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Volume X	Part 1	5747 – 1986
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CONTENTS	PAGE
JEWES IN VICTORIAN POLITICS..... By the Hon. Walter Jona, A.M.	2
I.L. PERETZ YIDDISH SCHOOL..... By David Burstin, B.Com., Dip.Ed.	15
FURTHER HISTORY OF THE BRISBANE..... HEBREW CONGREGATION By Morris S. Ochert	28
THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT GOULBURN..... By Stephen J. Tazewell	40
THE GOULBURN JEWISH CEMETERY..... A HERITAGE INTERPRETATION By M.Z. Forbes, B.A., LL.B.	45
THE BROTHERS COHEN..... By Lynette Ramsay Silver	57
E.H. HARGRAVES' "MISHTER COHEN"..... A PRELUDE TO THE GOLD RUSHES By M.Z. Forbes, B.A., LL.B.	61
BOOK REVIEWS.....	67
SECRETARY'S REPORT.....	72
VICTORIAN BRANCH REPORT.....	76
OBITUARY.....	78
GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES.....	80

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## JEWS IN VICTORIAN POLITICS 1835-1985

*by the Hon. Walter Jona, A.M.*

*(An address to the Victorian Branch, Australian Jewish Historical Society,  
24 October 1985)*

In 1860, just four years after Responsible Government came to Victoria, Nathaniel Levi became the first Jew to sit in the Victorian Parliament. In the intervening 125 years, 21 Jews have served in the Parliament, of whom eight served varying terms in the Cabinet, and one, Sir Archie Michaelis, became Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. On two occasions, both brief, in 1900 and in 1935, two Jews served simultaneously in the same State Cabinet. Of the 21 Jewish parliamentarians since 1860, 15 were elected in the forty years prior to 1900 and only six Jews have been elected since that time.

Following my own retirement from Parliament in March 1985, there was no Jew currently serving in the State Parliament. This is only the third occasion in all of the fifty Parliaments elected in Victoria since 1856 that neither the Legislative Assembly nor the Legislative Council has had a Jewish Member. The only other occasions in which there was no Jewish representation were in the very first Parliament from 1856-1859, and in the 39th Parliament from 1952-1955 following the defeat of Sir Archie Michaelis for the seat of St. Kilda and the election of Baron Snider for the same seat, three years later.

The Jewish contribution to the Parliamentary life of Victoria, particularly in the latter part of the 19th century, was notable in terms of both involvement and achievement. Similarly in the municipal sphere from the earliest days of local government and organised civic affairs, Jews have played a prominent role highly disproportionate to their low numbers in the total community.

In fact, from the commencement of white settlement on the shores of Port Phillip Bay 150 years ago, Jews have been prominent not only in the political, municipal and civic life of Victoria — and particularly during the pioneering days of the 19th century — but also played a significant and influential role in the areas of commerce and industry.

The events leading up to and following the gold discoveries of 1851, which transposed Victoria from a small pastoral colony to a State with a great industrial future, were frequently highlighted and at times dominated by Jewish initiative and entrepreneurial enterprise. As the State began to grow and flourish, so did the need for political and municipal structures that would ultimately enable full and effective self-government. In all of this development, Jews showed a remarkable degree of leadership, inspiration and courage. The fact that the Jews in early Victoria were so few in number and were, by distance, so isolated from other Jewish centres, undoubtedly accounted for their relatively high level of solidarity on most of the significant issues of the day. For these reasons in particular, it is perhaps not by accident that most of the early Jewish aspirants for parliamentary and municipal honours were also very prominent in Jewish communal and synagogue development as well as being in the forefront of the business and commercial life of the colony and later of the State.

During the mining booms and country prosperity of the mid-19th century Jews, as with so many other citizens, were attracted in large numbers to country districts.

It is interesting to note that in 1861, of a total Jewish population in Victoria of 2,903, only some 700 lived in what is now the Melbourne metropolis whilst the remainder were well spread over the thriving provincial centres and country areas. For example, 240 Jews lived in Ballarat, 287 were in the various mining camps in that district, 208 lived in Sandhurst and 145 resided in Geelong and Newtown. There were also many communities of up to a few dozen Jews in each of the numerous other towns such as Ararat, Castlemaine, Beechworth, Avoca, Kilmore and Warrnambool, whilst a large floating population kept migrating from one town to another according to their prosperity and their economic requirements.

This was the background to the remarkable contribution made by Jews in local government in the 19th century — a contribution which was to continue in a more diluted form — into the present century. Some of the prominent Jewish personalities who became municipal mayors in the 1800s included Phares Phillips in the Shire of Warracknaheal, Jonas Levin in the Drysdale Shire, Moritz Cohn in Amhurst, Charles Dyte in Ballarat, Jacob Kohn in Bendigo and Simeon Cohen in Fitzroy, whilst Benjamin Benjamin and Edward Cohen served terms as Mayor of Melbourne.

Into the 20th century, Isaac Solomon, who was born in the goldfields town of Majorca in 1876, served as Mayor of Maryborough on three separate occasions, whilst Zillah Crawcour, whose father, Abraham Levy, had twice been Mayor of Ballarat East and later first Mayor of the then newly united city of Ballarat, was to become Mayor of Newtown in 1963 and create history by being Victoria's first woman mayor. In 1973 Irvin Rockman became Lord Mayor of Melbourne, the youngest person ever to hold that office. In the past fifty years, numerous metropolitan and country municipalities in Victoria, and certainly not less than on twenty-four occasions, have been served by a Jewish mayor.

At least one individual of Jewish origin was concerned in the actual foundation of Victoria. He was Joseph Solomon of Launceston, in Van Diemen's Land, a prominent storekeeper and landowner who was ultimately associated with John Batman in the first settlement on the shores of Port Phillip Bay. Joseph Solomon, incidentally, was the brother of Judah Solomon, who presented to the small Jewish community of Van Diemen's Land part of his Hobart land holdings for the construction of the first Hobart synagogue. However, the real beginnings of Jewish settlement in Victoria date from 1839 when the first immigrant ship, *Hope*, arrived from England. In the preceding four years, there had been a few Jews who had previously come from New South Wales, South Australia and Van Diemen's Land.

In considering the personalities and the pattern of Jewish involvement in the politics of early Victoria, it is pertinent to view the contribution in the context of the beginnings of the Jewish community itself and in the light of the Jewish communal scene from which the aspiring Jewish politicians emerged.

The first recorded Minyan was for the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services in 1840, when the Jewish residents of the four year old colony gathered in the store of Solomon Benjamin, in Collins Street. Amongst those present was Michael Cashmore, then aged 24 years, who was to become the first President of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in the following year and who conducted the first Jewish funeral in Melbourne in 1840. Other future Presidents of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation who were present on that historic occasion were Asher Hart, President in 1843, Solomon Benjamin, 1846, Samuel Lazarus, 1865 and Edward Hart, who was to become President in 1894.

In the first forty years of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, four of its presidents were, at various times, to also serve as Members of the Victorian Parliament.

They were Edward Cohen, Benjamin Benjamin, Nathaniel Levi and Ephraim Zox. In 1846, Michael Cashmore became the first Jew to be elected to the Melbourne City Council, and in that year the Jewish population in the Port Phillip settlement reached 117. The Jews were actively contributing to the prosperity of the colony through their prominence in commerce in which they were particularly industrious as drapers, clothiers, storekeepers, auctioneers and hotelkeepers. Displaying enormous pride in the young colony and in expressing their overwhelming confidence in its future, the small Jewish community in that first twenty years of Port Phillip settlement played a significant role in establishing numerous civic and public institutions, such as the Melbourne Hospital and the Mechanics Institute, most of which were to flourish in the years to come.

By 1851, the Jewish population had grown to only 364, but by 1854 — just three years later — the number had increased dramatically to 1547. Just two years later in 1856, the Jewish population was almost 2000. This was the year in which responsible Government came to Victoria with the election of the newly created State's first Parliament following the constitutional separation of the Port Phillip district from New South Wales.

Understandably, during this period, the ties between England and her colonies were extremely close and it was therefore not surprising that the pattern of the Jewish community in Victoria conformed, more or less, to the design that was prevalent in Britain.

Significantly, and concurrently with the moves for a new self-governing Colony of Victoria, there was a totally unrelated movement under way in England to bring about the parliamentary emancipation of the Jews in that country. This movement was being led by two crusading and persuasive Peers, Lord Lyndhurst and Lord John Russell, who were strong advocates on behalf of the Jews of England and who were achieving considerable political success and support in their championing of the cause of religious liberty generally. When the first reports of the resultant parliamentary emancipation of the Jews in England in 1858 reached Australia, the Jewish community celebrated with great excitement and joy. This initial news of the emancipation had a particular impact in Melbourne, and when the more detailed reports arrived that Jews in England were now able to sit and vote in the House of Commons, a large and influential celebratory meeting was held in the vestry of the Melbourne Synagogue in Bourke Street on 24 October 1858. This meeting was chaired by Michael Cashmore and unanimously carried a motion of appreciation and gratitude to Lord Lyndhurst and Lord John Russell for their efforts on behalf of English Jewry.

The parliamentary emancipation in England greatly inspired the Jews of Victoria and in 1859, just one year later two Jews, Nathaniel Levi and Daniel Tallerman, stood for the Legislative Assembly. Both were unsuccessful. However, in 1860, the thirty year old Levi became the first Jew to be elected to the Victorian Parliament in extraordinary circumstances.

The Attorney-General, Richard Ireland, had been involved in a legal case for which he had received fees while holding the position of Attorney-General. He was required to resign his seat and submit himself for re-election. It was a very dirty by-election campaign that followed with frequent references to Nathaniel Levi's Jewish identity and to his so-called "alien" background. On a show of hands, as was the custom in those days before secret voting, the Returning Officer declared in favour of Ireland despite strong protests by Levi and his supporters. The Press, over the next two days, raised so much doubt about the declared result, that another poll was

ordered to be held at which Levi won by the clear margin of 166 votes. Following the new declaration announcing Nathaniel Levi as the elected Member, there were threats of petitions to have him removed on grounds of alleged bribery but Levi withstood these threats and went on to be re-elected by a greater majority in the general election of 1861. This was the real starting point of Jewish interest and practical involvement in the parliamentary politics of Victoria.

Nathaniel Levi, who was to spend almost nineteen years in Parliament of which the last twelve were in the Legislative Council, arrived in Melbourne in 1854 where he ran a store for a few years before joining the firm of John Levey & Son which had extensive interests in many parts of the colony, including Maryborough. Levi represented the Maryborough constituency for four years until 1865, then transferring to the electorate of East Melbourne for two years until he lost his seat in the general elections of 1867. Between 1868 and 1881, he unsuccessfully re-contested the Assembly seat of East Melbourne on seven occasions and also stood unsuccessfully for the Assembly seat of West Melbourne in the 1883 and 1886 elections. He then, with great persistence, continued his attempts to regain a seat in Parliament by standing for the Legislative Council South Eastern Province in 1886, South Western Province in 1889 and the North Yarra Province in 1891. Finally, he was successful in winning the North Yarra Province seat in 1892, which he held successfully until 1904. Levi's talents and public contribution extended well beyond the State political arena and Jewish communal areas. He became personally involved in huge commercial undertakings to open up the coal fields at Cape Patterson with a view to making Victoria self-supporting in coal. He pioneered Victoria's sugar beet industry, became President of the Chamber of Manufactures and occupied numerous other important offices until his death on 11 September 1908. Levi's historical entry into Parliament in 1860 was soon followed by London born Edward Cohen who arrived in Melbourne from New South Wales at the age of 20 years in 1842. Although Levi had first stood for Parliament unsuccessfully in 1859 and became the first Jewish Member of Parliament in Victoria in the following year, it was Edward Cohen, in fact, who was the first Jewish parliamentary candidate in Victoria, having unsuccessfully contested the seats of Melbourne in 1857 and West Melbourne in 1858. Edward Cohen was elected for the seat of East Melbourne in 1861 and from 1872-1875 held the portfolio of Trade and Customs which, of course, in those days was a pre-Federation Victorian Government responsibility. Cohen was well known and respected in Melbourne's philanthropic, commercial and social life. He was honorary treasurer of the Melbourne Hospital and held office in numerous Jewish and general organisations. As a member of the Melbourne City Council, he strongly advocated that the mayor should not be chosen by the Council but should be elected by the citizens at large, an echo which is still reverberating amongst Town Hall reformers today — 123 years later. When he retired from his term as Mayor of Melbourne in 1863, Cohen created social history for Melbourne by hosting the first mayoral ball. And what a ball it was! More than 2,300 invitations were sent out for the occasion, which was held in fancy dress at the Exhibition Buildings. The following morning's *Argus* newspaper gave eight columns to a description of the ball describing it as 'the gayest and most imposing event which has occurred in the colony — the festivity will make the mayoralty of Mr. Cohen ever memorable in the annals of Melbourne'. This proved to be a very true statement because the occasion is still being recalled.

