

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

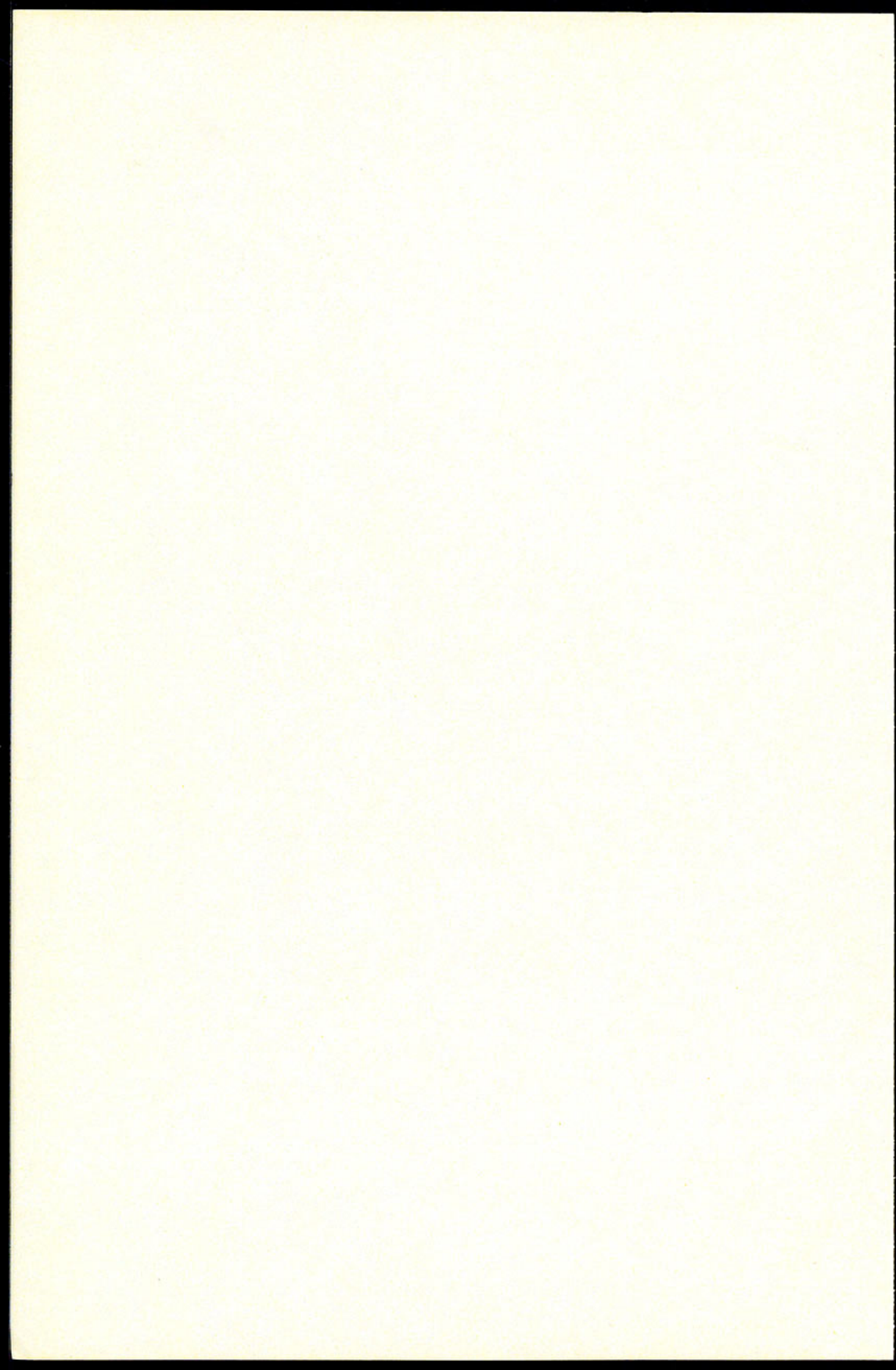


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With this issue of *Michigan Jewish History* we mark twenty years of continuous, uninterrupted publication, the product of the efforts of voluntary, idealistic and dedicated editors and contributors. We continue to maintain our outstanding record of being the oldest, continuously published journal of local Jewish history in North America.

Allen A. Warsen

*Founder, Jewish Historical Society
of Michigan*

Founder, Michigan Jewish History

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

... אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר את אבותם ... (יהושע ד:כא)

"When your children shall ask their parents in time to come . . ."

—Joshua 4:21

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The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, founded in 1959, promotes the study and research of Michigan Jewish history, publishes periodicals, collects documents and records which are deposited in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, and commemorates sites of Jewish historical significance.

Categories of membership in the Society include Life Member (\$100), Sustaining (\$25), Contributing (\$15), Regular (\$10). Inquiries regarding membership should be addressed to Ida Levine, Membership Chairman, 23237 Providence Dr., Southfield, Michigan 48075, (313) 557-0431.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

At a regular meeting of the Board of Directors on December 10, 1979, the following amendment of Article VI, Section 1 of the Constitution of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was adopted, pursuant to Article XI. The full text of the Constitution was published in *Michigan Jewish History*, Volume 19, Number 1 (January, 1979), pp. 16-21, and the following replaces the original:

ARTICLE VI

Section 1. The management of the Society shall be vested in the Board of Directors who shall be elected for a term of one year. The Board of Directors shall consist of twenty elected Directors, plus the elected Officers, the past Presidents and the Editor of the Society's official journal.

DR. LOUIS JACOB HIRSHMAN

By IRVING I. EDGAR

Dr. Louis Jacob Hirschman was the first Jewish physician of Michigan whose father was also a physician, Dr. Frederick L. Hirschman,¹ who had practiced mainly in Republic, Michigan. Louis was born August 15, 1878 at Republic in the Upper Peninsula, where his father was surgeon to the Republic Mine Company and later became surgeon-in-charge of the Penn Iron Mining Company's hospital at Norway, Michigan (1883).

