

ASPECTS OF ISOLATION- THE CHALLENGES OF MAINTAINING JEWISH LIFE IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

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The emergence of regional Jewish populations in Australia often stemmed from economic necessity or perceived opportunity, where it was the decision of a single family to settle away from one of the centres of Jewish population. It is from this initial family that a regional Jewish community may begin to be formed. One family can encourage others and a small community develops which, history has ably demonstrated, may grow, flourish and die in the space of one or two generations. It is not uncommon that many such communities end as they began, leaving, perhaps, a single Jewish family to continue alone or become simply an historical curiosity remembered through a few headstones in the local cemetery. This article will analyse some of the factors that led to the rise and fall of several small, regional Jewish communities in Australia, with particular reference to the Newcastle Jewish community. Some activities and organisations appear to be essential for a Jewish community to enjoy continuity, including the role of the synagogue and the minister in communal life and the development of Jewish educational, philanthropic, welfare and social activities and institutions, and these will be examined in this article.

It is possible for members of a lone Jewish family to maintain their faith and traditions in isolation, educating their children in religious practices and providing an environment where they grow secure in their faith despite their isolation. There have been many small Jewish communities in rural and regional areas of Australia and specifically in New South Wales that have appeared and disappeared over the past hundred and fifty years. Towns such as Narrabri, for example, have enjoyed a Jewish presence that existed on and off from the 1860s,

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when a Jewish portion of the local cemetery was gazetted as early in 1869,¹ to the 1930s, when the Ginges family lived and worked there.² In the late nineteenth century, Herman Ahronson raised a family firmly in the traditions of Judaism in Cundletown north of Taree. Indeed, some of his children went on to prominent careers in business and Jewish communal service. The process of creating a new Jewish community continues today in areas such as the Gold Coast in Queensland and on the Central Coast in NSW. Here demographic shifts in population have brought Jews into areas outside capital cities where they have not previously resided in significant numbers, and congregations have been created to meet newly emerging needs.

The Tamworth Jewish community had its roots in the Cohen and Levy families, founders of David Cohen & Co and local firm Cohen & Levy. This came about through the indebtedness of a store-owner in Tamworth, Carden Williams, to his wholesaler David Cohen & Co of Maitland. In 1845 David Cohen took possession of the store and installed Lewis Wolfe Levy as manager. The firm of Cohen & Levy 'was to have great impact on Tamworth's development for years to come'.³ The Tamworth Jewish community grew from only eight members in 1861 to a maximum population of forty-five in 1881 [see Appendix 1]. So prominent was the firm of Cohen & Levy that it warrants eleven mentions in Tamworth's official history, with members of the Cohen and Levy families cited an additional twelve times.⁴ Members of these families were also prominent in the Jewish communities of Maitland and Newcastle as well as in Sydney. Lewis Hyman, one of the leaders of the Tamworth Jewish community, and a manager of Cohen & Levy's store in the late 1890s built for his residence 'Salona' which is still described as 'one of Tamworth's most appealing houses'.⁵ For thirty-three years, from 1880-1913, the prominent Hunter-born politician R.H. (Robert Henry) Levien, whose father was Jewish, represented Tamworth in New South Wales Legislative Assembly.⁶ This small community, with a constant Jewish population of between twenty and twenty-five members,⁷ continued in that area for well over a hundred and twenty-five years until the death of matriarch Ida Cohen in 1970 at the age of 102. The size of the community, however, was not enough to sustain significant Jewish activity in Tamworth.

An even more remote community is that of Broken Hill where, in the early part of the twentieth century, a minister was retained and a synagogue erected at a time when the Jewish population numbered more than one hundred souls.⁸ In 1910 the *Hebrew Standard* noted that the Broken Hill congregation had been able to erect a synagogue where a 'handful of earnest Jews has struggled against many difficulties...to carry out the tenets of their Faith'.⁹

Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, dedicated the Broken Hill Synagogue in 1911¹⁰ when the Jewish population, was at its peak.

While the Jewish community has managed to maintain a presence in Newcastle for over a century, it is now a shadow of the thriving community that existed during the periods of its greatest numerical strength, the 1920s and the post-war boom of the 1950s when the city was economically vibrant and there was strong communal leadership as well as the funds to support a respected resident minister. The immediate predecessor of the Newcastle community, that of Maitland, just thirty kilometres further up the Hunter Valley, existed for more than sixty years from the 1830s to its demise in 1898 with the closure of the synagogue and the departure of its minister.

Jewish communities that can, at a certain point in time, reach a level of population stability and economic success sufficient to build and maintain a synagogue are more likely to continue even when numbers dwindle (the Jewish community in Hobart is a case in point). The synagogue provides a very public commitment to sustain a Jewish community in some form or other regardless of Sabbath attendance or the number of adherents. There is always the hope that some future wave of Jewish migration will return the withering community to its former health and vigour.

It is apparent in both Maitland and Broken Hill, however, that a building alone is no guarantee of a continuing Jewish communal presence. The economic vitality of the area and the presence of a community able to offer its members a range of necessary Jewish activities and services are keys to the success of the regional Jewish community. In the early days of the Newcastle Jewish community, as with Maitland several generations earlier, much of the prosperity of the community rested with the success of one firm – David Cohen and Co. Its significant commercial interests and the dedication of its directors to communal development provided the backbone to both a Jewish population through its workforce and a Jewish religious presence through its financial support for a minister. Indeed, in a 1910 editorial, the *Hebrew Standard* encouraged the Jewish residents of Newcastle to 'emulate the example of their less fortunately placed brethren in Broken Hill, and have erected in their midst an edifice of their own in which they may worship the Creator of all things'.¹¹ It was to be seventeen years before this hope was fulfilled.

The Broken Hill congregation, meanwhile, did not fare well following the departure of Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum and the synagogue was closed for three months in 1915. This was

considered regrettable by the *Standard* where the hope was expressed that 'it will now be made possible for the regular opening of the House of Worship in Broken Hill'.¹² Mandelbaum continued his journey as minister to a number of congregations around Australia, eventually settling in Ballarat where he served from 1927 until his death in 1941.¹³ The community fluctuated to less than forty individuals after World War II. By the 1960s, however, it had declined to just thirteen members [see Appendix 1.].

In 1953, Rabbi I.L. Swift of the Central Synagogue, Sydney made a tour of regional Jewish communities where he noted:

Communities like those of Perth and Adelaide bear much the same relationship to the larger communities of Sydney and Melbourne, as Australian Jewry as a whole bears to the main centres of Jewish life overseas: they are geographically remote, and relatively small in number...

...the smaller and distant communities within Australian Jewry look to the larger ones. They too greet the visitor from the Eastern States with an unaffected eagerness which speaks eloquently of their thirst, and they look in our direction for guidance in the conduct of their communal life and the administration of their affairs. How else can one explain the crowded meetings it fell to my privilege to address? Or the avid interest shown in the things I felt called upon to say? Or the oft-repeated remarks made to me that visits such as that paid recently by the President of the E.C.A.J. [Executive Council of Australian Jewry] had proved invaluable to their enterprises?¹⁴

Swift's recommendations included the encouragement of frequent visits to these areas by communal leaders from the larger centres. He commented that 'we should hold there many of our Federal conferences' in order to encourage them to feel that they have 'a notable contribution to make to the life and thought and survival of Australian Jewry'.¹⁵

Hahn in his study of Synagogue-Federation Relations notes that the question 'What is a Jew?' had a simple answer until the French Revolution and Jewish emancipation in Europe. Up until that time what defined Jews was their participation in a *shtetl* or ghetto:

A closed, self-contained, autonomous community, without any significant contact with the non-Jewish world ... [where] [t]he newspapers, the culture, the framework of imagery and of thought all revolved around Jewish life.¹⁶

Those with individual opinions and differing levels of Jewish observance were tolerated in this environment because, through the defining fact of living together, it was understood that one was a Jew and was accepted as such. Once Jews were free to leave these communities and venture into the wider world, being educated in secular institutions and enjoying a level of equality with the ethnic and religious majority, these cultural bonds broke down. Individuals became secularised, married out of the Jewish community and within a generation their Jewish distinctiveness was lost. Despite this secularisation, Jews still tended to congregate geographically in areas of larger cities and these developed a distinctively Jewish flavour.

In his history of the Ballarat Jewish community, Rosenthal recalls a time when the atmosphere of the Eastern European *shtetl* was recreated in that town through a division that arose in the Jewish population. In 1908 Orthodox migrants of Eastern European origin broke away from the mostly Anglo-run synagogue and created the Central Hebrew Congregation with its own minister, Rev. M. M. Levy. While lacking in funds to finance their vision, they were numerically strong and determined to bring to their part of Australia the kind of Jewish life they felt was missing in the existing Ballarat Hebrew congregation. As Rosenthal, whose father was intimately involved, recalled:

A visitor in those eventful years would have been staggered by what he found in Ballarat. It was as though a *shtetl* from Eastern Europe had been uprooted, transported and transplanted in this spot some seventy miles from the Australian coast...it was a marvellous environment for Jewish youth.

The 'seceders' even established a Young People's Zionist Society...Levy [the minister] had all the enthusiasm of youth, a deep knowledge of classical and modern Hebrew, and an understanding of young people that enabled him to communicate with them.¹⁷

In a country and a time where Jews of Anglo-Jewish origins controlled congregations by virtue of their wealth, their length of residence and their prominence in the secular world, such a display of Orthodox Jewish enthusiasm and communal spirit was indeed rare.

In this secular world, the synagogue became the focal point for Jewish life but this did not meet the needs of those Jews who did not identify religiously with the community but rather on a social,

philanthropic or cultural level. Over time a plethora of Jewish institutions arose in every city where there was a significant Jewish population providing religious education, health and welfare needs, dowries for indigent Jewish girls, burial societies, social clubs and a number of other functions. Here the secular Jew could participate culturally in whatever way was comfortable to him or her without the need for synagogue attendance, with the possible exception of the High Holy Days. Here the Jewish community developed its own religious observance hierarchy, just as did the secular Christians who surrounded them, and who attended Church only at Easter and Christmas and for life cycle events.

