Perth Amboy's Jewish Community

History, Memories, Tribute





Robert Spector

with

Marilyn Millet Goldberg

Jane Sanders Leal

Mona Shangold

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Foreword by Alan Cheuse

Edited by Daniel D. Chazin and Janet Bernstein Rabinowitch

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Dedicated to our ancestors and our descendants

Perth Amboy's Jewish Community
History, Memories, Tribute

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Front cover and page 2, photos left to right:

Perth Amboy Hebrew School graduation, 1955
Joel Sanders, Joel Blum, Terry Perlin, Myron Alpern, Gilbert Sandler, Sheldon Cheuse, Lewis Kaden

Beth Mordecai confirmation class, 1958
Judy Falk, Jean Kaden, Diane Stess, Martha Kaplan, Marla Harrison, Marilyn Silverman, Suzanne Walker, Connie Hess, Joan Sher, Susan Pliskin

Back cover, top to bottom:

YMHA Tween Basketball Team starting five, 1959
Front: Steven Fine, Stuart Leventhal; back: Jack Auerbach, Bob Spector, Bill Dubin

New YMHA, 1978

Eisemann family
Front: Ruth Eisemann and Blanche Eisemann; back: Kate Eisemann and Dr. Moses Eisemann

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Aerial view of Perth Amboy, 1958

FOREWORD *by Alan Cheuse*

Some years ago, while on a writing assignment, my wife and I found ourselves, after a pleasant lunch in the small dining room of the main house, in the back yard of a small family compound in a quiet section of Denpasar, the capital of the mostly Hindu island of Bali, which itself is the center of the Hindu faith in the otherwise Muslim chain of islands that we refer to as the Indonesian Archipelago.

Our host was showing us wood and stone carvings the family had placed in the dusty back portion of their property, some of them masks which he himself had carved, based on characters from ancient Balinese dances. At the back of the yard behind the house where his family had lived for nearly six hundred years, he pointed out a small patch of special earth. Here, he explained, was the family burial place, but a burial place unlike any he had seen in his many travels through the United States and Europe. "You know that we don't bury our dead, we cremate them," he said.

"Here"—and he tapped his bare foot on the ground—"our parents bury our placentas when we come into the world. Our belief has it that with the placenta buried in this holy ground we may, some of us anyway, travel far and wide across the globe, but we will always, sooner or later, find our way home to stay. The placenta pulls us toward home . . ."

Do you see where I am going here?

Wherever we may wander, and, being Americans, chances are we will wander rather far and wide from the place where we first saw the light, we feel a certain special tie to the place where we were born. The odd thing is, whether or not we will ever return makes little difference. The place remains a firm memory. And because of that we have to face up to the fact that all of us from Perth Amboy have never left home. Or, to look at it another way, we have carried our home with us wherever we have gone (the way Aeneas, Virgil's hero, carried the elements of the family hearth—and, for the first part of his journey of exile, his father on his back—from Troy to Italy).

The elbow of land that shows up on the map of north Jersey, poking out slightly into the confluence of the Arthur Kill and Raritan Bay, this piece of land I have carried with me in my imagination for many decades, writing about it now and then in both essays and stories. Which is a way—think of it—of making a snapshot of what at any instant you might sometimes be dreaming or ruminating about. The few times I have returned on a trip have thrilled me, to see how much is different and how much has remained the same. All of us born here share similar memories, but we also of course have slightly different memories because of where, when, and to whom we were born.

My maternal great-grandmother lived there—here! As did for a while, when I was a small child, my maternal grandparents—they owned and managed a cigar and news stand on Smith Street only a storefront or two down from a saloon. (Absent were all the family on my father's side, which made him a lonely man.

He had a brother and a sister in New York City, but everyone else from his large Russian family had remained in the old Soviet Union, and by the time I was born some of them were beginning to die off.)

Family is, of course, a great teacher and can be either a comfort or a torment or a mix of both, but always part of one's education. Why does Aunt X shun Cousin Y? What did Brother A do with all that money? Who bought the house on B Street? Yes, family is an education to an individual, and a particularly valuable training ground for the young novelist, hunter of motives in the great forest of human behavior.

And then there was our geography itself, that elbow of land poking into water, which taught its own lessons. People born landlocked, who have perhaps some memories of ponds and small rivers, can boast about how water played a pleasurable role in their early lives, but they will never know the serious satisfaction, both physical and mental, of growing up near the shore of a bay that led to one of the world's great oceans where tides and shipping played such an important function in the everyday world of the children born in proximity to its ebb and flow.

Water in fact made the town itself a shipping center, the early capital of the new colonial amalgam, and, with its bay full of clams and fish, a point of land the pre-European inhabitants had found both a necessity and a pleasure. Even our simple play at the waterside intersected with the ghosts of Indians come to fish or dig for clams, and when as children we climbed in and around the dangerous ruins of colonial-era buildings, such as the site where William Franklin, Ben's son, ruled as governor, we crossed the faded paths of our historical forebears. But long before he had become the Benjamin Franklin we know from our history books, young Ben, as he mentions in his *Autobiography*, had, on his way from Boston to Philadelphia, spent a night on the beach at Perth Amboy, dreaming who knows what dreams of life here to come.

Into this larger context of independence politics and national and world economic history Perth Amboyans born Jewish can now fit their specific line of evolution, from earliest arrival as just another economic and religious group seeking elbow-room in which to thrive to proprietors of a certain territory in the city's evolving history and geography.

Show us more about our home and you show us not only about who we were, but also about who we might become. Read this history and you will, by the time you finish it, become more than yourself when you began it. It's a fascinating education in self-study, a fascinating story about where we all come from, and an implicitly sweet and interesting lesson, an illuminated map of our local, regional, and national aspirations. But, Amboy reader, take care. Whether you still live in the county or have moved from our home place as far away as New York or Anchorage or Indonesia, reading this book will make you proud and want to return.

PREFACE

"Labor of love" is the most apt description of the effort it took for many volunteers to put this book together, over the course of many years. We never lost sight of the fact that we had a special story to tell.

We wrote this book for three primary reasons: (1) to honor and remember our courageous ancestors and to thank them for the struggles and sacrifices they endured to ensure that we would have better lives; (2) to thank the Perth Amboy Jewish community, which shaped our lives as we grew up, and made us the people we are today; and (3) to provide our descendants with a lasting record of this important part of their history and heritage.

We have made our best, most sincere efforts to provide comprehensive, accurate, and balanced information. We researched historical documents, interviewed many people, and collected a broad swath of material from a wide variety of sources.

We apologize in advance for any omissions, inaccuracies, or perceived imbalances in our narrative. It is our fervent hope that our readers will appreciate the content, spirit, and love we have attempted to convey and will forgive any unintentional and inadvertent errors.

We extend our deepest thanks and gratitude to all those who contributed to this book. Without their help, this treasure would not have been possible. The names of all contributors appear at the end of the book.

Enjoy the story of Perth Amboy's Jewish community.

Robert Spector
Marilyn Millet Goldberg
Jane Sanders Leal
Mona Shangold


FERRY
to STATEN ISLAND
SHORTEST ROUTE TO S.I. BEACHES
BROOKLYN and MANHATTAN
TRAIN CONNECTIONS TO NEW YORK
OVERHEAD CLEARANCE ELEVEN FEET SIX INCHES
15 MINUTE SERVICE
CARS PAY ON BOAT
TWO BOATS
TAXI


23343—C.R.R. of N. J. Station, PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

Chapter One

A Convenient Town

When William Penn, a man who knew something about real estate, first set eyes on the land that would eventually become Perth Amboy, he declared: "I have never seen such before in my life."

Penn was one of a group of two dozen British men, known as the East Jersey Board of Proprietors, who founded the town in 1664 after the British had taken ownership of New Jersey from the Dutch. Thirteen years earlier, the Algonquin tribe of Lenni Lenape peoples had granted a deed to the land to Augustine Herman, First Lord of Bohemia Manor, who was an explorer, merchant, and cartographer representing the Dutch.

The town that would become Perth Amboy was settled officially in 1683. Samuel Groom, a surveyor general and a member of the Board of Proprietors, laid out the land in 150 ten-acre lots and vowed to erect "by the help of Almighty God with all convenient speed, a convenient town."

Each proprietor contributed 1,200 English pounds for the construction of his own private home. This early example of a group of interested parties in Perth Amboy contributing to a cause/project they believed in was emulated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when families in the Perth Amboy Jewish community raised funds to build synagogues and a YMHA.

It was considered an ideal spot for merchandise, trade, and fishery, as well as "a sweet, wholesome, and delightful place proper for trade," according to the Proprietors, thanks to its safe harbor, navigable river, and fresh water, "and hath, by many persons of the greatest experience and best judgment, been approved for the goodness of the air, soil, and situation." With these credentials, the town was made the capital of East Jersey.

Perth Amboy's favorable business climate would eventually attract Jews, who became owners of retail businesses and companies that manufactured supplies and provided services.

What's in a Name?

Perth Amboy came by its odd moniker over the course of many decades. In the beginning, it was called, variously, Ompoge or Ompo or Ompoye, which translated to "elbow" or "point" (describing the shape of the land) in the language of the Lenni Lenape. The name gradually evolved from Emboyle to Amboyle to Ambo Point to Amboy.

Images from top to bottom:

Ferry to Tottenville

Central Railroad of New Jersey station, Perth Amboy, around 1900

In the 1680s, one of the area's first investors (most of whom lived in Scotland) was a Scotsman named James Drummond, Earl of Perth, who was appointed Lord High Chancellor by King James II. Thanks to Drummond (a member of the Board of Proprietors), the Amboy area soon became a destination for men and women who fled Europe for religious and political freedom (not unlike the Jews who would come later). Among the new refugees were Quakers, Dutch, Scottish Presbyterians, French Huguenots (Calvinists), and English Roundheads (Puritan supporters of Parliament during the English Civil War).

In 1685, 200 freedom-seeking Scottish Presbyterians left the port of Leith, Scotland, aboard the ship *Henry and Francis* for the 15-week journey to the New World. Those who couldn't afford the passage of five pounds sterling were expected to spend four years as servants to the proprietors of East Jersey. Once they fulfilled that obligation, they would be declared freemen and awarded a bounty of 25 acres of land and a new suit of clothes.

But something happens to immigrants when they reach the soil of the New World: They grasp the concept of freedom. By the time the *Henry and Francis* rounded Sandy Hook and dropped anchor at Amboy Point, many of its passengers considered themselves to be already free. They had endured nearly four months at sea—and an outbreak of fever that killed more than half of them. Many of the survivors settled in East Jersey and were granted refuge by James Drummond, the Earl of Perth. These new settlers paid their tribute to Drummond by referring to the town as, variously, New Perth, Perth Town, or Amboy Perth. It was initially referred to as Perth Amboy in 1692 and eventually became the first incorporated city in New Jersey, with a royal charter from King George I.

The old joke about how Perth Amboy got its name goes like this: The Lenni Lenape Indians spotted the Earl of Perth dressed in a kilt and asked him, "Perth am girl?" "No," he replied, "Perth am boy."

Although Perth was jailed in 1688 upon the abdication of King James II (who had been king of both England and Scotland), the town continued to bear his name.

In 1698, 12 Church of England communicants founded the Congregation of St. Peter's Episcopal Church and erected their first house of worship on the foundation of an abandoned courthouse. Twenty years later, King George I awarded a charter to the church, which became the first Episcopal parish in New Jersey. Over the next centuries, Perth Amboy was home to at least 45 houses of worship, including the synagogues begun in the homes of Jewish families in the late 19th century and the religious institutions that followed: Shaarey Tefiloh, Beth Mordecai, and Beth Israel.

Perth Amboy is the only city in the United States that has been incorporated twice. In 1718, it was granted its charter by King George I, and the city seal, which is still in use, was adopted. It was incorporated a second time in 1784, following the American Revolution.

Industrial Revolution

The town grew slowly. By 1810, the population was a mere 815. But clearly, momentum was building. As the 19th century advanced, Perth Amboy became a vital business center for Central Jersey, thanks to its docks, warehouses, rooming houses, stores, outdoor markets, and restaurants. The town was a magnet for sailors, shipwrights, tradesmen, and farm workers.

In 1846, Perth Amboy gave birth to its first significant company: the Alfred Hall and Sons Fire Brick Works (59 Buckingham Avenue), which was created to exploit the nearby rich deposits of clay. Renamed Perth Amboy Terra Cotta Company and then Atlantic Terra Cotta, it was the leading terra cotta producer in the United States. Its work can be seen today on notable buildings such as the United States Supreme Court, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Woolworth Building, the Plaza Hotel, and the Flatiron Building.

Working with famed architect Stanford White in 1885, the Perth Amboy Terra Cotta Company manufactured a speckled yellowish-brown Roman brick that White used for the Tiffany House at East 72nd Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan. White's creation became popularly known as "Tiffany bricks." The architect's partner, Charles Follen McKim, had gone to school in Perth Amboy.

Middlesex County became America's center of brick manufacturing because of its abundance of soil composed of red fire clay and kaolin. Eventually, brickyards lined both the south and north banks of the Raritan River, all the way to New Brunswick.

Perth Amboy was on its way to becoming a blue-collar industrial hub, which it would remain for the next eight decades.



Jacobson Building on State Street



Chapter Two

A Gathering of Immigrants

Of the approximately 17,000 Jews in America in 1858, a mere handful lived in Perth Amboy. But by the late 1880s, when there were about 270,000 Jews in the United States, a significant number had found their way to the banks of the Raritan.

Some of the first Jews were peddlers. These peripatetic entrepreneurs hawked their wares behind a pushcart or a horse-drawn wagon or on their strong backs, from house to house, on Perth Amboy's unpaved, often muddy streets. For the most enterprising of these men, peddling was a stepping-stone to shopkeeping—the opportunity to someday open a small downtown store on Smith Street or State Street or Hall Avenue, or maybe a little grocery or candy store in a neighborhood. For many of these early entrepreneurs, that dream came true. Jews eventually dominated Perth Amboy's merchant class.

Perth Amboy's population had jumped to 9,512 by 1890, an increase of almost 100 percent from 1880.

Around 1890, several groups of Jews began to hold services in private homes in Perth Amboy. One group, in the northern section of town, held services at the home of Raphael Levinson, on Elizabeth Street, near Hall Avenue. Another group held a *minyan* at the home of Philip Joselson, who lived on Prospect Street, near Fayette Street, in the southern section of town. On the High Holy Days, services were held at the hall of the Perth Amboy Savings Institution at Smith and Rector Streets. A daily *minyan* was established at the large home of a successful businessman named Kassel Finkelstein, on the north side of Market Street between State Street and Brighton Avenue.

The pious and respected Finkelstein was a pivotal pioneering figure among Perth Amboy's Jews. His spacious home included a Turkish bath—at a time when most homes were not equipped with bathtubs or even hot running water. He installed a *mikvah*, which was patronized regularly by the Jewish women of Perth Amboy and surrounding communities as far as Keyport.

It was a challenge to keep kosher in Perth Amboy when Finkelstein arrived, as kosher meat had to be procured from New York City. Not only did this involve a time-consuming trip, but the meat would not keep for very long because there was no private refrigeration in those days. Imagine what these pious pioneers faced in the middle of a hot, humid Perth Amboy summer.

Images from top to bottom:

Abraham Kelsey, 1900

Alta Gordon Davidson

Finkelstein was instrumental in bringing to Perth Amboy a young man trained as a *shochet* (a ritual slaughterer of animals), who opened a kosher butcher shop. That man was Solomon Brody, who was to become a legendary figure in the life of our Jewish community.

A Growing Town

As America was changing from an agricultural to an urban-based industrial economy, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe arrived to fill the labor force.

Perth Amboy had plenty of room to grow, and grow it did. With its natural resources (particularly clay), abundant waterway access, established infrastructure, and adjacent flatlands that were ideal for heavy industrial development, it became a working-class town, a smokestack manufacturing town, a hub for imports of raw materials, and a symbol of the ascendancy of the American industrial age.

By the early 1900s, 25 percent of the world's silver supply and 22 percent of the world's copper supply was processed in Perth Amboy. Perth Amboy was the tidewater terminus of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, owned by industrialist Asa Packer, who also built the city's biggest hotel, the Packer House. Coal from Pennsylvania was shipped by rail to the large Perth Amboy docks, from where it was transported by barge to New York City and beyond.

Certificate of citizenship of William Alper, June 5, 1947


THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. A-170409

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE — CERTIFICATE OF CITIZENSHIP

Application No. 0301-6788 0301-1847

Personal description of the citizen at date of issuance of this certificate: Sex Male; age 38 years; complexion Medium; color of eyes Brown; color of hair Black; height 5 feet 5 inches; weight 190 pounds; visible distinctive marks Mark on right cheek; scar on left index finger; Married

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

ORIGINAL

(Complete and true signature of holder)

The United States of America, State of Pennsylvania, ss:

Be it known that WILLIAM ALPER

now residing at 175 Kearny Avenue, Perth Amboy, New Jersey

having applied to the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization for a certificate of citizenship pursuant to Section 338 of the Nationality Act of 1940, having proved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that he is now a citizen of the United States of America, became a citizen thereof on November 27, 1926, and is entitled to the full and entire benefits and rights of citizenship as provided by law, and has taken the prescribed oath of allegiance.

Now Therefore, in pursuance of the authority contained in Section 338 of the Nationality Act of 1940, this certificate of citizenship is issued this 5th day of June in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-seven and of our Independence the one hundred and seventy-first and in the name of the Department of Justice aforesaid pursuant to statute.

Seal

It is a violation of the U.S. Code [illegible] to copy, print, photograph, or otherwise illegally use this certificate.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Raritan Copper Works, established in 1898 at the foot of Elm Street, near the railroad tracks, eventually became the largest electrolytic copper refinery in the world. Other firms included M. Guggenheim and Sons, Witco Chemical Company, Barber Asphalt Paving Company (which once refined much of the asphalt east of the Mississippi), Chesebrough Manufacturing Company (makers of Vaseline), American Smelting & Refining, General Cable Works, Industrial Hardware, DuPont, National Lead, Chevron Oil, Hess Oil, Anaconda Copper Mining, and Hatco Chemical, as well as enterprises that made neckties, cigars, lingerie, and auto parts.

Perth Amboy became a destination for ships that sailed the coasts and rivers of the northeast United States. The town's manufacturing plants and its deepwater port attracted petrochemical companies and metal refineries.

The wave of immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries fed that urban industrial machine. Perth Amboy's smokestack economy attracted immigrants from many lands, including Denmark, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Italy, and later Puerto Rico and the West Indies. At the town's industrial and financial peak in the 1940s and 1950s, half of the 40,000-plus population of Perth Amboy worked right in town.







Images from top to bottom:

Isenberg family, around 1919-20
Front row (children): Jerome (Jerry) Jacobson, Ruth Jacobson, Judith (Judy) Isenberg, Theodore (Ted) Levine, Joseph (Buddy) Isenberg, Regina Isenberg; front row (adults seated): Etta Isenberg Jacobson, Leo Jacobson, Michla (Millie) Isenberg, Lazarus Isenberg, Frieda Weinberger Isenberg, David Isenberg; second row (standing): Min Isenberg, Jennie Bernstein Isenberg, Meyer Isenberg, Sarah Isenberg Levine, Philip Levine, Etta Isenberg, Alice Isenberg; back row: Gerson Isenberg, Grace Levine, Esther Levine, Eleanor Levine

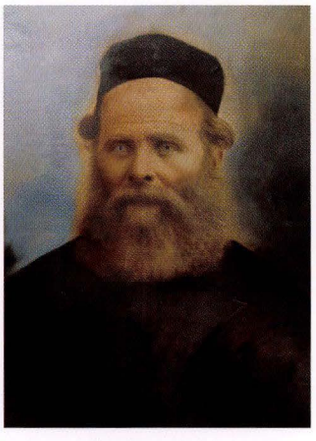
Installation of officers of Women's League of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh, 1951
Photo includes: Ann and Moe Isenberg, Hy and Dora Fine, Sam Fine, Ruth and Is Jacobson

Rose and Nathan Roth

Jacob and Annie Sher, around 1900



Reb Ben-Zion Greenberg



Jewish Businesses

As trade increased, proprietors began to set up shop along Smith Street, which leads from the waterfront through the heart of the city. In tandem with the prospering waterfront, Smith Street began to flourish as the city's business district. Eventually, Jews owned many of those shops (see Chapter 10).

When Fishkin Brothers opened around 1912, the store sold newspapers, tobacco, notions, and novelties. The brothers eventually moved into photography, to serve a community need. "There were many photographic studios in Perth Amboy in those days, because it was a really immigrant population," said Robert Fishkin, a son of one of the founders. "Everybody wanted pictures to send back to their families in Europe."

Fishkin's eventually became a photography superstore, attracting customers from all over the New York metropolitan area and as far away as Philadelphia. At the time, the store was a mainstay of downtown Perth Amboy, recognized by Jews and non-Jews alike as a community-minded business.

Nathan and Minnie Morrison



The "Original"

In the early 1890s, many Jews in Perth Amboy had difficulty adjusting to life in the new land. Poor transients roamed from store to store, both Jewish and non-Jewish, in their search for employment or help.

Kassel Finkelstein again stepped forward to offer assistance. The man who hosted Perth Amboy's first daily *minyan* offered the use of his home for women to organize to help the less fortunate. In October 1899, they formed the Perth Amboy Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, the first Jewish women's organization in Perth Amboy. Their self-assigned task was to welcome needy guests into their homes, a *mitzvah* known as *hachnosas orchim*. The women reported that "every stranger in our midst who applied for help received two meals, a night's lodging, and a nominal sum to help him on his way."



Original Perth Amboy Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society 50th anniversary, October 1949
Photo includes, seated: Esther Golub, Fannie Fine, Rachel Doris; standing: Sophie Widner, Gussie Ginzberg, Sarah Goldsmith, Michlia Berkow, Bertha Jacobson

The Perth Amboy Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society later merged with a similar group, the Original Perth Amboy Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, and adopted the latter group's name. The "Original," as the combined women's group was popularly known, played a large part in the building of Perth Amboy's charitable Jewish community by feeding needy families, paying for medical and hospital care, providing shelter by paying rent, and being a friend in times of great need.

For about 40 years, until the burden became too great, the Original Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society shouldered the full responsibility for this work. In 1940, the responsibility for *hachnosas orchim* was taken over by a group of members of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh.

During the Great Depression, many members of Shaarey Tefiloh provided needy people with temporary lodging, food, and money. Herb Zagor said that his father, Harry, "always volunteered to take all the *schnorrers* [beggars] into the house." Herb recalled that these transients would have to produce papers that proved their Jewishness.

Among those responsible for the success of the Original were Sarah Levine, the first president; Bertha Jacobson (president for over 25 years); Sarah Goldsmith (president for 12 years); Bessie Pavlovsky (secretary for over 30 years); and Ida Gavronsky, Judith Brody, Jennie Greenspan, Esther Polkowitz, Ida Plain, Jennie Rabinowitz, Rose Streiff, Fannie Slobodien, Rose Pavlovsky, Sophie Widner, Michlia Berkow, and Gussie Ginzberg.

Many of the individuals who were helped in their time of need became substantial citizens of the Jewish community, and their success rose from the start they had received from the warm hearts and helping hand of these women.

The members of the Original set the tone for generations of Jewish women to apply their influence and energy to the growth and development of Jewish life in Perth Amboy.



Belafsky family, 1918
Photo includes Jacob Belafsky (seated), Ida Belafsky (seated), Theodore Belafsky, Joseph Belafsky, Dorothy Belafsky







Above: Original Perth Amboy Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society 60th anniversary, 1959 Photo includes, standing: Sarah Goldsmith, Gussie Ginzberg, Bertha Jacobson, Rabbi Albert Schwartz, Bessie Gavronsky, Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin

Left: Abraham and Matel Belafsky

Right: David Kelsey, 1917





Above: Morris Toborowsky

Above right: Sarah, Alta, and Kalman Davidson

Right: Shaarey Tefiloh banquet Photo includes Lydia Singer, Martin Singer, Dr. Jack Shangold, Harriet Shangold, Ruth Safran, Walter Safran, Morris Ginzberg (standing)



Typical Challenges

Lydia Ginzberg Singer described some of the challenges the typical family faced in everyday life, recalling that "my mother (Gussie Ginzberg) had to walk several miles to the farmers' market to purchase a live chicken, then carry it to the slaughterhouse for a kosher execution, then bring it to the barrels for plucking, and finally carry the chicken back home to begin the preparation of the weekly Sabbath dinner. Modern cooks don't realize how hard our ancestors had to work to accomplish what they did."

She also remembered that they never let their own struggles diminish their generosity. "My father (Morris Ginzberg) worked hard but never forgot his own Jewish upbringing. He never turned away anyone who was hungry, and travelers from other cities and even states were given our name and address with the knowledge that a kosher meal awaited them."



Gussie and Morris Ginzberg





Left to right:

Julius Frankel, 1908

Ida Shangold, Art Aneckstein, Israel Shangold



Chapter Three

THE THREE SYNAGOGUES

SHAAREY TEFILOH, BETH MORDECAI, AND BETH ISRAEL

As more Jewish families moved to Perth Amboy in the last decade of the 19th century, a need arose for religious services with a *minyan*. Initially, services were held in private homes, but larger and more formal locations were soon required. Within a period of 15 years, three congregations—Shaarey Tefiloh, Beth Mordecai, and Beth Israel—were established, and these three synagogues continued to serve the Perth Amboy Jewish community for many years.

SHAAREY TEFILOH: "GATES OF PRAYER"

In 1891, a group of newly arrived Jewish men, including Kassel Finkelstein and Philip Joselson, formed the First Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society. This group was a fraternal association that provided various mutual benefits to its members. Its first meetings were held in the home of Morris Slobodien, at 79 Smith Street.

Members of the First Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society included Aaron Kaufman, Adolph Greenbauer, Nathan Roth, Abraham E. Cohen, Kassel Finkelstein, Nathan Jacobson, Barnet Goldman, Max Goldman, Peter Pavlovsky, Philip Joselson, Jacob Phillip Goldsmith, Philip Slobodien, Joseph Slobodien, Jacob Goldberger, Nathan Wilentz, Morris Shumsky, Joseph Schlesinger, Mr. Gross, Joseph Kramer, Abraham Kramer, Max Goldberger, Frank Avchen, and David Epstein.

Initially, they held services at the home of Philip Joselson, on Prospect Street. When they outgrew this space, the society procured a small building at 277 Elm Street, between Smith and Market Streets, which they converted to a synagogue. "Here these Jews, some of them who had prospered in Perth Amboy, gave thanks to God for the United States of America and for the welfare of the residents of the community," wrote Meyer Isenberg, a historian of the Perth Amboy Jewish community.

By 1903, the Elm Street building had become too small for their needs, and members of the society sought a location where they could build a much larger *shul*. With Max Goldman serving as president and Solomon Brody serving as chairman of the building committee, the group purchased a site at 314 Madison Avenue and developed a plan to build. Fifteen members of the group incorporated

Images from top to bottom:

Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh

Rabbi Albert Schwartz, Gary Shangold, and Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin prepare for Gary's bar mitzvah, 1966



Wedding of Charney Madrazo and Herb Pologe at Shaarey Tefiloh

as Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh ("Gates of Prayer")—the name selected for the new synagogue. They commissioned architect Jens K. Jensen to prepare plans for the building. Jensen designed an imposing Byzantine structure, an ornate two-and-a-half-story space trimmed in white and gold—later described as one of the most beautiful of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

It was to be, of course, an Orthodox synagogue. At that time, most of the nearly 2,000 Jewish congregations in the United States were Orthodox. More than half of that number were located in the North Atlantic states, where most Eastern European Jews chose to live.

A New Synagogue

On October 3, 1903, a cornerstone was laid at the site, as part of a civic gathering that included Mayor Charles K. Seaman, members of the Board of Aldermen, the prosecutor, city clerk, members of the Board of Freeholders, and other dignitaries, including Reverend S. T. Jackson, pastor of Simpson M.E. Church.

"No congregation ever laid a cornerstone with more show of enthusiasm than the Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society at the new Temple," stated a news account in the *Perth Amboy Chronicle* of October 5, 1903. "The affair was advertised to commence at 3 p.m.; by 2 p.m. there was no standing room within 200 feet on either the front or sides of the platform. Later about 500 people joined in the festivities at Wilder Hall, which lasted until 1:30 a.m."

On the 24th day of Elul in the year 5664 of the Hebrew calendar (1904), the Shaarey Tefiloh Synagogue was dedicated. The dedication ceremony was followed by a celebratory parade, highlighted by the carrying of the *Sifrei Torah* (scrolls of the Holy Scriptures) from Elm Street along Smith Street and then to Madison Avenue, as a band from the Hebrew Orphan Society played marching music. The pomp and beauty of the procession were witnessed by thousands of Jews and Gentiles. Decades later, in 1976, there was to be another joyous procession of Jews and their Gentile friends and neighbors. After a devastating fire had destroyed the Shaarey Tefiloh Synagogue, the Torahs that were heroically saved were marched through the streets of Perth Amboy to their new home on Market Street.

The 1904 dedication was climaxed by the opening of the new doors with a golden key. That honor and distinction was bestowed upon Harry Forgotson of South Amboy, one of many philanthropic men and women who had contributed generously to the synagogue.









Images from top to bottom:

(left) Seated: Gloria Schwartz, Jean Jacobson, Ruth Jacobson, Maybelle Jacobson, Ida Chazin; standing: Dr. Murray Jacobson, Ira Jacobson

(right) Photo includes Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin and Rabbi Albert Schwartz

Mizrachi dinner at Shaarey Tefiloh, around 1959
Seated on floor: Robert Weiss, Arnold Weiss; seated in chairs: Arthur Solomon, Isidor Eisenberg, Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin, Ida Chazin, Theodore Chazin, Shulamith Chazin; standing: Dave Weiss, Freda Chazin, Abe Chazin, Rhoda Faffer, Bertha Faffer, Charlotte Chazin, Meyer Chazin, Dotty Alper, William Alper

Shaarey Tefiloh group departing from JFK Airport on trip to Israel, March 1976
Photo includes Esther and Irving Golub, Dan and Felice Levy, N'tina Herman, Helen Schif, Essie Cohen, Fannie Gluck, Ethel Levine, Ida Silverman, Bea Heimlich, Esther Siegel, Leah Turkus, Bess Haber, Sylvia Ballon, Ruth Cox, Selma and Ben Miller, Dory and Ceil Reitman, Lou and Sadye Goss, Morris and Etta Cohen, Dr. Bernie and Lee Kramer, Sylvia Shangold, Rabbi Albert and Gloria Schwartz

Shaarey Tefiloh Pioneer Members

Shaarey Tefiloh's first congregation was composed of 150 founding members. These included the incorporators: Hyman Shragowitz (who later legally changed his name to Herman Ellis), Nathan Wilentz, Morris Shumsky, Philip Slobodien, Max Goldman, Jacob Sosin, Solomon Brody, Louis Perelman, Barnet Goldman, Hyman Richman, Nathan Jacobson, Jacob Sher, John Margaretten, Joseph Fingeroot, and Joseph Polkowitz.

Founding members also included the following: Fannie Goldman, Nathan Roth, Frank Avchen, Peter Pavlovsky, David Epstein, Philip Joselson, Jacob Phillip Goldsmith, Joseph Slobodien, Jacob Goldberger, Joseph Schlesinger, Max Goldberger, Tube Diamond, Samuel Richman, David Levine, Jacob Light, Abraham Shapiro, Joseph Kline, Adolf Metzendorf, Sam Jacobson, Meyer Goldsmith, Mr. Mintz, Abraham Greenspan, Mrs. David Epstein, Mrs. David Berman, Bella Braverman, Fannie Slobodien, Sarah Levine, Lea Pavlovsky, Mrs. Joseph Klein, Bella Berman, Moshe Epstein, Mrs. Max Semer, Mr. Wagner, Mrs. Wagner, Sam Sipkin, Mrs. Morris Epstein, Philip Levine, Sarah Goldsmith, Jacob Slobodien, Sarah Fine, Mrs. Frankel, Ben Goldman, Mrs. Avchen, Sam Fine, Louis Pavlovsky, Mr. S. Goodnick, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Levinson, Mrs. Levinson, Mrs. Joseph Kramer, Bella Cohen, Mr. Singer, Dora Fine, Rachel Fine, Abraham Kramer, Mrs. Abraham Kramer, Louis Cohen, Peretz Shapiro, Mrs. Peretz Shapiro, Jacob Maladelk, Goldy Shapiro, Mr. Banks, David Berman, Youth Mendel, Lazarus Isenberg, Meyer Simon, Sam Weiner, Anna Mintz, Wolf Cohen, Max Sacarny, David Kramer, Judith Brody, Kalmen Horowitz, Herman Deitz, Mr. Krisoff, and Mrs. Krisoff.



Group sending Torah to Mizrachi in Israel, 1945
Front row: Israel Levin, Louis Isenberg, Morris Ginzberg, Rabbi Samuel Levy, Rabbi M. Kirshblum, Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin, Mr. Goldberger; back row: Harry Marcus, Louis Barber, Reverend Saul Edelman, Max Turtletaub, David Kaplan, P. D. Segal, Mr. Dubin, L. Selkowitz, Reverend Lubinsky, Louis Pavlovsky, Mr. Barshay, Samuel Margaretten

On the outside walls of the synagogue of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh was a terra cotta plaque bearing the inscription "F.P.A.H.M.A.S.," in honor of the First Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society, who helped make the building possible.

The first president of Shaarey Tefiloh was Herman Ellis. Born Hyman Shragowitz, he was one of the major scrap metal dealers, with a yard on South Second Street, near the Raritan Copper Works. It was an ideal business for industrial Perth Amboy, where the factory owners were glad to have someone remove their junk. Several other Jews, including Harry Zagor, also owned scrap metal yards.

Harry's son, Herb, described Herman Ellis as "friendly, but very precise. He was short and well dressed, and spoke carefully with a slight accent [of his native Germany]. Everyone respected him. When Perth Amboy Jews went for their citizenship tests, they were asked, 'Who's the President?' The answer was 'Herman Ellis.' They had to think twice!"

Ruth Jacobson shakes hands with Zvi Levavy while Rabbi Albert Schwartz, left, Essie Cohen, and Esther Golub, at right, look on



The First Rabbis

The first rabbi engaged for the congregation was Rabbi Schaut, who served from 1906 to 1908. He was followed by Rabbis Yurman (1908-1912) and Romanoff (1912-1918). Lithuanian-born Rabbi Shmuel (Samuel) Rabinowitz served from 1918 until 1924.

Rabbi Rabinowitz was a descendant of more than 13 generations of rabbinic leaders and was a direct descendant of Avraham Ragoler, a brother of the Vilna Gaon (Eliyahu, the 18th-century Gaon of Vilna). He was a brilliant son of the Lithuanian Gaon Rabbi Meir Michel Rabinowitz, author of the famous *Ha-Meir la-Olam*, a collection of scholarly and philosophic commentary and communications with other rabbinical scholars.

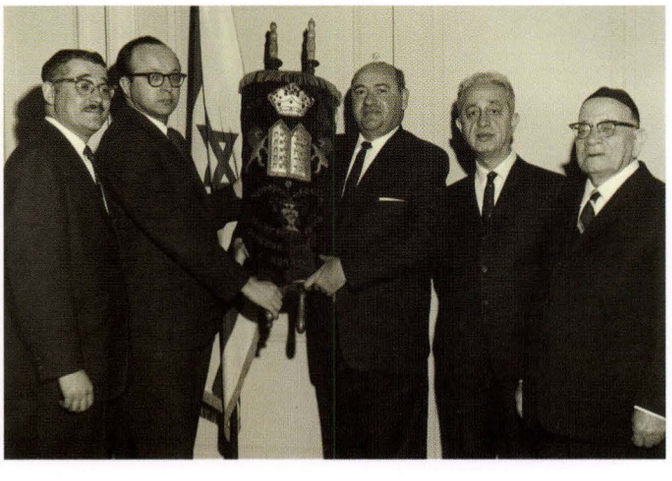
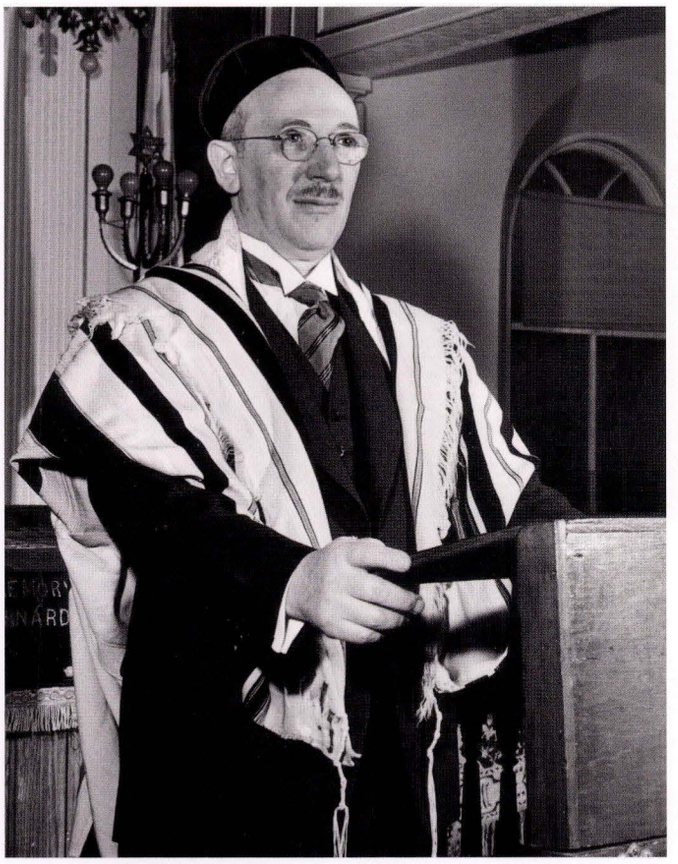


Photo includes Rabbi Albert Schwartz, Ira Zu Stess, Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin

Rabbi Rabinowitz had been a student at the Volozhin Yeshiva in Lithuania, where he enrolled in 1873, at the age of 16. By the time he was 18, he had mastered all of the Talmud and authorities on *Halacha* (Jewish law), and he was recognized as an outstanding scholar. He came to the United States in 1905, and he served as rabbi in Bay City, Michigan, and on the Lower East Side of New York City before becoming the rabbi of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh in 1918. During the early years of his tenure, Rabbi Rabinowitz often went without his weekly salary because the congregation was paying a heavy mortgage for the building.

