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FRONT COVER

The Providence Hebrew Day School on Waterman Street, Providence,
R.I., c. 1947. The building does not survive.

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RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A SEPTUAGENARIAN*

By RABBI WILLIAM G. (GERSHON ZEV) BRAUDE

Part 2

ATTEMPTS TO LEAD A CONGREGATION, TO FIGHT FOR CAUSES, AND STUDY TORAH

At the installation in 1932 the magic presence of Henry Englander,¹ the talk I gave, my youthful eagerness apparently "electrified" the Congregation, many of whom felt that my coming heralded a revival of its spirit—a kind of new beginning in the 78th year of the Congregation's existence. With all the enthusiasm of youth, I set out at once to "do" things.

But before recounting what I "did," or endeavored to "do," it may be of interest to tell about my living quarters.

My first home in Providence was in an apartment house at 90 Whitmarsh Street. Being very close to the old Temple Beth-El on Broad Street, the location seemed ideal. The tenants in the apartment house were elderly people who at first rejoiced at the arrival of a rabbi in their midst. Within a few months, however, the Armenian proprietor, a Mr. Williams, called on me, and after hemming and hawing, said that the neighbors were unhappy with me and would I move elsewhere. Why was I asked to leave? Because I disturbed the peace at night walking to and fro in my apartment as I memorized my sermons, all of which were written out in full, so that rehearsing them took considerable time, and understandably distressed those below my apartment.

Fortunately Mattie Pincus (1881-1954), who lived a block down the same street, came to the rescue of the new rabbi so soon declared *non grata*. Her father, Newman Pincus, secretary of the Congregation and Civil War veteran, had just died, leaving her and her mother Adelaide with limited means in a house bigger than they needed. So with an eye on me as tenant, she rebuilt her dwelling into two adjoining apartments, one of which was to become "the parsonage." Mattie was a woman of great energy and even greater soul. She worked as a bookkeeper at Greene Anthony, a wholesale shoe firm, and gave all her spare time to the Congregation. She preserved its records. It was she who had bound and kept the *Organ*, the Temple Bulletin, which Rabbi David Blaustein (1866-1912) started in 1895, and edited with such skill that to this day it could serve as a model for editors of temple bulletins throughout the country. She ran the Temple Alumnae Association, a youth group; she served as volunteer librarian; she gave a hand in the religious school, whose expenditures and enrollment she meticulously kept. She aspired to serve on the Congregation's board, but in those days being a woman and possessed of no wealth, that honor was not given her.

During the years Henry Englander was rabbi of the Congregation, she was in her twenties and, I believe, fell in love with the young Henry, a love

¹Henry Englander, who served as Rabbi of Temple Beth-El, Providence between 1905 and 1910, was instrumental in my coming to Providence and installed me as Rabbi 18 October 1932. See *RIJH Notes*, November 1981.

*The essay benefited greatly from the editorial reading and counsel of my wife, of my friend Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky, and my son Prof. Benjamin Meir Braude. Part 1 appeared in *RIJH Notes*, 8:345-372, (No. 3) Nov. 1981.

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 ménage, 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. One night, what began as a mild snowfall turned into a blizzard. As I was looking for shelter somewhere, the sight of a mezuzah on a doorpost encouraged me to ring the bell. In these days of security-mindedness, something is still to be said for the mezuzah whose case ensheathing it, bears the legend *שומר דלתות ישראל*, "He who guards Israel's doors". The door opened. Banice and Laura Feinberg* received me warmly. I can still remember how my eyes were drawn to a set of Talmud lining the wall in their living room.

My pastoral tour elicited a favorable response, and for some time many people came to Sabbath eve services. My being new was, of course, also helpful. I felt that good turnouts should continue, and that a brief decree from me printed in the Temple Bulletin, "Friday night was Temple night", would clinch the matter. It did not quite happen that way. Before long I heard that on a Friday night there had taken place a big dinner party, hosted by two monied men of the congregation, one of whom had been on the search committee which brought me to Beth-El. I called him first to ask him not to plan parties on a Friday night in the future. He was non-committal, but polite. The second unceremoniously told me to mind my own business.

Undaunted by the rebuff I set out to "do" other things, which should not have surprised people, because I declaimed about them in the inaugural talk

*Dr. and Mrs. Banice Feinberg

(18 October, 1932). In it, among other assertions of faith, I said, "All Jews are held together by invisible and enduring bonds that make Israel a people eternal."

Well, one of these bonds is the Jewish calendar. The passionate determination to preserve it is recorded in documents as ancient as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Accordingly, Beth-El's practice of holding confirmation services on the Sunday before or after Shavuot seemed to threaten disunity among our people. And so I began to plead that confirmation be held on the day the Festival fell. Though at the time my reputation was high, neither the president nor the board would introduce the change I requested, but put it up to the Congregation's annual meeting. The good sense of the Congregation moved them to accept my plea. Ever since 1934, confirmation at Beth-El has been held on Shavuot, now the prevailing pattern in Reform congregations throughout the land.

Later, when once again a few parents sought to bring confirmation to the Sunday nearest Shavuot, I discovered that there was a clause in the constitution of the Congregation requiring that confirmation be held on Shavuot, a clause which no one seemed to be aware of. It was good to learn that in its early days our Congregation was closer to the tradition than some of our officers realized.

Shavuot was at least given a courteous bow. But Purim was regarded as a barbaric observance. One very fine lady argued that "in this day and age someone like Haman who would set out to destroy the entire Jewish people was inconceivable." The lady's remark was made with Hitler already ruler of Germany. Tu Bishvat, Jewish Arbor Day, being connected with Palestine, was contraband, if not out-and-out *trafe*, a "no-no." The calendar of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods of the 1930s, if I remember correctly, listed neither Purim nor Tu Bishvat. When I suggested in a letter to the Executive Secretary that the two days be included, I received a frigid reply. The present Sisterhood's calendar, I am glad to say, lists all special days in the Jewish year.

During the years that followed, not only Shavuot, but Sabbath morning services, all evening and morning Festival services, even Rosh Hodesh, New Moon, became part of the congregational calendar. In 1943, I attempted to have Tu Bishvat and Lag Bo-omer, the Scholars' Festival, made more of through public observances (see page 434).

Since the seventh of November 1955 we have had a daily minyan, meeting even when blizzards struck. The *Gabbai*² of the minyan was Robert

²The volunteer in charge of the daily services.

Hochberg (1903-1982). Its *Gabbai rishon*³ was Abraham Adelman (1911-).

In my inaugural talk I spoke of “the ideals of lore and learning that have ever been luminous in the darkest of centuries.” Well, in practical terms it meant that a congregation is to have a *Jewish* library.

Beth-El did have a library. It was founded in 1892 by Rabbi David Blaustein and Mattie Pincus, but it was in a state of neglect, its relatively few items of Judaica being overwhelmed by castoff sets of public school textbooks, of the *Rover Boys*, *Horatio Alger*, and such. Without asking permission from anybody, Mrs. George Nathanson, president of the Sisterhood, and I went through the shelves and discarded all volumes extraneous to a Jewish library. All such books we distributed among rural libraries, or turned over to the State Board of Education. Feverishly, I set about building up the collection. Thus, in the 1930s, when the Soncino translation of the Talmud began to appear, I remember standing on a Sunday morning in front of the Temple soliciting from parents or grandparents ten dollar contributions—ten dollars was the cost of each of the volumes.

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 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, which, by this time I acquired, Beth-El's books went to Brown, Brown's books to Yeshiva, and Yeshiva's books to Beth-El.

Whenever something which I regarded as particularly un-Jewish occurred in the Congregation, I let off steam by buying Hebrew books for the library.

In this connection, not only Hebrew books were of concern to me, but also Hebrew names for our people, giving such names to newly born children when named during the Friday night service—a practice now widely observed. In the school we began calling children by their Hebrew names.

Through the years the people of Beth-El have been very good in contributing to the library, which now numbers approximately 21,000 volumes, and is said to be the foremost congregational library in the United States. Our library's resources are made use of throughout the state and in nearby Massachusetts.

³The *gabbai's* first aide.

Beth-El has been fortunate in having as its librarian, Maryland Estes (1912-) 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.

My personal library also deserves mention. In 1945, when we moved from 160 Brown Street to our own home on 93 Arlington Avenue, the collection had become so large that it could no longer be accommodated in one room. So we broke down a partition on the third floor, built bookcases in the interior of the enlarged space, and what was left of the walls was panelled with California redwood and birch. Presently the collection spread into the hallway, then into another room, and into what had been a storage area, even into drawers in which cloth and linen used to be kept. The entire third floor is now library, all of it—books, pamphlets, periodicals, offprints and separata numbering well over eight thousand items—catalogued. Our youngest son, Daniel⁴ (1948-), arranged in alphabetical order by title the piles and piles of sermons given during forty-two years at Beth-El. They are now in cardboard boxes, readily accessible to anyone hardy enough to wish a repeat.

In my inaugural talk I pledged loyalty to the people of Israel “whatever they be, whether adorned with patriarchal beards or clean of visage.” Among other things I took this to mean reaffirming that Yiddish, not infrequently treated as a stepchild, was bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh; it meant reaching out to our Orthodox brethren; it meant also avowing Zionism and working for its goals.

By way of reaffirming Yiddish, I subscribed to a Yiddish newspaper and was not self-conscious about reading it while traveling on street cars. In my sermons at Beth-El, I frequently used Yiddish expressions, and to make a point, even sang Yiddish ditties. Yiddish flowed naturally from my being, and so I resorted to it to add color and drama to my talks. Many members of the Congregation loved it because Yiddish evoked precious memories. To those who objected, it meant an unwelcome reminder of the poverty and humiliation which Yiddish represented to them. In Israel, I might interject, there had been at one time a comparable rejection of Yiddish—a rejection so sharp that it gave rise to an eerie kind of story: A Jew with a long beard was admonishing children for violating the Sabbath, “קײַנדערלאַך, ” “Children, it is the Sabbath.” Whereto the children responded, “דבר עברית, גוי, ” “Goy, speak Hebrew.”

⁴He attended Providence Hebrew Day School, Barnard, Hope High, and received his B.A. from Curry College.

Apropos, Saul Bellow's literary distinction stems in part from his incorporating Yiddish vocabulary and locutions into his writing, even in his speech. When I met him some years ago, I realized that whenever Bellow encountered a Yiddish speaking person, he buttonholed him and spoke to him only in Yiddish the rest of the evening.

The second day of Rosh Hashanah I used to attend Orthodox synagogues, and now and then lectured from their pulpits in Yiddish. Such activities likewise troubled those people in the Congregation, who, as already stated, regarded Yiddish as declassé.

Yiddish—to interject what was to happen—now a martyred language, is no longer declassé. The Yiddish anthem of Concentration Camps זאג ניט קיינמאל אז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן גאנג, “You must not say that you now walk the final way,” is now part of the Yom Kippur afternoon service in the *Gates of Repentance*.⁵

In those days brotherhoods of Reform congregations liked confrontations of Reform, Orthodox and Conservative Rabbis meeting on a dais and setting forth the elements which set them apart. I resisted suggestions for such meetings, feeling instinctively the need to assert Israel's commonalty—*Kelal Yisrael*, our people's togetherness.

Through the years I felt that Temple Beth-Israel on Niagara Street and Temple Emanuel on Morris Avenue were collaborators and not competitors, that Conservative and Reform congregations and their rabbis should work together—should be partners, not rivals.

I affirmed Zionist convictions, and at services that called for the anthem, had the Hatikvah⁶ sung, causing displeasure among those in the Congregation, one of them a president, who a few years later wanted to start a local chapter of the American Council of Judaism.⁷ It took considerable effort to persuade him and his followers to desist from such an attempt, one which I regarded as divisive and dangerous for *Kelal Yisrael*, Israel's unity. I would add that the first time I had the Hatikvah sung in Beth-El on Broad Street I thought the walls of the structure were shaking.

In my inaugural address 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

⁵Central Conference of American Rabbis, (New York, 5738/1978), p. 441)

⁶The song expressing the hope of return to the Holy Land. Now Israel's National Anthem.

⁷An anti-Zionist organization founded in 1942 by a group of Reform rabbis.

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's⁸ German Protestant music flavored by tunes from Italian operas was the mainstay.

I turned for counsel to Rabbi Jacob Singer⁹ (1883-1964) of Chicago, with whom I spent an entire day. It was he who introduced me to the High Holiday music of Edward Stark¹⁰ with "Cantor solos, form and choruses based upon traditional themes" (A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music* [New York, 1929], p. 326).

In 1943 we engaged Heinrich Schalit (1886-1976), renowned composer of Synagogue music, as Director of the choir, and after a period of intense and at times bitter struggle, the cantorate was restored to Beth-El's congregational worship. Before we engaged a cantor, we had Wileen Taber¹¹ (1933-) chant the blessings over the Lulab and Esrog,¹² and Fred Pinkney, a Jew, chant the Kiddush¹³ on Friday nights and the Kol Nidre on Yom Kippur.

It should be noted that in its early days, the Congregation had a *chazzan* 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 my brother-in-law's, Archie Finkelstein's (1915-), and Robert Hochberg's telephoning 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 (1914-), 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

⁸(1835-1906). He served forty years as organist and choir-leader of the congregation Shaarei Shomayim in Mobile, Alabama.

⁹He was then chairman of the music committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

¹⁰(1863-1918). In 1893 he became cantor of Temple Emanuel in San Francisco, where he served for about twenty years.

¹¹Now Mrs. Martin Coyne.

¹²Palm branch and citron used during the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot.

¹³The "hallowing" of a festal day which is uttered together with blessings over wine and bread.

a vigorous and prolonged debate, the Congregation voted to restore the cantorate.

Among the cantors engaged, Norman Gewirtz (1922-), who served fourteen years, was outstanding. A man of great soul, he won the hearts of people, young and old alike. In 1976 he left for *aliyyah*, migration to Israel.

Apropos “the customs and practices that have been our ethnic and ethical integrators,” I would mention the growing number of weddings where the groom and the bride are seated on chairs, which are lifted up and carried about by young men, while the wedding guests clap their hands and dance around them to the accompaniment of music. The newly married couple are given a white handkerchief, which they hold between them. This practice, known as the *חַנּוּכָּה לְיָדַיִם*, or “dance of the kerchief,” goes back to the fourth century C.E.¹⁴ The “dance of the kerchief” breathes a kind of chastity and restraint which may well account for its growing popularity.

More on “customs and practices”: In the course of a sermon, a predecessor of mine, pointing to the *tefillin*, phylacteries, which he brought to the pulpit, characterized them as “the junk of the ages.” Apparently his words evoked no protest. But the mood has changed greatly since then. The “junk of the ages” has come alive in the *New Union Prayer Book*, where the pertinent benedictions are provided for those who wear *tefillin*.¹⁵

In my inaugural talk I pledged loyalty “to the conceptions of justice and righteousness, which have ever been the foes of oppression and misdoing.” In the 1930s, I was captivated by Gandhi, and became an ardent pacifist. I failed to understand that, whereas Gandhi confronted the British *Raj*, which, despite backslidings, remained civilized, we Jews and the world confronted the German Nazi, cruel and committed to denial of all precepts of behavior associated with the word “civilization.” And so, in my callow pacifism, I did foolish things. Thus, I opposed the call by Jewish organizations to declare a boycott against Germany, asserting that such a boycott was an act of war. I wrote to Dieckhoff, the Nazi ambassador in Washington, saying that unless his government would relent in its hostility to Jews I might advise my friends not to use the German liner, the *Bremen*. I was naive enough to believe that my pebbles of disapproval might move the Nazi monster.

In those days I was intimately associated with liberal ministers such as Everett M. Baker (1901-1950), a Unitarian, Arthur E. Wilson (1902-), a Congregationalist, and Robert H. Schacht (1903-78), a Unitarian, and

¹⁴See B. Ketubot 17a.

¹⁵See *Gates of Prayer* (New York 5735/1975), pp. 48-49.

Jewish and Quaker ladies in promoting pacifism and "social justice," as it was then called.

We were in the midst of the depression, and our small group clamored for increased support for the poor. In 1939 we founded the Providence Urban League—I became its Vice President—and on my own I went from office to office, from bank to bank, from hospital to hospital, pleading that Negroes be engaged for tasks other than those that are menial. To little avail.

Our Rhode Island Council for Peace Action,¹⁶ with Irwin M. Tobin (1913-82) its unusually able executive director, felt that we, our small group of well-meaning ladies—Therese Wachenheimer (?-1954) and the Chase sisters—and ministers, could halt the revving up of the engines of war.

A few years later in an anguished sermon entitled "Confessions in a Grave Hour," I recanted my pacifism, and in 1939 or 1940 endeavored to enlist in the Navy as a chaplain. I still recall the advice given me by chaplain Samuel Soskin (?-1970), a good friend, who accompanied me to the medical examiner's office in the huge Third Naval District Headquarters on the lower East Side of New York. With his characteristic smile, he said: "Bill, why do you want to join the Navy? You stay home and study." In the event, the medical examiner rejected me because of my severe myopia.

When the refugees began coming to Providence, I threw myself into the work of providing all kinds of help for them. The morning after 10 November 1938, Crystal Night,¹⁷ I all but ran for a week or so, from one office to another, from one store to another, trying to get people to sign affidavits of support for families clamoring to flee the Nazi death trap. I remember almost forcing my way past the mistress secretary of the owner of the largest department store in Rhode Island, who had the gall to refuse to sign such an affidavit. He claimed he had to sign affidavits for members of his own family. Later I was to learn that he evaded even that obligation. Thank God, all others whom I approached responded promptly and generously.

To counteract the horror of Crystal Night, the congregation set aside a Friday night to welcome the new arrivals. A few minutes before the service was to begin, the man who was then 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

¹⁶Later named World Affairs Council of Rhode Island, which I served as president.

¹⁷During that night the entire Jewish population was subjected to a reign of terror. . . . Almost every synagogue in the country was burned to the ground . . . Numbers were lynched" (Ismar Elbogen, *A Century of Jewish Life*, Philadelphia, 5704/1944, pp. 663-64).

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. That Sabbath eve was for me an eve of mourning—mourning not only the Nazi atrocities, but mourning also the insensitivity of that man to the feelings of our guests.

Among the refugees who became good friends there stands out Erwin Englander (1897-1971), tall and burly, the first professing Jew to get a job at Brown and Sharpe tool manufacturers, where he won an honorable place for himself. He was a frequent visitor in our home. In the chess games we played, he invariably won. Like so many natives of Vienna he at one time hoped that his identity as a Jew would have low visibility. But after experiencing the lacerations of Nazi terror, he changed. In his will, he wrote "ich möchte nach Hause gehen,"¹⁸ and gave effect to these words by leaving his estate to the Congregation and to Israel.

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 (1901-)¹⁹ 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 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.

This incident brings me to the position of the rabbi vis-a-vis the president and the board. Within a few months after my coming to Providence, the man who was 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 26 August 1937 to set down in my diary a defiance: "Some men are determined to possess my soul, and I shall never permit it."

In this ongoing struggle I was helped for a while by John Jacob Rosenfeld

¹⁸"I want to go home."

¹⁹He later became a Rabbi, and was author of widely used textbooks, such as *How the Jewish People Grew Up* (Cincinnati, 1936), and *How the Jewish People Lives Today* (Cincinnati, 1940).

(born 1870), a friend, who in 1942 left his estate—it ultimately reached \$270,000—to the Congregation for the building of a school. The bequest enabled my friends to rally around me, and among other things relieved me of a president whom I found intolerable. For a spell I was allowed “to possess my soul.”

At this point it may be of interest to narrate a series of events beginning in 1937 which led to John Jacob Rosenfeld’s decision to bequeath his estate to the Congregation.

GUATEMALA AND JOHN JACOB ROSENFELD’S BEQUEST

Through the years, Pen and I traveled extensively, many times to Israel, a few times to England and France, and I traveled to Russia and Yugoslavia. Quite a few times, both of us were guests of our dear friends Edgar (1903-) and Libby (1917-) Fain in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and in Bermuda. In a possible sequel to these recollections I hope to share in detail our experiences during these travels. Here I will speak of my trip in the summer of 1937 to Guatemala, a trip which may also be entitled “Guatemala, and the Building of the Temple on Orchard Avenue.”

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.

Here is how it came about.

In 1936 after Mordecai Soloff was asked to leave, Mattie Pincus took over the running of the school. But I kept pressing for a full-time director. Albert Bilgray (1910-), who in 1937 had completed a term as rabbi in Springfield, Ohio, decided he wanted to devote himself altogether to education, and was willing to come to Beth-El for something like \$3500. The Board voted him in. In that year I completed my Ph.D. dissertation and was so tired that I decided not to stay for the conferring of post-graduate degrees at Brown University but instead to take a cruise on a Grace Liner—a beautiful ship and luxurious, too luxurious for my taste. So when we got to San Jose, Guatemala, I “jumped ship,” and spent the first night in a tin hut, sleeping on a hard pallet.

That night a mistral, a violent storm, blew up. But such is the magic of youth—I slept through till dawn only to be awakened occasionally by a particularly loud blast of thunder. A Guatemalan whom I met on the ship was to give me a ride to Guatemala City, the capital. En route we stopped at a “finca,” a coffee plantation, where I shared a meal with the owners. When I requested cream and sugar for the coffee that was served with much élan,

the disapproval around the table was perceptible. In a coffee plantation in Guatemala, one drinks one's coffee black!

As soon as I got to Guatemala City I sought out the few Jews there, who told me of their heroic efforts to bring together the Sephardi and Ashkenazi people in the community, and build a synagogue. A young man named Newman drove me to Chichicastenango, market center for Quiche Maya Indian villages, where I was shown the El Calvario Church, whose front bench was regularly occupied by young boys, every one of whom was named "Jesus." "Why Jesus?" "Because the identity of the man who begot them was unknown." According to rumor, the local priest fathered all the children on the church's front bench. In Central America at that time concubinage was not uncommon among the lower Catholic clergy.

After a week or so in Guatemala, I got back to a less luxurious liner which brought me to California, where Hans Lewy, who taught mathematics at Berkeley, was my host. Hans Lewy, formerly a *dozent* at the University of Göttingen, left Germany in 1933, and received an appointment at Brown University. During World War II he served in a highly secret project at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. He and I, both bachelors, became good friends, and he invited me to stay with him in his beautiful home perched high up above Berkeley. Through him I met a professor of mathematics whose father was a Chinese laundryman, addicted to the use of opium. When the father realized that his son had great promise, and that he, the father, did not have the means to send him through school, he gave up the opium habit, and with the money saved was able to provide the means required. But the sudden abandonment of opium cut short the father's life.

