

An Ongoing History of the *Beth Emeth* Congregation

Now known as *Beth Emeth-B'nai Yitzhok* Synagogue, it was planned in the late 1940s and formed in 1950.

A group consisting of 83 men signed a mortgage agreement to buy land for a new Synagogue. (See the enclosed list of names.) In an article in the Jewish Times, staff writer Rhonda Hoffman wrote "Humble beginnings in Oxford Circle ...Beth Emeth started in a little farmhouse." Beth Emeth, The House of Truth, found its first home in a farmhouse in Oxford Circle. After undergoing several major renovations (including a new entrance and wider front steps with railings), the farmhouse was converted to a Synagogue. It served as the home of the Congregation, Beth Emeth, for nearly a decade (1950 -59). Even after the new Synagogue was completed in 1959, the farmhouse still accommodated the religious school overflow, which at it's height had about

900 students. In addition, a tent was erected to hold the mass of worshipers during High Holy Day services.

“The building (Bustleton Ave. and Unruh St.) was ideal for classrooms because there were so many little rooms to accommodate all of the children.”

commented Mrs. Belle Vogel, an original member of the Synagogue and the congregation's first woman vice president, serving along with Dr. Bernard Miller and Arthur Silverman.

Louis Strumwasser's son Mark, and grandson Robert, both graduated from the religious school. His son graduated in the first class, while his grandson, who attended Akiba Hebrew Academy, was the first second generation graduate. The Rabbi fondly referred to them as “The Three Musketeers.”

The eldest Strumwasser recalled some of the original tent services: “ Carpets were laid on bare ground, and when the rains came they smelled to high heaven.”

So now we can appreciate what we have accomplished – starting from scratch and progressing to a beautiful edifice. It's like when you're either born with money or you go out and work for it. This is a workingman's Synagogue.” he proudly said.

The following article is not in the Jewish Times report.
It does precede the report in time:

In 1949 Ed and Shirley Toben invited 16 additional people into their home for a discussion on creating a new synagogue in the neighborhood. The area was just beginning to be built up with new homes. With a large Jewish population settling in Northeast Philadelphia, there was a need for an additional synagogue to be constructed. These people had the vision to see this and made plans to purchase the farmhouse on the corner of Bustleton Avenue and Unruh Street and turn it temporarily into a synagogue. The idea was to put up a new building in the future when funds became available. Because of these energetic and farsighted people, this Synagogue became a reality.

The 18 people involved in this historic meeting were Sid and Lois Dubin, Joe and Sally Kline, Ephriam and Sara Mantz, Sam and Minnie Sokoloff, Jack and Sally Shachter, Sam and Sima Shulman, Ed and Shirley Toben, Joe and Belle Vogel, and Herman and Lee Winthrop. We owe all these people a debt of gratitude.

The Jewish Times report continues as follows:
Joseph Vogel, a charter member, recalls the patchwork carpeting which served as the first interior decorations

for the new Synagogue. Today there are no remnants left of those tents or the farmhouse which burned down in 1968. A playground now occupies the place where the farmhouse once stood. The cause of the fire was never determined according to Morris J. Weyland, a charter member and the first editor of *Beth Emeth's* monthly publication, *The Double Triangle*. "I served as the first editor beginning in September, 1952 and stayed for ten years." Weyland said.

On July 20, 1950, Sam Sokoloff, who later joined Young Israel Synagogue, called a meeting at the home of Joe and Belle Vogel to make plans for a new place of worship.

A resolution was passed to begin Friday night and Sabbath morning services. Thus a synagogue was born. The congregation began raising funds for a new permanent structure to house the synagogue in October, 1953. Norman Crystal, another original member, was instrumental in launching the building campaign.

"We had such a hassle in getting a mortgage to build it. But when I went to Beneficial Savings Bank and promised them 100 new accounts and 100 signatures guaranteeing mortgage payment, everything started to get going. This was an area of average income families, so getting it off the ground required some work. We even had men on their hands and knees--guys who

never did a drop of cleaning in their lives--scrubbing the floors." Crystal recalled. In June, the congregation celebrated it's solvency with a mortgage burning ceremony. Vogel's son, a lawyer, prepared a simulated mortgage just for the occasion.

After four years of planning, construction was ready to begin and architects Sabatino and Fishman were selected. In a booklet they prepared describing the newest conservative synagogue in the Northeast, they wrote, "The marble steps leading to the lobby from the street are flanked by marble walled planting boxes. The main building rises majestically into the air. The front wall contains hammered glass to add luster during the daytime and sparkle at night, even as a shining jewel." Recently some of the marble on the outside had to be replaced due to defects. Interior marble was used for the exterior, and cracks developed.

On Sept. 8, 1957, groundbreaking ceremonies were held, featuring William J. Green, former congressman and father of Philadelphia's present mayor.

In a letter dated Sept. 4, 1957, Rabbi Pinchos J. Chasen, of Temple Shalom, wrote "As a neighbor, we have watched with keen interest and pleasure the growth of your congregation and we rejoice with you in the fulfillment of this great objective to build a proper structure to house your school and religious activities."

And from Rabbi J. Harold Romirowsky, of Oxford Circle Jewish Community Center: "May this new step serve as inspiration to all of your members and workers to do their best in the service of God and the glory of the community."

At the building dedication on Sept. 20, 1959, Richardson Dilworth, former Philadelphia mayor, addressed the congregation. In the 10th annual yearbook (1959), Rabbi Leo Landman of Beth Emeth wrote, "We have our own building. We could stop right here and all of our membership could justifiably pat themselves on their backs and enjoy their accomplishments; there is, however, much more."

Since it's founding in 1950, *Beth Emeth* has had several Rabbis. Rabbi Leo Landman served the longest and had the greatest influence on the congregation, according to Joseph Vogel.

Stanley Koltoff, a past president of the congregation and a member since 1952, has stayed because "You develop an emotional tie, an affinity. You're involved with people you've worked side by side with for so many years...There's something unique about our synagogue and congregation in that, in so many families, both husbands and wives have served in leadership positions. Morris J. Weyland served as

Congregation president while his wife, Sarah, served as Sisterhood president. Stan Koltoff was Congregation president and Sylvia was a Sisterhood president. Eleanor Dorfman was Sisterhood and her husband Phil was Congregation president. Sam Seinberg was president of Men's Club and his wife, Esther served as president of Sisterhood. I think this is unique, so many husbands and wives serving in leadership capacities," Koltoff commented.

Weyland remembers the late Jack Shachter, for whom the religious school is named, as a personable, kindhearted individual. A graduate of Beth Emeth Religious School, Rabbi Gary Gans became the religious leader of Beth Tikvah in Marlton, N.J. Three years before, he served as associate Rabbi at Temple Beth Zion Beth Israel, 18th and Spruce Streets. Rabbi Gans started attending hebrew school in 1957 at the age of seven and remembers Shachter, "who was a personal influence on the children and would sit with us during services and come up to us on Sabbath to give us candy. People respected and listened to him," Gans said. Rabbi Gans' parents Samuel and Ada Gans feel "there's something compelling about our membership in Beth Emeth. We take pride in greeting each other at services," Mrs. Gans remarked.

Rabbi Gans remembers the old farmhouse:

"I remember climbing steps, climbing forever, walking on creaky floors and sitting in cramped classrooms. I was too young to really appreciate Rabbi Landman, and only in recent years have I realized how much of a scholar he was. After every Bar Mitzvah service he would say, 'This is not the end this is only the beginning.' I use that same phrase to conclude every Bar and Bat Mitzvah also. Only now do I realize what a strong influence he had on me," Rabbi Gans noted.

