

Jewish Heritage Initiative

Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology

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Allen County History

Fort Wayne, the county seat of Allen County, developed from a fort founded in 1794. Early pioneers were attracted to Fort Wayne by the profitable fur trade.¹ The first known Jewish man in the area was John Jacob Hays, who moved to Cahokia, Illinois on the Mississippi River in 1793, and eventually was appointed an Indian agent at Fort Wayne.² He left Fort Wayne in 1823.

Construction of the Wabash & Erie Canal in the 1830s fostered further commercial possibilities and caused a great influx of immigrants to the growing community. Although no Jews are listed in the 1840 census, Sigmund Redelsheimer had arrived the year before and soon established a general store on Columbia Street in partnership with Abraham Oppenheimer, also Jewish. Redelsheimer would help found the first Jewish congregation in the state. In 1844, Isaac Lauferty arrived to establish a clothing store, and later a private bank. In 1875, the city directory lists Lauferty as a banker and broker.

By 1848, there was a sufficient number of Jews to form The Society for Visiting the Sick and Burying the Dead (in 1861, they changed their name to Congregation Achduth Vascholom), making it the oldest congregation in Indiana. The Society for Visiting the Sick and Burying the Dead purchased land in Fort Wayne for a cemetery, but this land proved not to be large enough for the group's needs, so in 1884, the congregation purchased acreage within the larger community cemetery (Lindenwood Cemetery - listed in the National Register of Historic Places). An Orthodox Jewish Cemetery would be dedicated in 1911.

The next aspect of life that was import to these individuals was the education of their children about their religion. They established a religious school in 1854.³ Caring for the cemetery and creating the religious

school united members of the congregation, but the issue of reforming the synagogue deeply divided members, causing many to leave the synagogue. Until 1859, Congregation Achduth Vascholom met in the house of one of its founders,⁴ Frederick Nirdlinger. When the new synagogue was dedicated, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (proponent of the Reform movement) came to Fort Wayne. Congregation Achduth Vascholom became a charter member of the American Reform Movement of Judaism. The synagogue moved four times; they moved to their current location in 1961.⁵ The first and second building no longer stand, but the third temple is used by a local not-for-profit; the fourth building is their current home. The Congregation has a Temple Museum, founded in 1928 and was designated the Goldmann Memorial Museum in 1931.⁶

During the 1880s and 1890s, Jews from Russian, Poland, and other eastern European countries began immigrating to the city. Because of divisions between the German Jews and the Eastern European Jews (described in the chapter “Jews in America”), these Eastern Europeans formed B’nai Israel Congregation. In 1912, another group of European Jews formed B’nai Jacob Synagogue. Just some of the founders of B’nai Israel included Sam Fieldbleat, a clothing storeowner; Louis Novitsky; and Morris Tarlitz (Tarletz). When B’nai Israel disbanded in 1936, members split their loyalty between Congregation Achduth Vascholom and B’nai Jacob. B’nai Jacob became a Conservative Congregation in 1938. In 1955, they moved into a new location, but left that in 1997.⁷

Always involved in the philanthropy and charity of their community, the Jewish women formed the Ladies’ Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1861 to help Union soldiers of all faiths. Eventually this organization grew to be one of the state’s most powerful philanthropic/charitable organizations. When it disbanded in 1921, the newly formed Fort Wayne Jewish Federation picked up its philanthropic work.⁸ The Federation was a welfare and relief organization that had a goal of coordinating the work and fundraising of the Jewish community. By 1939,

they had hired their first executive director, Joseph Levine, who became one of their most influential directors. He also founded the Indiana Jewish Historical Society and served as its president for years.

Business Owners and Community Leaders

Jews were always active in the business life of Fort Wayne. This included everything from clothing to dry goods to scrap dealers. This listing is just some of the business owners found in the city directories, county histories, and community memory.

Scrap dealers included Abraham Levy (1895), Abe field (1910), *The Huntington Scrap Yards* owned by Larry Levin (1903), and Aaron Heiligman's yard - he was a founder of B'nai Jacob.



Fort Wayne had several Jewish owned alcohol related businesses including a beer production facility owned by Jacob Becker from 1861-1872, a liquor store owned by Leopold Falk from 1861-1872, and a wine distributor owned by Sam Heilbraner from 1861-1866, and then again 1870-1872.

Clothing, shoes, leather goods, and other clothing type businesses were the most abundant. Just some of these businessmen included:

Congregation Achduth Vascholom located in Fort Wayne (Allen County). The congregation moved into this synagogue in 1961.

- *Joseph Black - ladies cloths - 1868-1872
- *Frank Leopold – leather – 1870-1872
- *Leopold Freiburger – leather – 1872
- *Abraham Heilbronner - hides – 1861-1870
- *Victor Jacobson – men’s clothing – 1861-1872
- *Max Lauferty – tailor 1861-1872
- **Levy Brothers Store* – clothing store opened 1895
- *Isaac Kretzman opened his store in 1910. He was a Russian Jew, who became a leader of the non-German Jews. He died in 1921.
- **Epstein Company Clothing Store*
- **Kratsch Brothers Clothing Store* – 1900
- **Benjamin Lehman Clothing Store* – 1895
- **L. Mautner and Co.*, tailors – 1900
- *Harry Berman boot maker

Manufacturers included

- *Mendel Zweig was an umbrella manufacturer. Max Nirdlinger owned a baseball bat factory (1883)⁹

Food or grocery store owners included:

- * Delicatessen owned by Mendel Hurowitz, in 1916. By 1921, the deli had changed to a grocery. Hurowitz also served as the Rabbi for B’nai Jacob.
- **Frank Dry Goods*, owned by Marx Frank opened in 1921.
- **Karn Brothers* meat market, 1900.
- * Mendel Frank owned grocery store.
- *Hannah Frankenstein owned a grocery store.¹⁰

Frederick Nirdlinger was born in Hechingen, Germany. At the age of 16, he came to Pennsylvania and then moved to Fort Wayne. He established the *New York Emporium*, which grew to be one of the largest clothing stores in Indiana. He served as president of Congregation Acduth Vesholom. Nirdlinger was involved in the civic life of Fort Wayne. In 1845, he was an organizing member of new Lodge of Odd Fellows; later, he helped to found the Kekionga Guards. Active in the Democratic Party, he was elected a township trustee in 1855. When Stephen A. Douglas came to town in 1860, he rode in Nirdlinger’s carriage. Nirdlinger’s home became the center of the local Jewish community, serving as a meeting place for most of their religious and

social gatherings. By 1848, when the local Jewish families established the minyan, they met in Nirdlinger's home.

In 1849, the editor of the *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, Thomas Tigar, commented on a rumor that peddlers, many of whom were Jewish, were the cause of a smallpox outbreak. Nirdlinger immediately cancelled his businesses' advertising and his own subscription to the paper. After several days of insults hurled at Nirdlinger, eventually Tigar apologized for his unfounded remarks, but did continue to warn individuals to be careful of the Jewish peddlers.

Wolf & Dessauer opened in 1896 by Sam Wolf and Myron Dessauer. Sam's father, A. Wolf was a city council man. The family also opened a store in Huntington run by William Latz; this store closed in 1969. The Fort Wayne location moved into a new structure in 1917, but that was destroyed by fire in 1962. Indianapolis based *L.S. Ayres Company* bought out the stores in 1969.¹¹

G. Irving Latz senior owned an A.M. Strauss (see below) designed home and was a founder of the Jewish Federation. He served as an influential businessman in Fort Wayne. He died in 1947.

G. Irving Latz II was a WWII vet, was director of *Fort Wayne National Bank*, on board of hospital, president of the Fort Wayne Jewish Foundation, part of the Fort Wayne Music Society, and active in United Fund drives.

William Latz served as a State Representative for four terms, was Allen County Council President, served as the Chair of Better Business Bureau, sat on the Convention Bureau and Civic Theatres' board, was vice president of the Fine Arts Foundation, and served in the United States Army.

Alvin Strauss, a local architect, opened *A. M. Strauss*. He was born in Kendallville (Noble County) in 1895. His parents were immigrants from Germany; his father was a merchant in Kendallville. After school and an apprenticeship in Chicago, he moved to Fort Wayne in 1915. His early projects (1918-1926) were located mainly in northern Indiana and northwest Ohio. Early work included residences, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, churches, and mausoleums. By 1924, he was building larger, more extravagant homes in Fort Wayne. Strauss built a number of buildings for the local Jewish community, including homes and synagogues, most of which still stand today. By 1927, he was building some of the most prominent structures in Fort Wayne including the *Emboyd Theatre*, the *Lincoln Bank Tower*, and the *St. Vincent Villa*. Strauss was also involved in community affairs including the Chamber of Commerce, Elks Lodge, Fort Wayne Country Club, and the Jewish Federation. He was a

director of the Indiana Society of Architects, president of the Fort Wayne Society of Architects, and was an active member of Achduth Vesholom Congregation. For a more complete look at Strauss' work, see Phylis Brockmyer's "Compilation of Architectural Works by A.M. Strauss, A.M. Strauss Associates, Inc., Strauss Associates, Inc. 1918-1989 Fort Wayne, Indiana."



St. Vincent Villa in Fort Wayne (now used as the YWCA campus) designed by Alvin Strauss in 1932. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. Photo: Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 1994.



The Lincoln Bank Tower in Fort Wayne was the tallest building in Indiana when designed by Alvin Strauss in 1929. Photo: Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 1996.

Many of the second generation Jews moved away from working in the family stores to work in more professional occupations. Isaac Rosenthal was a doctor as early as 1885, serving as president of the Allen County Medical Society. Maurice Rosenthal opened his medical practice around 1905. Byron Novitsky was a lawyer who had a firm in the 1960s; his law firm building still stands. George Gene Nathan was an author and critic.¹² Minette Baum was an active leader in women's Zionist movement.

Allen County contained three different congregations, three Jewish cemeteries, and a large population living in thriving in the community. A possibility of over 549 sites were identified and any relation of Jewish history; 309 could be located - 109 of the 309 buildings no longer exist.

Footnotes

¹ Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Review Board, Fort Wayne Interim Report (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Review Board, 1996), 11.

² W. William Wimberly, "The Jewish Experience in Indiana Before the Civil War: An Introduction," *Indiana Jewish Historical Society Publication No.6* (1976), 6; Carolyn Blackwell, "Jews," *Peopling Indiana*, Robert Taylor and Connie McBirney, eds (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 315; L.C. Rudolph. *Hoosier Faiths* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³ Frances Lowens, *The Records of Congregation Achduth Vesholom, Fort Wayne, Indiana 1848-1883, Books One, Two, and Three Translated from the German*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: self published), 1990.

⁴ While all were followed in the survey, and are found in the Excel spreadsheet, they are not all listed in this context statement.

⁵ Ruth Zweig, "The First Hundred and twenty-Five Years," *Indiana Jewish Historical Society Publication No.2* (September 1973), 1-4.

⁶ Congregation Achduth Vesholom, Achduth Vesholom Congregation history, <http://uahc.org/congs/in/in010/history.htm> (accessed June 18, 2004).

⁷ Congregation B'nai Jacob, Congregation Bnai Jacob Conservative Synagogue History, <http://mysite.verizon.net/bnaijacob/history.html> (access 30 August 2005).

⁸ Indiana Jewish Historical Society, *IJHS News*, (May 1994), 2.

⁹ Indiana Jewish Historical Society, *IJHS News*, (August 1981), 3.

¹⁰ Indiana Jewish Historical Society, *IJHS News*, (February 1979), 4.

¹¹ Jim Barron and Kathie Barron, *Wolf & Dessauer: An Album of Memories*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Self Published), 2003.

¹² Indiana Jewish Historical Society, *IJHS News*, (August 1981), 3.

Bartholomew County Jewish History

In September 1861 *The Israelite*, a Cincinnati-based Jewish weekly publication, reported that Columbus, Indiana Jews, though “few in number,” “have with a spirit of perseverance and liberality worthy of emulation, organized a new congregation under the title of Chisak Emuna.”¹ Members elected a Rabbi, as well as president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and three trustees. For the next 150 years, the Columbus Jewry continued to worship together despite a small membership and organizational changes.

The city of Columbus boasts the largest recorded population of Jews in Bartholomew County and serves as the county seat. Since the nineteenth century Bartholomew County residents have relied on a largely agricultural and manufacturing based economy, yet, very few Jews farmed. Instead they usually leased their land to others.² In the mid-nineteenth century, Columbus, like most Indiana cities, attracted Jewish families who settled and sustained their livelihoods through operating woolen mills and retail stores, as well as providing services.

The earliest Jewish residents in Indiana worked as peddlers, traveling between towns and selling goods from carts.³ The first Jewish settler is believed to be man named Hodler, but little is known about him. Another early Jewish resident, Samuel Samuels peddled with his brother David in 1852. In 1854, the Samuels had saved enough funds to send for his parents in Germany. By 1857, they established a dry goods business, *Trade Palace*. Samuels’ other ventures also fared well. The entrepreneurs partnered with a Mr. Carter (it is uncertain of his religious affiliation) to build a woolen mill in Columbus in 1863 and another one in St. Louis in 1866. In 1869, Samuels partnered with his former employee Mr. Vogel to form *Samuels, Vogel & Co*. While this firm replaced Vogel’s previous business, *Schloss and Vogel*, it operated at the same site. The dry goods store, with its annual \$100,000 business and renovations, proved a source of pride to the city. An article in the

February 24, 1876 edition of *The Republican* asserted the business “[compared] favorable [sic] with the finest dry goods house of Indianapolis. This store room is now a credit to Columbus and an honor to the enterprising firm.”⁴ The store’s notable features included separate departments for every category of goods, which enabled customers to easily locate items. *Samuels, Vogel & Co.* dissolved their partnership in 1879.

Other Columbus Jews established successful businesses at the turn of the twentieth century. Adolph Strauss resided in an 1890s vernacular, gable-fronted house. Strauss operated stores in Columbus, Terre Haute, Anderson, and Seymour after his arrival from New York City in 1870.

Once described as the “Number One [Columbus] Jewish family,” Lee Rosenbush, his sons, and their extended family moved to the city in 1884.⁵ The family purchased the *Sam the Boss* clothing store, which thrived. Rosenbush’s brothers-in-law opened a Seymour branch, but moved after its failure. Rosenbush’s nephew Morris immigrated from Germany to partner with his uncle and they changed the name of the store to *L. Rosenbush & Co.* A store advertisement in the January 1, 1900 *Columbus Daily Herald* promised higher quality clothing at lower prices than their competitors.⁷ The merchants offered men’s suits priced from \$2.75 to \$20.00 and men’s overcoats marked from \$3.00 to \$18.00. Morris may have bought out his uncle’s share of the business and renamed the firm Morris Rosenbush & Co.

Louis J. Lehman established *Lehman & Co.*, a dry goods and carpet store. Lehman directed a businessmen’s committee formed in Columbus in 1890. His wife and two daughters were described as “social favorites.”⁶

Joseph Kroot immigrated from Poland to Indianapolis and Edinburgh (near Columbus) in 1890 before settling in Columbus in 1900. He and his wife had six children who stayed in the Columbus area or moved to Indianapolis.

For several generations the Kroots operated scrap yards in Indianapolis and Columbus. *The Kroots Scrap Yard* in Columbus is still in operation today.

David Brunswick, a member of the first Jewish congregation, operated *Brunswick Clothing Company*. Brunswick and his two sons and two daughters came to town in 1897.

Oscar Bernhardt Fiegenbaum and his partner Mr. Meyer sold dry goods, carpets, and fancy and staple clothes. They advertised cloaks, blankets, underwear, wool hosiery, gloves, mitts, “fascinators,” carpet, linoleums, oilcloths, draperies, and shades and promised to show customers “a complete line.”⁸ A life-long native of Bartholomew County, Fiegenbaum was born in 1864 in Waymansville and died in 1949 in Columbus.⁸

Other Jews operated disparate businesses in Columbus, yet did not leave as much documentary evidence. A Mr. Bengus opened a shoe store, as did a Mr. Hub. The Bergers operated a ready-to-wear store before relocating outside the city. Moses and Rosa Cahn lived on the corner of Eighth and California Streets and partnered with Adolph Strauss to run a retail business on California before they moved to Indianapolis. A Mr. Caplan started a men’s store. Frizinske went into the scrap business. Harry Frohman had a clothing store and ran a fruit stand with his wife Bessie. The Glassners managed a ladies’ dry goods general store. Ruth Kahn established a clothing store before relocating to Chicago. Hannah Kizer or Kaiser ran a boarding house. Aaron Tross ran a clothing store for men, women, and children in the building opposite the courthouse. A Mr. Wasserman sold clothing and shoes.

Nine months after Columbus Jews formed an organization in September 1861 and elected a rabbi and administrative officers, they advertised for a Shoet (ritual slaughterer) and a teacher of Hebrew.⁹ The congregation listed themselves as Chasak Emunah, spelled slightly different than the name listed in the 1861 *The Israelite*. The congregation's executive officers did not waste time in gathering individuals who could perform religious rituals such as approving kosher meat and reading the Torah. In September 1871 the congregation, with its membership of fourteen families, dedicated the Chasak Emunah Synagogue, a small frame building. By 1877 the *American Israelite* reported that Chasak Emunah had grown to include fifteen to twenty members and provided Jewish Hoosiers the only place to worship between Indianapolis and Louisville along the Jeffersonville, Madison and Indianapolis Railroad. A weekly Sabbath school drew an average attendance of forty students. The Reform congregation actively engaged within the local community by hosting balls, fundraising for a theological college, and lecturing to Indiana Jews and non-Jews. Yet, Chasak Emunah's success faltered. One source asserts that Rabbi Samuel M. Laski created dissension amongst the congregation and numbers dwindled. The July 27, 1878 *Daily Evening Republic* printed a local church directory that included the Hebrew Synagogue on Vernon Street near Jackson Street. The advertisement listed their rabbi as "Rabbi, _____, Pastor" which indicated that the congregation no longer employed a resident rabbi. Nevertheless, services continued to be held every Friday and Saturday, and a Sunday school was offered. An 1888 published history of Bartholomew County included several paragraphs on the Columbus Hebrew community, noting that the synagogue peaked at thirty families or nearly 180 individuals.

According to the Columbus City Directory, another Jewish congregation called the Columbus Hebrew Congregation formed in the late 1960s. In the 1970s the congregation dwindled to five families as members moved away from Columbus for a variety of reasons.¹⁰ Family services were only held twice a year for the high holidays Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) with a non-resident

rabbi secured to conduct the celebration.¹¹ Once the congregation ceased altogether, the more devout Jewish families traveled to Louisville or Indianapolis to attend temple.¹²

The Jewish congregation and Jewish business owners counted Christians among their patrons. The Columbus synagogue hosted a grand mask ball on February 14, 1877 at the local Pallas Theater to raise funds for the congregation. The Columbus community, regardless of denomination, heavily attended the ball and four previous events given by the Jewish congregation. The *Weekly Republican* declared the function “the hit of the season” and stated that its readership had come to expect nothing less than success from their “Israelite friends.”¹³ Indeed, people traveled as far away as New York, Louisville, and Cincinnati to enjoy the orchestra, dance, masked procession, and desserts. The Columbus Jewry could not have sustained the Jewish-owned stores alone.

In the late nineteenth century Columbus’ population of 5,000 included fourteen Jewish families. In the late 1970s that number had not changed much even though the city population had grown to over 30,000. Despite their small numbers, the Jewish residents maintained a strong and active presence. Members of the Columbus Jewry served on the city council, as the hospital foundation president, the human rights commission chair, vice-president of the chamber of commerce, and chair of the League of Women Voters. Other Columbus Jews volunteered as therapists and tutors within the school system and for social and philanthropic organizations such as Meals on Wheels, the March of Dimes, and the Bartholomew County Heart Association. The same “spirit of perseverance and liberality worthy of emulation” that the 1861 *Israelite* attributed to the Columbus Jewry continues to thrive.

While Bartholomew County contained a total of 2 different Jewish congregations, only six buildings are extant with any relation to the Jewish history. These sites include synagogues/temples, homes, and businesses. All six were rated Contributing.

Footnotes

¹ Gladys Kaminsky, "History of the Jewish Community of Columbus, Indiana" (Fort Wayne: Indiana Jewish Historical Society, September 1978), 2. Indiana Historical Society, Pamphlet Collection.

² Carolyn S. Blackwell, *Peopling Indiana*, eds., Robert M. Taylor and Connie A. McBirney, (Indianapolis: The Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 324.

³ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁴ Kaminsky, 4.

⁵ William E. Marsh, *I Discover Columbus* (Oklahoma City: Semco Color Press, 1956), 210.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Columbus Daily Herald*, 1 January 1900. The Indiana State Library, Newspaper Collection.

⁸ www.rootsweb.com (accessed 24 August 2006).

⁹ *Jewish Messenger*, 27 June 1871. Reprinted from Kaminsky, 2.

¹⁰ Carolyne Stultz, *Bartholomew County, Indiana 1821-1999: Family Histories, Churches, and Schools* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1999).

¹¹ *History of Bartholomew County, Indiana, 1888* (Columbus, Indiana: Bartholomew County Historical Society, 1976), 112.

¹² Marsh, 121.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

Cass County History

The first treaty establishing United States' ownership of the lands that would become Cass County, Indiana was made in 1818 between the Potawatomie Indians and three United States Commissioners; Jonathan Jennings, Lewis Cass, and Benjamin Parke.¹ Several more treaties followed, including some with the Miami tribe, and white settlers began to stream into the area between the Wabash and Eel Rivers. In 1828 enough settlers had arrived to create a new county, named Cass, after the U.S. Commissioner that had negotiated most of the treaties, Lewis Cass.² Cass County continued to grow, and the present-day boundaries were not established until 1852.³

The city of Logansport developed in the fertile land right at the juncture of the Wabash and Eel Rivers. Local legend maintains that in 1827 a shooting contest took place between Hugh McKeen, an early settler, and Colonel John B. Duret for the right to name the new city. Duret won and chose the name Logan's Port after Shawnee Chief Logan, who died in the War of 1812 fighting with the Americans against the British.⁴ The name was eventually modified to Logansport and the city was incorporated in 1837-38.⁵ The city's location along the rivers, coupled with the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal, and followed by the construction of the railroad through the town, ensured that Logansport would continue to grow. By 1850 the city

¹ Thomas B. Helm, *History of Cass County, Indiana from the Earliest Time to the Present* (Chicago: Brant & Fuller, 1886), 260.

² *Ibid.*, 265.

³ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁴ Graham Taber, *History of Logansport and Cass County* (Logansport, IN: Pharos-Tribune, 1947), 3-5; Richard and Eileen Copeland, *Cass County, Indiana 2002 History* (Logansport, IN: Modern Graphics, 2002), 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

boasted a population of 2, 251 people.⁶ In 1870, the city had grown to a population of 8,950, and the population peaked in 1920 at 21, 626.⁷

A fairly large Jewish community developed in Logansport early in the city's history, with the first known family settling in the late 1850s. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, the Jewish community was large enough to support a visiting Rabbi from Lafayette for Jewish Holidays.⁸ A formal synagogue was never established in Logansport; however, the community did often have Rabbi's in from other communities for religious observances. Several obituaries for members of the Logansport Jewish community reference Rabbis from Fort Wayne, Wabash, Lafayette, and Cincinnati.⁹ While there are several mentions in the local newspapers about the members of the Jewish communities holding their own social affairs, often in Taylor Hall at 525 Market, no specific groups, such as women's groups, were named.¹⁰ By the mid-twentieth century, the cohesiveness of the Logansport Jewish Community was mostly lost. According to Theodore Gerst, whose family arrived in Logansport in the 1930s; Jewish families had to drive to Lafayette for services, and kosher meat was only available once a week from Indianapolis at a great cost. According to Mr. Gerst, during this time many families moved to be closer to religious facilities. Though his family remained in Logansport, they did continue to go to Lafayette for observance of High Holy Days.¹¹

In spite of the absence of a fully established congregation, the members of the Jewish community did come together in 1884 to purchase and maintain a Jewish cemetery. These

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Populations, "Logansport, Indiana," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logansport,_Indiana (accessed April 18, 2012).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Will Ball, "This Changing World: Part 224 Cass County Historical Society," Logansport Press, February 1, 1953.

⁹ "Solomon Fisher's Funeral," *The Logansport Journal*, April 8, 1894.; *The Logansport Pharos*, August 10, 1906.; "Eugene Berwanger Dies in Detroit," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 25, 1927.; *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, November 29, 1948.

¹⁰ Ball, "This Changing World."

¹¹ Interview with Theodore Gerst, March 8, 2012, done by Rusti Keen.

actions were likely prompted by the deaths of Gustave Lang and Max Kraus, both members of the Jewish community that passed away early in 1884, and are credited as the first interments in the Jewish cemetery.¹² Moses Michaels, Herman Frank, and Herman Stern were originally appointed to purchase the ground in February of 1884, and on July 11, 1884, Solomon Wise, Eli Greensfelder, and Moses Michaels were elected as trustees of the Jewish Cemetery Association.¹³

The Jewish families that settled Logansport, almost without exception, were very successful, owning their own businesses which became several of the mainstay establishments in Logansport. A 1953 article in the Logansport paper recapping the changing face of downtown Logansport's business community lists the Frank brothers, the Wilers, the Wises, the Fishers, the Sterns, the Frankenthals, the Michaels, the Langs, the Oppenheimers, the Kraus brothers, the Rosenthals, the Guggenheimers, the Kaufmans, the Levinsons, the Abrahams, the Hechts, the Mandels, the Birkenruths, the Herzs, Lewis Epstine, the Greensfelders, the Berwangers, the Rothschilds, the Cooks, Sam Berman, the Drucks, the Gersts, and the Kuppenheimers all as local business owners and members of the Jewish community.¹⁴

A part of their success can be attributed to the open-minded community in which they lived. All evidence suggests that there was very little to no anti-Semitism in Logansport and that the Jewish community there was able to prosper, maintain their faith, and participate in the community at large, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Ku Klux Klan was prevalent in Indiana and Logansport citizens were members. The Greensfelder twins, Melvin and Herbert, took it upon themselves to discover and

¹² "Graves of Many Pioneers Unmarked and Unknown: Most Burial Grounds Located in Township," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, June 4, 1956.

¹³ *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 19, 1884.; "Graves of Many Pioneers Unmarked and Un known."

¹⁴ Ball, "This Changing World." For some of these families, this article is the only evidence they were Jewish.

maintain a list of Klan members and actively work against the Klan's establishment in their community.¹⁵ In an interview with Theodore Gerst, one of the last surviving members of the Logansport Jewish community, he said that there were very few instances of anti-Semitism throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, largely because the city felt that the Jewish population was not large enough to warrant concern.¹⁶

Frank

The Frank family resided in Logansport in the nineteenth century. They lived in Logansport until 1892 and owned M. Frank & Bros, a clothing, dry goods, and gentleman's furnishings store.¹⁷ Martin Frank was born in Bavaria, Germany in 1832, and arrived in the United States in 1852, making his way to Logansport by 1854.¹⁸ Herman Frank, his brother, was selected as a member of the committee chosen to choose and purchase the land for Logansport's Jewish cemetery in 1884.¹⁹

Fisher/Oppenheim

Solomon Fisher was born in Germany in 1824 and immigrated to the United States at an unknown date. In 1857, he married Katherine Kohn (also spelled as Cohn or Cohen), of Minich, Bavaria, in Albany, New York. Immediately after their wedding, the couple came to

¹⁵ "Grandfather Fought the Klan in Indiana," *New York Times*, August 5, 1995.

¹⁶ Interview with Theodore Gerst, March 8, 2012.

¹⁷ J.T. Talbott, *Logansport Directory and Peru Directory for 1859-1860* (Indianapolis, Indiana: J.T. Talbott, 1860).; Cowen & Protzman, *Logansport City Directory and Classified Business Directory of Indianapolis, Lafayette, and Surrounding Towns, M.V.B. Cowen* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Cowen & Protzman, 1869).; Polk, Murphy & Co., *Logansport Directory, 1874* (Detroit, Michigan, Polk, Murphy & Co., 1874).; Morley & McLure & Collines, *Logansport Directroy, 1876-77* (Logansport, Indiana: Morley & McLure & Collin, 1876).; Chas O. Ebel & Co. *Logansport Directory, 1883-84* (Terre Haute, Indiana: Chas O. Ebel & Co., 1884).; F.J. Sutton *Logansport and Cass County Directory, 1887-88* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Spencer & Craig Printing Works, 1887).; Joseph E. Crain, *Historical Abridgement of Essences and Antiquity of Free Masonry: Its decadence and revival, introduction in America, its establishment in Indiana and induction in Logansport, Cass County* (Logansport, IN: The Longwell-Cummings Co., 1928).

¹⁸ Crain.

¹⁹ *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 19, 1884.

Logansport, Indiana where Solomon worked in the Frank Clothing Store.²⁰ The couple had five children: William, Benjamin, Max J., Pauline, and Morris.²¹ The Fishers remained in Logansport for several generations with many of the Fisher men working and owning businesses in the city. In 1880, Solomon is listed as a buyer of hides, rags, and iron; Max worked as a dry goods clerk; William was clerking in a clothing store; and Benjamin was working for the local druggist.²² Solomon, a member of the Masonic Fraternity, passed away in April of 1894, and was buried in the Hebrew Cemetery with a Rabbi from Ft. Wayne officiating the service.²³

Katie lived until 1916, when she passed away at the age of eighty-six from old age.²⁴ At the time of her death, her son Will was living in Chicago, Illinois; Morris had moved to Huntington, West Virginia; and Max Fisher was living in Logansport, though he was confined to a hospital in Baltimore after a major operation. Her daughter, Pauline, was widowed and living in Albany, New York.²⁵ Benjamin Fisher established and operated Ben Fisher & Co. as a druggist for a number of years, but is not listed as residing in Logansport after the 1903-1904 city directory.²⁶

Morris Fisher lived and worked in Logansport for several years, owning a haberdashery business and marrying Reda Oppenheim of another local Jewish family.²⁷ Samuel Oppenheim and his brother Jerry lived in Logansport during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, working in a clothing store and owning Oppenheim & Lang, with Gustave Lang, for a period of

²⁰ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 16, 1916.

²¹ *1870 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

²² *1880 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

²³ "Solomon Fisher's Funeral," *The Logansport Journal*, April 8, 1894.

²⁴ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 16, 1916.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Longwell-Cummings Co., *Logansport Directory, 1903-04* (Logansport, Indiana: John E. Anderson, 1904).

²⁷ "Brother of Max Fisher Passes Away. Death Followed Major Operation to Which he Submitted Recently," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, September 14, 1936.

time.²⁸ After that store closed, Samuel operated a clothing, gentlemen’s furnishings, and merchant tailor business at 330 Market Street. Samuel and his wife Augusta had three children,



including their daughter Reda. The couple moved their family to Huntington, West Virginia prior to 1900, where Samuel became a dealer in a furniture store.²⁹ Around 1903 Morris Fisher moved to Huntington, where he married Reda and worked with his father-in-law in the furniture business.³⁰ He passed

away in 1936 following a medical operation and was buried in West Virginia.³¹ Morris and his wife had no children.

Max J. Fisher remained in Logansport throughout his lifetime, marrying Clara Stettiner of Toledo, Ohio in 1894, and had one daughter, Maxine who married and moved to Indianapolis.³² For sixty-one years, Max owned several businesses in Logansport, originally partnering with Henry Wiler to form H. Wiler & Co., a dry goods store, and eventually going into business on his own with Fisher’s Furniture Store. In 1945 he sold his furniture store to a gentleman from Indianapolis. He passed away in Indianapolis in 1949.³³

²⁸ Cowen & Protzman, *Logansport City Directory and Classified Business Directory of Indianapolis, Lafayette, and Surrounding Towns*, M.V.B. Cowen (Indianapolis, Indiana: Cowen & Protzman, 1869).; Morley & McLure & Collines, *Logansport Directroy, 1876-77* (Logansport, Indiana: Morley & McLure & Collin, 1876).; F.J. Sutton *Logansport and Cass County Directory, 1887-88* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Spencer & Craig Printing Works, 1887).; J.E. Sutton *City Directory of Logansport, IN, 1889-90* (Logansport, Indiana: J.E. Sutton, 1890).; Chas. B. Longwell *Directory of Logansport, IN, 1890-91* (Logansport, Indiana: Chas. B. Longwell, 1890).

²⁹ 1900 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com.

³⁰ West Virginia Marriages Index, 1785-1971, Ancestry.com.

³¹ “Brother of Max Fisher Passes Away.”

³² “Max J. Fisher Succumbs in Indianapolis,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 11, 1949.

³³ *Ibid.*

Wiler

In 1867 the Fishers were joined by Joseph Wiler who arrived in Logansport, Indiana from Lafayette and joined his brother, Jacob in business.³⁴ After a number of years, he formed a partnership with Solomon Wise. The Wiler & Wise Company operated the Bee Hive Dry Goods Store for a number of years.³⁵ He also formed a partnership with his brother, Henry Wiler, after Henry's arrival in the United States in 1874.³⁶ He married Clara Oppenheim and the couple had two children, Carl J. Wiler and Bertha Wiler Kraus. He passed away in 1906 after a brief illness.³⁷ He was a well-respected businessman in Logansport, and in honor of his memory the proprietors of all dry goods stores in Logansport closed for his funeral.³⁸ His wife, Clara, lived until 1919.³⁹

Joseph's son, Carl, took over the operations of the Bee Hive Store until 1933, when the store was closed.⁴⁰ After that time, Carl worked for the Golden Rule Department Store in Logansport until his retirement and helped to found the Logansport Better Business Bureau. He married Helen Kuppenheimer, of a local Logansport family, and the couple had two children, a son, Joseph, and a daughter, Clare Jean, who passed away in 1920.⁴¹ Carl passed away in 1961 after a long illness. His wife, Helen, survived him until 1965.⁴²

³⁴ "Joseph Wiler is Dead," *The Logansport Daily Pharos*, November 24, 1906.

³⁵ Chas O. Ebel & Co. *Logansport Directory, 1883-84.*; Chas. B. Longwell *Directory of Logansport, IN, 1890-91*, (Logansport, Indiana: Chas. B. Longwell, 1890).

³⁶ "Henry Wiler Rites Monday," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 5, 1935.

³⁷ "Joseph Wiler is Dead," *The Logansport Daily Pharos*, November 24, 1906.

³⁸ "Stores Will Close for the Wiler Funeral Monday," *The Logansport Daily Pharos*, November 24, 1906.

³⁹ "Mrs. Clara Wiler Died Here Today," *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, April 8, 1919.

⁴⁰ "Carl Wiler, 81, Dies at Hospital," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 14, 1961.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHwi.html> (accessed March 7, 2012).

Carl and Helen's son, Joseph A. Wiler, remained in Logansport, working for the local radio station from 1949 until his retirement in 1986.⁴³ He married Martha Anne Stuart and the couple had a son, Joseph S., and a daughter, Susan.⁴⁴

Joseph Wiler's brother, Henry Wiler, also had a long life in Logansport. Owner of H. Wiler & Company, a furniture store, Henry married Rosetta and the couple had four children: Victor, Billy, and two daughters. Victor Wiler remained in Logansport and worked in his father's store. He married Marie Murphy and the couple had a son, William.⁴⁵ In 1928, after a long battle with illness, Victor's body was found hanging in a second story room of the furniture store.⁴⁶ No reason was given for the suicide.

Lang

Gustave Lang resided in Logansport from approximately 1869 until his death in 1884. He was married to Julia Oppenheimer, another prominent Logansport Jewish family. Gustave worked as a merchant tailor and clothier; owning the business Oppenheimer & Lang for a brief time.⁴⁷ Gustave, along with another local Jewish man, Max Kraus, was one of the first two burials in Logansport's Jewish cemetery.⁴⁸ Gustave and Julia had at least one daughter, Eugenia, who passed away at the age of 23 to sensational headlines. Shortly after her father's death in 1884, Julia and Eugenia left Logansport for Cincinnati under the stigma of Eugenia's reputation for having been "exceedingly gay" about town. In Cincinnati, Eugenia was accused of living a dual life, and according to her obituary was arrested in a house of ill-repute for stealing from a

⁴³ Obituaries, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, November 11, 1987.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "Find Body of Victor Wiler in his Store," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 30, 1928.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cowen & Protzman, *Logansport City Directory and Classified Business Directory of Indianapolis, Lafayette, and Surrounding Towns*, M.V.B. Cowen, 1869.; Chas O. Ebel & Co. *Logansport Directory, 1883-84.*; Morley & McLure & Collines, *Logansport Directroy, 1876-77.*

⁴⁸ "Kraus, Otto," Cass County Historical Society File Folder, Cass County Historical Society, Logansport, IN.

saloon keeper.⁴⁹ Not staying in Cincinnati long, she eventually moved to Chicago, where the details of her life were unknown prior to her overdose of morphine and subsequent death in a Cook County hospital.⁵⁰ Her body was returned to Logansport and she was interred near her father in Mount Hope cemetery. The newspaper obituary for Eugenia gives her last name as Lang, but her headstone in the cemetery reads “Eugenia Lang Choen” implying that she married at some point. Her mother, Julia, survived her, living until 1941, and is also buried in Mount Hope Cemetery.

Kraus

Jacob Kraus, a German Jewish immigrant, brought his family to the United States in the 1850s or 1860s, settling in Toledo, Ohio. Jacob was the father of four children: Adelaide, Rose, Otto, and Max.⁵¹ In 1869, Otto and his brother Max arrived in Logansport, Indiana and began working for the Frank Brothers clothing store, opening their own store within one year. Max passed away in 1884, but Otto operated the store until 1897, when he sold the business to Sidney V. Kaufman.⁵² He then opened The Otto Shoe and Clothing Company, which he ran until 1922, when he became a local salesman for a large eastern men’s clothing firm.⁵³ Max joined Gustave Lang as one of the first two burials in the Logansport Jewish Cemetery.⁵⁴

A very civic minded individual, Otto Kraus was well known for organizing the first independent baseball team of Logansport, the Ottos, and sponsoring their games for many years.

⁴⁹ “By Morphine ‘Genie’ Lang Dies at Chicago,” *The Daily Journal*, August 2, 1894

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² “In Business Here Over Forty Years: Otto Kraus Tells of His Early Business Experiences And of the Share That Advertising Had in His Success,” *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, November 18, 1916.

⁵³ “Logansport Mourns Passing of Otto Kraus; Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHkokz.html> (accessed March 5, 2012).

⁵⁴ “Kraus, Otto,” Cass County Historical Society File Folder, Cass County Historical Society, Logansport, IN.

He was also a founding member of the Elks lodge, and was the last surviving charter member at the time of his death.⁵⁵ Otto Kraus had the distinction of being known as the first merchant to extensively advertise along the roads leading to Logansport, painting the phrase “Otto Kraus, Of Course” on posts and boulders.⁵⁶

Otto married the daughter of another prominent Logansport Jewish family, Bertha Wise, in 1889, and the couple had no children.⁵⁷ Otto passed away in 1928 at the age of eighty-one. His wife, Bertha, about twenty years his junior, lived until 1947.⁵⁸

Guggenheimer

Not much is known about Theodore Guggenheimer. He is only listed on the 1870 census for Logansport as a single man from Bavaria working in a gentleman’s furnishings store.⁵⁹ In 1913 he was honored in a meeting of the Tipton Lodge No. 33 F. & A.M.⁶⁰

Rosenthals

The Rosenthals are also first found in Logansport in 1870. William and Sarah Rosenthal lived in Logansport with their children: Jennie, Emma, Walter, and Gertrude for a number of years.⁶¹ William worked as a clothing merchant.⁶² Emma married John M. Johnston and the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ “Many Changes,” *Logansport Press*, August 4, 1935.

⁵⁷ Indiana Marriage Collection, 1800-1941, Ancestry.com.

⁵⁸ “Bertha Kraus Passes Away,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 31, 1947.

⁵⁹ *1870 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

⁶⁰ *Logansport Journal-Tribune*, July 9, 1913.