Described by Meyer Isenberg as "a great scholar in Talmudic teachings," Rabbi Rabinowitz upheld the Orthodox rituals and traditions that were integral to his training. According to Rabbi Efryim Dovid Gruskin, former Rosh ha-Yeshiva of



Rabbi Samuel Levy

the Yeshiva Gedolah of Perth Amboy, Rabbi Rabinowitz was also a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) and operated a slaughterhouse in Perth Amboy. He served the congregation until he became seriously ill in 1924, and he died on September 16, 1925, at the age of 67. Rabbi Rabinowitz was succeeded by Rabbi Samuel Levy.

The Shamashim (Sextons)

Throughout the history of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh, a number of devoted men served important roles in carrying out the ritual functions of the synagogue and providing assistance to the rabbi, cantor, and congregation. Among those who served in the capacity of *shamash* (sexton) were Abraham Cohen (1903-1933), Jacob Cohen (1905-1944), Rev. Nisselbaum, and Shalom (Saul) Edelman (beginning in 1943). Their duties generally included reading the Torah and leading certain prayer services. Several also served in the capacities of *mohel* and *shochet*.

Shaarey Tefiloh Presidents

Herman Ellis	Samuel Goldstein	Walter Safran
Tube Diamond	Raymond Safran	Ira Zu Stess
Solomon Brody	Barney Streiff	Alan Goldsmith
Morris Shumsky	Morris Ginzberg	Ted Marks
Max Goldman	Henry Polkowitz	Sam Feinstein
Peter Pavlovsky	Isadore Rosenblum	Albert Kless
Philip Siskind	Dr. Martin Marcus	Sam Blumenfeld
Nathan Roth	Isaac Levin	George Cohen
Frank Avchen	Samuel S. Cohen	Leo Gursky
Hyman Wedeen	Abraham Weinstein	Herschel Chomsky
David Rosenzweig	Joseph Sussman	Barry Rosengarten
Louis Kaplowitz	Henry Schlachter	William Sewitch
Meyer Isenberg	Jacob H. Bernstein	Shep Sewitch



Temple Beth Mordecai

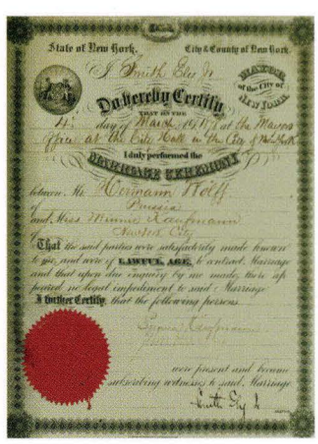
BETH MORDECAI: THE HOUSE THAT HENRY WOLFF BUILT

In 1895, two groups broke away from the First Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society and formed organizations of their own. One group, composed of the more liberal elements of the society, established the Hebrew Progressive Association. The other group, made up of the members of the society who had originated in Germany and Hungary, formed an organization that held services in a rented hall.

The pivotal figure in the formation of this latter organization was Henry Wolff. Born in East Prussia in 1845, he immigrated to the United States in 1860 and began his American journey as a peddler in North Carolina. By 1878, Henry Wolff was living in South Amboy, where he ran a dry goods/department store and invested in real estate. He married German-born Mina Kaufmann, who gave birth to a son named Max (Mordecai). In 1894, Max died at a young age of a ruptured appendix.

Wolff donated two building lots on Hobart Street and helped finance the construction of a synagogue. It was named Beth Mordecai, in memory of his son. The first officers were: Adolph Greenbaum, president; Jacob Goldberger, vice-president; Henry Wolff, treasurer; Jacob Kreilsheimer, financial secretary; William Gross, recording secretary; Louis Kreilsheimer, trustee; Herman Kollisch, trustee. The Building Committee included Kassel Finkelstein, Joseph Bruck, Max Goldberger, and Selig Pett. All proceedings were conducted in the English language. Also in 1897, the Ladies Auxiliary (Sisterhood) was formed, with Mina Wolff elected the first president.

The wooden building on Hobart Street opened its doors in the fall of 1897 as an Orthodox synagogue, with men and women seated on separate sides. There were no funds for a permanent rabbi. Dues were $10 for two seats.


State of New York, City & County of New York

Duplicate Certificate

I duly performed the Marriage Ceremony

That the said parties were subsequently made known to me, and were of LAWFUL AGE, to contract Marriage, and that upon due enquiry by me made, there appeared no legal impediment to said Marriage.

I further Certify that the following persons were present and became witnesses to said Marriage

Marriage certificate of Herman (Henry) Wolff and Minnie (Mina) Kaufmann



Temple Beth Mordecai Sisterhood smorgasbord Photo includes Margaret Davidson, Augusta Kagan, Vicke Goldstein, Ses Brody, Dorothy Kreilsheimer, Theo Eskow, Marion Kaden, Nan Safran, Lydia Goldsmith, Miriam Pargot, Sylvia Burg

Images from top to bottom:

Beth Mordecai confirmation class, 1931 Photo includes, seated: Abe Ephros, Miss Alpern, Hilda Dornyak, Rabbi Davidson, Cantor Gershon Ephros, Sybil Kempnor, Alan Avchen; standing: Seymour St. Lifer, Clare Ferbel, Ruth Jacobson, David Robinson, Al Levinson

Congregation Beth Mordecai 60th-anniversary program

(left) Beth Mordecai Youth League officers, 1952-53 RosaLee (Pinky) Greenhouse, Sydell Premselaar, Robert Schreibman, Joan Fishkoff, Lois Fox, Isabelle Blum, Malvina Rosenzweig

(right) Kate Eisemann, Ruth Eisemann, and Dr. Moses Eisemann at Ruth Eisemann's bat mitzvah, 1951



1897-1898 . . 60th ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM . . 1957-1958

Welcoming Remarks ..... Dr. Moses M. Eisemann
Invocation ..... Rabbi Max D. Davidson
Greetings ..... Dr. Jack M. Eskow, President

TEMPLE BETH MORDECAI
presents
SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY PAGEANT
by
MRS. SAMUEL B. KAGAN
in collaboration with
Mr. Leo Goldberger, Mrs. Nathan Witkin, Mr. Max Wurtzel

"Bless This House" ..... Choir
"Hineh Mah Tov" ..... Choir

TABLEAU I — FIRST HEBREW SCHOOL
Mark Goldberger, Lynn Kreil, Barbara Safran, Charles Safran, Marcy Sanders
Kleindeskinder and great-grandchildren of Founders

TABLEAU II — FIRST TEMPLE BALL
Judge Leo Goldberger, Mrs. Louis Weinblatt

TABLEAU III — FIRST WEDDING
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Klein

"Because" ..... Mrs. Joseph B. Schwartz

TABLEAU IV — BAR MITZVAH
Warren Greenhouse, Harry Hamburg, Charles Levy

"V'y Maleh" ..... Richard Kagan and Choir
"Ovenu Malkenu" ..... Choir

TABLEAU V — CONFIRMATION
Judy Falk, Maria Harrison, Connie Hess, Jean Kaden, Martha Kaplan, Susan Pliskin, Joan Sher, Marilyn Silverman, Diane Stess, Susann Walker
(Confirmation Class of 1958)

"Ten Commandments" ..... Mrs. Joseph B. Schwartz and Choir

TABLEAU VI — WORLD WAR I
Mr. Seymour S. Gast, Mr. Martin A. Weisberger

"May the Words" ..... Choir

TABLEAU VII — WORLD WAR II
Dr. Milton Burg, Mr. Melvin Goldberger, Dr. Irving Sanders

"God Bless America" ..... Choir

CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY
Mrs. Martha Greenbaum Neufeld escorted by Dr. J. M. Eskow
Mrs. Rosella Goldberger Metzendorf escorted by Mr. Benjamin Lorber

Production directed by Lynn Winik — Costumes by Mrs. William Winn and Mrs. Philip Breslow — Choral direction by Hazzan Solomon Sternberg — Pianist, Mrs. Joseph Scharer — Organist, Mrs. Joan McCandless — Sets by Dr. Philip Fass, Mr. Samuel B. Kagan, Mr. Lloyd Winik, Mr. Nathan Sunshine — Properties, Mr. Murray L. Gast — Photography by Mr. Philip Breslow.

NARRATORS
MRS. SAMUEL B. KAGAN — MR. OLIVER SEIDMAN

CHOIR
Mrs. Barnet Alexander — Mrs. Norman Axelrod — Mrs. Max D. Davidson — Dr. Moses M. Eisemann — Mrs. Henry Falk — Mrs. Lewis I. Fox — Mr. Jay Goldsmith — Mr. Morris Hamburg — Miss Berlha Jaffe — Richard Kagan — Dr. Albert Klein — Mrs. Theodore Mehaloff — Mrs. Joseph B. Schwartz — Mrs. Nathan Sunshine — Mrs. Julius Deutchman,





The building was dedicated by Stephen S. Wise, a 23-year-old Austro-Hungarian-born Zionist leader who served at the time as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, a Conservative synagogue in New York City, and later became a well-known Reform rabbi. Wise retained his connection with Temple Beth Mordecai for the next 50 years. In 1927, he spoke at the 30th-anniversary celebration, and 20 years later, he spoke at the 50th-anniversary celebration, one of his last public appearances.

The pioneering members of Beth Mordecai included Isaac Rubinstein, Edward Kramer, Charles Safran, I. Silverman, J. Schlesinger, I. Goodman, A. L. Kaufman, J. Weinberg, E. Samet, P. Joselson, Morris Slobodien, A. Beckhoff, N. Light, Max Kaufman, Aaron Gross, Joseph Slobodien, E. Sell, A. Kaufman, H. Lewinson, Charles Taussig, M. Levinson, M. Hess, and S. Gross.

The first wedding in the Hobart Street Temple was that of Esther Greenbaum and Joseph L. Klein. Herman Philo was the first choirmaster. Pauline Philo and Elsie and Belle Goldberger sang in the choir for over 42 years.

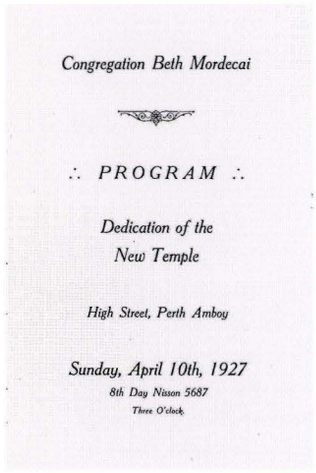
Although its membership grew steadily, Henry Wolff had to step in at least once to save the temple financially.

In 1922, on the 25th anniversary of Congregation Beth Mordecai, Wolff presented the canceled mortgage to the congregation, clearing the temple of indebtedness. A banquet followed at the Packer House on Smith Street. The food was strictly kosher, at $3.00 per person.

Henry Wolff died in June 1930, but his impact would live on for decades. His legacy was continued by his son-in-law Charles Safran (1872-1948) and his daughter Rachel Wolff Safran (1879-1944), who lived with Henry in his home on Feltus Street in South Amboy, across the street from his store. The Wolff/Safran story reads like a tale by Charles Dickens.

Hungarian-born Charles (Karlis) Safran, orphaned at a young age, was taken to New York by his sister and brother-in-law in 1883. When they could no longer afford to care for Charles, he was placed in a Jewish orphanage. In search of help for his store, Henry Wolff visited the orphanage and took Charles home with him. Rachel fell in love with Charles. They were married around 1905 and had two children, Ira (1907-1985) and Melvin (1913-1998). Charles served several terms as president of Temple Beth Mordecai. Ira also served a term as president.

Beth Mordecai dedication program, April 10, 1927



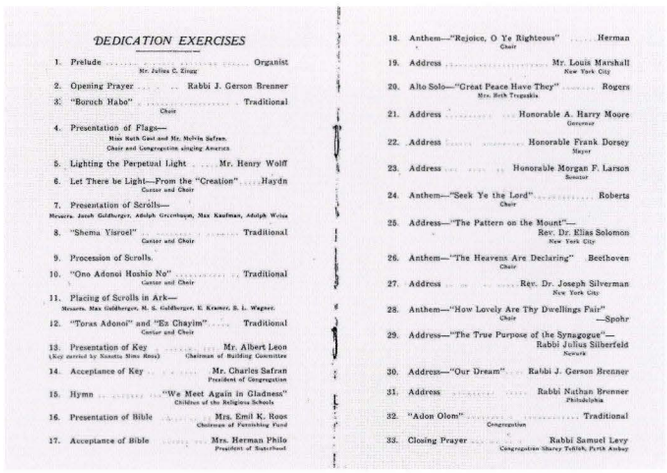
Congregation Beth Mordecai

∴ *PROGRAM* ∴

Dedication of the New Temple

High Street, Perth Amboy

Sunday, April 10th, 1927
8th Day Nisson 5687
Three O'clock



DEDICATION EXERCISES

1. Prelude ..... Organist
2. Opening Prayer ..... Rabbi J. Gerson Brenner
3. "Boruch Habo" ..... Traditional
   Choir
4. Presentation of Flags—
   Miss Ruth Cael and Mr. Melvin Safran.
   Choir and Congregation singing America
5. Lighting the Perpetual Light ..... Mr. Henry Wolff
6. Let There be Light—From the "Creation" ..... Haydn
   Cantor and Choir
7. Presentation of Scrolls—
   Messrs. Jacob Goldberger, Adolph Greenbaum, Max Kaufman, Adolph Weiss
8. "Shema Yisroel" ..... Traditional
   Cantor and Choir
9. Procession of Scrolls.
10. "Ono Adonoi Hoshio No" ..... Traditional
    Cantor and Choir
11. Placing of Scrolls in Ark—
    Messrs. Max Goldberger, H. S. Goldberger, E. Kramer, S. L. Wagner.
12. "Toras Adonoi" and "Ez Chayim" ..... Traditional
    Cantor and Choir
13. Presentation of Key ..... Mr. Albert Leon
    (Key carried by Sunetta Sims Ross) Chairman of Building Committee
14. Acceptance of Key ..... Mr. Charles Safran
    President of Congregation
15. Hymn ..... "We Meet Again in Gladness"
    Children of the Religious Schools
16. Presentation of Bible ..... Mrs. Emil K. Roos
    Chairman of Furnishing Fund
17. Acceptance of Bible ..... Mrs. Herman Philo
    President of Sisterhood
18. Anthem—"Rejoice, O Ye Righteous" ..... Herman
    Choir
19. Address ..... Mr. Louis Marshall
    New York City
20. Alto Solo—"Great Peace Have They" ..... Rogers
    Mrs. Birch Tregaskis
21. Address ..... Honorable A. Harry Moore
    Governor
22. Address ..... Honorable Frank Dorsey
    Mayor
23. Address ..... Honorable Morgan F. Larson
    Senator
24. Anthem—"Seek Ye the Lord" ..... Roberts
    Choir
25. Address—"The Pattern on the Mount"—
    Rev. Dr. Elias Solomon
    New York City
26. Anthem—"The Heavens Are Declaring" ..... Beethoven
    Choir
27. Address ..... Rev. Dr. Joseph Silverman
    New York City
28. Anthem—"How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings Fair" —Spohr
29. Address—"The True Purpose of the Synagogue"—
    Rabbi Julius Silberfeld
    Newark
30. Address—"Our Dream" ..... Rabbi J. Gerson Brenner
31. Address ..... Rabbi Nathan Brenner
    Philadelphia
32. "Adon Olom" ..... Traditional
    Congregation
33. Closing Prayer ..... Rabbi Samuel Levy
    Congregation Sharey Tefilah, Perth Amboy

Beth Mordecai Founders

Congregation Beth Mordecai was incorporated in 1895. The following individuals signed the Articles of Incorporation:

Henry Wolff (president)
Louis Kreilsheimer (secretary)
Kassel Finkelstein (treasurer)
Jacob Goldberger
Herman Kollisch

Beth Mordecai Presidents

Adolph Greenbaum	Jack Klein	Dr. Alvin Kravet
Leo Schwartz	Benjamin Lorber	Arthur Shelko
Edward Kramer	Dr. Albert Klein	Joel Gersten
William Gross	Ira W. Safran	Jerome Gampel
Adolph Greenbaum	William Zweigbaum	Alan Ring
Sigmund Spitzer	Dr. Jack M. Eskow	Eleanor Shelko
Charles Safran	Dr. Moses M. Eisemann	Ronald Miskoff
Samuel G. Levine	David Goldsmith	Genette Falk
Maurice Bruck	Lewis I. Fox	Michael Seidel
Emanuel Stern	Seymour S. Gast	Irwin Ziner
Charles Safran	Benjamin Sunshine	Raoul Rabiner
Irving Goldstein	Dr. Morton M. Klein	Larry Deutchman
Morris Filenbaum	Mark S. Preminger	Lisa Orson
Herman Fisher	Lloyd S. Winik	Michael Gast

Beth Mordecai presidents, March 10, 1974
Front row: Seymour Gast, Irving Goldstein, Dr. Jack Eskow, Benjamin Lorber, Ira Safran, Benjamin Sunshine; back row: Dr. Albert Klein, Mark Preminger, Lewis Fox, Dr. Moses Eisemann, Dr. Morton Klein



BETH ISRAEL: "THE LITTLE SHUL"



In 1890, a group of immigrant Jews from Central Europe met in the dining room of Raphael Levinson's house on Elizabeth Street, at the northern end of Perth Amboy, away from the central business district and the waterfront. The purpose of this meeting was to hold religious services and form a benevolent society. Among those who participated were Isadore Feigin and Charles Franzblau. These individuals, along with others, formed Congregation Beth Israel, an Orthodox synagogue. Franzblau was the first president, followed by Feigin and Levinson.

Congregation Beth Israel, September 11, 1960
Seated: Fannie Gluck, Ida Paley, Anne Littman, Ethel White; second row: Belle Krolick, Sally Silber, Fannie Bersin, Hyman Paley, Israel Silber, Hyman Pliskin, Ethel Roseff, Sophie Mink, Sadie Millet, Mr. Winkler; third row: Leo Bersin, Ralph Roseff, Dr. Edward Littman, David Pliskin, Phil Basson, Mr. Moslowitz, Morris Shihar; back row: Abraham Gelbstein, Leon Franzblau, Sidney Roseff

The other pioneer members included Morris Zalutsky, Barney Avchen, Isaac Berson, Jacob Frankel, Meyer Drourr, Harry Goldberg, Jacob Goldberg, David Rubin, William Rubin, Jacob Shihar, Reuben Kroop, Jacob Gaier, Joseph Sonkin, Mordecai Kahlstein, Jacob Flamm, Joseph Miller, Isaac Blatt, Hyman Pliskin, Hyman Paley, Israel Silber, Ralph Roseff, Samuel Beldengreen, David Dekoff, Benjamin Horowitz, David Diamond, David Labanovitch, Harry Barkan, Samuel Omanson, Samuel White, Mr. Hershman, and Sidney Roseff.

Beth Israel moved several times to be nearer to the central business section of Perth Amboy. In 1906, the small but devoted congregation purchased a former Danish church on Cortlandt Street, near Hall Avenue. In 1933, when Reuben Kroop was president, the congregation moved to a building on Division Street. Then, in 1960, they transformed the former Wesley Methodist Church at Madison Avenue and Jefferson Street into a synagogue.

All three buildings purchased by Beth Israel over its history had previously been houses of worship of other faiths. This fact epitomizes a quintessential Perth Amboy story: one ethnic or religious group passing its building on to the next.

WORSHIP

Although the congregation was not always blessed with a rabbi, Beth Israel did have several learned congregants who were capable of guiding prayers. The first to lead the services in the synagogue were Mordecai Kahlstein, Oscar Sonkin, and David Levine. Both Kahlstein and Sonkin were *shochtim* (ritual slaughterers) by vocation. Kahlstein resided in Woodbridge and walked to Perth Amboy to conduct Sabbath and holiday services.

When the synagogue was located on Cortlandt Street, its first hired rabbi was Hersch Dressner. After it moved to Division Street, it was supervised by Rabbi Joseph Schulson (who died suddenly a year after he arrived), then by Eliyahu Masur, who served until he passed away in 1940. In the early 1940s, Peretz Weiss served as rabbi until his retirement. After World War II, Rabbi Jacob Gordon served Beth Israel for about five years. Rabbi Gordon was the last full-time rabbi to serve the congregation. From the early 1950s on, prayer and policy were guided by respected members such as Abraham Gelbstein, Martin Schlussel, and Sidney Roseff.





Upper: Abraham Gelbstein

Lower: Sidney Roseff

Beth Israel Congregation Auxiliary/Sisterhood

In 1934, several leading women founded the Beth Israel Congregation Auxiliary. The founding mothers of this group were: Minnie Drourr, president; Rose Kaufman, vice-president; Shira Linetsky, treasurer; Jeanette Gaynor and Ida Paley, secretaries; and Mrs. S. Beldengreen, Jennie Dekoff, Minnie Schenkman, and Rose Shihar.

In February 1935, a group of seven Beth Israel women—Ida Cohen, Belle Goldberg, Mrs. H. Goldberg, Rose Kaufman, Ida Paley, Minnie Schenkman, and Lena Schreibman (who became known as The Seven Sisters)—planned the renovations of the new building. They were later joined by Minnie Drourr, Mrs. Hershman, Phoebe Magnes, Sadie Millet, and Mrs. Waldman. They organized card parties, teas, and picnics to raise money for a kitchen, a large gas range, cabinets, tables and chairs, two sets of dishes, and two sets of all necessary equipment. Floors were scrubbed and polished. The members of the Auxiliary cooked and served the traditional foods for parties on Chanukah, Purim, and Simchas Torah, as well as for Melava Malkas (meals traditionally served following the conclusion of the Sabbath).

In 1960, the women of Beth Israel changed the name of their organization to Sisterhood and became affiliated with the Women's Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

The year 1960 was a busy one for the women. As Anne W. Littman, Sisterhood president, wrote to her fellow congregants:

"With the acquisition of the synagogue on Jefferson Street, the appellation of 'Little Shul,' as we were affectionately referred to, became a misnomer.

"Once again we were faced with the Herculean task of refurbishing, only this time it was transforming a former church into a synagogue. Interior fire damage, suffered by the church before our purchase of it, required extensive and costly repairs. The placing of our original Ark in the daily chapel made it necessary to build a new Ark for the main house of worship. Restoration progressed, room-by-room walls were paneled, floors installed, window drapes and fireproof stage curtains purchased."

Mayor James Flynn



Alan Goldsmith, grandson of Hyman Paley, was the first bar mitzvah in the new synagogue (1960).

In 1965, the Congregation celebrated its 75-year Jubilee. The dinner event featured prominent guest speakers including Perth Amboy Mayor James J. Flynn Jr. and attorney Robert Wilentz, who served as toastmaster. Speakers from the Congregation were Hyman Hamerling and Izzy Goldberg, co-chairmen of the dinner. Hyman and Ida Paley, devoted Little Shul members, sat at the head table with Rabbi Max Davidson of Temple Beth Mordecai and Rabbi Abraham Mykoff of the Perth Amboy Hebrew School. And table after table of Congregation guests memorialized the shul's anniversary with smiles and good cheer.

Beth Israel Presidents

Charles Franzblau
Isadore Feigin
Raphael Levinson
Morris Zalutsky
Reuben Kroop
Sidney Roseff







Left: Hyman Hamerling

Center: Izzy Goldberg

Right: Robert N. Wilentz



Photo includes Sidney Josen, Florence Josen, Bert Berlfein, Davia Berlfein, Fannie Bersin, Leo Bersin, Ellie Shihar, Moishe Shihar, Esther Goldsmith



Hyman Paley, Ida Paley, Rabbi Max Davidson, Rabbi Abraham Mykoff at Congregation Beth Israel Jubilee celebration, 1965





Chapter Four

THE CONSTANT CLERGY

Both Shaarey Tefiloh and Beth Mordecai solidified themselves spiritually and financially in the mid-1920s. They were able to pay off their mortgages and improve their facilities. And just as important, during this decade, they each hired a rabbi and a cantor who would be the foundation of their respective synagogues for the next few decades.

In 1924, under the leadership of Herman Ellis, who was president of the congregation at the time, Shaarey Tefiloh was able to pay off its mortgage of $12,500. A celebratory banquet was held before a packed house in the auditorium of the YMHA next door. A young Perth Amboy attorney named David T. Wilentz was toastmaster of the affair, which was chaired by Harry K. Golenbock. The burning of the mortgage then followed.

Freed from the burden of the mortgage, the congregation could afford various improvements to the building, including the installation of a central heating system, which made it possible to hold services in the main sanctuary year-round. Until then, only the vestry rooms were heated, by a large potbellied stove, and in the winter, all services (including those on Saturdays and holidays) had to be conducted there.

Rabbi Samuel Levy

In 1924, Shaarey Tefiloh enlisted the services of Rabbi Samuel Levy, a native of Rozescow in the pre-World War I Austro-Hungarian Empire. He studied at *yeshivot* in both Poland and Hungary and secured his rabbinical degree in 1921 from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (now Yeshiva University) in New York City.

His first assignment after ordination was as rabbi of the West Side Jewish Center in midtown Manhattan, where he served for two years before coming to Perth Amboy. At that time, he also earned a master of arts degree at Columbia University.

During his distinguished career, Rabbi Levy served as president of the Rabbinical Council of America and was a member of many executive committees of that body. He was also named honorary president. Rabbi Levy was also an active member of the National Mizrachi Council of America. During World War II, he served his congregation, his religion, and his country as a member of the committee on Army and Navy Religious Activities of the Jewish Welfare Board, a service for which he was cited by a certificate from the Navy Department.

Images from top to bottom:

Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin

Rabbi Max Davidson

Women's League/Sisterhood

In 1931, Rabbi Levy and the original core group of Mrs. Gene Truner, Mrs. Jacob Greenspan, Mrs. David Isenberg, Mrs. Samuel Levy, Mrs. Leo Jacobson, Mrs. Hyman Wedeen, Mrs. Max Semer, and Mrs. Morris Bennett organized the Women's League. The group's purpose was to promote the general welfare of the congregation and to keep the synagogue in good condition. Raising money with luncheons, raffles, and various other projects, they added new lighting fixtures and installed a complete kitchen with two sets each of dishes, silverware, pots, and pans, among many other good works. When the building was renovated in the early 1930s, the Women's League helped to fund the installation of a women's lavatory on the balcony, so that female members didn't have to walk down two flights of stairs to the basement lavatory.

The installation of the lavatory was completed shortly before the High Holidays. During services on Rosh Hashanah, when the entire congregation was standing for the blowing of the *shofar*, a wave of water suddenly flooded the lobby. The water was immediately shut off and a plumber called. He discovered that a small plumber's wrench had been left in a pipe connection, causing the water to overflow.

In 1959, the Women's League changed its name to Sisterhood.

In 1963, on the 60th anniversary of the synagogue, Pat Weiss, Sisterhood president, wrote:

"What is our story about? It is a story of dedicated Jewish women who were then and are today involved in maintaining Judaism on a high level of dignity. Our aims are to help perpetuate our ancient traditions, to rear our children in the customs of our Faith and to instill in them an abiding love for our people. Through our untiring work for the synagogue, we have kept the Ner Tamid, the everlasting light of Torah—True Judaism, burning ever brighter.

"How have we kept Judaism alive? We serve holiday refreshments for the children, we serve as hostesses at the Oneg Shabbat, and at the Junior Congregation Kiddush.

"How do we perpetuate Judaism? No meeting passes without spiritually and culturally enriching our members. We celebrate all Jewish events and render explicit and detailed descriptions of the cycle of Jewish holidays. Our Sisterhood is a tree of life to all women who are affiliated with it. We need only grasp hold of its life-giving branches to be infused with spirit, with soul and with the sweet hope of the future. I'm sure that all of you feel as I do at this moment—proud, triumphant, a little excited and most of all, eager to continue our wonderful work and to grow from strength to strength."

Esther Rubinoff Golub served as president of the Shaarey Tefiloh Sisterhood for 45 years.

Gene Galen remembered services at Shaarey Tefiloh during his youth: "I'm sure I spent more time playing on the *shul*'s front steps than I did praying inside. When inside, however, I felt proud to sit next to my father, who always seemed to know the place in the prayer book. This was no easy task in a service which was conducted, at an incredible pace, completely in Hebrew, followed by Rabbi Levy's sermon in Yiddish."

Rabbi Levy would serve his congregation until 1958. He was much loved as an affectionate man who was known for pinching the cheeks of the young Jews of Perth Amboy. Jane Sanders Leal remembered: "Rabbi Levy would drop by our Hebrew School classes. He was always interested in how you were doing and the welfare of your family. As he engaged you in conversation, you were just anticipating the pinching of the cheek which you knew was coming. Maybe you didn't like the associated pain, but you loved the affection behind it."



Rabbi Samuel Levy at Golden Anniversary of Rose and Louis Pavlovsky, 1956

Rabbi Albert B. Schwartz

Rabbi Albert B. Schwartz once said that he "took one look at the building and fell in love" at first sight with Shaarey Tefiloh. A native of Baltimore, he succeeded Rabbi Levy in 1959. Ordained at Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore, Rabbi Schwartz received his bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and did graduate work at both Yeshiva and Brandeis Universities. He served as national secretary of the Rabbinical Council of America and national chairman of its Kashruth Commission, and was a member of the National Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Council of America, of the Massachusetts Rabbinical Chaplaincy Commission, and of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of Greater Boston.

Rabbi Schwartz brought into the congregation a youth group, a breakfast group, a women's study group, a Talmud group, and a senior men's organization. He also strengthened the Hillel Academy and served the Perth Amboy Hebrew School as chairman of its Board of Education.

In 1960, Rabbi Schwartz helped organize a Men's Club, which was led by Zu Stess, Harry Lieber, Joe Klegman, Abe Parnes, Dr. Leo Stess, Marvin Mankowitz, Jesse Lensky, and Kalman Davidson. The group provided social, athletic, and cultural programs for the members of the congregation.

During his tenure in Perth Amboy, Rabbi Schwartz also served the city of Perth Amboy by volunteering for emergencies on Christmas, enabling Christian colleagues to celebrate their holiday.

Rabbi Schwartz served until 1983, when he was succeeded by Rabbi Aaron Chomsky.

Rabbi Aaron Chomsky

Born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Rabbi Aaron Chomsky studied at the Rabbi Jacob Joseph Yeshiva and received his bachelor's degree from Yeshiva University, where he also was ordained as a rabbi. He served several congregations in the Rockaways and a nursing home in Richmond, Virginia, taught at the Hebrew Institute of Long Island, and was president of the North Hudson Branch of Mizrachi (now Religious Zionists of America) before arriving in Perth Amboy in 1983. Throughout his career, he was a member of the Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council of America, and he also worked in *kashrut* for the Orthodox Union.

Rabbi Chomsky served as rabbi of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh from 1983 to 1992, during which time he also supervised *kashrut* at Parnes Bakery and served as chaplain of the Alameda (Rehabilitation) Center in Perth Amboy. He was assisted in his educational and service activities by his wife, Rebbitzen Lillian Chomsky, to whom he was married for more than 56 years.

Following Rabbi Chomsky's death in 2009, Mayor Wilda Diaz ordered city flags to fly at half-mast as a very moving tribute to his many contributions to the city of Perth Amboy.

Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin

In late August 1920, the Reverend Hirsch L. Chazin arrived in Perth Amboy to begin his engagement as cantor of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh, a relationship that was to last 55 years.

A descendant of Rabbi Nahum of Chernobyl, one of the original disciples of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Hasidic movement, he was born in 1881 in Chernaya Greblya, in the Ukraine. At the age of five, he was sent to live with his maternal aunt, Tillie Kislak, in the nearby town of Gaysin, so that he could attend the local *cheder*, where he proved to be an outstanding student. The family wanted him to continue his studies at a yeshiva. Because the tsar had closed all of the yeshivas in the Ukraine, it was necessary to go elsewhere for a higher traditional Jewish education.

Shortly after his bar mitzvah, he was sent to study at the Telz Yeshiva in Lithuania. He told one of his granddaughters that he was "a small boy put on a train with his *peckle*, and he traveled three days and two nights to reach Telz." He studied at Telz for four years, after which he was sent to Radun (now in Belarus), where he studied at the renowned yeshiva headed by Rabbi Israel Meir ha-Kohen Kagan, commonly known as the "Chofetz Chaim."

After studying in Radun for several years, Cantor Chazin was one of a group of students sent by the Chofetz Chaim to open and staff a branch of his yeshiva in Bialystok. While he was in Bialystok, a neighbor proposed a marriage with Dora Margolis of Lazdijai, a descendant of Rashi. They were married in a Jewish religious ceremony in 1901. The young couple resided in Bialystok until the summer of 1903, at which time they had a civil marriage ceremony before departing with his wife's mother and her younger siblings to join her father and older siblings, who were already established in North Dakota, where they had obtained government land grants.

Cantor Chazin obtained a position with a small Jewish congregation in Bismarck, North Dakota, for the 1903 High Holidays. During the holidays, his first son, Ted, was born in Devils Lake, North Dakota, and a telegram addressed to "The Rabbi of the Jews" was sent to Cantor Chazin to notify him of the arrival. Soon afterward, the family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Cantor Chazin was employed as the cantor of Kenesseth Israel Congregation. He also served as a kosher butcher, *mohel*, and teacher. During their time in Minneapolis, six more children were born to Cantor and Mrs. Chazin.

In 1918, Cantor Chazin and his family moved to Superior, Wisconsin, where he was engaged as the cantor for the Orthodox Jewish congregation. But opportunities for Jewish education in the Midwest were limited, and Cantor Chazin decided to move to the East Coast so that his four sons could attend the Beth Medrosh Lemorim of Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan in New York.

In 1920, Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh of Perth Amboy was looking to hire a cantor. Cantor Chazin's brother, Morris Klein, who was already living in Perth Amboy, notified him of the opening. After negotiations, Cantor Chazin reached an agreement with the congregation, and he moved with his family to Perth Amboy.

Cantor Chazin was blessed with a rich baritone voice, which he was fortunate to retain into his old age. Although he had no formal training in writing music and was never taught to play the piano, he created original cantorial compositions, some of which were published in an anthology of sacred music. For the High Holidays, Cantor Chazin organized a choir to accompany him, composed primarily of his children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. One of the nonfamily members of the choir was Gerson Cohen, who later became chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Another nonfamily member was Alvin (Avi) Golub, son of Esther Golub, who was a tireless worker for Shaarey Tefiloh, serving as president of its Sisterhood for many years. Cantor Chazin served as cantor of Shaarey Tefiloh until 1974, when he retired at the age of 93 and became Cantor Emeritus.

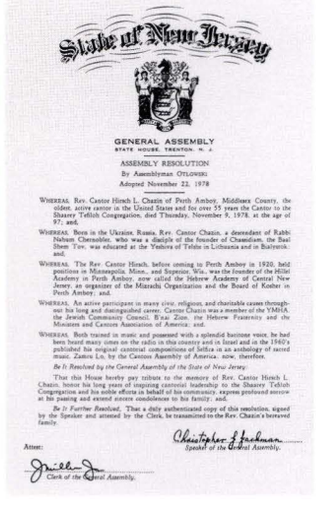
Cantor Chazin organized the Perth Amboy chapter of the Mizrachi Organization of America, and he served as its president for over 30 years. At the annual Mizrachi banquet on December 7, 1952, he was awarded a plaque of honor by the national organization in recognition of the work that the local Perth Amboy Mizrachi chapter was doing on behalf of the cause of Zionism and Israel.

Cantor Chazin instilled a deep love of the Land of Israel—"The Promised Land"—in his children. His daughter Rhoda was one of the founders of the Perth Amboy chapter of Mizrachi Women, and his daughter Mae held a similar position in Montreal, Canada.

In 1970, when he was honored with a testimonial dinner to commemorate his 50 years of service to Shaarey Tefiloh and the Perth Amboy Jewish community, he composed a special melody for the occasion. In attendance that night were many of the over 700 couples that, the cantor estimated, he had helped unite in matrimony. Cantor Chazin chanted the marriage vows, in the words set down thousands of years ago, to the new melody he had composed, as these people reaffirmed the vows they spoke on their original marriage day.

Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin at Golden Anniversary of Rose and Louis Pavlovsky, 1956





GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE HOUSE, TRENTON, N. J.

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION
By Assemblyman OTLOWSKI
Adopted November 22, 1978

WHEREAS, Rev. Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin of Perth Amboy, Middlesex County, the oldest, active cantor in the United States and for over 55 years the Cantor to the Shaarey Tefiloh Congregation, died Thursday, November 9, 1978, at the age of 97; and,

WHEREAS, Born in the Ukraine, Russia, Rev. Cantor Chazin, a descendant of Rabbi Nahum Chernobiler, who was a disciple of the founder of Chassidism, the Baal Shem Tov, was educated at the Yeshiva of Telshe in Lithuania and in Bialystok; and,

WHEREAS, The Rev. Cantor Hirsch, before coming to Perth Amboy in 1920, held positions in Minneapolis, Minn., and Superior, Wis., was the founder of the Hillel Academy in Perth Amboy, now called the Hebrew Academy of Central New Jersey, an organizer of the Mizrachi Organization and the Board of Kosher in Perth Amboy; and,

WHEREAS, An active participant in many civic, religious, and charitable causes throughout his long and distinguished career, Cantor Chazin was a member of the YMHA, the Jewish Community Council, B'nai Zion, the Hebrew Fraternity and the Ministers and Cantors Association of America; and,

WHEREAS, Both trained in music and possessed with a splendid baritone voice, he had been heard many times on the radio in this country and in Israel and in the 1960's published his original cantorial compositions of Selihot in an anthology of sacred music, Zamru Lo, by the Cantors Assembly of America, now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

That this House hereby pay tribute to the memory of Rev. Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin, honor his long years of inspiring cantorial leadership to the Shaarey Tefiloh Congregation and his noble efforts in behalf of his community, express profound sorrow at his passing and extend sincere condolences to his family; and,

Be It Further Resolved, That a duly authenticated copy of this resolution, signed by the Speaker and attested by the Clerk, be transmitted to the Rev. Chazin's bereaved family.

