A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership

The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El), Providence, Rhode Island

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Hazzan and Mrs. Abram Jacobs. *Hazzan* of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel 1862–1869. Photo in Temple Beth-El Archives.

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Preface

The story of the Jewish community of Providence and more specifically that of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David recapitulates in many ways the development of other American Jewish communities and Reform congregations. Yet it has its own special qualities and its own cast of characters. To compile this interesting chronicle and to make it a part of American Jewish history appeared to the author to be a worthwhile project.

When Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman envisioned a celebration of the 125th anniversary of the founding and chartering of the congregation (1979–1980), both he and the late Rabbi William G. Braude proposed that I write a history of the congregation. Because of other commitments at the time, I respectfully declined, foreseeing it as an undertaking of major proportions.

By early 1983 my circumstances had changed sufficiently so that I concluded that the project would now be feasible for me. Although Geraldine S. Foster had prepared a handsome anniversary pictorial book for the celebration, no one was working on a formal history. I approached Rabbi Gutterman and then-President Carl H. Feldman expressing my willingness to take on the laborious task, and my offer was warmly accepted. After some preliminary research, progress was interrupted and slowed for a time by my having to take on other publishing responsibilities, but gradually the undertaking gained momentum. Past President Melvin L. Zurier during his incumbency provided enthusiastic encouragement and succeeded in arranging solid financial support for the venture.

A decade has passed since the concept of a history first germinated. We now look forward hopefully to having it come to fruition in time for the 135th anniversary of the congregation in 1989–1990.

Acknowledgments

I have a special admiration for the unsung heroes of research, the librarians who work quietly, unassumingly, and unrecognized in their priceless repositories. I must mention especially those laboring in the libraries and archives of Temple Beth-El, the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Jewish Archives, the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Brown University Library, and the Providence Public Library. I also wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to the temple staff and the temporary outside scribes who patiently transcribed on a word processor my often difficult handwritten manuscript. Executive Director Robert M. (Rob) Goldberg lent has invaluable assistance in efficiently overseeing this arduous process and displayed his keen insight in monitoring our negotiations with the compositor. Temple Archivist George M. Goodwin has contributed substantially in helping to identify and select photographs and other graphics to be used as illustrations in this work.

I am especially indebted to Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman for his counsel and careful editing of the manuscript and to the several others who patiently read an early draft and offered valuable suggestions and detected embarrassing errors—Eleanor F. Horvitz, Geraldine S. Foster, Pearl F. Braude, Melvin L. Zurier, and Helene D. and Bertram L. Bernhardt.

Finally, I must express my deep gratitude to my wife, Bonnie, for her assistance in typing and her encouragement, judgment, and incredibly meticulous proofreading. To the others who may have contributed to this effort and who through unintentional oversight or the confines of space have gone unmentioned, I extend my apologies and my sincere appreciation.

Major Sources Employed in Compiling This Work

The author is particularly indebted to the seminal work of the late David Charak Adelman (1892–1967), the first archivist of Temple Beth-El and founder of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. He wrote a history of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, covering the first sixty years of the Providence Jewish community from the arrival of Solomon Pareira in 1838 to the purchase of land for the Friendship Street Synagogue in 1887. This account was published serially in the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* and later reprinted in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*. The account is especially valuable for the wealth of detail ferreted out by him from public records to fill out the period of 1854–1876, the records of which unfortunately were lost in a synagogue fire. His work was reliable and historically accurate.

The primary source for the remaining history are the meticulously kept minute books of the congregation and board of trustees virtually intact from 1876 to the present. They are in handwritten manuscript until after the turn of the century. The bulk of the history comes directly from these records. When sources are not documented in the text, the reader will assume that they are derived from the congregational records. Although the sequence is not always strictly chronological, it is close enough that a researcher would have no difficulty in identifying a citation in the original. The *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* has been used freely and also *The Organ*, likewise published by the congregation and covering an earlier period.

Another valuable source was Rabbi William G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," appearing in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*. The files of the latter publication, established by

David C. Adelman in 1954, in general have been an invaluable repository of relevant information and have been used frequently.

Personal interviews with the late Rabbi William Gordon Braude, Pearl F. Braude, Irwin N. Silverman, Melvin L. Zurier, and others have lent color to the narrative.

The sources of biographical data when taken from standard works are usually not identified. A frequently used resource for members of the rabbinate were the Yearbooks of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. A large-sized pictorial souvenir book, *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David—One hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary—A pictorial memoir*, edited by Geraldine S. Foster and published by the congregation in 1980 (undated and unpaged) is also a useful source of information about Temple Beth-El.

English transliterations from the Hebrew generally follow the practice of *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* [R. J. Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, editors; New York, Chicago, San Francisco; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966]. English translations from the Yiddish generally follow Leo Rosten [*The Joys of Yiddish*, New York, Toronto, London, Sydney; McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968]. The aspirate Ḥ is generally rendered H.

References to frequently used sources are usually abbreviated after the first citation. Examples are listed below.

Abbreviations of Frequently Used Sources and Repositories

D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community":—
David C. Adelman, "Early Days of the Providence Jewish Community," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:148–159, (December) 1960.

D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David":—
David C. Adelman, "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El), The Early Years," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:195–261, (May) 1962.

W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian":—
William G. Braude, "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:345–372, (November) 1981.

W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II":—
William G. Braude, "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:402–441, (November) 1982.

RIJHA:—
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association archives.

CHAPTER ONE

The Minyan and the Charter

There have been Jewish settlers in Rhode Island for more than three hundred years. The first Jews emigrated from Barbados to Newport, Rhode Island as early as 1658 upon the recommendation of one Captain Campa-Subados of Jamaica, who had operated in Rhode Island waters from 1653 to 1658 and had personal knowledge of Roger Williams. He extolled the virtues of the colony of Rhode Island as a haven of refuge.[1] Although not much is known of the fortunes of these early settlers, by the middle of the eighteenth century there was a prosperous, growing, and important community, which, although small, participated vigorously in the mercantile activities of Newport and contributed substantially to its Golden Age. Such names as Aaron Lopez and Abraham Rodrigues Rivera loom large in its contribution to Rhode Island prosperity.[2] During the Revolutionary War the community came upon hard times and never again regained its earlier importance. The last of the largely Sephardic Jewish settlers of Newport left for good in 1822.[3]

Not long thereafter Jews began to appear on the scene in Providence. Bayles, in his his *History of Providence County*, noted: "A few of that denomination [Jews] had resided here for many years. After the Spanish and Portuguese Jews were driven out of Newport . . . , a few of them came to Providence, but they were not strong enough to organize a synagogue. They passed the years in unorganized seclusion until the time of which we have spoken [1855]."[4]

According to the late David C. Adelman, the scholarly historian of Rhode Island Jews, "The name of [Solomon] Pareira is not the first name of a Jew to appear in the Providence Directory, although the census of 1850 shows that he was the first Jewish settler." He

added that the eldest child of Solomon and Miriam Pareira was born in Rhode Island and was in his twelfth year at that time, "which shows that Pareira came to Providence in 1838 and was the first Jewish settler."[5] Jacob Rader Marcus, dean of American Jewish historians, has cautioned against designating any Jew as the first in a community, because, he observed, "There is always another who has been there before."[6]

As Adelman himself realized, there had been Jews in Providence before that date. The Providence city directories, first published in 1824 and thereafter at three year intervals, were, he observed, inconclusive on this point, as there had been many omissions in the listings, and could not be relied upon to establish priority. The question may be a semantic one and is resolved by Pitterman who described Pareira as the first *permanent* settler. Segal and Goldowsky noted that one James Jacobs, a dry goods merchant, was listed in the very earliest Providence directory of 1824. He advertised his dry goods wares extensively in *The Providence Daily Journal.* His name appeared until 1832, and then once again in 1852 after a lapse of twenty years. Further, one Samuel Lopez, a "jeweller", was also listed in the directory of 1824. He and his brother Jacob had attended the grammar school on Meeting Street in Providence between 1810 and 1820 and, according to Adelman, was probably a nephew of Aaron Lopez of Newport. In 1824 he married the daughter of one Benjamin Tallman, Jr., a gentile, in the First Baptist Church of Providence. His listing last appeared in 1828–29. Our story, however, begins with Pareira, probably the first permanent settler.[7]

Following the Napoleonic Wars Ashkenazic (Eastern European) Jews began their mass migration to America. The German Jews, shaken by the European revolutions of the 1840s, came first, and only later did immigration from the poverty-stricken ghettos of Eastern Europe occur.[8] Providence, spurred by the enterprise of the Brown family and other wealthy merchants, had supplanted Newport as the chief port of Rhode Island. The railroads, still in their infancy, gave Providence overland access to the rest of the country. The west shore of the Providence River, running along Pine and Dyer Streets and around Exchange Place, formed Weybosset Neck, where the first Jewish settlers lived and carried on their businesses.[9]

Providence, in the neighborhood surrounding Weybosset Bridge, which spanned the river from Main Street to Weybosset Neck, was

a beehive of activity. It was the terminal of the Union Horse Railroad and bordered the harbor, which was full of sailing vessels of every description. Steamboats plied the waters between Providence, Fall River, Newport, Stonington, New London, and New York. There were eight railroads running to all points of the compass. Trains made two trips daily to Boston, and Long Island Sound steamers two sailings a week to New York. A daily train to Stonington, Connecticut connected with a boat to New York. The best trade was skimmed off by old-line firms such as Gladdings and Taylor & Symonds, which occupied the best locations. The Jewish merchants were obliged to fight for the sailors' business along the waterfront and the trade of the poor, and indeed they did.

Restrictions in Europe had confined Jews to the ghettos and further had limited them to menial trades. In their new land they picked up the threads of their lives where they had left off, as tailors (repairers of clothes) and dealers in second-hand clothing, serving a ready market, particularly along the waterfront. There were no ready-made clothes, and only the rich could afford a tailor, while the poor wore the discarded clothes of the rich. In David Adelman's words: "The first Jewish settlers of Providence were of the aristocracy, for they were shop keepers and necessarily capitalists."[10]

In the directory of 1847 appeared the name of John Nathan, who lived on Elbow Street and operated a clothing store on Westminster Street. As early as 1844 he had advertised in *The Manufacturers and Farmers Journal* (Providence). He described himself as "a tailor and clothes dresser from London", who "from his long practice in Europe is able to work on a plan different from any ever tried, garments apparently worthless are rendered valuable; faded clothes brought to their original colors." He paid the "highest cash price for cast off clothes and offered a variety of second hand clothes for sale cheap for cash." Adelman described him as "the first Jewish advertiser and apparently the first cleanser." Neither is true, as James Jacobs preceded him in both respects. According to the 1850 national census, Nathan, aged thirty-three, was born in England. His second of four children, seven years of age at that time, was born in Rhode Island, indicating that Nathan and his wife Caroline, aged 31, had come to Providence between 1841 and 1843. Although Nathan appeared in the city directory of 1847 while Pareira was not listed until 1850, Pareira appears to have arrived some three to five years before Nathan. Nathan was not listed after 1855.[11]

The Providence Directory of 1850 listed nine families with Jewish names, one short of a *minyan*.[12] Yet the small group gave evidence of a community consciousness. As was generally characteristic of new Hebrew communities, they sought to establish a consecrated burial ground even before they had a house of worship. The Jewish settlers of Newport, for example, had purchased land for a cemetery in 1677, more than three-quarters of a century before they built their famed synagogue in 1763. In 1849 the handful of Providence Jews had sent a communication to Shearith Israel, the Spanish-Portuguese congregation of New York, requesting permission to bury their dead in the cemetery in Newport. The heirs of Jacob Rodrigues Rivera and Moses Lopez had conveyed title to the synagogue (later known as Touro Synagogue) and to the Jews' cemetery in Newport to Shearith Israel. The New York congregation advised that application be made either to the town council of the city of Newport or to the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island. At that time neither, in fact, had jurisdiction over the synagogue or cemetery, and there is no public record of their having made such an application to the legislature.[13] The records of the city of Cranston, however, show that on September 10, 1849, one Francis Haswill conveyed about an acre of land on the New London Turnpike (now Reservoir Avenue) to Solomon Pareira, Leonard Gavitts (or Garritts), and Morris Steinberg, to whom the land was assessed at a valuation of $100—the tax was twenty cents. This became the site of a burial ground.[14]

Solomon Pareira, born in Amsterdam, The Netherlands about 1809, was the grandson of Jacob Rodrigues Pareira (b. 1745) and the son of Abraham Haim Van Jacob Pareira (b. 1785) and Mintje Levie. No relationship to Abraham and Isaac Pareira, wealthy stockholders of the Dutch West India Company of Amsterdam, has been established. He married Mintje (Miriam) Halberstadt, born in Holland, the daughter of Isaac, in Amsterdam on March 23, 1838 and brought his bride to Providence the same year. He sired no fewer than twelve children, the first four born in Providence.[15]

In 1850, at the age of 41, Pareira operated clothing stores on Westminster and Orange Streets, while he lived nearby on Pine Street. One David Deyoung (DeYoung) was listed as a tailor on Orange Street next to one of Pareira's stores. He was later employed by both Pareira and Pareira's brother-in-law Leonard Halberstad, probably as a clerk or tailor. Pareira, as did his contemporaries,

moved his business frequently. He was a kind and generous man and commanded the respect of the growing Jewish community. He was, as described by Adelman, a venturesome optimist, having bought a one hundred dollar share of the new Providence and Plainfield Railroad Company. It was soon obliged to merge with the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad and assessed its stockholders an additional ninety dollars.[16]

According to tradition, Pareira's Jewish neighbors worshiped in his home and possibly in the homes of others of the small Jewish community. His daughter, Mary Pareira Hirschorn, years later in 1920 recalled that as a very young child she could hear through a chink in the door of the living room of her father's home on Bridgham Street in Providence the voices of men reciting prayers. That would possibly have been as early as 1844 when she was four or five years old. The Bridgham Street address raises some questions, as it was some blocks west of the area where most of the Jews lived and worked at that time. As Pareira was never listed as living on Bridgham Street, and was not listed at all in 1844, it remains a matter of speculation.[17]

By 1855 Pareira was reduced to ownership of one store on Orange Street. In 1856, one year before the panic of 1857, he was financially embarrassed, and his name was missing from the directory of 1856. His seventeen-year-old son Israel, however, was listed as a jeweler at the Orange Street address. Records of the Board of Aldermen show that the elder Pareira was granted a license in 1856 and 1857 to conduct an eating saloon on Orange Street.[18]

These were difficult times in Rhode Island. According to a report in *The New York Herald*, the state "was up to its eyes in railroad securities taken for circulation to be distributed in Western States," and "banks held a considerable amount of them, and loans were very high." On September 28, 1857 *The Providence Daily Journal* observed: "There never before were two such weeks as closed upon the business of Providence last Saturday. Money continues at unmitigated rates . . . there is hardly any cotton in the market . . . it is impossible to raise money to pay labor and a dreary winter is before us." Two days later, 24 percent interest was offered by borrowers, and specie payment was suspended by the banks.[19]

Pareira, who had been taxed for $800 from 1851 to 1854, was assessed for $1,500 in 1855. However, his name abruptly disappeared from the tax list in 1856, and he soon found himself a

defendant in a number of lawsuits for non-payment of obligations. In 1858 he left Providence for good, and moved to Cincinnati as one of its early settlers. He died there in 1895. His effective leadership in establishing a congregation in Providence is a significant part of this story.[20]

The status of other members of the small Jewish community is relevant to its development. John Nathan, whose name was the first to appear in the directories of this period, prospered well. Taxed for five hundred dollars in 1848, his personal property valuation increased by increments of five hundred dollars a year, reaching twenty-five hundred dollars in 1853. Abraham Wormser, in the hosiery and fancy goods business on Westminster Street, lived in the City Hotel on Weybosset Street. Comparatively well off, his personal property tax assessment rose from one thousand dollars in 1852 to seven thousand in 1857, and his real estate assessment from thirty-four hundred dollars in 1855 to eighty-six hundred in 1856.[21]

Joseph Stern, born in Poland, was thirty-two years of age in 1850. He was a clothier at 8 Washington Building on Washington Row on the Providence River. His wife Esther was born in Pennsylvania. They had three daughters all born in Rhode Island, the first in 1841, and lived variously on Mathewson, South Main, and Dorrance Streets.[22]

Henry Solomon in 1852 was single and was a clothing dealer on South Main Street. He was peripatetic, conducting his business on Broad, Weybosset, and North Main Streets, while he lived variously on Transit and Richmond Streets, at the Central Hotel, and as late as 1874 with his brother-in-law David Frank on Friendship Street.[23]

Jacob R. Hershorn (also Hirschorn) was born in Fuerth, Bavaria in 1829. Leaving his widowed mother and sister behind, he fled from revolution-torn Europe and landed in Baltimore, Maryland on his way to New York, which he reached late in 1846. Since he had no relatives or acquaintances there, he would visit the Café de Paris on Broadway, a rendezvous for French and German men "of distinction", as he put it. Here he met a French nobleman of the old school, one Count Gustav De Bougars. They conversed in French for all of a week and became life-long friends. One day, out of the blue, the count said: "Jacques, I have a proposition to make to you. I have no relatives, no family in this country. I am all alone. Come with me as my protégé. I hold a commission as captain . . . in the New York Volunteers raised for the Mexican War. You will get a

position in the army, you will fight for 'Uncle Sam' and you will see a great deal of the world." Jacob consented. In 1903, at the age of 74, he published at the request of his children and grandchildren "The Mexican War Reminiscences of a Volunteer." Hershorn came to Providence in 1854 and in partnership with Raphael Frank opened a hosiery and embroidery shop in the Arcade. They lived on Congdon Street, the first Jews to live on the East Side of Providence. They were in business together as late as 1860. In 1856 Hershorn married Solomon Pareira's daughter, Mary, and lived on Page Street. Although there is no record of this marriage in the Providence Registry, a photostatic copy of the *ketubbah* (marriage agreement) is extant.[24]

In 1855 Solomon Cook conducted clothing stores on Washington and Broad Streets and later on North Main Street across the river, while he lived on Clemence Street. The settlers in this period conducted their businesses variously on both the east or west sides of the Providence River. Cook died on January 16, 1859 and was the first member of the congregation to be buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery.[25]

Abraham Goodman lived and conducted a clothing store on South Main Street. Isaac Fish was listed as a "trader" on Page Street, while Morris Marks ran a tailor shop farther west on High Street.[26]

While the name of Leonard Halberstad[27] does not appear in the Providence Directory until 1858, court records indicate that he was in business with his brother-in-law Solomon Pareira in 1856. After Pareira left Providence, Halberstad remained in business on High Street and lived on Pine Street. He is buried in the cemetery for Dutch Jews in Melrose, Massachusetts. In 1917 his granddaughter, Kate Slocum, received from Mary Pareira Hershorn, Pareira's daughter, a copy of the Ten Commandments, the Hebrew letters cut out of gold paper and pasted on a blue paper background. This in the early days had hung in the Pareira home. Marion L. Misch, who received this nostalgic item from Kate Slocum, had it framed and presented it to the congregation, which still treasures it among its collections.

In 1856 Solomon Pareira and his brother-in-law, Leonard Halberstad, were called upon to answer an indictment for receiving stolen property. They filed an affidavit which set forth that they had accepted the property as collateral for a loan and that they had made proper inquiries as to the ownership of the property. After a number

of court continuances extending over a period of a year, the attorney general refused to prosecute and the case was eventually dropped.[28]

Leonard Garits (also rendered as Garitz, Garrett, Garrits, and Gavitts), a grantee with Pareira and Steinberg of the cemetery land in 1849, was a native of Holland. He was 57 years of age. His wife Sarah, ten years his junior, was the mother of five daughters and one son, ranging in age from three to twenty, all born in New York. He was a merchant at various locations on Fenner, Fulton, and Broad Streets. He left Providence in 1854.[29]

Morris Steinberg, the third grantee mentioned in the Haswill cemetery deed, and his wife Caroline were born in Germany. He was thirty-one and she twenty-nine. In 1850 he was listed as a clerk on South Main Street. The following year, located on Washington Row, he sold his stock-in-trade, consisting of cloth, clothing, trimmings, and fixtures, to merchant Louis Lewisson.[30]

Louis Lewisson came to Providence in 1850 from Prussian Poland at the age of 29. His wife Amelia, born in Connecticut, was 25, and his daughter Sarah was one year old. They lived on Benefit Street, while he operated a clothing store on South Main Street. He was a merchandiser of considerable imagination. He advertised lavishly in the City Tax Book of 1852 and in the daily newspapers. An advertisement on the inside front cover of the tax book showed his store building with lettered banners flying aloft and signs across the front of the building. The inside back cover, simulating a dollar bill, showed a clipper ship in full sail and a sailor waving the American flag. His flamboyant merchandising style foreshadowed by half a century the later agressive advertising of the Samuels Brothers and the Outlet Company.

He gave away firewood and Thanksgiving dinners to the poor. His advertisements contrasted strikingly with the sober business cards and the four-line notices of prominent merchants such as Taylor & Symonds, Gladdings, and Blanding & Blanding. On the austere front page of *The Providence Daily Journal* in May 1855 he advertised: "Take notice that Louis Lewisson's Famous Clothing Bazar Nos. 21–23 South Main Street is now prepared to supply its customers with new and elegant assortment of spring and summer goods that will favorably compare both in quality and price with the goods of any other establishment in the world." Lewisson enlivened the Providence scene until 1861, when he left town for 30 years, residing in Worcester, Rochester, and New York City. When

he returned at long last in 1893, he maintained an office at 612 Westminster Street, where he also lived. He was still listed there in 1900.[31]

Raphael Frank was in the hosiery business with Jacob Hershorn in the Arcade from 1854 to 1860. David Frank in 1860 took over Raphael Frank's location in the Arcade, while both Franks lived at various locations on Friendship Street.[32] This small cadre of immigrants, most of whom ranged in age from 20 to 30 years when they arrived in Providence, became the founding fathers of the congregation.

On Sunday, January 8, 1854 a small group of men met, probably in the home of the bearded and patriarchal Solomon Pareira, to take a significant step hallowed by centuries of tradition. They formed a new congregation to be named Bnai Israel (Sons of Israel) and concluded certain agreements. The first officers were Solomon Pareira, president; Raphael Frank, vice president; Jacob R. Hershorn, secretary and treasurer; and Joseph Stern, Henry Solomon, and Leopold Steinberg, trustees. They signed an agreement to pay fifty cents a week. One Joseph Raphael Spiro, who was present, was engaged as *hazzan* (cantor and minister). He was paid five dollars and fifty cents weekly without the right to any other fees. The congregation agreed to provide a suitable place of worship prior to *Rosh Hodesh Elul* (the new moon—i.e. the first day—of the Hebrew month *Elul*), which in 1854 was August 15, well before the High Holidays. Hershorn announced that he would pay for the fence which had already been built around the cemetery on the New London Turnpike.[33] A few days later, on January 10, *The Providence Daily Journal* ran a column extracted from *The New York Times*, on an "interesting story of the remarkable [Rothschild] family", a world away. Yet it remained unaware for six months of a significant Jewish happening in its own back yard.

On January 13 the Reverend Spiro wrote to his mentor and confidant, the distinguished Rabbi Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, apprising him of this event. Leeser, who had emigrated from Prussia, had been minister of Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia. He was prodigiously active in Jewish affairs, a leader in traditional Judaism, and a pioneer in the organization of Jewish life in America. He traveled widely, promoting and dedicating synagogues and speaking on Jewish questions. Active in Jewish education and charitable affairs in Philadelphia, he published many books, edited *The*

Occident, an Anglo-Jewish monthly, and made Philadelphia the center of Hebrew printing in America. "I beg to inform you", Spiro wrote, "that we have established a congregation here in Providence. The whole membership met together last Sunday, and signed their names for supporting the society." After listing the officers and describing the dues and salary arrangement, he continued: "They also promised me to have a hall ready [in which] to perform and to deliver our prayers to our Holy God before *Rosh Hodesh Elul* and to fix everything in a suitable manner." The name of the congregation was *Bnai Israel*. He mentioned the burial ground with its new fence and added: "I hope I shall be able to inform you more about it next month" He concluded: "You will please send me *The Occident* as soon as possible."[34]

On January 18, 1854 Judah Touro, a loyal son of Rhode Island, died in New Orleans, his adopted city. In his munificent will, written only twelve days before he died, he expressed the "desire that my mortal remains be buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Newport, Rhode Island, as soon as practicable after my decease." He was, in fact, interred in Newport the following June. His body reached New York City by the steamer *Empire City* on June 4 and was thence transferred by the Fall River boat to Newport, arriving on June 6. It was taken immediately to the synagogue, where a funeral service was held, attended by one-hundred-and-fifty mourners from throughout the country, including many prominent Jewish leaders. Following the ceremony his body was interred in the nearby Jews' Cemetery, where a quantity of earth brought from Jerusalem was deposited on the grave.

Touro bequeathed ten thousand dollars to pay the salary of a minister of the Jewish Synagogue in Newport and to "keep in repair and embellish the Jewish Cemetery". He specified that the Gould brothers, David and Nathan H., oversee the improvements in the cemetery. Though gentiles, they had cared for the synagogue with vigilance, sensitivity, and devotion.[35]

Since Spiro was not mentioned in any of the notices of the services, it is a matter of speculation as to whether he attended. On Saturday, July 22, however, *The Newport Mercury* reported "that the Reverend Joseph Spiro, a Jewish Rabbi, who has recently organized a society in Providence, will hold service in the synagogue in this city [Newport] on Sunday, the 23rd, commencing at 5 o'clock PM. He will deliver a sermon on Religion, and read the

form of prayer for the dead in memory of the late Judah Touro. The public are invited to attend. The galleries will be occupied by ladies exclusively."

In the July issue of *The Occident*, Leeser noted: "We were in Providence on the 7th of June [after the Touro ceremonies in Newport] and we have since learned [actually Spiro had informed him in January] that a regular congregation has been formed under the name of *Bnai Israel*." He listed the officers, the choice of Reverend Spiro as minister, and plans for a place of worship. *The Providence Daily Journal* on July 14 took notice of the gathering of Congregation *Bnai Israel*, heading the item "The Israelites of Providence." Ironically, it learned of the event, not from a local source, but from *The Occident*, published in faraway Philadelphia. *The Newport Daily News* of July 20 in turn extracted the item from *The Providence Daily Journal*.

On July 25, Spiro wrote from his abode at the corner of Carpenter and Knight Streets in Providence to his "friend and teacher", Isaac Leeser, describing the events of Sunday, the 23rd in Newport. "I received your recent letter and would have answered it immediately," he wrote, "but I was just invited by the Gould brothers of Newport to give a service in the Synagogue." He described his prayer for Judah Touro and another "in behalf of the president and all the leaders and officers of the United States of America." The synagogue was filled, while the gallery was "less filled with women." "I hope", he continued, "that the men as well as the women were pleased with my remarks which dealt chiefly with religion." He mentioned *The Occident* to nearly everyone present, he noted, and "all wish to receive it."[36]

Later, on January 3, 1855, Spiro sent a long and pathetic letter to the "Revd. Mr. Leeser in Philadelphia." Matters had not been going well at *Bnai Israel*, and Spiro now found himself in New York City living on Third Avenue and without a job. He apologized for not having written sooner, but was so affected by "the present hard times", that he found it a burden to write. "But my dear sir," he wrote, "I can wait no longer—the daily question that my beloved wife asks me is 'What shall we eat?'" He feared he might be infringing on his mentor's valuable time, but pleaded for his help. "Sir", he continued, "you know my qualifications. I can teach in both the German and Portuguese *Minhag* [rite]." He was proficient in the Talmud and was able to translate the Bible in both languages.

He could teach German and would prefer a position as teacher, rather than as *Hazzan* (cantor) and *Shohet* (ritual slaughterer) as he was more accustomed to it. "I would feel fortunate," he continued, "if I could be near you!" Leeser's influence with the Hebrew education Society "would be enough" to procure that situation for him. He offered "as the greatest testimonial and reference" to teach one month on trial. Fervently he addressed his friend "as the happy Messenger of the only Creator." He begged for an answer "as soon as possible", and concluded "If you please, [do] something for me". Spiro's touching appeal is poignant testimony to his desperate circumstances. The plight of *Hazzan* Spiro was a sad reflection of the financial straits in which the small congregation found itself.[37]

Despite the difficult times, the fledgling congregation proceeded with its organization. At the May 1855 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly meeting in Newport, a petition was presented by Abraham H. Goodman, Joseph Stern, Henry Solomon, Jacob R. Hershorn, Solomon Pareira, David DeYoung, and Solomon Cook, stating "that they are desirous of forming themselves into a religious association to be known by the name Congregation of the Sons of Israel". On June 13, 1855 a charter was granted to Joseph Stern, Solomon Pareira, Abraham H. Goodman, David DeYoung (as we shall now render it), Morris Marks, Leopold Halberstad, Henry Solomon, and Isaac Fish as incorporators with the right to purchase and hold property in an amount up to twenty thousand dollars. Stern, Pareira, and Solomon were designated to call the first meeting. As Adelman noted, the names of petitioners Hershorn and Cook do not appear on the charter, and those of charter members M. Marks, L. Halberstad, and Isaac Fish do not appear on the petition. It is reasonable to infer, he speculated, that there was a question as to the citizenship of Hershorn and Cook, Hershorn, for example, not being naturalized until 1855.[38] This was the first charter granted to a Jewish organization in Rhode Island. The officers were those previously designated at the organizational meeting.[39]

The *minyan*, the quorum of ten adult males required for liturgical purposes, consisted of Abraham H. Goodman, Joseph Stern, Henry Solomon, Solomon Pareira, Jacob R. Hershorn, David DeYoung, Solomon Cook, Leonard Halberstad, Morris Marks, and Isaac Fish—those whose signatures appeared on the petition of 1855 and on the charter itself.[40]

The act to incorporate the Congregation of the Sons of Israel read

in part: "That Joseph Stern, Solomon Pareira, Abraham H. Goodman, David DeYoung, M. Marks, L. Halberstad, Henry Solomon, Isaac Fish, with their associates and successors, are hereby constituted, created and made a body politic and corporate for divine and benevolent purposes, by the name of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel, in the City of Providence, and by that name shall have perpetual succession."[41]

The number of Jewish family names listed in the Providence directories for the period 1850 to 1865 fluctuated between nine and twenty-two. There were likely other Jews in residence who did not make the directory listings. This small Jewish community was the source from which Congregation *Bnai Israel* drew its membership during this seminal period. According to Adelman, the congregation numbered eighteen male members at the outbreak of the Civil War.[42]

The congregation adopted the Sephardic *minhag*[43] for use in its worship, although most of its members were Ashkenazim, and no change was made until 1877, a significant year in the congregation's long history. While there were no theological differences between the Sephardim (the Jews initially from the Iberian peninsula) and the Ashkenazim (Jews initially of Franco-German origin, but later also of Eastern Europe), there were differences in their liturgy, cantillation, pronunciation of Hebrew, dialect, and cuisine. The Sephardim spoke Ladino (a medieval Castilian dialect), while the Ashkenazim spoke Yiddish (a dialect derived from medieval German). Both had an admixture of words from Hebrew and from the languages of the lands where the Jews had sojourned in their millenial wanderings. After the American Revolution the Ashkenazim, who came largely from Germany, Poland, and other Northern European countries, outnumbered the Sephardim. Yet, out of respect for the Sephardim and their long tradition of learning and culture, the congregation followed the Sephardic *minhag*.[44]

NOTES

1. "Did the Jews Settle in Newport in 1658?" *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:3, (Nov.) 1958.
2. Jacob Mark Jacobson, "Jewish Merchants of Newport in Pre-Revolution Days," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:332–377, (November)

1970. Also, Marilyn Kaplan, "The Jewish Merchants of Newport," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:12–32, (November) 1975.

3. See note 2, Kaplan, p. 28. While many of the early settlers of Newport were of Portuguese or Spanish origin and Congregation *Jeshuat Israel* (Touro Synagogue) was Sephardic (Spanish), there were northern European Jews (Ashkenazim) among them with such names as Hart, Isaacs, and Poloçk. See also Malcolm H. Stern, "Ashkenazim vs. Sephardim in the Colonial Era," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 10:163–175, (November) 1988, pp. 167–168.
4. Richard M. Bayles, Editor, *History of Providence County, Rhode Island*, 2 vol., v.1, pp. 481–482.
5. David C. Adelman, "Early Days of the Providence Jewish Community," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:148–159, (December) 1960, p. 148.
6. Quoted by Ann D. Michael, "The Origin of the Jewish Community of Cincinnati 1817–1860," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 30:172, 1972.
7. Beryl Segal and Seebert J. Goldowsky, "James Jacobs, Early Jewish Merchant of Providence, Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:461–470, (November) 1978. See also Marvin Pitterman, "Some Casual Observations," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:44–54, (December) 1958, p. 44; and "Samuel and Jacob Lopez," *Ibid.* 2:112, (April) 1957, and "Peter Spitz", *Ibid.* 1:232–233, (June) 1955.
8. The term *Ashkenazim*, meaning originally German Jews, came to be applied to all European Jews. The term *Sephardim*, the Spanish Jews, originally representing Jews of the Iberian peninsula, came to be applied to all of the Jews of the Mediterranean littoral and the Middle East who followed the Sephardic ritual and liturgy.

   While the Jews of the period were generally designated as German Jews, they were not uniformly so. For example, Solomon Pareira was born in Holland and Joseph Stern in Poland. Newman Pincus and Myer Noot of a slightly later period were born in New York. The partition of Poland in the 18th century resulted in the absorption of Western Poland into Prussia, confirmed by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Some of the "Prussian Jews" spoke Yiddish as a first language. See also "Dates and Statistics," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:236–237, (December) 1955.
9. D.C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," pp. 148–149.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
12. Minimum quorum of ten adult males required for liturgical purposes.
13. The records of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York City contain the following notation (v. 6, p. 4, dated July 1, 1849, cited

by William G. Braude, *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, v. 19, no. 10, January 23, 1946:

> A letter from sundry Jews in Providence, Rhode Island in respect to the burying of their dead in the *Bet Haim* in Newport and requesting the interference of this Board. The Clerk was directed to reply to the letter and recommending them to apply to the legislature of Rhode Island and Town Council of Newport.

14. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 149. Also David C. Adelman, "Reservoir Avenue Cemetery," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:244–246, (December) 1955.

R. M. Bayles in his *History of Providence County* (vol. 1, p. 292) wrote in 1891:

> On Reservoir avenue, and formerly in the Town of Cranston, is an enclosure, 15 by 150 feet, showing a few gravestones of a simple style. This is the holy ground of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel of this city. It is not so famous a spot as the Jewish Cemetery of Newport, but Longfellow's lines upon that, "How strange it seems, these Hebrews in their graves," point out to the observer here the sweet faith the Hebrew race entertains. The white marble slabs are all so placed that the sleepers will behold their promised Imanuel ["God is with us"] when the glorious day comes and appears in the east.
>
> About 60 bodies have been buried here. The grounds were presented to the Congregation of the Sons of Israel in 1856. . . . They were opened the same year, shortly before the Day of Atonement. From this time until 1882 the burying went on as the deaths befell without any event. September 10th, 1882, a ceremony of re-dedication took place [with President Henry Green and Acting Rabbi Myer Noot officiating]. . . . More than $1000 was spent putting the ground in order, so that to-day it is in a very neat condition. It does not contain any graves of the distinction of those of Newport.

15. David C. Adelman, "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El), The Early Years," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:195–239, (May) 1962 (p. 195). William Earl Caplin, great grandson of Mrs. Max Weil and great great grandson of Solomon Pareira, born in 1948, is currently living in Montreal, Quebec. Allen Wise, great grandson of Solomon Pareira, lives in Sacramento, California.

16. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," pp. 149, 152.

17. Presidential address of Charles C. Brown, delivered on November 20, 1932. Also Rabbi William G. Braude in the Ninetieth (*sic*) Anniversary program of Temple Beth-El, December 7–9, 1934. It was learned later that the actual date of the establishment of the congregation was 1854, not 1844. Both items in Temple Beth-El Archives.

Bicknell stated:

> Providence had a few Jewish settlers in 1769 (*sic*), but there was no communal activity until 1840, when Solomon Pareira of Amster-

dam settled there, followed shortly by enough others to make *Minyan*. A Congregation was thereupon formed, which met in Pareira's home. An alcove in his parlor was used for the Sepher Torah which was borrowed from New York for the Holy Days. (Theodore Williams Bicknell, *The History of the State of Rhode Island*, 3 vol. [New York, American Historical Society, Inc. 1920], p. 632. Cited in "Minyan, Shiva and Shroud, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:81, [November] 1971.)

Bicknell further states regarding the earliest period:

> There were itemized charges against Kalter's estate [probably Kastor] for ten men for *Minyan*, for the seven days' *Shivah* [seven solemn days of mourning], and for a bolt of linen for a shroud.

According to Bicknell the early Minyan consisted of Wormser, Stern, Pareira, Rashcover, Sternberg, Frank, Nathan, Solomon, Halberstad, and "Kalter" (probably Kastor).

18. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 152.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 152–153.
20. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 153; and D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 195.
21. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 153.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 154–155. Also *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* v. 1, no. 4, (December) 1955, front cover. The back cover of the same issue shows Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Hirschorn (Hershorn) at a game of pinochle.
25. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 155.
26. *Ibid.*
27. The name was spelled "Halberstadt" in Holland, but in America the "t" was dropped.
28. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," pp. 155–158. Also "Jews in the Court Records of Providence, 1739 to 1860," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:9–10, (June) 1954.
29. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 156.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, p. 148. Also Beryl Segal and David C. Adelman, "Louis Lewisson, A Pioneer Jewish Merchant of Providence," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:119–128, (December) 1954.
32. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 156.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
34. Joseph Spiro to Isaac Leeser, January 13, 1854, *Idem*, p. 150. Original in American Jewish Archives, photostatic copy in RIJHA.
35. David C. Adelman, "Life and Times of Judah Touro," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:262–283. Also *Newport Daily News* of June 7 and July 3, 1854; *Newport Mercury* of June 10, 1854. Nathan H. and David J. Gould were listed as drapers and tailors at 70 Thames Street, Newport, R.I.
36. Joseph Spiro to Isaac Leeser, July 25, 1854, American Jewish Archives, photostat in RIJHA. Letter written in Hebrew translated by Rabbi William G. Braude.
37. Joseph Spiro to Isaac Leeser, January 3, 1855. Original at Dropsie College, photostat in American Jewish Archives.
38. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 157.
39. "Chartered Organizations," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:21–85 (p. 21). The application for a charter and the charter are in the R.I. State Archives, photostatic copies in RIJHA.
40. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 157.
41. See note 38.
42. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 195. There is no documentation for this. He apparently based it on the number of Jewish family names in the Providence Directories for 1859 to 1861 (*Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:241, [December] 1955). The tradition has been perpetuated by others (Beryl Segal, *Rhode Island Jewish Herald*, November 5, 1954, cited in *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, One hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary, A pictorial memoir*, ed. by Geraldine Foster (c. 1980).
43. *Minhag* (Hebrew "custom"): religious custom or rite, the traditional rite of a particular community. More specifically *minhag* refers to a liturgical rite.
44. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 157.

CHAPTER TWO

The Early Years

All records of the congregation for the period 1854 to 1876 were destroyed in 1905 in a fire in the Rabbi's study in the Friendship Street synagogue. The history of the first two decades of the congregation is derived from public records and other sources for want of the missing records.

Times were difficult in 1856. The panic of 1857, precipitated by land speculation and credit overextension, was threatening. In February of 1856 the officers of the congregation addressed a letter to Congregation Shearith Israel of New York "soliciting some pecuniary aid." Shearith Israel contributed $25, for which they received "a letter of thanks from the Congregation Sons of Israel in Rhode Island."[1]

As Leeser pointed out in the December 1856 issue of *The Occident*, the establishment of *Bnai Israel* was part of a general movement toward organization of communities in the United States. He wrote: "Have our readers reflected on the increase of Jewish congregations all over the union? It is but a few years ago that one could count on his fingers the cities where Israelites had formed separate communities; whereas now they have worshipped in more than a hundred and ten localities . . . [among which is the] one in Providence."

Leeser's awareness of *Bnai Isael* prompted the congregation to ask him for help. On April 12, 1857 Abraham Wormser and Benjamin Shuman wrote to him as follows:[2]

> The Jews in this city are now quite a congregation, and they contemplate the erection of an edifice in which to worship the God of their fathers. Their means, by no means large, are inade-

> quate to build such a Temple as their hearts would desire. It having heard that the late Judah Touro of New Orleans left in trust certain funds to aid in the erection of houses for religious worship or places where the receivers of our faith are few in numbers and not abundant in means, we, as a committee appointed by the congregation, have taken the liberty to inquire of you if such be the fact. We know of no one to whom such inquiry would be more properly addressed than to one who was honored with that good man's confidence and regard.

Unfortunately the congregation had their facts wrong. Touro in his amazing will did, in fact, leave bequests to more than twenty synagogues which he specifically named, including of course the synagogue of Newport, Rhode Island. But no funds were left in trust or otherwise for "the erection of houses of religious worship." Thus, nothing came of the request. Incidentally, among the numerous other charitable bequests in his will, Touro left $300 to "my respected friend the Reverend Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia as a token of my regard."[3]

Leeser, however did take note of the plight of his Providence brethren. In the May 1857 issue of *The Occident*, he inserted this notice:

> Providence, Rhode Island. - We learn that the Israelites of this flourishing place [*sic*] have so greatly increased within the last three years, that they contemplate erecting a house to worship therein The God of Their Fathers. Their means, however, are nowise adequate to build such a structure as their hearts desire, and they would therefore be indebted to all the friends of their undertaking to aid them in their laudable efforts. We trust that their appeal will not be in vain. Donations may be sent to Mr. A. Wormser, Providence, Rhode Island.

The response to this solicitation is unknown, but it was probably negligible.

During July 1857, Isaac Leeser on a jaunt through New England on one of his many field trips "stopped a few hours at this beautiful city [Providence], where the Israelites are yet newcomers and far from numerous." "They are, however," he reported, "animated with a good spirit, and have kept up their organization under great difficulties." He mentioned their acquisition of a burying ground and "have it in contemplation to open a school, as well as to build a synagogue."[4]

On June 17, 1857 Pareira deeded to the congregation the land on New London Turnpike in Cranston, originally conveyed to him and others by Haswill in 1849. The deed stated: ". . . as and for a cemetery for the burial of the members of said Congregation Sons of Israel and for no other purpose forever." After the first burial, that of Solomon Cook in 1859, some half dozen others followed until about 1870, when Henry Whitman, an abutting landowner, discovered that the burials had been on land belonging to him, while the land owned by the congregation was swampland. He so informed President Henry Green. The facts were verified by a civil engineer. A review of the town records discloses what appears to have been a defect in the original deed of September 10, 1849 conveying the land to Pareira, Garits, and Steinberg. The later deed now in question, transferring the property from Pareira alone to the congregation, contains the phrases, "Being the same land conveyed to this Grantor by Francis Haswill by deed dated the 14th day of October 1849." This indicates yet another deed or deeds executed between September 10 and October 14, 1849.

At a congregational meeting of December 17, 1882, after a lapse of a dozen years, a communication from Whitman was read "in regard to the changing of land on the Burial Ground." Certain resolutions were passed, but not recorded in the minutes. Whitman had at first insisted that the graves be removed, but, being on friendly terms with President Green, yielded to Green's entreaty to allow the graves to remain in place in return for the land belonging to the congregation. He then in turn deeded to the congregation sufficient land to enclose the graves. The fences were removed, and new boundaries were agreed upon. A reservation in Pareira's deed, however, required that the congregation obtain a quit-claim from Pareira or his heirs. The congregation had failed to obtain a deed from Pareira, and Whitman died on November 9, 1888. Although the Whitman heirs desired to carry out the wishes of their ancestor, the matter dragged on. As time passed, it became urgent that the dispute be resolved while parties on both sides with personal knowledge of the facts were still alive.

The affair was finally settled on January 31, 1893, when Josiah Whitman conveyed two parcels of land to the congregation. The deed, filed in the town records of Cranston, stated: "Whereas the said congregation by mistake enclosed a lot of land and commenced a cemetery on land of this grantor, now therefor this deed is in

fulfillment of an agreement made between the grantor and said grantee, to convey to it the lot of land enclosed and occupied by said grantee as a cemetery which is located by mistake on his the said grantors land, and also to convey to said grantee other land adjoining said lot."

The negotiators for the congregation had made a good bargain. Later, on November 22, 1901, in reply to a letter from Sigmund Lederer, who somewhat tactlessly had solicited a contribution to the congregation, Josiah Whitman replied with a rebuke: "The small sum I consented to receive for transferring to the members of the Society my claims to the land was an insignificant contribution compared to the boon and benefit to them; but I have never learned that they passed any note of thanks to me for accepting so trifling amount as I did, and thereby relieving them from the deplorable dilemma in which they wre involved."[5]

During Sukkot of 1858 the congregation gave a testimonial to its retiring president, Solomon Pareira, and some days later to the retiring vice president, Solomon Cook. These events were duly noted in *The Occident* of November 1858. The gentlemen received silver goblets, while their ladies were presented with silver sugar bowls as "suitable tokens of respect." Leeser commented that the members would not suffer their officers "to quit their posts without testifying to them their approval of the exertions they had made to serve the congregation, which is yet in its infancy, but which we trust will steadily grow in numbers, importance, and piety." Leeser reported that the congregation had elected a new *hazzan*, Reverend Moses Cohen, of whom "we have also good accounts." He wished the new cantor "as ample a success as he can derive in the discharge of his important duties."

While in 1858 there were signs of a quick return of prosperity, the panic had been hard on the small group of pioneers in Providence, and its aftermath was still felt. The Pareiras left Providence for good shortly after the presentation. They removed to Cincinnati, where they were among the earliest Jewish settlers in that important Jewish community. They were not alone in seeking their fortunes elsewhere. The Wormsers soon followed, taking up residence in New York. Benjamin Shuman and Joseph Stern as well ultimately left Providence.[6]

Sensing a need for Jews to become unified nationally, Isaac Leeser in 1859 organized the Board of Delegates of the American Israelites,

primarily for defense purposes.[7] He was not unmindful also of the problems of Palestine relief and of the recent Mortara Affair in Italy.[8] The inaugural meeting of the Board of Delegates was held in New York City on Sunday, November 27, 1859. Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, founder of the Reform movement in America, objected to the conference on the ground that it was intended to oppose Reform Judaism, a charge which Leeser denied. While Benjamin Shuman and Joseph Stern were scheduled to attend as delegates from Congregation *Bnai Israel*, we know in fact that they were not in New York on the opening day. Whether they attended a later meeting on Tuesday, November 29 is not a matter of record.[9]

Indeed, both men were in Providence on the 27th. In 1859 Abraham Wormser had been living in New York for two years. Before leaving Providence he bade farewell to his good friends of the congregation and informed them that he planned a trip "to visit those dear to him on the other side of the Atlantic." According to *The Occident* of December 8, 1859, he promised that if he returned in safety from Europe he would donate a Sepher Torah to the synagogue. He fulfilled his promise on November 27 at a meeting in the synagogue at 56 Weybosset Street and addressed ex-president Shuman "in a neat speech." Shuman thanked Wormser on behalf of the congregation for "the highly prized gift so proudly and cheerfully bestowed." The account continued: " . . . all eyes were filled with tears, and all felt such a gift must be regarded above the great book of remembrance before the Great Father of the world." At the conclusion of the presentation ceremonies, the president called the meeting to order and the following resolutions were adopted unanimously:

> *Resolved*, That Mr. Wormser be elected an honorary member of the Congregation; and be it further
>
> *Resolved*, That Mr. Wormser's name be entered on the regular list of donors and be remembered by the prayer of *Mi She-Berakh* (he who blessed)

After the meeting the president invited those present to the home of Joseph Stern on Clemence Street "where they did ample justice to a repast prepared for the occasion" and then parted "much gratified" with the day's doings. The presidential succession during this transitional period is somewhat in doubt. It appears from avail-

able information that Pareira retired in 1857, followed by Joseph Stern. Other sources indicate that Green succeeded to the presidency in 1859. The above news item in *The Occident* dated December 1859, however, names Benjamin Shuman rather than Stern as immediate "ex-president." There is no other documentation to indicate that Shuman ever served as president. With no recourse to records, the discrepancy remains unresolved.

Despite the return of prosperity in 1858, ominous clouds appeared on the horizon. The United States Supreme Court had handed down the infamous Dred Scott decision in 1857, giving little hope to blacks. In 1858 the Lincoln-Douglas debates were at their height in Illinois, and the Civil War was imminent. During the period 1857 to 1858, Joseph Stern was president of the congregation; Elias Meyer, vice president; Abraham Stern, secretary; and Henry Solomon, Henry Green, and Isaac L. Fish, trustees. *Hazzan* Moses Cohen came to Providence in 1858 and stayed for a year. He was listed as "minister" of the congregation in the city directory of 1858 and as "pastor" in 1859.

In 1859 Henry Green, then a young merchant twenty-eight years of age, was elected president and, except for a brief period of nine months, served for the next twenty-one years. He became a prominent member of the Jewish community and an important leader of the congregation. Moses Bernhard was secretary-treasurer in 1859, but other officers and trustees during the ensuing two decades cannot in general be identified.

In 1860 *Hazzan* Lazarus Kantrowitz was listed in the Providence directory as "minister." He came to Providence in 1859 and lived at 3 Haymarket Street, which ran between Canal and North Main Streets. The congregation met at 56 Weybosset Street in the Harkness Block. Kantrowitz remained as "pastor" of the "Jewish Church" until 1861, when the congregation of the Sons of Israel was then listed as located at 42 Broad Street. This was probably in error, since for the next decade its address remained Weybosset Street. The meeting place or hall at either of these addresses is not identified.

By 1861 the brief recovery of 1858 had been dissipated by the outbreak of the Civil War. The Jewish community was reduced by a third or half of what it had been in 1855 and was struggling to gain a firm financial footing amid keen competition. There was no religious school during this difficult time. Yet the community

showed its viability, since as Adelman phrased it: "The mortality rate was favorable with three births and no deaths."[10]

In 1862 the bearded and austere *Hazzan* Abraham Jacobs was installed as minister and served as spiritual leader for the next seven years until 1869, longer than any previous minister, none of whom remained for more than two years.[11] Despite the hard times, the congregation saw fit to cooperate with Leeser's Board of Delegates. In 1862 the Board solicited funds to support a Jewish chaplain in the United States Army, a critical need in the war. Only four contributions were received, one of which was from Sons of Israel of Providence, Rhode Island.[12]

During the Civil War no war-time member of the congregation served in the armed forces. Shortly after the war, however, a young veteran arrived in Providence and joined the congregation—Newman Pincus, who in later years became prominent in congregational affairs.

Pincus, the son of Julius and Matilda Pincus, was born in Prussia on February 9, 1846. He came to America with his family at an early age, and at the time of the outbreak of the Civil War lived in Waterbury, Connecticut. In June of 1863, when he was seventeen years old, he followed his brothers to New York City to enlist in the army. Inspired by patriotism and bemused by the supposed glamor of military life, he concealed his real age. On June 20 he was accepted by the 12th Regiment of the New York State Militia. He was in just long enough to be involved in the suppression of the wild and bloody New York draft riots on July 13 to 16. He was discharged after only thirty days. Tradition has it that he was released after his brothers disclosed his true age. His brothers taunted him by playing on his first name, calling him "old man Pincus." He returned home, but did not give up his quest.

Later, on August 25, 1854, when he was eighteen years old, still under the draft age of twenty, he enlisted at New Haven, Connecticut and was assigned to Company K of the Fourteenth Regiment of the Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. He enlisted as "Charles Pincus", presumably to conceal his actual age and previous enlistment. He served in several important engagements, such as the investment and siege of Petersburg, Virginia and the attendant battles. He was mustered out at Fort Ethan Allen, Virginia on August 18, 1865. He moved to Providence from New York in 1866 and

made it his permanent home. In the early years he was listed as "clerk" and later as proprietor of A. Pincus & Co., retailers of "ladies' and gents' furnishings," presumably named for his wife Adelaide (Henius) Pincus. He was a charter member of Haggai Lodge of B'nai B'rith in 1870 and later commander of Slocum Post No. 10, Department of Rhode Island G.A.R.[13]

Less well known to the congregation was the story of Amelia L. (Mrs. Gustave) Rodenberg, who, when she was twenty years of age, served as a field nurse in the Battle of Antietam.[14]

Henry and Mary Green and their two young children arrived in Providence shortly after the Congregation of the Sons of Israel received its charter. Though not a member of the original *minyan*, Green was destined to become an important member of the congregation. The son of Herman and Addie Green, he was born in Gnesen, Prussia (now Gniezno, Poland) in 1830. Mary (Miriam), the daughter of Michael and Sarah Gomperts, whose nationality was given as Danish, was born in England in 1835. Henry and Mary Green, aged twenty-six and twenty-one respectively, came to Providence in 1856, after a brief stay in Virginia. All but the first two of their eleven children were born in Providence. Green opened his first establishment, a tailor shop, at 118 North Main Street in a store under the palatial Joseph Russell House, which had been elevated over a store-front. Over the years he conducted clothing businesses at various North Main Street addresses, on Market Square, and ultimately on Dorrance Street near the present City Hall. At the last address, many years later, he advertised "men's $15 black Kersey overcoats for $8.62, good $12 union beaver overcoats for $6.55, good $12 chinchilla overcoats for $8,—clothing bought from us will be renovated free of charge for one year,—we keep all goods bought from us in repair—pantaloons pressed once a week without charge, open evenings by the light of electricity."[15]

Green was not only a leader in the congregation, but also an organizer of three leading Jewish fraternal societies, Haggai Lodge, B'nai B'rith; Providence Lodge, Free Sons of Israel; and Isaac Leeser Lodge, Free Sons of Benjamin. He was a member and first senior warden of Redwood Lodge, the first Jewish Masonic Lodge in Providence. A generous contributor to the congregation, he was its president for many years. Traditionally, the performance of the offices for the dead, the preparation of the body for interment, and the

watching over and the accompanying of the body to its final burial comprise one of the most important of *Mitzvot* (ritual commandments). Green assumed this responsibility throughout his life with others chosen by him. These men were given the honorary Hebrew designation of *Baale Misaskim*.[16]

In 1862 *Hazzan* Abraham Jacobs became minister and held the position until 1869, except possibly for the year 1866, when one "Moses" Jacobs was listed as "pastor". This was probably an error, as Abraham Jacobs is generally believed to have served during the whole period. Jacobs came with his family and struck roots in the community. In the early years he also sold clothing, both on his own and for Louis Green and Company, and later was in the crockery and glass business with his brother Albert Jacobs. He was the grandfather of John Jacob Rosenfeld, the donor of the school building of the Orchard Avenue synagogue dedicated in 1954.[17]

The directory of 1869 listed A. Perrelman as "pastor" (probably *hazzan*) of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel. In 1870 and 1871 Louis Perlman was so listed. Since the latter was already a resident at 309 North Main Street in 1869 and since the directories were often unreliable, it is possible that the directory of 1869 was in error and Perlman officiated throughout. Hermann Bleichrod was listed as "pastor" in 1871 and appears to have served as *hazzan* during 1872 as well, as he was still living in Providence at the time and no minister was listed for that year.

Due to disaffection or controversy, a group of Providence Jewish citizens gathered in 1870 to form a new congregation. The organizer of the group, Abraham Jacobs, had been *hazzan* of the established congregation. The motives for such schisms were not always clear. Nathan Kaganoff has explained them in this way: "In part this was the result of a 'malady' that has afflicted Jewish life throughout history—personality conflicts among the members or more specifically among the officers," which resulted in groups breaking away and starting competing organizations.[18] Sometimes it was a member's thwarted ambition to be the leader, the president of the congregation.[19]

At any rate, they applied to the January 1871 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly for a charter.[20] This action was not taken lightly by the Congregation of the Sons of Israel. Reacting vigorously, they sent the following petition to the General Assembly early in 1871:[21]

> The undersigned the members of the Congregation Sons of Israel of Providence most respectfully remonstrate against the granting of the act of incorporation asked for by Abraham Jacobs and others under the style of the Sons of David.
>
> They represent that the act incorporating the Congregation of the Sons of Israel was granted some fifteen years since, that there are now in this city only some thirty-five male members of the Jewish Church, and of these only about twenty are Church members. They further represent that the church here in consequence of the small number of that persuasion in this city is quite poor and barely able to sustain their minister, that the application for said act of incorporation has been caused by said Jacobs through jealousy and from his desire to become a minister over said new society as your remonstrants believe. They therefore most earnestly remonstrate against the granting of said act of incorporation believing that it will work to the great prejudice and injury of this Church.

This was signed by the following twenty-eight members: David Frank, Julius Shuman, B. (Benjamin) Levy, Isaac Hahn, J. (Jacob) Richman, David Levy, Oscar Levy, Gustave R. Rodenberg, Louis Hirsch, H. (Henry) C. Stern, George Spitz, Charles Jacobs, Benno Wolf, Leopold Hardman (Hartman), Joseph Schwartz, Newman Pincus, Peter Spitz, Henry Solomon, Henry Green, Solomon Levy, Louis Frank, H. (Henry) C. Spear, L. Florsheim, M. Backer, B. (Bernard) Cohen, A. (Adolph) Fink, S. (Solomon) Green, and Isaack Burdicant (*sic*, Isaac Buitekan.)

On February 14, 1871 The Congregation Sons of David received from the Rhode Island General Assembly a charter, which stated simply "For Religious Purposes."[22] The names on the charter were Abraham Jacobs, Jacob Dimond, Casper Cohen, A. Jacob, Louis Green, Louis H. Rosenfield, Bernard Holmes, Morris Jacobs, Isaac Strumpf, Louis Friend, and Jacob Simon. The remonstrance clearly had failed. The new congregation's one and only minister was *Hazzan* Isaac Rosenberg, listed in the Providence directory as "clergyman". It met during its brief history of three years at 143 Canal Street. Its officers are not a matter of record.

The congregation purchased a plot of land in Moshassuck Cemetery in the Town of Lincoln (it is now located in Central Falls) on December 31, 1870. Later, after the congregation merged with the Congregation of the Sons of Israel, the burial plot was used primarily

for the burial of non-members, relatives of members, and charity cases.[23]

In the meantime in 1873 *Hazzan* Herman Pflaum, listed as "teacher", became the minister of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel. During the period 1873–1875 the congregation rented quarters in the Music Hall building at 266 Westminster Street. By 1875 both Rosenberg and Pflaum had left Providence.[24]

Eventually Henry Green achieved a rapprochement with the rival organization.[25] At the May 1874 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly, the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and The Congregation Sons of David were merged as the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, and a new charter was granted. *The Jewish Messenger* of New York City reported on May 29, 1874:

> The two Jewish congregations of Providence, R.I. on Sunday the 17th inst. consolidated under the name 'Sons of Israel and David.' On Shevuoth, a united service was held for the first time. The union had been brought about principally through the efforts of Hon. Henry Green of Providence, who, for the last seventeen years, has labored zealously in the name of Judaism. He will probably be elected president of the new congregation at the election [on] June 7th.

Henry Green was indeed elected president of the merged congregation.

These events transpired amidst the severe panic of 1873, which effectively ended the boom unleashed by the Civil War. The panic reached a climax on "Black Friday", September 19, following the failure of Jay Cooke and Company. The financial pressures did not relent until the recovery of 1877.[26]

The synagogue became the center of Jewish communal activities in Providence until the turn of the century. On March 11, 1870 a charter was granted to Haggai Lodge No. 132 of the Independent Order of Benna Bereth (*sic*, i.e. B'nai B'rith), which would regularly use the synagogue quarters for its meetings. Among the charter group were several prominent members of the congregation. In later years the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association and the Redwood Lodge of Masons were also closely affiliated with the synagogue.[27]

Abraham N. Coleman, who was *hazzan* and minister in 1876, was also listed in the Providence directory of 1877, although his

name does not appear in the surviving minutes of the congregation.[28] The records begin with the trustees' meeting of October 8, 1876, which was opened by Henry Green, retiring president. The newly elected president, Isaac Hahn, was escorted to the chair. Gustave Rodenberg continued as secretary. A committee was appointed to prepare a suitable testimonial for the retiring president, not to exceed $35. Another committee was authorized to prepare a testimonial suitably engrossed and framed to be presented to Vice President Jacob Dimond for officiating at the recent High Holidays. It was reported that tickets for the Holidays had been sold as follows: 35 at $2, 19 at $3, and 3 at $1, for a total of $130, with $105 paid and $25 to be collected. At a later board meeting on October 29 with Hahn presiding, it was recommended that several accounts of $1 to $4.25 be canceled "as we find them impossible to collect". After payment of bills, the congregation was solvent with $63.50 in the treasury. However, the trustees learned that a member of the board "had retained $18.50 of the property of the congregation", and an investigation was ordered.

On November 5, 1876 it was reported by the Committee on Renting a Hall that one would be available at 37 South Main Street on January 1, 1877 at $250 per annum payable quarterly. The congregation was still meeting in the Music Hall on Westminster Street. Daniel Frank was fined $5 for "disorderly conduct", but before the meeting had adjourned the action was rescinded. On December 3 Jacob Dimond presented to the congregation a cover for the Sepher Torah, for which he received a sincere vote of thanks.

At the board meeting of January 7, 1877, held in the new quarters at 37 South Main Street with Isaac Hahn presiding, several items of business were transacted. The testimonial to Jacob Dimond was presented by past president Henry Green, to which Dimond responded graciously. It was voted to suspend engagement of a *hazzan* for the next six months, a reflection of the congregation's stringent finances. A move to set the monthly dues at $1.25 was amended to read 50 cents, but was eventually compromised at $1. A "bill of the colored man of $2.00" was ordered paid. A committee of five was appointed by the chair "To promote the prosperity of the congregation" and to report regularly to the board. The members were Louis Hartman, David Frank, Henry Green, Simon Elias, and Isaac Hahn. It was voted that "inasmuch as it came to the knowledge of the congregation that our ex-chasan Mr. A.N. Coleman is now in

bad circumstances, that we shall assist the same." In February it was decided that board meetings in the future be held at 37 South Main Street "in the room downstairs". The Committee on the Ball for the Benefit of the Congregation reported a profit of $13.74.

Isaac Buitekant (the final "t" appeared and disappeared), sexton and dues collector, was also in the clothing business on Wickenden Street. In December he was paid $20 "for arranging this meeting", after a previous motion for $10 was amended upward. In February 1877, his account to the synagogue, representing collected dues, was deemed paid, and it was further ordered that he be paid $100 yearly for his services to the congregation. In March this was increased to $120, or $10 per month, but he would be required to pay his monthly synagogue dues. In 1878 he was re-elected sexton and collector, and his stipend was increased to $200 per year. Adolph Fink pledged surety on his bond for $300 to cover the dues collections. In the fall of 1879 Buitekant, in failing health, announced his retirement. His unpaid back dues of $17.50 were remitted, and he was granted a seat in the synagogue free of charge and free burial in the cemetary for "past services these long years." In April 1880, his death was announced, and a letter of condolence was sent to his widow.

As was so often the case, the meeting of February 4, 1877 was preoccupied with membership status and non-payment of dues. A seat-holder was suspended for non-payment. A member, who had vouched for the arrears of his brother's dues, later asked to be relieved of the obligation. He was told that the bill would be collected, by law if necessary, and if not paid, both he and his brother would be suspended from membership. The secretary was instructed to notify all members in arrears that they would be liable to suspension if their dues were not paid.

The Committee on Renting a Hall reported that rental of the hall at 37 South Main Street retroactive to January 11, 1877 would now be $200 rather than the $250 previously announced, for which good work the committee was thanked and discharged.

On April 1, 1877 it was voted that the initiation fee for congregation members be $2 until January 1, 1878. The Committee to Promote the Prosperity of the Congregation asked in frustration that it be discharged, but the request was denied. Myer Noot, of whom much more will follow, first appeared in the congregational minutes of this meeting. He had recently arrived in Providence and

set up in the crockery business on North Main Street. He began teaching the children of the congregation under unspecified arrangements. His request to use "the room attached to our Hall", free of charge, was granted, but only on condition that "he read the Sepher Torah every Saturday" and officiate as *hazzan*. Later, Noot was ordered to have "the faucet of our water fixed at his own expense, as the school children have demolished the same, and keep the schoolroom, as well as everything attached to it, in good order."

Several persons submitted applications to be seat-holders at a reduced monthly rate of fifty cents. They were accepted as members, and the initiation fee was excused. However, it was voted that for fiscal reasons the number of members of this special class be limited to ten only.

On March 4, 1877 the congregation granted the request of member Adolph Fink to have the grave-site of his late wife, Johanna, who had died in 1870 and was buried in the Reservoir Avenue Cemetery, increased to six feet by six feet and fenced off. This was approved without charge. At a later meeting the board of trustees was asked to declare null and void the action of the congregation "in giving away a piece of our Burying Ground" to a member. The transaction was declared "in direct violation of Article 8, Section 3 of our Bylaws." A committee of three was appointed to "bring in Rules and Regulations for government of the interments of our Burial Grounds."

On May 6 the committee reported that "there never existed any laws and regulations in regard to our Burying Grounds", and added, "a great many difficulties have arisen in the management of the affairs and a great deal of ground is wasted in consequence of not having fixed laws." New rules and regulations were presented and were adopted by the trustees. Lots were to measure three by six feet. The board of trustees together with the president and vice president would have full charge. In case of the death of a member, the assignment of a lot would be by a two-thirds vote of the trustees. Non-members might apply for a permit for burial in the cemetery. Any person having a grave dug without a permit would be subject to a charge of $50. If not paid, the congregation might have the body removed on the basis of trespass. The burial ground would be surveyed at a cost not to exceed $20. After learning that a reliable survey would cost $50, the board decided to lay the matter on the table "until we are able to pay for it."

The first organized effort to ascertain the size of Jewish communities in the United States was conducted by the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, merged in 1878 with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.[29] In response to a request from Philadelphia, the congregation on May 6, 1877 ordered that a survey form providing statistical information be filled out and returned.

At a meeting of June 17, 1877 a letter of resignation from President Hahn was read. It was proposed that his resignation be accepted only "in case he pays the fine of $10, as our bylaws prescribed." The reason for the fine was not disclosed. Cooler heads prevailed, and it was voted "to lay [over] the resignation of our president till the next meeting". On July 1 the resignation was accepted without comment, and the retiring president was thanked for the "able manner [in which] he conducted this congregation as presiding officer." Henry Green was chosen without opposition to serve the balance of the term after having relinquished the chair only nine months before. Gustave Rodenberg also resigned as secretary, again without comment. Myer Noot, who had been serving as teacher in the congregation's school and had just been granted formal membership in the congregation, was elected to serve out Rodenberg's unexpired term, a sign that his talents were early recognized. Noot was born in New York City of Dutch parents on November 14, 1848.

This eventful meeting then reverted to the activities of the Committee on Prosperity of the Congregation. It was tartly observed that "for the good and welfare of this congregation several speeches were made, and at last they came to a conclusion, that Mr. M. Noot shall be added to the committee, which is out since last January and that this committee go to work at once." This was voted without dissent.

Other lesser matters were transacted: "Mssrs I[saac] Hymes and H[yman] Happ were each fined $1 for not being at the funeral service at the house of Mr. D[avid] Frank after being [duly] notified in the usual way." Henriette Frank, the eight-month-old daughter of David and Sarah Frank, had been buried in the New London Turnpike (Reservoir Avenue) Cemetery on June 27, 1877.[30]

The improving national economy was reflected in events elsewhere on Narragansett Bay. *The Providence Daily Journal* of July 23, 1877 under the heading "*The Season at Newport: Few Festivities, but a Brilliant Prospect*" reported: "The hotels are gradually

filling up. . . . Of the recent arrivals, the Israelites are very prominent in point of numbers. They are received as are other people, but they are certainly not made a specialty of. They conduct themselves with becoming manners, they come, pay their bills, and depart. And except for the never-ending Jewish stamp upon their countenances, they can nowise be distinguished from other people, except perhaps in the matter of precious stones which glitter brilliantly, and as a rule outshine those of their Christian fellow guests." These opulent guests likely came from New York or Philadelphia, rather than from the struggling Providence community.

NOTES

1. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 195.

   The records of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York City contain this entry dated February 4, 1856 (v. 6, p. 256, cited by William G. Braude, *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, v. 19, no. 10, January 23, 1946:

   > A letter was received from the officers of the Congregation Benai Israel [*sic*] in Providence, Rhode Island soliciting some pecuniary aid. Mr. Nathan (Benjamin) offered the following resolution: Resolved that the President draw a warrant in favor of said Congregation for twenty-five dollars which was adopted by the following vote: Ayes: Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lazarus, Mr. Kursheedt, Mr. Nathan (4), Nay: Mr. Seixas (1).

2. Abraham Wormser and Benjamin Shuman to Isaac Leeser, April, 1857, reproduced in D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 151, original in American Jewish Archives.
3. D. C. Adelman's "Life and Times of Judah Touro," pp. 275–283.
4. *The Occident*, July 1857.
5. D. C. Adelman's "Reservoir Avenue Cemetery," pp. 244–246. Also "Jewish Cemeteries (Beth Chaim)," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:55–56 (November) 1958.
6. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 195.
7. Jacob Rader Marcus in *The American Jew, A Reappraisal*, ed. by Oscar I. Jananowsky (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1964), pp. 17–18. Also Solomon Grayzel, *A History of the Jews* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1953), pp. 702–703; and Salo W. Baron, *Steeled by Adversity* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), pp. 192, 205–206, 221.
8. Edgar Mortara, a Jewish child living in Bologna, Italy had been abducted

by papal guards after having been secretly baptized. Despite a wave of international protest, the papal authorities refused to release him to his parents.

9. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," p. 154. Also *The Occident*, December 1859.
10. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," pp. 195–196.
11. This statement follows D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," pp. 158, 159. *Hazzan* Joseph Raphael Spiro, who was in Providence on January 13, 1854, had left Providence and was in New York by July 25, 1854. He did not appear in the Providence directories. The directories indicate that *Hazzan* Moses Cohen was in Providence in 1858 and 1859, and *Hazzan* Lazarus Kantrowitz (also given as Cantrowitz) was in Providence in 1859 and 1860. R. M. Bayles in *History of Providence County*, v. 1, p. 482, came to the same conclusion, probably using the same sources.
12. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 196.
13. According to Pincus's army discharge papers, which identified him as "Charles Pincus," he was five feet, six inches tall and had brown eyes and dark hair. He was listed as a "cigar worker." His unit saw extensive action in the investment, siege, and capture of Petersburg, Virginia in the summer of 1864, and the attendant battles in Virginia in the fall of 1864 and the winter and spring of 1865. The regiment was involved in engagements at High Bridge and Farmville, Virginia along the Appromattox River from March 20 to April 19, 1865, the date of Lee's surrender.

    In May of 1865 he was transferred to the Second Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Heavy Artillery, as that unit was scheduled to be sent home. There is little doubt that he was a genuine combat veteran of the Civil War, who saw much action. He later became Commander of Slocum Post No. 10, Rhode Island Department of the G.A.R. At the time of his death on December 20, 1932 he was Vice Commander of the Rhode Island Department of the G.A.R., and was expected to be elevated to Commander had he survived until the spring of 1933.

    His discharge papers listed him as a "cigar worker," which accords with the statement in his newspaper obituary that he entered the "cigar business" in Providence. Later, of course, his business orientation changed. The account of his early military experience as described by Adelman is at variance with the facts. It stated that according to tradition "before he was sixteen years of age he followed his brothers to camp in New York in 1864 and tried to enlist in the army, like many boys about that age. His brothers prevented his enlistment by disclosing his real age. . . . Disappointed, he left for home, but he stopped off at New Haven, where he enlisted under the name of Charles Pincus, representing himself as eighteen years of age." His New York and Connecticut enlistments were, in fact, more than a year apart. If

his birth date of February 9, 1846 is correct, he was actually seventeen and eighteen years old respectively at the times of his New York and Connecticut enlistments, and not fifteen. See Civil War discharge papers, Temple Beth-El archives; *The Providence Journal*, December 21, 1932; and D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of the Providence Jewish Community," p. 158 (based on a typed note of unknown origin in RIJHA). See also several items in the Temple Beth-El archives from the Connecticut State Library: pp. 201 and 585 from the Adjutant General's *Record of Connecticut Men in the War of the Rebellion*, and brief histories of the 14th Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers (pp. 549–551) and the Second Regiment Heavy Artillery (pp. 173–175) from the same source.

14. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:238, (June) 1955.
15. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 196.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 196–197. *Baale Misaskim* (Hebrew) translates as "Those who occupy themselves" (with the duties of preparing the body for burial).
17. D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," pp. 158–159.
18. Nathan M. Kaganoff, "Landsmanshaften in New York City," *American Jewish History* 8:56–66, (September) 1986, p. 61.
19. The writer's father recalled that this was not a rare event.
20. Application is in the R.I. State Archives, photostat in RIJHA. This was signed by Abraham Jacobs, Jacob Dimond, Casper Cohen, A. Jacob, Louis Green, Louis H. Rosenfield, Barnard Holmes, Morris Jacobs, Isaac Strumpf, Louis Friend, and Jacob Simon.
21. Remonstrance in R.I. State Archives, photostat in RIJHA.
22. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:22, (May) 1956. The names of the incorporators were the same as the applicants for a charter. See note 20. Charter is in the Rhode Island State Archives, photostat in RIJHA.
23. "Moshassuck Cemetery," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:56–58, (November) 1958.
24. Providence directories.
25. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 200.
26. *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Second Edition (New York, Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 452, 1479.
27. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," pp. 200, 235. Also *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, pp. 22–23.
28. The first book of the surviving handwritten records shows evidence of charring from the fire which destroyed the prior records.
29. Salo W. Baron's *Steeled by Adversity*, p. 270.
30. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:249, (December) 1955.

CHAPTER THREE

Modified Reform

In the years between 1865 and 1877 the number of recognizable Jewish names in the Providence directories increased from eighteen to 105.[1] Adelman estimated that there were then about 150 Jewish families in Providence and Pawtucket, numbering perhaps 500 persons.[2] This was the beginning of the increasing waves of European Jews emigrating to America, reaching flood tide just before World War I. However, with the congregation membership down to eighteen families,[3] hardly more than at the end of the Civil War a dozen years earlier, the leadership felt an imperative need to tap this growing potential.

The Committee to Promote the Prosperity of the Congregation (also called the Committee for the Promotion of the Interest of the Congregation) was challenged by this need. Under the leadership of President Green and its newest member, Myer Noot, it undertook to arouse the community. The committee met on Sunday morning, July 8, 1877. Present were Henry Green, Isaac Hahn, David Frank, Simon Elias, and Myer Noot, the leadership of the small congregation.

Green was elected chairman and Noot secretary. The principal objective of the meetings "was to devise a plan of having a convention of all Israelites of this city, and to make it an object to have all attend." The secretary was empowered to write to President Morris Loth of the recently formed Union of American Hebrew Congregations, currently meeting in Philadelphia, to request that the Union provide two speakers to address the planned convention.

Their proposal to the Union suggests that affiliation with the Reform movement was already in mind. The proceedings of the

Fourth Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations noted: "A letter [was] read from the congregation 'Sons of Israel' of Providence, R.I., requesting that the Council delegate someone for the purpose of visiting that city . . . [to address] the Israelites there in the interest of Judaism. On motion, Dr. Sonneschein and Messrs. Loth and Peixotto were appointed a committee for that purpose."[4] Benjamin Franklin Peixotto of New York and Rabbi Solomon H. Sonneschein of St. Louis were delegated to make the trip to Providence. Peixotto, of a prominent American Jewish family, was a forty-three-year-old lawyer, editor, and diplomat. He had recently been consul in Romania, appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to deal with burgeoning Jewish persecutions in that country. Sonneschein, a thirty-eight-year-old native of Hungary, had been educated in rabbinical studies in Moravia, and later in Hamburg and Jena, where he received a Ph.D. degree. He was currently spiritual leader in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Committee for the Promotion of the Interest of the Congregation met to devise plans for the convention. A small committee was appointed "to raise funds to defray incidental expenses for carrying out the reception in a creditable manner & also have power to raise money from any source whatever, non-Israelites being understood excepted." The committee, consisting of Henry Green, Leopold Hartman, and Isaac Hahn as committee treasurer, proposed a circular letter. The committee recessed for five minutes while Secretary Myer Noot, whose recent addition to the committee had brought it new life, drafted the letter:

July 15, 1877

Dear Sir:

A convention of our Jewish Brethren will be held on Sunday, July the 22nd, at the Synagogue Building, 37 South Main Street at 2 P.M. for the purpose of having all unite and join us in carrying out a noble cause, that of gathering together all who have as yet not joined a congregation. The cause is praiseworthy and trust you will co-operate with us in upholding that faith, which challenges all others. The assemblage on this occasion will be addressed by the Hon. B. F. Peixotto (late consul to Roumania) and Dr. Sonneschein, Rabbi of St. Louis, gentlemen known for their

integrity and promoters of Judaism. You are earnestly requested to attend.

Yours Respectfully,
M. Noot, Secretary

Committee: H. Green, Chairman; L. Hartman; D. Frank; S. Elias; M. Noot

Three hundred and fifty circulars were printed, sufficient for the number of Jews in the community at that time. Communications were sent to Haggai Lodge I.O.B.B. and Isaac Leeser Lodge I.O.F.S.I., seeking their cooperation and assistance in honoring the invited guests. Arrangements for meeting and entertaining the visitors were completed. Messrs. Green, Frank, and Noot would meet them upon arrival at the train depot on Exchange Place and escort them by carriage to City Hotel on Broad Street (now Weybosset Street), to be joined there by the other committee members. The guests would be given time to rest and freshen up. The committee would call at the hotel at 2:30 p.m. to accompany them to the convention. Prior to the formal opening of the meeting, Henry Green, temporary chairman, would explain the objectives of the gathering. A permanent chairman would be elected, and the guest speakers would be introduced.

The Providence Daily Journal of Tuesday, July 24, 1877 reported the event as follows:

THE GATES OF PEACE
REFORM MEETING OF THE ISRAELITES.
—A NEW DEPARTURE.

A large number of the Israelites of this city met in the hall of the Free Sons of Israel on South Main street Sunday afternoon to consider the project of forming a congregation. The meeting began at 2 o'clock and continued about three hours. Quite a number of addresses were made, the chief being by Hon. B.F. Peixotto, late United States Consul to Roumania and Rev. Dr. Sonneschein of St. Louis. The former gave a graphic account of the condition of the Jews in Roumania, and contrasted their condition with that of the Jews in free America, where, as he said, every man has just as much freedom as he deserves. He then made an exhaustive argument in favor of reform. Rev. Dr. Sonneschein followed in the same strain. The history of the Jewish nation was recounted and the present situation defined. He considered the present a

critical time. Israelites were losing interest in their religion. Materialism was advancing, and the future was unpromising, except the Jewish people turned their attention from mere money making, and sustained and reverenced their glorious religion. He, too, argued that the ceremonies born of persecution were undesirable now, and he urged the Jews in Providence to form a religious organization upon the basis of moderate reform.

At the close of Dr. Sonneschein's remarks, which were very eloquent, and received with frequent bursts of applause, Mr. Peixotto read a preamble and resolutions, to which, as the platform of the new organization, he invited signatures. The preamble and resolutions practically set forth the facts that there was great need of a revival among Israelites, and that the old nations should give way to more enlightened ideas. An organization, to be conducted upon the principles of moderate reform, was proposed to be known as The Gates of Peace. It was also proposed to have, as soon as possible, a synagogue and a religious school, the latter with a special view to the enlightenment of children in the principles of the Jewish faith. The invitation to sign this declaration was immediately accepted, and almost seventy-five of those present joined The Gates of Peace.

It was announced that a memorial service would be held in the synagogue in Newport on Monday in commemoration of the illustrious Judah Touro. Hon. B.F. Peixotto and Rev. Dr. Sonneschein will speak and a large party is expected to go thither from Providence.

Seventy-three men subscribed to the platform for the new congregation. Twenty-four had been members of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, while forty-nine were new members, mostly young men in their twenties, as follows:[5]

Moses M. Stern	Samuel Crown	Morris Z. Jackson
Alexander Strauss	Fritz Hartman	Herman Schneider
Michael Hellman	Nathan Wald	Adolph R. Frank
Solomon Krohne	Edward Myers	Isaac Hymes
Moses Rosenthall	Abram Krohn	Leopold Dimond
Abraham Pakas	Alf. Belasco	Adolph J. Cohen
Louis Rosenfeild	Bernard Holmes*	I. Buitekant
M. Green	Jacob Simon	Louis Fisher
Charles Rotstein	Henry Cohen	Julius Shuman
Morris Hirsch	Charles Jacobs	Jacob Jackson
Morris Jacobs	Simeon Elias	Julius Goldberg
Max Feder	David Frank	Herman Krohne

Jacob Richman	Edward Harris	Jacob Knapf
Myer Noot	Gustave Rodenberg	Lazarus Reinstein
Henry Green	Benjamin Levy	Louis Green
Leopold Hartman	F. Williams	Jacob Harris
Morris Happ	Max Lissner	L. Blumenthal
Isaac Phillips	Jacob Cohn	Louis Hirsch
Joseph Cohn	Hermann Rosenberg	Josef Cohn
Morris Lissner	Adolph Greenwood	Albert Tint
Mandle Friedman	Harry Lamb	Sol Levy
Isaac Hahn	Samuel Krohne	Marcus Cohen
John H. Spitz	Lewis H. Kahn	Hyman Happ
Henry Solomon	Joseph Schwarz	Abraham Gompertz
Louis Frank		

* He was listed in directories both as Bernard and Barnard.

The convention resulted in an increase in the membership of the congregation in one leap from 18 to nearly 80. As Peixotto and Sonneschein reported to President Morris Loth, upon arrival in Providence they had been met by a committee with whom they consulted forthwith as to a plan of action. They then addressed a public meeting "at length upon the necessity of establishing a *new* congregation, embracing all, *the old and the young*, upon a basis in conformity with the principles of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations."[6]

Their plan of organization was adopted unanimously and "was signed by some *sixty* [actually 73] persons, agreeing thereby to become members of and to sustain a *new* society" to be known as "Congregation Shaari Shalom" [Gates of Peace]. "We were surprised", they wrote, "to find upon our arrival that the old organization had fallen into the low state of a membership of eighteen, that little or no interest was manifested for our holy religion, that general apathy and indifference prevailed, that no provision existed for religious education, and up to this time no Synagogue had been erected for the God of Israel." They reported that they had received pledges that the new organization would act promptly to secure a plot of land and erect a house of worship with provision for a school. They were confident that their co-religionists in Providence were "inspired with a firm resolution to carry out this good work."[7]

The local leaders, however, had reservations about two provisions of the compact: First, the organization of an entirely new congre-

gation; and second, the new name, Congregation Shaari Shalom (Gates of Peace). On the whole the convention appears to have accomplished the primary goals of its sponsors. Sonneschein and Peixotto added, however, that, "inasmuch as the community is small in numbers and limited in means, we would earnestly recommend that all the moral and material aid the Union is capable of granting shall here be extended."[8]

The American Israelite of July 29 reported that: "One of the most important proceedings that transpired at the meeting of the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations at Philadelphia was its action on the communication from a body of brethren at Providence, R.I. The letter sent to the Council was manly and earnest in its tone, and at once commended itself to the best thought of the delegates." After noting the mission of Peixotto and Sonneschein to Providence, it continued: "The result is now before the public. The gentlemen appointed immediately set out on their mission, and they succeeded in uniting the hitherto discordant elements into a band of brothers under the appropriate name of GATES OF PEACE." *The American Israelite* on August 3 noted that "At a large and enthusiastic meeting . . . addressed by Rev. Dr. Sonneschein and Hon. B.F. Peixotto, the preliminary steps for forming a congregation on moderate reform principles were taken."

The Newport Daily News of July 24 in the meantime had reported that Peixotto and Sonneschein had indeed proceeded to Newport on Monday following the convention. The Jewish synagogue (now Touro Synagogue) was opened by its keeper, David Gould, in response to a telegram from Sonneschein, who proposed a memorial service there, the first since 1854 "in honor of the late Judah Touro, whose name," the newspaper observed, "is a household word in Newport." It noted that "two prominent members" of the Hebrew convention in Philadelphia were in Providence "to organize a congregation there, which they did, securing a membership of eighty."

They indeed took advantage of their presence in Rhode Island to travel to Newport with the congregation the following day to "hold a service in memory of one whose deeds have lived after him and who gave (of) his means so liberally to charitable purposes." The service commenced about one o'clock with some seventy-five persons in attendance. Sonneschein delivered an eloquent address and then referred to the item in the Providence paper of the same day describing the social climate in Newport. His ire was aroused by

the report that the hotel arrivals included wives and daughters of Jews, wearing diamonds, expensive jewelry, and glittering stones. "I know", he said, "that they [the Jews] are of a different character from those alluded to . . . I trace this back to a different source. It is the scripture lesson —obey the teachings of thy father and mind the lessons of thy mother —this shall be a royal diadem on thy head and a brilliant chain of jewels around thy neck. These are the jewels . . . worn by our wives, sisters, and daughters . . . the virtues of chastity, modesty, temperance, and charity —the lessons of our forefathers wherever we may go."

Peixotto delivered a eulogy on the life of Judah Touro, who he said had built Christian as well as Hebrew churches, whose name would be renewed through all time. It was an appropriate and fitting tribute, he continued, that a small group be assembled to pay honor to Touro in a building erected to God, but a few yards from where he was interred. He urged the young to read of Touro's life as an example of high merit, and not merely because he was a Jew. Following a prayer for the dead (*Kaddish*), they repaired to the cemetery, where the Touro family are interred, to conclude a solemn and impressive ceremony.

A lengthy eventful meeting of the congregation took place on Sunday afternoon, August 5, 1877. It convened as the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. With President Henry Green in the chair, it received from the Committee to Promote the Prosperity of the Congregation the following resolutions:

> WHEREAS the Committee to Promote the Welfare [*sic*] of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David reported and met with success of getting members for our Congregation, therefore be it
>
> RESOLVED that all the names of those that are subscribed on the list shall be and are hereby members of this Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David with all the rights and benefits of members from this hour and date.
>
> RESOLVED that we adopt all the platform and resolutions of the one signed by them as the platform of this congregation *with the exception of name* [italics added]; and it shall take effect from date, and we further agree to abide by all the Bylaws and Constitution which shall be enacted hereafter.
>
> RESOLVED that all laws and resolutions conflicting with this resolution shall be repealed and null and void.

The committee members were Leopold Hartman, David Frank, Henry Green, and Myer Noot. The names of the 73 signers of the platform were appended.

The resolutions proved to be controversial for some members. The vote was 17 in favor and 3 opposed. The nay votes came from Louis Cohen, Abraham Jacobs, and Isaac Simon. Jacobs had earlier been *hazzan* and indeed an incorporator of The Congregation Sons of David. The three members objected to reorganization along Moderate Reform[9] lines even though the old name would be retained. The names of Leonard Halberstad, who had been an incorporator and a charter member of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel, and *Hazzan* Abraham Jacobs did not appear among the signers of the compact.[10] Subscribers Bernard Holmes, Marcus Cohn, and Morris Hirsch three years later joined with Halberstad and others to form a new congregation, Sons of Abraham of Providence, R.I., which was chartered by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1880.[11] The Sons of Zion, later Congregation Sons of Zion and familiarly known as the Orms Street Shul (synagogue), had already been chartered in 1875.[12] There was, therefore, adequate refuge for those choosing to remain with orthodoxy.

The August 5 meeting, after transacting some cemetery business, adjourned at 7:30 p.m. It promptly reconvened as an adjourned meeting of Congregation Shaari Shalom, with its president John H. Spitz in the chair and Myer Noot as secretary. The new organization had not yet obtained a charter. The minutes of a previous meeting (not extant) were read. It was indicated that a committee of ten had been appointed to "make a plan and arrange finances for governing the new congregation."

The committee brought in its plan regarding finances and a budget. Because of the late hour, consideration was postponed, "excepting that part relating to worship, religious school, and the election of the respective officers therein", which was adopted. A resolution to retain the name the "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David" while adopting the new platform carried unanimously.

The meeting of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David then immediately reconvened. A resolution was adopted that all present officers resign and the meeting dissolve itself. President Henry Green, Vice President Jacob Dimond, Treasurer Jacob Richman, Secretary Myer Noot, and Trustees Leopold Hartman, David

Frank, Jacob Cohn, Isaac Hymes, and Isaac Buitekant voluntarily resigned en masse. Spitz was appointed temporary chairman with Noot as secretary.

It was voted to proceed as a committee of the whole, and the election of officers followed. Green, Spitz, and Frank were nominated for the presidency. On the first ballot the votes were 20, 21, and 6 respectively, and no one was declared elected. Frank withdrew, and on a second ballot Green received 27 votes and Spitz 21, with Green the clear winner. Alexander Strauss prevailed over Hyman Happ for vice president 31 to 12. Myer Noot, twenty-seven years of age, was unanimously elected secretary, a testimonial to his popularity and his talent in bringing about the reorganization. Henry Solomon was chosen as financial secretary, and Moses Stern treasurer over Jacob Richman, 30 to 17. The trustees were David Frank, Bernard Holmes, Harry Lamb, Leopold Dimond, Isaac Hymes, Joseph Schwarz, and Louis Rosenfield.

The goal of melding both old and new members into the organization was largely met. The four top offices were divided equally between old and new, while five trustees were old members and two were new. Thus, through a parliamentary maneuver the new organization was merged into the old.

It was now well into the evening. Election of the Board of Finance and the School Committee was deferred, as several members had left. A committee of five was appointed to draw up a constitution and bylaws. Having thus laid the groundwork for future growth and development for the next hundred years, the meeting adjourned.

On Sunday, August 12, the congregation continued to perfect its reorganization. With President Green presiding, the constitution and bylaws were adopted unanimously with certain amendments. The platform adopted at the convention of July 22 became the preamble, amended to retain the familiar name of the congregation. It was engrossed in the minutes in the fine Spencerian script of Secretary Noot:[13]

> ***WHEREAS,*** the preservation of the sublime principle of Judaism is the profound aspiration and duty of every true Israelite, and the inculcation and practise of those principles indispensable to the welfare and happiness of the community, of the education of our children, and the moral, social, and intellectual progress of the people;

AND WHEREAS on standing on a common platform, every individual Israelite feels his strength and religious convictions secured and elevated,
THEREFORE We, the undersigned Israelites, of the City of Providence hereby covenant and agree, each with the other, and unitedly together, to form a more perfect religious "union" a Cong. to be called *Sons of Israel and David* that all who love the God of Israel who reverence and would perpetuate his Holy Law may enter and be at peace;
AND WE DO HEREBY AGREE, That said Congregation shall be established on the following basis and with the following aims, and objects:
FIRST, to secure a stricter observance of our Holy Religion by conforming to the duties and obligations enjoined on us by our laws and the Constitution which [we] shall hereafter adopt, to establish a Religious School for our children where in addition to our religion, the Hebrew Language shall be taught.
SECOND, The ritual of the Congregation shall be that of Moderate Reform and the Prayer Book to be used shall be that of the Revs. Drs. Szold & Jastrow.[14]
THIRD, And it shall be our early purpose to secure a plot of Ground and to erect a suitable Building to be dedicated as a place of worship to the Almighty God of Israel.

Certain significant amendments to the constitution and bylaws were adopted. All laws and ordinances in conflict with the present document were "repealed and annulled." The new rules would become effective immediately. "The Board of Trustees", it was voted, "shall receive their power from the congregation and shall not make any contract nor expend any money without receiving such power at a regular or special meeting of the congregation." Each member was required to sign "said form" as a guarantee to pay whatever amount is stipulated thereon. The constitution bestowed upon the president certain disciplinary preogatives:

> He [the President] shall have the power to keep order during Divine Service, and if any person disturbs the Congregation or Worship, he shall call the Sexton, request him to tell the person to come to order, and he shall have the power to fine, or order such Person out of Synagogue and in no case shall he use a Mallet, a Book, a Hand during Divine Service to call to order, or permit any one to do so.

Immediate steps were taken to join the "Union of the United Hebrew Congregations" (i.e. the Union of American Hebrew Congregations), thus sealing its commitment to Moderate Reform.

The trustees' report on the budget and a plan for assigning seats were read, and "considerable discussion followed without gaining any headway." It was finally agreed, to "let every member come forward and subscribe the amount within his reach." Twenty-three members offered amounts ranging from $9 to $80. The solicitation was deferred after what appears to have been a trial run.

Two important items were then considered. The board was authorized to rent "The Pine Street German Church"[15] at a rate not to exceed $300 per annum. This was the first mention in the records that the building was under consideration. A Building Committee was empowered to render the building "tenantable . . . the expense in fitting it up not to exceed the amount of $400."

"It was also ordered", according to the minutes, "that the Board of Trustees make all arrangements to engage a Hazan to officiate during the Hollidays [*sic*] and also make preparation as to dedication and all things appertaining to the opening of the Synagogue." A general assessment of two dollars was voted "to defray the expense of altering the building".

The congregation reconvened on Sunday, August 19 in the German Church building, corner of Pine and Page Streets. At its first meeting in the new quarters, the congregation returned to consideration of dues and seating. A dues classification was adopted with three categories of $24, $18, and $12 per year. With the High Holidays impending, seats were auctioned off for a premium with Henry C. Spear as auctioneer. The $24 class bid first, the highest bidder having first choice, with the $18 and $12 classes following in order. Green, a $24 member, won first choice of seats with a bid of $65, followed by Joseph Schwarz at $35, and Isaac Hymes at $27. Other bids in the $24 class ranged from $25 to $1. Dues would be collected prior to the Holidays. Absent members would be solicited individually.

With much business to transact, the congregation met frequently. On August 26 a letter was read from the secretary of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, acknowledging the request for affiliation. The board was empowered to make arrangements for services in the coming High Holy Days. At a meeting on Friday, September 7, the board recommended the election of the Reverend

Jacob Voorsanger as minister at a salary of $1,000 per annum for one year commencing September 1, 1877. The vote was 49 to 1. Travel expenses of $400 were authorized.

Born in Amsterdam, Holland in 1852, Voorsanger was educated at the Jewish Theological Seminary in the city of his birth. After emigrating to the United States in 1872, he attended Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, where he received a Doctor of Divinity degree and was ordained a Reform rabbi. Before coming to Providence he had served as spiritual leader in Philadelphia and in Washington, D.C. He was the first rabbi in Rhode Island to have been ordained in the United States. Bespectacled, bearded, and amply mustachioed, he was truly a scholarly presence.[16]

With its Moderate Reform program, the congregation retained *kashrut* (the traditional dietary laws) and the practice of wearing a *yarmulka* (skullcap) during worship. The hour of worship was changed from the traditional twilight to seven-thirty in the evening. More radical was the introduction of organ music and a mixed choir. In accordance with their zeal for Americanization, the English language was prescribed, rather than German or Yiddish then commonly used in American Ashkenazic congregations. Women were seated on the main floor of the sanctuary and not restricted to a balcony or screened area as was the time-honored custom.

Further, the Conservative prayer book of Drs. Benjamin Szold and Marcus Jastrow was adopted for use in the services. In 1864 Benjamin Szold of Baltimore published his *Abodath Israel (Service of Israel)*, which was immediately adopted by his own congregation, Oheb Shalom (Lovers of Peace), which was neither Reform nor Orthodox, but along lines now considered Conservative. Subsequently, it was published with emendations by Rabbi Marcus Jastrow of Philadelphia and was widely used under the designation *Minhag Jastrow* (Rite of Jastrow).[17]

The Reform Movement had its origins in Germany in the early nineteenth century, inspired by the Jewish Enlightenment *(Haskalah)* and the writings of Moses Mendelssohn. Reform Judaism had a distinctly German coloration in the United States, where it had been introduced by German immigrants. In 1877 four groups prevailed in the United States: the Orthodox, formerly led by Isaac Leeser, who had died in 1868; the moderates, later called Conservatives, led by Jastrow and Szold; the Moderate Reform, of which Rabbi Isaac M. Wise was the leading proponent; and the Radical

Reform of David Einhorn. Wise was the founder of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. As practiced in America, the Reform service was considerably influenced by the pervasive American Protestant tradition.

The "German Church" was a small chapel on Pine Street, corner of Page Street. It had been built about 1842 by the New Church or the New Jerusalem Temple (Swedenborgian), which had occupied it until approximately 1853. In 1875 it was occupied by St. Paul's Evangelical (German) Lutheran Church. The diminutive building measured 30 by 40 feet. In 1877 it was owned by A. and W. Sprague Manufacturing Company.[18] Although the amount authorized for rental was "not to exceed" $300, budgetary allotments indicate an actual rent of $225.

The Building Committee encountered considerable difficulty in meeting the stipulated authorization for restoration. At a meeting on September 23, 1877, it detailed its activities in refurbishing the new quarters. "Your Building Committee", the report read, " . . . beg leave to report [as follows]. . . .if we have gone beyond the amount stipulated . . . by the congregation, you will take into consideration we had no other objects in doing so only . . . of beautifying the place . . . and to make it a credit to us all." The expenses of $605.68 exceeded the authorization of $400 by $205.68. Carpentry at $353 and painting at $147 alone came to $500. No other items exceeded $11.50. The report continued: "All of the above bills have been paid with a few exceptions. . . .The question may arise [as to] how these bills were paid. . . .desirous of having all bills paid, the Board of Trustees . . . voted that the amount of $300 be borrowed by means of a note . . . duly made and endorsed by our president, Mr. Henry Green." "What we have done and to what extent we have labored", the report went on, "we need not here speak of. It is for you to . . . judge whether the appropriation allowed us could ever have accomplished the work before you. We have used all pains to get men to do the work low and have not left it to only 2 or 3 to figure on the work. [It] could not be done today for a similar amount. Your committee have labored zealously and faithfully. We have exceeded our appropriation by $200, but ways and means have been provided . . . whereby this amount has been . . . covered. We do not bring this in as a defense. We have not expended one cent extravagantly or without first considering if it

was really necessary. The building we now occupy will be an everlasting pride to us all, and [we] can now look down with pleasure on our work."

Despite the committee's fervent hopes, the congregation occupied the chapel for just five years. The report concluded: "We have nothing further to state, trusting you will look at it as we do and that we be discharged from said committee." The committee of Frank, Spitz, Happ, Green, and Strauss was dismissed and, we trust, with proper appreciation.

The Finance Committee reported a membership of 84. Forty-five were present and voting. Receipts were $787.74 and disbursements $659.86. Thus, the congregation was solvent with a balance for the year of $127.88. Henry Green and Alexander Strauss were elected president and vice president respectively, and Moses M. Stern, treasurer. Myer Noot was elected secretary, assistant teacher, and collector, at a salary of $300 for the ensuing year, although he continued to support himself in the crockery business.

A new board of trustees, an Education Committee, and a Board of Finance were also elected. Isaac Buitekant was elected sexton (undoubtedly called by them *shammes* [Yiddish for sexton or caretaker]). As described by Leo Rosten:[19] "In the old country, and in the early decades of this century in America, a *shammes* had many duties beyond the janitorial. He was expected to keep the synagogue clean and warm; to repair minor damage; to see that prayer books and ceremonial objects were safely preserved." In the *shtetl* (village) in Europe, Rosten added, "He collected synagogue dues, made funeral arrangements, and rounded up a *Minyan* [the traditional quorum for prayer of ten males]. He would even fill in for a cantor with a sore throat." As Rosten observed, "Jews did not stand on ceremony". For these duties Buitekant was paid the princely sum of $50 per year.

Thus ended the year of 1877, an eventful one for the congregation. During the first half of the year the congregation came close to disintegration. Yet it had seen the great convention of July and adoption of Moderate Reform. Membership rose from a mere eighteen families to more than eighty! It had engaged an ordained rabbi, the first in its history, and had acquired a sanctuary of its own, even though rented and diminutive in size. The year was also an eventful one in the history of the United States. It marked the end of the

Panic of 1873 and the beginning of the Imperial Age of business, lasting until the financial collapse of 1929.

It was also the year of the celebrated Hilton-Seligman Affair, which symbolized the changed attitude of some Americans toward Jews. As an act of social discrimination, the "Affair" was in itself of no great importance. Joseph Seligman, a prominent American Jew, whose interest in Jewish affairs was, in fact, rather slight, was refused admission to a fashionable Saratoga Springs hotel on the ground that he was a Jew. A bitter quarrel between Seligman and Henry Hilton, a minor politician in New York and executor of the estate which owned the hotel, became a *cause célèbre*. Hilton argued that it was bad for business to have Jewish guests at the hotel, since its socially prominent Christian visitors might find it offensive. Historically this was the first openly anti-Jewish act in the United States. Equally significant, however, was the fact that many of the individuals whom historian Solomon Grayzel characterized as the "better elements" in the country, such as Henry Ward Beecher, openly took a liberal position deprecating Hilton's bigotry. The issue had been joined, and thereafter many Christian social, cultural, and business groups became more brazenly discriminatory toward Jews.[20]

Despite the acculturation and assimilation of the Jews, a manifestation of which was the movement toward Moderate Reform, public prejudice would not abate significantly for another 75 years. These pioneer Jews, living in fear of the unexpected while struggling to gain economic security, referred to themselves as Hebrews or Israelites, not Jews. They were conservative, but not reactionary, accepting new concepts while retaining old traditions. Although aware of discrimination and realizing the unfortunate implications of the Hilton-Seligman Affair, American Jews felt secure that under the Constitution their rights were not in jeopardy. Whatever their preference—Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform —they were patriotic and devoted Americans moving toward the mainstream of their adopted country.[21]

With the dawning of the new year of 1878, the congregation showed its fervent commitment to Moderate Reform by purchasing an organ for $172. John Spitz discussed at length the congregation's debts and suggested a subscription, to which fifteen members pledged a total of $96. The following week seventeen members contributed an additional $53, and a committee was appointed to

approach all who had not subscribed. All members in arrears would "be notified [that] unless their indebtedness be paid 30 days from date they will be stricken from the roll."

At a special meeting in March, a committee to obtain a loan reported failure and offered the following resolution: "That the congregation issue notes . . . to members [on voluntary loans] for any amount for a term of one year at 5% per annum." Thirty-two members subscribed for amounts of $37 to $100 for a total of $487, half of which was accounted for by seven members. All receipts except members' dues would be applied to retirement of the notes. Receipts were placed in a sinking fund, and whenever it reached $50 a distribution was made. One month later a distribution of 78 percent was possible, leaving an unpaid balance of $77, the result of a successful "dramatic performance" which yielded a profit of $358. The congregation in due course became a constituent of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations at one dollar per member per year, with each member paying fifty cents, matched equally by the congregation.

In July of 1878 the following notation appeared in the minutes: "Communication [received] from Rev. Voorsanger stating his intention of going South, having accepted a call there. Letter also contained the good wishes for the Congregation and its future prosperity." The congregation voted to express its regrets on "our minister leaving," while the board sent a testimonial "recommending Rev. J. Voorsanger to any congregation desiring his services." What had transpired in less than a year to impel Voorsanger, now barely twenty-six years of age, to leave his post? As related by the late Rabbi William G. Braude, this is the story:[22]

> The late Mattie Pincus[23] told me that toward the end of his first and only year here he [Voorsanger] decided that a certain girl who had done no work whatever should not be graduated from the religious school. The girl was the daughter of a Mr. W. [probably Benno Wolf, at the time owner of a ladies' furnishings shop], then the richest man in the congregation, who declared bluntly, "either the Rabbi goes, or I go." The Rabbi went, victim of an early endeavor to introduce standards in religious instruction.

Without attribution, David C. Adelman characterized the story as based on tradition. However, it would appear to have much more substance than that, since Matilda J. Pincus, who had had a long

and devoted career in the congregation as teacher and librarian, was the daughter of Newman Pincus, who had come to Providence in 1867 and served the congregation over a period of many years as secretary and trustee. As Adelman observed, in a small congregation men of wealth often possessed power out of all proportion to their merit. The congregation could ill afford to lose any member and certainly not a wealthy one.[24]

Whether the congregation or Voorsanger was the loser in this affair is a question. As Rabbi Braude expressed it, "through varied, indeed remarkable activities, he was to become one of America's most distinguished Reform Rabbis."[25] After leaving Providence and serving briefly in Houston, Texas, Voorsanger became assistant rabbi and then rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco. He was appointed professor of Semitic languages and literature at the University of California and chaplain and special lecturer at Leland Stanford College, later Stanford University. He edited, at various stages in his career, *The Jewish South* (Houston), the *Sabbath Visitor* (Cincinnati), and *Emanu-El* (San Francisco) and was author of *Moses Mendelssohn's Life and Works*. As described in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, he was "well versed in Jewish literature, an energetic worker, and an able preacher", and he became "the foremost rabbi on the West Coast."

Despite his brief stay, Voorsanger left his mark on the congregation. He established a tradition of excellence in religious education and founded two important organizations, the Ladies' Auxiliary, later the Sisterhood, and the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association. The latter, organized by him on October 23, 1877, was chartered by the Rhode Island General Assembly at the January 1880 session as The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association. Montefiore Lodge was added to its title in 1885. It was the first chartered Jewish ladies charitable organization in Rhode Island, founded "for the purpose of visiting and granting weekly benefits to sick members and to assist the poor and needy"—"in order", said its constitution, "to follow the example of our noble mothers." It had a long and close association with the congregation.[26]

The vacuum created by Voorsanger's departure must be filled. An advertisement appeared weekly during August in *The Jewish Messenger* (New York):

> WANTED—A minister for the congregation "Sons of Israel and David", Providence, R.I., capable of officiating (Minhag Jastrow), lead and conduct a choir, preach in the English language and teach a Hebrew School. Applications to be sent prior to September 1, 1878. H. Green, President, 281 N. Main St. Traveling expenses paid to successful candidate only.

Although no salary was mentioned, the board of trustees had been authorized to advertise for a minister "at a liberal salary."

In July Myer Noot reported persistent financial difficulties with a cash balance on hand of $2.68 and a deficit of $165.32. He continued:

> If the members of the Congregation will manifest the same zeal and energy that they have shown last year, our Congregation can come out all right and . . . if I am to be dispensed with as a paid officer of the Congregation on account of the inability to pay, I shall still do all in my power to help them out, both in the Synagogue and by outside sources. I merely state this as it has come to my knowledge that I would not take the same interest if I was not a paid officer.
>
> I would also state that some recognition is due the choir of the Congregation, they certainly have devoted considerable of their time towards making the musical part of the services a success. Show them in some way that their services are appreciated. At the last performance given, all the ladies who participated in it never so much as received a vote of thanks. I don't speak for my part, I desire none and I certainly think the whole matter has been overlooked. In this performance one non-Israelite took part. No doubt he expected a letter of thanks. In conclusion, I desire to ask one favor of my members. I have still two hot months before me to make collections. I ask of my members to consider that it is not expected of me to call five or six times to collect dues. I am willing to go twice, but where I devote three weeks out of four it is entirely inconsistent trusting that the Congregation will be Prosperous and that Peace and Harmony may always prevail.

He had his hands full, and was certainly not overpaid at $300 per annum. This report showed him to be a kind and sensitive man, which did not make his burdens any easier to bear. His report was well received, and, in accordance with his suggestion regarding

recognition of the choir, letters of appreciation were sent to its members.

It was voted unanimously "that the same manner of holding services and conducted on the same principle be continued for the ensuing year [i.e. Moderate Reform with *Minhag* Jastrow, organ, and choir]." A committee was appointed to bring in a plan to meet the budget and call on each member to classify himself "as to the amount of dues he is desirous of paying.". Finally, a housekeeping item: "It has come to the knowledge of some of the members that the yard of the congregation was in use for Buggys [*sic*], etc." The president assigned two members to ascertain by whose authority the space had been rented for that use and how long it had been used that way.

Several items of business concerned the coming High Holy Days. Seats were sold, but, since insufficient funds were realized, a committee was appointed to assess members for dues. A drawing for seats at the July meeting proved satisfactory to the members present.

With the Holidays imminent, the congregation was preoccupied with engaging a rabbi in time for the observance. Several applications had been received in reply to the advertisement in *The Jewish Messenger*. Among the candidates were Reverends Henry Block, Schwab, and Marx Moses. Moses expressed an interest in coming "on trial". He was requested to be in Providence for a trial on Saturday, August 24, if possible. The trustees were empowered to "correspond with several parties as to his moral character, etc." Block's application was withdrawn. Moses clearly made a favorable impression, for on the day after his trial visit the congregation voted to "discontinue the reading of any further letters" from applicants. With Moses standing by, a committee of three was appointed "to wait upon the Gentm [*sic*, Gentlemen], relative to salary expected and credentials." The committee reported on "the straightforward remarks made by the Rev. Gentm." and that he was willing to accept the position at a salary of $1,000. The report stipulated that "if at any time it shall come to the knowledge of the congregation of anything derogatory to his character that may have transpired at a previous time, the congregation could discharge him forthwith." The vote was 11 ayes and 5 nays. A bill of $5.25 from Reverend Henry Block for board during his visit to Providence and another

for $5.00 for advertisements in *The Jewish Messenger* were ordered paid.

Moses was not an ordained rabbi. As early as 1870 he had advertised in *The American Israelite* (issue of February 18) offering his services as a "Practical Mohel" (*mohel* is Hebrew for ritual circumciser). He boasted that he had passed "examination by most prominent physicians" and that his charges were "moderate." At the time he was living in Peoria, Illinois.

A few days later Moses asked for a loan so that he could bring his family from New Orleans to Providence. To raise the money a note for $400 was issued, signed by the "proper officers", to run for four months. Reverend Moses was given a loan $300 and was paid $50 for travel expenses. The congregation paid his bill for hotel room and board at the City Hotel in Providence.

A committee was appointed to erect a platform for the choir "not exceeding $20". The Choir Committee was authorized to engage a soprano and tenor also for an amount not exceeding $20, which Noot volunteered to collect from members. All was then in readiness for the coming High Holy Days.

The annual meeting of 1878 was held on Sunday, October 13. The officers of the previous year were re-elected unanimously. Isaac Buitekant was elected sexton and collector at a salary of $200 per annum, and Adolf Fink furnished surety on Buitekant's bond for $200. The meeting now recognized notable contributions to the general good and welfare. A committee was appointed to present to Secretary Noot an engrossed set of resolutions "for services rendered to the Congregation and framed not exceeding $50." It was also empowered to express appreciation to the ladies of the choir who volunteered during the year and to the ladies of the congregation, "who worked so hard in making the Dramatic Performance a success." Not least, a set of resolutions would be presented to President Green "for his untiring efforts in behalf of the Congregation, having been its president for a period of 19 years previously to the changing of the mode of worship." A small committee was to solicit subscriptions for the resolutions.

Henry Green was the model of a solid citizen. At the time of his retirement from the presidency he was still only forty years of age. He had been a member of the congregation for twenty-two years since his arrival in Providence in 1856. Trained as a tailor in Europe,

for most of his years in Providence he operated a clothing store located at no less than five different addresses. His business at this time was at 281 North Main Street.[27] Short in stature, he was, as a young man, handsome with trim beard, waxed moustache, and piercing eyes. A later photo taken about 1890 shows him in front of his store (Green's Clothing House) at 19 Dorrance Street, dignified and dapper with gray beard, long suit-coat, vest with heavy watch chain, bow tie, and top hat. With him are two clerks and a fitter, wearing derby hats, the latter with a tape measure about his shoulders, all presenting a picture of prosperous enterprise.[28] Green lived another fourteen years, passing away in 1892 at the still early age of 62. He was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery.[29]

At the same meeting the congregation voted to accept in the religious school poor Jewish children whose parents were unable to pay the tuition, provided, however, that the parents were not members of the congregation.

As an act of compassion it voted that a letter of condolence be sent to the Reverend Moses "for the loss sustained in losing most of his family in New Orleans." It further ordered that copies of the letter be forwarded to *The Jewish Messenger* and *The American Israelite* for publication, provided that "it will be at no cost to the congregation." The records of the congregation do not divulge the nature of the tragedy or who of the Moses family had succumbed. The following items, however, which had already appeared in *The Jewish Messenger*, reveal the sad details of the catastrophe:

> September 20, 1878
>
> New Orleans, La.
>
> The condition of affairs in this city is about as bad as ever, and there are no prospects at present of a cessation of the plague. Among our coreligionists, however, the fever does not ravage so dreadfully as among members of different faiths. The Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Touro Infirmary are busy day and night in attending to the many cases of sickness, death, and misery brought to their notice. No one can imagine the horrors of the scene. Miss Matilda Moses, aged twenty years, eldest daughter of Rev. Marx Moses, now of Providence, R.I., died on the 12th inst.
>
> * * *

September 27, 1878

Providence, RI.

At the Jewish Synagogue, on Friday evening last, the officiating minister, Rev. Marx Moses, offered a prayer in which he referred, in touching words, to the terrible affliction which has befallen him. Mr. Moses' family, which resides in New Orleans, has been stricken by the dread disease, and, out of a family of five, but two children are left. Following the death of his wife, came that of his oldest son, Samuel, his daughter, Matilda, and his son, Isaac. The Mayor of Providence has kindly offered to send to New Orleans for the two remaining children; but the local authorities there deem it best not to send them North, for fear the seeds of death may thereby become scattered broadcast. The many friends of Rev. Mr. Moses offer their sincere condolence in his time of affliction.

Epidemics of cholera and yellow fever had been recurrent scourges in New Orleans. The loss of life was appalling and carried away many in the bloom of life. The germ theory of disease was then in its infancy. The nature of the offending agents and their cure and prevention were frustratingly elusive. Yet the clinical distinction between the two diseases was apparent to the physicians of the time. Medical history records that the very last cholera epidemic in New Orleans had occurred in 1873, while a large yellow fever epidemic prevailed there in 1878. It must be concluded that the ill-fated four members of Marx Moses' family were the tragic victims of mosquito-borne yellow fever.[30]

On December 2, 1878 a special meeting was called to hear a report on the congregation's debts and ways and means of meeting them. The congregation voted to borrow $375 on notes issued to members willing to take them. Two-hundred-and-seventy-five dollars of new money was required, as Treasurer Stern renewed his old note for $100. The total of $275 was successfully subscribed in amounts varying from $5 to $75. The notes again would be a first charge on all monies received, exclusive of dues.

At the first meeting of the new year on January 5, 1879, Reverend Moses offered to deliver his sermons ("lectures" he called them) alternately in English and German. After much discussion it was voted "to leave the arrangement as heretofore," i.e. English only.

The congregation was not prepared to retreat from its striving toward Americanization.

At a meeting in April the resolutions recognizing the services of Secretary Noot and President Green were read and ordered placed on the record. The Resolutions Committee was "discharged with thanks for their labors well performed."

The secretary reported many unpaid membership bills with no possibility of collecting the money. Treasurer Stern and Benno Wolf were delegated to call on those in arrears. It was further voted to repeal the congregation's initiation fee (presumably to attract new members). A special meeting was called in May to act on a request from the Independent Order Free Sons of Israel for a reduction in the $30 charge for burial of its members in the congregation's burial ground. The request was rejected, the price to be maintained "as heretofore."

Unheralded, the following advertisement appeared in the July 4, 1878 issue of *The Jewish Messenger:*

> WANTED—for the Congregation Sons of Israel and David, Providence, R.I., a minister capable of officiating according to Szold's prayer book, preach in the English language, teach a Hebrew School, lead and conduct a choir—salary $700 per annum. No traveling expenses paid. Apply as below.
>
> Henry Green, Pres.
> 271 North Main St.
> Providence. R.I.

Two days later, a letter was received from Reverend Moses in which he requested a three-week vacation (granted), but also announced that he would not be a candidate for re-election. Whether his departure was precipitated by the painful financial status of the congregation or his personal tragedy is not clear.[31] However, a committee was delegated to call on him to inquire whether he would be willing to continue at a salary of $700 (reduced from $1,000). The quest was unsuccessful, and Moses left Providence prior to the High Holidays. The advertisement in *The Jewish Messenger* was continued through August, but on August 22 the salary offer was increased to $900, frugality having failed.

At a special meeting on August 3, the trustees reported their inability to meet a proposed budget of $1,600. A committee on

assessment of members had succeeded in raising only $1,200. A budget of $1,175 was proposed with only $300 alloted for "teacher and minister". This proposition was offered to Noot, his term to begin September 1. A week later Noot resigned as teacher and minister, forcing reconsideration of the budget.

Early in September of 1878 a board report was implemented assessing each member yearly dues of $30, payable in monthly installments of $2.50, the first two months payable in advance. A note for $5 was accepted from one member. Seat-holders would be charged $15 per annum, payable under the same terms, they having no privileges other than occupying their rented seats. Thirty-two members were signed up. Single men were granted the right to request burial in the cemetery. Tickets for admission on the High Holidays would be sold to others at $5 a piece. Fixed dues was a departure from previous custom. Twenty-one seats were disposed of at an auction for amounts ranging from one dollar to $11.

