A History of the Washington Hebrew Congregation

One Hundred Years of Reform Judaism in the District of Columbia

by

BERNARD I. NORDLINGER

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Grateful acknowledgement is due the following friends of the Washington Hebrew Congregation for the love of the Temple which has made possible the publication and distribution of this History:

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Foreword

THIS IS THE THIRD occasion that a history of the Washington Hebrew Congregation has been compiled. The first was by Dr. Louis Stern, Rabbi of the Congregation from 1872 to 1920. It was published in *The Temple,* a journal of the Young People's Temple Society, in March, 1898, and republished in *The Washington Post* on July 13, 1901. The second was by Dr. Abram Simon, Rabbi of the Congregation from 1904 to 1938. It was published in pamphlet form by The Lippman Press, with some illustrations, in 1905, in commemoration of a Jubilee Celebration, and republished with some wood cuts in *The National Jewish Ledger* on February 6, 1931, on what was termed the Seventy-fifth Anniversary. The two previous histories do not entirely coincide in basic factual information, nor in approach.

In the present, or third, effort, in honor of the One Hundredth Anniversary celebration of the Congregation, statements of fact relating to Congregation affairs, have in most instances been based on original source material, and where that has not been possible, appropriate indication has been given. In addition, it is believed that a somewhat different treatment has been accorded the entire story, in this work.

Cooperation from the Temple office staff, particularly Mrs. Irene Coleman, Mrs. Alice Popkin and John Gibbs, has made it a pleasure to work under what otherwise would have been most difficult circumstances in the vault under the Temple office and in the Temple library.

Kind help has been received from both of the present Rabbis, Dr. Norman Gerstenfeld and Dr. Hugo Schiff, but the many errors in interpretation of ritual are due to lack of scholarship by the author. The English spelling of Hebrew words has in most instances been copied from references in

source material, which explains the frequent variations that appear.

There is a challenging opportunity for considerable work in cataloguing and classifying material now in the Temple vault. Some of the documents should be arranged appropriately for safekeeping so that destruction will not result from dust and decay, and some of the documents should be used for display, probably under glass, in the New Temple. It is earnestly hoped that the task here mentioned will soon be undertaken with understanding and enthusiasm.

The inspiration for this work is found in the author's love and reverence for an institution—emotions which must be shared by others in tolerance for its problems and in generosity for its needs, so that its growth and usefulness may continue.

BERNARD I. NORDLINGER
October, 1952

A HISTORY OF THE WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION:

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF REFORM JUDAISM IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE SLOW, inexorable passage of the stream of time covers all men and their institutions with the flood of eternity. Feeble efforts of human historians sometimes cause the tide of obscurity momentarily to slack in its course, until the flood casts its mantle forever. Such an effort is this—a story of plain people, their hopes, fears, struggles and successes, their institutions and their philosophies. The flow of the past hundred years has left not too much to be readily seen. Yet considerable remains; much of which has not yet been lifted above the waters and some of which, in deference to space, cannot here be described.

PART I.

THE AGING WHIG, Millard Fillmore, grimly completing the term of General Zachary Taylor, who had died during the summer of 1850, spent the year 1852 in the White House in Washington. Sensing, if not knowing, that his approval of the Fugitive Slave Law presaged his defeat as a Whig candidate in the election to be held in the autumn, he had appointed Daniel Webster as Secretary of State to engage New England support.[1] In June, at the Whig Convention in Baltimore,[2] General Winfield Scott was to receive the nomination over both Webster and Fillmore, while

[1] Andrews, *History of the United States,* Vol. III, p. 208 (Scribner's, 1915).

[2] Abraham Lincoln was a Whig delegate from Illinois. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln,* Vol. III, p. 162 (Houghton Mifflin, 1928).

Franklin Pierce was to receive the Democratic nomination at the Convention of that party in the same city, over Buchanan, Cass, Marcy and Douglas.[3]

The Capitol Building, half finished,[4] faced toward the east. Its west side, considered the back of the building, was confronted by rambling Tiber Creek, which made a marsh of that low portion of a wide, muddy thoroughfare, ambitiously named "Pennsylvania Avenue." The legislative chambers of the building resounded with heated debates concerning slavery legislation, culminating a few years later in the famous caning of Senator Sumner upon the floor of the Senate by Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina, a relative of Senator Butler of that State.[5]

Throughout the nation, great changes in thought and in the personalities of leadership were taking place. Harriet Beecher Stowe had just published *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* to stir, with pity or animosity, so many of the twenty-three million people then in the United States.[6] Her book had run two years in serial form in the *National Era,* an anti-slavery newspaper published in the District of Columbia.[7]

In journalism, *The New York Times* had been founded in 1851, and Joseph Medill became connected with *The Chicago Tribune* a few years later in 1855. Horace Greeley of *The New York Tribune,* Henry J. Raymond of *The New York Times,* James Gordon Bennett of *The New York Herald,* William Cullen Bryant of *The New York Evening Post,* were shaping popular reaction toward current events.

John Calhoun had died in 1850, Henry Clay and Webster,

[3] Emerson, *History of the Nineteenth Century,* Vol. 2, p. 116 (Collier, 1902).

[4] Caemmerer, *Early Washington and Its Art, Records of Columbia Historical Society* (1946-1947), p. 224.

[5] Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln,* Vol. III, p. 146 (Houghton Mifflin, 1928).

[6] Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict,* p. 184 (Houghton Mifflin, 1916).

[7] The book was first published in March, 1852. Schlesinger, *Political and Social History of the United States,* p. 135 (Macmillan, 1927).

late in 1852. New Senators were coming to Washington: Seward of New York, Chase of Ohio, Sumner of Massachusetts and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania; Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, Yancey of Alabama, Alexander H. Stephens, and Robert Toombs of Georgia; and the popular Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois.[8] Also, of which notice will be taken somewhat more in detail below, the famous Judah P. Benjamin was elected a Whig Senator from Louisiana in 1852.[9]

The City of Washington itself was barely begun to be built. Streets were torrents of rain, sloppy with mud, or sweltering with the humid heat of river flats. The Washington Monument had been begun only four years previously and was hardly under way; the Potomac River flowed nearly to its base.[10] No paving existed for streets or sidewalks; the northern and eastern lines of the city were marked by Boundary Street (renamed later as Florida Avenue) and by the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River, later renamed the Anacostia River; while the western and southern limits of the city were respectively Rock Creek and the Potomac River. The latter, without benefit of the Tidal Basin, constantly overflowed to maintain what is now "The Mall" (from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial), a mosquito-ridden morass and swamp. There were no streetcars of any kind but some horse-drawn omnibus lines operated from Georgetown to the Navy Yard and from the Wharves to L Street on Seventh Street. Not until 1862 did cars on rails appear. "Sea-going hacks" were common, seating four people, enclosed, and horse-drawn, so called because of the condition of the streets.[11] The population of the entire District of Columbia was slightly in excess of fifty thousand persons.[12]

[8] Schlesinger, *op. cit. supra,* pp. 135, 136, 137, 138.

[9] *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. 2, p. 181, *et seq.* (1940).

[10] America, *Picturesque and Beautiful,* Vol. 1, pp. 32, 33 (1900).

[11] Merrill, *Changing Fashions in Transportation, Records of Columbia Historical Society* (1946-1947), pp. 160, 161.

[12] *Census 1940,* Vol. I, Table I, p. 201. (U. S. Government Printing Office.)

From Germany, from 1848 to 1858, there came to the United States nearly one million immigrants, most of whom emigrated west.[13] A few arrived in Washington, and of these still fewer were Jews. Those who came numbered at least twenty-one, for on April 25, 1852, the strong call of thousands of years of Jewish history and culture resounded at the home of H. Lisberger on Pennsylvania Avenue near Twenty-first Street.[14] There a meeting was held to form a Hebrew Congregation in Washington. A record of it still remains in original form among the archives of the Congregation.[15] Written in German script and flowing style the following officers were elected:

Solomon Pribram ..... *President*
Jacob Saqui ..... *Vice-President*
Jonas Gluck ..... *Treasurer*
Albert Horwitz ..... *Secretary*

The following members each contributed one dollar "zur incorporei":

Leopold Oppenheimer
Moritz Fischer
Herman Listberger[15a]
Levy Whetfield
Moses May
Leopold Gassenheimer[15b]
W. Jacobi
Feist Hanlein
Sam Wallach
A. Bernstein
Sam Bien
Moses Friedenwald[15c]
Henry Lauchheiner
L. Cohen
Joseph Friedenwald[15d]
Abraham Strassburger
N. A. Schloss

[13] Schlesinger, *op. cit. supra,* p. 132.

[14] Stern's *History,* p. 1. Simon's *History,* p. 1, attributes the meeting to the home of W. Jacobi. Because of the greater probability of accuracy by Stern, who personally knew some of the founders, his statement has been adopted.

[15] *Accounts,* 1852, *et seq.*

[15a] Father of Mrs. Julia Steinem; grandfather of Albert E. Steinem, present Temple members.

[15b] Grandfather of Sidney Hechinger, Mrs. Maurice H. Hacke and Lawrence Gassenheimer.

[15c] Brother of Joseph Friedenwald.

[15d] Grandfather of Mrs. George Nordlinger.

By 1854 the number had grown to about forty and in October of that year Captain Jonas P. Levy made his first monetary contribution to be found in the records of the Congregation.[16]

Captain Levy was an American merchant, son of Michael Levy and Rachel Phillips. His mother was undoubtedly a member of the famous Jewish Phillips family of Philadelphia, one of whom (Henry) was a leading lawyer and a member of the Thirty-fifth Congress of the United States.[17] Captain Levy was born in Philadelphia in 1807; died in New York in 1883. He commanded the U. S. S. "AMERICA" during the Mexican War, having been appointed by General Winfield Scott, Captain of the Port of Vera Cruz, after the surrender of that city.[18] About 1850, Captain Levy had been active at stirring up opposition to ratification of a treaty with Switzerland which guaranteed fair treatment only to American Christians. In that successful effort he had enlisted aid from Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, and from Senator Clay, in which efforts he was joined by Dr. Isaac Leeser, Aaron Phillips, and J. M. Cardozo of Charleston, South Carolina.[19] The significance of that association appears in the following paragraph.

The foregoing brief account of the work of Captain Levy

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[16] *Accounts,* 1854. No minutes of meetings are available until 1866. Early minutes of Board and Congregation meetings may have been destroyed in either of two fires. One occurred October 14, 1907. Annual 11, p. 12. The damage was not repaired until March, 1908, Annual 11, p. 25, and the loss, covered by insurance, amounted to $8,455.81 on building, $1,000.00 on furniture, $2,544.00 on the organ. Annual 11, p. 44. No mention is made of destruction of records. Another fire occurred February 25, 1927. It was reported to the Board by Joseph Abel, Secretary, at a meeting March 3, 1927. It is further mentioned, Annual Report, 1926-1927, p. 28; "Feb. 25. Fire in vault at Temple, destroying part of records of congregation." That early minutes before 1866 were kept, is clear. *Receipt of D. Schleimer,* Recording Secretary, contained in Board Minutes of May 22, 1870.

[17] *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XII, p. 350 (1906).

[18] *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. VIII, p. 60, 61 (1904).

[19] *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XII, p. 356 (1906).

before his arrival in Washington, can serve as an explanation for the interest and intensity of devotion of this remarkable man. His success here can be understood. He was connected with politically powerful and financially wealthy people in Philadelphia; he was entitled to a sympathetic Government audience on his war record; he was widely known for his sympathy to Jewish causes by Jews and Christians alike. Senator Benjamin from Louisiana had spent his early life in Charleston, South Carolina and had been assisted in obtaining an education at Yale University by Dr. Isaac Leeser, and by Mr. Cardozo of Charleston; and Senator Benjamin had become a close friend of Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi. The great Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, later stated that Mr. Benjamin remained a Jew, despite a Catholic marriage, and that Mr. Benjamin had made the address of the day at a San Francisco, California, synagogue on Yom Kippur, a few years later.[20] Furthermore, it was reported in Dr. Simon's *History* that Mr. Benjamin celebrated with the Washington Hebrew Congregation the acquisition of a new scroll in 1859.[21] However, Captain Levy was undoubtedly known to and friendly with Senator Benjamin and that friendship is significant since Albert Gallatin Brown, the colleague of Senator Davis of Mississippi (an intimate of Senator Benjamin), came to the Senate of the United States in 1854.[22] Senator Brown was the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. He must have been a respected member of the Senate. He had served as a representative in the Thirtieth through the Thirty-second Congresses inclusive, later withdrew from the Senate, after the secession of the Confederate States to become a member of the Confederate Army, and the First and Second Confederate Congresses, when Senator Davis was to

[20] *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. 2, p. 181, *et seq.* (1940).
[21] Simon's *History,* p. 19.
[22] *Personnel of Thirty-fourth Congress,* Archives of the United States.

serve as President of the Confederacy and Senator Benjamin was to be appointed by Confederate President Davis as Attorney General, Secretary of War and Secretary of State of the Confederacy, successively.

To digress from the discussion of the personalities mentioned above, for necessary background, it is to be noted that in 1844 the Congress passed a general law applicable to the District of Columbia providing for the acceptance of conveyances of real estate in the District of Columbia by congregations organized for religious worship, permitting trustees for those congregations to take title. No religious sect is expressly referred to, nor in the Act of June 17, 1844, is any religious sect expressly discriminated against.[23]

The small group of Jews who had formed the Hebrew Congregation in Washington was apparently fearful that synagogues, Rabbis and persons in whom was reposed the trust to hold property of Jewish groups, were not covered by the laws of the District of Columbia. Centuries of sad experience, and intelligence keen and sharpened by years of the abstract study of religion, shaped by the alert minds of men like Captain Levy, and probably by some unknown clerk or lawyer, resulted in the submission of a *Memorial of the Washington Hebrew Congregation* to the first session of the Thirty-fourth Congress on February 5, 1856, "praying" an act of incorporation.[24] The memorial or petition stated: "That the existing laws of this District contains no provisions as they were advised under which they can be constituted a congregation. . . ." (sic). The document is signed by the following as officers:

Joseph Friedenwald..... *President*
Joseph Joseph..... *Vice-President*

[23] *Revised Statutes Relating to the District of Columbia* (1875), Ch. XIV, Sec. 453, *et seq.*, pp. 53, 54.

[24] *Records of the Thirty-fourth Congress,* Archives of the United States.

Leopold Oppenheimer..... *Treasurer*
H. Mela..... *Secretary*

and the following fifteen "members and directors":

Solomon Pribram
J. Hanlein
Jonas Gluck
Merno Lully[24a]
Heinrich Listberger[24b]
Nehm Kaufman
W. Wolf
Leopold Block
G. L. Hanlein
Sam Herman[24c]
M. Oppenheimer[24d]
A. Rice[24e]
N. A. Schloss
Isaac Herzberg
Jonas P. Levy

The Memorial was presented to the Senate by Senator Cass of Ohio, popularly called "General," a man of high standing who had been defeated for the presidency in 1848. He made a magnificent presentation speech for tolerance and justice.[25] The petition was referred to the Senate Com-

[24a] Great-grandfather of Mrs. Maurice H. Hacke and Sidney Hechinger. According to Mrs. Hacke, he had come to the United States as a member of the party accompanying Kossuth, the exiled Hungarian patriot. He is later referred to in *Accounts*, 1954, as "Capt. Lully."

[24b] This is undoubtedly the same person who is sometimes referred to as "Herman." See, *note* 15a, *supra.*

[24c] Father of Mrs. Bertha H. Strauss, grandfather of Leon and Harold Strauss, Mrs. Clara S. Loeb and Mrs. Camille H. Mayer. Mr. Herman later became "Chasan." See, *note* 59, *infra.*

[24d] Grandfather of Leon Oppenheimer. He later became "Shamus." See, *note* 85, *infra.*

[24e] Grandfather of Mrs. Leopold Freeman (Grace Rice).

[25] *The Congressional Globe,* February 5, 1856. *See, The Hebrew Fair Journal,* January 26, 1886, p. 7. Neither research nor sound historical speculation has revealed a connection between Senator Cass and the founders. Sheer imagination might attribute his interest to a desire to create a reputation for tolerance and liberalism to assist in obtaining the nomination for the Presidency at the convention to be held later in the year. Or perhaps, the Senator may have been a great liberal in fact. His early career could bear out that assertion. As Governor of Michigan Territory from 1813 through 1831, he had shown extraordinary interest in, and devotion to, Indian problems, despite considerable personal hardships. Thereafter he had become Secretary of War under President Jackson, Minister to France, served two terms as Senator, and became Secretary of State upon Buchanan's election as President. *See, The Columbia Encyclopedia,* p. 308 (1944).

mittee on the District of Columbia, of which, as has been stated, Senator Brown of Mississippi was Chairman, whose connections through his colleagues, Senator Davis of Mississippi, with Senator Benjamin of Louisiana, and thence with Captain Levy, have been heretofore noted.

