

Southern New Jersey  
**SYNAGOGUES**

A SOCIAL HISTORY

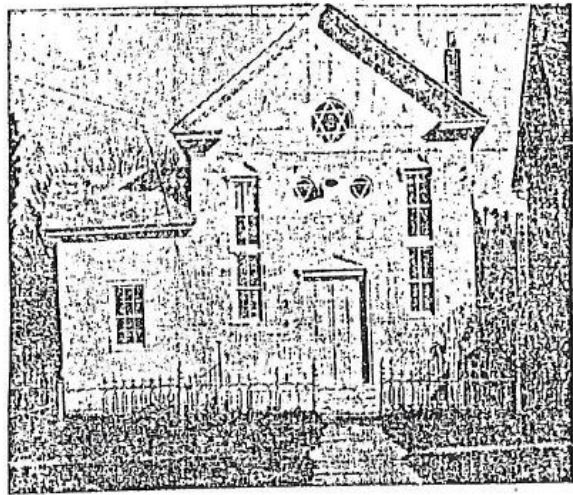
HIGHLIGHTED  
BY  
STORIES  
OF JEWISH LIFE  
FROM THE  
1880'S - 1980'S

Written By  
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Philadelphia, PA.

# ROSENHAYN SYNAGOGUE

CHEVRA ONSHEA ASHKINAZ



*Certificate of Incorporation of the Ashkenaz  
Society*

As is to be seen, that on the fourth day of March 1871,  
the undersigned and namely: Isaac David M. Roth, Michael Goff,  
Morris Philipson, Samuel Hoffmann, Isaac Schiff, Jacob Klein  
and Morris Shand, met in the village of Roslyn, County  
Rock County, New Jersey, being a true and lawful community  
agreed upon by a majority of them, for the purpose of forming  
an association, the object of which association is to purchase  
and acquire land in the settlement of Roslyn, and  
for cemetery purposes exclusively, according to the provisions  
of the act to entitle the undersigned to purchase  
"Society", an act to entitle the undersigned to purchase  
Society Association and to regulate matters relating  
thereto, 1871, and did to a vote of the majority of them  
present at said meeting, appoint Michael Goff, chairman  
and David M. Roth secretary, and did determine upon  
the name of "Ashkenaz Society" as the cor-  
porate name by which said association shall be called  
and known, and determined that there shall be seven  
members of such association, to wit: David M. Roth,  
Michael Goff, Morris Philipson, Samuel Hoffmann, Jacob  
Schiff, Jacob Klein and Morris Shand, and do the said  
meeting and association, did unanimously offer and do  
to provide the said charter by let with their clause as  
follows:

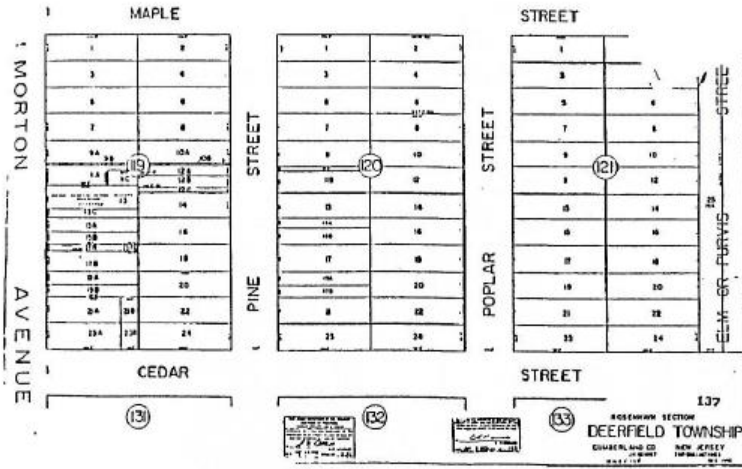
First clause To hold their office for one year -  
Jacob Klein, David M. Roth and Michael Goff.

Second clause To hold their office for two years -  
Morris Philipson and Samuel Hoffmann.

Third clause To hold their office for three years -  
Isaac Schiff and Morris Shand. And the said meeting  
did also determine that in the future the annual election  
of officers shall be held on the first Saturday in March.  
The witness whose name have hereunto set our hands  
and seals this third day of April A. D. eighteen hundred  
and seventy one 1871

Isaac David M. Roth } 1871  
Michael Goff }  
Morris Philipson }  
Samuel Hoffmann }  
Jacob Schiff }  
Jacob Klein }  
Morris Shand }  
David M. Roth }  
Rt. S. Schell }  
David M. Roth }

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations



OLD ROSENHAYN HOTEL

Rosenhayn was settled by Russian Jews in 1883. The New Jersey Southern Railroad connected this Jewish outpost in the wilderness with civilization in Vineland to the NorthEast and Bridgeton to the Southwest. The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society aided the six Jewish families who settled not far from the railroad tracks. The group did not survive the hardships of the first years. By the mid 1880's, another attempt would be made at settlement.

This time, two groups were split up and settled in the area. Rosenhayn was not a regular stop on the railroad. Russian Jews were settled along the main thoroughfare off the tracks. This dropoff would a later become Morton Avenue. The second group settled 2½ miles Southwest of Rosenhayn. This southern district was known to the Jews as "Seventeen

This settlement was occupied by 17 Jewish farmers near the Lebanon stream. The Jewish settlers arrived here in the year 1885. The new immigrants were scattered in the woods which eventually led through and along narrow paths to the Carmel Colony.

The land in Rosenhayn was more stable than in Carmel. The closer you came to Carmel, the greater the risk of swamp land was being your next door neighbor. These attempts at settlement were also failures.

With success of the Alliance Colony some five miles away in 1887 gave Rosenhayn new hope. Jews were arriving in steady streams by the late 1880's to the shores of America from Russia. The desire to conquer the hardships of the wilderness and to stake down a piece of land was a future dream for these immigrants. This dream became a reality as the Alliance Colony prospered. The Alliance investment in its crops brought hope to the entire Region. This hope was transformed into active Jewish settlements nearby.

In 1887, 37 Jewish families resettled Rosenhayn and started the third attempt at settlement in the area. By 1889, 67 Jewish families were actively farming and clearing the land. The Tenth Annual Report of Industries and Failures in New Jersey reported that Isaac Polokow employed 90 people making ladies cloaks in this settlement in 1891. One third were women and children. Albert Markland employed 9 people making buttons.

Jewish life could be supported and a congregation began to emerge. By 1892, the Rosenhayn congregation could be supported by a stable group. This group had emerged with five long years of struggling in the woods. But a strong Jewish institution emerged which held Sabbath and Jewish holiday services.

The Chevra Kaddisha was created in 1892. The next step at creating a more viable community of Jews would have to wait until after the Recession of 1893. This meant that the community would have to look at itself internally. But before the Recession was over in America, Rosenhayn would create " the Ascanazi Cemetery Association"



## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

People in the Jewish Community of Rosenhayn who gathered together to create this organization included David M. British, Michael Joseph, Morris Philipowitz, Earnet Kauffman, Esrael Ekoff, Jacob Klein and Harris Shrank. A certificate of incorporation was granted to the group on April third, 1893 by the State of New Jersey.

In 1894, the Jewish Colony of Rosenhayn grew by over 50% and now maintained 90 Jewish families. Rabbi Morais wrote in his book, " the Jews of Philadelphia " that 60 children in this Colony were learning their Judaism in a new land separate from their parents backgrounds.

One year later in 1895, the Rosenhayn Jewish community organized its own cemetery outside of Rosenhayn. This was the third Jewish cemetery to emerge and develop in the area of the Vineland Jewish Colonies. The Jews of nearby Garton Road used this burial ground in conjunction with the Rosenhayn community.

Industry and farming mixed well to serve the needs of the new immigrants. This resulted in building of a station along the Railroad at Morton Avenue in Rosenhayn. This was a true sign that Rosenhayn was stabilizing itself.

By 1897, the congregation realized that it had to legally insure its identity. The new arrivals in Rosenhayn were not Russian Jews. They were Roumanian and Austrian Jews who had a different idea of practicing Judaism. Thus a constitution was added as a legal document to insure that the new comers would conform.

The name of the congregation was declared as Agudath Achim Anshey Sphard. The first article noted that the ritual in the synagogue remain Sphard in form all the time. This would include prayer and ceremonies. That fact that this was put in and at the top of the list suggests that the new comers wanted to change the order of the synagogue. It was now spelled out in a land that cherished religious freedom to effectively block another form of Judaism from interfering with the old and established order. No one could institute another " system " or pray in another manner in this synagogue.

The officers were charged with following the rules, too. They were even instructed to keep the order in the synagogue by this document. You had to be a member of the congregation for at least six months before becoming elected as an officer. A member would be allowed three to six months to pay his dues or risk being suspended! At the end of this constitution was the inclusion of an article that dealt with the power of who was allowed to enter the praying stand. The idea of having a bannister around the Tabah was old world fashioned. In America, it would take on a new meaning. For the Gabbai was empowered to call only those people to the center of the Synagogue. A Jew must have the permission of the Gabbai to enter the " prayer stand". Morris Reising, Mark Love and Samuel Reising signed this document which was recorded on April 30th 1897.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

By 1901, some 800 people were living in this area. Nine factories were located in Rosenhayn. They included clothing, hosiery, foundry, tinware, and brick yard. The Jewish population was estimated to be 250 in Rosenhayn at the turn of the century.

