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The History of Hobart Jewry.

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Life in the early days of the convict settlement of Van Diemen's Land was hard and rigid. Five years after Lieutenant Bowen took possession in August, 1803, the failure of the crops in New South Wales started a famine on the island, which was not fully relieved until two years later in 1810. The first newspapers, *The Derwent Star* and *The Van Diemen's Land Intelligence*, published in the same year (1810), cost 2/- a copy, and though the total population in the whole of Van Diemen's Land was not greater than two thousand, bushranging was prevalent and martial law was proclaimed. By 1817 the populace had grown to 3,114, which included free settlers and grant men to whom the convicts were often hired out.¹ Amongst the convicts were Jews.

On the 8th May, 1817, Lieutenant-Governor Sorrell sent a severe reprimand to the captain of the brig *Kangaroo*, Lieutenant Jeffreys, upbraiding him for being at anchor at the lower end of the port against orders, so that some prisoners had tried to escape. The previous day four prisoners, who included two Jews, appeared before the Deputy Judge-Advocate, A. W. H. Humphrey, Esq. They were charged with being on board H.M. Colonial brig *Kangaroo*, secreted with intention clandestinely to leave the colony. The prisoners acknowledged the charge, and James Brimmer, an overseer, spoke of their general good character. The two Jews were in his employ, and had conducted themselves properly. One of them said they went on board the *Kangaroo* boats at the request of Jeffreys. The Court ordered the prisoners to work for the Government for one month for the same number of hours a day as worked by the Gaol Gang, and

at night they were to be confined to the gaol.² It is hoped that they slept well, for conditions in the gaols were atrocious, and at times they were so full that the prisoners had to take turns to lie down and sleep.

There may have been other Jews connected with early Tasmania. In a General Order dated 18th December, 1803, an overseer with a Jewish-sounding name was selected to supervise a gang of fifteen convicts to take cargo off boats.³ His name appears once again amongst a list of escapees, and an Order was issued on 17th May, 1807, warning inhabitants against having dealings with the escapees.⁴

Amongst four prisoners who were reported to be in safe custody by Lieutenant-Governor Sorrell to Major Cimitiere on 3rd December, 1819, was a person by the name of Solomon.⁵

A list issued on 24th March, 1820, gives the names of persons at Derwent and Port Dalrymple who had had their lands measured and had not received their grant. On the list appears the name of Emanuel Levy, who was given a grant of 30 acres at Ormaig.⁶

On 23rd December, 1823, the charter was granted for the Bank of Van Diemen's Land. The capital comprised a sum of 40,000 Spanish dollars, divided into 200 shares of 200 Spanish dollars each. Judah Solomon and Joseph Solomon were amongst the shareholders.⁷

In a list dated 14th July, 1824, amongst those given letters of recommendation as settlers was A. Aaron.⁸

One of the earliest Jewish settlers in Tasmania was Bernard Walford.⁹ His name first appears amongst petitioners to an influential citizen, R. W. Loane, in an address dated 30th June, 1818, in which Loane is asked to help put down the bad business practices in the colony, especially as he had been so helpful on a previous occasion in 1809.¹⁰

A list of settlers, with their families and Government men, rationed from His Majesty's Magazine at Hobart Town, include : Walford, Bernard, Jun., 1; and 1 (Government man).¹¹

Walford's name next appears in strange surroundings. He is included amongst seatholders of pews in St. David's Church.¹²

There can be no doubt, however, that Bernard Walford did not want to be buried as a non-Jew, for early in 1828

he petitioned Lieutenant-Governor Sir George Arthur on behalf of his co-religionists for a Jewish burial ground, which was granted on 24th May, 1828, and was situated next to the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Upper Patrick Street.¹³ Walford was possibly of German extraction. His original name was most likely Wohlfahrt, and it is quite probable that when he made his petition he knew that his end was approaching. He was the first to be buried in the Jewish Cemetery, and the following inscription is still decipherable upon the headstone erected to his memory, which now lies discarded and broken on the ground and not on the spot where his remains are buried :

Mr Bernard Walford

died Sep 20 1828

Aged 60 years

The above Bernard Walford
was the person when living
who applied to His Excellency
Governor Arthur for government
permission to appropriate this spot
of ground for a burial place
for the Jews.

Although Walford married out of his faith, his sentiments must have been strongly Jewish. His son, Barney Walford, was once dangerously ill, and he made an application to the committee of the congregation to be buried as a Jew, as his father was a Jew. The committee decided that if he were to die he was not to be buried in the Jewish Cemetery, as his mother was not a Jewess.¹⁴

Van Diemen's Land may also have had a Jewish bushranger. It is stated that about the middle of 1825 a convict named Cowan or Cohen was permitted to escape from an iron gang with broken fetters on his legs. He was found by some of the Brady gang and was taken to a friendly blacksmith, who knocked his irons off for him. He joined the gang, and more than once led them into conflicts with the soldiers, out of which only the skill and bravery of Brady delivered them. Cowan was no doubt a clever man in his way : he completely hoodwinked Brady and his mates ; he fought bravely in their skirmishes with the troops, and was always eager in looting houses or other places attacked. He professed to rob on "principle." He is said to have murdered the bushrangers Murphy and Williams while they slept, but there is no proof of this. He betrayed the camp to Lieutenant Williams of the 40th

Regiment, who was out with a party of soldiers in search of bushrangers. A terrific fight took place, in which several were killed on each side; some of the bushrangers were captured, while others escaped, but the gang was broken up. Cowan is said to have received a free pardon, several hundreds of pounds reward, and a free passage home for his services.¹⁵

One other convict who deserves mention is Ikey Solomons. It may be that he was the original of Fagin in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. M. J. Landa, in *The Jew in Drama* (London, 1926, pp. 160-162), gives some information about him, and discusses whether or no he was important in literary history. His arguments on this latter point are omitted from the following quotation, but sufficient is included to show what type of man Solomons was :—

Ikey Solomons led a life of evil. He was well known to the police as a pickpocket at the age of fourteen. Subsequently he set up as a "fence" in Rosemary Lane, popularly known as Rag Fair, now Royal Mint Street, Whitechapel, and also in Lower Queen Street, Islington, the two establishments enabling him to dodge the authorities by a dual existence. In May, 1827, he was about to emigrate to New South Wales, whither his wife had been transported, when he was arrested. By a simple trick he escaped from the police, and via New York reached Australia. There he was recognised, arrested, brought back to England in 1830, and, amid great excitement, tried at Old Bailey before Mr. Serjeant Arabin on July 8th, 9th, 12th and 13th the same year. Arraigned on eight indictments, he was found guilty on two only, sentenced to seven years' transportation, and sent to Van Diemen's Land. . . .

Ikey's age, at the time of his trial, was given as forty-five, and the *Morning Post* report of the proceedings declared that he did not look so old. He evinced neither dejection nor fear as he surveyed the packed court; he was firm and composed throughout the hearing, and stood with folded arms without betraying any emotion when pronounced guilty. He was not markedly Semitic in appearance or manner, and it was given in evidence that he had successfully passed himself off as a non-Jew, named Jones, in Islington. His landlady there stated that he had behaved with "propriety." . . . Ikey, at a sessions where death sentences were plentiful, according to the law of the period, received a comparatively light sentence.