Where the Jewish community in a city or town was too small to develop this range of organisations, and it was thus unable to create a Jewish precinct, the synagogue took on added significance. It fell to the minister and also, but to a lesser degree, members of the congregation, to provide for as many of these needs as possible. The synagogue was the visible symbol of Judaism and Jewish life and it was expected that the many and varied needs of the community would be met within its walls. This was the place where Jews could maintain and enhance their identity and associate with their co-religionists in a range of sacred and secular activities. In Newcastle, for example, a congregation was formed in 1905 but a synagogue was only built in 1927. It was to become the focal point of the local Jewish community. When the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation finally decided to build their own synagogue, they included a hall in which to conduct Hebrew school, social events and Board meetings. While the hall is actually the basement of the synagogue, 'the upper side is entirely above ground owing to the contour of the land' and has external access.¹⁸

In regional Australia after World War II, the synagogue continued to provide a cohesive role within the community, as Rabbi Swift noted in 1953:

...it was the Synagogue in the past which discharged this function and which has now lost much of its centripetal force; one finds reassurance in the reflection that, in Perth and Adelaide at any rate, the work for Israel is centred in the Synagogue and is doing much to restore that vital institution to its central position.¹⁹

It was incumbent upon the minister and often his spouse to provide leadership in Jewish observance and education. In small communities such as Newcastle the minister's role was an all-encompassing one. It included, in addition to preaching, teaching



Newcastle Synagogue, opened in 1927

Hebrew and Judaism to the children of the community, acting as *mohel* (ritual circumciser) and *shochet* (ritual slaughterer), visiting the sick, assisting the needy, representing and advocating for the Jewish community in the wider world, promoting philanthropy and supporting all manner of social and secular activities for the good of, or on behalf of the community. This array of activities caused Rabbi Gottschall, one of Newcastle's ministers, to write in the 1950s: 'Our diaries are crowded, the duties called for are growing...At times we feel it is impossible to continue in our work satisfactorily under present conditions'.²⁰

The inability of a small Jewish community to provide for all of the secular as well as religious needs of its members was one reason that many Jewish families moved to areas of greater Jewish population. This trend was particularly noticeable in Newcastle because of its close proximity to Sydney where a large and vibrant Jewish community with a full range of communal activities was readily available. If there were divisions within the community, this

provided a rationale for a number of families to move within a short period of time, leaving an even smaller and less viable Jewish community behind.

Philanthropy

One of the significant endeavours undertaken within Jewish communities that has occupied the energies and funds of communities large and small throughout time, is that of philanthropy and welfare for those in need, locally as well as in distant lands. Ephraim Frisch's early examination of the history of Jewish philanthropy noted that 'the passion to help the poor and distressed is planted deep in the hearts of all men. But...this passion has worked with special warmth and glow among Jews and that they, as a group, have shown an extraordinary leaning for works of beneficence'.²¹

Jewish philanthropy or *tzedakah* (generally translated as 'charity' but meaning, more literally, 'righteousness' or 'justice') has its origins in the Bible and post-Biblical literature. Even Christian writers acknowledge the distinctive aspects of early Jewish philanthropy. Three key characteristics are noted: 'the efficiency of their fundraising techniques, the fairness of their distribution of alms and their sensitivity towards recipient and donor'.²² Early Christian concepts of philanthropy and philanthropic institutions find some writers reflecting upon Jesus' teachings regarding the unhappy lot of the rich young man who chose not to dispose of his riches in order to follow Jesus. This event persuaded a number of Christian writers that poverty and rejection of wealth were essential to spiritual progression and salvation. Origen argued that 'a Christian should actually sell his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor: that the teaching has to be taken literally'.²³

Whereas poverty may be seen as a spiritual imperative in some Christian traditions, within Judaism it was seen as the reflection of a greater social ill. Whatever the reason for their financial situation indigent Jews were to be 'regarded as the equals of the successful and had the same fundamental claim, in the eyes of the exhorters and lawgivers, to the land and its products as had the rich, God alone, the father of all, being both owner and apportioner'.²⁴ As Siegel writes about the imperative of modern Jewish philanthropy:

Though charity and philanthropy have been stripped to a bare meaning of giving money, originally they suggested acts of love, action motivated by an inner caring for others. *Tz'dakah* [sic] includes this feeling...but goes beyond it. *Tz'dakah* transcends the individual's immediate moods and demands

that – even if there is no particular feeling of love at a certain moment – still, there is an obligation, a requirement to give. Because it is right, just, in the very nature of being created in the image of God.²⁵

The synagogue or organised Jewish community had, from its inception, become a centre for Jewish relief.²⁶ While some Jewish charitable institutions had been formed in Sydney by the middle of the nineteenth century, the synagogue was still seen as a first port of call in regional areas, with a significant responsibility to assist local Jewish residents as well as travellers in need.

The religious acceptance of philanthropy as a necessary moral attitude to help alleviate suffering in society pre-dates by centuries the modern concept of the welfare state, where it is accepted by the populace that it is the state's responsibility, not the society's, to alleviate all distress and provide for every need. Holton has noted that:

The philanthropic tradition – the independent sector of voluntary service, giving, and association – is the well-spring of most of the social change in our society. It is the source of the cultural innovation that changes the values as well as the behavior of our society. It provides the medium of moral discourse that establishes and modifies the public agenda...this tradition is directly related to our survival as a free and open and democratic society.²⁷

Jewish philanthropy has always contained an element of social justice with the notions of society building and against economic oppression. From earliest times it was considered that 'destitution was fundamentally a consequence of social and economic exploitation' which was 'denounced fearlessly'.²⁸

In Newcastle, an early attempt to assist needy Jews in the local area came through the creation of the Newcastle Jewish Relief Society with Nicholas Dach as president, D.R. Israel as treasurer and Wolf Flegeltaub as honorary secretary with Morris Reines as honorary collector.²⁹ This committee may have been in place for some time prior to its initial mention in the Jewish press in July 1909 as 'a very satisfactory report was presented by the President and by the Hon. Collector. There is already about £15 in hand'.³⁰ It was later noted that 'although our Relief Society has been established only a short time, it has already proved beneficial by relieving several cases of need'.³¹

The initiative for this relief society may well have come from

Flegeltaub, who had moved to Newcastle from Ballarat with his family the previous year.³² Flegeltaub had been very active in the Ballarat Jewish community, serving at various times in the 1870s and 80s as Chairman of the Board of Jewish Education and treasurer of the congregation.³³ One of the hallmarks of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation was the Jewish Philanthropic Society founded there in 1856 and active for more than twenty years.³⁴ Throughout its existence the Society raised funds and supported many Jewish families and individuals in need in the area. Indeed, it is recorded that the Society would not allow 'any trace of red tape to obstruct or hinder the attainment of its one clear-cut objective, to help those in need'.³⁵ It was, no doubt, with similar aims and objectives the Newcastle society was formed. Unlike its rural Victorian counterpart, however, it was fated to have but a brief existence.

Whatever the failings of this early attempt at providing for the welfare needs of the local Jewish community, the spirit of *tzedakah* had always been evident in the Newcastle Jewish community. Records of charitable giving predate the formal organisation of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation in 1905. In 1903, for example, S.R. Levy, S.S. Cohen (each contributing £5), S.J. Mitchell and brothers John Hart of Newcastle and Charles Hart of West Maitland, together with L.H. Lyman and Nathan Cohen and others of Tamworth joined many Sydney co-religionists in support of 'The Fund for the Relief of the Distressed Jews in Russia'.³⁶ This fund raised in excess of £700 in NSW, a considerable sum at that time. There were also regular subscriptions to the Anglo-Jewish Association from Newcastle and Maitland.

The Anglo-Jewish Association enjoyed strong support from the NSW Jewish community where, by 1915, the Sydney Branch (which included country NSW) was second only to Manchester, England in subscriptions.³⁷ The Association had three main objectives:

- (a) To aid in promoting the social, moral, and intellectual progress of the Jews;
- (b) The protection of Jews where persecuted;
- (c) The education of Jewish children in Eastern and other countries.³⁸

At the 1915 Annual Meeting the view was expressed that Australian Jewry should be much more supportive of the Association for it was thought that:

In this land, where they [the Jewish community] enjoyed to the full the benefits of equal citizenship, surely every member

of the community should come to the assistance of their people in other lands where religious disabilities rendered their continuance as Jews almost an impossibility.³⁹

Members of the Association were then encouraged to personally canvass their friends and relatives for subscriptions and, based on recent successes with another organisation, 'striking results' were predicted for such an effort.⁴⁰ This was the beginning of the use of 'modern' fundraising techniques in the Sydney region and proved to be a considerable success if increases in subscription lists for the association are any indication.

It was natural that the Anglo-Jewish Association should find such a significant level of support within the Sydney Jewish community that itself was largely of Anglo-Jewish origins. The enthusiastic involvement of George Judah Cohen as Honorary Treasurer for the Sydney Branch was entirely in keeping with the pro-British attitudes of the Cohens and Levys and many other families who migrated to Australia from a country they still considered home and to which they travelled whenever funds or business interests permitted. It was also an attitude largely supported by those Jews who came to Australia from elsewhere, as appropriate philanthropic support was one indication of a person's loyalties.

Local communal philanthropic activities and involvement with the Anglo-Jewish Association were far from the only calls upon the generosity of the Newcastle Jewish community. During 1905 the community received the first visitor from Palestine to include Newcastle on his itinerary as part of a national fundraising tour. Rev. Charles Pitkowsky of Jerusalem received the sum of £11 8s. from members of the congregation, with those contributing 'kind enough to promise a similar amount every year and the Rev. I. Morris has been appointed to collect same'.⁴¹ It is possible that Rev. Morris continued to take these subscriptions for, in 1909, he informed the *Hebrew Standard* that 'he received receipts from Jerusalem for money collected for Jerusalem Charities, for which he is authorised to collect'.⁴² The Newcastle Jewish community proved itself a generous contributor to many philanthropic causes throughout its early history. From available news reports, it would appear that most, if not all, international visitors seeking contributions from the Jewish community, visited Newcastle as part of their national tours. As far as can be determined, none were to leave empty handed.

One remarkable visit was that of Israel Cohen, a leading British Zionist, in 1920, the first leading Zionist to visit Australia on behalf

of the Palestine Restoration Fund. He travelled extensively throughout the country where Jewish and civic leaders met him. Such was the case in Newcastle where, upon arrival, he was met by the Mayor and leaders of the Jewish community.⁴³ His visit was an outstanding success in both financial and Zionist terms, raising £1274 8s in Newcastle alone⁴⁴ and £68,000 in all.⁴⁵ This total greatly exceeded any previous philanthropic contribution by the Newcastle Jewish community and made donations to established organisations such as the Anglo-Jewish Association appear paltry by comparison. It was not just the worthiness of the cause, but the oratorical powers of the emissary, that made the difference in appeals of this type. Cohen must have been persuasive indeed.

As Jewish charities proliferated and the number of foreign visitors seeking funds increased, each year saw a greater number of appeals for funds from the Jewish community for local and international causes. This proliferation led to duplication of services and inefficiencies in management. In Sydney, by the early 1920s, there were calls for the development of a federation of Jewish charitable organisations that would bring 'Sydney into line with the other progressive cities in this respect'.⁴⁶ Through the efforts of J. D. Rothbury, president of the Montefiore Home, an initial meeting laid the foundation for a 'United Council of Sydney Charitable Organisations'.⁴⁷ This initial meeting and the United Council that resulted was short-lived for, just a year later the matter had progressed no further and, frustrated at the lack of progress, a 1921 editorial in the *Standard* suggested:

If any of our businessmen, who are connected with the different charitable organisations of the community, were to run their own businesses on the same inefficient and uneconomical lines, that our charitable efforts are, they would soon have to close down. On all sides we see waste both as regards funds and effort, and overlapping of the work of the different societies.³⁸

These criticisms of businessmen (for they were mostly, although not all, men) who provided the leadership for the not-for-profit sector at that time are not dissimilar to those regularly expressed in fundraising circles until quite recently. There was the sense that board members left all of their business acumen outside the door when dealing with the emotive issues involving charitable institutions and addressing communal needs. The hard-hitting style of the cited editorial would likely have aroused the ire of some leading business and charitable figures such as George Judah

Cohen and Moritz Gotthelf. Both had close association with Sydney's Great Synagogue and a number of charitable causes and institutions there.