His father died when Louis was only eight years old (1886) and the family soon moved back to Detroit. There he came under the influence of his grandparents, Fannie H. (Labold) and Jacob L. Hirschman, who were very active in the Jewish community, particularly with Temple Beth El. Louis attended Beth El's religious school, which was then located at Washington Boulevard and Clifford Street. He must also have attended other functions that were held there, and later (1903) at the new Temple on Woodward Avenue near Elliot Street, now the Wayne State University Bonstelle Theatre.

Louis received most of his education in the Detroit public schools. He obtained his M.D. at the Detroit College of Medicine in 1899 (the early predecessor of Wayne State University Medical School).

While still attending the Medical School, he was employed by Harper Hospital as an extern in 1898-1899. The next year, following his graduation, he was appointed a regular house officer² of this hospital (intern).

As a house officer, it was one of his duties to ride with the horse-drawn ambulance of that period on emergency calls. An advertisement of this period boasted that a surgeon was always with the ambulance,³ and Dr. Hirschman must have been that surgeon many times. It is of some interest to note that during that year, Dr. Hirschman was "to be disciplined for taking his vacation without permission" of the hospital.⁴

Throughout the many years of his professional life, Dr. Hirschman worked at Harper Hospital and contributed greatly to that hospital's growth and reputation, and helped train many interns and residents. It might readily be affirmed that he was one of its most prominent, if not the most prominent of its active staff members.

IRVING I. EDGAR, M.D. is a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, and is the immediate past editor of *Michigan Jewish History*. He is in private practice in Detroit, and also serves on the staffs of Harper-Grace, Sinai and Doctors Hospitals. He has written extensively on early Jewish physicians of Detroit and Michigan; for a full listing, see the indexes in this and other issues of *Michigan Jewish History*.



Dr. Louis Jacob Hirschman

For the first six years following his graduation and internship at Harper Hospital, he was in private general practice, mainly at an office at 420 Woodward Avenue. During this period he was the Intubator for the City of Detroit, at a time when intubation with tracheotomy was a common procedure because of the prevalence of upper respiratory diphtheria. He received ten dollars for each such tracheotomy and intubation.

In 1904, he became the director of the Harper Hospital Polyclinic, a post he held for two years (1904-1906).

He soon decided to specialize in diseases of the lower gastrointestinal tract, particularly of the rectum. He had become aware that patients afflicted with rectal diseases received woefully inadequate care, as a result of which many patients turned to charlatans and quacks for relief from their hemorrhoids and fistulas.

Thus began Dr. Louis J. Hirschman's career in proctology in the city of Detroit, the first such specialist in the city and probably in the whole state of Michigan.

At Harper Hospital he organized and became the first chief of the Department of Proctology, a position he held from 1906-1940. He also organized the Department of Proctology at the Detroit Receiving Hospital in 1908. A year later, he organized and became professor and chief of the new Department of Proctology at Wayne State University College of Medicine.

In 1913, he became a founding member of the American College of Surgeons. In 1909 he published the first edition of his *Handbook of Diseases of the Rectum*, which went through many later editions,

the last one being published in 1941. This book became one of the most widely read of its kind in this field.

From 1906-1910, Dr. Hirschman was the editor of the *Harper Hospital Bulletin*, and from 1915-1918, he was a co-author of *The American Yearbook of Anesthesia*. He also wrote a *Synopsis, Anorectal Surgery*, (1937-1942). He was an associate editor of the *American Journal of Surgery* for sometime, as well as associate editor of the *American Journal, Digestive Diseases*.

Because of his national reputation, in 1917 he became the first secretary of the Section of Gastroenterology and Proctology of the American Medical Association; soon he became its chairman.

He was elected vice-president of the American Medical Association in 1931, while the year before he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, England, being the first Detroit surgeon to receive this honor.

Hirschman played a significant role in the development of the American Board of Proctology, and became its first chairman. His certification in proctology by the American Board of Surgery indicates that he was the first to receive such certification. Later, he became chairman of the Central Certifying Committee in Proctology of the American Board of Surgery, and became a member of the American Board of Proctology.

He was president of many medical organizations, including the Wayne County Medical Society, the Michigan State Medical Society, the Northern Tri-State Medical Society, the Detroit Medical Club, the Detroit Academy of Medicine, and the Alumni Association of Wayne State University (at that time the Detroit College of Medicine).

He also belonged to many non-medical organizations including the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club, the Republican Club, the Economic Club, the Detroit Yacht Club, the Torch Club and the Army and Navy Club of Washington, D.C.

He served as a member of the Michigan State Board of Health from 1927-1938, and was its president from 1937-1938.

Dr. Hirschman was proctologist to Women's Hospital commencing in 1922, and for many years thereafter. He was consulting proctologist to the Detroit Receiving Hospital, Detroit Tubercular Sanitarium, Detroit Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Jennings Hospital, Childrens Hospital, U.S. Veteran's Hospital and others.

He served as a Major in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Expeditionary Forces in World War I, being assigned to Base Hospital No. 17 (Harper Hospital Unit), stationed in France. Later he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, O.R.C. United States Army (1924). He also helped organize the Detroit Harper Hospital Unit for World War II, but could not himself serve in an active capacity because he had reached retirement age. He was a member of the Military Order of the Great War, and of the Association of Military Surgeons.

He was an extra-mural lecturer in post-graduate medicine at the University of Michigan. He taught proctology at Wayne State Univer-

sity Medical School and was Professor Emeritus in this speciality at the university for many years. He lectured and gave graduate courses all over the United States and contributed much to the literature in this field, being especially active in the 1930's.

Dr. Hirschman presented a clinic on diseases of the anus, rectum and colon at St. Joseph's Hospital, Fort Wayne, Indiana on Tuesday, December 3, 1935. Following the clinic he was the guest of the Academy of Medicine of Fort Wayne, at dinner. Following the dinner he addressed the Academy on "Some-Extra-Colonic Factors in the Etiology of Colitis."