It is apparent from the official figures of 1832, which state that 100 Jews arrived in Hobart Town on s.s. *Palamban*, and that in 1837 there were a total of 132 Jews, of whom 124 were free, that prior to 1832 there were a handful of Jews only on the island. This handful, however, was energetic, and its leaders were the same brothers mentioned above, Joseph and Judah Solomon, in whose

home services were conducted as early as 1830. In 1836 a Jewish Philanthropic Society was formed.

Small as their numbers were, there were always a few of the fraternity who needed assistance, and care had to be taken of the Jewish convicts and ticket-of-leave men. In 1845 the bulk of the Tasmanian population were convicts. The census figures for that year are 60,000 convicts, 7,000 in private service, and 8,000 ticket-of-leave men. It is also significant that a census card in the Chief Secretary's office in Hobart contains the Jewish figures for 1854, which gives a total Jewish population of 435, of whom 259 were free.¹⁶

As in most voluntary institutions, enthusiasm sometimes wanes, and the Hobart Jewish philanthropic movement was no exception. A Lewis Abrahams, who was blind, asked the congregation with which the Philanthropic Society was connected to help him to return to England, and the committee decided to call a meeting of members. Only the president, the secretary and two members came along.¹⁷ The final result, however, was far happier, for he was eventually assisted with £20. Ticket-of-leave men were often helped with substantial sums, and any from the penitentiary who attended the Synagogue on Sabbaths and festivals were provided with three free meals. Later the committee reduced the free meals from three to two.¹⁸ The spiritual needs of the convicts were not neglected, and at the request of the Controller of Convicts at Port Arthur the congregation sent one prayer book with an English translation and three other Hebrew prayer books.¹⁹

A most valuable intercession was successfully negotiated by the president, Louis Nathan, in 1847, when he arranged that all Jews in Hobart and Launceston prisons should have the privilege of attending Synagogue and refraining from work on Sabbaths.²⁰ This request had previously been refused by Sir John Franklin.

That it was their duty to help their unfortunate brethren was deeply ingrained in the hearts of the Hobart Jews, but doubts must have arisen in their minds as to whether convicts and ticket-of-leave men were allowed any privileges in the Synagogue. The Chief Rabbi wrote to the congregation and informed them that pass-holders were to be counted to a Minyan, but they could not have honours bestowed upon them.

One may guess that all was not well with one un-

happy prisoner in the Penitentiary, who bitterly complained to the committee that they request Reuben Joseph of New Norfolk to pay him the balance of the allowance due to him from the congregation. Because of its non-payment he was undergoing a state of bondage.²¹

As kind as Hobart Jewry was, it would not hearken to the plea for relief from Mark Salem.²² He probably had a reputation, and in the history of the Tasmanian theatre he finds a place of distinction. It is recorded that in 1834, in a theatre at the corner of St. John Street and Brisbane Street, Launceston, one Mark Salem, alias Maynard, once gave an entertainment styled "Maynards at Home," and most of the elite of the town attended in full dress; tickets, 7/6 each. Mark was his own money-taker, and when the room was full he threw off his coat and started singing "Bath bricks a penny a lump," but before he could get through two verses the room was empty, leaving Mark to pocket the cash and laugh at the sell. Mark Salem's name was soon after seen in the *Gazette* as having taken out a hawker's license.²³

Though the congregation was small—on 16th September, 1844, there were only 22 members on the register—it is worthy of note that in 1838 they presented His Excellency Sir John Franklin with a trophy for the first Hobart Town Regatta.²⁴ The relationship, though, between Sir John Franklin and the Jewish community was not entirely satisfactory, as can be seen from the following article which appeared in the *Voice of Jacob* in the issue dated 19th January, 1844²⁵ :—

Sir John Franklin, as we learn from the local papers, has resigned the government of Van Diemen's Land into the hands of his successor. The press, without distinction of politics, is animadverting upon the ex-Governor's unpopularity; but it is by no means with a wish to swell the general outcry, that we accede to the desire that we should allude to his very extraordinary conduct towards persons professing Judaism. A reference to our Vol. ii., p. 224, will prove, indeed, how we deprecated the bitterness of the *Cornwall* (V.D.L.) *Chronicle*, when accusing Sir John of unworthy motives, in refusing an allotment of land for a synagogue and burial ground, in Launceston; similar grants being commonly made to other denominations, and for less urgent purposes. The respectable claims and stations of the applicants, were attested in the extracts then made from the local press; which also stated it to be the avowed intention of Sir John, to make an unfavourable report to the home authorities, in opposition to the application which he had necessitated to be made to them! We regret to infer, that the ex-Governor has carried out his intention, from the circumstance that the application made here (*vide* No. 60) has, up to this point,

been unsuccessful. But as we cannot doubt the perseverance of those having charge of the petition, so are we likewise unwilling to attribute to the Noble Secretary for the Colonies, any feeling not consonant with that religious toleration which is a feature of our constitution; and one too which it has always been held expedient to carry out unrestrictedly in our colonies. Witness the high stations honorably and usefully filled by Jews in the West Indies, British America, etc. Nay, on the very spot, Van Diemen's land, an evidence is presented of the claim which the Jews have established on the respect and good offices of the authorities. In a file of the *Hobart Town Advertiser*, (which has reached our office since our paragraph having reference to the new synagogue in that city was written) we find that Christians are contributing liberally towards the cost of the erection; including ten guineas from Algernon Monague, Esq., Puisne Judge. Why then, this ungracious policy of the ex-Governor of the colony? We might have been warranted in supposing, that Sir John Franklin had deemed the aggregate of the petitioners for the grant, too few and unimportant; although the press of the island holds a contrary view, and although it would be very easy to show the propriety of even-handed liberality on the one side, and, on the other, the sound policy of affording facilities for the emigration of Jewish enterprise to such settlements. But not withstanding all our disposition to judge Sir John Franklin charitably, impelled thereto, moreover, by the voucher of a personal friend of his, with whom we have canvassed the matter, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the character of the following report, (if true) condensed from the *Hobart Town Advertiser*, of the 20th September, 1842:—

"The sanctity and obligatory character of the Jewish Day of Atonement are well known, and there being 'probationers' of that creed in the colony, application was made, that they might be permitted suitably to observe the solemnities of the day:—it was refused by the officer in charge, and the men were worked while observing a strict fast of twenty-four hours! A father and son (Jews) who had been transported together, were separated on their arrival; the son died, and application was made and refused for permitting the father, with due security, to follow the remains of his son to the grave! The Editor says, on these incidents:—

"The great ostensible object of probation is amendment, and fitting for a better state. If this is best obtained by embruting men's minds, by depriving them of all religious comfort, consolation, and benefit, Captain Forster's plan is excellent; but we doubt it. We consider religion one of the most powerful engines of reformation, and we know that the circumstances connected with the Day of Atonement, are such as have a most beneficial effect, even on the most hardened. The Jews too, are deprived of any other opportunities for worship, as their Sabbath falls on the Saturday. Surely the one day might have been granted them, especially when we see the license granted to the whole of the probation parties indiscriminately. . . . Oh! what an outcry there would have been, had the slaves in the West Indies been prevented from attending to their prayers on a Sabbath! . . ."

True, it may be said these were not the direct acts of the Governor; but the following passage appears to involve his tacit sanction:—

"Application was made to Sir John Franklin. It is well known the delicacy he has always shown in interfering with Capt. Forster's recommendation and Capt. Forster refused, and from ignorance of Sir John Franklin's motives, they did not again apply to him. These cases require no comment."