The congregation at a meeting later in September considered available applications for minister and pondered the congregation's difficult finances. A reduced budget was finally adopted as follows:

EXPENDITURES:	
minister	780
rent	225
organist	150
sexton	50
gas, coal, insurance	100
Total	$1305
REVENUE:	
34 members at $30 per annum	$1020
5 seatholders at $15	75
premium on seats	100
Total	$1195

The $110 deficit was increased to $150 by raising the sexton's fee by $25 and allowing $15 for incidentals. Fifteen members voluntarily subscribed a total of $65.60 in addition to their dues and seat premiums.

The credentials of the leading candidate for minister, Morris Rotenberg,[32] were "highly satisfactory as to moral character and pro-

ficiency in capacity of teacher, etc," although he was not an ordained rabbi. A motion to elect him to the position of minister, lecturer, and teacher beginning on September 1, 1879 carried by a vote of 17 to 2. His salary would be $15 per week, or $750 per annum, as budgeted, subject to a written agreement. Subscriptions would be solicited from absent members to make up the deficiency in income. All was now in order for the High Holy Days.

At the annual meeting of September 28, 1879, with retiring President Green in the chair and 27 of the 36 members present, officers for the ensuing year were elected. The slate included: Alexander Strauss, president; David Frank, vice president; Moses M. Stern, treasurer; and Myer Noot, secretary. Trustees and the School and Finance Committees were also elected. Jacob Jackson, a tailor, was elected sexton at a salary of $75 per year. Buitekant, the retiring sexton, left with unpaid dues of $7.50. This was remitted, and he was granted a seat in the synagogue and burial in case of demise for his "past services these long years." A committee of Strauss, Hartman, and Frank was appointed to draft new bylaws for the congregation to "embody therein all such laws and regulations to prompt the good government of this congregation."

A reunion of the religious school children would be held on or near *Simhat Torah* to provide an opportunity for Reverend Rotenberg to meet the children, the cost of the entertainment not to exceed $15. Children not presently members of the school were to be included. *Simhat Torah* (rejoicing in the law) was observed on the last day of Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles). During the celebration of *Simhat Torah* the children customarily participate in a procession of their elders carrying the Torah Scrolls. Members of the choir were invited to the reunion.

Myer Noot was given a rising vote of thanks for his dedicated services during the recent Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur holidays. The trustees were instructed "to attend to the fixing up of the Burying Ground", a continuing concern. Finally, there was an enthusiastic "rising vote of thanks" to retiring President Green "for his untiring efforts for the past year" and upon completion of twenty years of devoted and faithful service to the congregation. President Green responded with a few well-chosen words. Thus ended a very long meeting.

At a board meeting on November 11, 1879 appropriations of $22

to mend the burial ground fence and $75 to repair the schoolroom were approved. Noot assured the trustees that he would endeavor to raise $50 through a series of socials.

In January 1880 the new bylaws were adopted with the following amendment: that attendants who would sit with the body until burial be furnished upon the death of any family member, and that they be paid by an assessment upon each member of the congregation. The attendants would remain with the body until it was removed from the member's home. According to Jewish law the body should not be left alone. Jacob Jackson, the retiring sexton, was paid $6 for providing this service for a member's deceased child. Solomon Levy, a costumer and clothes cleaner, was elected "janitor", probably carrying out the duties of *shammash* (sexton). A letter of thanks was sent to the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association for their voluntary contribution to the congregation of a ton of coal. On March 10 it was voted unanimously to pay a dividend (distribution) of 50 percent on the outstanding notes, which was a source of considerable gratification. "There being no further business," the minutes noted, "the meeting adjourned and great satisfaction prevailed among the members."

In February the trustees received a contribution of $75.69 from the "Israelites of Pawtucket", the proceeds of an entertainment held on behalf of the congregation.[33] They requested that $10 be set aside for prizes in the religious school, the remainder to be reserved as a sinking fund for general purposes. The death of Isaac Buitekant, the retired sexton, occurred on April 10 in his 51st year. A letter of condolence was sent to his widow, and members were taxed to defray the cost for the watchers attending his remains.[34]

At this time the second schism in the congregation's relatively short history was taking place. The January 1880 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly was petitioned to grant a corporate charter authorizing certain individuals and their associates, "to form and constitute the Congregation Sons of Abraham worshipping God in Hebrew form and manner in the City of Providence." The seventeen persons included Leonard Halberstad (charter member of the Sons of Israel and David and brother-in-law of Solomon Pareira), Moses Einstein (son-in-law of *Hazzan* Abraham Jacobs), Bernard Holmes, Marcus Cohen, Moritz Hirsch, and Elias Hirsch, all former members of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. The

first signatory on the petition was the spiritual leader, one Reverend Himan Touvim. The petition for the charter, granted on March 17, 1880, further read:

> For the purpose of taking upon said corporation the care and assistance of the sick, needy and helpless of their own congregation and such other persons as they may deem proper under the name Sons of Abraham of Providence, R.I.

Whether the breakaway was prompted by discomfort or dissatisfaction with the modest liberalism of Moderate Reform, nostalgia for traditional orthodoxy, or internal power struggles cannot be gleaned from the record. It is clear, however, that the exodus contributed substantially to the rapid decline in membership from its high-water mark of 84 to a marginal 36. The fate of the Congregation Sons of Abraham is unknown. Aside from the petition and the charter, no records have been found, and it never appeared in any Providence Directory.[35] It was not related to the later Congregation Sons of Abraham chartered in 1938.

In May 1880 the trustees voted to rent the schoolroom to the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association for one dollar per meeting. The board considered the burial of a child of Abraham P. Spitz (in the hat and cap business), presumably a non-member. A deposit of $25 was required pending a decision as to the full amount. Later the trustees voted that congregational benefits would not be granted "to an Israelite residing in the city one year" (i.e. one who had lived in the area for over a year without becoming a member). This ruling applied to rights or benefits in or out of the synagogue. A committee was appointed to recruit new members with the added leverage of the new resolution. On July 11 a controversial clause in the new constitution was reconsidered. Article X provided that every member in good standing was entitled to participate in debate and vote, and was eligible to hold office. It stated, however, that privileges would not extend to boys over 18 years of age or to daughters when married. Seen as an unfair burden on young persons just starting out in life, the latter rule was stricken from the bylaws.

Later in July the board ordered that members be assessed in two classes, $36 and $18 per annum. Budget deficits would be met by voluntary contributions and sale of pews. On July 25 the following section on membership was repealed unanimously: "A widow whose husband was a member and in good standing at the time of

his death shall be entitled to all the privileges of a member's wife as long as she remains a widow". Rather, the trustees were empowered to treat such cases on an individual basis until a new bylaw was written. There appeared to be concern that a few well-off widows might take unfair advantage of the old rule.

The annual budget was set at $1640 with a $1000 salary for the minister, any deficit to be met by voluntary subscription. Contributions were pledged as follows: one at $12 per annum, 12 at $10, 5 at $5, and one each of $6 and $3, for a total of $160. Categories of membership as recommended by the board would be $36 and $18 per annum. Eighteen-dollar members would be allowed full privileges, except that each member would be limited to two seats. Single men, assessed at $12, would be entitled to one seat. Each member would be taxed sixty cents, if necessary, to meet any remaining deficiency.

At the annual meeting of 1880 held on September 19, John H. Spitz presided as temporary chairman. Alexander Strauss was reelected president, while Noot was elevated to the vice presidency and was replaced as secretary by Lewis H. Kahn. Moses M. Stern continued as treasurer. Solomon Levy was elevated from "janitor" to "sexton" at a salary of $150 per annum. The Finance Committee reported a budget of $1640. Income was expected to be $1760, with a positive balance of $106. Despite this optimistic outlook and a healthy rebound in membership from a low of 36 to 57, the precarious financial situation persisted. Reverend Rotenberg had been paid in irregular installments of five to twenty dollars during July and August, and the rent of $210 was overdue. Yet three marriages during the year gave hope for the future.

During October a balance of $43.33 due Rotenberg was paid, and the president was authorized by the trustees to borrow $100 to be paid on account for rent. Hyman Krohne, who was present, resigned as a member in the first class ($36) and requested the board to reclassify him in the second class ($18). He explained his grievance and the reasons for his resignation. The trustees were sorry "that a misunderstanding had taken place" at a recent service between him and ushers Noot and Happ. When the words "that he had been wronged" were stricken from the record, both ushers came forward and apologized. A clause "that there was no intention . . . to wrong him" was also deleted. "Mr. Krohne, being satisfied with the explanation", according to the minutes, "the whole matter [probably an

argument over seating] was settled to the satisfaction of all." Presumably Krohne continued his $36 membership.

In November the board, meeting in the "Haggai Room",[36] adopted a set of rules and regulations regarding the order of business and designation of committees. The parliamentary procedure of Cushing was to be followed (Luther Stearns Cushing's *Manual of Parliamentary Procedure*, first published in 1844).

During 1881 the financial crisis of the congregation continued. The distress was national as well as local. A communication was received from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations stating that it was in no position to aid the struggling Hebrew Union College.[37] In January the trustees voted to borrow $110 from the burial fund for a payment toward the rent. The congregation in February ordered "that the organist and choir be notified that their services are no longer required." A similar motion regarding the minister was tabled, but later in the month a committee was authorized "to confer with the Rev. Mr. Rotenberg on what terms he would relieve this Congregation." It reported that he expected the balance of his salary to March 1 ($83.33) to be paid, but he would settle for $375 (as against $500) for the balance of the year to September. A motion to relieve him of his duties as of March 1 failed, and he remained for the balance of his term to September 1. On March 27 the board was notified by A. and W. Sprague, owners of the chapel, that, unless the rent due March 1 of $260 were remitted by April 1, the premises would have to be vacated. It voted to borrow $100, and the collector was instructed to try his utmost to collect all dues payable up to April 1, so that the deadline could be met. Early in May the Committee on Entertainment was asked to arrange a benefit affair to bolster the wavering finances.

Later the board notified David Frank, bearded and handsome, and a long and devoted member of the congregation, that he would be suspended for non-payment of dues unless he paid his arrears to June 1. However, in view of extenuating circumstances the board reversed the suspension and voted to "congratulate him for his newborn son, inform him of the reconsideration, and request him to pay his dues." All members in arrears were notified that, unless their dues were paid by the next quarterly meeting, they would be suspended.

In July of 1881 the Budget Committee set dues assessments for the coming year at $18 and $12, in two "classes". This considerable

reduction from the previous year was presumably made posible by the recovery in membership. Forty members were assigned by the board to the $18 class and 15 to the $12 class. Fixed dues for all members was a departure from previous practice.

The following budget was then proposed:

Income:	
40 members at $18	$720
15 members at $12	180
	$900
Expenses:	
Rent	300
Taking care of property	25
Sundries	50
For services over holidays	200
	$575
Balance:	325
	$900

The favorable balance was made possible by the omission of an allowance for a minister, since it was decided not to engage one for the present. The committee also recommended the following rules to govern payment of assessments:

> Each member must pay a month's dues in advance and no person can be a member unless he is clear on the books for last year.
>
> A member who has been suspended for non-payment of dues cannot be admitted [to services] unless he pays all arrearages.
>
> No one shall be a member unless he agrees to bind himself to pay his whole year's assessment and sign a document to that effect; and no one shall be a member or have any rights or benefits as provided in the constitution of this congregation until he has signed his name and paid his assessment in advance.

Regarding the religious school, the committee recommended:

> that the Sunday School be continued as we know that we can get a teacher gratis and the trustees exert themselves that they can easily get two ladies as assistant teachers, as it is necessary if we cannot support a minister to keep up a Sunday School so that our children should not be neglected in the teachings of Judaism.

The provisions were adopted, and a time limit of August 15 was placed on implementation. Reverend Rotenberg was granted a three-week vacation commencing July 18. The Reverend Jacob Voorsanger planned to visit Providence on July 25 during Rotenberg's absence. A committee of three was appointed to receive him and extend to him an invitation to officiate on Saturday, July 30. There was obviously a reservoir of good will and affection for Voorsanger, who had left the congregation under duress. With the departure of Rotenberg, essentially for fiscal reasons, the record of one- and two-year tenures for ministers remained unbroken except for Abraham Jacobs, who survived for seven years.

Prices for seats for the coming High Holy Days were set at $8 for married men (and families) and $2 for single men. No member would be admitted without a ticket. The congregation met on September 4 "to make final arrangements to continue the congregation for the ensuing year and make preparations for the coming holidays." Thirty-seven members had complied with the regulations governing membership and were thus in good standing for the New Year. Myer Noot was asked to officiate during the holidays, but he declined. It was then voted to engage a "minister" for the holidays at an expense not to exceed $100. The Choir Committee was authorized to provide a choir at a cost not to exceed $50.

The reason for Noot's refusal to officiate is not clear from the records. It appears from his report as secretary that he was dissatisfied with the members' cooperation. The awkward situation was eased by the diplomatic intercession of President Strauss. At a board meeting at the Pawtucket Horse Guard Armory on September 7 (Strauss was an officer in the Rhode Island Cavalry), it was announced that Noot would indeed officiate at the services and that Henry Green would assist him. The president was asked to send tickets to those who were unable to pay.

At the annual meeting of October 2, 1881 it was decided to solicit contributions toward a fund of $100 for work on the burial ground. Noot showed his good will by subscribing the largest amount — $10, and cancelled an unpaid note which he held against the congregation. A resolution was adopted to present Noot "with some suitable testimonial for the efficient manner in which he conducted the services during the holidays." Speaking to the motion, Noot replied that he had already received his testimonial through the

verbal acknowledgment of the members and therefore declined to receive any further compensation for his services. A "rising vote of thanks" was accorded him, and he was unanimously re-elected vice president. Green also received a vote of thanks for his participation in the Holiday services.

With David Frank in the chair (apparently restored to good standing), Strauss, Kahn, and Stern were also re-elected to their respective offices and Solomon Levy was reappointed "janitor". The election of a School Committee was dispensed with, and its powers were assumed by the trustees. A letter of thanks was "sent to our janitor, Mr. Levy for his courteous manner towards the trustees at their various meetings and in behalf of the congregation at large". His salary of $50 per annum was renewed. The $100 loan from the burial ground fund was repaid, and the Committee on the Burial Ground was empowered to proceed with development work. This involved grading and filling, spreading black gravel on walks, straightening graves, laying turf and seeding, removing an old shed, and constructing a new gate with two granite posts and a center arch. Evergreen trees were planted in front of the cemetery bordering the street.

On December 4 a request was received from Hot Springs, Arkansas for a donation for a new synagogue. Preoccupied with its own financial woes, the congregation filed the request.

On March 12, 1882 the board agreed to a rent increase to $50 per month, double that of the previous year. Noot was directed to supervise the janitor to assure "that he keeps the synagogue and school room in good order, and have the same always neat and clean." The Committee on the Choir was authorized by the congregation to engage a choir for the Pesah (Passover) week for an amount not to exceed $40. The committee on developing the burial ground, as well as that to raise funds for the work, both reported progress. The Purim Ball Committee reported a profit of $250 and was complimented for its success. Finally, Noot announced an open examination of the Sunday School children in May with the membership invited. Happily, Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger was in Providence in May and attended the exercises. A letter was sent to his congregation in Houston, Texas, thanking them for the opportunity to entertain Voorsanger in Providence. It asked that he be excused for tarrying in the city over Shavuot (Week of Feasts, the Pentecost). It

was the customary time for Sunday School confirmation ceremonies, and he might otherwise have been with his own congregation on that occasion.

Board meetings in the spring and summer of 1882 were held variously at Fletcher's Hall and at the homes of President Strauss and Vice President Noot. The board recommended the engagement of a new rabbi at a salary of $1500, although no provision was made for a salary in the budget. It was learned that the currently occupied premises (still the former German Church) would have to be vacated, and a committee was appointed to procure a suitable hall.

In August the committee located an available hall in the Barstow Building at 98 Weybosset Street, one flight up and formerly occupied by the YMCA. A lease at $400 per year for five years was offered with the privilege of renewal for five years. Vice President Noot was authorized to buy the present pews for $25. A committee was appointed to "fix up the new hall as a synagogue", and to move the congregation's property from the present site to the new premises.

On August 27, a bill for carpentry work on the new hall from F.C. Stafford and Company for $140.63 was ordered paid, and it was reported that the lease on the new premises would soon be completed. Seat prices for the High Holidays were set at $5 for married men and their families and $2.50 for single men. A bench was provided as extra seating to accommodate two members and their families. Officers had first choice of pews before other members drew lots for pews. John H. Spitz on behalf of the congregation presented to Secretary Lewis H. Kahn "a nice set of resolutions". Both Stern and Kahn were appointed as ushers for the Holidays. A vote of thanks was tendered to Benedict Lederer for his gift to the congregation of a carpet for the new quarters.

At the annual meeting of October 1, 1882 the committee "on fixing up the new synagogue" made its final report and was discharged with thanks. The same officers were re-elected for the next year. Members repaired to the anteroom of the new synagogue, where a collation was provided by Secretary Kahn in appreciation of the testimonial he received the previous year. Letters of thanks were sent to Vice President Noot for the able manner in which he conducted the Holiday services "and through the year generally", to Henry Green for his able assistance to Noot, and to Pauline (Mrs. Julius) Shuman for her participation in the choir. Finally, a note of

thanks was sent to Isaac Hahn "for the handsome curtain (*parokhet*)[38] presented to the Congregation" for the ark. With a new carpet and a new curtain for the ark, the sanctuary was in fine shape. A bill for repairing and tuning the piano was ordered paid. The organ was not mentioned.

The congregation expressed renewed interest in building a synagogue. It was voted to draw $100 from the treasury to be placed in a sinking fund for a new building. The improvement in finances was made possible in part by Noot's generous free services as minister. Subscriptions of $100 for the popular undertaking were made by four members, including Henry Green and Myer Noot, and also ten of $50 and one of $36. Those not present would be solicited.

At a meeting on December 17, 1882 a letter was received from Henry Whitman, owner of land abutting the cemetery, "in regard to the clearing of land on the burying ground." Instructions to respond were given to President Strauss and Vice President Noot, the nature of which is not revealed in the minutes. Controversy over cemetery land titles remained unresolved for many years.

A notice from one C. Frank Parkhurst, attorney, was read informing the congregation "that a bill for rent [of the Chapel] amounting to $191.93 [for the period July 21 to September 5] has been given him for collection and requesting early settlement." This represented a period during which moving from the premises was in progress. A committee consisting of Benedict B. Lederer, Myer Noot, and Gustave Rodenberg was appointed "to see what settlement can be made" and with full power to act. The bill was eventually settled for $50. The committee on the *Simhat Torah* social reported a net profit of $16.71 and was duly discharged. It was voted to pay a bill from Henry Green "for expenses and horse car fare [incurred] during the fixing of the burying ground."

The first board meeting of 1883 was devoted to consideration of the burial of a child whose parents had endured illness in the family for a number of years. Burial was granted at no charge. This was typical of the generosity of the congregation in dealing with the deaths of children of poor families. Later, the body of a poor girl from Fall River was interred in the cemetery, thus extending the congregation's philanthropy beyond the state.

In March the Committee on Subscriptions for a new synagogue was reproached because it "had done nothing". A motion for a new

committee was defeated, but Noot "positively" refused to serve. He announced, however, that he would conduct services on Pesah and Shavuot and was empowered to engage a choir for both holidays.

The board in April considered finances for the next fiscal year. A budget of $2000 was presented, the largest ever, with provision for a minister at $800 and a caretaker for the cemetery at $50 per annum. Members were assessed for dues in amounts of $12 to $150, with a projected income of $1831. Discouraged by the poor support given by the congregation, Noot gave notice that he would no longer conduct the divine services. A congregational meeting was called for May 6, 1883 with this exhortation: "N.B. Your non-attendance at the above meeting will denote that you are not desirous of upholding the congregation."

At the meeting the board presented the proposed budget and assessments. In anticipation of prolonged controversy, it was voted "that no member shall speak longer than five minutes on one subject." Dismayed by the unprecedented size of the budget and the dues increases, the congregation promptly defeated both. A motion then carried "that a committee of three be appointed to call a convention of all the Israelites of Providence and vicinity" with power "to engage a prominent rabbi to address said convention." The committee consisted of Myer Noot, Henry Green, and Benedict Lederer.

Three days later the committee reported progress, but no "convention" was ever held. However, on August 3 the congregation took several important steps. "Brother Mr. Noot" offered a resolution which, if adopted, would induce him to volunteer his services to the congregation for two years free of charge. The resolution read:

> We, the undersigned bind ourselves to pay the amount assessed by the Board of Trustees less a discount of 20% but with the following conditions, that the amount realized by the said assessment (less the expenses of the present congregation) be placed in a separate fund to be known as the Building Fund for the purpose of building a synagogue, same to be paid quarterly in advance.

The adoption of the resolution augured well for the congregation.

In September the board upon petition reduced the assessments of

two members, and then appointed a committee to allot seats for the High Holy Days, which that year were late in the season.

The year 1883 was again one of financial stress in the United States. There were no further congregational meetings in 1883 after August 3, and in fact none in 1884 until the annual meeting of October 4. Alexander Strauss continued as president, but Benedict Lederer became the new vice president. Stern continued as treasurer, and Noot resumed his old office of secretary.

As recommended by the Burial Ground Committee, no tombstones could be placed in the burial ground without the consent of the Burial Ground Committee. To enforce the rules an existing outmoded gate would be closed and a new front iron gate would be installed at a cost of $3.74. "We deem it expedient", it was voted, to promote the sale of lots in the burial ground. Noot, continuing to apply pressure, volunteered to take charge of the Sunday School provided that members would agree to send their children regularly every Sunday. All parents were so notified.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations informed the congregation that it was in default in payment of its regular assessments, but would be reinstated if it paid its $23 semi-annual dues. The Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), although not chartered until 1898, was already active and in December 1883 requested "use of our room gratis," which was granted. The request, however, suggested to the leaders an additional potential source of revenue. Committees were appointed to render the hall at 98 Weybosset Street suitable for meetings and to arrange for renting it for lodge purposes. Also, an adjoining room was hired "at a moderate rental", apparently to be used as a schoolroom. Unheralded, a Mr. B. Eastwood of Boston, not identified in the records, donated $100 toward the building of a new synagogue, perhaps a sign that there was no turning back. Thus, a trying year ended on an upbeat note.

In January 1884, Noot resigned as secretary owing to his impending departure from the city. John H. Spitz was elected to fill out his term. Whether his departure was to be temporary or, in fact, whether it occurred at all is not clear, as later on Noot was again elected secretary. He was not, however, listed in the City Directory of 1884, and further the board voted "that the congregation pay its proportionate part" for a reception to be tendered to him "in conjunction with other organizations." The board also ratified the do-

nation of $10 "as charity" to a "minister who called here in search of a position".

The renting out of the synagogue quarters proved to be a profitable enterprise. Haggai Lodge of B'nai B'rith subscribed at $75 per year, the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association at $25, Providence Lodge at $75, and Abraham Lodge at $50. Judah Touro Lodge was also listed at 98 Weybosset Street in the current Providence directories, as were the above.[39] Thus, at least six organizations used the synagogue quarters for their meetings. Of these, only Haggai Lodge and the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association had obtained state charters prior to 1884. The School Committee was authorized to suspend sessions during the summer, as was customary. The Committee on Entertainment was directed to join with the Ladies Auxiliary Association in sponsoring a social or ball.

The year 1884 was the 100th anniversary of the birth of the renowned British philanthropist Sir Moses Haim Montefiore, who in fact in 1884 was still alive and would survive yet another year. The congregation voted unanimously to "take an active part in the proper celebration of the 100th anniversary of Sir Moses Montefiore and whatever is required to pay for the outlay to be paid in proportion with other organizations." The congregation's share was $37.50, one-fourth of the total deficit of $150.

At the annual meeting of October 4, 1884, Myer Noot was once again serving as secretary. Noot reappeared in the City Directory of 1885, but he had converted from the crockery business to "hats, caps, etc." Strauss was re-elected president, Lederer vice president, Stern treasurer, and Noot secretary. A vote of thanks was tendered to Spitz for his efficient services as secretary during Noot's absence. An improved financial report was read with great satisfaction.

Encouraged by the favorable fiscal situation, the congregation voted unanimously to engage an organist at a rate of $4 per week not to exceed $200 per annum for both Friday evening and Saturday morning services. The Choir Committee was empowered to enter into a yearly contract. Taking cognizance of the need for young men and women to be provided "with some means to enable them to obtain instruction in the Jewish Religion," the congregation requested that the trustees "take the matter in hand" and arrange for a Bible class. This was intended for older youths, as the Sunday school continued in operation. A letter of thanks was sent to the Ladies Auxiliary for its continuing assistance to the congregation.

Finally, it was voted "to return the body of Jacob Dimond, the father of Leopold Dimond [a faithful member of the congregation], and place it in the proper burying ground of this Congregation at the expense of the Congregation and the same be attended to *at once.*" Jacob Dimond, an incorporator of the Congregation of The Sons of David, died in 1878 and was buried in the Moshassuck Cemetery. In accordance with this order, his body was disinterred in 1884 and reburied in the "proper burying ground of this Congregation" [i.e. the Reservoir Avenue Cemetery], where his gravestone now stands. Moshassuck was still operated by the congregation to accommodate relatives of members, non-members, and charitable cases.

Later, in 1885 Louis Green, a member, requested permission to bury his father-in-law, Abraham Jacobs, the former *Hazzan* of the congregation, in one of the congregation's cemeteries. He too had been an incorporator of the Congregation of the Sons of David and at the time of his death was not a dues-paying member of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. Permission was granted for burial either at the Reservoir Avenue site for $100 or in the Moshassuck Cemetery for $30. He was in fact buried in Moshassuck, where his gravestone still survives. However, the question of "whether permission shall be granted to non-members to be interred in the Elmwood [Reservoir Avenue] Burial Ground" was referred to the congregation for later consideration. Finally, in 1892 the congregation voted to provide a burial place in the Reservoir Avenue Cemetery not only for members of the congregation, but for members of their families as well.

At the first congregational meeting of 1885 on February 8, the trustees were authorized to procure a stove for the schoolroom. Modest bills for coal and wood were received from time to time. Spitz had announced his forthcoming removal from the city, thus creating a vacancy on the board. The Committee on Amusements [i.e. the Entertainment Committee] was requested to plan a Purim Ball together with the Ladies' Auxiliary Society. The ball produced a net profit of $46. Ten dollars was appropriated for prizes for Sunday School pupils, while Noot volunteered to conduct a Bible class as recommended by the board.

The budget presented in June totaled $1800 with provision for a choir at $225 and a teacher at $400, but none for a rabbi. The congregation on Sunday, July 5 voted to prepare for President Al-

exander Strauss a special set of resolutions for his devoted service to the congregation, which were presented at a gathering on July 7:

Providence, July 7, 5645
1885

Whereas Our estimable Friend Mr. A. Strauss has served this Congn. as its Pres. during the past seven years and has devoted his time towards the furtherance of its highest Interests, and

Whereas the success of this Congn. has been in a measure due to his unceasing labors in their behalf, and

Whereas during the Exercises of his Office he has at all times evinced for each and every member of the Congn. a spirit of general satisfaction unbiased in any of his actions extending towards the Peace and prosperity of all interested, be it therefore

Resolved That . . . acknowledgment [be made] of all these noble sentiments and hearty actions that have been manifest in all the years of his presidency; [and be it further]

Resolved That an Engrossed Set of Resolutions be presented to our Pres. Mr. Alex Strauss and a copy of the same be spread upon the Records of the Cong.

L. Hartman
Myer Noot
J. Shartenberg
} *Committee*

The resolutions were spread upon the records following the minutes of the meeting of September 20.

On August 9 a committee was appointed to sell seats and pews for the High Holidays and another to explore the possibility of purchasing additional land adjacent to the cemetery and to determine whether it could be used under the statutes for burial purposes. Henry Green was asked to lend his assistance at the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services.

The annual meeting of the congregation on September 20, 1885 was attended by the officers and thirty members. The resolutions lauding President Strauss were read by Secretary Noot, chairman of the committee which had prepared them (and undoubtedly their author). He added a few remarks complimentary to the president, and was followed by the other two members of his committee. The "Brethren were [then] called upon for remarks in consonance with the occasion." The "recipient responded in his usual pleasing

manner." Secretary Noot's report for the year was eloquent and optimistic:

> To the Pres., Officers, & Members of the Congn. Sons of Israel Gentm.:
>
> I have the honor of presenting my report as S'c'y Commencing Sep. 1884 to Sep. 1885. At the same time it affords me unusual pleasure to chronicle the Financial Condition of the Congn. in the shape it is. I know of no year during the Existence of the Congn where so handsome an Amount has been in the Treas at the beginning of a new year. Another pleasant feature of the year is That there is not a delinquent on our Books every a/c having been closed up leaving a clean Record unsurpassed in the history of this Congn.
>
> With your Kind Attention I submit the amounts of monies that have passed thru my hands and amounts drawn upon the Treas.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Receipts | $1896.34 |
> | Disbursements | 1425.70 |
> | Balance on Hand | 470.64 |
>
> I need not speak of the success the past year of the Congn. the amount on hand speaks for itself.
>
> The Roll of membership numbers at present 44. We have gained the past year 6 new members and lost thru removal from the city 5. Thanks be to God Our Ranks have not been diminished by Death for which we feel especially pleased and thankful. Everything seems to be running smoothly and there is even indication that at some future day the Congn. may reach a much larger membership than it has under the present administration. Of the officers of the Congn. nothing can be said but words of praise. They have all worked zealously for the best interests of the Congn. Too much cannot be said however for our Pres. Mr. Alex Strauss for his untiring efforts manifested during the past year. The trustees in their deliberations at the Various Meetings have endeavored to watch the interest of anything touching the good & welfare of the Congregation. The project proposed by the Trustees that a Teacher be engaged at a stated salary to instruct the children of members will no doubt meet with the approval of the whole Congregation.
>
> It is with pleasure I chronicle the pleasant feature of Divine Services. It is now over a year since the project was started & there is every evidence of the same being continued. Too much praise cannot be accorded to the Ladies of the Choir who have given their time and attention the year around. Without this our

services would not be in harmony with the Ritual we have adopted.

The success in the future for our Cong. is assured. Everyone seems to be pleased with the internal workings and all act in harmony together.

Trusting that the Year just ushered in may be one of Prosperity, and that God's blessing may follow us in all our deliberations,

I remain Your Obdt. Servant

Myer Noot

Sec'y

And he was indeed an obedient and faithful servant of the congregation.

The congregation authorized the trustees to purchase at the best possible price an additional small piece of land at the cemetery in Elmwood amounting to 25 by 50 feet. A bill for $20 from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was ordered paid, and $10 was appropriated "Towards relief of a distressed Jewish family." Benedict B. Lederer was thanked for securing a contribution from Plume and Atwood of Boston toward the erection of a synagogue. Perhaps Lederer was also responsible for the contribution from B. Eastwood of Boston for the same purpose. Myer Noot was elected teacher, and a letter of thanks was sent to the choir for its devoted services. The officers elected for the ensuing year were Strauss, president; Lederer, vice president; Stern, treasurer; and Noot, secretary. Henry W. Brown was elected janitor at a salary of $100, increased from $75. It was ordered that the resolutions to Strauss be suitably engrossed, and the meeting concluded with refreshments.

In October the board set Noot's salary as teacher at $400, and requested him together with the School Committee to draw up rules governing the religious school. The Committee on Burial Ground was authorized to buy the additional tract of land at the cemetery, as approved by the congregation. Further, the treasurer was ordered to withdraw $300 from the general fund to be added to the Building Fund—a welcome sign of improving finances.

At the final regular congregational meeting of the year on Sunday, December 13, 1885, the School Committee presented a set of rules governing the school and reported "that the school is progressing slowly." Noot gave notice that he could not continue to serve as minister after the end of the year. Alarmed by this crisis, the con-

gregation feared that it might not survive. It ordered the board to meet promptly to formulate a plan to meet the emergency. With more serious matters to deal with, the congregation deferred purchase of additional land at the Reservoir Avenue cemetery. Leopold Hartman was elected collector, in consideration of which his dues were remitted.

The board on December 16 voted that the congregation should indeed be kept viable. It recommended that the tax on members voted in 1883 be maintained. The income from this source would be $1432 per annum, sufficient to keep the budget deficit at $250, which could be raised by voluntary subscription. At a special meeting on December 27, the plan proposed by the board was adopted, including a 20 percent surcharge on dues. The vote was ayes 16 and nays 3. The board of trustees was authorized to advertise for a minister when they deemed it expedient. The congregation was indeed entering a new era, but Noot remained on the scene for yet awhile.

A proposal in March 1886 that the board raise funds for a minister was after much debate tabled indefinitely. The board was empowered to engage Noot as rabbi for five months at a salary of $168, to be borrowed from the building fund if necessary. Noot's request for funds for a celebration for the school children was referred to the School Committee. The board in accordance with its instructions engaged Noot as rabbi (in addition to his duties as teacher). Although Noot had acted as teacher, collector, and minister at various times since 1875, he had not before been formally elected rabbi. With his added duties, Noot resigned as secretary and was replaced by Newman Pincus, who thus embarked on his long service to the congregation. In the City Directories of 1886 and 1887, Noot's mercantile occupation was no longer listed, consistent with his new role in congregational affairs. Although now designated rabbi, he had never been ordained.

Noot had gained considerable stature in the community. On December 7, 1885 he appeared before the Rhode Island Veteran Citizens Historical Association to acquaint its members with the status of Jews in the community and to explain some of their customs.[40] He was introduced by President Barnabas B. Hammond significantly as "acting Reform Rabbi and Acting Rabbi of the Israelites in Providence." The meeting, Hammond said, was devoted to the Hebrews of Providence, and added:

> You are to-day to hear somewhat of the Hebrews in this state, and witness an illustration of a portion of their religious services as conducted in their synagogues. These people outwardly are the descendants of Jacob and professors of the Jewish religion, but inwardly they are believers in, and the servants of God.

Due to persecution in Europe the term "Jew" had become one of opprobium, and circumlocutions were used to avoid it. The confusion as to terminology (Jew, Hebrew, Israelite) was not confined to non-Jews, who in fact were referred to as non-Israelites in Noot's talk. The differences between Reform and Orthodox practices at the time were slight, comprising for the most part the introduction of the English language and music into the service and change in the hour of worship. Noot referred to these changes as the correction of "great evils." As Adelman observed: "Since he upheld the practice of covering the head and the dietary laws (*kashrut*), it is difficult for us to understand his exaltation."[41] His non-Jewish audience did not have that problem, since the Jews were a small isolated group in the community who were supposed to hold their services in private because of fear of "non-Israelites" being present in their house of worship. Yet, the Jewish community was emerging from its isolation. In 1884 Isaac Hahn was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives from Providence (of a delegation of twelve from the city), the first Jew to be elected to public office in the state.[42] And here now was Noot addressing an important audience of non-Jews. Noot himself described his remarks as "short", but in fact they were lengthy. He said in part:

> It having pleased your society to set apart this day devoted to the Israelites of this State, and being cognizant of the appreciation of the same, I have prepared a short essay to speak upon this subject, although I feel that this task might have been placed in better and more competent hands in order to do justice to the occasion.
>
> When I look around and see in this assemblage men of intelligence, men of character and prominence, I feel that my People in Judaism should feel themselves highly flattered that this society should have so far given us an opportunity of showing what the Israelites have done towards furthering the social and commercial interests of little Rhode Island. As far as the social interests are concerned we as Israelites claim we are contributing our share in

this respect. We are law abiding people, ever willing and ready to stand by any and all laws which have been promulgated from time to time for the good government of all classes. And while we do not aspire to seeking for public offices we contribute our mite in giving evidence of our willingness to co-operate with our Christian brethren in matters relating to the interest of our city and state.

Commercially speaking we have been engaged in various pursuits and have endeavored to become with our sister merchants men who are toiling in various branches of industry striving hard to gain a livelihood. . . .

He spoke of how things were only ten years before:

A mere handful of people composed the congregation at that time; the service was entirely in the Hebrew language, and to have introduced English in the synagogue at that time would have been considered an innovation, so to speak. It was a rare thing to see children or young men attend the synagogue. If a non-Israelite happened to enter the synagogue, it was so much Greek to him to comprehend what was going on. . . .

How we as Israelites have been benefited by this great turn in the affairs of our religion words cannot express. Our doors are open now to any one who is desirous of hearing our service. The young and the old people congregate there to hear the Word of God expounded in language suited to the present time; they can readily follow the reader or minister and understand what they are saying. . . .

As to the benefits of Reform Judaism, he added with surprising candor, "We . . . have only come to our senses within the last eight years". Regarding the status of the Jewish community, he continued:

There are in this city over one hundred and fifty Jewish families numbering probably five hundred people, employed in various kinds of mercantile pursuits. We have also two synagogues, one strictly Orthodox and the other Moderate Reform. The former is composed chiefly of Russian Jews, and the latter principally Germans, and a few who claim this country as their birthplace. The Orthodox Jews in this city adhere strictly to all forms and ceremonies as practised years ago. The Reformers, however, have always believed that a change in the the mode of worship was

necessary (for reasons stated before) and the result has been that from a congregation of eighteen we number to-day sixty members of the male sex. . . .

He spoke of the status of Jewish organizations in the state and of the blessings of religious liberty in America:

There are in this city three Jewish Orders, the various Grand Lodges of which are in New York. The aims and objects are alike in all and are strictly Jewish so far as not to admit any but Israelites, as the name would denote—Sons of Covenant. The inconsistency of admitting non-Israelites is self-evident to any fair minded person. There is also a Jewish Benevolent Association composed of females only. They administer to the wants of those who need aid and consequently there is no need of going out of our precincts in that direction. In fact, my friends, we Israelites of this city and State are like all other cities, ever willing and ready to dispense charity and benevolence to our own people and to others who do not believe as we do.

We cannot boast of having a synagogue of our own, but a fund has been established for that purpose, and it is to be hoped the time is not far distant when this worthy project will have been made a success.

. . . in this very State our people have been honored at least by one Israelite who has held the position of Representative in the General Assembly, a distinction that would have been laughed at years ago. . . .

He discoursed at length on the historical and biblical backgrounds of synagogue ritual and justified Reform modifications on theological and scriptural grounds. He concluded:

If what I have said has in any way interested you I am pleased that I have added something that may reflect with credit upon the Israelites of Providence and vicinity. Our people will ever remember this day that we should have been allowed this privilege and honor of having a special day set apart whereon to give them prominence as a religious sect. God grant that we may merit at all times what has been advanced here this day. The Israelites of this city will have the satisfaction of knowing . . . that they have entered upon a new era of usefulness, and the ultimate results thereof must be beneficial to them and the community at large. Accept my thanks and those of the Israelites of this city for the honor conferred.

At the conclusion of his address, Noot performed for the edification of his audience a Reform service, as described in *The Narragansett Historical Registry* of April 1886:[43]

> Noot then proceeded, with the aid of members of the synagogue, to explain and exemplify portions of both Orthodox and Reformed Hebrew service. The Rabbi wore his cap, and the voices were supported by an organ. The recitations and chantings by the Rabbi, and the psalms and songs of the responding choir, were rendered with admirable pathos and purity, holding the assembly in rapt attention, and awakening a truly catholic religious spirit, alike among Gentiles and Jews. Altogether, the day was emphatically historic in our State, giving prominence to a peculiar and valuable portion of R.I. records, and cultivating in an unusual manner that charity and brotherhood, which should be felt by the children of the Great All-Father.

In June, with twenty-six members present, the congregation authorized the board to receive applications for the position of minister and accepted a budget providing $800 for the minister's salary. It met again on August 29, increased the amount budgeted for the minister's salary from $800 to $1000, and "duly elected [Noot] as minister of the Congregation for the ensuing [year]". The board was authorized to re-engage the organist at the previous salary, and the children of the religious school were invited to volunteer for the choir.

At the annual meeting on October 10, 1886 Strauss and Lederer were re-elected president and vice president respectively. Leopold Dimond was elected treasurer in place of Moses Stern, who had since died, and Abraham Pakas as secretary. Louis Green was elected janitor. A committee was appointed to draw up resolutions to express appreciation for the services of the choir and to arrange for a *Simhat Torah* Ball in the choir's honor. Thanks were expressed to the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association for the gift of a carpet and to the teachers who assisted in the Sunday school. Fifteen dollars was withdrawn from the Memorial Fund as a donation to Rhode Island Hospital. Concern about the management of the Building Fund was resolved by the election of Adolph Cohen of Pawtucket as trustee of the fund.

Late in October locks and keys were purchased to provide security for the various lodges meeting in the congregation's quarters. More important, a committee of five was appointed "to look out for a

suitable place for a synagogue". Resolutions were prepared in recognition of Newman Pincus's brief stint as secretary. The *Simhat Torah* Ball netted a modest $13.12.

On December 8 the board resolved two important matters. An agreement was concluded with Noot regarding his new status as rabbi. He was engaged for one year from September 1, 1886 to August 31, 1887 at a salary of $1000. He would give full time to the congregation and to the "labors appertaining to a Jewish rabbi," teach in the Sunday School, and desist from performing religious ceremonies for non-members (presumably marriages and funerals) without the consent of the board of trustees. He would no longer be engaged in any mercantile pursuit (which meant the end of his retail business). Mrs. Lake would teach and rehearse the choir, including volunteers. The rabbi, together with the Choir Committee, would have full control of the choir, including authorization to select music, engage singers, select books, and engage or dismiss singers.

The second matter had to do with intermarriage and interpretation of Jewish law. William Rosenthal, a baker, wrote that his brother-in-law had married a Christian girl, who was willing to embrace the Jewish faith. He inquired as to the feasibility of such an arrangement. A meeting of the board was held on December 12, and Rabbi Noot was invited to attend. Asked for his opinion "in regard to the rights in making a Christian girl to become a Jewess", Noot concluded that this was possible under certain conditions. The board approved Rosenthal's request "with the condition and rules laid down by the Rev. Mr. Noot."

On January 13, 1887 at the opening meeting of the new year, Abraham Pakas resigned as secretary, since he expected to leave Providence. Solomon Krohne was elected to serve out his term and was voted $5 for these services. An expression of appreciation was extended to Pakas and regrets at his removal from the city. The School Committee announced a public examination of the religious school pupils on Sunday March 27. Parents and members were invited, and $15 was appropriated for refreshments. Flowers were ordered for Shavuot. In April the board received a check for $120.15 from the Ladies Auxiliary, the proceeds of a successful Purim Social, to be deposited in the Building Fund. Jacob Jackson, currently the janitor, was apprised of complaints that he was neglecting his duties and informed that he was not to send a substitute in his stead. In

May Noot requested and was granted permission to perform the marriage of one Sol Cohn, presumably a non-member. Another $120 was ordered withdrawn from the general treasury and deposited in the Building Fund.

A letter in *The American Israelite* of February 25 provides a charming vignette of the contemporary scene:

> Our beautiful city numbers over three hundred Jewish families composed of German, Polish and Russian subjects. There are two synagogues, both worshiping in halls, and which conduct their services in the orthodox [B'nai Zion] and reform ritual. The latter was established in this city some nine years ago through the assistance of Dr. Sonneschein and B.F. Peixotto; the movement, however, was brought about by Mr. Myer Noot, the present minister of the reform congregation Sons of Israel, who at that time adopted the prayer-book of Szold and Jastrow, which is orthodox enough, however, to suit most of members of the congregation. We have three Jewish orders represented here, viz, I.O.B.B., I.O.F.S.I., and I.O.S.B.; of the latter order there are two lodges.[44] A Masonic lodge was also started some years ago, which, at the time of its constitution, was composed principally of Israelites. From this lodge arose the first Past Masters of the Jewish faith, which at that time was considered quite a novelty in this puritanic State. All acquitted themselves with honor and are all members of the Grand Lodge of Masons of Rhode Island.[45] There is also a Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Association founded by the Rev. Jacob Voorsanger, formerly minister of the Congregation Sons of Israel, but at present holding the respected position as Rabbi in San Francisco. His labors have not been in vain, and the beneficial results show themselves more and more every day, and it has been a great question how our City managed to get along without it.
>
> The Congregation Sons of Israel (the Rev. Mr. Noot, minister) numbers forty members, has services every Friday evening and Sabbath morning throughout the year. A volunteer choir provides ample music and the Sunday school with sixty scholars, is superintended by the minister, ably assisted by the Mesdames, M. Rosenbloom and Fink, the hours for tuition being ten to twelve. A class in Hebrew is presided over by the Rev. Noot on Saturday after the morning service. It will not be out of place to chronicle the untiring efforts of the President of the Congregation, Mr. Alex Strauss who has had this honorable position for the past seven years, and I might say right here that his equal would be very

> difficult to find in this congregation. The zeal he has envinced in all matters pertaining to the duties of the President, and the earnestness he mainfests for the good of the congregation make it self-evident why the members see fit to re-elect him from year to year. He is also supported by a Board of Trustees par excellence. A separate fund has been created for the purpose to erect a suitable place of worship in the near future. Part of this fund has accumulated through [the efforts of] the Rev. Mr. Noot, who gave his services gratis for over two years, the members, however, paying their dues into the Treasury of the Congregation. There is a bright future for our people in this city, and with a little more exertion and less indifference in the right direction, we shall yet live to see what we are all striving for —a building of our own to worship our Heavenly Father.
>
> Providence, R.I.
> February 13, 1887 EMETH

The author is unidentified. EMETH is Hebrew for "True".

On June 16, 1887 the board learned that an estate was to be sold at auction, which in the opinion of President Strauss would be suitable for the erection of a synagogue. The board planned to visit the site, and the president and treasurer were authorized to make the purchase. On June 19 the president informed the membership that an estate on Friendship Street, corner of Foster Street, had been purchased at a price of $6200. The transaction was ratified unanimously. The president reported that the Building Fund contained some $1720. A new subscription drive netted nineteen pledges of $1 to $100 for a total of $655, and a committee was appointed to solicit members not present.

The board on June 29 made final arrangements for purchase of the Friendship Street property. It authorizied a loan and mortgage of $4500 with the Citizens Savings Bank. Adolph Cohen, trustee of the Building Fund, was instructed to transfer all funds in his possession to the treasurer. The congregation on July 14 adopted a resolution offered by Isaac Hahn legally authorizing the bank loan, payable in one year at an interest rate of six percent, and also the mortgage "with the usual convenants to said bank on the property."

Meanwhile, on June 13, 1887, Rabbi Noot gave an instructive address before the Redwood Lodge of Masons on the duties of Masons. A born organizer, who had been deeply involved in the transition of the congregation to Modified Reform in 1877, Noot origi-

nated the concept of uniting the Israelites of Providence more closely by forming a lodge of Masons.[46] The petitioners for the new lodge were Noot, Henry Green, Leopold Hartman, Abraham Gomperts, Adolph Cohen, Joseph Schwartz, Charles Jacobs, Hyman Happ, Morris L. Happ, Adolph Greenwood, Lorenzo Traver, and William Richardson. The latter two were Christians, while all the rest were members of the congregation, with which for many years the lodge had a close connection. They proposed that it be designated "Redwood Lodge", certainly with Newport's Redwood Library in mind, of which the Jews of the colonial period had been founders, patrons, and members. The petition came to the Grand Master of Masons on January 2, 1878, and dispensation in accordance with wishes of the petitioners was granted on February 22, 1878, appropriately on Washington's Birthday. The lodge first met on February 25 at 11 Weybosset Street, also the meeting hall of Haggai Lodge of B'nai B'rith. The lodge was duly constituted on June 10, with Noot as Grand Master; Henry Green, First Senior Warden; and Leopold Hartman, First Junior Warden. Noot served as Master for two years, during which time the lodge had thirty-one members. During 1882 and 1883 no additional members were accepted as "some differences of opinion prevailed among members". However, Redwood Lodge of Masons No. 35 A.F. and A.M. prospered thereafter. Although the lodge was founded in the interests of "Israelitish" Masons, by 1891 there were only four Jews in a membership of 48. One of these was lawyer, later Judge J. Jerome Hahn, son of Isaac Hahn.

Noot's eloquent address before the Masons was virtually his last public appearance in Providence. The trustees of the congregation granted him a leave of absence from July 4 to July 11. The congregation on July 10 empowered the board of trustees to receive proposals for the position of rabbi for the next year. Yet the trustees authorized Noot to perform the marriage of the sister of Leopold Hartman as late as Septmeber 4, but was stipulated that the $5 fee be paid to the congregation. Nothing further was heard from Noot, and seemingly he departed without fanfare. The City Directory of 1888 indicated that he had returned to Hartford, Connecticut.

Although Noot had never been ordained a rabbi, the D.D. degree was appended to his name at the time of his death. When he was engaged as rabbi in Providence, ordained rabbis were comparatively scarce. Congregations frequently enrolled as rabbis men who were

not ordained, but had received sufficient Jewish education to carry out the duties. Later, Noot is known to have been in Troy, New York from 1896 to 1906, to have served as rabbi in Roanoke, Virginia from 1907 to 1909, to have been in Hazleton, Pennsylvania after 1909, and to have served as rabbi of Ohave Sholom Congregation of Williamsport, Pennsylvania from 1912 to 1914. It is unlikely that he ever again engaged in business after leaving Rhode Island. He passed away in Williamsport in 1916 and was memorialized by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, of which he was a member.[47]

Authorized by the board on September 5, 1887 to procure a minister for the High Holy Days, President Strauss engaged a Mr. Gersoni, one of two candidates, for $150. Thirty dollars was appropriated for a choir.

At the annual meeting of the congregation on October 5, 1887 the slate of President Strauss, Vice President Lederer, Secretary Solomon Krohne, and Treasurer Leopold Dimond was re-elected by acclamation. The estate on Friendship Street was reported to be in good condition and occupied by desirable tenants. Herman Krohne was elected trustee of the estate. Letters of thanks were sent to Pauline (Mrs. Julius) Shuman and the other members of the choir, including doubtless Miss Gertrude Shuman, a vocal teacher. Letters of appreciation were also sent to Henry Green and Leopold Hartman, who on the president's behalf had procured "such an able man to perform the daytime services."

The board on October 30 reviewed the applications of four candidates for rabbi: Morris Sessler of Wheeling, West Virginia; A.M. Block of Jackson, Mississippi; A. Possman of Hamilton, Ohio; and L. Harfeld of Natchez, Mississippi. The board favored Sessler and instructed the secretary to inquire as to his age, marital status, and when he could come for a trial. The information being satisfactory, Sessler was invited to conduct services in November. He was entertained by Vice President Benedict B. Lederer and appears to have made a favorable impression. On November 27, he was elected rabbi by a vote of 25 to 3. The board was empowered to engage him on terms deemed best for the congregation, and his travel expenses were to be paid, amounting to $94. The board thanked Vice President Lederer for his hospitality to the Reverend Sessler. The new rabbi delivered his inaugural address on Friday evening, December

25, at 6 p.m. The Ladies Auxiliary arranged an appropriate reception at a cost of $12.09.

Rabbi Sessler, born in Vienna, Austria on Purim in 1848, received his rabbinical training in his native city and in Budapest and Breslau. After concluding his studies, he came to the United States as a young man and assumed the rabbinical calling soon after his arrival. His principal pulpit before Providence had been in Wheeling, West Virginia. He had been married in 1874 to the former Louisa Calm of Philadelphia and was forty years of age when he arrived in Providence.[48] His salary at his new post was $1000.

At the first meeting of the new year on January 22, 1888 a very important resolution was adopted by the congregation authorizing the building of a synagogue. A committee of ten was appointed to work with the board to devise a plan to raise the necessary funds. Reverend Sessler resumed both Sabbath and Sunday Schools in December and reported that the scholars were making good progress. At his suggestion Friday evening divine services would commence at 7 p.m. He was called upon to speak "and responded in an able manner". Other routine business was transacted. Mrs. Rosenbloom, a choir standby, about to move from Providence, was presented with a "handsomely bound prayer book as is in use in our Congrn." for assistance to the choir and at Sabbath and Sunday School. The Hebrew young ladies of Providence were planning a Leap Year Ball for the benefit of the congregation. The congregation offered "to advise and assist" them "in their considerable undertaking."

The board on February 26, the birthday of Rabbi Sessler, voted to present him with a birthday gift of $50. He later reported favorably on the status of the religious school and spoke "in a fitting and eloquent manner."

Because of the magnitude of the building project, a circular letter was sent to prominent citizens of the community asking for their assistance in the undertaking. Dated April 4, 1888, it read,[49]

> Dear Sirs:
>
> Having purchased, after years of hard struggling, a suitable piece of land and proposing to build a place of worship on the same, and having exhausted our means in the purchase of the grounds we are now compelled to ask the kind assistance of our

> friends, to enable us to erect a Synagogue, and we hope that this appeal to you for this worthy object will receive your earnest consideration, and that you will aid us with a liberal subscription.

It was signed by President Alex Strauss, and by D. [David] Bernkopf and Isaac Hahn, secretary and treasurer, respectively, of the building committee.

In May progress reports on the collection of funds for the new synagogue were submitted to the congregation. The Building Committee was increased by four members, and the ladies of the congregation were invited to cooperate with the Building Committee.

The board in June recommended a budget of $2290, with provision for an organist at $225 and a raise of $300 for the rabbi, subject to later revision. At the annual meeting on September 16, 1888, the "minister's" salary was set at $1200. Other items included $150 for the janitor and $400 for rental of the hall. President Strauss, Vice President Lederer, Treasurer Dimond, and Secretary Krohne were all re-elected by acclamation. Louis Green, the current janitor, was re-hired. Rabbi Sessler was re-elected by a vote of 20 to 9 for a year beginning on December 1. He was to officiate "in accordance with the Laws and Rituals of the Congregation". A communication was received from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations announcing the 70th birthday in 1889 of the Reverend Isaac M. Wise, father of the Reform movement. Since the letter appeared to suggest financial participation, the matter was laid over.

Another news dispatch from Providence appeared in *The American Israelite* issue of September 28, 1888:

> The congregation of the Sons of Israel is in a flourishing condition and well pleased with their pastor, the Rev. M. Sessler, whose work in the Sabbath-school as well as in the temple is highly satisfactory and well appreciated. During the present holy days the services were so well conducted and the sermons so eloquent and impressive that the congregation by its committee, one day after the Day of Atonement, presented a purse of $100 to the Rabbi and announced to him that his salary had been raised $200 per annum. Rabbi Sessler is a talented and big-hearted man, who understands how to speak well and to do right. There are four other small congregations in Providence, viz. Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Rumanian,[50] who live and work each for itself. All four congregations wanted the Rev. Sessler to preach for them the second day of Rosh Hashanah [which is not observed by

> Reform Jews, thus leaving Sessler free to accommodate them]. Finally, they agreed to rent a large hall and have a union-meeting which was done, and the Rev. M. Sessler preached simultaneously to all four of them. They thanked him in a very flattering Hebrew letter for the eminent address, expressing the hope to hear him soon again. We are very glad to hear such good things from the Sons of Israel Congregation which is composed of a noble band of men.

On January 13, 1889 the congregation took further important steps in its building program. The Building Committee, represented by Leopold Dimond, Frederick Hartman, and Benedict Lederer, presented several alternate plans for the synagogue building. It was decided to erect a structure consisting of a synagogue proper, basement, and vestry, at a cost not to exceed $10,000. The committee was authorized to prepare plans for the building.

A meeting was called in March to raise the sum needed "to take up the mortgage" of $4,200 to enable the building committee with a clean slate to proceed with the erection of the new synagogue. Twenty-five contributors pledged sums of $10 to $50 for a total of $630. Subsequently the board thanked the Ladies' Auxiliary for its valuable assistance in making the Leap Year Ball a success, netting the unprecedented sum of $2,841.55.

In June 1889 the congregation learned that construction would begin at an early date. The cost of the building, including water and gas piping, pews, and everything else needed except the organ and carpet, would amount to $12,000. The Ladies' Auxiliary Society, assisted by the congregation, planned to hold a fair in the Music Hall in October for the benefit of the Building Fund. In September a reception committee to assist the ladies and several others for refreshments, printing, entertainment, advertising, and soliciting of advertisements for the program were appointed. The president announced that he had designated Rabbi Sessler to represent the congregation at the forthcoming meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Detroit, Michigan in July.

While these matters were in progress, our old friend "Emeth" sent the following dispatch to *The American Israelite* (September 10,1889):

> While your correspondent from our city is rusticating in the mountains, I trust you will give space in your valuable paper for the following tidings.

> The Congregation Sons of Israel has for the last thirty-five years worshipped in nine different halls. They had during this time several permanent *Chazonim Rabbanim* [Cantor-Rabbis].[51] Through neglect and mismanagement, they never succeeded in getting a place of worship of their own. Rabbi Sessler in his inaugural sermon touched the question with such an effect that the president, Mr. Alex Strauss, who has taken from this moment such a deep interest in the matter, called meeting after meeting, until the beautiful lot, which was purchased for $6000, was paid for. A tireless committee, to seek plans for a structure was appointed, and every member of the Congregation was set to work. Collections were made among their friends. While they were all thus busy, Rabbi Sessler collected among Americans [i.e. Christians, mostly white Anglo-Saxon Protestants] here over $3000 cash, and will not cease to collect until we have the sum of $5000.
>
> In addition to all this hard work the Congregation will have a grand fair in the latter part of October [q.v.], which has interested our Ladies Auxiliary Society so much that I am sure their noble efforts will be crowned with success. The Congregation will build a handsome Temple, and on the 23rd of this month the cornerstone will be laid, and this was all done and achieved during the short space of eighteen months. Now the congregation provides itself with its good president, with this esteemed and faithful rabbi, with an elegant choir, with a good attendance on Friday evening and Saturday, with a large Sunday school, and above all with a Bible class.

On Monday, September 23, 1889 a significant and historic event took place, the laying of the cornerstone of the new synagogue, the first permanent home of Congregation B'nai Israel. Secretary Krohne reported the proceedings in the congregational minutes:

> The laying of the cornerstone of our new synagogue took place on the above date. The members of the congregation with their families attended promptly and in large numbers. The ceremonies were performed by M.W. [Most Worshipful] Grand Lodge F. and A.M. of the State of Rhode Island, Hon. George Kenyon, Grand Master, in accordance with the ancient Rights and Usages of the F. and A.M. of Rhode Island. The worthy President of the congregation, Mr. A. Strauss addressed the M.W. Grand Lodge in a most fitting manner. The oration was delivered by our Rabbi Dr. M. Sessler. Our choir, led by Mrs. E.A. Lake, organist, also rendered valuable services.
>
> The day was a most beautiful one. The attendance quite large.

> Everything went on splendidly and it was an occasion to be remembered and to be proud of by every Israealite of our City and State. The ushers on said occasion were Messrs. S. Elias, M. Hartman, and David Bernkopf.

Sessler, bald and bespectacled, with a trim beard and ample walrus moustache, cut an impressive and dignified figure indeed.

The event was reported at great length in *The Providence Daily Journal* on the following morning (September 24), some of which follows:

> The Congregation, Sons of Israel, by dint of unremitting zeal and enterprise with the substantial co-operation of friends of other religious denominations, made the 35th year of their organization a memorable event in their history yesterday by the consecration of the corner stone of their new Jewish Synagogue, corner of Friendship and Foster Streets, with interesting and impressive exercises, in which the M.W. Grand Lodge of Masons, President Strauss of the congregation and the respected Rabbi, Rev. Dr. M. Sessler, participated. From a mere handful of devoted and progressive members, the congregation has steadily maintained its organization and enlarged its sphere of influence in the community, and its officers and clergy, aided by the Women's Auxiliary Society and those identified with the Secret and Beneficial Societies which have been formed from time to time, have directed themselves vigorously to the work of securing funds for the purchase of a site and the erection of a permanent temple of worship.
>
> The Jewish people of the city are recognized as among its most industrious, law-abiding and respectable inhabitants, and their active and self-sacrificing efforts for the promotion of their spiritual welfare have been crowned with remarkable results, for within a comparatively brief period, they have raised by subscription and other means the sum of $6500 for the purchase of the lot which is located in a most eligible spot within a quarter of a mile of the heart of the city. Emboldened by this happy consummation of their hopes, they have accepted plans for the erection of a cosy and convenient house of worship of picturesque and symbolical design, and are devising ways and means to secure funds for its construction and furnishing at a cost of $14,000. In this worthy effort they have been stimulated and encouraged by the devoted and energetic service of the Rabbi, Rev. Dr. Sessler, who assumed charge of the congregation about 18 months ago. No sooner had he commenced his ministration then he set about

devising means to secure the erection of a permanent place of worship for his congregation. With this end in view, he started a subscription list and solicited the co-operation of all friends regardless of their creed, and it was the list subdivided and framed in some dozen neat frames containing from 60 to 70 names each that the doctor proudly, and with every feeling of gratitude, exhibited to the reporter. The list is headed by Rev. Dr. [David H.] Greer, formerly rector of Grace Church of this city, who is a great friend and admirer of the Rabbi. Following are the names of the two ex-Governors of the State, [Royal C.] Taft and [Henry] Lippitt, and ex-Lieut. Gov. [Charles] Cutler, also that of Mayor [William] Barker, Joseph Banigan, F.C. Sayles and W.F. Sayles of Pawtucket, Charles Fletcher, Callender, McAuslan & Troup, and hundreds of other prominent persons in the city and throughout the State.[52] The names preserved in the frames will be hung about the walls of the synagogue when completed, and will be preserved among the most cherished archives, as evidence of the friendly spirit and encouragement manifested by their Christian brethren. When he left Wheeling, the congregation [there] possessed a handsome temple of worship as the fruit of his labors and it is his determination to duplicate his action in this city. He has a happy way of enlisting the sympathies of those with whom he comes in contact being a man of genial presence, and courteous and agreeable in manner. The congregation has responded loyally to his support and the outlook is very promising for the consummation of their cherished ambitions.

The Masonic procession formed on Dorrance Street in front of Freemason's Hall at two p.m. and marched to the site of the synagogue through Dorrance, Broad, Beacon, and Friendship Streets led by the National Band. Redwood Lodge, No. 35, A.F. and A.M., although at this time containing only three Jewish members, participated in the exercises. Among the special guests were federal, state, and city dignitaries; clergymen of various denominations; and officers of the congregation and related auxiliaries. The group arranged itself on the platform. The program began with selections by the band and the choir. The officers of the congregation were prominently represented. President Strauss delivered an address, describing the historical background of the congregation. An elaborate Masonic service followed and an oration by Rabbi Sessler with appropriate biblical allusions. He congratulated the president and officers for their noble undertaking, not forgetting the Women's

Auxiliary. The congregation, he said, will take great pride in the knowledge that they erected the first temple in the city. A little handful of people, he continued, have "established a house of worship where they will be able to invite their friends of whatever faith". "Judaism", he added, "does not live in seclusion, nor does it prohibit anyone from entering the doors of its temple and listen to its teachings from the pulpit". Sessler used this convenient forum to counter prejudice and foster ecumenism.

Sessler's oration was followed by musical numbers and then the laying of the cornerstone. The ceremony ended with a benediction by the rabbi with responses by the choir. The box placed under the cornerstone contained an incredible variety of items. They have, unfortunately, been lost to history, although the cornerstone is now embedded in a stone wall behind the Orchard Avenue synagogue. According to the newspaper account, these were the contents:

> Masonic documents: Proceedings of the Grand Lodge for the year 1888; constitution of the Grand Lodge 1889; circular order covering Grand Lodge this day; organization of the Grand Lodge for 1889; Grand Marshal's order of procession for the day; copy of the services used in laying the corner-stone this day; by-laws of Redwood Lodge, No.35, A.F. and A.M.; list of Masonic bodies and meetings in Rhode Island for 1889; medallion of Post Grand Master Thomas Arthur Doyle.
>
> Church [*sic*, i.e. synagogue] documents: The Congregation Sons of Israel, its Rabbi, President and Officers; Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society and its officers; Bible Class, its officers; Young Sons of Israel, its Officers and Members; Young Men's Hebrew Association, its Officers and Members; pictures of Rev. Dr. David H. Greer, former rector of Grace Church, Rev. Dr. J.M. Wise, Father of the Hebrew Union College; building committee, Dr. M. Sessler, Fritz [Frederick] Hartman, Leopold Dimond, B. Lederer; architect, W.H. Colwell; mason, John W. Briggs; carpenter, John Sprague; copies of the *Providence Journal* and *Evening Telegram*; pictures of Haggai Lodge, No. 132, I.O.B.B., the first Hebrew Benevolent Society in this city, which is partly instrumental for the existence of the present Congregation, instituted July 25, 1869; its charter members and present officers, also its by-laws; the officers and by-laws of the I.O.F.S. of Israel, Providence Lodge, No. 78; Juda Thora [*sic*, i.e. Judah Touro] Lodge, No. 59, I.O.S.B. Association, names of officers and by-laws; Abraham Lodge, No. 62, its names, officers, and by-laws; the Governor and

state officers; names of the Mayor and city officers; names of the President and Vice President of the United States; copies of *Rhode Island Democrat, Evening Call, American Israelite, Hebrew Standard, American Hebrew Jewish Tidings, Jewish Messenger, Jewish Exponent, Deborah, Jewish Almanac* for the year 5650; coins of gold and silver, by Master Abraham Strauss, B.T. Shuman, David Sessler, by four boys of B. Lederer, by four daughters of S. Lederer, by the Cohen boys of Pawtucket, R.I., by Mattie Hartman; city fire alarm list.[53]

It was announced that the architect for the new edifice was Wilmarth H. Colwell. The cost of the building as quoted in the news report was approximately $14,000, a gradual escalation from the $10,000 originally reported.

The dedication was also duly reported in *The American Israelite* of October 3, which noted that the congregation consisted of 45 members, with a Sabbath School of 65 children, a Bible class of 45 members, and a young Sons of Israel Society.

At the annual meeting held on October 13, 1889 the same slate of officers was re-elected together with Louis Green as janitor. The president thanked the congregation for the "confidence reposed in him", and the congregation expressed its appreciation to Henry Green for his able assistance at the Yom Kippur services. The rabbi's salary was increased to $1500, and $50 was voted for the secretary.

An elaborate and successful fair was held from October 21 to 25. It was both a social and financial success, mainly due to the zeal of the Ladies Auxiliary and the liberal donations of the merchants of Providence and vicinity. There were nine booths with items for sale. In addition, chances were sold, auctions were held, and season tickets were sold to community events. Among the items donated were a smoking jacket, comb, robe, books, and caps. Flowers, lemonade, and cigars were available in abundance. Still on hand to be disposed of after the fair were a barrel of flour from the New England Grocery Store, an order for a ton of coal from the City Coal Company, an assortment of jewelry (reflecting the burgeoning local jewelry industry), and a number of other articles. Even before the sale of these items, the fair grossed $3398.37 and netted a tidy $2847.55. The generous donations of the merchants were gratefully acknowledged.

In December the board received a letter from Myer Noot announcing his resignation from membership in the congregation. Mind-

ful of his significant contributions to the congregation's welfare for more than a decade, the board deferred the matter for further consideration.

On December 23, the Building Committee was requested to devise a plan to raise money for the completion of the synagogue. As the Building Fund was depleted, a mortgage on the Friendship Street property for $8000 at 5½ percent interest was negotiated with the Citizens Savings Bank. Reverend Sessler was re-elected rabbi for one year from December 1. Preparations for the dedication were under way.

In January 1890 the hiring of a choir at $200 per year was approved. Each member was taxed twenty percent of his dues from January 1 to September 1 to defray the cost. An entertainment for the Sabbath and Sunday Schools on Purim was provided by the congregation with the assistance of the Ladies' Auxiliary. A Purim Ball for the benefit of the congregation held in Dramatic Hall netted $100.53.

The president reported on March 20 that the Building Committee had encountered difficulty in procuring a mortgage on the new synagogue, since the record of incorporation had been lost. He requested that members correct the situation by signing their names to an appropriate document to meet the technical points of law. The congregation would apply to the state legislature for a new charter as soon as possible. In May the trustees signed a personal bond to Citizens Savings Bank to secure the mortgage.

The president was empowered to exchange deeds on parts of the Elmwood cemetery to correct the earlier mistakes in the location of graves. Henry B. Whitman, however, had died in 1888, further complicating the problem. Another three years passed before the matter was finally resolved. On a more felicitous note the trustees voted to send to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio the highest recommendation on behalf of Master Fred Cohen—perhaps the first pupil of the congregation's religious school to seek a career in the rabbinate.

The new charter was granted by the legislature and was accepted unanimously at a meeting of the congregation on June 1, 1890 with 29 members voting. At the same meeting the Building Committee was authorized to purchase pews for the new sanctuary at a cost of $889. Subscriptions for pews raised $450, or more than half the purchase price.

A new budget was offered in August, the highest yet, totaling $3025. It provided for a rabbi's salary of $1500, a mortgage payment of $440, and an organist and choir. A motion to reduce the rabbi's salary to $1000 was defeated. Dismayed by the size of the budget, members called for a special meeting to reconsider it. At this meeting early in September, a committee was appointed to review the budget and render a report immediately. After a long recess, the committee announced that it did not see fit to make any changes, except possibly to reduce the rabbi's salary to $1200. In the end, the budget was adopted with this change.

At the annual meeting on September 28, 1890, Strauss, Lederer, and Dimond were re-elected to their respective offices, but Newman Pincus returned as secretary. Rabbi Sessler was re-elected for another year from December 1 on a close vote of 21 to 19. Rabbis in those days lived precarious lives.

As construction of the new building was proceeding apace, the board met in late October to consider arrangements for the dedication on December 7. Rabbi Sessler explained plans he had drawn up. Sessler would invite Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise of Cinicinnati, father of Reform Judaism, Rabbi Benjamin Szold of Baltimore, Rabbi Solomon Schindler of Temple Israel of Boston, Rabbi Raphael Lasker of Congregation Ohabei Shalom of Boston, and Myer Noot, their old friend—a distinguished group indeed—all to assist in the dedication. Following the exercises there would be a gala banquet. A select committee was chosen to carry the Torah scrolls from the old synagogue to the new. Arrangements were in charge of Leopold Hartman, Sigmund Lederer, J. Jerome Hahn, Simon Elias, and David Frank, a competent group of solid citizens.

The board and congregation met several times to perfect arrangements. Regarding the banquet, the committee reported that it had visited a Mr. Harris of Boston, who offered a bill of fare at $3 per plate. Another from Gelb and Moen of Providence was priced at $1.25. It was decided to charge $3 per couple. A committee was appointed to visit members not present to solicit subscriptions and was directed not to accept any offers of less than $3. Later it was learned that Harris could be engaged for $2 per head, with a guarantee of 50 couples. The affair would presumably be subsidized by the more generous subscribers. Still another committee was named to procure wine and beer, whether by donation or at the best price was not mentioned.

A motion to reconsider the rabbi's salary set at $1200 was discussed at a November meeting, but no conclusion was reached. Later, on November 30, it was decided that a proposed contract with the rabbi be "handed back for corrections". With the rabbi's contract year to start the very next day (December 1), the matter was pressing. In the end, the rabbi lost out and the $1200 salary prevailed, which in essence was a compromise between the originally proposed $1500 and the $1000 advocated by some members.

NOTES

1. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:72–74, (June) 1954.
2. *Ibid.*
3. S. H. Sonneschein and Benjamin F. Peixotto to Morris Loth, (Providence, R.I.) July 24, 1877. From "Report of Committee Appointed to Visit Providence, R.I.," *Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations*, v. 1, 1877, Appendix, pp. 391–392. American Jewish Archives, photostat in RIJHA.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 387.
5. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 205.
6. See note 3.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Isaac Mayer Wise for some years after his arrival in the United States (1846) showed rather conservative inclinations. Later, as a rabbi in Albany, N.Y., he advocated mild reforms. The more radical reforms came later with the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. In Moderate Reform the ritual approximated that of the modern Conservative movement, men wore yarmulkas, and observance of the Sabbath and of *Kashrut* (the dietary laws) was encouraged. See Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews*, pp. 631–632.
10. Jacobs was the instigator of the earlier schism resulting in the formation of the Congregation of the Sons of David, while Halberstad was involved in a later schism (1880) which resulted in the formation of the congregation of the Sons of Abraham of Providence, R.I., an Orthodox congregation. Neither was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery. Abrams was buried in Moshassuck Cemetery in 1885 and Halberstad in the cemetery for Dutch Jews in Melrose, Massachusetts. See *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:59, (November) 1958; and D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of Providence Jewish Community," pp. 155–156.
11. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:22, (June) 1956.

12. *Ibid.*
13. Reproduced in D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," pp. 198–199.
14. Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews*, p. 631.
15. "Home of Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, 1877–1883," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:118–119, (November) 1967. Photo showing building.
16. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, The Macmillan Co., 1971), v. 16, p. 223. Also *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1909.
17. Isaac M. Fein, *The Making of an American Jewish Community, the History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), pp. 120–121.
18. See note 15.
19. Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish* (New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), pp. 327–328.
20. Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews*, pp. 701–702.
21. Theodore Roosevelt stated in 1905: "I am glad to be able to say . . . that while the Jews of the United States . . . have remained loyal to their faith and their race traditions, they have become indissolubly incorporated in the great army of American citizenship, prepared to make all sacrifice for the country, either in war or peace, and striving for the perpetuation of good government and for the maintenance of the principles embodied in our Constitution. They are . . . distinguished by their industry, their obedience to law, and their devotion to the national welfare. . . . This is true not only of the early settlers and those of American birth, but of a great and constantly increasing proportion of those who have come to our shores within the last twenty-five years. . . ." Quoted by Salo W. Baron in *Steeled by Adversity*, pp. 319–320.
22. William G. Braude, "Three Rabbis of the Congregation 1877–1910," *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, A pictorial memoir* (1980).
23. Matilda (Mattie) J. Pincus (1881–1954), daughter of Civil War veteran and long-time secretary of the congregation, Newman Pincus, was for many years the devoted librarian and religious school teacher. On many occasions she alone conducted the Sunday School. See David C. Adelman, "Mattie and her Congregation," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:108–111, (April) 1957. Also obituary, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:95, (May) 1956.
24. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 210.
25. See note 22.
26. See note 16.
27. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," pp. 196–197.

28. Photo, *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, A pictorial memoir* (1980).
29. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:249, (December) 1955.
30. *Encyclopoedia Britannica,* 11th Edition (Cambridge, England-New York, Cambridge University Press, 1910), v. 6, p. 265 (cholera), and v. 28, p. 910 (yellow fever). Also *A History of Yellow Fever: The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878, in Memphis, Tennessee* (Memphis, Tenn., printed for the Howard Association, 1879).
31. The refusal of the congregation to permit Moses to conduct services in German may also have added to his unhappiness.

    Marx Moses was never a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. It is doubtful if he were ever ordained as a rabbi. Geraldine Foster in *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, A pictorial memoir* (1980) characterized him as a *hazzan.*
32. Morris Rotenberg, like Marx Moses, also was not a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, was apparently never ordained as a rabbi, and was designated by Geraldine Foster as a *hazzan* (see note 31). He was listed in the City Directory as Rodenberg.
33. In 1880 there were some 19 Jewish families in Pawtucket, of whom at least 8 were members of the congregation. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:89–90, (May) 1956, and D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 205.
34. He was presumably buried in the Reservoir Avenue Cemetery, but there is no record of his gravesite, although congregational records in this regard appear generally to have been carefully maintained. His wife Johanna Fink Buitekan died on October 27, 1906 at age 67 and was buried in grave no. 127. Their daughter Bessie Buitekan, born on October 10, 1868 as Adelicia, died unmarried on December 28, 1956 in her 83rd year and was buried in grave no. 128.
35. R.I. State Archives. Photostats of the petition and charter are in RIJHA. Also *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:22, (May) 1956; and D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 219.
36. So-called because it had been fitted out as a meeting room for Haggai Lodge No. 132, Independent Order of B'nai B'rith.
37. Hebrew Union College was founded in 1875, two years after the establishment of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations as a Reform rabbinical college. Isaac Mayer Wise was president of the college during the first quarter century of its existence until his death in 1900. Jacob Rader Marcus in Oscar I. Janowsky's *The American Jew, A Reappraisal,* pp. 5, 8. Also Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews,* p. 632.
38. The *parokhet* in modern Ashkenazic usage is an integral part of the synagogue furnishings, a curtain placed in front of the ark. In ancient times it divided the sanctuary "between the holy place and the most holy" and was "blue and purple and scarlet and fine twisted linen" (*Exodus* 26:31 and 33). The task of making the *parokhet* was entrusted to women.

39. Providence Lodge, No. 28, Independent Order of Free Sons of Israel (I.O.F.S. of I.); Abraham Lodge, No. 62, Independent Order Sons of Benjamin (I.O.S.B.); and Judah Touro Lodge, No. 59, I.O.S.B.

40. *The Narragansett Historical Register*, v. 4, no. 4, pp. 318–327, April 1886. Also D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," pp. 226–235.

41. D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," p. 226.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

43. See note 40.

44. See notes 36 and 39.

45. Redwood Lodge (Masonic), No. 35, A.F. and A.M., organized by Myer Noot in 1878. See D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David," pp. 200, 211–212, 235. Also R. M. Bayles's *History of Providence County*, v. 2, p. 660; and Edward Field, *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations: A History*, 3 vol. (Boston and Syracuse, The Mason Publishing Company, 1902), v. 3, p. 524.

46. *Ibid.*

    This was not the earliest participation of Jews in Rhode Island in Freemasonry. King David's Lodge existed in Newport from 1780 to 1790 and boasted such names as Moses Michael Hays and Moses Seixas. There is indeed some evidence that the earliest Jewish settlers in Newport engaged in Masonic rites in the period of 1658 to 1742. See Field's *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, v. 3, pp. 498–500 and p. 496, footnote. Also Benton H. Rosen, "King David's Lodge, A.F. & A.M., No. 1 of Newport, Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6: 578–586, (November) 1974; and David C. Adelman, "Did Jews Settle in Rhode Island in 1658?", *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:216–218, (April) 1958.

47. Nancy P. Lorsong to Seebert J. Goldowsky, March 23, 1987, RIJHA. Mrs. Lorsong was genealogy researcher of the Lycoming County Historical Society and Museum, Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Submitted were citations from his will, city directory, and death notice and copies of obituaries in the *Gazette and Bulletin* of Williamstown, Pennsylvania, of March 24 and March 25, 1916 and *The Grit* of Lycoming County of March 26, 1916. A description of Noot's funeral appeared in the *Gazette and Bulletin* of March 26, 1916. All copies are in RIJHA. Also *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbooks* 26: 215–216, 1916.

48. *Yearbook, Central Conference of American Rabbis* 38:244–245, 1928.

49. Original letter reproduced in program for Israel Independence Day, May 11, 1951, accompanying lecture by David C. Adelman titled "Early Days of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David," RIJHA. Also in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:249, (December) 1960.

50. Five congregations organized prior to 1900 with orientation by country of origin can be identified as follows:

    Russia: Russian Congregation of Agudas Hakolel (*Agudat Hakolel* means "Citywide Congregation"), December 31, 1897.

    Poland: Congregation Bayt Hamedros Hagodel (Bet Hamidrash Hagodol means "Great House of Study"), "To establish and maintain the public worship of God according to the doctrines, rites, and usages of the Polish Hebrew faith," April 26, 1889. According to Beryl Segal, the congregation was formed by a Hasidic group from Poland breaking away from Congregation Sons of Zion. See *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 4:251, (November) 1965.

    Lithuania: The Sons of Zion, March 2, 1875.

    Rumania: The Roumanian Aghedath Israel (Agudat Israel means "Congregation of Israel"), March 21, 1880. Also, the Roumanian Avath Shoulom (Ahavath Shalom means "Lover of Peace"), February 5, 1897.

    See "Chartered Organizations," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:22–30, (May) 1956.

    In *The Organ* (published by the Congregation from 1895–1898 in v. 1, no. 1 (December 12, 1895) the following congregations are mentioned: Russian Congregation of Israel on State Street, and Roumanian Congregation Agudath Zedeck (Congregation of Righteousness or Charity), 42 Robinson Street. These were not chartered prior to 1900. They do not appear to duplicate the above.

51. Rabbi Sessler was only the second ordained rabbi after Rabbi Voorsanger in the 35 year history of the congregation.

52. Joseph Banigan was a founder of the United States Rubber Company. W. F. and F. C. Sayles Company dominated the textile bleaching business. Charles Fletcher was founder of the Providence Worsted Mills. Callender, McAuslan & Troup established an important department store (The Boston Store) on Westminster Street. Walter Callender, a descendant, was the current principal in the business.

CHAPTER FOUR

Friendship Street—a Home at Last!

At long last the great day dawned. The ceremonies began at 2:30 in the afternoon of December 7, 1890. The procession bearing the Torah scrolls from 98 Weybosset Street to the new synagogue at Friendship and Foster Streets must have been a colorful sight, but is not described in available accounts. The bearers were Henry Green, Adolph Fink, Jacob Jackson, and David Frank, the oldest members of the congregation. *The Providence Daily Journal* of December 8 carried a voluminous description of the exercises. It began as follows:

JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

Dedication Ceremonies at the Temple on Friendship Street
Oration and Sermon by Rev. Drs. Wise and Lasker
Impressive Musical Service and Celebration Supper

The Synagogue of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David, corner Friendship and Foster Streets, was formally dedicated yesterday afternoon with the impressive ceremonial of the Hebrew Church which included the consecration of the Ark of the Covenant, the lighting of the Perpetual Lamp, the deposit of the Sefer Torahs in the Ark,[1] an elaborate musical service, an oration by the distinguished Rabbi, Rev. Dr. [Isaac Mayer] Wise of Cincinnati, and Consecration Sermon by Rev. Dr. [Raphael] Lasker of Boston.[2] The arrangements were entrusted to a special committee, of which Rabbi Sessler was Chairman, and the auditorium was filled to its utmost capacity with members of the congregation and distinguished guests including ex-Governors [Herbert W.] Ladd and [Royal C.] Taft, Hon. George M. Carpenter of the United States District Court, Associate Justice Hon. P.E. Tillinghast of the Supreme Court, Post-Master C.H. George, Rev. Dr. [James G.]

Vose of the Beneficent Church and citizens prominent in business and professional circles.

A brief history of the congregation followed, with a story of the planning for the new building and of the laying of the cornerstone. It mentioned the congregation's desire for "a cozy and convenient house of worship of picturesque and symbolical design", and of the congregation's and Reverend Sessler's exertions to raise the necessary funds. The account continued:

In this worthy effort, they have been stimulated and encouraged by the devoted and energetic service of the Rabbi, Rev. Dr. Sessler, who assumed charge of the congregation nearly two years ago. No sooner had he commenced his ministrations then he set about devising the means to secure the erection of a permanent place of worship for his congregation. With this end in view, he started a subscription list and solicited the cooperation of all friends regardless of their creed, and a list was sub-divided and framed in some dozen neat frames containing from 60 to 70 names each. The list was headed by Rev. Dr. Greer, formerly rector of Grace Church of this city, who was a great friend and admirer of the Rabbi. There are the names of two ex-Governors of the State, Taft and Lippitt, and ex-Lieut. Gov. Cutler, also that of Mayor Barker, Joseph Banigan, F.C. Sayles and W.F. Sayles of Pawtucket, Charles Fletcher, Callender, McAusland & Troup, and hundreds of other prominent persons in the city and throughout the State.[3] The names preserved in the frames are hung about the walls of the Synagogue when completed and are preserved among the most cherished archives as evidence of the friendly spirit and encouragement manifested by their Christian brethern.

The dedicatory service was described in these words:

At 2:30 o'clock the services commenced with the presentation of the key by architect Colwell to the building committee, consisting of Rabbi M. Sessler, B. Lederer, L. Dimond, Fred Hartman and D. Bernkopf, Sr., after which the choir, consisting of Misses Gertie Shuman, Flora Dimond, Eva Hartman, Mrs. Julius Shuman, Mr. Fred S. Gardiner and William A. Potter, sang the anthem, "How Beautiful Are Thy Tents, O, Jacob"; Rabbi Sessler then opened the scroll of Sefer Torah and read selections interspersed with singing by the choir, and a joint procession moved down the aisles, the first led by Rabbi Sessler, followed by Rev. Dr. Wise, bearing the scrolls, and the Board of Trustees, Henry

> Green, J. Shuman, A. Cohen, D.C. Fink, Julius Moral, H. Boas, and J. Shartenberg, and the other led by Dr. Lasker, the children assigned to the presentation ceremony, and the building committee, B. Lederer, L. Dimond, Fred Hartman and D. Bernkopf, Sr. After they had taken their several stations, the responsive service by the Rabbi and choir proceeded, and then came the impressive service of lighting the Perpetual Lamp by President Strauss, which was stationed above the Ark, and was a handsome pendant of polished brass and ornamental brilliants. Simultaneously, the massive crystal chandelier and altar candelabra flooded the auditorium with light, the organ meanwhile accompanying the illuminative ceremony with subdued and melodious music. The altar and sanctuary were beautifully decorated with flowers and tropical plants and the rich brocaded draperies of satin with silvered linings, which were gracefully parted on either side of the Ark, as also that which screened the sacred symbols within, gave a brilliant and picturesque effect which was heightened by the artisic dressing of the scrolls.

Dr. Raphael Lasker delivered the dedicatory address. Invoking appropriate scriptural citations, he spoke of the new edifice as a House of God, where the mother can bring her tender offspring for a blessing, where the bride and groom can sanctify their marriage, where the penitent can find pardon and mercy, where the weary can find refuge, and where "will be heard the voice of religion most powerfully and majestically."

Miss Mattie Hartman then presented the key to President Strauss "in a neat and graceful address". Strauss accepted the offering from the children, and responded with a brief historical sketch, giving much credit "to our beloved Rabbi", who saw the necessity for a house of worship. The ceremonies continued with the placing of the Torah scrolls in the ark:

> Miss Flora Dimond sang a soprano solo with cultivated taste and sympathetic feeling, and the ceremony of placing the Sefer Torah in the Ark was performed by the committee, the choir rendering appropriate music. Rabbi Sessler offered the dedicatory prayer, and Miss Gertie Shuman sang the solo, "Hear us, O Father", with violin obligato, by Mr. Henri Faucher.[4] Miss Shuman is a pupil of Mr. Jordan, and has a voice of remarkable purity, flexibility and sweetness, which interpreted the stirring composition with artistic grace and intensity of expression.

Dr. Wise's oration followed. He spoke at length of the miracle of the survival of the Jews, outliving and outlasting all the revolutions and ruins of past centuries. According to the newspaper account, "the speaker then entered exhaustively into a history of the changing forms of religious belief." "Here is another miracle", he went on, "this second Jewish sanctuary in this State; the first was built in Newport." "It is," he concluded, "the lost link in the great chain of altars that commenced with Abraham at Bethel." The account continued:

> After the oration, Mr. Potter gave a baritone solo with a response by Miss Shuman in simulation of an echo, which was rendered with pleasing effect. The choir sang "Joy in the Sanctuary" and the service closed with the benediction by Dr. Sessler. The congregation remained quiet during the exercises which occupied nearly three hours, and at the close Rabbi Sessler and the officers were congratulated upon the success of the remarkable event in the history of the inception and consummation of their energetic and self-sacrificing efforts in the establishment of a permanent church home. Mr. Isaac Hahn officiated as marshal of the day, assisted by Messrs. Abe Dimond, M. Lorentz and Sam Hartman.

The newspaper story concluded with a description of the Celebratory Supper:

> At 8 o'clock in the evening, the congregation and its guests assembled in the vestry where an elaborate supper was served by caterer Harris of Boston. Rev. Drs. Wise and Lasker, Dr. Sessler, President Strauss, the Board of Trustees and others participated. Mr. J. Shartenberg presided as toastmaster, and the list of sentiments and respondents was as follows:
> *Our congregation*—"May our watchword continue to be onward."
> *Response by President Alex. Strauss, American Judaism*—"Its progress is felt the world over."
> *Response by Rev. Dr. Wise, Our Country*—"May its liberal Government be the guiding star for all nations."
> *Response by Mr. Isaac Hahn,* The Day We Celebrate.
> *Response by Dr. Sessler, Our Christian Friends*—"Those who so nobly responded to our cause."
> *Response by Mr. B. Lederer, Our Rabbis*—"May their labors in the field of religion be productive of good results."

Response by Dr. Lasker and Haggai Lodge.
Response by Mr. L. Hartman, Our Past Presidents—"The leaders of early Judaism in Providence whom we honor for their past services."
Response by Mr. Henry Green, Our ladies—"Those who have always aided us on all good and noble deeds."
Response by Mr. L. Dimond.

A particularly interesting feature was the presentation to President Strauss by the congregation of a costly parlor set of furniture of the Wilton rug pattern, with plush trimmings, with center table, in recognition of his faithful and well directed services during his presidency of 14 years, and which was fittingly referred to by toastmaster Shartenberg. The recipient was taken by surprise, but recovered his equilibrium sufficiently to make a grateful and affecting response. The festivities came to a delightful termination at a seasonable hour. Incidentally, Mrs. Shuman, Mrs. B. Lederer, and Mrs. Fink who dressed the scrolls, Mrs. S. Lederer who draped the altar and the ladies of Pawtucket who designed and embroidered the draperies of the Ark, were highly complimented for their valuable service.

A valuable and interesting part of the extensive newspaper story of the proceedings was a detailed description of the building:

> The lot is about 40×96 feet, costing about $6500, and is centrally located, fronting on one of the pleasantest streets of the city. The Synagogue follows the Romanesque style of architecture and is constructed of Springfield brick, with new quarry brownstone trimmings. The height of the building from its base to the gable is 48 feet and to the pinnacle of the tower 78 feet. It is lighted with cathedral tint windows, the large window in the front being surrounded with Hebraic tablets in Scriptural design. The chancel and pulpit form an extension from the auditorium 18×46 feet, the arch rising to a height of 30 feet and the roof being covered with green-colored slate. The vestibule is 35×55 feet, with a seating capacity of 410, while the gallery running along the Friendship Street side seats 85 persons. The interior is finished throughout in white wood and the roof is trussed in panels. The walls and ceiling are decorated in neutral tints to conform to the general plan of interior ornamentation. The chancel is 10×20 feet, and the platform is surmounted with a reading desk and tasteful furniture for the congregation and other occupants of the Sanctuary. In the rear of the pulpit is placed the Ark of the Covenant and other symbols of the church, including the





Solomon and Miriam (Mìetje Halberstad) Pareira. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Allen Wise, of Sacramento, California, great grandson of Solomon Pareira. Photos in RIJHA.

Congg. Beth Israel, Prov. 1854
See Vol. 3, P. 150

Providence the 13th of Jany 1854

Leeser Esqr

Sir, I beg leave to inform you that we have established a Congregation here in Providence. The whole members met together last Sunday, and signed their names for supporting the society with 50 cent each every week, and named it (S.S. 12) Bene Israel. They elected their officers, namely Mr Pereira President, Mr. Frank, Mr. Stern, Mr Salamon, and Mr Steinberg Comittee, Mr. Hirshhorn has been elected as Sec: and treasurer. They engaged me as their Ministes, and promised me $5.00 cet weekly salary without other income they also promised me to have a hall ready to perform and to deliver our Prayers to our holy God, before (Hk) and to fix every thing in a suitable manner. They bought already a (מזרח) and are undertaking of making around a fence, that is all I have to inform you about it at present, I hope I shall be able to inform you more about it next week month. You will please send me the President as soon as possible.

I allow me to ~~signe~~ sign

Your friend

Joseph Spiro

1-13-1854 V

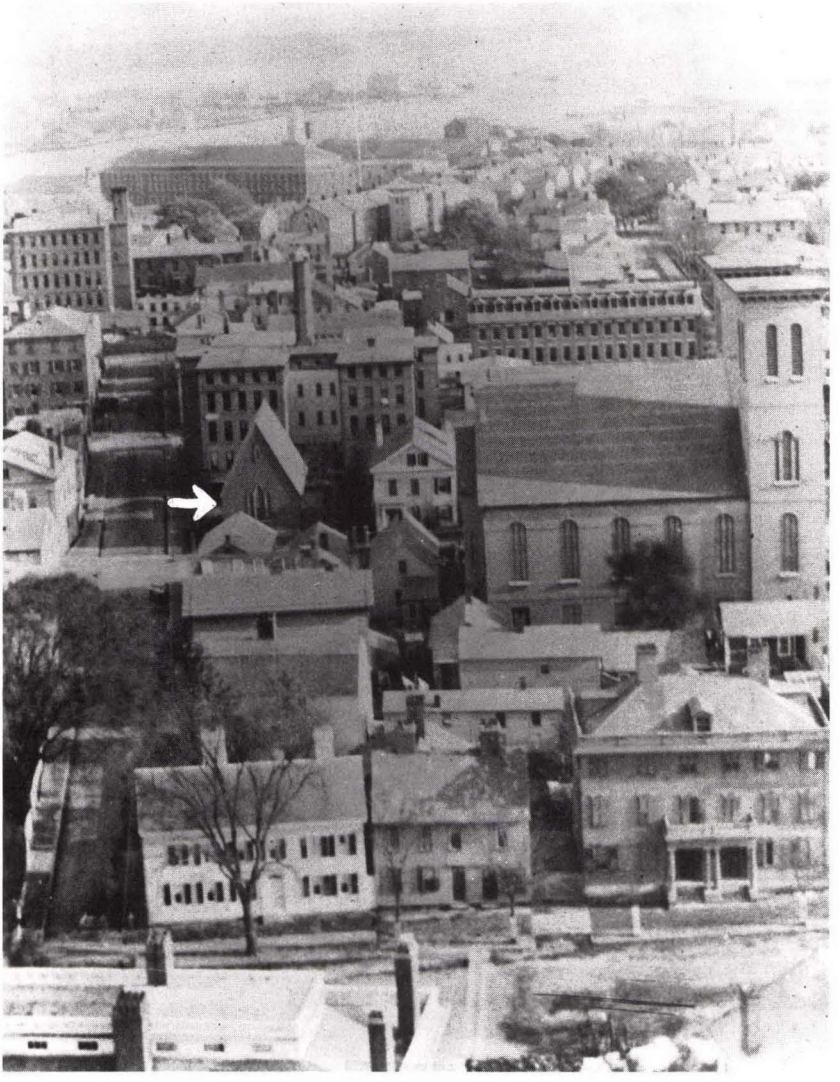
Letter from *Hazzan* Joseph Spiro to Rabbi Isaac Leeser, January 13, 1854. Courtesy American Jewish Archives. Copy in RIJHA.



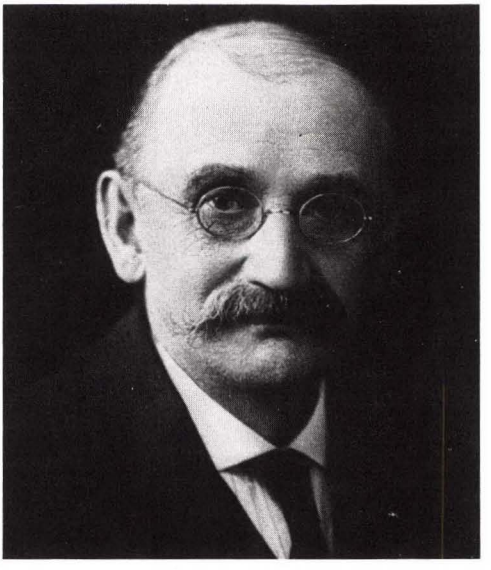
Henry Green, president 1858–1879. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger, rabbi 1877–1878. RIJHA.



Home of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, 1877–1883. The photograph, taken on October 20, 1860, is a view of the Richmond Street area taken from the steeple of Grace Church. The small chapel indicated by the white arrow had previously been occupied by St. Paul's Evangelical (German) Lutheran Church. The larger church to the right was the Richmond Street Congregational Church. Photo by Manchester Brothers. Published through the courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Print in RIJHA. See also *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:119, (November) 1967.



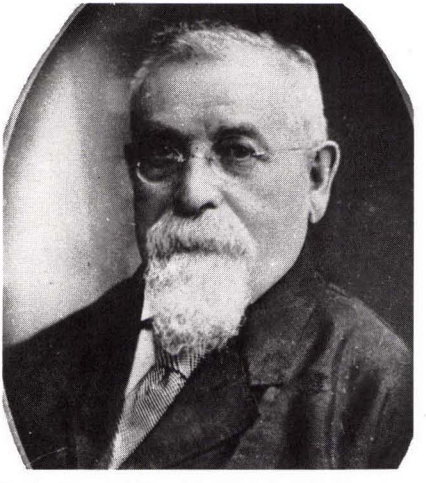
Newman Pincus (1846–1932), Civil War veteran, long-time secretary of the congregation. RIJHA.



Alexander Strauss, president 1879–1897. Temple Beth-El Archives.

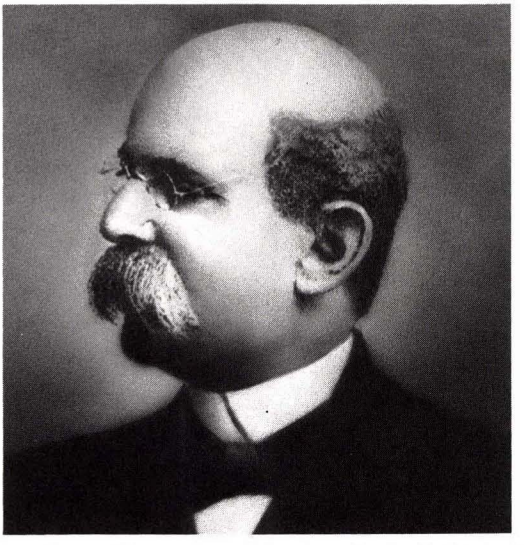


Alexander Strauss, shown in uniform of major of Company A, First Battalion, Rhode Island Cavalry. Temple Beth-El Archives.





Left: David Frank (1835–1919), vice president and long-time member of the board of trustees. RIJHA.
Right: Reverend Myer Noot, *hazzan* 1886–1887. From the *Gazette & Bulletin* (Williamsport, Pennsylvania), March 25, 1916. Print in Temple Beth-El Archives.



Rabbi Morris Sessler, rabbi 1887–1892. Temple Beth-El Archives (from a restored plate).



Solomon Pareira, president 1854–1857, in later life. Charcoal on photograph by Bertha Weil (1892–1984), granddaughter of Solomon Pareira. Original in Temple Beth-El Archives, signed "Bertha Weil '92." The latter date has not been explained.

Constitution

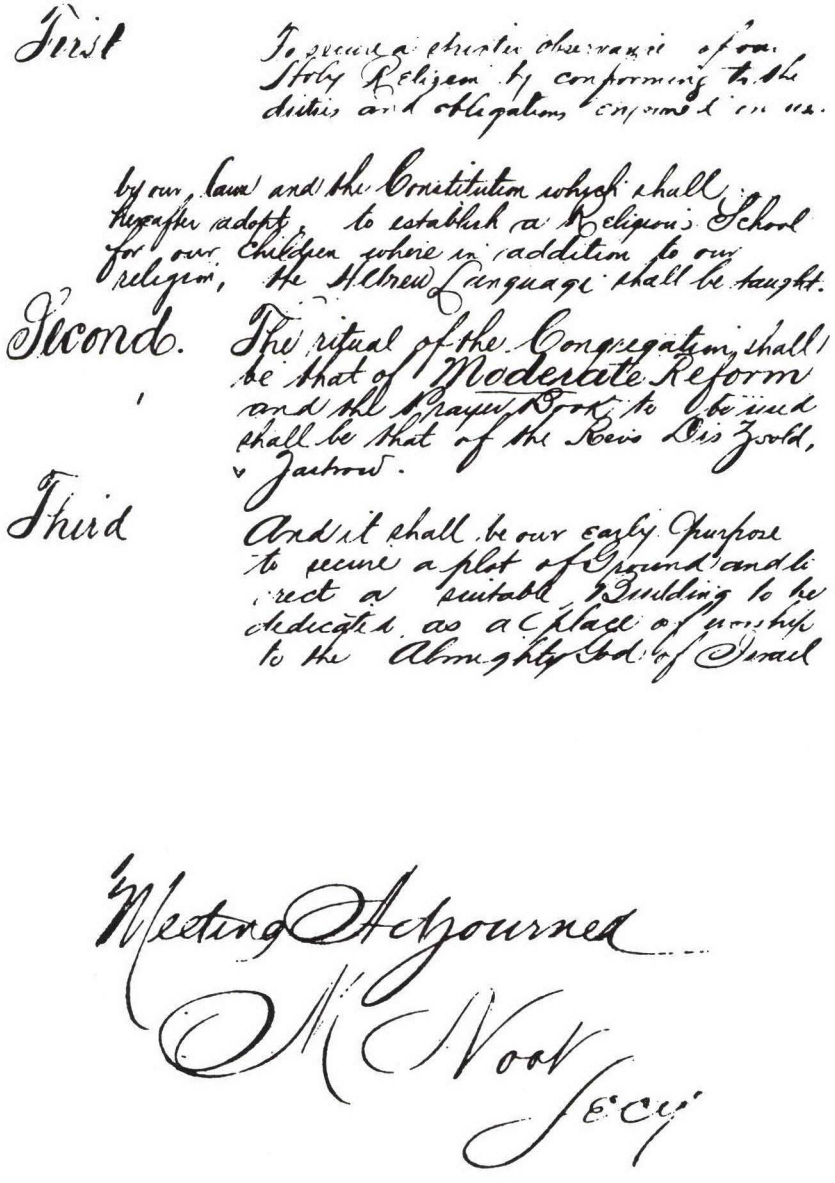
"Preamble"

Wheras The preservation of the sublime principle of Judaism is the profound aspiration and duty of every true Israelite and the inculcation and practice of those principles indispensible to the welfare and happiness of the community of the Education of our children, and the moral social and intellectual progress of the people.

And Whereas we standing on a Common platform, every individual Israelite feels his strength and religious convictions revived and elevated.

Therefore We The undersigned Israelites of the City of Providence hereby Covenant and agree, each with the other and unitedly together, to form a more "perfect religious "Union" a Cong. to be called "Sons of Israel and David" that all Jews love the God of Israel who reverance and would perpetuate his Holy Law may enter and be at peace.

And We do hereby Agree That said Congregation shall be established on the following basis and with the following aims, & objects


First To secure a strict observance of our Holy Religion by conforming to the duties and obligations enjoined in us by our laws and the Constitution which shall hereafter adopt, to establish a Religious School for our Children where in addition to our religion, the Hebrew Language shall be taught.

Second. The ritual of the Congregation shall be that of Moderate Reform and the Prayer Book to be used shall be that of the Revs Dis Zwold, Jastrow.

Third And it shall be our early Purpose to secure a plot of Ground and erect a suitable Building to be dedicated as a Place of worship to the Almighty God of Israel

Meeting Adjourned

M. Noah

Sec'y

Preamble of the Constitution of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. Temple Beth-El Archives.

Congregation Sons of Israel,

OF PROVIDENCE, R. I.

April 4, 1888.

Dear Sirs:

Having purchased, after years of hard struggling, a suitable piece of land and proposing to build a place of worship on the same, and having exhausted our means in the purchase of the grounds we are now compelled to ask the kind assistance of our friends, to enable us to erect a Synagogue, and we hope that this appeal to you for this worthy object will receive your earnest consideration, and that you will aid us with a liberal subscription.

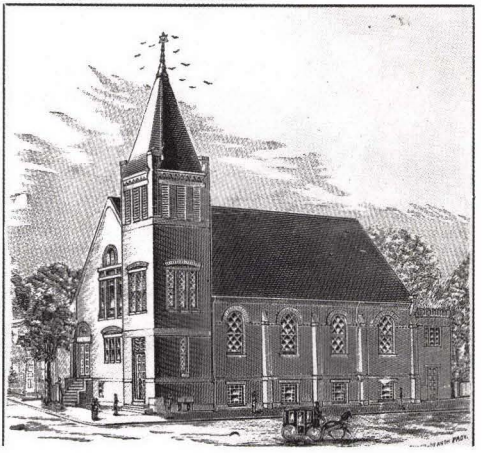
D. Bernkopf,
Secretary.

Alex. Straus
Pres't.

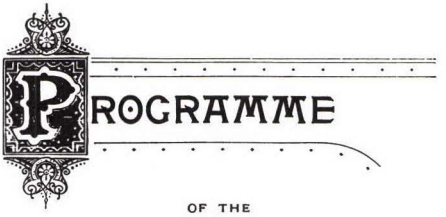
CONGREGATION SONS OF ISRAEL
PROVIDENCE, R.I.

Isaac Hahn
Treas

Circular letter sent to prominent members of The Providence Jewish and Christian communities, April 4, 1888. RIJHA.



Friendship Street Synagogue. Contemporary sketch. Temple Beth-El Archives.


PROGRAMME

OF THE

DEDICATION SERVICES

AT THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE

CONGREGATION

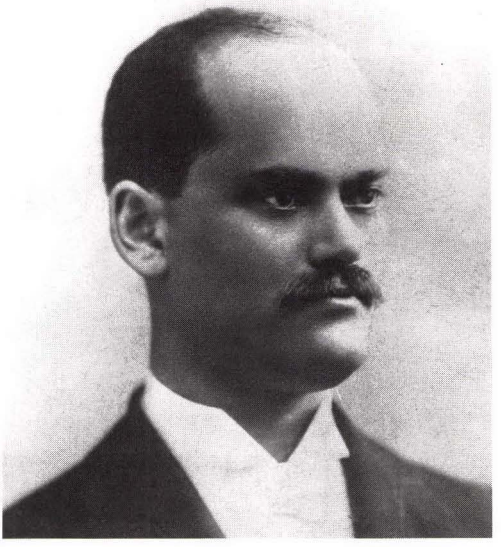
Sons of Israel and David,

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND,

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1890, 2.30 O'CLOCK P. M.

BLOCH PRINTING CO
CINCINNATI.

Program cover, dedication of Friendship Street Synagogue, December 7, 1890. RIJHA.



Rabbi David Blaustein, rabbi 1892–1898. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Jacob Shartenberg (1853–1915), vice president and long-time member of the board of trustees. RIJHA.



Confirmation Class of 1900. Rabbi Bennett Grad in center. RIJHA.





Left: Leopold Dimond, president 1897–1898. RIJHA.
Right: Leopold Hartman, president 1898–1902. RIJHA.

> tablets and the urn of sacred oil [the *Ner Tamid*, or Eternal Lamp]. Entrance to the chancel is gained by Foster Street, and also to the vestries below. In the rear of the pulpit are the Rabbi's study and waiting rooms. A stairway leads from the entrance at the base of the tower to the gallery and choir loft, the space to be devoted to the organ being 15 × 35 feet, and the choir section 14 feet square. Descending to the vestries by stairways near both main entrances, a room 56 × 35 feet easily divided into two apartments of equal size by adjustable doors, is found, which can be devoted to various uses. At the northerly end is a platform, on either side of which are rooms which can be utilized in many ways. A stairway leads to the vestry from the Foster street entrance, all of the exits being conveniently arranged. There are also two cozy rooms at the southerly end of the vestry, which can be used as toilet and coat apartments. The building is heated by steam and supplied with all the modern conveniences to insure comfort and durability. The cost of the building approximates $14,000, and the proceeds from a grand fair in Music Hall, and individual contributions have materially reduced the indebtedness.

The congregation entered their new sanctuary with feelings of joy and thanksgiving. It soon became a focus of community activities. The board on December 12 received inquiries from Judah Touro Lodge, Free Sons of Benjamin; Haggai Lodge, B'nai B'rith; and Providence Lodge, Free Sons of Israel as to whether they might use the vestry as a lodge room. It was voted to grant privileges to each lodge at $50 per year. The treasurer was authorized to insure the synagogue furnishings for $3000. Reflecting the congregation's growing status in the community, the board voted to elect a Relief Committee to involve the congregation formally in acts of charity.

Early in 1891, the board reviewed the status of the choir. The Committee on the Choir reported that Miss Gertrude (Gertie) Shuman, a voice teacher, would donate her talents to the choir. Mrs. Buffington, therefore, was informed that her services were no longer needed. Miss Flora Dimond and other members of the volunteer choir were requested to remain, while Mr. Fred Gardiner was asked to continue at his previous salary of $100 per year.

Rabbi Sessler invited the officers, trustees, and Building Committee and their ladies to join him at an open house on Wednesday, January 28, 1891. Despite the complimentary reports that appeared in the press and elsewhere, Sessler was far from uniformly popular. The close vote for his re-election was a harbinger of things to come.

At a January meeting Gustave Rodenberg charged that the rabbi had defamed Mrs. Rodenberg, using language from the pulpit "unbecoming a rabbi and a gentleman". Rodenberg was requested to appear with witnesses at a special meeting of the board, while the rabbi was invited with witnesses, if any, to answer the charge. Meetings of the board were called for February 4 and 11 to examine and hear the charges. In the meantime, the congregation was notified that there was a vacancy in the ministry. At the February 11 meeting, Rodenberg appeared, but his witness was unable to be present. Sessler apologized to Mrs. Rodenberg. The nature of his indiscretion was not recorded for history. The trustees passed this ungrammatical resolution: "Resolved: By the charges of Mr. Rodenberg the Trustees have become cognizant of the fact that the Rabbi [acted improperly for] [which there might have been cause], yet that the language used at that time from the pulpit in the opinion of the Trustees was not becoming for a Rabbi to use at no time, much less from the pulpit, and the Trustees earnestly request that no such action should ever occur again." It was ordered that Mrs. Rodenberg be notified of the rabbi's apology and the action of the board.

The sale of seats for the High Holy Days had yielded a robust $1600. Mrs. David C. Fink presented to the congregation a handsome clock for the vestry. Later, the Entertainment Committee turned over $106.45, which it had netted from a recent event. A move to sell pews to the highest bidder "in each class" after much discussion was defeated. A motion was offered that a committee of five be appointed to draw up resolutions suitably engrossed and framed to be presented to Rev. Dr. Sessler "for service rendered". This was amended to increase the committee to seven in order to solicit subscriptions from members for a *proper* testimonial [a purse?] for the rabbi—more in line with his needs.

In June, the board voted to send Rabbi Sessler, despite his threatened tenure, to the convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations as a representative of the congregation. The School Committee announced a public examination of the Sunday School pupils and appropriated $10 to procure medals for presentation to deserving students. Mrs. Julius Shuman and Miss Gertrude Shuman submitted their resignations from the choir.

On July 5 the congregation adopted a budget of $2665, providing a $1200 salary for the rabbi. Again, a move to reduce this to $1000 was defeated. It was voted, however, that the rabbi be notified that

his term of service would expire on December 1, and the board was instructed to advertise for a new rabbi. In August Sessler reported on the national convention he had attended and also introduced to the board new members of the congregation. During this period the Reverend Dr. Lasker of Boston had visited Providence and spoke briefly to the board.

Late in September the board received a report from the Committee to Advertise for a Rabbi. Reverend Elkins, one of several applicants, was invited to come for a trial. The president stated that he had not been authorized to expend any money to entertain applicants. All letters from rabbis were answered, and all applicants were informed that travel expenses including railroad fare and hotel bills would be paid only in the case of the successful candidate! Later the same day the congregation confirmed the board's action.

At the annual meeting held after the High Holidays on October 18, 1891, the incumbent officers were re-elected. The officers were thanked for their faithful service and Henry Green for his duties as reader during the Holidays. The financial report showed a total income of $3074.31 and expenditures of $3145.92 for a modest deficit of $71.61. A communication from Reverend Dr. Sessler was read in which he applied for re-election. Incredibly, he appeared to be unaware of the actions already taken. "After considerable discussion pro and con" the congregation proceeded to the election of a rabbi. The tellers reported a vote for Sessler of 23, and opposed 24, with one blank. Because of the late hour, the meeting adjourned without resolving the issue.

Although the rabbi had indicated his desire to stay, the board on November 1 voted to notify him of the result of the election. On the 18th the board instructed the president to advise Sessler to submit his resignation before he was apprised officially of the election result. He was offered the proposition that, if he resigned, he would be hired from month to month until he procured a new position —but not in any case for more than three months. After a brief recess, during which the president "waited on the rabbi", the president reported that Sessler was not satisfied with the offer—he desired re-election. He promised, however, to resign as soon as he obtained a position. He would advertise and was in fact already corresponding with two or three congregations.

Later, in November, a committee was appointed to meet with the rabbi and request that he continue to officiate during December for

$125. He would not listen to the proposition, and a motion to engage him for three months was defeated. At a special meeting called at the request of the rabbi, Sessler eloquently addressed the meeting "in regard to his labors in the last four years". After several members had spoken to the issue, it was voted to engage him for a term of three months from December 1 at a salary of $125 per month. Sessler eventually accepted the offer for the three month interim period.

The Committee to Advertise for a Rabbi reported in December that it had received several more applications. The committee was advised to call Rabbi Elkins (who had not yet appeared) or any other applicant they might desire for a trial.

Early in 1892 a Reverend Doctor Eisenberg of Newark, New Jersey was invited to officiate on a Friday evening, and a committee was appointed to entertain him. In the meantime, Reverend Sessler informed the congregation on February 21 that he expected a call for a pulpit position soon and requested that he be permitted to continue as rabbi until the position materialized. His request was not granted, but he appears nevertheless to have stayed on through March. Meanwhile, the Committee on Entertainment reported that it was making arrangements for a Purim affair.

Reverend Dr. Gersoni, who had earlier been visiting rabbi, occupied the pulpit on a trial basis on the first day of Passover. Leopold Hartman was thanked by the board for entertaining him during the visit. Later, the president was authorized to ascertain his terms for serving as rabbi and to obtain references. When it was learned that he was asking $1500 and a three-year contract, no action was taken.

By April 1 Sessler had departed. At a special meeting of the congregation on April 13, the following resolutions were adopted unanimously, in effect formally terminating Sessler's career in Providence:

> *Resolved.* That the Congregation express its high appreciation for the most valued services of the Rev. Dr. Sessler as Rabbi of this Congregation for the past four-and-a-half years and wishes publicly to acknowledge that thanks to his great ability and energy the building of our new Temple of Worship was consummated.
> *Resolved.* That its best wishes and God Speed be extended to the Rev. Dr. Sessler in his new home at the Golden Gate and these resolutions be spread on the minutes of this congregation

and a copy of the same suitably engrossed and framed be sent to the Rev. Dr. Sessler.

Sessler, like Jacob Voorsanger before him, was the second highly qualified rabbi to leave Providence under difficult circumstances. From Providence he went to Oakland, California and eventually to New Orleans, his principal pulpit. He also served, at various times in Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Arkansas, Virginia, and Louisiana. He eventually retired from active service at Gates of Prayer in New Orleans in 1915 and made his home there during his retirement. He passed away in 1926 in his 78th year. He was known for his passion for charity. He had helped organize the Jewish community of Guatemala City in Central America, officiated on a volunteer basis as spiritual leader at the Home for the Aged in New Orleans, and was a strong supporter of the Jewish Children's Home, The Touro Infirmary, and the Jewish Charitable and Educational Federation of that city.

NOTES

1. Ark of the Law is built into the eastern wall of the synagogue (the side facing Jerusalem) and contains the Scrolls of the Law. A curtain, the *parokhet*, is hung before the ark.

   The Perpetual Lamp (The *Ner Tamid*) is suspended above the ark. In times past only olive oil was used. In the sanctuary of the Orchard Avenue synagogue a candle is used. An electric light is now not uncommon, as was used in the sanctuary of the Broad Street synagogue.

   Sepher (Sefer) Torahs, scrolls of the Law, are arranged in the ark behind the curtain and are removed for public reading.
2. Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900) founded Hebrew Union College in 1875, of which he was president until his death, organized the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1875, and was president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which he established in 1889. He was also founder and editor of *The American Israelite.*

   Rabbi Raphael Lasker was spiritual leader of Congregation Ohabei Shalom of Boston, Massachusetts.
3. See note 52, Chapter Three.
4. Henri Faucher was this writer's first violin teacher, circa 1914–1915.

CHAPTER FIVE

Rabbi David Blaustein and Social Conscience

Early in May of 1892 the Committee on Seeking a Rabbi was authorized to advertise in *The American Israelite*. An application from a Reverend Mr. Friedlander of Brooklyn, New York had been received. He was invited to appear for a trial, while the president sought references. Whether he appeared is not clear. Later in May, however, the board of trustees was authorized to engage the Reverend David Blaustein, not previously mentioned, for an interim period of six months.