Together with Dr. Fred H. Cole, Dr. Hirschman took part in the Tenth Counsellor District post-graduate program of West Branch, Michigan. Hirschman spoke on "A Consideration of Anal Cryptitis with Reference to the Etiology of Peri-anal Infectious, Including Fistula."⁵

He read a paper before the Genessee County Medical Society at Hurley Hospital, Flint on November 1, 1933, entitled, "Ano-Rectal Fistula and Incontinence,"⁶ and wrote an article entitled, "The Proctologist Looks at Focal Infection," which appeared in the *Indiana Medical Association Journal*, issue of June, 1934.⁷

Dr. Hirschman was married to Lulu Frances Carstens, June 22, 1904. Three daughters were born of this marriage. His wife died in 1930, and in 1936 he married Mrs. Hanna C. Kellog. He retired from active practice in 1950 and moved to Traverse City, Michigan, where he died in 1965 at the age of 86 years.

* * *

*Dr. Louis Jacob Hirschman and
the Detroit Jewish Community*

It must be emphasized that Dr. Hirschman was the first Jewish physician in Detroit to handle and organize the early medical services under Jewish auspices. He was one of that quadrumvirate of Jewish physicians who played such an important part in the history of such services (Hirschman, Hugo A. Freund, Max Ballin and David J. Levy). We find many references to these services in various publications, and they relate not only to Dr. Hirschman's medical work, but also to his social activities. We especially find many such references in the various reports of the United Jewish Charities, particularly as compiled by Mrs. Samuel Chapin in her *History of the United Jewish Charities*.

Thus we find this item dated April 7, 1901:

Dr. L. J. Hirschman made a report of the cases he has treated by order of the United Jewish Charities and recommended that a free dispensary be established in the building of the United Jewish Charities then located at the corner of Montcalm and Brush Street.⁸

At that time, a committee, consisting of Mrs. M. Rosenfield, Mrs. Louis Wineman and Mrs. D. Sheyers, was appointed to consult with Dr. Hirschman on this matter and to the choice of physicians for this purpose.

The Jewish American of November 15, 1901, printed the full report (dated October 31, 1901) of Hirschman's medical and surgical services during the previous 12 month period (1900-1901). This is the first such report in the history of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit.

Dr. Hirschman volunteered to deliver 3 lectures to the Jewish community during the 1903 lecture season at the Hannah Schoss Building.⁹ Two of his lectures were on "First Aid to the Injured."¹⁰

Clinical cases of the newly formed United Jewish Charities were referred to the clinic operated by the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society for widows and orphans (of Temple Beth El) under the directions of Dr. Louis J. Hirschman. When the Hannah Schloss Building was opened in 1903, the clinic was transferred there under the sponsorship of the United Jewish Charities (then newly organized). Dr. Hirschman continued in charge and the clinic was open to the public three days each week, two days to children and one day to other patients, mostly tuberculars and cardiacs. The new plan called for the management of the clinic by its medical staff . . . ¹¹

Many physicians shared in the operation of the clinic. Dr. Hugo A. Freund succeeded Dr. Hirschman; years later, Dr. Max Ballin became chief of staff. Hospitalization of the clinic's clients was arranged through several local hospitals, especially Childrens, Harper and Women's.

In 1922, the clinic moved into two storefronts at 1216 Westminster Avenue near Delmar Avenue, when Dr. Harry Saltzstein became the chief of staff. Subsequently, a North End Clinic was built at the corner of Holbrook and Oakland Street (936 Holbrook), and finally, Sinai Hospital of Detroit with its Shifman Clinic of today.

Dr. Hirschman was on the Board of Directors of the United Jewish Charities in 1902 and for several years thereafter.

Dr. Hirschman was interested in other areas of Jewish life, and was active in the Fellowship Club of that time. An item in the *Jewish American* of October, 1901 under "Fellowship Club Notes" indicates that "Last Sunday an interesting debate on the equal suffrage" question was held . . . led by Dr. Louis Hirschman and Mr. Charles C. Simons. Later that year Hirschman was chosen to fill a vacancy on the club's board of directors.¹² At the club's third annual New Year's celebration in 1902, Dr. Hirschman, "who acted as toastmaster, by his witticisms, -- kept everybody in good humor."¹³ He is also reported as having bowled "214 up to the present time" in the Fellowship Club contests.¹⁴

Hirschman spoke before the United Zionists of Detroit on January 15, 1904 at the Talmud Torah at 47 Division Street, his sub-

ject being "Why Does Prejudice Exist?"

In these early years of Dr. Hirschman's medical practice and even before that time, especially before he specialized in proctology, he was active in the Jewish community and there are many social items regarding him and his family, as reported in the *Jewish American* under "Local Notes."

However, it must be remembered that Dr. Hirschman married out of the Jewish faith. One should also keep in mind that the first eight years of his life were spent at Republic and Norway, Michigan in the Upper Peninsula where there were no organized Jewish communities, so that he could not have received any type of formal Jewish education in those early years. It must never be forgotten however, that during the period when he was active in the Jewish sphere, he contributed much to the Jewish community.

NOTES

¹ See Irving I. Edgar, "A History of Some Early Jewish Physicians in Michigan," *Michigan Jewish History* (March, 1960), pp. 18-20.

² *Harper Star Gazette*, Vol. XV, No. 5, May, 1963, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Detroit Medical News*, June 4, 1934, p. 11.

⁶ *Detroit Medical News*, Nov. 20, 1933, p. 11.

⁷ *Detroit Medical News*, Aug. 13, 1934, p. 14.

⁸ Anna Chapin, "History of the United Jewish Charities," (Detroit: Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit [1950]), p. 6.

⁹ "United Jewish Charities," p. 33.

¹⁰ *Detroit Free Press*, Jan. 10, 1904.

¹¹ "United Jewish Charities," p. 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, Nov. 8, 1901, p. 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1902, p. 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, June 20, 1902.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1903.