On March 27, 1856, Senator Brown for the Committee on the District of Columbia made a favorable report,[26] pointing out that although the Act of June 17, 1844, mentioned above did not proscribe Jewish congregations, passage of the requested Bill (Senate Bill 199, Thirty-fourth Congress) would make for the happiness of certain citizens of the District.[27] The Bill was read a second time in the Senate as a committee of the whole, reported to the Senate without amendment, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read for the third time, and passed on April 11, 1856.[28]

Only three days later the Senate Bill was carried to the House of Representatives by Mr. Asbury, the messenger of the Senate, and its receipt noted.[29] Another southerner, Mr. Jones of Tennessee,[30] moved its first adoption but general consent was not obtained due to the objection of Mr. Bennett of Mississippi.[31] A record of intermediate action on the Bill has not been discovered, but in the absence of objec-

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[26] *Report of the Committee on District of Columbia on the Memorial of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, Report No. 58, Thirty-fourth Congress,* Archives of the United States.

[27] *The Congressional Globe,* March 27, 1856, p. 784. (The Bill was read a first time, and ordered to a second reading.)

[28] *The Congressional Globe,* April 11, 1856, p. 884.

[29] *The Congressional Globe,* April 14, 1846, p. 900.

[30] The preponderance of southern support and initiative behind the Bill may have been assisted by Joseph Friendewald. He was a partner in the Baltimore firm of Wiesenfeld, Stern & Co., dry goods merchants, whose business was largely in the south, although he was then resident in the District of Columbia. See, *Letter,* Joseph F. Hecht, dated August 21, 1952, addressed the author. Mr. Friedenwald's grand-daughter, the present Rosalie Nordlinger, is a member of this Congregation today, through her husband, Dr. George Nordlinger.

[31] *The Congressional Globe,* April 17, 1856, p. 952.

tion, on May 28, 1856, on motion of Mr. Cumback, Senate Bill No. 199 was read a third time and passed [32] by the House.

A day later, back to the Senate, a message from the House of Representatives was received that the Speaker had signed certain enrolled bills, among which was included "An Act for the benefit of the Hebrew Congregation in the City of Washington." [33]

Promptly the Bill went forward to President Franklin Pierce, who on June 2, 1856, affixed his signature in approval.[34]

The political wisdom required for securing the Act of Congress mentioned above cannot be understood without reference to the strong animosities then existing in the nation, and the violence of debate in the Senate and House over the controversial subjects of the day. A civil war was then being waged in Kansas resulting from the adoption of the Topeka Convention and the activities of the murderous John Brown at Ossowatumie. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Fugitive Slave Law, and other measures with their corollaries in legislative action, fanned the waves of argument. Indeed, at this time Congressman Brooks assaulted Senator Sumner on the Senate floor, on account of the position of the latter in a debate on the subject of Kansas.[35] The "Know-Nothing" party was active in American politics, with all of its prejudicial implications. It was a sort of secret America-first movement, which supported only American-born Protestants for public office. Adherents to the party gave it its

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[32] *The Congressional Globe,* May 28, 1856, p. 1326.

[33] *The Congressional Globe,* May 29, 1856, p. 1339.

[34] *Act of June 2, 1856, Thirty-fourth Congress.* There has heretofore existed considerable confusion respecting the date of the Act and the date of its signature by the President. It is now abundantly clear that the information set out herein is correct, previous illustrations and statements to the contrary notwithstanding.

[35] See, *note* 5, *supra.*

name by replying to requests for information on the order by saying "I know nothing." [36] Captain Levy, and the small group of eighteen other persons, who had filed in Congress their petition for their Charter, undoubtedly aware of the troublesome path which lay ahead, could not have achieved their purpose without a sagacity and acumen worthy long to be remembered.

Indeed, perhaps characteristic of their group, and those who followed, internal discussions and differences kept them from accepting the Charter until July, 1857, when at a meeting to adopt a Constitution and By-Laws, formal action was taken to organize the corporation.[37] Possibly in tribute to his efforts and in recognition of his qualities of leadership, Captain Levy was elected President and Solomon Pribram, who had presided at the first meeting in 1852, was elected Secretary. The number of members of the Congregation at that time had grown to fourty-four. The "Seating Register" and "Account Book" afford fertile field for future research and investigation of the personalities of those involved.

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[36] Schlesinger, *op. cit. supra,* pp. 145, 146; Beveridge, *op. cit. supra,* p. 328; Andrews, *op. cit. supra,* p. 225.

[37] A full record of the meeting and those who acted therein is still extant in original form, carrying a heavy red wax seal, set out in a book of ledger size, probably characteristic of the general stationery supplies available at the time.

PART II.

LITTLE CAN BE FOUND definitely to fix the first places of worship of the Congregation, because early formal minutes of Board or Congregation meetings are not available.[38]

It has heretofore been stated that the Congregation held services successively at Mr. Lisberger's; later on Tenth Street opposite Ford's Theater (where President Lincoln was eventually assassinated by Booth); Fourth Street opposite City Hall; Ninth Street near D; and D Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets.[39] Dr. Simon adds other locations including "Finkman's Hall (near the Engine House)." [40] No exact location of that place has been ascertained for the present history, albeit no real effort has been expended for the purpose.

Nevertheless, clear evidence of the time and background of acquisition of the Eighth Street property of the Congregation is available.

On June 1, 1845, John P. Van Ness donated to Trustees for the Central Presbyterian Church, certain lots on the west side of Eighth Street between H and Eye Streets for the purpose of erecting a church building.[41] The task of construction was completed by 1851 but bills for labor and material remaining unpaid, the property, including the church "Communion Service," was sold to Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for $3,630.00, all of which was finally paid by July 1, 1857, when a deed was recorded.[42] The extent of improvements added is not

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[38] *Supra, note* 16.

[39] Stern's *History,* p. 1.

[40] Simon's *History,* pp. 10, 19.

[41] Liber J. A. S. No. 51, Folio 511, Land Records of the District of Columbia.

[42] Liber J. A. S. No. 142, Folio 45, *et seq.*

known.[43] However, Joseph H. Henline, Emanuel Gutman and Moses Siegel, Trustees of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, acquired the property by deed dated February 9, 1863, from the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church for $8,000.00; of which $2,000.00 was paid in cash and the balance of $6,000.00 was deferred over a five-year period.[44] Some sort of sale of "stocks raised $1,875.00."[45] The remainder of the fund came from Congregation accumulations and for payment of deferred purchase money during the next five years, undoubtedly from additional sources such as B'nai B'rith and Friends of Israel,[46] and other Congregations elsewhere.[47]

After purchase, the Synagogue, as it was called then, except when referred to as "Shule," was dedicated July 31, 1863 by Dr. Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, as "Shaare Zedek Congregation." (Further reference to the name does not thereafter appear.) Dr. Isaac M. Wise preached here during that same year, and two years later, Dr. Leeser returned to officiate in memorial services for President Lincoln.[48] Dr. Leeser further showed his interest by a small contribution or "offering" on August 2, 1863.[49] The following interesting

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[43] It has heretofore been stated that the building was used as a hospital for wounded Federal soldiers in the early days of the Civil War. Simon's *History,* p. 22; Stern's *History,* p. 1; *The Washington Post,* July 13, 1901, p. 10. Mr. Leon Tobriner corroborates that statement. He remembers that the government used the building as a hospital; that convalescent soldiers lounged in the yard, playing with neighborhood children, of which he was one, living on the west side of 8th Street between G and H.

[44] The deed was recorded March 30, 1863, Liber N. C. T. 1, Folio 270. It was returned by the Recorder to Isaac Herzberg on November 5, 1863 after being copied on the Land Records.

[45] *Accounts,* entry of May 17, 1863.

[46] Board meeting, December 22, 1867.

[47] "From Congregation Beth-El, Phila. 44.50." *Accounts,* entry May 25, 1864. Dr. Leeser was Chazan of that Congregation. See *note* 52, *infra.* See also, letter from that Congregation dated May, 1864 addressed Washington Hebrew Congregation.

[48] Simon's *History,* p. 23.

[49] *Accounts,* entry August 2, 1863.

account was published in *The Evening Star,* August 1, 1863:

"Dedication of the Jewish Synagogue—Interesting Ceremonies.—Yesterday afternoon the new synagogue on Eighth street between H and I streets (formerly the M. E. Church South) was dedicated by the congregation with appropriate ceremonies in the presence of a large audience. Several of the clergy of the District were present, among them Revs. W. M. D. Ryan of the M. E. Church and C. T. Cochel and Oliver Cox of the M. P. Church and S. P. Hill of the Baptist Church; also many prominent citizens, including the members of our City Council, members of the bar and the press.

"The ceremonies were begun at the old synagogue at Harmony Hall on D street between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets, where the congregation assembled at 2 o'clock. Here the prayer Minchio (evening prayer) was said, and Dr. Archhemier of Baltimore delivered a short farewell address in German, after which the congregation repaired to the new synagogue. The five books of Moses, which are written on parchment enveloped in velvet, were taken in carriages in charge of the president of the congregation, Isaac Herzberg, assisted by the two oldest members, Jonas Gluck and Solomon Pribram, and the reader, Samuel Weill."

It is tragic that minutes of meetings of the period prior to 1866 have disappeared. The Account Book contains no record of the identity of the "Chazan" or "Reader," or of the "Schocath," or killer of Kosher meat, and, of course, no direct reference to ritual can be found in it.

There are, however, many references to funds derived from dues, money from the services of the Schocath ("Schocath-Gelt"), fines upon members for non-attendance at "Minyon," money from sale of seats to minor children of members, to non-members and their children.[50] Also, funds were derived from "marriage fees," funerals, sale of burial lots, etc. It would seem clear that early services must have been Orthodox,[51] not only from the entries in the Account Book, but also from the participation of Dr. Isaac Leeser in the

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[50] Also referred to in Simon's *History,* p. 19.

[51] *Compare,* Simon's *History,* p. 14.

services,[52] a conservative Rabbi. Moreover, later minutes to be hereafter noted [53] contain good evidence of the time and manner of the adoption of reform.

Immediately upon formation of the first "Minyon" in 1852, the Prayer Book at hand is known to have been printed in Hamburg, Germany,[54] one of the cradles of Reform Judaism.[55]

Previous statements have been made that the form of prayer was according to the "Sulzbach Ritual." [56] A German Prayer Book, printed at Sulzbach, is, in fact, among the early Congregation Prayer Books.[57] Research for this history has not revealed what the Sulzbach Ritual was, whereas the Hamburg origin of reform can be readily identified. However, in a Constitution adopted in 1861, signed by 101 members, the Congregation prescribed an "Aschkeness" Minhag, according to the Redelheimer prayer-book.[58]

The first officially elected Chazan was reputedly Mr. Sam Herman (1854),[59] then Mr. Seldner (1855),[60], H. Mela,[61] S. M. Landsberg (1857),[62] S. Weil (1859-1867),[63] J. S.

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[52] *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. 6, p. 588 (1940).

[53] See *note* 94, *infra.*

[54] *"Gebetbuch,"* (Hamburg, 1841).

[55] Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism,* p. 102 *et seq.* (Macmillan, 1907). See especially, p. 116, *note* 3.

[56] Simon's *History,* p. 14.

[57] Sulzbach (1841), inscribed "I. L. Blout Washington D. C. bought of Rev. Mr. Landsberg Septbr 1858."

[58] *New Constitution and By-Laws,* Art. I (January 13, 1861). It is not known what the prayer-book encompassed. Dr. Simon calls it "a dignified . . . service." Simon's *History,* p. 20.

[59] Simon's *History,* p. 10.

[60] *Idem.* p. 14 [61] *Idem.* p. 14.

[62] *Idem.* p. 15. The "Rev. Mr. Landsberg" was the father of Gustav, Max and James Lansburgh, founders of Lansburgh & Bros., a large and widely known department store of this city. Their family still furnishes strong support for the Congregation, including among their number the incomparable and indefatigable philanthropist "Aunt Minnie" Goldsmith, her son, Ralph, presently president of Lansburgh & Bros., Mrs. Eugenia Schwartz, Mrs. Molly Brylawski, Arthur T. Lyon, and Mark Lansburgh.

[63] *Idem.* p. 18.

Jacobson (1868),[64] Dr. Herman Baar (1869),[65] Rev. Isaac Stemple (1870),[65] Rev. Michael Goldberg (1871).[66]

In the Constitution of 1861, noted above, as a description of some of the habits of the Congregation, the officers were divided into two groups: (1) "Honorary," [67] consisting of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, two managers and three trustees; (2) "Salaried," [68] consisting of "Hasan, Schocath and Teacher in Hebrew and German," Extra Schocath, and "Preacher and Lecturer, if desired." The first of the foregoing ministers elected as a "preacher" appears to be Dr. Herman Baar, who accepted appointments as a "Lecturer." [69] Expected to arrive in the fall of 1868,[70] he was apparently delayed, since J. S. Jacobson was again elected "Chazan and Teacher" for one year ending September 1, 1869,[71] but carefully required to agree to serve bereaved families during their "seven days of mourning." Dr. Baar, however, was finally elected "Preacher and English Teacher" in 1870 [72] for annual compensation of $2,000.00; an extraordinarily large amount for the time.[73] A preacher in the Congregation was short-lived because Dr. Baar's successor, Mr. Goldberg, was specifically instructed to discontinue preaching. He was en-

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[64] *Idem.* p. 23.

[65] *Idem.* p. 23.

[66] *Idem.* p. 25.

[67] Art. II.

[68] Art. III.

[69] *Letter of Dr. Baar,* dated May 31, 1868, Brussells, Belgium, addressed Washington Hebrew Congregation. He had been "Lecturer" at Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation for ten years but resigned because of ill health. See, *letter* dated May 29, 1868 (5628) addressed I. L. Blout, from the Liverpool Congregation, Liverpool, England.

[70] Board Meeting June 14, 1868.

[71] Agreement dated September 1, 1868.

[72] Meeting April 10, 1870, to be hereafter noted.

[73] There were ninety members, classified into five groups of memberships with dues from $6 to $2, monthly. See, Meeting June 10, 1870.

gaged as a "Reader and Teacher." [74] Dr. Stern [75] was first elected "Hazan" (for one year) in 1872.[75]

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[74] Board Meeting, April 14, 1872.

[75] He will be later described in some detail. Although not academically entitled to the degree of "Doctor," in later years he was generally addressed as such. See, Congregation Meeting, July 21, 1872, for record of his first election. He had come to Washington at his own expense to officiate on trial. Congregation Meeting, July 7, 1872.

PART III.

TO DESCRIBE THE RITUAL of the time up to Dr. Stern's election, and understand the influence of the people involved will require a brief departure from the thread of this story.

Congregation Beth Elohim [76] was the first Reformed Jewish Congregation in America under leadership of a "preacher and reader," and it became such during the period 1836 to 1843. Gustav Poznanski, from the Hamburg Temple, the foremost exponent of the reform movement in Europe, expressed the wishes of his Congregation when an organ was installed, the prayer for re-establishment of Zion symbolically interpreted, and second day holidays abolished.[77]

Each Congregation in America is historically autonomous. Judaism is Congregational in its policy and ritual. There are no American chief rabbis, nor religious assemblies.[78] Hence, Reformed Judaism developed by steps in each congregation and its future lies with each congregation to grasp for itself.

Names of great thinkers of the mid-nineteenth century, in what is now Reformed Judaism, have become somewhat familiar here. The great Isaac M. Wise, and his prayer-book "Minhag America" published about 1858; B. Szold [79] of Baltimore, who published a prayer-book with M. Jastrow, about the same time,[80] were known to this Congregation.[81] Even the influential Dr. Isaac Leeser, sometimes termed "or-

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[76] See *infra, note* 146.

[77] Philipson, *op. cit. supra,* pp. 466, 467.

[78] Philipson, *op. cit. supra,* pp. 467, 468.

[79] Correspondence with Rev. Szold ensued to engage a new reader. Meeting, August 11, 1867. He obtained an assistant Chazan for the holidays. Meeting, August 24, 1867.

[80] *Idem.* p. 498.

