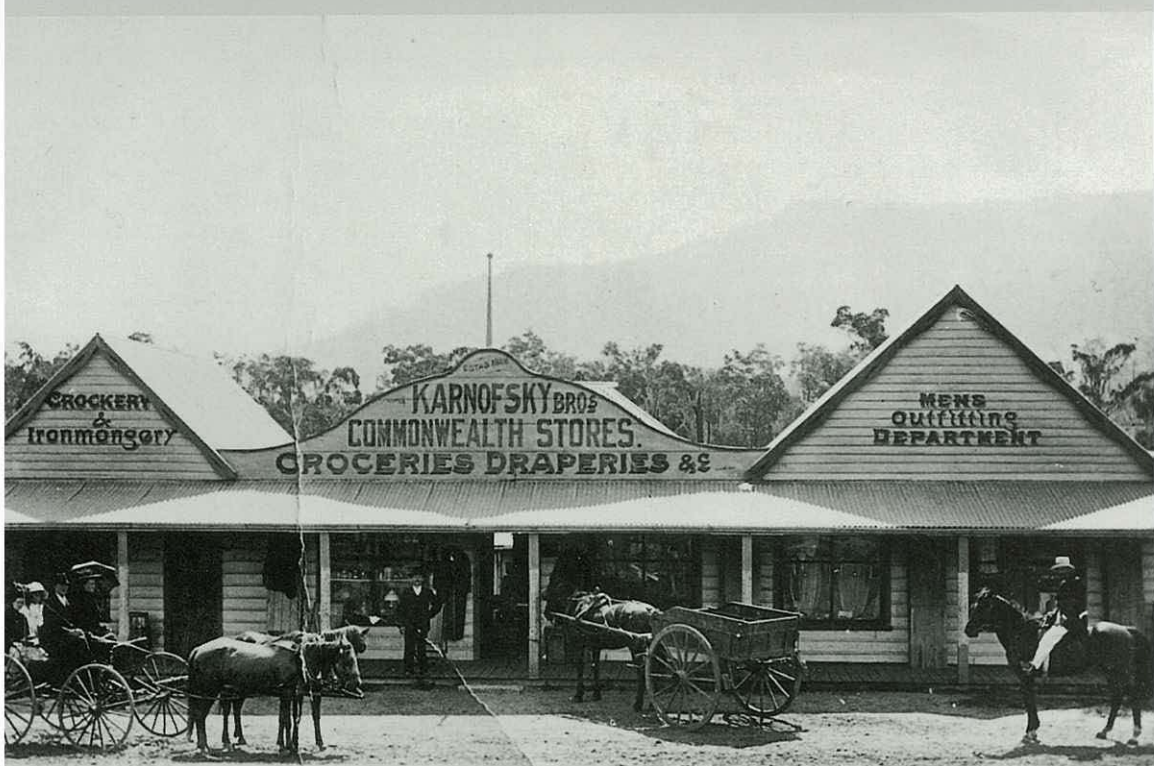


# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL XIII 1997



PART 4

## AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. The Victorian Branch of the Society Journal was founded in October 1949. A Branch also exists in Canberra and Western Australia has its own Jewish Historical Society.

The Australian Jewish Historical Journal has been published from 1939. From 1988 the production of the Journal is being shared by New South Wales (June edition) and Victoria (November edition).

The Journal is edited and published by an Editorial Committee whose members are:

New South Wales:

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Mrs Judy Shapira, BA, Dip Ed

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Dr Serge Liberman, MB,BS

A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed on the back cover.

The Editors welcome suggestions for articles and manuscripts dealing with any aspect of the history of the Jewish people in Australia. The Journal is national in coverage and deals with the whole sweep of Australian Jewish history from 1788 to the contemporary period.

Material submitted for consideration for publication in the Journal should be presented on a 3.5inch computer disk, in Macintosh or DOS format, saved as TEXT ONLY. Please indicate the software used (Microsoft Word is preferred). The disk should be sent with a double-spaced printout or typescript, and may be accompanied by illustrations. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. No payment can be offered for any contribution. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

For the NSW edition, communication should be sent to The Editor, Dr S.D. Rutland, or Mrs Helen Bersten, Honorary Archivist, AJHS, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlingtown, NSW 2008, Australia, from whom information and membership in the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

For the Victorian edition, communications should be sent either to the Editor, Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull, or to the Honorary Secretary, Mrs Beverley Davis OAM, PO Box 255, Camberwell, 3124, from whom information and membership in the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

Front cover: Israel Karnofsky's store at Kangaroo Valley  
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# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

**H**istorical research is an ongoing concern and there is always new research which throws additional light on various areas of historical interest, while those who have been working in the field for many years often come across new information which needs to be documented. This is the essence of this *Journal* where many of the articles add to the body of knowledge about Australian Jewry due to the work of additional research.

Much of this *Journal* focuses on Jews in rural areas of New South Wales and Queensland with an obvious skew to the nineteenth century. After 1850, 40% of all Jews lived in country areas, usually working as hawkers, peddlars, or storekeepers in small country towns. In keeping with Jewish historical patterns, only a small proportion of Jews living in the country were actually farmers. Much has been written in specific articles about Jews in different country towns of New South Wales. This includes previous editor of this *Journal* and president of the Society, Morris Z. Forbes' mammoth article on Jews in the Gold Rush in New South Wales.

In his article on 'Darling Downs Jewry and the Toowoomba Hebrew Congregation', Morris Ochert has carried out further intensive research which adds to our knowledge on the topic provided by Rev J. Wolman's article which was published in this *Journal* in 1941. As always, Morris Ochert has done detailed research on this topic and has drawn from his sterling contributions to the Brisbane *Chevra Kadisha* which also services Jews in country areas of Queensland to provide a very full picture of this congregation which emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century and even built its own synagogue. As is true of so many country communities scattered throughout the Eastern states of Australia, the main remnants today of this Jewish community are the Jewish gravestones in the Jewish section of the cemetery in Toowoomba.

In her article on 'Jews in Rural New South Wales', Helen Bersten has sought to bring together the information from the different articles, as well as further information which she has gleaned from her work as honorary archivist of the AJHS in Sydney, to provide a comprehensive overview of many Jewish settlements in rural New South Wales since the founding of the colony. In this way, her article provides a valuable synthesis of the information available on



the topic. Robert Parkinson's article on Jacob Glass' contribution to the development of cinema in the Illawarra area is an interesting story, adding to Helen Bersten's picture of Jews in rural areas.

Two further articles in this *Journal* add to articles published previously. Our corresponding member from Great Britain, Dr Anthony Joseph, has sent a further contribution on Lincoln, the descendents of Nathan ben Eliezer, which adds new information to his article on the topic also published in this *Journal* in 1973. Another article by Nicholas Draffin, reprinted by courtesy of the National Gallery of Victoria, is on Eliezer Levi Montefiore who made a significant contribution to the development of the arts in this country. This article provides an excellent overview of the life of E. L. Montefiore, a member of that leading Anglo-Jewish family, and adds to the work done by Ruth Faerber which was published in this *Journal* in 1977.

Developments in the religious life of Australian Jewry are a central aspect of the history of our community. Until the 1930s Australian Jewry was dominated by the conservative Anglo-Jewish approach to Judaism and all earlier efforts to provide alternatives in Jewish practice failed. Thus, the attempts by Melbourne identity Joseph Jacobs to introduce Reform Judaism into Australia at the turn of the century failed, while moves to create more orthodox congregations also met with little success. This lack of religious diversity in Australia changed radically in the 1930s and 1940s, largely as a result of the impact of pre-and post war Jewish migration. My article focuses on the development of the Yeshiva movement, emanating from *Habad*, in Australia which was spearheaded by the Feiglin family living on a farming community near the country town of Shepparton. Indeed, given that two of the articles in this issue focus on Jews living in country areas and their eventual disappearance, often as a result of assimilation and intermarriage, it is fascinating to consider that one of the most intensive movements of Judaism also owes its roots to a small Jewish settlement in the heart of rural Victoria.

Our honorary historian, Louise Rosenberg, has provided us with a valuable account of a number of historic houses in New South Wales which have a Jewish connection. Mrs Rosenberg has brought her usual enthusiasm and dedication to this topic to provide us with a detailed and interesting account of a range of historic houses and the Jewish families who lived in them. Many of these families were very prominent within both the Jewish and general communities.

Fortunately for our community and for research into Australian Jewish history, new books are always being published and we review a number in this issue. A new publication, *The Fiftieth Gate: A*



*Journey Through Memory*, which has aroused great interest in the Australian Jewish community, is Mark Baker's autobiographical approach to his parent's Holocaust experiences. Marian Pretzel, himself a Holocaust survivor from Poland who has published his own story, kindly agreed to review this book for us. We also include a review of the revised edition of *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, which has just been published by Brandl and Schlesinger and was launched at the Sydney Jewish Museum by past president Rabbi Raymond Apple, reviewed by Professor Sol Encel. Helen Bersten has reviewed Rosanna Rosini's comparative study of American and Australian fiction, which was written in Italian, while Sophie Caplan has reviewed Harry Stein's autobiography in more detail.

As has become the tradition of this *Journal*, this issue provides valuable reading covering a sweep of topics. Its publication is a team effort from the editorial sub-committee, with special thanks to Helen Bersten who, as always, provided sterling assistance and to committee member, Judy Shapira, for her careful proof reading.

Suzanne D. Rutland

## **DARLING DOWNS JEWRY AND THE TOOWOOMBA HEBREW CONGREGATION**

*Morris S. Ochert OAM*

**R**ev. J. Wolman's brief essay on Toowoomba Jewry appears in the Australian Jewish Historical Society's Journal II, part 6 of 1941. He regretted that the paucity of records prevented him from presenting a fuller story and he hoped that his paper might bring further data to light. On first hearing of the subject from my late father-in-law, Norman Ravdell during the Second World War, I resolved that, ultimately, I would take up the challenge. Since then I have been collecting data on this topic. Over half a century has elapsed and I feel that little is now likely to be revealed that I have not already unearthed, so I now go on record with what I have.<sup>1</sup>

Toowoomba, a beautiful city, is located 130 kilometres west of Brisbane at an elevation of over 600 metres (over 2000 feet) above sea level. It is built on an escarpment of the Main Range of the Great Dividing Range. The large surrounding rural and semi-rural area is called the Darling Downs (after Governor Ralph Darling) and is a fertile plateau, mainly devoted to farming. It is dotted with towns and villages. The Downs area exceeds the total size of a number of European States.

### **EARLY DAYS OF THE CONGREGATION**

No paper records survive the Toowoomba Congregation which was born in the early 1870s in an atmosphere of euphoria and enthusiasm. No Minutes Book, photo, Record of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Barmitzvah list <sup>2</sup>, correspondence, certificates, cash accounts, address list or membership list can be found. It can only be assumed that, in the atmosphere of demoralisation which later engulfed the little Congregation, no-one saw any purpose in maintaining chronicles.

Though there are various references to Jewish people in the area long prior to 25 October 1872, it was on that date *The Australian Israelite* published the news that about 30 men had assembled for worship in Toowoomba, the prayers being led by Messrs Benjamin





*Picture of the Toll Bar Road, illustrating the steep climb to Toowoomba*

and Lewin. The offerings, totalling twenty guineas, were to go towards the purchase of a Sefer Torah.<sup>3</sup>

Like the Brisbane congregation, it would be impossible to know when the first Jewish people arrived in Toowoomba and when they first banded together for the comfort of mingling with co-religionists and for the purposes of educating their children, for religious services, for funerals and other religious occasions. Most of them came from Poland and Russia, a handful from England and some moved to the Downs from Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne. Already in the 1860s and probably earlier, the elements of a Jewish community could be discerned. By the early 1870s they had formed a loosely bound congregation. They took the spiritual name<sup>4</sup> of "Beth Israel" ("House of Israel") and this was embossed in Hebrew characters on their Synagogue facade when it was erected some years later.

From the early 1870s services were held in private homes and in the large store of Spiro and Benjamin, and whenever possible, ministers and qualified laymen travelled from Brisbane to assist. While it is thought that the first Jewish wedding took place in 1860, no details of this event survive. The first recorded Jewish wedding in Toowoomba took place in the home of Samuel Benjamin in Stuart Street in 1873. Rev J.M. Myers came especially from Brisbane to officiate and the event was reported in detail in the *Darling Downs Gazette* of 22 March 1893. The distance was great, the road was primitive, only horse transport was available and the immediate approach to Toowoomba involved a climb up The Main Range which is still regarded as a steep ascent for a modern vehicle.<sup>5</sup> It is spoken



of with respect as "The Toll Bar" from the days when it was a formidable bullock-dray track hacked by hand-tools up the escarpment.<sup>6</sup>

As has been the case with many other nascent congregations, including Brisbane, one of the first projects of the congregation, prior even to erecting a synagogue, was the acquisition of a Jewish Burial Ground. An allocation was arranged in the Drayton - Toowoomba General Cemetery, by Henry Spiro together with Samuel and Joseph Benjamin.

In 1864 the first of at least five executions carried out in Toowoomba's gaol was of Andrew Ritchie, who held up the coach of the Rev Mr Thackeray, the Anglican Minister for Leyburn, at Yandilla. The coach driver was killed and Ritchie was convicted of robbery under arms and murder, both punishable by death. He was hanged in July 1864. The matter is of interest to us as the above Reverend gentleman later conducted religious studies in the unused Synagogue. It is of even more significance as this murderer was buried in the Jewish Section of the Toowoomba Cemetery. No reason can be found and it can only be assumed that it was due to an administrative error. The nascent Jewish Community let its objections be known, and the body was exhumed and re-interred elsewhere.

### BUILDING OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Around the same time, Henry Spiro and the Benjamins purchased the block of land upon which they later built their synagogue and minister's residence, near the corner of Neil and Herries Streets, "away from the bustle and noise of business". It measured "two roods and thirty perches", that is over a half acre or about quarter of a hectare in area. This was a very large area for a city allotment. Much later, the ownership of the land was vested in the congregation.<sup>7</sup> A building fund was set up with F. Simonsen as secretary and J. Lehman as treasurer, and others, and donations were sought locally, in Brisbane, interstate, in Britain and Europe. Baron Rothschild of London subscribed £50 and a Mr. Benjamin of London gave £50. It is to their great credit that the new synagogue was opened free of debt as was the case of the Brisbane Synagogue.

The front page of *The Australian Israelite* dated 28 November 1873, carried an article reading:

Toowoomba Synagogue. The want of a Synagogue in that part of Queensland, of which Toowoomba forms a convenient centre,



has long been severely felt and it has been decided to make an earnest endeavour to supply the want with as little delay as possible. With this in view, a subscription list has been started and the Elders of the Congregation most confidently appeal to their co-religionists throughout the colonies for assistance towards this laudable undertaking.

A list of 84 subscribers, to that date, follows that announcement. A number of those names appear in this manuscript as well as some which appear in the Brisbane Congregation History.

The architect, Willoughby Powell, designed the synagogue, to be about 50 feet long by about 25 feet wide - about 15.24m x about 7.62m. The builder was Richard Godsall. The style was in the Graeco-Gothic architectural tradition, as per the sketch herein. The walls were to be brick on a footing of basalt (bluestone) upon red volcanic clay. The overall contract price was £1,800 including internal rooms, (vestry, office and reading room) and fittings. Of this £885 represented the cost of the Synagogue.<sup>8</sup>

On 3 August 1875 the ceremony of laying the foundation stone was performed and was fully reported in *The Toowoomba Chronicle* as follows:

Mr. J.H. Mayer (sic)<sup>9</sup>, a Jewish Clergyman of Brisbane came up to carry out the ceremony. The official party met at the home of Mr. J.A. Lehmann and formed a procession. In the group were little children carrying, on silver salvers, the silver chalices containing the corn, wine and oil for use in the ceremony.<sup>10</sup> The officiant offered a prayer. Then a sealed bottle containing the current coins of the realm, from a farthing to a sovereign, the latest copies of the *London Jewish Chronicle*, the *Melbourne Dialectic*,<sup>11</sup> *The Toowoomba Chronicle* and *The Darling Downs Gazette* were placed in a cavity under the spot for the foundation stone with a Parchment Scroll which read: "The foundation stone of the Beth Yisrael (House of ISRAEL) SYNAGOGUE was laid by Samuel Benjamin, Esq., on Tuesday, 3rd August, 1875, anno 5635, in the 39th year of the reign of her Majesty Queen Victoria, in the presence of the Governor of Queensland, his Excellency William Wellington Cairns, Henry Spiro, Esq., and Joseph Benjamin, Esq., and Architect: Willoughby Powell, Esq. Contractor: Richard Godsall, Esq. Ferdinand Nathan Simonson, Secretary.

The bottle having been placed, the stone was lowered into place. It was 'plumbed and levelled' by Benjamin, and declared "well and



truly laid". The minister then took up the ceremony, using the corn, wine and oil carried in the procession, as follows: Taking corn and scattering it on the stone, Mayer said: "This corn is the emblem of abundance - may the bountiful hand of providence cause the blessing of productiveness to obtain in the world". It was then reported that:

Mr Mayer then took wine and poured it on the stone, saying "May the outpouring of Divine Blessing descend upon the inhabitants of this town, filling their hearts with gladness. Finally he took oil; he poured it on the four corners, and said 'oil, symbol of peacefulness. May peace reign over the four corners of the earth'. Psalm 150 was recited and then Mr Henry Spiro, Master Isaac Spiro and Master Joseph Benjamin laid the remaining three corner stones." In the evening a commemorative banquet was held at Lendenberg's Hotel. "Toasts were made to the Queen and Prince<sup>12</sup> and prayers said so that substantial justice could be done to the good things provided."

It appears that they were praying for hearty and appreciative appetites! The prayers were almost certainly the Kiddush before meals.

The building of the synagogue was completed in the following year in 1876. The following comprehensive description was given in the *Toowoomba Chronicle*:

Queensland's first synagogue,<sup>13</sup> proudly and lovingly commissioned by the small Jewish community of Toowoomba, was opened by the Rev Samuel A. Goldstein, who had arrived from London to minister to those of the Hebrew faith living on the Darling Downs. On the occasion of the opening, *The Toowoomba Chronicle* published a description of the interior fittings of the building. This left no doubt about the splendour of the furnishings of the little synagogue. "It was built to accommodate 150 worshippers. The lighting,<sup>14</sup> provided for evening service, comprises three-light gilded chandeliers suspended at each end of the building, and a magnificent 14-light crystal chandelier in the centre." ... looking to the east, there is a dais ascended by three steps, covered with handsome carpeting, on which is placed a richly carved cedar-frame cornice, evidently intended to represent an altar, and the whole combined represents the Ark of the Covenant. In the centre over the Ark are the two tablets of the Decalogue or Holy Law.<sup>15</sup> The interior of this beautiful piece of workmanship is lined with blue satin,



and is for the safe custody of the scrolls of the Holy Law.<sup>16</sup> Its doors are covered with a rich crimson curtain with a double triangle formed of yellow braid in the centre, called 'Magen David', or the Symbol of David.<sup>17</sup>

A short distance from the Ark is a capacious octagonal pulpit<sup>18</sup> with a reading desk, facing to the east. The panels of this beautiful piece of workmanship are of open fretwork, representing lilies. It is formed of cedar and is elaborately and beautifully executed.

Along the western wall is the mezzanine women's gallery,<sup>19</sup> approached by a double entrance. The plastered walls are of a flesh tint and harmonise well with the furnishing of the whole, which displays excellent taste and judgement and reflects great credit upon all who have had the responsibility for its creation.

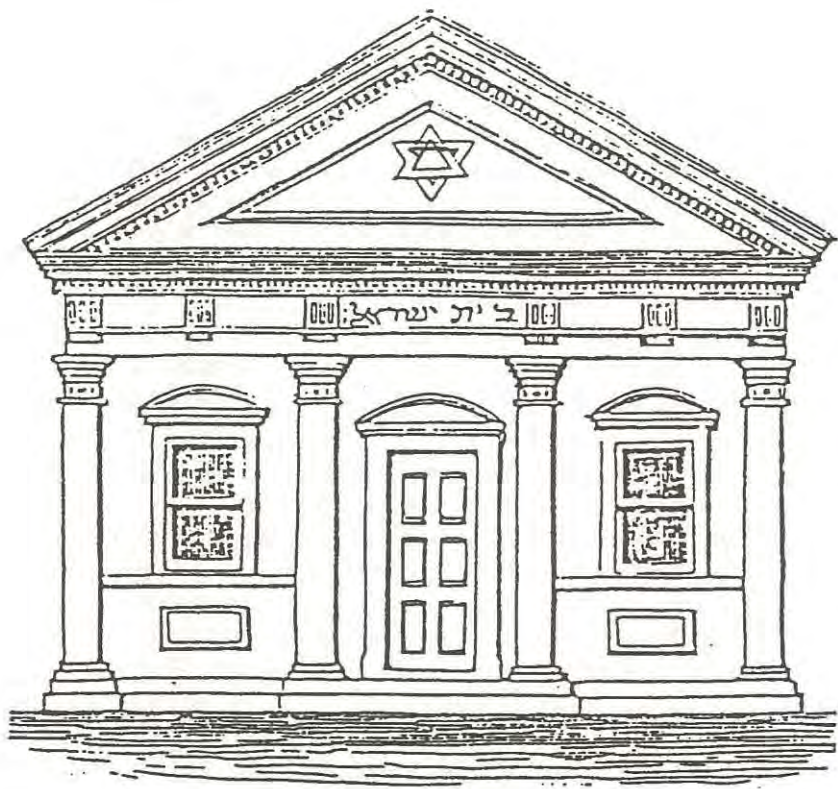
Despite much efforts to locate one, no photo of the synagogue has been found. However, as a result of a request by the late Rabbi Shmuel Gorr formerly of the Research Institute for the History of *Gedolei Israel* and the Jerusalem Correspondent of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Prof. D.B. Waterson found the sketch reproduced here. It is on page 501 of the 1875 edition of *Town and Country Journal*, published in New South Wales. It gives an architectural draftsman's impression of the facade based on the information that the synagogue was to be built in Graeco-Doric style. It would have been drawn about a year before the building was completed. The architects' prints would have been of great interest, but his firm and his family have long disappeared from the Toowoomba scene and only one page of his drawings can be located. A copy appears herein, showing first an end elevation of the interior. The ark, in the general style of the main door, reached by steps as is traditional, can be seen. The beautifully simple roof truss, carrying the purlins and roof cladding is shown, as well as the pressed-metal curved ceiling which would have had acoustic value.

The second sketch on that sheet shows a cross-sectional elevation of part of the end of building, opposite the Ark. One would have thought that the window shape would have conformed to the shape of those on the facade. There must have been a doorway at each rear corner, opening onto each stair leading up to the Women's Gallery. There would have been two banks of seats there, or, if a further row of seats was provided against the rear wall, there would have been three banks. Thus, provision was made for far fewer women than men. I have recently seen, in two of the main synagogues in Melbourne, that it has been found necessary to greatly augment the women's galleries, and even in those cases, to also provide blocks of



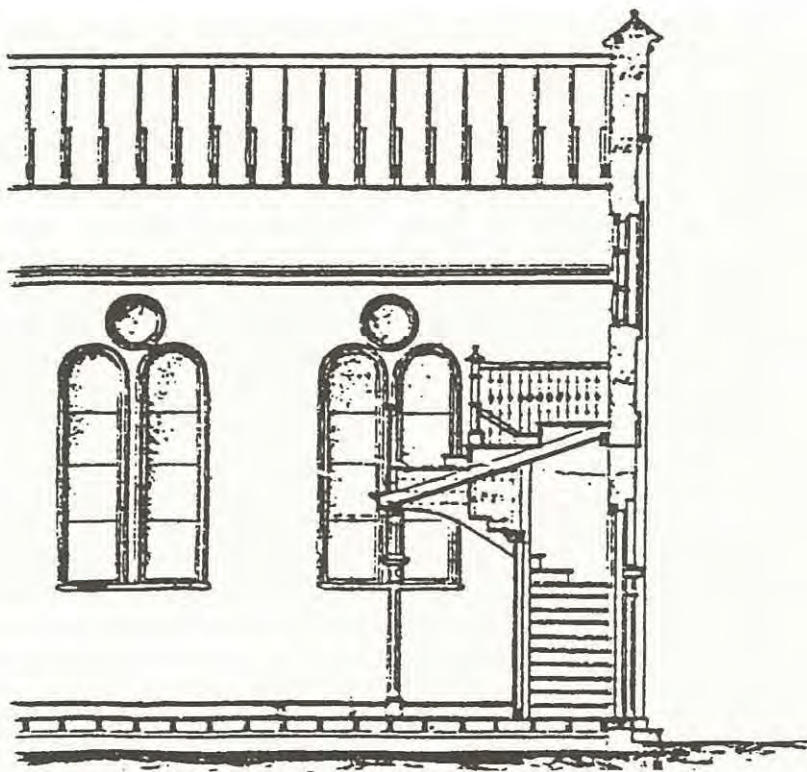
seating for them on the ground floor. The reason given to me was that, in the last century, women did not attend in the proportion that they do today. Probably, if the Toowoomba synagogue was still in use, far greater accommodation would also have been needed for the ladies.

The lofty ceiling, twenty-three feet and eight inches (7.22m) high would have been impressive. In Toowoomba's great summer temperatures, it probably would have been a hot building, particularly in the gallery. This would have been partly alleviated by the high windows, and further improved if adequate penetrations had been provided in the ceiling, with portholes through the brickwork in the ceiling space at each end, to allow the heat to be dissipated by convection. These two features do not appear in the prints. The stated capacity of the building, that is 150 people, would have meant that it was tightly packed and, even with all doors and windows open, it would have been quite hot and poorly ventilated on a summer day.



*An Impression of the facade of the Toowoomba Synagogue*





*Interior cross sectional side elevation showing gallery stair*

### THE OPENING OF THE SYNAGOGUE

The *Darling Downs Gazette* reported as follows, on the opening ceremony:

Soon after 3.00 pm. on 5 July 1876 the ceremony commenced by the lighting of two waxed tapers, and four youths supporting a rich canopy stationed themselves in front of the Ark. This canopy is used at Jewish weddings, and on this occasion represented the mystical wedding of the Maiden Synagogue with Holy Law. The Rev. Goldstein was robed in a rich silk robe with purple fringes and carried the Scroll of the Law, and Mr. Henry Spiro, who also was robed, carried a duplicate Scroll. After the opening services had been performed, assisted most ably by the choristers under the leadership of Madame Mendelsohn,<sup>20</sup> the Rev. Mr. Goldstein delivered an able and eloquent sermon suited for the occasion, referring to the privileges enjoyed at the present time

in comparison with those of the dark ages of the past, they now not only had the privilege of worshipping the God of their forefathers in freedom, and in such a beautiful building erected by themselves, but considerable contributions had been received towards its erection from friends of other creeds besides their own, and many were then present, testifying to the good feeling, which existed towards them. The honorary officers and other brethren were highly commended for the zeal and earnestness, with which they had worked together, giving both time, and of their means towards its erection, and now that the building was completed it behoved them all to regularly attend. Some might say that they could worship God at home when and how they pleased in a form to suit their several requirements, but this was inconsistent with the nature and disposition of mankind. Self-interest and aggrandisement with the cares of business estrange men from their religious duties. It was therefore necessary to attend the sanctuary, and also encourage others to do so likewise. The law as given to Moses was the basis of their religion, and in coming to the Synagogue, which, as its name indicates, is the "House of Israel", all profane and worldly thought should be banished, and the mind occupied with devotional prayer - prayer without devotion being like a body without a soul. The Rev. Speaker spoke forcibly on the efficiency of prayer, and concluded a very impressive discourse by declaring the synagogue duly open for the worship of the God of Israel's children.

The *Gazette* also reported that Saul Mendelsohn and his wife, both choir leaders of Nanango, had prepared a mixed choir for this occasion. Under the baton of Mrs Mendelsohn, they performed with great credit during and after the service.<sup>21</sup>

### **MISFORTUNE STRIKES EARLY**

The optimism and euphoria which characterised the opening of the synagogue was unfortunately shortlived. Scarcely was the opening over when Henry Spiro died. He was unquestionably the chief supporter of the synagogue project. He was a prominent businessman in the town, had been Mayor of Toowoomba in 1870 and 1873, and when he died was only 36 years old. He left a wife and large family, and a business in serious financial trouble.

Spiro and Samuel Benjamin had been storekeepers in Toowoomba from the early 1860s, and Henry Spiro, choosing to go on his own, had weathered the financial crisis of those days extending credit to



Who gave credit during the crisis of 1866, and continued the same to date, when everyone else wanted cash.

In consequences of continued illness of setting upon the advice of my Medical Attendant, I find it necessary to relinquish business and therefore take this opportunity of thanking my customers for the large amount of support they have always given me.

With reference to the foregoing, the undersigned begs to intimate that the whole of his EXTENSIVE STOCK must be SOLD WITHOUT DELAY, and in order to effect a SPEEDY CLEARANCE every article in the establishment will be marked to sell at

#### BELOW COST PRICE!

The Goods For Sale Will Consist Of

Wines and spirits	Hosery
Groceries	Hats
Drapery	Boots and shoes
Clothing	Grindery
Iron Mongery	Earthenware
Glassware	Fancy Goods
Fixtures, Glass Showcases, Horses, Harness, Carts, etc. etc. etc.	

#### LIBERAL TERMS TO LARGE PURCHASERS

In order that this GREAT SALE may be marked with unusual but reasonable celebration, the undersigned will present to every purchaser a CHRISTMAS GIFT, in commemoration of this

#### CLEARING OUT SALE

Sale commencing  
SATURDAY, DEC. 19. (1872)

This is no catch-penny,  
But a genuine  
Clearing-out sale

HENRY SPIRO  
RUTHVEN STREET

*Spiro's advert for his closing  
down sale.*

all who needed it. The consequence of this generosity was that, by mid-December 1876 he was experiencing severe financial problems and he placed an advertisement in the *Darling Downs*, calling attention to the fact that he alone of the merchants of the locality had given credit during the recession of 1866. However, he did not continue and say "and now it is YOUR turn to help ME in MY time of distress!" Perhaps his pride and dignity did not permit him to go further than an implied suggestion that those whom he had helped should now come to his aid. He thanked his customers, many of whom still owed him great sums of money, for their "large amount of support". He even offered "to every purchaser a Christmas gift", even though they would be buying at "below cost price". The advertisement was repeated in German, alongside the English version, as the Downs population was, at that time, about 20% German speaking. In the German translation he added that he was "the longest established hardware store-keeper in Toowoomba".<sup>22</sup>

At the time of his death in December 1876 his business was owed the then enormous sum of £10,000,



many of the debts dating back to 1866. The Spiro business was taken over by his former partner but, despite Benjamin's efforts his company, too, became bankrupt. In 1880, his store, its contents and other property were sold to discharge his debts and he left Toowoomba.

Thus, four years after the opening of the synagogue, the two main families which had supported it could no longer do so. Other Jewish families also left and thereafter the synagogue was rarely used for its original purpose, though there were occasions when it would burst briefly into some activity. Rev. S.A. Goldstein left in 1882.

A long period followed during which there was no record of Jewish communal activity. There were surely births, *britei milah* (ritual circumcision), weddings, deaths, comings and goings, celebrations, but either they were not recorded or all records were ultimately destroyed. The lack of use of the synagogue was seen in the fact that for some time in the 1870s and 1880s Rev Thackeray and others hired the synagogue premises as a classroom for their Collegiate School, a Christian Bible College.

During the 1890s there is some evidence of Jewish community activity. The *Gazette* of 19 June 1897 published an elaborate report on the first wedding held in the Synagogue, after it had existed for 23 years. This report began with the following:

#### MARRIAGE CHIMES<sup>23</sup> HENLEIN - GOLDRING

Much excitement prevailed in the ranks of our small Jewish community on Thursday, the occasion of the union in marriage of two well known and highly respected residents in the persons of Mr Siegmund Henlein, formerly engaged in commercial pursuits in this district, but now of Townsville, and Miss Harriet Goldring, daughter of the late Mr E. Goldring, who has been one of the most indefatigable workers in connection with the local "Hospital Help Society". Although in the early days one or two Jewish marriages have been celebrated in Toowoomba, there has never been one previous to the present solemnised in the synagogue erected over twenty-two years ago, when a large and wealthy Jewish community resided in our midst. It is not surprising therefore, that an element of curiosity should largely predominate the minds of Christians, more especially of the gentler sex, to witness the marriage rites as performed from time immemorial among God's chosen people. More than half an hour before the time fixed for the solemnisation of the marriage large numbers of ladies made their way to the Synagogue, and soon the body of the sacred edifice, as well as



the gallery, was filled with interested spectators. The synagogue was nicely decorated with flowers and pot plants for the auspicious occasion. As there is no resident Rabbi in Toowoomba the Reverend A.J. Chodowski came from Brisbane to tie the nuptial knot.

It is possible that this was not the first wedding to be held in the synagogue. Some weddings may have been conducted out-of-doors (this old practice has become increasingly popular universally) and others may have been celebrated in the synagogue without being brought to the attention of the Press.

In the same year of 1897 the following story of Jewish communal celebration for Queen Victoria's Jubilee<sup>24</sup> appeared in the Toowoomba press. The name of the paper had been erased from the cutting, but I believe it was *The Darling Downs Gazette*:

Over all her vast domains, the Queen's loyal subjects are commemorating the Jubilee of her glorious reign. In the Home Isles, in her colonies, dominions, and protectorates, here in distant Australia, in remote Queensland, in obscure Toowoomba and locally in our little Darling Downs Jewish Congregation, homage is being paid to our Sovereign. Yesterday evening, the occasion was celebrated at the Toowoomba Synagogue which was filled to capacity with Congregants, and with their Christian friends.

The handsome sum of five guineas had been expended on a comely full-sized plaster bust of Her Majesty, which formed the centre-piece of the decor. Flags were displayed both within the precinct and on its grounds.

The Minister of the Congregation conducted the evening service and preached his homily in which the Sovereign was given assurances of the fealty of this flock.<sup>25</sup>

Mr William Groom, the local Member of Parliament, spoke of the loyalty of all who dwell in this State, so aptly named in her honour. The Lord Mayor Mr Edmund Boland spoke of his Council's intention to set aside a formal city garden, to be named "Jubilee Park".

A pleasant concert followed. The Minister had trained a small choir for the occasion. Vocalists and instrumentalists made their contributions, mainly of songs, hymns and recitations on loyal themes. The National Anthem was rousingly rendered by all present.

The gathering concluded with a delightful supper which was set out in a brightly-lit marquee on the grounds. This



coincided with the commencement of a spectacular fireworks display which was seen from many parts of the city. This brought the celebration to a happy conclusion.

This report is further evidence of community activity in Toowoomba in 1897.

However, despite the elaborate wedding held in the Toowoomba Synagogue for the first time in 23 years and the celebration for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, the fortunes of the congregation did not improve. The Queensland-wide pastoral strike of 1890/93<sup>26</sup> affected the state's economy for many subsequent years. Particularly hard-hit were Toowoomba and the towns and villages of the Downs, the economies of which were based upon the agricultural industry. This drove more nails into the coffin of the Jewish community. Throughout the 1860-1900<sup>27</sup> period strikes, bushfires, droughts and floods plunged the Downs repeatedly into financial crises. The Brisbane Jewish community has similarly suffered from such problems as Brisbane is very much dependant upon the economic viability of its agrarian base.

Some communal activities did continue, as seen with the following account of a Toowoomba Jewish Communal picnic<sup>28</sup> which is reproduced in full, to preserve the picturesque language, from a local newspaper. Neither the name of the paper nor the date can be ascertained. It was a Sunday outing. It reads ....

A Joyous Day for our Jewish Cousins. Yesterday was the occasion for one of the largest and happiest functions experienced by the Jewish people of the Darling Downs. Few, if any of their local families could have been absent and those in attendance ranged from the newborn to the most elderly. Moreover, they arrived from all areas of the Downs - Toowoomba, Helidon, Cecil Plains, Warwick, Murphy's Creek, Oakey, Laidley, Pittsworth and some families travelled from Brisbane, Ipswich and Gatton to join local relatives. All the forenoon they were arriving at the venue, Picnic Point on a high prominence at the edge of the Main Range escarpment.<sup>29</sup>

Many walked from the town as the distance is not great, but most arrived on horseback, on bicycles, on carts, sulkies, or on drays. One group had hired a motor charabanc.<sup>30</sup> On a flat-topped wagon the cases of fruit, the trestle tables and benches, the water-boiling urns and the boxes of the bottled minerals<sup>31</sup> went up, escorted by young men on foot and on horseback.

Huge quantities of foodstuffs, much of it prepared in the homes of the Congregants, were piled on the groaning tables.



The Minister blessed the wines and the loaves which had been baked in the traditional shapes. The vast assembly "fell to"<sup>32</sup> and did justice to the tasteful spread. Ice cream and drinks had been donated by several of the Elders who conduct grocery stores. Later, the children enjoyed various sports and races, there was dancing and singing to the music of Henry McCorquindale Esq and his daughter on accordion and violin respectively. Numbers of the young swains, and their ladies, disappeared along bush-walking trails. Before the afternoon ended, the participants assembled again for tea and cakes, when those who had won prizes for sporting prowess were rewarded, as well as those children who had excelled at the Sunday School. The father of a lad who had been confirmed<sup>33</sup> on the previous day<sup>34</sup> announced that he would meet every cost of this function, in honour of his son's progression into manhood.<sup>35</sup> The Minister blessed all who had come and wished them a safe return to their homes whether near or far. The long cavalcade of merry-makers then moved off, just as cool shadows commenced to fall between the high trees. Soon the sigh of a chill afternoon wind, which had blown up from the deep valley below, replaced the sounds of laughter which had prevailed throughout the long autumnal afternoon. *Fine la musica, fine la feste.*<sup>36</sup>

The closing sentences of the above account seem to hold a chilling, depressing prophecy. After this happy and popular gathering, the Community rarely rallied again to celebrate glad events. From this point onwards, its cohesion diminished and its spirits sank and the morale of the congregation was never re-established.

### THE DOWNWARD SLIDE

The remainder of the history of this congregation does not make happy reading. Families tended to leave as soon as they had the means to settle elsewhere, but only rarely did new folk arrive. With the loss of the Spiro and Benjamin families and others from the early congregants, morale sank and no-one was prepared to provide leadership. The story of the remaining years tells of many attempts by the Brisbane Congregation Board and its ministers to re-establish regular services and facilities, but no lasting improvement was achieved. In that time it is recorded that services were conducted by Henry Bloom, Casper, Mark Harrison, J. Abrahams, Julius Zeiman, Phillip Frankel, Rev C. Levy, Rev. J.M. Myers, Rev. A.P. Phillips, Rev H.L. Friedlander, Rev N. Levine and Rev J. Wolman. Most of these were from Brisbane. Simonsen was recorded as an "honorary



teacher of the Talmud Torah,<sup>37</sup> but the demands of his business restricted the time he could devote to teaching." It is a fair assumption that most of the men listed above as having conducted services, would have taught at some time. We have no records of most of the devotions but Phillip Frankel of Brisbane reported of his service in 1927 "that it was very poorly attended." Another service in conjunction with an attempt to revitalise the congregation, in 1933 had, the same result. The Brisbane congregation made many offers to assist with teaching, supply of *matzot* (unleavened bread for Passover) and *tallasim* (prayer shawls), *siddurim* (prayer books), kosher wine and kosher meat and to conduct services, but even when these offers were accepted, no permanent improvement resulted.

The Brisbane minutes of January 1908 tell of a request for advice regarding the proposed ventilation of the Toowoomba Synagogue. The Toowoomba Trustees felt that attendances may improve if the unbearable heat and poor air circulation in summer could be alleviated. The Brisbane Board resolved to recommend that *punkah louvres*<sup>38</sup> be installed. The secretary was to ask the agent to contact the Toowoomba Board in regard to preparing a tender. Whether this was done, whether the equipment was installed and whether it resulted in an improvement, was not revealed. One can only gain the impression that the architect had much to answer for since the building was poorly ventilated and later we read that it was also poorly constructed. What is certain is that the congregation remained in a parlous condition and there is no record of regular services being held nor of an enthusiastic attendance at any such service.

In 1910 there is a further record that the minister and the president of the Brisbane congregation went to Toowoomba to assist in the celebration of the festival of *Pesach* (Passover). The Board Minutes do not record who went, but it can be assumed that wives accompanied them to assist in the preparations for the *Sederim*.<sup>39</sup> None of the names of those Toowoomba folk who participated are recorded, nor how many, nor whether the services and *Sederim* were held in the synagogue or in private homes. It was, however stated that the visitors brought with them the *Yayin Kosher shel Pesach* <sup>40</sup> and the *Matzot*.<sup>41</sup>

In 1911, Rev C Levy of Brisbane visited Toowoomba to conduct a service in honour of the coronation of King George V. It is recorded that "he found the affairs of the Synagogue in poor condition and organised a Committee to undertake an improvement and to redeem the title deeds. This improvement did take place, but was not sustained, and the organisation declined again after a few years."<sup>42</sup> No explanation can be found as to why or how the synagogue deeds had got out of the possession of the congregation.



In 1911 there were no Trustees since the three immediate past Trustees had passed away. Isaac Abrahams, Julius Cohen and Mark Harrison were elected to be the Trustees at a meeting called for that purpose. It was recorded that "Mr I. Abrahams and his wife made many gallant attempts to keep the spark alive." The Trustees did not allow the precinct to lose its dignity, for they rejected a request to hire the grounds for use by a circus and carnival.

As Jewish enlistments in Brisbane and Australia-wide during the First World War were relatively high, it is reasonable to assume that the same would have been the case in Toowoomba. While this would have reflected credit on that community, it would have further depleted for the duration, the number of menfolk available for communal activities, in that already tiny congregation.

Early in the First World War, there was a suggestion that the "unused" synagogue be loaned for use as a drill hall, and the half-acre of land as a parade ground for the use of a small army unit. Though the latter would have been excellent for the purpose, the 50 feet x 25 feet building would have been inadequate, even if all furnishings and fittings had been removed. It was decided that this consecrated building should not be so used. The long-empty minister's house was offered but a nearby sports field with its facilities was selected instead.

In 1917 it became obvious that the synagogue needed urgent and major restorations if it was to be retained in a viable and safe condition. An appeal was launched both locally and in Brisbane, and when it became obvious that the proceeds would be inadequate, most of the land and the long-unused minister's residence were sold. The funds raised by this sale proved to be adequate and the work was carried out. However, Rev Wolman stated in his essay that the restorations having been completed "the Congregation seemed to forget it owned a Synagogue." This could have been an exaggeration or an assumption, as the Toowoomba community always "under-communicated". If it was true, it suggests that they may have even abandoned their *Yomim Naroim*<sup>43</sup> services.

The fact that the synagogue was little used in its later years is indicated by the following copy of a news item. It bears no date but it can be assumed as being in the early 1920s.

During the week, vandalism was reported from the Jewish Synagogue. As is generally known, the church is closed up for a great portion of the year, and during the week some intruders entered the grounds, bashed in one of the doors, smashed a clock inside and lit the gas which burned for 3 days and nights before the matter was brought before the notice of adherents of



the church. The light was noticed by many pedestrians who naturally thought some service was being held. A prominent member of the Jewish faith stated yesterday that the damage caused was considerable and the matter has been placed in the hands of the police for further investigation. It is to be hoped that the culprits will be brought to book.

There is, however, no record as to whether the culprits for this vandalism were ever arrested.

By the early 1920s it was obvious that the synagogue could no longer be maintained by the defunct congregation and the Trustees decided to offer the land only for sale. The proposed Contract of Sale specified that the synagogue was to be demolished. Elsewhere it was recorded that "the building was never to be used for any secular or profane purpose." The property was no longer the large, choice piece of real estate that it had been prior to the sale in 1917 since it no longer included the minister's residence and most of the land.

After long and sometimes acrimonious negotiations with the Redeemer Lutheran Assembly, the sale was finalised on 25 February 1929 at a price of £833-18-0. The Trustees who represented the congregation were Mark Harrison, Isaac Abrahams and Benjamin Myer. Until the end, the buyers wished to acquire the synagogue as well and claimed they could not understand why it was to be demolished. Later, they agreed to "demolition down to the level of the window sills." This revealed that the foundations and walls were in very poor condition. *The Chronicle* reported that "a Rabbi came up from Brisbane and performed a ceremony to divest the precinct and site of its Jewish sacred significance.<sup>44</sup> Then the remainder of the walls were removed and the site cleaned and the bricks and other materials were sold for £85." The outline of the walls, however, can still be seen in the lawn on the north of the church built by the new owners.