Now may it not be likely, that the colonial office is also acting from "delicacy in interfering" with reference to the grant of land in Launceston? If so, the above illustrations of how far official 'delicacy' might trench upon the duties of common humanity and sound policy, may perhaps induce the noble Secretary to some little departure from the stricture of routine. We are not for an instant unmindful of the necessity for discipline, and for the moral support of distant authority in cases like these; nor have we been slow to blame the intemperance of editorial advocacy of Jewish claims; but that difficulty is now removed by the accession of a new Governor to the colony; and we are, therefore, not without hope, that the tolerant and liberal spirit which so generally pervades the administration of our colonial office, will find a means to concede the boon, respectfully and reasonably prayed for in this present instance.

At the end of 1841 the small community was stirred to place matters on a more permanent basis, and, with the arrival of orthodox newcomers from England early in 1842, it was proposed to build a Synagogue.²⁶ Temporary accommodation was provided by Judah Solomon in his home, and when the Governor refused to grant a plot of ground for a building Judah Solomon presented the congregation with a portion of his grounds in Argyle Street.

By a majority of three the committee decided to advertise for subscriptions, and amongst the contributors were many Gentiles. A tender was accepted for £717, and as the congregation did not possess sufficient funds an appeal for aid was sent to the London Board of Deputies through Sir Moses Montefiore. He himself responded, as did many other Londoners. The overseas interest in the Synagogue is apparent from the inscriptions on the walls and on the front of the ladies' gallery. Some of the donations and bequests to the congregation came from Jews living as far away as Toronto, Canada, and New Orleans, U.S.A.

It was resolved to lay the foundation stone on the first Wednesday after the 9th of Ab, and on the 9th August, 1843, the ceremony was carried out with due solemnity by the President, Louis Nathan.²⁷ The consecration was fixed for Friday, 20th June, 1845, but owing to a lack of lamps and branch lights it was postponed to Friday, 4th July, 1845. The chandelier cost £70, and when it was completed the congregation was so pleased

that it paid the artisan £10 extra for his work. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir J. E. Eardly-Wilmot, intended to be present; illness prevented him from doing so, and he was represented by his wife.²⁸

The building of the Hobart Synagogue prompted the members to help in the building of synagogues in other Australian cities. A collection was taken up for the Sydney Synagogue in June, 1842, and a few years later they assisted in wiping off the debt of the Launceston Synagogue.

The original reason for the early Jewish settlers meeting was almost entirely to distribute benevolence, and the first organised Jewish group in Hobart was named the Jewish Benevolent Society. When they contemplated building a Synagogue, a sub-committee was appointed to frame the by-laws, and the name was changed to the "Hebrew Philanthropic Institution," and then to the Hebrew Congregation and Philanthropic Society.²⁹ Two and a half years later the name underwent another change, and a new law was adopted by which the congregation was called the "Hebrew Congregation of Hobart Town."³⁰ In 1847 a permanent fund was set aside to assist distressed Jews, and the philanthropic activities of the community were vested in a separate organisation, the Tasmanian Hebrew Benevolent Society. After Hobart Town was renamed Hobart, the congregation was finally called by the name by which it is known to-day, the Hobart Hebrew Congregation.

Sir Moses Montefiore's interest in the Hobart community went beyond his donation towards the building of the Synagogue. A complaint was sent into the congregation by Mrs. Hannah Lazarus in August, 1846, that her daughter, only fourteen, was converted without Mrs. Lazarus' consent by the chaplain of the Queen's Orphan Schools. The President then communicated on the matter to the Governor, the Chief Rabbi, and Sir Moses Montefiore. The latter intervened with the Colonial Secretary concerning the girl, who was finally returned to the care of her mother.³¹ It will be remembered, too, that it was Sir Moses Montefiore who intervened with the Colonial Secretary regarding Sir John Franklin's refusal to grant land in Hobart and Launceston for the building of synagogues.

Though Judah Solomon had given the land for the

Synagogue and had contributed liberally towards the funds, that did not prevent the committee fining him and David Moses the sum of 2/6 each. The reason is not stated.³² Their offence could not have been serious, for otherwise the punishment would probably have been heavier. A Philip Phillips was fined 21/- for not going up to the Torah when called, whilst Lazarus Levy was punished by not having any honours bestowed upon him and by not being called to the Torah because he had created a disturbance in the Synagogue on Simchath Torah.³³ For insulting the President on the Sabbath, Samuel Karney was deprived of Mitzvoth for six months.³⁴ The committee meted out punishment to fit the crime. When the President's wife, Mrs. Nathan, was insulted with violent language by a lady member of the congregation at Sabbath service, they decided that the lady member be removed from her seat No. 7 to any other seat she could obtain in exchange.³⁵ The minutes fail to relate whether the culprit was successful in changing her seat. They do tell us, however, that her husband sided with the opposition. A fine seemed to be the usual method of dealing with recalcitrant members. A new law was submitted on 4th June, 1848, proposing fines on any member of the committee who would arrive later than 8.30 a.m. on Sabbaths. After a fortnight the law was made more stringent, and any committeeman who arrived after "Nishmath" was to be fined 2/6, and after three successive occasions his place would be declared vacant.

Even as late as 1873 fining was still used as a method to discipline the members of the congregation. Mr. Cohen would not accept a Mitzvah. This disturbed the service, and he was fined 21/- and was asked to apologise, otherwise he would receive no privileges.

A more serious case was the complaint of the minister, Rev. Mr. Myers, that one Lewis had struck him in the Synagogue at a Friday night service. Apparently the committee were reluctant at first to deal with the matter, for there was no quorum for the meeting. At the adjourned meeting the committee decided to fine Lewis 21/-, as he said he had been provoked, and he had to make a suitable apology or lose his privileges. The Rev. Mr. Myers then said that Lewis had committed a second offence by striking him on the head in the street. Lewis at first denied the charge, but then acknowledged his guilt, and

this time he had to make a public apology in the newspaper which was drawn up by the secretary.³⁶

Often the Synagogue would be in financial difficulties, and it is good to read of the noble Jewish spirit displayed by Judah Solomon, who told the congregation that if they could not repay his loan of £350 he would not demand it.³⁷ The congregation was not so generous, and it once resolved to give one month's notice to all owing money for Matzoth, and, if the money was not forthcoming, to hand over the debt to a professional man.³⁸ Drastic steps were taken against those who did not pay for their Mitzvoth, and they were informed that if they did not pay up for last Yom Tov they could not buy any Mitzvoth next year.³⁹ The Mitzvoth, as in many congregations in the 19th century, were sold by auction. Occasionally the offers were too low, and in Hobart a statutory minimum price of 1/- for each Mitzvah was introduced.⁴⁰ At one time the congregation was short of money to pay the minister, and a special levy of 5/- was imposed upon all ale house-keepers of the congregation, who were probably the most affluent in the community.⁴¹