Through Lewy I also met Isaiah Lepkovsky, greatly gifted in the study of food—he, I was told, isolated a vitamin. When asked what one should eat, he would reply, "Eat what you like."

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."

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. Besides, what business does the rabbi have with the dolce vita on Grace Liners, and with lolling about in California? Be that as it may, 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. At the meeting, Adolf Meller (1900-65), Samuel Kaplan (1890-1972), Harry M. Myers (1900-65), and I pledged a certain sum of money between us.

The next morning the first person I called on was John Jacob Rosenfeld, whose sister Estelle Einstein was a precious friend. It was she who said to me, "Now, rabbi, next time you need anything just go to my brother. You ask him. He'll give it to you."

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. And so I let go with all the fire I had. I told him of my dream of a good school, yes, a great 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 at the end of my outburst. 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.

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. One evening there was a man from West Greenwich and another from Westerly. Their conversation had a strong Rhode Island flavor, as unmistakable as South County johnny cakes. It was an unforgettable evening, rich in many yarns.

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, whose photograph now hangs in the Temple library, 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 our house of worship as a Temple. He generally called it a "shul."

Sometimes he spoke of his hardships 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 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. While unlike in our 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.

In 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 cost. I mentioned a minimum sum. He answered quietly, "I think I can manage it." Since that conversation, I never again spoke to him about his will or about money.

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. 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.

A word about Albert Bilgray, who was to serve in Providence for seven years. He was able, conscientious, and gentle. He was the only rabbi to serve as president of the Rhode Island Association of Ministers.

While serving as educational director at Beth-El, Rabbi Bilgray concluded that his true wish was to become again a pulpit rabbi. It is too bad that in 1937 the congregation had perhaps no more than 250 families, and

needed a rabbi and an educational director, but not two pulpit rabbis. Besides, 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.

During the years that followed, after we moved to Orchard Avenue, the membership of the congregation quadrupled, and we needed two rabbis. We were fortunate in the young men who came to serve: Jerome Gurland (1932-) and I became so close that when I was quoted as having said something on a controversial matter, he would say, "I am certain Rabbi Braude did not say it. Had he done so, I would have known about it." His presence—his tact and understanding—helped immensely during several congregational crises. Then, too, we not only studied *Chumash* and *Rashi* together, but also read through the *Pesikta Rabbati*.²⁰ Rabbi Gurland is now with Western New England College.

Then Herman Blumberg (1935-) able and loyal, resourceful and imaginative in the school, and profoundly concerned with social issues. Rabbi Blumberg is now with the American Jewish Committee.

Finally Leslie Y. Gutterman (1942-) whom I met at the Hebrew Union College in 1970, 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 for him the esteem and affection of the Congregation and of the larger community.

Each of these rabbis has been for me a source of strength and inspiration. The companionship of friends in the Congregation, a few of whom I would single out by name, has also meant much. Their support and understanding heartened me in difficult days. There was, as already stated, Mattie Pincus. There were Irving J. Fain (1906-1970), Beryl Segal (1900-1980), Abe Klein (1894-1980), and Dr. Samuel Pritzker (1905-)—their devotion was that of brothers. I might mention many, many other men and women whose friendship and loyalty sustained me as I moved from controversy to controversy. Never, never, however—even in dark days—did I doubt the worth of the Congregation or the genuineness of its people.

²⁰ *Pesikta Rabbati* is the larger collection of discourses on Scriptural readings for feasts, fasts and special Sabbaths in the Jewish year. When its two volumes were published by the Yale University Press, a precocious child looked at the title page, and said knowingly, "Ah, yes, Peter Rabbit in Latin."

PURSUING STUDY OF TORAH IN THE FACE OF CRITICISM,
AND BUILDING THE NEW TEMPLE

For a number of years certain members of the board began to be impatient with my pursuing studies at Brown University, a matter agreed upon at my arrival in Providence. As already stated, I was admitted to Brown's Graduate School and for my M.A. thesis decided to go over the secondary sources treating Jewish attitudes to converts and conversion. The only place to do the reading required was the Library of the Divinity School of Harvard. So during my vacation in the summer of 1933 I rented a room in Wigglesworth Hall. I spent my days in the Divinity School Library struggling through German essays on Jewish attitudes toward converts and conversion—essays suffused with anti-Semitism, which indicated that Nazism in Germany was not a Johnny-come-lately phenomenon.

I knew no one in Boston. So evenings I explored the Harvard campus. One evening it rained, and in one of Harvard's halls there was social dancing to the tune of "Singing in the Rain." To this day I remember the song because in my loneliness I tried, so to speak, to "sing in the rain." It was not only loneliness that made it necessary for me to "sing in the rain." It was also my growing awareness that some people of the Congregation were increasingly displeased by my obsession with studies and by what they regarded as "truancy" from my duties as a rabbi.

So great, in fact, was the displeasure of some people that at the annual meeting of the Congregation in 1940, the year Brown published my Ph.D. dissertation under the title *Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era*,²¹ the "intolerable" president²² in his report to the Congregation refused to make any allusion to the publication of the book, since 1897 the first between hard covers authored by a Providence rabbi. Even a friend's bringing over the volume to the president and showing it to him failed to move him.

Still, despite criticism, I persisted in my studies at Brown, which proved significant not so much in themselves, but in consequences they led to. As already mentioned, I found myself in classrooms with Samuel Belkin (1911-75), who was to become president of Yeshiva University and one of my closest friends.^{22a}

²¹Brown University, Providence, R.I., 1940.

²²He was the one who demanded that the refugees remove their hats during the special Friday night service to which they were invited. See p. 409.

^{22a}Over the years I have sought support for the Yeshiva University which has become one of the most distinguished Jewish institutions of higher learning in the United States. It pleased me that in 1974 Meyer Tenenbaum (1904-) of our congregation set up a substantial scholarship fund at Yeshiva University in memory of his wife, Helen (1905-1973).

Levi A. Olan, then Rabbi at Temple Emanuel in Worcester and a friend from my days at the Hebrew Union College, also registered for a course. From time to time we exchanged pulpits, and following the services would arrange to meet for coffee at the Uxbridge Inn, halfway between Providence and Worcester.

In a course on the Bible, I believe, the instructor insisted that Moses could not possibly have written a single line in Scripture since in his day there was not among the Hebrews knowledge of script. I objected: "But in the Book of Judges we are told that Gideon captured a boy from among the people of Succoth and the boy drew up a list of the officials and elders of Succoth (Judg. 8:14). If a boy could write," I argued, "surely, one may assume, that at the time of Moses there was a Hebrew script and that Moses knew how to use it." I argued in vain. The instructor insisted that the story of a boy's drawing up a list of names was either untrue or a later interpolation. In subsequent years, inscriptions in ancient Hebrew script which were discovered in the Sinai Peninsula indicated that at the time of Moses the Hebrew alphabet already existed, so that he and even a youngster in Succoth could use it.

The argument with the instructor shook my faith in Biblical Criticism as practiced in those years—skimpy attention to the text, and much theorizing based on preconceived notions.

Nevertheless, despite my doubts about the validity of Biblical Criticism, Robert P. Casey (1897-1959), head of the Department of Religious Studies, appointed me lecturer in 1937 after I received my Ph.D. Pearl Finkelstein (1917-) 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.

In June, 1938 in the garden of the home of her parents Joseph (1881-1960) and Rose (1886-1978) Finkelstein in Johnston, Rhode Island, Rabbi Morris Schussheim (1895-1970) of Temple Beth-Israel, where she was confirmed, Rabbi Jacob K. Shankman and Rabbi Samuel Belkin officiated. As the procession of the wedding party moved out of the house toward the tree which was to provide the *chuppah* (wedding canopy), birds began to sing.

Later I was to learn that before the marriage service there was a hassle between Schussheim, the Conservative Rabbi, and Shankman, the Reform Rabbi, concerning certain 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.

Even while courting Pearl, I took to calling her Peninnah (Hebrew for "Pearl"), which I shortened to Pen. Before *Kiddush* (Sanctification of the Sabbath) on Sabbath eve, when I serenade her with *Eshet Chayil*,²³ and sing the words "Her price is far above rubies," it is in tribute to what she has meant to me through the years.

A year or two later, I was to meet Knute Ansgar Nelson (1906-), a Benedictine monk from the Portsmouth Priory, Portsmouth, Rhode Island. When he came to my class at Brown University, he knew no Hebrew at all. At the end of the year he mastered so much Hebrew that he was able to memorize *Pirke Aboi*.²⁴ So we started the second year by reading the Book of Psalms. I used Rashi's commentary, and Brother Ansgar would bring a folio volume of St. Augustine. Rashi's crisp comments made St. Augustine appear verbose.

Later Brother Caedmon Holmes (1942-), whom Brother Ansgar taught Hebrew, was to join us in the reading of our sacred texts. Both men are filled with *יִרְאָה אֱלֹהִים וְרָאֵהבָּח הַתּוֹרָה*, "Awe of God and love of Torah."

Subsequently I encountered similar reverence in Fr. Pierre Lennard, head of the Ratisbonne Monastery in Jerusalem, who studied Talmud. At first, he said, its passages were baffling, unintelligible. But he persisted until the apparently disparate parts came together, and then he experienced joy—the thrill and privilege of meaning, pellucid meaning shining forth.

What a contrast between such men and certain Jewish intellectuals who approach our sacred texts with condescension, even contempt, dubbing them gibberish.

My immersion in Psalms led me to give talks on them to the School for the Jewish Woman, an ambitious venture in adult education, sponsored jointly by Temple Beth-El and the Conservative Temple Beth-Israel. Beneficent Congregational Church invited me to give a series on the Psalms during Lent; and the downtown Grace Episcopal Church invited me to be one of the Lenten noon-hour preachers—during those years a prestigious series.

Earlier I mentioned John Jacob Rosenfeld's bequest to the Congregation for the building of a school. His beneficence was to mean much for the

²³"A woman of valor" (*Proverbs* 31:10-31). The traditional tribute sung to the woman of the house before *Kiddush*.

²⁴A tractate in the *Mishnah*.

future of the Congregation, located as it was then on Broad Street in an area from which Jews had begun to move. The new site presently acquired was on Orchard Avenue on the East Side of Providence, which was rapidly becoming the center of the Jewish community. At the time we decided we had to build elsewhere, a sum even larger than Rosenfeld's had become available from the bequest of Alphonse Joseph Lederer (1897-1946), who, like Rosenfeld, was a close friend.

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 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 synagogues—elevations, interiors and exteriors—were displayed. She found Percival Goodman's (1904-) designs most exciting. The name Goodman was not unknown to her, since a year or so earlier Professor Meyer Schapiro (1904-) 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 (1891-1973) and Marc Chagall (1887-), then newly arrived from France. Percival Goodman impressed Pen as well as A. Henry Klein (1890-1980), first vice president of the Congregation, who accompanied her to the conference.

During Goodman's subsequent visit with the Building Plans Committee he made a very good impression. Still, 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 (1913-) 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 asked

permission to have our Pillar of Cloud exhibited at the Biennale in Venice²⁵ as one of the three best examples of American sculpture, the scorners and name-callers grew silent.

I should add that the artists were accorded full freedom in the execution of their works.

Pen's gifts found varied expression during the building of the Temple. She worked on the color schemes, and made the final choice of fabrics. She did the silk screen draperies for the rabbi's study, 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, and the *Mappah* for the chapel out of Indian saris.²⁶ She 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 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 dedication of the new Temple, a magnificent series of events, took place in April 1954. I was so immersed in preparing the many programs scheduled that if awakened at night I could have recited all sequences of each of them. While working out the details of these events, I read that when the *Aleynu*²⁷ was recited at the dedication of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, the people on the dais knelt. I wasn't sure about the desirability of such an act and so I tracked down in a barber shop Bertram Bernhardt (1906-), chairman of the Dedication Committee, to ask his advice, and in adjoining barber's chairs we decided not to follow the example of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

The new Temple structure, at this writing soon to reach the age of thirty, has been standing up well, due in large measure, I believe, to the ability and

²⁵An international exhibition run every two years.

²⁶We met Mr. Mehta, the Indian ambassador to the U.S., 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.

²⁷Prayer concluding every service.

devotion of Norman M. Fain (1914-), chairman of the building committee, which oversaw construction.

In the middle 1940s I began to feel the need for chairs of Jewish Studies at American universities. Just then my brother, Michael, a Chicagoan at the time, was discharged from the Navy and wanted to do something for the Jewish community. I encouraged him to try to set up such a chair at the University of Chicago. Some years later he interested Maxwell Abbell (1902-1957), a great philanthropist in Chicago, who was to preside at a fund-raising luncheon. Unfortunately, Abbell died a few days before the luncheon, and the proposal never got any further.

On his own, Henry M. Wriston (1889-1978), president of Brown University, approached Jewish alumni to have them endow a chair for Jewish Studies at Brown but with no success. In a private discussion with me he disclosed the attitude toward Jewish studies which then prevailed in American universities. He said: "If you succeed in getting money for a chair of Jewish Studies at Brown, the grant should contain a clause stating, that when such studies are no longer needed, the University have the right to divert the money to other purposes."

Wriston's suggestion indicated the low esteem accorded to Jewish studies in those years.

The low esteem was also reflected in Brown's negligible collection of Judaica. The Judaic books which now and then Rabbi Israel M. Goldman (1904-1979) and I presented to Brown used to be acknowledged in a perfunctory way.

From time to time I approached people in Providence to give money to Brown to endow a chair of Jewish Studies, but succeeded only in raising money for one-year stands. We thus had Gershom Scholem (1897-1982), Leon Roth²⁸ (1896-1963), Zvi Werblowsky²⁹ (1924-), Raphael Loewe (1919-), and Yigael Yadin (1917-) come to Brown as visiting professors for a year.

An experience with Gershom Scholem, who was at Brown in 1956, is memorable because it serves to put in place the notion that important subjects may be mastered by a hop, a skip, and a jump. During his stay, Gershom Scholem used to come once a week with his Mantua edition (1558-60) of the *Zohar*,³⁰ the Book of Splendor, to my home, where in the course

²⁸Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen raised most of the money for Professor Roth's visit.

²⁹In response to a sermon during the High Holidays, the children of Leo and Bessie Grossman contributed the money in honor of their parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary.

³⁰The *Zohar*, written in Aramaic in the form of a commentary on the Five Books of Moses, is the fundamental work of the mystic teachings of Judaism.

of a semester we read the entire introduction to the work. I set down his ample and illuminating comments in the margins of my copy of the *Zohar*. Nevertheless, I know almost nothing about *Kabbalah*, the mystical lore of our people, because a semester's stint is not enough to master any discipline, let alone one as intricate as *Kabbalah*.

Another experience with Gershom Scholem highlights Israel's confidence in their capacity to cope. News of the Suez War reached us during a dinner at the Brown Faculty Club, where Gershom Scholem was the guest of honor. All that I could think of was Scholem's great library on Abarbanel Street in Jerusalem going up in flames. But he sat there quite calm, confident that back home the Israeli army knew how to face the adversary.

Fanya Scholem, Gershom's wife, arrived in Providence with a beautiful folio of the *Tractate Ketubot*³¹ (Vienna, 1882) which she and two Hebrew University wives had been studying in Jerusalem under the direction of Yaakov Sussmann, then in his early twenties. Now *Ketubot* has many explicit passages. Still, Yaakov, young and unmarried, explained those passages to the three matrons in such a clinical manner, that during the sessions there was no note of ribaldry. He was able to do so, I believe, because of his innate elegance, and also because his concern, Torah, purifies all manifestations of life. In their respect for him the three matrons, with a twinkle in their eyes, took to calling him *מורנו, מורנו*, "our master, our teacher," a designation which was to prove prophetic. In subsequent years he was to become Professor of Talmud at the Hebrew University, chairman of its Institute of Jewish Studies, and one of the most distinguished Jewish scholars in the world. Pen and I cherish our friendship with him and his lovely Ayala.

My increasing concern with Jewish studies led me to support the struggling Providence Hebrew Day School under the auspices of Torah Umesorah. All of Providence's Jewish "leadership," and, it goes without saying, the leadership of my own congregation, were opposed to such a school. Nevertheless, in November 1948 I gave a sermon in which I backed the idea; and, I should add, Pen and I sent our children to the Day School.

At that time the very idea that a Reform Rabbi send his children to a Hebrew Day School—a parochial school as it was disdainfully designated—was not just preposterous, it was scandalous. This decision as well as other actions of mine persuaded some people that I was "Orthodox." So much so that in 1954, a few years later, when the Beth-El on Broad Street was sold to Shaare Zedek, an Orthodox congregation, there circulated the quip,

³¹Laws concerning a wife's marriage settlement. But the scope of the tractate is so great that it is often referred to as "The miniature Talmud."

“Braude was determined to turn Beth-El into an orthodox shul, and by golly he had his way.”

I was scared. So before deciding to send our children to the Day School, I turned to my guru, Professor Wolfson (1897-1974), whose instant response was, “Send them, send them. They’ll learn to eat *trafe* on their own. But Hebrew never.”

What in 1948 appeared to be preposterous has now become accepted. In cities where there is a day school, the local Reform rabbis generally send their children to it.

In those years Pen and I also decided to have a kosher home, and I, intermittently, resumed putting on tefillin for *Shaharit*.³² The wish to enable visiting Jews who observe *Kashrut*³³ to eat at our table motivated in part our decision. Like tefillin, *Kashrut* once a no-no in Reform circles, is now observed in the homes of many Reform rabbis throughout the land.

About that time I went to see Harry A. Wolfson of Harvard University to discuss with him the idea of chairs of Jewish Studies at American universities. He spent little time on that, merely saying that in the 1920s, in an article in the *Menorah Journal*, he had already projected the idea. But then he proceeded to another matter: A great university was about to launch a series of translations of classic Jewish texts. Would I be interested? I suggested the *Midrash on Psalms*,³⁴ the principal source of Rashi’s commentary on the Psalms. Shortly thereafter, under Wolfson’s guidance, I began working on the text. At first I felt that most of it made no sense, and my earlier “translations”—Heaven help me—reflected this conviction. But Wolfson, who used to give me Sunday afternoons, was a great teacher—persistent *and* kind. Until one day he made me *see* that unless the text was corrupt *Midrash* always made sense, and that it could be Englished gracefully. The two discoveries spun me around, had me give myself passionately to setting out the *Midrash on Psalms* in lucid English. The work became such an obsession that my wife began calling it her husband’s mistress.

For a long time my ignorance of *Midrash* remained abysmal, as may be illustrated by a preposterous suggestion I came with to Professor Wolfson concerning the meaning of **דְּהוּא מְשַׁכֵּשֵׁ לְבְרֵי יִתְחַא כְּמִין בִּינֵי סוּרֵי אֵתָא** (*Midrash Tehillim*9:5, ed. Buber, p. 82). The meaning I offered: “He

³²Morning prayers.

³³The dietary laws.

³⁴*Midrash* is a commentary which endeavors to bring forth the polyphony of Scripture’s meaning. This particular compilation was begun in the third century, C.E., with accretions added as late as the ninth century, C.E.

entangles men like the heretic among the Syrians.” Now who was *the* heretic who operated among the Syrians? Saul of Tarsus, the Rabbinical student who was to become St. Paul.

So I found “proof” startling “proof”, that in the *Midrash on Psalms* there was an allusion to St. Paul.

Quite pleased with myself, I set forth this suggestion to Professor Wolfson. He turned livid with rage, saying among other things that those on the Yale Judaica Series Committee who felt that rabbis should not be invited to do the work may well have been right. Whereupon, I began to backtrack very carefully, saying that I did not quite mean what I had just said. The backtracking precipitated another explosion: “I spent a lifetime figuring out just what people mean when they say something in writing, and you tell me you did not mean what I just heard with my own ears?”

Then he proceeded to show me: The word **כְּסִי** is to be vocalized not **כְּסִי**, “like a heretic”, but **כְּסִי**, “lurk”; and **סוּרְיָאָא** does not mean “Syrians,” but “bushes,” which is Aramaic for the Hebrew **סוּרְיָא** (*Eccles.* 4:14) read by the commentator not “prison,” as the word is usually understood. So, he concluded, the miscreant was not St. Paul as I wrongly surmised, but the inclination-to-evil ever lurking to lead men astray (see *Midrash on Psalms* [New Haven, 1959], I, p. 135).

What I then failed to understand is that a Midrashic comment never moves about like an unguided or misguided missile. It intends to offer a fresh understanding of a difficult verse in Scripture—which the *Midrash on Psalms*' comment on Ecclesiastes 4:14 indeed does.

Professor Harry A. Wolfson was not the only scholar who helped. Rabbi Menahem Mendel Kasher (1895-) introduced me to Professor Saul Lieberman (1898-1983) of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who gave me many, many hours—once eight hours—with a brief break for coffee, at a stretch—during which he shared with me his enormous learning in Rabbinica.

On one occasion while preparing a critical edition of *Piska*, chapter 26³⁵ in the *Pesikta Rabbati*,³⁶ I telephoned Professor Saul Lieberman, who was summering in Vineyard Haven, Martha's Vineyard, and made an appointment to see him on the Island. I arrived at Woods Hole in ample time to board the Island ferry, but sat down in the ticket shed to read, and

³⁵At the recommendation of Professor Salo W. Baron (1895-) of Columbia University, the essay was published in the Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research (Vol. 30, 1962).

³⁶The larger collection of discourses on the lessons in Scripture read during special Sabbaths, feasts and fasts of the Jewish year. The work was compiled in the seventh century, C.E.

became so absorbed that I did not hear the whistle announcing the ferry's departure. However, determined not to miss my appointment with Professor Lieberman, I chartered a small boat paying an arm and a leg for the crossing, because the day was stormy and the pilot reluctant to take his boat out. I arrived in time for the appointment and did not tell Professor Lieberman of the near mishap.

In 1957-58, as a gift for 25 years of service to the Congregation, the Congregation granted me a year's leave, which our family spent in Israel. During that year Professor Ephraim E. Urbach (1912-) of the Hebrew University taught me how to read a Hebrew manuscript as he led me through Parma MS 1240 of the *Pesikta Rabbati*. At the time Professor Urbach lived in a basement flat, so that even on sunny days the light was not ample. But one dark afternoon when there was very little light, his daughter Esther, five or six years old, walked into our room, looked around, and in a tiny voice, said **מִצַּרְיִם חֹשֶׁךְ**, "Egyptian darkness," her way of telling us that there was not enough light in the room. Am I flattering myself in supposing that for the two of us the room was illumined by the light of Torah?