It is regrettable that, at the time the building was demolished, the foundation stone and the contents of the bottle which had been embedded beneath it, were not retrieved. They would have been of great interest today. Similarly, the foundation stone and the bottle of coins, newspapers and documents buried under it, at the Brisbane Synagogue, cannot be located.<sup>45</sup> Historical researchers are constantly being frustrated by similar disinterest shown by past generations.

When a minister, Rev Nathan Levine, of Brisbane, came to Toowoomba in 1929, to de-consecrate the synagogue, he removed the three *Sifrei Torah* (scrolls of the Law). One was retained in the home of Isaac Abrahams, (one of the Trustees) for use if further services were held and the minister brought the other two back to



Brisbane. I was unable to find what happened to the Torah which remained in Toowoomba until, in July 1996, I had occasion to contact an elderly local man, Burt Abrahams, on a *Chevra Kadisha* matter. He told me that he was the son of Isaac, who had conducted services in his home as mentioned above. Isaac Abrahams had died in 1950 and Burt brought the Torah to his home in Brisbane. After the Central Synagogue, Bondi Junction, in Sydney was destroyed by fire in 1994, and all its Torah scrolls were lost, Burt Abrahams donated the Toowoomba scroll to Central. In doing so, Abrahams performed a great *Mitzvah* (meritorious deed).

Thus, Brisbane's ten *Sifrei Torah* include the two from its sister congregation. As this interesting record does not appear elsewhere, this page may be a relevant place to make an accounting of the ten. Our first was from Mr Jereslow "from the defunct Lachlan Congregation".<sup>46</sup> Then, one from H.E. and Miss M Moses in 1871; one from H.D. Benjamin of Berlin in 1877; two from Eisenberg, Cohen and Berliner; two from Norman Ravdell in 1952; one from Mrs. I. Freedman in 1954; one from A. Newhouse in 1970. (In most cases these donations included silver *Klie Kodesh* <sup>47</sup> and velvet mantles.<sup>48</sup> With the two from Toowoomba, these figures total eleven and this was reduced to ten during the Second War. In 1941, huge numbers of U.S. forces, including many Jewish personnel, were serving in New Guinea. Their chaplaincy requested the loan of a *Sefer Torah*. It was used at widely-attended services, particularly during the High Festivals and Pesach. No receipt or correspondence can be found on the matter, nor was action taken after the war to recover it. It can only be hoped that it was taken to U.S.A. at the close of the Pacific Campaign and that it is still held by the Jewish Chaplaincy.

A few Jews continued to live in Toowoomba and, from time to time, the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation attempted to make contact with them and assist them with the Jewish festivals. One such occasion was in 1940. A Jewish festival was imminent and the Brisbane Board wished to ensure that Toowoomba had services. A Toowoomba congregant agreed to publicise and to accommodate the services. Rev J. Wolman accompanied Norman Ravdell, the president Isaac Freedman and one other. Arriving at Toowoomba they found that their contact there had forgotten about the whole matter. After an afternoon of frenzied phoning, approximately two *minyanim*<sup>49</sup> were assembled for evening service and for the morning service next day. After the latter, the visitors were taken to lunch in the home of one of the locals. Mr Ravdell recalled that they felt that "the wives and families of their hosts were embarrassed by the whole affair. Being mostly non-Jewish, they had no idea what it was all about.



They were naturally puzzled by our *yarmalkas*,<sup>50</sup> *brochat*,<sup>51</sup> *Kiddush*,<sup>52</sup> *bensching*,<sup>53</sup> *challot*,<sup>54</sup> our *baal-ha-buyit* conversations<sup>55</sup> and by the whole riddle of why we were there and what did we want. Their menfolk, too, were a bit bemused. We were not of these people and they not of us! Intermarriage, apathy, and assimilation had brought them to a point where there was nothing to build upon. There was no common ground. When we suggested that we may repeat the exercise, an uneasy atmosphere pervaded the gathering. One of our hosts asked what did we hope to achieve. Obviously they felt that they had done us a favour by having us, but enough was enough! On the way back to Brisbane we came to the sad conclusion that we could never succeed if the Jews of Toowoomba saw the thing as an embarrassing burden, without a purpose. We concluded that we had enough to worry about in trying to win back the members of our own Brisbane congregation who had drifted away."

In 1941, when the Japanese approached dangerously close to Queensland, it was expected that Brisbane would suffer aerial bombardment. Children of all religions (not only Jewish ones) were moved west and south. Seventy Jewish children were sent by rail to Oakey, on the Downs.<sup>56</sup> Two adjoining houses were leased as a hostel, the boys in one and the girls in the other. All the expected things happened - fun and games, illnesses and tears, truancy from school, misbehaviour and home-sickness. Rev Wolman went there each Monday morning to do the *shechita*<sup>57</sup> or to bring the kosher meat, and Monday dinner was always liver, cooked outdoors on corrugated iron.<sup>58</sup> Some of the evacuees state they still will not eat liver to the present day following this experience. They do not recall the classes and services which Rev Wolman was to conduct. They remember some visits from Toowoomba Jewry, who lived only 28k (17 miles) away. They recall marching daily to a one-teacher school where they "received minimal instruction from a little man who looked and acted like Hitler." Over a year later an outbreak of scarlet fever and some other illnesses prompted the parents to withdraw their children from Oakey and, anyway, the Japanese had, by this time, been driven back and the danger was over.<sup>59</sup>

In 1940, at a well-attended meeting, the Toowoomba congregation lent £1,000 to the War Loan for the duration of the (Second) War and six months thereafter. At the same time they donated £100 to the Brisbane synagogue and the balance of their funds to various patriotic organisations.<sup>60</sup> Isaac Freedman, president of the Brisbane congregation attended this meeting, with Rev. J. Wolman and Norman Ravdell. They made yet another determined attempt to reinstate the ailing congregation but this was unsuccessful. An Order-in-Council was obtained, to authorise the Loan and gifts.



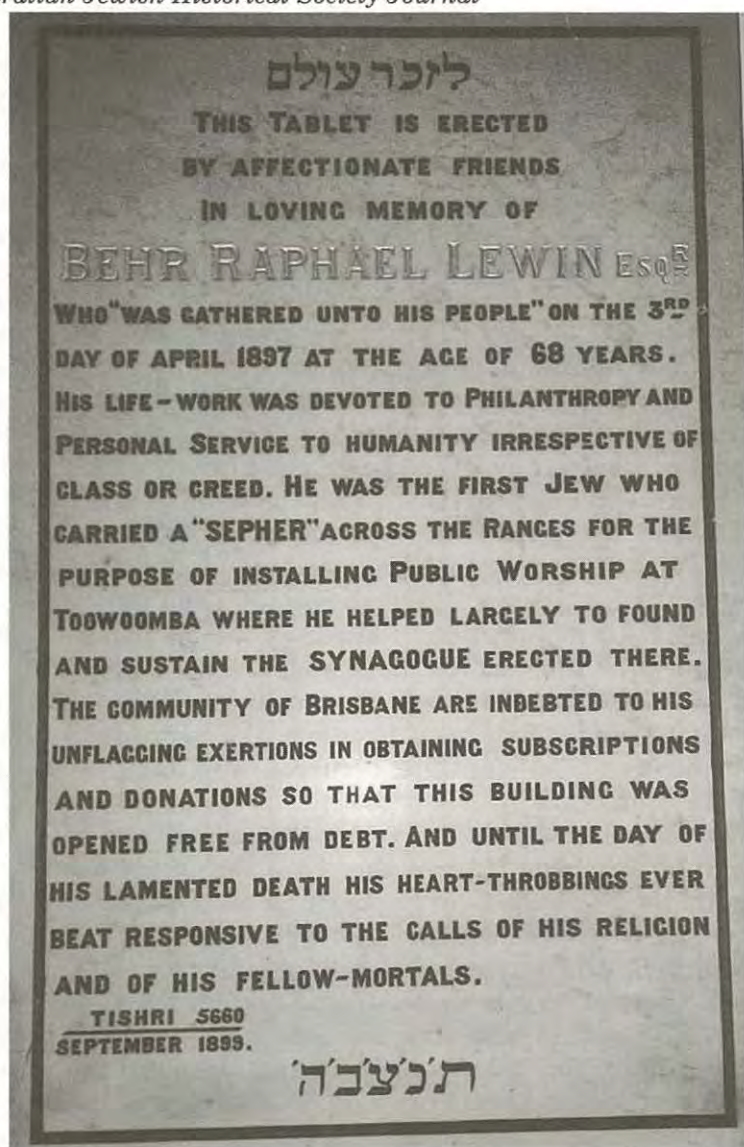
In order to redeem these War Loan Bonds, plus the considerable interest they had accrued, the Bonds should have been presented to the Federal Treasury after the war. This was not done. The two surviving trustees handed over their trusteeship to the Public Trustee in 1952. The Treasury, in 1955, took up the matter with the Public Trustee and were referred to the Brisbane congregation. About this time, a Protestant Church (not the Lutherans, who had bought the synagogue and land) launched a claim on these funds, on the grounds that they believed "they were the natural and legal successors to the Toowoomba Hebrew Congregation, as a senior member thereof had married one of our lady parishioners some years ago." That claim was not supported. The treasury officers were invited to the synagogue, where they were shown the minute book entry in which it was recorded that, in 1886, the Toowoomba Trustees met with those of the Brisbane Congregation, when the former stated they proposed to sell the Toowoomba synagogue and remit the proceeds to the Brisbane Synagogue Building Fund.<sup>61</sup> (The Brisbane Synagogue was being built at that time.) Much as the money would have been useful for that project, the Brisbane Trustees prevailed upon the troubled Toowoomba Trustees to continue to attempt to rally their flock and to seek to enlarge it by attracting migrants from interstate and overseas. The opposite occurred and families continued to emigrate from there.

The Treasury decided to remit the capital and interest of that Loan to the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation on the basis of a marble plaque in the Brisbane Synagogue which reads, *inter alia*, that "Behr Raphael Lewin ... was the first Jew who carried a Torah scroll across the Ranges for the purpose of installing public worship at Toowoomba where he helped largely to found and sustain the synagogue erected there ...." Upon reading these words, the senior treasury official present exclaimed: "I have never before encountered a more valid claim! Here, in this sacred precinct, is a permanent record, inscribed in marble, of this Congregation's efforts to establish your sister Congregation in Toowoomba." The funds were duly remitted to the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

## THE FINAL YEARS

Still more efforts were made to revive the flagging Toowoomba Congregation, even after the attempt in 1940. More trips were undertaken during the Second World War (1939-45) and in the several years immediately thereafter by Norman Ravdell, then Senior Trustee, with the late Leslie Benjamin and several others, including





*The Beautifully Engraved Plaque to the memory of B.R. Raphael.*

Rev Wolman, who left in 1946. However, these efforts did not meet with any greater success, and the Toowoomba congregation even faced the problem of the missionary activities of a Mr Schwartz.

About 1954, I arrived at the Brisbane Synagogue on a Sabbath morning to find a large stranger in the entry porch. He was talking to some of our children to whom he had given missionary tracts. I promptly returned them to him, while I left nothing unsaid. He stated that he was "the offside to Mr Schwartz, the Russian Jewish



Messianic Missionary of Toowoomba,” and that “Schwartz has converted some descendants of the old Jewish Congregation there.” Inside, I recognised Schwartz as the dealer through whom my father-in-law purchased our fine old Three Crown Rönisch piano from an elderly English widow, the lady with an unfortunate name! (See my “Bondi Jewry”, *Journal XI*, 1992 page 655). I made it clear they were unwelcome and they left peacefully. I did not hear from this missionary again, though his evangelistic program, emanating from a Toowoomba radio station, continued to be transmitted for several more years.

It can therefore be seen that by the immediate postwar period the Toowoomba community had totally disintegrated. The various efforts made by the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation during the 1940s to resurrect the congregation had failed.

### **A PILGRIMAGE TO HONOUR THE FORMER CONGREGATION**

In 1986 the Brisbane congregation held a series of commemorative functions and services, to mark the centenary of its synagogue. Included in these was a pilgrimage to pay respect to the former Toowoomba congregation. On 1 June 1986 about 40 people made the trip to Toowoomba. They were led by Rabbi R. Apple, senior minister of the Great Synagogue of Sydney and, at the time, president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. With Rev. Asher Dobelsky, minister of the Brisbane Congregation, he first recited prayers by the former site of the Toowoomba synagogue. Later, in the Jewish section at the Toowoomba - Drayton Cemetery, the Rabbi unveiled a bronze plaque (see photo) reading as follows:- “This plaque was unveiled in 1986 on the Centenary of the consecration of the Brisbane Synagogue. It commemorates the laying of the foundation stone of the first Synagogue in Queensland on 3 August 1875, at 77 Neil Street Toowoomba, which was consecrated in July, 1876.” The Rabbi then led a brief service, suitably addressed the gathering and made some presentations. Alderman Clive Berghofer, Mayor of Toowoomba, responded on behalf of the people of his city. Also present were the grandsons of the late Henry Spiro, one of the founders of the Toowoomba Synagogue.

The gathering was held on the initiative of Lance Phillips, then president of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation, and myself, Morris Ochert, honorary life member of the Board and the Society’s Queensland Correspondent, with considerable co-operation from Mayor Clive Berghofer and Ron Douglas of the Toowoomba Historical Society. It was hoped to affix the plaque onto a small plinth in a





*Rabbi R. Apple, Rev. A. Dobelsky and Clive Berghofer, Mayor of Toowoomba, at the grave of Henry Spiro, 1986.*



*Bronze Plaque unveiled at Toowoomba cemetery in 1986.*



corner of the Lutheran Church grounds. In reply to our request to do so, the Church Elders wrote stating that they "realised the significance of the site being the site of the first Synagogue in Queensland and we understand the interest ... in connection with the centenary celebrations ...". They "would be most happy for our community to view this site.... you will be pleased to know and see that the outline of the foundations ... can be seen through the lawn ...". The final paragraph repeats that they would be happy for us "to view this historic site at the time of your celebrations," and concludes by calling attention to the historical material they enclosed "which might be of interest". However, their penultimate paragraph states: "We would not favour, however, the placing of a plaque on this site ... now the site of a Christian congregation, where worship is directed to Almighty God, through Jesus Christ, whom we honour as Messiah, the Son of God and our Saviour."

In a phone call in which I gently remonstrated with the Chairman of Elders on this ruling, I pointed out that the plaque was tiny; that we hoped to place it in a corner next to the footpath where it could not be an obstruction; that we worship the Almighty in the manner of those who founded monotheism and the concept of one only, spiritual Deity; that the World Lutheran Congress had directed all Lutherans to maintain brotherly relations with our faith; that their co-operation could reflect only credit upon their Church and that we asked that the matter be reconsidered - there were still seven months in which to discuss their decree. The gentleman remained as courteous in this conversation as he was in his letter, except that, when I suggested that we could at least assemble on the lawn (prior to placing the plaque elsewhere) for a few minutes of prayer, he introduced a further additional and annoying restriction. Our prayers were not to be said upon their grounds! At that stage, it became obvious that nothing was to be gained from further discussion.

It transpired, from enquiries made of churchmen and other competent spokesman in Toowoomba that, (and I quote from a letter) "this insularity and intolerance persists in the ultra-conservative Lutheran Clergy of Toowoomba. They are good citizens, hard working, courteous, have been pioneer stock and they stick together and present a united front. But their archaic attitudes and 'tunnel vision' can be most frustrating. Their young people are moving away from these adamant stances." I give many lectures to Lutheran High Schools and Colleges and at their University Society and encounter no such attitudes as that which is reported above. In Brisbane, their pastors and teachers tell me there is a ready acceptance of the Declaration of the World Lutheran Federation of July 1983 (held on Luther's 500th



birthday) which emphatically rejected and repudiated Luther's antisemitic stance.

## THE CEMETERY

Drayton was the name of an early town which pre-dated Toowoomba. It was once recorded as "the capital of the Darling Downs." Today it is a suburb of Toowoomba, by which it was engulfed. The Drayton-Toowoomba Cemetery is a large area but no date can be ascertained as to when it was first so used. The Cemetery Trust, on becoming bankrupt about 1988, handed over the Cemetery to the Toowoomba City Council. They believe that it dates back to "about 1860".

There are 44 graves in the Jewish Section plus one unregistered grave, that of Susan Phillips, referred to below, making a total of 45. There could be more, which have not been registered. Eighteen monuments can clearly be discerned, but pieces of masonry are scattered about and these probably were once part of monuments which have fallen apart and no longer have headstones. Beverley Davis, the honorary secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society of Victoria has extensively researched all known Jewish burial sites in Australia and she holds the data for the Toowoomba cemetery.

A burial of some interest was that of David Hyman Karmel (KSIENSKY), formerly of England and Canada, born 23 November 1925. He had been living in Brisbane and had travelled to Toowoomba to seek work. Apparently he lost his footing while visiting Picnic Point, one of the look-outs on the eastern escarpment, and fell to his death, hundreds of feet below. The coroner deduced that this occurred about 8 May 1954, but the body was not immediately found, so that burial did not take place until 22 November. Rabbi A. Fabian proceeded there and decided that, in the circumstances, burial should take place promptly in Toowoomba rather than in Brisbane. The relatives provided a monument and it was consecrated by Rabbi Fabian.

About 1955 I visited the cemetery and found that long grass and weeds had overgrown the monuments, many of which were in a poor state of repair. Having been the technical officer of the Brisbane *Chevra Kadisha* since about 1950, I decided to extend my responsibilities to all Jewish burial grounds in Queensland. I found an elderly Jewish couple in Toowoomba, Percy and Ann Morris<sup>62</sup> who had not long before arrived from England and who obtained quotes for masonry repairs which were paid for by the Brisbane *Chevra*. They mowed the area for many years, till a younger family took over, Mr and Mrs L. Rother and their sons, from USA.



This Jewish Section is included in the "Heritage Trail", prepared by the local Heritage Authority, of places of historical interest. The City Council proposes to erect a bronze plaque alongside that unveiled in the 1986 pilgrimage. Small stones are frequently found on the monuments, no doubt placed by Jewish tourists. It is a universal Jewish way of saying "I have been here to visit you and I am adding to your monument."

A Toowoomba death certificate has been found, which states that, in the Drayton Jewish Cemetery, "an unregistered burial" was conducted. This predated the commencement of the cemetery register and the location of the grave is unknown. It was of Susan Phillips, who died on 27 July 1866, aged 31, after "a long and severe illness that is Preperal Fever." (In those days, this illness claimed the lives of many pregnant women.) She was born in Scotland, the daughter of Joseph Moses, a sea captain, and "was resident in the Colony for 18 years." Her husband was Jacob Aaron Phillips, a publican aged 36, the seventh child of Barnard Aaron Phillips, who arrived in Sydney with his family in 1833 on the *West Moreland*. They married in Mudgee, NSW, when she was 18. Her children were Eve 11, Joseph 10, Michael 8, Hannah 6, Clara 4, Bernard 2, Aaron 1 month.

The eldest son of the above Barnard Aaron Phillips - Charles Aaron Phillips, also a publican, 46 years, died on 13 December 1867 and was buried in the Toowoomba Cemetery on 14 December 1867. His tombstone records his name as "Saul" and not Charles, although this could have been his Hebrew name and the year "5678" should read "5628" - no doubt the "2" looks like a "7" due to age. A third member of the Phillips family - the thirteenth child of Barnard Aaron Phillips, Eve - born 1839 - married the partner of Henry Spiro, namely Samuel Benjamin, in Sydney in 1860.

Jacob Aaron Phillips subsequently married Sarah Matthew-Newton in Brisbane in 1871 and there were 6 children from this second marriage. He died in Brisbane in August 1893 following his diving to retrieve a valuable collection in the basement of his hotel, The Grand Hotel, Mary Street, Brisbane, flooded by the disastrous 1893 flood.

Jacob Aaron Phillips had opened the Post Office Hotel, Toowoomba in 1864 and after moving to Brisbane operated the Queens Hotel, Australian Hotel, Sovereign Hotel, Royal Hotel and the Osborne Hotel, Sandgate at different times. He was also noted as having been the caterer for the first Queensland Exhibition, and opened the first Refreshment Rooms at the Brisbane Railway Station.

The sixteenth child of Barnard Aaron Phillips, - Isaac Aaron Phillips - born 1844 -operated the Metropolitan Hotel, Edward & Mary Streets, from 1882 and was for many years among the leading





*Members of the Brisbane Chevra Kadisha, (The Sacred Society) at the Toowoomba Jewish Cemetery. At left is George Stein, current President. Fifth from left is George Frey. Seventh from left is the late Lance Phillips, then president. At right is Morris Ochert, the writer of this essay.*



*The handsome black granite headstone over the grave of the late Dr. P. Guastalla.*



sporting men of Brisbane, treasurer of Tattersall's Club and the Licensed Victuallers' Association and an enthusiastic advocate and supporter of everything appertaining to sport.

The cemetery records show that the following ministers and lay leaders conducted funerals in the Jewish Cemetery: Rev. S.A. Goldstein (1876), Henry Spiro (1875), T. St J. Pugh (1893), E. Caspar (1896/97), T. Warham (1900), I. Abrahams (1901), N. Bentwich (1902), I. Ziemann (1903), H.G. Bloom (1906/08), Rev. A.P. Phillips (1908), I. Abrahams (1914), Rev. H.L. Friedlander (1919/23), Rev. N. Levine (1932), Rev. I. Wolman (1946), Rabbi A. Fabian (1954), G. Frey (1993), S. List (1994). It is obvious that the officiant's name was not always recorded. T.St.J. Pugh was an Anglican Minister. Warham was a funeral director, who also was not Jewish. It is irregular to call upon a non-Jewish officiant, which was probably done in the absence of any congregant prepared to conduct a funeral.

Percy Morris, referred to elsewhere as the man who kindly helped me with the maintenance of the cemetery, passed away in October 1993. A *minyan* of men from Brisbane travelled to Toowoomba to perform the *Tahara* (preparation of the departed before burial) and the funeral, which was conducted by George Frey.

In August of the following year, Dr Peter Brutus Guastalla died. He had devoted his long life to surgery and was a leading obstetrician - gynaecologist, having delivered many thousands of babies during his years in Toowoomba. His long career extended back to his service in Europe and at sea. His will provided for a memorial in the Australian JNF's *Keren Maharat* Memorial Forest, which was recently unveiled by his widow. The *Chevre Kadisha* (The Sacred Society, a body of people who attend to such matters) again proceeded to Toowoomba to give final rites to the departed. S. List officiated. Subsequently, they travelled there again for the consecration of the two monuments. Attention is called to the impressive headstone over the grave of Dr Guastalla, the inscription on which includes the whole of the Memorial Prayer "*El Molè Rachamim*" ("O God, who art full of compassion ...")

### WHY DID IT DISINTEGRATE?

Almost from its first days, not only were the numbers of menfolk inadequate to ensure the viability of Toowoomba's congregation and its facilities, but the number of womenfolk who migrated there was far less. Left behind in Europe were the women who should have been the wives, the mothers, the home-makers of Toowoomba Jewry. Without them, a traditional, vibrant Jewish community could not be sustained. Thus, few marriages were solemnised under the *chuppa*



(marriage canopy), few children were born into the faith<sup>63</sup> and therefore it was, at most times, an aging community. The birth-rate amongst the Jewish people, was below average. As they could see no future, they aimed for no future.

Frequently, in many places, an infusion of Jewish men from "the Old World" has led to the establishment of a solid congregation but without a similar number of women, many fall by the wayside. My father told me that many a Jewish man who went to "the New World" (including Australia) planned to work hard, living on the smell of an oil rag, and, when he had made his fortune, he would send for his family or his girlfriend. It often did not work out so well! A fortune may take longer to amass than one anticipates and, in that time, good intentions were often forgotten or found to be impossible to achieve. Propinquity can play a part, or marriage to a "local" girl and the establishment of a "local" family may prove to be more achievable alternatives. The filial and spiritual piety of others did not even survive the sea voyage. *Siddurim*, *machzorim*, *tephillim*, *yarmelkas* even family photos were wrapped in their tallit and discarded through the porthole of the steerage class accommodation. New World, New Life, here I come!"

The story of a notable exception should be recorded here, for in no other way will this touching account be remembered. Isaac Hillel Hillman reached Brisbane from Latvia about 1885, just before the synagogue was built. He worked as a plumber, gaining local experience and hard-earned capital. He then sent for his younger brother Sigmund and his childhood sweetheart whom he married. Then they went to Townsville where the brothers set up a plumbing contracting workshop. Even at the age of 80, Hillel still worked on roofs. His wife and brother died long ago. He did all he could to maintain his religion in his isolation, even preparing matzot and kosher wine, observing Sabbath and the Jewish festivals and all possible commandments. When he was 91 he moved to Brisbane and was overjoyed to attend the synagogue and Jewish functions. When introduced to Mordechai Nurock, one of the early Ministers of Israel in Australia, he said. "Your Excellency, when I left Latvia I never thought I would meet the Ambassador of Israel!" This proud and humble little man was a joy to know. Shortly before his death, it was Passover and I brought him some *matzo* (unleavened bread) and wine in hospital.<sup>64</sup> He could take nothing by mouth, but he held them while we recited parts of the *Haggadah*.<sup>65</sup> At 96 he passed away and was buried in the Toowong Cemetery, "with my own people", as he had requested. I recently acquired his *kiddush kos*<sup>66</sup> and *deikun yayin*,<sup>67</sup> and have placed them on display, with a brief account of his life, in Sinai College, our new Jewish Day School. None of his



children married within the faith despite their parents' dedication. The point of this story is that, even with the greatest of good intentions and love for our Faith, it is difficult for Judaism to survive for long, in a vacuum. It does not often thrive in isolation. Not for nothing did the Psalmist say "Separate not thyself from the Congregation."

Though Brisbane is a small community, we find that, in a mixed-faiths couple, the non-Jewish partner tends to convert to Judaism and sometimes becomes more observant than is the partner born to Judaism. However, it seems that, in the tiny Toowoomba community, most of the non-Jewish partners saw no point in becoming Jewish as there was insufficient Jewish socio-religious activity to attract them. The resulting marriages would bring an end to a Jewish "dynasty".

I reported that congregants tended to leave as soon as they had the means to settle elsewhere, that few new people arrived, that Jewish social activities were rare, that morale was low and that intermarriage, indifference, apathy and assimilation characterised the congregation.

Finally, there is the subject of leadership. Leaders are born, not made by being elected at an annual meeting. The congregation was indeed fortunate that, initially, leaders like the Benjamins, Spiro, Simonson, Lehmann, Lewin and Casper strode forward with the ability, the will, and the means to launch the congregation. When, just after that was achieved, Henry Spiro died and the Benjamins and others left for various reasons, and a financial depression caused great problems, no-one seems to have had the motivation or the ability to pick up the pieces. As stated earlier in this report, as early as 1886 the Trustees considered the liquidation of their assets in favour of the Brisbane congregation. No one wanted to be at the helm of a sinking ship. No one wanted to preside over the congregation's disintegration!

## **DOWN'S' PERSONALITIES**

This section gives details of several Jewish personalities of Toowoomba and the Downs.

### **HENRY SPIRO**

As discussed above, one of the pioneer Jewish people of Toowoomba was Henry Spiro. He was born in Posen, Prussia, in October 1839. He commenced business in Ipswich in 1861, came to Toowoomba in 1863 and operated as a storekeeper and financier. He also owned a soap factory. He was twice elected to be Mayor of





*Henry Spiro*

Toowoomba, served several years as a Town Councillor and was a Magistrate, all at a very early age. From all records, he carried out these duties with skill and integrity. His partner in business, and in the establishment of the Synagogue, was Samuel Benjamin. Spiro became ill in 1874 and experienced great financial hardship, mainly because he extended credit with a too-liberal hand, during the long depression of the 1860s and 1870s. He died at the early age of "36 years and two months" on 10 December 1876, as inscribed on his monument. The press at that time stated that he died at 37 years, but the inscription on his monument must surely be correct. His monument was erected by a group of friends.

Spiro was famed for his dedication to his family and to his congregation. It was his selflessness which probably caused his bankruptcy and brought about the collapse of his business and this no doubt contributed to his early death. The history of his congregation would surely read very differently, had his life span been more in the order of "three score years and ten", or, by reason of strength, four score years."<sup>68</sup>

The Darling Downs Gazette recorded that "he became a by-word for generous, honest dealing" and quoted another obituary to the effect that "Mr Spiro possessed a large amount of natural ability and was a clear-headed financier. There are many successful businessmen in Toowoomba who owe their start to his assistance ..." He was also referred to as "the pillar and plinth of the Toowoomba Synagogue."<sup>69</sup>

### **ALFRED SPIRO**

A sailing vessel, the *Ly-Ee-Moon*, ran aground at Green Cape, north of Cape Howe on 30 May 1886 en route from Melbourne to



Brisbane. Amongst the 75 persons who drowned was Alfred Spiro, 17 years of age, son of the late Henry Spiro.

### **BEHR RAPHAEL LEWIN**

Behr Raphael Lewin was born in Lobsens, Prussia, in 1828. He reached Melbourne in 1848 and followed the occupation of photography, both there and in the country. He moved to Toowoomba in 1859, soon after Queensland's separation and witnessed the first parliamentary election in that city. In 1862 he opened a "general business" (probably storekeeping) in Roma.

Lewin brought a Sefer Torah on horseback, up the Main Range to Toowoomba, to enable public worship. This would have been in the early 1870s, because the Australian Israelite recorded, in 1872, that "about 30 men assembled for worship there during the High Festivals led by Messrs. Lewin and Benjamin. Offerings totalled 20 guineas and were for the purchase of a Sefer Torah". This would have been their second Torah scroll.

Behr Lewin visited Europe from 1875 to 1877 and then settled in Brisbane where he proved a great acquisition to that congregation. The *Brisbane Telegraph* stated that he "largely interested himself in wool and colonial produce". The *Telegraph* also recorded that Lewin was an uncle of A.M. Hertzberg, referred to elsewhere in this report, who was connected with Lewin in business for 16 years.

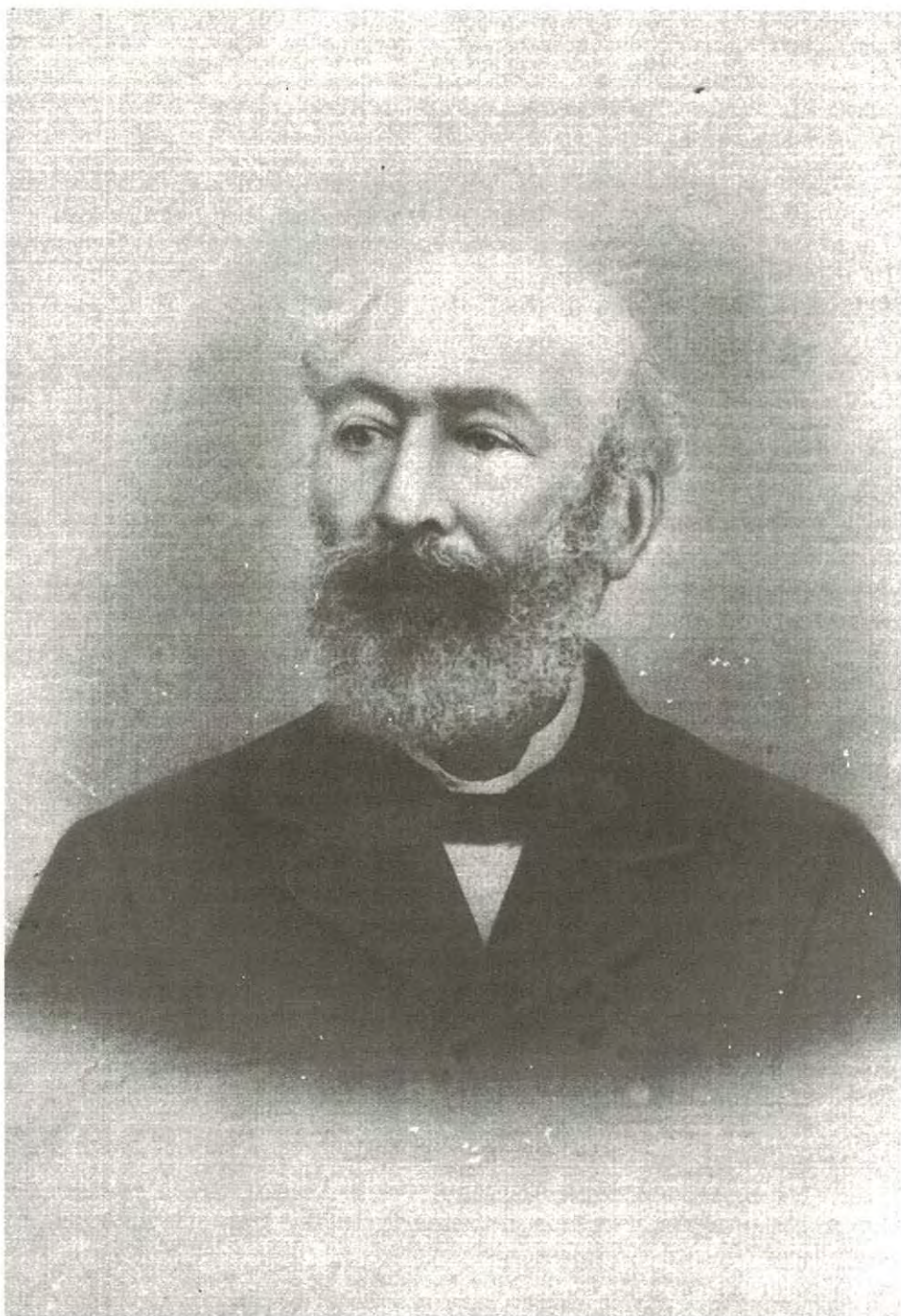
After three years of failing health, during which he had to relinquish his business activities, he passed away on 3 April 1897 and was interred in the Toowong Jewish cemetery.

### **GEORGE GERSHON MOCATTA 1815-1893**

George Mocatta is included in this report as a Jewish pioneer of the Darling Downs. On that area he made a great impact. Though he is not recorded as having ever resided in Toowoomba, he no doubt travelled there from time to time, mainly to procure supplies for his cattle stations. On the Downs he was a squatter, selector and pioneer agriculturalist and one would not imagine he had much time to spare for life in the towns.

He left Queensland in 1856, well before the Toowoomba congregation came together in the early 1870s. Some Jewish people may have been in that state prior to George's arrival, but he is the earliest of whom I have found a record. This is a very condensed account, as his life was thoroughly reported upon by Dr. George Bergman in a Journal of this Society.<sup>70</sup> Also, I have passed on to the Society the wide - ranging essays by Lady Mack and Capt. Robson





*George Gershon Mocatta*<sup>71</sup>



RN, both descendants of George Mocatta. More data is in the library of the University of Queensland, in the Oxley Library and the Dictionary of Biographies.

George was born in London in 1815, youngest son of Daniel Mocatta.<sup>72</sup> There have been many marriages between members of the influential and wealthy Sephardi families of Mocatta and Montefiore and the Ashkanazi dynasty of the Rothschilds. My considerable research on The Montefiore-Rothschilds of Queensland, with a quantity, which had come into my hands, of archives, books, photos and memorabilia of these families, was all sent by Dr George Bergman (then Editor of this Journal) to the Mocatta Archives in London. (This was the repository of a vast quantity of Anglo-Jewish history, but suffered great damage in the air-raids of the Second War.) It was passed over to the University of Southampton Library in 1990.

In 1829 George reached Sydney aged only 15, with his sister Rebecca Mocatta, her husband Joseph Barrow Montefiore and their children. Joseph was to become president of the first Sydney Hebrew Congregation. After working for Joseph while acquiring an education, George went to Northern New South Wales. In his early 20s, he already established and managed sheep and cattle selections. Dr George Bergman wrote that he was the only Jewish squatter who expanded his agricultural interests on a large scale. It is extraordinary to note that, single-handed, and without prior experience, this young man built up a pastoral empire despite strikes by recalcitrant shearers, shepherds and stockmen who often decamped with livestock and equipment or who were attacked by aborigines. He had to survive droughts, bushfires, floods, diseases of sheep and cattle and depressions. Bushrangers caused great problems and twice he requested the permanent stationing of mounted police on his selections. After years in the outback of New South Wales, he moved on to Queensland making a spectacular cattle-drive with 1,600 head of cattle in only 12 weeks, from Sydney.

Many of his Queensland runs were in the Darling Downs area, mainly around Dalby which is about 60 miles west of Toowoomba. Most of his properties still bear the names he gave them. Some selections have become towns, such as "Gaynda" (now Gayndah) and Grantham. Mocatta's Corner is an obscure railway village on the Dalby-Bell line. A peak on the Great Divide is named Mt. Mocatta. He also established a small agriculture empire in the Burnett River District.

George Mocatta's career was a long procession of harsh challenges. He found that "migrant workers from the British Isles were even more trouble than the assigned convict labourers." It was often hard to keep employees on his stations for they were understandably



fearful of the mutilations and murders inflicted by marauding aboriginals. Chinese migrants were tried, but were no more successful except that they were useful for growing vegetables. He then employed Germans who seemed to keep the problem in check. George was appalled later, to find that they were simply shooting any Aboriginal who came onto the property.

In 1856 he disposed of all his Queensland holdings except Myall Creek Station, and returned to Sydney. His isolation in the outback had caused him to lose touch with Judaism and this probably accounts for his marrying outside of his faith. In Sydney he engaged in commerce, but early in the 1860s the family went to France. Then he took up a cattle ranch in New Zealand. On his return to Australia he found the economy was suffering from a crippling drought and depression. The overseer whom he had left in charge of Myall Creek Station "had sold the livestock and moveables and cleared out with the cash." He wrote to a friend in North Queensland, seeking employment for his son Houlton. In 1891 he wrote to that son, expressing anxiety about the course and probable outcome "of the violent shearers' strike." This insurrection led to the formation of the Australian Labour Party.

In 1893 he was recorded as a "ship broker". I feel that his should have read "ship's chandler", that is selling ships' stores, rather than a "ship broker" who buys and sells vessels. He passed away in 1893 and his non-Jewish family had him buried in an Anglican cemetery. No minister officiated. Despite that great fortunes must have passed through his hands, he left only £143. This indicates how great were the problems of an agricultural entrepreneur in the times in which he worked in the outback.

Dr Bergman ascertained that no member of the Mocatta family in Australia is Jewish. I have contacted descendants in Brisbane and Dalby, who are proud of their Jewish ancestry and maintain contact with some of their distinguished Jewish relatives in England. As reported above, they are keen on researching the life of their pioneering ancestor.

### **ADOLPHUS MARCUS HERTZBERG**

Adolphus M. Hertzberg was born in 1852 in Prussia. He came to Queensland in 1867 at the age of 15 at the suggestion of his uncle, R.B. Lewin of Roma, Toowoomba and Brisbane. The Cafe de Paris, owned by J. Lenneberg (a distant relation) was the first roof under which he slept in Brisbane. He then travelled to Roma by coach, except between Ipswich and Helidon when he travelled by train. That was the only rail link at that time, as Brisbane was only



connected into the railway system some years later. The Oxley Library records that this was only one aspect of a running battle between various bitterly opposing factions. Each of these had its widely divergent reasons for wanting Queensland's capital to be either in Brisbane or in Ipswich or Toowoomba or Gayndah or Grantchester. Some of these opposing groups were Catholics versus Anglicans, English stock versus continental migrants, German migrants versus those from other areas, industrialists versus pastoralists and Irish migrants versus the rest. En route, he stayed with members of the early Toowoomba congregation for a month.

It is recorded that "Roma was a wild-west town in those days. Adolphus worked for his uncle, initially as a boy-labourer at a wage of five shillings a week plus food and clothing. He slept on the floor. He rose to be a highly regarded partner of the firm."

Hertzberg led a busy life. He joined a band as a flautist and joined a dramatic company of which H. Benjamin (of Toowoomba) was a member. In 1873, when he was only 21 years old, he became an alderman of Roma. He was a foundation member of the Bungil Shire Council. He assisted in the formation of the Raphael Masonic Lodge. He served on hospital committees and presided on the Bench as a Justice of the Peace. He married Miss Cohen of the Clarence River District, in 1886. Her father was a pioneer of that District. After his marriage he moved to Brisbane where he founded the firm which he led for the remainder of his life.

Hertzberg became a leading citizen of Brisbane and was involved in a variety of organisations. He was the government representative on the General Hospital Board from 1902, president of the Chamber of Commerce for three terms, a member of the Water and Sewerage Board from 1905, one of the first Senators of the University of Queensland and a foundation member of the Rhodes Scholarship Committee. He was president, for over 16 years of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation and maintained close contact with the Toowoomba congregation over many years. He was Grand Master of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Queensland for many years. He passed away in 1917.

## HENRY BLOOM

Henry Samuel Bloom, who was one of the lay ministers of the Toowoomba congregation, was born at Serady, Poland. He was a leading resident of Murphy's Creek, where the store he founded still functions. He was the father of 11 children. He was awarded a medal by the British Government for Crimean War Service at the Battle of Balaclava.



**JACOB HOROVITZ, M.L.A. FOR WARWICK, QLD**

Dr Duncan Waterson has extensively researched the life of the above and much detail is available in his book *Squatter, Selector and Storekeeper*, which was reviewed in the Society's Newsletter Vol 1, No 3 of Dec, 1969. Briefly, Horovitz was born about 1830 in East Prussia. He arrived in Australia in 1851 with his two brothers. Initially they ran a successful store on the Victorian goldfields and then they moved to Queensland where they operated the Exchange Store in Warwick. Jacob operated the Warwick Flour Mills from 1874 to 1886. He established, and later sold, his large farm at Swan Creek. He donated liberally to the Warwick Hospital and a ward there was named after him. He was successful in his many enterprises which included farming, financing, real estate and the sale of farmers' produce. As mayor (1876-1878) and as the MLA for Warwick (1878-87) he attained great popularity, particularly as a result of his support for the building of roads and bridges. Jacob was a dedicated member of the Jewish congregation of Toowoomba, which is 84 kilometres to the north of Warwick. In 1918 three brothers returned to Poland and Jacob died in Berlin on 24 March, 1920.

**SIMON ZIEMAN**

Simon, also known as Simeon Zieman came from Prussia. He lived at St George, where he was a storekeeper with his brother Lewis. Another brother, Julius, also "a native of Prussia" migrated to Australia and lived in Ipswich. In 1893 Julius conducted services at the Toowoomba synagogue.<sup>73</sup> Julius died in November 1905 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Toowong, Brisbane.

The *Australian Israelite*<sup>74</sup> reported that the brothers Simeon and Lewis Zieman were general storekeepers in St George and Toowoomba, Simeon being in charge of the latter. He was highly respected there. In the Prussian army he had received three medals for distinguished services in the campaign against Austria in 1866.

On 21 November 1871 Simon was murdered at the age of 29 beside the Gunda Gunda Creek, near Waroo Station. *The Examiner and Times of Warwick*<sup>75</sup> reported, inter alia, that Simeon had made an offer of £700 for cattle, on a visit to Tartella Station and that this was overheard by Collins, an ex-convict, recently released from St Helena Prison. In his confession to this crime, Patrick Collins, a farm labourer, told his grim tale with dramatic simplicity:

I overheard the conversation in Mr Beckett's room on the night of the 20th November (1871); I thought Zieman had money



upon him, and I being only recently out of trouble, and having been well robbed in gaol, resolved upon having money somehow, and therefore determined upon taking Zieman's; I met him near the end of the waterhole; I presented the pistol which I had taken from W. Beckett's bedroom and concealed in my shirt on the morning of the 21st; it had a cap on it; it was not loaded; I ordered Zieman to stand; he got off his horse by my direction; I ordered him to the water's edge, where Sgt. Downey found the head of the whip; he turned his trouser pockets inside out; he took off his coat and vest and gave them to me; I took out the watch and put it in my pocket; just as I was doing this, Zieman said, "Collins this is the worst day's work ever you did;" he made a run and I ran after him; I hit him with the pistol; he caught me by the trousers leg and pulled me into the water; I used the pistol again until I had killed him; I thought I would make a clean job of it; I took the saddle and bridle off the horse, led him into the water, and tried to hamstring him with the knife Sgt. Downey got at Surat; he swam right across; I put the bridle and saddle in the natural hole mentioned by Sgt. Downey; I put the watch, knife and pipe in the glove and put it in the log where it was found; I did not know that the cheque was unsigned until Mrs. Cavanaugh told me so; I threw that cheque and pocket book down the W.C. at Macalister's Hotel; I alone committed the deed and no one else knew anything about it; poor Shannon McGovern is as innocent as a child.

Signed Patrick Collins

The *Brisbane Courier*<sup>76</sup> stated that Collins was a huge and powerful man and, during his trial he made an attempt to escape from the Court and was restrained only with difficulty. Collins was sentenced to death and executed 29 May 1872 at the Brisbane Gaol.

