

Southern New Jersey
SYNAGOGUES

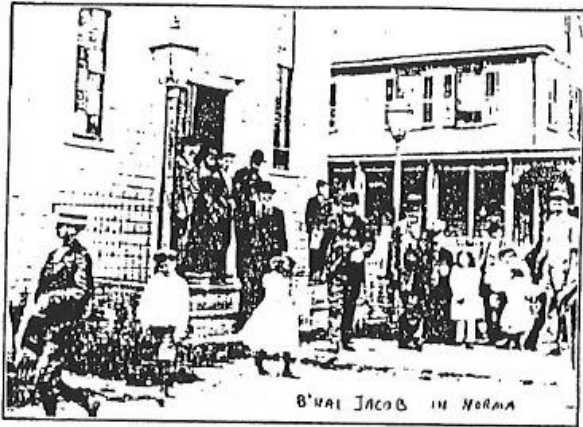
A SOCIAL HISTORY

HIGHLIGHTED
BY
STORIES
OF JEWISH LIFE
FROM THE
1880'S - 1980'S

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Norma B'nai Jacob



The center of the Alliance Colony was its first synagogue which was built on Isaac Avenue near Henry Avenue. From this focus point, newly arriving immigrants and their families made their homes around the shul. Later in the 1880's, new Jewish settlers found land nearby.

The first leap in this expansion from the center of the colony helped to bolster and contribute to the growth of the second synagogue in the Alliance Colony. The Tifereth Israel synagogue located on Gershal Avenue was supported in this fashion by Israel Eskin. Mr. Eskin set up a clothing factory and built some homes nearby about a mile from the Tifereth Israel Shul. Jewish settlement then fanned out in this direction towards the Bradway Railroad station.

Expansion from the center of the Alliance Colony was sprawn Northeast of the original settlement with the Eber Ezer Shul as its center. This development occurred in the 1890's, too. Abraham Brotman bought ground and started his clothing factory on nearby Gershal Avenue in 1892. Later in that same year, streets were laid out and the town of Brotmanville was created. By 1893, the town of Brotmanville was incorporated.

In 1893, the incorporation of the Alliance Hebrew Cemetery was official. The recession of 1893 stopped the flow of Jewish settlers here for a period of time. As a result, growth of organizations took place and internal development began to take place.

By the mid 1890's, a new wave of immigration took place to America. New immigrants came to the Jewish Colonies with Roumanian roots. This included the Speigal's, Chonofsky's, Lindenbaum's and the Lastel's.

Chuna Chonofsky settled in this area of what was soon to become Norma. Bradway Station was only a stop on the Railroad line that went from Bridgeton to Vineland. Later Bradway Station would be named Norma for the post office master's grand daughter. Norma would become a village in the late 1890's and attract many Jewish settlers here as a result.

Chuna was an organizer of the growing Jewish community in Norma. He was a Tzaddik or a religious leader. He helped to form the Norma shul and the B'nai Jacob congregation. His neighbors included the other Roumanian families that had come to America for an opportunity to practice their religion from persecution.

Norma encompassed an area beyond Eskintown on Almond Road. Four years after Eskintown was founded and following the 1893 recession meant a new chapter would be written in the development of the Jewish settlements. Chuna arrived from Roumanina. Born originally in Bialystock and later lived in the countryside was the background for a man destined to come to America as a Jewish settler. Chuna would leave his family in Roumania until he could secure his future in America.



DOBKE (DORA) 1995



ELCHANAN (CHARLES) CHONOFKY

BUBBE + ZAYDE of REBA CHONOFKY

Once Chuna arrived in America he would send for his family. Before the end of the 19th century, Chuna and his wife were blessed with a son. Life on the farm in Norma was not enough to eek out a living. Thus Chuna would travel via the train excursions and work in the sweat factories in New York City. He would work all week before returning home before the start of Shabbas in the Jewish Colonies. Chuna's family was left to work the farm while he traveled great distances to New York City to make enough money for his family to eat. Dora or Duba which his wife was called would tend to every aspect of the farm in his absence.