THE DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY FROM THE FOUNDING OF CONGREGATION BETH EL TO THE FOUNDING OF THE JEWISH WELFARE FEDERATION OF DETROIT

By ALLEN A. WARSEN

Prefatory Remarks

This study is intended to cover the high points in the history of the Detroit Jewish community of the period 1850-1926.

I would like to thank Philip Slomovitz, publisher and editor of The Detroit Jewish News, Miriam and Abba Kushner, archivists of the Beth El archives, and Charlotte Dubin, Public Relations Director of the Jewish Welfare Federation, for their cooperation and assistance.

* * *

The years 1849-1850 marked the beginning of the Detroit Jewish settlement. At that time there were thirty-six identifiably Jewish persons — men, women and children.¹ The adults were all born in Germany, the children in the United States, three of them in Michigan. The men, with two exceptions, were merchants.

Undoubtedly, the major event that took place in 1850 was the founding of the Orthodox Congregation Beth El. This event marked the beginning of Detroit's organized Jewish community.

Interestingly, the congregation's first house of worship was located above a store on Jefferson Avenue.² Its first rabbi, the Rev. Samuel Marcus, who also served as *shokhet* (ritual slaughterer) and cantor, died tragically in a cholera epidemic, and was the first person to be buried in the congregation's newly established Champ-lain Street Cemetery.

Beth El did not remain Orthodox very long. Influenced by liberal religious trends emanating from Germany, it introduced Reform practices and ceremonies into its service. As a result, in 1861 adherents of traditional Judaism withdrew and founded Congregation Shaarey Zedek. However, Shaarey Zedek did not remain a united congregation. Factional differences over ritual brought about a division, causing many members to pull out. In 1881, however, they rejoined.³

ALLEN A. WARSEN is the founder of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He served as the Society's first president, is the honorary president, and is a former editor of *Michigan Jewish History*.

Detroit's third oldest Jewish congregation, Bnai Israel, originally "Beinei Isroel," was incorporated June 19, 1871. The Articles of Association list these charter members: Isaac Levy, Kalman Freeman, Mendel Rosenthal, Jacob Burnstine, Jacob Brownstine, Mendel Starsky, and Isaac Adelson. The first officers were: Isaac Levy, president, Jacob Burnstine, treasurer, and Kalman Freeman, secretary. The trustees were: Solomon Minzer, Jacob Brownstine, Mendel Starsky, Harry Cohen and Jacob Burnstine.⁴

Bnai Israel's services were first conducted in a rented house, and later in Funke's Hall on Macomb Street. About 1878, the congregation built its first synagogue on Macomb Street, between St. Antoine and Beaubien. Its first cemetery was on William Avenue.⁵

The *Constitution and By-Laws of Congregation Beinei Israel* were published in 1875. The Constitution consisted of eight articles, and the By-Laws of a preamble and twenty-four articles.

The Constitution provided for a board of trustees, cantor and sexton, but not for a rabbi. It stipulated: "The form of prayer to be read in Synagogue Beinei Israel, Detroit shall be agreeable to the forms, customs and regulations of Minhag Polen."⁶

The By-Laws provided for the election of a *parnass*, (president) and *gabai* (vice-president), and state that the *parnass* shall "have all the superintendency of all religious ceremonies . . . and over all paid officers" and be in charge of the distribution of alms to the poor — a dollar per person — but cannot "give the same person . . . a second time within twelve months." The By-Laws also specify that "no person can be chosen as reader who is *mekhalel Shabbes* (desecrates the Sabbath)" and "has no beard during the year."

It should be noted that the founding of Congregation Bnai Israel in 1871 is convincing evidence that a significant number of Polish Jews resided then in Detroit.

The Detroit Jewish population grew from an estimated 665 in 1880 to 1,200 in 1890. This increase was brought about by an influx of Russian Jewish immigrants who fled the tsarist pogroms. These immigrants settled in the lower end of the Hastings Street district on cross streets from Beaubien to Rivard, while the older, better established residents moved from Grand Circus to Brady, between Woodward and Brush.⁷

The number of synagogues also increased in the 1880's and 1890's. Beth Jacob was founded in 1884, and Beth Abraham and Beth David in 1892. A year later the Hebrew Protective Association was organized.

The 1880's also marked the beginning of the Nederlander theatrical dynasty. Its founder, David T. Nederlander, was born in Detroit on May 24, 1886. His father, Joseph, a leading cigar manufacturer and leader of Congregation Bnai Israel, was born in New York, and came to Detroit at the age of five. David's mother, Sara, a native of Utica, N.Y., died a year after her son's birth. Upon graduation from Central High School (now Old Main on the Wayne State University campus), David entered the world of business, and soon afterward became identified with Detroit's theatrical enterprises.

ARTICLE XIII.

How **מִצּוֹת** are to be Disposed of.

SEC. 1. No **מִצּוֹת** or **עֲלִיּוֹת** shall be sold to strangers, except a member is responsible for the amount so bought, the same course be taken upon a strangers offerings.

ARTICLE XIV.

No Person to Read Prayers without Consent of the President.

SEC. 1. No person whatsoever shall read any public prayers or say **קריש** in the Synagogue, without consent of the President or presiding officer.

SEC. 2. **שׁוֹל** to be entitled to **רוֹבֵן** in the **שׁוֹל**; when married, they must be married not contrary to the Mosaic and Rabbinical Laws; strangers are entitled to **רוֹבֵן** when known only, or vouched for by members of this Congregation to be as prescribed above.

ARTICLE XV.

סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה Who Deposited in the Synagogue.

SEC. 1. No **סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה** can be deposited in the Synagogue of this Congregation without an especial agreement with the Trustees, and always on risk of the owner.

ARTICLE XVI.

Members to get Married to Procure a License. — Expulsion of Male or Female Marrying in any other Sect. — Loss of Privilege for Marrying without a License. — No Person to be Permitted to Perform Marriage Ceremony.