⁶¹ *1870 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com; *1880 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

⁶² *1870 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

couple settled in Logansport and had at least two daughters, Gertrude and Esther.⁶³ In 1900, Walter is listed on the census as living in Manhattan, New York with his wife Clara.⁶⁴

Greensfelder

Born in New York City on November 7, 1848, Elias Greensfelder, known as Eli, came to Fort Wayne, Indiana by canal boat at the age of ten

months with his parents, Gustav and Fannie

Greensfelder.⁶⁵ Gustav and Fannie were German

immigrants.⁶⁶ In 1872, a young Eli set out on his

own, arriving in Logansport that year and

remaining for the duration of his life. Upon

arriving in Logansport, Eli worked with Martin

Frank, of another Jewish family, in the clothing business for three years before starting his own

clothing store at 315 Market Street.⁶⁷ His business remained at that address until his death and

was later maintained and expanded by his sons, Melvin and Herbert. In 1881 Eli married Fannie

Mayer of Lafayette, Indiana and the couple had eight children, six of whom survived into

adulthood. Two boys, Jacob and Nathan, died in infancy.⁶⁸ Their surviving children were Clara,

Bertha, Sallie, Florence, and identical twins Herbert and Melvin. Eli Greensfelder lived to be

seventy years old, succumbing in 1918 to a cerebral apoplexy in the front room of his store

during business hours. Eli was a member of the Tipton Lodge No. 33, F. & A.M., the Logan



⁶³“Johnston-Waters,” *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, August 8, 1914.

⁶⁴ *1900 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

⁶⁵ “Eli Greensfelder,” Cass County Historical Society File Folder, Cass County Historical Society, Logansport, Indiana.

⁶⁶ Jan Lewis, granddaughter of Melvin Greensfelder.

⁶⁷ “Apoplexy was Fatal to Eli Greensfelder,” *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, August 29, 1918.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Chapter No. 2 R.A.M., and of the Logansport Council No. 11 R. & S.M. He was also a founding member and long time president of the Jewish Cemetery Association, and a member of the Cass County Chamber of Commerce and the Logansport Country Club.⁶⁹

Eli's wife, Fannie, lived to the age of 89 in Logansport, residing for many years with her sons Melvin and Herbert. Passing away in 1947, Fannie was buried in the Jewish Cemetery that her husband helped to found.⁷⁰

The Greensfelder children each lead successful lives. Herbert served during the First World War, and he and his brother Melvin lived in Logansport throughout their lives, carrying on their father's business. Melvin lived until 1975. Marrying Inez Taylor, the couple had one daughter, Suzanne. After having "twin" heart attacks less than a year apart, Melvin and Herbert served as co-chairmen of the Heart Fund for fourteen years. Melvin was a member of the Tipton Lodge No. 33, the local American Legion, the Masonic York Rite Council, the Kiwanis Club, and the Elks and Eagles lodges.⁷¹

Herbert survived his twin brother for two more years, passing away in 1977 in the Chase Manor Nursing Home. Remaining co-owner of Greensfelder Brothers Men's Clothing Store until the brothers' retirement, Herbert married Janet Logan in 1942. The couple had two daughters, Marilyn and Dianne. Herbert was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans of World War I, Elks and Eagles Lodge, American Legion, Tipton Masonic Lodge No. 33, and the Temple Israel in Lafayette.⁷²

Melvin and his brother, Herbert, were prominent businessmen in the town of Logansport throughout their lifetimes. They are also credited with fighting the Ku Klux Klan in Logansport

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 14, 1947.

⁷¹ "Melvin Greensfelder, 79, Local Businessman, Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune & Press*, March 21, 1975; Jan Lewis, granddaughter of Melvin Greensfelder

⁷² *Ibid.*

in the 1920s and 1930s, a time when Klan activity in Indiana was at its peak. According to a piece written by Melvin's granddaughter in the *New York Times*, Melvin maintained a list of local Klan members, and he and Herbert, accompanied by a Roman Catholic friend from Indianapolis, hired some Chicago "gangsters" to come to Logansport and wreck the local Klan office.⁷³

Eli's daughter Clara married Sam A. Stern and lived in Chicago. His two daughters, Sallie and Bertha, married a Mr. Charles F. Martin and a Mr. Ferdinand Goodman, and lived in Wyoming and Lafayette.⁷⁴ According to Melvin's granddaughter, Sally fell in love with Charles Martin and eloped against her family's wishes. The couple settled in Wyoming, where they had two children, Charles born in 1916, and Jimmy, born in 1918. The same year of Jimmy's birth, Sally passed away in the influenza pandemic of 1918.⁷⁵ Florence remained in Logansport for several years, working for a time on the *Logansport Pharos-Reporter* staff, before marrying



The recently renovated Greensfelder Building at 315 Market Street. Photo taken from indianalandmarks.org.

Harry Friedman of West Virginia.⁷⁶ Mr. Friedman would go on to serve in the West Virginia State Senate.⁷⁷ Florence passed away in 1977, and both she and her husband Harry are buried in the Logansport Jewish Cemetery with her family.⁷⁸

⁷³ Lewis, Jan, "Grandfather Fought the Klan in Indiana," *New York Times*, August 5, 1995.

⁷⁴ "Apoplexy was Fatal to Eli Greensfelder."

⁷⁵ Jan Lewis, granddaughter of Melvin Greensfelder.

⁷⁶ "Apoplexy was Fatal to Eli Greensfelder."

⁷⁷ "Local Man's Sister Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 30, 1977.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Janet Greensfelder, Herbert's wife, lived until 1989, and was buried with her husband.⁷⁹ Melvin and Inez's daughter, Suzanne, passed away in 1992. She had married and moved to St. Louis, and later to White Plains, New York, and then Chicago, where she worked for the law offices of Stone, McGuire, and Benjamin. She had two daughters, Jan and Beth, and one grandson. A son preceded her in death.⁸⁰

The building which the Greensfelder Brothers' store occupied is still standing today. In 2003, the front corner of the building collapsed and Indiana Landmarks, a non-profit, statewide historic preservation organization, received the building on donation, made significant repairs, and began considering new uses for the structure.⁸¹ In June of 2011, the building was sold to Marie Jaquith, a California author, who intends to open a bookstore and café in the historic structure.⁸²

Michaels/Nussbaum

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Moses Michaels came to the United States in the 1840s or 1850s.⁸³ Living in Logansport as early as 1874, Moses worked for several years in millinery and fancy goods, and as a traveling agent before becoming a manufacturer of cement, a career he retained for the duration of his life.⁸⁴ Moses, with Herman Stern and Harry Frank, were appointed in 1884 to a committee to purchase ground for a Jewish cemetery.⁸⁵ This might have

⁷⁹ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 29, 1989.

⁸⁰ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, June 28, 1992.

⁸¹ "Indiana Landmarks Sells Historic Greensfelder Building," <http://www.indianalandmarks.org/newsphotos/pages/archivenews.aspx?newsid=599> (accessed March 30, 2012).

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ "Death of an Old Citizen," *The Daily Journal*, January 25, 1895.

⁸⁴ Polk, Murphy & Co., *Logansport Directory, 1874* (Detroit, Michigan, Polk, Murphy & Co., 1874); Morley & McLure & Collines, *Logansport Directroy, 1876-77*; "Death of an Old Citizen," *The Daily Journal*, January 25, 1895.

⁸⁵ *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 19, 1884.

been facilitated by the deaths of Max Kraus and Gustave Lang, both of whom died in 1884 and were the first two to be buried in the Jewish Cemetery.⁸⁶

Moses and his wife, Sarah, had three children, Etta, Charles, and Rose. Sarah Michaels passed away in 1921 and was buried in Mount Hope with her husband. The Michaels daughter, Etta, married a Leo Nussbaum from Marion, Indiana and resided there until her death in 1915.⁸⁷ The Nussbaum's had a son die in infancy, Carl J., and interred him in Logansport with Moses and Sarah Michaels.⁸⁸ Their only other child, Selma Nussbaum, lived to adulthood and married, becoming Selma Lucas. Upon her death in 1915, Etta L. was buried with her parents and child, and in 1921, Leo Nussbaum was also interred in the Logansport Cemetery.⁸⁹ Selma Lucas lived until 1940, passing away in France at the age of 48.⁹⁰ Her body was returned to Logansport and interred with her family.⁹¹

Cook

Born in present-day Lithuania in 1852, Simon Cook immigrated to America around 1867 joining his brother Isaac in Chicago. Living and working in various cities, Simon was living in Indianapolis in 1877 when he married his wife, Anna Ringold. Shortly after their marriage, the couple moved to Wabash, Indiana where they remained engaged in local business until Simon's retirement in 1930. After traveling for a few years, the couple retired to Logansport, Indiana, where two of their sons resided, and remained there until Simon's death in 1935.⁹² The Cooks

⁸⁶ "Kraus, Otto," Cass County Historical Society File Folder, Cass County Historical Society, Logansport, IN.

⁸⁷ "Death of an Old Citizen," *The Daily Journal*, January 25, 1895.

⁸⁸ Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHmemim.html> [accessed 5 March 2012].

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Reports of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, 1835-1974.

⁹¹ Mount Hope Cemetery Database.

⁹² "Simon Cook Dies at Age 83 Years," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, December 12, 1935.

had four sons, Solomon O. Cook, Moie Cook, Sam Cook, who made his home in Los Angeles, California, and Ben Cook, who took up residence in Chicago, Illinois.⁹³

Born in 1884, a twenty-four year old Solomon (Sol) Cook was living in Logansport as early as 1910 dealing in scrap metals, and residing at a boarding house.⁹⁴ During his early years in Logansport, Sol operated a waste material business on Sixth street. He also helped to found a fan factory in the city before going to work in 1917 with the Obenchain-Boyer Company, serving as the secretary-treasurer of that company, which changed its name to the Boyer Fire Apparatus Company in 1925, for approximately thirty years. A businessman of variety, Sol Cook also worked for H. Wiler & Company and served as one of the owners of the new Wiler Company, a furniture business, before selling the company in January of 1949. Around that time, Sol and his brother Moie purchased the Kain's Motor Service, which he ran until the time of his death. Sol and his wife Helen were well-known in the city for their civic work. Sol served as president and fundraiser of the Logansport Stadium Corporation, which built a new football stadium and athletic field for the city in 1950. He was also instrumental in raising the funds to construct the Berry Bowl at the Logansport High School Gymnasium, and was active in the local Boy Scouts of America chapter, having a Scout camp along the Eel River named Camp Cook in his honor.⁹⁵

Born in Wabash in 1881, Moie Cook lived and worked in that town for several years before moving to Logansport. He married Mary Goldstine of Des Moines, Iowa in 1915 and the couple had one son, David M. Cook, who made his home in Indianapolis.⁹⁶ In 1924 Solomon was joined by his brother Moie, and both men took jobs at the Boyer Fire Apparatus Company,

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *1910 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

⁹⁵ "S.O. Cook, Civic Leader, Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 9, 1951.

⁹⁶ "Moie Cook Passes Away at Hospital After Long Illness," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 26, 1948.

eventually serving as company secretary and vice-president respectively.⁹⁷ During his time in Logansport, Moie Cook was a known business leader in the community, serving as President of the Logansport Chamber of Commerce from approximately 1928 to 1933. While serving in this capacity, Moie was responsible for bringing several industries to the city of Logansport, most notably working with S.O. Berman, publisher of the city's newspaper, to raise the capital and construct the H.W. Gossard factory, located at Sixth and Market streets.

Moie remained at the Fire Apparatus Company until 1933, when he was appointed by Indiana Governor Paul V. McNutt as the Republican member of the Indiana Public Service Commission. Moving to Indianapolis for his appointment, Moie was reappointed to the commission in 1937 by Governor M. Clifford Townsend and served until July of 1941, when he resigned and organized the Business and Public Utilities Company in Indianapolis.⁹⁸ While living in Indianapolis, Moie was a member of the B'nai B'rith, a Jewish fraternal order.⁹⁹ He remained in the state capitol with that business until 1944, when he returned to Logansport with his family. When he returned to Logansport he became the general manager of Kain's Motor Service, a new business purchased by the Cook brothers, where he remained until his death.¹⁰⁰ Moie's wife Mary took over the management of Kain's Motor Service after her husband's death, and lived until 1971.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷“Moie Cook Passes Away at Hospital After Long Illness,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 26, 1948; *1930 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

⁹⁸“Moie Cook Passes Away at Hospital After Long Illness.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*; http://www.bnaibrith.org/about_us/bbi_roots.cfm (accessed February 29, 2012).

¹⁰⁰“Moie Cook Passes Away at Hospital After Long Illness,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 26, 1948.

¹⁰¹“Deaths and Funerals,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune & Press*, November 2, 1971.

Stern

Herman Stern, born in 1845 in Germany, came to Logansport, Indiana around 1877 and opened a butcher shop.¹⁰² He and his wife, Caroline, had four children, Isaac, Abraham, Bertha, and Solomon.¹⁰³ Herman, along with Moses Michaels and Harry Frank were appointed in 1884 to a committee to purchase ground for a Jewish cemetery.¹⁰⁴ Herman passed away in 1895 after injuries sustained while clearing tree stumps on a farm he owned north of the city of Logansport.¹⁰⁵ He was interred in the Jewish cemetery.¹⁰⁶ His wife Caroline lived until 1916, when she passed away in her daughter's home in Kokomo, Indiana.¹⁰⁷ Her body was returned to Logansport and interred with her husband.



Abraham Stern remained in Logansport and operated his father's butcher shop throughout his life. Never marrying, he passed away in 1931 after a long illness.¹⁰⁸ Solomon and Isaac Stern also remained in Logansport. Isaac Stern seems to have been a difficult person to like. In 1921 his wife,

Florence Isabelle Stern, filed a divorce suit against Isaac after sixteen years of marriage, alleging cruel and inhuman treatment. According to the newspaper announcement of the divorce suit, Isaac frequently called her "vile names in the presence of his friends..." and sold her piano and

¹⁰² 1880 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 19, 1884.

¹⁰⁵ "The Injuries Proved Fatal," *The Daily Journal*, April 12, 1895.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ "Aged Lady Found Dead in Bed," *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, August 24, 1916.

¹⁰⁸ "Extended Illness Brings Death Last Night to Abe Stern," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 21, 1931.

Haviland chinaware without her permission.¹⁰⁹ Upon Abraham's death in 1931, the newspapers reported that he left his building and business to an employee, \$5,000 to his housekeeper, \$5,000 to his brother Solomon, and only \$1 to his brother Isaac.¹¹⁰ His sister, Bertha Frankenthal, was made executrix of the remainder of the estate.¹¹¹ Solomon passed away in 1946 of a heart attack, and Isaac lived until 1950, succumbing to a lingering illness.¹¹²

The Stern's daughter, Bertha, married Joseph Frankenthal, the son of Amelia Frankenthal of Logansport and brother of Bertha Berwanger, also of Logansport. The couple took up residence in Kokomo, Indiana where they remained until their deaths. Joseph passed away in 1952 and Bertha in 1970, both being buried in Logansport.

Wise

Solomon Wise was born in 1835 in Bavaria, Germany. He came to the United States in 1854 and eventually settled in Logansport, Indiana in 1878, when he joined the firm, Wiler & Wise. In 1865 he traveled to Europe and married Caroline Wiler, the sister of Joseph and Henry Wiler, also of Logansport. Solomon and Clara had four children: Bertha, Mollie, Carl, and Victor. Solomon Wise passed away in 1897 after battling Hotchkins disease.¹¹³ Solomon's wife, Caroline, passed away in 1929.¹¹⁴

Victor Wise lived in Chicago for a number of years, working in the shoe business in Chicago.¹¹⁵ He eventually returned to Logansport and worked at the firm Wiler & Wise started

¹⁰⁹ "Asks \$5,000 in Divorce Suit," *Logansport Press*, October 8, 1921.

¹¹⁰ "Stern Wills Business, Building, to Employee," *Logansport Press*, July 25, 1931.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² "Solomon Stern Passes Away," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 11, 1946; "Isaac Stern Dies at Local Hospital," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 29, 1950.

¹¹³ "Solomon Wise," *The Logansport Journal*, September 30, 1897.

¹¹⁴ "Death Summons Caroline Wise at Family Home," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 18, 1929.

¹¹⁵ "Solomon Wise," *The Logansport Journal*, September 30, 1897.

by his father. He lived to be 79 and never married, passing away in 1951 after a bad fall from a height of two and a half feet. Victor Wise was a founder of the Logansport Country Club.¹¹⁶

Bertha Wise married Otto Kraus. The couple lived in Logansport throughout their lives and never had children. Carl Wise moved to New York, where his son eventually became vice-president of Columbia Broadcasting Company.¹¹⁷

Kaufman

Julius Kaufman arrived in America in either 1868 or 1869, landing in New York City.¹¹⁸ By 1880, Julius and his brother Jacob were living in Logansport, running a shoe store.¹¹⁹ According to that year's census, Julius had married Rose Kraus, the daughter of another local Jewish family, and the couple had one son, Sidney.¹²⁰ The Kaufman's would also have a daughter, Bertha, who became a school teacher and the principal of the Columbia School and McKinley School.¹²¹ Sidney purchased the Kraus Brother's store from Otto Kraus and operated it for a number of years before becoming a traveling salesman in Chicago, after some time in California, and married a woman named Jewel.¹²² The couple had a daughter Jane.

Julius passed away in 1917, but Rose lived to be eighty-four, dying in 1931 from complications resulting from a broken hip. Rose had been born in Germany and brought to the

¹¹⁶ "Victor S. Wise Meets Tragic Death in Fall," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 27, 1951.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957, Ancestry.com; Wuerttemberg, Germany Emigration Index, Ancestry.com.

¹¹⁹ *1880 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ "Fracture of Hip Proves Fatal to Mrs. Rose Kaufman," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 22, 1931; "Former Local School Head Passes Away," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 14, 1947.

¹²² "In Business Here Over Forty Years," *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, November 18, 1916; *1930 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

United States by her parents as a small child, originally settling in Toledo, Ohio. Rose and Julius were married in Delaware, Ohio before coming to Logansport around 1877.¹²³

Mandel

The Mandel family originally came to Lafayette, Indiana from Germany. Eli and Henrietta Mandel lived in Lafayette, with Eli working as a tailor.¹²⁴ Their son Joseph and his wife Hannah moved to Logansport between 1880 and 1884, where Joseph worked as a traveling salesman for approximately twenty years.¹²⁵ Joseph and Hannah had three children, Sarah, Carl, and Louis. Carl J worked as a clerk for the Wiler & Wise store, at the Bee Hive, in Logansport.¹²⁶ Henrietta Mandel, who passed away in 1897, is buried in the Jewish section of the Logansport cemetery.¹²⁷

In 1915 the Mandels moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.¹²⁸ Sarah Mandel never married and passed away in 1948. Her bodied was returned to Logansport and interred beside her mother.¹²⁹ Carl Mandel passed away in 1951 and was also interred in Logansport.¹³⁰

¹²³ "Fracture of Hip Proves Fatal to Mrs. Rose Kaufman," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 22, 1931.

¹²⁴ 1880 *United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹²⁵ Chas O. Ebel & Co. *Logansport Directory, 1883-84.*; F.J. Sutton *Logansport and Cass County Directory, 1887-88.*; J.E. Sutton *City Directory of Logansport, IN, 1889-90* (Logansport, Indiana: J.E. Sutton, 1890).; Chas. B. Longwell *Directory of Logansport, IN, 1890-91.*; Longwell & Cummings, *Biennial Directory of Logansport and Cass County, 1897-98* (Logansport, Indiana: Longwell & Cummings, 1898).; Longwell-Cummings, *Logansport Directory, 1901-02* (Logansport, Indiana: John E. Anderson & The Longwell-Cummings Company, 1902).

¹²⁶ Longwell & Cummings, *Biennial Directory of Logansport and Cass County, 1897-98.*; Longwell-Cummings, *Logansport Directory, 1901-02.*; Longwell-Cummings Co., *Logansport Directory, 1903-04.*; R.L. Polk & Co., *Logansport City Directory, 1928* (Indianapolis, Indiana, R.L. Polk & Co., 1928).

¹²⁷ Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHmaamaz.html> (accessed March 5, 2012).

¹²⁸ "Joe Mandel Given Token of Esteem by his Verein Comrades," *Logansport Journal-Tribune*, July 3, 1915.

¹²⁹ Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, March 17, 1948.

¹³⁰ Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHmaamaz.html> (accessed 5 March 2012).

Hecht

Jordan Hecht was born in Germany in 1851. By the 1880s, Jordan and his brother Aaron were living in Logansport and clerking in a clothing store.¹³¹ During that decade, Jordan married Rebecca K., and the couple had a daughter Caroline and a son Leslie.¹³² Jordan Hecht eventually became a capitalist and broker before passing away in 1918.¹³³ Rebecca Hecht passed away in 1932 in Chicago, having moved there to be near her daughter, Caroline Hoodwin and her son, Leslie Hecht.¹³⁴ She was buried in Logansport with her husband. Caroline Hecht Hoodwin passed away in 1944 and was also buried in Logansport.¹³⁵ Leslie Hecht died at the age of 64 and was interred with the family in 1959.¹³⁶



Herz

The Herz family consisted of the matriarch, Mrs. Esther Herz, and her four children: Jacob, Matthias, Sara, and Herman.¹³⁷ The family immigrated to the United States sometime in the late nineteenth century, from all appearances without Mrs. Herz's husband.

¹³¹ 1880 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com.

¹³² 1900 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com.

¹³³ Ibid.; 1910 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com; Late Deaths, *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, June 20, 1918.

¹³⁴ "Former Local Lady is Dead," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, March 18, 1932.

¹³⁵ "Mount Hope Cemetery Database," <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHhoghy.html> (accessed March 4, 2012).

¹³⁶ Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 13, 1959.

¹³⁷ "Death of Mrs. Herz," *The Daily Journal*, March 3, 1894.

Jacob Herz was born in Germany in 1857 and came to Logansport, Indiana with his family in 1881.¹³⁸ Opening his own tailor shop, he engaged in that business for fifty-three years.¹³⁹ His first wife, Cedic, the sister of Eli Greensfelder, passed away in 1891 after a long battle with consumption, leaving Jacob with a young son, Seligman.¹⁴⁰ Within a few years, Jacob remarried a woman named Mathilde and the couple had another son, Robert T., and a daughter, Florence. Jacob lived a long life, passing away in 1932 at the age of 79.

Herman Herz moved to Rockyford, Colorado at an unknown date, and eventually his brother Matthias and sister Sara joined him there. Sara Herz passed away in 1917 and was interred in Logansport with her parents.¹⁴¹ At the time of her death, Herman resided in Goldfield, California.¹⁴² Matthias lived until 1941 and was also interred with the family in Logansport.¹⁴³

Jacob's son, Seligman, lived and worked in Chicago all of his adult life, but was buried with the family in Logansport.¹⁴⁴ Robert also lived in Chicago most of his life and Florence married and moved to Indianapolis.¹⁴⁵

Birkenruth

Simon Birkenruth is first listed in the Logansport city directories in 1883-84 as a butcher.¹⁴⁶ Simon and his wife, Mollie, had two daughters, Carrie and Jeanette, and a son, Isaac,

¹³⁸ "Jacob Herz, Aged Tailor, Dies at Home," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, December 24, 1932.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ "Death of Mrs. Jacob Herz," *The Daily Journal*, February 18, 1891.

¹⁴¹ Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, May 15, 1917.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ "Mount Hope Cemetery Database," <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHherhof.html> (accessed 4 March 2012.)

¹⁴⁴ *World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917, 1918*, Ancestry.com; *World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁴⁵ "Jacob Herz, Aged Tailor, Dies at Home," *Pharos-Tribune*, December 24, 1932.

who remained in Logansport working for the city as a fireman, even serving for a time as Fire Chief.¹⁴⁷ Isaac married Geneva and the couple had four children: Harry, Jason, Solomon, and Louise.¹⁴⁸ Jason lived and worked in Indianapolis, dying in 1936.¹⁴⁹ Isaac passed away in 1938 of heart disease.¹⁵⁰ Carrie and Jeanette made their way to San Francisco, where Jeanette passed away in 1952.¹⁵¹ Geneva survived her husband until 1957.¹⁵² In 1959, Carrie passed away while residing at the Webster nursing home in Logansport.¹⁵³

Berwanger

The Berwanger family was long time residents of Logansport. Lewis Berwanger (sometimes spelled Louis) was born in Germany in 1848. He married Hannah Frankenthal in North Carolina and had three children, Joseph L., born in 1881; Selma, born in 1883; and Bertha, born in 1886.¹⁵⁴ The family began moving westward, accompanied by Lewis's younger brother Henry, and another son, Eugene, was born in Tennessee in 1889.¹⁵⁵ By approximately 1891 the family had arrived and settled in Logansport at 210 8th street, and Lewis and Henry established the Hub Clothing Store, run by Berwanger Bros. & Company, at 313 4th street.¹⁵⁶ Lewis ran the Hub Clothing Store for almost twelve years before inexplicably committing suicide in 1903, the

¹⁴⁶ Chas O. Ebel & Co. *Logansport Directory, 1883-84*

¹⁴⁷ "Fire Chief Birkenruth in Accident," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, August 23, 1922; "Fire Chief Birkenruth Resigns; Schwering In," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, November 11, 1923.

¹⁴⁸ *1910 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com; *1930 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁴⁹ Hold Rites Friday for J.E. Birkenruth," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 2, 1936.

¹⁵⁰ "Ex-Fire Chief is Called by Death," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 17, 1938.

¹⁵¹ "Final Rites Thursday for Miss Bikenruth," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, November 26, 1952.

¹⁵² *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 22, 1957.

¹⁵³ "Logansport Resident Dies at Nursing Home," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 10, 1959.

¹⁵⁴ *1900 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com; *1910 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁵⁵ *1900 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁵⁶ Chas. B. Longwell *Directory of Logansport, IN, 1890-91.*; Longwell & Cummings, *Biennial Directory of Logansport and Cass County, 1897-98.*; Longwell-Cummings, *Logansport Directory, 1901-02.*; Longwell-Cummings Co., *Logansport Directory, 1903-04.*

cause of which was ruled temporary insanity.¹⁵⁷ He was interred in the Jewish section of Mount Hope Cemetery.

The oldest Berwanger son, Joseph L. Berwanger, became an electrician and by 1907 was running Berwanger and Murray, an electrical supply store at 322 Pearl Street.¹⁵⁸ The business later moved to 326 5th street.¹⁵⁹ Eventually Joseph moved to Gary, Indiana. The younger son, Eugene, also became an electrician, moving to Detroit, Michigan. A veteran of World War I,



Eugene passed away from complications following a surgery in July of 1927 and his body was returned to Logansport and interred at Mount Hope, where his father Lewis was buried.¹⁶⁰

Hannah Frankenthal Berwanger, Lewis's wife, and her two daughters, Selma and Bertha, remained in Logansport throughout their lives. Moving residences from 210 8th street to 117 8th street between 1908 and 1911, the three women lived together with Selma and Bertha never marrying. In 1930, Joseph Berwanger was found dead in his garage in Gary of a gunshot to the head and an automatic pistol on the ground, in what was apparently a suicide.¹⁶¹ Bertha passed away in 1933. Both were buried with their family in Mount Hope Cemetery. Hannah passed

¹⁵⁷“L. Berwanger Takes His Life,” *Logansport Journal*, January 7, 1903; “Berwanger was Insane,” *Logansport Journal*, January 8, 1903.

¹⁵⁸ John E. Anderson, *Logansport Directory, 1907*, (Logansport, Indiana: The Longwell-Cummings Co., 1907); John E. Anderson, *Logansport Directory, 1911*, (Logansport, Indiana: The Longwell-Cummings, Co., 1911).

¹⁵⁹ Longwell-Cummings Company, *Logansport & Cass County Directory, 1911, Vol. IX*, (Logansport, Indiana: Longwell-Cummings Company, 1911).

¹⁶⁰“Eugene Berwanger Dies in Detroit,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 25, 1927

¹⁶¹ “Joe Berwanger’s Body is Found in Garage at Gary: Death is Clothed in Mystery; Police and Coroner Active,” *The Logansport Press*, June 14, 1930; research was unable to determine whether this was definitely a suicide or a murder. The newspapers at first claimed it had to be murder, then never mentioned cause again.

away in 1948, and was buried with her husband, Lewis, in Mount Hope Cemetery.¹⁶² Selma began working as a stenographer for the law firm of Hillis and Hillis in 1910 and remained at that position until 1955.¹⁶³ Passing away in 1969, Selma, the last of the Logansport Berwangers, was buried with her family in Mount Hope cemetery.

Frakenthal

Amelia Frankenthal, widow of Siegfard Frankenthal, was born in Germany in 1833 and immigrated to the United States in 1856. Living originally in Charlotte, North Carolina, Amelia, along with her family, including the Berwangers, moved to Tennessee before settling in Logansport around 1891.¹⁶⁴ Her son, Joseph Frankenthal, and she lived with her daughter, Bertha Berwanger, at 210 8th street.¹⁶⁵ Joseph worked for the Berwangers at the Hub Clothing Store and as a clerk for the Wiler & Wise company, also owned by local Jewish families.¹⁶⁶ Amelia passed away in 1906 and her body was returned to Charlotte, North Carolina for burial.¹⁶⁷

In 1906 Joseph Frankenthal, and his wife Bertha, were living in Kokomo, Indiana. They had no children and are both buried in Mount Hope cemetery. Joseph passed away in 1952 and Bertha in 1970.

¹⁶²Death Notices, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, November 29, 1948.

¹⁶³“Selma Berwanger Claimed by Death,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, September 5, 1969.

¹⁶⁴ *The Logansport Pharos*, August 10, 1906.

¹⁶⁵ Longwell & Cummings, *Biennial Directory of Logansport and Cass County, 1897-98.*; Longwell & Cummings and R.L. Polk & Co., *Logansport Directory 1899-1900, Vol. V*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: R.L. Polk & Co., 1899); Longwell-Cummings Co., *Logansport Directory, 1903-04.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *The Logansport Pharos*, August 10, 1906.

Oppenheimer

Born in 1862 in Louisville, Kentucky to parents Morris and Rosa Oppenheimer, Isaac Oppenheimer arrived in Logansport, Indiana in 1895 and began operating the Boston Sample Shoe store.¹⁶⁸ In 1892 he married his wife Cora and the couple had three children: Rosalyn, Myron, and Morris.¹⁶⁹ Isaac was one of the original trustees of the St. Joseph's hospital in Logansport and served as the director of the Citizens' Loan and Trust company for a number of years.¹⁷⁰ Passing away at the age of ninety, Isaac was buried in the Mount Hope Cemetery.¹⁷¹

Morris and Myron Oppenheimer remained in Logansport, operating a liquor store, a tavern, and a dinnerware store at various times.¹⁷² Myron married Nettie Weis and the couple had no children. At some point, Myron and Nettie moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where they both lived until their deaths. Myron passed away in 1967, and his body was returned to Logansport and buried at Mount Hope Cemetery.¹⁷³ Nettie survived him ten more years, passing away in Pittsburgh in 1977.¹⁷⁴ Her body was also returned to Logansport.

Morris remained in Logansport throughout his life, marrying Mary Gisolo and having two children, Robert Isaac and Myron. He served in World War I and was a member of the local Elks lodge.¹⁷⁵ Morris passed away at the age of seventy-six. His sons, Robert and Myron, made their lives in Indianapolis. Morris's wife, Mary, passed away in 1981.¹⁷⁶ She had worked as a

¹⁶⁸ "Retired Local Merchant Isaac Oppenheimer Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, June 17, 1952.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ "Retired Local Merchant Isaac Oppenheimer Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, June 17, 1952.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² ConSurvey Company and Hendricks Brothers Co., *Logansport Indiana ConSurvey Directory, 1937* (ConSurvey Company and Hendricks Brothers Co., 1937); R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Logansport City Directory, 1943* (Indianapolis, Indiana: R.L. Polk & Co., 1942); R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Logansport City Directory, 1949* (Indianapolis, Indiana: R.L. Polk & Co., 1949).

¹⁷³ Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 28, 1967.

¹⁷⁴ "City Native Dies at 72," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 14, 1977.

¹⁷⁵ "Retired Local Merchant Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, August 12, 1977.

¹⁷⁶ "Mary Oppenheimer Dies," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 27, 1981.

registered nurse at St. Joseph's hospital and with the Red Cross, and attended the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic church in Logansport.¹⁷⁷

Rothschild/Levi/Marx

Isaac Rothschild was born in Germany in 1821. He immigrated to the United States in 1849, settling in Washington, Indiana.¹⁷⁸ He and his wife, Eva had six children: Hattie, Louis H., Louise, Sallie, Fannie, and Julius. The two sons, Louis and Julius came to Logansport in 1896 and started the clothing business, Rothschild Brothers, which ran the Globe Clothing House.¹⁷⁹ Following their sons and brothers, Isaac, Eva, Hattie and Louis also moved to Logansport with Louis and Julius. Isaac passed away in 1898 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery, followed by Eva in 1899.¹⁸⁰

In 1909, Louis Rothschild married Fannie Levy (sometimes spelled Levi), of Chicago. He lived until 1921, when he passed away after a long illness and a surgical operation in Chicago. He was a member of the Tipton Lodge No. 33, F. & A.M., Apollo Lodge No. 62, Knights of Pythias and Logansport Lodge No. 66 B.P.O. Elks.¹⁸¹

Hattie Rothschild never married, living with her brother Julius and her sister Louise throughout her life.¹⁸² She passed away in 1926 at the age of sixty-one years old.¹⁸³ Sallie

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Mortuary Record, *The Logansport Pharos*, October 24, 1898.

¹⁷⁹ "Local Dealer Died Sunday At His Home," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, August 22, 1921; Logansport City Directory 1897-98.

¹⁸⁰ Mortuary Record, *The Logansport Pharos*, October 24, 1898; Deaths of a Day, *Logansport Daily Journal*, September 15, 1899.

¹⁸¹ "Local Dealer Died Sunday At His Home."

¹⁸² Longwell & Cummings, *Biennial Directory of Logansport and Cass County, 1897-98.*; Longwell & Cummings and R.L. Polk & Co., *Logansport Directory, 1899-1900, Vol. V.*; Longwell-Cummings, *Logansport Directory, 1901-02.*; Longwell-Cummings Co., *Logansport Directory, 1903-04.*; Longwell-Cummings Co.,

Rothschild married Simon Joseph, and remained in Washington, Indiana, moving eventually to Indianapolis.¹⁸⁴ Fannie married A.H. Kohn and the couple resided in Evansville, Indiana.¹⁸⁵ Julius Rothschild lived until 1951, never marrying.¹⁸⁶ His sister, Louise, survived him by one year, passing away in 1952.¹⁸⁷

Julius and Rena Levy resided in Chicago and had two children, Isadora Fannie (Fannie) and Sigbert.¹⁸⁸ Julius worked as a traveling salesman.¹⁸⁹ Rena Levy was the daughter of Moses and Mena Rothschild, of Huntington, Indiana.¹⁹⁰ In 1909, Fannie was married to Louis Rothschild, of Logansport, Indiana and the couple took up residence in that city.¹⁹¹ In 1913, Rena passed away and her body was brought to Logansport for burial in the Jewish cemetery.¹⁹² In October of 1921, just a few months after the death of her husband Louis, Fannie Rothschild also lost her father, Julius Levy, who was also buried in Logansport.¹⁹³ Fannie Levy Rothschild remarried a Mr. Marx, and moved to South Bend, residing there for a number of years until her death in an automobile accident in 1928.¹⁹⁴ Her body was returned to Logansport and buried with her parents and first husband.¹⁹⁵

Logansport & Cass County Directory, 1907, Vol. IX, (Logansport, Indiana: Longwell-Cummings Co., 1907); Longwell-Cummings Co., *Logansport City Directory & Cass County Gazetteer, 1914-1915*, (Logansport, Indiana: Longwell-Cummings Co., 1915).

¹⁸³ Funerals and Deaths, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 27, 1926.

¹⁸⁴ "Local Dealer Died Sunday At His Home."

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.; Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 27, 1926.

¹⁸⁶ "Death Claims J. Rothschild," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 9, 1951.

¹⁸⁷ Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHrorry.html> (accessed 6 March 2012).

¹⁸⁸ *1900 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ *1870 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁹¹ "Local Dealer Died Sunday At His Home," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, August 22, 1921.

¹⁹² Deaths and Funerals, *The Logansport Pharos*, April 22, 1913.

¹⁹³ Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 15, 1921.

¹⁹⁴ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, September 15, 1928.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

Epstine

Lewis Epstine is only found on the 1900 census as a resident of Logansport, with his wife Mary, working as a clothing salesman.¹⁹⁶

Abrahams

The son of Polish parents, David Abrahams was born in St. Louis, Missouri in March of 1875.¹⁹⁷ After marrying his wife, Ruth, David worked as a merchant tailor, living in Logansport from approximately 1901 until 1915. The Abrahams had nine children Ariel, Stephen, Miriam Susanna, Nathaniel, Jerome, Phillip, Daniel, David, and Joel. During their time in Logansport, three of the children, Miriam Susanna, Phillip, and Daniel passed away and are interred in the Mount Hope cemetery in Logansport.¹⁹⁸ According to his draft card, by the time of United States entry into the First World War, the Abrahams had left Logansport and moved to Chicago, Illinois.¹⁹⁹ There are articles in the local Logansport papers; however, claiming that David Abrahams was chosen to lead the company of volunteer infantry from the city in 1917, and was later denied entrance into the service for failure to pass the hearing exam.²⁰⁰ In 1918, the Abrahams oldest daughter, Ariel, passed away in Chicago at the age of 18. She was interred at the Free Sons Jewish Cemetery in that city.²⁰¹ The 1930 census shows the family living in York, Illinois, with David still working as a tailor. The last trace of David Abrahams is the record of his

¹⁹⁶ 1900 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com.

¹⁹⁷ Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths Index, 1916-1947, Ancestry.com.

¹⁹⁸ Death Notices, *The Logansport Pharos*, January 6, 1909; Death Notices, *The Logansport Pharos*, August 11, 1909; Death Notices, *The Logansport Pharos*, March 9, 1911.

¹⁹⁹ World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917, 1918, Ancestry.com.

²⁰⁰ "Abrahams will Form Company," *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, April 10, 1917; "Have Until June 5th to Join Local Volunteers," *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, May 25, 1917.

²⁰¹ Cook County, Illinois, Death Index, 1878-1922, Ancestry.com.

death on July 2, 1942 in Hines, Illinois at the age of 67.²⁰² David Abrahams is buried in the Forest Home Cemetery in Proviso, Illinois.²⁰³

Berman

In 1902 Samuel O. Berman arrived in Logansport from Kokomo, opening a successful leather goods and sporting equipment store.²⁰⁴ He quickly took over management of the Logansport Ottos, the baseball team founded by Otto Kraus, and made the team into one of the most successful baseball clubs in the Midwest.²⁰⁵ In 1931 he help organize the National Bank of Logansport, and was also responsible for bringing significant industry to the city including the H.W. Gossard Company, The Iroquois Button Factory, the R-B-M Manufacturing Company, and the American Tire Company.²⁰⁶ Very civic minded, he was also involved with the Boy Scouts and the 4-H club, and was named publisher of the *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, where he worked until his death, in 1938.

Kuppenheimer/Stowman

John Kuppenheimer, a veteran of the Civil War, and his wife, Minnie, came to Logansport from Terre Haute, Indiana in 1904.²⁰⁷ The Kuppenheimers had five children: Walter, Jessie B., Mary, Helen C., Elizabeth, and Elza.²⁰⁸ John is possibly the brother of Bernhard Kuppenheimer, also of Terre Haute, who eventually moved to Chicago and founded B.

²⁰² 1930 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com; *Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths Index, 1916-1947*, Ancestry.com.

²⁰³ *Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths Index, 1916-1947*, Ancestry.com.

²⁰⁴ "His Work is His Epitaph," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, October 8, 1938.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ "Kuppenheimer Rites Tuesday," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 6, 1947.

²⁰⁸ 1900 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com.