In the 1866 general election, Edward Cohen did not stand and Nathaniel Levi, who had lost Maryborough in the previous year, won Cohen's East Melbourne seat. However, in 1868, Cohen opposed Levi in East Melbourne and defeated him by 42

votes. Levi was to remain out of Parliament for 24 years before re-entering as a Member of the Legislative Council in 1892.

Cohen, who became Mayor of Melbourne in 1862, was a successful business partner of his brother-in-law, Benjamin Benjamin who also served as Mayor of Melbourne in 1888 and who was a Member of the Legislative Council from 1889 to 1892. Benjamin Benjamin was the first Jew to receive a knighthood in Victoria and his death in 1908 brought to an end a very distinguished philanthropic, political and Jewish communal career.

Edward Cohen was succeeded in his constituency of East Melbourne by another Jewish politician, Ephraim Zox who, like Cohen and Benjamin, also served as a president of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. As was the case with Nathaniel Levi, Zox achieved a high profile and was a very visible and prominent spokesman for the Jewish community, both within and outside of Parliament. He was a colourful personality, both in appearance and manner, and he played a leading role in the establishment and development of numerous Jewish organisations, notably the Montefiore Homes.

Other prominent Jewish politicians of the 1860s and 1870s included Charles Dyte who represented East Ballarat for six years from 1864. Dyte had a mercantile training background and arrived in Melbourne from London in 1853. A sharebroker and chairman of the Ballarat Mining Exchange, Dyte became chairman of the first borough council of East Ballarat and also served as president of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. He also played a major role in the framing of the resolutions which were put to the historic meeting of the Eureka Stockade survivors, which was held on Bakery Hill on 6 December 1854.

Jonas Felix Levien, who was the first Jew to be born in Victoria, at Williamstown on 28 March 1840, became the Member for South Grant in 1871 when he defeated Eureka hero, Peter Lalor, in a hard-fought election. He was to serve in the Parliament for a total of thirty-three years — the longest period of any Jewish parliamentarian in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria.

In 1893 Daniel Lazarus, a prominent Bendigo mining director, was elected as the Member for Sandhurst. Lazarus was the first locally born mayor of Bendigo, and in 1897 he served on the Royal Commission into State Forests. Benjamin Fink, the Member for Maryborough and Talbot from 1883 to 1889, and who had migrated from the Channel Islands in 1861, was the older brother of Theodore Fink who also served in the Victorian Parliament as Member for Jolimont and for Richmond from 1894 to 1904. Theodore Fink served a very brief term as a Minister without Portfolio in 1900. One of the many achievements of Theodore Fink in public life was the gaining of admission of women doctors as members of the staff of the Melbourne Hospital.

A long serving Member of the Legislative Council during this period was Joseph Sternberg who served a total of thirty-seven years as the Member for Northern Province and later the Bendigo Province until his death in 1928. He was a member of several important Royal Commissions, and he had extensive agricultural, mining and wine growing interests in the Rochester and Bendigo districts. He had a remarkably close involvement with a host of communal organisations in his electorate, including the Bendigo Hospital, Bendigo Art Gallery, the Campaspe Irrigation Trust and the Rochester Agricultural Society.

Emanuel Steinfield served a brief one year term in the Legislative Council in 1892, whilst Phares Phillips, who was born at Mount Blackwood, was elected to the Legislative Council Province of North-Western in 1896. In 1901 he was briefly a Minister



without Portfolio in the Turner Government, resigning at the time of Federation to represent Wimmera in the Federal Parliament until 1906. Phillips was also long associated with local government, having been president of the Shire of St. Arnaud on three occasions and also for some years a councillor of the Borung Shire.

The two remaining Jews to have been elected to the Parliament before the end of the 19th century were Isaac Isaacs and his brother John. Isaac Isaacs, first elected as the Member for Bogong in the 1892 elections, soon became a leading member of the Ministry, a prominent framer of the Australian Constitution, a foundation member of the first Federal Parliament, Attorney-General of Australia, High Court Judge, Chief Justice and finally the first Australian-born Governor-General of Australia. Isaacs' career has been well documented and admirably recorded in two biographies by Jewish authors. The first biography was written in 1963 by Max Gordon, a former President and long time stalwart of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, whilst the second biography was a scholarly work in 1967 by Professor (now Sir) Zelman Cowen, who was to become the second Jew to assume the highest office in the land when he was appointed Governor-General in 1977.

The obituaries and tributes which followed Isaac Isaacs' death on 11 February, 1948 adequately recorded the rare intellectual capacity, legal skill and distinguished service of a humble man who achieved greatness. Prime Minister Ben Chifley said: "Isaacs' great public services and his scholarly attributes made him one of Australia's greatest citizens". Opposition Leader Robert Menzies said that Isaacs was one of the most remarkable men in Australia's history. "Both in the law and in public affairs, he had uncommon powers of clear thinking and lucid expression," added Menzies. Despite the resentment which Isaacs provoked in the Jewish community as a result of his strong and outspoken opposition to political Zionism in the 1940s, his attachment to Jewish ideals and his life-long defence and advocacy of Jewish rights were very much a mark of his career both before, during and subsequent to his influential role in Victorian politics. I believe that some commentators and writers of the Isaacs period are inaccurate when they claim that Isaacs tended to put aside his Jewish affiliation in political and public life. On the contrary, there are numerous instances, both within and outside of Parliament when Isaacs was instrumental in enabling a positive response to Jewish representations or where he initiated action to protect or advance a Jewish interest.

As far back as 1872 — twenty years before he entered the Victorian Parliament — Isaacs' interest in Jewish education motivated his major role in obtaining government subsidies for the Melbourne Hebrew School. In 1882 he was honorary secretary of the Melbourne Jewish Young Men's Russian Relief Fund. On numerous occasions he made his expert legal advice freely available to the Jewish community, whilst his very special interest in Jewish education and Jewish religious instruction greatly contributed to the establishment of the first general Jewish Education Board and later the United Jewish Education Board of which he was the first President whilst occupying the office of Victorian Attorney-General in 1895. He frequently responded to anti-semitic utterances and attacks with anger and always displayed his Jewish identity with pride on both public and private occasions. His controversial role in the 1943 public debate on political Zionism did, regrettably but perhaps justifiably, leave a blemish on his reputation but it was a blemish that should be viewed in the context of the time and not totally outside the framework of a very long and distinguished life.

Isaacs' departure from the Victorian Parliament in 1901 to enter Federal politics brought to an end a proud and notable era of Jewish participation in Victorian poli-

tics. The increasing involvement of Jews in parliamentary politics which followed Nathaniel Levi's first election in 1860 culminated in the remarkable achievement of 1894 when seven Jews were elected to the Legislative Assembly of 96 seats, in addition to the four Jews whose membership of the Legislative Council included the years 1892-1894. For a small community comprising less than 0.5% of the population to have gained by popular vote some 7% of the parliamentary representation was indeed a truly notable achievement.

There were three additional Members of Parliament in the 19th century who have in some writings, been referred to as Jewish. These were George Levey, Member for Normanby from 1861 to 1867, Albert Harris who represented the Gippsland area between 1883 and 1910, and Samuel Samuel who was the Member for Dundas for three months in 1892 but who died before taking his seat in the House. However in each case, there is no evidence to substantiate any claim to a Jewish identity. Levey, who was born in Washington USA, arrived in Melbourne in 1851. He became a proprietor and editor of *The Herald* in 1863 and later editor of *The Age* in 1868. He departed for England in 1882 where he became the London correspondent of *The Age*. He had no known formal contact with or any membership of any Jewish organisation, and newspaper references at the time of his death in 1919 provided evidence to suggest his attachment to the Presbyterian Church.

The name of Albert Harris appears to have been often confused, in historical references to the period, with several prominent Jews of the same name including Abraham Harris who was very active in Jewish affairs and in particular, with the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation of which he was President on two occasions. Abraham Harris had also been closely associated with a number of Jewish MPs on several community issues and together with Isaac Isaacs and Theodore Fink, was foundation committee member of the United Jewish Education Board. The Parliamentary references to Albert Harris would indicate that he was Church of England.

Samuel Samuel, despite his name and the frequent references to him at the time as "The Scottish Jew", does not appear to have any claim to Jewish identity or association. Born in Ireland in 1834, he moved to Scotland at a young age where he was educated before emigrating to Victoria where he worked in a store in Bendigo before qualifying as a solicitor, later becoming senior partner in the Hamilton legal firm of Samuel and Horwitz. He stood for Parliament on five occasions until finally winning a seat, but unfortunately died before the Parliament assembled following the 1892 election. He was hurried as a Presbyterian. Ironically, the Horwitz half of the Samuel and Horwitz legal partnership was Louis Horwitz, a Jew who maintained active associations with the Jewish community. Louis Horwitz had been elected to the Hamilton borough council when he was only 22 years old. Two years later he was elected Mayor, the youngest person ever to be elected to such a post. He was the son of Henry Horwitz, who was President of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in 1863. Louis was highly conceited, a social pusher and destined to finish up in serious trouble later in life. Nevertheless, as a young man he was highly talented, being the youngest person up to that period to have passed the final law examination and to have won the Victorian chess championship by a record 11½ games out of a possible 15. Incidentally Louis, whilst Mayor of Hamilton, married a daughter of Isaac Hart, one of the founders of the Melbourne Jewish community in the 1840s.

Louis Horwitz was one of the many non-parliamentary politicians to actively promote the federation of the Australian States. A prominent public speaker and author of several articles on that subject, Horwitz published a four-page supplement in the

*Jewish Herald* of a lecture he delivered under the auspices of the Australian Natives Association on 26 August, 1891 entitled "Federation: What Is It: What It Portends".

Other non-parliamentary Jews who actively worked for Federation included M.A. Rapken, who sat as a member on the General Council of the Australian Federal League. Rapken was very active in the Jewish community, particularly in the field of education. In the general community, he served as a Councillor for the City of Northcote and was a member of the Board of Advice to the Education Department for the Northcote district. Maximilian Hirsch, who was later to be elected in 1902 to one term in the Victorian Parliament, was another strong Jewish advocate for federation. He emigrated to Victoria from Cologne in 1890 and very quickly became the State's leading exponent of free trade and a system of a single land tax on market land values. Hirsch stood unsuccessfully for the Federal Parliament at its first election in 1901 and again was unsuccessful in an attempt to win the seat of Wimmera in 1906. He also served on the committee of the Australian Federal League with M.A. Rapken and Theodore Fink.