It was at this time that Rabbi Jacob L. Shwartz enters the religious picture here in Rosenhayn. Together here with Joseph Baldinger and Lazerus Slater there is a new attempt to change the name of the Synagogue.

The strength of the synagogue shifted in favor of the Askenazic Jews. With the officers elected in M. Philipowitz as President, D. Rottenberg as Vice President, M. Silver as Secretary and D. Magedensky as Treasurer this group was all set to announce a new change in name and direction of the Rosenhayn synagogue. The new name would be known as Chevro Kadisho Anshe Askenaz.

This was recorded in Corporation Book " B" on page 373 and 374. By 1907, the deed of the synagogue was changed to reflect the new name of the synagogue.

In 1907, Rabbi Isaac Shoop and the congregation boasted of 42 members. Education was of a prime concern to the Colonists as foreseen by their sponsors. A library was started in 1902. Professor Mounier reorganized the library two years later in 1904. A night school was started for the immigrants to learn English. This opportunity led to the further Americanization process one generation after the Russian Jews had arrived in Rosenhayn. This yielded some incredible results in upward mobility for the next generation of the immigrants and their children. The quality of education was good enough to yield lawyers, doctors and judges as time progressed. As this process took place, more and more non-Jews came to live in Rosenhayn. The community was changing as early as the year 1900. These newly arriving residents were immigrants, too. A large Italian population grew within this Jewish settlement as the town emerged into the 20th century.

More Jews found their way to Rosenhayn from not only Russia but from Roumania and Austria. Now the Jewish population was still growing and in 1907 reached 300 people. As more Litvaks and Galizaneres filled the Jewish ranks in Rosenhayn meant that change started to take place in Rosenhayn. The influx of more Jews who were different than the Russian Jews created a new Jewish experience in this town. New patterns of religious and social activities started to unfold. At the same time of the arrival of this influx of new Jewish residents meant that the synagogue would be affected, too.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

Conflicts developed in the early 1910's and a second congregation in Rosenhayn emerges. The order of the services had to be different for some Jews who came from various parts of Europe. Custom and ritual was not all that was making a difference. Living in the Dispura for any period of time gave rise to a new form of Jewish life. This was reflected in the attitudes and practices of the Jews themselves. Degrees of orthodox practice and custom was reflected in the desire to create a second synagogue in Rosenhayn. In Europe, some synagogues were established by various guilds and crafts. If the blacksmiths and tinsman went to the same synagogue, then the Jewish money lenders would have their own shul!

The Davidow family arrived in this era. Meyer Davidow left Russia after selling a dry cleaning business for \$ 200. As an officer in the Russian Army, Meyer toured with the Czar's Army in South Africa. Meyer was in charge of the wagon trains. He was a mechanic. His job was to make caps for the large wheels. By time Meyer gets to England he decides to leave the Czar's Army with an honorable discharge.

In 1905, Meyer Davidow would leave for America from London. His dream was to become a farmer. The Jewish Aid Society would assist him in his search for his dream.

First, Meyer would come to Philadelphia and meet his wife. Eva Volk was born in village in Kovno, Gubernia.

Eva was eager to become a farmerette. The Volks were a very strictly Kosher family. Her father was a Kosher butcher in the Strawberry Mansion section of the city. The Volks approved of their new future son-in-law's noble idea to return to the land. Meyer's endeavors were admirable as long as he could provide for Eva's well being!

Rosenhayn was a second choice of location for the newly married couple. Meyer's religious nature prevented him from settling in the Upper Darby area in the early 1910's because there were no Jews nearby! Instead, the Davidow's bought a farm in Rosenhayn, New Jersey. The farm he purchased for \$2,000 was mortgaged by the J.A.S. Meyer purchased the farm from a German farmer in the Seventeen settlement some 2½ miles outside of Rosenhayn. The mortgage itself would on the books from 1907 until 1936. The farm was 32 acres and some 20 acres were cleared. The farm itself included a house, a riding shed and a hand pump. In later years, a well with running water would be added. To every farmerette, running water was a luxury that few would be privy to have let alone an inside toilet.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

To Eva and Meyer were born two sons. Joshua was born December 23, 1909. Sol was born November 23, 1915. Three daughter were also born to this couple.

The Jewish community in Rosenhayn was growing and the Davidows fitted right in the town. Meyer's religious nature was devoted to saying prayers with no prayer book. The shop keepers lined Morton Avenue up and down this wide thoroughfare. Four Kosher butchers served this large community of Jews. They included Venitsky, Goldberg, Vimmick and Fishman.

As the children became of age to sit in the Cheder, they were sent to Franklin Hall. This is where Rev. Malavsky taught the children their Yiddishkeit

The Morton Avenue synagogue became a religious haven for Meyer who would walk 2 to 3 miles to shul on the sabbath from the Seventeen settlement. The Morton Avenue Shul was Askenaszic in its minhag. In this community, all the Jewish men went to the synagogue.

Meyer would join shop keepers on Shabbas and follow the customs he observed while in Russia. One such custom carried to America from the Old World was that if you lived too far out of the village you couldn't just enter the village. One way to circumvent this ordeal was to place a piece of meat in the first tree that marked the beginning of the village. In this manner you were allowed to enter the town and attend shul. This was called and Eirech

This community was the only one of the Colonies that instituted regular daily services. The reason being was on account of the 10 to 12 shops along Morton Avenue. These were all owned by Jews. The farmers out of town followed davening or prayer in their own farm houses.

Daily observance was not passed onto the children. Meyer's children would understand to refrain from disturbing their father when he was davening. This was done out of respect.

Kashrut was upheld at the insistence of the mother on this matter here in America. When Kosher meat was available and on the menu at the Davidow's, Eva would kasher the meat in the summer kitchen. This was done by soaking the meat in salt. Living on the farm meant that an extra act of discipline would have to be taken in following meat and milk items. The separation of dairy items from meat items was easier on the farm in the raw state. Three to six hours would lapse before meat dishes and milk or dairy items could be consumed. Eva would ensure that her children would follow this part of the tradition. This was more that just tradition but a matter of sensitivity. The family lived so close to both dairy and meat items. But to have a common source would be insulting to the animals that supplied them with their food. This act of loving kindness was repeated throughout the Jewish Colonies of Southern New Jersey in daily practice.



## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

### Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

Shabbas meant that a fine meal would be prepared. Refraining from work activities on the farm was observed in the Davidow's home in the 1910's and 1920's. Shabbas candles lit by Eva as her mother did in the city. Kiddush was recited by Meyer praising G-d for their lot. Chicken was the center of the meal every Friday evening. The chickens that embellished the Shabbas dinner table were the ones that did not lay eggs. These chickens were given to Rev. Malavsky, the shochet who received 5¢ a chicken to slaughter them according to Jewish tradition and Law. Shabbas was family time on the farm. This was a time of relaxation and enjoyment.

Jewish Holidays were observed in a variety of ways on the land. Selicos or the holiday ushering in the High Holidays were observed by the farmers walking through the darkened fields with only the moon light to guide them to the Rosenhayn Shul. Mid night services were attended by the men who came to welcome the start of a new season.

The synagogue was arranged so that the reader's table was in the middle of the synagogue. This is how the synagogues in Europe were laid out. Each person had his own seat. No name plates were made but everyone knew their own seat. The officers of the synagogue or the Balibatim sat in the front row of benches between the readers table and the Aron Kodesh or Holy Ark where the Torah was kept. The poorer people from the Seventeen settlement sat towards the back of the large synagogue. The upstairs balcony was reserved for women and children only. The prominent members of the congregation such as the Schranks and Joseph brothers sat close to the officers.

The Holidays that the farmers and merchants in Rosenhayn celebrated were centered around the family. The Bubbes and Zaydes who came to America were revered and enjoyed in all the Jewish settlers homes. It was in these homes that the elders never dropped their native tongues or quit the use of Yiddish. In most homes, the Bubbe and Zaydes never learned English. The grandchildren would learn English only in the public school since the language of the Cheder was in Yiddish, too.

Franklin Hall in Rosenhayn served the Jewish Community's need to interact socially, athletically and educationally. Cultural needs were taken care of in the Hall. A library was open and a night school to learn English was held here. Dances were open to the public and well attended. Lectures were held in this building. Recitals took place in this center of Jewish activity. Reading of Shakespeare was conducted in Yiddish at the Franklin Hall.

Abraham and Pessel Scherbekov came to Rosenhayn from Russia in the early 1900's. By 1905, Abraham was an American citizen. Twelve children were born to Abraham and Pessel. Three children were born in Russia before the couple came here to America as a family unit.

After the bloody Pogroms of 1906 and 1907 meant that more Russian Jews would find their way to America. It was in this fashion that the Jewish population of Rosenhayn would grow. The need for a second synagogue arose. This time the new congregation would follow the Anshe Sfard tradition of worship.