Kuppenheimer & Co., a national clothing store.²⁰⁹ John passed away sometime between the 1900 census and the 1910 census. His body is not in the Logansport Cemetery. Walter Kuppenheimer moved to Chicago, where he worked for a wholesale grocer, Warner & Co., before passing away after a long illness in 1918.²¹⁰ His body was taken to Terre Haute and placed in Rosehill cemetery.²¹¹ His sister, Elizabeth married, and moved to Chicago and eventually, Glendale, California.²¹²

Helen married Carl Wiler and the couple remained in Logansport. The couple had two children, a son, Joseph, and a daughter, Clare Jean, who passed away in 1920.²¹³ Carl passed away in 1961 after a long illness. His wife, Helen, survived him until 1965.²¹⁴

Elza married Charles Stowman and had a son, Billy. Both Charles and Billy passed away in 1938.²¹⁵ Elza died in 1944, and was interred in Mount Hope Cemetery.²¹⁶ Minnie Kuppenheimer lived to be ninety-three years old and passed away in 1947.²¹⁷

Jessie Kuppenheimer never married and remained in Logansport throughout her life, working as a milliner.²¹⁸ She passed away in 1961 at the age of eighty. Her sister, Mary, also never married, and lived until 1971, dying at the age of eighty-six.²¹⁹

²⁰⁹ Herman Koren, R.E.H.S., M.P.H., H.S.D. Professor Emeritus of Environmental Health and Safety, Indiana State University, *The 150 Year History of the Jewish Community of Terre Haute, Indiana* (May 1, 1999), 13.

²¹⁰ *Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, November 14, 1918.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*; "Mrs. Stowman Passes Away," *The Logansport Pharos-Reporter*, April 17, 1944.

²¹³ "Carl Wiler, 81, Dies at Hospital," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 14, 1961.

²¹⁴ Mount Hope Cemetery Database, <http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHwi.html> (accessed 7 March 2012).

²¹⁵ "Mrs. Stowman Passes Away."

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ "Kuppenheimer Rites Tuesday," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 6, 1947.

²¹⁸ Logansport City Directories; Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, September 20, 1961.

²¹⁹ Deaths and Funerals, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 20, 1971.

Gerst

J. Samuel Gerst and his family moved to Logansport in the 1930s from Fort Wayne.²²⁰ Owner and proprietor of the Smart Shoppe at 415 E Broadway, J. Samuel was well-known in the community. He ran the Smart Shoppe for over 30 years before retiring in 1956 and sold the



business to the local department store, The Golden Rule.²²¹ Born in New York City in 1894, he married Elinor Block in Lima, Ohio in 1925, and they had three children: Robert V. Gerst, Richard A. Gerst, and Theodore C. Gerst.²²² Robert and Richard were twins.²²³

The Gersts resided at 2210 North Street and 2409-2509 High Street in Logansport. Samuel passed away in 1960 and was interred in Mount Hope cemetery. Robert Gerst passed away in 1991 in Logansport, unmarried, and was buried in Mount Hope cemetery.²²⁴ Samuel's wife, Elinor, lived until 1996. At the age of 96 years old, she passed away and was interred with her family in Mount Hope Cemetery.²²⁵ Their son Richard, a Korean War veteran, married a Sally L. and settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan.²²⁶ Theodore attended the United States Naval Academy before joining the United States Air Force, from which he retired in 1976 as a Lieutenant Colonel, and married Alice Mann of Lovelady, Texas, settling in Severna Park, Maryland.²²⁷ Theodore's wife, Alice, passed away in 2003 and

²²⁰ Interview with Theodore Gerst, March 8, 2012.

²²¹ "Samuel Gerst, Ex-Merchant, Succumbs," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 28, 1960.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Interview with Theodore Gerst.

²²⁴ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 7, 1991.

²²⁵ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, June 7, 1996.

²²⁶ Interview with Theodore Gerst.

²²⁷ Interview with Theodore Gerst.; "From Maryland to Indiana, Ted and Alice Gerst espouse "notable" entertainment," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, January 17, 2000; *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 29, 2003.

was interred with the Gerst Family in the Jewish section of the Mount Hope Cemetery in Logansport.²²⁸ Theodore and Alice had three daughters: Tony Gerst Andrews of Cocoa Beach, Florida, Tobi Gerst Henri of Mateca, California, and Tina Gerst Jarrett of Bell Brook, Ohio.²²⁹

Druck

Justin M. Druck arrived in Logansport in 1936 to work for his uncle, Samuel Berman, at the *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*. Upon Samuel's death in 1938, Justin took over as publisher of the paper, where he worked until his entry into the United States Army in 1941. After the Second World War, Druck returned to Logansport and the *Pharos-Tribune*, retiring to Sarasota, Florida in 1990. He was a member of the Temple Israel, Lafayette, Temple Sinai of Sarasota, and the Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation.²³⁰ Justin passed away in 2005; his wife, Phyllis Maierson Druck and his two daughters, Diane and Barbara, survive him.

Lazoris

Benjamin G. Lazoris was born in Russia and immigrated to the United States in 1897.²³¹ His wife Fannie and his son Alexander immigrated with him. After arriving in the United States, the Lazoris family initially settled in Wisconsin, where they had two more children, Norman and Elinore.²³² The family eventually settled in Chicago. Benjamin worked as a traveling salesman, and he and his wife were both naturalized United States citizens in 1919.²³³ In 1943, Mr. Lazoris took up residence alone in the Barnes Hotel in Logansport, Indiana, where he resided for two and

²²⁸ *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 29, 2003.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ "Justin M. Druck," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, December 11, 2005.

²³¹ *1920 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

²³² *1910 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

²³³ *1920 United States Federal Census*, Ancestry.com.

a half years, continuing his trade as a traveling salesman.²³⁴ In 1945, Mr. Lazoris had a heart attack in his hotel room and was found the next morning by the hotel housekeeper.²³⁵ He was interred in the Jewish section of the Mount Hope Cemetery.

²³⁴ “B.G. Lazoris Found Dead,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 25, 1945.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

APPENDIX

Year	Business	Address	Name
1869	Wiler & Wilson	103 Market Street	Jacob Wiler
1869-1876	M. Frank & Bros.	50 and 52 Market Street	Herman and Martin Frank, Solomon Fisher
1869-1877	Oppenheim & Lang	56 4 th Street	Samuel Oppenheim, Gustave Lang
1870-1878	Kraus Brothers	52 Market Street	Max and Otto Kraus
1874-1877	Dry Goods Store	46 and 48 4 th Street	Joseph Wiler
1875-1918	Clothing Store	315 Market Street	Elias Greensfelder
1878-1887	Kraus Brothers	313 4 th Street	Otto Kraus
1883-1884	Merchant Tailor	406 Pearl Street	Jacob Herz
1883-1891	Clothing and Gent's Furnishing Goods	405 Market Street	Jordan Hecht
1883-1896	Wiler & Wise, The Bee Hive Store	315, 322 4 th	Joseph Wiler, Solomon Wise
1887-1888	M. Frank & Bros.	309 4 th Street	Herman Frank
1887-1891	Merchant Tailor	330 Market Street	Samuel Oppenheim
1887-1891	Butcher Shop	401 Market Street	Herman Stern
1887-1897	Kraus Brothers	317-319 4 th Street	Otto Kraus
1887-1895	M. Michaels Cement Works	Market Street and Eel River Road	Moses Michaels
1889-1890	Merchant Tailor	318 Pearl Street	Jacob Herz
1889-1891	M. Frank & Bros.	313 4 th	Herman Frank
1889-1891	Frank & Co	321 4 th Street	Benjamin and Nathan Frank
1889-1890	Ben Fisher & Co.		Benjamin Fisher

1890-1915	H. Wiler & Company		Max Fisher, Henry Wiler
1890-1915	Merchant Tailor	409 Market Street	Jacob Herz
1891-1903	Berwanger Bros. & Co., The Hub Clothing Store	313 4 th Street	Lewis Berwanger, Henry Berwanger
1892-1895	Butcher Shop	428 3 rd Street	Herman Stern
1892-1896	Lion Clothing House	320 Market Street	Jordan Hecht
1895-1898	Butcher Shop	309 Market Street	Abraham Stern
1896-1904	Rothschild Bros., The Globe Clothing House	Corner of 4 th and Market	JuliusRothschild, Louis Rothschild
1897-1902	Wiler & Wise, The Bee Hive Store	409-411 Broadway	Joseph Wiler, Solomon Wise
1897-1922	The Otto Shoe and Clothing Company		Otto Kraus
1897-1911	Boston Five and Ten Cent Store	322 4 th Street	Isaac Oppenheimer
1899-1904	Loans	214 ½ 4 th Street	Jordan Hecht
1899-1915	Butcher Shop	220 Market Street	Abraham Stern
1901-1904	Merchant Tailor	321 3 rd Street	David Abrahams
1902-1939	Berman Supply House	302 E Market Street	Samuel O. Berman
1903-1933	Wiler & Wise, The Bee Hive Store	412-414 Broadway	Joseph Wiler, Solomon Wise, Carl Wiler, Victor Wise
1908	Berwanger and Murray	509 Broadway	Joseph L. Berwanger
1908	Merchant Tailor	413 4 th Street	David Abrahams
1908-1915	Loans	406 ½ Broadway	Jordan Hecht
1908-1915	Rothschild Bros., The Globe Clothing House	320-322 Market Street	Julius Rothschild, Louis Rothschild

1908-1915	Kuppenheimer Milliner Store	405 E Broadway	Jess B. Kuppenheimer, Mary A. Kuppenheimer
1911	Berwanger and Murray	326 5 th Street	Joseph L. Berwanger
1911	Merchant Tailor	325 E Market Street	David Abrahams
1915-1928	Boston Five and Ten Cent Store	307 4 th Street	Isaac Oppenheimer, Morris H. Oppenheimer
1918-197?	Greensfelder Brothers	313-315 Market Street	Melvin and Herbert Greensfelder
193?-1960	Smart Shoppe	415 E Broadway	J. Samuel Gerst
1937	Regal Liquor Store	328 4 th Street	Morris H. Oppenheimer
1937-1943	Fisher's Furniture Store	324 4 th Street, 312-314 Broadway	Max Fisher
1943	Oppenheimer Tavern	317 3 rd Street	Morris H. Oppenheimer
1949	China & Glass, Inc.	425 3 rd Street	Mary Oppenheimer
1949-?	Kain's Motor Service	US 24 and End of Bates	Solomon Cook, Moie Cook, Helen Cook

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Delaware County

Founded in 1827, Muncie, the county seat of Delaware County, grew slowly until the discovery of natural gas in 1886, when an economic boom ensued and the population increased from a few thousand inhabitants to tens of thousands. By the early twentieth century, depletion of the natural gas slowed growth, but Muncie's central location, industrial capacity, and large workforce helped it to remain viable throughout the next century with various industries. Besides Ball canning jars and Ball State University, Muncie may be best known as "Middletown," the typical American city that sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd studied and reported upon in the 1920s and 30s in an effort to understand life in middle America.

Jews were a small, but significant element in the story of Muncie's development. Jews were present in Muncie at least as early as the 1850s, when brothers Lipman and Henry Marks opened a dry goods store in Muncie. The Jewish population of Muncie, even at its height, never exceeded 200 people.¹ With an extremely small population, it was impossible for the Jewish community to support more than one temple, let alone a kosher butcher. Nevertheless, their impact and influence on the greater community as a whole was disproportionately greater than their numbers. By the turn of the century, Jewish entrepreneurs operated a large proportion of downtown businesses.

The German born Jewish settlers owned businesses in many of the same types of industries as Jews in other Indiana towns - clothing stores, tailors, merchants, junk and scrap dealers, and liquor and cigar stores. The second wave of Eastern European Jewish immigrants were equally, and in some cases more successful than their German counterparts. Some of the second generation German and eastern European Jews also went into business, while others became pharmacists, lawyers, doctors, teachers, or civil servants.

Among Muncie's prominent businessmen was Victor E. Silverburg. Silverburg was involved in a number of enterprises. He was a pharmacist, owning two local drug stores, was vice president of a cigar

¹ Whitney H. Gordon, "Jews and Gentiles in Middletown- 1961," *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Apr. 1966, 41.

company, and president of the Machine Electric Supply Company which provided machine and electrical work, house wiring, sold electric and combination (gas) light fixtures, and sold automobiles. Victor died in 1910.²

His father, Heiman Silverburg, was a merchant tailor in Muncie for many years. His sisters Nora S. and Rose S. were both teachers, and his brother, Adolphe C., became an attorney. Adolphe C. Silverberg practiced law in Muncie for over forty years, from the 1880s -1920s, also serving as vice president of Muncie Savings and Loan, and president of Temple Beth-El.³

The Planks were also significant members of Muncie's business community, having operated a number of successful enterprises from the 1930s- 1960s. Plank Brothers salvage and auto parts business was principal among these operations. One brother in particular, Burle Plank and his wife Sylvia were significant for their contributions to Muncie's Jewish community. They were active in Temple Beth-El and served in various leadership and service positions within the congregation. Among many tasks, Sylvia Plank wrote about the history of Muncie Jews and Burle served as congregation president. Burle also helped organize the Jewish Welfare Fund and was co-founder of Green Hills Country Club.⁴

Charles Indorf was a successful Jewish businessman who owned a pawnshop and clothing store; he also served as manager for the Muncie Loan Company. Indorf was active in Temple Beth-El congregation and served as its president.

Harry D. Pazol was the founder of a family jewelry business that is still in operation after more than 80 years in downtown Muncie. His sons, Herbert and Morton Pazol succeeded him and ran the business from the 1950s- 1970s. The Pazol family has been active in the community and involved in Temple Beth-El.⁵

² Shonfield, 32; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 508, 662.

³ Shonfield, 33-34. *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1897-98*, Muncie, Indiana: Emerson & Dark Publishing Co., 1897, 553; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1915-16*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1915, 661; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1925-26*, Cincinnati: The Williams Directory Co, 1925, 552.

⁴ Rottenberg, 63, 93.

⁵ *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1921-22*, Muncie, Indiana: Emerson Directory Company, 1921, 569; R. L. Polk & Co, *Polk's Muncie City Directory, 1964*, R.L. Polk & Co., 1964, 436.

Sam Ringold was a clothing merchant and was considered one of Muncie's wealthiest businessmen at the turn of the century. The Ringolds were involved in Temple Beth-El and Sam served as president of the congregation.⁶

Moses Cohen was an early settler who was involved in the junk and scrap metal business. Other junk dealers include I. Levy & Co owned by Samuel Levy, Max Ziegler & Brothers junkyard, Harris and Belle Ringoldsky operated a iron. Junk, hides, furs, and pelts business in 1882, and

Martin D. Schwartz was a successful businessman and owner of Schwartz Paper Company (founded in the 1920s), took over the family business from his parents, Leo and Anna Schwartz, and his uncle, William Winick. Martin graduated from Harvard, helped develop the Harvard Center for Jewish Studies, and commissioned a Jewish oral history project that resulted in publication of several articles and the book, *Middletown Jews* by Dan Rottenberg.

Herman Marx and his wife Miriam operated several clothing stores from the 1920s – 1930s; they owned Marx Company, a men's clothing store. They also took over Sam Ringold's store (along with Dave Kallmeyer). Marx was active in Temple Beth-El and served as an officer.

Alexander L. Shonfield was a clothing merchant and was active in Temple Beth-El. He served as congregation president and wrote about Muncie's Jewish history and early Jewish settlers.⁷

Jack D. Burgauer was the founder of Muncie Typewriter Exchange in 1907. The business grew and remained in the family with his son David Burgauer taking over after his death. Meanwhile, Robert Burgauer founded Burgauer Business Machines. The business was in existence from the 1950s through the 1970s. Members of the Burgauer family were active in Temple Beth-El congregation.

Hotel Roberts was built by George D. Roberts, who made his wealth from a number of successful ventures including oil contacting and operations. He started in 1909 as a junk dealer. By the early 1920s, he was involved in oil and real estate. He owned the Bishop Block, Roberts Hotel, and the Roberts Block.

⁶ Shonfield, 33, 38.

⁷ Shonfield; 1897 Muncie city directory, 551.

Frank and Isabella Leon owned Leon & Metzger, later known as Leon's Famous. Frank is credited with helping found the local Knights of Pythias chapter, the Muncie Coral Society, and Citizens Enterprise Company, which promoted Muncie during the natural gas boom. He also hosted some of the first serves before there was a temple.

Martin and Helen Schwartz owned Schwartz Paper Company, which was founded by Martin's father Leo in the 1920s. Martin funded a Jewish oral history project, which resulted in articles and a books titled *Middletown Jews*. Martin also helped to establish the Harvard Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University. Another paper company, Muncie Paper Stock Company was owned by Samuel and Frieda Dobrow.

Raymond and Peal Shonfield were the proprietors of Shonfields, a men's clothing store. Raymond also served his community by serving as the treasurer of the local National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis. In 1955, he was instrumental in the distribution of the polio vaccine. He served on the board of directors for the Red Cross, Visiting Nurse Association, and the March of Dimes.

A significant number of clothing stores, over the years, were owned by members of Temple Beth-El. Leonard and Florence Scheuster operated the clothing store Why, Inc. (1943-1953), Herman Haas owned Kings Clothing Shop in the 1930s, Samuel and Fannie Schwartz operated Economy Shoe Store from the 1890s – 1930s, Leopold Klein operated The New Cincinnati, Morris and Fannie Shapera were the proprietors of the Victor Garment Manufacturing Company, Louis and Jeannette Shonfield owned Shonfields (clothing store) and the Chicago Salvage outlet Company, Women's Ready to Wear was owned by Melville Altschul in the 1920s, Herman Eichel operated a millinery shop in the 1910s-1920s. He also operated a house furnishings business in the early 1900s, Arthur and Amelia Wolff owned several local clothing stores from the late 1880s through the 1920s, Alexander Shonfield owned several clothing stores including the London Clothing House and Trade Place. He also wrote about Muncie Jewish history, Isaac and Ra Cohen owned the Progress shoe store and Model Clothing House.

William and Hazel Winick, along with Leo and Anna Schwartz started Schwartz Paper Company. It was a very successful business for the 1920s – 1960s.

Two jewelers in town were from Temple Beth-El, Morton and Herbert Pazol owned and operated Pazols Jewelers, while Lawson Jaffee and Morton Standt owned Lawson's Jewelers.

The final type of business owners were those dry good merchants. In Muncie, this included Moses and Rosa Hene operated a dry goods store from 1880-1920. Moses and his wife Rosa were involved in Temple Beth-El Congregation and he served as congregation president.⁸ Moses and Lydia Mark owned Leon, Marks and Company.

Muncie also had a number of very successful and influential Jewish social, political and business leaders in the twentieth century. For example, Victor E. Silverburg was a police commissioner, Burle Plank and Harry Zeigler organized the Jewish Welfare Fund, and Charles Indorf was board president of Public Works Commission.⁹ In civic affairs, Silverburg served as a police commissioner at the turn of the century.¹⁰ Indorf was also president of the Board of Public Works in the 1930s.¹¹

The Jewish congregation in Muncie remained small, was predominantly Reform, and somewhat informal, meeting in the homes of members. From 1891 until the construction of Temple Beth-El in 1922, the congregation met in various halls or meeting places throughout the city, including the Delaware Lodge, R. and A.M. (at the corner of High and Main for seven years), a meeting space (at the corner of Adams and High) from 1898-1912, and a building located at 120 E. Main for ten years.¹² The construction of Beth-El Temple represented a significant achievement for Muncie's Jewish community.

Muncie's Jewish community faced both subtle and blatant anti-Semitism. Jews were not allowed to purchase real estate in Muncie's most desirable neighborhoods, and they were excluded from fraternal, business, and social organizations, including the Delaware Country Club. A number of Muncie's Jewish leaders and businessmen invested in a new country club called Green Hills. The effort was led by Burle Plank

⁸ *Ibid.* 38; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 397; *Emerson's* 1897, 345.

⁹ E.S. Watson, *Muncie Business Directory*, 1898, Muncie, Indiana.: The Neely Printing Co., 1898, 3; Rottenberg, 57, 93; *Emerson's Muncie Directory*, 1931-32, Cincinnati: The Williams Directory Company, 1931, 339.

¹⁰ Shonfield, 32; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 508, 662.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 57; *Emerson's* 1931, 339.

¹² Alexander L. Shonfield, *Preface to the History of the Jewish People and a Sketch of the Jewish Congregation in the City of Muncie, Indiana (Muncie, Ind.: n.p., 1922)*, 38.

and Morton Standt in the 1950s. Green Hills was not an exclusively Jewish golf course, having both Jewish and non-Jewish members.¹³ Discriminatory practices by a number of local institutions continued through the 1960s. Over time, Muncie's Jewish community began to fight housing and employment discrimination. Because of their relatively small number, Muncie's Jewish community worked incrementally and quietly, avoiding contentious public battles. Despite periodic eruptions of anti-Semitism, most of Muncie's Jewish community was largely accepted and financially successful in their businesses and careers. As residents invested emotionally, socially, and financially in the community, most of Muncie's Jews favored a quiet approach that would not disrupt what they perceived as a mostly satisfactory lifestyle, despite pockets of discrimination.¹⁴

While the Jewish population of Muncie has been steady, in recent years the Jewish population has been declining. Marrying outside of the faith, job and career opportunities, and lack of immigration are among some of the reasons. Lack of opportunities and migration other cities may be the greatest factor in declining communities. Industrial and manufacturing job losses in Muncie and throughout central Indiana have resulted in slow population growth and loss of population as people move away for jobs. Many of Muncie's Jewish youth leave to pursue career and social opportunities found in larger cities. Today, Muncie still maintains its one temple (Reform).

Leopold Herrman was a successful Jewish businessman and was responsible for obtaining a dedicated area of Beech Grove Cemetery to be set aside for Jewish burials.¹⁵

¹³ Dan Rottenberg, *Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of An American Jewish Community*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997, 5, 63, 93; Seth Slabaugh, 20 April 1997, *Jews Not Welcomed*. The Star Press (Muncie, Indiana), F, 1, 1.

¹⁴ Gordon, 56-57.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

Elkhart County

Elkhart County was one of the first areas settled in Northern Indiana, as early as 1826. The city of Goshen serves as the county seat. While the date of the first Jewish person into the county is unclear, a congregation was meeting in the town of Goshen before 1877. Like most of the other congregations in the state, Congregation Shearith Israel started off by worshiping in individuals' homes until a first permanent building was purchased. Their first structure, built in 1859 as a Baptist church, was purchased in 1876. They then purchased land in 1877 at Oak Ridge Cemetery for the burial of the dead; the section was known as Shearith Israel Cemetery. After a permanent building and the cemetery purchase, the congregation started their Sabbath School in 1879. Around 1878, it is estimated that Goshen had about 125 Jews; this number hit an all time high in 1907 with 139 individuals, but by 1927 it was reduced to 51.² Some of the business owners included Louis Simon who owned *L. Simon Clothiers*, *Aaron Cohen Clothier*, *Bernstein's Cigars*, Jacob Frankenstein and Edward



L. Simon Clothiers in Goshen (Elkhart County).

Frankenstein, Harris Frankenstein, Freddie Simon, Sol Meyer; manufacturer of cigars, Abraham Kaatz, local tailor in business with Herman Goldstein, and Daniel Oppenheim. In a 1943 article concerning the death of Rabbi Harris Weinstein states that in 1943 there were fifteen Jewish families living in Goshen.¹

Temple Sharis Israel had been abandoned in 1932, but Weinstein still officiated at weddings and deaths. Weinstein was born in Lithuania in 1859. He came to America in 1880, living for some time in New York and

Evansville, Indiana before moving to Goshen. He was active in the Mason's organization.

Goshen was not the only city in the county to have an active Jewish community. In Rolling Prairie, platted in 1853, was the site of Camp Moshava, established on thirteen acres by Chicago Mizrahi, a Religious Zionist Movement. The camp was used from 1939-1955. Elkhart did not have a Jewish cemetery until 1962 when Beth Shalom was established.



Beth Shalom Cemetery in Elkhart (Elkhart County).

Footnotes

¹ "Layman Serving Goshen Jews for More than Fifty Years As Rabbi, Succumbs at 83," *The Jewish Post* 12 March 19143, p.1, col. 1.

² Lee Shai Weissbach, Decline in an Age of Expansion: Disappearing Jewish Communities in the Era of Mass Migration, *American Jewish Archives Journal*, www.huc.edu/aja/97-2.thm (Accessed June 15, 2004).

Grant County

Marion, the county seat of Grant County was settled in 1826. The original inhabitants of the area were the Miami Indians, but several battles and treaty negotiations ceded much of the land to the American government. Grant County has a strong Quaker history, who came in the 1820s and 1830s, drawn by the rich, fertile farmland. Natural gas was found in the county in 1887, stimulating growth, but this gas boom did not last for more than a decade. There are several larger communities in Grant County (Converse, Fairmount, Fowlerton, Gas City, Jonesboro, Marion, Matthews, Swayzee, Sweetser, Upland and Van Buren), but it was the city of Marion that attracted the majority of the Jewish population; a small community did flourish in Gas City.

Sinai Temple, a Reform congregation, was established in the 1920s to serve the needs of the Jewish community of Marion. In 1924, the ladies of the Sinai Temple community founded a Temple Sisterhood. By December 1924, the membership had grown to 25 women; in 1953 the numbers had grown to 60 women. The sisterhood raised funds to provide financial support to the Temple. The Orthodox Congregation eventually joined the Sinai Temple.

While having a formal synagogue, the Jews of Marion never had a separate cemetery, but rather were buried in the Independent Order Of Odd Fellows Cemetery in Marion in the Jewish section.

As in other communities, the Jewish settlers in Marion were business owners, not farmers. Jacob Baer owned *Blumenthal's*, but in 1863 he gave control to Morris Blumenthal, who partnered with David and Lewis Marks. Leo Nussbaum established *Canton Glass Company* in 1902. In 1923, Albert Rosenbaum opened *A. Rosenbaum and Co. Shoes*. Mark and Meyer Savesky and Joseph Kuppin established the *Challenge Tire*

Company in 1923. Wolf Jackson opened a dry goods store, and The Goldreich family three businesses - the *Goldreich Brothers Junk and Fur*, *Goldreich Fertilizer Company*, as well as the *Goldreich Tire Company*. David Maidenberg opened *Indiana Dry Goods*. Jacob Weinberg acquired *Jacob Weinberg News Agency* in 1928; *Klain Steel Supply, Inc* opened in 1929, Harry Lasky opened *Lasky's Shoe Store* in 1930, and *Leon & Strauss & Company* was owned by Sieg Leon. *Max Bernstein Clothing Store* was started by Max Bernstein and Nathan Schiff opened *Men's Clothing Store*. Other Jewish owned stores included *Meyer and Alexander Jewelers*, *Milton's Clothing Store*, *Newman's Store*, *Phil Lyons Clothing Store*, *Plank Auto Parts*, *Queen City Women's Clothing Store*, *Richard Clothing Co. (now known as Resneck's Women's Clothing Store)*, *Sam Levy Shoe Store*, *Tailor Shop*, *The Boys Shop*, *The Paris*, *The Union Store*, and *Zimmerman Brothers Clothing Store*. Marion had two jewelry stores: *Rogers Credit Jewelers* and *Gil Roskin Jewelers*.

Many influential members of community were Jewish. Tony Maidenberg was mayor, 1975-1979, while Ann Kallmeyer Sector served as a city council member.

Many of those praying at Sinai Temple lived and worked in Gas City, several miles from Marion. In addition, several Jewish merchants and Jewish owned companies were based out of Gas City including the *Gas City Mercantile Company*, established around 1909 by Ed and Ben Bloch; *Golden Eagle Men's Clothing* opened around 1896 also by Ed and Ben Bloch; and the *Twin City Shoe Store* started around 1923 by William Glogos and Samuel Siegel.

Footnotes

- ¹ Whitney H. Gordon, "Jews and Gentiles in Middletown- 1961," *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Apr. 1966, 41.
- ² Shonfield, 32; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 508, 662.
- ³ Shonfield, 33-34. *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1897-98*, Muncie, Indiana: Emerson & Dark Publishing Co., 1897, 553; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1915-16*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1915, 661; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1925-26*, Cincinnati: The Williams Directory Co, 1925, 552.
- ⁴ Rottenberg, 63, 93.
- ⁵ *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1921-22*, Muncie, Indiana: Emerson Directory Company, 1921, 569; R. L. Polk & Co, *Polk's Muncie City Directory, 1964*, R.L. Polk & Co., 1964, 436.
- ⁶ Shonfield, 33, 38.
- ⁷ Shonfield; 1897 Muncie city directory, 551.
- ⁸ *Ibid.* 38; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 397; *Emerson's* 1897, 345.
- ⁹ E.S. Watson, *Muncie Business Directory, 1898*, Muncie, Indiana.: The Neely Printing Co., 1898, 3; Rottenberg, 57, 93; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1931-32*, Cincinnati: The Williams Directory Company, 1931, 339.
- ¹⁰ Shonfield, 32; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 508, 662.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 57; *Emerson's* 1931, 339.
- ¹² Alexander L. Shonfield, Preface to the History of the Jewish People and a Sketch of the Jewish Congregation in the City of Muncie, Indiana (Muncie, Ind.: n.p., 1922), 38.
- ¹³ Dan Rottenberg, *Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of An American Jewish Community*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997, 5, 63, 93; Seth Slabaugh, 20 April 1997, *Jews Not Welcomed*. The Star Press (Muncie, Indiana), F, 1, 1.
- ¹⁴ Gordon, 56-57.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

Howard County History

Kokomo, the county seat of Howard County, was laid out in 1844. The Wabash and Erie Canal brought an economic boom to the county. Most of the settlers were farmers, with a great many of them being Quakers. Like many of the other counties in this area of Indiana, natural gas was found in 1886, leading to another economic growth.¹

While as early as 1845 Samuel Rosenthal settled and opened a store, the Jewish population never boomed and became a community until the twentieth century. At this time, Jews became members of the large community and eventually came together to promote their Jewish life.

By the early 1920s and 1930s, enough Jews were living in the city to establish organizations associated with the community. In 1930, the women of the congregation established the Jewish Ladies Aid Society, affiliated with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods since 1931. The Sisterhood is still active within the Temple. The Men's association, the B'nai B'rith, was active within Kokomo until the 1970s.

It was not until 1942 that the community was able to support the building of a synagogue, when the congregation built Temple B'nai Israel. After 50 years of service to the Jewish population of Kokomo, the Temple B'nai Israel remains the center of activity for the small community.

The leader of the movement to construct the temple was Max Gerber, founder of *Gerber Plumbing Products*. Other leaders of the Jewish community include Milton Kraus (1866-1942), who served as United States Representative from Indiana's 11th District from 1917 - 1923. He attended law school at the University of

Michigan at Ann Arbor. He was admitted to the bar in 1887 and practiced in Peru, Indiana. He organized a company of volunteers for the Spanish-American War. After serving in Congress, he resumed his manufacturing activities. He died in Wabash in 1942.² Another man, Misch Kohn was born in 1916 to Russian emigrants. He studied art at the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis. He was a fine art painter and a renowned printmaker. He moved to Chicago in 1939.³ Some of his works can be found at the Kokomo Public Library and at Indiana University Kokomo. He died in 2003.



Tiger, by Misch Kohn, found at the Kokomo Public Library

Footnotes

¹ Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Howard County Interim Report (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 2003), xii-xiii.

² United States Congress, Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=K000323> (accessed September 19, 2006).

³ Annex Galleries, Misch Kohn 1916-2003 Biography, http://www.annexgalleries.com/artists/Misch_Kohn.html (accessed September 19, 2006).

Jefferson County History

Madison, Indiana sits along the Ohio River. It served as one of the important cities in the early development of Indiana. Its location on the river made it one of the central shipping locations in the state. One of the largest commodities trade were pigs, earning Madison the dubious title of “Porkopolis.”¹ Despite the fact that most Jewish people do not eat pork, Madison became a place for settlement by Jews.

One of the first families to arrive was Elias and Teresa Hilpp in 1847. They had lived in New Orleans and Louisville before settling in Madison. Also in that year, Aaron Marks from German settled in Madison. He worked as a peddler before coming to Madison, so when he arrived he had enough money to open a store. In 1849, a marriage between Ernestine Wehle and Max Abeles was performed in Madison, possibly the first Jewish marriage officiated by a Rabbi in Indiana.

Adolph Brandeis came from Prague to America looking for a city to start a family business. After traveling to several cities, he decided Madison was the best place to start the family starch manufacturing business. Twenty-six members of his family left Prague to work in the family business. When the family arrived, some members opened other businesses. Samuel Brandeis opened a medical practice and Ludwig Dembitz opened a law firm.² Their strong German heritage, coupled with the fact that Madison had a large German immigrant population, allowed many of the Jews to join the social clubs, read the German newspapers, and attend the German theater.

As early as 1849, Jews in Madison came together to worship. Although they did not have a formal synagogue or congregation, many of the Jews still practiced their religion. A report from a Rabbi Isaac Leeser stated that

in 1851 the Jewish families had a schochet (ritual slaughterer), which “reveals the relatively large number of families practicing traditional Judaism...”³ In 1853 a minyan came together to form a congregation (Adas Israel). Like many other Indiana communities, before a permanent place of worship was established, the grounds for burying the dead was secured. In 1855, the congregation purchased land to be used as a cemetery (Adas Israel Cemetery). The last burial in the cemetery was in 1875. At this point, burials were made in a portion of the community cemetery, Springdale.

Also in 1855, they dedicated the synagogue on the second floor a W.M. Hoffstadt’s store, Lotz Brothers Shoe Store.⁴ Within a year, the congregation hired their first instructor, Bernard Felsenthal; Felsenthal, but he left for Chicago in 1858 after suggesting that the Orthodox service change. Felsenthal would become a leader in the Reform and Zionist movements in America. The congregation constructed a mikvah (ritual bath house) and opened a Hebrew school in the Masonic building.

The Hebrew Youths’ Society was organized in 1862. In 1868, the congregation moved to larger quarters, when they purchased the “Old Radical Methodist Church.” The years of living in the United States and the changes that had to be made in order to assimilate moved the group towards the Reform movement. By the 1870s, there is evidence that that congregation was adapting to Reform Judaism (including working on the Sabbath, purchasing an organ for the synagogue, and the adoption of the Minhag America [American tradition].)⁵ Despite these changes, many of the families kept some of the dietary restrictions of Orthodox Judaism, even supporting a kosher butcher shop in the downtown area.

The women of the community were active in fundraising for both the temple and the community. In 1883, the Ladies’ Benevolent Society was established, there was the Hagar Lodge No. 135 of B’nai B’rith.

As in other Indiana communities, Jews worked as business owners and in the clothing business. Julius Hoffstadt manufactured men's clothing and employed as many as 35 individuals. Chaim Weinbert worked as a tailor.

Despite the early community, over the next 20 years, individuals slowly began to move out of Madison.

While a few families moved into the area (Isaac Stern came in 1888 and Henry Klein came around the same time), but in general the population of Jews slowly began to decline. Most of the original settlers had died and few new families moved into the area. In 1919, the Jewish population reduced to 70 people. Rabbi Stern served as an uncompensated Rabbi for the congregation until 1923 when he moved; the synagogue closed their doors permanently after this.

Footnotes

¹ Eliazbeth Shaikun Weinberg, *Hoosier Israelites on the Ohio – A History of Madison's Indiana Jews*, Indiana Jewish History Publication No 27 (1991), 10.

² *Ibid.*, 25.

³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴ Current Events Club, *Early History of Madison and Jefferson County* (Madison, Indiana: Current Events Club, 1960) 83.

⁵ Weinberg, 16.

Lake County History

Lake County, located in the northwest corner of Indiana, was first explored by Jesuit priests in 1675. Lake County was officially organized in 1837. The northern third is heavily industrialized, with strong ties Chicago. On the other hand, the southern two thirds typifies much of rural Indiana with farms and rural communities. Because of the county's topography, much of the early settlement occurred in the county's central areas.

Between 1890 and the 1920s, steel companies and associated industries developed along the northern shores: *Inland Steel's* plant in Indiana Harbor, *Mark Manufacturing* in East Chicago, *Standard Oil* in Whiting, *Pullman Standard* in Hammond, and *U.S. Steel* in Gary. These companies drew thousands of workers to the region. During the 1970s, the decline of the steel industry, closing of several large companies, and the loss of manufacturing jobs, led to high unemployment and a gradual decline of quality of life in the region.

Gary

Gary had the largest concentration of sites identified with Jewish heritage; most Gary Jews arrived from other large cities, most often Chicago, rather than Europe. The city had two Jewish congregations with Temple Beth-El and Temple Israel. Temple Israel still exists in a 1958 structure in the Miller area, a recently annexed suburb of Gary. Temple Beth-El no longer exists. Other than Temple Israel, none of the existing residences or businesses has identifiable Jewish characteristics. The identified residences are clustered around the former locations of the congregations, which is typical of any Jewish community.

Early Jewish settlers had their first services in 1907 in a hayloft. Temple Beth-El's first building was a temporary structure completed in 1908, but a permanent building was erected in 1912.

Temple Israel was established in 1910. As in other cities, the Orthodox Jews kept services close to the European style while the Reformed considered their services Americanized. Gary's temples, like immigrant churches, became community centers providing services such as counseling and social activities to the Jewish residents.¹ Temple Beth-El produced a monthly newspaper called *The Bulletin*, which contained articles on Zionism, local Jewish achievements, and the successes of American Jews in general.



Temple Beth-El in Gary (Lake County). The building is no longer used as a synagogue, but rather is now a church).

Both temples placed major emphasis on the Jewish education of their children. The most important Jewish educational institution in the city, the Hebrew Educational Alliance, received national recognition. It had an

extensive library of Hebrew and Yiddish books and sponsored numerous social and organizational activities.²



Temple Israel in Gary (Lake County is still an active synagogue).

Lazarus Goodman, the proprietor of the largest and most complete department store, was a born in Poland in 1874. He came to the United States when he was fifteen, started a business in Philadelphia, and then moved to West Lebanon,

Indiana. He established and operated small stores in West Lebanon. In 1907 he moved to Gary. His store in Gary employed around 125 people. Goodman had two stores *The Emporium* and the *Boston Store*. Goodman was involved in the Masons, B'nai B'rith, Commercial Club and Chamber of Commerce.³

Isidor M. Cohen was successful architect. He was born in Russia in 1893 and moved to South Bend, Indiana. After college, he came to Gary in 1916. In 1921 he established his own office. He was the architect for Gary's first large apartment building. Because of the speed at which much of Gary was built, many buildings were erected hastily and without regard for artistic fronts; Cohen worked to remodel these. Cohen was a member of the Indiana Society of Architects, a Moose, and a member of B'nai B'rith.⁴

Abraham Rosen and his associates established *The United Fixtures Company*. Rosen was born in Russia and at the age of 14 came to the United States. He lived in New York, working in a factory that manufactured shirts. After three years, he moved to Chicago; by 1907 he moved to Gary. In addition to the *United Fixtures Company*, Rosen also owned *United Bottling Company*. He was a member of the Moose, B'nai B'rith, Temple Beth El, and Chamber of Commerce.⁵



The home of Abraham Rosen, owner of the United Fixtures Company in Gary (Lake County).

Jack and Sam Miller owned *Miller's Toggery* and were members of the Jewish community. Louis Glueck was a local banker and active in Temple. Irving Given owned *Continental Cleaners*, Cyrus and Loretta Wechsler owned *Hudson's Ladies Dress*, Isadore Alterowitz owned *Gary Sanitary Mattress and Bedding Manufacturing*, and H. Gordan & Sons owned a department store in Gary. Rabbi Garry August was an influential Rabbi for Temple Beth-El.

Other business owners included Sylvia and Simon Pass (*Indiana Clothing Company*), Nathan Migatz (*The Hub Store*), Herman Smolensky (a dry goods store), Harry Alschuler (*H. Alschuler Department Store*), Herman Smolensky (*Smolensky Dry Good Store*), J. Kaplan (*J. Kaplan Clothing Store*), and Edward Milgram (*Milgrams Bootery*).



Home of Jack and Sam Miller, owners of Miller's Toggery in Gary (Lake County).

Hammond

Like Gary, Hammond had two Jewish Congregations, one Orthodox called Kneseth Israel and the other Reformed called Temple Beth-El. Most of the structures surveyed do not have identifiable Jewish markings except the 1950s location of both Kneseth Israel and Temple Beth-El and the cemetery. Two of the commercial structures have names of the business.



Kneseth Israel Cemetery in Hammond (Lake County).

As early as 1881, Jews moved into Hammond, the early settlers being Nathan Levi, Morris Wise, Julius Taussig, Joe Handle, William Elsner and Jonas Lautman. In 1894 Hirsh Berkman settle there. Without a synagogue, he officiated services in a private house until 1899, when Mayer Rubin organized and chartered an Orthodox congregation, known as Keneseth Israel.

