Southern New Jersey SYNAGOGUES

A SOCIAL HISTORY

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

Written By
ALLEN MEYERS

HISTORIAN of the
Jewish Community
Greater Delaware Valley
Philadelphia, PA.
The land that is situated between Bridgeport and Millville covers eleven miles in distance. Back in the wilderness off the main road between these two cities lay the future of Jewish life. The pioneers were the leaders of the 1860s. The wilderness would be home to Russian Jews. The building of their houses was started in 1881.

Jewish life did not begin to take place in this area only in the 1880s. The Civil War ended in 1865 and the arrival of its first Jewish settlers. A census of Jews was conducted by William Heilprin, a prominent Jewish leader of Philadelphia. A survey of Jews living in the area was conducted by the Census. Delaware Valley was conducted by postal card in conjunction with the Committee on Statistics in Philadelphia in the late 1870s. The society was located at 20 N. Third Street in Philadelphia. As early as 1878, Morris Myers of Millville reported 9 Jews living in town. Bridgeport, the county seat of Cumberland County, claimed to have 31 Jews living there as reported by Mayer Myers.

In 1892, William Miller, the president, and his wife, were among the first Jews to settle in Millville. Millville was a stagecoach stop on the road between Bridgeport and Millville.

One generation later, William Miller would try to attract German immigrants and their families to settle in Millville. After the success of the first settlement, Millville agreed to accept the request of a community institution of a Jewish settlement.

A Jewish settlement would allow the community to be united and to form a community institution. The name of this area would soon change to reflect this change.

A great benefactor in Millville was the company of Russian Jews. The Jews themselves chose to name the area due to their desire to remember the place. The first one was in honor of their brethren who had left Russia for the future Jewish homeland. The second one was in honor of their ancestors who had lived in the wilderness for centuries ago. Carmel was chosen as the new name of the settlement. The name translated from the original Hebrew means "a green pasture." Since Carmel was near the sea and flourished as a green pasture, so too would Carmel in New Jersey where the wilderness would be.

Seventeen families were settled in Carmel in 1882 to 1883. These families included two Jewish families. One was the Kramer family. Of these families, seven left due to hardships.

New Russian Jews of Western Russia with agricultural experience arrived to support the original settlers. This included the April family. Isaac April was a native of the old country. This would lead to his success in America.

With him came Isaac Rosen at this time.
After Mr. Helfprin's death, Rev. Morais asked Moses Klein of Philadelphia to investigate the conditions of the colonies. This was to include the Carmel Colony. This survey was most timely for the Jewish colonies but mostly for Carmel itself. A working knowledge of how best to help the Colonists based on their needs was being sought. The publication took the form of a booklet entitled "Mission Zophim" or the Watch Tower and was published in 1889.

Five thousand and ninety dollars were gained by the Carmelites to lighten their financial burdens. This money was then used to bring the Carmelites over the bittersweet months of 1888-1889. Seed money and money for horses were high priority items. Community support and communal use of horses for the heavy plowing was the order of the day.

Carmel was now thrust into the 1890's. New life was granted to the Carmel Colony. The first cemetery in Carmel was chartered on May 15, 1899. Fifteen hundred acres of land was added to the Colony at this time. Now some 3200 acres made up the Colony and 36 houses stood in Carmel by the early 1900's. Rev. Morais erected a three story factory during this time of renewal. Mixing of industry with farming made for a viable and stable colony as witnessed by other colonies nearby.

The Baron De Hirsch monies could not be depended on again in the 1890's due to a financial disaster caused by the trustees of the fund. A whole new Colony would be undertaken and the Baron De Hirsch Fund would undertake the new Woodbine Colony in full. This new agricultural settlement was some 25 miles southwest of Carmel. That new development would capture the spirit of the region in the early 1900's. This undertaking would be completely agricultural at the outset.

In the early years, Carmel would become completely self-sufficient by 1892. Competition of the Jewish Colonies for survival meant the same hardships. But the Jews of many of the Colonies would see their dream come true.

In the 10th annual report of industries and factories of New Jersey in 1892 it was reported that the cooperative employed 92 people making shirts. Fifty percent of the work force was composed of women and children.

The next step was to insure the continued growth of the spiritual life of the Colony. The Colony was growing and expanding all at the same time. Now was the time for the communal leaders to lend themselves to consider a system by which Jewish faith could be formally taught to its children. The children were their next crop and this meant many more sacrifices. Carmel didn't receive monies from the Baron De Hirsch Fund anymore. But the working relations and the trustees could be looked to for ideas and concepts. In this way Carmel started in its success to give its children a Jewish education.

Philadelphia's impact on the religious life of the Carmelites was great. The distance was not great enough for the two communities to keep them close to the land. This part of the experiment worked and a second function was the channeling of new and progressive ideas coming from the South to the Colonies. The Jews of Philadelphia which would be published in 1904.

The Central Scholastic was composed of Pius IX, a Russian Jew, not German or Sephardic Jews. The Americanization process was brought in this fashion by collaboration of the two communities Jewish style! The Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia was founded by the German Jews in 1848. The Central Scholastic was incorporated in September 1892 as the Talmud Torah and Hebrew Education Society of Carmel.

The officers included H. Waxman as president, M. Leopold as vice-president, L. Stillpass as secretary, S. Elime as treasurer with M. Edrani, H. Ruben and Arom Finklestein as Trustees.

The congregation of Carmel met in the Stillpass home and agreed to create a school here. The regular religious services were supplemented by a religious school. The congregation met for High Holidays in a building on Irving Avenue on the road to the public school house. For weekly services, the men would meet in Mr. Stillpass home.

The financial collapse of the Reading Railroad and Pennsylvania Railroad had little effect on this community at the time of the great Recession of 1893. But this lack of capital made it impossible to connect the cities to the Colonies via the railroad lines. The ground in Carmel was too swampy to lend itself to a railroad bed anyway. The cost of such a venture would be too costly to even consider. Immigration to the shores of America seemed to slow the rapid pace set in earlier years due to the adverse economic conditions in 1893.

Abel Dichter was an independent Jew who left Russia in search of a Jewish future. By 1890, Abel left for Palestine. But due to the outbreak of malaria and poor farming conditions he returns to Russia in the early 1890's. The Dichter were merchants. Except Abel wanted to farm the land. He hopes to reside in America and farm was granted to Abe soon after his return to Russia.
Carmel

Abt took his family and located to the area outside of Carmel as an independent. The ground was more fertile out there than in Carmel. The land yielded more crops and fruits.