The idea for a second synagogue grew in the home of Abraham Scherbekov. This is where the newly organized Gemilias Chesed was formed. This free loan society was a needed service in the Rosenhayn community, especially for the next group of newly arriving Russian Jews. Loans were made interest free and were meaded out to the newly arriving immigrants who would later repay the loans.

The synagogue in Rosenhayn was in a state of turmoil during the last part of the 19th century and into the new century. Control of this Jewish institution meant that a certain format of worship would be followed. All the people were Jewish in nature and birth. But they did not all come from the same village, town or state. This produced a different style of prayer. Every Jew could follow along regardless but there were some people who wanted to remain praying the way they did in the old country. This community thus became a melting pot for the different religious perspectives on prayer. By the turn of the century there were more non-Russian Jews in Rosenhayn who challenged the foundation of the Rosenhayn synagogue and actually changed it over to their style of prayer.

Again there was turmoil in the community. Certainly as one group changed the rules in the synagogue there was to be a heated debated on the floor of the synagogue of how it was to be managed. This infighting went on into the early 1900's.

Finally Abraham Scherbekov realized that world events could not be controlled by the Jewish community in Rosehayn. The type of immigration from Russia was beginning to look homogeneous in make-up. This was especially true of the people themselves who came to Rosenhayn with others from their same villages. This need to rekindle the type of synagogue that they had in their small town which they recently left was brought to the direct attention of Abraham in his home where the Gemilias Chesed meet.

The difference in pronunciation of words was only the beginning ones in this religious debate of opinions. But the real difference was in the order of the service that sparked the Rosenhayn Cherva Sephardim congregation to form in the early 1910's.



## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

By 1919, the population of the Jewish community reached 400 Jewish people. The two congregations which were separated by  $\frac{1}{2}$  block conducted their own Hebrew Schools. The president of the Cherva Sephardim Congregation was found in Wolfe Greenberg at this time. He hired the teacher for this purpose. J. Isdar was hired as the teacher and taught 21 children to read and write Yiddish. They learned handle the siddurim or daily prayer book with ease. Jewish history was also taught here.

In 1920, the Malavsky brothers educated the children in children in a cheder in Rosenhayn. One of the brothers was a shochet and the other brother was a Chazzon. Professor Mounier stopped his lectures and discussion in the surrounding communities that was once the Jewish Colonies. Philip Goldstein discontinued his Sunday School in English at the Franklin Hall. The Franklin Hall was now used by the community for the instruction of Yiddishkeit on Morton Avenue.

Abraham and his wife were rich in culture but they shared one common trait with many Russian Jewish parents. This was the need to speak Russian in the house when there was a crisis or a problem that the children who understood Yiddish would not "hear".

In the 1920's and 1930's, Jewish people from the Seventeen settlement some two miles away from Rosenhayn attended the Rosenhayn synagogues. Most of the Seventeen Jewish settlers lived near Wiseman's Pond and would walk the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles to shul. Some families such as the Davidows would go to the Chevra Kaddisha Anshe Ashkinaz synagogue on Morton Avenue. While other families such as the Scribners and Blumbergs would go to the Chevra Sephardim Shul on Spruce Street.

Finally enough years had passed in Rosenhayn for the second Rosenhayn Synagogue to recall the name of the first congregation that called themselves Agudath Achim Anshe Sfarid. Cherva Sephardim members were not Sfaridic Jews. They only professed to follow the Sfarid minhag. In the late 1920's there was a need to combine the efforts of the charity and religious needs of this one group into one organization.

The group composed of Wolfe Greenberg, Hyman Scribner, Abraham Scherbekov, Manassa Scribner plus two Shochtim found in Abraham Goldman and Jacob Popvosky entered into a legal document. These men became the trustees of this newly combined organization which was created on January 28, 1929 at the Bridgeton Court House. This document was recorded in Book "G" and logged on page 101. Finally there was one group of Jews in Rosenhayn who prayed the same and were named the same as they believed.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

Sucas or the Jewish Holiday of the autumn harvest was fully observed on the land. It is a custom to dwell in booths during this time. The construction of the sucah or booth became a community activity. The Davidow's did not have a sucah but the nearby Rothenbergs erected one. The idea of one family erecting one and not the other was typical of the religious freedom that Jews felt in their new home land. Some religious insight into this matter is useful. This was the era when the shul did not erect their own sucah! In America, the custom of building a sucah on the grounds of the synagogue was not popular until after the 1930's. Jews in South Philadelphia were confined to small spaces but found room to erect sucachs in their small back yards and not their shul. This activity was a home ritual and not a community one until the modern era.

Judge Davidow estimates that 50 % of the farmers in Rosenhayn built sucachs on their farms in the 1910's. By the 1930's, Joshua could only see a decline in this custom. This practice dropped to 20% of the farmers who erected sucachs during the Great Depression.

Rosh Chodesh or the cycle which the Jewish calendar is based upon was observed and celebrated in the Morton Avenue shul. The celebration of this holiday was transplanted in the Jewish Colonies. In Rosenhayn, this timely celebration was observed with the women in full attendance in the balcony. The children were invited up on the bima. This was a joyous celebration honoring the new moon. The women would shower the children with raisins from their seats in the balcony. This custom persisted until the 1940's.

Chanukah initiated the start of the winter season for the Jewish farmer. Chanukah candles were not available at this time in the Davidow household. Who needs them when a Jewish farmer celebrates the Jewish holidays in his own way. Small turnips would be substituted in this ritual. Digging out the turnips was a fun activity for the children. Next, oil would be placed in the cavities and a "schmatah" or rag would be used for a wick. In poor turnip seasons, sweet potatoes would be used.

On Purim, the children would join in with the celebration of the holiday. The children would work their noise makers or "Gragers" effectively when the terrible King Haman name would be announced. The volume of noise that would ring out could be heard across Morton Avenue.

Pesach ushered in the start of the plowing season. Passover came to the farm in a particular way. Searching for Chometz or bread crumbs with a candle and a feather posed a special activity in the farm house of the Davidow's. Meyer didn't make his own wine as many of the other farmers did in Rosenhayn.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

The Davidow's did make other foods especially for Pesach. This included a special borsht. This was a stronger type called Russell. Before Passover, this borsht stayed in its own jugs or barrels. The smell of beets in the cellar was a sweet one. Matzoh was purchased in Rothenberg's store in Rosenhayn.

During Pesach, the whole mispoaha would gather in Rosenhayn to celebrate this holiday. At the Davidow home, uncle Abe would come to translate the Hagaddah into Yiddish as the Seder was conducted in full length. The service itself would be conducted in Hebrew. This was done so that the children could follow along and understand the service.

The children at this time of year would engage in the "nuts" game. This was done Rosenhayn style. Holes were dug into the ground and the children would play each other to see who landed more nuts into the holes. Scores were kept and this kept the children occupied as they were having fun.

Anti-Semitism reared its ugly head in the community of Rosenhayn during the 1930's. Clare ( Popovsky ) Blumberg was the Shamus daughter. She recalls this tragic era. The Goyim would become very incensed during the Jewish Holidays. That the Jews killed G-d and this led to a real threat of violence to the Jewish population here. If you were a little Jew, you had to have a protector on St. Joseph's Holiday. There was a large group of Italians who were Roman Catholic in the community by this time. Whatever the Church taught those children were passed onto the next generation. Dead birds were put on Jewish people's lawns as a symbol of this mass hatred. Even Clare's husband's family, the Ostroff's home was " stoned " in Rosenhayn in the 20th Century by these ignorant people.

Jewish life persisted in the area for many years to come before the era came to a close. Jewish tunes were a way of life for these Jews in the 1930's. Judge Davidow recalls that the tunes were a major source of difference between the two synagogues in Rosenhayn.

The Depression years did not interrupt the Pleasurnik Era. The Pleasurniks took the train from Philadelphia down to the country to relax and enjoy the slow pace of life here in the fresh air. Relatives would come to the smaller Davidow farm. This was repeated everywhere in the Rosenhayn area. The children did not mind that they had to sleep in the hay mows to make room for the visitors. Some people came to certain farms because they were maintained Kosher

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

The tunes turned into songs for Joshua Davidow. This was a very profitable way to earn some money. Joshua was taught to sing songs in Yiddish that the Pleasurniks would enjoy. His pay was in the form of pennies!

Other activities in the Colony included the formulation of a youth group in the 1930's. This group would later become the AZA or Zionist youth group in the region during the 1930's. The group would put on stage programs. Programming was sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women. A representative of that organization by the name of Miss Goodwin would come to the Davidow farm to pick up the boys and take them to the Franklin Hall. This would occur once per month. This group was organized by Joshua Davidow. It was originally called the Baron De Hirsch Club.

Another activity for the Jewish youth in the Rosenhayn Community in the 1930's was that of Boy Scouting. Troop # 19 was organized by Joshua Davidow. But the Jewish mothers did not want their boys to become Boy Scouts because the uniforms were like that of the Army. This was a throw back to the real reason the immigrants left Russia and that was to escape the Czar's Army. The mothers didn't want their boys to be soldiers.