The first paid official of the congregation was Mr. Philip Phillips. He was appointed as Messenger and Collector with a salary of 10% on all collections, plus 5/- for attendance at weddings.⁴² The payment for services was not always cash. Mr. H. Nathan, for his services on the High Holy Days, received a suit of clothes.⁴³ For the consecration of the Synagogue, the Cantor fared better. In addition to a new suit, he received a hat and a cloak. The Reader then was Henry Jones. He was appointed on 12th May, 1844, at a salary of £12 per annum, and was to receive, as Collector, 10% on all collections. Henry Jones was one of those unfortunate Synagogue officials who was constantly harassed. After two months the committee reduced his commission on collections from 10% to 5%. After a year's service his salary was fixed at £20 with no commission. After two years' service he was demoted to Second Reader, and when the Reader would come out he was to receive in addition 10% on all collections that he made. The new Reader arrived on the *Psyche* on 10th August, 1846. He was Rev. Morrice Cohen; his salary was £250 a year.⁴⁴ Jones, who was better known than the new minister, retained the sympathy of the members, and, to safeguard the

interests of Cohen, the committee decided "that the offerings in the first place must be made to the Chief Reader, and the sum offered must not be less than that offered to an inferior officer."⁴⁵ The two ministers did not get on together, and they made complaints against each other. The committee usually decided that Jones was wrong. After nearly completing twenty years' service with the congregation, something unfortunate occurred in the home of Mr. Jones, and the committee was hastily summoned. The minutes do not satisfy the curiosity as to what did actually occur. Jones resigned; and the committee decided to give him a sum of £50 as a retiring gift and to apply for a new Cantor. The general meeting which was held on the same day, 8th November, 1863, confirmed Jones' resignation, but not the gift of £50. The meeting said it was short of funds. Nevertheless, the congregation paid the fares of Mr. and Mrs. Jones to go to New Zealand.

From the earliest days of the Hobart Hebrew Congregation, the problem of proselytes occupied the minds of the committee. Proselytes were made, but whether or not they were always converted according to orthodox Jewish law is not known. Orthodox law requires, as a compulsory requisite, immersion in a Mikvah on the authority of a qualified Beth Din, and in Hobart it was not until June, 1847, that a ladies' committee was formed to find a suitable place for a Mikvah. It appears that the Synagogue committee thought that it had the right and the power to permit conversions, and a minute is found where it is stated that it was the unanimous decision of the committee that a certain member of the congregation be united with a named non-Jewish woman according to the custom of the Hebrew nation.⁴⁶ An application by another member to have his wife proselytised was agreed to by the casting vote of the President.⁴⁷ On another occasion they were confronted with a difficult problem, when a member applied for his Christian wife and his newly-born infant son to be proselytised and circumcised. The committee agreed to the circumcision, but not to the proselytisation until further enquiries.⁴⁸ A curious fact is conspicuously noticeable in the first record book of the congregation. When the Rev. Herman Hoelzel was in office he performed the marriages, but whenever one of the parties was a proselyte the marriage ceremony was performed by Henry Jones.⁴⁹

The first birth recorded with the congregation is that of Benjamin Joseph Solomon, son of Abraham and Rose Solomon, born on 27th February, 1834. The first death in the record book is that of Francis Nathan, who died on 12th August, 1844, aged 36. He, however, was not the first Jew to die in Hobart. Bernard Walford had died in 1828, and on the fly leaf of the first minute book is a note to the effect that Mr. S. Levy died last day of Passover, on 22nd April, on a Friday night. The year is not given, but it was most likely 1842.

The first Jewish marriage in Hobart was solemnised on 6th June, 1840, by the President, Louis Nathan, "according to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish nation." It was conducted at the home of the bride's parents in Elizabeth Street. The bride was Sarah Solomon, a minor, and the bridegroom was Michael Solomon, a farmer. An addendum is appended to the record that the parties were divorced on 29th January, 1854. A feature of the marriage records is the number of Jews who stated their occupation as farmers, and quite a number signed with a cross, a mark of illiteracy. One bridegroom gave his profession as a professor of dancing.⁵⁰ When a marriage was not in accordance with Jewish law, the committee did not hesitate to write to the Registrar of Marriages that it was contrary to the Jewish rites. They announced, too, that anyone taking part in the contemplated marriage would be expelled. The contemplated marriage must have caused a stir, for a conscientious Jew who lived in Oatlands, in Central Tasmania, informed the congregation that the intended bridegroom had written to him that he would perform the marriage clandestinely. Apparently he meant to carry out his threat. A member of the congregation, at the risk of expulsion, wrote a Ketubah for him. The culprit was brought before the committee, and, after expressing regret and promising not to do it again, he was only reprimanded.⁵¹ Another case worthy of mention is that of a couple who had married some years previously in the Episcopalian Church at Launceston. By authorization of the Chief Rabbi they were united by Jewish law.⁵²

The Hobart congregation commendably carried out its duty in preserving the initiatory rites into the covenant of Abraham. In the early years of the community the ceremony was performed by Samuel Moses, a trustee and

committeeman of the Synagogue who travelled throughout Tasmania to perform the Mitzvah. The esteem that he won for himself can be seen from the following article from the *Voice of Jacob* of 9th May, 1845 :—

On the 5th January last, a beautiful piece of plate was presented by the Hebrew community to Mr. Samuel Moses, of the firm Nathan, Moses and Co., on his departure for England. It bore, as an inscription, in Hebrew and English :—

"Presented to Samuel Moses Esq., by the members of the Hebrew community at Hobart Town, in Van Diemen's Land, on the 5th January, (5605) 1845, as a token of respect and esteem, and as an acknowledgment of the services he has rendered to them by his zealous efforts to promote their spiritual interests."

In a letter to Mr. Moses, signed by the members of the Hobart Town Synagogue, they declare :—

"The valuable service you have rendered to us, by your zeal in promoting the observances of our holy religion, justly merit our heartfelt acknowledgments; but these alone would be an inadequate return. Your reward will be in the satisfaction arising in your own breast, and the approval of the Almighty.

"Whilst we regret your departure from these shores, we rejoice in the hope that the separation between us will only be temporary, and we shall hail with feelings of pleasure your re-appearance amongst us. Fervently praying that the long and arduous voyage you are about to undertake, with your family, may be prosperous, we confide you to the holy keeping of the Lord God of our ancestors."

Mr. Moses replied in appropriate terms. It gives us the more pleasure to chronicle this incident, because, whilst among our brethren in this hemisphere, it is chiefly acts of munificence which attract the public regard, a steady devotion to the preservation of Jewish nationality, and Jewish observance, in a new and widely dispersed colony, is a service above all praise. The following is the addition of the Christian editor⁵³ :—

Besides his efforts on behalf of his own persuasion, Mr. Moses has been well known as an upright and enterprising citizen, and one who, while he has been eminently successful himself, has done much to promote the interests of the colony. The firm to which he belongs, has been one of the largest importing and exporting houses in Van Diemen's Land. Mr. Moses will take with him from our shores the esteem of all with whom he was concerned, either in business or social life.

Samuel Moses died on 2nd December, 1873, at 19 York Terrace, Regent's Park, London, and the following are some of the extracts from an obituary sent in by a correspondent to the *Jewish Chronicle*⁵⁴ :—

On Sunday a good and pious Israelite was laid in the field at Willesden. As in his lifetime it was granted to him by his example and exhortations to cause his brethren to observe their holy religion, so it was fitting that his death and burial should sanctify a future resting place for the people whom he loved.

With the assistance of Mr. Louis Nathan and Mr. H. L. Boddington, a house of prayer was erected (in Hobart).

In 1845 the Congregation in Hobart Town presented him with

a testimonial for his services. Again, on quitting the colony for England in 1858, the Congregation by a similar act, evinced their appreciation of his zeal during the many years he had acted as President.

