

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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Greater Delaware Valley  
Philadelphia, PA.

Vineland Ahavas Achim Plum Street

As more Jews decided to come to Vineland in the early days of the twentieth century there was created an atmosphere of Jewish opinions. This period of time was marked by the more traditional Jews arriving in town to work and live. The newly arriving Jews were Sabbath observers. This differed from the initial group. A second congregation was thus formed to protest the first congregation. The first synagogue was too Americanized for many of the newly arriving Jews in Vineland.

These newly arriving Jews were merchants and manufacturers of clothing. By 1903, the second group of men gathered enough followers to establish this congregation. This group identified itself as Ahavas Achim and dissenting from the first synagogue since it too was named Ahavas Achim.

A president was selected in Ben Rudnick and the Cantor was found in David Greenberg. The members would total over two minyans. By October 3, 1904 a charter was granted to the Congregation by the State of New Jersey. This enactment of history was important so that the group could lay down its rules and regulation in the form of By-laws.

Trustees were founded in well known personalities in the Jewish community for Ahavas Achim. They included Morris Gassel, Max Rubinoff, Lazar Klure, John Joseph and Abraham Niggen. These men decided that a by-law of the synagogue would not allow a person to become a member of the congregation unless they were a Sabbath observing Jew.

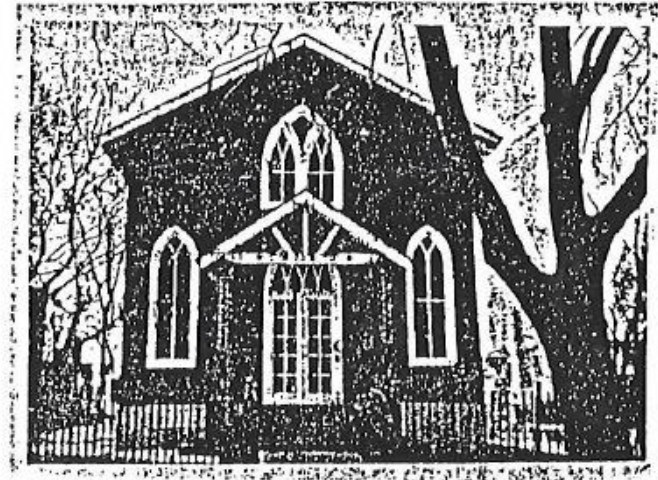
Twenty-six charter members founded this congregation. They included Louis Berstein, David Kotok, William Traiman, the Shochet, Rev. Jacob Cohen, Jules Sheuberg, Eli Hoffman, S. Rubinoff, Edward P. Weiner, Benjamin Rudnick, H. Agranofsky, Max Michalowsky, Charles Levy, K. Rothman, Louis Mitnick, John Tucker and S. Golper.

The people believed in their viewpoint as the correct one. These men would not eat the meat that was slaughtered in Vineland at the time. They sent to Rabbi Block's congregation in "New Jerusalem". This was located in Philadelphia's very traditional neighborhood along the Delaware River and North of Lehigh Avenue near Aramingo and Cambria.

Soon the group started to trust the Kosher butcher in Vineland that set up shop on 6th Street. The congregation grew rapidly. Ahavas Achim would seek a new building after a few years in a building remodeled into a Synagogue that had dirt floors to step on as one prayed to the Almighty G-d.

The idea of attacking Americanism was not a good idea during this very trying time period. These Jews professed to uphold the tradition of Jewish Law in America. But they had to revert back to the Puritan idea of levying fines against members for not attending services. This would amount to 50¢

A Hebrew School was the first institution which was started in this environment. A Hebrew School was started and a Mikvah was built in the community for immediate use! Those two items are essential if Jewish communities want to exist more than one generation in a small town.



AHAVAS ACHIM  
CONGREGATION  
PLUM ST., VINELAND, N. J.



## Vineland Ahavas Achim Plum Street

Before the first decade of the 20th century came to a conclusion, congregation Ahavas Achim would begin to build a synagogue. The Talmud Torah and Mikvah were located on the premises where the congregation would build their new synagogue.

During this time a rabbi was not necessary because the men could daven for themselves. For the High Holidays they hired a Cantor to chant the service and embellish it fully.

The Congregation grew in numbers as more Jews arrived in Vineland from the surrounding country-side during the 1910's. The end of an era for the Jewish Colonies was happening and Jews from Norma and Alliance were taking up residence in Vineland during this time. The Vineland Jewish community would also swell from the influx of newly arriving East European immigrants as Russian mobs continued their Pogroms against the Jews after World War One and into the early 1920's.

Barney Woldar and his family were amongst this new group of immigrants to Vineland in the early 1920's. Barney was sponsored by his step-father, Mr. Sendrow of Salem, New Jersey. Barney would settle in Vineland and ultimately take over Mr. Levy's Butcher shop on Plum Street across from Ahavas Achim.

Barney Woldar was a Shomer Shabbas Jew and immediately joined the Plum Street Shul. The Talmud Torah behind the shul served as a social hall, too. For Simchas Torah, in 1923 was celebrated with the men of Ahavas Achim parading with the Torah inside the synagogue. Later, the men and women would go to the Talmud Torah to refresh themselves. This was Barney Woldar's initiation into the community.

Rev Mallin was a leader in the shul at the time and a Shochet. He would teach at the Talmud Torah in the afternoons.

The Vineland area was hopping in the 1920's. Mr. Lubin was in the movie house business and operated Rainbow Lake. A Pavilion was erected and activities for many Jewish people would occur by the lake throughout the season. Dances were held and Jewish people met their spouses here during the height of the 1920's.

Red Skeleton would come down and entertain at the Lubin Pavilion. Walkatons around the Lake were popular for many of the Pleasurniks that came to enjoy themselves as well as the local Jewish population.

This was the era of the Jewish Hotels in the countryside. They included Finkle, Schrank and Rodeski.

Barney Woldar served Finkle's on Rainbow Lake all year round. This would last from Pesach to Sucos. He sold them all their chickens and meats. Manny Woldar as a child still can remember that you had to "ingratiolate" these people. Manny Woldar was respected as a decent and honest man. When you have 500 to 600 customers per week at one location during the summer it was necessary to have a loyal and honest purveyor who could deliver and supply the trade with quality Kosher meats.

These hotels were loyal to their clientele. Each hotel had a different clientele. Meats were taken in from Chicago for this trade. Litwack and other families in Cumberland County did inspect the meats and Barney would deliver or cut the exact portions for Finkle's trade.

Mr. Mallin was Manny's tutor for religious instruction. Mr Mallin's format was very strict for young Manny. After Shul on Shabbas, Manny would return home and have lunch. Then he would go to Mr. Mallin's home on Plum Street near Fourth to study and know Chumash or the Bible. Mr. Mallin would tell young Manny that, "this study was for a good purpose and not just hour on end." "To know how you are a Jew is as important as being the son of a Kosher Butcher".

Instead of playing ball, Manny would be subjected to the rudiments of learning his lessons faithfully.

Rev Mallin watched Manny carefully during their sessions. Manny would recite his lessons to Rev Mallin on Shabbas afternoon and Rev Mallin would fall asleep. But as soon as Manny would err in his lessons, Rev. Mallin would jump right up and correct him!

Manny can say that he was missing so much as his friends were free to play. But later in life, Manny knew that it was the correct thing to do. Meantime his friends went to the Lubin Grand Theatre on Landis Avenue for Saturday matinees.

Manny would go to shul with his father as did other children who lived on Plum Street. This was done before they ate dinner at home. Twenty five children were part of the Friday evening services. But no little girls were at the synagogue. Instead, they helped their mothers in preparation for the meal that ushered in the Sabbath.

When the congregation used to sing Sholem Aleichem, everyone nearby the Shul on Plum Street could hear the excitement. Shabbas was Coming! Shabbas was Coming! Everyone sang cheerfully and loud.

Barney Woldar would lead the Friday evening services. This was common since Barney did most of the Davening for Rosh Shannah and Shabbas year round.

Morning minyan was a important part of the activities at the Plum Street Shul. This aspect would never change. There weren't many times at the Shul when someone was not saying Kaddish in the 1920's. This was the end of an era for many families who were children of the Jewish pioneers which settled in the Jewish Colonies in the late 1890's. Some one would run over to Barney Woldar's store and get a man to complete a minyan for the mid day service.

Barney Woldar was an integral part of the Plum Street Shul in many ways. Reading Torah on Monday and Thursday morning was a regular event in this synagogue in the 1920's. Minyan started at 7 A.M and Torah was read at 7:30 A.M. Then the men went to work.

The Jewish Holidays counted in the Woldar home as a way of life. This translated into ritual. For Pesach, this feeling started early with the scrubbing of the floors in Woldar's home. Freshing up the kitchen with a new coat of paint was usual everytime this holiday approached.

Vineland Ahavas Achim Plum Street

Goldstein's Delicatessen on Landis Avenue would be hurt if Barney would take in retail Cold Cuts. Bulk selling of Cold Cuts by the pound would disrupt Goldstein's business. Barney carried Roast Beef, Lamb Chops, Steak and ground meat. But the tastes of the next generation of Jews was changing. The customers outside of Vineland would ask for Pastrami, Corn beef and Salami.

Many people outside of the community viewed Barney as a Saint. Jew, Gentile and Negro alike all respected this man. Barney loved people and he would never see anything wrong.

His familiar quote when a negative comment was passed about a person was, " But look how nice he smiles. "People to this day talk about Barney as though he was their uncle or grand father. Barney shared his Nushuma or spirit with everyone he came in contact with in his store and on the road. The people loved him.

After Lag B Omer and Shavous came Tish Ab. This was observed in the Plum Street Shul with children in attendance. Vineland was a Boro or a District in the 1920's that was very closely knit. Because of living quarters in this community were so close to another meant a perfect reproduction for the Shetle life that existed in Europe. Ninety percent of the Jews in the District lived two or three blocks from a Shul.

Barney Woldar would help to conduct the services in the Plum Street shul for a couple of years. Then a sudden change in the congregation started to take place. The community was growing older and the next generation wanted to make a statement of its own. They did not want to be strictly " orthodox " and thus splintered into another group.

The third congregation in Vineland in less than 25 years would become reality. Barney Woldar broke with tradition during this time and followed the splinter group that eventually became Congregation Beth Israel. Barney Woldar would daven for both congregations during this transition in the Vineland Jewish Community.

This arrangement could have worked but then Rev. Mallin would affiliate with Beth Israel and Ahavas Achim was severely short of knowledgeable daveners.

Newly appointed Grand Rabbi of Atlantic City stepped in and supplied a much needed Rabbi for Ahavas Achim. Rabbi Moshe Sharipo arrived in this country via Philadelphia and was directed to Atlantic City by Philadelphia's Rabbi B.L. Levinthal. In turn Rabbi Sharipo would place and direct Rabbi Simon Eisenstein to Vineland. Rabbi Eisenstein would come to supervise the Kashuruth of the Greater Vineland Jewish Community.

In Vineland at this time was three cheders. The Plum Street Shul had the largest attendance of any up until this time. The Shamus of the Plum Street Shul was found in Mr. Disson. He lived next door to the synagogue. Mr. Disson was more than a caretaker. He loved to open up the shul at the outset of dawn for the morning minyan. The men would arrive early by walking to synagogue. The inspection of the prayer books and the Tabah or reader's table in the middle of the shul was a daily ritual for him. A warm face and a Sholem Aleichem greeted every Jew at the entrance to the shul as they arrived to compose a minyan for morning prayers.

In the afternoons, Mr. Disson would see to it that 55 Jewish children would receive their inculcation in traditional Jewish ritual through education. Mr. Disson held the congregation together as times changed in Vineland.

The congregation survived the split in the community and Rabbi Eisenstein would help to unite the Ahavas Achim congregation back into one cohesive group.

The 1930's would bring a new dimension to the community. The Great Depression would come to town and affect the business community on Landis Avenue with a hard blow. The synagogues managed to survive this scourge.

Rabbi Eisenstein contributed to the welfare of the community in a helpful way. He would supervise the Kashruth of the community and he would add his values to the community as well. Rabbi Eisenstien was a good man and an understanding one. Manny had respected this man for many years to come due to his Jewish values. First Rabbi Eisenstein was not intimidated by people who had money. He was just intimidated by money period!

His explanation to Manny was inspiring for a lifetime. As Rabbi Eisenstein showed Manny through his house he pointed to the furniture and lamented, " He had nothing to leave his children". He had always been a hard working man, but Oh So Poor! Rabbi Eisenstein brought Manny over to a side desk and showed him what he was leaving his children. He was a scribe and was writing the Torah in book style. This was done all in Hebrew.

Study in the community during this time period was important. On Shabbas afternoon the men of Plum Street would study with the Rabbi. Psalms were often read on the week days and recited by individuals as a carry over of tradition from Europe.

Even though Rabbi Eisenstein was very strictly orthodox his vocabulary and phrasology was friendly. This would make you feel like his best friend.

The community in the mid 1930's began to see an influx of German Jews who were fleeing from Hitler's Germany. The 1935 Nuremberg laws were clearly directed against the Jews. The Jews were starting to leave. By 1938 and the famous day in November of that year ushered in a new era in the Vineland community. Krstyal Knoch (Night) was when all the windows of Jewish businesses were smashed and hoodlums ransacked the synagogues in Germany. Synagogues were destroyed and books were burned. Jewish people quickly realized that pogroms were coming to Germany

The number of Jews who came to the Vineland area during the Second World War amounted to a couple hundred German Jews. The impact of the German Jew on the Vineland community could hardly be appreciated at this time. The fact that the community would be dependent upon this group of Jews as part of the community for many years to come remained unforseen.

Menasse Scribner, Maynard Nussbaum and Sali Mayerfeld are known to have helped the Plum Street Shul move into the future. Later would follow, Israel Herdfeld, Israel Koitz and William Gotsdiner. Of course one can not forget the name Kurt Joseph when one mentions the change of the Plum Street Shul in the 1940's.

The 1940's would see a change in this congregation. When congregations were losing members and having a difficult time making a minyan during the War it was the exception that the Plum Street Shul would always have a service with at least 10 to 18 men every day.

A brother-in-law to the Mayerfelds would embellish the service with a cantorial voice. This voice belonged to Rev. Ludwig Freimark. He was a Shochet for the community for a long time.

Rabbi Eisenstein would continue to nurture this congregation for another 20 years into the 1960's. But changes were occurring all the time in the general community. The fact that less Kashruth observance was being practiced meant that the Plum Street Shul was quickly becoming a central focus of the community in this area.

Leaders from amongst the ranks of the synagogue would lead this congregation for many years. Shama Cygler was one of the people.

Another person was Kurt Joseph. Kurt came to America in November 1938 on Krystal Knoch. He was born in Germany in 1919.

By 1941, Kurt was a good member of the Vineland community. He received his official papers stating that he was now a citizen of the United States of America. Kurt was drafted into the Army before December 7, 1941! Before the Government could send you overseas to fight they had to make you a citizen. After 6 months of residency you were made a citizen! He served with the 10th Armored Cavalry. Kurt would travel with the Over Seas Service or OSS as an interpreter.

By 1946, Kurt was sent back to Europe. After the war he stayed in the military for four more months. By seniority you were given points to allow your discharge. But first his unit would "liberate" death camps within Germany. He was able to return to his old home town of Trier as part of this expedition. This was the oldest town in Europe and only five miles from Luxonberg.

In the Army, Kurt kept Kosher by refusing to eat non-Kosher foods where ever he was sent!

Upon arriving back in America meant that he would meet his wife all over again. His luck was no luck at all. For it was determined in the heavens that he should meet his future wife in New York City on the first Shabbas he would spend in America. This was Bersheit or meant to be.

What motivated Kurt to leave Germany in 1938? Mr. Joseph was an educated man and could clearly see a pattern of harm that followed other "legal actions" in other countries that were directed towards the Jews.

The May Day laws of Czarist Russia in 1882 were duplicated in the Nuremberg Laws in Germany in 1935. The list of refusals and outright Anti-Semitism aimed at the Jews were increasing. A German Jew could not employ a maid. A Jew could not be a doctor or a college student. Ninety percent of the business that Jews traditionally did for a living was now banned!

Every Jew wanted to leave Germany. It was just a matter of knowing where to go. Many Jews would come to America but there was a quota of 21,000 per year that were allowed to immigrate. In Germany at this time there were over 600,000 German Jews. As Kurt put it, "if America would take everyone they would have come over to the land of the Free."

The American Government acted in defiance of Humanity when it sent the ship St. Louis or the voyage of the damned back to Nazi Germany. This is what made Kurt realize that he had to join the United States Army and assist his fellow Jews in a different way in order so they could live!

For some German Jews, Palestine was a choice of escape. The American Government required that you have a sponsor to come to this land. Kurt had some real experience in this area as a German Jew before he decided to come to America.

In 1935, Kurt was 16 and attended a Yeshiva in Germany. A notice on the bulletin board notified the students of an opportunity for them to participate in a voyage to Palestine. Six or seven children were picked out of 200 students. His name was selected with the others. These children were sent to England in the beginning of 1937. The children arrived in the Scottish Highlands. Kurt's parents were in the cattle business. He knew how to milk cows.

Once in England he was considered an Alien and had to register monthly. During his stay in England during 1937, Chancellor Baldwin issued a White Paper allowing no more immigration to Palestine.

Kurt remembers clearly this time in his life. The Government of England did not want this kind of publicity. Now Kurt had a choice. He could have stayed in England and been separated from his parents. But instead he chose to return to Nazi Germany. In the meantime he made contact with his relatives in America. But he needed his papers to come to America. Not enough money existed to bring him and his parents out of Germany. The choice was clear. The next generation must survive! His parents sent him to America to be safe!

His future was waiting for him in America. Hilda, his wife to be was related to the Mayerfelds of Landis Township. Hilda would visit on the farms as a youngster. Hilda did not like the city.

Upon his discharge from the Army, Kurt found himself with no occupation. Mutually they came to Southern New Jersey to be Chicken Farmers.

This was an orthodox community in the outskirts of Vineland where the Jews lived. They farmed the land and raised chicken and lived a Kosher life. This was exactly what Kurt could do for a lifetime. His true love for cattle would have to be casted aside for a 15 acre chicken farm.

This was the late 1940's and the quality of Jewish life was changing in the community for the better. More and more displaced persons would come to this area from Poland, German and Hungria. The Plum Street Shul would grow.

The idea of living a life according to Halachic ideas was ever present in the mind of Kurt and his wife.

The Plum Street Shul had changed over the years. The congregation had its beginning with the idealogical difference of Sabbath observance in Vineland. Most of the manufacturers of clothing which was brought to the Norma Railroad Station were now moving to Vineland in the early 1900's. There was a mix of Shomre Shabbas Jews and others. Vineland was a non-Jewish town. This meant that Kosher facilities and meat was not available here until the later part of the first decade of the 20th century. Jon Joseph was the first Jew to bring his manufacturing factory to Vineland. This was the up and coming richer class of Jews in Cumberland County. They were not well-to-do yet!

They had to find more workers. In the days of limited automobiles meant that it was not an easy journey from Norma to Vineland some five miles away. No roads existed except for the Bridgeton Pike. Only the train connected the two towns. A great deal of learning and education was fostered in the Plum Street Shul and the Talmud Torah over the next generation into the 1940's.

But by the late 1940's only a fragment of the once lively Orthodox Hebrew Ahavath Achim would exist. The Mayerfeld's moved to Norma and Kurt Joesph would move in that direction, too.

Kurt joined Ahavath Achim in 1946. Ten to fifteen Jewish families was all that remained associated with Ahavath Achim during this time. The average age of the men were in their 70's and early 80's.

Rabbi Eisenstein was here since the late 1920's and supervised the Kashruth of the Vineland community while being affiliated with Ahavath Achim.

The German Survivors of the Holocaust began to arrive with the other displaced persons to the Vinleand area. They came to buy chicken farms and to be close to a Shul! That meant walking distances for Shomre Shabbas Jews. By 1947, 50 people belonged to Ahavath Achim. It was growing.

The whole area was growing. This cycle would last into the 1950's. Then there was a great change in the Jewish country side.. The egg business went bust and Jews began to leave the area once more. The Ahavath Achim Synagogue survived this time period with little effect since it was in the city of Vineland.

Kurt's reflection on this time period are somewhat different. Jews couldn't make a living and they left for the big cities. They didn't buy other failed Jewish places. No one in the late 1950's bought chicken farms in Vineland, least of all the Jews.

Kurt decided to stay and diversified. He started a Kosher chicken and egg route in the late 1950's and continues into the 1980's.

The fact that the Plum Street Shul did not move is representative of the Greater Delaware Valley in terms of its orthodox synagogues. In the 1960's, Rabbi Eisenstein would retire after serving the congregation for over 40 years. Rabbi Nafhtali Schwartz would serve this congregation in conjunction with the Norma synagogue. The synagogue stayed in Vineland and was redecorated. But air conditioning would still be a luxury for this congregation as it had been for sixty years. Finally in the hotter days of 1972 a fund drive to install this much needed relief was completed.