The Cheder of those days prepared the children differently than the modern Hebrew Schools of today. Joshua Davidow and Bar Mitzvah speech was given in Yiddish during those days. The girls would attend a year or two of the Cheder in order to understand the siddur or pray book in synagogue services. But it was in the home that the girls learned to maintain a Kosher home. Marriage was an important subject in the community. In terms of the religious life, the Efferurah would take place on the Sabbath preceding the wedding ceremony in either shul. Joshua goes onto tell that the Oifruffen is not like today. Where if an Oifruffen even takes place for anyone today, it is only an opportunity to be called to the Torah for an Aliyah. This is to state the blessing before and after a certain portion of the Torah is read. An Oifruffen in Rosenhayn in the 1930's meant that a groom would prepare to conduct the entire service and read the portion of the week found in the Torah from the Tabah or reader's table in the center of the shul. This meant that all eyes, including your relatives were gleaming proudly upon you as you prepared for the future event of the wedding and your responsibility of being a Jew in the community.

The Pleasurnik Era was still in effect during the 1930's. Down the road was the Richard's Farm and across the highway was the Lubin Cabins on Rainbow Lake. This would later become known as the Finkle's place. The Schrank's had their hotel and farm nearby in Rosenhayn. The Schrank's Hotel was known as the Bunker Hill Farm



## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

These hotels were open and received many Jewish visitors. They were heavily used by the Jewish communities of Philadelphia and New York. During the High Holiday period it was difficult to find a room to stay. Other Jewish Holidays were booked, too. The nearby synagogues gained an more people in their congregation from the Pleasurnik's. These people would walk to the synagogues in Rosenhayn and join in the services.

Sol Davidow recalls this time because he was a waiter at the Schrank's Hotel. The dining room could seat and feed over 150 guests. On Yontav, the guests would hold services in some of the Hotels with a hired Chazzon provided for by the owner of the establishment.

The Davidow's participated in this function and business. The Pleasurnik trade was a good one and provided much needed income for the Jewish farmer regardless of the Depression. Eva Davidow was a good Jewish cook. Eva would cook a big Sunday dinner and serve the Pleasurniks who would number around 25. She made blintzes, kugle, strudel and three or four freshly killed chickens by the shochet in Rosenhayn.

Dairy food items were made right on the farm for this trade. Cottage cheese and sour cream were a favorite item of the Pleasurniks.

The dairy items that all or most Jewish people liked were not available in many of the stores in Vineland during this era. Sol Davidow as a child would bring two quarts of sour cream to Vineland and traded it for food for the week! Sour cream fetched 50¢ a quart. His weekly trips would net a dollar and fifty cents! Six miles to Vineland by horse and wagon was a treat for the Davidow boys.

The Davidow's did and make their own wine at all. Eva was responsible for this event. Eva did not believe in alcohol. Meyer would buy the wine from Abraham Sherbekov for a \$ 1.50 a gallon.

In the 1930's, over 100 members were counted as belonging to the first synagogue in Rosenhayn. Forty men attended Sabbath services every week.

Meyer Davidow was a dirt farmer. Beans, peppers, tomatoes and sweet potatoes were his lot. The Pleasurnik trade added some much needed monies for the family. But his biggest crop was mortgages! Meyer borrowed more money each year so he could make ends meet. But still, Meyer stayed on the land. The staying power of many Jewish farmers were found in this lifestyle.

This was the time that Max Wurtzel owned the Post Office on Morton Avenue. The Post Office was the hub of the community because it contained a telephone. This phone and the Post Office was the link to the outside world. Mr. Wurtzel's children would marry the Weinstein's. In time, the hub of the community was known as Weinstein's General Store.

A mikveh existed in Rosenhayn well into the 1930's off of Morton Avenue. Fishman's Kosher Meat market was located on Morton Avenue and was a favorite place to shop amongst the Jews of Rosenhayn, Norma and Garton Road. Rosenhayn became a center for the Jewish settler's shopping needs as the second generation grew up in the countryside. Rosenhayn was centrally located between the various Jewish Colonies.

Matzoh was delivered by horse and wagon in the 1910's and later in a panel track from Norma. A man from Bridgeton would peddle his fish which was mostly Carp off the back of a pick-up truck in the 1930's. The neighbors would know that the fish man was nearby when they would hear his scale swaying in the wind. Blue fish was a Jewish farmerette favorite, too.

Mr. Ostroff's father would make his own wine. Purple grapes were picked, squeezed and crushed by the children in preparation for the wine that would be used to make Kiddush. This wine was used to praise G-d's name on Eruv Shabbas. For Pesach, different grapes were used. Those grapes were grown in an arbor and were used in the preparation of the Passover wine. These grapes were usually sweeter than the regular grapes during the year.

The needy families hard hit by the Depression were helped by the Benevolent Association in Rosenhayn. This Jewish organization was made of mostly Jewish women. These ladies helped the families in need with bushels of clothes and coal.

For Yontav, the Alper Hotel on Morton Avenue was a favorite place for the Pleasurniks. They would stay and join the congregation on Spruce Street for the High Holidays. Philadelphia people would be a regular part of the Jewish Holidays in Rosenhayn.

The Rosenhayn Jewish community was divided by orthodox Jews and less orthodox Jews. Abraham Scherbekov observed the Sabbath and did not work or drive his automobile. By the time the automobile gained popularity in Rosenhayn, some men would drive to the Morton Avenue Synagogue. This change did not alter the format of the service which was still conducted in an orthodox manner. But the men at the Spruce Street Shul walked to the synagogue on Shabbas even if they lived 3 or 4 miles away. Aliyahs at the Spruce Street Shul were not auctioned. This was a major difference between the two synagogues. At the Spruce Street Shul, members would contribute funds according to their means.

The Morton Avenue synagogue was Litvak and more progressive. For the Spruce Street Shul, Shabbas was always Shabbas.

A good many women attended Sabbath services on Spruce Street. But most of the women only came to shul only on Yontav. There was a balcony around the entire synagogue on the second floor where the women would sit. There was no Matriarch at this synagogue to guide the women along during service. Here the women did know how to daven and sat quietly with Talisim covering their heads.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregation

Yiddishkeit on the spiritual level far out weighed the reading knowledge of these women. For on cue, the women all of them would wail as they knew it was an important portion.

By the late 1930's, the division between the two synagogues was very much in tact and for good reasons. With each group not being able to afford or wanting to have two separate people to perform the duties of the Shamus, there was a solution. This partial solution was found in one man. The two congregations shared the Shamus in a very polite and unique way. The Shamus being more important than the Baal Korei or even the Baal Telfiah would open the shul and prepare it for services. On the High Holidays, this meant the honor of re-wrapping the Torah in a special covering and placing a white ribbon around the scrolls. This white ribbon would be tied secured so that the Torah would not unravel.

This honor was bestowed upon Mr. Popovsky at both synagogues. This arrangement worked well for the individual, too. For when the Shamus became "upset" at one shul he would go to the other shul. When the Shamus became "glad" he went back to the first shul. And so the story went until the Spruce Street Shul closed in the late 1940's.

The Chevra Kaddisha was an important organization in this community. As in Carmel, this was a similar interest of the Jewish Community in Rosenhayn. But unlike Carmel, Rosenhayn had two synagogues. The cemetery would be split into two during the 1930's in Rosenhayn. The two differing points of view would carry all the way to the graveside. But the surprising fact that the fight broke out and all erupted in the Morton Avenue Synagogue. When a group splintered and left for the Spruce Street Shul meant that two cemeteries became a real entity even though they were next to each other. At that point we find the new or separate part of the burial ground called the Rosenhayn Hebrew Cemetery.

The name of the Spruce Street Shul was also changed but a few years earlier. This time another name was adopted by the congregants but without legal documents being filed. This time it was shortened to just plain Agudath Achim.

Jewish education of the children in Rosenhayn insured that they would marry other Jews. In spite of this encouragement to marry with in the Jewish religion meant that some choose to marry non-Jews. These Jews brought a custom over from the old world and practiced it in the new world when the need arose concerning this situation. The Jews of this congregation would sit Shiva or the traditional mourning period for the deceased in Judaism. The children by choosing not to marry some one of the Jewish faith were considered dead and deceased by their parents. Mirrors were covered and even coffins were buried when their children married out of the Jewish religion. This "killed" the parents. The community would not allow conversion for the sake of marriage when it occurred in one of the families. But the elders of the community could not prevent this happening since it was not the shetle. Another avenue open to prevent this from happening was the Americanization of the Match-Maker. This was found in Rosenhayn's Dr. Phillip Culter.

Each new generation has a beginning and an end. This is true of congregations and their synagogues. Mr. Abraham Scherbekov passed away in the 1940's and so did the Spruce Street Shul.

## Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

A disagreement in the Morton Avenue synagogue affected the full Jewish community. A group left the Morton Avenue Synagogue and went over to the Spruce Street Shul. The cemetery was affected and was split into two sections. The new part of the Rosenhayn Cemetery would be named quite simply the Rosenhayn Hebrew Cemetery. The Morton Avenue synagogue shortened its name to Chevra Onshea Ashkinaz. The Spruce Street Shul changed its name to Agudath Achim or the Greater Brotherhood. A portion of the cemetery was sold to Congregation Beth Abraham of Bridgeton. A deed to the Bridgeton Hebrew Cemetery would be created in 1942. Albert Schrank would care for this cemetery for many years to come as a benefactor until his death in 1986.

Changes after the Second World War would call an end to an era of Jewish life in Rosenhayn. The Agudath Achim synagogue would close due to its members passing away. There was no more Pleasurniks to bolster the roster of people who would help to enlarge the congregation during the 1950's. This would lead Shabbas services being curtained and eventually stopped. No new Jews were moving into the area. The Holocaust Survivors located nearer to Vineland than they did to Bridgeton.

Younger people were leaving the town of Rosenhayn in the Jewish community. This led to a smaller Jewish population in town. For some Jews, three times a year is enough time spent in a synagogue. But the truth of the matter is that this condition of the synagogue in Rosenhayn was not to be defined in those terms. The Rosenhayn Jews did not give up their Judaism. This meant that because there was less Jews in Rosenhayn, the toll was taken on the synagogue. This was a fact of Jewish life repeated in many small towns.

By the late 1950's, the Chevra Onshea Ashkinaz would only be open on Jewish Holidays other than the Sabbath. The congregation dwindled down to 21 members in 1963. The synagogue could still boast of having two cantors to conduct Simhas Torah services! Cantors David Kember and Lewis Fenik would lead this proud group of Jews in joyous festivities during this time. In 1960, Meyer Davidow passed away at the age of 84.

The next generation of Jewish leaders to conduct the Jewish affairs in Rosenhayn were non-observant in earlier years. This was due to demands of their businesses. These people then as time went on looked to their old age in the community. They took to the calling of leading the Rosenhayn Jewish Community in the 1960's.

Harry Feinberg worked on Saturdays. Later he would retire and read the Torah on Holidays. He joined the Chevra Kaddisha and recited prayers at funeral services on the Rosenhayn Cemetery. The batan of religious leadership was passed to Ben Schwenk. In the late 1960's, Ben Schwenk took care of the shul. When Ben died, it was David Sherby who took care of the shul.



Rosenhayn's Jewish Congregations

Cantor David Kember conducted High Holiday services here for a short time in the late 1960's. By the early 1970's, the remaining Jews of the Rosenhayn Congregation had all passed away.

A wall of separation persisted until the end for each Jewish Colony. This included the Congregations and their synagogues. Since Carmel did not want to come to the Rosenhayn congregation this represented a stubborn amount of religious pride. So the Rosenhayn Congregation did not go to the Carmel Congregation for merger talks.

This was happening in South Philadelphia with many of the older congregations in the neighborhood at exactly the same time and for the same reasons.

The synagogue that was surrounded with decorative wrought iron fencing had stood the test of time and served the Jewish community favorably. Its slender large windows and three circular port windows had witnessed many happy and sad occasions. The synagogue would outlast the Jewish community. The white frame synagogue which was built in the last century had witnessed many good Jewish fights over ritual and custom under its one roof.

The officers were selected in this time period one by one. Now the congregation with David Sherby as president would enter its final stage of existence. In 1973, the synagogue was sold to a church. The organization of the Chevra Kaddisha and the Rosenhayn Cemetery continue to serve the Jews who remained but who could no longer sustain their shul.

Recently David Sherby z"l has passed away and his wife Edith Sherby is overseeing the Cemetery. Up until now all transactions were recorded verbally. No cemetery plots or maps existed. An engineer from Vineland has been hired to plot out this land. A woman managing a cemetery, let alone an orthodox one has been unheard of up until now.

Soon the "child" of the parent, the adjacent Bridgeton Hebrew Cemetery now owned by Congregation Beth Abraham will watch over the Jewish pioneers at rest in the Rosenhayn Cemetery. Renovation of the area by relatives is under way and in the planning stage to insure the proper maintenance.

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GARTON RD Shul as it stood  
in the late 1980's

Garton Road Or Yisrael Congregation

The second wave of Russian Jews as immigrants to America resulted in the Southern New Jersey Jewish Colonies expanding and new areas developing to meet the influx. Some development occurred adjacent to the older Colonies or along the different Railroad lines that connected the wilderness to the cities.

As the Central New Jersey Railroad passed from Vineland to Bridgeton meant that it went through the wilderness and Rosenhayn. Two and half miles west of Rosenhayn in the wilderness and along the Railroad lay ground for the future Jewish Colony of Garton Road.

This Colony was to be different than all the preceding Colonies. This Colony would be made up of all agricultural endeavors. This new settlement would survive well into the 20th Century in tact!

Garton Road as a Colony was started by Russian immigrants in 1888. Twenty acres of bush land was purchased near Woodruff. The area was a neighbor to the Methodist village some two miles west of this wilderness.

Garton Road was a dirt thoroughfare that led to the Bridgeton-Vineland Turnpike. The area took its name from the man, Mr. Henry Garton who owned a lumber supply business near this dirt road.

This Jewish settlement would be independent of the neighboring sister Jewish settlement of Rosenhayn in many different ways. This distance between the settlements was to be measured along the Railroad itself. Later a Railroad station would be built at the point where the tracks crossed Garton Road.

Garton Road would stay a strictly agricultural settlement. These men in Aaron Rodesky, Solomon Schneiss, Osias Sommers, Abraham Feinstein, Mendel Silber, Isaac Malemut were later joined by Abraham Ostroff, Avrium Sherbekov and Mr. Rudoph plus their families. This was a time in helping each other to survive the wilderness. Their commitment was old world spun in belief. That meant that "being together is a family". This was the tradition of Menchkeit.

Initially these Jews walked to the settlement of Rosenhayn for Sabbath services. This two or three mile walk meant more than a walk that Mr. David would have to endure. The trail through the woods would be made in order for the pioneers to follow! Thus the isolation of the Garton Road community was outside of the realm of the Rosenhayn Community. This was a fact even though the walking distance was the same for some of those who lived at the outskirts of Rosenhayn.

Even though the Rosenhayn Jewish community made it easier for the two communities to share in services such as the location of a Jewish Cemetery in 1893, it was not enough. Ideology was a factor in this division. Workers in Rosenhayn were soon busy doing factory work while the Garton Road Jewish farmers continued to till the soil and never think of the sewing machine as a way to their future!

Garton Road Or Yisrael Congregation

By the mid 1890's a congregation in the Garton Road settlement was formed. The initial meetings took place in Abramham Feinstein's house. This led to services being conducted there for Sabbath and Jewish Holidays. These Jews followed the Sefardic minhag which was initially the same as the Rosenhayn congregation.

On August 31st, 1898, the congregation was incorporated in Bridgeton. This group called itself Or Yisrael or Light of Israel. A new law was adopted in 1898 for religious societies to become incorporated in the State of New Jersey.

The congregation banded together to build a Jewish house of worship. First, monies would have to be gathered together to pay for the new shul. The leader in the community was Aaron Rodesky who had vast riches in the old country, but he left them all behind for adventure in a free land called America. Aaron's wife, Betsy and her family played a role in the securing of the funds for the new shul. Betsy's brother was an actor on the Yiddish stage in New York. This group of Yiddish actors would come to the Alliance Hall to entertain the Jewish settlers and bring Jewish culture to the Pioneers of the land in the 1890's.

Mr. Rodesky, Mr. Rhinehart and Mr. Garner of Garton Road went on the train to New York to see the owner of the Yiddish Theatre Company. Mrs. Rodesky's brother was an actor in this company. The money was realized in the form of a loan and the shul was built.

Sharing of farm utensils and horses plus knowledge to till the land led to a strong bond in this community. These Jews not only banded together to build their shul but placed it in the middle of their work fields. The congregation affixed a large Mogen David atop the tallest building for miles around. This denoted a breaking away from the other synagogues in the Colonies.

The news of the First World Zionist Conference in 1897 helped to foster an ideology amongst the farmers in the Garton Road Colony. This Mogen David atop their shul was more than just a symbol to the settlers. The community's aim and development was aligned to this perspective on Jewish life. News was carried from Wilmington, Delaware by Mr. Klein of the Zionist's activities. A decision to remain agricultural was tied to this sentiment of supporting Zionism by Moses Herder of nearby Carmel Colony.

The ladies of the Colony rallied behind the Zionist cause and organized a group named the Sisters of Zion in 1902. Betsy Rodesky was selected as its leader and first president. This society maintained 15 members to discuss the plight of the Jew world wide and to raise funds for that purpose.



Garton Road Or Yisrael Congregation

Garton Road Or Yisrael Congregation

During this period of time, the congregation had 20 members for its congregation. This included 30 pupils being taught Yiddishkeit by one teacher who managed four classes. The community would boast 150 Jews in the early 1900's. Families were big and help was homegrown to tend the farm chores.

Abraham Goldman was brought to Garton Road to teach the Cheder from Europe. He settled on a farm and was a shochet. Abraham slaughtered the animals for food according to Jewish Law. His daughter, Clara would later marry Abraham Feinstein's son, Hyman.