[81] *Note* 47, *supra.*

thodox," [82] refused so to classify himself and introduced many reforms into his Sephardic service.[83]

There were at least sixteen different reform prayer-books with resultant rituals known to this Congregation.[84] The ritual used until the adoption of the Szold-Jastrow ritual shortly after Dr. Stern's arrival, can best be described by the formal actions of the Congregation in respect thereof, by reviewing the dress used in worship and by a picture of the place where the services were carried on.

Here, a perfectly fabulous character emerges bearing the picturesque name, Manassas Oppenheimer. He was elected "Shamus" September 8, 1867,[85] and immediately "tendered his services for Mincah on the day of Yom Kippur. . . ." The following year, he was ordered to white-wash the Synagogue.[86] He was most successful in collecting funds.[87] To his talents as a ritualist, mechanic and financier must now be added that of a public relations counsel, for he was also ordered not to permit ladies to nurse babies in the yard of the "Shule," but to show them to a room inside the building.[85] To assist him in the latter undertaking, the Board ordered a sale of the "benches laying about in the yard." [85]

Inside the building, ladies sat in the gallery; men in the main floor. Two sets of ushers were provided to enforce the custom, already becoming troublesome.[85] Notices in German and English were posted to invite attention to a fine of $1.00 imposed by the Board upon anyone smoking in the building during hours of service.

For the approaching holiday season, a "Shofar" was bought.[85] Members read services on both first and second

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[82] Philipson, *op. cit. supra,* p. 471 .
[83] *Note,* 20, *supra.*
[84] Stern's *History,* p. 1.
[85] Meeting that date, Minutes.
[86] August 10, 1868, Minutes.
[87] *Accounts,* 1867-1870.

day of "Rosha Shonah" and on Yom Kippur.[88] Detailed rules were adopted for "the different 'Parseerchus,' " rites followed during services.[89]

There were eighty members,[90] paying $2.00 monthly. A choir "or rabbi" was suggested as a means of making the services more attractive for them.[91] "Kohn" and "Levi" were called up to the pulpit in rotation.[92]

But progress was slowly being made. The rite of confirmation was adopted, being limited to children who received instruction in the Congregation school.[93] Wearing the "Zieniss" was abolished excepting by the "Bal de Karim" (one of the readers during the holidays) and assistants; cushions were ordered removed from seats.

By 1869, all notes of the Synagogue were paid, and an organ was donated by Henry Adler, on behalf of himself and Messrs. L. Baar, Isaac Herzberg, Philip Wallach and Henry S. Blout,[94] and twelve days later, a choir authorized.[95] The following month, the "Hooper" was abolished, no further footstools or boxes permitted without approval of the President,[96] prayers were ordered in English, "Kiddush" in the Synagogue abolished, fines upon members for non-attendance at Minyon rescinded, the latter subject to Congregational approval.[97]

But what a storm of protest arose. More than thirty-five members resigned, including some of the founders,[98] and even

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[88] Meeting, October 13, 1867.

[89] Meeting, July 12, 1868.

[90] *Report of Finance Committee,* August 31, 1868.

[91] *Report of Adolph Adler, Financial Secretary,* Sept. 8, 1866.

[92] Meeting, November 8, 1868.

[93] Meeting, September 5, 1869.

[94] Meeting, December 5, 1869. Mr. Blout was the grandfather of Mrs. Natalie Simon, a present Temple member.

[95] Meeting, December 17, 1869.

[96] Meeting, January 17, 1870.

[97] Meeting, January 29, 1870.

[98] Original letters of resignation have been preserved and are available.

the Shamus and Schocath. The seceding members formed the Adas Israel Congregation.[99] Despite the controversy over ritual, the relationship was friendly between the Synagogues. This Congregation loaned its Saphar Torah to Adas Israel for dedication of the building of the latter in 1876.[100]

Those resigning were soon replaced by new members, twenty-six of whom joined the following month, including Simon Wolf, one of the most distinguished active members ever to participate in Congregation affairs, S. N. Meyer, an indefatigable worker for many years, and Max Weyl, later to become known as an artist of landscapes in this city.[101] At the same time, payment was authorized for a watercloset installed in the building,[102] and for numbering pews.

Soon thereafter, none other than the prayer-books adopted by the Congregation were permitted for use, and a choir was in fact obtained.[103] Calling up "Chonim" and "Levinim" in rotation was abolished,[104] and Dr. Wise was requested to lecture[105] which he did, after appropriate ceremonies by a committee in reception, including advertising of the event in *The Evening Star.*

The membership was now back to ninety,[106] with robe and cap still in use, at least by the Reader.[107] Yet Reform was not to be accomplished without more internal struggle. J. Stemple, the Reader, refused to read in English, refused to light the Synagogue properly and refused to give a sermon,

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[99] See, Simon's *History,* p. 20; Stern's *History,* p. 1.

[100] *Letter Morris Cohen,* Secretary Adas Israel, May 15, 1876. *Agreement for Burials,* December 10, 1877.

[101] Meeting, February 8, 1870.

[102] Plumbing seems currently of interest. Smith, *The Curious Case of the President's Bathtub, Saturday Evening Post,* Vol. 225, No. 8, August 23, 1952.

[103] Meeting, March 6, 1870.

[104] Meeting, April 10, 1870.

[105] *Meetings,* May 8, 1870, and June 12, 1870.

[106] See *Note* 73, *supra; Report of Financial Secretary,* March 31, 1870.

[107] *Bills paid,* July 10, 1870.

for which a note of censure was adopted by the Board.[108] President Prince refused to deliver the resolution of censure and when a motion of censure was made against the President, it was lost.[109]

Although unhappy to relate, it seems that Mr. Stempel ultimately brought suit against the Congregation, which was referred to the then President Simon Wolf for attention. What came of the controversy is not revealed,[110] but the amount in dispute must have been trifling because of the limited jurisdiction of justices of the peace at that time.[111]

To discuss briefly once again the position of "Schocath": In 1867, Mr. Simon Mindheim was elected.[112] His interest and devotion must have been keen, since in about ninety days, he refused to "schecht" for certain members, charging them before the Board with selling pork and "Traefer" meat.[113] Moreover, he cooperated with the Board by refusing to "schecht" for members in arrears in dues.[114] He eventually obtained an assistant, and when they were called upon for "Gabohlohs," (credentials) Mr. Mindheim produced them after a trip to Baltimore for the purpose. The Board, however, was unable to translate the "Gabohlohs"; hence, upon request, Mr. Mindheim did.[115] His authority, and that of his assistant (Mr. Loeb) being established, the Board voted a reimbursement of $5.00 for the journey to Baltimore;[116]

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[108] Meeting, October 9, 1870.

[109] Meeting, October 16, 1870.

[110] "A summons from a Justice of the Peace against the Trustees of this Congregation in the case of I. Stemple against this Congregation was read, when on motion, the President was requested to take the matter in charge." Meeting, April 7, 1872.

[111] $100. was the maximum amount for which suit could be brought. R. S. D. C., *supra,* Ch. 31, Sec. 997, p. 117.

[112] Meeting, September 8, 1867. His great-granddaughter is the wife of the present Rabbi, Norman Gerstenfeld.

[113] Meeting, December 22, 1867.

[114] Meeting, October 10, 1869.

[115] *"Gabohloh,"* Simon Mündheim, August 2, 1869.

[116] Meeting, October 10, 1869.

no mean trip in those days. It took an entire day each way.[117]

To return to a description of the school of the Congregation during this time, the requirement of the Board that children be instructed there before confirmation[118] was not as simple as is preparation today. The school was in session six hours daily, and the School Committee was vigilant in requiring the Reader to obey their rules.[119] Seventy-five children were in attendance; there were two teachers; non-members were required to pay and there was usually a slight deficit in operations.[120] The Treasurer of the Committee did not always attend scrupulously to his duties. On occasion he was required to make up shortages in the funds and he did not always do so.[121] German, Hebrew, English and Arithmetic were taught and the school was characterized as equal to other elementary schools in the District.[122]

In addition, a religious school was conducted at the request of the Reader.[123] It was held twice weekly and Sundays, but soon changed to Saturday and Sunday.[124]

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[117] Merrill, *op. cit. supra.*

[118] *Note* 93, *supra.* Public schools were not begun in Washington until 1862. *Statement Vernon E. West,* Corporation Counsel, *The Evening Star,* September 20, 1952.

[119] Meeting, October 20, 1867.

[120] *Report of School Committee,* December 3, 1867.

[121] *Specifications,* March 19, 1868, for failure to make payment for check drawn on National Bank of the Republic given at Board Meeting, March 17, 1868. This was not the Treasurer of the Congregation.

[122] *Note* 120, *supra.*

[123] Meeting, April 11, 1868.

[124] Meeting, August 27, 1871.

PART IV.

THE CONGREGATION MET hard times following the steps taken toward Reform.

The day school was suspended;[125] dissatisfaction arose over the "Minhag";[126] a ball was held for the benefit of the choir which raised only a trifling sum;[127] a committee was appointed to provide additional funds, those at hand being inadequate;[128] a loan was authorized to pay current expenses;[129] attempts were made to obtain payment for children attending religious school.[130]

At a Congregation meeting at which only twenty-one persons attended, it was determined to advertise in Cincinnati and New York for a new Reader and Teacher, while the following courageous persons were elected to office:[131]

Simon Wolf ..... *President*
B. Raff ..... *Vice-President*
D. Schleimer ..... *Recording Secretary*
S. N. Meyer ..... *Financial Secretary*
B. Kaufman ..... *Treasurer*
H. Strasburger, M. Hoffa, N. Kaufman ..... *Trustees*

The following month, the President reported that the Congregation must disband or do something to restore a healthy financial condition. In response, the choir was discharged;[132] new prayers were adopted;[133]; a new silk "Tallis" was pre-

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[125] Meeting, October 9, 1870.

[126] Congregation Meeting, October 8, 1871. See, *Order of Divine Service, Washington Hebrew Congregation* (Binswanger & Co., Balto., 1870).

[127] Meeting, February 4, 1872 ($25.90).

[128] Meeting, March 3, 1872.

[129] Congregation Meeting, April 7, 1872.

[130] Meeting, April 14, 1872.

[131] Congregation Meeting, May 5, 1872.

[132] Congregation Meeting, June 16, 1872.

[133] Congregation Meeting, July 7, 1872. The prayer-book was the "Minhag America" of Dr. Isaac M. Wise but was soon abandoned, *note* 138, *infra*, because it contained no ritual for the "great holidays." Stern's *History*, p. 1.

sented to the "Chasan"; Henry Adler was elected President by acclamation on motion of Simon Wolf;[134] and as has been noted, Dr. Stern was employed.[135]

A vital change in ritual here occurred. The reading of the Torah was by a plan which limited a complete presentation to each three-year period; use of the "Thalith" was confined to the Reader and officers; reading of the Torah was to be done plainly, "that is to say, without the singing. . . ." [136]

Despite the financial difficulties noted, the Congregation did not ignore the sufferings of others. A special meeting was held to raise money for victims in the Chicago Fire. Two Hundred Dollars was immediately subscribed by the members in attendance [137] and total funds eventually reached $400.00. That sum should be compared with the following annual expenses of operation of the Congregation then being paid:

Reader	$1,000.00
Shamas	400.00
Financial Secretary	150.00
Recording Secretary	150.00
Sexton at Cemetery	300.00

[134] Congregation Meeting, November 4, 1872.
[135] *Note* 75, *supra.*
[136] *Report to the President and Members of the "Wash. H. Cong."*
[137] Congregation Meeting, October 11, 1871.

PART V.

THE CAUSE OF REFORM was not lost. The new Chasan, at the head of his loyal Congregation, steadfastly adhered to the new principles.

A new prayer-book of Dr. Szold of Baltimore was adopted. A substantial part of it was in English. A motion to read alternately in German and English was lost 27 to 10.[138]

The Synagogue was closed on the second day of "Rosh Hashona," [139] and a new President, Marx Kaufman, was elected on one ballot.

Some of the services, however, were still conducted in German,[140] and confirmation speeches of the children, and poems of the choir on Shabuouth, were sometimes in German [141] until 1880.[142] By 1878, even the Passover Service for the home was in English, excepting the traditional Hebrew portions,[143] and the term "Temple" had taken hold as descriptive of the Synagogue.[144] It must have been more than mere coincidence that the rebuilt Temple in 1898 was dedicated as *Temple Beth Elohim,*[145] the same name as the first Reformed Temple in America at Charleston, South Carolina.[146]

And the Congregation participated in the National course of Reform by joining the new Union of American Hebrew

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[138] Congregation Meeting, August 10, 1873.

[139] Congregation Meeting, September 6, 1873.

[140] *Manuscript,* Thanksgiving Sermon, Dr. Stern, 1875; *Manuscript,* Confirmation Lecture, Dr. Stern, 1876.

[141, 142] *Confirmation Programs,* 1876 through 1880.

[143] *Family Service for the Eve of Passover,* M. Jastrow, Rabbi "Rodef Shalom," Phila. (1878).

[144] *Program, Dedication Service of the Temple of the Washington Hebrew Congregation,* (August 31, 1877); *The Washington Gazette,* September 2, 1877, No. 458, p. 1, *The Hebrew Temple.*

[145] *The Temple, Souvenir Number,* (September, 1898) Vol. 1, No. 6.

[146] *Supra, note* 76.

Congregations.[147] The day of the opening of the new Hebrew Union College was an occasion of rejoicing and delegates to the Union secured the annual convention for Washington in 1876.[148]

In conformity with a movement then pronounced in the development of Reform,[149] the Congregation for a few months dispensed with Saturday morning services but not for long.[150]

Lack of cooperation between parent and teachers in the Sunday School has first been noted in 1878, when the teachers consisted of Dr. Stern and the Misses Cora Adler, Fay Rosenberg and (unidentified) Luchs.[151] A year later, disinterest of the parents in enforcement of home study by the pupils, caused abandonment of Hebrew as a regular course. Thereafter instruction in that language was given on special days.[152] One hundred and ten scholars were then enrolled.[153] Plans for a school building were abandoned for lack of funds. Despite the enthusiasm evinced by the ultimate construction of a new Temple building in 1898 to be hereafter described, throughout the period annual messages of the President, H. King, Jr., continued to deplore the lethargy of the parents respecting the school.

The Congregation members always participated in holiday services, in particular B. Gusdorf, Simon Goodman[154] and Charles Baum, although an assistant Chazan was sometimes obtained elsewhere. The Mount Sinai Society of Georgetown was a congregation which was holding services in

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[147] *Letter from Moritz Loth,* President, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 7, 1873, addressed Hon. Simon Wolf.

[148] *Report to President and Members,* October 3, 1875, signed Simon Wolf, P. Wallach, I. L. Blout.

[149] Philipson, *op. cit. supra.*

[150] *Letter,* L. Heilbrunn addressed H. Adler, President, dated June 11, 1877.

[151] *Report of School Committee,* June 28, 1878.

[152] Congregation Meeting, July 6, 1879.

[153] *Idem.*

[154] Mr. Goodman acted as "Bal Tekeah," blower of the Shofar.

Georgetown, a separate city in the early days. David Dreyfuss, M. Baer, M. Blumenthal, B. Sinsheimer, Isaac Young, H. Sommers, Wolf Nordlinger and Bernard Nordlinger were among the founders soon after the Civil War.[155] Bernard Nordlinger acted as Chazan. He bore a certificate from J. Rosenfeld, Rabbi at Savannah, Georgia,[156] having acted as Chazan at Congregation Beth Israel, Macon, Georgia,[157] before service in the Confederate Army.[158]

Mr. Nordlinger was asked to officiate as an assistant at services of the Washington Hebrew Congregation as early as 1870,[159] and a pew set aside for use of his family *gratis,* but he refused, because of his activities in Georgetown.[160] Later, however, he officiated here for many years,[161] after the Mount Sinai Society commenced holding joint holiday observances with this Congregation.[162] The Society ceased to exist by 1900, lacking a Temple building or cemetery, the cemetery of this Congregation being used under joint agreement.[163] Moreover, Wolf Nordlinger, the strongest financial support of the Georgetown group, had left it to become active and generous in the affairs of this Congregation by 1874.[164]

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[155] See *Letter,* Julius Louis, Secretary, addressed Henry Adler, President Washington Hebrew Congregation, dated May 7, 1875.

[156] *Letter,* J. Rosenfeld, "Grand Rabbi of the Hebrew Congregation of Savannah, Georgia," dated August 3, 1863, sworn to in the Clerk's office, Bibb County, Georgia, August 3, 1863, in possession of author.