SEC. 1. Any member, or his children, wishing to get married, must apply to the President or procure a license, and all arrears of such applicant due to the Congregation, also the fees of \$4.00 must be previously discharged. A stranger marrying in this Congregation shall pay to the funds of this Congregation the sum of \$6.00.

David, it should be noted, was a patron of the Jewish Old Folk's Home and a member of its board of directors.⁸

During these last decades of the 1800's in Detroit's Jewish community, of historic importance was the formation of charities: the United Jewish Charities by the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, the Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society and the Self Help Circle. The Jewish Relief Society was founded on November 21, 1899, "Detroit's first central Jewish philanthropic organization. Its purpose was to expedite the charitable and educational work undertaken by existing organizations, and to reduce the expense incurred by these societies in their individual practice of philanthropy."⁹

The first officers of the UJC were David W. Simons, president; Samuel Heavenrich, first vice-president; Mrs. Sarah Berger, second vice-president; E. H. Van Baalen, treasurer, and Abraham Benjamin, secretary.

The incorporators were: Henry M. Butzel, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, Jacob Friedman, Bernard Ginsburg, Samuel Goldstein, Moses Harris, Mrs. Samuel Heavenrich, Simon Heavenrich, J. Jatovsky, B. L. Lambert, Rosa T. Rosenfeld, William Saulson, A. Schlesinger, Lottie T. Sloman, Adolph Sloman, and Joseph Wertheimer.

The first full-time superintendent, Louis James Rosenberg, was appointed in 1902. He was preceded by Joseph H. Wertheimer, who worked part-time on a voluntary basis. In 1903 Miss Blanche Hart became superintendent and remained in that position for twenty years.¹⁰

It should be noted that during the first decade of this century the number of Jews in Detroit increased from 5,000 to 14,000. This increase was due primarily to the expansion of the automobile industry in the city.¹¹

That decade was also notable for the Jewish community's social and cultural achievements:

The first Anglo-Jewish weekly, *The Jewish American* began appearing in 1901. S. M. Goldsmith was its publisher and (Rabbi) Leo M. Franklin the editor.

In 1902, the Hebrew Free School was organized. It was Detroit's first Hebrew communal school. Its principal was the Hebrew scholar, Dr. Jacob Ben Baruch. In the same year the Fresh Air Society was established.

In 1903 the Hannah Schloss Memorial Building on East High Street (now East Vernor Highway) was dedicated as headquarters of UJC and as a community center. In 1908 an addition known as the Jewish Institute was constructed.¹²

In 1906 the Shaarey Zedek Ladies' Auxiliary was formed. Its officers in 1916 were: Mrs. Abram Sapiro, president; Mrs. Harold Smilansky, vice-president; Miss Sadie Keiden, treasurer, and Mrs. Hattie Gittlement, secretary.

In 1907 *The Detroit Jewish Directory* of 1907 was published. Compiled and printed by L. Knoppow & Sons, it was the only directory ever to be published in Yiddish anywhere.

In 1908 David Emil Heineman, Michigan's first Jewish historian

Detroit Tuesday Evg Nov 7-1899

In pursuance of a call issued by a Committee appointed by the Beth-El Hebrew Relief Society, to the various Jewish Philanthropic Organizations of this City, a meeting was held this evening in the Vestry rooms of Temple Beth-El, with the following Societies represented.

- Ladies Sewing Society
 - Jewish Relief Society
 - Self help Circle
 - Beth-El Hebrew Relief Society
- upon motion, Mr Martin Butzel was elected Chairman, and Mr Alfred Roth, Child, Secretary.

Dr Franklin as Chairman of the Committee representing the Beth-El Hebrew Relief Society, reported, that the following letter had been sent to all the Jewish Charitable Organizations of this City, and which had given birth to this evenings meeting.

- At a meeting of the Beth-El Hebrew Relief Society, the undersigned Committee was appointed to secure the
- Co-operation of all other Jewish Philanthropic organizations in the City
- for the formation of a joint association by which all charitable and educational work now being done by our various Societies may be more expeditiously and less expensively accomplished.
- It may be said, that according to the plan of organization proposed

and first Jewish president of the Detroit Common Council (1903-1910), designed the flag of Detroit. (In recognition of his civic and cultural contributions, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in 1972 established a memorial at the Detroit Historical Museum.)

During the early 1900's three more Orthodox congregations were founded: Beth Tephila in 1905 and Beth Aaron and Beth Hamidrash in 1907.¹³

The second decade of this century is noted for the phenomenal growth of the Detroit Jewish population, their number increasing to 40,000. This figure is based, among other data, on the reports of the United States Centennial Census of 1920. Interestingly, the census, as recorded in *The Survey of the Detroit Jewish Community of 1923*, "enumerates under Yiddish and Hebrew mother tongue 34,727 persons of whom 20,070 or approximately 60% were of foreign birth." It was also estimated that during that decade approximately 75,000 people came to Detroit. This increase, too, was due to the unprecedented development of the automobile industry.¹⁴

Simultaneously the black population increased enormously. Geographical pressure on the Jewish districts effected an exodus of Jews from their established neighborhoods toward Oakland, Michigan Avenue, Twenty-Ninth Street, Delray, West Warren, Hamtramck, and Mack Avenue.¹⁵

Significantly, in 1916, the 300-page *Detroit Jewish Society Book* appeared, a superbly illustrated history of the Detroit Jewish community, containing the names and addresses of the members and the history of each synagogue and organization then in existence. The editor and publisher of this unique publication was Arthur A. Polachek.



Rabbi Ezekiel Aishiskin (left) and Rabbi Joseph Thumin.

Concurrent with the population growth, the number of synagogues increased. Twenty new congregations were formed by 1920, and the number grew to more than thirty by 1925.¹⁶ Yet, there were only four Orthodox rabbis then in Detroit: Judah L. Levin, Ezekiel Aishiskin, Joseph Eisenman, and Joseph Thumin.