Attest:

Clerk of the General Assembly

Speaker of the General Assembly

State of New Jersey General Assembly Resolution, November 22, 1978, paying tribute to the memory of Rev. Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin

Bar Mitzvah Lessons

Among his responsibilities as cantor of Shaarey Tefiloh, Cantor Chazin prepared bar mitzvah boys for their big day on the *bimah*. David Greenhouse recalled that he enjoyed studying with Cantor Chazin so much that he expressed the desire to return for further lessons even after his bar mitzvah. "I regret that I never managed to do so," said David, "but I always was greeted fondly by Cantor Chazin every time we saw each other."



Business card of Rev. H. L. Chazin

Shortly after his arrival in Perth Amboy, Cantor Chazin was instrumental in organizing the local Board of Kosher, which supervised all kosher slaughter in Perth Amboy and vicinity. The Board included Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, Solomon Brody, Lazarus Isenberg, Peter Pavlovsky, Nathan Roth, and Frank Avchen.

A man of many talents, he was recognized by the congregation and the community as a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer), and by the residents of a much broader area as an expert *mohel*.

Rabbi Levy and Cantor Chazin provided a solid continuity to the congregation, which at its peak included over 800 families. Rabbi Levy served for 34 years and Cantor Chazin for more than 55 years—comparable to the long-running service of Rabbi Max D. Davidson and Cantor Gershon Ephros at Beth Mordecai.

Depression Woes

During the Depression, Shaarey Tefiloh found itself in economic difficulty. Both Rabbi Levy and Cantor Chazin were owed six months' back salary. On November 6, 1930, Rabbi Levy was notified that his contract would expire as of June 1931. In a display of their extraordinary character and unselfish devotion to their communities, both men agreed to waive back salary and to take a 50 percent cut in future salary. Their willingness to serve despite these economic hardships earned them far more love and admiration than they had given up in monetary compensation and inscribed them forever in the hearts of the entire Perth Amboy Jewish community.

Thanks to the endorsement of ten congregants, Shaarey Tefiloh secured a bank loan of $4,000 for badly needed renovations, including repairing a leaky roof, which had caused considerable damage to the walls of the synagogue. The outside of the building was sandblasted and made to look like new.

To help raise money, the administration installed a memorial tablet on the west wall of the main synagogue. The families of departed pioneer members paid $100 per name to perpetuate the memory of their antecedents. At the first unveiling, which was held before the 1931 High Holidays, 30 names were inscribed. The memorial tablets became a permanent institution, a steady source of revenue for many years, and a visible way to honor the memory of the congregation's ancestors.

The Community Pitches In

During the Depression, several Jewish women found ways to bring in additional income, at a time when few women worked outside the home. Mrs. Goldie Simkin, Mrs. Jenny Goodman, and other Jewish women sold corsets door-to-door for the Olga Corset Company. They would come to the customer's home, take measurements, and then send in the order.

Miriam Gutman Braverman recalled that time, when "the business and everything Papa owned was lost in the Depression. There was no money, none. Mama went door-to-door selling corsets. I remember one evening; it was a Friday and, though we were not religious, Friday night dinner was special. Papa and Davy sat in the sun parlor waiting for Mama to come home, hopefully with some money. She did—$2.50, which at that time was enough to buy some groceries."

Decades later, Miriam, who became a noted library scientist and political activist, recalled how Isaac Alpern helped her destitute family during the Depression: "In one way, we were lucky, in that Mr. Alpern, the president of the Perth Amboy Trust Company, which held our mortgage, did not throw us out on the street when they took over the property for non-payment. He liked Papa and let us stay there and pay rent."

Beth Mordecai: From Orthodox to Conservative

In the early years, Beth Mordecai was an Orthodox congregation. But in 1921, spurred by lobbying from younger members, it became Conservative, affiliated with the United Synagogue of America. Mixed pews were introduced. The first organ was donated by Albert Leon, an émigré from Germany, who owned the largest store in Perth Amboy, a furniture store on the corner of State and Smith Streets.

With the growth of the Conservative Jewish population in Perth Amboy, Beth Mordecai moved into a large, modern building on High Street, which was dedicated in April 1927. In attendance was Dr. Stephen S. Wise, who had attended the opening of the first temple in 1897. (One of his last public addresses was given at Beth Mordecai's 50th-anniversary celebration in 1947.)

The other noteworthy guest speaker was 71-year-old Louis B. Marshall, a famed corporate, constitutional, and civil rights lawyer, mediator, and Jewish community leader, who was among the founders of the American Jewish Committee and the NAACP.

Cantor Gershon Ephros

In 1927, the year the new temple opened on High Street, the congregation hired its first regular cantor. Gershon Ephros was born in Serotzk, Poland, in 1890, the last of three children born to Feiga and Avraham Abba. His father was a Hebrew teacher and a Torah reader, who gave his son a love for the Jewish musical tradition.

According to Ruth Patt's biographical essay, Cantor Ephros's mother was a popular dressmaker, who often employed several young women to help fill orders. Many times they had to remain into the night to finish their work, and in order to keep awake and alert, the women sang folk tunes, which the young Gershon heard as he lay in bed upstairs. Those songs would inspire his musical compositions.

Ephros came to the United States in 1911. He served congregations in Norfolk, Virginia, and Bronx, New York, before moving to Perth Amboy.

Ephros was a student, a teacher, a researcher, and a composer of cantorial works. During the course of his long career, he interviewed many cantors, copied down all the music they knew, and then edited the work. He devoted many years to compiling and editing the six-volume *Cantorial Anthology*, which made Jewish liturgical music for the entire year's holidays available in print.

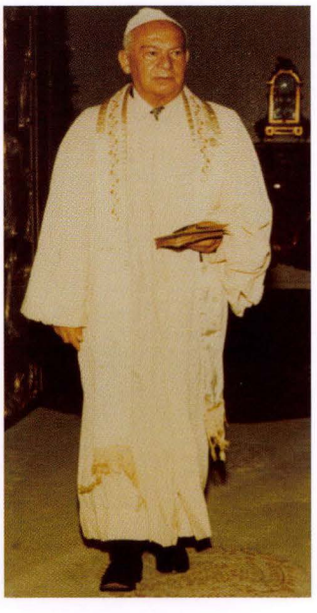
Cantor Ephros was a founder and faculty member of the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music. The Jewish Music Research Centre at the Hebrew University National Library holds his papers and over 100 scores, of both published and unpublished works. Most of the compositions were written between 1925 and 1977. Cantor Ephros retired in 1957 and passed away in 1978.

In 1990, an entire evening of Cantor Ephros's music was performed in Jerusalem.

Ed Berkowitz, a Beth Mordecai member during his childhood in Fords, noted that at his Reform synagogue (Temple Sinai) in Washington, D.C., "our cantor's collection of sacred music includes many songs and prayers arranged by Cantor Ephros."

Lillian Faffer, a granddaughter of Cantor Chazin, who grew up in a house shared with her grandfather, remembered that her grandfather and Cantor Ephros had a close relationship, both professionally and personally, based not only on their positions as cantors of their respective congregations, but also on their similar educational backgrounds and interest in performing and composing liturgical music.

Rabbi Max Davidson



Rabbi Max D. Davidson

In 1928, a year after Gershon Ephros assumed his duties as cantor, Rabbi Max D. Davidson, who had served as rabbi of Congregation Beth El in Asbury Park from 1922 to 1928, joined him on the pulpit.

An accomplished scholar and author, Rabbi Davidson was born, raised, and educated in Newark. He earned a bachelor of arts degree at New York University and a master's degree at Rutgers University. In 1922, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America ordained him.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, members of Beth Mordecai had difficulty paying their dues. Rabbi Davidson and Cantor Gershon Ephros generously took cuts in their salaries. Charles Safran rescued Beth Mordecai by personally paying the temple's debts.

Max Davidson became one of the nation's leading Jewish clergymen. He was elected president of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, an association of Conservative rabbis. He also served as president of the Synagogue Council of America, comprising the Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative rabbinical and congregational bodies.

He was chairman of the Division of Religious Activities of the National Jewish Welfare Board, which was devoted primarily to the recruiting, endorsing, and certifying of all Jewish chaplains in the armed forces.

The civic-minded rabbi led the way for his congregation in strengthening Perth Amboy's inter-religious, intercultural, and intereconomic position.

Jimmy Hardiman, owner of Seaman's Pharmacy on Smith Street, which was famous for its old-fashioned lunch counter, once recalled that Rabbi Davidson used to stop by before his Friday night service for a cup of coffee and a corn muffin. Hardiman loved to talk to him and was astounded by his wealth of knowledge.

A Renaissance man, Rabbi Davidson once moonlighted as drama critic for the *Asbury Park Press*, while he served the congregation in that seashore town. He was a top-notch tennis player, an official at national championships, and a member of the United States National Lawn Tennis Association.

His daughter Doris Davidson Gordon fondly remembered how her father adored his wife, Margaret, "whom he tried to take for a 'date' to Howard Johnson's every Saturday night, his children, telling stories, his amateur photography, travel, theater, films, books (especially histories and mysteries), conversation (with scholars or with the person sitting next to him in the theater or car wash), current events, and every new idea and trend he could evaluate, dissect, and explore."



Rabbi Max Davidson and Margaret Davidson

By 1944, under the leadership of Isadore Greenspan, one of the temple's newer benefactors, the mortgage was liquidated and the congregation was practically clear of debt, which would set the stage for growth in the postwar period.

With Davidson and Ephros as the two pillars of Beth Mordecai, the temple membership numbered more than 1,000 congregants at its peak. Beth Mordecai encompassed the Raritan Bay area, with members from Fords, Edison, Metuchen, and other nearby communities.

Although the exact number of bar and bat mitzvahs at Beth Mordecai is unknown, Eddie Saiff's experience was shared by many: "My bar mitzvah was on October 15, 1956. Rabbi Davidson and Cantor Ephros officiated. We had a luncheon right afterwards at Beth Mordecai. Dr. Fred Greenfield's band played. Fred was a podiatrist in Perth Amboy, and he was a saxophone player."

In a 2007 article in *New Jersey Jewish News*, Augusta Kagan reminisced about the impact of Beth Mordecai on her life and the life of her family. She cited walking to Sunday school, her wedding, attending social events, cooking classes, and dances, and participating in Sisterhood functions. Her mother, a pianist, played at shows and religious school and Sisterhood programs.

Kagan mentioned that when Beth Mordecai was robbed just prior to a major function, the news was immediately sent out to Sisterhood members, who rushed over with silver platters and utensils to replace those that were taken.

"That's just the kind of place it was," she said. "Everybody helped everybody all the time. I'll just never forget it. That temple means so much to me."


HEBREW FRATERNITY


IN MEMORY OF
MAX
BELOVED SON OF
MINA & HENRY
WOLFF
REST IN PEACE


SHARI TEPHALO

Chapter Five

Cemeteries: Honoring Our Ancestors

One aspect of establishing a Jewish community that its founders hope will endure long after they have passed away is providing for cemeteries. All Jewish communities share this concern, and Perth Amboy was certainly no exception. Many organizations in the growing Perth Amboy Jewish community established their own cemeteries, and each of the cemeteries discussed below is the final resting place of many of the community's founders, leaders, and members. By visiting the graves of their ancestors at these cemeteries, the descendants of those buried there can honor and remember them, as well as learn about their own history and heritage.

Hebrew Fraternity Cemetery

In 1894, the First Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society purchased land on New Brunswick Avenue in Hopelawn from William H. McCormick and established a cemetery on the property. The society affiliated itself with another organization to provide insurance for its members, but assessments rapidly increased, thus draining the society's funds. In 1916, the First Perth Amboy Hebrew Mutual Aid Society dissolved and reorganized as the Hebrew Fraternity, which assumed responsibility for the cemetery. With $3,000 cash on hand, its members paid for the construction of an iron fence around their cemetery.

In 1973, facing declining and aging membership, the Hebrew Fraternity (under the leadership of President Jack Shangold and Secretary Howard Kleimer) dissolved and transferred ownership of this cemetery to Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh.

Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh Cemetery

In 1917, Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh purchased ground (from Frederick and Marie Brown) at the corner of Florida Grove Road and Bingle Street in Perth Amboy for a cemetery. That same year, the United Hebrew Association of Perth Amboy (another independent fraternal lodge) purchased land on Bingle Street, adjacent to the Shaarey Tefiloh cemetery, for its own cemetery.

In 1954, the United Hebrew Association of Perth Amboy (under the leadership of Leon Sewitch, David Encherman, and Samuel Miller) found itself in the same position faced later by the Hebrew Fraternity: declining and aging membership. Ownership of its cemetery was transferred to Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh, and it became known as the "Bingle Street Section" of the Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh cemetery.

Images from top to bottom:

Hebrew Fraternity Cemetery

Cemetery monument of Max Wolff

Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh Cemetery



Congregation Beth Israel Cemetery

In 1922, Congregation Beth Israel recognized the need for its own burial space and purchased land on Harned Street in Perth Amboy for a cemetery. By 1995, the synagogue had closed, and no one was left to take care of the cemetery. Under the leadership of Sidney Josen, title to the cemetery was transferred to the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County.

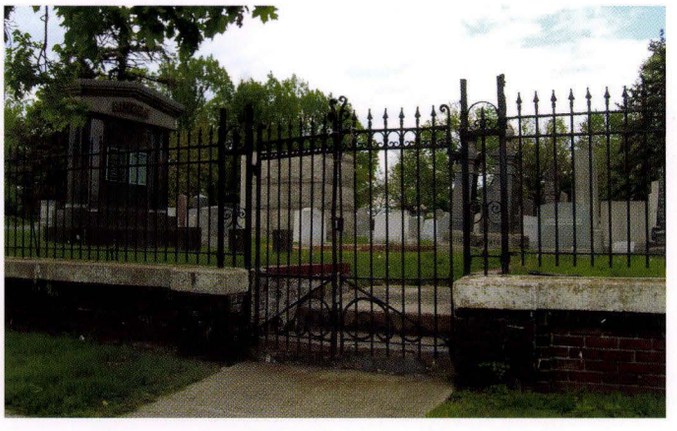


Congregation Beth Mordecai Cemetery

In 1894, Beth Mordecai purchased land on Florida Grove Road for its cemetery. The first burial was Max Wolff, son of Henry and Mina Wolff. In 1896, the Wolffs dedicated this cemetery in memory of Max.

Hebrew Progressive Cemetery

In 1902, the Hebrew Progressive Association, another fraternal lodge, purchased land for a cemetery on Florida Grove Road. Facing declining and aging membership, this organization (under the leadership of Chairman Oliver Seidman and Secretary Sidney Stern) transferred ownership of its cemetery to Congregation Beth Mordecai in 1965.



Workmen's Circle of Perth Amboy (Branch 95) Cemetery

In 1922, the Workmen's Circle of Perth Amboy (Branch 95) acquired land adjacent to the cemetery owned by Congregation Beth Israel, so that its members could have their own burial space. In 1999, with the organization having been inactive for over ten years and no one remaining to care for its cemetery, the lodge (under the leadership of Jack Stillman) transferred ownership of its cemetery to the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County.

Ahavas Achim Cemetery Association

The Ahavas Achim Cemetery Association was formed in 1932 by Ferencz Weiss, Alex Silver, Benjamin Horowitz, Joseph Polkowitz, President Anton Weiss, Louis Horowitz, and Jacob Polkowitz to provide additional burial space to the community. It purchased land on Bingle Street for cemetery use. This organization soon became inactive, and very few burials took place at its cemetery.

Images from top to bottom:

Congregation Beth Israel Cemetery entry plaque

Congregation Beth Mordecai Cemetery

Hebrew Progressive Cemetery







Left: Cemetery monument of Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Center: Cemetery monument of Hecky Plain

Right: Cemetery monument of Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin





Left: Cemetery monument of Solomon Brody

Right: Cemetery monument of Kassel Finkelstein





Left: Monument dedicating Congregation Beth Mordecai Cemetery to Max Wolff

Right: Cemetery monument of Max and Fannie Goldman





Left: Cemetery monument of Mina and Henry Wolff

Right: Cemetery monument of Barnet Goldman

Beth Israel Memorial Park and Mount Lebanon Cemetery

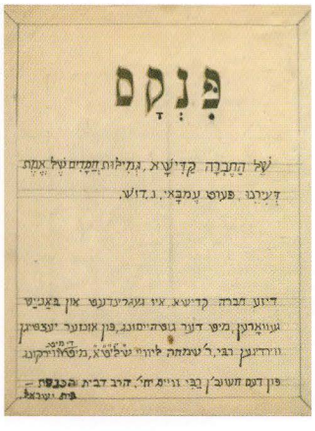
Beth Israel Memorial Park in Woodbridge (founded in 1927) and Mount Lebanon Cemetery in Iselin (founded in 1929) are owned and managed by StoneMor Partners L.P., a full-service cemetery and funeral home corporation that currently owns more than 293 properties in 26 states. Both Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh and Congregation Beth Israel purchased sections at this cemetery. Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh still owns its section, while Congregation Beth Israel transferred the ownership of its section to the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County.

Images from top to bottom:

Congregation Beth Israel section at Beth Israel Memorial Park

Title page from Chevra Kadisha Record Book (Pinkas)





Chevra Kadisha

Chesed shel emet ("a true good deed") is a term often used to describe the ritual of preparing the dead for burial, a truly selfless act that is done with no ulterior motive, since the dead cannot possibly repay the deed. In the 1890s, with the growth and maturation of the Jewish population of Perth Amboy, there was a need for burial services. A group of pious men, among them Solomon Brody, Moshe Chaim Frankel, Julius Frankel, Frank Avchen, and Peter Pavlovsky, formed the Chevra Kadisha ("Holy Society") to ensure proper burial for all Jews, regardless of socioeconomic circumstances. Rachel Frankel, Chai Frankel, and Bertha Jacobson formed a women's group in 1910.

The primary function of the Chevra Kadisha was to prepare the bodies of deceased Jews for burial according to *Halacha* (Jewish law), including ritual cleansing of the body, followed by dressing.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Chevra Kadisha of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh, under Rabbi Samuel Levy and later Rabbi Albert Schwartz, served the entire Jewish community of Perth Amboy and surrounding towns. The minutes of its meetings, which were never made public, itemized services rendered and the disposition of funds to charitable causes and assistance for needy members of the community. There is no listing of members because it was apparently the policy of the Chevra Kadisha to protect the privacy of all who participated, including the services that were rendered. Anonymous gifts were made to needy families and organizations.

The principal officers and leaders of the various Chevra Kadisha groups included Cantor Hirsch Chazin, Pesach ("P.D.") Siegel, Morris Ginzberg, Joseph Feibush, Bertha Greenberg, Sam Farben, Julius Frankel, Solomon Brody, Frank Avchen, Peter Pavlovsky, Rachel Frankel, Chai Frankel, Bertha Jacobson, Gussie Ginzberg, and Esther Golub.

The devoted members of the Chevra Kadisha epitomized the altruistic Jewish community from its earliest days. Although they had little themselves, they were willing and eager to share whatever resources they did have. They served the deceased anonymously, with no thought of acknowledgment or repayment.

The Future of the Cemeteries



Workmen's Circle and Congregation Beth Israel cemeteries

It is a common experience—statewide, nationwide, and even worldwide—for communities to grow and thrive before moving away, only to leave their cemeteries behind. The same cycle occurred in the Perth Amboy Jewish community. Joseph Klegman first recognized the problem. In 1994, with the assistance and cooperation of the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County, Klegman helped form the Greater Middlesex Jewish Cemetery Management Corporation. This organization's purpose is to own, manage, operate, and maintain Jewish cemeteries in the area served by the Federation when existing organizations are unable to provide for the continued management, operation, and maintenance of the cemeteries for which they are responsible.

In 2005, a group of individuals concerned about the future of the cemeteries owned by Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh independently formed Friends for Preservation of Middlesex County Jewish Cemeteries. Current Board members include Mona Shangold, Norma Jacobson Messing, Daniel D. Chazin, Bardin Levavy, Barry Rosengarten, Shep Sewitch, and Gary Shangold. It is hoped that these two organizations will work together to plan for the future of the cemeteries that are the final resting place for most members of the Perth Amboy Jewish community.

Funeral Hearse

The concern about providing proper burial grounds for the Jewish population of Perth Amboy was extended to include a hearse for Jewish funerals. During the years 1912-1920, the United Chesed Shelemis of Perth Amboy, led by its president Morris Slobodien and its secretary Julius Frankel, pledged "donations towards the purchase of a motorized hearse to be used by the undersigned organization at all Jewish funerals." Most donors who signed their pledges were male heads of household, but a few women signed pledges; there was one from Fishkin Brothers and one honoring the bar mitzvah of Abraham Bey. Some pledged more than once. The amounts pledged ranged from $1 to $100. Over 100 donations were listed, and numerous prominent families were represented. A few signed their names in Hebrew.







Chapter Six

A Jewish Education

Providing a Jewish education for their children was a priority from the moment Jewish immigrants arrived in Perth Amboy.

In the early 1890s, the growing Jewish community was composed of families who believed that their children must be educated in their faith and lore. Jewish education was initially provided by engaging a rabbi to give private lessons.

Subsequently, to make Jewish education more widely available, a daily Hebrew School was started in a private home. A 21-year-old Russian immigrant named Isaac Alpern, a "*yeshiva bochur*," and Hyman Krissoff, a Talmudic scholar, taught the pupils.

After teaching Hebrew for about three years, Alpern went into the real estate and insurance business, eventually creating Alpern & Company. He was also president and a director of the Perth Amboy Trust Company. Alpern played a leading role in the development of the commercial and industrial life of Perth Amboy. He and his wife, Lena Pauline Coble, were the parents of Ruth and Frances.

Perth Amboy Hebrew School

When the building of Shaarey Tefiloh was completed in 1904, a group of men formed the Perth Amboy Free Hebrew School. Children from Jewish families who could not afford tuition fees were taken in as free pupils or at a nominal fee. In the vestry rooms of Shaarey Tefiloh, instruction was given in the Orthodox tradition, with a curriculum including *siddur*, Hebrew, *chumash*, history, writing, customs and ceremonies, Sabbath services, knowledge and celebration of the holidays, songs, and various extracurricular activities related to the program. The school's standards were exceptionally high.

Classes were held Monday through Thursday after school and on Sunday mornings. A preschool program was offered on Monday mornings for younger children.

Solomon Brody Auxiliary

Solomon Brody, president of the Perth Amboy Hebrew School, recruited Jewish women to form an auxiliary organization to lend moral and financial support to the school. At a meeting of the Original Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society in May 1921, Brody presented his plan, and 40 women signed up as charter members.

Two months later, Brody suddenly became ill and passed away. This was a great shock and loss to the community, particularly to the nascent Auxiliary, which was left without an advisor and leader. Shortly after the month of mourning, Judith Brody (Solomon's widow), with the assistance of Fannie Slobodien, recruited additional members. The first regular installation of officers was held in

Images from top to bottom:

Shaarey Tefiloh
bat mitzvah class, 1949
Standing: Marilyn Millet, Janet Bernstein, Judy Maltz, Beverly Meyers, Lois Samson, Barbara Schwartz, Shirly Alper; seated: Judy Meistrich, Judy Kaplan

Shaarey Tefiloh
bat mitzvah class, 1952
Norma Jacobson, Carole Meistrich, Jane Stess, Barbara Schwartz, Bertha Faffer, Susan Feldman, Roslyn Koenigsberg, Gail Mandel, Helene Korb, Sandy Safran

Shaarey Tefiloh
bat mitzvah class, 1960
Front row: Leona Weiss, Fran Clawans, Jane Perlin, Mona Shangold, Susan Klegman, Arlene Kroop; back row: Marlene Hamerling, Diane Jacobson, Jane Sanders, Susan Kleimer



Perth Amboy Hebrew School graduation, 1955
Joel Sanders, Joel Blum, Terry Perlin, Myron Alpern, Gilbert Sandler, Sheldon Cheuse, Lewis Kaden

December 1921, with Mrs. Slobodien installed as president. At that meeting, it was unanimously decided to name the organization the Solomon Brody Auxiliary to the Hebrew School, honoring the man who was dedicated to the cause of Jewish education in Perth Amboy.

The Solomon Brody Auxiliary played a vital role in the progress of the Hebrew School. It raised funds to clear the budget deficits, provided play material and visual aids, and hosted celebrations on every holiday and on the Sabbath. It encouraged attendance at Hebrew School by the award of yearly prizes, participated in every enrollment campaign for new pupils, and was responsible for the collection of a large part of the Yom Kippur pledges for the school and for the painting and decorating of all the classrooms and offices.

A parent-teacher group was formed so that young mothers of pupils were kept abreast of their children's progress and also enlisted in the work of furthering Jewish education.

On October 19, 1922, the school was incorporated under the name Perth Amboy Hebrew School as an independent organization, not directly affiliated with any other group. Its several hundred men and women members supported it generously with dues and donations. The founders included Solomon Brody, Louis Braines, Abraham Beckoff, Herman Ellis, Philip Siskind, Max S. Goldberger, Max L. Scott, Nathan Jacobson, Barney Streiff, Joseph Slobodien, and Philip Levine.

In 1950, the Board of Directors of the Perth Amboy Hebrew School included Morris Ginzberg, president; Dr. Martin Marcus, Benjamin Horowitz, and Harry Malett, vice-presidents; Bertha Jacobson, treasurer; and Bessie Gavronsky, secretary. Rabbi Levy served as chairman of the Board of Education.

Hebrew School at the Y

When the YMHA was built in 1923, Hebrew School classes were held six days a week, "concluding, in celebration, on the day following bar mitzvah," recalled Gene Galen.

During the 1950s, as many as 100 students were enrolled in daily classes, with 30 additional students in Sunday school. Eugene Glatzer arrived from Brooklyn and was hired as principal. He also taught classes. Kids connected with him, thanks to his warm, youthful personality and his devotion to teaching Hebrew, religion, and Jewish customs. He was beloved for his extraordinary rapport with his students and for playing ball with them on the "roof garden" before class.

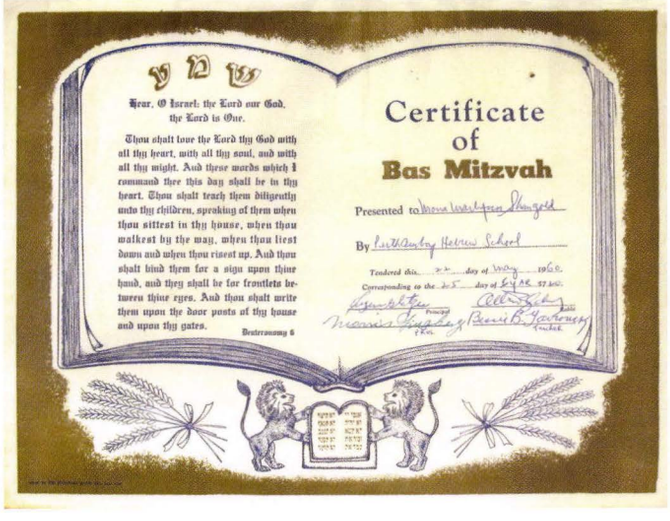
Some of the well-remembered Hebrew School teachers were Bertha Zion and principal Edward Rubin (in the 1930s), as well as Bessie Gavronsky, Abe Parnes, Nathan Kapner, and principals Rabbi Rabinowitz and Rabbi Abraham Mykoff (in the 1960s). Most Perth Amboy Hebrew School alumni especially remember Bessie Gavronsky (daughter of Solomon and Judith Brody), who taught first grade to several generations of students—many of whom affectionately called her "Doda Bessie." All those who attended Hebrew School in the 1930s and 1940s—when Edward Rubin was principal—remember the picnic outings that added to the social experience of the school.

Robert Fishkin fondly recalled the days when he and a cousin rode their bicycles to and from Hebrew School: "We used to talk Hebrew to each other in this polyglot town. [Years later,] we see all these Spanish kids running around talking Spanish to each other, and there we were [speaking Hebrew]. Hebrew was a scholarly thing, like Latin. We knew basic conversational Hebrew, and we used to get a kick out of doing that."

Attending Perth Amboy Hebrew School was an important part of the lives of all of its alumni, who remember the social and athletic aspects as much as the academic ones. Lydia Ginzberg Singer recalled the annual Siyum exercises that were held in the YMHA Auditorium every June, celebrating completion of a section of Torah study. "This was a major annual celebration that featured presentations, awards, and a very beautiful choral performance by Hebrew School students of the 'Hallelujah' written by Solomon Brody years before. Bessie Gavronsky had brought her father's music and lyrics to the students, who loved the song and the opportunity to perform it." Lydia also recalled that "student plays were held as fundraisers for the school and served as popular social events as well."

Top: Bat mitzvah certificate of Mona Shangold, May 22, 1960

Bottom: Perth Amboy Hebrew School diploma of Mona Shangold, June 19, 1960


שמע

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house and upon thy gates. Deuteronomy 6

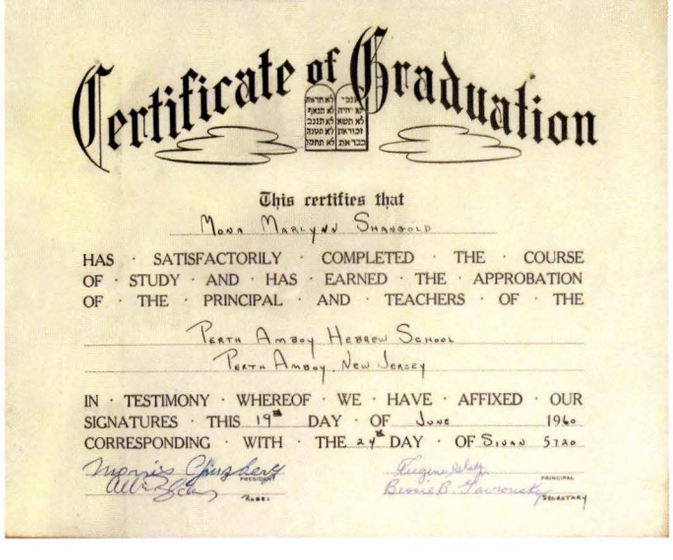
Certificate of Bas Mitzvah

Presented to Mona Marilynn Shangold

By Perth Amboy Hebrew School

Tendered this 22nd day of May 1960.

Corresponding to the 25th day of Iyar 5720.


Certificate of Graduation

This certifies that

Mona Marilynn Shangold

HAS · SATISFACTORILY · COMPLETED · THE · COURSE OF · STUDY · AND · HAS · EARNED · THE · APPROBATION OF · THE · PRINCIPAL · AND · TEACHERS · OF · THE

Perth Amboy Hebrew School

Perth Amboy, New Jersey

IN · TESTIMONY · WHEREOF · WE · HAVE · AFFIXED · OUR SIGNATURES · THIS 19th DAY · OF June 1960 CORRESPONDING · WITH · THE 24th DAY · OF Sivan 5720

Morris Ginzberg PRESIDENT

Eugene Glatzer PRINCIPAL

Bessie B. Gavronsky SECRETARY

Perth Amboy Hebrew School graduation program, June 19, 1960

PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL

"AYL BORAICH AMERICA" — Graduates

WELCOMING REMARKS — Rev. Eugene Glatzer

"SHEHECHEYONU" — Rev. Hirsh L. Chazin

PSALM 24 - HEBREW — Mona Shangold
- ENGLISH — Arnold Danzig

SONG - "KAYL N'KOYOS" — Graduates

REMARKS — Dr. Martin E.Danzig
Executive Director Y.M.H.A.

SALUTATORIAN'S ADDRESS — Arlene Kroop

SONG - HABAIN YAKIR LI" — Rev.Hirsh L. Chazin, with RobtLevinson, Richard Millet, Marc Stess, and Graduates

VALEDICTORIAN'S ADDRESS — Richard Millet

PRESENTATIONS

DIPLOMAS AND KEYS — Morris Ginzberg
President Perth Amboy Hebrew School

ATTENDANCE AWARD — Mrs. Abraham Faffer
President Solomon Brody Auxiliary

MEMORIAL AWARDS — Rev. Eugene Glatzer
Principal Perth Amboy Hebrew School

ADDRESS AND ADMONITION — Rabbi Albert Schwartz

HATIKVAH

GRADUATES

ARNOLD DANZIG
HENRY EHRLICH
MARLENE HAMERLING
JOEL JACOBSON
ARLENE KROOP
ROBERT LEVINSON
RICHARD MILLET
ALAN MINK
JANE PERLIN
MORTON ROSENBERG
JANE SANDERS
MONA SHANGOLD
DAVID SHIHAR
MARC STESS

MEMORIAL AWARDS

VALEDICTORIAN AWARD
In memory of John and Mary Margaretten

SALUTATORIAN AWARD
In memory of Morria and Ida Gavronsky

OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP
In memory of Harry Fishkin
In memory of Max S. Goldberger
In memory of Sadie S. Goldberger
In memory of Irwin Lader
In memory of Lena Sarokin
In memory of Jennie Schlesinger
In memory of Saul and Anna Schwartzman
In memory of Jennie Shenke Wedeen

EXCELLENCE IN SIDDUR
In memory of Alan Golub
In memory of Augusta Rabinowitz
In memory of Lena Sarokin
In memory of Jennie Shenke Wedeen
In memory of Isadore Zassler

GOOD CITIZENSHIP
In memory of Gary Mandel

FREE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
Hyman and Esther Wedeen Memorial Fund

The Roof Garden

The Hebrew School teachers undoubtedly recognized the need for exercise between a full day of public school classes and an additional academic hour of Hebrew education in the late afternoon. All Perth Amboy Hebrew School alumni remember the "roof garden" (on top of the YMHA) with excitement, fondness, and many wonderful memories.

Barry Greenberg reminisced about "games on the roof garden, like punch ball, stick ball, and dodge ball."

Jane Sanders Leal recalled: "As much as the students were learning to read Hebrew for religious services, preparing for bar and bat mitzvahs, celebrating Jewish holidays and events, one of the highlights of attending Hebrew School was the time period between arriving at the YMHA and the start of class. The fenced-in outdoor roof garden of the Hebrew School proved to be the best place for playing punch ball, and many of the participants still cannot figure out why the ball never went over the fence to the street below."

Seymour Buchsbaum remembered: "One day, we 11-year-olds were shooting dice on the roof garden, when Mr. Rubin, the principal of the Hebrew School, discovered us and said he would send a letter to our parents. There were five boys watching their home mailboxes for the next week. We never gambled again!"



Beth Hillel Day Nursery first graduating class, 1951 Front row: Evelyn Gelbstein, Edward Marcus, Arlene Kroop, Arnold Weiss, Robert Weiss, Morton Rosenberg, Mona Shangold, Toby Adler; back row: Ruth Jacobson (co-director), Tommy Farben, Barbara Dern, Rose Aneis, Powell Saks, Ileene Rabinowitz, Richard Plavin, Nathan Kapner (co-director)

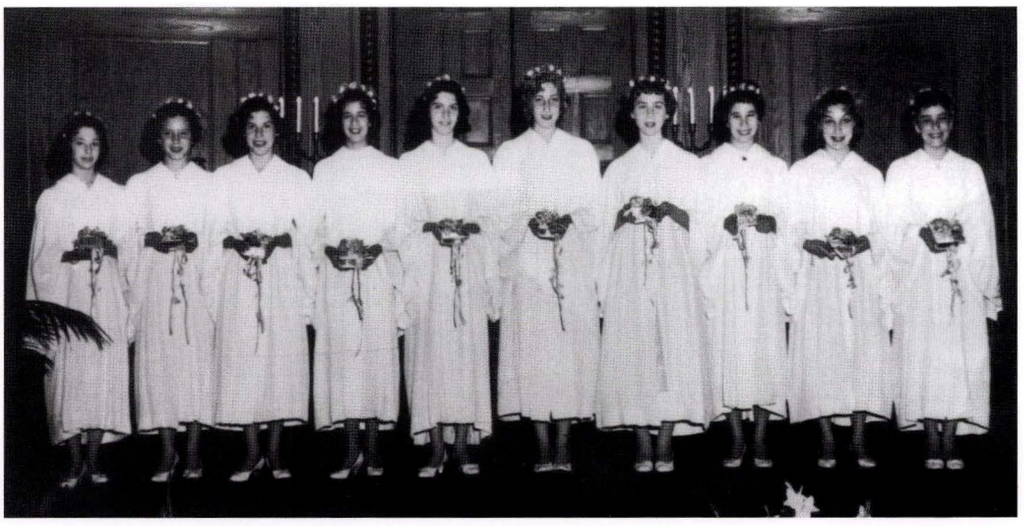
Beth Hillel Day Nursery School

In 1950, Beth Hillel Day Nursery School was founded and met on the third floor of the YMHA, with Ruth (Mrs. Sol) Jacobson and Nathan Kapner serving as co-directors. Its first class graduated in 1951.

St. Peter's Nursery School

St. Peter's Nursery School attracted many Jewish children who lived in the neighborhood. Reverend George Boyd, who was certainly one of the most popular Christians among Perth Amboy Jews, welcomed Jewish children to the school, which was run by his wife, Esther, who served as principal. It was established in 1948 and offered morning classes for children ages 3 years, 6 months to 5 years in the parish house across from the church on Rector Street. The school was accredited by the New Jersey State Board of Education, and religion was not taught. In 1957, enrollment was 33.

"Reverend Boyd was a doll," recalled Renee Klein. Several of her children attended the school. "The kids were able to get out, do things, arts and crafts, meet other kids, and all the things you do in nursery school."



Beth Mordecai confirmation class, 1958 Judy Falk, Jean Kaden, Diane Stess, Martha Kaplan, Marla Harrison, Marilyn Silverman, Suzanne Walker, Connie Hess, Joan Sher, Susan Pliskin

Beth Mordecai Hebrew School

Located in the temple on High Street, this school was founded in 1897 to teach Jewish history, customs, and ceremonies, as well as the Hebrew language and religion. In 1957, there were 130 students enrolled, with classes held three days a week after public school hours and on Sundays. In that year, Benjamin Lorber was president, with Rabbi Davidson serving as principal and supervisor.