The *Toowoomba Chronicle* described Simon Zieman's funeral as follows:

Simon Zieman's remains were interred in the Jewish portion of the Toowoomba Cemetery. Great interest was exhibited by the general public in the whole of the proceedings. The principal places of business were closed during the progress of the procession from the Masonic Hall<sup>77</sup> to the Cemetery, and the footpaths in Russell Street were crowded with spectators. The procession was headed by the Brethren of the two Lodges, the hearse containing the body coming next and the vehicles conveying the friends of the deceased gentleman bringing up



the rear. A large number of horsemen also assisted in the procession. At the grave the Jewish service was read by Mr S. Benjamin, after which the body was interred according to Masonic formula.

Another Zeiman brother had lost his life in the bush some years before. While searching for missing horses in the Bogan-Logan River area, he lost his way and died of exhaustion and starvation.

### FREDERICK ISAAC

Frederick Isaac was a Jewish squatter on the Darling Downs after whom the explorer, Dr Ludwig Leichhardt, named the Isaac River in 1845 "in recognition of Isaac's kind support." He was the son of a wealthy banker, George Isaac, of Worcester and a nephew of two British ministers of parliament.

### ADDENDUM

Early in this manuscript I wrote that no archives of the congregation had survived - no correspondence, documents, notices or minutes books, could be found. Not long after concluding it, I was in touch with a Toowoomba gentleman in relation to the condition of his family's monument in the cemetery there. He advised me that his father had been the last trustee of the congregation and that, some years after his father's death he had given a bundle of papers relevant to the congregation to the University of Southern Queensland (in Toowoomba). The librarian there will not release them, nor allow them to be photocopied, but assisted a local Jewish lady (the niece of the late Percy Morris, who died there a few years ago) to make a precis. There was little therein which needs to be added to what I have already submitted.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- *The Toowoomba Chronicle*
- *The Darling Downs Gazette* (out of publication since 1922)
- *The Queenslander* (out of publication since 1939)
- *The Australian Israelite*
- Toowoomba Historical Society (Dr Ian Gibson, President and Researcher, Mr Ron Douglas).
- Researchers Prof. R.B. Waterson and Messrs W. Sullivan and R.A. Dansie.
- Minutes of Board of Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.



- The late Norman Ravdell, Trustee and President of Brisbane Congregation.
- Officers of the Australian Jewish Historical Society including Mr M.Z. Forbes, Louise Rosenberg. Dr S. Rutland, Helen Bersten.
- Beverley Davis of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Jewish Historical Society.
- Colin Sheehan, Chief of the Oxley Library
- Dennis Cleary, Sec. of the Queensland Place Names Board
- Capt. C. Robson R.N. and Lady Ida Mack, descendants and researchers of George Mocatta. (*The Robson Chronicles*)
- The Toowoomba City Council
- Dr Max Brandel, Director of the Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Queensland
- Mary Hollis of the Darling Downs Historical Society
- Frank Robinson of Toowoomba City Council
- "Jews of Toowoomba" by Rev. I. Wolman. (See *Journal* of this Society)
- "History of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation". (See *Journals* of this Society) by Morris S. Ochert.
- Lance Phillips who, at the time of the pilgrimage to Toowoomba was president of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation, who organised that pilgrimage. He was the Great Grandson of Henry Bloom, referred to in this manuscript.

## NOTES

1. My "History of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation" was printed serially in this Society's *Journal* IX Part 6, *Journal* IX Part 7 and *Journal* X Part 1. References in that Brisbane History to matters in this Toowoomba report can be located by turning to the notes, where the page is indicated, for example Note 26.
2. *Barmitzvah* (Hebrew) "Son of the Commandments". The ceremony set for a boy on attaining the age of 13. After this, he is to be held responsible for all his acts, no longer being regarded as an "infant" whose parents must be blamed for his breaches of the Commandments.
3. *Sefer Torah*. (Hebrew) "Book or Scroll of the Law", ie. the Five Books of Moses (Pentateuch) which contain all of Mosaic Law in its original form. *Sifrei Torah* (the plural form) are essential in Jewish Religious Services.
4. Every Jewish Congregation takes a "Spiritual Name" when it is founded. For instance, on the facade of the Brisbane Synagogue are the words *Kehilla Kedosha Sha-ari Emuna* - "The Holy Congregation of the Gates of Faith." At the time of the opening of the Toowoomba Synagogue, the press used the transliterations "*Beth Yisroel*", "*Beth Ysrael*" and "*Beth Yesrael*" that is "The House of Israel".



5. The words "up the Main Range to Toowoomba" conveys nothing of the effort which that would have entailed. Having travelled over rough gravel roads to the foot of the Range, the daunting task of climbing the Toll Bar would still be ahead. The following, extracted from the *Darling Downs Gazette* of November 1861 will give some picture of this massive obstacle. It described the great bullock wagons, carrying tons of freight, toiling up the slope, each with ten or twelve bullocks; sometimes, when progress was impossible the bullocks of two wagons would be coupled, one wagon being left behind and subsequently hauled up the "pinch" in the same manner; that the combined strength of over 20 animals sometimes caused the drag chains to snap so that the entire wagon would get away downhill smashing all in its headlong path. It tells of the "bullockies" with their huge whips, "shouting profanities, lurid comments and sundry oburgation" to "encourage" their beasts. The ascent could take a day and a half "so it was with relief that the toll-gate was reached, the dues paid .... and the little town of Toowoomba was seen nestling between its malodorous swamps." And it was a continuous challenge for, "during the past week 1,500 bullocks and 144 drays were camped at the back of the Royal Hotel." The view reproduced below shows the flattest section of the Toll Bar Road. To the right of the photo is the plant being used to first seal it. Picnic Point, referred to twice in this essay, is high at the top of this picture.
6. See later references to R.B. Lewin, who carried the first Sefer Torah up the range to Toowoomba, on horseback.
7. See Ochert, *Brisbane History*, Page 461
8. This compares with the cost of the very much larger Brisbane Synagogue, for which a total of £6,450 was raised from which £5,000 was disbursed for the building and the balance for seating, fittings, lightings etc.
9. Brisbane's first Minister was Rev Joseph E. Myers. He was replaced in the same year, ie. 1865, by his cousin the Rev Jonas Myer Myers, who remained for the rest of the century and would certainly have been the man who officiated at this ceremony. The name "Mr J.H. Mayer, a Jewish Clergyman of Brisbane" is an obvious error.
10. The elaborate service here described is not a standard procedure, but is that devised by the Masonic Craft and originates in the Old Testament.
11. This publication had a small circulation in the general period 1840 - 1880, in Melbourne. No copy has been located in Brisbane. The State Archivist understands it purported to be "interdenominational and dealt with writings of a Religious Philosophical Nature".
12. These were Queen Victoria and her Consort, Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha.
13. The expression "Queensland's FIRST Synagogue" is not entirely correct. Their building was the first to be built for use as a Synagogue. However, the Brisbane Congregation dedicated and utilised a number of premises as temporary Synagogues - ie. private homes and rented commercial premises, in the 21 years between the founding of the Congregation in 1865 and the dedication of its present Synagogue in 1886.
14. This was gas.
15. The Ten Commandments
16. these scrolls would be a Sefer Torah - see note 2.
17. "*Magen David*" (Hebrew) "Shield", not "Star" of David. The six-pointed symbol, formed by the intertwining of two isosceles triangles, was selected



by King David as his crest or symbol. It was emblazoned on his army's shields and flags and to this day remains on the national flag of Israel and is the most popular and recognised symbol of the Jewish People, Religion and State. Its significance, however, is lost in antiquity.

18. It is traditional, though not apparently mandatory, for the Reading Desk to be in the body of the Synagogue. This follows the Temple arrangement, where the prayers were offered "in the midst of the People." The raised stage referred to here as a "pulpit" is called the "*bimah*" that is "stage".
19. See architect's sketch.
20. This is wrongly spelt and should read "Mendelsohn". See note 21.
21. This couple is the subject of my manuscript - "Sali Mendelsohn, Balladeer" - in the Archives of the Aust. Jewish Historical Society.
22. Spiro's English was, understandably, not the best and the Newspaper should have amended the obvious errors. In the second sentence, the words "of setting" should have been changed to words such as "and acting upon." "Iron Mongery" should have been changed to "Ironmongery". The passage in German does not translate easily. For instance the expression "*lange Establrken*" (long established) was no longer used even in those days. "Kaufmann" presents problems. The German Department at the University of Queensland states it was a term used in Prussia at that time, for a "Hardware Store". They suggest that some Herr Kaufmann may have pioneered this type of hardware store and that this became a generic term for such an establishment. Similarly vacuum cleaners are widely called "Hoovers" after the inventor.
23. Bells form no part of Jewish wedding celebrations nor of synagogue architecture.
24. The word "Jubilee" originates from the Hebrew "YOBEL" - the ram's horn or shofar. It refers to the important Jewish festival of biblical times, proclaimed by the ram's horn every 50th year. This was the Year of Release when sins were remitted, slaves were to be freed and lands were restored to their original owners, etc. In English, the word's meaning has been extended to indicate any major anniversary. For instance a diamond, golden or silver "jubilee" signifies a sixtieth, fiftieth or twenty fifth anniversary, respectively. Queen Victoria's sixty year reign was known as "The Queen's Silver Jubilee".
25. Loyalty to the Sovereign and the State, in whatever land Jewish People may sojourn, is a principle of the Jewish Religion.
26. See Ochert, Brisbane History page 464
27. Ochert, Brisbane History page 458
28. The date of this picnic was not recorded. The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland made an assessment that, in view of the repeated references to horse transport, with only an incidental "Motor charabanc" that it would have been "in the earliest days of motor transport in country Queensland ie. about 1905."
29. The Toowoomba Historical Society has advised that it is believed that Picnic Point was so named by Carl Hartmann, a noted botanist who arrived from Leipzig about 1863. His extensive nurseries and orchards extended from Picnic Point to Alderley Street. Today, this is an area of beautiful garden suburbs, leading up to this popular recreation park. The Brisbane Congregants who participate in the 1986 "Pilgrimage", reported later, had lunch there.
30. "Char-a-banc" (French): a long open vehicle with rows of transverse seats.



31. "Minerals": an archaic expression for bottled mineral (effervescent) soft drinks such as Lemonade.
32. "Fell to". A quaint old English expression which indicates that they "attacked the food with gusto."
33. Same as *Barmitzvah*, see note 1.
34. As the *Barmitzvah* ceremony is almost always a part of the Sabbath (Saturday) morning Service, it follows that the picnic was on a Sunday.
35. "Manhood". A careful reading of Note (1) will indicate that it is NOT a ceremony which automatically progresses a boy into "manhood", despite widely-held misconceptions.
36. "fine la musica, fine la feste" (Italian): "When the music ceases, the festival has terminated."
37. "*Talmud Torah*" (Hebrew): "Learning of the Law", that is the Torah. A school of Jewish Religion and Hebrew language studies.
38. "*Punkah louvres*" (Indian) An Indian ventilation device, for circulating air, utilising rectangular canvas fans, oscillating slowly. Each fan is connected to the ceiling by hinged rods and all are inter-connected.
39. "*Sederim*." (Hebrew) Plural for the "*Seder*" that is the Order of the Service in the home on the first two nights of the Passover.
40. "*Yayin Kosher shel Pesach*". (Hebrew) Wine which has been prepared in accordance with strict procedures and is thus ritually suitable for use at Passover.
41. "*Matzot*". (Hebrew) The unleavened bread of the Passover Festival.
42. See Ochert, Brisbane History, page 510.
43. "*Yomim Naroim*". (Hebrew) "The Days of Awe" ie. the period between the commencement of the New Year and the conclusion of the Day of Atonement.
44. There is no standard service for the de-consecration of a synagogue. The official charged with this solemn task devises a dignified procedure. The minimum to be done is to ensure that the Toral scrolls, sacred books and other items of Jewish religious significance are carried out and transported in a respectful manner. Finally, the *mezuzot* (small boxes on the doorposts which indicate that the precinct is Jewish - refer Deut 6 - 9) are removed and the *Ner Tamid* (the eternal lamp over the Ark) is extinguished. Some appropriate Psalms are to be recited. If there is a gathering present, a brief address may be delivered, giving credit to those who have prayed therein.
45. See Ochert, Brisbane History, p 28.
46. See Ochert, Brisbane History, p 458.
47. "*Klie Kodesh*". (Hebrew) Sacred embellishments with which the Torah is "dressed".
48. Covers with which the Torah is dressed.
49. "*Minyanim*". (Hebrew) Plural of "*Minyan*" which is the minimum quorum required for congregation prayer.
50. "*Yarmalkas*" (Yiddish): Skull cap worn by males at prayer.
51. "*Brochat*". (Hebrew) "Blessings" that is the benedictions before food, in this case.
52. "*Kiddush*" (Hebrew) The prayer with wine, bread and salt, before a meal.
53. "*Bensching*" (Hebrew) Grace after a meal.
54. "*Challot*" (Hebrew) Plural for "*Challah*" the plaited loaf especially baked for *Kiddush* (note 52).
55. "*baal-ha'buyit ...*" (Hebrew) "Master of the house". Refers to the type of conversations which would be heard, between Jewish Communal leaders.



56. See Ochert, *Brisbane History*, page 574.
57. "Shechita". (Hebrew) Ritual Kosher slaughter of animals for food.
58. Grilling is one feature of the kosher preparation of meat.
59. See Ochert, *Brisbane History*, page 514.
60. *Ibid.*, page 461.
61. *Ibid.*, page 462.
62. Percy performed another Mitzvah by preparing a Toowoomba lad for his *Barmitzvah*, which was held in the Brisbane Synagogue.
63. A person is born Jewish only if his/her mother was Jewish. Judaism is a matriarchy that is the descent is through the maternal line.
64. Wine forms an important part of the symbolism of the Pesach commemoration.
65. *Haggadah* (Hebrew): The manual of the service in the home for the celebration of the Passover.
66. "Kiddush Kos" (Hebrew) The cup, usually silver, used in the Kiddush ceremony.
67. "deikun yayin" (Hebrew). Ceremonial wine decanter.
68. This passage, used in the funeral service, is from *Tehillim*, Book of Psalms.
69. A copy of the Will of Henry Spiro, dated 17 March 1875, and of a Codicil dated 13 November 1876 and a document granting Probate, dated 13 January 1877 have been lodged in the Society's Archives.
70. *AJHS Journal*, Vol VIII, Part 1, June, 1975
71. Lady Mack provided the photo, probably the only one in existence.
72. Daniel helped to found a London Synagogue. He was a bullion buyer in the Currency Division, called Mocatta and Rothschild, of Rothschild's Bank, which was founded six years before the Bank of England. The stockbrokers, Mocatta, Samuel and Morgan, still trade in London. The Lord Chief Justice of England in 1974 was a second cousin of George.
73. *Brisbane History*, *AJHS Journal* Vol IX. Part 6, p. 461
74. *The Australian Israelite*, 22 December 1871
75. *The Examiner and Times* of Warwick, 2 December 1871
76. *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1872
77. The synagogue was not built at that time.



## JEWES IN RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES

*Helen Bersten*

Outside of Israel, Jews have largely been recognised as urban dwellers. Once they migrated from Europe, they settled close together in large numbers in the East End of London and on the Eastside of New York. In Sydney they first arrivals lived in the Rocks. The question arises - why did they leave the city to travel to outback New South Wales and risk the loss of contact with the close Jewish community of Sydney?

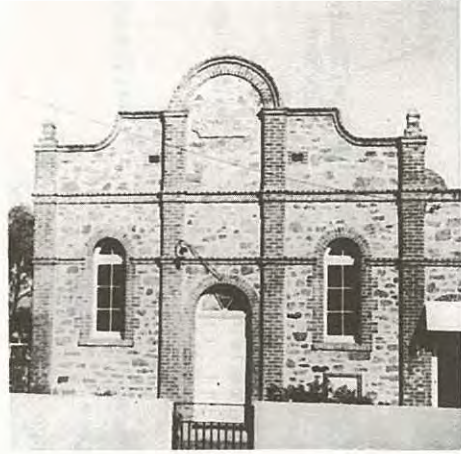
Jews in New South Wales went as far north as Lismore, as far west as Broken Hill and as far south as Eden. They went where there was rich pasture land, where there was gold and silver and copper and where there were business opportunities. They sought to make a living for themselves and their families in newly established frontier townships and were often shopkeepers, publicans or auctioneers and occasionally newspaper proprietors and postmasters. In Mudgee one was a barber. Jewish settlement in rural areas was supplemented by German Jews escaping Europe after the failure of the 1848 revolutions. Thus, Albert Eshman settled in Inverell in the north-west of the state in 1854 following the failure of the Hanoverian uprising. Again, at the turn of the century, a number of Jews escaping the pogroms of Eastern Europe, such as the Pearlman and Coppleson families, settled in country areas of New South Wales.

In most country areas Jews did not settle in sufficient numbers to form even the rudiments of a congregation but those families who established themselves in a town became involved in the local community, in local and occasionally state politics, and often were prime movers in the establishment of hospitals and welfare facilities. Not all were successful business people and many became insolvent, but some were well respected philanthropists and most left some mark on the places they chose to settle in. Many retained affiliations with Sydney synagogues while some, in places such as Broken Hill, Canberra, Forbes, Maitland, Newcastle and Wollongong, built their own synagogues. In Goulburn a major synagogue was never built, but a building on the Lansdowne estate was used by some families





*Newcastle Synagogue*



*Broken Hill Synagogue,  
1912-1962*



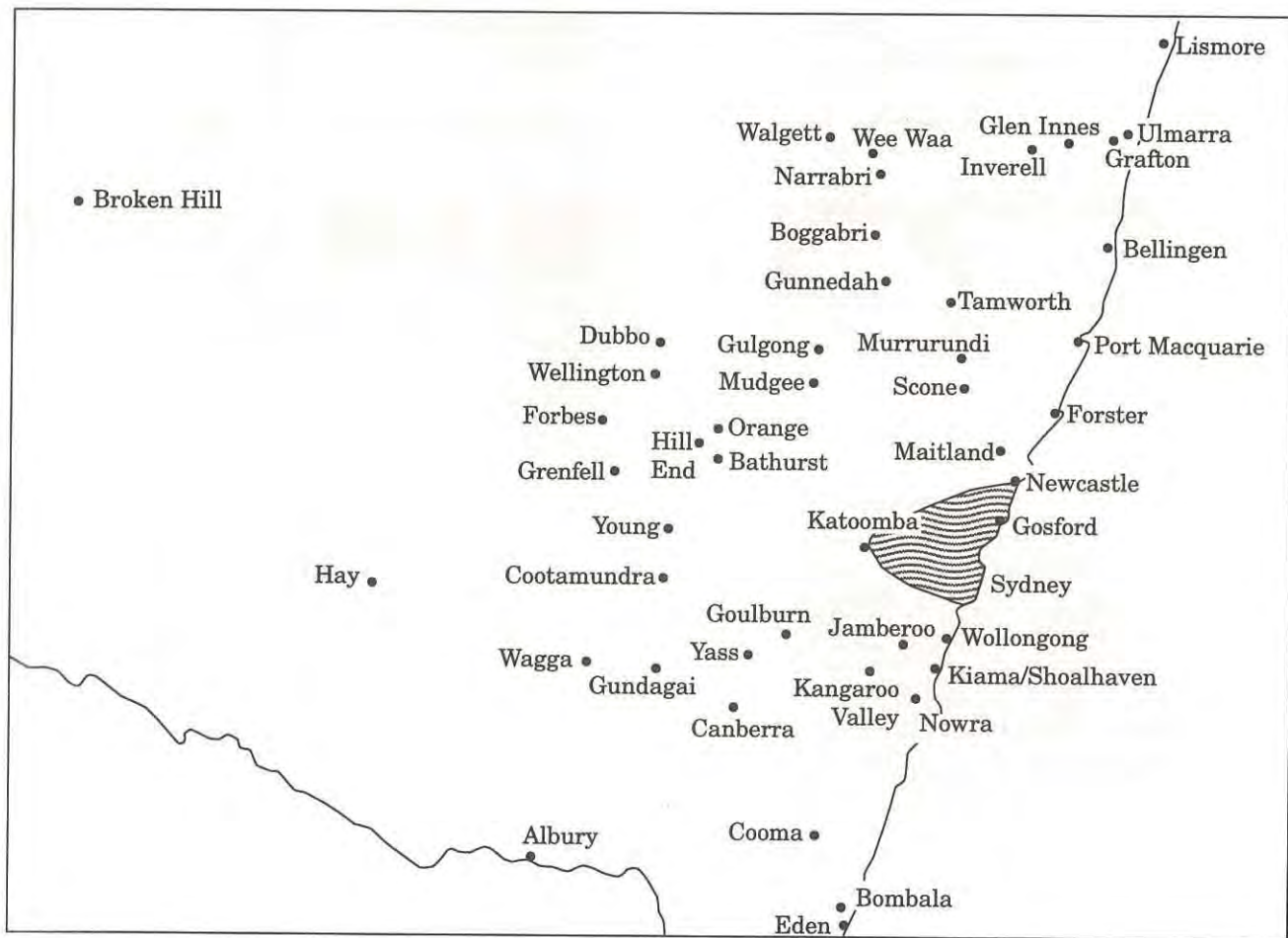
*Maitland Synagogue*



*Goulburn Synagogue*



*Towns in New South Wales where Jews settled*





for services and regular services were held in the premises of leading community members. The Lansdowne Estate building has now been recognised by Rabbi Apple as a synagogue.<sup>1</sup> In Grafton, land was reserved for a synagogue which was never built.<sup>2</sup> Over the years rabbis from Sydney often travelled to country areas to perform marriages and circumcisions as families from Port Macquarie and Tamworth or Bombala and Goulburn forged links which would create the future generations - some of whom are members of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. Many descendants of these early pioneers are no longer Jewish, but, in a number of cases, it is thanks to their interest in their ancestors that we have some of their fascinating stories.

A number of the country Jews from Maitland were prime movers in the breakaway New Synagogue in Sydney's Macquarie Street. In Broken Hill and Maitland the synagogue buildings still stand although they are no longer used as such. The former is home to the Broken Hill Historical Society and the latter is the Maitland Credit Union.

There is still a small community in Newcastle, another in Canberra, a small group in the Blue Mountains, a fledgling group in the Southern Highlands and another on the Northern Rivers as well as a small but growing community on the Central Coast; however in some country areas the only clue to a once busy Jewish community is in the names of streets or buildings or bridges.<sup>3</sup> The 1968 Readers Digest Atlas of Australia listed Jews Creek Sofala, Jews Flat Tambaroora, Jews Mountain near Ben Bullen. In some places the only record lies with the dead in overgrown, crumbling graveyards, or in the fading pages of country newspapers.

In 1861 forty percent of the Jewish population was living outside the capital cities.<sup>4</sup> By 1991 over ninety percent lived in Sydney.<sup>5</sup> In 1871, when the number of Jews in the colony was not quite two and a half thousand, comprising only 0.42% of the New South Wales population, the York Street synagogue's annual report included the names of Jewish burial grounds dedicated in country areas. Some names are still familiar, others are unknown but the towns listed were: Broughton Creek, Blayney, Cudall, Crookwell, Eden, Emu Plains, Frederickton, Forbes, Grenfell, Gygederick, Hyde's Falls Bellinger River, Hay, Kiama, Longbottom, Murrurundi, Mudgee, Merimbula, Rylstone, Smith's Flat, Tenterfield, Taree, Tumberumba, Urana, Waratah and Windeyer.<sup>6</sup> Each of these names carries with it the history of the rise and fall of small Jewish communities in rural New South Wales. Beverley Davis from the Australian Jewish Historical Society (Victoria) has travelled over a large part of Australia recording Jewish inscriptions from cemeteries such as these.



As Jews in one town moved on to other places and as the cemeteries designated for them fell into disuse, trustees often could no longer be found, so these Jewish portions were closed. The Great Synagogue has taken over the trust in many country areas where there are still viable Jewish portions of cemeteries.

The once far-flung New South Wales community has today narrowed in area to the eastern part of the state from the Southern Highlands to the Northern Rivers and from the Blue Mountains to the Harbour, but community numbers have increased to an estimated total of about 45,000<sup>7</sup> in New South Wales as new Jewish migrants have taken the place of the old settlers and entered businesses and the professions. The number of synagogues in Sydney has increased to nearly thirty as Jews continue to establish new communities in the areas they have settled. In this regard you could say that the new pioneer territories are Lane Cove and the Northern Rivers.

Obviously in a short article it is impossible to go into great detail about all the rural communities, so I will cover a few communities in brief. In some cases, a single family constituted the Jewish population of an outback area. Those who wish to read in detail should consult the Society's *Journal* where the tales of country Jewry come to life. A number of country Jews went into local politics, some becoming mayors while others went into state politics. Two, Sir Saul Samuel and Henry Emanuel Cohen, became colonial treasurer on separate occasions and both became ministers of the Crown. Some names appear in more than one country town as the Jewish shopkeepers followed the fortunes of the gold miners in the rush from one find to another.

### GOULBURN<sup>8</sup>

I shall start with Goulburn, where the Jewish population in 1841 was 22. When this increased to 54 in 1846, Goulburn had the greatest concentration of Jews outside Sydney and by 1851, when the gold rushes had become a fact of life and the search for more gold was on to the south of Goulburn, 75 Jews were to be found in the County of Argyle. However there had been Jews there since the 1830s when the Argyle Store and the Australian Stores were established.

During the gold rush, many of the Jewish shopkeepers in Goulburn were either outfitting expeditions or organising reward money for gold discoveries or buying gold from the prospectors. Samuel Emanuel and Benjamin Moses of the Beehive Store and David Davis of the old Commercial Store were buyers, while Nathan Mandelson of the Goulburn hotel was on the reward committee.





*The Goulburn Hotel, owned by Nathan Mandelson*

Mandelson also provided the gold escort from Braidwood to Sydney. Samuel Davis (1) from the Australian Stores fitted out the parties seeking gold. He should not be confused with Samuel Davis (2), the watchmaker. Until 1872 Goulburn was a thriving town for the Jews involved in commerce. Their early stores had been simple wood and bark structures, but with the growing prosperity of the town, proper brick shops were built. In 1845 Samuel Emanuel had opened the Beehive Stores. Samuel represented the Electorate of Argyle in the Legislative Assembly from 1862 to 1864 and his son, Sidney Levy Emanuel, was an alderman on the Goulburn Council. In the late 1840s a number of young Jews had come to the area as employees in the many Jewish owned wholesale businesses. All the Jewish businesses in Goulburn closed on the Sabbath and the shopkeepers were regarded as solid citizens. The famous quotation is mentioned by an early historian, Charles Mac Alister: "Goulburn owed much in the formative years to the commercial genius of the Hebrew race. In fact, the term 'as solid as a Goulburn Jew' almost threatened at one time to pass into a proverb."<sup>9</sup>



In 1844 the Jews of Goulburn had sent money to support the York Street synagogue's building appeal and the names of Solomon Moses, Elias Moses, Abraham Meyer, Nathan Mandelson and Isaac Hart appear as donors in the York Street report.<sup>10</sup> In the same year, seventeen people were reported to have attended High Holy Day observances at the Argyle Store. The room at the back of the store had been set up as a synagogue with a specially constructed ark. The Goulburn Hebrew Association supported the community from 1851 when it first provided money for the sick and poor. Its last entry is 1877.<sup>11</sup>

The first Jewish marriage in Goulburn was in 1850 between Samuel Davis, the Goulburn watchmaker and Sarah Phillips from Sydney. Jacob Isaacs, reader of the York Street synagogue, travelled to Goulburn to perform the ceremony which was held in the Benjamin home. Davis was later to erect the first public town clock in Benjamin's premises. In 1854, when Moss Marks married Esther Davis at the Argyle Store, the officiant was Mr Strelitz, reader.

The early 1850s were thriving times. In 1851 gold had been discovered near Bathurst and many people left town to seek their fortunes. That same year the first gold to reach Goulburn from the southern fields was purchased by Samuel Emanuel and Samuel Davis (1). Later gold was bought directly at the fields by Mandelson, Davis and Moss Marks and Benjamin and Moses exported it to England. 1853 saw Moss Marks, J.P., secure a grant of land to Samuel Davis (1), Samuel Benjamin and Nathan Mandelson for the synagogue and school, but they were never built and the land was resumed in 1891.

When brothers-in-law Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses' Argyle Store in Goulburn became established, it was said to be the only business of the kind between Sydney and Melbourne. It survived until 1861. Before Nathan Mandelson built his famous hotel in Goulburn he had owned another in Bungonia on a busy stock route. Samuel Davis (1) founded the Australian Stores in 1838 and enlarged them into a warehouse in 1844 when his brother-in law, Isaac Levey, secured the contract for provisioning convict establishments in the area. In 1844 Benjamin and Moses also set up a factory at Towrang for boiling down sheep and cattle carcasses for tallow. It was managed by Abraham Meyer and was capable of treating 1000 sheep or 60 head of cattle per day.

Solomon Moses had purchased the Policeman's Arms Hotel in 1836 and changed the name to Travellers' Home Inn. He enlarged the premises and later moved to "new" Goulburn where he built the Royal Hotel. He was drowned at Deep Creek in 1860. He was married to Deborah Hart and their son Morris was born in Goulburn in 1844. He should not to be confused with the Solomon Moses of **Bungendore**



who married P. Levey, daughter of A.J. Levey and opened the Beehive Store and Beehive Hotel in that town when gold was found there in 1854.

Benjamin and Moses were responsible for providing the land at Towrang for the cemetery. The trustees were Nathan Mandelson, Samuel Davis (1) and Solomon Moses. The caretaker's cottage built there and used for prayers survived until 1945. The cemetery itself still survives thanks in great measure to the late Stephen Tazewell of Goulburn.<sup>12</sup> The earliest burials were those of Sarah and Hannah, daughters of John and Rebecca Moses of Bowning, who were drowned in 1844. Their mother, Rebecca is also buried there. She was originally Mary Conolly, the first Jewish convert and partner in the first Jewish marriage in Australia in 1830. Another early burial was that of Isaac Davis of Boorowa, who was killed by bushrangers in 1845. It was his widow, Esther, who married Moss Marks, later manager of the Argyle Store. Altogether 22 people are buried in the cemetery, the last two being wartime refugees who settled in the area, Dr Hugo Goldberger and Mr Siegfried Vogel who both died in 1943, a century after the first Jews went to Goulburn. In 1883 four hundred pounds was handed over to the Great Synagogue to care for the Goulburn cemetery as most Jews had left the area, however the Great did not become the Trustee until 1943.<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Benjamin dissolved his partnership with Elias Moses and returned to Sydney where he died in 1854. Eight years later Nathan Mandelson was back in Sydney as president of the York Street synagogue. In Sydney he acted as a commission agent and purveyor of wine and spirits. His coaching interests in Goulburn were carried on by his son, Emanuel, while Nathan maintained his interests in Gunning and Braidwood as well. He later returned to Goulburn but died suddenly in 1867. Samuel Davis (1) retired from the Australian Stores and handed over his interests to Isaac Levey, Jacob Alexander and William Davies. P.S. Solomon and Joseph Collins who had been apprentices at the Australian Stores continued there. Collins was later treasurer of the Goulburn Hebrew Association and went on to become an alderman. His wife, Lydia, buried at Goulburn, was a member of the Marks family from Lambing Flat and Forbes. Collins was one of the last Jews in Goulburn along with Samuel Emanuel who stayed until 1875 when his son took over the business. By 1881 only 11 Jews remained in Goulburn.<sup>14</sup>

### COOTAMUNDRA<sup>15</sup>

A few Jewish families were associated with Cootamundra which was first settled in the 1830s. The railway reached it in 1877 and it



became a municipality in 1884. M. Solomon was the proprietor of Angrove's Albion Hotel in 1886. Solomon Cohen, son of Lewis Cohen bought the Trade Palace in the same year. He married Mabel Cohen, daughter of Frederick and Rosetta who owned a store at Muswellbrook. Rosetta's father was Samuel Emanuel of Goulburn. Solomon and Mabel's children, Burnett, Reginald, Doris, Enid, Zara, Harold and Eileen were all born in Cootamundra. Unfortunately all four girls died between 1894 and 1901 when the remaining family moved to Sydney. Solomon and Mabel were divorced in 1903 after which he remarried. He died in Burradoo in 1922.

Samuel Henry Cohen, born in Goulburn and known as Harry, joined the firm of Solomon Cohen and Co. in Cootamundra in 1902 and finally became managing director of Solomon Cohen Pty.Ltd. He married Beatrice Bowman in 1903 and a year later their first child, Russell was born followed by twins who died shortly after birth. They had four more children three of whom survived. Samuel died in 1955 aged 83, some twenty years after Beatrice. Many family members had worked in the Cootamundra store which became known as "Cohen's Corner".

Abraham Leslie Cohen, known as Bray, was the brother of Mabel and Samuel Henry. He married Annie McKenzie and they moved to Germanton, renamed Holbrook at the end of World War 1. Their four children were Sydney, Rosetta, Frederick and Russell, two born in South Gundagai and two in Holbrook. By 1943 they had moved back to Cootamundra. Sydney, who was in the army, joined them in 1945 with his wife Jessie and two children, Betty and Barry, after his discharge. Two more children, Donald and David were born in 1947 and 1953. Bray died at 84 in 1959; Annie, also 84, died in 1964. Russell had been killed in a car accident in 1961. Sydney died in Wagga in 1975. The last of the Cootamundra Cohens, Syd's wife Jessie, left in 1996.

The Emanuel family were also represented in Cootamundra by farmers Percy and Norman, sons of Nathaniel Emanuel, solicitor of Tumut, and cousins of Harry and Bray Cohen. Members of both families are buried in Cootamundra cemetery.

### **LAMBING FLAT, FORBES AND NORTHERN GOLDFIELDS**

Lambing Flat was the original name of **Young**. Among the many migrants attracted to the goldfields were a number of Jews whose story has been told in detail in a previous journal by M.Z. Forbes. I have included a brief summary to add to the picture of Jews in rural New South Wales.<sup>16</sup> Gold diggers went there in such numbers



that in 1860 there were 400 miners on the fields, many of whom were Chinese, caught up in the terrible 1861 massacre.

A census in 1861 at Binalong near the goldfields recorded a Jewish population of 70 in the Lachlan district.<sup>17</sup> 150 Jews were on the goldfields in 1862, but by 1865 there were no large Jewish stores left and by 1872 less than 12 Jews remained. Well-known names connected with the Lachlan district were Morris Asher who owned the Sydney Store at a place later known as **Wombat**. He also owned stores in **Albury and Rydal**. He was one of the early Jewish politicians. In 1865 he moved to **Grenfell**. Barnett Phillips owned the Diggers Arms Hotel; L. Marcus The Great Eastern. E. Freeman and Michael Levy were auctioneers. Michael Levy's large rooms were fitted up for High Holy Day worship in 1861 when 50 to 60 attended. Traders were Elias Moses and Benjamin Benjamin of the Old Argyle Store, Woolf Lazarus of the Beehive Store and the Beehive Sale Yards, W.M. Barnett, D. Myers, Joseph Joseph, S. Moses and Sons, Abraham Levy, Green and Jacobson jewellers and John Cohen. Henry Jacobs had stores at Stoney Creek and New Rush. M.D. Isaacs was editor of the *Mining and General Advertiser* in 1861 and was also founder of the Burrangong Amateur Theatrical Association as well as being involved with many other local associations in the town. Peddlers Joseph and Solomon Hoeflich sold their wares in the Lambing Flat district while a Jewish boxer called Burnett fought matches nearby, which the Jewish residents loved to bet on. The burial ground at **Burrangong** was established in 1861 after a meeting at Lazarus' store.

In **Forbes**, stores such as those at Goulburn, but on a smaller scale, sprang up to supply the gold diggers when the 1860 rush took prospectors there. Abraham Marks, brother of Lydia Collins of Goulburn, owned the Original Little Wonder, Nelson and Cohen the Great Surprise Store, S. and H.B. Cohen the Armidale Stores, S. Moses and Son the Prince of Wales Stores, Maurice Lazarus and Morris Neroman the Monster Clothing Hall, A.L. Rosenweig the Beehive Store, Rogalsky and Goulstone were produce merchants while A. Goldsmide ran the Diggers Library. Levy Vandenberg owned the Court House Hotel. J.L. Jerelow, Lazarus Cohen, Morris Levy and M. Michaelis were also at Forbes. Henry Cohen was a well-known auctioneer and Daniel Berger a travelling auctioneer also well-known at Forbes. He built the Lachlan Arcade in Rankin Street.

In 1862 a wooden building in Templar Street was dedicated as a synagogue in time for the High Holydays. It was the only synagogue outside Sydney at the time. Solomon Cohen was the president. Unfortunately by the end of the year numbers declined as people



were beginning to leave for the New Zealand gold fields. The synagogue building remained until 1893, when it was either destroyed by a flood or the wood sold to the Methodists, depending on which story you choose to believe.<sup>18</sup>

Michael Levy and Morris Asher went to **Grenfell**, originally called Weddin Mountain then Emu Creek, from the Lachlan diggings between 1865 and 1871. Also at Grenfell were Robert Cohen and Mary, formerly Daly, and their daughter Rebecca. In 1867 Moses Bros. were auctioneers there. In 1896 Alfred Shackell was mayor and was active on the hospital committee and, by his philanthropy, assisted other public organisations. He left for Sydney in 1898 and was given a grand farewell party. Prior to arriving in Grenfell, Shackell had joined a firm in **Yass** then become branch manager in **Wagga**. The success of this business led to the establishment of a branch in **Parkes** where he was prominent in the hospital and fire brigade. Parkes in the 1870s led the colony's gold production. Baron Cohen was a publican in the district. Shackell's brother, David, was an alderman in **Cowra** in the first quarter of this century.

At **Temora**, Henry Margules was the first mining registrar, issuing a licence for Benjamin Joseph to mine in the district. Further north, gold and copper were found at **Ophir**. Solomon Meyer opened the first general store in a bark hut. He later acquired Joseph Simmon junior's business at Carcoar where he ran a flour mill called Australian Steam Mills. He represented the district in parliament between 1874 and 1876. Raphael Tolano, a former convict who had served his time at Bathurst, ran stores for Simmons at **Bathurst and Carcoar** in 1851 and opened the Beehive store at Ophir. He was the first cash buyer for gold in the district and also bought wool for cash.

A number of Jews resided in **Bathurst** for a period. Benjamin Isaacs was an advocate, John Davies, Chief Constable, J. B. Solomon, storekeeper, Aaron Gainsborg, jeweller, J. Brocksteyn, watchmaker, Joseph Aaron Jnr., store and innkeeper, Jacob Myers, innkeeper. Saul Samuel was a leading trader at Bathurst and resident director of the Bathurst Copper Mining Company. He was also director of the Ophir Copper Mining Company. He also had mining interests in Newcastle and a pastoral property at Wellington. He was elected to the Legislative Council in 1854, having been the first Jewish magistrate in the state in 1848. He represented Orange in the Assembly in 1859, was Colonial Treasurer three times, Postmaster General, NSW Agent General in London, was knighted in 1882 and became a baronet in 1898.

In 1848 there were 24 Jews living in Bathurst; by 1861 there were only six. However in 1916 one Martin Lapin arrived as a peddler.



He later became a retailer with a discount store which he operated until 1954 after which time his son, Norman ran it until he came to Sydney.<sup>19</sup> In the late 1920s Norman's sister Rebecca married the owner of the general store at Kelso, Russian immigrant Grisha Bershtein and they also eventually moved to Sydney. The Jewish population in Bathurst was back to 21 in 1921, but down to 14 by 1961 and 12 in 1991.

J.B. Montefiore also had pastoral property in the Wellington Valley. Members of the Shrug family, later to change their name to Shaw, were born in Wellington in the early 1900s. Louis Shrug had the Crown Stores in **Gilgandra** from the early years. Samuel Shaw was to become a wool buyer in **Dubbo** and live there for ten years after World War II. Charles Assenheim who died in 1866 is buried in the Dubbo cemetery.

Simeon and Rebecca Isaacs lived at **Hill End** in 1874 where they ran the Criterion Hotel and Billiard Parlour in Clarke Street. Their last child, Sydney Emanuel Isaacs was born there. The family later returned to Dunedin in New Zealand.<sup>20</sup>

There is a lonely grave at **Warren**, in north-west NSW, belonging to Rosetta Alexander.<sup>21</sup> She was the daughter of Benjamin and Frances Nelson of **Orange** and she died in 1881. Another Nelson daughter, Hannah, married Harris Cohen in Orange in 1869. Benjamin Nelson became a member of the second Municipal Council in Orange between 1861 and 1866 and he was elected mayor in 1870. He was a very extensive trader and Nelson Bros. Great Western Stores boasted the earliest flour mill in the district. In 1858 he and Hyam Phillips were on the committee for the public hospital. Rev. Solomon Phillips from Macquarie Street synagogue came to Orange in 1860 to perform some office when Nelson requested it. Harris Levi Nelson also represented Orange between 1872 and 1877. Benjamin's brother-in-law, Edward Nathan was also on the Council in 1876 and from 1889 to 1891. He was mayor in 1882. Saul Samuel had been the first member for Orange serving 1859-60 and 1869-72.

In 1859 there was a Jewish cemetery near Summer Hill where Hannah, wife of J. L. Isaacs of Ironbarks (called Stuart Town in 1937) was buried in 1891. Her husband was a hotelier in Lucknow and a possible relative, H. Isaacs, was licensee for the Wentworth Hotel in Orange. In 1902 Robert Louis Lowenthal, infant son of Abraham and Lottie was buried. Orange never had a large Jewish population.

At **Gulgong** in the early 1870s the gold rush was reaching its peak when Simon Belinfante, local doctor and barrister, was drowned in an accident in 1874 while travelling from Mudgee. The Belinfante Bridge bears his name.<sup>22</sup> Other names associated with Gulgong were



Benjamin Benjamin, storekeeper and mining investor, A. Moses, spirit merchant, Abraham Hyams, Seigismund Salamon, S.A. Levy and Dr Charles Zimmer, a doctor from Hanover, who was the local pharmacist. Maurice Lazarus and Jacob Myers owned the Crystal Cordial Co. A. Myers was a jeweller. Moses Bros. advertised their store in 1871 as "The Greatest Wonder of the World". Simeon S. Moses, one of the proprietors, travelled around the goldfields and had a hotel at Braidwood and a tobacco shop at Araluen. Morris Asher opened a store here as well, which unfortunately was destroyed by fire in 1872. J. A. Moss, together with Messrs Hyams, Blumenthal and Solomons officiated at Jewish services in 1871. It was hoped that a synagogue might be erected but by 1875 many residents were leaving.<sup>23</sup> In the early 1920s there was a jeweller called de Groen living in Gulgong.

In **Mudgee** the Cohen family were prominent in the town; four members of the family served in the fire brigade - two Lawrence



*Mudgee Fire Brigade*

*Top Row: (from left side) first man, Laurie Cohen, nephew of second man, Charles Halpin.*

*Middle Row: (from left side) fifth man, Laurie Cohen, brother of Jessie Maria Halpin, Captain of the fire brigade.*

*Bottom Row: (from left side) third boy, Alec Halpin, son of Charles Halpin.*



Cohens and Charles and Alec Halpin! Lawrence Cohen senior, brother-in-law of Charles Halpin was the brigade captain and mayor of Mudgee for many years.<sup>24</sup> Robert Abraham Cohen, a former convict, arrived in Mudgee and set up as a barber in 1872, having previously been in Wagga. He had married Margaret Kidd in 1848 and they had five children. The eldest, Lawrence was later to become mayor and the youngest, George Henry, a journalist with Smith's Weekly and owner of several country newspapers including the *Guardian* and the *Mudgee Mail*. Robert and Margaret Cohen's joint grave, dating from 1886, is the only Jewish one at Mudgee.

Solomon Levy had shares in a gold mine at Mudgee in the 1870s and the Marks family were storekeepers from the 1880s to the 1900s. Amelia Colliss was born at Louisa Creek, Mudgee in 1856. Her father, David had been born in Bathurst and died at Sofala. His father, Abraham had arrived in Australia in 1841. The Exchange rooms at Sofala were conducted by J.H. Asher and J. Keesing.