"It was important to me to go back to the synagogue to be married in 1976. My family is still active in the congregation and my grandfather, Nathan Zuckerman, attends daily morning services in the Zuckerman Chapel, which originally was two classrooms, dedicated in his honor," his grandson noted. "We were pleased to honor him while he was healthy."

Rabbi Gans recalls the height of Hebrew School enrollment in the late '50s through the mid '60s. "I remember *Simchat Torah* - so many students marching with flags. On Sundays, we used the old Neighborhood Center (now the JYC David Neuman Senior Center) for classes. I remember we had 3 or 4 *Bar Mitzvahs* every week."

Raphael Becker, principal of the Jack Shachter Religious School for the past eight years, has been a teacher at the school since 1959. The camp and nursery

school are under the direction of Mrs. Betty Trachtman.

Becker notes the changes in religious education over the years. "Parents have changed more than the kids. Once they had a stronger influence on their children's religious growth. Anything parents do at home to enhance or enrich their children's religious studies is important. Without education, there is no Judaism. Russia learned that the best way to stifle Judaism is to stifle education," Becker remarked.

Rabbi Herman L. Horowitz, *Beth Emeth's* fifth Rabbi, came from *Bet Torah*, a synagogue in upstate New York. Cantor Hershel A. Weitz joined the synagogue last year. Explaining the relationship between the cantor and himself, Rabbi Horowitz comments: "We are independent of each other, but we try to work together. I also see myself close to the education program of the synagogue, frequently meeting with the principal to discuss and modify the curriculum."

"At *Beth Emeth*, we encourage congregation participation - a lot of singing and recitation of prayers. Services are not a spectator activity," Rabbi Horowitz stressed. "The theme of *Beth Emeth* is 'going up spiritually.' The most traditional potent way to go up spiritually is to study the Torah, but not just intellectually. The goal of this study is transforming

the personality, sanctifying it," the Rabbi explained.

Rabbi Horowitz, who practices family therapy, takes the one-to-one role between himself and each member of the congregation very seriously. "Society is troubled. There's a pain everywhere. One has to have a handle on it in order to understand better - this is available through special training." Rabbi Horowitz received much of his training at the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in the department of family psychiatry. "I feel I needed this kind of training in order to get a handle on what's going on in the hearts and homes of people in the congregation," he said.

The sense of alienation affecting the Jewish community prompted the Rabbi to start a Parent Education Program (PEP). Finding ways to live more comfortably with one's Jewishness, feeling comfortable with one's heritage and one's relationship to the community, the synagogue, peers, children and to one's self are some of the areas the group explores on Sunday mornings.

Beth Emeth, now 425 families strong, continues to work and worship together. And as they worship, the Hebrew words on the Bima in the main sanctuary are clearly evident: "In every place I cause My name to be mentioned, there will I come to you and Bless you." (from the Book of Exodus).

Memories

Here are some memories expressed by current members of B.E.B.Y. this May and June of 2007.

Eleanor Rubin remembers: "I was the first woman to read and chant from the Torah."

The B.E. Bowling Team was started by Milt Angert, Len Ginsberg, and Sid Cooper in the late 1950s, and expanded to 12 teams. It originally was the Oxford Circle Bowling League consisting of O.C.J.C.C. and B.E. After a few years, B.E. formed it's own league. The league officers were Sid Cooper, president and Len Ginsberg, secretary. The league disbanded in the late 1990s.

Al Feldman recalls a few events as Congregation President 1968 to 1970. "The farmhouse was damaged by a fire and I negotiated with the Insurance Co. for full restitution because it was damaged beyond repair and had to be demolished. The lower Chapel with the beautiful stained glass windows was then built. These are a few lasting memories." "Also my dear mother Anne Feldman was the first President of Sisterhood." "My sons Stanley and Michael both attended the religious school and were both Bar Mitzved at B.E. Michael was married at B.E. and my brother Sid and I

recall that our parents Nathan and Anne celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at B.E.B.Y.”

Helen Desman recalls: “The Chanukah Bazaar for many years served only hot dogs, so I decided we should have hamburgers and they were a huge success, which led to my long career in B.E.B.Y.’s kitchen. Mr. Ehrilch kindly donated meat for our hamburgers. My kids always said whenever they wanted to find their mother they would look in the kitchen first. Mrs. Kramer ran the Tefillin breakfast for the Bar Mitzvah boys. They came early Sunday morning and had to be fed. If you could not get six slices out of a tomato you were fired, luckily, I passed the test and worked with this lovely lady for many years.”

P.S. “She knitted a lovely baby sweater for my granddaughter when she was born.”

Matilda Tye Schwartz says: “I was a member when B.E. opened. I have a yearbook from 1957. I was very active there. I have a Plaque for my mother on the wall.

Current co-president Diana Gottlieb recalls: “When Bert and I joined B.E. in 1965, the first thing on my agenda was to join the Friday night choir. Everyone attended Shabbos services just to listen to the melodic voices of this beautiful choir, under the direction of our choir leader Ben Litman. I recall Max Pollock & Elaine Michaels made me feel very welcome. They helped me

with the transliterations. Phyllis Katz (Of Blessed Memory) was a high soprano. When some of our children became teenagers, they too joined the choir. We had Lisa Litman, Ellen Gottlieb, Anita Graboyes, and her mom Lucille and Ellen Krakow, and Sheldon Katz. Our group grew in leaps and bounds, and we had a wonderful High Holiday choir. I was proud to be in such wonderful company.”

Paul R. Kaplan remembers: “I’ve been an adult member for only 2 years, but my parents belonged and I attended Hebrew school from Bet class through my Bar Mitzvah. While I have many memories from those days—the challenging education by very bright teachers, youth services and Bar Mitzvah training in the old white building by an old man whose name I can’t remember, Rabbi Landman’s commanding presence and thunderous oratory - my most cherished memories are of one man - Cantor Hyman Sky.

Cantor Sky was short and stocky with a smile that lit up his entire face and sometimes reminded me of Santa Claus. He loved being around us kids, loved to teach, and was far more friendly and approachable than Rabbi Landman (whose “people” skills were no match for his wisdom and scholarship).

He was a real Chazzan, boy could he sing - with power and unmatched passion. When he chanted the

Readers' Kaddish, a look of unbridled joy encompassed his face, and when the words flew from his mouth, he was alone, basking in the glow of being blessed with the opportunity and talent to sing praise to the Almighty.

Cantor Sky taught me to sing. I was in my elementary school chorus for 4 years, but he taught me to hold notes like a blues singer, to feel and mean what I was singing (and not even in English.) These lessons learned are still with me. I was shy elsewhere, but in his presence I freely let it all out.

When I rejoined B.E., I was glad to be back in the chapel where, encouraged beforehand and congratulated afterwards by my Chazzan's beaming Santa smile, I stood on the bima before a packed house (three Bar Mitzvahs that June day) and sang my heart out. I felt the presence of my departed grandparents, a feeling I've not had since.

Like my fellow Beth Emeth alumni, the closing of the building will leave me with only my vocal skills, and my ingrained memories of Cantor Sky's beaming visage and soaring voice.

Michael Feldman said: "We made a discovery. In the farmhouse building we found a set of steps leading to the third floor. We removed a board in a closet and discovered the steps. We would sneak up there and play. There were several religious books there."

Joseph Wakshul sent numerous copies of our monthly publication The Double Triangle dating back to September, 1953.

He said: "Al, perhaps you can dig up some history from these. Good luck."

The numerous articles and pictures that Joe sent will be submitted to the Jewish Archives with a copy of the History of B.E.B.Y.

Norma Shanzer wrote: "I promised to send you my husband Abe's speech but I can't find it, anyway, I'll give you the gist of it. Most of it was started by Abe. First Tay Sacks testing in the Northeast, first Blood Bank, first CPR, selling bricks for \$1.00 each, This is Your Life Bowling League for men and women. Hope you get a lot of remembrances.