Nearby neighbors were found in the Gitomer Family. These two families increased in numbers as the 19th Century neared an end.

As independent Jews they were still confined to the Carmel area. This land might have been part of the new land acquired by the Colony in the early part of the 1890's as recalled by Ada Rosen, the granddaughter of Abe Dichter. The two families would walk to Carmel for religious services. This was a good four mile walk one way.

The Dichters had three sons. They were Louis, Herman and Ruben. Herman lived on the land and had five sons and a daughter. Ada would grow up and live in Millville in the 1930's.

New immigration from Roumania gave the colonies a real boost in population after the Recession of 1893. Due to limited capital expenditures, the Carmel Colony grew internally. New organizations were formed and adjusted to this changing colonial situation.

The Carmel Colony would succeed and prosper as the 20th Century arrived in the wilderness. The Carmel Ladies Aid Society and Carmel Relief Society were formulated to help the newly arriving immigrants and insure their adjustment to the land.

During this time, the Baron De Hirsch Fund revised a plan to form the Jewish Agricultural Aid Society at the end of the 19th Century. This new society would assist newly arriving immigrants in Carmel in gaining mortgages but grants were considered to be an item of the past. Work and the ability to pay for one's dwelling seemed to fit the new agenda of the Jewish Agricultural Aid Society. Settlements were better as more likely to succeed if the inhabitants contributed to their well being themselves.

Professor Louis Kounier would make his appointed rounds to the nearby colonies as part of his job duties. His job as Chief of Americanization and Culture was sealed by the Baron De Hirsch Fund in the late 1890's. But Jewish life would not stop aside for Professor Kounier. Sabbath Services and Religious home life continued as they new century got underway. Just as a night school was instituted to teach the new immigrants English, there was a resistance on the majority of the settler to take part in this free program. Less than 10 persons would attend this activity. Everyone in the community spoke Yiddish without ever learning English for a good number of years.

The foundation of any Jewish settlement rested upon its ability to create and sustain a congregation that held public worship. This was true especially in the wilderness. From 200 Jews living in Carmel in 1890 to over 471 by 1900 meant that Jewish activity was growing, too! By 1907, the settlement had peaked at over 600 Jewish inhabitants.

Carmel

Two groups emerged at the end of the 19th Century in Carmel. Their division spilled over in to separate cemeteries being created for their members based on loyalty to one group or the other. The original Carmel cemetery of Chessed Shel Emeth was the first to be formed.

The never group of immigrants formed an association and later affiliated with the National Order of Beth Abraham. New arriving immigrants to Carmel in the mid 1900's dictated to each other an organization of Chessed Shel Emeth and incorporated themselves in 1910.

This new group had vision and invited the newly forming Jewish community to the southeast of Carmel to join their group. The new activity in Millville represented renewed interest in the region in terms of Eastern European Jews for the first time.

The move to the city was seen with keen interest to the Carmelites who were not the original Jewish settlers in the community by this time. Millville was just a satellite of the Carmel Colony in terms of its Jewish residents. German Jews had settled in Millville but still owed their allegiance to the big synagogues in Philadelphia for the High Holidays. The East European element was aided by this close tie to the Carmel community as it began its history. Some people left the countryside for the city of Millville some five miles south of Carmel. Other Jewish immigrants could not find land in the community towards the latter part of the 1890's. They went to Millville too.

Religious services were conducted in this group by Mosse Aaron. He was elected president of the congregation at this time. Religious activities and benevolent benefits were mixed to attract new membership. Those activities served the internal needs of the members themselves.

Samuel Gold created the momentum to erect a synagogue in the community of Carmel. The split in the community to how the synagogue was to be conducted stopped work on the synagogue building itself. The two groups and two congregations were not about to support one congregation. So the source and drive for the funds ran out in the community due to this split. Even though the name of the congregation was selected as Agudath Achim of Carmel or translated means the Carmel Brotherhood made no difference how some felt in the community. The selection of the name did not reflect the popular sentiment in the community on this issue of religion. Agudath Achim being the first group in the community to organize invited the newly forming Jewish community in Milford to join their congregation. Now two groups existed side by side in the wilderness with satellites in big towns only a few miles away from Carmel. This was religious politics at its best! Different points of view were necessary to create a sense of religious community and this was carried over from the old country. Traditions played a large part in this division within the community.
This cycle of two groups and two ideals would be duplicated in Carmel. The Norma Colony was a similar situation only going through this process a few years earlier. In 1906, the activity of the newly formed Norma Athletic Association helped to unite each group in Norma and thereby create an atmosphere of working together. This was needed in Norma since the two groups could not build two separate synagogues. B'nai Jacob of Norma was later replaced by a joint effort to create one synagogue and renamed itself Agudath Achim.

The early years of the 20th Century witnessed a number of institutions and organizations develop in Carmel. A second cemetery was erected in 1901. The Ladies Aid Society followed and the Ladies Relief Society was formed to tend to women during confinement. By 1902, the Carmel Library Association was reorganized with the aid of the State of New Jersey. All Colonies had a library as part of their enhancement programs.

A community leader was found in Samuel Gelb. For six years he tried to unite the community to have one shul built. Mr. Gelb would not live to see his dream fulfilled. But his efforts did succeed in uniting the two groups of Jews into one group if not one congregation.

Finally in 1906, the Independent Order of Beth Abraham Lodge #146 extended themselves in unifying the community. This was done by the Lodge buying the mortgage of the new shul. Money was borrowed from factory owner, Henry A. Dix by the Lodge. All parties were paid back and a deed was turned over to a neutral community leader. This person being Isaac Rosen. Mr. Rosen was then selected as president of the new shul in this manner.

Preparation of the interior and exterior was extensive. The outside was made of brick, which symbolized a permanent Jewish community. The interior was elaborately decorated, furnished and outfitted. On the inside, the Aron Kodesh or Holy Ark was constructed by William Pollock. The carvings of the lions on top of the Ark was completed by David Moscovitz. The Ladies Aid Society collected money for the Ark by going door to door in Carmel. The two small Torahs were donated by opposing groups and who were not united under one roof. This was a community synagouge in the truest sense of the word.

The name of the synagogue was in honor of its beloved benefactor in Henry Dix. The shul took its name from Henry's Hebrew name, Hillel, and so, the shul was named Beth Hillel. Not only did Henry Dix lend money necessary to complete the shul, but he also have a $500 donation at the outset of the synagogue's history in 1908.