Other Jewish non-parliamentary political personalities in Victoria who were active in various crusades at the close of the 19th century included Joseph Hyman, a member of the Executive and at one time President of the Trades Hall Council, also serving as president of the Eight Hours Day Movement. With Max Hirsch, Hyman also served on the Government's Unemployment Board. He was a strong supporter of women's suffrage in which Vida Goldstein was taking the most prominent and active role. M.M. Phillips and H.F. Barnet joined with Hirsch in his campaign for free trade, and as senior members of the Free Trade movement, they were valued advisers to the Council of the Australian Free Trade and Liberal Association. Barnet was also an influential and active member of the Australian National League. However, the principal Jewish advocate for federation was, naturally, Isaac Isaacs, who by virtue of his senior position in the Victorian Government and as a delegate to the Federal Convention to draft the Federal Constitution, played an historic role in all of the events, both parliamentary and organisational, that ultimately led to the Commonwealth coming into being on 1 January 1901.

One interesting sidelight worth recording is related to another Jewish delegate to the final session of the Convention held in Melbourne on 20 January, 1898. The delegate concerned, Vabian Solomon, from South Australia, upon his arrival in Melbourne, informed the forty or more delegates and dozens of advisers present that, as he observed the Sabbath and had to attend the synagogue, he would not sit on Saturday sessions of the Convention. Despite the fact that the Convention programmes had been finalised and the agenda timetable was well-advanced in preparation, the Convention, in deference to Solomon, resolved not to sit on Saturdays at all.

During the latter part of the last century, whilst so many Jews were playing a prominent part in the State parliamentary scene, Jews were continuing their active and often leading participation at the municipal level. Several Jews, notably Jacob Marks and Ber Rapiport, were following in the footsteps of Edward Cohen and Benjamin Benjamin as members of the Melbourne City Council, whilst Joseph Levi at St. Kilda, Morris Gross at Fitzroy, Edwin Crawcour in Richmond and M.A. Rapken of Northcote were foremost amongst new Councillors in the metropolitan municipalities. In the country, Leon Rosenbloom became Mayor of Rutherglen and Morris Silberberg was elected President of the Shire of Portland. Sigismund Jacoby, a brother-in-law of Louis Horwitz, was Mayor of Hamilton in 1875-76 and, remarkably, was to later become Mayor of St. Kilda on four occasions between 1892 and

1908. This list of Jews who acted as mayors is not intended to be complete, but rather, to indicate the extent and diversity of involvement. Whilst so many Jews had come from the relatively small Jewish community to occupy important political and civic positions, especially in the years between 1860 and 1900, it is noteworthy that at least four Jews in the same period achieved diplomatic recognition. They were Moritz Michaelis, who acted as Prussian Consul in Victoria; Henry J. Hart who was the Consul for the United States of America; Alexander Marks who for many years was Japanese Consul in Australia and on his retirement Honorary Consul for Victoria and Tasmania, and Lewis Sanders who held the honorary appointment of Consul-General for Liberia.

Following the turn of the century, it was to be twenty-one years before the next Jew, Henry Isaac Cohen, was to be elected to the Legislative Council, and thirty years before the Legislative Assembly was again to have a Jewish Member with the election of Archie Michaelis as Member for St. Kilda. When Henry Cohen was elected as the Member for Melbourne Province in 1921, Joseph Sternberg, who had been in the Legislative Council since 1891, was the only Jewish member of the Parliament. Cohen, who was born in 1872, built up a successful law practice in civil and arbitration cases. He was appointed a King's Counsel the year he was elected to Parliament, and in 1928-29 he was government leader in the Legislative Council. In 1923-24, 1929 and 1935, he held a number of Cabinet posts, each for short periods of time, during a period of government instability. In 1929, Henry Isaac Cohen was joined in the Legislative Council by Brigadier Harold Edward Cohen, a grandson of Edward Cohen who had been the Member for East Melbourne. H.E. Cohen was not related to H.I. Cohen. Like his namesake, Harold Cohen had also graduated in law and held a number of company directorships. He was a member of the State Cabinet from 1932 to 1935 and was joined in Cabinet by H.I. Cohen for the final three weeks of the Argyle Government in March 1935. Harold Cohen retired from the Legislative Council at the 1935 elections to become the Member for Caulfield in the Legislative Assembly until his defeat at the polls in 1943. Outside of his successful business activities, Harold Cohen served with great distinction as an officer in the 1914-18 War and in the Second World War as the Honorary Red Cross Commissioner in the Middle East. He was the first President of Melbourne Legacy, Chief Commissioner of the Boy Scouts, and from 1937 to 1946 he was President of the Victorian Jewish Returned and Ex Servicemen's Association, now known as V.A.J.E.X. He died in 1946.

Archie Michaelis, who held the Legislative Assembly seat of St. Kilda for twenty years until his defeat in 1952, was a grandson of Moritz Michaelis, the founder of the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation in 1872. Archie Michaelis was perhaps the most prominent Anglo-Jewish personality of his time. Totally integrated into the life of the Australian community, he nevertheless had very close attachments and equally strong ties with the Jewish community, which he viewed entirely and demonstrably as a group to be distinguished within the wider community solely on the basis of religion and mode of worship. Like Harold Cohen, he strongly subscribed to a traditional Anglo-Jewish doctrine and was openly hostile to any concept of political Zionism which came into conflict with the prevailing policy of the British Government. Nevertheless, and in contrast to the public stand which Michaelis took against political Zionism in the 1940s, he had a long record of public support for a national homeland for the Jews consistent with the Balfour Declaration. Michaelis had been treasurer of the Palestine Restoration Fund and gave generously for the relief of overseas Jewry as far back as the end of the First World War. Throughout the

1930s in particular, Archie Michaelis was the most visible spokesman for the Jewish community by virtue of his parliamentary office and his official status within the Jewish community. He was President of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board (forerunner of the Board of Deputies) in 1939-40, a Trustee and Past President of the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation and Foundation President of the Victorian branch of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. He was also a Patron of the Society for a number of years. Michaelis was a Minister without Portfolio in the seven weeks Macfarlan Government in 1945, and from 1950 to 1952 was the first and only Jewish Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Knighted in 1952, Sir Archie continued to be active in public affairs following his defeat at the polls in October of that year. He died in 1975.

Following more than seventy years of Jewish prominence in municipal politics, and in particular throughout the provincial and thriving country regions of Victoria, Jews were continuing to be active in local government on a wide front. Between the two World Wars in metropolitan Melbourne, the City of St. Kilda had two Jewish Mayors in J.B. Levi in 1924-25 and Alfred Levy in 1936-37, whilst Joseph Redapple acted as Mayor of Brighton also in 1936-37. Joseph Waxman, long prominent in Jewish affairs, continued to serve as an Alderman of the Brunswick Council of which he was Mayor in 1912-13. Since the end of the Second World War, some of the prominent Jewish municipal councillors who served as mayors of metropolitan municipalities included Julius Pollack in Malvern, Les Kausman in Hawthorn, Harold Weinberg in Heidelberg, Maurice Sloman and Charles Lux in Prahran, Martin Solomon in Kew, and Brian Rudzki in Caulfield. There was also Harry Samuel in Mordialloc, Howard Nathan in South Melbourne, whilst in Geelong, Morris Jacobs followed in the footsteps of his father, Solomon Jacobs, who served that city as mayor on five occasions. Irvin Rockman had been elected to the Melbourne City Council and soon followed in the footsteps of Edward Cohen and Sir Benjamin Benjamin by being elected the third Jewish Lord Mayor of the city, for three years from 1977 to 1979. Rockman was widely regarded as one of the most industrious and progressive Lord Mayors with wide sights and long term vision for city development in all its aspects. In the State legislature, Sir Archie Michaelis' successor as Member for St. Kilda was defeated three years later in 1955 by Baron David Snider, whose uncle, Leon Snider, had for many years been a member of the Legislative Council in New South Wales.

Born in 1917, Baron Snider grew up in Melbourne where as a youth he was actively involved in the 3rd St. Kilda Jewish Boy Scouts and other Jewish youth organisations. Following extensive experience in the organisation of industrial safety both in the USA and in Australia, he established his own management consultancy business in Melbourne in 1951. On entering Parliament, Baron Snider quickly became a forthright public advocate of Jewish causes and firmly established himself as the liaison between the organised Jewish community and government. He was closely associated with the Jewish National Fund projects and actively promoted the involvement and support of politicians and other public figures in the Menzies, Blamey and other forest projects in Israel. Baron Snider led a Commonwealth Trade Survey to Israel in 1963, and at the State elections in the following year, 1964, he transferred from the Assembly seat of St. Kilda to the Legislative Council Province of Higginbotham which he held until his premature death in December 1966.

In 1964, I joined Baron Snider in the Parliament as the Member for Hawthorn, the seat I was to hold for seven successive general elections until my retirement from the Parliament after 21 years service in March 1985 — the longest service of any Member to represent Hawthorn since responsible Government in 1856.

For nine years prior to my election, Baron Snider had been the only Jewish member of the Victorian Parliament and he had demonstrably relished the unique role which that position had afforded him both within the Jewish community and within the Parliament itself. My election was clearly not a time of rejoicing for Baron Snider. I was not only in the same Parliament, but I was also a member of the same party, which meant that in future, his hitherto exclusive representation of Jewish interests might have to be shared with another parliamentary colleague. I had come into the Parliament following a long and intense Jewish communal experience in which I had been president of several important Jewish organisations and, at the time of entering Parliament, I was an elected member of the Jewish Board of Deputies under the then direct representation scheme.

My friendship with Baron Snider had extended back over many years and had always been one of complete trust and cordiality. On the day of my election, however, our relationship suddenly changed to one of strict formality and it was very clear to me that Baron Snider resented my intrusion into his domain. For the next twelve months, we maintained a distant but courteous relationship in which we each responded independently to any Jewish representations which we received. All this changed on 1 May 1966, when the first serious public anti-semitic incident to occur since my entry into Parliament took place during the May Day March in Melbourne. Men dressed in Nazi-style uniforms marched through the streets carrying anti-Jewish banners and shouting anti-semitic slogans.

On that evening Baron Snider phoned me and suggested we should get together the following morning in order to prepare a strong and united submission to the Acting Premier at the time, Arthur Rylah. This we did in a spirit of absolute co-operation, and on the following day our joint representations resulted in a full-scale police investigation which led to identification of the individuals and groups concerned, with effective follow-up action by the State Special Branch and appropriate Federal authorities. On the following Friday, 6 May 1966, the *Australian Jewish News* in a strong editorial on the seriousness of the incident said . . . "it was left to two Jewish State parliamentarians to induce the Acting Premier to police investigation . . . one could be excused for pondering what would and could happen if there were no Jewish Members of Parliament . . .". From that incident onwards, Snider and I enjoyed a remarkably close political, communal and personal relationship in which we acted as one on all issues which had any bearing on matters of importance to the Jewish community. Unfortunately, this partnership in Parliament was to be short-lived with Snider's premature death prior to the 1967 elections. I was then to be the only Jewish representative in either House for the next 18 years, except for a brief period following the 1970 elections when David Bornstein, who had little involvement with the Jewish community, held the seat of Brunswick East.

In 1967, three years after entering Parliament, I was appointed Chairman of the All-Party Select Committee on Road Safety. It was in this capacity that I made my greatest contribution as a Private Member by initiating, chairing the enquiry and later recommending to Parliament legislation for the compulsory wearing of seat belts in motor vehicles. This report was adopted by the Government.