Sam Speigal was a long time resident of the area. But Sam would venture off to his fortune in another Jewish Colony. This being the Woodbine Colony some 25 miles south of Norma Sam helped to build much needed homes in Woodbine from 1893 until 1905. Sam would then return to Norma in the early years of the 20th century to help Norma grow.

The development of Norma into a Jewish settlement was by no means an accident. More Jewish settlers arrived in the mid 1890's and made this area an attractive spot to farm and own land!

The new Jewish agricultural school in Woodbine assisted many new Jewish farmers to become successful in a short period of time. One of these men was founded in Mr. Lipman. He attended the school in the 1890's and later became an instructor at the institution. Mr. Lipman settled his dream in the soil and was later financed by the great benefactor in Smauel Fels from Philadelphia. A model farm on Allivine Road was developed into a colossal success. Mr. Lipman was appointed the superintendent of the project.

The distance between Norma and the Tifereth Israel Shul on Gershal Avenue necessitated the development of a new congregation to be born in Norma. In addition, the Roumanian minhag or way in which the Norma congregation davened was different than the Polish minhag of the Gershal Avenue Shul.

By the year 1897, the congregation in Norma was in operation and incorporated itself with Sam Speigal as its president. Sam Rothman was elected the Treasurer and Max Gass was the Secretary. The community blossomed and by 1901, boasted 30 members in its new formed congregation. The congregation named itself B'nai Jacob. At the turn of the century, its new shul and place of prayer was ready. The shul adapted its name as Ahavas Achim or the Norma Brotherhood. This new name was inconjunction with the return of Sam Speigal from Woodbine. The Woodbine Brotherhood was already in operation and doing very well. By now the community in Norma would see some real dramatic growth.

The Lipman model farm helped bolster growth in this community. The countryside was now producing more produce than their was a ready market for at the time. Their hard work would not go to waste. For in 1901, the Lipman farm converted this overproduction into a useful commodity by opening a canning factory. The road on which the factory was honored as Can House Road.

Jewish life was not affected by the Blue Laws in use in the State of New Jersey. In Vineland, only three miles away was another world. The stores there were all closed on Sunday in the late 1890's. But in Norma, Saturday was a day of rest for most of the people and thus their stores were closed on Saturday. In the early 1890's, mobility in the area meant that roads would find their way to Norma and the Jews would not escape the collision with the Blue Laws. Gentile customers were now coming to Jewishly owned stores on Sunday and desecrating the Christian Sabbath. These places of business were opened on Sunday due to being closed on Shabbas or Saturday. For over the next generation this scene of violating the Blue Laws and being fined would exist for the Jewish shop owners. Shop owners in Norma were open Sundays if only for the sake of their livelihood if not for their Jewish clientele. The case of the Blue Laws were finally laid to rest in this community by the nearby community of Shiloh which also celebrated its Sabbath on Saturday due to being a Seventh Day Adventist Community.

Jake Speigal was the organizer of the Norma Jewish Community in all of its aspects. Rev. Isaac Krassenstein was the shochet and teacher in the community. This was done in his house on Almond Road. By 1901, not only did B'nai Jacob have 30 members but it boasted a high number of children in its Cheder. This was the future of the community. Seventy children were taught their Judaism in this community.

The early 1900's were a time of creativity in Norma. New organizations sprouted up in Norma during this period of time. Mrs. L. Lewisohn Benevolent Society was organized in April 1899. Over seventy five members maintained this important organization that would help to assist the newly arriving immigrants in the community as they poured into Norma during the first decade of the 20th century. Two hundred Jewish people were now living in Norma during this period. In 1902, a free night school was initiated to acquaint the new immigrants with English and the introduction to modern manual trades.

Other institutions grew along side the shul in the early 1900's. Community bath houses in the countryside were rare but not so in these Jewish Colonies. Not one but two bath houses were constructed here in Norma! Jacob Speigal opened his bath house in Norma in 1903. In 1904, Mendel Goldstein opened his bath house. Ritual was observed in doors with the creation of mikveh by Mendel Goldstein in his enterprise.