[157] Silver cup so engraved, dated June 1863, in possession of author.

[158] Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen,* p. 135 (Levytype Co., Phila. 1895).

[159] Board Meeting, August 7, 1870.

[160] Board Meeting, August 21, 1870.

[161] 1881 through 1894. See, Minutes of Board for the period.

[162] Mr. Nordlinger, B. Sinshemer and David Dreyfuss arranged for seats. Board Meetings September 4, 1881, August 2, 1885.

[163] Reference to former agreements noted, Board Meeting September 4, 1881.

[164] W. Nordlinger frequently loaned money to this Congregation and served on all its building committees for its three buildings hereafter mentioned. He was also a Trustee from time to time. See, Minutes of the period.

The Georgetown group is principally noteworthy for assistance rendered in obtaining and providing an additional Sephar Torah for this Congregation.[165]

The absorption of the smaller Congregation by the larger did not deter the progress of reform. Debate on the subject having been in progress since 1881,[166] it was finally decided that head covering during services was unnecessary.[167]

In 1893, steps were taken to deprive Bar Mitzvah of its importance by postponing it until after the boy's Confirmation but this was repealed about a year later.[168]

A few years thereafter, the Union Prayer Book was adopted.[169] When cap and gown had been discarded by Dr. Stern is not known but an effort to require its use was promptly defeated.[170] Hence, it appears that by the turn of the century, a ritual of the Congregation had been adopted which except for several changes adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (in which it is believed laymen do not participate) was to remain in effect for almost fifty years. Changes made during the service of Rabbi Gerstenfeld will be hereafter discussed.

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[165] Board Meeting, July 22, 1869. See, *Letter* to D. Dreyfuss from A. Sopher, Paris, France, dated January 23, 1868, sent by him to B. Nordlinger at that time (translated by Dr. Schiff), in possession of author.

[166] Congregation Meetings, January 2, 1881, October 5, 1884, January 4, 1885.

[167] Congregation Meeting, April 5, 1891.

[168] Congregation Meetings, June 8, 1892, April 2, 1893.

[169] Congregation Meeting, April 4, 1897.

[170] Congregation Meeting, April 1, 1901.

PART VI.

THIS WAS A PERIOD of building—not only the ritual of Reform, but the physical properties of the Temple as well.

A cemetery had long been acquired. It was located on Hamilton Road [171] but being inadequate the Congregation hesitated to acquire more land without further enabling corporate authority. A new General Incorporation Act being passed for the District of Columbia,[172] the Congregation filed its new certificate, dated July 16, 1873, reciting that it was ". . . for the purpose of incorporating . . . and to cure any discrepancies that may exist in our charter heretofore granted by Congress under a General Law of the Dist. . . ." (sic).[173] It was signed by Henry Adler, B. Kauffman, J. P. Herman, M. Cohen, J. H. Hanlein, N. Kaufman, M. Hoffa, I. L. Blout, A. Adler and S. N. Meyer, "duly elected Incorporators and Trustees at a regular meeting held June 1, 1873 in the vestry room of the Synagogue on 8th Street between H and I. . . ." The certificate was acknowledged by Henry Adler the next day after signature, before Simon Wolf, then Recorder of Deeds, and recorded August 6 of the same year. The reason for the delay does not appear.

After considerable effort, land was finally acquired on what is now Alabama Avenue, lots laid out and the cemetery named "Machpelah." [174] The first burial in the new cemetery was Mrs. Henrietta Behrend in 1879,[175] although the graves from the older burial ground were of course moved

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[171] Simon's *History,* p. 33.

[172] R. S. D. C., *supra,* Ch. 18, Sec. 533 *et seq.,* p. 65.

[173] Acts of Incorporation, Liber 1, Folio 305, No. 221, Office of the Recorder of Deeds of the District of Columbia.

[174] Congregation Meeting, April 6, 1879; see also, *Agreement No. 152, The Machpelah Cemetery of the Washington Hebrew Congregation,* dated April 19, 1889, in possession of author.

[175] *The American Israelite,* April 18, 1879.

into the new.[176] The old lot was finally sold for $85.00 subject to a commission of $5.00.[177] An additional four acres of land was later purchased to enlarge the "Machpelah" Cemetery.[178] A separate Cemetery Fund was first proposed in 1907[179] to cover perpetual care charges of $500.00 per family lot.

The Temple building itself was not neglected. Work to renovate the old building acquired in 1863 commenced under a committee consisting of B. Gusdorf, Chairman, Lewis Abraham, Secretary, Henry Franc, Charles Baum, B. Kaufman, B. Raff, R. Goldschmid, Henry Strasburger and an unknown wag, "James Buchanan."[180] Plans drawn by C. A. Didden were apparently completed satisfactorily, resulting in beautiful art work on walls and ceiling of the auditorium. Funds were derived from donations approximately thirty per cent, and loans from Temple members the balance of the total cost of nearly $5,000.00, of which nearly half was provided by W. Nordlinger of Georgetown.

Eighty-five members were assigned pews, the floor plan apparently being ample for the membership assignments.

Dedication ceremonies were termed "impressive" by the "Gazette."[181] In attendance were many notables of the time: The Secretary of War, the President's private secretary, Colonel Rogers, and Adjutant-General Townsend. There was a prayer by Dr. Szold, by Rev. Stern, and address by Rev. Stern and dedication sermon by Dr. Szold, and the usual Sabbath Eve Services, indeed an occasion of great rejoicing in which the young and the old joined in a procession carrying the Scrolls.[182]

[176] Statement corroborated by Mr. Leon Tobriner to author.

[177] Congregation meeting, July 5, 1885.

[178] Board Meeting, July 2, 1889.

[179] Congregation Meeting, April 7, 1907. See *note* 324, *infra.*

[180] *Report to Officers and Members,* October 7, 1877.

[181] September 2, 1877, p. 1.

[182] *Dedication Service of the Temple of the Washington Hebrew Congregation* (Friday, August 31, 1877, Service at 6 o'clock p.m.).

Yet in the short space of eight years the Congregation had outgrown its quarters. In 1885, a committee for a new Synagogue was appointed.[183] Arrangements were perfected to use the Grand Army Hall, corner of 7th and L Streets, for services and school, while the Temple was being rebuilt.[184] During the performance of the work, the energetic and devout Henry King, Jr., was first elected President of the Congregation.[185] A huge Fair was planned and it became a grand success, ultimately realized nearly seventy-five per cent of the approximate $12,000.00 the improvements cost.[186] There were 153 members.[187] Nearly all participated in planning and holding the Fair in some capacity, but the Committee for the repair and improvement of "the Temple of this Congregation" consisted of I. L. Blout, H. Adler, J. P. Herman, Levi Baar and A. Kaufmann.[188] Its task was difficult; the contract of the builder was forfeited and the work completed by the Committee under subcontracts.[189]

The Fair itself was held at Odd Fellows Hall from January 25 through February 5, 1886. It was opened by a march through the Hall led by Speaker of the House Carlisle, and the Commissioners Webb and Edmunds, escorted by Simon Wolf. Speeches, of course, were made by all hands, marked by the usual compliments of the time.[190]

Invitations to Dedication Services of the New Temple were issued both to Mount Sinai Society and to Adas Israel Congregations, and the event was advertised in *The Evening Star, The Washington Post* and *National Republican.*[191] The

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[183] Congregation Meeting, July 5, 1885.
[184] Board Meeting, October 11, 1885.
[185] Congregation Meeting, October 4, 1885.
[186] *Report of S. N. Meyer, Financial Secretary,* April 1, 1887.
[187] *Idem.*
[188] Congregation Meeting, September 13, 1885.
[189] *Report of Building Committee,* October 3, 1886.
[190] *Hebrew Fair Journal,* 1886.
[191] Board Meeting, April 11, 1886.

newly renovated building would now provide seats for 825 persons.[192]

Active in selecting a new organ was the famous Emile Berliner, who had become a member of the Temple in 1884.[193] The inventor of the loose contact diaphragm telephone receiver, the flat disc record player (Victrola),[194] he was elected to the Board in 1886.[195] His many outstanding achievements have been discussed elsewhere. Suffice it here to note his marriage to Cora Adler (daughter of Henry Adler, a faithful worker for the Temple), and the subsequent marriage of his daughter, Louise, to Milton W. King, grandson of H. King, Jr., and later himself to become a Temple President.

Dedication Services were set out in a modest program,[196] which included procession of the Scrolls, prayer by Dr. Szold, Remarks by H. King, Jr., and Sermon by Rev. Stern, followed by the Evening Service.

Hardly had this event been celebrated, when within five years, the membership having swelled to 199, the President, H. King, Jr., in his annual report, recommended another new Temple. A committee was immediately appointed, consisting of the officers, Board, and Simon Wolf, H. Adler, Chas. Baum, W. Nordlinger and B. Burnstine.[197]

With membership grown to 207 by the following year, and with hearty support from the influential Simon Wolf, no action having been taken by the preceding Committee, a new Committee was appointed.[198] A repetition occurred at the next annual meeting, the membership having increased

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[192] Congregation Meeting, June 2, 1895.

[193] Congregation Meeting, April 6, 1884.

[194] Wile, *Emile Berliner, Maker of the Microphone* (Bobbs-Merrill 1926).

[195] Congregation Meeting, April 4, 1886.

[196] *Dedication Services of the Temple of the W. H. C.* (Friday, April 16, 1886).

[197] Congregation Meeting, April 5, 1891.

[198] Congregation Meeting, April 3, 1892.

to 222, of whom 114 were present.[199] Again the next year, the membership having grown to 230, of whom 142 were present, another eloquent plea from the same President, H. King, Jr., was received.[200]

The Board this time appointed a Committee for another Fair,[201] but it was postponed because of "dull times" and other uncertainties.[202] After another plea by the same President,[203] a special meeting was held and another Committee appointed [204] consisting of Wm. Hahn, L. Luchs, Simon Wolf, Abraham Kerman, Chas. Baum, S. Bieber, Isidore Saks, M. Loeb, M. Goldsmith, J. Sondheim, Amnon Behrend, Rev. L. Stern, H. King, Jr.; and a Finance Committee consisting of W. Nordlinger, S. Bieber and L. Luchs.

The Fair was held at the Washington Light Infantry Armory from February 10 through February 22, 1896. Again nearly all participated. The proceedings were opened by remarks by Mr. King as President, Simon Wolf as Chairman and an address by the Hon. Adlai Stevenson, Vice-President of the United States.[205] After these ceremonies, the Vice-President [206] escorted by Messrs. Wolf and Isaac Gans, in company of Hon. James L. Norris, walked throughout the hall shaking hands and congratulating all.[207]

At the annual meeting in April, receipts from the Fair exceeded anticipation, over $11,000.00 having been realized.[208] Yet the Committee recommended no action on building

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[199] Congregation Meeting, April 2, 1893.

[200] Congregation Meeting, April 1, 1894.

[201] Board Meeting, April 8, 1894.

[202] Board Meeting, November 4, 1894.

[203] Congregation Meeting, April 7, 1894.

[204] Special Congregation, June 2, 1895.

[205] Grandfather of the presidential nominee of the Democratic party in the election of 1952.

[206] President Grover Clevland had sent regrets. *Letter* of Grover Cleveland. February 7, 1896, addressed Washington Hebrew Congregation.

[207] *Hebrew Fair Journal,* 1896.

[208] Congregation Meeting, April 5, 1896.

plans, despite a dissenting minority report by H. King, Jr., J. Sondheimer, L. Luchs, Amnon Behrend, M. Loeb and Wm. Hahn. The minority report was adopted after sharp debate.

The Board arranged to use Carroll Institute Hall while the Temple was being rebuilt;[209] for the Holidays, the First Congregational Church was kindly made available.[210] This Congregation's letter of thanks for the use of the church was published in *The Evening Star.*[211]

Meantime, the work of the Building Committee, under Chairman William Hahn, was proceeding apace. The cornerstone of the Temple was laid September 16, 1897. The honored guests included President McKinley, Postmaster General Gray, Secretary Alger, Secretary Sherman, Secretary Bliss, Secretary Wilson; also Dr. Alexander Kent of the People's Church, Rev. Easton, Dr. Sunderland of the First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Greene of the Calvary Baptist Church; Commissioner John B. Wight, officers of the Grand Lodge of Masons. The ceremonies commenced at five o'cock but between three and four thousand spectators jammed the streets. What an occasion for the successors to that small band that had met only forty-five years previously.

At five o'clock the Canton Potomac Drum Corps, "thirty strong," came marching down Eighth Street and played "Hail to the Chief" before President McKinley, being given a "rousing welcome" by the "vast audience."

Rev. Dr. Stern opened the proceedings, being followed by I. L. Blout, Wm. Hahn, and next by the Masonic officials in appropriate order. Inside the cornerstone was place a Hebrew Bible, Union Prayer Book, Constitution of the United States, Constitution of the Congregation, Constitution of the Grand Lodge, History of the Congregation, newspapers of

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[209] Board Meeting, May 2, 1897.

[210] Board Meeting, September 5, 1897. The occasion and ceremonies were noted in detail in *The Morning Times,* September 27, 1897.

[211] Board Meeting, November 7, 1897.

the day, names of officers of the United States Government, names of officers of the Congregation, and other material. The Grand Master completed his portion of the ceremonies by presenting for use the gavel of Potomac Lodge, used by George Washington in laying the cornerstone of the Capitol Building.

Hon. Simon Wolf made some remarks, followed by one of the Ministers in attendance, and President McKinley concluded the ceremonies by congratulating the Congregation on the occasion.[212]

Dedication of the Building, in about a year, was something of an anti-climax.[213] President McKinley sent his regrets.[214] But the beautiful and entirely new building, dedicated as "Beth Elohim" was appropriately opened. The customary procession of dignitaries with scrolls, the speeches of officers and visiting ministers, Dr. Abram S. Isaacs of New York, Dr. Henry Berkowitz of Philadelphia, Rev. B. A. Dumm of the First Congregational Church, an address by Simon Wolf, were enthusiastically received and partly preserved in *The Temple.*[213]

The Building then was substantially identical to the present Temple, excepting the addition of the Sisterhood House as an office, and the decoration of the Library. Successive redecorations have, however, from a consideration of illustrations of the interior, completely obliterated original art work and color scheme.

The new building would accommodate "about 1,340 persons." It had cost approximately $62,000.00, of which $40,000.00 was obtained on loan from the Penn Mutual Life

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[212] *The Morning Times,* September 17, 1897, p. 3.

[213] *Programme Dedicatory Exercises, Temple Washington Hebrew Congregation* (Friday, September 9, 1898); *The Temple, Souvenir Number* (September, 1898).

[214] *Letter,* William McKinley, addressed Hon. Simon Wolf, from Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C., September 8, 1898.

Insurance Co., and, as has been stated, about $11,500.00 from the Fair. The architects, Stutz & Pease, had estimated the cost of the building almost exactly. Wm. Yost & Bros., the builders, had done their work well.[215]

So, like the Reform ritual, the Temple Building, and the cemetery, by the turn of the century, had been provided for the next generations. Their work was to solidify the courageous beginnings into a firm structure, so that it might grow and prosper, crystallized into an influence for continued achievement in the religious and temporal life to follow.

But like the Temple buildings which had preceded, the new one was soon to become old. Dr. Abram Simon, the great and brilliant Rabbi of this Congregation for more than thirty years (of whom more below), issued a stirring call for a larger and more commodious building after less than fifteen years had passed, in a lecture at services on a Rosh Hashona morning.[216] His challenge was swiftly answered.[217]

Harry King was appointed Chairman of a Special Committee on Ways & Means but in less than six months filed a negative report.[218] Undaunted, at a special meeting in about a year, a resolution authorizing sale of the Temple for $75,000.00 was adopted,[219] but nothing came of it. About four years later, Julius Peyser asked the Board for "moral support" for the project, which was, of course, granted.[220] Again a four-year lapse, when President Lee Baumgarten, in a logical annual message explained the necessity for the new Temple building.[221] Constant repetition of the demands

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[215] *Report of Chairman of Building Committee,* March 15, 1898.

[216] *The Evening Star,* October 4, 1911. President I. L. Blout's annual messages had emphasized the need for three years.

[217] Special Meeting Congregation, November 5, 1911.

[218] *Letter,* March 7, 1912; *Annual Report 15,* p. 11.

[219] July 7, 1913.

[220] *Annual No. 20* (1917) pp. 29, 30.