### **BROKEN HILL**

While the search for gold was the main reason for the establishment of many of these country towns, two owed their existence to silver. One was Broken Hill and the other Yerranderie. In 1883 silver and lead were discovered in the Broken Hill region. One of the earliest Jewish arrivals in the area was Marcus Mannheim who lived there from 1888 to 1908. By 1891 Sigmond Hoffnung was established there and also Melbourne sewing machine manufacturer, Hugo Wertheim. A Mrs Levy was running a boarding house in 1900. There were some Jewish miners in the area, one of whom, Richard Dias, died in 1893 and is buried in the cemetery. By 1901 there were up to 50 Jewish families in the area and High Holy Day services were already being held in the Masonic Hall. The Edelman and Krantz brothers had the first large stores. Annie Krantz, one of thirteen children, married William Roden, uniting two families. Rev. Boas from Adelaide came up to conduct weddings before 1905 when Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum arrived as the first minister. He stayed until 1914. In 1911 a synagogue was built which still stands today although it was closed in 1962. It has been acquired by the Broken Hill Historical Society and they have attempted to keep it in its original form. The Lakovsky family who lived in Broken Hill from 1905 to 1910 later changed their name to Lake. 1919 saw the arrival of Rev. Nathan Salas who later left for New Zealand. The core of Russian Jews who supported the congregation had dwindled by 1930 when Rev. Mordechai Eisen was appointed. The last minister was Rev. Abraham Berman who served from 1940 to 1944, while Bernie Press



was president from 1946 to 1949. By 1961 only 13 Jews remained and thirty years later the census recorded only six.<sup>25</sup>

### **SOUTHERN GOLDFIELDS, MONARO DISTRICT AND SOUTH COAST**

When the Goulburn merchants bought gold from the southern fields, it came from places such as **Tumut** and **Kiandra**. The Snowy Mountains rush in 1859 caused many Jews to follow. Men such as Morris Asher, Nathan Mandelson, J.L. Montefiore and J.G. Cohen were actively encouraging the government to mine here. Jews owned some of the leading stores of the forty which sprang up on the Snowy River goldfields. B. Benjamin had the Old Argyle Store at Kiandra, Davies, Alexander and Company, successors to Samuel Davis (1), ran the Australian Store while P. Michaelis had the Old Post Office Stores. Jews ran many of the public houses in the Kiandra area - notably Benjamin Benjamin and Elias Moses, Maurice Solomon and Samuel Phillips. On Yom Kippur the Jewish stores at **Cooma**, **Denison**, **Russels** and **Nine Mile** were all closed. However, by 1861 the Kiandra finds were already on the decline and Moses and Benjamin were insolvent.

Levi and Naphtali Mandelson arrived in **Tumut** in 1857 and stayed twenty years. The Emanuels and the Mandelsons were leading citizens in the town. In 1860 the Macquarie Street synagogue received a request for a *mohel* from the Mandelson family, but the request was refused as the distance was too far. Perhaps it was an omen for by 1861 there were only twelve Jews left in Tumut and two in **Adelong**.

Near **Cooma**, at **Jews Flat**, later called Bunyan, S. Solomon had a store. In 1860 Charles Solomon, his brother-in-law Lewis Wolfe Levy and the brothers H. and S. Solomon settled in the district with pastoral interests as well as commercial enterprises. By 1861 Cooma had 16 Jews. One hundred years later, with the coming of the Snowy scheme, the census recorded 40.<sup>26</sup> Charles was the first mayor and other family members later also served as mayor. Solomon Solomon, with Henry and Maurice Solomon, established a branch of their store in **Eden** to equip diggers heading for Kiandra. They later owned schooners which plied their trade to New Zealand, Queensland and the Pacific islands. Felix Mitchell was a lawyer in Eden.

Isaac Nathan Robinovitz was a Russian immigrant arriving in the 1880s. He married Esther Assure in 1889 and, after some time in Quirindi, joined his father-in-law Yehuda who had a shop in Towamba, 14 miles from Eden. After Yehuda went to Palestine, Isaac took over the shop and advertised the Polytechnic Stores,



cheapest in the Southern Hemisphere. He received permission to open on Saturday nights and Sundays. The family moved to Sydney in 1914.

In 1861 there were 16 Jews at Eden, 24 at **Five Islands, now known as Shoalhaven**, and 15 at **Bombala**. Hyam Moses Joseph who married the daughter of Elias Moses from Goulburn, was the first mayor of Bombala and the Joseph, Goldberg and Goodman families were well known in the district. Hyam Moses was the son of Moses Joseph who had settled in the district and established a successful sheep station, 'Mahratta'. This was the same Moses Joseph who had purchased the land for the York Street synagogue. J.A. Joseph sold his store to A. Alexander who with M.S. Emanuel owned land in the district. In 1989, Lou Joseph and his sister Betty owned Narrabeen station between Bombala and Cathcart. They were descendants of the Josephs who lived in Cooma, Bombala and Eden in the 1860s.

Jacob Phillips owned the Commercial Hotel in Bombala. Percy Jonas succeeded his father Emanuel as editor and proprietor of the *Bombala Times*. He was also an auctioneer and mayor at one time. Lewis Goldberg also served as mayor. Cecil F. Moses became a dentist in Bombala. He was a grandson of S. Solomon. Peter Solomon was a storekeeper in the district when his son Phillip was born in Bombala in 1904. Phillip was mayor of Campbelltown from 1945 to 1950.<sup>27</sup> David Goodman had a store at Bombala with a branch at Delegate. By 1901 there were 17 Jews in Bombala and the Jewish population remained fairly steady until the late forties. Peter Solomon with P. Rosenthal of Bega and Dr Schalit in Delegate unsuccessfully tried to interest the local Jews in Jewish affairs.<sup>28</sup> Early this century, in

Delegate the Jewish population was tailor made - 11 Goodmans and 4 Goldmans out of a Jewish population of 16. The other one was Dr Schalit who left in 1909. In 1990 there were 16 graves in the Bombala cemetery including Maurice Solomon and his brother-in-law Lionel Levy, son of Joseph Levy from **Berrima**.



*Joseph Levy's Victoria Inn (photo taken 1988)*



Joseph Levy owned the Victoria Inn, later Allington House, in Berrima in 1840. He had been a convict and went to the country to try his luck when he received his conditional pardon in 1834. The next year he opened a general store and supplied rations for settlers and convicts. In 1837 he founded the Imperial Brewery. He also acted as an auctioneer and his inn was the booking office for the Sydney-Goulburn coach. He sold part of his interests to Hyam Phillips in 1841 after receiving his absolute pardon, but twenty years later his nephew Lewis Levy ran the store and inn while Phillips retained the brewery. Joseph Levy returned to Berrima in the 1850s with the discovery of gold in Victoria, as the coach business was very busy, but retained his membership of the Sydney synagogue. His daughter Rebecca married Maurice Solomon from Eden.

In 1887 an immigrant from Lithuania, Israel Karnovsky, came to **Kangaroo Valley**. A year later he brought out his brother, Meyer and they established a department store called Commonwealth Stores in a shop purchased from fellow Jew, Peter Solomon. In 1896 they brought out their sister, Annie to marry fellow Russian immigrant, Meyer Reuben Rosenberg. Their daughter, Esther married a local man, Charles Edward Cox. A fire destroyed the shop in 1916, but it was rebuilt and continued business as Karnovsky Bros. Sydney Store.

Michael Hyam received a grant of land at **Jamberoo** in 1835. On it he set up a store, hotel, tannery, bootmaking business, cedar getting business and a racecourse! After his wife's death in 1846, he sold out and moved to Shoalhaven, where he had another store and another inn at Greenhills. He ended his days in **Nowra** at the age of 84 in 1883. Seven years after the death of his first wife, Charlotte Rebecca (formerly Catherine Mary Broughton), mother of all the children except Joseph, Michael married Deborah Moses. His son, David, who was born at Jamberoo lived in Shoalhaven for 75 years. David was involved with the hotel at **Greenhills** and another at **Terara**. In 1885 he was farming at Bamarang and raising award-winning herds of Jersey cattle, the nucleus of which he had acquired from his brother, Solomon. There were dairy properties at Nowra Hill and Mayfield. David married Maria Graham. He was an alderman for 47 years and mayor of Nowra. The Hyam name is perpetuated in Hyam Beach and Hyam Street. No Jews were recorded in Nowra after 1947.

David's sister, Sarah Zorilda, married Henry Moss who was also a mayor of Nowra. Henry went to Shoalhaven in 1851. He was instrumental in establishing the town of Nowra after a huge flood severely damaged the town of Terara in 1870. He was a member of the first municipal council and was a geological surveyor. He was awarded several international medals at exhibitions for his efforts to advertise Shoalhaven and Nowra.



In 1859 the Macquarie Street synagogue received a request for a *mohel* for Morris Woolf's nephew at **Kiama**.

**Wollongong** had a short-lived community which was formed in 1961 as the South Coast Hebrew Congregation. When it closed in 1990, the records were handed over to the Illawarra synagogue at Allawah in Sydney. At its peak the congregation had numbered 84, but was half that number in the mid-seventies. The original timber building housing 51 worshippers was replaced in 1963. Jacob Glass and his wife had settled in Bulli in 1880, one of the first families in the South Coast area. Glass was a foundation member of the hospital and a committee member for over 30 years. He was an honorary magistrate for over 20 years and had been involved with other prominent citizens in the purchase of the land for the Friendly Societies' Hall in 1904.<sup>29</sup> Mrs Glass (nee Cohen) involved herself in welfare work besides bringing up nine children, one of whom was former AJHS secretary, S.B. Glass. After the Bulli Colliery disaster of 1887, Jacob Glass was on the Conciliation Committee and he sponsored the movement for the dedication of the Bulli Pass lookout.

Some of the names associated with the community in Wollongong were Heimann, Bowen, Rose, Bando, Bluth, Kemeny, Reed, Segal, Stern and Starr.

## YASS

One of the first land buyers here in 1837 was Isaac Moses, brother of John and Moses Moses, all ex-convicts and sons of Joseph Moses. Isaac and Moses opened the Argyle store in 1838. Moses built the Yass Hotel in 1840 and became a councillor in the first Yass Council in 1843. Moses died in 1858 and is buried in the local cemetery which he had helped to create in 1844. Isaac and John ran an inn from 1844. John's sons were Henry Moss of Nowra and Jack Moses, poet and friend of Henry Lawson.

The Moses brothers' nephew, Henry Hart ran the Rose Inn in Yass in 1845, later called the Golden Fleece, and built the Royal Hotel in 1849 returning to Sydney after selling it in 1878. In 1858 he had opened four adjoining shops known as Hart's Row.<sup>30</sup>

Sarah Benjamin is also buried in the Yass cemetery having died in 1848. She was the wife of John Benjamin and daughter of Phillip Levey. John Benjamin was the son of Emanuel Benjamin. Lewis Benjamin from London married Henry Hart's daughter Deborah in 1865. Deborah had 11 siblings and all but one of the children married Jews. A Henry Margules owned the Union Inn in Yass in 1862 which was built to accommodate miners during the gold rush, possibly the



same man who had been in Temora. Yass's largest Jewish community was in the 1860s.

## CANBERRA

A special issue of this Society's Journal has been dedicated to Canberra's Jewish community, so I shall just provide a brief summary here.<sup>31</sup> The Canberra community proper began in 1951, the first president being Ron Mendelsohn; however there were one or two Jewish families in the area thirty years before. Mr and Mrs Mischa Bershtein, later to change their surname to Bersten, lived in Canberra in the late twenties and Mr and Mrs Nat Lipman lived there in 1937. Harry Kellerman, patron of our Society, was the commerce master at Telopea Park High School from 1929 to 1933. In 1933 there had only been four Jews, by 1947 there were 26, 54 by 1954 and 323 in 1976. The Canberra Community Memorial Centre was built in 1962 and the synagogue consecrated in 1972. A Jewish section in the Woden cemetery was consecrated in 1960 and a section in the Gungahlen cemetery in the late seventies. The 1991 census counted 527 Jews in the Canberra-Queanbeyan area.

## GUNDAGAI

Samuel Solomon arrived in Australia in the 1890s from Poland and with his wife, Mac, acquired a grazing property near Gundagai. He was an alderman and president of the hospital board. Mae served on all the local women's committees. Their three girls, Lena, Esther and Rubie were all born in Gundagai. A fourth sister died young and the only son was killed during World War II. In 1919 the family moved to Sydney where Samuel became president of the Newtown synagogue.<sup>32</sup>

## WAGGA WAGGA

The Mendes family, Abe and Diana (nee Myers) were here in the 1920s with their sons Joe, John and George. George and his wife Belle were in Wagga in 1936. She had come out from England to marry George whom she had met when she was seven and he was nineteen. Robert Cohen was a barber here before he left for Mudgee in the 1870s. The Jewish population here reached its peak in 1954.



## ALBURY

In the Riverina at Albury there are the Jewish graves of Lydia Sarah Jones, daughter of Rosetta who died in 1874; Rose Salmon, wife of Philip, daughter of Wolf and Clara Cohen who died in 1877 and Belle Blasbalk who died in 1899. The last burial was in 1910. There had been only 16 Jews in Albury in 1861, a peak of 26 in 1881 and 24 in 1976 with troughs in between.

In the 1880s Mr Moses owned the Globe Hotel, Mr Cohen, Mr Blasbalk and Mr Hart were jewellers, Mr Abrahams and Mr Pattick were tailors, Mr Solomon and Mr Rappaport ran general stores.<sup>33</sup> Jacob Brann, a draper, lived in Albury from 1886 to 1942 and was an alderman for 33 years owning large tracts of land in the heart of the city. David and Leah Cann had a bridal shop and general business in Albury from 1932 until they went to Sydney in the early 1940s. Ralph Marks was an alderman on the Albury City Council for over twenty-five years as well as owning an all-purpose clothing store. He also arrived in the district in the 1930s having been previously in Adelaide and Melbourne.

## HAY

Hay is better known as the area of the notorious internment camp for the *Dunera* boys, German Jewish refugees who were interned, classified by the British government as 'enemy aliens' and sent out to Australia on the infamous ship, the *Dunera*, but there were Jewish burials there almost every year from 1874 to 1896. Grace Johns, 1874; Mayo Laherium, 1875; Henry Lindsay, 1876; Henry Tartakower, 1878; Abraham Raphael, 1878 and Herman Levy known as The Baron, 1896. Two men and a boy were buried in 1940.<sup>34</sup>

## BLUE MOUNTAINS

Jews have been associated with the Blue Mountains for many years. In the early 1920s Mischa Bershtein opened a jewellery shop in Katoomba and his first child, Eva, was born there in 1922. However, economic circumstances caused him to become a traveller and other children were born in Goulburn and Port Kembla.<sup>35</sup> In the late 1950s William and Margaret Rev opened a kosher guest house in Leura, called the Blue and White Guest House which they owned for fifteen years, until it was burnt down during one of the bushfires. They even had their own synagogue.<sup>36</sup> Another Jewish resident, a Mr Wittman, owned the Dreamland Guesthouse, situated



opposite the Leura golf course, from 1958 to 1962. Bill Friedlander was mayor in the Blue Mountains area for many years.

In 1990 the Shalom Aleichem Blue Mountains community began and is still organised by Hal and Heather Ginges. Meetings and celebrations are held in members' homes. The community comprises all Jews, regardless of their religious affiliation, but provides vegetarian food at gatherings so as not to offend any members.<sup>37</sup> The 1991 census shows 41 Jews in the Katoomba-Wentworth Falls area.

### YERRANDERIE

Yerranderie, in the Burragorang Valley, now Lake Burragorang, is today a ghost town, owned by a Sydney woman and managed by a young couple with a new baby.<sup>38</sup> Once it was The Peaks Mining Settlement and was the centre of a silver mining area. A few Jewish families were there. One was Mark Rosenberg who was proprietor of The Peaks Co-operative Stores in 1900. Another was Alfred Harris, founder and editor of the *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, who decided to move to Yerranderie in 1908 after he married Cecilia Harris because the family did not approve of the match. Harris was to return to the *Standard* in 1925 after his father's death. Dawn Fraser is rumoured to be descended from Alfred's father's second marriage. The largest store in Yerranderie was run by brothers-in-law, Samuel and Baron Harris. Fred Schindler, a young man of seventeen was an assistant in 1909 as was young Ross Harris aged 25. Alfred was the treasurer of an exploration group which was searching for silver and lead in the Ruby Creek mine and he was later a director of the mine. In 1895 in Sydney, Alfred had established the *Hebrew Standard* newspaper which celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 1995.

### CENTRAL COAST

The Shalom Central Coast Jewish Friendship and Support Association, based in Gosford, includes both Orthodox and Progressive Jews. It began in 1990 with 60 members and is growing rapidly. Many are former members of the North Shore Temple Emanuel, but the community includes South African and Israeli immigrants as well as local born members and Sydney retirees.<sup>39</sup> The 1991 census recorded 138 Jews in the area. The cemetery was consecrated in 1993 by Rabbi Apple of the Great Synagogue in Sydney.



## NORTH COAST AND NORTHERN TABLELANDS

The **Newcastle** area was the one of the earliest with Jewish residents because it was an area where convicts were sent to work out their sentences, often in chains. From the very early 1800s Jewish convicts such as Samuel Levy, Joel Joseph, Abraham Pollack, Benjamin Lee, Samuel Hart, Levy Lazarus, Vaiben and Emanuel Solomon, Samuel Lyons and notorious bushranger Edward Davis or "Teddy the Jewboy" were sent to Newcastle to work in the coal pits. However the history of the Newcastle Jewish Community begins after the history of **Maitland**.

Nathan Joseph had a general store in Maitland in 1830. In 1831 Phillip Joseph Cohen opened a store and soap factory after the failure of his business in Sydney. He married Abigail, the daughter of Solomon Levien, the town's postmaster and the licensee of the Rose Inn. When Levien moved to Sydney in 1835, Cohen took over both positions. He also had shipping interests, however the recession of the forties brought his fortunes low and he once again returned to Sydney. In 1838 Henry Robert Reuben, a ginger beer and cordial manufacturer, was in Maitland. In 1839 Lewis and Samuel Cohen were trading as Lambeth House. Samuel returned to Sydney in 1841 but maintained his interests in Maitland. P. J. Cohen's step-brother, Simeon J. Cohen arrived in 1840 and in partnership with Alfred Levien formed a commission agency and sold wholesale spirits.

In 1845 Brodziak and Davis, watchmakers and jewellers, were in West Maitland. The Jewish cemetery held 44 graves, while about 40 Jews were living in the town in 1848. West Maitland had 31 Jews in 1851. Five years later there were 100 Jewish inhabitants, the largest number of all country towns at that time. However, by 1861 only 69 remained in West Maitland. Samuel and David Cohen and Lewis Wolfe Levy, who had arrived in 1854, established the famous house of David Cohen and Co.. Levy was on many boards and was a member of parliament for five years from 1880. After Levy left Maitland in 1862, George Judah Cohen, son of Samuel, took over the firm. Samuel had been elected to the seat of Morpeth in 1860. Henry Emanuel Cohen, later to be Colonial Treasurer, was a clerk with the company until 1864.

Other Maitland businesspeople included Benjamin Hart, Edward Salomon, wine and spirit merchant, Elijah Hart, who owned a portrait gallery, and Joseph and Elizabeth Marks, parents of Percy, Ernest and Hilda. Percy was the first president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Ernest was the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Sydney and Hilda was prominent in Jewish literary and debating circles.



The Audet family ran a pharmacy in Maitland during the late nineteen thirties and forties.

As in the case of Forbes, the synagogue was built just before the population began to decline. The foundation stone was laid in 1879. Joseph Marks was treasurer. Rev. A.B. Davis came up from Sydney for the dedication. The minister, Samuel Aaron Goldstein, went to Auckland in 1880 and Rev. Solomon Levi, son of Rev.A.A. Levi from Sydney arrived. He remained until the closure of the synagogue in 1898. The building was sold in 1926. The finial which used to stand on top of the synagogue has been relocated at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

George Judah Cohen also had interests in Newcastle. In 1905, after the decline of the Maitland community, he asked Rev. Isack Morris to lead the tiny community in Newcastle, made up, as it was, of many ex-Maitlanders. George's son, Samuel Cohen (later Sir Samuel) was its first president. Morris led the Newcastle congregation from 1905 to 1949 with a break of ten years between 1910 and 1920. Visiting rabbis filled the intervening years.<sup>40</sup> The Newcastle synagogue was opened in 1927 after Rev. Morris's return and after the sale of the Maitland building. The community reached a peak in 1954 with the census recording over 200 Jews. The last minister, Rev. Wugman, left in 1969 and lay readers have led the congregation since then. In 1989 the congregation numbered only eighty with some South African immigrants adding to the numbers. The last wedding had been ten years earlier and the one previous to that fourteen years earlier. In the 1990s the membership of the synagogue was only about 65.<sup>41</sup> 130 Jews were recorded in the 1991 census.

In the 1930s Lionel Israel started a small clothing store in Newcastle. It became a chain of forty shops called the Coo-ee Clothing Stores. He sold the business in the 1960s to live at Aberdeen, near Scone where he bred racehorses. He had dabbled in breeding horses, sheep and cattle at Raymond Terrace during the years he ran the Coo-ee Stores.

Harry Barnett was a doctor in **Branxton, near Cessnock** mid-century.

## PORT MACQUARIE

Port Macquarie was also an early convict settlement. By 1836 there were 24 Jews in Port Macquarie and 27 in 1841. Many of these were members of the Henry and Elizabeth Cohen family. By 1856 no one remained. Henry and Elizabeth's daughters Frances and Jane were born in 1834 and 1837; Sophia and Abraham's daughter Rosa died at Port Macquarie in 1840, then twins Henry Emanuel and



George were born in that year, followed by Nathan, Caroline, Hannah and Sarah. Abraham Cohen was the manager of the Port Macquarie Steam Navigation Company in 1841. His daughter Caroline married Solomon Joseph of Tamworth and his son Nathan later became an important figure in Tamworth. Samuel and Eliza's daughters Sophia, Sarah, Agnes and Rose were born at Port Macquarie between 1845 and 1851. Samuel owned a small sailing ship named after his mother, the "Elizabeth Cohen" and another after his wife, Eliza. Both plied between Sydney and Port Macquarie. Edward and Esther Cohen, a different family, had a daughter Frances, born at Port Macquarie in 1837.

To break the Cohen monopoly, David Davis, possibly the brother of notorious Kempsey bushranger Edward "Jew Boy" Davis who was hanged in Sydney in 1841, moved to Port Macquarie and died there in 1836. Another Davis, Isaac, died in Port Macquarie in 1845.

### **BELLINGER VALLEY**

Samuel Goldstein bought the property "Goldbrae" at Gleniffer, near Dorrigo, in 1930 for his son, Mark. A piggery was established which was acknowledged as one of the cleanest in the state. It is now a cattle property run by Samuel's grandson, Mark. His brother, Samuel, was killed by lightning while mustering cattle some years ago.<sup>42</sup>

### **GRAFTON**

More Cohens lived in Grafton. John Jacob Cohen, architect and later Judge, was born there in 1859. He was the second son of Samuel Cohen, a pioneer of the Clarence River District. He obtained an Arts degree, worked first for an engineering firm while studying architecture at night, worked as an architect in Queensland, then studied law and went to Sydney where he was admitted to the bar in 1894. In state parliament for 19 years, he was speaker in 1917 and appointed as Judge of the District Court in 1918. He was secretary of the Great Synagogue in 1903 and died in 1939.

Samuel Cohen and his wife, Rosetta, had been living in Newcastle before settling in Grafton where Samuel operated a store. In the 1860s they moved down river to Ulmarra where they operated the hotel as well as a large store. Samuel also owned sailing ships, one the "Rachel Cohen", named after his mother. He was director of the sugar mill, first life member of the hospital, a Justice of the Peace and first mayor of the municipality. In the early 1900s they moved to Sydney where they lived in Macleay Street.





*Rosetta Cohen*

*(reproduced from Lysbeth Cohen's Beginning with Esther, p. 15)*

Land in South Grafton was actually allocated for a synagogue in 1870 and the trustees were Samuel Cohen, Lewis Samuel Lowenthal and Lewis Jacobs but the site was never used, so reverted to the Crown in 1939 and became part of the adjacent public school.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, there were 34 Jews in Grafton in 1947. Abraham Lipman and Edward Solberg were the only trustees left in the mid 1920s after the death of Lewis Jacobs and the departure for Sydney of Samuel Cohen, J.J. Cohen, L.L. Loewenthal, and N.M. Loewenthal. J.Percy Lipman was the last trustee in 1939, when the funds were distributed to the school, to Newcastle synagogue and to the Jewish burial ground. Buried at Grafton are Phoebe Lipman, Alma



Abrahams, Fernandez, Marcus Samuel Loewenthal and Henry and Julius Lazarus. The Loewenthals who owned a store in Grafton were a well-known family with thirteen children.

Abe and Rebecca Tofler had a furniture store in Grafton, having lived there since 1931. Their home was the Jewish centre and Rabbi Morris stayed with them when visiting from Newcastle. Harris and Julie Morris went to Grafton in 1946 where Harris taught at the High School and Julie opened a pre-school. The Lester family arrived in 1947 and both families stayed until the early fifties. Jewish families in these small country towns were delighted to find others to share the festivals and celebrations.<sup>44</sup>

### LISMORE

Lismore attracted a number of foreign born Jews from the 1870s to the early 1900s. Dr Ludwig Bernstein was prominent in public affairs in the late 1870s and early 1880s having come from Tenterfield. Nathan Simmons had also come from Tenterfield. He was a solicitor and a philanthropist with extensive properties. Charles Lobliner ran a general store, Isidore Harovitch was also a general merchant, while Isaac Himmelhoch and Joseph Cohen and his son Harry were jewellers. Hyman Himmelhoch also had a jewellery business in Armidale from 1905 to the early twenties. Bernstein was an alderman, mayor three times as well as coroner and he inaugurated the Lismore Hospital. The highest Jewish population was 34 in 1921.<sup>45</sup>

### MURRURUNDI

Isaac Levey and Samuel Davis (1) bought land in the **Scone** area which Levey alone retained until 1884 having bought Davis out. George Cohen of **St.Aubins** bought land in 1851 and 1852 and established a store, but moved to Gunnedah thirty years later in 1882.

In 1938 Lionel Israel purchased the historic Hunter Valley property, Segenhoe at **Aberdeen**, near Scone and began to create his famous stud breeding business.<sup>46</sup> Thirty years later he sold his clothing business in Newcastle to live full-time at Segenhoe. Abraham Pearlman had a store in a small shed in Aberdeen which was sold in 1918.

In 1858, Lewis Cohen, storekeeper of Murrurundi, purchased land in the new village of **Wingen**. Joseph Friedman, a Polish immigrant, who had previously lived at **Singleton**, became postmaster in 1870 after purchasing land in the area the previous year. He carried on subsistence farming after the railway arrived



and many other businesspeople had left Wingen. In 1878 he obtained a wine licence and sold sherry. He later obtained permission to have music and dancing on his premises. His youngest son, Albert, who also managed the dairy, joined the business prior to 1890 and worked there until he went to Maitland in 1906. After Joseph died the business was carried on by Albert's widowed daughter-in-law who was still in charge in 1982. Although Joseph was religious and had the rabbi come from Maitland for his daughters' marriages, three of his children married non-Jews and Albert converted to Catholicism.

Lewis Cohen was the licensee of the Woolpack Inn (Bobadil House in 1982). In 1852 he and Joseph Cohen opened a store in Murrurundi which traded under the name of Joseph Cohen and Co. The land he purchased in 1853 was known as Cohen's Place. There is also a Cohen's Gully and Cohen Street. Doughboy Hollow, now **Ardglen** was the site of a further land purchase by Lewis Cohen in 1855 where he established a branch store which was sold in 1859. That year he bought land at **Blandford** where he established a store in 1861 which was run by Bernard Cohen. This was sold in the twenties. He also bought land in Nundle when gold was discovered there. The 1850s to 1860s saw him investing in land for grazing stock and in the early seventies he built a house at Glenmire village. Unfortunately it was destroyed by fire in 1886 and Lewis Cohen went to live with his son, Solomon. He handed the business over to his son in about 1872 as Joseph Cohen had gone to Maitland where he was managing a brewery. In 1876 Solomon shot an intruder and was tried but acquitted. He continued to operate the business until about 1885 when he sold out to William Done and went to **Cootamundra** where he took over an established store which eventually became the largest in the town. Lewis Cohen had been an original member of the Murrurundi Benevolent Society which established the hospital. He was also interested in horse racing. He died in 1894, his wife, Sarah, having pre-deceased him. He had two unmarried daughters, Rose and Kate. A Gabriel Cohen was practising in Murrurundi as a dentist in the seventies until he moved to Tamworth in 1876.

David Cohen and Co. had interests in Murrurundi from 1856 and in 1884 the company took over a large store which was sold in 1903 to the manager, J. Dooley. When Samuel Cohen was principal of the Maitland firm he bought land at Murrurundi. Samuel died in 1861 and his son, George Judah sold the land to David Cohen and L.W. Levy. It was never developed and sold again in 1914.

Lewis Lipson was buried in Murrurundi in 1916.



## GUNNEDAH

George Cohen, brother of David and Abraham from Maitland, arrived in Gunnedah in the late 1850s. From 1861 to 1874 he was the town's postmaster. He also ran a store from which he retired in 1891. He opened Cohen's Bridge across the Namoi River, named after him, in 1885. Previously there had been two crossings: Cohen's for transporting people in iron flat-bottomed boats, and Bennetts was the stock crossing, still used by drovers. By the 1870s a proper bridge was an urgent matter and it was finally built to the west of Cohen's crossing. In 1886 a larger bridge was built across the Namoi at Manilla. This was opened by Mrs Harry Levien, whose husband had contested the seat of Tamworth against Bennett.

George Cohen built himself a large private residence, Roseneath. After George left, it was actually used as a church until 1895. George's sons Sam, Harry, Percy and Bert and his three daughters lived in Gunnedah for many years.

## TAMWORTH, NARRABRI AND BOGGABRI

It was the early 1840s when Abraham Cohen, who was connected to the Maitland Cohens, arrived. Lewis Wolfe Levy arrived in 1846 and carried on his business until 1864 when he went to Maitland. He also ran the post office. Four of his children were born in Tamworth. Abraham Cohen and Louis Levy, brother of L.W., owned their store



*The four daughters of Esther and Nathan Cohen: Ida, Eden, Alice, Cora (reproduced from Lysbeth Cohen's Beginning with Esther, p. 22)*



from 1846 to 1906. Nathan Cohen, with his parents Abraham and Sophie from Port Macquarie, arrived in 1858 to work for his uncle William Cohen, brother of Edward. He married Esther Solomon, daughter of Solomon Solomon from Eden and they built the house "Brighton" in Carthage Street. Later he was married to Esther's sister, Deborah. His daughter, Ida Cohen lived to the ripe old age of 102, the grand old lady of Tamworth. She married her cousin, Victor Cohen who had arrived at the age of 15 to work as an office boy for uncle Nathan. Nathan became a great philanthropist, was a member of the first council in 1876 and was mayor twice, in 1882 and 1883. When Nathan died, R. H. Levien became local member for Tamworth in 1910.

In 1852 gold was discovered south-east of Tamworth at Hanging Rock. Cohen and Levy opened a store on the new field and by 1856 there were 16 Jews. In the 1880s the number had risen to 45. It was also a rich wool area. David Cohen of Maitland, Abraham's brother, owned a number of sheep properties in the area. Other families were in the district as well, namely Josephs and Levys. The names were perpetuated in such landmarks as Levy's Springs, Jewry Street and Cohen's Run. A land sale in the 1850s included the names Moses Joseph, Joseph Joseph, Nathan Joseph, Lewis Wolfe Levy, L. Hart, Henry Cohen. Cohen and Levy opened their store in town in 1867 after the mines at Nundle were no longer profitable.

Abraham Cohen and his wife Sophie, daughter of Henry Cohen, were active in civic affairs. He was a local councillor in 1876. Other Jews in the town were B.A. Moses, saddler and bootseller, and Henry Lewis Harris, government medical officer in 1891. Between 1883 and 1891 several hoteliers were Jews. Other eminent names were Colonel Arthur Wellesley who was on Monash's staff and an early president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. Charles Collins was MLA for Namoi and Narrabri. Collins and Louis Hyman worked with Cohen and Levy.

In 1889 Solomon Joseph and Caroline, Nathan's sister, moved to Tamworth where he bought the *Tamworth News* which he held until his death in 1901. His nephew, Albert Joseph built up the *Northern Daily Leader* from 1910. Lou Solomon served the community for many years having arrived in 1914 as a small child.

Services were held in the billiard room of Nathan Cohen's home from the 1870s. Solomon Joseph and Joseph Barnard officiated. Victor Cohen was the first president of the later Tamworth Hebrew Congregation. In 1934 there were meetings of the community to discuss boosting the population with European migrants. Rev. William Katz and his family were brought out and were warmly welcomed during the year they stayed with the community before going to the



Northern Suburbs Hebrew Congregation which later established a synagogue at Lindfield. D. Luberman was honorary secretary of the Tamworth congregation in 1936 and in 1938 Lewis Shaw conducted services for the congregation in premises in Peel Street. Letters were written in 1937 about establishing a synagogue, when money from land sales at Goulburn became available, but no synagogue was ever built. The largest Jewish population had been in 1881; by 1969 only 10 members of the congregation were left. Surprisingly, the 1991 census recorded 21!

## NARRABRI

Narrabri had been the railway terminus since 1882 when Harris and Julia Lewis arrived there in 1907. Harris set up a tailoring shop and menswear establishment with his son Jack and another son, Morris, arrived in 1909. Julia died in 1916 and the shop was sold after World War I. In 1910 their daughter Ettie created quite a stir in town with her lavish wedding and ball to which the whole town was invited. Her sister Nancy was a milliner in Narrabri. Other Jewish residents included the Reubens, Goldmans, Goldings and Idsteins, all merchants. Among the wedding guests were the Pearlmans of Boggabri and J. Samuels of Moree (grandfather of the present NSW governor, the Honorable Gordon Samuels). Ettie's brother Maurice later had a business in Moree as did sister Bella and husband Errol Cohen. Another son, Ike, had a tailoring business in Gundagai and later in Coonamble.<sup>47</sup> The Milston family was in Coonamble from the 1890s.

Woolf Ruta Cohen had begun hawking in the Tamworth and Narrabri districts before the turn of the century.<sup>48</sup> He was in partnership with Albert Coppleson in a store at **Walgett** but by 1892 was on his own and remained in business until 1908. Coppleson went into business in **Wee Waa** in 1890 and continued until 1936. He was president of the Shire Council for twenty-two years and was active in rail and road improvement as well as water conservation.<sup>49</sup>

Ruby Rich was born in Walgett in 1888 where her parents Ada and Louis also operated a store. They were one of the few white families in the district and Ada relied on help from the Aboriginal women as there were no other white women around. For a Jewish family in outback New South Wales they were very isolated and soon moved to Sydney where Ruby was educated and became very involved in women's rights and in WIZO.<sup>50</sup>



## BOGGABRI

Abraham Pearlman, having started hawking with his brother Isaac and Isaac Robinovitz in the Quirindi area saw promise in another railway town, Boggabri. They moved there in 1894 and established Pearlman Brothers Store. Abraham married the next year and children followed. They kept in contact with the Sydney community and Abraham assisted Rev. Bramson with services in 1901 in Sydney.

Abraham and his wife took up a pastoral lease in 1905, while Isaac and his wife took over the store. Isaac later leased a small property as well. Abraham called his farm "Herzleton" after Theodore Herzl and established a Farmers and Graziers Association. He became president of the Building Committee for the hospital and was one of the founders of the Masonic Lodge. When Abraham died in 1934 the local paper wrote a glowing obituary.<sup>51</sup>

## PRE-WORLD WAR II MIGRATION: MUTUAL FARMS AND THE BIG BROTHER MOVEMENT

Mutual Farms and Mutual Enterprises were established by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in the 1930s for the benefit of refugees already in country New South Wales. The Welfare had promised the government to place as many migrants as possible in agricultural work on the land. These enterprises were to encourage and finance farming and small business. Paul Cohen, later Major-General Paul Cullen, was a guiding force behind this enterprise and, together with Gerald de Vahl Davis, organised financial assistance from the American-based Refugee Economic Corporation for Mutual Farms. The objectives were to purchase land, develop it and carry out farming, grazing, fruit preserving, mining etc.<sup>52</sup> A number of refugees were settled on small holdings such as poultry farms, mixed farms and market gardens with tomato glass houses. In places such as **Glass House, Long Jetty, The Entrance and the Central Coast** farms were leased by Mutual Farms and sub-let to consecutive Jewish migrant farmers. However they were never self-sufficient and the last family left in 1941. Orchards and rice farms in the **Leeton/ Grafton** region were also obtained for Jewish migrants.

The 25 acre Chelsea Park Training Farm in Baulkham Hills was opened in November 1938 to train families to be poultry farmers and farm hands. It had expanded to 34 acres by mid-1939 but was abandoned soon after the outbreak of war in March 1940. By December 1939 25 families had moved to properties and 28 married couples were in rural employment.



In September 1940 Mutual Farms purchased 250 acres at **Cowra** and established a group settlement called Mooringa where they placed refugees from Germany and Austria. Each family had a cow, a horse, a plough and two dozen chickens as well as vegetable seed. Each man farmed and milked the cow and made butter while his wife cared for the chickens. Piggeries were established with the dairy waste and vegetables were grown. A weekly wage was paid to the families by Mutual Farms. It was not greatly successful financially and when the younger men joined the army, the older ones continued, but many families returned to the cities. In 1944 the project was closed and the land sold to Edgells. Mutual Farms was liquidated in 1966.<sup>53</sup>

The Big Brother movement began in 1938 to sponsor Jewish boys from Germany, in order to train them at government experimental farms, so they could find employment on the land. The first of the boys arrived in April. They were sent to Glen Innes where they were trained and they found work in the Glen Innes/ Tamworth area. The second group arrived six months later and were enrolled in January 1939. In the first group were the Bluth brothers, Claude Newcombe, James Willow, Werner Heilbrunn, Andy Brools and Louis Freeland. Werner Heilbrunn continues to farm and trade cattle in

the Wyong, Martinsville, Maitland and Dubbo areas.<sup>54</sup> The second group comprised Hugh Freede, Rolf Mandstock, Walter Freeland, Curt Hersh, Harry Steiner and Rolf Weiner Freman. Later Mutual Farms was instrumental in helping some of the boys' families to migrate here. Through this scheme the "Gross-Breesen boys" from Silesia found work at **Forster**, having arrived in May 1939.

Nine families had formerly been farming in the Parramatta area. In the 1950s Dr Solomon Goldberg was experimenting with the production and export of Corriedale sheep. Jewish people on the land encompassed farmers and graziers, studmasters, dairy and poultry farmers, vegetable and cut flower gardeners and farm labourers. Jews on the land were identified in the



*Werner Heilbrunn at Glen  
Innes*



following areas: Albury, Bathurst, Bowral, Bundanoon, Canberra, Carlingford, Cowra, Dungog, Dural, Glen Innes, Glenbrook, Glenfield, Goulburn, Griffiths, Gundagai, Junee, Milperra, Panania, Parramatta, Robertson, Taree and Windsor.<sup>55</sup>

It seems today that the wheel has almost turned full-circle with communities being established again in regions geographically far away from Sydney. In the early 1980s 20 Jewish families were fully occupied in farming. Braham Seeman was farming at Bowral in 1982. However, with modern communication technology, no one is really very far away and small outlying congregations can keep in touch with major ones easily. The fears for the assimilation of Jews in remote outlying areas are dispelled as small groups of Jews seek each other out and gather together to celebrate age-old rituals.

Dr Lionel Fredman, writing in the *AJHS Journal*, quoted Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport":

Gone are the living, but the dead remain/ And not neglected; for  
a hand unseen/ scattering its bounty like a summer rain/ Still  
keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

He then wrote; "It is the task of the Jewish historian, in Australia...to explain that 'hand unseen' and explain why Jewish communities in the Diaspora survive, adapt and are replenished"<sup>56</sup>

The small rural Jewish communities in New South Wales survived by dint of hard work, interest in communal affairs, family contacts, intermarriage with other Jewish communities. They kept in contact with the Sydney community and made use of its services. They were respected in their local communities where they worked side by side with their non-Jewish neighbours and adapted to the ways of the country. When gold rushes ceased and property booms declined and depression set in, they readapted and returned to the cities. However it would seem that in the late twentieth century some of the Jewish communities in rural New South Wales are being replenished as people retire to areas away from the city centres and set up their own support mechanisms or seek support from Sydney as they did over a hundred years ago.



## **APPENDIX I**

### **MARRIAGES BETWEEN TOWNS**

TOWNS	NAMES
Boorowa and Goulburn	Esther Davis and Moses Marks
Cootamundra and Musswelbrook	Solomon Cohen and Mabel Cohen
Eden and Berrima	Rebecca Solomon and Joseph Levy
Goulburn and Forbes	Joseph Collins and Lydia Marks
Jamberoo and Nowra	Sarah Hyam and Henry Moss
Kelso and Bathurst	Grisha Bershtein and Rebecca Lapin
Port Macquarie and Tamworth	Caroline Cohen and Solomon Joseph

## **APPENDIX II**

### **NEWSPAPER PROPRIETORS**

TOWNS	NAMES
Bombala	P. Jonas
Goulburn	Benjamin Isaacs
Lambing Flat	Mr Isaacs
Mudgee	George Henry Cohen
Tamworth	Albert Joseph Solomon Joseph

## **APPENDIX III**

### **STOREKEEPERS**

TOWNS	NAMES
Albury	David and Leah Cann Ralph and Ada Marks Jacob Brann Mr Rappaport Mr Solomon
Bathurst	Saul and Lewis Samuel
Boorowa	Isaac Levey
Cootamundra	Solomon Cohen
Forbes	Abraham Marks



# STOREKEEPERS (cont.)

TOWNS	NAMES
Forbes	Nelson and Cohen S and H.B. Cohen S. Moses Maurice Lazarus and Morris Neroman A. L. Rosenweig Rosalsky and Goulstone A. Goldsmide
Kiandra	Benjamin Davies, Allander and Co. P. Richards
Goulburn	Samuel Emanuel and Benjamin Moses Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses David Davis Samuel Davis
Maitland	P.J. Cohen L.W. Levy George Judah Cohen
Morpeth and Maitland	Samuel Cohen
Musselbrook	Frederick Cohen
Walgett	Wolf Cohen Louis Rich
Wee Waa	Albert Coppleson

## APPENDIX IV

### PASTORALISTS

TOWNS	NAMES
Darling Downs	George Mocatta
Goulburn and Yass	Isaac Levey
Gundagai	Samuel Solomon
Jamberoo	Michael Hyam Solomon Herbert Hyam
Minnamurra, Kiama	Michael Hyam
Wellington	Jacob B. Montefiore Michael Phillips P.J. Cohen Saul Samuel



## APPENDIX V

### PUBLICANS

TOWNS	NAMES
Albury	Mr Moses
Berrima	Joseph Levy
Bombala	Jacob Phillips
Bungendore	Solomon Moses
Bungonia	Nathan Mandelson
Cootamundra	Solomon Cohen
	M. Solomon
Forbes	Levy Vandenberg
	Abraham Cohen
Goulburn	Nathan Mandelson
	Solomon Moses (d.1860)
Jamberoo and Shoalhaven	Michael Hyam
	David Hyam
Kiandra	Maurice Solomon
	Samuel Phillips
Lambing flat	Barnett Phillips
	L. Marcus
Lucknow	J.L.Isaacs
Maitland	Saul Lyons
	Abraham Samuel
	Solomon Levien
	P.J. Cohen
Murrurundi	Lewis Cohen
Orange	H. Isaacs
Parkes	Baron Cohen

## APPENDIX VI

### COACH PROPRIETORS

TOWN	NAMES
Bathurst	Louis Alexander
Goulburn	Nathan Mandelson



## APPENDIX VII

MAYORS

TOWN	NAMES
Bombala	Hyam Moses Joseph P.Jonas L. Goldberg
Campbelltown	Phillip Solomon
Cooma	Charles Solomon
Lismore	Bernstein
Mudgee	Laurie Cohen
Nowra	Henry Moss David Hyam
Orange	Benjamin Nelson Edward Nathan
Tamworth	Nathan Cohen Abraham Cohen

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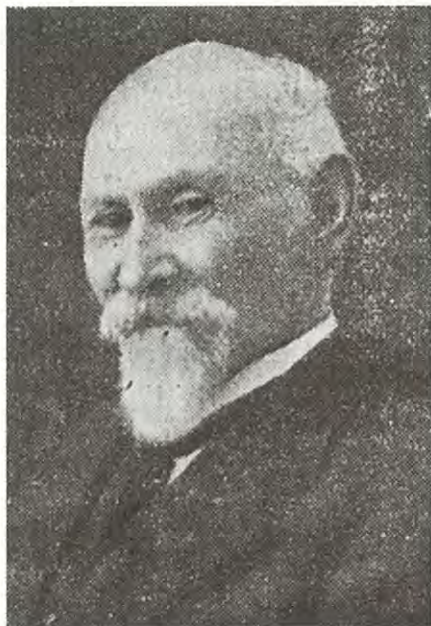
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## JACOB GLASS AND THE CINEMA

*Robert Parkinson*

**T**he date 28 December 1895 marked the first demonstration of moving film projection to an audience of paying customers in Paris by the Lumiere Brothers. Thomas Edison had previously invented a machine for individual viewing of moving pictures, a kinetoscope, which was imported into Australia in November 1894. However, projection to an audience did not happen here until magician, Carl Hertz, included this "marvel of the age" in his show at the Melbourne Opera House on Saturday 22 August 1896. By the beginning of the twentieth century the phenomenon had taken hold of the public's imagination and led to the building of special theatres (cinemas) in major cities to show the ever increasing output of film studios both here and overseas. "Live" theatres and community halls also came to be taken over for the new medium, especially in country districts, but even there purpose-built cinemas were soon bringing the same delights to residents as those enjoyed by their metropolitan cousins.