Love, Norma

Beatrice Blum recalls: "I have been a member since the start of Beth Emeth in 1950, along with my husband and one child, my son Arnold, born 7/02/45, deceased 3/29/04. Fred my youngest son, born 6/26/50 celebrated his 55th birthday at the luncheon for Beth Emeth's 55th anniversary held on 6/29/05 with the congregation and myself.

I remember my son Arnold's Bar Mitzvah on 6/29/58. It was the last Bar Mitzvah held in the old farmhouse. One wall had been taken away already;

a tent setup for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services to accommodate the growing congregation until Beth Emeth could be built. There was no room in the farmhouse for any kind of celebration. Eddie Getson, the caterer at that time, had me take our celebration for Arnold to the Sylvania House in center city.

Five years later, Fred's Bar Mitzvah 6/28/63 was held in the new Beth Emeth Synagogue. This time we were able to fully celebrate with Fred at Beth Emeth. It was wonderful. I remember we used the Neighborhood Center (before the name changed to The Neuman Center) for Yiskor on Yom Kippur to accommodate non-members.

The Blum family moved to the Northeast from Southwest Philadelphia in 1949. Fred was born in 1950. There was much development going on. Bustleton Ave. was a narrow country road. My husband was a member for as long as he could be. I was a working mother. But I always kept my membership up with Congregation and Sisterhood."

Gert Kivitz says: "In December, 1950, Herm and I moved into our home on Princeton Ave. It was one of the happiest days of our lives. We made sure there was a Synagogue nearby.

My first job for Sisterhood was the newspaper. My

first job for Congregation was collecting for the building fund. Herm was Men's Club treasurer and secretary for the Bowling League. For 35 years the two of us always had a job to do.

Now we are moving to Shaare Shamayim, and we have many good memories and good friends. I hope we will be together for a few more years."

Al Rosenzweig recalls: "For many years, Beth Emeth conducted a special Passover Store in the lower auditorium. Many of our members participated in this activity over the years, and I was able to help during the last few years that this wonderful project happened.

Customers came to the store from near and far.

Members and non-members of Beth Emeth purchased their Holiday foods exclusively here. Special orders were delivered to homes that were not able to carry all the items purchased.

The store was setup in a manner similar to a supermarket with rows of tables and aisles with overhead banners listing products in each row. Refrigerators and freezers held cold items. Pushcarts were available. On the stage, bottles of wine were displayed, each with it's own pricetag. A checkout counter with a cash register and telephone were in place, and "clerks" packed up the items. The clerks helped load cars if needed.

Many thanks are given to all who contributed time

and effort all the years the store operated.”

Ben and Marjorie Needelman offered a few words:

Thoughts of the beginning of Beth Emeth

(By Marjorie) -- I used to go once a week and collect a dollar for the brick fund, to build the Shul. Many weeks the people did not have a dollar to spare.”

“One Friday evening at services they honored the families. We were honored having four generations: Ben and Marjorie Needelman , our daughters Diane (Miller), Adrienne (Magness), Sam and Esther Needelman, my inlaws, my Mother who came from England, Jessie Coutts, and our grandsons Perry and Ryan. Our daughters were married and our grandsons attended Hebrew School, and were Bar Mitzved at B.E.B.Y.”

Al Rosenzweig also contributed information about the many fundraising activities at B.E.B.Y., such as Comedy Night Dinner Theater, a musical play called “That’s Life” written by Al Feldman, Bingo Nights, A Day at the Races, Shabbat dinners, trips to the mountains, trips to New York, “A Hawaiian Night” held at B.E.B.Y., trips to the Saxony Hotel in Miami Beach, trips to Israel, “Broadway on Bustleton Avenue” called “The 15 Minute Star,” Casino Night also at B.E.B.Y., New Year’s Eve Parties, and much more sponsored by Sisterhood and Men’s Club.

Bertha Roth writes: "I became a member of Beth Emeth when our meetings were in the old farmhouse. I was most active in Sisterhood when Faye Ross and I co-chaired Ladies of the Shabbotimes. It was the most successful program in Sisterhood. Some of our topics which my wonderful brother (Of Blessed Memory) suggested were: growing up Jewish in different neighborhoods, trips to Israel, histories of successful Jewish women, and many more. Thanks to the ladies who participated as speakers, and the more than 50 women who attended. Who can forget Faye Rose singing her ditties which were always appropriate to the subject matter. We really had some wonderful Sabbath afternoons."

Dolly Pearlman recalls: "In the year 2000, my dear friend and Rabbi J. Harold Romirowsky retired from O.C.J.C.C. Synagogue. It seemed the next best step was to go to B.E.B.Y. and continue with his son Rabbi Mitchell Romirowsky.

This proved to be a good decision. Not only was I continuing in my accustomed religious services, but I found the leadership and members were extremely kind and caring. They welcomed me into all the activities. In 2001 I became a member and began being active in Sisterhood and Congregation.

On 9/11, a nice gentleman named Sam Pearlman called

me and our first date was at Friday Night Services at B.E.B.Y. where I learned that Sam and his family were also familiar with Rabbi Mitchell when he was a youngster. This was another connection.

After a year and a half of attending Shabbat Services together, we decided to get married at B.E.B.Y. in the Sanctuary and have the reception in the newly painted Auditorium. The ceremony was performed by Rabbis Mitchell and J. Harold Romirowsky on April 6, 2003. We remained at B.E.B.Y. and made many friends and had very happy times.

We will miss many wonderful people, especially Rabbi Mitchell Romirowsky and his lovely wife Sheila. We look forward to our new surroundings, but will always remember the beneficial, helpful and kind people of Beth Emeth-B'nai Yitzhok.

In 1990 Samuel Geiger and Sheldon Stein started a Food For The Needy Program to help needy families in the Northeast enjoy a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner. In 1991 Samuel Geiger resigned due to poor health. Sheldon, with his wife Helen, continued the Program for 16 years.

Members of Men's Club and Sisterhood donated funds to buy a large variety of food which Sheldon and Helen purchased. Food markets and local butchers donated gift certificates for turkeys, and Men's Club members helped

to deliver the food to the families.

Sheldon recalls: "A young child in the Charter School in our building asked if she could have a package for her poor family, which I delivered. Her parents were very grateful. In 17 years 129 needy families received Thanksgiving meals. The project ended in 2006."

On September 7, 1998 Bernie Good and Sheldon Stein conceived the idea of a trip to New York City as a Men's Club fund-raiser.

Due to poor health Bernie resigned as co-chairman in 1999. Sheldon and his wife Helen continued the trips until May 9, 2007.

The total net profit for Men's Club was \$6,079.

Helen Stein states: "In February, 1996 Beth Emeth prepared for a spectacular fund-raiser called 'Hello Molly'. Beth Emeth bought the original script, and hired professionals to rehearse with the cast and to select authentic costumes. It was a complete sellout for the two nights of performances."

Helen enclosed a photo of the entire cast which will be filed separately.

Shirley Don writes: "My husband Samuel Don and I with our two small children Ruth and Sidney moved to Northeast Philadelphia at about the same time Beth Emeth Synagogue was formed. Both the neighborhood and Beth Emeth quickly adopted us, Beth Emeth becoming our

second home. Our bakery and our children kept us busy, but somehow we managed to get involved in Beth Emeth. With two more children, Rene and Roslyn, we moved to the suburbs, but continued to be involved at Beth Emeth and to support our Shul. I suggested to my children that we join a Synagogue closer to our home but they refused and would not hear of it! So, I continued to shlep my four kids to Hebrew school at Beth Emeth because of our family loyalty to our congregation.

My children enjoyed beautiful Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and consecrations at Beth Emeth. I myself enjoyed becoming a Bat Mitzvah at the age of 50! It was a most memorable event for both my family and myself.