As the Brewster Road Shul closed in the early 1970's it merged with the Plum Street Shul. People were honored for terms of service to the synagogue. But more important was the fact that no matter how much the congregation and the community would change this synagogue would belong to the committed Jew who observed the Sabbath!

The congregation was going through changes of attrition and old age as the Bi-Centennial approached in 1976. This congregation is not made of Frum people as much as it is made of committed Jews to Judaism.

The Jewish holidays will remain an important part of the Plum Street Shul as it has over this entire century in Vineland. All pilgrimage holidays are celebrated with a minyan. By the 1980's a different approach to celebration of Jewish Holidays would be noticable at the Plum Street Shul. This synagogue would prepare for Shavous as it did in years goneby. Visting relatives would add to the ranks of the congregation as the summer drew near. The summer would usher in a another period of prayer with Tish Ab in Mid-summer. Orthodox congregations do not take "prayer breaks" as Kurt refers to Conservative and Reform congregations in the Greater Delaware Valley. Kurt is especially happy to give praise to G-d 365 days a years! This is the teachings of his Judaism carried over to America. He quips, " why should it change now".

For Tish Ab which commemorates the destruction of the Temples in Jersalem over two millennium is celebrated with three minyans and everyone fasts on that day as part of the ritual. The men sit and read Lamentations and recite Pslams. This time of the Jewish calendar was considered for a Holocaust memorial but was turned down by a majority of the congregation.

Now as the days of late August turn to September a sense of the High Holidays are ushered into this community. In the late 1980's, ushers in a realization that the community has changed as it aged into the modern period. Selicos ushers in the start of the High Holidays. It is traditionally observed with mid-night services the Sabbath before the start of Rosh Shannah. Now in 1988, Ahavath Achim celebrates this time in the Jewish Calendar according to Halacha. Services are conducted the following morning before the sun comes up. The older congregants can not see in the dark to drive.

Vineland Ahavas Achim Plum Street

Rabbi Joseph Loebenstein joined the congregation after his father passed away and the Brewster Road congregation folded. Now Rabbi Loebenstein is charged with leadership of the congregation like his dad with the Brewster Road Shul.

This is a very proud time for the congregation. For in 1987 at Chanukah, a minyan was held every night for the children and men alike to join in.

A summary of the history of this congregation over the last thirty years would include many names but changes are the mainstay of this synagogue. On Shabbas afternoons, you can not have a second minyan. Rabbi Loebenstein walks an hour and a half to shul. He gives a lecture on the Talmud after services. For one hour in the afternoon on Saturday there are discussions of the Bible as in the past. Rabbi Eisenstein would give lesson on Gemora and Mishna because the men had a greater understanding of the works.

Today none of the Shuls nearby have a paid rabbi except Congregation Beth Israel. Today, the budget for the year is \$5,000 to \$ 6,000. The members that make up the congregation make up the expenses.

You can not have a Rabbi making \$30,000 for a limited number of people. Just being a Rabbi does not constitute a paid salary in a small synagogue. Rabbi Eisenstein over the years made his living as head of the Kashruth Council in Vineland. There was not one small Shul in the area over the last 35 years that had a paid Rabbi. To hire a Cantor from the outside was rare, too. It is fortunate that these shuls were blessed well with men well versed in their Judaism sufficiently to conduct the affairs of the congregation by themselves.

Rabbi Loebenstein today doesn't receive payment from the shul. Mr. Kurt Joesph paid the highest compliment to Rabbi Loebenstein when he said, " Rabbi Loebenstein is the biggest Benefactor of the Shul. " " He gives more than anyone else" Today 35 people attend the Plum Street Shul for High Holidays and daily minyan. This congregation celebrates every Jewish Holiday with a minyan. It is Yontav in Vineland that counts!

Reference Source Credit

- American Jewish Yearbook 1907
- Article in the Cumberland County Jewish Chronicle May 1984
- Taped interview with Kurt Joseph # 312 12/23/87
- Taped interview with Manny Woldar #344 2/27/89
- Taped interview with Joseph Loebenstein # 346 and 347 3/17/89

Certificate of Incorporation ) We, Nathan Folstein, Joseph Kaverberg, Herman  
of ) Mennies, Louis Berstein, Yudel Tucker, Hyman  
The Congregation of the ) Levy, Hyman Wachter, John Tucker, Lazar Klure  
Children of Jacob, of Yld. ) and Gerson Kishner, hereby certify, that we,  
the above named persons, were duly and regularly

electd by a plurality of votes of the members who regularly contribute to the support of a religious society which has its place of meeting for public worship at and in a brick building situate on the south side of Grape Street between Third and Fourth Streets, in the Borough of Vineland, Cumberland County, New Jersey.

We further certify, that at least ten days notice by an advertisement in writing was duly set up in open view at the said place of meeting; which said meeting took place at the time advertised, at said usual place of meeting, for the purpose of electing trustees for the purpose of incorporating the said society.

We further certify, that the charter members of the said religious society in addition to the trustees elected, as aforesaid, are, Abram Higgin, Abraham Lipitz, L. Leverman, Harry Tuff, H. Monbit, A. Gidenstein, M. Levin, S. Mitnick, H. Levy, S. Lieberman, S. Hoehberg, S. Rubinoff and H. Cohen.

We further certify, that the name assumed by the said religious society is "The Congregation of the Children of Jacob, of Vineland".

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we, the said Trustees, have hereunto set our hands and seals, this ninth day of September, nineteen hundred and eight.

Signed, sealed and executed. )

by all ten persons named. ) Nathan Folstein (SEAL)

in the presence of ) *ישראל* (SEAL)

Henry S. Alvord ) (Hebrew for Jacob Kaverberg)

his ) Herman X Mennies (SEAL)

Mark ) Louis Berstein, Sec. (SEAL)

Yudel Tucker (SEAL)

(Yudel Tucker)

H. Levy (SEAL)

*ישראל* (SEAL)

(Hebrew for Hyman Wachter)

John Tucker (SEAL)

(Written for him at his request in his presence by his son.)

L. Klure (SEAL)

(Lazar Klure)

*ישראל* (SEAL)

(Hebrew for Gerson Kishner)

Received and recorded September 12, A. D. 1908, at 8 o'clock, A. M.

Vineland, New Jersey became the crossroads of the Southern New Jersey region. This area attracted many different nationalities to the region. Jewish growth and development began in the region in the period following the Civil War. For indeed Vineland itself was founded in this era.

From Woodbine to Philadelphia and from Salem to Atlantic City describes the coordinates of this historical area. Jews began to criss-cross the region in the late 1880's. First by horse and wagon and later by the railroads. Jewish settlement initially took place in all the above areas except Vineland for a good many years. Resettlement of the Russian Jews was directed towards the country-side all around. Urban living was not a viable option even if it meant a small town. For this lifestyle could be found in many Eastern seaboard towns.

The transplantation to the farm land was to be short lived. Immigrants conducted High Holiday services in Vineland in the mid 1880's. This was a temporary venture for the agriculturally inclined Russian Jews. But a change was underway in the 1890's. Vineland became known as a nice place to settle. The Jewish farmers left the soil for an urban environment. The Jewish manufacturers found they could attract cheaper labor into their factories and not necessarily Jewish people.

By the late 1890's, the foundation of a Jewish community was built one Jewish family at a time! Some Jewish farm families moved off the land and into the city to upgrade their life styles. The Boyd business directory of Vineland was teeming with Jewishly owned concerns. Landis Avenue was a drawing card that not many towns in Southern New Jersey could boast. The wide Avenue named for the founder of the area was great for business and attracted people far and wide.

The need to create a minyan was tremendous. This group of Jews met in the closing years of the 19th Century in Vineland for public Jewish worship. But come the High Holidays they would return to larger Jewish centers to attend services. Finally in November of 1905, the first Jewish congregation of Vineland was organized. Lazar Klure, a feed mill owner was elected President of Agudas Achim. A relative in Abraham Niggin was elected Secretary and Max Gassel of the Alliance Jewish Colony was Treasurer. The members would total 12 in that year.

By 1908 there was a change in the Jewish Community and a second congregation was thus formed. The community was changing with the arrival of more Jewish families. Now a second congregation was chartered on September 9th, 1908. The organizers of the religious group of Jews included Nathan Folstein, Joseph Kaverberg, Herman Mennies, Hyman Levy, Hyman Wachter, John Tocker, Lazar Klure and Gerson Kishner. These men represented a split in the Jewish community over ritual. The preceding congregation was too strict and severe in observing ritual. Lazar Klure, Louis Berstein and Yudel Tocker, brother to John joined in the spirit of good brotherhood to separate themselves from the other congregation and helped to form the Children of Jacob.

The late 1910's brought a new era into being in the Vineland Jewish Community. The newly arriving immigrants came to Vineland in lesser numbers and the Jewish community grew less than the preceding ten years. But the end of first Jewish pioneers generation was starting to take place. Jews settled on the vacant land and carved a life from the soil. Now it was time to retire. This meant that many Jewish families would leave the farmstead for the first time in over 15 years. This would include the families of Jacob Greenblatt from Brotmanville and Isaac Farber of Monroeville. This was the time of the great exodus of British Jews from England, too. These three men would change the character of the synagogue in the early 1920's.

All these men had one thing in common. They were Sabbath observers. It is important to understand the background of each of these men. Isaac Farber's history is a fascinating one to view. Isaac arrived in America in the mid 1890's. Isaac came to America from Latvia and settled in Philadelphia. He sent for his wife in the old country. The couple were not yet married. Mr. Farber would have to go out to the ship in New York harbour and be married aboard this vessel before his wife was allowed to enter this country of "Freedom"! The recession of 1893 laid a wary mark upon the land that affected this new couple who were arriving as Jewish immigrants.

Isaac and Ella arrived in Philadelphia and settled in South Philadelphia. Shortly, after the couple ventured to the farm lands of Southern New Jersey where many young Jewish couples transversed in search of a home and a new beginning. Ella was her adopted name since since landed at Ellis Island and was married there.

Isaac was a fine ladies tailor and worked for the Manny Sacks family in Philadelphia. But his wife had the free spirit and closeness to the soil. Ella's father was a farmer in Latvia and she could not let herself be detached from the land!

By 1895, the couple bought a farm in Monroeville, New Jersey some 35 miles from Philadelphia for \$ 800. Sam was born to the couple shortly afterwards in 1896. The Jewish community grew in this village and a shul was built for public Jewish worship in 1903.

A Jew who was part of the community who didn't attend High Holiday services was an outcast. They were described as worst than a "Goi". If people viewed them on the country lanes they would avoid these people.

Abe Bolnick established Monroeville as a center for Jews. This was a new Jewish Ghetto in the country. Abe Bolnick was a strong minded man. He educated his children in the Jewish religion in the middle of the fields. Abe hired a melamed or religious teacher from Philadelphia who would make special trips to the countryside. Finally, this melamed would stay on the farm and teach an entire community. This education was intended for his family and his girls would learn to daven as well as the boys so that they should know who they were, i.e. Jews!



These Jews came to the area more regularly in 1905. Some went into the cattle business immediately. The relatives of the Farbers included the Levins and the Kretschmers. Farmers, Feed dealers and Cattle men composed the occupations of this community of Jews.

Isaac was a Schneider or tailor. He was an exception in the community. Isaac worked for the Manny Sacks family in Philadelphia previous to coming to Monroeville. Ella would milk the cows on the farm and Isaac would have a ready made trade route up and into Philadelphia. Isaac would work for the Sacks family in the off season. He would work all week in Philadelphia and leave for Monroeville early Friday morning. Piece work was brought home for all the family to join in as an activity. This family "sewing circle" would commence on Saturday night after the conclusion of the Sabbath. The Sacks were related to Farbers in some manner and the Glick people of Clayton would add to this unison.

Young Sam was in public school in Monroeville and learned to speak English here. This was a two story school house with two rooms. One was for the first to fourth and the other was for fifth to eight grade. There was no High School.

In 1909, Sam was a Bar Mitzvah boy and celebrated his day in the shul in the middle of a corn field! American society prevailed upon this young and energetic man. For Sam who was born on Shabbath Hagadol 1896 was destined to become a Jewish communal leader.

By 1920, Sam seized the opportunity to move off the farm and into the city of Vineland. He went into business with his cousin Levin. Then came his father to Vineland in 1921. This was a joyous moment in the history of the community. The character of Isaac Farber was an often sought after commodity. For Isaac, a shul was not a necessity but rather a mainstay of his life! At first he attached himself to Ahavath Achim on Plum Street. Isaac bought a house at Third and Elmer Streets nearby the Grape Street Shul. Then he switched over to that Shul and added a new dimension to the congregation. It was not him alone that added this element of newness but his entire family as well.

Sam remained single until 1922 when he married Henrietta Gottlieb from Philadelphia's Strawberry Mansion Section. They were married in the little Larchwood synagogue near 60th Street.

Sam entered into the world of car dealers during an exciting era. The partnership formed by his cousin was short lived. Thus, Sam was the youngest Packard Pierrce Arrow franchise in the nation.

This community prospered following World War One. Isaac soon became a great benefactor of the Grape Street Shul due to his interest. He would "Schnor" for the Shul. This amounted to a plea for funds in the community so the shul could run. To collect money for funds for the coal in the winter time lay in the hands of Isaac Farber.

Sam and Henrietta were blessed with a little girl in 1923. Annette Farber was named in this orthodox shul in a service that was rare in occurrence. The little baby girl was named while in the arms of Henrietta Farber in the middle of the Shul shortly after she was born.

Seina Ceil Bas Yashiah was the Hebrew name given to Annette Farber that day. This little girl would have a lasting impact on the future of this shul in the years to come.

The Farbers were more orthodox than the main part of the congregation. This would hold true for the group that eventually would create a splinter group and found another Jewish congregation in the city of Vineland. Beth Israel was good for the development of the general community as a whole. "Jewish life is full of Jewish friends" This is how Sam Farber views that development in the 1920's.

The community was high in excitement as the 1920's got underway except for one important area of commerce. Sam came to Vineland off the farm to sell cars at his Packard Agency on 414 Landis Avenue. Some Jews who were newly appointed Doctors and Lawyers bought this top car. It was not for show but a reaction to the times in which Jews lived in America. Henry Ford published the damaging and insulting Elders of Zion in the late 1910's. Jews were angry about this Anti-Semitic literature and refused to buy his products. This action did hurt his business and he later apologized for his folly. America showed it true colors when it came to religious freedom and Sam was proud to be an American Jew.

The congregation was about to take a new direction with Isaac Farber who was joined by Jacob Greenblatt and Simon Levin. Observing the Sabbath meant no riding on the Sabbath and all three of these men observed this tradition.

Some people in the Sons of Grape Street Shul were not as observant. This was in stark comparison to the men of the Plum Street Shul. At Plum Street you wouldn't think of riding since Aliyahs were given only to those people who took the traditions of the Sabbath very seriously.

The idea of a break in the community to form another congregation was composed of both groups. The Plum Street people were too strict for the younger generation and the Grape Street people looked the other way when it came to some who did not keep the sanctity of the Sabbath. Members of Grape Street who rode to shul on the Sabbath covered up by parking their cars away from the synagogue. There was no parking lot nearby!

Mr. Mallin lived across the street from the Plum Street Shul but davened at the Grape Street Shul. Mr. Mallin was paid for his services on the High Holidays in this regard. He stood in the middle of the floor on the bima and auctioned Aliyahs. This was done as tradition prescribed the ritual and decorum that was used in the old country.

This was tradition for the Yontavim. When the Balabitim would take out the Torahs, the Ritual commenced. The first Aliyah belongs to the Kohan. If a Kohan was sitting in the Shul he was obligated to buy that Aliyah. The second Aliyah is Levy and belonged to the men who were Levities. The third was Shee-she and the fourth is Revee. This goes back to temple times when certain classes of Jews maintained the Holy of Holies.

The Aliyah was sold to the highest bidder in the shul. The President would announce, "One hundred Dollar, Kohan" This was done all in Yiddish. If you wanted to bid, you raised your right index finger firmly and high in the air and announced, "One Hundred and ten Dollars"! Someone else would bid. The President would announce, "One Hundred and Ten once, twice, SOLD!"

For the Aliyahs that were given on the Sabbath there was no charge. They were honorary. The Gabbai or this person insured the order and the correctness of the services. He would stand along side the person reading the from the Torah to insure the accuracy of the G-d given words. To correct people's mistakes was not taken personally but only as precaution against misunderstanding. This would hold true on Monday and Thursday when the Torahs were taken and read in the Shul. The Gabbai would come and get Sam Farber in his seat and announce him as Shumuel ben Itzstak his Hebrew name.

Leaders in the Shul were also Balabitim. This meant that the leaders were officers in the synagogue. The Balabitim in the 1920's included the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, Shamus, first Gabbai and second Gabbai. This included Isaac Farber, Simon Levin, Sam Levin, Jacob Greenblatt, Rev. Mallin and Mr. Rosensweig plus Joe Brotman's father.

During the late 1920's, after Beth Israel came in to being was a trying time for the Sons of Jacob synagogue. The synagogue survived this division in the Jewish community in Vineland. They did not need the turncoats including the Greenblatts and others. The members of the shul viewed those Jews as different Jews!

Many members couldn't say no to Sam Farber for a donation to the shul. This is exactly what it took for this congregation to survive into the 1930's. Sam Farber was a member of the second generation in the Jewish community. He was the bridge to the future in this congregation as the Depression started to affect this community. This preceded the era of Sidney Levin who was a member of the second generation of the Sons of Jacob. Sidney Levin would be married in the community in 1937. This was the cement that held this congregation together in its darkest days. The strength of the congregation was found in its traditional management of the shul. From father to son or from one generation to the next generation was the key to survival for the Sons of Jacob over the years.

Not all organizations that were composed of the synagogue men were run by the father and sons. Nor was there a need for the second generation to engage in their activities. The "Corporation" was one such group. This group was opened to men only as compared to the Hebrew Benevolent Society in Vineland that was run by the ladies. Isaac Farber was the president of the Corporation. Old man Pokis was the Treasurer. Nate Edelstein was the secretary. The Corporation acted as a go between for the first generation Jews who wanted to go into business but lacked seed money in Vineland. This organization was well used in the 1920's and into the 1930's when the Depression would effect the Jewish community as well as the general community. Annette's uncle Henry and Nate Edelstein were actively involved in the group on a daily basis. Some men would be well respected in the community and this is how they came to be part of many organizations at the same time. In those days integrity was a value held high in the community. For Nate Edelstein was the secretary in the Chevra Kaddish and took the notes in Yiddish.

Annette Farber grew up in her early years in the company of her Bubbe and Zadhe. Too young to attend school meant that she would tag along with her Zadhe Itzak. He was elected President of the Shul in 1924 and actively led the congregation. He was a retired farmer but an active Jew in the community on behalf of the Sons of Jacob.

This was a self contained community separated by over 25 miles from Atlantic City and over 50 miles from Philadelphia.

Vineland was connected to Camden by train and that was the end of the line. The Jewish community in Camden was controlled and supervised by Rabbi N. Riff for many years since Rabbi B.L. Levinthal placed him there in the mid 1890's. Rabbi Riff would not venture into Vineland frequently. This was a time when Sam's sister lived in Swedesboro which was not a Jewish town at all. But three Jewish families did live in town. They included the Kolker's Annette's aunt married into the family and moved to Swedesboro to follow Mr. Kolker's business. By coincidence, the Kolker's were familiar with the Kolker Shul in South Philadelphia which was located at 5th and Dudley Street. A small town in Europe could be found on the map with this name. In addition to the Kolkers in Swedesboro were included the Jewish families of the Armand's and Polsky's. The Kolker's attended the Son's of Israel in Camden and were friendly with Rabbi Riff. Sam Farber's other sister settled directly in Camden and also went to the Sons of Israel.

Now Annette Farber was not known for her shyness even when it came to great Rabbis! Annette being a young Jewess and a keeper of the Shul on Grape Street meant that she had great confidence in her knowledge of Judaism. But Annette admits that she made a mistake by talking to Rabbi Riff. For Rabbi Riff was of the old world and did not converse with women on such matters!

## Grape Street Shul - Sons of Jacob

Women in Vineland played an enormous role in the development of the modern Jewish community in town. Taslich as a ritual belonged to the women of Vineland. During the 1930's this was a valid woman's function. Between the start of the High Holidays and its conclusion would appear the time to conduct a prayer service along side the stream of water near Walnut and West Avenues. Ella Farber, Mrs. Jacob Greenblatt and Dora Bloch would conduct this traditional release of one's sins throughout the year in the depths of the water as a condition to accepting the seal of their faith in the " book of Life " on Yom Kippur.

The 1930's were filled with useful items to engage in being Jewish in the community. But the effect of the Depression superceded the quality of religious life as compared to the time in the community during the 1920's.