In the year 1909 Mayer Rubin also organized and incorporated a Reformed congregation under the name of Beth El Congregation. Hammond also boasted a Jewish Ladies Aid Society and two Jewish lodges (Israel Zanwill of the Western Star Order and Zion Gate of the Sons of Zion).⁶ The Sunday school was organized in 1922. The congregation had a youth organization called the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association. The congregation also sponsored a Zionist organization and the Hadassah organization of women Zionists.



Conkey Printing located in Hammond, Indiana (Lake County).

W.B. Conkey operated the world's largest printing and binding plant. Conkey printed eighteen thousand Sears, Roebuck catalogues a day, and at the same time produced labels, dictionaries, Encyclopedia Britannica, and other items. Conkey, born in Canada in 1858 and educated in Philadelphia, he moved to Chicago in 1872. He entered the printing trade in 1878. By 1905 he owned the largest printing plant.⁷

Leo Wolf owned *The Lion Store*, which began as *Leo Wolf's Shoe Shop* in the 1880s. His brother-in-law Carl Kaufman joined him in 1898. As *Kaufman & Wolf* stock grew to include dry goods, furniture, and groceries between 1899 and 1908, *the Lion Store* expanded and opened a separate furniture store. By 1913 the two men managed a



Home of Leo Wolf in Hammond (Lake County), owner of The Lion Store.

hundred thousand square foot store with 250 employees, 2 buses, and 10 wagons.⁸

H. Gershman was a local merchant, Samuel Isaac Levin owned a shoe store and repair shop, Maurice Rothschild co-owned *Rothschild-Hirsch Department Store* (formerly *The Model*), Peter Fox was a landscape architect who designed several parks in downtown.

Crown Point

Crown Point never had an organized congregation, but community members would meet for the high holidays on the second floor of a commercial building.

Meyer Winer owned *Winer Manufacturing*. Services would be held in his home. H.H. Levis opened a tobacco and cigar store in 1864. Morris Levine, born in Russia, opened *The Boston Store* in 1897 in Crown Point, but he lived in LaPorte.



Winer Manufacturing in Crown Point, Indiana (Lake County) owned by Meyer Winer, who also held services in his home before they moved to another building.

East Chicago-Indiana Harbor

Indiana Harbor and East Chicago, referred to as the “Twin Cities,” are located in the northwest corner of the county. The township’s geographic location played a vital role in the development of the area as a major industrial force. By 1880, eight railroad lines linked the area to Chicago and other urban centers and a series of canals connected Lake Michigan to the Grand Calumet River. This extensive transportation network, as well as large expanses of undeveloped land, proved attractive to a number of industries and soon the area experienced an industrial boom unparalleled in its history.

The East Chicago/Indiana Harbor area historically had two Jewish congregations named Beth Shalom and B'nai Israel. Neither congregation is in existence today. Congregation B'nai Israel was organized in 1910 with 25 members and had its own structure.⁹

The Block brothers (Joseph, Philip and Leopold) had a huge impact on the Indiana Harbor area with the establishment of the *Inland Steel Company* in 1893.¹⁰ Joseph Block, a Cincinnati industrialist, took advantage of incentives offered by the town of Chicago Heights, and with his son, Phillip, founded the *Inland Steel Company*. In 1897, Phillip purchased a bankrupt East Chicago manufacturing interest, and with that leverage, struck a deal for free land in Indiana Harbor. The Blocks asked for a guarantee of a harbor on the lakefront, a railroad line and housing for their workers. As labor demands increased, large numbers of foreign-born workers flocked to the city. Initially, many of the workers came from Western European countries such as Ireland and Germany.¹¹

Albert Given (1871-1941) was born in Poland. He founded a textile company. He often sponsored Eastern European Jews as they immigrated from Europe to East Chicago. Other stores included *Abramson's Men's Store*, *Bayless Luck Lady*, *Brozowsky's Cedar Department Store*, *Freignebaum's Men's Store*; *Solman Furniture*, *Albert Marcus Jewelers*, *Meirovich's Department Store*, *Simon Miller's Variety Store*, *Magdeman's Store for Men* *Pecar's Children Store*, and *Tarler Shoes*.

Munster

The Jewish congregations in Hammond and East Chicago have relocated to the Munster area. Also the Chabad (a form of Hassidic Judaism) of Northwest Indiana is located in Munster. The structures associated with these congregations are outside of the time frame of this study.

Whiting

The Orthodox B'nai Judah Congregation was founded in 1903, but it was not until 1910 that a building was built. By 1950, enough families were attending services, that a new building was needed. The congregation closed in 2003.



The Orthodox synagogue B'nai Judah in Whiting (Lake County). Note the blue Stars of David on the chimney.



The plaque that still remains on the synagogue in Whiting (Lake County).

In 1890, Nathan Migatz and Max Stiglitz opened *Cheap Mike's Place*, a clothing store. Later it became known as *The Hub Clothing*, although locally it was called *Migatz & Stiglitz*.¹³ One of the first Jews was a jeweler named David Nassau. His brother, Julius, then moved to Whiting to manage *the Royal and Palace Theatres*. Charles Pitzele from Austria-Hungary, opened his clothing store in 1896. Later, he opened *The New York Department Store*. By 1907, he had moved to East Chicago, Indiana to run *the Boston Clothing Store*.¹⁴ Sol Oppenheimer, founded *Oppenheimer Brothers* clothing store in 1891. Along with being involved in business, Sol also served as volunteer fire chief and Whiting town treasurer. By 1903, he had moved to Washington, D.C. Isaac Rosenberg, of Germany, owned a tailoring shop in town. He died after only two years in business; his son Henry then took over the shop. Joe Bernstein, from Russia, opened the *School House Store*, a grocery store. Barney Cohen opened a tavern in 1891 (*The Whiting Liquor House*). Abe Goldsmith opened the *Whiting Wholesale Liquor House*. By 1904, he added a retail portion to his business. Other saloon owners included Sam and Abe Cohen, O.S. Pitzele, Harry Gordon, Charles Goldstein, and Charles Pick. Aron Sugar started as a peddler, but by 1910 opened a bar. Abe Goldsmith opened Goldsmith's haberdashery. Robert Gordon started *R. Gordon & Sons* department store.

In 1915, Charles Perel established his law firm. During World War I, he served in the air corps and by 1924, was named commander of the American Legion Post 80. In 1926, he was appointed city attorney, then later as city judge. Abe Oberlander served as president of B'nai Judah for 35 years and was vice-president of the Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana. He owned *Whiting Laundry*.

Harry Gordon of Lithuania came to the United States in 1882. He got a job at Standard Oil. He opened his first business, a liquor store, in 1897. After closing the bar, he opened *The Reliable* clothing store; by 1988 he opened his first *Gordon Store*. By 1906 he had also opened stores in Gary. He served as a trustee of the

congregation. Fred Gold opened a gas station in 1920. By 1924, his son Harry opened two other stations and several auto parts stores.

In the entire county, 49 properties were surveyed. One was determined to be outstanding, six were rated as Notable, 39 were rated as Contributing, and three were rated as Non-Contributing.

Footnotes

¹ William Frederick Howat, *A Standard History of Lake County, Indiana and the Calumet Region*, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915.

² Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906 – 1950*, New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986 p. 172-173.

³ Thomas H. Cannon, *History of Lake County and Calumet Region of Indiana: Embracing the Counties of Lake, Porter, and La Porte*, Vol. II, Indianapolis, Indiana: Historians Association Publishers, 1927

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Howat.

⁷ Lance Trust, *Hammond: A Centennial Portrait*. Norfolk VA: Donning Company, Publishing, 1990.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Thomas H. Cannon, *History of Lake County and Calumet Region of Indiana: Embracing the Counties of Lake, Porter, and La Porte*, Vol. I, Indianapolis, Indiana: Historians Association Publishers, 1927, p. 526-527.

¹⁰ Cannon, *History Vol. I.*, 811.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 811.

¹² *Ibid.*, 526-527.

¹³ Daniel Levin, "Jewish Colony of Whiting," *Indiana Jewish History Publication No. 30*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Indiana Jewish Historical Society, 1994), 14.

¹⁴ Levin, 15.

LaPorte County History

LaPorte County, nestled in the Dunes Region of Northwest Indiana had its first white settlers beginning in the early 1830s. Both Michigan City and LaPorte grew as the most populated hamlets of the county. LaPorte grew due to Section 4 of LaPorte County's Act of Incorporation, stating that county commission meetings were to be held near the center of the county; this also attracted residents and business to the center of the newly formed county. Michigan City would thrive due to economic benefits of being on Lake Michigan, but it would quickly be outclassed by Chicago's larger port.¹

The Jewish history of the county is centered in Michigan City and LaPorte that afforded immigrants the opportunity to peddle and trade goods, a skill that a number of Jewish immigrants took advantage of to establish themselves financially. The earliest artifacts of the Jewish community in the Dunes region are two gravestones found in LaPorte County. Dating back to 1837 these stones are believed to be those of Jewish peddlers in the region.²

The first congregation of the region, B'ne Zion, or Sons of Zion, was organized in 1854 and was centered in LaPorte. Their first meetings had no regular rabbi, nor did it have a permanent building. This community was built up of 40-50 various families from throughout northwest Indiana, including Gary, Valparaiso, Plymouth and Michigan City.

As a congregation, their first act was the purchase of land for a Jewish cemetery in 1859. The B'ne Zion Congregation still actively maintains the land, situated within Patton Cemetery in LaPorte. The congregation was able to afford the purchase of their first, and only, home in LaPorte. Situated on the corner of "West and First St," which is today Indiana Ave and Osborn St., the members of B'ne Zion purchase a lot in 1864. By

1869, a small red brick temple had been built.³ Between these two significant accomplishments, the membership adopted a revised constitution, establishing fees, rights, duties of officers and, most importantly, the “Reform Service according to the doctrine [sic] laid down in the prayer book of Dr. Einhorn.”⁴

Members were charged dues as part of the building costs, maintenance and salaries. A \$10 admission charge was to accompany the membership application as were \$2 per month to LaPorte residents and \$1 per month for those from anywhere else.⁵ These fees, along with a sale of seats (\$135-\$330 each) allowed for the building to be owned by the congregation by the dedication of the temple in 1869.

Through membership dying, moving or leaving the faith, the congregation dwindled. In 1886, Rabbi Jacob Wile resigned his post, because the congregation unable to afford his services. He stayed on as a “reader” and choir director for \$400 a year. The congregation continued to shrink and by the mid 1890s regular services were never held, except for an occasional wedding or funeral.

In 1898 the congregation finally met to sell the vacant building and invest the proceeds to care for the cemetery and for “charitable purposes.”⁶ The property went for \$3,000 to Edward Michael, who subsequently tore the building down. The pews and the pulpit were donated to Dr. Stolz in Chicago for a Sunday school at his new temple. The rest of the belongings were donated to the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society for the groups use. The B’nai Zion Cemetery Association formed in 1867 to care for and improve the cemetery is the only remaining Jewish organization in LaPorte.⁷



The Guggenheim-Wile Building in LaPorte (LaPorte County).

Jacob Wile, the first and only rabbi of the B'ne Zion Congregation, presided in the constructed temple. He was a successful businessman and influential member of the LaPorte community. Having arrived in LaPorte in 1854, he established the *Citizen's Bank* in LaPorte in 1857. From this time until the construction and dedication of the temple in 1869, services were held on the second floor of his bank. He was featured in the 1880 History of LaPorte County, being one of only two Jews cited in the county.⁸ His business partner, Jacob Guggenheim finally made the 1904 edition. The Guggenheim family

lived just three houses down from the Wile's on the same street. Both of their homes, and their business are notable historic building still standing in the city of LaPorte.

Partnering between these successful Jewish families was not unusual. Guggenheim and Jacob's brother, Simon Wile, partnered with the Fox Family to establish the *Fox Woolen Mills*, the success of which provided LaPorte with desperately needed jobs. The Fox contributions to LaPorte were above and beyond the economic benefit of the Factory. Samuel Fox was born in



Jacob Guffenheim's home in LaPorte (Laporte County).

Bavaria in 1838. He came to the United States in 1854 and was in LaPorte in 1858. He started a business with Jacob Wile and by 1864, they had started the Woolen Mill. Samuel died in 1894. The Fox family altruism played an important role in LaPorte's history. The patriarch, Samuel made the first donation of Fox Park, a 100-yard public park in 1911. The sons both continued this tradition. Herbert gave land for what would become the *Beechwood Golf Course*, a municipal course still in play today. Maurice, however, gave the most lasting and impactful donation to LaPorte's community.

As a tribute to his deceased parents, Maurice proposed a civic auditorium and gymnasium center for “all individuals and civic and educational groups or bodies, membership of which is not limited by race, nationality or religion,” and with a ban on any group that was biased or against the Government.⁹

Civic Auditorium and Gymnasium, given by Maurice Fox in honor of his parents in LaPorte (LaPorte County).



Other influential individuals included Jacob Meyer, who came from Germany, and served in the city council, Nathan Low who owned *Lows Clothing Store* in LaPorte. M. Henoch owned a building in which the services of the congregation were held before they owned a temple in LaPorte, as well as *Schnewind Shoe and Boot* store in LaPorte.

Isadore Levine was the first person of Jewish faith to sit on the Indiana State Supreme Court. Justice Levine was born March 25, 1897, in Michigan City, Indiana, and died April 5, 1963, in LaPorte, Indiana. He attended the University of Michigan and received an B.A. in 1920 and a J.D. in 1921. He was admitted to the Indiana bar and opened a general law practice in



Isadore Levine's home in LaPorte (LaPorte County).

LaPorte. In January 1955, he was appointed to the Indiana Supreme Court to fill a vacancy.

Michigan City

In Michigan City, in 1900, Oheb Sholom Cemetery Association was founded. They acquired a part of Greenwood Cemetery for Jewish burials. The first Reform services were held in 1904, renting halls for the high holy days. They organized a congregation in 1912 named Sinai Congregation. The Ladies' Aid Society was founded in 1920 (AKA Sinai Temple Sisterhood). In 1930, the congregation bought a former church. In 1953, they dedicated a new temple. They had a Religious School, youth group and a B'nai B'rith. This was taken over by the Sinai congregation in 1947. In 1961, the cemetery name was changed to Sinai Temple Cemetery. In 2004, the temple celebrated their 90th anniversary.

Footnotes

¹ Healthy Communities of LaPorte County, Brief History of LaPorte County, www.laportecounty.net/history/brief_history.html (accessed September 14, 2006).

² Dunes Region Jewish History. Find Citation.

³ Nettie Stern and Edith Backus, History of B'Ne Zion, Stern and Backus, not published.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Excerpts from Minutes of Meetings of Congregation B'Ne Zion on 10/30/1898 and 11/30/1898

⁷ At time of Publication.

⁸ Dunes Region.

⁹ LaPorte Paper.



Sinai Temple Cemetery in LaPorte (LaPorte County).

Marion County History

Indianapolis, the county seat for Marion County, also serves as the State Capitol. The city has been a transportation hub since the 1850s.¹ While not the earliest settlement of Jews in Indiana, Indianapolis would become the center of the Jewish population in the state. The first Jews to the city came in 1849. The evolution of the Jewish community in Indianapolis was typical of the happenings statewide, with the first wave of immigrants being German Jews. Many of these Jews were peddlers, who took advantage of the blossoming city. From peddler, they were able to purchase small stores, growing eventually to some of the largest retailers in the state. Like the rest of the state, the Jews dominated the clothing and tailoring businesses. In 1860, 56% of the clothing businesses were owned by Jews.

By the late 1860s, Eastern Europeans began moving into the city. What made Indianapolis unique was the ethnic diversity that allowed for many of the ethnic communities to found their own synagogues. In 1870, the Polish immigrants formed a prayer group that became Sharah Tefella. In 1884, the Hungarians organized Congregation Ohev Zedeck, and by 1889 the Russian community founded Knesses Israel. In 1906, a small group of Sephardic Jews settled in the city. Originally from Turkish Macedonia, they spoke Ladino, not Yiddish. These newest immigrants founded Congregation Sephard of Monastir in 1913.

The Jews moving here prospered, although the German Jews with a greater willingness to assimilate, succeeded at a faster rate than their peers. Like the rest of the state, most of the Jews business owners fell into very distinct categories: peddlers (which led to dry good stores), tailors (which led to department stores and clothing stores), grocers, and scrap dealers.

In the early days of settlement, most moved into the area just south of downtown Indianapolis. This south side neighborhood prospered and developed into a community. The city directories for Indianapolis show that the near south side contained most of the Jewish residents, the institutions, and organizations related to Jewish life. Those community resources found in this area on the south side included the National Jewish Post (newspaper), Abraham Lodge, I.O.O.B. No.58, Esther Lodge, I.O.O.B. No.323, and the Tree of Life Mutual Benefit Society. The Communal Building, built in 1914, later became the Jewish Community Center.

The community held adult classes (citizenship), kindergarten, and some social activities (these activities/programs headed up by the National Council of Jewish Women). The South Side Hebrew Ladies Charity Organization established a shelter house at 907 Maple Street; in 1906 they moved to a larger place at 808 South Illinois and in 1920 moved to 835 Union Street and also started taking care of the elderly. In 1908 the Jewish Federation sent transients to the “Friendly Inn” or “Wood Yard,” shelters established by the Indianapolis Benevolent Society in 1880. Later the Morris house became a part of the Jewish Federation with programs for immigrants and serving as a center for social and educational facilities (library of Yiddish books, meeting rooms, kindergarten).

In 1918 land and buildings near the White River in Broad Ripple (a neighborhood in Marion County) were used as a summer camp (Camp Ida Wineman), but was eventually abandoned when they moved to Laurel Halls Stock Farm Company in Zionsville (Boone County); Big Eagle Camp, as it became known, was sold to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Education was very important to the immigrants and by 1863 the German Jews established the first school. Over the next several decades a variety of schools were organized on the south side. Some of the schools

were associated with an ethnic group, while others were affiliated with synagogues. In 1896 Chevrah Tamud Torah (school) was organized and in 1907 Congregation Sharah Tefilla had a school. But, a lack of support for each individual school led to the establishment of the United Hebrew Schools, which opened Hebrew Academy in 1971. For a more detailed look at Jewish education in Indianapolis, look at the Masters in Public History thesis *Jewish Education in Indianapolis through 1985* by Lindsey Barton Mintz.

The Indianapolis Jewish Federation was established in 1905 as a way to centralize fundraising of Jewish organizations. In Indianapolis, “as in other cities, Jews of German heritage controlled the Federation, although Eastern European immigrants were the main recipients of services.”² In 1939, the Indianapolis Jewish Federation organized a series of lectures to inform the public about the problems in Nazi Germany. By 1947, this committee became the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), with the goal of promoting interfaith activities. The JCRC still exists today as a voice of the Jewish community in Indiana.

The Spokesman Company was founded by Gabriel Cohen in 1932; currently it publishes three newspapers, including the *Jewish Post and Opinion*.

Changes in religious attitudes allowed for shifts in the structure and make-up of the Jewish community. In the Orthodox community, one lived near the temple so that the family could walk to services. With the rise of the Reform movement, which lifted this rule, individuals could move into more prosperous neighborhoods. In these instances their neighbors would have economic commonality, if not religious affiliation. In Indianapolis, this meant moving north of the center of the city (known as the Circle).



The near southside of Indianapolis became the neighborhood for the Jewish community from the 1850s until the 1960s. Homes, businesses, synagogues, and social service agencies were located in this area. Today, because of urban sprawl, the construction of I-70, and other factors, very little is left of the built environment. Most streets look like South Meridian (above), with vacant lots and a small spattering of historic structures. Or, all structures are gone because of the interstate development like South Capitol Avenue (below).



As the community moved north, so did their institutions. The Indianapolis Club building (23rd and Meridian) was purchased in 1925 for the Kirshbaum Community Center; the noted Indianapolis architecture firm Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller remodeled it. The building was razed in 1950. The home for the elderly, in 1938, moved to 356 North Central; in 1964, this institution moved to the far north side to the “Hoover Road” area and opened as Hooverwood. Also in the “Hoover Road” area is the Bureau of Jewish Education, all the synagogues, and the Jewish Community Center. With the move north, there is some residential concentration around the synagogues, but is by “no means comparable to the earlier situation.”⁵

The Congregations and Businesses of Indianapolis

Indianapolis had at least four congregations in the late 1800s and early 1900s. By the 1940s, this number had increased to over eight. By 1856, there were enough families living in the city that fourteen men approved the constitution and by-laws of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC). The IHC would become the Reform synagogue for the city. The congregation met in temporary quarters for at least two years, until they could acquire a room in the Judah Block, where they remained for ten years. In 1868, they moved to the Market Street site, where they worshiped until 1899; at that time, they sold the Market Street temple to Ohev Zedeck, the Hungarian shul (a small congregation).



A postcard rendition of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation at 10th and Delaware. The building no longer stands.

Ohev Zedeck was formed in 1884 by Hungarian immigrants, renting storefronts for worship. In 1899, they were able to purchase the Market Street temple from the IHC. Ohev Zedeck occupied this building until 1927, when the congregation merged with Congregation Beth El (formed in 1915). The vacant Market Street Temple was demolished in 1933 for a parking lot. The Hungarian Jews also established a Hungarian Jewish School, a benevolent society, and the First Hungarian Society.



Location of the first synagogue for the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation in downtown Indianapolis (Marion County) Later the temple was used by Ohev Zedeck Congregation. The building was demolished in 1933. This Indiana Historical Bureau marker commemorates the location.

Sharah Tefilla was founded by Polish immigrants in 1870. Originally called the polische shul, this was the first of the southside shuls (small synagogue). The group met in rented rooms. Around 1877, they changed their name to Chevro Bene Jacob; in 1882, the name was changed to Sharah Tefilla. At this time, they also purchased a permanent building on South Meridian Street. In 1910, they moved into a new building designed by George Bedell, a well-known Indianapolis architect.

Knesses Israel was founded in 1889 by a group of Russian immigrants. This Orthodox synagogue was also known as the russische shul. By 1893, they built a new temple; in 1923, they moved out of this facility and built another structure. For many years, Sharah Tefilla and Knesses Israel shared rabbis.

While there were three Orthodox congregations, they remained small. Ethnic differences prevented any organizations which benefited the entire Jewish community (schools, burial societies, etc) from prospering. In 1903 the United Hebrew Congregation was formed with the hopes of overcoming the ethnic differences that divided the Orthodox community. Also known as the Union shul, they dedicated their building in 1904. It became the largest and most influential of the many Orthodox synagogues on the south side of Indianapolis. It boasted the city's first Talmud Torah (school), as well as the city's first Jewish Women's group. The Central Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1923 by a group of Orthodox Jews who had moved north of the Circle. Its first location was on Central Avenue, at 21st Street. By 1957, Central Hebrew merged with United Hebrew; during the merger, the congregation was known briefly as the United Central Hebrew Congregation. They moved into buildings at 34th and Ruckle Streets and changed the name to B'nai Torah. In 1965, they acquired land on the far north side of Indianapolis and moved in 1967. It is the largest Orthodox Congregation in the state. In 1969, a new mikveh adjoined the B'nai Torah. Today it is the largest Orthodox Congregation in the state.⁴



B'nai Torah temple in Indianapolis (Marion County) from 1957 - 1967.

In 1910, Ezras Achim served some of the poorest Jews in the city. Also known as the peddler's shul, because of the occupation of most of the congregants, the congregation was the last congregation formed by Eastern Europeans.

In 1915, former leaders of Sharah Tefilla established a new congregation, Congregation Beth El. In 1928, Congregation Beth El merged with Ohev Zedeck to become Congregation Beth-El Zedeck. The two groups joined and built a building on the near north side of Indianapolis. The Conservative synagogue moved to north side in 1958. In this building, the largest congregation in the state maintains a kosher kitchen, a library, school, and offices.



Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis (Marion County). This building was constructed in 1958, with a remodel in 2002.

The first Sephardic settlers to arrive in Indianapolis were Jacob and Rachel Sarfati Toledano, from Monastir, Yugoslavia, in 1906. They opened a small men's tailoring shop on West Washington Street. Almost all of the early settlers came to them to find employment.

David A. Nahmias owned a small shoemaker's shop close to Union Station train station. His shop became the first stop for all the newly arriving Sephardim. Here, "the new arrivals were introduced to other members of the community and given helpful information pertaining to employment, living quarters, etc."⁸ Not all the Sephardic came from Yugoslavia. Regina and Louis Behar arrived from Palestine; David Eskenazi was from Salonika, Greece; Mallah Mordoh came from Salonika; and Morris and Gracia Abravaya were from Turkey.

Many Sephardic spoke Ladino instead of Yiddish. For this, and other reasons, for many years the Sephardim were not recognized as Jews by Ashkenazim Jews. The Sephardim were proud of their heritage and for many years a social rift prevailed in the Indianapolis Jewish community between the two groups. There was no intermarriage of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim Jews until 1932.

Before they had a synagogue, the Sephardic Jews used the Communal Building for religious services. They purchased a cemetery on Kelly Street in 1916. Bohor Samuel Calderon and Isaac (Avisai) Levy formed the men's burial society (Havrim) in 1921.

A social men's club was formed in 1920 under the leadership of Naphtali Eskenazi. They met first at the Communal Building, then moved to a rented room in the 800 block of South Meridian Street. Two more moves were made until they were able to purchase a two-story building at 1002 South Capital Avenue in 1930. By 1933,



In 1919, the Sephardic congregation purchased this former Lutheran church for services. This building was used until 1963.

the Sephardic community consisted of about 75 families, totaling about 350 individuals. At that time, there were 2 market stand owners, 7 wholesale fruit peddlers, 4 retail fruit peddlers, 2 secondhand dry goods dealers, 3 privately owned tailoring shops, 3 shoemakers, 2 men's furnishing shops, 1 baker, 1 grocer, 1 confectionery, and 1 dry goods store.



This building was used as the Sephardic synagogue from 1963 until 2006.

Almost 50% of the Sephardic community worked for the Kahn Tailoring Company, including some women who worked before they were married. A few others worked at the August Julian Tailoring Company on South Street. Since most of the members moved to the north side of Indianapolis by 1960, it

became necessary to find another location for their synagogue, which was closer to the majority of its members. In 1963, a committee purchased the Pleasant View Lutheran Church at the corner of 64th and Hoover Rd. The steeple was removed and extensive remodeling and additions were made to convert it to a proper place of worship for the congregation. They remained in this building until 2006, when they built a new synagogue.

Of equal importance to the Jews of Indianapolis were the burial of their dead. While each congregation owned their own cemetery, the cemeteries for all the synagogues were established side by side, just south of the neighborhood. Since many of the synagogues were too small to support a burial society, a group of Jews created a community burial society, Linat ha'zedek, in 1910. Not all groups supported this society; the Hungarian synaue never joined, but rather created their own burial society; congregants from Sharah Tefilla did not approve of the running of the organization so created their own burial society. The Separdim also created a men's and women's burial society, The Rochessim and The Rochessot in 1921.

The list of Jewish owned businesses in Indianapolis is extensive. These are just some of the Jewish owned businesses located on the south side or in the downtown area of Indianapolis. Most of the buildings no longer exist today.

Meat/Deli/Grocery:

- Leuchner Meat
- Shapiro's Deli (still in existence, but not in the original building)
- Solomon's Kosher Deli
- Vogel Market
- Whitlock's Grocery
- Goldstein Meat Market
- Abraham's Market
- Campbell's Grocery
- Alinkoff's Kosher Meat Market
- Henry Dobrowitz's Butcher Shop
- Louis Golas' Butcher Shop

Moses Klein's Butcher Shop
Sarah Hantma's Fish Market
Morris Greenwald's Bakery
Isaac Regenstreit and Sig Mahler Bakery
Joseph Bledstein Grocery
Louis Bryan Grocery
Samuel Bunes Grocery
Alex Dorman Grocery
Morris Glick Grocery
Louis Golas Grocery and butcher shop
Benjamin Goldstein Grocery
Fannie Goldstein Grocery
Peter Hirsch Grocery
Peretz Hirshowitz Grocery
Wolfe Hirshowitz Grocery
Aaron Iszak Grocery
Hyman Kaminsky Grocery
Abraham Kollinger Grocery
Mallah and Abrovaya Grocery
Henry F. Meyer Grocery
Herman Rabinowitz Grocery
Abraham Rothstein Grocery
Reuben Rogin Grocery
Louis Sapirie Grocery
Louis Shapiro Grocery
Meyer Silverstein Grocery
Isaac Levy Grocery (produce only)

Stores:

Efroymsen's Department Store
Block's Department Store
L. Strauss
H.P. Wasson's
Glaser Mitchel and Company
H. Rosenthal and Company
Joseph Kohn
Katzenstein and Wachtel
Start Store

The sheer number of Jews living in the city makes it virtually impossible to follow the business and housing patterns of all Jews. For this survey, we focused on the area just south of Indianapolis where the early immigration occurred, trying to locate businesses, institutions, and residences. As individuals moved out of the

“neighborhood” we focused more on the businesses and institutions. This was done to limit the scope of Marion County and to complete the survey in the time allotted possible. Additional work will be completed in future years to give a more thorough look at Marion County.

Herman Bamberger was born in Germany in 1837. He immigrated to America at the age of eighteen. Soon after he arrived, a minyan (a group of 10 men needed for communal prayer) began meeting in a small office. Bamberger was one of the founders of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation in 1856. He was president of the congregation when it moved into its building on Market Street.

Ralph Bamberger was involved in Indiana politics. Born in Indianapolis in 1872 and the son of Herman Bamberger, he attended Indiana University. After graduation, he moved to Utah, but by 1898 had returned to Indianapolis and entered into a law practice with Isadore Feibleman. Bamberger was active in B’nai B’rith (the oldest and largest Jewish service organization, founded in 1843 in New York City), being elected as the first president of the Indianapolis chapter, then was head of District Lodge Two, which encompassed eight midwestern states. He was president of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation between 1909 and 1911, and served on the board of the Jewish Welfare Fund campaign. Politically, he served a term in the Indiana Legislature.

Isidore Feibleman was a law partner at *Bamberger and Feibleman*. Established in 1898, it is the longest lasting law partnership in the state that has always retained the same name. Feibleman attended Indiana University. After graduating, he served as president of the Esther Lodge of B’nai B’rith and later served a term as president of that organization’s District Lodge, serving eight midwestern states. He was a president of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, and was active in the Jewish Welfare Federation and in the Community Fund.

Louis Borinstein was active in business, civics, Jewish organizations, his temple, and government work. Upon graduation from high school, he went to work at *A. Borinstein & Company*, a scrap iron firm started by his father. He was president of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation from 1925 – 1940, served as president of the Broadmoor Country Club, was active in B'nai B'rith, and served as president of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce.

Isaac Cohen, one of the first Sephardim to arrive in Indianapolis, served his community by allowing immigrant families to stay in his house and collected for charities. He was born in 1883 in Monastir, coming to the United States to work in the West Virginia coal mines. Eventually he arrived in Indianapolis, where he went to work for Kahn Tailoring. He eventually opened a clothing and dry goods store on West Washington Street. Cohen was one of the founders of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation. Until a rabbi arrived, he served as acting rabbi.

Gustave Efrogmson started working in a dry goods store at the age of fourteen. At eighteen, he co-founded the *Star Store* with his brother-in-law, Louis P. Wolf. From 1912 to 1930, he was the president of *H. P. Wasson & Company*, the city's largest specialty shop. In 1932, he was elected president and general manager of *Real Silk Hosiery Mills*, a manufacturing firm of hosiery, lingerie, and undergarments. During World War II, the company made parachutes for the United States government .⁶ The company was founded by Jacob Goodman, who served as president of Beth-El Zedeck and the Jewish Welfare Federation.



The H.P. Wasson & Company was housed in this art deco building in downtown Indianapolis (Marion County). The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Efroymson served as president of the Jewish Federation of Indianapolis, president of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, and was a director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He also served as a director of the *Indiana National Bank* and the *Union Trust Company*, and organized the Indianapolis Public Welfare Association. When Efroymson died in 1946, control of the *Real Silk Hosiery Mills* passed to his



Photo of the Real Silk Hosiery Mill taken in 1930 by the Bass Photo Company. Photo: Indiana Historical Society, William Smith Library.

son, Robert. Under Robert Efroymsen's control, the company first closed its manufacturing operations in Indianapolis and Dalton, Georgia, and a short time later closed all other manufacturing operations. All the machinery was sold except that which was related to direct-to-consumer selling, and the plant, which was located at 611 N. Park was leased to a printing company. The former plant was converted into apartments in the late 1980s.

Robert himself was a successful business man and philanthropist. After attending Harvard Law School, he returned to Indianapolis to practice law. He served in World War II. When his father died, he took control of the family businesses. He converted the *Real Silk Hosiery Mills* into an investment company, which he ran until his death in 1988. Robert served on the Board of Directors for the Indianapolis Foundation, was president of the Civic Progress Association, served as president of Community Hospital, and chaired the Indianapolis Housing Authority. Along with his brother, Dr. Clarence Efroymsen, he established a private charitable foundation.

Rabbi Morris Feuerlicht served as rabbi of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation for more than forty years. Born in Hungary in 1879, he came to the United States as an infant. He graduated from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati; his first rabbinic post was in Lafayette, Indiana. In 1904 he joined IHC as associate rabbi, and 1907 he became full rabbi. He served as president of the Children's Aid Society, president of the Indiana State Conference of Charities, and a member of the State Board of Charities. He taught the essentials of Judaism to graduate ministers at Butler University School of Religion. During World War I, he served as Jewish chaplain at Fort Harrison in Indianapolis. He died in November 1959 at the age of eighty-one.

Leo Lefkovitz, a leader of the Hungarian- Jewish community in Indianapolis, was one of the first Eastern European Jews to become a lawyer. After graduating from law school in the early 1900s, he became credit manager for the *New York Store*, a local department store. After the *New York Store* folded during the depression, he opened his own law practice. Lefkovitz was very active in Congregation Ohev Zedeck, serving as both secretary and treasurer, and was a strong supporter of its Talmud Torah (an Orthodox school). After the synagogue merged with Beth El to form Beth -El Zedeck in 1927, he continued to be active, serving on the new congregation's board for more than ten years.

Isaac Levy was a Sephardic immigrant, born in 1887 in Monastir. He worked at Kahn Tailoring during the early part of this century. After leaving Kahn's, he worked at *L. Straus* (a local department store) for twenty-two years. While at *L. Straus*, he also operated his own small tailoring shop in the downtown area. He was a member of Etz Chaim Congregation, and served as its president. He was also active in the Chevra Kedisha (burial society). He died in December 1973.

Moses Rabb was born in Germany. He came to Indianapolis as a small child. Upon graduation, he worked as an independent insurance agent. Rabb was active in Zionist politics. He was one of the founders, both locally and nationally, the religious Zionist organization Mizrachi. He also served as secretary/treasurer for the seminal Federation of American Zionists. He was founder of both the United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis (the Jewish Educational Association) and of the city's Jewish National Fund chapter. He was affiliated with both Knesses Israel Congregation and Sharah Tefilla Congregation. He was active in politics, serving at different times as both precinct committeeman and ward chairman.

Joseph Solomon was a cigar maker from London. In 1860, Indianapolis' first Jewish wedding was between Solomon and Sarah Harris. Once in Indianapolis, he became involved in the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation and also in the Masons. In 1862, Solomon opened a pawnshop.

Morris Solomon was born in London and came to Indianapolis in 1860, about the same time as his brother, Joseph. As a member of the IHC, Solomon was appointed to chair a committee to arrange for a fair, which would serve as a fundraising project for a new synagogue. Through his efforts a lot was purchased on East Market Street, and the cornerstone for the building was dedicated in 1865. He served as secretary of the temple in 1885.

Leonard Strauss (officer in Kahn Tailoring) was one of the founders of Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, as it developed from the amateur orchestra that he founded.

Leon Kahn, a tailor, was elected Indianapolis Common County in 1869. Mayer Messing (1843-1930), rabbi for the IHC for 40 years, founded the Indianapolis Humane Society.

Leopold Strauss (1844-1914) came to Indianapolis in 1864. He was a store clerk in the *Eagle Clothing Store*, which had been founded in 1853 by Jewish tailor Max Derham and German John Gramling and later purchased by Morris and Louis Greisheimer. By 1871 Strauss became a partner and in 1879 bought out the Greisheimers. In 1899 he brought in Abram L. Block from Brooklyn; at the same time, he changed the store name to *L. Strauss and Company*. Strauss was also a founder of the Indianapolis Merchant's Association.

The company became a large department store, opening branches in local malls. In 1969, the local business was purchased by an out-of-state company.



L. Struass operated in the building above from 1905 - 1946. In that year, they moved into the building on the left. Photos: Indiana Historical Society, William Smith Library.



Sarah Goodman, first female president of the Jewish Federation, helped to found the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. She was born in Austria, coming to America as an infant. She worked as a teacher in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1924 she and her husband, Jack, moved to Indianapolis. She was active in local theater, served as arts chair at the Kirshbaum Community Center (later this became the Jewish Community Center), and the Woman's Committee of the Indiana State Symphony Society. In 1956, the Indianapolis Community Chest and B'Nai B'rith named her Woman of the Year.

William H. Block lived in Kokomo, but moved to Indianapolis in 1896. He opened his first store in Indianapolis on Washington Street between Illinois and Meridian. He incorporated the *William H. Block Company* in 1907 and built a building in 1910; the building still stands. William died in 1928, when his sons took over the operations. In 1962, the business was sold to the *Allied Stores Corporation* out of New York. William was an active member of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation.



The Block's building in downtown Indianapolis (Marion County). It was used as the Blocks Department Store building until the late 1980s. Today it houses retail and apartments. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



The Kahn factory in Indianapolis (Marion County) where many Jewish immigrants worked.

The garment trade in Indiana, like that in America, attracted a large number of Jews. In Indianapolis, the largest garment manufacturer, Henry Kahn (1860-1934), founded Kahn Tailoring Company in 1903. Kahn was born in Bloomington in 1860 to immigrant parents. The family moved to Indianapolis in 1866; Kahn attended public school and went to Butler University. He opened a small tailoring shop in 1886 on East Washington Street near Meridian Street. In 1903, he founded Kahn Tailoring Company – one of the country’s largest manufacturers of men’s suits and military uniforms. There was a sales room in the Kahn Building at Meridian and Washington and a factory on Capitol Street, which still stands. Kahn was active with the Industrial Removal Office to help Jewish immigrants find employment outside of New York.

While not active member of the Jewish community, Kahn did employ hundreds of newly arriving Jewish immigrants. From 1904-1918, the number of Jewish immigrants coming into New York City overwhelmed the Jewish community, as well as their resources of jobs, housing, and social services. Leaders of the Jewish



The Kahn Tailoring factory in 1907. Photo: Indiana Historical Society, William Smith Library.



One of the social events hosted by Kahn Tailoring. Photo: Indiana Historical Society, William Smith Library.

community in New York City created the Industrial Removal Office (IRO) to locate immigrants to jobs outside of the New York City area. Kahn Tailoring actively cooperated with the local IRO office. Kahn Tailoring became the single largest employer of Jewish immigrants in Indianapolis.

The company offered social services for their employees. A social welfare department provided for the needs of all employees, especially those new to the city. Social gatherings were held at the office and during lunch, a factory orchestra played music in the cafeteria.

When Henry died in 1934, his son-in-law became president. In 1954, the company merged with *Globe Tailoring* of Cincinnati, where the base of operations shifted. By 1970, no Kahn store remained in Indianapolis.

Meyer-Kiser Bank, founded by Sol S. Keiser and Sol Meyer in 1906, became one of the largest lending institutions in the state and financed some of the most important buildings in Indianapolis before closing their doors in 1931.

Samuel E. Rauh (1854-1935) came to Indianapolis in 1874 and established a branch of *E. Rauh and Sons* (hide and fur dealers). In 1880, he established the first fertilizer factory in the midwest; in 1884 he created the *Indianapolis Slaughtering Company*, in 1890 he opened *Moore Packing*

Company, and then in 1890 began operating the *Indianapolis Desiccating Company*, the first plant organized in the country for the disposal of city garbage. In addition, he was an organizer of the *Union Trust Company*

and president of the *Belt Railroad and Stock Yards*. He donated his family home to the Marion County Public Library system; the home has since been demolished.