*Jacob Glass (Courtesy Hebrew Standard of Australasia)*

Jacob Glass, who was born in Poland some forty years prior to the Paris moving picture demonstration, migrated to Australia in 1879 and settled in Bulli on the New South Wales Illawarra coast. There he established a miners' supply business, having "learnt the ropes" in the coalfields around Leeds in the United Kingdom. Glass brought out his wife, Emma, and the two settled into a highly rewarding life in their adopted country. Business flourished, and, despite fathering a large family of ten, Glass still found



time for hospital charity work, industrial conciliation for miners, active support of striking miners in 1897, local friendly societies, competitive fishing, and lawn bowls.

The family historian and grandson, Bernie Freedman, of Woollahra, a Sydney suburb, thinks that Glass came to regard Australia as a kind of "promised land" flowing with, if not milk and honey, at least offering incredibly cheap food, especially meat. Jacob's thoughts may have been turned in an antipodean direction by the escapades of one Thomas Orton, a butcher from Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, a former Londoner. Orton had been found guilty of imposture and jailed in England 1872. His trial and background caused such sensation as to be reported extensively in newspapers to which Glass would have had access. In any case, Glass decided to seek the better standard of living offered in Australia and apply his business skills in its burgeoning coal mining industry.

By February 1897, when a travelling showman brought moving pictures for the first time to the Illawarra District in Wollongong Town Hall, Glass would have been well established as a social and business personality in the area immediately to the north. Pictures are recorded in Bulli and the adjoining village of Woonona as early as 1901 and may have been witnessed by Glass or members of his family. Travelling shows used one of three venues: Oddfellows' Hall (still standing but renovated as the Masonic Temple), Music Hall (destroyed by fire in December 1906), and Friendly Societies Hall (still standing but used as a motor repair garage). One of the trustees of the latter was Jacob Glass who is recorded as originally opposing construction of the hall in 1905 because of the availability of the other two.

By 1911 Glass, however, seems to have decided that provision for theatrical entertainment, including moving pictures, was inadequate as he engaged architect Alex Elphinstone to design and construct a multi-purpose hall in Woonona, seating 1000 and costing £ 3000. Eventually named "Princess" the theatre was declared open on Friday 19 January 1912 by John Kirton, Bulli Shire President, who stated:

...he thought it spoke well for the energy and enterprise of their friend Glass to put a structure up such as that one. He thought Mr. Glass deserved great credit for having the opening for the benefit of their noble institution, the hospital...creditable to Mr. Glass and all connected with him to have erected such an elegant structure. If this stadium were run on proper lines, combining interest with pleasure, it would be an acquisition. He felt sure, from the reputation of Gordon's, that the standard





*Woonona Princess Theatre, August 1930 (Photo courtesy of W. Parkinson). The hoardings at front were advertising programs at the nearby Royal Theatre opened in 1924.*

of his pictures would be such that the most fastidious could bring their families along and enjoy them...Gordon's then gave a picture programme of the usual excellence...<sup>1</sup>

The friendship of Glass with Kirton is corroborated by the latter's daughter, Irene, Mrs Stephens of Clovelly, who remembers her father collecting Glass in the family car for a weekly game of lawn bowls.

The increasing significance of moving pictures for community entertainment is underscored by there being the opening presentation at Glass' theatre by a Mr Gordon who had shown films in Wollongong and other neighbouring towns since 1909. He was really Charles Weisbach, former officer in the Salvation Army Limelight Department which he and other colleagues abandoned when their superiors gradually withdrew support for the Army's hitherto widespread production and exhibition program. It was the Salvation Army which won government contracts to film the 1901 ceremonies marking Australia's Federation in Sydney and the 1908 visit of the American



Fleet. Extensive screenings of religious and secular subjects by Army teams throughout Australia are well documented from 1897 to 1910, including Bulli and Wollongong in 1903, 1904 and 1908.

On his resignation from the Salvation Army, Weisbach adopted the "stage" name of Harry Gordon, probably due to embarrassment from his German name, and applied his Limelight Department experience as a travelling showman in NSW and Queensland, taking films to small communities that did not enjoy a permanent cinema. Although he later changed his family name to Whitebrook, an easy direct translation from German, he retained the 'Gordon' pseudonym for his business work until his death in Wollongong in January 1932, only a few months before the death of his former Woonona business associate Glass.

The original Woonona "stadium" appears to have been an open-air structure behind an enclosed hall which fronted the street. It is not clear when roofing covered the open-air section but eventually a fully enclosed auditorium occupied the site.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1914 part of the complex was given over to non-theatrical activities such as those of Sydney dentist Spencer Nolan. On Gordon's tenure coming to an end in late 1914 it seems that the enterprising Wollongong entrepreneur Herbert Boland became involved with the Princess. It is known that he had a definite lease from 1 August 1925 in the name of his company, Wollongong Theatres Ltd, but permitted only dances, skating and other social activities, having opened the more modern Royal Theatre a little distance north on the same street in September 1924.

Some six years previously, Glass had moved to Waverley, a Sydney suburb, apparently losing interest in the theatre site as did family members even though they had helped in running it in the early days. In 1930 dancing was advertised in the Palais Regent (Late Princess Theatre, Woonona).<sup>3</sup> By the time of Glass' death in 1932 the Princess Theatre was not considered worth mentioning in his obituary and, according to the family historian, little could be recalled about it. By 1938 furniture sales took place in the premises and in November 1939 ownership passed to Wollongong Theatres Pty Ltd following protracted negotiations from 1937 caused by legal complications in the administration of Glass' estate. The sale price was a mere £ 2500. The new owner had no intention of upgrading the theatre so as to prevent any show in opposition to the Royal. The building was poorly maintained and eventually became completely unusable. It was sold to Bulli Shire Council in 1946 and a year later, following local government amalgamations, ownership passed to Greater Wollongong City Council. Subsequent demolition removed all traces of the Princess Theatre and its place was taken by a Baby



Health Centre and park, commemorating a local alderman, Mr Strachan, not the arguably more memorable Jacob Glass. The site is on the western side of the main road in the current commercial centre of Woonona.

Memories of the old theatre were revived in March 1988 when the *Illawarra Mercury* published a photograph of a small statue of a black man found in a local garden. Ensuing correspondence described a similar adornment on the facade of the Princess Theatre, and the Glass family historian has added weight to the story by remarking on Glass' interest in unusual ornaments such as the two statues rescued from the Bondi Junction Star Theatre and re-erected in Glass' Waverley garden. In 1995 the Australian Cinema and Theatre Society Inc published my book with the intriguing title of *Gauffered Velour* ("crushed velvet" for the uninitiated) detailing the history of Illawarra picture theatres and exhibitors. Glass and the Woonona Princess Theatre feature prominently therein and appropriately revive the memory of a man about whom the *Hebrew Standard* of Friday 26 August 1932 published these words:

...well-known South Coast identity...Until a few years ago the deceased resided in the Illawarra District, of which he was one of the pioneers, the business he established at Bulli over fifty years ago being still continued by two of his sons...held a conspicuous position in all South Coast movements...In the bitter industrial disputes and disturbances preceding the calamitous Bulli Colliery Disaster in 1887 and throughout the early nineties, Mr. Glass acted regularly as one of the miners' representatives on the Conciliation Committee...purchased and voluntarily supplied material for housing evicted families...sponsor of the movement for the dedication to the public of the Hopetoun Park Reservation at the Bulli Pass Look-out and was appointed one of the first trustees of the present reserve...<sup>4</sup> One of the few surviving members of the Foundation Committee of the Bulli-Woonona District Hospital he served on the Management Committee for over thirty years...He held office as honorary Magistrate at Bulli for over twenty years and took a keen interest in the friendly society and other movements...He was for over thirty-five years a member of the Great Synagogue and for some years a member of the Board of the Eastern Suburbs Central Synagogue. Always an enthusiastic fisherman...on two occasions won coastal fishing competitions. There is much sympathy expressed with Mrs. Glass and her children, as they have all been prominently identified with communal matters for many years. They comprise



Mr. L. Glass (Bulli), Mr. Louis E. Glass (Waverley), Mr. Samuel Glass (Bulli), Mrs. I. Freedman (Waverley), Mr Sydney B. Glass (hon. treasurer of the Great Synagogue), Mrs M. Levy (Elizabeth Street, Sydney), Mrs M. Toffler (Waverley), Mr. David Glass (Leichhardt), and Mr. E. G. Glass (Robertson Road, Sydney) [a tenth child Solomon had predeceased his father].

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Australian Cinema and Theatre Society Inc, Australian Jewish Historical Society, Illawarra Historical Society, Land Titles Office of NSW, Salvation Army Heritage Centre (Bexley North), Wollongong City Library, Wollongong University Archives, *Hebrew Standard*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Modern Reference Encyclopedia*, *South Coast Times*, *War Cry*, B. Freedman (Woollahra), K. Cork (Seven Hills), C. Long (Melbourne), I. Stephens (Clovelly), Dr F. Whitebrook (Lismore).

### NOTES

1. *South Coast Times*, 26 January 1912
2. *Ibid.*, 17 August and 3 November 1923
3. *Illawarra Mercury*, 24 October 1930
4. Lord Hopetoun was Australia's first Governor-General; regrettably the reserve no longer carries his name



## LINCOLN, THE DESCENDANTS OF NATHAN BEN ELIJAH AND AUSTRALIA: A NEW APPRAISAL

*Anthony Josphe*

**T**he ancient City of Lincoln in England has received the attention of numerous Jewish scholars, mostly because of its important Medieval Jewish community. It was also a place, tragic in Anglo-Jewish history, where calumny was again heaped upon the Jews for alleged involvement in sacrificial murder rites. The legend of 'Little St Hugh', commemorated by so eminent an English scribe as Chaucer, and discussed by (Australian-born) Joseph Jacobs before the Jewish Historical Society of England in May 1894,<sup>1</sup> is one of the more ugly myths in the Jews' long history of struggle against the forces of darkness. This sad martyrdom in Lincoln in 1255 had a disastrous effect for the whole of the medieval Anglo-Jewish community and its details were recalled, suitably embellished, when additional ammunition was required by the Court of King Edward I and his nobles in the events leading up to that monarch expelling the Jews from the realm in 1290.

Several papers concerning different aspects of medieval Lincoln Jewry have been read to the Jewish Historical Society in England and that society has also paid at least two official visits to the town. On Monday, 5 June 1899, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported subsequently:<sup>2</sup>

Twenty members from London were joined by numerous other members from Birmingham and received a 'very enjoyable guided tour of the town conducted for them by Mr Joseph Jacobs [the same person as had read the paper in 1894] and Mr Frank Haes.'

The occasion of the second J.H.S.E. official visit to Lincoln was on 24 June 1934, which visit was also reported in the *Jewish Chronicle*<sup>3</sup> and commemorated in the form of a small booklet giving full details of the outing. The Society's then President, Gustave Tuck, described the visit as one of the most successful functions in the entire history of the Society with 80 members and others participating.



Amongst the array of important Jewish personalities who participated in that gathering in Lincoln on 24 June 1934 was Cecil Roth, who had himself already contributed to our knowledge on Lincoln Jewry and was to do so again in a manner which provided me with one of the starting points for my investigations into the Jewish community of Lincoln. Amongst his many contributions to aspects of Jewish scholarship, Roth was, for a considerable time, the Corresponding Member for Great Britain of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and when he resigned that office in 1966 I succeeded him and have filled the position ever since. Roth was also currently President of the Jewish Historical Society of England at the time when I joined it in 1954 and it seems that in some small way I have followed him in various aspects of Jewish historical studies, although I make no claim to anything like the expertise that he displayed in the field.

Roth's *magnum opus* on the origins and early development of so many of the English smaller provincial communities was published in 1950 under the title *The Rise of Provincial Jewry*. Many of the communities mentioned therein were already long since mere memories, including that of Lincoln about which Roth wrote: 'It can hardly be imagined that so numerous a group did not hold regular religious services.'<sup>4</sup> It may never be possible to resolve this rhetorically-posed question for certainty but it has certainly provided me with one of the strands of investigation that led me to examine afresh the extent and degree of organisation of the Jewish community in Lincoln over the past two centuries or more. The other significant starting point for me leading to the gathering together of material that I am presenting to you now is personal in that I am a descendant of one Jonas Lazarus, jeweller and freemason, and who, too, Roth mentions in *The Rise of Provincial Jewry*.<sup>5</sup> Lazarus lived in Lincoln for upwards of perhaps 50 years and his celebrated marriage on 5 August 1810 at Godmanchester 'to the beautiful and accomplished Rosceia, daughter of Mr Moses I. Nathan' was reported in great detail in the contemporary press.<sup>6</sup> I shall have occasion to refer again to this marriage and its significant links with Australian Jewry. For me too an important additional sense of personal involvement in the story of the Lincoln Jewish community derives from the fact that both my late first wife and I jointly descend from Jonas and Rosceia Lazarus and we were aware of this link with Lincoln even before our own marriage which took place in 1960. Rosceia Lazarus died 'under circumstances of great worldly depression' on 9 April 1832<sup>7</sup> and her husband, Jonas Lazarus, died at his residence at 12 Steep Hill, Lincoln, on 25 November 1851. He was aged 80 and according to his death certificate died of 'Spasm of the Lungs' which, I think, must mean bronchial asthma.



Writing on the origins of Lincoln Jewry, Roth states:

There was more than one household and possibly an organised religious life, all traces of which has now disappeared . . . The Jewish tradition here is a long one, Nathan Elias or Nathan Ben Elijah Lincoln, ancestor and namesake of Ney Elias, the eminent explorer, was admitted to membership of the Great Synagogue, London, in 1766/7.<sup>8</sup>

It was perfectly usual for the eighteenth century membership of the Lincoln Great Synagogue to be far flung and many other examples could be quoted of members who lived many miles from the English capital. The synagogue membership list compiled by Roth and published already by the Jewish Historical Society of England,<sup>9</sup> includes Nathan Ben Elijah's son-in-law, Pheis Ben Moses Lincoln, otherwise known as Philip Levi, and, subsequently, founder of a family firm, Philip Levi & Sons, in George Yard, Lombard Street. I shall return to him and his descendants during the course of this paper. I have already mentioned that an account of Jonas Lazarus' wedding to Rosceia Nathan appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and from this source it is apparent that Rosceia was, in fact, a grand-daughter of Nathan Ben Elijah Lincoln and that he was also present at his grand-daughter's wedding. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, a sort of precursor to *Punch*, often entertained its readers with examples of colourful and unusual ceremonies, amongst which items concerning Jews are sprinkled not infrequently.<sup>10</sup>

In 1841 there are only two certainly identifiable Jewish families in Lincoln, one of which is Jonas Lazarus, already in 12 Steep Hill, and at the time a widower with three of his children, all born in Lincoln between 1815 and 1830. From other sources Jonas Lazarus was known to have had at least four other children, but by the time of the 1841 Census they were already sufficiently adult to have left the original homestead and be in different parts of the kingdom, or even already in Australia. The youngest Lazarus child, David, was born in Lincoln in 1830 two years before his mother's death and he too ended his days in Australia, as will be discussed later.

In the 1851 Census listing again there are only two known Jewish families and one of which, of course, is Jonas Lazarus, the widower. This time the only child with him is his still unmarried daughter, Esther, and also a grand-daughter of his called Amelia Hart, who was born in Wolverhampton in 1837. Amelia was a daughter of Jonas and Rosceia's daughter, Sheba (wife of Emanuel Hart; she died in a Stafford mental asylum in 1870). I think Amelia must have been somewhat of a favourite of her grandfather since she was the



only grandchild to be mentioned in his will when he died later that year.

Amongst the few Jewish families to be found in the 1861 Census is Jonas Lazarus' daughter, Esther, now married to Abraham Moses and living at the house at 12 Steep Hill with their own small daughter, Rosa. Jonas Lazarus had left his house and its contents to his daughter, Esther; he also left various personal effects to another daughter, Catherine, who was unmarried at the time of her father's death. She subsequently married Isaac Levi and the couple settled in Australia; they are buried in the Jewish section of the Melbourne General Cemetery, where their graves were located by Eric Tetlow. They appear to have emigrated to Australia fairly shortly after Jonas Lazarus' death and Eric Tetlow has also found shipping records of their arrival at Port Philip on the *Covenanter* in 1852. They should have been married in England sometime between Jonas Lazarus' death and their arrival in Australia but an exhaustive search has failed to find any record of the marriage.

Lincoln has proved a seminal nursery for some early Australian Jewish development. I have already touched upon the eighteenth century Lincoln Jew, Nathan Ben Elijah, father-in-law of Philip Levi. Philip Levi himself has three sons, Moses Philip Levi, Samuel Philip Levi and Nathan Philip Levi, who were all first cousins, therefore, of Rosceia Nathan. In 1819 Nathan Philip Levi, the youngest son, married Sarah Goldsmid from the well-known bullion-broking and banking family. The details of the marriage settlement have been preserved and the original is now in the South Australian Archives in Adelaide. One of the Trustees was Nathan's elder brother, Samuel, who later abjured his faith and took his mother-in-law's maiden name of Rickman. He married Mary Hobson from the family that gave rise to 'Hobson's Choice' and died in Tottenham, London, in 1844.

Like so many of their kith and kin, Nathan and Sarah Levi also had a large family and their eldest son, Philip Levi (named after his grandfather), migrated as a free settler in 1838 to the then newly established colony in South Australia. Philip Levi travelled with his cousin, Jonas Moses Philipson, the son of Moses Philip Levi, who had died young in 1817. The two cousins prospered in the new colony, especially Philip who

... exhibited great faith in the future of the young Country and became very deeply involved in the rapidly growing pastoral industry ... he was a man of remarkable energy and financial ability with a daring, speculative spirit tempered by sound judgement.<sup>11</sup>



Nathan Philip Levi followed his son to Australia, arriving first in Sydney and subsequently moving to Adelaide, which he reached in 1841. He died in July 1843 and became the first interment in the new Jewish section of the West Terrace Cemetery. His wife, Sarah, was in fact already on her way to join her husband with the rest of their children but arrived to learn that he had died some two months before. She remained a widow and became a prominent personality in her own right in the colony for some 46 years until her own death in 1889. Two other sons of Nathan and Sarah Levi, namely Edmund and Frederick, joined forces with their elder brother, Philip, and between them became one of the wealthiest and most powerful groupings in the emerging colony. However, their fortunes had varying successes and they lost as much as they gained after commercial miscalculations in the wake of the American Civil War. Their nephew, Nathaniel Philipson (son of Jonas Moses Philipson, who had married his own cousin, one of Philip Levi's sisters), pioneered the development of the inland areas of South Australia. He arranged the importation of camels and their Afghan owners since he rightly judged the practical uses of these animals as transport beasts in such terrain. He was also a shrewd employer and learned to speak Afghan to enable him to communicate with the camel drivers.

While this line of the descendants of Nathan Ben Elijah was prospering in South Australia things were not quite the same with some of the other descendants in Victoria. Jonas Lazarus' eldest son, Isaac, had emigrated to Australia in 1833 and his youngest son, David, followed his elder brother about 20 years later. Both Lazarus brothers, on arrival in Australia, incorporated their native town's name in their own surname, which illustrates a frequent way in which Jews do derive their civil names. Isaac at first settled in New South Wales but moved to Port Philip where he was a *Mohel* with a certificate from Chief Rabbi Herschell. He used chloroform as an anaesthetic, to which Herschell raised no objections, but he was also very tolerant about circumcising proselytes and not enquiring too deeply into the circumstances surrounding conversion. Herschell had many misgivings on this matter but Isaac Lazarus reasoned that the local community was simply too small to afford itself the luxury of rejecting too many applicants. He also was willing to initiate children of mixed marriages and was not over-scrupulous about the *halachic* validity of his actions. This too caused controversy back in London at the office of the Chief Rabbi.

Isaac Lazarus Lincoln, in his capacity as *Mohel*, was required to make many journeys and cover long distances from Melbourne in order to supply his services in far-flung outposts where occasionally a Jewish family might reside. He seemed somehow to attract natural



disasters – storms, floods and tempests disrupting his journeys only too frequently. Perhaps, too, his duty as a *Mohel* in these circumstances did not allow him sufficient time to devote to business and the economic ups and downs of the period made Lincoln unequal to the task. He became insolvent in 1849<sup>12</sup> which resolved him to look elsewhere for a livelihood and he chose to try California which, at that time, was experiencing a gold-rush boom. For many years it was not known exactly what happened to Isaac Lazarus Lincoln and his family and it was thought that they died in a shipwreck after they left Melbourne. Recent information unearthed by a descendant, Mr Howell Lovell Jnr, attorney at law in San Francisco, shows that the Lincoln family reached Honolulu on their journey across the Pacific without any mishap. Here they encountered a Harris family from Liverpool who had settled there and Isaac decided to leave his eldest son, Jonas Lincoln, with this family for the time being. He and the rest of the family attempted to continue their journey to California and were subsequently drowned. Jonas Lincoln, in Honolulu, subsequently married one of the Harris daughters and migrated to San Francisco. He died in San Francisco in 1876, leaving five daughters and one son (Isaac Fred Lincoln). There are direct male line living descendants of Isaac Lincoln and there are many other living descendants in the same region, stemming from one or other of the sisters of Isaac Fred Lincoln. Amongst this collection of descendants is Mr Howell Lovell Jnr, whose serendipitous attempt to trace his ancestry has so marvellously reached me and allowed me to place correctly in position the last piece of a jigsaw over which I have been working for a very long time.

David Lazarus Lincoln married Ann Levi in Melbourne in 1856 and they settled in Maryborough, where their son, also called Jonas Lazarus Lincoln, was born in 1857. Ann Levi was the sister of the Isaac Levi who had married David Lincoln's elder sister, Catherine Lazarus. David and Ann had a subsequent child in 1859 but unfortunately the pregnancy ended in disaster with both Ann and her infant dying, leaving David a widower with his son, Jonas, the only surviving child of that family. David Lazarus Lincoln died in Amhurst in 1873 when young Jonas Lincoln was scarcely then 16. This Jonas Lincoln, joined the newly-expanding railroad company and remained employed with them throughout his life. He married a non-Jewess and died in Melbourne in 1917. Despite his marriage outside the faith he was buried as a Jew by a 'Hebrew Minister'. His only son, Newman Lincoln, died without issue in 1944.

One further Australian link with the Lazarus family is derived through Levi and Sarah Harris of Wolverhampton, amongst whose large family their daughter, Rebecca, married Heyman Heymanson



and they migrated to Melbourne in about 1860. Rebecca's mother, Sarah Harris, had been born Sarah Lazarus in Lincoln and she was both my ancestress and, of course, a sister of the two brothers just mentioned. Rebecca Heymanson also died young in 1884, leaving a large family of her own, only two of whom married within the Jewish community. One of those who left the faith became the father of the late Sir Randall Heymanson who died in New York in 1984.

Some of this information, both in a historical and genealogical context, was partly researched by me about 14-15 years ago with the very great help of Kingsley Ireland from South Australia. Together we contributed a paper that was adapted and read to the Society and was published in its adapted form in the *Journal* of August 1974.<sup>13</sup> This paper referred almost entirely to the descent from Nathan Ben Elijah to his son-in-law, Philip Levi, and I have already referred extensively to some of the children of this Philip Levi's son, Nathan Levi, about whom we have presented as much detail as we could from our researching in 1973 and 1974. Altogether there were seven such children and between them and their husbands and their descendants they all made a considerable mark on the development of many aspects of Australian life in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. In Western Australia Lionel Samson, who married Fanny Levi, was the first Postmaster General in that colony and they founded a dynasty which has contributed a great deal to the growth of that State.

Since the 1974 paper was published, further information has come to light about the family of Philip Levi. Isaac Levi had prospered in Maryborough and retired to Melbourne in his latter years. Isaac and Catherine's family had all been born in Maryborough and in 1886 their daughter, Rose, suffered the identical fate as had befallen her aunt, Ann Lincoln, in Amhurst in 1859: premature death in childbirth with the child perishing as well. Young Rose Levi had married a non-Jew, Frederick Field, who subsequently remarried after his first wife's death and whose descendants from that second marriage live in Melbourne today. Rose's siblings, Ann, Fanny, Jonas and Esther, were all alive at the time of their mother's death in 1896 but only Ann was married at the time (to Lewis Isaacs). I have not yet succeeded in tracing any of their subsequent descendants. David and Ann Lincoln had both died prematurely, as we have seen, with only their son, Jonas Lazarus Lincoln, surviving. Since he married a gentile, Sarah Harvey, their descendants are no longer amongst our community but for completeness they had two children: Newman, who died a bachelor in 1944, as I have already said, and Victoria Jubilee (known as Queenie) who was born in 1887 (the 50th year of Queen Victoria's reign – hence the name) and died in Wedderburn in



1968. Queenie married Alan Burge and their numerous descendants are still in Wedderburn and Melbourne. When I came to Australia in May 1986 for the Fourth Australasian Genealogical Congress in Canberra I subsequently visited different parts of Australia for 'family reunions' and I met for the first time many of these distant cousins of mine in Wedderburn. I visited also Amhurst and the area where poor Ann (Levi) Lincoln and Rose (Levi) Field had both died so tragically young. The murky light of a Victorian autumn evening somehow lent some solemnity and pathos to the rather sad contributions this branch of my family made in their nineteenth century story.

I have already mentioned that Jonas and Rosceia Lazarus had seven children, three of whom settled in Australia. I also mentioned a fourth child, Esther Moses, who died in Birmingham in 1887. The three remaining children were my own ancestresses: Sarah Harris, who has also already been mentioned; Sheba Hart, whose death in a mental home I have already mentioned too; and my late first wife's ancestress, Betsy Gordon (1827-1910). Latter day descendants of all these sisters are flourishing in many parts of Australia today and, combined with the numerous descendants from Nathan Philip Levi, it means the total descent from Nathan Ben Elijah of Lincoln is very much represented in the Antipodes.

I will conclude by noting one of the strange quirks of genealogy. Having confessed that a motivating circumstance in preparing this material was in tribute to my late wife's memory, I put some of it together to read as a paper to the Jewish Historical Society of England in London in December 1985. My task was eased greatly by having shortly prior to that time met my present wife, Judy, who typed and edited the work for me and lo! her uncle is married to my third cousin, who also descends from our Lincoln forebear, Jonas Lazarus!

## NOTES

1. *Transactions JHSE*, Vol.I, p.89.
2. *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 June 1899.
3. *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 June 1934.
4. C. Roth, *The Rise of Provincial Jewry*, 1950, p.21.
5. Roth, *ibid.*, p.20.
6. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1810, Vol.80, pt.2, p.184.
7. This information appeared in the *Lincolnshire, Stamford and Rutland Mercury* 13 April 1832. The meaning of the phrase, 'worldly depression' is unclear, but Dr Joesph believes that she may have taken her own life because her daughter, Amelia, died in a mental instituion in Stafford in 1870 of 'acute melancholia'.
8. Roth, *ibid.*, p.20.



9. *Miscellanies JHSE*, Part VI, p.175.
10. *Genealogists' Magazine*, Vol.13, no.7, p.200. I did, in fact, quote *verbatim* the whole passage from *The Gentleman's Magazine* relating to the Lazar/Nathan marriage in an account that I put together about the family for the *Genealogist's Magazine* in September 1960.
11. Hirsch Munz, *Jews in South Australia 1836-1936*, p.36.
12. *AJHS Journal*, Vol.IX, pt. 2, p.132.
13. *AJHS Journal*, Vol.VII, pt.7, p.513.



## THE EMERGENCE OF ULTRA-ORTHODOX JUDAISM IN POST-WAR AUSTRALIA

*Suzanne D. Rutland*

**R**enowned Jewish scholar, Daniel Elazar, has shown that in contemporary Jewish life, Jewish identification results through a choice of commitment to being Jewish rather than by accident of birth. He has outlined the shape of contemporary Jewish communities as shown in his diagram as being a series of concentric circles from the most committed, consisting of Jews living full Jewish lives or intensively active in Jewish affairs, to the least committed or quasi-Jews whose very Jewish status is unclear either because of intermarriage or assimilation in some other form.<sup>1</sup> This pattern is particularly applicable to Australian Jewry because of the community's high level of social and political acceptance.

It seems to me that without the central element in this pattern, the hard core of integral Jews whose Jewishness, to quote Elazar, 'is a full-time business',<sup>2</sup> the continued existence of a Jewish community is precarious. Elazar divides these Jews into three categories: those who are traditionally religious; ethnic nationalists; and those who are intensively involved in Jewish affairs, although there can obviously be an overlap between these different categories. One problem for Jewish survival in Australia until the 1930s and 1940s was that there were very few local Jews who would have fitted into this first category. This applied in particular to those who were traditionally orthodox whose smallness of numbers risked their being swamped by the outside assimilationist pressures.

Since 1945, Australian Jewry has experienced a new phenomenon – the emergence of ultra-orthodox groups, the largest and most important of which has been the spread of the *Lubavitch* movement, which in addition to strengthening in both size and commitment the inner core has, through its outreach programmes, sought to influence those in the decreasing concentric circles. In spite of the tensions which this has caused, I believe that the growth of the *Lubavitch* movement is an important development in strengthening the fabric of Australian Jewry.



Religious observance in Australia has traditionally been very weak. Problems in the early days arose from the paucity of numbers, especially Jewish women, from inadequate religious and educational facilities and, above all, to quote Geoffrey Blainey, the tyranny of distance. The dilution of Jewish religious observance continued to be a key feature of Australian Jewish life until the 1930s. Indeed, during the period between 1850 and 1880 three dominant features emerged in Australian Jewish life and they continued to be the main features of our community until the impact of the pre- and post-World War II waves of Jewish immigrants. They were the general acceptance of the Jews within the wider community, the resultant stress on social integration rather than religious observance which led to much religious laxity, and the continuation of Anglo-Jewish dominance despite the arrival of a significant number of 'foreigners'.

In terms of the general acceptance of the Jews within the general community in the 1860s, one prominent emissary from Palestine, Rabbi Jacob Levi Saphir, summed up the situation in his travelogue, *Eben Saphir*:

There is no discrimination made between nation and nation. The Jews live in safety, and take their share in all the good things of the country. They also occupy Government positions and administrative posts. In this land they have learnt that the Jews also possess good qualities, and hatred towards him has entirely disappeared here.<sup>3</sup>

The risk for Australian Jewry in this high level of acceptance was the threat to the maintenance of the religious traditions which would ensure the continuity of Judaism in Australia. For example, Australian Jews often claimed it was too difficult to observe the Jewish dietary laws, which were developed partly to assume Jewish distinctiveness.

Saphir had some pertinent comments to make in relation to *Kashrut*. He noted that in the early years the various Jewish communities of the colonies had made no provision for the ritual slaughtering of animals, and Jews became used to eating non-kosher meat. Even when the facilities of a *shochet* became available this habit was pursued. He gave an example from Melbourne that:

They salt it [the meat] according to Jewish ritual so as to drain the blood from the meat, and are even meticulously careful to use separate utensils for meat and milk. One of them told me that he first used to take kosher meat, but when he learnt that the *Shochet* of the community commits acts contrary to Jewish



law and ethics – acts which invalidates his ritual killing – he did not feel inclined to eat the meat prepared by him. This was his excuse to buy meat from the Gentile, while adhering to the Jewish ritual to salt the meat. Many others followed his example.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, purchase of kosher meat entailed inconvenient travel for many and it was available only at certain times while non-kosher meat was 'plentiful and easily obtainable'.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the lack of religious observance, the shortage of Jewish women and the high level of intermarriage in the nineteenth century made the acceptance of proselytes one of the most burning issues within Australian Jewry. Until a local *Beth Din* was formed, the advice of the British Chief Rabbi was sought in each case but some congregations believed that no proselytes should be accepted.

An Australian *Beth Din* was eventually created in Melbourne in February 1864 when Rev. Samuel Herman arrived in Australia with a wide knowledge of rabbinic law. This was the first *Beth Din* to be formed outside London by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire. It was established particularly to deal with the problem of admission of proselytes. Dr Adler later recalled that 'cases occurred at that time in Melbourne where refusal to admit them into our pale would have been almost a crime and their reception a positive good'.<sup>6</sup>

There was no fully constituted *Beth Din* in Sydney for many years. In 1870 the York Street board applied to Dr Adler for the creation of a *Beth Din* in Sydney, but this request was rejected on the grounds that the community had no fully qualified rabbi. An irregular *Beth Din* was established in Sydney in 1872 under the chairmanship of Rev. A.B. Davis. Dr Adler refused to acknowledge this *Beth Din* and eventually in 1875 it was dissolved. A fully constituted *Beth Din* was not created until 1886, but its powers were limited; it could accept proselytes but not perform divorces or any other ecclesiastical functions. These had to be referred to the Melbourne *Beth Din* or to the Chief Rabbi himself. Davis acted as head of the Sydney *Beth Din*, but the limitations on its power were a matter of concern for the Great Synagogue Board and were not overcome until the arrival of Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen in Sydney in 1905.

The constant reference to the Chief Rabbi in relation to proselytisation was indicative of the close relationship which was maintained between the Australian and British Jewish communities. This relationship contributed to the continued dominance of the Anglo-Jewish way of life in Australia.

Despite the introduction of *Batei Din*, Australian Jewry continued to be plagued by the problems of low levels of religious observance,



poor standards of Jewish education, and the pressures of integration within the general community. Added to this were the tensions which continued to exist between the foreigners and the established Anglo-Jewish leadership.

This profile of Australian Jewry did not change in any significant manner despite the arrival of East European Jews in the period 1880 to 1914, unlike other parts of the English-speaking world such as America, Canada, England and South Africa. Religious life was standardised as attempts to introduce Reform Judaism had failed and the more orthodox forms of Judaism and the *Chassidic* way of life of Eastern Europe were virtually unknown. Even more problematic for orthodox Judaism was that facilities for *Kashrut* were inadequate while outside Melbourne there was no *mikvah* for ritual immersion.

After World War I, religious life continued to stagnate. Attendances at regular services remained poor, indicating the decreasing hold of the synagogue.<sup>7</sup> At the general meetings of all the congregations, complaints were voiced about the indifference and lack of support of their congregants. Each synagogue had a body of staunch supporters, but a large proportion of Australian Jewry remained outside the orbit of synagogue life. As Peter Medding commented, orthodoxy was 'at a low ebb' in the 1920s<sup>8</sup> and the established religious leadership represented by Rabbi Jacob Danglow of St Kilda, Melbourne, and Rabbi Cohen of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, was prepared to adapt Orthodox practices in a spirit of compromise. For example, Rabbi Cohen stated that Jewish families could have Christmas trees in their homes if they placed a Star of David on top of the tree.<sup>9</sup> In 1924 Danglow claimed that the religious leadership could never 'raise in this country a Jewish community which is strictly orthodox'.<sup>10</sup>

Australian Jewry, on the whole, failed to diversify its communal framework because of the dominance of the Anglo-Jewish leadership. Their philosophy was to eliminate any differences between Jew and non-Jew except in the very narrow religious sense. These attitudes led the Jewish leaders to fashion 'a Jewish communal ideology of non-distinctiveness' which involved 'minimal observance of Jewish ritual together with the continued acceptance of those basic and irreconcilable differences in religious belief and dogma, which separated Judaism from Christianity'.<sup>11</sup> The fact was that Australian Jews, whether they were born in Australia, as most were by 1920, or England, regarded themselves primarily as British subjects and loyal Australians, and were more concerned with being Australian than being Jewish. These attitudes had a stronger influence in Sydney than Melbourne because of the dominant role played by the Great



Synagogue leaders who desired complete acceptance within Australian society, while in the smaller Jewish communities there was a continual struggle for survival.

As a result of the rigid structure of communal organisation and the limited Anglicised leadership, Jewish religious and cultural life stagnated and the community lacked a strong sense of Jewish identification. The East European Jews who arrived before and after 1914 were too small in number to significantly affect the basic attitudes of Australian Jewry and were, themselves, often influenced by pressures to conform to the ways of their new country. This weakened group cohesion and threatened the continued existence of the community as a distinctive entity. Assimilation was an important response of Australian Jewry to the challenges of living in a free, open society, as was the prominent part played by Jews in all areas of general endeavour within the community at large.<sup>12</sup>

With the arrival of Jewish refugees in the second half of the 1930s there was a gradual strengthening of orthodox Judaism. Before 1933, all the congregations in Australia were virtually orthodox in name only, with the exception of the few congregations located in Carlton, Melbourne. To the orthodox Jewish refugees who arrived after 1933, Australia, and especially Sydney, appeared to be a spiritual wilderness. They were aghast to find no butcher shop which sold exclusively kosher meat, ministers attending public Jewish functions where non-kosher meat was served, and on the second days of the Jewish festivals *shechitah* (ritual slaughter) taking place at the abattoirs and ministers conducting funerals. The influence of new rabbinical leadership and the establishment of more orthodox congregations which were bolstered by the arrival of the refugees contributed to the gradual elimination of these practices. As a result, beginning in the 1930s and continuing in the postwar period, the orthodox congregations were gradually brought into line with their counterparts elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

In Melbourne in the 1930s many of the more orthodox were attracted to the *Machzikai Hatorah* (Upholders of the *Torah*) congregation, St Kilda, as well as the congregations located in and around Carlton. In Sydney, orthodoxy was strengthened by the formation of the *Mizrachi* congregation, established in 1933 because some members of the Central Synagogue believed that Rabbi Gedaliah Kirsner was dismissed in a most unjust and undignified manner from the Central pulpit in 1933. They created the new congregation to ensure that the Rabbi did not become destitute and weekly services were held in private homes.<sup>14</sup> The members of the *Mizrachi* congregation consisted largely of East European Jews who migrated to Australia after World War I. The *Mizrachi* did not attract many



new members from the refugee migration before the Second World War, but, under the leadership of Rabbi Osher Abramsohn, became an important nucleus for the more orthodox Jews who migrated to Sydney immediately after 1945. The *Adath Yisroel* congregation was also created in 1943 by Abraham Rabinovitch as a more orthodox, breakaway congregation, initially holding its services in the ballroom of Rabinovitch's home. The ministerial ranks were also reinforced through the arrival of refugees who brought with them dedication to orthodoxy and new ideas.

Despite these developments, the observance of traditional Judaism continued to be problematic in the postwar period, particularly in the area of *Kashruth* observance. Problems faced in the supply of kosher foods would need to be dealt with in a separate paper, but the comments of Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits, a world-renowned Jewish scholar and minister of the Central Synagogue, Sydney (1946-1949), are of relevance in setting the scene. When Berkovits arrived in Sydney he became a member of the Sydney *Beth Din*. When he became aware of the inadequacies in the supply of kosher meat in Sydney, due to the fact that M. Snyder, *shochet* for many years, was not *shomrei shabbat*,<sup>15</sup> as well as other problems, he decided that the Central Synagogue would have to establish its own *Shechitah* Board. In an interview explaining his actions, Berkovits referred to 'the inconceivable disorder and chaos in all matters concerning *shechitah* and *kashruth*'<sup>16</sup> and claimed that:

In fact, judging by the conditions I found I have no reason to assume that these matters have ever been in order for the last twenty years or so. I have had to reach the conclusion that the *Beth Din* was lacking the necessary authority to solve the problem of *kashruth* and at the same time I also found that a sound foundation for the administration of *shechitah* and *kashruth* have never been in existence.<sup>17</sup>

Berkovits believed that the chaos in *kashruth* was due to years of neglect, inefficiency, incompetence and to some extent indifference and that, for much too long, the affairs of *shechitah* had been controlled by people (not the *Beth Din*) who were not interested in *kashruth* as such, but only in the power of controlling the community.<sup>18</sup> The veracity of this belief was evidence by the fact that when the Chief Minister of the Great Synagogue visited a member of the synagogue's *kashruth* sub-committee one Sunday morning he found him eating prawns.

It is against this background of religious ignorance and laxity that the growth of the *Lubavitch* movement must be studied. As one



highly visible postwar development in Jewish religious life, first in Melbourne and later in Sydney, its history is important. This movement in Australia has been fostered by the *Chassidic* tradition which sought to infuse joy and hope into Jewish life. *Chassidism*, founded in the eighteenth century, initially stressed ecstasy at being in the presence of God, with music and dance as important means of communications with God. They increasingly turned to study so that today piety and learning are both central to the movement.<sup>19</sup> Unlike modern orthodoxy, it is a fundamentalist movement which has revived many old traditions, its outward differences in lifestyle reflecting a different religious philosophy. One of the most obvious features is its style of dress, with young men with beards and earlocks and with long black coats and black hats, the traditional *Chassidic* garb. These ultra-orthodox Jews reject the modern, materialistic approach, and seek to stress closeness to God through *Torah* learning, observance of all the *mizvot* (commandments) and personal piety.

The *Lubavitch* tradition was brought to Australian shores well before 1945 as the kernel for its development was sown by the Feiglin family which settled in Shepparton, Victoria, where they founded an agricultural colony. The story of the Feiglins is a fascinating one as they have had a disproportionate influence on the directions of Jewish development in Australia including the *Mizrachi* movement, Mount Scopus, *Yeshiva* and *Yavneh*. To understand this role a brief outline of their family history is necessary.

In his essay, 'The Feiglins – An Australian Jewish Saga', published in the *B'nai Brith Year Book*, Peter Kohn wrote:

The drive that epitomised this family's thinking was evident long before the first Feiglin migrated to Australia. It goes back to 1889 when three generations of the family, numbering fourteen people, migrated from Horka in White Russia to Palestine after liquidating their assets, including a well established merchant business dealing with agricultural products.<sup>20</sup>

After a series of problems in establishing themselves as farmers, Jacob Zvi Feiglin and his wife and four sons (Shmuel, Moishe Zalman, Isaac Isaac and Dov Bere) and two daughters (Chaya Basia and Esther) settled in *Mishmar Hayarden* on the Jordan in the north of Palestine where they established flourishing vineyards and also had cattle and sheep. Another son, Chaim, was born in Palestine. The family was affected by malaria and harsh taxation under the Turkish government and as the children married and moved away the settlement was eventually abandoned. With the threat of the Balkan



wars, Jacob Zvi advised his children to leave Palestine and scatter. Isaac Isaac left for New York while the youngest, Chaim, still single, set sail for Australia. He was followed by two of his brothers, first Dov Bere and later Moishe Zalman, but Chaim himself did not establish firm roots in Australia. Only Shmuel Feiglin remained in Palestine, settling in Haifa.<sup>21</sup> When Moishe Feiglin came to Australia he found that unless one worked on the Sabbath, life was a constant economic battle and that the early hours that he had to leave home in the winter meant that he could not *doven Shachrit*. A friend advised, 'you live in the dark so you can *doven* in the dark'.<sup>22</sup> It was in the light of these difficulties, combined with his desire for the rural life, that led him to participate in the Jewish settlement scheme in Shepparton in 1913, supported financially by the Jewish Territorial organisation.

Joined by his brother, Dov Bere, he insisted that there were ten families in the scheme so that they would have a *minyan*. Originally planned as a dairy farm, the Feiglins drew on their orchardist experience in Palestine and developed fruit growing.<sup>23</sup>

A small property adjoining Moshe's was bought and the house on that property turned into a synagogue. As his son David described it:

That *minyan* was the nucleus of the success of Shepparton. It was a rugged, hard life. The surroundings were forces of assimilation but the synagogue stood out as a beacon. Moishe taught his own family, ten children, in pairs. On Shabbat he taught other children. Because of problems of supply of kosher meat he became a *shochet ophot* (chicken slaughterer) but he still wanted a teacher and a *shochet* for the whole community.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of the efforts of Reb Moishe Feiglin, including his writing to Rav Kook in Israel, a *shochet*, Rev. Chaim Yoffe was sent out to Shepparton. After him, followed a series of other *shochtim*. Moishe Feiglin did not expect any such appointment to remain in Shepparton for long and was always looking for replacements. During the depression years it was common for recently arrived Jewish immigrants to come to Shepparton during the season to pick fruit. Amongst these fruit pickers was one Myer Polonski, a Russian Jew who mentioned to Moishe the name of Rabbi Bezalel Wilshansky as a suitable *shochet* and teacher. Moishe Feiglin found Wilshansky's address in Russia, corresponded with him and organised a landing permit, but before formalities could be completed war broke out and Wilshansky could not get out of Russia.