Professor Mounier and Henry Dix helped to design the shul.
The new congregation was not only a combination of the two different groups of Jews in Carmel but it represented a third group. The general community at large was represented by the Independent Talmud Torah. This group of members demanded that before this union take place it was necessary to continue the Jewish and Hebrew education of their children as provided by the Talmud Torah. This meant that a school had to be maintained within the shul. This was radical thinking for those days in 1908. Hebrew Schools and especially Talmud Torahs were not side by side or placed within synagogues as a rule until the 1920's in Philadelphia. Carmel was a progressive town when it came to applying Jewish concepts in an ever changing new world.

Moses Herder gave his collection of Jewish books to the shul as a symbol of this change before he left for Hollicia Hill.

Cyrus S. Sulzburger of Philadelphia was the keynote speaker at the dedication of the new shul on August 28th, 1908. Rev. Margolis was joined by many distinguished guests. Rabbi A. Remenick of the previous Agudath Achim Congregation was joined with Rabbi Flecha and Rabbi Eades of the Talmud Torah. The Talmud Torah had been in existence since 1893... Those men all gathered together in a union that would benefit the community all under one roof.

Professor Moular worked outside of the shul in stimulating cultural activities. The Jewish Colonies were described as Utopias of places where all things were like in paradise. Yes, there was a real chance for the Jew to reach out and become somebody as he increased his self worth. This was not allowable in the old world. But for Jews who tilled the soil like my Great Grandfather, Max Meyerowitz in the late 1890's up in the Bernstown Valley, Pennsylvania, life was not a Utopia. It was Sweat, Toll and Prayer! Jewish life was at peace within this framework for the pioneering generation.

But at last, tradition is continuous and so Jewish life demanded a shul in Carmel. Jewish life would grow in this community. It was the dedication and the devotion of the Jewish spirit that was applied that made this shul a reality. These people applied themselves to the soil and transplanted their souls and carried their Yiddishkeit forward to the new world.

Outside of the shul was a new world at their doorsteps. Public school was a part of this scenery. This is where the children learned their first words of English. The instruction was slow. But finally, by the 1910's, many Jewish Colonies could boast of the home grown Jewish public school teachers.

Ground in this area was broken by the Carlisle family in 1902. Jumme Benjamin, Reuben April and Benjamin Shapiro all taught in the 1910's at the multi-room school house in Carmel. Private Hebrew instruction was taught in the home and conducted by Mr. Chasin from 1906 until 1914. In the late 1910's, Rabbi Yocklin arrived from Palestine to conduct the religious instruction of the children and oversee the shul.
Carmel

This was a time of radical change in the Colonies. More and more Jewish people were leaving the countryside for the big cities. Rabbi Yorishnow left the area while Professor Housner continued his lectures on culture in Carmel until the early 1930's. Yiddish culture was still held in high regard by the community and not Hebrew or ZIonist view! Rabbi Briskman of North would help to fill the void in Carmel as the 1920's got underway.

Abe Dichter owned a large tract of land south of Carmel took over instilling Yiddishkeit into the youngsters of Carmel until the late 1920's. There were 22 children who learned their Hebrew instructions in this manner at the time.

The Ted Rosen Memorial was dedicated during this time in honor of one of its own native sons. Ted Rosen served as a Captain in World War One and later became a Judge upon his return. The Rosen family had played an important role of leading the community in religious and civic affairs. It was befitting that a memorial park was erected and stands between the shul and Columbia Hall attesting to this fact of life in Carmel.

Clare Popovsky (Ostroff) was born in Carmel. Later on as a young married bride she moved into Rosenhayn. The following is a recounting of the early years of her life in Carmel.

By the time Clare was a year and a half old, her dad had passed away. Her family had come from Białystok at the turn of the century. Her Bubbe helped to raise her family. On the farm they raised tomatoes, sweet potatoes and beans to sustain the family. Walking to the shul was part of her life even as a young child. Her other Bubbe Weinstein was blind. At one time there were two shuls in Carmel. The two congregations did become one congregation. But some traditions would not be observed.

Clare was seven years old when her Zadie passed away.

When Clare was 22 years old she became engaged and her remaining Bubbe passed away at this time. The Bubbe would say, "she had seen her grandchildren ride to shul on Shabbos when the other children would grow up too." She did not want to be living to see this occur. Her attachment to her lifestyle that was transplanted to America was unbroken. It broke her heart that her abolition of tradition and ritual was taking place before her very eyes and right in her own mishpacha or family.

Superstition and understanding the natural order of the things to come was old world upon in belief. She understood her grandparents belief in Yontros and Shabbos. But she couldn't understand how her Zadie would come to understand his own faith one night.

Clare's Zadie was 70 years old by this time. He had taken ill after his birthday. The man was treated for stomach ailments and had lung ailments as Clare recalls. Zadie would make Kiddush every Friday night in his home after returning home from the shul. This one Friday night he was very ill and he missed services at the shul. This was not so severe if it hadn't been Rosh Chodesh or the new month. Special prayers for the new moon were said at this time. Instinctively he knew that he would die shortly thereafter.

In South Philadelphia, many men brought a love of the Rosh Chodesh with them from the old country. These men even decorated their shuls with the Jewish Zodiac signs and symbols. B'nai Reuben of Sixth below South Street in South Philadelphia encorlled these symbols upon the ceiling in the 1919. Shortly after missing this appointed time in the synagogue he passed away.

Jewish families in Carmel numbered 50 in the early 1910's. Some owned factories that manufactured clothes. Others were dirt farmers. These people made their own raiments and prunes by allowing the grapes and plums to dry out on long boards in the sun. These were the days before the icebox and vegetables were stored in the ground or canned. Clare's mom would pickle many items to preserve them for any length of time. This included apples, watermelon slices and green tomatoes. Wine for religious reasons was made on a seasonal basis.

For Sukkos, the Zadie would build a little sukkah or booth outside of the home. He would sleep in the booth and eat there, too. The sukkah would be covered with greens and vines as prescribed by the Bible. At the end of Sukkot came Simhan Torah. The shamus of the sukkah would come to Zadie's severely ill and bring the Luvrov, the myrtle and the fragrant estrag. A blessing would be made in the home and this was an honor. Clare would take the myrtle and put it over a closet for good luck after the passing of the holiday. Mr. Stollup who was the shamus was a welcomed guest here.

No English was spoken by her parents. English was a second language. On Yom Kippur, as a young child, a lunch was packed for the her and taken to the shul. The adults themselves would break from prayer about 2 P.M. and later return to synagogue for the conclusion of the service. These services would run well into the evening. Darkness would settle in over the synagogue by time they concluded with the blowing of the Shofar.