His exertions, however, were not confined to Tasmania, for all the colonies of Australia at various times witnessed him leaving his family and business in order to further the cause of our holy religion. In later years as an active magistrate and Justice of the Peace in Tasmania he successfully brought his influence to bear in order that those unfortunates of his brethren who languished under the severe penal regime of the colony might be permitted to attend divine worship in the synagogue on solemn occasions to observe, as far as practicable, the Jewish holidays. To the sick, the weary and the dying, he was indeed a friend and at many a humble death bed has he administered divine consolation. Unobtrusive, kindly and generous, he loved to work good deeds alone and in the silence that gives not pain to the recipient.

The importance with which circumcision was regarded is also seen from the application that the Launceston community made to Hobart for Rev. Morrice Cohen to come to Launceston to "male" the children. The application was refused on account of his also being the Shoehet, so that he could not be spared, but the Hobart congregation offered to pay the expenses of bringing any child to the capital city whose parents were unable to afford to do so.⁵⁵ On occasions when there was no minister in Hobart, the congregation defrayed part of the cost of bringing a Mohel from Melbourne to perform the initiatory rites.⁵⁶

Disputes between the members, apart from those between the ministers, were not unknown. In one dispute the fine old Jewish method of arbitration was chosen to settle the differences, with two arbiters on each side. I. Friedman charged P. Levy that he had said before the magistrate that Friedman's house was a brothel. Levy was exonerated, and both were asked to continue sitting on the committee as if nought had happened.⁵⁷

Friedman will be remembered as the man in whose home the first meeting was held to consider the building of a Synagogue. He will also be remembered as one of the gentlemen who issued token pennies at the time when minted pennies were short in Hobart. On the obverse side of the coin is a crude figure of Britannia holding a pair of scales in her right hand, and a mysterious object in her left. A ship riding the seas is in the background. On the reverse side of the coin appears the legend, "I. Friedman, pawnbroker, one penny."

Sabbath observance was also a bone of contention. Rev. M. R. Cohen complained that the Mrs. Widow Cohen kept open shop on the Sabbath. The committee decided that all members be informed that anyone keeping open shop would not be entitled to privileges as a member, and that Mrs. Widow Cohen particularly receive notice to this effect.⁵⁸

The same Mr. Cohen complained that Isaac Solomon had used improper language against him. The charge was denied and, as there were no witnesses, the committee came to no decision.⁵⁹

When Rev. I. M. Goldreich was insulted by one Cohen, he took more drastic steps. He resigned. He withdrew his resignation only when Cohen was told by the committee that his remarks were uncalled for.⁶⁰

Matters concerning the Mikvah and Shechitah were constant sources of worry to the community. At one time a Mr. Davis, of Broad March, was appointed butcher under instructions from the committee, but his service was so unsatisfactory that within two months he was peremptorily informed that if he did not supply meat by the following week another butcher would be appointed.⁶¹

A question of interest, even to-day, to Jewish communities in the southern hemisphere, was addressed to the Chief Rabbi in June, 1846. The congregation desired to know if *Mashiv Horu'ach*, *Tal* and certain other prayers were to be recited during the services. These items in the prayer book are read only during certain seasons, and, as the seasons in the southern hemisphere are the reverse of those in the northern hemisphere, questions arose as to (a) should these prayers be read at the same time as they are read in the northern hemisphere, or (b) should they be read at the appropriate season, or (c) should they be omitted altogether? A reply was soon received from the Chief Rabbi to the effect that *Geshem* and *Tal* could be dispensed with altogether, and that worshippers were exempt from reciting *Mashiv Horu'ach*, but when rain is needed it could be silently said and inserted before *Ki Atoh Shomai'a Tfilloh*.⁶²

The Jewish cultural needs of the Hobart community were also catered for. In August, 1845, the congregation decided to form a library. Five years later a committee was established to consider the formation of a Hebrew school. In March, 1864, it was proposed and carried

that the Hebrew Proprietary School be permanently incorporated with the Synagogue.

A Hobart Town Hebrew Choral Society was established on Rosh Hashanah, 14th September, 5624, 1863. It was supported by voluntary contributions, and its slogan, which also indicated the year of the Society's formation, was, as is shown on the accompanying illustration: "Thou shalt renew the melodious songs in the mouths of those who proclaim Thy unity morning and evening."

At the close of 1845 the Synagogue was broken into and a Yod, a silver cup, and a piece of velvet were stolen. An advertisement was put in the *Trumpeter* offering £10 reward. The Synagogue seemed to have some attraction for burglars, for four years later, almost to the day, it was broken into again; Talethim were stolen, and the Scrolls were desecrated. Because of this, a public fast was held on 27th December, 1849. This time the President offered £20 reward. Another public fast was held in 1853, when an epidemic broke out in the colony.

No public fast, however, was held when the Jewish Cemetery was desecrated in January, 1856, when graves were broken and tombstones defaced, but it roused the great indignation of all the inhabitants of every denomination. A stir was also created in the Jewish community when it was alleged that a co-religionist was buried in the Gentile burial ground.

A petition to the Government in 1852 to subsidise the Jewish clergy on the same basis as the clergy of other denominations was granted after negotiation.⁶³ The grant was stopped in April, 1870,⁶⁴ and in compensation, under the State Aid Commutation Act, the Hobart congregation received debentures for the sum of £286.⁶⁵

Upon the recommendation of the Chief Rabbi, Rev. Herman Hoelzel was appointed as Minister, and was inducted on 5th June, 1853. He was particularly interested in astronomy, and was highly esteemed in Hobart Town. An idea of his character and personality may be gained from previous articles contained in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*.⁶⁶

In 1853 transportation of convicts to Tasmania ceased. Tasmania, however, still remained a penal settlement, and it was quite openly expressed that, because of the different rest days and the dietary laws, the Jews suffered disabili-

ties as citizens, and that they were a hindrance to the enforcement of the discipline it was necessary to maintain in a penal settlement.⁶⁷

From 1853 onwards the Jewish population began to dwindle. Within forty years the Jewish population in the whole of Tasmania fell from the highest total of 452 to 84 in 1891. One minister succeeded the other. Hoelzel left for Sydney in 1856. Poor Henry Jones, who carried on after he departed, also had to leave Tasmania. He went to New Zealand in 1863 because of the unfortunate incident mentioned above. Rev. I. M. Goldreich was appointed on 6th March, 1864. At the close of 1867 he intimated that he wished to apply for the post at Ballarat. By a majority decision of the committee he was urged to remain at a salary of £200 per annum, but three months later he sent in his resignation, which was accepted. During those three months he, on behalf of the Jewish community, presented an address to His Royal Highness Prince Alfred. He and the committee also examined the credentials of a Rabbi Jacob Cohen from Siberia, who had come to Hobart on a mission. His credentials were accepted and £4 collected for his cause.⁶⁸ Like many ministers, Goldreich was not endowed with affluence, and his claim for £50 which he said was due to him was denied. As he was unable to pay off his furniture, the congregation bought it and paid off the instalments. They also gave him an illuminated address.

The next Minister, Rev. Isaac Stone, formerly of Geelong, also did not remain long in Hobart. He arrived in May, 1868, and his resignation was accepted in November, 1870, so that he could accept an appointment at Sandhurst, Victoria. The immediate cause of Isaac Stone's resignation was the cessation of the Government grant and the uncertainty of the congregation's ability to provide for him. He left the colony in 1871 in the possession of an illuminated address.