Professor Mordecai Margulies (1909-68) of the Jewish Theological Seminary helped immensely during calls at his office and by means of seventy-five to a hundred letters during the time I was working on the translation of *Pesikta Rabbati* and *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*,³⁷ Professor Jakob J. Petuchowski (1925-) of the Hebrew Union College was indefatigable in responding to my questions about *Tanna d'be Eliyyahu*.³⁸ Professor Israel J. Kapstein (1904-) of Brown University read the manuscripts, and his sensitive understanding and felicity of style are imprinted on every page of all the books published. Esther Kaplan (1924-), my secretary, was meticulous and indefatigable in copying and recopying the manuscripts.

Finally, in the preparation of the aforementioned works, there was the unassuming presence of Leon Nemoy (1901-), editor of the Yale Judaica Series. His friendship, wisdom, learning, and great editorial skill provided guidance, support, and inspiration.

Leon Nemoy succeeded Julian J. Obermann (1888-1956), the Yale Judaica Series' first editor. Obermann's knowledge of Rabbinics was limited, but his esteem of his own competence was unlimited. When he set out to "revise" my manuscript without consulting me, I withdrew it from the Yale Press.

³⁷R. Kahana's shorter compilation (sixth century, C.E.) of a work similar to the *Pesikta Rabbati*.

³⁸"The Lore of the School of Elijah," a work of the fifth or sixth century, C.E.

But before I decided to do so, I went through great anguish. For all I knew years and years of work were, so it seemed, about to go down the drain. My friend, Professor Morton Smith (1915-), who then taught at Brown, after comparing my manuscript and Obermann's revisions concluded that Obermann was wrong. So, unbeknownst to me, he took a night train to New York, where he showed Saul Lieberman my text and Obermann's revisions. Professor Lieberman confirmed Smith's opinion. Smith then took another night train back to Providence, and phoned me in Estes Park, Colorado, where I was attending a meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, to pass on the good news that Professor Lieberman felt I was right.

So I decided to withdraw the manuscript. Then, as an act of despair, I called on Louis Rabinowitz (1887-1957), the backer of the Yale Judaica Series, to tell him my tale of woe. He received me in his office in lower Manhattan, where the machines manufacturing zippers were in full blast—music to his ears. But I had to make myself heard over the noise of the machinery, and after talking thus for an hour or so I left with a raw throat and a feeling that I got nowhere. Louis Rabinowitz appeared to be non-committal. In fact, he was not. He turned to Professor Wolfson, citing what Obermann had to say and what I had to say. Wolfson's response: "If there is a question whose word is to be taken, Braude's or Obermann's, you may, without hesitation, take Braude's word." In the meantime Professor Erwin R. Goodenough (1893-1965), spurred by Morton Smith, intervened with the relevant authorities at Yale, who without informing Julian Obermann, asked me to return the manuscript, and invited Leon Nemoy to ready it for the Press.

Before this happened, my brother Michael and sister-in-law Lillian came forward and offered to finance publication of the work at the University. My sister Dorothy and my brother-in-law Jim Fuerst (1917-), and friends Rabbis Jacob K. Shankman and Abraham Klausner (1915-) also undertook to provide help.

Had I not done something impetuous earlier, a portion of the money for publishing the work would have been on hand. A few years back my father-in-law Joseph Finkelstein gave \$3,000 to the Congregation with the understanding that it be used to defray the cost of publishing any of my works. Since I assumed that Yale was going to publish the *Midrash on Psalms*, I asked the treasurer of the Congregation to give the three thousand dollars to three libraries: Hebrew Union College, Hebrew University, and Yeshiva University.

As publication of the work kept being delayed, my friend David C. Adelman (1892-1967), with whom I worked closely in the early days of the

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, asked what was happening to the manuscript. When I told him the story, he muttered, "There is no justice in the world." But in the event, "justice" was done.

The *Midrash on Psalms* in two volumes was finally published by the Yale University Press. It did not set the world on fire as I dreamt. Not even members of my own family were overwhelmed except for one, my oldest son Joel Isaac (1940-),³⁹ who at the time was studying at the Hebrew University. The set I airmailed to him he went through and responded with pages of notes, some of which were incorporated in subsequent printings.

The *Midrash on Psalms*, a work of 1200 pages, required infinite preparation and concentration. So unless there was an emergency, I shut myself off mornings in my study and was "unavailable" for chitchat on the phone. But when there was genuine need, I left my desk and immediately went to help. I could not, however, have exercised such judgment but for Pen's providing what amounted to "guard duty." The grumbling in the Congregation rose. More and more people felt that they did not hire a rabbi to write books. My job was on the line. Nevertheless, if I had been confronted with an ultimatum, "Give up your 'obsession' or resign," I would—even though I had no financial resources, and three children to support—I would have resigned. This too I would not have dared to do but for Pen's support.

Fortunately for me there were enough people who felt that to serve his congregation properly a rabbi should continue to study Torah. His utterances would thereby be enriched and given greater authenticity, power, and suaveness. These people saw to it that my tenth anniversary with the Congregation was celebrated with my friend Jacob Shankman as speaker; my twenty-fifth, where Rabbi Shankman spoke again, was celebrated with much éclat including silver-edged invitations. At that time, as already mentioned, I was granted a year's leave and given life tenure. Our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary was celebrated by the Congregation's purchase of a Torah scroll in our honor. In 1967, the 75th anniversary of the library, it was renamed the William G. Braude Library of Temple Beth-El. This was done upon the initiative of Dr. Samuel Pritsker, who was then president. The speaker for the occasion was Professor Salo Baron. Through the years, as stated before, the majority of the people of Beth-El have supported me in ever so many ways.

Instinctively, they felt that no rabbi including myself had only one facet

³⁹Joel is a graduate of the Providence Hebrew Day School, Hope High School, received his B.A. from Brown University, studied at the Hebrew University, and received his M.A. from Rhode Island College. On 1 November 1970 he married Ruth Zemach of Jerusalem (1944-), with whom he has two sons, Yosef Zvi (1974-), and Yonatan Ezra (1977-).

in his work. The nature of the rabbinate is such that a rabbi must engage in a multitude of concerns as I endeavored to do. If he is worthy of his salt, he comes to excel in one area, whether it be social action, Zionism and Israel, matters ecumenical, pastoral or administrative, or scholarship. In my reaching out for the world of Jewish learning, the majority of the people of the Congregation not only saw nothing wrong in it—they believed it to be admirable.

Nevertheless, in earlier years, the criticism of some in the Congregation, particularly certain officers, as well as my growing reverence for the tradition made me begin to think that I should not continue as a Reform rabbi—perhaps change to a Conservative or even an Orthodox pulpit.

I remember going to consult Rabbi Samuel Schulman (1864-1955), the retired rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, New York. He, too, he said, shared my reverence for tradition. From time to time he wanted to stand up on a Sunday morning in Carnegie Hall with tallis⁴⁰ and tefillin on his head, and say, “If Maimonides was able to accept *חוררה מסינוי*,⁴¹ so should I.”

Nevertheless, Rabbi Schulman advised me to remain in the Reform rabbinate. So did Samuel Belkin, who told me that I could never adjust myself to living as an Orthodox rabbi. As for Conservatism, there was little among the lay people to differentiate it from Reform.

I am glad I listened to their advice. I should add that the Centenary Statement of Reform Judaism, published in the middle 1970s by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, made me feel no longer an “outsider,” but one in the mainstream of the movement.

During the 1950s and early 1960s “Social Action” was of passionate concern to me, as it was to Ernest Nathan (1905-), then president, to Irving Jay Fain, to Stanley Grossman (1919-), and to many others. And so in tandem with Rabbi Saul Leeman (1916-) 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

⁴⁰Prayer shawl.

⁴¹The revelation of Torah at Sinai.

Montgomery, have been good to us, and you make our life 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.

During my march to Montgomery I noted that many blacks, and whites too, wore *yarmulkes* (skull caps) which they called freedom caps. So many Jews with *yarmulkes* on their heads participated in the march that the *yarmulke* became a symbol of freedom.

The impact of the *yarmulke* 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 *yarmulkes*,” at the end of which I put on a *yarmulke* as I pronounced the $\text{שְׁמֵרָתִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי}$.⁴² I was told afterwards that during the sermon some people wept. A few dared to applaud, and quite a number took *yarmulkes* 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 *yarmulkes* on men’s heads was a complete surprise to me. Apparently some men setting out for Beth-El, because of their childhood memories, put *yarmulkes* 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.

VENTURES

Five such I find memorable: (1) An incursion into city politics. (2) an attempt to give greater significance to Hanukkah, Tu Bishvat, Purim, and Lag Bo-omer. (3) *Chumash*, the Five Books of Moses, and Rashi as a surrogate for the “Happy Hour” between noon and one PM on a Bar Mitzvah Sabbath. (4) A group meeting weekly to study *Mishnah*. (5) The unprecedented experience of going over the typescript of one of my works in the company of rabbis and students.

⁴²*She-heheyyanu*, the blessing recited the first time a meaningful act is performed.

FIRST, MY INCURSION INTO POLITICS. Upon my return from a trip during the summer of 1943, Pen, my wife, reported that Lillian Potter (1913-)* had telephoned, and told the following: Gordon Mulvey, who worked for City Hall as a plumber, circulated petitions and secured the required number of signatures to be a candidate in the forthcoming election for the School Committee. Since no other candidate had himself qualified, he was a shoo-in, and the cause of good government in Providence would suffer irreparably, unless a strong counter-candidate be nominated. The League felt that my reputation as an intellectual might tip the balance in the ballots, particularly since Brown University was in our school district. With such flattery from a bevy of women, reinforced as it happened by my wife's quondam liberalism, how could I resist? I consented to run, little realizing what I was letting myself in for, little realizing that the League's, my wife's, and my own good opinion of myself notwithstanding, I did not stand a chance. For, despite the supposedly non-partisan character of the elections for the School Committee guaranteed by Rhode Island's Strayer Act, they were in fact strongly partisan—Gordon Mulvey represented the Democrats, who at that time were in absolute control of the city, and his opponent, even if it be God almighty, was automatically Republican, so that nuns and priests would in good conscience vote against Him.

Besides, in those days, a clergyman's incursion into politics was a no-no, disapproved of by quite a number of people in my congregation. Hence, when I tried to explain during a Rosh Hashanah sermon what a "Valiant Knight" I was, one of those who disapproved, a "pillar", got up and solemnly walked out of the Temple. He was quoted later as saying that he did not wish to have the pulpit polluted by politics. His demonstrative departure made Pen, the campaign's assistant manager, and me even more determined to proceed. We tried hard. We had ads inserted in the *Providence Chronicle*, the Negroes' weekly. Here is the text of one such ad:

(Turn page)

*Now Lillian Potter Goldstein. She intervened for the League of Women Voters.

YOUR CANDIDATE FOR THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

District G

WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

A few days before the recent School Committee caucus my wife asked a Negro friend of many years' standing to vote for me. He promised he would.

The day after the caucus he happened to pass our house. My wife hailed and asked: "Did you vote for my husband, Tom?" He was then halfway down the street. Slowly he wheeled around and came back to her. "I have a confession to make. I did not vote yesterday because I am not a citizen of the United States." "But, Tom," my wife was surprised, "how long have you been here?" "Practically all my life," Tom answered. "I was brought here as an infant from a French island possession. When I grew up I applied for my first papers. That day I learned that to become a citizen I had to swear off all allegiance to the Republic of France. I came home and wept most of the night. In the morning I made my resolution: I would never swear off the French Republic. There they treat the colored man like a human being. There the colored man has equal opportunity to share in the life of the community."

I happened to come along as Tom was finishing his story. This straightforward confession by an honest and sensitive man moved me deeply.

*If the people elect me as a member of the School Committee I shall dedicate my best energies to the end that the colored people of our community be given the right to teach, to work and to share as equals in the schools of Providence.**

For the Man Who Will Represent YOU Vote For

WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

Vote on Tuesday, November 2nd at Your Nearest Polling Place
Pull the First Lever
For Transportation Call De. 9533

*(Statement requested by the *Providence Chronicle*. Submitted by Rabbi William G. Braude.)

We distributed fliers in Italian:

TENETE LA POLITICA LONTANA DALLA SCUOLAI

GIOVEDI PROSSIMO ELEGGERETE IL VOSTRO DELEGATO ALLE SCUOLE

VOTATE PER

DR. WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

che ricevette la sua educazione nelle scuole pubbliche
che cominciò a studiare in una scuola di una sola stanza
che ottenne un diploma superiore da Brown University
che durante tutta la vita s'interessò dell'educazione

TENETE LA POLITICA LONTANA DALLA SCUOLAI I

Votate Per

DR. WILLIAM BRAUDE

che è un maestro non un uomo politico
che è interessato a dare ai vostri figli la migliore educazione
che cerca di servirvi perchè la sua vita è dedicata al servizio del popolo

TENETE LA POLITICA LONTANA DALLA SCUOLAI I

Per il bene dei vostri figli votate per

DR. WILLIAM BRAUDE

MARTEDI - - - - 2 NOVEMBRE

NELLA SCUOLA ELEMENTARE DI BRANCH AVE.

Votate per tempo

Votate per Braude

Tirate la prima manovella

On the QT Jewish friends such as Howard Presel (1906-), a Democrat who worked for City Hall, gave us counsel. We turned our home into campaign headquarters. Our three-year-old son, Joel Isaac, walked around, saying: "Back Braude for Better Schools." Unsolicited, wealthy WASPS, Republicans, of course, provided money. For liberal clergymen in Providence, headed by Arthur E. Wilson and Robert H. Schacht,⁴³ my campaign was a kind of *jihad*. Friends rallied and served in all manner of ways. Maurice Moskol (1895-1971) and Paul Rouslin (1908-) were in charge of branch offices and transportation.

In the end, it goes without saying, we lost, we were swamped, although professionals comforted us by saying that under the circumstances we did well, very well.

Did the cause of good government suffer irreparably? Not at all. The "plumber," the unspeakable plumber, was to become an invaluable member of the school committee, in time to serve with distinction as its chairman. So much for the prescience of the League of Women Voters.

In retrospect, do I regret the effort which took so much out of Pen and me? Not at all. As a result of the campaign I came to realize the complexity of Providence, made up as it was of so many ethnic "islands" which lived unto themselves. Although at the time I had already been in Providence eleven years, there were many Jews in my district who had never heard the name "Braude", and neither knew nor cared about my very existence—chilling but wholesome medication.

I learned, too, to entertain a healthy respect for a "politician." His severest critics would have to admit that getting elected was no "cinch." A political campaign, even in a School Committee election, is a grueling ordeal.

Suppose I had been elected. I would then have given myself to the problems of the School Committee, whose crucial decisions I could not possibly have affected. I would have had to cut sharply into the time given to congregational duties. Besides, I would not have been able to devote myself to Rabbinic studies which I was to begin under Professor Wolfson in 1945.

During the campaign I used a card which is reproduced below. The card's obverse side asks voters to pull the first lever for me. Its reverse side has scrawled on it titles of books, books which in the years that followed the campaign were to engage me, indeed possess me. Thus the card's obverse side states plainly in print what I fought for— a place on the School

⁴³Wilson, Schacht, and I arrived in Providence in 1932. On 28 November 1965 we celebrated the thirty-third anniversary of our arrival at a special service in the First Unitarian Church—the theme "A hundred years of friendship," a theme I endeavored to voice in my talk entitled, "Spire, Dome and Wall."

Committee. The scrawl on the reverse side refers to the occupation and pursuits which, I believe, God intended for me. So, in defeating me, the voters acted, if I dare say so, as unconscious instruments of God's will: by voting against me they directed me to the world of Jewish lore.

Elect

WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

SCHOOL COMMITTEEMAN
District G

PULL THE FIRST LEVER

NOVEMBER 2, 1943



2000
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 210
 100
 100

—
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Krotoschin —
 Tolmud
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Ginzberg,
 Comm. ed.
 Tolmud
 Get 3111/11, 11.2
 27

THE SECOND VENTURE: 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, 1 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.

A climactic event in the spirit of the Festival Forum took place on Purim 1955 in the new Temple. Therese Friendly Wachenheimer (?-1954)⁴⁴ died just before we moved to Orchard Avenue. A year later her son Fred in observance of her *Jahrzeit* brought Edward R. Murrow (1908-1965), then at the height of his glory, to speak and Carl Sandberg (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.⁴⁵ 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 THIRD VENTURE: *Chumash* and Rashi as a surrogate, between noon and one PM, for the "Happy Hour" on a Bar Mitzvah Sabbath. Here is how it came into being:

In 1954 we 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 AM, 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 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 *Chumash* and

⁴⁴She was the mother of Fred Friendly (1915-), then President of CBS News.

⁴⁵He died of lung cancer.

Rashi, and invited others to do so. Among the steadfasts in the group were Beryl Segal (1900-1980), Paul Chernov (1901-), Professors Albert and Helen Salzberg (1935-), Professor Marvin (1912-) and Pearl Pitterman (1914-), Dr. George Meissner (1915-), Albert M. Schaler (1924-), Samuel J. Cohen (1907-) and Stanley Freedman (1941-). So we escaped the "Happy Hour." People became aware that between 12 noon and 1 PM the Rabbi led a group in study. During the years we went through *Chumash* and Rashi from Genesis through Deuteronomy. Then we read Nachmanides' Commentary from Genesis through Leviticus. After that we proceeded to the Maimonides Reader.⁴⁶ We began reading the *Tanna d'êbe Eliyyahu*,⁴⁷ but had to stop in 1982 because I became involved, as I shall tell later, in translating Bialik and Rawnitzky's *Sefer ha-Aggadah*, "Book of Jewish Lore."

THE FOURTH VENTURE: A group meeting weekly to study *Mishnah*.

When Leslie Gutterman arrived at Temple Beth-El in 1970 he wanted to study certain rabbinic texts which the Hebrew Union College required for an advanced degree. The texts included selections in *Moed*, "Seasons," the second division of *Mishnah*.⁴⁸

I was very happy to join Rabbi Gutterman in such study, and co-opted Knute Ansgar Nelson (by then retired Roman Catholic Bishop of Sweden) and Brother Caedmon Holmes. Elsewhere⁴⁹ I describe our excitement during the hours we pored over the texts of *Mishnah*, and our joy and delight when an apparently obscure passage became clear as a morning without clouds.

Completing the six divisions of *Mishnah* became a passionate concern. So wherever I went, I persisted in seeking out people with whom I might read *Mishnah*. Thus in 1979, when I served as chaplain on the S.S. Rotterdam during a Thanksgiving cruise, I enlisted a retired colonel of the U.S. Engineer Corps (Catholic), and a retired librarian (Presbyterian), with whom I studied the tractate *Yebamot*, "Levirate Marriages"; and in East Hampton I enlisted Professor David Sidorsky of Columbia, who during the study of the Tractate *Peah*, "Corners of fields", which deals with the dispensing of charity, drew upon his vast knowledge of social structures.

⁴⁶Philadelphia, 1972.

⁴⁷Philadelphia, 1981.

⁴⁸Literally "teaching" or "repetition", the collection of legal traditions (explaining or supplementing the laws of the Pentateuch) in the form compiled by R. Judah the Patriarch at the end of the second century C.E.

⁴⁹*RIJH Notes*, November, 1980.

THE FIFTH VENTURE: The unprecedented experience of going over the entire typescript of a current work in the company of rabbis and students.

When I prepared the translation of the *Midrash on Psalms*, I went over the typescript by myself. After the *Midrash on Psalms* I set to work on the *Pesikta Rabbati* without assurance that it would ever appear in print. The Yale Judaica expressed no interest, and prospects for publication elsewhere were dim. Fortunately, in those years Rabbi Jerome S. Gurland was my associate; he and I spent two pleasant years in intense study of the original, the translation of which the Yale Judaica published in 1968. *Piska 9* of the *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, which the Jewish Publication Society published in 1975, had the benefit of intense examination in the company of students at the Hebrew University, where I taught in 1971-1972, and of students of Leo Baeck College, in London, where I taught in 1973. But the entire text of *Tanna debe Eliyyahu* (JPS, 1981) I was able to read with a study group composed of the Most Reverend Dom K. Ansgar Nelson and Dom Caedmon Holmes, and Rabbis Eli A. Bohnen (1909-), Leslie Y. Gutterman, Alvin Kaunfer (1946-), Saul Leeman; Lawrence Silverman (1943-), and Nancy Wellins (1954-). From week to week this group made valuable suggestions in regard to the interpretation of a number of passages, and helped in collating Friedmann's edition of *Tanna debe Eliyyahu* with *Codex Vatican 31* and *Parma MS 2785*. During our stay in Key Biscayne, Florida, the late Rabbi Israel M. Goldman also helped in collating manuscript and print. Finally, as already mentioned the text was read and re-read in collaboration with Israel J. Kapstein. I should add that in 1976, in an undergraduate seminar at Yale, where I taught the first three chapters of *Tanna debe Eliyyahu*, I gained new insights into the meaning of the text.

In 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.

In further retrospect: In the summer of 1932 when Lillian Seidler, a friend in Rockford, Illinois, where I then served as rabbi, having learned that I might go to Providence, wrote about it to her friend, Rabbi Sidney Tedesche (1890-1962) in Brooklyn, New York. Without any delay, Rabbi Tedesche, who had been rabbi of Temple Beth-El in Providence from 1915

to 1917, telephoned Lillian Seidler: "I hear Braude is a nice fellow. Tell him to think twice before going to Providence." Perhaps he was not altogether wrong. My forty-two years as active rabbi of Temple Beth-El have not always been easy, often quite stormy, filled as they were with controversy, and crises, during the worst of which, as I have already stated, I never doubted the decency, the judgment, the good will of the people in the Congregation.

But was Sidney Tedesche right? He was not. A rabbi and a congregation who stay together are, to quote Marie Presel (1910-), like an old married couple. They have their fallings out, but they always come together. So on balance, my decision to come to and stay at Beth-El⁵⁰ was right. In time, even critics will, I hope, come to feel that my years at Beth-El have served some purpose, God's purpose, I trust, which none of us can presume to chart or fathom. We are Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. Both Israel and David have had tempestuous careers, and thank God, both Israel and David's symbols are alive, even as with God's help, this congregation will stay alive long after all of us are gone, and will continue to meet in a Beth-El which it will strive to make truly a House of God, so that beneath its halls for worship, study, and assembly there will be God's everlasting arms.