Eddie Saiff remembered Beth Mordecai Hebrew School: "A couple of guys in Hebrew School made up a group we called 'Bumping Buddies.' We bumped into each other and sang our song: 'Rabbis young and old; rabbis brave and bold; fight, fight, fight for kosher ham.' My Hebrew School teacher, Dr. Eisner, was a chiropractor. If we behaved in class, he gave us a short biology lesson. He taught us both the fetal and adult pathways of blood traveling through the heart and



Beth Mordecai confirmation class, 1962 Ronna Kohn, Phyllis Slutsky, Patti Gray, Lisa Saltman, Rhoda Spielman, Marcy Sanders

vessels around the heart. I was so excited by his lessons that I majored in biology in college and went on to earn my doctorate in zoology and physiology. Later, I became a professor of biology at Ramapo College."

Ruth Eisemann Fost remembered that attending Beth Mordecai Hebrew School included "the usual chaos and out-of-control boys. It's hard to imagine how we learned anything. But I do recall several interesting conversations/discussions with Rabbi Davidson. One of them took the guilt out of being in the sixth grade chorus (which I loved), where we sang all the Christmas carols and went to various sites in concert. The rabbi said it was fine to sing them, as long as we didn't 'believe' in them."

Blanche Eisemann Sosland recalled:
"My bat mitzvah was on March 18, 1949, on a Friday evening at Temple Beth Mordecai. Rabbi Davidson was very progressive, and I remember him explaining the 'new concept of bat mitzvah' to my parents. Girls were only allowed to have a bat mitzvah on Friday evening, and it wasn't until after my own daughter became bat mitzvah that girls were permitted to read from the Torah on Shabbat morning.

"Rabbi Davidson and Cantor Ephros taught me my *haftarah*. I remember going to the cantor's home and Mrs. Ephros giving me her homemade sweets after each lesson. There was a heavy snowstorm the day of my bat mitzvah, but it didn't seem to deter people from attending. I remember being very nervous and my mother telling me to enjoy what I was doing and that people would enjoy listening to me. It is advice that has had a lifelong impact on me."

Painters and several other men at Sholem Aleichem school on Hobart Street, 1953



Sholem Aleichem Folkshul #7

For more eclectic Jewish education, there was the Sholem Aleichem Folkshul #7, another after-school program that was part of the New York-based Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute, which emphasized the Yiddish cultural world in the 1920s and 1930s. The institute's summer Yiddish camp, Camp Boiberik, stressed humanistic values (with a touch of socialism) that could be learned from traditional Judaism and applied to the modern Jewish experience.

Eva Schlachter, who attended the school in the 1930s, also remembered classes on Tuesday night and Saturday morning. "The Orthodox thought that it was terrible having classes on Saturday morning, since, of course, we wrote in class."

The Perth Amboy school was located on the third floor of a building at the corner of Smith and McClellan Streets, above the A. Greenhouse, Inc., fur store and Amboy Lighting.

Muriel "Bosh" Brandwein Greenhouse fondly recalled "a particular day in 1932, when Mrs. Simkin asked how old I was. When my mother replied that I was eight, Mrs. Simkin said, 'It's time she began to study at the Sholem Aleichem School.' My mother agreed, and it was then that I began a journey into my love of all things Yiddish as a culture: reading and writing Yiddish; learning its rich history and literature and music. It was also a beginning of my lifelong love affair with Marvin Greenhouse.



Alvin (Avi) Golub's bar mitzvah reception, 1952 Center: Irving Golub, Alvin (Avi) Golub, Esther Golub; left: Gloria Lampert, Rabbi Samuel Levy, Nathan Kapner, Elaine Toborowsky, Sharon Feldman, Bertha Faffer; right row (right to left): Lana Golub, Norma Jacobson, Annette Pollack, Hannah Miller

"Sholem Aleichem School was a very special place. Our parents were very much involved with the school. The curriculum was so diversified. We studied and observed all the holidays and discussed current events and United States history. I learned about Booker T. Washington, Eugene V. Debs, the labor movement, etc. We took part in plays and musicals. We had a school newspaper, and we had summer picnics and outings to New York. We had a chorus, with a musical director coming in from New York once a week for rehearsals. Concerts were held in the Masonic Temple on State Street or at Perth Amboy High School."

In 1957, 55 school-age students were enrolled in classes. Leon Gutman and Emil Gelber served as administrators, and three teachers were listed: Sol Reisen, who also served as principal, Mrs. Reisen, and Jack Kroop, who also served as president.

One thing Sholem Aleichem did not do was prepare young boys for bar mitzvah. All four of Bosh and Marvin Greenhouse's sons—David, Rick, Jack, and Ken—had their bar mitzvahs at Shaarey Tefiloh, tutored by Rabbi Schwartz and Cantor Chazin. David was Rabbi Schwartz's first bar mitzvah of a Sholem Aleichem alumnus as the rabbi of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh. Since he had attended the Sholem Aleichem school, David gave his bar mitzvah speech in Yiddish.

Gentile Friends

Always interested in learning and socializing, Karen Glaus Porter, although not Jewish, followed some of her many Jewish friends and classmates to Sholem Aleichem after-school classes while in seventh grade because it was so interesting and so much fun. It took several months for the school to discover that she wasn't properly enrolled and to contact Karen's mother to discuss (and end) her participation.

As a slightly perplexed and bemused teenager, Milan Zahorcak remembered serving as the *Shabbos goy* for Rabbis Rabinowitz and Twersky when he lived near them on lower First Street in the early 1960s. Although not Jewish, Milan (who graduated from Perth Amboy High School in 1964) has always had many Jewish friends and felt very much a part of the Perth Amboy Jewish community.

Hillel Academy

In the mid-1950s, Rabbi Levy proposed the establishment of a yeshiva day school in Perth Amboy to serve as an alternative to public school. The idea won support quickly. Following a successful fundraising campaign, led by David Stepacoff and Ida Silverman, Perth Amboy's Hillel Academy was built in 1957 at 100 First Street, on land donated by Hyman Davidson for this purpose. William Braunstein served as the school's first president, and Rabbi Joseph Heimowitz served as its first principal. Nettie Bzura served as its first supervisor and Meyer Isenberg as its first house chairman, representing Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh. At the time of its inception, it was one of only two yeshivas in Middlesex County and one of only 264 yeshivas in the United States.



Hillel dinner, 1956
Seated: Lydia Goldfarb, Ruth Jacobson, Dora Fine, Mildred Wedeen, Bessie Gavronsky, Bertha Jacobson; standing: Dr. H. P. Fine, Morris Goldfarb, William Wedeen, Is Jacobson

Fully accredited by the New Jersey Board of Education, Hillel Academy provided both the standard public school curriculum and a Jewish curriculum of religion, Hebrew language, culture, and law. Rabbi David Twersky served as the school's principal from 1960 to 1977, when the school merged with the Yeshiva of Plainfield and became known as the Hebrew Academy of Central New Jersey.



Shaarey Tefiloh
bat mitzvah class, 1957
Carol Ann Swerdel, Bonnie Borak, Linda Meistrich, Jane Margaretten, Marsha Goldman, Barbara Ehrlich, Marcia Weinstein


CAKE
SALE
Y.M.H.A.
FEB.


PYA
1924-25

Chapter Seven

YMHA: Center of the Community

Each of the Perth Amboy Jewish institutions had its own glorious history, and the YMHA was no exception. It played a major role in the life of every Jew who lived in Perth Amboy and the surrounding communities during most of the 20th century.

In the early years of the 20th century, Jewish life in Perth Amboy and the rest of America was facing the challenges of modernity. The immigrants, with their roots in "the old world," struggled with the rebellion of the first generation of American Jews, with roots in "the new world" and a spirit of freedom, democracy, and possibility.

In 1902, two separate small groups of young men met in each other's homes or at rented rooms to discuss forming social clubs. Four years later, the two clubs combined under the name YMHA and conducted their activities in three rooms in the McCormick Building, at the corner of Smith and High Streets.

In 1908, Jacob H. Weitzen, Fred L. Schmidt, Meyer Freedman, Louis Isenberg, Hyman Friedman, and Samuel Borak organized the Young Men's Club "for the purpose of promoting good fellowship, social standing, and intellectualism." Over the next year, they met in a rented room on the second floor of 338 State Street. They later moved, for a short period, to the northeast corner of Smith and High Streets, above what was then Seaman's Drug Store.

In 1910, as membership increased, they rented the second and third floors of the original Perth Amboy Savings Institution, at the southeast corner of Smith and Rector Streets, which came with a pool room, lodge room, and three meeting rooms. The club was incorporated under the name The Young Men's Hebrew Association of Perth Amboy, N.J., with the purpose of promoting "sociability amongst its members; to advance its members mentally, intellectually, and athletically." The founders included Bernard Feldman, DDS (the first president of the club at this location), Jack Rosenthal, Albert Klein, Jack Klein, and Herman Klein. That year, the total Jewish population of Perth Amboy was about 2,000. The town's general population was 32,121—an 82 percent increase from 1900.

To judge by this item from a Y publication, *The Outlook*, social life took center stage: "John Slobodien gave a stag and smoker at his home on Smith Street on Sunday evening, January 21, 1912. About 40 YMHA boys were present. Card games were played, songs were rendered, and a very pleasant evening was spent by all. Later in the evening refreshments of all kinds were served. A pie-eating contest was the feature of the evening. Al Siskind thought more of his pie than he did of the prize (one of Otto's beer checks). A vote of thanks was given to the genial host."

Images from top to bottom:

Ner Tikvah bake sale at YMHA, 1950
Photo includes, front row: Marilyn Millet, Joyce Pecarsky, Maxine Strom, Elaine Alexander, Zelda Deutsch, Shirly Alper, Anita Alper; middle row: Lois Fox, Judy Maltz; back row: Sandy Kalish, Janet Bernstein, Lois Samson, Irene Berkow, Joan Safran, Rita Falk, Barbara Schwartz, Beverly Meyers, Jean Braunstein

YMHA 1924-25 championship basketball team



Packing boxes at the Y to send to troops during World War II Photo includes Dr. William Wedeen and Dr. Moses Eisemann, first and second from left, and Jacob H. Bernstein and Louis Isenberg, second and first from right

That same year, *The Outlook* ran this ad for an upcoming gathering to be held at Wilder Hall on Smith Street: "Don't forget our Fancy Dress Ball and Masquerade. The most elaborate social event ever attempted by our Y.M.H.A. And that's saying a great deal."

With the addition of a group of high school and college students, membership totaled about 100. Y members started a night school with volunteer teachers, opened a Sunday school, and formed a Ladies Auxiliary, with Esther Esberg as its first president.

The philosophy behind the organization was spelled out in the February 1912 edition of *The Outlook*:

"The young men should have their gymnasium, where during their idle moments, they may seek recreation in good, clean sport. A gymnasium is needed that the young men may develop themselves physically. A healthy body is needed to carry a healthy mind. Let the young American Hebrew boy develop himself physically so that his race may be made of a powerful class of men. Men that are powerful in mind and powerful in body. Such men will be ready to protect the Jew and Jews' honor.

"Remember that the young men of today will be the helmsmen of the Hebrew race tomorrow. Upon them will rest the burdens of the present generation. It will be for them to maintain and uphold the respect and honor attributed to the Hebrew race today. It will be for them to sustain the glorious history of their forefathers and prove themselves worthy of such noble ancestry.

"Where the present generation will leave, they will commence. If the parents of the present generation desire their children to do justice to the responsibilities placed upon them, let them give the youths the proper training in their early start in life. Let them support the Educational Alliance and thus prepare the young men to assume the burden of upholding Judaism in a proper and befitting spirit."

In 1915, the Y leased the upper two stories of a building located on the southwest corner of Smith and McClellan Streets. The upper floor was used as a gymnasium and dance floor. The lower floor contained a lodge room, five club rooms, game rooms, a billiard room, pool, office, and library (with 400 volumes of standard literature, including complete sets of Balzac, Shakespeare, and Kipling), according to a January 16, 1915, article in the *Perth Amboy Evening News.*

The first part-time secretaries were Samuel Diamond, Lewis Jacobson, and Morris Margaretten. The first full-time secretary was Robert Menaker.

As the Y grew, a new building was inevitable.



Dr. Jack Shangold and Is Jacobson

Becoming a Jewish Community Center

In 1903, after attending the American Zionist convention in Pittsburgh, Philip Levine, Louis Braines, Joseph Slobodien, Philip Slobodien, Abraham Beckoff, Solomon Brody, Nathan Jacobson, Adolf Metzendorf, Julius Miller, and Isaac Alpern formed B'nai Zion Camp No. 20, the first organization in Perth Amboy that promoted both education and Zionism. Their first project was a Hebrew school that would teach children the Hebrew language exclusively—rather than Hebrew translated into Yiddish, as was customary in those days.

They bought and remodeled an old Baptist church on Fayette and Mechanic Streets, which they named Hebrew Institute of Perth Amboy. It has been described as "adequate and spacious and private, also serving as a community center, with meeting rooms and social affairs." At one time, the school boasted an enrollment of 235 pupils, with three full-time teachers.



YMHA presidents Dr. Jack Shangold, Reuben Kaden, Ben Lorber, New Jersey State Senator Larry Weiss, Nate Witkin, Dr. Irving Sanders, Irving Cohen, David Pavlovsky

But by 1917, the Hebrew Institute was waning in popularity. Its members searched for a solution to save their educational institution.

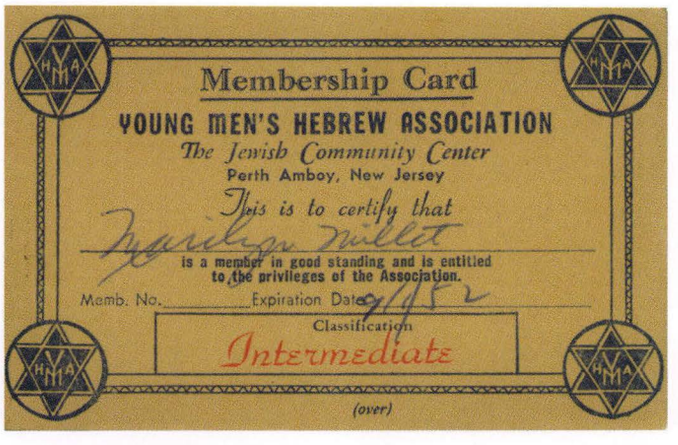
Several years earlier (in 1912), Hebrew Institute members David Dobbs, Herman Ellis, Barney Goldman, Max Goldman, Jacob Phillip Goldsmith, Nathan Jacobson, Peter Pavlovsky, Joseph Slobodien, Sigmund Spitzer, and Barney Streiff—all members of Shaarey Tefiloh—had each contributed $300 toward the purchase of a parcel of land on the southeast corner of Jefferson Street and Madison Avenue, next to Shaarey Tefiloh. They considered this site a particularly desirable one for the Y, but there was not yet enough support in the community to finance the construction of a new building, so they turned the parcel over to Shaarey Tefiloh to await the time when the YMHA could be erected.

When funds were being raised in the community for a YMHA, the Hebrew Institute sold its property and donated all proceeds to the campaign, with the assurance that the YMHA would provide a permanent home for the Hebrew School—and it did. In 1920, Isaac Alpern spearheaded a fundraising campaign that amassed $115,000 to erect the building.

When it was completed in 1923, the Perth Amboy YMHA was the first building in the state of New Jersey to be constructed specifically for YMHA uses. It was state-of-the-art, with school rooms, lodge rooms, study hall, auditorium, gymnasium, library, banquet hall, swimming pool, lockers, shower baths, and bowling alleys packed into three stories and a basement. The building was crowned by a "roof garden," which was "an attractive-sounding name for a high chain-link fenced-off area of an asphalt-covered roof, where we had recess periods (during Hebrew School)," recalled Gene Galen.

Top: YMHA membership card of Marilyn Millet, 1952

Bottom: Dr. Jack Shangold and Raoul Rabiner at YMHA installation of officers, 1981


Membership Card

YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION

The Jewish Community Center

Perth Amboy, New Jersey

This is to certify that

Marilyn Millet

is a member in good standing and is entitled to the privileges of the Association.

Memb. No. _____ Expiration Date 6/1/52

Classification

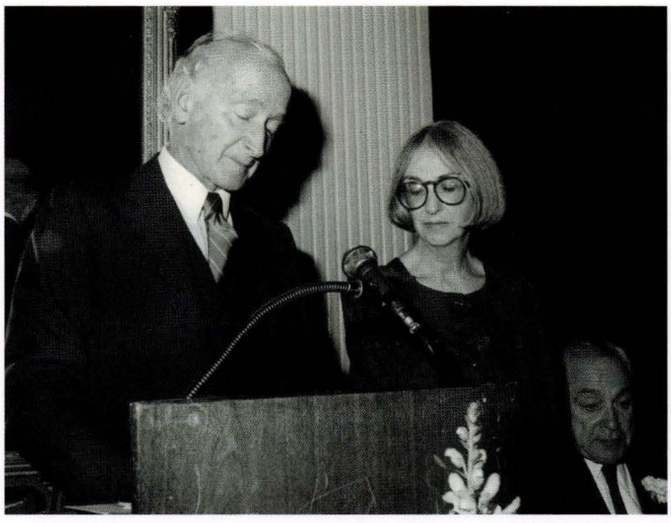
Intermediate

(over)



In 1925, the community raised $200,000 to clear the association of debt and provide funds for the next five years. At a big victory dinner, they burned the two mortgages. Nathan Margaretten, chairman of one of the nation's most prominent mortgage banking companies, Margaretten & Company, and president of the Jewish Community Council, once said: "One of the proudest accomplishments of my life was being chairman of the committee that paid off the mortgage on the YMHA." His brother Morris was a prominent leader of the Y for many years.

The presidents of the Y during the campaign and construction of the building were Dr. Charles I. Silk and Max Wurtzel. Subsequent presidents included Isaac Alpern, Harry S. Medinets, Samuel Polkowitz, Morris Margaretten, Henry Golenbock, Nathan Margaretten, Jacob Bernstein, Nathaniel Hoffman, Dr. William Wedeen, Samuel S. Cohen, Alex Kosene, Harold Levy, Reuben Kaden, Raymond Safran, Dr. Jack Shangold, Samuel Kaplan, Nathan Witkin, George Cohen, Ben Lorber, Raoul Rabiner, and Dr. Barry Adler.









Images from top to bottom:

(left) Joe Scharer and Norma Witkin at YMHA

(right) Samuel Kaplan (president of YMHA), Dr. Jack Shangold (past president), Nathan Margaretten (receiving Man-of-Year Award), Irene Kaufman, October 25, 1973

Seated: Vincent Cannamela, Mayor George Otlowski, Nate Witkin; standing: Rabbi Donald Crane, Zu Stess, Rabbi Albert Schwartz, Ralph Roseff

The Perth Amboy Jewish community inscribes Mayor James Flynn in the Golden Book on the 10th anniversary of Israel, 1958 Photo includes Alice Glatzer, Saul Edelman, Abe Parnes, Cantor Hirsch L. Chazin, Sylvia Kluft, Mayor James Flynn, P. D. Segal, Ray Safran, Belle Schwartz, Bertha Jacobson, Harriet Shangold, Dr. Jack Shangold

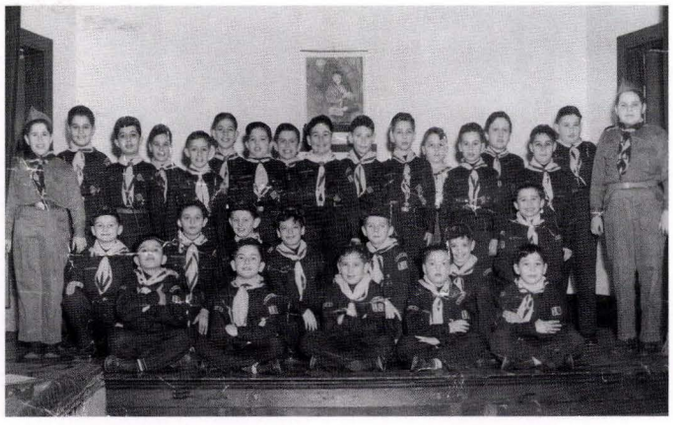


Above: Cub Scouts at YMHA, around 1962
Photo includes: Ruth Shipkin, Howie Opatosky, Daniel Weiss, David Weiss, Gary Shangold, Harriet Shangold, Zelda Weiss, Irwin Friedman, Scott Sewitch, David Bennett, Joel Brodsky, Mark Shipkin, Eric Sanders, Donald King, George Brodsky, Claire Bennett, Betty Carr

Right: YMHA summer camp



The YMHA building became the center of social, recreational, and intellectual activities in the "young, vital, vibrant Perth Amboy Jewish community," said Nate Witkin, who joined the Y in 1927, when he was 11. The building continued to serve as the center of Jewish social life in Perth Amboy for the next five decades. Although the Jewish population of Perth Amboy was divided by synagogue allegiance, virtually everyone joined together at the Y, which was always a beehive of activity—lecture series, plays, concerts, art shows, sports, arts and crafts, and a wide variety of group meetings, including Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, B'nai B'rith Girls, and AZA Fraternity, among many others.



Cub Scouts at YMHA, around 1950
Front row, seated: Tommy Pliskin, Stuart Edelstein, unidentified, Neal Silberberg, Allan Lubin; second row, seated: Robert Josen, Teddy Epstein, Arnie Epstein, George Graber, Sandy Epstein, Howard Sage, Eddie Kaplan; back row, standing: Sandy Luger, George Taros, Alvin (Avi) Golub, Neal Jacobson, Alan Golub, Joe Schlesinger, Mark Kaplowitz, Sidney Millet, Lewis Levy, Kenny Gross, Barry Katz, Allen Kohn, Ronnie Berkowitz, Stanley Stern, Lewis Kaden, Jules Levine, Marvin Lubinsky

Beginning in the 1920s, a well-attended lecture series attracted many national figures, including Max Lerner, columnist for the *New York Post*, John Chamberlain of the *New York Times*, writer and war correspondent Quentin Reynolds, and U.S. Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas of California, who was later defeated in a run for the U.S. Senate by Congressman Richard M. Nixon. During World War II, the series featured scholarly titles that offered both wisdom and foresight, such as "A Free Russia in a Free World" and "How Democratic Is the Chinese Government?"

Cultural activities at the Y included the production of plays. For instance, the program for a Junior Hadassah evening on January 26, 1928, featured two one-act plays: *Winter*, by Sholom Ash (cast: Gladys Bardin, Ida Kantor, Rose Wedeen, Bertha Jaffee, Ida Sarah Cohen, and Belle Wedeen), and *She Must Marry a Doctor*, by Sholom Aleichem (cast: Benjamin Kass, Jacob Bernstein, Ida Sarah Cohen, Joseph Schwartz, and Belle Goldberger).

During World War II, the YMHA served as a mecca for servicemen by hosting Thursday night nonsectarian dances on the "roof garden" during the summer and in the decorated auditorium during colder weather. David Bonder, who served as executive director of the YMHA at that time, considered the Y's obligation toward



First annual youth banquet at YMHA, 1951

our country's war effort to be its primary duty. He estimated that 6,000 men and women in uniform attended these dances or enjoyed the Y's other facilities during 1944. He also estimated that more than 600 Jewish men and women from Perth Amboy were serving at home and abroad at that time.

After the war, the legendary roof garden continued to serve as the ideal location for dances and sports. Sylvia Barkan Rimm remembered: "The Y had a Teen Council, with representatives from AZA, Boy Scouts, Young Judaea, and other groups. The council planned dances both in the gym and on the roof garden. I remember decorating the roof garden with crepe paper and having kids' bands or records for the music; and sock hops in the gym and auditorium, where we all took off our shoes. We also had dance classes in the gym and auditorium while in Grammar School and had several dances a year. It was hard to get those guys to ask the girls to dance, so we had one Sadie Hawkins dance a year, where the girls did the asking."

Many who grew up in Perth Amboy have memories of Junior Cotillion, held every Saturday night in the Y auditorium, where seventh and eighth graders were instructed in ballroom dance—foxtrot, jitterbug, and the stroll—as they learned to be young ladies and gentlemen. Junior Cotillion alumni remember instructors Lee and Lillian Creighton and recall the mix of emotions and drama that highlighted these pivotal social sessions.

YMHA play, around 1952



Norma Witkin fondly recalled programs such as Yiddish Circle, Travel Circle, Day Camp, and Friends of Music, which were created by Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Wedeen, patrons of music and generous benefactors of many budding musicians—including a young Isaac Stern, who was a guest violinist at the Y.

Both Beth Mordecai and the Y sponsored Boy Scout troops. Al Benjamin was the longtime scoutmaster of Troop 2, chartered to the Y. Ed Berkowitz recalled that Boy Scouts "was a fine opportunity to meet and have fun with other Jewish boys (but especially non-Jewish boys) during our stays at Camp Cowaw, the Scout summer camp located in the Delaware Water Gap area. Oddly enough, the interaction with non-Jews there was no problem and even great fun. I was on the staff







Images from top to bottom:

Testimonial dinner for Isaac Alpern, March 27, 1927

UJA campaign meeting
Dr. Jack Shangold, Sol Kaufman, Is Jacobson, Iz Silver, Ray Safran, Ben Lorber

YMHA Board of Directors, around 1972

Nate Witkin, Norma Witkin, Sol Kaufman, Irene Kaufman, Raoul Rabiner



Renee Klein accepts check for UJA Campaign from Perth Amboy Seniors



Rabbi Albert Schwartz speaks at an event at the YMHA



there for two years, and one of my jobs was holding Shabbat services for Jewish kids who wanted them. When I couldn't get a *minyan*, I recruited several of my Christian friends to fill in—on the condition that I attend their Sunday services. We all got a lot of religion during those summers."

Tassie Surkis Becker remembered that "B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG) played a very active role during our high school days (1960-64), including volunteer work and social and athletic events. We made small gift packages for needy youths and delivered the packages to them. We traveled around the state for volleyball meets, and we had sleepover weekends, *Oneg Shabbats*, dances, and mother-daughter dinners every year. I also remember schmoozing in the basement of the Y while Danny Doctofsky banged out tunes on the piano and swim parties in the pool under the supervision of Hecky Plain and volleyball coach Fred Margolis."

B'nai B'rith Youth Organization membership certificate of Mona Shangold



What did the Y mean to Perth Amboy Jewry?

"The Y was responsible for the social interaction of the community," Dr. Barry Adler said.

"Being part of the Jewish community in Perth Amboy was very important and inspiring in my life," said Sylvia Barkan Rimm. "I belonged to Young Judaea and the Y, where I had many leadership and social opportunities. The Y was a second home for me where I had many very close friends—Sylvia Laskowsky, Gabby Weiss, Manny Marks, Sid Horowitz, Rhoda Reitman, Chuck Goldstein, and a whole bunch of other wonderful kids."



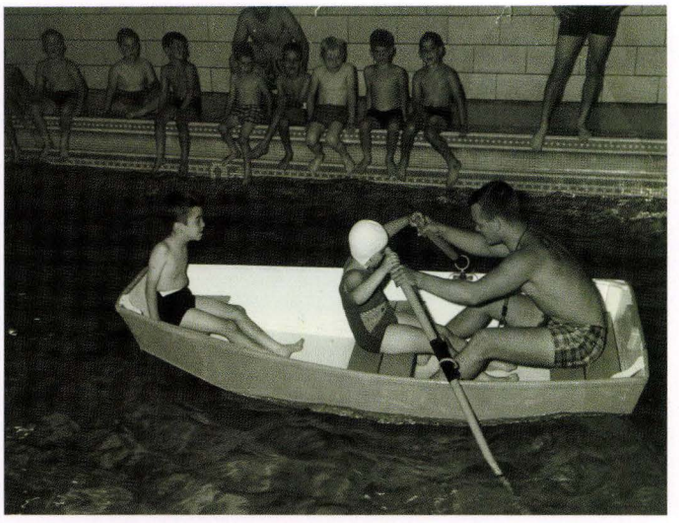
YMHA show

Sylvia also remembered "roller skating in the gym, swimming and teaching swimming with Hecky Plain and Manny Marks, dances on the decorated roof garden, Young Judaea and leading YJ groups when I was in college, cheerleading for the boys' basketball team, day camp, and arts and crafts when I was a very little kid, and the list could go on and on. Weren't we lucky to have that wonderful Y!"

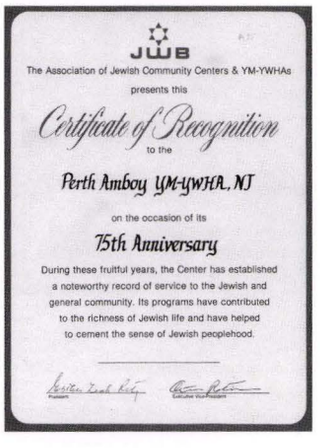
Janet Bernstein Rabinowitch remembered making crepe paper roses in Mrs. Degge's arts-and-crafts class and taking modern dance lessons.

According to Sidney Horowitz, many members of the Young Judaea group have continued meeting regularly for the past 60 years—demonstrating that friendships that started at the Y long ago have endured all these years.

Seymour Buchsbaum reminisced: "I also fondly remember the high school dances at the Y. It was *the* place to go on Saturday night. We had visitors from as far away as Newark. We always had a live band, and I remember letting a 12-year-old kid named Morris Nanton (who went on to become a noted pianist) sit in with the Phil Wilmot band. We always had a great time."







Images from top to bottom:

Rowing lessons in YMHA pool

Dr. Jack Shangold, Mayor James Flynn, Robert Wilentz

75th Anniversary Certificate of Recognition from the Association of Jewish Community Centers & YM-YWHAs

Many people who spent much of their youth at the Y remember some vigorous ping-pong matches down in the basement. A number of tournaments were held, with trophies awarded to the winners. All kinds of activities were held in the pool, and most Perth Amboy Jewish youths learned to swim at the Y. And for many, a favorite pastime was the roller skating sessions held in the gym. The skates were the old-fashioned metal ones, where you used a key to tighten them onto your shoes. It was always a fun and raucous time, with Athletic Director Hecky Plain trying to control the chaos.

Among those responsible for the success of the Y were its dedicated executive directors, who supervised all activities and programs. Those who served in this capacity included Morris Margaretten, Robert Menaker, A. A. Finkelstein, William Michaelson, Samuel Rodman, Harry Shapiro, Harold Tratner, Julian Greifer, Leslie Flaksman, David Bonder, Martin Danzig, Israel Silver, Ben Edelman, and Larry Pallas. Assisted by the Y's very active officers and directors, they worked tirelessly to raise funds for the United Jewish Appeal, the YMHA, and the many national and international welfare organizations in which these organizations participated.

Perhaps George Cohen said it best: "The hub of everything to do outside of the summer months was the Y; without the Y, none of us would exist."

Basketball at the Y

Basketball was the most popular athletic activity, and many Y teams were community and state champions. The first basketball team consisted of Benjamin Goldberger, Harry Schwartz, Sam Sarokin, Max Sarokin, Louis Weinblatt, and Bernard Feldman. Charles Sher was a member of the YMHA basketball team in the 1920s. In 1924, Perth Amboy won the state championship of YMHAs, for which he received a pocket watch, with a commemoration of the championship inscribed on the casing. The manager of the team was David T. Wilentz. (Charles Sher's son Burton was a member of the last Board of Directors of the Y.)

Morris "Moishe" Shihar coached and played on those Y teams in the 1920s. In World War II, he served on the famed PT-109 naval boat that was captained by John F. Kennedy. When Kennedy was elected president in 1960, Moishe Shihar was invited to the inaugural.





Above: UJA dinner

Left: Nate Witkin, Sue Rosenblum, Dr. Irving Sanders

The Perth Amboy YMHA again won the New Jersey State YMHA Basketball Championship in 1936. The team included Myron (Sonny) Sewitch, Tar Miller, Sam Dubin, Teddy Mittman, Morris Sokel, Itsky Horowitz, Benny Goron, Julius Kushinsky, and Hy Sussman. Sonny Sewitch also played on the Long Island University basketball team that won the National Collegiate Championship.

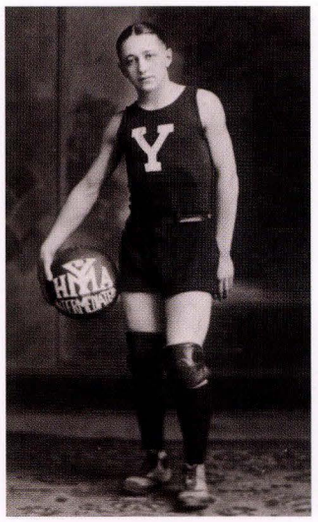
From 1936 to 1939, Shep Sewitch was one of the stars of the Y basketball teams. He also starred on the Perth Amboy High School basketball teams, which for many years were coached by Stanley "Tex" Rosen. Shep later went to Rutgers, where he captained the varsity basketball squad and the varsity tennis team. Shep also played varsity football at Rutgers until he was sidelined by knee injuries.

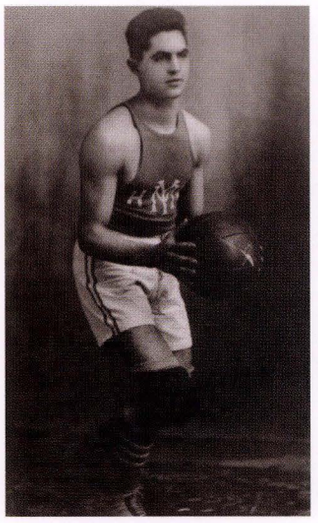
"The Y was such a great facility," recalled Shep. "That's where I learned to play basketball, coached by Moishe Shihar. The gymnasium seated about 400 on the main floor and a balcony. Every Sunday night, there was a Y basketball game. It was the place to go for Jewish couples and older folks, too. It was always packed. A live band would play before the game, at half-time, and for dancing after the game."

"That lasted until Milton Berle's television program came on the scene on Sunday nights," said Shep. "Then people stayed home to watch 'Uncle Miltie,' and the Y games stopped drawing a crowd."

By 1958, the Y reached a peak membership of 1,200 families. At that time, there were 5,000 Jews in Perth Amboy, out of a general population of 38,000.

YMHA basketball player





Above: Charles Sher



Right: YMHA Men's Club



YMHA 1936 championship basketball team

Hecky Plain

Eddie Saiff remembered how important Hecky Plain was to all those who participated in sports at the Y: "Hecky was a great guy. I loved roller-skating on the gym floor in the Y. He taught me how to skate and how to fall down without breaking any bones." Jay Goldsmith recalled: "Hecky taught swimming and boxing. Swimming was great. Boxing, my mother's idea, was not for me." Mona Shangold remembered Hecky's extraordinary patience with the struggles, interruptions, and stall tactics she and her cousin, Fran Clawans Anderson, used as he tried to teach them to dive in the Y swimming pool.