Year after year, Jewish activity increased in Norma. Americanization of the Jews in this village setting was realized earlier with the inception of the Norma Athletic Association by Jake Speigal in 1904. Baseball was the main activity of this organization. The interest was immense in the Jewish Colonies for this American sport. Participation was drawn from nearby Alliance and Brotmanville. Teams would be matched up as they would compete with one another. Other Jewish Colonies would join in and have fun. This included Carmel and Woodbine.

Nick names still held true during this time period. These names had real meaning. Reba's father was called "Buzzard" Chonofsky. Mr. Gross was known as the "White Rooster" and there was Screwby Goldstein.

Yiddishkeit was alive on Garshal Avenue. Many cheders existed in the community. Mr. Halpert had one and he was attached to the Tifereth Israel of Alliance. Wolf Lewishsky who was the cantor for Tifereth Israel Congregation taught some of the boys in his home. Motte Miller's father, Harry taught one in his home, too.

Boys were taught Yiddishkeit in Yeshiva style at these places. All the children were taught in Yiddish. Six or seven boys would come to Cantor Lewinsky's house for their lessons. The time of change in the 1920's meant that Jewish families were moving to Vineland and Bridgeton. Religion was being Anglicized with services in English for the first time so all native born American Jews could understand in this area. In the 1920's, Beth Israel congregation in Vineland was founded on this precept and participation was brisk. Beth Israel was born in this era as a result of this need for Americanization within Judaism. The Chatuqua Society helped to prepare the way to the future for this community by its method of instruction of Judaism in English.

The Jews in Norma were adjusting to this incursion upon their traditions in spite of a great resistance by the pioneer generation and the older men of the community.

As in other places in the Greater Delaware Valley such as Wilmington Delaware Congregation Beth Shalom it was the women who lead the Jewish religion into the future. They now gained the right to vote in America and wanted their children to have the best education in Judaism that could be offered. This was done even if the women had to organize the system themselves. The women in Norma saw that the Americanization within Judaism was not all that bad! An Auxiliary of the Norma shul was formed in the 1920's and actively moved to modernize the Norma Shul.

Mr. Feinberg had faded away into the past. The women that organized the Ladies Auxiliary in the Norma Shul included Fannie Chonofsky (Reba's Mom), Mollie Moskowitz, Esther Edelstein and Mrs. Barrish. These ladies then went onto to establish the Norma Hebrew School within the Norma Shul. An addition was built as a direct result of these ladies efforts. The extension was made into a large room and an annex was built in the early 1930's. There was a bathroom added and the large room was heated. Mr. Leonard Greenburg of Vineland was engaged as a Hebrew School teacher. He belonged to the Grape Street Shul at the time.

The women would fire up the pot belly stove on cold days in anticipation of the youngsters coming after public school in the afternoons.

Fifteen children would sit around a long narrow table and learn about their Yiddishkeit. This was done mostly in English. If you could pay okay, if not you attended free! The people who could afford to fund this activity paid 50 ¢ per week. Chanukah and Purim plays were conducted in this room and helped to enliven the spirit of the shul and enhance the Hebrew School experiences for the children.

Into the 1930's and 1940's, Bar Mitzvah celebrations were catered in the Bar Mitzvah boy's home. The mothers and relatives would bake and cook for this joyous occasion. All members of the community came to celebrate the affair and to enjoy the various tasty foods in honor of the boy in the community becoming a Bar Mitzvah or son of the commandments. This then took on a community festival in the celebration of this Simcha.