One factor that loomed above all the rest was that everyone was having hard times. But the rate of participation in this congregation increased whereas other religious institutions lost members who could not afford to donate monies. Jewish life did not take a back seat. If at all only the pace of Jewish life slowed to meet the economic conditions of the Jewish Community. Maftur still would bring 10 bucks during Yontav. Isaac Farber would go around collecting funds for the upkeep of the synagogue and pick up 25 and 50 cent pieces by going door to door.

Another great part of the history of the Grape Street Shul could be found in the contribution of the Levin Family in the beginning in the late 1910's. Benefactors of the shul would not be home grown for over two generations. Simon Levin was raised in London England in the late 19th century. By the early 1910's, it was apparent that the Jews in London would leave that fair city to venture to other places in search of work. Simon Levin was a tailor and could not find work in the city during 1912. He was not alone! Many English Jews ventured to America in search of a brighter future. Philadelphia's Strawberry Mansion section and Marshall and Girard Avenues attracted quite a number of London Jews. These Jews were well educated in the knowledge of their religion.

Simon Levin had cousins living in Vineland New Jersey and migrated to this town. The Joseph brothers had a clothing factory and provided immediate work. Simon came to Vineland and took a job in the 1910's earning \$13 per week.

Sidney Levin was born in 1908 in London England. The trip across the Atlantic would be a permanent one.

Immediately, Simon joined the Sons of Jacob Shul in Vineland and became a great benefactor of the synagogue. Simon was interested in the Chevra Kadisha in the community. Simon was trained to be a rabbi in England but would not become ordained.

By this time the community of the Jews in Vineland was growing with each passing year. Newly arriving immigrants and their families would make Vineland their new home for business and the Sons of Jacob their synagogue. Thus the fusion of the synagogue members meant that Jewish families struggling to make a living would keep their stores open on Sabbath to gain the business of their Gentile neighbors.

## \* Grape Street Shul - Sons of Jacob

But at the same time there was an influx of Jewish who were Shomre Shabbas and did not open their stores on Saturdays. Some of the manufacturers would also keep their factories open on the Sabbath before and during the First World War. Following the War, Jewish life returned to a more traditional regime for some in the community. The Levins would never see their Jewish workers make a choice of working for them or keeping the Sabbath for the Levins were closed in honor of the Sabbath. Simon and his brother went into business with five men. Their factory was set up in Norma and was closed on the Sabbath. From Norma, the factory moved to 4th and Almond in Vineland.

Young Sidney Levin grew up and was married in Vineland in 1937. The tradition of being a benefactor of the Grape Street Shul was passed from father to son.

It didn't matter that Sidney Levin's wife was not a Jew. This is important in light of the era that witnessed the beginning of the American process that brought many non-Jews into the Jewish Tradition. The Jewish community and the Levin family welcomed her into both the Jewish family and Grape Street shul family as a person. This allowed Ann to support her husband in his search for religious identification. No one forced her to embrace Judaism in the greatest fashion Vineland would ever witness. Ann Levin to this day says that she did it out of the love and respect of her husband. Her deeds to follow in the coming years for the cause of Judaism in Vineland were immeasurable. This love and understanding of Judaism would be passed onto her son, Howard over the course of time.

With the end of the Second World War came a new desire on the part of the women of this shul to participate in services on a more regular basis. This new direction would have a lasting impact on this congregation well into the post War period. This momentum was started with only 10 paid members comprising the synagogue in 1946. The future would mean expansion of the building to accomodate more people. An annex was constructed. The paid members would include Sam Farber, Jesse Morvay, Lou Foss, Joe Alterman, Ascher Gousman, Mr. Brenner, Henry Steinsynder, Sidney Levin, Arbit Levin and Sol Levin.

This was a new era but some traditions do not change. Eventhough Isaac Farber passed away in 1939, the family still lived close to the synagogue. The smell of fresh challah and hot rolls waffed through the neighborhood for the people who arose at 4am on Friday mornings near Third and Elmer Streets.

Meanwhile, the movement of the synagogue into the future was coupled with a modern approach never tried before at this synagogue. Orthodox ritual would not change but many items within and outside of the synagogue would come under scrutiny for the first time in over 40 years of existence.

A sign of the times could be found in the exchange of ideas between members of the Grape Street Shul and the Seventh Street Temple. When Sam Farber was president of the Grape Street Shul, he went over to Joe Greenblatt and asked him for a donation in the period right after the War. Joe told Sam, " that Grape Street had outlived its usefulness and that it should be boarded up! " " Further more, the remainants should come over to Beth Israel!" Never was Sam so up set in all his life! This was all that was needed to stir up the fire in Sam's loyalty to his father's shul. Besides Sam could not expect his congregation to become second rate members of Beth Israel which meant that you sat downstairs in the their basement vestry room and listened to the High Holidays over a Public Address system! The answer was a definite No. to all offers. History would repeat itself over in the course of time.

Competition for new members was keen and the life blood of this congregation if it would continue on the path of progression. In a bold attempt to satisfy this internal and external need meant a radical change. A full time rabbi would be hired to insure the growth of this congregation into the late 1940's.

Leadership in any generation is viewed with genuine risk of failure. But this was a better price to pay than to sit and wait for certain closure of a synagogue. This community was more fortunate than some congregations in that "faced this same situation. Ahavas Chesed Anshe Shavel of Philadelphia chose to close its doors with a special meeting.

Aron Molof and Sidney Levin were elected to head the synagogue in those years. Rabbi Mordechai was invited down for one weekend after the initial announcement for obtaining a full time rabbi was made a reality. The Balabitim enjoyed this man's presentation and invited him down for a second week. Mr. Effron was not even a graduate of the Yeshiva in New York! Mr. Effron was in the upper one third of his class when he was graduated with honors in 1946.

The congregation invited him back because they liked him very much as a leader. Sam Farber, Sidney Levin and Henry Steinsynder went up to New York for his graduation.

Now the Grape Street Shul was about to attract a curious and more numerous grouping of people for its congregation than it ever attracted in its past.

A young singles group was created with speakers and leaders for the up and coming generation. Some Jewish couples would meet their future spouses from this get together group. The Hebrew school was starting to grow once more and was held in a building next to the synagogue. This building would be the spot where not only the future of Children of Jacob congregation was learning to become responsible adults but the very spot where a new Jewish Center would be constructed within the next 13 years.

The impact of the original minyan in 1946 could never foresee this tremendous growth. The Rabbi would impact the community as well as the congregation.

The overflow initially would be comprised of women. The Annex as the first expansion of this synagogue was called was used for the women to sit separate from the men. Rabbi Effron allowed the women to come down from the balcony to sit on one level with the men of the congregation but not next to one another. Thus the use of the balcony was discontinued in the late 1940's. Moveable partitions were installed to separate the men from the women. This area was used for social affairs when not used for services. Community organizations would also use this new facility for its meetings.

The stain glass windows were installed to embellish the sanctuary and to provide a way for memorializing one's loved relatives. The Bima was moved from the center of the synagogue to the front of the shul facing Eastwardly.

The balcony now was used as the Rabbi's study. This was a special part of the synagogue now. For Rabbi Effron reached out into the community to help other Jewish concerns. This room was not only used to discuss marriage vows between couple and to review legal Jewish divorce papers or Gets but to serve as a Beth Midrash or a place of learning for special people. Rabbi Effron would conduct Bar Mitzvah lessons for the Jewish handicap boys at the State School on Landis Avenue. Rabbi Effron showed an interest in these boys .

Jewish Holidays were celebrated in traditional fashion in the Grape Street Shul in the 1950's. The ritual would remain the same for the Chazzon only. He would face the Aron Kodesh and serve as a conduit of prayer to G-d for the congregation. More families started to attend this orthodox synagogue. This in effect meant that a change was happening in the synagogue in America outside of a Conservative congregation. This change was not profound while it was happening or even noticeable to the congregation itself since it was gradual. But now that the ladies were downstairs and sitting on the same level as the men with no Mechitza meant a change in the direction of the congregation.

For Sucas, a sucah was built outside for all the congregation to gather under and pray together for the Fall Harvest. On Simhas Torah, the men would march with the Torahs on the inside of the synagogue and be joined by the women and children for refreshments afterwards. Children were now invited to participate in the services. For Shavous at the beginning of the Summer meant that the children would decorate the synagogue in beautiful greenery. But orthodoxy still prevailed when it came to the observing of Tish Ab. Women were not permitted in the synagogue and the mood of the congregation was a somber one as the thoughts of the men turned to the destruction of the Temple in olden days in Jerusalem.

Differences of religious opinions separated the community in this modern era. The difference between the Plum Street Shul remained the issue of riding on the Sabbath. It was a fact in this community that some Jews did not observe the Sabbath by refraining from working on this day. By the late 1940's, more Jews who were members of the Congregation Children of Jacob of Vineland moved further out from the synagogue. They decided to come on the Sabbath but they rode to Shul! The Rabbi never condoned this action but accepted this fact if he was going to conduct or have a minyan on the Sabbath.

If you grew up in the orthodox ritual and were comfortable with this regiment of religious behaviour then you more than likely adopted this habit of walking to the synagogue on the Sabbath and not riding. This was expanded past the threshold of marriage and included your spouse, too. ~~From~~ This is what you were loyal to in terms of religious identification in the community and belonged to the institution that fitted your religious needs all these years. A forty hour work week was becoming more a reality for more workers than ever before.

This was a period of "modernization" and this meant more conveniences than ever before. The microphone and eating out were two issues were in the minds of the Jews at this time. The Vineland Jewish community as a whole kept to the Jewish Dietary laws and refrained from eating out. This element of modernization was up most in the minds of the Jewish people as the Supermarket became a reality in the city of Vineland. The Food Fair at Boulevard and Elmer helped to break down this tradition of depending on the Jewish Delicatessen. For even Jewish people worked here and helped in the promoting of selling Jewish foods that were not strictly Kosher but because they were handled by worthy Jews made the consumption of the products okay. From fish to salads slowly meant an erosion of the practice of Kashruth.

The Jewish people along Grape Street would leave their lights burning over the Sabbath. Whereas the lights were never lighted and used during the Sabbath. This was not the dark age but the preceding generation viewed their beliefs more closely aligned with Jewish traditions.

Changes were happening in Vineland during this time, too. Landis Township now became part of Vineland in 1952 as consolidation of the area meant different things to different people.

By the mid 1950's it was clear that Grape Street Shul would never be the same anymore. The name of the Synagogue was changed to reflect the abbreviated look of the congregation. On August 10, 1953, the congregation petitioned the state of New Jersey to be known as the Sons of Jacob.

A new congregation even in an old building needs a new identification separate from its beginning. But this was not the only change in the community underway. The children in the community all wanted a Jewish Community Center separated from their congregations. AZA at the Grape Street Shul attracted new members of the congregation. BBYO and Young Judea was held at the Beth Israel congregation. Even the Boy Scout group which met at the Synagogue was Troop number 32.

The move to create a brand new Jewish organization had the support of the entire community. Each element of the community had a part in the development of a Jewish community center. Joseph Alterman of the new Sons of Jacob congregation would be part of this important development. A non-profit corporation was formed to embark on the journey to finally create a Jewish Community Center separate from the synagogues. The Jewish Community Center of Greater Vineland was chartered on April 15, 1954 and recorded in Book Q, page 44. The trustees would include 12 people. They included Dr. Nathan Wernloff, Robert Weitzman, Noah Silver, I.H. Levin, Samuel Cantor, Isadore Bogis, Armin Lehman, Dr. Tevis M. Goldhaft, Benjamin Fisher, Joseph Alterman and Moey Lihn.

Now the Sons of Jacob were embarking on a journey of their own. A Men's Club was organized to counter the attention that this group was demonstrating in the public's eye. In 1953, a Men's Club was created by the men of the congregation. A men's club for an orthodox congregation was an unknown dimension. But this was a progressive and modernizing congregation in the 1950's. Stanley Altman was the Men's Club's first president. Stanley was a former member of Beth Israel. He started a drive at the Grape Street Shul to create this new activity of the congregation.

Change after change would take place in this era. The Men's Club was active for few years when the need and the vision ~~was~~ to create a building fund was implemented. Even the older generation was active in this group and its activities. For the popular, Hebrew School teacher, Joseph Fredricks became the president of the Men's Club!

By the mid 1950's, the Vineland community found itself caught up in a growth period. This was expressed in terms of ideas and bricks! Shortly after the Grape Street Shul changed its name, a move to create the Vineland Jewish Community was started. Next in turn was Beth Israel's desire to relocate and build a new facility. Now it was the Sons of Jacob turn to deal with its future.

The growth in the Grape Street Congregation demanded that a larger sanctuary and social hall be built. The decision to stay in town was unanimous. The house near the synagogue that was used to stage the Hebrew School would be razed to make room for the new synagogue and social hall.

## Grape Street Shul - Sons of Jacob

### Grape Street Shul - Sons of Jacob

By 1958 and the 50th anniversary of the Grape Street Shul was a double celebration. A milestone and a new building were celebrated. A dedication yearbook was created to honor this develop and help to defray the cost of the new mortgage. Now the Sons of Jacob could effectively compete for new Jewish families as part of its increasing family membership.

The congregation had a new building which included a large auditorium and stage for High Holiday services, a Kosher Kitchen, four new class rooms for its expanding Hebrew School. Fourty to fifty students were enrolled in its Hebrew School at the time.

During the dedication of the new synagogue and social hall, many people in and out of the community would attend this function. Cantor Yehuda Mandel of the Philadelphia's Beth Judah Congregation in Logan was the conductor of the liturgy that would be recited to usher in a new period in the history of the Sons of Jacob in Vineland.

Beth Judah of Philidelphia was part of the Yeshiva Council in Philadelphia. This meant that the Sons of Jacob was in this same realm of congregations as Philadelphia only separated by many miles and not neighborhoods.

The Sons of Jacob was the only Yeshiva Council Synagogue in Southern New Jersey. The search for an orthodox congregation in a modern American setting caused this phenomenon. Yet mixed seating was not allowed or practiced during the 13 years leading up to the opening of the new synagogue. But the Bima was moved to the front of the synagogue, the men and women sat on one level, the balcony was discontinued, the prayer book was changed from the Desola to the Silverman or from all Hebrew to English and Hebrew facing each other on one page and a full time Rabbi was leading this congregation. But some things did not change. They included the Cantor facing the Aron Kodesh, the lack of a choir and aliyahs were still auctioned in the new building. Now dues were collected for the modern approach to Judaism at the Grape Street Shul. The Rabbi now was paid a salary instead of donations to provide a sustenance for him and his wife. This was a first for the congregation because Rabbi Efron was the first full time Rabbi the congregation ever employeed.

The dues were running \$10 to \$15 per month for the average family to be members of the Sons of Jacob. The issue of building edifaces after the end of the Second World War was taken up as a fight by Esther Kline in the Jewish Newspapers in Philadelphia. The editorials were full of pros and cons.

This analysis would come up for discussion in the following generation as the high cost of "belonging" would arise again. Only in Vineland could a positive response be better accepted. The struggle for religious freedom had deep roots in the community and the nearby country-side. The struggle to be a Jew in Southern New Jersey was never an easy one as compared to Philadelphia. So it was apparent that this sentiment of cost for one's Jewishness was a price well paid for and was well represented by the sentiment of the entire community in Vineland. Sidney Levin best explained the profound sense of obligation and commitment when he wrote the following in the 50th Anniversary souvenir book of the Sons of Jacob. His message would carry a loud cry for immediate action into the next generation. Sidney wrote, "Be willing to do right even when it seems costly to do so indicates great faith in G-d and life"! Some Jews are willing to pay dues in spite of the high cost is actually a showing of faith in themselves. On another level, it is to show the community that the Jews "made it in America".

The comparison of both the Sons of Jacob and the Beth Israel congregation can be separated by more than both building new facilities in the 1950's and approaches to ritual in each synagogue. Another division could be made by looking at the financial outlook of the congregants themselves. This would be the plain people verses the well to do ones. Philadelphia had a similar perspective on this issue. Jewish people growing up together always do not have the same outlook on life. This can thus be represented by the congregations they form and the congregations they belong to when they grow up.

This was the case of the Strawberry Mansion Jews verses the Wynnefield Jews as it relates to the Sons of Jacob congregants verses the Beth Israel people. The separation of Jews by class into their own synagogues was history of the Shetle experience in Europe. The tailors and handcrafters belonged to one synagogue and the carpenters and goldsmiths made up another congregation.

This was all a back drop for the changing of the times that were gradual and went unnoticed by Vineland's Jewry. The older generation was slow at turning over the reins of leadership in this community until it was too late. A synagogue could die and fold up as almost the Grape Street Shul did in the early 1940's. American society had some role to play in this picture. One short example of this could be seen in the late 1950's. The elders of the synagogue community were dead and their service to the community was lost in many aspects. One was the selling and the providing of wine in Vineland that was Kosher. Now some liquor establishments in the late 1950's came under Jewish ownership. By agreement some name brand Kosher Wines such as Carmel and others were carried in these stores. Even the visiting Jews who collected monies for Jewish organizations stopped coming to Vineland as frequently as they did and this helped dry up a source of kosher wine for ritual. Thus another phase of the early Jewish community in Vineland was declared over by 1960!

Grape Street Shul - Sons of Jacob

No matter how the times would change or how the ritual would be practiced, one thing was for certain. Funds would have to be raised to maintain a synagogue.

Synagogue life in Vineland was the focus of the Jewish community into the 1950's.

A big dance was held as a regular Social event at the new Sons of Jacob. But this was really a gigantic fund raiser. You didn't have to individualize that sector as recalled by Ann Levin. All you had to do was participate. Raising funds was like death and taxes. You had to do this for your synagogue in order for it to survive. The congregants of the Sons of Jacob realized this and practiced it without fail. They even had fun while performing the mitzvah of maintaining a synagogue for public Jewish worship and the welfare of the Jewish community at large. The odd thing in the 1950's as compared to later times was that you didn't have to solicit funds by yourself! No men or ladies auxiliaries were needed for this function. There was a due structure that ran up to \$150 in the late 1950's. But this was not enough funds to pay for all the activities of a modern synagogue during this time. The idea of a lone benefactor was part of another time in the Grape Street Shul's history.

Ann Levin and Goldie Ronis sponsored and ran the Rummage sale for the synagogue. These two ladies ran this event for the synagogue's benefit. They "manned" the store from 9 A.M. until 9 P.M. when they had the sale going on. An empty store in Vineland was donated for this purpose. The members of the synagogue would donate clothes and toys in the fall and spring. For one week this activity was in the conversations of every Jew who belonged to the Grape Street Shul in Vineland. The synagogue would benefit by \$300 to \$400 each time this event was held. Later in the 1960's when the congregation peaked at 135 families the Rummage Sale was extended and more money was realized. The fun factor was increase as the work force increased to insure the success of this program. Fifteen hundred dollars was recouped from the sale of Rummage in the 1970's.

During the bake sale was a special time. Everyone made a cake for the sale. A certain night was set for the sale. This was no ordinary cake sale. It wasn't even a bazaar where you haggle over the price. It was actually like a night at the races. They started out with a nickel. It would increase a nickel at a time. The last person that said it was "his nickel" got the cake! The cakes would fetch as much as eight dollars on the average. Ann Levin and others miss those days when nickels brought everyone together.

The sisterhood was active in the raising of funds in the 1950's. Dora Bloch was a cousin to Sidney Levin. She was the first president of the Sisterhood. Rose Alterman was also very active in this group as well as Ann Levin.

Grape Street Shul - sons of Jacob

Beth Israel did not offer a New Year's Eve dance. For the Grape Street Shul to do just this was incredible. This congregation was orthodox. This event should have never been on the calendar of such a synagogue. The American New Year had nothing to do with being Jewish! But the fact of the matter was that the Grape Street Shul was under going a modernization period. This synagogue had to rely on creative fund raisers in order to survive and make ends meet. Besides, comments Ann Levin, "We were all American Jews and wanted to do something American". The prayer for this country's safe being was sponsored in this same manner. This New Year's Eve dance was more social than anything else!

In the summertime, barbecues were held at the Pavilion at Norma Beach. Irv would allow his facility to be used for this social event. The Norma beach would serve over three generations of Jews in this region for recreation and fun. Ann would buy the Kosher meat and bring them to the shul. Then the ladies would make the hamburgers. Kosher chickens were brought into the synagogue's kitchen for the same attention and preparation in anticipation of this fun activity.

The chickens were cut into quarters and cleaned. The chickens would then be roasted and sold to the people who attended the barbecue. Ann would buy the Kosher link hot dogs from Esther and William Nunberg's delicatessen on Route 47 Delsea Drive between Park Avenue and Wheat Road.

It is clear that the term "Shul Worker" is an old fashioned term! This is really what is missing in today's generation. Chicken dinners were held in the shul in the 1950's. The new kitchen in the new center was outfitted with good equipment to handle such an affair. This Kosher Kitchen was composed of Cast iron stoves and separate refrigerators for dairy and milk items. Tickets were sold to these events. Non-Jews would attend and eat the well prepared items. The expense of the food was donated by members of the congregation. Spaghetti dinners were held here, too.