In Carmel, the bima was like a stage. The men and women sat separately. The Balcony would be only for women. The children would be separated, too. These were the years that the fire hall served as the court house. Up until 1960, a Jewish flag hung side by side with the American one the hall being organized by the Jewish pioneers.
Ben Soloff's father and his brother arrived in Carmel in the early 1900's. Ben's father, Barney, had immigrated from Russia. In Russia, Ben's father was a forest worker. Ben's grandfather was an overseer of a grain mill. The life of Carmel was not much different from the one in Russia. With the exception that the Soloff's were free to be Jews here in America. Father and son came to settle on 50 acres of land in Carmel. This was a family affair. Aaron came first. Barney would follow with two of his aunts as travel companions. Barney would establish himself and buy his own property of some 40 acres in Carmel. He would marry and later die here. Mr. Soloff worked at the Dix factory nearby the Carmel Lumber Company. Being a farmette was not the future idea. Mrs. Soloff had in mind when she met Barney in the early 1920's. Ben turned his attention to being a dirt farmer in raising vegetables that included peppers, beans, onions and potatoes.

This life was passed from grandfather to son and later to the grandson. Ben was born in 1915 and lived the life of a Jewish farmer's son for many years.

Religious education was a commitment to living on the land and being attached to the soil. From the age of 5 until Ben was almost 16 this cycle would be continuous. Later Ben would start to go to public school in Carmel. His father's farm was on the border of Deerfield Township and close to Millville Township by a couple of hundred of feet. The first five years Ben would go to the Carmel school. Millville would build a middle school. Then Ben was bussed to this new school.

Ben's daily routine included going to the Carmel school and then going off to the Cheder. The Hebraic School was located in Columbia Hall right next to the shul. This was now the late 1920's in Carmel. Times were changing. Rabbis came and left Carmel during this time. Mr. Richter was the shul and the Hebraic school for a number of years. By 1927, Max Bernstein had donated $1,000 towards the permanent establishment of a Talmud Torah. It was in this year of 1927, that the shul took on the religious school as an obligation. During this time, Rabbi Levinson, Mrs. Shariel and Mr. Shekpo ensured the Carmelite Jewish children got a religious education.

The new Bernstein fund helped to encourage others who couldn't afford to send their children to a relaxedly taught Jewish educational school. Rev. Morris and Abraham Narovianksy assisted in this transmission of Jewish learning in Carmel. These men were bashers of the shul. People in the community would bring them live chickens to slaughter according to Jewish law for a fee.

One big room in the shul which was located off the balcony upstairs was used as the cheder and new Talmud Torah. Rev. Narovianksy would teach 2 classes at a time. Between 20 to 25 children were taught in this manner.
Carmel

During the Depression, the reverse in Jewish life took place in Carmel. Most congregations were moving their Tabernacle up to the Aron Kodesh area. Here in Carmel, the Bar Mitzvah moved down from the bima into the center of the room. This occurred after Ben was called to the Torah for his Bar Mitzvah. The fact that this shul was the only Sephardic one in the colonies could explain this change. The prayer books used were Sephardic, too. Ben was given a siddur in both Hebrew and English for his Bar Mitzvah. But this was a Sephardic one. The fact that he was given a siddur in both Hebrew and English was symbolic of the changing times. But for the next twenty years in Carmel this return to the old world style of prayer remained in effect.

On Shabbos Torsh, the congregation would parade inside of the shul. The children would attend and display their apples and Jewish flags proudly. Morris April's father lived on the outside of town in Millville Township which was about a mile from the shul. He was the Rabbi or watchman of the shul. Members would meet here in the afternoons of the Tova. The children, women and men would have a get together here as one big family into the 1920's and 1930's. This tradition goes back to the 1890's in the Carmel Colony. The Jews were still the majority in Carmel in the 1930's and would parade joyfully into town and up to the shul. Fifty or sixty farmers comprised the congregation during these days. Jews lived on the Braddock to Millville Pike, in Cedarville and further South.

The Cheder would prepare the children for the Jewish Holidays. Instruction was given in Yiddish. Basic learning would be transferred to the portion of the Torah which was to be read for the Sabbath or festival. This was done by translation from the Hebrew to Yiddish. It was important to go through the whole portion of the Torah. Two or three paragraphs were usually translated by this process every week. You would find that after the first part of the Torah was translated, the children would read two or three words, and then translate them into Yiddish. Ben wanted to be rabbi and teacher, so he thought that if they translated from Hebrew to English, more learning would be digested and thus learned. But Rev. Narowinski disagreed.

For Purim, noise makers were home made. This was part of the life style for the Jews in the country. You didn't have to worry about your neighbors complaining about the noise being too loud. Because they were Jewish, too. Your Jewish life and everyday life were one and the same. The shochet was supposed to be the Rabbi and teacher in one person.

During the 1920's this did not work. With the onslaught of the Depression it was a changing situation that brought religious life down to a different level. By the Depression years, a lay teacher who doubled as a farmer and Chazzan led the synagogue and the community. For economic reasons of his own, Rev. Narowinski would also oversee the Salem congregation some twenty three miles away from Carmel after Mr. Weinstein from Clayton stopped his activity there.

The Talmud Torah was half girls and half boys until the children got older. Then the girls stopped as the boys continued. Many boys did not continue after their Bar Mitzvah. But all the boys would continue to study Talmud and siddur in their own prayers.

For one's Bar Mitzvah, you not only knew how to say your Haftarah but you had to know other Haftarot as well. This was an important factor in the selection of a student for his Bar Mitzvah. On the other hand, when the shul was shut down, the children of the congregation realized that it was Shosh Choden. Ben was assigned another portion. He failed through it but finished his portion. The boys were expected to do a half dozen Haftarot during the course of the year. This way of instruction helped to foster a deeper sense of community in religious affairs for any Colony. This preparation for the next generation to take over in ritual was done in a very precise and pinpoint manner that would have lasting effects.

The Aylah's were sold for $10, $15 and $20. People who wanted to donate money to the synagogue were always run up on the amount! This was a common way to get money in the 1930's. The 1930's severely limited what Jews could donate to the shul. There was no money to be made, and the shul would go into a dormant stage. Aylah's were discontinued during this time.

Tashlich was observed with the women and the Rabbie, Mrs. Blumberg Ben's mom and other women would go down to the stream about a half mile from the shul. Prayers were said and cast into the waters under the little bridge near Sugarman Avenue.