In Europe the concept of federation had been advanced and instituted as early as 1809 in France and the 1850s in England.⁴⁹ In the United States federation of Jewish charities had begun in Boston in 1895⁵⁰ while in regional Jewish communities such as Columbus Ohio federation was instituted in 1904.⁵¹ In 1923 another attempt was made to federate the Jewish Charities in Sydney. This was headed by Aaron Blashki and included representatives of several leading Jewish organisations. These included The Hebrew Benevolent Society, The Montefiore Home, The Help in Need Society, The Sydney Jewish Aid Society, The Girls' Guild, the *Chevra Kadisha*, the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education, the Maternity Society and the *Shiva Chevra*.⁵² Blashki spoke at length about the successes of federated Jewish organisations in the United States and in Britain, where giving to the federated body far exceeded the combined contributions to the member organisations. Not only that, but federation brought a closer sense of purpose to the Jewish community and a less competitive spirit in relation to fundraising. He quoted Arthur Lehrmann of New York who said: 'Apart from the financial success that the federation had thus far achieved, much had been gained in other directions by its organisation [including] a spirit of cooperation among our charities that bodes well for the future'.⁵³

Given the reluctance of charities to agree to a unified approach at prior attempts, the reported response was positive indeed. Perhaps the strongly supportive comments of Rabbi Cohen set the tone for the discussion:

In the past, new societies had sprung up without a sense of the strength they would have by co-operation [sic] with others. A state of chaos was the result, but the community was waking up to this, and federation was in the air, and in this sphere objection to federation should be finally settled by what Mr. Blashki had said.⁵⁴

It was resolved that a committee with three representatives of each organisation present at that initial meeting work on preparing a constitution that could be brought forward for discussion. This was carried unanimously with the proviso that Blashki serve as convenor and chairman of that committee.⁵⁵ However, the plans to create a united Jewish charitable organisation in Sydney at this time were not fulfilled, and it was not until 1967, after the Six Day War in Israel, that

the Joint Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA) was formed, allowing for a more cohesive fundraising system in Sydney. If the earlier plans had succeeded in the 1920s, it might have meant that Sydney Jewry would have been in a better position to assist rural Jewish communities in New South Wales. As it was, those communities were left to their own devices and, without outside support, were not able to survive. Since 1967 this picture has changed, particularly for the Jewish community in Canberra, ACT, which has become a member of the JCA and benefits from Sydney's joint fundraising.

Education

One issue that was a cause of great concern for the editor of the *Hebrew Standard* was the education of Jewish children in rural NSW in Judaism. In a 1908 editorial, Alfred Harris noted that there were many Jews in rural areas of the state who came together only on the High Holy Days when 'steps are almost always taken by these brethren for the purpose of arranging the assembly of all Jews in the district for a *minyan*'.⁵⁶ He goes on to lament that such attention to Jewish worship is not apparent at other times aside from those organised congregations in Sydney, Newcastle and Broken Hill. The suggestion is then made that:

Wherever there are a few Jewish families residing...is should be easy for weekly, or even monthly, services, to be conducted in the vernacular, if not in Hebrew, and otherwise modifying the traditional ritual to meet local circumstances.⁵⁷

This proposal may appear radical when the Orthodoxy of the Jewish community of the time is taken into account. It was a practical solution nevertheless.

Of particular concern was the education of the children of these rural families in Jewish life because of the fear that they may drift away 'from the communion of their fathers into what it practically heathenism [sic]'.⁵⁸ The example is recounted of a young lady of 'zealous Jewish feeling' who went to live in a remote area where there were several Jewish families whose children were 'growing up without any well-founded knowledge of their Faith'. She apparently had little difficulty in organising a Sabbath School where the children gathered weekly for a 'short and bright talk on some aspect of Judaism'. Such an example is then recommended to Jewish families in similar circumstances. Not to do so would 'inevitably end in the total loss to Judaism of the greater majority of the children of Jewish parents in the Australian bush'.⁵⁹

While there are a number of examples that may be cited of

Jewish families in remote locations who managed to educate their children in Judaism and then had those children going forth as leading communal figures, yet the concern expressed was a valid one that still resonates today. Indeed, the concern is as real today as in earlier times in many regional areas of Australia. Today, the Jewish community in Newcastle, for example, is no longer able to sustain a Sabbath School for the few Jewish children in the area.

Jewish education was not merely a concern in the bush, however, as was noted in early 1909, when statistics were released revealing that:

The proportion of Jewish children under religious instruction turns out to be so very much lower than in the case of any other denomination...one-third as general with us as with most of the other communities [sic]!⁶⁰

From its inception the Jewish press in Australia has emphasised the importance of education for the future of Judaism in this country. While acknowledging the need for better formal educational opportunities in Jewish communities, it also acknowledged the importance of the home environment. Reprinting an essay from the English newspaper, *Jewish Spectator*, it endorsed comments that:

The attitudes of parents toward the religious training of their children is to be deplored. It is a disgrace to Jewish mothers and fathers. That may sound rather hard, but it is nevertheless true. Their interest is zero. Not only do they not interest themselves by occasionally putting in an appearance and seeing what their children are doing in the Sabbath School, but the homes are thoroughly without the religious spirit, worse than this, religion is scarce spoken of in a ...derisive way... If the home is without religion no Sabbath-school can ever hope to create the religious spirit in the heart of the children.⁶¹

Concerns were regularly expressed about the state of Jewish education in regional areas.

Most disturbing of all is the position of religious education, juvenile, adolescent and adult. The last mentioned scarcely exists at all. Youth education could make advances, but lacks guidance and experienced leadership. And as for children's education this is in a lamentable state, with no trained teachers, no curriculum planned to meet the needs of Australian Jewish children and, consequently, no real hope of Jewish knowledge and religious observance on their parts as they grow to maturity.⁶²

The instruction of children of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation in matters of Judaism and Hebrew language was one of the essential duties of the minister appointed to the newly created community. This matter was of such importance to the founders of the community that immediately upon his arrival in Newcastle in December 1905, Rev. Morris formed Hebrew classes where he hoped 'the children of the community would be induced to attend regularly'.⁶³ It was agreed that these classes be conducted on Wednesday afternoons and after the conclusion of the services on the Sabbath.⁶⁴

It is evident from the report of the first annual examination of the Sabbath School that Rev. Morris was an effective teacher. Edward Solomon, the examiner 'expressed his high appreciation of the manner in which the Rev. I. Morris had conducted the school', noting that he was also 'highly pleased' with the progress of the children although he hoped that 'more parents would take an interest in the school in future'.⁶⁵ By this time the children had been organised into 'upper' and 'lower' classes. Prizewinners included children from the Sussman, Israel and Gubbay families who all played significant leadership roles in the congregation. There was also a class established in West Maitland, apparently to instruct the children of Charles and John Hart,⁶⁶ brothers who ran a jewellery business in the town. The Hart brothers were almost the sole remnants of the disbanded Maitland congregation. They remained involved with and supportive of the Newcastle congregation as well as causes such as the Anglo-Jewish Association.⁶⁷ Two of Charles Hart's daughters were to marry into the prominent Michaelis family of Melbourne.

Little is mentioned of Hebrew School activities in Newcastle until the arrival of Rev. Diamond in December 1910, Rev. Morris having departed earlier in the year for a position in Hobart. Diamond, a noted choirmaster, had also been a teacher at the NSW Board of Jewish Education⁶⁸ and was highly regarded. After a hiatus caused by the departure of Morris it was decided early in 1911 that:

Hebrew classes should be commenced on Friday February 8. Hopes are entertained that this instruction will help to make the children take a greater interest in the teaching of their religion...

As an inducement 'prizes are to be offered both for attendance and progress'.⁶⁹

With Diamond's departure for Dunedin, New Zealand less than two years later, in 1912, the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation was again left without a minister or Hebrew teacher. A Mr Eizenberg of Sydney answered the congregation's advertisement to act as Reader for the High Holy Days and served in this capacity in 1913 when a there was a large congregation present.⁷⁰

The few mentions of the Newcastle Congregation in the Jewish press during World War I give no indication as to the fate of Jewish education in Newcastle, although any such endeavours would have had to be undertaken by volunteers from within the local Jewish community. While High Holy Days were celebrated and well-supported each year, it is not known whether weekly services, let alone social or educational activities, were conducted throughout this period.

There must have been some members of the congregation who were well-versed in Hebrew, however, as boys continued to celebrate their *Bar Mitzvah* in the congregation over this period. In order for this to be achieved, they would have been instructed in their portion of the *Torah* that they were required for this ceremony. D. R. Israel's son, Lionel, was one of several boys who became a *Bar Mitzvah* at that time.⁷¹

In June 1917 another attempt was made to secure a minister for the Newcastle congregation with the appointment of S. Davis of Bankstown as reader and teacher for a probationary period until 30 September.⁷² With Davis's appointment came a renewal of interest in a Hebrew School with 'good progress' being reported in 'Hebrew and Religious Instruction among the children'.⁷³ The congregation must have been growing during the War because there were twenty-one children enrolled in classes with several boys preparing for their *Barmitzvah*.⁷⁴ The High Holy Days brought a very good attendance and positive reports of Davis's abilities as he 'proved himself clear and easy to understand and follow'.⁷⁵ Davis also officiated at Passover services the following year (1918).⁷⁶ However, later that same month, a notice appeared on behalf of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation advertising for a 'competent Reader, Teacher and *Shochet*'⁷⁷ and Davis was forced to advertise his services for the coming High Holy Days.⁷⁸

While Davis appears to have been an adequate reader and teacher for the Newcastle congregation, it may well have been his lack of training as a *Shochet* that proved to be the deciding factor. Small Jewish communities required a great deal of their ministers and the ability to ritually slaughter meat for kosher consumption was critical to an orthodox community. Rev. Morris, who would return to Newcastle in 1921, possessed all of the desired skills to

ensure the proper functioning of an isolated Jewish community.