I treasure the friendship and community of the congregation of Beth Emeth. Each time we walked into Shul for services or a special event, we experienced the feeling of coming home to friends.

Beth Emeth will always have a special place in my heart.

Best wishes to everyone from the whole Don family!"

Sincerely, Shirley Don

Sylvia Angert says: "When my parents moved to the Northeast in 1956, my dad, Jacob Kramer (Of Blessed Memory) visited the Synagogues in the area and decided to join Beth Emeth because ...in his words: 'the people

were nice.' He became the Gabbai and loved his Shul.

To honor him at his funeral in 1961, his casket was brought to Beth Emeth on the way from Goldstein's to Montefiore Cemetery. After his death, my beloved mother (Of Blessed Memory) devoted Sunday mornings to preparing and serving Sunday morning breakfast to the Tefillin Club. I am often told that she is fondly remembered. She was loved by all who knew her.

Beth Emeth was naturally the choice for Milt and myself when we needed a Religious School for our family. Larry, Phyllis and Michael all attended and went on to Gratz College. Our simchas were all celebrated in Beth Emeth's social hallBar Mitzvahs and 'ufruffs' for Larry and Michael and a wedding for Phyllis. We always treasure our memories of the building that will no longer be Beth Emeth."

Bob Tomar wrote: "I was there at the marriage between Beth Emeth and B'nai Yitzhak. B'nai Yitzhak was in a declining neighborhood, with a dwindling membership. What was once a vibrant Jewish area was no longer and Beth Emeth was not exactly healthy either. B'nai Yitzhak's building was the target of local hoodlums who kept putting graffiti on the building and they had to leave.

Jeanette Tomar (Of Blessed Memory), an active member of Beth Emeth congregation was employed as a

secretary at B'nai Yitzhak, and took it upon herself to suggest to Ida Zavodnick a merger between the two Synagogues. After some discussion in both Synagogues, Jeanette brokered an introduction between Ida Zavodnick, President of B'nai Yitzhak and Dr. Bernard Miller, President of Beth Emeth. The conversation proved fruitful and a committee was formed to work out the details.

The merger took place in 1986, and on a beautiful Sunday afternoon there was a parade, with a march of the members of B'nai Yitzhak coming up Bustleton Ave. carrying the Torahs of their former Shul, to be met by the children from the Jack Shachter Religious School of Beth Emeth. The entire group proceeded to the front steps of Beth Emeth and under a Chupah setup on the sidewalk, The Torahs were given to officers of Beth Emeth.

This was the beginning of a wonderful wedding of two great Synagogues. It infused new blood into both congregations. They brought to this new entity a 16mm sound projector, dinner dishes, an electric bingo board, but most of all, they brought a wealth of wonderful, hard working people with new ideas.

I confess I can't recall all the people, but a few do stand out in my mind. I remember the late Claire Matz who chaired the Adult Education committee, Rose Rosenfeld and the late Irv Feldman who introduced the "Florida trips" run by Diana Gottlieb and Toby Weitz. Abe Gusoff

and Ida Zavodnick who served as vice presidents of Beth Emeth-B'nai Yitzhak Congregation. Abe helped raise money for our Men's Club giving us a banner year.

Morton Dunoff became the first combined Congregational President. I was privileged to have been the first Men's Club President and Susan Mallitz the first Sisterhood President of the newly combined Synagogue, now known as Beth Emeth-B'nai Yitzhak. At the second 13 years we will be celebrating a sort of Bar Mitzvah, in time only, as an integral part of that merger, William Senet known to us as just plain Bill, and to the Rabbi as Velvel.

Yes, it has been many wonderful years with no regrets on any side. I'm happy to say there is no longer "they" or "us, it's "we" and we are alive and well, looking forward to a bright future.

(Bill Senet was the caretaker at B'nai Yitzhak and came to us as part of the merger.)"

Sid Feldman notes: "I was the first President of YPL, and an usher for The High Holidays in the tent. Elaine and I were married at Beth Emeth, our daughters Lori and Joy had their baby naming at B.E., and mom and dad (Nathan and Anne) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary ceremony and party at Beth Emeth."

Sara Mansfield wrote:

"I Remember

...when Sisterhood used to meet in the old Farmhouse we had so many members we had to sit on the hallway steps.

...with almost every Jewish family in the neighborhood joining the Congregation, the children would get a Jewish education and be with their peers. We had a school of 800 students.

...our children were Bar/Bat Mitzvahed and confirmed here. We had our first confirmation class and one of the confirmed was Marcia Exmore.

...the elderly men who came to sit with me in the little mailroom waiting for the Minyan service to start.

...all members coming to the Synagogue to celebrate the forming of the State of Israel and the end of the 6 day war.

...the New Year's Eve affairs, our donor and double donor affairs, our trips to the mountains, our trips to New York, and celebrations of our anniversaries. How can we not remember all these wonderful affairs?

...Jack Bender, bringing the folding machine on weekends so we could do our mailings (we had loads of volunteers.)

But mostly I remember our Souvenir Ad Book and all the hours our members spent to make it successful, raising thousands of dollars. We grew to know each other and

share our simchas and sorrows together.

How can you say goodbye to a Synagogue that we shared so many memories with and loved so much? We will always remember her.”

The following is an excerpt from a book written by Ben Litman. The complete chapter will be sent to the Jewish Archives.

“Fate has a way of creating directions in your life. With a new family, new home on Knorr Street, new business, new responsibilities, our thoughts started to look forward to our children’s needs. We had to join a Synagogue. Near us was the new little Congregation which had just moved out of someone’s basement into an old ramshackle farmhouse. Miriam joined the Sisterhood of the Beth Emeth congregation to see if it would fit our background and current lifestyle. It did. During our first years, The High Holidays were celebrated in a huge tent adjacent to the farmhouse. We sat on folding chairs, and even in the heat, it was not only bearable, but downright enjoyable. I remember saying to myself that the Cantor at the front end could use a little help so I meandered down to the front and found two or three other men with the same idea in mind. The chazzan sang and we responded. We hummed, giving him a ‘tone’ (some backup), and it occurred to me that this was what I want to be doing on a more

permanent basis.

I was part of the first choir in Beth Emeth's history. Such modest beginnings started almost half a lifetime of work and pleasure. The weekly rehearsals, the Friday evening services were a staple in my Synagogue life. Summers were a time of intense practice and preparation for The High Holidays. It gave me much, it taught me much, and the flip side is that it took a lot out of me, too, but it was always gratifying. During this long tenure, I worked with some wonderful people, too many to mention here. I still meet many of those who had joined the choir after Bar Mitzvah and who now take the time to recall the good old days. By now, they're doctors, lawyers, teachers, musicians, and they all remember how important the choir was to them, and they all ask about the Chazzan they worked with, and what happened to them. We had many Cantors at Beth Emeth, and my memories of them are still strong and vivid.

So I retired, and sat in the congregation, and I listened to the choir being led by Max Pollock, and then Sol Segal, and I sang along with them in my seat. With the loss of several members, the choir was down to three, so I had to join them. At least I can say that I was in the original choir, and finished my Choral career in the final one.

In conclusion, I asked myself, was it worth all the effort for the giving of 50 years of my life to the Beth

Emeth choir? I answered myself with a resounding "Yes."
It was worth every minute of it.

Once upon a time there was a large group of people who belonged to a synagogue known as BETH EMETH. They became known as THE MEN'S CLUB.

This group consisted of 400/500 men and had a president, 3 vice presidents, treasurer, secretary and many volunteer workers. They organized many fund-raisers, parties, socials, etc. They also began the practice of having a Sunday morning breakfast monthly, usually attended by 150/200 men.