I also had the honour of being the first Jew to be appointed Secretary of the State Cabinet in 1973, and three years later of being the first Minister of Ethnic Affairs in Victoria. In subsequent years, I was privileged to hold other portfolios before my decision to retire at the 1985 general election. As I look back on my many years in the Victorian Parliament, I recall numerous incidents and events that bear a remarkable similarity to the experiences of my Jewish forebears in the Parliament during the

19th century. There was barely one week in my career, particularly in government, when I was not involved in at least one significant intervention to prevent or to counter some action or proposal about which Jews or the Jewish community would have had understandable or justifiable concern. More often than not, these interventions were prompted by my own knowledge of the event and before outside Jewish interests had become aware of it. In addition, of course, there were the almost daily representations from Jewish organisations and individuals on matters which affected them as Jews or related to the Jewish community as a whole.

The Jewish Member of Parliament, throughout Victorian history, has been the victim on occasions — fortunately few and far between — of derogatory and unparliamentary references to his Jewish origin or association. I experienced the brunt of such attacks on just three occasions, and in each instance, the offending Member had shown a prejudice that was uncharacteristic of the Parliament and was clearly isolated by his remarks. By the same token, the Jewish Member of Parliament throughout 150 years of Victorian history has also been the subject of generous tributes, high respect and admiration because of the traits displayed through his Jewishness and his loyalty to his beliefs and his community. Time has scarcely changed the experiences of a Jewish MP and the relationship between him and the Jewish community and, more importantly, his obligation to it. The strong ethic of Nathaniel Levi, more than 120 years ago, is just as strong today, and the protests that a Jew could raise in those days are regrettably the same protests that only a Jew could raise today.

There is no doubt that because of the influence of the Jewish mind, the Jewish attitude and feeling on the Victorian Parliament since its inception 129 years ago, the legislature has been the richer and its laws have been the kinder and more responsive to those most dependent upon them. In both parliamentary and municipal spheres, Victorian Jews have contributed much to the advancement of the State and its people.

#### **CURRICULUM VITAE OF THE HONORABLE WALTER JONA, A.M.**

**Parliamentary:** Minister for Community Welfare Services 1979-82  
Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1976-79  
Assistant Minister of Health 1976-79  
Parliamentary Secretary of Cabinet 1973-76  
Shadow Minister of Education 1982-84  
Member of Legislative Assembly for Hawthorn 1964-85  
Deputy Leader, Australian Delegation U.N. Conference on Crime and Treatment of Offenders, Caracas 1981  
Chairman, Joint Parliamentary Select Committee on Road Safety 1967-73  
Deputy Chairman of Committees, Legislative Assembly 1970-73  
Deputy Chairman, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Development 1982-85  
Chairman, Government Party Health Committee 1967-70  
Chairman, Government Party Transport Committee 1970-73  
Member, Joint Standing Committee on State Policy 1973-82  
Member, Standing Orders Committee, Legislative Assembly 1967-70  
Member, Privileges Committee, Legislative Assembly 1982-85  
**Community:** President, Asthma Foundation of Victoria since 1983; Director since 1966  
Director, Victoria State Opera Company 1975-80  
President, Hawthorn City Brass Band since 1973  
President, Hillel Foundation of Victoria 1965-69  
Vice-President, Swinburne Technical School 1969-79  
Member of Council, Swinburne College of Technology 1972-80  
Vice-President, Hawthorn Australia Day Association since 1973

Chairman, Kozminsky Trust since 1985; Trustee since 1981  
 Member of Council, Victorian Institute of Secondary Education 1982-85  
 Member of Council, Rossbourne House School since 1985  
 Trustee, Victorian Autistic Children's Association since 1970  
 Patron and Trustee, Hawthorn Citizens' Youth Club since 1967  
 Patron, Victorian Boys' Choir since 1974  
 Member, Gallery Society of Victoria since 1982  
 Chief Patron and No. 1 Member, Hawthorn-East Melbourne Cricket Club since 1982  
 Patron, Hawthorn Football Club since 1978  
**Commercial:** Director, Walter Jona and Associates Pty. Ltd. since 1984  
 Associate Director and Consultant, John P. Young and Associates (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. since 1984  
 Consultant, Meldrum Burrows & Partners since 1984  
 Consultant, Aura Levin Partners since 1984  
 Chairman, Gandel Charitable Trust since 1985  
 Assistant Secretary, Nicholas Pty. Ltd. Australia 1954-60  
 Development Administrator 1960-64  
 Accident Claims Manager, Atlas Assurance Company 1950-54  
 Associate, Australian Institute of Insurance  
**Clubs:** Naval and Military  
 Melbourne Cricket Club  
 R.S.L.  
**Military Service:** R.A.A.F. (South West Pacific) World War II  
 Pilot Officer R.A.A.F. Reserve  
**Recreation:** Cycling  
 Tennis  
 Watching football and cricket  
**Educated:** Glenferrie Primary School  
 Scotch College  
 University of Melbourne  
**Personal:** Married January 1972, Alwynne Burley  
 Home Address: 11 Kildare Street, Hawthorn East 3123.  
**Jewish Community:** Chairman of Committees, Magen David Adom since 1966  
 President, 1984 Jewish Welfare Appeal  
 President, Hillel Foundation of Victoria 1965-69  
 President, Australian Federation of Jewish Ex-Service Associations 1964-65; Patron and Life Member since 1967  
 President, Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women 1958-60; Life Member since 1962  
 Member, Board of Governors, Tel Aviv University since 1985  
 Patron, Friends of Tel Aviv University since 1976  
 Consultant Member of Board of Management of Executive Council of Australian Jewry 1981-85  
 Member, Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies 1955-64  
 Trustee, National Council of Jewish Women Foundation since 1983  
 Trustee, A. Kozminsky Trust since 1961; Chairman since 1985  
 Member, Young Men's Hebrew Association since 1946  
 (Baron Snider Award 1976)  
 Member, Australian Jewish Historical Society since 1955  
 Executive Committee, Jewish Museum of Australia since 1985  
 Patron or Member of numerous other Jewish communal organisations and projects.



## I.L. PERETZ YIDDISH SCHOOL 1935-1984

by David Burstin, B.Comm. Dip.Ed.

### THE FLEDGLING YEARS

In pre-war Eastern Europe the Yiddish language was the main cultural base for Jewish life. "Yiddishkeit", a secular outlook on Jewish life incorporating the Yiddish language offered an alternative to Religious Orthodoxy as a Jewish Philosophy. During the 1920s and '30s the TSISHO Schools of Poland (Central Yiddish Schools Organisation) grew rapidly, challenging the antiquated Cheder education system. Those involved with the TSISHO Schools believed that the Yiddish language represented the grass roots of the Jewish people, the cultural link with the largest Jewish Centres of the world. They wanted Jewish children to continue to have contact with the Yiddish language, the *Folkshprach* of the Jewish people. Furthermore, they also believed that a Yiddish School should be a-political and follow the national cultural values as outlined by the Y.I.V.O., i.e., the "Yiddish Scientific Institute". The I.L. Peretz School during the 50 years of its existence reflected these attitudes and values, and should be considered in this context.

When migration to the United States was restricted in 1924, Australia remained one of the few countries to which a limited number of Jews could settle. As a result, during the late 1920s there was an upsurge in the number of Yiddish speaking migrants from Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania coming to Melbourne. Many of these migrants had been involved in running secular Yiddish Schools in *der alter heim*, and because of their desire to maintain their involvement with these schools, a group was formed calling itself "Friends of the Yiddish Schools in Poland". This group also wanted their children to learn Yiddish. The only Yiddish education which could then be provided came from a few unqualified private teachers. The establishment of a fully fledged Yiddish School was regarded as a pipe-dream. As well as a shortage of qualified teachers there were a number of other problems to overcome. There was a grave doubt as to whether there would be enough parents willing to send their children to make such a school viable, and there was no prospective principal to lead the school.

Melech Rawicz, the noted Yiddish author and poet arrived in Australia early 1935 to raise money for the Central Yiddish School Organisation of Poland. At meetings, his descriptions of the flourishing schools of Eastern Europe and the United States inspired the local Yiddish speaking community to consider the establishment of a Yiddish secular School in Melbourne. Having enjoyed his stay in Australia, Rawicz decided to settle in Melbourne. Feelers were put to him regarding the establishment of a school. As a result, on 1 October 1935 a group who became the foundation members of the school, met at the home of Jankl Ginter, where it was decided to invite interested people to an open meeting to consider the establishment of a school.

A letter signed by the following foundation members, S. Burstin, S. Brilliant, J. Ginter, M. Silman and M. Rawicz was circulated on 2 October 1935. It invited people to the upper hall of the Kadimah on 8 October to consider the establishment of an afternoon and Sunday School. The letter advised that at the meeting a short address

would be given by Melech Rawicz concerning the need for Yiddish Schools and Courses, and that a School Committee would be elected.<sup>1</sup> Enclosed with the open letter was an outline of the basic aims of the afternoon and Sunday School as conceived by the foundation members. Classes would be taken in Yiddish with the express purpose of giving its pupils a knowledge of Yiddish language, reading, and writing together with an introduction to Jewish History; a knowledge of Yiddish literature; a broad knowledge of Jewish literature.<sup>2</sup>

On 8 October, 1935, 39 people gathered at the Kadimah to lay the basis for a Yiddish secular school in Melbourne. After a lively debate it was decided to open a school which was to be called "Yiddish Sunday and Afternoon School in Melbourne". It is interesting to note that it was recorded in the minutes of that meeting that Melech Rawicz dismissed a proposal for a Yiddish day school as not being viable, having based his opinion on his experiences in the United States, Canada, and South Africa. There also were suggestions that adult courses be established to discuss Jewish writers who have written not only in Yiddish, but in other languages as well. The first elected committee consisted of Messrs S. Burstin, P. Goldhar, M. Silman, Ch. Davis, M. Hiller, M. Weinig, P. Lasika, B. Rosenberg, and Mrs. R. Brilliant. The committee decided not to elect an executive, appointing only Mrs. R. Brilliant (Secretary) and Ch. Davis (Treasurer) to official positions. Mrs. Brilliant, the first President, was not elected to the position until some time later. One of the first issues to be decided by the committee was where to house the new school. The committee rejected a proposal to use a local State school, deciding instead that the Kadimah should be used on Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons.

The school opened on Sunday, 3 November 1935 with 30 children.<sup>3</sup> The children were divided into three groups which were taught by the Principal Melech Rawicz, and B. Star and L. Szabinski. During April 1936 adult courses in Yiddish Literature commenced. These courses were arranged by M. Rawicz. Later, these courses were conducted by the group calling itself "The Friends of the Yiddish Schools in Poland".

Serious problems beset the school when Rawicz left Australia in July 1937. The committee appointed H. Gurt, a literary critic, to temporarily take over the reins as Principal, but Rawicz's departure left a vacuum that was difficult for the fledgling school to fill. This problem was compounded by an outbreak of infantile paralysis which closed the school for two months between August and October 1937. The school reopened late in October with drastically diminished numbers, the average attendance having fallen by 50%. The school which was now led by a new president, Moishe Hiller, was facing a crisis.

At the time of Rawicz's emigration from Australia, the Central Yiddish School Organisation appointed Joseph Giligich as an emissary to raise money for the struggling Polish Yiddish Schools. Giligich had been a teacher in the Wilna Real Gymnasium, and for the previous ten years a senior teacher in Riga. The school committee noted that Giligich was not only a first class organiser, but an educator who could become principal of the School. At the end of the appeal Giligich was offered the position, which he accepted early in 1938 despite the fact that he had another offer to become Principal of a far larger Yiddish School in Toronto, Canada. In the book *Ten Years Yiddish School*, S. Burstin states that by accepting the position of principal, Giligich solved the leadership crisis that the school was facing.<sup>4</sup> It was a position he was to hold over 30 years. Under Giligich and a hard working committee, the school was put on a more solid footing.