It was at the same time that the Newcastle leadership suffered a public embarrassment for, in July 1918, they announced the appointment of Rev. A. T. Chodowski of Newtown as the new Minister of the Newcastle Congregation and published it in the *Standard*.⁷⁹ It is not known whether Chodowski ever actually took up residence in Newcastle, but a mere two months later, in September of that same year, he was confirmed as minister, teacher and *mohel* of the Newtown Hebrew Congregation.⁸⁰ This forced Newcastle into the embarrassing situation of having to once again call upon Davis to officiate at High Holy Day services.⁸¹ Chodowski, meanwhile, delivered 'most impressive sermons on both days' in Newtown.⁸²

In 1920 the Newcastle Congregation once again advertised for a reader and teacher.⁸³ It would appear that the teaching position, at least, was filled; either in a volunteer or a paid capacity, for a 'Mr Rosen, of Sydney, assisted by the local Hebrew Teacher' conducted the services for the High Holy Days.⁸⁴ In June 1921 Rev. Morris returned to Newcastle as its Minister. Once installed, he immediately began re-establishing the essential elements of the community including the supply of kosher meat 'at usual prices' and the organisation of Hebrew classes.⁸⁵ The Jewish community, numbering more than fifty families were reported to be 'very enthusiastic with the revival of communal affairs'.⁸⁶ Within a year of his return it was reported that twenty-two children were enrolled in classes with an average of fifteen attending.⁸⁷ '[E]ducational facilities are now complete, and under [Morris's] tuition the children have made wonderful progress'.⁸⁸ Upon examination the children demonstrated their knowledge in 'Hebrew reading, translation, Jewish history, historical feasts and fasts, and their significance'⁸⁹ representing all aspects of Jewish faith and practice.

The drought of Jewish education in Newcastle, after a decade of instability, was now broken and a consistent level of Jewish education would be available to youth in the region for almost the next three decades as Morris continued his ministry in Newcastle. Annual Reports of the congregation record the progress of the Hebrew School where students generally were recorded as having made 'good progress' both in Newcastle and Maitland and this reflected 'great credit on their teacher' (Rev. Morris).⁹⁰ By 1929 classes had increased from twice to four times weekly (Saturday and Sunday Mornings and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons) in the hall of the newly-dedicated synagogue.⁹¹

As the years passed communal leaders expressed concern that not all children in the Newcastle area took advantage of the Hebrew School and they appealed to the parents of those children who did

not attend 'in the children's interests' to ensure regular attendance.⁹² In 1939 classes were reduced to three times weekly (Saturday mornings and Monday and Thursday afternoons). Hebrew class instruction by Rev. Morris in Newcastle was free to parents⁹³ as opposed to classes in Sydney where fees helped support a professional teaching staff. By 1948, an aging Rev. Morris, now in his late sixties, was unable to continue to teach all of the Hebrew School classes without assistance. Asher Solomon Jr, his sister Sadie and Cam Goldring served as honorary Hebrew teachers for several years with other members of the congregation assisting as needed.⁹⁴ Asher Solomon was, at that time, just twenty-one years old in and Sadie only nineteen. Both of them, born in Newcastle, would have been among Morris's pupils. Goldring, born in 1901 and having migrated to Newcastle with his family in 1914, was a generation older.⁹⁵ It is no small tribute that a tradition of Jewish education in Newcastle endured because of the quality of Morris's teaching and his passion for Jewish education.

With the retirement of Rev. Morris in 1949 due to age and ill health, and the appointment of Rabbi Dr Benjamin Gottschall as his successor, tribute was paid in the congregation's 1950 Annual Report to Cam Goldring who was thanked for his 'untiring, unselfish work in the sphere of education'.⁹⁶ Great hopes were expressed for an expanding Jewish education program with the arrival of Rabbi Gottschall. Gottschall continued to take a keen interest in Jewish education and in 1954 there were thirty-eight children in the congregation eligible for instruction. In addition to Sabbath School, the rabbi delivered some lessons in public schools in the city, likely in the form of scripture classes for Jewish children,⁹⁷ 'Barmitzvah boys receiving special instruction' from the rabbi. Regular acknowledgement was given to Mrs. Gottschall for her assistance in teaching the children.⁹⁸ With post-war migration, Gottschall presided over the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation when the Jewish population in Newcastle was at its peak [see Appendix 1.].

During his 1952 pastoral tour of Australia, the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Rabbi Israel Brodie, visited Newcastle where he emphasised the importance of Jewish education and parental example:

It is the parents [sic] duty to show the children in the home what they are taught in the schools by their teachers. It is dangerous for us to develop in them a dual morality by telling them one thing in the classes and showing them another in the home.⁹⁹

With the departure of Rabbi Gottschall in November 1958 and the arrival of Rabbi Azrael Tarsis in June 1959, Jewish education was given additional emphasis. Tarsis, who had pioneered adult Hebrew education in London,¹⁰⁰ advocated Hebrew tuition and Jewish education for adults as well as children. In the rabbi's message in the 1959 Annual Report, Tarsis explained his view that:

The only way to succeed in the future is by education – the first method whereby a minority can preserve its identity. Surely this can be achieved only by ensuring that every Jewish person has a sound Jewish education...Therefore my plan to establish classes for adults is very important.¹⁰¹

Tarsis embarked upon this project with determination and enthusiasm. By the following year Hebrew classes had been established for post *Bar Mitzvah* boys and adults 'at every required level' from beginners to advanced Hebrew. The visiting examiner, Rev. Rafalowicz, Principal of the NSW Board of Jewish Education, 'expressed pleasure at the level reached by all groups and warmly commended both pupils and their teacher'.¹⁰² Tarsis continued to emphasise the need for Jewish education at all ages and levels throughout his Newcastle ministry, but he was apparently too orthodox for the Newcastle congregation and, in 1963, he left for Melbourne. With his departure, the quality of Jewish education deteriorated rapidly with the candid assessment from the president of the congregation, Samuel Morris, in the Annual Report that 'the Hebrew School during the last year has been a complete and utter flop [sic]'. The decline in teaching standards was matched by a decline in children attending until there were just 'two or three pupils'.¹⁰³

At this low point representatives of the Board of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation including Samuel Morris travelled to Sydney for a special conference with the Executives of the NSW Board of Jewish Education, namely Rabbi Porush, Rabbi Coleman and Maurice (Harry) Kellerman. The Board offered assistance by subsidising the costs of employing a qualified Hebrew teacher for Sabbath School classes.¹⁰⁴ While this arrangement proved not to be entirely satisfactory, it did allow continuation and improvement of the Hebrew School until the arrival of Rev. Wugman who was experienced 'in the teaching of children and adults of all age groups'.¹⁰⁵ Wugman continued his services until 1969 and since that time the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation has been without the services of a paid minister, relying upon members of the congregation who had the ability to lead services in an honorary

capacity. Volunteer Hebrew teachers have also attempted to continue the work of Jewish education in Newcastle with mixed success.

Sydney Jewry itself struggled to maintain a high level of Jewish education, even though this has always been a priority in Jewish life. In order to oversee Jewish education in New South Wales the Sydney Jewish Education Board was created in 1880 under the auspices of the Great Synagogue, Sydney with the Chief Rabbi of the Great Synagogue generally serving as president. In 1909 the Board was amalgamated with the Sydney Sabbath School and renamed the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education. It supervised classes in a number of Sydney locations as well as in Newcastle and in its Annual Report for 1923 twenty-two children are listed as attending Sabbath School in Newcastle with an average attendance of 81.8%.¹⁰⁶ It is evident from editorials in the *Hebrew Standard* that parental and community support for Jewish education was lacking: 'Jewish education is absolutely vital for our future existence, and unless we are willing, nay, are eager to pay for it, it must surely be neglected'.¹⁰⁷

Rev. A. T. Chodowski in the very first issue of *The Jewish Chronicle* in 1922 lamented the same lack of interest in Jewish education in Sydney where:

The Board is handicapped by lack of funds with which to pay for the services of the staff of qualified instructors really necessary, and by the apathy of parents which, in part, is responsible for the absence of funds, has a very big area to cover with its hampered efforts. The reports...upon the attendances [sic] at the classes at the Great Synagogue show that these are very disappointing, the figures indicating that the greater number of the Jewish children in Sydney are growing up without religious instruction.¹⁰⁸

While the Board of Jewish Education may have supplied curriculum materials to the Newcastle Hebrew School, there appears to have been neither support for nor interference in Jewish education under Rev. Morris's instruction. In most of the Board's Annual Reports published in the newspaper, figures for Newcastle were not included. It would appear that there was little need for the Board's involvement until the 1950s when they regularly supplied examiners for the Hebrew School who provided written reports to the Board of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation. As has been noted, the Board made themselves available to provide greater assistance in the early 1960s when the need arose.¹⁰⁹

It was not only Hebrew education that was celebrated by members of the Newcastle Jewish community – there were regular mentions of academic successes in High School, Technical College and University by the children of the community. As one typical press report from 1929 noted: ‘Miss Mae Audet, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs. M. Audet of West Maitland, and Mr Hyam Reiness, eldest son of Mr and Mrs. M. Reiness, of Hunter Street, Newcastle, were among the successful candidates who creditably passed the last Intermediate examinations’.¹¹⁰

Rev. Morris encouraged his own sons to enter suitable professions and receive the necessary education. Several of Morris’s sons chose to enter pharmacy and their entry into and successful completion of courses was duly noted in the regular Newcastle press release published in the *Standard*. He was also involved as president of the Newcastle Boys’ High School Parents and Citizens Association (P & C) in July 1942 when a motion, adopted unanimously, called for immediate agitation among interested people and organisation to establish a university college in Newcastle. As one who had been forced to send his six sons elsewhere to receive their tertiary education, Morris strongly supported the idea.¹¹¹ From these small beginnings, the movement to establish a university in Newcastle gained momentum and was ultimately successful, with first a university college of the University of New South Wales established in the early 1950s and later the independent University of Newcastle. Morris’s successor as minister in Newcastle, Rabbi Dr Benjamin Gottschall, regularly participated in academic processions for graduation ceremonies at the new University College in those early years.

The public record of individuals and events in the Newcastle area reflect a Jewish community very supportive of its young people and their achievements. There is a tone of familial pride in their successes and accomplishments and a very real sense of loss in times of death or illness. While members of the congregation came and went over time, there were a number of families and individuals who represented the core of the Jewish community. Their activities and life cycle events can be traced for two or three generations through the regular Newcastle column in the Jewish press.

Social Life and Youth Organisations

One important, though frequently overlooked, aspect of Jewish life in regional areas is that of the social life of the community. Where there were only a few Jewish families, such as in Tamworth, and where many of the members of the Jewish community were related to one another, social events could simply be family occasions. There

everyone could gather in a home, with entertainment, food and sporting activities being arranged in an informal way. As numbers increased in a Jewish community and where families of differing cultural and social backgrounds were involved, more formal activities were required to cater for the various social, cultural and sporting interests of members of the community.

An early attempt in Newcastle was the formation of the short-lived but enthusiastic Newcastle Hebrew Literary and Debating Club in 1908. While there were adults in the Jewish community acting as officers of this society, it was really the young adults themselves who organised activities with much support and encouragement from older members of the congregation. Events were apparently well-organised and well-attended. It appears that the demise of this promising organisation was not due to lack of interest, but rather as a result of the general economic downturn in Newcastle and subsequent loss of members of the Jewish community in search of work to other areas.