Men's Club always gave BETH EMETH a major check at the end of the term which, together with Sisterhood and other associated groups, helped to bring BETH EMETH into being as a brand new building in 1960. Shortly a shabbas elevator was added because of these checks and voluntary donations, and Beth Emeth became a vital synagogue in the Northeast.

When MEN'S CLUB was unable to find officers willing to lead the club, a five member Presidential Council was formed. As of today, the Council has agreed to disband and will be packaging up their many beautiful memories and say SHALOM to

BETH EMETH-BNAI YITZHOK.

It is with sadness that we say adieu to all past and present members of the MEN'S CLUB and hope that our relationships will last for MANY, MANY years.

Thankfully we will be able to recall those happy years spent together and wish you ALL ----

GOOD LUCK!!!

From the Presidential Council: Jack Bender, Sheldon Stein, Isadore Goldberg, Harvey Segal and Edmund Lovenwirth.

Morris F. Bronstein writes:

“Of all my memories of B.E.B.Y. the most unusual was the following: Back when the new building was completed, I was serving on the board as the USY advisor. Jack Shachter had approached me to try my hand at reorganizing the USY group. It took several months before the group was up and running. We had religious meetings, Friday night services, and social activities. One of our goals was to send deserving members to Camp USY at the end of the summer. The encampment took place at Camp Ramah in the Poconos. As an additional prize we wanted to subsidize the cost of camp.

After brainstorming the traditional methods of fundraising we were introduced to Cal Rudman who was a popular disc jockey. He was very cooperative and

suggested a dance at the synagogue. Excitement was building. Cal promised to bring Chubby Checkers and other talent to entertain at the dance. Permission to hold the dance was given by the board. Plans were set in motion, posters were printed and chaperones for the dance were requested. Ann and Sid Cooper and Rita and Marvin Noble volunteered to help out.

The night of the dance we quickly recognized that instead of the 200 youngsters we expected, 700 showed up. What a night! Needless to say we were overwhelmed and under-staffed. Everywhere you looked, there were youngsters dancing, sitting on the floor next to piles of coats and having lots of fun.

The evening started at 8:00pm and by 8:15 Blanche and I looked at our watches again and again, wishing for 11:00 pm to come so the dance would be over.

Our sons Howard and Steven were pressed into service to see that no smoking, etc. was taking place in the restrooms.

Looking for all the help we could get we contacted the police to help us disburse the crowd at 11 o'clock.

With all this going on there were no serious incidents, and we raised enough funds to subsidize all those USY members who deserved to go to camp. It was the first and last time we ever ran an open dance to raise funds. It was a long, long night.

Sheila L. Good writes:

“Dear Beth Emeth Family:

My memories of Beth Emeth started in 1954 when my parents and I moved from Collingswood, N.J. to Oxford Circle. I have lots of fine memories as a child. Rabbi Landman was wonderful. I remember whenever he heard a child give a peep or make some noise and a parent would try to quiet him, the Rabbi would say ‘No, don’t. Whenever I hear a child I know I am hearing a future member of our congregation.’ I also remember hearing his children arguing with their neighborhood friends saying, ‘My daddy does this and my daddy does that and then one of Rabbi Landman’s girls said, well my daddy calls out pages.’

When I was 10, 11, and 12 years old my girlfriend Roz Spivak and I had a camp in my basement. With the money we made from the camp, Roz and I bought two (2) chairs.

Sheila Levin and Roz Spivak

In Honor Of

Sheila Levin and Roz Spivak

This is the kind of impact that our Synagogue made on us kids back then. We could have bought a game or anything, but instead we chose to buy 2 chairs for our Synagogue.

I was lucky enough to find one of these chairs at my first wedding, and my father was able to sit on it during the ceremony. I sat on it during the reception.

Men, do you remember Phil Levin when he got into the ring with the wrestlers at a Men's Club meeting. That was my dad. He would have done anything crazy. I heard he was a heckler and was called into the ring on a bluff. He also made fun of the noise they made on breaking the wood and surprised them when he broke the wood himself. Everyone called my mother, Rose, to tell her how crazy my dad was.

Beth Emeth just remember, "Everything's Coming Up Roses This Time for ..."

Editor's Notes

This has been a labor of love coupled with feelings of nostalgia.

I titled this brochure "An Ongoing History of the Beth Emeth Congregation" because I believe that we will carry fond memories of our Synagogue with us and keep them alive, while building new memories within the Congregations Of Shaare Shamayim.

To paraphrase Rabbi Leo Landman's words "This is not the end, this is a 'new beginning' "

May G'd grant us all a few more years so that we can enjoy being together at our new location.

I wish to thank all those who's names appear with the memories they shared with us.

A special thank you to Barry Good for the wonderful pictures and the help in proofreading these documents. Thanks to Diana Gottlieb and Leonard Ginsberg for their help in providing documents and old pictures involving the History of Beth Emeth and their encouragement. The beautiful cover was provided by Harvey Segal. Thank you Harvey. If I omitted someone's name, my deepest apologies. Everyone's contributions are appreciated.

Alvin Feldman

Past Presidents of Congregation Beth Emeth

Joseph Klein *
Joseph Vogal *
Morris Weyland *
Jack Shachter *
Norman Cristol *
Milton Jacobs

Philip Dorfman *
Alvin Feldman
William Siegel *
Emanuel Locke
Stanley Koltoff *
Dr. Bernard Miller

Past Presidents Of Congregation B'nai Yitzhok

Jack Blumenfield *
Charles Cohen *
Irving Feldman *
David Mamot *
Jack Numeroff *

Ida Zavodnick *
David Bogdonoff *
Samuel Jacobs *
Joseph Pollack *
Charles Shotz Esq.

Past Presidents Of Congregation Beth Emeth/B'nai Yitzhok

Morton Dunoff *
Irving J. Cogan *
Sylvia Koltoff *

Robert Tomar
Diana Gottlieb
Leonard Ginsberg

* Of Blessed Memory

Past Presidents Of Beth Emeth/B'nai Yitzhok Sisterhood

Anne Feldman *
Sally Klein
Anne G. Tomar *
Rae Fink *
Belle Vogel *
Lucy Siegel
Sara Weyland
Betty Waller
Evelyn Litzer
Mildred Shenkman *
Elaine Michaels
Sara Bornstein
Sylvia Koltoff *
Esther Seinerberg *
Esther Silverman
Helen Desman

Jeanette Tomar *
Guilda Dunoff
Faye Feldman
Ida Zavodnick *
Susan Mallitz
Diana Gottlieb
Eleanor Rubin
Arlene Wattman
Charlotte Green
Lois Shapiro
Anne Cristol
Karen Pollack
Toby Weitz
Gertrude Kivitz
Rose Ginsberg
Rosalie Kaplan