Reba Chonofsky was born to Fannie and Israel Chonofsky in Norma. As a little girl, Reba was steeped in her Yiddishkeit in a fun and loving manner. For her Jewish life was not only exciting but a great deal of fun. Her ten to twelve pals included Sylvia Moskowitz, Rosie Ecelstein, Edith Gross, Pessie Kravitz and Jennie Applebaum. The shul was a fun place where Reba felt at home. The neighborhood lent itself to this feeling. On Almond Avenue alone in the 1920's, six out of ten houses had a sucah booth after the High Holidays. Jewish families ate and slept out in them as the festival dictates but with joy and laughter. On Simchas Torah, the women would toss bags of fruit and raisins joyfully from the balcony in the shul upon the children down below to catch.

Purim was a noisy festival. The hammers and old pipes in the shul rattled as the children almost broke the floor in by having such a good time. This was done on cue when the bad King's name was mentioned.

Ritual in the home was observed. Reba's father was the manager of the Norma Athletic Association Baseball team. Israel gave up Reba's mom for baseball during the spring and summer. This sacrifice did not include religion!

This is a time when the man ran the religious end of the family by insisting upon it! Tradition would become between the family members. Tradition was the reason for it in all matters of family life.

Wisnik or black cherry juice was used for Kiddish on Friday nights in the Chonofsky household. This was the ceremony that sanctified the beginning of the Sabbath. Wine from raisins in this house was common, too! The raisins would ferment in a large kettle behind the kitchen stove that burned wood and coal. By 1926, Reba's parents bought a house in the community with running water installed in it and ready to use. This was the only house in the community of Norma at this time that had inside plumbing!

Norma Ahavas Achim

For a girl in the countryside as it was a wonderful experience to prepare for the Sabbath. This was a big treat. Reba would help her mom clean the upstairs while her brother Joseph was at Mr. Feinberg's learning about Yiddishkeit. Meanwhile little Reba was at home, "doing Yiddishkeit!" That was the difference between the boys and the girls.

Israel would peddle fruit and vegetables with a truck. He would go to Carmel, Elmer, Malaga and Woodstown to engage in a living. As he returned home at night he would bring leftover fruit with him. Reba would sneak off the truck some of this fruit and give it to the Italian family next door. The Chonosfsky's were poor but the Italian family was poor-poor. This was done with the approval of her father knowingly.

Israel Chonofsky would lay Teflin and pray three times a day. These were the days Reba would go to buy Shabbas candles at Cardin's store. Later the store would become Mr. Jacob's Jewish General Store. Yazhreit or memorial candles were available here, too. Halavah or that Jewish delicacy made with crushed sesame seeds was sold by the chunk at the general store. This was a fresh piece of ready enjoyment on the way home from her chores.

Superstition permeated throughout Reba's childhood and was a matter of conviction in her homelife. As elsewhere in the Colonies where Jews lived, beets were kept separate in their own earth crocks weeks before the arrival of Passover. This was the basis for the Holiday Borscht. All the Jews somehow knew that this was called Russel. It was sour to the taste and this was believed "to keep the color in your face to ward off the evil eye."

Passover was a time for many happy doings. This was the time Reba would help her mom prepare the Gefilte fish with a Collett or chopper. There was no grinder to get the fish into proper texture for fish balls in those days!

Reba's Bubbe, Dubka lived in their household for 25 years. Dubka would force the children to say their morning prayers before eating. This was a ritual after eating each meal. Reba would "bench" or say prayers and blessings as her mother did in the old country. Things weren't so different in the new country in this regard.

The Chonofsky household was a happy place to grow up. Since radios did not come to Norma for some time, the entertainment was home spun! Humor in the house was the order of the day. No disrespectfulness mind you, just old fashion hearty laughter. Israel Chonofsky was bald for as long as Reba could remember. The children would crayon out faces on his head and he enjoyed it so much that he even laughed as hard as they did!

Norma Ahavas Achim

Old neck ties were used to tie their father to the chair. The fun you had in the old days was real enjoyment. This was a time when Tzedakah was practiced in the home. A pushka was stationed in their house and used every time her Bubbe "benched" or prayed. She did it for Chai or Life! This is how her family was taught in the old country. A pious man from New York would come two times per year to collect the money for Jewish charities.