When Rev. Morris returned to Newcastle in 1921 following his very successful decade in Hobart, he was a more mature man, now forty years of age, with a second wife, the former Rae Grinblat of Ballarat (his first wife, Rosie, having died while in Hobart in 1915). Rae (or Ray) Morris had a penchant for organisation and a real desire to bring the Jewish community together, believing that social activities were one important way of uniting people. At their first gathering more than seventy members of the community participated in a social and musical evening at the Myola Hall, off Darby Street, Newcastle (the synagogue having not yet been built) on Wednesday 27 July 1921. A number of women from the community acted as hostesses for the evening with H. Levy as MC. There were a number of musical items as well as dancing. Rae Morris 'in a few well-chosen words' encouraged everyone present to form a social club. This proposition was, not surprisingly, strongly supported by Rev. Morris. However, others also spoke in favour of the proposal. By a unanimous vote of those assembled the social club was formed to meet the first Wednesday of the month at the Myola Hall.¹¹² The next social evening, a month later, was an even greater success with about one hundred people present including 'many visitors from Sydney and Melbourne'.¹¹³ Progress continued during the year and 'many were the expressions of thanks and pleasure to the organiser of these monthly socials, which are proving a great success by bringing the Jewish residents and visitors together'.¹¹⁴ Another social event of a different kind was the Hebrew School picnic held at Blackalls Park. This was an enjoyable occasion for the young students and their families with about sixty

people present. Two rowing boats were made available and a number enjoyed an outing on the Lake while others 'indulged in swimming'.¹¹⁵ The day was a great success and voted 'one of the most enjoyable outings the Jewish residents had had'.¹¹⁶

For all the enthusiastic expressions of support, the social club is not mentioned in reports of the community in Newcastle from 1922, although 'surprise parties' were held in individual homes from time to time. These included parlor games, singing and dancing followed by a supper.¹¹⁷ When the Morrises moved into their new home 'Temple House' in Tyrrell St Newcastle, they were given a surprise housewarming party by a 'large number of Jewish residents'.¹¹⁸ It was not until March 1928, however, that Rae Morris, displaying characteristic determination, once again called a meeting to establish a social club in the community. The Club provided a range of activities to suit all ages and interests.¹¹⁹

It is significant that this was the first organisation in Newcastle where men and women participated equally at board level. E. Lieberman, BA, LLB, was elected President and Mrs. A. Gubby (sister to Rae Morris) elected vice-president, C. Goldring was honorary secretary and a committee of six ladies and twelve gentlemen was formed.¹²⁰ M. Steinberg 'who is a professional athlete, very kindly offered to act as gym instructor... Judging by the great enthusiasm of the very large attendance, the club should have a very successful career'.¹²¹ The club continued with a program of regular meetings on Tuesday and Sunday nights.¹²² As Calman Goldring, recalled: 'a lot of young men used to go to the *Shule* [sic] hall twice a week and we had a lot of equipment. It was a gym. And some of the men were physical culture cranks...'.¹²³

In July 1929, enthusiastic soccer supporters invited a junior soccer team to visit Newcastle from Sydney for a match. The Judeans enjoyed typical Newcastle hospitality on the Saturday evening before triumphing over the Newcastle team on Sunday morning.¹²⁴ In the Soccer News section of the *Hebrew Standard* a rousing account of the match was given together with acknowledgements to a number of members of the Newcastle Jewish community who had assisted.¹²⁵ It may have been some little comfort to know that, although defeated in soccer six goals to one, the Newcastle side was triumphant in the subsequent tennis match played that afternoon, six games to five.¹²⁶ This was the first sporting event of its kind to be played in Newcastle. It indicated, not only that the young men of the Newcastle Jewish community were anxious to be involved in sporting and social activities, but that the Sydney organisers of the competition were willing to include Newcastle in their planning.

By 1931, the physical culture aspects of this club were formed into a branch of the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA).¹²⁷ Little is mentioned of the Association or youth activities in the Annual Reports of the congregation. 1935 saw a visit from the 2nd Judean Bondi Cubs.¹²⁸ This visit occasioned a special service in the synagogue and the cubs were comfortably housed in the synagogue hall. The work of Rev. Morris and his wife was acknowledged in ensuring the success of the visit.¹²⁹ The Morris's personal interest and involvement in the scouting movement would have encouraged such an association.

Several attempts were made over the years to establish a formal youth organisation in Newcastle. In November 1946 the Newcastle Hebrew Youth Organisation celebrated its first anniversary.¹³⁰ Just eighteen months later, in February 1948, another group was formed called the Newcastle Synagogue Juniors. Records are insufficient to determine the reasons for the inconsistent nature of Jewish youth organisations in Newcastle and it cannot be determined with any certainty whether these groups replaced one another or co-existed for a time. What is known is that Hebrew School and Jewish education had been available on a continuous basis since the 1920s and the fellowship of youth that began in Hebrew School may have continued into a more social organisation. The Hebrew School served as a binding force in a small Jewish community where young people did not all live in close proximity to the synagogue and attended different schools where there were few Jewish students.

The Synagogue Juniors appears to have arisen out of the Hebrew classes being conducted by the young Asher Solomon and this organisation involved 'practically all the younger members of this community'. One of their early activities was participation in a Purim play followed by musical items.¹³¹ Such was the success of the production that an appeal was made for the erection of a stage in the synagogue hall for future such occasions.¹³² This appeal was successful and, during 1949, a small, well-constructed, raised stage, complete with wings and a curtain was built as a permanent fixture at one end of the synagogue hall. The Newcastle Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) contributed the bulk of the funds for the stage - more than £89¹³³ - and this was duly acknowledged in the congregation's Annual Report.¹³⁴

By 1952 there were two youth groups operating within the congregation - Newcastle Jewish Youth with Joe Ungerliedner as president, Belle Gouttman as secretary and Shirley Solomon, Treasurer; and Newcastle Intermediate Youth Group with John Glass as President, Denise Lieberman Secretary and Muriel Brodie,

treasurer.¹³⁵ These groups continued through the 1950s with regular changes in leadership.

Rabbi and Mrs. Gottschall both took considerable interest in the youth and, by 1958, there were three youth groups in operation with a total of more than sixty members. These groups participated in social and religious activities under the guidance of couples in the congregation. The Junior group (under twelve years of age) meeting monthly under the supervision of Mr and Mrs W. Ginges and Mr and Mrs M. Lenzer; the intermediate group (twelve to sixteen) under Mr and Mrs W. Finkelstein; and the senior group under Mr and Mrs Harold Abrahams. The senior group (sixteen and older) activities included the performance of the play 'Labernum Grove', and 'Ask the Rabbi' night and special lectures.¹³⁶ Disappointment was expressed at the cancellation of a proposed visit from the Great Synagogue Youth whose visits were 'stimulating' to the local youth groups.¹³⁷ The note of regret in the report indicated that such visits had become a regular event in the life of Newcastle Jewish youth.

Just one year later, the older group had formed itself into a Council Younger Set in line with similar groups in Sydney, and it had developed a closer working relationship with the adults in the congregation. They also enjoyed a camp in association with the Sydney University Jewish Students' Union and lectures in Zionism.¹³⁸ Youth above the age of sixteen were, in the 1950s, of an age to attend university and the association with university students was a natural one. It was only with the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme in NSW schools in the late 1960s, and the adding of a sixth year at high school, that youth began their university education when the majority were seventeen or eighteen years of age. Some of the youth from Newcastle would have been attending the university college in Newcastle.

Other noteworthy changes took place at that time, including affiliation with sporting groups in Sydney and an association between the intermediate group and *B'nai Akiva*, a worldwide religious Zionist youth movement, in Sydney, with leaders coming from Sydney on a fortnightly basis to conduct an ongoing program. This group also held a camp at the holiday property of Mr and Mrs D. R. Israel in Wangi. The junior group did not fare so well, however, and ceased to function.¹³⁹

It was only during the 1950s that Newcastle Jewish youth began to have closer ties with Jewish youth in Sydney. Numbers in the Newcastle Jewish community were increasing during this period and Rabbi and Mrs Gottschall both took a keen interest in

educating and developing the youth of the region. The affiliation with Great Synagogue Youth continued the ties between the two congregations that were formally created as far back as 1907. While there were decades where Newcastle appeared to receive little support, improvements in transport and communications meant that travel between the two centres was not so arduous. In addition, the level of car ownership was increasing and telephone calls were replacing letters as the standard form of communication.

The Gottschalls represented a modern era as well, with Rabbi Gottschall having a secular as well as religious education. He was also more than a generation younger than Rev. Morris, who had led the congregation since its inception. Both Rabbi Gottschall and his wife were part of the significant post-war Jewish migrants from Europe who not only brought with them the memories of the Holocaust, but also knowledge of the vibrant Jewish life that existed in Europe before it. Their impact upon the conservative Jewish population in Sydney was dramatic. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the legitimacy of Zionist ideals and creation of Zionist youth groups also changed the dynamic within the community. These changes were reflected among the Jewish youth in Newcastle throughout this period.

The high point of Jewish youth activity in Newcastle came in 1961 when the senior youth group, now called Newcastle Synagogue Youth, held several major activities during the year. These included the presentation of a night of plays in the synagogue hall, one of which was 'entered in the Jewish Youth Drama Festival in Sydney and earned second place'.¹⁴⁰ Other activities included organising a 'car trial' for the community and organisation of activities such as card parties to support synagogue funds and support for the NCJW Queen competition.¹⁴¹ As reported in the 1961 Annual Report:

B'nei Akiva have this year extended their membership to take in a younger age group. The duties of leadership of this younger group has been taken over by senior members of *B'nei Akiva* (Newcastle) and for this purpose meetings are held weekly and a carefully prepared programme is adhered to.¹⁴²

In addition to events in Newcastle, youth participated in camps held as far afield as Wollongong and Victoria.¹⁴³ Newcastle Jewish youth had made significant advances in their ability to manage their own affairs, provide leadership for younger members of the congregation and maintain an outwardly focused program that

assisted both the local congregation and other worthwhile causes.

By the following year, however, changes were taking place within the community with five families leaving the city. This departure necessitated raising the annual subscription rate and a call made for urgent attention to be paid to ways of encouraging 'newcomers to Newcastle'.¹⁴⁴ A diminishing funding base is reflected in the Annual Report itself, which for many years had been professionally printed, but was now gestetnered and reproduced on poor quality paper. Rabbi Tarsis in his annual message encouraged members of the community to see the 'gradual thinning' of numbers as an invitation 'to action in all fields of Jewish endeavour – moral, spiritual and intellectual'.¹⁴⁵ Within the area of youth activity, the *B'nei Akiva* group, led by the rabbi's son, Norman Tarsis,¹⁴⁶ continued with the highlight being a *Shabbat* that included visits from Sydney members where the youth 'conducted the entire Sabbath morning service'. The 1962 Annual Report noted that: 'The effects of such a weekend are hard to overestimate. Not only are lasting friendships made but the educational and religious programme provides rare opportunity for our youth'.¹⁴⁷ In addition to this weekend, youth participated in camps, and a 'small but enthusiastic group' was studying *Ivrit* (Hebrew).¹⁴⁸

Throughout the 1960s, despite fluctuations in the population and financial affairs of the congregation, the youth of community continued to flourish. Members of *B'nei Akiva* were active over this period with their leaders enthusing the young people about Zionism and Jewish life. With improvements in transport and communication, regular fortnightly visits from Sydney leaders became the norm and the organisation flourished. Camps in Sydney were regularly organised and Newcastle youth were invariably included. These activities provided a depth of knowledge, friendship and experience that would have otherwise been unavailable to an isolated Jewish community. Over time local youth leaders were trained to take on much of the responsibility for the youth in Newcastle, but a helping hand was always available due to the dedication and commitment of Sydney-based visitors from the organisation. In addition to leadership visits, Sydney Jewish youth also travelled to Newcastle for joint activities.¹⁴⁹

With the arrival of Rev. Wugman in 1964, there was a revival of the Newcastle Synagogue Youth to involve the older youth and young adults, many of who were university students. These young men and women appear to have readily committed to this cause and worked together, often creating activities that would financially benefit the synagogue. The Board of Management of the

congregation created a liaison role so that one of its members could provide the link between the youth and the Board. This organisational initiative appears to have worked well.