With the popular matrimonial season approaching, two weddings were booked, perhaps the first in the new sanctuary. In a ceremony on May 19, 1892 Bertha Hellman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael C. Hellman, was wed to Joseph Huller, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Huller. The bride's father was a prosperous hat manufacturer. The groom was a baker.[1]

The second wedding, which occurred on June 8, 1892, united Flora S. Dimond, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leopold Dimond, to Louis Lyons. The groom, whose parents were not named, was described as the senior member of the firm of Lyons & Brown in the textile business. The Reverend Dr. Raphael Lasker of Congregation Ohabei Shalom of Boston officiated. A detailed account of the elaborate wedding in *The Providence Daily Journal* of June 9 described the wedding as "The most fashionable event of the season in Hebrew social circles." The story concluded: "Mr. and Mrs. Dimond were the recipients of cordial congratulations upon the splendid success which had crowned the nuptial celebration and which in point of social distinction and completeness, stamped it as one of the most notable events in Hebraic circles ever chronicled in the city's social life."[2] Miss Dimond had served for several seasons as

a volunteer in the choir. In recognition of her faithful service the board presented a special testimonial wedding gift to the bride—at a cost of $54.90, generous for its day.

In July the budget for the ensuing year was approved, providing for a salary of $1000 for the rabbi and $500 for the organist and choir. At the annual meeting in October, David Blaustein was unanimously elected rabbi at the stated salary. Blaustein, who had waited outside the meeting during the vote, was sent for "and appeared and accepted the position with appropriate remarks." The officers were re-elected for another year.

David Blaustein was born on May 5, 1866 in Lida, province of Vilna, then part of Russia. He received his first education in Hebrew in the *heder* and *yeshivah*[3] of his native town. In 1883, at the age of eighteen, he fled to Prussia to evade conscription in the army and studied Hebrew and rabbinical literature there under the scholarly Israel Lipkin. Subsequently, he removed to Mecklenburg-Schwerin, where he worked and studied Jewish history and philosophy under Feilschenfeld. Being still a Russian subject, he was after a time denied further residence and was ordered to leave Germany. In 1886 he emigrated to the United States and settled in Boston. There he opened a modern German-Hebrew school, the first of its kind in the United States. He engaged actively in educational and communal work, being one of the founders of the Sheltering Home for Immigrants. In 1890 he entered Harvard University, but left after three years to devote himself entirely to congregational duties in Providence.[4] He was barely twenty-six years of age when he arrived, well-educated, enthusiastic, and innovative. Mature for his age, slightly bald, with a trim moustache, high forehead, and penetrating eyes, he projected the image of a keen intelligence, which, indeed, he proceeded to manifest in many ways. Trained in German methodology, he was endowed with an unusual talent for organization. He was in essence the embodiment of the clean-cut modern rabbi.

At the annual meeting of the congregation on October 2, 1892 President Alexander Strauss and the other officers were re-elected for another year. The Reverend David Blaustein also was elected unanimously for the ensuing year at a salary of $1000. This was a signal event, as he proved to be a successful and popular spiritual leader and prominent in community affairs. The congregation re-

quested the trustees to plan a Columbus Day celebration, a very special Columbus Day in 1892.

The board met on October 9 to perfect arrangements for the event. It was celebrated in conjunction with Providence Lodge, No. 78, Independent Order Free Sons of Israel (I.O.F.S.I.) on Friday evening, October 21. Professor David Gordon Lyon of Harvard University was invited to deliver the principal address.[5] D. Russell Brown, Governor of Rhode Island; Mayor William K. Potter of Providence; United States District Court Judge George M. Carpenter; and a representative of *The Providence Daily Journal* were invited.

The School Committee recommended that the following books be ordered: for the first class, Post-Biblical History, Biblical Ethics, Biblical History, a Hebrew reader, and Faith and Deed Religion; for the second class, Biblical History, Faith and Deed, and a Hebrew reader; and for the third class, a Hebrew reader. In fact, the books had already been ordered by the teacher, Rabbi Blaustein. The congregation furnished the books, but the parents would be responsible for their care. Five volunteer teachers were recruited—two males, two "misses," and one matron. One thousand cards were orderd to assist the teachers in keeping "a correct record of the doings of the scholars." The school opened on October 2 with a nearly full attendance. The new rabbi appeared to be functioning well.

Henry Green passed away on November 11, 1892 in his sixty-third year. He had come to Providence in 1856, had served as president of the congregation for twenty years, and was a member of the board of trustees for most of his thirty-four years in the city. Resolutions were drafted by a committee of the board to be placed in the minutes of the congregation. They stated that the congregation "mourns the loss of one of its oldest members and faithful co-worker in the cause of Judaism," and noted the "Good deeds he has done on behalf of the poor, sick and helpless." "The Board of Trustees," the draft continued, "have lost one of their most active members, whose advice and counsel will long be missed"; and "The entire Jewish community have lost an upright friend who not only befriended the living, but also assisted in the last sad rites of the dead." It was "resolved that a page in our Book of Records be set aside in memory of our most worthy Bro. Henry Green," which command was duly executed.

Immediately following the eulogy in the congregational minutes

was a draft of the Bylaws of the Congregation and Laws to Govern the School Committee, recorded in the fine hand of Myer Noot, drawn up before he left Providence. He had presumably left space for other intervening business. Under the heading "Benefits," it provided that the annual assessment entitles each member to a seat in the synagogue, attendance of the family's children in the school, and right of burial in the congregation's cemetery of each member, spouse, and children. The school was to provide instruction in Hebrew, Biblical History, and "Catechism."[6]

On March 3, 1893 the board received a check for $44 from Mrs. Abram Slocum, wife of the well-known costumer, being equal to the receipts from the hiring of costumes for the recent Purim masquerade. A letter of thanks for her generosity was sent to the donor.

Later in the spring the rabbi requested an appropriation for prizes for deserving scholars in the Sunday School. Fifteen dollars was voted for this purpose, and a member was appointed to assist the rabbi in procuring the prizes. All members were invited to a public Sunday School Examination on June 25, 1893.

Rabbi Blaustein agitated consistently for support of Rhode Island Hospital. In response to a plea, the trustees voted a ten-dollar donation to the hospital.

On June 26, the board scheduled a special meeting for Sunday afternoon, July 30 and ordered that "all members in arrears be notified that, if not paid up on or before that meeting, the same will be legally collected with the expense of 10 percent for collection to be attached."

The rabbi was otherwise occupied that afternoon, as he was attending the dedication of the new building of the Orthodox Congregation Sons of Zion (Bnai Zion) on Orms Street in Providence. *The Providence Daily Journal* of July 31 described the day as mild and delightful. The exercises in the sanctuary before a capacity audience were preceded by a parade with a marching band. Rabbi Nathan L. Rabinowitz of Sons of Zion officiated, and visiting clergy from New York, Boston, and Providence delivered addresses, among whom was the new young rabbi from the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David.[7]

In the late summer Leopold Hartman was appointed collector of dues and was allowed five percent of collections. The trustees met twice in early September to sell pews for the High Holidays, and the rabbi was authorized to procure an assistant for the occasion.

Burial applications for the Elmwood cemetery were set at $100, and $25 for Moshassuck. The sexton of Moshassuck was ordered to put the grounds in order at a price 20 percent less than his previous charge. The Choir Committee reported that a Mrs. Almon C. Burnham had been engaged to replace Mrs. Buffington as organist at the same price. The dates of meetings for the Free Sons of Israel and the Free Sons of Benjamin were set and charges for the same established.

At the annual meeting of September 24, 1893 the rabbi was re-elected by acclamation for the ensuing year at a salary of $1200, and $550 was approved for the choir. The president, vice president, and treasurer were re-elected, but William Schloss became the new secretary. The final financial report to September '93 showed disbursements of $3,160.36, receipts of $3,078.83, and a deficit of $81. Supervision of the Sunday School was placed in the hands of the minister.

Late in the year, the Burial Committee reported that it had authorized Attorney H.C. Whitcomb to make inquiries regarding procurement of additional land for the Elmwood cemetery and to obtain an option on 10,000 square feet.

The new year opened with a ball on January 3, 1894 arranged by the Entertainment Committee. The trustees had been urged to support it by selling tickets. Receipts were $125.25 and expenses $92.65, for a modest return of $32.60.

In March Rabbi Blaustein made "very worthy suggestions" regarding reorganization of the confirmation class. After looking into the matter, the board approved his recommendation. He also suggested a committee structure covering such matters as services, Sabbath School, and education, which in turn was also adopted. Fifteen dollars was again appropriated for Sunday School prizes. The trustees recommended that the rabbi be re-elected at a salary of $1200 and that he represent the congregation at the rabbinical convention in Atlantic City in July, for which it appropriated $50. These actions were approved by the congregation in July and also a budget of $2890 with an expected deficit of $300. Thanks were extended to the Judah Touro Lodge, I.O.S.B. "for the courtesy extended to the members of the congregation on the eve of departure for Europe of Mr. Isaac Hahn, [and] being able to meet him under such pleasant auspices." It also extended thanks to the Sabbath School teachers for their faithful services and to Mr. Tobias Cohen

for a *Megillah* (scroll) of the biblical Book of Esther presented by him to the congregation. On a more mundane note, it approved the building of a bin to hold ten tons of coal for the coming winter and the purchase of coal to fill the bin.

At the annual meeting of October 14, 1894 Strauss, Ledèrer, Dimond, and Schloss were re-elected to their respective offices, and Blaustein was unanimously re-elected rabbi. The purchase of a wedding gift was ordered for Miss Eva Hartman, daughter of Trustee Leopold Hartman, at a price not to exceed $50 "in appreciation for her many acts of kindness towards the congregation." Finally, President Strauss and Reverend Blaustein were elected to represent the congregation at a conference of the Progressive Industrial Society to be held in Providence.

Later in the year, the Committee on Burial Grounds reported to the board that Joseph Whitman, son of the former owner of the Elmwood cemetery plot and present owner of the abutting land, offered to sell some 13,000 to 14,000 square feet of the property for $300. Since this was swamp land, the committee must first investigate the cost of filling it in.

During this time, Rabbi Blaustein was busily engaged in community affairs. He was deeply concerned about the proliferation of charitable societies and their competitive and disorganized manner of operation. The Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association (1880), the Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association (1890), and the Young Ladies Hebrew Aid Society of Providence, Rhode Island (1894) were already in existence, as well as a multiplicity of lodges, congregations, other societies chartered and unchartered, and individuals catering to the needy, all serving overlapping functions.

As David Adelman has written: "Rabbi David Blaustein . . . , who was trained in German methodology, sought to bring order out of chaos, that is, instead of dispensing charity indiscriminately to every applicant, he wanted to have a central body to dispense aid in such a manner as to rehabilitate the applicant and make him self-sufficient. Accordingly, he organized the United Hebrew Charities with representatives of traditional [Orthodox] Jews in the North End community and from his own congregation, whose members were commonly referred to as the 'Deutchen'. The net result was that the 'Deutchen' furnished the money and the administration, while the traditional Jews furnished the indigents."[8] The

organization did not in fact obtain a charter until after Blaustein had left Providence and then under another name, the Associate Hebrew Charities of Providence (1900). Its goal of organizing all Jewish charities of Providence was never achieved.[9]

There is evidence that the United Hebrew Charities was actually in existence in early 1894, although the year of its organization is sometimes given as 1895. Blaustein on February 14, 1894 donated $23.50 to the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association on behalf of the United Hebrew Charities, although generally the donations flowed the other way.[10] The Montefiore association voted to cooperate with the United Hebrew Charities, and Mrs. Jacob Falkenberg was appointed a delegate to the latter organization. On March 13, 1895 she reported that the United Hebrew Charities required no donation from Montefiore at that time. Blaustein addressed them concerning the goals of the consortium, and in accordance with his suggestion it considered donating a stated sum each month to the United Hebrew Charities. Mrs. Falkenberg, nevertheless, felt that the ladies of the association should continue such charitable works as they could perform more effectively than men, and might furnish a list of names of those assisted when such information could be divulged.[11] It was not, however, until 1945 with the formation of the General Jewish Committee, Inc. that Blaustein's dream of a systematic dispensing of charity funds within the Jewish community was truly realized.[12]

On January 1, 1895 at a congregational meeting a letter was read from civil engineer Joseph A. Latham, stating that the lot adjoining the present cemetery and available for purchase must be filled 7 to 10 feet to conform to the present grade and would require 3000 to 3500 cubic yards of fill. The trustees were granted authority to purchase the plot for a price not to exceed $300 as previously quoted. The purchase was later consummated.

At a special meeting of the congregation on February 10, to which the wives of members were especially invited, long-time treasurer Leopold Dimond was honored. President Strauss, after "an elaborate and appropriate speech," presented "a most elegant set of resolutions" to the guest of honor. The resolutions took cognizance of his "faithful and distinguished services," and "the fidelity and fraternal spirit with which Brother Dimond has discharged the responsible duties of his office." After several other speakers had added their congratulations, Dimond responded appropriately.

The congregation on June 30 adopted a budget of $3140 providing for the rabbi's salary of $1350 and choir services of $700. At the request of the Building Committee, $300 was added to the budget for repairs on the building, to be covered by an assessment on each member proportional to his dues. The repairs actually cost $420, which was authorized by the trustees. Fifty dollars was appropriated to help defray the expenses of the rabbi's attendance at the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Letters of thanks were sent to the religious school teachers and especially to a Linda Biscow for her kindness in teaching at the school. A resolution was introduced on a subject which became a source of continuing controversy: "We the undersigned members in good standing bring in the following resolution—that hereafter the services of the congregation be conducted with the male members having their hats off." It was ruled that the resolution would be inserted in the call for the annual meeting.

Several board meetings during the summer and fall were devoted to the chronic problem of delinquent dues payments. The repairs to the synagogue were carried out in time for the High Holidays, for which the rabbi was authorized to engage an assistant.

On September 29, 1895 at the annual meeting, Strauss, Lederer, and Dimond were re-elected to their respective offices. There being no nominations for secretary, the office was left open. Rabbi Blaustein was re-elected for one year. The controversy over hats erupted as expected. A motion to lay over to the next meeting the resolution outlawing hats failed to pass. The resolution itself on an informal non-binding vote passed 28 to 20, but the final vote was postponed.

On December 6, 1895 the board received a communication from Congregation Jeshuat Israel of Newport, which had recently taken over Touro Synagogue, requesting a contribution toward procuring a burial place. The historic Jews' Cemetery in Newport was deemed hallowed ground and too small for a modern Jewish cemetery. The matter was deferred, but at a subsequent congregational meeting the appeal was placed on file and the Newport Touro group was informed that "we are unable to help them." After all, the Sons of Israel and David had its own problems. For example, at the November meeting, the "Rev. D. Blaustein spoke about means to abate the indifference prevailing in our congregation for congregational matters and how to awaken the interest of its members." He suggested the publication of a congregational paper and asked the financial

support of the congregation. The trustees favored the idea and referred the matter to the congregation with a view to raising part of the cost. In the meantime Blaustein was granted a vacation for a visit to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

In January the touchy issue of hats was again brought up and again deferred. It was voted "that the action of taking off hats by the male members be laid over to our next quarterly meeting and members be notified to attend for final action."

As for the new publication, it was ordered "that one hundred dollars ($100.00) be placed to the credit of the paper called [*The*] *Organ* . . . toward helping maintain same." *The Organ*, in fact, had already made an appearance. The first issue, designated Volume 1, Number 1 and dated December 12, 1895, was called the "Hanukkah Edition."[13] Although Blaustein indicated otherwise, there is good evidence from its content that he hoped the paper would provide a service to the community as well as to the congregation. In the inaugural issue he addressed the following statement "To Our Readers":[14]

> The appearance of this leaflet is not a literary enterprise, nor is it an addition to Jewish journalism in this country. As the name indicates it is purely a local undertaking, solely in the interests of our own congregation. This congregation stands under the banner of progressive Judaism. Its progress is, however, very slow, indeed, hardly noticeable. Those who for one reason or another do not frequent the weekly services, and have no children in the Sabbath School know nothing of the affairs of the congregation, and, of course, therefore feel no real interest; and so as an inevitable result we are sadly lagging behind. To combat this evil of indifference the publication of this paper is intended. . . .if our people neglect to frequent the synagogue, the synagogue must visit the people in their homes. . . .

The first issue provided a potpourri of newsy items and information. With an eye to future editions, the following "Notice to Secretaries" was inserted:[15]

> The secretaries of the various Jewish organizations in the city are respectfully requested to send to this paper the names of the officers and the time of the stated meetings of their respective societies. Also short reports of the proceedings of their meetings will be gratefully received.

Regarding Rabbi Blaustein's forthcoming visit to Hebrew Union College, it was reported that he planned to leave on December 16 for ten days.[16] "Hannukah, this year," the editor noted, "is not two weeks before Christmas, but Christmas this year is two weeks after Hannukah." "Instead of Christmas presents," he continued, "remember your friends and rejoice the hearts of the little ones by giving them Hannukah presents."[17] Looking toward the broader community, the editor asked: "What fault do you find with the services, with the Sabbath School, with the charity work of the congregation, and with all the Jewish organizations in the city? What reforms would you suggest?"[18]

It was announced that *The Organ* would reach readers through the Sabbath School. It would be distributed to the children, who would spread it among their relatives and friends. Anyone wishing it to be mailed should send twenty cents in cash or stamps to Master Bertrand Shuman (son of Julius Shuman) at 11 Summer Street, which would cover postage costs to June 1896. It would appear twice monthly on the first and third Fridays.[19]

The Organ noted that quite a number of Jewish boys and girls were attending the Providence High School and ranked high in their classes. Two Jewish boys, Masters Harry Shuman and Isidor Lederer, were in the Glee Club. Several Jewish girls were attendants at Manual Training High School, while Jewish boys also attended Pawtucket High School—all doing splendidly. The prizes for declamation at the Y.M.C.A. in November were "carried off by two Jewish boys," Master Bruno Heller (first prize) and Master Irving Loeb (second prize).[20]

On the literary side the issue carried an essay, "A Short History of the Maccabees," which Miss Gertrude Lederer had read at the 1893 Hanukkah Celebration. It also contained an unsigned article, "The Woman and the Synagogue."[21]

The listing in *The Organ* of Jewish institutions in Providence is of historical interest:[22]

RELIGIOUS

Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David—corner of Friendship and Foster Streets.
Congregation Sons of Zion—Orms Street
Russian Congregation of Israel—State Street

Roumanian Congregation Agudath Zedeck—42 Robinson Street
Congregation Agudath Hakolel—Shawmut Street

FRATERNAL

I.O.O.F., M.U. [Manchester Unity], Providence Lodge, No. 7050
I.O.S.B., Judah Touro Lodge, No. 59
I.O.B.B., Haggai Lodge, No. 132
I.O.F.S.I., Providence Lodge, No. 78
O.B.A., Baron de Hirsch Lodge, No.99
Maimonides Lodge, No.112
City of Providence Lodge, No. 143
Miriam Lodge, No.13

CHARITABLE

Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association
Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association
Young Ladies Hebrew Aid Association
United Hebrew Charities

EDUCATIONAL

Young Men's Moses Montefiore Association, Montefiore Hall, 93 North Main Street
Young Sons of Israel, Temple, Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David

The spelling and titles of the organizations do not always conform precisely to those in the original charters.

In February young Bruno Heller addressed the trustees on behalf of the Confirmation Class of '95 and presented to the congregation a handsome framed picture of his class. The president accepted it for the congregation with many thanks. Reverend Blaustein appeared before the trustees in the spring and spoke encouragingly of the progress of *The Organ*. He was granted a leave during May to attend the biennial meeting of the Jewish Publication Society of America in Philadelphia. A committee was appointed to raise funds to level the ground at the Elmwood cemetery according to previous specifications.

The formation at Blaustein's suggestion of the Ladies Literary Circle in December 1895 was announced in *The Organ*. In addition to the study of the Old Testament, two papers were read, one on a practical matter, and the other on a historical subject. "Our particular work for at least one year," the account read, "should be the

study of conditions in the City of Providence so as to know how to apply our charity in the best way." The influence of their diligent rabbi is evident. At its first meeting, following the installation of officers, Rabbi Blaustein gave an illustration of how a "circle" (discussion group) should be conducted. The first two chapters of Genesis were read and discussed, and "all present were pleased with the illustration."

The Ladies Literary Circle, patterned after the National Council of Jewish Women, was open to "Jewish Ladies of all sections of the city, married as well as single . . . , whether connected with a congregation or not." At an early meeting it adopted the formal name of The Roger Williams Circle of Jewish Women. It met regularly in the vestry.[23]

A public installation of officers of the Independent Order Free Sons of Israel, Providence Lodge, No. 78, which took place in the temple on January 12 1895, was reported in *The Organ*. The Honorable Julius Hamburger of New York City, Grand Master, conducted the installation and delivered the address. The public was invited to attend. The address was described as powerful and "full of American patriotism." Other installations were also listed in *The Organ*: Haggai Lodge, the Montefiore Ladies, and Judah Touro Lodge, all during January.[24]

Commenting on the progress of Reform Judaism, Blaustein noted in *The Organ*: "In the western cities there are no Jewish ghettos nor is Reform Judaism there confined to the richer classes only."

In the third issue of *The Organ* (January 17, 1896), Rabbi Blaustein published his first appeal for annual contributions to Rhode Island Hospital, the ultimate resource at that time for sick Jews in the community. During the brief life of the publication there were eleven appeals or news items concerning a continuing struggle to make up an annual contribution of $75 to the hospital. On several occasions the following appeal appeared:[25]

IN BEHALF OF RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL

> The Congregation as well as other Jewish organizations paying an annual contribution to Rhode Island Hospital are hereby reminded that the payment thereof is now due. To make the Jewish donation more presentable, the various societies are respectfully requested to send their contributions to Rabbi Blaustein, who will in the name of the societies of Providence forward the whole sum to the treasurer of the hospital.

> Rabbi Blaustein will gladly receive donations for said purpose also from charitably inclined individuals. Small amounts will be welcome as well as larger ones.

On one occasion he commented, "We hope this appeal will not be a voice calling in the wilderness," and on another, "It pains us to repeat the statement that Providence Jewry cannot boast of public spirited individuals." He added, "The appeal in behalf of the Rhode Island Hospital was not responded to by anyone of our well-to-do co-religionists." Aside from annual contributions by the congregation and a few from fraternal lodges, the only other donation was one of twenty-five cents "from a family that cannot afford to spare even that small amount."

Another issue of *The Organ* carried a brief essay by "a young observer" from the post-confirmation class titled "Our Duties as Citizens of the Community."[26] It argued for contributions to Rhode Island Hospital, and read in part: " . . . our Rabbi told us that within the last few months he had placed several patients for treatment in the Rhode Island Hospital. Some were sheltered there for a great many weeks, and if charges were made the bill would amount to at least one hundred and fifty dollars. But how much do the Jewish people of Providence contribute to the Rhode Island Hospital?"

On January 7 Blaustein participated in a meeting of the Union for Practical Progress at Sayles Hall in Brown University. There were 50 in attendance. It called for the closing of saloons for longer hours than the frequent 12 midnight to 4 a.m. (hours of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. were recommended), closing on all legal holidays, keeping them at a reasonable distance from schools (400 feet or more), a clear view of the interior from the street, the elimination of pool tables on the premises, the number of licenses to be limited according to population (one per 1000 recommended), and an annual vote on the question of granting of licenses.[27]

Public service items often appeared in *The Organ*. For example, board and lodging was sought for two Jewish young men "at some respectable Jewish family."[28] In an editorial, the writer observed that mentally Jews were still living in the ghetto and should do more for the community. Sponsorship of a series of public lectures for this purpose was suggested. Support by one or several individuals would be welcome, as the congregation itself could not afford the expense. This was indeed a prescient proposal.[29]

In a special supplement for Purim and Washington's Birthday, *The Organ* reprinted the famous exchange of letters between Moses Seixas and President George Washington concerning the Jews of Newport.[30] During January, Rabbi Blaustein gave lectures on "Modern Judaism" before societies in Lebanon, New Hampshire and North Pomfret, Vermont.[31]

At meetings of the Roger Williams Circle of Jewish Women, Blaustein lectured on Genesis.[32] He suggested that the Jewish ladies of Rhode Island make contributions to the Women's College in Brown University in the name of the Circle. Later, the Circle presented a purse of $25 to the Women's College.[33] In April, the Circle was host to the Providence Women's Suffrage League. The non-Jewish speakers apologized for Christians' ostracizing the Jews of the city. The rabbi explained why the Jews took no part in public movements. Mrs. Ellen M. Bolles of the League explained "the women's suffrage movement and invited Jewish women to participate."[34] Mrs. Bolles later sent a courtesy note to Reverend Blaustein in which she stated: "It is only recently that I have become aware of the extremely interesting character of the Jewish religion. The breadth and liberality which are its distinguishing features have come to me as a surprise." She concluded: "My own mental horizon has become enlarged by coming into contact with modern Jewish thought and life and I believe that the liberality developing among your young people will soon make itself felt for good in the rising generation of those of other creeds around them."[35] The rabbi's skills at community relations and in selling Reform Judaism were having some effect.

Rabbi Blaustein's views on women in the Reform Jewish community, considering that they were expressed in 1892, were certainly forward looking. He wrote:[36]

> Judaism is progressive; it keeps step with the times. This is evident from the change in the religious position of woman, who has until recently been a nonentity in the synagogue. She received no religious instruction, and her presence at divine service was only tolerated. She was seated in the gallery, was not counted in constituting a religious quorum, and was not allowed to touch sacred objects. . . .
>
> With the dawn of reformed Judaism, however, her position in The Synagogue has changed for the better. She is gradually becoming the equal of man. The girl is now instructed in the tenets

> of Judaism, and the rite of confirmation is conferred upon her as well as upon the boy. At the religous service, she is no longer confined to the gallery, but occupies a seat of honor beside the male members of her family. . . .In the more liberal congregations in this country, women are active members, even serving as trustees. Wherever this is the case the congregation prospers both materially and spiritually.

In 1895 The Congregation of The Sons of Israel and David was not yet *that* liberal.

During March *The Organ* solicited support for itself, for the Rhode Island Hospital, and for the Matzah Fund.[37] On March 6 Hyman Goldsmith became the first Jewish police officer and was sworn in by the mayor of Providence.[38] It was announced that the respected Myer Noot had been elected rabbi of Beth-El Congregation of Newburgh, New York. However, shortly thereafter the doctors of Albany, New York advised Noot not to settle in New York as the hilly climate would be detrimental to Mrs. Noot's health. He therefore declined the position and accepted a call to Troy, New York.[39]

Rhode Island Hospital acknowledged a gift of $50, representing contributions from three fraternal lodges and the temple (as the congregation was now beginning to be called). Later, the hospital acknowledged a gift of $71.50 from the "Jewish societies of Providence, R.I.".[40]

The Roger Williams Circle presented Charles F. Kent, professor of biblical literature and history at Brown University and a teacher of Semitic studies, in a lecture titled "The Wise Men of Ancient Israel." Noting "the little purse" which the Circle had presented to the Women's College at his behest, Blaustein commented: "It is to the credit of the ladies. But this is not enough. We must go a step further. With Professor Kent as teacher, the Semitic studies will be more and more cultivated, growing into a large department. We must avail ourselves of the opportunity and be the first ones to present Brown University with books that they may be the nucleus for a Semitic library. Let us do something." Again Blaustein showed his vision and foresight. At the time, he was already doing graduate work at the University.[41]

At a congregational meeting on April 19,1896, there was further discussion of the controversial hat issue. A move to postpone the matter indefinitely was defeated. An amendment was offered to add

to that part of the resolution which read that "the services . . . be conducted with the male members having their hats off," the phrase "but not to be compulsory." This too was rejected. The original resolution was then defeated on a straight aye-nay vote, but a motion to reconsider passed. Finally, a substitute resolution was offered and adopted: "Resolved that hereafter it shall be optional for the male members to wear their hats or not during the worship of the Congregation." The result of this discussion was reported in an early issue of *The Organ*.[42] The controversy over hats in the synagogue had been settled for the present; the wearing of hats by men would now be optional. Those who wished not to wear head coverings would remove them on entering the temple, while those who wished to keep them on would do so. Lack of consistency or uniformity, *The Organ* stated, might not be good from the esthetic point of view, but it was beneficial from the standpoint of religion, "which deals more with the conscience of the individual." The rabbi himself, it concluded, would continue to wear a cap.[43] The congregation had taken another step toward radical Reform. The issue, however, was not dead and would continue to surface from time to time.

The compromise allowing males to bare their heads at worship was an example of the inclination of these Reform Jews to conform to the prevailing Protestant mores, along with their use of English in the services and the singing of Protestant hymns (with such offending phrses as "Jesus, Son of God" altered to "our Father in heaven"). Their insistence on having the services conducted in English was further motivated by their patriotic fervor to be American. In the jargon of the day "Americans" were usually white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant.

At the April board meeting, in response to a communication from the Helpful Thoughts Publishing Co. of New York, the trustees authorized the purchase of fifty subscription copies of *Helpful Thoughts*, a student periodical presumably for the Sabbath School pupils. The national school paper would be distributed monthly to the students.

In June "a delegation consisting of Masters Henry Dimond, Bernard Boas, and the Misses Jaretsky and Lederer representing the Post-Confirmation class appeared before the board asking for the adoption of the Union Prayer Book [of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations]. Master Harry Dimond made an eloquent

plea for the adoption of the same." President Strauss promised to bring the matter before the congregation. The younger element were adding their voices to the movement for more liberal reform.

The congregation in July adopted a budget of $3090, allowing for $1350 for the rabbi's salary, with no increase. Sensitivity about this led to a resolution expressing appreciation for the rabbi's work, but explaining that the finances of the congregation made it impossible to "manifest their approval." A committee conferred with the rabbi, apprised him of the resolution, and expressed their desire more adequately to "manifest their approval of his work . . . at some future time."

At the annual meeting on September 20, 1896, the present officers were re-elected, except for a new secretary, Louis Friedman. Rabbi Blaustein was re-elected for the ensuing year at the same salary. The deficit for the year was $153.98, an improvement over that of the previous year. The Building Committee had attended to roof repairs and had ventilators installed. At this time, according to *The Organ*, the congregation had 73 member families.[44]

A controversy, unexplained but possibly related to seating on the High Holidays, erupted at the meeting. Louis Green filed a written complaint against George L. Rodenberg for disorder in the temple on Yom Kippur. The matter was referred to the board. In a letter to the board Rodenberg apologized for "insulting Mr. Green . . . for the mistake I did [*sic*] in the Temple." He would apologize "not only through your body," but also "to him personally," which appeared to end the matter. At the same board meeting, the Confirmation Class, as was now customary, presented a framed picture of the Class of '96.

The Organ of November 13, quoting from the *Brown Daily Herald*, the Brown University campus newspaper, announced a gift of a Semitic library to Brown University from Jacob Shartenberg of Pawtucket.[45] The books had been collected by Ephraim Deinard, prominent Jewish writer and traveler.[46] The majority of the books were in Hebrew, Latin, and German. The gift was deemed opportune at this time because they were acquired soon after the reorganization of the Department of Biblical Literature by Professor Charles Foster Kent. The fine hand of Rabbi Blaustein is clearly evident.

In November the board appointed Benedict B. Lederer as its delegate to the 15th Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Louisville, Kentucky in December. The choir com-

mittee was directed to assist the rabbi in arranging a Thanksgiving service.

The School Committee presented a comprehensive report of the school's status. There were 44 pupils in five classes, as follows: Class I-7; Class II-11; Class III-9; Class IV-7; and Class V-10. The teachers were the Misses Rita Goldsmith, Matilda (Mattie) Pincus, Hedwig (Hattie) Lederer, Gertrude (Gertie) Lederer, and physician-teacher Doctor Max Gomberg. Rabbi Blaustein suggested that the children conduct a service, or a Hanukkah Festival on December 6. He ordered 200 pamphlets called "Hannukah Festivals" which, he said, would also be useful on Purim. The board favored the energetic rabbi's plan of visiting Jewish communities in the vicinity which had no synagogue of their own.

The Organ late in November announced a Thanksgiving service in the synagogue on Thursday, the 26th at 10:30 a.m.[47] An invitation was sent to sister congregations and Jewish fraternal societies to join in. The circular letter read in part:[48]

> Although Thanksgiving is a secular holiday, a celebration of the people, the Hebrew citizens of this community have rarely responded to a call for its observance coming from both national and state organizations. While it is true that at all our religious convocations we offer thanks to God for His divine favor to our beloved country, we have, nevertheless, seldom done so upon the day especially dedicated by our nation to the sublime idea of being grateful to God. To counteract such apparent lack of patriotism, we have decided upon holding on the appointed day a service of praise in our Synagogue. . . .

The Thanksgiving celebration was an auspicious occasion. The choir's use of the Union service (as proposed by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations) was eminently successful.[49]

Among other matters, *The Organ* reported that the Roger Williams Circle had joined the National Council of Jewish Women, in effect becoming its local chapter.[50] The Providence School Committee had established in the Ward Room on North Main Street (which stood on Constitution Hill until urban renewal) a night school exclusively for foreign-born Jews. The principal and teachers were Jewish. The English language was taught through the medium of the "Judaic-German" (i.e. Yiddish) dialect. The principal was Isaac L. Adelman, a bookkeeper, and Miss Gertrude Jacobs was one

of the teachers.[51] Blaustein continued his plea for donations to Rhode Island Hospital from the various local organizations.

In *The Organ* of January 15, 1897 Blaustein acknowledged contributions of $10 each from the Providence Lodge of I.O.F.S.I. and the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association. In the same issue, Rabbi Blaustein reported on the Hebrew Free School attached to Congregation Sons of Zion on Orms Street. It was in essence a Talmud Torah, a designation that in earlier times in Eastern Europe had been applied to community-sponsored Hebrew schools for children of the poor. To remove the stigma of poverty, the school had been given this innovative title. It adopted the then novel idea of admitting girls and was proud of having abolished Yiddish for translation of Hebrew texts and as the language of instruction. The school, conducted on liberal principles similar to those of the public school system, offered quality instruction in Hebrew, Jewish history, Jewish religion, and celebration of the holidays. All instruction was in English. Public examinations were held twice a year and were an event of consequence in the North End Jewish community. Blaustein, who was on the examination committee, reported on an examination on December 20 at which sixty-two children were tested. The school in his judgment was initiating a new era in the schooling of Hebrew children.

On January 16, as reported later in *The Organ*, a General Conference of the Society for Organizing Charities was held at Brown University.[52] This was in a way a forerunner of the Council of Community Services of Rhode Island. Many prominent speakers from both Providence and Boston were present. Blaustein described present facilities in Providence for affording employment, either casual or permanent. His participation foreshadowed his lifelong professional involvement in social concerns.

In April the Entertainment Committee reported on its sponsorship of a recent stage play (a farce) and reception. Income was realized from sale of tickets, flowers, and hat checks; raffle of a turkey; and advertising in the program. Acknowledgments were sent to the ladies who prepared and donated "the edibles," to the entire cast who had taken part in the play, and to Joseph Fox, who had acted as floor manager. Receipts were $294.16, expenses $131.59, and net profit $162.57.

In April Rabbi Blaustein requested the board's permission to devote part of his time to teaching at Brown University, a compliment

to both the rabbi and the congregation. The congregation, with flattering comments about the rabbi, happily granted permission. David Blaustein thus became the first Jewish faculty member at Brown University. According to *The Organ* he had been conducting Hebrew courses there in the absence of Professor Charles Foster Kent.[53]

The congregation authorized the president to procure 25 sample copies of the Union Hebrew prayer book, prepared by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The president was directed upon their arrival to call a conference of members and wives to consider changing prayer books, the wives having the privilege to vote. This represented another move to a more liberal posture, and coincidentally a halting step toward equality for women. The matter of moving the Sabbath morning service to the vestry was also discussed—presumably because of scant attendance on Saturday mornings. The majority, however, opposed any change.

Several actions by the board regarding burial problems illustrate the variety of ways in which cases were handled. While a member was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery, the sister of a member, not a member herself, was granted burial in Moshassuck Cemetery. In the case of a needy non-member, $6 was contributed to the Congregation Sons of Zion toward the burial of a body in their cemetery, probably in Lincoln Park cemetery in Warwick, just recently available for burials. Despite strict rules governing eligibility for interment in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery, the congregation found ways of providing burial for those in need. The frequency with which the burial of children was noted in the minutes reflected the high mortality among infants and children in those years, largely from infectious diseases.

In May of 1897 the congregation celebrated the silver wedding anniversary of long-time President and Mrs. Alexander Strauss at an affair in the temple. There were many gifts, both from individuals and from organizations such as Haggai Lodge, I.O.B.B.; Providence Lodge, I.O.F.S.I.; Judah Touro Lodge, I.O.S.B.; the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association; and the Ladies Auxiliary of the congregation. Each guest received a photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Strauss.[54]

In June the board noted the forthcoming marriage of Miss Ray Cohn, for many years a teacher in the Sabbath School, to Jacob

Dimond. In recognition of her devoted services to the congregation, the board ordered that a suitable gift be procured, not to exceed $50. A letter from Congregation Anshe Emeth of New Brunswick, New Jersey soliciting aid toward construction of a new synagogue building was laid aside—the usual disposition of such requests. The Jewish Chautauqua Society invited the congregation to enroll as a member at $10 per year. The society, founded in 1893 in close affiliation with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is now sponsored by the Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. Six complimentary season tickets entitled members of the congregation to be admitted to the Summer Assembly at Atlantic City, New Jersey from July 25 to August 8.[55] The board voted to subscribe to the Chautauqua Society and sent the tickets to the Sunday School for distribution.

The Organ that summer noted a letter of thanks from Rhode Island Hospital for a contribution of $61.[56] Although basically a project of Rabbi Blaustein's, *The Organ* was designated by him as a publication of the Senior Post-Confirmation Class. He remained as Editor-in-Chief for about a year, assisted by Ansell Strauss. After a period during which no editor was listed, Benjamin F. Hartman took over with the assistance of Gertrude Lederer and Bernard Boas. Dr. Max B. Gomberg, a Providence physician, assumed the editorship during the last year of its brief existence.[57]

The congregation in August of 1897 considered a budget of $3090, providing $1350 for the rabbi's salary and $650 for the choir. It was decided for the next six months to dispense with the choir professionals Fred Gardiner, Mrs. F.L. Sheldon, and Mrs. Maria Burnham. A move to authorize a choir just for the holidays was defeated. With an allowance of $350 for the choir, the budget was reduced to $2790.

Because of the budgetary difficulties, letters were sent to all members in arrears and also to all non-member co-religionists in the city, asking them to join the congegation. Dated September 16, 1897, the latter read:

> Dear Sirs and Co-religionists:
>
> A new year is coming! The time of our great Jewish holidays, where every Jewish soul is drawn nearer to its creator, is before us.
>
> Many a person who stands the whole year outside of the Jewish

circle feels at this time that there is still some spark of Judaism in his heart and that the ties of brotherhood are not altogether broken yet.

If we appeal to you on this occasion to become a member of our congregation and to join us in a good cause to enhance the higher aims of Israel, we do so in the belief that you will make common cause with us and that you might feel inclined . . . [to spend] the coming holidays in the house set apart for the glorification of our Creator.

Our congregation is struggling along and needs new members. Our cause is one which needs the cooperation of every soul in this city and vicinity.

We hope that you will consider this matter and join us in our earnest endeavor to hold up the principles of Judaism, a common centre for the worship of God, and the upholding of the teachers of Israel.

Respectfully yours,
Louis Friedman, Secy.

It ended with the names and addresses of the president, secretary, and treasurer, who could be applied to for further information. The response to this eloquent plea was not overwhelming.

The financial report presented at the annual meeting on October 10 showed income of $2814.76 and disbursements of $3234.90 for a deficit of over $400. Nevertheless, it was voted to restore the full amount of $650 for the choir, with the stipulation that ways and means be devised to raise the amount. President Alexander Strauss notified the board that he would be moving to Lowell, Massachusetts and asked that he be retained as a member. Presiding at his last meeting, he was unanimously elected by a rising vote to honorary membership in the congregation and also on the board. He was later sent a letter expressing the board's deep appreciation for his long and faithful service, and "embodying his Honorable Membership." He had served as president for eighteen years, an incumbency never to be surpassed in length.

Strauss had been a citizen of considerable stature. Active in the local militia, he advanced from private in Company A, First Battalion, Rhode Island Cavalry to the rank of major in 27 years. His services were recognized and praised at a banquet and testimonial tendered by his officer staff and his former military comrades

shortly before he left the city. A photograph of him on horseback in full military uniform with spiked and plumed helmet, sword, and cavalry boots, shows him to have been a handsome, moustachioed, stern-faced officer and a commanding figure.[58]

The following new officers were elected for the ensuing year: Leopold Dimond, president; Harry Robisnson, vice president; Sigmund L. Lederer, treasurer; and Louis Friedman, secretary. A resolution was sent to Benedict B. Lederer in recognition of his long and faithful service to the congregation in various offices. Blaustein was re-elected rabbi at the same salary. The board was requested to restore to the budget the full amount for the choir and report at the next congregational meeting on "ways and means they have devised to raise said amount." The budget contained a new item of $1.75 paid to one F.E. Perry for "typewriting," evidence that the congregation was entering the age of technology. The board voted to inquire of President Solomon Treitel of the Woonsocket congregation as to whether he still had in his possession the Sepher Torah loaned to him by President Strauss, which was never acknowledged. After some delay Treitel replied that he still had the Sepher Torah in his possession and would "return the same at once," and expressed his congregation's appreciation for this neighborly act. Later, thanks was extended to Mrs. Louis Green for presenting to the congregation a handsome Torah cover.

In November, the board received an interesting letter from Isidor Straus of New York. Straus, formerly a United States Congressman from New York, recently had become an owner with his brother Nathan of R.H. Macy and Company of New York City. The letter, dated October 17, 1897, read as follows:

> Gentleman:
>
> It has incidentally come to my ears that your Rabbi has been appointed assistant professor [actually instructor] of Semitic languages at Brown University. I desire to congratulate you on this mark of distinction. It is not only a credit to the Rabbi himself, but an honor to the congregation over which he presides.
>
> I have watched the career of Mr. Blaustein for several years past, having had my attention called to him through my son [Jesse Isidor Straus] who was a student at Harvard University during the time Mr. Blaustein was studying there, and I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity to hear testimony to his erudite

knowledge, his exemplary character, and his praiseworthy ambition. You may justly feel proud of such a leader, and I venture to believe that greater honors are in store for him.

I do not know what moral support he receives from the congregation, but if his efforts in behalf of elevating humanity and his sincere devotion to his calling be properly appreciated, there can be no question but that the benefits which will accrue to all who come under the influence of his teachings must be the means of raising the Israelites of Providence in the esteem of many who heretofore maintained a hereditary and unreasoned prejudice against the race. A gentleman of his attainments, by virtue of the influence of his new position will do much to correct erroneous impressions and be the means of placing the Jews of Providence in a light by which they will be more readily accorded the position in the community to which their conduct may entitle them.

Very truly yours,
Isidor Straus

The letter was acknowledged with thanks for the "interest taken in our Rabbi," and Straus was assured that the rabbi's efforts "have [been] and will be appreciated." That the congregation did in fact appreciate his unusual qualities there is no doubt. That the financially hard-pressed congregation could not afford to keep him soon became evident. The ill-fated Isidor and Mrs. Straus were victims of the Titanic disaster in 1912.

The Providence Journal of October 6, 1897 ran a story on the significance of Yom Kippur and described the services held the previous evening at Congregation Sons of Zion on Orms Street and at the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David on Friendship Street. After explaining the nature of the services and describing the elaborate ritual at Orms Street, it went on:

> The celebration as a whole is picturesque and of historical as well as present interest. The Reformed [*sic*] Jews do not observe it so laboriously as the Orthodox Jews. They do not worship all night. The printed prayers are in the ancient Hebrew language, and are not very fully understood, but are just as earnestly pronounced as if they were. . . .
>
> The services at the Synagogue at Friendship and Foster Streets, where the Hebrews of the Reformed faith worship, was crowded

> at the services last night. They were conducted by the Rev. David Blaustein, who also preached an interesting discourse appropriate to the occasion.

Although there may have been "many inaccuracies and some misconceptions"in this report, as the late Beryl Segal commented many years later, the account, as he conceded, "conveys the picturesqueness of the all-day Yom Kippur service."[59] It appears to have been a conscientious effort by the *Journal* to be instructive and educational regarding this fascinating ceremony of the new immigrants. The patently snide anti-Semitic slurs and biased observations often evident in the past were not clearly manifest in this piece. Yet it inevitably offended some readers, always sensitive to intended or unintended slurs. The following, probably written by editor Dr. Gomberg, appeared in *The Organ* in a November 1897 issue:[60]

> *The Providence Journal* has so often shown itself only too eager to ridicule and vilify the Jewish community in this state that it requires a certain refinement of criticism to decide whether, in its article on the "Day of Atonement," the many inaccuracies and misrepresentations contained are to be considered a desire on the part of the Editorial staff to popularize sensationalism or rather a maudlin attempt once again to cast a slur upon a peaceable and industrious class of citizens.
>
> A paper which takes upon itself the responsibilities of presenting an enlightened public should beware of falling into the slough of cheap banter and lampoonery, especially when the subject under consideration is one that touches to the quick the religious instincts of a large number of its patrons.
>
> The Day of Atonement as celebrated by the Jewish race the world over is an occasion vividly portraying the deep pathos of sincere repentance and the undying hope of Israel in the love, justice, and mercy of the Eternal God.

In retrospect the judgement seems harsh. Incidentally, at the time of the report, John Jacob Rosenfeld, later a lawyer and significant benefactor of the congregation, was city editor of the *Journal* and may well have assigned the reporters to the story and assured sympathetic coverage.

The financial status of the congregation as the year 1897 came to a close was more than likely a reflection of the lingering effects of the Panic of 1893. In 1896 William Jennings Bryan had delivered

his famous "Cross of Gold" speech. Yet in the same year hope for the future was restored with the election of Republican William McKinley as president, and the shortage of specie was beginning to be relieved with the outpouring of gold from the world's mines. Yet the departure from Providence of the Strausses and at least two other member families (the Herman Schreibers and the Herman Krohnes) was not good news.[61]

The Providence Jewish community at the time was wracked by what *The Organ*[62] described as "a rupture of friendly relations between the conservative and liberal elements of the orthodox community" developing at the Orms Street synagogue. The account went on: " . . . the Jews of Providence are passing through a social and religious crisis which we hope will lead to some necessary changes in the direction of progressive, earnest and sincere religious aspirations. But we trust that this symptom of a new awakening shall not be clouded by the venom and bitterness of malicious partisanship. The question is not now who is to be blamed, but what is to be the end of this unlooked-for commotion and disorganization." Controversy over extremes of orthodoxy and the use of English versus Yiddish in the Hebrew schools were among the questions at issue.

Between 1875, when Congregation Sons of Zion was formed, and 1897, no less than nine other Orthodox congregations were chartered, often based on national, regional, or language customs.[63]

Rabbi Blaustein remained active in community affairs. In the fall, he spoke before a group of Congregationalist ministers in Pilgrim Hall on "Tendencies of Modern Judaism." The Jews, he explained, are divided into Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Radical Reform groups. He spoke of the external differences along social, ritualistic, and doctrinal lines.[64] At this time the Conservative movement had only recently emerged from the Reform movement, and this appears to have been the first mention of this historic development in Rhode Island writings. A Conservative synagogue would not in fact be established in Rhode Island for another quarter century.

On the evening of November 11, Blaustein delivered a lecture on the "Herzl Movement" before the B'nai Zion Educational Society at Zion Hall on Hanover Street near Cranston Street, of which Aaron Ginsburg was president. Blaustein traced the Zionist movement from its beginnings and made a strong plea for the establish-

ment of a home for oppressed Jews. He dwelt on the miseries of the persecuted Hebrews of Russia and declared that a Hebrew state as envisioned by Herzl was a dream that could be realized.[65]

At its last meeting of 1897 on December 14, the board, in response to instructions to find ways and means of financing a full choir, recommended to the congregation an assessment of 12½ percent of dues. It also requested the Entertainment Committee to hold a Congregational Conference every other Friday evening, the nature of which was not described. In January of 1898 Rabbi Blaustein informed the board that in the course of his charity work among the Jewish poor he was frequently obliged to refer cases to institutions such as Rhode Island Hospital, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Fuel Society, the Society for Organizing Charities, and others. While he was always treated with the utmost courtesy, he nevertheless felt that he had no right to call upon these institutions as often as he was obliged to. Aside from the annual contribution of some $70 to the Rhode Island Hospital made by the several societies, the Jewish people of Providence neither collectively nor individually gave financial aid to these institutions, although they were non-sectarian. He urged the congregation to take the lead among Jewish societies in contributing annually to the various non-sectarian institutions and to encourage other Jewish organizations to participate. Considering the depressed conditions of the economy, the concept was probably not accepted with enthusiasm, but the board referred the matter to the next congregational meeting in January.

The subject, however, was not discussed, nor was it ever mentioned again. The question of the 12½ percent assessment was thoroughly debated. After "considerable discussion," the recommendation was withdrawn, and it was voted to defray the expenses of the choir by subscription. Pledges of $153.50 were received on the spot, and those members not present would be solicited individually. Apparently disgruntled by the lack of support by the board, Leopold Hartman, William Schloss, and Caesar Misch submitted their resignations from the board. No action, however, was taken on their resignations at the time. A concert and ball on November 29 under the auspices of the Entertainment Committee had netted a disappointing $19.75, which did not help much in the budget crunch. Hartman was currently the first Jewish deputy sheriff.

In February of 1898 a circular letter was sent to members of the

congregation describing the "great financial embarrassment" due to the many members in arrears on their dues and beseeching them to pay up. A committee called on the Ladies Auxiliary to request a loan of $150, and Treasurer Sigmund L. Lederer reported that the Ladies Auxiliary had indeed approved the loan. *The Organ*[66] reported in March that the Ladies Auxiliary Association had held a bazaar, which had realized $300 and was a social success as well, probably the source of the funds. A measure of the financial woes was the treatment afforded David Frank, a pillar of the congregation and a long-time trustee. He was notified that, if his past dues were not paid by the next meeting, he would be dropped from membership. He informed the board that he was unable to settle his old account, but would pay his dues for the present year. The board denied his request, but agreed to extend the time for his current dues. The matter was referred to the congregation, but the record does not show that it was ever considered there. Frank offered to serve as secretary for one year to work off his debt, but was informed that the trustees had no power to elect a secretary. They seem to have relented, however, as Frank and his family were granted a pew for the Holidays.

The sordid Dreyfus affair in France was then at its height. Cognizance was taken of it in *The Organ* of January 28, 1898. Samuel Mason, a young member of the congregation, after giving the background of the case, wrote:[67]

> The French Republic, one of the most enlightened and leading nations of the world, is now on the verge of one of the most disastrous revolutions in its history, because it permitted itself to sacrifice justice for the cravings of a few cranks.

It would be another three years before Captain Alfred Dreyfus, under the lash of Emile Zola's *J'Accuse!*, would be pardoned and released from imprisonment on infamous Devil's Island.

On a lighter note, the congregation was invited to join in a trip to Lowell, Massachusetts to assist in the presentation of resolutions to popular Past President Strauss, a sentimental journey indeed. Further, Dr. H. Pereira Mendes[68] of New York invited the congregation to take part in a convention on Orthodox Judaism in New York. The invitation, referred to the congregation, was not likely to be received enthusiastically by this increasingly liberal group,

and it was indeed filed without comment. On recommendation of the trustees and most certainly inspired by Rabbi Blaustein, the congregation voted to invite President E. Benjamin Andrews of Brown University to address the congregation after services on Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, Pentecost).

The board in May received the unhappy news that Rabbi Blaustein had submitted his resignation. In recognition of his past services, it recommended that his salary be continued to the end of the fiscal year. The congregation regretfully accepted his resignation to take effect "as stated," but declined to ratify the recommendation that he be paid to the end of the fiscal year. A committee was appointed to prepare a testimonial and draft resolutions "in recognition of his past services to our congregation." Owing to the resignation of the rabbi, the choir, with the exception of Mrs. E.A. Lake, was notified that after July 1 their services would not be required until further notice. The subscription for the choir had raised $208.50. All who had not paid would have the amount of their pledges added to their dues account. The Laws Committee presented the revised constitution and bylaws, which were duly adopted effective September 1, 1898.

Blaustein recommended that the board bring in one Caesar Salkind on a temporary basis to read the services and assist with the school and choir. Salkind's qualifications were not described. Blaustein's impending departure set in motion a number of activities. The first of several applications for the position of rabbi was submitted by Max Cohen Currick of Cincinnati, a graduate of Hebrew Union College in the class of 1898. It was deferred for consideration with other applications.

At a special meeting on June 19 the congregation appropriated $100 for a testimonial to the rabbi in recognition of his meritorious services. The testimonial committee was advised to cooperate with the Ladies Auxiliary Society in arranging a celebration for presentation of the testimonial and the resolutions. The board set Friday, June 24 for the celebration, and incidentally approved payment of $1.50 for tuning the Gabler square piano. At the special service Rabbi Blaustein delivered his farewell sermon. He departed on July 1 to become the superintendant of the Educational Alliance of New York, of which Isidor Straus was president. Straus was undoubtedly responsible for luring Blaustein to New York. The organization was

devoted to the Americanization of immigrants. He served it with distinction for many years. His untimely death in 1912 at the age of 46 ended prematurely a brilliant career.

With Blaustein's departure, the brief history of *The Organ* came to an end. The final issue appeared on July 8, 1898 under the editorship of Dr. Gomberg.[69] He commented: "We have no apologies to offer for any shortcomings during the past years. In this, the last issue of *The Organ* under our supervision, we wish to state that our motives were always good." Of Rabbi Blaustein he wrote in part these eloquent words:

> It is with a mingled feeling of joy and sorrow that we now learn of the departure for newer fields of our esteemed pastor and teacher, the rabbi of Congregation Sons of Israel and David, Dr. David Blaustein.
>
> *The Organ*, founded by Dr. Blaustein, with the prophetic eye which befits its more than ordinary mission, has long been cognizant of the truth that for such talent and ability as our rabbi possessed, the field here has been too small and narrow. We have not deceived ourselves.

After enlarging on Blaustein's sterling qualities and uplifting "labors among us," Gomberg went on:

> As a representative of the Jewish community he, by his affability, intelligence and broad-mindedness, and his earnestness in the presentation of undenominational charitable work, has earned for himself and us a consideration from our gentile neighbors which does honor to him, to us, and to all.
>
> As a scholar of Semitic languages, he has made himself indispensable in his work at Brown University , where he occupied an honorable and important post as instructor in Hebrew, Assyrian, and Aramaic.
>
> . . . Dr. Blaustein's career among us shows that he is one of the chosen. . . .

At a meeting of Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association on October 23, 1898,[70] its able president, Mrs. Caesar Misch, speaking of the greatly improved organization of the association's charity committee, attributed it to the stimulus and noble efforts "of our recent Rabbi David Blaustein whose zeal in this direction was untiring and whose influence and advice had enabled

us to put the working of the charity committee on the systematic footing it now holds."

NOTES

1. Providence City Register of Marriages and Providence City Directories. J. Huller frequently advertised in *The Organ*, temple publication (see note 13). He operated the "Smith Hill Fancy Bakery and Creamery" at 286 Smith Street. He featured ice cream "in all styles."
2. Leopold Dimond was a wealthy dry goods and ladies' garment retailer. During the next several years he developed Dimond's Store, a ladies' garment specialty shop at 244 Westminster Street. He died in 1911, and the store closed prior to World War II. The account of the wedding in *The Providence Journal* of June 9 read in part:

   > The popularity of the contracting parties, not only in Providence and vicinity, but also in New York and Boston, was attested by the brilliant and representative gathering in the Synagogue, which filled the auditorium, choir gallery and corridors to repletion an hour before the ceremony was solemnized. Shortly after 5 o'clock, the bridal party formed in the vestibule and proceeded to the altar to the music of the Swedish Wedding March in the following order: Ushers . . . ; Henry Shartenberg and Mrs. Shartenberg, grandmother to the bride; Mr. Louis Lyons, the bridegroom, and Mrs. Shartenberg; Mr. Shartenberg and Mrs. Leopold Dimond, mother of the bride; bridesmaids and groomsmen; Mr. Abe Dimond, brother of the bride, and Miss Pearl Kantrowitz of New York; Mr. Romier Hahn and Miss Rebecca Rosenfield of Boston; Louis Rosenfield and Miss Gertrude Shuman of Providence; Mr. David Bernkopf and Miss Millie Frank of Providence; Miss Flora Dimond, the bride, and her father, Mr. Leopold Dimond; maid of honor, Miss Jeanette Lederer, and Master Henry Dimond. They moved slowly down the main aisle and took positions upon a dais in front of the altar, where they were met by Rev. Dr. Lasker of Boston, the officiating clergyman. The altar and the chancel were handsomely decorated with ferns, plants and smilax by florist Johnson, and the body of the house reserved for the guests, 200 in number, was separated by white satin ribbon bands, which extended across the tops of the pews on opposite sides of the aisles. The altar and the auditorium were brilliantly lighted, and the rich toilettes of the ladies beside their escorts in conventional full dress contributed to the attractiveness of the nuptial celebration. Rev. Dr. Lasker invoked divine blessing, and soprano and tenor solos by Mrs. G. E. C. Buffington and Mr. Fred S. Gardiner were given during the performance of the ritual of the church. The ceremonial of drinking the wine and the words of counsel supplemented by the solemnization of the vows formed a most impressive feature, and then the bridal party in reverse order returned to their carriages, and followed by the

guests drove to the Trocadero, where the reception and wedding supper were given.

The bride's gown was of white corded silk, falling in a long court train from a Watteau pleat from the back of the bodice. The front edge of the skirt is finished with a deep band of pearl passementerie. A girdle of pearls ornamented the front of the pointed low-cut bodice. The elbow sleeves are finished with Valenciennes lace and pearl epaulettes. A long reel of tulle was fastened with orchids and a diamond and pearl pendant, the gift of the groom, adorned her neck.

The bridesmaids were attired in rich, China white silks, en train, point lace trimmings, with draperies and flowers to match their characteristic tastes. [Elaborate descriptions of the gowns of the other members of the wedding party follow.] . . .

Caterer George A. Harris of Boston served an elaborate menu in which rare dishes in great variety were interspersed with choice wines and relishes in great variety. . . . Reeve's orchestra . . . invited the younger element to the waltz, lancers, schottische and other fashionable figures . . . [A supper catered by Harris followed.]

Mr. and Mrs. Lyons made their adieux in order to catch the midnight train for New York and Washington where they will spend their honeymoon. During the afternoon the wedding presents were exhibited at the residence of the bride's parents on Friendship Street, and a magnificent array of silverware, bric-a-brac, and a miscellaneous collection of household ornaments and utensils, invited critical appreciation for their value and beauty. . . .

3. *Heder* (Hebrew for "room") is popularly applied to an elementary religious school of the type prevalent in Eastern Europe, often situated in a single room in the teacher's house. Attempts to transplant the *heder* system to western countries, where the prevalence of compulsory secular elementary education forced it into the position of an afternoon adjunct to the day school, was unsatisfactory. The tendency now is for Sunday classes or day schools, but weekday Hebrew classes are still common. The larger *Talmud Torah* schools had several rooms and more than one teacher, were customarily supported by the synagogue, and charged no tuition.

   The *yeshivah*, a rabbinical college or seminary, is the oldest institution of higher learning in Judaism. The *yeshivah* flourished in Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, and Galicia. Relatively few of the *yeshivah* students in Eastern Europe received or wanted a rabbinical degree, but aspired to be well versed in the Talmud, i.e., learned erudite men, ascetic in their habits, and devoted to the study of *Torah* for their remaining days.

4. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, v. 4, p. 1078; *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 2, pp. 360–361; *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, v. 3, pp. 238–239; *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* rfs. too numerous to mention.

5. David Gordon Lyon (1852–1935) was Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard. A graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he

received a Ph.D. in Semitic Philology from Leipzig University. He was appointed Hollis Professor in 1882, and was chosen as curator of the newly established Semitic Museum at Harvard, opened in 1901, a gift of Jacob H. Schiff. He had published a student's handbook of the Assyrian language in 1886. Later he was engaged in excavations in Samaria. He undoubtedly had been a teacher of Rabbi Blaustein at Harvard.

6. Catechism is a compendium of instruction in the form of questions and answers. Familiar in Catholic pedagogy, it is unfamiliar in Jewish instruction in the 20th century. Historically, the Christian manual was derived from a Jewish model in the 2nd century, C.E. A catechism was used in Venice in Jewish instruction in the 16th century. Following the progressive emancipation of the Jews in the western world in the 18th and 19th centuries, many such manuals were published. They were particularly favored by Reform Judaism in the 19th century.
7. Beryl Segal, "Congregation Sons of Zion, Providence Rhode Island, The Orms Street Synagogue," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 4:239–276, (November) 1965. See pp. 245–247.
8. David C. Adelman, "The Providence Jewish Communities Unite," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:160–191, (December) 1960. See pp. 160–161. Adelman used "Deutchen" ("Germans") as a transliteration of the Yiddish. The German spelling, of course, is "Deutschen."
9. *Ibid.* Also *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:33, (May) 1956. The charter read: "For organizing, directing, systematizing, bringing into co-operation and recording all the charities of the Jewish Community of Providence."
10. David C. Adelman's "Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, The First Quarter Century," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 4:47–78, (May) 1963. See p. 53.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 55–56.
12. D. C. Adelman's "Providence Jewish Communities Unite," pp. 186–187.
13. *The Organ* ran from December 12, 1895 to July 8, 1898. It appeared in three volumes. Volume 1 contained eleven issues, and volumes 2 and 3, six each. Issues were mostly of four pages, but three issues went to six, eight, and ten pages, respectively. There were 23 issues in all. Its first editor was Rabbi Blaustein himself and later Dr. Max B. Gomberg, respected physician of his day, scholar and poet, and a graduate (1895) of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. See Seebert J. Goldowsky, "Jews in Medicine in Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:151–191, (December) 1957, pp. 159–161.

    Bound photostats of *The Organ* are available in the Temple Beth-El archives and in RIJHA. The bound volumes have numbered pages, the same numbers in both volumes. The references are to these page numbers.

14. *The Organ*, p. 1.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 4. The listing was carried in many issues.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 5, 11.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 8, 11.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 10. Also pp. 14, 15, 21, 24, 28, 35, 64, 78, 108, 119.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
27. *Idem*, p. 10. Extracted from *The Providence Journal* of January 8, 1896.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 16.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 20. In the latter citation, the following quotation appeared from the *Vermont Standard* of January 30, 1896 under "North Pomfret Notes": "On Wednesday evening of last week Rev. Dr. Blaustein of Providence, R.I., gave at the Church a very interesting lecture on 'Modern Judaism.' Mr. Blaustein has many friends in this vicinity who gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to listen to his lecture."
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 22.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 54. Latter citation extracted from *The Providence Journal* of May 21, 1896.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 41, 78.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 32, 35.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 28. Quoted from *The Providence Journal* of March 7, 1986.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 35, 55.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 42, 43, 46, 49. The records consistently refer to "hats" and not the *yarmulka* or *kippeh*. This writer recalls that at Conservative or Orthodox services or prayers many years ago, a fedora or cap was frequently worn in lieu of a *yarmulka*. In *The Organ* (p. 43) the editor writes: "Now that the wearing of the hat has become optional, I should like to know which stand the Rabbi must now take. . . . My own opinion is that he will continue to appear in the pulpit in his *cap* (italics added). . . ."

43. *Ibid.*, p. 42. See also note 42.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 55–56.
46. Ephraim Deinard (1846–1930) was a Hebrew writer and bibliographer. He traveled widely in Europe and the Orient, collecting books, many of which were purchased by M. Sulzberger and the libraries of Congress and Harvard. In addition to journalism and accounts of his journeys, he wrote bibliographical studies, including *Kohelet America* (1926), listing all Hebrew books published in the U.S. Many of the books collected by him are also in Cambridge and Oxford Universities, and, of course, in Brown University.
47. *The Organ*, p. 56.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 59. Also board of trustees' minutes of December 9, 1896. *The Organ* account read in part:

    > . . . the attendance was comparatively large. . . . Nearly every Jewish congregation . . . and even some non-Jews were noted. . . . It was a unique service. . . . The prayer as well as the sermon by the Rabbi were full of patriotic fervor. Of special interest was the address by Mr. James Rose of the sister congregation, Sons of Zion. For the benefit of foreign-born co-religionists he spoke in the Judaic-German dialect [*sic*, i.e, Yiddish]. In an eloquent and pathetic way he described the pitiful condition of the Jews in Russia, and contrasted them with those in America. . . . The first attempt of holding a union Thanksgiving service has proved to be be a success. . . .

    This exercise was educational as well, as some recent Eastern European immigrants assumed that Thanksgiving was a *Goyish* (i.e., Gentile or Christian) holiday.
50. *The Organ*, p. 58.
51. *Idem*, p. 62. Gertrude Jacobs graduated from the Rhode Island Normal School (now Rhode Island College) with the class of 1897 and received an appointment as a regular teacher in the Providence public school system (*The Organ*, p. 76).
52. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 74 (reprinted from *The American Israelite*).
55. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
57. See note 13.
58. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, v. 2, no. 2, (April) 1957, front cover and inside front cover.
59. Beryl Segal's "Congregation Sons of Zion," pp. 255–257.
60. *The Organ*, p. 80.

61. *The Organ*, p. 74, also mentions the departure of the Herman Goldsmith, Louis Jaretsky, and Robert Hellman families, and Benjamin Bronstein, "a younger member of the congregation."
62. *The Organ*, p. 80. Also Beryl Segal's "Congregation Sons of Zion," pp. 254–255.
63. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:22–30, (May) 1956.
64. *The Organ*, p. 81.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
68. Henry Pereira Mendes (1852–1937), born in Birmingham, England of a distinguished family of Sephardic Hebraic scholars, was spiritual leader of Congregation Shearith Israel from 1877 to 1920.
69. *The Organ*, p. 117.
70. D. C. Adelman's "Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association," p. 59.

CHAPTER SIX

Transition

The president, in accordance with his instructions, engaged Salkind on a temporary basis at $6 per week. The board recommended that members paying up to $36 in dues be assessed at 6 percent and those in the higher category at 12 percent, but later rescinded the unpopular recommendation.

On August 15, 1898 the congregation received an application from the Reverend Herman J. Elkin of Niantic, Connecticut. He was invited to conduct services and deliver a sermon on Friday evening, August 19, and the president was authorized to engage a choir for the evening. Elkin officiated on both Friday and Saturday, but, because of the poor attendance, no action was taken. He was invited to officiate on the Holidays, but, unable to do so, he was advised to accept another position if available. The congregation would retain him if he were free until it could procure a permanent replacement. In fact, he served from early September to the end of the year, except for the Holidays. A new budget was adopted, allowing $1000 for the rabbi's salary, $300 for the choir (reduced from the recommended $650), and $25 each for recording and financial secretaries, for a total of $2390.

The board on September 1 received two applications, one from a Reverend Margolis, recommended by Blaustein, and the other from Reverend S.N. Deinard of Terre Haute, Indiana, accompanied by a reference from Reverend B. Felsenthal of Chicago. The president invited Margolis for the Holidays. Blaustein, however, wrote that Margolis might not be available and recommended another young man from Hebrew Union College, who in his opinion was just as good as Margolis, if not better. The matter was left to the president, who had in the meantime recruited member Julius Eichenberg to

assist at the Holidays. Blaustein later wrote that Margolis would be going to Titusville, Pennsylvania and recommended in his stead one Abraham Brill of New York, a student at Hebrew Union College. Brill in due course was engaged for the Holidays. The board then appropriated $60 from its Charity Fund for the work of the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association.

The annual meeting was held on October 2, 1898. Brill had officiated as rabbi during the Holidays, assisted by Eichenberg. The procurement of a permanent rabbi was referred to the trustees. The financial report showed a deficit of $213 with income of $2706.61 and expenditures of $2919.75. President Leopold Dimond was renominated, but declined to serve another term. The new slate consisted of Jacob Shartenberg, president; Leopold Hartman, vice president; Sigmund Lederer, treasurer; and Louis Friedman, secretary.

When it was learned that Shartenberg would also be unable to serve as president, he was urged to reconsider. While he fully appreciated the honor bestowed upon him, Shartenberg found it impossible to accept the office. The congregation then elected Leopold Hartman as president and Harry Robinson as vice president. Newman Pincus, for unexplained reasons, resigned from the board and was replaced by William Schloss.

Because of fiscal constraints, a choir could no longer be engaged by the year. Except for Mrs. Lake, the choir would serve subject to call. That fall the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevloent Association celebrated the 21st anniversary of its founding in 1877. The congregation happily joined in the celebration.

During the closing weeks of 1898, the frantic search for a rabbi continued. Rabbi Charles Fleischer of Boston offered to deliver sermons on Friday evenings, and Shartenberg was delegated to confer with him on arrangements. The congregation, however, decided to engage a permanent rabbi as soon as possible, as there were several applications on hand. They thanked Fleischer for his "unselfish and neighborly efforts for the welfare of the Congregation." Salkind was paid for four weeks from September 10 to October 10 at $6 per week. He was later informed that his services after December 31 would not be required.

No less than sixteen applications were received from such assorted places as Chicago; Brooklyn; Pine Bluff, Arkansas; Doylestown and Altoona, Pennsylvania; and Akron, Ohio. Inquiries were made of Blaustein, Reverend Isaac Mayer Wise of Hebrew Union

College in Cincinnati, and others as to character and ability. Several candidates were brought to Providence for trial runs to conduct services and deliver a sermon on Friday evening and Saturday morning. One applicant wrote that $1000 was out of the question since he was already receiving $1800. Although he indicated he might consider a compromise, he was turned down. Dr. Wise was consulted regarding the relative qualities of candidates Bennett Grad of Kingston, New York and G.H. Loewenstein of Houston, Texas. Dr. Wise concluded that Grad had the advantage in that "he is a steady married man with the experience of several years in office," while the other was short in experience.

Fitting the trials into the limited number of weekends before the first of the year was like assembling a jigsaw puzzle, but the jockeying went on apace and continued through January 1899. The hotel bills for the Providence visits of some of the candidates were paid in amounts of six to ten dollars. Because of the flood of applicants, the advertisement in *The American Israelite* was discontinued during December.

Other matters were in progress during this busy time. President Hartman reported that the Sabbath School was flourishing and that he was delighted with its excellent system, the best in his opinion in the history of the congregation and a reflection of the sterling administration of David Blaustein. The Women's College in Brown University submitted to the congregation the names of young ladies attending the college who designated the congregation as their "home church."[1]

In December, Sigmund Lederer reported that a writ had been served upon him as treasurer in the name of Caesar Salkind, to be returned at court on January 6, 1899. President Hartman and the treasurer were authorized to engage counsel and take charge of the writ. Salkind, it appears, had sued for breach of contract, the nature of the breach not specified in the minutes. The president reported, however, that the case had been thrown out of District Court, but was appealed to the Common Pleas Court. Salkind eventually settled the suit in the anteroom of the courthouse for $50 and costs. Attorney Frank W. Tillinghast submitted a bill of $6 for services.

The trial visits of prospective rabbis continued through January 1899. The Spanish-American War, which had broken out in April 1898 and ended on December 10 with the Treaty of Paris, had caused nary a ripple in the records of the congregation. On January

9, however, the board received a communication from the National Fund Committee of New York, urging "that all congregations should set apart one Sabbath [suggesting Saturday, January 28, 1899] upon which services should be held in memory of the soldiers and marines who died in their country's defense." The Union of American Hebrew Congregations had endorsed the proposal. If the service was held, no notice was taken of it.

The Reverend Bennett Grad of Kingston, New York came for his tryout on Friday and Saturday, January 20 and 21, staying at the Hotel Newman. The congregation paid his $6 hotel bill. A non-binding election for rabbi was held on January 29. The candidates had been winnowed down to two, Bennett Grad and the well-recommended Emanuel Schreiber of Youngstown, Ohio, who had been in Providence on December 2 and 3. The non-binding vote was Grad 22, Schreiber 6, and undecided 2. Schreiber was no longer considered. The Reverend Louis G. Reynolds of Bradford, Pennsylvania and formerly of Newark, New Jersey, was also well recommended, but could not officiate until February 3 and 4. It was decided to await his appearance before a final vote was taken. The congregation on February 5 voted in a series of ballots, two informal and two binding, with Grad and Reynolds the only contenders. The first vote was tied 11 to 11. The second was won by Reynolds, 13 to 10. The first formal binding ballot was tied at Reynolds 11 and Grad 11, while Schreiber reappeared with a lone vote. On the second and final ballot Grad won over Reynolds by 17 to 6. It was resolved to make Grad's election unanimous—for one year from March 1 at a salary of $1200.

He was offered the position of rabbi if he cared to accept. He expressed his appreciation and reported that his application for release from his present pulpit had been submitted. He hoped to be in Providence about March 15. Grad, who had received an A.B. degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1894, was ordained by Hebrew Union College the same year.[2]

In the meantime in January, the congregation learned from Maurice Dauer, a grocer on Chalkstone Avenue, that a ticket raffle was being held for the benefit of the family of the late Rabbi Nathan Robinson of Congregation Sons of Zion. Enough tickets were sold to yield $11.50, which was forwarded to Dauer. The board also donated $10 from its Charity Fund to the Matzah Fund.

Rabbi Grad officiated at his inaugural ceremony on March 10 and

at services regularly thereafter. A committee was assembled "to make the congregation generally better acquainted with Rev. Grad." He appeared before the trustees in April and offered suggestions regarding the school and choir. A recommendation that the children of non-members be admitted to the school was referred to the School Committee. A request for volunteers for the choir received an encouraging response. In June a budget of $2700 was presented providing $1200 for the rabbi's salary and a reduced choir expenditure of $350. Twenty-five dollars for travel expenses to Providence were paid to Grad "as per agreement."

The fence about the cemetery was reported to be in very poor condition. The cost of constructing a new fence and erecting a building large enough to shelter a burial service was $260. The Cemetery Committee was instructed to procure estimates on filling in the recently acquired land and laying out plots. The swampy land was first surveyed and then filled with gravel and graded. The Cemetery Committee, still involved with Moshassuck Cemetery, purchased additional land to increase its holdings to 4,680 square feet. The congregation appropriated $150 toward defraying these costs.[3]

Necessary repairs to the synagogue including gutters would cost at least $250. A meeting of the board and representatives of the Ladies Auxiliary Society was devoted to finding ways of meeting this obligation. The ladies donated $150 to the congregation and in addition informed the board that the earlier loan of $150 to the congregation would be canceled. These gifts were greatly appreciated.

In August the board directed the secretary "to write to Mrs. Jacobs [Gertrude L. Jacobs, a teacher] so that the volunteer choir would be called together in time to prepare their tunes for *Yontiff.*"[4]

At the annual meeting of September 17, 1899, President Hartman, Vice President Robinson, and Treasurer Lederer were re-elected. Louis Lyons (the groom of yesteryear) assumed office as the new secretary. Votes of thanks were tendered to Julius Eichenberg for ably assisting Rabbi Grad "during *Yontiff*" and to Simon Elias "for the able manner of blowing the *Shofar* on *Yontiff.*" The *Shofar* (ram's horn) is blown at services on Rosh Hashanah, the Hebrew New Year. President Hartman's message, neatly typed for the first time, was attached to the hand-written minutes. The well-written report read in part as follows:

> It is not a year since I had the honor of being elected President of this Congregation. During this time we have had but two regular meetings, while the laws provide for four. . . .whether . . . due to your aversion to your President or to . . . confidence in the President and the Board . . . it is not for me to say. . . .
>
> At the commencement of our administration many obstacles stared us in the face, viz: no Rabbi or Teacher, a lawsuit with the reader, insufficient money . . . to meet the requirements of engaging a choir, and . . . most discouraging, an accumulated debt from former administrations of from seven to eight hundred dollars . . . .it was a year of unceasing activity, and yet I am compelled to bequeath to my successor considerable work . . . .[I commend] the noble work of the daughters and sons of our members, who have sacrificed their time and pleasure for the sake of educating the children . . . , and in my opinion have saved the congregation from dissolution while being without a Rabbi. . . .

He discussed the Salkind lawsuit, finances, the budget, charitable acts, the volunteer choir, the needs of two burial grounds, and memberships,which had remained stable. He then spoke of one of the greatest and most difficult problems looming ahead:

> Our temple, which has been built nearly nine years, had become in a deplorable condition. Rain and all inclemencies of weather raised havoc with the roof, the rain gaining its way inside, defacing the walls and paint . . . .the Board . . . to prevent [virtual] demolition . . . contracted for the expenditure of a sum not far from $450, and while there are no visible funds . . . we think . . . this expenditure . . . will be met without the burden of an extra tax. . . .

He closed with expressions of appreciation to all who had assisted him.

At a meeting in November, called to elect a rabbi, the congregation voted unanimously to re-elect the Reverend Grad for one year from March 1, 1900. Grad requested an expression from the board regarding their intentions, so that he could plan for the future. His original application, indeed, had been for a term of three years. The congregation in April appointed a committee to wait upon Grad and explain that his request could not be granted, rendering his future in Rhode Island very uncertain.

Other matters came before the board and the congregation in the early months of 1900. The Choir Committee, allowed to hire a male

voice for the balance of the season, engaged Mr. Burnham. The Cemetery Committee carried out the extensive operations which it had recommended. At the suggestion of the rabbi, a *seder*[5] was held in the vestry after services on Friday, April 18. Jacob Shartenberg, representing Haggai Lodge, arranged with the congregation and several other organizations a memorial service for the late Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who had recently passed away in his 82nd year. Letters of appreciation were sent to Rabbis Charles Fleischer and Samuel Hirshberg, both of Boston, for their able assistance at the Wise memorial service, together with checks for $5 each for travel expenses. The Entertainment Committee reported a net profit of $92.61 from an affair on March 15 and thanked Rabbi and Mrs. Grad for their "services" on that occasion. Mrs. Grad had recently joined the Montefiore Ladies.[6]

In June the board recommended a budget of $2700 with $1200 for the rabbi and $350 for the choir. A gift of books, suitably inscribed, were presented to each of the teachers of the Sabbath School, whose voluntary participation had kept the school alive. A public examination of the pupils was held on Sunday, May 27.

The committee to wait upon the rabbi regarding his request for a three-year contract reported that they had carried out the wishes of the congregation. They had been courteously received, and "felt encouraged that the visit was likely to do considerable good." The summer passed without event. The Choir Committee was authorized to engage extra singers for the Holidays, and the usual pre-Holiday activity prevailed regarding dues, arrearages, new members, and pews.

The budget was adopted at the annual meeting in October, and all officers with the exception of secretary were re-elected. Newman Pincus, after a hiatus, again resumed the duties of secretary. The problem of the rabbi's tenure was prominent on the agenda. The rabbi had been informed "that owing to the poor financial condition of the congregation, they were unable to advance his salary at the present time." It was voted to postpone the election of a rabbi pending the call of the president. Shortly thereafter, on October 8, Grad appeared before the board. His present salary, he maintained, was insufficient to enable him and his family to live comfortably. He realized that the congregation could not afford more, but the board must not misconstrue his motives if sometime in the near future he took steps to better his position. When asked if he had

any other position in view, he stated that he had not, nor had he as yet formulated any plans.

It was proposed at a board meeting in November that the rabbi be notified that his contract would expire on March 1, 1901 and that applications for the position of rabbi would be received. The motion was defeated, and the issue remained unresolved. The committee which had been meeting with the rabbi reported that Rabbi Grad had decided after all to be a candidate for the pulpit. He was informed that his contract nevertheless would expire on March 1, but that the election of a rabbi had been postponed. In the meantime during the academic year of 1900–1901, he had been doing graduate work at Brown University and was an instructor in Semitic languages.[7]

In December Grad reported that he had been doing missionary work in the North End, where he had helped organize a Hebrew school with 150 scholars. He asked the congregation to uphold his action and provide support and assistance. The board heartily endorsed Grad's efforts in the North End and granted him permission to continue his work. His future in Providence, however, remained in limbo.

On February 17, 1901 the congregation amended the bylaws to fix dues at not less than $12. Membership privileges included seats for the member and his wife, attendance of the member's children at the religious school, but no other benefits. The trustees were empowered to reject any member. A motion to elect Grad as rabbi for one year was defeated, but the trustees were instructed to assure that services would be held regularly.

The board in February voted to engage Rabbi Grad on a month-to-month basis, if he were willing. He expressed willingness to continue on this basis, "and would do the best he could." The board donated $10 to St. Joseph's Hospital to be delivered by the Reverend Grad.

In April the board decided to advertise for a rabbi in *The American Israelite*. Because of vacancies in the volunteer choir, it was decided to engage Mr. Burnham on a regular basis. The secretary was instructed to write to Reverend Grad, requesting him to see Miss Hamburger regarding her singing in the choir and asking "why he did not do so when he promised to do so." Problems with the choir aggravated a tense situation with the rabbi. In May the board learned that the Hamburger choir matter had been attended to. Informed

that volunteer choir member Gertrude L. Jacobs was about to be married, the board ordered purchase of a suitable wedding gift, which she later acknowledged in a graceful note.

In the spring of 1901 the Cemetery Committee reported that the new part of the Reservoir Avenue cemetery grounds would be ready on Decoration (Memorial) Day. A large flower bed in the center of the grounds would be cared for by the Ladies' Auxiliary. The grade of the old grounds and the new land was elevated to conform to that of Reservoir Avenue, which bordered the front of the cemetery.

Applications for the position of rabbi began to come in. Rabbi Sigmund Frey, now of Wabash, Indiana, who had been an earlier applicant, again sought the pulpit. One Joseph Blatt, a student at Hebrew Union College, also applied. He was requested to indicate what part of the country he came from and when it would be convenient for him to appear for a trial.

No less than eight applications for the pulpit from a wide geographical distribution were received. Trials were arranged and references sought. Inquiry was made of one candidate as to whether he was married and, if so, the size of his family. Reverend David H. Wittenberg of Jacksonville, Florida appeared before a congregational meeting on June 21 and described what he would accomplish for the congregation if hired. Mrs. Harry L. (Emma) Lamb was paid $7 for entertaining him while he was in town. In the meantime, Grad was notified that his services would terminate as of July 31.

Dedication of the enlarged and refurbished cemetery took place on May 30, Memorial Day. Since the Reverend Grad could not be present, Rabbi Blaustein was invited to officiate. He graciously refused an honorarium, but was sent travel expenses from New York with a letter of appreciation. The Cemetery Committee informed the congregation that it was in urgent need of funds to pay the contractors for the extensive work done. The board, authorized to borrow up to $1000 for this purpose, executed a note for $800 for one year from July, which was endorsed by the officers and trustees.

The board recommended a budget of $2900 with provision of $1200 for the rabbi's salary and $400 for the choir. The choir appropriation, always problematical, was raised to $500. The trustees gave a farewell reception for Reverend and Mrs. Grad prior to their departure from Providence and presented them with appropriate testimonials. The reception committee presented a bill for $22.50.

A congregational meeting was called for July 7 to elect a rabbi. Reverend Gustav Naphthali Hausmann of Chicago, whose name had not appeared prominently in the record prior to the meeting, and Reverend Wittenberg were the leading candidates. Hausmann after much discussion was eventually elected at a salary of $1200. The secretary was instructed to inform Wittenberg of the result.

Hausmann, described as belonging to the older school of rabbis, was born in Austria in 1860, graduated from the Yeshiva Prezmysl, and had only recently emigrated to America. He joined the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1901, manifesting his Reform orientation. He had served as rabbi at Grand Rapids, Michigan and as chaplain at the University of Michigan before coming to Providence at the age of 41. According to Rabbi William G. Braude, who later served as spiritual leader of the congregation, Hausmann had never been ordained.

Congregational business was at a low ebb during the summer, but as the High Holidays approached there was the usual flurry of activity regarding unpaid dues and assessments, dues levels, and membership. Benedict B. Lederer sent a letter "remonstrating against his assessment." Since he was one of the wealthiest members of the congregation, there were surely some raised eyebrows, but action was postponed and nothing more was heard of the matter.

President William McKinley died tragically on September 14 following an assassination attempt. A memorial service was held in the temple on Thursday, September 19 at 3 p.m. "in memory of the late President." A Mr. Perry was sent a letter of appreciation "for draping the pulpit and the chair in the Temple for the funeral of our late President".

Rabbi Hausmann at the annual meeting on September 29, 1901 urged the adoption of the Union Prayer Book, which he espoused as a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. A motion to adopt the Union Prayer Book was defeated. However, the rabbi was authorized to procure 20 copies "on memo[randum]" to be tried for four weeks. Later, in December, however, the congregation voted to adopt the Union Prayer Book, and the secretary was instructed to send return cards to members to determine how many of the new books would be required. This represented another significant step toward affiliation with the national Reform movement. The president, vice president, and treasurer were re-elected, but Solomon Krohne replaced Newman Pincus as secretary.

Encouraged by healthier finances, the congregation voted to increase Hausmann's salary by $150 per annum beginning December 1. The new-found prosperity was reflected in the board's instructions to the Choir Committee to procure a "suitable choir." The volunteer choir were thanked for their services to the congregation, but they continued to perform for want of replacements. The Choir Committee, unhappy with their performance, had tried Mrs. Sheldon. Finding her a disappointment, they dismissed her and despaired of securing a suitable choir. Later, however, they hired a Mr. Pond, a tenor, for one year at $25.

Early in the new year of 1902 Hausmann announced that the new edition of the prayer book was on hand. The copies would remain the property of the congregation, available to members at the Friday and Saturday services. They would be loaned to non-member visitors at a slight charge of 25 cents.

A benefit concert by members of the Brown University Quartet was held at the Empire Theater on Westminster Street. They were sent a letter of thanks for the generous gift of their talents to the congregation. The recently chartered South Providence Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox) sent a delegation to the congregation to solicit aid to reduce the debt on their new synagogue on Willard Avenue. After much discussion, a motion to donate $15, amended to $10, was adopted 11 to 5.

In the spring the Cemetery Committee was confronted by requests from wealthy members for special privileges. Leon Samuels, who with his brother Joseph owned the successful Manufacturers Outlet Company, sought in consideration of a payment of $200 to be allowed to erect a monument on space adjoining the grave of his mother, not to exceed six running feet. Caroline Samuels had died on August 27, 1901. The request was eventually granted, but it was ruled that a yearly charge would be made when a grave occupied more space than the regulations provided.

Later, Benedict Lederer, who had recently taken exception to the size of his dues assessment, petitioned the Cemetery Committee for extra space in the cemetery for his family plot. One-year-old Viola, daughter of Benedict and Theresa Lederer, who died in 1886, had already been buried there. The Lederer and Samuels requests culminated in the construction of two of the largest and most pretentious family mausoleums in the Reservoir Avenue burial ground. It was voted in the spring to tax each member who had

relatives buried in the cemetery $3 per annum for each grave ($2 for a child's grave). This was made necessary by recent large expenditures at the cemetery and the related borrowing. The board called for endorsers for a loan of $400 to cover the cemetery work.

The budget adopted on June 16, 1902 provided for a $1500 salary for the rabbi, the largest yet. An allowance of $700 for the choir was also the most generous thus far. During the early months of the year Louis Green abruptly resigned as sexton. His resignation was accepted, but he was later rehired. The nature of his grievance is not clear, but money was probably involved. Mrs. Green appears not to have shared her husband's vexations. In the spring she donated a silver *Torah* guide[8] to the congregation in memory of her parents and was later involved in procuring carpeting for the temple aisles.

Late in June of 1902, Rabbi Hausmann requested permission for health reasons to leave the city in order to recuperate. Permission was granted provided that he notify the congregation of his whereabouts and be available to respond to any call of the congregation.

Prior to the High Holidays the congregation was notified that the old Jastrow prayer books would be used during the current services, since Union Prayer Books for the Holidays had not yet arrived. A Mr. Feldman would blow the *shophar* on Rosh Hashanah. As fall approached a heater (gas?) was ordered for the rabbi's study, perhaps to fend off his indispositions. The following officers were elected: Jacob Shartenberg, president; Simon Elias, vice president; Sigmund Lederer, treasurer; and Leopold Hartman, secretary. Reverend Hausmann was re-elected rabbi for a year from September 1, 1902. Miss Julia Jacobs was thanked for her services to the choir, and $15 was voted to procure suitable gifts for the Sunday School teachers. Once again, however, Shartenberg submitted his resignation and declined to serve further, as he had once before in 1898. At a special congregational meeting, Vice President Elias was called upon to fill the vacancy, and Harry Robinson, a partner of Shartenberg's in Shartenberg & Robinson's dry goods business in Pawtucket, was elected vice president.

Speaking in behalf of Rabbi Hausmann, President Elias in November reported that some Jewish young men and women at Brown University requested permission to hold weekly Bible classes in the vestry under the auspices of the rabbi. The board was happy to grant the request. Possibly a dozen Jewish men and women were matric-

ulated at Brown at this time. Rabbi Hausmann himself was in fact registered as a special student.[9] Also, a Young People's Literary Association was formed, and all young men and ladies of Jewish faith were cordially invited to join. Later, President Elias urged the congregation to procure a pipe organ for the temple. Manufacturers' price lists were reviewed, and the president was delegated to pursue the matter.

Early in 1903 the $400 note for the cemetery work was paid off and the interest on the mortgage met. The Cemetery Committee was further empowered to ready plans and specifications for a new building on the cemetery grounds. The marriage of Julia Jacobs, the choir volunteer, was announced. She was presented with a wedding gift by the board (not to exceed $15). The Choir Committee, feeling its oats, engaged a William Bischoff to join the choir for the ensuing year at a salary of $100.

The board in May, noting that Rabbi Hausmann's term would expire on September 4, proposed that applications for the post be considered at the June congregational meeting. A significant action was taken at the May meeting indicative of the growth and relative prosperity of the congregation. The Building Committee was instructed to seek architectural advice as to the feasibility of increasing the seating capacity of the present syangogue structure, still only thirteen years old.

Early in June the board was apprised of a crisis of historic proportions facing the Jews of Russia. Only weeks before, on Easter Sunday, a well-organized crowd had inflicted the notorious pogrom in the Bessarabian province of Kishinev. The masses, secretly incited by the ultra-reactionary Minister of the Interior, Vyacheslev K. von Plehve, had murdered 50 Jews, wounded 600 others, and plundered or destroyed 1500 shops and homes. The police looked on passively, while the massacre continued for several days. A committee from Haggai Lodge, I.O.B.B. announced that a meeting of various Jewish societies of the city would be held on June 10 to assist the Kishinev sufferers who were about to come to America. The committee requested that a delegate from the congregation be appointed to attend the meeting. President Elias was designated to represent the congregation.

At the same meeting Rabbi Hausmann's application for re-election was received, and recommendation for approval was sent to the congregation. The Choir Committee reported the hiring of a

substitute soprano for Shavuot (Pentecost) for $5. The Ladies' Auxiliary Society had sponsored a very successful cantata yielding a respectable profit of $275, for which "kind services" gratitude was expressed to the ladies.

On June 22, 1903 the congregation re-elected the rabbi for another year. It adopted a growing budget of $3500, providing $1,500 for the rabbi's salary and a generous $700 for the choir. Later, the rabbi requested vacation time, which was granted for two months from July 1 to September 1. Problems with the sexton continued. Louis Green again resigned as of August 1, but, since a suitable replacement could not be found, he was rehired early in August at $250 per year.

The congregation was informed that the Jewish Relief Association for Russian Refugees had held its first meeting on June 10 as scheduled and was functioning. The congregation offered its cooperation in the good work of the organization.

The Building Committee presented plans prepared by the architects W.R. Walker and Son for enlarging the temple seating capacity. After reviewing the plans, specifications, and costs, it was decided to postpone the building modifications indefinitely. The Building Committee, however, was authorized to make certain necessary repairs.

In preparation for the High Holidays, the board voted to engage the choir for the ensuing year, as the old contract had expired. Seat assignments and applications for Sunday School were considered. The Jastrow *Minhag* was again used for the Holidays, and the *shophar* this year was blown by member Robert Hellman.

The annual meeting on October 4, 1903 was uneventful, with the usual votes of thanks and special mention of the Ladies Auxiliary Society. Fifteen dollars was appropriated for gifts for the Sunday School teachers. Simon Elias was re-elected president. The other officers were Leon Krieger, vice president; Isaac Krohne, treasurer; and Leo Hartman, secretary. Later in the year, Maurice (Moe) Levine was elected recording secretary at $25 per annum, and Leo Hartman became financial secretary. The division of labor was another indication of the growing size of the congregation.

In the fall, at the president's request, several young men's and ladies' societies, such as the Ladies' Sewing Circle, were permitted to meet in the vestry. The congregation donated to Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association $100 in three install-

ments to support its charities, the money to be drawn from the Charity Fund.

There was surprisingly little activity during the spring of 1904. Six prayer books were ordered to loan to "visiting strangers." The yearly picture of the confirmation class was presented to the board, and Rabbi Hausmann was happily granted permission to invite old friend Myer Noot to occupy the pulpit on Saturday, May 11.

The congregation on May 31 amended the bylaws to establish a rotating board of trustees with three-year terms. A budget of $3750 was approved with provision of $1600 for the rabbi and $750 for the choir. Increases in dues were also ordered, which resulted in a number of complaints, several from prominent members of the congregation. Delicate diplomacy was required for adjudication. The congregation received a proposition from Messrs. Abraham A. Spitz and Max Nathanson, prominent theater entrepreneurs (Spitz & Nathanson), to build a mortuary chapel at the cemetery. The concept was approved in principle, but the president was requested to seek more information. Later, President Elias reported that Spitz & Nathanson had offered to contribute $1000 toward building the mortuary with several provisos. They would raise the amount by giving an entertainment under the auspices of the congregation and in return would be granted the privilege of placing tablets in the cemetery in memory of their parents. Although the board favorably recommended the proposition to the congregation, it was quietly dropped.

The secretary of the Young Folk Society requested that his group be permitted to change their meeting night from Friday to Tuesday. Permission was granted "provided they pledge themselves to attend regular services Friday as usual and have no music or dancing in the vestry unless they first have permission." A Saturday afternoon party in the vestry was planned for the Sunday School children after the close of school.

Rabbi Hausmann was notified that his contract would expire on September 1, 1904. He applied for re-election, was in due course re-elected, and was also granted a summer vacation. A Boston congregation, which was losing its rabbi, requested leave to call on Hausmann to help out if necessary. Permission was granted.

Congregation B'nai Israel of Woonsocket again requested loan of a *Torah* scroll, this time for the dedication of its new synagogue on July 7. The request was granted provided they pick it up and return

it promptly in good condition. Rabbi Hausmann and members of the congregation attended. The *Sepher Torah* was returned promptly with a gracious letter of thanks.

Late in June President Elias learned that property next to the synagogue was for sale. The Building Committee was instructed to investigate its possibilities. The building inspector notified the temple that according to the fire laws the outside doors of the present building would have to be modified to open outward, an early enforcement of a safety provision now universally accepted. The work was accomplished at the then considerable cost of $27.47.

President Elias in the meantime was performing acts of charity in the name of the congregation. He reported having helped a young Jewish man in distress in the amount of $300. Also, a Rabbi A. Rosen, recently spiritual leader of a congregation in the West, had called upon him. Seeking a position in the East because of ill health, he had requested financial assistance to continue his journey to Manchester, New Hampshire, hoping to find an opportunity there. The president gave him $10 to get him to Boston.[10] He was reimbursed for both acts of charity.

President Elias was re-elected at the annual meeting on September 25, 1904. Other officers were Leopold Dimond, vice president; Isaac Hahn, treasurer; Leo Hartman, financial secretary; and Maurice (Moe) Levine, recording secretary. Income for the fiscal year was $4,061.93 with disbursements of $4,021.01, for a healthy balance of $40.92. Once again the president's report, sober in mood, appeared in typescript on legal-sized paper. President Elias, summing up his first year in office, complained of poor attendance at congregational meetings and the refusal of some members to pay the extra dues assessment. He recommended that the $100 allocation to the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association be discontinued for the present, as they had failed to take charge of all charity cases referred by the congregation as had been anticipated. "It appears to me," he stated, "that they have not been as energetic in the work as might be possible . . . as we had to assist a number of cases which were refused by their committee."

The choir during the year had not maintained a satisfactory standard. Although two members had been ill during the High Holidays, "a lack of musical excellence was noticeable" during the entire season. Elias was more upbeat about the Sabbath School. There were about 80 students enrolled and an average attendance of 50.

He praised the teachers for their untiring labor and energy while donating their services, and "for the good results which have attended their efforts." A Hebrew class was started under Rabbi Hausmann with gratifying results, as demonstrated at the confirmation exercises. Elias announced with regret the retirement of Miss Boas, "one of the most efficient lady teachers," and recommended a special appropriation in appreciation of her devoted service. Three members were lost to death, but membership numbered some 97 families. The work on the cemetery had been completed, with the new land plotted out, the grounds in fine condition, and the fence and small building freshly painted at a cost of $100. His comments on the Ladies' Auxiliary Society reflect a serious unexplained rift in the congregation:

> It is with a feeling of regret that I am obliged to state that the flower of our Congregation, the Ladies' Auxiliary Society, are not in bloom, as there are apparent certain misunderstandings and dissensions among its members, which have sadly interfered with the work and harmony of the organization and rendered it for the time being dormant. Through the differing views and opinions of its members (which in a great many instances seem to be shared by the heads of the families), the breach among them seems to be widened. I would earnestly beg of the male members of the congregation to quiet and suppress all such feelings and dissensions and to aid in reuniting the members, as the purpose of the Society is not one for individual benefit, but is for the benefit of all, which means the Congregation. I hope that this coming winter social gatherings will be . . . not for any financial benefit, but for the creation of a better and more cordial feeling between the members. . . .

He concluded with an expression of appreciation to the board, the officers, and members of the congregation for their cooperation.

In October the board heard a report from Isaac Hahn on the available land adjacent to the synagogue, which the owner was willing to sell for $3000. Hahn suggested that ten members put up $100 each and take out a mortgage of $2000 for the balance. They would hold the land until the congregation desired to take it over. In the meantime the holders would derive all benefits from the property until it was transferred to the congregation. The matter was left in Hahn's hands. The board then took notice of the fact that the congregation on July 1, 1905 would be 50 years old. The

Entertainment Committee was instructed to arrange an affair to celebrate the occasion in a "becoming manner."

President Elias was pleased to report in November that the Montefiore Ladies were now doing good work. He recommended that the $100 subvention be continued at $25 per quarter, but the ladies would be questioned about their intentions regarding worthy persons recommended by the congregation. Elias later met with the Montefiore Ladies and came to a satisfactory agreement regarding charity cases. Thanksgiving services were planned for November 24. Children of the North End Sunday School were invited to Hanukkah services on Sunday, December 4. This was a thoughtful act in recognition of the plight of the newly arrived Eastern European immigrants of the North End of Providence, many surely refugees from the Kishinev massacre. The School Committee, in fact, entertained some 300 children from the North End at a party following the services. The Ladies' Auxiliary Society furnished 250 boxes of candy at a cost of $19.55, billed to the congregation.

Early in January of 1905, Isaac Hahn reported that, since one of the owners of the property adjoining the synagogue had died, the matter would have to be deferred for a while. The president announced that a mass meeting of the congregation was planned for an early date to devise ways of raising funds to liquidate the mortgage. The president was reimbursed $25 for the use of his telephone.

On February 22 the board met to consider an unexplained controversy regarding the rabbi. On Sunday, February 19 "our rabbi" had made a speech at the Orms Street Synagogue to which many had taken umbrage. Whether it was the content of his talk or his presence at the synagogue without permission is not clear. At a special meeting of the congregation on February 26, the rabbi was "sent for to appear personally to present his case." After he addressed the meeting, the matter was returned to the board for action. A committee met with the rabbi to seek an agreement in writing that he would not be a candidate for re-election and to terminate his connection with the congregation as soon as possible.

The rabbi replied that he would not vacate his position until his term had expired, but assured the committee that he would not seek re-election, would put no obstacle in the way of any applicant, and would inform the president to that effect in writing. A committee was then appointed to "look around and visit different cities at their own expense" to audit the services of various rabbis and

report their impressions. The rabbi, incidentally, was taken to task for purchasing books for the school on his own responsibility when such purchases should have been made by the School Committee.

The owners of the property next to the synagogue were now ready to sell for $3000. Hahn reported that, if he could obtain a mortgage for $2000, he would raise the remaining $1000 from members, as he had promised. Inquiries were made to the Bloch Company, publishers of liturgical books, regarding the congregation's credit standing, as a letter to the rabbi appeared to imply some difficulties. The publisher replied that all bills had been paid, credit was A1, and the discount on books would be continued.

At this time, an unfortunate event occurred in the synagogue which, although historically important, was barely mentioned in the congregational minutes. The following news item appeared in *The Providence Sunday Journal* of March 26, 1905:

FIRE IN JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

BLAZE ORIGINATED IN BOILER ROOM OF FRIENDSHIP STREET EDIFICE.

Fire which originated in the boiler room of the synagogue of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David at Foster and Friendship Streets caused considerable damage to the stock and fixtures of that edifice last evening [March 25].

William Kelley, while passing along Friendship Street, saw a cloud of smoke gush from the front façade of the structure and ran to box 247, and sent in an alarm. The firemen in responding found lots of smoke, but very little fire until they entered the building. The janitor of the church was present to open the doors for their entrance.

In a small room directly under the rabbi's pulpit and near the boiler room, a lively blaze, which was easily extinguished, was found. The character of the furnishings was such as to cause a great deal of smoke and the damage from that source will be large. The damage by fire was confined to the halls and partitions and is estimated at about $800.

Some six months later, it was noted in the board minutes that the Ladies' Auxiliary Society was paid $50 to reimburse it for its loss in the fire, probably from insurance money.

Tradition has it that the fire involved the rabbi's study, which was to the rear of the pulpit. The congregational records were stored

there. All records from 1854 to 1876 were destroyed by the fire. The earliest book extant, starting in 1876, shows evidence of charring.

Despite the fire, the congregation met in the synagogue on the very next day, Sunday, March 26 for its quarterly meeting. It was voted unanimously to notify Reverend Hausmann that his contract would expire on September 1, unless he secured a position before that date. A few days later Rabbi Hausmann resigned. It was agreed in a compromise to pay his salary to July 1, 1905, and his resignation was accepted. Hausmann appears to have left soon thereafter. During April and May letters were received from congregations in Newark and Trenton, New Jersey requesting references for Rabbi Hausmann. The president replied to the inquiries "on the plan as drafted by the Trustees." So far as the record shows, Hausmann's departure was related to some event at the Orms Street Synagogue on Sunday, February 19. There were no items in the press or entries in the minutes to explain it further. However, Rabbi Henry Englander, who succeeded Hausmann, told the late Rabbi Wiliam G. Braude that Hausmann was not liked by the congregation, and that the Orms Street episode was more an aggravation than a cause in itself leading up to his resignation. More to the point were persistent rumors that the rabbi had been touched by scandal. He was alleged to have been seen visiting a house of ill-fame.

The record shows that Hausmann thereafter enjoyed a fairly productive career. He went first to New York, where he served as chaplain at Columbia University, and in 1922 helped found the Community Synagogue on the Lower East Side. He was also founder and director of the Beth Abraham Home for Incurables in the Bronx. During the administration of President William Howard Taft, he was guest chaplain of both the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. He was the author of *The Great War and the Hope of the Jew* and *Israel's Zeal for Education*, and edited a volume of the *Jewish Code of Jurisprudence*. He retired from the active rabbinate in 1930 and died in 1948.

NOTES

1. The Women's College in Brown University (later Pembroke College in Brown University), established in 1890, graduated its first class in 1894 (two girls). It expanded rapidly and graduated 18 girls in 1895. Its first

Jewish graduate was Clara Angela Gomberg in 1897. It welcomed Jewish girls who lived in the Providence area and commuted. When dormitories became available in the 1920s, quotas were established for out-of-town Jewish girls to limit the numbers in the dormitories. After World War II ethnic quotas were discredited and were eliminated. Pembroke College is now fully merged into Brown University. The list of girls designating Temple Beth-El as their "home church" must have been brief as there were not more than three or four matriculated at Brown at that time. One of them was Gertrude Lederer, class of '02. See Karen M. Lamoree, "'Why Not a Jewish Girl?': The Jewish Experience at Pembroke College in Brown University," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 10:122–140, (November) 1988.

2. Bennet Grad had become a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1894.
3. There is no indication that the congregation has ever relinquished title to its holdings in Moshassuck Cemetery.
4. *Yontiff* (Yiddish) is a corruption of the Hebrew *Yom Tov* (literally "good day"). It has come to mean a Jewish festival or holiday.
5. *Seder* (Hebrew meaning literally "order of procedure") is a combination of dinner and religious service conducted in the home preceding the first and second nights of Passover (*Pesah* in Hebrew). Reform Jews generally observe only the first night. They often hold a public *seder* at the synagogue on the second night of Passover. On the table are the symbolic foods commemorating events related to the Israelites' exodus from Egypt: *matzah* (the unleavened "bread of affliction," bitter herbs, a roasted egg and bone, and a mixture of nuts, apples, cinnamon, and wine. There is much drinking of a sweet wine, especially certified for the holiday.
6. D. C. Adelman's "Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association," p. 60. The rabbi also participated in community affairs. On July 28, 1901 he read the closing prayer at a Convention of Jewish Societies for Promoting Physical Culture Among the Jewish Masses, called by the Touro Cadets. The meeting was held in Masonic Hall in Newport, Rhode Island. See "Touro Cadets and Touro Guards," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:99–103, (May) 1956, p. 101.
7. He was listed as a graduate student and instructor in Semitic languages in *The Historical Catalogue of Brown University 1764–1934* (Providence, pub. by Brown University, 1936), pp. 36, 1112.

   According to the late Rabbi William G. Braude, there was a lingering perception many years later that Grad had been lazy.
8. *Yad* in Hebrew (meaning literally "hand"). It is a pointer, usually of silver, but also of wood or ivory, used by the reader as a guide in reading the Scroll of Law (the *Torah*). It prevents touching the revered parchment with the finger. The pointer is commonly in the form of a diminutive hand.

9. *Brown University Historical Catalogue 1764–1934*, p. 524.
10. Helping a traveling Jew with a meal, lodging, and enough cash to propel him on to his next stopover was a traditional act of charity among the Jews of immigrant America.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Rabbi Henry Englander, Gentleman and Scholar

The search committee for a rabbi received inquiries from Rabbi Henry Englander of Ligonier, Indiana; Rabbi Koch of Pensacola, Florida; and Rabbi Margolis of Pueblo, Colorado. Ligonier, some forty miles north of Fort Wayne, had a large population of Jewish immigrant families.[1] Englander wrote that he would consider an offer of $2000, which was more than the congregation had paid thus far. Correspondence followed concerning the availability of candidates for a trial, and a letter was sent to Hebrew Union College, requesting recommendations for "some experienced rabbi." Englander replied that he would be available during the month of May.

In the meantime, the board found time to send a contribution of $5 to the Miriam Society, Number One (forerunner of The Miriam Hospital Association of Providence, Rhode Island) to purchase tickets for its hospital fund.[2]

Arrangements were made to engage a Mr. Mattacks (or Mattax) to be the reader for thirteen weeks ending July 1, at a salary of $200. Rabbi Englander probably occupied the pulpit on Saturday and Sunday May 13 and 14. The board met on May 24 to consider the various applications. Englander was highly recommended. The board favored his election and called a special congregational meeting for the 28th. He was duly elected and would be asked to begin on September 1. He was notified by telephone—a further sign of technological progress.

The congregation in June faced an increased budget of $4350, allowing $2000 for the rabbi and $780 for the choir, the additional costs to be met by higher dues assessments. Reverend Englander accepted the call, and fifty dollars was appropriated to pay for his trip to Providence.

Several other matters preoccupied the board during the summer. Six grave lots were sold to Joseph and Leon Samuels, on which they would erect the family mausoleum. They agreed to abide by all pertinent regulations. President Leopold Dimond requested permission to erect a memorial gate at the cemetery entrance and submitted plans. These were approved and acknowledged with a note of thanks. Mr. Mattacks, in his capacity as temporary reader, presented to the board the customary picture of the confirmation class. The board requested the Entertainment Committee and the Ladies' Auxiliary Society to prepare a reception before Rosh Hashanah to introduce Rabbi Englander to the members.

Englander, born in Hungary on February 17, 1877, came to America as a young child. His family settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Henry attended elementary and high schools. His father, a Hebrew teacher, was an expert scribe of biblical and classical Hebrew texts. Young Henry entered Hebrew Union College in 1893. He was ordained a rabbi in 1901 and simultaneously graduated from the University of Cincinnati. His first congregation was in Ligonier, Indiana. The Jewish community of Ligonier was interesting historically. In a total population of 3000 souls, fewer than 50 Jewish families, descended from early settlers, assumed leadership in the town's civic, social, agricultural, industrial, and commerical interests. In the years 1901 to 1905, while serving his own congregation and also a larger one in South Bend forty miles to the north, he pursued postgraduate studies in Bible and Semitics at the University of Chicago, a train ride of 125 miles. He would leave Ligonier at 4 a.m. every Monday for classes with Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, professor of rabbinic studies.[3] Englander was scholarly-appearing, high-browed, clean-shaven, and wearing pince-nez glasses and a bow tie.

The congregation at the annual meeting of October 15, 1905 elected Simon Elias, president; Leopold Dimond, vice president; Isaac Hahn, treasurer; Maurice (Moe) Levine, recording secretary; and Leo Hartman, financial secretary. The financial report showed income of $4007.26 and expenditures of $4070.57, a deficit of $63.61.

A Golden Jubilee Celebration was planned for Thanksgiving, November 30, to observe a half century of progress. Several past rabbis were invited to participate or to send greetings—each not to exceed ten minutes of reading time! Voorsanger, Noot, Sessler, Grad, and Blaustein were mentioned—but notably not Hausmann. Later the

social features of the celebration were canceled "in view of the calamity that has befallen our co-religionists in Russia." Rabbi Blaustein participated in the formal anniversary ceremony and was sent a check for $20 for expenses. President Elias presented a decorative Star of David to the congregation to commemorate the event.

Revolution was rife in Russia in 1905 in the wake of the disastrous defeats in the Russo-Japanese War. The Jews, as usual, were made the scapegoats. Widespread pogroms continued throughout the summer and fall. They were exacerbated by the humiliating peace treaty signed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on September 5. In fact, the period of October 18 to 25 was described as the darkest week in Russian-Jewish history.[4] The trustees voted to send $250 to the United Relief fund for "the relief of the Russian sufferers." The amount caused consternation in some quarters, and a special meeting of the congregation was called on November 26 to protest the donation. After a lengthy and heated discussion, the action of the trustees was ratified. In the meantime, the Ladies' Auxiliary Society had turned over $145, the proceeds of a successful vaudeville entertainment, which was added to the $250 already approved. The gift of almost $400 was generous indeed.

The year ended on a significant note. On the very last day of 1905 the congregation voted, probably at the urging of the new young rabbi, to adopt the Union Prayer Book for use on the High Holidays as well as during the entire year—still another step toward more liberal Reform.

Early in January of 1906, the rabbi was authorized to engage a teacher to assist him in teaching Hebrew at a price not to exceed $4 per month. Leopold Dimond was thanked for his gift of the handsome cemetery gates and was presented with a set of resolutions. The regular quarterly payment of $25 to the Montefiore Ladies was accompanied by authorization to continue its charity work on behalf of the congregation. Five dollars was donated to the Miriam Society for care of the sick, and $10 distributed to the various hospitals. The rabbi was appointed custodian of these funds.

On April 20, only two days after the disastrous San Francisco earthquake and fire, the congregation donated $250 from the congregation's general fund for the relief of sufferers of the earthquake. Each member was taxed one dollar to defray the cost and reimburse the treasury. A local free loan society at about the same time sent

100 tickets for purchase at $15 to support its activities; they were returned with "a letter of explanation."[5]

As dues were unduly slow in coming in, the financial secretary was directed to add six percent to the dues of each member in arrears, and an official dues collector was hired at $2 per week. A letter from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations indicated that the congregation owed $144 in back dues and requested that a check be sent. Caesar Misch, delegated to investigate the matter, found that the congregation was indeed in default. A letter of apology and $50 on account were forwarded to the Union.

As summer approached, plans were made as usual to close the school for the season. A violinist was engaged for the confirmation services, and a gift of $20 was voted as a token of appreciation for the Hebrew teacher. The rabbi was notified as early as April that he would be re-elected, a token of the high esteem in which he was held. His salary was increased to $2100 in a budget of $4500. He expressed his appreciation to the board and was granted a vacation with full pay during July and August. He was also allowed $50 for attendance at the Rabbinical Convention in Indianapolis. During the year since his arrival, he had taken graduate courses at Brown University and received an A.M. degree at the June commencement.

The following officers were elected at the annual meeting of September 30, 1906: Simon Elias, president; Leopold Dimond, vice president; Isaac Hahn, treasurer; Robert Hellman, recording secretary; and Leo Hartman, financial secretary. On account of illness a substitute soprano served during the High Holidays, and Bowen R. Church,[6] famed Providence cornetist, performed on Rosh Hashanah.

In the fall the rabbi received $25 from the Charity Fund to support a carnival to aid the Providence Society for Organizing Charity.[7] The first social reunion of the congregation arranged by the Social Committee was held in the vestry on Wednesday evening, October 10. Isaac Hahn reported that architect Frank Woods submitted a bill at a negotiated price of $75 for drawing up plans for the cemetery chapel. Twenty-five dollars was appropriated for Hanukkah presents for the school children. And thus the year ended.

As the new year of 1907 began, the trustees appropriated $50 to procure a gift for the popular young rabbi as a token of appreciation on his thirtieth birthday on February 17. A special entertainment was held for him in the vestry, and he was presented with a cabinet.

Also at the affair Vice President Leopold Dimond received a set of resolutions for his devoted service to the congregation. Mr. and Mrs. Leopold Hartman and Mr. and Mrs. Leon Krieger received bouquets of flowers in honor of their 40th and 18th wedding anniversaries respectively. The various recipients eloquently thanked the board and the congregation. Everyone present had an enjoyable time, and the party was judged to be a great success.

In April the congregation again demonstrated its affection for its popular spiritual leader by unanimously re-electing him rabbi for an unprecedented three-year term with his salary increased to $2200 for the first year. His term would extend from September 1, 1907 to September 1, 1910. He was also granted $50 for travel expenses to the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Frankfort, Michigan and also a summer vacation from early June to September 1. This generous treatment elicited a gracious reply from Rabbi Englander:

May 29, 1907

Gentlemen of the Board of Directors of Congregation Sons of Israel and David.

Respected Sirs:

I do hereby acknowledge the recent notification of my re-election at an increased salary for three years as rabbi of the congregation. Being told that this was the first time in the history of the congregation that an election for a term of more than one year took place, I especially appreciate and value the tribute of confidence implied in the three-year term of office which you have offered to me.

Not a single incident having occurred to weaken or make unpleasant the relationship between the congregation and myself, it is with pleasure that I renew that relationship and convenant in the sincere hope that the future may be as the past in respect to the mutual goodwill, confidence, and satisfaction that have obtained until now.

I also take this opportunity of saying a word of sincere appreciation of the spirit that prompted the Board to vote me a sum of money to defray my expenses in attending the convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which is to take place in Frankfort, Michigan in the first week of July. Inasmuch as the territory in which the conference is to meet can be con-

veniently and without much added expense be reached on the trip which I annually take west, I would ask the Board's kind indulgence to allow me to attend the conference at my own expense and at the same time I would ask that it be recorded on the minutes that the Congregation voted to defray my expenses, deeming such action worthy of record.

Again thanking you, and through you the congregation, for the three-year term and for the generous and loyal spirit displayed in your readiness to send me to the conference,

I am, Gentlemen
Appreciatively yours,
Henry Englander

Englander was studying for his Ph.D. degree and was appointed lecturer in biblical history and literature at Brown University. He received his Ph.D. degree in 1909.[8]

There was concern in the spring of '07 concerning the condition of the congregation's financial records. In April the secretary of the congregation was directed to demand that the treasurer, Isaac Hahn, deliver all bank books and other records to the Finance Committee prior to the next trustee meeting. Although there was concern about his performance due to health problems, Hahn was nevertheless re-elected treasurer at the annual meeting in September. The board on October 11 heard a report from the Finance Committee that there were outstanding accounts of which the treasurer knew nothing. He was therefore "called upon to qualify for said office." Benedict Lederer and Morris Rosendale were accepted as surety for the treasurer, and a bond was issued in the amount of $3000. Hahn was replaced as treasurer by Louis Lyons at the annual meeting of 1908, but it would be some time before the finances were straightened out.

The dickering with Louis Green, sexton and janitor, which had been going on for years, continued through the summer. In the fall of 1907 he was granted an additional salary of $150 per year for a total of $475, in return for which he agreed to devote full time to the congregation and in addition to collect dues. He was also to be provided with a telephone!