Perth Amboy Jewish Men and Women Who Served Our Country in World War II

(=killed in action)*

Gustave Aberman
Morris L. Ackerman
Max Adelman
Meyer Adelman
William Adler
Herbert Alfin
Norman Alfin
Julius Allen
Leon Allen
*Raymond Aneckstein
Bernard Asman
Irving Asman
Henry H. Aubrey
Meyer Auerbach
Irving August
Kalman August
William L. Austin
Alan Avchen
Hyman A. Avchen
Theodore Avchen
Bernard Axelrod
Norman R. Axelrod
Warren Axelroth
Nathan Ballon
Arthur Baltin
Elias Baltin
Joseph Barber
Samuel Barr
Joseph Barrat
Bernard Barshay
Nathan Barshay
Sina Baum
Harold Beck
Charles Beeber
Herman Beeber
Harry J. Belafsky
Henry Belafsky
Irving Belafsky
Joseph Belafsky
Tobias Belafsky
Rubin Beldengreen
Bernard Belikove
Charles Bender
Harold Bender
Al Benjamin
Bori Berkow
Samuel G. Berkow
Louis E. Berkowitz
Joseph Berlfein
Arthur Berman
Samuel Berman
M. J. Bernstein
Martin Bernstein
Joseph E. Bimstein
Bernard Bitterman
Fred Blitzer
Morris Bodine
Edward Borak
Hyman Borak
Theodore Borak
Moe Boris
Martin Boriskin
William Brandwein
Murray Brasky
Saul Braun
Sam Breitman
Irving I. Breslow
Samuel Breslow
John Bressler
Joseph George Brodsky
Sidney Brown
Bernard Buchsbaum
Nat Buchsbaum
Seymour Buchsbaum
Herman Budin
Fred Buncher
Albert Burke
Martin Catarivas
Pinchos J. Chazin
A. G. Chmelnik
Emanuel Choper
Harold M. Clifford
Robert Clifford
Frances Cohen
George Cohen
Irving Cohen
Irving I. Cohen
Isadore D. Cohen
Joseph G. Cohen
Kalman Cohen
Sam Cohen
Samuel Cohen
Theodore Cohen
Benton R. Cohn
Nathan B. Cole
Benjamin Copleman
Albert Cushing
Leonard Cutler
Walter W. Daitz
Kalman Davidson
Harold Dekoff
David J. Delinko
David Deutsch
Sandor Deutsch
Jacob Deutsche
Abraham Diamond
Alan Diamond
Bernard Diamond
Gus Diamond
Harold J. Diamond
Myer Diamond
Victor Diamond
Milton Dicker
Carl Drourr
George Dubin
Morris Dubin
Robert Dubin
Samuel Dubin
Norman Dubrow
Joseph Dwork
Sol Dwork
*Alfred Ehrlich
George R. Eisner
Nathan E. Eisner
Irving Ellenbogen



Abraham Ephros
Jack Faber
Leo Faber
Arthur Falk
Raymond Farber
Mildred Fassler
Samuel Feinstein
Gerald Feldman
Harold Feldman
Horace Feldman
Leo Feldman
Jerry Fertig
Alexander Filenbaum
David Filenbaum
Irwin Fine
Raymond Fine
Marvin H. Fisher
Jack Fishkin
Joseph Fishkin
Leslie Flaksman
Irving Fox
Bernard Frankel
Florence Frankel
Harold Frankel
Herman Frankel
Sol Frankel
Gladys Franklin
Arnold Franzblau
Lawrence Fried
Murray Fried
Alex Friedland
Howard Friedman
Irwin Friedman
*Edward Leo Fuchs
Milton J. Fuchs
Jerome Gast
Murray Gast
Seymour Gast
Bernard Gelber
Abe Gerzoff
Max Gerzoff

Sam Gevirtzman
James J. Gindin
Larry Ginsberg
Jacob Glaser
David Leo Glasgall
Harvey Gluck
Nathan Gluck
Philip R. Gluck
Coleman L. Goff
Harold Gold
Merton Gold
H. C. Goldberg
Isadore Goldberg
Raymond Goldberg
Beatrice Goldberger
Howard K. Goldberger
Irma Goldberger
Melvin S. Goldberger
Louis Goldblatt
Emanuel Goldfarb
Robert Goldfarb
Daniel Goldman
Irving Goldmintz



George S. Goldsmith
Leon Goldsmith
Lewis Goldsmith
Milton Goldsmith
Morton E. Goldsmith
Robert H. Goldsmith
Sherman Goldsmith
Abe Goldstein
Carl Goldstein
Charles Goldstein
Jack Goldstein
Lewis Goldstein
William W. Goodman
Sidney Goodstein
Al Gordon
Nathan Gordon
Benjamin Goron
Louis F. Gould
Maurice F. Gould
Stanley Grassgreen
Irving Greenberg
Edgar Greenfield
Fred Greenfield
Kenneth Greenfield
Lester Greenfield
*Sam Greenfield
Francis Greenspan
Henry Greenspan
Isadore Greenspan
Leroy Greenspan
Mortimer Greenspan
Philip W. Greenspan
Waldo Greenspan
Walter M. Greenspan
Nathan Gross
Ray Gross
Ralph Grossman
Joseph Gumenik
Sol Gurschman
Arnold Gursky
Joseph Gursky
Aaron Guth
Murray Guth
David Gutman
Bernard Hammer

Adolph A. Harris
Bert Harris
Irving R. Harris
Walter Hartwick
Nathan Heimlich
Austin Norman Heller
Emanuel C. Heller
Edward Herbert
Sidney L. Herbert
Bernard Herz
Moe Herz
Jacob Hochfelder
Martin Hochfelder
Samuel Hochfelder
Charles Horowitz
C. I. Hutner
Joseph Hyman
Bernard Isenberg
Joseph Isenberg
Murray Jacobson
Meyer Jaffe
Arthur Kalish
Benjamin Kanter
Alfred Kaplan
Charles Kaplan
Joseph Kaplan
Benjamin Kaplowitz
Leonard Kaplowitz
Milton Karten
Julius Kass
David Katz
George Katz
Herman Katz
M. Michael Katz
A. Arthur Kaufman
Abe Kaufman
Edward Kaufman
Harry Kaufman
Leo Kaufman
Lester G. Kaufman
Louis Kaufman
William K. Kaufman
Albert J. Kay
Joseph Klegman

Jack Klein
Jacob M. Klein
Morton Klein
Sol Klein
Howard Kless
Jack M. Kluft
Blanche Koch
Hyman D. Koch
Martin S. Koch
Edward H. Koplowitz
Edward Allen Kopper
Benjamin Korb
Harry Korb
Herbert B. Korn
Jack Kosene
Milton Kosene
Bernard Kramer
Jacob Krantz
Frank M. Kroop
Joseph C. Kroop
Norman Lader
Joseph Lang
*Reubin Lefkowitz
Simon Lefkowitz
Erich Leiner
Murray Leitner
Zvi Levavy
Marvin Levey
Albert Levine
Harry Levine
Henry Levine
Herman Levine
Joseph C. Levine
Leroy Levine
Mel Levine
Morris E. Levine
Robert Levine
Theodore Levine
Albert Levinson
Alfred Levinson
Leon Levinson
Louis Levinson
Malcolm Levinson
Reuben Levinson



Harry Levitan
Leonard Levy
Solomon Levy
William Leonard Levy
Victor S. Lewis
William Lewkowitz
Ernest Lichtman
Harry Lieber
Joseph Lieber
Isadore Lipman
Aaron Lipton
G. Powell Lobel
Alfred London
Alex Lonky
Harry Lonky
Bernard Lopatin
Herbert Lopatin
Sheldon Lowenkopf
Herbert Luchfeld
Leonard Luchfeld
Marvin Luchfeld
Paul Luchfeld
Arthur Macofsky
Harry Macofsky
David L. Madrazo
Edward J. Mahler
Benjamin Mann
Irwin Mansbach
LeRoy Mansbach

Martin Marcus
Isadore D. Margolis
Benjamin Markoff
A. Marowitz
Henry Marx
K. J. Marx
James Maso
Arthur Mazursky
Irving Mazursky
Howard E. Medinets
Julius Meistrich
Sam Metchik
Theodore Metzendorf
Paul Metzger
Alex Miller
Fred W. Miller
Marvin I. Miller
Morris Miller
Seymour Miller
Harry Mink
Morris Mink
Robert Molina
Malvin Morrison
H. L. Moss
Harold Napear
Joliet Napear
Leon Nedzela
Bernard Newmark

Bertram Newmark
Joseph Novick
Sidney Novick
Harold Oliet
George Olmezer
Morris Opatosky
Victor Oppenheim
Morris S. Paley
Melvin Pappas
Aaron Pargot
David L. Parnes
Edward Pavlovsky
Francis Pavlovsky
Irving A. Penn
Sidney Penn
Leo Perelman
Leo L. Perelman
Sam Perelman
George Plain
Herman Plavin
*Monroe J. Polensky
Irwin J. Polkowitz
Maurice S. Polkowitz
Morton Polkowitz
William Pollen
Herbert Pologe
Seymour Rappaport
Richard L. Reback
Abe Resnick
Harold Richman
Robert L. Richman
David Robinson
Lawrence Robinson
Gerston Rocker
Michael Roochvarg
Stanley Rosen
Edward Rosenberg
Louis Rosenberg
Marvin Rosenberg
Isadore Rosenblum
George Rosenshein
Sam Rosenthal
Norman Rossner
Paul Rossner
Alexander Roth
Saul Roth
Henry Rothstein
Harold Rubin
Leonard Rubin
Melvin Rubin
Sol Rubinoff
Paul Rubinstein
Henry Ruderman
Herbert Ruderman
Norman Ruderman
Harold M. Rudorfer
Leo Sacarny
Leo Sachs
Melvin H. Safran
Sheldon Safran
Sigmund Safran
Walter M. Safran
Abraham L. Salit
Irving I. Salit
Meyer Salit
Jerome Salny
Israel H. Saltman
William Saltman
George Sanders
Albert Sandler
Mitchell M. Sandler
Norman Sandler
Samuel Sandler
Seymour Scharer
William Scherling
Sidney Schleifer
Joseph Schlesinger
Ralph Schlesinger
Harry Schuloff
Henry Schuloff
Sol Schuloff
Beatrice H. Schwartz
Bernard L. Schwartz
Harold Schwartz
Joseph Schwartz
Martin Schwartz
Paul L. Schwartz
Daniel Scott
Felix Scott
Saul Scott
Israel Segal
Robert Segal
Oliver G. Seidman
Donald Selkowitz
Leon Semer
Myron (Sonny) Sewitch
Sidney (Shep) Sewitch
Alvin Shangold
Jack E. Shangold
Daniel Shapiro
Howard Shapiro
Ira Shapiro
George Sheppard
Burton Sher
Lester Sher
Morris Sher
Hyman Shihar
Meyer Shihar
Morris Shihar
Alfred Shipkin
Raymond Shipkin
Josiah Shulman
Raymond Shulman
Gerald Siegal
Irving Silber
Seymour Sillman
Alton Silverman
David Silverman
Melvin Silverman
Theodore T. Simkin
Isadore Singer
William Singer
Arthur Sitnitsky
Louis Sitnitsky
George Sladkus
Howard D. Slobodien
Edward Slotkin
Robert Slutsky
Samuel Slutsky
Wilbur Snaper
Eli Sobel

Melvin Sokol
Phillip Solomon
Simon Ben Sosna
Henry Sotnikoff
Hyman Sotnikoff
Herman L. Spiegal
Irving Leonard Spiegel
Jerome Spiegel
Milton Spiegel
Emil William Spitz
Milton Spitz
David Stepacoff
Annette Stern
Arthur Stern
David Stern
Lewis Stern
Sidney L. Stern
Ira Zu Stess
Harold Strashun
Bernard Strone
Harry Surkis
Edward Sussman
Joseph Sussman
Isadore Swerdel
Norman Swerdel
Samuel Swerdel
Sylvia Swerling
Morris Taleisnick
Alfred J. Tenenbaum
Heinz Thugut
Sheldon Toborowsky
Sidney Tucker
O. Richard Tuckerman
Herbert Turner
Morton J. Turner
Seymour Turner
Abraham Turtletaub
David Turtletaub
Alan Verner
Rose Virgirdas
Arthur Vogel
Aaron Waldman
Eleanor Waldman
Irving Wallace
Solomon Wallach
Herbert Wallen
Sydney Wedeen
Arthur Weinblatt
Bernard Weinblatt
Benjamin Weiner
Israel Weiner
Robert Weiner
George Weingarten
Leon Weingarten
Joseph H. Weinstein
Leo Weinstein
Martin Weisberger
Edith Weisel
Albert A. Weiss
Anton Weiss
Denis Weiss
Jerry Weiss
Joseph Weiss
Laurence S. Weiss
Murray Weiss
Paul Weiss
Paul Weissman
Samuel Weissman
Clifford Weitzen
Harry Wexler
Martin Wexler
Al Wilde
Warren Wilentz
Roland A. Winter
Nathan Witkin
Julius Zack
Alvin Zagor
Harry Zagor
Sidney Zagoreen
Irving Zalutsky
Herman Zarinsky
Louis Zarinsky
Samuel D. Zeidman
Morris Zimmerman
Harold Zweigbaum

Who's Who . . . A Famous Relationship

Perth Amboy native and decorated World War II hero Morris "Moishe" Shihar was a war buddy of John F. Kennedy, both having served on PT boats in the Pacific. Shihar's navy training at Annapolis was overseen by John Kennedy, an experienced sailor. Shihar witnessed the attack on Kennedy's PT-109, as he was in the PT boat behind it. The two war comrades kept in touch over the years, and Shihar attended the 1960 Democratic convention, at which Kennedy was nominated for President of the United States. In 1961, Shihar brought his 16-year-old son, Skip, to Washington, D.C., to meet the President in the Oval Office. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 was a devastating event and a very tearful and painful time for Moishe Shihar.







Chapter Eight

The Fabric of Perth Amboy

Perth Amboy was a small town. For many of us, it was just the right size.

"If I got lost, as I did every now and then when I was young, I'd just walk up to any cop and tell him who I was," said Melvin Silverman. "He knew who I was. He knew who my parents were, and he would take me home.

"After I graduated from Rutgers, I went to the University of California. I went to a bank to open up an account. They wanted to know where I lived. It was shocking because I'd go into any bank in Perth Amboy and tell them who I was, and if I wanted to open up an account, they'd fill in my address. They'd fill in everything for me.

"My mother didn't drive the car very well. I remember once coming home from school; I saw the car parked in the middle of the road. This cop was directing traffic around it. I wanted to know what was going on. He said to me: 'Your mother decided to go shopping, and she left the car where she usually does. I want to make sure nobody hits the car.'"

Neighborhoods

Eventually, most Jewish families lived in the southern part of town, below Smith Street, down to the waterfront.

Typical was Rhoda Reitman Juskow: "We lived on Lewis Street, where the majority of families were Jewish, with a few Italian families thrown in. The families near us were Joselson, Samson, Winters, Faffer, Stepacoff, Weiner, Slobodien, Klein, Berkowitz, Levine, Penn, Weiss, Linett, Galinsky, Falk, Silverman, Graber, Gaier, etc. There were ten Jewish girls my age within nine or ten blocks. Cantor Chazin lived across the street, and we could very often hear him singing."

Lee Metzendorf had fond memories of when his family moved to 118 Rector Street, near Woodruff Place, which was called "the play street," said Lee. "A million kids of all ages lived in the area, all ages. It was fun to grow up in Perth Amboy. Doors were open, and you flew out to the street."

Most Jewish children in Perth Amboy attended Perth Amboy public schools for their general education. There were several numbered elementary schools for kindergarten through grade 5. Most of the Jewish students went to Number 7 School (at the corner of Madison Avenue and Patterson Street) or Number 1 School (on State Street across from the High School). For grades 6-8, all students attended Perth Amboy Grammar School, and then Perth Amboy High School for grades 9-12.

Images from top to bottom:

Wedding of Esther Meistrich and Ray Safran, 1933
Leonard Safran, Ruth Safran, Sam Safran, Esther Safran, Ray Safran, Ida Safran, Walter Safran, Sheldon Safran

Miller family, 1954
Seated: Peter Miller, David Goldsmith, Lydia Goldsmith, Meyer Miller, Fanny Miller, Billy Miller, Helen Miller, Nancy Miller; standing: Seymour Miller, Susan Buden, Kathy Goldsmith, Mitzie Miller, Kathleen Busch, Danny Miller, Freddie Miller, Lenny Busch, Scott Miller, Henry Busch, Bruce Miller, Arlene Miller; back row, standing: Penny Buden, David Buden, Jay Goldsmith, Mark Busch

Front: Sharyn Bey, Arne Bey; back: Gilda Bey, Sharon Strom, Noreen Connors, Lana Golub, around 1954

There were some Jewish families north of Smith Street in the Dublin section of town, which was where Bosh Greenhouse grew up. "My childhood friends were from the neighborhood," said Bosh. "I recall my parents bemoaning the fact that there were not many Jewish children on our street. One day, I came home from school and told her that I found a Jewish friend who lived on the next street. Her name was Florence Stern from the Stern Cleaners family. Florence and I became close friends."

Eventually, the Jewish kids who did not know each other through synagogue or the Y converged at the Grammar School on Barracks Street. "When I entered the Grammar School in September 1934, suddenly a whole new world opened," said Bosh. "I met so many new boys and girls who arrived from all the other elementary schools in the city."

Yiddish

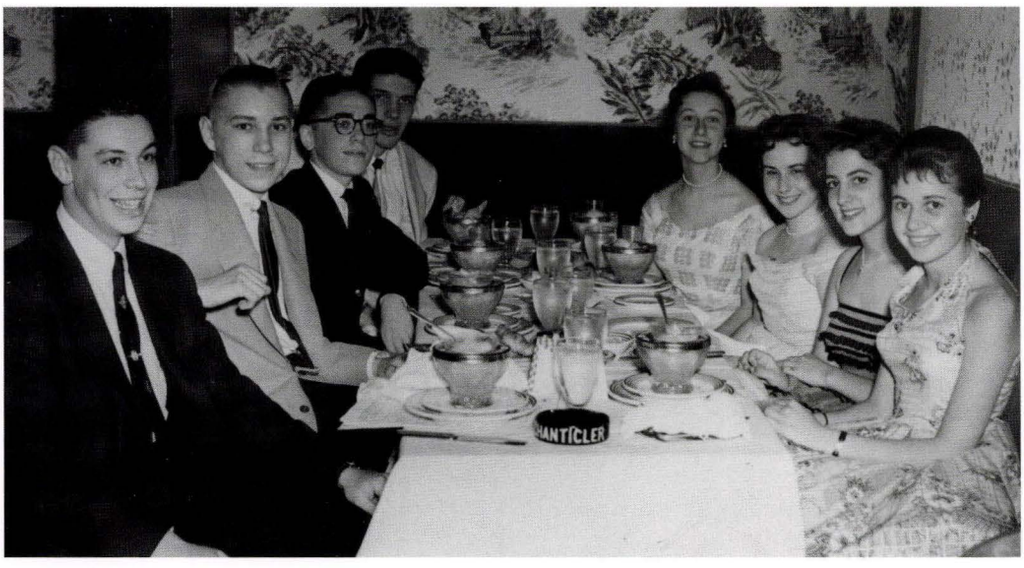
"Most parents talked Yiddish when they didn't want the kids to know what they were talking about," said Robert Fishkin.

"You spoke two languages," said Manny Goldfarb, "one at home—for us it was Yiddish. On the streets and in school you spoke English. And the Polish kids and the Hungarian kids also. It was unusual in Perth Amboy to only speak one language."

"In the 1940s and 1950s, my grandparents' accented English, studded with plentiful phrases in Yiddish, must have struck the ears of their Protestant neighbors as colorful and full of flavor, and a bit mysterious, too, and perhaps even threatening," Alan Cheuse wrote in a magazine article about Perth Amboy. "Melting pot, mixing bowl, such traditional phrases come to mind when I think of the many national groups and linguistic clusters who made my hometown their home, too. A melting pot, yes—but a melting pot bounded on two sides by water."



Merry Fellows Social Club dinner dance, February 1, 1938 Photo includes Harry and Pearl Hochheiser, Sadie and Al Kaplan, Morris and Mollie Pecarsky, Harry and Ann Hirschorn, Abe and Dorothy Levine, Charles and Dorothy Sher, Leo and Jeanette Stess, Sylvia and Harry Katz, Barney and Helen Labonowitz, Harry Levine, Marion Selkowitz, Andy and Edith Sachs, Seymour and Hannah Strom



Gathering after prom, 1956
Neil Reiseman, Bobby Toborowsky, Alan Braun, Gordon Lewis, Carole Meistrich, Norma Jacobson, Sue Safran, Ruth Eisemann

Summer at the Beach

Proximity to the water has always been elemental to life in Perth Amboy, especially in the summer. The Raritan Yacht Club, founded in 1865, is one of the oldest in the country.

In the 1940s, most Jewish kids spent summer days at Mrs. Esberg's beach, at the foot of High Street on Water Street, around the corner from the Royal Court apartments. There was a raft and a diving board.

"Mrs. Esberg would sit with an apron which had coin pockets and she would collect a nickel to go into her beach," said Seymour Buchsbaum.

"You brought five cents to give to Mrs. Esberg, and some change for a drink or a candy bar," said Marilyn Rosenberg Roth. "It seemed to have only Jewish children as far as I remember, and was considered a safe place by our mothers. Other stretches of beach were free, but we went only to Mrs. Esberg's."

Shep Sewitch recalled Mrs. Esberg's beach as the place "where all the nice Jewish girls were."

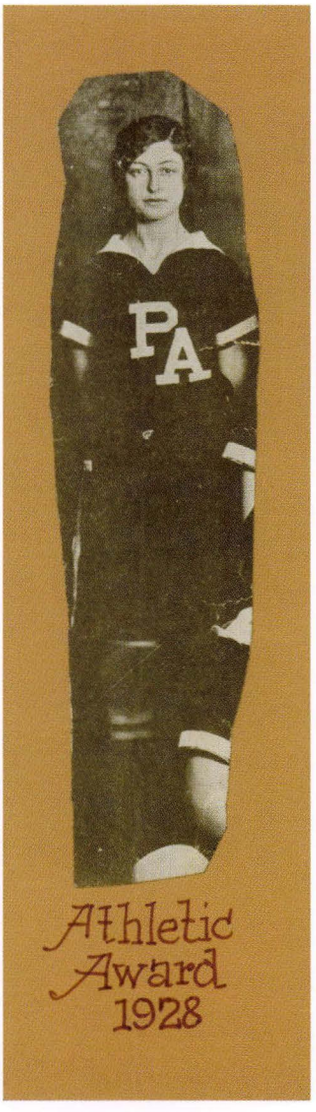
Alan Cheuse wrote about going to the beach, "where my parents paid the [nickel] toll and took me and my brother to swim. I chased horseshoe crabs into the gently lapping waters of the bay, when I wasn't digging in the sand to capture gray crabs no larger than a thumb-nail to put in paper cups and later set free into the oncoming tide. Or watching avidly as a friend's father buried potatoes in the sand and built a fire over them and let them bake."



Dancing at Annellen Fine's Sweet Sixteen party, 1947
Photo includes Leonard Polkowitz, Judy Davidson, Fred Rock, Mark Preminger, Alan Greenspan, Anita Goldman, Charles Metzendorf, Bob Korb

Ruth Eisemann Fost remembered "a little walk-in locker" near Mrs. Esberg's beach "where we kept our bathing suits and towels. I can still recall the summer, sandy smell of it. We spent many a happy morning or afternoon on the beach in Perth Amboy (before pollution was an issue)."

For a year, Rose and Max Turtletaub, who later owned and operated the Army & Navy Store on Fayette Street and Turtle's on Smith Street, operated a food concession.



Above: Esther Meistrich's Perth Amboy High School Athletic Award, 1928



Right: Jewish War Veterans softball team

Sports

Perth Amboy had many playing fields around town. "The YMHA owned a field on Wisteria Place," said Shep Sewitch. "It had very little grass; it was clay. We played football there all the time, and we challenged teams from the other side of the tracks. We weren't that good, but that's how we kept ourselves busy. We played sports all the time."

The Jewish kids formed their own football, basketball, and baseball teams and played both with and against other ethnic groups. "St. Stephen's [Church] had a good basketball team," said Shep Sewitch, "as did the Hungarian athletic community. Although we played intracity games that were highly contested, we were all good friends and enjoyed being both teammates and opponents." Said Ted Simkin: "The Jewish kids were good, tough players, and could mix it up with anybody."

As part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration during the Depression, eight clay tennis courts and a clubhouse were built at Sadowski Parkway and Brighton Avenue. When city and invitational tournaments were held, temporary stands were erected to provide additional seating.

"Back in those days, tennis was a rich man's sport," said Roland Winter. "There were very few poor industrial communities that had any tennis facilities whatever. My friends and I took advantage of those courts."

Many of the city's championship tennis players were Jewish. Benny Goron was the dominant singles player throughout the 1930s. Benny was a fine instructor and later became the manager of the city tennis program. Cliff Weitzen, the leading singles player in the 1940s, teamed with Shep Sewitch (a top singles player in his own right) to win many doubles tournaments.

Jewish players, including Shep Sewitch, "Tex" Avchen, Joe Barber, Bernard Belikove, Bernie Asman, and Fred Miller, dominated the Perth Amboy High School tennis teams in the late 1930s. Rabbi Max Davidson won a singles title in a "veterans" category in 1934 and also several "veterans" doubles titles. From 1929 to 1941, Ann Mandel and Ida Berman Whitman dominated women's tennis in Perth Amboy. Ann Mandel won titles from 1929 to 1937 and in 1941, but Ida finally beat her great rival in 1938, holding the title through 1940. In 1938, at the age of 23, Whitman simultaneously held the titles for women's singles championships of Perth Amboy, Middlesex County, and the state of New Jersey.



Sweet Sixteen party, around 1953
Photo includes Zelda Deutsch, Sharon Salls, Sharon Neuss, Malvina Rosenzweig, Sandy Stein, Marilyn Millet, Irene Berkow, Ed Berkowitz, Robert Toborowsky, Manny Marks



UJA banquet, 1963
Photo includes Leo Feldman, Dr. Jack Shangold, Is Jacobson



Front row: Lydia Goldfarb, Bertha Jacobson, Morris Goldfarb, Rae Rosengarten, Norma Jacobson; back row: Is Jacobson, Ruth Jacobson

Upper: Sadie Golosoff, Regina Pavlovsky, Blanche Pavlovsky

Lower: Dorothy Pavlovsky and son Francis Pavlovsky at NYU graduation, 1938

Right: Sol Kelsey







Left: Julia, Serena, Bessie, and Ethel Kelsey, 1945

Right: Evelyn Morrison





She also teamed with Cliff Weitzen to win mixed doubles titles. Truly a pioneer in women's sports, Ida won over 100 tennis tournaments throughout her career, including many as Middlesex County Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles Champion. In 1990 (at the age of 74), she won the New Jersey State Senior Games and held the title for six years.

For many years, Perth Amboy held an invitational tournament shortly after the U.S. Open at Forest Hills, New York, concluded. Several of the players eliminated in the first and second rounds of the U.S. Open went to play in the Perth Amboy invitational. Cliff Weitzen represented Perth Amboy in this event for many years. In the late 1960s, city champion Bill Dubin played a spirited game against the great Arthur Ashe.



Front row: Ruth Segal, Eleanor Siegel; back row: Bernard Kramer, Ralph Siegel, Israel Segal, around 1920

Many Jews played varsity sports at Perth Amboy High School, including Shep Sewitch, Sonny Sewitch, Sammy Silverman, Sammy Dubin, Artie Sinett, Charlie Bender, Bobby Goldberger, Lenny Rosenberg, Bob Weiner, Arnold Zimmerman, Sam Breslow, Nat Cohen, Abe Goldfarb, Leo Klein, Eddie Margaretten, Morris Wilner, Jerry Malett, Irv Rubinoff (now Roberts), Reubin Lefkowitz, Joel Sanders, Richard Sachs, Robert Spector, Barry Greenberg, Allen Ruskin, Alan Goldsmith, Alan Axelroth, David Saltman, Marc Stess, Tommy Farben, Jayme Sokolow, Scott Sewitch, and Nick Sewitch.

In 1915, Leo Lowenkopf was the East Jersey High School high jump champion, and in 1920 he won both the high jump and the broad jump in the New Jersey Young Men's Hebrew Association competition.

Leo Klein was a legendary track coach at Perth Amboy High School and developed many state champions, particularly in the high hurdles. For several years in a row, the Perth Amboy High School 440-yard high-hurdle relay team set national records for the event.

Blessings and Baseball

Most Jewish kids loved and played baseball, rooting for Jewish players such as Hank Greenberg, Al Rosen, Sid Gordon, and Sandy Koufax. In those days, the World Series was played in early October, often at the same time as the High Holidays. All the games were played during the day, just when everyone was supposed to be in synagogue. So, how do you keep track of the score? "The *Perth Amboy Evening News* building was across the street from Shaarey Tefiloh," recalled Herb Zagor. "On the side of the building, a running score was posted." As a child, Herb was the designated "runner." During the Yom Kippur service, Herb ran back and forth to the *News* building to check the score and inform his father, who immediately passed the word around.

Social Organizations

During the 1920s, young Jewish Perth Amboy men joined the Iota chapter of the national social fraternity Upsilon Lambda Phi, while young women joined the Gamma chapter of the Iota Phi sorority, which was founded in Newark in 1922. At the time of its fourth annual convention in 1926, Iota Phi had 11 chapters in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. A 1926 roster lists the following members of the Gamma chapter: Ruth Benhamu, Frieda Encherman, Edythe Book, Belle Goldberger, Rosella Goldberger, Regina Goldberger, Reebe Greenspan, Sadie A. Goldsmith, Gertrude Goldsmith, Rae Jacobson, Sadie Klein, Alice E. Isenberg, Eleanor Levine, Grace Levine, Florence Leichtman, Irene Leichtman, Maybelle Meyers, Minerva Polkowitz, Florence Robinson, Sarah Segal, Ida Segal, Jennie Sians, and Sylvia Goldberg.

Upsilon Lambda Phi and Iota Phi held regular dances and dinners. An Upsilon Lambda Phi Midsummer Night's Dream Dance held at the Raritan Yacht Club on June 16, 1922, featured music by the Society Syncopators. Of the 16 dances, three were waltzes and the rest foxtrots. An Upsilon Lambda Phi dance at the Raritan Yacht Club on June 27, 1923, included a boat ride; patrons and patronesses were Pater and Mrs. H. Rothberg, Pater and Mrs. L. Kornhauser, and Pater and Mrs. L. S. Lowenkopf.

An Iota Phi Thanksgiving-eve dance held at the Hotel Berwick in Newark on November 29, 1922, was described by Alice Isenberg as "the event of the season."

The *Iotian*, a newsletter circulated by the Iota chapter of Upsilon Lambda Phi and edited by Jacob H. Bernstein, included news of fraters from various chapters. One issue promoted the candidacy of Jack Bernstein for secretary of the national organization. His platform was "to work zealously to make Upsilon Lambda Phi the biggest, best International Jewish High School Fraternity in the world." Although this speaks of a high school fraternity, by 1922 most local members were already high school graduates. Perth Amboy chapters of Iota Phi and Upsilon Lambda Phi were still active as high school social organizations in the 1960s.



Newspaper photo of Perth Amboy Jewish men gathered in 1917 before service in World War I
Seated: Jacob Karkus, Isadore Blatt, Jacob Rippen, Emil Friedman, Morris Goldberger, Henry Polkowitz, Jacob Lesslauer; standing: Samuel Wedeen, Sol Kelsey, Nathan Goldberger, Max Wurtzel, Irvin Kreilsheimer, Mr. Sachack, Max Kreilsheimer





Above: Reunion of Perth Amboy friends in Las Vegas, May 1988
Seated: Martin Lipman, Gordon Sandler, Lewis Korb, Benjamin Frankel, Mike Shevell, Eugene Galen; standing: Herbert Lipman, Leslie Wurtzel, Edward Levy, Warren Deutsch, Herbert Lovit, Allen Weingarten, Lester Berkow, Richard Spivack

Left: The Fellowship Club, YMHA, 1940s
Bert and Sam Lubin, Dottie and Ed Sher, Ceil and Dory Reitman, Sadye and Lou Goss, Miriam and Al Cohen, Rose and Al Graber

Top: Malvin and Beatrice Morrison

Bottom: Young ladies in City Hall Park, 1952 Beverly Meyers, Blanche Eisemann, Marilyn Millet, Malvina Rosenzweig, Barbara Berkowitz





Menorah Link No. 8—Order of the Golden Chain

During the summer of 1929, hundreds of women and men from New Jersey and New York met in Asbury Park to form the Order of the Golden Chain. In October 1929, the Order, with a membership of about 4,000, was granted a charter by the state of New Jersey. Menorah Link No. 8 of Perth Amboy was among the original links that formed the Order.

Menorah Link No. 8 contributed equipment to the Perth Amboy General Hospital and to the Cerebral Palsy Clinic in Perth Amboy and made cash contributions to other organizations. Rabbi Max D. Davidson and Mrs. Erene Weiss of Menorah Link No. 8 served, respectively, as Past Grand Patron and Past Grand Matron of the Order of the Golden Chain.

The Elective Officers for 1958 were: Worthy Matron, Minna Weiss; Worthy Patron, Max Weiss; Associate Matron, Mrs. Blanche Zagoren; Conductress, Mrs. Julia Gluck; Treasurer, Mrs. Rose Shutinsky; Conductress, Mrs. Betty Schlesinger. Appointive Officers were: Marshall, Mrs. Esther Levy; Chaplain, Mrs. Fay Cohen; Historian, Mrs. Sylvia Lehrer; Warder, Mrs. Sadye Medinets; Organist, Mrs. Eleanor Ohlsen; Sentinel, Abraham Shutinsky; Homemaker, Anne Zall; Angel of Mercy, Miss Harriet Stern; Friendly Sister, Mrs. Faye Belafsky; Torch Bearer, Mrs. Claire Goldstein; Patriot, Mrs. Augusta Levine; Keeper of the Faith, Mrs. Esther Marques; Grand Officer, Mrs. Ann Wail, Right Worthy Grand Torch Bearer. (This information was taken from Diane Norek Harrison's column in the *Atom Tabloid*, "Remembering the Past," and is used with the permission of the author.)

Hadassah—The Women's Zionist Organization

In 1913, the year after Henrietta Szold founded Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization, in Palestine, she visited Perth Amboy, where she helped to organize the 11th chapter in the United States. Chartered in 1915, the Perth Amboy chapter had 13 original members. For more than seven decades, Perth Amboy Hadassah women actively supported the organization's life-saving and life-giving philanthropic initiatives, first in Palestine and then in the state of Israel. In 1988, as the Perth Amboy chapter prepared to celebrate its 75th anniversary, its members contributed $20,000 to help Hadassah's causes. The annual Spring Donor Luncheon was attended by 45 women, including Esther Safran, Jeanette Stess, Shirley Pallas, Ruth Jacobson, Sylvia Glaser, Jean Jacobson, Ruth Safran, Rose Pollock, Sue Rosenblum, and outgoing president Rebecca Davidson. A special honor that year was the presentation of the National Hadassah Leadership Award to longtime Perth Amboy Hadassah member Jean Jacobson at the organization's national convention in Chicago.

Anti-Semitism

There was anti-Semitism in Perth Amboy. The extent of it depended on where you lived. Most of the Jews who lived in the southern part of town experienced little anti-Semitism. For those who lived elsewhere, it was another story.

"When I was growing up, Perth Amboy was socially nonintegrated," said Melvin Silverman. "If you stepped out of your milieu, you got yourself beat up. I was not very large."
George Cohen recalled: "We lived in the northern section of Perth Amboy. If I didn't wind up in a fight every day, it was very surprising."



Seated: Leo Steskovitz (Stess), Samuel Steskovitz, Isadore Steskovitz (Ira Zu Stess); standing: Mack Steskovitz (Stess), Jack Steskovitz (Stess), Lena Steskovitz, Robert Steskovitz (Stess)

Ed Berkowitz, who grew up in Fords, vividly recalled "taunts of 'Jewboy'" and worse while growing up: "At first, I hardly knew what they were talking about. I do recall that on one sad occasion the windows of our store were painted over with anti-Semitic filth (this during the middle of World War II!). There was little secret about who did it, since those kids weren't the cleverest vandals. We were particularly upset because the family of the kids who did it occasionally traded at my father's store, where people usually bought their food on credit and paid when they could. Ironically, so did the families of some other kids who tossed around anti-Semitic remarks. Eventually, that sort of thing wore off, but the memory lingers on."

Although Roland Winter got into his share of fights as a kid in Perth Amboy, he later reflected that Perth Amboy prepared him for life: "Perth Amboy was a tough town. More Damon Runyon than Brooklyn. I mean, if you were street smart in Perth Amboy, you were ready for the world—academically or streetwise or problem solving or coping. There's no training like growing up in Perth Amboy. Incredible town."



Max Goluh with collie Bruce at the Goluh Brothers fruit and vegetable store

Perth Amboy Marriages — Why Mostly Everyone in Perth Amboy Is Related

"Almost everybody in Perth Amboy was related to someone else in town, and you had to be careful what you said to anyone," said Manny Goldfarb.

"All the Perth Amboy people knew each other, and all the people were related to each other," said Renee Klein. "It would take you 45 minutes to walk down Smith Street because you knew everyone you passed and you had to stop and say hello."