On Shavous every year, Ben would pass the low lying marsh grass on his way to the shul. There would be willows growing near the marsh. The kids would get up early and strip the willow trees during going to shul for services. This was great fun and the people in the marsh would stand in front of the shul and observe the branches to people going inside. The children would make 30 or 40 cents for their work. Of course the money was paid a few days later when money was allowed to be carried again in the middle of the summer. Tashlich would be observed. The women would attend with the men and women so the whole shul shook! The men were all somber as the service continued with the Yizkor prayers being said and the names of the dead being read. Phillip Goldstein would come as a welcome guest of the Chataqua Society and teach at the Columbia Hall Jewish History in the mid-1910's. It is important to discuss this time period. Some Jewish children in the community would attend this type of school.

Some children received a traditional Jewish education while others received an abbreviated education provided by the Chataqua Society. Even though the community insisted on the need for the shul to have a Talmud Torah within the shul there was no real program. But at the outset in 1908 it never really served the entire community's needs.
Thus as times changed, it became more acceptable to send one's children to the Columbia Hall to learn one's Jewish history in English and to put their religious background on a higher plane. In this way, Carmel was characterized as being less religious of a Colony than the rest of the Jewish settlements. Even though this was true, there was a large nucleus of religious men in the community that took the time to ensure that that ritual was being followed and passed down to the next generation. In his thesis, Phillip Goldstein listed 78 children as receiving a Jewish education in Carmel in 1910. This was the largest amount of children in the Jewish settlements that were receiving such an education at the time. This was by no accident. For Moses Herder had insisted on Jewish education in the Colony since the early 1900's. His son, Fred, would carry on the tradition in Carmel. Meanwhile, Moses would leave Carmel in the early 1910's and set up a farm settlement in Mullica Hill near Glassboro. Others left Carmel to assist other Jewish settlements. Solomon Aaron left Nispah during this time.

The men of the community could boast of their own mikveh just like Norma. Mr. Tzudas created his Shvitz by heating his water room with hot stones. Hot turkish baths were a normal occurrence in the old country. But for the religious men of the community it was an absolute necessity. They would cleanse themselves before Shabbas every Friday afternoon and before the start of Yom Kippur.

The children of the community were there to ensure a good time and take a break from the heat in the summertime. One such place was the "Box." It was built by Mr. Skudzilwich. This was a swimming hole with four walls. Benches lined the room. You had to provide your own private property to get to the swimming hole. One would have to pay a penny to get through the property and another penny for entering the swimming hole. The path to the - a few miles north of Carmel. This was the way to the Lebanon stream. By the late the 1910's, the swimming hole had filled in with dirt and the children were all grown up.

The Carmel area was devoid of Anti-Semitism except for some incidents at the outbreak of the 1930s. An awareness of Hitler's ideals was carried into the Jewish countryside. First a volunteer fire department was formed to deal with this danger. No insurance could be written on the old farms. The shul chartered the fire department. Jews were leaving this area and the fires ceased.

This was the time of the Great Drought. Prohibition meant that wine for Kiddush was severely limited in quantity. It became necessary to use strawberries to make wine during this period since grape wine was not available.

The 1930's was a time of quiet religion in Carmel. The children were being educated as Jews. Mr. Cherkasky was the president of the shul. Rabbi Rotenberg was leading the congregation. The council of Jewish Women would send their representatives to Carmel to help create the curriculum in the Talmud Torah and instill a sense of pride in Jewish culture.

Even though 50 years had passed since Carmel was originated as a Jewish settlement, it was clear to see that tradition was being passed from second to third generation. Farming of the land in Carmel was still being done on a lesser scale.

For the Poppovskys, preparation for Pesach or Passover in the 1930s was as old. Luscious scrubbing of the farm house and the kashering of the kitchen for Pesach was an annual ritual. In addition, the silverware would be kashered or kosherized to use exclusively for this Holiday. This activity took place outside in their backyard. The men would dig a large hole. They would fill up a piece of steel until it was red hot. The silverware would be wrapped and tied with string and then placed into the hole in the ground. Water was added and the hot piece of steel was placed in the water with the silverware. Next, forks, knives and spoons were run through the coal fire to dry. This ritual would continue well into the 1950s.

This ritual was brought from Europe and practiced throughout the Delaware Valley. Even in the back yards of the Jews who lived near Marshall and Girard Avenues in Philadelphia would practice this ritual. Those Jews were mostly from Central Europe but this ritual was universal in use.

The Depression lingered and many people would move off the farms. For the families that stayed, this tradition was practically out of the 1930s. It was not until this time that the Poppovskys family could afford another set of silverware. The second set was bought on the installment plan. This meant that they paid 10c per week to Chan's of America, who was the well known peddler. Chan's would deliver the goods to the family after receiving 30% of the money.

Fay April meets and marries Frank Schwad at this time in the late 1930s. Both come from large families of ten children. This union would mean more to the future of Carmel than anyone would ever imagine. Frank's father settled on a farm in Michigan and later came East in the late 1930s with all 10 children after his wife died prematurely. Meanwhile, Fay's father, Hyman April would rear 10 children with his wife in Carmel. Frank and Fay moved to Bridgeton as a young married couple. Frank worked in Bridgeton during the war. But they managed to continue in the Carmel shul as a matter of tradition on Fay's side of the family.

Frank would attend Shabbas services and High Holiday services. He would later be asked to become part of the Chevra Kadisha or Carmel Jewish burial society. During the Second World War, Shabbas services in Carmel would be conducted by 28 families. These families all belonged to the shul in Carmel. Yakelikas were observed in the home and Yiskor services dictated a morning minyan service at the shul. During the entire length of the war, this tradition would continue.
After the war, the young men of the community started to rear their families. The Talmud Torah continued to educate the Jewish children in Carmel as in years gone by. Reb Narovalsky was the religious leader in Carmel in 1939. This is exactly when Frank Schweb came to Carmel. After the war, Reb Narovalsky passed away and his brother who was also a shochet took over for the next six months. Mr. Schwartz then took over as the Gabbai and religious leader until a new religious direction could be agreed to by the congregation.

In the late 1940's, the Carmel Talmud Torah included 13 or 14 children. Some girls attended the school. For Yontov, 30 men would come to services. Lillian April would lead the women in the balcony section upstairs. Lillian would be at shul on every Shabbos up until she passed away in the 1980's. She would not attend Friday evening services that included Mincha and Maariv. A Friday evening minyan was conducted up until 1966. Later Mincha and Maariv were held in each person's home unless there was a Yizkor or memorial service. Then a minyan would be gathered and the community observed the Yizkor together.