### GROWING PAINS

The fifth birthday was celebrated in the form of a *Banket*, a party at the Kadimah, with the main hall packed to capacity. The celebration was a morale booster for school workers. It indicated that the school had an important role to play in the community, and that their efforts were receiving widespread appreciation. At the time of the outbreak of World War II the school had 45 pupils. There was a need for a fourth class. This was established when A. Junowicz, a former teacher of Yiddish in a Polish state school was appointed. The staff was increased to five when Pinchas Sharp was employed to teach singing. At the beginning of 1940 a fifth class was started with the new appointee being Giligich's daughter, Sulamith Sher, who had recently arrived from Riga. In 1941 the first graduate of the school Senia Rosenberg, a locally trained State high school teacher, was employed and the school now comprised six classes.

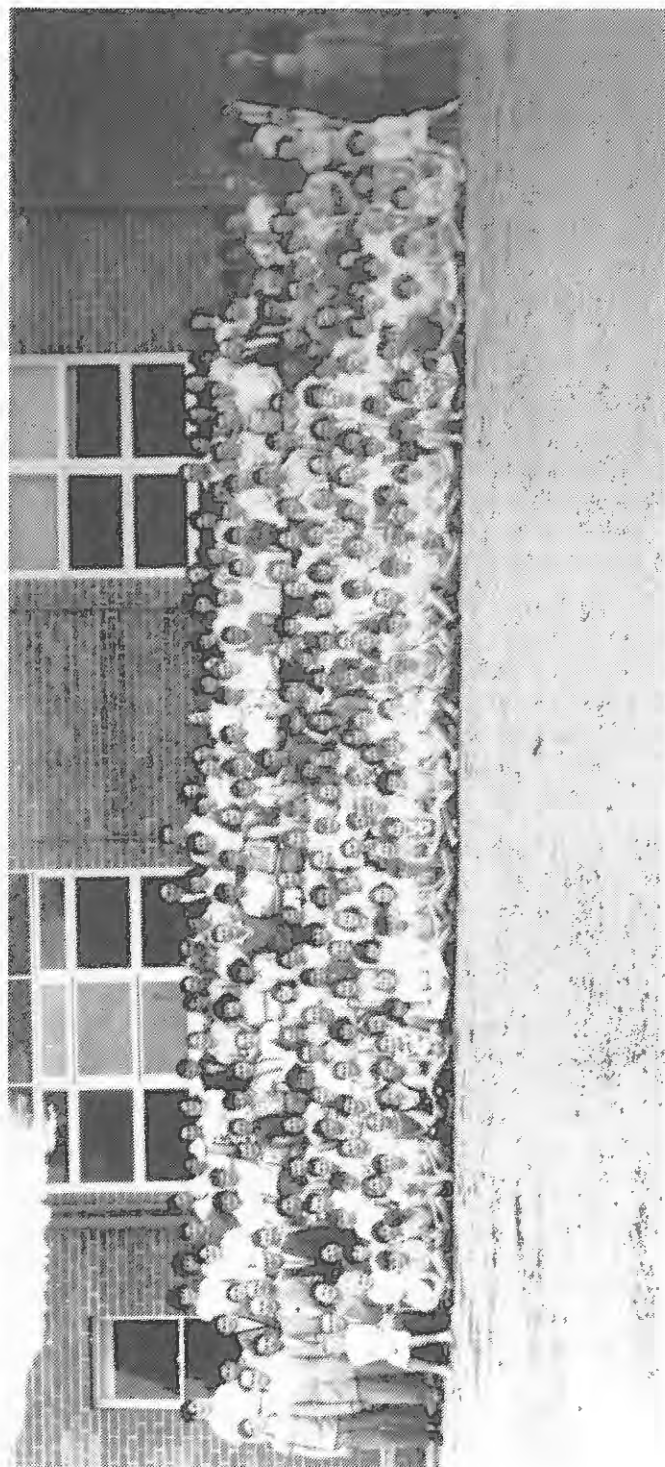
With school numbers increasing rapidly, the Kadimah could no longer house all the classes at the same time. The school used the house next door to the Kadimah, but even so class times had to be staggered, as the needs of the school were still not being met. The school was now open on Sunday morning and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoons. Recognising that this situation could not continue indefinitely, a fund raising effort during 1941 resulted in the purchase of a house at 1008 Drummond Street, North Carlton. Due to war-time regulations, the building could not be used until 1943.

The world-renowned Yiddish actor for the "Wilna Troupe", Jacob Waislitz, was added to the staff in 1943. When he left for Sydney in 1944, he was replaced by author and literary critic, Itzhak Kahn. In 1945 Jasha Sber, a graduate of the Riga State Gymnasium and Pola Weingart were appointed. Weingart remained a member of the staff for over 30 years, whilst Sher, the current editor of the Yiddishe Naves and President of the Kadimah, was to become the first principal of the Sholem Aleichem School.

By March 1946 the number of students attending the school had reached 140, and there were now eight classes. In addition, the school was conducting two evening adult classes with an average attendance of 18. Even though the house at Drummond Street had been purchased during the war to make room for the extra students, the school was both cramped and divided into two "campuses". The younger classes were held at the Kadimah while the older classes were moved to Drummond Street. This made the task of running the growing school extraordinarily difficult, with Principal Giligich being forced to run from one division to another. Because of its size and design it was not possible to extend the building at Drummond Street.

The immediate post-war period saw the injection of further new students and new blood on the teaching staff and on the school committee. The first wave of post-war migrants to arrive in Australia in 1947 from Shanghai included Beril Rosen, the noted Yiddish author and journalist. As a senior literary teacher in the school his influence over the students was profound. Many remember the impact of his sudden death in October 1953, and the resulting vacuum in the senior classes. Pinie Ringelblum, who was to loyally serve the school both as a teacher and principal for over 25 years, arrived from Paris in 1949. Chaim Davidowicz, who became the hard working secretary of the school for a number of years, arrived with the Shanghai group in 1947.

Other migrants to arrive were M. Wilenski, a printer from Poland, who was to serve as secretary of the school after the death of Davidowicz, and L. Goldblum and J. Goldman who were to work as treasurers during the 1960s and '70s.



I.L. PERETZ SCHOOL — 1960.

The school's program was extended in 1950 by the establishment of a kindergarten under the direction of Tsloova Crystal. Tsloova, the name by which she was endearingly known, had been a kindergarten directress of the TSISHO schools in Warsaw. For a number of years the kindergarten fed the school with new pupils. However, in the early 1950s it accentuated the space problems that the school was facing.

During 1948 a large house situated at 885 Drummond Street was bought by Jacob Waks, the President of the Bund in Melbourne, on behalf of the Jewish Workers Committee of New York. In the late 1940s and early 1950s it was used by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society to house recently arrived refugees from Europe. The Artur Zigelboim House — as it was known — was offered as a gift to the Peretz School in 1953, because the house was no longer required by the Welfare Society. The number of migrants arriving in Australia had declined and the house was emptying. However, the house as it stood simply did not meet the needs of the 200 children who now attended the school. At first the committee thought it would be possible to build a second floor on to the existing building. A building sub-committee consisting of M. Silman (President, School Committee), Y. Zuker and J. Giligich analysed all the possibilities, deciding that the most feasible economic approach would be to demolish the existing building and commence afresh.

Plans for a two-storey structure consisting of 18 class rooms were prepared by architect Harold Bloom. The sub-committee decided to save the school money by doing the sub-contracting themselves. Mr. S. Burstin (Vice President) estimated that the sub-committee through their work saved the school approximately one-third of the estimated cost of £40,000.<sup>5</sup> During November 1954 the existing house was demolished, and on 20 February 1955, Meir Silman, President of the School Committee, unveiled the foundation stone. Many friends of the school contributed generously to the building fund appeal. A substantial loan was obtained from the bank, and after the sale of the house at 1008 Drummond Street, the committee was able to finance the project. Silman, Giligich and Zuker spent days on the site organising the building of the school, which was completed in June 1956.

On Sunday 1 July 1956, on a dry winter day, two streams of children, one from the Kadimah and the other from 1008 Drummond Street, entered through the gates of the new school. The I.L. Peretz School had reached a new pinnacle. There were now over 225 children learning Yiddish at 11 levels, preps to Grade 10, and at some class levels there were parallel grades.

### SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND PROGRAM

The school's educational sub-committee, the *Pedagogisber Rad*, consisted of the principal, teachers, and a representative from the School Council. Conversely, there was always a member from the *Pedagogisber Rad* on the School Council to facilitate the ongoing contact between the two bodies which ran the school. The grading of students of varying abilities always posed a difficult problem for the education sub-committee. Generally it was decided to group students according to age rather than ability, and children who started at the school late were encouraged to have extra tuition outside school hours. Due to the constant changes in the number of classes and the range in the standards of the students, teaching techniques had to be flexible.

The main emphasis in the lower grades was to learn the *aleph/beth*. At this level games and singing were also considered an integral part of the program. Even

though in Grades 1 and 2 the emphasis was on reading and writing, students were gradually introduced to "*Hebraismen*", i.e. Hebrew words that are used in the Yiddish language. As students progressed through the school, the complexity of the material increased until the oldest groups reached the stage where they could analyse the literary works of I.L. Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, and others. Jewish History was taught from the second class, approximately following the text of *Yiddishe Geschichte* by Professor Shimon Dubnow. In the older classes Giligich taught the Ethics of the Jewish Religion, including parts of the Chumash, Prophets, and the Talmudic epoch. Singing was compulsory for all students. The frequent public appearances of the choir showed the importance of singing in the school's program.

After the outbreak of World War II it became difficult to obtain suitable texts. As a result the committee decided to publish a monthly children's journal to provide the children with suitable learning material. The first issue of the journal called *My Small World*, *Mein Kleine Veldt* was published in 1942. It included children's essays and stories, school news, and a games section. The aim of the editorial board which comprised teachers, parents and children, was not merely to entertain, but to educate. By 1945 twelve issues each of 300 copies were produced on the school's Gestetner.<sup>6</sup>

While the school was growing, the problem of finding suitable staff periodically became critical. During 1943 the committee decided that Giligich should conduct three year teaching training seminars. These seminars were later cut to two years. By 1961 over 22 teachers had completed the seminars.<sup>7</sup>

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

From its inception the Yiddish School has been a *folks-schul*, a community school. People sympathetic to the ideals of the school together with parents, led the committees. In 1943 the parent group for the *Yiddishe Schuln in Melbourne*, totalled approximately 200. The school committee had the responsibility of providing a support system for the school and ensuring its economic viability. After the war ended, in an effort to draw parents even closer to the school, the committee decided to hold Friday evening discussion groups. The standard format was lectures followed by a supper.

A sound financial base was the aim of every committee. On average, school fees covered two-thirds of the budget during the period of the school's growth. The balance of the budget came from membership fees, and fund raising functions such as bazaars and balls, which were organised by the appropriate sub-committees. The main expenditure was on teachers' salaries. Rental payments were minimal, since the Kadimah only requested token payments for the use of the cottage next door to the centre.

In 1938 an attempt was made to re-organise the school as a co-operative, whereby each father (interestingly, not mother) automatically became a member by enrolling a child and paying a membership fee of one pound. This attempt at compulsory membership failed, because just prior to the outbreak of War a large number of migrants had arrived who were unable to make the payment. In fact 40% of parents were either offered discounts, or did not pay the school fees, which were two shillings per week.<sup>8</sup> No children were ever refused a place at the school because their parents were unable to pay fees.

Open functions were an integral part of the school's program. Some involved children, some were of a purely cultural nature, whilst others were fund raising.

Amongst those functions that did not involve children were those held in conjunction with the Kadimah, examples being lectures on child-rearing, Yiddish folklore, and the great Yiddish writers, Peretz and Sholem Aleichem.