[221] *Annual No. 24* (1921) p. 6.

for action in which Presidents Baumgarten, Goldsmith, and Rabbis Simon and Rosenblum joined,[222] resulted in pledges of $130,000.00 being realized. A file of new Temple sites and offers of land was collected,[223] by a Commitee of which Mr. Goldsmith was Chairman and the following members: Julius Peyser, Stanley Fischer, Harry S. Lewis, Harry King, Sidney Reizenstein, Harry Hahn, Leon Tobriner, I. B. Nordlinger, Ed Kohner, Eugene Young, Louis Simon and Mesdames Alexander Wolf, Milton Kronheim, Hannah Lansburgh. But still no action.

By 1927, another committee took over with Julius Peyser as Chairman,[224] with the result that a few more pledges were made.[225]

Then came the crash of the stock markets, the depression of the 1930's, the years of World War II through the first half of the 1940's, and building hopes, plans and pledges completely disappeared. Yet a New Temple Committee had been appointed at a Board Meeting, April 8, 1940, consisting of David Frank, Chairman, Frank Luchs, David Simon, Albert Small, Morris Cafritz, Gustav Ring, Theodore Peyser, Ed. Finkelhor, Charles B. Dulcan and Sidney Hechinger.

The end of World War II in 1945 found a new champion, Mr. Morris Cafritz, leading citizen of Washington and outstanding Jewish philanthropist, spurred by the enthusiasm of Rabbi Gerstenfeld, called a meeting at his home to form a Committee for a new Temple. It was quickly incorporated,[226] by David A. Baer, Harry G. Taylor, Theodore D. Peyser, Julius I. Peyser, Milton W. King. To the newly formed corporation, Mr. Cafritz conveyed a tract of land at Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Streets and the New

[222] *Annuals No. 25, 26.*

[223] *Charles A. Goldsmith, Lots Submitted for Temple site* (1922).

[224] *Annual Report* (1927-1928) p. 6

[225] *Annual Report* (1928-1929) pp. 9, 26, 27.

[226] *Charter, The New Temple Committee,* filed June 19, 1945, Office of Recorder of Deeds.

Temple had its start. By-laws for the new corporation, drafted by Bernard I. Nordlinger, were quickly adopted at a general meeting, but despite the enthusiasm of so many members, the generosity of leading citizens, and the efforts of all to raise necessary funds, the drive for subscriptions lagged. Finally, under the joint President of this Congregation and the new corporation, Milton W. King, grandson of the Henry King, Jr., who had been largely responsible for the erection of the present building, a contract was entered into with the Ring Engineering Company, Inc., for the erection of the new building.[227]

Yet a prompt commencement of the work was not to be had. Use of the site to the best advantage was prevented by adjacent land of the National Park System and future plans for development of the city streets. An exchange of land with the Government of the United States became necessary. Mr. Douglas Mode was employed to assist in the presentation of the data to the Congress.[228] The Commissioners of the District recommended to Congress that the exchange be authorized,[229] and the recommendation was acted upon in due course by the Congress.[230] Thus, nearly one hundred years after President Pierce had given corporate life to this Congregation, President Truman gave it opportunity for continued growth.

Pursuant to the authority mentioned, New Temple Committee, Inc., conveyed certain of its land to the United States in March, 1951,[231] and duly acquired a conveyance from the

[227] *Contract*, dated June 8, 1950 between Ring Engineering Company, Inc. by Gustav Ring, President, Stanford Abel, Secretary, and New Temple Committee, Inc. by Milton W. King, President, and Milton D. Korman, Secretary.

[228] *Letter*, Ring Construction Company, dated March 22, 1951.

[229] *Annual Report Commissioners of the District of Columbia*, 1950.

[230] Public Law 829, 81st Congress, 2nd Session (H.R. 9362), approved September 23, 1950 by Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, 1950 U. S. Code Congressional Service 980.

[231] Deed dated December 19, 1950, recorded March 5, 1951, Liber 7832, folio 279.

United States several months later.[232] It is of historical interest that the scientific aspect of this modern Atomic Age was appropriately reflected in the deed of conveyance delivered by the United States. There was a reservation in that deed permitting the Government, pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, to enter upon the land in perpetuity for the mining and removal of uranium, thorium, and other materials.[233]

Meanwhile, the diligent efforts of the Ring Company had resulted in issuance of a Building Permit by the District of Columbia on November 1, 1951.[234] Nevertheless, other obstacles intervened. Hostilities in Korea, and National Defense restrictions prohibited non-essential construction. Houses of worship were not in the category of essential construction. Accordingly, until relaxation of controls, the National Production Authority could not permit construction to begin. Finally, however, by release of March 10, 1952, the National Production Authority authorized procurement of material and commencement of the work.

This the respective Boards of the Congregation and New Temple Committee immediately acted upon in joint meeting.[235] The New Temple officers were:

Milton W. King..... *President*
David G. Bress..... *Vice-President*
Herbert J. Rich..... *2nd Vice-President*
Milton D. Korman..... *Secretary*
J. E. Bindeman..... *Assistant Secretary*
Richard K. Lyon..... *Assistant Treasurer*
Eugene Young..... *Treasurer*

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[232] Deed dated May 16, 1951, recorded May 22, 1951, Instrument No. 21969.

[233] See, *Title Certificate*, Real Estate & Columbia Title Insurance Companies, Case No. 175,311, June 4, 1952.

[234] *Letter*, Ring Engineering Company, Inc., dated November 1, 1951.

[235] Meeting, April 5, 1952.

It is to be noted that the officers were not without proper legal background—all leading lawyers, excepting Mr. Rich, a well-known F Street shoe merchant, long widely respected for his civic and philanthropic activities.

Following the meeting, the land was transferred to the Congregation, necessary funds provided, all legal requirements satisfied, a building loan secured from The Riggs National Bank, a deed of trust recorded to secure it, and the work joyously commenced,[236] without fanfare or celebration other than distribution of a "tear-sheet" to all Congregation members. Laying of the cornerstone, in conjunction with a celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary Celebration, was postponed until autumn, with the hope, presently expected to be realized, that the President of the United States will honor the Congregation with his presence and an address for the occasion.

The task of completing the edifice, and paying for it, is one of the undertakings to be performed by the Congregation as the second one hundred years of Temple history begins. The leadership of the Congregation having been accepted by Garfield I. Kass as President, the Building Committee of Sidney Hechinger, David Dreyfuss and S. Meyer Barnett, and the Ways and Means Committee under Cecil Kaufmann and Frank J. Luchs, promises speedy and economical success. That Gustav Ring, President of the Contracting Building Company, and Stanford Abel, Superintendent of Construction and Secretary of the Ring Company, are both enthusiastic and loyal Temple members, seems to insure the promising aspect of the building operations.

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[236] *The Washington Post,* June 25, 1952.

PART VII.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS of the history of this Congregation, its devotion to liberal Judaism, to the interests of its city and its nation, to the weak, to the oppressed, to the needy in youth and age, was breathed into life in the person of Simon Wolf. No personality could better typify what the Reformed Jew had aimed to do and what he had become, than this truly remarkable man. His career is one of growth from small beginnings to a position of honor and recognition as an American Jew, patriot, and citizen.[237]

Born in the Rhineland in 1836, he came to the United States at twelve years of age. Until he was twenty-three, he was a salesman and bookkeeper in Uhrichsville, Ohio, briefly engaged in business, then in 1859 obtained an opportunity to read law in a small Ohio town while taking a course of lectures at the Cleveland Law School. At twenty-five he was admitted to the Bar in Ohio, his examiners being Columbus Delano, later Secretary of Interior under President Grant, and Frank Hurd, later a "greenback" Congressman. A year later (1862), being dissatisfied with a small-town Ohio practice, he left for Washington, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

His early life in Ohio found him an ardent champion of equality and freedom. He supported Fremont against Buchanan in 1856, drifted through the Democratic Conventions of Charleston and Baltimore, and finally joined the

[237] "The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen" was the title of a book written by Mr. Wolf. See *note* 158, *supra.* He was the author of many others. The source of the information concerning his life, set out above, is an invaluable piece of Americana, the property of the Congregation, a book published under the title "Complimentary Banquet in honor of Hon. Simon Wolf on The Anniversary of His Seventieth Birthday at the Arlington Hotel, Washington, D. C., October 28, 1906," bearing on the fly leaf "To my young friend Rabbi Louis Stern in the hope of seeing him at ninety. Simon Wolf. Feby. 10th 1907."

Union, later the Republican party, throughout this time gaining considerable experience as a conventional platform orator. His Republican convictions caused him to stump for the party in every election until 1900.

By 1869 he had gained sufficient prominence to obtain appointment by President Grant as Recorder of Deeds of the District of Columbia. Anti-Jewish sentiment caused some protest to be made after his nomination. Aid was enlisted from Hannibal Hamlin, Carl Schurz and others, so that his appointment was confirmed; and he served until 1878, when he again commenced practising law until President Garfield appointed him Consul General to Egypt in 1881. It was the last commission signed by the President before his assassination.

Mr. Wolf served in Egypt about a year, returning to this city where he again undertook the practice of law.

It was said that he "enjoyed the esteem and confidence of every President from Lincoln to Roosevelt" (Theodore).

That he was President of this Congregation, and active many years, has already been noted. For twenty-five years he lectured to the Congregation at Yom Kippur morning services. He was a practising Jew, proud in his devotion to his religion and proud of the liberal government which protected its exercise.

For years he was Chairman of "Kesher Shel Barzel" in Cleveland; the Montefiore Home for the Aged was commenced under his chairmanship.[238] He was twice President of the local B'nai B'rith, and twice National Chairman. Founder of the Atlanta Hebrew Orphans Home, sponsor of the mission to Roumania which President Grant ordered

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[238] A photograph of a letter to him from the famous Sir Moses Montefiore, April 20, 1885, has been preserved among Congregation archives. He was largely responsible for the celebration at the Temple on the 100th birthday of Sir Moses on October 24, 1884. Congregation Meeting, July 6, 1884. *Program, Order of Exercises at the Temple,* Sunday, October 26, 1884.

for assistance to persecuted Jews, initiator of the Kishineff conferences with Roosevelt and Hay for religious liberty to Jews in Russia, a promoter and director of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, National Farm School, Jewish Publication Society, Jewish Historical Society, and a loyal supporter of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, being for twenty-five years Chairman of the Board of Delegates.

Locally, Mr. Wolf was a 33d degree Scottish Rite Mason. He was President of the Washington Literary Association, of the "Schuetzen Verein," of the Board of Children's Guardians, of the Ruppert Home for the Aged, member of Board of Charities (Presidential appointment), director of the German Orphan Asylum, of the Garfield Hospital, of the "Saengerbund," of the Second National Bank, of the Red Cross, and many others.

He had four children who reached adulthood. Mrs. Frederick Gotthold, who moved to New York, became a gifted artist; a second daughter married Meyer Cohen, son of Moses Cohen, "Shames" or sexton of the Temple for many years, the son-in-law becoming Mr. Wolf's law partner in the well-known firm of Wolf & Cohen, still doing a general insurance business in this city; the third daughter became a gifted literary figure; and the fourth child, a son, The Honorable Adolph G. Wolf, became Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico.

When Mrs. Gotthold was married, the ceremony was performed in the Temple. As reported in *The Gazette,* June 16, 1878, the affair was "beautiful and impressive," . . . "and the address made by Rev. L. Stern, the rabbi." The detailed information therein contained is early and official Washington at its best. Attending were Secretary and Mrs. Carl Schurz and daughters, Speaker of the House and Mrs. Randall, Secretary Rodgers, Judge and Mrs. MacArthur, ex-Mayor Bowen, General Sheridan, and many Representatives

and other dignitaries and friends and Temple members.

On an occasion some three years thereafter, following a Passover service at "the Jewish synagogue," [239] discrimination in allowing excused absences to Christian children on holidays and unexcused absences to Jewish children on holidays, having been noted by Dr. Stern to be customary in the Public Schools, Mr. Wolf called for a meeting in protest. A committee consisting of I. L. Blout, H. Adler, Rev. L. Stern, W. Nordlinger, L. Abrahams and Charles Baum was appointed. A formal, printed protest to the Public School Trustees, was drafted and delivered.[240] It sounded in the dignity of democratic citizens of a free state, demanding free churches under a free government, without distinction to the varying creeds or colors of the heterogeneous origins of the students. To emasculate the magnificence of its diction by quoting parts would only serve to abort its sound philosophy that "the Public Schools of the United States must and shall be kept free and intact from sectarian influence."

Needless to say the School Board adopted the Memorial and granted its prayers.[241] Never since has the policy been infringed, although sectarian aspects of opening exercises in the schools was the occasion of a later protest, likewise granted.[242]

On Mr. Wolf's seventieth birthday, nearly the entire Congregation joined in its acclaim for him. The committee, consisting of A. D. Prince, Chairman, J. Eisenmann, Secretary, Rabbis Abram Simon and Louis Stern, Messrs. Max Fischer and A. M. Fishel, arranged an elaborate affair under Temple auspices, and distributed a well-bound volume of

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[239] *The Morning Times,* April 15, 1881, p. 1.

[240] *To the Board of School Trustees, District of Columbia,* May 10th, 1881.

[241] Congregation Meeting, July 3, 1881.

[242] *To the President, Officers and Members of the Board of Education,* January 22, 1901.

speeches, menu, written tributes and guest list as a permanent record. The menu alone is awe-inspiring. Wines, delicacies and Victorian sweet-meats abounded. The oratory of the speakers was in the traditional grandiloquent style. They included Dr. Simon as toastmaster; Commissioner H. B. Macfarland, Justices Frederick L. Siddons and Wendell P. Stafford, Rabbis Edward N. Calisch of Richmond, Henry Berkowitz of Philadelphia, and Louis Stern of Washington, Dr. Cyrus Adler, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute who had married Racie Friedenwald, daughter of a Congregation founder, Hon. Frank P. Sargent, Commissioner General of Immigration, and Maurice D. Rosenberg, a leading member of the local bar.[243] Of course, Mr. Wolf answered in appropriate dignity and appreciation, "that in a humble way I have helped to reconcile differences, to uproot and destroy prejudice, and to bring into closer accord divergent nationalities and faiths." And indeed he had, for it was said that he had obtained more than an hundred Presidential pardons for individuals convicted of alleged crimes, victims of one or another of the mass hysterias through which he had lived, when the innocence of the previously convicted had been otherwise proved. To grasp the breadth of his tolerance, his love for the free institutions of his country, his devotion to his faith and his belief in the responsibility of organized charity, recourse must be had to the glowing tributes contained in "Complimentary Banquet."

It was in this soil that Reform was nourished.

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[243] *Program, Complimentary Banquet tendered Honorable Simon Wolf,* October 29, 1906.

PART VIII.

BY AGREEMENT DATED JULY 25, 1872, B. Raff, J. P. Herman and M. Cohen, Trustees of the Congregation engaged the services of Louis Stern as "Chazan and teacher in Hebrew and Jewish Religion," and "to instruct the School Children in musical singing as well as other persons designated by the Congregation for the purpose of establishing a Choir for divine services." The engagement was for one year. What a momentous contract! It was one of which the Congregation would forever be proud.

Dr. Stern, as he was later called, in respect and affection, was born at Simmern, in the Rhineland, February 10, 1847. He graduated from a "Seminary of Munster" at nineteen and held his first and only position in Germany at Luegde, Westphalia, until 1872 when he emigrated to the United States. Almost immediately, his connection with this Congregation was made and it was here he spent the remainder of his life.[244]

As Simon Wolf was the layman incarnate, so was Dr. Stern representative of the progressive ministry of the time. "His liberality of views. . . . He is a representative American in thought and conduct, intensely patriotic to his adopted country, and a man of modern thought in every respect." [245]

Not an ordained rabbi, at twenty-five years of age he came to a strange country, to speak a strange tongue, to help found a new form of an old religion.

That he was a poet and musician is abundantly clear from the many records available in the form of Confirmation programs, Temple affairs and civic organization records.

Although his first sermons were in German, as the extant manuscripts reveal, he mastered English elocution, probably

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[244] *The Washington Post*, July 13, 1901.