Isaac Serata came to America in 1888. He settled in South New Jersey in the Garton Road Jewish Colony. With in five years and by 1892 witnessed Isaac becoming a naturalized citizen in Cumberland County. Isaac sent for his wife and later raised the ten children they were blessed with in America. Mr. Serata owned and operated the only Jewish business in Garton Road. A smoke house was built to process Keifer pears.

The Rodesky family arrived in Garton Road in the 1890's. First came Aaron Rodesky, who later sent for his wife in the old country. To Aaron and Betsey was born Rose, who tells us the story. Her parents were well to do in Russia and never had to work. Rose recalls her father saying, " when you come to a new place, you have to work to eat!"

Aaron would build a hotel in the country which attracted many Jewish people. The Garton Road community hall was built near the turn of the century and many Yiddish plays were performed here. People needed a place to stay and thus Rodesky's hotel was built.

The Sabbath was observed in the community. Each Friday evening, religious services were conducted and Saturday services were started promptly and lasted all day.

Isaac Serata convinced his friend in Chuna Alder in joining him here in America. Chuna would leave Russia for New Jersey and join his friend in their quest for a free atmosphere of religious toleration. These men were now free to be Jews!. Chuna immediately became the Gabbai of the Or Yisrael congregation as its new shul was built in the late 1890's

Abraham Feinstein would continue to lead the congregation as it moved from his house into their new beautiful wood frame Shul back in a cleared corn field a few yards from Garton Roads. All the farmers were Shomre Shabbas and they all went to the new shul in the early 1900's. They followed the bible, which tells of ensuring that their animals are taken care of first on the Sabbath. This meant that extra water and feed would be set out for the live stock before sundown on Friday, to ensure the animal's sustenance until after sundown on Saturday. The planting season was like wide adhered to in Garton Road. Sowing of seed and preparation of the fields did not take place on the Jewish Sabbath in the 1890's and early 1900's.

The Lipman model farm on Allivine Road near Norma was underwritten by Sam Fels who was a prosperous Jew in Philadelphia. On this farm was introduced a new crop to the Jewish Farm Colonies. Asparagus would yield extra income. But the Jews of Garton Road chose not to plant this tedious crop. Asparagus, itself was a root crop and took three years to yield its fruit. The crop had to be trimmed daily or part of the fruit would be lost. On the Sabbath, the Jews of Garton Road refrained from working in the fields and thus asparagus was not planted .

Harvest time was a joyous time in the Colony. But come the Sabbath not an apple was picked! The men would study in the late afternoon on Shabbas in the shul before the Havdalah service. The sweet scent of the spice box permeated throughout the shul as evening drew near. These men congregated in the shul which was surrounded by corn fields. They would discuss Jewish writings of the past and sip a glass of hot tea in an atmosphere free from fear of Pogroms. The Sabbath afternoon gave way to the evening and the conclusion of the Sabbath. These men were proud to be Jews and free to practice their ancestral beliefs plus doing it here in America.

In the mid 1890's, Abraham Ostroff arrived in America. Abraham always called himself Motte. From Kiev to Virginia, Motte fled to escape the Czar's Army. Motte was a furrier in the old country.

By 1898, Motte would leave Virginia for the New Jersey Jewish Colonies. He would settle in the Garton Road Colony. Motte bought a farm in conjunction with a partner in Jake Tornick. The Tornick boys were raised by Motte due to their father dying at an early age in Russia. The Tornick boys would leave for America, too. This partnership in the farm was a bond formed through active participation in family life in the old country that carried over to their new land of hope. This joint venture was a matter of survival in a new land.

The farm that these men purchased was near the established families of Sommers and Katz near the Bridgeton Road.

Motte's wife, Chassie was sent for three years after Motte arrived in America. Chassie traveled through seven countries with her three young boys. The flight from Russia left her penniless in France before being sent money by Motte for passage to America.

Chassie traveled with her three boys and brought with her what she could to the new world. This amounted to what she could carry. Included in this bundle of belongings were a pair of solid brass Shabbas candle holders and one set of silverware. Part of this package included pillows made with hand crafted feathers and a coin inside of each one for Mazel or good luck.

By comparison, Motte traveled lightly to the new world by bringing only his Teflin or prayer accessories and a pair of Siddurim. These prayer books were handed down to him from his father and were published in Prussia in the 1850's.



Together, the Ostroff's transplanted their Yiddishkeit to the new world in the late 1890's. Motte and Chassie would be blessed with two children in the new land by 1898. Meyer was later joined by Samuel, Saul, Ben, and Rose.

Rose Ostroff was born a decade after her parents arrived in Garton Road in 1909. Rose's early childhood was very difficult but so enjoyable. Running water was a luxury and happened only when it rained, so laughed Rose Ostroff. There was the outhouse that was a bathroom but only outside of the house. This was located a couple hundred feet from the house in back of the barn. This was a good walk from the house and the girls would go in pairs and chit-chat on the way. For the cows, water was hand drawn from the deep well. Twenty buckets per cow was needed to satisfy their daily drinking thirst.

Eating off the land was a custom brought to America by the Jews themselves. But actually living on the land at the same time resulted in some adjustments. Some practices never changed even here in America. Eating was one of those joys when it came time after school. This was treat time. A hunk of pumpernickel bread and Smaltz was a tasty treat. Bread was baked once every two weeks by the farmers themselves. Smaltz was a treat by itself! Chicken fat was cut into pieces and put into a frying pan. The chicken fat was heated and onions plus seasoning was added for more flavor. The fat would be melted down in this fashion. It was then put into a jar and used like butter by all in the Ostroff household.

Beet Borsht was a popular soup. This was made of a couple of beets and its own juices. To this was added pieces of potatoes and beans. Add a piece of flanken in its soup with other vegetables and this was a meal all by itself!

In the summertime, sour grass or Schav was made fresh on the farm. Wild grass which was big, leafy and similar to spinach was picked daily. The Italians in nearby Rosenhayn would pick dante lions to make their version. Add a little cream, the white of an egg and pieces of potatoes plus beans and mix! Potatoes and beans were staples that were used in most meals. This then became a most nutritious mix that was served hot in the winter and cold in the summer.

Louie Lahn would come and peddle his fish to the Jews in the countryside nearby Garton Road with his horse and wagon. His selection was well known amongst the Jewish farmer's wives. He brought along smelts, carp, pike and white fish. The fish he sold was live and they were put into tubs to live until needed by the Jewish women for whatever Yontav was close at hand.

The women would use a blunt club and hit the fish over the head to kill them. A grinder for fish? What grinder was available in the 1890's and early 1900's. The fish was chopped fine and made into fish balls or replaced in its skin and served cold. The fish eggs were made into a jellied candied sauce and garnished with carrots for flavor. This was a favorite treat for the men of the house and was called Jewish Caviar!

On Pesach, the house would fill with the pungent odor of fresh horse radish. Horse radish was made fresh for every Jewish festival. Home grown root of horse radish would be used in the recipe. Big white and long horse radishes were mixed with beets for added color. The beets and horse radish were grated on the reishbaisher or hand held grater. Vinegar was an important ingredient in the old fashioned recipe. Another favorite of the Jewish farmer was Chalzer. Fried onions and seasonings were cooked until golden brown. Add matzoh meal plus one egg and mix. Extra water was added to give it a loose texture. Vegetables such as carrots and celery was cut into this mix to create edible and Jewishly delicious food was created from the land. Nothing in the category of food was ever thrown away in this household. This mixture was then stuffed in the emptied and cleaned chicken's neck and baked. This Jewish stuffing helped to feed eight people in the Ostroff family.

Apart from the kitchen being the hub of the women's time being spent in laboring to create meals for the entire family was the Community Hall. The Community Hall was widely used by the entire community. Entertainers such as Alex Zible, the Fineman's and Leon Blank entertained the local people and their invited guests. The people who stayed during the summer months as boarders soon picked the label of being pleasure seekers. Thus the Yiddish term of Pleasurnikers were applied to them. Some were relatives and others were complete Jewish strangers, if that was a term! This was a time when visiting your Bubbe and Zayde were regular events every Shabbas in the country. Being with family and friends on Shabbas was the social contact that helped the pioneers to manage to overcome the loneliness and isolation that some Jewish settlers felt initially upon arriving in Garton Road.

The Rodesky Hotel became a landmark in the country. One hundred and fifty people would spend their summers here free to relax and enjoy the country. Meals were served all under Kosher supervision of the Jewish people who prepared the food. The guests from Philadelphia were often spotted in the kitchen checking to see that separate Kosher tubs for washing dishes were in use. Rev. Goldman from Garton Road was a shochet and would insure the Kashrus of the Hotel.

Yiddishkeit was introduced on the formal level as Rose was old enough to understand how to write. She would go to the public school in Rosenhayn for her beginning education. On the way back from school, Rose would go to Mr. Gotlieb's house for her Hebrew instructions. The Rabbi would stop here to teach the children. Sometimes, the children would not let the Rabbi in the door!