Annual concerts involved students from the school in recitations, drama and singing and were major events of the school calendar. Most of the material used for these concerts arose from the courses studied throughout the year. They were an artistic report to the community, showing a part of what had been learnt. Included were scenes from stories by A. Raisen, I.L. Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, and on one occasion a musical *Dos Sbnai Meidele* written and directed by J. Giligich, was enacted. The success of these performances showed to what extent the school had become a part of the Jewish cultural scene. The concerts were important in developing the confidence of children in front of audiences and in fostering latent talent. The first public appearances of the actor John Bluthal were at concerts organised by the Yiddish Schools.

The choir, which had attained a high standard always featured at the annual concerts of the school. Its public appearances also included the Victorian Jewish Competitions and a number of radio broadcasts. In 1943 the choir was praised after its appearance on station 3AW. Their second broadcast in 1944 was transmitted by the ABC directly from an overfull Kadimah Hall, throughout Australia and the Pacific Islands. "Whilst Yiddish songs were being heard over radio wave-lengths of the South Pacific, our brethren were being gassed in the ovens of Europe."<sup>9</sup>

In 1945 at the request of the Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, eleven gramophone records of the choir were cut. During a time-slot allocated to the Jewish Council, these records were broadcast over 3XY. Since all three radio broadcasts were highly successful, they were an important morale booster for the committee, teachers and students.

The book *Ten Years Yiddish Schools in Melbourne*, was published in 1946. It contained articles by many of the founders of the school, and was a statement of belief in the future of the Yiddish language. The book, which was a credit to the efforts of the committee, was sponsored by advertisements. For the present writer it was an invaluable source of material for this essay.

From its foundation until 1971 the school was housed in Carlton. Although most students lived in Carlton, many travelled from suburbs as far away as St. Kilda. As early as February 1936 the committee considered the establishment of a St. Kilda division of the school. Twenty-three children were enrolled to begin such a division in 1941, but the committee was unable to find a suitable building. At the end of the war the need for a further branch of the Yiddish School became a pressing problem. A group of "South of the Yarra" pioneers, which included M. Glatt (foundation president), W. Davis, I. Kosky, and G. Nirens, found a suitable site in Blanche Street, St. Kilda, in which to house the new school. Coincidentally, 23 children, the same number that had enrolled in 1941, attended classes on 5 May, 1946.<sup>10</sup> With the establishment of the Sholem Aleichem School in St. Kilda it was decided to call the Carlton division "THE I.L. PERETZ YIDDISH SCHOOL".

### THE DECLINE OF CARLTON

With the completion in 1956 of the new building at 885 Drummond Street, Carlton, the I.L. Peretz School peaked. Student numbers were no longer increasing because the Jewish population was moving to the southern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Perhaps it is easy to be wise after the event, but the school was built in

the wrong place at the wrong time. Student numbers started to stagnate in the late 1950s, but the fall in numbers was quite dramatic during the 1960s. The decade opened with student numbers totalling 243, plus a total of 11 in the kindergarten.<sup>11</sup> But by the beginning of the next decade there were only 70 students regularly attending the Sunday School.<sup>12</sup> Figures published by the Education Chairman of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies in their annual report also reveal the decline — 1962 — 215 children; 1963 — 207 children; 1964 — 177 children; 1965 — 157 children; 1966 — 128 children.<sup>13</sup>

Students of Yiddish living in the southern suburbs were being catered for by the Sholem Aleichem School, therefore the potential for new students came only from the Jewish community now living in the eastern suburbs as very few Jewish families still lived in Melbourne's northern suburbs. Mr Giligich, who was now in his late seventies and wanting to retire as principal, was in no position to initiate another shift of the Peretz School.

The kindergarten, which was established to feed the school with new students, was from the early 1960s proving difficult to maintain. Faced with the problems of low enrolments and the imminent retirement of Tsloova Crystal, the committee decided to close the kindergarten at the end of 1964. Its closing was another sign of decline. The premises were let to the University of Melbourne, enabling them to offer kindergarten facilities to the children of staff members.<sup>14</sup>

When one peruses the minutes of the committee meetings, very little reference is made to the decline of the school. The minutes of nearly every meeting revolve around the organising of cultural or fund raising functions. The main fund raising functions were the annual balls and bazaars, whilst cultural evenings consisted of open lessons, family evenings or the third Seder. The content of curriculum was left completely in the hands of the principal, and was very rarely mentioned at committee level.

After considering the achievements of the 1960s mention must be made of the Seder evenings, which were held annually from 1963 to 1969 in conjunction with the Sholem Aleichem School. The text of the Seder, which was compiled by Giligich with music arranged by B. Kaluszyner, was based on the format of the third Seders held by the Yiddish Schools of New York. Basically, it consisted of three parts, where a concise Hagada was combined with references to the destruction of European Jewry and the resurrection of the State of Israel. They were cultural evenings involving a large number of students plus a number of guest artists, and the average attendance during this six-year period was over 500. Another achievement of the decade was the publishing of the book *Twenty-five Years I.L. Peretz School in Melbourne* by the Jubilee Committee. The book contained articles on the history and purpose of the school, the future of the Yiddish language and essays by students. Fifty pages of sponsored advertisements paid for the book.

It is ironic that despite the decline in numbers attending the school, money for once was not a problem. Princes Hill High School had been burnt to the ground by a fire-bug on 7 February, 1970. The Education Department desperately required premises for the students attending the High School, and the Peretz School provided the perfect solution. The rent paid by the Department enabled the committee to quickly pay off the balance of the mortgage on the building.

When Giligich retired at the end of 1970, his replacement, Pinie Ringelblum (a senior teacher at the school for over 20 years), decided to direct his unbounded energies towards relocating the school and establishing a new kindergarten in the Balwyn-Doncaster area. The committee, which was now led by one of the original



foundation members, Sender Burstin, supported these efforts.

In June 1971 the school celebrated the eightieth birthday of Giligich at a huge dinner-dance at the Melbourne Town House. Over 400 people attended this function showing the high esteem in which he was held.

### THE BALWYN SHIFT

Immediately after he was appointed principal, Ringelblum arranged the renting of the Balwyn Primary School. A junior school with four classes, Kindergarten, Preps., Grades 1 and 2, was established under the direction of Doris Burstin (Sender Burstin's daughter-in-law) in 1971. The school was once again divided, since the senior classes were still held in Carlton.

During June 1972 the property located at 885 Drummond Street was sold to Melbourne's growing Greek community.<sup>15</sup> The Greek community was anxious to establish an ethnic school in the Carlton district, and by purchasing the I.L. Peretz building they were able to satisfy their needs. However, this meant another shift for both the junior and senior divisions of the school. Balwyn Primary School's headmaster would not let any extra rooms to the Peretz School, so again it became imperative to find new premises. Bellevue Primary School in North Balwyn became the new temporary home for the senior and junior schools.

Plans to build a new kindergarten in a house purchased in 1970 in Hatfield Street, North Balwyn were shelved because of the objections of neighbours. Mr. Wilenski's successor as secretary, Maurice Burstin (Sender Burstin's son), together with Sym Wolski found suitable land on which to build a kindergarten at the corner of Balwyn and Estelle Streets, Bulleen.<sup>16</sup> This land was purchased with the proceeds from the sale of the Hatfield Street property. The money from the sale of 885 Drummond Street was held in trust, only to be used to finance the proposed new buildings.

An axiom in building local kindergartens is that if there are no problems with neighbours then there will certainly be problems with the Health Commission of Victoria. For a period of two years Maurice Burstin and Harold Bloom, who was once again appointed architect, worked to satisfy the requirements of the Health Commission. When the Health Commission was finally satisfied with the plans, inflation had escalated costs by over 30%, and the money from the sale of the Drummond Street premises was no longer sufficient to cover the cost of the new building. The total cost of land and building was now estimated at just under \$200,000, and this was far greater than the original quotations indicated. J. Goldman, the Treasurer, negotiated on behalf of the committee a 10 year loan for \$40,000 with the A.N.Z. Bank, which enabled building to commence. A number of drawing-room appeal meetings were organised to help defray some of the costs of establishing both the new kindergarten and completing the surrounds.

The foundation stone was laid on 9 September 1976 by the President, Sender Burstin. Maurice Burstin supervised the construction of the building which included a large kindergarten doubling as a hall and five small classrooms. By the end of 1976 the building was ready to be used. Maurice Williams, the local M.L.A., presided at an opening function attended by over 100 friends of the I.L. Peretz School on Sunday 13 March, 1977.<sup>17</sup>

On 6 February, 1977, the school began to operate from its new premises in Bulleen, with 48 children.<sup>18</sup> The committee felt a sense of exhilaration in achieving their goal of building a new school, but there was still a sense of trepidation for the future, as Grades 6 and 7 and Grades 8 and 9 were now run as combined classes.

To graduate, a pupil still had to attend for 11 years from Preps to Grade 10.

Fay Morris, a graduate from the school, was appointed kindergarten directress. Her task was not only to run the kindergarten, but to get it off the ground. Not only did she have to equip the kindergarten, she had to chase enrolments. The Health Commission required that there be a minimum of 15 three- and four-year old children attending a kindergarten before it would offer a subsidy. In February 1977 Fay started the second I.L. Peretz Kindergarten. Her warmth endeared her to the hearts of the parents, but this did not mean that children attending would necessarily be sent on by their parents to the school. The kindergarten, as such, was a success, but as a feeder for the school it was a failure.

Pinie Ringelblum remained on as principal until the end of 1978, when he resigned to direct his energies towards the building of the Sholem Aleichem College, the newly established Yiddish day school. Henry Nusbaum, a senior teacher at the school and newly appointed secretary of the Council, took over as principal for a period of two years, 1979 to 1980. Doris Burstin, who resigned as Directress of Jewish Studies at the Sholem Aleichem College in 1978, and who from 1979 was the Yiddish teacher at Mt. Scopus, accepted the position of principal from the commencement of the 1981 school year. At committee level, Sym Wolski took over the position of president from the long serving Sender Burstin who decided to stand down because of ill health.

### CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND BACKGROUNDS

The parents of the '60s and '70s were less inclined to limit their Sunday morning activities because of Yiddish School. Due to the growth of the Jewish Day School Movement, there had been changes in the social attitudes towards part-time Jewish schools. Part-time schools were regarded as second best. Research into second language learning has shown that exposure to the language must be daily, especially if the language is no longer spoken at home. Even if the latest methods are used, children find it difficult to learn another language if there is a time lapse of a week between each exposure. The establishment of a Yiddish Day School was the best way of overcoming this problem. It should be noted that students attending the Sholem Aleichem College, and exposed to Yiddish daily, are able to speak fluently by the end of Grade 6, even though most come from non-Yiddish speaking backgrounds. In comparison, those students who have a little exposure to Yiddish at home, struggle with the language when they receive tuition only on a weekly basis.

In the past very high standards of work were attained by students whose *Mamme Loshn* was Yiddish. This was evident in such publications as *Kinder Schraibn*, which was a booklet of articles by students printed in the early 1950s. Such levels of attainment were now well beyond the reach of the students of the next generation. Yiddish was no longer spoken at home, and contact with Yiddish was mainly with the grandparents. The school could and did teach *Yiddishkeit*, which included subjects such as Yiddish language, literature, history, ethics, festivals, demography and singing. Modern Hebrew, which had been part of the curriculum during the '40s, '50s and '60s, was dropped as a subject in the early '70s, because the time spent on Hebrew was now needed for the teaching of the Yiddish language. Besides, the majority of children at the school were attending Jewish Day Schools where Hebrew was taught daily. Despite the fact that most students came to the school with little knowledge of Yiddish, the teaching staff continued to use Yiddish as the language of instruction. Not until the final years, i.e., the 9th and 10th classes, did the lan-

guage of instruction sometimes change to English. The main reason for the change was that it was considered important for students to understand particular aspects of *Yiddishkeit* before they left the school. Some concepts, e.g., Demography, would be difficult for 15 year old children to grasp in English, let alone in Yiddish.