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The Meyer-Kiser Bank building. Photo: Indiana Historical Society, William Smith Library.



The Samuel Rauh house circa 1909, when it was used as a home. He donated the home to the Marion County Public Library. Photo: Indiana Historical Society, William Smith Library.



J. Solotken and Co was one of the many scrap yards owned by Jewish families in Indiana. The company moved into this old furniture factory in 1932.

J. Solotken and Co. Inc. is a scrap dealer company still in existence today. Founded in 1914 by Russian immigrant Jacob Solotken, the company moved into their current headquarters in 1932 and is still family owned and operated.⁷

Mel and Herbert Simon were born in New York. Mel was stationed at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis while in the army. He remained in Indianapolis after his discharge. He started in the mall business, eventually creating, with his brother, *Melvin Simon and Associates*. The company has developed into one of the largest real estate development and management corporations in the country.

Today, Indianapolis still has a large Jewish population, but the historic community that once thrived on the southside of Indianapolis is all but gone. Only remnants of the community exist today including the cemeteries, a few homes, two temples, and a few pieces of the commercial districts. Some of the structures from the 1920s through the 1970s still exist, but this number continues to decline.

Footnotes

¹ David Bodenhamer and Robert Barrows, *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), viii.

² Carolyn Blackwell, “Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis,” *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, Bob Barrows, ed (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society,) 845.

³ <http://www.nmajh.org/exhibitions/postcards/cards/13.htm> (accessed July 15, 2004).

⁴ Congregation of B’Nai Torah, History of Congregation B’Nai Torah, www.btorah.org/History.html (accesses October 4, 2005.)

⁵ Dorothy Anne Forman, *A Study of the Jewish Communal Building of Indianapolis* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, 1940), 23.

⁶ J.A. and L.L. Goodman founded the Real Silk Company in 1922. The company ran knitting mill, manufacturing hosiery, lingerie, and underwear. At its height, the company averaged more than one million dozen pairs of women’s hosiery a year.

⁷ Tammy Lieber, “From Trash to Treasure,” *Indiana Business Journal* 19 April 2004, p.49., col. 1; Interview with Joseph Alpert, owner J. Solotken and Co by Jeannie Regan-Dinius in 2005.

⁸ Sylvia Nahmia Cohen, “The History of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation and Community of Indianapolis, Indiana, Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation of Indianapolis, <http://www.etzchaimindy.org/history.htm> (accessed June 29, 2005).

Miami County, Indiana's Jewish Population

Miami County, Indiana, located northeast of the state's center along the banks of the Wabash River, was organized in 1834 on land purchased by Joseph Holman from the Miami Tribe of Chief, John B. Richardville, in 1830. The Miami moved from their historical home in Wisconsin to central Indiana over a century before Indiana Territory was established in 1800, but lost much of their land through a string of 1830s treaties, starting with the 1834 treaty which dissolved the Eel Creek Reserve and forced inhabitants to move to other land within Miami County. The federal government quickly purchased the newly-available land and started the Wabash-Erie Canal. Peru, the county seat, was established shortly after Miami County, and became the hub of commercial and social activity in the county as those eager to work on the canal or sell goods to the canal workers trickled into the area. The first canal boat arrived in Peru in 1837, followed by additional treaties culminating in the 1840 treaty which forced the remaining Miami to cede their land and leave the state by 1845. This removal opened up Miami County for more development including the Lake and Western Reserve Railroad which reached Peru in 1854.¹

Miami County's first Jewish citizen was Moses Falk, an immigrant from Wurtemberg, Germany arrived in Miami County around 1838.² Falk was a trader originally based out of Cincinnati who made his living by offering goods to European and American residents, as well as local Native Americans. Falk eventually organized a store known as the "Dutch Grocery" in Peoria, a pioneer Miami County settlement located southeast of present-day Peru, along the shore of Mississinewa Lake. Moses and his brother Loeb were the two of the first three Miami

¹ "History of Miami County," *Miami County Museum*, <http://www.mcmuseum.org/History.html> [accessed July 3, 2012].

² "Zebler Family Among First Jewish Families In Indiana," *Jewish Post and Opinion*. Miami County Historical Society Collection.

County residents to become naturalized United States citizens after filing naturalization papers in 1844.³ In 1850 Moses decided to move to Peru, starting the Falk Store, which he would manage until his death in 1878. His resulting commercial success made Falk “the first Jewish communal leader of importance” in the state, according to the *Jewish Post and Opinion*.⁴ Falk was soon joined by other men from his native Wurtemberg throughout the 1840s, creating a successful pioneer Jewish community centered in Peru.

Early Jewish settlers included the Sterne brothers, the Strouse brothers, and Moses Oppenheimer. Falk originally sent for Charles and Herman Sterne, partnering with the brothers to create the Falk & Sterne Mercantile Firm, which operated from 1850 to 1859.⁵ The Sterne brothers then purchased the Peru Woolen Mill. Falk continued to run a store until his 1878 retirement when he passed the company to his son Julius. Moses Rosenthal, Moses Falk’s nephew, traveled to Peru by foot from Carrollton, Illinois to work as a clerk in his uncle’s shop, eventually starting his own mercantile shop and becoming a partner in the Peru Woolen Mills after giving considerable capital to rebuild the mill after a 1868 fire. The Strouse brothers, Harry and David, also got their start in the Peru Woolen Mill after immigrating from Wurtemberg in the 1870s. They ended up building Peru’s first gas plant to operate with their mill and contracted with the city to provide street lights.⁶

Many of the Jewish individuals in Peru became community leaders by owning successful businesses, undertaking civic enterprises, joining fraternal organizations, and acting on various boards of directors. For example, Moses Falk became the first man to receive a degree from the

³ Arthur Bodurtha, *History of Miami County, Indiana* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing and Printing Co., 1914), 316.

⁴ “Zebler Family Among First Jewish Families in Indiana,” *The Jewish Post and Opinion*, ND, Miami County Historical Society;; “Samuel Judah Held State Post in 1827,” *The National Jewish Post and Opinion*, ND, Miami County Historical Society.

⁵ *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1889), 235.

⁶Bodurtha, 169.

Miami Lodge No. 67 Free and Accepted Masons.⁷ Julius Falk, son and business heir of Moses Falk, was a member of the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Red Men, Elks, Eastern Star, Royal Arcanum Maccabees, Foresters, and Ancient Order of United Workman while still finding time to run his store, be part owner of Peru Novelty Works, and serve on the committee to create the Peru Commercial Club.⁸ Julius Falk and Moses Rosenthal were two of the founders of the Miami County Driving Park and Agricultural Society, founded in 1890. Milton Kraus, a local attorney, acted as the Peru Lodge No. 365 Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks's first Exalted Ruler and was a big proponent of a railroad extension, which would have connected Peru directly to Chicago. David Strouse originally wrote to Andrew Carnegie asking him to help fund a local public library years before he eventually gave the community money.

Some of Peru's Jews were active in state and national politics. In the late nineteenth century Harry Sterne served as the U.S. consulate to Budapest.⁹ Jerome Herff was the Democratic nominee for Indiana State Treasurer in 1896 and 1900. Milton Kraus, a native of Peru and son of Peru Flax Mill owner Charles Kraus, served as the Miami County Chairman in 1910 and eventually represented Indiana Republicans in Congress.

Even though most of Peru's Jewish community met great commercial success in Miami County, the majority of Jews left Peru by the 1930s. By that time, the first generation of businessmen and mill owners who arrived in Indiana during the 1840s and 1850s had passed on and many of the second generation of store owners, who gained success during and between 1880 and 1910, were also retiring from business. Many decided to move to be closer to their children who had left Peru once they reached adulthood.

⁷Ibid., 416.

⁸ Al. D. Beasley, ed., *Twentieth Century Peru* (n.d.), 11.

⁹ Bodurtha, 392.

Or Zion Synagogue



North Broadway in downtown Peru. The two-story white building with blue roofline detail in the foreground is 65 North Broadway, former home of the Or Zion Synagogue.

The Peru Jewish community formed the Or Zion Congregation in 1870, holding its meetings in private residences and sometimes using the local Methodist church for holy day observations as membership fluctuated over the years. In Peru's earliest city directory, the congregation is listed at

19 West Second Street, meeting the first Sunday of each month.¹⁰

However, by the 1890s the congregation had grown large enough to support its own reform synagogue. On July 11, 1891, Hirsch Baer, a prominent Jewish businessman who served as the congregation's reader and the president of the congregation, gave the dedication address officially opening the Or Zion Synagogue.¹¹ Located in a second floor room at 65 North Broadway, the Jewish congregation shared the second floor with Mrs. Cynthia Stewart, an African American woman from Kentucky who operated the barber shop on the building's first floor.¹² When first founded, the synagogue hosted weekly Saturday night services conducted by rabbis visiting from Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Lafayette, or students from Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College. In 1894, the *Peru Republican* ran an article about that year's Rosh Hashanah celebration led by Mr. Bottingham, a student at the Hebrew Union College and a distant relative

¹⁰ *Peru City Directory*, 1887.

¹¹ H. Baer, *Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Or Zion Synagogue* (Cincinnati: Block Publishing and Printing Co., 1911).

¹² *Peru City Directory*, 1892; U.S. Census, 1880.

of Hirsh Baer.¹³ However, during the last decade of the nineteenth century many of Peru's Jewish families relocated, leaving only sixteen synagogue members by 1900.¹⁴

In 1912, the Wilkinson brothers who owned 65 North Broadway requested Or Zion move out of the second floor space so the Wilkinsons could convert the room into living quarters for when they were in town overseeing business affairs.¹⁵ The congregation, which served a Jewish population now hovering around 40, failed to secure another building for their synagogue. While no Peru synagogue or Jewish congregation is listed in 1920s' American Jewish Yearbooks, the congregation continued to meet and host visiting rabbis into the 1930s.¹⁶

Jewish Ladies' Aid Society

First started in the 1880s, Peru's Jewish Ladies Aid Society was organized with the goal of raising funds for a synagogue or temple to be built in the community, but quickly refocused its efforts to provide relief during emergencies and offer general charitable work. After Or Zion's dedication, the Society was reorganized in 1895 with nineteen members who met on a regular basis in members' homes. By 1914, only three original members were still living in Peru and the organization counted only six members. While a small group, the society still managed to raise a considerable amount of money for the Dukes Memorial Hospital, furnishing a whole room in the new hospital when it was being built in the early 1910s.¹⁷

¹³ "The Jewish Holidays," *Peru Republican*, 5 October 1894.

¹⁴ "Directory of Local Organizations," *American Jewish Yearbook 1899-1900*, 32.

¹⁵ "Or Zion Congregation is Compelled to Move," *Peru Republican*, 14 Nov. 1912.

¹⁶ "Directory of Jewish Organizations in the United States," *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1908; "Rabbi Wertheimer held services..." *Peru Republican*, 14 Jul. 1933; No synagogue is listed in the 1919-1920 or later Peru city directories. The 1919 American Jewish Yearbook only lists Peru's Jewish cemetery.

¹⁷ Bodurtha, 415.

Jewish Cemetery- Mount Hope/Zion

Mount Hope Cemetery, located northwest of downtown Peru along Logan Street, was laid out in 1845 and originally occupied three acres. Being the only burial ground serving the city of Peru, spaces in the new cemetery were assessed at much too low of a cost to sustain the cemetery and sold out soon after the cemetery was established. The Mount Hope Cemetery Association, established in 1884, put an end to the burial plot rush by accessing the land and adding a \$6 per plot charge to go towards the cemetery's upkeep. Oak Grove Cemetery was organized in 1868 and completely surrounded the original Mount Hope acreage. In 1912, Mount Hope merged with adjacent Oak Grove Cemetery, which contained the local Jewish burial ground. The section where most Jewish individuals are interred has subsequently been called Mount Hope, Oak Ridge, the Jewish Cemetery, and Zion Cemetery. The first burials in the Jewish section (Section A of the current Mount Hope Cemetery Map) were the children of pioneer businessman Herman Sterne: Emanuel (d. 1869) and Cora (d. 1872).¹⁸ Burials in this section occurred regularly through the 1930s, with only a few stones dating after this decade.

Affelder

Louis Affelder was born in Bavaria in 1845 and immigrated to the United States with his family while still a young man. He first settled in Pittsburgh, working as a liquor store agent.¹⁹²⁰ In the early 1870s he found his way to Peru, working as a bookkeeper in Peru's Woolen Mill and

¹⁸ Ibid., 379-380; "Reveal Mt. Hope Cemetery Was Organized in 1845," *Peru Daily Tribune*, 24 Aug. 1949.

¹⁹U.S. Census: 1870; There are two Louis Affelders listed in the 1870 census, one in Pittsburgh and one in New York. I assume the Pittsburgh Affelder was the one to move to Peru, since the Redelsheimers had Peru connections, showing up in 1840s marriage records. The New York Affelders came as a family with sons Louis and Leopold, but I found no mention of a Leopold Affelder in connection to Peru's Louis.

²⁰ The date of Louis Affelder's immigration is unclear; in the 1900 census it is listed as 1851 when he would have been 6 years old, however it is listed as 1861 in the 1910 census, making him 16. If he did indeed travel to America without any family members, as is supposed in the previous footnote, the 1861 date makes more sense.

marrying a woman by the name of Ida.²¹ They had five children: Morris (b. ~1872), Henrietta (b. ~1874), Hannah (b. 1875), William (b. 1876) and Eddie (b. 1877). In 1888, Henrietta, described as “the idol of her parents and the pride of her teachers,” died suddenly of typhoid fever when only sixteen years old.²² Louis continued to work at the woolen mill until its 1896 closure, then taking up the mercantile business.²³ He was also involved with civic matters, being the first treasurer of Peru’s first building and loan association and an active member of the Masons along with his sons.²⁴

In May 1891, William (aka Willie) Affelder made headlines after returning home to Peru after going missing on the last day of 1889. The boy, thirteen years old at the time of his disappearance, claims to have traveled to Chicago via Logansport, where he worked odd jobs. Later he went to St. Louis, working in a restaurant for four months, before heading west for a short trip to Denver. When he returned to Chicago he secured a job on a steamboat running between Chicago and Buffalo. At the end of the season, he made his way out to California, where he remained until an acquaintance who overheard the young man was from Peru connected Willie to the missing person ads placed by Mr. Affelder in national papers and the *Chicago Tribune* article written about the boy’s disappearance eighteen months earlier. Louis Affelder met Willie in Chicago and surprised the rest of the Affelder family at Sunday dinner with the boy’s return.²⁵

²¹U.S. Census: 1880, 1900, 1910; The 1900 census says Louis and Ida had been married for 25 years, making their wedding sometime in 1875, a fact that is repeated in the 1910 census. According to the 1880 census, the couple’s oldest child, Morris was 8 years old, meaning he was born sometime around 1872 when Ida would have been 18.

²²“Died,” *Peru Republican*, October 19, 1888.

²³“Mrs. Affelder Former Peru Woman is Dead,” *Peru Republican*, March 2, 1934.

²⁴“Small Talk,” *Peru Republican*, February 5, 1886; “Mrs. Affelder Former Peru Woman is Dead,” *Peru Republican*, March 2, 1934.

²⁵“Willie Affelder’s Return,” *Peru Republican*, May 22, 1891.

Two years later the Affelder family again was in the local news with the December 1893 wedding of eighteen-year-old daughter Hannah to Rabbi Max Wertheimer of Dayton, Ohio, a frequent speaker at Peru's *Or Zion* congregation.²⁶ The happiness was short-lived, as Hannah died in the Indianapolis Sanitarium October 1897, leaving two young children, Lester and Rose.²⁷ Rose, born in July 1897 just months before her mother's death, she eventually moved from the Wertheimer's Dayton home to live with her grandparents in Peru.²⁸

The Affelder family lived in Peru from the early 1870s until 1910 when they relocated to St. Louis, with Louis heading a furniture store until his death in 1916 at the age of 73.²⁹ His son Ed continued to run the store and support his widowed mother and niece. Ida Affelder died in 1934 at her home in St. Louis.

Louis and Ida Affelder, along with their children Henrietta and Hannah Affelder Wertheim are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Hirsch Baer

Hirsch Baer was born in Wurtemberg, Germany in 1824, came to the United States in 1846 and immediately settled in Peru. He became one of the area's early Jewish merchants by traveling across Miami County on horseback, buying furs and selling goods.³⁰ During the 1850s Jacob Baer joined his brother Hirsch in Peru, bringing his wife Fannie and her sister Adelheit Blumenthal from their hometown in Wurtemberg. Hirsch and Adelheit were married in November 1853, months after Jacob and Fannie's marriage was recorded in the Miami County

²⁶“A Happy Wedding-A Notable Nuptial Celebration in Jewish Circles,” *Peru Republican*, December 22, 1893.

²⁷“A Beautiful Life Goes Out,” *Peru Republican*, November 5, 1897.

²⁸ U.S. Census, 1900.

²⁹ U.S. Census, 1910; “Death of Mr. Affelder,” *Peru Republican*, October 27, 1916.

³⁰ “Hirsch Baer Gone-A Good Man Joins the Silent Majority,” *Peru Republican*, November 29, 1901.

records.³¹ Hirsch and Adelheit quickly started a family and continued to prosper from Hirsch's successful clothing store. Over the next decade the Baers had five children: Barnhart "Barney" (b.1856), Sarah (b. 1857), Louis "Lou" (b. 1860), Samuel (b. 1862) and David who died in infancy.³² During their teens and early twenties the children worked as clerks in the clothing business.³³ Hirsch, described as "a devout Israelite, who takes an unusual interest in the religious training of the young and the spiritual welfare of the congregation," was instrumental in developing Peru's *Or Zion* Hebrew congregation, founded July 3, 1870, and acted as President and Reader through much of the congregation's history.³⁴ He was also a founding member of the Miami Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons.³⁵ Between 1880 and 1900, the family moved from their home on Fifth Street to 11 Court Street.³⁶ In 1886, daughter Sarah married Felix Levy, owner of the French Bazaar Market at 56-58 Broadway, moving her new husband into the Baer's Court Street home.

After Hirsch's death from kidney failure in 1901, his widow and children continued to live at 11 Court Street, with Barney running a bicycle repair shop in the Odd Fellows Hall basement (corner of Main and Wabash), Louis working as a traveling salesman, and Sam working with his brother-in-law Felix Levy at the French Bazaar. Later, after the French Bazaar closed its doors, Sam worked as a salesman in Toledo and Chicago until his death in 1911.³⁷ Adelheit lived to be ninety years old, passing away in 1920 from complications resulting from a broken leg. Felix and Sarah Levy moved to New York City in the 1920s, leaving Barney and

³¹ *Miami Co., Ind. Marriage Records: 1843-1855*; "Death of Mrs. Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 16, 1920.

³² "Death of Mrs. Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 16, 1920; U.S. Census records

³³ U.S. Census: 1880

³⁴ "Local Organizations," *Jewish Yearbook 1899-1900*, http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1899_1900_5_LocalOrgs.pdf, (accessed July 9, 2012); "The Jewish Holidays," *Peru Republican*, October 5, 1894.

³⁵ "Hirsch Baer Gone- A Good Man Joins the Silent Majority," *Peru Republican*, November 29, 1901.

³⁶ U.S. Census: 1880, 1900

³⁷ "Sam Baer Dead," *Peru Republican*, June 30, 1911.

Lou in the house on Court Street until Barney's death in 1926. A member of the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, and the Masons, Barney was well-known in the Peru community.³⁸ Lou, the last of Hirsch and Adelheit's children to live in Peru, until his death in 1943.

Hirsch, Adelheit, their children Barney, Lou, Samuel, Sarah, and her husband Felix Levy and son Irving are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Jacob Baer



Jacob Baer moved from his hometown in Wurtemberg, Germany in the early 1850s to join his brother Hirsch in Peru, Indiana. He brought his wife Fannie (nee Blumenthal) and her sister Adelheid, who a few years later married Hirsch.³⁹ By the 1860s, the Baers lived in Marion, Indiana with Jacob working as a merchant.⁴⁰ In 1862, Jacob enlisted in the Civil War, becoming a member of Company A in the 89th Indiana Infantry Regiment. While stationed in Pleasant Hill Louisiana, Jacob was killed, with his body being transported back to Wabash, Indiana for burial in the Rodef Sholem Jewish Cemetery.⁴¹

Fannie appears in the 1870 census, living on East Main Street in Peru with her five children: Sarah/Sallie (b. ~1855), David (b.~1857), Benjamin "Bernie" (b. ~1860), Emma (b.~1861),and Isaac (b.~1864).⁴²

³⁸ "Barney Baer," *Peru Republican*, February 19, 1926.

³⁹ "Hirsch Baer Gone-A Good Man Joins the Silent Majority," *Peru Republican*, November 29, 1901.

⁴⁰ "Isaac Baer Dead," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1931.

⁴¹ "Pvt. Jacob Baer," *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=67539494>, (accessed July 9, 2012).

In 1875, Sarah married Jerome Herff, a traveling salesman from Wabash. The couple and their children lived in Peru until 1910 when they family moved to Indianapolis.⁴³

David, a traveling salesman for a Cincinnati manufacturing house and member of the Knights of Pythias, died at the age of 32 of brain congestion at his mother's home May of 1888.⁴⁴

Just a few months later, Emma married Louis Hainsfurther of Petersburg, Illinois in a traditional Jewish ceremony and lavish reception at Peru's GAR Hall. The couple met at the wedding of the bride's brother (Ben), in April 1888 in Champaign, Illinois.⁴⁵

Emma son, Isaac, was an employee in Peru's Boston Store, and member of the Elks. He continued to live with his mother until her death in 1919 when he relocated to 84 W. Third Street. A few years later he caught pneumonia and passed away in 1936 at the age of 66.⁴⁶

Fannie Baer and her children David and Isaac are buried in Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Catherine and Severn Baer

Catherine Baer, born in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany is listed in the 1870 census , living on Seventh Street in Peru with her five children, all of which were born in Indiana: Andrew (b.~1855), Edward (b.~1857), Catherine (b. ~1862), Philip (b.~1866), and Joseph (b. ~1869). There is no mention in this or following censuses of her husband Severn.⁴⁷ In 1882, daughter Catherine had married Frederick Troster, a jeweler originally from Iowa. Son Phil worked with a

⁴² U.S. Census: 1870.

⁴³ U.S. Census: 1900; "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935.

⁴⁴ "Death of David Baer," *Peru Republican*, May 18, 1888.

⁴⁵ "Hainsfurther-Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 3, 1888.

⁴⁶ "Isaac Baer Dead," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1931.

⁴⁷ U.S. Census: 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910.

railroad company and was named a U.S. Marshal in Texas in 1912.⁴⁸ Joseph Baer briefly lived with his sister before marrying Selma Kurtz and moving to Marion, Indiana in 1928. When he died in 1933, his funeral was given at St. Charles Catholic Church and buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in the Jewish Section.⁴⁹

It is unclear what the relationship between Severn Baer and prominent Jewish Peru citizens Hirsch and Jacob Baer is. The only available information about Severn Baer is Joseph Baer's 1933. Obituary listing Severn and Catherine as Joseph Baer's parents.

Beitman

Raphael and Mollie Beitman were Bavarian immigrants who met in Cincinnati and married around 1864. They decided to make a home in Washington, Indiana, a Daviess County community near Vincennes. There Raphael worked as a clothing merchant alongside his younger brother Emmanuel.⁵⁰ Raphael and Molly raised four children: Flora (b. ~1867), Jacob (b. ~1869), Julia (b.~ 1872), and Bertha (b.~1875).⁵¹ After Raphael's death in 1895, Jacob continued his father's clothing business in Washington while his sisters married into prominent Jewish families in Peru: Flora married Albert Kittner, a successful clothier working with his father in D. Kittner & Sons Store, in 1895, Julia married Sig Frank, a boot and shoe maker, the same year; and Bertha married Albert's younger brother Henry Kittner, Jr. in 1903.⁵² In 1904, Mollie moved

⁴⁸ "Philip Baer," *Peru Republican*, May 4, 1934.

⁴⁹ "Joseph Baer," *Peru Republican*, April 28, 1933.

⁵⁰ U.S. Census 1870; "Mrs. Beitman-Mother of Mrs. Albert Kittner Died Thursday," *Peru Republican*, March 3, 1912.

⁵¹ U.S. Census, 1880; The 1900 census states Mollie had 5 children, but the other child does not appear in any census, meaning he or she did not survive childhood.

⁵² U.S. Census, 1900, 1910.

from Washington to Peru, living with her daughter Bertha at her 159 West Main Street home until Mollie's death in 1912.⁵³



Raphael and Mollie Beitman, as well as their daughters and their husbands: Julia Beitman Frank and Sig Frank, Bertha Beitman Kittner and Henry Kittner, and Flora Beitman Kittner and Henry Kittner, Jr., are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Blumenthal

During the 1850s Jacob Baer joined his brother, established merchant Hirsch Baer, in Peru, bringing his wife Fannie and her sister Adelheit Blumenthal from their hometown in Wurtemberg, Germany. Hirsch and Adelheit were married in November 1853, months after Jacob and Fannie's marriage was recorded in the Miami County records.⁵⁴

All of Fannie and Adelheit's siblings, children of David and Mina Blumenthal of Wurtemberg, eventually moved to the United States. Their brother Morris lived in Peru with

⁵³ "Mrs. Beitman-Mother of Mrs. Albert Kittner Died Thursday," *Peru Republican*, March 3, 1912.

⁵⁴ *Miami Co., Ind. Marriage Records: 1843-1855*; "Death of Mrs. Baer," *Peru Republican*, December 16, 1920.

Hirsch and Adelheit for a short time during the 1860s before moving to Marion to start his own dry goods business, marry, and start a family.⁵⁵ Their sister Babette lived with Morris in 1870 and eventually moved in with the widowed Adelheid in the 1910s.⁵⁶ (She is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery with the Baer family.) Two unnamed sisters are mentioned in Adelheid's 1920 obituary as living in Chicago before their deaths.

Fannie Blumenthal Baer and her children, David and Isaac, Adelheit Blumenthal Baer and all five of her children, and Babbette Blumenthal are buried in Peru's Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Cohn

William Cohn, originally from Austria, married Carrie Lehman, a native of Wurtemberg, Germany, and had two children: Hattie (b. 1873 in Missouri) and Berthold "Bert" (b. 1876 in Indiana).⁵⁷ In the mid-1870s, the family moved to Peru, where William died in 1878. Carrie remarried in 1890 to Felix Moses, a 48 year old bachelor.⁵⁸ Hattie married Peru businessman Nathan Loewenthal in 1894, and moved to Indianapolis in the mid-1910s. Bert received his Ph.D. in chemistry and worked in connection with the Indiana Pure Food Department in Indianapolis until his death in 1918.⁵⁹

William Cohn, his wife Carrie (nee Lehman) Cohn Moses, and their son Bert are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Rene Crozette

⁵⁵ U.S. Census: 1860, 1870.

⁵⁶ U.S. Census: 1870, 1910; In the 1870 census she is mistakenly identified as Barbara Blumenthal.

⁵⁷ U.S. Census, 1880.

⁵⁸ U.S. Census, 1900; "Death of Mrs. Moses," *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916.

⁵⁹ "Death of Mrs. Moses," *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916; "Death of Mr. Cohn," *Peru Republican*, November 8, 1918.

Rene Crozette was born in Rouen, France in 1848. His father was a local schoolteacher who changed the family's name from Levi to Crozette before Rene was born. Rene first worked as a teacher, instructing French pupils in German and Hebrew, before joining the army, and serving in the Franco-Prussian War from 1870-1871. During that time he received a saber blow to the head and was taken as a prisoner of war at a Metz hospital. While he was lucky to survive such a serious injury, he suffered from memory loss and forgetfulness after the incident. After returning to civilian life and teaching for a few years, Crozette immigrated to the United States in 1875, and settled in Peru. He first worked in the Peru Bagging Mills, later he offered French classes. He joined the local Order of Owls, while holding the janitor position for the Cole Block on South Broadway.

In 1915, Rene Crozette's Bright Disease began to severely affect his health. He was found dead in the Cole Block building where he worked as a janitor. He was buried in Peru's Jewish Cemetery, While the *Republican* article states that Crozette was buried in "the Jewish Cemetery," his gravestone could not be located in the Jewish section of Mount Hope Cemetery.⁶⁰

Moses Falk

Moses Falk was one of Central Indiana's pioneer merchants coming to Miami County in the early 1830s, and was a pillar in the early merchant community. Born in 1816 in Wurtemberg, Germany, Moses first learned carpentry and traveled to America in his youth. Once he arrived, he settled in Cincinnati and began his long and storied career as a merchant, buying goods in the major city, and acting as an itinerant peddler across Indiana and Ohio. He quickly gained a reputation as a fair businessman willing to trade with Native Americans and white settlers alike. He opened his first store, "The Dutch Grocery," and bought a small farm in Peoria, Indiana, a

⁶⁰ "Veteran Dies in Great Agony," *Peru Republican*, September 1, 1915.

small community near Peru, in 1837.⁶¹ Two of his brothers, Loeb and Isaac, also joined Moses in Indiana during the 1840s. In 1846, Isaac enlisted in the Mexican War as a captain and was on his way to Wabash to recruit more troops when he drowned in the canal towpath, either by accident or after being purposefully thrown into the water.⁶² Moses Falk also met his first wife, Helen Redelsheimer of Fort Wayne, while in Peoria. This union produced seven children which included: Frances (b. 1849), Pauline (b. 1850), Carrie (b. 1853), Julius (b. 1855), who would become heir to his father's business empire, and Flora (b. 1857).⁶³ In 1850, the young and growing Falk family and Moses' brother Loeb moved to Peru. Moses created the firm Falk & Sterne with the Sterne Brothers, men Falk knew from his hometown in Germany who had already established themselves in Peru, and made considerable money.⁶⁴ Loeb died in 1856.⁶⁵

After Helen's untimely death in 1858, Moses married Jennie Kuppenheimer, and left the firm Falk & Stern to start his own mercantile business in 1859. Moses and Jennie had three children: Mollie (b.~1861), Elba (b.~1864), and Harry (b.~1867).⁶⁶ Falk continued to run his large and successful mercantile business in downtown Peru until his retirement in 1875, when he transferred the store to his eldest son Julius. After the time of Moses Falk's death in 1880, his children lived across the Midwest and by 1900 Julius was the only Falk remaining in Peru.⁶⁷

Moses Falk, his second wife Jennie Kuppenheimer, his daughter Pauline Falk Kaufman, and son Julius with his wife Jennie Wile Falk and two of Julius's six children are buried in the

⁶¹ "Julius Falk," *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1898), 235-237; Bodurtha, 538-539.

⁶²"Julius Falk," *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties*, 235-237.

⁶³U.S. Census, 1860; I found no mention of the Helen and Moses's other two children, but the two county histories mentioned above both say Moses had seven children from his first marriage.

⁶⁴ Bodurtha, 538-539.

⁶⁵ Ruth M. Slevin, *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy Room), 81.

⁶⁶U.S. Census, 1880.

⁶⁷ "Julius Falk, *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1898), 235-237.

Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. Moses Falk's nephew Moses Oppenheimer and his wife Anna Oppenheimer are also buried in Mount Hope's Jewish section.

Julius Falk



Julius Falk was born in 1855, son of Moses Falk and his first wife Helen Redelsheimer, and grew up in Peru. Where he attended the local high school and was groomed to take over his father's successful mercantile business. After two years at Earlham College, in Richmond, Indiana, Julius returned to Peru and inherited the

Falk store upon his father's retirement in 1878 at the age of 23.⁶⁸ Julius moved the business to the "Red Front" building at 68 South Broadway in 1880, and quickly became known as one of the savviest businessmen in Peru, who were ushering in the era of aggressive newspaper advertising, with substantial ads running each week in the *Peru Republican*.

In 1882, he married Jennie Wile of Owensboro, Kentucky, and continued to expand his business, moving into the Cole Block on the Broadway-Main intersection in downtown Peru in 1887.⁶⁹ When describing his business in 1894, the *Peru Republican* said "to-day it is regarded as a leading house in its line throughout the country" and said Julius "conducted his house in a manner that wins every patron as a friend; honest and liberal he offers his patrons such

⁶⁸ "Julius Falk," *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties*, 235-237.

⁶⁹ Bodurtha, 539-540.

advantages as make them call again.”⁷⁰ He was active socially; becoming a member of the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Red Men, Elks, Eastern Star, Chapter Council, Royal Arcanum Maccabees, Foresters, and Ancient Order of United Workmen. He also invested in other Peru business ventures, becoming part owner of Peru Novelty Works and the vice-president and director of Wright Medicine Co.⁷¹ In 1900, Julius built a house complete with modern conveniences at 84 West Main Street, considered “one of the pretties portions of the city and to own property there is to own some of the most valuable property to be found in the city.”⁷² Julius Falk passed away May 1914 after being afflicted with paralysis a few months before.⁷³

Julius and Jennie had six children: Frances (b. 1889), Corinne (b. 1891), Aimee (b. 1893), Nanette (b. 1900), Moses (b. 1902), and Julius Jr. (b. 1903). Aimee died in 1909 at the age of 16. A few months after her father’s death in 1914, Frances married Arthur Simon, a young man originally from Wabash who managed Falk’s store after Julius’s death earlier that year, and in 1924, became the sole owner of the store.⁷⁴

Julius and Jennie Wile Falk, their daughter Aimee and their son Julius Jr. are buried in the Jewish section of Peru’s Mount Home Cemetery.

Frank

Sigmond Frank, the son of Prussian immigrants Gustoff, a dry goods merchant, and Sarah Frank, was born in Petersburg, Indiana in 1868.⁷⁵ In 1895 he married Anna, the daughter of Washington, Indiana clothing merchant Raphael and Mollie Beitman. (Anna’s sister Flora

⁷⁰ “Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review,” *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

⁷¹ Al. D. Beasley, *Twentieth Century Peru*, 11.

⁷² Al. D. Beasley, *Twentieth Century Peru*, 29; The building is now the Eikenberry-Eddy Funeral Home.

⁷³ “Pioneer in Peru Was Julius Falk- Clothier, Widely Known, Answers Summons Which Comes to All,” *Peru Republican*, May 1, 1914.

⁷⁴ “Miss Falk Married,” *Peru Republican*, July 3, 1914; “Arthur Simon is Now Owner of Falk’s Store,” *Peru Republican*, February 1, 1924.

⁷⁵ U.S. Census, 1880.

married Peru clothing merchant Albert Kittner the same year.)⁷⁶ The couple boarded in a house on East Third Street for the first few years of their marriage while Sig ran his boot and shoe business out of 60 S. Broadway.⁷⁷ In 1901, the couple moved to 125 W. Third and in 1905 they are recorded at 125 N. Hood while “Frank the Foot Fitter” continued business at his Broadway shop.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, a fire ravaged the building that housed Frank’s store, leaving him with \$7,500 in damage and only \$5,000 insurance coverage.⁷⁹ Shortly after the fire, the couple moved to Kokomo and Sig started a new business as an ice cream manufacturer.⁸⁰ Sig Frank passed away in 1928, with Julia dying in 1941.

Sig Frank and his wife Julia Beitman Frank are buried in the Jewish section of Peru’s Mount Hope Cemetery.

Gunzburger

Max Gunzburger, originally from Buffalo, New York, married Dora Kraus, daughter of Charles, proprietor of the Peru Bagging Mill, and Hannah Kraus of Peru, in 1907.⁸¹ Max worked as a traveling salesman early during their marriage. Leaving Dora and their daughter, Jennet (b. 1910) to live with Dora’s parents in the Kraus homestead, 159 W. Main Street.⁸²

Max Gunzberger and Dora Kraus Gunzberger are buried in the Jewish section of Peru’s Mount Hope Cemetery.

⁷⁶ U.S. Census, 1900.

⁷⁷ *Stephen’s Directory of Peru, Indiana for the year 1900*, 71.

⁷⁸ *Pocket Directory of the City of Peru and Suburbs* (Peru: Miller-Wallick Printing, 1901), 84; *Peru City Directory 1905-1906* (Marion, IN: Inter-State Directory Co, 1905), 60; *The 1908-1909 Standard Directory of Peru, Indiana and Rural Routes* (Buffalo, NY: V.M. Pierce, 1908).

⁷⁹ “\$20,000 Fire Loss-Mercantile District of Peru is Visited by a Disastrous Blaze,” *Peru Republican*, February 16, 1906.

⁸⁰ U.S. Census, 1920, 1930.

⁸¹ “Gunsberger-Kraus,” *Peru Republican*, November 8, 1907.

⁸² U.S. Census, 1910; Dora and Jennet are listed in C.J. Kraus’s household. Max does not appear in the Peru census.

Max Gunzburger may be related to Norbert Gunzberger who married Delia Rosenthal, Dora Kraus Gunzberger's cousin. (Delia's father Moses Rosenthal was the brother of Hannah Rosenthal Kraus, Dora's mother).

Haas

Moses Haas immigrated from Prussia (Rhine Province, Germany) in 1860, and settled in Greene County near Worthington, Indiana after serving in the Civil War.⁸³ While in Worthington he started as a merchant. He married Caroline Rosenthal, who moved to Peru from Wurtemberg with her six siblings, in 1869.⁸⁴ By 1880 the couple had moved to Tipton, where Moses continued to work as a merchant, and had six children: daughter Dina (b. 1869), Frank (b. 1871), Mary (b. 1873), Lewis (b. 1876), Hattie (b. 1878) and Albert (b. 1880).⁸⁵

Absalom Haas, a Wabash farmer originally from Ohio, does not appear to have any connections with Moses Haas. Ab Haas's son Homer opened his own medical office in Peru, becoming a leading physician and one of the original directors of the Peru Country Club. Although the Haas family shares their last name with a Jewish family with Peru connections, there is no evidence Absalom Haas's family was Jewish. (Dr. Homer Haas had a Christian burial after his 1927 death in Palo Alto, California.)⁸⁶

Moses Haas and Caroline Rosenthal Haas are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

⁸³ "Moses Haas," *Counties of Howard and Tipton, Indiana* (Chicago: F.A. Battey & Co., 1883).

⁸⁴ U.S. Census, 1870; *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 209.

⁸⁵ U.S. Census, 1880.

⁸⁶ "Dr. Homer C. Haas, Dead at Palo Alto," *Peru Republican*, August 17, 1927.

Heller

In 1895, Bertha Oppenheimer, the only child of Moses and Anna Oppenheimer, and the sole heir to Moses Oppenheimer's considerable wealth, married Samuel Heller, a New York businessman.⁸⁷ The couple resided on Madison Avenue in Manhattan during the winter months and spent summers in Far Rockaway, Long Island. They had two children; Ruth (b. ~1902) and Robert (b.~1906).⁸⁸ Bertha Oppenheimer Heller died unexpectedly in 1919.

A stone for Bertha O. Heller lays alongside her parents is in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery

Herff

Jerome Herff was born in New York, but moved to Wabash as a young man, working as a traveling salesman. In 1875 he married Sarah Baer, daughter of Jacob and Fannie Baer, and the couple had two children: Rheda (b. 1876) and Harry J. (b. 1885).⁸⁹ While in Peru, Jerome was very involved in civic matters, promoting Ulen-Ferritt's electric light project, acting as one of the Home Telephone Co.'s officers, and working in the sidewalk paving business. He was also a member of the Peru Masons.⁹⁰ In 1896 and 1900, Jerome was named the Democratic nominee for Indiana State Treasurer, and moved with his family to Indianapolis in 1910.⁹¹ In Indianapolis, Herff lived with his daughter Rheda at 3025 N. Meridian Street until his death in 1935. His son Harry and Harry's business partner, Randall Jones started Herff Jones Company in

⁸⁷ "A Delightful Party- Celebrates the Betrothal of Miss Oppenheimer to Mr. Heller of New York," *Peru Republican*, December 28, 1894;

⁸⁸ U.S. Census, 1900, 1910; "Death of Mrs. Heller," *Peru Republican*, December 19, 1919.

⁸⁹ U.S. Census: 1880, 1900.

⁹⁰ "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, 30 Mar. 1900; "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935.

⁹¹ "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, 4 June 1902; "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935.