POSTSCRIPTS RECOUNTING A RABBI EMERITUS'S ENDEAVORS TO EARN MERIT

Since retiring in 1974, I do not attend public meetings or meetings of committees. But from time to time I visit sick people in hospitals, occasionally officiate at funerals, bar mitzvahs, or weddings, and am present at immersion of converts in the *Mikveh*.⁵¹ When needed, I substitute for my successor, Leslie Gutterman, in the pulpit. I have also lectured on *Midrash* at the *Kallah* of the Chicago Board of Rabbis, Oak Park Temple, Oak Park, Illinois; Jewish Community Center, White Plains, New York; Temple Sholom, Anshe Emet, and Sinai Congregation, Chicago; and the New England region of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Monticello, New York. One topic I like to present is "Midrash Seen as Nuclear Power."

During the years, I had wonderful relations with the staff beginning with Wilfred Smith, the first custodian I knew, who used to speak of the *Lulab*⁵² as a cat o' nine tails, and Henry Marshall (1914-), who besides mechanical skill that was unbelievable had considerable talent as a lay preacher. He

⁵⁰The words beginning "So on balance, my decision to come and stay at Beth-El" concluded my remarks on 13 June 1974 at a meeting of the Board of Trustees—the last meeting I attended as active rabbi.

⁵¹Pool of water for ritual immersion.

⁵²Palm branch used in the celebration of *Succoth*, the Festival of Tabernacles.

loved the structure on Orchard Avenue, and from time to time at an assembly of the school would address the children, pleading with them to cause no damage to the installations in the building.

With Samuel Stepak (1919-), executive director; Seymour Krieger (1919-), director of the school; Allen Metz (1950-), librarian; Elizabeth Homans (1942-), my secretary; Anita Mueller, bookkeeper; Ruth Cohen (1910-) and Gloria Jarcho (1936-), secretaries; and Douglas Bate (1948-), custodian, my relations have through the years been a source of joy. It is gratifying that after my retirement all these people have, if anything, been more solicitous, more forthcoming than ever.

In 1980, upon returning from Jerusalem, I resumed the study of *Mishnah*, and in the company of fellow students at Hillel House, Brown University, and in my home, 93 Arlington Avenue, finished *Zeraim*, Division of "Seeds", on 19 January 1981, the last *Mishnah* being at the end of *Terumat*, "Heave offerings."

The *siyyum*, "conclusion," was marked Sunday evening, 18 January 1981 (14 *Shevat*, 5741) by a celebration in the home of Rabbi Eli and Eleanor Bohnen, at which most of the twenty people present had during preceding years shared with me the study of *Mishnah*.

In my remarks I used the prayer after the triennial distribution of tithes (*Maaser Shevi* 5:11-13) as the *siyyum*, "concluding *Mishnah*." Among other things, I called attention to its sensible interpretation of the phrase, "a land flowing with milk and honey," a description which hardly matches the barren and rocky land of Israel. Hence, the *Mishnah's* interpretation: When Jews are conscientious in tithing, God will so blend dew and rain that the fruits grown in the land will have the savor of milk and honey.

For several years my friends, Rabbis Eli A. Bohnen and Saul Leeman, and I met at the Jewish Community Center for a swim and a sauna. The sessions were invariably preceded by an hour's study of Ezra-Zion Melamed's *Bible Commentators*.⁵³

Before Passover 5740 (1980) Pen and I left for Jerusalem, where I taught at the Hebrew University during the spring trimester of 1980. My subject: **חידושי של אליהו רבה במדרש פטוקים** "Novellae in Eliyyahu Rabb's Exegesis."⁵⁴ During our stay in Jerusalem, our son Benjamin Meir⁵⁵

⁵³Jerusalem, 1975.

⁵⁴The article appeared in *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy* in memory of Joseph Heinemann, Jerusalem, 1981.

⁵⁵He attended Providence Hebrew Day School and Classical High. He received his B.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University, and serves as assistant professor of History at Boston College. On 19 June 1977 he married Lois Carol Dubin (1952-) of Montreal.

lived with us for several weeks while doing research at the Israel Government Archives and the Ben-Zvi Institute for the study of Jews of the East. So, too, did my sister Dorothy and brother-in-law Jim Fuerst. He investigated housing, parks, and libraries in Jerusalem for a series of articles he was preparing.

ANOTHER ENDEAVOR

During the last few months, several colleagues and I have been studying subtle and exciting discussions concerning a second or third century Judean farm worker's privilege—its range and limitations—in consuming the product of his labors in field or granary, in vineyard or winepress (*Babylonian Talmud Baba Mesia 87a-93a*).

For me who have lived for years in the lyrical atmosphere of *Midrash*, such legal discussions revealed a new world, a world differing greatly from *Midrash* as well as from the more recently studied texts of *Mishnah*, which are disciplined, chiseled, and conceal well the tempestuous give-and-take of analysis and argument they are a part of, or indeed give rise to. Though highly intellectual, Talmudic discussions are enlivened by vivid metaphor, thrusts of wit, and even earthy humor, and are rich in startling turns and climaxes.

May I be granted sight and life to continue exploring the vast world of rabbinic lore.

לכל תכלה ראיחתי קץ. רחבה מצותך מאד

I have seen an end to every purpose; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad (Psalm 119:96).

א' דראש חודש אדר א' חשי"מא
30 Shevat (first day of Rosh hodesh Adar I)
5742 4 February 1981.

I typed the above, a paean to *Gemara*, Talmud, revered by my mother whose *Jahrzeit* in on the thirtieth of *Shevat*.

In fact, the use of Psalm 119:96, a verse which begins with *lamed*, the last letter in *Rachel*, Mother's name, was inspired by the *Jahrzeit* day's readings in *Mishnah* and in the Psalter.

STILL ANOTHER ENDEAVOR

Quite a number of years ago my teacher Harry A. Wolfson suggested to me that I should translate Bialik and Rawnitzky's *Sefer ha-Aggadah*. Then when I visited him at the Stillman Infirmary on Wednesday 11 September 1974, a few days before his death, he asked me again—his last words to me—whether I had started on the *Sefer ha-Aggadah*, and I was the one to do it. On 23 September 1974, the day after Harry Wolfson's funeral, I began to work on the translation. But I stopped because I could not come to a satisfactory arrangement with the Dvir Publishing House which owns the copyright.

But then in 1981 during our stay in Jerusalem I reached an understanding with Emanuel Hausman of Dvir. And so since the beginning of May 1981, Pen and I have been working feverishly on a translation into English of *Sefer ha-Aggadah*, "The Book of Jewish Lore," a work of 687 pages, published by Dvir in 1908, and since then reprinted frequently. It is the most comprehensive anthology of Jewish lore extant, and is widely regarded as a masterpiece. Our second son Benjamin has been reading the text, and providing invaluable suggestions. When published, the work may appear in four volumes. May God permit me to see this ongoing endeavor to its conclusion.

כ"ג כסלו תשמ"ג

23 Kislev 5743

8 December 1982

PHOTO ESSAY
BY ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

The photographs reproduced in this essay were taken at the Jewish Community Center when it was located at 65 Benefit Street. They show the varied activities offered in the 1940s. There are pictures of arts and crafts for both children and adults. The Center Orchestra, too, was enjoyed by those who participated as players and by audiences at its concerts. During World War II the Center was "home" to many out-of-town servicemen, and a place for social activities for those who were home on leave as well. The Jewish Community Center maintained a Sunday School and one of the graduations is shown. There are, in the archives of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, programs for the many plays and musicals put on by the Center's players. Purim and the election of a Queen Esther were highlights of the Center programming.



Queen Esther, "Purim", Jewish Community Center.



Arts and Crafts at the Jewish Community Center.



Jewish Community Center Woodworking Class.



Jewish Community Center Orchestra — 1948.



Servicemen were entertained at the Jewish Community Center during World War II — 1941.



Jewish Community Center Sunday School Graduation — 1947.



Plays and Musicals performed by Jewish Community Center.

Resolution Of The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

Whereas, One Of Our Great Sages, Yehuda Ben Tema, Observed With Great Perspicacity "Ben Shivim U'Saiyah", Which, Freely Translated, Means That The Seventieth Year is Marked By One's Hair Being Gray, Which Connotes the Attainment Of Wisdom: And, Further, Said Our Sage Yehuda "Ben Shemonim Tivburah" — If You Get To Be Eighty, It's By Reason Of Strength, Not Only Of Body, But Of Character; And

Whereas, You, Rabbi William Gordon Braude, Distinguished Rabbi Emeritus Of Temple Beth-El, Have, On This Day, Reached The Precise Middle Point Between These Two Milestones:

Now, Therefore, The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, At Its Annual Meeting, Recognizes That The Vigor And Strength By Means Of Which You Have Shared The Depth And Quality Of Your Wisdom With The Entire Scholarly World, Is Superbly Displayed In Your Profound And Illuminating Writings And Publications, With Their Influence Causing The Entire Jewish Community Of Rhode Island To Bask In The Reflected Glory Emanating From Your Worldwide Fame, Particularly Where Scholarship, Knowledge, And The Ability To Make Ancient And Obscure Writings Come Alive With Vibrancy, Poetry And Meaning, Are The True Measure Of A Man's Influence and Basic Worth.

Be It Further Resolved, That By Reason Of The Lasting Value Of Your Work, And The Close Ties You Have Brought With This Society, The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Salutes You On This Auspicious Day, Acknowledges Your Tremendous Scholarly Achievements, And Expresses The Hope And Prayers Of The Entire Community That, For Many Years To Come, You Will Continue To Explore, Delinate, And Interpret Those Precious Legacies From Our Sages For The Benefit Of The Entire Literate Community, With The Blessings Of Health An Happiness, For You, Your Devoted Wife Pearl, And All Of Your Dear Ones.

Done At Providence, Rhode Island, This 2nd Day Of MARCH 5742, Corresponding To The 25th Day Of April, 1982.

Marvin Pitterman, President

Stella Glassman, Secretary

RESOLUTION HONORING RABBI WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

Read at the Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, April 25, 1982.

REFORM JUDAISM COMES TO RHODE ISLAND
AN EVENTFUL WEEKEND

By SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

In 1877 The Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David of Providence (now familiarly known as Temple Beth-El) was at a low ebb, having declined to a membership of some 18 families. The recent merger of the older Congregation of the Sons of Israel, established in 1854, with the newer Congregation Sons of David apparently had done little to enhance membership. Thought was given to embracing the Moderate Reform movement, which had originated in Germany and was taking root in America.

The Moderate Reform movement was holding a convention in Philadelphia on July 10, 1877. Advice was sought from its leaders as to how to proceed. The convention delegated Benjamin F. Peixotto, former United States Consul to Romania, and the Rev. Dr. Solomon H. Sonneschein of St. Louis to give assistance to the Providence congregation. A mass meeting was planned for Sunday afternoon, July 22, 1877 at the Synagogue's quarters at 37 South Main Street. Some 350 invitations were sent out. Peixotto and Sonneschein were invited to address the meeting. It was a considerable success, with the recruitment of some 73 members, 24 of whom had been members of the older congregation. The planned change of name to Shaari Shalom (Gates of Peace) was later discarded in favor of retaining the established corporate name. Under the heading "The Gates of Peace — Reform Meeting of the Israelites — A New Departure", the following description of the event appeared in the *Providence Daily Journal* of July 24, 1877:

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 Romania and Rev. Dr. Sonneschein of St. Louis. The former gave a graphic account of the condition of the Jews in Romania, 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 revered their glorious religion. He, too, argued that the cere-

monies 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.

This was not the only event of Jewish interest in Rhode Island that weekend. It was the height of the season in fashionable Newport, and in a dispatch from that town the *Providence Daily Journal* on Monday morning (July 23) reported with a less than subtle bias: "The hotels are gradually filling up, although they are not nearly so full as might be desired. 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."

This oblique anti-Semitism did not miss the sharp eyes of the visitors, at least one of whom was constrained to comment upon it during the Touro Memorial Service that afternoon. The *Newport Daily News* of Tuesday, July 24 reported on the exercises in these words:

Yesterday's memorial service was held in the Jewish Synagogue which was of a very interesting character. The house was opened yesterday in obedience to a telegram received by Mr. David Gould, the keeper, from the Rev. Dr. Sonneschein of St. Louis. The service was in

honor of the late Judah Touro, whose name is a household word in Newport. Two prominent members of the Society were in Providence on Sunday as delegates from the recent Hebrew Convention in Philadelphia to organize a Congregation there, which they did, securing a membership of eighty. After the meeting it was suggested that the Congregation should come to Newport the following day and hold a service in memory of one whose deeds have lived after him and who gave his means so liberally to charitable purposes.

The service commenced soon after one o'clock and there were about seventy-five persons present. The Rev. Dr. Sonneschein offered a fervent prayer, first in Hebrew and then in English, after which he delivered a Memorial Sermon, which was listened to with close attention. It was a very appropriate address, breathing a spirit of love to all mankind, Gentile as well as Jews. In the course of his remarks, the speaker said he had read the same morning in a Providence paper a letter from Newport which alleged that among the arrivals at the hotels were many of the wives and daughters of Jews who wore more diamonds and expensive stones, "but I know that they are of a different character from those alluded to in the letter. I trace these jewels 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 which are worn by our wives, sisters and daughters" — and they are the distinguishing virtues "of chastity, modesty, temperance and charity, which we carry along in obedience to the lessons of our forefathers wherever we may go."

Hon. Benjamin F. Peixotto of New York, United States Consul to Rumania, then delivered an eloquent eulogy upon the life of Judah Touro. He referred to the good which had been done by Mr. Touro — that he had built Christian as well as Hebrew churches, hospitals, etc. throughout the land. The speaker considered him one of the best men that had ever lived and whose name was among those not born to die. He was respected by all and his name would be revered through all time by his brethren. Mr. Peixotto paid a fitting tribute to Newport, noticing the appropriateness of the fact that in one of the capitals of the state, and in a building erected to God, but a few yards from where Judah Touro was interred, a little band had assembled to honor his memory. He urged upon the young the need of reading the life and following the example of Mr. Touro, and that they should know them for their merit and not because they were Jews.

The prayer for the dead was then read, after which the company

repaired to the cemetery where Mr. Touro and his family are interred, and read the Hebrew prayer for the dead. The services throughout were very solemn and impressive.

THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL

By ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

Is the concept of a Jewish all-day school in the United States a new idea? Not at all. The first Jewish all-day school, Yeshivat Minha Areb, was established in New York City by the Spanish-Portuguese congregation, Shearith Israel, in 1731. A typical colonial school, it offered both Hebrew and secular education under ecclesiastical auspices.¹ Between the end of the Revolutionary War and 1879, a period of 93 years, many day schools existed under various congregational and private auspices. According to Alvin Irwin Schiff in his book, *The Jewish Day School in America*, most of these schools were short-lived. Dr. Schiff estimated that the height of day school growth in the 19th century was reached in 1854 when 857 pupils were taught by 35 teachers in seven New York Jewish schools. He attributes the growth of the day school during this period to the attitude of Jews toward public education. The newly arrived immigrants were reluctant to send their children to secular schools permeated with Christian influences.

Due to many influences such as the secularization of the public schools (prohibition of use of sectarian books), and free tuition, the all-day Jewish schools gradually disappeared. Jewish schools then became concerned with Jewish education exclusively. Another factor was the influx of Eastern European Jews. The Russian Jew, who had been excluded from public schooling, was eager to take advantage of the United States's open policy of free education for his children. He also was so concerned with making a living that he was not anxious to undertake the financing of a private day school.

In his analysis of the development of the Jewish all-day school, Louis Nulman wrote: "Until 1945 the all-day school did not show signs of growth in the number of schools nor in pupil enrollment. In 1935, in New York City there were only sixteen all-day schools with a total enrollment of 4500, and one such school in Baltimore. As late as 1942, there were on record only seven all-day schools outside of New York City."²

Dr. Schiff characterized the period between 1940-1964 as the "Era of Great Expansion". He wrote that there was a rapid three-dimensional spread of Jewish day schools, i.e., increases in the number of day schools, in the number of pupils, and in the number of communities served by day schools. He maintained that over 90% of all Jewish day schools were founded after 1940.

Dr. Schiff elaborated upon the statistics presented by Louis Nulman. In 1940 there were schools in six communities, which included New York City as one community, located in six states and two Canadian provinces. By 1950 there were fifty-two communities in twenty states and four provinces. By

1964 the day school movement had spread to one hundred seventeen communities in twenty-nine states and five Canadian provinces.³

One of the reasons for the popularity of the day school movement in the past forty years has been stated by Abraham P. Gannes:

The rapid growth of this type of school since 1945 may be ascribed to the realization that the transmission of a rich religious and literary heritage requires continuous and regular study over a period of many years and that it cannot be achieved in the limited hours of study given in the declining communal Talmud Torah or the synagogue school, and may be due to the desire on the part of some to experiment with an integrated course of studies which combines the best teachings of American culture and the tested traditions of Judaism.⁴

Dr. Schiff concluded that there has been a trend in general toward renewed interest in Jewish life accompanied by growing Jewish communal and organizational concern for Jewish education. On the local level he felt it was evidenced in the activity of the community councils and federations, and on the national in the programs of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, Israel-centered organizations, and Jewish service agencies.⁵

LOCAL HEBREW EDUCATION

Beryl Segal in Volume 7, No. 3 of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* traced the history of Hebrew education in Providence in an article entitled, "Jewish Schools and Teachers in Metropolitan Providence — the First Century." He wrote about such excellent teachers as Hyman B. Lasker, Mayer Gereboff and other dedicated men of the Talmud Torah* connected with the Sons of Zion Synagogue on Orms Street. He considered the Chester Avenue Talmud Torah in South Providence to have had lesser impact on Jewish education than the Sons of Zion Talmud Torah. The Chester Avenue Talmud Torah was located separate and apart from the four synagogues in its immediate vicinity. Segal included in his essay the Jewish education offered by the congregations of Temples Beth-El, Beth-Israel, and Emanuel, as well as Congregation Sons of Abraham and other smaller synagogues. These Hebrew school options were in addition to a child's separate public or private secular education.

In the same issue of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* Rabbi William G. Braude reviewed a publication, "Ezra — a Journal of Opinion". This was a monthly journal (although only this issue seems to be in

*Literally, "Teaching of Jewish religious law", it was traditionally a term applied to Hebrew schools.

existence) issued by the Order of Ezra, Providence, R.I. (Volume 1, No. 1). One of its articles was signed with the pseudonym, "Ariel". He deplored the lack of Hebrew education for the children of Jewish immigrants. He commented that these immigrants were so immersed in their new-found American freedom, that they ignored their obligation for their children's Jewish education. Thus in 1911 he called for the establishment of a Jewish day school. Rabbi Braude quotes from Ariel's article:

We must tax ourselves to provide sufficient means for one Jewish education institution — a single institution in which our children will receive both Jewish and secular training. Such an institution should not be shackled to the different congregations. It must belong to the people, must be maintained by the people, and the sole authority is to be the people who, one may be certain, will find the right personnel to supervise so important a venture.

It was 34 years after the publication of this article that the Rabbis David and Joshua Werner proposed a modern Hebrew day school. The 1945 school was named Yeshiva Achei Temimim (Academy of Brothers who Strive for Perfection). The school was housed in the same facilities as the original Talmud Torah connected with the Sons of Zion synagogue. It was orthodox in the tradition of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva.* Supposedly it attracted one hundred students. Since its orthodoxy did not appeal to all parents, the school closed its doors in 1946,⁶ presumably due to lack of patronage.

*A school founded by a very pious sect of Orthodox Jews.



Lunchroom in basement, 151 Waterman Street, Grades 1 and 2, c. 1956. Woman in picture, Miss Velma Brown (English secular teacher), and Rabbi Akiva Egozi.

THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL
151 Waterman Street — 1947-1958

Rabbi Akiva Egozi, director of the Providence Hebrew Day School from 1952 to 1964, described the school's origins in the 1962 dedication souvenir book:

The school was organized in February 1947 by a group of idealistically inclined parents who sought to blend the values of their Jewish heritage with the nobility of American democracy and tradition. The purpose of this school was to devise a curriculum calculated to develop Jewish children into individuals of high moral character, with well-informed and disciplined minds and a social mindedness that would fit them for loyalty and service to their community and to their country. . . . Though the day school movement was not new fifteen years ago, it seemed a fantastic idea to organize one in Providence. It met with great opposition from various circles of the Jewish community.

Rabbi Egozi described some of the objections:

You are going to separate the Jewish children from their neighbors. You are not giving them an opportunity to mingle with children of another religion. They will grow up wild. They will become ghetto Jews and will not be able to cope with the economic life of today. You are undermining the free American idea of public school. You are breaking American democracy.⁷

Mrs. Archie (Miriam) Smith, widow of one of the founders of the school, reminisced about her husband's role: "I do not think this movement would have started at all without my husband. He really gave it status, for he was a recognized member of the community. He knew day schools were being organized and got together with Lewis Korn, Irving Koffler, Bob Berlinsky, Isaiah Segal, Eugene Freedman and Joseph Dubin. These men were all interested."⁸ She said that her husband had used as his model the Maimonides School which had opened in Boston in 1945, sponsored by the Samuel Feuerstein family. "In 1944," Mrs. Smith commented, "the Torah Umesorah* had organized in New York City for the purpose of building a day school in every Jewish community in America."

Judith P. Wegner⁹ had interviewed Archie Smith:

The first President of the School was Mr. Archie Smith, well-known Providence lawyer, who told me that he and his founding colleagues

*National Society of Hebrew Day Schools.

“felt the need for a school which would provide a thorough Jewish and Hebrew education, far superior to that available at the three-day temple Hebrew school, while at the same time offering a secular education equal to the best of the city’s private schools.” Such an education, it was felt, would produce a well-rounded young Jew who could observe his religion with a proper understanding of its relevance to modern American life.

Isaiah A. Segal, one of the original seven men interested in founding a day school, wrote as follows:¹⁰

They went as far as negotiating to buy a building at a proper East Side location, suitable for use as a school, and at a reasonable price. Soon a storm of protests was raised by the community leadership against a Hebrew Day School in general, and to a location on the East Side in particular. Facing a strong opposition, and not being sure of the number of parents who would be willing to undertake the burden or even send their children to a day school, they dropped the idea for the time being.