Rabbi J. Isagar was a little man and had a terrible temper. Ten children would come to the Gotlieb house for such instruction. Rose as a child chose to go to these sessions and her father allowed her to do so with his approval. When Mr. Gotlieb would come home, he would drive the children home with the horse and wagon.



It was not long before the children grew too big for the Gottleib's house. Rosenhayn did not have a " Hebrew School " in the early 1900's. The children were taught separately.

By the 1910's , the Chatuaqua Society was conducting a Sabbath School at the Morton Avenue Shul. But most children received their formal Yiddishkeit training in the private homes such as the Gottleib's with a melamed or religious person.

Mr. Gottleib's three children would benefit from this arrangement and it provided the social contact that was essential for all the children who lived nearby. But when the Chatuaqua Society started to conduct their program for the children in Rosenhayn it was time for Rabbi J. Isagar to move, too. The Melamed would now conduct these sessions of Yiddishkeit in the Community Hall of Rosenhayn. The idea spread to Garton Road. Franklin Hall was now in daily use for lesson of Jewish History, Reading and Writing of Yiddish plus understanding how to read the Torah.

The farm chores still had to be done when the children arrived home. To milk the cows or feed the horse was a daily chore, especially in the winter time. These Jewish farmers persevered and so did their children. The winter months were weathered with high felt inserts placed in their boots up to their thighs. Others gathered Smatahs or rags around their feet and legs to keep themselves warm in the winter.

Samuel Ostroff, Moisha's father, was educated for a life of farming at the Agricultural School in Woodbine.

In the 1910's, free monthly tickets to ride the train to Bridgeton for school purposes was in effect. The station master, Mr. Harry Wichter would dispense the tickets that were supplemented by Deerfield Township. If you could afford to go to school you went! If you couldn't afford clothes, you did not go, even if the train ride was free as recalled by Rose Rodesky. The children left the farm at an early age. Sometime they were as young as age ten. The children would go to work at doing anything in a small town factory or at someone else farm so their own family could make ends meet! Some children during this early time in the beginning part of the 20th Century would travel the countryside with a horse and wagon selling sour cream for 8¢ a quart!

Every house in Garton Road in the 1910's was Jewish. The Pleasurnikers would attend shul with the regular members throughout the year starting in the late spring. Every house took in boarders during the summer months to help with the farm finances. This was especially worthwhile when you look at the impact it had on the Or Yisrael Shul. Summer time services were always held with so many people able to make the minyan a regular function of the community. Everyone in the community paid 10¢ per week to help support the shul.

Chassie Ostroff insured that her children Sam, Saul and Ben were all sent to Cheder so she could see them become a Bar Mitzvah. During Chanukah, the children received Chanukah gelt or money. This was a reward for going to Cheder in the Ostroff family. This Jewish holiday signified the start of winter and the beginning of Cheder. This was long coming after the children helped with the fall harvest of potatoes. Some of the food used during this time remained in the deep wells to keep the food from spoiling. Some food was kept in the ground to preserve them, too! Salt hay was used as a bedding to keep vegetables from going bad in this manner.

Motte Ostroff conducted services on Shabbas. Avrumin Goldman, the shochet would conduct the High Holiday services.

Chassie Ostroff was just as involved and would serve as the Matriarch of the Garton Road Shul. All the women would crowd around her in the balcony to know about the order of the service and on cue when to wail. This was especially important for an important part of the service.

Chassie's one set of silver ware was kashered in the ground for their use during Pesach or Passover. This was done according to Jewish tradition carried over from the old world. From generation to generation, Yiddishkeit would be passed on even in a new country. Ben Ostroff was born in 1907. He celebrated his Bar Mitzvah at the Or Yisrael shul in 1920.

Teaching children Yiddish was done to give them culture and so as not to forget their heritage. Instruction in the Siddurim or daily prayer book was extensively done to ensure that the next generation could understand the prayers that they recited. Children were taught to daven daily and girls were included. Boys were taught to lay Teflin as they approached their thirteenth birthday.

Benny would continue to lay Teflin even after his Bar Mitzvah. Yiddishkeit was very strong in the Ostroff house and being passed onto the next generation as though they were in Russia. As long as the children were at home, the agrarian lifestyle and Jewish Tradition were observed. Once the children moved to the city and away from the farm, they became less observant in some instances. But their Jewish values never would leave them.

Each Colony had its own shul. In the course of time, Garton Road built its shul. Each mispocha or family would see to that the shul would be maintained. These shuls then became family shuls and loyalty was an honor in only one shul. Dual membership was not to be seen in the Jewish Colonies due to this factor.

Chaim in America was a religious man and a peddler at the same time. He would often stop at Garton Road and peddle his cotton and buttons. His other function was to transport news of the day from one house to next. His side job was to be a Yenta in a funny way!

In Garton Road, on Sucas, old man Hyman Stotter gave and brought the estrog plus luvav to all the houses in the community. He would say the prayers for the festival in the farm houses, too. Five cents per household was given to him for his services.

Depending on how the Jewish holidays fell that year, by Sucas time, the Pleasurnikers were all gone for the season. Right up until that appointed time, the kids would have to sleep on the floor or in the hay lofts. The children didn't mind giving up their beds for the guests. Come September, the farmers were their own bosses once more!

By 1919, the Garton Road community had grown from 20 Jewish farmers and their families in the early 1890's to 35 Jewish families by this time. Seventy five children were being taught about their Judaism at this time.

Meanwhile, the shul was seeing a changing of the generations, itself in progress. Mr. Greenhouse, Mr. Rabinowitz, Mr. Rosenthal were now the Balibatim or leaders in the synagogue. Abraham Wolf would donate a Porcas or curtain to cover the Ark. Morris Yankelowitz, a prosperous cattle dealer was a good bidder on the Aliyah each Shabbas. Each Aliyah or turn in being called to the Torah was an honor. You were expected to pay for this honor on Jewish festivals. This was one way in which the Synagogue could maintain itself.

An important part of the shul functioning was the use of the Shabbas Goi. This was a man that was found in John Zigman in the 1920's. By this time, some non-Jews were living in the community. The shul was outfitted with gas lights and John would come in and light the shul before the start of the Sabbath on Friday evenings. This was one way to ensure that the community was well taken care in terms of keeping to the prescribed rituals that surrounded the Sabbath. In America, there was another benefit of having this non-Jew involved in the function of the synagogue. This person turned out to be the good-will ambassador to the Gentile community in behalf of the Jews.

Jewish people made their own wine for the Kiddush that was recited in every Jewish farmer's house on Friday nights in Garton Road. In addition, some Jews made their own whiskey, too. Rev. Lankin was a shochet and a mohel in the Rosenhayn area at this time. On Pesach in the 1920's, Rev. Lankin sold the matzoh along with Rev. Malavsky to the Jews of Garton Road. During the Prohibition Era, when the making of one's own liquor was not allowed meant that Rev. Lankin's place was raided. Part of the whiskey making equipment and its spirits were tossed into the pot bellied stove to keep it out of the hands of the authorities.

In the late 1920's, the Fisher's place across the street from the Garton Road Community Center was a popular place for the Pleasurnikers. This was a Jewish place where wedding receptions were held. Dances on Sunday evenings took place here and package parties abounded at this location.

By now, the keepers of the shul were found in the Ostroff clan. But change was occurring on the farm. Some of the children of the second generation were leaving the farm for the city. Even though the boys left the farms to the elders, each Yontav meant that the children would return to the old farmstead to be with the family in shul. The Garton Road Shul did not have assigned seats but everyone knew his place. This was a strict matter of tradition since the 1890's.

Meyer Ostroff's farm burned down in the late 1920's. This initiated the dormant stage of the Or Yisrael Shul. Sabbath services were halted during this period due to the absence of Benny who moved his family to New York.

The Depression came to the country side slowly. The farm prices were down sharply. But it was always a struggle to get a fair price for the produce. The end result was always to make ends meet. The one advantage that the Jewish Farmers had over their city cousins was a constant supply of food on their tables. This persisted even at the height of the Great Depression.

The Depression era ushered in the sleeping time of the shul. The people who didn't lose their farms due to foreclosure on their mortgages still left the farm and went to the city for work. Any work was fine! Now the shul fell into a state of disuse. Rabbi Sacks was the man who conducted High Holiday services during this time.

Up until this time in the 1930's, the bima or stage was situated in the middle of the shul. The men would lay the Torahs on the table with a bannister that went all way around the reader's table. This Tabah was covered with a beautifully decorated table cloth at the time.

By the late 1930's, the Ostroff clan would return one by one to the Garton Road community. First came Motte back from Rosenhayn. Then came Sam and his family. By 1937, Benny and his family came back to the area. There was nothing for his family to eat in New York! The Ostroff's grew in number to 12 or 13 strong in terms of adult men. The minyan would once again flourish.

Some of the Ostroff's lived in the Community Hall during these difficult times. By the end of the Depression there was more gloom on the corn fields. But Jewish life would persist in this community even if the Spruce Street Shul closed or America entered World War Two! An influx of new comers or German Jews were welcomed into the community in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Some of the German Jews left Germany before the start of the War and came to the America for work and a livelihood.