Following the High Holidays, at the annual meeting on September 22, 1907, President Elias, Vice President Dimond, Treasurer Hahn, and Financial Secretary Hartman were re-elected. Leo Engel became

the new recording secretary. Two-hundred-and-fifty "Children's Rituals" were ordered for the children's Yom Kippur service, made possible by a gift from Mrs. Caesar Misch. Further, donations were solicited for the Sunday School library. When the trustees were petitioned to improve the lighting of the pulpit, the Alumnal Association[9] offered to wire the temple for electric lighting.[10] No action was taken, however, since there was doubt on several accounts that the present building would be used much longer. The School Committee reported an attendance of 132 pupils in seven classes, with an average attendance of 111, taxing the present facilities. The sanctuary was crowded on the Holidays, and the neighborhood in which the synagogue was located was beginning to deteriorate. However, the Choir Committee, probably faced with an emergency, bought a new organ and at the same time engaged a very good new contralto and a soprano.

Conscious of the inadequacy of the present building, Property Committee chairman Sigmund Lederer reported that the land adjoining the temple could probably be bought for $11,000, the asking price being $12,000 An offer of $10,500 was refused. In view of the impasse on price and also doubts about the wisdom of purchasing the land, the board voted to defer the matter.

Concerning the growing feeling that a change of locale was essential, Rabbi William G. Braude tells this story:[11]

> There were, to be sure, plans to move . . . , but the going was agonizingly slow. In the meantime Friendship Street was becoming more and more sleazy. [It degenerated, in fact, together with adjacent Pine Street into a well-known red-light district.] One day a woman, denizen of one of Friendship Street's "houses," accosted Henry [Englander], sweet innocent Henry, as he was entering the synagogue. Thereupon (I heard the story from Henry himself), he served [the congregation with] an ultimatum, "Either you build or I go." The authorities [were] thus driven into precipitous action. . . .

This event, of course, was not recorded in the official journals!

At the first board meeting of the new year on January 8, 1908, the Property Committee reported that the congregation's current offer of $10,500 with a six month option for the land adjacent to the temple would not be considered by the owners. Disposing of the present structure and building elsewhere had become virtually

inevitable. In February President Elias reported conversations with the First Swedish (Baptist) Congregation regarding the sale of the Friendship Street property. Their church was presently located on Plain Street, corner of Globe Street.

In early March Sigmund Lederer informed the board that Messrs. Holden and Lands of the Swedish church had been through the synagogue and liked it very much. They were informed that the building had cost $22,000. Their interest in purchasing the property would depend on price. The congregation's board would have to set the selling price, and the matter would ultimately be referred to the quarterly meeting of the congregation. Other matters came before the meeting. Rabbi Englander expressed his thanks for the gift of a chair on his 31st birthday. Mr. Burnham of the choir requested a raise in salary to $12.50, which all other members of the choir received. This eminently reasonable request was granted without dissent.

Late in March Caesar Misch reported for the Property Committee that it had met with the board of the Swedish Congregation and had set a selling price for the synagogue of $18,000. The Swedish group made a counter offer of their present property on Plain Street plus an extra lot of land. Informed that this was unacceptable, they offered $14,500 in cash, which was also refused. The Property Committee was then authorized to sell at once or arrange to sell at $16,000 if a deal could be closed. If this were not possible, they could arrange a sale for as much more than $14,500 as could be obtained, but $14,500 was to be the absolute minumum. Leon Samuels announced that he and his brother Joseph were ready to subscribe to a fund for a new building. After a subscription drive among all members of the congregation, they would loan "a limited amount of money" at 4 percent interest so as to avoid any delay in erecting a new building. A subscription was immediately opened. Leopold Dimond made the first pledge of $1500. There were 29 in all, one each at $1000 and $500, with others as low as $5—for a total of $7370. Later in the meeting the secretary read a letter from Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob of Savannah, Georgia requesting a contribution toward the building of a new temple. Unfortunately for the Georgia brethren, the request came at an inopportune time.

The Property Committee reported early in April that the Swedish congregation had made a firm offer of $14,750, of which $500 would be paid at once and the balance by January 1, 1909. The congregation

would have the use of the building for religious purposes until the sale was final. The Property Committee was ordered to close the sale, subject to the approval of the congregation.

Caesar Misch reported to the congregation on April 12 that the price of $14,750 had been confirmed. The congregation approved the sale, but reserved the right to remove the ark, the *menorah* lights, the chandeliers, the perpetual light, two divans, two small flower tables on the altar, the organ, the furniture, and the cornerstone, which would have to be replaced.[12] The congregation, it was agreed, could use the building until October 15, 1908, through the High Holidays. Acceptance of the down payment of $500 was authorized, the balance to be paid in whole or in part by January 1, 1909. In the unlikely event that full payment was made prior to October 15, arrangements would be made for joint occupancy until that date. The president and treasurer were empowered to sign the papers. The subscription list was again opened and the pledges rose to $9415.

The board in May received a letter from Jesse I. Baker, a member of the choir, requesting payment for his services and expressing dissatisfaction with his stipend. He had been promised, he said, that he was to remain permanently and not merely until Mr. Pond returned from leave. The Choir Committee, however, reported that Pond had already been discharged and that they had no intention of retaining Baker. They had engaged in Pond's place "one of the best tenors in the city" for two years at $2.50 more per month than they had paid Pond, i.e. $15, if after a trial he was hired permanently. In other business, the board sent $20 to the Sunday Hospital Fund (a church endeavor) in the name of the congregation. Finally, resolutions were sent to the family of the late Jacob Voorsanger, who had recently passed away in San Francisco.

The Property Committee reported on May 19 that the sale of the present temple building had been consummated, subject to financing. The president was authorized to appoint a "General Building Committtee for the purpose of erecting a new Temple." The committee of twenty contained the names of many prominent members of the congregation. President Elias was elected chairman, Louis Lyons secretary, and David Bernkopf treasurer. The committee was divided into two subcommittees, one on Buildings and Sites with Sigmund Lederer as chairman, and the other on Ways and Means chaired by Harry Robinson.

In June the School Committee announced the purchase of a writing desk for Matilda (Mattie) Pincus and books for the school, all at a cost of $26. Mattie Pincus, under the direction of Rabbi Englander, was installing a new library system. A picnic was planned for the school children at Oakland Beach[13] on Sunday, June 7, and the rabbi was granted a summer vacation to September 1. The budget was set at $4850 and the rabbi's salary at $2200. Expected income was predicted to be an optimistic $5011. More significant, the Building Committee was given authority to purchase a site for the new temple.

The congregation was shocked by the premature, unexpected death on July 25 of merchant Caesar Misch, an able member of the board and an important member of the Property and Building Committees.[14] The trustees expressed deep regret and considered the loss to the board as particularly significant. Condolences were extended to the family, and a page in the congregational minutes was set aside as a memorial.

Several cemetery lots had been sold for varying amounts up to the $600 paid by Leopold Dimond. The board recommended that the congregation purchase more land adjacent to the cemetery (34,000 square feet on Jordan Street) at the best possible price. After the land was surveyed, the Cemetery Committee was authorized to purchase the property, provided it could be used for burial purposes.

These were busy days for the trustees and the membership. The First Swedish Baptist Congregation notified the board on September 19, 1908 that they contemplated taking possession of the temple in thirty days. The Property Committee and an attorney met with the purchasers to iron out details, the sale of the "former Temple" was consummated, and $250 was paid in cash. A mortgage note for $2000 at 6 percent interest due on April 1, 1909 was offered as part payment toward the balance of the purchase price.

There was consternation when the original $500 deposit could not be accounted for by the treasurer (Isaac Hahn). Sigmund Lederer and Leopold Dimond were delegated to call upon him, Dimond later reporting "that he [Hahn] would have the matter straightened out." The board ordered "that a report in triplicate be made showing the amount of money due the congregation by our treasurer and that this with a demand for same be sent as follows—copy to Mr. J. [Jerome] Hahn, one copy to our treasurer, Mr. I. Hahn, and the

third copy to remain in the files of the congregation." Attorney (later Judge) J. Jerome Hahn was the son of Isaac Hahn. Hahn, of course, was not re-elected treasurer at the annual meeting in October.

The board voted in November "that the entire matter of securing the books and funds belonging to this congregation and now in the hands of Mr. Isaac Hahn be left with our Finance Committee being empowered to act as they see fit in the matter." In November Harry Robinson reported for the Finance Committee that the $57.40 "due us" had been received and that the $500 due from the sale of the temple would be forwarded in a few days. On February 2, 1909 the Finance Committee reported receiving the $500 "from our late [i.e. former] treasurer, Mr. I. Hahn, this being the money he owed us from the sale of the former Temple." Hahn's health was clearly failing, and he died shortly thereafter on March 12 in his 64th year. He was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery.[15]

The board learned in September that a hall was available at the corner of Weybosset and Eddy Streets at a cost of $650 for one year commencing on November 1 with the privilege of renewal for a longer term if necessary. This facility, known as Outlet Hall, was a part of the Samuels Brothers' holdings. Its entrance was at 123 Eddy Street. The Property Committee was directed to engage an architect to draw up a plan for alterations to the new hall to make it suitable as a temporary house of worship. Early in October $50 was appropriated for the Entertainment Committee to arrange a reception and furnish refreshments "at our next and last service in our present Temple"—most certainly a nostalgic occasion.

The board voted to increase the salaries of the choir. The piano and organ of the old synagogue were returned to M. Steinert and Sons, music and instrument dealers, for disposition. Leopold Dimond donated a carpet (from his department store, no doubt) for the pulpit of the new hall. Arrangements were made with the janitor of the Outlet Company building to have its elevator operating for Friday evening services at fifty cents per evening.[16] The Council of Jewish Women was given permission to hold meetings in the hall at $1.50 for each session.

On October 11, 1908 at the annual meeting, the congregation elected Simon Elias president; Leopold Dimond, vice president; Louis Lyons, treasurer; Leo Hartman, financial secretary; and Leo Engel, recording secretary. The president and treasurer were autho-

rized to accept the $2000 mortgage from the Swedish church as recommended by the Property Committee. Thanks were extended "to J.J. Hahn, our attorney, for his untiring efforts in behalf of the congregation." A vote of appreciation was also tendered "to [Louis] Green [sexton], Leo Hartman, Leon Krieger, and Miriam Grover for their efforts and the manner in which they handled and seated the members and many visiting strangers at our Temple during the past Holidays"—the last in the old sanctuary. Sigmund Lederer, Cemetery Committee chairman, was authorized to purchase an additional parcel of land at the cemetery, for which they had obtained an option, for $3100—$500 payable in cash and $2600 as a mortgage at 6 percent. Finally, in response to a solicitation from the League for the Suppression of Tuberculosis,[17] $5 each was donated to the Providence and Pawtucket branches.

The board in November, in response to a request from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, designated President Simon Elias and Rabbi Henry Englander as its delegates to the convention in Philadelphia on January 19,1909. It was suggested that they "stop over at any points between Providence and Philadelphia for the purpose of looking over such Temples as may be in such towns and gather suggestions therefrom for our new edifice." A letter of appreciation was sent to Alderman William K. Reynolds for his efforts in obtaining a permit for use of the additional land at the cemetery for burial purposes.

During January of 1909 the Building and Sites Committee learned from Attorney Carroll that 31,212 square feet of land on Elmwood Avenue between Wesleyan Avenue and Plenty Street was available for $20,000. It belonged to the widowed Mrs. Augustus S. Miller and contained a 20-room house. Sigmund Lederer of the Building and Sites Committee made a deposit of $500 and took an option on the land which could be exercised any time prior to June 1, 1909. The Building and Sites Committee was unanimous in judging the Elmwood Avenue site as most desirable.

The board voted to have the congregation's charter amended "to raise from $20,000 to $130,000 the amount the corporation may receive and take by purchase, grant, devise, bequest, or donation any real or personal property and may manage and dispose of same according to their discretion" and "shall never at one time exceed this value." Amended to $100,000, the petition was ratified by the congregation and later granted by the General Assembly.

In February the School Committee advised the board that the Sunday School was greatly handicapped in its present quarters. It recommended the hiring of other halls in the building to facilitate the separation of classes. The board voted to donate $33.75 from the cemetery charity box[18] to the newly opened Rhode Island Home for Jewish Orphans and Day Nursery, later the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island.[19]

Lederer reported in April that negotiations for the purchase of the Elmwood Avenue property had failed due to difficulty in obtaining a clear title. He announced, however, that the committee had consummated the purchase for some $10,100 of a lot at the corner of Broad and Glenham Streets in Providence, with 123 feet on Broad Street and 145½ feet on Glenham Street, totaling 17,924 square feet.

The board received an acknowledgment from Mrs. Isaac Hahn for its expression of sympathy upon the passing of her husband. J. Jerome Hahn paid for his father's seat in the synagogue to date and applied for its continuance for himself and his mother. The trustees expressed their appreciation for "his attitude in the matter," and set aside a page in the minutes in memory of the congregation's long-time treasurer. New leadership was emerging.

The surveyor of the cemetery property informed the Cemetery Committee that a fence on the newly acquired property was misplaced and belonged on the property of the estate of the late W. Moore. The contractor, Joseph A. Latham, estimated that the new cemetery plot would require 1992 cubic feet of fill. It was decided to proceed with the fill and top dressing and have the fences moved as indicated by the surveyor. Estimates of $1050 and $1275 were received for the work, and the lesser bid was accepted.

On the charity agenda, the Providence Society for Organizing Charity was given the congregation's annual donation of $10, and the Providence District Nursing Association acknowledged a donation of ice cream. The Young Men's Hebrew Association (Y.M.H.A.) had been given permission to use the congregation's present quarters and expressed its gratitude for the favor.

A special meeting of the congregation was called on May 5 to act upon a plan for financing the new temple. The plan provided for pledges which could be applied at the option of the subscribing members toward the purchase of a pew, subject to agreement as to price and location. The pew would become the property of the

subscriber and his heirs in accordance with the rules and regulations of the congregation. Sigmund Lederer subscribed $1000, and three smaller pledges were also received.

As summer approached, the rabbi was granted a vacation during July and August. Each Sunday School teacher was given a gift of a book for good work, and a special letter of commendation was sent to Matilda (Mattie) Pincus for her unusually fine performance as a teacher. The Rhode Island Company (the electric streetcar utility) was asked to extend its Reservoir Avenue line to the city line, which was beyond the cemetery, and the city was petitioned to put an electric arc light in front of the cemetery. The street railway company later informed the congregation that it had referred the petition to its board, but in any case intended eventually to run the Reservoir Avenue line to Auburn in Cranston, well beyond the cemetery.

The board was informed that it must take possession of the Broad Street property at once if it were to avoid city property taxes after July 1. The cash on hand was $2500 short of that needed to complete the purchase. The treasurer was authorized to borrow from the Citizens Savings Bank whatever funds were required to close the sale. However, to raise the $2500 urgently needed to cover the deficiency, $250 would be borrowed from each of 10 members on a short-term basis.

On June 15 the congregation learned from the Building and Sites Committee chairman, Sigmund Lederer, that the lot at the corner of Broad and Glenham Streets had been purchased for $10,108.62. The committee had met with William R. Walker and Son, Architects to gain some idea of the cost of erecting the new temple. Mr. Howard Walker, architect for the project, had brought in plans based upon the temple in St. Paul, Minnesota, which the Building Committee had found pleasing. Harry Robinson reported that 57 of 108 members had subscribed $13,755 to the Building Fund, leaving 51 members still to be heard from. Lederer reported that the shortage of $2500 required to meet the purchase price had indeed been made up by borrowing from members. The list contained such familiar names as Harry Robinson, Leon and Joseph Samuels, Sigmund Lederer, Leopold Dimond, and Mrs. Caesar Misch—the only female.

During the past academic year Rabbi Englander had earned his Ph.D. degree and was congratulated by the board for his attainments.[20] His expenses for the forthcoming meeting of the Central

Conference of American Rabbis in New York City would be paid. The work of filling in the land at the cemetery and constructing fences had been completed. Elysium Hall at 183 Weybosset Street was hired for the High Holidays for two evening and two morning services at $125, because of the inadequacy of Outlet Hall.

The annual meeting of 1909 was held at the "present place of worship" on September 26. The officers were re-elected except that recording secretary, Leo Engel, was replaced by Benjamin Jacobs. Business was routine, with the congregation obviously in a holding pattern.

On October 4, 1909 a death occurred of some historic significance. Mrs. Anna Jacobs Rosenfeld, "one of the oldest and most esteemed members" of the congregation, had passed away in her 66th year. She was the daughter of Cantor Abraham and Mrs. Jacobs. Jacobs had officiated as spiritual leader of Congregation Sons of Israel from 1862 to 1869, prior to its merger with Sons of David. She was the widowed mother of John Jacob Rosenfeld, whose later bequest gave impetus to the erection of the Orchard Avenue complex. At a board meeting on the day following her death, notice was taken of her passing, and her son John Jacob Rosenfeld, not previously himself a member of the congregation, was elected to membership.

At several meetings in October 1909, the Building and Sites Committee considered various plans and estimates. In addition to the Walker plans, Banning & Thornton had submitted competing plans. E.K. Watson & Company of Warren, Rhode Island estimated that they could build the Banning & Thornton building for $37,500, and that the total cost including plumbing, heating, lighting, furnishings, and organ would be $47,000. They estimated that they could build according to the Walker plan for $45,000 with a further saving of $2250 if a planned dome were omitted. The committee voted 11 to 3 in favor of selecting Banning & Thornton as architects. Lederer, who favored Walker as architect and perhaps was somewhat committed to the firm, felt that as a matter of principle he should resign as chairman if his judgment were not honored. After much discussion, however, he agreed to continue, and the matter thus rested while bids were being prepared.

Other small items of business were transacted at year's end. The cornerstone of the old temple was received and stored for future placement. A bill for elevator service at Outlet Hall was disposed of. A charge of $2 for use of the hall would be assessed for each

meeting of the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association. A request from the Congregation Beth Israel of Hartford, Connecticut for permission to exchange pulpits was granted.

On February 1, 1910 seven sealed bids upon specifications submitted by Banning & Thornton, architects, were opened and read by the Building and Sites Committee. The bids ran the gamut from $88,000 to $125,000 for the building alone. Plumbing bids ranged from $2100 to $2600 and heating from $4400 to $5900. Banning, who was present at the meeting, was asked if he could explain the remarkable increase over the estimates which he had originally submitted. He replied that the price could be materially reduced by certain changes in specifications.

Later, in February, Lederer reported that Banning had proposed drawing plans for a cheaper building. Walker, however, had stated that he could build according to his plans for $60,000. Much discussion ensued. In fact, a church available for sale was mentioned as a possible alternative. It was decided in the end to delay proceeding with plans and to investigate the church possibility.

The board, which was composed of many of the same persons as the Building and Sites Committee, also met on February 1. Its meeting was featured by two important items of business. Reverend Henry Englander tendered his resignation effective at the end of his term on September 1, 1910. His letter gave "in detail his reasons for leaving the congregation." President Elias also read a letter from Dr. David Philipson of Cincinnati, scholarly rabbi and a leading member of the board of Hebrew Union College, appealing to the congregation to accept Englander's resignation. He was sought for the faculty of Hebrew Union College and would be only the third alumnus to serve on the faculty of his Alma Mater. The board recommended that the congregation accept his resignation and prepare a testimonial for presentation before his departure. The congregation on February 9 ratified both actions and authorized an expenditure "not exceeding $100." The task of finding a new rabbi was referred to the board. The board also recommended that the new temple be designated "Temple Beth-El", which was in due course adopted by the congregation.

Rabbi Nathan Stern of Trenton, New Jersey had been suggested to the board as Englander's successor. A recommendation from Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, president of Hebrew Union College, appears to

have been favorable. The congregation extended a call to Dr. Stern to occupy the pulpit at a salary of $2100. He accepted the offer and on recommendation of the board was unanimously elected rabbi on March 18.

In the spring a concert held to raise money for the new building project netted a respectable $1027.66. On May 4 new bids were opened, based on modified plans and specifications by Banning & Thornton. These ranged from $45,000 to $52,000 for the building, $1500 to $1800 for the plumbing, $450 to $850 for electrical work, and $2400 to $3500 for heating. After general discussion the chairman of the Building and Sites Committee was authorized to sign contracts with the successful bidders for a sum not to exceed $51,000. On June 2 the congregation ratified this action and empowered the chairman to sign contracts with successful bidders for erection of the new temple and installation of plumbing, heating, gas, and electrical equipment for a sum not to exceed $51,000. The committee was also authorized to execute a mortgage with the Citizens Savings Bank for up to $30,000 at 5 percent on the land and building to be erected and to enter into any other contracts necessary to complete the temple.

Attorney J. Jerome Hahn had advised against signing any contracts before the mortgage had been obtained. Robinson reported for the Ways and Means Committee that $17,545 had already been pledged. He predicted that, including pledges, his committee would probably raise a total of $32,700 through solicitations from co-religionists; businesses in Providence, Boston, and New York; sale of memorial windows; sale of pews; entertainments; and contributions from the Alumnal Association[21] and the Ladies' Auxiliary Society. As a last resort, the committee would recommend the issuance of ten-year $50 bonds, at least ten of which would be retired each year. The congregation concluded the eventful meeting by approving a budget of $4530, providing a salary of $2100 for the rabbi, $750 for the choir, and $650 for hall rental, with income optimistically estimated at $5127. A $25 check was sent to Matilda (Mattie) Pincus for her valuable services as librarian of the Sunday School library.

Early in the summer the president joined with the Ladies' Auxiliary Society in planning an entertainment and farewell reception for Rabbi Englander. Drs. Nathan Stern and Henry Englander were

requested to arrange for the laying of the cornerstone of the new building, as construction was already under way. Elysium Hall was again engaged for the Holidays.

Stern was added to the Building and Sites Committee, and a resident engineer was engaged to oversee the construction. The board recommended that an inscription be carved upon the portico of the new building to read TEMPLE BETH-EL in simple capital block letters with the hyphen as designated. Mrs. Caesar Misch, who had received several estimates from organ-building firms, insisted that quality as well as price would be a factor in selection of the instrument.

Dr. Henry Englander left the congregation on September 1 to join the faculty of Hebrew Union College. "Although a pulpiteer and public speaker of no mean ability," an obituary many years later stated, " . . . he preferred the unaffected, quieter, and less artful accents of the academic classroom." In Rhode Island he was esteemed for his sincerity and character. At Hebrew Union College he had a distinguished career as Professor of Medieval Jewish Exegesis, and in 1940 the college conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. He passed away on April 9, 1951 in his 74th year.[22]

Nathan Stern was a native of New York, where he had a brilliant record as a student. He graduated from Columbia University in 1898 with a B.A. degree and went on to earn M.A. and Ph.D. degrees there in 1899 and 1901, respectively, while in his early twenties. During 1901 and 1902 he was a research student under the brillant Solomon Schechter at St. John's College of Cambridge University in England. In 1902 Schechter was called to the then struggling Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, which he eventually elevated to preeminence in Conservative Judaism. Stern followed him to New York and spent a year with him. Since Stern's inclination was distinctly toward Reform, he entered Hebrew Union College, where he completed his rabbinical studies and was ordained in 1904. His first positions were with congregations in Marion and Wabash, Indiana, where he served from 1904 to 1906. He then assumed the rabbinate in Trenton, New Jersey, where he occupied the pulpit from 1905 to 1910. While there, he served as Jewish chaplain of the New Jersey State Prison, as a commissioner of the Trenton Public Library, and as visitor at one of the city

hospitals.[23] Stern, bespectacled, scholary-looking, handsome, and square-jawed, was favored with a thatch of wavy brown hair.

In September the recommendation of the board on naming the new temple was discussed by the congregation and Dr. Stern. After a spirited debate, it was voted unanimously that the new temple would be named Temple Beth-El, conforming to the Hebraic rendering with a hyphen between "Beth" and "El." The congregation, however, would retain its corporate name, "The Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David." Beth-El is Hebrew for "House of God." The term "Temple" was adopted by the Reform movement in Germany as early as 1818. The usage apparently derived from the conviction that the modern synagogue had in fact replaced the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, while the Orthodox clung to the faith that the Temple, the holy sanctuary of the Bible, would in time be restored. Conservative congregations, however, have also frequently used the designation "temple."[24]

The incumbent officers were re-elected at the annual meeting on October 16, 1910. A committee was appointed to represent the congregation at the dedication on October 23 of the new home of the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island on North Main Street in Providence.[25] A delegation consisting of Jacob Shartenberg, Harry Cutler, Abraham Cohen, and Rabbi Stern was appointed to attend the convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in New York. Dr. Stern's expenses of $30 would be paid by the congregation.

On November 1 the board ordered that the property of the congregation be ready for removal on December 1. The School Committee reported in December that there were some 60 children in the school whose parents were non-members, and that it was in the process of investigating the parents' circumstances. Ethel M. Lindsay of the choir requested an increase in salary—a continuing problem. The organist, Mrs. Burnham, was granted the loan of the congregation's portable organ for use in a forthcoming recital at Churchill House, a hall on Angell Street.

Mrs. Caesar Misch reported to the Building and Sites Committee in December 1910 that the committee on procuring an organ recommended the purchase of a Miller organ at a cost of about $3500. The designs for memorial windows submitted by Messrs. Murphy and Millson of Boston were accepted as the most fitting, each win-

dow to contain a different symbol appropriate to the Jewish religion. The Swedish Baptist Society offered $75 for the chandelier in the Friendship Street building, not suitable for the new structure. It was voted to ask $100, but to accept the original offer if no more could be obtained.

The new year of 1911 began with an unhappy event. The incumbent vice president, Leopold Dimond, died on February 24, 1911 in his 67th year.[26] He had been a successful businessman, contributing to the growth of Providence, and a conscientious and devoted servant of the congregation, closely allied to its growth for more than 40 years. Sigmund Lederer was elected to fill his unexpired term, and a memorial service was held later on April 7.

Progress on the building continued. The Alumni Association of past confirmands offered to furnish 250 chairs for the vestry and to pay for extra electrical wiring. The purchase of a lighting system was left to Chairman Lederer and architect Banning. It was decided to have only two chairs on the pulpit. Choice of decorations, furnishings, hangings, and other accoutrements to be used in the vestry would be left in the hands of the Alumni Association. Ultimately, the lighting contract went to the Bradley and Hubbard Company of Meriden, Connecticut.

The board in April notified the membership that the pulpit, ark, pews, and other congregational furniture in the new temple would be "on sale." The memorial windows would be available at $750 each. The selection would be by auction, and no one would be eligible to purchase a memorial who had not subscribed at least $500 to the erection of the temple or the purchase of a pew.

The congregational meeting of April 16 was held —most certainly with great satisfaction —in the vestry of the unfinished new temple. Dr. Stern was re-elected rabbi for a year at an increased salary of $2200. Vice President and Building Committee Chairman Sigmund Lederer was able to announce that the building would be completed and ready for occupancy about July 1.

The board, meeting on May 1, voted that 25 percent of the purchase price of pews must be paid at the time of purchase and 10 percent annually with interest at 6 percent per year on the balance. One might "hire" a pew at an amount designated for each member, plus 6% annually of the value of the pew, this in addition to the membership assessment. The members would also pay a percentage

of the value of the pews as the board might deem necessary to meet the expenses of the congregation. Subscriptions to the Building Fund would not be credited toward the purchase of pews after September 1, 1911. The board reserved the right to extend this time at its discretion. These rulings were ratified by the congregation on May 21.

A Committee on Dedication of the new temple was established consisting of 22 members, nine from the board, including officers. The Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association presented two candelabra to the temple. The board granted Henry Wessel permission to use the congregation's present hall three evenings a week during July and August for classes for poor children.

Abraham Dimond on behalf of his mother, Mrs. Leopold Dimond, and his brothers, M. Maurice and Henry J. Dimond, offered to furnish an onyx pulpit "similar to that used in the temple on Commonwealth Avenue" (i.e. Temple Israel, the Reform congregation of Boston). The offer was accepted, and work on the mahogany pulpit being built by the Wholesale Cabinet Works was ordered stopped. The committee on May 21 made an official inspection of the new temple, at which the contractor, William Williams, was present. Robinson reported to the Ways and Means Committee that the cost of the new temple would be $62,000 exclusive of the land, which cost $10,108.62. He stated that the shortage of $12,000 to $14,000 would be discussed at the congregational meeting of May 21. As previously ruled, the purchase or hiring of pews and subscriptions were tied together. Several meetings of the board were devoted to complaints about the size of assessments.

On June 6 the board voted the regular contributions to the League for the Suppression of Tuberculosis and the Providence Society for Organizing Charity. A gift by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Lyons of a perpetual lamp for the sanctuary of the new temple was gratefully accepted. Archibald Silverman, destined to be an important member of the congregation, was admitted to membership effective September 1. Rabbi Stern was granted the customary summer vacation during July and August.

The congregation on June 25 approved a growing budget of $7355 with allowances for the rabbi's salary of $2500, the choir at $1000, the janitor at $900, and the secretary at $75. A large item was interest on the mortgage of $1750. The appointment of the Ded-

ication Committee consisting of the trustees and certain others was ratified. Respected former congregant Alexander Strauss of Lowell, Massachusetts was made an honorary member of the committee.

During July a plan of architect Banning for the new onyx altar donated by the Dimond family was accepted. The Austin Organ Company, the dealer from whom the new organ was purchased, accepted four notes for $262.50 at 6 percent maturing at six month intervals. The balance of $2500 was paid in cash. On August 6, 1911, Chairman of the Committee on Bylaws, J. Jerome Hahn, presented extensive amendments to the bylaws of both the congregation and the burial ground. These were adopted essentially intact. Among other provisions, the amendments gave the board of trustees power to transact all business between meetings of the congregation and further revised all congregational documents to render them consonant with the congregation's move into its bright new quarters.

Also during August the treasurer reported receipt of $2500 from the Ladies' Auxiliary Society toward purchase of the organ. Joseph and Leon Samuels purchased two lots in the cemetery. The board accepted gifts of a music rack for the choir loft from the widowed Pauline Shuman and a settee from President Elias in memory of his son Augustus. The lighting fixtures were installed and were pronounced satisfactory. It was decided to complete the mahogany altar after all, to put it on casters, and place it in the vestry. With these finishing touches the congregation's new home was ready to be dedicated.

NOTES

1. Ligonier, Indiana is 39 miles northwest of Fort Wayne. It was a trading center for a rich dairy, poultry, and cattle-raising industry. Its population in 1950 was 2,178. It had a vibrant Jewish immigrant community with a Jewish cemetery and synagogue. As late as 1950 many of its townspeople were descendants of these early Jewish settlers. As of this writing, few of the descendants of the Jewish pioneers remain in Ligonier, but the cemetery and synagogue have been preserved.

   Englander's obituary contained the following on Ligonier:

   > His first Congregation was that of Ligonier, Indiana, a community historically distinguished in the fact that out of a total population of 3000 souls, its less than half-a-hundred Jewish families of native

origin constituted the primary source and direction of the city's civic, social, agricultural, industrial, and commercial interests.
Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbooks 61:247–251, 1951.

2. See S.J. Goldowsky, "Jews in Medicine in Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Historical Notes* 2:151–191, (December) 1957, pp. 175–183. This paper describes the progression from Miriam Lodge, No. 13, O.B.A. (c. 1895) to Miriam Society, Number one (1903) to The Miriam Hospital Association (1907)—all women's organizations—to the opening of The Miriam Hospital in 1925. The Association became the auxiliary of the hospital.
3. See note 1. Also *Lives and Voices*, ed. by Stanley Chyet, chapter titled "A Hoosier Rabbinate" by Morris M. Feuerlicht (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1972), pp. 156–157.
4. After the abortive revolution of 1905 in Russia, pogroms increased in number and violence as the Czarist government attempted to direct the revolutionary anger of the masses toward Jews.
5. David C. Adelman wrote:

   The *Gemilath Chesed* Associations [also rendered *Gemilut Hesed*, Hebrew for "bestowal of loving-kindness"] were formed in every new Jewish community (fifty years later in Providence) and have persisted down to our own day. . . .

   The Hebrew Free Loan Association of Providence, organized in 1903 with a subscribed capital of $725, made loans up to $25 and grew financially from dues and donations until today [1954]. They make individual loans as high as $650 and have a capital of $105,000. The loans are made without interest or any other charge whatsoever, on easy repayments, thus enabling those in financial distress to go into or stay in business, marry, continue their studies, bury their dead, celebrate the high holidays, in short, to live as self-respecting members of the community. [It was, of course, aimed at assisting the new and poor immigrants.]

   See D. C. Adelman, "Gemilath Chesed, Hebrew Free Loan Association of Providence," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:129–146 (June) 1954. Also Benton H. Rosen, "The Gemiloth Chasodim of Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:275–288, (November) 1969; and "Gemilath Chesed," Hebrew Free Loan Association of Providence," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:414–427, (November) 1970.
6. There is a bronze statue of Bowen E. Church playing his cornet in Roger Williams Park, Providence, R.I.
7. The Providence Society for Organizing Charity was a consortium of Providence charities designed to avoid duplication of services to any one client. It attempted to keep a roll of all charity cases in Providence and a record of the activities of the various constituent societies. It had been in existence as early as 1896. See D. C. Adelman's "Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association," pp. 56–71, *passim*.

8. *The Historical Catalogue of Brown University 1764–1934*, pp. 32, 1041, 1044.
9. An association of past confirmands. The adjective "alumnal" does not appear in any of several dictionaries consulted (including the Oxford). The association soon began using the more conventional "Alumni Association."
10. With a telephone for the sexton and possible electric lighting, the congregation was on the threshold of the modern era.
11. William G. Braude, "Three Rabbis of the Congregation, 1877–1910," *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Anniversary, A pictorial memoir*, 1980.
12. The cornerstone was not, in fact, removed at that time. The Swedish congregation occupied the building until 1959 as the Friendship Street Baptist Church, when it was demolished to make way for the Interstate 195 freeway. David C. Adelman recovered the cornerstone, which was subsequently imbedded in the stone wall bordering the garden to the rear of the Orchard Avenue synagogue.

    Menorah (Hebrew) means "candelabrum." There are two candelabra of religious significance, the seven-branched *menorah* of the ancient temple, and the later eight-branched type (with an additional socket for the "server" candle) used at Hanukkah. The seven-branched *menorah* became one of the most familiar Jewish symbols and is frequently found in synagogue decorations and on tombs. The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts what was purported to be the *menorah* of the second temple. The ancient temple *menorah* was of solid gold.
13. Oakland Beach on East Greenwich Bay in the town of Warwick, Rhode Island had a small amusement park and was accessible by trolley car. After the 1938 hurricane it became largely a suburban community.
14. Caesar Misch, born in Berlin, Germany in 1857, was well educated in Germany and served as a lieutenant in the German army. He came to America in 1888 and settled in Providence in 1892. He became a very successful clothing merchant on Westminster Street and opened in quick succession stores in Worcester, Massachusetts; Lowell, Massachusetts; Hartford, Connecticut; Holyoke, Massachusetts; Manchester, New Hampshire; Brockton, Massachusetts; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and New York City, the last in 1901. He depended heavily on installment buying. He built a six-story building on Westminster Street, corner of Empire Street, which survives as the Harris Building. It became the headquarters of his far-flung businesses. He was also financially involved in Vanity Fair Amusement Company, which ran an amusement park on Narragansett Bay in East Providence. The park was destroyed by fire a few years later. He was a 32nd degree Mason in Redwood Lodge. He died suddenly at the age of 51. He was survived by his wife Marion L. (Simon) Misch, who became a prominent citizen in her own right, a son Walter, and a daughter Dorothy. See Eleanor F. Horvitz, "Marion L. Misch—An Extraordinary Woman," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:143–201, (November) 1980, pp. 145–148.

15. Isaac Hahn, born in New York in 1845, came to Providence from Albany, New York, about 1870. He started out in the retail business, selling gloves, laces, and dress trimmings. In 1885 he was president of the National Tubing Company, manufacturer of flexible tubing. In 1888 he advertised as Isaac Hahn, Manufacturer of Silk, Worsted and Mohair Braids. He is believed to have been the first Jewish textile manufacturer in Rhode Island. He owned considerable real estate in downtown Providence. The Isaac Hahn Land Company was chartered on October 3, 1908, shortly before his death. He was the first Jew elected to public office in Rhode Island, serving one term in the House of Representatives of the General Assembly. See *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 4:517–518, (November) 1966. Also Erwin Strasmich, "Jews and the Textile Industry, Rhode Island and Fall River, Massachusetts," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:249–299, (November) 1972, p. 254. Also "Isaac Hahn—Pioneer Textile Manufacturer," *ibid.* 6:308 and adjoining inside back cover (November 1972).
16. The Samuels brothers, Joseph and Leon, founded the Outlet Company in 1894. Their store on Weybosset Street in Providence was highly successful and came to occupy a full city block. They became very wealthy and were prominent in civic, business, and community affairs. The burned-out shell of their store was demolished in the fall of 1989. WJAR-TV (Channel 10) is a lineal descendant of their successful pioneering radio station. See Eleanor F. Horvitz, "The Outlet Company Story and the Samuels Brothers," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:488–531, (November) 1974. Also Samuel Chipman Smart, *The Outlet Story 1894–1984* (Providence, pub. by Outlet Communications, Inc., 1984).
17. Tuberculosis was a leading cause of death, particularly among the poorer classes. The death rate from tuberculosis in 1900 was 40.3 per 100,000. By 1947 it had dropped to 0.6 per 100,000 as a result of public health measures to check infection from tubercular patients, improved diagnosis and treatment, and rest and diet, particularly in sanitaria as espoused by Edward L. Trudeau. With the discovery of streptomycin in 1944, the first anti-tubercular antibiotic, the disease became amenable to antibiotic therapy. The State of Rhode Island had a tuberculosis sanitarium at Wallum Lake, and the City of Providence operated a tuberculosis ward at the former Providence City Hospital (later The Charles V. Chapin Hospital).
18. The charity boxes at Jewish cemeteries are not now in evidence. They were discontinued at Reform cemeteries before they disappeared from the Orthodox. The author can remember as a child attending Orthodox funerals where old men rattled charity boxes soliciting contributions. *Pushkes* (Yiddish) were little cans or containers kept in the home, often in the kitchen, in which money to be donated to charity was accumulated. Each charity would provide its own *pushke*. The money in the charity box mentioned here was obviously distributed at the discretion of the board.

19. The Rhode Island Home for Jewish Orphans (chartered in September 1908—it later became the Rhode Island Home for Jewish Orphans and Day Nursery) and the Machzek-Hadas Home for Jewish Orphans (chartered in November 1908) merged in July 1909 to form The Jewish Orphanage of Providence. It later became The Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island, and then The Jewish Children's Home of Rhode Island. It built a facility on Summit Avenue in Providence, opened in 1924. It closed for good in 1942. The building is now part of The Miriam Hospital. See Seebert J. Goldowsky, "The Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:88–105, (November) 1958.
20. *Brown University Historical Catalogue 1764–1934*, pp. 32, 1041, 1044.
21. See note 9.
22. See note 1.
23. *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook* 55:210–211, 1945.
24. In the *Random House Dictionary* (unabridged 1967) "temple" in one of several definitions is defined as "A synagogue, usually a Reform or Conservative one." In American usage one speaks of "going to Temple." It appears also to have a broader connotation referring to the congregation, e.g., Temple Brotherhood, Temple Sisterhood, Temple Youth, Temple affairs, Temple finances, Temple services, and Temple board.
25. See note 19. From 1910 to 1924 the orphanage occupied a large Victorian mansion at 1213 North Main Street in Providence.
26. See Chapter Five, note 2.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Broad Street and Temple Beth-El

The Great Event, the dedication of the new edifice, was spread over a three-day period from September 15 to 17, 1911. The festivities were anticipated by a spread in *The Providence Sunday Journal* of September 10. The headline in bold capitals read: "GROWTH OF THE CITY'S JEWISH COMMUNITY: DEDICATION THIS WEEK OF TEMPLE BETH-EL, NEW HOME OF REFORM JUDAISM, A NOTABLE STEP IN RACE'S PROGRESS." The account described the building as a handsome gray brick temple, and commented that the dedication "will mark a notable step in the development of the Jewish Community in Providence. For it will give the oldest congregation in this city a synagogue which ranks with any to be found in this section of the country." The story continued: "The new Temple Beth-El . . . reflects the rise and growth of reform or liberal Judaism in America."

A sketch of the history of the congregation followed. It told of a fire in the vestry rooms of the former synagogue which destroyed the records of the early years and added: "The important events of these years of struggle and growth are preserved only as reminiscences of the older Jewish residents." Only David Frank, who was in his 77th year, was around in the earliest years.[1] As noted in the account, the Reverend Henry Englander had been an active supporter of the move to Broad and Glenham Streets. Since the official name was considered too cumbersome for general use, it would be referred to in popular parlance as Temple Beth-El. The cost of the new edifice was about $75,000. The article gave a graphic description of this early twentieth century classical revival building:

> The Temple . . . is well situated on land of sufficient area to preserve the dignity of the Roman Corinthian order, which it exemplifies.
>
> The exterior is of dark gray mottled brick with all detail of terra cotta in the same shade, and its simple form gives a quiet impression of architectural dignity. There are six entrances, approach to the interior being through a portico in the main vestibule through three main entrances, from which one may go to the gallery, the main auditorium, or the floor [below] devoted to the religious school.
>
> The auditorium proper is most attractive. Lighted by eight main windows of pleasing design and color, all uniform, but each having incorporated different symbolical emblems of special significance to this congregation, the light values are satisfactory without becoming sombre.
>
> The effect first in evidence is the Ark and platform. The wall at the rear of the platform is relieved by fluted Corinthian pilasters with free columns and pediment at the Ark supporting the Commandments in Hebrew on white onyx at either side and behind which is a gallery parapet, giving access to three minor rooms on the gallery level. At the front of the platform is the altar of white onyx flanked on either side by fluted columns supporting the seven candles [Menorah].
>
> The platform itself is flanked on the left by the organ and choir gallery and on the right by an additional exit, gallery and stairway, giving access to the rooms of the rabbi and the choir in the rear of the platform as well as to the Sabbath School floor.
>
> The general color scheme is white and mahogany, white predominating, accenting at its greatest value the classic detail. At the rear, over the main vestibule, is a gallery with stepped floor and a curved balustrade.
>
> The Sabbath School rooms and vestry, reached from either vestibule, have four classrooms, one in each corner, two of which open upon the platform with folding doors acting as ante-rooms on occasions of entertainment, for which the platform is supplied with footlights, curtains, etc. Three other classrooms are in the rear of the platform, one of which is used and fitted for kitchen purposes.

The account mentioned several affiliated organizations: the religious school, the Ladies' Auxiliary, and the Alumni Association. The school had seven grades leading to confirmation and met every

Sunday morning. The rabbi was superintendant and Mattie Pincus general secretary and librarian. The school had an excellent library. The Ladies' Auxiliary provided money for "decorating and beautifying" the synagogue and donated the large organ. The Alumni Association equipped and maintained the school, developed and sustained the library, and furnished the vestry. The story described the scholarly background of Rabbi Stern and noted that he lectured in the department of biblical literature and history at Brown University—the third rabbi of the congregation to be so recognized.[2]

The inaugural service of the dedication, held on Friday evening, September 15, was described in *The Providence Journal*, as were the subsequent events. The news story of September 16 again described the temple, which, it said, bordered on a fairly large Jewish settlement, was a handsome structure of fine architecture, with an interior simply decorated, pure white being the predominant color.

The audience was comprised largely of Jews, although there was a scattering of Christians. Mayor Henry Fletcher of Providence, Mayor Giles W. Easterbrooks of Pawtucket, and other prominent persons attended. The key to the building was presented to President Simon Elias by Chairman Sigmund Lederer. Four bearers carried the Torah scrolls, placed them within the Ark, and closed the doors. Treasurer Louis Lyons lighted the permanent lamp. Rabbi Stern delivered introductory remarks, followed by former spiritual leader Rabbi Henry Englander, who gave the dedicatory address. He cautioned his audience, "you have made only the beginning of a larger and finer temple. . . . it remains to be seen whether in spiritual greatness and moral power you will make this abode more effective and acceptable in the sight of God and man." Old friend Rabbi David Blaustein also participated.

The Saturday morning service, reported in *The Providence Sunday Journal* of September 17, was attended by Rabbis Stern, Englander, Morris Sessler, and Henry W. Ettleson of Temple Beth-Israel of Hartford. Myer Noot had been expected, but was unavoidably absent. Rabbi Sessler delivered the dedicatory address.

The concluding exercises, followed by an informal reception on Sunday afternoon in the vestry, were described in the news story of September 18 as the "Climax to Dedication." The program featured a series of addresses interspersed with music. According to the account, "It proved a delightful and interesting affair and a fitting

climax to an especial occasion in the history of the congregation." Harry Cutler, chairman of the reception committee, presided. Among the speakers were President Elias; past President Alexander Strauss, now of Lowell, Massachusetts; Sigmund Lederer, chairman of the Building and Sites Committee; former Rabbi Englander; incumbent Rabbi Stern; and David Frank, oldest living member of the congregation.[3]

A handsome solid-silver loving cup was presented to Sigmund Lederer in appreciation of his efficient services and accomplishments in bringing the new edifice to completion. The musical numbers included a piano solo by Mrs. Theodore Eisner, a violin solo by Professor Henri Faucher, a cornet solo by the eminent Bowen R. Church, and a bass solo by Percy L. Smith. A collation was served. Many letters and telegrams were read from persons unable to attend. Among them were: President William Herbert Perry Faunce of Brown University; Rhode Island Governor Aram J. Pothier; Rabbi Myer Noot; Rabbi Harry Levi of Temple Israel, Boston; Rabbi Israel S. Rubinstein of the Congregation Sons of Zion of Providence; and Rabbi David P. Philipson, the eminent historian of Cincinnati, to name a few.

According to plan, the new synagogue was dedicated in time for the High Holy Days. A notice was sent to the members emphasizing that all dues and interest must be paid by Friday, September 29 in order to be entitled to a pew or seat on Yom Kippur. "To facilitate," the notice read, "please send check by mail."

The annual meeting of October 8, 1911 was held in the vestry with Vice President Shartenberg presiding, due to the serious illness of the president. The incumbent officers were re-elected. Mattie Pincus was voted $25 for her devoted services to the school. The office of librarian was created with a stipend of $50 per annum intended, of course, for Mattie Pincus. A new committee of five was appointed to adopt ways and means of increasing attendance at Saturday services.

President Simon Elias passed away on October 14 in his 65th year. He had served faithfully as president for nine years. His funeral was held in the temple on October 17, and later on November 24 a special memorial service was held. He was interred in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery.

The board, at a meeting on October 15, ordered that resolutions

be drafted in memory of Simon Elias, who had died in office. A janitor was hired for the new building at $50 per annum. A check for $60.55 was sent to Rabbi Sessler for his travel expenses to the dedication. He had journeyed from New Orleans to pay homage to his old friends. Checks for travel expenses were also sent to Rabbis Ettleson, Blaustein, and Englander. Later, Stern informed the board that Englander had written a letter to the congregation and had graciously returned his check for $50. Rabbi Stern was requested to return the check to Englander with a cordial letter, and Englander later accepted it with an expression of appreciation. The Montefiore Ladies were granted leave to hold their meetings in the vestry for an amount to be determined. The Alumni Association was also welcome to use the vestry. Plans were afoot to have an organ recital in the temple proudly to display the organ's fine qualities. It was announced that three memorial windows had been "sold."

Two annoying matters emerged which gave the trustees a trying time. Benedict B. Lederer had "not affiliated with the congregation" (i.e. had not paid his dues) during the fiscal years 1911 and 1912. The board ordered that a letter be sent to him inquiring as to his reasons for default. If he did not reply, he would no longer remain an officer (trustee) or a member, and a deadline of December 5 was set. The reason for the default in the case of this officer and long-time prominent member of the congregation is not clear. Although Lederer was known to be parsimonious, it is likely that his difficulties were due to illness. Eventually the matter was resolved. At a special meeting of the board on March 16, 1913, Lederer's membership was reinstated, and a committee consisting of Cutler, Shartenberg, and Hahn visited him to apprise him of this action. Lederer, a native of Bohemia, died later on November 28, 1914 at the age of 60. Condolences were sent to the family and were duly acknowledged.

The Elias family was upset upon receiving a bill for $3.38 for removing and replacing pews for the memorial service on November 24. The offended family refused to attend the service. A special meeting of the board was convened to meet the emergency. A delegation was sent to apologize to Mrs. Elias and the family and explain that the bill had been sent in error. The family accepted the apology and agreed to attend.

The congregation was assembled to fill the vacancy in the presi-

dency. Harry Cutler and Louis Lyons were nominated. Cutler was elected, and Joseph Samuels was chosen to replace Cutler on the board. A new generation of leadership was emerging.

Cutler soon gave evidence of his growing national and international reputation. He informed the board that the Honorable Oscar S. Straus[4] would be the guest of Brown University on Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1912. Straus, the brother of Isidor and Nathan Straus, had been affiliated with them in R.H. Macy and Company. A graduate of Columbia University and Columbia Law School, he served as minister or ambassador to Turkey under several presidents, and as Secretary of Labor and Commerce, and also sat on the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. Cutler suggested that Straus be invited to occupy the pulpit at Beth-El while he was in Providence on Friday evening, February 23.

Early in December it was announced that Gene Ware had been engaged as organist at $300 per year. Ware, who was chapel organist at Brown University and would later teach in the music department at the university, was a talented musician and served Temple Beth-El with distinction for many years.[5]

The General Building Committee met on December 13 to wrap up its affairs. Sigmund Lederer reported unpaid bills of $8,340.28. Ways and Means Chairman Harry Robinson reckoned that enough monies could be collected immediately to reduce the obligation to $5000 and recommended that $5000 be borrowed to pay the bills.

The final congregational meeting of the year was held on December 26, 1911. It was decided to borrow $5000 as recommended and to pay all outstanding bills. Several members volunteered to endorse the promisory note. All proceeds from sale of pews would be applied to retiring the debt, and all notes received as partial payment would be held as security. Louis Lyons read the final report of the Building Committee. He was accorded a "rising vote of thanks" for his able presentation. Thus ended an eventful year and a landmark in the history of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David.

At the first board meeting of the new year in the new temple on January 2, 1912, it was agreed to borrow the $5000 on notes from the High Street Bank. The Building Committee was authorized to store or sell the chandelier and the Ark coverings from the old temple, which would no longer be useful in the new building. The Montefiore Ladies and the Council of Jewish Women were granted the privilege of holding meetings in the new vestry at $3 per meet-

ing, thus ensuring continuity. Mrs. Burnham resigned as organist upon the advent of Gene Ware, but Mr. A.C. Burnham would continue in the choir if the board were agreeable. Her resignation was accepted. A.C. Burnham's offer was approved, but he left later.

Although Oscar S. Straus had originally agreed to occupy the pulpit on Friday evening, February 23, he later requested a change to Thursday evening as he would be obliged to return to New York on Friday. Straus gave the address commemorating Washington's Birthday in Sayles Hall at Brown University.[6] In the afternoon, after the celebration, Cutler and a delegation of trustees called at the home of President William H.P. Faunce of Brown University[7] and conducted Straus on a tour of the city and several of its principal industrial plants.

The special evening observance of Washington's Birthday at Temple Beth-El began at 8 p.m. The auditorium was filled to capacity. On the platform were President Harry Cutler; Vice President Jacob Shartenberg; Treasurer Louis Lyons; and trustees Abraham Dimond, Sigmund Lederer, and Joseph Samuels; Rabbi Nathan Stern; Straus; and Brown President William H.P. Faunce. Following prayers and a reading of psalms by Rabbi Stern, Straus spoke, warning of sectarianism in political life. He recalled the importance of Jews in early Rhode Island history, and again stressed the importance of the separation of church and state as espoused by Roger Williams. He cautioned against political appeals and influences based on sectarianism. He was followed by Faunce, who expressed hope that the values of Americans would keep pace with their recent material progress. The program closed with music by temple organist Gene Ware, assisted by soprano Geneva Hall Jefferds, a member of the choir. The exercises were followed by a reception with refreshments prepared by the Ladies' Auxiliary.[8]

The board authorized travel expenses for the rabbi to attend the rabbinical conference in Baltimore in April. The chandelier of the old synagogue was finally sold to the Swedish church for $25. A promisory note for $2250 was given to William Williams, builder of the temple, on account of the balance due him. This was paid off in June. Cutler reported to the congregation that Mrs. David Bernkopf had donated a set of Torah covers for the ark.[9] The Cemetery Committee was authorized to procure a tent for use in the cemetery for stormy weather, but the board recommended that land be set aside in the cemetery for a mortuary chapel. It was voted to

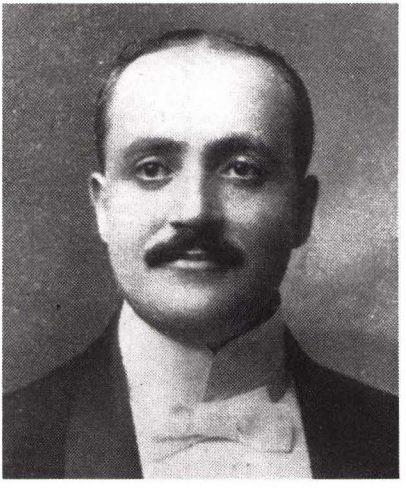
circulate a draft form for dues for pews, the text of which was later adopted and printed. Pews not occupied by those owning or hiring them, or not sold or rented, would be assigned to members by lot, precedence being given to older or infirm members and to those who had been affiliated with the congregation for 20 years or longer.

A successful Summer Festival party organized by the Ladies' Auxiliary yielded a profit of $760. This enabled Mrs. Joseph Samuels and Mrs. Abraham Dimond to present to the congregation on behalf of the Auxiliary a substantial gift of $1000. The budget for the ensuing year was set at $8039, providing for the rabbi's salary at $2300, the choir at $1025, the janitor at $1175, and mortgage interest at $1750. During the summer the note for $5000 with the High Street Bank due on July 22 was renegotiated. J. Jerome Hahn for the Committee on Bylaws submitted a revised set of bylaws, which were unanimously adopted with minor changes. Harry Cutler was re-elected president and Jacob Shartenberg vice president at the annual meeting on September 12.

Also at the annual meeting the Finance Committee was directed to confer with Benedict Lederer "with a view to adjusting all differences between the congregation and Mr. Lederer in the same spirit and for the purpose of bringing about the satisfactory results . . . obtained in other instances in which the congregation had to a certain extent modified its rules to retain the membership of certain members." This was clearly an effort to smooth matters over with this patriarch of the wealthy Lederer clan, who had been affiliated with the congregation for some 35 years. And this friendly gesture would have important repercussions for the congregation 40 years later.

The congregation late in the summer learned of the untimely death of Rabbi David Blaustein on August 26, 1912 in his 47th year. He had been married less than a year to Miriam Umstadter of Norfolk, Virginia. The board sent a letter of condolence to his widow and arranged for a suitable memorial. The Dictionary of American Biography wrote of Blaustein: "He may be considered the first in line of trained Jewish social workers. Original in thought and method, he left a deep impression on the development of social thought and endeavor in Jewish communal activity."

President Cutler, Vice President Shartenberg, and Rabbi Stern attended the annual convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Cincinnati in January 1913. Cutler also designated





Left: Rabbi Gustav N. Hausmann, rabbi 1901–1905. RIJHA.
Right: Rabbi Henry Englander, rabbi 1905–1910. RIJHA.

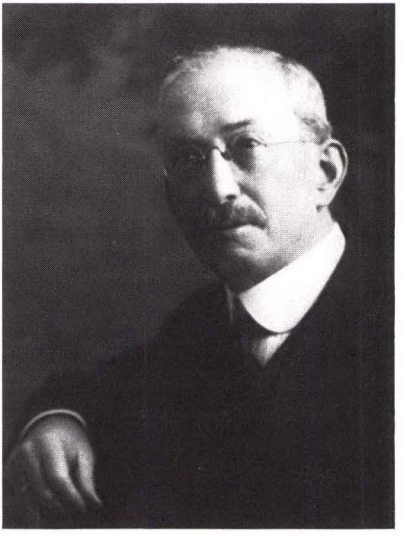


Confirmation Class, circa 1902. Rabbi Gustav Hausmann in center. RIJHA.

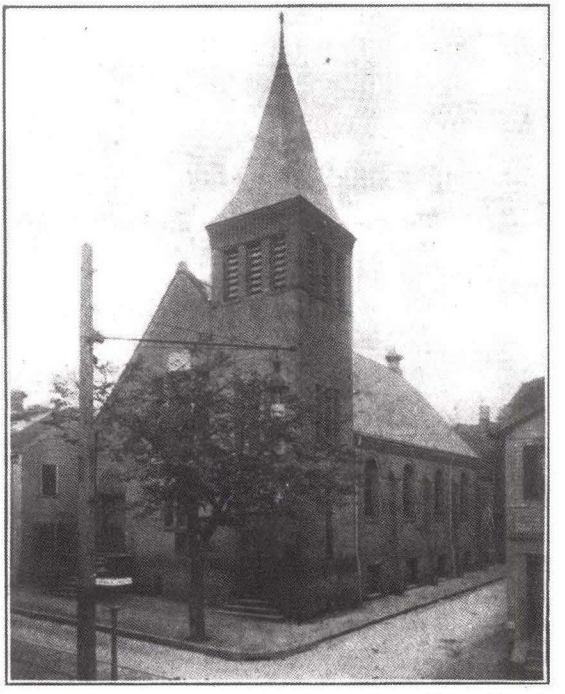


Confirmation Class of 1910 with Rabbis Henry Englander and Nathan Stern. Temple Beth-El Archives.





Left: Rabbi Nathan Stern, rabbi 1910–1915. RIJHA.
Right: Sigmund I. Lederer (1850–1935), long-time member of the board of trustees. RIJHA.



Friendship Street Synagogue, circa 1910. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Gate of the Reservoir Avenue Cemetery, circa 1955. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Temple Beth-El, Broad Street, circa 1934. From cover of *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* vol. 7, no. 4, (November) 1978.



Interior of the Broad Street synagogue showing the Ark. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Librarians' picnic, circa 1915. Left to right: William Schloss, Harriet Dimond [Mrs. Arthur Levy], Harold Bernkopf, Helen Cohen, Celia Ernstof [Mrs. Walter Adler], Roswell Hoffman, Rosa Schneider, Matilda J. (Mattie) Pincus, Alphonse Lederer, Christine Hamburger, and Amos Steiner. RIJHA.





Left: Matilda J. (Mattie) Pincus (1881–1954), served the congregation as librarian, religious school teacher, and principal. RIJHA.
Right: Rabbi Sydney S. Tedesche, rabbi 1916–1917. RIJHA.



President and Mrs. William Howard Taft, accompanied by congregation president Colonel Harry Cutler. Taft, a close friend of Cutler's, at Cutler's invitation occupied the pulpit on the last night of Passover of 1915. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Confirmation Class of 1917. Top row, left to right: William M. Smira, James S. Krasnoff, Joslin Shore, Sanford Shore. Middle row, left to right: Sadie Arken, Celia Ernstof, Robert Lederer, Blanche Davis, Le Roy Dauer, Muriel Dimond, Sophie Slater, Irwin Silverman. Bottom row, left to right: Ethel L. Lippman, Elsie Tatz, Rabbi Sydney S. Tedesche, Pauline G. Jacoby, Mamie Goldberg. RIJHA.



Colonel Harry Cutler, president 1911–1920. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Rabbi Samuel M. Gup, rabbi 1919–1932. RIJHA.



Marion L. (Mrs. Caesar) Misch (1869–1942), first female member of the board of trustees. RIJHA.



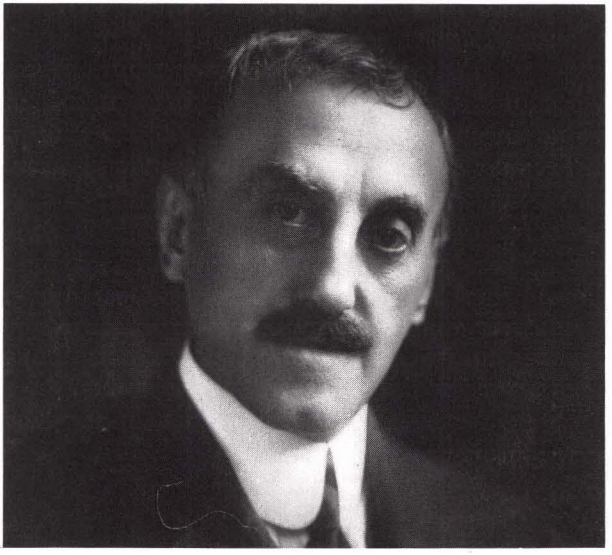
Louis Lyons, president 1920–1927. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Archibald Silverman, president 1942–1946. RIJHA.



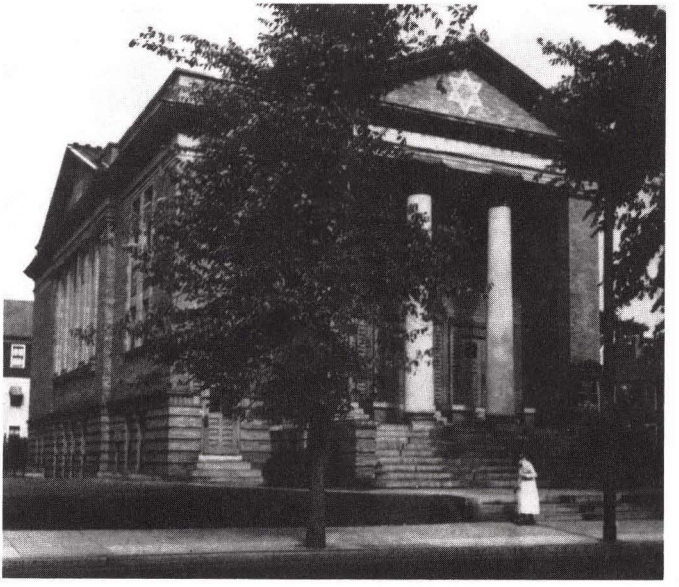
Samuel Kaplan, president 1949–1952. Temple Beth-El Archives.



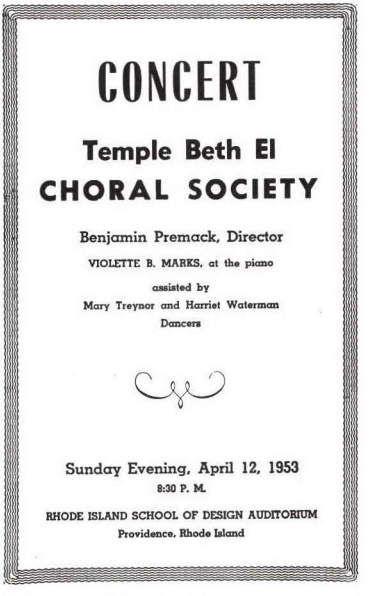
John Jacob Rosenfeld (1870–1942). His generous bequest contributed substantially to the building of the Orchard Avenue synagogue. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Alphonse J. Lederer (1897–1946). His generous bequest also contributed substantially to the building of the Orchard Avenue synagogue. RIJHA.



Temple Beth-El, Broad Street, summertime view. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Program of one of the Choral Society's most successful concerts. RIJHA.



Temple Beth-El Choral Society, March 1951.
Front row, left to right: Mrs. Hazel K. Roth, Mrs. Matthew E. Segool, Mrs. Gabriel Salk, Mrs. Paul H. Rouslin, Mrs. Archie M. Finkle, Mrs. Charles L. Silverman, Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky (Chairman), Mrs. Arthur J. Levy, Miss Violette B. Marks (Accompanist). Rear row, left to right: Mrs. Geza Grossman, Mrs. Milton Pliner, Mrs. Samuel L. Rantz, Mrs. Charles Bojar, Mrs. Ralph Feinstein, Mrs. Jacob Klein, Mrs. J. Joslyn Presser, Miss Dora Korenbaum, Mrs. Aaron Norman, Mrs. Gerald Gordon, Mr. Benjamin Premack, Director. RIJHA.

Rabbi (now Professor) Henry Englander as a delegate from Temple Beth-El. Cutler and Stern later reported to the congregation on the doings at the convention.

There was a continual turnover of personnel in the choir. It had been suggested earlier that a bass be added to the ensemble, and now soprano Geneva Hall Jefferds had resigned. She was later replaced by Madame Fornier at a salary of $20 per month, and, after some delay, a bass singer named Myers was engaged.

During a recent visit to Providence, Rabbi Frederick Cohn of Omaha had delivered an "interesting" sermon from the Beth-El pulpit. A request from congregation Beth Israel of Troy, New York for help in discharging its mortgage was, as usual, placed on file. Rabbi Stern was granted a summer vacation with pay from Shavuot to Rosh Hashanah. As he was planning to travel to Europe, the Ladies' Auxiliary arranged a farewell reception prior to his departure. The rabbi was re-elected for another year at a salary of $2500.

The Ladies' Auxiliary arranged a ball for early in the new year, which turned out to be both a financial and social success. A letter of appreciation was sent to the Auxiliary for "the noble work they are doing in behalf of the Temple." Since available funds were insufficient to pay the $750 interest due on the new mortgage, $500 was borrowed from the Ladies' Auxiliary. William Schloss, a founder of the newly established Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island, appealed for assistance from the congregation. In response the congregation became a contributing member of the Orphanage.

At the request of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Cutler and Shartenberg were elected representatives to its National Advisory Board. Further, "it was moved and carried that the picture of President Cutler as colonel of the First Light Infantry as portrayed in *The Providenc Sunday Journal* of February 23, 1913 be placed in the archives of the congregation."

The budget for the ensuing year was set at $8855, providing $2500 for the rabbi, $1025 for the choir, $1640 for mortgage interest, $1201 for the janitor, and $300 for teachers. The school was reported to be in flourishing condition. A payment of $350 was made to Anna R. Jordan, closing the mortgage on the cemetery. At a special meeting the board assigned seats to those who had not purchased pews.

In October, President Cutler reported that Mrs. Caesar Misch, an inveterate traveler, had addressed a Gentlemen's Night meeting of the Council of Jewish Women in the temple vestry on September

29. She announced that she was presenting to the congregation a valuable *megillah*. The minutes of the Council meeting continue:[10]

> The speaker was Mrs. Caesar Misch, the subject Europe and the near East with special reference to the Holy Land, which Mrs. Misch had visited during her recent trip abroad. At the conclusion of the address Mrs. Misch presented to the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David an ancient copy of the *Megillah* which she had secured in Jerusalem. The white satin robe [i.e. cover] embroidered in gold was the handiwork of the girls at a school in Jerusalem. The silver crown was made by hand in the boys' school in Palestine.
>
> This beautiful and historic gift, said to have been in one family for two hundred years, was received by Mr. Harry Cutler, president of the congregation with, as he expressed it, "a deep feeling of reverence for such an ancient and valuable gift as well as extreme pleasure and thanks to the donor in behalf of the congregation, promising that it would be guarded [as] sacred and preserved as a treasure by the congregation."

Rabbi Stern followed with a few words of appreciation, paying tribute to Mrs. Misch's thoughtfulness and loyalty for presenting such an historic gift to the congregation. A social hour and refreshments followed a showing of the ornate object.

After the meeting in a letter to President Cutler, Mrs. Misch related the background of the gift:[11]

> October 1, 1913
>
> My Dear Mr. Cutler,
>
> In re the *Megillah*. All through Spain I hunted for some relic which might have remained of the Jewish life there before the Inquisition, as it seemed to me that something from that period would be an acceptable gift for our Temple. At last in Gibraltar, through one of the oldest Jewish residents, I found an old woman of 80 whose family had gone in 1492 from Spain to Morocco and thence to Gibraltar. Of all the goods they took with them in their forced exodus from Spain only this *Megillah* remained, and as she is the last of her family, with no relatives near or distant to whom to leave it, I was able to purchase it.
>
> I then thought the gift might be still more acceptable if I added to it some of the work done in the Jerusalem schools. I therefore had the cloak embroidered in the Evalina de Rothschild School

and the silver crown, pointer, and clasp made in the Bezalel School.

Professor Shatz of the latter was enthusiastic over the *Megillah*, which he told me was undoubtedly unique and a museum piece. He asked permission to photograph it for the Bezalel Museum.

Yours sincerely,
Marion L. Misch
400 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island

She wrote from her business address. The term *Megillah* ("scroll") usually refers to the Book of Esther, read in the synagogue during the Purim holiday. There are actually five *Megillot* in all. The books of the Bible traditionally written and preserved in scroll form are the *Song of Songs*, *Ruth*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Esther*, and *Lamentations*. Doubt has been expressed that the scroll dated from the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Dr. A.M. Habermann, Librarian of The Schocken Library in Jerusalem, viewed the scroll during a visit to Temple Beth-El in November 1959. He judged it to be of Iraqi or Yemenite origin, probably dating from the Early 19th Century.[12]

President Harry Cutler, Vice President Jacob Shartenberg, and Treasurer Louis Lyons were re-elected at the annual meeting on October 19, 1913. Benjamin Jacobs was elected recording secretary, and Newman Pincus financial secretary. The treasurer's report submitted by Louis Lyons was an interesting document covering two fiscal years:

> In presenting my annual report as treasurer, I have felt it necessary practically to combine the reports of the financial secretary in order to lay before you in all intelligent manner the exact standing of our corporation.
>
> At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees it was suggested that a statement should be prepared, not only to show the actual amount of cash on hand at the present time, but to analyze the various accounts and to find out, if possible . . . whether we were really self-supporting. . . .this report . . . [covers] a period . . . up to the end of our last fiscal year, which was August 31st, 1913.
>
> At this time permit me to say that your executive officers have been handicapped in a great measure by their inability to secure a financial secretary willing to keep the books of this corporation in the manner originally arranged for.
>
> . . . I think that we can be congratulated upon the accomplish-

> ments of the past two years, as we have succeeded in fully paying the mortgage . . . on the cemetery grounds . . . , in paying $3500 on a loan of $5000 negotiated at the High Street Bank, and . . . I have in my possession sufficient funds to pay the remaining $1500 . . . balance of the note which matures November first of this year . . . .[Paying off the $5000 note, the $1600 mortgage, and $3244.14 in interest on them amounted to a total of $9844.14.]
>
> . . . The congregation, which formerly had been run at a minimum of expense with an exceedingly low rate of taxation to the members, upon taking possession of the new Temple was faced with expenses more than double what [they had been]. . . .

He recommended that $500 per year be added to a sinking fund for repairs and rehabilitation of the building. He suggested that the Ladies' Auxiliary Society join with the Entertainment Committee to raise funds for payments on the mortgage. Lyons accompanied his report with several tables. Receipts and disbursements for the two-year period were $73,000, of which $70,000 was the value of the land and buildings. Cash on hand was only $900, and good and collectible accounts were $1400. The cemetery fund contained $1300. The mortgage was $30,000. Thus the congregation was skating on pretty thin ice, but it would survive.

A committee was appointed to devise ways and means for erecting a mortuary chapel and improving the condition of the cemetery. Rabbi Stern discussed the possibility of issuing a monthly bulletin;[13] none had been published since the passing of *The Organ*. The congregation appropriated $100 for the customary charitable work of the Montfiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association.

Early in 1914 the congregation received a request from the Central Conference of American Rabbis for the annual donation to its Relief and Tract Fund. The board informed the C.C.A.R. that its financial condition did not permit a contribution during the current year. The Ladies' Auxiliary Society presented a check for $1000 to the congregation, which was applied to the mortgage. Appreciation was expressed for its "earnest work in behalf of our Temple." Dr. Stern was reimbursed for expenses incurred in publishing the bulletin, and he was given permission to perform the marriage of a couple who were not members. He was also granted a vacation for the months of July and August and leave to attend the convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Detroit, Michigan, for which travel expenses of $75 were allowed.

The board had recommended Stern's re-election at a salary of $2500, but consideration was given to the feasibility of increasing his salary. Income and expenditure figures, it was argued, did not warrant an increased outlay. However, he was ultimately granted an increase of $100 immediately and another when justified by income. The congregation ratified this compromise and re-elected Stern for another year. The budget for the ensuing year was set at $7970. Interest on the current mortgage of $29,000 was $1450.

Rabbi Stephen Wise, eminent and eloquent rabbi of New York, founder of the Free Synagogue and now in his forty-first year, visited Providence on May 1 and delivered a characteristically grandiloquent sermon from the pulpit of Temple Beth-El. President Cutler reported to the board on his able performance.

The big events of the day were taking place far from Broad and Glenham Streets. On June 28, 1914 Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria and his duchess were assassinated in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Hercegovina (now a part of Yugoslavia), by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian student nationalist. Austria-Hungary soon thereafter declared war on Serbia, the first of a series of domino actions leading ultimately to Britain's declaration of war on Germany on August 4. Thus, the Guns of August were in full clamor, but not a word in the congregational records through the summer and fall reveal any concern with these fateful events.

In the fall an offer was received from Joseph and Leon Samuels, owners of the Outlet Company, offering to build a mortuary chapel in the cemetery in memory of their mother, Mrs. Caroline Samuels. The gift of $6500 for this purpose was accepted with thanks, and it was understood that the building would be constructed under the direction of the board.

At the annual meeting on October 11, 1914 Cutler, Shartenberg, Lyons, Pincus, and Jacobs were re-elected to their respective offices. Newman Pincus was appointed general superintendent of the temple to collect bills and tend to other administrative matters, in addition to his duties as financial secretary, at a salary of $450 per year. This action, it was hoped, would correct the bookkeeping deficiencies described by Treasurer Louis Lyons.

The board on November 3, 1914 received a letter from Dr. Henry Englander congratulating the congregation for an interesting and encouraging report in a recent temple bulletin and extended his wishes for a year of good work and prosperity. The year ended with

the announcement of the purchase of a memorial window by Mrs. Benno Wolf in memory of her late husband. The proceeds from the purchase ($750) made possible a $1000 payment on the mortgage.

In March of 1915 the board was asked by the National Advisory Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations "to ascertain what efforts if any have been put forth in our city to have removed from the school curriculum the reading of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and similar literature objectionable to Jews, as well as songs similarly objectionable." Whatever action may have been taken by the board, this chronicler can testify that the *Merchant of Venice* was never withdrawn from the curriculum of the city's schools.

The minutes of the March meeting for the first time take note, albeit obliquely, of the war raging in Europe. A check for $1000 from the Ladies' Auxiliary Society was received and acknowledged with thanks: "This remittance is doubly appreciated as they [the trustees] realize the abnormal condition of business, and the extra amount of work which must have been necessary to raise so substantial a fund." Soon, however, the references to the conflict became more overt. On March 28, a solicitation for purchase of tickets for aid to the distressed in Europe was received from the American Jewish Relief Committee of Rhode Island. Five dollars worth of tickets were purchased. Also, ten cents per month was added to members' dues for "as long as the war lasts." At the same meeting Rabbi Stern was re-elected for another year at a salary of $2800, an increase of $200.

On the last night of Passover in 1915, a significant event occurred. President William Howard Taft, at the invitation of his good friend Colonel Harry Cutler, occupied the pulpit. Mrs. Taft accompanied the president to Providence.

In May the Samuels brothers presented plans for the cemetery mortuary for review by the Cemetery Committee. Sigmund Lederer reported for the Cemetery Committee that it had obtained options on additional land—18,000 square feet from St. Elizabeth's Home at $1600 and 14,000 square feet from the Moore Estate at $1200. Binders of $150 were placed on both, and the City of Providence granted permission for use of the land for burial purposes.

The board set the budget for the new fiscal year at $7808, providing for mortgage interest of $1272 and a total of $490 for the sec-

retaries and collector. On recommendation of Chairman Hahn of the Choir Committee, the salary of organist Gene Ware was increased by $100. At the close of the school year medals were awarded to two girls and two boys of the confirmation class, courtesy of Messrs. Cutler and Lyons, and the Caesar Misch Life Membership in the Temple Alumni Association was awarded to a boy. These were new prizes. The rabbi was granted leave to attend the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis at Charlevoix, Michigan from June 29 to July 6 and allowed $100 for expenses.

The tragic death of Jacob Shartenberg, incumbent vice president, a pillar of the congregation and able merchant of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, occurred on July 14 in his 62nd year. Suitable resolutions were prepared, and a memorial service was held in the temple.

Despite approval of Rabbi Stern's performance and an offer of another year at an increased salary, he decided to seek greener pastures. Early in the summer he submitted his resignation effective prior to the High Holidays. President Cutler was authorized to procure a rabbi for the Holidays and to consider applications for the permanent position with the assistance of a selection committee. Among the applicants was Rabbi Maurice Maxwell Mazure, a 1912 graduate of Hebrew Union College and currently rabbi in Sioux City, Iowa. Joshua Bloch, who had attended Hebrew Union College and headed the Jewish section of the New York Public Library, urged Mazure to try hard for the pulpit in Providence. Writing in Hebrew on August 2, Bloch commented in part:[14]

> Now I hasten to write you concerning still another first-rate post. No doubt you know that Dr. Nathan Stern resigned from his pulpit in Providence, Rhode Island and is going to New York to assist Dr. Frederick [De Sola] Mendes.[15] Professor [Abram Samuel] Isaacs of New York University[16] told me that Harry Cutler had received a good many applications for the post. Among those who applied are two rabbis who are alumni of the [Jewish Theological] Seminary and [you know] that the Board of Temple Beth-El in Providence had decided not to consider before the High Holidays the letters which had been received, and that the Board will not invite the candidates for trial sermons, and will instead choose the one who will provide them with letters of recommendation and similar documents of approbation. In a word, the man

will be chosen on the basis of his general knowledge and character.

In my opinion there is no likelihood for an alumnus of the [Jewish Theological] Seminary to get this post, since the president of the congregation is one of the officers of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Still, with Dr. Cyrus Adler's help, Professor Schechter and his group are laboring to place the alumnus of their school in Providence. [Adler was currently president of Dropsie College in Philadelphia and Solomon Schechter founder of the Jewish Theological Seminary].

No doubt you know that Dr. Adler and Mr. Harry Cutler are members of the Executive Board of the American Jewish Committee,[17] so that Dr. Adler may prevail upon the latter.

In a conversation that I had with Dr. Isaacs, who is to preach in Providence during the coming High Holidays, I proposed your name as the proper man to take the post in which Dr. Englander and Dr. Stern had served. My advice is that you at once see Dr. [David] Philipson [of Cincinnati, on the faculty of Hebrew Union College], and get his advice concerning the post. Don't hesitate to tell him about the attempts of the men of the Seminary to capture Providence for themselves. Should Dr. Philipson wish to help you he can do much in your behalf.

You should know that the post in Providence is very important, being the only Reform pulpit in all of Rhode Island, and the Reform Rabbi of Providence is regarded as the Jewish representative of Rhode Island Jewry.

If I can help you in any way, rest assured that I shall do all you ask of me. . . .In short, take my advice and do all you can in order to get the post in Providence, and let me know at once what you decide to do.

Mazure did not, in fact, receive a call to Temple Beth-El, but, ironically, did turn up later in Providence. In 1931 he became rabbi of Temple Beth Israel (chartered in 1930 as the Providence Conservative Synagogue, then on Melrose Street), succeeding Rabbi Jacob Sonderling, and served until 1933.

The president reported that he had engaged Rabbi George Zepen of Cincinnati, director of synagogue and school extension of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, to occupy the pulpit during the Holidays. He officiated as planned, but could not be present for the concluding days of Sukkot. Cutler had also invited several rabbis to occupy the pulpit on Friday evenings. Among those

who responded were Rabbi Harry Levi of Temple Israel of Boston and the Reverend Dr. Abraham Cronbach of Temple Beth El, South Bend, Indiana, who officiated on November 20 and 21. Cronbach was later to become the father-in-law of Rabbi Maurice Davis, a native of Rhode Island and a confirmand of Temple Beth-El.[18]

Stern preached his farewell sermon on Friday evening, October 15, 1915. Oddly, since a motion at the annual meeting to hold a reception after the service had been defeated, Stern departed with little fanfare. Early in 1916 he went on to Congregation Shaaray Tefila (the West End Synagogue) in New York City, where he eventually succeeded Frederick DeSola Mendes[19] and served until 1942, when due to failing health he retired with the title Rabbi Emeritus. He was especially devoted to young people and was involved in establishing the Institute for Youth Leadership Training in New York City. He also participated in the preparation of the Union Hymnal.[20]

On September 19, 1915 at the annual meeting Harry Cutler was re-elected president, and Felix Hoffman vice president. The other officers were also re-elected. The Misses Rose Schneider and Harriet Dimond were thanked for their services as volunteer members of the choir on Friday evenings. The options on the new cemetery lands were due to expire on September 20, necessitating a bank loan. A loan of $2700 at 4½ percent was negotiated with the National Exchange Bank. It was announced that Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Lederer had purchased a window at the usual price of $750.

In November, Mrs. William Loeb and Mrs. Harry Jacobs reported for the Temple Sisterhood on good and welfare. Although the report was routine, the item in the board minutes was of interest as the former Ladies' Auxiliary Society for the first time used the current designation. Gene Ware, organist, announced that he was training children for singing at the Sabbath services, and later he was granted a salary increase. The new mortuary chapel at the cemetery was now nearly completed, and $200 was appropriated for the furnishings. At year's end acknowledgment was received from the American Jewish Relief Committee of Rhode Island for contributions of $67.75 raised through the ten cents per month tax.[21]

At its first meeting of the new year on January 4, 1916, the board received a petition from the Providence Section, Council of Jewish Women, presented by President Mrs. D.C. Fink and Dr. Anna Topaz.[22] Dr. Topaz was the first formally trained female Jewish phys-

ician in Providence. They planned to establish a psychopathic or mental hygiene circle (i.e. a mental health clinic) and requested permission to use a room or space in the temple vestry. The clinic would be under the direction of Dr. Fred Farnell, a prominent Providence psychiatrist. A committee of two board members would interview Dr. Farnell, Mrs. Caesar Misch, Dr. Topaz, and Mrs. Fink to learn more about the project and to report back on the advisability of granting the request. President Cutler appointed Messrs. David Bernkopf and J.J. Hahn to serve on the special committee. Bernkopf recommended after interviews with Mrs. Misch and others that the use of the vestry for this purpose be granted.

On February 1 an application was received from the estate of Benedict B. Lederer offering to purchase two separate cemetery parcels embracing nine cemetery lots and including the pathway between them. A new pathway four feet wide would be carved out of the purchased parcels to replace the one lost and would become the property of the congregation. The "consideration" would be $3000, plus a further $4500, of which $1500 would be placed in the perpetual care fund for care of the lots and mausoleum, but not repairs or damage to the latter. The remaining $3000 would be applied to reducing the mortgage on the temple. After extended discussion, the proposition was unanimously adopted, "subject to the condition that it be used solely as a repository for the bodies of B.B. Lederer, his sons, their wives and children, and his brother Adolph Lederer, provided that at the time of their decease they are of the Jewish faith." This was the first of several mausoleums on so-called "mausoleum row," the special preserve of the congregation's super-affluent.

On February 13, 1916 Recording Secretary Benjamin Jacobs passed away, another of the congregation's officers to die while in office. His premature death occurred just eight days short of his 57th birthday. At the next congregational meeting Gus Schneider was elected recording secretary to fill the vacancy.

A teacher recommended by Rabbi Harry Levi of Boston was retained by the congregation for the balance of the year. However, he lasted only two months, and Matilda (Mattie) Pincus assumed the responsibility. The search committee for a rabbi was finding it difficult to secure a replacement for Rabbi Stern, but the congregation was assured that a rabbi would officiate at the forthcoming confirmation.

Mrs. Moses (Estelle) Einstein, granddaughter of *Hazzan* Abraham Jacobs and Sister of John Jacob Rosenfeld, a stalwart of the congregation and president of the Sisterhood, was in charge of a committee to establish religious customs for the mortuary chapel. The congregation took possession of the chapel in April, but pews were not installed until August. It was finally dedicated in the early fall.

David Bernkopf, chairman of the selection committee, discussed the difficulties in choosing a rabbi and asked for patience and cooperation. President Cutler reported that some 40 applications had been received. The committee on May 3 recommended the selection of Rabbi Sidney S.Tedesche of Springfield, Illinois. Cutler read replies to inquiries about his qualifications, which on the whole were favorable. The board recommended his election at a salary of $2500. The congregation voted unanimously for his election for one year. Tedesche thanked the trustees, especially for commencing his salary immediately. He was also granted expenses of $50 to attend an early meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Rabbi Tedesche appears to have been in town for Shavuot. He attended the confirmation, which was reported to have gone well, and met the Alumni Association at a reception. His formal induction took place just prior to the High Holidays, Rabbi Harry Levi of Boston officiating. Levi was sent a letter of appreciation for his services and $5 for expenses.

Rabbi Sidney S. Tedesche was born in Elmwood Place, Ohio in 1890. Since his family was the only Jewish household in town, he learned little about Judaism until his early teens, but his avid curiosity led him to read widely about Jews and Judaism. He enrolled in both the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College simultaneously, as was not uncommon. In 1913 he both graduated from the University (A.B., Phi Beta Kappa) and was ordained by Hebrew Union College. He was particularly skilled in languages (he could translate fourteen) with Greek his primary interest. Prior to coming to Providence he served as rabbi of Temple Brith Sholom of Springfield, Illinois. He participated there in interfaith work and also organized a community council and a community luncheon club to interpret Abraham Lincoln to foreign and American visitors to Lincoln's birthplace.[23]

The budget for the ensuing year of $7640 allowed $2500 for the rabbi's salary and $1162 for interest on the mortgage. When the Cemetery Committee reported that 100 feet of the cemetery fence

needed repair, President Cutler directed that designs be procured for a fence around the entire cemetery.

In the absence of several officers, Treasurer Lyons presided at the annual meeting on October 8, 1916. The incumbent officers were re-elected. The American Jewish Committee acknowledged receipt of an additional $54 from the congregational fund. The congregation advised the board to permit dancing in the vestry at functions of the Alumni Association. As the year ended, the rabbi's salary was increased to $2700 for the remainder of his current term, more than the budgeted amount.

As the new year of 1917 began, $3000 was paid on the mortgage. In the spring, Rabbi Tedesche was re-elected for another year at a salary of $3000 beginning on April 1, 1917. The Sisterhood, which contributed another $1000 toward the mortgage, was thanked for its "splendid work." Sigmund Lederer donated a large table for the use of the trustees.

NOTES

1. David Frank, born in 1835, died in 1919 at the age of 84. He first appeared in the Providence City Directory in 1860, five years after the congregation was chartered. He was in the "fancy goods" business in the Arcade on Westminster Street through 1878. However, a photo (undated, but early) shows that he occupied a store at another location (North Main Street?). See front cover *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, v. 3., no. 3, (December) 1960. From 1880 through 1900 he was listed as "auctioneer."
2. Rabbi Stern was a lecturer in biblical literature at Brown University from 1910 to 1915. See *Brown University Historical Catalogue 1764–1934*, p. 59.
3. See note 1.
4. Oscar Solomon Straus received an honorary Litt.D. degree from Brown University in 1896.
5. Gene Wilder Ware received an A.B. degree from Brown University in the class of 1906. He was director of chapel music there from 1906 to 1909, organist and director 1910 to 1931, lecturer in music 1920 to 1923, and assistant professor of music 1923 to 1931.
6. *The Evening Bulletin* (Providence, R.I.), February 22, 1912.
7. William Herbert Perry Faunce (1859–1930), a graduate of Brown University in the class of 1880, was a Baptist minister, as were all Brown University presidents until Henry M. Wriston in 1939. Faunce was well recognized among his Jewish students, in the Providence Jewish

community, and eventually in the Jewish community nationally to be an anti-Semite. See Eleanor F. Horvitz and Benton H. Rosen, "The Jewish Fraternity and Brown University," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:299–344, (November) 1980.

8. *The Evening Bulletin* (Providence, R.I.), February 23, 1912.
9. It is customary to drape the scrolls in mantles of costly materials, velvet or silk, often richly embroidered. During reading of the scroll, the cover is removed and the scroll is laid down flat on the reading desk.
10. A copy of the Council minutes of this meeting is attached to the board minutes of the congregation.
11. Marion L. Misch to Harry Cutler, October 1, 1913. Temple Beth-El archives.
12. Memorandum attached to a case protecting the scroll.
13. A temple bulletin was published sporadically over the years, but a regular monthly bulletin did not appear until 1926, when volume 1, number 1 of the present series was published. It was titled for many years, *Bulletin of Temple Beth-El* and more recently as *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*.
14. "Temple Beth-El Seeks a Rabbi," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:175–177, (November) 1968. This paper contains an English translation of the letter by the late Rabbi William G. Braude with annotations. The original in Hebrew is in the Temple Beth-El archives. Rabbi Braude corresponded with Rabbi Abraham J. Karp about the letter, who commented in part:

    > Many thanks for the Bloch letter. You are right in suggesting that there was a time when lines were not quite so rigid. Passions were often high, but congregations had still not become rigidly set within national institutional patterns. It was still the days before Conservative congregations had organized themselves into the United Synagogue.
    >
    > The only synagogal Union was the U.A.H.C. [Union of American Hebrew Congregations]. Even within that there were those who remembered that initially the Union was to serve all American congregations. By 1910 the Union was, of course, thoroughly Reform, but which American organization doesn't like to claim for itself universal appeal. . . .

    The United Synagogue, organized in 1913, became the organization of Conservative congregations.

    Abraham J. Karp was rabbi of Temple Beth-El in Rochester, N.Y. and an American Jewish historian of note.
15. Frederick de Sola Mendes, a native of Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies was rabbi of Congregation Shaaray Tefila (West End Synagogue) in New York City.
16. Abram Samuel Isaacs, born in New York City in 1852, died in Paterson, N.J. in 1920. He received A.B., A.M., and Ph.D. degrees from New York

University. He studied at the University of Breslau and the Jewish Theological Seminary in that city. He was professor of Hebrew, German, and Semitics at New York University at various times. He was also editor of *The Jewish Messenger* and rabbi of Temple B'nai Jeshurun in Paterson, N.J.

17. The American Jewish Committee was organized in 1906 as a defense agency dedicated to the protection of the rights of Jews. This was a response to the Kishinev atrocities in 1903 and the pogroms following the abortive Russian revolution of 1905. See Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist, A History of the American Jewish Committee 1906–1966* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society, 1972), pp. 3–16. Harry Cutler is mentioned on pp. 71, 77, and 112.
18. Maurice Davis was born in Warwick, R.I. on December 15, 1920. He attended Brown University from 1939 to 1941. He received a B.A. degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1945 and an M.H.L. from Hebrew Union College in 1949. He married Marion H. Cronbach, the daughter of Rabbi Abraham Cronbach of South Bend, Indiana in 1944. He received an L.H.D. degree from Marion College in Indiana in 1969 and a D.D. from Hebrew Union College in 1974. He was rabbi of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation from 1956–1967 and rabbi of the Jewish Community Center of White Plains, N.Y. from 1967 until his retirement. He currently spends his summers in Narragansett, R.I. In a personal communication, he states: "I entered Beth-El at age six, and went through high school. I had my bar mitzvah at Beth-El in 1933, and I was confirmed there in 1935." (Temple records indicate that he was confirmed on Shavuot, Wednesday, 27 May 1936.)
19. See note 15.
20. See Chapter Seven, note 23.
21. In October 1914 the American Jewish Committee convened a conference in New York City to form an American Jewish Relief Committee. A month later the latter organization joined with other similar groups to form the Joint Distribution Committee of the American Funds for Jewish War Sufferers (JDC) under the chairmanship of Felix M. Warburg. The JDC became an important agency in both world wars and in Palestine and Israel.
22. Dr. Anna Topaz, born in Kovno, Russia in 1872, studied medicine at the University of Warsaw. She came to America in 1900 and received another M.D. degree from Tufts College Medical School in 1903. In 1908 she studied pediatrics and obstetrics at the University of Paris. She became a member of the Providence Medical Association and was a member of the original staff of The Miriam Hospital in 1925. Her practice was largely obstetrical. She died in 1945 from injuries sustained in a streetcar accident. See S. J. Goldowsky's "Jews in Medicine in Rhode Island," p. 164.
23. *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook* 72:198–199, 1962.

CHAPTER NINE

The War Years—World War I

Early in 1917 the United States declared war on Germany, but the business of the congregation went on. Rabbi Tedesche reported on the status of the school and other matters. He hoped that "A Date with the Rabbi on Friday night" would be the slogan of every member. Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York delivered an address in Providence on Sunday June 17 for the benefit of the war sufferers. Members of the congregation were urged to attend.[1]

The rabbi was granted leave to attend the meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Buffalo from June 25 to July 4, for which he was given a subvention of $100 and was granted a vacation during July and August. In accordance with the war-time spirit of patriotism, Sigmund Lederer noted that a flagpole had been erected, and the flag, the gift of a member, was raised with appropriate ceremony. Matilda (Mattie) Pincus resigned as librarian of the religious school library due to the press of other responsibilities. Miss Harriet Dimond (later Mrs. Arthur J. Levy) took over as her successor. Miss Russell of the choir was about to be married, but would remain in the choir.

Early in September, pursuant to the war effort, the board voted unanimously "as a first step in the cooperation of the congregation in the work of the Jewish Board for Welfare Work in the army and navy . . . [to join] with other synagogues in the city to extend a cordial invitation to Jewish sailors and soldiers in the vicinity of Providence to attend services during the Holidays." Invitations signed by Rabbi Tedesche and Rabbi Israel S. Rubinstein of Congregation Sons of Zion were sent to troop commanders in the state.

Former president Alexander Strauss died in Lowell, Massachusetts on September 9, 1917. A resolution was spread upon the con-

gregational records "as a token of their affectionate regard for him." It spoke of his loyal and indefatigable work for the congregation, of his military leadership, and of his active participation in fraternal and communal affairs. It praised him for his earnestness, faithfulness, and wholesome sterling character.

On September 16 the board instructed the secretary to send a cordial invitation to Mrs. Jacob Hirschorn (née Mary Pareira), daughter of the late Solomon Pareira, first president of the congregation, to attend services during the High Holidays while she was visiting in Providence. Mrs. Hirschorn was then living in St. Louis. Her husband had been the first secretary and treasurer of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel.[2]

The annual meeting of the congregation in this war year was held on September 30, 1917. The slate of officers for the ensuing year comprised Harry Cutler, president; Sigmund L. Lederer, vice president; Louis Lyons, treasurer; Newman Pincus, financial secretary; and Benjamin I. Robinson, recording secretary. It was decided unanimously to abolish all Sabbath School tuition fees for children whose parents could afford temple membership, but they would not be admitted unless their parents became members. A letter of thanks was sent to Stanley Lyons for the "able manner" in which he blew the *shophar* on Rosh Hashanah.

The board on November 2 was apprised unexpectedly of the resignation of Rabbi Sidney Tedesche effective December 1, or as soon as a successor could be elected. The congregation had a favorable opinion of Rabbi Tedesche, as it was prepared to re-elect him at an increased salary. While the reasons for his leaving are not evident, the congregation's good will toward him was clearly not reciprocated. Many years later, when Rabbi William G. Braude was contemplating a call to Temple Beth-El in Providence, Tedesche remarked to a mutual friend: "I hear Braude is a nice fellow. Tell him to think twice before going to Providence."[3] After leaving Providence Tedesche served at Temple Beth El in San Antonio, Texas; Temple Mishkan Israel in New Haven, Connecticut; and ultimately Union Temple of Brooklyn. While in New Haven he earned a Ph.D. degree in Comparative Philology at the Yale Graduate School. He was a member of the American Oriental Society and the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. He became a specialist in Alexandrian Greek literature and was the author of several learned works. In Brooklyn he earned an LL.D. degree at St. John's Law School.

Hebrew Union College awarded him an honory Doctor of Divinity. He died in Hollywood, Florida on May 18, 1962.[4]

A letter and a telegram highly recommending Simon Cohen of Greensboro, North Carolina for the position of rabbi were received from Rabbi William Rosenau of Baltimore on behalf of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Cohen was a native of Baltimore. Cohen and other available candidates would be invited to conduct Friday evening services.

On November 6 the board received a letter of resignation from membership from Dr. Simon G. Lenzner, who had joined the colors and was leaving the city.[5] Inquiry was made as to his intentions regarding membership when he returned to Providence after the war. It appears that his resignation was not accepted. After serving in France in the Army Medical Corps, he resumed practice in Providence on Broad Street, only a stone's throw from the temple. The treasurer was authorized to purchase $3000 worth of registered 4 percent Liberty Bonds (war bonds) with funds from the cemetery perpetual care fund.

Rabbi Cohen conducted Friday evening services on November 4. At a meeting of the congregation on November 11 a resoltuion was presented to invite all available candidates to officiate on successive Friday evenings to choose a successor to Tedesche. The congregation, however, must have liked what it heard of Rabbi Cohen, as the resolution was defeated, and Cohen was invited to fill the vacancy until March 1918 at a salary of $2000.

President Cutler announced to the board on December 4 that Rabbi Simon Cohen had indeed accepted the call, had arrived in Providence with Mrs. Cohen, and was met and welcomed by a reception committee including Cutler himself. President Cutler introduced the rabbi to the congregation at Friday evening services on December 7. The School Committee reported that Stanley Lyons had volunteered to cooperate with Rabbi Cohen in conducting the annual Hanukkah services on Sunday December 16, and the Sisterhood prepared a Hanukkah supper on December 12 in association with an informal reception for Rabbi and Mrs. Cohen. The children of the Jewish Orphanage were invited to present a Hanukkah play in the vestry. The year ended with payment of another $750 on the mortgage drawn from the congregation's savings account.

In February of 1918 President Cutler informed the board that the Jewish Welfare Board for Soldiers and Sailors in the United States

Army and Navy, of which he was chairman, would distribute *matzot*[6] to Jewish men in the service.[7] He also announced that Jewish army and navy chaplains would no longer wear the cross as the insignia of chaplaincy.

Simon Cohen, another in the long line of scholarly rabbis who have served the congregation, was born in Baltimore, Maryland on February 26, 1894, the son of Benjamin and Rebecca Cohen. The Cohens were a family of distinction and scholarly tradition in Baltimore going back to the 18th Century. Rabbi Cohen received an A.B. degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1916 and was ordained by Hebrew Union College the same year, a track taken by many Reform rabbis including several who have served in Providence.[8] Soon after the arrival of Rabbi and Mrs. Cohen in Rhode Island, their first child was born. This was acknowledged by the board on March 19 with congratulations and best wishes. Soon thereafter, Simon Cohen was re-elected for another year at the same salary. The rabbi was later granted permission, if he so desired, to attend the Central Conference of American Rabbis convention in Chicago in June and July, and $100 in expense money was allowed.

There were now recurrent intimations of the war effort in the records. A letter from the chairman of the Providence campaign of the American Red Cross requested assistance of the congregation in its second war fund solicitation. In response to a request from The American Jewish Relief Committee of Rhode Island[9] for cooperation in a systematized campaign for funds, the secretary was authorized to submit a list of members. The use of the vestry was granted to a class of sixteen girls for Red Cross work such as folding bandages. The small rooms were used to conserve coal in accordance with war-time fuel conservation. The Liberty Bonds in the Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund were converted from 4 to 4½ percent as interest rates rose.

On November 4, just seven days before the Armistice, President Cutler reported on the work of the Jewish Welfare Board. In response to his appeal, the board unanimously extended the hospitality of the congregation at Friday evening services and on other appropriate occasions to servicemen stationed in the area. In the aftermath of the war, the board on January 19, 1919 voted "that a committee be appointed to draft a suitable letter to our President, Harry Cutler, expressing our gratification in his appointment to represent the Jewish people at the Paris Peace Conference." The board also ap-

pointed delegates including Rabbi Cohen to the American Jewish Relief Committee of Rhode Island.

Although the Cemetery Committee was authorized in June to spend $275 to erect a fence around the whole of the cemetery grounds, the project was not carried out at that time. In December Chairman Lederer reported that Harmon P. Jordan had offered a triangular piece of land on Jordan Street adjoining the cemetery, amounting to 2782 square feet, at 10 cents a square foot. A counter offer of 8½ cents was made, the same price previously paid to the Moore Estate. A purchase agreement was eventually consummated at that price. The new cemetery grounds were graded at a cost of $200.

In September 1918 at the annual meeting Sigmund Lederer, chairman of the Cemetery Committee, presented to the congregation framed charts displaying the old and new cemetery plots, showing distinctly the names and numbers of the graves occupied up to that time. The incumbent officers were re-elected for the ensuing year. Felix Hoffman, diligent chairman of the Sabbath School Committee, resigned from the congregation, as he was leaving town. He was given a beautiful platinum scarf pin set with diamonds in recognition of his devoted services. Gifts of jewelry and plate were common in this world center of jewelry manufacturing.[10]

As the year closed, Rabbi Cohen announced that a newly revised edition of the Union Prayer Book was available. Although there were no significant changes, he urged that it be adopted, as the older version would soon be out of print. Rabbi Cohen gave a detailed report of his activities to the congregation and made ten specific recommendations. After a lengthy discussion they were referred to the board for further evaluation, but there is no evidence that they were ever considered or adopted.

The Sisterhood sponsored a special evening entertainment for members and their friends in the vestry on January 7, 1919. It featured a supper followed by a game of whist. The use of the vestry for certain secular activities had always been a sensitive issue. Soon after the affair the Sisterhood and the Temple Alumni requested the board to allow dancing in the vestry and submitted a list of members in favor of the change. After much debate the radical idea was rejected unanimously by the board. Also, the new Community Club of the temple, devoted to adult education, was granted use of the vestry.

Before leaving for Europe in January 1919 to attend the Paris Peace Conference, Cutler was honored at banquets tendered by the Jews of Rhode Island and by state officials. While in Paris, he received word that his wife had become seriously ill. He interrupted his stay and returned to the United States. He spent the remaining months of 1919 with his ailing wife.

On June 17, 1919 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by Secretary of War Newton D. Baker at an elaborate ceremony in Washington, and Rhode Islanders honored him with a reception at the Strand Theater on Washington Street in Providence.

In March another $1500 was paid on the mortgage. The School Committee reported that interest in the school had revived after some decline, and Mattie Pincus was again teaching. She had visited the religious school of Temple Israel in Boston and came away with many valuable ideas. She was reimbursed $2.86 for her travel expenses. The board responded to an appeal from the Relief Fund for Superannuated Rabbis with a donation of $10. William Schloss reported on a nationwide $300,000 fund-raising drive by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Schloss, the local chairman, appealed for workers and contributions, but Providence failed to meet its quota.

During his tenure in Providence, Rabbi Cohen attended graduate school at Brown,[11] as did several of his predecessors and successors. In March he requested permission to attend a conference at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and was granted leave and travel expenses. He invited the Reverend Dr. Marion Emmett Bratcher, lecturer in biblical literature and history at Brown University and assistant pastor at the Calvary Baptist Church in Providence, to occupy the pulpit during his absence.

In March Rabbi Cohen requested that his name be withdrawn as a candidate for re-election as he expected a call from the Jewish Welfare Board for service on troop transports returning servicemen from overseas. Later he received the appointment, and his resignation was accepted with the best wishes of the congregation. Meanwhile because of sickness in his household, he was confined to his home and could not officiate at services for several weeks. Reverend Bratcher; Courtney Langdon, professor of romance languages and literature at Brown University; and Henry Woolf, superintendent of the Children's Orphanage of Rhode Island, occupied the pulpit on successive Friday evenings during his absence.

In May the board learned from Rabbi Cohen that the Jewish Welfare Board had decided not to engage more rabbis for the transport service and that he would be available to finish his term in March 1919. The board informed him that it would not be possible to accept his offer, since arrangements had already been made for conducting services, operating the Sabbath School, and confirming the children. Thus ended Rabbi Simon Cohen's brief career in Providence.

After leaving Providence, he served for varying periods as rabbi of a number of congregations, including Pueblo, Colorado; Springfield, Ohio; Selma, Alabama; Temples Beth El and Emauu-El in New York City; Plattsburg, New York; Benton Harbor, Michigan; and Kilgore, Texas. In 1924 he received a D.D. degree from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. His peripatetic career indicates what was obvious to his friends and admirers—that active preaching and pastoral duties were not his métier, although his integrity and devotion to Judaism were self-evident. He published a number of erudite works, but his most important achievement was his scholarly contributions to the ten-volume *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* for which he was director of research from 1928 to 1944. From 1952 until his death in Cincinnati in 1977, he served as a research librarian of the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion with the title Reference and Serial Librarian and Cataloguer.[12]

In the meantime the School Committee reported that Miss Pincus was attending to the preparation of the confirmands. Rabbi Lee J. Levinger of Paducah, Kentucky ("late from overseas"); Rabbi Samuel M. Gup of Natchez, Mississippi; and Rabbi Abraham Holzberg of Cincinnati were invited to occupy the pulpit over several weekends. The members were sent notices announcing the visiting rabbis.

Mesdames Misch, Julius (Pauline) Shuman, and Samuel K. Grover, representing the Sisterhood, addressed a special meeting of the board to discuss fuller cooperation between the Sisterhood and the board. In this early bid for greater female equality they requested 1. representation on important committees such as school, membership, and entertainment, and 2. the privilege of associate membership on the board so as to be in a position to present matters of importance on a basis of equality. Marion Misch, intelligent and prescient, nevertheless was cautious and concluded that actual

membership of women on the board at that time was not desirable in the unlikely event that the board consented. The board took no immediate action, but referred the proposals to the next congregational meeting. There is no evidence that the suggestions were taken seriously at the time, although members of the Sisterhood were in fact invited to "participate" in the June congregational meeting. While the issue was cast aside for the moment, it would not die.

Organist Gene Ware suggested that his services be temporarily dispensed with at the Saturday morning services, as he considered it "a waste of time to continue . . . under the present conditions"—poor attendance. Accordingly, the Choir Committee acceded to his request.

The congregation purchased a Liberty Bond in May for $1000, a late echo of the recent war. The Sisterhood was granted permission to hold a whist in the vestry and the Alumni Association to use it for gymnasium purposes. The board learned of the elevation of J. Jerome Hahn to a judgeship in the Rhode Island Superior Court, extended to him their best wishes for success, and made plans to entertain him at an informal dinner.[13]

Rabbi Henry Englander, "our friend and former rabbi," officiated at the children's confirmation exercises on Shavuot and was sent a check for $200 in acknowledgment of his services. The confirmands themselves presented him with a cane suitably inscribed "in appreciation of his untiring efforts in their behalf." Mattie Pincus also received a gift (of $50) in recognition of her services in the Sabbath School and in the preparation of the confirmands. The School Committee elected her principal of the Sabbath School for the ensuing year at a salary of $300 per year.

Mrs. Misch and Henry Woolf, superintendent of the Jewish Orphanage, attended the 26th Biennial Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Boston from May 19 to 22 as delegates from the Sisterhood and congregation respectively.

NOTES

1. Shortly thereafter Rabbi Stephen S. Wise wrote to Harry Cutler: "It will interest you to learn that I had a conference with the President [Woodrow Wilson, regarding the American Jewish Congress]. . . . He is "persuaded that [it] . . . will wisely and prudently serve Jewish interests,

[and] . . . its deliberations and policies will be in accord with and helpful to the aims and policies of the American government." Stephen S. Wise to Harry Cutler, June 30, 1917. Extracted from Carl Herman Vose's *Stephen S. Wise, Servant of the People* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), pp. 81–82.

2. See D. C. Adelman's "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, the Early Years," p. 195. Also *Bulletin of Temple Beth-El*, vol. 25, no. 5, April 22, 1952. Adelman wrote:

   Records of the congregation disclose that in 1917 the board of trustees extended an invitation to Mrs. Jacob R. Hirschorn (Hershorn) of St. Louis to attend services during the holidays while she was visiting in Providence. Mrs. Hirschorn was in fact Mary Pareira, the daughter of Solomon Pareira. Still living in 1952 was a Mrs. Belle Pareira Wise of San Francisco, the last survivor of twelve children of Solomon and Miriam Pareira; and two daughters of Jacob R. and Mary Pareira Hirschorn (Hershon), Gertrude (Mrs. Julius Rothschild of Gary, Indiana) and Sadie (Mrs. Max Weil of Chicago), a lady then in her 90th year [she died in 1963 at age 102].

   In 1987 William Gail Caplin of Montreal, Quebec, Canada visited Temple Beth-El. Born in 1948, he was a great grandson of Sadie (Sarah) Hirschorn (Hershorn) Weil, the great great grandson of Mary Pareira Hirschorn (Hershorn), and the great great great grandson of Solomon Pareira.

3. William G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 437–438.

4. See Chapter Eight, note 23.

5. Dr. Simon Geilech Lenzner was born in 1889 and received his M.D. degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. He was licensed in R.I. in 1914. Until World War I he practiced general medicine. Based on his surgical experience with the American Expeditionary Forces in France, he limited his practice to surgery after the opening of The Miriam Hospital in 1925. He appears to have been the only physician to join the armed forces in World War I while a member of the congregation.

6. See Chapter 6, note 4. *Matzot* is the Hebrew plural of *matzah*. While observance of the dietary laws of the Orthodox persuasion is virtually impossible in the armed forces of a secular nation in wartime, the distribution of the traditional unleavened bread during the Passover season is a great comfort to observing Jews as a symbolic gesture and a morale builder.

7. After the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, it became necessary to care for the social and religious needs of the tens of thousands of Jewish servicemen. To meet these needs the National Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) was organized by Harry Cutler, who was selected as its chairman. After the war it became the central organization of the numerous Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations (YMHAs and

YWHAs) and the community centers which were already in existence or were burgeoning throughout the U.S.

8. See *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook* 88:129–130, 1978.
9. The American Jewish Relief Committee of Rhode Island was organized in 1914 and functioned throughout World War I, raising between 1914 and 1919 a total of $185,000. See David C. Adelman, "The Providence Jewish Communities Unite," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 3:160–191, (December) 1960, p. 163.
10. At the turn of the century and until World War I fine gold and platinum jewelry with precious stones were designed and fashioned by hand in the Providence-Attleboro area. Rather rapidly thereafter it became the center of the costume jewelry industry. Several manufacturers produced fine sterling silver and silver plate, including the great Gorham Company. Cutler himself, of course, was in the jewelry manufacturing business.
11. Simon Cohen was listed as a graduate student at Brown University in 1918–1919. See *Brown University Historical Catalogue 1764–1934*, p. 1093.
12. See note 8.
13. J. Jerome Hahn (1868–1938) was Rhode Island's first judge of Jewish descent.

CHAPTER TEN

Rabbi Samuel M. Gup— a Bridge to Present Times

On June 8, 1919 the board considered available candidates for the pulpit. They voted unanimously to recommend the election of Rabbi Samuel Marcus Gup, then officiating at Natchez, Mississippi. The congregation on June 16 elected him rabbi for the ensuing year at a salary of $3500.

Also in June the congregation ordered preparation of a set of resolutions expressing "the esteem of the congregation for Colonel Harry Cutler for carrying out successfully the great responsibility connected with the office of chairman of the Jewish Welfare Board," and also extended congratulations to him and Mrs. Cutler "on the recognition of his valued patriotic services by the government in awarding him the Distinguished Service Medal." Cutler graciously acknowledged this expression of high regard.

Rabbi Gup was formally installed as spiritual leader of Temple Beth-El on Friday evening, September 19, 1919. Rabbi Abraham Holzberg of Chattanooga, Tennessee sent a letter congratulating the congregation on the wise selection of Rabbi Gup. Rabbi Harry Levi of Boston's Temple Israel officiated at the installation, for which he was sent a check for $25—gratefully acknowledged.

Rabbi Samuel Marcus Gup was born in Mobile, Alabama on November 7, 1894. He received his A.B. and A.M. degrees from the University of Cincinnati in 1914 and 1915 and was ordained at the Hebrew Union College in 1918. In 1919 he married Ruth Stern of Cincinnati. Upon completion of his studies he served as rabbi of the Reform congregation of Natchez, Mississippi, whence he received the call to Providence.[1] He was a trim balding figure with a neat moustache. This writer recalls that he preached from the pulpit

in morning coat, without gown, *kippah* (yarmulka or head covering), or *tallit* (prayer shawl).

The new rabbi suggested that the Sunday School admission policy be changed and advocated the abolition of all requirements as to payment of dues by parents. He outlined tentative policies for the school and urged the importance of increased facilities for the Sabbath School. He also expressed liberal views on dancing in the vestry. Obviously pleased with his performance, the congregation, even before he had served a year, voted to increase his salary by $500 to $4000 per annum, as recommended unanimously by the board.

The annual meeting of October 15, 1919 was featured by a record-breaking attendance of 88. For its role in this the Sisterhood received an expression of appreciation. President Cutler, Treasurer Lyons, Financial Secretary Pincus, and Recording Secretary Robinson were re-elected. Lederer declined re-election as vice president and was replaced by Paul Paris. The Entertainment Committee announced plans for a *Simhat Torah* reunion and entertainment (a festival on the last day of Sukkot). William Schloss and Ida (Mrs. Archibald) Silverman spoke regarding a forthcoming fund-raising campaign of the American Jewish Relief Committee in Rhode Island, probably the last of the war period. They especially sought active workers, and most members volunteered. The Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association sent a $100 check to the campaign, which raised $88,691 for a total since 1914 of $185,265.

The building of a new fence around the old and new cemetery lands was again discussed and generally approved. Mrs. Misch contributed $100 to the project. Sigmund Lederer, chairman of the Cemetery Committee, submitted plans for the fence drawn by W. R. Walker & Son, architects. Since, however, an ornamental iron picket fence with granite posts would cost $4000, the project was again deferred because of the cost. In the meantime chairman Lederer proposed separating the cemetery from the synagogue as financial entities, according to a plan advocated by Judge Hahn. The matter was referred to the Laws Committee for evaluation.

The rabbi's plans to admit the children of non-members to the school was deferred to ascertain first how many parents might be induced to join the congregation. The Montefiore Ladies were granted permission to use the vestry for a whist, and Haggai Lodge,

No. 132, I.O.B.B. was invited to hold a special B'nai B'rith service in the temple on Friday evening, December 26 as part of their Golden Jubilee Celebration. Thus a friendly association between two venerable organizations and the congregation was further nurtured as the year came to an end.

As the new year of 1920 dawned, the congregation gave serious thought to liquidation of the decade-old mortgage and to erection of an adjoining building to provide additional space to house the growing temple activities. The board endorsed solicitation of funds for these purposes, and by April the campaign had already received pledges of $5400.

The board in January learned of the resignation of Matilda Pincus as superintendent of the Sabbath School due to increased personal business affairs. They accepted her resignation with genuine regret.

Ida Rutberg Cutler, Harry Cutler's wife, died tragically on February 2, 1920 at the age of 39. The board voted unanimously to send condolences to President Cutler and directed that the letter be "spread upon the record." He was deeply grieved over this premature and unfortunate loss, which doubtless contributed to a minor stroke which he suffered shortly thereafter and eventually to his early demise. Although he limited his activities for several months, he continued to make speeches on behalf of Zionism and pursued his work with the Jewish Welfare Board.

A special dinner meeting of the board was held at the Narragansett Hotel on May 15, 1920. President Cutler reminded the gathering that some time had elapsed (a year, in fact) since the board had voted formally to manifest their regard for Judge J. Jerome Hahn. Cutler extended to him on behalf of the officers and trustees felicitations upon his elevation to the Superior Court and presented as a token of their esteem a four-volume edition of the *Life of John Marshall*. The first volume contained a parchment insert with an inscription bearing the signatures of the officers, trustees, and rabbi. Hahn responded graciously, and each person present received a facsimile copy of the insert.

Use of the vestry was granted to the Palestine Restoration Fund and also to the Sisterhood for a bazaar to be held early in December. The rabbi was allowed, as usual, to attend the regular summer meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Rochester, New York, and his travel expenses were paid. Discussion of the status of the library led to a decision to place it under the jurisdic-

tion of Rabbi Gup, since it was in effect an adjunct of the Sabbath School.

The congregation in July adopted the unassigned pew system for the High Holy Days on a 27 to 15 vote, an innovation that has prevailed since that time. It was also decided, because of the limited seating capacity of the sanctuary, to exclude children under confirmation age from the adult Holiday services and to provide a special service for them in the vestry. Children in mourning, however, would be permitted to sit with their parents. This action inevitably produced controversy. A letter from Treasurer Louis Lyons proclaimed that he would not permit anyone to use his pew without his authorization and that he had taken up the matter of his rights with Judge Hahn. Another member who objected returned his ticket. Nevertheless, the new method prevailed. Max L. Grant, aged 31, was newly admitted to membership in the $1000 class. Son of Louis and Mary D. Grant (Granowsky), he later became a wealthy industrialist and a prominent member of the congregation.

President Cutler announced that Rabbi Jacob D. Schwartz of the Department of Synagogue and School Extension of Hebrew Union College would be in residence during the Holiday period to assist Rabbi Gup. The Children's Services were held on the morning of Rosh Hashanah. Schwartz was paid $200 for his services.