Stone was succeeded by Rev. Isaac Pulver. Probably because of his age, poverty and ill-health, the congregation was able to offer a low salary, and he was appointed on the casting vote of the chairman early in 1871 on £100 per annum. This fine, pious Jew, with a splendid record of service in the ministry in England, South Africa and Australia,⁶⁹ was reduced to ask for financial assistance for the High Holy Days, and the committee agreed to pay

“half expenses of £15 provided it did not exceed that amount.”⁷⁰ By the end of the year he was in such ill-health that the committee gave him three months’ notice. He died in 1873 at 70 years of age, and lies buried in the Cornelian Bay Cemetery, Hobart.

Rev. Abraham Myers was engaged as Reader in March, 1872. His term of office was uneventful, except for the occasion when he was hit in the Synagogue by a member of the congregation and was again struck on the head by the same gentleman when he was in the street. Myers resigned and left for Wellington, New Zealand, on the 10th May, 1874.

A Mr. Harris, of Exeter, England, applied for the vacant post, and the congregation had to reply to him that it could not afford to bring out a married man.⁷¹

The sister Launceston congregation was also in financial trouble, and S. Davis wrote to Hobart asking for assistance for repairs of the Synagogue. Hobart replied that they wanted an estimate of the cost of repairs, and wanted to know how much others in the island were prepared to pay.⁷² Eventually the Launceston Synagogue was closed, and in one Tasmanian history book⁷³ the fact is recorded thus: “The Launceston Synagogue is boarded up, and is now waiting like Jerusalem for its brethren to return.”

The Hobart Synagogue was also closed for a number of years in the 1880’s because of the lack of worshippers. When the Synagogue re-opened the services were taken by H. Ansell, who acted as Hon. Reader and Secretary of the congregation. He was the recipient of a testimonial in 1895 which was signed by sixteen signatories; six were surnamed Benjamin and four of them Jacobs. Samuel Benjamin resigned as President.⁷⁴

Samuel Benjamin was born in Hamilton, in Southern Tasmania, on 21st July, 1839, and after his Barmitzvah was placed with his uncles’ firm, Judah and Joseph Solomon, of Temple House, Argyle Street. The firm closed down in 1867, and Benjamin went into business with the sons of Solomon, manufacturing shoes. Later he went into partnership with the eldest son, and, when the latter went to England, Benjamin looked after the Melbourne interests, which had a turnover of £200,000 a year. When the taxes on shoes in Victoria became too high, Benjamin transferred the business to Sydney.

There he married Miss Fannie Benjamin; they had one son and two daughters. Benjamin retired, but then lost all his money on the Stock Exchange. He went into business once again and made his home first in England and then in Paris, where he stayed for twelve months. He then transferred to New York, where he bought a wine and spirit business in 1884. This time a fire totally ruined him. With amazing courage Benjamin went out west to Ohio, where he entered the tobacco-leaf industry, and in which he became quite successful. In 1894 he was informed that his uncle, Joseph Solomon, had died and had left £1,000 to the Hobart Synagogue, of which he had been President for many years, and had left him the residue of the estate, which was then worth about £100,000. After an absence of thirty-five years, Benjamin returned to Tasmania. He was soon elected the President of the congregation and a Justice of the Peace. In 1897 he was elected as an Alderman of Hobart City, and a year later he stood for election as a member of the Legislative Assembly, but was defeated. Tall and possessing a long, flowing beard, he commanded the respect of all the citizens. He was a man of strong character and engaging personality. He was interested in a variety of movements, but the Synagogue was his particular care, as he had been enjoined by his uncle to look after its interests. Amongst the institutions in which he was active was the Deaf and Dumb Institute; the South Tasmanian Chrysanthemum Association, of which he was president; and the Ornithological Society, in which he held the office of president as well. He was a well-known figure in Hobart, and every day he would go into Tattersall's and take a ticket in the consultation. He did not pay cash for his tickets; he was amongst the few privileged to have an account with George Adams, and whenever he won a prize the winnings were placed to his credit. He was most meticulous in manners and dress, and he had a reputation of standing outside the Synagogue and watching those who entered. Anyone who, in his opinion, was not properly attired, was not permitted to enter the house of worship, and once he even prevented the minister's son from going into Shool. Mr. Benjamin's son was in the Railway Department in Hobart.⁷⁵

Associated with the Tasmanian Railway was another interesting Jew, John William Israel, who was born in

Launceston in 1850. He became stationmaster of Launceston in the Launceston-Deloraine Railway, and later the Chief Clerk of the Audit Department of Railways. In 1882 he was made Deputy Auditor in the Fysh-Bird Administration, and became Auditor-General in 1895. He took a leading part in establishing the Civil Servants' Association, and on its foundation in 1897 he was elected its president, but he had to retire in the following year owing to ill-health.⁷⁶

Samuel Benjamin's daughter, Eveline Rosetta, was a personality in her own right. She was one of the first women to study medicine at Trinity College, Melbourne, and during the first World War she enlisted in the R.A.M.C. and served in Malta. She married a Mr. Cohen.

At the invitation of the congregation, various ministers from the mainland came over to officiate in Hobart. Rabbi Dr. Joseph Abrahams paid a visit in November, 1904, and on 5th February, 1905, Rev. I. A. Bernstein, under authority from Dr. Abrahams, officiated at the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. J. Levy. This was the first Jewish wedding that the citizens of Hobart had seen for many years, and tickets were sold for the occasion, as the Synagogue could accommodate only 200 people. The press relates that hundreds crowded around the Synagogue to catch a glimpse of the ceremony.

The following year, in December, 1906, Rabbi Francis Cohen, of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, visited Hobart and celebrated the marriage of Moses Epstein, who in 1908 took over the position of Hon. Reader from Ansell. On the same visit Rabbi Cohen also performed the marriage of Reuben Benjamin, who was no relation to Samuel Benjamin, but who also later became president of the congregation and one of its most consistent, loyal adherents.

On 8th April, 1906, the congregation once again formed itself into an organised institution, and regular meetings were held and minutes kept. Besides being appointed President, Samuel Benjamin was also appointed Hon. Treasurer.

When H. Ansell retired as Hon. Reader, the congregation considered the appointment of a permanent minister, and enquiries were made concerning the qualifications of various gentlemen. On 3rd April, 1910, Rev. (later Rabbi) Isaac Morris, of Newcastle, was appointed as Minister, and acted as Shochet, Reader and Mohel.⁷⁷

A suggestion for the triennial system of reading the Law was rejected, but later it was passed and introduced. Rabbi Francis Cohen, who visited Hobart again in May, 1911, noticed that the method used in Hobart was not the traditional triennial Reading of the Law as practised in ancient times. According to ancient practice, the Law was read consecutively each week. At Hobart they simply read a smaller portion from the weekly Sedra without consecutive reading.

At the same meeting which introduced the triennial Reading of the Law, a resolution was passed that the Reader should read the Shmoneh Esreh more slowly so as to give the congregation a chance to finish. It was also resolved that the congregation should take the lead from the minister when singing.

In the following year annoyance was caused by a Mr. Levy reading the service aloud, and by the way he read the Kaddish. Though it is hard to believe, he was sent a solicitor's letter to the effect that, if he did not stop, stringent measures would be taken against him.⁷⁸

An important decision was made on 3rd December, 1911. Rev. I. Morris, Samuel Benjamin, M. Epstein and G. Harris were appointed as a Beth Din by the committee to consider applications received for admittance into Judaism.