This congregation was active in producing entertainment for its internal purposes. This idea was not new in the general Jewish community. Philadelphia's Kensington Jewish Community Center was identical in its approach to providing quality programming for its congregants over one generation ago in the 1920's. A well known lawyer was the director.

Rabbi Effron was strictly orthodox. He led the congregation through a different time in the history of the congregation. The modern era had a definite impact on the congregants themselves. Riding to shul was frowned upon in the 1950's. There was no parking lot. But people would drive from the outlying areas of the new and consolidated Vineland area. The next generation of Jews had moved away from the boro of Vineland. Some congregants would never move as did Sam Farber who bought a home near his parents at Third and Elmer Streets.

Late Friday Night services were initiated by Rabbi Efron. Oneg Shabbats would follow with a discussion of Jewish content. This was aimed at attracting the families with children and catering to their sense of community within this new religious setting called the Sons of Jacob. This was a drastic difference as compared to the synagogue of old which had only early Friday evening services and the Sabbath was celebrated strictly in the home. But the ritual in all respects remained orthodox.

Fund raisers and community activities were a distinct part of this congregation. A community Seder was held at the new synagogue in the late 1950's. This was held on the second night of Passover. The Seder was catered by the Shul. Sidney Levin would contribute the bulk of the funds towards this activity. Sometimes he supplemented the Seder with as much as \$ 200. No one knew this fact while he was alive. This was not made public. But after his death in 1964, his wife would have liked a plaque put up in the synagogue stating his good deeds. For his spirit lives on in the memories of the congregation. Sidney's sense of community was of a much higher degree than his fellow congregants.

The early days of the 1960's marked the beginning of a new era. Anything to make money for the shul was considered to be in good taste. These were the days when there was enough people who were interested in the synagogue. This was also the ending days of the one cent candy. Candy bars were a nickel. The candy shop was a favorite stop off before coming to Hebrew School for the little ones. Ann Levin and Ruth Rosen watched in horror as one little boy was almost struck by a car as he left the Candy store for Hebrew School one day in the fall of 1960. These two ladies met and formed the idea of creating a candy stop in the Synagogue before the start of Hebrew School. Ann put out tables and laid out candy for the children. The ladies would serve ice cream and popicles in the warmer months. All the profits were passed onto the sisterhood who in return provided gifts to the children annually at the end of the Hebrew School year. Needless to say this was a huge success!

Sidney Levin gave the monies in the shadows of the shul. He required no Kovad beyond the fact that he helped the shul. No special Aliyah or portion " belonged " to him. This was total commitment. But Sidney was not totally committed to his Judaism in a practicing sense. But when his father passed away he became very active in the late 1950's. This was a sign of the times. For Sidney was moved in his compassion for the synagogue as his father before him had been. The acutal involvement in the affairs of the synagogue began to take place after his son, Howard was born. The Bris for his son was completed with Rabbi/ Mohel Morris Shoulson who was Rabbi in Millville in the 1930's. He returned often to Vineland in the period after the Second World War to perform the ritual that united one generation with the next one.

The joint venture of the combining of the Grape Street Hebrew School and the Beth Israel Hebrew School became a reality in 1962. Bernie Branderbit was the architect of this plan to unite two separate religious educational systems into one for the betterment and social experience of both groups. As far as the Grape Street Shul was concerned, Joeseph Fredrick's methods of teaching kids to daven couldn't be beat! But the children were not meeting the other children in the community. On the other hand the children at the Beth Israel school could hardly recite their Haftorah or Bar Mitzvah speeches. The children met at the more spacious facilities of the Beth Israel congregation on Park Avenue.

The idea of community spirit united these groups where only eight years earlier an agreement on a Jewish Community Center was never reached. Much of the same attitudes were present in this era as in the preceding one. The kids in those days wanted a JCC with a pool and gym. When it came to the adults it became a matter of Kovad. Kovad is the politics of the Jewish community. Who was going to get the Honor! This was the true item that held up the building of a JCC. In essence, it was a matter of joint community effort that stopped the JCC from becoming reality.

This concept of unification of the Jewish community was possible in other communities that even had Reform congregations in their midst! But not in Vineland. This was truly a crossroads of Jewish ideas and practices plus philosophy.

That eight year period was marked by " one upmanship " as the mode of community spirit. If one person or synagogue put on an affair, the other would have to " up " it 2,3 or even 4 times. This was not a time for flattery but a time for the wrong type of competition that could tear apart the Vineland Jewish community.

Even when the Grape Street Shul emerged with a new synagogue and social hall did not mean a diversion in its attempt to attract more members. There was no Welcoming Committee to entice new members. This synagogue would still stay a Hamish shul inspite of its move into the future.

The idea of the Joint Hebrew School was an attempt beyond the obvious intent to curtail rising costs. But instead a new era was in the beginning stages to close the gap between the two synagogues thru this venture. The end result would be a conduction of closing exercises of the Hebrew School at each Synagogue on alternating years. The children of Grape Street were allowed to enter into the Hebrew High School program and attend confirmation classes. Bas Mitzvah for the girls of the Sons of Jacob congregation was accepted and conducted in their synagogue at Late Friday Services. This venture showed each other how the other side lived and attended to its practices and ritual. Barriers would come down and more understanding and respect for one another would ensue if only for a short time. This ultimately led to the insistence of the congregants to allow mixed seating in their synagogue.



## Grape Street Shul- Sons of Jacob

This would never happen during the stay of Rabbi Effron. The Holocaust Survivors would now join in with both congregations in varying degrees. The commitment to support the Grape Street Shul was not as much a success on the part of these Jews as compared to Beth Israel. The Refugees did not want to pay money and support the Grape Street Shul, eventhough dues were less here than at Beth Israel. Allowing the Refugees to become part of the Balabitim could have played a role in this case. Membership verses buying seats for the High Holidays were how many of these people felt a synagogue should operate. They did not make the transition into the modern era in terms of religious affiliation.

Degrees of religious practice could be noticed in the case of the refugee. Walter Shone was an exception. He was a committed German Jew with a brilliant Jewish education and an appreciation for synagogue life. Thus he was invited to become a Gabbai. He was described as a Gentleman!

Herb Bierg would join the Sons of Jacob in 1959 after leaving Norma. There were two morning minyans here during this time. People would bring two, three and four people alone to services. Many people were in the clothing business, insurance and fur businesses. His brothers would attend here, too. And as Herb put, " it was an Israeli who wanted to combine both Hebrew Schools of Beth Israel and Grape Street". But this serene picture did not last given the volatile nature of this community.

By the time of the Israeli Six Day War in 1967, it was the end of an era and the conclusion of the first generation input into this congregation.

Rabbi Effron was called to Brooklyn New York and the pillar that held this congregation together for over 22 years was gone. Rabbis would come and go during this period and the old issues of the past would return. But this congregation had matured and could independently stand alone. The congregants were in charge of their own religious futures.

Meanwhile Rabbi Freed followed Rabbi Effron. Yet no rabbi could understand the congregation. It was orthodox in set up and ritual but American in religious perspective as shown by its stance on mixed seating. Rabbi Freed even tried to attract some attention to ritual by starting a choir. The congregants themselves joined in and participated. They included Sarah Blum and Jane Kliiven. But this attempt at enhancing the service was short lived. The majority of the congregants did not know Hebrew and the songs plus melodies were considered foreign!

A newsletter was started by Rabbi Effron and continued well into the 1980's. This concept was a modern one and no orthodox synagogue would conduct such a communication apparatus.

Bingo was a forbidden subject and the core of many editorials of respected Rabbis in Philadelphia over its presence in the Synagogue. By the late 1960's, Bingo was a permanent part of the Sons of Jacob during the post Rabbi Effron era. Bingo was held every Tuesday night at the synagogue and helped the synagogue to make a little money. Ann Levin would make sandwiches and coffee to sell on the side and would push a cart to sell cake.

When Rabbi Griebel arrived there was a motion to create mixed seating for the first time in the history of this congregation. It passed! The Bierg's left the congregation as did others. When Rabbi Bliss arrived he brought with him a couple from New York to conduct the High Holiday services. It was during this time that the Chazzon faced the congregation and conducted services for the first time.

It was during this time that the younger generation thought of moving this shul to another location. The odds for this happening were definitely against this from occurring. But this was the natural progression of the modernization era. Howard Levin, the grandson of Simon Levin viewed the future with zeal. He and others were laughed off the synagogue board even after they had sketches and blue prints made up. The move to East Vineland was not considered a viable one at this or any other time. Howard pointed out that the congregation could not attract new members where they were located. The move towards Lincoln Avenue was not possible eventhough the neighborhood around the shul did change. Sidney Levin lived near the shul as did Sam Farber. But more important this was the real reason that the Shul did not move. TRADITION! Orthodox synagogue do not move! Congregants who have property nearby the shul would not abandon the synagogue and who was about to tell the synagogue that the minyan could not exist just because the neighborhood had changed! The younger members of the board were upset to say the least but the older members of the congregation were right, too. Today hindsight is great to have but this did not change the history of the Grape Street Shul.

History would repeat itself in this era. The attempt of merger loomed in the air. The Sons of Jacob would not allow itself to move or the closing of its doors. Jay Greenblatt would receive word that the Sons of Jacob would not allow itself to listen to services in the rear of the Beth Israel auditorium over the speaker system.

When there is a Rabbi and a congregation that does not think in the same direction there is turmoil. This leads to a lack of identification for the congregation on the spectrum of the various Jewish movements in America. Every Rabbi that was brought in to the Sons of Jacob had an orientation that the Shul was orthodox and the ritual was orthodox so why allow mixed seating! It did not add up. But the difference was that the congregation ran the synagogue and not the Rabbi. The members made the rules it wanted to follow. This was no longer a homogenized Congregation. It drifted towards being labeled Conservadox.

## Grape Street Shul Sons of Jacob

In the late 1960's there was a time of need and reflection on the part of the congregation that dared to be different than the other two Jewish congregations in Vineland. The desire to create an environment that was free to be Jewish in outlook but modern in approach struggled to find a sense of identity within its function. From Rabbi to Rabbi this congregation would turn to hopes and needs in search of a direction. The community would ultimately decide which direction it would turn. This congregation would strive for a new direction based on its membership.

Eventhough this time period was the end of an era it was the beginning of a new one. Mixed seating within an orthodox synagogue could only happen in America where freedom to create this environment in a religious setting could only exist. Leadership was never a rare commodity in this congregation. This era would be privy to religious leadership from a curious source.

William Niven would come to Carmel from Fulton New York to live and join in community affairs. William would become the unsung Rabbi of Beth Hillel from 1967 until 1972.

In 1972 he would retire to Vineland. During the 1970's there was a great change in the direction of this synagogue. William would be loyal to his upbringing and still witness a combining of mixed seating for both men and women in an orthodox. William would become a Gabbai Reshon at the Grape Street Shul.

The Americanization of the Grape Street Shul was not de facto. This allowance of mixed seating was what the congregation wanted in the way of accommodations in their sanctuary. This did cause some alarm and concern in the congregation at the time as recalled by Annette Smith.

Annette and her husband Al would return to Vineland to accompany Henrietta and Sam Farber to the synagogue after a serious injury affected Henrietta's health.

The future would catch up with Annette and Henrietta in a startling way. The time was the High Holidays in the early 1970's. The pair walked into the shul and stood in the middle of the floor as they entered the sanctuary. Such a dilemma could only be fabricated in America. There were seats waiting for them next to their husbands and the partition in the annex was removed showing the ladies section. But seats were waiting next to their husbands! These ladies wanted to sit next to their husbands and did so that year!

The decorum in the shul would dictate the way in which this congregation would face its future

The balcony was discontinued some years ago. No curtain ever existed at the base of the Balcony railing. So why should there be a curtain downstairs with a proper mechitza. Judging by this response in relationship to the seating arrangement would mean a more prominent change was about to be made.

For the loyal separatists, there was a section to the left isle for women "only". The mixed seating couples were families. Henrietta Farber refused to follow any direction but her own! This meant that she would sit in the middle isles where mixed seating was permitted. This followed the tradition of the 33rd Street Shul in Strawberry Mansion section in the 1930's. The B'nai Jeshurun synagogue was fully democratic in this regard.

This era was marked by the simplicity of its appeals which were a trademark of its philosophy over the years. Pledges were left for over the Day of Atonement. This Yom Kippur appeal is for the up keep of the shul. This was a major difference over the years as compared to the Beth Israel Congregation. Beth Israel would funnel its appeal towards the up keep of its Hebrew School!

Appeals for monies were not made at the Grape street Shul during the Six Day War of 1967 in Israel or during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Appeals were not made at the Shul during this time because Vineland is a self contained Jewish community. Meaning that all people were not affiliated to all synagogues but they gave to the United Jewish Appeal!

It was the same when it came to ritual as far as Women's rights and equality in Jewish life in America was changing. The ladies of the Grape Street Shul allowed the women's revolution of equality in Jewish ritual to pass right over their synagogue. They did not want to participate in Aliyahs. This action in turn would lead to a more definitive action in the 1980's.

One hundred families belonged to the shul in the early 1970's. A daily minyan attracted over 25 men. For Shabbas in the 1970's meant that 15 people would make a Shabbas minyan possible. Time would pass swiftly in the 1970's. William Niven passed away and was survived by his wife and son, David. By the end of the 1970's, over 65% of the congregation would pass away.

With the arrival of Al Smith in Vineland in the late 1970's meant the reawakening of the men's club. But this was short lived as the 1980's arrived.

The congregation was fast approaching its 75th birthday. The question was would it live to see its 75th continuous year of serving the Vineland Jewish community. It's morning minyan was a reason for its existence and continuation.

The absence of a Rabbi and the quick turnover of the religious leaders painted a very definite picture. But throughout the years, one thing remained illuminated. This was the respect of the congregation for the ritual and decorum within the synagogue and in services. The congregation would change over the course of time but the general consensus would support strict orthodox ritual. This continuum of religious attitude faded to a bleak glimmer of its former importance but was never extinguished. The Yeshiva Council of Synagogues which numbered close to 12 at one time in Philadelphia was diminishing rapidly in the mid 1980's. Rabbi's who were popular in their home congregations such as Ner Zedek-Ezrath Israel would retire. While other synagogues, such as Shaare Shamyim would see its religious leader for over one generation go back into other fields of

other endeavors.

Grape Street Shul Sons of Jacob

Like Philadelphia's waning Yeshiva Council and its synagogues would see the demise of this arm of the Jewish community. An era had succumbed to time in this region by the late 1980's. These synagogues identified more closely with the Conservative movement. Whereas Grape Street insulated itself from this development by adhering to orthodox ritual.

As the 75th Anniversary of the Shul was celebrated in 1983 it could only be said that the synagogue was open and not closed! The Alternative Hebrew School was organized to meet the needs of some of the dissatisfied parents of both Beth Israel and Sons of Jacob.

Again the quest for a move to a new location was raised. The old idea of merging the Sons of Jacob with Beth Israel was in the air again. By this moment a portion of time was superceded by the inclusion of the Refugees and their involvement in the running of the shul.

Orthodox shuls do not move as a compromise of its neighborhood. In addition, a clause in Mr. Klure's will protected the rights of this religious entity. People in this synagogue worked their tails off and could not bear to see the demise of this synagogue. This included Al Smith z"l, Jerry Batt, Roy Rubenstein, Fred Levin and Al Rothchild.

A synagogue is not comparable to a person's life in this respect. Annette Smith had terse words about this state of condition of the synagogue she was named in years ago. She remarked, " Does the Catholic Church go out of business in a neighborhood" ? Then why should a synagogue go out of business?

A new era was gradually dawning as the 1980's make its way to the 1990's. The Holocaust Survivors who gathered together South of Landis Avenue on the other side of Delsea Drive witnessed the deterioration of its synagogue. Now 13 families would venture together in searching for a new beginning. Mr. Raab would come over to Grape Street as a symbol of brotherhood and read the Megillah on Purim during 1987. The idea of joining two congregations for the betterment of a community is well founded in Jewish tradition.

But first, a meeting was held to set ground rule for such a union. The Sons of Jacobs voted to discontinue the idea of mixed seating and thus return to separate seating at Yontavim. This reversal was a first in the Greater Delaware Valley ever. This was initiated in order to accomodate the Orchard Road Shul people into the Sons of Jacob Shul.

Naturally there was some vocal protest at the outset of this momentous event. Up until this time, the congregation was declared " homogenized " by Annette Smith.

The meeting produced a radical change or was just an adaptation of the desire of the congregation to continue its tradition?

Grape Street Shul Sons of Jacob

For Annette, who was named in this shul it was matter of deep soul searching. It was her Shul! Her reply was based on the fact that she did not want to see the synagogue go down the drain. So, if Annette would have to sit separate from her husband, she would! She raised her hand and voted in favor of the elimination of the mixed seating. The other ladies did not want to do so because they had become familiar with seating with their husbands during services. But if it meant " Saving the Shul", they would do it!

A few members walked out and left for Beth Israel. While others joined the newly created Reform congregation in Carmel. The 13 families never did pay dues that year because they hired a Cantor from New York. They have not joined the congregation to date but participate to some degree in its operation.

A translated Yiddish saying is worthwhile repeating here. This synagogue doesn't stand alone. " It shouldn't happen like it can happen" But this is the way of Jewish communities in America in the 20 century!

Tradition in the Jewish religion is one thing and how an older person in America would take a time cycle event is another. Sam Adelson was a close friend to Sam Farber. During the interview for this portion of the book, Annette admitted that she never told her father, who was sitting at the table with us about the passing of Sam Adelson. Sam Farber was sick at the time and she wanted to protect him as only a daughter could be expected.

In later years Sam had moved to Tampa Florida. Once the news had reached the community of his passing Jewish tradition took over. The Monroeville Synagogue mustered 9 men for memorial services for one of their own members in the early 1980's. Thus the reciting of the Kaddish for Sam could not be said for the lack of a tenth person. Si Bolnick ran into Annette Smith at Arthur's Delicatessen on Landis Avenue and referred to this event. Annette was composed and she asked why didn't he call her? Si replied that he did not want to upset her father. Old people are protected in these matters for health reasons.

But in the the Jewish religion it is Tradition that would supercede in this case. So, the men sat quietly in the Crown of Israelites Shul in the early 1980's remembering the good things Sam Adelson did for his community and family.

The late 1980's has brought change to the Vineland Jewish Community in a variety of ways. This would include the closing of the final butcher and Kosher meat shop in the area in 1987. The Bierg ceased their retail operation and William Nunberg passed away which ultimately closed his business. Fresh Kosher killed poultry is still available in the community according to Kashrus. But all kosher keeping Jews must import their kosher meats as over 100 year ago when they first came to this region to live and work.

The Bierg's were numerous members of the Sons of Jacob from 1959 until the early 1970's. But with the mixing of men and women at services came the withdrawal of support for this shul by the Biergs. Herb Bierg respected the Sabbath and the idea of separation of men and women in prayer services. This was his background and he was proud of it. They later joined the Orchard Road Shul.

By the 1980's, both buildings were undergoing physical deterioration. First, the Grape Street Shul's roof was in dire need of repairs. Just to show how the feminist movement did have an effect on this congregation is illustrated by what happened at one Yom Kippur Appeal during this time. A prominent lawyer's wife donated \$ 500 to this appeal. This was done when her husband was out to the restroom. When the man reappeared his friend next to him thanked him for the contribution. Now he yells at his wife and she says, please be quiet or I'll give another \$ 500 . The roof was fixed!

Now with the Orchard Road Shul in dire repair it was imperative that another place of worship be located. Herb Bierg's basement was converted into a Beth Hamedrash and a Beth Ha Keneseth.

A meeting at Grape Street would take effect and clear the way for such a merger if only to accommodate the 13 families in 1987 for High Holiday services. But time was short and the Orchard Road people went out and hired a Chazzan and conducted services for themselves that year.

The Balabitim of the Shul has always had the best interest in heart. For the congregation to move into the 1980's was to be no different. Harry Zislin was part of this process over the years. Harry was raised in Philadelphia but returned to Carmel during the Depression years. He spent a great deal of time on the land which belonged to his mother's father. Mr. Weisman was witness to his grandson becoming a Bar Mitzvah boy in 1934 at the Beth Hillel shul.

After being married in 1954 at the Commodore Hotel at Broad and Spruce in Philadelphia, the couple came to live in Vineland. Belonging to a synagogue was a natural for this young man.

The synagogue over the last thirty five years has undergone a variety of changes. Being a board member for most of those years has not been an easy chore. One such chore was the sending of Yazhreit notices through the mail to people's homes. The Yazhreit memorial boards in the synagogue were kept current and Yiskor was observed three times per year for the entire community to observe properly.

If the members wanted a minyan for the reciting of Kaddish during this time a notice was sent out prior to this date. Shiva minyans were provided for the members in their own home by the synagogue through internal means.

Harry has witnessed the congregation growth to a peak of 130 to 140 families and now down to 85 in 1989. For the High Holiday appeals he would remind everyone of their Jewish communal responsibilities.