There were other comments from those opposed to a day school:

“What are you trying to do, revive a European custom?” “We do not want yeshivas in this country.”¹¹

Rabbi William G. Braude, who was interested in the idea of a day school, recalled some of the adverse comments he heard: “Noise on the streets”. “The WASPS (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants) live in the neighborhood”. “It might promote more anti-semitism.” The real reason, he stated, was that the Jews who ran the philanthropic institutions at the time did not want a Hebrew Day School.¹²

After this abortive attempt to start a day school, the Yeshiva Achei Temimim (referred to in article by Beryl Segal) came into being. As Mrs. Smith explained, “Some of the people did send their children there. We were not Lubavitch-oriented, and this was really an old-fashioned school. This was not what my husband had in mind.” Further comment about the Lubavitch school was made by Lewis Korn, one of the founders of the Providence Hebrew Day School: “We were interested in sending our son to a day school, and decided to try the Lubavitch school. He did so well in a few short weeks there. However, we felt it was not for us as the school was a little too rigid for Providence at that time.”¹³

During the latter part of 1946 the seven men got together again, but this time they did not approach the General Jewish Committee for permission to buy a building. They decided themselves to purchase the brick building at

151 Waterman Street, Providence, R.I. for use as a school building for the Providence Hebrew Day School. The cost of the building was \$65,000. Isaiah A. Segal explained how they financed purchase of the building: "We needed \$20,000 immediately for a down payment. One of the parents present said that he would give \$10,000 if the rest of us would give the other \$10,000. Three of those present contributed \$2,000 each and four more gave \$1,000. Having assured the down payment for the building, the Charter was signed. We elected officers and proceeded with the organization of the school."¹⁴

The charter, as recorded in Volume 2, No. 1 of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, reads as follows:

September 17, 1946. Providence Hebrew Day School, Inc. Irving Koffler, Harris Miller, Lewis Korn, Joseph Dubin, Eugene Freedman, Robert R. Berlinsky, Isaiah A. Segal. For advancing secular and religious education and furthering by all proper and legitimate means the dissemination of traditional orthodox Hebrew religious and moral instruction; building and maintaining schools and places of worship; publishing and circulating literature in the Hebrew or English language; providing for the delivery and holding of lectures, exhibitions, public meetings, classes and conferences, calculated directly or indirectly to advance the cause of traditional orthodox religious and secular education; receiving gifts, legacies and donations from any sources whatsoever; exercising all such power and authority as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and essence of this corporation, being purely religious, literary, charitable and philanthropic, it is expressly declared that this is a corporation not for gain or individual profit and that no dividend shall ever be declared or paid to any of its members and that none of its property, real or personal, shall ever be used or expended except in carrying into effect the legitimate ends and aims of its being. Said educational purposes and features shall not include secondary or higher education.

It is interesting that two of the seven charter members and three of the ten founders never had any children in school. Judith P. Wegner has listed those who were associated with the school from its inception: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Berlinsky; Mr. and Mrs. Max Brier; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dubin; Mr. Eugene Freedman; Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Koffler; Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Korn; Mr. Harris Miller; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Oelbaum; Mr. and Mrs. Isaiah Segal; Mr. and Mrs. Archie Smith; Mr. and Mrs. William Newman; and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hassenfeld.

Registration for the new Providence Hebrew Day School was announced in the *Rhode Island Herald* of January 3, 1947. Children from ages four to

ten years old could be registered for the nursery school, the kindergarten and the first four primary grades. Bus transportation to and from the school was furnished, and hot nutritious lunches were to be served daily. Archie Smith, president of the institution, reported that competent, licensed teachers were being engaged and that the Providence School Department would supervise the entire secular curriculum. These subjects would include those now being taught in the public schools plus courses in music appreciation and the various arts.

For the fall semester of 1947 it was announced in the *Rhode Island Herald* on June 20, 1947 that the school was now offering study from the nursery level through the eighth grade. Further details included the fact that the children received an extensive Hebrew education in reading, writing, prayers, Jewish history, customs and ceremonies. The textbooks for the English courses were the same as those used in the public schools. The parents were assured that the children would not be denied their after school play time since classes were held between 9:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

The school opened its doors to 93 students in February, 1947, only five months from the date of the charter for the Providence Hebrew Day School. During those five months donations by private individuals were used to renovate and convert the house to a school building. By June of 1947 the school became affiliated with Torah Umesorah on advice of Rabbi James Gordon. The newly appointed director of Torah Umesorah, Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, advised those running the Providence school on curriculum and choice of teachers.

Isiah A. Segal¹⁶ describes the meeting of the committee with Dr. Kaminetsky:

The organization of our school was unique in that it was completely composed of both men and women. It was also unique in that ordinarily day schools begin with a kindergarten and 1st grade. We started with a kindergarten and six grades, with an enrollment of between eighty to ninety children. When a committee of five went to New York and entered the office of the Director of Torah Umesorah, Joseph Kaminetsky, the committee told him that we did not come for organizational or for financial help. We had already bought a building, and we had close to one hundred registered children. All we wanted was educational guidance and supervision. He was so overwhelmingly surprised that he had us repeat our request over and over again. "This is", he said, "the first time that a committee came to us with a ready organized school."

The opening days of the school were filled with excitement and

problems. It was a new experience for the men and women of courage who were responsible for its existence. The physical set-up, a converted old mansion, was considerably unlike the standard brick school building of the 1940s. As Judith Wegner recalled:

I particularly remember the unique, spacious, red-and-black-tiled bathroom on the third floor, and the fun we kids had going down the elaborate mahogany staircase, bumping our rears all the way down, one step at a time!¹⁷

Aaron Siegel, had his own vivid recollections: "As I enter my own classroom (he is a public school teacher), I cannot help thinking back to the days when I was a student at the Providence Hebrew Day School. The kindergarten, first grade, second grade and office were on the first floor. The third through sixth grades on the second floor. The dining room in the basement. The teachers of Israeli or European background."¹⁸



First 9th Grade Class.

Alan Brier, another alumnus, remembers the sumptuous hot lunches served daily by devoted mothers.¹⁹ Concerning the hot lunches and the housekeeping of the school, Caroline Gereboff reminisced about her own role:²⁰

It was really physical work — we swept floors in the building, we scrubbed refrigerators. They had a kitchen from which they fed the children, and they had to comply with the families' desires, and then the government desires, then the kids would say, "Eech". . . We never had enough space. The dining room was originally on the second floor, but it was needed for classrooms, so it was decided to use the cellar for the lunchroom. God was with us. It was unbelievable. The cellar had three sections; one room in the middle had no windows, with three steps going out to a bulkhead. The kitchen was upstairs, and the cook's helper, the janitor, would come downstairs with great big pots of hot soup, and it would be ladled out to the children. And nothing happened, thank God. Fridays the kids had the best meal of the week — jelly sandwiches.

THE CURRICULUM AND FACULTY PROBLEMS

An Education Committee was made up of two lawyers, a former school teacher, a businessman and a pharmacist. It was their duty to establish the policy and principles of the school and to see that they were observed.

Many of the early records of the school appear to have been lost. As Lewis Korn explained, "We were greenhorns — a bunch of amateurs — we didn't keep records." A notebook with just one recorded set of minutes of an educational committee meeting was found by Aaron Siegel.

Present at the September 13, 1951 meeting held in the school building were: David Adelman, Mrs. F. Korn, Mrs. H. Oelbaum, Mrs. M. Sternbach, Joshua Bell, Archie Smith, and the principal Isaiah Segal, presiding, with J. Dubin participating. An application for admission of a refugee child was discussed. He was about three years older than the first graders. He knew Hebrew well enough to enter the third grade, but no English. Although one member pleaded he be admitted, his application was rejected on the grounds that it would create an unusual hardship for the teacher, an unfair situation for the rest of the class, and a lowering of the school standard. Another child was admitted to the kindergarten, but he was to be an exception for they felt he was too young. They decided to be more careful about the age of kindergarten children in the future. The number of children in the school at that time was listed as follows: 1st grade — 14, 2nd grade — 13, 3rd grade — 10, 4th grade — 13, 5th and 6th — 9 and the kindergarten — 16, making a total of 75. No note was made of the

number of students in the 7th and 8th grades, which may not have come within the province of the education committee.

According to Isaiah Segal²¹ the finest experienced secular teachers were available for teaching at the Providence Hebrew Day School, since the Providence School Department did not employ married women as teachers in those days. Appointment of Hebrew teachers was a problem. The Providence Hebrew Day School was one of the early schools of its type. There were no so-called day school teachers obtainable. This situation was resolved, according to Segal, in the following way:

The Talmud Torah type teachers whom we were successful in inducing to come to Providence had to be guided and actually instructed by the principal before each daily lesson. Fortunately, our first two long-term principals were both Yeshiva University graduates and ordained Rabbis, imbued with an extraordinary and selfless dedication and devotion to the cause of Jewish education. . . . In addition to instructing the teachers and teaching some classes themselves, they directed the education program and administered the affairs of the school.

Isaiah Segal described the early educational format of the Providence Hebrew Day School:

The character of the school was to be Traditional Orthodox and the method of instruction *Ivrith Beivrith*.^{*} The two programs, Hebrew and English were to be strictly integrated. The English program was supervised by the Providence School Department and was evaluated by city and state school authorities. The Hebrew Department was similarly supervised and regulated by Torah Umesorah.²²

Mrs. Archie Smith commented on the early faculty problems:

Originally we were going to start, like the Solomon Schechter School, with one grade at a time. But we took over the children who had been in the Lubavitcher school. With all those children we had to have every grade, and we had to get teachers, and there were growing pains. Who wanted to come to Providence? No religious teacher wanted to come to Providence. We often did not get really good teachers. A lot of couples came. And often it would happen that the man would be marvelous, and the woman terrible, or visa versa.

Rabbi James I. Gordon wrote about the early days of the school:²³

^{*}A method of instruction — teaching Hebrew through the exclusive use of the Hebrew language.

My work in Providence began September 1, 1947 where I served as principal of the Providence Hebrew Day School for a period of three years until August of 1950. We had a complete elementary school from kindergarten to sixth grade starting out with 90 students, which had doubled to about 180 by the time I left. The school was on a temporary license from the Department of Public Education of Rhode Island when I arrived. In my third year it received permanent certification.

Rabbi James Gordon prepared an annual desk calendar which served to answer questions about the day school. A typical day schedule, taken from his 1952 "Notes on the Jewish Calendar":

9:00 A.M. Arrival. Classes

10:30 A.M. Recess (15 minutes). Class to 11:50 A.M.

12:00 Lunch (prepared by professional cook assisted by mothers of the Ladies Association. Lunch supervised by two Brown students, who also supervise organized play and recreation).

12:50 P.M. Classes resume

2:30 P.M. Recess

3:30 Dismissal

Weekly arts and crafts; weekly assemblies, drama, music; national and Jewish holidays; competitive intramural sports.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Rabbi Gordon described the difficulty in making ends meet in the school's early days:²⁵

These were most difficult years. The general attitude of the community was antagonistic. Outside of the Orthodox community, people had not yet recognized the benefits of this kind of education and were bothered by the concept of parochialism. Because of this, fund raising was very difficult and all personnel connected with the school very often waited long periods for their salaries.

Mrs. Gereboff also recalled the early difficult days of the school:

When my son entered kindergarten, he walked in the front door and we walked in the back door and volunteered. We worked very, very hard. There was so little money. The community support was negligible. There was no Federation, no Bureau of Jewish Education for funding. Among the parents there was very little money. Some were refugees. There were parents who wanted the Jewish education for their children, but they couldn't afford it. And then we would have bridge parties to raise money. That was our everlasting necessity — to

raise money, because without money you do not have teachers. We worked through the Ladies Association. . . . There were lots of problems in the school. Every parent wanted his own method of education. And the money was scarce. Rabbi Egozi would try to manipulate — he would bring in a teacher, and let him teach half time in his school, and get him a job for the other half time, so he would get a living wage. (Mrs. Gereboff had reference to the teachers in the Hebrew curriculum).

Isaiah Segal described a very low point in the early years of the school:²⁷

The teachers hadn't been paid for weeks. The bus company threatened that it would not pick up the children. I made an appointment with Rabbi Bohnen. As I related to him the financial condition of the school, I broke down in tears. Rabbi Bohnen stopped me, picked up the receiver and made an appointment with Joseph Ress.

The Rabbi's action resulted in a meeting of the General Jewish Committee. Alvin Sopkin met with Rabbi Bohnen, Rabbi Braude, Rabbi Silk, Ress and Judge Frank Licht. Subsequently the school received its first grant from the General Jewish Committee, an amount which covered all the back salaries of the principal and teachers. According to Segal, because of this action on the part of the General Jewish Committee, a general evaluation of Jewish education in Rhode Island by a committee headed by Dr. Engleman of the American Bureau of Jewish Education was undertaken. The result was the establishment of the Bureau of Jewish Education in 1953. The Providence Hebrew Day School has been the largest beneficiary of the Bureau's educational grants since that time.

Lewis Korn was actively involved in the problem of meeting payrolls:

Whenever there was a board meeting there would be the question of teachers' salaries. As much as sixteen weeks salaries were owed to the teachers, who were beginning to revolt! Everyone on the Board was then expected to dip into his own pocket to pay them. It happened many times. It was given, not loaned. This was before the time of Federation help. They looked on us as black sheep. The attitude changed when Federation hired a concern to make a survey of the Talmud Torahs and Hebrew Day School. Their idea was to ascertain whether there was any reason for the existence of the Hebrew Day School. They thought it might come out as unnecessary, but it backfired, as in their report it was the only shining light. The Talmud Torahs did not fare as well.

Another participant in the early history of the Providence Hebrew Day School was Joseph Dubin,²⁹ who has written about the financial problems. When he became president in 1953 he found that the teachers had received no pay for 23 weeks. Other bills which had not been paid were those for oil, the telephone, the mortgage, social security, and books. He was happy to write that "today the school is living with pride."

Aaron Segal, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Isaiah Segal, were involved in all aspects of the school, remembered the discussions at his home about the problems connected with running the school:³⁰

There were serious financial problems in those days. They tried to meet the teachers' payrolls in one way or another. They would sometimes be paid late. I remembered when Rabbi Braude found out that there was not enough in the account to pay the teachers, he went to several people, solicited funds, deposited the money in the account and then called Rabbi Gordon to issue checks. Quite often when there was not enough money, the officers or others involved came through. Sometimes they were repaid, sometimes they were not.

THE LADIES ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Gereboff has already described some of her impressions of the work of the women volunteers who were involved with the school. Several women related their experiences both as parents and as members of the Ladies Association.

Mrs. Evelyn Bresnick recalled how the women were involved in cooking for the children:

The school could not afford to hire help for the one cook, so it was the women who assisted her in making the lunch. It was necessary to serve lunch as it guaranteed that non-Kosher food would not be brought into the building. We had hot meals every day. The mothers were involved with the cooking, and worked with Mrs. Fein (the cook). They helped her, and if she did not come in to work, they would come in and do the cooking. When she retired, they did the cooking, preparing and everything else.

Caroline Gereboff elaborated further about the women volunteers:³²

They were a good group of women, but there were not very many. Most women were parents only (not workers). There were exceptions such as Mrs. Joseph Dubin, who gave up much of her time to a continuous rummage sale. She started having a rummage sale on Willard Avenue. We would go around collecting rummage, and she

would sell it in the little store she had in the "new Willard Avenue Shopping Center." She would stay in the store, take clothes home to launder, replace missing buttons and mend rips. Nobody but she was permitted to price the items. That was her prerogative. She worked very hard. At the end of the week, she would come in with her little *baytl* (purse). There was a plaque at the Day School with her little purse impaneled in it. That was her memento for the years she worked for the school. She would hand her money to Lewis Korn, who would count the dimes and quarters, and he would announce at the monthly board meeting how much she had taken in. And this went on for years. She eventually moved the store to Wickenden Street.

There are other references to Mrs. Dubin. A tribute was paid to her in the 1968 yearbook of the Providence Hebrew Day School:

Tribute to Mrs. Joseph Dubin, worker and fund raiser. For twenty years this lady has cooked, baked, cleaned, and served. For fifteen years she has single-handedly operated a thrift shop, now located at 242 Wickenden Street. She has collected the clothes, sorted, mended, altered, cleaned and ironed to realize more income. She alone, through this effort, has raised up to \$3,000 every year. She is not a financier, business tycoon or merchandise manager. She is, however, a devoted and loyal worker for HER children in our school. She is a true mother of Israel.

Lewis Korn, who has been the treasurer of the Day School since its inception, called Mrs. Dubin a "Trojan woman", both for her work in the thrift shop and for her *schnorring* (begging). He also spoke of his wife, Fannie Korn, who was at the school practically every day helping out in the kitchen and wherever she was needed.

Aaron Segal referred to his mother's devotion to the school:³³

She was at school every day, and also acted as liaison between the school, home and parents. She was chairman of the Transportation Committee. The representative of the bus company came to our home, conferred on lists sent to her and made up the routes with her. All problems with the buses went through my mother.

There were many other dedicated women of whom those mentioned are merely examples. Who made up the membership of the Ladies Association? All the mothers of the children at the school, and a few women who did not have children in the Day School. They were a very close-knit group. From recollections of the early members it is apparent that the Ladies Association was not fashionable or popular among the majority of Jewish women. "Sort of as if we were black sheep," commented Miriam Smith, chairman of the

first donor luncheon. She spoke of the difficulty of selling tickets to an event for an unpopular cause. However, the women were never daunted, and Mrs. Smith went on to chair four more donor events.

Ludwig Lewisohn, the eminent author and scholar, was the guest speaker at the second annual donor luncheon held in the Narragansett Hotel. He was quoted in the *Providence Journal* of December 19, 1949 as saying: "Every Jew who opposed Jewish day schools is playing a part in destroying the cultural liberties of himself and his children and his Christian fellow citizens." He further said that the Hebrew day schools made for cohesiveness and trained the pupils to become well-balanced Jews.

Isaiah A. Segal described the many-faceted role of the Ladies Association in this way:³⁴

The Ladies Association grew out of the members of the general organization. . . . Besides serving as a nucleus that attracted parents as well as other interested individuals, they took an active part in the administration of the school. Many were original members of the School Board and served on important committees like finance, education, transportation and house. The Ladies Association also deserves the credit for initiating the yearly campaign dinners which served a double purpose: financial and educational.

The Ladies Association edited and published "Highlights," the newsletter which was sent out to the membership describing the school's activities.

On the 25th Anniversary Year of the Ladies Association the president, Judy Robbins, wrote in the 1973 yearbook:

It has been a successful year for the Day School women. It has been successful not only because of the hard work and warm cooperation of our officers, board, chairmen and members, but most importantly, because we have built upon the secure foundations laid for us by our past presidents. Without their dedication and perseverance the Day School would never have reached this point where its crucial role in the furtherance of Jewish education in our community and the force that it exerts to ensure the perpetuity, the commitment, and the future leadership of our Jewish people are widely acknowledged and supported.

It was during Mrs. Robbins's term of office that the name of the group was changed to the Providence Hebrew Day School Women.

The Ladies Association as described is no longer in existence. It was replaced by a group called Parents and Friends of the Providence Hebrew Day School, which involves both men and women. As Caroline Gereboff

said, "When we worked, we really worked our hearts out. Today the women for the most part are working themselves, some are in professions and they do not want to raise money. It's a whole different society. . . . The concept had to change to suit their own needs."³⁵

THE TEMPLES COME TO THE RESCUE

Toward the end of 1958 there was a tragic fire in a Chicago Catholic school resulting in the death of ninety children. The school had been a fire trap, and this tragedy prompted the nationwide inspection of schools by local fire departments. The Providence firemen condemned the Day School on Waterman Street. The inspection had taken place during the school December vacation. What to do with the students on their return? As Caroline Gereboff remarked, "What do you do with our two hundred kids? It was a terrible time."

It was Rabbi William G. Braude whom Isaiah Segal confronted with this dilemma. The use of the classrooms at Temple Beth-El was suggested. Antipathy toward the existence of the school was still prevalent, and there were some who disapproved of the children using Temple Beth-El's classrooms. Evelyn Bresnick commented: "When I told one person about the suggested move, she was surprised at Temple Beth-El. When I asked why, she said it would look bad for St. Martin's (the Protestant church next door to Temple Beth-El) to see the children running around with their yarmulkes on."

Rabbi Braude mentioned Arthur Levy as one board member of Temple Beth-El who spoke up for taking in the children of the Hebrew Day School. The students finished the school year in Temple Beth-El's classrooms. The school, however, was then moved into the more spacious facilities of Temple Emanuel until its new building was completed.

THE RABBIS, FRIENDS OF THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL

No history of the Providence Hebrew Day School would be complete without reference to the important involvement of Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen of Temple Emanuel and Rabbi William G. Braude of Temple Beth-El. Lewis Korn noted that "Some of the Rabbis had a feeling for the school. Rabbi Bohnen really helped the school. Through the Conservative temple he was able to get the people to support the school. He did a lot of public relations for the school".³⁶

Caroline Gereboff recalled:

When the day school was housed in Temple Emanuel, Rabbi Bohnen was so wonderful. He was such a great help. He went out of

his way to help the day school in any manner that he could. He was very instrumental in getting the people from Emanuel to back the day school with funds, for without them we could not have managed what we did.³⁷

On the occasion of the school's 25th anniversary Rabbi Bohnen stated the following in the commemorative book:

It is a source of pleasure to me to salute the Providence Hebrew Day School on its 25th anniversary. For almost twenty-three of those years I have watched the school grow from a tiny, controversial school to one of the very important and significant institutions of our community. My own son was a student of the school in its early years in the drab and unlamented house on Waterman Street; so I was cognizant of the trials and tribulations of the founders of the school and of those who worked so hard to keep it alive. It pleased me that Temple Emanuel was host to the school for a year during the construction of the building on Elmgrove Avenue. It pleases me that so much of the support for the school comes from members of Temple Emanuel, as do officers, board members and students.

Rabbi William G. Braude was involved with the Providence Hebrew Day School when it was only an idea in the minds of men like Archie Smith. He was one of the few who spoke out for it, and as he himself admitted not always to his own best interest. He not only supported the school but interested men like David Adelman, Paul Chernov and a few others to solicit for the building on Waterman Street.