For the first time in its sixty-year history the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation was being ably assisted and encouraged by the members of the Sydney Jewish community. Youth activities such as *B'nei Akiva* benefited from strong Sydney-based leadership who were willing to take the time and make the effort to ensure that Newcastle's youth were not forgotten. They also had the professional leadership and trained paid and volunteer staff willing and able to make regular journeys to Newcastle to assist. Their enthusiasm for their cause meant that, for the first time, the youth of Newcastle had access to the same level of instruction and training as Sydney youth. Not only was instruction given to the young people themselves, youth leaders were trained locally to take responsibility for the organisation and continuing education and activities of the group. By training youth in areas of leadership, a level of autonomy was developed that retained links with Sydney counterparts but ceased to be as reliant upon them for the success of the organisation.

The number and participation of the youth and young adults during the 1960s was followed by a rapid decline in congregation numbers and youth strength in the late 1960s. With the retirement of Rev. Wugman in 1969, the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation was left without a professional minister and they had insufficient funds to secure a replacement. As they reached adulthood, the members of *B'nei Akiva* married and moved to either Sydney or Melbourne. The financial realities that had become increasingly dire during the decade had placed the community in a difficult position from which it was feared it would not recover. By 1971 there were only seven pre-*Barmitzvah* pupils.¹⁵⁰ This small number had, by 1975, been reduced to just three children, although it is recorded that this small number 'does not appear to have dampened Mr. Gleitman's enthusiasm for the job'.¹⁵¹ While education classes taught by members of the congregation limped along, by the early 1970s youth activities and organisation had ceased to function.

Relationship with the General Community

One of the characteristics of Jewish settlers in rural and remote regions was their involvement in the local communities in which they lived. Not content to simply engage in their trade or business activities, many Jewish families became community leaders with a heavy involvement in local affairs. This was particularly true of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, when there

was a high level of Jewish participation in both local and state politics. One reason for this was the desire of Anglo-Jews to demonstrate their gratitude to Australia, which offered them freedom and full emancipation, unlike the situation for Jews on the continent, particularly in Eastern Europe at this time. This active involvement within the general community is illustrated by three specific case studies: the activities of the Ahronson family of Cundletown; Nathan Cohen of Tamworth; and Morris Light of Newcastle.

In 1860 Herman Ahronson, a thirty-two year old immigrant recently arrived from Hamburg, Germany, married Rachel, the eighteen year-old daughter of Lewis and Elizabeth Moss, in Sydney. In 1869 Herman set off alone to Cundletown, a busy port on the Manning River some 200 miles north of Sydney. At that time Cundletown was one of the major centres of commerce in the area with the river serving as the principal transport route to Taree and a number of other towns and villages further west.¹⁵²

In the May 1869 issues of the *Manning River Times*, Ahronson advertised a 'choice stock of goods' for sale.¹⁵³ From this beginning the Ahronson family maintained a successful produce business in Cundletown for more than fifty years, until the 1920s. In July of 1869 Rachel Ahronson joined her husband with their four children (Sophie, Isabelle, Elizabeth and Adelina), arriving on the ship *Fire King* just as her husband had done three months earlier.¹⁵⁴ In November another daughter, Rosetta, was born. Then came two sons, Moritz in 1872 and Lewis in 1875. Like most families of that time, the Ahronsons experienced the loss of a child when Lewis died at just two years of age in 1877.

Unlike many Jewish families who settled in rural NSW, Herman and Rachel Ahronson determined not to assimilate and to raise their children firmly in their Jewish faith. Despite their isolation as the only Jewish family in the Manning Valley for most the next fifty years, they worked hard, established a successful business on the corner of Main and Queen Streets, and raised their family fully involved in the local community. Herman served a term as Treasurer of the local School of Arts and on two Cundle committees established to improve life in the region.¹⁵⁵ He was philanthropic to local charities and contributed one pound towards an appeal for the Manning District Hospital in Taree.¹⁵⁶

Aware of the isolation facing his family, Herman Ahronson decided to send his son, Moritz to Sydney Grammar School in 1885, Moritz gained an abiding taste for history that he credited to his time at Grammar.¹⁵⁷ Herman's son Moritz followed his father's example in supporting local causes, serving the local community in

1898 on the Cundletown Progress Committee and as Vice-President of the local football club.¹⁵⁸ He was for many years President of the Manning River District Hospital Committee and a leading Mason.¹⁵⁹ In 1908 Moritz, together with several other Jewish men in regional NSW, was appointed a local Justice of the Peace.¹⁶⁰

In 1927 Moritz followed in his parents' footsteps by retiring to Sydney where he maintained an active interest in the community including serving on the Australian Jewish Historical Society's committee. He was highly regarded in the Manning region and, even though he had left the area more than 25 years previously, his obituary in the local paper quoted Shakespeare in describing him: 'His life was so gentle and the elements so mixed in him that Nature may stand up and say to the world, "This was a man."¹⁶¹

Following the example of their parents, the Ahronson children, when they left Cundletown, became very active in the Sydney Jewish community and the Great Synagogue. Elizabeth Ahronson, who, like her brother Moritz, had never married, was also very involved in the Sydney Jewish community especially in support of charitable institutions such as the Isabella Lazarus Home for Jewish Children, the Maccabean Hall, the NSW Society for Crippled Children and the Australian Red Cross.¹⁶² Because of their work in the Sydney Jewish community and with the Jewish Historical Society both Moritz and Elizabeth received obituaries in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*. Adelina Ahronson did marry, however. She and her husband, Mark Myers of Sydney, married in 1901 and had several children naming two of them after her father Herman and her late sister Sophie.¹⁶³

The Ahronsons remain just one example of how an isolated Jewish family can retain their Jewish identity, successfully passing this on to the next generation, without a Jewish community as such to support them. They also serve to highlight the difficulties of perpetuating Jewish life in such circumstances, because of a lack of suitable marriage partners for their children and the separation of working and religious life. While the Ahronsons were successful in their business endeavours and community involvement in their local community, they evidently felt the need to return to the only substantial Jewish community available in Sydney as soon as the opportunity for retirement approached. Such actions indicate that, while material success may have been available to them in isolation, they still longed to be a part of their own religious community.

Another good example of the integration and participation of Jews in rural New South Wales in this period, is that of the Nathan Cohen family of Tamworth, who were both commercial and

community leaders in the region. Nathan Cohen's passion for the area and his active involvement in the community was passed on to his daughter Ida, who continued her father's legacy as a charity worker. Ida Cohen received an MBE in 1955 for her work with the Red Cross. While Ida Cohen has an entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*,¹⁶⁴ Nathan Cohen, who is listed as 'The most prominent Jewish resident of Tamworth and the Northern District'¹⁶⁵ has not been so honoured.

Cohen was Australian born, in Port Macquarie, NSW in 1842 and died in 1910. He came to Tamworth at the age of sixteen, and



Nathan Cohen.

Photo supplied by the Tamworth Historical Society

resided there for upwards of fifty years. He was first employed by an uncle [on his mother's side], William Cohen, who carried on business as a general merchant. After the death of his uncle, he managed the business for a time on behalf of the widow, but in 1872 he established his own business as auctioneer and agent, for

a while together with partners, then entirely on his own. Already as a young man he took a keen interest in the public life of the town, and furthered its welfare throughout his life. There was scarcely a movement for the advancement of the welfare of Tamworth with which Nathan Cohen was not connected. He played an important part in building up the district. The Municipal Council of Tamworth was formed in 1876, and Nathan Cohen was a member of the first Council, and then for a number of years afterwards, twice occupying the position of Mayor—in 1882 and 1883.

Cohen was prominent in the commercial world. He founded, or helped to found, a number of companies ..., which have contributed much to the well being of the population. The Building Society and the Dairy Company should be mentioned in particular. He was also Chairman of the Tamworth Gas and Coke Co., was closely associated with Centenary Coal and Coke Co. and the Green Mount Land and Quarry Co. The core of his commercial activities was the firm of Nathan Cohen & Co. Ltd., auctioneers and stock and station agents.

Also in the charitable field he was very active. He was largely instrumental in the building of the Tamworth Hospital, and belonged to its Committee for many years, occupying on several occasions the offices of Treasurer, President and Trustee.

It is said that Nathan Cohen took a leading part in every philanthropic movement of the town. Also in the sporting world he occupied a prominent position. He was President of the Cricket Club and a Trustee of the Jockey Club.¹⁶⁶ At his death in 1910 there was a great outpouring of grief.

Cohen was proud of his Jewish heritage. When daughter, Ida married her cousin Victor Cohen on 4 December 1901 in the family home, the ceremony was conducted by Rabbi Landau of Sydney and guests travelled from Sydney and Melbourne for the occasion. Records indicate that this was the first and only Jewish wedding to take place in Tamworth and it caused considerable interest¹⁶⁷. Nathan Cohen's passion for the Tamworth region and his interest in all things charitable was inherited by Ida and her sisters with Ida Cohen taking an active leadership role in many charitable endeavours in the region. She was appointed an MBE in 1955 for her long charitable service to the Red Cross. Ida Cohen retained a membership in the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation until her death, although it is unlikely that she ever visited Newcastle or attended services in the synagogue she supported.¹⁶⁸

A third relevant example is that of Morris Light who was born in Kovno, Russia in 1859, leaving Russia in 1879 and settling in the Newcastle area after several years in Scotland, in 1886. He

established a furniture business in Carrington and later in Newcastle West with a subsidiary store in the Hunter Coalfields town of Cessnock. Light believed in community involvement and served more than thirty-five years as an alderman on the Carrington and Newcastle councils. He served two terms as Mayor of Carrington in 1902 and 1903, being credited as 'being a catalyst for the early electrical illumination of Carrington Streets'.¹⁶⁹ The culmination of Light's political career was his election as Mayor of Newcastle. He was the only Jewish Mayor of the city and his election was not without controversy:

On the evening of December 10th 1924, while a band outside the Council chambers played "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow", Morris Light was elected Mayor of Newcastle, an event that was not without controversy. For the outgoing Mayor, Alderman R.G. Kilgour, refused to invest the new Mayor with the robes of office. Apparently upset at not being able to secure a seventh year as Mayor, he resigned as a protest against what he termed the 'deceit and intrigue' of his colleagues. Morris Light served as Mayor until December 10th 1925.¹⁷⁰

Light's achievements included the electrification of the tram service, he was also an advocate of the electrification of the Newcastle to Sydney rail link, the creation of a children's park at Centennial Park, and he set in motion the construction of the city hall, offices, art gallery and museum.¹⁷¹ More than 300 people attended his funeral at Sandgate Cemetery, where a joint Jewish and Masonic service was held. The funeral cortege was the largest seen in Newcastle to that time.¹⁷²

These individuals, while members of small Jewish communities in isolated areas, exerted an influence far greater than one would expect of their religious community's impact and disproportional to their membership. Their active participation, combined with their small numbers, may explain why there appears to be little record of antisemitism experienced by Jews in rural areas. They enjoyed a high level of acceptance and social integration within the general community, as evidenced in the family stories discussed above. The high level of Jewish acculturation and their desire to appear 'more British than the British' is seen in the involvement of Jewish soldiers in World War I.