In the late 1940's, Rev. Narovalsky wanted to conduct Sunday morning services. The Jewish farmers who were still farming the land in the 1940's couldn't spare the time on Saturdays to attend services. So services were extended to Sundays. During the harvest season, the farmers could be there on Sunday's. A new generation meant changing values and hardships to follow April.

Another reason for this idea of the Sunday morning service was to attract the young boys who were new Bar Mitzvahs. These boys would participate in laying tefillin in the adult services. This was done by the inclusion of the full congregation to conduct services. Still there was no Torah service conducted. This was a very positive step for the congregation. Many Bar Mitzvahs were occurring and this was one way to encourage active participation beyond the age of thirteen in a meaningful way. A Bar Mitzvah did occur a Saturday service was conducted.

Finally, a Rabbi with a French background was hired by the congregation. This was to be a full time rabbi. A house was provided for the new Rabbi. Later he followed by Rabbi Zeff. At this time all Jewish Holidays were under the supervision of Rabbi Zeff.

The farmer established the Jewish Holidays with Jewish tradition. From the Soffer's house, a procession was sent to the shul as a tradition in Carmel was carried forward into the future. Tashlich was observed in this manner. A procession from the Soffer's house would start off and wind up at the Blackwater branch of the Lebanon stream for this ritual of casting one's sins away before the start of the 10 days of introspection at the High Holiday season.

Nearby was the "Box". This was one of the more popular swimming holes in the vicinity. The "Box" was located near where the Schwed's lived. This was the Wiseman's property. This area was now located on the map and known as Wiseman's Pond. Mr. Wiseman was the town's barber and he had his barber shop in the other half of the Rabbi's house. Another swimming hole was located on the road to Rosenhayn. This swimming hole had a little boardwalk and a beach. The Lebanon Branch stream ran behind the Schwed's property. The Lebanon stream was so named because it ran through the cedar swamps and the cold water was reddish brown in color. Many of the people who drank of this water lived well into their 80's and 90's. This water was very healthy to drink and was pure spring water. It was a soft water and had very few heavy minerals in and thus ran very cold even in the summer time.

Two Kosher Butchers would serve the Carmel community for some time. They included Mr. Reznick and Mr. Fishman. Later Mr. Wertzler would follow them.

The community in the 1940's was still built around the celebration of the Jewish Holidays. On Succos the children were assigned the major roles in the ceremonies. The children were not only part of the congregation but the reason for it continuing into the second half of the 20th Century. During Passover time, each family would hold their own seders. Mr. Hyman April took a great deal of pride in this achievement. His family would read the Hagadah from cover to cover. The children were allowed to drink the wine and would fall asleep at the table in their mother's arms. The actual eating of the Passover meal would not occur until very late that evening.

The April family would be a close knit family in Carmel for many years. On Succos or the period of time that ushers in the High Holidays, they would bend their table in front of the house and would eat all day long. The April family would stay by the April family and in the Summertime stay all season long. The Aprils would enjoy the time right before the start of the High Holidays with day trips. One such favorite place was nearby. The April family would load up the wagon with straw and food. They would then sleigh off to Indian Head for the day. This is where the Maurice River meets another river. The current at this junction was very swift. This was four miles back in the wilderness from Carmel.
Mrs. Zeffin lived in Carmel and had a large hotel. It was 3 stories high and an addition was added on as the area grew. This was a favorite spot for many pleasure-seekers. These were just memories in the mind of Fay (April) Schved by the late 1960's. Raising a family was a no easy chore and took a lot of time plus devotion. Devotion was the key. For the Schved's would move to Carmel in the early 1940's and devote a lifetime of hard work to the community and the Carmel shul.

The 1950's would give way to the new generation of the 1970's. Rev. Abraham Harvichinsky would pass away in the late 1960's. Frank Schved would become the Shams or caretaker of the shul, as the congregation started to fade away. Abie Cutler died in the early 1970's. This was the end of the very religious nucleus that came to respect and love Lillian April. Lillian April became the matriarch of the Carmel Jewish community with the Talmud Torah being named for her in the late 1950's. No matter that a men's club was formed at this time. Miss Lillian April was the Rebecca Gratz of Carmel.

This was a time of change and new direction. By the early 1970's, Reform Judaism would gain a foothold in Carmel. But it never materialized into anything. Morris April was the president of the shul in the early 1970's and was able to do little about this change in the community. David Kane would assist Mr. April. Lillian April came to Frank Schved for a talk on the future of the congregation.

Mr. Schved came out of a serious operation and was just getting back to being healthy. The rest of the men in the congregation were older than him and in good health. Fourteen to fifteen men would make up the minyan of the shul in the early 1970's. A dying congregation it was not! Just that there were no more people. The older generation died off. Older families moved away. The second and third generation moved away, too. Eighty percent of the male youth over the last 50 years were professional people and lived in the cities of Bridgeton, Millville or Vineland. Many followed their professions in Cumberland County. Many lived to the old age of ninety.
Abie Cutler lived on Irving Avenue and he was in the cattle business. By age 55, Abie retired and turned very religious. Frank and Abie Cutler were preparing the funeral for Morris April, when Abie suddenly passed away that morning.

Services for Shabbas was a struggle since few were living! The regular people in Zeke, Sam, Morris April and Abie Cutler were painfully lost. Mr. Schwartz would now move away. Mr. Altman died, too. Twelve to fifteen men would die in this community within a four year period of time! Carmel struggled to gather a minyan on Saturday mornings. Nearby, it was exactly the same. For the Garton Road community could no longer hold regular Shabbas services either. So the two congregations joined forces. The Rosenhayn Congregations had closed and disbanded by the 1960's.

Superstition entered the picture. Fay was told that her mom's soul went to heaven when she died. Fay was only a child then. In the midst of all this, eating prunes and hot milk entered the picture. Fay thought that she would have to eat prunes and hot milk once you got to heaven. So she never ate prunes and hot milk anymore. The community was full of this kind of folklore from the old world.

Fay was raised by her sister, Gussie and brother-in-law, Mattie. Later in life her brother-in-law passed away. Her sister was very ill and was placed into a nursing home. Gussie never regained her full strength. But for one full year she fought for her life. Then in March in the late 1970's her sister was declared dying. The family rushed to her bedside but she held on until April the third. April the third was the date the couple would have been married 52 years! There was a belief in this mysticism due to where the people had come from in the old country.