This is a list—prepared by Jeanette Davidson Stess and Eleanor (Lakey) Goldfarb Dekoff—of marriages among residents of Perth Amboy:



Shep and Donna Sewitch, 1997

David Adler – Blanche Hutter
Steve Adler – Sylvia Borak
Norman Alfin – Beverly Frankenstein
Willie Allen – Judy Karkus
Morris Aneckstein – Anne Shangold
Bernie Asman – Carol Schlesinger
Norman Axelrod – Edna Lifshitz;
Edna Axelrod – Milton Simkin
Warren Axelroth – Lynn Breslin
Hy Ballon – Sylvia Widner
Abe Baum – Ethel Boorstein
Edward Beagle – Cookie Sacks
Irving Belafsky – Zelda Brody
Bernie Belikove – Ruth Kosene
Phil Belikove – Rose Levy
J.J. Berger – Minerva Weinblatt
Gordon Berkow – Rita Lichtman
Dr. Sam Berkow – Elizabeth Doris
Morris Berkowitz – Rose Miller
Ronald Berkowitz – Roni Goss
Joe Berlfein – Bertha Shihar
Jack Bernstein – Alice Isenberg
Izzy Bey – Sylvia Feder
Sam Bey – Mollie Belafsky
Sidney Bey – Dorothy Budin
Joe Bimstein – Jennie Levine
Hyman Borak – Mary Shihar
Sam Borak – Mollie Roth
Martin Braun – Regina Pavlovsky
Dr. Isadore Breslow – Gertrude Eskow
Phil Breslow – Jeanette Cohan
Dr. Sam Breslow – Esther Frankel
George Brodsky – Jeanette Polkowitz
Morris Brody – Ada Schwartzstein
Richard Brody – Ila Stimein
Sidney Brody – Eleanor Isenberg;
Eleanor Brody – Jack Polkowitz
David Brown – Adele Medinets
Seymour Buchsbaum – Dorothy Schenkman; Seymour Buchsbaum – Charney Pologe
Dr. Morris Coble – Rae Jacobson
Alex Cohen – Anne Siskind
Bernard Cohen – Ida Stolz
Edward Cohen – Beatrice Stimon
George Cohen – Florence Schwartzman
Leonard Cohen – Annette Benjamin
Morris Cohen – Ada Schlesinger
Nathan Cohen – Pauline Franzblau
Seymour Cohen – June Green
Walter Cohen – Belle Cardon
Benton Cohn – Helen Fine
Jerome Cossman – Irene Schwartz
Arthur Cutler – Susan Kroop
Howard Daitz – Miriam Katz
Harold Dekoff – Lakey Goldfarb
Al Deutsch – Sophie Kaplowitz
Carl Deutsch – Phyllis Epstein
Sandor Deutsch – Sylvia Sosna
Jacob Deutsche – Sylvia Katz
Harold Diamond – Rose Goldmintz
Isadore Diamond – Sarah Fleischman
Joe Diamond – Julia Heksch
Milton Dicker – Shirley Kaufelt
Sam Dimond – Etta Isenberg
Cal Dobbs – Estelle Metchik
Herman Doctofsky – Belvine Rosenshein
Max Doctofsky – Nettie Goldman
Dr. Sam Doctofsky – Rita Ruderman
Sidney Dornyak – Helen Sloan
George Dubin – Zelda Goldstein
Isadore Dubrow – Lillian Fine
Al Edelstein – Helen Eisner
Harold Eisner – Rose Gerzoff;
Rose Eisner – Duke Rubin
Jerry Eisner – Barbara Spector

Russell Epstein – Essie Weiner
Jerry Eskow – Estelle Tobin
Jack Faber – Ruth Blitzer
Charles Feibush – Rose Turtletaub
Sam Feinstein – Jeanette Gerzoff
Leo Feldman – Shirley Zweigbaum
Nick Feldman – Mae Boris
Jerry Fertig – Grace Perlin
Robert Fishkin – Gilda Ligorner
Irving Fox – Florence Stern
Arthur Frankel – Betty Miller
Harold Frankel – Millicent Harrison
Irving Frankel – Ida Macofsky
Jonah Frankel – Henrietta Weinblatt
Aaron Franzblau – Ella Lobel
Leon Franzblau – Esther Young
Arnold Freeman – Gertie Guth
Irwin Friedman – Janice Levine
Julius Gaier – Eva Stepacoff
Fred Gates – Barbara Schwartz
Dr. S. Gavronsky – Bess Brody
Bernard Gelber – Zalma Alpert
Abe Gerzoff – Anne Isenberg
Leo Gilbert – Anita Slavick
Louis Ginsberg – Lena Bushen
Albert Gittleman – Faye Penn
Jack Glaser – Sylvia Fishkin
David Gluck – Ann Roth
Harvey Gluck – Estelle Slavick
Morris Gluck – Julia Margaretten
Nathan Goldberg – Rita Levine
Ben Goldberger – Dora Karkus
Leo Goldberger – Sadie Wagner
Morris Goldberger – Rose Goldman
Morris Goldfarb – Lydia Jacobson
Ben Goldman – Betty Weinblatt
LeRoy Goldman – Freda Rosenzweig
Alan Goldsmith – Anne Shechter
David Goldsmith – Lydia Miller
Louis Goldsmith – Esther Paley
Alfie Goldstein – Leah Blum
Frank Goldstein – Mildred Fried
Irving Goldstein – Vicki Metzendorf
Isadore Goldstein – Elsie Fettman
Irving Golub – Esther Rubinoff
Dr. Sidney Goodstein – Beatrice Kuntz
Stanley Grassgreen – Estelle Margaretten
Dr. Charles Greenberg – Adele Eskine
Edgar Greenfield – Frances Gilbert
Lester Greenfield – Rosylyn Goldman
Hyman Greenhouse – Martha Axelrod
Marvin Greenhouse – Muriel Brandwein
Alan Greenspan – Alice Braverman
Isadore Greenspan – Anna Davidson
LeRoy Greenspan – Barbara Fink
Phil Greenspan – Serena Kelsey Robinson;
Serena Greenspan – Dr. J. J. Mann
Ralph Grossman – Kay Margolin
Murray Guth – Annellen Fine
David Gutman – Lillian Stein
Harry Hamburg – Shirley Lubinsky
Al Harris – Ruth Jacobson
Sidney Harris – Ruth Robinson
Nat Heimlich – Bea Kramer
Ed Herbert – Henrietta Rosenshein
Herman Howard – Jeanette Goldberger
David Hutter – Pearl Petronovsky
Morris Hyman – Sylvia Miller
Frank Isaacson – Muriel Handelman
Bernie Isenberg – Jeanette Spivack
Leonard Isenberg – Helene Baum
Moe Isenberg – Anne Gavronsky
Lester Izsaky – Regina Goldberger
Ira Jacobson – Maybelle Meyers;
Maybelle Jacobson – Sidney Metzendorf
Isadore Jacobson – Ruth Jacobson
Lewis Jacobson – Rose Goldstein
Neal Jacobson – Carole Meistrich
Sid Josen – Florence Pliskin
Reuben Kaden – Marion Selkowitz
George Kagan – Rita Doctofsky
Sam Kagan – Augusta Rosenberg
Ben Kantor – Frances Dornyak
Irving Kaplan – Diana Jafee
David Kaplowitz – Shelley Stimon
Ed Kaplowitz – Anita Kruman
Lolly Kaplowitz – Evelyn Freeman
Louis Kaplowitz – Ida Goldfarb
Richard Kaplowitz – Sydney Levine
Julius Kass – Eleanor Levine
Hempy Katz – Isabelle Rossner
Sandy Katz – Paulette Kaufman
Seymour Katz – Roberta Sher
Isadore Kaufman – Rose Hershman
Dr. Morris Kaufman – Paula Alpert
Sol Kaufman – Rose Reiter
Alan Kelsey – Shirley Blau;
Shirley Kelsey – Dr. Reuben Levinson
Isadore Kelsey – Dora Dobbs
Ben Kirshner – Leah Joselson



Abraham Davidson family
Seated: Alta Gordon Davidson,
Jeanette Davidson,
Kalman Davidson; standing:
Abraham Davidson

Irving Klein – Dora Weiner
Dr. J. Klein – Anna Metzendorf
Jack Klein – Ruth Pearl
Leo Klein – Becky Spivack
Albert Kless – Sylvia Rubin
Howard Kless – Ada Galen
Louis Kless – Yetta Brandwein
Dr. Jack Kluft – Peppy Rabiner
Sidney Kohn – Amelia Stern
Alex Kosene – Bessie Karkus
Frank Kroop – Minnie Siegel
Louis Kroop – Claire Stepacoff
Norman Lader – Estelle Lippner Maltz
Emil Landau – Estelle Gold
Jack Lesslauer – Dorothy Goldberger
Cuzzy Levenson – Joyce Berger
Jack Levenson – Malve Mahler
Sam Levin – Ida Stepacoff
Joe Levine – Pearl Klein
Le Roy (Red) Levine – Sylvia Kaplowitz
Robert Levine – Janice Sommers
Dr. Abe Levy – Ella Goldstein
Adolph Levy – Lena Diamond
Edward Levy – Linda Schlesinger
Harold Levy – Diana Greenspan
Leonard Levy – Diana Axelrod
Joe Lewkowitz – Lena Rachlin
David Lipman – Sadye Fishkoff
Herbert Lipman – Beverly Fishkin
Nathan Lipman – Kate Doris
Fred Lippner – Daisy Fassler;
Fred Lippner – Rae Spivack
Barney Lobonowitz – Helen Markel
Dr. William London – Lillian Mann
Leo Lowenkopf – Vivian Reiter
Sam Lubin – Bertha Novick
Irwin Mancbach – Barbara Miller
Le Roy Mancbach – Miriam Berger
Morris Mancbach – Emma Kramer
Gabe Mandel – Rose Gavronsky
Dr. Joseph Mandel – Jeanette Greenspan
Saul Mankowitz – Bess Fleischman
Dr. Ben Mann – Frieda Encherman
Dr. Edward Margaretten – Ruth Brown
Morris Margaretten – Pauline Avchen
Dr. Sam Markhoff – Mollie Pavlovsky
Jules Meistrich – Min Goldmintz
Charles Metzendorf – Nancy Rosengarten
David Metzendorf – Mollie Wedeen
Sam Metzendorf – Rosella Goldberger
Sidney Metzendorf – Rebe Sarokin
Teddy Metzendorf – Harriet Resnick
Alan Meyerhoff – Dolores Zinner
Albert Meyerhoff – Sylvia Frank
Eddie Meyers – Roberta Cutler
Alex Miller – Jennie Parnes
George Miller – Bertha Sarokin
Harry Miller – Helen Mazursky
Marvin Miller – Millicent Harrison
Morris Miller – Dove Cheret
Morris Miller – Sarah Levenson
Seymour Miller – Arlene Wedeen
Sidney Millet – Linda Gray
Morris Mink – Sophie Goldberg
Stanley Morris – Gloria Berkowitz
Nat Moss – Pearl Kaufman
Leon Nedzela – Pearl Manger
Dr. Seymour Oliet – Sherry Roseff
Morris Paley – Judy Sommers
Dr. Aaron Pargot – Helen Kantor
Herbert Pargot – Miriam Kosene
Abe Parnes – Frieda Miller
Dave Pavlovsky – Ceil Ferbel
Dr. Francis Pavlovsky – Eleanor Siegel
Matt Perlin – Frances Greenfield
David Pliskin – Bertha Cohen
Albert Pollak – Rose Sobel
Herb Pologe – Charney Madrazo;
Charney Pologe – Seymour Buchsbaum
Mark Preminger – Anne Lonky
Raoul Rabiner – Barbara Leon
David Robinson – Fredda Goldstein
Julie Robinson – Julie Kaplowitz
Eddie Rosenberg – Florence Budin
Leonard Rosenberg – Rita Jaffee
Isadore Rosenblum – Frances Shutinsky
Norman Rossner – Jean Fuchs
Dr. Paul Rossner – Rusty Buchbinder
Harold Rubin – Evelyn Nussbaum
Melvin Rubin – Felice Fisher
Dr. Alex Ruderman – Ida Ruderman
Walter Ruderman – Lillian Doctofsky
David Sacks – Evelyn Horowitz
Ray Safran – Esther Meistrich
Walter Safran – Ruth Buncher
Abe Salit – Martha Shapiro
Isadore Saltman – Fannie Silverman
William Saltman – Juliette Zion
William Samson – Bert Levin



Esther and Ray Safran at West Point, 1929

Dr. Irving Sanders – Joan Bruck
Sam Sarokin – Rebe Weinblatt
Joe Scharer – Dorothy Donesen
Harry Schenkman – Minnie Hershman
Henry Schlachter – Margie Blum;
Henry Schlachter – Eva Bloom
Philip Schlesinger – Etta Singer;
Etta Schlesinger – Morris Cohen
Sol Schuloff – Pearl Greenberg
Albert Schwartz – Edna Kirshner
Bennett Schwartz – Shirley Kaplowitz
Charles Schwartz – Norma Rabiner
Joseph Schwartz – Jennie Daitz
Joseph Schwartz – Belle Goldberger
Herb Seransky – Muriel Barshay
Shep Sewitch – Donna Goldman
William Sewitch – Joan Weiss
Dr. Jack Shangold – Harriet Ginzberg
Sam Shangold – Hilda Rocker
Ira Shapiro – Joan Handelman
Abe Sher – Estelle Fine
Burton Sher – Beverly Staum
Charles Sher – Mary Spivack
Harold Sher – Ethel Falk
Daniel Shevell – Janice Bey
Jack Shifrin – Dorothy Roseff
Hyman Shihar – Frieda Novick
Morris Shihar – Ellie Madsen
Alf Shipkin – Florence Goldmintz
Ray Shipkin – Ruth Nadel
Josiah Shulman – Mildred Safran
Dr. S. Isadore Siegel – Jeanette Kramer;
Dr. S. Isadore Siegel – Esther Kramer
Richard Silverberg – Ronna Kohn
David Silverman – Sylvia Gold
Melvin Silverman – Irma Horowitz
Dr. Sam Silverman – Harriet Preminger
Ted Simkin – Janice Gast
Al Simon – Essie Harris
Martin Singer – Lydia Ginzberg
Izzy Slutsky – Hannah Epstein Black
Morris Slutsky – Regina Isenberg
Murray Slutsky – Harriet Benjamin
Robert Slutsky – Belle Claire Price
Charles Sommers – Sadie Levin
Louis Sosin – Emma Klein
Leonard Spivack – Ida Salit
Sam Spivack – Eva Fishkoff
Al Stern – Bernice Joselson
Milton Stern – Mildred Schwartz
Morris Stern – Rae Jacobson
Jack Stess – Dora Goldstein
Dr. Leo Stess – Jeanette Stess
Max Stess – Shirley Zall
Dr. Robert Stess – Eleanor Stepacoff
Zu Stess – Cecelia Kaden
Harry Surkus – Dorothy Frank;
Dorothy Surkus – Bernie Diamond
Leon Swerdel – Lena Rosenblum
Sam Swerdel – Frances Simon
Sheldon Taber – Pearl Pologe
Al Tanenbaum – Bernice Gimpleman
Franklin Thomas – Janet Nadel
Charles Toborowsky – Lena Bender
David Toborowsky – Rebe Edelman;
Rebe Toborowsky – S. Sher
Richard Tuckerman – Bobbi Snaper
Dr. Henry Turner – Edith Winograd
Abe Turtletaub – Rose Berman
Ed Turtletaub – Pearl Zack
Aaron Waldman – Ann Karkus
Dr. Ben Weinberger – Rose Levy
Barney Weinblatt – Renee Kempner
Ben Weiner – Eleanor Sandler
Louis Weiner – Sylvia Weiner
Robert Weiner – Flora Buchbinder
Marty Weisberger – Shirley Lubliner
David Weiss – Pat Chazin
Mark Robert Weiss – Joyce Kirschner
Paul Weiss – Zelda Perlman
William Weiss – Lucille Polensky
Clifford Weitzen – Mitzi Weiss
Jack Weitzen – Mae Schwartzstein
David Wilentz – Lena Goldman
Dr. William Wilentz – Elsie Rosenzweig
Abe Wilner – Jessie Bimstein
Al Wilner – Sadie Klein
Dr. Larry Winn – Estelle Mahler;
Estelle Winn – Bernie Spivack
Nathan Witkin – Norma Stein
Makey Wolfson – Pearl Sandler
Dr. Joseph Wurtzel – Ruth Benhamu
William Zack – Elaine Sacarny
Alvin Zagor – Janice Cutler



Al Wolensky and Mary Toborowsky


M
Metuchen
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WELCOMES YOU


INC.
LET THERE BE LIGHT
1870
WELCOME TO
Edison
Township

Chapter Nine

THE SUBURBS

The influence of the Perth Amboy Jewish community extended to the suburbs. Many former Amboyans moved to nearby communities, such as Woodbridge, Fords, and Metuchen, but retained their connections with—and often their synagogue memberships in—Perth Amboy.

Mark Belafsky noted:
"Our Belafsky, Bey, Frankel, and Golub families were all entrenched in Perth Amboy. They are all descended from Isaac Belyavsky, whom we have traced back to Konotop, (now) Ukraine. Isaac lived around 1800.

"My father, Hank (Henry), opened his medical office in Woodbridge in 1938. He graduated from medical school in 1932, but because of the Depression was unable to save money to buy anything until 1938. I do not know why he decided to leave Perth Amboy for the 'burbs.' I do know that my early years, particularly the war years, were spent in Perth Amboy. Memories include nursery school, with naps on the floor, then shopping downtown, Slobodien's Shoes, Parnes Bakery, Polkowitz Buick, Littman's, etc.

"During high school, I would ride my bike to the Y during summer months. In 1955, my father left his Woodbridge practice and opened up an ob-gyn practice on New Brunswick Avenue with Sam Breslow and Jack Shangold.

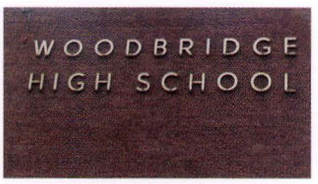
"My folks' social life centered around Perth Amboy friends, such as his partners, Sam Bey, Murray Jacobson, Ben Weisenfeld, Finky Fine, Reece Polkowitz, and others. Most of the Jews of Woodbridge had Perth Amboy roots—Rabinowitz, Hutner, Margaretten, Fertig, Korb, Neuss, Laden, Meistrich, and many more. Some of my closest lifelong friends I first met at the Y. Arthur Silverman became my fraternity brother and college roommate, and Bob Toborowsky my next-door neighbor."

Mark's brother, Bob, added:
"Through my high school friends Bob Spector (our esteemed author), Bob Levinson, Roy Eskow, and Russell Bey, I can fondly remember 'bugging the stem' and hanging at The Stand."

Bob's wife, the former Abby Meistrich, who grew up in Woodbridge, also has deep Perth Amboy roots through her parents, Jules and Minnie Goldmintz Meistrich. Jules owned the Esso gas station at the triangle of New Brunswick and Madison Avenues and Fayette Street.

Eddie Saiff, whose family moved to North Brunswick in March 1958, stayed with his grandparents in Perth Amboy so that he could finish his junior year at







Perth Amboy High School. "I had to enroll in New Brunswick High School for my last year, but I spent weekends and school holidays as much as possible in Perth Amboy. We continued our membership in Beth Mordecai even though we lived in North Brunswick, and I often took the bus from New Brunswick to activities in the Y. After graduating from New Brunswick High School, I maintained a close relationship with many of my Perth Amboy friends, especially Mark Premselaar and Peter Feldman. In fact, Mark was one of the groomsmen at my wedding."

Ed Berkowitz reminisced:

"I lived in Fords, but I hung out in Perth Amboy and had many friends there who are still friends today. My recollection was that my friends in Perth Amboy seemed to consider Fords somewhere to the west of Denver rather than the next town over. On the other hand, those of us who lived in Fords, showing equal innocence, saw Perth Amboy as the 'big city.' Obviously, we both were as wrong as could be.

"Fords was part of Woodbridge Township, and consequently, I, and all my local friends, attended Woodbridge High School. Woodbridge High School and Perth Amboy High School were athletic rivals, and that always provided a base for lots of good-natured joshing between me and my Perth Amboy friends, but that is getting ahead of the story.

"Fords had very few Jewish residents, most of whom operated stores in town. My father immigrated to the United States from Austria-Hungary as a teenager before World War I. He worked for a relative in Keasbey (where people considered Fords the 'big city') but started a grocery/meat market in Fords as soon as he was able to shake loose from employment with the Keasbey relative. Fortunately, he prospered in Fords, and by the time I came along in 1935, he was well settled and even a member of the Board of Directors of the Fords National Bank.

"The Jews in Fords owned the local sweet shop/newsstand (Ferbel), a law office (Pavlovsky), the movie (Weiss/Lang), two hardware stores (Lipinsky and Rosenblum), a pharmacy (Katz), a candy store near my elementary school (Brown), a saloon (Meyers) and, possibly, the 'department store' (Metzger, but I was never sure they were Jewish).

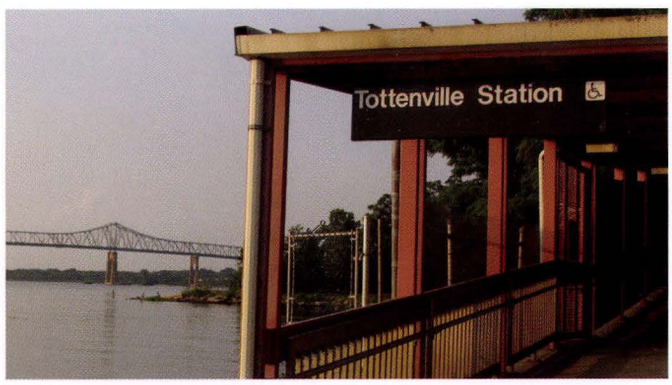
"Our family were members of Temple Beth Mordecai in Perth Amboy. I began to go to Hebrew School there, and my bar mitzvah took place there. Hebrew School at Beth Mordecai was really my first serious exposure to other Jewish kids (apart from my many cousins). My parents also sent me to the YMHA summer day camp (Camp Noar), where I began to learn there was more to Jewish culture than being the butt of nasty bullies. (The nasty bullies also learned that when Jewish kids grew up, they would fight back, and that tended to tamp down that problem—but that's another story.) When I graduated high school, I worked a couple of summers as a counselor at that day camp, which by that time even had staff members who weren't Jewish.

"The friendships begun at the YMHA were wonderful. The Y was a great opportunity for the Jewish kids to meet and socialize. It was safe and stable—no problems other than wondering who might be trying to date the girl you had your eye on. The Y—and, sometimes, Beth Mordecai—had dances and other social events."

Burton Sher commented:

"My great-grandparents, my grandparents, and my parents all lived in Perth Amboy, but I didn't become a Perth Amboy resident until I was discharged from the army in 1946 at the age of 22. Although I was born in Perth Amboy General Hospital, my family lived in Tottenville, and that's where I spent my youth.

"However, as I look back to those days, it seems we were always going to Perth Amboy for some reason. The first reason for going to Perth Amboy so often was to visit relatives, and I certainly had plenty of them in Perth Amboy. My mother was a Spivack and she had two brothers, a sister, and a mother—plus I don't remember how many nephews and nieces and all their children—living in Perth Amboy. Added to the Sher family in Perth Amboy, my family made up a good part of the Jewish population in town.



"Then I met Joan Meister at one of the cemetery tours and found there was another branch of the Sher family in Perth Amboy that I never knew. I found out that my great-grandfather had a brother who never came to America, but many of his children did, and they settled in Perth Amboy. Joan is a descendant of that branch of the family. Her father and my father were both named Charles Sher, and her grandfather and my grandfather were both named Jacob Sher.

"We had no kosher butchers in Tottenville, so we had to buy all our meat and chickens from one of the kosher butchers in Perth Amboy. There were about five kosher butchers in Perth Amboy, and one of them was a relative. And while in Perth Amboy, we could get a good kosher corned beef sandwich at Cohen's Delicatessen or maybe a challah or bagels at Parnes Bakery. On a Friday night or Saturday, we would come to Perth Amboy and shop for clothing at the many stores along Smith Street.

"During my high school years, I met many of the Jewish kids in Perth Amboy, either at the YMHA or at various house parties, since we had no such activities in Tottenville for Jewish kids. I still remember that one of the prettiest girls I met in Perth Amboy was a girl named Harriet Ginzberg. She later became Harriet Shangold, Mona and Gary Shangold's mother.

"We had no formal Hebrew School in Tottenville, so we had to hire teachers from Perth Amboy. I remember that two of my teachers were the sons of Cantor Chazin and Cantor Ephros.

"During World War II, my family moved from Tottenville to Perth Amboy, so that when I got out of the service, I became a resident of Perth Amboy. The first thing I noticed was the fact that most of my neighbors were now Jewish, as were all of my friends. And I didn't have to go very far to find a wife. My future wife Beverly lived two doors away on Brighton Avenue, and my brother Harold found his future wife living about a block away, also on Brighton Avenue. I now had to commute from Perth Amboy to New York to complete my last two years of college, which was an easier commute than from Tottenville.

"In 1949, I finally married my neighbor Beverly and moved to Woodbridge. However, I continued to be a member of the Y, and I served on the Board of Directors when the Y building was sold."

Harold Sher recalled:
"In the 1890s, my great-grandfather Max Sher lived at 128 Hall Avenue, Perth Amboy, having arrived in the United States in 1885. He, along with my grandfather Jacob Sher, was one of the founders of Shaarey Tefiloh.



Dr. Jack Shangold, Morris Goldfarb, Ruth Jacobson, and Samuel Hamelsky present a check to Central New Jersey Jewish Home for the Aged

"Three generations of the Sher family are buried in the Shaarey Tefiloh cemetery. In fact, my grandfather on my mother's side of the family was the second person buried in this cemetery. His real name was Benyumen Goldenbaum, and my grandmother, his wife, was buried next to him. She was buried under the name of Rose Spivack, her maiden name, which was the name she used when she entered the United States and continued to use for the next 35 years. She came from a big family, and one of her brothers owned Spivack Brothers paint store on State Street. On the Sher side of my family, my great-grandfather and great-grandmother, my grandfather and grandmother, and my father and mother are all buried there.

"Although I grew up in Tottenville and moved to Perth Amboy in 1943 at the age of 16, most of the Sher family, as well as my mother's family, lived there. Perth Amboy was the 'big city' to us, and I can remember taking the Tottenville ferry to Perth Amboy very often. We went there to shop at the kosher butcher and the outdoor market, where my mother picked out live chickens and had them killed and koshered to bring home. Then we went to Cohen's Deli for a corned beef sandwich. The ferry took about 20 minutes and cost five cents. There was usually a violin player and a shoeshine boy on the ferry.

"My father, Charles Sher, was an outstanding basketball player in the late 1910s and 1920s, even playing with Nat Holman. He played at the Perth Amboy YMHA, and I promptly joined when I moved there. My brothers, Burton and Lester Sher (the Sher twins), also became key players for the Y. It was at the Y that I met many of my Jewish friends, played pool, bowled, and swam in the nude in the wonderful Y pool. Of course, men and women had different pool hours.

"We then moved to Brighton Avenue, where I met my future wife, Ethel Sher, who lived on the same street. We just celebrated our 58th wedding anniversary, so Perth Amboy has special meaning to both of us."

Bob Arky remembered growing up in South Amboy:
"There were 35 Jewish families in town and an Orthodox synagogue on Henry Street, I believe. I remember going to services there with my grandfather, even though my family were members of Temple Beth Mordecai. Jerry and Monroe Reiner and I traveled to Perth Amboy High School on the public bus (Marathon bus line). The one-way fare was ten cents.

"Businesses owned by Jews in South Amboy were Siemer's Hardware, Zall's Confectionery, Reiner's Hardware, Reiner's Tavern, and Arky's Pharmacy. Leo Klein and his wife ran a luncheonette, and he was also a teacher-coach at Perth Amboy High School. Pfeffer's Dry Goods Store was the typical 'Jew store' found in many small towns during that period."

Central New Jersey Jewish Home for the Aged

As the Jews of Perth Amboy moved to the suburbs, facilities were developed to serve the Jewish community of a broader area. There was a need for a residential facility for Jewish senior citizens of Central New Jersey, and in 1963, leaders of various Jewish communities in Middlesex and Somerset Counties began meeting as a steering committee to discuss the feasibility of establishing a nursing home for the Jewish community of the region. Twelve years later, the first wing of the Central New Jersey Jewish Home for the Aged—the Janice and Philip Levin Wing—was opened in Somerset with 120 beds. While representatives from many Central New Jersey Jewish organizations played important roles, several of the founding leaders and trustees were from the Perth Amboy Jewish community, including Ruth Jacobson, Joe Klegman, Morris Goldfarb, David Pavlovsky, Ray Safran, Dan Scott, and Dr. Jack Shangold. Numerous fundraising activities for the benefit of the Jewish Home took place in Perth Amboy in the 1970s and 1980s. Over the years, a number of Perth Amboy's aging Jewish seniors took up residence at the Home, enjoying the excellent level of care and kosher food in a welcoming Jewish environment. And, as a matter of fact, a senior residence building was added to the campus in 1985 and was named after its Perth Amboy benefactors, the Lena and David T. Wilentz Senior Residence. In 1988, the nursing home increased to 255 beds with the addition of the Lydia and Morris Goldfarb Pavilion, honoring another important couple with Perth Amboy roots. The current name of this facility is The Oscar and Ella Wilf Campus for Senior Living, and it provides a range of living options for Jewish senior citizens.



Central New Jersey Jewish Home for the Aged Board of Trustees, around 1980


GREENHOUSE FURS


WILLIAM ALPER
KOSHER כשר
MEATS & POULTRY
ALPER'S KOSHER MEAT MARKET

Chapter Ten

Jewish Businesses and Professionals

Jewish proprietors dominated the small independent shops in Perth Amboy, which was the commercial shopping center for the region, until the advent of the Menlo Park Shopping Center in 1959.

These Jewish refugees from European anti-Semitism believed that their future lay in entrepreneurism—in creating their own opportunities. Overcoming language barriers, they became butchers, bakers, grocers, dry goods merchants, shoe salesmen, sporting goods retailers, jewelers, and restaurant owners.

"It was the Jewish population's unique capacity for occupational diversity and adaptability that had such a profound influence on the development and success of Perth Amboy as a city," observed Eugene Galen, who had retailers on both sides of his family: Wolpiansky Dry Goods (1910-1942) and Galinsky's Department Store (1926-1954).

Gene Galen, like his siblings Ada and Bernice, worked in the store. They were trained to be aware of the warning signal when a potential shoplifter entered the store. The code words were the Yiddish numbers for two and ten, "tswai-zhen," implying that you should use your two eyes to watch their ten fingers.

At one time, downtown Perth Amboy boasted five movie theaters—Majestic, Strand, Ditmas, Crescent, and Roky. All were owned by Jews.

The Roky was originally owned by George Glasser. Subsequently, it was acquired by Aaron Shusterman. At first, it was called the Roxy, but when the famed Roxy Theatre in New York City sued Shusterman for trademark infringement, he replaced the *x* with a *k*.

"My father-in-law, Abraham Greenhouse [owner of A. Greenhouse Fine Furs], formed a retail merchants' association in Perth Amboy," said Muriel "Bosh" Greenhouse. "One year, they were having a meeting in my father-in-law's store right before a Jewish holiday. Smith Street, which had all the retail stores, was shut down because almost every merchant was Jewish. And the non-Jewish people knew it was a Jewish holiday. They didn't bother going shopping because they knew they wouldn't find anything open."

Some of the children of the retail pioneers, such as Robert Fishkin, joined their parents' business. Others furthered their education to become teachers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, scientists, writers, and accountants.

Images from top to bottom:

A. Greenhouse, Inc.

William Alper at his store, Alper's Kosher Meat Market

D. Kaden Trucking
David and Reuben Kaden, along with their drivers and mechanics, in front of company trucks at Flagstaff Foods warehouse. David Kaden and his son, Reuben, owned D. Kaden Trucking Company, which was a contract carrier for Flagstaff Foods. D. Kaden Trucking Company was located on South Second Street.



Plaid 'n Tweed

Every Jewish tween or teen young lady in the 1950s and 1960s dreamed of owning outfits from Plaid 'n Tweed. This Madison Avenue store featured very stylish and special clothing, and both the "haves" and the "have-nots" made their way into Plaid 'n Tweed. The "haves" bought lots of clothing from the store, while the "have-nots" might persuade mom to buy them just one or two or a few beautiful things. There were school clothes, special-occasion dresses, separates, coats for the High Holy Days, and really special designer dresses and gowns for bat mitzvahs, weddings, and other events. But all girls had one thing in common. When any girl tried on a dress or outfit, the store owner, Sylvia Marlin, would gaze at that girl and declare, "Stunning!"

Fishkin's

Fishkin's was a store that supplied Jewish children and adults alike with sports and hobby tools and supplies. They carried everything from baseball bats to bicycles, not to mention team uniforms, fishing gear, plus basketball and football gear. Name your hobby, and supplies for that hobby were for sale. Fishkin's real specialty was cameras and camera supplies. The salespeople were well trained in photographic equipment, and you could get your film developed there. As the years went on, the store became more and more focused (no kidding) on the photography side of the business. Because the store featured leisure-time items, everyone loved to roam the aisles and check out its inventory. Fishkin's was a family-owned store that was a real part of the Perth Amboy community.

Memories

"It's Sunday morning, and I can almost inhale the sweet fragrance of pastries and fresh rolls—but most of all, I remember the bread: rye, corn rye by the pound, and pumpernickel. Behind the counter we move in double time trying to accommodate the customers as quickly as we can. In front of the counter, they fill the store, snaking out the door, white and black plastic numbers clutched in their hands. The next number up shifts impatiently, pushing to the front. They all want to be served sooner than it seems possible to those of us rushing behind the counter. This scene starts as early as 8:00 a.m. and lingers past noon. As quickly as it empties, the store fills again, keeping time with the church services dispersing every hour on the hour. Butter horns, hard rolls, Miami cheese Danish, Russian coffee cake, and pound cake are all in demand. The hum of the bread slicer is a constant: everyone wants one or two pounds of the most popular item in the store—rye bread, seeded or plain. Wax bags and white boxes of every shape and size, tied with colored string, are passed over the counter to the eager customers. One o'clock comes, and the customers have trickled down to just a few. It's an ordinary Sunday at Parnes Bakery."

— *Rebecca Parnes Singer*

Fertig Hosiery Co.



Shopping and Snacking at Perth Amboy Favorites

Walking into Cohen's Delicatessen was almost a religious experience. Its creaky wooden floors, lengthy glass showcases, and natural lighting welcomed customers. The delicious scent of pastrami, corned beef, and other deli delights would spark your senses, but the altar of Jewish palate appeal was the traditional pickle barrel at the center of the store. This brine-filled wonder held the best sour pickles in the world, and its appeal was universal. Students walking home from the Grammar School would stop in and pick out a mouthwatering treat. These kids used their pennies and nickels on pickles, not candy, soda, or ice cream.

Sheila Stess Schechtman recalled: "One of my favorite things to do was go to the Majestic on a Saturday morning and see the movies for 25 cents. Of course, on the way back from Grammar School, I always stopped at the Corner Bake Shop to get a huge chocolate chip cookie for five cents. There has never been a better cookie than the one at the Corner Bake Shop! I still have never found a toll house cookie bigger, thicker, or more chock full of chocolate chips."

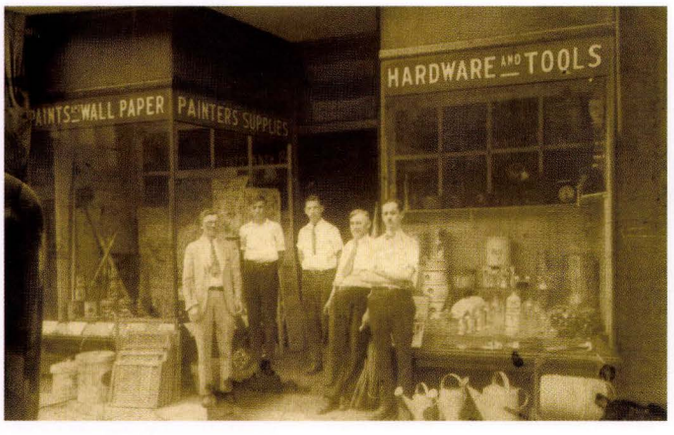
Ruth Eisemann Fost recalled "shopping on Smith Street, putting my little feet into the x-ray machine at Slobodien's to see the 'fit,' and spending bat mitzvah money for a pretty shorts and top outfit (I met my husband wearing it) at Martin Shapiro. I also remember as far back as buying a live chicken at the farmers' market and getting bread at Parnes Bakery and freshly sliced cheese from Mrs. Adler's little shop on New Brunswick Avenue."

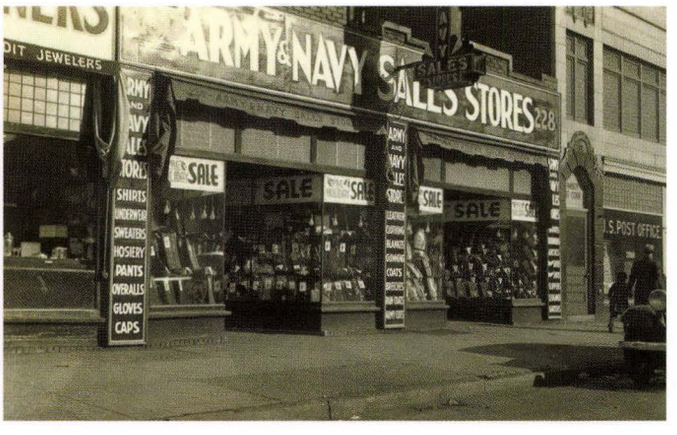
Jay Goldsmith remembered that his father, David, "insisted that we wear shoes from Slobodien's as he knew they would fit correctly. You could see the bones of your feet through their fluoroscope."

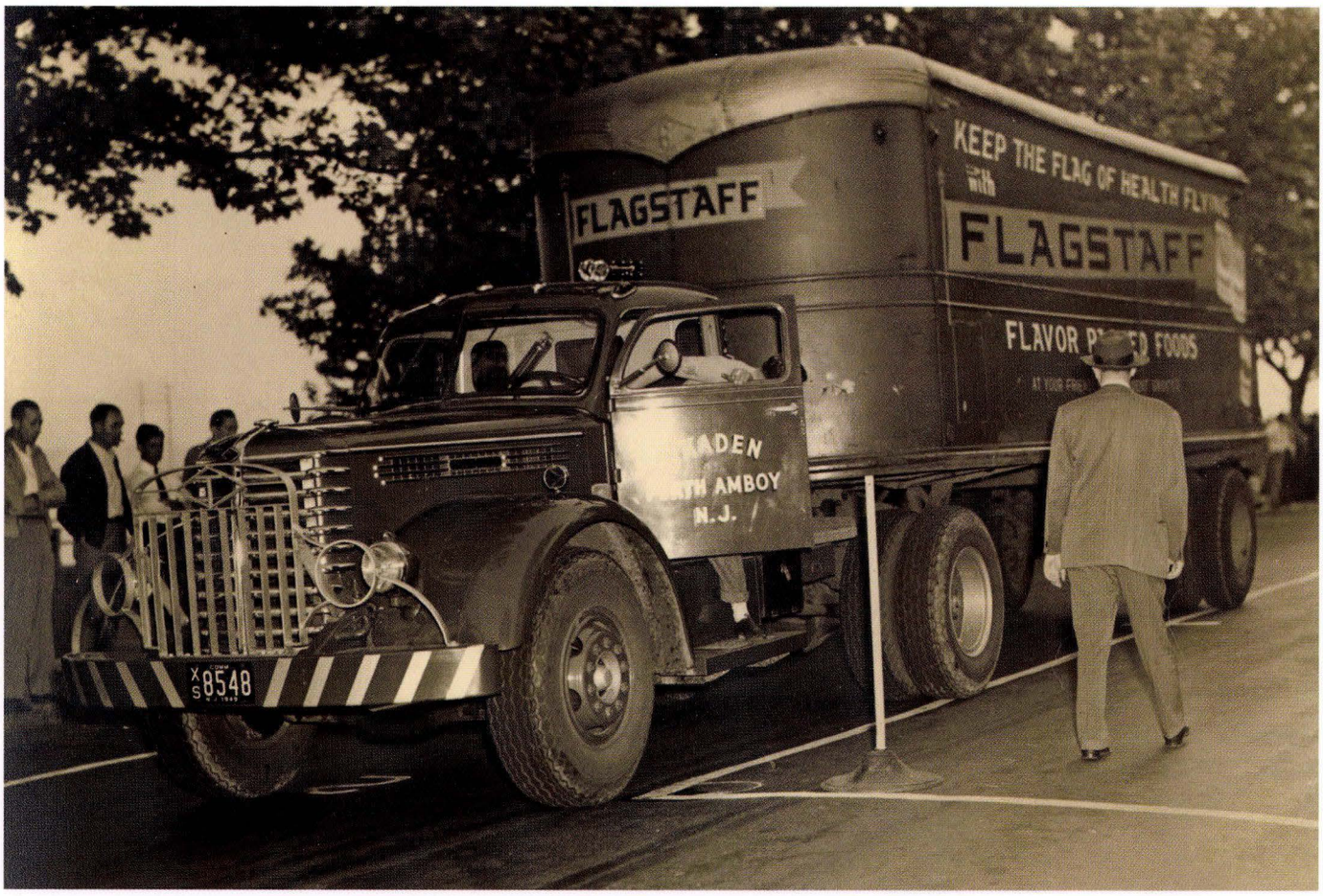
Seymour Buchsbaum has memories of "Mechanic's Bicycle Shop, where bar mitzvah boys got their bikes; Farkas Furs, where our mothers stored their fur coats over the hot summer; and Barney's News Stand, against the Hobart Street wall. Fishkin's Sporting Goods always had the best holiday windows. Fink's Department Store could always be counted on—Fishkin's tuxedo rental shop, Katz linoleum store, St. Lifer clothing store, the Roky Theater, and my dad's Rockville Farm Dairy that had all the imported cheeses when nobody else did. I remember Morrison's and Epstein's neighborhood grocery stores on Brighton Avenue, and Penn's candy store on Lewis Street, where we hung out during the summer evenings. And let's not forget Brody's candy store on Madison Avenue near Smith Street. If the gang wasn't at the Y, then we were at Brody's."

Left: Joseph Rosenberg and salesmen at Rosenberg's store, J. Rosenberg Hardware, around 1914

Right: Army & Navy Sales Stores







Flagstaff Foods Truck
David Kaden, with his back to the camera, surveys his business's 1949 tractor-trailer on Sadowski Parkway.