Merging with the Plum Street Shul which has 15 active families in the late 1980's is not feasible. Nor would the possibility to merge with Beth Israel be a reality. All synagogues in Vineland have faced this crisis in terms of a declining membership. The days of the large fund raisers held in the Big building are over. The big building is leased to the Creative Achievement Academy for children of broken homes. This is a state funded institution. Since 1988 this has helped to defray the costs of running the synagogue. The group knows that the stage or the Bima is off limits. Harry is a loyal member of the congregation that would not trade his membership for any place else. Others have since left the congregation for other synagogues.

Harry's philosophy is home grown. When a farmer does not add fertilizer then there will be no commercial crop. Young families are hard to attract to this congregation. The term modern orthodox was a special term created to describe this congregation. It was a local make-up euphemism which helped to explain the direction of this congregation. A renaissance in the area where the synagogue is located is projected for the coming years. For Harry, as long as there is a minyan there will be a congregation! Harry Zislin belongs to the Sons of Jacob because it exists.

Making the synagogue and its functions interesting was tried in the mid 1980's. The last President of the shul, Roy Rubenstein created the Sunday morning brunch. But there was no attendees!

Today there are no Presidents or Rabbis for this synagogue. Yet it continues to exist based on its own will and testament. The old congregation is no more. A three member tribunal conducts the financial and religious affairs of this religious entity. At the end of the 20th century, the three-day-a-year Jew is a dying breed. The Refugees do not ride on Shabbas or Yontav to the Grape Street Shul. The Grape Street Shul serves as a place for minyan in the early morning hours.

For some people in 1989, belonging to a synagogue is out of reach financially for some families. Paying \$700, \$800 or \$1200, \$1300 per year is too much! Being affiliated with a synagogue has never been cheap. But this shul did not extract a dues membership higher than the means of its members! For the honor or Kovad of reciting certain portions did not belong to a certain few. The money donated was gathered together for the up keep of the shul itself.

We have to have leaders who are willing to deal with this dilemma at the end of the 20th century in America! There are people who want to belong but can't afford it. What is their alternative? A cheaper Shul! A Shandah! In plain terms, a disgrace to the Jewish community. Jews should learn a lesson from the pages of history on this subject so they can work it out instead of charging " admission "

When Max Nunberg's parents came to Vineland this is exactly what occurred. For Max was a young child but vividly remembers his parents William and Esther being turned down at the doors of the Grand Movie Theatre on Landis Avenue in order to attend High Holiday services. William pleaded with the man at the door that he had no money on him since it was Yontav but wanted to attend. William was refused even when he offered to sent a donation after the High Holidays! This was not a case of a "free Davener" who wanted to attend services but a sincere Jew who was turned away on Rosh Shannah because he had no "ticket"!

But now the quality of your Jewishness is being measured by the amount of money you can put out to attend a synagogue for High Holiday services. Judaism is of a higher quality than a movie theatre! Today, dues at the Grape Street Shul run close to \$350.

A new era is dawning for this congregation. Regardless of the fact of any more people coming forth from the existing communities nearby. Just as the Lunar Eclipse was a reality on the night of August 16th, 1989 so is the continuation of the Sons of Jacob. Its 80 plus years of existence has been witness to many good and bad events. But the glimmer of hope that is renewed in its leaders can make the difference for its future.

Max Nunberg is a child of a Holocaust Survivors family. The hope is in youth and necessarily in young families. The next generation must assume its responsibility. Just as his father who recently passed away was a beacon of inspiration and hope in his Delicatessen on Delsea Drive, it now Max's turn to lead! The commitment that William Nunberg made to his community by providing a service that included freshly made Kosher Sausage and other cold cuts so it is the responsibility of Max to provide "services" for his generation.

Jewish life for William Nunberg was simple. He was not going to become rich in terms of dollars and cents only satisfied by providing a "service" for other Jews. William was a meat purveyor in the old country. He survived the Holocaust and came to Cumberland County to be a Chicken farmer. When this failed he resigned himself to create a better sense of community by reverting back to his old occupation. The symbol of Kashrus is very potent in a Jewish community. The degree of Kosherness is determined ultimately by the individual. But without Kashrus, Max exclaims there is no link to modern life. This daily link is very important for Max and others who abide by the laws of Kashrus.

This value was passed from father to son when many people gave up their linkage to the past as perceived by Max. William Nunberg was a compassionate man. His drive was based on "an effort of love". Thus his occupation was a one of compassion to "benefit the other people" in the Jewish community. This was the true link of the Jewish generations in this community that have made it possible to write about the current state of events in Cumberland County's Jewish Community.

It is true that the Refugee people would not ride to synagogue on the Sabbath and the High Holidays. But this did not mean that they did not attend the Grape Street Shul!. For William and Esther Nunberg did what other Jews in the community did during these days in September and October annually. They would rent rooms near the shul at motels on Delsea Drive. This included the East Landis and the Circle Motel. Later Max bought a home in Vineland and his parents would stay by him for the Yontavim so they could walk to shul.

When Rabbi Norwood Unger came to Vineland it was considered a good thing. But as time went on he was considered a bad influence in the this synagogue due to his stances on religion. The direction of the synagogue as it approaches the 1990's was due to his foresight. Rabbi Norwood dared Jews to be themselves. Nothing was considered purer than Jews who cared about their religion.

The synagogue became a place where Jews came together for more than just prayer. This is the only place where Jews can come together as one! Being religious and observant are not one and the same thing. There is a difference.

Max Nunberg recognizes this fact. He describes the Jewish community as "under seize". The synagogue can be viewed as a place of refuge. He believes that the synagogue can serve this purpose in the 1990's.

Leo Segalman mustered his own strength and literally helped to save the synagogue from closing its doors. He is on the Tribunal today and helps to steer the synagogue into the future. Leo had a strict self policy of belonging to the Grape Street Shul. You come to the shul for your own good not because I invite you! More people viewed his strength with vigor and they came on their own! Today, the Sons of Jacob are giving refuge to those that want religion.

Max Nunberg believes that in return this congregation should provide for its congregants something tangible for the next generation. Thus for the coming High Holidays of 5750 it is going to secure a Rabbi. The direction of the congregation had been re-established and now it needs leadership for more families to feel at home for the next generation. Max believes in this fashion the Grape Street Shul will give the congregation an identity and forefill their Jewishness.

The synagogue witnessed more than 150 people attend High Holiday services last year. Just as the Lunar Eclipse hid the brightness of the moon, so there was a sliver of light on the rim that reached the earth. This is comparable to the Sons of Jacob which started out over 80 years ago and has seeded and blossomed. The essence of this comparison is the fact that flame did not go out! The future for the Sons of Jacob is hopeful due to this process.

Grape Street Shul Sons of Jacob

Ten to twenty eight men attend morning Minyan. Twenty to 30 men attend Shabbas minyan and services on Saturdays in 1989. A bizzare fact is worth repeating. The men stay for over half an hour to talk about the meaning of the Torah portion. They eat herring and drink Schnapps as they prepare for the kiddish. Max Nunberg is usually the last one out! The spark is usually stronger in the next generation and this spelled out to be true for the misphocha of the Nunbergs

Now that Annette Smith has lost her husband in addition to her mother and father-in-law she feels that no one should stop her from saying Kaddish for her husband, Al Smith z"l least of all her father! She points out that nowhere in the laws of Judaism point to the exclusion of women in this time honored tradition. Up until this time, the Grape Street Shul was identified as neither fish nor fowl. But this event has meant the end of the demise of this " Modern Orthodox Shul"

A synagogue closes its doors when it can no longer function as a basic Jewish religious entity. This means the lack of a High Holiday service or Shabbas Services or Morning minyan!

Surely Annette will go and say Kaddish for her husband because she feels compelled to do so.

Just as no one can tell a synagogue as to when to close its doors, no one can tell Annette to pay a person to say Kaddish for her husband, Surely the current minyan and men have offered to say Kaddish every day as prescribed by Jewish tradition up until the eleventh month following one's death in the Jewish religion.

Special preparations have been made by the congregation that decided to re-instate separation of men and women in prayer services. She was named in this synagogue almost 70 years ago on the Bima and now she will be separated by a panel in another room as she recites the time honored Kaddish for her husband who has no one left in his family to do so.

This congregation is blessed in many ways if they only do not fail to see the beauty in which this congregation has come to exist all these years.

This chapter is specially dedicated to the people who have put their hearts and minds together to perfect a more Jewish lifestyle. May it be a blessing that they go forth into the 21st century in Vineland with love and understanding of Judaism that has brought them this far.

Reference Source Credit

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- Telephone conversation with Roy Rubenstein 7/31/89
- Telephone conversation with Max Nunberg 8/16/89
- Special thanks to private nurse Gloria and Annette's  
dog named "Snickers" who kept my daughter Alisha  
entertained for over two hours while I interviewed  
Annette and Sam Farber

The next generation is always a potent force to deal with in terms of ideas and principles especially in the Jewish community. Vineland, New Jersey would be no different in this regard. The community itself was only twenty years old when the emergence of new ideas towards Judaism rose to the surface. The idea of many factions of Judaism within the boundaries of Vineland was no surprise.

Vineland's Jewry was growing as the Jewish Agricultural Colonies were declining in the 1910's. Many older Jewish pioneer families stayed on the land for a longer period of time than most recent immigrants to the area.

The Greenblatt clan was no exception in this matter. This family endured the beginnings of Brotmanville and by the late 1910's would move into town. That being Vineland. Jacob's family would certainly attach themselves to a synagogue in town.

Vineland's Jewish population can be traced to the mid 1880's. By the early 1900's, the Jewish manufacturers and merchants inhabited this community in sufficient numbers to warrant two congregations to be formed. Different ritual was the root cause for the two distinctive groups.

The early families of Vineland's Jewry were in business for a couple of decades by the onset of World War One. The next generation of children was about to grow up and take their place in this Jewish community. Changes in the way in which this group would approach its future would have long term effects on this community.

Americanization of the Jew in this community was in the works as early as 1916. Patriotism and the scout movement meant for a Jewish acceptance to this concept.

This was the first step in adopting ideals like the rest of the community but within a Jewish context. The Bridgeton community was approaching the future with a congregation of its own. But Vineland would have to wait until the end of the First World War in order to address its expanding communal needs.

Meanwhile, the Greenblatts came to town and added a new dimension to the community. Jacob was a carpenter and later became a Kosher Butcher. He settled in a home near 8th and Montrose Streets. But by 1917 Jacob came to Vineland to retire. Jacob joined the Grape Street Shul as did his adult children.

Martin Joseph Greenblatt was born in 1897 in Brotmanville. M. Joseph as he was known went to a trade school in Eskintown on Gershel Avenue. He wanted to become a dentist but his teacher, Mr. Chisel advised him to become a lawyer. M. Joseph's father wanted him to become a doctor. M. Joseph chose to become a lawyer. This was 1917 and the family's decision to move to Vineland affected his time schedule in this regard. Back then you didn't need a pre-law curriculum. M. Joseph entered the University of Pennsylvania to become a lawyer in 1918.

The early 1920's were full of adventure. Even in the small communities there was sense of the future at their doorsteps. Electricity was being installed in many new houses.

M. Joseph marries Miss Esther Nuremburg from Mt. Holly, New Jersey. The couple is married by Rabbi Max Kline of Philadelphia's congregation Adath Jeshurun. The wedding is a grand one and the Chuppah is set up inside the Majestic Hotel on North Broad Street. Rabbi Max Kline would be a key asset to the Vineland Jewish community in the near future.

The tradition of splitting congregations in Vineland in order to make another one is part of this Jewish community's history. Now another split and one based on ideology plus one along generational lines was in the works in early 1923.

By May 1923, a meeting was called for in the home of one of the earliest Jewish merchant's in Vineland to discuss a new Jewish congregation. Frank Mennies home on East Avenue was used for this historic occasion. Jacob Rubinoff, John Joseph, Frank Kotok, David Rosenthal, Sylvan Einstein, William Kronheim, Morris Zukerman, David Kotok, Sol Beilin, M. Joseph Greenblatt, Barnett Melletz were present to discuss the future of the Jewish community in Vineland.

At the very core of this discussion was the concept of an updated version of the Talmud Torah. A New Hebrew School would be started. Mrs. Rosenzweig from Palestine was selected for this task. This idea was tried in a number of other cities at this time in the Greater Delaware Valley Region. Beth Shalom congregation of Wilmington, Delaware was founded in a similar manner. This was in response to certain needs that were felt by the communities themselves.

The men of this group were all members of the Vineland Hebrew Civic Club. They met to socialize by playing cards and to raise funds to make Vineland a better place to live as a Jew! This idealism spilled over into the religious aspect of the community as the next generation took its place in the community.

These Jews saw other people conducting their religious affairs in America in a different way in which Jews previously would never adhere to. But in America the next generation of immigrant children saw religious schools attached to churches and the congregants sat together with their wives at their sides. This ideal was not brought up in traditional Jewish congregations of Eastern European extraction. Only the American Reform movement permitted this unusual behavior in the synagogue. But now the next generation of Jewish children born to East European parents were now Americans! Change in Judaism in Vineland was in the air.

Frank Mennies loved apples and the group ate a half bushel that night they met to discuss a new congregation. The group was a splinter of the Plum Street Shul. It called itself Ahavath Achim New Synagogue Committee.

Officers were selected for this new group. They met in Frank Kotok's home a short time later to draw up a charter.

The meeting dragged on and M. Joseph went home for the evening. In the morning, M. Joseph asked the men what had happened? M. Joseph WAS ASSESSED \$ 500 ! Then he was informed that this money was to be paid into a special account for the formation of a Hebrew School. ANOTHER \$ 500 WAS ASSESSED FOR GENERAL EXPENSES OF THE CONGREGATION! This now totaled \$ 1000!

The men went to Philadelphia to inquire about help in their quest to start a new congregation. Rabbi Samuel Fredman of West Philadelphia's new liberal Conservative Synagogue, Beth El led the group of men in enlisting Rabbi Max Kline's help in this matter. M. Joseph Greenblatt was instrumental in this regard since he was married recently by Congregation Adath Jeshurun's Spiritual leader. The format of the new congregation was sealed in this fashion.

Cantor Jaffe of the nearby area was hired for the High Holiday season. Rabbi Joseph Marcus of the Jewish Theological Seminary was hired, too. Rabbi Marcus was still a student at the time.

These men banded together and raised money in card parties for the new congregation. The Friday evening services were held in English for everyone to listen and participate. The quarters of the Hebrew Civic Club was used for this purpose. A new home for the congregation would have to wait until the men had more money in their pockets!

M. Joseph helped in arranging the banquet for the newly fledging congregation. Rabbi Max Kline of Philadelphia was in attendance. The Synagogue was now named after this affair as Congregation Beth Israel.

M. Joseph's assessment was very high. One of his first cases as a lawyer was pending in the area. The prospective Hebrew Teacher lived in Norma and was represented by M. Joseph. The " new " lawyer was concerned about the case and his assessment. This accident case would be an important one for M. Joseph.

The jury awarded M. Joseph and his client \$ 3,000. Now M. Joseph had money in his hands and instantly became a Machor in the new congregation.

Within six months, a new building facility was chosen. The Pilgrim Congregational Church of Vineland was purchased by Beth Israel for \$ 13,000. The congregation bought the church for a very low sum of money. The men did not want to obligate themselves to too much money. In Philadelphia, at this time the leaders of Conservative Congregation B'nai Jeshurun were about to vote on a \$500,000 Temple. By comparison in Congregation Beth Israel there was no opposition to this plan to buy a church. Similar goals were at the forefront of these institutions. A Hebrew School was a focus for both Congregations. Approach to Jewish study was done with an individual, but now a teacher would have a class!

The wives of the men participated in other Jewish communal organizations. This included the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Vineland. Sylvan Einstein was a natural leader in the Stephen Girard Home in Philadelphia. This would carry over in his adult life in Vineland, New Jersey

Adolph Stein arrived in Vineland in the 1920's and sought help from M. Joseph Greenblatt. A timely meeting was held in a drug store near 6th and Landis Avenue. Adolph was trained to be rabbi in Canada.

This was a very good time for the congregation and they wanted members to give sums of money to build a solid foundation for the new synagogue to stand on. Due to Adolph Stern's lack of funds did not deter the congregation from making him a "member". Adolph was given a shul worker's " contract ". This was service to the synagogue. This then served as his assessment. Adolph was immediately made the President of the Men's Club.

The Congregation made an early commitment to its Hebrew School. The Kol Nidre appeal went towards the Beth Israel Hebrew School. M. Joseph went to other members' homes to get their financial pledges. This was a vital part of the maintenance of the synagogue. This act of responsibility was done in person the day before Kol Nidre. In shul, the announcement of the pledges were a mere formality. This was different than Plum or Grape Street synagogues!

Here in Beth Israel, the announcement of the pledges was a unique tradition for these Jews. This was certainly a different approach to a constant family. Here in Beth Israel, the Shamus went row by row to get the members in the synagogue and their pledges for the coming year.

M. Joseph tells us that this unusual way of collecting dues was in response to the general members dislike toward voice pledges that was in vogue in the other synagogues at the time in Vineland.

The first year in the congregation's history was full of great happenings and short lived hopes. First, Mrs. Taube Rubinoff presented a Torah to Beth Israel. Rabbi Marcus resigned one year after he was hired by the congregation.

Rabbi N.B. Krueger was engaged as the Rabbi. Another Cantor was hired, too. The officers changed during the first years in addition to the spiritual leaders. A long standing Secretary would be found in Leon N. Bardfeld commencing in 1925.

Controversy would spread over this year. Rabbi Krueger was too liberal in his approach to Judaism. He wanted to promote less or little Kashrut in the home. Rabbi Krueger's legacy was found in his inception of the Beth Yod Forum during his stay in 1925. This activity brought noted speakers to the synagogue to lecture on topics of the day.

Jacob Greenblatt was a help to the entire Vineland community in many ways. One special way he contributed his expertise was found in reading the Torah for the Grape Street Shul during the First World War. He was the only one who could read Torah there and was promised \$ 25 for his services. Only the Hebrew teachers were paid.

As the Beth Israel Congregation was started, Jacob Greenblatt would help both congregations by reading Torah for both of them every Sabbath.



Manny Woldar, his brother and sister were born in Russia at the turn of the century. During the First World War, Barney's father was severely wounded. Barney remained in the hospital for some time. The Russian General whose life Barney saved was grateful of this act of courage. The General promised Barney aid in the event that he should ever need it. Barney left the hospital and could not find a job. The war was over. The General enabled Barney Woldar to undertake a contract to feed 500,000 Russian soldiers with meat, potatoes and bread. The family now lived in royalty. But reality soon caught up with this patriotic Russian Jewish Soldier.

Fresh pogroms broke out all over Russia with the Jew as a focus point. Meantime the Woldars would have to leave Russia in order to survive. During this time Barney's brother was murdered in front of his shul in Kiev on Sucas in the late 1910's. The hoodlums came and ransacked the Shul. The mob was furious and out of control. A Christian woman hid Barney Woldar in an outhouse for three days until the town calmed down.

Relatives of the Woldars were located in America. Salem, New Jersey was home for a few of his family's people. Mr Sendrow was Barney's stepfather. Manny Woldar was born in 1917 and was six and one half years old when the family left Russia. People needed a sponsor or relative in order to immigrate to America in 1924. The Anti-Immigration act of 1924 stopped mass immigration to America in its tracks.

Barney Woldar was a Shomer Shabbas Jew and did not like the idea of working on the Sabbath.

It was at this time that Mr. Levy's Kosher Butcher shop in Vineland was located across from the Plum Street Shul. The Rosen and Levinson families joined in this trade in Vineland during this time period. Kosher butchers came and went in the earlier years of the community. Mr. Rosenthal was part of the transition. Mr. Woldar bought Mr. Levy's business upon his retirement in 1923.

The Woldar's lived above the store on Plum Street. Barney worked 20 hours per day and raised his family out of two rooms in the 1920's. The struggle was then to survive! In any event the business was built up before the 1930's arrived.

Barney joined the Plum Street Shul for two years. Barney Woldar would follow many of his friends by leaving the Plum Street Shul for the new congregation of Beth Israel. The new congregation did not have a regular davener to lead the group. Barney was not a cantor but he had a sweet voice. Barney's Hebrew name was Betta.

Manny Woldar views his father as a stern man with principles. Manny would describe his father as, "an individual orthodox Jew with vision." Barney was ahead of his time. Different Jewish people would join Beth Israel for many reasons. America was now affecting the newly arrived Woldar's in many ways.

Barney could see that his children wouldn't fit into what he had learned and experienced in Russia in the Jewish religion. The Talmud Torahs that were in use in Southern New Jersey in the early 1900's were intensive cheders. Barney switched to Congregation Beth Israel because of his children.