During the summer of 1920 Secretary of War Newton D. Baker officially invited Cutler to represent the Jewish Welfare Board on the new War Memorial Commission. Cutler, despite the warnings of his personal physician, accepted the charge and sailed for Europe on August 12, 1920. While in Paris in 1919, he had traveled through the countryside inspecting cemeteries and assuring the proper marking of the graves of Jewish soldiers. He welcomed the opportunity to honor once again the Jewish soldiers buried in Europe. Less than a week after arriving in London, he died on August 28, 1920.

His body arrived in New York City by steamer sixteen days later and was escorted on the train to Providence by a full military honor guard. He lay in state at Temple Beth-El for twenty-four hours before the funeral and burial next to his wife at the Reservoir Avenue cemetery. Rabbi Gup eloquently praised his life, and Rabbi Henry Englander, a close friend of Cutler's, delivered the eulogy, beginning with King David's words: "Know ye not that a prince and a great

man has fallen this day in Israel." Formal resolutions were drafted and presented to his family. The congregation was informed that he had left a bequest to the temple.[2]

In September Rabbi Gup engaged Milton Torgan as assistant superintendent of the Sunday School at $100 per year. Nine young persons were appointed as teachers and one as librarian.

The annual meeting of October 10, 1920 was devoted to electing a successor to President Cutler, who had died in office. In a dual race Louis Lyons won over Paul Paris 43–40. Archibald Silverman was elected vice president, David Bernkopf treasurer, Newman Pincus financial secretary, and Louis K. Golden recording secretary.

A special memorial service for Cutler was held on October 29, 1920. Rabbis Cyrus Adler, Samuel Schulman, William Rosen, and Stephen Wise, all prominent Jewish religious leaders, were invited, but none was able to attend because of prior engagements. Rabbi Harry Levi of Boston, however, did participate with Rabbi Gup. The congregation voted to raise $750 from among its members to purchase a memorial window in honor of Cutler. The directors of the Union Trust Company bank donated $50 in his memory to purchase books for the library. Acknowledgment was sent through C. Joseph Fox, a member of the temple and of the bank's board.

In the fall with a school enrollment of 300 pupils, lack of classroom space was a pressing problem. The vestry was screened off to provide two extra school rooms. Rabbi Gup reported an anonymous gift of $500 from a member for the printing of a weekly pamphlet on the activities of the congregation. The donor stipulated that it be distributed to members during the next six months. The gift was accepted, thus reviving the sporadic publication of a bulletin. The president was asked to confer with Samuel Priest, an affluent member of the congregation, as to how much he was willing to pay for use of the temple for his daughter's forthcoming wedding.[3]

Several important matters came before the board as the year drew to a close. Rabbi Gup, in accordance with his liberal leanings, once again recommended that dancing be allowed at socials in the vestry. It was proposed that the board increase its size from nine to twelve members to make provision for women. Both of these perennial matters were referred to the congregation for further consideration and implementation, if approved. Additional payment of $1500 was made on the mortgage.

At the final congregational meeting of the year on December 27, 1920, the Sabbath School Committee reported a large attendance for the year and a successful Hanukkah entertainment. A committee from the Sisterhood was invited to attend the next board meeting to discuss distribution of funds for good and welfare. Finally, Mrs. Misch presented to the congregation in memory of her daughter a tablet of the Ten Commandments used by the Congregation Sons of Israel in the earliest days. Cut out of gold paper and pasted on a blue background, it was said to have hung in Solomon Pareira's home. Mrs. Misch had received it from Kate Slocum, granddaughter of Halberstad (Pareira's brother-in-law), who in turn had received it from Pareira's daughter, Mary. Mrs. Misch had it "beautifully framed and suitably inscribed." It is still in the possession of the temple.

The first board meeting of the new year was held on January 3, 1921. A committee of the Sisterhood submitted a proposal for new semi-direct lighting in the sanctuary. Since women were not welcome at the meetings, the Sisterhood ladies were allowed to address the board only before it was called to order. After dismissing the ladies and formally convening the meeting, it was voted to try frosted lights in the present fixtures before making a final decision on new lighting.

At an important meeting of the congregation on January 31, 1921, the large issues of women on the board and dancing in the vestry were cautiously resolved. The constitution was amended to increase the board from nine to twelve members, with the proviso that "at least nine of the trustees shall be men." Three new members were elected to the board, but the congregation did not go overboard on the issue of female representation. The three new members were Walter I. Sundlun, Albert Cohn, and Mrs. Caesar Misch. Other new measures affecting women were equally modest:

> Widows or unmarried women shall have the right to become members of this congregation, but not the right of holding any office with the exception of that of trustee. Married women whose husbands are members in good standing in the congregation shall, so long as their husbands live and remain in good standing, become, and remain associate members of the congregation. Such membership [is] to terminate immediately upon the decease or termination of the husband's membership through any cause

whatsoever. Associate members may vote and hold the office of trustee, but otherwise shall have no rights except such as are given to wives by virtue of the bylaws and constitution of the congregation.

Several women were eventually admitted to associate membership. To become associate members, wives of members were required to apply for the privilege and to pay yearly dues of $6.

The congregation thereupon voted to permit dancing in the vestry, but with the following strict conditions:

1. Permission for dances shall be given only to organizations [regularly] meeting in the Temple.
2. Every dance shall be chaperoned by a committee of the Sisterhood.
3. There shall be no dancing in the vestry of the Temple on Sunday or Friday evenings.
4. All dances shall be under the jurisdiction of the Entertainment Committee.
5. Expense of dances shall be made by subscription of members of the organization holding the dance, and not by [general] sale of tickets.
6. Dances are to be attended only by members of the organization meeting in the Temple, except that out-of-town visiting guests may be invited.
7. Dances must close at 11 p.m.
8. There shall be no dance in the vestry without the specific permission of the Entertainment Committee.

Rabbi Gup suggested the advisability of experimenting with unassigned pews for a period of two years, not only for the High Holidays, but throughout the year. A special committee reported favorably on the proposal, and beginning with the High Holy Days of 1921 it became the custom of the congregation thereafter. There was a special service for children under confirmation age. Alvin T. Sapinsley spoke on the desirability of improving the Friday evening services, and a committee was appointed to work with the rabbi to that end. The rabbi was unanimously re-elected with a $500 increase in salary. He attended the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Washington, D.C. on April 2

with expenses paid. The children of non-members presently in the school would be permitted to complete the school year, after which the School Committe would assume jurisdiction of all admissions to the school.

The winter and spring months were busy with social and religious activities. The Community Club of the temple, which normally met in the vestry, sponsored a lecture by the eloquent and popular Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in the main sanctuary on February 15. Mrs. Misch invited Rabbi Dr. Rudolph Grossman of Congregation Rodeph Sholom of New York City to speak on Monday evening, March 28, and Rabbi Solomon Foster of Newark, New Jersey addressed the congregation at a later date. The lecture by Grossman was deemed the "treat of the season." Both were paid $50 for expenses. The vestry was used for various events by the Menorah Society of Brown University,[4] the Council of Jewish Women, the Council of Jewish Juniors, and the Lambs Club[5] comprised of Jewish young men and boys. Dances were sponsored by the Temple Guild, a youth group, on March 22 and by the Lambs Club on April 4. The Community Club paid $50 for the use of the vestry and later sponsored a picnic for the Sabbath School children.

The spring congregational meeting of June 23, 1921 was featured by copious and informative committee reports. The board had submitted to the congregation the proposal for issuing a semi-monthly bulletin at a cost of $500 to be raised outside the budget. Alvin T. Sapinsley was authorized to secure advertisements to offset the cost.

Mrs. Misch reported for the Cemetery Committee that the grounds at the rear of the cemetery were being filled and leveled. To date, $1500 had been spent on the grading, and an additional $500 was authorized. A receiving vault connected to the memorial chapel was highly recommended. Mrs. Misch considered a hard surface for the roads of the cemetery highly desirable, and recommended that an iron fence be constructed on the Jordan Street and Reservoir Avenue sides up to the main gate—a project so far deferred because of the cost.

The Sabbath School Committee reported the largest enrollment in history—300 in eleven classes—an increase in two years from 100 in 7 classes. Four new classes were added, one in kindergarten and three in high school. It became necessary to partition the vestry into classrooms because of the serious space problems. Ages ranged

from five years to 18. The very first graduation of a three-year post-confirmation class was held that year. The library had grown by 111 books to a total of 2557. A total of 2373 books were circulated for a weekly average of 85. The children participated in the service on the last night of Sukkot, and took part in a Hanukkah play and an operetta, *Judas Maccabeus*, all parts sung by children. The orchestra for the operetta was comprised of members of the school. Candy for the events was provided by the Sisterhood. Two plays were staged on Purim, including an original effort by Miss H. Schreiber, a teacher. The children, it was said, learned the habit of sharing, cultivated through weekly contributions totaling $391 to a charity supporting 22 organizations. The beneficiary groups receiving monthly gifts of $5 to $40 were local, national, and international sectarian and non-sectarian—and included a special $3 contribution to the China Famine Fund.

The Entertainment Committee reported use of the vestry by several groups and also for a play by the confirmation class. The dancing experiment worked out well; the affairs were generally orderly and brought the young folks "under our roof." There was "no doubt the good effects will be shown later on." A bazaar mounted by the Sisterhood had been very successful financially and socially.

The officers elected for the ensuing year at the annual meeting of October 19, 1921 were Louis Lyons, president; Archibald Silverman, vice president; David Bernkopf, treasurer; Newman Pincus, financial secretary; and Jack Anhalt, recording secretary. In conformity with a growing practice among Reform congregations, a Brotherhood was established. Finally, an embarrassing brouhaha occurred at the meeting during which a member of the congregation made scurrilous remarks about the rabbi.

This led to a special meeting of the board with the vice president in the chair. After a lengthy discussion concerning the remarks made by member S. Schreiber at the annual meeting, a resolution was drafted to be delivered to Rabbi Gup by the president:

> The Trustees of Temple Beth-El in session assembled this twenty-fourth day of October, 1921, at a special meeting called for this purpose deeply deplore the unfortunate unpleasantness which occurred at the annual meeting of the congregation, and extend to Rabbi Gup their regrets and their assurance that measures will be taken in the near future which will tend to prevent public criticism of our spiritual leader.

Since the president because of illness was unable to carry out the mission, Vice President Silverman and a special delegation presented the resolution to Gup together with appropriate and conciliatory remarks. Gup appears to have taken the affair with good grace. The cause of the uproar is not evident from the record, but it may well have had to do with his propensity to partake in public of foods proscribed by *Kashrut* (the traditional dietary laws).

The decision to abolish all tuition fees for the Sabbath School was modified as follows: "Children whose parents can afford membership in the congregation shall not be admitted unless the parents become members." Two sessions of the school would be held, one for members' children and one for as many others as could be accommodated, but applying only to classes up to confirmation. It was later decided to hold sessions for members' children in the morning and those of non-members in the afternoon, a sort of means test. The School Committee later reported that there were initially 132 in the morning class and 25 in the afternoon class. The afternoon enrollment, however, eventually declined to 10 pupils, and the session was discontinued.

In response to a request from the rabbi for assistance in finding a dwelling place for himself and his family, Mrs. Misch reported for the Finance Committee that efforts were under way to find a suitable parsonage so that "our Rabbi would have a permanent home and would not be compelled every few months to look for a new home." During 1919 and 1920 he took graduate courses at Brown University, as had other rabbis of Temple Beth-El.[6]

Late in the year Mrs. Bessie Bloom Wessel donated a painting to the temple, which was accepted with appreciation. A graduate of Brown Unviersity and later a Ph.D. recipient at Columbia University, widowed by the influenza epidemic, she became a prominent sociologist and headed the department of sociology at Connecticut College for Women.[7] The painting, John Singer Sargent's "The Prophets," was hung in the vestry.

As the year drew to a close the Brotherhood held its first meeting and was in the process of further development by Alvin T. Sapinsley. The Choir Committee announced that newly published liturgical music was now being used in the services.

The year 1922 began with a payment of $1000 on the mortgage, taken from the Cemetery Fund. The board approved Rabbi Gup's

request that the Saturday morning services be discontinued because of small attendance by the children. It was decided to hold them only when attendance warranted. The School Committee was empowered to hire a musical director for the school. Gene Ware had resigned as organist for unspecified grievances, but after a meeting with him all matters were adjusted to his satisfaction and he withdrew his resignation. Alvin T. Sapinsley reported that the Brotherhood had held several meetings, which were well attended. A masque ball was both a social and financial success, and a supper was sponsored jointly by the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. The board in March voted to recommend the re-election of Rabbi Gup at a salary of $6500 per year for two years starting on September 1.

Archibald Silverman informed the board that in response to a request received in November 1921, he had assembled a special committee to formulate plans for a National Conference of Social Service to be held in Providence. The president authorized the appointment of a committee of fifteen to represent both the congregation and all other organizations in the city interested in cooperating. Mrs. Caesar Misch and C. Joseph Fox were appointed delegates from the congregation to the meeting to be held on May 14 at the Crown Hotel in Providence. President Lyons, chairman of the special committee on entertainment of guests, reported that he was having "considerable trouble" in obtaining the cooperation of the relevant committees on arrangements, but that he hoped soon to have matters in hand. He succeeded after much work and with the help of his committee in taking care of all visitors to the city. An outing to Newport was thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated, and Lyons mentioned particularly the fine cooperation of the Newport congregation and the excellent accommodations arranged by Judge and Mrs. Max Levy of that city. Following the conference Mrs. Misch recommended that the congregation participate in the organization's activities.

Harry Cutler, the late president of the congregation, had been prominent, as previously noted, in the affairs of several national Jewish organizations—the American Jewish Committee, the first (temporary) American Jewish Congress existing from 1918 to 1920, and the second (permanent) American Jewish Congress organized in 1922.[8] The latter at a recent meeting adopted the following resolution, entered in the congregation's minutes:

> The American Jewish Congress inscribes this minute in deeply felt reverence and gratitude to the memory of Col. Harry Cutler, who will be remembered as one of the far-seeing and intrepid pioneers of the American Jewish Congress movement. A copy of this minute to be adopted shall be sent to the Jewish Welfare Board, to the synagogue in Providence of which Col. Cutler was long the president, and above all to his honored mother to whom the respectful and heartfelt sympathy of the American Jewish Congress is hereby extended.

During the summer Gup was granted the usual vacation and was sent to the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, for which he was allowed $75 for expenses. Rabbi Fred Cohn, who visited Providence with his wife, and Max Berry were thanked for conducting services during the summer. In the fall the Misses Olch, Mildred Blumenthal, and Crown were the new teachers in the Sabbath School, which was attended by 112 pupils. Because of fiscal constraints the board levied an increase in fees for pews of 8 to 12 percent, which the pew holders accepted unanimously. Others were asked to pay up to $50 voluntarily.

The annual congregational meeting was held on Sunday evening, October 16, 1922 at the Providence Biltmore Hotel with Rabbi Harry Levi of Boston as the guest speaker. The incumbent officers were re-elected. It was voted to accept in the Sabbath School up to its capacity any child who in the judgment of the board should be admitted. Later a Sunday-morning service was introduced in addition to regular services on a trial basis to April 1923. Sunday is, of course, a weekday in Jewish tradition. Arrangements were made for a choir for this service. The Sunday-morning service was a further liberalization of the Reform movement, following a custom adhered to for many years by a number of Reform congregations. Cards were sent to Brown University students and to selected organizations informing them of the Sunday morning program. The Choir Committee reported that an organist and choir had been engaged for these services. The death of William Schloss on October 23 in his 63rd year was duly noted in the minutes.

The twenty-fifth council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was held on January 23, 1923. Delegates attending were Messrs. Lyons, Silverman, and Bernkopf and Mrs. Misch.

Not since the days of Rabbi David Blaustein in the late 1890s had there been a serious attempt to organize the Jewish Charities of

Providence. His effort, the United Jewish Charities, faded out of existence after he left Providence in 1898. Prompted by Haggai Lodge, of which Henry Woolf was president and Arthur J. Levy secretary, a questionnaire was sent to all Jewish charitable organizations in Providence to identify and characterize them.[9] Later they received the following circular from Mrs. Archibald Silverman, temporary chairman of the organization:[10]

> Your notice is hereby called to a situation that merits our most serious consideration.
>
> From time to time recently there have arisen within our community conditions which have influenced and may vitally affect the welfare of our people. Such matters are of deep concern to all Jews living in Providence. In these circumstances, the undersigned have informally deemed it imperatively desirable to have all the different organizations of the city come together for an exchange of views, with the object of forming a permanent central representative body to deal with all general Jewish problems and with the necessary authority to handle matters concerning local Jewry as a whole.
>
> To that end, you are earnestly and cordially invited to send four delegates to attend a conference to be held at the Crown Hotel Ballroom, on Sunday. May 14, 1922, at 7:30 o'clock P.M. This gathering, which will be all-Jewish in character, will in no way conflict with your own purposes. Your attention is respectfully called to the fact that the conference is designed to further the best interests of our Jewish communal life and to provide definitely for means of general Jewish welfare. It accordingly suggests the importance and necessity of your representation.
>
> The great significance of the subject matter is worthy of early action on your part. Since the intention is to organize permanently, it is requested that you immediately select delegates with power to effect permanent organization. Kindly forward the names of these representatives to the undersigned secretary on the enclosed credential card forthwith.

David C. Adelman, who was likely present at the meeting, described it in this way:[11]

> At this meeting over some objections of Rabbi Samuel M. Gup of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El) relating to the aspects of the sale of "sacramental wines" during Prohibition and Marion L. Misch representing the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, objecting to

the use of the Yiddish language at the conference which was used in a rapid-fire delivery by Rabbi Rubinstein and more particularly by Mr. Alter Boyman, the delegates representing fifty-seven separate Jewish organizations adopted a resolution, which

> (a) endorsed the propositions to create a permanent organization to represent the Jewish Community as a whole in all matters appertaining to its general welfare,
> (b) created a Ways and Means Committee to study the question; to prepare a report on Objects, Organization and Representation; and to call a second gathering of the Conference, and
> (c) provided that delegates to the second gathering of the All-Jewish Conference be empowered to act for their organizations,

and called a second meeting of the conference to be held in the Parlors of the Narragansett Hotel at 7:30 o'clock, Sunday evening, December 10, 1922.

In response to the call for delegates to the "All-Jewish Conference," the board on December 4 unanimously passed this resolution:

> That the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David refuse to enter into the deliberations of the "All-Jewish Conference" (so-called) or be represented in the association now or after organization, either by sending delegates there or joining in its deliberations, and that Rabbi Gup shall attend the meeting to be held on December 10th and express to the organization the views of the members of this Congregation and a letter be sent by our President stating our disapproval of the proposed organization.

Pursuant to this resolution, the following letter was sent in the president's name to Samuel A. Cohen, secretary of the All-Jewish Conference (December 7, 1922):

> At a regular meeting of the trustees of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David, held on Monday, December 4th, the following resolution, offered by J. Jerome Hahn and seconded by David Bernkopf, was unanimously adopted.

After quoting the resolution, the letter continued:

> In accordance with this resolution we desire to express our conviction on behalf of the members of the Congregation that the formulation of such an organization as you suggest is in most

emphatic opposition to the best interest of our fellow Jewish citizens.

We regard your projects as fraught with incalculable danger. It is most unnecessary and very decidedly un-American. Instead of working for the benefit of the Jew, it would operate as a tool to his own prejudice and harm.

So confident are we that your project bodes ill to the Jewish community at large, that we refuse even to countenance your meeting by appointment of any delegation to participate in your proceedings. We ask, however, that an opportunity be afforded our Rabbi to explain in detail why the creation of such an organization will prove disastrous to the welfare of our Jewish community.

We desire to have it clearly understood that under no circumstances will we allow any group the authority to voice views for our Congregation or any individual therof or to convey any impression to the public of representing us in any manner whatsoever. We protest, therefore, against the assumption by your committee of the word "All" in your title ("All Jewish Committee").

We desire to state in conclusion that we are opposed to the formation of any association which may well be considered to segregate and alienate our people from their fellow American citizens.

This in a sense was a late reflection of the continuing dichotomy between the early Jewish settlers and the late comers, although there undoubtedly were some of either ilk in both camps. But this controversy, nevertheless, sounded a death knell for the conference. As Adelman expressed it: "After the objection of the Deutchen the All-Jewish Conference became quiescent."

At the first board meeting of the new year on January 2, 1923, note was taken of the recent death of Henry Krohne in his 71st year, long a devoted member of the congregation.

On January 4 a meeting was held in the vestry in the interest of the National Farm School of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, founded in 1897 by Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, who was present and spoke at the meeting. Its goal was to introduce young Jews to farming.[12] Later the Brotherhood conducted a fund drive for the school. A two-week leave of absence in February was granted to Rabbi Gup. Rabbi Jacob Schwartz of New York was invited to occupy the pulpit during his absence.

The Sunday morning services were not setting the world afire. A committee to devise ways of increasing attendance at all services advertised the Sunday services in the daily newspapers. Later, Gup was voted $100 to attend the annual rabbinical conference in Cape May, New Jersey. The Sisterhood in June contributed $500 to be applied to the mortgage. On Friday evening, May 25, graduation exercises were held for the first class to be graduated from the new high school. The budget for the ensuing year provided $6500 for the rabbi and $1500 for the choir, for a total of $16,596 against an estimated income of $14,000. A $1000 item for the Sunday choir was deferred because of doubt as to the fate of the Sunday service.

A special committee was established under the chairmanship of Paul Paris to investigate the desirability of continuing the Sunday service. It reported to the board as follows:

> We have corresponded with congregations in various cities and find a number having two major services per week, mostly in the larger cities.
>
> Careful investigation has led us to believe conditions existing in these several cities are not applicable to Providence. We are of the opinion that the personnel of our Providence congregation is such that we should lend all our efforts to make our Friday night services popular, and to have the members and their friends attend. It is our [further] opinion [that] until such time that we have succeeded in getting a large and regular attendance at these Friday night services, we should put all . . . thought of the Sunday services out of our mind.

The report was accepted, and Sunday services were never again revived.

The incumbent officers were re-elected at the annual meeting on September 23, 1923. Stanley Lyons was thanked for blowing the *shophar* on Rosh Hashanah. Attendance during the High Holidays was "excellent." The teachers for the fall classes, one through nine, were Hannah Schneider, Gail Schein, Lester Selonek, Elizabeth Davis, Walter Cobe, Ada Cohen, William Smira, and Henry Bellin. Enrollment in the school was a healthy 204. Salaries of the choir members were increased from $25 to $40 per month and that of organist Gene Ware from $45 to $65. The Sabbath School charity fund distributed $95 to various organizations.

Herman Galkin, who had been involved in the Boy Scout movement in Rhode Island since its beginning in 1910 and had already

established troops of Jewish boys at the Hebrew Educational Institute at 65 Benefit Street in Providence (Troop 5) and at the Jewish Orphanage on North Main Street (Troop 41), approached the trustees of Temple Beth-El with a proposal to start a troop there. A special committee recommended that use of the vestry one night a week be granted for use by a Boy Scout troop, whose members, it stipulated, were "not to be known as Jewish Boy Scouts." It further recommended that similar privileges be granted to the Girl Scouts, if requested. On April 29, 1924 a play was presented at a special Scout night in the vestry by the members of the Men's Club (the Brotherhood) and Troop 5 of Providence, of which Herman Galkin was scoutmaster. The evening was featured by a play, "Scouting in our Community," written, directed, and acted by members of the troop. This was followed by the organization of Troop 50, based at the temple, chartered on January 12, 1925. There were 15 boys in the first troop (aged 12 to 15), and the original scoutmaster was Abraham L. Abel. The inaugural meeting of the troop took place in the main sanctuary of the temple in a colorful ceremony on February 15, 1925.[13] Later a Girl Scout troop was also organized, and the Sisterhood was asked to have a member present at the Girl Scout meetings.

A newly revised constitution and bylaws were presented at a special meeting of the board on February 25, 1924. Although introduced by Judge J. Jerome Hahn, chairman of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, they had actually been drafted by attorney Walter I. Sundlun. They provided for congregational meetings twice a year (May and November) rather than quarterly. The board would meet monthly except in July and August. Officers of the congregation were unchanged. The congregation accepted the changes effective September 1, 1924.

By a vote of 60 to 14 they re-elected Rabbi Gup for two years at a salary of $7500 per year, also effective on September 1. They also alloted $1000 per year to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (up from $1 per member).

In the spring of 1924 the Lederer Estate had proposed buying six cemetery lots in the rear of their mausoleum. The sale was authorized at $3000, although $2400 had been offered. A growing budget for 1924–1925 of $17,823 was adopted, allowing $7500 for the rabbi, $2250 for the choir, $1000 for the mortgage, and $1000 for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Rabbi Gup was granted leave

to attend the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in the summer of 1924 with his expenses paid.

Yet all was not serene in the congregation. The board on June 2 passed the following resolution:

> WHEREAS there has come to the attention of the Board of Trustees in an official manner the existence of an alleged difference between Rabbi Gup and Mr. Archibald Silverman, a member of the Congregation, and
>
> WHEREAS the Board of Trustees is desirous of arriving at the correct findings of the dispute involved therein, and to do justice to all parties concerned, now therefore be it
>
> RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees select a committee of three consisting of Mr. David Bernkopf, Mr. J. J. Hahn, and Mr. W.I. Sundlun who shall interview all the said parties involved and concerned therein and after said interview report their findings to the Board of Trustees.

A meeting of the board was held two weeks later to receive the report of the special committee. The minutes referred to the "attached correspondence," which, in fact, had been removed from the records. Silverman resigned from the vice-presidency, and Paul Paris was unanimously elected his successor.

Interviews with Irwin Silverman, son of Archibald Silverman, and with the late Rabbi William G. Braude elicited the broad outlines of what had transpired. Silverman's younger son Norman was eligible for bar mitzvah. Rabbi Gup was out of town on the date planned for the ceremony. Whether the time for the event was chosen by design or by happenstance is not clear. According to Irwin Silverman there had not been a bar mitzvah in Temple Beth-El since the opening of the Broad Street Temple in 1911. Rabbi Braude was of the opinion that there probably had been some bar mitzvahs, but not many, although the evidence either way is slight. At any rate, Rabbi Nathan Krass of Temple Emanu-El of New York City was engaged to conduct the service at Temple Beth-El in Providence. The result was an explosion between Gup and Silverman, which resulted in the above resolution. How the matter was resolved is not clear, but it is a matter of fact that neither Archibald nor Ida Silverman ever again appeared in the temple during Gup's tenure. Rabbi Braude believed, and Irwin Silverman concedes, that it is more than likely that Silverman's resignation from office was largely inspired by Mrs. Silverman, an ardent and influential Zionist

activist, who greatly resented Gup's negative attitude regarding Zionism.

At the close of the Sabbath School year in the spring of 1924, several interesting prizes were given to the students. A gold medal given each year by President Lyons was awarded to the confirmation class scholar who excelled during the year. Mrs. Misch donated a Bible for efficiency in biblical studies, while the Sisterhood awarded a Bible to the best scholar in the confirmation class. The Slocum family awarded 13 books for perfect attendance, and four books were awarded to children who kept their Junior Bibles in perfect condition. David D. Gilman awarded a prize in memory of his late son to the most efficient scholar in the class attended by his son, who had died in his eighth year. Finally, Walter Cobe donated prizes for the best students in the class which he himself had taught during the year.

The teachers for the fall session were, by grades: Ella Feinstein, first; Harriet Schneider, second; Julian Solinger, third; Lester Selonek, fourth; May Edelstein, fifth; Henry D. Bellin, sixth; Grace Shein, confirmation class; Walter Cobe, first high school; Rabbi Gup, second high school and Normal (i.e. teachers') class; Amy Wise, librarian; and Violette Marks, secretary and pianist. Miss Zellermeyer was added, with her assignment unstated. The School Committee announced that 200 students were enrolled for the fall and winter season, ages 5 to 18. While Purim and Hanukkah entertainments were held in the vestry as usual, the sanctuary was used for Sukkot services. A kindergarten room with tables was added by the Sisterhood, and the confirmation class gave four bookcases to the library.

In those pioneer days of radio broadcasting, the board assigned to the Brotherhood the responsibility of broadcasting temple services. This was the beginning of many years of public radio and television broadcasting by Rabbis Gup, Braude, and Gutterman, which were generally oriented toward public education.

At a special meeting of the board, letters were ordered sent to prominent industrialists Joseph Finberg of Attleboro, Massachusetts and Austin Levy of Harrisville, Rhode Island, both married to gentile ladies, inviting them to the High Holiday services. Both Levy and Finberg, who were successful in textile and jewelry manufacturing respectively, were generous in charitable pursuits. While they retained their Jewish identity, they were not much involved in the

Jewish social or religious life of Rhode Island. The cordial invitation by the board anticipated by half a century the efforts by the Reform movement in the 1980s, and more particularly actions by the board of Temple Beth-El, to recruit into the Reform community Jews who have non-Jewish spouses. Mrs. Joseph Finberg died in 1925, which event was duly noted by the board. Brown and Pembroke students were also invited to services by notices posted at the college.

The slate of Louis Lyons, president; Paul B. Paris, vice president; Abraham Dimond, treasurer; Newman Pincus, financial secretary; and Jack Anhalt, recording secretary, was elected at the annual meeting in November 1924. Rabbi Gup made "commendable remarks" and urged attendance at Friday evening services, a recurrent theme for Temple Beth-El and rabbis elsewhere. Thirty-five new members were added to the congregation prior to the Holidays, an encouraging sign of vigor.

Early in the new year of 1925 the board empowered the Sabbath School Committee to assess non-member parents of students in the school to create a sinking fund. If not paid, the committee at its discretion could dismiss the child. Each assessment was subject to approval by the board, as was also dismissal.

A special committee was authorized to examine the Jordan family land adjacent to the cemetery and make a recommendation as to purchase. An agreement was reached with Harmon P. Jordan, Sanford A. Jordan, and Henry P. Jordan on November 29, 1924 to purchase the land for $11,934 and was unanimously approved by the board. A mortgage of $7000 was secured to finance the purchase of the land, which was located on Jordan Street between Reservoir and Niantic Avenues.

Early in May of 1925 Rabbi Gup received a letter from Commander Morris Snow of Harry Cutler Post, No. 3 of the Jewish Veterans of the Wars of the Republic, located in the Bronx, New York, requesting permission to hold services at Cutler's grave and in the temple on Memorial Day, May 30. Permission was granted "upon the distinct understanding that Rabbi Samuel M. Gup would officiate at both services."[14]

The budget for the ensuing year of $17,473 provided $7500 for the Rabbi's salary. The board unanimously extended best wishes to Mrs. Marion Misch for an enjoyable voyage on another of her periodic jaunts to Europe and for her good health and a safe return. In

another bow to modern times, contracts were signed for installation of an oil burner at $1775 and for fuel oil at 8.5 cents a gallon. Rabbi Gup was granted leave to attend a meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 20 to 24.

The incumbent officers were re-elected at the annual meeting of the congregation on November 1, 1925. Rabbi Gup reminded the congregation that he had been spiritual leader for the past seven years, during which he had given the congregation his best efforts and felt very much discouraged at the attendance at Friday night services. He urged the Brotherhood and Sisterhood to assist in stimulating the congregation to attend the services. A special Attendance Committee was urged to "try to arouse the spirit of our members religiously," the committee consisting of four men and 19 women. The preponderance of women on this special committee in a customarily male-dominated organization was an acknowledgment of their organizational capability. It had been planned earlier in the year to celebrate the "80th Anniversary" of the congregation in November 1925. This, of course, was in error, as the congregation, founded in 1854 and chartered in 1855, was actually seventy-one years old. The error went undetected for another twenty years until discovered by Rabbi Braude in 1945. Strangely, in May of 1927 a committee was again appointed to arrange for an 80th anniversary celebration.

Early in 1926 the Attendance Committee reported very encouraging results. It had a number of plans, such as sending weekly notices to members, and was arranging an open forum for all charity organizations on Friday evening, February 12.

President Louis Lyons was delegated to represent the congregation at special exercises at The Miriam Hospital, which had recently been opened. The hospital, which had been dedicated at a banquet on November 15, 1925 and received its first patient on November 16, was chartered by the Rhode Island General Assembly on March 25, 1926.

A special congregational meeting was held on February 21 to discuss the desirability of enlarging the vestry, as it was impossible to conduct school sessions properly in the present congested and limited space. The school was prospering with an average weekly attendance rate of 80 percent. A proposed plan to spend $65,000 was considered impractical by the board, which initially authorized

an expenditure of $20,000 to purchase adjoining land on Marlborough Avenue, adjacent to the temple. This idea was also abandoned in favor of purchasing collapsible partitions for the vestry for $4000.

In April the board moved to take advantage of the availability of more land adjacent to the cemetery. It authorized the purchase of all land abutting the cemetery on the easterly and westerly sides of Jordan Street next to the cemetery and on the southerly and northerly sides of Howe Street to the rear. The owners were A.R. Jordan, the estate of C. Moore, R. Rosenberg, and T.J. Jacques. A year later another 40,000 square feet of land was purchased from the Moore estate for $3100. The use of mausoleums was restricted to burial of those of the Jewish faith; to members and their wives; to sons and daughters of members, and their husbands and wives; and to grandchildren while single. The cost of perpetual care of the land around the mausoleums was set at $1200, but the congregation would assume no responsibility for any care of the mausoleums themselves.

Rabbi Gup was re-elected by a vote of 35 to 4 at a salary of $8000 beginning September 1, 1926. He was granted a ten-day vacation in April, during which he addressed a congregation in Miami, Florida. The slowly growing budget was set at $18,360. The newly elected officers were Louis Lyons, president; Edward Wolf, vice president; Abraham Dimond, treasurer; and Abraham Klein, financial secretary. The bylaws were amended to eliminate the office of recording secretary and to engage a clerk in lieu of the secretary. He would keep all congregational records; attend all meetings; read all letters, reports, petitions, and recommendations; assist all committees and keep their records; and have a paid assistant. Newman Pincus's long service was recognized by electing him Secretary Emeritus and awarding him a yearly stipend of $300 and a life membership.

In February 1927, $3000 from the cemetery fund was applied to the cemetery mortgage, and a $4000 loan at 5 percent was negotiated to pay off the cemetery mortgage held by the Jordan brothers.

The Sabbath School Committee ruled that after the class of 1928 all children to be confirmed must be 16 years old before the commencement of the next term. Further, the rabbi was instructed to initiate classes in Hebrew, which at that time had languished, and the School Committee was authorized to hire a Hebrew teacher. Enrollment reached 249 with an average attendance of 72 percent.

Rabbi Gup was re-elected for another year from September 1,

1927 again at $8000. The board ordered purchase of a gift for Rabbi and Mrs. Gup on the occasion of their eighth wedding anniversary.

The budget for the next year was set at $18,820. An innovation was voted by the congregation in May of 1927. All attending the regular services would rise for the *Kaddish* (a prayer recited by mourners), rather than only those observing a *Yahrzeit* (anniversary) of a death. This custom has been followed since that time. The modification of the ancient custom was originally adopted to avoid embarrassing the mourners, but after the Holocaust everyone stood to share in the universal expression of grief.

A new class of "Honorary Officers" was established for those who had served as officers of the congregation for at least twenty years to recognize Lyons's long service. All members would be assessed $5 per year toward the annual levy paid to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The new officers were: Edward Wolf, president; Charles C. Brown, vice president; Abraham Dimond, treasurer; and Adolf Meller, financial secretary. Leo Hamburger was elected secretary-clerk. Rabbi Gup proposed starting Hebrew and Bible classes for adults and an auxiliary choir of all-Jewish voices. The first convention of the teachers of the Liberal Jewish Schools of New England was held in Boston on December 25–27. Rabbi Gup was elected its first president. Travel to the meeting by Rabbi Gup and the teachers was reimbursed by the temple.

On December 17 a Hanukkah play was presented in the vestry by the children of the Sabbath School. The children of the Jewish Orphanage were invited to attend, and the affair attracted one of the largest crowds ever seen in the vestry. The Sabbath School Orchestra of five musicians performed for the first time, as well as a choir and a group called the "Paris Trio."

Early in 1928 an annuity was purchased for Rabbi Gup, and his re-election for two years from September at a salary of $8500 per year was recommended. Gup attended the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Chicago in June and July and was elected a member of its board. As time went on, he became increasingly involved in the councils of the Central Conference and later served as corresponding secretary and chairman of its pension board. The temple budget was set at $18,820. The congregation currently consisted of 271 members and seat holders, of whom 183 paid less than $75 per year. The congregation was reminded that two other synagogues in Providence had minimum dues of $75 and both charged

an extra assessment for those with children in Hebrew classes. Seat holders paid less than the minimum dues. An increase in dues was voted to take effect with the new fiscal year. A committee was appointed to plan with the Cemetery Committee for an extension of the iron fence.

A feature of the annual meeting on November 4, 1928 was a talk by Marion Misch about her interesting experiences abroad. The board was empowered to consider further the erection of vaults in the cemetery, a project seemingly on hold. The new officers were: Charles C. Brown, president; Adolph Meller, vice president; Abraham Dimond, treasurer; and Jack L. Anhalt, financial secretary.

As the year closed it was voted not to send delegates to the annual meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in San Francisco, as the expense would be too great. Seat holders, it was emphasized, not being deemed members of the congregation, had no right to a cemetery plot and no vote in congregational matters. The Sabbath School enrollment was 228 with 84 percent average attendance. A Hanukkah play, presented on December 9, was derived from an original script written by Lester Selonek and Walter Cobe, teachers in the school. Walter Cobe at the time was also principal of the school. Temple Beth-El was the host on December 30 and 31 of the newly formed New England teachers' convention (the Liberal Jewish Schools of New England), which had met the previous year in Boston. The board voted a subvention of $100. Dr. Julian Morgenstern, president of Hebrew Union College, was entertained by the board of trustees at a luncheon.

Rabbi Harry Levi of Boston was invited to occupy the pulpit on a Friday evening in January of 1929. Rabbi Gup officiated at Temple Beth-El in Jersey City, New Jersey on March 15 on behalf of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. During his absence the Reverend Richard C. Raines, pastor of Mathewson Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Providence, occupied the pulpit. Plans were made to present a gift of $1000 to Rabbi Gup in January of 1930 in celebration of his ten years of service to the congregation. It was comprised of donations of $500 from the treasury and $250 each from the Sisterhood and the Brotherhood, combined with gifts collected from individual members.

In April of 1929 further cemetery land was bought from the Jordan family, comprised of lots lying northwest of the proposed Southern New England Railway. The railroad, a feeder to the Grand Trunk

Line of Canada, was never completed. The cost was $12,343.94, of which $2043.94 was paid in cash, the balance by a mortgage to the Jordan family of $10,300 at 6 percent. The purchase was ratified at the June meeting of the congregation.

The budget for the ensuing year, adopted at the same meeting, was set at $22,730. Mrs. Misch presented to the congregation a much-admired picture of Elijah blowing a *shophar*, and also a portrait of Moses on behalf of a Miss Elizabeth Upham Gates. Walter Cobe resigned as principal of the Sabbath School and was replaced by Lester Selonek.

The board voted unanimously in July "that the services of a cantor would be a desirable addition to our Temple." The matter was referred to a meeting of the congregation, but was not resolved as a quorum was lacking. Shortly thereafter, the talented organist Gene Ware resigned, whether prompted by these discussions is not clear. His resignation was accepted with genuine regrets. He was later replaced by Frederick Very, another prominent local musician. The hiring of a cantor was approved, and Reuben Rothman was elected for a three-month trial at $500. The congregation had not heard a cantor at its services since 1877, and it remained a controversial matter, particularly in the minds of the older and more liberal congregants. There was also more at issue, according to Pearl Braude, the widow of Rabbi William G. Braude, than whether or not a cantor was to be engaged. The music of the synagogue was dominated by the Protestant hymnal, which was too close for comfort to the "Salvation Army sounds" for some sensitive Jewish ears. On the other hand, many congregants had been brought up to prefer the Protestant music and would vote to retain that tradition. The presence of a cantor, moreover, would further violate the accustomed ambiance—it was too Jewish.

On October 28 the board voted on the following questions: 1. Was the board in favor of continuing a cantor? 2. If so, should Cantor Reuben Rothman be continued? The vote was divided in both cases and apparently was considered indecisive. At any rate, before the three-month trial period had run its course, the whole congregation met again on November 3 to vote on the issue. The minutes recorded the proposed resolution and the vote:

> That the religious service of this Temple will hereafter and until further notice be conducted without the services of a cantor.

> In fairness to those members who were in favor of a cantor, a record of the vote on the motion was taken, the vote being 47 in favor of the motion and 7 opposed.

This settled the matter for many years. With an increasing number of congregants with Orthodox or Conservative background entering the congregation and also a changing philosophy in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College, it eventually came to pass in the 1950s that cantorial music was reintroduced into the services after a lapse of three-quarters of a century.

October 24, 1929 was "Black Thursday" on the New York Stock Exchange. Between the 24th and 29th the value of stocks on the Exchange dropped from $87 billion to $55 billion, or a loss of 37 percent. By March 1, 1933 an unparalleled depression had set in, and the value of the stocks had dropped a disastrous total of 80 percent to $19 billion. This was a severe blow to many members of the congregation, but was not immediately reflected in the minutes.

On October 28 Rabbi Gup, attending a meeting in Cincinnati, sent the following telegram to the board: "It would be pleasant and desirable for congregation to invite Conference of American Rabbis to meet in Providence next June [1930]. Cost approximately one thousand dollars. Hope you will do so. Wire decision immediately." A special meeting of the board was called for the next day to consider the proposal. The cost of entertaining about 200 delegates and their wives would amount to some $1000, as estimated by Gup. Five members of the board were present, and eight others were consulted. Judge Hahn was favorable to the idea, provided any possible deficit from entertaining delegates be made up from treasury funds. If the board was agreeable to this proposition, he personally would contribute toward such entertaining. His consent was further conditional upon the willingness of members to contribute to the comfort and entertainment of the delegates by giving of their personal time and effort to the endeavor, and furnishing such conveniences as automobile transportation. It was decided to secure the convention for Providence and to cover any deficit from general funds. Gup was informed of the decision, and the convention in due course was held in Providence.

The congregation at its annual meeting on November 3, 1929 re-

elected the incumbent officers. Judge Hahn, presiding for the election, called upon Newman Pincus, now in his 83rd year, to escort President Charles C. Brown to the chair. Mrs. Misch announced that Clarence A. Barbour, president of Brown University, would address an early meeting of the Council of Jewish Women in the vestry, and invited the congregation to attend. Barbour, recently elected to the presidency of Brown, was the last Baptist minister to serve in that capacity.[15] Gup announced that the Honorable Judge Myron Sulzberger of New York City and Rabbi Simon R. Cohen, distinguished Rabbi Emeritus of Union Temple of Brooklyn, New York, would visit the temple on Friday evening, December 13 in connection with a tour they were making for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Further, Gup would occupy the pulpit of the Mathewson Street Methodist Episcopal Church on December 15, reciprocating for the recent visit of the Reverend Richard C. Raines to Beth-El. Members of the congregation were invited to attend. Rabbi Gup informed the congregation that Rabbi David Philip Bookstaber of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania had donated $100 to the congregation in memory of Rabbi David Blaustein, who had died in 1912. After consulting Bookstaber, it was decided to use the gift for a memorial tablet in Blaustein's memory. On a more mundane note, approval was granted to extend the lease of a diner ("dining car") on cemetery land bordering Reservoir Avenue at a rental of $900 a year for the first two years and $1200 for fifteen years thereafter. The diner had been located on the land for several years.

At an entertainment on January 17, 1930 in celebration of Rabbi Gup's tenth anniversary as rabbi, he was presented with a purse and the following resolution:

> WHEREAS, We, the members of the Congregation of
>
> TEMPLE BETH-EL
>
> being desirous of registering our esteem, affection and respect for our spiritual leader, Rabbi Samuel M. Gup, and also of extending to him, on this, his tenth anniversary as the spiritual leader of our Congregation our hope and wishes for his future happiness and success. Be it therefore
>
> RESOLVED, That we, by our duly constituted officers, hereby express and record our sincere regard for our

RABBI SAMUEL M. GUP

and our recognition of him as Rabbi possessing a profound knowledge of Theology; as a man interested in the alleviation of the distress and hardships of the weak, the poor and the sick; as a citizen and leader in our community earnestly devoting his energies towards the creation and establishment of a better understanding between all races and creeds; as one fearless, honest and willing to express his true thoughts and as a champion and spiritual leader of the Jewish people, interested at all times in attaining for them the cultural and spiritual standards which tend to create and foster the highest principles of Judaism and of American citizenship.

We recognize his influence, strongly exerted, for the establishment of good will among all inhabitants of the State of Rhode Island and we are deeply conscious of his constant endeavors for the advancement of good will and brotherhood amongst all people. We recognize him as a man of strong intelligence and high ideals, and we who have known him for the past ten years as our spiritual leader extend to him our wishes for his success in his work as a Rabbi and that he may continue to render many, many years of successful spiritual and social work for the enlightenment and uplifting of all mankind. Be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David be instructed to register the foregoing resolutions upon the records of the said board and that a copy thereof, suitably engrossed, be presented to our esteemed Rabbi, Samuel M. Gup.

Early in the new year of 1930 a committee was formed to prepare for the rabbinical conference in May. The Sisterhood donated $500 toward the entertainment fund for the conference.

Part of the cemetery fence was in need of repairs, and new fences were needed around the far reaches of the new lands. The Cemetery Committee was authorized to execute contracts for this work and also later for filling in some of the new area on Jordan Street.

An amendment to the bylaws, passed by the congregation in May, provided for honorary trustees, who, as in the case of honorary officers, must have served in some capacity for twenty years. A later amendment provided for a second vice president. Gup was reelected for two years at a salary of $8500 per year. The budget was set at $22,730. Lester Selonek submitted his resignation as principal

of the Sabbath School and was given a gift of $100 in recognition of his good work.[16]

The 41st Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis was held in Providence from June 25 to 29.[17] Headquarters were at the Biltmore Hotel, and assemblies were also held at Temple Beth-El. It was attended by 158 members. In his address of welcome, President Meller spoke in part as follows:

> . . . Our Temple, I am proud to say, is a fitting example of the fruit of your conferences. Our pulpit commands the respect and admiration of all Providence, and has enormously raised the prestige of the whole Jewish community. Every worthwhile [Jewish] institution in this city has found its inspiration and impetus right in our Temple. Much of this we owe to your dear colleague, our Rabbi Samuel M. Gup. . . .

How these obliquely patronizing remarks were received by Jews in Providence otherwise affiliated is not a matter of record. Meller went on: "Tomorrow it will be our pleasure to take you to Newport, where the first synagogue in the Unites States of America was built in 1762 [It was not the first, Ed.].[18] It is significant that it should have been built in the state of the Union whose very foundation rests upon the principle of religious liberty." Rabbi David Philipson, distinguished spiritual leader of Cincinnati, historian and honorary president of the Conference, spoke of the emotional impact of his first visit to Touro Synagogue and to the Jews' Cemetery in Newport. He referred briefly to the achievements of Judah Touro and complimented Rabbi Gup for his splendid record in Providence.

On June 26 the visitors proceeded to Newport and met in Touro Synagogue (Congregation Jeshuat Israel). An address of welcome in Hebrew was delivered by Rabbi Jacob Seidel,[19] followed by greetings from Nathan David, president of the congregation, Mayor Mortimer Sullivan, and Judge Max Levy. The visitors spent the whole day in Newport, visiting the Jews' Cemetery "and other points of interest." Gup was later praised by the temple board for his able efforts in making the conference a signal success.

In a further move away from austere liberalism, the board approved an offer of the Sisterhood to purchase a robe for the rabbi to be worn on the pulpit. There is no evidence that the free-spirited rabbi objected, although he had never worn one before.

Mrs. Misch gave five volumes of Sephardic prayer books to the library; gratitude was expressed "for this most acceptable gift." The officers were re-elected for the 1930–1931 year. Gup pleaded for support by attendance at services and urged the members to make the temple the center of activities. As the year ended, in response to a request from the president, he presented a comprehensive list of recommendations for the various committees of the congregation. Among his recommendations were the following: a summer school session for the religious school; two sessions a week for all classes above the age 12; charging for children of non-affiliated parents; lower fees for young married couples; a scheme to enable confirmands to enter the congregation with a nominal payment; upholstered cushions for the pews; making the cemetery more park-like; eliminate the semi-annual meeting and change the annual meeting date to January; more involvement of the choir at services; and an organized campaign for more members.

Other suggestions included: improving attendance at services, initially by urging the attendance of members of the Attendance Committee; ex-officio membership on the board of presidents of the Sisterhood and Brotherhood; a large and fine congregational affair each year at nominal cost so as not to exclude any member; some social amenities at the annual meeting and completion of all business in one hour; a committee of ushers to serve throughout the year and on Holidays; better publicity for the public, press, and members; increasing relations between Christians and Jews, more exchanges of pulpits with Christian churches, exchange of pulpits with the Conservative synagogues, and a Union Thanksgiving Service with one or several Christian churches; formulation and development of a program of youth activities beyond the existing High School Youth; and creation of a definite program of Jewish education for adults with courses in Jewish history, biblical study, Hebrew, current Jewish problems, and modern Jewish literature. He envisioned the eventual development of a post-high-school program of religious instruction.

Finally, the rabbi recommended an impartial study by the Temple Commission (a new committee) to determine "Why the Neutrality [read 'Indifference'] of our members?" How can the religious interests in the synagogue and the home be increased? He raised the question again of whether Sunday morning would be more suitable for services than Friday evening. "Is the Sabbath Eve Service," he

asked "doomed to permanent disappointment because of the conditions which obtain on Friday night, such as, coming at the end of a day of business, competition of theatres, and weather conditions at night not as favorable as those of day for leaving home?" Some of the questions are as pertinent at this writing as they were a half century ago. On the whole, this was a perceptive and comprehensive document, and many of the proposals have since become accepted doctrine.

The first meeting of the board in 1931 was held on New Year's Day. All funds left over from the rabbis' convention in June were turned over to the treasurer. The new work on the cemetery iron fence was completed at a cost of $360. Mrs. Misch "bought" a section of the fence in memory of the recently deceased George Walder. Miss Amy Wise reported to the board as the new superintendent of the Sabbath School. It was announced that Dr. Arthur H. Bradford, Minister of the Central Congregational Church, and Rabbi Gup would exchange pulpits on Sunday, February 8 and Friday, February 13 respectively.

Mrs. Misch informed the board that Professor Boris Schatz would be visiting New England. She was asked to welcome him to Providence and invited him to exhibit his paintings and other works of art in the vestry at a time convenient to him. Schatz, a native of Kovno in Lithuania, had studied in Paris before founding the Bezalel School of Art in Jerusalem at the urging of Theodor Herzl.[20] Mrs. Misch was familiar with the school, where she had commissioned the silver appurtenances for the *Megillah* which she had presented to the congregation. Schatz, who was on a fund-raising tour of America, died shortly thereafter in Denver, Colorado.

Judge J. Jerome Hahn was congratulated upon his elevation from the State Superior Court to the Supreme Court. A bronze plaque of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, founder of Reform Judaism in America, was presented by the confirmation class. The bylaws were amended to provide for an Investment Committee. The new budget was set at $22,730 with $8500 for the rabbi. Abraham Dimond resigned as treasurer, and at a special board meeting Milton Sulzberger was nominated to replace him. He was elected treasurer at the annual meeting in November, and the balance of the slate was re-elected. Judge Hahn moved "that the president appoint a committee of seven members to consider the matter of locating and building in the City of Providence a new Temple suitable for the needs of this congre-

gation, this committee to report at our next annual meeting or earlier if in their discretion it is advisable." The motion was adopted, but with the deepening depression the congregation had other problems. There is no evidence that a report was ever rendered, and the idea did not come to fruition for another twenty years.

Rabbi Gup, busy with communal matters, sponsored a student discussion group and addressed interfaith gatherings. He later spoke at a special exercise celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington on February 22, 1932. The rabbi announced a member's gift of two phonographs ("Victrolas").

The deepening depression was having a palpable effect on the congregation's welfare, but remained unmentioned despite an alarming number of resignations, requests for reductions in dues, and revocation of memberships for non-payment of dues. With the advent of the new year, matters reached a climax. A special meeting of the board was called for January 25, 1932 to discuss budgetary problems. Several measures were taken to meet the crisis. The choir was reduced by having the male members participate on alternate weeks. The salaries of the organist, janitor, librarian, and librarian's assistant were all reduced by 10 percent, and the services of the Sabbath School principal and one Hebrew teacher were dispensed with entirely. Travel expenses to the various conferences were no longer reimbursable, "miscellaneous items" in the budget were reduced from $1000 to $300. The *Temple Bulletin* was issued bi-weekly instead of weekly. Rabbi Gup volunteered to donate $42 per month from his salary for the balance of the year, and the secretary volunteered a similar 10 percent reduction in his salary.

Pavel Bytovetski, the current organist, resigned, perhaps annoyed by the reduction in his salary. Gup proposed the use of the junior choir on Friday evenings, a plan which was taken under consideration. He further suggested the possibility of combining the first and second high school classes, but the board preferred to cut the teachers' salaries by 20 percent. One teacher immediately resigned, unwilling to work at a reduced salary. Further, most Sabbath School prizes were eliminated. "Judge Hahn," it was noted, "in some well chosen words, asked the cooperation of all the trustees to promote the welfare of the congregation, especially in these trying times." A suggestion that the cemetery land be used as a site for a tree or shrub nursery as a way of producing income was quickly defeated.

Amid the adversity, resignations of members and reductions in dues continued.

The board recommended a reduced budget of $17,447 for the next year. The rabbi was re-elected for two years, but at a reduced salary of $8000. The budget provided only $1000 for the choir, which had recently received as much as $2300.

Walter I. Sundlun in May of 1932 reported for the Laws Committee that the Moshassuck Cemetery Corporation had built a garage on land owned by the congregation. The Moshassuck corporation had ceased construction and was awaiting further word from the congregation. Notices were sent to the congregation to gather information concerning bodies which may have been disturbed during the excavation for the foundation. Sundlun maintained that every effort should be made to ascertain the names of those buried in the congregation's plot, and a committee was appointed with full authority to adjust the matter. Sundlun later in 1935 was authorized to sue the Moshassuck Cemetery Corporation and to retain the Mortgage Guarantee and Title Company to assure the proper disposition of the question of title. There is no indication that any graves were disturbed, and the matter was eventually settled.

Gifts of a painting from Mrs. George Wise and an etching from Isadore S. Horenstein were announced. Rabbi Gup spoke favorably of the services rendered by former organist Pavel Bytovetski at the Bicentennial of Washington's Birthday and at the recent confirmation services, and Bytovetski was sent a letter of appreciation.

In June Rabbi Gup informed the board that he desired to resign from the pulpit. His resignation was accepted without dissent as of September 1, 1932, and a committee was appointed to seek a replacement. Since Gup had already been re-elected for two years, the motivation for his decision is not clear. It is likely, however, that he had concluded that he could improve his financial situation, there being little likelihood in the near future of restoring his former salary at Beth-El. He left apparently with little fanfare. After leaving Providence, Rabbi Gup assumed the pulpit in Columbus, Ohio, where he served until his death in 1955. His devoted services on behalf of the Central Conference of American Rabbis was duly noted in his obituary.[21] Rabbi Henry Englander officiated during the ensuing High Holidays, for which he was given an honorarium of $350 (including expenses).

NOTES

1. *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook* 65:158–159, 1955.
2. Harry Cutler, born in Russia in 1874, came to America as a boy. He was but 14 years of age when he moved to Providence to make his career. He was a jewelry manufacturer, colonel in the Rhode Island militia, representative in the Rhode Island General Assembly, prominent in Reform Jewish circles, locally and nationally, founder of the Jewish Welfare Board, on the executive board of the American Jewish Committee, and an organizer *par excellence* in Rhode Island Jewish philanthropies. He was commended by President Woodrow Wilson and national Jewish leaders. He was also the first Chief Scout Commissioner of the Rhode Island Boys Scouts. See "Reminiscences of Harry Cutler," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:104–107, (May) 1956. Also *ibid.*: 192–207, (December) 1957.
3. Samuel Priest, born in Lithuania, first engaged in the waste and rag business, founded the Imperial Printing and Finishing Company in Cranston in 1912. It survived until 1937. His son-in-law, Alfred Joslin, who learned the business at the Imperial Print Works, later became president of M. Lowenstein and Sons of South Carolina, the largest finishing plant in the world. Pearl Raphael (Mrs. Samuel) Priest continued Priest's various manufacturing enterprises after his death in 1926. Erwin Strasmich's "Jews and the Textile Industry," pp. 200–201.
4. The Menorah Society, founded in 1906 at Harvard University, spread to many colleges. The Brown University chapter was chartered in 1914. The *Menorah Journal* was first published in 1915. The Menorah Society emphasized the intellectual and cultural aspects of Jewish life. The movement flourished until 1930. It has been replaced in Jewish college life by the Hillel Foundations of B'nai B'rith, which movement was founded in 1923. See Eleanor F. Horvitz and Benton H. Rosen, "The Jewish Fraternity and Brown University," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:299–344 *passim*, (November) 1980. Also Jenna Weissman Joselit, "Without Ghettoism: A History of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, 1906–1930," *American Jewish Archives* 30:133–154, (November) 1978.
5. Joseph M. Finkle to Louis Lyons, March 2, 1921, Temple Beth-El archives. The letter reads in part:

   > . . . Herbert Marks informs me that . . . to secure the vestry . . . for meetings of "The Lambs" you would require some information concerning said organization. . . .
   >
   > "The Lambs" . . . are composed of 72 young men . . . carefully passed upon before being admitted. . . .
   >
   > . . . twenty . . . are students at Brown University, the majority . . . [from] other cities.
   >
   > Our purpose . . . [is] "to promote the welfare of our members," also to be of aid to the community as a whole.
   >
   > . . . our meetings . . . [are] addressed by some prominent speaker[s]

on subjects of timely interest to young men of preparatory or collegiate age.

We . . . request . . . [use of] the vestry . . . once every three weeks. . . .

We . . . [invite] the Board of Trustees . . . [to] our next meeting. . . , when our club will be addressed by Lieutenant Commander J. Ogden Hoffman of the U.S. Naval Bureau. . . .

6. *Brown University Catalogue 1764–1934*, p. 1097.
7. See Bessie Edith Bloom, "Jewish Life in Providence," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:386–413, (November) 1970, including a biographical sketch of Bessie Bloom Wessel on pp. 409–412.
8. See Chapter Eight, note 17.
9. D. C. Adelman, "The Providence Jewish Communities Unite," pp. 164–165.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
12. The National Farm School reached its maximum dormitory capacity of 45 pupils in 1904. It laid the foundation for numerous Jews to undertake individual farming. Jewish farmers often concentrated on dairy and truck farming near metropolitan areas. They frequently supplemented their income by accommodating summer guests. See Salo W. Baron's *Steeled by Adversity*, p. 295.
13. Troop 50 later became Troop 40 at Temple Beth-El. It was disbanded about 1975. See Eleanor F. Horvitz, "Jews and the Boy Scout Movement in Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:341–384, (November) 1977, pp. 355–380 *passim*.
14. In addition to the notation in the minutes of the board of trustees of May 5, 1925, there are several citations about Harry Cutler Post, No. 3 in Eleanor Horvitz's "Jews and the Boy Scout Movement in Rhode Island," pp. 360–364. It transpires that the Harry Cutler Post, No. 3 of the Bronx had come to Providence on three previous Memorial Days (1922, 1923, and 1924) to lay a wreath on Cutler's grave. The wording of the proviso would indicate that the board was offended at a slight to Rabbi Gup on those occasions, when in fact he appears not to have been invited to participate.
15. Clarence August Barbour became president of Brown University in 1929. Upon his ascent to the presidency, the controversy over a Jewish fraternity at Brown came to an end. A contemporary observer noted: "President Barbour did not see what was the big deal—Jewish boys want to have a fraternity—Why not?" Shortly thereafter Pi Lambda Phi, a national non-sectarian fraternity with a largely Jewish membership, was recognized at Brown University. The fraternities at Brown that survive have no racial or ethnic barriers. See Eleanor F. Horvitz and Benton H. Rosen, "The Jewish Fraternity at Brown University," pp. 311–312, *et seq.*
16. Lester Selonek was assistant scoutmaster of Troop 50 of the temple

Boy Scout troop when it was founded in 1925. See note 13, p. 356 of the citation.

17. *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook* 40:17–21, 88–89, 1930.
18. Although the construction of Touro Synagogue was in progress in 1762, it was not dedicated until 1763. It should more properly be referred to as "the oldest synagogue building still standing in North America." See Malcolm Stern, "Newport Jewry—Whence and When?" *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:313–326, (November) 1969, pp. 318–319.
19. With the advent of Rabbi Jacob Seidel, a distinct Ashkenazic coloration came to Touro Synagogue, which from its colonial origins had been traditionally Sephardic. See Bernard Kusinitz, "The 1902 Sit-in at Touro Synagogue," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:42–72, (November) 1975, p. 44.
20. According to the Talmud, Bezalel, the artist-craftsman who had made the Ark of the Lord for the Tabernacle in the wilderness, "knew how to arrange the letters by which heaven and earth had been created." See Nathan Ausubel, *The Book of Jewish Knowledge* (New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1964), p. 69.
21. See note 1.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Rabbi William G. Braude Begins his Long Tenure

At a special meeting of the board, the Search Committee announced the unanimous selection of Rabbi William G. Braude of Rockford, Illinois, and recommended his election for one year from October 1, 1932 at a salary of $4000, later confirmed by the congregation.

William Gordon Braude, born in Telz, Lithuania in 1907, the son of Rabbi Yitzhak Aisik and Chiene Rachel Braude, after many trials and tribulations in the turbulent World War I and postwar periods, came to the United States with his mother in 1920. His father, an Orthodox rabbi, had preceded them and already occupied a pulpit in Denver, Colorado. After attending the public schools in Denver and Dayton, Ohio, to which his family had later moved, he enrolled in both the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and the University of Cincinnati in 1925.

As Braude himself later wrote: "My Hebraic training, such as it was, got me third-year standing in the Prep Department [of Hebrew Union College], the requirements being so low." "I did not overwork at the Hebrew Union College," he continued, "concentrating on my studies at the University of Cincinnati." It obviously paid off, as he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year and earned his A.B. degree *summa cum laude* and with honors in 1929.[1] In the meantime, he was awarded the B.H.L. degree (Bachelor of Hebrew Letters) with honors by Hebrew Union College in 1927. Continuing his studies there, he received his rabbinical ordination in 1931.

Following ordination and a summer of travel and study in Europe, he accepted the pulpit in Rockford, Illinois, whence he was able to commute to Chicago to attend classes at the University of Chicago. Shortly after the death of his father in 1932, while taking summer courses at Hebrew Union College, he was told by Professor Israel

Bettan of an opening in Providence. Through the intercession of Professor Henry Englander, he received the call almost without competition with an increase in salary from $2500 at Rockford to $4000 in Providence. Englander was still influential at Temple Beth-El even though twenty-two years had elapsed since his departure.[2]

Rabbi Braude was installed by Rabbi Englander on Friday evening, October 7, 1932.[3] Braude's acceptance remarks were brief, but eloquent:[4]

> A Rabbi of the Talmud once asked: "What is God's daily prayer?" His audience gasped at the audacity and seeming blasphemy of the question. But he proceeded to give the prayer which he believed God daily utters. That prayer was: "May the quality of my mercy exceed the quality of my justice." Sometimes I think that Henry Englander need never utter these words. In him more than in any human I know do the scales of mercy outweigh the scales of justice. Rightly is he blessed with abundance of love. Thrice beloved is he as man, as Rabbi, and as teacher.
>
> Twenty-two years have gone since you left this community and tonight it is not only I, its newly elected Rabbi, but this Congregation who look to you for spiritual guidance and inspiration. For you, my beloved master, with all your modesty and simplicity, have ascended the Mountain of the Lord, your hands are clean, your heart is pure. There is no man living at whose hands and from whose lips I would accept with greater humility and greater eagerness this consecrating charge.
>
> Upon the threshold of this, my new ministry, I believe it fitting to state the intellectual as well as purely affirmative bases of my future work.
>
> Standing in your presence, my beloved master, and in the presence of this Congregation, I do pledge myself to faith in God as the source of consolation in spiritual solitudes and despairs, as the force that makes for goodness in communities of men, as the life mystery in the infinitudes of the universe.
>
> Standing in your presence, my beloved master, and in the presence of this Congregation, I do pledge my love to the people of Israel, wherever they be, whether in the lands of the East or those of the West; whatever they be, whether adorned with patriarchal beards or clean of visage, whether arrayed in flowing oriental robes or fitted out in severe European cloth, whether speaking strange tongues or uttering the familiar syllables of our childhood. All of them are our flesh, our blood, our life. We cannot escape

them; they cannot escape us. We are held together by the invisible but enduring bonds that make Israel a people eternal.

Standing in your presence, my beloved master, and in the presence of this Congregation, I do pledge my loyalty to the immemorial traditions of the people of Israel, to the sacred language—that vehicle of man's noblest aspirations now revitalized for ever greater achievement. I do pledge my loyalty to the customs and practices that have ever been our ethnic and ethical integrators, to the ideals of lore and learning that have ever been luminous in the darkest of centuries, to the conceptions of justice and righteousness that have ever been the foes of oppression and misdoing.

Finally, I do pledge my allegiance to this Congregation Sons of Israel and David, which well-nigh a century ago brought the torch of Judaism into this community, kindled its flame in the hearts of succeeding generations and, with the aid of God, will make it a *Ner Tamid*—a lamp everlasting.

Yet I know full well that all these high-sounding pledges are destined to remain words, naught but words, unless the Rabbi by his own way of life can gain the admiration, love, and affection of this Congregation, unless his utterances are bodied from his every act and every deed.

May God grant that I be endowed with humility, wisdom, and understanding, with knowledge, sympathy, and strength that I may prove worthy of the mantle of Henry Englander that has fallen upon my shoulders, that I may live up to the highest reaches of Jewish leadership, so that all of us in this assembly, both men and women, both young and old, both laymen and Rabbis, may work hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, and soul to soul, and make of this community of Providence, a Mother City in American Israel. Amen.

Rabbi Braude wrote of his early years in Providence and of his memories of Matilda (Mattie) Pincus:[5]

During the years Henry Englander was rabbi of the Congregation, she [Mattie Pincus] was in her twenties and, I believe, fell in love with the young Henry, a love he did not reciprocate, but which she continued to cherish. Then when he came to Providence to install me and told her, "You take care of this boy," she did so to the last day of her life. She died shortly before the dedication of the Temple on Orchard Avenue, about which she dreamt for years.

> Mattie took Henry Englander's "You take care of this boy" so seriously that she and her mother Adelaide would hover over me, frequently inviting me to meals, and overseeing all sorts of household chores in my two-room menage, and did not bat an eyelash when they found books in the refrigerator, or in the kitchen cabinets.
>
> Through all the years that followed I shared with Mattie the problems I had; and she, in her unostentatious way, sought to relieve my burdens. It is no exaggeration that but for her, I might not have been able to cope with the difficulties I was to face in the years that followed.
>
> The first task I set for myself was to get to know the people of the Congregation. Although at that time a Chevrolet cost only $600, I could not afford to purchase one. My salary of $4000 a year had to be used in part to help my mother and sister, and relatives in Palestine. So having decided to call on and get to know each and every member of the Congregation, I set out on street cars, or on foot, frequently trudging through the streets of the East Side. . . . My pastoral tour elicited a favorable response. . . .

In the fall, with the country still deep in the throes of the depression, there were numerous resignations and further requests for reduction in dues. At the annual meeting in November, the presidents of the Sisterhood and Brotherhood were finally authorized to attend all trustee meetings, but without a vote. Rabbi Braude was delegated to attend the forthcoming convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in December, expenses paid. The newly elected officers were: Charles C. Brown, president; Adolph Meller, vice president; Milton Sulzberger, treasurer; and Jack L. Anhalt, financial secretary. The new young rabbi "made a stirring appeal on behalf of the Community Chest" and also "gave an interesting outline of a plan for advanced Jewish education." The president, Charles C. Brown, read his annual message, which was largely devoted to a history of the congregation. In reviewing the year's activities, he mentioned the following organizations which met in the temple: Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, the Council of Jewish Women, the Sisterhood, the Brotherhood, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, the Beth-El League, the South Providence Hebrew Association, and the Intermediate Miriam Hospital Association (young women). He spoke of the visits of several dignitaries to the congregation and of increasing numbers

of enterprises with Brown University. Four boys became bar mitzvah at the Passover services. Newman Pincus died on December 20, 1932 in his 87th year. He in a way represented the last link with the early days of the congregation.

In February of 1933 the Sabbath School Committee recommended the engagement of an adequately trained full-time professional teacher to supervise the operation of the school, train the teaching staff, organize clubs for the youth, stage plays and pageants, and organize all activities "to bring the younger generation in closer contact with the Temple and their religion." The committee also recommended the construction of a separate school building and the study of available land and cost of constructing a separate facility—a goal which would take two more decades to realize.

In the spring the board recommended the re-election of Braude for two years with an increase in salary to $4500 per year. The budget was set at $15,202, down sharply from its high point. One thousand dollars was paid off on the cemetery mortgage. Rabbi Braude requested that the confirmation exercises be held on the morning of *Shavuot*, rather than on the Sunday before. While not granted for the present year, the suggestion was taken under advisement and was later adopted.[6] After having served for half a year, Braude concluded that no religious school could function properly without a full-time administrator.[7] President Brown and the board agreed and appropriated the necessary funds. On recommendation of the Sabbath School Committee, Mordecai I. Soloff was engaged as Director of Religious Education for one year starting September 1, 1933 at a salary of $2500 per year. Born in Russia in 1901, he was a graduate of the City College of New York in 1923 and the Teachers College of Columbia University in 1927. He had taught for 15 years in Hebrew and Sunday Schools in Baltimore, New York, and Chicago, where he had been affiliated with the Reform congregations Temple Emanuel and Temple Judea. He came highly recommended and had written a series of textbooks used in countless schools around the country. Rabbi Braude regarded him "as a man of great probity and absolute loyalty to his work."[8]

In June the board learned that a lot and building at 95–97 Glenham Street adjacent to the temple was available. It was eventually purchased for $10,000, financed by a first mortgage on the property and a second mortgage on the temple, totaling $9500 at six percent. The land, however, was never used by the temple for any purpose.

An important factor in the lagging interest in the property was the progressive migration of the South Providence and Elmwood Jewish settlers to the East Side of Providence and to the suburbs. C. Joseph Fox, an influential member of the congregation who lived on the East Side and whose children were attending the school, "voiced a serious objection to the method of transportation of the East Side children to and from the Temple." The chairman of the Religious School Committee was requested to discuss the matter with his group. At this time the school comprised ten grades K through 9 and the high school years 10 and 11. All connected with the school—pupils, teachers, club directors, musical directors, organist, and librarian—were entertained at Lincoln Woods (state park) in June. In another youth matter, the president of the Brotherhood, Arthur Basok, was asked to assure that proper supervision be provided on Thursday evenings at the Boy Scout meetings.

The board ordered that all members who had secured reductions in dues in the past be informed that such reductions would be continued to August 31, 1934. The incumbent officers were reelected at the annual meeting on November 5, 1933. Several speakers referred to the continuing depression and also to the threatening rise of Adolf Hitler.

Early in 1934 a controversy arose over the powers of the School Committee in declaring certain students deficient. At a board meeting on February 5, the School Committee reported that there were several children in the confirmation class who were not attending weekday classes regularly and asked for guidance. They were advised that they had the power in cases of delinquency to make their own determinations. Walter I. Sundlun, however, questioned the curriculum provision requiring three days of attendance for the confirmation and pre-confirmation classes. The board finally adopted the following resolution: "That the children of parents who are members of this Congregation and such other children who are duly enrolled in our Religious School and who shall attend reasonably the prescribed sessions of the said Religious School shall be given the right and all the attendant privileges of Confirmation, provided however, that no child who reaches the age of Confirmation and who has been duly enrolled as a member of the Confirmation Class and who reasonably complies with the rules and requirements presented by the Religious School Committee for Confirmation shall be denied the privilege and right of Confirma-

tion unless so directed by the said Board of Trustees." The board in 1927 had set the minimum age of confirmation at 15 and ruled that the 15th birthday of confirmands must not be later than September 15 following confirmation.

Rabbi Braude was later called upon to speak to the board in regard to confirmation requirements. After much discussion, he was assured that he would have their fullest cooperation in permitting the confirmation of all students he recommended. The board also approved the recommendation of the Religious School Committee that the confirmation class be required to attend classes on Sunday, Tuesday, and Saturday for the balance of 1934, and also Sunday and Saturday or Wednesday for the pre-confirmation class. All of this activity was prompted by Rabbi Braude's efforts to improve the standards and performance in the Religious School. Matters came to a head when he denied confirmation to Alton Schneider because he had not attended classes regularly. Alton's mother and the rabbi met with the board on May 3 to discuss the difficulties. After they were heard, the board debated the issue for several hours. It then appointed a committee "with a view of finding a means by which Alton Schneider could be confirmed with the Confirmation Class of 1934." One prominent member of the congregation had boasted, "I'll fix it for him."

At a special board meeting on May 16 a motion was offered to rescind the resolution of February 5, which it now appeared could thwart the aims of Rabbi Braude by allowing the board to overrule him and the School Committee. The vote to rescind was 8 to 5. In the end, the Schneider boy was not confirmed that year. Rabbi Braude received strong support from Judge Hahn and several members of the board. Later in the year it was reported that the Confirmation Department registered 40 students, the Hebrew Department 32 volunteer students, and the Intermediate and Senior Departments 40 students. The total enrollment in these upper classes thus was 80, and attendance was 80 percent.

In May the congregation set the budget at $18,912 and the rabbi's salary at $4500 per year. It re-elected Soloff as superintendent of the Religious School for one year from October 1, 1934. Rabbi Braude requested appointment of a committee to arrange for a 90th anniversary celebration in the fall of 1934. It would be another ten years before he learned that this date, set by tradition, was historically incorrect. However, a three-day celebration was held from December

7 to 9. The newly elected officers of the congregation were President Charles C. Brown, Vice President Archibald Silverman (now back in the fold), Treasurer Milton Sulzberger, and Financial Secretary Jack L. Anhalt. The year ended with Rabbi Bernard J. Bamberger of Albany, New York addressing the congregation on behalf of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on Friday evening, December 14.

The death of Sigmund L. Lederer on March 21, 1935 in his 86th year was duly noted. He had long been a faithful and productive member of the congregation.[9]

The budget for the ensuing year was reconsidered and reduced to $15,210 under the financial pressures of the time. The rabbi's re-election for a two-year term at the same salary was recommended. The School Committee proposed that Soloff not be re-elected, whether for fiscal or other reasons was not stated. But the recommendation was not immediately accepted. Braude was granted leave during the summer of '35, as was customary, and Sidney Ballon, a student at Hebrew Union College, was engaged to conduct Friday evening services during the summer. Mrs. Misch was delegated to consult with Arthur Einstein, music director of Conservative Temple Emanuel of Providence, as to the feasibility of forming and instructing a Jewish choir for Temple Beth-El. This was an objective which had been discussed intermittently over the years, but nothing came of the suggestion.

The question of Soloff's re-election and the smoldering controversy over confirmation standards were debated at length at a board meeting on September 30. The contentious resolution, previously passed and then rescinded, was again approved. It provided that no member of the confirmation class "who reasonably complies with the rules and requirements . . . shall be denied . . . confirmation unless so directed by the Board of Trustees." The key controversial word was the ambiguous "reasonably." An agreement worked out between President Brown and Mordecai Soloff, which reveals some of Soloff's difficulties, was made a part of the record. It vested all authority regarding the school in the board of trustees through the School Committee. The curriculum and all curricular activities, such as the Youth Forum and the Beth-El League, were to be worked out with the Religious School Committee. All problems and difficulties arising in the conduct of the school were to be handled through the committee and only with its approval. No direct con-

tact of any sort was to be established with the congregation, either personal or otherwise, in matters pertaining to the school except with the approval of the committee. In a letter to Soloff attached to the agreement, the president attempted somewhat to soften the strictures limiting the administrator's independence, but also brought into the open another source of irritation:

> I may add that these points are less severe than they sound . . . if you will take the pains to let yourself into the spirit of the congregation. . . .I would, therefore, recommend . . . that you . . . come on (here) early enough to permit the deliberate preparation of the next curriculum so that it will not have to be rushed through in the last days and so that it will not be found out later that some things got into the curriculum which should not have been there, but which it would be difficult to eliminate because the school had already started. . . .I recommend . . . that you return as early as possible [in the fall to allow the members of the Religious School Committee sufficient time to work with you on the curriculum].

These limitations, which were undoubtedly constraining to a young, able, and well-trained professional, were more likely based on ideological and theological differences than on personal difficulties. During the controversy the Sisterhood specifically requested representation on the School Committee. Despite the tension, Soloff stayed on for the present.

Late in 1935 at the annual congregational meeting, new leadership emerged. Adolph Meller and Max L. Grant were elected president and vice president respectively. The treasurer and financial secretary were re-elected. Fiscal problems persisted, requiring authorization to borrow $4500 to pay all bills and provide some working capital. The Finance Committee announced a "readjustment" of dues to produce additional revenue.

The year 1936 began with an historically significant and ominous event, the arrival of the first refugees from Hitler's Germany. Three recent arrivals were invited to be courtesy members of the congregation. The board decided that it would be a "fine gesture" to assist them in acclimating to conditions in this country. A house on Niantic Avenue was leased and repaired to provide them with living quarters.[10]

Mattie Pincus, the librarian, recommended procedural changes in the temple office to improve its efficiency. These were approved

together with provision to replace the old mimeograph machine, which was "so obsolete it could not be repaired." The owners of the diner on cemetery land requested leave to make certain alterations. Permission was granted provided that there would be no dancing or dispensing of liquor and that any other changes were sanctioned by the board.

Financial problems continued to plague the board as the depression deepened. During 1936 the congregation faced a serious debt crisis despite the recent increase in dues. Protests over the higher assessments were common, as the board terminated the membership of certain individuals who refused to pay the increase. In the face of a current budget deficit of $3759, the $4500 allotted to the Religious School out of a total budget of $16,710 loomed large. Yet the budget was eventually adopted without change, and no activities were curtailed. There were immediate obligations of $5500 to be paid. A loan of $4500 was negotiated with the National Bank of Commerce, and a $1000 payment was made on the mortgage.

It was decided to assess each member having children in the school at $10 per child and to charge for books payable in cash, something never done before. The board was authorized to increase the cemetery mortgage by $5500, if necessary. Obviously disturbed by this action, Judge Hahn later recommended that the cemetery property be sequestered in a separate corporation, apart from the congregation. In the meantime the cemetery mortgage was transferred to another holder, who accepted smaller principal payments.

In July President Meller reported that there were unpaid bills amounting to $3300, and that efforts by board members to collect dues had been disappointing. In fact, resignations appeared to increase under pressure. In the end, it was decided to dispense with the services of a religious school director. Although there were undoubtedly tensions over policy between Soloff and President Meller, his resignation was requested, according to the late William G. Braude, primarily because of the financial stringencies.

In later years Rabbi Braude wrote of the episode:[11]

> Soon after my arrival at Beth-El, I felt that the religious school should have a full-time head, and persuaded the board to engage Mordecai I. Soloff as director of the school. Ours was the first and only midsized congregation to have a professional director. During his two years in Providence, he tightened discipline, introduced [compulsory] regular weekday instruction in Hebrew, and

began developing an orderly curriculum. Unfortunately, while I was away during the summer, the arbitrary decision of one individual resulted in Mordecai Soloff's abrupt dismissal. Not until my return to Providence did I learn of it.

Many years later, I was pained to hear from Mordecai Soloff that all along he thought I was in on the decision to dismiss him—the pain of that dismissal is still with me.

Soloff later became a rabbi and was the author of widely used textbooks.[12]

Braude recommended, in the absence of a school director, that Abraham Regelson of New York be engaged as a Hebrew teacher on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays to fill the void. Regelson would be a valuable addition to the teaching staff, and Braude suggested a salary of $300. How he could manage to survive on this paltry stipend was not discussed. However, since Regelson could not come, Herbert Ballon would teach Hebrew in weekday classes for $285 for the year.

Organist Frederick Very, who was also let go, expressed his regrets on severing relations with the congregation. Gene Ware, former organist, returned as his replacement.

Rabbi Morris A. Gutstein, spiritual leader of Touro Synagogue in Newport, had just published his *The Story of The Jews of Newport*. He requested a list of members of Temple Beth-El in order to publicize his book. The board generously offered to include his circular in a mailing of the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*. While this work is a useful sourcebook concerning Jews in the Colonial period in Newport, Rabbi Malcolm Stern, the eminent genealogist, has described it as "regrettably inaccurate."[13]

While resignations continued, a turn-around was in evidence with an infusion of new members. The Citizens Savings Bank agreed to finance the consolidation of all mortgages, amounting to $26,810 at 5½ percent. The Religious School had a reasonably satisfactory enrollment of 171 children, of whom 154 were offspring of members. Sale of school books had yielded $200.37.

On December 6, 1936 at the annual meeting the incumbent officers were re-elected. The Laws Committee was asked to draw up an amendment to restore once again the office of recording secretary. The work had been done by Milton Pliner as assistant secretary, but it was felt that the office should now be given the formal recognition it deserved. The recurring question of financing a choir

consisting only of members was again raised. A committee was appointed to explore the possibilities, but as before nothing came of it. Rabbi Braude pleaded for regular attendance at the Sabbath Services and appealed for better facilities for the school. He hoped that in the not too distant future it might be feasible once again to retain a full-time school director. According to the record, "The Rabbi in his remarks stated that, with business definitely improving, the congregation was in a position . . . to become one of the leading congregations in the country." On this optimistic note, the year 1936 came to an end.

In February 1937, Rabbi Braude recommended to the board that the congregation be represented at the forthcoming organization meeting of the Rhode Island Council of Churches. This was approved, and delegates were appointed.

Braude addressed the board in March regarding his future status. If the board intended to recommend his re-election, it "must recognize that the rabbi must have all educational, spiritual, and religious matters under his jurisdiction as the final authority." The board thanked the rabbi for his comments and expressed unanimously "our wholehearted desire to cooperate with him in the fullest measure in all things pertaining to the best interests of the congregation, and that we recognize in principle the spiritual and religious prerogatives of the rabbi and that we undertake to act in matters in these fields only after full consultation with him." In April the board recommended Rabbi Braude's re-election for the ensuing year with a $500 salary increase.

Walter I. Sundlun for the Laws Committee urged that the bylaws be amended to provide for attendance at board meetings of the presidents of the Sisterhood, Brotherhood, and Parent-Teachers Association, but without a vote. He also recommended that the office of recording secretary be reinstituted.

Rabbi Braude had been urging the employment of a full-time director of the religious school since Mordecai Soloff's departure, while in the interim Mattie Pincus had served the school well as principal. Although the reforms which Soloff introduced had alienated some of the leaders of the congregation, it was generally conceded that his more rigorous standards were necessary and constructive.

Mattie Pincus reported an attendance rate of 80 percent. Forty-seven children pledged to join the choir under Professor Einstein to

practice for the children's service on Yom Kippur. Thirteen appeared at the first rehearsal. Other youth activities included the Beth-El League and the Youth Forum. Currently fourteen teachers and two alternates comprised a faculty of 16, including the principal and the rabbi. There were 192 pupils, of whom 119 (63 percent) were taking Hebrew, as compared to 100 out of 450 (22 percent) at Temple Emanuel. Twenty-two of the students were children of non-members. Mattie Pincus, however, submitted her resignation, as she was to become librarian. It was accepted with regret and appreciation for her loyal and unselfish services. She was given a special gift of $200 for having built up the library during the past year with the encouragement of Rabbi Braude. At Braude's urging it was decided once again to consider the desirability of engaging a full-time director of religious education.

Chairman Harry M. Myers of the Religious School Committee recommended the election of Rabbi Albert T. Bilgray as Director of Religious Education at a salary of $2000. This action was approved, and travel expenses for Rabbi Bilgray not to exceed $200 were voted. Bilgray, born in Austria in 1910, was graduated from Hebrew Union College in the class of 1935 with a Ph.B degree. Before coming to Temple Beth-El, he had served as spiritual leader at the South Fountain Avenue Temple in Springfield, Illinois. Bilgray had decided that he wanted to devote all of his time to religious education and was willing to come to Providence for $3500. His transfer to Providence was almost canceled by the board for financial reasons, as will appear later. But in the end, Rabbi Braude had personally solicited the funds necessary to assure the new director's arrival. Bilgray also served as Temple Beth-El's first assistant rabbi.[14]

Later, Mattie Pincus reported that she had visited The Temple library in Cleveland, which Rabbi Braude considered the best in the country and had learned a great deal to assist her in her new duties. She proposed adoption of the Dewey Decimal System used in the Cleveland library, as well as in most large libraries in the country, such as the Providence Public Library.

Temple Beth-El had long had a library founded in 1892 by Rabbi Blaustein with the help of several children, including Mattie Pincus. However, according to Rabbi Braude it was in a state of neglect, its relatively few items of Judaica being overwhelmed by castoff sets of public school textbooks and copies of such banalities as *The Rover Boys* and Horatio Alger stories. Without asking permission,

Braude and Mrs. George Nathanson, president of the Sisterhood, discarded all volumes extraneous to a Jewish library. Braude personally solicited contributions from parents to purchase the Soncino translation of the *Talmud*. He described a scheme he devised to increase the holdings:[15]

> To enlarge the library, I conceived a three-fold barter: Beth-El had a surplus of ordinary Judaica, which Brown University did not possess. Brown University had a surplus of books on science and biology which Yeshiva College in New York did not possess. Yeshiva had a surplus of certain Hebrew books which Beth-El did not possess (in fact Beth-El had no Hebrew books). So with me at the wheel of my car . . . Beth-El's books went to Brown, Brown's books went to Yeshiva, and Yeshiva's books to Beth-El.

In 1958 Library Committee Chairman Aaron Cohen urged the hiring of a professional librarian. Maryland Estes was engaged soon thereafter. By 1982 through Braude's diligence some 21,000 volumes had been acquired, and it was deemed America's foremost congregational library.

The budget for the next year was set at $15,255 with the rabbi's salary at $5000. President Adolph Meller announced that, through the special efforts of the Cemetery Committee chairman and the financial secretary, the congregation with its present resources would end the next fiscal year on August 31, 1938 with a substantial surplus—rare good news as the Great Depression was winding down. Further, through the special efforts of the Religious Education Committee chairman Harry M. Myers and the rabbi, a special Education Fund of $2500 had been raised. Contributions of $23 to $100 continued to come in.

Because of the great demands on the president, the bylaws were amended so as to add a vice president and six additional board members to relieve the president and the first vice president of some of their responsibilities. The board now totaled 18 members to be elected on a rotating basis.

The growing anti-Semitic pressures in Nazi Germany were reflected in the minutes. President Meller recommended that the congregation take cognizance of the financial burden facing American Jews "in placing innumerable German refugees in proper positions, so that they might become self-sufficient." It was voted to contribute from the general fund one dollar for each member to be turned over to the National Coordinating Committee in New York

City and to send $10 to the German-Jewish Congregation of New York. During this critical period Rabbi Braude was tireless in striving to obtain affidavits from persons in the area to vouch that the individual immigrants would not become charges upon the community. He was undoubtedly responsible for saving many lives.[16]

At the annual meeting of November 7, 1937, Adolph Meller was re-elected president. Other officers were Max L. Grant, first vice president; A. Henry Klein, second vice president; Milton Sulzberger, treasurer; Jack Anhalt, financial secretary; and Milton Pliner, recording secretary, the newly established office. Max L. Grant earlier had addressed the trustees about the valued services to the congregation of Judge J. Jerome Hahn. "The congregation," he stated, "was fortunate in having a trustee whose advice and council was very valuable and whose leadership was unquestioned." His "faithfulness to his work on behalf of the congregation and his loyalty to the congregation are of long standing." He proposed that Hahn be elected Honorary President for Life with a full voice in temple affairs and hoped Hahn would accept the honor. The Laws Committee had acted favorably on the question.

Although Hahn had been reluctant to accept, he did so upon the urging of the board and thanked the board for the honor bestowed upon him. "The past must be linked to the present," he stated, and congratulated the board on recommending for election to its membership several younger individuals. He again recommended setting up the cemetery as a separate entity. Then, as recommended by the trustees, Hahn was duly elected Honorary President for Life. He expressed to the congregation his deep appreciation for the manifestation of good will, and added that "he considered it a rare privilege to be so honored by his own people." At the same meeting, Marion L. Misch, Paul B. Paris, and Isaac Rose were elected Honorary Trustees for Life.

Mrs. Misch reported for the Choir Committee that she and Rabbi Braude had negotiated with Willard E. Retallick to be the new organist. Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Meller were presented with a set of traveling cases in honor of their 25th wedding anniversary.

In December the president requested formation of a Liaison Committee to receive all complaints of grievances and controversies regarding members, the rabbi, or officers and to act as the representative of the trustees. The recommendation was approved, and Archibald Silverman was appointed as its first chairman.

Bertram Bernhardt, president of the Brotherhood, requested that the congregation participate in a forthcoming meeting of the United Palestine Appeal (UPA), inspired by the unhappy events in Germany. The purposes of the UPA were endorsed, and Bernhardt was appointed to head the delegation which would meet with representatives of various other temple auxiliaries on January 2, 1938. The organizations represented at the UPA meeting were asked to make donations. After much discussion, the board tabled the recommendation.

Permission was granted to the Sisterhood to plan an evening Bingo party in association with the Brotherhood. During the December board meeting Rabbi Bilgray, the new director of religious education, presented a detailed report covering operations from September through December. Of 186 students, 90 percent were present at the opening session. Ninety-eight had perfect attendance records. Teaching efforts were impeded by inadequate facilities, a problem emphasized by Rabbi Braude and destined to be an increasing cause of frustration. There were two bar mitzvah rituals during this period. It was also announced that both Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops were meeting in the vestry.

Once again the issue arose of maintaining a high standard in the religious school when refusing confirmation of the child of a prominent member of the congregation presented a political dilemma. Walter I. Sundlun requested permission to address the board at its meeting on June 9, 1938. He stated that the board should take cognizance of the "problem" relating to the confirmation of children. The policy should be clarified, and the board must go on record "taking a definite stand, which must be adhered to by all concerned." He did not immediately state the reason for his personal concern, although it was doubtless evident to those present.

After hearing from several members, President Meller was directed to call on Rabbi Braude and "acquaint him with the board's rule . . . that [its decisions in] all matters, especially the matter of confirmation, shall be final." Meller reported that he had informed the rabbi that this principle must be adhered to if they were to go on together. The rabbi must accept the trustees as the final arbiters of all controversies. The rabbi responded amiably that he was in complete accord with the rulings of the board. Sundlun had been present at the meeting and informed the board that he was happy with the result. Judge Hahn, a firm supporter of Rabbi Braude, had

also spoken to him and was pleased to report that the rabbi was "willing to recognize the will of the Board of Trustees."

The difficulty had arisen over the attendance record of Walter I. ("Wally") Sundlun, Jr., the fourteen-year-old son of Vice President Walter I. and Jeannette Sundlun. Rabbi Braude, in his concern over the academic standing of the school, was inclined to deny him confirmation, but through these discussions a satisfactory compromise was reached. Tragically, Wally Sundlun, amidst this controversy, only nine days later on June 18 died of a ruptured appendix, which but a very few years later might have been managed successfully with sulfa drugs or antibiotics. The boy was confirmed posthumously.

Rabbi Braude was re-elected at a salary of $5000 from September 1, 1938. Bilgray was also re-elected as assistant rabbi and director of education at a salary of $2500. Fifty dollars was appropriated to purchase a gift for Rabbi Braude and his fiancée in honor of their forthcoming marriage.

Rabbi Braude was wedded to Pearl Finkelstein, daughter of Joseph and Rose Finkelstein, on June 19 in the garden of their home in Johnston, Rhode Island. Rabbi Morris Schussheim of Temple Beth-Israel of Providence, where the bride had been confirmed, conducted the ceremony. He was assisted by Rabbis Jacob K. Shankman[17] and Samuel Belkin (later president of Yeshiva University),[18] old friends of Rabbi Braude. Later, Braude learned that there had been a hassle between Schussheim and Shankman concerning the *Ketubbah*, the marriage contract, as Schussheim was Conservative and Shankman Reform. Doubtless the matter was ultimately resolved in some amicable fashion.[19] Rabbi Braude had received both his A.M. degree in 1934 and his Ph.D. in 1937 at Brown University. He met Pearl (whom he called "Pen," from *Peninnah*, the Hebrew for "precious gem")[20] in his class in Elementary Hebrew at the college, where he had been appointed lecturer. He taught at the University for several years.

In September of 1938 the board voted that "all married children of members desiring admission to the High Holy Day Services shall be denied this privilege unless they themselves become members of the congregation." President Meller suggested that it would be in order for the congregation to invite all German-Austrian refugees to become affiliated as members without any charges until they were in a position to pay dues.

A communication was received in October from the Zionist Organization of America inviting delegates to a conference discussing the Balfour Declaration, an echo of World War I, now becoming urgent in light of the tragic plight of Jews in Europe. Chairman Myers of the Religious School Committee reported that registration at the school was incomplete due to disruption by the recent Great Hurricane and flood in Providence on September 21, 1938.

A reception celebrating the recent marriage of Rabbi and Mrs. Braude was co-hosted by the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. The couple were presented with a wedding gift of silver flatware.

The annual meeting of November 13, 1938 witnessed the election of a new president, Walter I. Sundlun. First vice president was Max L. Grant and second vice president A. Henry Klein. The other officers remained the same. Rabbi Braude asked for support of a Temple Repertory Players performance to benefit the World Youth *Aliyah*,[21] which facilitated the immigration of young people to Palestine.

The issue of attendance requirements for confirmation continued to rankle. At the September 1938 board meeting, Max L. Grant had presented a resolution stipulating that pre-confirmation and confirmation classes be no longer required to attend Saturday morning classes or services. The motion at the time passed unanimously, but that did not end the matter. On January 9, 1939, the board, after much discussion, decided unanimously to re-establish the attendance rule, but for the confirmation class only, exempting all other classes. It then read "that all children . . . of the confirmation class shall be required to attend Saturday morning classes and services in addition to Sunday morning services." After settling this thorny issue, the board ruled that the rabbi would be invited to all trustee meetings, but would be asked to absent himself for part of each meeting.

Colonel Joseph Samuels, founder with his brother Leon of the highly successful Outlet Co. department store in Providence, died on February 13, 1939 in his 74th year. Rabbi Braude officiated at his funeral, and he was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery. Braude's feelings toward Samuels were somewhat ambiguous because of Samuels's well-known restrained attitude toward contributing to Jewish causes.[22]

On Friday evening, February 17 the Brotherhood and Sisterhood jointly sponsored a service honoring the new and the past presidents, followed by a reception in the vestry.

The director of the religious school reported a registration of 172. There were recurrent complaints from parents about transportation by taxi for children from the East Side. It was suggested that a bus could be hired each Sunday for $9, but little enthusiasm for this solution was evident.

The Committee on Sabbath Eve and Holiday Services reported that it had had "a protracted discussion of the lack of impressiveness of the Torah Service due to the use of the Hymnal Service as well as the [new] prayer book." Further, it created confusion. All had agreed that the service could and should be improved. It was decided to inquire of the secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis regarding proper use of the prayer book. A revised Sabbath Eve Torah Service was secured at no expense from Rabbi Isaac E. Marcusson of Macon, Georgia, and others.

The refugee problem continued to preoccupy the board. The Refugee Committee reported that the library was available to the newcomers, and one young lady was studying Hebrew. Members were urged to call on the refugees and invite them to their homes. Emergency funds were raised to provide necessities and to take care of transients and those overseas. Four categories of assistance were essential: 1. to arrange for reception, 2. to furnish financial aid, 3. to procure affidavits of financial responsibility, and 4. to engage in public relations activities ("propaganda" in the minutes) by appearances before non-Jewish groups.

Rabbi Braude, reporting further for the Refugee Committee, suggested that the next High Holidays might be an advantageous time for fund raising. The board were urged to sign as many affidavits of financial responsibility as possible. The publicity was designed to encourage sympathizers among both Jews and non-Jews for passage of the Wagner Bill, which would authorize admission to the United States of 10,000 refugee children. Further, a cablegram was dispatched to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain of Great Britain urging him to open the doors of Palestine to Jewish refugees from Europe.

Shortly after the infamous *Kristallnacht*[23] in Nazi Germany on November 10, 1938, in which a reign of terror was imposed upon the entire Jewish population, a special Friday night service was set aside to protest the atrocities and to welcome the new arrivals.[24] President Sundlun noted at a service that these special guests were wearing hats, which was a breach of the current practice at Temple

Beth-El. Sundlun confronted Rabbi Braude, who was in his study and was unaware of what transpired. Braude later reflected on the episode in this way:[25]

> A few minutes before the service was to begin, the . . . president of the Congregation rushed into the small—so-called—Rabbi's study in the rear of the synagogue, and in a stentorian voice demanded: "Did you tell those people that they could wear hats?" It was like being asked, "When did you stop beating your mother?" I had no knowledge of what was going on in the synagogue. Cowed by the bullying attack on me, I stammered whatever I stammered in reply.[26] That Sabbath eve was for me an eve of mourning—mourning not only the Nazi atrocities, but mourning also the insensitivity . . . to the feelings of our guests.

Yet the confrontation may have been less dramatic than Rabbi Braude's recollection of the event. Sundlun's reaction is not a matter of record. This incident was a recurrence of the long-standing controversy, dating back to the time of Rabbi Blaustein, when it was decided that the wearing of hats would be optional, as it became again during the latter years of Rabbi Braude's incumbency.[27]

Because of continuing financial problems, President Sundlun called a special gathering of the congregation for June 5, 1939 to seek ways of meeting the crisis. The attendance at the meeting was good—121 members—due to the efforts of a telephone squad. Sundlun was discouraged and worried because 80 percent of the members were in arrears in payment of their dues. He was concerned because of the chronic lack of cash to pay the rabbis, the teachers, and the choir. It was decided to raise dues by not less than $10 for all members, and by $20 for those who could afford it. Several members objected and noted that these were times of stress for all. In reply to the suggestion that some functions be dropped, Sundlun explained that they were provided for in the bylaws. Six members volunteered to increase their dues by amounts ranging from $10 to $50. The transcript of the meeting ran to nine pages, and someone remarked that they were "going around in circles."

Although the meeting ended indecisively, the president's concerns seem to have made an impression. Later, the board learned that many, in fact most members had increased their dues. The board decided that certain reluctant congregants would have to be interviewed by board members, and names were assigned for personal contact.

At the special congregational meeting Rabbis Bilgray and Braude each gave brief talks. Bilgray spoke of the problem of morale in the congregation. Braude announced that he had been appointed lecturer at Brown University. Both reported that they had received bids elsewhere, but they declined the offers because of their loyalty to the congregation. Their re-election at the same salaries was recommended. Complimentary tickets for seats in the balcony for the High Holidays were to be provided to refugees.

In the fall Rabbi Braude asked the board to appoint a committee to consult with the *Vaad Ha Kashruth* Association[28] (the group supervising the standards and implementation of Jewish dietary laws) with a view to securing for Temple Beth-El its just share of the collections of that organization. A committee was appointed to explore the matter.[29] Braude announced the formation of a School for the Jewish Woman jointly sponsored by Temple Beth-Israel, Temple Beth-El, and the Providence chapter of Hadassah. He also presented to the congregation a photograph (unidentified) on behalf of Stefan Stengel, a refugee doing photography in the city.

At the annual meeting on November 12, 1939 the incumbent officers were re-elected except that Archibald Silverman replaced Max L. Grant as first vice president. Sundlun reported great improvement in the financial situation as the year progressed. With conditions for Jews as they are in the world, he maintained, the temple should receive more support than it does.

As the new year of 1940 began, Rabbi Braude announced that the Howell Street Synagogue (Orthodox)[30] was planning to celebrate its 35th anniversary in conjunction with the installation of Rabbi Morris G. Silk as its new spiritual leader.[31] Rabbi Braude and Second Vice President A. Henry Klein represented Temple Beth-El at the ceremony.

Entertainment Committee chairman Dr. James G. Krasnoff announced that there would be a Spring Frolic and Dance at the Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet pavilion. To meet the initial expenses of $500 to $600, board members would be obligated to pledge $20 each, which they could reduce by selling tickets. Later, he announced with satisfaction that the Frolic had been both a financial and social success, netting a respectable $2262.35.

The Sisterhood canceled its annual group Seder so that it could make a substantial donation to the Temple Improvement Fund. The refugees, who were usually guests at the affair, would be invited to

private homes. The poor condition of the school quarters gave emphasis to the need for painting and redecorating, and the inadequacy of the present facilities was again stressed. Congregant William P. Herman and Rabbi Braude made certain recommendations for improvement of the vestry for the religious school, developed in consultation with Providence Superintendent of Schools, Dr. James L. Hanley, and Mr. McCarthy, also of the School Department. Rabbi Braude assured the congregation that the vestry was not a fire trap, contrary to erroneus assertions to that effect. It had been inspected by various public school officials and was found to conform to all fire regulations. Bids from contractors to renovate the vestry ranged from $2600 to $3900.

The Sabbath Evening and Holy Days Committee recommended that lighting of Sabbath candles and chanting of the *Kiddush* (sanctification of the Sabbath over a cup of wine) be added to the Friday evening service. The candles (in accordance with tradition) would be lighted by a woman congregant, and the *Kiddush* would be chanted by the rabbi. The board, however, did not approve, a reaffirmation of the current leaders' lingering preference for retaining a more liberal posture. These rituals, however, were in later years adopted, as more and more traditional observances were added to the Reform service. Rabbi Braude anounced that a robe for Rabbi Bilgray had been donated by Mr. and Mrs. Isador S. Low in honor of the bar mitzvah of their son. The wearing of a robe by the rabbi was a tradition not followed by Rabbi Gup in the earlier years, but Rabbi Braude did so regularly.

In June Rabbis Braude and Bilgray were re-elected at salaries of $5000 and $3000 respectively. The Entertainment Committee, because of the success of the Spring Frolic, was able to make available to the temple more than $3000, the miniumum necessary to carry out the planned improvement program. Sundlun reported for the Improvement Fund, however, that about $4000 would be needed for the extensive repairs and decorations. Later, he raised this estimate to $6300. The board, he stated, must seek ways of raising the funds and appointed a committee to devise types of memorials. The doors on either side of the pulpit, the *menorah* columns on the pulpit, the eight doors leading into the temple, and sections of the choir loft and choir screen would be used for this purpose. Prices for the memorials were established later.

The board sent greetings to Rabbi and Mrs. Braude on the birth

of their first child, Joel Isaac Braude. Cognizance was taken of the publication of Rabbi Braude's first book, *Jewish Proselytizing in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era*, based on his Ph.D. thesis, and published by Brown University. He promised that the first copy would go to the temple library. The president of the congregation made clear his lack of interest in the project as not relevant to the temple's goals. The federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) was granted use of the vestry for Americanization classes for the new arrivals, and Rabbi Braude requested tickets to admit them to the High Holy Day Services. The Sisterhood undertook planning for an Interfaith Pageant, which was the beginning of a long series of interfaith activities.

At the 1940 annual meeting in November, the incumbent officers were re-elected. The Finance Committee reported a membership of 275 families. Dues payments ranged up to $325, but 149 members were paying $50 or less. Harry M. Myers reported for the Religious School Committee that, of 171 pupils registered, 21 were on scholarship. The faculty consisted of 17 teachers, including the rabbi and assistant rabbi.

The tension between the temple leadership and the rabbi was a source of continuing difficulty. As Rabbi Braude recalls the period:[32]

> Within a few months of my coming to Providence, the . . . then president let drop a hint that as president he had the right to read in advance and presumably censor my sermons. I told him politely but unmistakably that I rejected his notion. That give-and-take between myself and the president on freedom of the pulpit and incidents such as the dismissal of Mordecai Soloff led me on August 26, 1937 to set down in my diary a defiance: "Some men are determined to possess my soul and I shall never permit it."[33]

The tense situation was not allayed by a change in the presidency. Braude continued to discuss controversial matters in his sermons and ruffled some feathers. The following entry appeared in the minutes of the board meeting of December 4, 1940:

> Mr. Sundlun introduced for consideration a problem confronting the Congregation [unstated] and there followed a prolonged discussion in respect to the rabbi, his sermons, and other phases of the pulpit. All members of the board were given full and free opportunity to express their . . . views. A letter was read [on] . . . the subject matter, and after discussion the president stated that

> he would either, through himself and the two vice presidents or through a committee appointed by himself, impart to the rabbi the substance of the stated views.

There the matter rested so far as the record shows, and Braude survived. As a final order of business for the year, the board size was increased to 21 members, in groups of seven each for three-year terms.

As the year of 1941 began, Entertainment Committee Chairman Bertram L. Bernhardt announced that the Spring Frolic would be held at the Providence Biltmore Hotel on May 14 with Jack Marshard's orchestra for dancing. It eventually netted $3,516.32, of which $2,500 was applied to current temple expenses.

The redoubtable and devoted Marion L. Misch died on January 18, 1941 in her 71st year. A page in her memory was set aside in the board minutes.[34] With the deterioration of the old tool house at the cemetery, the board authorized the construction of a garage and caretaker's quarters at a cost of $2,575. A request for a subscription to a bond issue for a new synagogue building for Temple Emanuel in Sydney, Australia was, as usual, deferred as "not possible at this time." Attorney Daniel Jacobs submitted a check for $200 ($300, less his fee of $100) in settlement of the long-standing dispute between the congregation and Moshassuck Cemetery. The salary of Miss Sarah Blistein, who had been the congregation secretary for several years, was increased to $25 a week in recognition of her faithful service.

The board in June recommended the re-election of Rabbis Braude and Bilgray for two years at salaries of $5500 and $3000 respectively. The budget was set at $18,665. An offer to purchase the temple building was received from Temple Beth-Israel, the Conservative congregation. It seemed premature at the time, but a committee, nevertheless, was appointed to consider the offer. A move to use the house purchased on Glenham Street near the synagogue for classrooms was tabled, and the property in fact was later sold. Rabbi Braude recommended that the congregation invest surplus funds in Defense Savings Bonds and suggested that the federal bond campaign be endorsed in the congregation bulletin.

A new glass choir screen caused difficulties in the transmission of sound. Because the presence of memorials complicated its removal, the screen was moved forward and a drapery was hung to

obscure the distracting motions of the choir and organist. Improved lighting was provided for the organist. At the suggestion of the rabbi a sound amplifying system was installed in the sanctuary. The Religious School Committee reported a registration of 170 students and a faculty of 18, including the rabbis. Irving J. Fain accepted the chairmanship of the 1942 Spring Frolic Committee. Upon recommendation of the Laws Committee, a Committee on Temple Publications was appointed with the rabbi as an ex-officio member.

The incumbent officers were re-elected at the annual meeting of December 1, 1941: Walter I. Sundlun, president; Archibald Silverman, first vice president; A. Henry Klein, second vice president; Milton Sulzberger, treasurer; Jack Anhalt, financial secretary; and Milton Pliner, recording secretary. Rabbi Braude reported that attendance at the Friday night services was increasing and that the School for the Jewish Woman was flourishing. Six days later Japan attacked Pearl Harbor![35]

NOTES

1. Pearl Braude emphasized Braude's brilliant record as a student. Braude himself wrote: ". . . at graduation (1931) I copped all the prizes—the best sermon prize. . . , the best grades prize, the prize for an essay on 'Immortality in the Writings of Maimonides,' and other prizes. Because my father was ill, no member of my family could be present, so I felt sad. My friends construed my sadness as modesty. Had I been complacent about the rain of awards, they would have been very angry at me." See William G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:345–372, (November) 1981, pp. 364–365.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 368–372.
3. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 401.
4. Manuscript in Temple Beth-El archives.
5. See note 3, pp. 401–402.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 403. *Shavuot*, the Feast of Weeks, is usually celebrated in May or June. It became customary during the Middle Ages for parents to enroll their small boys in *Heder* (religious school) at this time. From this custom, another of recent origin developed, the group confirmation of boys and girls in Reform and Conservative synagogues on *Shavuot*.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
8. *Who's Who in World Jewry, 1972* (New York, London, *et al.*, Pitman Publishing Corp., Inc., 1972), p. 858. Also *Bulletin of Temple Beth-El*, vol. 6, no. 18, May 23, 1933; W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Sep-

tuagenarian, Part II," pp. 410–411; and William G. Braude, "The Story of a Will," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:435–439, (November) 1970, pp. 435–436.

9. Sigmund L. Lederer was the head of the Lederer clan. Together with his younger brother, Benedict B. Lederer, he formed the S & B Lederer Co., manufacturing jewelers, prior to 1878. They later added the Providence Stock Co., also in the manufacturing jewelry business. Sigmund Lederer was chairman of the building committee of the Broad Street synagogue.
10. Rabbi Braude's involvement was significant. As related by Pearl Braude: "I think it is important that you mention my husband's activities on behalf of the refugees. He was tireless in running about getting affidavits from people in the community [to vouch that the refugees would not be a charge on the community]. I believe he saved the lives of many people." Following Braude's death on Feb. 25, 1988, the following notice appeared in *The Providence Sunday Journal* of Feb. 28: "IN SYMPATHY. The community of new Americans in Providence lovingly blesses the memory of the great William Gordon Braude, who saved the lives of so many of us." Mrs. Braude stated: "This brief item meant more to me than many of the obituaries which appeared in the papers." She also pointed out that Pauline (Meller) (Bernstein) Berger, daughter of President Meller, was also very active on behalf of refugees.
    See also W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 409–410.
11. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 410.
12. After leaving Providence, Soloff continued his religious studies. He received a M.H.L. degree from Hebrew Union College and was ordained a rabbi in 1940. In 1965 he was awarded a D.D. degree by Hebrew Union College. In 1952, he became rabbi of Temple Jeremiah in Los Angeles, California. Still living in California as of this writing, he is Rabbi Emeritus of that congregation. He was the author of several widely used textbooks. *Ibid.*, p. 410n. See also note 8.
13. Malcolm H. Stern, "Myer Benjamin and his Descendants, A Study in Biographical Method," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:133–144, (November) 1967, p. 133.
14. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 411–413.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 404.
16. See note 10.
17. Rabbi Jacob K. Shankman of Troy, New York was a brilliant scholar. He entered Harvard College at the age of fourteen and received a Master's degree at the age of nineteen. He graduated from Hebrew Union College in 1930. He and Rabbi Braude were close friends at rabbinical school and kept up a correspondence for many years. Rabbi Shankman's papers are in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. See *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 14, March 21, 1933. Also

W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," pp. 358–360; and "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 417.

18. Braude first met Samuel Belkin when they were both graduate students at Brown University. Belkin later became president of Yeshiva University in New York. See *The Historical Catalogue of Brown University 1764–1934*, p. 1092. Also William G. Braude, "Samuel Belkin at Brown," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:610–613, (November) 1974; and "Samuel Belkin at Brown—a Postscript," *ibid.*, 7:149–151, (November) 1975.

19. As Braude tells the story:

> Later I was to learn that before the marriage there was a hassle betwen Schussheim, the Conservative rabbi,and Shankman, the Reform rabbi, concerning details in the *Ketubah*, the marriage contract. So I asked Belkin: "What did you say?" He replied: "I said nothing." "Why not?," I asked. "What was the use: Neither knew what he was talking about." They, of course, knew what they were talking about. But they were not cognizant of the subtleties of the law which a traditional scholar like Samuel Belkin commanded.

See W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 417–418.

20. Rabbi Braude recalled: "Even while courting Pearl, I took to calling her Peninnah (Hebrew for 'Pearl') which I shortened to Pen." Pearl Braude points out that the literal translation from the Hebrew is actually "precious gem." Pearl is *margolit*.

Rabbi Braude wrote of their courtship:

> Robert P. Casey (1897–1959), head of the Department of Religious Studies [at Brown University], appointed me lecturer in 1937 after I received my Ph.D. Pearl Finkelstein registered in the elementary class in Hebrew. I first met her in June, 1937 near the Van Wickle gate of Brown University. Her smile captivated me at once, so that during that summer while in Guatemala I wrote to her. On the sixteenth of September I took her to Boston for dinner and on the eighth of December I knew that I wanted her to be my wife.

Ibid.

21. *Aliyah* (also rendered *Aliyyah*) is translated from the Hebrew as "ascent" or "going up." It has three connotations:

1. Ascent to heaven.
2. The privilege of being called up to the dais of the synagogue for the Reading of the Law.
3. Ascent to the land of Israel—as applied in this instance. Traditionally it was a pilgrimage to Israel. It now usually means immigration for permanent settlement.

22. Regarding Braude's views on Joseph Samuels's philanthropies, Eleanor Horvitz has written:

> An entirely different facet of Joseph Samuels's personality was gleaned from Rabbi William G. Braude of Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El). Both Leon and Joseph were

members of the congregation. The late Rabbi Samuel M. Gup had officiated at Leon's funeral service. Rabbi Braude knew only Joseph Samuels. To the question, Had Joseph Samuels ever used the facilities of the temple? the Rabbi replied, "He was brought in there when he died."

In Rabbi Braude's view Joseph Samuels was not the philanthropist which he was judged to be by others interviewed by the author, since he had never extended the same degree of generosity in giving to Jewish as to non-Jewish causes. Rabbi Braude summarized the situation thus: "I must say that Joseph Samuels, in my opinion, whatever he may have been in business, I am no judge of that, was a disaster in the Jewish community. You see, he was very, very wealthy, by far the wealthiest man in town. The people with whom he surrounded himself in the store naturally had to be in the main people like himself, especially some of the buyers. Here was the wealthiest group of the Jewish community, and it never gave anything of consequence to charity. So that, let us say, when a man like Archibald (Archie) Silverman began giving, he would measure himself by what Samuels gave. But Samuels did not give very generously. When Alvin Sopkin came to town, he created a new standard no longer based on Samuels's giving." The Rabbi cited other examples in which he was personally involved, such as requesting Joseph Samuels's signature on affidavits needed to bring Jews out of Germany in the 1930s. In none of these instances did Samuels cooperate to any degree.

See Eleanor Horvitz, "The Outlet Company Story," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:448–531, (November) 1974, pp. 524 and 528.

Samuel Chipman Smart in his history of the Outlet Co. relates this incident:

Some of the bitterness the Rabbi expressed in this interview [related above] may have stemmed from an unpleasant incident that occurred at Colonel Samuels' funeral. Braude, as Rabbi of Temple Beth-El, of whose congregation Colonel Samuels was a member, was invited to conduct the memorial service at the Samuels' home on Blackstone Boulevard, Providence. Store employees, business associates, prominent members of the community, civic leaders, and friends were all invited to attend the memorial service. Many of the mourners were not Jewish and practically no one understood Hebrew. For this reason, Colonel Samuels' daughter and closest relative, Bertha Samuels Sinclair, made the reasonable request that Braude's comments be made in English so that she and other members of her family, plus their non-Jewish friends, could understand the import of his remarks. Rabbi Braude chose to ignore the request of Mrs. Sinclair, and proceeded to conduct the service in Hebrew. "Babe" Sinclair, apparently hurt by this snub and not one to mince words when angry, dismissed him on the spot and Rabbi Braude was forced to make a hasty and rather ignominious departure.

See Samuel Chipman, *The Outlet Story 1894–1984* (Providence, R.I., pub. by Outlet Communications, Inc., 1984), pp. 43–44.

23. On November 7, 1938 one Herschel Grynszpan, a 17–year-old German-Jewish refugee in Paris, in revenge for the deportation of his father among 10,000 Jews transported to Poland and the general persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, went to the German embassy in Paris, intending to kill the Ambassador, shot dead the third secretary. Using this as a pretext, the Nazi party bosses instigated the worst pogrom that had yet taken place in the Third Reich on the night of November 9–10. "Spontaneous" demonstrations resulted in a night of horror throughout Germany. Synagogues, Jewish homes, and shops went up in flames. Several Jewish men, women, and children were shot or otherwise slain while trying to escape burning to death. Hundreds of shops and dwellings were set on fire or destroyed. Scores of synagogues were likewise affected. Thousands of Jews were arrested. Thousands of Jewish shops were looted. Because of the broken window glass, it was derisively called *Krìstallnacht* (Crystal Night) or in Nazi party circles as "The Week of the Broken Glass." See William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1960), pp. 430–433.
24. As recalled by Pearl Braude, "it was a meeting of protest and consternation and an expression of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Germany."
25. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 409–410.
26. Rabbi Braude told Pearl Braude that they had almost come to blows.
27. In those days the men often wore hats rather than *yarmulkas* on such occasions.
28. The Hebrew words mean "Committee on Dietary Laws." A *Vaad Hachashrath* was chartered on May 8, 1916 "To aid and assist in the enforcement of the pure food laws, education, charity and benevolence." A *Waad Hachashruth* was chartered on May 5, 1920. A *Vaad Hakashrut* of Providence printed its constitution and bylaws in Yiddish and stated that it was "Founded June 30, 1920 by the City and Rabbis." The discrepancies are unresolved. With the cooperation of the rabbis it was reorganized in 1969 under the auspices of the General Jewish Committee of Rhode Island, which then lent financial support. See "Chartered Organizations," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:70 and 78, (May) 1956. Also Beryl Segal, "*Vaad Hakashruth* of Providence, Rhode Island, Text of the Constitution and Bylaws with Annotations," *ibid.* 6:454–464, (November) 1973; and Beryl Segal, "The General Jewish Committee—The First Quarter Century, 1945–1970," *ibid.* 6:5–35, (November) 1971, p. 25. The capricious spellings conform to the transliterations from the Hebrew as they appear in the several references.
29. It is not clear whether in fact the *Vaad Ha Kashruth* was making a profit. Later, it was apparently a deficit operation. See note 28. Any source of additional income at this time, of course, would have been welcome.