[245] *Idem.*

with benefit of training, self-imposed though it may have been.[246]

By 1876, Dr. Stern's abandonment of a belief in a literal Messiah and a literal restoration of Zion was the occasion of comment even in *The Boston Herald.*[247] He apparently expressed well the sentiments of a Congregation beginning, but committed to, Reform. That he was comfortable, happy and at home is obvious, since he married Fanny Gusdorf, daughter of a Temple member in 1879 and was tendered Congregation greetings and gift at a general meeting.[248]

Apparently, even in his early years he sought the society of his colleagues in Reform, for he was active in the formation and administration of the Jewish Ministers Association, forerunner of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In that organization he was in the company of many of the great rabbis of the time, Drs. Gotthiel and De Sola Mendes of New York, and Dr. Jastrow of Philadelphia.[249] Dr. Stern was honored by the assignment of the Opening Prayer, and the following year, at the meeting in New York, with Dr. Guttmann of Syracuse, and Dr. Jastrow, gave one of the three addresses of the day.[250] He was also elected Recording Secretary that year,[251] when he carefully *typewrote* the list of members; imposing though it was, space does not here permit a detail of it.

At this time, Dr. Stern's sermons were noted and discussed at length in local newspapers. His sermon on the death

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[246] *Readings and Recitations at the Watch Meeting of the Martyn College of Elocution,* December 31, 1887.

[247] August 18, 1876.

[248] Congregation Meeting, October 5, 1879.

[249] *Program, Public Meeting of the Jewish Ministers' Association at Hanover Street Temple, Baltimore,* October 26, 1886.

[250] *Program, Conference of the Jewish Ministers' Association, Fall Session, 1886,* Public Meeting at Temple Ahawath Chesed, New York, November 23, 1886.

[251] *Notice of Meeting, Jewish Ministers' Association,* November 4, 1886.

of Sir Moses Montefiore was quoted in *The Post*;[252] his answers to requests of an Episcopal minister for converts, in *The National Republican*;[253] his reply to a Methodist minister again in *The National Republican*;[254] his defense of Judaism against resolutions of a "Christian Conference" in *The Post*;[255] his opposition to conversion in *The Post*;[256] a tract against union of church and state in *The Jewish Messenger*.[257] He participated in a symposium of ministers of different faiths held at the turn of the century and his was the first speech, being introduced by former Governor Sidney Perham of Maine.[258] He gave the address of the evening at the commencement exercises of the Business High School held at the "New National Theatre" in June, 1899, where District Commissioners, School Board and other dignitaries attended.[259] His were the replies published to some malicious anti-semitic attacks in 1903,[260] and his expositions on the Dreyfuss trial in France were also noted in the local press.[260]

Following the assassination of President McKinley, public religious services were held in a joint meeting to honor the deceased, at Chase's Theater (possibly the present RKO Keith's). Plans included attendance of President Theodore Roosevelt, Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, the District Commissioner and many others, including Dr. Stern as one of the speakers.[261]

Succinctly, it was said of him:[262]

"Rabbi Stern guarded Jewish right most seduously, challenged

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[252] August 3, 1885.
[253] February 7, 1887.
[254] January 3, 1888.
[255] April 6, 1890.
[256] February 14, 1892.
[257] March 30, 1894.
[258] *The Washington Post,* January 7, 1901.
[259] Unidentified clipping.
[260] Unidentified clippings.
[261] *The Evening Star,* September 19, 1901.
[262] *The National Jewish Ledger,* February, 1920.

attacks on Jews and Jewish customs and started the agitation for the elimination of the New Testament from the public schools. He was also a pioneer in the Goodwill Movement and exchanged pulpits with many Christian ministers, as well as opened the House of Representatives with prayer on several occasions.

"He introduced many reforms in the services during the 47 years of his active service as Rabbi, such as the late Friday evening service in place of the one at sundown. He organized the Young People's Society and also wrote words and music of many hymns, a number of which appear in the Union Hymnal.

"He was a 32nd degree Mason, a Ben B'rith and had many other affiliations." (sic)

A vigorous, yet scholarly and religious man, poet and musician, orator and philosopher, teacher and pioneer, this great man of local history, served his Congregation through its most formative years, when the efforts of the latter half of the Nineteenth Century produced a Reformed ritual, cemetery and Temple Building. When Dr. Stern died in 1920, he left the work of the first half of the Twentieth Century to be to add prestige in the Community at large to the foundations so well laid theretofore.

Of his three living children, David L. Stern is still a Temple member, as well as a leading architect in this city. His son Alfred Stern is also a member and his interest in the Congregation is largely responsible for a considerable portion of the memoranda of the period reflected in this work. Dr. Stern's daughter, Mrs. Leona Webber, now resides in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is accordingly no longer a member of the Congregation.

PART IX.

ON JULY 14, 1872, in Nashville, Tennessee, a son was born to David and Rachel (Lederhandler) Simon. He was named Abram.[263] Their undoubted rejoicing at the birth of a son was but a small beginning to the sweeping pride that was later to be shown when the infant became a Reform Rabbi in this city.

The child's parents moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, to avoid the yellow fever then raging in the south, in 1874, but when the boy was eight years of age, he was sent to school in Cleveland, remaining their until he was fourteen.[264]

At fourteen he entered the Hebrew Union College, graduating eight years later at the head of his class.[265] His degree was conferred by the great Dr. Isaac M. Wise, and at the commencement the young Rabbi Simon made the "address" for the Class.[266]

Immediately upon graduation, Dr. Simon accepted a call to Temple Beth Israel, Sacramento, California. There he assisted in founding, and became Secretary of, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, for which a beautifully engraved gold watch was bestowed. He assisted in founding a non-sectarian memorial fund for the education of poor boys, and was an active member of several non-sectarian civic clubs of interest to educators and intellectuals. During his service in California, he married Carrie Obendorfer of Uniontown, Alabama, August 5, 1896.[267] His

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[263] *The Washington Post,* December 25, 1938. By magnificent coincidence, this was at exactly the same time that Dr. Stern first came to the Congregation in Washington. As the first of the Congregation's three great rabbis was engaged, the second was born.

[264] *Omaha World-Herald,* May 7, 1899.

[265] *Idem.*

[266] *Program, Hebrew Union College Graduation Exercises, Class 1894,* June 15th, at the Mound Street Temple.

[267] *Sunday Star,* December 25, 1938.

brilliant energies were not unnoticed, for after five years he moved on to serve a larger community in Omaha, Nebraska, The Congregation of Israel.

There he served until 1904. He soon became widely known throughout the state by reason of speeches [268] and through publication of a state-wide paper, *The Jewish World,* "devoted to the interests of the Jewish people of Nebraska," [269] of which he, with I. I. Modjeska, was editor.

The ubiquitous Simon Wolf in some manner became acquainted with the young rabbi, perhaps at a convention in Cincinnati in honor of Dr. Isaac M. Wise during the McKinley Administration.[270] Mr. Wolf arranged for Dr. Simon to lecture here, late in 1903.[271] After the lecture, the Board of the Congregation, at a special meeting, determined that Dr. Simon was "well fitted for the position as Rabbi of the Congregation" and called a special meeting of the Congregation to approve its findings,[272] which was done at once and with enthusiasm. *The Star* termed Dr. Simon as "being in the front ranks of Jewish rabbis of the United States." [273]

The Congregation of Israel at Omaha, suffered this news with sorrow but with understanding; making a record of its affection and admiration for Dr. Simon in the form of resolutions, leather-bound, delivered to him and still available.[274]

Installation services were arranged for February 5, 1904.[275] They were celebrated as planned.[276] Dr. William Rosenan of Eutaw Place Temple, Baltimore, Rabbi Julius T. Loeb of

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[268] *Lincoln Evening News*, May 29, 1899.

[269] *The Jewish World*, Omaha, February 7, 1902.

[270] Unidentified clipping containing picture of Dr. Simon with Dr. Wise.

[271] Board Meeting, November 1, 1903. *Letter* from Simon Wolf reported.

[272] Special Board Meeting, November 22, 1903.

[273] *The Evening Star,* November 17, 1903.

[274] *Resolutions of Farewell, Congregation of Israel, Omaha,* January, 1904.

[275] Special Board Meeting, January 27, 1904.

[276] *Installation Exercises of Rabbi Abram Simon, Friday Evening, February 5, 1904.*

Adas Israel Congregation, Washington, Rabbi Stern, President Blout, and Simon Wolf all participated in speeches and lectures on the widely celebrated joyous occasion.

Dr. Simon approached his task here with two guiding principles to his abounding and warm faith in his religion: "The way to solve the problem (of persecution) is for the Jew to remain where he is, and by his own character, his own manhood, fling the lie in the face of his accusers." [277]

". . . Israel has no priesthood . . . every man is a priest. There is no caste, religious or social. All are sons of God. There is no distinction in Israel today or (of) clergy and laity. The title of Rabbi is one of leadership, won by scholarship, not by special appointment." [278]

So Dr. Simon undertook his duties with humility, dedicating his life in scholarship and community activity to prove "by his own character, his own manhood" that the members of his faith are entitled to respect and tolerance.

In less than a year he was asked to, and did, open the Senate with prayer;[279] the following month performing the same services in the House.[280] His activities, both pastoral and civic, were manifold; his enthusiasm for his task, boundless; his warm response to all, magnetic. What wonder then that the Temple Emanuel, San Francisco, sought in a short time to regain for the west, the talents and eloquence theretofore brought to the east.[281] But it was not to be. It was in Washington that Dr. Simon was to serve the remainder of his life.

As Simon Wolf and Rabbi Stern were so representative

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[277] An unidentified Sacramento, Calif. evening paper, June 21, 1897.

[278] *The Constructive Character and Function of Religion in Human Progress as Illustrated by the Religion of Israel, A Thesis—for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Abram Simon,* George Washington University, 1907.

[279] *Prayer at Opening of Senate,* January 16, 1905.

[280] *Prayer before the House of Representatives,* February 16, 1905.

[281] *The Washington Post,* January 16, 1909; *Washington Times,* January 16, 1909.

of the strength of Reform Judaism brought respectively by member and "Chasan" to Congregation life in the last half of the Nineteenth Century, so Dr. Simon during the thirty-five years of his ministry here contributed to Reform Judaism the position of respect and wide community acceptance which the movement required for its continued life. It was Dr. Simon's task to solidify the position of the Congregation as a recognized force for tolerance and leadership in Judaism. This he did.

In the fourteen years between the arrival of Dr. Simon and the commencement of World War I, he became an outstanding civic and nationally recognized figure in the Rabbinate. He was a loyal Mason where his eloquence was in constant demand. He exchanged pulpits with Christian ministers in this city and with rabbis elsewhere on occasions too numerous to mention. The guiding force of his belief in the force of character and manhood caused him to enlist in the Red Cross during the First War, where he served in Europe with distinction with the 79th Division.

Upon his return, he was appointed a member of the Board of Education in 1919, and continued to serve until 1923 when he refused reappointment, having discharged the arduous duties of President during the years 1920 through 1921. He again accepted appointment in 1930.

Dr. Simon was President of the Board of Columbia Hospital from 1921 to 1927 and of the Free Public Library from 1929 to 1933.

He was President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis 1924-1925, throughout his life being an active member.

The Hebrew Union College bestowed the honorary degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature in 1925, although he

had obtained his degree, Doctor of Philosophy, from George Washington University in 1907.[282]

On October 25, 1922, Dr. Simon broadcasted his first radio lecture over Station WEAS.[283] These he continued sporadically until by 1925, two other Jewish Congregations in Washington conducted their entire services by listening to his radio broadcasts.[284] Broadcasts continued through this period, but by 1929, apparently only High Holiday services were broadcast over WRC and WMAL.[285] In 1924, his radio sermon *Let Us Understand Each Other,* at the request of Senator Copeland of New York, was printed in full in the *Congressional Record.*[286]

He was active, indeed instrumental, in the formation of the Committee on Religious Life in Washington, consisting of ministers of various denominations; and was an ardent supporter of the Conference of Christians and Jews, waiting upon President Hoover at the First Convention of the Conference.[287]

As a testimonial to his years of devotion to the Congregation, in celebration of thirty years of service, on February 7, 1934, a thousand friends joined at a dinner at the Mayflower Hotel. Included were important local and national figures, statesmen, clergymen, businessmen and women. Ministers of all faiths participated.

On December 24, 1938, following a morning broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System, he was stricken suddenly with a heart attack and passed away the same day. All of the District of Columbia joined in tribute to him, and his work; ministers of all faiths, members of the Congress and

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[282] Foregoing biographical data from *The Sunday Star* and *The Washington Post,* December 25, 1938.

[283] *Annual Report No. 26,* p. 27.

[284] *Annual Report No. 29* (1924-25), p. 8.

[285] *Annual Report* (1925-26), p. 27; Board Meeting, October 8, 1929.

[286] 1924 *Congressional Record* 8321.

[287] Picture extant.

the Cabinet; the newspapers of the day, *The Star, Post, Times* and *Herald* are replete with love and reverence on all sides, summed up best perhaps in the words of Rabbi Gerstenfeld: "He was a scholar and a saint."

The final recognition came in 1951 with the naming of Abram Simon School at 4th and Mississippi Avenue, S. E.[288] in his honor, to serve as a permanent part of the educational facilities of the Public School System of the city—a monument to a man and the group which produced him, a group which had maintained its own elementary school at one time an hundred years before.

Although memorials of various kinds have been adopted by the Congregation in his memory, a portrait, a tablet, a section of the cemetery, the real work of memorial lies ahead in the New Temple. The form it will take, the inspiration to be derived from its medium of expression, must be carefully determined so that the personality and spirit of one of the great men of the First Half of the Twentieth Century can be appropriately preserved.

Of Dr. Simon's two sons, one, Leo, a promising lawyer, scholar and intellectual, was taken early in life. The other son, David Simon, still a Temple member, has entered into community and religious life with ardor, being a leading realtor in the city.

The significance of the life of Dr. Simon in this community, he himself expressed, as has been shown. His life taught a lesson; he lived it and contributed it, in turn, to the life of the Congregation. The Jew, and Reform Judaism, by character and manhood is to create his and its own position in the community. And scholarship, study, and learning, are the cornerstone.

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[288] *The Washington Post,* May 24, 1951.

PART X.

ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1904, Norman Gerstenfeld was born in Croydon, England.[289] After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Chicago, he graduated from the Hebrew Union College in 1933, but continued his studies at the Hebrew University at Jerusalem and at Harvard University, in the interim having married Louise Mundheim of Pittsburgh on March 22, 1934, a member of a family whose roots sink deep in the Washington Jewish community and the history of this Congregation.

While at Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Gerstenfeld had achieved honors in preaching and theology and had won the Montefiore prize for an essay submitted on the theme "Imitatio Dei in Rabbinic Literature." Upon graduation, the faculty honored him by naming him a Fellow in Jewish Philosophy. Since his graduation the honorary degree, Doctor of Humanities, was conferred upon him by the University of Tampa.

In 1935, it was determined to obtain an assistant to Dr. Simon. Accordingly, after some investigation to select a promising man of high attainment, Rabbi Gerstenfeld was suggested by Mr. Edmund I. Kaufmann.[290] After the passage of a few months, the Board unanimously approved the selection of Rabbi Gerstenfeld,[291] and called a Special Congregation Meeting where the report of the Board was unanimously approved.[292]

Rabbi Gerstenfeld immediately commenced his task with a rare intellectual energy. He quickly proposed a radio pro-

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[289] As Dr. Simon was born at the time Dr. Stern became Rabbi of this Congregation, so Rabbi Gerstenfeld was born as Dr. Simon became Rabbi. Thus, the third Rabbi repeated the pattern of events which marked the birth of the second.

[290] Board Meeting, June 18, 1935.

[291] Board Meeting, September 10, 1935.

[292] Special Congregation Meeting, September 19, 1935.

gram, regular in nature, and obtained funds from interested Temple members with which to support it. The program is now in its eighteenth year.

The younger people of the Congregation were organized as a Young People's Guild, which later expanded into National Temple Forum, where eminent speakers such as Will Durant, Lord Bertrand Russell, James G. McDonald, Lewis Browne, Rabbis de Sola Pool and Abba Hillel Silver, drew large audiences.

His continued enthusiasm was recognized by the Congregation, when, after the death of the beloved Dr. Simon, at a general meeting, he was tendered the position as Rabbi of the Congregation,[293] for a five-year term.

The breadth of his grasp of the New Future which lay before him is evident in other action taken at that meeting with his support. The Congregation authorized membership in The Jewish Community Council and engaged a Cantor, Abrasha Robofsky.[294]

Both of those actions portended an expansion in concept which is necessary to Congregation growth. The first indicated willingness to participate in Jewish affairs on other than a Reform basis—a relapse from an attitude developing in past years. The second was of a deeper religious significance—an attempt to make Reform in this city more readily acceptable to Orthodox and Conservative Jews who might desire affiliation with Reform. It was a fresh approach which even dissidents, upon reflection, understood.