When you came to a house as a child, you were welcomed! It was a Hamish environment that surrounded you with love and warmth. It was like family when you went over to someone's house. The neighbors all cared about the children the most.

The Pleasurnik season brought out the best in the children in the community. Parvin's Resort, Almond Road Bridge, Centerton, Rainbow Lake and Norma Beach were all favorite Jewish spots to relax and have fun.

Later on the Norma Beach got a concession and an open dance floor. A nickelodeon played and the kids did the jitterbug. In the summertime, from the dance floor to the swimming hole was a common activity at all of these places.

The Pleasurniks themselves meant extra money to keep the farm or house from going into the tax collection agent's hands! Three or four hundred dollars was realized in Reba's family through the Pleasurnik trade. The money would last the winter until the next season.

Growing up as a child in this Jewish environment meant hard work, too. The kids would see two pairs of shoes per year! One for the High Holidays and the other for Passover. Summertime meant barefoot time! Picking strawberries and stringbeans was a good way to earn extra money. But Reba was the lousiest picker! "If it didn't look good, she ate it" Reba Chonofsky recalls her childhood and the way Jewish life was in Norma for her with zeal. This was by no accident she assures us. For she was born on the First Seder during Passover. When the men arrived home from shul that evening in 1924, to start the Seder it was a joyous blessing indeed! For Israel and Fannie Chonofsky z"l soul is planted deep inside of Reba. For Reba has grown to love every pebble in Norma and cherish its freedom!

Jacob Kravitz came to Norma to assist in building the Jewish community. His livelihood was found in that of a Kosher meat cutter. Jacob would travel to Elmer and buy the cattle and have it shipped to Norma for slaughtering according to Jewish Law. This operation was overseen by Rabbi Brickman of the Ahavas Achim Shul in Norma in the 1910's and 1920's on Gershal Avenue. Jewish cattle auctions were held in Elmer because the Gentiles banned Jews from bidding on cattle in their auctions.

By the time the Berkovitz family arrived in Norma in the early 1920's, Jacob set up a Kosher Meat Market. He would still deliver to outlying areas. His peddling of Kosher meat from the horse and wagon was given up for a store front in time.

The Beirig's came from South Germany and were sponsored by an uncle in New York City. The Depression was still in effect and attacking the quality of life in America by the late 1930's. Seigmund Beirig came as a Shomer Shabbas Jew who observed the sanctity of the day and its rest period from work. Hitler would not stop this belief! Getting a job where one did not have to work on the Sabbath was nearly impossible for Mr. Beirig at this time. So he packed his belongings and the family moved to Southern Jersey. Many Jewish refugees were beginning to migrate to South Jersey to provide for their children and sustain a Kosher family lifestyle. Seigmund believed that to keep the Shabbas was number one in his mind. "If you don't keep Shabbas, then you are not a Jew!"

The Beirig's settled in Norma and bought a farm with no money down from Harry Rothman's mother for \$ 2,000. The Rothman's were original settlers in Norma themselves. Seigmund bought the farm so he would not have to work on Shabbas. This was one way to sustain his family in the countryside.

Why Norma? Seigmund looked in Woodbine, too. He wanted to find a community where he could live and walk to shul.

By the late 1930's, Norma was no longer considered a pioneering town. The elders maintained the shul with 14 or 15 families. Bennie Grossman, Mr. Krassenstein, Mr. Altman and his son, Louie Kohn, David plus Michael Chonofsky, Sam Barrish the Justice of the Peace, Joe Alterman, Mr. Margoles who made whiskey, Mr. Knefsky, Mr. Lazarus the peddler, Mr. Matlin the baker, Kaddish Berkowitz and Jack Leahman made up the shul.

Friday night and Shabbas services were held weekly. The Beirig's would walk to shul no matter how cold or bad the weather would get! Chazzon Harry Miller assisted Israel Berkowitz in conducting the High Holidays services.