30. The Congregation of Ahavath Sholoam [Lover of Peace] of Providence, Rhode Island was chartered on October 29, 1904. It was known familiarly as the "Howell Street Shul." Lower Howell Street and the synagogue were completely erased by the University Heights development.
31. After the Howell Street synagogue closed, Rabbi Silk became spiritual leader of Congregation Sons of Abraham on Prairie Avenue in South Providence, chartered in 1938. When that congregation many years later merged with Congregation Shaare Zedek in the old Temple Beth-El building on Broad Street, Rabbi Silk retired to Israel. See William G. Braude, "A Sabbath Tour of Synagogues in Providence and Vicinity," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 9:340–355, (November) 1986, pp. 340 and 344. Also Beryl Segal, "The Education of an Immigrant," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:277–293, (November) 1976, p. 292; and Beryl Segal, "Jewish Schools and Teachers in Metropolitan Providence—The First Century," *ibid.* 410–419, p. 416.
32. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 410.
33. Geraldine Foster states: "I think this is somewhat misleading. Rabbi Braude's relationship with Adolph Meller was, I believe, cordial."
34. Marion L. Misch was an unusual woman for her day—leader in Jewish affairs and community endeavors, businesswoman, music patron, and world traveler. For more on Mrs. Misch see Eleanor F. Horvitz, "Marion L. Misch—An Extraordinary Woman," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:143(7)-201(65), (November) 1980.
35. Pearl Braude recalls: "The Sisterhood was planning a morale-building musical spectacle. Marion Strauss was probably director. I was in charge of the dance scenes and costumes. There was commentary. It was called something like 'The Eternal Jew.' We started with the Jews as slaves in Egypt, for which we did a dance scene. In the middle of rehearsal for the dance sequence of the Jews of Spain with music by Manuel de Falla, we heard the news of Pearl Harbor. I shall never forget our reaction. We all slumped down on the stage!"

    Marion Brooks (Mrs. Walter H.) Strauss, veteran high school teacher and drama coach, staged the confirmation exercises for many years and also the performances of the Temple Beth-El Choral Society in the 1950s. Her quiet contribution over the years to the temple's public image deserves recognition.

CHAPTER TWELVE

World War II— Farewell to Broad Street

The board in January of 1942 instructed the Trust Fund Committee to purchase $5000 worth of Defense Bonds. The eruption of hostilities induced Irving J. Fain to ask the board to reconsider the propriety of a Spring Frolic. The minutes of the meeting of January 12 contained this entry:

> Since the war had commenced, there was considerable agitation on the part of members of the congregation to have the Frolic postponed until conditions became more favorable. It was the sense of the board that the committee meet to consider the advisability of holding the Frolic and report at the next meeting. It was suggested that, should the Frolic be called off, the committee might pursue a campaign of contacting members of the congregation for contributions to the same extent [as] if they had purchased Frolic tickets.

Later, as recommended by the committee, the affair was indefinitely postponed because of the "national emergency." In the meantime, the Religious School Committee and the rabbis were perfecting a set of rules and regulations pertaining to air-raid precautions and fire-fighting drills. The board participated in supervising drills, and the need for glass protection and fire-fighting equipment was addressed. The religious school gave a Sunday performance for the benefit of the United Service Organizations (the USO).[1]

President Sundlun asked the board to give careful consideration to the financial future of the congregation in light of war conditions. The world situation, he said, would necessarily affect every person and every institution, including the temple. He asked the board to adopt a policy of retrenchment so as to be prepared to meet a

reduced income without a shock. The Finance Committee reported that the congregation was in very good condition financially and expected a surplus for the year.

On the evening of February 12, 1942 the temple library celebrated its 50th anniversary with an affair arranged by the Brotherhood. The principal speakers were President Henry M. Wriston of Brown University and Adolph Oko, Librarian of the Hebrew Union College. Harriet Dimond (Mrs. Arthur J.) Levy reminisced about the early days of the library and mentioned among other volunteer workers Alphonse J. Lederer, who would later be the congregation's greatest benefactor. Mattie Pincus prepared a special display, enriched by Jewish Lincolniana from the John Hay Library at Brown University. The heads of seven Providence libraries were present. The holdings at that time were over 4100 volumes.

During these turbulent times, an event occurred which would be highly significant for the future of the temple, the death on January 19, 1942 of John Jacob Rosenfeld at the age of 71. Within two short weeks, the import of his death for the temple became evident at the board meeting of February 2. The Laws Committee, significantly, recommended the establishment of a Memorial Fund to receive large contributions or bequests. The immediate reason for initiating the fund was a bequest in Rosenfeld's will "sufficient in size and character to change the entire course of the future affairs of the congregation." First, it established a trust fund of $25,000 for the benefit of Mary E. Broady, his nurse, during her lifetime. It further provided for a gift of $10,000 to the congregational cemetery for the care of the Rosenfeld lots, the surplus to be used for general cemetery purposes. The residue of the estate was set aside "for the express purpose of erecting a building which will advance the educational purposes of said Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, and serve as a lecture room, Sabbath School and similar purposes. Said building to be known as the Rosenfeld Memorial." The bequest additionally provided that a "suitable bronze plaque shall be placed on said building in an appropriate location upon which shall be inscribed the words: This building given by John J. Rosenfeld in memory of his mother, Anna Rosenfeld, and his wife, Elizabeth Mary Rosenfeld."[2]

The Rosenfeld estate was later valued at $206,875. After payment of other bequests, the $10,000 to the cemetery fund, and the $25,000

to the Mary E. Broady Trust, the residual estate amounted to $141,175. Further proceeds would accrue from the sale of houses on Jillson and Glenham Streets in Providence and the family automobile and silverware. The board recommended that the congregation accept the gifts. Arthur J. Levy of the Laws Committee was praised for his work on the Rosenfeld Estate.

John Jacob (Jake) Rosenfeld was truly a self-made man. He was born in Providence on September 12, 1870, the son of Louis and Anna (Jacobs) Rosenfeld. His maternal grandfather was Cantor Abraham Jacobs, who had been spiritual leader of the Congregation Sons of Israel from 1862 to 1869. In his early years the Rosenfeld family moved to Pawtucket, where his father ran a department store. His father died in 1879, when Jake was nine years old. Anna Rosenfeld was left with three young children—Jake, Estelle (later Mrs. Moses Einstein), and Mabel (later Mrs. Herbert J. Caffrey). Mrs. Rosenfeld returned to Providence, where she raised her family by operating a second-hand clothing store. She was later characterized as a "costumer." Rosenfeld lived with his mother most of the time until her death in 1909. He was graduated from Doyle Avenue (grammar) School in Providence. There is no evidence that he had any further formal education, except for attending religious school at the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. His first newspaper job, when he was but a teenager, was with *The Morning Dispatch* of Providence. When still only nineteen years of age, he was hired by the (Providence) *Evening Telegram*. While at the *Telegram* he suffered a back injury in an elevator accident, from which he eventually recovered, although it bothered him in later years. He then moved to *The Pawtucket Times*, where he served as city editor. By 1895 he had joined *The Providence Journal* and *The Evening Bulletin*, where he was in time promoted to general editorial duties and ultimately to city editor of the *Journal-Bulletin* newspapers. He served in their New York office for some eighteen months. In the early 1900s Rosenfeld returned to the *Telegram* and finally to *The Providence Tribune* as managing editor. Late in 1908, after a disagreement with the editor, he resigned and did not return to newspaper work. He then sought to secure work through political connections.

With the help of General Charles R. Brayton, the powerful Republican boss, he obtained an $800 a year position as clerk of the

committee on corporations of the House of Representatives of the Rhode Island General Assembly, the only political job open at the time. In November of 1908 (at the age of 38) he began the study of law in the law offices of Harris & Champlin (Judge James Harris and Irving Champlin). He also studied law with Alexander L. Churchill, Associate Justice of the Superior Court. During this period he served as a member of the Republican City Committee.

Rosenfeld was admitted to the bar on May 6, 1912 at the age of 41. He formed a law partnership with Daniel T. Hagan as Rosenfeld & Hagan, which association lasted for almost a quarter century. Hagan earlier had served under Rosenfeld as a newspaper reporter. While with Hagan, Rosenfeld enjoyed a lucrative practice as defense counsel in prohibition cases in federal court. In 1936 he formed a partnership with John G. Murphy as Rosenfeld & Murphy. His offices were always in the Turks Head Building. His wife, Elizabeth Mary Eberhardt of Seymour, Connecticut, died childless in 1936. A 32nd degree Mason, Rosenfeld had served in the Rhode Island Militia and was a member of the Rhode Island and American Bar Associations. He died on January 19, 1942 and was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery.

Among his political coups was the creation of the first police commission in Providence. He was said to typify the old regime of "personal, and usually political journalism." His acquaintances were legion, but his close friends were few. In his obituary in *The Providence Journal*,[3] Rosenfeld was characterized as one who had "mastered politics in the school of the late Sen. Charles R. Brayton, state G.O.P. boss and, after withdrawing from the forefront in the political game, maintained his interest from that background." The obituary concluded: "He was politically minded, he frankly admitted, but never ran for office." He was a success in his chosen field and died a reasonably affluent man for his time.

Rabbi Braude has described his part in influencing Rosenfeld to make his generous bequest. Following the completion of his Ph.D. studies in the summer of 1937, Braude embarked on a Grace Line cruise through the Panama Canal to recover from fatigue induced by his arduous studies. He interrupted the cruise to spend some time in Guatemala and eventually arrived in California, where he tarried for a while in Berkeley and San Francisco. Hearing troubling news from home, described below, Braude hurriedly left California and returned to Providence.[4]

He later described how in his mind his trip to Guatemala and the building of the temple on Orchard Avenue were linked. On Friday evening, February 26, 1942, shortly after Rosenfeld's death, Braude delivered a sermon eulogizing Rosenfeld and describing the background of their relationship:[5]

> Tonight, I wish to speak of the story behind the will. It began unfolding 70 years ago when Abraham Jacobs became Rabbi of Sons of Israel, which later merged with another Congregation to form the present Sons of Israel and David. Rabbi Jacobs came with his family and struck roots in this community. John Rosenfeld was his last surviving grandchild. No man now alive can tell the entire story. The records of the congregation perished in a fire many years ago. My tale is only a fragment which began nine-and-a-half years ago when I came to Providence. . . .

After describing the hiring of Mordecai I. Soloff as Director of Religious Education and Soloff's subsequent departure under circumstances of financial stringency in the congregation, Braude continued:

> In the interregnum, Mattie Pincus took charge of the school and did a fine job under very great difficulties.
>
> During my first five years in Providence, I kept dreaming of a better school. I kept working for higher standards, for fair play, for equal treatment of rich and poor, the son of the widow and the son of the well-to-do. There were a few with whom I shared my hopes. I spoke to them freely of my joy and my heartaches. Among these there was Mrs. Moses Einstein, also a grandchild of Jacobs. She always listened. . . . She told me of former rabbis and former officials, of differences in old families as well as of deep understandings. She gave me the history behind the official records of the congregation. Official histories, as you know, always leave out the most interesting stories. . . . Very often during my visits with Mrs. Einstein she would say: "Now, rabbi, next time you need anything just go to my brother. You ask him. He'll give it to you."

Many years later Rabbi Braude wrote further:[6]

> I was having a good time in Berkeley and nearby San Francisco when a telegram came from the man then president of the Congregation: "Come back. We cannot engage Bilgray. There is no money." [Bilgray was about to depart for Providence.]
>
> It was still July. But I cut my vacation short and returned to

Providence. In later years I was to realize that the telegram may have been prompted not so much by lack of money as by the feeling that the rabbi had studied enough and should get down to "nuts-and-bolts," to running the school. . . . I returned to Providence, where I pointed out that Rabbi Bilgray had completed his plans to move, and that asking him not to come in effect violated a contract.

So at a special meeting of the Religious School Committee, I was given permission to attempt raising the sum of money needed.

In his sermon on Rosenfeld, Braude takes up the story:[7]

. . . we [had] decided once again to engage a qualified man for the direction of the school, and as before we found ourselves on the short end financially. At the Religious School Committee a few of us—Adolph Meller, then President, Samuel Kaplan, Harry M. Myers, and myself—pledged a sum between us. The next morning, I made an appointment with John J. Rosenfeld. He was the first man I went to see. It was the first time I stepped into his modest office. He received me cordially. I did not know him well at the time. I did not know whether I could interest him in the school. . . . I told him of my dream of a good school . . . with adequate supervision and competent instruction. I spoke of a school building, a meeting house where the facilities and the quarters would be so attractive that children could not resist the temptation of coming regularly and gladly. He said very little. . . . He smiled pleasantly and said: "Yes, yes, I'll be glad to contribute. How much would you like to have?" I mentioned the sum. He nodded. Within a few days we received his check.

This call at his office took place about a year after his delicate and beloved wife, Elizabeth Mary Eberhardt, had passed away. Her death was a devastating shock to him. He was bedridden for a few months. I visited him often, sought to comfort him, but it was an impossible task.

My visit at his office provided the first opportunity for speaking of matters other than his great sorrow. After that, I called often. Each time he inquired about the school. Gradually this taciturn man began to talk. He told me stories of political life, of buccaneering gerrymanders and bold maneuvers. He told me of the early days of men now prominent in state and city government. We did not always agree in our politics. . . . Sometimes I met ex-big-wigs of the state government and the Republican Party at his home. . . .

But generally he and I were alone. After a while, as the deaths of his two sisters brought us even closer together, he began talking of his childhood. He spoke of the severity of his grandfather, Rabbi Abraham Jacobs. . . . of the tenderness of his grandmother, of the understanding of Anna Rosenfeld, his mother. He spoke of the Hebrew which he learned in Sabbath School days. He very proudly confided that, although a bit rusty, he still followed the Hebrew prayers easily. He rarely spoke of his house of worship as a Temple. He generally called it a "shul." [Yiddish for synagogue]

Sometimes he spoke of his hardship as a young man, of his days as a cub reporter, of the elevator accident which almost ended his life, of his experience as managing editor of *The Providence Journal.* He spoke little of himself as the maker of men in political life.

He displayed ever greater interest in the life of the Congregation. I told him of my disappointments as well as my occasional triumphs. He listened keenly. Sometimes a quick smile lit up his imperturbable face. When he spoke, he uttered penetrating judgments of men and affairs in the Congregation. Unlike politics, we were at one in our views of congregational life.

I cannot recall how we came specifically to the subject of a school building. I vaguely remember that we once spoke of the inadequacies of wills left by men in our community. I ventured, quite timidly, to utter the hope that someone some day might provide an adequate school building. He was interested. At later meetings, I came back to the subject. His interest was unmistakable. I never asked him in so many words to do it. But there developed a silent understanding that he was going to do it.

Late last summer [1941] after my wife and I returned from Mexico, he invited me to call on him at his office. He asked a few direct questions involving his will. He asked how much the erection of a school building would cost. I mentioned a minimum sum. He answered quietly, "I think I can manage it." Since that conversation, I never spoke to him about his will or about money.

He could not be present at the High Holidays services, and I brought to him my sermons, which he read. I also brought to him the journal of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David which I presented at the opening meeting of the Brotherhood last fall. It amused him a good deal, and he told me that the account I gave of the Congregation was accurate. I told him to call me whenever he needed me at any hour day or night.

The call finally came Monday, the 19th of January, the day of his death. Mr. A. Henry Klein sent out a letter to the Board

requesting them to pay honor to this last descendant of one of the oldest Jewish families in Providence.

In his later account of these events, Rabbi Braude reverted to the link with Guatemala:[8]

> I come now to the link between Guatemala and the Temple on Orchard Avenue. Had I not gone to Guatemala the officers might not have become indignant about my taking off, the money for Rabbi Bilgray's salary would have been provided in the normal way, I would not have gone to see John Jacob Rosenfeld, and he might not have left the bulk of his estate for the building of the school. [Braude wrote elsewhere: "The linking of the two may appear as bizarre as associating a camel with Indian pudding. But in God's strange ways, it so came about that my trip to Guatemala was an incident which seventeen years later had a significant role in the building of the new Temple on Orchard Avenue."] His bequest in 1942 no doubt inspired Alphonse Joseph Lederer to do likewise in 1946. The two bequests provided the major portion of the money spent for the land and the construction of the Temple complex on Orchard Avenue.

The Rosenfeld home on Rochambeau Avenue at the corner of Blackstone Boulevard was appraised at $14,000. The board decided to hold it off the market for the present pending a decision as to whether it might be occupied as a parsonage by Rabbi Braude. The Laws Committee suggested "that it ought to be made available [for that purpose] if at all possible, in view of the very large part which Rabbi Braude played in bringing about the large benefits to the congregation under the Rosenfeld will."[9]

During these anxious days the American war effort was accelerating on a massive scale. Several of the younger male and female members of the congregation notified the board that they were entering the armed forces. Some resigned; others maintained their paid membership. Generally, resignations were tabled. It was suggested that a plaque be mounted to honor those in military service. The *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* was ordered sent to all servicemen and servicewomen.

A committee was appointed to arrange for recognition of the 10th anniversary of Rabbi Braude's joining the congregation. The rabbi announced the resignation of Mattie Pincus as librarian. She was

given a $50 War Bond in appreciation of her many fine services to the congregation. Within a month, however, she returned as acting librarian, as Miss Kay Kodosh, the new librarian, had enlisted in the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service—United States Navy).

Several significant matters were discussed at the annual meeting of November 23, 1942. The newly elected officers were Archibald Silverman, president; A. Henry Klein, first vice president; Samuel Kaplan, second vice president; Milton Sulzberger, treasurer; Jack Anhalt, financial secretary; and Milton Pliner, recording secretary. The bylaws were amended once again to increase the board membership—from 21 to 24 members. The sale of four properties was announced. The first, the house adjacent to the temple at 95–97 Glenham Street, not a part of the Rosenfeld estate, was sold for $8500. The proceeds were to be applied to the mortgage. The remaining three parcels were part of the estate. Houses at 70–72 Glenham Street and 18 Jillson Street yielded $5400 and $3500 respectively. It was finally decided to dispose of the Rosenfeld home on Rochambeau Avenue, which was sold for $12,500. Actual net yields varied slightly from these amounts. Personal effects, jewelry, silverware, and household furniture were also disposed of at an auction.

The Religious School Committee reported a registration of 175. The paid-up membership, according to the Finance Committee, numbered 321. Fifty-seven percent of the members paid dues of $50 or less (average $40), 29 percent $51 to $99 (average $66), and 14 percent $100 or more (average $144). It was announced that Lt. Irving J. Fain, currently in London, had sent books from England for the library.

The Fain family was involved in another significant project. Elizabeth Stoneman (Mrs. Alfred A.) Fain had died on May 24, 1942 in her 63rd year. Alfred A. Fain and family offered to provide funds to establish an Elizabeth Stoneman Fain Festival Forum to perpetuate her memory. They would begin with a grant of several thousand dollars and hoped to increase the fund until income would be sufficient to cover all expenses of the Forum. In the meantime, they would underwrite all costs above the endowment income. The purpose was to invite speakers or artists of distinction to address or perform for the congregation at festival seasons. The program was formulated as follows:

1. Religious Dedication on Hanukkah (Festival of Lights).
2. Place of Palestine in Jewish Life, on *Hamishah Asar Bi-Shevat* (Also *Tu Bi-Shevat*, New Year for trees, or Jewish Arbor Day).
3. Relations of Jews and non-Jews or the Future of the Jew in the World, on *Purim* (the Feast of Lots).
4. Presentation of Jewish art, music, history, and similar topics, on *Lag Ba-Omer* (Scholars' Festival).

Rabbi Braude said of the Fain proposal that the speakers would be of the very highest order and that "it will never become just a lecture series, because each lecture will be presented in the festive atmosphere of the day." The board in February of 1943 voted to accept the Fain offer, and a $5000 trust was established. The Elizabeth Fain Festival Forum Committee was named with Braude as chairman; Norman Fain, secretary-treasurer; and Edgar Fain, Albert Pilavin (a Fain son-in-law), Archibald Silverman, and A. Henry Klein as members. Rabbi Braude hoped that the first speaker would be Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, but he did not come until later.

The final titles were modified as follows: 1."Religion in the Modern World"; 2. "What Place has Palestine in Jewish Life and Thought?"; 3. "How Shall Jews and Christians Live Together in the Future?"; and 4. "Facets of Art, Literature, and Music." The first of the series, held on December 24, 1943 presented Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof of Pittsburgh. The others of the first season took place on February 9, March 9, and May 21, 1944.[10] The February 9th session was addressed by Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman of Temple Israel of Boston. The Reverend John Howland Lathrop appeared on March 9. Since none of the three accepted fees, gifts in honor of the speakers were made by the foundation to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Jewish National Fund, and the Service Commission of the American Unitarian Association for their refugee work. The last event of the series was a concert-lecture on sacred music featuring Sidor Belarsky and Professor Abraham W. Binder.[11] The printed programs carried this statement: "The four evenings are supported [respectively] by one of the auxiliary organizations of Temple Beth-El: The Brotherhood, The Sisterhood, The War Activities Group, or the Beth-El League."[12]

Rabbi Braude described the events in this way:

> [This was an . . .] attempt to give greater significance to *Hanukkah, Tu Bishvat, Purim,* and *Lag Bo-omer.* Upon the death of

Elizabeth Stoneman Fain (May, 1942), I persuaded her children to set up what I called a Festival Forum to be held on each of the aforementioned days. Each of the days was to be celebrated with lay participation, appropriate music, dances by visiting performers, and generally a speaker in keeping with the particular festival. Among the visitors, we had for *Tu Bishvat*, 9 February 1944, Joshua Loth Liebman on "What Place Palestine has in Jewish Thought." For *Purim*, 9 March 1944, we had John Howland Lathrop (1890–1967) on "How Shall Jews and Christians Face the Future Together." On *Lag Bo-omer*, 21 May that year, we had Sidor Belarsky (1900–1975) present a concert of religious and folk songs as well as Palestinian melodies, and Professor Abraham W. Binder (1895–1966) give an illustrated lecture on "Jewish Music." To name other guests: Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof (1892–), Abba Hillel Silver (1893–1963), Felix A. Levy (1884–1963), Professor Salo Baron (1895–), and Maurice Samuel (1895–1972). The programs for each event were worked out with great care and beautifully printed. The Festival lasted for a decade.[13]

The Beth-El War Activities Group, under the presidency of Madeline Cohn, announced in April that over a four-month period it had entertained 500 servicemen in the vestry. They were made to feel at home through entertainment and the serving of Jewish food. The group also cooperated in a project of the Jewish Welfare Board. The Sisterhood volunteered to have hostesses on hand to greet visiting servicemen at Friday evening services. It was proposed that an honor-roll plaque be placed in the temple, paying homage to those serving in the armed forces. Since bronze was a critical defense item, the plaque was initially fashioned of wood, later to be cast in metal. Rabbi Braude himself in 1943 applied for a commission in the Chaplain Corps of both the Army and the Navy, but was rejected by both services because of poor vision.[14] He sought to fulfill his sense of civic duty by running (unsuccessfully) for the Providence School Committee in November 1943.[15]

Another sign of the times was the announcement by Rabbi Braude that the first bat mitzvah (the female counterpart of bar mitzvah) in the history of the congregation had been held on Tuesday, April 20. The young lady was Esta E. Strong, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William D. Strong. Many other girls would follow this pioneering young lady.

Since organist Retallick had announced that he was leaving, a replacement would be sought, if available. The suggestion of engag-

ing a cantor for the High Holy Days was approved by the trustees, but was later dropped in favor of engaging a Jewish organist and choir director. During the summer of '43 the Choir Committee engaged Heinrich Schalit, a refugee, as organist and choir director for one year at a salary of $1800. He was installed in a house on Camp Street. Schalit had served as music director in the Great Synagogue in Munich. After the advent of Hitler, he emigrated to Rome, but soon was overtaken there by Mussolini's anti-Semitic posturing. In 1938 he proceeded to England, and thence to Rochester, New York. He was considered to be perhaps the outstanding Jewish liturgical musician of his day. He had composed several hymns, which he played from time to time at Temple Beth-El. Further, while at Beth-El he composed several cantatas, which were produced at the temple, and for one year's confirmation class wrote original music to accompany material from the *Midrash*, translated by Rabbi Braude.[16] A competent piano teacher, he taught several students on the side. There were a number of complaints that he was unable to devote sufficient time to his temple duties, as he had taken a defense job! But on the whole, comments were favorable, and some congratulated the congregation for having obtained his services.

The Salary Stabilization Board of the United States Treasury Department approved salary increases for Rabbis Braude and Bilgray and for secretary Sarah Blistein. Braude was re-elected for two years at a salary of $6000 and Bilgray for three years at $3000. Later in the year Braude's salary was increased by an additional $1000 and Bilgray's by $333.33 for the remainder of the current year. The budget for the next year was set at $23,255, with an expected income of $20,363. The Finance Committee felt obliged to find a way to raise $3,000 to cover the deficit. A vigorous campaign to increase dues produced $1500 of the amount.

William P. Herman in a letter to the board in November 1943 urged that the $12,000 residual mortgage on the temple be liquidated by a drive among the membership. To give the effort impetus, he himself pledged ten percent of the total, or $1200. Other pledges followed—58 in all—for a total of $10,500. The amount eventually reached $12,650. The entire mortgage was paid off on December 21, 1943. This was an important development, as serious thought was now being given to a building program. Herman also volunteered to underwrite the cost of printing the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* to

permit a mailing every two weeks in accordance with a plan announced by Rabbi Braude.

The second full war year ended with the re-election of President Archibald Silverman and the incumbent slate of officers for the ensuing year.

At the request of Silverman, the board on February 26, 1944 approved a resolution appealing to the United States government to take appropriate action to ensure the withdrawal of the Palestine White Paper of May 1939 with its unjustifiable restrictions on immigration and land settlement. The mandated territory was to be closed to immigration by Jews on March 31, 1944 in repudiation of a previous promise. "Hundreds of thousands of Europe's Jews," the resolution proclaimed, "who might otherwise have passed into Nazi concentration camps and death chambers found refuge in Palestine. But now the very existence of the national homeland and the haven of refuge is being threatened." It was sent to each Rhode Island senator and congressman and to the State Department through the American Zionist Emergency Council of Rhode Island.[17]

In March 1944 discussions began regarding the acquisition of a new site for a meeting house. The Cole Farm site on Cole Avenue on the East Side of Providence available at some $40,000 was under consideration. President Silverman and First Vice President Klein were empowered to take an option on the property. Ultimately, however, another site on the East Side was selected. At a special meeting in April the board authorized the purchase of land at the corner of Butler and Orchard Avenues owned by Karl Humphrey. The parcel comprised 59,461 square feet, containing two dwellings and a barn at a purchase price of $35,000. An adjoining property of 29,148 square feet owned by Leo Logan, real estate developer, was also available for $13,000. Silverman and Klein were empowered to execute purchase of both sites.

Items related to the war continued to intrude upon the record. Rabbi Braude conducted a special service on April 21 to dedicate an enlarged Honor Roll, which included members, sons and daughters of members, and members of the Brotherhood who were in the armed forces. He urged families having Passover seders to invite servicemen to their homes. It was reported that Army Air Corps Lieutenant Bruce Sundlun, son of Walter I. Sundlun, was missing in action over Germany. It was later learned that his plane had been shot down and that he had parachuted safely and made his way to

Switzerland without being captured. One hundred dollars was made available to the War Activities Group to provide suppers and dances for servicemen on Sunday evenings. The Sisterhood pledged to sell $125,000 worth of War Bonds. They eventually sold bonds in the amount of $256,000.

The Memorial Tablet and Trust Fund Committee voted to invest all of its assets in the Sixth War Loan Drive. On D-Day, June 6, the Allied Forces successfully invaded northern Europe across the English Channel.

The acquisition of the new properties heightened fiscal concerns. The board in May authorized a campaign to raise $50,000 for the purchase. Board members pledged $1,750 at the meeting. Helene (Mrs. Bertram L.) Bernhardt announced that the Sisterhood would present a musical review in the fall for the benefit of the Building Fund. In June, the congregation unanimously ratified the purchase of the Orchard Avenue land. President Silverman reported that the board at a special luncheon had pledged $21,150. Additional pledges raised the total to $25,620, and a month later it had further increased to $36,000. A friendly message was received from St. Martin's Episcopal Church on Orchard Avenue adjacent to the new Beth-El property welcoming the congregation as a neighbor, the beginning of a long and cordial relationship. The board learned that $150,000 from the Rosenfeld estate would soon be turned over to the congregation. It established a J.J. Rosenfeld Fund with proceeds to be administered by the J.J. Rosenfeld Estate Committee with the Industrial Trust Company bank as agent. The committee was given broad power to trade in securities between board meetings. A board meeting was held in the Humphrey house on the new property to meet the requirement that it be used immediately for congregational purposes to avoid taxation. While these matters were in progress, the rabbi and assistant rabbi were re-elected at salaries of $7,000 and $3,333.33 respectively. The new budget amounted to $23,998.33.

In the fall of '44 the second Fain Festival Forum was announced, to be inaugurated on December 13, the fourth night of Hanukkah, with the eminent Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver as the speaker. It was in fact postponed at Silver's urgent request to January 3, 1945.[18]

In 1943 Rabbi Braude had informed the board that he was planning to translate the *Midrash* on Psalms and expressed the hope

that the trustees would raise funds to support the publication. He suggested that 60 percent of the royalties would accrue to the author and 40 percent to the congregation, which could be distributed to various institutions, such as Hebrew Union College. The board voted to approve the publication project. In the fall of 1944 Braude received a tentative invitation from Dr. Solomon Grayzel of the Jewish Publication Society of America to include the work in the Schiff Library of Jewish Classics series. Ultimately, however, the *Midrash on Psalms* was published by the Yale University Press as part of its Yale Judaica series. Joseph M. Finkelstein, Braude's father-in-law, announced that he was making a contribution in support of the publication, amounting eventually to $3000.[19]

Mattie Pincus once again resumed duties as librarian and requested $200 for current expenses. Associated with the library for 50 years, since the days of Rabbi Blaustein, she was praised for performing a labor of love for which the congregation could never make adequate compensation. Music Director Schalit's salary was increased to $2,280. It was also voted to pay the recording secretary, Milton Pliner, $2000 annually, which would, in fact, largely reimburse him for clerical help in his office. The board also instituted a pension plan for the rabbis administered through the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

The annual meeting of the congregation on November 19, 1944 was presumed to be the 100th anniversary meeting. A celebration at an appropriate time was planned, and Walter I. Sundlun and Milton Sapinsley were appointed co-chairmen of the event. Rabbi Braude, however, had some doubts about the date and looked into the matter. He received a letter from Professor Jacob R. Marcus, eminent historian of the American Jewish Archives, that an item appearing in the *National Jewish Magazine* of 1854 gave 1854 as the actual date of organization, which of course, as herein documented, is now well established as the authentic date. Plans for a celebration were therefore postponed for ten years.[20]

In Feburary of 1945, Rabbi Albert Bilgray, after having served at Beth-El for seven years, announced his resignation to assume his own pulpit elsewhere. A testimonial and farewell reception was held by the congregation on May 6. Bilgray received a gift of $500 appropriated from the general funds, while the grateful children of

the religious school presented him with a generous purse of $1300. Rabbi Braude decribed him as "able, conscientious, and gentle." He wrote further of him:[21]

> While serving as educational director of Beth-El, Rabbi Bilgray concluded that his true wish was to become again a pulpit rabbi. It is too bad that in 1937 [when] the congregation had perhaps no more than 250 families and needed a rabbi and an educational director, but not two pulpit rabbis . . . I had neither the wisdom nor the experience to cope with the new situation. Nevertheless, he and I remained good friends. He went to McKeesport, Pennsylvania, then to Tucson, where he was instrumental in setting up the Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Arizona.

He was later awarded a D.D. degree by Hebrew Union College.

The war reached a climax with the surrender of Germany on May 7 and victory over Japan on August 14. Information was received that one young son of a member family had returned after being wounded in Germany and another after having been held prisoner for many months. Others were being welcomed as they filtered back from duty around the world. Rabbi Braude suggested that servicemen, now veterans, be invited to sit on the pulpit during the High Holy Days. The first post-war affair, a lively evening, was held by the Brotherhood on November 28, 1945. It was intended when metals again became available to replace the wooden honor roll with bronze. There is no evidence that this was ever carried out.

Pledges to the Land Fund had reached $40,757 by October with only $800 outstanding. With the war winding down, more attention was directed to the building project. Overcrowding in the synagogue on the Holidays was a growing problem. The board discussed limiting membership to relieve the pressure, certainly an unacceptable solution. Members were discouraged from bringing children and guests to the services. When the Humphrey house on the Orchard Avenue property was vandalized with the breaking of windows, consideration was given to tearing it down, but eventually it was sold for $800 and moved elsewhere.

Rabbi Braude advised that a study of the requirements for the new temple begin immediately and that architects be retained. Both Rabbis Maurice N. Eisendrath and Louis I. Newman, who had visited the area, agreed that it was one of the best synagogue sites in America. Rabbi Eisendrath was president of the Union of American

Hebrew Congregations. Dr. Newman, spiritual leader of Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City and a noted scholar and teacher, was a native of Providence and a graduate of Brown University. Members of the board agreed that architects should be engaged and a building fund campaign started. It was hoped that the campaign could be tied to the proposed 100th anniversary celebration of the congregation until the error in dates was discovered. Mattie Pincus suggested that other temples be visited for ideas and to profit from their mistakes. Attorney Arthur J. Levy was appointed chairman of the Building Plans Committee. He proved to be an excellent choice.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Building Plans Committee, it was agreed to engage the best qualified architect available with specific experience in synagogue construction. If a candidate were chosen from out of town, a local architect of good standing would be employed to be associated with him for details of planning and supervision. An earlier request from the distinguished Providence architect Albert Harkness that he be considered for the post of leading architect apparently was deferred in the light of prevailing stylistic preferences.

The Building Plans Committee was faced with a number of questions:

1. The choice of the type of architecture was important, whether Byzantine, New England Colonial, Georgian, Modern, or other.
2. In view of the substantial Rosenfeld Fund, it was questionable whether the size of the school should be tailored to present and immediate future needs of the congregation including children of non-members, or whether the great deficiency in religious school facilities in the community be taken into acccount. Rabbi Braude felt that with the move to the East Side there would be greater demands placed upon the school.
3. Should the temple auditorium be large enough for all probable future needs, including provision for guests and children? Should overflow space be provided by such devices as sliding doors?
4. Should air conditioning, sadly missed in the Broad Street building, be provided for the auditorium, for the school, or for the entire complex?

A committee of seven was appointed to select an architect. Before the year was out, several prospects had been consulted. Charles

Greco of Boston had designed synagogues in Cleveland, Hartford, Evanston, and Worcester. Robert Cohen was the designer of Temple Emanu-El in New York City. Eric Mendelssohn, famous European synagogue architect, was now in America, but was considered to be unavailable. None of these was selected.[22]

While these inquiries were in progress during 1945, the routine business of the temple went on. The budget for the new year was set at $29,298, showing progressive growth. The rabbi's salary remained at $7,000 and the choir director's at $2,280. Before the year was out, Braude's was increased to $9,000. A new prayer book for the High Holy Days was released by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It was adopted by the congregation for the current year, and copies were made available to members at one dollar each. The Religious School Committee recommended that Mattie Pincus be retained as administrator of the school at $1,000 and Bernard (Beryl) Segal as director of the Hebrew Department at $1,800. After a prolonged discussion, the proposal was adopted unanimously. Ray Gardner, long a choir member and a popular and dignified bass singer, resigned from the choir and was given a gift, which he gratefully and gracefully acknowledged. He survived for many more years and was a faithful attendant at musical events in Providence. There was talk of reviving the annual Spring Frolic in May 1946, but this was later deferred.

The incumbent officers were re-elected at the annual meeting on November 11, 1945. Rabbi Braude was congratulated on the birth of his second son, Benjamin Meir Braude. Braude thanked Archibald and Ida Silverman for permitting the use of their home twice weekly for Hebrew classes. The Choir Committee commented on its good fortune in having Schalit as its music director, a distinguished leader in the field, and noted that he was the only Jew associated with the choir. Despite this favorable report, there was a dispute sometime later over his request for an increase in salary.

With a series of frustrating leaks in the roof of the Broad Street temple, the prospect of a new building was all the more attractive. Rabbi Braude spoke of a recent visit of Dr. Franz Landsberger, distinguished Jewish art historian, who spoke on the great synagogue buildings of the world and noted that they were usually built in keeping with the architecture of the times, whether Greek and Roman, Moorish, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, or Baroque.

They have been built of stone or wood. In the United States "modernist" or "functional" examples had been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Eric Mendelssohn, and Percival Goodman. Dr. Eric Mendelssohn, while in Providence, attended a meeting of the board at the office of Arthur J. Levy on March 7, 1946.

At the suggestion of Irving J. Fain, a special Fund-Raising Plans Committee was formed, of which he was appointed chairman. A joint dinner-meeting with the Building Plans Committee was held at the Narragansett Hotel on March 25, 1946. Answers to questions regarding fund-raising were sought: How much? How? and When? It was estimated that $500,000 would be needed for the school and temple. Some $150,000 was on hand from the Rosenfeld Estate, and $50,000 could be realized from sale of the present building, leaving a balance of $300,000. This amount could be raised by personal solicitation of each member.

The committee proposed to start the campaign at once and to complete it by August 31, 1946. It was the consensus that memorials not be considered initially as a means of fund-raising, that all new members be required to contribute to the capital funds, and that a mortgage was certainly feasible to raise some of the money. Pledges could be paid over a three-year period. Fain, designated as general chairman, later reported that there was opposition from many sources to fund-raising at that time. Upon his recommendation the board postponed the campaign until February 1947. In the meantime he would conduct an educational program to prepare for the definitive solicitation.

Arthur J. Levy reported that the Building Plans Committee had interviewed architects who had designed temples in New York, Cleveland, Erie, Hartford, Worcester, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Europe. All agreed that the site was ideal. Plans of a temple about to be built elsewhere were examined, and the committee was urged to procure sketches of proposals.

Overcrowding of the temple on the High Holy Days continued to present difficulties. Children and members who could not be seated were accommodated in the vestry, which was furnished with a public address system. Members were required to present tickets at the door. Seats were not permitted in the aisles because of fire regulations, but were set up in the foyer. The use of the Rhode Island School of Design Auditorium had been suggested for the two Holiday evenings, but was not deemed feasible.

Problems of space and geography reached crisis proportions for the Religious School. Classes for East Side children were held weekdays at a nominal cost in public school facilities at Nathan Bishop Junior High School on Elmgrove Avenue. Overcrowding of Sunday classes at the temple was relieved by hiring the Chester Avenue public primary school as an annex. Mattie Pincus was re-engaged as adminstrative director of the school at $1,200 and Bernard Segal as Hebrew supervisor at $2,200, representing increases of $200 and $400 respectively. The Religious School Committee was instructed to seek a full-time director.

The budget had now reached $35,842. The rabbi was re-elected for two years at a salary of $9,000, while the music director was re-engaged at $2,280, apparently placated after a session with a delegation from the board. The board learned in August of the passing of Alphonse J. Lederer on the 31st of July. Early in September they were informed by the probate court of the City of Providence that the congregation had been named a legatee under his will, the full impact of which was not then realized. A committee was formed to plan a suitable memorial for him.

At the annual dinner meeting of the congregation, held in the Indian Room of the Narragansett Hotel on November 24, 1946, a new slate of officers was installed. It was designated as the "92nd annual meeting," indicating that the corrected chronology had been accepted. A. Henry Klein was elected president. Other officers were Samuel Kaplan, first vice president; Arthur J. Levy, second vice president; Jules P. Goldstein, treasurer; Jack L. Anhalt, financial secretary; and Milton Pliner, recording secretary. The membership numbered 473 dues-paying families, up from 367 in 1943. Some 285 dues increases totaled $5,000. Other members received letters asking for voluntary increases.

The Sisterhood reported that it had held a joint meeting of Sisterhoods with Temples Emanuel and Beth-Israel with a remarkable attendance of 500. It was addressed by Dr. Louis I. Newman, Rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Sholom of New York. Helene Bernhardt reported for the Sisterhood that it had been in the process of converting its activites from a wartime to a peacetime basis. Considerable time and effort had been expended in collecting and shipping 7,500 pounds of clothing and 20 cases of foodstuffs sorely needed by the survivors of the European tragedy. Generous contributions to help defray the cost were obtained from members by serenading

them on their birthdays. The annual dinner-dance of the Brotherhood was held on November 9, the first since the start of the War. Archibald Silverman upon his retirement from the presidency was presented with a clock by the congregation in recognition of his faithful services. He expressed his appreciation and also his regrets that his wife, Ida, could not be present to participate in the pleasures of the moment. As so often transpired, she was away on Zionist business.

The Building Plans Committee had for a time been relatively inactive. It reported that $9,500 was still due for the land on Orchard Avenue. Rabbi Braude's voice, for obscure reasons, had failed him, and on doctor's orders he was obliged to spare it for the foreseeable future. But he found voice to address the congregation on the "generous provisions" of the Lederer trust, the full impact of which was just now beginning to be realized:[23]

> When his will was read, its very generous provisions revealed a delicate concern for, and an abiding faith in the future of our congregation, whose ultimate consequences it is difficult to assess. Very few synagogues in the land have received such magnificent tributes of loyalty, and I pray to God that we here shall at all times prove worthy of Alphonse Lederer's love and trust.

Alphonse Jacob Lederer was born in New York City on September 16, 1897, the son of Henry S. and Julia Lederer. Henry Lederer, the son of Benedict B. and Theresa Lederer, was, like his father, in the manufacturing jewelry business. At the time of Alphonse's birth, his father Henry was managing the New York sales office. Although his firm was organized as early as 1895, it was not incorporated until 1904 under the corporate name of Henry Lederer and Brothers, Inc. The corporators were Henry S. and brothers Adolph and Edward B. Lederer. Alphonse attended public school in Providence, and in 1915, right out of high school, joined his father's business as a salesman. Henry Lederer died in 1917 and Adolph in 1922. Young Alphonse, barely twenty years of age, succeeded his father as head of the firm and rose to be its president, treasurer, and secretary. He never married and lived with and cared for his widowed mother. He was a very private person and lived a quiet and unostentatious life. He conducted the enterprise successfully for almost thirty years. Suddenly, on July 31, 1946 in his 49th year, he was found dead in his automobile in the garage of his home at 26 Grotto

Avenue in Providence. The medical examiner declared the death to be due to suicide from carbon monoxide poisoning. He was survived by his mother, but there were no other immediate heirs.[24]

The consequences of this tragic event to Temple Beth-El were not immediately apparent. However, it was well known that his family had been closely associated with the congregation since his grandfather Benedict B. and his great-uncle Sigmund L. Lederer had come to Providence in the 1870s. Both had been prominent in congregational affairs. Alphonse Lederer, like benefactor John Jacob Rosenfeld, had been a good friend of Rabbi Braude's.

Because of Rabbi Braude's voice problems, Professor Israel J. Kapstein, author and faculty member at Brown University, delivered a series of four Friday night lectures. Other speakers also participated. Visiting rabbis officiated on Friday evenings through February 14, while the Sisterhood and Brotherhood supervised services on February 21 and 29 respectively. It was announced that, since the Joseph Finkelstein Psalms Fund was not needed for Braude's book, the money was distributed as follows: $1000 each to Hebrew Union College, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Yeshiva University in New York in honor of Adolph Meller, Archibald Silverman, and A. Henry Klein, recent presidents of the congregation, and $28.63 (from income) to the American Academy of Jewish Science in honor of Arthur J. Levy for his endeavors in behalf of the congregation. Mrs. Alice Liffman volunteered to serve as organist during the summer without compensation.

President Klein described the increasing complexity and volume of work in conducting the affairs of the congregation. He suggested establishment of an Executive Committee in lieu of unwieldy special board meetings. Accordingly, an Executive Committee consisting of seven members was established to make recommendations to the board of trustees, but without power to act. The salary of organist Heinrich Schalit was increased to $3,000, and he was granted travel expenses to a conference on "Jewish Music in the Synagogue." Although Arthur Levy had had difficulty in organizing the Building Plans Committee, the problems were resolved and work on tentative plans was begun.

By early April 1947 the full dimensions of Alphonse Lederer's bequest were revealed. He had bequeathed his entire estate for religious and educational purposes to the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David upon the death of his mother, Julia Lederer. Mrs.

Lederer died on January 19, 1947, as fate would have it, only six months after the demise of her son. Walter Adler, chairman of the Laws Committee, reported on April 7 that the gross amount of the Lederer estate was $674,033.03 before taxes and certain expenses. The board accepted the bequest and established a John J. Rosenfeld and Alphonse J. Lederer Estate Committee to supersede the existing Rosenfeld committee. The congregation further benefited to the amount of $15,000 to $20,000 in dividends from Henry Lederer and Brother, Inc. accruing to the late Julia Lederer, but never paid.

Alphonse Lederer was the sole stockholder of the corporation. His stock was valued at $307,000, while his other personal holdings amounted to $347,000, accounting for an estimated estate of $647,000. Rhode Island law permitted charitable, religious, and educational non-profit corporations to hold real and personal property of up to $150,000. In 1925 the charter of the congregation had been amended to allow for holdings of $500,000. Upon advice of the Laws Committee a petition was made further to amend the charter to permit holdings of up to $2,000,000. The Rhode Island General Assembly granted the petition. These developments, of course, gave considerable impetus to the Building Plans Committee to proceed.

Arthur J. Levy, representing the committee, presented illustrations of all types of synagogue architecture. Levy advised the board that it must itself choose the type of architecture it desired, since architects are identified according to the styles which they advocate. After much discussion, a straw vote yielded a wide difference of opinion. The preliminary vote was followed by a special meeting of the board to make a definitive selection of architectural style. The meeting was addressed by Albert Simonson of the Department of Architecture of the Rhode Island School of Design. He suggested three types of design that would be appropriate: English Colonial or Georgian, contemporary, and Byzantine. A poll yielded 25 votes for contemporary and two for traditional. The Building Plans Committee, therefore, was instructed to seek architects who were experienced in the contemporary style, which at the time was beginning to emerge as dominant in the United States.

Other temple business went on as usual. After much indecision the board decided to raze the Samuels Memorial Chapel at the cemetery with the consent of Joseph and Leon Samuels. It had not had much use and occupied space essential for other purposes. Further improvements in the cemetery were also approved, includ-

ing installation of an irrigation system, road work, grading and planting, and erection of a building to provide for a cemetery office, a garage, and storage of tools and equipment. Authorization was granted to engage architects, engineers, contractors, and other necessary specialists not to exceed $20,000. This was later increased to $25,000.

It was essential, despite ambitious plans for the future, to continue expenditures on the old temple, as new construction might well be several years away. The roof, a chronic source of difficulty, needed repairs. Improved lighting fixtures, alterations to the choir stall, cleaning and repair of the stained-glass windows, cleansing of rugs, installation of a new drinking fountain, repair and welding of the iron work, repair of damaged doors, upholstering, and other services were required to keep the handsome but aging building respectable.

The Finance Committee recommended an increase in the rabbi's salary by $1,000 to $10,000. It further proposed procurement of a religious and youth activities director at $5,000 and a music director at $3,000. A budget of $41,572 was presented.

The Religious School Committee offered an adult education course on Wednesday evenings. At each session the program was divided into two segments: the first part of the evening was devoted to "Religion in the Home," conducted by Rabbi Braude, the second to the study of Hebrew.

The Laws Committee reported that up to July 31 $18,873.17 had been turned over to the congregation from the Lederer estate. All income from the estate was applied to the Lederer Fund. Members of the Building Plans Committee attended a conference in New York on Contemporary Architecture for Synagogues. They met personally with Percival Goodman, a well-known architect, who had participated prominently in the proceedings. Rabbi Braude described the background of this visit:[25]

> The issue we faced at the beginning was the style of architecture. The majority of the board and I, too, felt it should be Colonial. Here my wife's knowledge and determination were to prove decisive. Her minor [concentration] at Pembroke College in Brown University was the History of Art. She began by persuading me that significant structures are rarely evocative or nostalgic, but are in an idiom which is contemporary. She did

more. She went to a conference on synagogue architecture convoked in New York City by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. At that conference, plans of syangogues—elevations, interiors and exteriors—were displayed. She found Percival Goodman's designs most exciting. The name Goodman was not unknown to her, since a year or so earlier Professor Meyer Schapiro of Columbia University, in response to my inquiry, had recommended him.

As she listened to the discussions, she concluded that a synagogue's façade should not be, e.g. Colonial, with synagogue furnishings hid, so to speak, behind. She rose up to say that a synagogue should have organic unity, so that its exterior would reflect the activities within it.

Percival Goodman, a vigorous participant in the discussions, also believed that a synagogue plan should provide settings for great works of art which would reflect our religious aspirations and loyalties. He dared hope that synagogues would commission men such as Jacques Lipchitz and Marc Chagall, then newly arrived from France. Percival Goodman impressed Pen as well as A. Henry Klein, first vice president of the Congregation, who accompanied her to the conference.

In November the Building Plans Committee announced that it had unanimously selected Percival Goodman as the architect. A request that it be authorized to execute a contract with him was approved.

The 93rd annual meeting preceded by a dinner was again held at the venerable Narragansett Hotel. The officers of the previous year were re-elected, with A. Henry Klein as president. The theme of the evening was the "New Temple Building." Arthur Levy reported that, after many meetings and many interviews with architects, Percival Goodman had been selected and the decision had been made to build in the contemporary style. Percival Goodman, who had been invited to attend the meeting, addressed the membership. The project, he stated, required a new perspective on age-old tradition, while not discarding any of its essentials. The building of a House of God, he continued, required faith, or there would be no need for a temple.

Chairman Bertram Bernhardt of the Orchard Avenue Land Committee reported that the fund still had a deficit of $9,500, for which the committee proposed a fund-raising raffle. Herman Bennett, an

automobile dealer and nephew by marriage of past-president Archibald Silverman, offered to provide a Chevrolet sedan at cost. Most members at the dinner participated, and $4,500 was pledged. Other members would be solicited, and Bernhardt was authorized to proceed with the project. Because of slow sales, the raffle ticket price was lowered from $5 to $1. Vice President Samuel Kaplan, a retail jeweler, donated a diamond watch as a second prize, and other items were added. The raffle went on until the following June, eventually netting a profit of $7,500.

Crowding in the school continued to be a serious problem. The Religious School Committee recommended that nearby Peace Street School, a public grammar school, be rented for classes 4 through 9, while classes K through 3 and the high school be held at the temple. It was decided to defer a decision for further study. Levy for the Building Plans Committee asked for advice on the maximum cost of the new building as a guide for the architect and also an estimate of how large a membership to accommodate. The present membership was 513. If a membership of 750–800 were assumed, he went on, "It is obvious we cannot afford to plan an auditorium which, when expanded, will hold the entire congregation plus all grown-up children and religious school children. This would call for 1,600 [seats] now, and with a membership of 800 [would] require about 2,400 seats, approximately as large as the Albee Theater [in Providence]!" Tentative plans later provided for an auditorium of 1,500 seats.

The Property Committee began to consider problems associated with an eventual major move, such as proper provision for storing old pictures and relics. The basement of the temple contained a huge accumulation of broken school chairs, benches, furniture, old stage scenery, boxes, bottles, and other discarded materials, which had been gathering dust for years. The debris should be removed from the premises as a nuisance and a hazard in close proximity to the oil burners. Many items of interest to the congregation should be preserved. In a dark and dusty storage room on the second floor just above the ark were other items requiring cleaning and preservation. There was a set of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which should be given to the library. Pictures should be gathered, scrutinized, and possibly restored as historical items in the new temple.

As the year 1947 closed, all of the common stock of Henry Lederer

and Brother, Inc. was turned over to the congregation. A decision would have to be made as to whether to sell the company or to continue in operation. A new board of directors of the corporation was elected: Edward B. Lederer, an original corporator, president; A. Henry Klein, vice president; Arthur J. Levy, secretary-treasurer; Walter Adler, assistant secretary and assistant treasurer; Perry Bernstein, assistant treasurer; and Samuel Kaplan, assistant treasurer. The congregation was thus well represented on the board. A special committee under Albert Pilavin later advised that the business be disposed of as soon as possible, as it would be better operated by those experienced in business.

With the death in January 1947 of Julia Lederer, life tenant under her son's will, the congregation became residual legatee. There were serious federal and state tax questions involving considerable sums. Every effort was made to settle these amicably. The principal asset of the estate, of course, was the stock of Henry Lederer and Brother, Inc. In April of 1948 the board, as recommended by the special committee, voted to sell the business at a fair market price, exclusive of cash, securities, and accounts receivable.

The City of Providence taxes on the Rosenfeld Estate were abated. Several questions remained unresolved concerning the Lederer estate: 1. The matter of property owned jointly by Alphonse J. and Julia L. Lederer; 2. life insurance and the taxes thereon; 3. whether taxes were due on the charitable remainder; and 4. the proposal for a compromise agreement on the estate of Julia Lederer. Representatives of the congregation negotiated a compromise with the heirs of Julia Lederer and the executors of Alphonse Lederer. Ultimately over $500,000 was turned over to the congregation.

It was announced in March of 1948 that Milton Pliner was retiring after serving as recording secretary for thirty years. His activities had been so varied that in effect he had functioned as business manager. The board decided to engage a bookkeeper and an accountant to professionalize the congregation's financial records. It further elected to appoint a director to supervise the religious school, lead youth activities, and handle temple matters, preferably a person trained for such a position.

The budget for the ensuing year was set at $44,560, with salaries of $12,000 for the rabbi, $5,000 for a religious school director, and $5,000 for a music director. The increase from $3,000 for the music

director was not applicable to Schalit, and his contract was not renewed. He, in fact, left for a new position in Denver on November 1. He was eventually granted an additional $2,000 to pay for his services during September and October, and his expenses for the move to Denver were reimbursed. Housekeeping problems in the old building continued to plague the Property Committee. The leaking roof was again patched, the auditorium was extensively repaired and redecorated at a cost of $2070, and new lighting fixtures were installed. A jeep and power lawn mower were purchased for the cemetery.

A contract for the services of Percival Goodman prepared by the Laws Committee was duly executed. At a board meeting on September 28 Goodman presented preliminary rough estimates of the cost of the new construction: the school $299,000, the social hall $204,000, the temple proper $310,000, for a total of $813,000. This would provide a structure of 650,918 cubic feet at a cost of $1.25 per cubic foot. Twenty percent of the building costs, or $162,000, must be added for furnishings and a further $100,000 for engineering and architectural fees and landscaping, totaling $1,075,000. This was a breath-taking project despite the bequests, but the architect was instructed to complete the plans and construct a model.

The annual meeting of the congregation on December 12, 1948 was a busy one. The Laws Committee submitted the following bylaws provisions:

1. No officer except the secretaries may serve more than five years.
2. No trustees may serve more than two consecutive terms.
3. The president is authorized to appoint three trustees for one year, each not to serve more than three consecutive years.
4. No husband and wife may serve as trustees at the same time.
5. The president will upon retirement serve on the board of trustees ex officio unless elected an honorary trustee.
6. The presidents of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood will have a voice and be empowered to vote.

These amendments were adopted without dissent. At this writing numbers 1, 3, 4, and 5 are no longer in effect.

The congregation was, of course, apprised of the status of the new building project, but plans were too preliminary for action at this time.

The following officers were elected: A. Henry Klein, president; Samuel Kaplan, first vice president; Arthur J. Levy, second vice president; Jules P. Goldstein, treasurer; Benjamin Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Meyer Tenenbaum, recording secretary.

Special recognition was paid to Matilda Pincus, and gratitude expressed for her having been a tower of strength in congregational life for many years. She not only had served as librarian and teacher, but also contributed in many ways involving a maze of detail. "We are richer," a citation read, "for having her services for all of these past years, and may she continue in good health and remain with us for many years to come."[26]

With the departure of Heinrich Schalit, much attention was paid to the future of music in the temple. Rabbi Braude spoke of a new School of Sacred Jewish Music inaugurated by Hebrew Union College especially to train young men as cantors. He suggested that the congregation give thought to engaging such a man (the newfangled concept of female cantors had not yet emerged) at an appropriate time.

Walter H. Strauss reported at length for the Choir Committee.[27] During Jewish Music Week in January of 1948 the temple had brought Cantor Louis Gordon from Boston. He had an excellent voice, and his renditions were received "with singular acclaim." On two later engagements he was again greeted enthusiastically. Following Schalit's departure, Mrs. Alice Liffman had served satisfactorily on an interim basis as organist and choir director and would continue to do so for the foreseeable future. At the request of the committee, Ray Gardner, long-time popular basso of the choir, made inquiries locally, interviewed most of the available talents, and made a few tentative suggestions. "It is unfortunate," he stated, "that practically no one has had any experience with the music of the Temple ritual." "In passing," he concluded, "I might say that the quartet at the Temple are extremely sorry to sever our relations with Mr. Schalit. We all agree that we have never worked with a finer musician and we have all profited musically from his expert knowledge and extraordinary musical perception."[28]

Rabbi Braude, according to Strauss, had consulted Dr. Eric Werner, Professor of Music at Hebrew Union College and Chairman of the Executive Committee of its School of Sacred Music in New York City. Werner had suggested engaging a student cantor on an interim

basis to sing at services twice weekly. Such a person could replace the choir and perhaps collaborate in building a volunteer choir of children for the Sunday school and a volunteer choir of the Sisterhood for regular services. He could also serve as director of the religious school and teach elementary and intermediate Hebrew classes and Jewish history. These duties might merit a salary of $2,000.

The congregation should be prepared later to engage a cantor/religious school director on a full-time basis at $5,000. The Choir Committee requested guidance on the following questions: Do we favor the return of a cantor? If yes, do we wish to retain the choir? Do we desire a full-time or part-time organist? Do we insist on an organist of Jewish background or will a non-Jewish organist with the necessary qualifications be satisfactory? Further, instructions were requested of the Finance Committee as to the funds available for temple musical activities.

Werner, in a letter to Rabbi Braude, made several observations which were to have considerable bearing in the future on practices at the temple.[29] These are some of his comments:

> The Reform service in general lacks warmth and active congregational participation. The abolishment of the cantorate, as effected in the last half of the nineteenth centery, has turned out to be a boomerang, rather than an asset. The choir, which replaced the cantor, took away the last vestiges of active congregational participation on [the] one hand, and [on the other hand] by introducing Gentile, non-Jewish music deprived our worship of its inherent spiritual warmth.
>
> The Reform Congregations all over the country have begun to realize that the radical abolishment of the cantorate was a mistake. A survey . . . answered by 285 congregations showed that at present 62 congregations employ a cantor and more than 50 are ready . . . to employ a cantor-educator, preferably a graduate of this school. . . .
>
> A cantor for modern Jewry . . . will be able to arrange, in collaboration with an organist, the music for the specific season or day . . . [and] build a volunteer choir. . . . I personally feel that such a development would greatly enhance the attractiveness of the Reform service, and would help to imbue our congregations with the spirit of Judaism, which in the last fifty years we have abandoned all too rashly.

These concepts were not accepted with uniform enthusiasm, especially among long-time members of the congregation, but they were ultimately to prevail as the Reform movement as a whole moved perceptibly toward a more traditional posture.

Early in 1949 Rabbi Braude visited the Hebrew Union (College) School of Jewish Sacred Music in New York. He learned that a full-time organist would cost $4,000 to $5,000 per year. A student at the College could be obtained for weekends. The choir, also engaged just for weekends, would be comprised of volunteers gathered by the cantor, as suggested by Werner. After considerable general discussion and in the face of outspoken opposition, the question of engaging a student cantor/religious school director was postponed indefinitely.

The Religious School Committee in the meantime, and in the absence of a school director, urged that the salaries of Bernard Segal and Matilda Pincus be increased by $500. Rabbi Braude emphasized that persons of their caliber were hard to come by and should be encouraged to stay. In view of an impending budgetary deficit, the Finance Committee settled for an increase of $300 for Pincus and $250 for Segal.

As the year progressed, it appeared that the deficit would amount to $7,500. Although there was a carry-over of some $4,000 from the previous year, it was a serious matter. It was decided that the parents of children in the religious school would be charged a flat rate per child per year, the additional funds to be used to engage a full-time religious school director. The question of raising dues was also weighed, but was not considered "sound" at this time.

For most of the year, the board was preoccupied with building plans. It authorized payment of preliminary architectural and engineering fees and expenses. In accordance with provisions of the wills, 40 percent of the amount would be paid from principal or income of the Rosenfeld estate and 60 percent from income only of the Lederer estate. The Building and Plans Committee reported that the total architectural fee would be $60,000 if the whole project amounted to $1 million, with 20 percent ($12,000) due now for the preliminary stages of work. Further, $2,000 was authorized to engage a mechanical engineer, and Jack M. Levy of New York was proposed for the position. Due to normal inflation, building costs could be expected to rise while plans were in progress. Walter Sund-

lun and Milton Pliner, with the concurrence of Archibald Silverman, insisted that some estimate of building costs be obtained and presented before a fund-raising campaign was started.

In October Chairman Levy of the Building Plans Committee summarized all progress to date. After several extensive meetings, Levy recalled, the board had chosen the "contemporary" or "modern" style for the structures as opposed to Colonial or Byzantine, and Goodman had been unanimously approved as architect. "The committee," he noted, had had "no occasion to regret the decision, and it is a pleasure to report that Mr. Goodman's work as well as his personal cooperation have been all that we expected and more." In accordance with the board's instructions, the buildings would provide for a congregation of 750 members. The religious school would provide two classrooms for each age group to keep the classes at a comfortable size with ample provision of both space and structure to provide for subsequent needs. The quality of the buildings, in accordance with instructions, would be consistent with the dignity of the institution and would be economical and not luxurious. The next step would be the preparation of working drawings.

A board meeting in November was devoted to a presentation by architect Percival Goodman of the building plans featuring a model and a showing of slides. The board approved the plans, and the president was authorized to appoint a fund-raising committee. Walter Sundlun, ever cautious, warned against proceeding with construction until sufficient funds were available to keep any mortgage within reason.

The 95th annual dinner-meeting of the congregation, held in the Garden Room of the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel on December 4, 1949, was an eventful one. A new slate of officers was elected: Samuel Kaplan, president; Arthur J. Levy, first vice president; Bertram L. Bernhardt, second vice president; Jules P. Goldstein, treasurer; Benjamin B. Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Meyer Tenenbaum, recording secretary.

The Rosenfeld estate, it was estimated, would yield some $200,000, while the Lederer estate would amount to approximately $500,000. An announcement was made at the meeting that Rabbi Braude was conducting an "Ask the Rabbi" program Saturday evenings on radio station WPRO. The series was well received.

The feature of the evening was a report of the Building Plans Committee presented by Chairman Arthur J. Levy. It was compre-

hensive, graphic, and carefully prepared, in accordance with Levy's characteristic thoroughness and attention to detail. The following are the salient points:

> The preliminary plans for the new Temple and school have been completed, submitted to the board of trustees of the Congregation and approved. The Building Plans Committee is now awaiting instructions from the board as to the next step . . . , preparation of working drawings and specifications. This will take about six months. . . . it will [then] be in order to obtain bids, award the contract for the construction of the buildings, and proceed to build. There is little point in . . . preparation of working drawings and specifications unless we are prepared to build as soon as we can obtain bids and award the contract. That means that we must have a sufficient sum of money available to pay for the buildings as the work goes on. The principal decision which must be made by the Congregation is how to raise the needed additional funds before we can proceed with the working drawings and specifications.
>
> In presenting our report to the board of trustees we included detailed architect's drawings, specifications in sufficient detail to enable contractors to give us carefully prepared estimates, a full and complete statement of estimates of building costs obtained by the architect, a large model of the exterior of the buildings including landscaping, and a large model showing the interior of the Temple auditorium. All these things are available for inspection by the congregation. . . .
>
> The work of the committee has covered a period of several years. . . . We have never had the slightest occasion to regret our decision in employing Percival Goodman as our architect. . . . we are increasingly impressed with his approach . . . , not only from the spiritual and artistic points of view, but especially from a very practical point of view . . . ,
>
> The main Temple auditorium will be located near the corner of Butler Avenue and Orchard Avenue, the school building near the corner of Orchard Place and Orchard Avenue (near St. Martin's Church), and the auditorium [social hall], offices, library, and chapel in between. The main entrance will be on Orchard Avenue. Most of the facilities will be virtually at street level with practically no stairs to climb. As we enter a wide entrance corridor from Orchard Avenue the main Temple auditorium is on our right, the meeting hall doors and the other facilities to our left, and a glass-enclosed garden straight ahead.

Let's turn to the right to enter the Temple auditorium. Here we will find an arched room, without balcony, with [gently] sloping floor, and seats for 1058 people. The choir and organ will be concealed above and behind the pulpit. The side walls will consist of heavy curtains, which we hope can include specially made tapestry. Behind the curtains on each side is a corridor and behind the corridor on each side four classrooms. For the High Holy Days the walls and furniture of these class rooms will completely disappear, the tapestry curtains will move back, additional pews will be put in place, and the total capacity of the auditorium will be expanded to seat 1636.

Returning now to the entrance hall we may turn left through the doors into the social hall. This room will have a seating capacity of 648 for meetings, dramatics, etc. and a seating capacity, with tables, of 336 for banquets. There will be a fully equipped stage with adequate dressing rooms. Storage space for chairs and tables not in use is provided under the stage. Directly off of the social hall and on the same floor level, without steps to climb, there will be a large and fully equipped kitchen. At the back of the auditorium there will be a projection room for movies, etc. The auditorium and the whole building will of course be wired for sound. We are particularly proud of the fact that one side of the social hall will be glass, with doors opening into a large enclosed garden. This means that at appropriate times in the year events such as weddings can be held both indoors and outdoors.

Along the other side of the social hall, opening off the main lobby, will be a long corridor leading to the school building. Also along this corridor will be located the chapel with seating capacity of about 50 [the capacity was later increased to 80], the rabbi's private study, and the library. The library will have adequate modern book storage plus ample reading-room equipment. Additional book storage space is provided by a separate staircase into the basement so that the library will be an integrated unit.

The school wing stretching along Orchard Place will be two stories high. Besides the eight classrooms in the Temple wing, there will be nine more classrooms in the school building with space provided for an extension to include eight additional classrooms. In addition there will be a basement playroom, service quarters, boiler room, and other facilities. Stretching from Orchard Place to Butler Avenue there will be a parking lot for approximately 75 cars.

We have before us the project of building the finest Temple in the United States, and it will cost us about a million dollars. We

> have on hand from the estates of John J. Rosenfeld and Alphonse J. Lederer approximately $700,000.00 and from other sources including the value of the present Temple perhaps another $50,000. We must provide another $250,000 either from contributions or from borrowed money.
>
> Although it is not part of this report of a Building Plans Committee, it is nevertheless our opinion that no congregation should proceed with such a project unless every single member is invited to contribute some share, large or small, so that the buildings, when completed, can properly be our project and not merely a gift from two deceased benefactors. Moreover, not only should all members be invited to participate, but the great majority should be expected to contribute. . . .

This was an accurate description of the ultimate product.

The cost estimates were as follows: the completed building $839,380; landscaping and related work, such as paving $26,552; and all equipment and furnishings $18,123. These major items totaled $984,055. Adding to this the architect's and engineer's fees amounting to $66,624, the total project would come to an estimated $1,050,679. This compared favorably with the original rough guess of $1,250,000.

Having accomplished this much, further actions concerning the new construction appeared, on the surface at least, to be on hold during most of 1950. President Kaplan assumed as his personal project the stimulation of more temple activities and commissioned Bertram Bernhardt to pursue this objective. One of his first acts was the establishment of a bowling league, which proved to be very popular and flourished for a number of years. Reporting further for the Temple Activities Committee, Bernhardt recommended the formation of a Choral Society. This had been suggested by Bonnie (Mrs. Seebert J.) Goldowsky, who had participated in a successful temple group in Boston. She was the organizer and the first chairman of the project. A loan of $500 financed the undertaking initially, and Benjamin Premack, violinist and an administrator in the music department of the Providence public school system, was engaged as music director. It was a popular and successful enterprise for several years. Bernhardt reported that a dramatic group was also being formed. Dr. James Krasnoff of the Entertainment Committee reported a recent "Chinese Auction," which netted $436, a modest contribution in the face of very substantial needs.

Caroline Wachenheimer on her own had organized a Young People's Group to fill a gap in congregational life. She was appointed Youth Activities adviser and was eventually awarded a gift for her efforts. Rabbi Braude urged the formation of a "Nifties" (NFTY) group (chapter of the National Federation of Temple Youth) and a "Mr. and Mrs." club, suggestions which were carried out. A fall dinner-dance was sold out and deemed highly successful, both financially and socially.

Amidst the flurry of social activities, the business of the temple proceeded. The board approved the purchase for $2,500 of the adjacent Karl Humphrey cottage, together with the right-of-way over the remainder of the premises. This gave the temple full possession of what now constitutes the synagogue property. The small cottage later was rented to the janitor at $40 per month.[30]

In response to the suggestion of the Cemetery Committee that better management of the cemetery was essential, Jack L. Anhalt was engaged as superintendent of the cemetery at $50 per week. Albert Cohn, a devoted member of the congregation, who had managed the cemetery affairs for many years as a volunteer, relinquished the responsibilities and was voted an honorary trustee of the congregation. The Choir Committee reported the recruitment of Mrs. Fisher, soprano, and the talented David Laurent, baritone, for the choir. There was a possibility that the popular Ray Gardner, long-time basso member of the choir, would also participate. This assured an outstanding choir for the next year, and Alice (Mrs. Max) Liffman, organist, was given credit for engaging them for the season.

David C. Adelman, attorney and long-time member of the congregation, pursuing his interest in local Jewish history, was granted permission to examine the old records of the congregation. He eventually was designated archivist of the congregation. His productive and seminal studies on the early Jewish settlers of Providence and the related story of the establishment of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David have contributed substantially to our knowledge of these events.[31]

The board decided to carry Rabbi Braude's salary on the books at $9,600, the balance of $2,400 being designated as a parsonage allowance for living quarters for himself and family. He could thus benefit from certain tax savings.

The building project again surfaced in a major way at the annual meeting of December 4, 1950. A large attendance was on hand to

hear about developments—the largest, said past President Walter Sundlun, he had seen in thirty years. The incumbent officers were re-elected, with Samuel Kaplan as president. A resolution was read by David C. Adelman honoring Mattie Pincus on the occasion of her forthcoming 70th birthday (January 9, 1951) and another in tribute to Albert Cohn on his elevation to Honorary Lifetime Trustee. Mattie Pincus was also presented with a gift. The Pincus resolution mentioned her long-time devoted service to the congregation, that she had been confirmed in the congregation's school in 1895, and that her father was the only member who had served in the Civil War.[32] The resolution honoring Cohn mentioned his invaluable and sustained service on the Cemetery Committee, the Religious School Committee, and the committee arranging Newport Day for the Central Conference of American Rabbis meeting in Providence.

Attention reverted to the overriding issue, the building of the new temple. Arthur Levy of the Building Plans Committee confirmed that the structure would be contemporary in style. There would be eight schoolrooms in the Rosenfeld building and nine in the temple proper for a total of seventeen. The chapel could also be used for a confirmation class schoolroom. Levy set the present estimated cost of the "complete" building at the original $1,250,000. Funds currently on hand comprised $550,000 to $600,000 from the Lederer estate, $180,000 from the Rosenfeld will, and an estimated $70,000 to $80,000 from sale of the Broad Street temple. This would leave a balance of roughly one-third, or $400,000. It remained for the congregation of 500 families to raise this amount, and Levy recommended an early fund-raising effort for this purpose. He further urged that it was important to start building as soon as possible.

Levy cautioned, nevertheless, that the congregation should be aware that at least one more full-time custodian would be required to keep the building in good shape and that the cost of supplies, heat, light, and other services would also increase.

Walter I. Sundlun assumed a prominent leadership role in the continuing discussion. He said that he had previously been opposed to building, but was now in favor of proceeding. The money on hand was not sufficient to complete the structure. He had discussed the matter with the architect and was informed that it would cost much more if the units were built separately. He, however, was

militantly opposed to a large indebtedness. The congregation and its descendants should not be burdened with a large debt. It would be a shame, he emphasized, for the congregation to ride on the shoulders of two deceased members without sharing in the project, and he urged full participation by the membership. We must, he said, fulfill the trust placed in us by John Jacob Rosenfeld and Alphonse Lederer. He then presented a resolution authorizing construction of the whole complex.

A wide-ranging discussion followed. Several members emphasized the need for a new school building. David C. Adelman concluded from an historical perspective that the congregation was unnecessarily apprehensive. When the synagogues on Friendship and Broad Streets were built, the congregation was obliged to scratch, but somehow managed to get by. The overriding fact was the inadequacy of the present building, and the congregation should proceed even if a mortgage were necessary. Eventually the resolution to proceed was adopted unanimously.

It was then explained that the Lederer will required that a majority of the total membership of the congregation must approve the action. To achieve this goal a resolution permitting a vote by mail was approved. The ballots were distributed early in the new year, and the results were reported on March 5, 1951. Of 347 sealed ballots received, 316 were in favor and 25 opposed. Thus, a majority of the total members had approved, as required by the Lederer will, as well as 55 percent of the total membership, in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the congregation. The board in turn unanimously ratified the vote of the congregation. This set in motion the largest project in the history of the congregation, but the decision was still not irrevocable.

After the major decision was made, many related issues came to the fore. A topic of considerable controversy was the choice of an electronic versus a conventional pipe organ. The traditionalists generally favored the latter and were mindful of the excellent instrument in the Broad Street temple. A committee appointed to investigate the problem reported that its members favored a pipe organ. The board, however, authorized procurement of an electronic organ if a pipe organ were unavailable and an "adequate substitute in its discretion" could be provided. The committee found that an electronic organ would cost from $3600 to $9200, plus $1000 for installation and related work, while a pipe organ would cost $18,750

to $32,289 plus $5000 in additional costs. The committee urged the board to make an early decision. Goodman, in the meantime, had informed the committee that a pipe organ would occasion unanticipated design changes. On May 2, he wrote:[33]

> I am simply AGHAST at your letter of April 30th. THE IDEA OF REDESIGNING TEMPLE BETH-EL, PROVIDENCE, FILLS ME WITH HORROR. . . . It would be necessary to start from the beginning and create a different type of temple structure from the one contemplated. . . . The total building would be affected. . . . [It would be] impossible for me to conceive that the balance of the design would harmonize in proportion or general treatment with such a radical change. . . . what would remain of the work done to date would be a general floor plan. Everything else would have to be redone.

After considering the matter overnight, Goodman softened his stand somewhat.[34] A pipe organ, he noted (May 3), could be installed horizontally. This would not interfere with its tonal quality, but it would increase the cost. His previous observations pertained to a standard vertical organ chamber 10 feet by 10 feet square with an unobstructed height of approximately 29 feet. Ultimately, an electronic organ was selected.

Bertram Bernhardt noted great improvement in the temple choir. He also mentioned the fine work of Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky in fostering the Choral Society. The board voted to pay Premack, the music director, $500 per year rather than $10 per session as previously agreed.

In accordance with the recommendation of Goodman and the Building Plans Committee, Samuel Lerner was approved as the local associate architect. The board also engaged Goldsmith and Company at a fee of $1000 as fund-raising consultants. All new applicants for membership would henceforth be referred to the Building Fund Committee before being accepted as members.

Benjamin Ruttenberg, reporting for the committee to select a religious school director, recommended Mrs. Miriam Makiri of Newark, New Jersey for the position. He was initially "shocked," Ruttenberg admitted, by the idea of having a woman as director, but emphatically changed his mind. Makiri, a native of New York City, was 39 years old, a graduate of Hunter College, and a former student of the Jewish Institute of Religion. She had taught English

and Hebrew in Israel for six years and for nine years had been director of a large temple school. She had also taken courses in education at Dropsie College in Philadelphia. Her appointment as Religious School director was approved at a salary of $7000.

A "Loyalty Dinner" fund-raising affair was held in the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel on Sunday evening, May 13, 1951. Walter I. Sundlun was chairman of the evening. President Kaplan noted that forty years ago most congregants had lived in the neighborhood of the temple in South Providence, whereas now 75 percent lived on the East Side, where the new synagogue would be located. Arthur J. Levy was honored for his yeoman performance as Building Plans Committee chairman. Mack M. Forman, general chairman of the fund-raising campaign, spoke of the task ahead. Al Capp, famed cartoonist and creator of the "Li'l Abner" cartoon series, was the speaker of the evening, and entertainment was provided by the Choral Society. Attending the dinner were 116 couples and 41 individuals for a total of 273 persons. Sundlun announced at the dinner that $200,000 had been subscribed. The Sisterhood pledged $20,000, while the largest individual gift was $17,500.

A Friday evening service was devoted to honoring Dr. Louis I. Kramer, Arthur J. Levy, and Dr. Archie A. Albert, who, all in the same year, served as presidents of the Providence Medical Association, the Rhode Island Bar Association, and the Rhode Island Dental Society respectively. Arthur Levy suggested that a committee be appointed to list all property in the old temple building which would be moved to the new. An old barn on the Orchard Avenue property was donated to Lincoln School (for girls) across Butler Avenue.

Rabbi Braude learned from Rabbi Louis L. Mann of Chicago that the library of the late Rabbi Henry Englander was for sale. Braude believed that the temple library was a "natural repository for the collection" and on a trip to Cincinnati would view the material. As usual, a voice of caution was heard—nothing should interfere with the fund-raising until it was clear where the money was coming from to purchase the books. Braude later announced that the collection was available at $1,500 and that he already had a contribution of $650 from an anonymous contributor. The valuable collection was eventually purchased and added to the temple library collections.

In July 1951 the board appointed Norman A. Fain as chairman of

the Building Committee, which numbered 53 persons with 14 on its Executive Committee. There was delay in starting construction due in part to defense commitments of the mechanical engineer, but more directly to a planning decision to redesign the structure to eliminate critical steel as far as possible. Steel was eliminated from the roof of the social hall, while the school building would be converted from steel frame to reinforced concrete. Planning proceeded, but with a special government permit. The steel restrictions were related to the Korean War, which was at its height. The Sisterhood soon thereafter approved plans for the kitchen adjacent to the meeting hall.

Controversy continued about the amount of time Rabbi Braude spent on his scholarly pursuits. A request was submitted by Mrs. Lillian Gordon, the rabbi's secretary, for an increase in pay "due to the fact that she would be doing some extra work for Rabbi Braude"—presumably connected with his writing. After much discussion the matter was referred to President Kaplan. Bernhardt then reported on related personnel problems in the temple office. "Immediately," according to the record, "a heated discussion took place in which Meyer Tenenbaum, Irving Fain, Milton Tucker, Mack Forman, and Samuel Kaplan took part." A motion to approve an additional $2000 for secretarial service was defeated. Mack Forman agreed to discuss the matter with Rabbi Braude.

As the High Holidays approached, the congregation was faced with a frightening deficit of $12,000. The board voted to increase the regular fee for each child in the religious school by $15 and also to impose a general increase in dues. These, it was feverently hoped, would yield $3000 and $10,000 respectively, thus closing the gap. The board recommended the re-election of the current officers at the forthcoming annual meeting.

The congregation gathered on Sunday evening, September 9, 1951 at 8:15 pm to cast the die on whether to proceed with the building project. President Kaplan explained that a final decision must be made immediately as to whether or not to build, even though the congregation the past December had already voted unanimously to proceed. He then turned the meeting over to Walter Sundlun. "I hope everybody here tonight will speak up," Sundlum said, as he wanted to hear from everyone, whether favorable or dead set against it. The Rosenfeld estate ($150,000) and the Lederer Estate ($550,000) were producing income of $18,000 a year, making available total

funds of $820,000. Levy and his committee had labored unstintingly for five years with architect Percival Goodman. Experts at the Rhode Island School of Design had reviewed the project before plans and specifications were set. Bids had been received and opened, and the bidders were given an opportunity to reduce their bids. Some $31,000 could be saved by eliminating certain luxuries. Sundlun offered three options:

1. Complete the temple, school, and social hall with all furnishings and landscaping. Add $60,000 for contingencies. Total $1,443,600.
2. Build the temple complete, including the grounds. Reduce the furnishings and leave the remainder as a shell. Total $1,320,099.
3. Complete the building as a shell, eliminate all furnishings. Complete the chapel, the rabbi's study, and the library. Total $1,388,000.

Sundlun proceeded with his analysis of the situation. Following a meeting attended by the architect, the building engineer, and other relevant parties, a telegram was sent to all contributors of over $500 apprising them of all related facts. Despite the previous authorization to proceed, Sundlun felt that all large contributors should have the opportunity to express their views. While one or two donors, he said, had objected to assuming the entire burden at this time, all others had voted to proceed immediately with the total project. Levy then warned that costs had been rising tremendously during the past five years, but specific bids were now available. Some concern was expressed over the inevitable increase in the budget, but a motion to obtain a $500,000 mortgage was approved 49–27. A move to make the vote unanimous failed by one vote (86–1). A final vote to enter into a contract to build at $1,250,000 was unanimous (70 in favor). The momentous meeting adjourned at 12:18 a.m.!

A request by Rabbi Braude for additional secretarial assistance and another by Religious School Director Makiri for her own secretary compounded the personnel problems in the office. The board initially appropriated $2,000 to engage a secretary for Mrs. Makiri, but the motion was amended so as in effect to withdraw the appropriation and provide for a committee to conduct a study and recommend any changes. Arthur Levy spoke of the faithful service of Miss Sarah Blistein, temple secretary. The temple, he said, was

morally obligated to treat her fairly. Rabbi Braude's comment revealed one source of the present difficulty. "He has no personal feelings against Miss Blistein," the record stated, "but the duties of a rabbi's secretary are such that she could not perform them properly." He was referring, no doubt, to his need for secretarial help in his scholarly activities. As these new demands were debated, concern was once again expressed about the inevitable increase in the budget with the new construction.

The special committee on personnel requirements recommended at the final board meeting of the year on December 3, 1951 that: 1. There should be a separate business secretary at $2,600 to $3,500; 2. a standing committee should be established, in cooperation with the officers and the rabbi, to supervise all personnel and be granted the power to hire and fire; and 3. Miss Blistein should report to the business secretary.

At the same meeting it was reported that the fall annual temple dance had been "a huge success." A quitclaim was received on the Caroline Samuels Chapel in the cemetery, permitting disposition of the structure in accordance with past decisions of the board.

Early in the new year (1952) Archivist David C. Adelman was authorized to loan to the American Jewish Historical Society the minutes of temple meetings one volume at a time to be photostated and returned. Rabbi Braude was invited to deliver holiday greetings over television station WJAR-TV.

The 97th annual meeting and dinner were held belatedly on April 27, 1952 at the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel. President Samuel Kaplan for personal reasons had asked to be relieved from his previous commitment to serve another term. This created a vacuum which the Nominating Committee under William P. Weinstein was obliged to fill. After careful consideration they turned to Walter I. Sundlun, who a decade earlier had served as president for four years and was reluctant to accept the responsibility. Weinstein observed that it was very clear that "there was seething evidence of lack of unity and vexing unrest existing amongst the members of our congregation and that a leader who could bring to our temple unity, peace, and real progress" was urgently needed. After much soul-searching Sundlun agreed to accept the burden. Before doing so, however, he made clear his profound feeling that the budget must reflect available income and that contracts for building should not be signed unless funds were on hand to pay for them. He maintained

that the congregation had great potential, and he was willing to undertake the duties of leadership once again with the hope of preparing able young men in the congregation to assume the role in later years. He concluded his acceptance message by expressing the belief "that our temple must recapture the position it formerly held in our community . . . and can have many happy successful years ahead if we all strive to attain that objective."[35] The *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* reported: "In the opinion of veteran members, this was one of the most spirited meetings in the history of the congregation. It is a healthy sign, for out of the exchange of ideas comes better understanding." The attendance was described as "excellent."[36]

In May of 1952 the board received a very favorable report concerning the Choral Society. The annual $500 appropriation was renewed. Rabbi Braude requested a secretary to serve him exclusively. The special Committee on Personnel found that neither the rabbi nor Mrs. Makiri needed a full-time secretary and voted part-time secretaries for both at not over $1,000 each.

Norman Fain, reporting for the Building Committee, recommended that the school, the temple, and the center section exterior be completed. All exterior structures and all utilities to the point of distribution should be completed, but not the interior of the remaining structure ("Plan F"). This would reduce the overall building costs and the resulting mortgage. The interior of the center structure could be completed at any time. On this basis the mortgage could be held to $225,000 plus or minus $25,000. He requested approval of this plan at $1,330,000. The board, led by Sundlun, unanimously recommended approval by the congregation, which, after extensive discussion, ratified the plan on May 25.

Past President Kaplan spoke of the need for an executive director for business matters and activities. In view of current fiscal restraints, the suggestion was tabled.

At an important dinner-meeting of the board on Tuesday, June 10 at the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel, it was emphasized that the budget of $57,320 had never been presented to the congregation for adoption. Ten thousand dollars of this amount was designated as follows: religious school director $7,000, secretary of the religious school director $2,000, Choral Society $500, and other incidentals $500. Through May 1, $43,466.71 had already been spent with an additional anticipated expenditure to the end of the fiscal year on Au-

gust 31 of $16,272.77. Thus, there appeared to be an immediate deficit of $5,000 with a probable deficit for the whole year of $10,000. With the building program imminent, this was a serious matter.

Sundlun made much of the need to pay the bills on hand. Those for the cemetery, which was not separately incorporated, had been paid. He complained of the poor bookkeeping in which there was a mixing of general funds and endowment. The bookkeeper had resigned, apparently under pressure because adequate information as to the funds was unavailable. The need of a fund-raising function or solicitation of the trustees and others to cover the deficit was suggested, but Sundlun found these solutions to be unsatisfactory. The big problem, he complained, was uncollected dues. Only $1,000 had been received to June 1, which was 5 percent of what was due. This was in contrast to the $18,000 actually needed. As urged by A. Henry Klein, it was decided to wait until fall to determine the actual deficit. In the meantime, Sundlun promised that every dollar possible would be raised to pay outstanding bills, and a new budget would be drafted.

Norman Fain reported for the Building Committee that contracts were to be signed in June and ground-breaking would take place very soon thereafter. Work would start within 24 hours of ground-breaking, and construction would take 300 working days. The committee was authorized to borrow up to $500,000. The committee would build as much as was permissable with available funds, and it had the legal authority to make this decision. President Sundlun expressed his personal hope that the whole structure would in fact be completed.

Contracts were signed on June 25 with the following: Turgeon Construction Company, general contractor; Coken Electric Company, electrical contractor; Max Fish, plumbing; and Cuddington Company, seating. Ground was broken on June 30, 1952 with some 250 members of the congregation in attendance. Max L. Grant was master of ceremonies, and Rabbi William G. Braude officiated. President Sundlun termed the enterprise an expression of democracy and of faith in religious liberty. Past presidents of the congregation, Sisterhood, and Brotherhood, and chairmen of the various committees participated.[37] Construction began immediately.

For its first fall session, the board met at dinner at the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel on September 4, 1952. The dues problem remained

a serious concern, with large amounts still outstanding as of September 2. Accounts receivable on September 2 were $14,623, including dues of $10,487 from the current year and $2,500 from previous years, as well as Union of American Hebrew Congregations assessments and Sunday school fees. The board established a firm policy of "No tickets for the High Holidays without payment of dues and no admissions without tickets."

Norman Fain reported for the Building Committee that work on construction was progressing satisfactorily and that foundations would be completed before the cold weather arrived. Work would be permitted on Rosh Hashanah, but not on Yom Kippur. The Building Fund pledges had now reached $232,965, of which $56,000 had been paid.

At a dinner-meeting in October the board discussed further the problem of delinquent dues payments. Sundlun stated that with $2 million dollars to be managed ($1.5 million for the building alone), it was important to institute professional accounting, and he intended to place the books on a solid financial basis. The congregation was still facing an operating deficit of $7,000 with projected expenses of $60,000 and income of $53,000. It was urged again that new members be required to make a pledge to the Building Fund. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was also asking for more money, but this was considered highly inopportune in the present fiscal crisis. Sundlun urged that the Sisterhood and Brotherhood both conduct fund-raising events. Lillian P. (Mrs. Jacob I.) Fogel was honored for having sold an incredible 8,000 Uniongrams (greetings on special occasions) benefiting the scholarship fund of the Sisterhood.

It was announced in November that professional accountants (the Perry Bernstein-Milton Pliner office) would be used by the temple bookkeeper. The president recommended that:

1. The board approve a quarterly audit at $500.
2. The Finance Committee be increased to provide more manpower.

In making these proposals the president recalled the long and generous service to the congregation of these individuals in providing accounting assistance, but maintained that they could not be expected to continue further without due compensation. The measures were authorized by the board.

Rabbi Braude reminded the board that 1953 would be his 20th anniversary with the congregation and requested leave to visit Israel, a long-time aspiration. A leave of two months was granted for his first visit to the Holy Land.

At the final board meeting of the year in December it was reported that the option to complete the social hall at the bid price must be exercised by June 15, 1953. Sundlun requested that Walter Adler arrange for permanent safekeeping of the temple papers and records, stating that they are valuable and must be adequately cared for, but at the same time be readily available to officers and members when needed.

The Annual Dinner Dance on December 6 was sold out with 400 reservations. It realized a modest profit of $680. The annual meeting of the congregation was held on January 4, 1953 in the Garden Room of the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel. The constitution was amended to move the annual meeting to the first Sunday in May, with a semi-annual meeting on the first Sunday in December. The officers would assume their duties on June 15 following the annual meeting. The newly elected officers were: Walter I. Sundlun, president; Arthur J. Levy, first vice president; Bertram L. Bernhardt, second vice president; Max Siegel, treasurer; Benjamin Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Kenneth Logowitz, recording secretary. They were to hold office until the next annual meeting in May 1954. Entertainment for the evening was provided by the temple's Choral Society.

During Rabbi Braude's absence in Israel, visiting rabbis occupied the pulpit. One service was conducted by the Grand Lodge of Masons of Rhode Island, which recalled an earlier day when there was a close relationship between the congregation and the local Masons. Rabbi Braude had invited listeners to his WPRO radio program to send in questions on the State of Israel, which he would answer in recordings to be broadcast Saturday evenings. Braude returned to Providence on May 1.

President Sundlun at the April 13 meeting of the board praised the Choral Society for its fine performance at the Rhode Island School of Design auditorium on the previous evening. He proposed writing a letter to each member of the group and to Director Premack, enclosing a resolution complimenting them for their "magnificent performance" and extending "congratulations and applause." The resolution expressed in behalf of the board

> . . . its gratitude for the good will thereby created in the community in behalf of and in the name of the congregation and its enthusiastic encouragement to continue to develop a program of choral music, with full assurance of complete congregational support.

In June Bonnie (Mrs. Seebert J.) Goldowsky submitted the first annual report of the Choral Society for the year 1952–1953. She quoted the critique of *The Providence Journal* music critic William Dinneen of the concert of April 12. "Premack," he stated, "has created a Choral Society of 30 sopranos and altos which demonstrated a fine homogeneity of tone and musical feeling. The group already has attained a musical 'personality' and a polish phenomenal for a first public concert. There is no doubt that last evening's program added a major organization to our musical scene." The instrumentalist, the staging, the dancers, and the men's group all contributed to the success of the performance, he added. Mrs. Goldowsky presented a check for $500 to the congregation, representing profit from the concert.

The congregation at a special meeting on May 15 voted to complete the social (meeting) hall at an estimated cost of $135,000, thus exercising the option which would expire on June 1. The Finance Committee reported to the board on June 8 that the estimated operating expenditures to August 31, 1953 would be $64,598 with accounts received and receivable of $58,117. The officers were authorized to borrow up to $10,000 to meet current expenses in view of the projected deficit of $6,481.

The cornerstone of the new temple was laid on September 20, 1953. The speakers were President Sundlun; Jill Forman of the confirmation class; Mrs. Joseph W. Pulver, president of the Sisterhood; Norman Fain, chairman of the Building Committee; Arthur J. Levy, chairman of the Building Plans Committee; and Rabbi Braude. Percival Goodman, architect, described the features of the new complex. Louis M. Grant, aged 95, father of Max L. Grant, and Charles C. Alexander, both members when the Broad Street temple was dedicated in 1910, were present at the ceremony.

In October Norman Fain announced that the expected date of completion would be March 1, 1954. The Sisterhood voted to transfer $7,000 to the new Temple Building Fund immediately. The Membership Committee of the temple reported recruiting 103 new members, which was an encouraging sign amidst the serious fiscal

problems. In accordance with an earlier unanimous vote of the congregation in September 1951, the board authorized a loan with the Providence Union National Bank and Trust Company. The bank agreed to provide up to $500,000 at the prime rate of 3.25 percent to be used for furnishing and equipping the new building. At year's end Sarah Blistein resigned as temple secretary, as she was soon to be married. She was presented with a life membership in the congregation without dues, and the board members provided for a suitable gift.

Early in 1954 the board approved the Sisterhood's plan to present a musical Artists Series, utilizing the main auditorium of the new building. The initial series would extend from September 22, 1954 through January 19, 1955 and would comprise five concerts featuring Roberta Peters, soprano of the Metropolitan Opera Company; Isaac Stern, virtuoso violinist; Nancy Chase (daughter of members Mr. and Mrs. Louis Symonds), concert lyric soprano; Jacques Abram, pianist; and Luboshutz and Nemenoff, a two-piano team. The price for the series of five concerts would be a modest $10 per person. The series, which lasted 20 years to 1974, was a highly successful artistic undertaking, which enriched the greater Rhode Island community. The Sisterhood president at the time of the initial concert was Estelle (Mrs. Joseph W.) Pulver, and the first Artists Series chairperson was Frances (Mrs. Frederic W.) Schwartz. The chairpersons showed great ingenuity and persuasiveness in attracting luminaries of the musical world, as well as talented younger artists, many of whom later became prominent on the concert stage. Helen (Mrs. Ernest L.) Shein was chairperson for the last thirteen years of the series. The critical reviews were consistently favorable over the twenty-one-year life of the program.[38]

The Finance Committee estimated that the new budget would provide $17,000 to $20,000 for 5 percent amortization of the probable mortgage of $400,000. The present budget of about $64,000 would soon rise substantially to some $110,000 in the new building. Bertram L. Bernhardt was appointed chairman of the Dedication Planning Committee. He presented a tentative program for the celebration comprising several events extending through April and May. David C. Adelman, archivist, who had been working on a history of the temple, requested permission to print 1000 pamphlets covering the history from the beginning to 1885. The board preferred to defer the project until the history was completed.[39]

The last meeting of the board in the Broad Street building was held on Monday, April 12. The Religious School Committee reported that the last session of the school in the old edifice had been held the previous day and that the school would reopen in the new building on Saturday, May 1, 1954. Enrollment was 350, and was expected to increase to 425 in the near future. Mrs. Makiri was engaged for another year at $7,000. Fain announced that the new temple would be ready for its formal opening on April 23. According to Sundlun, several groups were interested in procuring the old building—he himself would prefer to see it taken over by a religious congregation.

The debt currently was about $500,000 at an interest rate of 3.5 percent. As Sundlun emphasized again the need for fund-raising to reduce the indebtedness, the board voted to formulate and execute a plan to that end.

The "Services of Farewell Marking the Last Congregational Gathering in the Broad Street Temple" were initiated on Friday evening, April 16, 1954. The regular Sabbath morning service was held on the 17th, followed on Sunday morning, the first day of Pesah, by a service especially for the temple's young people. The Friday evening service had been a sentimental occasion, featured by short presentations on "The Friendship Street Synagogue" by Walter Adler, "The Broad Street Temple" by Arthur Markoff, and "To Remember and to Look Ahead" by Rabbi Braude.[40]

NOTES

1. A consortium of the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the National Catholic Community Service, the Salvation Army, the Jewish Welfare Board, and the National Travelers Aid Association, the USO was organized in 1941 to provide social, recreational, welfare, and spiritual facilities for the armed forces.
2. The quotations are from the report of the Laws Committee in the minutes of the board of trustees meeting of February 2, 1942. Pearl Braude states: "I believe my husband's name is in the will specifically as being in control of plans for the school as long as he is rabbi of the congregation."
3. *The Providence Journal*, January 20, 1942, is the source for most of the material in this biographical sketch. Material was also extracted from the Providence City Directories.

4. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 411–413.
5. William G. Braude, "The Story of a Will," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:435–439, (November) 1970.
6. See note 4.
7. See note 5.
8. See note 4, p. 414.
9. Pearl Braude states that they were never offered the use of the property as a parsonage.
10. All of the programs are in the Temple Beth-El archives.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 434–435.

    Solomon B. Freehof was rabbi of Congregation Rodef Shalom of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was prominent in Reform Jewish circles and was a scholar in Jewish liturgy. At the time of his lecture he was president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He was chairman of the committee which compiled the Union Prayer Book (1940–1945). The title of his talk was "In the Days of the Maccabees."

    Joshua Loth Liebman, spiritual leader of Temple Israel of Boston, was an eloquent speaker and to some extent a role model for Rabbi Braude. The topic of his address was "What Place has Palestine in Jewish Life and Thought."

    John Howland Lathrop, a Unitarian minister, was for many years pastor of the First Unitarian Congregational Church of Brooklyn, New York (designated in the program as "Church of the Saviour"). A clergyman, author, and lecturer, he was deeply involved in liberal causes nationally and internationally. He was a member of the American Committee on Religious Rights and Minorities. In the issue of the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* prior to his appearance, he was described as "one of the country's leading Unitarian ministers, a liberal spirit," who "has concerned himself for many years with the problem of Christian-Jewish relations." The title of his talk was "How Shall Jews and Christians Face the Future Together?".

    Sidor Belarsky was a distinguished singer of religious, folk, and Palestinian melodies. Professor Abraham Wolf Binder was Professor of Jewish Liturgical Music at the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. A prolific composer of songs and synagogue liturgical music, he revised the Union Hymnal in 1932. He also composed Hebrew and Yiddish songs, cantatas and oratorios, and music for piano, violin, chamber groups, and orchestras. He later founded the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College (1948).

    For Abba Hillel Silver, see note 18 below.

    Felix Alexander Levy, a Reform rabbi and scholar, was spiritual leader of Emmanuel Congregation of Chicago. He influenced his colleagues

in the Central Conference of American Rabbis to modify the attitude of Reform Judaism regarding *halakha* (Jewish religious, ethical, civil, and criminal law) and the nature of Jewish identity embodied in the 1937 Columbus Platform adopted by the CCAR under his leadership as president (1935–1937).

Salo Wittmayer Baron, professor of Jewish History, Literature, and Institutions at Columbia University, has written numerous works on Jewish history, including the multiple-volume *A Social and Religious History of the Jews.* He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Maurice Samuel was a brilliant author, orator, and conversationalist. He was a proponent of Zionism and a translator of modern Yiddish writings.

14. Minutes of the annual meeting of the congregation, November 7, 1943.
15. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 430–434.
16. Recollection of Pearl Braude.
17. Pearl Braude writes in a personal communication: "I believe a very important fund drive was launched in Providence initiated by my husband during 1943, or about that time. It was to help *all* refugees. Bishop Keough [of the Providence Diocese] was co-sponsor. It was called Fund for 'Oppressed Minorities' [quotes added by Mrs. Braude]. This was before ecumenicalism, and it took some doing to persuade Keough to join in."
18. Abba Hillel Silver (1893–1963), born in Lithuania, came to the U.S.A. in 1902. He graduated from Hebrew Union College in 1915. After serving the congregation in Wheeling, West Virginia, he became rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Israel in Cleveland, Ohio in 1917, which he served until his death. He was tall and striking in appearance, had a superb speaking voice, and was one of the country's leading orators. A powerful advocate of Zionism, he was a leader and statesman and was active in Zionist affairs throughout World War II. At various times he was chairman of the United Palestine Appeal and the United Jewish Appeal, chairman of the American section of the Jewish Agency, president of the Zionist Organization of America, and president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Rabbi Silver's appearance at the Fain forum had been postponed because he had been detained in Washington to testify before Congress on a pending joint resolution on Palestine. See *Temple Beth-El Bulletin,* December 6 and 20, 1944.
19. Pearl Braude comments in a personal communication: "*Midrash on Psalms,* published by Yale, brought *no* royalties. My husband spent his own money on secretarial help and related services. By this time he had given the $3000 from the Finkelstein Fund to several institutions and thus had no money for his continuing expenses. In the years that he asked for a secretary, a good deal of his own salary went for these expenses."

20. William G. Braude, "Ten Years Younger," *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, January 23, 1946.
21. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 414–415.
22. The date of this report was December 3, 1945. Eric Mendelssohn came to Providence later on March 4, 1946 and met with the board at Arthur Levy's office. Pearl Braude comments (personal communication): "Eric Mendelssohn was *certainly* available. But he had moved to California, and we thought the distance was too far to make for a comfortable relationship. He had come to the house and was probably seen by members of the Committee [see above]. He gave me a number of brochures and books which I gave to the architectural department of the Rhode Island School of Design."
23. Eulogy read by Rabbi William G. Braude at the annual meeting of the congregation on November 24, 1946.
24. *The Providence Journal*, August 1, 1946.
25. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 419.
    Percival Goodman, professor emeritus of architecture at Columbia University, died in New York City on October 11, 1989 of lung cancer in his 86th year. Paul Goldberger, architectural critic of the *New York Times*, wrote in his obituary: "His synagogues were assertive, modernistic structures, reflecting Mr. Goodman's belief that the vocabulary of modern architecture could be transformed into something rich enough to express powerful religious feelings."
26. Obituary, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:95, (May) 1956; David C. Adelman, "Mattie and Her Congregation," *ibid.*, 2:108–111, (April) 1957; and W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," *ibid.*, 8:401–402, (November) 1982.
27. Report of Choir Committee, Walter H. Strauss, chairman, to the board of trustees, December 12, 1948, Temple Beth-El archives.
28. Ray A. Gardner to Walter H. Strauss, October 23, 1948. Temple Beth-El archives.
29. Eric Werner to William G. Braude, November 1, 1948. Temple Beth-El archives.
30. The William J. Harris House (1839). It has been described in this way: A 5-bay-façade, center chimney cottage. This small dwelling is the only remaining structure related to Moses Brown's farm, which encompassed much of the land in this neighborhood. Brown's house was located near the present-day intersection of Wayland and Humboldt Avenues. Harris was the executor of Moses Brown's estate and built this house on the farm land three years after Brown's death in 1836. The cottage was recently (1989) offered to Lincoln School or Moses Brown School, but was refused because it did not exist during Moses Brown's lifetime and the cost of moving and restoration would be prohibitive. Both are Quaker schools, and Moses Brown was a Quaker.

W. McK. Woodward, and E. F. Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources* (Providence, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1986), p. 207.

31. David Charak Adelman (1892–1967), born in Providence, was the son of Isaac S. and Rose B. Adelman. He attended Classical High School (Providence) and received an A.B. degree from Brown University in 1914. After serving in World War I as a second lieutenant, he attended the law school of Northeastern University and was admitted to the bar in 1919. He practiced law, held several minor political appointments, and was an active Mason. He founded the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association in 1951 and its publication, the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, in 1954. He was the first archivist of the congregation. See "David Charak Adelman 1892–1967," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 5:3–6, (November) 1967. Beryl Segal described him as "a remarkable man who burned with the idea of forming a Jewish historical society in Rhode Island." See Beryl Segal, "The Education of an Immigrant," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:277–293, (November) 1967, p. 292.
32. See note 26.
33. Percival Goodman to Arthur J. Levy, May 2, 1951. Temple Beth-El archives.
34. Percival Goodman to Arthur J. Levy, May 3, 1951. Temple Beth-El archives.
35. *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, April 22, 1952.
36. *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, May 20, 1952.
37. *The Providence Journal*, July 1, 1952.
38. Frances Schwartz brought the concept of the Artists Series from Chicago, where she had resided before coming to Providence. In the early years of the program she alone had been involved in the recruiting of talent, and her effectiveness in this endeavor was responsible for launching the series successfully. Helen Shein for most of the succeeding years carried out this function with remarkable musical insight. Her selection of the artists was largely accountable for the highly professional quality of the series. Bound volumes (2) of all programs of the Artists Series (1954–1974), RIJHA.
39. The story appeared serially in the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, but the pamphlets were never printed. The story based on these articles, however, appeared in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*. See D. C. Adelman's "Early Days of the Providence Jewish Community" and "Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David."
40. Programs of these exercises are in the Temple Beth-El archives and also in RIJHA.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Move to Orchard Avenue

Following the Sunday Service of Farewell a week before the dedication, the Torah scrolls were carried to the new building by temple members David C. Adelman, Bernard (Beryl) Segal, Joseph Finkelstein, and Samuel Goldin. The pulpit flags were borne by a color guard consisting of Elliot Slack, Norman Tilles, Sidney Long, and Arthur Rosen. The Torah bearers walked to waiting limousines, which bore them across town to Orchard Avenue, whence they carried the scrolls into the new sanctuary and placed them in the ark.

The Service of Dedication was held in the new sanctuary on Friday evening, April 23, 1954, the seventh day of Pesah. It included a ceremonial kindling of the Eternal Light, lighting of the Sabbath candles, and a dedication address by Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, D.D., president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.[1] The Children's Service of Dedication was held for the religious school and the congregation on Saturday morning, April 24.

The Formal Ceremonies of Dedication for the Presentation of Keys and the consecration of the Lederer and Rosenfeld Memorials were held on Sunday evening, April 25. Bertram L. Bernhardt, chairman of the Committee on Dedication, opened the meeting, which was featured by a series of introductions. Harry Wachenheimer[2] was secretary of the committee which had planned the dedication of the Broad Street temple in 1911. Arthur Levy, chairman of the evening, delivered remarks appropriately titled "Blueprints." Greetings were offered by Governor Dennis J. Roberts, Jr. for the state and by the Reverend Charles W. Wilding, B.D., rector of St. Martin's Church, the temple's new neighbor. The oldest living confirmands of the congregation, Rachel Dimond (1885) and George Lederer (1895),

were introduced, as were past presidents Archibald Silverman, A. Henry Klein, and Samuel Kaplan. The Lederer and Rosenfeld Memorials were then consecrated by Rabbi Braude, who spoke on "The Prayer Book and Holy Scriptures." Norman Fain, chairman of the Building Committee, presented the keys of the building to President Walter Sundlun, who responded with appropriate remarks, stating: "At this unforgettable dedication of our new Temple Beth-El, we the present living members, now vow that we shall ever honorably perform our duty to care for, protect and safeguard its honor, its dignity, and its sanctity throughout our lives, and a similar injunction shall be the heritage of all who succeed us." A letter of greetings to Rabbi Braude from President Dwight W. Eisenhower was read which stated: "It is my hope that all who have made possible this new Temple will find in it the inspiration and spiritual comfort which so many people of the Jewish faith have found in the old Temple Beth-El throughout its many years of existence." Incidental music was provided by the Temple Beth-El Choral Society.

Two plaques were dedicated. The first, as provided in the Rosenfeld will, read "THIS BUILDING GIVEN BY JOHN J. ROSENFELD IN MEMORY OF HIS MOTHER ANNA ROSENFELD AND HIS WIFE ELIZABETH ROSENFELD." The other read: "ALPHONSE J. LEDERER WHO DIED ON JULY 31, 1946. BY HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT GAVE TO THIS CONGREGATION THE RESIDUE CONSTITUTING SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF HIS ESTATE. WITH THE FUNDS FROM THIS GENEROUS GIFT THIS TEMPLE BUILDING WAS ERECTED IN 1952–1954."[3]

During the next several weeks a series of special services was held on the following topics: "The Synagogue and its Family," "The Synagogue and the Jewish Community," "The Synagogue and the Larger Community," and "The Synagogue and the Brotherhood of Man." Among the guest speakers for the series (in addition to Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath) were Rabbi Jacob K. Shankman of Temple Israel, New Rochelle, New York, friend and classmate of Rabbi Braude's; Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, rabbi of Temple Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh; Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn of Temple Israel, Boston; and Reverend Arthur E. Wilson, D.D., pastor of the Beneficent Congregational Church of Providence.[4]

The service on "The Jewish Synagogue and the Jewish Community" was held on Wednesday evening, May 5. Chairman of the

evening was Irving J. Fain. Others participating were Rabbi Julius Goldberg of the Cranston Jewish Center; Jacob Hohenemser, cantor of Temple Emanuel of Providence; John J. Cashman, Providence finance director, representing the City of Providence; Benjamin Brier, president of The Miriam Hospital; Alvin A. Sopkin, president of the General Jewish Committee; Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen, D.H.L., of Temple Emanuel of Providence; and Rabbi Morris Schussheim, Ed.D., of Temple Beth Israel of Providence; and the principal speaker, Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn of Temple Israel, Boston.[5]

Shortly after these events the estimable Matilda J. Pincus, who had seen in her lifetime the Friendship Street, the Broad Street, and the Orchard Avenue Synagogues and faithfully served them all, died on May 22 in her 74th year.[6]

The new synagogue was an impressive edifice. Originally somewhat startling as a contemporary structure in a traditional neighborhood, it has now blended into the surroundings. As one faces the building from Orchard Avenue, to the right is the vaulted sanctuary and to its left is the main entrance. To the left of the entrance is a small dome representing the chapel, and to the far left the school building. The interior of the sanctuary has a high vaulted ceiling supported by a series of massive wooden arches. The wall behind the broad pulpit is composed of small projecting concrete pyramids which produce an ever-changing pattern of light and shadow with variations of illumination or ambient light. The chapel, with its domed ceiling, is intimate and of a quiet mood. The social hall, now called the meeting hall, is large, high-ceilinged and modern in feeling. The school building is business-like and simple, well designed for its practical functions.

The furnishings of the sanctuary are all modern in style and were created especially for Temple Beth-El. Two welded bronze columns, nine feet tall, flank the ark. They were designed and handwrought by Ibram Lassaw, New York sculptor, and represent the "Pillar of Cloud" to the left and the "Pillar of Fire" to the right. During services, they are lighted from below, casting intricate patterns of light and shadow on the ceiling above. Shortly after the dedication, one of the columns, The Pillar of Cloud, was loaned for exhibition in the American Pavilion at the XXVII Biennale in Venice and was absent from the temple for ten months.[7] Also of interest are the Menorah and the Eternal Light, designed and executed in the ab-

stract mode by David Hare, a protégé of Pablo Picasso. Different colored metals were used to present a play of colors.[8] A candle was used for the Eternal Light.

The floor of the foyer at the entrance to the sanctuary bears three colored mosaics created by Professor Walter Feldman of the Art Department of Brown University. The mosaics were inspired by verses from the Scriptures dealing with Beth-El.[9] Feldman also later fashioned mosaics for the pavement outside the main entrance to the temple, representing the Jewish festivals.[10] To the left of the main entrance is a metal Hanukkah Menorah, designed by sculptor Herbert Ferber. Dorothy Liebes of California and New York designed the original hand-woven draperies for the ark, which is the focal point of the main sanctuary, and also the draperies lining the walls of the sanctuary.[11] Pearl Braude, who participated in selection of the draperies, described Ms. Liebes as a "superb colorist." Her color combinations in the wall draperies, she stated, "were subtle and strong at once."[12]

Rabbi Braude later wrote of these events:[13]

> . . . our decision to build in the contemporary style was made final only after Albert Simonson, Professor of Architecture at Rhode Island School of Design, advocated it before the Board. During construction I gave counsel to the different artists. Thus I explained to Ibram Lassaw that the two pillars flanking the Ark, *Jachin* ("Fire") and *Boaz* ("Cloud"), were meant to reflect God's explicit and implicit powers. Lassaw's columns, upon being unpacked, were at first dubbed "Jungle-jims," but after the Museum of Modern Art [of New York City] asked permission to have our Pillar of Fire exhibited at the Biennale in Venice as one of the three best examples of American sculpture, the scorners and name-callers grew silent.[14]
>
> I should add that the artists were accorded full freedom in the execution of their works.

Rabbi Braude described the contributions of his wife Pearl:[15]

> Pen's gifts found varied expression during the building of the Temple.[16] She worked on the color schemes, and made the final choice of fabrics. She did the silk screen draperies for the rabbi's study,[17] and worked closely with Dorothy Liebes, the weaver. The colors were to be those of the hangings in the Tabernacle—scarlet, purple, blue, gold thread and fine linen. She put together the colored stripes of varying widths. She made the *Mappah*, the

coverlet for the Cantor's lectern,[18] and the *Mappah* for the chapel, both out of Indian saris.

The saris were obtained directly from India:[19]

> We [Pen and I] met Mr. Mehta, the Indian ambassador to the United States, and Professor Sundaram, the cultural attaché, when they came to the Vedanta Society here in Providence. Upon visiting our Temple they invited Pen to fly to Washington to view Indian textiles on display at the Embassy. She was able to order Indian saris which were especially dyed and woven for our Temple and flown to us via diplomatic pouch.

Rabbi Braude continued his description of the temple furnishings.[20]

> She [Pen] designed and with the help of women of the Congregation sewed by hand the Torah mantles—gold for the year round, and white for the High Holy Days.
>
> In 1954 as we were reaching the end of construction, we had the "war" of the Hanukkah lamp, a sizable installation [outside, at the front entrance of the Temple] which was to be lit by children and adults during the week of Hanukkah. A few were against such public display and wanted the lamp set up in the rear of the Temple. Others, including Pen and myself, wanted to have it stand in the open—a way of saying, "We are what we are—the lights represent affirmation of our faith." We won—the Hanukkah lamp is at the Temple's façade.

The board met for the first time in the new building on May 10, 1954. The budget was set at $102,631, an all-time high, with an estimated income of $80,020, and a net deficit of $22,611. The principal item in the deficit was an interest charge of $16,000. The budget provided a stipend or expenses for the archivist of $1,000 (increased from $150), while the religious school would require $17,750 ($7,000 for the director). The rabbi's salary remained at $9,600, with an increased allowance of $5,400 for the parsonage, plus $1,060 for his pension plan. The allowance for the Choral Society was increased to $800. A plea from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for an increase in the allotment for training teachers, rabbis, and cantors was deferred, Sundlun explained, until the local fund-raising was completed. The Building Fund Committee announced five contributions of $10,000 each and explained

that pledges could be paid over a five-year period. The Artists Series had thus far sold 650 tickets, with 350 still unsold.

An offer of $75,000 for the old temple building was received from the Hellenistic Orthodox Apostolic Church. A committee was appointed to negotiate the sale.

Norman Fain emphasized the urgent need to engage an administrator or manager for the congregation and, with the support of Arthur J. Levy, stressed the necessity of reorganizing the staff. Sundlun later announced that Jack L. Anhalt had been employed as temple director.

The board inquired about several budget items: an increase in the allowance for the archivist from $150 to $1,000, an increase in the Choral Society appropriation from $500 to $800, and a new youth activity at $500. All items survived. Rabbi Braude again requested a full-time private secretary who could also work as a general secretary if free time allowed, but again his request was denied. He, however, was granted $1,000 to cover extra expenses incurred at the parsonage in connection with the dedication exercises.

In June the board received a request from the Art Institute of Chicago to exhibit the "Pillar of Fire" sculpture during October, further evidence of the artistic importance of these striking constructions. Permission was granted effective after the High Holidays. Irving J. Fain spoke of the Jewish Tercentenary in Rhode Island to take place on September 14. Funds were needed from each group in the community, and President Sundlun was appointed to represent Temple Beth-El.