Children were not welcomed in the synagogue because of the noise factor during Sabbath services in the other two Vineland shuls in the 1910's as reported by M. Joseph Greenblatt. The cheder and the Talmud Torahs were separate entities in many communities in the Greater Delaware Valley during this time period. The synagogue was for prayer and advanced study for these transplanted East European immigrants. But as the East European Jews wanted to become more Americanized, they wanted their synagogues to partake in this transition, also.

In Vineland, three cheders and children were welcomed. After Beth Israel opened its Hebrew School in the late 1920's, the Plum Street Talmud Torah suffered in many ways.

Beth Israel later bought a church and converted it into a synagogue. This was one of the only Jewish congregations that chose not to build its first synagogue from the ground up! The Salem and Clayton congregations would follow a similar pattern in its earlier years, too. But all three groups would build a new Community Center and sanctuary by the late 1940's or early 1950's.

By contrast, the synagogues in Vineland all had Church like architecture. This was not by choice but by design. For the Jewish community built their buildings according to the popular architectural motifs in use in Vineland during the early 20th century.

By comparison all three synagogues looked remarkably alike from the outside. The pointed Gothic windows on all three synagogues was where the similarities stopped.

By custom and tradition, it is okay to convert for a Jewish congregation to buy a church and convert it into a Jewish house of worship. But it's against Jewish minhag to convert an abandoned synagogue into a church.

Having arched cathedral ceilings in the newly renovated 7th Street Synagogue was an indication of a new era for Barney Woldar's generation. This was especially true in this location when a balcony was not available or installed.

This change was representative of the mood of this new congregation in Vineland. New thought and the ability to have more room to think in a religious setting was productive for the newly evolving Conservative Congregation of Beth Israel!

No balcony was available or needed as the new congregation adapted the dominant culture manners on sitting together both men and women. This feature in Jewish law had been in effect for many centuries except for the last 100 years. The idea that men could not concentrate while sitting with women in prayer was always held in high regard in the Jewish religion.

The idea of this being evil and that man could not concentrate with total devotion to prayer was cast aside in America by the East European Jew. A more updated and less traditional approach was now in place in many communities. Freedom of religion now included the idea of choosing ritual within religion in America in the early 20th century. It was now okay to allow men and women to sit together in worship services in the Jewish religion.

But this focus was not the first or last thing that made Congregation Beth Israel different from the other synagogues in Vineland! Leftover feelings were abundant in the new Beth Israel congregation. It was not the fact that Jews were praying in a converted church but that now two factions existed as represented by the splinter group that eventually made up another Jewish synagogue in Vineland's Jewish community.

Both the Plum Street and Grape Street shuls were separated from each other by a large geographical barrier, <sup>ie Lanfis Ave</sup> the East European synagogues were adjusting to the new found freedom in America in a religious sense. Now you were accepted in the community as a Jew even if you didn't keep the Sabbath! But a more traditional group of newly arriving East European Jews felt that they should not give up their traditions least of all the observance of Shabbas. Thus the Plum Street Shul took pride in this fact. The members at that synagogue had to observe the Sabbath in order to belong. This was not the case in the new Beth Israel congregation.

Now the next movement in American Jewish history would affect Vineland. Mixed seating within a worship service was the norm for American culture. Jews in Vineland wanted to be seen in the community as being separate especially since they received their new citizenship papers in Bridgeton.

English in the service was the next step in this evolutionary process. The ritual would now change as well. Ultra religious in those days meant being a Shomer Shabbas Jew. For some Jews in Vineland this meant no change at all. Some leaders of the Grape Street Shul did work on the Sabbath and others would keep their factories open.

The majority of Jews at Grape Street in the 1920's did work on Saturday's because they had to earn a livelihood. At Plum Street, the men did not work on Saturday as part of their commitment to their religious habits and beliefs. Mr. Cohen had a furniture store but he would close it on Saturday. All the Kosher Butchers were part of the Plum Street Shul. The Shochetim or ritual slaughters of chickens which included Mr. Mallin would observe the Sabbath.

The Woldar's upon entering Vineland worked very hard to make a living from being a Kosher Butcher. The effort to feed one's family is usually measured in terms of sacrifice. For the Woldar's this meant physical exhaustion, too. The height of the Pleasurink Era was in full swing in the late 1920's.

A contract to feed the summer trade at the Jewish Hotels in the countryside was in order for Mr. Woldar. And why not? Barney had experience in feeding many people at one time in Russia. But catering to the various needs of Jewish people was quite different.

Before the Jewish Holidays in September would mean a great strain on one's ability to keep awake and perform a great task. The Woldar family would join in by working 24, 36, or 48 hours straight in order to meet the needs of its customers. There was only so much time as then young Manny Woldar recalls. In addition Barney Woldar supplied the communities of Carmel, Rosenhayn, and Millville with fresh Kosher meat delivered by horse and wagon.

The trolley car ran down Landis Avenue from the Railroad Boulevard. At Main Road it would turn right and head for Millville. Barney would take all the orders for that day in a burlap bag and schlep them on the trolley car for the ride to Millville. The evening was reserved for this venture.

By 7 or 8PM Barney would arrive in Millville. The first stop was the Ackerman's. Barney would leave half the orders there for distribution. Mr. Woldar would then go to the other side of town and deliver the orders personally door to door. Manny would help his father in this exciting adventure.

Sure, the trip to Millville was always filled with excitement and adventure. Sometimes tragedy and disaster awaited their arrival. Fire would stop the trolley car and Barney would have to hire a wagon to deliver his meat/poultry with his son at his side into the late evening hours.

Delivery of Kosher meats by use of the Trolley car from city to city was full of fun. Fun and hard work in the Greater Delaware Valley was a way of life for many newly arrived East European Jews in the 1920's. Jewish people from 40th and Girard Avenues in Philadelphia would take their live chickens under their arms on the route 40 trolley car to 5th and Lombard Streets to be slaughtered by the Shochet. Then the people would return with fresh killed kosher provision under their arms.

The scene was repeated throughout the Greater Delaware Valley with many variations. Kosher Meats were sent on the trolley cars that transversed from Trenton, south to Camden. Stops included Bordentown, Burlington, Mount Holly and Riverside. This meant packages were dropped off at various locations and one could keep a kosher home some 30 miles away from a Jewish neighborhood but still receive quality Kosher provisions within 24 hours.

This era was full of Jewish adventure and stories. Many have not been told because they were part of every day life for the Jewish immigrants.

One such story can not go unfortold. Manny would go and deliver the meats with his father in a horse and buggy when the family could afford such a luxury. This meant that regular runs would be made weekly.

A horse and buggy were bought by Barney. A former race horse was now harnessed to the red buggy for these trips throughout the countryside. The horse was named Prince and Manny would wait outside as Barney would make the deliveries. To keep the horse calm during these times was not an easy chore especially in the dead of winter. Sometimes frostbite would set into Manny's toes. But the hot sweet potatoes wrapped in newspapers would do the trick next to Manny's cold toes.

Prince was a " biter " and would raise his feet high in the air and kick. Barney was forced to sell him to the Post Office

The holidays were always near in Manny's childhood. As Selicos or the holiday that ushered in the High Holidays would stand out in Manny's mind. Those Friday nights were special to him. School would start at this time of year in early September. When Manny would leave school at 6th and Plum Streets on Friday afternoons he would smell the Gefilte fish and the freshly baked challah in the air. For Freidman's Jewish bakery was nearby. It was an exception not to see lights on before dark as he walked home. Gentile neighbors would come in and light the wicks and gas lights so the religious Jews could observe the true intent of the Sabbath according to Jewish Law.

Before Yontav, Manny would see the fish peddler, Mr. Scriber on the street. The fish man would have beautiful White fish, Pike and Carp for the Jewish ladies to select from on Wednesday afternoons.

Times would change in a short period of time or so it seemed to Barney Woldar. By the High Holidays of the late 1920's some Jewish people were driving to synagogue from the outlying areas. But some traditions never changed. Home baked goods were stored in the front seats of the cars and exchanged. Manny Woldar would go to shul with his father as the other children on Plum Street did with their fathers

Barney Woldar joined the children of the pioneer families in Vineland in the development of the Beth Israel congregation. The Mennies, Joesepeh and Greenblatt's were all young and successful. Now they felt that they couldn't go along with the strict orthodox mannerisms while being an American and living in Vineland in the 1920's.

Some of these people were able to be Shomre Shabbas observers but they could not see the meaning of remaining in the last century in modern times. Following the precepts of Sabbath observance was confining their freedom as American Jews, so they believed!. The daily ritual was outdated for them! These young professionals and business men got together in a group. They preferred a more liberal approach to their Judaism. When Rabbi Kreuger was hired he appeared to be too far to the left of this group and thus did not stay any length of time in Vineland. Rabbi Krueger promoted the idea of not keeping a kosher home for all the congregants of Beth Israel. This idea was too radical for the majority of the congregation and offended them eventhough they wanted a more liberalized program when it came to religion.

#### Vineland-Beth Israel

This group of dedicated men and women were striving for a better way of Jewish life here in America. The Norma Cemetery was improved, a B'nai Brith chapter was originated and the mortgage of the synagogue was paid off within six years of its inception.

During the late 1920's , a movement to turn Jewish institutions into Jewish Community Centers was underway in America and touched Vineland. The mortgage of the synagogue had recently been paid when another attempt to create a Jewish Community Center was tried. Rabbi Hyman Solomon led the congregation in this great period of its history.

Events in nearby communities drew on the energies of the congregants. Bridgeton and Millville adapted new formats in their approach to Judaism. Conservative Judaism was here to stay in the Tri-City area.

The 1929 Stock Market Crash put an end to the hope of a Jewish Community Center and shortly thereafter Rabbi Solomon passed away suddenly.

M. Joseph Greenblatt was then elected President of the Synagogue in 1930. M. Joseph remained successful during this time. His prominence in the community was balanced with respect. A few board members traveled with M. Joseph in his new " Pierce Arrow " touring automobile the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York in search of a Rabbi. Harry Kellman was selected in this manner as he was a student at the time.

Now began a period of time that was marked with stability in a rabbi. Rabbi Harry Kellman graduated the Seminary in 1931 and came to Vineland. Harry was born in Philadelphia in 1907. His father, Michael Kellman was a rigger near Second and Vine Streets next to the well known Benjamin Brothers.

Michael Kellman raised his family near New Market and Poplar Streets. Father and son went to Congregation Dir She Tov Synagogue. Jack Stein and Michael Kellman helped young Harry to determine his lifetime trade. Service to his people was a key ingredient in the make up of Harry Kellman as a young child. Harry attended Yeshiva Mishkan Yisroel at Second near Girard Avenues. Benjamin Teller was a classmate. The two boys would often go over to Teller's Hebrew Article near Sixth near Girard Avenue to study. These two childhood friends would become Rabbis and breakaway from their orthodox roots in the process. Both young men would serve the same congregation in Vineland, New Jersey.

Rabbi Kellman would help further the development of this congregation and a new dimension of appeal in this community was began in the early 1930's. The Hebrew School was set apart from the Talmud Torah in its approach to the needs of the community. All children were welcome without a fee! The parents would contribute to the general fund of the synagogue as they best could this expense.

Barney Woldar switched over to Congregation Beth Israel. Barney was now the main davener at the new synagogue. Even Rev. Mallin came over to Beth Israel! What a shock to the Vineland Jewish community!

This was the era of Rabbi Hyman Solomon in the late 1920's. Miss Waxman of Vineland would marry Rabbi Solomon. The era was high-lighted with many events. Manny Woldar would soon be a Bar mitzvah boy in 1930. Tragedy would strike in these happy times. For Rabbi Solomon would pass away suddenly within two weeks of Manny being called to the Torah in honor of his Bar Mitzvah.

Rev. Mallin would assist young Manny with his Torah reading. Rev Mallin would continue to support Beth Israel in many different ways in the future. Cantors at Beth Israel were not in demand due the rich supply within the congregation itself.

A month after Manny's Bar Mitzvah took place, Rabbi Harry Kellman was allowed to conduct services for the first time at Beth Israel. Rabbi Kellman was as handsome as an actor and well liked. His appeal to the congregation went further than skin deep. For Rabbi Kellman would pace the beams and get the entire audience's attention.

This was not the usual sign of the times. For Rabbis and congregations were both struggling to get by in the early days of the Great Depression. But as faith would have it this would be Harry Kellman's first congregation.

The shidach or marriage of Rabbi Kellman to this congregation was marked in the community with many pleasant remarks. As Barney and his wife would attend regularly and remark, " Geshmach " ! " Oh how wonderful a speech " !

But Manny couldn't understand the big fuss for he didn't even understand what Rabbi Kellman had said! Rabbi Kellman would have a certain charm and magic about his demeanor that drew all types of Jews to the synagogue. It didn't matter if you understood Yiddish or English. You could follow along with him. This was the appealing part of Beth Israel's success in the 1930's in Vineland's Jewish community

This love affair attracted a larger audience especially on the Sabbath. Fifteen to twenty men would come to services and THIRTY FIVE TO FOURTY WOMEN attended, too.

On the more serious side was the investment in the Hebrew School which was the core of this congregation. Rae Cohn was a Hebrew School teacher here. Rabbi Kellman ran the Hebrew School and created new programs of interest.

But Rabbi Kellman always built upon the relatively new foundations set down by his previous colleagues. One such activity was the use of the choir. This was an appealing part of the congregation. The choir was started during Rabbi Solomon's tenure. Now a Junior Congregational Choir was formed and successfully started. The senior choir came to Synagogue every Friday night and performed. Later Friday evening services were new to this town in the early 1930's. They had been tried with much raved success in Philadelphia.

This was to be the hallmark of the Conservative Synagogue in the 1930's in the Greater Delaware Valley Region! A sermon and some timely words were all that any people needed during these trying times.

The inspirations were delivered in the form of a lecture at Beth Israel Synagogue. For Friday night services, Two Hundred people would attend. An oneg or short discussion would follow with refreshments served. Rabbi Max Kline of Adath Jeshurun in Philadelphia would help Rabbi Kellman prepare his material on occasion.

Ninety nine percent of the Jews in Vineland belonged to a synagogue in Vineland during this time as recalled by Rabbi Harry Kellman. There was no choir at the Grape or Plum Street synagogues. Professional singers would perform in the choir at Beth Israel. This included then well known Sarah Blum. The Junior Choir was in full swing with Manny Woldar and his sister, Jane and Dr. Hyman.

Confirmation was an early part of the Beth Israel story. By 1940, Beth Israel would celebrate its 13th annual confirmation ceremony.

A new chapter was about to be written. A new addition to the growing synagogue was in order. The outbreak of War in Europe would prevent the Congregation from thinking of moving to larger quarters but more space was needed for the congregational activities. Symbolically the building was completely faced with brick to reassure the community of its solid future.

The inclusion of America in World War Two would interrupt the natural development of this community like many religious groups across the country. But this event did not prevent the evolution of Vineland's Jewish community from going further in its quest for spiritual guidance.

Rabbi Einstein of the Plum Street Shul and Rabbi Kellman had varying opinions of Jewish Life. But for the sake of Sholem or peace in the Jewish Community meant that all Jews should be friendly towards one another. The Jewish community of Vineland was unique in this fashion.

The Jewish community in Vineland by the late 1930's was still composed of all people who were related to each other through marriages of the original settlers of the nearby Jewish Colonies.

The traditional Jews now became " orthodox " as the next generation of Jews in Vineland chose to become Americanized and thus split the Jewish community of Vineland into two.

An edict was declared to Jews in communities across the country as to not associate themselves with these new Jews! This isolationist procedure could not work in Vineland. The unity of the community and respect for each faction's domain would not straddle family ties. Thus as Adolph Hitler was terrorizing Jews in Europe, Jewish unity was being promoted in Vineland. Joint Sabbath morning services of Plum Street and Beth Israel were in effect due to the sensitivity of the rabbis in the community. Thus this edict was not adhered to in Vineland and Jewish families remained ideologically divided based on preference of religious ritual but never split over family ties to a synagogue.

Meanwhile, the Grape Street Shul was abiding by the separation of men and women in prayer services but accepted the community's plea for " Sholem ".

Ted Krause was born in Philadelphia in 1911. The Krause family lived in 7 different places within three years. To grow up in Philadelphia in the 1910's was exciting for a young Jewish boy. The opportunities were immense. The idea to become what ever one wanted to become were numerous. One could attend a variety of schools. This included Gratz Normal school and Central for boys to the Jewish settelemnt school of music on Catherine Street near Seventh. Ted chose to attend the Jewish National Farm School in Doylestown.

Ted was a straight A student and was told of other places to attend. But this was the era of choice and Ted opted for this adventure.

Ted Krause's family followed his initiative and located themselves on a farm some 50 miles from the Jewish side streets of South Philadelphia. The open air and moist soil was appealing to this Jewish family as compared to the crowded conditions in South Philadelphia.

Cultural shock set in for young Ted as he came in contact with the land. He knew milk came from a cow but to sit down and milk a cow was suddenly different. Ted knew water came out of a facet but he didn't know anything about wells.

His father bought the farm outside of Brotmanville in Six Points. The 65 acre farm would serve the family well especially during the Depression. Ted's father was in the grocery business and now with the help of his son they planted corn, wheat, tomatoes and pickles. They raised chickens and packed eggs into the late evening hours.

Both his parents were born in Russia and escaped to America with only their clothes on their backs. A strong desire to farm the land was inspired in Ted by Rabbi Krauskopt who founded the National Farm School.

Ted's Bubbe and Zadhe lived in the household with them. They were very traditional people. Ted learned to speak Yiddish at a very early age.

Zionist feelings run very deep in this family. Ted would be carried to the streible that his father belonged at 3rd near Wolf in South Philadelphia. The family continued to return to this place of worship even when they lived on the farm.

Ted grew into his twenties and wanted a more steady diet of Jewish content. So he joined Beth Israel congregation of Vineland in the 1930's. Rabbi Kellman wanted to start a class of Hebrew in those days in 1937. Nineteen women and Ted signed up for this class.

At the end of four weeks, Ted was the only person left in the class. This was an inspiration to Rabbi Kellman's future plans for Jewish education. A class of only one is a unique situation in Judaism. The one on one approach to learning in Judaism is traditional. Rabbi Kellman was brought up in this traditional manner. Then Rabbi Kellman would transfer all the Jewish knowledge found in the writings of the Jewish people to Ted. They went from Aleph-Bet to Chumash, Mishnah, Talmud, Thellium to the Sages.

What is about to be revealed next is not unique to Jewish men the world over. The women of the community chided Ted how he could become a Bar Mitzvah boy and not know much Hebrew especially the Aleph-Bet.

Rabbi Kellman helped to make this community a hamish place to live, raise Jewish youth and provide a good sense of Jewish loyalty.

Understanding Vineland means to understand Manny's "cake theory". In order to create a Jewish child with values or a Jewish community you need the correct ingredients and you can't skip on anything. Or else it won't come out to be a cake. Religion in the Jewish community in Vineland was a wide colodge of things for Jews in this era.

By time Rabbi Kellman returned from his time in the service the community had matured. More space and larger quarters were needed. But Rabbi Kellman would not stay much longer after the end of the War.

The Rabbi's one and half years in the service was an interruption in the natural progress of the community. Upon returning home Rabbi Kellman made a modest salary and never asked for a raise.

The members of the board were mostly merchants and would give \$100 when ever he needed it for expenses. In the summer of 1946, Rabbi Kellman wanted to rent a place in Atlantic City during the summer and asked for a \$500 raise. The board members said they would have to think it over.

In the meantime, Rabbi Kellman traveled to many communities in the Delaware Valley. Camden was only one of them. Camden would offer Rabbi Kellman a 50% increase in salary if only he would come to Beth El in Parkside. Rabbi Kellman's wife did not want her husband to haggle over \$500. So Rabbi Kellman resigned from Beth Israel at one board meeting and asked the people not to persuade him otherwise.

His childhood friend in Rabbi Teller followed him on the pulpit at Beth Israel.

After the War, the community outgrew the new addition to the synagogue by the late 1940's. A planning committee was established to investigate a new location and or rebuilding on the current site. In 1951, it was decided to relocate.

History would repeat itself for this congregation in Vineland. The Hebrew School was the core of the synagogue in principle. More children were now part of the Congregation. New direction meant a new outlook on the scope of the synagogue as it moved into the 1950's. A board of education was appointed for the Religious school. The idea of a Sabbath School was in existence for sometime and combined with the students of the Hebrew School, Congregation Beth Israel was now host to over 200 children!

The Synagogue was sold by the congregation that had grown to over 150 families. The building was torn down and made into a parking lot. This was the time when Vineland was still a Boro. The boundary extended to State Street on the East from the Railroad tracks and from Park to Chestnut Avenue running North and South. The Boro consisted of 8,000 to 10,000 people at that time.

This was an ideal time to begin anew the idea of a Jewish Community Center. In 1953, leaders on the Vineland Welfare Board and members of Beth Israel organized a meeting at the Jewish War Veterans home of Vineland on south East Blvd and Montrose Street.