Jake Speigal's wife taught the Hebrew School in the 1940's in this community. Mr. Feinberg passed away before this era. Freddie Dreyfuss, the shochet took over Mr. Feinberg's labor of love for a short period of time until Mrs. Speigal began her activities. It was at this time that Rabbi Schwartz from Europe arrives in Norma. The Adelstein's arrived as German refugees and the Hebrew School began to grow even bigger.

After services at the shul for Yontav were complete 14 or 15 families went visiting each other at their homes. During Yontav, the shul was packed with men, their wives and children. The little children would sit upstairs with their mothers in the balcony.

In 1944, a big hurricane came up the Eastern Seaboard during the High Holidays. But the services were conducted as usual that year. The farmers went out from the shul to tend to their animals in spite of the storm.

Herb Beirig was 12 years old at this time and was in charge of feeding his family's chickens. Young Herbie would leave the shul to feed the chickens as the Yiskor service or memorial service for one's relatives and parents commenced. The Hurricane did not cancel Yom Kippur during 1944 or stop Herbie from his appointed rounds on that day in the barn yard.

Many people collected eggs on Shabbas. Herb's family did not collect one single egg! The Beirig's never had any hired help either! The family would turn the lights in the chicken coops on after Shabbas and work collecting the eggs into the night! Seigmund would milk the cows before going to shul as the bible tells us Jews to practice when one is tied to the land. The idea was practical and a gesture of loving kindness towards the animals who would benefit the most. Mr. Beirig would not use this milk. The idea to milk the cow was to relieve any pain that the animal might incur if not milked. The calves were later used instead to perform this task in a natural way. Herb says, "as a young child he could see the fact that some Jews forgot who they were!" His father would tell him and his brothers that when this happens G-d sends someone to remind the people who they are! You can't erase this from the Torah. A Jew is a Jew no matter who he or she are in life!

In 1953, Herb Beirig put on an Army uniform and served his country during the Korean War. His teflin would go where he went. Some other Jewish men in his company thought this made life more difficult for them. Herb told these Jewish men that it would be less difficult for them to start observing prayer time in the morning rather than let the non-Jewish men see him stop what his father had taught him! Herb was a squad leader, too! His men respected him very much.

When Herb returned to Norma, it was near Tish Ab. Tish Ab is a Jewish observance of when the Temple in Biblical times was destroyed. Since the Holocaust, this day of collective Jewish remembrance was suppose to include the Holocaust and the terrible tragedy that was beset upon the Jews. Tish AB is the darkest day in the Jewish calendar. It started when Moses sent his spies to scout out the land. The spies came back after spying out the promised land. G-d told Moses that he knew where the promised land was located. But you Moses must send out the spies first! Moses sent out the prince of each tribe and they returned with a terrible report. It was a great land but the people were giants and the fruit is tremendous! Only two of the leaders came back with good reports. Joshua, who later became the leader of the Jewish people after Moses reported that Hebron was a good place. Thus the majority of the Jewish people complained to G-d. And G-d said he would remember and that every year the Jewish people would get a little bit of this trouble back. The princes arrived home on Tish Ab. This represented the first sin that the Jewish nation would commit! The people had no reason to complain but they did! G-d said I'll give you a reason to complain! This was the way in which Herb received the story about this observance of Tish Ab from his father.

Herb and his brother grew up in Norma understanding that the three weeks between Shavous and Tish Ab was a sad period of time. You were instructed through practice in the home that you couldn't enjoy this time. This meant no haircuts and you were not allowed to go to the movies. No Weddings and no pleasure was allowed. Little Herbie knew that after the three weeks had passed, life would always be better.

When we look at the American Jewish calendar of today, we see a bending of this tradition. Today every one boasts of instant Mazel Tov or good things. Never should there be a dark day. Jews in America have it good, but Jewish life over the centuries has not been so protective. Sometimes American Jews just block out of their minds the bad things! The bible tells of the good and the bad times in all generations!