* Of Blessed Memory

Past Presidents Of Beth Emeth/ B'nai Yitzhok Men's Club

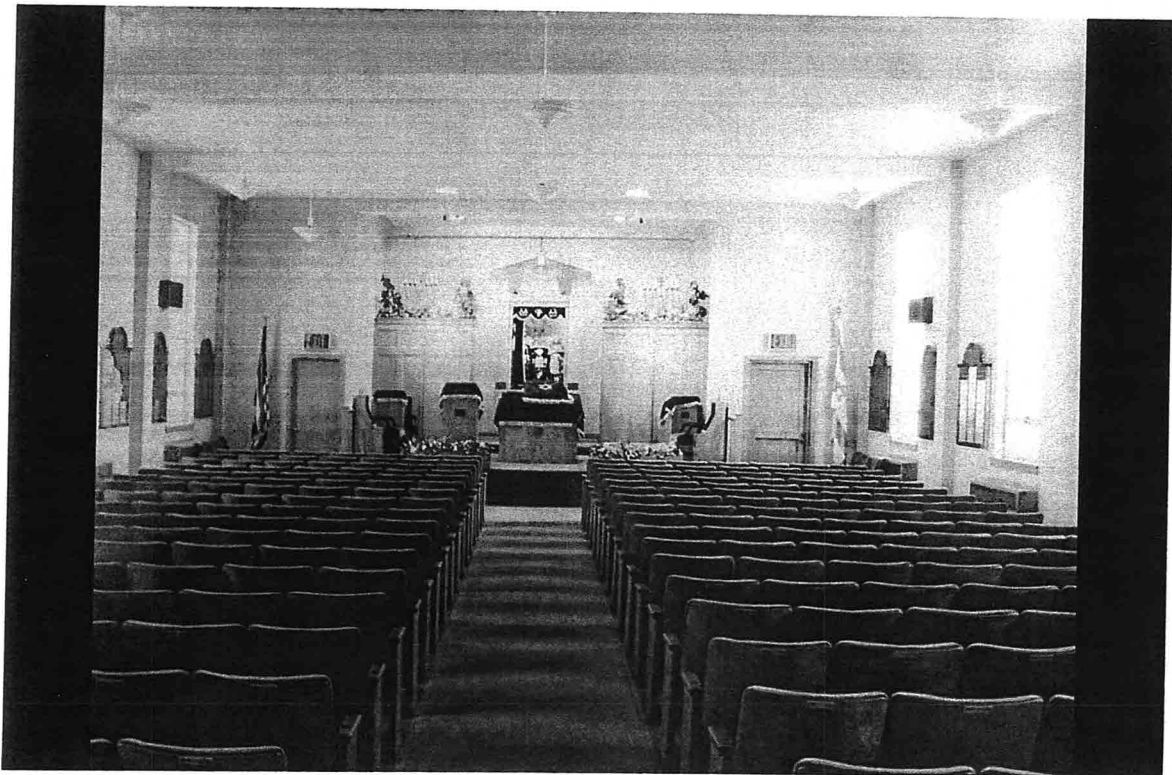
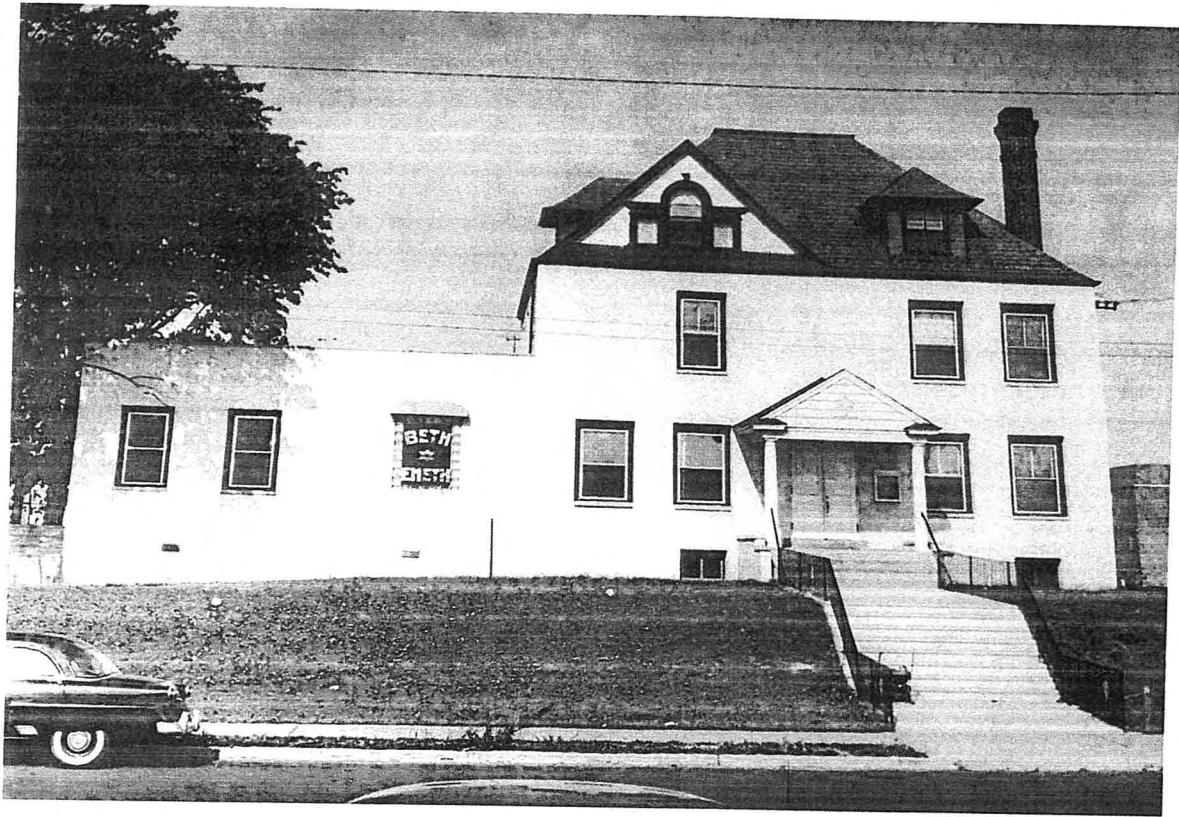
Norman Cristol *
David Wexler *
Mort Lowenthal
Isidore Fleisher *
Sidney Graboyes *
Herman Waloff *
Jack Bender
Dr. Marvin Noble *
Harold W. Kline
Bernard Lubner *
Sol Robbins *
Robert Siegel *
Alex Shenkman *
Milton Angert
Albert B. Forman *
Arthur Silverman *

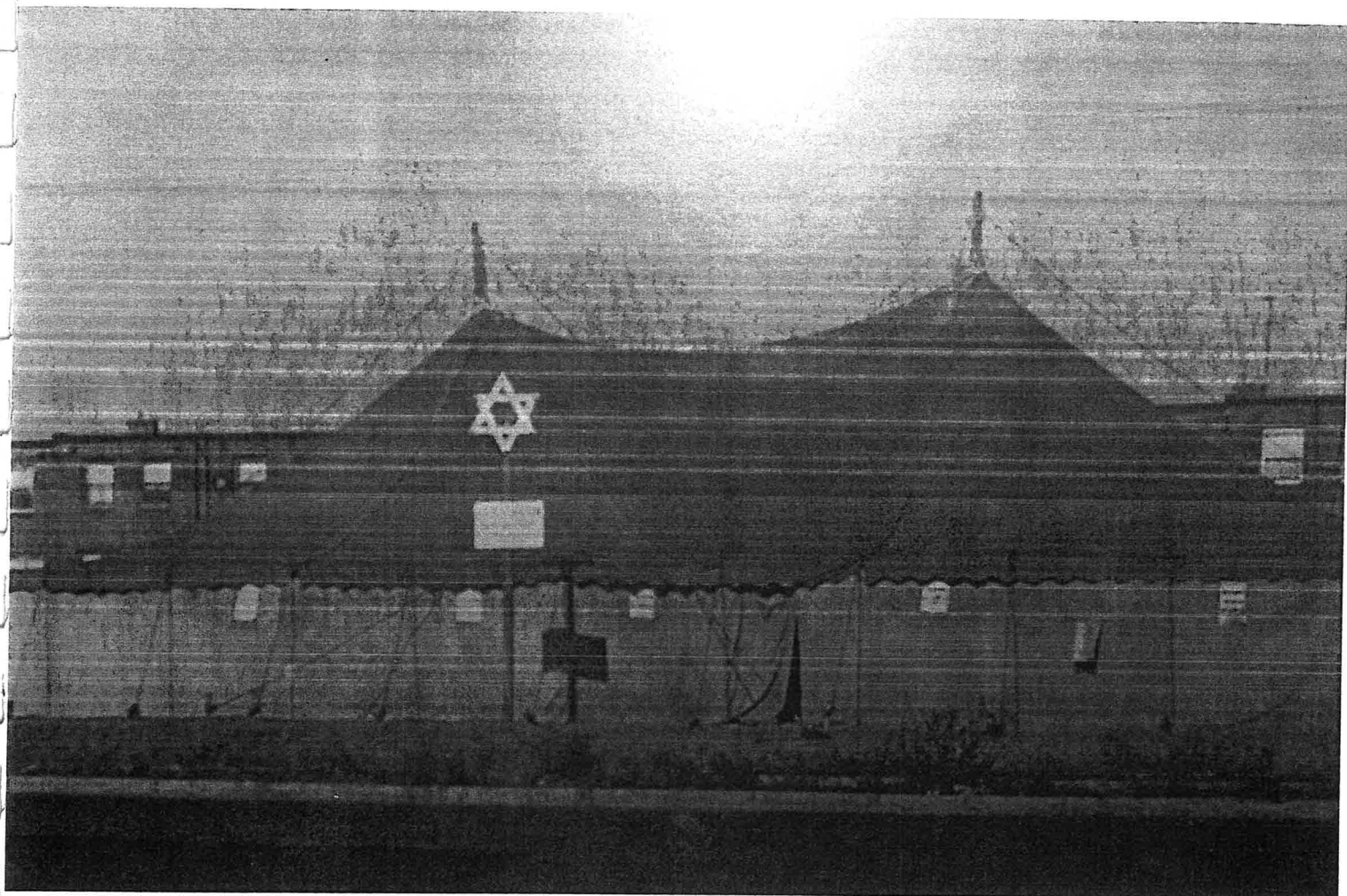
Leonard Fiel
Bernard Good *
Robert Ettinger
Samuel Seinerberg *
Abraham Kelman
Robert Tomar
Sidney Ginsberg
Stuart Kaplan *
Manuel Dossick *
Jack Bender
Robert Ettinger
Herbert Shugar *
Harvey Segal
Sheldon Stein
Isadore Goldberg
Jack Bender