1920, creating emblem jewelry, including class rings. Today Herff Jones is a national company which focuses on graduation accessories, yearbooks, and class jewelry.⁹²

Kaufman

Benjamin Kaufman, born in Germany in 1843, immigrated to the United States in 1850 at the age of 7. By the mid-1860s, he had moved to Peru and in October 1868 he married Pauline Falk, daughter of one of Peru's first businessmen, Moses Falk, and sister to Julius Falk, a well-known Peru businessman in his own right.⁹³ The Kaufmans moved to Winchester, Indiana and had two children: Leo and Bertha. After years in Winchester, the family moved to Boston where Ben worked as a wholesale fish seller.⁹⁴ In 1892, Bertha Kaufman married Jonas Fox, a merchant clothier, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio.⁹⁵ Leo moved back to Peru in 1899 to work as a clerk in his uncle Julius Falk's store. Mrs. Pauline Kaufman suffered a paralytic stroke, and died suddenly in 1900.⁹⁶ Leo died in 1913.

Joshua T., "JT" Kaufman, the owner of the successful clothing store at 68 South Broadway does not appear to be related to Benjamin Kaufman. Joshua, a German-Canadian Jew, immigrated to the U.S. in 1891, moved to Peru, and was joined by his wife Louise in 1898. Although there does not seem to be a familial connection between Joshua and Ben Kaufman, J.T. Kaufman's clothing store moved into the "Red Front" building, 68 S. Broadway, which originally housed Julius Falk's store.⁹⁷

⁹² "Jerome Herff Was Prominent Here Years Ago," *Peru Republican*, March 29, 1935; "About Herff Jones," *Herff Jones.com*, <http://www.herffjones.com/about>, (accessed July 9, 2012).

⁹³ "Obituary," *Peru Republican*, 9 Nov. 1900; U.S. Census, 1900.

⁹⁴ U.S. Census, 1900.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ "Obituary," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1900.

⁹⁷ U.S. Census, 1910; "Pioneer in Peru was Julius Falk," *Peru Republican*, May 1, 1914.

Benjamin Kaufman, wife Pauline Falk Kaufman, and their son Leo Kaufman are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Kittner

David Kittner immigrated to the United State in 1844 at the age of 6.⁹⁸ After he arrived in Peru, he and his brother Henry started a dry good shop in Peru's downtown during the 1860s.⁹⁹ David married Rosa Herff, a fellow German Jew, in 1863, and had two children: Albert (b.1864) and Henry (b. 1865).¹⁰⁰ The family lived at 118 West Sixth Street, sharing the house with David's younger brother and business partner Henry (b.~1840 in Germany), David's younger brother Frederick, who worked as a clerk in the Kittner store, David's younger sister Theresa (b.~ 1858 in Germany), Rosa's widowed mother Yetta Herff, and several servants at different times between 1870 and 1910.¹⁰¹ In 1874, the Kittners moved the store to its prominent 52 South Broadway location in the heart of Peru's business district, and continued to develop a reputation for providing quality clothing, shoes, and home furnishings, and improved the storefront throughout the 1900s.¹⁰²

Elder son Albert married Flora Beitman, daughter of Washington, Indiana merchant Raphael and Mollie Beitman, in 1895, and moved to 171 West Main Street which was only blocks away from the D. Kittner & Sons Store.¹⁰³ By 1908, the couple moved to 134 West Sixth

⁹⁸ U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900; The 1870 census lists Kittner as a native of Baden and Mrs. Kittner as a native of Bavaria, but they are both recorded as Bavarians in the 1880 census.

⁹⁹ "Retires from Business," *Peru Republican*, June 4, 1915.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Census, 1870, 1900.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910; Peru City Directory, 1905-06, 89.

¹⁰² "Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review," *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894; "Retires from Business," *Peru Republican*, June 4, 1915; Peru City Directory, 1905-06, 89; "To Have New Front," *Peru Republican*, July 27, 1906; "Will Improve Store," *Peru Republican*, August 17, 1906.

¹⁰³ U.S. Census, 1900; Peru City Directory, 1900, 99.

Street, a few doors down from David and Rosa.¹⁰⁴ The next year, 1909, Flora died unexpectedly, and the widowed Albert moved back in with his parents.¹⁰⁵

Younger son Henry continued to live with his parents in their West Sixth Street home until his 1902 marriage to Flora Beitman Kittner's younger sister Bertha. (The middle Beitman sister Julia married Peru shoe merchant Sig Frank.) The young couple first made their home at 109 West Sixth Street, across the street from Henry's parents, but in 1906 Henry and Bertha moved to 125 North Hood Street where their son Ralph was born in 1907.¹⁰⁶

The firm D. Kittner & Sons continued to operate the 52 South Broadway store until David's 1915 retirement when the firm officially passed to his two sons.¹⁰⁷ David and Rosa moved to Chicago, and were eventually followed by their sons after they closed the business a few years after their father's retirement.¹⁰⁸ David, considered one of Peru's pioneer businessmen, died at his Chicago home in 1919; Mrs. Rosa Kittner passed away in 1927.¹⁰⁹

Henry and David Kitter, David's wife Rosa, son Albert and his wife Flora Beitman Kittner, and son Henry and his wife, Bertha Beitman Kittner are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Kraus

Charles J. Kraus was born in Bohemia in 1845, and immigrated to the United States in 1860. He settled in Kokomo and married Hannah Rosenthal in 1864. While in Kokomo Charles, also called C.J., ran a clothing store. Hannah and Charles had seven children: Milton (b. 1866),

¹⁰⁴ Peru City Directory, 1908-1909, 110.

¹⁰⁵ U.S. Census, 1910; Flora Beitman Kittner's obituary ran in the January 1, 1901 *Peru Republican*, which was on loan and not available on microfilm during the time of this research.

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Census, 1910; Peru City Directory, 1908-1909, 110.

¹⁰⁷ "Retires from Business," *Peru Republican*, June 4, 1915.

¹⁰⁸ Peru City Directory, 1919-1920; U.S. Census, 1930.

¹⁰⁹ "David Kittner Dead," *Peru Republican*, September 19, 1919; "Mrs. Kittner of Chicago Buried Here," *Peru Republican*, October 18, 1927.

Max (b. 1867), Dora (b. 1868), Jessie (b. 1871), Ida (b. 1872), Helen (b. 1873), and Sydney (b. 1887). By 1880, he and his growing family had moved to Peru, and he had started working at Peru's flax mill.¹¹⁰ Changing the name to the Peru Bagging Mill, Charles and his sons sold their flax bagging to southern farmers to be used when bailing cotton.¹¹¹ In the summer of 1894, Hannah traveled to Atlantic City with her daughter Ida in the hopes that the seaside resort town would help restore Ida's health which had suffered since the girl was bitten by a dog the year before. Unfortunately, Ida died in Atlantic City in October 1894.¹¹² In 1901, Charles decided to strike out on his own, opening Peru's bagging mills, which had been closed for a little over a year, with the help of his sons Milton and Max.¹¹³

Milton Kraus had already started his law career by the time he reopened the Peru bagging mill with his father and brother. That same year, 1901, he was prominent in a proposal for the C.R. & M. railroad to create a route from Muncie to Chicago, and was practicing law in Peru.¹¹⁴ (He was still living with his parents at 159 W. Main Street at this time.) In 1910 Milton was elected County Chairman and in 1916 Indiana Republicans elected him to Congress.¹¹⁵

Max married Clara Strauss of Lyons, New York in 1904. The couple lived in Peru at 112 E. Sixth Street where they raised their daughter Hannah, who was born 1910.

Dora Kraus married Max Gunzburger, a traveling salesman originally from Buffalo, New York, in 1907. Dora had a daughter Jennet in 1910, and continued to live with her parents in Peru while Max was on the road.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ U.S. Census, 1870, 1880.

¹¹¹ Bodurtha, 278.

¹¹² "Death of Ida Kraus," *Peru Republican*, October 5, 1894.

¹¹³ "Bagging Mil Opens," *Peru Republican*, July 3, 1901.

¹¹⁴ "C.R. & M. Railroad," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1901; *Peru City Directory*, 1900, 1901, 1905, 1908.

¹¹⁵ "Milton Kraus Elected County Chairman," *Peru Republican*, February 1, 1910; "Milton Kraus Announces Candidacy," *Peru Republican*, November 19, 1915; "Election Day," *Peru Republican*, November 7, 1916.

¹¹⁶ "Gunsburger-Kraus," *Peru Republican*, November 8, 1907; U.S. Census, 1910.

Daughter Jessie married Isaac Beitman, a senior member of the Wabash law firm Beitman, Wolf, & Co., in 1905 and moved to Wabash.¹¹⁷ By 1919, the couple was back in Peru, living at 159 West Main with Charles and Hannah.¹¹⁸

Little is known about Charles and Hannah's daughter, Helen, who married Morris Mossler in 1911.¹¹⁹

Sidney enlisted in the navy during World War I, and became a career Navy man, being promoted to Captain by the end of the war. He married Harriet Langdon in Cincinnati, in November 1932, and moved to New Jersey.¹²⁰

Charles J. and Hannah Rosenthal Kraus as well as their children Milton, Ida, Dora Gunzburger and her husband Max are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Landauer

Nathan Landauer, a native of Wurtemberg, Germany who immigrated to the U.S. in 1855, married Sidonia, a Wurtemberg woman who moved to the U.S. in 1865, in November 1869.¹²¹ The couple made their home in Peru at 75 North Wabash Street, with Nathan working as a traveling salesman. During the next 15 years, the couple had six children: Ida, Jesse (b. 1874), Leo (b. 1876), Jerome (b. 1879), Harry (b. 1882), and Stella (b. 1884).¹²² In 1873, Ida died at a very young age and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. In 1900, Jesse and his younger brother Leo worked as electricians, while Harry was employed as a clerk at the Berris Hotel.¹²³ Jerome enlisted as a soldier in the Spanish-American War, but returned to Peru after his service. The

¹¹⁷ "A Betrothal Party," *Peru Republican*, February 3, 1905.

¹¹⁸ Peru City Directory, 1919.

¹¹⁹ "Marriage License," *Peru Republican*, April 26, 1911.

¹²⁰ Kraus-Langdon," *Peru Republican*, November 21, 1932.

¹²¹ U.S. Census, 1880; "The Landauer Wedding Anniversary," *Peru Republican*, November 30, 1894.

¹²² Peru City Directory, 1900

¹²³ Peru City Directory, 1900, 1901.

family continued to live in Peru until 1904 when Nathan, then retired, relocated to Chicago with his wife and three youngest children. Harry found work as a dry goods salesman, and Stella was hired as a publishing house's cashier.¹²⁴ (Jesse moved to Marion and was hired as the Soldier's Home's electrician.) Shortly after the move, Jerome died in Chicago after an appendectomy revealed the young man had a fatal abscess on his kidney.¹²⁵

By 1911, Harry Landauer had found his way to Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he ran into trouble with the law. On September 28, 1905, Harry was charged with involuntary manslaughter after a scuffle over blocking the sidewalk resulted in Harry pushing a man into a wooden, cigar store Indian. The man sustained a fractured skull and died, which led to Harry's arrest. Many Peru citizens contributed to a legal fund for Harry, known locally as "a young man of temperate habits and an excellent character."¹²⁶ At his trial in November of that year, Harry's lawyer argued that the push was in self-defense, and that the victim's years of alcohol abuse left him susceptible to such an injury. The jury deliberated for only a half-hour and delivered a not guilty verdict, which was immediately met with cheers from the audience.¹²⁷ Soon after his trial concluded, the Peru local newspaper reported that Harry married a young woman, but did not include specifics on who the woman was or where the ceremony took place.¹²⁸

Stella Landauer, the only girl to make it to adulthood, married Charles Kohn of Chicago in 1912.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ U.S. Census, 1910.

¹²⁵ Peru City Directory, 1905-06; "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, January 27, 1905.

¹²⁶ "Fund for Landauer," *Peru Republican*, October 19, 1906.

¹²⁷ "Involuntary Manslaughter-Harry Landauer is Held at Allentown, Pa.," *Peru Republican*, September 28, 1906; "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, October 5, 1906; "Blames Harry Landauer-Coroner's Jury Makes it Report at Allentown, Pa.," *Peru Republican*, October 12, 1906; "Fund for Landauer," *Peru Republican*, October 29, 1906; "Harry Landauer Writes," *Peru Republican*, October 26, 1906; "Quickly Acquitted-Harry Landauer Found Not Guilty As Charged," *Peru Republican*, November 2, 1906; "Landauer Acquitted-Former Peruvian Not Punished for Accident," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1906.

¹²⁸ "Harry to Marry," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1906.

¹²⁹ "Society," *Peru Republican*, October 27, 1911.

Jerome and Ida Landauer, as well as two of Nathan and Sidonia's children, are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Lehman

The Lehmans, siblings Abraham (b. ~1845) and Carrie (b.~1850) , were originally from Wurtemberg, Germany and lived in Peru during their adult lives. Carrie Lehman married William Cohn in the 1870s, and had two children: Hattie (b. 1873 in Missouri) and Bert (b. 1876 in Indiana).¹³⁰ The young family moved to Peru during the mid-1870s. After William's death in 1878, Carrie's brother 32-year old Abraham, a successful Peru businessman who was one of the flax mill's proprietors, moved in with the widow and her children,¹³¹ until Carrie Lehman Cohn married Felix Moses in 1890; she then lived in Peru until her death in 1916.¹³²

Abraham soon started a family of his own, marrying Ida Rosenthal of Cincinnati in 1884, and fathering four children: Bernard (b. 1885), Minnie (b. 1887), Fannie (b. 1888), and Erma (b. 1893). By the late 1890s, Abraham began investing profits from his bagging mill in other ventures, purchasing 4,600 acres of farm land in Illinois with a group of Peru businessmen in 1895, and putting money into a Kokomo rubber bicycle tire factory in 1896. He sold the Peru bagging mill in 1900, and in January 1901, Abe temporarily moved to Louisville, Kentucky to manage a bagging factory there. By July of that year, he sold his stock in the bagging factory and took his family on a European vacation funded by the \$20,000 he earned in mining stock.¹³³ During the 1900s the Lehmans moved to Indianapolis, with Abe buying into a box factory.¹³⁴ Daughter Minnie married Sidney Katz in 1909, and Irma married John I. Schnitzer in 1916.

¹³⁰ U.S. Census, 1880.

¹³¹ U.S. Census, 1880.

¹³² U.S. Census, 1900; "Death of Mrs. Moses," *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916.

¹³³ "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, July 5, 1901.

¹³⁴ U.S. Census, 1910.

William Riley Lehman, reporter and eventual publisher of *Peru Republican*, does not appear to be related to Abraham and Carrie Lehman. W.R. Lehman was born in Indiana around 1863 and both of his parents were also born in the state.¹³⁵ There is no indication William Lehman's family was Jewish.

Carrie Lehman Cohn Moses is the only Lehman family member buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Max Levi/Levy

Max Levi immigrated to the United States from his home in Prussia in 1875 at the age of 25. He first shows up in Peru records in 1880, working as a clerk, and living in a boarding house on Broadway in downtown Peru.¹³⁶ In 1892 he married Maggie Lehev, born in Indiana to Irish parents, and by 1900 was living in Washington, Indiana (Miami Co.) and working as a baggage handler.¹³⁷ The couple had two daughters: Mildred (b. 1893) and Nora (b. 1896).¹³⁸

While there is no known connection between Max Levi and Felix Levy or either of the Levi families in Peru, there is a possibility he was Jewish since the 1880 census has him living with other Jewish families in a boarding house (Rosenthal, Redelsheimer, Joseph Levi). However, Max had a Catholic service at his funeral in 1915, meaning he might have converted for his wife.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ U.S. Census, 1900.

¹³⁶ U.S. Census, 1880.

¹³⁷ "Marriage License," *Peru Republican*, June 24, 1892; U.S. Census, 1900.

¹³⁸ U.S. Census, 1900.

¹³⁹ "Death of Max Levy," *Peru Republican*, April 21, 1915.

Samuel Levi

Newlyweds Samuel and Sarah Levi immigrated to the United States from Russia in 1869. They moved to Peru where they lived at 170 West Eighth Street. There Sam operated a local junk yard and hide business.¹⁴⁰ The *Peru Republican* described Sam's business as "the leader in its particular line in our city. Mr. Levi is an extensive dealer in leather, shoe findings, hides, pelts, tallow, wool and furs and understands every detail pertaining to this business," and called Mr. Levi "a gentleman highly esteemed by all who know him as an honorable, upright private citizen and merchant."¹⁴¹ The couple had nine children: Joseph, Annie, Lida, Abraham (b. 1874), Belle (b. 1879); Benjamin (b. 1882), Lena (b. 1884), Lewis (b. 1886), and Minnie (b. 1889).

In 1894, Annie Levi married Jacob Strifling, a South Bend businessman.¹⁴² The couple stayed in Peru, with Strifling starting the Chicago Fair store on South Broadway until Jacob took on a business venture in Muncie in 1900.¹⁴³ In 1909, Belle Levi married Moe Amdur of Indianapolis and moved to that city.¹⁴⁴ Louis Levi married Mary L. Sheldon in 1904.¹⁴⁵

Lida married Ike Harwich, also from South Bend, in 1896. After their wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Harwich made their home in South Bend.¹⁴⁶

Joseph Levi moved to Marion, married his wife Gussie and managed a 10-cent store.¹⁴⁷ In 1903, Joseph filed for bankruptcy, claiming \$7,593.23 liabilities and only \$210.11 in assets.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Census, 1900; Peru City Directory, 1901, 135.

¹⁴¹ "Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review," *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

¹⁴² "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, November 9, 1894.

¹⁴³ "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, October 12, 1900.

¹⁴⁴ "Levi-Amdur," *Peru Republican*, April 30, 1909.

¹⁴⁵ "Wedding Licenses," *Peru Republican*, March 25, 1904.

¹⁴⁶ "A Pretty Wedding," *Peru Republican*, August 28, 1896.

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Census, 1910.

¹⁴⁸ "Joseph Levi Bankrupt," *Peru Republican*, August 21, 1903.

Shortly after that he moved to LaPorte, Indiana where he started his own junk yard and had a daughter Lorraine in 1907.¹⁴⁹

In 1912, Samuel moved his junk business from 112 South Broadway to 35 West Second Street.¹⁵⁰ After Samuel's death in 1916, Abraham inherited his father's tallow and hides business.¹⁵¹ Ben stayed in Peru a few years to work with his brother, but ultimately moved to Chicago to live with his mother, widowed sister Minnie, and other sister Lena around 1920.¹⁵²

By Joseph's death in 1935, Mrs. Sarah Levi, Belle Levi Andur, Minnie Levi Dressler, and Louis Levi were living in Los Angeles, California, and Ben had moved back to Peru to work with Abe.¹⁵³

There is no connection between Samuel Levi and William Levi, a prominent Peruvian businessmen buried in Mount Hope Cemetery's Jewish section.

No members of the Samuel Levi family are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

William Levi

William Levi was born in the Wurtemberg town of Nagelsburg, Germany in 1842, and immigrated to the United States in 1857 at the age of 15. He first stopped in Wabash, but a year later settled in Peru, working as a clerk in Nathan Levi's store.¹⁵⁴ By 1870 William had opened his own dry goods store, married Frances Falk, daughter of Peru's pioneer businessman, Moses

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Census, 1910.

¹⁵⁰ "Business Moved," *Peru Republican*, August 30, 1912.

¹⁵¹ *Peru City Directory*, 1919-1920, 170.

¹⁵² U.S. Census, 1920; *Peru City Directory* 1919-1920, 170.

¹⁵³ "Joe Levi," *Peru Republican*, February 15, 1935.

¹⁵⁴ ."William Levi Pioneer Citizen of Peru is Dead," *Peru Republican*, July 25, 1925; U.S. Census, 1860; Nathan (b. 1826) and William (b. 1842) were probably brothers or cousins.

Falk, and had two sons.¹⁵⁵ In all the couple had six children: Edward (b. 1868), Albert (b. 1869), Nellie (b. 1872), Emma (b. 1874), Lillie (b. 1876), and Lulu (b. 1877). Frances Falk Levi died in 1889 at the age of 40, but William continued to live in Peru, developing his Peruvian business interests by supporting the Peru Bagging Mill and eventually opening a banker and broker office in his brother-in-law Julius Falk's store.¹⁵⁶ He was active in civic matters too, organizing Peru's first civic organization, the Miami Club, and convincing the Square D Steel Mill and Carbon Factory to move to the city.¹⁵⁷ William lived in Peru for 72 years, sharing the family home at 115 West Third Street with his youngest daughter Lulu until passing away in 1935 at the age of 87.¹⁵⁸

The Levi's wealth was evident when considering the Levi children's lavish weddings. When Nellie Levi married Hartford City businessman, Mayer Weiler in 1895, it was written in the news that "never had such an elegant array of presents been seen in Peru as were bestowed upon this happy bride," with the newlyweds receiving a fully-furnished house (which included a piano purchased by Edward Levi) in Hartford City.¹⁵⁹ Daughter Emma married Saul Munter of Indianapolis in 1897, the news once again wrote that it was "the greatest social event of the season" which included music by the Peru orchestra.¹⁶⁰ A few years later, in 1903, Edward Levi married Carrie Eisendroth in Chicago's Standard Club before the couple moved to Rochester, New York where Ed was in business.¹⁶¹ In 1906 Lillian Levi married Morris Higer, and moved to Detroit.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ U.S. Census, 1870.

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Census, 1900; Peru City Directory, 1900, 15; "William Levi Pioneer Citizen of Peru is Dead," *Peru Republican*, July 25, 1925.

¹⁵⁷ "William Levi Pioneer Citizen of Peru is Dead," *Peru Republican*, July 25, 1925.

¹⁵⁸ U.S. Census, 1920; "William Levi Plans New House on West Third Street," *Peru Republican*, February 7, 1896.

¹⁵⁹ "Weiler-Levi Nuptials," *Peru Republican*, February 15, 1885.

¹⁶⁰ "Munter-Levi Nuptials," *Peru Republican*, April 30, 1897.

¹⁶¹ "Married Next Tuesday," *Peru Republican*, June 26, 1903.

¹⁶² "Wedding License," *Peru Republican*, February 9, 1906.

Albert Levi, William and Fannie's second son, seemed to follow in his father's footsteps. Known as "Babbie" in his youth, Albert graduated from Peru Central School, and became a Mason before moving to Indianapolis around 1895 and marrying his wife Stella. While there he worked as a traveling salesman and later was connected to the Investors' Syndicate. Albert founded the Indiana Retail Clothiers Association and the Men's Apparel Club; acting as secretary for both groups over the years. The couple had one son, Albert W. Levi, Jr.¹⁶³ By Albert's death in 1935, there were no Levi family members left living in Peru. (Lulu moved to Detroit to live with her sister Lillian Higer.)

William and Francis Falk Levi, their daughter Lulu, and their son Albert, his wife Stella, and Albert and Stella's son Albert Levi are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Felix Levy

Felix Levy, born in Alsace Lorraine, France in 1854, immigrated to the United States in



1874. According to a feature article on his daughter Frances, Felix was born in Paris, and while in Indiana on a business trip, fell in love with Sarah Baer, the daughter of Hirsch, the Or Zion president and local merchant, and Adelheit Baer.¹⁶⁴ The couple married in 1886, with Levy moving into the Hirsch

¹⁶³ "Albert W. Levi Reared in Peru Known Over State," *Peru Republican*, January 12, 1934.

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Census, 1900; "Florence Irving," *Peru Republican*, January 11, 1924.

residence at 11 Court St., and had two children: son Irving (b. 1889) and daughter Florence (b. 1892). Levy managed the French Bazaar, a major downtown Peru dry goods and mercantile store own by the Lafayette firm of Loeb & Hieny. Located at 58 South Broadway, the French Bazaar “immediately jumped into prominence and attained a large trade as the just result of equitable methods and low prices. The local news spoke highly of Felix: “Mr. F. Levy is everywhere highly regarded. Affable and pleasant, he gives special attention to all departments of this business.”¹⁶⁵

When Loeb & Hieny decided to close the Peru store in January 1909, Levy started working with the Fox Brothers Manufacturing Cotton Mill, and is listed as a “underware manufacturer” in the 1910 census.¹⁶⁶ Sarah, the only daughter of a well-known Peru Jewish family, organized the Peru Art Club, and stayed active in the town’s social scene.¹⁶⁷ Irving enlisted the Navy during World War I, being promoted to Captain in 1918 and sailing for Hawaii the next year.¹⁶⁸ Around the same time Florence decided to pursue acting, joining Stuart Walker’s company and spending two seasons in Indianapolis before moving to New York City to further her career. Although she did not have professional training, she was cast in the 1924 Broadway hit “The Last Warning” under her stage name Florence Irving.¹⁶⁹ After serving in the Navy, Irving settled in New York as well. Felix, who was gradually going blind, and Sarah moved to New York City to be closer to their children in 1928, living in the Emerson Hotel during their time there.¹⁷⁰ Florence married and moved to London in the early 1930s. Felix Levy

¹⁶⁵ “Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review,” *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

¹⁶⁶ “French Bazaar Leaving,” *Peru Republican*, November 6, 1908; “Felix Levy Dead in New York,” *Peru Republican*, December 31, 1935; U.S. Census, 1910.

¹⁶⁷ “Levy Rites Conducted,” *Peru Republican*, April 15, 1938.

¹⁶⁸ “Iriving Levy Promoted to Captain at Washington,” *Peru Republican*, July 19, 1918; “Captain Levy Sails for Hawaii,” *Peru Republican*, March 19, 1919.

¹⁶⁹ Florence Irving,” *Peru Republican*, January 11, 1924.

¹⁷⁰ “Felix Levy Dead in New York,” *Peru Republican*, December 13, 1935.

died in December 1935; his remains were transported back to Peru for burial. Sarah died three years later in April 1938.

Felix and Sarah Baer Levy, and their son Irving are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Loewenthal

Nathan Loewenthal immigrated to the United States from Esslinger, Germany in 1880 at the age of twelve and made his way to Peru.¹⁷¹ In February 1890, at the age of twenty-two, Loewenthal partnered with Clarence Hall to open a clothing firm at 20-22 South Broadway Street.¹⁷² The *Peru Republican* described Hall & Loewenthal as “the most popular dealers in clothing, etc., in Peru,” and that the two owners “are highly esteemed in social circles, while in commercial circles they are regarded as men of energy and thoroughly reliable in all their dealings.”¹⁷³ In 1894 he married Harriet “Hattie” Cohn, daughter of William and Carrie Lehman Cohn, also of Peru, and the couple moved into 177 West Third Street.¹⁷⁴ Daughter Alma was born in 1899.¹⁷⁵ Nathan Loewenthal continued to run the Hall & Loewenthal store until his death in 1910. At that point, the business continued under the ownership of Hall and his son Lyman. Hattie and Alma Loewenthal moved to Indianapolis soon after Nathan's death, and Hattie remarried, becoming Hattie Meier.¹⁷⁶

Nathan Loewenthal is buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

¹⁷¹ U.S. Census, 1900.

¹⁷² “Small Talk,” *Peru Republican*, February 3, 1890; Peru City Directory, 1900, 16.

¹⁷³ “Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review,” *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

¹⁷⁴ “Wedding Bells-Marriage of Nathan Loewenthal to Miss Hattie Cohn,” *Peru Republican*, June 29, 1894; Peru City Directory 1900, 107.

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Census, 1900; After William Cohn's death, Harriet's mother Carrie Cohn married local businessman Felix Moses.

¹⁷⁶ Omer Holman, *Here We Live Over the Last Fifty Years: Peru and Miami County, 1885-1935* (Peru, Indiana: Peru Republican, 1936), 15; “Death of Mrs. Moses,” *Peru Republican*, September 22, 1916.

Mergentheim

Lewis Mergentheim, born in the Bavarian town of Fuerth, Germany in 1846, immigrated to the United States in 1866 to join his cousin Eugenia and her husband Charles Sterne in Peru. Sterne, along with his brother Herman, founded the Peru Woolen Mill in 1865.¹⁷⁷ The mill, which manufactured jeans, flannel, cassimere, blankets, and other cloths, employed around 150 people, and eventually expanded to operate in conjunction with the Sterne's natural gas works which ran the mills and supplied "illuminating gas" for Peru's street lights. Lewis started as a clerk at the mill and lived with Charles Sterne's growing family upon his arrival.¹⁷⁸ Gradually, Lewis worked his way up, first to a traveling salesman position and then, after the death of Moses Oppenheimer, becoming a partner in the newly-named firm of Mergentheim, Sterne & Strouse, in 1886.¹⁷⁹ Lewis also served on the board of directors for the Peru Natural Gas & Fuel Company (est. 1886), and the Peru Electric Manufacturing Company (org. 1893).¹⁸⁰

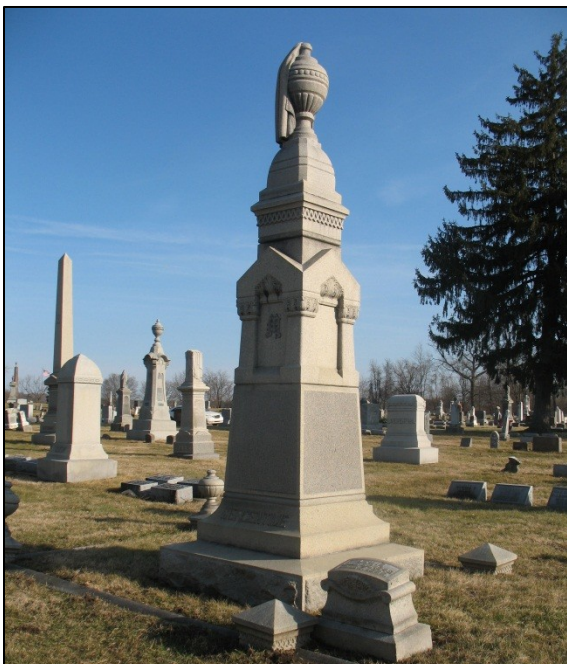


¹⁷⁷ "Lewis Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, June 12, 1896

¹⁷⁸ U.S. Census, 1870.

¹⁷⁹ "Lewis Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, 12 Jun. 1896; Bodurtha, 275-276.

¹⁸⁰ Bodurtha, 279, 282-283.



The rest of the Mergentheim siblings, Sophia, Clara, Mathilda, Louise, Marie, and brother Henry also immigrated from their Bavarian hometown during the 1860s and 1870s.¹⁸¹ Henry settled in New York City. Sophia lived with Charles Sterne's family in Peru for a short time before marrying Adolph Bearss of Peru.¹⁸² Louise married Herman Bearss of Peru, while Mathilda married Jacob Pappenheimer and moved to Fort Smith,

Arkansas.¹⁸³ The youngest sibling Marie lived with Lewis in his house on the corner of Third and Hood Streets.

In April 1896, a workman cleaning the gutters of Lewis Mergentheim's home began to fall off his ladder and Lewis jumped to help the falling man avoid the stone walkway situated below. Lewis ended up cushioning the man's fall, allowing the workman to walk away uninjured, but Mergentheim suffered a broken ankle.¹⁸⁴ While a full recovery was expected since Lewis was in otherwise in good health and only 50 years old, he experienced swelling a few weeks after the accident, and ended up suffering from a lung embolism and passing away unexpectedly. The funeral was attended by many of Peru's business leaders from the past and present, and the Honorable Charles W. Fairbanks, Indiana senator and eventual Vice President of the United States, sent his condolences and flowers.¹⁸⁵ He was buried in the Jewish section of

¹⁸¹ *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 169.

¹⁸² U.S. Census, 1880, "Personal," *Peru Republican*, May 21, 1891.

¹⁸³ "Death of Miss Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, March 21, 1919.

¹⁸⁴ "Mr. Mergentheim's Accident," *Peru Republican*, April 17, 1896.

¹⁸⁵ "Lewis Mergentheim" *Peru Republican*, June 12, 1896.

Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. After Lewis's death, Marie Mergentheim moved to New York City, where she died of influenza in 1919.¹⁸⁶

Felix Moses

Felix Moses appears in Peru records around the time of his 1890 marriage to Carrie Lehman Cohn, with the couple making their home at 179 W. Third Street and Felix working as a traveling salesman.¹⁸⁷

There is some ambiguity surrounding Felix Moses's life. The 1900 Census lists Moses as a German immigrant, coming to the United States in 1875; however, the 1910 census says he is originally from Pennsylvania. There is a peddler named Felix Moses that appears in the 1863 Indiana IRS Tax Assessment list which could very well be the Moses that later lived in Peru if he was indeed born in Pennsylvania.

Felix Moses and his wife Carrie (nee Lehman) Cohn Moses are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Jacob C. Moses, a grocer living in Peru during the 1870s, does not appear to be related to Felix Moses and there is no indication Jacob, his wife Elizabeth, or any of the couple's four children were Jewish.

Oppenheimer

Moses Oppenheimer was born in the Wurtemberg, Germany town of Berlinger in 1825, and was raised by extended family after being orphaned at a young age.¹⁸⁸ He immigrated to

¹⁸⁶ "Death of Miss Mergentheim," *Peru Republican*, March 21, 1919.

¹⁸⁷ Peru City Directory, 1900, 1901, 1905, 1908.

America with his sister Henrietta¹⁸⁹ in 1849, joining his brother who had already settled in Carrollton, Illinois and he worked alongside his brother as a gunsmith. He later moved to St. Louis where he worked in a white lead manufactory.¹⁹⁰ Wanting to get into merchandising, Moses wrote his uncle Moses Falk, a prominent Peru businessman for advice and soon moved to Peru to clerk in Falk's store. He quickly moved up the corporate ladder, becoming his uncle's business partner in 1853, only four years after his arrival in the United States. In 1856 Oppenheimer married Anna Thalheimer, a young woman he met while in New York on a purchasing trip.¹⁹¹ Anna, one of ten siblings, was also from Wurtemberg, and had traveled to America in 1851 at the age of fourteen to learn millinery. The couple worked in Falk's store until 1865 when health ailments led Oppenheimer to sell the store and visit Europe in hopes that the vacation would benefit Moses's health. Once they returned to Peru, the Sterne brothers, close friends of Moses Falk and owners of the Peru Woolen Mill, approached Oppenheimer about joining the firm and supplying capital to rebuild the mill after it was gutted during a disastrous 1868 fire. Moses agreed, purchasing the best equipment and making the mill a very profitable enterprise. The couple lived at 116 W. Third Street and had two daughters: Bertha (b. 1876) and Nettie (b. 1878), who died at the age of 18 months. In July 1885, the Oppenheimers planned to summer in Atlantic City with friend Moses Rosenthal after visiting Moses's physician in Philadelphia. During the examination, the physician told Moses that death was eminent and not

¹⁸⁸ *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties* claims he grew up with his grandparents while Oppenheimer's *Peru Republican* obituary "Death of Mr. Oppenheimer," says it was his uncle who raised him.

¹⁸⁹ Henrietta is only mentioned in the *Biographical and Genealogical History*.

¹⁹⁰ "Death of Mr. Oppenheimer: He Was a Prominent Manufacturer of Peru," *Peru Republican*, August 14, 1885.

¹⁹¹ *Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, and Tipton Counties*, 763-767.

to start the journey home; four weeks later, in August 1885, Moses Oppenheimer died of a heart embolism.¹⁹²

In 1895, Bertha married Samuel Heller, a New York businessman.¹⁹³ The couple resided on Madison Avenue in Manhattan during the winter months and spent summers in Far Rockaway, Long Island. They had two children; Ruth (b. ~1902) and Robert (b.~1906).¹⁹⁴ Anna sold the Oppenheimer family home to Mrs. Jackson Tillett for \$7,000 in 1900, saying she planned on staying in Peru but didn't need such a big house now that she was widowed.¹⁹⁵ After renting a house on South Miami Street that she shared with boarders, she eventually joined the Hellers in New York, staying there until Bertha Heller unexpectedly died in 1919.¹⁹⁶

Mrs. Anna Oppenheimer moved back to Peru after Bertha's death, sharing her home with boarders until her death in 1926 at the age of 95. Peru's oldest woman, Anna died after complications resulting from a broken hip received while walking on Third Street.¹⁹⁷

Moses and Anna Oppenheimer are buried and there is a stone for their daughter Bertha Oppenheimer Heller in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Prince

David Prince, a native of Massachusetts, and his wife Sarah, born in Ohio to Bavarian immigrants, first lived in Boston where David worked as a bookseller.¹⁹⁸ During the 1880s the family moved to Peru where David became mail carrier for the west side of Peru and purchased a

¹⁹² "Death of Mr. Oppenheimer," *Peru Republican*, August 14, 1885.

¹⁹³ "A Delightful Party- Celebrates the Betrothal of Miss Oppenheimer to Mr. Heller of New York," *Peru Republican*, December 28, 1894;

¹⁹⁴ U.S. Census, 1900, 1910; "Death of Mrs. Heller," *Peru Republican*, December 19, 1919.

¹⁹⁵ "Small Talk," *Peru Republican*, March 30, 1900.

¹⁹⁶ U.S. Census, 1900.

¹⁹⁷ "Mrs. Anna Oppenheimer-Pioneer Citizen, a Nonagenarian, Passes Away at County Hospital," *Peru Republican*, December 17, 1926.

¹⁹⁸ U.S. Census, 1880.

house on Third Street.¹⁹⁹ While in Peru, the family grew, with Nathan (b. 1883), Solomon (b. 1887), Louis (b. 1892), Rebecca, and David joining eldest daughter Josephine (b. 1880 in MA).²⁰⁰

David died in 1894 of pneumonia, leaving Sarah a widow at the age of 41.²⁰¹ Many of the couples' children decided to stay in Peru with Josephine, Nathan, Solomon, and Louis living together in 1910. Even after Solomon married his wife Edna in 1920 and had two children, (Phyllis, b. 1922, and Forrest, b.1929) and Louis got married in the 1920s and moved into their own homes; the rest of the siblings staying together in the Third Street House.²⁰² Over the years Solomon managed a billiards parlor, Nathan became a machinist helper with the railroad.

Sarah Prince and children Josephine, Nathan, Solomon and his wife Edna, and Rebecca are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.²⁰³

Ramsey

Roy Ramsey, born around 1895, lived in Miami County's Harrison Township and married Hazel in 1912 at the age of 17. Roy, Hazel, and their four children, twins Irene and Geraldine (b. 1913), Ruth (b.1916), and Clarence (b. 1919), eventually moved to Peru during the 1920s where Roy worked as a locomotive fireman for the steam railroad, and they rented a house on West Main Street.²⁰⁴ Roy died in 1967; Hazel passed away in 1987.

Roy Ramsey and his wife Hazel are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. There are no other indicators that the Ramseys were Jewish or distantly related to

¹⁹⁹ "Death of David Prince," *Peru Republican*, March 9, 1894.

²⁰⁰ U.S. Census, 1990.

²⁰¹ "Death of David Prince," *Peru Republican*, March 9, 1894.

²⁰² U.S. Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

²⁰³ In his obituary it says David Prince was buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, another name for Mount Hope, but no grave marker could be found with the other Prince markers in the Jewish section.

²⁰⁴ U.S. Census, 1920, 1930.

anyone else buried in this cemetery section.



Roy and Hazel Ramsey grave marker in Mount Hope Cemetery.

Rosenthal



Moses Rosenthal immigrated to the United States from Wurtemberg, Germany at the age of fifteen in 1860, and went to Peru to work in the Sterne Brothers' Woolen Mill, living with Herman Sterne and his family.²⁰⁵ By 1880, Rosenthal had become owner of Peru's Flax Mill as part of the firm Lehman, Rosenthal & Kraus,

²⁰⁵ U.S. Census, 1860.

had married his wife Francis, who was originally from Kentucky, and had six children: Max (b. ~1868), Delia (b. ~1870), Walter (b. ~1872), Eugene (b. ~1874), Albert (b. ~1877), and Edwin (b.~1879).²⁰⁶

Most of the Rosenthal siblings immigrated to the U.S. and settled in the Peru area. Sister Rosa stayed in Wurtemberg, but Joseph, Isaac, Hannah, Bertha, Caroline, Clara, and half-siblings Samuel, Nathan, and Julian all settled in the Peru area.²⁰⁷

Caroline married Moses Haas around 1863, and had seven children. Hannah married Charles Kraus in 1864, and had three children: Milton (b. 1866), Max (b. 1868) and Dora (b. 1869). Joseph lived with the Kraus's during the 1870 when he worked in Charles's clothing store.²⁰⁸ (Bertha Rosenthal also married a Kraus.)