So the young Rabbi, at his Installation Services, celebrated the occasion in gown,[295] and with Cantor. Yet his more traditional approach to the trappings of ritual did not portend a departure from the tradition of community non-Jewish participation. Bishop Freeman, Episcopal Bishop of Wash-

[293] Congregation Meeting, April 5, 1939.

[294] *Idem.*

[295] Use of the gown had been discussed a year earlier. *Note* 338, *infra.*

ington, and Dr. McCartney, Chairman of the Committee on Religious Life, respectively, gave the sermon and read ritual. Dr. Julius Morgenstern, President of the Hebrew Union College, and Rabbi Metz of Adas Israel Congregation attended and the former gave the charge—truly an auspicious and significant service.[296] Newspaper editorials of the day appropriately reflected the respect of the community for the Congregation, its two preceding great Rabbis, and the knowledge that their brilliant and devoted successor was "a man equal to the responsibility." [297]

Rabbi Gerstenfeld amply justified that confidence. Continued interest in, and application to, inter-faith problems found him eloquent in his radio program and in his work in the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Indeed, he was honored as one of three ministers, himself, Dr. John S. Studebaker and Father John K. Cartwright, who presented, on behalf of the Conference, a three-faith pledge signifying Democracy, Freedom and Tolerance, to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 13, 1939.[298]

However, he did not forget his Congregation. The Rabbi's Supper Club soon became a popular medium for informal meetings with the Rabbi and his distinguished guests, well-known political and literary personalities of the day.

His part in creating the High Holyday Services at Constitution Hall is elsewhere discussed in this work.[299] In those services, through the cooperation of Dr. Eric Werner, original modern Jewish music, in the traditional mood, has been produced, a magnificent creative effort the critical appraisal of which cannot here be attempted.

The growth in membership of the Congregation during Rabbi Gerstenfeld's service has been a challenge. Physical

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[296] *Installation Service of Rabbi Norman Gerstenfeld*, May 19, 1939.
[297] *The Evening Star, The Washington Post,* May 20, 1939.
[298] Picture extant.
[299] *Note* 346, *infra.*

facilities inadequate to serve as a place of worship or as a religious school have resulted in ingenious methods of solution, under his leadership, such as the Constitution Hall High Holyday Services, use of George Washington University and then a two-day shift at the Temple for the Religious School. The addition of some five hundred families during the past fifteen years, from a membership of about six hundred to nearly eleven hundred, emphasized the need for the New Temple—a drive which could not have been thus far successful without the added impetus of Rabbi Gerstenfeld's ardor and constant work.

The interests and energies of the Rabbi have been directed to many other fields. Exchange of pulpits, community effort in many phases, and other media indicate that his future is indeed as promising as was foreseen eighteen years ago.

An appraisal of the real significance of his contribution to the history of the Congregation cannot yet be made dispassionately. His youth augurs well for many years of continued service with the temper of experience adding strength to his efforts on behalf of his Congregation.

During the years of his marriage, four children have been born to him. John, the eldest, was confirmed in the Congregation on Shavouth, 1952. Two daughters, Lynn and Norma, and another son, Roger, complete his family.

PART XI.

FREQUENT REFERENCES throughout Congregation proceedings during the period of its existence could well serve as a basis for a pageant of the history of the United States and the District of Columbia. National and local events which are noted, recognized and acted upon by the respective Boards, annual meetings, and services of the Temple reveal the alert interest of the membership in events then current. Much has already been disclosed in preceding chapters. Suffice it here to note only highlights of other activities.

For instance, a resolution of sympathy to the family of President Garfield, after his assassination, was passed and delivery of a copy ordered to the Secretary of State and to the local press.[300] Upon the assassination of McKinley, during funeral ceremonies that began on Sunday and lasted through Thursday, the Congregation conducted a memorial service.[301]

Upon the election of President Theodore Roosevelt, the Congregation forwarded congratulations and duly received a card of thanks in response.[302] Upon the death of Secretary Hay, "a great friend of the Congregation," memorial services were held.[303]

At the Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the Congregation, held on Friday, December 29, 1905, Vice-President Fairbanks, the Honorable Henry L. West, Commissioner of the District of Columbia, and others, attended the services.[304] A general Fair for the District of Columbia was held by the Congregation, largely attended by the entire community of the District of Columbia and proceeds aggregated nearly $11,000.00, used for reduction of the Temple debt.[305]

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[300] Congregation Meeting, July 3, 1881.
[301] *Washington Times,* September 16, 1901.
[302] Board Meeting, December 4, 1904.
[303] Board Meeting, July 3, 1905.
[304] Board Meeting, November 1, 1905.
[305] Board Meeting, October 1, 1905.

After the San Francisco fire, the Congregation held a special meeting in response to a telegram from Oakland, California, reciting that "Thousand unfortunate co-religionists fled from San Francisco calamity in our care," and the Congregation made an appropriate contribution for relief.[306]

The appointment of Oscar Strauss as Secretary of Commerce and Labor was noted by the Congregation in a letter to Secretary Strauss sending congratulations and a notification that a pew had been set aside for the use of the Secretary and his family.[307] At Thanksgiving services in 1921, attended by more than 1,000 people, the Honorable William Jennings Bryan made the address of the day.[308]

Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts, Honorable Julius Kahn, representative from California, Chief Judge Bolitha Laws, and Judge E. Barrett Prettyman, addressed the Congregation in later years and during the years of World War II, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau frequently attended services. Indeed, a complete dossier of the Congregation activities would unduly protract this work. Suffice it here especially to note only the appearance of President William H. Taft at a meeting of the Temple Men's Club on May 16, 1911, where he made an address on the participation of Haym Salomon in the Revolutionary War.[309]

Letters from Presidents Taft and Hoover, from Commissioner Boardman, and others, remain among Congregation records.

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[306] Special Meeting Congregation, April 25, 1906.

[307] Board Meeting, November 4, 1906.

[308] Congregation *Annual Report No. 25,* p. 8.

[309] Congregation *Annual Report No. 15 (1912),* p. 7, address of Dr. Simon.

PART XII.

THE DEVELOPMENT of the men's and women's auxiliaries of the Temple, now known as the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, should be appropriately noted, as well as certain other special aspects of Congregation custom.

The Men's Temple Club was started by Dr. Simon in 1909.[310] The first officers were:

D. J. Kaufman..... *President*
Louis Hirsch..... *Vice-President*
Julian Reis..... *Secretary*
Ben Salomon..... *Treasurer*

The first Board was Simon Wolf, I. L. Blout and Isadore Goldheim. Although active for a few years, interest in it soon waned thereafter.

For a few years a Temple Alumni Association was active. It commenced in 1921. Composed of post-confirmants, it sponsored a Fathers' and Sons' Banquet, the first ever held in the Congregation, on December 7, 1921.[311] It repeated its sole sponsorship three more times.[312] At this time, due largely to the efforts of R. B. H. Lyon, as principal organizer, The Temple Brotherhood was first formed.[313] During its first year it obtained 250 members. The officers were:

Dr. Bernard A. Baer..... *President*
Joseph D. Dreyfuss..... *Vice-President*
Alan DeFord..... *Secretary*
Sylvan Oppenheimer..... *Treasurer*

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[310] *Congregation Annual No. 12 (1909)*, p. 5.
[311] *Congregation Annual No. 25 (1921-1922)*, p. 8.
[312] *Congregation Annuals Nos. 26*, p. 14; *27*, p. 27.
[313] *Congregation Annual No. 29*, pp. 12-25, *Report* by Dr. Bernard A. Baer.

Directors were:

Dr. Aubrey Fischer	Sol Louis
Harold Gans	R. B. H. Lyon
Dr. Milton Goldsmith	Arthur Newman
Maurice Kafka	Julian Reis

Immediately the Brotherhood jointly sponsored the Father and Son Banquet with the Alumni Association.[314] By the following year, Leon Pretzfelder, Brotherhood President, stated at the Convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Cleveland that the outstanding activity of the Brotherhood in Washington was the Father and Son Banquet.[315] Two years thereafter at the National Convention of Brotherhoods, the Alumni Association participation had apparently completely ceased and the National Convention was informed by the Brotherhood that "our Father and Sons Banquet" was a principal contribution to Temple welfare.[316] The activities of the Brotherhood since its early beginnings are so well known, and its influence for good in Temple affairs so plain throughout the passage of the intervening years that further reference to its activities is deemed here to be inappropriate. The Temple is honored during the year 1952 by the Honorable Milton S. Kronheim, Jr., acting as President of its Brotherhood.

The Ladies' Auxiliary to the Temple commenced in 1906. Mrs. Abram Simon conceived the idea and reported it to the Board which resolved that it "endorses heartily" the origin of the movement.[317] Due principally to the energies of Mrs. Simon as President, the Ladies' Auxiliary Society prospered and by 1913, the movement received national recognition by the formation of a National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods at the Convention of the Union of American Hebrew

[314] *Congregation Annual (1925-1926)*, p. 14.
[315] *Congregation Annual (1926-1927)*, p. 14.
[316] *Congregation Annual (1928-1929)*, pp. 8, 12.
[317] *Congregation Annual 11 (1906)*, p. 12.

Congregations at Cincinnati. The efforts of Mrs. Simon were recognized by her election as the first national President.[318] The name "Sisterhood" was adopted at that time, and like Brotherhood activities, the good works of the Sisterhood in furtherance of the aims of the Temple cannot be over-emphasized. One of its principal achievements was the acquisition of the "Sisterhood House" next to the Temple, first used as a Sunday School and later as the Temple office. The devotion of Mrs. Louis Kronheimer, then President of the Sisterhood, is appropriately noted in connection with the gift of the Sisterhood House to the Temple, although a portion of the cost was later paid by the Temple through amortization of a deferred purchase money mortgage.[319]

As has been shown, a ready source of Congregation funds throughout the years was the sale of burial privileges, interment fees, and other charges relating to the cemetery. For the first time at a Board meeting in 1911, the Secretary of the Congregation was directed to keep a record of all burial lots covered by the agreement of the Congregation to afford "perpetual care." [320] Prior thereto, and even following the action, receipts from the "perpetual care of graves" had been deposited in the general funds of the Congregation. Indeed, the Congregation could not have existed during that preceding sixty-year period had it not used for general purposes all receipts resulting from its ownership and maintenance of the cemetery. Thus, receipts from the perpetual care of graves were deposited in Congregation general funds. The cost then was $100.00, and sometimes less.[321]

Perpetual care charges commenced to increase at about that time, the Board charging for the privilege whatever the

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[318] *Congregation Annual 16 (1913)*, p. 7.

[319] *Congregation Annual 28 (1928-1929)*, p. 5.

[320] *Congregational Annual 15 (1912)*, p. 41, report of Board Meeting, July 2, 1911.

[321] *Congregation Annual 15*, p. 17.

traffic would bear, either $100.00, $200.00, or more, or less.[322] It is here to be noted that a "sinking fund" for the retirement of Congregation debt had first been established in 1907 when Mrs. Abram Simon, then President of the Ladies' Auxiliary, as a gift of that Society, tendered marble tablets to the Congregation, inscriptions upon which were to be sold for $100.00 as a memorial to the departed, and the proceeds of which were to be used for the retirement of Congregation debt.[323] The first reference to maintenance of a cemetery fund is connected with that previous action of the Board, for in 1914 three funds were ordered to be maintained by the Congregation: general fund, sinking fund and cemetery fund.[324] The practice of charging what the traffic would bear for perpetual care continued, however, and no separate cemetery fund was set up at that time.[325] However, by the late 1920's, the sinking fund contained bonds in the amount of $8,500.00.[326] The first real action towards setting up a cemetery fund occurred under the energetic leadership of President Joseph Salomon when he recommended that a separate cemetery fund be established,[327] and a "perpetual care fund" to be kept separate and intact was discussed at a Board Meeting in 1929.[328] Despite considerable difference of opinion on the subject, the Congregation ordered monies paid for perpetual care to be "segregated" at a special meeting called for that purpose,[329] and for the first time the Congregation commenced to pay into the cemetery fund monies which it received in its general fund from other sources.

[322] *Congregation Annual 16,* p. 30.

[323] Board Meeting, April 24, 1907.

[324] *Congregation Annual No. 17 (1914),* p. 18.

[325] *Congregation Annuals No. 17,* p. 23, *No. 18,* p. 21, *No. 19,* p. 14, *No. 20,* p. 12, *No. 21,* p. 16, *No. 23,* p. 12, *No. 24,* p. 20, *No. 25,* p. 16.

[326] *Congregation Annual No. 25,* p. 19.

[327] *Congregation Annual (1929-1930),* p. 2.

[328] Board Meeting, December 7, 1929.

[329] Special Meeting, March 24, 1931, *Congregation Annual (1930-1931),* p. 6.

Until May 15, 1926, all Congregation members were entitled to have burial lots set aside for them. After that date the practice of selling burial lots to members commenced. As a result, funds derived from the sale of burial lots by 1952, together with funds paid for perpetual care, resulted in the accumulation of a fund of $84,000.00 in cash and United States Savings Bonds.[330] The annual budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1953, discloses that cost of cemetery operation for that year is estimated to be $10,000.00, and obviously, in order to obtain sufficient income from a cemetery fund to permit payment of that cost, would require an accumulation estimated at about $400,000.00. The lack of necessity for setting apart such a large sum of money in view of present Congregation needs, and in the light of its contrary actions in that respect over a period of more than sixty years, is at once apparent. Segregation of funds for retirement of Congregation debt is a sensible and necessary action but since maintenance of a cemetery is but another phase of Congregation activity, similar in essence to maintenance of pews and payment of other costs, a separate cemetery fund seems to be unnecessary. Certainly, payment of interest on other Congregation debt at a relatively high rate, and receipt of minimum interest from a large Congregation fund for cemetery purposes is unwise, since other Congregation costs must be paid by members in the form of increased dues. The only obligation of the Congregation in respect of cemetery lots for which a charge for perpetual care has been made, is to see that perpetual care is given. The Congregation which decided to set apart cemetery funds, may take contrary action at any time it wishes, subject only to the proviso that perpetual care be afforded. Furthermore, the charge for perpetual care having been variously, as has been shown, charged at sums less than $100.00, to the present rates which

[330] *The Temple Journal,* May 9-22, 1952.

can aggregate $800.00,[331] results in unequal burdens on Congregation membership. The purpose in paying for perpetual care is to support an institution. Only that purpose would justify the varying charges and that use of the money for so long a period of time. Indeed, such stalwarts of the Temple as Dr. Bernard A. Baer, and Adolph Kuntz (of whom more below) have in the past proposed withdrawal of cemetery funds for general Congregation purposes.[332]

Another interesting custom developed in this Congregation, here worthy of note, is the publication of a memorial booklet in memory of the departed on Yom Kippur. Prior to 1928, all names of the departed, whose memory was honored by contribution to the Temple, were read from the pulpit. The list becoming too long, by action taken in 1928, it was determined to publish a booklet containing the names and to read only a tribute to those who had departed during the current year.[333]

A function of the Congregation not often noted by its members today, is the duties discharged by the Divine Worship and Choir Committee. Prior to 1915, the President of the Congregation had complete power to determine upon the form which the ritual of services would take, subject only to action taken by the Congregation in meetings held for that purpose. President Blout, deeming it advisable to change the complete power of the President theretofore existing, recommended a Worship and Choir Committee to be established by the By-Laws.[334] This recommendation the Congregation accepted and over the course of the years it was variously known until the term "Divine Worship and

[331] *Article 9, Congregation By-Laws (Burial Ground), The Temple Journal,* May 9-22, 1952.

[332] A loan was proposed by them at a Special Meeting of the Congregation, September 30, 1940.

[333] *Congregation Annual (1928-1929), p.* 7.

[334] *Congregation Annual Report No. 18 (1915),* p. 6.

Choir Committee" became fixed in the By-Laws. The Committee soon became active when it adopted a detailed ritual for the handling of the Torah in 1917,[335] a procedure quite different from that which had been in effect in the past. The procedure then followed was marked by considerably more decorum than had been the case ten years before when a ritual dispute had resulted in a Board resolution, directed to the Rabbis of the Congregation, notifying the "divines" that "* * * as the religious services in the Temple of the Congregation are by law under the control and charge of the Prest. (sic) his orders and instructions should be obeyed." [336]

When real matters of change of ritual were discussed and action taken in recent years, the wisdom of the action taken in formation of the Committee became apparent. Dr. Simon proposed that a Kiddush ceremony be performed on Friday nights, with lighting of candles. After dignified discussion, by the Board on recommendations of the Committee, "it was decided that it was entirely a matter for the Rabbis." [337]

Several years thereafter, a reasonable procedure, dignified and restrained, was adopted when the Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Baer, recommended to the Board that the Rabbis be requested to wear gowns and that a Cantor be engaged. Although there were sharp differences of opinion, even among the Rabbis, and lengthy written reports, it was determined, without too much delay, to approve the Committee report.[338] In earlier days, special Congregation Meetings would undoubtedly have evoked lengthy debate and possibly some bitterness.