## MEMBERSHIP . . 1938

Mr. and Mrs. Abe Alpert  
 Mr. and Mrs. Leon M. Bardfeld  
 Mr. and Mrs. Max Baskin  
 Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Bass  
 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bleznak  
 Mrs. Isaac Hleznak  
 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Blom  
 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bloomenstein  
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bellin  
 Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Bolnick  
 Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Braun  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brenner  
 Mr. and Mrs. Herman Brotman  
 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bress  
 Mr. and Mrs. Anron Brotman  
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Chertok  
 Mr. and Mrs. Meyer E. Cohlen  
 Mr. and Mrs. Morris Cotler  
 Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin C. Davis  
 Mr. and Mrs. Sylvan D. Einstein  
 Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Fisher  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alex Forstein  
 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Friedman  
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis Foss  
 Dr. and Mrs. Arthur D. Goldhaft  
 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel L. Gassel  
 Mr. and Mrs. James Goldberg  
 Mr. and Mrs. Isidore Goldstein  
 Mrs. Rose Greenberg  
 Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Greenblatt  
 Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert Greenblatt  
 Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Greenblatt  
 Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hyman  
 Mr. Harry Horowitz  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Joffe  
 Mr. Abraham Joseph  
 Mrs. Barney Joseph  
 Mr. and Mrs. John Joseph  
 Mrs. Samuel M. Joseph  
 Mr. and Mrs. Sol Joseph  
 Mr. and Mrs. Lewis S. Klevan  
 Mr. and Mrs. Israel Koltz  
 Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Krause  
 Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kotok  
 Dr. J. Louis Kotok  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Myer Kotok  
 Mr. and Mrs. William A. Kronheim  
 Mr. and Mrs. Max Leuchter  
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Mr. and Mrs. Abe Lihn  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lihn  
 Mr. and Mrs. Moe Lihn  
 Dr. Barney Lihn  
 Dr. Martin Levy  
 Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Lipman  
 Mr. Phillip L. Lipman  
 Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Lubin  
 Mr. and Mrs. Barnett Melletz  
 Mr. and Mrs. Morris Melletz  
 Mr. and Mrs. David Melletz  
 Mrs. Frank Mennies  
 Mr. and Mrs. David Molof  
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 Mr. Robert Mennies  
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 Mr. Jacob Pogust  
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis L. Prince  
 Mr. and Mrs. David Reback  
 Mr. and Mrs. Herman Reback  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Reback  
 Mr. and Mrs. B. Rosen  
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rosen  
 Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Rosenberg  
 Mr. and Mrs. Irving Rosenberg  
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 Mr. and Mrs. I. C. Schwarzman  
 Mr. and Mrs. Max Scheiber  
 Mr. and Mrs. Morris Shore  
 Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Silverman  
 Mr. Barney Soffan  
 Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Stein  
 Mr. and Mrs. Herman Stein  
 Mr. and Mrs. Barney Woldar  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Waxman  
 Mrs. Esther Waxman  
 Warner Brothers Grand Theatre  
 Mr. and Mrs. Morris Zukerman  
 Mr. Nathan Zukerman

## Vineland - Beth Israel

The head of the Community Centers movement in America came to address the group. Activities for the entire family were planned and presented to the group.

The timing of this event was the turning point of this community. It was a good time to look at the future of this community but anxious leaders failed to recognize the history of this community. The community was not oriented like Bridgeton. Plus the community was in the midst of planning a new synagogue. Not many Community Centers were dually outfitted as houses of Worship. It was a possibility but far removed from the economic reality of the community. Costs and limited amounts of finances made this a dead issue. The fact remained that religion was more important in the minds of the people in the community than in social activity and athletics or cultural programs.

The Beth Israel congregation met in the Grand Theatre in 1954 for High Holiday services. An appeal for a building fund was successfully started at the same time.

By 1955, ground was broken for the New Beth Israel Synagogue.

The issues of the day included the use of the microphone and riding to the synagogue only for the occasion of going to Shul.

But as the new synagogue was being planned and built there was an internal change in the works as well. The next generation was becoming of age. This was the era of great urban change in the larger cities that affect the Jewish population directly. For Vineland there was no cause for alarm. Beth Israel was changing not the neighborhood.

Dr. Seymour Hyman, Bernard Einstein, and Manny Woldar were the first young people who broke into leadership positions. Up until the 1950's, the men of the synagogue board would perpetuate themselves. Power was the key to holding this position. To be a Board of Director was to be a "Machor" or important person. This then would translate into power and prestige. And above all, this was an honor! The Greenblatts, Kotoks, and the Josephs. Perpetuation meant that if anything should happen to them, then this honor was passed onto a son. Breaking into this realm of leadership was almost impossible. This was not a click! But it was a closed door entity.

Three new men put their names in for recognition at a congregational meeting. The people in the community all knew Dr. Hyman, Mr. Einstein and Mr. Woldar. Even though the board makes certain rules, did not mean that everyone abided or enjoyed them or even wanted these rules!

This "closed club" was never open to new ideas or new members. The Board of Directors forgot what a community was all about over thirty-five years previous to 1958. Most people thought that it was impossible to break into this club!

## Vineland - Beth Israel

Manny was successful because he proved himself to be a successful fund raiser for the Congregation. For Manny this course of events were easy since he had " 2200 friends " from the long list of faithful customers of his father's butcher business. The monies he raised would represent 50% of total take.

By the late 1950's, it was evident that the new board members were the next generation. These new men envisioned and desired a new facility. A Community Center was planned and certain aspects of the national Community Center activities were incorporated into the New Beth Israel.

The new men on the board were successful in raising money for the new synagogue in a big way. Four hundred thirty five thousand dollars were needed to erect the new synagogue.

The location was centrally located for the sprawling Jewish community of the enlarged Vineland. A couple of houses were on the property at Park Avenue. Room to expand and to make this project into a Jewish campus existed!

A Jewish community center and Synagogue were planned but by the time the actual building got underway there was no need for a Community Center. The idea of a Jewish Community Center in the Greater Delaware Valley Region was outmoded in many regards by this modern era. The community was open to the Jews so that the Jews did not have to build their own recreational facilities. They could now use the ones already existing in the community.

This was evident in Vineland. Manny was part of the Basketball team that was sponsored by congregation Beth Israel in the 1940's and early 1950's. The team won the championship of the Church league. The Congregation was very excited as Manny recalls. But the idea to build a Community Center only because the Basketball team won the championship was ludicrous.

Rabbi Douglas arrives after Rabbi Teller in Vineland. Rabbi Douglas would lead the congregation into the 1950's. Eating out was an issue in the Jewish community during this time period. People observed Kashruth. Three Kosher butcher stores existed and functioned in Vineland in the early 1950's. Rabbi Eiseman of the Plum Street synagogue supervised the Kashruth for Vineland's Jewry. For the Jews who belonged to Congregation Beth Israel this meant that big affairs had to be catered with a misgheach on the premises. Other events were catered by the women of the congregation by cooking and baking inside the Synagogue.

The new synagogue was built full of mistakes. Due to influence, the architect was hired to do the job. The architect never built a synagogue but he designed Movie Theatres. The roof could not stand up to wind sheer.

Within five years the synagogue underwent another series of facelifts. In 1962, the Albert Brothers were hired to make the Sanctuary more Hamish and personal. The beama was rebuilt under the Presidency of Stanley Greenblatt.

Aliyahs were never sold. This was a point of division between the synagogues in town. The due structure was based on dances, affairs and fund raisers. The seats were sold. The first twenty rows of seats were sold. Objections arose that this was not a Democratic process!

## Vineland - Beth Israel

Instead of selling aliyahs, seats were sold. In the 1960's, \$10,000 was raised in this fashion. The first partition now included the Samsonite seats. The Congregation grew in the 1960's to over 200 families. During Rabbi Douglas stay there was no ritual changes.

Sisterhood was an important part of the congregation. The Sisterhood was very strong during this new era. Fund raising and beautification of the synagogue was in the hands of the ladies.

Later Hadassah gained more appeal. Due to the wider interests of Hadassah there was a shift in the appeal of Sisterhood in the 1960's. The younger generation of women that had made Sisterhood viable was dying out. The next generation could not attract wide support. Hadassah raises 5 to 10 times as much monies as does Beth Israel Sisterhood.

There has been no ORT or Organization Through Retraining in Vineland. But the most appealing and attractive organization was found in Vineland's Hebrew Benevolent Society.

Eventhough this group was not religious in orientation it is important to insert its history in this time frame for most of its members were found in the Beth Israel Sisterhood.

Benevolent as the organization came to be known was founded in 1910 for indigent Jews. By the 1950's, this group was the most active in Vineland's Jewish and all of the monies raised stayed within the Jewish community. This was a matter of self pride that was perpetuated from one generation to the next.

During the 1950's, Benevolent's aim was " No Jewish Families on Relief." Religion spilled over into this group as the number of unaffiliated families started to multiply. Scrape books collected by members of the Society tell us of the Cantorials and Charity Dances that were held at the Elks Hall.

The Society grew from 35 women who took a real interest in the needs of the Jews in Vineland. In those early days, newly arriving Jews were supplied with Food, Shelter, Rent Money, Medical Supplies and Food for the Jewish Holidays.

The methods of raising funds in those early days included sponsoring Purim Balls, card parties, fruit sales and Annual Dues. By 1955, Mary Stern was the President and Betsy Greenberg was its Treasurer and they were both Charter Members!

During the 1960's, a thrift shop was organized. This outlet would serve as a place to donate old clothes and in turn would be turned over to less fortunate Jews in the community. Good quality items could be purchased at low prices and thus the entire Jewish community benefited.

The 1960's witnessed the addition of medicine and doctors being added to the services provided by the Society.

Welfare was asked to call Benevolent for referrals. Elderly Jews are admitted to the Uptown Home For The Aged in Philadelphia

The Solicitor, attorney Phillip L. Lipman pointed to the real essence of the group in the modern era. This derived from Biblical sources. In Deut. chapter 16, verse 2 tells us that the needy shall not look outside thy land and that thy brother shall open thy hand." This organization reached families who would not ask for public relief.

Fund raisers with well known personalities for the era included talented Steve Gaynor. By the early 1960's the expenditure for all assistance reached \$ 10,000 and served 18 families in the Vineland area.

The early 1960's witnessed the preparation for the Society's 50th anniversary. This would be held at the old English House in Atlantic City. Entertainment included a variety show by the Vineland Theatre. Prizes were donated by the well known Lit Bros of Philadelphia. Pictures were taken by the Press and published.

A change in the leadership and its affiliation meant a different meeting place. A mink stole was auctioned at its first meeting at the Grape Street Shul in the early 1960's. Functions were usually held at the Beth Israel Synagogue. A tea for 250 members was widely attended by both men and women.

It was during this time that the organization tried to catered to the religious needs of its members. This was a different era when not all the members of the community would belong to a synagogue. Molly Kravitz reported that a High Holiday service was provided by the Society. A family Buffet was held shortly thereafter. Many modes of attracting and serving new members was tried during this time period. This included a strawberry festival held at 624 Elm Street!

Trudy Gordon's father belonged to the Grape Street Shul and helped that synagogue to meet its debts. To give a \$ 150 donation was the usual amount for this community in the 1950's. This was a sacrifice! To go to the bank and make a yearly loan was one way to accomplish this feat. Then Trudy's father would do the same for Benevolent! Trudy's father was a survivor of the Holocaust. For Survivors to become involved in an American institution was common. For it helped Jews!

The 1960's witnessed the fact that Benevolent became the largest group in Vineland. This was a glamorous group but 2nd and 3rd generation Jews and later 4th generation Jews would join as well! It is unique. The community viewed this organization as tradition. There is no central office. It is unique to Vineland people to help fellow Jews.

Social activities meant growth for this entity after the Second World War. This would increase the income of the group, too. Molly Lazar was prominent in the development of this group in this regard. She was an actress from a prominent family in Lithuania. Molly had a beautiful voice. She caused the Society to have social events such as dances. She was the driving force of the organization in the 1950's and 1960's until she retired to Florida in the late 1960's

The Beth Israel family during the 1950's welcomed a large group of Holocaust survivors. Four hundred families came to the Vineland area after the War. These people heard about Vineland through the grapevine. The Jewish Agricultural Society would help many of these Jews gain second mortgages on their properties. Ted Krause's company, Equitable Life Insurance Company would give credit Mr. Gerstern would give baby chickens on credits, too. Ted met most of these new immigrants because they needed a mortgage. Ted tried to influence or steer the tide of this wave of immigration to the Vineland Area by himself. This area was entrenched in poultry farming and he conveyed the fact that it was hard work from his personal experience.

The new immigrants disregarded this forewarning and brought large sums of cash to buy poultry farms. The farms were even bought on the black market. But the enthusiasm was short-lived. For in the early 1960's, these same immigrants just picked up and left the farms and their bills behind them.

This group of people had a definite impact on Beth Israel. The initiative alone of these people was awesome to witness. When 100 families joined Congregation Beth Israel it was a heavenly present! Strangely enough, without this influx of new comers, Beth Israel with its new furnishings would have to close its doors.

Ninety percent of the new comers were Polish Jews and 10 percent were German Jews. In 1960, Rabbi Paul Katz would join Beth Israel. He was a young fellow with vim and vigor. He would start to blend the new comers into the Beth Israel realm. By 1963 Rabbi Katz resigned.

Dr. Seymour Hyman filled in for services during the one year.

For many Conservative synagogues in the Greater Delaware Valley in the summertime marks a time when many Jews go on vacation. This translates into no services in many congregations. But Beth Israel has been able to conduct services for 52 weeks per year.

Friday night services, Morning minyan and Sabbath services accompany the Jewish Holidays. Due to a strong orthodox community and an attachment to synagogue going has meant a tradition of belonging in this community. The business people contribute to this fact in a positive way.

The rate of participation is constant in this community. After the Festival of Shavous in the late spring is followed by Tisha Ab in mid summer. It observes the destruction of the second temple in Jewish history and is a gathering place for Jews in the community who survived the Holocaust. A large gathering of Jews turn out at the Beth Israel synagogue to pray and fast. By the cool nights of August or early September means the start of the High Holidays with the celebration of Selicos at mid night services. A movie of Jewish content is presented on the Saturday night before the Jewish Holidays of Rosh Shannah and Yom Kippur begin.



In 1965 ushered in the start of a new era. For Rabbi, Murray J. Kohn began serving the needs of the congregation. This was the first Rabbi to serve Beth Israel who did not graduate from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Kohn was in charge of a large Hebrew School previous to coming to Beth Israel.

Rabbi Kohn was born in 1929 in a small town north of Warsaw Poland. His Rabbi as a young child and as his teacher was found in Rabbi Mordechai Grumwald. Rabbi Grumwald was the first Rabbi to sign the Mizrachi Zionist Religious movement decree on a free Jewish state. This movement remained Zionist as a concept of realization as Rabbi Kohn puts it!. The idea of such a movement inside Poland in the 1930's began with speaking Hebrew amongst each other in preparation of a new Jewish homeland. Both middle class Jews and Religious Zionists belonged to this group. This group appeared to be more progressive in its appearance. Perhaps less orthodox in that the men were clean shavened and gained a higher degree of education. But Kashruth, Laying Teflin, Holiday observance and Zionsim were the staples of Murray's life from an early age. His home was Religious as well as Zionist. This was Murray Kohn's Jewishness!

By the late 1930's there was talk of Hitler invading Poland but the Jews never believed that he would do such a thing. They were wrong as Rabbi Murray Kohn gestures.

Murray was sent to a concentration camp in 1941 at the age of 12½. Those first 12½ years molded his personal opinions for life. This was the imitation of his parents. This was a positive item of being Jewish in an age when Jews were being attacked for who they were.

The Polish Jews lived on a higher plane than the average Pole. The Jews' thinking was more advanced due to the education of the Jewish Youth in the realm of religion.

Murray's dad was preparing to go to Palestine in the late 1930's. Murray's dad wanted his son to finish high school before he would travel. Anti-Semitism abounded in the schools of Poland during this time.

The course of Anti-Semitism was clear in Poland at this time. The Gymnasium was open to Jews and non-Jews. The course of hatred was inbred in the Polish people in recent history. To insult the Jew on the streets of Poland was accepted and common.

This attitude was reflective of the mood of the country at the time. The community of Worms was a very proud Jewish Center. The Jews of Poland were friendly. These Jews were allowed to pick wherever they wanted to live

The religious leaders were picked by the community but were paid by the state! This was the similar practice that was followed in Germany.

The Polish Government paid the salary of the religious leaders. The Rabbi had to be supported. But Rabbis were not an employee of the community in America! The community could select its own Rabbis.

The Polish community was divided into many Chasidic Streibles. These small self contained synagogues consisted of 10 to 20 daveners congregating in one house. In this scenery there was no need for a Rabbi. The Rebbe was only a Dayan or a judge of important matters. But the community and the men conducted their own affairs.

Murray Kohn survived the concentration camp and turned his thoughts to the future. Murray was a Zionist at heart. But family was more important. So Murray headed for America to be with his father's uncle in New York. Taking care of children within a Jewish family is a tradition no matter how old the child might be.

In New York Murray went to the Graduate teacher's institute and obtained a Masters degree in Jewish Life. By 1961 Rabbi Kohn was teaching a very large Hebrew School in West Larchwood and was the Principal. Next he went to B'nai Jeshurun on Staten Island which also had a large Hebrew School of over 1000 students.

In 1965-1966 Rabbi Kohn was called to Beth Israel in Vineland to serve. Here at Beth Israel he found himself! His survival of the Holocaust was an asset rather than a detriment! His first job as a Hebrew school teacher was denied to him in America because he was a " Survivor ".

It is Rabbi Kohn's thought that stability in the community adds for a solid community. Rabbi Kohn views Rabbis and communities as Husband and Wife. A marriage is one item but does not guarantee the relationship for ever.

Rabbi Kohn feels that the marriage will work even if he ( Rabbi Kohn) has to satisfy all people under one roof. Personalities are important. The concept has merit for Rabbi Kohn who has been allowed to stay at Beth Israel and guide its membership for over 20 years.

During this time Rabbi Kohn has given direction and leadership and has been able to survive many issues. As Rabbi Kohn puts it, " If he was asked what kind of father he is, he would have to say a good father". " Ask his wife and children". He retorts, "has he gone to a school to become a father, he answers No"! Rabbis learn as they go along. His role model struggle for him with the synagogue board does not mean personality struggle.

Rabbi Kohn feels he is like many rabbis in one respect. Someone is always thinking of dumping or firing the Rabbi in America. Rabbi Kohn explains that there are four parts of his life. These are his " Cards ". He came to America to assume the responsibilities of the Rabbi. That is to be a teacher and not a Dictator. A teacher has ideas, concepts, beliefs and wisdom! He has been able to make adjustments to one's thinking. The women's issue in Conservative Judaism is one example. A double standard for the Rabbi in most communities in America exist. " Only the Rabbi is judged so critically which leaves little or no room for the rabbi to deviate.

How did Rabbis prepare themselves for this era? He is of the firm belief of not coming into the synagogue with an iron hand. Rabbi Kohn relies on Jewish law down through the ages to guide him. This Halachic approach is on a sure footing due to no challenges by his congregants or the community. This included the Din Torah and the Jewish community. This was due to the fact that Vineland is a self contained community consisting of Survivors who only know traditional Judaism and American Jews as descendants of the original Jewish Colonists

This Rabbi has won the complete confidence over the years of the key congregants. These people knew this man to be sturdy and a man of great knowledge in Torah. Rabbi Kohn was going to steer the congregation into the future. This was vision of leadership for Rabbi Kohn. The Rabbi was not about to make changes because he was the " Rabbi ". Every change he made was nice, easy, gentlemen-like, Halachic and explainable. This method won the confidence of the congregation. Rabbi Kohn always wanted the congregation to appreciate the way in which he conducted the synagogue. This translated into " If he does it, it must be okay".

The congregation did not challenge his wisdom. Preparation was the key to this successful course of action over the years. Preparation meant Women being called up to the Torah. Rabbi Kohn brought to the attention of the congregation that there was no objection to call women up to the Torah or for a woman to conduct a service. Women sang Sholem Aleichem and Sham-ro. A Beautiful, sweet voice is welcomed in Beth Israel in any generation!

Rabbi Kohn assured the women of going up on the beama by sheer understanding. He knew how difficult an encounter it would be for these women. The only prejudice was based on social morals on this subject.

However, Rabbi Kohn didn't embrace the idea of accepting women into the minyan. His colleagues in the Conservative Movement did accept this concept.

Rabbi Kohn protested to the best of his ability against this concept. He explains that , " if there were 1000 women in the synagogue and 10 men you could have a minyan or you could have a service". But in 1970 if you had 1000 women with 9 men you could not have a service.

Rabbi Kohn offered the men the opportunity to maintain this all male ritual, i.e. conducting of services . All men were asked to be at services so as to never try this new approach to Judaism.

However, Rabbi Kohn suggested that on a Friday night in the Summertime when he has 35 women who have a need to say Kaddish and there are only 8 or 9 men in the synagogue what does one do? The aging of the community can not be stopped!