On his 73rd birthday in 1912, Samuel Benjamin received an address of appreciation from the congregation, a token which was repeated ten years later in 1922. Between those two dates a bitter feud broke out between Benjamin and the committee. The exact cause is not stated. As Rabbi Morris, after invitation, recently declined to contribute towards the history of Hobart, no further light can be thrown on the subject except that which is contained in the minutes.

On 16th February, 1916, the President was rebuked for writing an unauthorised paragraph in a letter to Rev. I. Morris, whilst the latter was rebuked for reading the Law without what is incorrectly described as "kinnoth" (Trop). The correct expression, of course, is Neginoth. Three months later the President resigned, and stated "that should there be an alteration at any time in the conducting of the service, I would be willing to contribute liberally to the congregation." Benjamin then gave notice that he would sever his connection with the congre-

gation and cut it out of his will. Matters worsened between the two parties, and the congregation called in solicitors to guard their interests in the bequest of the late Joseph Solomon. Benjamin's report as ex-treasurer was not accepted by the committee, because he had not been authorised to pay monies to the Anglo-Jewish Society, the Sydney Zionist Society, etc. The congregation wanted a silver cup and records back, but Benjamin said they belonged to him. Eventually Benjamin returned the cup and the records, but it was alleged that the books were given back in a mutilated condition. The committee decided to ask Benjamin for missing documents and for £150 wrongly paid in to the Perpetual Trustees' Account. The request was refused, and the committee decided to sue for the £150 and asked Samuel Benjamin and his son to resign as trustees. The matter was settled out of court, but the Benjamins did not resign. The division continued for three years more, and, with the Benjamins not taking an active interest in the congregation, counsel's opinion was sought as to how to get rid of them as trustees. With the resignation of Rabbi Morris in May, 1921, the dispute was settled, harmony once again reigned in the community, and Samuel Benjamin was re-elected as President.

In the last year of Rabbi Morris' ministry, an address was presented to Lord Forster on his arrival as Governor-General of the Commonwealth, and to the Chief Rabbi, Dr. J. H. Hertz, who came to Australia on a pastoral tour. Previously Rabbi Morris had remarried in Melbourne, and, because the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation had charged him a marriage fee and the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation had slighted him, an official rebuke was sent by the Hobart congregation to both of its sister congregations.

He was succeeded by Rev. Leo Goran, who did not stay long in Hobart, and who later accepted a post with the Carlton Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne.

With the death of Samuel Benjamin on 5th March, 1926, Synagogue services with a full minyan were held but intermittently, yet the Synagogue was opened regularly every Friday night and Saturday morning as well as on festivals without interruption. The Synagogue was opened and prayers were recited by Reuben Benjamin, who originally came from New Zealand. Often he was

the only worshipper present. He looked upon that which he was doing as a holy task, and he would not leave Hobart so that he could care for the Synagogue and retain the continuity of the services. He was eventually rewarded, for with the Nazi persecutions a number of overseas families arrived in Hobart and a minyan was once again available for Sabbaths and Holy Days. It is to be regretted that some of the old Australians did not want to mingle with the newcomers. It was no fault of those who came from overseas, and it is sad to relate that on the minute books there is a resolution which was passed during the Second World War which disallowed foreigners becoming members of the congregation. In their over-zealous loyalty, the committee also passed a resolution that only British-born subjects could hold office as President and Executive. After the war, the new element which is now the backbone of the community had these two offensive resolutions rescinded.

Although the newcomers were comparatively few, their feelings must have been deeply hurt by these resolutions and the attitude of their co-religionists. Some of them needed assistance, and it was suggested that the surplus funds of the congregation should be utilised as a Welfare Fund. This suggestion did not find favour with the committee, and instead £100 was donated to the Red Cross and £400 to the Salvation Army.

The Centenary year of the congregation was marked by the appointment of Rev. Joseph Asher as Minister in September, 1943. He did not remain long, and in July, 1944, left to assume a post as Assistant Minister of the Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne, a liberal Jewish institution.

In January, 1944, that old staunch supporter of the Hobart Synagogue, Reuben Benjamin, passed away.

The finances of the congregation improved considerably in 1945 when it received a bequest of £715 from Miss Fall, and it sold for £1,000 the ten acres of land of the old cemetery originally obtained by grant in 1828 by Bernard Walford. A pious resolution was passed that when the money from the cemetery sale would be received £100 should be donated to the Chief Rabbi's Appeal, £200 to the Jewish Overseas Relief Fund, and £200 to the Youth Aliyah Appeal, and that an attempt should be made to settle refugees in Australia. When the money was

actually received, the resolution regarding the donations to charities was rescinded.⁷⁹ The writer, in a visit to Hobart in 1949, suggested that since the congregation had received £1,000 from the sale of the cemetery it should take proper care of the tombstones and graves where Jews lie buried. An assurance was given.

A serious problem was discussed by the committee in May, 1946. It was proposed that Rev. Max Warse, officiating in Shanghai, should be appointed minister. Rev. Mr. Warse was a liberal Jew. The committee came to the conclusion that the Synagogue services should be conducted in an orthodox manner, but that the Synagogue be open to all.



חברא
לזמרו לשמו



Hobart Town Hebrew Choral Society.

Established ראש השנה New Year Sept. 14th, 5624, 1863.

Supported by voluntary contributions.

בשנה החדש שירים ערבים. בפה משכמים ומשירים לפק

"Thou shalt renew the melodious songs in the mouths of those who proclaim Thy unity morning and evening."

562 186

RECEIVED from Mr. _____ the

sum of _____ being _____

months Subscription due to the above Society up to _____

186



HOBART CHORAL SOCIETY RECEIPT FORM.

COLLECTOR.

On 3rd February, 1947, Rev. Mr. Warse was elected minister of the congregation, and "liberal" features were introduced into the service. One member protested that only three were called up to the Torah, and he was told that the services were in the hands of Mr. Warse. The writer was unable to attend a Sabbath service in Hobart when on a visit in 1947, as the harmonium was played in the Synagogue contrary to orthodox practice. Mr. Warse later accepted a post at the Liberal Temple in Sydney.

Representations were made in 1949 on behalf of a gentleman living in London to come out to Australia to take up the post of minister. The Congregational Committee of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies were prepared to subsidise the Hobart congregation to the extent of £250 per annum in order to give him a decent salary. On arrival in Melbourne, the gentleman went on to Sydney instead of taking up his appointment with the congregation.

The present incumbent, Rev. G. W. Ruben, was then appointed. He served previously with the Liberal Synagogue in Melbourne, but signed a contract with the Hobart congregation that the services would be conducted in an orthodox fashion.

The future of the Hobart congregation is uncertain. The community is small, and its most serious problem is that of survival coupled with the danger of inter-marriage. Sometimes because of this, sad and tragic circumstances arise. Stories can be told of young Jewish children being converted to Christianity, of persons who had married out of their faith accepting honorary office with the Synagogue because no one else would accept. Sad is the tale of one man who, as a young lad, desired to marry within the fold, but poverty and other circumstances did not allow him to come over to the mainland. There were no Jewish marriageable girls in Hobart at the time. He brought his daughter up as Jewish. When the child grew up, a visitor to Tasmania noticed that a Jewish gentleman was interested in marrying her, and the visitor informed the young man that marriage could not take place in the Synagogue. When the girl heard this, recriminations were showered upon the father, who was broken-hearted and who could not prevent his offspring immediately forming an alliance with a non-Jew.