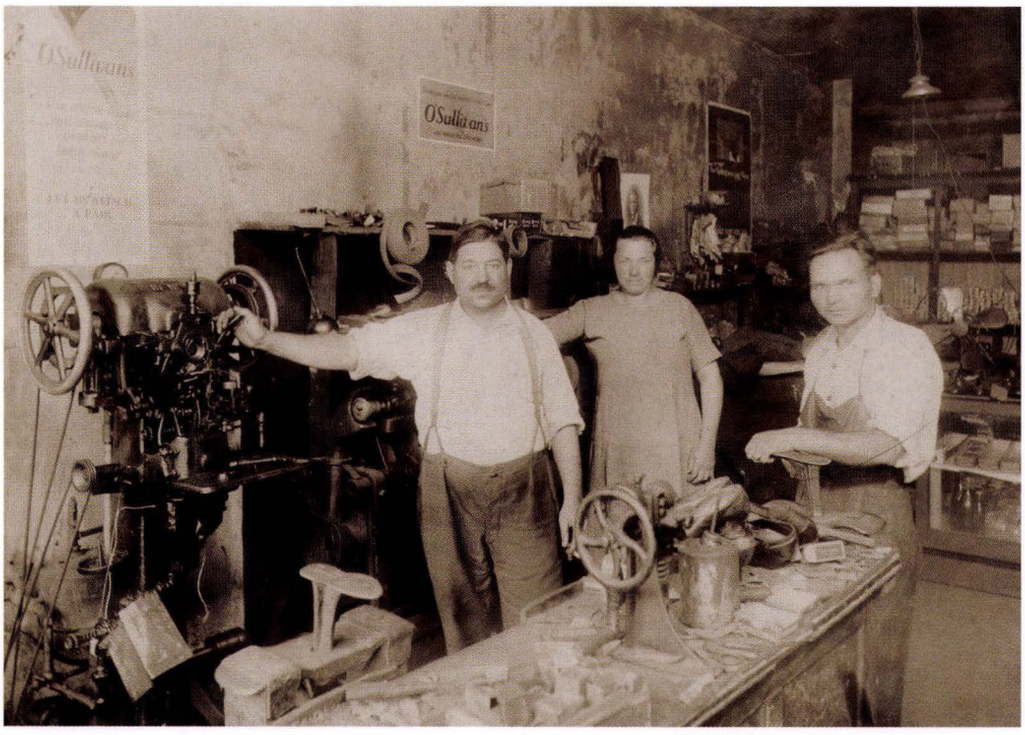
Marcia Weinstein Stern vividly recalled Penn's Confectionery, "the Jewish version of *Cheers*, where the men would gather after work for a 'malted' or a 'small chocolate soda' (called an 'egg cream' in New York City) and where we kids would buy pretzel rods, licorice sticks, penny candy, comic books, and 'movie star' magazines. Golub Brothers had the finest in produce. If he knew you well, Irving or Max would go to 'the back' and bring out 'the best.' Cohen's Delicatessen—I can still taste the garlic in the pastrami. Buy a pickle from the barrel, and eat it before Hebrew School. Parnes Bakery: wonderful brownies, terrific rye bread and hard rolls. Every Sunday we bought assorted Danish, the essential part of 'coffee and . . .'"

Blanche Eisemann Sosland remembered: "Each of the shops brings back a flood of memories—shopping in each of the stores and the great excitement brought about with the opening of Pride 'n Joy. I recall walking to Adler's cheese store with my mother when my sister Ruth was still in a stroller. Mrs. Adler would give us a piece of Muenster cheese, my favorite to this day. Most of all, I remember Sara Aneckstein's Corner Book Store. As a five-year-old, I went to her store at the Five Corners to choose Chanukah presents on a very dreary, cold December day, later that year getting a Magic Slate as an *afikoman* reward.

"By the time I was 12, she had moved to a larger store on Smith Street near High Street, and when my family went in to do some shopping, we discovered that she had broken her arm and was in a cast. My dad asked her if she thought that I might be able to help her out until her arm healed. With that began a wonderful 'career' for me, selling my favorite books to customers who asked for gift ideas!"

Jewish-Owned Businesses in Perth Amboy

A. Greenhouse, Inc.
A. N. Weissman & Sons
Abarry Steel Company
Adler Egg Company
Albert Leon Furniture
Alexander's Jewelry
Alexander's Men's Shop
Allyn Shoes
Alper's Kosher Meat Market
Amboy Feed
Amboy Lighting
Amboy Shirt Company
Aneis Kosher Butcher
Ann's Children's Shop
Apex Trucking
Arjay's Gift Shop
Arky's City Pharmacy
Army & Navy Sales Stores
Audrey Phillips Dress
Avchen's Pharmacy
Axelrod & Company Real Estate
Barnekov & Petz
Barney Lobonowitz News Stand
Barrel's Tavern
Barry Rosengarten Companies
Beebee Hat Company
Belafsky Roofing & Sheet Metal Co.
Bennett Radio
Berlfein's Confectionery
Beryl Weiner's Tavern
Blanche Shop
Blau's Linens
Bond Cleaners
Boston Cash Grocery
Boston Shoes
Brandwein Painters
Braunstein's Suits & Dresses
Broadman's Pharmacy
Brody's Candy & Stationery
C & D Auto Parts
Capel Motors
Cardon & Streif 5, 10 & 25 Cent Store
Cherensky's Shoes
Clothes Closet
Cohen and Shechter
Cohen's Delicatessen
Cohen's Hardware
Cohen's Market
Convery Chevron
Corner Bake Shop
Corner Book Store
Crystal Shop
Cutler Junk Cars & Auto Parts
D. Kaden Trucking
David Fass Clothes
David Kelsey's Smoke Shop
Davidson Brothers
Deiches' Department Store
Dekoff Locksmiths
Diamond Glass
Dobbs Hats
Don's Esso Service
Du Brow's Furniture
Elias Wedeen's Dry Good Stores
Eugene Jacobs
Faber's Gift Shop
Fannie Barber Specialty Shop
Farkus Furrier
Feinstein's Bicycle Shop
Feldman's Automobile Service
Fertig Hosiery Co.
Fertig's Uniform Headquarters
Fink's Department Store
Fishkin Brothers
Fishkoff Jewelers
Flagstaff Foods
Flor de Cumbal
Fox the Furrier
Frankel's Grocery Store
French Millinery
Gaier's State Street Market
Galinsky's Department Store
Gast Tavern
Gerry Price Dresses
Gimpleman's Paints
Ginzberg's Haberdashery
Golden Jewelers
Goldsmith Shoes
Goldsmith's Delicatessen
Golub Brothers
Greenbaum's Department Store
Gruber's Bakery
Gursky Heating & Plumbing
Guth Electrical Company
Gutman's Hardware
H. Katz Produce
H. Shangold and Brother
Halpern Star Neckwear
Harefil Sales
Harris Grocery Store
Harry Goldberg & Sons Scrap Iron
Harry Lubinsky Shoemaker
Herbert Jewelers
Herbie's Confectionery
Hirsch Shoe Company
Horowitz Business
I. Gast Tavern
Ida Hertz Catering
Ida Silverman Catering
Irene's
Irving Goldstein Real Estate
J. Miller and Sons
J. Rosenberg Hardware
J. Weinberg Clothing
Jack & Jill Children's Store
Jack Kroop Painting Contractor
Jack Rubin Jewelers
Jacob Goldberg Scrap Iron
Jacob Goldberger Steamship Ticket Agent
Jacobson, Goldfarb and Tanzman
Jay-Zee Dress Shop
Jersey Tire Co.
Joseph Bruck Fine Shoes
Karkus Press
Katz Linoleum
Kaufelt Brothers
Kaufman's Candy
Kenneth Lonky Photographer
Kessler's Pharmacy
King High Garage
Kirshman's Specialty Shop
Klein & Nolan Footwear
Klein's Delicatessen Store
Klein's Kosher Butcher
Klein's Locksmith & Hardware
Kolber Sladkus Shoes
Kosene & Belikove, Inc.
Kotton Shop
Kreilsheimer's
L. Isenberg & Bros.
Lader's Dress Shop
Landsman's Pharmacy
Laskowsky's Dry Goods
Lee Luggage
Lee's Wahrendorff Florist
Leiber's Sporting Goods
Leon Ferbel Ladies Tailoring



Left: Max & Ethel Lubinsky Shoe Repair, 1928

Center left: Abraham Cohen at Cohen's Delicatessen in earliest days

Lower right: Dora and Samuel Galen, 1946

Bottom left: Bertha Greenberg at her store, The Grand Trimming, around 1909







Leon Sewitch and Sons, Inc.
Leonard Sklair Real Estate
Leslaurer's Restaurant
Levin's Sporting Goods
Levy's Market
Lewkowitz Dress Shop
Lichtman Brothers
Littman's Jewelers
Lobel's Children's Shop
Louis Frankel Cosmopolitan Pharmacy
Louis Weinblatt Wholesale Cigar Dealer
Lubinsky Shoe Repair
Luger Bakery
M. Mechanic Bicycle Supplies & Sundries
M. Zucker
MacHenry's Men's Store
Majestic Bakery
Majestic Bowling Alley
Majestic Pharmacy
Majestic Theater
Maple Hotel & Bar
Margaretten Agency
Marstan Beauty Supply
Martin Shapiro
Max Gast Liquor Store
Max Klein, Men's Furnisher
Mayfair Supermarket
Mazur's
Mechanic's Toy Store
Meistrich Window Washing
Metzendorf Brothers & Co.
Middlesex Tobacco & Candy
Miller Marine Hardware
Modern Boys Shop
Morris Shangold Shoes
Morris Weisberger Plumbing
Morris Zalutsky's Dry Goods Store
Morrison's Grocery Store
Mrs. Dobbs Millinery
N. J. Automatic Dairy Service
N. Jacobson, The Clothier
N. Roth
Necchi-Elna Local Sewing Center
Neiderman Shoes
OK Electric
Oliet/Weber Grocery
Palace Hotel
Panter Motors
Paramount Shop
Parnes Bakery
Penn's Confectionery
Perth Amboy Beef Company
Perth Amboy Coal & Oil Company
Perth Amboy Plumbing Supply
Perth Amboy Window Washing
Phil Pollen Restaurant Supply
Phil's TV
Philip Basson Pharmacy
Philip Levine Clothing
Philip Zack Painter
Plaid 'n Tweed
Polkowitz Motors
Pride 'n Joy
Princeton Shirt Company
Puritan Dairy
Rabiner's Hospital Pharmacy
Raritan Candy & Tobacco
Raritan Electrical Supply Co., Inc.
Rathskeller Tavern
Regal Bedding Company
Rialto Barbershop
Roberts and Lieberman Jewelers
Rockville Farm Dairy
Roky Theater
Rose Fur Shop
Rosebud
Roth Furniture
Roy's Young Men's Shop
Royal Dinette
Royal Interior Decorators
Royal Stationers
Ruderman Painters
Russell-Stanley Corporation
S. Fishkin Sportswear
S. N. Greene Sporting Goods
Sam Cardon Jeweler
Sam Levin Public Appliance
Sammy Rosen's Candy Store
Samson Electrical Supply
Samuel Baum & Sons
Samuel Steskovitz Shoes
Samuel Wedeen's Candy Store
Sandler's Dry Goods
Sarah Bardin's Gift Shop
Schlachter & Company Real Estate
Schlesinger's Insurance Agency
Schlesinger's Stationery
Schreibman Plumbing
Schwartzman Tailoring
Segel's Hardware
Sher's TV and Appliances
Shindel's Department Store
Shirley Spiegel Dress Shop
Siegel's Butcher Shop
Siegel's Fishery
Sillman's Paint Store
Simon's Dairy
Sklar's Grocery Store
Slobodien's Shoes
Sol Jacobson's Men's Shop
Spector's Meat Market
Spivack Brothers
St. Lifer's Clothes
Stan Morris Record Shop
State Floor Covering
Stern's Cleaners
Stern's Confectionery
Stern's Men's Store
Steskovitz Candy Store
Stop 'n Shop
Style Craft Shirt Company
Surprise Store
Sussman Manufacturing Company
The Famous
The Grand Trimming Store
The Nut House
The Wool Shop
Toborowsky Detective Agency
Towne Hardware
Turtletaub's Men's Clothing/Sporting Goods
Universal General Sheet Metal Company
Wagner & Wurtzel
Waltham Company
Weingarten's Market
Weiss & Alper Kosher Butchers
Wilentz Tobacco Company
Wilk's Dress Shop
Witkin & Drourr's Kosher Butcher
Witty Brothers Tavern
Wolpiansky Dry Goods
Youth Fashion Shop
Zagoren Dry Goods
Zellman's Music House
Zinner's Dry Goods



Louis Kroop, Robert Kroop, and Frank Kroop at Towne Hardware

Perth Amboy Jewish Professionals Who Practiced in Perth Amboy

Accountants

Martin Boreskin
Charles Goldstein
Herbert Harris
Benjamin Kirschner
Abe Krisoff
Bernard Lipman
David Lipman
Herbert Lipman
Edmond Meyers
Herman Nathanson
Herbert Pargot
Mark Preminger
Herbert Rosenthal
Harry Rubenstein
Martin Singer
Alfred Tenenbaum
Irving Zocks

Dentists

Irving Avchen
William Bergner
Oscar Bregman
Irving Breslow
Milton Burg
David Deutsch
Ralph Deutsch
Mark Donner
Jack Eskow
Philip Fass
Bernard Feldman
Louis Fried
Jac Gindin
Hugh Habas
Morris Kaufman
Albert Klein
Hyman Koch
Edward Littman
Martin Marcus
David Moss
J. B. Moss
Francis Pavlovsky
Paul Rossner
Alton Roth
Irving Sanders
Percy Seaman
J. A. Seeman
William Wedeen
Albert Weiss
Sidney Zagoreen

Attorneys

Esther Beckhoff
Philip Belicove
Gordon Berkow
Edward Berkowitz
Jacob Bernstein
William Brandwein
Morris Brown
Alex Cohen
Norman Cohen
Samuel Cohen
Nathan Daitz
Isidore Dubrow
Leo Goldberger
Morris Goldberger
G. George Goldman
Lewis Jacobson
Meyer Jaffe
Sol Kantor
Ezra Karkus
Jacob Klein
Martin Koch
Gary Kroop
Alfred Levinson
Jack Levinson
Leo Lowenkopf
David Mandel
Morris Margaretten
Harry Medinets
David Pavlovsky
David Pliskin
Jacob Polkowitz
Isadore Rosenblum
Joseph B. Schwartz
Samuel Sladkus
Louis Sosin

Maxwell Sosin
Henry Spitzer
Isidor Spivack
David Stepacoff
David T. Wilentz
Robert Wilentz
Warren Wilentz
Roland Winter
Arthur Wolpin



Dr. Henry Belafsky, Dr. Morton Klein, Dr. Jack Shangold

Physicians

Arthur Aneckstein
Stanley Becker
Henry Belafsky
Bori Berkow
Lester Berkow
Samuel Berkow
Samuel Breslow
Sara Ann Bunin Joselson
Sigmund Clayman
Morris Coble
Nathan (Bootsy) Cole
Eli Cooperman
Benjamin Copleman
Arnold Derman
Hyman Peter Fine
Irvin J. Fine
Alexander Fishkoff
Daniel Fishkoff
Richard Fox
Sol Gershman
Louis Gould
William Greenberg
Jerold Grubman
Joseph Harris
Leonard Hirsch
Al Horowitz
Murray Jacobson
S. Harrison Jerrold
Howard Joselson
Edward Klein
Morton Klein
Philip Kline
Jack Kluft
Bernard Kramer
Alvin Kravet
Sidney Kress
Herbert Lang
Sheldon Leibow
Ralph Lev
Reuben Levinson
Ralph Lewis
William London
Benjamin Mann
J. J. Mann
Edward Margaretten
Ira Markman
Jacob Mermelstein
Marvin Mufson
Max Novich
Bernard Pancer
Marvin Platt
William Pollen
Philip Rosenfeld
Arthur Roth
Albert Schwartz
Jack Shangold
Marvin Shuster
Isadore Siegel
Ralph Siegel
Samuel Silverman
Jack Singer
Benjamin Slobodien
Howard Slobodien
Ira Spiler
Gary Steinbach
Sidney Tucker
Jonathan Turkish
Sheldon Turkish
Armine Vafai
Henry Weiner
Benjamin Weisenfeld
Paul Weisenfeld
William Wilentz
Larry Winn
William Winn

Other Medical Professionals

Samuel Bernstein (podiatrist)
Fred Greenfield (podiatrist)
Morris Grossman (chiropractor)
Lew Korb (chiropractor)
Ignatz Mann (optometrist)
Lester Mann (optician)
David Roth (chiropractor)
Leo Stess (podiatrist)
Robert Stess (podiatrist)
Abraham Wexler (optometrist)
Joseph Wurtzel (optometrist)

David T. Wilentz

Perth Amboy's Jews benefited from the fact that the most important nonelected Democratic politician in the state of New Jersey, David T. Wilentz, was one of their own.

Born in Lithuania in 1894, Dave Wilentz was one year old when his parents brought him to the United States, eventually settling in Perth Amboy. His father, Nathan, was one of the founders of Shaarey Tefiloh.

After graduating from Perth Amboy High School, he worked as a copyboy and reporter for the *Perth Amboy Evening News* and commuted to Manhattan to attend night classes at New York Law School. After serving in the Army during World War I, he received his law degree and soon was in private practice in Perth Amboy.

In the late 1920s, Wilentz and his longtime friend State Senator John Toolan teamed up to oust William Wilson, the Republican mayor of Perth Amboy, replacing him with a Democrat. Led by Wilentz and Toolan, Middlesex County was—and is to this day—strongly Democratic.

In 1934, Wilentz was appointed attorney general of New Jersey with the backing of Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, the state's most powerful political boss. A year later, Wilentz was the prosecutor in the case against Bruno Richard Hauptmann, who was accused of kidnapping and murdering the 22-month-old son of renowned aviator Charles A. Lindbergh. It was the first criminal case Wilentz had ever tried. From a tiny courtroom in Flemington, New Jersey, he drew worldwide attention, taking center stage in the sensational "Trial of the Century." At the conclusion of a six-week-long trial, Wilentz gained a conviction against Hauptmann, who died in the electric chair in 1936.

After that, Wilentz was political royalty in Perth Amboy, in New Jersey, and in the Democratic party. If anyone in Perth Amboy needed a favor, they were told to "go see Dave." Wilentz, an image of impeccable fashion, with perfectly shined shoes, neatly creased pants, double-breasted jackets, and tilted fedoras, went on to build one of the best-oiled Democratic machines in the state.

"He built a powerful organization, not on the whip, but on the magnetism of his personality," said one of his protégés, George Otlowski, a former mayor of Perth Amboy.

Wilentz launched careers, including those of his two sons: Robert, who was chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, and Warren, who was Middlesex County prosecutor. His law firm, Wilentz, Goldman and Spitzer, retains its position as one of the leading firms in New Jersey. His daughter, Norma, married Leon Hess, who was the founder of Hess Oil.



David T. Wilentz, 1935


E.W. WOOLWORTH CO.
NO LEFT TURN



Chapter Eleven

THE END OF AN ERA

The late 1940s marked the beginning of the exodus of Jews from Perth Amboy to the growing nearby communities of Edison, Woodbridge, Highland Park, and Metuchen.

"Most of us who came back after World War II could not get an apartment in Perth Amboy," recalled Manny Goldfarb. "There were no new homes. So our generation left."

Ted Simkin concurred: "My brother moved first. His family felt there was no proper house for them to buy in Perth Amboy, so they moved to Metuchen, and then to Plainfield. I moved to Metuchen because it was convenient and it was a nice small city. Most of my friends from Perth Amboy were moving there. Perth Amboy no longer had space for building new homes."

One might say that the scattering of the Jewish community away from Perth Amboy was a result of our parents', grandparents', and great-grandparents' emphasis on education, which resulted in a broadening of horizons and a desire to make our way out into the world.

Sylvia Barkan Rimm's story is typical. "My parents came to Perth Amboy about five years before I was born, from Riga, Latvia," she said. "My dad worked in a pocketbook factory and my mom took in boarders so we could manage financially. Early on, even as a child, I heard about the American dream—that in America 'vee could verk our vay up.' Family members, cousins, etc., who had an education were always mentioned with a special reverence, so education was clearly on a pedestal for me."

Sylvia went on to earn a B.A. in sociology in 1957 from Douglass College and later an M.S. and Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Wisconsin, specializing in parenting, child development, and learning. She became a best-selling author and contributor to various national television programs and continued to live in the Midwest. But without that emphasis on education, her life would have been completely different.

"I probably wouldn't have gone to college if it weren't for my sisters and especially [high school guidance counselor] Henrietta Herbert, who convinced me I should write away for scholarships. She gave me a huge book of scholarships, and I remember the weekend I studied it and sent for as many as I qualified for. She wrote letters of reference on my behalf for all of them, and I received a bunch.

Images from top to bottom:

Procession down Smith Street carrying Torahs to the new Shaarey Tefiloh synagogue, 1976 Leaders: Saul Edelman, Ira Zu Stess, Rabbi Albert Schwartz; also in photo: Avi Golub, Sandy Katz

Hy Sussman's annual dinner event Photo includes Hy Sussman, Murray Jacobson, Jack Glaser, Sam Lewis, Harry Derman, Alexander Horwitz, George Cohen, Sam Sanders, Vevy Daitz, Sammy Dubin, Moishe Shihar, Mr. Deitche, George Pucci, Harold Diamond, Jack Shangold, Abe Parnes, Harold Dekoff, Dave Pavlovsky, Dan Scott, Sonny Sewitch, Tommy Sinatra, George Dubin, Roland Winter, Larry Pallas, Ted Marks, Sam Feinstein, Kalman Davidson, Irv Sanders, Reuben Kaden, Dave Clawans, Jack Longstreet, Lenny Dubrow, Peaches Heenan, Shep Sewitch, Joe Klegman, Ed Mahler, Hyman Guth, Jules Meistrich, Sam Swerdel, Leon Weingarten

"Being a part of the Jewish community was very important and inspiring in my life and provided me with a foundational set of values. From the community I grew up in, I learned about developing good friendships and an important sense of community, where people are supportive and helpful to each other. I think my childhood in Perth Amboy also affected my approach to counseling families today. Finding an active religious community often provides an appropriate peer environment in which adolescents can achieve and thrive."



Rose Brody

Jewish Educators

Many of the Jews who grew up in Perth Amboy attribute part of their success to the solid education they received in Perth Amboy schools. Education was an emphasis in the Perth Amboy community, and Jews were represented on the Board of Education and as administrators, as well as teachers in the classroom and support personnel. In essence, they helped establish the curriculum, budgets, and services that delivered that excellent education. Benjamin Goldman served on the Board of Education from the 1930s through the 1950s, and Lydia Goldfarb served during the 1950s.

Some of the many Jewish teachers who influenced the lives of the youth of Perth Amboy were Rose Goldstein, Abraham Jacobson, Philip Breslow, Sylvia Clawans, Abraham Parnes, George Dubin, Zelda Dubin, Felice Picker, Rae Goldstein, Arthur Wolpin, Jacob Deutsche, Elsie Perlin, Pauline Philo, Leo Klein, Stanley Rosen, Eleanor Stess, Sara Lowengrub, Dora Cowan, Savilla Margaretten, Mae Boris Feldman, Sara Sokolow, Madeline Katz, Gladys Bardin, Mollie Pavlovsky, Beatrice Goldberger, Leon Goldsmith, Ann Preminger, Lena Swerdel, Benjamin Beckhoff, and Sylvia Silverman. One of the most memorable was Rose Brody, daughter of Judith and Solomon Brody, who—as a wonderful eighth-grade teacher in the Grammar School—taught many of us to write with clarity.

Hy Sussman's "Old Timers' Club"

Hy Sussman grew up in Perth Amboy, where he was very committed to many institutions, including Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh and the YMHA. He was also very devoted to his friends. As people began to move away and lose touch, he came up with the idea of "The Old Timers' Club" and hosted an annual dinner to which he invited all his old friends. All who attended enjoyed the opportunity to reminisce about growing up in Perth Amboy and to catch up with each other. Hy's friends were dear to him, and he was very generous to them. The annual dinner was a special highlight for all of them.



Hy Sussman's annual dinner event, 1987
Photo includes Hy Sussman, Moishe Shihar, Sam Lewis, Alfred Goldstein, Jack Glaser, Dave Parnes, Abe Parnes, Murray Jacobson, Dave Stern, Sam Bey, Harold Diamond, John Venezia, Nate Witkin, Larry Pallas, Gaga Greenberg, Reuben Kaden, Shep Sewitch, George Pucci, George Dubin, Sam Dubin, Hyman Guth, Alexander Horwitz, Sonny Sewitch, Jules Meistrich, Joe Klegman, Ted Marks, Dan Scott, Harold Dekoff, Leon Weingarten, Mr. Berman, Peaches Heenan, Morty Greenspan, Ed Patten, George Cohen, Sam Lonky, Irv Sanders, Hank Lieber, Vevy Daitz, Cliff Weitzen, Dave Pavlovsky, Warren Wilentz, Ed Mahler, Mr. Sher

Post-Industrial Perth Amboy

At the time that many Jews were leaving Perth Amboy, the city's status as an industrial town was diminishing.

In 1969, manufacturing hit its all-time peak in New Jersey, with 900,000 manufacturing jobs. Over the next four decades, that number was halved.

By the 1970s, manufacturing was shifting from the northeast United States to the southeast and to countries with lower labor costs. Industrial hubs such as Perth Amboy were at a fatal disadvantage.

At the same time, the state of New Jersey enacted some of the nation's strictest environmental enforcement laws, which essentially redlined old industrial properties in urban areas. The laws effectively said that a new buyer would be liable for all the harm done to the environment by that property.

Most of the factories and industrial firms that were the backbone of Perth Amboy's economy bolted: Cable Works, Anaconda Copper Works, American Smelting and Refining. All are now gone.

It would have been possible for some incubator or small-scale manufacturing enterprise to fill those old buildings and generate new economic activity, but the environmental laws essentially precluded that. As a result, businesses that had long thrived in Perth Amboy fled or just closed down. In the city's heyday, the industrial base paid two-thirds of the taxes. By 1989, three-quarters of the tax base was residential.

By the end of the 1970s, the waterfront and the marina—the jewels of the city—were falling apart. Downtown stores were boarded up, and many people were moving away from the city.

Nevertheless, Perth Amboy continued to be what it had always been—a port of entry for immigrants—but this time, the newcomers were Hispanic. Initially, they came from Puerto Rico, and later from Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. Today, about 75 percent of the population of 48,000 is Hispanic, representing virtually every Spanish-speaking country.

A Changing of the Guard

The era saw changes in leadership at Beth Mordecai and Shaarey Tefiloh. In 1967, Rabbi Barry Dov Schwartz, a native of Brookline, Massachusetts, succeeded Rabbi Davidson as rabbi of Temple Beth Mordecai. Rabbi Davidson, who had served

Beth Mordecai for 39 years, served as Rabbi Emeritus until his passing in September 1977. Rabbi Barry Dov Schwartz left Beth Mordecai in 1973.

Cantor Leopold Edelstein succeeded Gershon Ephros in 1957 and served until his retirement in 1973. From then on, Beth Mordecai went through a series of rabbis and cantors, who served a dwindling congregation. The rabbis included Rabbi Hilel Rudavsky, who served from 1985 until his death in 2006; Rabbi Melinda Zalma, who served from 2006 to 2012; and Rabbi Ari Saks, who succeeded her in 2012.

Rabbi Albert Schwartz served Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh from 1959 until 1983, when he was succeeded by Rabbi Aaron Chomsky, who served from 1983 until 1992.



YMHA building after 1975 fire

In 1981, with a dwindling congregation, Congregation Beth Israel sold the building on Jefferson Street to a Christian church, enabling it to remain a house of worship. Many Beth Israel congregants joined Shaarey Tefiloh and continued to pray there. The Torahs and other sacred items were given to Shaarey Tefiloh.

Two Fires

In 1975, fire destroyed two of the Jewish community's most treasured buildings.

On February 12, a blaze obliterated the YMHA. Almost everything was lost. Among the items saved were two jumbo-sized photos of winning YMHA basketball teams and a photo of the 1938 Perth Amboy High School championship tennis team. As Executive Director Israel Silver said, "The entire Jewish community sat *shiva*."

Just three months later, on May 13, 1975, Shaarey Tefiloh experienced the same fate. The fire originated in the basement storage area of the Good Guys Department Store at Smith Street and Madison Avenue (the location occupied by Fink's Department Store until six months before) and soon filled the store with smoke. A ruptured gas line in the back of the store fed the flames.

In three hours, the three-story store was a smoking shell. Its back wall collapsed into the synagogue, allowing the fire to catch under the eaves. The column of smoke from the blaze was visible more than five miles away. Some 100 firemen were on the scene from Perth Amboy, South Amboy, Carteret, Hopelawn, Madison Township, Fords, and Port Reading. They brought five snorkel trucks and five other trucks.

Around 4:00 p.m., the roof of the synagogue collapsed, obliterating 12 irreplaceable stained glass windows, each one a memorial from some of the oldest families in the congregation. The main rosette was also smashed in the firefighting effort. The Torahs and other sacred objects had been safely removed hours earlier by a human chain formed by Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. But Shaarey Tefiloh—the "gates of prayer"—was closed for the first time in 71 years.

"We are never without prayers at Shaarey Tefiloh," said Rabbi Albert B. Schwartz. "And we are saying prayers of gratitude that our Torah scrolls and other sacred objects were saved." Hours after the last flames had been smothered, he led

his congregation in a morning prayer service at nearby Congregation Beth Israel, which became the temporary home of Shaarey Tefiloh.

"It has been a part of our life since we were children," said the 81-year-old Nathan Margaretten at the time. "Our father was a very Orthodox person and made sure all of his sons attended services there twice a day."

"We can never dictate what will happen, but we can dictate how we respond to it," said Rabbi Schwartz at the time. "When a person dies—or when a temple burns—there is only one thing to say, *baruch dayan ha-emet* (blessed is the true Judge)."

Top: New Shaarey Tefiloh synagogue, built in 1976

Center: Isadore Bey, Russell Bey, and Morris Ginzberg carry Torahs to the new synagogue





A New Shaarey Tefiloh

Eighteen months after its fire, on November 28, 1976, a new Shaarey Tefiloh was completed on the corner of Market and Water Streets. The one-story structure was built by Leon Sewitch and Sons, Inc., a Perth Amboy business established in 1907 by Leon Sewitch, who was later joined by his sons Sonny, William, and Shep Sewitch. The synagogue was designed by Abraham Goodman, a Linden architect, who sought to give the windowless synagogue a tentlike quality, with a rising domelike roof to evoke the original.

On opening day, the Torahs were carried through the streets by nine men under a bright red canopy used in wedding ceremonies—"the wedding of the Torahs into law"—in a joyous, dancing procession to the congregation's new home. Much of Perth Amboy shared in the rejoicing. The procession followed a color guard from Post 43 of the Jewish War Veterans, led by Evelyn Saltman, a former WAVE, and George Cohen, an Air Force veteran, who served as grand marshal.

As a truck-mounted two-piece band broke into spirited Hasidic music, Rabbi Schwartz, wearing a homburg, cutaway, and striped trousers, broke into a dance, and most of the other marchers followed his lead. At the halfway point of the parade route, Rabbi Schwartz organized the marchers into a *hora* circle that grew larger as more and more marchers joined in.

"Warmest greetings to Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh," read a sign on the First Presbyterian Church, along the parade route. As the marchers passed along Smith Street, apartment windows shot up, and residents waved and applauded the line of dancers.



George Cohen leads a procession down Smith Street carrying Torahs to the new Shaarey Tefiloh synagogue, 1976

Former Assemblyman David I. Stepacoff led the dedication ceremony, during which 95-year-old Cantor Emeritus Hirsch L. Chazin sang the *shehecheyanu* prayer, thanking God for enabling the congregation to reach this milestone. Rabbi Schwartz likened his congregation's emotions to the joy of King David "leaping





Top left: Dedication of new YMHA, 1978

Top right: Photo includes Iz Silver, Dave Pavlovsky, Nate Witkin, Rabbi Albert Schwartz

Right: Perth Amboy Seniors lunch program at YMHA



Event dedicating rebuilding of YM-YWHA in Perth Amboy, 1975 Photo includes Dave Pavlovsky, Morris Margaretten, Rabbi Albert Schwartz



and dancing before the Lord. It was a transcendent joy." However, membership in the congregation would subsequently decline as Jewish families continued their exodus from Perth Amboy.

The Y as a Senior Community

Almost immediately after the fire that destroyed the YMHA in February 1975, the community began the process of rebuilding. Much of its fundraising base had been lost as families moved away, and the money came primarily from $90,000 in insurance, plus contributions from the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County and the United Way of Central Jersey.

In 1978, a new 15,000-square-foot building was constructed by Leon Sewitch and Sons, Inc., on the original site. Unlike the old Y, which was a beehive of activity for people of all ages, the new facility was essentially a senior center for Perth Amboy's aging Jewish population.

Nate Witkin, who was building committee chairman and president of the Y, said at the time: "The Jews of Perth Amboy have something very precious, often lacking in suburbia: roots, a tradition of commitment and community. We didn't want our older population just to crawl into the woodwork. But we took care of all our people. We stayed with them. If we didn't do it, they'd get lost."



Mayor Joseph Vas, Nate Witkin, and George Cohen show off a new van for YMHA Seniors

By the 1990s, senior programming had become the Y's sole activity. Twenty-five people were regulars; another 25 visited infrequently. The Y provided lunch three days a week, exercise and entertainment programs, medical services, and Jewish holiday and birthday celebrations.

No longer sustainable, the building at the corner of Madison Avenue and Jefferson Street was sold in February 2003 for $1.6 million to the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc., which provided social, economic, health, and educational programs for the Middlesex County Puerto Rican community. The Y donated its remaining memorabilia and documents to the Jewish Historical Society of Central Jersey and gave its plaques to the families of those who were honored on them.

After 80 years as a center of Jewish life in Perth Amboy, the Y closed its doors officially on April 21, 2003.

By 2012, very few Jews lived in Perth Amboy. Although Beth Mordecai continued to function, there was insufficient support for an Orthodox synagogue, and services were no longer conducted at Shaarey Tefiloh. But thanks to the dedicated efforts of descendants of those who are buried there, the Jewish cemeteries of Perth Amboy are being cared for and are open at all times to visitors who wish to recall and honor their ancestors, as well as pay tribute to the century of rich and vibrant Jewish life in Perth Amboy.



Chapter Twelve

From Perth Amboy with Love

A Tale of Memories and Pride

Those who grew up in the Perth Amboy Jewish community feel gratitude toward their ancestors and take pride in their roots, even though they may now live far from the city of their childhood. The education imparted by Perth Amboy High School has had a major influence on those who attended the school in their youth, and the school is proud of its many graduates who have gone on to successful careers. As a way of honoring alumni for their achievements, Perth Amboy High School established the Perth Amboy High School Hall of Fame in 1985 and annually selects alumni for induction. As of 2012, over 25 percent of the inductees have come from the Jewish community. They are listed below.