During the war years the Australian Jewish community was strengthened by the arrival of a group of ultra-orthodox Jews among



the Dunera internees. The 'Dunera boys', as they have been called, were interned first at Hay in New South Wales and later at Tatura, Victoria, which was only an hour's drive from Shepparton. Moishe Feiglin helped to organise the supply of kosher meat to the internees and to ensure that all their other religious requirements were catered for. About 100 internees were also allowed to assist at Shepparton during the fruit picking season. Not all the *Dunera* internees' memories of the Feiglins in this period were positive. One *Dunera* internee, reminiscing of his experiences at Shepparton, noted:

My recollections of Shepparton and the Feiglin family are also not very happy. Between discharge from the camp and joining the labour corps, we were sent fruit picking for some 6-8 weeks. I was allocated to the Feiglins and had the strange experience of listening to words of welcome by a Mr Feiglin. When he had established that most of us were neither orthodox Jews nor ate kosher, he told us bluntly that we 'deserved' Hitler.<sup>25</sup>

However, for the orthodox among the internees, the Feiglin family played a vital role in assisting them during their stay at Tatura.

After the war, Wilshansky wrote again to Moishe Feiglin. He was among a group of 200 *Lubavitch* rabbis who managed to escape from Russia on forged passports and had arrived in Paris with nothing. Wilshansky wrote that he was prepared to come out to Australia if the Rebbe agreed, and on the advice of the Rebbe five *Lubavitch* rabbis and their families emigrated to Victoria from this group in Paris. In addition to Wilshansky they included N.Z. Gurewicz, I. Kluwgant, S. Althaus, Z. Serebryanski and A. Pliskin.<sup>26</sup> Their arrival in Victoria was a milestone in the history of the Jewish community. With the blessing of the Rebbe, they established a *Yeshiva* with three pupils in 1949, using the Shepparton *Shule*, the Shepparton Jewish hostel and some buildings provided by the Feiglin family. These students were joined by both local youth and newcomers including one Sydney specialist and some Melbourne solicitors. This little *Yeshiva* expanded over two years and, to grow further, Moishe Feiglin realised it had to move to Melbourne. In 1951 the centre moved to East Burwood, Melbourne, but this site was still considered to be 'out bush' so that in May 1954 the present *Yeshiva* site at 92 Hotham Street, East St Kilda, was purchased, the property being found with the help of Rabbi Sholem Gutnick whose wife was born a Feiglin. On this property a primary school was founded with twelve boys in 1955 with Reb Zalman Serebryanski as headmaster, and in 1956 a girls' school, the *Beth Rivkah* Ladies' College, was established with Susie Herz as its first teacher.<sup>27</sup> The establishment of *Beth*



*Rivkah* resulted from a visit by David Feiglin with his father Moishe to New York where they met with the *Lubavitch Rebbe*. David Feiglin was returning from a Zionist Congress in Israel where he was a representative for the religious Zionist movement, *Mizrachi*, of which he had been president for ten years. David saw the meeting with the *Rebbe* as a great privilege and a significant turning point for the *Yeshiva* movement. When the *Rebbe* asked David to set up a girls' school he was amazed. They were struggling to establish a boys' primary school and he respectfully asked the *Rebbe* if he was aware of the local difficulties. The answer came as follows: 'If a central light was shining at a crossroads in Eastern Europe and the light entered a blank window it would light up the house. So, a girls' school would bring lights into the house'.<sup>28</sup> In relation to the financial problems, the *Rebbe* advised to 'take a first mortgage and if necessary a second and a third, for money could always be redeemed but time could not redeem the loss of those girls'.<sup>29</sup> Inspired by these words, David Feiglin returned to Melbourne and accomplished the goals of developing a *Yeshiva* boys' and girls' school, the establishment of *Beth Rivkah* being greatly assisted by a generous donation from Sir Adolph Basser.<sup>30</sup>

In 1960 Rabbi Y.D. Groner, who had previously visited Australia in 1948, arrived from New York to take up the position of Principal of the College and Rabbi of the *Lubavitch* community. Under his dynamic direction the *Yeshiva* has become a centre for Jewish study and Talmudic learning and has established tertiary institutions with the *Yeshiva Gedolah* in 1965, *Ohel Chana* in 1971 and the *Yeshiva Kollel* in 1977.<sup>31</sup> Groner's success has been due to his 'rapport with the whole ambit of Judaism in the full age spectrum, especially in his ability to communicate with highly intellectual young adults'.<sup>32</sup> His combination of learning and warmth and his total dedication to the growth of the *Yeshiva* movement in Melbourne account for its success.

The growth of the *Yeshiva* Centre in Sydney has been much slower and is a less dynamic story. The Sydney *Yeshiva* was founded in 1955 by Rabbi Gedaliah Herc, and a property in Flood Street, Bondi, was bought by Abraham Rabinovitch who had previously founded the *Adath Yisroel* movement and the North Bondi Jewish day school and kindergarten.<sup>33</sup> Rabinovitch quarrelled with other leaders of the *Adath* and became the leading financial figure behind the *Yeshiva* in Sydney. His supporters in this development were almost all post-war immigrants, survivors of the Holocaust from Poland, including the Greenbaum and Perlman families.<sup>34</sup> The development of the *Yeshiva* centre in Sydney was hindered partly by the more assimilated nature of the community and partly because of



the lack of dynamic leadership. Rabbi Herc, who had been principal of a well-known *Yeshiva* in Tel Aviv,<sup>35</sup> spoke only in Yiddish and his inability to communicate fluently in English meant that he had a limited impact. It only began to develop as a meaningful force after the arrival of Rabbi Pinchus Feldman.

The *Adath Yisroel* movement continued to function in Sydney after the split with Rabinovitch, strengthened by the arrival of a small group of ultra-orthodox Hungarian Jews. Its Melbourne counterpart (called *Adass Israel*) was more active and established its own day school, the *Adass Israel* School, in Elsternwick in the late 1950s, supported largely by the arrival of postwar migrants from Hungary. By 1956 the Melbourne *Adass Israel* claimed to consist of 800 people who migrated to Australia between 1950 and 1956, among whom were many Holocaust survivors.<sup>36</sup> The *Adass* community has built up a network of religious institutions.

The *Adass Israel* in Melbourne, but less in Sydney, are dedicated to a separatist ideology, in contrast to *Lubavitch* which is an activist outreach movement.<sup>37</sup> *Lubavitch*, for example, have developed *mitzvah* campaigns, using unusual methods of promoting observance of commandments such as the lighting of Sabbath candles, eating kosher food, and placing *mezuzahs* on doorposts.

For the first time, therefore, Australian Jewry has experienced a totally visible, orthodox group openly avowing the distinctiveness of Jewish traditions. Before 1945 the sight of bearded orthodox Jews wearing traditional black garb was almost totally unknown and would have been strongly condemned by the established Australian Jewish leadership. In Melbourne particularly, the outward symbols of Chassidic life have gradually become more commonplace in areas around St Kilda and Elsternwick. Though very small in numbers, the ultra-orthodox congregations have contributed significantly to the religious depth and diversity of the Jewish community in Australia.

The growth of the *Lubavitch* movement is testimony to the power held by the *Rebbe* in New York. All important decisions relating to the expansion of the movement in Australia have been referred to him. Commenting on the leadership of the *Lubavitch* movement, its president since 1956, David Feiglin, stated: 'In our organisation we are not just a debating society. Democracy suffers a little. We try to be democratic along the line but not always'.<sup>38</sup> To the outsider such control seems retrogressive. But, whether one agrees with the *Lubavitch* philosophy or is totally opposed, a new group of integral Jews has been added to Australian Jewish society and this development must be numbered as one of the major changes in the face of postwar Australian Jewry.



## NOTES

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25. Letter from a *Dunera* internee, 1988, name withheld on request.
26. David Feiglin, 'Origin and Development of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva College, Melbourne', *Let's Shed some Light on the Yeshiva Centre*, nd, Melbourne pp 6 - 11.
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31. David Feiglin, 'Origin and Development of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva', op. cit., pp 6 - 11.



32. Interview with David Feiglin.
33. *SJN*, 4 and 18 February 1955.
34. Interview with Rachel Greenbaum.
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## **SOME HISTORIC HOUSES, FORMERLY THE PROUD RESIDENCES OF NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY JEWISH FAMILIES IN SYDNEY**

*Louise Rosenberg*

**T**here are around Sydney and its suburbs — and in country towns where formerly there was a sizeable Jewish presence — buildings which had been the proud residences of notable Jewish families. All of these homes have heritage significance, and in this article I am going to discuss ten or twelve of these houses, together with details of their owners. This is with a view to understanding something of the demography of the Jewish community during the nineteenth century, an important period of our community's development. The homes selected for this brief survey seem to reflect something of the lives and lifestyles of a Jewish community which was vastly different from today's community. We should get some idea of the personalities who lived in those times, their values and their interests. Also, we may reflect upon the differences in the areas in which Jewish families wished to make their homes. It might be instructive to see, where possible, what the present status is of those homes which are extant.

### **CLEVELAND HOUSE**

Probably the earliest extant house — and one of only two domestic mansions left from the period — is Cleveland House. Cleveland House stands on the corner of Bedford and Buckingham Streets, Sydney, near Central Railway, and was built about 1814, originally standing in grounds covering five hectares. It was the home for many years of Andrew De Metz and his wife, with their six daughters. Besides being their home, it was also used by them as a girls' boarding school from 1834; the first of its kind in the colony. An early newspaper advertisement advises readers that "For 60 pounds per annum young ladies are taught, with the most arduous care, in writing, arithmetic, geography, French, piano forte, drawing, pointing [sic.], metzo and oriental tinting, dancing, plain and fancy needle work and every other branch of polite female education." The



advertisement adds that there would be "no extra charges except for Books and Stationery." The Misses De Metz were considered to have 'special qualifications for teaching', and the school was regarded as 'very select'. A news item of interest which appeared in the *Sydney Gazette*<sup>1</sup> informs readers a little about the De Metz family and their school. It reads: "Marriage: Yesterday, at the residence of A. L. De Metz Esq. By P. J. Cohen of Maitland, agreeably to the Judaical rites and customs; Mr L. Spyers to Miss J. De Metz of Cleveland House, Sydney." (The Great Synagogue holds the early Marriage Registers of the period and these record the name of Lawrence Spyers' bride as Angelina De Metz.) A later issue of the *Sydney Gazette* announces the following: "Cleveland House. Mrs and the Misses De Metz respectfully return thanks for the patronage they have received, and beg to announce that their establishment will reopen after Christmas recess on Monday the 12th January. Cleveland House."<sup>2</sup>

Until recently, Cleveland House was owned by the New South Wales Society for Crippled Children and was operated as a sheltered workshop and is now privately owned. It is a two-storey, stuccoed brick building, and it is believed to have been designed by Francis Greenway (1777-1837), who had been sent to the colony in 1814 for having "forged a document". He was recognised as a talented architect and allowed much freedom after his arrival, which enabled him to conduct a private practice, with an office at 84 George Street, Sydney. Cleveland House was built by Daniel Cooper (later to become the business partner of Barnett Levey) sometime prior to 1819 — probably 1814. It was sold at auction in 1819 to Major Thomas Sadlier Cleveland. However, it was unoccupied until 1825 when Daniel Cooper acquired it as his home for the next four years. It is not clear when the De Metz family moved into Cleveland House, but it must have been about 1829, and they stayed there until 1843 when they moved their school to Elizabeth Street near Hunter Street, where the two eldest daughters, Esther and Elizabeth, continued to conduct the "ladies' seminary" until about 1860.

After the De Metz family moved out of Cleveland House, it was purchased by Isaac and Dinah Levey, the brother and sister-in-law of Barnett Levey. Isaac Levey, who died in 1860, was president of the committee set up in 1857 to raise money for the establishment of the first Hebrew Grammar School which began at 334 Pitt Street near Bathurst Street. Portraits of Isaac and Dinah Levey hang in the auditorium of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, today.

The interior of Cleveland House features a splendid staircase, and the doorways are all fan-lighted. A deep, columned verandah extends around three sides, and is "rich throughout in cedar joinery". There are two curious main entrance doors, suggesting some possible



discontinuity in construction. An extract from the National Trust classification citation of 15 December 1973, advises that it was proposed for classification by the Heritage Commission. The house remains an excellent example of Colonial Georgian domestic architecture.

### **ELIZABETH BAY HOUSE**

Elizabeth Bay House is situated at 7 Onslow Avenue, Elizabeth Bay. Today, it is owned by the Historic Houses Trust. It is a sandstone, Regency-style mansion designed by architect John Verge and built during the years 1832 and 1833 for Alexander Macleay, the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. Macleay played a part in the establishment of the Sydney Botanical Gardens and the Australian Museum. It has been suggested that John Verge's best work was done between 1830 and 1837 when he retired. The house has been described by Harley Preston as having "one of the richest and most spatially dramatic interiors in early Australian colonial architecture...a notable house which, with its former spacious ornamental grounds, was much praised".<sup>3</sup> The architecture focuses on the symmetry of the central oval saloon with a domed ceiling and grand winding staircase. The house itself was originally surrounded by a superb garden in which plants from many parts of the world were grown. It has been said that Alexander Macleay's obsession to make Elizabeth Bay House the "grandest in Australia" virtually impoverished his family. Elizabeth Bay House was approved for classification on 11 February 1974 and, quoting from its citation for listing with the Trust, "Of two storeys, with cellars, it has a central, pedimented bay rising above the main parapet roof line. From this centre part a portico projects forming a balcony on to which open French doors. Ground floor openings are generally French doors while upper floor windows are double hung sashes, all being shuttered and surrounded with classical architraves. The interiors contain most of their fine original cedar joinery while the stone elliptical staircase, wrought iron balustrading, and hall is one of the finest works of its kind in Australian Colonial architecture. The hall is roofed by a fine elliptical lanterned dome sheeted in lead with hipped slate roofs to the remainder". In recent times, it was completely restored and furnished in its period style to be used as the official Civic Residence in Sydney of the New South Wales Planning and Environment Commission. The restoration was done with sensitivity and with regard to the spirit of the place.

The Jewish family which lived in Elizabeth Bay House from 1903 till 1926 was that of George Michaelis and his wife, Lily (nee





*Elizabeth Bay House (Photo by courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales)*

Gotthelf), with their three children, Alan, Rupert and Elaine, all of whom were born there. For many years Mrs Michaelis's parents, Moritz and Rachel Gotthelf also lived there, with their own separate area which included a gracious drawing room. Lily Michaelis was one of four daughters of Moritz and Rachel Gotthelf. Her sister, Zara, married Henry Hallenstein, a kinsman, but was widowed early when Henry died in 1922. Rose and Enid Gotthelf both married cousins, Emile Isaac and Percy Halstead (formerly Hallenstein) of New Zealand. The Hallenstein-Gotthelf families were prominent in Melbourne and Sydney as tanners and shoe manufacturers and George Michaelis became the Managing Director of McMurtrie, the subsidiary firm in Sydney. George Michaelis was a keen sportsman, particularly as a rower with the Sydney Rowing Club. He featured in a local newspaper in an amusing account of an important race when he was one of the eight: "Sydney Rowing Club had the race well in hand when Michaelis, rowing 'bow', caught a crab, and the



race was lost." It was his father's love of rowing which influenced Rupert Michaelis to become one of Australia's best rowers and an all-round sportsman, even after his return from World War Two in which he held the rank of Warrant Officer.

George and Lily Michaelis and family lived at Elizabeth Bay House until it was sold to a syndicate. Then the Michaelis family moved to Point Piper. But today, members of the family recall the magnificent grounds of Elizabeth Bay House where there were tennis courts and extensive parklands.

### HAMPTON VILLA

Another extant home of a former Jewish notable is Hampton Villa at 12 Grafton Street, Balmain, overlooking Jubilee Bay. It was the first residence of Eliezer Levi Montefiore, whose story has been published in another article in this issue of the *Journal*, supplementing the work of Ruth Faerber published in 1977<sup>4</sup>, his wife, Esther Hannah, and their six daughters and one son, when they moved to Sydney in 1871. The house was built in 1850 by E. Hunt and is made of sandstone blocks in the colonial style prevalent at the time. It has wide, overhanging eaves and shuttered French doors opening on to flagstoned surrounding verandahs. Olive and peppercorn trees still grow in the grounds. At one stage it became the home of Sir Henry Parkes. Today it has few changes, except for the addition of roof tiles and a swimming pool. An excellent picture of it hangs in the Commercial Bank in Balmain. The original double wooden gates can still be seen from the grounds, and an enclosing wall protects it from the developments which have taken place over the intervening years in the area. However, the interior of the house has the original solid cedar door and window frames, high ceilings, fire-places, and hard wood ironbark floors.

Hampton Villa was the home of the Montefiore family for many years, and it was there that two more children of Eliezer and Esther Hannah were born. E. L. Montefiore was a businessman, etcher and gallery director, born in the West Indies, educated in England, who came to Australia in 1843. He settled first in Adelaide where he was married in May 1843 to his cousin, Esther Hannah Barrow Montefiore. At that time there were only 58 professing Jews in South Australia. Almost immediately upon his arrival in the colony Montefiore, with others, applied for a grant of land from the government for a Jewish cemetery, and he became involved in a move to have a synagogue established. However, this did not eventuate until 1848 and, by then, Montefiore was preparing to move with his family to Melbourne to become Victorian branch



manager of the firm Montefiore, Graham and Company. It was in Melbourne that he felt able to give expression to his love of literature and, as a patron of the arts, prompted the late Dr G. F. J. Bergman to describe him thus: "Eliezer Levi Montefiore...was...perhaps the most important member of the Montefiore family [in Australia] because of his lasting influence on the cultural life of Australia."<sup>5</sup> Whilst in Adelaide, in 1844, he was a founding member of the first Circulating Library; but in Melbourne, as a trustee of the Victorian National Gallery, he did much to encourage the establishment of the Victorian Artists' Society in 1870, which still occupies a building on its original site. Even when Montefiore and his family moved to Sydney in 1871, he continued his affiliation with the Victorian Academy, representing that state in the Inter-colonial Exhibition in Melbourne in 1875.

In the same year that the Montefiore family came to live in Sydney, the New South Wales Academy of Arts was founded. Historic records inform us that Reeves became Hon. Secretary and he and the Vice-President, E. L. Montefiore were the real founders of the Academy. This establishment was the forerunner of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales founded in 1880, with its five trustees, one of whom was E. L. Montefiore. At this time, Montefiore was 54 years of age, and it was from photographs and pencil sketches made then that a marble bust was carved in 1898 by Theodora Cowan. Today that bust stands in the court of the Art Gallery, with a plaque describing him as "Second President of Trustees". He was a talented black-and-white artist and the catalogues of the gallery feature his etchings of the principal pictures in 1883-1893. Montefiore's trusteeship of the Art Gallery extended over seventeen years.

In 1882 Esther Hannah Barrow Montefiore died, but her husband and their children stayed at Hampton Villa for eight more years until 1890, when they moved to Oak Lodge on the corner of Trelawney and Fullerton Streets, Woollahra, near to where the Wolper Jewish Hospital is located today. Montefiore's only son died in October 1893 and exactly one year later, Eliezer himself died, aged 74. An obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Tuesday October 23, 1894, described how, on the previous Sunday afternoon, "Mr Montefiore paid a visit of congratulation to Mr Frank B. Suttor, newly returned from Canada, and at this gentleman's house he examined photographs illustrating the ex-Minister's recent travels, and chatted with his friends Sir William Windeyer and Sir Julian Salomons. After leaving Billyard-avenue, Mr Montefiore walked into Macleay-street, and there staggered and fell..." He died, without recovering consciousness, the following day. The Art Gallery closed its doors on the day of the funeral, "out of respect to his memory." E. L. Montefiore's tombstone



is at Rookwood Cemetery, and in 1996 an anonymous philanthropist from Queensland offered to pay for its 'Perpetual Care'.

It is of interest here, perhaps, that Hampton Villa was purchased some twenty or thirty years ago by a Mr and Mrs Ashton, who restored the home to its original condition. Ruth Faerber, in her article wrote of how she saw the house: "It is not difficult to imagine the graciousness of the lifestyle the Montefiores must have known in this solid home, with its attic and dormer windows."<sup>6</sup>

## CYPRESS HALL AND DARLINGTON HALL

Cypress Hall and its immediate neighbour, Darlington Hall, in City Road, opposite the University of Sydney, have a fascinating history with many unlikely vicissitudes. There are known descendants of the two Jewish families which once lived in these magnificent houses on the sites which, today, go by the name of St Michael's College, the University Catholic Centre of the University of Sydney and its chapel.

To go right back to the origins of the properties, we find an advertisement in a Sydney newspaper of September 1856. The advertisement gives details of an auction which was to be held on the ground near Newtown Toll Bar on Monday, September 15, at 12 o'clock. It proceeds to describe the site as being on the elevation of South Sydney, "nearly equal to that of the University", and giving it "the command of the most beautiful views of the country, extending almost from Sydney Heads to the waters of Botany Bay, including a panoramic view of the City and its environs." It promises that the site is "the most salubrious, the various circumstances enumerated above securing for it the advantages of a cool breeze from the sea which affords a mild and healthful temperature unknown in the lower streets and more crowded thoroughfares of the City." Then it promises "An abundant supply of water is to be had at the public reserve on the opposite side of Newtown Road. The railway terminus is also within a short distance which, upon the opening of Cleveland Street, will be rendered still less. Omnibuses pass to and fro to all parts of the city every five minutes." The prospective buyers are even offered a champagne lunch and conveyance to the sale "free of expense".

This was the site where Cypress Hall was built, being completed by 1859 as a 15-room mansion of three storeys, with its coach house in Alma Street. It was first occupied by a tenant, one James Isbester, a commission agent. In November 1860 Dr John Forrest rented Cypress Hall as a temporary college until November 1863. In the February of 1864 the property was purchased by Alfred Joseph from



the original grantee, Francis O'Brien, and later in the year Joseph decided to buy the adjoining block of land on which to erect Darlington Hall for his son-in-law, Henry Solomon. Henry had married Alfred Joseph's daughter Adeline. Henry and Adeline Solomon had ten children, of whom Harry Octavius, the youngest, born in 1881, is of some interest to members of the Australian Jewish Historical Society today who descend from this family, including those of the late David Henry and Miriam Solomon.<sup>7</sup>

Alfred Joseph came from England to Australia in 1849 and was a jeweller and assayer in the city. Two of his other daughters, Sarah and Jane, had a double wedding at the York Street Synagogue when Sarah married George Myers and Jane married his brother Mark. George Myers subsequently became the first president of the Great Synagogue when it opened in March 1878. Yet another member of this same family endowed the Isabella Lazarus Home for Jewish orphans in Mary Street, Waverley. Today the home in Mary Street is owned by Habonim, a Zionist youth movement; and the Isabella Lazarus Institute itself has been absorbed into the Montefiore Home at Hunters Hill.

Both Alfred Joseph and his family and Henry Solomon and his family left their respective homes, Cypress Hall and Darlington Hall, at the end of 1874. Alfred Joseph's family moved to a house in Glebe, where they lived until Joseph's death in 1910. Henry Solomon's family moved to Moore Park, near where the Captain Cook Hotel is today.

During 1875 St Andrew's College rented Cypress Hall as temporary premises until its own building was ready for occupation, and classes were held in Cypress Hall but all the students were non-resident. In 1876 Alfred Joseph sold the building to the Reverend James Fullerton, LL.D., a minister of the Presbyterian church at Pitt Street South. The new owner's first tenant was Benjamin Hyam Cohen, an outfitter. Cohen lived there until 1882 when it became known as Leinster Hall.

Darlington Hall was a two-storeyed, eight roomed dwelling, somewhat in the shadow of its more impressive neighbour, although its occupants were always considered to be 'notables'. After the Solomon family left, it was occupied first by a surgeon, Thomas Hogg, as a tenant. Ten years later it became known as 'Darlington Hall — Mission House'. Mrs Annie Woods was the matron. Darlington Hall was sold in 1910 and its new owner, Nicholas Hawken, M.L.A. changed the name to 'The Gables'. Hawken was at the time mayor of Darlington. It was known as 'The Gables' until its demolition in January 1967, just failing to make its century. Today, on its site is built the chapel for St Michael's College, with a capacity



to hold 300 persons. Eventually the property was bequeathed to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan in recognition of their work at the Magdalene Retreat. From 1923 until 1925 it was the residence of the Sacred Heart Sisters while they were waiting for the completion of Sancta Sophia College at 8 Missenden Road, Camperdown on the campus of the University of Sydney. At that time there were 80 or 90 Catholic women at the University of Sydney and they were receiving lectures in philosophy, history and apologetics.

In 1930 the building received yet another appellation, St Michael's Hostel. It was extensively renovated and, for over thirty years, it gave excellent lodgings to more than forty women. By this time the addresses of the two buildings, originally Cypress Hall and Darlington Hall, had become, respectively, 150 and 152 City Road, and they are part of the complex which today is St Michael's College, with the chapel and chaplain's residence; a residential college and Catholic centre.

The Sisters of St Joseph generously donated the land and building to Cardinal Gilroy, and the University supported a proposal in 1966 when a committee under the chairmanship of Bishop James Freeman proposed the scheme to turn the property into St Michael's Residential College. The late Archbishop Kelly was once heard to describe the place as 'Chosen Hall' — he said, because it was precious in terms other than those of money value.

Much of the detail regarding these two buildings comes from an article by Father Francis Mecham<sup>8</sup>, written when, as Rector, he was researching the history of St Michael's College. He received considerable assistance from the Australian Jewish Historical Society which was able to introduce him to descendants of the Solomon and Joseph families.

## **RATHVEN AND SCARBA**

The two brothers Charles Jacob Loewenthal and Abraham Marcus Loewenthal were prominent figures in the Sydney Jewish community of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were born at Grafton on the Clarence River. When they came to Sydney Abraham Marcus, the younger brother, moved into Rathven at 43a St Marks Road, Randwick and Charles Jacob, the eldest in the Loewenthal family, moved into Scarba which, in the 1870s and 1880s, had the address of Wellington Street, Bondi, but whose grounds extended through to Ocean Street.

Both Rathven and Scarba are extant, but we might look at Rathven first. It was built on land which originally belonged to the Church of England (St Mark's.) Being glebe land it could not be sold



outright, but was leased for 99 years. In 1882 Charles Bulyard purchased the lease from the Church. Later, in 1886, he sold the remainder of the 99-year lease to one George Raffan, a builder. Raffan built Rathven, naming it after the district in Scotland from which he had come. Rathven is on the north-east coast of Scotland, near the Moray Firth. The name of the house in which George Raffan had lived as a child was Randwick, hence the name of the suburb in Sydney in which he was building his home. He arrived in Sydney in 1874 and became a building contractor. His home was designed in the grand Italianate style with the best of timber and workmanship, as an example of the work he was capable of doing. He was a master craftsman and he wished his home to be an advertisement, a public announcement of his own capabilities.

In 1915 Raffan sold the lease to Abraham Marcus Loewenthal and it became the Loewenthal family home for the next 11 years. Loewenthal's wife was the former Charlotte Miriam Cohen, known as Lottie. Their family consisted of Gwen, Louis, Charles, Enid, Betty and John, who became a leading professor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney. The family was closely associated with the York Street and Great Synagogues, and when A. M. (as he was affectionately known) and Lottie married, Lottie's grandfather, John Isaacs, the first treasurer of the York Street Synagogue, donated to the Synagogue a silver *chuppah*. Today that *chuppah* is one of the treasures of the Great Synagogue and, when descendants of that family are married it is brought out for the occasion.

A. M. Loewenthal was a commercial traveller along the north coast of New South Wales, and he was civic-minded and involved in many communal and welfare organisations. For the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, he was instrumental in having a ward of 28 cots established; it was named The North Coast Travellers' Ward, as it was endowed by residents of towns in the area of the north coast. Loewenthal was a member of the Waverley Council; a member of the Board of Directors of the Montefiore Home; he was a president of the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial (Maccabean Hall) and he gave liberally of his time and money towards its consolidation and success. Lottie was the first president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Benevolent Society.

In 1926 Sir William Cowper and Orwell Phillips (Snr), with several other members of the Old Sydneyans Union, persuaded the Trustees of Sydney Grammar School to purchase the property and the remaining part of the 99-year lease, to be used as a boarding residence for Sydney Grammar School. Orwell Phillips was at that time president of the Great Synagogue.



The house remained part of Sydney Grammar School until 1970, when the school closed its boarding house, and Rathven became derelict until 1982. During the year 1979, the Randwick Glebe Gully Preservation Group and the Randwick Action Group, together with the Randwick Civic Reform Committee, fought to preserve the Gully which is part of the estate. They were successful, and today the whole area is classified by the National Trust. In 1982 the place was purchased by Professor T. Bolin and his wife, and they embarked upon a campaign to totally restore Rathven and its wonderful grounds to their former elegance. The result is grandeur seldom seen in Australia.

A detailed description of Rathven as it is today seems well worthwhile. The entrance is across a bricked courtyard, on the right of which, at the base of the steps, is a Lyndon Dadswell sculpture. In the gardens are other statuary and fountains. In the house itself are very many paintings by well-known Australian artists. Just some are J. Vander's *Hill End*, *Carcoar*, and *Sofala*; Colin Parker's *Nymagee Shops* and *Trees by the Pond*; Judy Cassab's *Roof Tops Florence*, and three of Cedric Flower's works: *Sunday*, *Hill End* and *Sydney Town Hall*; Sidney Nolan's *Ayers Rock* and *Bird*; Frances Jones's *Daisies*, and Brian Yates's *Joys of Spring*. Over one of the marble fireplaces is a Dennis Parker work, *Landscape in a Storm*. There are many other works by overseas artists and, throughout, elegant nineteenth century furniture. The walls and ceilings of many of the rooms were found, during restoration work, to have most beautiful fresco paintings. These have been preserved. In 1993 the Old Boys of Sydney Grammar School held their reunion there.

Now, a look at the other Loewenthal brother, Charles Jacob, and his family and their former home, Scarba. Charles Jacob Loewenthal was married to Sarah (Saidee) nee Rosenwax who, incidentally, was his cousin. They had four children: Gladys Natalie, born in 1885; Leslie Stanhope, born in 1887; Athol Vivian, in 1889; and Olga Phyllis, 1891. They moved into Scarba in 1906. The family had previously lived in Alpha in Ocean Street, Bondi.

Originally, Charles and Abraham Marcus had gone into business together in the field of commerce. Both men were eager to earn the title of 'Merchant Prince'; to establish reputations as responsible citizens. Their respective homes were large and bore the mark of the cultured. Charles Jacob and Saidee's family grew to love their old home with its address in Wellington Street and going through to Ocean Street. The grounds featured a croquet lawn, a tennis court and a sweeping driveway up to the house. The commanding wrought-iron gates facing Wellington Street bore the monogram *CJL*. Charles



was responsible for the establishment of the Bondi-Waverley School of Arts; he was keenly interested in the work of the Red Cross and Scarba Welfare Home for Children. Four of the Loewenthal children were born there, and Gladys Natalie, when she married William Lawrence Cohen in 1915, had her wedding reception in the grounds of Scarba.

The home was subsequently left to the Scarba Family Centre (Benevolent Society of New South Wales). Today, displayed in the grounds, on one of the gates, are two plaques. These plaques acknowledge the sacrifices of two young men who died during World War Two, both of whom were from the C. J. Loewenthal family. One bears the inscription "The Philip Myerson Playground — This Playground was equipped by the National Council of Jewish Women Local Charities Committee. In Memory of Pilot-Officer Philip Myerson who was killed in action on 29th January, 1945." The other reads: "Scarba Gate, Erected in memory of RAAF F/Sgt. Maurice Green, killed on air operations, 26th January, 1944." The funds for the erection of this imposing gate were provided by the Scarba Ladies' Committee and City Fashions Welfare Association. It was unveiled



*Gates of Scarba House, with plaques acknowledging the contributions of Philip Myerson and Maurice Green who were both killed in action during World War II*



on 11 November 1944 by S. Bissett when Mrs O'Malley-Wood, president of the Ladies' Committee, formally handed over the gate to Peter Board who was representing the Board of Directors of the Scarba Family Centre for Children. Flight-Sergeant Green was the only son of Israel and Bella Green, leading members of the Great Synagogue and Sydney Jewry. Philip Myerson had been the auditor of the National Council of Jewish Women prior to entlisting. It has been suggested recently that a further plaque be placed prominently there advising that the home had previously been that of C. J. Loewenthal and family, who had worked with devotion for the Benevolent Society under the aegis of Scarba Family Centre.

Charles Jacob Loewenthal published a bound monograph of his family background and his life in relation to the area in which they had lived so happily and with such well-directed energies. The book is inscribed, "A Souvenir presented on my 57th Birthday to permanently record what effort has accomplished in a suburb of Sydney where I resided for almost a quarter of a century. "Alpha", Ocean Street, Bondi. Signed, C. J. Loewenthal. 25th May, 1917." A copy of this work is held by C. J. Loewenthal's granddaughter, Marise (Mrs Ronald) Brass, a foundation member in 1938 of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. At that time, Marise Cohen was all of 16 years of age.

### MARAMANAH

Another graceful old mansion, Maramanah, sadly no longer stands. It was originally a substantial cottage, built on the corner of Elizabeth Bay Road and Macleay Street, Potts Point; one of the first houses to be built on the 1841 subdivision of the Macleay Estate, and occupied by John Henry Challis, among others, and extended from time to time. By the turn of the century Maramanah had become a sprawling grey turreted and balconied edifice. The cottage had been bought by a wealthy bachelor, W. E. Sparks, in the 1860s and he added a second storey and gave it its name. Its original name was Merino Lodge.

This was the house to which Jacob Hollander and his ten children moved from Ballarat in Victoria soon after the death of Jacob's wife, Annie. Hollander purchased the house from Sparks in 1890. It was Jacob Hollander who subsequently added the turrets, towers and balconies which gave the house its uniquely distinguished appearance. Maramanah and the background in which the Hollander children, and later the grandchildren and even the great-grandchildren, lived has been described in detail in this Society's *Journal*, volume XII, part 4, in this author's article, "A Rich Heritage — Colleen Rich and



Her Family Circle in Australia Since 1853". The Hollander family was fond of music; all were talented musicians and they hosted parties for such celebrated guests as Dame Clara Butt and her husband, Kennerly Rumford, among many others of international fame. One of the grandchildren of Jacob Hollander, Robin Eakin, wrote *Aunts Up The Cross* in which she describes Maramanah so vividly: the "heavy drapes and dusty aspidestras [sic.], complete with its own family orchestra and occasional visits from Madame Melba." The aunts who inhabited the home, some with spouses and children, included Dora, Abraham, twins Florence and Leopold, Bertram, Juliet, Minna, Lilla, Netta and Anys, the youngest, at whose birth her mother, Annie, had died. The last members of the Hollander family to live at Maramanah sold the building to the local council in 1945. For a while it was used as a community centre until, in 1954, Maramanah was demolished and the land was incorporated into the Fitzroy Gardens, featuring the El Alamein Fountain.

### RANELAGH

Ranelagh is located at 3 Darling Point Road, Darling Point, and was the residence of outstanding Jewish barrister, Sir Julian Emanuel Salomons, from 1885 until 1889. It is situated at the southern end of Darling Point Road and today is a very different edifice from the original Ranelagh of 140 years ago. Today the house itself, in truncated form, is part of a complex which, since the 1960s, has been a large block of apartments — 139 units, and what is left of the once gracious old mansion is the 140th. Its history goes back to the early 1850s, when Andrew Lenahan built the three-storeyed dwelling of stone. The upper two storeys featured broad, cast-iron balconies running around three sides of the house. A porch was built around the main front entrance. Lenahan named the house after a suburb in Dublin, and he lived at Ranelagh until 1864 when it was occupied by a parliamentarian and philanthropist, John Frazer. During the early 1880s Ranelagh was occupied by Frazer's brother-in-law, James Ewan, a director of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company. He served as a magistrate, a member of the Benevolent Society, and was a director on the Board of Sydney Hospital. In 1885 one of Sydney's most distinguished barristers and, subsequently, Chief Justice, Sir Julian Salomons, moved into Ranelagh. Salomons served briefly in Parliament between 1870 and 1871. In 1881 he was made a QC and in 1886 he was gazetted Chief Justice of New South Wales. However, he resigned this office before being sworn in. The following year he re-entered Parliament, where he remained until his death in April 1909.



Salomons has been described by a contemporary of his as having all the vivacity of a continental lawyer as he stormed and declaimed in court. The legal historian, J. M. Bennett, refers to the wit of Salomons as "devastating"<sup>9</sup> while M. Z. Forbes, writing in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* in 1996, quotes another writer, A. B. Piddington, thus: "Neither wit, nor learning, nor industry would have made Salomons the man he was without the earnestness which is the terrific gift of his race, whether as prophets or as artists, whether in the professions, or, in commerce."<sup>10</sup> Piddington also referred to his "scintillating wit". Julian Emanuel Salomons was knighted in 1891.

Well, so much for the man who arrived in Australia from England aged 17 years in 1853, and began work as a stockbroker's clerk during the day and in a bookshop in the evenings. In 1862 he returned to England where he married his cousin, Louisa Solomons. A year later he and his wife returned to Australia. In 1885 the family — Salomons, his wife and their two daughters — moved into Ranelagh, which stood in two and a half acres of gardens. After the family left Ranelagh in 1889, the house was allowed to deteriorate somewhat. By the turn of the century it had been converted into a boarding house under the ownership of a Mrs Barnett, and it continued thus until, in 1934, it was being advertised as a smart guest house with modern appointments, hot and cold running water to all bedrooms and a tennis court, all for 10/6 per day. Ranelagh never again returned to its original elegance as a proud, three-storey mansion. In the late 1950s the ever-increasing need for land for home unit development meant that it had "finally run out of time".

In 1967 a block of apartments bearing the name Ranelagh was erected and, as noted above, the house itself is part of the complex, separate from the main block of units. These boast "Indoor (heated) plus outdoor pool and sauna, with huge visitor parking area." The site offers a commanding view of Sydney Harbour and the Bridge. Is it a curious co-incidence that a number of Jewish families have units in the modern Ranelagh?<sup>11</sup>

## **SARAVILLE**

Yet another interesting historic home, and one which has seen numerous vicissitudes in its more than a century of existence, is Saraville at 29 Challis Avenue, Potts Point. Saraville was its original name when it was built by Samuel Davis, who had come to Sydney from Goulburn in the 1880s. He named the house after his wife, Sarah, a daughter of Barnet Aaron Phillips. In 1903 when Edward Asher Benjamin bought it, it was renamed Ovaleau. The Benjamin



family owned it for about 40 years. Then, in the 1950s, it was taken over by a Swiss lady, Madame De Risonico, who converted it into a high-class restaurant, giving it the name "Le Trianon". Her partner in the enterprise was the former head waiter at "Chequers". The place was again sold in 1967 to a company headed by Andre De Villeneuve and he, together with the owner of the highly successful "Croissant D'Or" at Kings Cross, retained the name "Le Trianon" until the 1990s when it was sold again and given the name "Cicada". It is of interest here that between 1975 and 1988 it was owned by a Jewish lady who wishes to remain anonymous. She sold the business in 1987 and the property in 1988.

Samuel Davis, the original owner, was once described thus: "...Mr Davis has been closely associated with the commercial life of Australia for many years."<sup>12</sup> The veracity of this statement may be judged from the fact that in 1838 he founded a business in Auburn Street, Goulburn, which he named "The Australian Store", and at a time when Goulburn had the third largest Jewish community in Australia, after Sydney and Melbourne. Samuel Davis's Australian Store was "for many years the best known business establishment in the southern districts."<sup>13</sup>

A fine description of Saraville, which had been built in 1883, is found in the account of Mr and Mrs Samuel Davis's celebration of their Golden Wedding in *The Hebrew Standard*: "The reception room was beautifully decorated with a profusion of flowers, and the large number of guests were ushered into what was practically a conservatory..."<sup>14</sup> Although this very beautiful building has seen no less than four changes of name, has been a proud home to two Jewish families over a period of seventy years, and almost 50 years as a prestigious restaurant, it still retains the name "Saraville" on the sky-light over the front entrance.

## TUSCULUM

Tusculum at 1 to 3 Manning Street, Potts Point, has a long history. It was built in the 1830s by John Verge, and features a pleasing combination of the Regency mode so fashionable in Britain during the first half of the 19th century with the addition of the Australian return verandah. It has two storeys, and was built at a time when the new colonial government and its architects were trying to attract suitable persons out to the colony by free grants, in recognition of their bringing out capital or goods to be invested or used here. John Verge, together with Alexander Brodie Spark, sponsored the building and architectural design of Tusculum. Alexander Brodie Spark was a businessman who arrived in Sydney



in 1823. He was active in the Church, a director of a number of companies and the Bank of Australia; as well, he was the first treasurer of the Australian Gaslight Company.

William Grant Broughton, the first and only Bishop of Australia – from 1836 to 1852 – occupied Tusculum for his final three months in Australia before he sailed home to England. During the 1840s Spark borrowed money on the house and he lost control of it in 1841 to Charles William Roemer, a German immigrant merchant, who paid £12,000 for it.

The house was put up for auction on 6 September 1848 and, with its 2 acres, 3 roods and 12 perches, was bought by William Long, an ex-convict who had arrived in 1815. After Long's death in 1876, the property passed on to his son, William Alexander Long. In 1890 Louis and Clara (nee Moss) Phillips bought Tusculum, but it was let to Sir William Manning until 1905. Soon after he vacated the place, Louis Phillips gave the house to his son and daughter-in-law, Orwell and Helene Phillips. Orwell and Helene Florence (nee Hart) made Tusculum their family home for many years. Helene Florence was a daughter of Hyam and Florence Hart of New Zealand, and she and Orwell were married in 1902. Their three children were born at Tusculum: Florence in 1911, Orwell Edward in 1913, and Barbara in 1915. It was a large, gracious house; a true Australian sandstone mansion, steeped in history, with formal sitting room, drawing room and dining room on the ground floor, and with a billiard room, day nursery and maids' service wing attached. Upstairs were five bedrooms, a sewing room and the night nursery.

This Phillips family has been part of the Sydney and Melbourne Jewish communities for almost a century and a half. Louis Phillips came here from England in 1856 as a young man of 17. He found employment with Moses Moss (later to become his father-in-law); when the Great Synagogue was opened in 1878, Louis Phillips was its first treasurer. He was later to serve five terms as its president, between 1888 and 1910. He died in 1913, having given over 40 years' service on the Board of the Great Synagogue, and with practical involvement in charitable institutions both within and outside the Jewish community. He was secretary to the Sydney Jewish Sabbath School and Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge (to give it its full appellation), founded by the Reverend A. B. Davis in 1863.

Orwell Phillips, the son of Louis Phillips, served a four year term as president of the Great Synagogue from 1924 to 1928 and the Synagogue's honorary architect. His son, Orwell Edward Phillips, was president of the "Great" during 1982 and 1985 and its honorary architect for over 50 years. O. E. Phillips's son, Peter Orwell, is "following the family tradition".



Today the New South Wales Chapter of the Royal Institute of Architects has its headquarters there, after having added two further formal rooms to the building when it was being renovated several years ago. A description of Tusculum in a recently-published pamphlet, *A Walk Around the Cross*, gives the following detail: "...completed in 1835, it is rectangular in plan with a double storied [sic.] encircling verandah. Until recently it boasted a portico, with cast iron columns, but the building has suffered many changes over the years; with infilled verandahs, interior joinery removed and a loss of architectural detail." However, much of this was corrected before the New South Wales Chapter of the Royal Institute of Architects moved in.