The 99th annual congregational meeting, the first in the new temple, was held on June 20, 1954. The newly elected officers were Walter I. Sundlun, president; Bertram L. Bernhardt, first vice president; Alvin A. Sopkin, second vice president; Max Siegel, treasurer; Benjamin F. Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Arthur J. Levy, recording secretary. The Building Fund Committee reported pledges from 97 members totaling $160,000. Membership in the congregation had increased to 680, with the addition of an encouraging 101 new members. The budget of $102,631 was adopted as presented. Bonnie (Mrs. Seebert J.) Goldowsky, chairman of the Choral Society, reported on its progress and passed on the chairmanship to Rachel (Mrs. Nathan) Rakatansky.

Surprisingly, late in August Treasurer Max Siegel reported that for the first time in years, the temple was in a solvent condition

and had operated during the summer without borrowing. All members' children over 21 years of age and self-supporting would be expected to become members in their own right even though living with their parents. Rabbi Braude reported early in November that an adult education series would begin later that month. The program comprised three courses: 1. Bible Study with Rabbi Braude; 2. Adventures in Hebrew with Miriam Makiri; and 3. Our Holidays and Festivals, with Bernard (Beryl) Segal. Adult Activities included: 1. The Adult Education Series; 2. Dramatics, conducted by various members; 3. Art Class with Ben Blau; and 4. Square Dancing with Mrs. Solon Jaffe. As of November 1, thirty new members had joined since August 30.

Arthur J. Levy presented for approval by the congregation a contract providing for the sale on November 15 of the Broad Street temple for $125,000, less $30,000 for alterations for a net of $95,000. The buyer was the Orthodox Congregation Shaare Zedek, which was formed by the merger of four South Providence Orthodox congregations dispossessed of their synagogues in the old South Providence settlement by the redevelopment of the Willard Avenue neighborhood. Archibald Silverman and others arranged for the merger and purchase. Later, a fifth congregation joined the merger.[21]

Maurice Musler for the House Committee reported that a decision had been made to change the pool in the patio to a rock garden because of the difficulty of maintenance. The cost would be $400. Eventually the Eden Garden Club of the temple converted the area to a Biblical Garden, containing shrubs and plantings mentioned in the Bible. The cornerstone from the former Friendship Street synagogue was set in the stone wall bordering the Biblical Garden. It had been salvaged by Archivist David C. Adelman when the building was demolished for the construction of Interstate Highway 195.

The American Jewish Tercentenary, which was being celebrated in 1954 and 1955, featured a series of events such as the George Washington Letter Ceremonies at Touro Synagogue in Newport in August, a program at Roger Williams Spring in Providence in September, followed by a presentation at Veterans Memorial Auditorium, and a Community service of worship sponsored by the Rhode Island State Council of Churches at the First Baptist Meeting House in Providence in February 1955. Many Rhode Island dignitaries participated in these exercises. A Special Tercentenary Service was held at Temple Beth-El on Friday evening, November 5, 1954, at

which Abram Sachar, president of Brandeis University, was the guest speaker.[22]

The Annual Temple Dance was held on December 4, boasting a large attendance. Not intended as a fund-raising project, it was deemed a highly successful affair. The raffling of a Cadillac automobile by the Temple Brotherhood on January 1, 1955, raised $5,000 toward the Brotherhood building pledge. Dr. Nathan Bolotow won the prize and donated $600 to the Brotherhood. The religious school enrollment at year's end was 472.

In February of 1955 Rabbi Braude reminded the board that about ten years previously the Fain family had established the Elizabeth Stoneman Fain Festival Forum, but after a few years had been obliged to discontinue its support. Braude considered the Forum a great asset to the congregation and urged that the congregation consider resuming such a series. He also read into the record a letter from Peter A. McCray of the Museum of Modern Art of New York:

> On December 2nd we returned to you Lassaw's sculpture "Pillar," which you generously loaned to the exhibition TWO PAINTERS AND THREE SCULPTURES assembled by this museum and shown in the American Pavilion at the XXVII Biennale in Venice. The response to the exhibition was highly gratifying, and I believe most visitors felt our artists made one of the strongest and most effective impressions at the Biennale. The press in general was extremely favorable, and foreign artists made repeated visits to the Pavilion and spent hours studying the works and the publications available on American art. May I extend our sincerest thanks to you for this loan, which made an indispensable contribution to a greater understanding and respect for our art abroad.

Rabbi Braude added: "As a result of these manifestations of local and national interest, we are being besieged by innumerable requests to be shown around the temple," both by church and academic groups. Also the Union of American Hebrew Congregations requested loan of the model of the temple to be shown at its Biennial Convention in Los Angeles and after that to be displayed permanently at the House of Living Judaism in New York City. The board presented a gift to Rabbi Braude in recognition of the honorary D.D. degree awarded him by Brown University. Braude modestly expressed the opinion that Brown University had awarded him the degree because of the work of the Building Committee. It was

obviously his community leadership and his scholarly works which were the motivating factors.

Representatives of *Life Magazine* visited the temple to take photographs of the building and temple activities for a series on "The World's Great Religions." The material relating to Temple Beth-El appeared in the *Life* issue on "Judaism" on June 13, 1955. The illustrations were later included in a lavish folio album recapitulating the whole series, published by Time Incorporated in 1957. A photograph by Thomas B. Stevens of the main sanctuary showed its vaulted ceiling. Appearing in *The Evening Bulletin* (Providence) issue of May 10. 1954, it won a first award in the American Architectural Journalism Competition of the American Institute of Architects.

Cognizance was taken of the death on March 30, 1955, of Rabbi Samuel M. Gup, who was indeed a link with the past. Miriam Makiri was rehired as Director of Religious Education for the year 1955–1956 at $7,100. A committee was appointed to discuss the observance of Jewish dietary laws at all functions in the temple.

The 100th annual meeting of the congregation was held on May 17, 1955. A new slate of officers was elected: Bertram L. Bernhardt, president; Irving J. Fain, first vice president; Walter Adler, second vice president; Max Siegel, treasurer; Benjamin F. Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Kenneth Logowitz, recording secretary. The proposed budget was set at $105,751 with a deficit of $12,031, as compared to that of the current year of $102,431, with a deficit of $22,411. The deficits were substantially attributable to the high interest costs on the outstanding bank loan of $385,000. Sundlun reported that $455,000 had been raised in 1954–55, but that $200,000 was still needed. Norman Fain announced that the total building costs were $1,465,402, which was $67,500 under the final authorization. Sundlun praised him for his untiring effort in overseeing every phase of construction "brick by brick." The membership of the congregation had now reached 764, while the religious school had shown "tremendous growth" in enrollment from 340 to 476, requiring three additional classes.

Walter I. Sundlun, upon retirement from the presidency, was awarded a Distinguished Service Citation for completing two separate terms as president (1938–42 and 1952–55), and he was also elected Honorary Trustee for Life. His vigorous leadership, stated the citation, had led to the building of "one of the great synagogue

structures in the world today," the doubling of the congregation's membership, and significant expansion of temple activities. This had been an eventful time in the annals of Temple Beth-El. In little more than a year it had dedicated its new edifice, celebrated the centennial of its founding, and participated in the three-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Jews in North America.

In June Mrs. Miriam Makiri's resignation as director of the religious school was accepted with regret. Some members maintained that the next director should be a man. Such chauvinistic suggestions were still possible in 1955 without fear of outrage. Rabbi Braude, on behalf of the Search Committee seeking a replacement for Mrs. Makiri, requested the assistance of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Benjamin Efron was recommended and was eventually selected as director of the school. Born in Russia in 1908, he immigrated to the United States with his family in 1913. After attending public schools in New York, he was graduated from City College of New York in 1929 with a B.S.S. (Bachelor of Social Science) degree. In 1937 he received an M.A. degree in history from Columbia University. From 1931 to 1954 he taught social studies in New York high schools, eventually attaining the chairmanship of the department of social studies. He was married and had three children. While in New York he had also been involved in Jewish religious education.

In the fall, enrollment in the religious school had grown to 542, and 26 new members of the congregation had been recruited. There was discussion of the need to collect the Building Fund pledges, 300 from the first and second campaigns being still outstanding. A third campaign was suggested, classifying members according to ability to contribute.

At a Brotherhood meeting in October 1955 Norman Alper proposed the establishment at the temple of a daily *minyan* for the purpose of "contributing in a meaningful manner to the ideal of a daily worship service, the true spiritual goal of our Temple life." A daily *minyan* had not, so far as the records show, ever been a part of Temple Beth-El's Reform tradition. The suggestion was enthusiastically endorsed by Rabbi Braude. The first service was held on November 7, 1955 at 5:45 p.m. under the co-chairmanship of Robert Hochberg and Abraham Adelman. Both served the *minyan* for many years. It has met ever since without interruption except for one evening during The Great Blizzard of 1978.[23]

The Festival Forum was resumed in accordance with Rabbi Braude's wishes. The first assemblage in December during Hanukkah was addressed by famed historian Salo W. Baron of Columbia University. The second, on February 26, 1956 celebrating Purim, featured as principal speaker, Theodor Gaster, also of Columbia University. The final program on April 29, 1956 in recognition of Lag Ba-Omer presented Barnaby C. Keeney, president of Brown University, and a performance by the temple's Modern Dance Group, interpreting the Book of Ruth.[24] Costumes and choreography for the dance were created by Pearl F. Braude, who also directed the performance with music by Aaron Copland.[25]

A fund-raising carnival planned for October was postponed to November 21–23 because of a hurricane threat. This was not unrealistic in view of the devastating Hurricane Carol and flood which only a year earlier had ravaged downtown Providence and much of New England. The carnival, together with its sale of merchandise and other activities, netted $8,677.44, not the $15,000 hoped for, but satisfactory nevertheless. Shortly thereafter, on December 3, a socially successful dinner-dance was held in the ballroom of the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel. A committee was appointed to determine the fate of the Caroline Samuels Memorial Chapel in the cemetery, a firm decision having thus far eluded the congregation.

Early in the new year of 1956 the Cemetery Committee announced that a trust fund had been established. The Perpetual Care Fund, which had long been a goal of the congregation, amounted initially to $60,687.15. There was continued discussion of the need for an assistant rabbi who could also serve as youth leader. Rabbi Braude, however, persisted in urging the acquisition of a cantor and suggested that a cantor/youth leader would provide a solution to the problem. A graduate of the Hebrew Union College of Education and Sacred Music could serve in this capacity. He read a letter from Hebrew Union College Executive Director Cantor Wolf Hecker, who noted that some 50 to 75 percent of all Reform congregations, numbering 500 members or more, were served by cantors. This proposal gave rise to a bitter controversy that would not be resolved for several years. In the meantime a special committee was appointed to select an assistant rabbi and was authorized to offer $7,500. The Library Committee requested additional funding to engage a professional librarian for the growing collection of books and reported that a qualified candidate was now available. Cecile

(Mrs. Isador) Low, reporting for the Artists Series, presented $1,300 to the Building Fund in addition to a prior gift of $4,000 from proceeds of the series.

In May the board discussed further the question of a cantor. Rabbi Braude maintained that a cantor "would add great warmth to our services." A motion to alter the budget to read "Engagement of assistant rabbi/youth director or cantor/youth director" was tabled by a vote of 14 to 8. The motion passed in a more permissive form, allowing a committee to study the issue and submit its opinion to the congregation.

The annual congregational meeting of May 6, 1956 was attended by some 300 members. The budget was set at $122,540 with a projected deficit of $13,000. The rabbi's total salary was set at $16,060 (including the parsonage) and the assistant rabbi's at $7,500. The outstanding bank loan remained at $350,000. There were now 764 family members. The School Committee reported that Benjamin Efron had been re-engaged as school director for another year. The number of bar mitzvahs had increased from two in 1933 to 29 in 1955. As a result of this growth, it was decided to hold all future bar mitzvah ceremonies on Saturdays at the weekly Sabbath morning serivces. The Library Committee described the library of 8000 volumes as among the five or six largest congregational libraries in the country. It added by purchase approximately 500 new books each year. By 1988 it had grown to approximately 27,000 volumes. The newly elected officers were: Bertram L. Bernhardt, president; Irving J. Fain, first vice president; Walter Adler, second vice president; Kenneth Logowitz, treasurer; Benjamin Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Pauline (Mrs. Perry) Bernstein, recording secretary.

A congregational meeting was called for June 10 to elect an assistant rabbi. Rabbi Selig Salkowitz had been recommended by the special search committee at a salary of $7,000. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Salkowitz, aged 27, after graduating from college received an M.H.L. degree from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and was ordained in 1954. He was unanimously elected by the congregation, his term to begin as soon as possible.

There was considerable discussion concerning the desirability of engaging a cantor, a controversial subject in a congregation with a long Reform tradition. Arthur J. Levy argued that it was not a question of a cantor versus an assistant rabbi, but rather the needs

of a rapidly growing congregation. The board set up another committee to study the problem. In the meantime Rabbi Salkowitz established standards for bar mitzvahs. Professor Marvin Pitterman described the activities of the Bar Mitzvah Brotherhood embracing boys 13 to 15 years of age and NFTY (National Federation of Temple Youth) for youngsters of ages 15 to 18. Students of the confirmation class through the first year of college were included in NFTY in accordance with national policy. There was also a 20–30 Club introduced at the Festival Forums. Two temple tours conducted by Rabbis Braude and Salkowitz were well attended and well received.

The trustees learned that additional income of $2,000 had accrued from an increase in dues and $7,800 from the sale of cemetery lots. As of November 1956 the indebtedness to the bank had been reduced to $300,000. Of this amount $115,000 was still not covered by pledges. The Membership Committee reported that it had welcomed 49 new family members to the congregation. There were now 600 children enrolled in the school Saturdays and Sundays, while 130 attended weekday Hebrew classes. Dr. Samuel Pritzker reported for the Building Fund Committee that 426 members had not yet made pledges and that 200 new members had not yet been solicited. A.B. Polinsky, general chairman of the Combined Campaign of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, informed the temple that its quota was $16,000 and that the total amount assessed from each member should be sent to the Union. The board informed Polinsky that it was not now in a position to accept this quota. The year ended with the Annual Dinner Dance at the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel on December 1, 1956.

At the first board meeting of 1957 Arthur J. Levy for the Laws Committee described the background of the Elizabeth Stoneman Fain Festival Forum Foundation, which had been inactive and had been superseded by a renewed Festival Forum series. After explaining its original purpose, he offered amendments which would terminate the foundation and transfer to the Building Fund its assets, amounting to $5,000 of capital and $3,000 of accumulated interest. The proposal was adopted unanimously.

The Sisterhood announced an excellent Artists Series program for the ensuing year. Hilde Gueden, soprano, appeared on January 25; pianist Artur Rubinstein on February 27; classical guitarist Andres Segovia on March 27; and Israeli violinist Ivry Gitlis on April 10.

The Sisterhood reported a very successful interfaith meeting attended by 300 women, including guild members from eight churches.

During the spring months the finances of the congregation gradually improved. The budget for the next year was set at $122,540 with an expected income of $116,000, the improvement due largely to the progressively decreasing interest payments on the loan, which by April had been reduced to $290,000. Receipts from dues had increased by $4,000, and new pledges since November 1956 had reached $13,450. Pledges of $138,000 were still outstanding, $100,000 of which was considered to be "good money."

A variety of adult activities provided for a busy time at the temple. The Adult Education Spring Series of the Temple Beth-El Institute was initiated on March 27 with a lecture on Moses by Rabbi Braude, attended by 56 members. The Spring Concert of the Choral Society was presented on May 12, while the Festival Forum celebrated Lag Ba-Omer on May 19 with "An Evening of Jewish Music," featuring cantor Wolf Hecker, Dean of the Hebrew Union College School of Education and Sacred Music. He spoke on "The Musical Wealth of our People." The lecture was accompanied by cantorial music sung by four student cantors. This exercise was not unrelated to Rabbi Braude's steadfast campaign for a cantor at Temple Beth-El.

The Artists Series program for the ensuing season included violinist Yehudi Menuhin on November 13, pianist Andre Tchaikovsky on December 4, the instrumental ensemble Virtuosi di Roma on January 14, 1958, and Metropolitan Opera soprano Victoria de los Angeles on March 12.

The Social Action Committee, now under the chairmanship of Joseph Finkle, presented a Forum on Middle East Affairs, arranged by Ernest Nathan for Friday evenings after the services. The topics included "People and History," April 26; "Principal Figures of the Middle East," May 3; "Irrigation and Colonization," May 10; and "Oil in the Middle East and its Transportation," May 17.

The revival of the Festival Forum was featured by a very special event on March 17, 1957, described by Rabbi Braude:[26]

> A climactic event in the spirit of the Festival Forum took place on Purim (1957) in the new Temple. Therese Friendly Wachenheimer [(Mrs. Samuel) mother of Fred Friendly, then president of

> CBS News] died in 1954 just before we moved to Orchard Avenue.[27] Her son Fred, in observance of her Yahrzeit,[28] brought Edward R. Murrow (1908–1965) [who later died of lung cancer, but was] then at the height of his glory, to speak, and Carl Sandburg (1878–1967) to chat and strum his guitar. The entire place was filled—standing room only. Among the standees was Barnaby Keeney (1914–80), president of Brown University, who when offered a seat declined, not wishing to receive preferential treatment. Murrow, as people may remember, was an inveterate smoker. On the dais he looked yearningly in my direction for permission to smoke, which I gave. As he lit the cigarette his face lit up, even as the faces of some people grew dark with disapproval. My instinctive consent was, I found out later, confirmed by rabbis far more learned than I. A synagogue is not a shrine, they said, and smoking within its walls is permitted, particularly on a day such as Purim, and, of course, on any weekday. Within synagogues in Jerusalem I subsequently saw men smoking freely.
>
> Though Murrow's smoke wafted away, people still speak of that evening in the early days of the Temple on Orchard Avenue as a memorable one.

The attendance was the largest in Festival Forum history, numbering almost 2500. The sanctuary was filled to its capacity of 1600, while 300 were accommodated in the meeting hall, and numerous others in classrooms and the chapel, where sound was piped in. In addition there were 200 standing and 15 in the organ loft. Murrow spoke of Israel and the recent Suez campaign (1956) from first-hand knowledge of the Middle East, as he had reported in his recent television programs.

The following officers were elected at the annual meeting of 1957 on May 26: Bertram L. Bernhardt, president; Irving J. Fain, first vice president; Walter Adler, second vice president; Kenneth Logowitz, treasurer; Pauline (Mrs. Perry) Bernstein, recording secretary; and Benjamin Ruttenberg, financial secretary. The budget projected expenditures of $123,000 with the salaries of the rabbi and assistant rabbi set at $16,060 and $8,000 respectively, and that of the religious school director at $8,560. The estimated deficit was $4,030 as against an actual deficit for 1956–57 of $1,860. The Building Fund benefited from a bequest of $5,000 from the estate of the late Judge J. Jerome Hahn. The congregation had now reached a total membership of 869 families. A special assessment was levied on those

who had not yet contributed to the Building Fund, in order to amortize the mortgage in three years. The temple library received a Certificate of Merit from the Jewish Book Council of America, sponsored by the National Jewish Welfare Board in recognition of its "contribution to the futherance of Jewish culture through the dissemination of the Jewish book."

Rabbi Braude continued his campaign for a cantor and presented his personal check for $100 to be used toward the cantor's salary. He discussed the history of music in the Beth-El services throughout the years. Of 545 Reform congregations in the country, more than 100 engaged cantors. A heated discussion followed, leading to appropriation of $1,000 to engage a cantor for the High Holidays. It was decided to circulate a questionnaire to the congregation on the subject.

The discussion of the cantor issue continued at the June board meeting, and note was taken of the ill-feeling which it had engendered. Concluding that $1,000 was insufficient to hire a cantor, the board increased the amount to $1,500.

The rabbi, who would soon complete 25 years of service, requested a sabbatical leave from November 15, 1957 to July 1958 to visit Israel. His request was granted, and it was the consensus that he had earned a respite after a quarter century of spiritual leadership. He was also by unanimous vote awarded life-time tenure, a new departure for the congregation. The background of the latter action is interesting. As this special anniversary of his tenure approached, Professor Harry A. Wolfson of Harvard University invited Irving J. Fain to visit him in Cambridge and suggested life tenure as a recognition of Braude's long service. Fain carried the message to the board, which acted favorably.[29]

A committee was appointed to arrange for substitute rabbis. The distribution of a questionnaire on the hiring of a cantor was delayed to permit the congregation to make a judgment after they had heard the visiting cantors. Three additional cantors were auditioned on Friday evenings into December. Leo Cass was engaged at $1,250 to serve as guest cantor during the Holidays. A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music and originally a concert artist, he had served for five years as bass-baritone soloist at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York City. Later, under the direction of Morris Barash of Hebrew Union College in New York, he trained to become a cantor. He had also been engaged as a voice teacher.

A fund-raising carnival was held June 15 to 17 under a circus tent on the temple grounds. Among the prizes were a trip to Hawaii or Europe, a trip to Bermuda, and a HiFi (high fidelity) record player. The profit of over $5,000 was applied to the Building Fund. By the time of the Holidays, the bank loan had been reduced to $275,000 and by October to $250,000. The Special Dues Revision Committee reported that 351 members had not yet made pledges to the Building Fund. One hundred were not solicited because of their financial circumstances. In other cases dues increases in lieu of pledges were ordered, ranging from $150 to a maximum of $2,500 payable over three years. If 230 members subscribed, $103,000 could be realized. Letters were sent out, although some resignations were expected.

After a release was signed by the Samuels family, the cemetery chapel was finally razed and the area landscaped as the Caroline Samuels Memorial Park at a cost of $975. Further, the iron fences were repainted at a cost of $400. The Cemetery Committee reported that two parcels of cemetery land amounting to 123,000 and 50,000 square feet respectively had been taken by the state through condemnation in order to build a cross-town freeway (later the Governor Dennis J. Roberts, Jr. Expressway). The Cemetery Committee recommended that the lost acreage be somehow replaced. The Laws Committee was authorized to work out a possible land exchange with the state. Because of the loss of a building as a result of the condemnation, a new garage-office building would have to be constructed. Architect Lester Millman was engaged at a fee of $500 to draft plans for the new structure and also to delineate cemetery lots on the newly acquired land.

Before departing on his sabbatical, Rabbi Braude submitted a list of visiting rabbis who would officiate during his absence. He also planned the programs of the Festival Forum for the ensuing year. Harry Meyer Orlinsky, biblical scholar and professor at Hebrew Union College, would address the Hanukkah forum on December 20; the distinguished British historian Cecil Roth the Purim forum on March 7, 1958; and Immanuel Ben-Dor the Lag Ba-Omer forum on May 9. Ben-Dor, who had formerly been assistant curator of the Israel Department of Antiquities, was recently appointed professor of biblical archeology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Braude stressed the need for a full-time librarian and recommended furnishing Brown University with a duplicate catalogue of the library holdings.[30] He spoke of his plans to work on his next

publication while in Jerusalem and reminded the board that by coincidence the Torah portion for the previous week was concerned with Abraham, to whom God said, "Get thee out of thy country"—which indeed he would be doing and hoped he would be refreshed and strengthened. "Through mutual exchange of ideas," he continued, "perhaps the lives of all of us will be enriched."

The service honoring Rabbi Braude's 25 years of service was held on Friday, November 15, 1957, two days before his departure. The sermon was given by Rabbi Jacob Shankman, spiritual leader of Temple Israel of New Rochelle, New York, classmate and long-time friend and correspondent of Rabbi Braude's.[31] The special program featured tributes by Assistant Rabbi Selig Salkowitz, Director of Education Benjamin Efron, Sisterhood President Janet F. Waldman, Brotherhood President Saul Zarchen, three past presidents (Archibald Silverman, Walter I. Sundlun, and Samuel Kaplan), Congregation President Bertram L. Bernhardt, Anniversary Chairman A. Henry Klein, and Congregational Historian and Archivist David C. Adelman. Letters of congratulation were received from Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and Nelson Glueck, president of Hebrew Union College. The names of the fourteen rabbis who would be guests during Braude's absence were announced.[32] They included such familiar names as Rabbi Maurice Davis of Indianapolis (an old friend of the congregation and a disciple of Rabbi Braude's),[33] Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn of Boston, Rabbi Abraham Klausner of Yonkers, and Bertram Korn of Philadelphia. The rabbi was presented with gifts of $500 each from the Sisterhood and Brotherhood and $1,500 from congregational funds for travel and related expenses.

Upon Braude's departure Salkowitz assumed his pastoral responsibilities. As late as 1957 bat mitzvah (the analog for girls of bar mitzvah) was still a rare event in Providence. Rabbi Salkowitz reported to the board in December that a request had come from some families for bat mitzvahs for their daughters. The board recommended that ceremonies be held twice yearly for girls who at age 13 met the same criteria as had been established for boys, and a committee was named to explore the matter. Salkowitz in the meantime was appointed "acting rabbi," and an assistant rabbi would be chosen to succeed him, if and when he departed. The board had decided earlier to rotate young men in the position of

assistant rabbi, and it was therefore expected that Salkowitz would leave upon the return of Rabbi Braude.

By the end of November several hundred ballots had been received on the question of a cantor. Great concern was expressed by several trustees that the congregation have a voice in the decision regarding a choice between a cantor, an assistant rabbi, or possibly both, and that they be satisfied with the resolution of the issue. It was the prime order of business when the congregation met on December 8. Howard Presel, who had interviewed the candidates, explained the role of the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music and the services it provided to Reform congregations. He and Rabbi Braude had selected Cass and three others for trial at Sabbath Services. Cass had not had cantorial training, but all four were listed at the school. It was difficult to find a candidate with the necessary qualifications—a good voice, a thorough knowledge of Hebrew, and the experience and willingness to work with children.

The relative services of a cantor and an assistant rabbi were analyzed, and the substantial annual cost to the congregation of liturgical music was emphasized. Bella G. Halpert, reporting further for the special committee to interview cantorial candidates, pointed out the additional cost of engaging a cantor and also of auditions and interviews with prospects. The committee had questioned the three candidates as to their cantorial and musical background, knowledge of Hebrew, and teaching competence. The committee deemed none of them qualified properly "to fill all of the needs we would expect from a cantor for our congregation."

The ballot survey was then analyzed at the December meeting by Dr. Harold Musiker, a psychologist at Rhode Island Hospital and a member of the congregation. He was able to validate 698 of 711 ballots received. Fifty percent favored engaging a cantor, while 42 percent were opposed. Eight percent were undecided. If it were necessary to choose between a cantor and an assistant rabbi, 58 percent favored an assistant rabbi over a cantor, 33.6 percent preferred a cantor rather than an assistant rabbi, while 8 percent were undecided. However, only 17 percent of those in favor of a cantor were willing to have their dues raised to accommodate both a cantor and an assistant rabbi. Musiker read several spirited comments on the ballots, both pro and con.

An animated discussion followed with considerable parliamen-

tary confusion, while motions were offered and withdrawn. It was generally conceded, however, that President Bernhardt had conducted the difficult proceedings with tact, skill, and patience and that everyone had had a voice in the discussion and an opportunity to be heard.

In the meantime the committee to select an assistant rabbi, with the participation of Rabbi Braude, reported its conclusions. After interviewing six candidates, it unanimously urged the election of Rabbi Jerome Gurland, impressed by his qualifications, background, personality, and fine qualities. Twenty-four years of age and a native New Yorker, Gurland had received an A.B. degree from Brooklyn College in 1952, and had done graduate work in German on a teaching fellowship at Johns Hopkins University. He entered Hebrew Union College in 1953 and graduated in December 1957, six months ahead of his class with B.H.L. and M.A.H.L. degrees, the outstanding member of his senior class. Currently, he was doing further graduate work at Johns Hopkins University toward an M.A. degree. He had also served for four years as student rabbi at Winchester, Virginia and expected to receive his ordination from Hebrew Union College at the end of the present academic year in 1958.

In view of the policy of rotating the assistant rabbi, Rabbi Salkowitz expected to leave in the summer of 1958 to become the spiritual leader of Temple Avoda in Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Rabbi Braude wrote of Salkowitz that during Braude's absence for the better part of a year "he, despite his youth, ably administered to the needs of the congregation." Young Rabbi Gurland would thus be available to assume his duties at an appropriate time. Before his departure for Israel, Rabbi Braude sent a letter to the president of the congregation warmly recommending the selection of Rabbi Gurland. He also predicted that the poll regarding a cantor would be overwhelmingly affirmative (not quite). He recommended that a committee be named to explore further the subject of a cantor and to secure the best available candidate for the year 1958–9.

Rabbi Gurland was unanimously elected assistant rabbi effective July 15, 1958. Prior to the annual meeting of the congregation a mail ballot was ordered on the question "Shall the congregation have a cantor?" Professor Harry Orlinsky of Hebrew Union College addressed the congregation as scheduled on Friday, December 20, the Hanukkah event of the Festival Forum. The minutes reported



Rehearsal group of Temple Beth-El Choral Society, circa 1952. Back row, left to right: Rose (Mrs. Geza) Grossman, Mrs. Samuel L. Rantz, Mrs. Hazel Roth, Ann (Mrs. Jacob) Klein, Hazel (Mrs. Stanley) Grossman, Celia (Mrs. Aaron) Norman. Front row, left to right: Marcia (Mrs. Milton) Pliner, Betty (Mrs. J. Joslyn) Presser, Sally (Mrs. Paul) Rouslin, Selma (Mrs. Archie) Finkle, Marguerite (Mrs. Charles) Bojar, Frances (Mrs. Gabriel) Salk, Bonnie (Mrs. Seebert J.) Goldowsky, Harriet (Mrs. Arthur J.) Levy. Director: Benjamin Premack. Pianist (back to camera): Violette Marks. Temple Beth-El Archives.





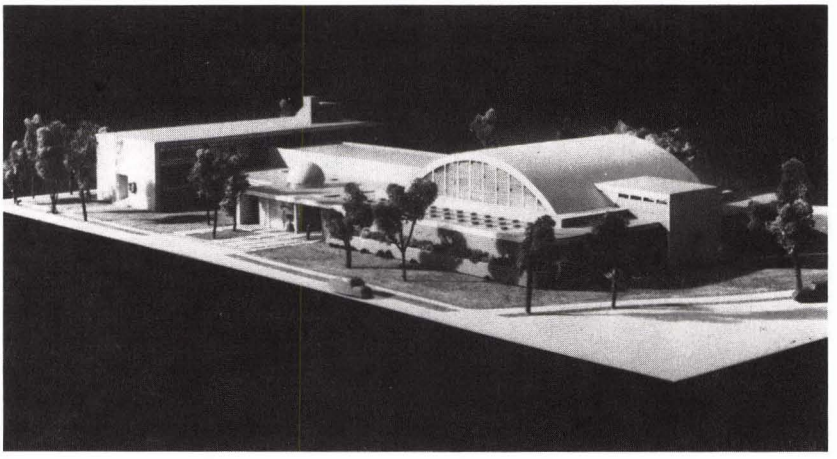
Left: Celia A. (Mrs. Harry) Parvey, in costume as Hannah in biblical tableaux featuring Women of the Bible, 1939. RIJHA.
Right: Ida Rae Hersh, the first female cantorial soloist at Temple Beth-El. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Groundbreaking for Orchard Avenue synagogue. Left to right: Mack M. Forman, Norman M. Fain, Rabbi William G. Braude, Arthur J. Levy, and in front with shovel, President Walter I. Sundlun. June 30, 1952. Temple Beth-El Archives.



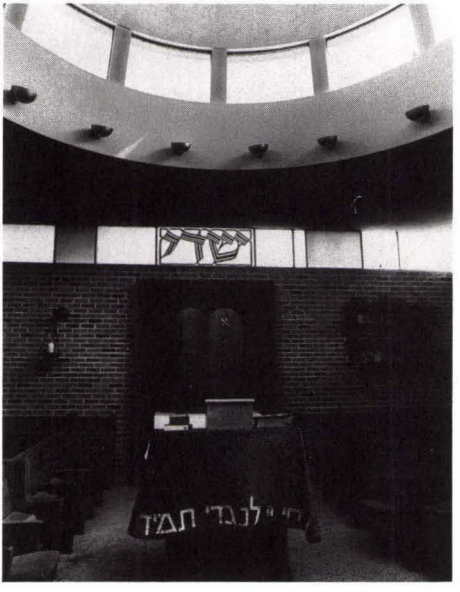
Dedication of Orchard Avenue synagogue; placing of Time Capsule in cornerstone, 1954. Left to right: President Walter I. Sundlun, Rabbi William G. Braude, Norman M. Fain, Jill Forman (now Mrs. Sherman Starr), Arthur J. Levy, Bertram L. Bernhardt. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Orchard Avenue synagogue complex, architect's model. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Sanctuary of the Orchard Avenue synagogue showing the vaulted ceiling, the menorah to the left, the eternal light, and the Pillars of Cloud and Fire bracketing the Ark. RIJHA.



Interior of the Chapel, Orchard Avenue synagogue. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Congregation addressed by former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger on April 30, 1980. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Exodus of Torah procession from the Broad Street synagogue, showing Rabbi William G. Braude and Temple Archivist David C. Adelman. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Entering Orchard Avenue synagogue with Torah scrolls. Left to right: Samuel Goldin, David C. Adelman, Joseph Finkelstein, Beryl Segal, Rabbi William G. Braude. RIJHA.



Arthur J. Levy (1897–1972), chairman of the Building Plans Committee of the Orchard Avenue synagogue. Temple Beth-El Archives.



Norman M. Fain, chairman of Building Committee, Orchard Avenue synagogue. Temple Beth-El Archives.



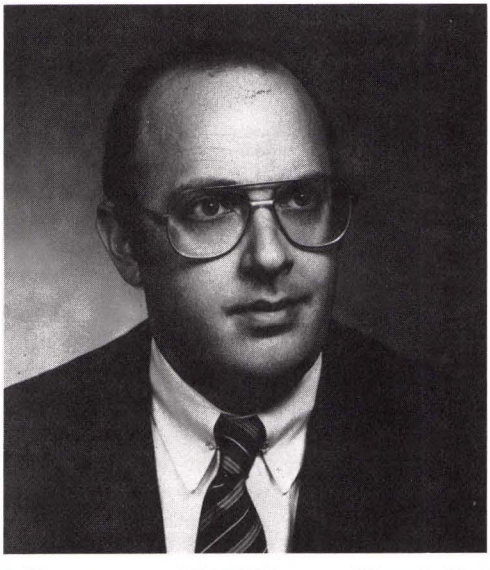
Bertram L. Bernhardt, chairman of the dedication ceremony, Orchard Avenue synagogue, and president 1955–1960. Temple Beth-El Archives.



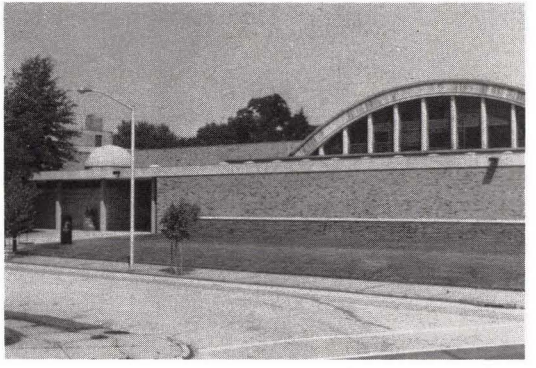
Irving J. Fain (1906–1970), president 1960–1961. Fain family collection.

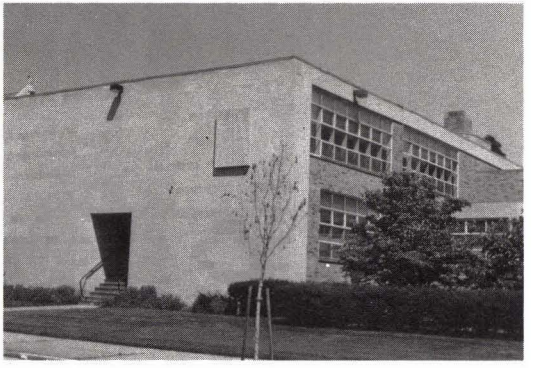


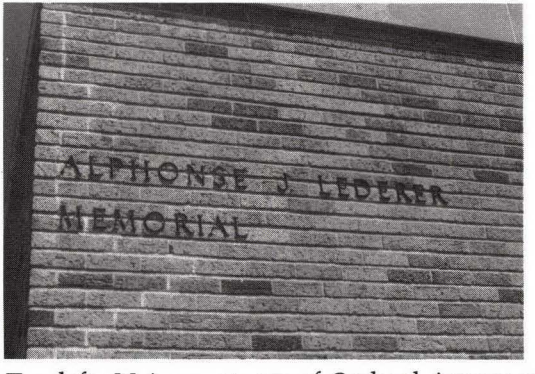
Rabbi William G. Braude (1907–1988), rabbi 1932–1974. Temple Beth-El Archives.

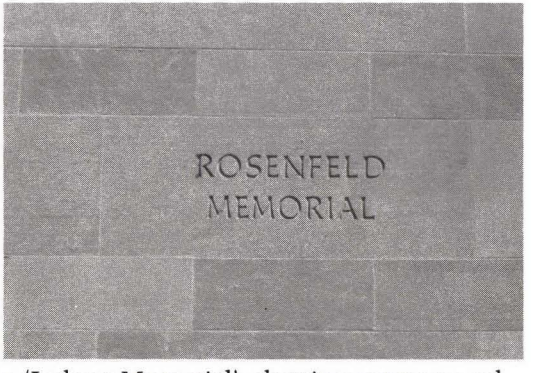


Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman, rabbi 1974– . Temple Beth-El Archives.





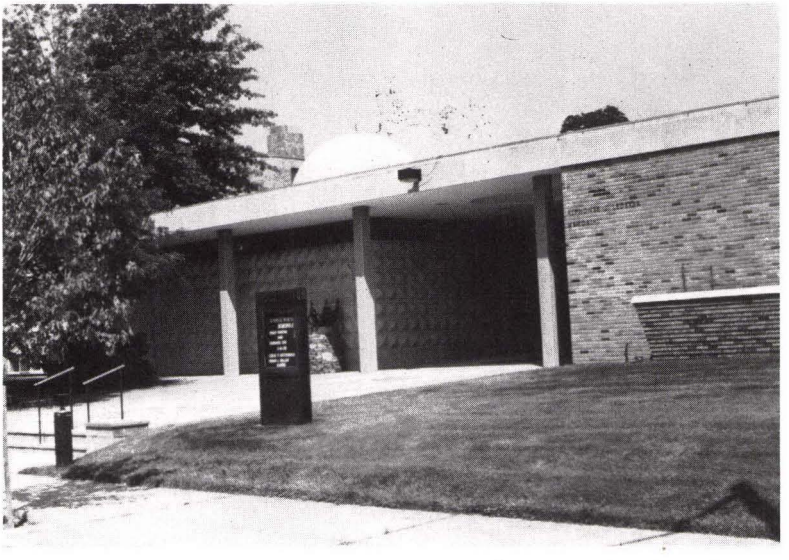




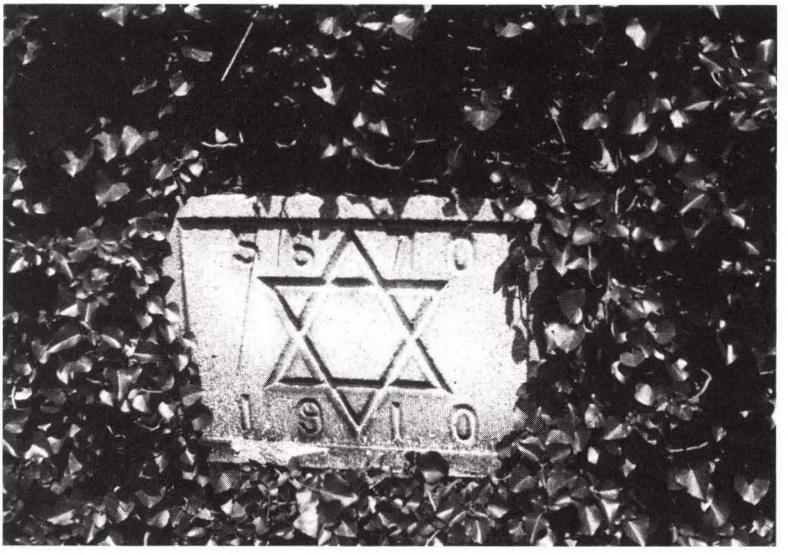
Top left: Main sanctuary of Orchard Avenue synagogue (Lederer Memorial), showing entrance and domed chapel. Top right: Religious school buiding (Rosenfeld Memorial). Photos by author (1989).



Hanukkah menorah at Temple entrance. Photo by author (1989).



Main entrance and dome of chapel. Photo by author (1989).



Cornerstone of the Broad Street synagogue imbedded in stone wall of Temple garden. Photo by author (1989).



William J. Harris house (1839), last remnant of the Moses Brown farm. Photo by author (1989).



Temple Beth-El 1989. Photo by author.

laconically that his talk of 50 minutes after the service was "too long." Although no further business was transacted during the remainder of 1957, it had been a busy year indeed.

As the new year of 1958 dawned, Professor Marvin Pitterman of the University of Rhode Island reported that a luncheon for college students in the area was attended by 43 students and was enthusiastically received. Stanley Grossman, reporting for the Bat Mitzvah Committee, gave a brief background history of bat mitzvah in Reform congregations. He outlined the criteria which had been established by the committee and announced that a booklet was in preparation to summarize the requirements for both bat and bar mitzvah.

Early in the year, the congregation once again found itself in stringent financial circumstances. In March there was difficulty in paying bills because of a cash shortage of $15,000. Since the need to raise cash was urgent, a raffle was held in connection with a forthcoming carnival, which fortunately netted $5,100. Of $189,724 pledged toward the Building Fund, not more than $175,000 was deemed collectible because of resignations and other attrition. In the face of this fiscal crisis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations set a campaign quota of $16,000 for Temple Beth-El. Some $12,000 of this amount was raised. The $4,000 still due to meet the quota was an added burden upon the temple's resources.

The Laws Committee reported that about 50 percent of the cemetery land amounting to 186,000 square feet had been taken by the state by condemnation. Legal steps were necessary to assure appropriate valuation, but it was expected that the congregation would be amply compensated. Options were obtained on new land to the rear of the cemetery as a replacement for the lost footage.

The board learned that a Cranston group contemplated the organization of a Reform congregation. The board congratulated the group for its foresight and pioneering spirit in founding what would be only the second Reform congregation in Rhode Island in over 100 years and sent words of encouragement and good wishes. The new synagogue, designated Temple Sinai, held its first Sabbath service at the Greenwood Country Club on March 7, 1958 under the leadership of Rabbi Daniel David, representing the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Temple Beth-El loaned a Torah scroll and donated 50 prayer books, and another 50 prayer books were provided by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Dr.

Albert Goodman, president of the new congregation, and its members were guests of Temple Beth-El at Friday evening services on March 14.

The 10th anniversary of the State of Israel was celebrated at a special service on Friday evening, April 25. Following the service entertainment was provided in the meeting hall by the Temple Beth-El Choral Society and the Temple Dance Group under the leadership of Sheila Efron. The Festival Forum on May 11, celebrating Lag Ba-Omer, presented Professor Walter Feldman of the Brown University art department, who spoke on "Mosaics as an Art Form." He described and explained the colorful mosaics which he had designed and created to embellish the entrance plaza and the foyer of the Orchard Avenue synagogue.

Dr. Harold Musiker, chairman of the Membership Survey Committee, discussed progress to date in organizing the survey. He met with Rabbi Eugene Lipman of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Professor Kurt Mayer, chairman of the sociology department at Brown University, and a member of the congregation, to formulate plans. They suggested that a bright young graduate student be engaged to assist in the work. The survey would examine the present profile of the congregation and the interrelationships of its components:

1. Membership profile—age and family structure, and
2. Interrelationships of the temple family—the board of trustees, the congregation, and the auxiliaries (Brotherhood and Sisterhood), and their individual and collective relationships with the total Jewish community of Providence.

A grant of $500 was voted to implement the work of the committee.

On May 5 the old and new boards of trustees and their wives met for dinner at the Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Massachusetts. At the meeting the Cemetery Committee reported that an estimated 182,000 square feet of land was lost to the state. The residual property amounted to some 160,000 square feet, of which 27,000 square feet were on the opposite side of the freeway from the main parcel and therefore useless. The committee made a down payment on 65,000 additional square feet of land at 15 cents per square foot. It was deemed desirable to purchase up to 320,000 square feet if available, as only 132,000 square feet of the original

tract remained on the cemetery side of the freeway. Stanley Shein, real estate agent and member of the congregation, donated his fee for services to the congregation. Later, further land was purchased.

The 103rd annual meeting was held on May 18, 1958 in an upbeat mood. The budget was set at $122,760 with enough revenue anticipated to produce a surplus of $4,440, an optimistic note in the fluctuating fiscal fortunes of the congregation. The incumbent officers were re-elected. The background and education of Rabbi Gurland, who would be arriving soon, were described to the members.

By June 12, Gurland had arrived and was introduced to the trustees by Dr. Manuel Horwitz. Horwitz noted that many complex issues had been solved during the administration of Rabbi Salkowitz, and a fine relationship of trust and friendship had marked his two-year term at Beth-El. The trustees wished Selig and Marcia Salkowitz the best of luck and expressed sorrow at their leaving. He was installed as rabbi at Fair Lawn, New Jersey on November 14. The board ordered flowers sent for the occasion. It was announced that Rabbi Braude would visit England before returning to the United States.

At the September board meeting Rabbi Braude was warmly welcomed home. It was difficult, he said, to compare his experiences in Israel with those in New England, where he had so many deep and sentimental attachments. The new librarian, Mrs. Maryland Estes, was presented to the board, and her excellent performance to date was noted. Library circulation had increased appreciably not only among members, but among non-members as well, seeking books not available elsewhere. Rabbi Braude had purchased many volumes in Israel which were not listed even in the Library of Congress. As suggested by Rabbi Gurland, the listings would be added to the catalogue of the library of Hebrew Union College. There were currently 700 students in the religious school, more than 40 of whom would be confirmed at the next graduation, over 200 in the Hebrew classes, and nine in the high school department.

After the High Holy Days Rabbi Braude complained of the poor decorum during the services with people going in and out, creating commotion. At his urging a committee was appointed to address the matter. For the first time an entire *Kol Nidrei*[34] service was broadcast over television station WJAR-TV and was well received by the community. The Finance Committee reported that the mort-

gage now stood at $220,000. Sixteen thousand dollars had recently been paid on account, and by the end of the year it was further reduced to $210,000.

According to William Bojar, attendance at the Jewish Institute on Adult Education had been poor for the past four-and-half years. It was decided, therefore, to arrange programs for the next year in cooperation with the Brotherhood. Rabbi Braude, called upon for comments regarding a cantor for the Holidays, maintained that, if one were desired for the coming year, it would be necessary to start a search immediately. Walter Sundlun offered a resolution to engage a cantor for the next year at $1,000. After a spirited debate, with finances and members' attitudes at issue, the motion lost on a tie vote 15 to 15. A concert by the popular pianist-entertainer Victor Borge, a Danish Jew, sponsored by PROVTY (the Temple Youth Group), netted $1,431, $1,000 of which was donated to the New England Camp of Living Judaism.

The Providence Hebrew Day School, founded in 1946 and strongly Orthodox in its orientation, had since its opening in 1947 occupied a large Victorian mansion at 151 Waterman Street in Providence's East Side. At the time of its opening it registered 93 students. A recent tragic fire in 1958 in a Catholic school in Chicago had resulted in the deaths of 90 children. This incident prompted nationwide inspection of schools for fire hazard, which led to the condemnation of the Waterman Street building. Although the Day School eventually built its own quarters, the ruling created an emergency for the school, which requested the use in the interim of temple classrooms for its 200 students. This aroused consternation among more liberal Reform elements in the congregation. Rabbi Braude's earlier support of the school had stirred much resentment, not only among his own congregation, but even among certain circles of the Central Conference of American Rabbis as well.[35] He sent his own children there, although some members resented this "European custom" of having a *yeshivah*[36] in the midst of the community. After much discussion the request was granted, and the Temple Beth-El classrooms were used until the new Providence Hebrew Day School on Elmgrove Avenue was completed in 1964. Conditions governing the arrangements were drafted by the board and sent to the school. The leaders of the Hebrew Day School accepted certain stipulations and formally expressed their gratitude to the Temple Beth-El board for its generous action. Concerning his deci-

sion to send his own children to the school, Rabbi Braude later wrote:

> I was scared. So before deciding to send our children to the Day School, I turned to my guru, Professor Wolfson (1897–1974) [of Harvard] whose instant response was, "Send them, send them. They'll learn to eat *trafe* [*terephiah*, i.e. non-kosher foods] on their own. But Hebrew never."[37]

The Artists Series of four concerts for 1958–59 had already started on December 10 with a sparkling performance by Blanche Thebom, distinguished American mezzo-soprano of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

The first board meeting of 1959 was preceded by a dinner and reception honoring Jack L. Anhalt on his 75th birthday and recognizing his long service to the congregation. Mr. and Mrs. Jay Isenberg purchased 15 sets of the two-volume *Midrash on Psalms* by Rabbi Braude, which had just been published by the Yale University Press, to present to several libraries in the United States and abroad.

Irving J. Fain at this time became deeply involved in civil rights activities and more especially in equal housing legislation. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations had formed a joint Commission on Social Action, consisting of the Union, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, and the National Federation of Temple Youth.

United States Senate Rule 22, which required a two-thirds majority to terminate debate by cloture, had so far successfully blocked civil rights legislation. The commission urged the Senate to change the rule and also sponsored a fair-housing law to eliminate discrimination in housing. On Fain's recommendation the resolution on fair housing was sent to the Rhode Island General Assembly. His persistent agitation for such legislation in Rhode Island ultimately ended successfully in 1965 with passage of a state Fair Housing Law.[38] At Fain's prompting a letter on Rule 22 on behalf of the congregation was also sent to the United States Senate. Fain, on a different matter, read a resolution from the United Jewish Appeal urging the support of Providence Jewry in assisting emigration of Romanian Jews to Israel.

Early in the new year of '59 Building Fund pledges and dues assessments amounting to $162,392 were still unpaid. Dr. Samuel

Pritzker of the Building Fund Committee pleaded for the assistance of the entire board. Several members were suspended for not paying their dues assessments, one of whom had refused even to discuss the matter. He maintained that "the congregation has no right to tell him how much he should pay." When he felt the heat, he agreed to pay the assessment assigned to him and was duly reinstated to full membership.

The Cemetery Committee had purchased 53,000 square feet of land for $8,500. Offered an opportunity to sell it for $50,000, the board was sorely tempted, especially since it was estimated that the 49 percent of the original land which remained would most likely provide enough space for graves for 50 years. Acknowledging an obligation to future generations, the committee decided to retain the new land.

The Building Fund Committee reported that, through the efforts of the trustees in response to Dr. Pritzker's urging, an additional $13,000 in pledges had been received. The Sisterhood donated almost $12,000 in the past five years, while the Brotherhood planned a raffle on a $4,000 basket of "blue chip" common stocks. Further, at a cost of more than $2,800 it was building a reading room in the basement connected to the library by a spiral staircase. Owing to the efficiency of Mrs. Estes, the librarian, the readership and circulation in the library were increasing "enormously." The Beth-El Institute on Judaism was attended by 25 persons.

In April the board learned of the resignation of Benjamin Efron, the religious school director. At the end of the school year prior to his departure he was entertained at a reception. After his four years at Beth-El, he served as director of education at Temple Sinai in Roslyn, New York and later at several other congregations. He was best known for his textbooks on Jewish education, for the development of curriculum programs, and as a consultant to the KTAV Publishing House in New York. A committee was appointed to choose a successor.

At the 104th annual meeting on May 4, 1959 the incumbent officers and Rabbi Gurland were re-elected for the year 1959–60. Later, Gurland was named associate rabbi and his contract extended for two years to September 1961, an expression of approval of his performance. The budget of $131,385 was accepted with an expected income of $129,000, thus anticipating another deficit.

Also at the annual meeting Seymour Krieger was appointed Di-

rector of the Religious School. Krieger was not new to Providence. For the past six years he had been part-time Hebrew teacher, youth director, and principal at Temple Beth-Israel, the Conservative congregaton in the Elmwood section of Providence. From 1946 to 1959 he had been employed as counseling psychologist at the Veterans Administation in Providence. A native New Yorker, he received an A.B. degree from Brooklyn College and an M.A. from Columbia Unversity. He also completed two years of study toward a Ph.D. degree at New York University. Prior to college he attended a Hebrew day school for ten years, later took Hebrew courses in college, and attended summer seminars in Hebrew studies at Cornell University and the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Braude saw no barrier in his essentially Conservative background to his performing satisfactorily in the Reform environment of Temple Beth-El.

A special Friday evening service was held on May 8, followed by a reception honoring Rabbi Braude upon the publication of his second scholarly work, *Midrash on Psalms*. The guest speaker was Rabbi Levi A. Olan, spiritual leader of Temple Emanuel, Dallas, Texas.

The board tentatively approved an appropriation of $100 to support the Choral Society if the latter desired to continue performing. Despite its early success, it had been having difficulty recently in retaining members. From an original group of 12, which eventually grew to an ensemble of 40 singers, it could now no longer recruit enough temple members to sustain its former excellent quality. The Society had brought in new members to both the Sisterhood and the temple, but interest had declined to a point where a request for temple support for so small a constituency seemed unreasonable. It was decided, therefore, to disband at the end of the present season.

The Choral Society had presented four formal programs, and on several occasions had entertained informally at temple affairs. In its fifth and final formal presentation in June, the Society's ensemble was augmented by the Veterans Choral Association, a group of black male singers who had performed about the state for many years. The total chorus of 50 singers presented selections from the folk opera *Porgy and Bess*. Founded in March 1950, the Choral Society's three chairpersons had been Bonnie (Mrs. Seebert J.) Goldowsky (the founder), Rachel (Mrs. Nathan) Rakatansky, and Beatrice (Mrs. William) Bojar. Benjamin Premack and Violette Marks had been the director and accompanist throughout, the latter serv-

ing without remuneration. Bella (Mrs. Murry) Halpert (Braunstein) served as alternate accompanist. The Society presented to the congregation $1,150 and the step risers which it had purchased for its own use.

Cecile (Mrs. Isador S.) Low informed the board that the 1958–59 Artists Series had been both a cultural and financial success. She announced a four-concert series for 1959–60 featuring pianist Artur Rubinstein and the American soprano Roberta Peters of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

Members in arrears in dues or assessments were not admitted to the High Holiday services. At the time of the announcement of this policy, $16,000 was still outstanding. The Holidays were observed during a hot spell, causing much suffering among members, since the sanctuary as an economy measure had not been air-conditioned during construction. Although the necessary ducts were in place, it would cost as much as $75,000 to install the cooling equipment. The House Committee was instructed to explore anew the feasibility and costs. According to the Choir Committee the music at the Holiday services had been of poor quality, and it recommended that a professional liturgical choral group under a trained leader be retained at a cost of $4,000. Rabbi Braude maintained that there were other viable solutions.

A special committee on liturgical music was appointed to explore the possibilities, and in the end the regular choir was supplemented for the Holidays by four additional voices. The use of Jewish singers was strongly advocated by some members, but the special committee reported that efforts to secure Jewish singers was largely unsuccessful. "It appears impossible, if not highly improbable," according to the report, "that under our present set-up we can achieve the desired goal of having an all-Jewish choir." A full-time music director might help to solve the problem at a salary of $6,500 to $8,500 per year. As an alternative a cantor could also serve as music director. The committee finally recommended appointment of a cantor-music director. A combined Holiday service in lieu of the present two consecutive services was also discussed, but ultimately it was decided to retain the dual services for the present.

Rabbi Braude announced that the Institute for Adult Education would be continued. Temple tours were conducted at the rate of three or four per week. They were a burdensome chore, but, since

they represented a successful public relations effort, it was decided to continue them indefinitely.

By fall the mortgage had been reduced to $185,000, but outstanding pledges and assessments amounting to $125,000 would be vigorously pursued. The Laws Committee, dissatisfied with the settlement offered for the condemned cemetery lands, decided to sue the state for $200,000. Maurice Musler reported for the Building Committee that the wall near the canopy in the rear of the building was to be altered to prevent children from climbing on the roof. The cornerstone and stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, which had been recovered by David C. Adelman from the old Friendship Street building, were placed in a stone wall bordering the Biblical Garden adjacent to the patio outside the meeting hall.

In the new year of 1960 reduction of the mortgage continued to have a high priority. Dr. Samuel Pritzker, chairman of the Building Fund Committee, reported that three large pledges of $25,000 were still unpaid after five years. A suggestion that the donors be asked to pay interest was dismissed as too burdensome, but it was decided to seek pledges from members in the lower income brackets. The board was cautioned that a cantor-music director would cost about $10,000 per year and would certainly upset the budget now precariously in balance. Such an appointment, nevertheless, was approved by a surprising 14 to 4 majority. It was further decided to increase Religious School Director Krieger's salary by $500. These charges were in addition to $8,000 for an executive director and a possible $10,000 for a cantor-music director, surely a budgetary headache.

On May 1, 1960 at the annual meeting, a new slate of officers was elected: Irving J. Fain, president; Walter Adler, first vice president; Dr. Samuel Pritzker, second vice president; Kenneth Logowitz, treasurer; Benjamin F. Ruttenberg, financial secretary; and Mrs. Walter J. Nelson, recording secretary. Bertram Bernhardt, retiring president, was elected honorary trustee for life. The congregation had grown to 930 families, and there were 700 children in the religious school. The mortgage had been reduced in five years from $385,000 to $165,000. Seymour Krieger was re-engaged as school director.

The meeting then turned to the controversial question of a cantor-music director. A motion to proceed with the hiring stimulated a "spirited and varied" discussion. The vote on a secret ballot was

177 in favor of a cantor and 146 opposed. After further discussion the situation was summarized in this way:

1. The hiring of a cantor would increase the budgetary deficit (in a budget of $134,000) by an estimated $5,675 to $10,635.
2. The 377 persons present did not adequately represent the congregation at large (323 actually voted).
3. It was emphasized that the introduction of a cantor would in fact noticeably alter the service that had long been familiar.

Rabbi Braude wrote of this period:[39]

> In my inaugural address [in 1932] I pledged "my loyalty to the traditions of our people . . . to the customs and practices that have ever been our ethnic and ethical integrators."
>
> Well, among other tasks, this meant Judaizing or Hebraizing the music of the service, which needed it badly, as I was to discover when soon after my arrival I visited the choir loft. I was appalled by its collection of music, made up in the main of anthems with "Jesus, Son of God" crossed out and "our Father in heaven" written in. For the High Holidays, Sigmund Schlesinger's German Protestant music flavored by tunes from Italian operas was the mainstay.
>
> I turned for counsel to Rabbi Jacob Singer (1883–1964) of Chicago [chairman of the Music Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis], with whom I spent an entire day. It was he who introduced me to the High Holiday music of Edward Stark with "Cantor solos, form and choruses based upon traditional themes" (A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music* [New York, 1929], p. 326). . . .
>
> It should be noted that in its early days, the Congregation had a hazzan or cantor. But during the days of extreme Reform, in Providence as elsewhere, cantorial music and the chanting of Scripture came to be regarded as alien, and were abandoned. For quite a number of years I pressed for the restoration of the cantorate.
>
> The matter was brought up at the 105th annual meeting, Sunday, 1 May 1960. As a result of telephoning by my brother-in-law, Archie Finkelstein, and Robert Hochberg to alert those who wanted a cantor (or wanted to have me remain with the Congregation) to come to the meeting, the turnout was the largest in Beth-El's history—standing room only. During the meeting, one of the opponents, seeing that those present were likely to vote

for having a cantor, suggested that the issue be decided by a mail vote. Thereupon, Sylvia, Archie's wife, stood up and said "I don't pray by mail, and I don't want to vote for a cantor by mail." Following a vigorous and prolonged debate, the Congregation voted to restore the cantorate.

As a result of the questions raised, a special meeting of the congregation was called for June 20 to consider the matter further. The stated reason for requesting the meeting was "to create greater harmony in the congregation" over this contentious issue. President Fain conducted the meeting with much patience. Twenty-five members spoke. A dual motion was offered (1) to rescind the action of May 1 to engage a cantor-music director, and (2) to circulate a mail ballot on the question "Shall this congregation engage a cantor-music director?" The motion was clearly defeated, thus ending a controversy which had for some time aroused and divided the congregation, and in effect confirmed the earlier vote of the congregation to engage a cantor-music director.

Bertram Bernhardt entertained the board at a gala party on May 12 to celebrate his retirement from the presidency and his election as honorary life trustee.

A search began immediately to select a candidate for cantor-music director. The position was offered to Cantor Harold Dworkin of Chicago, Illinois at a salary of $8,500. A graduate of Michigan State University (A.B., 1952), he had also graduated from the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College. He had previously studied music for 17 years, had a fine voice, and came with excellent recommendations. He had served as cantor of several congregations, most recently for four years at Oak Park, Illinois. He accepted the offer, but, since he would not be available until after the High Holidays, Leo Cass was engaged for the current year at a fee of $1250.

Rabbi Braude was currently busy with the publication of three works: editing for an Israeli publisher the Hebrew edition of the *Midrash on Psalms* with collated comments, translation of this work for the Yale Judaica Press, and an *Introduction to the Midrash* designed for lay readers requested by the Jewish Publication Society.

Early in 1961 Jack L. Anhalt died, leaving a void in the temple's administrative staff. He was well known in Providence, having operated a men's hat store in the downtown area for many years.

He was congenial and popular, and after long involvement in congregational affairs he would be missed. Careful attention to selection of a replacement was indicated. Mrs. Liffman also retired after 12 years. It was necessary, therefore, to select a new organist as well.

The annual meeting was held on June 25, 1961, and the incumbent officers were re-elected. A budget of $144,045 was presented with sufficient income projected to produce a surplus of $4,255. The Committee on Personnel had recommended the hiring of a temple administrator at a salary of $7,500. Since the budget did not allow for this expenditure, it was likely that the surplus would evaporate.

The Cemetery Committee reported that it planned to develop more land in the cemetery, and that a landscape artist from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations had presented plans for the development, which would cost $5,000. The Laws Committee noted that the jury in the temple's legal case against the State of Rhode Island to recover adequate compensation for the condemned land had awarded only $89,350. Arthur J. Levy commented that "we believe this verdict would have been substantially higher if it were not for patent religious prejudice injected into the trial by the attorney who appeared for the State of Rhode Island." Primarily for that reason the matter was appealed to the Supreme Court and was still pending. Attorneys Levy and Maurice Hendel had spent many hours in preparing the case. Joseph V. Cavanaugh of the firm of Higgins & Cavanaugh was retained by the committee. The proceeds of the award would be reserved to replace land and buildings lost to the state. The presently available land would meet requirements for only 10 to 15 years, considerably less than had recently been projected.

The temple membership was 932 with a religious school enrollment of 687. Sixty-eight percent of all eligible children were attending weekly Hebrew classes. President Fain in his annual report spoke favorably of the influence of Cantor Dworkin and mentioned with regret the retirement of organist Mrs. Max Liffman. He judged that recent staff changes would necessitate a dues increase. He then described his experiences in visiting eight countries in French West Africa at the request of the United States Department of Commerce. An unusually long report from the Social Action Committee reflected the president's interests and influence.

A summary of the work of the Temple Beth-El Institute for Jewish Adult Education was presented by chairman Bernard Segal. The series embraced guest lectures, home-study groups, and active and successful Hebrew classes. President Fain noted that increasing costs related to the engagement of a cantor, an administrator, and a new organist quickly had changed the budgetary picture from one of a probable surplus to a likely deficit. At a special board meeting in August called to discuss the unhappy financial situation, it was decided that an increase in dues was essential. A form letter was sent to members paying less than $25, requesting a voluntary increase, while those paying $25 or more were to be solicited through personal contact. By the time of the High Holy Days, 37 new members had joined the congregation, pledging $8,200 to the Building Fund. Rabbi Gurland was re-elected for three years.

The board on September 18 received the distressing news that President Irving J. Fain had resigned from the presidency after serving only one year because of incapacity due to an eye operation. First Vice President Walter Adler immediately assumed the presidency.

Disarray in the office staff led to an executive committee meeting in November to ameliorate conditions by assigning specific duties to each of the office personnel. This was followed shortly by the hiring of a temple administrator. A policy had been established of hiring for this position a person who was a non-member. The leading candidate was William L. (Will) Robin. Born in Providence in 1922, he graduated from Brown University with an A.B. degree in economics in 1943. He had been engaged in several business enterprises and was presently employed by a handbag manufacturer. He recently had lived in Easton, Pennsylvania, where he was chairman of the local school board. Well recommended, he was engaged at a salary of $7,500 plus a pension benefit. Robin promptly proceeded to set up codes and standards for all personnel.

Before the close of the year the Religious School Committee codified the requirements governing bar mitzvahs. These included three years of attendance at weekday Hebrew classes, another move toward more traditional practices at Temple Beth-El.

In January of 1962 the Music and Choir Committee recommended that Cantor Dworkin's contract be renewed at an increased salary of $10,000 per year. This amount was deemed by some to be out of line as compared to Rabbi Gurland's salary and that of other cantors.

Further, there were complaints that he had trouble singing on key. Professor William Dinneen of the Brown University music department thought his problem was due to the position of the cantor in relation to the organ, which made synchronization difficult.[40] A decision was initially deferred, but in February the committee again recommended that he be re-engaged at a salary of $10,000. After a lengthy discussion, the issue was again referred to the committee. In March it was announced that Dworkin had resigned as of the end of his contract on August 31. After auditioning three candidates for the position, the committee recommended the engagement of Cantor Norman Gewirtz at a salary of $8,500 with an option for a second year at $9,000. The recommendation was accepted.

Norman Gewirtz, born in New York City in 1922, attended the New York public schools and City College of New York. In 1942, he was inducted into the army and served until the end of the war. After discharge he studied music at the American Theater Wing and then enrolled in the Hebrew Union College of Education and Sacred Music. Following graduation he served as cantor for seven years at a congregation in Silver Spring, Maryland and for two years at Bay Shore, Long Island. He was married and had three children. Rabbi Braude considered him "outstanding" and a "man of great soul," who "won the hearts of people, young and old alike." He served the congregation for 14 years.

The Artists Series continued its excellent and successful programs. The 1961–62 season featured such prominent performers as the Tanglewood Quintet, pianist Van Cliburn, soprano Adele Addison, and the Bolivian violinist Jaime Laredo. The 1962–63 season was also announced and would include such stars as Metropolitan Opera tenor Richard Tucker and virtuoso pianist Rudolph Serkin, among others.

The Laws Committee announced that its appeal in the cemetery land suit had been denied by the State Supreme Court. There was some hope that some of the unused land taken by the state could be re-purchased. Ultimately the State of Rhode Island delivered a check for $115,261.50. After legal fees of some $14,000 and $23,600 for the purchase of additional land and other costs, the net accrual to the cemetery fund was $77,670.84.

The constitution and bylaws of the congregation, which had been in effect since 1854, albeit with many changes and amendments, had become complicated and unwieldy. The board voted to repeal

the exisiting document and appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Stanley Grossman to draft a completely new constitution. The new instrument was to be adopted at the annual meeting. It provided for three vice presidents.

The following officers were elected at the annual meeting of May 20, 1962: Walter Adler, president; Dr. Samuel Pritzker, Benjamin F. Ruttenberg, and Stanley Grossman, vice presidents; Raymond G. Franks, treasurer; and Mrs. Walter J. Nelson, secretary. The new budget projected expenditures of $158,599, with an estimated deficit of $399. A successful luncheon attended by 250 members enabled the Sisterhood to present a check for $8,000 to the congregation. The mortgage was reduced to $100,000 and would be further decreased to $95,000 by year's end.

The congregational membership was now 940, and some 600 to 700 children were enrolled in the religious school. Dr. Herman Marks reported for the Religious School Committee that several members had spoken with high praise of School Director Seymour Krieger. The Music and Choir Committee announced that the choir was now comprised of six members and that it hoped to add two more singers in the near future. The Library Committee sent copies of its catalogue cards to the Brown University library in accordance with Rabbi Braude's plan, a practice which was discontinued some years later.

The board learned that Rabbi Sidney S. Tedesche, who had served the congregation from 1915 to 1917, had died on May 18 in Hollywood, Florida. Several members recalled him with affection. The engagement of Rabbi Gurland to Joan Barbara Greenstein, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Jacob E. Greenstein, was announced. She was present at the meeting and was introduced to the gathering. Rabbi Gurland was re-elected for a term of three years.

At the September board meeting newly-arrived Cantor Gewirtz was introduced to the new members. His performance through the fall was highly satisfactory and his relations with the choir, the organist, and the religious school were excellent. The board in December, without waiting for further reaction, recommended that he be engaged for another year. "Will" Robin reported that his own duties fell into three categories: 1. maintenance of the buildings and property, 2. supervision of the office (which he had recently reorganized), and 3. working with and giving administrative support to the various committees.

Speaking for the Religious School Committee, Dr. Herman Marks expressed concern about the extravagance associated with bar mitzvah celebrations. He hoped that, in the natural course of events, the entertainment aspects would be curtailed.

NOTES

1. Louis I. Grant, father of Max L. Grant and the oldest living member of the congregation, was assisted in the ceremonial kindling of the Eternal Light by a young boy of the congregation, Arnold Goldman. Pearl Braude lighted the Menorah, chanting the Hebrew blessing, while Marjorie Ann Sanek spoke the words in English. Personal communication of Pearl F. Braude. Also the Service of Dedication program.
2. Harry Wachenheimer was the father of Fred Friendly, president of CBS News and later dean of the Columbia School of Journalism. Fred Friendly took his name from his mother, Therese Friendly Wachenheimer. Because it was cumbersome for an announcer, Friendly changed his name from Ferdinand Friendly Wachenheimer at the behest of the director of Providence radio station WEAN, where he began his broadcasting career.
3. The programs of the ceremonies and services are in both the Temple Beth-El archives and RIJHA.
4. *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, April 23, 1954.
5. See notes 3 and 4.
6. Obituary, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:95, (May) 1956. See also David C. Adelman, "Mattie and her Congregation," *ibid.* 2:108–111, (May) 1956.
7. Pearl Braude wrote in the spring of 1954:
   > One of the two welded bronze columns flanking the Ark of the New Temple Beth-El will be shipped to Venice, Italy a few days after our formal dedication ceremonies are over. The nine-foot column, designed and hand wrought by the New York sculptor, Ibram Lassaw, will occupy the center of the American exhibition at the U.S. Pavilion in Venice. In that city, starting in June, works of art representing nations the world over will be displayed for prize awards. Andrew Ritchie, director of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, who saw the columns in an unfinished state in the Lassaw studio, was so impressed with the design that he immediately asked permission to allow the removal of one of the columns from the sanctuary. Nelson and Winthrop Rockefeller, patrons of the Museum, are paying the cost of shipment and reinstallation. . . . these columns . . . were inspired by the description in the Bible of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, the columns called Jachim and Boaz and representing the "the pillar of cloud" by day and "the pillar of fire" by night for the children of Israel in the days of their

wanderings. . . . Percival Goodman . . . [desired] to collaborate with painters, sculptors, and other artisans to give his buildings inspirational beauty and warmth.

Temple Beth-El Bulletin, April 23, 1954.

8. *Ibid.*

9. About these mosaics, Pearl Braude wrote:

> The entrance to the main Sanctuary is heralded by three brilliantly colored mosaics created by Professor Walter Feldman of the Art Department of Brown University. Mr. Feldman was formerly associated with the Yale School of Design. . . . The mosaics were inspired by three of the verses from Scripture which are sandblasted into the main windows of the Temple. The theme of the verses . . . is the spiritual history of the Sanctuary known as Beth-El. One deals with Jacob's dream of the ladder leading up to heaven, a dream which took place at Beth-El. The center mosaic is exhortatory, urging the people of Beth-El to put away their alien gods. The third deals with the purification of Beth-El by Jacob, his building of an altar, and his triumphant proclamation "God is in Beth-El." In the borders there appear as decorative motifs the marks of cantillations that go with these passages.

Ibid.

10. Early in 1954, Pearl Braude wrote:

> . . . [The] four mosaics at the main entrance. . . , depicting the four seasons of the year and with them the symbols of the Jewish holidays and festivals, . . . [will be] a kind of prayer writ in stone so that at all times during the year—fall, winter, spring, and summer—men, women, and children will be walking in and out of Beth-El in joy, reverence, and dignity.

Ibid.

In a personal communication Mrs. Braude modifies this description: "Three mosaics represent the holidays celebrated during the four seasons of the year beginning with Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and ending with Shavuot. The fourth mosaic deals exclusively with symbols representing the Sabbath."

11. *Ibid.*

The ark curtains have since been replaced twice, most recently by draperies designed and executed by Ina Golub, New Jersey textile artist. Ms. Golub, self-styled fiber artist and designer, is an eminent creator of Jewish ceremonial textiles, such as ark curtains and Torah mantles. Ms. Golub's Beth-El ark curtains have an elaborately appliquéd valance. See *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, March 17, 1986 and Ina Golub's advertising brochure (1977). Temple Beth-El archives.

12. *Ibid.*

13. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 419–420.

14. See note 7.

15. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 420.
16. Pearl Braude writes (personal communication): "I was officially selected to head the decorations committee by Norman Fain, chairman of the Building Committee."
17. Pearl Braude writes (personal communication):
    The [linen] draperies in my husband's study, which I designed and executed by the silk screen method, were stylized faces representing the races of man, and below each row of faces was the phrase written in modern Hebrew calligraphy "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity," a line from the Book of Psalms [Psalm 133].
18. The coverlet has recently been replaced by one also executed by Ms. Golub matching the ark curtains and also characterized by appliquéd borders. See note 11.
19. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 420f.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
21. The merger comprised: 1. The Lenard Azedeck Congregation (1896); 2. South Providence Hebrew Congregation (1901); 3. Machzekas Hadas Congregation (1907); and 4. Congregation Bais Isruel Anshoy Hestreich (1907). See "Chartered Organizations," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 2:85, (May) 1956. Congregation Sons of Abraham later joined the consortium, forming Congregation Shaare Zedek-Sons of Abraham.
    Rabbi Braude wrote in 1985: "What of Shaare-Zedek's future? The neighborhood is no longer Jewish. All but one or two of the worshipers get to the synagogue by car. There are no children. There is a daily *minyan*, but not at night when it is dangerous to venture abroad. The youngest member of the congregation's board is 70. . . . Joseph Margolis, who treats the structure as an heirloom . . . regards Shaare Zedek as the last living link to the once flourishing Jewish community of South Providence. See William G. Braude's "A Sabbath Tour of Synagogues in Providence and Vicinity" in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 9:340–355, (November) 1985, pp. 346–347. Rabbi Braude wrote elsewhere: "When Beth-El on Broad Street was sold to Shaare Zedek, an Orthodox congregation, there circulated the quip, 'Braude was determined to turn Beth-El into an Orthodox *shul*, and by golly he had his way.'" See W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 422–423.
22. Pearl Braude recalls (personal communication): "Among the events in the community associated with the Tercentenary was a special exhibition of 'Jewish Ceremonial Art' at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. Pearl F. Braude was chairman. A beautiful catalogue was produced with a cover design by Professor Walter Feldman of Brown University. The art came from homes and synagogues from all over Rhode Island. Among the items were ceremonial objects collected by Ida (Mrs. Archibald) Silverman, items taken from the Temple Emanuel [Providence] Art Galley [Natalie (Mrs. Abraham) Percelay, director],

and a Torah mantle from Temple Beth-El, designed and executed by Pearl F. Braude."

23. Beryl Segal, "The History of the Temple [Beth-El] Minyan," June 19, 1980, manuscript in the RIJHA.
24. Hanukkah is the eight-day Festival of Lights commemorating the re-dedication of the Second Temple by Judah. It features the lighting of candles on eight successive evenings, adding one candle each evening mounted on an 8–branched candelabrum, using a lighted candle from a ninth socket.

    Purim is the festival of Esther commemorating deliverance from extermination of the Jews of the Persian Empire.

    Lag Ba-Omer is a minor festival. The 49 days from the second day of Passover was traditionally a period of mourning for the many misfortunes and persecutions suffered by the Jews. The restrictions are lifted on Lag Ba-Omer, the 33rd day of the period of mourning, and weddings and celebrations are allowed. The historical reasons for the celebration are obscure.
25. Personal communication from Pearl Braude.
26. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 435.
27. See note 2.
28. Yahrzeit (Yiddish, not Hebrew) literally means "anniversary," and in this context more specifically the anniversary of someone's death. Observant Jews light a memorial candle or lamp in the home, where it burns from sunset to sunset. Also an annual prayer is said for the dead. The more Orthodox may also light a candle in the synagogue.
29. William G. Braude, "Harry Wolfson as Mentor," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7:140–148, (November) 1975, p. 146.
30. This procedure was followed for a while, but later was allowed to lapse.
31. Some of this correspondence is in the Temple Beth-El archives and some in RIJHA. The bulk of it, however, is among the Shankman papers in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.
32. *Twenty-five Years of Spiritual Leadership, A Tribute to Our Rabbi, William Gordon Braude, Ph.D., D.D.*, November 15, 1957. Special issue of the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*.
33. Rabbi Maurice Davis, the son of Jacob and Sadie Gertrude Davis, was born in Warwick, R.I. on December 15, 1920. He graduated from Classical High School in Providence and attended Brown University from 1939 to 1941. He received an A.B. degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1945 and an M.H.L. from Hebrew Union College in 1949, when he was ordained. He entered the Temple Beth-El religious school at age six and continued through the religious high school. He had his bar mitzvah at Temple Beth-El in 1933 and was confirmed there in 1935. Rabbi Davis wrote in a personal communication (1988):

    I studied with Rabbi Braude from the day he first came to Beth-El. When I was in high school, Rabbi Braude would pick me up at

Classical [High School], and I would drive with him to wherever he was scheduled to speak. On the way I would read to him and translate from the *Humash* [the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, the Torah]. On the way home he would recite a line from the Bible and I would repeat it, until I had memorized whole portions of the Torah. On other occasions we would walk for miles while I drank in his every word.

When I entered Brown, he changed the Hebrew course he was teaching from Beginner's Hebrew to Advanced Hebrew. The next year he changed it to Talmud. I was his only student. Still later, whenever I would visit him, he would turn each visit into a study session. He was my only rabbi.

Rabbi Davis continues his account:

For the past 30 years I have preached at Beth-El on the night after Thanksgiving. My mother, Sadie Davis, was born on Thanksgiving, and Rabbi Braude asked me to preach at Beth-El on the night following her birthday in her honor. . . . My mother was president of the Beth-El Sisterhood. . . .

The Thanksgiving sermon in 1987 was delivered by the three *Rabbis Davis*, Rabbi Jay R. Davis, Student Rabbi Michael Davis, and I. . . . [Jay R. and Michael Alan Davis are his sons.]

I co-officiated with Rabbi Braude at the wedding of my sister [on February 24, 1946]. . . . Thirty-two years later [September 24, 1973], also at Beth-El and also with Rabbi Braude, I co-officiated at the wedding of my sister's daughter, my niece. . . .

He served as rabbi of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation from 1956 to 1967 and of the Jewish Community Center of White Plains, N.Y., from 1967 to 1987. He received an honorary D.D. degree from Hebrew Union College in 1974. In 1972 he began a vigorous campaign to combat cults. Now retired, he lives in Florida, but summers in Narragansett, R.I.

34. The words are Aramaic, not Hebrew. They connote the plaintive prayer that ushers in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. In synagogues and temples around the world the cantor chants the *Kol Nidrei* on the eve of Yom Kippur. It asks that all unfulfilled vows be nullified and all transgressions be forgiven. The melody of the chant was included by Beethoven in his *Quartet in C-sharp Minor* and is regularly played at Reform Yom Kippur services as a violin or cello solo accompanied by organ.

35. Pearl Braude comments (personal communication): "In time the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis both sponsored and encouraged the building of Hebrew day schools throughout the country." In Providence, Conservative Temple Emanuel operates the Ruth and Max Alperin Schechter Day School. There is no Reform counterpart.

36. The *yeshivah* was a rabbinical college or seminary. In the United States the term was applied to a secondary Hebrew school, or (as in this case)

to an elementary school in which both religious and secular subjects are studied.

37. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 422–423. Rabbi Braude writes: "What in 1948 appeared to be preposterous has now [1981] become accepted. In cities where there is a day school, the local Reform rabbis generally send their children to it."
38. Joseph Conforti, "Irving Fain and the Fair Housing Movement in Rhode Island, 1958–1970," *Rhode Island History* 45:23–35, (February) 1986.
39. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 406–408.
40. Although the physical relationships have not changed, his successors have not appeared to have this difficulty.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Turbulent '60s and Social Action

Early in 1963 it was announced that there were no less than 702 children in the religious school, 270 of whom were attending midweek Hebrew classes. During this period the Social Action Committee became noticeably more active. Irving J. Fain was certainly a motivating force, although national trends contributed to the contentious environment. In a letter dated January 15, Ernest Nathan, chairman of the Social Action Committee, received a letter from the National Council of the Churches of Christ acknowledging a gift of $25 from the congregation for the restoration of Negro churches in Georgia. The National Conference on Religion and Race, meeting in Chicago on January 17, passed a resolution appealing to the American people "to act courageously . . . to eliminate racism permanently and decisively, to seize the historic opportunity . . . [to heal] an ancient rupture in the human family." On January 21 the board adopted a resolution advocating the outlawing of discrimination in housing and sent copies to the governor and the Rhode Island General Assembly. It read as follows:

> On January 5, 1959 this Board of Trustees passed unanimously a resolution on this subject [discrimination and segregation in housing], which called for legislation in our state. We now reaffirm this declaration of principle. . . .
>
> Housing discrimination and segregation is a denial of the religious doctrine of the equality and dignity of all men under the common fatherhood of God. We, therefore, call upon our congregants:
>
> • To free themselves of stereotypes, bias, prejudice, fear, hate, based on race or color, religion, or origin;

- To welcome into their neighborhoods all persons on their individual merits, irrespective of race or color, religion, or origin;
- To work alone and with others to help integrate non-white families into previously all-white neighborhoods; [and]
- To persuade by precept and example their families, friends, and neighbors to make progress toward the above goals.

We call upon the Governor and the General Assembly of our state to pass speedily an effective, comprehensive fair housing law, and to enforce it with vigor and justice.

Although the resolution was passed without dissent, questions about the role of the congregation in such sensitive matters raised some doubts. At the board meeting of February 11, 1963 President Adler reviewed the adoption by the board of the Fair Housing Resolution. Copies had been sent to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and Majority and Minority Leaders of the state House and Senate. The president raised serious questions about the function of the Social Action Committee. He questioned the right of the board to speak out on controversial issues for the whole congregation. He spoke of the action of the Baptist Convention, which felt its role was education rather than action.

Chairman Nathan replied that the Social Action Committee had a moral duty to speak out and be heard on important issues such as the "Negro problem" ("Negro" was still a respectable term). Adler spoke of a request by the Social Action Committee that copies of the Fair Housing Resolution be sent to five religious organizations, six civil rights groups, four newspapers, and all 164 members of the legislature. He maintained that the trustees when elected were not authorized to speak for the entire congregation in matters of social action affecting the community. Irving J. Fain, who was in the forefront of the fair-housing campaign, took vigorous exception to this position, maintaining that favorable legislation could be obtained only through positive action. He spoke of the plight of Negroes in the community in housing and employment and reiterated that the congregration had a moral obligation to help them. Much heated discussion followed. It was decided to devote the next board meeting to the question of who is speaking on the issue—the rabbi, the board of trustees, or the whole congregation, which might well be divided on issues.

The discussion continued at the meeting of March 4. Many felt

that it was the role of the Social Action Committee to educate members. However, it should not become involved without the consent of the entire congregation in politically controversial matters, not within temple purview.

Fain also alerted the members about the upcoming United States Supreme Court decision on prayer in the schools and reported on his attendance at the southeast regional meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, where there was a special conference to discuss the role of Jews in the changing South. The result of the conference was recognition of the importance of involving members in the Union's Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. The congregation later acted on the U.A.H.C. resolution.

On Friday, May 10, 1963 the congregation of Temple Sinai in Cranston, Rhode Island dedicated its new synagogue, only the second Reform congregation in the state. The ceremony was addressed by Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and was attended by several representatives from Temple Beth-El.

The annual meeting was held on May 19, 1963. The newly elected officers were: Walter Adler, president; Dr. Samuel Pritzker, Benjamin Ruttenberg, and Dr. Herman B. Marks, vice presidents; Raymond G. Franks, treasurer; and Mrs. Robert Hochberg, secretary. They were installed by Irving J. Fain. Pursuing his consistent theme, he spoke of the duty of a religious organization to educate its members about its moral obligations in all community problems, and more specifically in civil rights, making Judaism a significant force in everyday life. Speaking to the issue of the role of a congregation in social concerns, Rabbi Braude related a parable about "a shul with a pool." The synagogue (the *Shul*) should be concerned, not with trivia, he said, but with study, worship, and deeds of mercy—helping others.

The budget for the next year had grown to $161,350 with a projected deficit of $2,150. The bank mortgage, on the other hand, had declined to $75,000. The Cemetery Committee noted that the City of Providence proposed to lay sewers across part of the cemetery land, but hoped that the congregation might acquire in a swap some city-held land adjacent to the cemetery. It planned conversations with the city to this end. The Religious Education Committee announced that there would be 65 confirmands in the present class.

William Robin was engaged for another three years as temple administrator at a progressively increasing salary of $9,000, $9,500, and $10,000, up from $8,500, evidence of satisfaction with his performance. The Artists Series program was announced for the following year, featuring among others operatic mezzo-soprano Jean Madeira, wife of Francis Madeira, conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, and pianist Byron Janis. Ernest Nathan, reporting for the Social Action Committee, spoke of participation by Rabbi Braude and himself and other members of the congregation in a mass rally to protest segregation and the disgraceful behavior of authorities in Birmingham, Alabama, and also in support of the Fair Housing Bill pending in the Rhode Island General Assembly.

During September a special subcommittee of the Social Action Committee considered a draft of a policy statement on racial issues to be disseminated to the congregation and titled "A Call to Racial Justice." Vigorous discussion ensued as to how much autonomy was granted to the Social Action Committee when engaging in outside activities. The draft document was amended to include appropriate restraints. The subject was further debated at the December board meeting, with Irving J. Fain strongly advocating an aggressive position. As stated in the minutes: "The basic issue seemed to be whether and to what extent the Committee on Social Action should be permitted to participate in activities other than congregational activities without the approval of the Board of Trustees." Fain argued that such review could result in undue delay. Ultimately, it was resolved "that the Board of Trustees was unwilling that the Social Action Committee should participate in public activities or make public statements without prior approval."

As the year closed, a printed pamphlet titled "A Call to Racial Justice" was sent to all members under the imprimature of the congregation and subtitled "Temple Beth-El's Program for Racial Justice." Its preamble stated: "The resolution of America's race problems is not the exclusive responsibility of any single group of Negroes or Whites, of Christians or Jews, but rather it is the collective responsibility of all Americans." The subtitles were: I. Racial Justice in our Congregation's Administrative Policies; II. Racial Justice in our Congregation's Educational, Cultural, and Worship Programs; III. Racial Justice in our Congregation's Cooperative Relationships with Other Institutions; and IV. Racial Justice in the

Lives of our Individual Congregants. Responsibility for carrying out its mandates was assigned to the Social Action Committee. Although the document was couched in general terms and addressed various types of bigotry, its main thrust, as might be expected from its vigorous sponsorship by Irving J. Fain, had to do with discrimination in housing.

During October the board received from Past President Walter I. Sundlun a request to permit the hanging in the temple of a picture showing him and Mrs. Sundlun carrying the Eternal Light into the new temple. After much discussion it was ruled "that only pictures of deceased persons be so memorialized and that a 'hornets' nest' would be stirred up if Mr. Sundlun's request was granted." It was the consensus "that members should develop a sense of serving instead of being rewarded and recognized."

Shortly thereafter on November 22, 1963 President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. A special memorial service held to mark the tragic event was duly noted in the minutes of the board.

Early in 1964 the board considered a recommendation that Cantor Gewirtz be offered a three-year contract at $10,000 per year beginning in the fall of 1964. There was opposition to the proposal, as there was no precedent for such an extended contract for a cantor, but in the end it was approved.

In April of 1964 the Sisterhood celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special luncheon. The following winter it conducted a meeting on civil rights and social action. The Social Action Committee in March was host to a group called the East Side Good Neighbor Unit. The affair was attended by 100 persons from all East Side churches. A "Negro" minister and a "Negro" social worker addressed the meeting, and speakers urged that anyone knowing of available housing inform the Social Action Committee. A letter from Irving J. Fain was read, written on stationery of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, of which he was chairman and a prime mover, advocating adoption of the 10 percent of temple dues requirement of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Presumably these added funds would help support the programs of the Commission. Beth-El had been sending 10 percent of dues, but not including religious school tuitions in its reckoning. U.A.H.C. principles called for inclusion of members' dues and assessments, pew rentals and taxes, religious school tuitions, and "other like

income." After a special committee had reflected on how to deal with this unwelcome mandate, the board decided against any further payment and the U.A.H.C. was so informed.

By April the bank mortgage had been reduced further to $59,000, certainly a manageable obligation. At this time a letter was received from Rabbi Gurland requesting permission to accept another pulpit if offered. The board accepted his conditional resignation, applauded him for his services, and sent him forth with its blessing and "a feeling of pride in his achievements." The executive committee was authorized to seek a successor, if indeed a vacancy occurred. Gurland had, in fact, as stated in his letter, already "entered into active negotiations with another congregation."

Soon thereafter, at the annual meeting of May 1, 1964, a second letter from Rabbi Gurland was read announcing that he had been elected rabbi of the recently organized Reform congregation of Temple Sinai in Cranston. As an expression of mutual goodwill and affection, he concluded:

> Though at some future occasion I hope to have the opportunity of giving expression to my thoughts on my years at Beth-El, I would like to express briefly my deepest appreciation to all those who have become so much a part of my life—both co-workers and congregants—and particularly to Rabbi Braude who has been to me what I believe few rabbis have ever been to a colleague either older or younger.

President Adler, after reading the letter, spoke of the congregation's feelings: "This resignation was accepted with regret and with heartfelt good wishes of the congregation to Rabbi Gurland and to his family for a bright future in his new affiliation with our good neighbor Temple Sinai of Cranston, Rhode Island." He served that congregation until the late 1970s, but later joined the faculty of Western New England College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The newly elected officers were Dr. Samuel Pritzker, president; Benjamin Ruttenberg, Dr. Herman B. Marks, and Kenneth Logowitz, vice presidents; Raymond S. Franks, treasurer; and Mrs. Robert Hochberg, secretary.

The budget showed an impressive increase of $10,500 in one year to $171,837 with a projected deficit of $2,637. There were now 986 member families. A detailed report from the executive director

provided a comprehensive picture of the activities of the temple. There were daily services in the chapel from 5:45 to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays. There were also services in the sanctuary on Friday evening and Saturday morning, and on the High Holidays. The religious school operated on Saturdays and Sundays, and on weekdays as well. There were 700 children involved in the Sunday program and 270 in weekday Hebrew classes. Instruction extended from kindergarten through high school. Subject matter embraced the origin of Judaism, history, literature, language, customs, and ceremonies. The religious school provided junior congregational services on Saturday and a junior choir. Training for bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, and confirmation was provided by the school with involvement of the rabbis and cantor.

An extensive adult education program included the following:

1. The Festival Forum, with leading scholars, authors, and lecturers from the United States and abroad.
2. The Rabbi's courses on Ethics of the Fathers, Psalms, and Torah with Rashi[1] commentaries and others.
3. Other courses given by the school director in beginner and intermediate Hebrew, the history and structure of the prayer book, and related subjects.

The Adult Education Institute held classes on Tuesday evenings on Great Jewish Affirmations (eight lectures), Judaism of the Synagogue (four sessions), beginner's Hebrew Reading, and beginner's Conversational Hebrew. There were six Monday morning sessions on Ethics and *Midrash* (literature on interpretation of the Scriptures).[2] A course titled "First Look at Judaism" was given on Wednesday evenings. A study group on *Humash* (the Pentateuch)[3] and *Rashi* held on Saturdays at noon was led by Rabbi Braude. In this class the weekly Torah portion[4] with Rashi's commentary was read and studied under Rabbi Braude's guidance.

Rabbi Braude described later how he came to lead the study group in *Humash* (the five books of Moses, i.e. the Pentateuch or the Torah) and Rashi (acronym for Rabbi Shelomoh Yitzhaki [1040–1105], French Bible and Talmudic scholar and commentator, who wrote in Hebrew). He explained the venture "as a surrogate between noon and 1 p.m. for the 'Happy Hour' on a bar mitzvah Sabbath." It originated in this way:[5]

> In 1954 we [had] moved into the new Temple on Orchard Avenue. Membership went over a thousand, and Sabbath after Sabbath there was a bar mitzvah at 11:00 a.m. followed by a "Happy Hour," before the bar mitzvah dinner. That hour we hoped we could utilize for study. It so happened that our oldest son Joel Isaac [Braude] had just become bar mitzvah, and was anxious to continue his Hebraic studies. Jerome Gurland, the newly appointed Assistant Rabbi, suggested that we use Saturday's "Happy Hour" for such purposes and that he would join us. We decided to study *Humash* and Rashi, and invited others to do so. Among the steadfasts in the group were Beryl Segal, Paul Chernov, Professors Albert and Helen Salzberg, Professor Marvin and Pearl Pitterman, Dr. George Meissner, Albert M. Schaler, Samuel J. Cohen, and Stanley Freedman. So we escaped the "Happy Hour." People became aware that between 12 noon and 1 p.m. the Rabbi led a group in study.[6] During the years we went through *Humash* and Rashi from Genesis through Deuteronomy. Then we read Nachmanides'[7] Commentary from Genesis through Leviticus. After that we proceeded to the Maimonides Reader.[8] We began reading the *Tanna dêbe Eliyyahu* [*The Lore of the School of Elijah*],[9] published in translation in 1981 by Rabbi Braude and Professor Israel Kapstein of Brown University],[10] but had to stop in 1982 because I became involved in translating Bialik and Ravnitsky's *Sefer ha-Aggadah*, "Book of Jewish Lore."[11]

Robin's account of temple activities continued with a description of the growing library, which now contained some 10,000 volumes and circulated 6,000 books in a year. Other functions included bar and bat mitzvahs, confirmations, and *oneg shabbat* (literally "Sabbath delight," a collation after the Friday evening service, often accompanied by a cultural event). There were Sisterhood, Brotherhood, youth group, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout meetings in the meeting hall. Some 20 committees held frequent business sessions, while the board met monthly.

A special executive committee meeting was held on May 7 to select a successor to Associate Rabbi Gurland. Rabbi Braude had visited the Hebrew Union College campuses in Cincinnati and New York City, where he interviewed several candidates. After meeting with Rabbi Herman J. Blumberg on three occasions, Rabbi Braude was impressed with his concern for youth, education, and religious training and his earnestness, directness, and sincerity. Rabbi Braude considered him his first choice.

Rabbi Blumberg was born in Philadelphia in 1935, where he attended the public schools. He was confirmed at Congregation Rodeph Shalom and continued his religious education in the Normal Department of Gratz College in Philadelphia. He received a B.A. degree in European history from the University of Pennsylvania in 1956. During this period he was active in the National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) program and worked as a leader in the NFTY-UAHC (Union of American Hebrew Congregations) weekend conclave and summer camp programs. He then attended the New York branch of the Hebrew Union College—Institute of Religion. He received the M.A.H.L. degree and was ordained in Cincinnati in 1963. On leave of absence from his studies from January to August 1960, he studied privately in Jerusalem toward a degree of D.H.L. and traveled in Europe. He was student rabbi in several communities, and for two years following ordination served as United States Army chaplain at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Newly ordained rabbis usually started at a salary of $8,500. Since he had already served two years, he requested a stipend of $10,000 plus pension. It was recommended that he be engaged at this salary, plus pension and travel expenses from Philadelphia. Upon arrival for an interview he was introduced to the executive committee by Rabbi Braude. The duties of assistant rabbi were explained to him. They included pastoral duties, religious school teaching as specified by the school director, adviser to PROVTY (Providence Temple Youth), teaching of bar and bat mitzvah candidates, and involvement in Brotherhood and other congregational programs.

Four days later he appeared before the board, where the recommendation was tentatively ratified for submission to the congregation in accordance with the bylaws. Arthur J. Levy, while expressing his approval, "wished to be recorded as suggesting that in the future the Board of Trustees should have the opportunity . . . to evaluate the experience and qualifications necessary for this important position . . . well before the candidates are interviewed." Blumberg was finally elected by the congregation at an "open board meeting" on June 11. The congregation also met with Mrs. Blumberg, the former Paula Popkin, who like her husband was a graduate of the New York branch of Hebrew Union College—Institute of Religion, where she had specialized in Judaic studies. She had had considerable experience in supervising and guiding Jewish teenagers both individually and in groups.

Prior to the High Holidays, the board acted to enforce the collection of seat tickets by the ushers. In response to a plea from the ushers, it was ruled that in the interest of simplicity (and economy, no doubt) they might wear dark suits rather than the customary formal attire at funeral services in the synagogue. President Pritzker, expressing his concern about the need for attracting younger members to the congregation, noted that of the 2,854 individuals comprising the membership 42 percent were over 50 years of age and 73 percent over 40 years.

As the year was coming to an end, Religious School Director Seymour Krieger was re-appointed for another year. It was further recommended that the salary of Temple Librarian Maryland (Mrs. John) Estes be re-evaluated in light of her valuable services to the library. Rabbi Braude later wrote of her:[12]

> Beth-El had been fortunate in having as its librarian Maryland Estes, who served for twenty-six years. An Episcopalian, she learned enough Hebrew to handle Hebrew books so well that Orthodox Rabbis consulted her concerning them. Because her capacity to locate any volume in the library was uncanny, I took to calling her 007, the code number for the secret agent in James Bond movies.

Air conditioning had always been under consideration for the Orchard Avenue structure. Although ducts had been installed to service the sanctuary and the meeting hall, the air-conditioning equipment had not been included in the original construction in order to save money. There were times during the High Holidays when hot weather had made attendance at the services an uncomfortable experience. A cost figure of $15,000 was mentioned, but this would suffice only if no more than 400 persons were in attendance, not a solution for the Holidays. Expert opinion was sought.

Eventually in May 1965 it was reported to the board that the ducts provided for the sanctuary and meeting hall were indeed adequate, but that air-conditioning these spaces could cost some $38,000. A long discussion followed. Rabbi Braude, who disliked air-conditioning, questioned its need in cool New England, claiming that only once in his long experience at a Yom Kippur service was it uncomfortable because of extreme heat. He furthermore seriously challenged it as an unnecessary expenditure, as the temple was used little during the summer. It was explained that it had always been

intended to incorporate air conditioning, and, if provision had not been made, the cost would have been much higher. In the end Rabbi Braude lost the contest. Installation for the sanctuary and meeting hall was recommended at a cost not to exceed $40,000. The board by a 17 to 10 vote authorized a bank loan if necessary to cover the expenses. At the subsequent annual meeting on May 16 it was explained that there would be not only increased comfort on the Holidays, but also availability of the temple for summer weddings and bar mitzvahs. The vote to ratify was favorable by a large majority.

As the year 1965 began, the bank mortgage had been reduced to $45,000. Irving J. Fain, continuing his promotion of Social Action, invited members to attend a meeting in March at the Religious Action Center in Washington, D.C. He advocated an allocation by the congregation for needs not directly related to religious matters or the temple. These "matters of concern" included interfaith movements, rebuilding of bombed Negro churches, or any aspects of our society where a "show of support" would be needed and welcomed. He suggested five percent of the budget, or roughly $8,000, for this period. There was no groundswell of enthusiasm for the proposition, and no vote was taken.

The Social Action Committee, however, continued to be active in the realm of fair housing. Its main project at the time was helping to organize a "Dependable Service Co.," which would be black-operated to offer part-time employment or work not requiring specific skills. This project was clearly consistent with the goals of Irving J. Fain.

The board approved a Religious School Committee recommendation to re-engage Seymour Krieger as school director for five years at a salary of $12,000, $12,500, and $13,000 for the first three years. Several board members spoke glowingly of his talents and his competence in a demanding role. William L. (Will) Robin's salary as temple administrator was increased by $1,000 and then by $500 each year until it had reached $13,000.

Continuing his pressure for a "Fund for Social Concern" based on an allotment of five percent of the budget, Fain in April presented a four-part proposal with the following provisions:

1. It should be a regular part of the budget.
2. It should include a specific fund for contributions for social concerns.

3. It should be cumulative and be carried over from year to year.
4. Rules should be established for control of expenditures.

Fain was strongly of the opinion that Temple Beth-El could demonstrate its leadership by being the first congregation in the United States to exhibit concern for less privileged persons outside of the temple community. The proposal was tabled for the present, and a committee including Fain was appointed to explore the proposal. In the meantime President Pritzker commended Fain for his many good works and particularly for his success in bringing about passage of the Fair Housing Bill in the current General Assembly session. Speaking later on behalf of the special committee, Fain reported that it had approved his concept of a budgetary allocation. Several members expressed concern. The board in the end approved creation of the fund, but ruled that it would be supported only by voluntary contributions. Regulations governing the fund were to be drawn up and reviewed by the Laws Committee.

Toward the end of the year Ernest Nathan reported on the status of the Fund for Social Concern. Arthur J. Levy, speaking as a lawyer, questioned the need for a fund of this nature which did not relate to temple purposes. He further doubted that this group could speak for all members. Walter Sundlun and Walter Adler, both lawyers, concurred vigorously. They were of the opinion that the "emergency" nature of the fund might be misguided and misinterpreted. Stanley Grossman and Dr. Harold R. Musiker argued that the congregation must extend its charity beyond those of the Jewish faith. Bernhardt wondered whether a temple was a truly charitable organization. Melvin L. Zurier advised that the fund was in accordance with principles established by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

In the end the report on the fund was approved, except that certain provisions "for emergency contributions" were deleted. The fund, it was said, would help to implement the biblical injunction to pursue justice. It would consist of voluntary contributions approved by the board. The fund would be used for activities and programs outside of normal internal activities of the congregation (local, regional, national, or international) relating to social justice, educational and humanitarian concerns, and pioneering and emergency projects "in which the synagogue's voice should be made manifest." The fund would be adminstered by the Fund for Social Concern,

which would be appointed and confirmed annually and would include the rabbis. All allocations would be approved by the board, with all assets maintained in a separate account.[13]

Other charitable activities of the congregation were not neglected. The Sisterhood worked actively for the blind, while the Brotherhood collected an amazing six tons of clothing for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

In the early spring of 1965 the massive voter registration drives of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in the South were in full swing. The activity reached its climax in March. The American Jewish Committee, together with other civil and religious organizations, was deeply involved in the publicity and planning for the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery in Alabama. After one false start due to terrorist acts, the historic five-day walk finally got under way on March 21 extending to the 25th. Twenty-three hundred blacks and several hundred whites participated in the demonstration under the protection of federalized Alabama National Guard troops. It attracted national and world-wide attention. Rabbi Braude traveled to Alabama and participated in the march. Although his involvement is not mentioned in the temple records, Rabbi Braude later described the episode:[14]

> During the 1950s and early 1960s "Social Action" was of passionate concern to me, as it was to Ernest Nathan, then president, to Irving Jay Fain, to Stanley Grossman, and to many others. And so in tandem with Rabbi Saul Leeman [of the Cranston, Rhode Island Jewish Center, soon to become Temple Beth Torah, and later Temple Torat Yisrael] I joined Martin Luther King's march to Montgomery, Alabama. But it was in Montgomery that I began to have a more sober view of the entire problem. It happened while visiting a Sephardi synagogue during the repast following a Thursday morning bar mitzvah. The woman seated next to me, who of course, knew that I was one of the marchers, all but turned her back upon me. Finally she faced me, glowering, "When are you going home?" I told her I would go the next day. And she went on: "Why did you come here? Helicopters and the U.S. Army have been protecting you along the route. Then you will go back North, denounce us, and make like a big hero while we remain here and take upon ourselves the mischief you wrought. These people, the whites of Montgomery, have been good to us, and you make our lives here so very difficult."
>
> Then and there, I realized that I was indulging in heroics with

impunity, blissfully unaware and unconcerned that others, specifically my brothers in the South, would have to pay the bill.

Still I do not regret my participation in the march and remain a liberal in the classic sense, espousing equality and very limited interference by government.

At this time Rabbi Braude introduced to the congregation a change which to older Reform members seemed boldly radical or at the very least controversial—wearing of the *yarmulka* (skullcap) in the sanctuary. It had long been the tradition in Orthodox and Conservative synagogues for males to wear a head covering—as likely in the old days to be the ordinary street hat or cap as a *yarmulka*. Many Reform congregations including Temple Beth-El had over the years opted for elimination of head covering and eventually made the bared head mandatory. The Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David in 1892 made the choice an optional one, but later bare heads for males became mandatory in imitation of the American custom of showing respect by baring one's head. In fact, males wearing hats or skullcaps were asked to remove them. This indeed happened at a special service. Rabbi Braude relates how he challenged the congregation on this issue and how his action was received:[15]

During my march to Montgomery, I noted that many blacks, and whites too, wore *yarmulkas* (skullcaps) which they called freedom caps. So many Jews with *yarmulkas* on their heads participated in the march that the *yarmulka* became a symbol of freedom.

The impact of the *yarmulka* as a "freedom cap" and my growing respect for Jewish tradition led me to give in 1965 the Rosh Hashanah sermon, "What I learned in Alabama about *yarmulkas*", at the end of which I put on a *yarmulka* as I pronounced the . . . [*She-heheyanu*, the blessing recited the first time a meaningful act is performed]. I was told afterwards that during the sermon some people wept. A few dared to applaud, and quite a number took *yarmulkas* out of their pockets and put them on their heads. Since no one in the congregation knew that I was about to cover my head—until that morning I always appeared in the pulpit with my head uncovered—the emergence of *yarmulkas* on men's heads was a complete surprise to me. Apparently some men setting out for Beth-El, because of their childhood memories, put *yarmulkas* in their pockets.

In my various affirmations of respect, indeed reverence, for

tradition I, in fact, came to realize that I voiced the convictions of many people in the congregation. An example: In the 1930s at a congregational dinner celebrating an anniversary, shellfish was served. But in 1979 a committee preparing for the congregation's 125th anniversary took it for granted that if a dinner be part of the festivities, that dinner had to be kosher.

The officers elected for the ensuing year at the annual meeting on May 16, 1965 were Dr. Samuel Pritzker, president; Kenneth Logowitz, Dr. Manuel Horwitz, and Ernest Nathan, vice presidents; Raymond S. Franks, treasurer; and Gertrude (Mrs. Robert) Hochberg, secretary. The budget for the next year was set at $173,685. With a projected income of $169,500, the estimated deficit would be $4,820. The Cemetery Committee reported the acquisition of 6,470 square feet from Standish-Johnson Co., which had advertising display signs at the north margin of the grounds. This replaced some land taken for the expressway. Further negotiations were under way to purchase an additional four parcels totaling 62,000 square feet. Fifty families had joined the congregation during the past year, bringing the total to 1001.

Later, the board approved at a cost of $15,630 the construction of a marble-clad building for a cemetery workshop, garage, and lavatories to replace buildings lost in the recent land condemnation. The building, it was noted, was "both beautiful and blends with the cemetery surroundings."

The Sisterhood announced the Artists Series concerts for the 1965–66 season. Four concerts were planned featuring star performers such as violinist Itzhak Perlman, pianist Rudolph Serkin, and Metropolitan Opera baritone Robert Merrill. The Sisterhood had so far donated to the Building Fund some $50,000 derived from the nine concerts of the Artists Series. Reports were received from 25 committees in all.

Aside from "Social Concern," the congregation in various ways continued its traditional good deeds. The board authorized the building of a sound-proof room for "Talking Books" recordings for the blind to be financed by a bequest from the late Helen (Mrs. Daniel) Donig. The Sisterhood was gratified that it could meet the strict requirements and high standards of the national "Talking Books" organization. Rabbi Blumberg traveled to Washington, D.C. in September to join in a protest (called "Vigil in Protest") against anti-Semitism in Russia. Sixty-five dollars was sent to the Israel

Synagogue Building Fund in honor of the 65th wedding anniversary of Archibald and Ida Silverman.

Double services were again ordered for the High Holidays. Air conditioning was in operation for the first time. The Reverend Halsey DeWolf Howe, Rector of neighboring St. Martin's (Episcopal) Church, was invited to one of the Rosh Hashanah services on the evening of September 26. He sent a long and gracious letter to Rabbi Braude, expressing his appreciation "for the kindness and courtesy with which members of your congregation greeted and welcomed me." He found the service "extremely interesting" and extended his thanks for the privilege of attending. He closed his letter with the traditional New Year greeting, which he believed to be the "proper" one: "*L'shonoh Tovoh Tikosevu V'sechosemu*".[16] This is a transliteration of the Hebrew for "May you be inscribed and sealed (in the Book of Life) for a good year" (i.e. "Happy New Year.").

The neighborliness with Christian congregations, which had been fostered by Rabbi Braude, was further manifested in a special Sunday service at the First Unitarian Church on November 28 celebrating "One Hundred Years of Friendship." Participating in the event with Rabbi Braude were the ministers of the Beneficent Congregational (Round Top) and First Unitarian Churches, the Reverends Arthur E. Wilson and Robert H. Schacht, respectively, and members of the three congregations. It celebrated the combined services of the three spiritual leaders totaling 100 years. Some 750 persons attended. The exercise was described by an observer as "touching." The three ministers, whom Rabbi Braude described as "liberal clergymen," were kindred spirits.

In the Fall the board received the resignation of the building custodian. This raised the question of whether the small cottage in the rear of the synagogue, which he rented as living quarters, should be demolished to provide more parking. President Pritzker discussed the matter with this writer. It was emphasized that this was an historic structure, dating from the federal period when the synagogue land was part of a farm operated by Moses Brown of the eminent Brown family of Providence. President Pritzker suggested that the Rhode Island Historical Society be asked to investigate its historical value. It was eventually saved from demolition and still stands awaiting an appropriate disposition.[17]

The year 1965 ended on a significant note. The celebrated Yiddish author Isaac Bashevis Singer, later a winner of the Nobel Prize for

Literature,was guest speaker at the Hanukkah Festival Forum. An eventful weekend began on Friday evening, December 17, when he addressed an audience of 400 worshipers. On Saturday evening he was present at the outdoor Hanukkah Menorah Lighting Ceremony at the main temple entrance. Early on Sunday morning he lectured to a Brotherhood breakfast audience of 140 members and guests. Later that morning he concluded his weekend in Providence with an appearance at an assembly of several hundred religious school students and parents. After reading two original unpublished short stories, he entertained questions from the children and participated in a discussion with them.

During the new year periodic contributions were made to various projects by the Fund for Social Concern. The major thrusts were civil rights and the cause of Soviet Jewry. Brown students were supported in their voter registration drive in Mississippi carried on at great personal sacrifice. Assistance to migrant workers in Mississippi, support of the student struggle for Soviet Jews, Boston public television station WGBH (apparently a favorite of Irving Fain's), the Selma (Alabama) Interreligious Project, and Project Mississippi were given grants of $25 to $50.

Early in 1966 President Pritzker expounded on the need of establishing an Endowment Fund. With a budget in excess of $170,000, a dependable source of supplementary income was essential. The concept of an endownment was approved, and later Melvin L. Zurier for the Laws Committee explained its nature and implementation. His report was accepted, and the Endowment Fund was established.

On February 26 the congregation gave recognition to its long-time religious school teachers by an Evening of Tribute for "150 years of service." Each of the six members of the faculty had taught at least 20 years—Rabbi Braude 34 years, Max Millman 32 years, Marion Strauss 23 years, Betty Presser 21 years, and J. Joslyn Presser and Samuel Stepak 20 years each.

In March, Brown University Vice President James P. Adams sent the following communication:

> I am enclosing herewith my check for $10 as a contribution to the work and welfare of the congregation and the Temple. I suggest that you assign it to such purpose as you may deem appropriate.
>
> I continue to reap spiritual rewards from the Sabbath Evening Services which I attend from time to time, and I cherish deeply

> the friendship of Rabbi Braude and Rabbi Blumberg and many of your people. With all good wishes for the approaching Passover Commemoration. . . .

Dr. Adams had been very friendly to the Jewish community, and in 1954 and 1955 at the time of the Tercentenary of the arrival of Jews in North America, he had given significant addresses at the George Washington letter ceremonies at Touro Synagogue in Newport and at a Sunday service at the First Baptist Meeting House in Providence sponsored by the Rhode Island State Council of Churches.[18] His letter was graciously acknowledged, and his contribution was applied to the Building Fund. Also in the spring, Rabbi Gershon Cohen, librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York (Conservative), was the guest lecturer at the Purim Festival Forum.

In April it was learned that temple Executive Director Robin would resign when his present three-year contract expired on May 31, 1966. The board was happy with Robin's four-year tenure and made every effort to persuade him to remain. It extolled him for his "diligence, integrity, and competence in a demanding role" and expressed its regret at his departure after "four years of outstanding service." At the annual meeting a tribute was paid to him, and he was presented with a large silver Paul Revere bowl for "his extreme conscientiousness, unusual diligence, and extraordinary patience."

The board selected as his successor Israel Karten, who had at one time been a teacher in the temple's religious school and was currently superintendent of the religious school at Temple Sinai in Cranston. The congregation of Sinai had been very happy with his performance during his four-year tenure. He was well known to members of the board, who considered themselves fortunate to have a candidate of his excellent qualifications. It was suggested that he could fill in at the religious school when needed. His salary was set at $9,500.

Rabbi Braude in April visited Israel, Vienna, Moscow, Belgrade, and London to observe the condition of Jews in those countries.

On May 15 at the annual meeting the slate of officers contained some changes: Dr. Pritzker, president; Maurice Hendel, Kenneth Logowitz, and Ernest Nathan, vice presidents; Raymond S. Franks, treasurer; and Martha (Mrs. Milton) Paisner, secretary. Martha Paisner was the daughter of Past President Samuel Kaplan. Gertrude (Mrs. Robert) Hochberg, retiring secretary, delivered a few gracious

remarks upon her departure. The budget was set at $198,946 with a projected deficit of $5,261. President Pritzker stressed the increasing diversity of the congregation and emphasized the need to accept changes in the services toward a more traditional mode:

> Ours is a heterogeneous congregation. We do not come from the same religious backgrounds, nor do we all have the same dedication to Judaism. Each seeks fulfillment as a Jew in his own way. However, the reformation of Judaism is a continuous process. . . . Maurice Eisendrath, president of the U.A.H.C. . . . urges Reform Judaism to continue the process of its reformation and to prevent past reforms from becoming so traditional as to constitute a new form of Orthodoxy. . . . Because something has been done in a specific manner for the past 10 or 15 years, we assume it has always been done this way and must continue. . . . If we permit no flexibility for change, . . . then this rigidity will be the greatest stumbling block in the path of future development of Temple Beth-El.

He praised his good working relationship with Rabbi Braude, who then reported on his European trip.

On September 15, 1966, Archibald Silverman, past president of the congregation and long-time trustee, died in his 87th year. He had been a prominent jewelry manufacturer and was affiliated with several financial institutions. He was an active participant and leader in Zionist affairs, Jewish charities, and a variety of communal and religious pursuits. (See obituary in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 4:515, [November] 1966.)

The Artists Series program for 1966–1967 featured several international star performers: violinist Itzhak Perlman, pianist Artur Rubinstein, Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, and the Bach Festival Chamber Orchestra.

The Cemetery Committee expressed much concern over the condition of the lawns and trees. The cost of rehabilitation was estimated by a contractor to be $5,000. As suggested by Professor Marvin Pitterman, experts from the Extension Service of the University of Rhode Island were consulted. They advised procedures that could be carried out by the regular custodians at a considerable saving. Inquiries about the possible purchase of land not used by the state could not yet be answered.

As the year closed, the Music and Choir Committee announced

that Cantor Gewirtz would be re-engaged for three years from June 1, 1967 at a salary of $11,500 for the first two years and $12,000 for the third year. He was given the option of renewing the contract at $12,500 for the fourth year and $13,000 for the fifth year.

Since the 13th Anniversary of the new synagogue occurred during the year, 1967 was designated as the Bar Mitzvah Year, and an appropriate celebration was planned. Executive Director Karten reported that the cost of operating the religious school was $42,000. With income from fees of only $15,000, the deficit was $27,000, underwritten by a temple subsidy. The admission of children of non-members and the level of fees were again debated, but no conclusions were reached.

The cemetery was a source of recurring problems. A bill for $8,000 was received from the City of Providence for sewage charges not planned for and assessed after the land was purchased. Further taxes of $896 were due because of zoning provisions which must be changed if such taxes were to be avoided in the future. Further, records regarding ownership of burial plots were found to be in poor order. Rehabilitation of the lawns was started, and additional help was hired for the spring and summer.