Fay and Frank seen many of the Carmelites passing away. This happened one after another. Frank was declared the youngest of the old group. He was ill and his acquaintance with the shul was much appreciated. Lillian April convinced him to think unselfishly about why G-d spared him so he might conduct the affairs of the Carmel shul. Frank promised Lillian that he would continue the shul and the cemetery plus move it into the future for as long as he was alive.

A few men younger than Frank helped in the administration and the physical upkeep of the shul. Larry April and Sol Spector both helped in this manner. These men never missed a Shabbas service or skipped a High Holiday service.
The New Age of Reform in Carmel during the 1980's

The May and June 1988 Soviet-American Superpower Summit was underway and was a backdrop as this chapter was being completed. Jews are not free in the Soviet Union to be Jews. Yes, they were persecuted 100 years ago but free to leave! Jewish life is difficult to uphold in the Soviet Union today. The following would not have been possible if our brethren were not permitted to leave at the time. At the tragic hour of Judaism, it is imperative to support freedom for Soviet Jews to emigrate to where ever they wish!

Synagogue services in Carmel in the late 1970's was a struggle but a must! The Rabbi’s home was sold during this time. A trailer was rented so that visiting Rabbis could stay in Carmel in a kosher environment. The last permanent Rabbi in Carmel was during 1975 until 1979. This was found in Rabbi Steinberg. Barney Goldman* had the job of seeing that the Rabbi’s parsonage was in good working order. But the pipes froze during a cold snap in 1979. It would cost $1800 to repair the damage. This was done and it was decided to sell the property since the next Rabbi would only stay for five or six holidays.

Sol Spector lent his trailer for one year. Rabbi Hiegm made a Carmel for the next five years. Sometimes he would stay by Lillian April. Rabbi Herman’s father was the Cantor under Rabbi Kellman at Beth El in Cherry Hill and Camden for over 25 years. While Rabbi David Hiegm was going to school in Baltimore, he would come down the three Sundays before the High Holidays to help Frank Schved attend the needs of the families that came to visit relatives in the cemetery.

The Chabad Sheli Emeth Cemetery always provided a Chazan or Rabbi for this meaningful ritual in the Jewish ritual. A prayer or Moled would be made by four or five men of the Chevra Kadisha in years gone by. But now they too were interred in the cemetery themselves and the tradition would continue. Morris April, Fred Stirva, David Kane and Max April would be here in these years to assist families in locating loved ones and reciting prayers at their graves. Now Frank Schved was the only one alive and reached out to the community.

By 1983, the Garton Road Shul was in a state of deterioration. The caretakers of the cemetery would come to Carmel for services. The families of Garton Road numbered more than Carmel with 8 or 9 members. Carmel was down to about seven families. The Osterroff, Julius Feuerstein, Mr. Silverberg from Hillville helped to make carpentering a reality. This scene was being duplicated in South Philadelphia at exactly the same time. Will exactly the same type Jews. Except the city brethren were not farmers. For the High Holidays, the extended families totaled 35 to 40 people which was very good.

Rabbi Herman would get married and stayed one more year. Michael Kleinman was then hired as a chazan from 1983 until 1986. These were the transitional years of the orthodox congregation known as Beth Hillel. Times were changing and Frank had a promise to keep.

The New Age of Reform in Carmel during the 1980's

Frank first put an add in the local newspapers. The add ran in all the Cumberland County newspapers for orthodox families to move and help save the Carmel Shul. But this failed.

Some of the relatives of Jews that were no part of the congregation. Something had to be done to keep the shul moving into the future and not fading away! The group reached out in order to understand its destiny. Here the Carmelites invited the Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist groups to present a plan of the future for Carmel.

The synagogues group consisted of Sam and Helen Ostrow, Frank Schved’s son, Henry, Jay Eisenstein, his wife, Ely Rennish, Zane Osborne and Mark Stoitz. Rabbi Seymour Rosen of Margate was invited to talk to the congregation in Carmel about Reform Judaism. Barbara Rennish grew up as a child in Rabbi Rosen’s congregation.

Harry Levin made a statement at this time. He said, “a synagogue is a synagogue.” This is true and the new congregation did make a vibrant difference. Reform Judaism did not have a chance or the appeal to the newly arriving immigrants in the later part of the late 19th Century and the early 20th Century.

The impact that Rabbi Rosen had on the community could be found in the eyes and hearts of the two older members of the Carmel Congregation. This included Frank Schved and Larry April. A question came up in a discussion about the young people of the valley. Since the new blood would have to come from outside Carmel, it was natural to look into this situation.

The Carmel synagogue was the first synagogue in the Greater Delaware Valley to change its format from Orthodoxy to Reform. In close to 100 years of settlement in Southern New Jersey, German Congregation of Philadelphia did choose to become Reform in the late 19th century.

It had been only less than three years since the population of the synagogue had dwindled to less than ten families making the end of the synagogue a real possibility. Even the three Torahs were stolen in a rash of similar occurrences up and down the East Coast during this period of time. The fact that the Shul lent itself to a place of the National Register of historic buildings did stop this from taking its toll.

But the Carmel Shul had one very strong piece of evidence built into its future. This was founded in the community’s understanding of how to pass the baton of tradition onto the next generation in anticipation of the future. This was done no matter what may lie ahead. The will of the synagogue was handed on in the commitment to continue as a part of its tradition and heritage. This was sealed in the hands of Frank Schved.
The New Age of Reform in Carmel during the 1980's

By 1985, it was estimated that there were 2400 Jews living in Cumberland County. Many Jews were identified as being un-affiliated. Why should this be the case in such a family bound community. Jews in this community still have religious needs to be forefilled as in generations past.

Dues and Jews did not mix well in this urban-country setting in the latter part of the 20th century. The dues structure at Congregation Beth Israel was considered to be very high for the average Jewish family struggling to keep up with all the financial demands of the current society. At about $600 per year was very expensive price. This was out of reach for many families with children who needed and wanted a Jewish education. It showed a similar situation developing in the community such as the elderly Jews who can no longer go to shul and the end result is the closure of a synagogue. Then the individual must choose to keep the ritual going in his or her own home. Judaism is designed to be communal and this means responsibility for the other Jew! At the same time, Judaism was not meant to be a burden upon the average Jewish family in regards of supporting their communal house of worship. Paying a monthly bill of $50 or $60 meant that some Jewish families would have to count belonging to a synagogue the same as a gas or electric bill! Sure in those areas, one could conserve and thus reduce the monthly billing. But this could never happen to the dues! When have you heard of dues for a synagogue going down?