* Of Blessed Memory

Beth Emeth Mortgage Signers

Daniel Becker	Bernard Good	Sol Robbins
Jack Bender	Sidney Graboyes	Morris Schwartz
Bernard Bergman	Louis Gritz	Ralph Schwartz
Leon Brown	Julius Grossman	P. J. Seltzer
Edward Brozin	Max Hurwitz	Jack Shachter
Benjamin Busler	Manuel Kane	William Siegel
Bernard Caplan	Aaron Katz	Edward Simons
Abraham Cohen	Milton Katz	Leonard Solkin
Harry Cohen	Herman Kirk	Reuben Solow
Jack Comer	Herman Kivitz	Samuel Spivack
Sidney Cooper	Max Klemper	Jesse Sternblitz
Raphael Corson	Myer Kligman	Leon Swedloff
Norman Cristol	Philip Levin	Robert Tafflin
Lewis Dabrow	Leonard Levy	Sidney Tichtin
Nathan Exmore	Bernard Linder	Martin Titleman
Leonard Fiel	Sidney Litzer	Joseph Vogel
Alvin Finer	Bernard Lubowitz	Meyer Waller
Harold Fink	Moses Michaels	Herman Waloff
Isadore Fleisher	Mr. Morris	Sydney Wasa
Robert Frank	Philip Moskowitz	Albert Wasserman
Isadore Friedman	Henry Nalitt	Abraham Weiner
William Getzik	Lionel Nathan	William Wexler
Benzion Ginn	Dr. Marvin Noble	Morris Weyland
Leonard Ginsberg	Herbert Pastor	Herman Winthrop
Meyer Goldenberg	Meno Plenn	Edward Zimmerman
Joseph Goldman	Joseph Podolnick	Max Zuker
Simon Goldman	Max Pollack	Benjamin Zwick
Walter Goldman	Leonard Priler	