Rabbi Kohn is full of fairness and not righteousness. He was not about to destroy a service. Jewish identity was measured by this Rabbi in Jewish terms in the late 20th century.

The Rabbi couldn't fully accept these 35 women who came for reasons including religious ones. But to say that they are not worth two men is meaningless in the late 20th century in America. Some Rabbis could argue against this point but Rabbi Kohn was wiser. This situation would be reduced and viewed as saying that these women could not say Kaddish for their loved ones! This was a statement made by Rabbi Kohn in the form of a protest. But now Rabbi Kohn explains his reasons for women's equality in different terms.

This concept has changed from a necessity to a rite! Rabbi Kohn has dropped the social prejudice against women due to this reality of the women participating in the Synagogue in America. Services do not belong to men only now. Halachically, the minyan is composed of 10 people of equal obligation in the community. The orthodox are arguing that since women do not have an obligation , so therefore they can not be included in the congregational meeting. Rabbi Kohn's conclusion of this matter is based on Jewish Law. He believes that when the women decided to participate in the service was the start of this process. At that moment, she has " chosen that obligation ".

It is strange to live in Vineland and not know how your Rabbi thinks. But many Jews in this community find themselves in that predicament. Rabbi Kohn's message is that women issues has changed American Judaism for good. If people do not accept this as fact then every male Jew who comes to Shabbas morning services to daven and get there by driving or buying their newspapers has a Halachic problem. The Conservative Movement has said it is okay to drive to shul only for the purpose of synagogue services.

But this in fact has meant a violation of the Sabbath. And further more since this man violated the Sabbath he can not have an Aliyah! Rabbi Kohn has held this notion close to him for many years and many people in the congregation do not understand him. But Rabbi Kohn who has survived the Holocaust feels that , " You are a Shomre Shabbas Jew for that two or three hours WHILE In SYNAGOGUE.

Another familiar situation is posed to the Rabbi frequently by young people. It is the question of being married on the Sabbath. Rabbi Kohn tells us that Jews can not be married on the Sabbath not due to the two witnesses being called to write on the Ketubah but because according to Jewish Law you should not confuse two happy occasions.

No one has question Rabbi Kohn's authority, sincerity or his ability to lead his people. He is an Americanized, Westernized and Cultural Jew who is at home in his congregation.

To live in America and to be a Jew is to adopt some of the Wasp culture in his pastoral duties. Being a functionary of the congregation is a critical part of today's Judaism. But his concepts of Jewish laws and custom come first.

Vineland - Beth Israel

Rabbi Kohn's pulpit has been granted complete freedom. He has been a free thinker in these terms. A free pulpit means that the rabbi can express his own opinion and eventhough some congregants disagree they are free to discuss their feelings,too! Rabbi Kohn has tried to build a community of knowledgeable and committed Jews of all degrees and on all levels. .

These people are committed to their ancestry. This is a very unique community. Both American Jews, whose ancestors were the Jewish Pioneers nearby and the Holocaust Survivor subscribe to Zionist views and are National minded at the same time in terms of a Jewish homeland.

For most Jews in Vineland, the synagogue is part of their lives. But this is true only when they choose it to be that way! A deep Jewish awareness is critical for any Jewish Community to exist and grow!

This community has produced National Jewish leadership. The feeling was translated into action for Jewish causes across the Greater Delaware Valley, the nation and the world. The community has not produced rabbis. But if the community is not producing Rabbis then what is the condition of the state of the future communities?

Rabbi Kohn has admitted that he has not created the sort of Jews who would go into the Rabbinate. But he did influence the thought of the young people on a wide variety of issues.

Torah readers, learning Mafiturs and how Jewish professionals in business or medicine apply the principles of their Judaism is reflective of Rabbi Kohn's teachings. Decisions that are based on Jewish Law in many of his congregants are a direct result of his imput. Rabbi Kohn believes in this idea. He is the teacher but he does not give grades!

Some Jewish people in the Jewish Community of Vineland know the difference of right and wrong according to Jewish Ethics and some don't care as in all Jewish communities across America today.

Adult education is an everyday affair in the Jewish community as Rabbi Kohn continues his services to the Beth Israel congregation. Rabbi Kohn sees the special opportunity on Friday night to impart knowledge so that Jews go home with a message in their mind. The congregant is free to conclude or to form his own opinions on the subject. Sometimes, the Rabbi can influence people's thoughts by just one word! But it is hard to measure this influence in today's world.

Some Jews in the community feel hurt in some small way because Rabbi Kohn has spoken decisively on mixed marriages, assimilation, or kashruth. Some Jews feel inadequate upon hearing these words eventhough they give to United Jewish Appeal or go regularly to synagogue services.

Not as a Rabbi but as a committed Jew he feels frustrated because things that he wanted his congregants to do, they don't! And yet these same people consider themselves right

Vineland - Beth Israel

Selective Judaism occurs with regularity in America. But Manny Woldar explains his Knish concept. You have to have certain ingredients to make and cook and then bake the knish. You can not skimp on any ingredient in the recipe or it will not come out to be a Knish. Jews are selective in these ingredients. But who has the right to question the degree of this entity, i.e. the Jew. It is only the quality of Jewish life that is appropriate to question. Otherwise you are attacking the person as a Jew.

Rabbi Kohn reminds us that Judaism has survived by a nucleus. In the Greater Delaware Valley there are many groups of Jews who think alike in this regard. Jewish communities have to be fed Jewish content in today's world. The knowledge of the older generation has been diluted and lost. Jewish communities can not replenish themselves in numbers alone warns Rabbi Kohn.

Israel tries to promote this idea. But synagogues must be open and accessible and not only to the rich. They must be open to the common man as well. In a synagogue setting this means a minyan. For the second day of Sucas or the last days of Passover. For Tisha Ab, Jews in Vineland do not go on " Vacation "

In many communities, the habit of being a Jew is casted aside in the years of the late 20th century in America. If the Jew is not going to continue, even if he does not understand the service is not a valid reason. Participation or the lack of it will destroy any institution. A good example of this occurred in the 1950's. Since were not going to buy Kosher meat meant that they were not going to keep a Kosher home. This idea meant that many Jews were not going to be part of the general community. The unaffiliated rate became increasingly higher during this time due to this poplar sentiment. Judaism suffered a tremendous loss in synagogue attendance. By contrast, in todays's generation , the once popular three-day-year Jew is a dying breed. JEWISH HABIT AND THOUGHT MUST BE ONE!

Rabbi Kohn's thought impressed the community which included American Jews from nearby Clayton. Some people in the 1960's started to attend morning minyan services in Vineland and realized that the rabbi was saying the truth.

Here we found men starting to attend 2 Shabbas morning services, then 3 services and later they became regular comers. The same was true in Vineland. The tradition was recreated in Beth Israel for Sabbath attendance. Rabbi Kohn impressed upon these people that if they don't come to synagogue there will be no minyan. If there would be no Shabbas morning service, then Rabbi Kohn feels that Beth Israel has no right to call itself a " congregation " even if it has 250 members!

Rabbi Kohn , in his twenty years of service to Beth Israel and Vineland has been faithful. He has not offered any gimmicks short of S & H green stamps as some rabbis do or must! Gimmicks for him only serve the short term goals and needs of the synagogue. They are no substitute for a strong nucleus.

Vineland - Beth Israel

The 1970's would present it own challenges for the Beth Israel congregation. The Sons of Jacob congregation joined in with Beth Israel to co-sponsor a joint Hebrew School. This was not an attempt to merge the two synagogues. But it was an attempt to cut costs in operation.

The problems of the Hebrew School were around for many years. The children were sent to Hebrew School for five years and you hoped that they could read their Haftorah. But sometimes they could not recite it properly. Today the the children read the Sedera from the Torah.

Confirmation was re-introduced in the 1950's with the help of Rabbi Douglas. A Hebrew High was started to continue the learning that was started with the confirmation process. Kerem Torah was a great way for the children to learn more about their Jewish roots. This school would include Bridgeton, Grape Street Shul and the Millville synagogue.

The idea was good but the concept was faltering. A community Hebrew School was thought of during those years. This was similar to the old Talmud Torah concept in Philadelphia.

An executive director was hired at an increase of \$30,000 in the annual Beth Israel budget. The idea was sound since 92% of the students would be Beth Israel students. But parents were negative to the idea due to an old idea in a new time. Time competition was critical in the lives of the congregants in the early 1970's

Rabbi Kohn was a bridge and a bond in the fight to unite this community. By the mid 1960's, 50% of the congregation was Survivors. Rabbi Kohn took in tradition, European and Americanism under one roof. People would relate to him very well.

The 1980's was a time of excitement and change for this community. This was the greatest time to be alive and participate in this community's history. In the 1980's, the minyan is proof of this bond. Fifty people were now part of the Saturday morning minyan. Eight or nine people were American born and the remaining people were European born. The minyan would not be possible without the new comers!

Rabbi Kohn has a sweet voice and was given a modest increase for being the cantor, too. But when the Torah reader left he was asked to do it for no fee. Rabbi agreed on this point. This was the situation in many synagogues in Philadelphia during this time frame. The late 1960's and early 1970's was a curious time in religious circles in the Greater Delaware Valley. This period was not the end of a generation in the strictest sense. But it was the end of an era for sure. The older men of the community were dying and there was no one to take their place except for the Rabbi.

American born children who grow up in religiously intensive congregations attend Yeshivoh. These children and young adults are familiar with davening and even the harder Mafiturim.

Philadelphia congregations such as Adath Jeshurun had a fine program of teaching people to become Torah readers. This is a modern approach as well as an American one to forefilling a need in the Jewish community.

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## Vineland - Beth Israel

There is no need to groom a Rabbi since there are some institutions for this very purpose. Few congregations can point to having more than one rabbi amongst their membership. The emphasis is shifted to the skill of reading Torah and Mafitirim for future generations.

It was Rabbi Doulgas who started the idea of getting children prepared to reading Torah in the 1950's. Five or six children were on the beama for the High Holidays.

The future was clear to see for many inside the Beth Israel Congregation on this issue. In the 1960's, this question was raised of who would continue as one generation passed away and the congregation's ability to maintain a synagogue diminished.

Now in the 1980's, the same level of education is questioned for the future growth and development of the congregation. The level of quality Jewish education was an issue 10 years ago in Beth Israel. Since then an alternative Hebrew School was formed by many parents in Vineland. This would include only three hours of instruction on Sundays in preparation for Bar and Bas Mitzvah. This alternative school was founded outside of the realm of Beth Israel. Blame was pointed towards Rabbi Kohn's unbending compromise of tradition within the synagogue. This statement of blame is completely unfair. This concept for another Hebrew School developing was part of a bigger picture that not even the board members of Beth Israel could appreciate or understand. The 1980's was reflective of the reforms in society that America was experiencing. This would filter down to the religious community in essence. A new direction and not just dissatisfaction with the status quo was the reason for another Hebrew School. The 1980's would reveal this fact to be true as history would repeat itself. The new Hebrew School would blossom into the foundation of the first Reform congregation in this community in over 100 years of existence.

Ted Krause points out Beth Israel children know little of their heritage and the Alternative Hebrew School students knew even less. This represented a quagmire for the state of Jewish education in the Vineland Jewish community.

A new principal was found in Dr. Levenson. He was teacher on the faculty at Gratz Hebrew College in Philadelphia. By 1985, the Beth Israel school was losing more children to this alternative education system. This was evident due to the desires of the parent themselves! They wanted convenience. These parents were tired of car pooling. So Beth Israel adjusted and re-evaluated the situation. A new plan of action was adopted due to this competition for students. The new plan included two hours of Hebrew study after school on Wednesday and three hours of study on Sunday. This does not conform to the basic 6 hours of instruction as set up by United Synagogue of America as part of their total program. Change in the Greater Delaware Valley on this very issue is still unfolding. A synagogue in Easton, Pa would also breach its traditional view on this subject in order to adopt to the new time we American Jews live and find ourselves in today. That synagogue was not even Conservative but Reform.

## Vineland Beth Israel

### Vineland - Beth Israel

Many Sundays are missed due to Jewish Holidays. But one good thing that came out of this change was that children would attend Saturday morning service more often. Part of this new program would include the participation of the children and their parents in weekly services. This was now a requirement for a student to become a Bar or Bas Mitzvah.

Bas Mitzvah was introduced in the late 1950's and early 1960's in this congregation. Some people for various reasons have not had the opportunity to become a Bar or Bas Mitzvah person.

The 1980's was full of new zeal and return to one's traditions throughout the nation. This affected Judaism in Vineland, too. This inspiration was now translated into a special B'nai Mitzvot class. This was part of Rabbi's plan to incorporate women wholly and fully into the scope of prayer within the synagogue. In June of 1987, 29 women, ranging from the age of 30 to 70 were part of a special Bas Mitzvah service. This time of year is usually reserved for the young confirmants to participate in Shavous services but this year would be different than any previous ones. This would be a very beautiful service. The women studied one or two evenings per week.

In 1988, six women enrolled in the second program after the big rush. For the men it was the Efrurah or being called to the Torah on the Saturday before one's Wedding. Most men just recited the call to prayer or Barch Hu. A few men went onto read a portion of the Torah for the week. Ted attributes this action to the connotation of Jewish continuity.

Ted's personal feelings were coming to past at this time, too. After studying for 40 years, Ted could not chant the Torah. Rabbi Kohn helped Ted with the aid of tapes. Now Ted helps his grandchildren with the help of a piano. Ted studied very hard and was extremely nervous. Ted Krause would become a Bar Mitzvah on the week of December 20th 1987 as he recited his Haftorah at Beth Israel. This was a proud day in the life of Ted Krause. His knowledge was expanding in Jewish areas since he arrived in the Vineland area some 60 years ago. His commitment to his Judaism has helped to inspire many who have come into contact with him in this community. But he felt uncomplete and took painful but necessary steps in achieving this honorable task eventhough it was much later in his life.

In 1987, Rabbi Kohn taught two adults how to read the Haftorahs for the High Holidays. The two men learned the program from tapes made by Rabbi Kohn but they did not learn the Trope of musical notes themselves.

For Ted, this is crucial if the next generation is going to continue the Beth Israel Tradition into the 21st Century. There are 10 to 12 notes that are part of Torah Reading. These notes are read as symbols so that the reader can chant the words of the text in a proper voice accompanied with pitch. Ted is teaching his grandchildren the Trope. Under Rabbi Kellman the boys were all instructed in Trope but not any more.

Vineland - Beth Israel

As the Synagogue moved into the 1980's, so did Benevolent. This organization peaked out at 600 members in the early 1980's. The needs of the community are reflected in both organizations. Funds for Benevolent are raised only for expenses. This would include the newsletter and mailing. Just as Beth Israel adjusted to the future so did Benevolent in the 1980's.

Up until the early 1970's there was no Jew on welfare in Vineland. Rather than process a Jewish client they were referred by the welfare agency to Benevolent. Jewish people were entitled to Public Welfare but the Jewish communal leaders did not want this to occur. A thrift shop was opened up at 530 Elm Street to provide services to clients and to add more income to the program.

The community at large called this charity. But the Jewish community called it "help". This was done so that Jewish people could keep their dignity until they got back on their feet. People were allowed to keep their self-respect and tried to support themselves at the same time. By learning a trade was an example of this philosophy.

Included in the service provided was now added clothing and counseling. People in the Jewish community volunteered their expertise in return for knowing that they helped someone better themselves. Trudy Gordon came from Vienna and her father was involved in a similar community to help Jews in that city. But the Vienna group was not nearly as large as Vineland's Benevolent.

This group is not an American self help group. Benevolent is a Jewish organization helping Jews gain economic independence for themselves. The clients are made to feel less embarrassed at the same time.

Trudy is representative of the Jewish inspiration that makes this organization work after 75 years on guard. As a Zionist, Trudy can see that the money raised stays in the community to help fellow Jews.

This is remedial for the community because they can see the good this group does for Vineland. As long as there is a need for this community service there will be a Benevolent. The services continue to exist in caring for funerals.

Rabbi Kohn has volunteered his services on these occasions. Soviet Jews who escaped to America in this time period have been helped likewise. Helping a family to afford a Jewish education for their children is also offered.

In 1980, President Ronald Reagan approach and leadership helped all religious groups get back on track in America. The rededication to religious views was illustrative of the mood of the country. Southern New Jersey's Jewish community of Vineland joined in by a desire to rededicate its sanctuary.

Other communities in Southern New Jersey followed this path. They included Beth Judah of Ventnor and B'nai Tikvah of Washington Township in Turnersville.

Beth Israel of Vineland rededicated its synagogue building with \$ 800,000 worth of improvements. Now the next generation was upon Congregation Beth Israel. The momentum to move to a new location was not there in this time period as it was thirty or sixty years ago. But the next generation of leadership in Vineland had to make a statement of purpose.

According to the national rededication of religious morals it was okay to say that you are religious! This is one explanation of why Beth Israel did not use this opportunity in time and money to finance a new facility for the next generation outside of Vineland. Another reason for this lack of movement is looked upon in real terms. Manny Woldar asks "who are we building this new facility for" ? Rededication in Beth Israel was therefore a logical one.

Today, many Holocaust Survivors are members of Beth Israel and are elderly. All that one has to do is look at the high proportion of the unaffiliated families. This is the norm throughout the Greater Delaware Valley today. This represents 50 to 60 percent of the total numbers of families in most communities. These people do not belong to a religious organization at all. Manny Woldar was asked, "wouldn't a new facility help to promote a new sense of belonging"? His answer was, "who would pay for such a new mortgage of 5 to 6 million dollars".

By comparison of costs, a new roof was \$ 8,000 seven or eight years ago. Today in the late 1980's it would cost \$80,000. Jews live within a three mile radius around the synagogue and can drive any place!

Another reason for the lack of movement to another area is explained by Manny Woldar by understanding the youth of today. The young Jew today is different in his religious commitment than when Manny was 30 to 35 years old. The religious fervent found in his idealism is lacking in this generation!

A good example of this is found in donations. If you need a \$ 100 donation, it is only money without commitment attached! Manny puts it this way, "here is my money and I don't want to participate". Years ago, young Jews raised that money and participated to the fullest extent of their time allocation. That feeling is lost in today's world.

In Vineland, this is representative of a change at this moment in the late 1980's. Twenty years ago after the Six Day War in Israel, the community donated the most amount of money to the United Jewish Appeal as compared to its numbers. Certainly a large number of Jews were Survivors which added a different dimension to the quest for help to survive.

Today the professionals and others give money of themselves only. The difference is that Manny and his friends who were merchants in Vineland in the 1950's and 1960's went to the bank and borrowed money at 5 or 6 percent on top of their donation.

## Vineland - Beth Israel

Jews of today are not of that same feeling! Today this apathy is measured in numbers only! One thousand Jewish families live in Vineland. Five hundred are not affiliated with a synagogue. Ease of being Jewish and not belonging to a synagogue has become an American Jewish norm.

Manny believes that this is the fault in part of the synagogue itself! " Sure , the synagogue is only there for the unaffiliated family". " Why you could HIRE the Rabbi for a Simha or RENT the auditorium for a FEE". Now the American synagogue is reduced to a " Jewish Community Hall".

In retrospect, the Beth Israel synagogue is a Jewish Community Center like it or not! Jews in the community belong to Hadassah, Benevolent and B'nai Brith and use the Synagogue facilities as an organization. But the individual themselves do not belong to the Center, i.e. Beth Israel.

The involvement of women in the synagogue has added a new dimension to the congregation that was not afforded to members of the congregation in years goneby. Aliyoth was granted to women in 1976. By 1984, Beth Israel started counting women as part of the minyan. Bas Mitzvah was a decision that is left up to the parent to make.

Changes are in the works again as Beth Israel approaches the 1990's. They include two or three men outside of the Rabbi who can read Torah, a late Friday night kiddish where the girls recite their Haftorah, women who are welcomed on the Beama to read from the Torah, and a possibility of going back to a six hour week of instruction for Hebrew School provided if transportation is available now that the Alternative Hebrew School is feeding the new Reform Congregation in Carmel.

The 1980's proved to be the crossroads for this synagogue. Many women have added their presence to the congregation and have been accepted as full members! Nine women come on a regular basis with their husbands to Friday night services with a positive attitude. This attitude is based on knowledge that gives the synagogue hope for the future!

In the early 1980's this feeling of rededication was not evident. It was non-existent and Rabbi Kohn was not hopeful of the future.

Now in the late 1980's, Rabbi Kohn is pleased to announce a feeling of accomplishment and achievement in synagogue affairs. This feeling is representative of the age. There is a nucleus of new blood for this congregation. The Returnees or people who grew up in the Beth Israel family have returned to become actively involved in this community. They are striking roots as Rabbi Kohn proclaims. As Rabbi Kohn looks out from his domain, he sees Jewish Life reoccurring.

A synagogue today is an expensive proposition and must change in order to Survive! The tools of survival are not always provided by the Rabbi alone as in 30 years ago.

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