Judaism was never meant to be a pay as you go society or a religion only for those who could afford dues! These people are no different than other people in various communities across the United States in the 1980's who also have to choose whether to belong to a synagogue or to obtain from belonging to one based on their complete ability to pay high set dues. This is not the fault of the individual institution alone. High cost in our society mean different things in the economy of the community. But this should not affect Religious affiliation.

Years ago in the 1940's and 1950's, it was common to separate yourself from a synagogue based on your ability to participate. Even then, no participation did not mean no Judaism in the home.

Times change. The people in this community all wanted to belong. But they did not want to be a burden to a religious institution in their community. These people all had children and could not afford the high price of Judaism in Vineisland. So they dropped out of Judaism and would resurface in Carmel through friends in the community.
The New Age of Reform in Carmel during the 1980's

No matter what faction of Judaism the Carmel congregation would adopt for its norm was not going to affect the structure here in Carmel. It was going to be less expensive to belong to a Synagogue than to a Congregation. The number of families that couldn't afford to join a Synagogue in Carmel. These people could now send their children to Hebrew School.

Many families dropped back into their Judaism. The rebirth of the Carmel Shul was by no means an accident. This was one thing for sure. The mixture of the right climate to adapt to change had occurred in unison for this community! The new congregation's interest was high and the idea of Reform Judaism appealed to these Jews. These young families would join together and support the Synagogue. Growth was steady and sure.

In 1985, the Synagogue was set in a new direction. A new name was adopted. This being that of Temple Beth Israel of Carmel. A new Torah was dedicated by the Synagogue in December 1985. A Loaner Torah was no longer needed at this Synagogue. New prayer books were acquired and used. Cantor David Kember would conduct the High Holiday services for a short time here. He was joined by Rabbi Richard, who heads the B'nai-B'rith Youth Synagogue located in Philadelphia.

Rabbi Address resides in Cherry Hill and within driving distance of the new Synagogue. New activities started to take place in the Synagogue that only a few short years ago earlier could not see beyond one Yom Tov. For every Yom Tov, it became a matter of question whether to continue the operation of the Synagogue without people to attend. That was all behind the history of the Synagogue now. New activities started to take place and they included more than just Hebrew School and Services. Art auctions, adult education programs and various fund raisers infused new life into the Synagogue on Sherman Avenue. A new look for the Synagogue was realized with over thirty families now part of the congregation.

The renovations included new lighting and electrical work. The natural gas lights that were used to feed the lighting system existed for decades to be removed. In addition, a new air conditioning system was installed. New carpeting was laid on the floors, a new cesspool was installed, plus the refinishing of the wood floors were all done in time for the High Holidays of 1986!

The New Age of Reform in Carmel during the 1980's

With all of this activity, dues were set at $225 per family and $135 per individual. In addition, High Holiday tickets were set at $100 per family and $60 per individual. You could pick the level of participation and the commitment you wanted to apply to the community institution that was called Temple Beth Israel. As years went by, no Jew was turned away from praying during this very special time of the Jewish Calendar.

When Cantor Kember came to Carmel to conduct the religious services, he would stay by the Gartoff's. But on Yom Kippur, Cantor Kember would not travel. He would stay with the Shweds. A problem developed at this time. For on Yom Kippur the Cantor would not ride to shul. By this time, the Shweds had sold their home in Carmel where they lived for the last forty years. They moved to the other side of Van Nuys beyond Main Road.

The idea of how a congregation goes from Orthodox to Reform is an interesting experience all by itself. Before the passing of Lillian April would occur, it was agreed upon that the very existence of the shul was its survival. Frank Schweb and others from Carmel agreed that "we" meaning us Jews were chasing the Jewish people away from their religion. This idea was expounded upon in a variety of ways in conversation one summer evening in 1984. From their roots, the Jewish people were being chased due to the intermarried situation. This was not to mention the high rate of divorce in America in the 1980's that was now filtering down to the Jews. Orthodox would not allow or accept one spouse if the other spouse did not convert. This left many Jewish people without a religion. Frank Schweb was convinced in his direction as a leader of the community to find a way to marry his married couple that found themselves in this situation.

The acceptance of the one Jewish partner in the marriage as an active participant in the shul was okay even if the other spouse was never converted to Judaism. This was enacted before the Congregation of Carmel embraced Reform Judaism as its format. It was conceived as not being a 100% deal whereby both spouses had to be Jewish in order to join the Carmel Synagogue.

Frank Schweb understood the Jewish demographics of his community and the area in general. These people wanted to be here as recalled by Frank. So why not give them a reason to do just that and belong to a Synagogue? These people were welcomed as a people.

This was a beneficial step. In Carmel, it was conceived that of the stronger spouse is identified as being Jewish in terms of religious identification. Then the other spouse is going to be identified as Jewish too. This arrangement was acceptable to many families in the area who were asked no questions about being Jewish. The main issue was that their children were going to be raised as Jewish children was the right step to be taken in Frank Schweb's mind. The new directors of this Synagogue felt the same. Thus, a newly reorganized Carmel Synagogue would begin to flourish in Carmel.
The New Age of Reform in Carmel during the 1980’s

Standing room only during the 1937, high holidays has meant that expansion of this landmark building in Carmel is postponing a useful necessity. The future of this congregation is very bright for the near period of time immediately ahead before the year 2000. Six acres behind the synagogue where the children of the pioneers would play hide and seek has laid vacuum for all these years for a purpose: The need to expand in real. For each new generation a new congregation will exist. This could mean a new or renovated facility may come to fruition.

A woman Cantor is part of the new scenario here in Carmel. The idea of a woman Cantor in American Judaism is brand new. Shari Shapiro has been an added addition to this new and vibrant change in Carmel. Twenty eight children are being educated in a Jewish environment here in Carmel in the late 1980’s! Four or five Bar and Bat Mitzvahs are occurring each year in the late 1980’s as a result of a dramatic change.

A new format; a new name, a new Torah and even a new Chaiya Kaddish is going to be found here in Carmel in the near future. New regulations will have to be developed in order to meet the needs of the community. The Jewish Cemetery of Carmel which includes actually two cemeteries will now have a third section of about 25 acres added to meet the needs of the next generation as it unfolds in Carmel. The 21st Century has arrived in Carmel and Jews still pray and are buried here.

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