The Gala Weekend Celebration in honor of the temple's Bar Mitzvah was held May 5 to May 7. The theme of the festivities was a text from Ecclesiastes: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens." The weekend was initiated by a special worship service on Friday evening, May 5 with the theme "A time to speak and utter words of praise." For a Saturday evening champagne supper-dance the theme was "A time to laugh and dance," and finally on Sunday, May 7, 1967 the 112th annual congregational meeting was held with the theme "A time to build up."

New officers were elected at the annual meeting: Ernest Nathan, president; Kenneth Logowitz, Maurice Hendel and Melvin L. Zurier, vice presidents; Harold D. Fine, treasurer; and Bruce R. Ruttenberg, secretary. The budget, which continued to grow, was set at $186,424 with a projected deficit of $4,424. Both Executive Director Karten and Rabbi Blumberg were re-engaged for another year, the latter again as assistant rabbi at a salary of $10,000.

Since the year 1967 represented both Rabbi Braude's 60th birthday anniversary and the 75th anniversary of the temple's library, the

board offered resolutions taking cognizance of these events. Drawn up for the Laws Committee by Vice President Melvin L. Zurier, it read:

> The Board of Trustees proposes the following Resolution to be considered at the annual meeting of the Congregation on May 7, 1967.
> "WHEREAS, since 1932, William G. Braude has served the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David as Rabbi and counselor with distinction; and
> "WHEREAS, much recognition has come to William G. Braude as a scholar, teacher, author, and interpreter of Holy Writ, which recognition has reflected most favorably upon this Congregation, and
> "WHEREAS, during his tenure of over three decades the Congregation has flourished as a vital and vibrant part of the community, and
> "WHEREAS, under his guidance and advice the library's collection of Judaica has grown and the quality of its contents is recognized by many scholars who have come for research and study; now, therefore, be it
> "RESOLVED that the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David at its annual meeting held on May 7, 1967 being cognizant of the influence which William G. Braude, Rabbi and Scholar, has reflected upon this Congregation, does hereby designate the library of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David as the William G. Braude Library: and be it further
> "RESOLVED, that a suitable inscription indicating such designation be placed in a prominent place within the library."

The concept of naming the library in honor of Rabbi Braude had originally been suggested to President Pritzker by this writer. The resolutions were adopted by the congregation.

The Bar Mitzvah weekend celebration was followed by two further significant events. The first was a special Friday evening service with the Reverend Arthur E. Wilson of the Beneficent Congregational Church, Rabbi Braude's old friend, invited as speaker. Wilson had been one of the participants at the dedication of the Orchard Avenue building in 1954 and also at the "One Hundred Years of Friendship" service.

The final event of the Bar Mitzvah Year was the celebration on Wednesday evening, May 24 of the 75th anniversary of the founding

of the Temple library. Earlier, President Pritzker received a gracious letter from Rabbi Jacob K. Shankman[19] of New Rochelle, New York, Rabbi Braude's good friend and confidant (April 26, 1967):

> It is a joy to me to learn that Temple Beth-El is about to celebrate several significant events and I hope that I may be included in your festivities.
>
> It is a source of great satisfaction to me that you are celebrating Rabbi Braude's 60th birthday and that this significant milestone in his life coincides with the completion of 35 years of service to your congregation. In honor of these events, I am enclosing a check showing $1 per year for the years of his life, and $1 per year for his years of association with your congregation, and to round out the sum, I am adding $5 in his honor and in honor of your Temple library and making the entire check for $100 payable to the William G. Braude Judaica Fund.
>
> My friendship and affection for your Rabbi, my admiration for the faithfulness of his authentic Rabbinic service to your congregation, my understanding of the way in which he has inspired you to build your outstanding library—all these sentiments well up within me and I ask you to convey my warmest regards and congratulations to my wonderful friend and your devoted Rabbi.

The main address was delivered by the distinguished American Jewish historian, Salo Wittmayer Baron, since 1963 Professor Emeritus of Jewish History, Literature, and Institutions at Columbia University. He was at that time completing a term as Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies at Brown University. The *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* of May 18 called it a "most auspicious occasion in the long history" of the congregation, giving recognition to "the splendid collection of Judaica and Hebraica that grace the walls of the library." An exhibit of relevant material was prepared by Mrs. John J. (Maryland) Estes, the able temple librarian. At the time there were 13,000 volumes in the temple library.

In the wake of these happy occasions the congregation, as indeed the whole Jewish community, was aroused by the eruption on June 5 of the Six-Day War in Israel, which culminated on June 10 in a decisive Israeli victory.

A persistent move to invest temple funds in Israel bonds was considered unwise, and a majority of the Executive Committee was opposed. The Laws Committee further recommended against such

use of congregational monies, although it advised that individuals could make contributions with instructions that they be used solely to purchase Israel bonds, which could then be held by the temple. During a later emergency, however, the congregation authorized the purchase of Israel bonds under certain specified conditions. The board directed that $3000 donated by the Sisterhood be used to buy Israel Building Fund Bonds, which would be redeemable one year after purchase. At the outbreak of the war, the 1967 confirmation class voted to forego flowers and the usual party following the confirmation exercises and rather to donate the money to a special fund drive in behalf of the State of Israel. A cocktail party was planned on June 15 to honor Past President Pritzker upon his retirement from office. In view of the emergency, Dr. Pritzker requested that the party be canceled and the monies saved be invested in Israel bonds to be placed in the temple Endowment Fund. President Nathan regretfully, but with understanding, accepted the offer and recommended that the purchase be made in honor of Dr. Pritzker.

On the day following the start of hostilities in Israel, Rabbi Braude received a heartwarming letter from the Reverend Halsey DeWolf Howe, rector of neighboring St. Martin's Church (dated Monday, June 5):

> It was an honor and a privilege for me to worship with you this evening, and to add my own prayers for the peace of Jerusalem to yours and those of your congregation. I have just written letters to the President of the United States, our two Senators, and our Congressmen, urging their support of the territorial integrity of Israel and urging their efforts to restore and to ensure peace in that troubled part of the world.
>
> . . . we shall pray for the peace of the world, and for our brethren in Israel. . . .

During the year, the Fund for Social Action gave donations of $25 to $50 to the Center for Russian Jews, the Lippitt Tutorial Program (a one-to-one grade-school tutoring program for underprivileged—mostly black—children), Boston public television station WGBH, the Karen Or, Inc. (Institute for the Blind in Jerusalem), and Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A contribution of $25 to Father Groppi of Milwaukee was recommended in support of his fight for open housing, arousing considerable controversy in the board. After a lengthy

discussion, the proposal was defeated by a 14 to 1 vote. The Fund continued to show a bias in favor of projects relating to black civil rights and the State of Israel.

In the early fall the Artists Series concerts for 1967–1968 were announced. Among the featured performers were Spanish pianist Alicia DeLarrocha and famed violinist Isaac Stern.

A bequest of $5,000 was received from the estate of the late Alfred A. Fain, husband of the late Elizabeth Stoneman Fain and father of Past President Irving J. Fain. A long-time member and benefactor of the temple, he had died on March 26, 1966. The board applied the gift to the Endowment Fund, along with other recently received donations.

At this time President Ernest Nathan received a letter from Irving J. Fain (October 30):

> University Heights, Incorporated [UHI] is a Rhode Island corporation, organized for the purpose of redeveloping Lippitt Hill, with social goals predominant. We are in the midst of the construction program which, when completed, will include about 480 residences and 90,000 square feet of shopping center [space]. . . .
>
> The social goals of UHI are primarily racial integration, combined with economic integration. These twin goals have been easily achieved [thus far]. . . .
>
> The capital stock of UHI totals $300,000, half in common [stock] and half in convertible debentures. . . . This has been subscribed by a group of Rhode Islanders committed to our social goals and the Star Market Company, who will operate a supermarket in the shopping center.
>
> In order to assure the indefinite long-term holding of the common stock in the hands of those who, by their very nature, would support the social goals, I am about to contribute a total of about $75,000 of the securities of UHI [in equal amounts] to a number of religious, educational, and civil rights organizations, including Temple Beth-El, Brown University, Providence College, Rhode Island State Council of Churches, [and the] Catholic Interracial Council. . . .
>
> They do, however, carry a moral obligation; that is, to insure the continuation of the social goals of University Heights.
>
> I would be pleased to make a contribution of $5,000 of the capital securities of UHI to Temple Beth-El for the Fund for Social Concern. What strings are attached? Two! First, UHI and PRA

> [Providence Redevelopment Agency] and FHA [Federal Housing Administration] are all concerned that substantial holders of UHI securities share the social goals of UHI. Second, it should be the intention of the new holders to hold these securities for an indefinite period.
>
> I hope the authorities of the congregation will be willing to accept this gift which implies the acceptance of the two conditions. Since I hope to make the gifts . . . before the end of the year, I shall appreciate hearing from you. . . .

The Lippitt Hill area on the East Side of Providence had been in recent years a black settlement, and before that Jewish. It was razed for redevelopment with the displacement of many black families. Fain's action was further evidence of his dogged determination to keep the temple involved in "social concerns." His persistence was admired, as he was suffering from Hodgkin's disease, to which he eventually succumbed. The matter was referred to the Laws Committee, which found the offer acceptable. It voted unanimously to recommend acceptance of the securities "under appropriate conditions."

The University Heights development was racially integrated and contained the required number of federal "Section 8" apartments for limited income families or individuals. As this is written, Section 8 housing restrictions in the project have begun to expire and the whole complex was recently sold by the owners to real estate investors. Manager of the complex prior to the sale was Lyle S. Fain, son of Irving J. Fain.

The Social Action Committee voted to "adopt" the Roger Williams Head Start Program in black South Providence aimed at enriching the background of underprivileged preschool children. One hundred dollars was contributed to purchase a refrigerator-freezer needed in conjunction with its lunch program. Dr. Jason C. Siegel of the committee later reported that he was pleased with what he had seen of the program.

The temple was host to an exhibit of Israeli art December 4 to 8 presented by Murray Greenfield Galleries of Tel Aviv and New York. Based on 20 percent of the gross sales of objects, the Temple netted $574.20, which was considered a successful result.

As winter approached, the roof was found to be in poor condition, a prolonged chronic problem, which produced criticism of architect

Percival Goodman's specifications for the roof. Twenty-six leaks were found in the roof of the religious school. An expenditure of up to $15,000 was authorized for repairs. On closer inspection with the coming of spring, the roof was discovered, to the board's dismay, to be in a "shocking state of disrepair." The board reluctantly authorized an expenditure of up to $50,000 in lieu of the previous $15,000 appropriation.

As recommended by the Cemetery Committee, the board approved a $500 expenditure to survey the congregation's cemetery holdings. It was planned to negotiate with the state for the repurchase of land originally taken for highway purposes, but never used. After prolonged but successful negotiations, a worthwhile parcel of land was purchased from the state in 1970, appreciably increasing the acreage available for burials.

The incumbent officers were re-elected at the annual meeting of May 19, 1968, and Rabbi Blumberg was engaged for another year. The budget was set at $197,847, an all-time high, with expected income of $185,405 and an anticipated deficit of $11,442. Caught in an inflationary spiral and with an unexpected expenditure for roof repairs, the projected deficit of almost $12,000 was disheartening. An all-inclusive Fair Share Dues Plan was ordered to be instituted. A special committee was named to raise $12,000 on an emergency basis, and several board members donated $100 each as a nucleus.

President Nathan reported that the Endowment Fund had benefited from three "substantial" contributions from the Fain family: the $5000 bequest of Alfred A. Fain, Irving Fain's gift of University Heights, Inc. stock, both already announced, and a further personal donation by Irving Fain of $5,000. Twenty-two new families joined the congregation, which now numbered 1005. The religious school in the fall welcomed 528 registrants. The Second Annual Gala Champagne Ball, sponsored by the Sisterhood and Brotherhood, was held on May 18, the evening before the annual meeting.

In the waning years of the turbulent '60s, the leaders of the congregation were preoccupied with social concerns. The Social Action Committee in May created CURE, the Citizen's United Rehabilitation Enterprises, Inc. to rehabilitate and rebuild run-down housing. Fifteen hundred dollars was contributed to CURE by two members of the congregation. Contributions of $25 to $50 were

made by the Fund for Social Concern to Biafran Relief (famine in Nigeria), the Rhode Island Emergency Commission for Gun Control, television station WGBH in Boston, and Cesar Chavez's striking grape pickers in California.

Irving J. Fain urged a $50 contribution to the Jewish Peace Fellowship. The organization, among other peace-related activities, counseled young Jews about conscientious objector status during the Vietnam War. The request was defeated by a vote of nine to six. At Irving Fain's urgent request to reconsider, the matter was tabled while literature about the organization was obtained. It was learned from this material that the chairman of the executive committee was a lawyer who was touted in pamphlets as one to consult for legal counsel when filing for conscientious objector status. This was too much for the board, which, although under pressure from Fain, tabled the matter for good. A final item, Project Equality, was then presented by the Social Action Committee. It had to do with open employment, but attracted little support from the board. The Catholic Diocese of Providence would donate one-half of the $37,000 budget if the project was started. Temple Beth-El would contribute $150 if the proposal became a community enterprise. The proposal was held in abeyance for further study.

In a gesture more congruous with the temple's religious concerns, the congregation presented to the Barrington Jewish Center, the third and newest Reform congregation in Rhode Island, a *shophar* (ram's horn) as a modest gesture of friendship. The Artists Series for the 1968–69 season again featured Metropolitan Opera soprano Roberta Peters, as well as American pianist Ruth Laredo and the talented young pianist André Watts.

A reception for Rabbi Braude was held on Sunday, January 26 in honor of the publication of his latest book, the monumental two-volume, 995-page *Pesikta Rabbati*,[20] translated from the Hebrew and published by the Yale University Press Judaica Series. *The Pesikta* are a *Midrash* collection based on Torah. Rabbi Blumberg described the book as a classic contribution to Jewish literature and a rare contribution to Jewish scholarship. Four hundred persons attended the reception. The principal speaker was Judah Goldin, professor of classical Judaica at Yale and reputedly a great Jewish scholar. It was announced that Rabbi Braude was asked to teach a graduate seminar at Brown University in the fall of 1969.

A Connecticut family requested that their son be permitted to celebrate his bar mitzvah in Temple Beth-El in July 1969. The request was approved with four provisos: 1. that there be no conflict in dates with commitments to temple members, 2. that the boy be a member of a sister congregation not less than 50 miles from Providence, 3. that the boy be properly prepared and that the preparation be approved by Beth-El's rabbi, and 4. that the boy be a direct lineal descendant of a member of Temple Beth-El. Whether these criteria were met is not clear.

In the new year of 1969 "Social Concerns" were again prominent in the congregational records. In January the Fund for Social Concern contributed $25 to the Northern California Council of Churches as an expression of support for the striking grape pickers in that state and of recognition of the plight of migrant workers. The Fund also contributed $50 to rebuild yeshivahs (Hebrew schools) in poor neighborhoods destroyed by anti-Semitic vandals. A similar contribution was made to Voices, Inc. for the support of a dramatic presentation under the aegis of the Rhode Island School of Design. The production purportedly attempted to portray the attitudes, needs, and goals of the black community. A grant of $100 was sent to a school tutorial program in South Providence, now predominantly a black area. A renewed thrust to join the controversial Project Equality having to do with open employment, as previously described, aroused vigorous vocal opposition, but, after unspecified changes were made to meet several objections, the resolution was adopted by a vote of 15 to 4. Through the year, the Fund contributed to the Council for Concern for Russian Jewry, the Brown University Afro-American Student Cultural Fund, the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, and the *Keren Yaldenu* ("Our Child's Fund"), an organization which countered Christian prosyletizing. Rabbi Braude personally endorsed several of these proposals.

A request from Irving Fain for a vote to support a ban of the antiballistic missile system (ABM), considered in October at the biennial meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, was tabled after much discussion. Not all politically sensitive matters were eschewed. The board endorsed "the principles and goals of the Vietnam [War] Moratorium Day," which was held on October

15, 1969. A "special service for peace" was held the same day to underline the congregation's support.

At the behest of the board, President Nathan in February appointed a new Israel Affairs Committee to cultivate a favorable public image of the State of Israel. Its first event was a celebration of the 21st anniversary of the State of Israel at Temple Beth-El on Sunday, April 20.

In February the Sisterhood conducted its annual Interfaith Day. Rosalea (Mrs. Newton B.) Cohn, Sisterhood president, reported an attendance of 700 women at six workshops conducted by Rabbi Braude and Dr. Ernest S. Frerichs, professor of religious studies at Brown University.

Earl Morse, chairman of the board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, visited Temple Beth-El in April. In his address he described the present status of Reform Judaism in America. There were 740 Reform Congregations with a membership of one million persons. They conducted seven summer camps serving 5,000 children and youth groups embracing 30,000 participants. Yet he was personally concerned in those turbulent days of the '60s about a world in disarray with many Jewish college youth skeptical about the relevance of Judaism to the current scene. (Professor Calvin Goldscheider of Brown University, speaking 18 years later in 1987, before the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, was much more optimistic about the survival of Jewish identity in future generations, evidence of a markedly different social and political climate.)[21]

The annual meeting of 1969 was held on May 11. The slate of officers for the following year consisted of Ernest Nathan, president; Maurice Hendel, Murry L. Halpert, and Melvin L. Zurier, vice presidents; Harold Fine, treasurer; and Bruce A. Ruttenberg, secretary. The budget had now reached $213,630 with a projected deficit of $1,170. Executive Director Israel Karten emphasized the serious consequences of annual deficits, which had seriously depleted the financial reserves of the congregation. The dues structure was inequitable and unrealistic. After much analysis, a Fair Share plan with self-examination was adopted. The cooperation of all was essential, but there was some criticism among the membership. A 15 percent increase over the previous year was requested, but thus far the response had been disappointing. Despite the estimated modest

deficit, it was feared that it could actually reach $10,000 to $15,000, which would be disastrous. Therefore, in the fall there would be a search for methods of cutting expenditures and increasing income, as well as a campaign for new members.

Enrollment in the religious school the following fall declined to 480 from the current 550, which added to the financial stress. Karten was re-engaged at a salary of $11,750, and Rabbi Blumberg was elevated to associate rabbi.

The Artists Series concerts for 1969–70 promised to match its customary excellence with such featured soloists as Soviet pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy, Israeli violinist Pinchas Zukerman, and Metropolitan Opera tenor James McCracken.

As the High Holidays approached, there was growing concern that black militant groups might repeat their recent performance when they invaded and occupied the Beneficent Congregational (Round Top) Church and interrupted the services. In fact, they did appear and picketed the temple building carrying crude signs and mouthing slogans as the congregants gathered for the services. An impressive show of police, however, discouraged any untoward acts, and the episode passed without disruption of the service.

In October Karten reported that there had been two weddings and four bar mitzvahs during the previous month and that attendance at the High Holiday Services had been "huge."

Cantor Gewirtz requested a nine-month leave during 1970–71 for a sojourn in Israel together with his family. It would provide an opportunity for him to pursue studies in Hebrew and Jewish music, to compose music himself, and to be invigorated by the atmosphere of Israel. He requested, not a formal sabbatical, but a nine-month leave with three months of pay. He had found replacements for all functions in which he was involved, and there would be no additional expense to the temple. The trustees were sympathetic and unanimously granted his request.

Executive Director Karten reported that the Torah scrolls had a "forlorn look," the crowns were worn, and the breast plates needed replacement. Their poor condition was reiterated by Rabbi Braude. Torah restoration and replacement of the ornaments was recommended at a cost of possibly $1,000. The board unanimously appropriated the necessary funds not to exceed $1,200.

The Brotherhood at year's end donated $210 to youth activities

and $600 to the Braude Library. Rabbi Braude was invited to be a member of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) study commission to visit Israel during January 1970, half of his expenses to be paid by the UJA. The board voted to pay the balance up to $350.

A special Hanukkah family service was held on Friday evening, December 7 at which Israeli archeologist, Yigael Yadin, who from 1963 to 1965 excavated the Masada ruins, was the speaker.[22]

At the first board meeting of the new year in January 1970 Seymour Krieger was re-elected as director of the religious school, but now with tenure. This was reinforced by increases in salary—$16,000 in 1970–71, $16,500 in 1971–72, and $17,000 in 1972–73. He was further granted a sabbatical leave of seven months with pay and an optional two months without pay. There was a sharp difference of opinion over this plan both within the Religious School Committee and the board, with objections and criticisms countered by strong support. In the end, the package was adopted 11 to 4.

Later in the month a fire was discovered in the draperies on the left side of the sanctuary. It was quickly brought under control, but the damage was considerable. It recalled an earlier fire in the old Friendship Street synagogue when valuable early congregational records were lost.

Early in February 1970 President Nathan received a gracious letter from Rabbi Blumberg (February 2):

> As you and the Executive Committee know, I have accepted the position as Rabbi of Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The appointment is subject to formal approval . . . by the Beth Elohim Board . . . and the membership. . . .
>
> When I came to Beth-El six years ago, my first goal was to work and study with Rabbi Braude. Every expectation of that relationship has been fulfilled, and more. William Braude has permitted me to grow and flourish as a human being. He has guided me gently as a Rabbi. He has been a model of devotion to our people, of integrity and inner strength and faith which I will strive to emulate all of my days.
>
> But these years have yielded an unanticipated joy: The blessing of the congregation's warm friendship and response to me as Rabbi. Many have been willing to listen. Some have exhibited a real desire to grow as Jews in the modern synagogue community. The congregation has permitted me to work freely as a young Rabbi and hence to mature as a Rabbi.
>
> Paula and I and our children (imagine, our three chidlren were

born here!) have been welcomed into heart and home. I could ask for little more.

What I am saying is that we are leaving Beth-El under most pleasant circumstances. . . . Providence . . . will always be our "home town."

Our move to Wellesley . . . will bring the fulfillment of the dream to build a congregation of my own. . . . we leave with . . . deep regret for the ties here which must be loosened. Know of our gratitude and our lasting friendship. . . .

Tentatively, may I suggest that my resignation become effective July 15, 1970.

Rabbi Braude later described him as "able and loyal, resourceful and imaginative in the school, and profoundly concerned with social issues."[23] After he left Wellesley, he became headmaster of the Solomon Schechter Day School in Newton, Massachusetts and later served as Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee office in Boston, Massachusetts. At this writing he is rabbi of Congregation Beth Tikva (Reform) in Wayland, Massachusetts.

The temple continued to be a busy place. For the months of January and February, Executive Director Karten reported monthly Sisterhood and Brotherhood board meetings, two Brotherhood breakfasts, the Sisterhood annual meeting, the Sisterhood annual Interfaith Day attended by 700, two PROVTY (Providence Temple Youth) meetings, meetings of the Religious School Committee, a meeting of the Accounts Committee, a Clergy Conference on Israel, a meeting of the Nominating Committee, four sessions of the prayerbook reading class, the third concert of the Artists Series, a meeting of the Dance Group, three weddings, two bar mitzvahs, and one group bat mitzvah involving six girls. Eventually the board adopted new rules eliminating the group bat mitzvah ceremony—a belated concession to the feminist movement. As with boys, the ceremony would be held on an individual basis and only on Saturday mornings.

In March the board paid a special tribute to Robert Hochberg and his colleagues for their untiring efforts in behalf of the daily *minyan* (evening prayer service) with an average attendance of 20, but with as many as 40 participating. Rabbi Braude wrote of the *minyan*: "Since the seventh of November 1955 we have had a daily minyan, meeting even when blizzards struck. The *Gabbai* (the volunteer in charge of the daily service) was Robert Hochberg (1903–1982). Its

Gabbai rishon (the *Gabbai's* first aide) was Abraham (Al) Adelman."[24] As of 1986 Abraham Adelman still presided as *Gabbai.*

NOTES

1. Rashi is an acronym for Rabbi Shelomoh (Solomon) Yitzhaki (Isaac), 1040–1105 C.E. A French scholar, he studied at Academies in Mainz and Worms in Germany and then returned to his native Troyes, where he founded his own academy. His commentaries on the Bible and Talmud are considered to be definitive and excel all others in lucidity and precision, according to scholars.
2. *Midrash,* dating from the earliest times, denotes the literature which interprets the Scripture. Written in Hebrew, it has been further defined as the homiletic exposition of the biblical text.
3. *Humash* denotes the five books of Moses, or the Pentateuch, synonymous with Torah.
4. Known in Hebrew as the *Sidrah,* the weekly portion of the Pentateuch (the Torah) is read in the synagogue on Sabbath. There are 54 *Sidrot* (Hebrew plural), so arranged (two being sometimes joined together) that one portion is read on successive Sabbaths, beginning with the Creation (Chapter One of *Genesis*) and ending the year-long weekly cycle with Moses's farewell to the Children of Israel (Chapter 33 of *Deuteronomy*).
5. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 435–436.
6. Pearl Braude in a personal communication notes several others who attended: Knute Ansgar Nelson, a Benedictine monk, from Portsmouth Abbey, a boys' school in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and a former student of Rabbi Braude's at Brown University; Brother Caedman Holmes, also of Portsmouth Abbey; and Dr. Meissner, who attended when his other duties permitted. Nelson was a retired Roman Catholic Bishop of Sweden. See also William G. Braude, "The Mishnaic Laws of Purity—Their Aphysical Character," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8:207–209 (71–80), (November) 1980. Also W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II,", pp. 418, 436–437.
7. Nahmanides, Son of Nahman (also rendered Nachmanides) is the Greek form of Moses ben Nahman, 1194–1270. He was a Spanish talmudist, kabbalist, and Bible commentator. He spent his last years in Palestine and was the first prominent rabbi to pronounce the resettlement of the Land of Israel as a biblical precept.
8. Maimonides (Greek for Son of Maimon) was Moses ben Maimon, 1135–1204. Born in Cordoba, Spain, he lived most of his life in Egypt. Distinguished as a philosopher and codifier, he was also physician to the court. At age 30 he concluded his classical commentary in Arabic on the *Mishnah* (the code of Oral Laws), the first of three major divisions

of the Talmud. The others are the *Gemara* (the commentary and elaboration of the *Mishnah* text) and the *Midrash* (the sermonic exposition and popular interpretation of the Bible). He was often known by the Hebrew acronym *Rambam* for Rabbi Moses ben Maimon. Rambam Hospital, the leading medical center of Haifa, Israel, gives recognition to his fame as a physician. His medical writings are as renowned as his theological commentaries.

9. Rendered as *Tanna de-vei Eliyyahu* in *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*. It is an ethical religious work in Hebrew "comprising a series of moral homilies stressing the love and study of Torah, love of Israel, and social justice."
10. Israel J. Kapstein (1903–1983) was a full professor of English at Brown University. He gained a national reputation as a novelist for his *Something of a Hero*. He was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 1944. In 1976 he was awarded the National Jewish Book Award for his English translation with Rabbi William G. Braude of the classical Hebrew and Aramaic work *Pesikta-de-Rab Kahana*.
11. Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934) was a renowned poet in modern Hebrew. With his friend Joshua Chaim Ravitsky he wrote this work, which consisted of rabbinical aphorisms, teachings, illustrative anecdotes, and legends from the Talmud.
12. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 405.
13. On May 18, 1954, the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision on Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, striking down "separate but equal." Congregation B'nai Jehudah of Kansas City, Missouri formed a Social Action Committee in June 1954. In 1955 the Union of American Hebrew Congregations issued "The Synagogue and Social Action: A Statement of Principles." It stated: "Judaism insists that we must apply constantly the sharp ethical insights of the prophets to the specific social problems of our generation." Reform congregations in general were slow to fall in line. See Frank J. Adler's *Roots In A Moving Stream: The Centennial History of Congregation B'nai Jehudah of Kansas City 1870–1970* (Kansas City, Missouri, the Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah, 1972), pp. 252–254.
14. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," pp. 428–429.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
16. According to Carol Ingall of the Bureau of Jewish Education (Rhode Island), this is a rendering of the Ashkenazic Hebrew. Leo Rosten in his "The Joys of Yiddish" states: "The traditional Rosh Hashanah greeting is *Leshana tova tikosevu* (pronounced by Ashkenazic Jews le-shah-nah toe-va tee-kah-say-vu)—'May you be inscribed for a good year.'"
17. See Chapter Twelve, note 30. Melvin L. Zurier wrote in the latter part of 1988 (personal communication): "The temple has been trying to get someone to move the building on condition that it be restored. Moses

Brown School is interested, and a feasibility committee of that school is considering its removal to the school grounds." The above citation contains a later report on the status of the building.

18. *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 1:82–86, (December) 1954; and *Ibid.* 1:165–172, (June) 1955.
19. Rabbi Jacob K. Shankman and Rabbi Braude were close friends and frequent correspondents beginning in their student days at Hebrew Union College. Rabbi Shankman officiated at Rabbi Braude's wedding. Of Shankman, Braude wrote: "Among the friends I made [at H.U.C.], Jake Shankman was in many ways the most remarkable. I felt fortunate in that he included me in his circle. . . ." See W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," pp. 358–360.
20. *Pesikta* is Aramaic for "section." It is a cycle of *Midrashim* (see note 2), so-called because, instead of following the biblical books in sequence, it deals only with selected passages. Two versions exist, the first being *Pesikta of Rabbi Kahana*, completed during the 7th Century C.E. The other, *Pesikta Rabbati*, was completed c. 845 C.E. It consists of distinct "sections" each complete in itself relating to a weekly Torah portion reading.
21. See Calvin Goldscheider, "Studying Jewish History: How Does it Help Us Understand Contemporary Jews and Their Communities?", *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 10:5–16, (November) 1987.
22. See Yigael Yadin, *Masada* (New York, Random House, 1966).
23. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 415.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 403–404.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman Joins the Temple Family

When Rabbi Blumberg's election to the Wellesley pulpit was confirmed, a search for his successor began in earnest. The Rabbinical Placement Service conducted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Hebrew Union College was consulted. Rabbi Braude interviewed a number of candidates for the position of assistant rabbi, including 10 members of the graduating class of Hebrew Union College, who would be ordained in June. Among the candidates were one from Curaçao and another matriculating at Brandeis University. Braude was particularly impressed by two candidates who would come to Providence for further interviews. In all, Braude interviewed more than 20 individuals. On the basis of these conversations and other information he unequivocally favored Rabbi Leslie Yale Gutterman, who was highly praised. Later Rabbi Braude wrote:[1]

> [With] Leslie Y. Gutterman, whom I met at the Hebrew Union College in 1970, [I] found myself captivated at once, and invited him to Providence, and it soon became obvious that he would be my successor. His charm, wit, and rare pastoral talent have won him the esteem and affection of the congregation and of the larger community.

In May the board voted to recommend his election as assistant rabbi. In addressing the board, Rabbi Gutterman thanked the members for their expression of confidence in him and noted that he was conscious of the excellent standards established by Rabbi Braude and of the fine service provided by Rabbi Blumberg. His remarks were warmly received. As Rabbi Braude reported in the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*, "The Executive Committee as well as the

Board were greatly taken by Rabbi Gutterman's person and presence, and are unanimous in approval."

Rabbi Gutterman, born in Flint, Michigan on October 9, 1942, received a B.A. degree from the University of Michigan in English Studies and received degrees of B.H.L. and M.H.L. from Hebrew Union College, where he was ordained in 1970 . He was the first alumnus of the Michigan State Temple Youth to return to its conclaves as a faculty member. He had served as student rabbi at several congregations and, together with his wife Julie, spent a year studying in Jerusalem.

A new slate of officers was elected at the annual meeting on May 10, 1970: Maurice W. Hendel, president; Harold D. Fine, Murry L. Halpert, and Melvin L. Zurier, vice presidents; Harold S. Braunstein, treasurer; and Harold S. Roberts, secretary. The budget for the ensuing year was set at $221,837 with a welcome projected surplus of $3,463. The positive balance was due in part to success in increasing the dues of some members. The congregation was reminded, however, that despite the improved budgetary picture the accumulated deficits amounted to $22,000, and the bank mortgage still stood at $54,000. A small increase in salary for Mrs. Estes, the librarian, was provided. The recommendation of the board that Rabbi Gutterman be elected for one year was approved, and the congregation bade a sincere farewell to Rabbi Blumberg. A purse was presented to him by the congregation.

Past President Walter I. Sundlun continued to press for the hanging of the picture of himself and the late Mrs. [Jan] Sundlun carrying the eternal light into the new temple in 1954, and also the repositioning of the presidential plaques in the corridor. The board again deferred these sensitive matters.

The Artists Series for the season 1970–71 lacked the luminaries of some previous years. It featured "An Evening of Opera" and the Johann Strauss Ensemble of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. On May 3 the temple was host to the annual meeting of the League of Rhode Island Historical Societies. Pearl Braude described the interior of the sanctuary, while Rabbi Theodore Lewis of Newport, Rhode Island showed colored slides of Touro Synagogue in Newport and explained their significance.

The "Drawings from Terezin," the Nazi concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, 44 by adults and 51 by children, were exhibited at Temple Beth-El from May 15 to 31. The exhibit was opened on

Friday evening, May 15 with a sermon by Rabbi Braude titled "The Light of Dead Stars." The service was "a tribute to the artists and their kin whose spirits could not be crushed." The drawings were on loan from the State Jewish Museum in Prague.

Israel Karten submitted his resignation as executive director effective July 1, and was succeeded by Samuel J. Stepak. A Hebrew teacher for many years, Stepak was a Navy veteran of World War II and had attended Brown University and the University of Rhode Island. He taught in the religious schools of both Temple Beth-El and Temple Habonim of Barrington and had tutored boys privately for bar mitzvah. At the time of assuming his new position he was teaching industrial arts part-time in the Providence public schools.

In his first report to the board in September he noted that during the summer months there had been a confirmation class dinner, eleven weddings, five bar mitzvahs, and two funerals. As David C. Adelman commented about the vital statistics of the congregation in the year 1857 (when there were three births and no deaths): "The mortality rate was favorable." Yet there were concerns. The student enrollment in the religious school was down to 450 from 480 the previous year. From a high of over 700 in the period from 1958 through 1963, registration had progressively declined to its present level. The aging of the membership of the congregation and the waning of the post-World War II "baby boom" appeared to be significant factors. Further, many young families had settled in the suburbs. The Religious School Committee saw prospects of a continuous gradual decline in school enrollment over the next few years and discussed its possible impact on the availability of teachers and on the budget. In the long run, however, it could be anticipated that in the late '70s and '80s, when the baby boom generation produced offspring of its own of school age, the decline might well be reversed.

The Fund for Social Concern at the request of Rabbi Braude appropriated $50 for Pakistan relief. A similar amount was granted to Americans and Canadians in Israel, and an additional $250 to the same organization to be disbursed in $50 increments. Rabbi Gutterman requested that aerograms in behalf of Soviet Jews be sent to a Conference on Soviet Jewry. A later request from the Jewish Community Relations Council of Rhode Island for a $50 donation to the Soviet Jewish Appeal was also granted.

Past President Irving J. Fain died on August 21, 1970, a victim of

Hodgkin's Disease. He had become a nationally known figure as chairman of the Social Action Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Following his death, the U.A.H.C. established an annual award in his memory, conferring recognition on Reform synagogues throughout the United States that have distinguished themselves in the field of social action.

In October President Hendel reminded the board that the "senior rabbi" (i.e. Rabbi Braude) had reached a stage in his temple career when serious consideration had to be given to a retirement plan. He appointed Past President Ernest Nathan to form a committee of temple officers and representatives of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to review the situation. During this period Rabbi Braude continued to be active in a variety of ways. He had recently completed a well-received series of lectures at Providence College, a Dominican Catholic institution. The Reverend Mark Heath, O.P., Chairman of the College's department of Religious Studies, wrote to Rabbi Braude (December 10):

> May I at this time, which marks the formal end of our first semester engagement, thank you again for the contribution you have made to our program in Religious Studies at Providence College.
>
> I have every sign that the experiment was a success. . . . The personal and enthusiastic witness of a man of Biblical faith, the engaging and intricate and often humorous ways of rabbinical theology, the simple skills of drawing moral teachings from the least expected text of the Scripture, the experience of theology within a historic tradition that stretched back many centuries: all of these could have been offered our students in no other way than by your teaching; and we are deeply grateful for it. . . .
>
> I have enclosed the check which comes to you from the Jewish Chautauqua Society via Providence College. . . . I shall be in touch with you for an occasional lecture and class this coming spring. . . .

In January of 1971 Rabbi Braude spoke of his desire to plan a trip to Israel and Russia. He hoped to visit Moscow to gather first-hand information concerning the plight and status of Jews in Russia and then, if permitted, to inter his parents' remains in Israel. He requested an absence of 20 days, following which he would give a sermon at the temple titled "Israel and Russia, Two Worlds." Mat-

ters, however, turned out differently. He reported in March that he had been asked to give two courses of lectures and discussion at Hebrew University in Jerusalem during two trimesters of 1971–72. He requested a leave of absence of eight months beginning in November 1971 and would invite guest speakers to alternate with Rabbi Gutterman. He had also arranged for substitute teachers for the confirmation and pre-confirmation classes and offered to repay the cost of $4,000 over a three-year period.

Melvin L. Zurier, apprised of Braude's plans, had sent a letter to the board declaring the timing to be poor, since Rabbi Gutterman was short in experience and also because of pending discussions regarding a pension for Rabbi Braude. Braude reported that his tenure of 39 years was the second longest in the country. He did not mention that his last sabbatical leave was 14 years before, but he did complain that it was unfair to bring up the subject of a pension at this time. After a considerable discussion he was granted an eight-month sabbatical, and no repayment for substitute teachers would be necessary. Before leaving in November, Braude announced an "imposing" list of guests to occupy the pulpit during his absence.

The annual meeting of 1971 was held on May 16. The incumbent officers were re-elected with the exception of Secretary Roberts, who was replaced by William L. Robin. The budget allowed for estimated expenses of $237,685 with a projected deficit of $30,985. The budget contained a $10,000 item for a fire alarm system. It was ordered that this amount must not be exceeded, although estimates ranged from $10,750 to $12,000. The system was eventually installed for $8,250. New draperies had been hung in the sanctuary, selected by Pearl Braude to replace the original hangings, some of which had been in a fire and otherwise had faded and deteriorated over a quarter of a century. The Fair Share Dues Committee reported that there were now 40 members paying dues of $1000, and two more were added over the summer. The committee judged that $300 would be fair average dues.

The Sisterhood reported that its Spring Luncheon had netted over $3200, while the season's Artists Series had yielded $5300 (90 percent of the proceeds were profit, of which the Sisterhood was very proud). The Sisterhood was able to donate $4770 to the temple. The executive director reported for the year a total of 22 weddings in the synagogue and chapel, 20 wedding receptions in the meeting

hall, 19 bar mitzvahs, and 18 luncheons or receptions. Yet the diminishing number of students in the religious school was a cause of considerable worry.

Rabbi Gutterman was becoming involved in the Jewish Family and Children's Service, of which he later became president. He presented at the temple a film and lecture series describing the functions and accomplishments of the agency. He commended Cantor Gewirtz for his counseling services to members of the congregation and also for his hospital visits and general help during Rabbi Braude's absence.

The Artists Series for the 1971–72 season was announced, featuring two soloists familiar to subscribers—soprano Nancy Chase, daughter of the late Louis Symonds of the congregation, and virtuoso violinist Itzhak Perlman.

Early in 1972 the congregation received a bequest from an unexpected source. Erwin Englander, a bachelor who had died on March 8, 1971 with no surviving relatives, willed $25,000 to the temple.[2] A retiring person and little known to the congregation, he had been for many years until his retirement a manufacturing engineer at Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Company. Born in Vienna, Austria, he had served as a lieutenant in the Austrian Army during World War I. He came to the United States during the early years of the Nazi threat. Traveling widely following his retirement in 1962, he died in Freiburg, Germany while on a visit. He was buried in the Reservoir Avenue cemetery on March 26, 1971, having lived in Rhode Island for 35 years.[3]

On February 7 the Sisterhood held its annual interfaith meeting attended by 400. The speaker was Father Edward H. Flannery of the Institute of Judeo-Christian studies at Seton Hall University, a Catholic college in New Jersey. Father Flannery, author of *The Anguish of The Jews*, a history of anti-Semitism, had formerly been editor of the Catholic diocesan newspaper, *The Providence Visitor*. He had long been a friend of the Jews and an enemy of anti-Semitism, a subject about which he had become a leading Christian authority. The Sisterhood during the year also hosted a luncheon for the blind and another for Golden Agers which attracted 200 guests.

Later in the year the Sisterhood sent a giant Uniongram (a greeting for special occasions sponsored by the Sisterhood) to Ida (Mrs. Archibald) Silverman, who had moved to Israel, on the occasion of her

90th birthday. During May the Fund for Social Concern contributed $50 each to the Jewish Chautauqua Society and to the Israel Independence Day celebration.

During March Rabbi Braude interrupted his sabbatical for two weeks during the spring recess at Hebrew University and returned to Providence for a respite, during which he conducted two Friday night services. Attendance was large, numbering 300 to 400 on each occasion.

The annual meeting of 1972 was held on May 21. The incumbent officers were re-elected for another term. The budget continued to increase, reaching $252,464 with a projected deficit of a discouraging $35,764. On the positive side, it was announced that the Endowment Fund had reached $100,000. Executive Director Stepak in his report described the temple as a House of Worship, a House of Study (mentioning the continuing *Humash* and Rashi group meeting every Saturday at 12 noon still conducted by Rabbi Braude), and a House of Assembly. The Artists Series for the 1972–73 season was announced, featuring among other performers Metropolitan Opera soprano Phyllis Curtin and pianist Misha Dichter.

The last board meeting before the summer was held on June 5, by which time Rabbi Braude had returned from his sabbatical. Present at the meeting, he was welcomed by President Hendel and spoke of teaching in both English and Hebrew at two different campuses of Hebrew University. His students included five Israelis, 17 students from Hebrew Union College, one Jesuit priest, two nuns, a psychiatrist who was a rabbi, and a young immigrant to Israel from Switzerland.

During the late summer, the temple was visited by the most Reverend Louis E. Gelineau, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Providence, who attended a *minyan* service to convey in person his sorrow over the killing of the Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. He expressed his fondness for The Service of the Heart prayerbook. Rabbi Braude suggested that he be formally presented with a copy of the book and that copies also be sent to Father Kenneth Angell, who accompanied him, and Father Ferry, current editor of The *Providence Visitor*.

An *ad hoc* committee of 15 with Professor Albert C. Salzberg as chairman was named in May of 1972 to explore reasons for the declining enrollment in the religious school and to seek remedies. In its report on November 6 it described "increasing dissatisfaction"

with the school. It noted that the impetus behind formation of the committee was a decline in enrollment from 568 in 1968–69 to 353 in October 1972. Furthermore, it continued, "complaints were heard from both parents and students to the effect that students are bored, that they are not learning as much as they should, and that the director is unresponsive to the complaints of parents." The committee's conclusions, based on a study of the *Status of Jewish Education in Rhode Island* issued by the Bureau of Jewish Education (of Rhode Island), interviews with many involved individuals, and a review of the curricula vitae of the teachers, were as follows:

> . . . Temple Beth-El and the Bureau of Jewish Education have at present no correspondence in matters of teacher selection and training and in curriculum. . . . Our Religious School is ignoring . . . [this] valuable resource.
>
> . . . our teachers are uncertified and . . . some of them . . . were poorly qualified. Students complained of repetition in subject matter from year to year, of uninspired instruction, and of large gaps in the continuity of Jewish history and thought. . . . parents complained of angry outbursts on the part of the School Director when they had expressed dissatisfaction. . . . The weekday Hebrew School appeared to be the weakest part of the program. . . .
>
> Sharply declining enrollment was accompanied by only a small decrease in costs. . . . Temple Emanuel [was] faced with much the same [economic problem] . . .

On the basis of these observations the committee recommended serious negotiations with Temple Emanuel with a view to merging the two religious schools and also the weekday Hebrew classes. It also urged closer ties with the Bureau of Jewish Education; consultations with the Bureau regarding teachers, curriculum, teacher preparation, teacher continuing education, and teaching methods; and formation of a Parents and Students Council to work closely with the director. Some of the committee, including the chairman, urged exploration of the possibility of establishing a day school in the Providence area under liberal Jewish auspices. The recommendations regarding better communication with the Bureau of Jewish Education and formation of a Parents and Students Council were referred to the Religious School Committee for study and implementation. The board also ordered discussions with Temple Emanuel regarding a possible merger of the two religious educational programs.

The decline in enrollment in religious schools among Jewish congregations in America at the time was quite general and had affected Temple Emanuel as well. The local experience was a reflection of a national trend. The evaluation of the Religious School by the Special Committee was by no means generally accepted by the congregation or the board. Some of its recommendations were followed, but by and large the report was filed and not further acted upon. Negotiations with Temple Emanuel concerning merger of the schools aroused little enthusiasm on either side and were not further pursued.[4] It was the consensus that Krieger was performing creditably, and this appraisal was later affirmed upon his retirement.

Despite these educational concerns, the vigor of the Temple Youth was indicated by a membership in PROVTY of 65 with an expected increase to 75 in the near future.

Arthur J. Levy, honorary life trustee of the temple, past president of its Brotherhood, and past president of the Rhode Island Bar Association, died on November 12. Thirty-six officers of the temple and members of its board were among the honor guard and bearers at his funeral. The board took cognizance of his passing at its meeting of December 4. His important role in planning the Orchard Avenue synagogue was remembered with appreciation.[5]

Rabbi Braude announced that he had been invited to spend one month teaching at Leo Baeck College in London. The College, established to train European rabbis, was named after Leo Baeck (1873–1956), a German Reform rabbi, theologian, and scholar, who had survived deportation by the Nazis to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, and after the war settled in London. Rabbi Braude, following his ordination in 1931, had worked briefly with Dr. Baeck at the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, not long before Hitler's seizure of power in 1933.

At the end of the year the Fund for Social Concern made several small grants to organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a subtle balance between black and Jewish concerns.

At an Executive Committee meeting on January 2, 1973, it was agreed that top priority be given to planning for the inevitable changes that would follow the retirements of Seymour Krieger and Rabbi Braude. The direction the school would take—whether merger, involvement in a community program, or some other ar-

rangement—was uncertain. It was agreed, however, that, coupled with Braude's retirement, a new team of senior-junior rabbis would be appropriate, in which the junior member might assume some role in the school program. In the meantime Krieger was granted a sabbatical leave from November 1973 to May 1974.

A letter from Melvin L. Zurier to President Hendel dated January 5 described discussions held at an Executive Committee meeting called to consider Rabbi Braude's request for a reconsideration of his pension arrangement. After outlining the preliminary deliberations, it continued:

> A further matter discussed was the exact nature of the unanimous recommendation our pension committee reached in the spring of 1971 concerning Rabbi Braude's retirement. First, we agreed, unequivocally, that it was a condition of our recommendation that the retirement be definite on May 31, 1975—not that there be any consideration given to possible mutual extensions. . . . We also had in mind the situation involving expiration of Seymour's [Seymour Krieger's] contract.

After describing Rabbi Braude's pension arrangement and a suggested "contribution"[6] from the general funds of the congregation of up to $15,000 with certain deductions, as suggested by Rabbi Braude, Zurier's letter continued:

> Our conclusions two years ago were very specific and unambiguous. I am very much concerned lest any ambiguities be introduced now . . . [regarding] the 1971 arrangement . . .—after lengthy discussions . . . the final product was something he [the rabbi] said he was satisfied with. . . . We have estimated an annual "contribution" of $10,000 a year [involving a possible commensurate dues increase]. . . . our problems are plain to see. . . .

Zurier proposed that a committee be named to consider the engagement of senior and junior rabbis for the year commencing on June 1, 1975, contemplating that the duties of the junior rabbi extend to administration of Hebrew and religious education. The proposal was adopted by the board on January 8.

In the meantime the Executive Committee through the person of Past President Ernest Nathan communicated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations concerning the proposal to com-

bine the positions of assistant rabbi and school principal. Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president-elect of the Union, in his reply (January 11) advised that rabbi-school principal and cantor-school principal arrangements did not in general work out well. He added: "I must caution you that should Temple Beth-El decide to seek a combination rabbi-principal there must be very specific and precise guidelines and . . . you must be clear and concise in regard to . . . priorities." He added: "The decrease in the Temple Beth-El school population from 750 to 350 students in a four-year period is a matter of grave concern to me. This is far too precipitous an erosion to be due only to the decline in population in your area. . . . I cannot urge too strongly . . . a serious investigation."

In March the Religious School Committee reported that it had engaged member Max Millman, a recently retired public school teacher and principal, to direct the religious school during Krieger's sabbatical leave until June 1974. Millman received a salary of $5,500 and was designated "Acting Principal." Seymour Krieger returned to his duties in the fall of 1974.

The committee also had further discussions of a possible merger of the temple school with that of Temple Emanuel. A response was expected from Louis I. Kramer, chairman of the school committee of Temple Emanuel and, incidentally, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Providence. Also at this time Rabbi Gutterman was elevated to the position of Associate rabbi.

Other temple activities continued as usual. On Friday evening, January 5, following the service, there was a panel discussion on "Exploring Various Dimensions of Human Relations between Patients, Families, Doctors, and Hospitals." The speakers, all physicians on the staff of The Miriam Hospital, were Robert Davis, M.D., physician-in-chief; Banice Webber, M.D., former president of the hospital staff association; and Melvin D. Hoffman, M.D., president of the staff association. Norman Fain, chairman of the board of The Miriam Hospital, presided. Some 188 persons attended the presentation.

The Sisterhood on Feburary 5 conducted its annual Interfaith Day. Six hundred women attended the affair. The speaker was Rabbi Sally Preisand, assistant rabbi at the Stephen M. Wise Free Synagogue in New York. Her subject was "A Woman Rabbi: Her Problems, Prerogatives, and Principles." A graduate of Hebrew Union

College—Jewish Institute of Religion, she was the first and at that time the only female rabbi anywhere. When she appeared at the college, she remarked, "Most people thought I came for a husband."

Also during February Pearl (Mrs. William G.) Braude spoke in the meeting hall to a joint gathering of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Her talk was titled "I spent Five Days in Moscow." Her purpose had been to visit relatives there and encourage them to leave Russia. Rabbi Braude had been in Moscow several years earlier and made contact with them. Her experiences during her brief visit traveling alone were difficult and chilling in those days before *Glasnost*. Eventually her relatives emigrated to the United States.

NOTES

1. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 415.
2. Obituary in *The Providence Journal* of March 26, 1971.
3. According to Pearl Braude (personal communication):
   > My husband secured employment for him at Brown & Sharpe Mfg. Co. My husband was named executor of the will. He turned his fee over to the temple. My husband and I were his closest friends in Providence. The bulk of his estate was given to the General Jewish Committee (now the Jewish Federation of R.I.). My husband as executor gave instructions that the money was to be designated as a memorial to Englander's parents in Israel to benefit Israeli museums, Hebrew University, and a music school. Since my husband and I planned to leave the U.S. in October 1971, the officers of the G.J.C. had my husband sign the necessary papers and promised that they would set up the memorial when we returned. Instead, the money was sent to the Jewish Agency as part of the Providence allocation. By the time we were back home, the matter had already been disposed of, and, as far as I know, no memorial to Englander's parents was ever set up—a matter of great and lingering chagrin to me.
4. Melvin L. Zurier writes (personal communication): "The merger with Temple Emanuel's weekday Hebrew School was appealing to that temple's leadership. There was opposition, however, from Emanuel's Rabbi Joel M. Zaiman, who feared standards would be lowered by the merger. The result was to continue two struggling schools."
5. Obituary, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:305–306, (November) 1972; and "Erratum and Addendum", *ibid.*, p. 477, (November) 1973.
6. In a personal communication, Melvin L. Zurier states:
   > The term "contribution" came from Rabbi Braude's legal adviser, a Pittsburgh lawyer named Eugene Strassburger, who was close to Braude's friend, Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof of Congregation Rodef

Shalom of Pittsburgh. He suggested that the congregation, instead of "paying" a pension, rather make an annual "gift" to the retiring rabbi to avoid his having to pay taxes. This suggestion was rejected on the advice of the temple's auditor, as well as a panel of the country's top tax lawyers, who suggested that making such payment as "gifts" was probably illegal.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Braude Retires; Gutterman Succeeds

A new slate of officers was elected at the annual meeting of May 20, 1973: Murry M. Halpert, president; Rosalea (Mrs. Newton B.) Cohn, Dr. Edward Spindell, and Melvin L. Zurier, vice presidents; William L. Robin, treasurer; and Perry Shatkin, secretary. The budget was set at $245,033 with an estimated deficit of $26,033. The accumulated deficit at this time was $60,000. Several fiscal measures were taken to improve the balance sheet. Religious school fees for students were reinstituted with a minimum of $100, and dues were increased 10 percent across the board. A money-raising auction on March 4 and 5 had yielded $11,000, which was good news in the face of a bleak financial picture. The Executive Committee was charged with the task of examining all expenses to realize maximum savings.

Rabbi Braude was absent from the annual meeting, as he was in London teaching at Leo Baeck College, as previously announced. In his absence, after "a general explanation" regarding the Braude pension matter, Melvin Zurier presented the following resolution:[1]

> *Whereas*, Dr. William G. Braude is to retire as Rabbi of this Congregation on September 1, 1974, after having served it with distinction for 40 years; and
>
> *Whereas*, Dr. Braude has earned and enjoyed the admiration, affection, and esteem of this Congregation as well as the community at large; and
>
> *Whereas*, as a token of its gratitude and appreciation the Congregation desires to place Dr. Braude in a position where he may devote his remaining years to study, writing, lecturing, and public service without concern to financial matters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

First: That Dr. William G. Braude is hereby elected as of September 1, 1974, Rabbi Emeritus for life of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David with no obligation on his part, nor shall he be expected to render service to or for the congregation; and

Second: That this congregation does hereby give and grant to Rabbi Braude for life and to his widow if she survives him an annual grant for life and in accordance with the memorandum hereto attached.

The memorandum provided that his full salary would be in effect until August 31, 1975, after which his pension arrangement in lesser amount would take effect, jointly financed by the temple and the Rabbinical Pension Fund. The congregation participated in this arrangement "because of the close and personal ties between him and the congregation." Cost-of-living reviews were contemplated. The agreement specifically excluded "office, secretarial assistance, or telephone," a provision which later became a bone of contention. The resolutions were adopted unanimously by the congregation.

In November the president appointed a committee to propose a candidate for senior rabbi. It recommended the elevation of Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman to the position effective September 1, 1974. The board submitted the nomination to the congregation for final action.

Rabbi Gutterman addressed the board early in January 1974 prior to his elevation to senior rabbi. He spoke of two problems facing the congregation in its 120th year—membership and morale. It was essential, he said, to take a "new look" at membership policies. The best potential lay in unaffiliated persons who could be approached through a wide range of representation on the membership committee. As for morale, he noted the limited success of the Friday evening family dinners. More person-to-person contact, more warmth, and a greater effort to make young couples feel that Beth-El was a part of their social life were needed. He later again emphasized the need to bring more young couples into the activities of the temple and to lay greater stress on adult education. He was formally elected Senior Rabbi at the age of 31 at a special congregational meeting on January 20, 1974. His election was coupled with the purchase by the congregation of a house on Elton Street

as a parsonage (cost not to exceed $45,000). A loan was required to consummate the sale. Thus the congregation quietly took a course which would affect its well-being for many years to come.

In the meantime the Yom Kippur War of 1973 had broken out in Israel and had run its course.[2] In January 1974 Israel began its withdrawal from the Suez Canal. These grim events were reflected in the congregation's minutes of the same special meeting of January 20. The congregation, modifying its previous policy, authorized the borrowing, under certain conditions, of $100,000 for the purchase of Israel bonds. The excess cost of interest on the loan over the yield of the bonds would be made up by a special fund. Before this process could be carried out, sufficient voluntary pledges must be in hand to fund the excess interest payments. The bonds would be collateral against the loan, and the interest rate must not exceed the prime rate. Eventually some $7,000 in pledges was received, which permitted the purchase of $70,000 in Israel bonds, the amount to be borrowed from Citizens Savings Bank at a rate of 8 percent.

At this time the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargo was in full effect. To help out in the fuel crisis, all thermostats in the temple complex were lowered to 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

In December the board learned of the death on November 1, 1973 of Ida Marcia (Mrs. Archibald) Silverman in Herzliya, Israel the day after her 91st birthday. She was interred in the cemetery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Well known internationally because of her travels on behalf of Israel and locally for her efforts in support of innumerable Jewish causes and the reopening of Butler Hospital in the '50s, she was the widow of Archibald Silverman, past president and a long-time leader of the congregation and community.[3]

The Artists Series for 1973–74 had been announced. It featured cellist Jules Eskin of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Beverly Sills, leading soprano of the New York City Opera Company. In March, as the concert season was winding down, it became evident that the future of the Artists Series was in serious doubt. Helen (Mrs. Ernest L.) Shein, who had been chairman of the series since 1961, had submitted to the Sisterhood her resignation from the chairmanship. The board established a committee under the chairmanship of Carl Feldman to explore the future of the concerts. He

reported that it would be worthwhile to continue the concerts, which had been a valuable asset both to the congregation and to the community and an artistic success, if the proper chairman could be found and a new format worked out. The committee recommended that the temple take over the Artists Series as a temple function, subject to the recruiting of a suitable chairman.

The board decided that Feldman's committee would continue in charge, while Frances Schwartz, who had been very active in initiating the project, would be asked to act as business manager. Thought was given to changing the format of the concerts from all classical to "family unit" programs to be held on Sunday afternoons. The possibility of grant support by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts would be explored. As recommended by the committee, the board voted to continue the Artists Series under temple auspices. On May 6, four days after the final concert, Chairman Feldman reported that Frances Schwartz expressed her willingness to serve as managing director. In line with rapidly increasing artists' fees, a budget of $19,000 was proposed.

The board accepted the report and extended its thanks to the Sisterhood and to Mrs. Shein for the splendid service rendered to the temple over a period of more than 21 years. An appropriate resolution was drafted and presented to Mrs. Shein. Also recognized were the sustained efforts of Cecile (Mrs. Isador S.) Low, who with her committee had raised substantial sums by selling advertisements for the programs. Without these sizable funds it would not have been possible to secure the highly-paid artists who were essential to the success of the series. Despite the board's good intentions, however, the concerts were, in fact, never resumed. According to Helen Shein (personal communication), decreasing support of the concerts in their latter years and the rising fees demanded by the artists rendered continuation of the series impractical.

The series came to a brilliant climax with the performance of Beverly Sills on May 2, the very last of more than 80 concerts. The cash on hand amounting to $3,349.60 was turned over to the temple soon thereafter as a final act. Over the twenty-one-year existence of the program, the Artists Series through the Sisterhood turned over some $80,000 to the temple's coffers.

On May 19 at the annual meeting, new officers were elected: Murry M. Halpert, president; Rosalea (Mrs. Newton B.) Cohn, Dr.

Edward Spindell, and Melvin L. Zurier, vice presidents; William L. Robin, treasurer; and Perry Shatkin, secretary. The budget was set at $254,155 with an estimated deficit of $15,555. Rabbi Braude made his last appearance before the congregation as senior rabbi. His tenure as a Reform rabbi was the second longest in the United States and the longest in New England. After a few sentimental remarks he turned to a nagging controversial issue.

He discussed his negotiations with the special committee on retirement and expressed his satisfaction with most of the terms of the agreement. An important exception, however, was the last sentence in the memorandum which stated that as Rabbi Emeritus he would not be entitled to an office, study, secretary, or telephone service. He now realized that he had an accumulation of memorabilia gathered over the 42 years of his tenure. The Executive Committee had accepted these papers and established a "depository," but still had not granted him the privilege of a secretary or telephone. He expressed his wish to have the agreement amended to allow him the use of an office, a telephone, and finally a secretary for one day a week when he deemed it necessary.

Attorney Raul Lovett moved to delete the clause relating to the exclusions and to substitute the words "the Rabbi shall be allowed in the Temple a study, secretary, and telephone as needed." Attorney and Vice President Melvin L. Zurier, who had been active in the negotiations, moved to table the resolution and refer it to the board for further negotiation with the rabbi. The motion to table was defeated in a close vote. An amendment to ballot the congregation by mail was not seconded. Finally, Lovett's motion passed, and Rabbi Braude won his last battle.[4] Later, he was entertained at a reception tendered by the congregation under the chairmanship of Helene Bernhardt. He continued to conduct *Humash* and Rashi classes.

In his "Recollections of a Septuagenerian" written many years later, Rabbi Braude described his philosophy in these words:[5]

> In further retrospect: During my fifty years in the Reform rabbinate, I confronted our entire tradition in a spirit of reverence with no condescension toward, or, God forbid, disdain for even the parts I did not understand or respond to.
>
> I held aloof from regarding institutions, organizations, or temples, including my own, as ends unto themselves, or as entities which are the sum or be-all of Jewish life. Every group in Jewry

> is only a part of our people's aspirations. Hence, sectarianism is to be discouraged, and at all times it should be our endeavor to preserve Israel's unity.

As this is written, some fifteen years after Rabbi Braude's retirement, an appraisal of his 42–year rabbinate at Temple Beth-El is not inappropriate. Talented, scholarly, and complex in character, he presented a many-faceted persona to his congregants, to the community, and to the world of Judaic studies. When he arrived in Providence in 1932 as a 25–year-old recently-ordained young rabbi, he was considered so unworldly that members of the Board of Trustees felt constrained to look after his financial affairs lest in a flurry of altruism he sacrifice his own needs. Yet upon his retirement, his last days were clouded by controversy over his pension and provision of office services. He had a delightful sense of humor, and his sermons were generally well-written and cogent.

There is no doubt that in general he was a skilled writer. He was a good and devoted teacher, and his retentive memory served him well. His performance of pastoral duties often left much to be desired. He seemed at times to be inarticulate and ill-at-ease when making sick and condolence calls; this was not his métier. Yet his compassion was genuine.

There were those in the congregation who had a deep affection for him and those who found him wanting. Yet the great majority accepted him as he was—articulate, honest, and a deeply believing Jew. Most pertinent to this mixed acceptance by the congregation were his learned pursuits. His several monumental publications were widely acclaimed in academic circles. Many in the congregation, however, felt that he sacrified his pastoral duties in favor of scholarly attainments.[6]

Certainly, one of the more tumultuous aspects of Braude's career was his presiding over the renaissance of tradition in the Reform movement on the local scene at Temple Beth-El. While undoubtedly these developments were congenial to his spirit, they were also widespread in Reform temples around the country. It is perhaps an accident of history that Rabbi Braude was the spiritual leader when these probably inevitable changes came to pass in Providence.

During his tenure he saw to the introduction of the robe, *tallit* (prayer shawl), and *yarmulka* (skull cap) for the rabbis and cantor; the introduction of the cantorial soloist; and finally, the optional

wearing of a *yarmulka* by congregants and guests attending services. While all of these changes were greatly resented by some of the older confirmed Reform congregants, they are now generally accepted as normal by a younger generation.

Not to be overlooked was his long espousal and personal involvement in liberal, charitable, Israeli, and Jewish causes, which was vigorous and effective. He had been a member of the Human Relations Commission (appointed by the governor of Rhode Island), president of the World Affairs Council of Rhode Island, and a founder of the Providence Urban League, serving as its first vice-president.[7] He was recognized and respected among Christians as a spokesman for the Jewish communities of Providence and Rhode Island. Whether heartily disliked, grudgingly accepted, or loved by his members, there is no doubt that his imprint on the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David will be lasting.

Rabbi Leslie Yale Gutterman was officially installed as senior rabbi of the congregation on Friday evening, October 11, 1974. Rabbis Samuel Egal Karff of Chicago, Willian Gordon Braude, and Joel H. Zaiman of Temple Emanuel of Providence officiated. Rabbi Karff, spiritual leader of the Chicago Sinai Congregation was invited by Rabbi Gutterman to preach the installation sermon. He had married Julie and Leslie Gutterman, who considered his friendship "significant to us both." Rabbi Braude performed the installation and gave the blessing. "As my rabbi," said Gutterman, "he has shown me what love of Torah can mean." Rabbi Gutterman called the occasion "a special *Shabbat* (Sabbath) for me and my family, celebrating personal hopes as well as aspirations for the Beth-El family."

Rabbi Gutterman looked for a "change of mood" in the congregation. He would promote Beth-El to new and prospective members as a metropolitan congregation. Unaffiliated persons in towns other than Providence would be invited to membership by designated representatives in those areas. He suggested a group in the temple family to counsel on death and dying.

The Religious School Committee had been discussing the desirability of converting from the Ashkenazic to the Sephardic pronunciation in the school. It was the mode in contemporary American Hebrew schools to use the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew words, which scholars believe more nearly approximates that of the Babylonian sounds and tradition of ancient times. The following

resolution was adopted by the board: "That Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew shall be taught in all Hebrew classes and applied in the Temple Beth-El Religious School commencing September 1974, so that all Hebrew spoken and taught shall be consistent." These pronunciations prevail in Israel, but in temple services it would appear that the result is not consistent.

In its eagerness to modernize, the Religious School Committee proposed that girls who were studying for bat mitzvah have the option of having either an individual or group ceremony, the latter practice having prevailed since bat mitzvah was sanctioned by the congregation. The president appointed a study committee to explore the question. The study committee in due course recommended individual bat mitzvahs for girls, a practice since regularly followed. The board, incidentally, voted that dance band music for bar mitzvah parties in the temple not be permitted on Friday evenings or Saturday.[8]

The Religious School Committee continued into the new year its review of school problems. It looked with envy at the $75,000 to $85,000 allocations made by the Bureau of Jewish Education, of which Temple Beth-El received nothing. The lion's share went to the Providence Hebrew Day School, while allocations of $3,100 to $8,000 went to all other religious schools. Temple Emanuel received $3,000 for a designated specific one-time project. The board eventually decided to request of the Bureau an incentive grant for special holiday plays to be directed by Marion Brooks (Mrs. Walter) Strauss, an experienced dramatic coach. The grant request specified $1,200 for services and $200 for supplies.

After the High Holidays, attendance at the services was analyzed to determine whether to continue dual consecutive services on the holidays. The combined attendance at Rosh Hashanah and at Yom Kippur services was in each case under 1,400. Since the main sanctuary provides 950 seats and the wings an additional 500 for a total of 1,450, it was decided to discontinue dual services.

Early in 1975 a fund was established to purchase a new organ, which would be needed in the near future. As of the initial report, $500 had been contributed.

At the 120th annual meeting of May 18, 1975 some changes were revealed in the officer roster: Murry M. Halpert, president; Rosalea (Mrs. Newton B.) Cohn, Joseph Schwartz, and Dr. Edward Spindell, vice presidents; Lewis M. Tanner, treasurer; and Perry Shatkin,

secretary. The budget was projected at $250,230, with an estimated deficit of $28,430. The executive director reported the following statistics for the year: 10 weddings, 20 bar mitzvahs, 11 bat mitzvahs, a marked increase in library use with a circulation of 8,000 books, and a current family membership of 888, a net increase of 14 families, laboriously returning to the former high of some 1000 families.

A special feature of the anniversary meeting was a salute to all seven living past presidents. Resolutions were read and presented to those honored: Walter I. Sundlun (1939–1943; 1952–1954), A. Henry Klein (1946–1949), Bertram L. Bernhardt (1955–1960), Walter Adler (1962–1964), Samuel Pritzker (1964–1967), Ernest Nathan (1967–1970), and Maurice W. Hendel (1970–1973). Those who had died since Sundlun's first presidency—Archibald Silverman (1942–1946), Samuel Kaplan (1949–1952) and Irving Jay Fain (1960–1961)—were also honored.

As the year progressed, Rabbi Gutterman commended the efforts of the membership recruitment committee, noting that 40 new families had recently joined the congregation. This was an encouraging development in view of the substantial cumulative financial deficit. Over the summer the deficit had declined from $70,000 to $63,000, monies owed to special funds of the temple.

Rabbi Gutterman in the fall of 1975 proposed the establishment of *Havurot* ("friendship circles") within the congregation.[9] These small congenial groups gathered at the homes of members for socializing, study, and cultural pursuits. Rabbi Gutterman congratulated Judith and Dr. Henry Litchman for their work in organizing the venture, in which 100 persons participated. In pursuit of the program Rabbi Gutterman, Judith Litchman, and others visited Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, which conducted one of the first academic studies of the *Havurah* movement. They conferred with Brandeis Dean Bernard Reisman and Joan Brunwasser, one of his graduate students, who would supervise the Beth-El program for academic credits.

Rabbi Gutterman later reported that the *Havurot* program was progressing quite well. The purpose behind it, he explained, was to promote Jewish fellowship. The degree of success among the several groups varied, with the more innovative showing considerable resourcefulness in formulating programs. A presentation titled "Day for Dilettantes" featuring a musical presentation was an example

of the creative skill manifested by some of the groups. The *Havurah* groups attended a travel seminar and discussion at Brandeis University on Sunday, April 25, 1976, which proved to be of mutual benefit. Rabbi Gutterman reported to the board that the Temple Beth-El contingent at the conference was the largest in numbers and the best in a review of programs and participation interest. Plans were in progress for the temple to take over the program. Joan Brunwasser again met with the Beth-El leaders to assist in carrying out the transition to temple supervision and later sent a final report. By the end of 1976 there were six groups, and satisfaction was quite general.

Rabbi Gutterman, in a refrain often repeated in the long history of the congregation, fretted over the poor attendance at Sabbath services, seeing mostly the same loyal 100 or 150 persons. He emphasized the responsibility of board members to be present on Friday evenings. The rabbi also announced the publication of a new prayer book, the first in 80 years, titled the *Gates of Prayer*. The new edition was authorized by the board, and sufficient numbers were ordered to replace the old texts. As the year came to a close, Cantor Norman Gewirtz expressed his desire to relinquish his duties as of November 1976 and to be granted a terminal sabbatical leave with pay through May 1977. His request was granted unanimously.

A report from PROVTY gives some idea of the scope of its activities. In January 1976 twelve members attended a subregional retreat at Needham, Massachusetts, where the subject of discussion was "Zionism is Racism—Another Holocaust?"[10] The group provided coat-checking services at the "Winner's Circle" champagne dinner, which proved to be a profitable enterprise. The volleyball team was on a winning streak, and the January meeting presented a speaker on transcendental meditation, a recurrent fad. Representatives in February attended a "Conclavette" in Springfield, Massachusetts, and in March a "coffee house party" was featured.

Support of Israel continued to be a concern of the temple. A special Israel bond affair was hosted by the temple on Sunday, April 25. The entertainer at the champagne reception styled "Cafe Dizengoff"[11] was comedian Joey Adams. The event honoring Rabbi Gutterman was attended by 250 persons, who purchased $85,000 worth of bonds.

The annual meeting of 1976 was held on May 16. A new slate of

officers was elected with Rosalea (Mrs. Newton B.) Cohn elevated to the presidency, the first female president at Beth-El. Other officers were: Carl H. Feldman, Bertram Katzanek, and Joseph Schwartz, vice presidents; Lewis M. Tanner, treasurer; and Lawrence S. Gates, secretary. The budget provided for expenditures of $272,145 with an estimated deficit of $24,545. A move to increase dues by 10 percent was defeated, but a credit of religious school fees against dues was eliminated, a modest concession in the face of recurrent large deficits. The Sisterhood had earlier contributed $4,000 for repairs and equipment.

On the other side of the ledger, it was reported in the fall that 49 new families had become members, representing additional income of $12,500 and building fund pledges of $24,500.

Overall revenues were up by $20,000. There were 28 new children in the religious school, but total enrollment was a disappointing 273, one of the lowest in many years. Although representatives met with the Bureau of Jewish Education regarding establishment of a community Hebrew high school as an economy move, Temple Beth-El was not interested. A move to admit the children of non-members stimulated a prolonged discussion, but in the end was tabled.

At a reception on October 17 in honor of departing Cantor Gewirtz, he was presented with a purse as a token of appreciation. The Music and Choir Committee undertook a search for a replacement, although it was believed that a full-time cantor was not needed. The committee learned of two cantor prospects available for weekends, one of whom was an ordained cantor. A female cantor was a realistic choice, as three were now available in the United States, all Reform. They were regularly accepted for training and ordination by Hebrew Union College. The committee advertised for a part-time cantor in the *Jewish Advocate* of Boston, as a part-time cantor from that area could, as a practical matter, readily commute to Providence. The committee at the same time was contemplating the purchase of a new organ, but encountered major difficulties. A new instrument could cost up to $100,000, while the Organ Fund contained only $1,116.

From October 17 to November 21, 1976 Julie and Rabbi Leslie Gutterman were leaders of a temple tour group traveling to Israel. Sponsored by the Israel Seminars Foundation and the American Zionist Foundation, it arranged meetings and discussions with Is-

raelis. The group visited an immigrant induction center, Masada, and the Knesset, and attended evening lectures on the growth of Reform Judaism and its effect on Israel. Thirty-two persons participated in the tour at a modest cost of $777 per person. Not all were congregants of Temple Beth-El. Rabbi Gutterman particularly noted the diverse ages of the group and commented on the harmony which prevailed.

In the fall of 1976 Rabbi Braude resumed his study group, now focused on *Humash* and Ramban.[12] It continued throughout the winter and spring and was again resumed in the 1977–1978 season.

A Thanksgiving Eve Service in conjunction with neighboring St. Martin's Church, a yearly event, was held on Wednesday evening, November 24. The guest speaker at the Friday evening service on December 10 was Professor Warren Teixeira, formerly head of the Department of Textile Design at the Rhode Island School of Design. His theme was "An Artist's Perception of Israel." After 15 years at the School of Design, he had recently spent five years in Israel. At the invitation of the Israeli government he had set up a new College of Design and Technology. His presentation featured paintings that he had executed while in Israel.

The annual outdoor Hanukkah candle-lighting ceremonies, a regular feature since the opening of the Orchard Avenue edifice, were attended by parents and children and was described as a "festive occasion." The nightly ceremonies continued until the end of Hanukkah.

On Friday evening, January 14, 1977 the *Gates of Prayer*, the new Union prayer book, which had been on order for more than a year, was introduced for the first time. It replaced the "Newly Revised" edition of the *Union Prayer Book*, which had been in use at Temple Beth-El since 1940. The new prayer book, larger than the old, drew not only upon familiar liturgy, but added to it from other sources. "The new prayer book," said the prospectus, "is intended to satisfy the spiritual needs of many diverse points of view within Reform Judaism." Much of the language was modernized.

PROVTY under President Susan Webber was unusually active. A medical student at Brown University had become an adviser to the group. Several members spent a weekend on tour in New York, while four members attended during the school vacations a week-long retreat and institute in New Hampshire. The president of the

group spoke of trips to Israel sponsored by NEFTY (New England Federation of Temple Youth) and a summer camp in New York State for leadership training.

Chairman Bertram Katzanek of the Religious School Committee reported in February that the committee had unanimously decided to re-engage Seymour Krieger as school administrator. A survey by the Board of Jewish Education found, significantly, that Temple Beth-El had the largest number of students and teachers among Rhode Island congregations. Through the year there were 300 students in the Sunday School and 87 in the Hebrew School, an increase in both categories as compared to decreases in enrollment in most other religious schools. In the spring, exercises were held for 19 confirmands and 10 high school graduates.

Carl Feldman, chairman of the Music and Cantorial Search Committee, reported that he had been in communication with the placement service of the Cantorial School of Hebrew Union College in New York. He had had profitable conversations with two recent guest cantors, Albert Sturmer and Sheila Mae Klein. He explained that the search must be conducted through proper channels, which in the present situation was the American Conference of Cantors in New York. Guest cantors must be paid $300 for each audition, and many other temples were also searching for cantors. The quest at present was for either a part-time or full-time cantor on a permanent basis. In the meantime a cantor would be available for all bar and bat mitzvah services, if desired. Robert Block, the last of the guest cantors, appeared on Friday evening, March 18. Feldman reported that Block was seeking a permanent part-time position. A member of the choir had been engaged to sing at Saturday morning services.

Feldman reported that the Cantorial Search Committee recommended the engagement of Cantor Robert Block on a part-time basis for the High Holy Days of 1977 and for 20 weekends during the year for a fee of $8,000 which would include all expenses. Cantor Block's services were available to all families at their option for a fee of $200, but in any case a cantorial soloist and the organist would continue to be supplied for all bar and bat mitzvah services at no charge.

Feldman explained that there was a current shortage of cantors, with 30 congregations seeking full-time cantors, while only nine

would be graduated that year. This discrepancy resulted in high salary demands. Rabbi Gutterman had not yet decided whether a full-time or part-time cantor would be preferable for the congregation. The arrangement with Cantor Block for a one-year period would provide the congregation with an opportunity to weigh the various alternatives. The motion to approve the committee's recommendation to engage Block for a one-year period was approved. Mrs. Helene Bernhardt cast a single dissenting vote, recorded at her request.

The annual meeting was held on May 15, 1977. The incumbent officers were re-elected for another term. The budget for the year 1977–78 allowed for expenses of $311,760 with another large projected deficit of $30,060. However, 51 new families had joined the congregation since the previous High Holidays. The fairness of the dues structure was again a matter of discussion. Four hundred of the 900 members paid $225 or less, while 300 paid in excess of $300. Some considered the situation inequitable to higher-paying members, since many in the congregation were not paying their "fair share." The board was called upon to approach members for revision of dues. A new group called the Beth-El Singers provided welcome entertainment after the discouraging news.

Both the Sisterhood and Brotherhood reported considerable activity during the year. The Sisterhood, among its other activities, had hosted a Purim Party, held Purim Parties at nursing homes, organized the annual Donor Luncheon, held a Golden Agers event at the temple, planned to stock special Passover items in its Judaica shop, held its annual usually successful Interfaith Day on April 18, and conducted various study groups. The Brotherhood hosted regular Sunday morning breakfast meetings, sponsored study groups, ran an interfaith get-together, presented a lecture-discussion series on "The Jew—an International Problem?," arranged a Family Night, and engaged in a variety of other activities. On May 1 the congregation, with the support of both the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, conducted a money-raising Marathon Spring Bazaar and surprise auction lasting for 12 hours.

On June 15 Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Segal were honored at Temple Beth-El on behalf of the current Israel bond campaign. The guest speaker was the Honorable Eliashiu Ben-Horin, Israeli ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg, and head of the Israeli Mission to the

United Nations. Beryl and Chaya Segal were long-time members of the congregation, and both had taught in the temple religious school.

At the June meeting of the board, the chairman of the Endowment Fund requested a vote on the motion "that a Pooled Income Trust be established for the benefit of the Endowment Fund, and that Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank be nominated as Trustee of said trust." After some discussion the proposition was voted without dissent.

As the year ended, the congregation learned of the death of Rabbi Simon Cohen (1894–1977), who had served the congregation as rabbi from 1917 to 1919. A scholar of note, he had received an earned D.D. degree at Hebrew Union College in 1924. For many years he was editor of the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* and more recently had served on the library staff of Hebrew Union College.

The great Providence blizzard of Monday, February 6, 1978 produced many stories of individual adventures and exploits. People in large numbers were trapped for days in their places of employment or stranded on the roads, while others could not leave their homes. The city was virtually paralyzed, until the National Guard dug it out with heavy motorized earth-moving equipment. Temple Beth-El had its own story, as related by Executive Director Samuel Stepak. There had been ample warnings of a severe storm, and as the snowfall began in the late morning "I insisted and advised our Temple office personnel to pack up and go home at noon." All made it home safely, but some required two to three hours, as streets were increasingly impassable and blocked by cars and snowdrifts, while freeway ramps became virtual barriers, rather than means of access or exit.

Stepak, however, kept the custodial staff on duty. As the snow accumulated, they worked valiantly with plow and shovel all day until 11 p.m. that evening, keeping the walks and parking lot open. As the streets were not plowed, because the city's equipment had long been immobilized, Stepak and the custodians were trapped in the building until Friday. They shopped for food at a supermarket a few blocks away. A Friday evening service was managed despite the difficulties and also a bar mitzvah on Saturday morning attended by 60 persons. Over the weekend Stepak alone kept the buildings open and warm (despite a heating breakdown, which he managed to correct), and the daily *minyan* services were also held. By Mon-

day, thanks to an exhausted Stepak, the routine was essentially back to normal.

In February 1978 the board learned that another cantor would be auditioned on a forthcoming Friday evening and "that a female cantor residing in the Boston area is available to us for selected services." In March Carl Feldman reported for the Music Committee that a Cantor Perlstein, who had earlier failed to show up for an audition because of the Great Blizzard, had been rescheduled. Further, a female soprano cantor soloist would appear on March 24 and continue every Friday evening until the end of scheduled services in June. The "female cantor residing in Boston" and the "woman soprano cantor soloist" were the same person. With a woman as president of the congregation, a female cantor would no longer seem unusual.

During the spring the Brotherhood held a wine and cheese party featuring Israeli folk dancers with PROVTY participating. It also sponsored a trip to Brandeis University for a session at which Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, was the principal speaker. In April a meeting of the Brotherhood was addressed by Edward F. Burke, chairman of the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission. The Sisterhood contributed in excess of $1,500 to the Endowment Fund and promised substantial involvement in extensive restoration of the meeting hall, now shabby after almost a quarter century of use.

The annual meeting of May 7, 1978 was preceded by a reception for Robert (Bob) Hochberg and Abraham (Al) Adelman, recognizing their long and faithful service in conducting the daily *minyan* and their election as Honorary Life Trustees.

All of the incumbent officers were re-elected except that Edward S. Goldin was chosen to replace Joseph Schwartz as one of the vice presidents. The new budget provided for expenditures of $325,357 with a projected deficit of $26,657. A delayed payment of $61,000 from the residual of the estate of John J. Rosenfeld was placed in the Endowment Fund. Rabbi Gutterman announced that in the fall Mrs. Shelley Parness would assume the new position of Program Director. Certified by the Rhode Island Activities Director Association, she had previously served as the first activities director of the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island. Her mission was the coordination of existing adult programs and the initiation of new ones. Her tenure proved to be brief. Rabbi Gutterman spoke of

his recent attendance at the White House celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the State of Israel.

Rabbi Gutterman announced to the board in September that Ida Rae Hersh would be the cantorial soloist for the High Holy Days. During recent months she had sung at Friday evening services and at Saturday morning bar and bat mitzvahs. Ms. Hersh had received a B.F.A. degree from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and was currently enrolled in the Master's program at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. She planned to commute to Providence for the remainder of the season. She was well received at the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services and continued to serve as "cantorial soloist" for the ensuing two years.

In October the Music Committee recommended purchase of a new organ at a cost of $21,000, the present instrument being in a "precarious state." The board appropriated up to $5,000 from the Building Fund toward the purchase price, if contributions from voluntary sources were insufficient to cover the full cost. By early April the new double-manual Rogers organ had been installed. Temple Emanuel organist Frederick MacArthur performed at the console for a Friday evening dedicatory service. It was generally agreed that it was a fine instrument, and the improvement in tonal quality was readily apparent.

Rabbi Gutterman continued to be involved in community affairs. In the spring of 1979 he was appointed by Governor J. Joseph Garrahy to the Governor's Commission for the International Year of the Child to examine the state's policies and programs on behalf of children. He also served on the Providence Human Relations Commission, was chairman of the Program Committee of the Jewish Family and Children's Service, and was a member of the executive board of the recently organized Hospice Care of Rhode Island.

On Saturday and Sunday evenings May 12 and 13 the Beth-El Players after some nine rehearsals presented the comedy "Plaza Suite," the Broadway hit play by Neil Simon. The play was both a popular and financial success, with a net profit from admissions and advertising in the souvenir program of some $4,900.

Previous attempts to allow music and dancing at bar and bat mitzvah celebrations had thus far been vetoed by the rabbis and the board, but the agitation for the change continued. At a board meeting in May 1979 Dr. Alan Josephson[13] read a petition signed by 62 members of the congregation:

> We, the undersigned . . . having inquired of other congregations in the New England and New York areas as to the propriety of Saturday evening *Havdalah*[14] (end of Sabbath) bar/bat mitzvah services and finding that many of them had such service, hereby request the reinstitution of the Saturday evening *Havdalah* bar/bat mitzvah services at Temple Beth-El.
>
> We purposely used the word "reinstitution" as Saturday evening *Havdalah* bar/bat mitzvah services were part of the weekly calender from 1954–1956.

In discussing the petition, Rabbi Gutterman read letters from rabbis whose opinions he had requested. Based on these opinions and his own convictions, he expressed his opposition to the proposal for religious reasons. The matter was referred to the Religious Practices Committee. Dr. Josephson then suggested that consideration also be given by the committee to the sanctioning of music and dancing after Friday evening bar/bat mitzvah services—an unlikely prospect.

Dr. Josephson continued to press his petition for music and dancing at bar/bat mitzvah celebrations. Suggesting that, since regular Friday evening services are not scheduled between Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah, music and dancing might be permitted at bar/bat mitzvah affairs during that period. President Goldin noted that the general subject was still under consideration by the Religious Practices Committee. The new suggestion would be referred to the committee, which had been gathering material from other congregations concerning the subject. When Dr. Josephson urged that a younger member be appointed to the committee, the president noted that two such persons had in fact recently been appointed.

Melvin Zurier, chairman of the Religious Practices Committee, reported that the committee had been formed in 1964 to discuss the matter of funerals, but until recently had not met at all during the past 15 years.[15] In its investigation regarding bar and bat mitzvahs on Friday evenings and during *Havdalah* services, the committee sought expressions of opinion from the congregation and inquired of the policies of other congregations. The committee made the following recommendations:

> The present arrangement for holding bar mitzvahs on Friday evenings between *Shavuot* and *Rosh Hashanah* should be continued. . . .
>
> The committee recommends against the holding of a *Havdalah*

> service on a Saturday evening. It believes that such a service would be artificial, would take away from the significance of a Saturday morning service where a thirteen-year-old is initiated into religious experience at a regular service, and . . . that the social aspects of the affair could well overshadow the religious aspects. . . .
>
> The committee opposes the institution of social dancing at any bar mitzvah—whether on a Friday evening between *Shavuot* and *Rosh Hashanah* or on a Saturday afternoon at the reception following a bar mitzvah. . . .

Rabbi Gutterman commended the committee for its scrupulous fairness in weighing the issue and in pursuing its charge with the good of the congregation and its future growth as a guide. The recommendations were accepted as presented.

At the same board meeting, Rabbi Gutterman expressed his desire for the establishment of a temple fund to provide income to support programs of cultural significance. Two members were interested in organizing such a fund and volunteered to solicit contributions of $10,000. It was considered an appropriate goal to raise some $125,000 for this purpose on the occasion of the forthcoming 125th anniversary celebration of the temple. Concern was expressed as to whether this fund-raising would interfere with solicitation for the Endowment Fund. After lengthy discussion, it was decided to establish such a fund to provide special "cultural advancement of the congregation." A committee was named to develop the program, which came to be known as the Benefactors Fund and was to a degree a successor to Rabbi Braude's languishing Festival Forums.

The 124th annual meeting of May 20, 1979 was preceded by a Dutch Treat Supper. A new slate of officers was elected: Edward S. Goldin, president; Carl H. Feldman, Lawrence S. Gates, and Bertram Katzanek, vice presidents; Marvin Grabel, treasurer; and Tovia A. Siegel, secretary. The new budget provided for expenditures of $344,083 with an estimated deficit of $17,183.

During 1978 President Goldin appointed a Long-Range Planning Committee with Bertram Katzanek as chairman to assess the temple's religious, educational, administrative, and maintenance needs for the next five years and to provide plans to meet these needs. The committee was divided into subcommittees to explore the various categories. Victoria Lederberg reported to the board on June 4, 1979 that the final report, partly based on a questionnaire sent

to all members, had been completed, was on file, and was available to members. She spoke favorably of the large number of responses to the questionnaire, but noted the distinct need for more communication and cooperation among the various components of the congregation, such as the Brotherhood, Sisterhood and PROVTY. Some respondents expressed the view that certain questions were ambiguous and should be reformulated for the next round.

On motion of Carl Feldman, a Committee on Temple Art was established to approve all donations of art works or other creative artifacts to the temple. It would also suggest and recommend to the board ideas for implementation of an art program and methods of obtaining appropriate items. The committee later approved some choice acquisitions, which were displayed in glass cases in the corridor alongside the meeting hall.

The board also approved the formation of a committee to plan a celebration of the 125th Anniversary year of the congregation and a series of events during the year. While the congregation was actually organized on January 8, 1854, it did not receive its legislative charter until June 13, 1855. It was, thus, not unreasonable to choose the latter date as the focus of the celebration. Beginning with the August 30th issue, the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* carried on its masthead in prominent type the legend "125th Anniversary Year."

Rabbi Gutterman wrote of this period:[16]

> In the spring of 1979 I began to think about some way in which we could appropriately celebrate the 125th anniversary of Temple Beth-El. I envisioned such a major anniversary celebration to underscore our remarkable history and to present a dramatic opportunity for rededicating ourselves to all that Beth-El represents in our lives today.
>
> Furthermore, I wanted the celebration to plant seeds that would yield a lush harvest. In other words, I had hoped we could do something to insure many happy returns of the day.
>
> I instinctively turned to Norman Fain, whom I regard as a person of vision and action, and who is committed to the welfare of our Temple. He suggested the formation of a Benefactor's Fund which would guarantee funds to be used for important Jewish cultural events . . . for years to come.
>
> When Norman and his capable wife Rosalie learned that the creative Bert and Helene Bernhardt were willing to co-chair a

series of happy celebrations, they were enthusiastic. I knew then that this would be a memorable year.

Ultimately 19 families contributed $10,000 each, which was invested to provide funding for supplemental temple activities on an annual basis. The benefactors would join with the rabbi in selecting special programs "to enrich the lifestyle" of the congregation, as it was reported in the *Temple Beth-El Bulletin*.[17] The fund was kept separate from the 125th Anniversary Fund, which requested donations from the membership to support the various events planned for the anniversary year. Rabbi Gutterman also announced plans for a study group with members of neighboring St. Martin's Church. The group, which came to be known as the Orchard Avenue Study Group, presented discussions on timely subjects with invited speakers.

At the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services there were more than 1650 persons in attendance, requiring the placing of spare pews in the wings and chairs in the foyer. A new organist, Dennis Brunelle, had been engaged, a new sound system was installed, and Ida Rae Hersh officiated as cantorial soloist. After a brief trial period, Brunelle resigned and was replaced by organist Vance Westgate. With progressive adjustments of the sound system over a period of time, the sound transmission in the sanctuary was greatly improved.

In November 1979 Rabbi Gutterman reported to the board that Shelley Parness, the activities director, had requested an extended leave, and he hoped to find assistance in the congregation to carry on her functions. As for his own community involvement, he believed that his membership on boards and committees of various community organizations was part of his responsibility in representing the congregation in the community.

The yearly joint Thanksgiving service with St. Martin's Church was held on Wednesday, November 21. During the weekend of November 29 to December 2, the temple entertained as scholar-in-residence Aaron David Rosenbaum, staff member of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). A lobbyist for legislation affecting Israel, he was editor of *Near East Report*, a newsletter widely read on Capitol Hill. He delivered three lectures during his stay.

In the same month Stanley Grossman, speaking for the Social

Action Committee, proposed that the temple sponsor a refugee family, at a probable cost of $500–600, and noted that several agencies were available for guidance. The committee had also been consulting with the Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS) concerning the problems of Russian Jewish immigrant families and their absorption into the community.

By December the Social Action Committee could report that, through Rabbi Gutterman's intercession with JFCS, Temple Beth-El had arranged to sponsor a Vietnamese "boat family," one of four being resettled by the Jewish Community in Rhode Island. Temple Beth-El would oversee the resettlement of this one family by providing volunteers to find jobs and an apartment for them, and by supervising their acculturation. The federal government contributed $250 per person, after which Temple Beth-El was responsible for their support. The family could eventually apply for welfare if necessary. In essence, Temple Beth-El was responsible for settling the family (food, shelter, clothing, medical care, employment, and schooling) and for the funds necessary to fulfill these needs when the federal government's grant of $250 per person was exhausted. Fourteen hundred dollars was contributed voluntarily by members of the congregation for support of the "boat people."

The extended family finally adopted by the congregation, consisting of a husband and wife, two young daughters, the wife's sister, and the husband's brother, arrived in March. An apartment was found for them at University Heights, the Fain project in which the congregation held stock. The family had some difficult times, but by April two of the children were in school, and one member was ready to seek employment. They received some welfare benefits. Members of PROVTY tutored them in English three times a week.

Rabbi Gutterman also spoke of the need to "reach out" to the Russian Jews recently arrived in the community. The temple endeavored to engage five such families in congregational activities. Members were urged to welcome visitors to temple services and to be hosts to newcomers, especially for Seder celebrations.

Overt anti-Semitic activities once again surfaced in the community, and swastikas were painted on monuments in the cemetery. The matter was reported to the police and to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. The desecration involved 50 graves, monuments, and mausoleums. The police responded with night and weekend patrols. The ADL reaction was "immediate and knowl-

edgeable." The monuments were steam-cleaned professionally at a cost of $1,900. Other expenses were also incurred at this time. Some $30,000 was appropriated from the Building Fund for a comprehensive rebuilding and modernization of the temple's heating system, worn out after a quarter century of use. Installation of a burglar alarm system was also under consideration.

The chief preoccupation of the congregation's leadership was the 125th Anniversary Celebration. Contributions to the Anniversary Fund amounted eventually to $26,000. The anniversary season opened with four special Sabbath services in April. A vocal recital by the popular cantorial soloist Ida Rae Hersh was held on April 4. Rabbi David Saperstein was the guest speaker on Friday evening, April 11. Saperstein was Associate Director of the Religious Action Center and the Commission on Social Action of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He was active in the civil rights struggle, the anti-war movement, prison reform, and housing. After the service he met, appropriately, with members of the Social Action Committee.

At a special Sabbath Service of Commemoration and Rededication on Friday evening, April 18,the principal speaker was Albert Vorspan, vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Deemed to be one of America's foremost religious leaders, he was director of the Commission on Social Action of the U.A.H.C. and a humorous commentator on the trials and tribulations of everyday life. Preceding the service there was a procession of all temple board members present, and afterwards a reception in the meeting hall. The biblical themes for the evening were "Blessed are you who have come here in the name of the Lord" and "He abides through all generations."

The principal speaker at the Friday evening service of April 25 was Lieutenant Colonel Itzhak Itzhaki, who spoke on "Masada: Rise and Fall." Colonel Itzhaki was a veteran of the Israeli Defense Forces, in which he had served as head of the Educational Branch of General Headquarters. He was now principally engaged in instructing teachers on the Bible and conducting adult seminars on Jewish history. He was visiting Providence in connection with the annual State of Israel bond drive.

Dr. Henry Kissinger addressed the congregation on Wednesday evening, April 30. Formerly a Harvard professor, he had been National Security Adviser and Secretary of State to President Richard

Nixon. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 and was presently University Professor of Diplomacy at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. A special section of the sanctuary was reserved for some 100 dignitaries. All 1,600 seats were filled, and an overflow audience was accommodated in the meeting hall with closed-circuit television. Kissinger held a press conference prior to his address attended by 30 reporters and televised live.

The 125th annual meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday evening, May 11. The roster of officers for the ensuing year included Edward S. Goldin, president; Carl H. Feldman, Lawrence S. Gates, and J. William Pinkos, vice presidents; Marvin Grabel, treasurer; and Mrs. Jason C. (Tovia) Siegel, secretary. The budget projected expenditures of $362,700 with an estimated deficit of $33,890, thirty times the total budget a century ago. The rabbi announced that the congregation now numbered 1,000 families, with more to come in the fall. The previous high-water mark had been 1,005 families in 1967. After a progressive decline to 888 families in 1975, it had gradually grown again to the current 1,000 families under the nurturing of Rabbi Gutterman.

Bella Davidovich, Russian-Jewish concert pianist, appeared in concert as the third major event of the Anniversary Year on Wednesday evening, May 14. Described as "Russia's best kept secret," she made her American debut at Carnegie Hall in New York in 1979, shortly after her immigration to the United States. She came to be recognized as one of the world's outstanding pianists, and her brilliant and resplendent performance was received with enthusiasm.

The closing affair of the 125th Anniversary Celebration was the Anniversary Party on June 7, close to the June 13 date of the charter. Black ties and long gowns had been specified (The *Temple Beth-El Bulletin* proclaimed: "This is the night to bring out the black ties and the long gowns!"). However, at a board meeting on May 19, a letter was read protesting the formal dress announcement, which it was argued, would exclude many members of the congregation. After discussing the matter, the board in the interests of democracy decreed that dark suits would be acceptable for men, and formal gowns would not be necessary. The affair took place in the meeting hall strikingly decorated with balloons and flowers, with the colorful reception opening out on to the patio on a mild June evening. The adjacent biblical garden had recently been restored especially for the occasion by the Eden Garden Club, an official affiliate of

the congregation. The various events of the 125th Anniversary year were well covered by the electronic media and the press.

The closing event of the 125th Anniversary year was the issuance in October 1980, after the High Holy Days, of the souvenir book titled *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David—One hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary—A pictorial memoir.* The handsome oversized book printed on heavily coated paper was published by a committee under the talented leadership of Geraldine Segal (Mrs. Warren) Foster, editor, and Carl Feldman, associate editor. The cover, printed in bright colors, was taken from a symbolic painting by Professor Walter Feldman of Brown University, creator of the mosaics at the entrance and in the foyer of the Orchard Avenue synagogue, the original of which had been presented to Henry Kissinger. It was inspired by these lines from the 35th Chapter of the Book of Chronicles:

> And God said unto Jacob: "Arise, go up to Beth-El, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God" . . . And he built there an altar and called the place El-beth-el, because there God was revealed unto him. . . .

The publication was in essence a striking pictorial history of the congregation and its various temples from its beginnings in 1854 to the 125th anniversary of its charter in 1980. The book opened and closed with appropriate biblical texts: " . . . like a tree replanted by streams of water that yields its fruit in due season . . . " and "It is a tree of life to those who hold it fast."

Thus ends the story of a century-and-a-quarter of Jewish spiritual leadership in Providence, Rhode Island and of a large segment of the three centuries-and-a-quarter of Jewish life in this Colony and State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations—Roger Williams's haven of religious tolerance.

NOTES

1. Melvin L. Zurier writes in a personal communication: "The special pension committee had been working for more than a year and consisted of all past presidents and several others. Rabbi Braude requested that I be appointed as chairman. We met with Norman Fain and Milton Pliner at Braude's request. The final product was seen by Braude as generous, and he so acknowledged, saying he was completely satisfied. I was determined that he be satisfied, not only because I wanted the

proposal to be without controversy, but because it was the right thing to do. Little did I realize a year later that this was not to be."

2. Melvin L. Zurier recalls: "How well I remember returning to the synagogue and sitting on the pulpit during the *Neilah* service [the closing service of the Day of Atonement] on Yom Kippur. We had heard about Egypt's attack an hour or two earlier. There was genuine emotion and apprehension as the *shophar* [ram's horn] blew to end the service."
3. Obituary in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 6:480–482, (November) 1973.
4. Melvin L. Zurier in a personal communication makes two points:

   First, as in the case of the cantor issue [annual meeting of May 1, 1960], Braude had arranged for telephone squads to call people to urge them to attend the meeting and vote in his favor, without an inkling of any kind to President Murry Halpert, Past President Maurice Hendel, or any member of the Executive Committee.

   Second, we thought we had reached a total understanding a year earlier to Braude's satisfaction. I had to restrain Treasurer Will Robins from walking out of the meeting.

   Zurier removed himself from temple activities for a number of years because of disappointment over the methods used by a person he greatly admired. The years and Rabbi Braude's illness and courageous efforts to recover tempered his feelings, and in fact he subsequently resumed his relationship with the Braudes and his active involvement in temple governance.

   Pearl Braude gives her reactions to these events (personal communication):

   The reason why my late husband insisted that he have secretarial help was because he was short-changed for so long. His salary was never as high as his colleagues' because there were those in the congregation who were parsimonious when it came to a rabbi's salary. However, there were enough people who understood his worth and came to his rescue at that fateful congregational meeting in 1974 when he retired. To have treated him differently would have been unfortunate.
5. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 437.
6. Pearl Braude writes (personal communication):

   I take exception to the characterization of my husband's performance of his pastoral duties. He was not "inarticulate and ill-at-ease" when making sick and condolence calls. I have received *hundreds* of letters from people who wrote how meaningful his help was during those periods. There are always persons who want the rabbi to be at their beck and call. My husband was there when he felt he was needed.

   There were enough people in the congregation who understood the value of his . . . [scholarly] activities. His dream was to elevate Jews to deeper understanding of their heritage. His work was meant not only for scholars, but for ordinary people as well. They, to be sure,

have to be led in the study of his works, and that is where his contribution is seen to have its value. I doubt that there are many rabbis—Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox—who do not know his works and have not gained insights in their study of *Midrash*.

Mrs. Braude wrote of her husband's "devotion to Torah" and "his deepening [of] his understanding of Judaism," and went on:

> . . . by studying he became more articulate, so that his pulpit utterances had *substance* and *depth*. How many people have said to me: "Every time Rabbi Braude speaks, I learn something!"

Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman has pointed out that Rabbi Braude's demeanor in calling on the bereaved may have reflected the custom of the East European ghettos. According to *The Book of Jewish Knowledge* (Nathan Ausubel, 1964, p. 404): "Unobtrusive was their *shivah* (memorial week) call in keeping with tradition. All conversation with the mourners except for some appropriate words of praise for the deceased, was tacitly avoided." However, "Visiting the sick and the afflicted in order to render assistance and to speak words of consolation to them was given unusual prominence." (*Ibid.*, p. 410).

7. W. G. Braude's "Recollections of a Septuagenarian, Part II," p. 409. Also note of Pearl Braude.
8. This matter again surfaced in 1979, when the Religious Practices Committee confirmed the board's position.
9. *Havurah* (Hebrew singular) and *Havurot* (Hebrew plural).
10. Melvin L. Zurier writes (personal communication): "This program was doubtless prompted by the United Nations debate wherein the General Assembly passed a resolution equating Zionism with racism. I recall participating with Milton Stanzler, prominent civil rights attorney, at the Temple in 1975 on the subject of the Bakke case and affirmative action." [The Supreme Court ruled in Bakke's favor when he was denied admission to a medical school having a numerical quota for blacks, when in the absence of such a quota he would have been admitted.] Zurier continues: "Our programs frequently reflected current issues—as, of course, they still do."
11. Tel Aviv in Israel was founded in 1909. A founder and its first mayor was Meir Dizengoff. There are a Dizengoff Street and a Dizengoff Circle in Tel Aviv.
12. See Chapter 14, notes 3 and 7.
13. Dr. Alan Josephson in 1988 moved to California.
14. *Havdalah* is the prayer recited at sundown at the conclusion of Sabbaths and festivals. Reform congregations do not customarily hold a *Havdalah* service at the conclusion of Sabbath.
15. Melvin L. Zurier, chairman of the Religious Practices Committee at the time, writes in a personal communication:

> Prior to 1979 the committee's only meeting and report was about 1965, when it presented a Code of Funeral Practices, which the board

approved and which is still in effect. One of the recommendations was the omission of flowers at temple funerals.

When a woman board member expressed her displeasure over the board's action, her husband (also a board member) loyally proclaimed, "I don't care what the board says. I'll see to it that there are flowers at your funeral!"

16. See *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, One hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary, A pictorial memoir* (1980).
17. The fund is administered by a separate Board of Administration. While it reports to the board, it operates independently through its self-perpetuating board. A separate advisory committee has handled selection of speakers and performers.

EPILOGUE

Another Decade Passes

As this is written (1989), it is nine years since the closing events of the 125th Anniversary Year of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. It is appropriate, therefore, to bring the story up to date and note some of the principal happenings since that milestone celebration. The ambiance of the imposing edifice has changed little, except that a shade more of patina has softened its lines. At night it is now brightly illuminated, primarily for security purposes, but lending a quality of radiance to its commanding architecture.

Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman has become an influential spiritual leader, enhancing the eminence of the congregation in the community with his persuasiveness and gentle nature. Besides his pastoral duties, he has been a member of the boards of The Miriam and Butler Hospitals, a member of the original board of Hospice Care of Rhode Island, president of the Jewish Family Service of Rhode Island, chairman of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, and a member of the Rhode Island Communications Authority, none of which has affected his conscientious attention to temple affairs. Edward S. Goldin yielded the presidency of the congregation to Carl Feldman in 1982, and he in turn to Melvin L. Zurier in 1985. In 1988 Bruce G. Sundlun succeeded to the presidency. He is the son of the late Walter I. Sundlun, who served two separate terms as president of the congregation. This is the first time in the long history of the congregation that the son of a previous president has assumed the office. During these years the temple has been in transition to a new generation of leadership.

The membership of the congregation by 1988 had grown to 1125 families, the largest in the history of the congregation, especially reassuring in light of a significant decline in the Jewish population

of Rhode Island. Population surveys commissioned twenty-five years apart by the Jewish Federation of Providence and its successor, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, indicate a shrinking of the Jewish population of Greater Providence from 19,457 persons in 1963 to 15,110 in 1987, a loss of 22 percent in a quarter of a century.[1]

While Orthodox, and to a lesser extent Conservative synagogue membership has declined, the Reform movement has experienced an encouraging increase. This has been occasioned in part by an outreach program to welcome non-Jewish spouses, as well as the controversial recognition by The Reform Movement of patrilineal descent in defining who is a Jew. The Membership Committee of the congregation in 1988 estimated that almost one in three of the new families joining the congregation has a spouse not born Jewish.

The board of the congregation is measurably younger than in the past. It has recently held annual retreats at which the relevance and responsibility of its members are explored. The *Havurah* movement continues to grow and now constitutes some ten groups. A flourishing adult education program is an expression of the growing zeal in the congregation for the study of matters of Jewish interest. The budget increased to $646,000 with no anticipated deficit. This favorable outlook has resulted in part from a comprehensive dues revaluation, in part from a burgeoning membership, in part from successful management of temple invested funds with the guidance of professional counsel, and in part from efficient administration. This optimistic assessment has taken into account the need for extensive and costly restoration of the exterior of the entire temple complex (recently completed) and total replacement of the long defective and cronically leaky roof. An active House Policies Committee adopted a comprehensive maintenance plan, which included reconstruction of the patio, construction of a new office section through the generosity of a member family, and numerous other renovations. New ark curtains and Torah covers have been installed. The pooled endowment and special funds now total $1.5 million.

There have been other changes in the temple family. The conscientious and devoted Executive Director Samuel J. Stepak retired in 1984, after serving for 14 years, succeeded by Robert M. (Rob) Goldberg, a graduate of Brown University, who had served in a similar capacity at Temple Torat Yisrael in Cranston. The estimable and admired librarian Maryland Estes retired in March 1981 after 26 years of efficient stewardship. The library during her incumbency

had grown to 17,000 volumes, one of the most extensive collections of Judaica and Hebrew works in the United States.[2] It circulated 8,000 books annually. Her successor was Allan S. Metz, a bearded young graduate in library science from the University of Rhode Island. He resigned in 1987 to pursue studies in his chosen field of Latin-American Judaica. His replacement was Reinhild (Mrs. Lawrence M.) Silverman, wife of the associate rabbi.

Ida Rae Hersh, the popular and talented cantorial soloist, resigned effective after the High Holidays of 1980, leaving New England to take up residence at Oberlin College in Ohio, where her husband had assumed a teaching position. The vacancy was filled for a year by Lisa Avery and since then by soprano Alice Solorow, who commutes from Boston to sing at Sabbath services. Ms. Hersh has continued during the intervening years to officiate on the High Holy Days. It is notable that one or another female artist has filled this signal position for ten years.

Director of Education Seymour Krieger retired from his position effective in 1985 after 26 years of service. He was elected Director of Education Emeritus in recognition of his devoted service. Anticipating his retirement, the congregration engaged Rabbi Lawrence M. Silverman to assume duties both as associate rabbi and director of education. He was a welcome partner for Rabbi Gutterman, who had toiled alone in his pastoral duties for fifteen years since his election as senior rabbi. It was also many years since the congregation had had a rabbi who also served as director of the religious school. Rabbi Silverman, born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1943, had received a B.A. degree from Brown University in 1965 and an M.A. from the University of Toronto in 1967. After his ordination with an M.A.H.L. degree from Hebrew Union College in 1973, he earned a D.H.L. degree from the same school in 1976. Prior to coming to Temple Beth-El, he had occupied the pulpit at Congregation Beth Jacob in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Rabbi Silverman resigned, effective July, 1988 to return to Plymouth. He was succeeded by Susan Lynn Miller as assistant rabbi. A native of Clifton, New Jersey, she is a graduate of Brandeis University, *summa cum laude*, and of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. She was the first woman rabbi to be associated with a Jewish congregation in Rhode Island.

Also in 1988 Lisa (Mrs. Maurice) Goldstein, a native of Framingham, Massachusetts became Director of Education. She is also

a graduate of Brandeis University and received a master's degree in education from The University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

A recent addition to the temple's staff on a part-time basis was Arthur Eisenstein as adult education coordinator. An example of his projects was a one-day bus tour on October 25, 1987 to New York City to view an exhibit at the Jewish Museum of memorabilia related to the notorious Dreyfus Affair in France, and to spend an afternoon at the Metropolian Museum of Art. There was also a trip to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island to hear lectures by Jewish faculty members of the College.

The first Benefactors Fund concert was a presentation on October 22, 1981 by the International String Quartet, then in residence at Brown University. Other guests who have appeared in subsequent years are Theodore Bikel; Abba Eban; Jehan Sadat, widow of Anwar Sadat (This was the first synagogue she had ever entered.); Elie Wiesel; Chaim Potok; David Shipler of *The New York Times*; Mary Travers, folk singer and Soviet Jewry activist; and New York District Attorney Elizabeth Holzman, who spoke on "Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals." The Benefactors Fund has reached almost $200,000.

In 1984 Rhode Island native Irving R. Levine, author and television commentator on financial matters, appeared on behalf of the Irving Jay Fain Pension Fund, which has grown to some $250,000. In November 1986 under the sponsorship of the Freda and Louis Kaufman Memorial Fund, former Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg addressed a large audience, describing his experiences as a committed Jew, serving in President John F. Kennedy's cabinet, on the Supreme Court, and in the United Nations.

In November 1987 noted liturgical composer Ben Steinberg led an augmented musical ensemble, which included members of the choir, in an original composition commissioned by the Kaufman family in memory of their parents.[3]

To tidy up temple affairs, a completely revised edition of the Constitution of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David was adopted at the 131st annual meeting of the congregation on May 18, 1986. Responding to a shift in demography in the Rhode Island community and nationally, the congregation recognized a new category of members, the non-Jewish spouses of Jewish members.

Pursuant to a recommendaton of the Archives Committee, of

which this writer was chairman, Nathan Kaganoff, librarian of the American Jewish Historical Society, was engaged to survey the temple archives and make recommendations as to their disposition and management. The archives were disorganized and poorly preserved. After spending a day at the temple on October 8, 1986, Kaganoff in his report wrote: "I have never . . . visited a synagogue that . . . has such a rich collection as you have" and "has not as yet established its archives." Based on this assessment, the temple in the summer of 1988 appointed George Goodwin as its first professional archivist. A graduate in art history of Lake Forest College in Illinois, he earned masters' degrees from Columbia University, Hebrew Union College, and the University of Southern California, and a Ph.D. degree in art and education from Stanford University. Before coming to Providence he had organized major exhibitions for two Reform congregations. He planned eventually, based on the temple's extensive archives, to prepare a public exhibition and also to gather further written, visual, and audio materials. (*See below.*)

Rabbi William G. Braude passed away on February 25, 1988. He had continued to the end to manifest his devout interest in temple affairs, but his health had gradually failed following a stroke some years ago. Rabbi Gutterman, in his eulogy, said:[4] "For Rabbi Braude *Maasim Tovim*, righteous living, meant reaching out to our entire community with all of his characteristic zest, energy, humor, and unconditional belief in the worth and goodness inherent in the human spirit." He quoted Braude's last words to the board of trustees upon the latter's retirement:

> We are Congregation Sons of Israel and David. Both terms, Israel and David, have had tempestuous careers and. thank God, both Israel and the symbol of David are still going even as with God's help this one congregation will keep going even after I am gone. For we meet in a Beth-El, in a House of God, beneath whose halls for worship, study, and assembly are and may ever be God's everlasting arms.

Journalist Fred Friendly, old friend of Rabbi Braude's, also joined in the eulogy.

On April 10, 1988 at a special meeting of the congregation, a recommendation was received from the Cemetery Committee under the leadership of Bruce G. Sundlun to sell for $350,000 approximately 154,947 square feet of cemetery land to the rear of the

present Reservoir Avenue cemetery. Several parcels of land located off Niantic Avenue and adjacent to Mashpaug Pond had been laboriously acquired over a period of years to replace land lost to the adjacent freeway. The purchaser offered in return a gift of 5,701 square feet of land holding several billboards and located between the cemetery and the exit ramps from Rhode Island Route 10. It had long been an objective of the Cemetery Committee to remove the billboards. The land to be disposed of had doubtful use for gravesites because much of it was close to Mashpaug Pond, causing environmental concerns. The sale of the land ws approved at the annual meeting of May 15, 1988. A decision as to replacement of the land was deferred.

Nine former rabbis of Temple Beth-El had been either students (four), faculty members (one), or both student and faculty (four) at Brown University, usually in religious studies. Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman followed in this tradition, albeit not at Brown University. During the years 1984–1987 he was a special lecturer in Religious Studies at Providence College. The lectures were sponsored and financed by the Jewish Chautauqua Society. Rabbi Braude had preceded him as a Chautauqua lecturer there in 1970.

In the spring and summer of 1989 a special fund-raising campaign was mounted on the occasion of the 135th anniversary of the temple. The goal was 135 donors of $1000 each. At the last accounting, $200,000 had been raised. President Bruce G. Sundlun entertained the donors on September 9, 1989 with an elegant reception at his Newport estate.

According to plan, a gallery of temple history was dedicated on the evening of October 27, 1989. The inaugural exhibit was titled "Visions and Voices of Beth-El". Designed and mounted by temple archivist Dr. George M. Goodwin, it displayed 300 photographs, letters, postcards, telegrams, books, ceremonial objects, and ephemera. Various items featured the genesis of the congregation (the first Reform congregation in New England), the life and career of Rabbi William G. Braude, the World War I and World II periods, the Holocaust, and civil rights. The museum was designated the Bertram L. and Helene D. Bernhardt Gallery, honoring a couple who were for decades Temple leaders and benefactors. The gallery is in the basement of the Temple foyer, created from a former cloak room. Provision will be made in the same area for the temple archives. It is planned to change the exhibits from time to time.

The Benefactors Fund sponsored a lecture on October 4, 1989 by New York Governor Mario M. Cuomo. The Freda and Louis Kaufman Memorial Weekend featured a Friday evening lecture titled "My Spiritual Oddyssey to Judaism" by Professor Julius Lester. Dr. Lester is a Black who converted to Judaism and teaches Judaic studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is reputed to have a fine voice and chants cantorial music with a professional flair.

It was learned soon thereafter that Percival Goodman had passed away in New York on October 11, 1989 in his 86th year. He was Professor Emeritus at Columbia University, where he had taught architecture for more than twenty-five years.

Bruce G. Sundlun serves as president of the congregation as this is written.

With this sampling of events in the recent history of Temple Beth-El, we bring our chronicle to a close and hand over the quill to some future scribe, perhaps in the 21st Century and perhaps as yet unborn.

. . . *our days on earth are as a shadow* . . .

NOTES

1. See Sidney Goldstein, *The Greater Providence Jewish Community: A Population Survey* (Providence, pub. by The General Jewish Committee of Providence, 1964); also Calvin Goldscheider and Sidney Goldstein, *The Jewish Community of Rhode Island: A Social and Demographic Study* (Providence, pub. by Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, 1988).
2. Pearl Braude believes the library now contains close to 26,000 volumes. Reinhild Silverman, the present librarian, does not believe there is a reliable count.
3. The Kaufman Scholar in Residence Program was established by Howard and Rachel (Mrs. Howard) Kaufman in 1983.
4. Reprinted in *The Evening Bulletin* (Providence), March 4, 1988.

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  Cutler, Harry (1911–1920)
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  Elias, Simon (1902–1911)
  Fain, Irving J. (1960–1961)
  Feldman, Carl H. (1982–1985)
  Goldin, Edward S. (1979–1982)
  Green, Henry (1858–1876, 1877–1879)
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  Hendel, Maurice W. (1970–1973)
  Kaplan, Samuel (1949–1952)
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  Lyons, Louis (1920–1927)
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  Nathan, Ernest (1967–1970)
  Pareira, Solomon (1854–1857)
  Pritzker, Samuel, Dr. (1964–1967)
  Silverman, Archibald (1942–1946)
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  Cohen, Moses (1859–1861) (H)
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  Coleman, Abraham N. (1875–1877) (H)
  Englander, Henry (1905–1910)
  Grad, Bennett (1899–1901)
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