

Southern New Jersey  
**SYNAGOGUES**

A SOCIAL HISTORY

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

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## Malaga

Malaga became the home to Russian Jewish immigrants in the early 1890's. The Franklin Township, newspaper reported that thirty five Jews arrived in Malaga in May of 1892. The A.B. Richmond stocking factory provided work for these new settlers. Malaga located only eight mile North of Vineland and along the Railroad from Camden provided an excellent location.

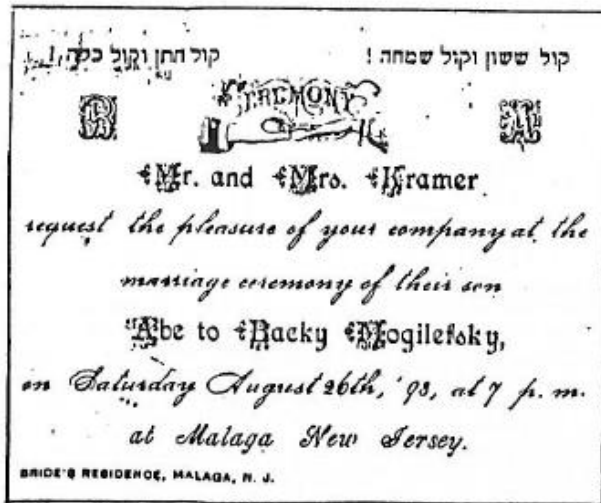
The Jews stayed in the community and continued to work in the factories and on the land. These Jews settled separately and independently of the Ziontown settlers some four miles away from Malaga. Jewish life continued its tradition with marriage amongst the Jewish settlers themselves. Abraham Kramer was married to Rebecca Mogilefsky at her home as per Jewish tradition on August 26th, 1893.

By 1901, the American Jewish Yearbook reported some 34 Jewish farmers in Malaga. This important crossroad community had enough Jewish men to conduct Sabbath and Jewish festival services. The community was large enough to conduct High Holiday services according to Jewish Law which requires 10 adult Jews men for public Jewish worship. A Torah would be brought to one person's house even though they did not have a synagogue. At the same time in 1901, Carmel boasted of 84 Jewish farmers. Rosenhayn had 106 and Alliance-Norma totaled 129 Jewish farmers. Woodbine was much more industrialized and listed only 37 or more than Malaga!

This groups of Jewish farmers who banded to together included the independent Jews who moved into Malaga after nearby Ziontown went bust in the mid 1890's. Jews lived independently in the community and relied on each other for a sense of community.

By the 1910's, Malaga was helped by the Jewish philanthropist, Maurice Fels. During this time he helped in funding Jewish children in their desire to be public school teachers. Maurice would grant scholarship monies to Jewish students in Malaga who wanted to go to the training school for teachers. One such place was located in Ocean City.

In the 1920's, Maurice helped to establish Malaga's public schools as a leading Southern New Jersey institution. Maurice, who remained a bachelor, would stay by Edward Brandriff of Malaga



## Brotherhood in Malaga

February has been designated Brotherhood Month and appropriate observation attended by interfaith audiences are being held across the country. In this Democracy, different races and religions have lived together, in peace and harmony for nearly two hundred years.

The small town of Malaga is an early example of Liberty and freedom for all and two historical pictures will bear us out.

To the left, the reader will see an old photograph of the Malaga Church and Parsonage, located east of the lake, along the once famous Old Malaga Road (now Delsea Drive).

The faded photograph, taken by "J. J. Woodford, Amateur Photographer of Newfield, N. J." around the turn of the century, shows the church property just about as it looked at the time the 1888 collections had taken place.

While no direct identification has been handed down with the picture, we are fairly certain that the family in front of the edifice would be the pastor, his wife and child. There was no Synagogue in Malaga, as very few Jewish people had settled outside the well-known immigrant colonies of Alliance, Norma and Carmel

in Salem and Cumberland County respectively. But newly found evidence proves that at least a few had ventured outside the before-mentioned triangle.

A wedding invitation, dated August 25, 1893 relates to such a ceremony having taken place at the Mogilefsky residence at Malaga. (Illustration above). While the invitations had been mailed out by the groom's parents, the ceremony itself, according to Jewish customs, took place at the bride's residence. The lack of a Jewish house of worship did not prevent the people of Jewish faith to live according to the laws and customs of their forefathers. The presence of Jewish families in Malaga proves that this rural community lived in perfect harmony with all religions during the nineteenth century already.

A Roman Catholic Church, located at Rt. 40 near the rail road crossing also certifies to that effect.

## Malaga

Edward was born in 1887 and his family lived in Malaga during the 1910's and 1920's while he was associated with the Malaga School System. His daughter remembers Maurice being a jolly man who enjoyed the Brandriff's hospitality. Rebecca recalls Mr. Fels giving away his age during one such stay at her house in town. He told the family that he was 21 in the year the United States celebrated its centennial in 1876.

Malaga remembers Maurice Fels for his generosity to the public school system. Maurice contributed money for scholarships for teachers. In the 1920's, Maurice listened to the teacher's input.

This translated into action in the community. Mr. Fels provided monies for manual education books and training. He was allowed to replace individual desks throughout the school system. His thoughts were clear on this subject. The Malaga School System welcomed his thoughts on this issue.

Malaga was host to a few Jewish families in the 1920's. They included the Kotok's who later moved to Norma. A shochet who was both a butcher of meats and fresh poultry according to Jewish law. He lived in the community near Newfield. The shochet, Mr. Koitz daughter was deaf. Other Jews came to the area as the 1930's approached.

These Jews were immigrants, too. They included the Reich's. They lived on Lake Road east of Main Road or Route # 555 near the gravel pits. The Fleischers would settle in this area as well. They were from Czechoslovakia and migrated to America to escape religious persecution. Nearby Newfield would become a haven for Polish and German newcomers in the 1930's and 1940's. This area was kind to the Jewish settler and immigrant over the last 100 years

## Reference Source Credit

September 7th, 1892 issue of the Franklin Township Sentinel Newspaper.

Malaga Library / now the Franklin Township Library  
Herman Berstein writings in the 1920's and 1930's

Telephone interview with Rebecca ( Brandriff ) Mullen  
on October 30th , 1988

American Jewish Year Books of 1901 and 1907

COURTESY

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