38a

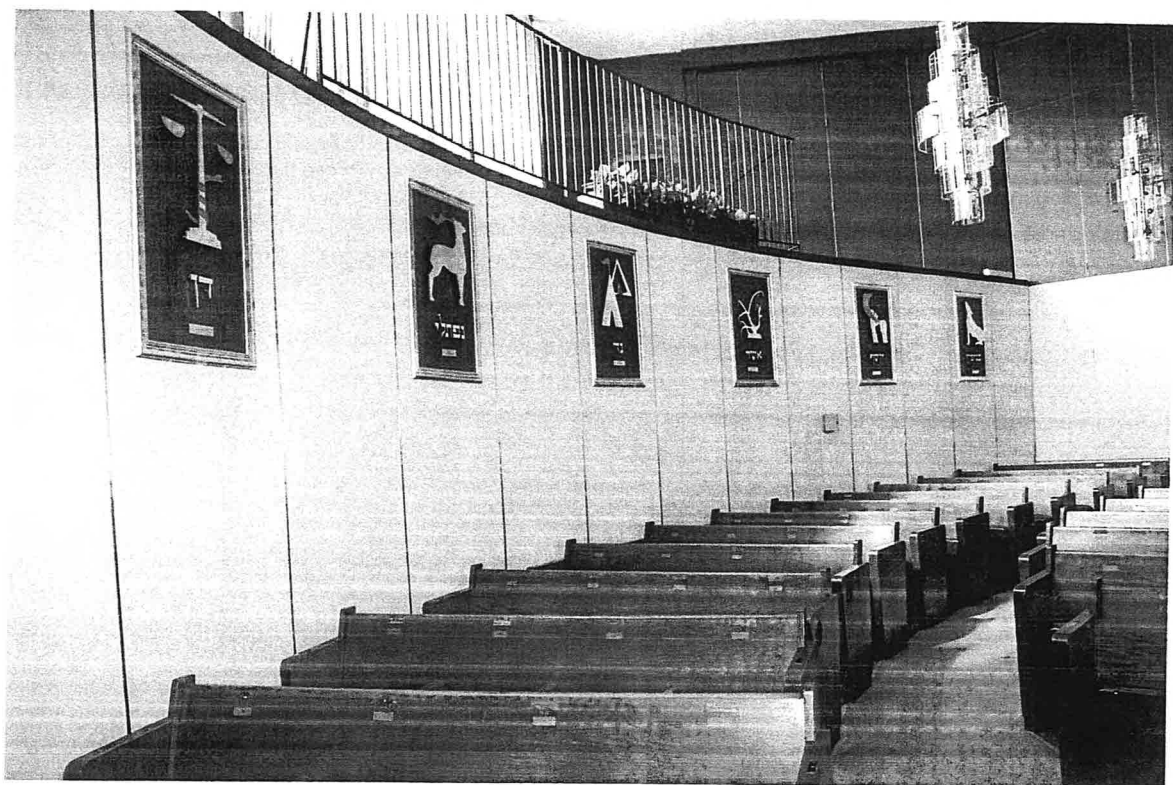


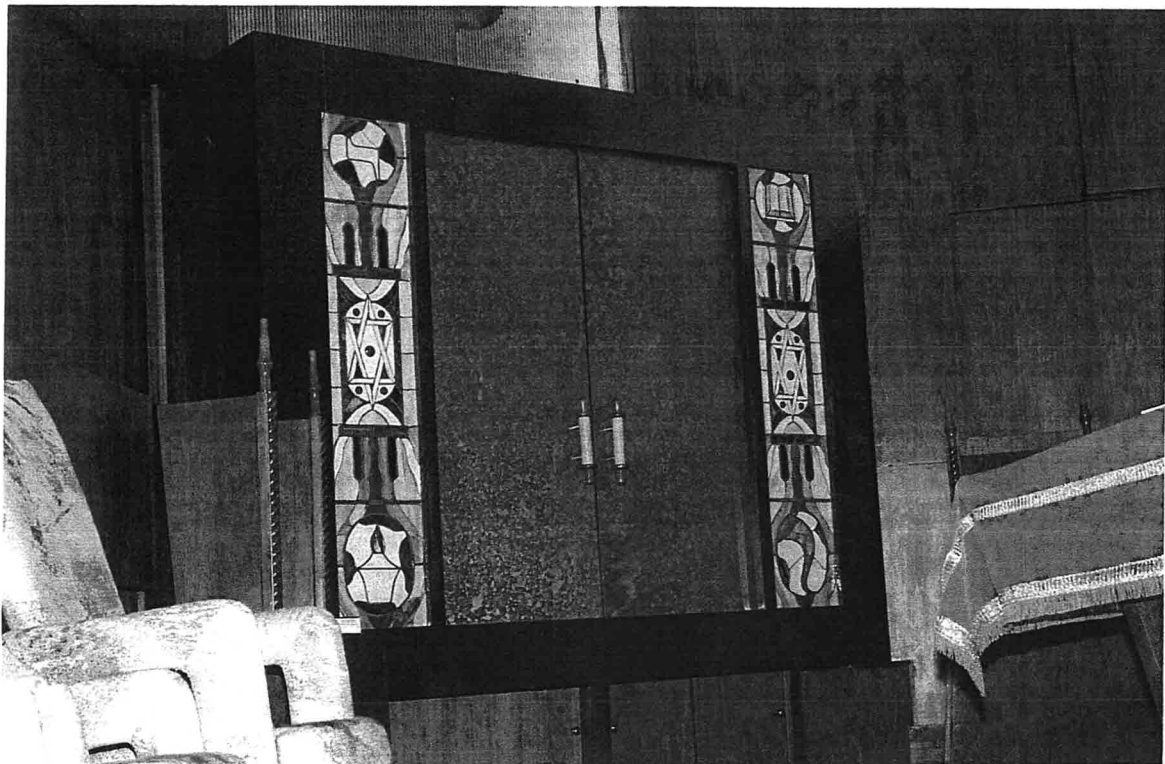
Groundbreaking ceremonies at the site of the new synagogue. Joseph Klein (left) & Joe Vogel lift the first shovels of earth.



Affixing the first MEZZUZAH on the new synagogue in 1959 is Rabbi Leo Landman. Holding it in place is Jack Shachter, for whom the religious school is named.













Congregation Presidents From 1950



Joseph Klein
1950 - 1951



Joseph Vogel
1952 - 1953



Morris J. Weyland
1954 - 1955



David Fried
1955 - 1957

Congregation Presidents From 1950



Jack Shachter
1957 - 1960



Norman Cristol
1960 - 1963



Harold Fink
1963 - 1964



Milton Jacobs
1964 - 1966

Congregation Presidents From 1950



Harold W. Kline
1966 - 1968



Alvin I. Feldman
1968 - 1970



Philip S. Dorfman
1970 - 1974



William Siegal
1974 - 1976

Congregation Presidents From 1950



Emanuel A. Locke
1976 - 1978



Stanley Koltoff
1978 - 1982



Dr. H. Bernard Miller
1982 - 1986



Morton Dunoff
1986 - 1988

Congregation Presidents From 1950



Irving J. Cogan
1988 - 1992



Sylvia Koltoff
1992 - 1996

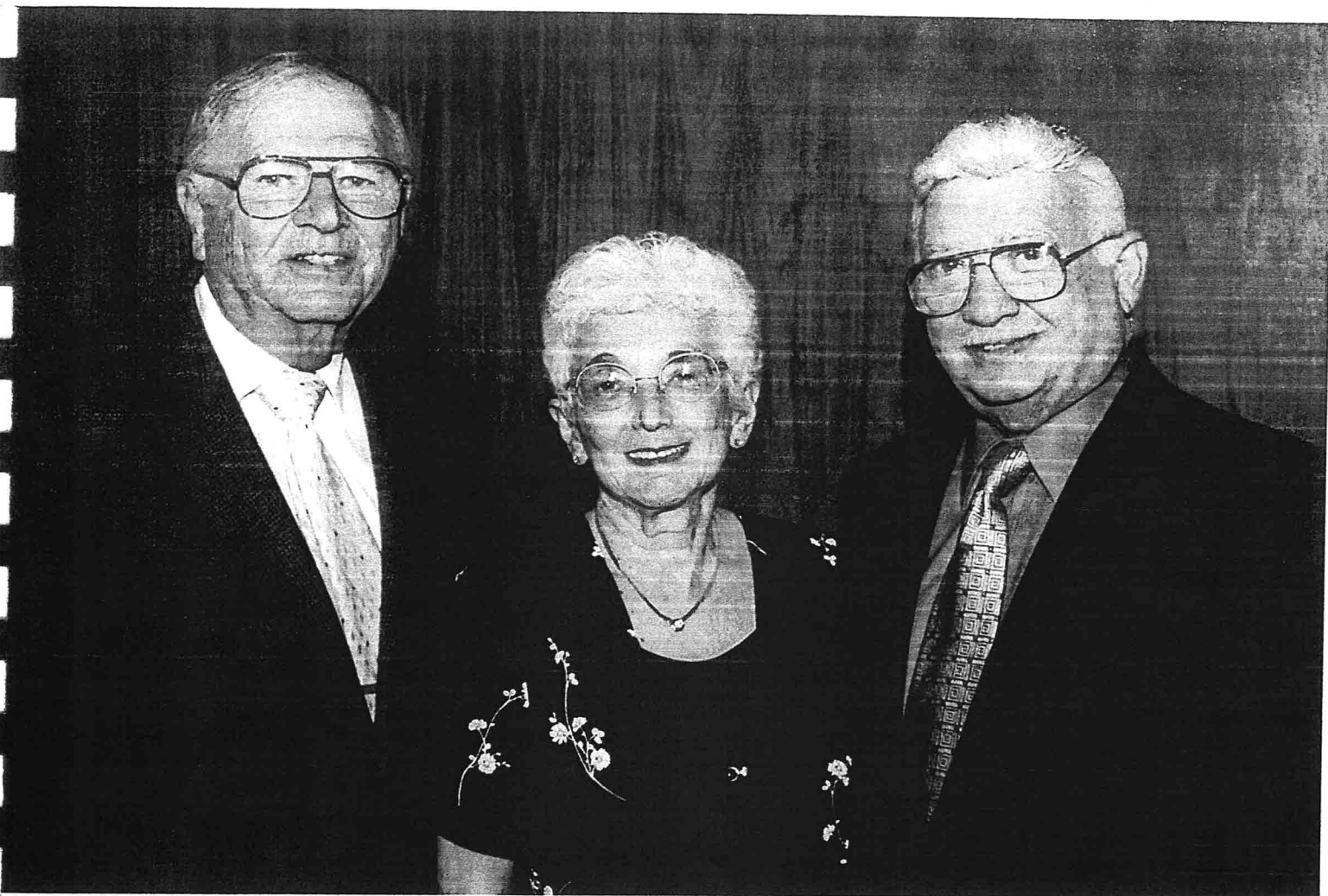


Diana Gottlieb
1996 - 1998



Leonard Ginsberg
Diana Gottlieb
1998 - 2007

Congregation Presidents From 1950



Leonard
Ginsberg

Diana
Gottlieb

Bob
Tomar

July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000



Past Presidents At
55th Anniversary Affair

Emanuel Locke, Leonard Ginsberg
Robert Tomar, Diana Gottlieb
Harold Kline, Milton Jacobs
Dr. Bernard Miller, Alvin Feldman

Rabbi
Mitchell
Romirovsky



1996 - 2007