A PERTH AMBOY WHO'S WHO

Perth Amboy High School Hall of Fame:

Alan Cheuse, Ph.D. (Class of 1957) – professor of creative writing, accomplished and prolific author of fiction and nonfiction, book reviewer for National Public Radio

Stanley N. Cohen, M.D. (Class of 1952) – pioneer of genetic engineering, accomplished medical researcher, recipient of National Medal of Science

Roy S. Doctofsky (Class of 1946) – pharmacist, trustee on several governing boards, active member of several charitable organizations

Fred M. Fishkin (Class of 1969) – veteran radio journalist, specialist in technology reporting, producer of *Boot Camp*, recipient of the Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Reporting from the national Radio-Television News Directors Association

Ruth Eisemann Fost (Class of 1957) – playwright and pioneer in creating and delivering theater arts education nationally and internationally to young audiences in all socioeconomic groups, promoting arts education and cultural diversity

Alan Goldsmith, Ph.D. (Class of 1966) – director and founder of the Jewish Renaissance Foundation and the Jewish Renaissance Medical Center

Kenneth E. Greenhouse (Class of 1970) – chair of Voice Department at Berklee College of Music, choral conductor, music specialist, and recognized music educator

Gail Mandel Gross, Ed.D. (Class of 1963) – nationally recognized expert, author, and lecturer on juvenile education, behavior, and development issues; veteran radio talk show host

Opposite:
Front row: Mike Shevell, Henry Safran, Billy Mayer, Lew Korb; back row: Allen Weingarten, Lenny Schwartz, Tommy London, Billy Gindin

ELIN GURSKY, SC.D. (Class of 1968) – international public health expert, specialist in communicable diseases and bioterrorism, recipient of many writing and achievement awards

EDWARD HERBERT (Class of 1926) – teacher, director of guidance at Perth Amboy High School, founder of special-education classes, and active member of many charitable organizations

CHARNEY MADRAZO HERST, PH.D. (Class of 1946) – clinical psychologist, author, lecturer, recipient of several awards for volunteer work

LEWIS KADEN, J.D. (Class of 1959) – law professor at Columbia University, vice chairman and chief administrative officer of Citigroup, trustee and chairman of several governing and advisory boards

ISABEL BLUM KALFAIAN, J.D. (Class of 1955) – assistant district attorney for Brooklyn, trial lawyer, public relations agent

LEO KLEIN (Class of 1923) – teacher, notable track coach, athletic director, and vice principal at Perth Amboy High School

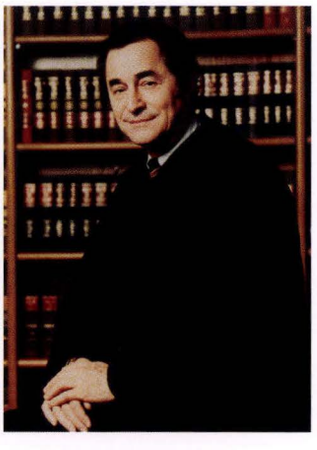
ANN SELKOWITZ LITT (Class of 1971) – nationally recognized nutritionist, speaker, author, and columnist

SEYMOUR OLIET, D.D.S. (Class of 1945) – endodontist, researcher, mentor, founding dean of the Nova Southeastern University School of Dental Medicine

MICHAEL PERLIN, J.D. (Class of 1962) – professor at New York Law School, international authority on mental disability law, recipient of several awards for publications on mental disability law

JANET BERNSTEIN RABINOWITCH, PH.D. (Class of 1954) – director of Indiana University Press, publisher, editor, recipient of many awards, named one of the top 50 women in book publishing by *Book Business* magazine

New Jersey Chief Justice Robert N. Wilentz



SYLVIA BARKAN RIMM, PH.D. (Class of 1953) – psychologist, author, speaker, columnist, gifted-children's advocate

BARBARA BRAUN ROSS (Class of 1953) – award-winning Broadway and off-Broadway producer

MARTHA LEIBOWITZ ROTHMAN (Class of 1957) – outstanding architect specializing in health care and academic science projects, founding member of the American College of Healthcare Architects

DONNA GOLDMAN SEWITCH (Class of 1941) – devoted volunteer who used her talents and creativity in support of the city of Perth Amboy, Perth Amboy Public Schools, and the Perth Amboy Public Library

MONA M. SHANGOLD, M.D. (Class of 1964) – women's health specialist, pioneer in sports gynecology, author, columnist, speaker

MYRON P. SHEVELL (Class of 1953) – chairman and CEO of New England Motor Freight, philanthropist

HOWARD SLOBODIEN, M.D. (Class of 1939) – surgeon, president of the Medical Society of New Jersey, distinguished leadership amongst physicians

ELI SOBEL, PH.D. (Class of 1933) – Germanic language scholar and authority, chairman of Department of Germanic Languages and associate dean of the Gifted Students and Honors Programs at UCLA, recipient of many military honors, president of the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast

Robert Spector (Class of 1965) – journalist, best-selling author of business books (*The Nordstrom Way*, *Amazon.com: Get Big Fast*), international speaker and consultant on customer engagement and corporate culture

David Stepacoff, LL.B. (Class of 1925) – attorney with an active trial practice in criminal and civil cases, New Jersey assemblyman, World War II Coast Guard veteran

Joan Turkus, M.D. (Class of 1951) – forensic psychiatrist, authority on post-traumatic disorders, president of International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation

Ida Berman Whitman (Class of 1934) – pioneer in women's sports, winner of over 100 tennis tournaments, including New Jersey state championships in 1938 and 1990

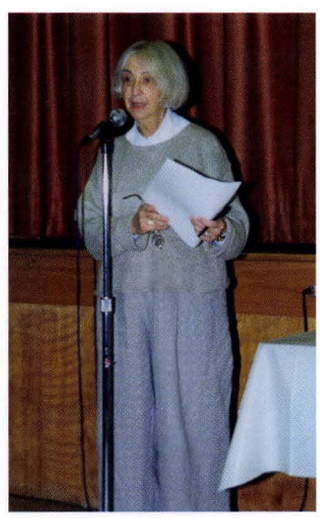
David T. Wilentz, LL.B. (Class of 1912) – *Perth Amboy Evening News* sports editor, New Jersey attorney general successfully prosecuting Bruno Hauptmann in the Lindbergh kidnapping trial, Democratic political organizer, founder Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer law firm

Robert Wilentz, J.D. (Class of 1944) – New Jersey assemblyman, longest-serving chief justice of New Jersey Supreme Court

Warren W. Wilentz, J.D. (Class of 1941) – Middlesex County prosecutor, Middlesex County counsel, attorney and partner Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer

Norma Stein Witkin (Class of 1941) – accomplished poet, parodist, composer, and lyricist, recognized for devoted public service to diversified groups in the city of Perth Amboy

Marc A. Zagoren (Class of 1958) – professor of theater, author, playwright, winner of Literature Fellowship from National Endowment for the Arts



Norma Witkin speaks at Temple Beth Mordecai

Other Noteworthy Perth Amboy Jews Include:

Esther Beckhoff – first woman attorney in Middlesex County

Miriam Gutman Braverman – professor of library science at Columbia University and political activist

Charlotte Chaney – Army nurse, treated liberated prisoners at Dachau concentration camp

Gene Galen, M.D. – creator of the Galen Capsule, used to obtain intestinal biopsy samples

Charles A. Goldstein – New York attorney specializing in international art law and the restitution of Holocaust looted art, as well as real estate law, former general counsel to the Citizens Budget Commission in New York City

Barbara Goldman Schneiderman – pianist and nationally acclaimed author, lecturer, and music teacher

Arthur Sills – attorney general of New Jersey, 1962-1970

Blanche Eisemann Sosland, Ph.D. – educator, author, lecturer, noted authority on strategies for eliminating a climate of bullying

Herbert Zagor, Ph.D. – nuclear physicist, developed programming for the analogue computer

The Ties to Perth Amboy Endure

"Whenever you meet people from Perth Amboy or who were from there, anywhere in the world, there's a special kind of kinship," said Robert Fishkin, who described life growing up in Perth Amboy as "very insular. Our families were tightly knit. That's all we knew. Even the few people that we would socialize [with] when we were out of town, it was because one of them was originally from Perth Amboy."

Marilyn Rosenberg Roth commented: "When I would tell friends here in New York that I was going to a high school reunion, they would ask me 'Why?' They had attended different schools in different locations and felt no loyalty to their fellow students during any of those brief periods of time. When I would explain that I would be seeing people that I went to kindergarten through high school with, they were amazed and could then understand why I was looking forward to it."

Renee Klein said: "Perth Amboy connections are worldwide. Everywhere you go, you meet people with Perth Amboy connections."

David Robinson, whose father had a grocery and butcher shop in Port Reading, summed up what many of us thought about our town: "What a wonderful life! The Perth Amboy culture allowed me to develop socially and even to make a living and live lovingly with a family. It was a town that could do that. It was a great place to grow up in."



Family Tributes and Commemorations

We are grateful to the families and individuals whose generous financial support enabled the preparation and publication of this book.

Jacobson Family

Nathan Jacobson was born in the Russian village of Chesnick in 1872, the middle of three sons. After his mother died when he was three, his father, Yeruchin, married Sarah and they had six more children: Sam, Leo, Sidney, Rebecca, Rose, and Sol.

Because young men in Russia were often conscripted into the army to serve for extended periods, many left home at a young age and found their way to America. At the age of 19 Nathan, too, left home and made his way to the "Golden Land."

After arriving in New York, on the recommendation of a *landsman* he found his way to Perth Amboy. Once there he invested in small amounts of merchandise, went door-to-door to sell, and with the small profit bought more inventory and left again to sell. Peddlers like Nathan were usually treated as welcome visitors, traveling town-to-town and bringing news not easily available by other means.



Bertha Benjinsohn Jacobson and Nathan Jacobson

Very quickly, Nathan accumulated enough capital to open a men's haberdashery store at 318 State Street. Four years later he found a bride and brought her to Perth Amboy. Bertha Benjinsohn, then 18, had come from the same Russian village and had arrived when she was 12 with her parents, Bernard and Brina, and siblings Haika, Dora, Sam, Olga, Frances, and Sarah.

Nathan's business thrived and in 1907 he built a three-story building at the State Street address with two floors for the store and living quarters on the third. He invested in real estate and in 1912 bought a home at 157 Kearny Avenue, now a part of the historic Proprietary House property.

Both Nathan and Bertha were instrumental in founding institutions and organizations to care for their community's needs: synagogue, cemetery, Hebrew school, Hebrew Free Loan society, fraternal organizations including insurance and burial funds, and benevolent societies. Among her numerous affiliations, Bertha was a founding member of the Perth Amboy Chevra Kadisha as well as the Original Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, where she was president for 25 years and secretary for another 25.

During all those years Nathan and Bertha did what many Jewish immigrants did: they remembered their families in Europe and sent for them. They paid their fares, housed them, established them in business, and arranged *shidduchs* for a few.

In 1914 Nathan died suddenly at the age of 42. The tragedy shook the town. Despite the hardships of an early widowhood and the many problems of raising and educating five small children, Bertha carried on working and never wavered in her devotion to organizational work and participation in community activity. She ensured that her children were well educated and that the family remained close, celebrating every holiday together until her death at age 82.

Although she ran the men's store successfully, she eventually sold it to Leo Jacobson and in the early 1930s opened her own dress shop, with dresses priced at $2.88 and $3.88 to reflect the conditions of the Depression. Jay-Zee remained open and she continued to work there—buying, selling, and making alterations—until her death in 1961.

Nathan and Bertha's children—Ruth, Lydia, Murray, Rae, and Ira—followed their parents' examples in terms of achievements and impact on the community. Ruth and Lydia studied education and music and were talented musicians, Ruth in voice and Lydia in piano. They married, respectively, Is Jacobson and Morris Goldfarb, two friends who formed a real estate and insurance partnership in 1922 (Jacobson and Goldfarb). Although they had no children of their own, they served *in loco parentis* to several generations of nieces and nephews. All were vitally active in the Perth Amboy secular and Jewish community, serving in lead positions on planning boards, Board of Education, Housing Authority, Parking Authority, and the Welfare Board, among many others.

Murray became a physician, married Jean Krafchik, and had two children: Norma (Robin, Bonnie, Susan) and Joel (Laura). Rae, a kindergarten teacher, married Phil Rosengarten; their children were Nancy (Jane, Eric, Bruce) and Barry. Ira, a wholesale food salesman, married Maybelle Meyers; their children were Neal (Steven, Marc, Daniel, Adam) and Diane (Meridith, Jonathan, Brian).

Both Nathan and Bertha set a high bar for subsequent generations, who they hoped would develop into outstanding American Jews and Jewish Americans. They left a legacy of civic and charitable responsibility, leading by example rather than by words. Long before feminism was an issue and single-parenthood a choice, Bertha demonstrated qualities that would inspire her progeny: wisdom, wit, independence, generosity, and, always, familial commitment. Late in her life, when she had reached the age where she could have gracefully retired and rested on her numerous laurels, she explained her choice to remain actively involved in her community with her philosophy that "to retire from activity is to retire from life."

Upper photo:
Front row: Norma Jacobson, Joel Jacobson, Neal Jacobson; middle row: Rae Rosengarten, Ruth Jacobson, Bertha Jacobson, Lydia Goldfarb, Diane Jacobson, Maybelle Jacobson; back row: Barry Rosengarten, Nancy Rosengarten, Is Jacobson, Murray Jacobson, Jean Jacobson, Morris Goldfarb, Ira Jacobson

Lower photo:
Jacobson Family – Chanukah 2006 Front row: Bruce Metzendorf, Stephanie Hochman, Emily Guadagno, Phoebe Bogdanoff, Michael Lehman, Grace Lehman, James Sui; second row: Marc Jacobson, Jane Guadagno, Donna Wrenn, Meridith Lehman, Ian Lehman, Diane Parks, Bleu Parks, Dawn Jacobson, Daniel Jacobson, Pat Guadagno; back rows: Barry Rosengarten, Nicole Rosengarten, Elaine Hartman, Bill Kaplan, Norma Messing, Nancy Metzendorf, Carole Corral, Robin Messing, Jamie Bogdanoff, Jon Parks, Jamie Parks, unidentified, Bonnie Messing, Cameron Jacobson, unidentified, unidentified





The Kaden-Selkowitz Family

Reuben Kaden and Marion Selkowitz met in Perth Amboy in the mid 1930s and married in 1940. Reuben's parents, David Kaden and Mollie Pasternack, met in New York after both came to the United States from Russia between 1906 and 1907. Jenny Pasternack, Mollie's sister, who had recently married David's father, Lewis Kaden, introduced them. David's mother, Rebecca, had died in Russia when David was 16. David and Mollie married in 1908 and settled on Division Street in Perth Amboy. They had five children, of whom Reuben was the middle child and the only son. After Division Street, they lived for a time on New Brunswick Avenue before buying a house at 161 Brighton Avenue.

Lewis and David started a transport company with two wagons and five horses when they settled in Perth Amboy. It soon became D. Kaden Trucking, which grew into a fleet of 70 trucks, transporting canned foods for Flagstaff Foods until that company stopped producing canned food products in 1955. Reuben joined the family business after receiving his degree in accounting from New York University. Reuben later acquired a chemical tank carrier, James J. Keating, Inc., which he subsequently based in Perth Amboy.



50th wedding anniversary of Mollie and David Kaden, 1958





Left: Sylvia, Reuben, and Ruth Kaden, 1915

Right: Wedding of Don and Lenore Selkowitz, 1946

Marion Selkowitz had moved to Perth Amboy in 1937 from North Adams, Massachusetts, following her parents, Jacob and Anna, her sister, Evelyn, and brothers, Donald and Herbert, who had moved the previous year. Her father, a baker, suffered severe injuries in a truck accident and needed medical attention at Manhattan Ear and Eye Hospital in New York for many months. Soon after Marion met Ruby, they were married and bought a home at 58 State Street, not far from both parents. They had three children, Lewis in 1942, Jean in 1945, and Daniel in 1948. Each of them, like Reuben and his four sisters, Sylvia, Ruth, Cecilia, and Bernice, graduated from Perth Amboy High School. Marion's sister and brothers also graduated from Perth Amboy High School.

Both Marion and Reuben were very active in the Perth Amboy Jewish community. Reuben was president of the YMHA in 1954 and Marion was president of the Women's Division of YMHA in 1955. In 1966, Marion and Reuben were co-chairmen of the UJA-YMHA campaigns. They continued in these positions for a few years. Reuben was also president of the Jewish Community Council. Marion served as financial secretary for the Auxiliary of the Central NJ Jewish Home for the Aged and was active in the Sisterhood of Temple Beth Mordecai. Perth Amboy and the Jewish community remained continuously important and influential aspects of Reuben's and Marion's lives.

Goldstein/Zalutsky/Sanders Family

Morris Zalutsky, born in Vilna, Russia, arrived in New York City through Ellis Island in 1904, when he was 26 years old. Morris took the last name of his brother-in-law, Jacob Goldstein.

His soon-to-be wife, Ida, whom he knew in Ostryna, Russia, followed him to New York one year later. They married in 1906 and their first child, Sadie, was born in 1907. They lived on the Lower East Side and moved to Perth Amboy. We guess they knew people from the old country who lived in Perth Amboy.

They owned a dry goods store on outer State Street and lived upstairs. Three more children were born in Perth Amboy: Sophie, Samuel, and Irving. Wanting his children to have the Zalutsky name, Morris legally changed the family name back to Zalutsky. The family became part of the Perth Amboy Jewish community and Morris was a founder of Congregation Beth Israel. After he died in the early 1930s, Ida continued to run the store, a typical family business.

Sadie married and began to raise her own family. Sophie, who became deaf from a childhood illness, was able to graduate high school and worked in the New York City garment district as an accomplished seamstress. Sam worked for a Perth Amboy candy wholesaler. Irving graduated from New York University and the University of Pennsylvania Dental School and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, ultimately establishing a dental practice in Perth Amboy.

So how did the Zalutskys become Sanders? Two family stories: When Irving was an officer in the navy during World War II, the sailors would salute him, but they had trouble pronouncing Zalutsky, so when he returned to Perth Amboy, he convinced the family to change the name. Alternatively, Ida was convinced no one would want to be a patient of a Dr. Irving Zalutsky. The last part of the story: Ida opened the phonebook and just picked out the name Sanders because she liked the sound of it.

The Goldstein-Zalutsky-Sanders family were hard workers. If something failed, they went on to the next thing. They stayed close to each other emotionally and geographically. Sam's and Sadie's families lived in a two-story house on Madison Avenue. Irving's dental office was across the street, and Sophie and her mother, Ida, lived upstairs from the dental office.



Zalutsky (Sanders) Family
Morris Zalutsky, Sam, Irving, and Sadie (behind counter)

Belafsky Family

Abraham Belyavsky, from Konotop, Chernigov, Russia, arrived in Perth Amboy in 1880. He changed his name to Bell in 1927 and opened Bell's Meats in Matawan.

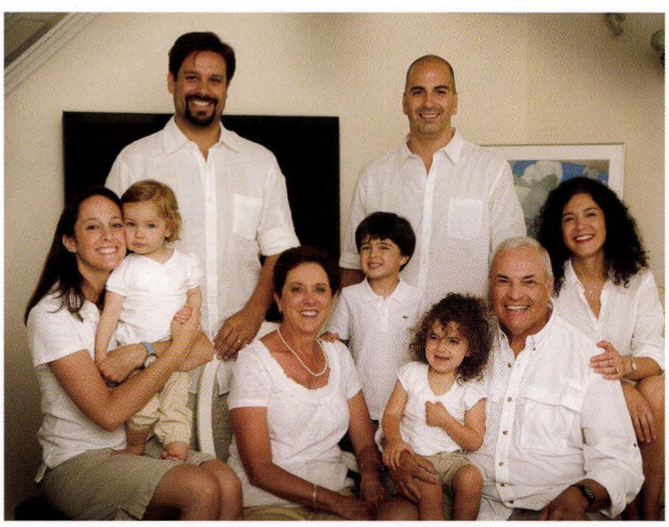


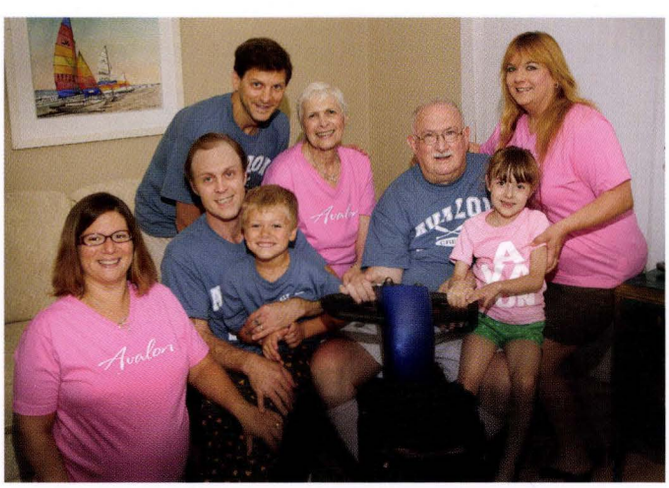
Yitzhak Leib Belafsky was Abraham's brother. His son, also Abraham, and Abraham's wife, Matel, established the Woodbridge Belafsky branch. Their daughter, Rebecca, married Henry Golub of Perth Amboy.

Ida Mollie Belafsky, Abraham's and Yitzhak's sister, married Benjamin Frankel of Perth Amboy.

Beryl Belafsky, Abraham's brother, established the Belafsky and Bey families of Perth Amboy.

The photographs show the grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren of Abraham and Matel Belafsky (Woodbridge branch).





Photos from top to bottom:

Family of Mark Belafsky: Celeste Trivers, Samantha Belafsky, Peter Belafsky, Caryn Belafsky Trivers, Allie Belafsky, Cooper Belafsky, Sheri Belafsky, Mark Belafsky, Quinn Trivers, Betty Belafsky. Not pictured: John Trivers

Family of Robert Belafsky: Meredith Belafsky Swartz, Sasha Swartz, Benjy Swartz, Abby Meistrich Belafsky, Noah Berman, Michael Berman, Mira Berman, Robert Belafsky, Tara Belafsky Berman

Family of Sheila Belafsky Chodosh: Lisa Chodosh, Rich Rebnicky, Jeffery Chodosh, Matthew Chodosh, Sheila Belafsky Chodosh, Bruce Chodosh, Callie Rebnicky, Debbie Chodosh Rebnicky. Not pictured: Samuel Chodosh

Ginzberg Family

It was love at first sight for Gussie Goldsmith and Morris Ginzberg in Jonava, Lithuania, but their families had arranged a marriage between Morris and Gussie's older sister instead. The ensuing clash inspired Gussie and Morris to elope in 1920 and immigrate to America in 1922, seeking a better life for themselves and their descendants.



Front row: Lydia, Harriet, and Meyer Ginzberg; back row: Gussie and Morris Ginzberg

Morris, an intelligent young man born in Dukstas, Lithuania, in 1891, had left school after 7th grade because he had been conscripted to serve in the Russian and Polish Armies. His own mother had said Kaddish for him because she hadn't heard from him for more than one year—only to be overjoyed when she learned he was still alive.

Gussie's paternal uncle Jonah Goldsmith helped Gussie and Morris travel to the U.S. with their one-year-old son, Meyer, in 1922. Lydia and Harriet were born in Perth Amboy soon after the family arrived.

Gussie and Morris established Ginzberg's Haberdashery and worked hard to make ends meet. They quickly learned English and became American citizens and active members of the Perth Amboy Jewish community. Morris served as president of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh, Perth Amboy Hebrew School, and the Hebrew Fraternity, as well as chairman of the Chevra Kadisha. Gussie served as secretary of the Original Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society and was also an active member of several other organizations.

Despite their own struggles, they remained inspiring role models for their children and grandchildren, always emphasizing education and hard work—and always demonstrating love, faith, integrity, and generosity. Meyer's premature and untimely death at the age of 13 was a painful loss to the young family. Lydia later married Martin Singer and had two children: Joanne (married Murray Kaplan/ children: Renee and Jay) and Jack (married Debbie Klein/daughter: Meredith). Harriet married Jack Shangold and had two children: Mona (married Gabe Mirkin/ son: Kenneth) and Gary (married Yvette Anderson/sons: Harlen and Justin).

Gussie and Morris lived frugally so that they could be generous to others. Their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have followed their legacy of community service and charitable responsibility.

Eisemann Family

Dr. Moses and Kate Eisemann escaped Nazi Germany, with the help of brother Gustave, and arrived in Perth Amboy on July 4, 1934. Dr. Eisemann held a research position at the American Smelting and Refining Co. until his retirement in 1965. He did secret work on the Manhattan Project, which he never revealed until interviewed by his grandchildren in the late 1980s.

Soon after they arrived in Perth Amboy, Kate and Moe attended Shabbat services at Temple Beth Mordecai, where they were surrounded by people who wanted to know what was really going on in Germany. Terrified that "they would be turned in for talking," they were reassured that they were now in a free country—something they cherished their entire lives.

Kate (Katja) had been executive secretary at the largest newspaper in Berlin before the war. In Perth Amboy, she served as Rabbi Max Davidson's secretary for many years. She was an avid reader and a firm believer in good nutrition and exercise.

Moe was active in the Temple Brotherhood, and served on the Temple's Board and as its president. He also served on the Jewish Welfare Board during the war.

Kate and Moe had two daughters, Blanche Judith, born in 1936—the first American-born child in the family, a fact that made her parents proud—and Ruth Helen, born in 1939 and delivered at Perth Amboy General Hospital by Dr. Fannie Sender, who became Moe's second wife several years after Kate's death.

The Eisemanns never let their daughters forget how fortunate they were to live in America. Their children's and grandchildren's educational accomplishments are a testament to their legacy:



Eisemann Family
Front: Ruth and Blanche; back: Kate and Moe

Blanche Eisemann Sosland, Ph.D., married Neil Sosland, B.A.
Ruth Eisemann Fost, M.A., married Arthur Fost, M.D.
Debbie Sosland-Edelman, Ph.D., married Alan Edelman, M.A.
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Michelle Fost, M.A., married Michael Chazan, Ph.D.
David Fost, M.D., married Patty Fost, B.S.
Elisabeth Fost, Ph.D., married Eric Maring, B.A.

In Memory of Eleanor Goldman Leibowitz

September 13, 1912 – September 18, 2008

Eleanor was the last living member of her generation of the Goldman family. She was the daughter of Max and Fannie (Berger) Goldman, and she remembered fondly her Uncle Barnet and Aunt Sarah Goldman, who are buried at the cemetery next to her parents. Eleanor spoke often of her time in Perth Amboy—1912 until 1977, when she moved to Boston, where she lived for many happy years until her death in 2008. She was predeceased by her husband, M. Murray Leibowitz, who died in 1999.

We want to honor her in remembrance of Perth Amboy Jewish history.



Fannie and Max Goldman

Her family, the descendants of Max and Fannie Goldman, includes:
Martha (Goldman) Leibowitz Rothman and Elliot Paul Rothman
Sabine Rothman and Amy Breedlove, and their son
Russell Barnett Rothman Breedlove
Adam Rothman and Marian Currinder, and their daughter
Frances Eleanor Currinder Rothman
Erik Rothman and Juan-Manuel Olivera-Silvera

The surviving family of Eleanor's brother, Benjamin, and Betty (Weinblatt) Goldman includes:
Richard M. Goldman
Sidney (Shep) Sewitch, husband of Donna Goldman Sewitch
Scott and Nancy Sewitch, son and daughter-in-law of Shep and Donna Sewitch
Nicholas and Catherine C. Sewitch, son and daughter-in-law of Shep and Donna Sewitch
Patrick Sere, husband of Melissa Sere, daughter of LeRoy (Goldman) Gould and Freda (Rosenzweig) Gould
Tatiana Leigh Sere Dorman, daughter of Melissa and Patrick Sere, and her husband, Brett Andrew Dorman

In addition to Eleanor's brother Benjamin, sister-in-law Betty, their daughters Natalie and Donna, their son LeRoy and his daughter Melissa, she was predeceased by Lena Goldman Blum, daughter of Max Goldman, and Lena's daughter Marjorie Blum Schlachter.

We want also to remember the many descendants of Max Goldman's brother Barnet Goldman and his wife Sarah.

Pavlovsky Family

The Shoulders Upon Which We Stand

This tribute is to our extraordinary parents, Francis and Eleanor Pavlovsky. Theirs was a true Perth Amboy love story: They grew up on opposite sides of the same block of State Street.

Our parents not only gave us life, they taught us to live with integrity, beauty, and kindness. Their love for us—and for each other—was our greatest treasure.

We wish to pay tribute also to the grandparents who molded our parents: Dorothy and Abraham Pavlovsky and Isadore and Jeanette Siegel.

They will live forever in our hearts.

— Arnold Pavlovsky and Jeannie Pavlovsky Castells







Top: Francis Pavlovsky and Eleanor Siegel at the time of their engagement, 1946

Bottom: Jeanette Kramer and Isadore Siegel at the time of their engagement, 1913

Above: Dorothy Fenischel and Abraham Pavlovsky at the time of their engagement, 1907

Winograd – Cohen/Kagan and Wagner – Rosenberg Families

We honor our parents, Augusta and Samuel Kagan, for their love and guidance throughout our wonderful childhood years growing up in Perth Amboy and their legacy of connection to family and place.

We honor and remember our grandparents, Benjamin and Mary Cohen-Kagan and Lillian and Barney Rosenberg. We remember with pride the Winograd and Wagner families and their strong Perth Amboy ties.

Rachel Kaminsky Winograd and Isadore Winograd came to America from Kletz, Minsk, Russia. They had seven children: Joseph, Alice, Jenny, Mary, Lena, Anna, and Julius. Six generations of Winograds and hundreds of family members have been spread throughout the United States from east coast to west coast, but we remember our Perth Amboy roots and admire the courage of Rachel (Bubba) and Isadore and their children for leaving their Russian home to make a better life for themselves and generations to follow. We remember the Winograd women and their extraordinary cooking skills, producing memorable Jewish dishes.

Mary Winograd married Benjamin Cohen (Kagan) and had four children: Harry, Edith, George and Samuel.

Marie and Isadore Wagner also traveled to America from their Russian home. There were eight Wagner children: Al, Benjamin, George, Rachel, Lillian, Hattie, Tonchin, and Harry. Some of the Wagner descendants settled in Perth Amboy, and as a young child I had warm family memories of Perth Amboy at 120 Lewis Street as the gathering place for the Wagner family and for the MUSIC that was a staple of the Rosenberg household. Generations of Wagners are located all across the United States, and their love of family, music, and life is a common thread.



Augusta and Sam Kagan, wedding photo, January 1, 1941

Lillian and Barney Rosenberg had three children: Marvin, Mary, and Augusta.

Augusta Rosenberg and Sam Cohen (the name was later restored to Kagan) married on New Year's Day in 1941. Their children, Barbara, Richard, and Susan, share cherished memories of growing up in Perth Amboy. All the Kagan great-grandchildren—Hunter, Emma, Jack, Sophia, Julian, and Leyla Littman and Zealand Kagan Law—can be proud of the legacy of their great-grandparents.

We hope that reading this tribute book will help our children and grandchildren connect to and appreciate the roots of our family long gone and the city of Perth Amboy.

— Barbara Kagan Littman

Parnes Family

Jacob and Anna Parnes were the founders and proprietors of a small bakery which became a virtual legend in the city of Perth Amboy. They emigrated from Eastern Europe to New York and then moved from New York to Perth Amboy sometime after 1912, when their only son, David, was born. After Dave, they had three daughters—Molly, Frances, and Esther—and each of the children eventually worked in the business.

Dave took over the running of the bakery in the late 1940s after graduating college and serving in the army during World War II. He shared the daily running of the store with Morris Pecarsky and Emmanuel Adler, his brothers-in-law. Conrad Diener, another brother-in-law, was also involved. Eventually, branch stores were opened in Woodbridge, Carteret, and Sayreville, and an extended wholesale route, delivering to delicatessens and grocery stores in the surrounding towns, was established.

Superiority of ingredients and careful monitoring of products were the bywords of the Parnes Bakery. Say the words "rye bread" or "hard rolls" to anyone who grew up in Perth Amboy, and they immediately smile and begin to reminisce about the best rye bread and hard rolls ever.

Dave and his mother, Anna, were the driving force behind the bakery, but Dave's wife, Margaret, and her co-worker Grace Kirally were the artists who made Parnes cakes famous. Their birthday and wedding cakes were simply gorgeous in their artistic reproduction of flowers and other decorations.

There was also a memorable sales force: Alice Olsen, a bundle of energy in a small package; Bella Shangold, the nighttime supervisor, who cared for the store as if it were her own; Dottie Szemchak, who had a smile for everyone and made everyone feel they were an important part of a well-run organization; and Dave's sister Molly, who had a sweet smile and a kind word for all.

Parnes Bakery was a hard seven-day-a-week business, but it will always remain a source of pride and a symbol of quality for everyone in our family.

Parnes Bakery, Inc.

238 NEW BRUNSWICK AVENUE
PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

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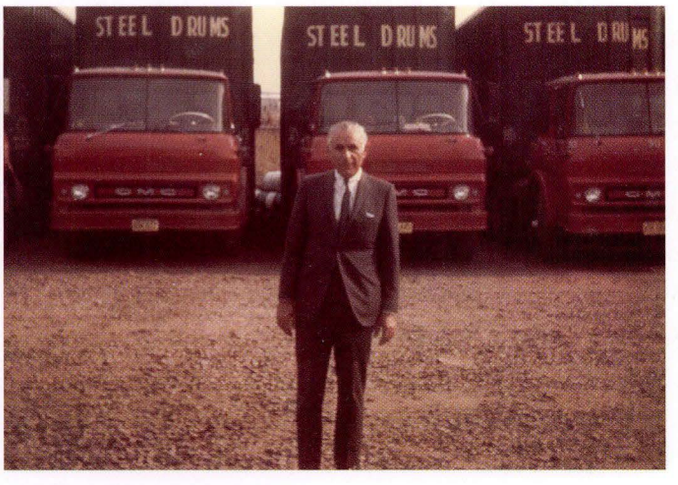
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Bey Family

Abraham Bey arrived in America from Romania in 1922 alone. He lived in New York City until his wife (Rose) and children (Anna, Edyth, Isadore, Samuel, and Sidney) joined him in 1923. The family moved to Perth Amboy in 1924. Isadore and Samuel joined their father in the cooperage business (buying, reconditioning, and selling old wooden barrels) in the 1930s and then purchased their own factory, continuing in the wooden barrel business.

Harry Feder emigrated from Russia in the early 1900s and lived in the Spotswood/Englishtown area, where he had a tailor store. He married Tema Epstein, also from Russia, and together they had four children: Samuel, Eva (Schnitzer), Rose (Helfand), and Sylvia (Bey). In 1929, the family and business moved to Perth Amboy, where they remained until Harry's death in 1953 and Tema's death in 1958.

Isadore Bey and Sylvia Feder were married in 1934 and raised three children (Janice, Gilda, and Russell) in Perth Amboy.



Above: Isadore Bey

Isadore and Samuel closed their wooden barrel business in 1949 and began producing 55-gallon steel drums for the oil and chemical industries—naming their new business Russell-Stanley after each owner's first-born son. By 1959, the business had become the largest independently owned steel drum factory in the country.

The family remained active in the Perth Amboy Jewish community and were strong supporters of Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh until Isadore's death in 1980, Sylvia's death in 2003, and the closure of Shaarey Tefiloh in 2011.



Right: Bey Family
Seated: Sylvia Bey; standing: Isadore Bey, Janice Bey, Gilda Bey, Russell Bey

The Segal/Siegel Family

Moses Segal (1848-1926) and Reisel Golosoff Segal (1848-1930) came to Perth Amboy immediately after entering the United States on March 3, 1906. Moses had been a merchant in Berdjansk, Ukraine, then part of the Russian Empire. Moses and Reisel operated a Perth Amboy dry goods store and later an apartment building. Several descendants were also merchants.

Their seven children eventually came to the U.S.: Sonia (1869-1955), Harry (1870-1949), Grisha (1875-1946), Freidal (1879-1910), Anna (1882-1965), Isadore (1885-1968), and Constant (1887-1957). Some birth years are approximate. The eldest five married before immigration.

Sonia married merchant Samuel Koltunoff. Their children were Esther and Annie. After Samuel's death, she married tobacconist Harry Goldstein in Perth Amboy. They had a daughter, Dorothy.

Harry married Hannah Yowell. Their children were Sarah, Ida, Israel, and Ruth. Harry operated several Perth Amboy businesses his first three decades in the U.S., including an Amboy Avenue store with brother Constant and a dairy with (among others) cousin Philip Levine.

Grisha Siegel married Betty Milwitsky. Their children were William and Herbert. They were the last to immigrate (in the early 1920s) and lived in Perth Amboy only briefly.

Freidal married Izak Mehaloff. Their children were Lucy, Lillian, and Theodore. Izak was a Perth Amboy-area grocer into at least the 1940s.

Anna married Nathan Golosoff. Their children were Jeanette, Rose, Sadie, and Freda. They operated a Perth Amboy millinery shop in the 1920s and 1930s.

Isadore Siegel, a physician in Perth Amboy for several decades, married Jeanette Kramer of Perth Amboy. Their children were Ralph, also a physician; Eleanor, who married dentist Francis Pavlovsky; and Natalie. After Jeanette's death, Isadore married Esther Kramer.

Constant married Anna Glass (apparently of Carteret). Their children were Robert, Miriam, and Melvin. Constant operated a store on Amboy Avenue into the 1950s. Nephew Israel later operated the store.

The original family surname had been Ziegelneitsky. Two branches spelled the shortened surname as Siegel. Some members were known by other given names within the family and/or before coming to the U.S.

The Segals are connected to other Perth Amboy families in addition to the marriages listed above. Moses's sister, Fannie, had married shoe merchant Joseph Slobodien, who sponsored the immigration of several family members. Reisel's sister was Rose Slatkoff. Rose's daughter Sonia married Boris Rabiner, who was a Perth Amboy pharmacist, as was Rose's son, Samuel.

Submitted by Carl Fields, based on information collected by Susan Segal and others.

In honor of
MICHLA AND LAZARUS ISENBERG,
their children, and grandchildren

MEYER ISENBERG	DAVID ISENBERG	SARAH LEVINE	ETTA JACOBSON
Min Boyers	Regina Slutsky	Esther Levy	Ruth Harris
Etta Dimond	Joseph Isenberg	Eleanor Kass	Jerome Jacobson
Alice Bernstein		Grace Copleman	
Gerson Isenberg		Theodore Levine	
Judith Greenfader			

With love from Ruth Jacobson Harris *and Isenberg great-grandchildren:*
Martha Copleman, Nancy Isenberg Freifeld, Lawrence Isenberg, Stephen Kass,
Vicki Harris Lemberg, Emme Kass Pedinielli, Janet Bernstein Rabinowitch,
Carol Levine Roberts, Emily Harris Rubinfield

With Love We Remember

Reb Ben-Zion & Chaia Mera Greenberg
Minnie & Nathan Morrison
Beatrice & Nathaniel Copeland
Malvin Morrison
Evelyn Morrison
Bertha & Joseph Rosenberg
Bernard & Jean Ross
Howard Ross

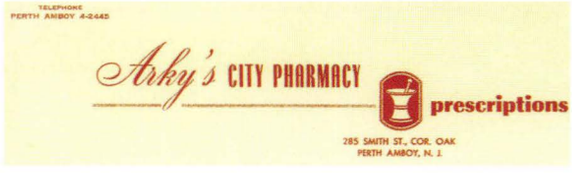
In memory of
Emanuel (Manny) Goldfarb
and
Robert (Bob) Goldfarb
and
all the Goldfarb family

Betty Goldfarb and Vivian Goldfarb

Rita Arky Aber

Ronald, Stanley and
Norman Arky

Bob Arky



In Memory of

SAMUEL AND DORA GALINSKY

of Ostryna, Belarus

Thank you for coming to America

EUGENE H. GALEN, M.D.

Remembering and Honoring
Our Loved Ones

DR H. P. and DORA FINE
FANNIE and SAMUEL FINE
PAULINE and MAX GUTH

ANNELLEN and MURRAY GUTH

In loving memory of my parents and sister

Dorothy Sussman Sher
Charles Sher
Barbara Sher Levy

and my grandparents

Bessie Mann Sher
Jacob Sher

Joan Sher Meister

To honor the Lubinsky-Madrazo family

MAX AND ETHEL: ABE, HARRY, SAM,

IDA GRAY AND SYLVIA MADRAZO

By

CHARNEY HERST AND DAVID MADRAZO

and their families

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Max *and* Julia Silverman,

our grandmother, Ida Silverman,

and our uncle, David Silverman,

who enriched our lives.

Arthur Silverman *and* Marilyn

Silverman Berkowitz

We Proudly Honor:

LENA (LEAH) STILLMAN

ISIDORE (IZZY) STILLMAN

RUTH STILLMAN

ANNE ROSENBLUM

IRVING ROSENBLUM

Jack and Marcy Stillman

Donors

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Sources

The following is a list of the principal sources consulted in researching and writing this history of the Perth Amboy Jewish community, including published and unpublished materials. The unpublished texts listed under "Memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies" were provided to the project by members of the respective families, local synagogues, and other organizations.

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