Where does Yiddishkeit begin? The refugees who came yesterday to America were shunned and not accepted by the general Jewish community during the initial period before 1940. This was evident in Norma, too! Some think back on those days because the refugees used their heads and were hard working people. Their efforts were immeasurable within a few short years compared to the Jews who had been in this country for the last 40 or 50 years going back to the 1880's and 1890's.

There was a difference between the Polish refugees and the German refugees. The Polish Jews were known as "Greenhorns" and the German Jews were known as "German Refugees" A class distinction existed but all Jews were the same in America by this time. At least this was the theory in Norma. Polish and German Jews intermingled in Norma as one people.

Seigmund Beirig's neighbor was a Polish Jew. This neighbor started in the poultry business as he came to Norma. But soon the work stopped. Seigmund asked his neighbor why he stopped building his chicken coops. The neighbor replied that he ran out of money. Seigmund then proceeded to help his Polish Jewish neighbor in his endeavors to make a life for his family here in America. The neighbor asked Seigmund if he wanted a bank note or something in return. Seigmund asked for what? Mr. Jacovich and Kasolsky were his neighbors!

By the time Herb returned from the Korean War, the egg business went bust. Egg prices dropped and feed prices soared. Some Jews left Norma. Other Jews such as the Beirig's went into other trades. The Beirig's went back to the cattle business.

In the 1950's, many Jewish refugees flocked to the Vineland area. A ring of Jews settled in the countryside nearby. The area beyond Norma was growing with newly arriving Jewish people. Rabbi Schwartz and Mr. Loebenstein discussed a possible plan for a Jewish day school. From Europe, these Jews brought the idea that you can't have a Jewish community and Yiddishkeit without a Jewish day school. American Yiddishkeit was defined completely differently. For the European Jews, Yiddishkeit was not something that they had to buy! The Jews of Vilna had it as a part of their tradition. These Jews were also the poorest that ever lived! The Beirig's were very poor at the time when they arrived here in America. But Yiddishkeit was all that they owned! It was something that has kept the Jewish people alive!

Shabbas in this context is most important. Why? For on Shabbas, the Jew has a different nushuma or spirit. Herb says that if it wasn't for Shabbas, his family would have worked the farm seven days a week. Shabbas gave his family a day to re-cooperate from the heavy physical work. All one has to do is keep his religion!

By the early 1950's, Sali Mayerfeld would move his family from one side of Vineland to the other side. By 1952, a new mikveh would be dedicated for use by the entire community. The Norma shul was growing for the first time in over 30 years! The side streets were filling up with Jewish residents. An extension of the shul was considered. Sali was against this movement.

Being a Jewish farmer in the 1950's was no less different than in years goneby. For on Sucas, the farmers embellished the celebration of the Jewish holiCays with live things. But there were draw backs to this embellishment that the Jewish farmers did not think about. These people were not farmers in Europe! Now they found it was not a good idea to use real fruit in the actual celebration of the festival outside because people were followed by the bees and were stung frequently. The farmers used artificial fruit instead. When you have chicken manure, the flies were terrible and this led to the mechanization of the farm for sanitary reasons.

Sali diversified and went into the lumber business. Now the chicken coops were being rebuilt and remodeled. Sali built the biggest chicken coop in all of Southern New Jersey. It measured over 1032 feet long. In one day he put over 125,000 baby chicks into the coops.

An orthodox shul is centered around prayer and this was the purpose of the Norma Shul. Over 100 years of Jewish life has been recorded in this community. The Chevra Mishnais meets on Shabbas as in years past. The study of Jewish tradition and laws is an on going process in Norma. Time has marched on into the future. Sali Mayerfeld and his wife, Helen are both in their 80's and still live in Norma during the 1980's. But time has taken a toll on Sali's health. He had a stroke recently and had to stop going to the Norma Shul. This development was overcome by the full support of the community. By special request, the Shabbas minyan is held in the Mayerfeld's home down the road from the Shul. The children of community are now sent to Yeshivas outside of the community. But on Yontav, the Norma Shul attracts a group of devoted Jews in the 1980's

Reference Source Credits

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Yoval : 50 years of Pioneers on the land
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