On November 5, 1948 Rabbi Braude gave a sermon on Hebrew day schools from the pulpit of Temple Beth-El. As he commented, "It was a chilly night, but no matter what the chill outside, the chill inside the Temple as I delivered it (the sermon) was perceptible. You could cut the ice."³⁸

The Rabbi prepared his congregants with the statement that within the next ten years they could expect lively discussion on the theme of Jewish day schools, or as he preferred to call them, private Jewish schools. He spoke about the history of two parallel systems of schooling, public and private, and demonstrated how the so-called private schools were Christian oriented. He spoke about his discontent with the existing pattern of the Jewish education of that time: "The results achieved by the Sunday school are in the main very meagre both as to Jewish piety and Jewish learning. The world of Torah is a very great world and it cannot be squeezed into the tiny confines of the Sunday School. The results achieved by the Talmud Torah have not been much better. . . . I have very positive reasons for wanting it (a private Jewish school). . . . I do not wish to see Torah shunted off to an hour or so

on a Sunday morning. . . . Daily I want my child to study and to practice the prayers and the blessings which are ours. . . ." He concluded by saying, "By means of such schools, a generation will ride psychologically secure in their American heritage, spiritually rich in knowledge and understanding of Torah, and immovably strong in piety and fear of God."³⁹

Rabbi Braude, then the only reform Rabbi in the state, was undoubtedly the focus of criticism not only from his congregation but from the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Not so the mother institution of Hebrew day schools, Torah Umesorah, headed by Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, its director. Torah Umesorah had recently organized and was having its own problems. Rabbi Braude's sermon came to their attention at a time when they thought they might have to give up. It was a tremendous morale booster for Torah Umesorah.

Ironically the Reform movement seems to have come full circle. The magazine, *Reform Judaism*, Summer 1982, carried an article by Rabbi Samuel E. Karff entitled, "Are Day Schools Right for Reform?" He writes:

Why did I change my mind? The majority of children whom we enroll in our Reform day school would have been sent to some other private school in order to achieve a higher level of educational excellence. While a part of me laments the deterioration of public education, I am persuaded that the new reality challenges us to provide a Jewish alternative for those parents who opt for private schools. . . . Does the day school option violate the fundamental character of Reform Judaism? Hardly. A richer and more sustained encounter with the Torah tradition would enable our children to be better Reform Jews, for freedom of choice in Jewish practice is dependent on Jewish knowledge.

Dr. Joseph J. Fishbein, who served as president of the Providence Hebrew Day School from 1972-1975, commented: "If Rabbis Braude and Bohnen had not backed the school, it would never have gotten off the ground. Braude was a good friend. Bohnen has access to people who had traditional homes who helped out, like Max Alpert."⁴⁰ Judith Wegner commented: "And we got a great deal of support from the Rabbis. Rabbi Bohnen and Rabbi Braude were just our best friends. They were really so enthused about the whole thing."⁴¹

At the 18th anniversary scholarship dinner of the Providence Hebrew Day School Rabbis Bohnen and Braude were honored. Rabbi Bohnen was in India at the time, but Rabbi Braude was present. The awards were presented for "their tireless and ardent support of the school through the years." Rabbis Bohnen and Braude showed their support for and belief in the school by sending their own sons to the Providence Hebrew Day School.

Rabbi Nathan Rosen, Director of Hillel House at Brown University, was also involved with the Providence Hebrew Day School. On the occasion of a dinner tribute to Rabbi Rosen in October of 1972 marking his twenty-five years of service, Rabbi Baruch Korff of Taunton, Massachusetts was quoted as follows in the *Rhode Island Herald*, October 11, 1972:

Among the beneficiaries of Rabbi Rosen's efforts is the Providence Hebrew Day School. For many years he waged a one-man personal campaign of acceptance of the Providence Hebrew Day School on the part of the Rhode Island community. When the old Day School building on Waterman Street was condemned, following a tragic fire of a school building in Chicago, the Board of Directors of the Day School was about to purchase land in the slum area of South Providence. The principal of the school, Rabbi Egozi, desperately called up Rabbi Rosen. He rushed to the meeting and succeeded in convincing the board members of the vital importance of locating on the East Side. He persuaded them to venture the purchase of a parcel of land on Elmgrove Avenue adjacent to the Brown football stadium at ten times the cost of the South Providence land. The neighbors, fearing the presence of a school near their property, drew up a petition of objection. Rabbi Rosen appeared before the Zoning Board and won approval for the new building.

There were a few rabbis who opposed the school, but those mentioned above and Rabbi Morris G. Silk gave the Providence Hebrew Day School the spiritual, moral and influential support it needed in order to prosper.

A NEW HOME FOR THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL IS NEEDED

The facilities of the Waterman Street building were inadequate even before the condemnation in December of 1958. As Judith P. Wegner wrote:

The demand for space grew rapidly, and the Waterman Street premises became too small. When the school decided in 1957 to start a junior high school division, there was no place to put a seventh grade. The problem was temporarily solved by acquiring an old carriage house adjacent to the building on Waterman Street and converting it for classroom use.⁴²

In April, 1959 while classes were being held in Temple-Beth El, a \$300,000 building campaign for a new Providence Hebrew Day School was launched. Joseph Dubin, president of the school, made the announcement. The kickoff dinner was held at the Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel, followed by a campaign to May 1. Superior Court Judge Frank Licht was to serve as honorary chairman, Lewis Korn as general chairman. Assisting Korn as

associate chairmen were Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen, Max Brodsky and Ralph Shuster. The (Providence) *Evening Bulletin* of March 6, 1959 announced that the school's board of directors were negotiating with the city for a site on Paterson Street in Providence. A modern fireproof building would be erected on some 100,000 square feet of land. Another individual named in connection with the building plans was Jerome Feinstein, chairman of the building plans committee. This committee was to study similar school buildings in other parts of the country. Other committee members were: David Adelman, David Hassenfeld, Archie Bellin and Alexander Rumpfer. Rabbi Nathan N. Rosen was chairman of the parents' committee. His associate chairman was Abraham Marks. More than \$115,000 was pledged at the fund-raising event held at the Sheraton-Biltmore.⁴³

By May of 1960 the second phase of the Hebrew Day School Fund Drive was launched following the granting of a permit by city officials for construction of the school on an Elmgrove Avenue site.⁴⁴ (There was no further reference to the proposed Paterson Street site). At a special meeting at Temple Emanuel, called by Rabbi Bohnen, it was voted to renew the building fund campaign. Archie Smith succeeded Lewis Korn, who had chaired the initial phase. That phase had raised \$130,000, a large part of which was used to acquire the 37,000 square feet of land on Elmgrove Avenue.

Caroline Gereboff, who worked with Jerome Feinstein on the building fund, reminisced about the hard work and dedication that went into the fund raising:

I like to think that every stone in that building on Elmgrove Avenue went through my hands. Joe Dubin was president and how that man worked for \$10.00 in a way people now work to collect thousands of dollars. Jerry Feinstein worked very, very hard. We hired a fund-raising firm from Boston. It was a beautiful day in our lives to see Joe Dubin with a golden spade turn over the dirt for the new building. And that lot was bought for \$50,000. Citizens Savings Bank funded them (with a mortgage), through Jerry Feinstein's contact.

Mrs. Gereboff also alluded to the objections of the neighbors who lived in the vicinity of the Elmgrove Avenue proposed site:

But I think Archie Smith straightened things out, and they were able to buy the lot and start fund-raising to build the building. That was such a vital piece of land. Someone had suggested building on Creston Way or Nisbet Street.* Rabbi Egozi did not want to be isolated up

*The first near The Miriam Hospital and the latter east of Butler Avenue.

there. He said, "This is the heart of the Jewish neighborhood. This is where the school has to be." And he was insistent and persistent, and that is where the building was.⁴⁵

Dr. Joseph J. Fishbein, who was involved in the fund raising for the new building, commented about this period in the school's history:

I came into the picture after it was condemned on Waterman Street. We were looking for a location. Elmgrove area was the area of choice. I worked on the building committee with Jerry Feinstein and Rabbi Egozi. We went to the community for funds. Some people were reluctant to give money for a day school. We got the cold shoulder. Some were not reluctant to give for a day school, but were opposed to where it was to be built. One person would have given 25 to 50,000 dollars if we put it up in the South Providence area.⁴⁶

Judith P. Wegner had access to the minutes of the school board for 1958-60: "They (the minutes) disclose a constant flurry of energetic fund-raising for the new building — dinners, carnivals, rummage sales, bazaars, the whole time-honored gamut of activities."⁴⁷

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the two-story brick building were scheduled for June 15, 1960 at 4:00 P.M. The (Providence) *Evening Bulletin* of May 9, 1960 reported:

The new ten room classroom of the Hebrew Day School on Elmgrove Avenue is reported assured. A joining of three religious segments of the Jewish community is behind the drive for the construction of a new Hebrew Day School building. Building is expected to start in the autumn upon 37,000 square feet purchased on Elmgrove Avenue between Sargent Avenue and Savoy Street.

Rabbi Egozi said that \$130,000 already had been raised. The objective is \$300,000. He expressed hope that necessary funds would be forthcoming on the night of the June 15th dinner following ground breaking ceremonies.

It was also reported in this news story that a multi-purpose room was to be used as a place of worship. It would have a stage, ark and reading table. Innovations in the school were to be the conducting of religious services every Thursday morning. The ninth grade would be added to the curriculum that fall, and scholarships would be available for qualified students who could not pay tuition fees.

450 ELMGROVE AVENUE

Cornerstone dedication of the new building on Elmgrove Avenue was held on March 22, 1962. The (Providence) *Evening Bulletin* of that day contained a picture of the ceremonies. It showed Mrs. Archibald Silverman, Rabbi Akiva Egozi, Joseph Dubin and Archibald Silverman. Mrs. Silverman was honorary chairperson of the dedication dinner. The cornerstone was limestone from the hills of Jerusalem in Israel. It had been procured through the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Silverman, and the stone had the blessings of Itzhak Ben Zvi, president of Israel, and Premier David Ben Gurion. Building fund campaign chairmen were Lewis Korn, Thomas W. Pearlman and Archie Smith.

The dedication dinner and ceremonies took place on Sunday, April 1, 1962. Guests at the dinner included several students of the Providence Hebrew Day School when it opened on Waterman Street fifteen years previously. One of the students, Hershel Smith, a Brown University senior, who had affixed a mezzuza* to the front door of the Waterman Street structure, again conducted this ancient religious ceremony on the front entrance of the new building. Approximately 425 guests attended the dedication.

The building contained twelve classrooms with accommodations for 350 pupils. There were two divisions: the lower school included a kindergarten and the first six grades; the upper school consisted of grades seven, eight and nine.

Rabbi Egozi, director of the school, spoke at the dedication dinner:⁴⁸

Now after fifteen years the school stands firm and rooted in the heart of Jewish Providence. The school has grown spiritually and materially and is recognized as one of the best educational institutions in New England. The opposition has become quiet; many of the former opponents became friends and are playing an important part in the functioning of the school . . . the school is standing on the threshold of its new half million dollar school building, which will soon dominate the scene at 450 Elmgrove Avenue, with new significance and beauty.

Two years later on Sunday, April 19, 1964 there was a dinner to mark the dedication of the auditorium, the library, class rooms, windows and plaques. Archie Smith, who had resumed the presidency (there were two

*Parchment scroll containing two Biblical passages in a container, and affixed to the doorpost of rooms in a Jewish home or institution.

intervening presidents since he had first been president), noted in the program book of that evening:

Our dinner gathering tonight marks the dedication of the Auditorium, Library, Classrooms, Windows and Plaques in our new Hebrew Day School Building. It is the token by which the Directors of the School express their sincere appreciation to our many benefactors and contributors. . . . We humbly submit that the record of our School in the past seventeen years has more than fulfilled the hope of its founders. . . . The many friends who year after year have stood loyally by our school to make it possible for all children whose parents are interested in giving them a maximum Torah education to attend our classes regardless of their ability to meet tuition requirements are a source of unending encouragement.

THE EXPANDED KINDERGARTEN

By 1966 it was apparent that a new kindergarten room was needed to enable the present kindergarten to be converted to space much needed for use by the first grade. Plans for the new kindergarten included a large dividable room which would open into an inner courtyard to be used as a



Class of 1965: Front Row: Bernard Formel, Steven Farber. 2nd Row: Ava Garber, Barry Novich, Cathy Delbaum. 3rd Row: Andrea Feldman, Joel Gereboff, Sandford Trautenberg, Lynn Duvinsky.

play area. The roof of the projected kindergarten room would have an adjustable skylight designed with geometric shapes in primary colors. Provision would also be made for the installation of the traditional branch-covered room used during the fall festival of Sukkot.*⁴⁹ The plans called for innovations to facilitate creative teaching and flexible instruction. The room was to be equipped with a clerestory, a system of windows which take advantage of all available natural light.⁵⁰

Beryl Segal described the expanded kindergarten facilities in his column of March 10, 1967 (*Rhode Island Herald*):

The room is to house two kindergarten classes and a nursery, taking turns in utilizing the facilities. The rooms are chuckful of modern accommodations. The heating comes from the floors and you get the feeling the heat surrounds you. In the walls are built all kinds of shelves and nooks and corners for keeping the toys and supplies. The blackboards are movable, in and out of the walls, and the child can adjust them to his or her height. The rooms have an exit all of their own, and the children can go out on a nice day to play in a closed-in court without disturbing the other classes.

A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new kindergarten and nursery school was held on October 22, 1967. Malcolm C. Bromberg was general chairman of the kindergarten program, and Samuel Malkin was building chairman.

Fourteen years after its dedication, the Providence Hebrew Day School announced a full day kindergarten program for the 1981-82 academic year, an expansion of the school's half-day session. The purpose of this new approach at the school was to provide kindergarteners with an individualized full-day program emphasizing more cognitive learning.⁵¹

AN EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR

The physical facilities have been described, but what type of education has been offered to the Providence Hebrew Day School student since the inception of the school? One of the precepts of the school's directors was that students generally could manage much more work than they are called upon to do. At the end of the year in the first grade at the Providence Hebrew Day School students were estimated to have a vocabulary of four hundred Hebrew words. Study of the language continued throughout the grades with emphasis on the Bible and Talmud** in advanced study.⁵² This description occurred in a newspaper account in 1958. It was felt that the

*Festival of harvest.

**Compilations in which are collected the records of academic discussion and of judicial administration of Jewish Law.

smaller classes and the shorter class time in no way jeopardized the amount of knowledge a student learned about a subject.

“Students are taught to think” was a comment of Rabbi Nachman Cohen, principal from 1968 to 1979. “We don’t teach memorization of facts.” He commented on the method of teaching: “We try to have students pick out what is relevant, how to tackle problems, how to question any answer a teacher might give them, how to intelligently challenge theories which are found in textbooks, and how to see through extraneous factors.”⁵³

Beryl Segal wrote about an afternoon he spent in the classrooms of the Providence Hebrew Day School (*R.I. Herald*, March 23, 1965):

The class will always stand out in my mind as an answer to all who are doubtful about the potential of American Jewish children to master Hebrew. I had the impression that the children also thought in Hebrew as well as spoke Hebrew. And that was only the fifth grade . . . (compared to) the afternoon schools . . . the Day School can afford to do and dares to do (much more).

Segal explained that the subjects are so integrated that you do not know where the general subjects begin and the Hebrew ends.

In describing the Providence Hebrew Day School, Linda Lotridge Levin (*East Side*, January 27, 1977) emphasized that “students and teachers at the school agree that the emphasis is on making better human beings, intellectually and spiritually.” She compared the classes to family units. The children helped each other, and there appeared to be a great deal of self-motivation.

In an interview in the *Rhode Island Herald* in 1965, Rabbi David Jehuda, principal of the school from 1965-1967, was questioned about the program of the Day School:⁵⁴

It is not a double program, but a reinforced program — the school hours are no longer than those of public schools. And there are many classes in which the two sides of the program — the secular and the Hebrew — can be integrated — as in the study of history, or of art, or even in the physical education classes. The school and the students have a high scholastic aim and those with less academic inclination may find it more difficult than public school.

He felt that the aim of the teachers should be the correlation of the dual program wherever possible.

Dr. Jerome Kutliroff, director of the secular program, was interviewed by a reporter of the *Federation Voice*.⁵⁵ He felt that the program was an enriched one, not only in its content but in its methodology. He pointed out

that "The school uses such modern approaches as team teaching, which gives children the benefit of the specialized talents of different teachers, and individualization, so that children with special talents in specific areas can follow an individual course of study — for instance in mathematics, or art, or additional languages." It was further pointed out that the languages offered for study besides Hebrew were French, Spanish and Arabic. Curricular activities including dramatics, school newspapers in Hebrew and English, ceramics, photography, puppetry, history, were also offered in the 1974 program. There was a full gymnastic and sports program offered with the cooperation of the Jewish Community Center.

Science projects were always a large part of the secular program. The Day School not only held its own science fairs, but students from the school have received honors at such science fairs as the *Journal-Bulletin* Statewide Science Fair.

Edward Adler, a teacher at the Providence Hebrew Day School, in an interview stated that he became a member of the faculty in 1963 and has the title of Ritual Director. He spoke about the specifics of the courses as far as his own expertise was involved. He teaches the students how to participate in services, to read Torah,* to learn customs such as assisting at weddings, funerals, unveilings. Parents may choose whether their sons or daughters are to receive their training for Bar or Bas Mitzvah** at the Day School. He felt that the fifteen hours a week religious instruction against four hours at a synagogue makes for a much more knowledgeable Bar Mitzvah student. Concerning the extent of training in conversational Hebrew a student receives, Adler was persuaded that the child learns enough to have a background knowledge. As with any other foreign language, it has to be used within the country where it is spoken.

Commenting on homework, Adler noted that there was not much in the way of assignments in the early grades and that which was given was to reinforce what had been taught. Junior high school homework was based on notes made in class and in writing reports.

VARIED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Providence Hebrew Day School students are often in the news. Headlines in the *Providence Journal*, the *Rhode Island Herald* and the *Federation Voice* reflect the varied and colorful extracurricular projects of the students: "Hebrew Day School observes Israel's birthday", "Rites held at

*The meaning of Hebrew Law.

**Ceremony marking the initiation of a boy or girl at the age of 13 into the Jewish religious community, and into observance of the Precepts of the Torah.

Hebrew Day School" (for the Hanukkah* observance which was marked by lighting Hanukkah candles as part of the holiday festivities), "Singing for Elderly" (the choir sang for the elderly residents of the Jewish Home for the Aged), "Purim** celebration at Providence Hebrew Day School", "Providence Hebrew Day School presents Children's Plays in Hebrew", "Hanukkah Bowl Winners Announced" (a college bowl-like contest for students in grades five to twelve). These are a sample of the many activities offered by the school. Interesting and varied field trips are also part of the program.

Sponsored by the Ladies Association, and then by the Parents and Friends group which superseded it are activities in which the students participate to varying degrees. There is the annual school book fair, the first of which was held on December 24, 1967. The *Melevvah Malka* evenings which, within context of the meaning of the words, feature speakers of note as well as musical entertainment. Of recent origin is a "Torah Freedom Run" held in May. Members of the community are invited to participate. The run has the dual purpose of celebrating the Festival of Lag B'Omer*** and promoting Jewish athletes.

NEW ENGLAND ACADEMY OF TORAH

"When the history of the Jewish community of Rhode Island is written, the year 1968 will be labeled a most significant year. Through the establishment of the high school division our community has available for the first time intensive Jewish education above the elementary level." Thomas W. Pearlman, president of the school from 1966 to 1971, made these statements in the Providence Hebrew Day School yearbook of 1969.

By unanimous vote twenty-nine board members of the Providence Hebrew Day School voted the establishment of an all-day intensified high school later to become known as New England Academy of Torah, as reported in a newsletter issued by the school. A school of higher education, it was felt, would be the answer to the questions: (1) How could the Providence Hebrew Day school upgrade its faculty? (2) Intensify its curriculum? (3) Alumni continue their secondary and higher Jewish education? (4) Help produce Judaic scholars who are so necessary to Judaism and who are sought by major universities? (5) Help produce

*Hanukkah — Eight-day celebration commemorating the victory of Judah the Maccabee over Antiochus Epiphanes and subsequent rededication of the Temple and Altar.

**Purim — Festival commemorating the rescue of Persian Jewry through the mediation of Esther from the threat of annihilation engineered by Haman.

***Lag Ba-omer — According to legend an outbreak of plague among the pupils of Rakiva in the 2nd cent. ended on this date. Considered the "scholar's feast".

Hebrew teachers to fill positions in the community as well as in other areas? (6) Reach those who have been deprived of their right of a Hebrew Day School education? Of great importance was the fact that it would have the effect of attracting highly qualified Hebrew teachers to the Providence Hebrew Day School and the community. Just as elementary and secondary secular curricula have been intensified because of the more demanding requirements of the colleges, so too, if a demanding intensified all-day high school existed in the city, the level of education in the elementary school would be raised. It would keep in Providence those graduates of the school who before had gone out of town to continue their Jewish education.

Since more than half of the high school students were not from Rhode Island, proper dormitory facilities were needed. There had been makeshift arrangements from its opening in 1968. St. Francis Friary located at 262 Blackstone Boulevard was purchased for use as a boys' dormitory of the Day School in March of 1973. After modernization the building was dedicated on March 24, 1974. The dormitory was dedicated in memory of Louis and Sarah Fishbein and was presented by their sons. The girls' dormitory is located on Taft Avenue.

Dr. Jerome Kutliroff, high school principal in 1979, described the kind of girls and boys who chose the New England Academy of Torah:⁵⁷ "The typical student at the Hebrew Day School's high school is highly motivated. Kids who come here really want to come. They really want a religious education. Since the students are so motivated to be here, to learn and to study, it makes the atmosphere here very positive".

FINANCING THE SCHOOL

The Providence Hebrew Day School has the same problems meeting its financial obligations as do all private schools. Tuition payments alone are far from adequate to meet the school's expenses. Many men and women like Thomas Pearlman have dedicated their time and money to obtain funds for the school. There is the Endowment Fund devoted to improving and maintaining teaching facilities and upgrading and expanding the curriculum. There is the Scholarship Fund. As stated in the 18th Anniversary Scholarship Dinner program book: "In keeping with Jewish tradition, the Providence Hebrew Day School opens its doors to all Jewish children regardless of the financial circumstances of their parents. The Providence Hebrew Day School, through the generosity of its friends, has established a Scholarship Fund, which helps us prepare today's students of Torah to become our people's leaders of tomorrow."

An additional financial responsibility has been the absorption into the program of the children of Russian families who settled in Rhode Island.

These Russians are the victims of Soviet Jewry oppression. A special transitional bilingual program has been set up for them.

PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL EVALUATED

To the questions: "How do you feel your child was prepared for adulthood?" and "What do you think of the education your child received at the Providence Hebrew Day School?" the following are representative answers given by some of the parents interviewed:

My children must have been very happy there for my daughter sends her own children to a day school, and my son plans to send his own children, if he should marry and have children. The school instilled family respect — honor your father and your mother. Morals were very explicit in their Biblical studies. My children did well and were accepted by the colleges they chose to attend.⁵⁸

All three of my sons went to the Day School. Each absorbed to the limit of his capacity, I would say.⁵⁹

The education was good, considering some of the troublesome times when they might have a change of teachers five or six times in a semester. The pupils who really wanted to learn, learned. And those who didn't care, didn't learn. Of course, there were things that could have been better, but that happens in every school. The teachers, the principal did the best they could. It was a new beginning for my children. I was very happy they went to the Hebrew Day School. It taught them discipline. It taught them their historical background. It taught them Hebrew. It taught them ethics. They had a feeling for Judaism, which to me was most important. The kids who came out of the school did very well, as did my sons. Say 90% were accepted into really good colleges. I think the intensive study provided them with the tools of their future education.⁶⁰

We have been very happy with the school. We like the way our children turned out. I do not know if they would have anyhow, if they had not gone there, but I like what I see. They are honest, truthful, well-adjusted. What more would you want?⁶²

An alumnus of the school in answer to the question, "Did you feel you received a good educational background?" answered, "Excellent. In those early years we all went on to college. It was a well-rounded total education."⁶² A testimony to the success of the school is the fact that many of the alumni are sending their own children there.

PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL UPDATED

The 1982 Providence Hebrew Day School yearbook reported that 189 children were enrolled in the kindergarten through the eighth grade, 36 students in the high school, and 11 children in the bilingual program. The Dean of the Elementary and High School is Rabbi Scholom Strajcher, who works with a faculty of 52 men and women. Dr. Edward N. Beiser, president of the school, commented, "The Day School would be nothing were it not open to and concerned for the entire Jewish community. And the Day School would be nothing if its dedication to the community were not rooted firmly in Jewish tradition and practice."

Rabbi Strajcher in a recent article⁶³ summarized the goals of the school: "The school seeks to put those two worlds together (the world of secular or general studies and the best of Jewish learning) in a program with small classes, very qualified teachers and sensitivity to what kids are all about. . . . We want to help raise a generation of young people who will view things through Jewish eyes."

Samuel M. Shlevin, Executive Director of Administration, declared that the Providence Hebrew Day School was the most exciting place to be in. There is evidence of growth in the school. There is a new computer program. There are constant plans for physical plant expansion.

Within the last few years another day school has emerged — the conservative Solomon Schechter Day School, which holds its classes in Temple Emanuel. It is adding one school grade each year. It is drawing its students from the same community, often from the same families who send their children to the Orthodox Providence Hebrew Day School.

The Providence Hebrew Day School has come a long way from the ninety-three students in six grades who in February, 1947 walked through the doors of the converted house at 151 Waterman Street. Many are the milestones: 1962 — the new building on Elmgrove Avenue opened its doors to the students; 1964 — the dedication of the auditorium, the library, class rooms, windows and plaques; 1966 — the growth of the endowment fund with over \$100,000 in pledges and receipts; 1967 — the new kindergarten and science rooms; 1968 — the new high school division, New England Academy of Torah; 1969 — the \$25,000 Library Improvement Fund; 1974 — the Louis and Sarah Fishbein Memorial Building; 1977 — host to the annual New England Teachers Conference sponsored by the National Conference of Yeshiva Principals which is affiliated with Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools.

The school appears to have been founded on sound principles.

PRESIDENTS OF THE LADIES ASSOCIATION OF
THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL

Mrs. Isaiah A. Segal	1947 - 1951
Mrs. Max Brodsky	1951 - 1953
Mrs. Robert Berlinsky	1953 - 1954
Mrs. Maurice Gereboff	1955 - 1957
Mrs. Morris L. Keller	1957 - 1958
Mrs. Samuel Bresnick	1958 - 1961
Mrs. Earl Novich	1961 - 1963
Mrs. Joseph J. Fishbein	1963 - 1965
Mrs. Sheldon S. Sollosy	1965 - 1968
Mrs. Norman Berkowitz	1968 - 1970
Mrs. David M. Korn	1970 - 1972
Mrs. Arthur Robbins	1972 - 1975*
Mrs. Stanley Smith	1975 - 1977
Mrs. Bartholomew Schiavo	1978 - 1979**
Mrs. Howard London	
Mrs. Howard London	1979 - 1980
Mrs. Bartholomew Schiavo	1980 - 1981
Mrs. Henry Sisun	
Mrs. Henry Sisun	1981 - 1982

PRESIDENTS OF THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL

Archie Smith	1947 - 1951 (?)***
Max Brodsky	1951(?) - 1952(?)†
Joseph Dubin	1953 - 1963
Archie Smith	1964 - 1965
Thomas W. Pearlman	1966 - 1971
Dr. Joseph J. Fishbein	1972 - 1975
Sheldon Sollosy	1976 - 1978
Edward Aronson	1979 - 1981
Dr. Edward N. Beiser	1982 -

*Name changed to "Providence Hebrew Day School Women"

**Name changed to Parents and Friends of the Providence Hebrew Day School

***Exact date of Archie Smith's length of service could not be determined.

†Exact dates Max Brodsky held office as president could not be determined.

AMUDIN AWARDS

Providence Hebrew Day School pays tribute annually to a man or woman of the Rhode Island Jewish community who is a distinguished citizen and community leader. This is called the Amudin award. Listed are the recipients of this award:

- 1965 - Rabbi William G. Braude
- 1966 - Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen
- 1967 - Max Alperin
- 1968 - Benjamin Brier
- 1969 - The Honorable Frank Licht
- 1970 - Martin Lifland
- 1971 - Samuel Rosen
- 1972 - Samuel Malkin
- 1973 - Joseph W. Ress
- 1974 - Malcolm Bromberg
- 1975 - Manfred Weil
- 1976 - Ada S. Sydney
- 1977 - Samuel M. Shlevin
- 1978 - Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sandler
- 1979 - Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Korn
- 1980 - Leonard J. Sholes
- 1981 - Arthur S. Robbins
- 1982 - Gladys and Sheldon Sollosy

There is also an Amudin award issued by Torah Umesorah, the National Society of Hebrew Day Schools. The following Rhode Island men have been recipients:

- Archie Smith
- Joseph Dubin
- Thomas W. Pearlman
- Dr. Joseph J. Fishbein
- Lewis Korn
- Isaiah A. Segal
- Samuel Berman
- Morton J. Marks

PRINCIPALS OR DEANS OF THE PROVIDENCE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL

1947 - 1950	Rabbi James Gordon*
1952 - 1965	Rabbi Akiva Egozi
1965 - 1967	Rabbi David Jehuda
1968 - 1979	Rabbi Nachman Cohen
1980 -	Rabbi Sholom Strajcher

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 Rabbi Nachman Cohen, former dean of the school
 Joseph Dubin
 Dr. Joseph J. Fishbein
 Caroline Gereboff (Mrs. Maurice)
 Rabbi James I. Gordon, former principal of the school
 Rabbi Bernard Golenberg, national director, Torah Umesorah
 Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Korn
 Thomas W. Pearlman
 Dr. Bartholomew Schiavo
 Aaron Segal
 Samuel Shlevin, executive director of administration
 Miriam Smith (Mrs. Archie)
 Gladys Sollosy (Mrs. Sheldon)
 Rabbi Sholom Strajcher (present dean of the school)

*After Rabbi Gordon resigned as principal, several individuals acted temporarily as principals of the school. Among these were Emmanuel Zapinsky (noted in the school's 1952 desk calendar) and Isaiah Segal.

NOTES

¹Nulman, Louis, *The Parent and the Jewish Day School*. p. 2

²Ibid. p. 5

³Schiff, Alvin I., *The Jewish Day School in America*. p. 49

⁴Gannes, Abraham P., *Central Community Agencies for Jewish Education*, p. 35

⁵See No. 3. p. 19

⁶Segal, Beryl, "Jewish Schools and Teachers in Metropolitan Providence — the First Century", Volume 7, No. 3, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, pp. 416 and 417.

⁷Egozi, Rabbi Akiva, "The Providence Hebrew Day School — a Success Story in Education", Providence Hebrew Day School program book, Dedication Exercises, April 1, 1962.

⁸Taped Interview with Miriam Smith (Mrs. Archie), July 6, 1982

⁹Wegner, Judith, "A History of the Providence Hebrew Day School" program book, "Providence Hebrew Day School — 25 years of Educational Progress" — 1971.

¹⁰Segal, Isaiah, "The Bereishis* of the Providence Hebrew Day School". Program book, "Providence Hebrew Day School — 25 years of Educational Progress" — 1971.

¹¹See No. 8

¹²Taped Interview with Rabbi William G. Braude, July 13, 1982

¹³Telephone Interview with Lewis and Fannie Korn, November 9, 1982

¹⁴See No. 10

¹⁵See No. 9

¹⁶See No. 10

¹⁷See No. 9

¹⁸Taped Interview with Aaron Segal, September 28, 1982

¹⁹See No. 9

²⁰Taped interview with Caroline Gereboff (Mrs. Maurice) July 17, 1982

²¹See No. 10

²²See No. 8

²³Letter from Rabbi James I. Gordon, dated September 1, 1982

²⁴From research material compiled by Dr. Bartholomew Schiavo

²⁵See No. 23

²⁶See No. 20

²⁷See No. 10

²⁸See No. 13

²⁹Letter from Joseph Dubin dated June 3, 1982

³⁰See No. 18

³¹Taped Interview with Evelyn Bresnick (Mrs. Samuel) July 21, 1982

³²See No. 20

³³See No. 18

³⁴See No. 10

³⁵See No. 20

³⁶See No. 13

³⁷See No. 20

³⁸See No. 12

³⁹Reprint: Sermon by Rabbi William G. Braude given from the pulpit of Temple Beth-El, Providence, R.I., November 5, 1948

⁴⁰Taped Interview with Dr. Joseph J. Fishbein, July 20, 1982

⁴¹See No. 8

*(Genesis or beginning)

⁴²See No. 9

⁴³*R.I. Herald*, January 18, 1979

⁴⁴*R.I. Herald*, May 6, 1960

⁴⁵See No. 20

⁴⁶See No. 40

⁴⁷See No. 9

⁴⁸"Dedication Exercises, Providence Hebrew Day School", April 1, 1962

⁴⁹*Providence Journal*, May 23, 1966

⁵⁰*R.I. Herald*, May 12, 1967

⁵¹*Providence Journal-Bulletin*, March 31, 1981 and *R.I. Herald*, March 26, 1981

⁵²*Providence Evening Bulletin*, February 19, 1958

⁵³*Providence Evening Bulletin*, April 29, 1969

⁵⁴*R.I. Herald*, February 16, 1965

⁵⁵*Federation Voice*, publication of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, June 1974

⁵⁶Taped Interview with Edward Adler, July 13, 1982

⁵⁷*R.I. Herald*, August 30, 1979

⁵⁸See No. 31

⁵⁹See No. 12

⁶⁰See No. 20

⁶¹See No. 40

⁶²See No. 18

⁶³*R.I. Herald*, June 18, 1981

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF — THE TOURO SYNAGOGUE STAMP



BY JAMES H. BRUNS

Persistence usually pays off. The backers of the Touro Synagogue know that all too well. Their sixteen year effort to get the U.S. Postal Service to issue a stamp for the oldest standing synagogue building in America will finally pay off August 22.

That's when the Postal Service will issue a 20-cent stamp at Newport, Rhode Island, in honor of the more than 200-year-old house of worship.

Getting the stamp wasn't easy. Rejection became a rather commonplace experience for the backers. Despite repeated attempts, each time they requested that such a stamp be approved for issue, they were told the same thing — no such stamp was feasible at the time.

One bright spot did occur almost a decade ago, but this time it was the supporters of the stamp who turned thumbs down. In 1973 the Postal Service approved the Touro Synagogue for use on a Historical Preservation series postal card, but the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue, the

Of historic interest to Rhode Island's Jews was the issuing by the United States Postal Service of the Touro Synagogue stamp on August 22, 1982. The above essay is reprinted from the magazine *Minkus Stamp and Coin Journal* with the permission of the author and the publisher.

Mr. Bruns is associated with the philatelic services of the United States Postal Service.

stamp's chief sponsor, respectfully declined that offer, stating that they'd rather wait until they were give a commemorative stamp.

THE WASHINGTON CONNECTION

The group got its way in 1980. At its January 19, 1980 meeting, the Postmaster General's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee once again weighed the merits of issuing such a stamp and this time placed the subject in its "hold for further consideration" category. While that didn't automatically guarantee that the Touro Synagogue stamp would be issued, it at least increased the likelihood that it would.

One problem still facing the idea of a stamp for the Touro Synagogue was when it could appropriately be issued. Apparently as things stacked up, even if the Postal Service had given its flat-out approval to the subject, a stamp wasn't likely to appear before 1984 simply because of the number of previously approved commemorative stamps with fixed dates of issue.

But the subject had been linked from the beginning with George Washington, whose 250th birthday anniversary was celebrated earlier this year, making a 1982 issuance appropriate. The Postal Service made the connection by using two phrases from a letter to the synagogue's congregation, written by the Nation's first chief executive in 1790. The phrases — "To bigotry, no sanction" and "To persecution, no assistance" — were penned in response to a message of welcome Washington received from the congregation during a visit to Newport in August of that year.

TO BIGOTRY NO SANCTION

The initial message which prompted Washington's reply was prepared by the warden of the synagogue, Moses Seixas. In his note Seixas observed that while ". . . deprived as we heretofore have been of the invaluable rights of free Citizens, we now (with a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty dispenser of all events) behold a Government erected by the Majesty of the People — a Government, which to bigotry gives no sanction, persecution no assistance — but generously affording to All liberty of conscience, and immunities of Citizenship . . ."

Washington responded by confirming what Seixas had written. "The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy, a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship."

"It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the

indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of that inherent natural right. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support," wrote the President.

Ironically, within a few short years of receiving Washington's letter the synagogue was closed. The closing came not in response to government pressure or the acts of hostile citizens in the community, but as a result of a dwindling congregation. This was not the first time that the building had been closed to religious service, and, like the previous closing, it would not mark the end of the building as a religious center. The Newport Synagogue, as it originally was called, was far too significant to forget that easily.

AN ARCHITECTURAL GEM

Its history is a rich one. Designed by colonial architect Peter Harrison, the synagogue was built by Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal who had fled the Inquisition and found in the Rhode Island colony the religious freedom they sought.

Considered by many to be a true architectural gem, the synagogue is thought to be the finest of Harrison's work. The English-born American architect also was responsible for King's Chapel in Boston, Christ Church in Cambridge, and the Redwood Library and Brick Market in Newport.

Georgian in design, the synagogue offers a surprising contrast; its plain exterior hides a delicately ornate interior.

Described as a "handsome specimen of ancient architecture," the synagogue was dedicated on December 2, 1763. Officiating at the dedication ceremony was Isaac Touro, the spiritual leader of Newport's Jewish community. Touro not only was instrumental in bringing the synagogue to life, but his memory served as the inspiration behind its survival.

The synagogue prospered until the outbreak of the American Revolution. During the Revolutionary War British troops occupied Newport, transforming the city into an armed camp. When the British seized Newport most of the townspeople fled, including the bulk of the synagogue's congregation, prompting religious services to be suspended.

TOURO'S SONS PROVIDE CARE

Few worshippers returned after the war. Lacking an adequate congregation, the synagogue was used for a time to house the Rhode Island

General Assembly and later served as the site for sessions of the state's supreme court. By the end of the 18th century the building was closed.

Faithfully, however, the sons of Isaac Touro provided money to ensure that the vacant building would be cared for; but for the house of worship this was a bleak period, a time when, as one observer noted, only bats and moles now made their abode there.

Although the synagogue was from time to time used for worship services starting in the 1820s, it wasn't until 1883 that the building was permanently reopened.

Situated on an angle with respect to the street, at first glance the synagogue appears to have been misplaced on its small plot, but the angular placement of the building on the lot was intentional. The angle allows those worshipping before the Holy Ark, which houses the sacred Scrolls of the Law, on which are recorded the Five Books of Moses, the source of Jewish faith, to face eastward towards Jerusalem. The difference in the angle of the building and the street appears on the upcoming U.S. stamp.

CARD ART USED ON STAMP

The view of the synagogue used on the stamp was painted by veteran stamp designer Donald Moss of Ridgefield, Conn. for the rejected postal card. Moss's design was unveiled by Postmaster General William F. Bolger on December 10, 1980 in conjunction with the opening of a major exhibition sponsored by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The exhibit, housed in the DAR Museum in Washington, D.C., was devoted to "The Jewish Community in Early America: 1654-1830."

Appropriately, the Jewish community at Newport was one of this nation's earliest. Founders of the first Newport congregation settled in the town perhaps as early as 1658.

Touro Synagogue, which has been restored to its pre-Revolutionary War appearance, was designated a National Historical Site in 1946. As a national landmark, the National Park Service provides technical assistance in preserving the synagogue, which continues to serve as the place of worship for Newport's Congregation Jeshuat Israel.

The Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue offer a special cacheted Official First Day Cover illustrating the Synagogue and the quotation of George Washington:

*"... to bigotry no sanction,
to persecution no assistance. ..."*



All proceeds will be used in the maintenance and preservation of this beautiful and national historical and religious site.

Covers can be purchased at \$1.40 each (Three for \$3.75). Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Checks or money order should be made payable to "Touro Stamp" and mailed to Charles W. Birdy, Sr., P.O. Box 388, Middletown, R.I. 02840-0013, who serves as co-ordinator of this project for the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue.

ADVERTISEMENT APPEARING IN VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS
DESCRIBING THE OFFICIAL FIRST DAY COVER



Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue

George Washington Letter Ceremonies

Sunday, August 22, 1982

Touro Synagogue

and

Patriots Park

Newport, Rhode Island

Patriots Park Exercises

Presiding

Mr. Burton Fischler

Dedication of Plaques

followed by Reception on Synagogue Grounds

PROGRAM OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON LETTER CEREMONIES, AUGUST 22, 1982

Patriots Park adjoins Touro Synagogue and is part of the National Historic Site.

George Washington Letter Ceremonies

Sunday, August 22, 1982

Touro Synagogue

and

Patriots Park

Newport, Rhode Island

Presiding

Howard N. Kay
Master of Ceremonies

Invocation

Rabbi Theodore A. Lewis
Touro Synagogue

Greetings

Herbert W. Epstein
Chairman of the Day

Greetings

Dr. James K. Herstoff
President, Congregation Ieshuat Israel

Greetings

Aaron J. Sloni
President, Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue

Recognition of Distinguished Guests

Reading of the Moses Seixas Letter

Dr. Frank A. Seixas

Reading of the George Washington Letter

Hon. Paul L. Gaines
Mayor, City of Newport

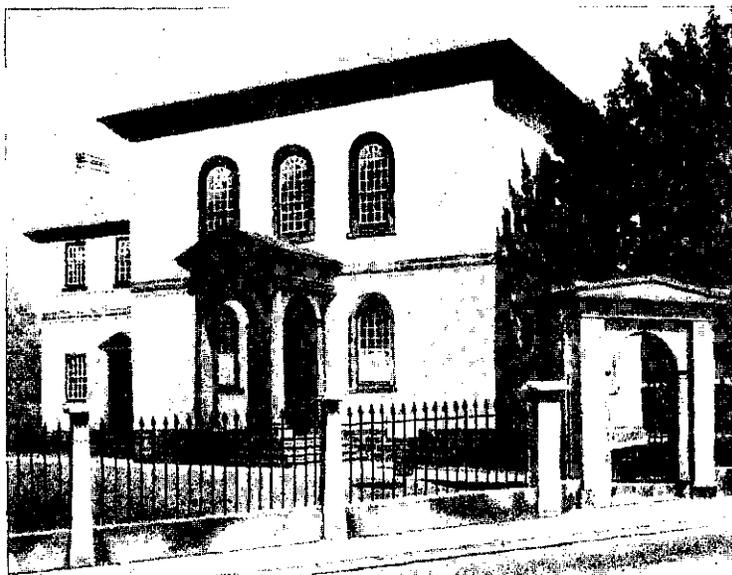
Address

Hon. William F. Bolger
Postmaster General of the United States

Benediction

Rabbi Eli Katz
Touro Synagogue

REMARKS BY WILLIAM F. BOLGER,
POSTMASTER GENERAL
AT GEORGE WASHINGTON LETTER CEREMONIES*



THE TOURO SYNAGOGUE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure and an honor to be invited to speak twice in one day before the same group. Our gathering at this ceremony continues two very important traditions — two traditions as old and enduring as our nation itself.

That we have gathered together to reread the letters exchanged by George Washington and Moses Seixas is a tradition unto itself, for letters are a form of communication unlike any other. A letter says just what its writer wants it to say — no more and no less — and only to the person to whom it is conveyed unless that person decides to share it.

A letter may bring joy or sorrow or simply convey information. But

*The traditional George Washington Letter Ceremonies were held on Sunday afternoon, August 22, 1982 in Touro Synagogue. Mr. Bolger also presided at the stamp issuing ceremony Tuesday morning. The illustration is from a print of the original painting for the stamp by Donald Moss.

whatever a letter says, it is immortal in a very special way: As long as a letter endures, the writer's thoughts live on. Yet that is not the only tradition embodied in the letters we commemorate today: They also embody the tradition of liberty central to the system of government that is the essence of our nation's greatness.

When Moses Seixas wrote to George Washington in 1790 to welcome him to Newport, he also sought assurance that the Hebrew congregation would be free to worship as it chose — assurance, as he put it, that the new government would “to bigotry give no sanction, to persecution no assistance.”

Washington not only provided that assurance — and provided it, remember, before our constitutional Bill of Rights had become the law of the land — he echoed the very words Moses Seixas had used to express the yearning of his people — a people who had wandered for centuries in search of a sanctuary that would give freedom more than mere lip service. And in echoing the ideal to which Moses Seixas gave voice, George Washington made it an explicit promise and statement of purpose for *all* Americans.

Remember: Back then it wasn't at all certain that the vision of liberty that had fueled the American Revolution would in fact guide the new government in its operations. There were many among Washington's peers who would have curtailed that absolute right, who would have formed another kind of government entirely and thereby perpetuated on these shores the very inequities they had fled.

The tradition of liberty we hold so dear lives on today in large part because of what George Washington did in his day — because he had the wisdom and foresight to set a course that would ensure the survival of liberty in the infant nation. Yet, in honoring the greatness of Washington, it has become too easy to ignore the qualities of the man that made him great in the first place and fail to appreciate his outstanding qualities as a *person*.