## Garton Road or Yisrael Congregation

The two communities of Rosenhayn and Garton Road were very friendly towards each other in many respects except in terms of religious affiliation. The rivalry between the congregations meant loyalty to one community verses the other one.

History would reverse itself in this matter in the 20th century. For even as the Rosenhayn shul was closing, their members did not come to the Garton Road Shul. Instead there was an influx of new comers or German Jewish refugees who came to the area to settle. These people congregated in Mr. Lando's house initially upon arrival to the area. Land purchases were plentiful. These new men would help to bolster the Garton Road Shul since they were Shomre Shabbas and faithful to their religion as much as the Ostroff's. The new face of the minyan on Garton Road would include the Ostroffs, Rudolphs, Adlers and the new comers. These new comers included Lando, Piano, Nimton, Oppenheimer, Pearlstein, Berg, Cohen and Klebatt.

This was also the time when it was an honor to clean the shul before Yontav. This Kovad went to the Adler girls.

By the late 1940's, the Shul on Garton Road was in use once more on a regular basis. The shul was rededicated and its name was not the only change. The bima was moved from the center of the shul to up against the Mizrahi or eastern wall.

The roof leaked over the Aron Kodesh where the Torahs were stored in the Ark. A new outcove was built and the Aron Kodesh from the Spruce Street Shul which had recently closed was donated by Mr. Schribner. Mr. Schribner built a foundation for the new Aron Kodesh and also donated the electric Ner Talmid or Eternal Light to the Garton Road Shul. The perpetuation of the Spruce Street Shul was now completed. An outhouse was built behind the shul at this time.

Monies were being donated to the newly re-dedicated shul and a check book account was set up to usher in this new era. This is the first time that the new name of the shul is listed as Congregation Beth Israel. This was done directly on the printed checks.

This was certainly a new era. The 22 members of the Ostroff clan and others had renewed the shul to its former use. But the shul was not open on Shabbas anymore. This new era did not include the people who did not work on Saturday anymore.

The preceding generation were Sabbath observers and struggled through the years to make a living for themselves. They still honored the Sabbath. By the third generation of Jewish people on the land meant that this was not the case. This transition did not take place in one generation alone. For in the second generation which included the children of the pioneers themselves meant that the grown adults in the 1920's and 1930's would go to shul in the morning on the Sabbath and went to work in the fields in the afternoon.

Mr. Popovsky came to the Garton Road Shul as he was feuding with the congregation in Rosenhayn. By the 1950's, a New Comer was hired to conduct the services for the Beth Israel Shul. Erwin Shouck conducted the High Holiday services for some time.

Jack Ostroff recalls some timely thoughts on this time period as he was growing up. Jack recalls, "Who ever thought that their Zayde was going to die?" Motte lived until the year 1954. In the same breathe, Jack says, "who even thought of saving items from the time period in which all the Jewish farmers struggled. Everyone wanted to come out of that poverty. The smell of the old kerosene lamps would never leave the noses of the Jewish children growing up in the country on the farms. Jack loved those days but he is an exception to most in his generation.

The area was prospering in the 1950's. People are again moving away. This was the normal cycle of events in the country over the years as the Jews came to the area. The same would hold true for religious loyalty. For come Yontav, people would return to family, friends and shul. Some would come to say Yiskor or prayers for their loved ones. As much as the times changes the environment around the shul did not. Into the 1950's and beyond, the potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers grew in the fields with the corn stalks towering over them in a protective manner. The corn fields guarded the shul as much as the Ostroff's maintained the shul. Fifty people would attend High Holiday services.

For Simhas Torah, the boys would shower the girls and each other with clippings from the milkweeds that grew along the road side. Morris and Helen ( Popovsky ) were married in July 1950. An Oifesson was held the preceding Saturday before his wedding in the Shul. Morris was called to the Torah and read the portion for that week. A terrible car accident took place before this joyous occasion of the wedding the following week. Home prepared and cooked foods for a wedding was still a tradition in this community. Morris mom was delivering the home baked good to the shul when she was severely hurt in an automobile accident. She would live to see her son married later that week!

Jack and Mildred were blessed with a girl. Rabbi Shouck named her outside of the shul itself in the mid 1960's. This was done since the Rabbi would not allow the naming of a female child inside the shul! No naming service for a female child was prevalent in the area during this time period.

This was a special occasion but it was done near the time of the High Holidays. This was when the shul would be in use. Beverly of Basha was her given Hebrew name. When the Ostroffs had a son the Shul on Garton Road was open but for the second son it was a different matter. The Carmel Shul was used for this occasion.

Into the 1950's, old world tradition was maintained side by side with Jewish superstition. Taslich was conducted during the High Holidays at the nearby stream on Vineland Avenue near Mr. Sommers home. The custom of swinging a live chicken was prevalent amongst the people in this community. Casting away of one's sins in this fashion was a common practice for the people of Garton Road.

Belief in superstition is real. The translation of watching out for the evil eye was considered to be as important as religion itself in Russia. These customs were also brought with the immigrants that came to settle the land.

A red ribbon or a red string was usually tied to a baby's outerwear in order to protect the child from harm's way. Saying were popular when some one had passed away. This was done so the Evil Eye would not come and pester the person that said it in the first place. Lifting the ear upward when you sneeze after you spoke about someone who was deceased is another example of how powerful the beliefs of this nature meant to the people. These beliefs were then translated into customs. Rose Ostroff ( Marcus ) Sister-in-law , a relative of the founders of the large supermarket chain once known as Food Fair out of Philadelphia would not leave the house without putting on something red well into the late 1950's.

Rabbi Baruch Schwartz brother conducted services at the Garton Road Shul in the 1960's. Rabbi Schwartz conducted services for the nearby Norma Congregation.

To capture the feeling of the people in the shul at Yiskor time is of importance. People who you would not see all year round and those who would travel great distances to make the special journey to be at the shul for the special appointed time were indeed a sight to behold. The tradition of saying Yiskor by people who only had deceased relatives was a custom brought over to America from Europe. If you had a living parent, you knew to leave the shul so the remaining people could begin the Yiskor service. Even if the person you were saying Yiskor for was dead for 60 years. His or her name was " called " in this synagogue as part of the tradition.

After World War Two, all people were asked to stay and participate in the Yiskor service. This was done in remembrance of all the 6 million Jews who perished in Hitler's gas chambers. Who was going to say Yiskor for this mass of humanity? Tradition in this manner and fashion changed. First, second, third and fourth generation removed from the pioneers along with the New Comers stayed to recite the prayers. Some people in the group even lost family members in the Holocaust. The Rudolph boys would stay to recite Yiskor for their mother after their Bar Mitzvah days. For Rosh Ha Shannah, the Shofar was sounded throughout the fields. The Ostroff's always took great pride in sounding the Shofar. Mr. Toyster would join them in later years. With the conclusion of the Yom Kippur services meant the blowing of the Shofar. There was one exception to this resounding event. If Yom Kippur fell on the Sabbath, the Shofar would not be sounded all day. The fast was broken by the people in their own homes. But in the late 1940's, the Adlers and Ostroffs would start a tradition in the shul by serving Whiskey and cake. Family for many of the New Comers in the congregation meant the people of the shul! This tradition would last for the entire next generation.

In the 1970's, Morris and Helen Ostroff would host the breaking of the Yom Kippur fast since their house was close to the Shul. The 1970's witnessed the challenge to get a person hired to conduct the High Holiday services. A man from an orthodox Yeshiva in New York was brought in to lead the congregation in services for the holidays.

Finally Danny Fried would do the services. Later Rabbi Klineman would begin the services. One year in the 1970's, the shul was closed. This dramatized the difficulty in securing someone to daven for the High Holidays. Meeting conducted prior to the High Holidays were poorly attended. Benny Ostroff would bring some people from Vineland to help make the High Holiday minyan.

The Shul would open again in the late 1970's. But by this time, Benny, Sam, Meyer, and Sam Ostroff had all passed away. The five generations of the Ostroffs being the keepers of the wooden frame house of prayer would give way to time.

Meantime, the Shul in Carmel was open for Shabbas services. Frank Schwed and Max April offered Sam Ostroff before he passed away to combine the two shuls together. This decision was based upon an agreement made by these men. Garton Road would have Rosh Ha Shannah services and the Carmel Shul would host the Yom Kippur services. The problem was that Carmel had no one to daven for them. Rabbi Klineman was offered to daven for the Carmel shul. But in the end there was never any combination services. The Garton Road shul and its service to its community lasted close to 100 years. Mrs Helen Ostroff is a key link in the transition of the Garton Road community. She is a board member of the Carmel Shul. Carmel was where her father was the Gabbai for many years. The cycle has become complete. Helen's maternal grandparents were founding members of the Carmel Shul in the last century.

The pioneers are gone and so is the outhouse that blew down after a wind storm in the late 1960's. But the wooden frame Synagogue on Garton Road still stands guarded by the fruits and hard labor of the Jewish Colonist all these years. The corn fields guard the entrance to this sacred place after all this time with its white wooden Mogen David marking this building as something special in the wilderness

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