Unquestionably, the most outstanding Orthodox rabbi of the first quarter of this century was Rabbi Judah L. Levin, the founder of Yeshivath Beth Yehuda. Born July 6, 1862 in Russia, he received his education in that country's foremost *yeshivot*. His rabbinical ordination (*Smikhat Rabanut*) was bestowed upon him by the famous Volozhin Yeshivah. As already mentioned, he came to Detroit in 1897. He was instrumental in organizing the "Agudas Hakehilos" (United Orthodox Congregations of Detroit, comprising Bnai Israel, Beth Jacob, Beth Abraham and Shaarey Zedek), and was a founder of the American Mizrahi movement. He died in Detroit on April 13, 1927.¹⁷

During the early years of this century new branches of the Workmen's Circle and the National Workers alliance were organized. Landsmanshaften were formed, including the Turover Untershtitzung Verein, the Kovler-Wohliner Co-operative League, and the Independent Russian-Polish Aid Society. In addition, the Bnai Brith, the Knights of Pythias, and the Independent Order of Free Sons of Israel continued to perform their services.¹⁸

During those years Detroit Jews engaged in a variety of occupations, including retail and wholesale merchandising, furniture and jewelry business, and housing and construction. They were represented in financial concerns and in the professions. They were not, however, involved to any great extent in the leading manufacturing interests of Detroit. Hundreds of Jewish workers were employed by the Ford and Cadillac Motor Companies and Dodge Brothers. They worked in the building trades, they were bakers, waiters and barbers. The majority was skilled; a small minority were laborers.¹⁹

In 1919 a major event in the history of the Detroit Jewish community occurred with the founding of the United Hebrew Schools. The UHS resulted from the merger of the Division and Wilkins Street Talmud Torahs. Bernard Isaacs, an outstanding pedagog, Hebrew scholar and man of letters, became the schools' superintendent. In 1923, caused by the emergence of new Jewish neighborhoods, the UHS considered it wise to follow the people and build a school for their children. The result was the Kirby School, better known as the Kirby Center, located at the corner of Kirby and St. Antoine. In addition to classrooms, it housed the offices of the UHS and served as a center of social and cultural activities.²⁰ The curriculum of the UHS provided for the teaching of traditional and Hebraic studies, and Jewish history.

There were other Jewish schools in Detroit during the same period:

Yeshivath Beth Yehudah, founded by Rabbi Yehudah L. Levin in 1916 (mentioned above), stressed the studies of Torah, Rashi, Talmud, and *Shulkhan Arukh* (laws regulating the conduct of Jews).



The Division Street Talmud Torah as it appeared in the early 1900's. The building is no longer standing; the site is now part of I-75 (the Chrysler Freeway).

The Hebrew National School, established in 1923, nationalistic in orientation, emphasized Hebraic studies and Jewish history.

The Yiddish schools had their inception in 1912 when Poale-Zionists started a weekend school. Five years later, Socialists-Territorialists organized the I.L. Peretz School. In 1921, the Workmen's Circle established a Yiddish school, and a year later it merged with the Peretz School. The Yiddish schools provided Jewish secular education.²¹

Congregation Beth El started Detroit's first Jewish Sunday School in 1869. Until then Beth El's day school, organized *circa* 1850, provided a religious and secular education. The Congregation's Sunday school, also called "Sabbath school," provided only religious instruction.²²

Through the early 1900's Beth El was Detroit's only Reform Congregation, and Shaarey Zedek the only Conservative Congregation, and their rabbis, respectively, were Leo M. Franklin and Abraham M. Hershman.

Rabbi Leo M. Franklin²³ was born March 5th, 1870 in Cambridge, Indiana where he attended the local public schools. Upon graduation from high school, he enrolled at the University of Cincinnati, and at the same time studied at the Hebrew Union College. In 1892 he graduated from the University and was ordained rabbi by the HUC rabbinical school. Interestingly, he was the only rabbi to be ordained that year, and was the twenty-eighth Reform rabbi to be ordained by the HUC. Following ordination, he became rabbi of Temple Israel, Omaha, Nebraska. In 1899 he resigned to become

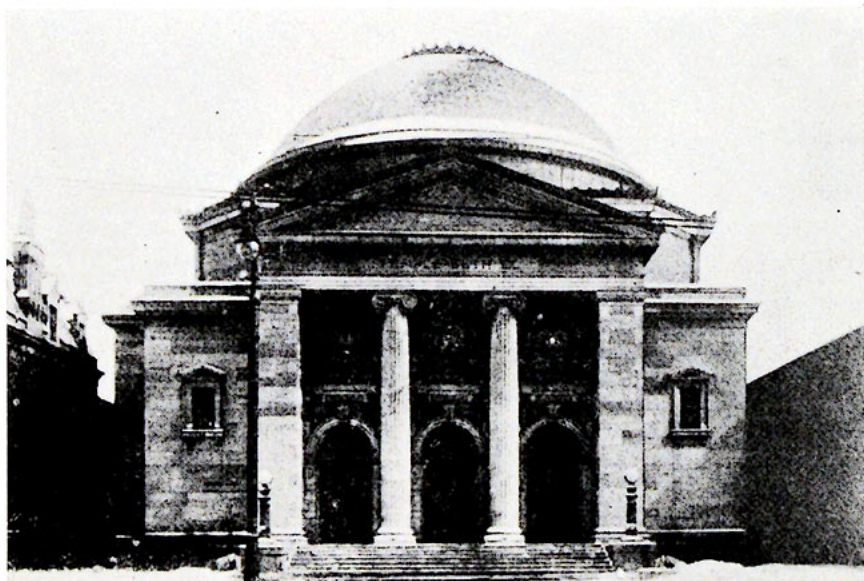


Rabbi Leo M. Franklin

rabbi of Temple Beth El, Detroit, Michigan. In 1896, Rabbi Franklin married Hattie M. Oberfelder of Chicago. Of the three children born to them, two survive: Leo I. Franklin and Mrs. Stanley (Margo) Fleischaker. Their third child was a daughter, Mrs. Ruth Einstein.