Caroline married Moses Haas, a Greene County merchant, in the early 1860s and had six children.²⁰⁹

Joseph Rosenthal, Hannah Rosenthal Kraus, her husband Charles, and children Milton, Dora Kraus Gunzberger, and Ida Kraus, and Caroline Rosenthal Haas and her husband Moses Haas are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Sterne

Brothers Herman (b.~1826) and Charles(b.~1830) Sterne, natives of Wurtemberg, Germany, immigrated to the United States in the mid-1850s. The pair founded the Peru Woolen Mill in 1865. After the majority of the mill was destroyed in an 1868 fire, the Sterne's expanded

²⁰⁶ Bodurtha, 278; U.S. Census, 1880.

²⁰⁷ *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 209; In Joseph Rosenthal's will, dated 1896, he names his brother Moses's widow and children, Charles Kraus and his sister Hannah Kraus, and his sister Rosa who is still in Wurtemberg as heirs. He specifically says nothing is given to his brother Isaac, sisters Bertha Rosenthal Kraus, Caroline Rosenthal Haas, and Clara Rosenthal Kochendale, and his half-brothers Samuel, Nathan, and Julian.

²⁰⁸ U.S. Census, 1870.

²⁰⁹ U.S. Census, 1870, 1880.

the mill, and offered Moses Oppenheimer, a successful Peru merchant, position as a partner in exchange for funding to rebuild the damaged building and equipment. The mill, which manufactured jeans, flannel, cassimere, blankets, and other cloths, was located on West Canal Street employed around 150 people, and eventually operated in conjunction with the Sterne's natural gas works which opened in 1874, and ran the mills and supplied "illuminating gas" for Peru's street lights.²¹⁰ Herman immigrated with his wife Sophia, and they had seven children: Esther (b.~1856), Emanuel (b. 1859), Harry, Irma, Alice, and Eugene.²¹¹ Charles married Eugenia Fries of Cincinnati, a native of Bavaria and cousin of Lewis Mergentheim; they had nine children: William, Emma, Mary, Edwin, Albert, Lillie, Charles, Nellie, and Stella.²¹² Herman died in 1879, Charles in 1880, and Charles's wife Eugenia in 1881.

Herman and Sophia Sterne and their children Esther, Emmanuel, and Cora, and Charles and Eugenia Sterne, as well as their children Lillie and Charles are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery. Emanuel (d. 1869) and Cora (d. 1872) Sterne are the first two recorded burials in the cemetery's Jewish section.

Strouse

Brothers Harry (b. 1852) and David (b. 1859) Strouse were born in Wurtemberg, Germany and settled in Peru, first working as book keepers in the Peru Woolen Mill. In February 1877, Harry Strouse became one of the Woolen Mill's partners, with the firm being renamed Mergentheim, Sterne & Strouse in 1886.²¹³ When the initial natural gas boom of the early

²¹⁰ Bodurtha, 169, 275-276.

²¹¹ *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 238; Herman leaves money for the care of his parents' graves in Berlichinger, Wurtemberg's Jewish cemetery.

²¹² *Miami County, Ind. Will Records: 1843-1900* (ISL Genealogy), 237; In his will dated 10 March 1880, Charles Sterne bequests money to the Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, the Jewish Orphan Asylum in Cleveland, and leaves money for a Jewish Agricultural College if one is established, as well as his family.

²¹³ Bodurtha, 275-276.

twentieth century ended, David Strouse organized the People's Oil Company with the hopes of finding oil in Peru. Harry and David together organized the Valley Oil Company, which leased land and ended up drilling one oil well.²¹⁴

The entire Strouse family, Harry and his wife, David, their two sisters, and their mother, moved east in the early 1900s.²¹⁵ David ended up living with his sisters Carrin and Pauline Myers, in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

No Strouse family members are buried in Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Wertheim

Adolph Wertheim, born December 1858 in Austria-Hungary, immigrated to the United States in 1871 at the age of thirteen.²¹⁶ Here he met Otilia Cohn, another Magyar immigrant who had been in the United States with her family since 1865. The pair was married in 1883, and made their home in Peru. Here Adolph started his own tailor shop in 1889 at 53 South Broadway and the couple raised their two sons: Ralph (b. 1885) and Franklin (b. 1891).²¹⁷ The *Peru Republican* called Wertheim the town's prominent tailor, "a man of vast practical experience in his profession, possessed of a continental training in every detail of the art."²¹⁸ Franklin died in 1911 and Otilia's widowed mother, Fannie Cohn lived with the couple until her death in 1919.²¹⁹ Ralph married Bessie Wise of Toledo in 1917, an event covered by the noted Jewish

²¹⁴ Ibid., 282-283.

²¹⁵ "Our Jewish Population," *Peru Republican*, March 13, 1905.

²¹⁶ U.S. Census: 1900; Census records between 1900 and 1930 list Mr. and Mrs. Wertheim's birthplace as Austria (1900), Magyar (1910), Budapest (1920) and Hungary (1930).

²¹⁷ U.S. Census: 1910.

²¹⁸ "Peru Historical Descriptive and Commercial Review," *Peru Republican*, December 21, 1894.

²¹⁹ "Death of Mrs. Cohn," *Peru Republican*, June 20, 1919., Mrs. Cohn is buried in Chicago.

paper *The Israelite*, and the couple moved to Chicago where Ralph worked as a trunk salesman. Their son Frank was born in 1920.²²⁰

Adolph and Otilia Wertheim, their son Franklin, and Ralph and his wife Bessie and son Frank, are buried in the Jewish section of Peru's Mount Hope Cemetery.

²²⁰ "Wertheim-Wise," *Peru Republican*, January 12, 1917; U.S. Census, 1920.

Appendix: Jewish Owned Businesses in Peru, Indiana

Unknown	Mercantile Store	Louis Affelder	1896-1910
Corner Wabash & Main (Odd Fellow Hall Basement)	Baer Bicycle & Bicycle Repair	Barney Baer	1900-1910s
35 E. Main	Baer Bicycle & Sundries	Barney Baer	1920
E. Fifth Street (Old Emerick Opera House)	Baer Bicycle & Sundries	Barney Baer	1920-1926
Unknown	Clothing store	Hirsch Baer	Before 1890
68 S. Broadway	Falk's "Red Front" Store	Julius Falk	1880-1887
1-3 S. Broadway	Julius Falk	Julius Falk, Arthur Simon	1887-1914
1-3 S. Broadway	Julius Falk	Arthur Simon	1914-1920s
Between First & Second Streets	Falk & Sterne	Moses Falk,	1850-1859
No. 5 Broadway (near Canal Street)	Falk Store	Moses Falk, Moses Oppenheimer	1859-1878
60 S. Broadway	Frank the Foot Fitter	Sigmond Frank	1895-1906
58 S. Broadway	French Bazaar	Felix Levy	1886-1909
20-22 N. Broadway (Brownell Building)	Hall & Loewenthal	Nathan Loewenthal	1900
52 S. Broadway	D. Kittner & Sons	David Kittner, Henry & Albert Kittner	1874-1916
18 ½ N. Broadway	Milton Kraus Law Office	Milton Kraus	1908
	Peru Bagging Company	Charles J. Kraus, Milton & Max Kraus	1900-1909
	Peru Flax Mill	Abraham Lehman, Moses Rosenthal, Charles Kraus	1880-1900
W. Canal Street	Peru Woolen Mill	Charles & Henry Sterne	1865-1868
W. Canal Street	Peru Woolen Mill	Charles & Henry Sterne, Moses Oppenheimer, Lewis Mergentheim	1872-1885
W. Canal Street	Peru Woolen Mill	Lewis Mergentheim, Charles Sterne & Harry W. Strouse	1886-1896
112 S. Broadway	Hides, Leather & Junks	Samuel Levi	1870-1912
Broadway Between First & Second Streets	Sterne Dry Goods	Henry Sterne	1860
53 S. Broadway	Wertheim Tailors	Adolph Wertheim	1900
23 E. Main	Wertheim Tailors	Adolph Wertheim	1908
35 W. Second	Hides, Tallow, Etc.	Sam Levi, Abe Levi	1912-1930s

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Monroe County History

Bloomington, the county seat of Monroe County, was settled in 1815. It is the home to Indiana University, founded in 1820, it is one of the oldest institutions of higher learning west of the Alleghenies. The first Jewish family to arrive in Bloomington was the brothers Isaac, Samuel and Levi Kahn, from France around 1855. Soon after their arrival, they opened their clothing business. In 1860 their nephew Moses joined the business. After serving as intern in the business with his uncles for several years, Moses joined Solomon Tannenbaum in business. In 1883, after a disastrous fire, Tannenbaum withdrew from the partnership. Moses paid back all creditors, re-opened the business, and was one of the founding members of the Bloomington fire department. Moses died in 1920.

The Becovitz family came to Bloomington in 1893 from Poland. Abe opened a fruit store, but by 1900 he had moved out of the county. Two of his sons moved to Bedford (Lawrence County) to open a junk business. Later they opened a clothing store called *Loubens*. After an argument between the brothers, Loubens became *Ben's* store, while Louis started the *Vogue*, an upscale women's clothing store. Louis also opened an audio store called *HiFi Specialists*.

Other Jewish families in Bloomington were Zelda and Clarence Baum, Ida Lashofsky, and the Kadison and Cohen families. The Kadisons owned a cigar and billiard parlor on the west side of the square, which opened in 1909. In 1916 the Kadisons joined Moses Wolf selling clothing.

In 1917, Irving Fell came to Bloomington to study music at Indiana University and to help his family in the scrap metal business. Fell operated the first Hebrew Sunday school, which met at various homes.

The Moses Montefiore Synagogue, designed by architect George H. Miller, was completed in 1889. It was rebuilt in 1892 after a fire. It served as an active synagogue until 1959, when it was sold to the Unity Church.

The first Hillel (the college division of B'nai B'rith) building was built in 1936. Members of the Jewish community began using it for a Sunday school.¹ The wife of the Hillel Rabbi, Mae Clement, wrote a book called *Without My Gloves* about her life in Bloomington in 1940, discussing the anti-Semitic attitude of the community. In 1943 the Indiana/Kentucky Association of B'nai B'rith convinced the National Hillel Commission to purchase a three-story brick building (the Cravens' dormitory for men) as the new location for the IU Hillel. Ben Becovitz started the drive for the new Hillel building; the building was dedicated in 1943.

Little social interaction occurred outside of holiday functions between Jewish faculty and the few Jewish businessmen and professionals in town. By 1965 the Jewish community had 25 families and had decided to incorporate as the University Jewish Community, while still using the facilities of Hillel and IU. Known as the Beth Shalom Congregation, by 1971 they built Beth Shalom Synagogue. Both the Hillel and the Beck Chapel on the Indiana University campus were used for Jewish events. By 1973, there was a Bloomington Jewish Community building on 3rd Street. Also in 1971, a Jewish section of the Valhalla Memory Gardens was established.

Some of the Jewish faculty did not want to affiliate or help with fundraising. Melvin Plotinsky broke away and started a new group called Anshe Torah. This group no longer exists.

Dr. Henry Fishel established the Jewish Studies Department at Indiana University in 1969. The Jewish Studies Department at Indiana University became one of the leading centers in the United States. It was established in 1969 and designated as the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University.

G. George Fox talks about being a rabbi at a reform congregation in Bloomington, 1908-1910 in *Lives and Voices: A Collection of American Jewish Memoirs*. Stanley Chyet, ed. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication society of America, 1972.

Footnotes

¹ The Hillel was established to serve the needs of the Jewish students at Indiana University.

² http://www.zbt.org/about_zbt/history.htm (Accessed September 12, 2006).

Noble County Jewish History

A rumor may have enticed the first Jews to settle in Noble County, specifically Ligonier. The 1854 newspapers announced that the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad would pass through Ligonier, a village with 300 residents. Recent German immigrants Frederick William (F. W.) Straus and Solomon Mier recognized the potential economic opportunities a railroad offered and relocated to the small northern Indiana town.¹ Although the railroad company never installed a line through Ligonier, Straus and Mier stayed and created multiple economic opportunities for themselves and their Jewish relatives.²

Straus and Mier's first years in the United States mirrored other early Hoosier Jews. The two immigrants settled near friends from their birth country, including Joseph Steifel who owned an Auburn general store. Steifel helped Straus and Mier by teaching them some English and furnishing them with items to peddle.³ After a dispute Straus and Mier severed ties and each man opened his own businesses. Although competitive with each other, Straus and Mier offered the same assistance they had received from Steifel to subsequent immigrants. With their newly-arrived relatives, both Straus and Mier built successful business firms.

F. W. Straus formed the Straus Brothers Co., after his brothers Jacob and Mathias immigrated to Ligonier. The Strauses opened a general store in 1860 and the *Citizens Bank* in 1868 and constructed an entire block of buildings by 1888. They also ventured into real estate and manufactured buggies. F. W. and Mathias retired to Chicago in the 1880s, leaving Jacob to control the Straus firm with his sons Simon and Isaac and his son-in-law Abraham Goldsmith. The Strauses expanded their interests, controlling the *Farmers Bank* of Albion, the *Auburn State Bank*, and the *Commerce Bank* of Fort Wayne. The family invested early in the telephone and

formed the *Warsaw Telephone System* which established toll lines throughout northern Indiana. Their farm real-estate business, *Straus Quality Farms*, had branches in Fort Wayne, Chicago, Detroit, and Ontario, Canada.⁴

Solomon Mier and his family were equally as successful. Mier operated a clothing business in Ligonier before selling the company to two employees in 1873. Like Straus, Mier had other businesses to manage. Mier owned or invested in the *Banking House of Solomon Mier*, the *Bank of Wayne*, and the *Cromwell State Bank*, owned the title for a northern Indiana electric railway, and manufactured buggies, carriages, and the early automobile, the Runabout. Contemporary reports recognized the firm *Sol Mier & Co.* as one of the largest farmland dealers in the world.⁵

Straus and Mier's Jewish relatives and friends also enjoyed success, organizing businesses that capitalized on Noble County's agriculturally-based economy. Historian Lois Fields Schwartz writes, "The Jewish merchants formed a monopoly in clothing and general merchandise stores, grain and livestock, and land and farm brokerages."⁶ Jacobs owned a general store, Loeser traded horses, Schloss operated a dry goods business, Selig dealt cattle, and Wertheimer bought and sold grain, seed, and wool. These businessmen purchased regional farmers' crops and livestock and sold them to Chicago and Toledo firms and the farmers patronized the Jewish general stores. A study found that in 1878 Ligonier's one-hundred stores grossed \$1,000,000; the town's ten Jewish-owned stores contributed one-third of the total sum.⁷

Ligonier's Jewish population flourished in the late nineteenth century along with the Jewish-owned businesses. By 1865 Ligonier boasted at least fifteen families who formed the Congregation Ahavath Shalom and elected

officials including Mathias Strus, Isaac Ackerman, Jonas Decker, H. B. Falk, Solomon Mier, Leopold Schloss, and F. M. Straus. The Orthodox congregation conducted services in members' homes, required Bar Mitzvah for all thirteen-year-old boys, observed dietary laws such as separate dishes for milk and meat products, and its members wore hats and shawls during worship. In 1871 the congregation built a small synagogue on Main Street. They introduced reforms including installing family pews instead of separate seating for men and women. By 1876 Ahavath Shalom adopted the book of liberal Reform Judaism.

As the local Jewish population swelled to over fifty-five families, the congregation built a more elaborate red-brick temple at 503 South Main Street. Both Jews and non-Jews celebrated its 1889 dedication with a procession, music, sermons, meals, and a ball. The congregation practiced Reform Judaism and replaced their German-language sermons with English and confirmed both boys and girls.⁸

Temple membership declined as older generations died and subsequent generations moved to larger cities in the early twentieth century. In 1904 a part-time rabbi conducted services and in 1932 the congregation only held services on the High Holy Days and the Sabbath School ceased operation. By 1948 the congregation had dwindled to fourteen members.⁹ The temple was sold several times in the second half of the twentieth century to the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, the Trinity Assembly of God Church, and the Ligonier Public Library.¹⁰ Although its function has changed, the building still features its original stained glass window with the large Star of David over its main entrance.

Footnotes

¹ Lois Fields Schwartz, “The Jews of Ligonier: An American Experience” (Fort Wayne: The Indiana Jewish Historical Society, January, 1978) 5.

² *The New York Times*, 11 November 1984.

³ Nancy Romero, “Rags to Riches Stories Recorded There,” *The News-Sentinel*, 16 August 1975.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Schwartz, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰ Karen Murphy, “Exodus: The Jews of Ligonier,” *The Indianapolis Star*, 1989.

Porter County History

In 1836, Porter County was formed, including the territory now comprising both Porter and Lake Counties.¹

French explorers, traders, and missionaries were the first Europeans to visit and live in the area with the Native Americans. In 1822, the first permanent white settler was Joseph Bailly, a fur trader.

Valparaiso, the county seat, was originally platted as Porterville in 1836. Pennsylvania Railroad reached as far west as 1858 and many of the public buildings of the square were constructed in 1850.

Jacob Lowenstein, an early merchant, founded *Lowenstein's Department Store*. He was from Lithuania and came to America in the 1880s. He worked as a peddler, but eventually could afford to establish a store. His son Mandel "Nick" Lowenstine founded *Indiana Steel Company* and later the *Central Steel and Wire Company* in Chicago.

Other influential business leaders included Alex Lippman, who came to Valparaiso in 1900 and traded hides, furs, and metals; his company dissolved in 1950. Sigmund Freund opened a summer resort on Flint Lake, just north of Valparaiso, in 1910, which he ran until the 1920s. His



Alex Lippman's home in Valparaiso (Porter County).

son, Edmund, was a lawyer in Valparaiso.

From the early 1900s until about 1918, several Jewish families owned businesses in the downtown area. Louis Szold owned a store, the Lilienthal family owned a store, David Poncher owned a shoe store, Boris Kozlenko owned a shoe store, Max Bernhart and Ben Pncus were tailors, and Isaac Simon owned a furniture store. Morris Linkimer established *Linkimer's Shoe Store* in 1919. The family ran this business until 1970.

Between 1920 and 1925 several families established businesses. Sam Salberg opened a men's clothing store, Abe Magid opened *Premier Food Market*, Sam Kozlenko opened shoe store, and Mandel Derman operated a rooming house. A.J. Shauer owned the *Old Sheridan Movie Theatre*, and then later built the *Premier Movie Theater*.

Other individuals included Adolph Kolner, who owned a wholesale dress business, Louis Sokoloff who operated a rooming house, Ben Donchon who was a merchant in North Judson, but worshipped in Valparaiso, I.R. Vision was a peddler, Jacob Henry



The Premier Movie Theater (Porter County) as it looked in 1980. Photo: Gene Gladson Collection, Indiana Division of Historic Prservation and Archaeology.

operated an overall factory, Joseph Gross had a clothing store, Theodore Bodenheimer was a baker, Boris Kozlenko owned a shoe store, Carl Erea worked on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and A.J. Barnetet owned a clothing store.

In the 1930s, Albert Withal owned the *Valparaiso Metal Company*, Israel Sudekoff owned Sudekoff Dry Cleaners, Sam Simon owned a car dealership, Kalman and Hilda Meyer owned a clothing store, Hyman Miller owned Miller's Market, Chester and Ralph Baker owned Spesco Plumbing and Heating, Abe Retzkoff owned Retzkoff Poultry (formerly Lippman's Hide and Poultry). Burton Langer owned Fetla's Bargain Center, Joanne Cristea and Pearl Vision owned J.J.'s Near New Clothing, and Alan Gluck owned Record mart.

Congregation Adas Israel was founded in 1920. Services were held in private homes, but High Holiday services required the rental of the Knights of Columbus Hall. In 1946, a building was finally purchased; the synagogue was called Temple Israel. In 1984 a fire swept through the building and a new building was constructed on different land.

A religious school was founded soon after the original synagogue was built. In 1952, a section of Graceland Cemetery was dedicated for

Jewish burials. Members of the temple were also active in the greater community, serving on boards and participating in general philanthropy. David Lilienthal was the first chair of the United States Atomic Energy Commission; he also



The Lowenstine family mausoleum in the Jewish section of the Graceland Cemetery in Porter County.

served as director of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The city of Portage, just east of Gary, Indiana has Beth El Cemetery (AKA Temple Israel Cemetery) started in 1924. The congregations are located in Gary, Indiana.

Of the buildings associated with the Jews of Porter County, 26 were surveyed. Zero were rated as Outstanding; two were rated as Notable; 23 buildings were rated Contributing; and one was rated Non-Contributing.

Footnotes

¹ F.A. Battey & Co, The History of Porter County, Indiana (Chicago: F.A. Battey & Co., 1882).

St. Joseph County Jewish History

Located in central northern Indiana along the Michigan border, St. Joseph County was established in 1830. Some of the county's earliest residents operated trading posts, exchanging furs, maple sugar, and baskets with the Native Americans. Later residents opened formal stores and sold clothing and dry goods. Jewish merchants immigrated from Germany and settled largely in the cities of South Bend and Mishawaka. They ran businesses, built houses of worship, and bonded with each other and local German Christians through social clubs.

SOUTH BEND

In 1878 South Bend's population included 125 Jews. By 1912 that figure had increased to 1,200, the third largest Jewish population in the state.¹ A 1960 survey counted 805 Jewish households and 2652 individuals. This number declined throughout the 1970s as younger generations moved to larger cities.² Nevertheless, the present local Jewish community, the remaining built environment, and documentary evidence serve as reminders of the rich St. Joseph County Jewish heritage.

The earliest St. Joseph County Jews peddled before settling in South Bend and Mishawaka and opening stores. These German-Jewish business owners typically served as prominent leaders within the South Bend Jewish community. Others ventured into banking and real estate. South Bend Jews became increasingly professionalized the longer they resided in the city and with subsequent generations.

The formation of an association was amongst the first Jewish community activity in the county. As part of religious custom, early South Bend Jews established a burial society in 1859 even before organizing a synagogue. The Hebrew Society of Brotherly Love, founded by Henry Barth, Abraham Hanauer, Theo J. Seixas, Henry Goodman, and Meyer Livingston, pledged to provide and maintain a suitable burial ground for the local Jewish

community and properly bury the disadvantaged. The organization purchased land on the west side of Niles Avenue between Cedar Street and Crescent Avenue. Twenty-two burials were performed before the Singer Company, a sewing machine cabinet factory, purchased the site in 1883 for a parking lot. The graves interred at this site were removed in 1884 and reburied in Rose Hill Cemetery, a portion of South Bend's City Cemetery. The Indiana Historical Bureau and the Michiana Jewish Historical Society installed a historical marker in 2002 to commemorate the former site of the Hebrew Society of Brotherly Love Cemetery.¹⁰

After establishing a local burial society, Jewish communities often formed a congregation and secured a synagogue or temple. Although part of a single religious community, South Bend Jews enjoyed a population large enough to assemble separate congregations according to how they interpreted Jewish law and its malleability. They established houses of worship that conformed to different denominations of Judaism including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist.

The Hebrew Orthodox congregation organized in 1887 and met in various locations including the home of Louis Feldman at 720 West Division Street. In 1916 the group purchased the 410 South Taylor Street site where they soon constructed a redbrick Georgian-Revival-style building. The structure features two Stars of David above the pilasters and Hebrew words above the main entrance. The Jewish congregation worshipped there from 1922–1970 when they relocated to their present location, 3207 High Street. Their new 1971 institutional-style structure features two Stars of David on the front



The 1971 Orthodox synagogue in South Bend (St. Joseph County).

door handles. The Sweet Home Missionary Baptist congregation currently uses the Taylor Street building for their services despite severe damages from a 1970 fire.

The congregation Sons of Israel worshipped in a 1902 red brick functional-style building with arched windows, a decorative arch with Hebrew scribe at the top of the main façade, and two Stars of David mounted to the corners. B'nai Ysrael Reconstructionist Congregation took over the site in 1982 before deeding it to the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana in 2003. In 2005 an individual purchased the property with plans to refurbish it as a private residence.¹¹

The Reform Temple Beth-El congregation performed religious services in a building at 604 West LaSalle Avenue from 1906–1950. At that time, they moved to a 1950 redbrick institutional-style structure purchased from the city. The interdenominational Peoples Church used the former temple after Temple Beth-El moved to their present location at 305 West Madison Street, a 1950 redbrick institutional-style structure. In 1971, the congregation purchased a new site.

The Conservative Sinai congregation inhabits a 1951 redbrick institutional-style synagogue at 1102 East LaSalle Avenue that features a Star of David mounted on the dome. The congregation organized in 1932 and first met on the second floor of buildings at 114 East Wayne Street and the southwest corner of Monroe and Michigan Streets. Sinai purchased a building at 410 West Jefferson Street in 1935 and worshipped there for sixteen years before relocating to the LaSalle Avenue synagogue.

A 1916 wooden Italianate-style building on William Street accommodated The Hebrew Orthodox Shul until the congregation relocated in 1922. The structure was later called Hachnosis Orchim and provided housing and kosher meals to Jews traveling through South Bend. Its current owners use it as a private residence.

Although they worshipped in several different congregations, South Bend Jews organized associations that united the Jewish community and celebrated their German heritage. Many of the same individuals who opened dry goods and clothing stores helped found Jewish and German organizations. Typically Jewish communities created a B'nai B'rith Lodge to unite the Jewish community facing Gentile discrimination after they had established a burial society.¹² Yet, South Bend Jews did not found a B'nai B'rith Lodge until the 1920s, sixty-some years after they formed the Hebrew Society of Brotherly Love. Instead, the city's Jews bonded with local Christians because of their shared German ethnicity and demonstrated this relationship through several shared social clubs.

The turnverein, a combination gymnasium, social club, and cultural center acted as a vital organization for Hoosier Germans.¹³ Ten local leaders including Moses Livingston founded the South Bend Turnverein in 1861. Other German clubs included the German choir and the Germania Lodge. Jews participated as both members and officers of these clubs. The close social contact between the South Bend German Jews and German Christians extended beyond these clubs. Jews served as pall bearers at Christian funerals, Christians attended Jewish weddings, and German-Christian-owned businesses donated funds for the construction of Temple Beth-El.¹⁴

Jewish organizations existed as well. A local post of the Workmen's Circle, which celebrated Yiddish cultural events and supplied health and education services to the South Bend Jewry, met at 214 South William Street from 1921–1927. The group organized in 1907 and was active through the 1930s.

Organized in 1917 the Hebrew Institute Society used their 420 South Franklin Street building to host weddings, dinners, adult and youth group meetings, and religious education classes from 1920–1963. The Society sold the building to Sears Roebuck who razed it for a parking lot.

A private social club named City Club was located at 903 East Jefferson Boulevard from 1947–1975. The Jewish War Veterans, Maj. Gen. Maurice B. Rose Post 318, met at 301 South William Street from 1947–1962.

New York City native Theodore J. Seixas (1802–1882) moved to South Bend in 1857 and opened a grocery store. Seixas added dry goods to his inventory when he partnered with Ephraim Gerstle. After his business failed in 1868, Seixas solicited prominent businessmen to organize the *St. Joseph County Savings Bank* in 1870. His new venture thrived, netting \$400,000 in deposits within twelve years.³

After peddling in Philadelphia, German immigrant Henry Barth (1818–1895) opened a South Bend clothing store in 1847. Barth also started successful lumber companies by partnering with native-born elite in both Indiana and Ohio and invested in a local mill. A South Bend paper noted in Barth's obituary that he "aid[ed] any enterprise that was calculated to improve South Bend."⁴

Bavarian Abraham Hanauer (1818–1909) immigrated to South Bend in 1859 and established a successful dry goods and clothing store at 82 and 84 Michigan Street. South Bend’s first German choral society, The Maennerchor, met at Hanauer’s store. Hanauer later worked as a traveling salesman for the *LaPorte Woolen Mills*. Hanauer lived with his wife and four children on the corner of Marion and Michigan Streets and served as an executive of the Germania Lodge.⁵

In 1856 German cousins Meyer and Moses Livingston moved to the northern Indiana city and opened a small dry goods store four years later. The partnership dissolved in 1876 and Moses became the sole proprietor. The 58 Washington Street store grew into “one of South Bend’s leading small dry goods and clothing establishments.”⁶ After 1876 Moses partnered with brothers-in-law Moses and Samuel Adler in the *Adler Brothers* clothing store and later launched *The Hub*, another clothing shop. Moses actively participated in both Christian-German clubs and in Jewish community organizations such as the Hebrew Society of Brotherly Love. He helped found the South Bend Turnverein and offered his clothing store as a meeting place for social and business gatherings. Moses and his cousin Meyer, who opened a meat market, belonged to the Germania Lodge and the Maennerchor.

Brothers Samuel and Moses Adler immigrated to South Bend in 1857. They worked as clerks before opening a clothing and boot store and the *Adler and Company Hatters*. Their sister Carrie married Moses Livingston, with whom they partnered. Moses Adler belonged to German organizations such as the Turnverein and the Maennerchor.⁷

Brothers William and Simon Lantz owned the *New York Clothing Store* on the southwest corner of Michigan and Washington Streets. They offered a wide selection of items including “collar, cuffs, gloves, hosiery,

handkerchiefs, shirts”⁸ Another Washington Street store, owned by German-Jewish immigrant Isaac Kahn, specialized in hats and furs.

Other South Bend German-Jewish businesses enabled local Jews to purchase products specially prepared to meet religious dietary laws. Mort Soslowksi operated the *Meyer Sofan Kosher Meat Market* at 612 West Division Street (later Western Avenue) from 1914–1943. Samuel Hershberger ran the *Hershberger-Zonenberg Kosher Meat Market* across the street at 611 West Division Street from 1921–1943. Samuel Zonenberg owned the business from 1943–1960. Abraham Cohen owned the *Progressive Kosher Bakery* at 431 South Chapin Street from 1921–1935. According to residents, the bakery operated into the 1950s. Benjamin Cooperman managed *Cooperman’s Kosher Bakery* down the street at 503 South Chapin from 1921–1960. Both bakeries and meat markets have been torn down.⁹

MISHAWAKA

Although smaller than South Bend, nearby Mishawaka also contains evidence of a local Jewish community including burial grounds, a synagogue, and a school.

A Uniroyal Plant parking lot replaced the Anshe Sholem Synagogue at 210-212 North Spring Street in Mishawaka. The congregation worshipped there from circa 1943–1966 before the building was purchased and razed.

The Hebrew Orthodox Association Cemetery is located on the east side of Logan Street south of Jefferson Boulevard. The cemetery was founded in 1892 and houses the Jewish Memorial Chapel, a 1964 redbrick functional-style building in the form of the Star of David. The chapel is dedicated to the six million Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II.



The 1964 chapel dedicated to Holocaust victims in Mishawaka (St. Joseph County)

In 1945 South Bend and Mishawaka Jewish leaders established the Jewish Community Council of St. Joseph County, Indiana, which was reorganized in 1978 as the Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley. Amongst other objectives this group pledged to coordinate, foster, and promote Jewish community activities. The council succeeded in fundraising for Holocaust refugee immigrants and Jews returning to Israel, sponsoring dances, summer camps, and lectures, and responding to anti-Semitic incidents.¹⁵

Although South Bend Jews enjoyed a close relationship with German Christians in the nineteenth century, there is some evidence of twentieth-century anti-Semitism. Housing addition “Morris Park” employed a covenant that excluded Jewish owners or occupants. The South Bend public schools leased their facilities for Protestant religious education activities and public school teachers often sang Christian songs or taught the New Testament in the classroom. The Hebrew Orthodox Cemetery suffered from vandalism and local restaurants distributed anti-Semitic literature.¹⁶

The St. Joseph County Jewry created a strong community within South Bend and Mishawaka. They partnered with family members to operate businesses, formed leagues with fellow Jews and fellow Germans, and assembled into congregations to worship. Even though their population numbered greater than most Indiana counties, St. Joseph County Jews developed close-knit relationships.

In St. Joseph County, ten structures were surveyed. Two were rated Outstanding, three were rate Notable, five were rate Contributing, and none were rated Non-Contributing.

Footnotes

¹ “Jews in Five Major Indiana Cities,” from *American Jewish Yearbook in Peopling Indiana*, eds., Robert M. Taylor, Jr., and Connie A. McBirney (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 322.

² Roger Birdsell, “The Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley: Continuity and Change” (South Bend: Michiana Jewish Historical Society, Inc., 1999), 9-10.

³ “The ‘German Jews’ in South Bend,” 102.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 100-101.

⁶ Ibid., 100.

⁷ Ibid., 101

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ron Grossman, “Jewish Communities Fade in Small Towns: Synagogues Stand as Sole Reminders,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 2004.

¹⁰ Roger Birdsell, “A Burial Ground for Deceased Israelites: Jewish Cemeteries in South Bend” (South Bend: Michiana Jewish Historical Society, 2002), 1-4.

¹¹ Margaret Fosmoe, “A Man’s Home is His Temple: Long-vacant Building Will Be Residence and Office,” *South Bend Tribune*, 2 August 2005.

¹² “The ‘German Jews’ in South Bend,” 102.

¹³ Ibid., 105.

¹⁴ Ibid., 107.

¹⁵ Roger Birdsell, "The Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley: Organizing a Jewish Community Council" (South Bend: Michiana Jewish Historical Society, 1998), 3-49.

¹⁶ Ibid., 27-31.

Tippecanoe County History

Tippecanoe County was organized in 1826. The city of Lafayette, incorporated in 1853, is the county seat. The first congregation, Ahvas Achim Congregation, was formed Lafayette in 1851. They had a Hebrew school and a cemetery, and by 1869 had built a temple by architect Jacob Welschbiling; this synagogue was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The name of the congregation was changed to Temple Israel in 1919. The congregation sold the building in 1969 and built in nearby West Lafayette.



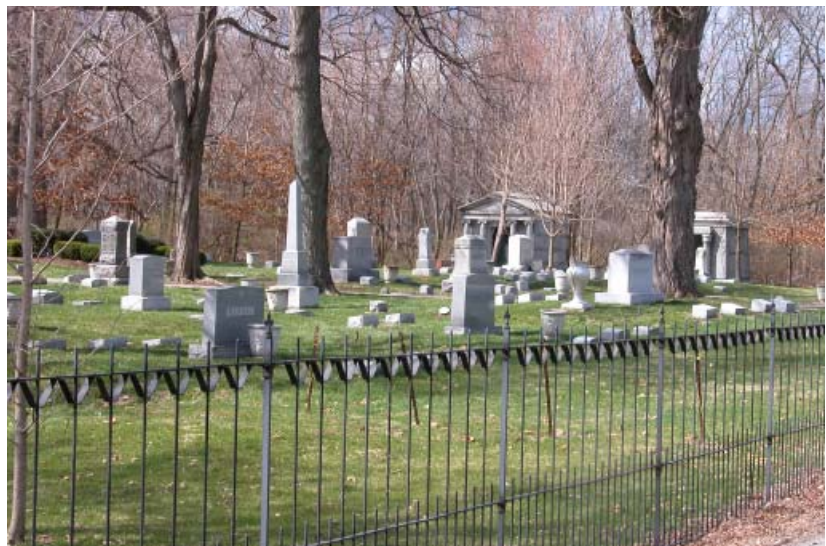
Temple Israel in Lafayette (Tippecanoe County), which is still in use as a church today, as it looked when listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

In 1889, another minyan came together to organize the Sons of Abraham, the Orthodox congregation. At first, they held services in a rented space, until a temple could be built in 1916. A second synagogue was built in 1940 and still in use today. This temple sits in the middle of a neighborhood, so that when it was built, members could walk to temple as is the custom in the Orthodox tradition. The Sons of Abraham have a cemetery within the Ahavas Cemetery for their burials. There was a Sisterhood of Sons of Abraham. ¹

The city of Lafayette has had a long history of Jewish business owners. Heintz Rosenwhitzengery was listed as a peddler in 1860, Samuel Bom was a grain dealer in 1869, Henry Rosenweig was a clothier in 1865 and in 1875 he was also listed as a pawn broker, Leo Dreyfus was a butcher in 1869 working for *Meyer and Kurtz* a butcher shop owned by Charles and Daniel Kurtz, Henry Strauss and A. Strauss were clothiers in the 1860s, Emanuel Ullmann owned *E. Ullman & Co* in 1869, M. Ullmann owend a store that sold groceries and provisions, and Solomon Wise, who was a trustee of Ahavas, owned *S. Wise and Bros Store*, a notions and drygoods store.



Other influential individuals included Jacob Kurtz who worked as the City Clerk in 1875, Jacob Lion (Leon) who was was a clothier, had a cigar shop, and was a Trustee of Ahavas when formed; Mose Berger, Oscar Winski, and the Perlman brothers were all junk dealers in the



The two congregations in Lafayette (Tippecanoe County) share land for their respective burial grounds.

1940s. Mose Berger also owned *Berger Steel*. Harry Rosenthal owned *Harry Rosenthal's* in 1940. The Loeb family has a long history in the county as business owners and for their participation in many philanthropic activities. Julius L. Loeb opened *Loeb & Hene* in 1875; by 1940, it was still in the family, owned by Samuel Loeb. Louis Loeb was listed as a peddler in 1865. The Loeb family gave money for a fountain at Purdue University, located in West Lafayette.

Footnotes

¹ Sam Harris, An Address by Sam Harris for the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Congregation Sons of Abraham, Lafayette, Indiana 24 September 1989.

Vigo County History

Terre Haute is Indiana's ninth largest city and the county seat for Vigo County. The first indication of permanent white occupation coincided with the construction of Fort Harrison in 1811,¹ while the first record of a Jew in Terre Haute is 1827 when Samuel Judah (1798-1869) of Vincennes, who purchased land in the county. He descended from a family of Spanish Jews, who traveled to Canada, then New York before coming to Indiana. Judah later served in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1827 to 1829 and from 1837 to 1841, acting as Speaker in 1840-1841. From 1829 to 1833, he was U. S. Attorney in Indiana.²

Farming, milling and pork processing constituted most of the economic operations the city. The National Road reached the city in 1835 and then in 1849 Wabash and Erie Canal reached the city. During this time, several Jews moved into the city; their exact date of migration is unknown, but in 1845, David Arnold, H. Moss, David Marsh, and Joseph Billingheimer purchased land to form the Terre Haute Israelite Burial Society.

The 1850 census lists at least 11 Jewish adults living in Terre Haute.³ In 1858, a group of men came together to formalize a congregation. These leaders included N. Berlanger, Charles Springer, B. Kuppenheimer, Charles Alshuler, and Sam Mack. The group was named Terre Haute Zions Gemeinde. By 1868, a B'nai B'rith Lodge (Gan Eden Lodge #110) was founded.⁴ In 1872, the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Aid Society was formed and in 1879 and the Sunday School was started.

In 1882, as an outgrowth of Zion Gemeinde, the Hebrew Congregation was organized; it met in a rented hall, where the B'Nai B'rith and Sunday School met. In 1891, the congregation dedicated a synagogue, named Temple Israel. The Sewing Society, a ladies auxiliary of Temple Israel, supported the choir, raised money for

the temple, and contributed to the Terre Haute community. In 1898, the Terre Haute chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women was formed.

As late as 1882, most of the community was composed of German Jews.⁵ But by 1880, Eastern Jews started moving into the community. By 1886, enough Orthodox Jews settled in the Terre Haute to form a second synagogue, Congregation B'nai Abraham. H.G. Goldberg was first president; other leaders include Meyer Levin, Benjamin Becker, and Luis Brown. Today, the United Hebrew Congregation is a result of a merger which took place in 1935 of the Reform Temple Israel and the Orthodox Temple B'nai Abraham.

In 1854, Philip Schloss came to Terre Haute. He owned several businesses, served in the Civil War, and became a leader of the community (he served as a city council man, State Senator, and president of B'nai B'rith). Bavarian born Schloss was one of the most prominent manufacturers of clothing. By 1862 he became a partner in business with Goodman Sr. By 1867, on his own, he built one of the largest business of manufacturing clothing in the city. In 1874 he was elected a member of the common council of the city of Terre Haute.⁶

Leopold Goodman opened his business in 1855; in 1871, he sold it to his nephew Lee Goodman and it became



The Philip Schloss home in Terre Haute (Vigo County).