*Morris Light served as Mayor of Newcastle,
Photo Courtesy of the University of Newcastle Archives.*

**Jewish Soldiers from the Hunter Region
Who Served in World War I**

IF I SHOULD FALL

PREMONITION

'If I should fall do not grieve for me,
I shall be one with the sun and the
Wind and the flowers.'

Leslie Coulson

If I should fall, my presence may be sought,
In all the teeming beauty of the earth,
With every lovely thing that God has wrought,
I shall be one, and find in it new birth,
Therefore, within the shadow of the wind
Upon green meadows, or in April grass
And flowers, who wills, my presence still might find,
Which shall inhabit these until Time pass.
Seek in the gold and purple of the west,
Seek in the sunshine of a summer's day,
Seek in the ocean's silence and unrest,
If you would find me; and, while seeking, say:
'He loved all these – he loved all lovely things;
And from them now his living spirit sings.'

Lt. Robert S. Lasker, RAF¹⁷³

It is this poem that sets the tone for the In Memoriam section of the *Australian Jewry Book of Honour: The Great War, 1914-1918*, Australian Jewry's privately funded and unofficial response to those Jewish servicemen who died during the conflict. Reminiscent of the poetry of Rupert Brooke, this poem was written by the young Robert Lasker, who enlisted as a twenty year-old medical student at the University of Sydney. Lasker was the son of Isaac and Rachel Lasker of Newcastle, where his father ran a clothing store and served as the first secretary of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation in 1905,¹⁷⁴ serving on the management committee for several years.

In 1940, not long after the commencement of World War II, Harold Boas and Arthur (A.W.) Hyman, prepared a brief report of Jewish involvement in World War I for publication in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*. Hyman, from Tamworth in Northern NSW, was the most distinguished Jewish soldier to

emerge from the region during the conflict.¹⁷⁵ By the end of the war he had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, one of only two Australian Jews to be so honoured, apart from Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash. He was an aid to Australia's most famous Jewish soldier, Monash. He was also awarded an OBE. (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) in the military division in the New Year's honours list for 1919.¹⁷⁶

In their article, Boas and Hyman quote enlistment figures from NSW of 161,821 with 806 (less than 0.5%) being Jews. 114 Jewish soldiers from NSW were killed.¹⁷⁷ In all, they estimated that there were at least 2,300 Australian Jewish men who enlisted and served abroad, 13% of the Australian Jewish population at that time, with more than 300 killed, and many wounded. Almost 200 held commissioned rank and 95 received honours and distinctions, including Lt. Leonard Keysor who was awarded the Victoria Cross.¹⁷⁸

During The Great War the Jewish community supported the war effort in every way and male members of the community participated as soldiers, sailors and airmen in support of the allies. Legend and folklore surrounding this conflict would tend to suggest that the men who served were largely young, many in their teens, enthusiastic about their opportunity to participate and naïve as to the reality of what involvement in this conflict might bring.

However, a brief examination of those Jews from the Hunter region of New South Wales who participated in the Great War paints a somewhat different picture. Jewish soldiers from the Hunter were aged from eighteen to forty-one. While some were unskilled, listing their occupation as 'labourer', others were professional men with a good education and career. [For a list of Jewish soldiers from the Hunter who served in World War I see Appendix 2].

Three of the soldiers from the Hunter lost their lives in the conflict. The loss of these young men must have had a devastating impact on their families, but also on the small Jewish community in Newcastle. Several came from families with significant involvement in the community, including the Laskers, mentioned above, the Sussmans who ran hotels and retail businesses and the Audet and Illfield families from the Maitland district. Julius Illfield, killed in France, was an only child. One indicator of the affection of the Lasker family and the congregation for young Robert was the way in which his every scholastic achievement was noted in news from the Newcastle community printed in the *Hebrew Standard*. By 1909 Robert had won the State Scholarship for the third time in three years.¹⁷⁹ Henry Thomas was a prisoner of war of the Germans from

1916, although he survived the war to serve as an NCO lecturer the training school in Wiltshire, England.¹⁸⁰

Worthy of special mention is the Gubbay family who are one of the few Jewish families that have lived and been actively involved with the Jewish community in Newcastle continuously since its inception. David Gubbay, nephew of Joseph Gubbay who lost his life in the World War I, served as the president of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation for a number of years.

Thus, the Jews of the Hunter region made their contribution to the effort of the Great War, and this further highlighted their desire to participate in the broader society. Those families who made the supreme sacrifice with the loss of their sons were among some of the most active members of the Newcastle Jewish community. However, this high level of integration and acculturation also led to the ongoing problems of assimilation and intermarriage, which the isolated Jewish communities in rural Australia experienced, contributing to their eventual demise.

Conclusion

It is evident from the examples given, that the creation of a sustained Orthodox Jewish community in a rural or regional area of Australia, while challenging, was not impossible. However, a number of factors needed to be in place for such a community to evolve and thrive. In the nineteenth century such communities existed in Ballarat in Victoria, briefly in Broken Hill and over longer periods in Maitland and Tamworth in NSW. These communities drew together co-religionists from local towns and settlements and gave them a focal point for religious observance, marriage and social and educational activities. Unfortunately, there is also ready evidence that the building of a synagogue, employment of a minister and the desire to sustain such a community is no guarantee of its continuity if economic circumstances change and these small self-sustaining communities suffer an exodus of membership. There must be a critical mass of Jewish population in such areas for any Jewish community to be successful. It is evident from the population details outlined in Appendix 1 that, when the Jewish population declined below a certain level, it is no longer able to be self-sustaining.

As has been noted, such communities existed outside the capital cities and major Jewish population centres largely without support from those major centres. Even the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, located only one hundred and sixty kilometers north of Sydney's large and influential Jewish community, was left for the most part entirely to its own devices. Still, the Orthodox Jewish

population of Newcastle managed to sustain a successful community with a wide range of educational, religious, social and philanthropic activities for more than forty years from 1921 to the mid-1960s. An attractive and practical synagogue was constructed and paid for that stands as evidence of this heyday. That building still exists today and is used from time to time for religious and social celebrations by the small remnant Jewish population of the city.

Although meeting the following criteria do not guarantee an ongoing Jewish congregation, history would indicate that, for such rural and regional communities to exist and to flourish, at the very least, these several factors need to be in place:

1. There must be a certain level of religious leadership, preferably in the person of a minister or rabbi who is willing to undertake the many demands places upon him in such an isolated setting.
2. A synagogue serves as a focal point for the community and as a centre for educational and social as well as religious activity.
3. Effective education in Hebrew and Jewish beliefs and practices are needed.
4. There needs to be a body of willing volunteers to take on responsibility for the socially binding activities of the community.
5. The community needs to be financially self-sustaining.

When these elements were in place, a multi-faceted and rich Jewish community could evolve that not only met the religious needs of the observant Jewish population, but also the educational and social needs as well.

Appendix 1.

Town Census ¹	1861	1881	1901	1921	1933	1947	1954	1961
Maitland	45 m 25 f	27 m 25 f	6 m 0 f.	12 m 11 f	10 m 11 f	4 m 4 f	3 m 1 f	3 m 0 f
Tamworth	4 m 4 f	22 m 23 f	10 m 10 f	14 m 10 f.	16 m 9 f	16 m 9 f	12 m 8 f	12 m 8 f
Newcastle	2 m 1 f	34 m 16 f	78 m 36 f	73 m 48 f	39 m 24 f	102 m 92 f	120 m 114 f	90 m 84 f
Broken Hill		29 m 12 f	65 m 38 f	22 m 15 f	44 m 19 f	27 m 12 f	21 m 10 f	8 m 5 f
Sydney	1072	2480	5188	8695	9216	11968	18616	23106
Newcastle² (general population)			50,000	84,000	104,000	127,000		
Ballarat	163 m 78 f	180 m 175 f	135 m 131 f	42 m 49 f	40 m 30 f	34 m 38 f	19 m 26 f	25 m 26 f

m=male f=female

1. Data contained in: Price, Charles, *Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788-1961*, Appendix VI, *AJHS Journal* Vol V.Part VIII (1964) from census data.
2. Statistics for Newcastle's population are drawn from Suters Architects. *Newcastle City Wide Heritage Study: Thematic History* (1996/7) p.7 Accessed 24 April
http://www.ncc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/46713/City_Wide_Heritage_Study_Thematic_History_Verbatim_copy.pdf

Appendix 2.