### CLOSURE

School numbers continued to decline slowly during the '70s, albeit at a much slower rate compared with the '60s. Even though the drop off rate was only a trickle, it did affect the classes, nearly all of which had to be paired. From 1981 to 1984 the numbers attending school still continued to slide at a slow rate. The drop was from 36 to 28 during the four-year period. The problem was not one of retaining the children attending, but the lack of enrolments for the preparatory classes. In fact, most children that were enrolled during the '70s did complete the 10-year course. Most new students came from parents who were themselves graduates, but less than half a dozen students came directly from the kindergarten.

Until the end of 1983 the State Government subsidised extended kindergarten hours as long as there was a minimum of 15 children between the ages of three and four. On 30 September, 1983 the State Government announced the following policy changes: Free Milk Scheme to cease from 31/12/83; subsidies for extended hours to cease on 31/1/84 (except in cases of special needs); after 31/1/84 subsidies for three-year olds to end.<sup>19</sup> To receive even the reduced subsidy, a kindergarten required a minimum of 15 four-year olds. For the Peretz School the policy changes were an effective cut in subsidy of between 55% to 60%.

To meet the new criteria, the kindergarten had to immediately enrol five more four-year olds, and raise fees substantially. This would only maintain the financial status quo, and keep the kindergarten open. The writer, who was by then president of the School Council (having replaced Sym Wolski who resigned as president at the end of 1981), organised an appeal against the new levels of funding offered by the Health Commission. However the appeal was rejected, and only after a very heavy advertising program did the committee enrol enough four-year olds to ensure that the kindergarten was maintained during 1984. One could sense that the end for the Peretz School was not far away. This did not daunt the enthusiasm of the staff who continued to work diligently. Individually structured programs were worked out for all students up to the Eighth Grade. Special series of lessons were worked out for the Tenth Grade, which began the year with 7 students, six of whom graduated at the end of the year. It is interesting to note that in 1984 one quarter of the students attending the school were in the Tenth Grade, and that class started with only seven pupils in 1974. In 1984 there were only 2 classes in the traditional sense, the Preparatory Grade and the Tenth Grade, the other classes having only one or two students. It was projected that once the Tenth Grade had graduated, there would be fewer than 20 students attending the school in 1985. The principal, Doris Burstin felt that with such low numbers it would be both educationally and socially desirable for the remaining students to attend the Sholem Aleichem Sunday School.

At the commencement of the 1984 kindergarten year, Fay Morris was confident that she could once again find the required number of four-year olds to continue the kindergarten in 1985. She advised the committee that she had enrolled 12 four-year olds for 1985, which was only three or four short of the numbers required by the Health Commission. However, when parents were asked to make a firm commitment for 1985 the number of enrolments dropped to seven. A fervent advertising

program brought no result. The committee was called together on 12 September 1984 to consider the position. Motions were put and passed that both the school and kindergarten close at the end of the year. These motions were confirmed at an extraordinary general meeting of members held on 13 November. It was also decided at the meeting to offer the assets of the school to the Sholem Aleichem College. Other suggestions were made, but the members realised that since the College was a sister school, there was no other logical alternative.

Staff morale naturally was not high, but this was not reflected in their work. To their credit both Doris and Fay did not despair, even though the imminent closing of the school and kindergarten was staring them in the face. With only small numbers with which to work, a fine end of year concert was presented on 9 December. The last school function the *Seeum*, the graduation ceremony, was held on 15 December at the home of Ruth Friede. Five of the six graduates were children of students of the Peretz School who had themselves graduated in the 1950s. One of the five graduates was the great-granddaughter of J. Giligich, whilst two others were grandchildren of S. Burstin who had been a continuous member of the committee for the 49 years of the school's existence.

One cannot write an essay about the I.L. Peretz School without mentioning a number of workers for the school who were never a president, a secretary or a treasurer. People like Lazar Bloustein, Mr. and Mrs. Trevaks, Toibele Ginter and Ides Silman. Bloustein was on the committee for over 47 years, doing the hard thankless tasks, like collecting school fees and parcels for the bazaars. Mr. Trevaks, the founder of the Shepparton Yiddish School, worked tirelessly for the school after his arrival in Melbourne till his untimely passing. His wife Ethel, was responsible for updating the school's membership list, and for many years arranged the collection of membership dues. Only Toibele Ginter, Ides Silman and Sender Burstin attended both the first meeting of the school, and also its closing function.

Over the years there have been countless devoted workers for the school whom I have not mentioned: those who worked for the *Froyen Commitet* (Mothers Club), the ex-students who arranged the annual balls during the 1960s and 1970s, the people who collected for the bazaars, and the parents committee of the Bulleen Kindergarten which organised numerous functions. I apologise for any other omissions.

Fifteen students who would have attended the Peretz School in 1985, are now being transported every week to the Sholem Aleichem Sunday School. The building now operates as a Montessorri Kindergarten. For the people involved in the Yiddish School Movement, the closing of the I.L. Peretz School and Kindergarten signifies the closing of a building, not the demise of its philosophy or its aims.

#### NOTES

1. *Ten Years Yiddish Schools in Melbourne* — Excelsior Printing p.11
2. *Ibid.*, p.12
3. *Ibid.*, p.14
4. *Ibid.*, p.1000
5. *Twenty Five Years I.L. Peretz School* — York Press, 1960, p.11
6. *Ten Years Yiddish Schools in Melbourne*, p.30
7. *Twenty Five Years I.L. Peretz School*, p.5
8. *Ten Years Yiddish Schools in Melbourne*, p.29
9. *Ibid.*, p.27
10. *Twenty Years Sholem Aleichem School* — Gibbs & Son, 1967, p.5
11. Minutes of committee meeting 3 March 1960
12. Minutes of committee meeting 6 May 1971
13. Total School numbers are featured in the appendix of every annual report of the V.J.B.D.

14. Minutes of committee meeting 28 January 1965
15. Minutes of committee meeting 7 July 1972
16. Minutes of committee meeting 9 May 1972
17. Minutes of committee meeting 31 March 1977
18. Minutes of committee meeting 22 February 1977
19. Letter from Tom Roper (Victorian State Minister for Health), 30 September 1984

## FURTHER HISTORY OF THE BRISBANE HEBREW CONGREGATION

by Morris S. Ochert

In the past two issues of this publication, Vol IX Parts 6 & 7, I summarised the period till March 1965, when the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation's Centenary was celebrated. The purpose of the notes which follow are two-fold — to add some data and colour to that centenary history, and to update the story to the time of writing, September 1986, being a third instalment of this history.

It has not been possible to write of members of Queensland Jewry who lived in various areas of this vast State, long before the earliest date in my essay. For instance, I have heard of a family in Roma in 1848 and of temporary Synagogues in Roma, Warwick and elsewhere.

Mine is not even a full history of Brisbane Jewry. This can never be written as much detail is no longer in existence. It has no doubt been destroyed in perennial "spring cleanings". In most organisations many papers, which could be of great interest for later researchers have been discarded, for a secretary must choose between becoming swamped in his own archives or severely pruning them periodically. People who could have recalled many an interesting fact are no longer with us.

It would have been fascinating, for example, to know about "David Cohen, born 1824, late of Rattlesnake Bar, California, about whom a letter is to be sent to the Polish Rabbi". I wonder why? Similarly, many an interesting, amusing or poignant story must lie forever forgotten behind the terse and briefly minuted words . . . "A letter from Mombassa has been dealt with by the President" . . . "The Senior Rabbi of the Bulgarian Community replied to our cable" . . . "A trio of co-religionists arrived by ship from Shanghai, proved themselves to be thorough-going scoundrels and were provided with ten shillings each, which sufficed to pay their onward passages to Sydney".

On the other hand, I was fortunate to find a cryptic note in the Board's Minute Book of nearly 90 years ago, which read only, "Sam Heiser, Struckoil, Mt. Usher".† There are Heiser descendants still in Brisbane and I found that Sam had just then named his baby daughter "Dorothy Ivy Struckoil Heiser". Well, she is known as "Aunty Dot" and lives near Brisbane and she explained that the slang expression "he struck oil" meant that "he had struck it lucky". Sam had not "struck oil" but found gold at his gold leases at Mt. Usher and recorded his luck by naming his daughter "Struckoil". She told me she founded the Brisbane Jewish Scout Troop in the 1920s. It disbanded in the early 1960s.

Those who have read my centenary history will recall that quite a mystery surrounds the Brisbane Synagogue's foundation stone and its location. A bottle containing documents and coins (something like a time-capsule) was implanted beneath the stone at its laying ceremony in 1886. That night the stone was dislodged by persons unknown and the bottle was stolen. The *Daily Mail* of the day estimated that three were involved — one to keep a look-out while at least two others would be needed to shift the heavy stone. The perpetrators were not apprehended, but the bottle, still containing its documents, was found the following day in vacant ground nearby. The coins were missing, but the *Mail* took comfort in the fact that their value was

not great, so that the "miscreants got little reward for their nefarious activity". The coins were replaced, the bottle was re-inserted in its cavity and the stone was re-cemented in its niche. A large quantity of masonry was immediately laid on top of the stone, to deter a repetition of the earlier theft and this proved effective. Why then, can't we produce the stone, the bottle or its contents? The answer lies in the shape of the hill up which Margaret Street was constructed. Apparently the street originally sloped upwards gradually from Albert Street, and just before it reached George Street, it sloped up very steeply. The effect was that the street outside the Synagogue was some feet lower than at present. This is further supported by the fact that the natural ground surface of the cellar under the Synagogue floor is about 9 feet deep at its lowest corner, and a sketch by the architect shows a number of steps in front of the entry porch. Today the step-up is only a few inches.

Having raised the street and footpath, it would be the obvious thing to also raise the Synagogue's courtyard level, so that one would not have to go down steps from the footpath to the courtyard. In doing so, the foundation stone was, I assume, buried, though it would not have been a difficult task to re-locate the stone above the new courtyard level. It could be that if the foundation stone was of local sandstone, it may have fretted away, as did large areas of identical material at nearby Parliament House. To find it, one would have to excavate through the cement paving and some feet of earth. This operation was planned before the Synagogue centenary in 1986. Reasonable assumptions may be made as to the stone's location:

- (a) At the right hand side of the front of the building, as this is common practice;
- (b) On the corner of the front, as the expression used in the Press and in the Synagogue Minutes is "corner stone";
- (c) About one metre below the paving.

To avoid the expense of excavating, I tried to locate the bottle from the inside of the cellar. Using an electrical metal detector, the inside surface of the front wall of the Synagogue was gone over thoroughly. My hope was to locate the bottle by getting a sounding on the metal coins in it. This proved fruitless as the wall is over a metre thick at that level. The next approach was the possibility that a written description, a photo or a drawing may give its location. Although the *Jewish Chronicle* (London), the *Brisbane Mail* and the Synagogue records give lavish accounts of the ceremony and the Synagogue, the position of the stone is the one missing item. No photo has been found and the newspapers of that day never carried pictures. The only sketch we have by the architect is a faithful depiction of the building as it was constructed, but the stone is not shown. This led me to seek the architect's drawings. Unfortunately, the City Council has only drawings of buildings going back to its formation in 1925. I was led to inquire of the architect's grand-niece, who had obtained all the surviving drawings and greatly valued them. She explained that one large roll was in perfect condition, while another had been left in the open and had largely rotted away. Most of these prints were completely destroyed. As fate would have it, a minute search failed to locate a single paper appertaining to the Synagogue. (It appears that the architect had migrated from Italy and designed many Brisbane buildings, including a number of fine churches, still standing.)