Goodman and Hirschler. Lee was on the city council and overseer of the cemetery. Dr. Leo Weinstein came to Terre Haute in 1878. He served on the City Council and was one of the founders of Union Hospital. A.B. Felsenthal was born in German in 1849. He came to Terre Haute in 1870. He earned his law degree, and eventually was elected Justice of the Peace, member of B'nai B'rith. Isaac Fecheimer was president of the Temple Israel; he moved to California in 1913.

Adolph Herz founded the Terre Haute Commercial Club (the first Chamber of Commerce) in 1899. He had come to Terre Haute in 1867 as a merchant tailor. He started his own business called *Herz Bazaar*, becoming the largest specialty store in Midwest and employing 165 people. He was also director of *McKean National Bank*, trustee of the Rose Orphan home, president of the local society settlement, director of the Terre Haute Society for Organizing Charity. Herz died in 1917.

Rebecca Torner was a teacher at Wiley High School. She helped start the first art society in town, was a charter member of the Terre Haute Women's club, a member of the first literary club, a member of the Sex Hygiene National Committee, and worked on social hygiene.

1899 Dr. Herman Bernheimer set up a medical practice. Jonas Stouse, a German born in 1844, came in 1900, serving as president of Temple Israel and opening a retail grocery store. He died in 1932.

Harry Schloss was president of Temple Israel, served as secretary of the Vigo County Democratic Society, was a City Councilman, and Trustee of the State School for Boys. His wife was president of the Terre Haute

chapters of the Council of Jewish Women and of the Fresh Air Mission, a nonsectarian organization. She was honored by the local anti-tuberculosis campaign and was involved in other community efforts.

Mrs. S. Kleeman was President of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society. The society, from its inception in 1872, responded to various financial emergencies and in numerous instances had given considerable individual assistance to many people throughout the community. Mrs. Kleeman was known to be an untiring worker in helping others.

Mrs. Mariana Mack, who came to Terre Haute in 1853 at the age of seventeen, was the first President of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society. For a period of over forty-one years, she continued to work for the welfare of others.

Mrs. Herz Straus, who came to Terre Haute in 1868, was one of the charter members of the Benevolent Society. She became president and held this office for thirteen years. She was President of the Auxiliary Society of the Reform Synagogue. Mrs. Straus also participated in many community projects over many years and was an active member of the Board of the Local Society for Organizing Charity.

Mrs. Lee Goodman came to Terre Haute in 1876. She became president of the Sewing Society and the local section of the Council of Jewish Women. She was also involved in many secular organizations such as the Needlework Guild and was president of one of its sections.

Mrs. Adolph Joseph was secretary to the local chapter of the National Council. In 1909, she and the local community were honored when she was chosen to serve on the National Committee of Peace and Arbitration, and the Housing Committee of the State Federation of Women's Clubs.

Mrs. Leon Stern, the daughter of Rabbi Mayer Messing of Indianapolis, honed her social work skills there and then put them to good use after having moved to Terre Haute. Mrs. Stern was the treasurer of the State Federation of WOMCII'S Clubs and director of the State Suffrage Association.

Leopold Joseph was president of Temple Israel from 1914 to 1922. In 1904, he and his brother took over their family clothing store, *Joseph's*, and continued the business for 36 years. He was a member of Terre Haute Lodge No. 86 F&AM, B'nai B'rith and contributed to many civic efforts.

Isaac Ades was a small child when he left Russia with his mother and three brothers to join his father in Terre Haute in 1892. He sold papers, took a road job for a theater group for ten years and then came back to Terre Haute, when he purchased a theater at 8th and Wabash Avenue. In April 1917, he purchased the *John Hanley Tent and Awning Company*, changing its name to *Terre Haute Tent and Awning Inc.* and remained the owner until his death in 1955. He was an active member of Temple Israel and B'nai B'rith.

Ben Becker was born in Germany in 1889. At age 13, he came to New York and later became a shoe salesman in Milwaukee. In 1908, he moved to Terre Haute to open his own shoe and repair store at 1105 Wabash Avenue. Then, in 1915, he opened a store at Fifth and Wabash, where his business experienced a dramatic increase. He also became involved with several local enterprises and several out-of-town shoe companies.

Ben Goldman was born in 1866 in Baltimore. In 1901, he came to Terre Haute and opened the *Terre Haute Furniture Company*. He was general manager, secretary, and treasurer it grew so much that he moved to large quarters in 1917. It was the largest retail furniture store in Vigo County. He was an active participant in the Chamber of Commerce, Business Men's Club, Retail Merchants Association, and the Phoenix Club.



Two of the Goodman family homes in Terre Haute (Vigo County).



Louis Silberman was born in New Albany, Indiana in 1869. He started a furniture business on Wabash Avenue about 1890 and, by 1915, it had grown from one floor to nine floors, plus a large warehouse. He was founder of *Superior Mattress Co.*, which became an important industry in Terre Haute. He became recognized as a fine leader in local business affairs. He was president of the Retail Merchants Association, a member of the Board of Review of the Phoenix Club, the Odd Fellows and Temple Israel.

Samuel T. Greenberg was born in Buffalo, New York in August, 1875. He went to school in Indianapolis and Terre Haute. At 15 he started to work in the clothing store of *Thorman and Schloss*. In 1901 he and his brother-in-law, Jacob R. Finkelstein, went into business; in 1907 they changed the name to *A. L. Greenberg Iron Company* with Samuel as secretary/treasurer. His holdings came to include stock in the *Linton Ice and Cold Storage Company*, the *Linton Opera Company.*, the *Southern Indiana Railroad*, the *Phoenix Building & Realty Co.*, the *Kettle Creek Coal Company.* and the *Riley Oil Company*. He was a member of the Phoenix Club and Temple Israel.

Jacob R. Finkelstein was born in Iowa in 1877. He was educated in Indianapolis, where his father was a large dealer in used iron. At age 13 he was traveling as a buyer of used iron. He became the president of *A. L. Greenberg Iron Company* in May of 1907. The offices and yards were located at the corner of Tenth and Crawford Streets.

Julian Silverstein was president of *World Wide Travel* in the 1960s. Benjamin Goldman was secretary, salesman and manager for *Terre Haute Furniture and Carpet Company*. Harry W. Cohen was the department manager for *A. Herz*, originally a notions store, but later developed into a ladies clothing store. Leo Joseph owned *M. Joseph's Sons*, a clothing store and tailor shop as early as 1906. Morris and Lena Rosenfeld

*United Hebrew
Congregation, a
combination of all
congregation in Terre
Haute, now occupies
Temple Israel.*



owned *Rosenfeld Brothers*, a clothing store as early as 1912. Charles and Carolyn Gurman owned *I. Gurman & Sons*, a barrel dealer from the 1930s – 1960s.

Herz Park is named for Adolph Herz, who died in 1916. Parsons Hall, a building at Indiana State University, was gift by Benjamin Blumberg.

The Jewish people of Terre Haute made huge contributions to the general community compared to their numbers. They organized and contributed two benevolent associations for relief of the poor, and two associations to assist transients. They served on the boards and held offices in the Local Society for Organizing Charity, Fresh Air Mission, the Penny Lunch Movement in the schools, the Social Settlement, Hospital Boards, Day Nursery, Boys Club, Com-mercial Club, Retail Merchants Association, City Council, State Legislature, etc.

Of the 797 sites identified in Vigo County with an association to the Jewish community, 109 buildings are still in existence; all buildings were surveyed. Five were rated Outstanding (Temple Israel, the Star Building, the Sycamore building, Temple B'nai Abraham, and Highland Lawn Cemetery), two were rated Notable, 100 were rated Contributing, and 2 were rated Not Contributing.

Footnotes

¹ Robert Taylor, Errol Wayne Stevens, Mary Ann Ponder, and Paul Brockman, *Indiana: A New Historical Guide* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society) <http://web.indstate.edu/community/vchs/thhist.htm> (accessed September 5, 2006).

² Herman Koren, *The 150 Year History of the Jewish Community of Terre Haute, Indiana, Terre Haute, Indiana*: Indiana State University, 1999, 12; Indiana Historical Society, [Indiana Historical Society - Manuscripts and Archives Department](http://www.indianahistory.org/library/manuscripts/collection_guides/m0171.html#HIST), Judah-Brandon Family Papers, 1820-1950 Biographical Context, http://www.indianahistory.org/library/manuscripts/collection_guides/m0171.html#HIST (accessed September 5, 2006).

³ Koren, 12

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶ H. W. Beckwith, *History of Vigo and Parke Counties, Together With Historic Notes on the Wabash Valley*, (Terre Haute, Indiana: H.W. Beckwith, 1880), 243-244.

Wabash County Jewish Heritage

Wabash County, located in north-central Indiana was named after the Wabash River. Its largest city, Wabash, became the county seat in 1835.¹ The area developed in response to the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal, part of an ambitious state project to provide waterway transportation across Indiana. North Manchester, the second largest city in Wabash County, is home to Manchester College. From its founding through the turn of the nineteenth century, Jewish immigrants played an important role in shaping the history and development of Wabash County. While the Jewish population was concentrated mostly within the city of Wabash, there was also a Jewish presence in North Manchester, with other families scattered throughout the county.

In terms of Indiana Jewry, Wabash's first Jewish resident was Michael Hyman who settled there in 1846.² Work opportunities also attracted new residents to Wabash. With the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal, Wabash became a regional market and shipping center. Early industries included lumber, flour and grain mills, livestock, corn and wheat. Wabash also had a cannery, brewery, slaughterhouse and furniture factory. A variety of Jewish businessmen opened stores, markets, factories, and other services that served all citizens of Wabash. In 1854, Charles Herff, Michael Hyman, and Leonard Hyman pooled their resources to purchase one acre of land, which became known as the Hebrew Cemetery.³ The gentlemen held this ground until the Rodet Sholem Congregation was organized in 1869, when they donated the land to the congregation. Today, the cemetery



Rodet Sholem Cemetery in Wabash (Wabash County).

contains approximately 300 Jewish graves.⁴ By 1877, the Congregation Rodef Sholem were able to secure a regular rabbi. They established a B'nai B'rith and a ladies Aid Society. Rodef Sholem was formally dissolved in 1946.⁵

Michael Hyman settled in Wabash in 1846.⁶ He began as a peddler in the county, but eventually saved enough money to start a grocery store and dry good business. Hyman worked as a clerk until he founded a dry goods and clothing store in 1840s along with Leonard Hyman. He was also involved in the *Star Woolen Mills* and a



The grave of Michael Hyman, the first Jewish resident of Wabash (Wabash County).

linseed oil mill. Besides several successful business ventures, Hyman was an influential leader in the Jewish community, joining his brother Leonard Hyman and Charles Herff in establishing Wabash's first Jewish cemetery in 1854. Hyman was involved in forming the Jewish congregation of Rodef Sholem and served in various roles, such as a negotiator in the purchase of its building.⁷

Wabash had at least three Jewish owned meat markets: Nathan and Benie Bockman owned *Bockman Meat Market*, Max Kahn owned *Kahn Meat Market* and also sold liquors, cigars, and tobacco, and Louis Wolf was grocer.

Isaac Beitman and his family were active in the establishment of the Rodef Sholem congregation.⁸ Isaac was one of the founders of the *Beitman & Wolf* store. The store was founded in 1865, selling household goods, dry goods, and groceries. By 1934, the store sold exclusively men's' and women's clothing. The store closed in 1980.⁹

In the 1840s, Charles Herff and Benjamin Moses both ran grocery stores, while M. and L. Hyman owned a dry good and grocery store.¹⁰

Benjamin Wolf purchased this store in 1865; the store became known as *Beitman and Wolf*.¹¹ Wolf, a Jew,

was born in 1842. He came to America in 1860. By 1863, he opened a butcher shop and then began opening other businesses. He purchased *M. and L. Hyman Store* in 1865.¹² In 1865, he joined David Beitman and opened *Wolf & Beitman*.¹³ He also bought and sold various properties in the county, owned farms and bought and sold horses. He was involved in civic organizations, was one of organizers of *Wabash National*



The location of Wolf & Beitman in Wabash (Wabash County).

Bank and served on its board of directors; later he was involved in *Farmers and Merchants Bank* of Wabash. The Wolf family was involved in the establishment of Rodef Sholem Congregation.¹⁴ Benjamin died in 1912.¹⁵

Isaac New, a German, was a Wabash businessman for over 40 years. He moved to Lagro in Wabash County in 1861 and then into the city of Wabash. He died in 1907. He owned a dry goods and clothing store, *I. New and Sons*.¹⁹ His son Alexander was born in Wabash in 1861. After attending Wabash public schools, Alexander attended Washington and Jefferson University where he graduated with a law degree. He moved away to Kansas City, but in 1930, he donated a statue of Abraham Lincoln to the city of Wabash in his parents' name.

The city of Wabash had two scrap businesses owned by Jewish families. Abraham and Jeanette Sposeep owned *A. Sposeep & Sons*. Abe came to American from Russia in 1912, settling in Fort Wayne. By 1926, he moved to Wabash and started the scrap yard. Michael Sposeep, grandson of Abe currently runs the business; he served as a Wabash City Court Judge in the 1970s also.²⁰ Benjamin Cook was a partner with Moie Cook in the *Simon Cook Co.*

Other individuals in the community include Charles Herff, who helped found the Jewish cemetery, was a trustee of Rodef Sholem congregation, and owned a grocery store; David Marks formed partnership



A. Sposeep & Sons is a scrap yard in Wabash (Wabash County), one of several Jewish owned yards in town.

with Jacob Hyman and purchased *Star Woolen Mills*.²¹ Hyman was a wool buyer before founding the mill; Carrie Staadecker was a successful businesswoman in Wabash. She owned a millinery shop and was involved in Rodef Sholem congregation; Moses Mandelbaum was a cigar maker, while Aaron Mandelbaum was a city attorney along with his involvement in the grocery store *Wolf & Mandelbaum*. Edward Beitman was a partner in *Beitman & Wolf* and involved in Rodef Sholem. Samuel Simon was a partner with his brother Aaron in *Simon Brothers*, a dry goods and clothing store.

Herman and Carrie Wolf were livestock dealers, owning *H & H Wolf*. Also were partners in *Rindsberg & Wolf*, a dealer in fine horses. By 1901, he was owner of *Wolf & Talbert*, importers of horses. Herman had a grocery store with his son Louis at the turn of the century. By 1907, Aaron Mandelbaum was involved in the grocery store, *Wolf & Mandelbaum*.

Herman and Blanche Schwarts (Schwartz) owned a tailor shop in the 1940s. Before that, Herman was a partner with Roy Packard in *Schwartz & Packard billiards* (1912). Louis and Herbert Bockman owned *L. Bockman & Son* shoe store (1907-1924). Louis Hyman was president of the *Wabash Canning Company*. Abe Simon and Louis Bockman owned *Simon & Bockman* boots and shoe store (1897-1901). Abe was also involved in the Wabash chapter No. 292 of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, serving as an officer. By 1918, Abe Simon had a buggy business in downtown Wabash. Adolph Doob operated the New York Store and was dry goods dealer. Henry Herff owned *Herff Saloon and Billiards* (1897).

The Pioneer Hat Works, founded by Nathan Meyers, recruited and employed a large number of Jewish immigrants. There were approximately 100 Jews living in Wabash prior to World War I.¹⁶ When the *Pioneer*

The Pioneer Hat Work, which was owned by Nathan Meyers, recruited large number of Jewish immigrant to work at the factory.



Hat Works closed shortly after war, Wabash's Jewish population began to decline. By the 1940s, Wabash's Jewish population had fallen so sharply that the few remaining families were not sufficient to support the temple. The Rodef-Sholem Congregation disbanded and the building was sold to a Christian denomination.¹⁷ It is believed that only four Jewish families remained in Wabash by the 1970s- the Wolf family, son and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Abe Sposeep (Sam and Michael Sposeep) and Robert Zimmerman's widow and family.¹⁸

NORTH MANCHESTER

Best known for its association with Manchester College, which was renamed and moved to North Manchester in 1889 (formerly located in Roanoke, Indiana and known as Roanoke Classical Seminary),²⁴ North Manchester was laid out beside the Eel River, several miles from the Wabash and Erie Canal. North Manchester benefited from its proximity to the canal until the town of Lagro eclipsed it, which was closer to the canal. With the construction of the railroad, which went through North Manchester, it again became an important shipping point for goods.²⁵ The town was platted in 1836 and incorporated in 1874.²⁶ North Manchester had one



The house to the right was one of the Oppenheim homes in North Manchester (Wabash County).

particularly prominent Jewish family, the Oppenheims. Jacob Oppenheim operated a clothing store (Oppenheim's). Jacob was from East Prussia and came to America in 1870. He opened his first store in Paw Paw, Michigan in 1873. By 1875, he sold this store and moved to North Manchester. He opened Oppenheim's New York Cheap Store. Jacob also



This building was the location of the Oppenheim Store in North Manchester.

founded the North Manchester Telephone Company.²⁷ Jacob died in 1883, when the store passed to Jacob's son Benjamin; from 1922 to 1949, Ben's son Gene operated the store; Gene's son Phil took over control. The store celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1975. The store has since closed, but the building remains.²⁸ The family also established the Oppenheimer Foundation.

Footnotes

¹ Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Wabash County Interim Report, Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1982.

² Joseph Levine, From Peddlers to Merchants, *Indiana Jewish History*: July 1979, 12.

³ International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, *Cemeteries of North American – Indiana*, <http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/northamerica/indiana.html> (accessed August 11, 2006).

⁴ Levine, 12-13; Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, *Indiana Cemetery and Burial Ground Registry Form - Hebrew Cemetery*, 2001.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iv.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷ John Morris, History of Wabash County, Indiana. Containing a History of the County: Its Townships, Towns, Military Record, Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men: Personal Reminiscences, Etc, Chicago: John Morris, Printer, 224.

⁸ Levine, 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹ Morris, 252.

¹² Levine, 6.

¹³ Weesner, 576.

¹⁴ Levine, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, iv.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁹ "Wabash Historical Information 1880s-1970s", M 743 IJHS, box 119, folder 22, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana; Weesner, 561; Homer T. Showalter, *The Story of the Lincoln Monument and its Donor- Alexander New*, Wabash: Wabash County Historical Society, no date.

²⁰ Lezlie Leeka, Lori Ver Maas, and Ron Woodward, *Junk Dealers Licenses 1919-1948 of Wabash County*, Wabash, Indiana: Wabash County Genealogical Society, 2006.

²¹ Morris, 255.

²² John Morris, *History of Wabash County, Indiana* (Chicago: John Morris Printer Chicago, 1884), 224.

²³ Linda Robertson, *Wabash County History Centennial Edition 1976* (Wabash, Indiana: Wabash County Historical Museum, 1976), 167.

²⁴ National Register Nomination, North Manchester HD, Section 8,9, 10: 20.

²⁵ National Register Nomination, North Manchester HD, Section 8,9, 10: 18).

²⁶ National Register Nomination, North Manchester HD, Section 8,9, 10: 18-20.

²⁷ Carolyn Blackwell, *Jews, Peopling Indiana*, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996, 323.

²⁸ Levine, 22-27.

Wayne County History

Richmond, Indiana is particularly rich in Quaker history and is the home of Earlham College, founded by Quakers in 1847. Even before the establishment of this institution of high learning, the first Jew settled in the county. In 1834 William Brady, a harnesser and saddler, became the first permanent Jewish resident of Richmond; he died in 1872. Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, the leader in American Reform Judaism, reported in his German magazine, *Die Deborah*, on October 14, 1864, that there were Jewish families living in Richmond:

In the State of Indiana there is until now only one (synagogue) in Fort Wayne and a building planned for Evansville; however, communities are found in Indianapolis, Lafayette, and Terre Haute, many Jewish families reside in Vincennes, Logansport, and Richmond.¹

Over the next several decades, a variety of families from not just Germany, but also East Europe began arriving. Solomon Fox arrived from Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. It is possible that Fox might have come to Richmond to join relatives who had been in the city since 1866. The 1878 Business Directory reports that Solomon Fox was working for Sam and Simon Fox. Simon Fox (1842-1913) was born in France and came to America in 1855, moving to Richmond in 1866. He was a prominent clothing merchant and kept a shop in downtown. Solomon Fox worked for Simon for two years before opening his own hat shop. Solomon died in 1922.

George Fox, born in 1865, came to Richmond in 1871. By 1907 he became a partner in a hat business. George married Millie Spiesberger of Iowa. Millie helped organize the Richmond Sisterhood in 1919. George was an active member of the Richmond Jewish Congregation, Rotary Club, Elks and Masonic Lodges as well as President of the city's Sinking Fund Commission and Director of the State Clothiers Association. George died in March, 1940.

Alvin Fox (1895-1939) was born in Richmond, Indiana, and lived there until 1936. His father, George, made him a partner in the hat business in 1919 and Alvin later worked as the manager of *Richman Brothers*, the successor to the Fox store. Alvin's wife, Claudine, participated in the Sisterhood. Alvin was an active member of the congregation, Kiwanis, and the Elk Lodge.

Solomon and Lizzie Frankel moved to Richmond in 1898 and operated the *Model Clothing Company* (1910). They never affiliated with the congregation. Their son Harry (1888-1948) is best remembered as "Singin, Sam, the Barbasol Man," having sung the shaving company's theme song for seven years. In the early 1930s, Harry was a popular radio entertainer in America and later did advertising work for Coca Cola.

Morris Fivelowitz (later shortened to Fivel) arrived in Richmond by 1905 with his relative Solomon Saffer. Morris' brother, Sam followed in 1905. Like the Frankels, they did not participate in the congregation or Sisterhood. However, many of their children who were born and raised in Richmond became active members of the community in their adult years.

Solomon Saffer worked as a junk dealer. The Saffers' son Mendle ran the *King's Men Shop* in Richmond. Mendle Saffer had joined the Richmond Jewish congregation by 1930 and later was one of the original members of the local B'nai B'rith.

Sam Jaffe settled in Richmond in 1905. Because he could not find employment in Richmond, he went to Cincinnati where he worked for a butcher. Later he moved to Sidney, Ohio where a scrap dealer employed him. After saving enough money to buy a horse and wagon, he began peddling in Ohio and Indiana. He returned to Richmond and opened a scrap yard. In 1933, he opened a coal yard.

Abraham and Fannie Harsh owned and operated the *Tiger Coal and Supply Company*. Harsh donated a Sefer Torah to the Richmond Jewish Congregation. The scroll is now one of three housed at Beth Boruk (the synagogue in Richmond).

Sam Fred was in the clothing business and had opened the *\$10.00 Clothing Store*. In 1919 when Fred took the initiative in organizing a relief campaign for European Jews displaced during World War I. Fred also work to help build the YMCA, helped to organize of the Welfare Fund (parent organization of the Community Fund) and the Richmond Social Service Bureau. When Sam died in 1932, the Richmond Jewish Congregation sent a memorial to the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

Zalmen and Gutel Charongitsky came from Lithuania in 1882; their children followed shortly after. The children shortened their family name to Vigran. Several members eventually settled in Richmond, one moved to Connersville (Fayette County), and the reminder stayed in Cincinnati. Sam Vigran moved to Richmond in 1913, opening a jewelry, sporting goods, and luggage store. Sam joined the Richmond Congregation and later served as its president in 1932-1933. He died in 1933.

Sam was joined by one of his younger brothers, Ben, in 1919. Originally, Ben moved to Connersville with another brother, but only stayed for one year. He left Connersville to move to Rushville, Indiana (Rush County) where he owned a variety store from 1908 until 1913. He left Rushville to purchase a variety store in Oxford, Ohio. He returned to Richmond in 1918 where he opened a ladies, ready-to-wear business. Ben served as an officer in the congregation and joined the B'nai B'rith chapter. He served as a director of the old *American Trust and Savings Company* and was a member of the Masonic and Elks Lodges and of the

Grotto. In the summer of 1945 Ben sold his business to *Hixbie Stores*; he died in 1948. Ben's son, Marvin, was killed during World War II. The Marvin Vigran Memorial scholarship fund for students entering Earlham College was established in his honor.

The third Vigran to arrive in Richmond was Harry. At 19, he moved from Cincinnati to Aurora, Indiana where he opened his own store. He stayed for thirteen years, moving to Richmond in 1919. He bought the *Iloff Store* at Sixth and Main and opened *Vigran's Variety Store*. Harry joined the Richmond Jewish Congregation. His wife, Rose, became active in the Sisterhood.

The second generation of Vigrans to living in Richmond also provided community leadership. Stanley graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He has served for thirty years in the Department of Parks and Recreation, was the first Jew in Richmond to serve on the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, served as the President of the Board of Directors of the local YMCA, and as a member of their Board of Trustees. His wife Joan was active in the *Richmond Civic Theater*.

Just west of Richmond is the town of Straughn, Indiana. Florence and Frank Breese moved there in 1920. Frank was a timber buyer and ran a sawmill in Hagerstown, Indiana. Another Jewish family, the Goldmans moved to Straughn in the mid 1920s, working as farmers. The Goldman farm consisted of 1500 acres. Sam was the president of a local phone company and on the South Henry School Board. Goldman never belonged to the Jewish congregation in Richmond although his children report that some Jewish practices were kept at home.

David Fehr managed Ben Vigran's *Ladies' Ready-To-Wear Shop* and then opened his own store the *Style Shop*. By 1920 he owned stores in ten other Indiana cities.

The Jewish community of the 1920s in Richmond (and including nearby towns) approached a total of 40 households. This larger sense of community created the organization of a congregation. Before World War I, the Jews of Richmond did not view themselves as a community. In 1919, a representative of the American Jewish Relief Committee visited Richmond, whose visit had a decided impact on the Jews of Richmond. The meeting was covered in the *Richmond Item* on Wednesday, October 1, 1919, and given one of the two top headlines that appeared that day.

In December 1919, the first meeting of the Richmond Sisterhood was held at the home of Millie Fox. A constitution was based on the one used by the Sisterhood of Paducah, Kentucky. It was also decided to join the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, a branch of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform). The women of the Sisterhood played a significant role in developing a Jewish community. They held regular meetings, hosted social events, ran a Religious School, assumed both defense and philanthropic responsibilities, and managed the major communal events.

A local synagogue had never been contemplated before the Depression and was no longer feasible after economic crisis and social dislocation set in. Immediately after World War II, the Jews of Richmond again became involved in overseas charity work. During this period the Jewish population increased and prospered. The first concrete step towards revitalizing the community following a long decline during the Depression and the war was the organizing of the Richmond Jewish Council in 1948. A local B'nai B'rith chapter was chartered seven years later. In 1957 a conscious effort to build a synagogue in Richmond was spearheaded.

Construction on Beth Boruk Temple began in 1962. Debate on the religious identity of the congregation quickly ensued and did not resolve itself until 1965. Another milepost in the maturation of the Richmond Jewish community was reached in 1971 with the acquisition of a Jewish section in the Earlham cemetery.

Footnotes

¹ Lance Sussman, *The Emergence of a Jewish Community in Richmond, Indiana, 1816-1930*, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1980), 8).

Whitley County Jewish History

Jews living in Whitley County during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were a part of, not apart from, mainstream culture. According to one report, one hundred Jewish individuals lived in the northeastern Indiana county in 1900.¹ Most Whitley County Jews resided in Columbia City, but a few families lived in South Whitley and one family lived in Churubusco. Possibly due to their small number, the local Jewish community did not erect a temple or synagogue, a Hebrew school, or kosher businesses. Rather, Whitley Jews befriended their non-Jewish neighbors, attended public schools, occasionally went to Christian Sunday school, and joined interfaith choirs. Yet through individual and group activities, the Whitley Jewry maintained their cultural heritage.

Former Columbia City citizen, Eugene Kraus, Sr. posits that by the time his grandfather Leopold Krause immigrated to Columbia City in 1858, a handful of Jews already lived there.² Another citizen Abraham K. Strouse asserts that most Whitley County Jews immigrated from Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, and Russia in the 1880s and 1890s to flee pogroms.³ Regardless of their arrival date, most nineteenth-century Whitley County Jews established stores after first peddling. These Jewish-owned stores and Jewish residences lined Van Buren and Chauncey Streets in downtown Columbia City.

Area Jews launched congregation Bene Jacob in 1877 and signed a constitution. Bene Jacob conducted High Holy Day Services in rented quarters such as local lodges and churches. Minutes of the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society document that the organization helped pay for an organ used in a



Abraham Storuse's home in Columbia City (Whitley County).

lodge room.¹⁶ Yet, Bene Jacob did not provide all Jewish religious services. Eugene Kraus, Sr. recalls that he attended a local Lutheran kindergarten and a Presbyterian Sunday School circa 1900–1913 because there was not a Jewish Sunday School in Columbia City. Maureen Isay Grinsfelder recounts that her uncles traveled weekly by train from Churubusco to a Fort Wayne Jewish Sunday School until 1908. Grinsfelder’s father attended a local Methodist Sunday School if his mother, Tillie Starr Isay, did not object to the weekly lesson content.

Whitley County Jews also formed relationships with Fort Wayne’s congregations. Kraus writes, “With few exceptions, Columbia City Jews affiliated with the congregations in Fort Wayne” and traveled to the Allen County city to attend Jewish holiday services.¹⁷ Grinsfelder’s aunt Helen Isay Smith remembers traveling to Fort Wayne, passing by her non-Jewish friends going to school. Smith writes, “I felt a little superior and special because we were all dressed up and going to Temple.”¹⁸ In the early twentieth century Fort Wayne rabbis, particularly those from the Achduth Vesholom Congregation, traveled from Allen County to accommodate Whitley County Jews. Strouse writes, “Rabbi Ettelson came to Columbia City once a week to prepare the confirmands.” The local Lutheran church cancelled their Sunday services once a year and offered their facilities for Jewish confirmation services.¹⁹

Abraham K. Strouse’s grandfather Abraham Kramer, an early Jewish settler, opened a grocery store, which his son Nathan ran after Abraham’s death in 1896. The *Farmers Loan and Trust Company* later used the building. Abraham K. Strouse’s father Moses was born in Germany in 1860 and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of thirteen.⁴ In 1887 Moses and his brother Emanuel opened a clothing store at the corner of Van Buren and Chauncey Streets in Columbia City. After Emanuel moved to Ohio, Moses partnered with his sons Edgar and Ralph and named the store *M. Strouse and Sons*. Moses’ other son Abraham K. Strouse later took over

the business with his brother Edgar and then his nephew Edgar Jr. Abraham K. Strouse lived in a house at 310 East Market Street until 1954. The structure is still in existence.

Leopold Kraus and his sons Max and Sam partnered with Moses Apfelbaum to operate a grain and wool business. Born in 1862, Moses Apfelbaum married Leopold's oldest daughter Hannah. The firm *Kraus and Apfelbaum* had offices in the Masonic Temple and their warehouse in a brick building at 113 East Van Buren Street that the *Superior Garment Company* and the Moose Lodge later used and remains standing today. Although Eugene Kraus, Sr. noted that his grandfather Leopold "spent his life buying and selling grain and wool," the *Kraus and Apfelbaum* firm also had a grocery store at 122 West Van Buren Street.⁵ Store items included furs and apples, and in an 1894 newspaper Kraus and Apfelbaum advertised that they paid "the best price" for local farmers' produce and sold groceries and chinaware "cheaper than any firm in the county."⁶ While the 1880 U.S. census listed Leopold as a grocer, other federal censuses referred to him as a grain and wool dealer.⁷ In 1913 the Kraus and Apfelbaum families relocated to Fort Wayne along with the firm. Leopold maintained a small office in Columbia City, where he traveled each day by train to conduct business. The 1920 federal census reveals that

Leopold lived with his daughter Hannah and son-in-law and business partner Moses and

Leopold Kraus' grain dealership office in Columbia City (Whitley County).



continued to deal grain and wool. By 1930 Leopold retired, leaving Moses as the senior proprietor of their business. Leopold's grandson Eugene joined the family firm in the 1920s, formed the Central States Grain Company, and partly owned the Columbia Grain Company in Columbia City. The Kraus and Apfelbaum families prospered enough to hire live-in servants.⁸

Samuel Apfelbaum had a plumbing store on the block east of the old *Provident Trust Company*. According to Abraham K. Strouse, Apfelbaum "advertised as a 'sanitary plumber.'"⁹ Apfelbaum possibly relocated his business to Gary, Indiana.¹⁰

One of Columbia City's first Jewish residents and city council member Daniel Daniel was born in Germany in 1844 and immigrated to Indiana in 1866. Daniel first peddled and later established the *Star Shoe Store*, which was housed in a brick building at 223 West Van Buren Street from 1897–1982. Daniel's sons Albert and Maurice assisted their father with the shoe business and advertised their fine and heavy rubber boots and shoes as "fresh from the factories" in an 1894 newspaper.¹¹ Daniel's third son Louis helped with his other ventures such as a cattle farm and meat market. A federal census listed both Louis and his father as cattle stock buyers. The Daniels owned farmland on County Road 50 East where they erected a wooden barn with a metal roof. The barn stands empty today. Louis and his wife Thelma lived in three houses in Columbia City that remain standing: 301 East Van Buren Street from 1897–1926, 302 East Van Buren, and 316 North Chauncey Street. Louis' son Daniel L. Daniel also worked in the *Star Shoe Store* as well as his cousin's clothing store *Bluminthal*. Daniel L. lived at 116 South Whitley Street from 1969–1999. The house is still in existence. The *Nook Restaurant* currently occupies the *Star Shoe Store* building.

David Daniel and his sons Harry, Edward, and Lee maintained a butcher shop and a packing plant in Columbia City and a wholesale and retail store in Fort Wayne. The Daniel family also operated a grocery store in Columbia City, which later became the *Williams Market*. The family prospered enough to have a servant.¹²

Lee and Sarah Daniel of the Daniel Bros. Packing Plant lived at 216 North Chauncey Street. The 1920 federal census listed Lee as a county stock buyer. After their deaths, the Daniel brothers' wholesale and meat firm ceased to exist.¹³



The home of Lee and Sarah Daniel in Columbia City (Whitley County).

Hungarian Samuel Lorber was born in 1858 and immigrated in 1880. He ran *Lorber Cloak and Suit Store* with his children. The 1910 federal census listed daughter Ruth as a saleslady and son Milton as a commercial salesman. Milton opened a ladies' ready-to-wear shop with Edgar Lorber in the Grant Building, which was

later used as a dental office until its demolition. The Lorber Family enjoyed the services of a live-in housekeeper at their house, which remains standing.

The Stein family operated the *Chicago Fair*, a notions and dry goods store, in an 1897 brick and stone building at 105 South Main Street. In an 1894 advertisement the Stein brothers conveyed that holiday sales had exceeded their expectations.¹⁴ The family eventually relocated to West Pullman, Illinois. Wright Choice Therapy currently uses the former store space.



The Chicago Fair, dry goods and notion store in Columbia City (Whitley County).

The 1889 Clugston building at 201-203 West Van Buren Street housed the *Flox and Flox Department Store* from 1926–1982. Jacob Flox partnered with George

Harrison until Harrison’s death, after which he invited his brother Louis into the firm. Jacob lived in a house at 604 West Van Buren Street from 1926–1954 and in a brick home at 302 Line Street, which Moses Strouse later purchased. After the Flox brothers’ deaths, Jacob’s son Richard served as the store’s proprietor. The Estlick-Girvin and Lefever Insurance Agency currently operates in the former store and the two houses remain standing.

The Landy, Portman, Levin, and Heller families each owned their own scrap iron and metal businesses in Columbia City. Harry and Rebecca Levin emigrated from Russia in 1911 and lived at 509 East Van Buren Street, currently the River Bluff Apartments. A federal census listed Harry as a “coal and junk owner.” Charles

and Rebecca Heller resided at 112 Swihart Street and ran their business in their backyard. Although both houses remain standing, the junkyards are gone.

Harry and Sadie Rush resided in the Rush Apartments at 210-214 East Van Buren Street. The Simon Meyer family lived at the corner of Wayne and Van Buren Streets. Both of these structures remain in existence.

The Isay family and bachelor Louis Gloutzer comprised the Jews living in Churubusco. Leopold Isay emigrated from Bremen, Indiana to Churubusco in 1880 to clerk and keep the books in his uncle's, Theodore Mayer, dry goods store. By 1902 Leopold purchased full interest in the store and his wife, Tillie Starr Isay, assisted with the daily operations.

Although Whitley County Jews never built a house of worship, they did establish a Jewish cemetery and a local congregation. The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society organized in 1874 and aimed to help bury local Jews. In 1890 the society founded a cemetery at Spencer and Madison Streets in Columbia City and maintained it until the group disbanded in January 1931. The local Jewish community operated the cemetery until management was turned over to the city. Although the Jewish cemetery is currently part of Greenhill Cemetery, a road and some property separates it from the other graves.

The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society met regularly in private residences to sign a register and collect dues. The group participated in social welfare activities, making donations for flood relief, orphanages, Matzos for Jews, war sufferers, hospitals, Christmas funds, and to anonymous needy individuals. In 1893 Leopold Isay of Churubusco wrote his fiancée Tillie Starr that although there was no temple in the small town and that he spent

Yom Kippur in his room, Columbia City boasted a Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society. Isay assured Starr that she would enjoy the society members.¹⁵

The Whitley Jewry also formed close relationships with their non-Jewish neighbors. Kraus writes, “Most of the time, I was the only child of Jewish parentage in class . . . We had Jewish friends and non-Jewish friends visit our home, and we visited their homes.” Few Whitley Jews remember hostility or discrimination. Kraus writes, “I do not recall a single instance of anti-Semitism during my childhood.”²⁰ Grinsfelder chronicles that Churubusco non-Jews expressed curiosity when her grandfather Leopold Isay first opened his store. One farmer wished to meet Leopold because he had “never seen a Jew before.” When Leopold died years later businesses closed and people lined the streets to pay their respects to their friend.²¹

Jewish families actively participated in Whitley community organizations: Leopold Isay founded the Churubusco Masons and served as president of the school board, Eugene Kraus, Sr. was a member of the Board of Directors of Whitley County Memorial Hospital, at least five Jews have been selected as president of the annual Old Settlers Day celebration, and others have established or led the Rotary Club, PTA, and the local Red Cross. Tillie Starr Isay baked goods for the Methodist church’s fundraisers and sang in the church choir, skipping words not consistent with her Jewish faith.²²



The Jewish Section of the City Cemetery in Columbia City (Whitley County), originally founded as a separate cemetery, but eventually given to the city to assure that maintenance would occur.

Whitley County Jews socialized with non-Jewish residents and assimilated to the American culture while honoring their culture and faith. Extant structures such as former stores and residences and resident testimonies illustrate Whitley County's Jewish heritage. Nineteen structures were surveyed; one was rated Outstanding, none were rated as Notable, 18 were rated as Contributing, and none were rated as Non-Contributing.

Footnotes

¹ A.K. Strouse, "The History of the Jewish People of Columbia City and Whitley County, Indiana," *Jewish Life in Indiana* (Indiana Jewish Historical Society, Inc., 1980), 1. The 1910 U.S. Census notes that Kraus emigrated from Germany in 1856. Kraus may have temporarily lived in other American cities before settling in Columbia City.

² Eugene Kraus, Sr., "History of the Kraus Family of Columbia City, Indiana" *Jewish Life in Indiana* (Indiana Jewish Historical Society, Inc., 1980), 13-14.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Strouse, 5. According to a federal census, Moses Strouse immigrated to the United States in 1877. This information conflicts with A. K. Strouse's recollections.

⁵ Kraus, 14.

⁶ Advertisement. *The Columbia City Post*, 19 December 1894.

⁷ 1880 U.S. Census; available from www.ancestry.com (accessed 8 September 2006).

⁸ 1920 & 1930 U.S. Censuses; available from www.ancestry.com (accessed 8 September 2006).

⁹ Strouse, 3.

¹⁰ The 1920 U.S. Census lists a "Sam Aplebaum" in Gary Ward 7, Lake, IN as a "plumber/steel works."

¹¹ Advertisement, *The Columbia City Post*, 10 January 1894.

¹² 1930 U.S. Census.

¹³ Strouse, 3-4.

¹⁴ Advertisement. *The Columbia City Post*, January 1894.

¹⁵ Maureen Isay Grinsfelder, "The Jewish 'Community' of Churubusco, Indiana, 1880-1980" *Indiana Jewish History*, no. 33 (July 2000): 54.

¹⁶ Strouse, 6.

¹⁷ Kraus, 10.

¹⁸ Grinsfelder, 56.

¹⁹ Kraus, 7.

²⁰ Ibid., 16.

²¹ Grinsfelder, 53-54.

²² Ibid.