Through Rabbi Franklin's efforts, the Beth El Temple at Woodward and Eliot (now the Wayne State University Bonstelle Theatre) was built in 1903, and in 1922 the Temple at Woodward and Gladstone was constructed. Of the reforms he introduced into Beth El, the abolition of the pew system was the most important, as it helped to democratize the congregation.

In 1914 he established the Jewish Student Organization at the University of Michigan, the first in the United States, and the forerunner of the Bnai Brith Hillel Foundation. Rabbi Franklin served as president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1919. In 1923 the University of Detroit conferred on him an honorary doctorate. In 1932 he was elected president of the Detroit Public Library, and for many years he served as director of the Detroit Symphony Society.



Temple Beth El at Woodward and Eliot.

The building today is the Wayne State University Bonstelle Theatre.

In addition to editing *The Jewish American* from 1901 to 1910, Rabbi Franklin authored *A History of Congregation Beth El, Detroit, Michigan* in two volumes, covering the periods 1850-1900 and 1900-1910. In 1938 he wrote the enlightening volume *The Rabbi: The Man and His Message*.

Rabbi Franklin retired October 31, 1941 and died October 8, 1948 in Detroit.

Born in Newstadt, Poland in May 1880, Rabbi Abraham M. Hershman²⁴ studied in *yeshivot* in Poland, and at the College of the City of New York and Columbia University. He was ordained Rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1906, and in 1930 and 1934 the Seminary conferred upon him the degrees of Doctor of Divinity and Doctor of Hebrew Literature. He came to Detroit to serve as Shaarey Zedek's rabbi in 1907, and was elected rabbi for life in 1933.

Rabbi Hershman was active in many local movements. He was a member of the board of governors of the Jewish Welfare Federation, helped organize the Jewish Community Council, was the first president of the Zionist Organization of Detroit and served on the national executive committee of the Zionist Organization of America. He was chairman of Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund) campaigns, was instrumental in establishing the American Jewish Congress, and was a delegate to the first convention of the AJ Congress in Philadelphia in 1918. He revitalized the Shaarey Zedek Ladies' Auxiliary in 1911.

As a result of his efforts, the Shaarey Zedek synagogues at Willis (1915) and West Chicago (1932) were built. He authored *Rabbi Isaac Perfet and His Time*, a volume on Maimonides and two volumes of his sermons.

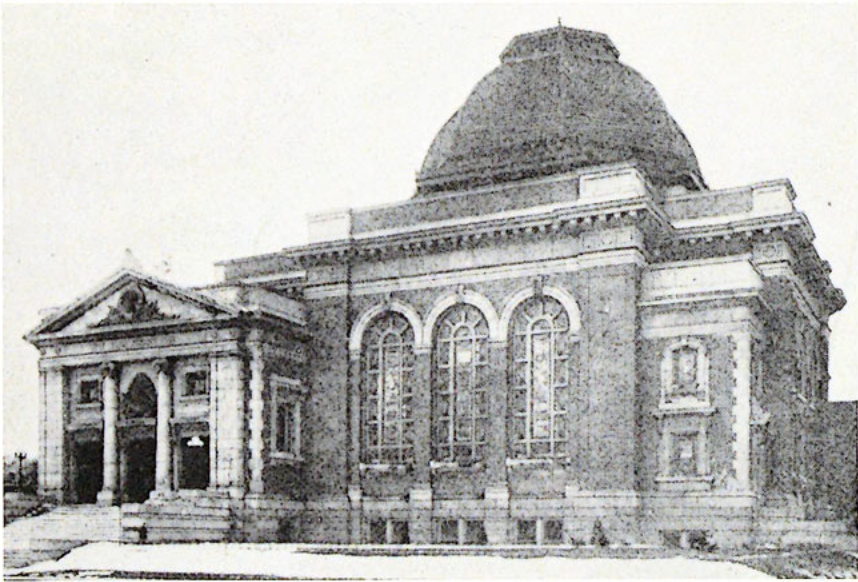
He died on April 6, 1959 at age 79. His wife, Miriam, died June 10, 1955. They were survived by son, David, and daughters, Ruth

and Ayga. In 1979 Ruth authored a biography of her renowned grandfather, the pioneer Zionist, Eliahu Zev (Elias Wolf) Lewin-Epstein (1863-1932). The book bears the title *In Pursuit of a Dream*.²⁵

It is well to remember that in the 1920's there were twelve Jewish communal philanthropic organizations active in Detroit. (Their history and functions are thoroughly described in S. D. Weinberg's Yiddish classic *Yiddishe Institutsyes un Anshtaltn in Detroit* ("Jewish Social Services of Detroit") and Allen A. Warsen's *Jewish Communal Institutions in Detroit*.) They were: United Jewish Charities, United Hebrew Schools, Jewish



Rabbi Abraham M. Hershman



Shaarey Zedek's synagogue on Willis And Brush, built in 1915. The building is no longer standing, and the site is today part of the Detroit Medical Center complex.

Centers' Association, Fresh Air Society, Jewish Social Service Bureau (now Jewish Family Service), Detroit Service Group, Hebrew Free Loan Association, North End Clinic, Jewish House of Shelter, Jewish Home for Aged, Young Women's Hebrew Association, Hebrew Benevolent Society.²⁶

With few exceptions, these organizations joined together in 1926 to form the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit (now of Metropolitan Detroit). Its first officers were: Henry Wineman, president; Samuel Summerfield, first vice-president; William Friedman, second vice-president; David W. Simons, (first United Jewish Charities president), treasurer; Morris D. Waldman, secretary, and Fred M. Butzel, chairman of the Executive Committee. The provisional Board of Governors consisted of David A. Brown, Fred M. Butzel, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, William Friedman, Bernard Ginsburg, Rabbi M. Hershman, Judge Harry B. Keidan, Julian H. Kroluk, David W. Simons, Milford Stern, and Samuel Summerfield.²⁷

The founding of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit, it should be emphasized, marked a turning point in the seventy-six year old history of the Detroit Jewish community. The Federation brought a new concept to Jewish communal life in Detroit: a partnership of agencies and services financially supported through a central campaign, and benefitting from central planning towards the good of the entire Jewish community.