### ENGADINE

Engadine was built on land adjoining Elizabeth Bay House, which, with its grounds the largest in the area, stretching from Macleay Street to the water's edge, was ultimately to have much of its parkland subdivided to take in Onslow Avenue and Billyard Avenue, Elizabeth Bay. Engadine was built on the corner of these two avenues in 1884-85 by George Judah Cohen, when he and his wife and their family came to Sydney to live, after having been in business in Maitland and Newcastle. It became their home for the next 43 years. George Judah Cohen's father was Samuel Cohen (1812-1861), who came to Australia in 1835 on a business trip, originally intending to return to England. In the event, he stayed on in Australia to found a dynasty which has produced descendants who have contributed mightily to many facets of Australian development until today. Samuel Cohen and his wife, Rachel (nee Nathan), were married in Sydney in August 1837, and their eldest son was George Judah (1842-1937). G. J. Cohen was educated at Cleveland House, when the headmaster was James Kean, and finished his formal education at University College School, London, during 1857-1860. After the death of his father in 1861, George Judah Cohen entered the family business in Maitland. In February, 1868 in Sydney, he married Rebecca Levy, his second cousin. A branch of the Cohen business was opened in Newcastle. The facade of that building in Hunter Street still survives, and has been classified by the National Trust. This superb carved facade of local stone, even though at one stage the building was badly damaged by fire, retains the original quality of the architecture. Professor Lionel Fredman, in a pamphlet published to mark the Newcastle Synagogue jubilee, gives a fine word-picture of G. J. Cohen: "He lived long enough to celebrate the centenary of his firm and acquire an enviable reputation as one of



Sydney's best-known and most generous business leaders. It was typical that he should continue to keep a patriarchal eye on his co-religionists in the lower Hunter."<sup>15</sup> For many years he helped maintain the viability of the Newcastle Synagogue.

In 1879, the G. J. Cohen family moved to Sydney where Cohen became a director of the United Insurance Company Limited, The Australian Gaslight Company and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney. (There is hanging today in the main banking chamber of the bank a portrait of G. J. Cohen done by George Lambert.) In 1882 he was elected president of the Great Synagogue, serving the first of a record seven terms spread over almost 40 years. He had many opportunities to enter politics, but in 1898 he refused a seat in the Legislative Council because the offer was conditional on his support of the Australasian Federation enabling Bill. He frequently spoke of his father, Samuel's refusal, as a politician, to vote on a Friday night on the John Robertson Land Reform Bill in 1860, saying he would not compromise his Sabbath, to do so would prove me unworthy of my religious belief. It is of interest here, too, that Cohen's refusal to vote did not disadvantage his party, as a fellow Jew, Saul Samuel, in the opposite camp, likewise refused to vote on the Sabbath.

George Judah Cohen and his wife, Ré, celebrated their diamond wedding in 1928 at Engadine. Their descendants today tell of how the couple's children secretly arranged for their parents' home to be redecorated; and a party was held to mark the occasion, with thirty guests present and two wedding cakes, one of which featured sixty tiny silver bells. George Judah was recalled afterwards, in a privately published *Memoir*, as "having lost no occasion upon which he could make reference to the remarkable comradeship which, more than anything, made his life a happy one." The *Memoir of George Judah and Rebecca Cohen*, written by their son-in-law, Keith Moss, describes their marriage as "...the commencement of a union of the rarest felicity".<sup>16</sup>

George Judah and Ré had nine children, but two died in early childhood, and after the death of George Judah in 1937 aged 95 – just four years after Ré's death at 83 – their surviving family of five sons and two daughters decided to donate his valuable collection of coins to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, and £1,000 to the University of Sydney to provide for the George Judah Cohen Memorial Lectureship. Rabbi Porush, writing in his *House of Israel*, described G. J. Cohen as "The most prominent Jew in the state and the undisputed lay leader of the Community". He wrote further, "Mr Cohen was an observant Jew, and regular attendance of the Synagogue was an integral part of his life."<sup>17</sup> The minutes of the



Great Synagogue Board of Management record: "For fifty-five years he has been the guiding influence of the destinies not only of this Congregation but of the Jewish Community of the State..."<sup>18</sup>

At the time of George Judah's death, his eldest son, Sir Samuel Cohen, was serving his third term as president of the Great Synagogue, and that was also the year – 1937 – that he received his knighthood.

Engadine was a four-storey mansion, with the lower floor erected in 1885 on part of the Elizabeth Bay estate. There were 18 rooms in the house which was set amidst trees and had frontages on both Onslow and Billyard Avenues. It had the first private lift in Australia installed. Descendants recall that it was a "traditionally Jewish home". It was sold in 1937, with its 70-foot frontage, for £6,500.

### SOME OTHER HISTORIC HOUSES

There are still traces of the once lavish houses of the 1880s and 1890s of Sydney, with their exotic roof forms, stucco ornaments, cast iron railings and examples of nineteenth century grandeur, often long since converted to flats and rooms-to-let. Some of the four- and five-storey terraces, elaborate with stucco and cast iron, from the 1880s, are magnificent examples of the inner city housing boom in the prosperous decades towards the end of the 19th century. The famous Alberto Terrace of Darlinghurst Road, was long regarded as a "fashionable address" for Jewish families who were enabled to live near enough to be able to walk to the Great Synagogue. These houses stood opposite where the present Kings Cross Station entrance is now.

Another interesting house in the Kings Cross area is Orwell, in Orwell Street, Potts Point, which was built on a land grant made to Judge John Stephen in 1831. It stood in large grounds and was, at one time, bought by Louis Phillips and his wife, Clara, to be their family home. All of their children were born there and grew up within its environs. It subsequently became a boarding house, to be demolished in the 1930s. Built on its site in 1939 was the Metro Centre, designed by architects C. B. Dellit, G. Crick and B. Furse. The building became the Minerva Centre, which was a complex including a restaurant, dance floor and cafes. All of these were intended to be the new wave of the '30s' entertainment with its urban-based pleasures and burgeoning night life. This did not really materialise. In recent times it became the 2KY Building.

Many of the members of Newtown Synagogue lived in and around the suburbs bounded by Forest Lodge and Annandale. Avoca Terrace, at 9 to 15 Junction Street, Forest Lodge was within walking distance



of the synagogue, and was owned by Harris and Samuel Weingott, where the respective houses were home to their parents, Yeoshuya and Faegela Weingott, and four of their married children. It is also worth recalling that 'Annandale' was the home for many years of Esther Abrahams and George Johnston who came here on the First Fleet. The house was named 'Annandale' after the town George Johnston came from in Scotland.

The first of the Montefiore Home addresses was in Dowling Street, Moore Park, founded in 1883 to honour the hundredth birthday of Sir Moses Montefiore. When it needed to expand as a senior citizens' establishment, the Home was moved in 1923 to Bellevue Hill, to a fine old mansion on the corner of Old South Head and Birriga Roads. In 1939 it again needed to extend its facilities, and it was moved to Hunters Hill. There it was taken over by the army for some years, and today it is a vast complex, having incorporated a number of other Jewish institutions.

There are still surviving proud country homes of prominent Jewish families. Just some of these must include Cintra, Leholme and Bennholme in Maitland. These were the residences of the Cohen and Levy cousins, where George Judah Cohen lived at Cintra, Louis Wolfe Levy and family at Leholme and Benn W. Levy at Bennholme. Cintra and Bennholme were located off High Street in Regent Street, Maitland. Cintra's architect was John Pender, the same architect who designed the Maitland Synagogue. The name Cintra came from the place of that name in Portugal where one of the children of Mrs Ward, who received a large land grant in the Maitland area in the 1810s and 1820s, was born.<sup>19</sup> When the families moved from Maitland to Newcastle – and later to Sydney – they handed over their homes, some of the largest residences in the district, to the local townsfolk as a hospital, the Benevolent Society, with which the two families were actively involved (Bennholme), and as an orphanage for girls (Cintra).

There are still a number of historic homes in Goulburn, formerly the family residences of Jewish pioneers. The home for many years of Samuel Emanuel and family, just out of Goulburn at Lansdowne, has a summer house which was used by the family and other members of the local Jewish community as a place of worship. Samuel Emanuel was the owner of much Goulburn property and was "a most influential citizen". The present owners of the house at Lansdowne have restored the summer house, and refer to it as the "Jewish Synagogue" to attract tourists. Judah and Gwen Green's home, Corrinayah, six and a half kilometres from Goulburn is remembered fondly by their four children today where groups of young folk from the Sydney Jewish community came for dances and picnics and regular excursions. They



recall their mother's weekly broadcasts during the 1950s when she spoke about fashion, cooking, gardening, and other home-crafts. The Jewish cemetery at Goulburn, with upwards of 37 burials, has been classified in the Register of the National Trust since 1984. An early local historian, Charles MacAlister, recorded his tribute to the Jews of Goulburn thus: "Goulburn owed much in the formative years to the commercial genius of the Hebrew race. In fact, the term 'as solid as a Goulburn Jew' almost threatened at one time to pass into a proverb."<sup>20</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Classification by the National Trust means that a property deemed to have heritage significance is surveyed and assessed and, if approved, is placed on the Trust's Register. These properties may include landscapes, townscapes, buildings, industrial sites, cemeteries or any items or places which the Trust determines to be worthy of conservation. Items listed in the Trust's Register are said to be Classified. The Trust's Register is intended to perform an advisory and educational role. The listing of a place in the Register has no legal force. However, it is widely recognised as an authoritative statement of the heritage significance of a place. Most places listed in the Register are in private ownership, and the Trust encourages owners of listed places to respect their heritage significance. The inclusion of a property on such a schedule can impose certain restrictions and local councils will advise the extent of such restrictions.

The National Trust of Australia is a non-government community organisation which promotes the conservation of both built and natural heritage. It works closely with a kindred organisation, the Historic Houses Trust. This latter organisation is responsible for such buildings as Elizabeth Bay House, Elizabeth Farm, First Government House, Hyde Park Barracks, The Justice and Police Museum, Rose Seidler House at Turramurra, and Vacluse House.

Linda Rector, a curator with Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, is planning an exhibition to be held at Elizabeth Bay House in 1998. The aim is to show how Jewish families settled in Woolloomooloo, now called Elizabeth Bay, between 1900 and 1940. The majority of families came from different parts of Europe and, once settled, contributed not only to the growth of Australian Jewry but to the development of Australia generally.

The emphasis will be on the social history aspect of five/six families who lived in these notable houses, one being the Michaelis family at Elizabeth Bay House. Cultural adaptations brought about



changes in material culture which will be shown in this exhibition by examining life style, interior design, furnishings and education and career paths.

Speaking in 1985, in regard to the importance of imaginative conservation and preservation of our National Treasures and our history, David Lowenthal, professor emeritus at University College, London, said: "The public heritage of any society should reflect a natural and cultural past as little falsified as professionals can make it, but also one that connects fruitfully with its inheritors, a legacy they will wish both to enjoy and to hand down to their descendants with their own alterations and additions."<sup>21</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the help of Orwell Philips, Dinah Harvey (daughter of Paul Cullen and grand daughter of Sir Samuel Cohen), Primrose Moss, and Linda Rector of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

## NOTES

1. *Sydney Gazette*, 18 December 1834.
2. *Ibid*, 8 January 1835.
3. Harley Preston, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 2, 1788-1850, p. 554.
4. Ruth Faerber, 'Eliezer Levi Montefiore', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, 1977, Vol 8, Part 4, pp.185-194
5. G.F.J. Bergman, 'Rise and Fall of Male Montefiores', *Sydney Jewish News*, 19 February, 1971, p. 9.
6. Faerber, *op. cit.*
7. Miriam Solomon is the Honorary Treasurer of the AJHS in Sydney.
8. F Mecham, 'The Cradle of Four Colleges' *The Catholic Weekly*, November 1999.
9. As quoted in M.Z. Forbes, 'Sir Julian Salomons, 1835-1909: A Brilliant Lawyer and Parliamentarian', *AJHS Journal*, 1996, Vol 13, Part 2, p. 222.
10. *Ibid*.
11. These include members of the Great Synagogue, Mr and Mrs Jack Freedman (president from 1993 -1996), the late Ernie Morris, Mr and Mrs Alan Lesnie, Mr and Mrs Gerry Levy, president of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, 1989 - 1993, Mr and Mrs Lowy, and Mrs Miriam Rutkevitz, and her late husband Zalman.
12. *Hebrew Standard of Australasia (HS)*, 8 June 1900, p.6
13. Sydney B. Glass, *AJHS Journal*, volume I, part 8, 1942.
14. *HS*, 8 June 1900.
15. Lionel Fredman, *Newcastle Synagogue Jubilee, 1927 - 1977: the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation*, p.3.



16. *The Memoir of George Judah and Rebecca Cohen*, written by their son-in-law, Keith Moss, nd, np, located at the AJHS Archive, Mandelbaum House, Sydney.
17. Israel Porush, *The House of Israel*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1978, p.129.
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19. See Lionel Fredman, *AJHS Journal*, Vol 9, Part 8, p.596 and p.606, footnote 9.
20. As quoted in M.Z. Forbes, 'The Goulburn Jewish Cemetery: A Heritage Interpretation', *AJHS Journal*, 1986, Vol 10, Part 1, p.54,56. This was quoted from Charles MacAlister, 'Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South'.
21. *Ibid.*, p.53.



## AN ENTHUSIASTIC AMATEUR OF THE ARTS ELIEZER LEVI MONTEFIORE IN MELBOURNE 1853-71

*Nicholas Draffin\**  
*Curator of Prints and Drawings*  
*Art Gallery of New South Wales*

On 10 March 1853 the French ship *Vesta* arrived in Port Phillip from Sydney, en route to Le Havre. Among the cabin passengers were 'Mr and Mrs Montefiore and family'.<sup>1</sup> They settled in Melbourne for almost twenty years, in 'a community whose advancement in wealth has been rapid without parallel, and whose future prospects are brilliant beyond the dreams of hope'.<sup>2</sup>

Eliezer Levi Montefiore came to Melbourne to represent some of his family's extensive business interests; here he was also able to develop his own interest in the arts, which had already briefly shown itself in Adelaide. After moving to Sydney in 1871, his closer involvement was linked with the founding of the New South Wales Academy of Art, and from this the Art Gallery of New South Wales, of which he became first Director from 1892 until his death in 1894.<sup>3</sup> These later years in Sydney are comparatively well documented, and his early years in Adelaide have never been adequately studied. This article seeks to present new information on his move to Melbourne and his years there.

The Montefiores had links with Australia from 1829, when Eliezer's maternal uncle, Joseph Barrow Montefiore,<sup>4</sup> was appointed one of the eleven Commissioners for the colonisation of South Australia, but apart from several visits to Adelaide, he spent only a few years in Australia as a merchant in Melbourne.<sup>5</sup>

Eliezer's elder brother, Jacob Levi Montefiore,<sup>6</sup> joined his uncle Joseph Barrow Montefiore in Sydney in 1837, later going into business on his own. On 1 November 1846 Jacob Levi announced his

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Eliezer Levi Montefiore c. 1864, by an unknown photographer  
*Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales*

partnership in Sydney with a wealthy young Scot, Robert Graham, under the name Montefiore, Graham and Co.<sup>7</sup> With the family established in Australia, the young Eliezer joined them a few years after the death of his father, Isaac Levi, in Belgium in 1839.<sup>8</sup> He probably initially travelled to Sydney to join his elder brother; by 1843 Eliezer was in Adelaide and stayed there for about ten years. Montefiore's Store in Adelaide is prominent in one of the finest of S.T. Gill's watercolours, *Sturt's Overland Expedition leaving Adelaide, 10th August, 1844*.<sup>9</sup>

Following the discovery of gold in the Port Phillip District in 1851, Melbourne's rapid growth and newly-found prosperity seemed to offer great opportunities to merchants, and the Montefiore family



were among many who could anticipate a profitable new market.<sup>10</sup> Eliezer's uncle Jacob came to Melbourne early in 1852, and his company, Jacob Montefiore and Co., was listed in Melbourne directories from 1853 to 1855. He appeared both as a merchant (initially at 92 Collins Street West, then at 83 Elizabeth Street) and as a banker; he advertised dealings in gold, wool and tallow, and as the agent for N.M. Rothschild & Co.<sup>11</sup>

His advertisements in January 1853 offer a strange assembly of commodities:

Fine Leeward Island Rum  
Martell's pale old brandy in quarter casks  
Old Tom, No 1  
Eleme raisins  
Zante currants  
Preserved salmon  
Chamois skins  
Men's strong boots  
Ewbank's nails, assorted  
Sheet lead  
Liverpool soap  
Cork butter  
A fresh assortment of Milner's iron safes and deed boxes

JACOB MONTEFIORE & CO.  
Market-square

With his uncle already in Melbourne, Eliezer came to manage his brother Jacob Levi Montefiore's interests, as representative for Montefiore, Graham and Co. Eliezer may already have been used to travelling between the Australian colonies on family business;<sup>12</sup> in 1849 he travelled from Adelaide to Melbourne on the ship *Eliza*, which carried a cargo of 251 tons of copper ore from the South Australia Company.<sup>13</sup>

By then Eliezer had married his cousin Esther Hannah Barrow Montefiore, in Adelaide on 3 May 1848. Their first son, Arthur Augustus, was born in Adelaide on 6 May 1849; a second son, Frederick, was also born there on 12 March 1852, but died at the age of three months.<sup>14</sup> By mid-1852 Eliezer and his family seem to have begun plans to move to Melbourne. On 3 October they set out for Melbourne on the ship *Woodbridge*,<sup>15</sup> the first stage of a trip to Sydney to visit Jacob Levi Montefiore and his family; five months later they finally disembarked in Melbourne to set up house and business.





*E.L. Montefiore, Portrait of Esther Montefiore (?) 1852  
Pencil and watercolour wash  
La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria*

These travels are delightfully recorded in a hitherto unidentified sketchbook in the La Trobe Library.<sup>16</sup> Most of the drawings are dated and briefly titled in pencil, but unsigned; they allow us to accompany the author on his journey, without revealing his identity. The only immediate clue in the entire book is the modest signature 'E L M' on the final page, under a beautiful half-length portrait of a young woman with dark hair, and dated 'Dec 25/52'. The previous

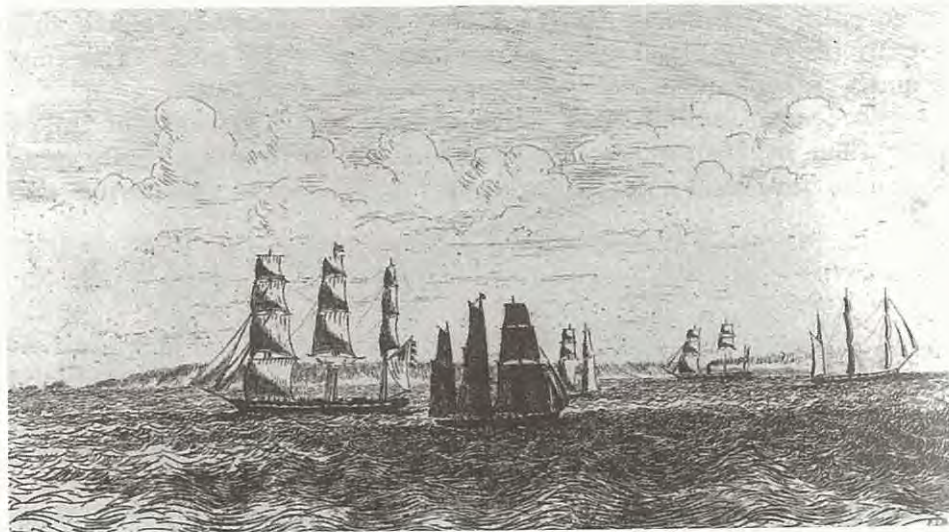


page has a similar, but less fine, portrait dated 'Jan 9th 1853'. It is presumed here that both are portraits of Eliezer's wife Esther.

The dates of the sketches of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney correspond to shipping intelligence of the Montefiores' travels at this time, in particular their final arrival in Melbourne on the French ship *Vesta*, commanded by E. Soubry. Further, two of the drawings were used by Eliezer fifteen years later as the basis for the etchings *Environs de Sydney* and *The Rip, Port Phillip Heads*.<sup>17</sup> This new attribution of the sketchbook thus seems beyond question, and is a substantial addition to awareness of Montefiore as an artist.

The sketchbook begins with an unannotated sketch of an elegant cottage; a later drawing suggests that it was Eliezer and Hannah's home in Adelaide after their marriage. The following three watercolours were made in Melbourne on 9 and 10 October 1852, and two sketches of Twofold Bay were made three days later. The ship reached Garden Island, Sydney, on 20 October; there are eleven drawings of Sydney, the last of which is dated 7 November.

Eliezer then apparently returned to Adelaide to settle up affairs there, pausing in Hobson's Bay (Port Phillip) on 15 November to sketch the renowned steam ship *Great Britain*, but probably not disembarking. The ten careful drawings made in Adelaide between 28 November and 27 December are parting souvenirs of the familiar town. In addition to the more public sights – the Collegiate School,



*E.L. Montefiore, The Rip, Port Phillip Heads (c.1869)*

*Etching*

*La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria*



the River Torrens, Frome Bridge – there are more personal views of Eliezer's own cottage, and of uncle Joseph's house, peopled by members of the family and the pet dog. It is at about this time that Eliezer drew, at the back of the book, the portrait of his wife(?) and added his signature.

Two sketches in Melbourne are dated 17 January 1853, one perhaps of the house he had arranged for his forthcoming residence in the colony; then Montefiore was back in Sydney for the end of January and most of February, in time to enjoy a regatta on Sydney Harbour on 26 January – and to make a lively panoramic sketch of it, using both facing pages and covering the entire width of the open sketchbook. For about a month Eliezer stayed in Sydney with his elder brother, for much of it, one supposes, finalising business arrangements for Melbourne or sweltering in the sub-tropical heat and humidity. From the end of January there were no sketches until a few days before the Montefiores' departure on 24 February. On the verso of a later page is a short pencilled note: 'Sailed from Sydney 24th Feb<sup>y</sup> 1853 at 4. a.m./anchored at P.P. – 9 March 10 p.m.'

There is a drawing of ships – some sail, some steam – at 'P.P. Heads' dated '9 Mar/1853', when the Montefiores' ship sailed into Port Phillip; it is followed by a portrait of the latter, the French ship *Vesta*.

Eliezer seems to have assumed the proud identity of a Melbourne merchant from the moment of his final landing in the town. A scene of shipping – 'Hobson's Bay/11 March 1853' – shows a French ship (again the *Vesta*) and is annotated on the facing page: 'The first French vessel loaded with/Australian produce for France'.

The cargo included 170 bales of wool and 379 casks of tallow consigned by Montefiore, Graham and Co. in Sydney.<sup>18</sup> Shipping seems to have held a particular appeal for Eliezer at this period, and



*E.L. Montefiore, Panorama of shipping on the Yarra Yarra (c. 1853)  
Pen and Ink and watercolour wash  
La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria*



the next double-page of the sketchbook is another animated panorama. It shows a dense cluster of ships on the Yarra Yarra River, in front of the Customs House and with St James Cathedral further in the distance to the left. With its vigorous use of pen and ink, particularly on the patterns of tackle and rigging on the ships, this is the liveliest drawing in the book; unusually, it bears neither date nor inscription.

Finally, two further panoramas towards the end of the sketchbook show an interest in the early history of Melbourne, soon after its foundation in 1837. The first, 'Melbourne from the Falls. June 30. 1837', is copied by Montefiore from a familiar drawing by Robert Russell, the first surveyor.<sup>19</sup> The second is inscribed 'Panorama of Early Melbourne/October 1838', and again must have been copied from an original sketch by Russell; it is a less familiar but more interesting view of the recently founded village.

The firm of Montefiore, Graham and Co. was established at 54 William Street from 1854 to 1859. In 1855 the firm was advertising its agency for the French National Steam Packet Company; in 1859 Tanner's directory also listed Montefiore's Bonded Stores, Lonsdale Street East. The business presumably closed its Melbourne office some time in 1860; the partnership between Montefiore and Graham was dissolved in 1861.

In 1861, for the first and only time, Eliezer appeared in a business of his own for a few years: E.L. Montefiore and Co., merchants, at 116 Lonsdale Street West, with Montefiore's bonded store at 159 Lonsdale Street West. The firm was listed from 1861 until 1864, the year in which Eliezer became Secretary of the Australasian Insurance Company, a position he retained until his move to Sydney. In 1863 the bonded store passed to the Cleve brothers, with whom Montefiore had shared his main premises.<sup>20</sup>

Already in Adelaide Eliezer had exhibited his own drawings: five drawings (three of them views of Sydney) appeared in the second Exhibition of Pictures of 1848; in 1851 he advertised 'Old Masters' for sale.<sup>21</sup> He also seems to have owned drawings by S.T. Gill,<sup>22</sup> and himself made careful copies of other Gill sketches.<sup>23</sup> In Melbourne he made his first appearance as an exhibitor at the Melbourne Exhibition 1854, held 'in connexion with the Paris Exhibition 1855'; not, however, as an artist, but in a category 'Specimens in Natural History', where he displayed *no. 209: Skeleton of a deaf (sic) adder found in an ant hill at Port Lincoln*. In the Fine Arts section the exhibition included the artists MacKenna, von Guérard, Becker, Strutt and Summers, amongst others.

The artist Nicholas Chevalier<sup>24</sup> came to the colony in February 1855; first spending some time at the goldfields, before returning to



Melbourne and taking a position as illustrator for *Melbourne Punch* later in the same year. Eliezer became a close friend of the Chevaliers, and the younger artist seems to have encouraged Montefiore in his amateur activities in the arts. Eliezer may also already have been on terms of friendship with Redmond Barry. At least his reputation and social standing in the colony are indicated by his election to the Melbourne Club at a meeting on Wednesday, 2 July 1856.<sup>25</sup>

The Victorian Exhibition of Art, organised by Mr Frank Newton at the Exhibition Building in December 1856, included, under the heading 'Watercolours', three works by E.L. Montefiore: 50. *The Glee Maiden*, 60. *Distinguished Member of the Humane Society*, and 61. *Return from the Warren*. Although all three are clearly described in the catalogue as 'etchings', this seems unlikely (it was a common misuse at the time to describe pen-and-ink drawings as etchings); 'and E.L. Montefiore, with a series in Indian Ink, was a great delight to the taste of that generation'.<sup>26</sup> *Distinguished Member of the Humane Society*, a copy of a Landseer painting of a dog (probably known from an engraving), seems to have been a particular favourite, and is exhibited on a number of later occasions when it is described as a pen-and-ink drawing.<sup>27</sup>

Eliezer also lent a number of 'Foreign Photographs' to the 1856 Exhibition – seven French views by Bisson Frères, nine Crimean and other scenes by Robertson, and five views of the University of Sydney by his own younger brother, Octavius Levi Montefiore,<sup>28</sup> who had only recently arrived in Australia.

It was almost ten years before Eliezer again exhibited his works – this time including his first-known etching – in the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition 1866-67, although in the intervening years the First Exhibition of the Victorian Society of Fine Arts was presented in 1857, and there were a number of subsequent exhibitions.<sup>29</sup> This may be due in part to the changes in the family businesses, and Eliezer's other public commitments, and in part to the domestic circumstances of a growing family. In addition to Arthur Augustus, the surviving son of two born in Adelaide, two further sons were born in Melbourne but died in early infancy (George Jacob, born in 1855, died the same year; Albert Frank, born in 1857, died in 1858). The Melbourne household was greatly increased by a series of daughters: Caroline, born c. 1855, then Amy (1859), Eliza Jessie (1861), Mary (2 May 1863), Esther Lilian (7 July 1866), Ethel Octavia (1868) and Hortense (1871).<sup>30</sup>

By 1861 the Montefiores were living in a house on the east side of Lennox Street, Richmond (near Bridge Road), set in grounds of about half an acre.<sup>31</sup> Rented through the merchant James Graham, it was offered for sale to them at £1200 in December of that year, but



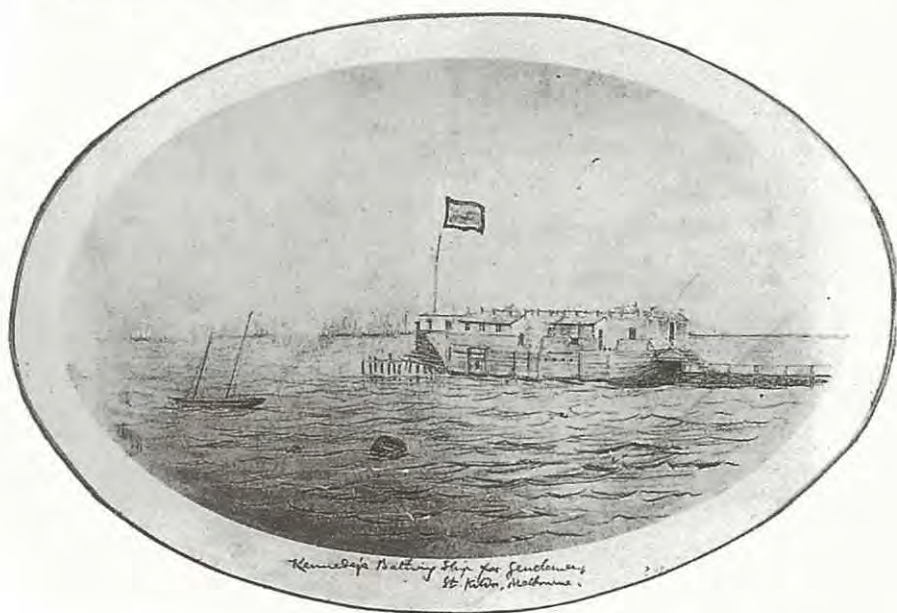
the offer seems to have lapsed a few months later. Some years later – in March 1866 – the house, 'Pine Grove', was sold to the theatrical entrepreneur George Coppin for £1500. The Montefiores moved to a recently-built house on the east side of Murphy Street, South Yarra, where they remained until leaving Melbourne for Sydney in 1871.<sup>32</sup>

A few works, never exhibited, date from these years. The most charming is an album of sketches and photographs, evidently compiled by Eliezer as an eighth-birthday present for his eldest daughter Caroline.<sup>33</sup> In addition, one of three small sketchbooks contains drawings of Melbourne and Adelaide dated from '9 Nov 65' to 'Oct 7/66'.<sup>34</sup> A recently rediscovered presentation drawing of *Kenney's Bathing Ship for Gentlemen*, St Kilda, seems to date from the late 1850s or early 1860s.<sup>35</sup>

Sir Redmond Barry wrote to E.L. Montefiore on 7 November 1866:<sup>36</sup>

Dear Sir

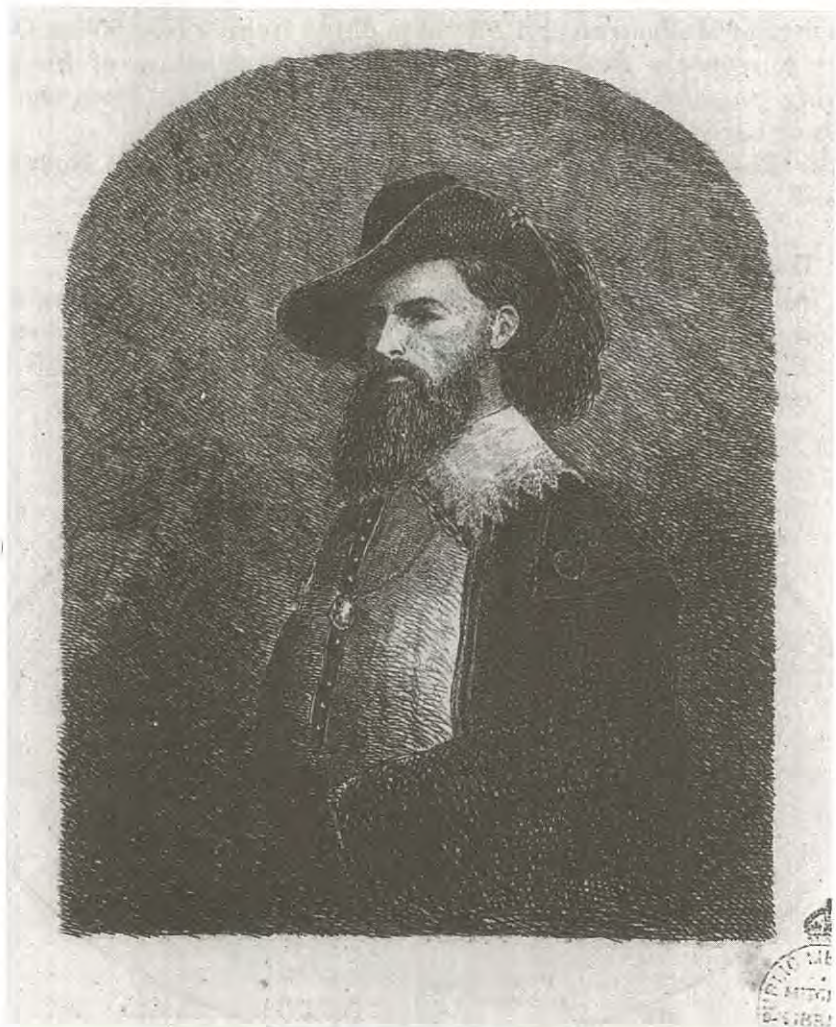
Allow me to thank you for your kind attention in sending to me a copy of your admirable etching representing Melbourne in 1837. On Thursday next I will (if it please God I shall live) complete my 27th year of residence here.



E.L. Montefiore, *Kenney's Bathing Ship for Gentlemen*  
Pencil and watercolour wash on prepared card  
La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria



The etching *Melbourne from the Falls* 1837 is one of the three works contributed by Eliezer to the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition 1866-67. The others – our old friend of the *Humane Society*, and *Joan of Arc* – are almost certainly pen-and-ink drawings. Eliezer was awarded a medal for *Etchings [sic] in Aquafortis*; it is the first unequivocal reference to an identifiable etching by him.<sup>37</sup> It is safe to assume that it had only recently been completed, and that Eliezer was proud of his achievement.



*E.L. Montefiore, Portrait of N. Chevalier esq. fancy Dress Rubens*  
1868

*Etching*

*Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales*



The fullest available reference to etching in mid-nineteenth-century Melbourne is given by William Moore: 'The late George Gordon McCrae once informed me that Nicholas Chevalier and Richard Henry Horne, author of *Orion*, did a few etchings. And both taught McCrae how to handle a plate.'<sup>38</sup> It would appear that Chevalier also taught his friend Montefiore. There is no evidence to suggest that Eliezer visited Europe during his Melbourne years; and although he appears to have maintained an exchange of letters with his younger brother Edward,<sup>39</sup> an engineer and later a banker in Paris, a pupil of the French etcher Maxime Lalanne, and an active amateur etcher in his own right, it is hardly likely that Eliezer could have learnt etching by correspondence.

Over the next four years, Eliezer made a dozen or so etchings. While it is not clear whether three plates dated 1866 are by him rather than by his brother Edward in Paris,<sup>40</sup> his authorship of four plates dated 1868 is certain.<sup>41</sup> The portrait of his friend, *Nicholas Chevalier in Fancy Dress*, and the view of *The Rip, Port Phillip Heads* are apparently based on his own drawings; that of Chevalier shows the artist at a fancy-dress ball dressed as Rubens; the artist von Guérard had appeared at the ball as Salvator Rosa. The other etchings reproduce a watercolour by Chevalier and a modern French painting by Ed Hamman; Eliezer probably knew the latter painting only from a photograph. None of Eliezer's other Melbourne plates seem to be dated, and only two of his later Sydney plates, but in some cases an approximate date can be assumed. In 1869 he gave a group of etchings to the National Gallery of Victoria;<sup>42</sup> in 1870 he exhibited six etchings, as well as three drawings,<sup>43</sup> at the first exhibition of the Victorian Academy of Arts, of which he was a council member from 1870 to 1872 and a life member from 1874.<sup>44</sup>

An Act of Incorporation passed in late 1869 united the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery under one newly-formed board of Trustees. The thirteen Trustees were announced by the Chief Secretary on Monday, 1 February 1870, and gazetted three days later. The letter, dated 3 February and notifying Eliezer Levi Montefiore of his appointment as a Trustee, is still preserved.<sup>45</sup>

Five committees were appointed at a special meeting of trustees held on 18 March; the National Gallery Committee comprised the Hon. C.G. Duff, the Hon. T.T. a'Beckett, the Hon. A. Michie and E.L. Montefiore Esqr. Montefiore seems to have attended the meetings regularly, acting as Chairman on occasion.<sup>46</sup> In the same year Eliezer also appeared as one of the Commissioners for Victoria for the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition of 1870, with Redmond Barry as President.





*E.L. Montefiore (after N. Chevalier), Pigeon Bay Creek, Banks Peninsula, N.Z. 1868*

*Etching*

*Gift of Jane Macgowan 1985, Art Gallery of New South Wales*

The next February the *Argus* announced Eliezer's impending departure:

The Public will be glad to learn that Mr E.L. Montefiore, the late secretary of the Australasian Insurance Company, who will shortly leave Melbourne to fill the post of Secretary to the Pacific Insurance Company in Sydney, has consented to not wholly withdraw himself from the conduct of the affairs of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery, of which he is a trustee. Mr Montefiore's taste in art, and personal talent as an artist, has enabled him to render most valuable assistance to the committee of the National Gallery, to which section of the institution he particularly devoted his attention.<sup>47</sup>

He attended his last meeting of the committee on 21 March 1871, and the trustees expressed their regret at his leaving. As a farewell presentation he was given an album of facsimiles after Dürer woodcuts, with a dedicatory inscription impressed in gold on the front cover.<sup>48</sup>

'Mr Montefiore's . . . personal talent as an artist' is briefly indicated above, and by the illustrations to this article. He never



seeks to intrude himself as more than an enthusiastic amateur; yet the best of his etchings have a certain strength and technical accomplishment surprising in one working almost in isolation from the etching revival appearing in France. After his move to Sydney, some of his later etchings were included in portfolios published in Paris by Cadart<sup>49</sup> – the professionally engraved titles on *Pigeon Bay Creek* and *Port Phillip Heads* suggest that they too were intended for publication, probably in portfolios – and stand up quite well to comparison with many of the contributions by French professional artists, particularly for their directness and simplicity.

His taste in art, at least during his Melbourne years, is not so well documented or so easy to judge, without depending on the evidence of his Sydney years and in particular the two papers – ‘Etchings and Etchers’ (1876) and ‘Art Criticism’ (1879) – delivered to the Royal Society of New South Wales. We do at least know something of his own collection from the loans he made to the important Exhibition of Art and Art Treasures held in Melbourne in 1869, and it is worth recounting his contribution here:

#### OIL PAINTINGS

- |                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 326. <i>Ostia</i> | Chevalier |
|-------------------|-----------|

#### WATER-COLOUR PAINTINGS

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 161. <i>On the Tambo River, Gipps Land</i> | Chevalier |
| 162. <i>Teremakau, N.Z.</i>                | Chevalier |
| 163. <i>Sydney Harbour, N.S.W.</i>         | Martens   |

#### SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS

- |                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 88. <i>Landscape, in charcoal</i>    | artist unknown      |
| 89. <i>Head of Moses</i>             | artist unknown      |
| 90. <i>Head of a girl</i>            | artist unknown      |
| 91. <i>Cupid drawn by the Graces</i> | A. Kauffman         |
| 91. <i>Study</i>                     | by Bartolozzi       |
| 92. <i>Study</i>                     | by Bamboccio        |
| 94. <i>Study</i>                     | by Paduanino        |
| 95. <i>Study</i>                     | by Bernard Castelli |
| 96. <i>Study</i>                     | by Gainsborough     |

#### ENGRAVINGS AND ETCHINGS

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 78. <i>Les Plaisirs du Bal</i>                                | after Watteau, Scolin |
| 79. <i>Madonna and Child, after Rubens</i>                    | Morghen Raphael       |
| 80. <i>Le Judgement de Paris, after Vanderwerf</i>            | Blot                  |
| 81. <i>La Retour a la ferme, after Berghem, in aquafortis</i> |                       |



82. *Paris (View of)*, an Etching, in aquafortis Lalanne  
 83. *St. Jerome*, in aquafortis artist unknown  
 102-10. Photographs, chiefly after old masters (25 items)

The variety and curiosity of the group is in itself interesting. Photographs, including those after works of art, are readily and unselfconsciously accepted in nineteenth-century exhibitions in Australia. Redmond Barry had himself initially recommended that the Public Library buy photographs and not original works of art, which would prove too expensive; and in 1869 the National Gallery of Victoria was forming a collection of autotypes by Adolphe Braun after the masters and their drawings, and these are still held in the Department of Prints and Drawings. Similarly, the sharp distinction between original and reproductive prints had yet to be made. The *View of Paris* (no longer identifiable) by Maxime Lalanne would have been a recent work by one of the modern masters of French etching; Lalanne had taught Eliezer's brother Edward in Paris.

The selection of oil painting and watercolours is less surprising. Eliezer had some personal interest in Conrad Martens, as well as in Sydney;<sup>50</sup> and his friendship with Chevalier has already been mentioned. *Teremakau*, N.Z. seems to have been the model for Eliezer's etching *Crossing a Creek*.<sup>51</sup> Chevalier's painting *Ostia* was also lent to the Ballarat Fine Arts Exhibition in 1869.

It is the drawings which here deserve closer attention. The first three, by unknown artists, cannot be traced any further, and are presumably long since lost. The Gainsborough also has been lost.<sup>52</sup> Given the often hopeful and dubious attributions given to works of art in nineteenth-century loan exhibitions in Australia, one might also be tempted to dismiss the remaining five; but Eliezer gave them to the National Gallery of Victoria late in 1869,<sup>53</sup> and they appear again in the Gallery's 1894 catalogue, although not in the Gallery's Stock Book No. 1. They are here identified and published for the first time in nearly a hundred years, and the best is illustrated.

The attributions are mostly based on early inscriptions, and seem reliable. The Padovanino drawing has a companion at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, also given by E.L. Montefiore,<sup>54</sup> and the two appear to have been once joined as a single sheet. All five drawings are of good quality, although not now in universally pristine condition; and these are the first old master drawings to enter the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. To the list of Eliezer Levi Montefiore's other achievements in Melbourne can be added his forgotten role in starting the collection of old master drawings.





*Alessandro Varotari (called 'il Padovanino'), Study of a stooping boy  
Black chalk, heightened with white  
Gift of E.L. Montefiore 1869, National Gallery of Victoria*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am particularly grateful to Ruth Faerber, Paul Huège de Serville and Tim Bonyhady for information, guidance and encouragement at crucial stages in my research. I also warmly thank Christine Downer, Mary Lewis and other colleagues at the La Trobe Library, Melbourne; Elizabeth Imashev and the staff of the Mitchell Library, Sydney; Frank Strachan and the University Archives, University of Melbourne; the staff of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*; and the many others, both in Australia and overseas, who have contributed to material gradually gathered over ten years. The Art Gallery of New South Wales allowed a short period of study leave in Melbourne in early 1987 which has helped to bring the research to fruition.

## NOTES

1. *Argus*, 12 March 1853, shipping intelligence.
2. James Smith, *Argus*, 16 December 1856.
3. Eliezer Levi Montefiore 1820-94: *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.5, p.269. The entry, by George Bergman, is very unreliable for Montefiore's years in Adelaide and Melbourne. Ruth Faerber, 'Eliezer Levi Montefiore', *Journal of Proceeding, Australian Jewish Historical Society*, VIII, 4, 1977, p.185, follows and expands on Bergman's material. I am indebted to Ruth Faerber for entrusting me with all her notes and references, including papers received from Dr Bergman. Some further details may be found in Hirsch Munz, *Jews in South Australia*, Thornquist Press, Adelaide, 1936; and Lazarus M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, the author, Melbourne, 1954.
4. Joseph Barrow Montefiore 1803-93: *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.2, pp.250-51; entry by Israel Gertler.
5. G. Bergman, 'Rise and Fall of Male Montefiores': *Australian Jewish News*, 2 April 1971.
6. Jacob Isaac Levi Montefiore 1819-85: *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.5, pp.270-71; entry by Martha Rutledge.
7. Printed announcement, with letter to S. Cohen, 6 November 1846; Mitchell Library, Sydney, Mss Am 35.
8. *Biographie Nationale publiée par l'Académie des Sciences des Lettres et des Beaux Arts de Belgique*, T.38, supplement T.10, Bruxelles 1973-74, col.598: entry for George Montefiore Levi 1832-1906, younger brother of Eliezer. Kindly communicated to me by Marianne Rucquoy, Commission Royale d'Histoire, Bruxelles.
9. Art Gallery of South Australia, AGSA O.1128.
10. By July 1853 this no longer seems to have been the case, according to a report from Montefiore, Graham and Co. in Melbourne; quoted by Eric Richards, *Journal of Proceeding, Australian Jewish Historical Society*, VIII, 4, 1977, p.162.
11. Compiled from directory entries, *Argus*, 1852-53, and other sources.