Another custom developed in recent years is the practice of holding services in Constitution Hall on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. It was first proposed by Rabbi Gersten-

[335] *Congregation Annual Report No. 20 (1917)*, p. 23.
[336] Board Meeting, May 23, 1907.
[337] Board Meeting, November 9, 1936.
[338] Board Meeting, May 23, 1938.

feld in 1939,[339] again in 1942,[340] and 1943.[341] At a Special Congregation Meeting in the latter year, the Congregation decided against it.[342] The Board, however, in the following year approved the request,[343] but on report to a Congregation Meeting where about 500 members attended, it was determined again not to do so.[344] In 1947, the Board again determined to use Constitution Hall[345] and this time the Congregation approved.[346] 1952 marked the sixth year of the ceremonies and even the most vigorous opponents of the original proposals now find those services conducted with beauty and dignity before a company much larger than could be accommodated in the present Temple building; although, it is true, resumption of High Holiday Services once more in the own home of the Congregation, is generally awaited eagerly on all sides.

The Temple, in the past quarter-century, has brought to the attention of the general membership, with respect and affection, three outstanding personalities. The first, the late Lee Baumgarten, past-president, served the Congregation during summer and illness of the Rabbis, with loyalty and warmth as a "reader" in the sense which has become traditional with this Congregation. His faithful reading of services for about ten years, from 1927[347] until his death in 1937, resulted in many Congregation actions of appreciation. A silver pitcher and goblets,[348] a radio,[349] several resolutions

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[339] Board Meeting, July 10, 1939.
[340] Board Meeting, April 17, 1942.
[341] Board Meeting, April 27, 1943.
[342] Special Congregation Meeting, May 17, 1943.
[343] Board Meeting, May 1, 1944.
[344] Congregation Meeting, May 31, 1944.
[345] Board Meeting, March 17, 1947.
[346] Special Congregation Meeting, April 7, 1947.
[347] *Congregation Annual Report (1927-1928)*, p. 1.
[348] *Congregation Annual Report (1929-1930)*, p. 1.
[349] *Congregation Annual Report (1930-1931)*, p. 1.

of thanks,[350] an honorary membership, and finally a beautiful resolution of condolence to him as past-President "and acting Rabbi," carrying the offering of gratuitous inscription of his name upon the Memorial Tablets,[351] have left a record which can be embellished only by personal recollections of his sincerity and kindly demeanor.

Adolph Kuntz, both elder and sage of the Temple, after years of faithful effort in nearly every branch of Temple activity for more than forty years, was elected an honorary life member in 1935.[352] After nearly fifty years of Temple work, on the occasion of his 70th birthday, the Board determined to present him with the gift of an automobile.[353] Its action was approved by the Congregation,[354] and the presentation was made to him at a dinner meeting of the Board at the Ambassador Hotel.[355] That recognition has served only to stimulate Mr. Kuntz to further effort and his interest unflagging, he remains a stalwart contemporary, still energetic, and strong in his sense of duty to his religion.

Dr. Bernard A. Baer, first President of the Temple Brotherhood, a Temple officer for many years in many capacities, Chairman of the Divine Worship and Choir Committee, past Acting President of the Congregation, was honored as the first Honorary Vice-President of the Congregation.[356] None who have known him have escaped the impact of his genial, calm devotion to his religion and to his fellowmen. None have served the Temple more faithfully and none have contributed more in the past twenty-five years to a growth in membership from about five hundred to nearly eleven hun-

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[350] *Congregation Annual Report (1931-1932)*, p. 27; *Congregation Annual Report (1934-1935)*, p. 3.

[351] Congregation Meeting, April 7, 1937.

[352] Congregation Meeting, April 8, 1935.

[353] Board Meeting, September 27, 1940.

[354] Special Congregation Meeting, September 30, 1940.

[355] Board Meeting, October 14, 1940.

[356] Congregation Meeting, May 25, 1949.

dred. The Temple Brotherhood, with its emphasis upon a broad scope of affiliation, has served as a constant source of new Temple members in a city in which Jewish population has now increased to an estimated fifty thousand. Co-operative always with other Temple officers and with its Rabbis, his Committee continues to reflect a flexible attitude to Reform ritual and the needs or demands of the Congregation. Thus with loyal service, may the Temple continue its course toward the future still unmarked.

The Assistant Rabbis of the Congregation, both formally elected as well as those in summer and holiday service, should be noted.

In April, 1925,[357] Rabbi Harry L. Kronman was elected Assistant Rabbi but served only about a year. Rabbi William Franklin Rosenblum acted during the summer[358] and was elected Assistant during the summer of 1926.[359] He too left after a short time, to become Rabbi at Temple Israel in New York City.[360]

Late in the 1920's, the Sisterhood of the Congregation bestowed a scholarship for the Hebrew Union College upon a young man named Alexander Goode who was to have an appointment with national history. He officiated here on an occasion of Friday night services in 1936 when in his senior year at the College.[361] He later served during an illness of Dr. Simon in 1937,[362] and during the summer of 1939.[363] It became the sad duty of the Board to send a letter of condolence to his widow in 1943.[364] He was one of the heroic four chaplains who remained aboard the U. S. S.

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[357] Annual Meeting, April 1, 1925.
[358] *Annual Report (1925-1926)*, p. 27.
[359] *Annual Report (1926-1927)*, p. 29.
[360] *Annual Report (1929-1930)*, p. 1.
[361] Temple postcard announcement, September 9, 1936.
[362] Board Meeting, June 14, 1937.
[363] Board Meeting, June 12, 1939.
[364] Board Meeting, April 12, 1943.

"Dorchester" when she sank, so that enlisted men might have life belts and places aboard life-boats. His memory is forever commemorated in national history on a postage stamp in honor of his heroism and that of his clergyman colleagues: "These immortal chaplains, Interfaith in Action."

In 1935, Rabbi Isadore Breslau acted as guest Rabbi in High Holy Day Services held in the vestry of the Temple;[365] again in 1936,[366] 1937 [367] an 1938.[368] In the latter year, he was joined by Rabbi Paul Richman, who conducted overflow services, assisted by Mr. Elsberg, in 1939 [369] and 1940.[370]

By 1941, an Assistant Rabbi had been obtained, particularly for Superintendence of the Religious School,[371] his title being "Director of Religious Education." [372] This was Rabbi Morton Fierman. He was soon to become a chaplain in the Army as a First Lieutenant. On his departure for the service in 1942, he took with him the affection of the Board and Congregation as well as a generous gift.[373]

During the years of World War II, the Congregation took appropriate action to reflect the necessities of the times. Members of the Congregation serving in the Armed Forces were granted remission of Temple dues, although many did not accept the grant. Because of short supply of gasoline and the resultant rationing program, the Sabbath School Committee early in the War, under the Chairmanship of Bernard I. Nordlinger, arranged for special busses, one on Connecticut Avenue and one on Massachusetts Avenue, to

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[365] Board Meeting, Oct. 16, 1935.

[366] Board Meeting, November 9, 1936.

[367] Board Meeting, June 14, 1937.

[368] Board Meeting, October 10, 1938.

[369] Board Meeting, July 10, 1939.

[370] Board Meeting, September 10, 1940.

[371] Board Meeting, May 13, 1941.

[372] Board Meeting, June 9, 1941.

[373] Board Meeting, December 14, 1942.

transport the children along the routes to the Temple School.[374]

And now to come to the present. Dr. Hugo Schiff, "formerly of Germany," then serving at the Temple in Alexandria, was recognized for his kind participation in services for this Congregation.[375] He acted as Rabbi during the summer in 1940,[376] 1941, [377] 1942,[378] always with warmth, compassion and an attentive demeanor. At the annual meeting in 1948 the Board was authorized to engage an Assistant Rabbi,[379] which it did with alacrity,[380] requesting Dr. Schiff to accept appointment. With his usual kindliness, Dr. Schiff agreed at once.

Hence, this remarkable man, whose character is so well marked with a quiet dignity, has now become part of the history of this institution. He was born at Hoffenheim, near Heidelberg, in Germany in 1897, studied at the Universities of Heidelberg, Breslau, and Erlangen, at the latter of which he obtained the degree, Doctor of Philosophy. His degree as Rabbi, he obtained from the Jewish Theological Seminary at Breslau in 1923, which was the liberal institution in Germany but was, of course, destroyed by the Nazis during the Hitler era. Dr. Schiff served as Rabbi of the Jewish Congregation in Braunschweig, 1923-1925, and at Karlsruhe, Baden, 1925-1939. In the latter year, in company with so many others of all faiths and political creeds, he fled the Nazi persecution, a victim of the Hitlerite tyranny, coming to the United States. Here, he was immediately engaged by Congregation Beth El, Alexandria, Virginia, where he served as Rabbi until his engagement by this Congregation in 1948.

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[374] Board Meeting, October 12, 1942.
[375] Board Meeting, January 5, 1940.
[376] Board Meeting, June 10, 1940.
[377] Board Meeting, June 9, 1941.
[378] Board Meeting, May 11, 1941.
[379] Congregation Meeting, May 25, 1948.
[380] Board Meeting, June 16, 1948.

Dr. Schiff, with dignified determination, has completely overcome the complexities resulting from the destruction of his career abroad and the necessities of the use of a new language. With his devoted wife, he has endeared himself to the entire Congregation, where his duties, chiefly in the field of attention to the personal relationships of the pulpit to Temple members, have brought him in constant contact with the young, the old, and the ill, the bereavement and the happiness of the membership.

He has instituted a program of luncheons for the older members of the Congregation, held in the Vestry of the Temple on or near religious holidays. Yet, he has not neglected relationships with the community at large, having been, since 1944, a lecturer at the Howard University School of Religion. Since 1946, his lectures have been under the auspices of the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

Although the Congregation today numbers among its members outstanding lawyers, doctors, professional and businessmen who lead in all phases of civic life, and all cannot be adequately described, it must be recognized with pride and dignity that Judge David L. Bazelon of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Judge Milton S. Kronheim, Jr., of the Municipal Court of the District of Columbia, former Judge Milton Strasburger of the Municipal Court of the District of Columbia are Temple members. Most of the other leading citizens of the community who are Temple members have been mentioned in one or the other of the phases of this work.

Yet one of the outstanding active Temple members, important on the local and national scene, is Milton S. Kronheim, Sr., who was largely responsible for securing the consent of President Truman to lay the cornerstone of the New Temple on November 16, 1952. Mr. Kronheim has achieved a stature best described by reference to a dinner

tendered him at The Mayflower Hotel on October 20, 1952 in honor of his sixty-fourth birthday. Although not a Temple function, it was amply attended by Temple members. Over a thousand persons attended. The invocation by Rabbi Gerstenfeld opened an evening rich in the significance of tolerance and achievement. In attendance were a number of judges of the Courts of the District of Columbia, Justice Minton of the Supreme Court of the United States, leading members of the bar, doctors, businessmen and civic leaders of all walks of life, including Honorable James Moran, Commissioner of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. Addresses by the Honorable William E. Leahy, Commissioner of the District F. Joseph Donohue, Judge Milton S. Kronheim, Jr., and a response by Mr. Kronheim, Sr., were concluded after entertainment, by a Benediction by Monsignor Maurice J. Sheehy of Catholic University. This indeed was a tribute of friendship in which Reform Judaism may justly take pride.

Thus, after one hundred years, the life of the Washington Hebrew Congregation is marked by freedom, justice, tolerance and joy. Its setting is in the same series of national events in which it begun—a year of the Presidential election, a political campaign—but the difference in the institution itself. It is today one of the largest and most influential Congregations in America! May it continue in honor and pride to offer useful service to its members.

PART XIII.

"What is past is prologue." [381]

THE EVENTS OF THE PAST one hundred years in the religious life of the Reformed Jewish community, mark well the responsibility of the members of this Congregation in the second half of the Twentieth Century.

Form of ritual, if not marked by superstitution and ignorance, is unimportant. Return to use of gown by the Rabbis, re-introduction of cantorial singing into the service and wearing of the cap, gown and "Tallis" by the soloist, if understood to be symbolic only of ancient traditions in the same manner as recitation of traditional Hebrew phrases during the service, need not be objectionable. Reform Judaism, German in origin, American in development, which achieved a new liberalism in the last half of the Nineteenth Century and became solidified in the first half of the Twentieth, has perhaps made its first great contribution to Jewish life in America.

Its next achievement must be equally as realistic as its first and accomplished in the same objective manner.

Surely the enormous growth of this Congregation in membership has not resulted from a mere increase in the number of that small colony of German Jews who formed its nucleus. Jews of Eastern European origin, from Russia and Poland particularly, who have slowly changed from Orthodoxy and Conservatism to Reform, have been a principal source of growth. The slow movement of the ritual of Reform, backward to the points mentioned above, although perhaps to be explained in terms of religious sentiment, can find an explanation equally in a more important field.

The Eastern European Jew brought to the United States a

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[381] Inscription on statute at Archives Building of the United States, Pennsylvania Avenue Entrance, Washington, D. C.

more fervent and emotional approach to Zionism, rooted deep in the literal interpretation of the prayer for restoration of Zion, discarded early in the development of Reform. Likewise, the growing civic and financial importance of the immigrants from Russian and Poland, and the successive generations born in America, cradled in Orthodoxy and Conservatism, closer to the conscious or subconscious experience of the "Kehilla," [382] has given impetus to local movements such as The Jewish Community Council.

So the impact upon American Reform has resulted here in some change in ritual.

The United Jewish Appeal, fundamental in its approach to the necessity of Jews abroad, has been largely successful because of the religious emotion incident to the prayer for the rebuilding of Judaism in Jerusalem. Its importance in local Jewish life in the United States cannot be overemphasized in terms of its unifying influence among all the Jewish Congregations on any local scene. For instance, it is reported that some thirty-one Jewish Temples, Synagogues and Congregations function in the District of Columbia and its environs. Not more than two or three could be called "Reformed." Yet most of the Jewish population in the area, with the exception of a relative handful of dissidents, participate in annual drives, shoulder to shoulder, single in purpose to assist the needy of a great religion, albeit with degrees of enthusiasm depending upon the emotion generated by the vision of traditional Israel.

That unity of general purpose might find expression in years to come, in a religious sense, based not only on a

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[382] See Hersey, *The Wall* (Knopf, 1950) for a dramatic description. Termed "Kahal," a "communal autonomy" by a probably more accurate author. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland,* Vol II, pp. 90, 112 (Jewish Publication Society 1918). See also, *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. 6, p. 279, *et seq.*

common philanthropy, but also upon a common prayer, in turn to be read in the *Union Prayer-Book*:

"O may all, created in Thine image, recognize that they are brethren, so that one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be forever united before Thee."

Reform Judaism was not accomplished by rabbis or "chasonim." The common Jew, the plain man who walked in pride and honor, established and practised it.[383] He was led by those "who followed fastest." The intellectual explanation for Reform, and its religious justification, was and is undoubtedly committed to those who trained and educated for the purpose, make their holy profession that of bringing the Good Life, and its civil obligations, to organized groups of religious worshippers.

Yet a form of unity in religious life must be achieved by individual congregations, who are traditionally free to adopt their own rituals and their own policies. The Jewish Congregations of this city, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, should find some method, "when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye . . ." to attain a common American way to satisfy the demands of each. All Jews in their acceptance of the one God, and their devotion to honor and integrity in the Good Life, are fundamentally the same. And the degrees of difference in Jewish ritual are largely unknown outside the faith.

Hence, there can be neither logic nor necessity for continued differences to exist. Under the protection of the greatest liberal government ever developed in the history of civilization, there is, and can be found, a way. Help is needed from the Rabbis. It will come. Help is needed from the pious. It, too, will come. It is the responsibility first of the masses, of the laity, to demand it.

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[383] "It is the people, not the Rabbis, who form, reform and transform institutions." *Annual No. 13 (1910)*, "The Rabbi's Message" (Dr. Abram Simon), p. 4.

Possibly this Congregation, dedicated to Reform, can point its high purpose to more than a beautiful New Temple, to an unlimited horizon, to a fine ideal: the unification of modern Jewish ritual in the United States of America.