The Hobart Synagogue is the oldest Synagogue building in Australia. It has celebrated its centenary and retains its charm. On entry, one conjures up pictures of the Georgian and Victorian eras, of bell-toppers and crinolines, of the rich, dignified and pious Jews, and the poor, helpless ticket-of-leave men to whom no honours and privileges were allowed. After a visit to the Hobart community, one may conclude that this small congregation, the most southern in the southern hemisphere, is no dif-

ferent from other small communities in other parts of the world, yet each community has its own characteristics. In Hobart it was the convict settlement and the penitentiary where some Jews were also confined, and who were tenacious in adhering to their faith whilst they longed for liberty and freedom. There is a legend that a Jewish convict named Levy was prepared to build a bridge across the Derwent if he was granted his liberty. This cannot be confirmed. Strangely enough, the famous pontoon bridge across the Derwent is connected with a Jew—David Isaacs, of Sydney, who is the consultant engineer.

There is an old saying that the soul of a Jew cannot be estimated, and in the small community of Hobart the sacred melodies of our ritual still ring out regularly Sabbath by Sabbath from the mouths of Jews, staunch and loyal, whose attendance is far greater in proportion to any other congregation on the mainland. May the Hobart congregation succeed and prosper.⁸⁰

NOTES.

1. *A Short History of Australia*, by Ernest Scott (Humphrey Milford : Oxford University Press, 1928).
2. *Historical Records of Australia* (henceforth cited as *H.R. of A.*), Series 3, Vol. 2, p. 227. Colonel William Sorrell (1775-1848) was Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land from April, 1817, until May, 1824.
3. *H.R. of A.*, Series 3, Vol. 2, p. 81.
4. *Ibid*, p. 555.
5. *Ibid*, p. 539.
6. *Ibid*, Series 3, Vol. 3, pp. 573 and 582.
7. *Ibid*, Series 3, Vol. 4, p. 532.
8. *Ibid*, p. 101.
9. His name wrongly appears in the Australian Jewish Historical Society's *Journal* (henceforth cited as *Journal*), Vol. 2, p. 3, as M. B. Woodford. In the same paragraph, one should read Harrington Street for Barrington Street.
10. *H.R. of A.*
11. *Ibid*, 24th March, 1820.
12. *Ibid*, 22nd September, 1820.
13. Colonial Advocate and Colonial Secretary's Files, "64.97."
14. Minutes of the Hobart Hebrew Congregation (henceforth cited as *Minutes*), 16th July, 1841.
15. *History of the Australian Bushrangers*, by George E. Boxall (Home Entertainment Library, 1935).
16. The figures for that year given in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 16, and in the *Sydney Jewish News*, 16th February, 1945, p. 5, are incomplete in this respect.
17. Minutes, 14th and 16th January, 1844.

18. *Ibid*, 17th January, 1847, and 2nd March, 1848.
19. *Ibid*, 19th February, 1844.
20. *Ibid*, 25th April, 1847.
21. *Ibid*, 9th March, 1845.
22. *Ibid*, 7th May, 1845.
23. *The Cyclopaedia of Tasmania*, Vol. 2, by Ernest Whitefield, Esq., P.M. (Maitland & Krone, Hobart).
24. *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 4.
25. *The Voice of Jacob*, Vol. 3, p. 68. Some notes and comments on this passage, presented as part of the series of extracts from the *Voice of Jacob*, commenced in this part of the *Journal*, will be published in due course. The footnotes of the Editor of the *Voice of Jacob* which do not relate to Tasmania are here omitted. (—EDITOR.)
26. *Journal*, Vol. 2, pp. 4, 5.
27. A full account of the ceremony appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 6.
28. The statement in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 6, that he was present is incorrect. A full account of the consecration ceremony appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, pp. 7-9.
29. Minutes, 12th December and 26th December, 1841.
30. *Ibid*, 30th June, 1844.
31. *Ibid*, 13th August, 1846, and 27th October, 1847.
32. *Ibid*, 8th January, 1843.
33. *Ibid*, 6th October, 1845.
34. *Ibid*, 23rd August, 1846.
35. *Ibid*, 13th December, 1846.
36. *Ibid*, 11th March, 1873.
37. *Ibid*, 18th June, 1848.
38. *Ibid*, 10th April, 1842.
39. *Ibid*, 27th August, 1846.
40. *Ibid*, 25th April, 1847.
41. *Ibid*, 8th August, 1847.
42. *Ibid*, 16th June, 1842.
43. *Ibid*, 17th September, 1843.
44. The statement in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 16, that Rev. Solomon was the first minister of the congregation is an error.
45. Minutes, 18th April, 1847.
46. *Ibid*, 17th June, 1842.
47. *Ibid*, 6th October, 1846.
48. *Ibid*, 20th May, 1847.
49. First Record Book of the Congregation of Hobartown.
50. *Ibid*, 11th November, 1848.
51. Minutes, 8th and 26th January, 1846.
52. *Ibid*, 6th December, 1846.
53. The editor of the *Hobart Town Advertiser*.
54. *Australian Israelite*, 16th January, 1874.
55. Minutes, 17th January, 1847.
56. *Ibid*, 9th June, 1874, and 19th May, 1875.
57. *Ibid*, 13th February, 1844, and 19th February, 1844.
58. *Ibid*, 24th April, 1848.
59. *Ibid*, 30th October, 1848.
60. *Ibid*, 18th December, 1864.
61. *Ibid*, 28th June and 27th August, 1846.

62. *Ibid*, 5th September, 1846.
63. *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 10. The full text of the petition is given in the *Journal*, Vol. 1, pp. 108-110.
64. Minutes, 5th April, 1870.
65. *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 13.
66. *Ibid*, Vol. 1, pp. 146, 147; Vol. 2, pp. 10-12; Vol. 2, pp. 172-200.
67. *The Colonial Times*, 14th June, 1853, p. 2.
68. Minutes, 2nd February, 1868.
69. *Journal*, Vol. 3, p. 28.
70. Minutes, 27th August, 1871.
71. *Ibid*, 6th December, 1874.
71. *Ibid*, 6th December, 1874.
72. *Ibid*, 17th January, 1875.
73. *The Cyclopaedia of Tasmania*, Vol. 2.
74. A photograph of Samuel Benjamin appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 11.
75. *The Cyclopaedia of Tasmania*, Vol. 1, p. 190.
76. *Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 103.
77. A photograph of Rev. I. Morris appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 14. He died in Newcastle on 12th March, 1951, at the age of 73. An obituary notice appears later in this Part.
78. Minutes, 10th September, 1911.
79. *Ibid*, 12th September, 1945, and 21st May, 1947.
80. A photograph of the Hobart Synagogue appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 7. A photograph of Rev. I. M. Goldreich appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 144. A photograph of the Launceston Synagogue appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 416. A photograph of Rev. Isaac Pulver appears in the *Journal*, Vol. 3, p. 30.

Contemporary References to the York Street Synagogue.

By M. H. KELLERMAN, B.Ec.

(*Read before the Society, 14th December, 1950.*)

The main story of the York Street Synagogue has been published in the *Journal*, and a fairly comprehensive picture is thus available of the events leading to its erection, its consecration, and later history until 1877. There appear to be lacking, however, a few details, what one might call intimate details, that would make the project real and personal. The aim of this short paper is to endeavour to supply these from references made during the period 1842 to 1848. I have made this explanation so that there would be no doubt as to the meaning of the expression, "contemporary references."