First Name/s	Surname	Age	Occupation	Residence	Date of Enlistment	Battalion
Lewis	Audet	21	Civil Engineer	West Maitland	28/5/1917	2nd Draft reinforcement Field Engineers
Leopold Powell	Barfield	33	Interpreter	Newcastle	18/1/1916	36th Infantry Battalion
Gordon George	Cohen	32	Shearer	Scone	14/6/1917	41st Battalion
Karl Morris	Cohen ¹	41	Mining Engineer	Newcastle	25/6/1915	20th Infantry Battalion
Lipman	Cohen	18	Clerk	Hamilton	24/1/1917	54th Battalion
John Croydon	Cohen	38	Labourer	Maitland	23/6/1916	
Augustine George	Davis	37	Electrical Engineer	Newcastle	5/5/1918	53rd Infantry Battalion
Ernest	Eckman	23	Labourer	The Junction	19/12/1914	4th Infantry Battalion
Joseph Manasseh	Gubby ²	28	Salesman	Lambton	8/1/1917	36th Infantry Battalion
Julius	Illfield ³	22	Labourer	Vacy	9/9/1916	20th Infantry Battalion
Abraham	Kersh	26	Labourer	Glebe, Merewether	29/4/1918	5th NSW Reinforcements
Robert Sydney	Lasker ⁴	20	Medical Student	Randwick, NSW	16/8/1915	25th Squadron Royal Airforce
Augustus	Lipman	37	Independent Means	Muswellbrook	25/9/1916	2nd Aux. Mechanical Transport Company
Maurice	Sussman	23	Clerk	Mayfield	6/6/1915	9th Reinforcement 6th Light Horse
Henry Lambert	Thomas ⁵			Toronto		

1. Sergeant. Awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre.
2. Killed in Action: 8 June 1917. Memorial at the Menin Gate Cemetery, Belgium
3. Killed in Action: 2 March 1917. Buried Warlencourt British Cemetery, France
4. 2nd Lieutenant **Date of Death: 20/05/1918 Cemetery or Memorial Details: FRANCE 941. Aulnoye Communal Cemetery. A. 2**
5. Awarded Meritorious Service Medal 3 June 1919

ENDNOTES

1. *Hebrew Standard of Australasia, (HS,)*, vol. 17, no. 30, 24 January 1913, p.9 indicated that there had been a portion in the general cemetery 'set apart for Jewish burials for the past 44 years'.
2. Births, deaths and marriages within the Max Ginges family are included in Newcastle synagogue records.
3. Warren Newman & Lyall Green, *Tamworth a pictorial history*, (Avalon, NSW: Halbooks Publishing, 1998), p. 29.
4. *Ibid.*, see Index pp. 237-238.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
7. See Charles Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', *Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS,) Journal*, vol. V, part VIII, (1964). Appendix VI that lists Jewish populations in NSW country areas from 1861 to 1961 using census data.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *HS.*, vol 15, no 23, 9 December 1910, p. 8.
10. Israel Porush *The House of Israel*, (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1977), p. 329.
11. *HS.*, vol 15, no 23, 9 December 1910, p. 8.
12. *HS.*, 8 January 1915, vol. 19, no. 28, p. 10.
13. Newman Rosenthal *Formula for Survival: The Saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* (Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1979), pp.94, 110.
14. *HS.*, 3 July 1953, vol. 60, no. 1, p. 3.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Harold D. Hahn, 'Synagogue-Federation Relations, in Marc Lee Raphael (ed.), *Understanding American Jewish Philanthropy* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1979), p.225.
17. Newman Rosenthal, *op. cit.* p. 74. For a history of the Central Congregation see pp.66-78.
18. *HS.*, 17 June 1927, vol. 32, no. 50, p.5.
19. *HS.*, 3 July 1953, vol. 60, no. 1, p. 3.
20. 'A Word from Our Rabbi', in the *Fifty-First Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation - 1957* inside cover.
21. Ephraim Frisch, *An Historical Survey of Jewish Philanthropy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p.178.
22. Redmond Mullin, *The Wealth of Christians* (Exeter, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1983), p.28.
23. As quoted in Mullin, *op.cit.*, 1983.
24. Frisch, 1924, *op. cit.*, p.10.
25. Danny Siegel, 'Tz'dakah, Privilege, Joy, Dignity', *Moment* vol. 2, (July 1977), p.13.
26. See Frisch, *op. cit.*, pp.31-40.
27. Felicia Antonelli Holton, 'In a Secular Society, How Can we Teach People About Philanthropy? A Conversation with Robert L Payton', *The University of Chicago Magazine* (Fall 1985), p.5.
28. Frisch, *op. cit.*, p.6.
29. *HS.*, vol. 14, no. 3, 16 July 1909, p.10.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *HS.*, vol. 14, no. 5, 6 August 1909, p.10.

32. *HS*, vol. 13, no. 8, 28 August 1908, p.11.
33. Newman Rosenthal, op. cit., pp.49-50.
34. *Ibid.*, p.17.
35. *Ibid.*, p.35.
36. *HS*, 7 August 1903, pp.4-5.
37. *HS*, 12 February 1915, vol. 19, no. 33, p.5.
38. *HS*, 4 May 1921, vol. 25, no. 36, p.8.
39. *HS*, 12 February 1915, vol. 19, no. 33, p.5.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *HS*, 17 August 1906, vol. 11, no. 6, p.4.
42. *HS*, 25 March 1909, vol. 13, no.38, p.9.
43. *HS*, 29 October 1920, vol. 25, no. 17, p.6.
44. *HS*, 3 December 1920, vol. 25, no. 23, p.11.
45. Elyahu Honig *Zionism in Australia: 1920-1939 The Formative Years* (Sydney: Mandelbaum Trust, 1997), p.19.
46. *HS*, 28 May 1920, vol. 24, no. 48, p.10.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *HS*, 26 August 1921, vol. 26, no. 9, p.8.
49. Frisch, op. cit., p.172.
50. Marc Lee Raphael 'Federated Philanthropy in an American Jewish Community 1904-1948', *American Jewish History* vol. 68 (1978), p.148.
51. A history of Federation in Columbus Ohio is found in Raphael, *Ibid.*, pp.147-162.
52. *HS*, 1 June 1923, vol. 27, no. 48, p.5.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, p.6.
55. *Ibid.*, p.7.
56. *HS*, 26 June 1908, vol. 12, no. 51, p.8.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. *HS*, 8 January 1909, vol. 13, no. 27, p.8.
61. *HS*, 29 November 1907, vol. 12, no. 21.
62. *HS*, 3 July 1953, vol. 60, no. 1, p.3.
63. *HS*, 8 December 1905, p.7.
64. *HS*, 15 December 1905.
65. *HS*, 11 January 1907, vol. 11, no. 27, p.7.
66. *Ibid.*, The prizes were '1st, Sylvia Hart, 2nd, Clara Hart'.
67. *HS*, 7 August 1903, pp.4-5.
68. *HS*, 28 June 1912, vol. 16, no. 52, p.9.
69. *HS*, 3 February 1911, vol. 15, no. 31, p.11.
70. *HS*, 10 October 1913, vol. 18, no. 15, p.5.
71. *HS*, 16 April 1915, vol. 19, no. 42.
72. *HS*, 22 June 1917, vol. 21, no. 51, p.10.
73. *HS*, 20 July 1917, vol. 22, no. 3, p.10.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *HS*, 21 September 1917, vol. 22, no. 12, p.8.
76. *HS*, 5 April 1918, vol. 22, no. 40, p.10.
77. *HS*, 26 April 1918, vol. 22, no. 43, p.10.
78. *HS*, 26 July 1918, vol. 23, no. 4, p.10.
79. *HS*, 19 July 1918, vol. 23, no. 3, p.10.

80. *HS*, 6 September 1918, vol. 23, no. 10, p.10.
81. *HS*, 20 September 1918, vol. 23, no. 12, p.10.
82. *HS*, 4 October 1918, vol. 23, no. 14, p.10.
83. *HS*, 23 January 1920, vol. 24, no. 30, p.10.
84. *HS*, 17 September 1920, vol. 25, no. 11, p.10.
85. *HS*, 10 June 1921, vol. 25, no. 50, p.11.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *HS*, 30 June 1922, vol. 26, no. 52, p.5.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Twentieth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1926.*
91. *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1929.*
92. *Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1938.*
93. *Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1939.*
94. The services of these volunteer teachers is recorded in extant Annual Reports for the period. See *Forty-Second Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1948.*
95. Congregational Birth, Death and Marriage records maintained by Rev. Morris. Also recorded information from headstones in the Jewish Section of the Sandgate Cemetery.
96. *Forty-Fourth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1950.*
97. *Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1953/4, p.6.*
98. *Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1955, p.3.*
99. *HS*, 14 March 1952, vol. 57, no. 37, p.1.
100. *Board Bulletin* of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, August 1959, p.1.
101. 'A Word from Our Rabbi' *Fifty-Third Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1959*, inside cover.
102. *Fifty-Fourth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1960, p.3.*
103. *Fifty-Eighth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1964.*
104. *Ibid.*
105. *Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1965.*
106. *HS*, 23 November 1923, vol. 28, no. 21, p.8.
107. *Ibid.*, p.12.
108. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 9 March 1922, vol. 1, no. 1, p.2.
109. For a history of the Board of Jewish Education see Maurice H. Kellerman, *The New South Wales Board of Jewish Education History 1909-1979* (Sydney: New South Wales Board of Jewish Education, 1979).
110. *HS*, 22 February 1929, vol. 35, no. 35, p.11.
111. Don Wright *Looking Back: A History of the University of Newcastle* (Callaghan, NSW: The University of Newcastle, 1992), p.5.

112. *HS*, 5 August 1921, vol. 26, no. 6, p.11.
113. *HS*, 16 September 1921, vol. 26, no 12, p.10.
114. *HS*, 23 October 1921, vol. 26, no 18, p.11.
115. *HS*, 28 February 1923, vol. 27, no 34, p.11.
116. *Ibid.*
117. *HS*, 19 September 1924, vol. 29, no 12, p.14.
118. *HS*, 14 November 1924, vol. 29, no 20, p.13.
119. *HS*, 30 March 1928, vol. 34, no. 40, p.2.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1928.*
123. Interview of Calman Goldring by Dr F.S. Owen in March 1977. Transcript of interview p.10. Original in the possession of the author.
124. *HS*, 2 August 1929, vol. 35, no. 6.
125. *Ibid.*, p.11.
126. *Ibid.*
127. *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1931.*
128. The Judean Scouts were formed in 1926 by Abraham Rothfield, headmaster of the Board of Jewish Education at that time. 'The movement spread and within three years in addition to the two Judean Troops there were a Wolf Cub Pack of 20, a Patrol of Rover Scouts and a regular camp at Waterfall. Patrol leaders attended a week-end [sic] camp of instruction with non-Jews, and the movement developed and maintained as a permanent adjunct to Jewish Education was off to a fine start', Kellerman, *op. cit* p., p.23.
129. *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1935.*
130. *HS*, 28 November 1946, vol. 52, no 21, p.3.
131. *HS*, 8 April 1948, vol. 53, no. 40, p.2.
132. *Ibid.*
133. 'National Council of Jewish Women - Newcastle Section, Financial Statement May 1st - April 30th 1950' in *NCJW Cash Book 1931-1955.*
134. *Forty-Fourth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1950.*
135. *Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1952, p.2.*
136. *Fifty-Second Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1958, pp.3-4.*
137. *Ibid.*, p.3.
138. *Fifty-Third Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1959, p.4.*
139. *Ibid.*
140. *Fifty-Fifth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1961, p.5.*
141. *Ibid.*
142. *Ibid.*
143. *Ibid.*
144. *Fifty-Sixth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1962.*
145. A New Year Message *Fifty-Sixth Annual Report of the Newcastle*

- Hebrew Congregation, 1962*, inside cover.
146. *Fifty-Seventh Annual report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1963.*
 147. *Fifty-Sixth Annual report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation 1962.*
 148. Ibid.
 149. See notes on Youth in the *Sixtieth Annual report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation 1966* n.p.
 150. *Sixty-Fifth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1971*, p.3.
 151. *Sixty-Ninth Annual Report of the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1975*, p.5.
 152. Cundletown Historical Society 'A Brief History of the Historical Centre and the Area', in Brochure n.d.
 153. Manning Valley Historical Society (1997) *Manning River Newspaper Indexes* vol. 1 p. 5
 154. MVHS (1997) op. cit.
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