12. Arrivals of Mr Montefiore in Adelaide from Sydney on the brig *Emma* are noted on 1 July 1842 and 19 March 1845 in shipping records; letter of Sadie Pritchard to Ruth Faerber, 28 April 1977.
13. *Argus*, 10 October 1849, shipping intelligence. The Montefiores had extensive mining interests in South Australia, see Munz, op.cit.
14. Letter of Sadie Pritchard, 9 September 1976, citing *Adelaide Observer*, 6 May 1849, and Birth Register in the Congregation's records.
15. *Argus*, 8 October 1852, shipping intelligence. They are entered as 'Mr and Mrs Montefiore, Miss Montefiore and servant'; the three-year-old son may still have been dressed in petticoats as was usual at the time.
16. La Trobe Library, Melbourne, LTA H 84.459/816, bought from Maggs, London, as 'The Original Book of Drawings in water-colours executed by William Leigh of Little Aston, Staffordshire, containing Forty-one drawings of Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne', cat. no. 564. William Leigh, and the reasons for Maggs's attribution, are otherwise unknown. Christine Downer, the Pictures Librarian, kindly read through the original draft of this text and brought the sketchbook to my attention, remembering that it contained one drawing signed 'E L M'.
17. The two drawings are inscribed in pencil: 'Woolloomoolloo/Sydney 20 Oct 52; P.P. Heads/9.Mar/53'.
18. *Herald*, 12 February 1853 and 19 February 1853, shipping intelligence.
19. Robert Russell (1808-1900) evidently copied and repeated his original sketch on many later occasions. Eliezer certainly owned one of the later copies, reproduced in *Illustrated Sydney News*, 30 August 1888, p.5; and in 1866 made an etched version, discussed below, which differs in some substantial details from the version in the sketchbook copy.
20. Compiled from directories and *Argus*, also *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.5, p.270.
21. S.C. Wilson & K.T. Borrow, *The Bridge Over the Ocean*, the authors, Adelaide, 1973, pp.305-6. The authors have inadvertently transposed the dates of the first two exhibitions.
22. Mitchell Library Sydney: Z SSV\*/S.P.COLL/GILL/1 *Frome Bridge, Adelaide*; Z SSV\*/S.P.COLL/GILL/2 *King William St. Adelaide*; Z SSV\*/S.P.COLL/GILL/3 *Port Adelaide, S.A. King William St. Adelaide* is a portrait of Montefiore's Store (see note 9) above) and has been annotated in pencil in the margin 'My store My dwelling E L M'. Montefiore's known copies after Gill are carefully signed with his initials 'E L M'. It is possible that two of them were exhibited in Melbourne at the Victoria Fine Arts Society Exhibition, August 1853, cat. nos 95 (*View in Adelaide, South Australia*) and 120 (*Port Adelaide, South Australia*) so they may have been lent by Montefiore.
23. Mitchell Library, Sydney; three wash drawings: Z SSV3/RAC/VIC P/1 *Race Course, Adelaide*; SSV\*/AUS ABO/MAN/1 *Aborigines Making Fire, SSV\*/BUSH L/4 Bushmen Preparing to Fire on Aborigines*.
24. Nicholas Chevalier 1828-1902: *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.3, pp.387-88; entry by Marjorie J. Tipping.
25. First brought to my attention by Paul Huège de Serville; letter of R.R. McNicoll, honorary archivist, Melbourne Club, 6 March 1986.
26. Alexander Sutherland, *Melbourne and its Metropolis*, Melbourne [c. 1888], p.502.
27. 'The Distinguished Member of the Humane Society (Landseer's unrivalled Newfoundland dog) is Mr Montefiore's well-known *chef d'oeuvre* in pen



- and ink', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 March 1872, review of the First Exhibition of the New South Wales Academy of Art.
28. Octavius Levi Montefiore, c. 1834-93, merchant, died 4 July 1893, obituary in *Table Talk*, 14 July 1893.
  29. Christine Downer & Jennifer Phipps, *Victorian Vision*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1985, pp.92-93.
  30. Based on notes held in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* files.
  31. University Archives, University of Melbourne: James Graham papers, Private Letter Book No. 4; the papers contain details of other business dealings with Montefiore, Graham and Co. and with the Australasian Insurance Company. My thanks to the University Archivist, Frank Strachan, for his generous guidance through this extensive collection of documents.
  32. Directories and other sources. One of two new houses, built between the properties of W.W. Dobbs and F. Tate, Montefiore's house was subsequently occupied by Mrs Robert Gannon, and numbered 14 Murphy Street.
  33. Mitchell Library, Sydney, B.551, in embossed black leather cover. The ornamental title page is inscribed: CARRY/from/Papa/30th March/1864.
  34. Mitchell Library, Sydney, B.848, B.849, B.850; bought from the Bush Book Club, 5 May 1933, and possible from the estate of Caroline Levi Montefiore who died in Sydney on 14 August 1932. B.849 has drawings dated 1865 and 1866 of Brighton, the Botanical Gardens and Port Adelaide. B.848 and B.850 are later in date, probably 1876-82.
  35. La Trobe Library, Melbourne, H.1839 LT Box/M, *Kennedy's* [sic] *Bathing Ship for Gentlemen*, drawing, pencil with light wash and scratched highlights, 14.0 x 22.2 cm, oval on prepared yellow-green tinted paper mounted on presentation backing; inscribed on flag of ship, as titled above. Captain William Kenney established his baths in St Kilda in the mid-1850s, around the hulk of an ancient Swedish brig *Nancy*, which had been abandoned by its crew in Port Phillip in 1854. For a lively and informative account of Kenney's Baths, see John Butler Cooper, *The History of St Kilda*, Printers Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1931, pp.156ff.
  36. La Trobe Library, Melbourne, Redmond Barry papers, 599/2(k).
  37. *Melbourne from the Falls* 1837 after Robert Russell, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 5594, La Trobe (two impressions), H.2240, H.3831, National Library of Australia; here dated 1866.
  38. William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1934, vol.II, pp.129-30. Etchings by Horne and McCrae have yet to be located or identified.
  39. Edward Levi Montefiore 1826-1906. The entries for Montefiore in Thieme-Becker, *Kunstlerlexikon*, and following it in Bénézit, completely confuse the brothers Edward and Eliezer under one single entry. For some years Edward acted for the Art Gallery of New South Wales as its Paris adviser. He died at Coucy-le-Château.
  40. The plates that cannot be attributed to Eliezer with complete confidence are: (1) *La Mazeppa* (The worn-out horse) 1866, after Carel Dujardin, AGNSW.5062, La Trobe H.9396. At this period it would be quite usual to copy a seventeenth-century Dutch etching as a student exercise when learning etching. This might be an early experiment by Eliezer. (2) (*Garden Scene - At Foot of Steps*) 1866, AGNSW.5598, La Trobe H.9397. More probably by Edward? (3) (*Garden Scene - Woman Seated*) 1866, AGNSW.5599. Probably by Edward?



41. *Portrait of N. Chevalier esq. Fancy dress Rubens* 1868, Mitchell P2/117; *Port Phillip Heads Australia* 1868, La Trobe (two impressions), H.1514, H.6698, see above and note 19; *Pigeon Bay Creek, Banks Peninsula N.Z.* 1868, after N. Chevalier; AGNSW (two impressions), 5600, 410.1985; Mitchell SV7B/BAN P./1, the drawing is in the National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand, acc.no.501 (formerly P50A); *André Vésale* 1868 after Ed. Hamman, AGNSW.5596.
42. Identified in the Gallery's 1894 Catalogue (cat. nos 76, 86 (1-4)): *Melbourne from the Falls 1837/Environs of Sydney/Crossing a Creek N.Z./after . . . N. Chevalier/Port Phillip Heads/Pigeon Point, Banks Peninsula, N.Z./after . . . N. Chevalier.*
43. Cat. no. 151, *Portrait*, in charcoal drawing; 218, *Kapiti Island, N.Z.*, etching; 219, *Still Life*, watercolour; 220, *André Vésale*, etching; 221, *Pigeon Bay Creek . . .*, etching; 225, *The Lesson*, etching; 226, *View in Tahiti*, etching; 227, *Catching Flies*, etching; 228, *Sketch*, charcoal. Etchings survive, particularly because of Eliezer's gifts of etchings to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1869 and to the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1894.
44. Catalogues of the Victorian Academy of Arts.
45. La Trobe Library, Melbourne, Australian autograph collection, M.4970.
46. La Trobe Library Archives, Minutes of the National Gallery Committee.
47. *Argue*, February 1871. Montefiore's main contribution from Sydney was to be the purchase in 1873 of a fine Conrad Martens watercolour *Apsley Falls*, Acquisition no. P166/1.
48. Now held by the Department of Prints and Drawings, Art Gallery of New South Wales.
49. For Cadart and his publications, see Janine Bailly-Herzberg, *L'Eau-forte du peintre au dix-neuvième siècle: La Société des Aquafortistes* (1862-1867), 2 vols, Léonce Laget, Paris, 1972.
50. Both his uncle, Joseph Barrow, and brother, Jacob Levi, had been patrons of Conrad Martens in the 1840s.
51. See note 42 above. The watercolour has not been located. There is a small oil painting of the subject in the Wollongong City Art Gallery, and a large finished composition painted in Europe from earlier sketches in the Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand.
52. Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1899 Catalogue, no.601, as gift of E.L. Montefiore 1883. It appeared in the 1924 Catalogue, but was transferred to the Education Department in May 1927, and has not been traced since. It is presumed lost.
53. Report of the Trustees, 1870, in Victorian *Parliamentary Papers* 1871, vol.2.
54. Alessandro Varotari, called 'il Padovanino', *Study of a stooping shepherd boy*, drawing, black chalk heightened with white, 36.5 x 26.1 cm, on blue paper mostly discoloured to a dull buff; old attribution in brown ink, lower right; 'Padovanino', part of an old attribution, centre right, 'Padov/', Art Gallery of New South Wales, gift of E.L. Montefiore 1883, inv. 474.



## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE FIFTIETH GATE A JOURNEY THROUGH MEMORY

by Mark Raphael Baker, Melbourne, Flamingo (Harper Collins),  
1997, pp. 339. \$16.95

**T**he recently published book, *The Fiftieth Gate*, written by Mark Baker, adds additional dimensions to the rapidly growing collection of books dealing with personal experiences of the survivors of the *Shoah*. The author opens the book with an intriguing statement which depicts the contents of this powerful and creative narrative: 'It begins where it ends, and ends where it begins: with my parents' stories, and my stories of their stories . . .'

The book is a collection of Genia and Yosl Baker's memories as recorded by their son Mark. Their experiences and their fight for survival could hardly have been more dissimilar. Yosl, the survivor of death camps Auschwitz and Buchenwald; and Genia, who for almost three years lived in hiding in constant fear. From the snippets of their memories, slowly brought to life during months of audio and video interviews, Baker created this imaginative mosaic-like pattern. The reader is witnessing a continuous chain of questions being fired at his parents and, in the process, their tragic history and memories emerge. Stories of both parents are only partly revealed, as their memories have faded over the passage of time. This particularly applies to his mother's incomplete account which takes the form of a jigsaw puzzle with many vital pieces missing.

It is not at all surprising – in fact it seems inevitable – that Mark was determined to find these 'pieces' of his parents' past. Each survivor has a story to tell, and this one as told by Genia and Yosl Baker to their son (who is a lecturer in Modern Jewish History at Melbourne University) is a fascinating – and despite many horrific accounts – an easy to read insight into their past. They could not have had a more sympathetic, lovable and better-equipped 'interrogator' – as his mother called Mark when he persisted in getting an answer or clarification. In his probing for a satisfactory response that his mother was unable to provide, 'the son', in frustration, becomes a 'historian', resolved (at times almost obsessed) – for his parents' sake as well as his own – to resurface the long submerged memories of pain and sorrow.



Genia was only seven years old when the Nazis overran her home town Bolszowce, where she was hiding in cellars, cupboards or dugouts, most of the time in darkness. Her recollections of events of that period are very sketchy, some of them not corresponding with eye witnesses or official records. She repeatedly quoted what she had stored in her mind some fifty-odd years ago. If there were any discrepancies it was that 'the other person was wrong, not her'. Memories are very precious, especially to the survivors, most of whom cherish the gradually vanishing recollections of the past. If these memories were to be negated by having doubts as to their accuracy cast on them, it would destroy what they had believed in. At one stage Genia pleaded with her son: 'Don't steal my memories.'

The narrative takes the reader on an absorbing journey where times and places change at will. From the father's account of early life in Wierzbnik through Majowka camp, Auschwitz and Buchenwald, to the tragic childhood of his mother . . . and back again. They all come in short, often unrelated vignettes or chapters, intermingled with first person accounts (highlighted in italics), which at times necessitate the reader to take a short pause in order to identify the time and location.

In a determined bid to unravel the missing details of his parents' past, Baker went to extraordinary lengths. He was fortunate to have them accompany him in his travels to Poland, Ukraine and Germany where most of their memories were buried, and where he spent untold hours searching archives, hoping to verify facts which they had committed to memory many years ago. During his exhaustive research in Yad Vashem archives, Mark Baker found only one document referring to his mother's home town. It was an official document written in 1945, which reads: 'Among 1380 people, one family survived by chance. They were Leo Krochmal and his wife Rosa.' Genia, their daughter's name, did not appear anywhere. This prompted the author to ask a thought-provoking question: 'Does history remember more than memory?'

This intensifies the already sad part of Genia's story of survival. There are no other survivors to confirm or deny her account. The small *shtetl* in Western Ukraine was burned to the ground, while Genia and her mother ran to the nearest forest where they awaited the Russian liberators. One of the few clear memories that she has is of her father Leo, a lawyer and highly respected communal activist and, as she recalls, very rich land owner. The property which once belonged to him is still locally known as the 'Krochmal Fields'.

Mark takes his father to his home town Wierzbnik, which the German Army entered during the first weeks of World War II, and where at the age of 14 he was captured by the Gestapo and sent to a



camp in Majowka. His memories of the town and his schooldays are limited to 'being scared to get another black eye'. In summer 1944 he was transported to Auschwitz. Looking at the gates 52 years later, he became confused, his memory failed him. 'It was here . . . but not here', followed by: 'I shouldn't have come here, there's nothing to see.' Prior to their departure for Europe, Yosl was very proud of his memory, but the memory proved to be a very selective one. The spine chilling description of the day the *aktion* and the selection took place, he remembers as being a very cold day, while all other people remember it as hot. According to official records, he even changed his age four times; the last time was when trying to obtain a child's visa to Switzerland when he made himself two years younger.

Walking around the camp, the sight of the area suddenly triggered off his memory mechanism. Several missing tiles of the mosaic found their places; the past started to reappear — from the time the train stopped at the big gates, then following all procedures. Slowly he recalled the evacuation of the camp and the months-long 'death march' which culminated in Buchenwald, where in April 1945 the United States Army liberated the camp.

Yosl arrived in Australia in 1948, Genia four years later. Their love of dancing brought them together in Melbourne where they married and have built a successful business. As if in defiance of Hitler's 'final solution', they started new generations. Besides Mark they have another son John, who in turn created for them eight grandchildren.

In his book Baker also included some of the results of his extensive research: several excerpts of official documents as well as testimonies of war criminals, who in graphic detail described the last hours/minutes of victims of Nazi barbarism. Genia and Yosl, despite their horrific experiences, contribute a great deal of lightheartedness and even humour, displaying their positive outlook on life. Finally, recognising his efforts to revive his parents' past as being almost futile, Baker shows a sign of remorse when he asks: 'Why had I brought them here? These long lost memories, once awakened, they will never rest again.'

The high quality of writing in *The Fiftieth Gate*, and its unusual concept makes it a compelling and fascinating read. Through its integration of the present and the past and its analysis of the meaning of memory, it contributes an important dimension in our search for understanding the Holocaust.

Marian Pretzel



## EDGE OF THE DIASPORA: TWO CENTURIES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

*by Suzanne D. Rutland, 2nd revised edition, 1997, Sydney, Brandl and Schlesinger, 485pp, \$29.95*

**I**t is very gratifying to see that Suzanne Rutland has been able to produce a second edition of her history of Australian Jewry. Although other historical works have been written since the first edition appeared in the bicentennial year 1988, this book is now clearly the standard history of the Jewish community in Australia.

When I reviewed the first edition, I noted that Dr Rutland had found a central theme by constructing her story around the impact of Jewish immigration to Australia since 1933, which transformed the Jewish community as it had existed in organised form for the previous 100 years. As in so many other aspects of social life, Jews were somewhat ahead of the community at large, which underwent a corresponding transformation as the result of massive immigration after 1945.

Change spurred by immigration remains a major theme in the additional chapter which Dr Rutland has added in this new edition. Apart from some revisions of her original text, the present book differs essentially by adding a codicil in the shape of a new chapter 15, dealing with the period since 1988. Immigration during that period, notably from South Africa and the former Soviet Union, is further modifying the face of the community. As Dr Rutland notes, small communities, especially Perth, have been substantially affected. This is an interesting shift. Whereas the smaller communities were generally assumed to be declining, they are now on the rise both demographically and culturally. Since the book was written, we learn that the Perth community has embarked on an ambitious program of attracting migrants from South Africa, with the aim of raising its numbers to 10,000 and more.

Dr Rutland's new chapter, comprising no more than 12 pages, reflects the limitations of space imposed by her publishers. Consequently, she is forced to treat a number of developments in summary fashion. Not surprisingly, her choice of topics reflects her own special interests, including the role of women in the community, education, and the Jewish press. The vicissitudes of the Australian Jewish News are allotted well over one and a half pages. Although Dr Rutland refers briefly to the development of Jewish welfare services, she says remarkably little about the implications of our disproportionately aged community where the percentage of people over 60 is twice as high as it is in the general Australian community.



Impending cuts in Commonwealth Government funding for aged care services will impose even greater responsibilities on our welfare bodies. Ironically, the ageing of the community is a long-term effect of the large-scale immigration of the post-war period.

I was also surprised to find no mention of the two substantial surveys of Jewish communities in Melbourne and Sydney conducted in the 1990s, which are not described in the text or listed in the bibliography. The bibliography itself contains some notable gaps, and does not even list books which are mentioned in the introduction. Otherwise, the new chapter is an admirable short survey of an eventful period. It is to be hoped that Dr Rutland will have an opportunity to write about it at greater length in the near future.

Sol Encel

## STELLE E STRISCE E STELLA DI DAVID NELLA CROCE DEL SUD

*(Stars and Stripes and the Star of David in the Southern Cross)*  
by Rosanna Rosini, Coopstudio srl, Trieste, 1988

**I**n 1992(vol.11, part 4), I wrote in a review of a previous book by this author that I hoped to review her book on Anglo-Jewish writing in the new worlds. Six years later, I have finally set out to achieve this goal and have read this present work in Italian. The harvest is exceptional. The book deserves to be translated into English, but this reviewer is not volunteering!

I wrote previously that Professor Rosini is obviously a fascinating person. Reviewing this book has certainly not changed my mind. She includes liberal quotes in English and Italian from 243 works and very few typographical errors have slipped in. (The two glaring ones were Ray Lawfer for Lawler and Eastern Council of Australian Jewry as an explanation of Executive Council of Australian Jewry). Her bibliography containing 95 entries is amazing as she obviously has covered a great variety of writers. Whereas before she concentrated more on Judah Waten and Australia, in this book she extends her research and covers writers in Australia, both Jewish and non-Jewish, (the latter with Jewish characters in their novels) as well as writers in America, New Zealand, England and South Africa. In this survey she includes Nancy Keesing, Morris Lurie, Harry Marks, Benzion Patkin, Leonie Sperling and David Martin, but she does not mention Serge Liberman. Her non-Jewish Australian writers include Patrick White, D. H. Lawrence, Martin Boyd, Bruce Dawe, Geoffrey Dutton



and for background she uses Thomas Keneally, Harry Heseltine, John Hooker, Humphrey McQueen, Geoffrey Serle, Chris Wallace-Crabbe with Marcus Arkin and Gideon Shimoni from South Africa. Students in her lectures are obviously expected to be well read! (She specialises in Australian literature at the University of Venice)

Her Jewish background reading includes this Society's Journal, as well as works by Peter Medding and Sol Encel. She has obviously read widely in order to place both the Australian and American Jewish literature in their cultural, political and historical contexts and she quotes liberally, in English, from all these sources.

At the beginning of the book, her dedicatory quotations are from Steven Spielberg, the Baal Shem Tov, Leo Rosten, Allen Guttman, Dorothy Bilik and Howard Jacobsen. This gives a taste of her wide range of reading. Her acknowledgements include several Catholic nuns from Sydney, Nancy Keesing, Louise Rosenberg, Fay Zwicky and Rose Faen as well as Lawrence Nathan from New Zealand. She also thanks people in Montreal, Trieste and New York and gives special thanks to Judah and Hyrell Waten.

The sub title of Rosini's book is "metaphors and contexts in colonial and post-colonial literature in the new worlds". The work is divided into seven chapters. These are 1. 'Refugees and Exiles', which includes *To the Eastern Festival*, *Odessa*, *Melting Pots* and *Babel*; 2. 'Roots', which has "The heart is where the hurt is" and *Laughter and Tears*; 3. 'The Mothers' Reign', which has the conflict between food and spirit as well as *The Mother Tongue* and the *Ultimate Message*; 4. 'The Empire Strikes Back' which has *The Centrality of the Empire* and the *Iron Crown* as well as "A new Britannia?"; 5. 'The Final Redemption and the Land of the "Second Chance"' which has "Beneath our radiant Southern Cross" and *The Star of David in the Southern Cross*; 6. 'The Metaphor of New Worlds and the Crime of Eden' which has *The Symphony of the New World* and the *Shriek* as well as *The Sacrificial Stranger* and the *Loss of Innocence*; and finally 7. 'The Flight from Prophecy' which has *Obscurity* and the *Splendour of the Outback* as well as *The light* and the *Great Australian Emptiness*. Each of these chapters is further divided into sections and sub sections.

Rosini returns to these themes again many times as she interprets the effects of exile from the Old World, migration to the New, colonisation and Empire on Australian Jewish literature and assimilation on American Jewish literature. Of America she says that the pressure to conform, so much a part of the early immigrant novel is not so significant in later novels. She refers to the differing themes of pre and post Holocaust Jewish literature in the two hemispheres. She also comments on the influence of Jewish characters



in the writings of James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence and Patrick White and the mysticism associated with them.

In discussing female protagonists in American literature, she describes the paramount role of the mother with her warmth, the creation of new *shtetls* within the new cities and growing of businesses from small beginnings. Emigration literature emphasises links between generations of women. Australians writing about Melbourne, particularly Carlton, focus on roots and nostalgia where the mother is the last link between the old ways and the new. She assimilates into the country of exile but continues the Jewish festival traditions. It is a bitter-sweet culture clash.

The Star of David in the Southern Cross manifests itself in the conflict of language and culture as children of a Yiddish heritage struggle to identify with their new culture. Rosini says the pre Holocaust immigrants to Australia came from cosmopolitan cities to make money and found a culture clash with rural protestant ethics. They found a conservative, isolated society which was weakly organised, antagonistic to foreigners and fiercely loyal to the Crown of England. The existence of this society allowed Patrick White to create the Jewish outsider, *Himmelfarb*.

The post Holocaust women characters have great spirit. Whereas, in America, the great melting pot absorbed so many, in Australia the billy of Empire drowned the nation. Australia and its people were struggling with their own identity and this theme is strong in post Holocaust Australian Jewish literature. American Jews were more city based than their Australian counterparts in suburbia, but the cultural and political freedoms in both America and Australia allowed faster assimilation for pre-Holocaust migrants. However the Australian mateship ideal in the outback often excuded outsiders such as immigrants and women.

The immigrant parents often idealised the Old World, while the children wanted to conform to the New. The post-Holocaust and refugee experience was different because of the conflict between the ideal of promised lands and the reality of the diaspora experience. These themes are reflected in the literature as post-Holocaust characters experience racism when they identify more as Jews. The writing of the fifties and sixties reflected the themes of witness, survival and memory whereas previous writing highlighted assimilation and identity. Many Australian Jewish writers were the second generation out of the ghetto and had begun the process of assimilation. Rosini comments that Australian Jewish writers did not tackle the Holocaust itself in fiction as the experience was too recent. She compares Patkin's writing on the *Dunera* experience with the *Arandora Star* which sank with Italian prisoners on board.



While American writing became more universal and American writers often drew on biblical mythology for their themes, Australian literature remained inward looking. In America the divide between Jews was between rich and poor while in Australia in the thirties and forties it was between Anglo Jews and non Anglo. American Jews were more reformist; in Australia they were more conservative. Yet, English Judaism as translated to Australia was more liberal than European.

Rosini also discusses the Zionist debates in Australia in the thirties and talks of a culture of gratitude to Australia for accepting pre- and post-war migrants. She contrasts the American attitude to England with that of Canada and Australia where the nation's good was the Empire's good. In England in 1753 Disraeli, Goldsmid and the Rothschilds had supported colonisation and free trade; Jews had been allowed to take up previously forbidden occupations and Jewish colonists were loyal to the Crown. Colonial novelists such as John Lang saw Australia as the land of the second chance. Federation in 1901 gave Australians their own identity, whereas the Americans had gained their independence from colonialism centuries before in the War of Independence. Rosini sees the English as imposing tough conforming regulations on Australian society in an attempt to restrict Catholicism and other religious differences as a reaction to the American revolution. German Jewish emigrants to Australia during the gold rushes had often come via America and saw the freedom and democracy there first hand. Rosini quotes from the *AJHS Journal* article of Abraham Abrahamson's travels in Australia in the 1850s.

Perhaps it is Rosini's nostalgia for Australia that leads to her emphasis on the influence of the great Australian emptiness. For emigrants from the *shtetls* of Europe the country was young and unexplored, the lure of gold gave it a romantic image, but the country in reality was so vast and empty that it was an entirely different kind of frontier.

The great American dream was not the great Australian dream. The American Founding Fathers arrived with the Bible and a trust in God, seeking a new Eden. Australian society began with the Bible and the lash. It was not God, but the English Crown which demanded loyalty and sacrifice in Australia right up to the Second World War. The American immigrants seeking a new Jerusalem found sweat shops and a new Babylon where the English language overcame all others. In contrasting American Jewish post war fiction with Australian, Rosini comments on the American concentration on city ghettos and contrasts this with Australia's wide open spaces and suburban streets where the children of immigrants ran free and wild. For their parents, both America and Australia were promised



lands, second chances and final redemptions. The children sloughed off the old identity and took on the new. In non Jewish fiction, such as Patrick White's, the Jewish character of Himmelfarb takes on the burden of universal anguish and is a mystical figure in the great Australian emptiness. D.H. Lawrence draws Australia as a wild mysterious land, an island in an empty ocean, an ideal place for post Holocaust regeneration. She sees Thomas Keneally as an influence on contemporary Jewish writers. James Joyce's Bloom is the typical Anglo-Jewish stereotype of his day, but Lawrence and White create paradoxes who are atypical of Australian Jewish culture of the time. She says that the post war Jewish immigrants in Australia planted a new Jewish culture in the bed of Anglo-Judaism.

D.M. Thomas in his book *The White Hotel* is discussed as seeing Jewish immigrants from Odessa as lost innocents after the Fall from Grace departing from the Promised Land and seeking the New. The Promised land is a railway station where passengers come and go, but do they ever actually arrive? White and Lawrence see the immigrants as innocents in a new land still at the mercy of bureaucrats from the old. Their Jewish characters become Everyman. The Promised Land condemns its prophets. Rosini identifies mystical Jewish writers such as Gershon Scholem who could have influenced White. There is a touch of heresy with the mysticism in White's character, Himmelfarb. The duality in the old and new worlds he lives in is reflected in the real and metaphoric meanings in the text. The Jewish characters of Joyce, White and Lawrence are exiles in a strange land.

Rosini makes the point that when John Lang wrote the first Jewish Australian novel he was part of the Empire ruled by Queen Victoria; he saw hope for future progress. White's Himmelfarb reflects the void that surrounds modern man. She comments that no Jewish Australian writers have been awarded a Nobel Prize for literature and that in the fifties and sixties Antipodean writers were ignored as was the ethnicity of the writers. Jewish intellectuals have resuscitated their curiosity about the social systems they would criticise, but is this enough to give form to literature?

In discussing modern writers such as Morris Lurie and Leonie Sperling she comments that their worlds are not of migrants and their children, but of acculturated expatriate Jews with a sense of solitude in their crimes against their ethnicity. (In Sperling's case it is her struggle with Jewish dietary laws). These are no longer innocents but Jews after the Fall paying the price to be part of the New World.

Amidst themes of food, anguish and desert solitude and Australian pioneering oral history, Rosini sees the boiling billy of *Waltzing*



*Matilda* as a symbol of the Australian independent, liberal spirit - a far cry from white prayer meetings and the bureaucratic administration of coastal settlements. In the fifties the bush was protective and provided comfort beyond the existential anguish which became part of the sixties literature. She sees the desert, bushfires and the seasonal cycles of Australia in a metaphysical sense as a transported biblical place of revelation where spirit and earth meet. She states that Western literature is founded on Jewish biblical mythology, but asks what is the proportion between the model and its copies? She identifies a mixture of cultural roots in Australia: the influences of Hebrew mysticism, German and European traditions, Aboriginal dreamtime myths and says that the geography of the countries themselves have exerted differing influences on Jewish writers in Australia and America. The vastness of the desert and the great emptiness makes modern Australian writers look above and beyond the mere human.

Rosini believes that the time has come for Australian Jewish writers to open the door and dare to tackle the greater mysteries beyond the Antipodes and beyond the English speaking world as White and Lawrence have done using Jewish characters and themes.

Rosini's love of literature and passion for Australia come through the pages of this book. It needs a serious study to discuss her themes and arguments, and obviously it would be well worth the effort to read all the texts she uses to see if one would come to the same conclusions.

Helen Bersten

## A GLANCE OVER AN OLD LEFT SHOULDER: HARRY STEIN REMEMBERS

*by Harry Stein, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1994. Price \$19.95.*

**H**arry Stein died from cancer a few months before publication of this autobiography. Its publication was ensured by friends like Joan Clarke and Tom Uren who wrote a warm foreword, and distribution was ensured by word of mouth from old friends on the left side of politics.

Harry's parents had emigrated separately from Safed in what was then Turkish Palestine before the First World War, married and settled in Carlton, when North Melbourne was still the hub of the Jewish community. Abraham Stein, his father, was a presser by trade who eked out a sparse living to support the family of a wife



and three sons. He was learned in *Torah* despite his humble calling and associated with the De Vahl Stone *shule* and *Chevra Kadisha* near his home. When ill-health forced him to retire, he became the *shammash* of Stone's *shule*. The opening chapter of the book, celebrating the life of his father, a humble, pious Jew, with the full nostalgia of a son who has abandoned the path of his forebears, is the most touching of the whole book. In a slightly different form it was published in this *Journal* some years ago.

Growing up in a Carlton from which the Jews were moving out brought Harry, the middle son, who had left school at 13, into contact with Australian working-class youths. He lived the same life of poverty as they endured during the 1930s Depression in Melbourne. These experiences brought him to left-wing politics, first in the Victorian Young Communist League and later in the Communist Party.

At the same time, Stein became involved in the nascent world of Australian jazz while earning a bare living with a variety of small, insignificant jobs mostly connected with the theatre when he came across many theatrical personalities of that time, such as Harry Van Der Sluice, better known as Mo. Jazz drumming brought him to England via a ship's steward's job in 1937, aged 18. In England he joined a picket-line of striking musicians on the night of his arrival. From then on his life revolved around jazz and left-wing politics, and whenever possible he combined the two. Apparently he was once described in the Melbourne *Herald* as 'a jazz-crazed Communist who can talk on any subject at any time.'

Indeed, Stein's description of the rise of the jazz scene in Australia, its early practitioners, and how Graeme Bell's band became known in Europe through Harry's invitation to them to play at the Prague communist-sponsored Youth Festival in 1947, are treated in greater depth and detail than Harry's long career as a communist apparatchik.

He became president of the Victorian Eureka Youth League, the youth wing of the Australian Communist Party, and from his return to Australia in 1938 he was employed full-time in political activities, or journalistic activities connected with the party, until the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia when he resigned. As such, there should have been a wealth of insights, if not revelations, about the Australian Communist Party in this autobiography. Disappointingly the politics are dealt with at a superficial level, as if the author were still concerned with not giving away anything that might be embarrassing or revealing. Yet his career included editing *Challenge*, a journal for socialist youth, and being Canberra press gallery correspondent for *Tribune*, the communist weekly, for many years.



There are no insights that one might expect from a seasoned communist who has become disillusioned. Rather it is all amiable descriptions of meals, of gatherings, of voyages. Among the facile judgments one must deplore is an endorsement of the naive view of Austria having been 'under Nazi occupation' rather than an enthusiastic participant in Greater Germany, an odd judgment by an intelligent, politically aware Jew, which possibly reveals the author's distance from his Jewish roots.

After his departure from the Communist Party, Harry joined the Labor Party and, despite a first bout of bowel cancer in 1972, became part of the Whitlam government team and the Department of Urban and Regional Development under the ministry of Tom Uren. At that time, offering to drive him home after a *Shabbat* family dinner at our house which had lasted several hours, and knowing he had no car, we were surprised to hear that his government car and chauffeur had been stationed outside our gate all that time.

Indubitably Harry Stein had the gift of friendship, and the long roll-call of jazz musicians, communist activists, actors and painters who returned that friendship included Clifton and Judith Pugh, Pat O'Shane, Ray Peckham, Mikey Theodorakis, and many less famous. He never married, but seems to have had no dearth of feminine company. He left no descendants. His book is a fascinating glimpse into the milieu of poor Jews in 1920s and 1930s Carlton, as well as the alienation from any meaningful Jewish life that this produced. Greater exposure of the world of communist activism in which he participated could have made this book a really significant autobiography.

Sophie Caplan



## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,  
*Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*

Re: Sir Julian Salomons, 1835 -1909

Dear Dr Suzanne Rutland,

This interesting lawyer described by M.Z. Forbes<sup>1</sup> defended Daniel Boon in Wagga Wagga in 1876 against a charge of murder. Boon, of Anglican religious background, married the widow Rebecca Barr, daughter of the Jewish Cooma businessman Samuel Shannon<sup>2</sup> in 1866.

Boon kept the Home Hotel, Wagga, and let nearby premises to Alexander McMullen, a blacksmith, who had a reputation for violence and non-payment of debts.<sup>3</sup> On 10 January 1876, in the late afternoon, Boon, who had been drinking all day in his bar, took his shotgun and went to the smithy to insist on prompt payment of rent arrears. McMullen was placatory but Boon shot him in the shoulder. McMullen died on 16 January of wound gangrene.

Boon was charged with murder and brought before the local magistrates on 21 January for committal. He was represented by local solicitor and prominent churchman, H.B. Fitzhardinge, who briefed Julian Salomons - 'Mr Salomons is engaged for the defence'.<sup>4</sup> The trial only lasted one day, 5 April, and was held before Sir James Martin, C.J.<sup>5</sup> During the trial, Salomons ascertained from a key witness that he had 'never heard the prisoner make use of threats towards the deceased'. In his summation, Salomons argued that the crime was manslaughter, not murder.

The jury 'after a short absence found a verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy, on the ground that the prisoner was hardly accountable for his actions at the time. His Honour then proceeded to pass sentence of death in an impressive manner. A public petition was launched for commutation of the death sentence, but the press were against it - as was stated in the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*: 'we see no grounds whatever to justify any pleading for mercy'.<sup>6</sup>

'Mr Salomons applied to the Full Court to set aside the conviction of Daniel Boon, on the ground that the murder was committed by him



while drunk'.<sup>7</sup> This appeal was heard on 9 June 1876 by three judges of the Supreme Court,<sup>8</sup> who were asked to rule that the trial judge should have offered the jury the choice of a manslaughter verdict.<sup>9</sup>

'A point of law was reserved in his favour, the substance of it being that he was under the influence of drink at the time he committed the crime. This was argued before the Full Court by Mr Salomons, his counsel, but without effect. In upholding the conviction, the Court held that drunkenness was no excuse for crime'.<sup>10</sup> 'It would be frightful if a person could madden himself with liquor and then, after shooting down an inoffensive person, be acquitted of the murder because he was too much intoxicated to form an intent... In a prosecution for murder a malicious intent is presumed, for the prisoner to give evidence of excuse or justification... If a man chooses to get drunk, it is his own voluntary act; it is very different from a madness which is not caused by any act of the person'.<sup>11</sup>

John M. Stanhope

### NOTES

1. Forbes, MZ, 'Sir Julian Salomons, 1835 - 1909', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol 13, no 2, 1996, 191 - 225.
2. Stanhope, JM, 'Samuel Shannon: Cooma businessman (1802 - 1868)', *AJHS Journal*, vol 11, 1991, pp 269-273.
3. *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* (WWA) 19 February and 31 May 1873; *Wagga Wagga Express* (WWE) 19 February, 24 & 31 May 1873.
4. WWA, 1 April 1876.
5. WWE, 8 April 1876.
6. WWA, 12 April 1876.
7. Ibid., 10 June 1876.
8. WWE, 14 June 1876 and WWA, 24 June 1876.
9. WWA, 14 June 1876.
10. WWE, 22 July 1876.
11. WWE, 14 June 1876.

The Editor,  
*Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*

Dear Madam,

I refer to the excellent article by Louise Rosenberg published in Volume 12, Part 3, 1995 and to the Addenda and Corrigenda to this article published in Volume 13, Part 2, 1996. I am able to give further information on the family of Jacob Hollander who died 10 April 1905 aged 69 leaving 10 children. The eldest, Abraham Alfred Hollander never married and died aged 82, 11 March 1942; the



eldest daughter Dora Dagmar Solomon died aged 92, 21 March 1955; the second daughter Bertram (Bertie) Cohen died aged 82, 26 October 1947; the third daughter Juliet Cohen died aged 83, 1 December 1950; the fourth daughter Florence Keith-Cohen died aged 103, 2 November 1972; her twin brother Leopold died aged 64, 19 March 1934; the fifth daughter Mina never married and died aged 80, 20 November 1959; the sixth daughter Lilla never married and died aged 71, 20 June 1949; the seventh daughter Netta never married and died aged 76, 16 July 1959; the eighth and youngest daughter Anys never married and died aged 89, 22 June 1972.

Louise Rosenberg correctly stated that the bulk of the estate of Anys Hollander was to be divided equally between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the "Aged Men and Women's Home (*Shemon Shenin*) at Jerusalem, Israel", the "Anys Hollander School for Retarded Children at Jerusalem, Israel" and the "Blovestein Orphanage at Tel Aviv, Israel".

On 8 January 1973, the solicitors for the estate of Anys Hollander wrote to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Division of Public Institutions, Israel, asking whether each of the four Israeli organisations mentioned in her will were in existence.

The Ministry of Social Welfare replied on 6 February 1973 stating that the Hebrew University and the Blovestein Orphanage were in existence, but that nothing was known of the "Aged Men and Women's Home (*Shemon Shenin*)" or of the "Anys Hollander School for Retarded Children, Jerusalem".

On 31 May 1973, the solicitors for the estate wrote to me as Honorary Secretary of the NSW Friends of the Hebrew University, stating that they were having difficulty in establishing the identity of two of the beneficiaries of the estate.

Later it was found by the New South Wales Supreme Court that Anys Hollander had intended that the bequests should have gone to the "United Aged Home, Moshav Skenim" and the "Anys Hollander School, Or Yehuda District, Tel Aviv". At the first hearing of the Court Application in June 1976, the Judge decided that all of the Israeli organisations should be represented in the Supreme Court and that no decision would be given until a responsible person could give personal affidavits that these organisations were in existence and were the ones intended by Anys Hollander. Mr Michael Dunkel, as Honorary Solicitor for the NSW Friends spent a considerable time over several years arranging for the necessary affidavits. It was not until 18 June 1982 that the final distribution from the estate was made to the beneficiaries.

Alan Milston.



## ERRATA

Morris Ochert, 'Dr Reading vs Smiths', AJHS Journal, Vol 13, Part 2, 1996:

p. 309, Dr Stanley Reading was Dr Fanny Reading's younger brother (not older brother).

p.331. Ida Wynn was the Federal President of WIZO and of Youth Aliyah.

p.339, the last item is the date, '1930' which should read '1939'.

p. 342, Samuel Wynn was the husband of Ida Wynn who was the president of Youth Aliyah.



## GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES

This list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until April 1997. If you did not initiate the enquiry but would like to add information or receive information, please write to our Genealogist, Mrs. Rothenberg, at 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington 2008.

JOSEPH, Emauel, son of Maurice and Esther (Burman)

GUTMANN, Judith (nee Benedik) born Germany on 2 December 1896. Daughter, Margit, migrated to California.

PROOSOV, Isaac & Jane, Norma & Victor, Jeanette & Ian — birth details required.

ROTH, Gustav (previously Rothstein) born Hanover, arrived 1898. Information required about parents Solly and Louise (nee Goldschmidt)

JULIAN, Jacob, son of Moses and Elizabeth Julian. Seeking descendants.

HOLSTEIN, Sydney, Victor, Lazarus, emigrated from South Africa.

LEWIS, Isabella, born 1862 in Sydney, daughter of Joseph Lewis, cab proprietor.

ROSE, Louis married Anne Mitchell, Ballarat, 1855. Children Agnes, born 1857 and David born 1859.



## NEW MEMBERS

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BEECHER, Mrs Marion  
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## **BENEFACTIONS IN MEMORY OF**

ERNEST SAMUEL MARKS, CBE  
ADOLPH AND AMELIA ALEXANDER  
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ERNEST R. BARUCH  
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FREDERICK DAVID AND ESTHER ZILLAH MICHAELIS  
JACOB AND EMMA GLASS  
PERCY BRIGHTON COHEN  
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PHILIP SCHNEIDEMAN  
SYDNEY BENJAMIN GLASS  
DAVID JAMES BENJAMIN  
JUDAH AND FANNY ELLIS  
RABBI LAZARUS MORRIS GOLDMAN  
RALPH SYMONDS  
JUDAH GREEN  
PHILLIP MORRIS AND DORA ELIZABETH HART  
REV. ABRAHAM TOBIAS BOAS  
SAM ROSENBERG  
REBECCA HAYMAN (nee Josephson)  
BELLA GREEN  
CELIA ROSENBERG  
PERCY WOLFSON  
GEORGE F.J. BERGMAN  
PHOEBE DAVIS  
CHARLES AARON  
MANUEL, MIRIAM AND ALAN GREEN  
RALPH SAMUEL, MBE, JP (by his family)  
PHYLLIS BRONSTEIN (by East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation)  
HELENE JEDWAB (by parents George & Patricia Revelman)



## CONTRIBUTORS

**Helen Bersten**, BA, Dip Lib, a member of the AJHS Committee and its honorary archivist since 1979.

**Sophie Caplan**, BA, Dip Ed, MEd (Hons), vice-president of the AJHS Committee, founder and president of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, and editor of its Newsletter, *The Kosher Koala*.

**Nicholas Draffin**, curator of prints and drawings at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and art historian.

**Sol Encel**, MA, PhD, is Emeritus Professor at the University of New South Wales, having served for a quarter of a century as professor of the School of Sociology at that university. He is one of the intellectual founders of modern Australian Sociology, known for his work on the themes of power and inequality in Australian Society.

**Anthony Joseph**, MBBS, a general medical practitioner in the United Kingdom; he has been the AJHS's UK corresponding member since 1966 and has been particularly interested in genealogy. He is the current president of the Jewish Historical Society of England.

**Morris Ochert**, OAM, ASTC, (MechEng), MIE Aust, CP Eng., Queensland correspondent for the AJHS, researcher and author of many articles on Australian Jewish history, specialising in Queensland topics, a retired engineer and honorary life member of the Institution of Engineers of Australia. He is an honorary life member of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

**Robert Parkinson**, BA, Dip Ed, taught, worked in the public service and is now researching the history of cinemas and theatre. He is a member of the Australian Cinema and Theatre Society and has published *Gaufered Velour*, a history of cinema in the Illawarra area.

**Marian Pretzel**, graphic designer and artist, has written a number of books about his Holocaust experiences, including *Portrait of a*



*Young Forger* and *There was No Farewell*, dealing with his own reactions to his return to his home town in Poland, Lyov. He is a past Vice-President of the Australian Jewish Holocaust Survivors' Association.

**Louise Rosenberg**, a member of the AJHS for over thirty years. Honorary Secretary for 25 years, including 11 years as Secretary/Treasurer from 1966 to 1977. She is a regular contributor to three publications: the *AJHS Journal*, the *Great Synagogue Journal*, and the AJWS Jewish Community Services' *Keeping in Touch*.

**Suzanne D. Rutland**, MA (Hons), PhD, Dip Ed, President of the AJHS and Sydney editor of the *AJHS Journal*, Senior Lecturer in Jewish Civilisation in the Department of Semitic Studies, University of Sydney, previously Lecturer in Jewish Education in the Faculty of Education, author of numerous books and articles on Australian Jewish history.



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