NOTES

- ¹ Allen A. Warsen, *Autobiographical Episodes* (Oak Park, Mich.: 1972), p. 42.
- ² Irving I. Edgar, M.D., "The Early Sites and Beginnings of Temple Beth El," *Michigan Jewish History* (November, 1970), p. 8.
- ³ Harry L. Lurie, "Survey of Detroit Jewish Community" (New York: Bureau of Jewish Social Research, 1923). Page numbers illegible on copy.
- ⁴ *Constitution and By-Laws of Congregation Beinei Israel* (Detroit: Emil Schober, Book and Job Printer, 1875).
- ⁵ Based on manuscript data.
- ⁶ *Minhag* or ritual is a term designating synagogue custom. The principal *minhagim* are: Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Polen. *Minhagim* evolved in America are: Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist.
- ⁷ "Survey."
- ⁸ George B. Catlin, editor, *Historic Michigan* (Dayton, O.: National Historical Association, Inc., 1924), pp. 320-321.
- ⁹ "United Jewish Charities Annual Report" (Detroit: 1950).
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ "Survey."
- ¹² *The Jewish American* (Detroit: August 29, 1902).
- ¹³ "Survey."
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*; see also Phillip Applebaum, *A Tour of Jewish Detroit* (Detroit: Southeast Michigan Ethnic Heritage Studies Center, 1975).
- ¹⁷ *Jewish Society Book 1916* (Detroit: Arthur A. Polachek, 1916).
- ¹⁸ "Survey."
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Morris Garvet, "The Development of Jewish Education in Detroit," *Michigan Jewish History* (May, 1965).
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ "Rabbi Franklin," mimeographed typewritten manuscript, no author (located in the Temple Beth El archives).

- ²⁴ Mimeographed typewritten manuscript, no title, no author (located in the files of *The Detroit Jewish News*).
- ²⁵ Philip Slomovitz (P.S.), "Zionist Pioneering in Ruth Hershman's Story of Her Grandfather Eliahu Zev Lewin-Epstein," *The Detroit Jewish News* (Detroit: August 10, 1979), p. 64.
- ²⁶ Allen A. Warsen, *Jewish Communal Institutions in Detroit* (Oak Park, Mich.: 1952), pp. 36-37.
- ²⁷ "United Jewish Charities Annual Report" (Detroit: 1959).

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July 1977 — June 1980

By ALLEN A. WARSEN

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NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following persons and institutions who have recently joined the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan:

Congregation B'nai David

George H. Goldstone

Bernard Grant

Jewish Home for the Aged

Abe Katzman

Jerome W. Kelman

Sylvia B. Kruger

Harold Rubenstein

Lillian Rosinger

Mrs. Theodore Schatz

Jack S. Schwartz

Donald A. Sherman

Mrs. Harold Tobias

Henry Thumin

Mrs. Stephen Warren

Allen Zemmol

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Additions and corrections to "The History of the Traverse City Jewish Community: Part I," Volume 19, Number 2, June 1979:

Page 23, paragraph 1, line 5 should be corrected to read:

. . . Minnie married J. Walter Levie who had a mercantile business in Wolverine, Michigan, and in 1912 they moved to Washington, D.C.; about a year later they moved to Baltimore, Maryland . . .

Page 25, following paragraph 2, add the following:

The 1880 U.S. Census for Traverse City lists Isaac Shepman and his wife, Manya; also a daughter, Ella, age 20, and granddaughter, Dora Belle, age 2 years. Isaac was a notions peddler.

Page 31, note 26 should read:

"New York Attorney Makes a Case for Elk Rapids" by Richard R. Levie . . .

Page 33, add to the acknowledgements:

Special gratitude is extended to Doris P. Easton, president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, for her valuable contributions to this study by providing superb photocopies of eighteen documents from the Julius Steinberg file of 1886.

* * *

Additions and corrections to "The History of the Traverse City Jewish Community: Part II," Volume 20, Number 1, January 1980:

Page 11, line 2: the name should be Esther Alper Blender.

Page 17, add to the paragraph on the Brown family:

. . . The Browns also had a younger daughter, Gertrude, and another son, Leo.

NECROLOGIES

LOUIS LaMED, who died in Miami Beach, Florida, December 23, 1979, was a board member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan for many years. Born in 1897 in the Ukraine, he came to Detroit in 1921, and earned a law degree at the University of Detroit. He was founder and owner of three furniture companies, but his true love was for Jewish culture. In 1940 he established the Louis LaMed Foundation for the Advancement of Hebrew and Yiddish Literature, which awarded prizes for outstanding works published in both languages in the United States, and for books in English having a bearing on Yiddish and Hebrew. He also established the LaMed Professorship in Jewish Studies at Wayne State University in 1955, from which emerged the present Department of Near Eastern Studies. In recognition of their many contributions, the United Hebrew Schools named the auditorium of its Southfield complex in honor of Louis and Esther LaMed in 1970. The late Jay Rosenshine wrote a profile, "Louis LaMed: Jewish Culture is His Hobby," which was published in the June, 1963 issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.



JOSEPH E. ZELTZER was a member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan for many years. He died in Detroit March 23, 1980. Born in White Russia in 1887, he came to the United States in 1905, and arrived in Detroit in 1917, after having earned the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan Agricultural College in East Lansing, today Michigan State University. He retired in 1957, and devoted much of his time to the cause of Labor Zionism. His memoir appeared in the June, 1973 issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

We respectfully wish to inform our membership that they can benefit the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan by means of bequests from wills, trust funds, insurance policies, endowments, foundation donations, and outright gifts. For further information, please contact our president, Jeffrey N. Borin, Suite 1430, 3000 Town Center, Southfield, Michigan 48075; (313) 353-0023. All inquiries will be handled in strict confidence.

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