Abigail Adams said of Washington after his death, “Simple truth is his best, his greatest eulogy.” But as the legend of Washington has grown, I think that much of the simple truth has been obscured. And that simple truth, in my opinion, provides the most eloquent testimony to his greatness and the most valuable lesson for those of us who treasure his legacy. His honesty, integrity, sense of duty and devotion, dignity, perseverance and faith — all these, and more — were qualities that have too often been taken for granted. And, as a result, many have come to regard him as a statue, rather than the living, breathing, marvelous human being that he was — and in doing so, have lost a true appreciation of all that he was.

The roots of this feeling go deep, for in his own time, Washington came to

be viewed as almost god-like. But he never lost his abiding sense of humility. Indeed, in all of history, probably no one sought fame *less* than Washington — yet gained so large a measure of it. What drove him was not the possible reward of personal glory, but rather a sense of duty and his faith in the noble experiment he and his countrymen had launched — his faith that the ideal articulated by the founders of this congregation *could* be realized.

Washington's heart lay with the soil, with honest work, with bringing forth improvements from the land, and certainly, with his family. Indeed, one gets the feeling that what he wanted most was — as he put it in a letter to Lafayette — to “tread the paths of private life with heartfelt satisfaction.” Yet, when duty called, as it did repeatedly, he relinquished these simple pleasures and did what he had to do, serving as only he could serve. Time after time, he was called on to give of himself — and he gave. In his service to his country, he bore vast burdens and suffered hardships the full dimensions of which can only be imagined because he was not one to complain, except when the welfare of his soldiers was involved.

From our distant perspective, we tend to think the Revolutionary War happened quickly. It did not. It dragged on for eight long and hard years, and for most of this time there was discouraging inactivity and hardship that threatened to tear the army apart. Yet through these trying days, it was Washington who held the army together. There was no glory to the task, and a lesser leader would have given it up. But Washington persevered through the force of his own character, and the army, and thus the infant nation was saved.

There came a point, in fact, in 1783 when the Continental forces were on the verge of disbanding even while the articles of peace were being negotiated. Washington addressed a meeting of the leading officers to confront their dissatisfaction. An eyewitness account says that he began to read his remarks “with obvious emotion” and difficulty. He paused to take out a pair of glasses, asking the indulgence of his audience, and observing that he had grown gray in the service of his country — and now he found himself going blind. The men were obviously moved by his remarks, in which he did not berate them, but rather appealed to their aspirations for a new and better age in a new and better nation. They stayed at their task. The event had to have been one of the most moving in all of our history. Happily, of course, Washington did not go blind. His eyes were always wide open, and they saw as few others could.

In an appraisal of Washington, we would also do well to see clearly the greatness of the patriots in whose company he moved and the vast admiration which *they* had for him. These were men worthy of fame

themselves — strong individuals not entirely without ego — *leaders*. And yet it was Washington to whom *they* looked to be their leader — as it was to Washington the founders of this congregation looked to lead the way to freedom.

In his famous appraisal of Washington, written 15 years after the great leader's death, Thomas Jefferson acknowledged that the first President was not perfect in every respect. He admitted that Washington's mind was great and powerful — though not of the very first order of a Newton or a Locke. That mind, he said, "was slow in operation" and perhaps lacked imagination. But, Jefferson continued, Washington's "prudence" — his judgment — was superb, and he noted that once launched on a course, Washington went through with his purpose "whatever obstacles opposed." In integrity and motive, he found Washington "most pure." Summing up, said Jefferson, "Never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great."

When we consider all that Washington did, however, we must also note the importance of what he did *not* do. So great was his reputation and so solid his following after serving as commanding general and as our first President that, if he had chosen, he could have also become the first member of an American royalty. But his devotion to the principles of the Constitution *and* his innately just nature made this unthinkable to him.

In our age, it is popular to downplay talk about heroes — even to deny that any exist. And history does provide enough examples of "false heroes" whose fame was fleeting to make this position understandable, at least to a degree. But there is no question that American history has produced an abundance of genuine heroes, and we are the poorer if we deny that fact.

What such genuinely great heroes as George Washington teach us is that we each have the capacity to do more with our own lives. They also teach us to appreciate the hard-won freedoms that were molded by their hands. And, by example, they lead us to strive to do all we can, in whatever small ways, to continue the building of this great nation they forged. America, in short, needs its heroes — and needs to recognize them on occasions like this. For the inspiration they supplied to their times is needed also today.

Page Smith, in his book, *A New Age Now Begins*, says of Washington: "His genius was the ability to endure, to maintain his equilibrium in the midst of endless frustrations, disappointments, setbacks, and defeats. The American colonies had only to likewise endure to become their own masters — free and independent — and George Washington became the symbol of that determination to endure. He not only symbolized the will of Americans to persevere in the cause of liberty, he symbolized the unity of the states."

Washington bequeathed to us a free and independent land as his legacy. That legacy lives on — the legacy of a government which, in the words of George Washington's and Moses Seixas' letters, "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

I like to think that posterity will not find us wanting in our care of this legacy.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

Recent acquisitions in the library of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association containing items of Rhode Island interest and a listing of these items:

1. *Tanna Dêbe Eliyyahu. The Lore of The School of Elijah.* Translated from the Hebrew by William G. Braude and Israel Kapstein. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1981. 609 pages.
This work is of Rhode Island interest as Braude is Rabbi Emeritus of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David and Kapstein is Professor Emeritus of English at Brown University.
2. *The Jewish Almanac. Traditions, History, Religion, Wisdom, Achievements.* Compiled and edited by Richard Siegel and Carl Rheins, with extensive illustrations, maps, and charts. Bantam Books, Inc., New York, Toronto 1980. 622 pages, paperback.
Page 115. Estimated Jewish population of Rhode Island was 22,000 of a total of 935,000.
Page 479. Brown University: Estimated Jewish enrollment 1300 of a total of 6700 in 1979. Courses and major in Jewish Studies offered. There is a full-time Hillel Foundation. Kosher food is offered at dinner only.
3. *Dedication of Temple Beth-El, Congregation Sons of Israel and David,* Providence, R.I., April, 1954. 12 pages, paperback.
Booklet published on the occasion of the dedication of the Orchard Avenue edifice and the hundredth anniversary of the congregation.
4. *Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary. A pictorial memoir.* Edited by Geraldine Foster. Published by the Congregation, Providence, 1979. 64 pages, paperback.
5. *The American Jewish Woman 1654-1980.* By Jacob Rader Marcus. KTAV Publishing House, Inc., New York, and The American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1981. 211 pages.
Page 204. Mention of paper by Eleanor Horvitz in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 7: 501 *et seq.* on "The Jewish Woman Liberated: A History of the Ladies' Hebrew Free Loan Association" (Providence, R.I.).
6. *America, History and Life.* Part D, Annual Index with List of Periodicals. Vol 15; 1978. American Bibliographical Center — Clio Press, Santa Barbara, California. 560 pages, paperback.
Sections on "Rhode Island (Newport)" and "Rhode Island (Providence)" contain several items relevant to Rhode Island Jewish history.
7. *America, History and Life.* Part D, Annual Index with List of Periodicals. Vol 16; 1979. American Bibliographical Center — Clio Press, Santa Barbara, California. 543 pages, paperback.
Sections on "Rhode Island (Newport)" and "Rhode Island (Providence)" contain several items relevant to Rhode Island Jewish history.

8. *Theodore Francis Green — The Rhode Island Years, 1906-1936*. By Erwin L. Levine. Brown University Bicentennial Publications, Brown University Press, Providence, 1963. 222 pages.
Page 109. Green spoke at Zionist meeting in Providence, recounting the glories of ancient Israel.
9. *Freemasonry in Rhode Island — Memorial Volume, 1891*. Providence 1895. Title page missing. 869 pages.
Page 582. Describes the founding of Redwood Lodge, No. 35, Providence, by a group of Jewish Masons residing in Providence. Myer Noot was the first Grand Master.
Page 43 *et seq.* King David's Lodge in Newport was established by Moses H. Hays. Other prominent Jews, such as Moses Seixas, were members.
10. *Aaron Lopez and Judah Touro, A Refugee and a Son of a Refugee*, by Morris A. Gutstein, Behrman's Jewish Book House, New York, 1939. 120 pages.
Whole text devoted to biographical sketches of two prominent Jews of the Golden Era of Newport.
11. *The Jews of Charleston, A History of an American Jewish Community*, by Charles Reznikoff with the collaboration of Uriah Z. Engelman. The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1950. 342 pages.
Page 8. While Roger Williams was devoted to religious freedom, democracy as we know it was not practiced in Rhode Island. Aaron Lopez and Isaac Elizer were obliged to travel to Boston to attain naturalization.
Page 151. Part of the cemetery of Congregation Beth Elohim in Charleston was purchased with funds donated by Judah Touro.
12. *A Centennial History of Redwood Lodge, Number 35 A.F. & A.M. in The Jurisdiction of Rhode Island*, by Louis Baruch Rubinstein Published by Redwood Lodge, Providence, 1982. 144 pages.
Story of the founding by a group of Jewish Masons in 1877, and the later history. Many Jewish citizens prominent in Masonic affairs in Rhode Island are mentioned.
13. *Smith Hill, Providence*, Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-P-4. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, June 1980. 46 pages, paperback.
Page 11. The first Jewish settlers came to Providence from Germany in the 1840s and settled along the eastern border of Smith Hill. They and their successors established several synagogues in the area, beginning with Congregation Sons of Zion in 1892.
A number of streets and neighborhoods described in the text were populated by Jews.
14. *Guide to Jewish Archives*. Edited by Aryeh Segall. World Council on Jewish Archives. Jerusalem — New York, 1981. 90 pages, paperback.
Pages 60-61. Describes the history, services, and beginnings of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association and a list of collections of special interest.
15. *The American Jewish Experience: From 1654 to the Present*. by Allon Schoener. Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, 1981. 64 pages, paperback.

Page 11. Chronology of events of Jewish interest in Colonial Newport, 1678-1778.

16. *On Common Ground, The Boston Jewish Experience 1649-1980*. A catalogue of the exhibition on life in Boston, presented by the American Jewish Historical Society. American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, 1981. Unpaged, paperback.

Moses Michael Hays arrived in Newport from Portugal. He settled in Boston in 1782. Abraham and Judah Touro, his nephews, were prominent in Boston affairs, helping to found the Boston Athenaeum, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and Bunker Hill Monument. Judah Touro later settled in New Orleans.

17. *Catalogue of Memoirs. The William E. Wiener Oral History Library of The American Jewish Committee*, American Jewish Committee, 1978. 145 pages, paperback.

Page 36. Recording of Frank Licht, former Governor of Rhode Island listed.

18. *Liber Brunensis*, class yearbooks of Brown University, 1909 (230 pages and advts.), 1910 (300 pages and advts.), 1911 (298 pages and advts.), 1914 (300 pages and advts.), and 1915 (334 pages and advts.).

There were Jewish members of all classes. The Menorah Society first appeared in the issue of 1915.

19. *American Jewish History*. Vol. 70, No. 2, Dec. 1980. Pub. by the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.

Pages 149 and 159. Stephen J. Whitfield in a paper titled "The Presence of the Past: Recent Trends in American Jewish History" cites Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport."

20. *Id.* Vol. 70, No. 4, June 1981.

Pages 492. Cites *Congregation of The Sons of Israel and David, One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Anniversary; A Pictorial Memoir*, Providence 1980, as a pictorial history of the synagogue and the Jewish Community of Providence.

21. *Id.* Vol. 71, No. 4, June 1982.

Page 510. Lists *Shalom Rhode Island*, published by the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, which contains a directory of Jewish synagogues, organizations, and services available in Rhode Island.

22. *Id.* Vol. 72, No. 1, September 1982.

Page 55. Stephen J. Whitfield, in a paper titled "From Public Occurrences to Pseudo-Events: Journalists and their Critics," describes Nathanael West as "The first Major American Journalist." West graduated from Brown University, where he associated closely with another Brown student, S. J. Perelman, who later became celebrated in his own right.

23. *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 34, No. 1, April 1982. Pub. by the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Pages 98-102. Paper by Alexander Guttman titled "Ezra Stiles, Newport Jewry, and a Question of Law". In 1780 a Mr. Channing requested use of Touro Synagogue for a Christian service. This request on advice of Stiles was denied by Moses Seixas, the Synagogue warden. Professor Guttman documents that Stiles's advice was well founded in Talmudic law.

RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION,
TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING
April 25, 1982

The twenty-eighth annual meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was convened on Sunday, April 25, 1982 in the auditorium of the Jewish Community Center, 401 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence and was called to order by the president, Dr. Marvin Pitterman at 2:45 P.M.

A motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the last annual meeting was passed.

The treasurer's report covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 1981 revealed a balance of \$4361.52 in an Industrial National Bank N.O.W. account; \$1000 in a Fidelity Cash Reserves money market fund, and \$7248.00 in a special funds account earning substantial interest.

Louis Sweet, chairman of the budget committee, reported that remittances have been received from three fourths of the 478 dues-paying members. The anticipated income for 1982 of approximately \$9000 should be sufficient to provide a balanced budget, since stipends or services rendered are small and assistance is provided by a number of volunteers.

It was revealed that scholars from many states, as well as from overseas, have used the material made available by the Association. Requests for information have been received from as far away as London and Japan. Some of this correspondence concerns a search for Rhode Island relatives. The inclusion of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* in library lists publicizes the existence of this organization.

Dr. Albert Salzberg reported that the *Notes* were delivered on April 1, slightly delayed by the move of quarters of the mailing services, William Baker Company. The next issue will contain a continuation of Rabbi Braude's recollections and an article by Allan Rubin, a graduate student at Brown University. The subject was not stated.

Rachel Kaufman presented a progress report on the project *To Chase a Living 1880 to 1920*, the culmination of an idea born during a visit to the exhibit *On Common Ground* in Boston. Ellen Smith, the director of that exhibit was invited to Providence to consult with interested local people. Response to a letter sent out to members of the Jewish community resulted in the appointment of a committee of thirty members. The Jewish Community Center will sponsor the project with Albert Klyberg lending support, as will Deborah Samdperil and Max Ryder. Michael Bell is serving as folklorist, Eleanor Horvitz as archivist, and David Chapman as designer. The purpose of the exhibit is to reveal the roots of the Jewish community of

the Providence area. A grant of \$10,000 made by the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities will be augmented by funds from friends and contributions resulting from a drive to be led by Charles Samdperil and Howard Kaufman. A slide show presented to the audience by Judith Lantos gave some indication of the appearance of the exhibit. There will be panels of varying heights — six feet, three feet and four and one-half feet, approximately — two of them with audio-visual capacity activated by buttons. Slides that will be part of the display will be focused on a self-contained screen. The exhibit will usually be displayed in the Jewish Community Center lobby, but will be loaned to Sunday schools, banks, and similar establishments throughout the state. The sturdy materials to be used in the construction will guarantee a long serviceable life. Thanks for assistance were extended to the executive committee, particularly to Eleanor Horvitz, Geraldine Foster, and her mother Chaya Segal. The completed project should be ready for dedication by December, 1982.

The president reported that the cumulative index of seven volumes of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* compiled by Bonnie Goldowsky is ready for the press.

Melvin Zurier, chairman of the membership committee, stated that his group has a goal of 500 members. Dues, which range from a minimum of \$15 to contributions of \$20 to \$100, and \$250 for a life membership, are fully tax deductible.

The slate of officers for the coming year was presented by the nominating committee and elected by the association members attending the meeting.

The president thanked his officers and all his committee chairmen for their support during his term of office.

Rabbi William Braude, the speaker for the Twelfth Annual David C. Adelman Lecture, honoring the founder of the Historical Association, was introduced by Dr. Marvin Pitterman. His topic "An Old Translator's New Adventure", dealt with the continuation of his work of forty-five years devoted to translating Midrashic texts in an effort to make them intelligible to readers. Parables, he stated, are an effort to make Scriptures meaningful; for example, the parables of Solomon are intended to explain his philosophy. *The Book of Jewish Lore*, written in the nineteenth century, was culled from the entire range of Jewish literature and consequently covers a wide scope of materials. This was streamlined to provide continuity and edited to avoid offending the mores of the period. The authors of *The Book of Jewish Lore* omitted the sexually explicit scenes sometimes found in Hebraic literature, events overtly hostile to gentiles, and mention of characteristic Jewish practices. They omitted stories which strained

credulity, deleted or softened the consequences of sin, and generally attempted to make the stories inoffensive to the sensibilities of the times.

Louis B. Rubinstein proposed a resolution recognizing the intellectual vigor and strength of Rabbi Braude as well as his ability to make literature come alive, and acknowledging his scholarly contributions.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20.

Florence Zacks, Secretary

NECROLOGY

DR. MAURICE ADELMAN, born in Providence, Rhode Island, was the son of the late William and Bessie (Greenberg) Adelman. A Providence pediatrician with offices in Providence and Narragansett for many years prior to retiring in 1980, Dr. Adelman was a 1920 graduate of Harvard Medical School and a 1916 graduate of Brown University.

Dr. Adelman served on the staffs of the Rhode Island, Providence Lying-In (now Women and Infants), Miriam, Charles V. Chapin, South County and other hospitals. He had been Chief of Pediatrics at Providence Lying-In, Miriam and Charles V. Chapin Hospitals. For 35 years he was medical director and on the board of trustees of the Visiting Nurses Association of Providence. His memberships included the Rhode Island Medical Society, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Temple Beth-El.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on November 1, 1982 at the age of 86.

DR. HEBERT FANGER, born in Millis, Massachusetts, September 11, 1914, was the son of the late Max and Bertha (Miles) Fanger. A prominent pathologist, he served on the faculty of the Brown University School of Medicine, and served as chief of laboratory medicine at the Rhode Island Hospital since 1949. He retired in January of 1982. He also held the position of associate professor of Pathology at Boston University Medical School.

Dr. Fanger graduated from Harvard University in 1936, and New York Medical College in 1940. He served as captain in the Army Medical Corps during World War II. He was a pioneer in developing Brown University's medical school, and later became a professor of medical science there. He was a past president of the Rhode Island Cancer Society, of the Rhode Island Society of Pathologists and of the New England Society of Pathologists. He was director of the blood bank at Rhode Island Hospital, a member of the examining board of pathologists and of the editorial board of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal*.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on August 2, 1982.

HARRY A. GOURSE, born in Fall River, Massachusetts, was the son of the late Simon and Ethel (Smolensky) Gourse. He was a graduate of B. M.C. Durfee High School. Mr. Gourse was the owner of the former Hub Clothing Store in Fall River. He was a World War I veteran and founder and past president of the Fall River Credit Bureau. He was a member of Temple Beth-El, Congregation Adas Israel, the Jewish War Veterans, American Legion, the Zionist Organization of America, Fall River Lions Club. He also served as secretary-treasurer of the former Jewish Welfare Fund, and as board member of the Fall River Jewish Home for the Aged. He was a member of Mt. Hope Lodge, a 32nd degree Mason.

Died in Fall River, Massachusetts on December 7, 1981 at the age of 89.

DR. JOSEPH H. KOLODNEY, born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, was the son of the late William and Gussie (Steinberg) Kolodney. A dentist for more than 35 years in Providence, he was a consulting dentist at the Ladd School, and formerly on the staff of the Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital. He was elected to membership in the British Royal Society of Health. He also was a member of Temple Emanuel and its Men's Club, the Rhode Island Dental Society, the Criterions, and Redwood Lodge 35, AF & AM. He held membership in Alpha Omega, the American Dental Association, the Jewish Home for the Aged and the Jewish Community Center. He was past president of the Smith Hill Businessmen's Association and a board member of Progress for Providence.

Dr. Kolodney was a graduate of Loyola University School of Dentistry and Rhode Island School of Pharmacy.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on February 11, 1982 at the age of 70.

ABRAHAM LINDER, born in Austria, was the son of the late Morris and Hanna Linder and lived in Providence for more than 80 years. A salesman for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for 30 years, he retired more than 30 years ago. He was a founder, past president and

honorary president of Congregation Mishkon Tfiloh. He also held memberships in Temple Emanuel's Men's Club, Touro Fraternal Association, the Jewish Home for the Aged, The Miriam Hospital, Chesed Shel Emes Association, Waad Hachashruth, the Providence Hebrew Day School and the Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on December 5, 1980 at the age of 100.

NEDA P. LOGOWITZ, born in Brooklyn, New York, and a Providence resident most of her life, she was the daughter of Harry and Sarah (Newman) Payton. She attended the Rhode Island School of Design and was docent of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art. She was a trustee of the Providence Preservation Society and a life member of Temple Beth-El, where she served on the board of directors of its Sisterhood as well as chairman of tours. She was a member of the Providence Section of the National Council of Jewish Women and The Miriam Hospital Women's Association.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on June 2, 1982.

ALAN M. RAVENAL, who grew up in New York City, received a law degree at Fordham University in 1918. He lived in Providence, Rhode Island since 1940. He was an industrialist and investor who owned Elbe File and Binder Company, Fall River, Massachusetts, developing the business into one of the largest manufacturers of loose-leaf binders and record-keeping equipment for commercial, industrial and academic uses.

Mr. Ravenal owned real estate in Providence and New York. He conducted courses for retired citizens on economics and investments at Hamilton House, Providence.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on September 28, 1982.

NATHAN RESNIK was the former owner and operator of Emblem and Badge Company, Providence, Rhode Island until his retirement ten years ago.

He was a member of Congregation Mishkon Tfiloh, honorary board member for life of the Providence Hebrew Day School, a member of the Labor Zionist Organization, member of the Friends of Touro Synagogue of Newport, Jewish Home for the Aged, Hebrew Free Loan Association, Histadrut Ivrit of America, Chug Ivri of Miami Beach, Florida and an Associate Member of Hadassah.

Articles and poetry by Mr. Resnik have appeared in the *Pesach Blatt*, *Hadoar*, and the *Rhode Island Herald*.

Died in Pawtucket, Rhode Island on April 7, 1982.

HILDA RUTTENBERG, born in Providence, Rhode Island, was a daughter of Rebecca (Berman) Siegal and the late Max Siegel. For more than twenty years she had been executive vice president of the former City Hall Hardware Company, retiring in 1965.

She was a member of the Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El, the Providence Chapter of Hadassah, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the Jewish Home for the Aged.

Died while vacationing in West Palm Beach, Florida on April 9, 1982 at the age of 74.

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