To exactly locate the Congregation's first Synagogue of 1865, I obtained a map from the Oxley Historical Library. Bulcock's Building, in Queen Street, is shown as the premises of Robert Bulcock, Seedsman, marked "7 & 9 Bulcock", next to the "Post Office and Court House". That is still the G.P.O., but Bulcock's blocks are now occupied by the Brisbane Head Office of the Commonwealth Bank. The Bank insisted on providing a memorial plaque on their portico, at their own cost, to mark

the centenary of the Congregation. A speaker at the unveiling was Sir Frank Bulcock, ex MHR, a descendant of Robert, the Congregation's first landlord. On the same map, the present Synagogue is on the site marked "GIBBON 17" in Margaret Street.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society has been forwarded two old communications found in the Synagogue premises. One is a telegram to "Jno Myers Brisbane", obviously in response to a call from this Congregation, as follows:

"Will accept if offered. Advance for journey will be necessary, A.P. Phillips, Hebrew School, Pitt Street", (both these Ministers are mentioned in the centenary history).

The other is a memo from B.F. Marks, requesting "Meelah to be performed on my infant son", and dated 3 September 1879. He wrongly addressed the secretary as C.V. Milligan, an Irish name, whereas he had the Dutch name of Van Millingen.

A report to the Land Board, of 1913, in the Queensland Government Archives, deals with the resumption of the original Cemetery at Lang Park. There were only three Jewish burials there: David Levy, Herbert Michael Levy and Osias Loewe. As this cemetery was opened in the early 1840s, apparently these were the only Jews who were buried in a Jewish cemetery in Brisbane, prior to the opening of the Jewish section of Toowong Cemetery, about 1875. The remains and their memorial stones were moved to the centre of the new Toowong Cemetery in 1913. The inscriptions are hard to read, but dates of death were 1872 and 1875. The first original interment at Toowong was of Sam Harris, in September 1875.

About 830 burials have taken place there, and apart from about 30 sold reserved plots, this cemetery is quite full.

In Vol. IV of the Australian Jewish Historical Society's *Journal* there is an essay by Mr Forbes — "The Jews of the Lachlan District 1861-63" — which ties in with my own centenary history of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

The former essay indicates —

"... A few days later (ie. just after 31 May, 1862) the residents on the Lachlan, of the Hebrew persuasion, were invited to attend a meeting at Mr. Jereslow's, Browne Street, Forbes, for the purpose of considering the importance of erecting a Synagogue, and fencing in a burial ground."

My Brisbane history reads,

"On 5 March 1865, a meeting was called . . . to find a temporary Place of Worship. Mr. Jereslow had obtained for their use, the Sepher Torah and other things from the defunct Lachlan Congregation."

Three weeks later, on the Motion of the same ubiquitous Mr. Jereslow, the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation was formed and he then subscribed a guinea to the Synagogue Fund and a guinea to the Burial Ground Fund, for the purpose of fencing same.

Regarding the above Sepher Torah of the defunct Lachlan Congregation, I note that in 1862 they had asked the old York Street (Sydney) Congregation for a Sepher and had been referred by them "to Joseph Collins of Goulburn who had a Sepher which was not in use". It was felt that this approach would be successful as Mr. Collins was related to Mr. Marks of the Lachlan Board. Therefore, it is conceivable that since 1862, the Brisbane Congregation has owned a Sepher which was used on the Lachlan River area in 1862 and previously was owned by Mr. Collins. Where did he get it, and how old is it?

The Lachlan (or Forbes) Hebrew Congregation did not long enjoy the use of its Sepher, for the "Community did not outlive the gold rush of 1861-62", and this would account for Jereslow's success in acquiring their Torah.



The centenary history refers to a congregant, Sir Matthew Nathan, the Governor of Queensland from 1920 to 1927. I have ample material for a separate essay about him, as well as an essay on Henry Spiro, the Mayor of Toowoomba from 1870 to 1873. In recent years two Jews in Queensland were knighted — Dr. Abram Fryberg M.C., formerly Director General of Health, and Professor Zelman Cowen, Vice Chancellor of the University of Queensland, later to become Governor General. Locally born Alex Roby rose to the rank of Brigadier General, and many other of our community have rendered, or continue to render, valuable public service. Lt. Col. Errol Solomon Meyers had a distinguished medical career. Later, I will submit essays on Saul Mendelsohn (Balladier), the Blumbers of Blumbergville, and many others.

In the first instalment I stated that there are only four Jewish cemeteries in Queensland, though Jewish people are buried in general cemeteries in many parts of this State. Since then, my attention has been called to a small area in the Cooktown Cemetery containing monuments nearly a century old, over three Jewish graves. There is no register so more than three may be buried there. The details have been sent to the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

Recent years have brought hardship to numbers of Brisbane Jewry. The financial depression of the late seventies forced some to lose their source of livelihood. A great flood on Australia Day, 26 January 1974, which covered all the low-lying areas of Brisbane and Ipswich and the Gold Coast, destroyed or damaged homes or businesses of many Jewish families, just as occurred in 1893. Water reached a point 30 yards from the Brisbane Synagogue, while the Sifrie Torah had to be rescued from the Central Synagogue, South Brisbane, by rowing boat. Many rallied to aid in the heart-breaking tasks of rehabilitation. A large amount of money was contributed by local Jewry to the Lord Mayor's Flood Relief Fund, as well as to the fund for their co-religionists. The Darwin Cyclone Tracy Fund also received much support from Queensland Jewry.

This is an opportunity to write about some Communal organisations not referred to elsewhere in this essay. The Queensland Association of Ex-Servicemen and Women (known as Q.A.J.E.X.) is the successor organisation to the one which was formed after the First World War. Q.A.J.E.X. was founded soon after World War II and originally enlisted a handful of World War I veterans, all of whom have since passed on. Indeed, many of the World War II members are also no longer with us, and the ranks are thinner when they fall in each year for the Anzac Day Service. The parade and service, preceded by a wreath-laying at the Cenotaph and followed by a luncheon and the Annual Meeting, are the main annual activities. However, it is felt that the mere existence of the Association is an important public relations feature of the Community.

Soon after World War II, the Judean Sports Club became Queensland Maccabi and joined the Australian Maccabi Federation. Members participate in various sports at the Annual A.J.A.X. Carnivals which are held in Queensland every four years. Members have also competed, with some success, at the Israel Maccabiah each four years.

In the 1950s and 1960s a very talented group functioned with the name, The Jewish Art Group. They presented a number of excellent reviews and plays.

A Migrants' Welfare Society did good work in the several years following World War II, welcoming migrants and helping them to settle. A large home was converted to be "Welfare Home", to house them till housing could be found. The late Abe Newhouse did valuable work in this regard.

When entertainment groups such as the Red Army Ballet come to Brisbane, an orderly protest is staged, not against the performers or their art, but against the princi-

ple that those who persecute our people should be patronised and given the impression that "business is as usual". If we must be the world's conscience, so be it!

Brisbane B'nai B'rith Lodge 2123 was formed in 1957 and the Women's Chapter followed several years later. Many valuable charitable acts have been performed by Brisbane B'nai B'rith, the foremost being the raising of a large sum needed to launch the Retirement Homes at the Communal Centre. In 1984 they combined to form the B'nai B'rith Brisbane Unit 3207, and Unit Harmony was added.

Some other groups which have a long record of successful operation are WIZO, N.C.J.W., the Brisbane Help-in-Need Society, and the United Board of Hebrew Education. Student groups have been formed with rising and failing fortunes, as is the case with Youth Aliyah and Friends of the Hebrew University. Recently, an Association of Jewish Doctors was formed.

The remainder of this essay is in the form of an update, from the Centenary in 1965 to September 1986, in chronological order.

1965/66 — The Centenary was celebrated in July 1965. At the Centenary Banquet, the Administrator of Queensland, Sir Allen Mansfield, was the guest speaker. There was also a Centenary Garden Party. The Congregation was inscribed into the Golden Book of the Keren Kayemeth in Jerusalem.

1966/67 An area for *Shemot* (irreparable religious items) was established in the Toowong Cemetery and used for the first time.

Rabbi Z. Tapoohi was appointed as Shochet and Assistant Reader. A home was purchased for him at Milton, in the basement of which a Mikvah was constructed and consecrated. This house was inundated to a depth of a metre over the floor, in the flood of 1974 and it was later sold.

The Central Synagogue in South Brisbane, which was founded in 1915, was mysteriously destroyed by fire one Friday night. No explanation was ever found for this disaster. Being a wooden building it was entirely destroyed, including four Sifrie Torah. Their remains, with the ashes of books etc., were buried in the *Shemot* grave abovementioned, in the presence of a large gathering. The partly melted and distorted silver *Klie Kodesh*, however, were retained and remain on display as a memorial in the new Central Synagogue which was erected and consecrated within 3 years. Being brick and on a hill-top, it should be safer from fire and floods, which had caused so much grief to the congregation of the original Shule. The attractive new building is a great credit to the late E. Doobov, and the present president G. Stein.

The South Brisbane Chevra Kadisha united with the Brisbane Chevra. A funeral chapel was constructed for the Chevra, set in bush surroundings at the New Jewish Cemetery at Mt. Grayatt. In the presence of clergy, the Lord Mayor, the Director of the City Health Department, and many congregants, this dignified structure was opened and consecrated for its sacred purposes. It contains striking memorials to Jewish victims of the Holocaust and of the two World Wars. The new burial ground was consecrated with the traditional seven circuits.

Early in 1967 Rabbi Gottshall's place was taken by Rev. A. Sternfein and Rabbi Tapoohi became Minister to South Brisbane. About this time, "Unity of the Community", again became the motto. The plan to provide a modern synagogue, kindergarten, ministers' residences, Talmud Torah, Youth Centre, communal hall etc. all in one locality, and handy to the main Jewish population centre, had been presented over and over again, in various forms, for many years. The idea was to liquefy and combine the assets of the Brisbane and South Brisbane Congregations, and make a new start in a suitable central location. Three things put an end to this proposal on

this occasion: the fact that the South Brisbane Congregation was already building its replacement structure while the discussion was proceeding; the fact that there is simply no "central" location in Brisbane, and no matter where a complex would be erected, it would be many kilometers from many suburbs containing groups of Jewish families, for the Community, though small, occupies ALL of the greater Brisbane area; there is still also a small vestige of distrust between some members of each Congregation, left over from the days when each openly felt that the other was seeking to take advantage. The discussion has since re-started a few times, and a sub-committee exists — the matter has all the hall-marks of something that may lead nowhere.

The Gold Coast Congregation completed its beautiful synagogue and later added an upper floor containing an assembly hall, catering and other facilities. This rapidly growing young congregation now has premises of which they may be truly proud. Their Centre is indispensable for visitors from overseas and interstate, as well as local congregants. Rabbi Ludwig became their first minister. Some years later, a Liberal Congregation was founded at Surfers.

The end of the Six Day War of June 1967 was marked locally by a Service of Thanksgiving. An Emergency Appeal for reconstruction work in Israel was highly successful. The excitement of the events resulted in many contributions from non-Jewish groups and individuals. The Chaplain General of the Israel Defence Forces, Rabbi Goren, who was in Brisbane at the time, rushed back to Israel and was there in time to blow the first shofar at the Western Wall, on its recovery. A number of young Brisbane Jewish people, who were in Israel at the time, remained to assist in various capacities, and were joined by six other local volunteers who were selected from over 100 who came forward. Later that year, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra performed at the City Hall with great success and receptions were tendered by the Premier and the Lord Mayor.

1967/68 A World Scout Jamboree was held in suburban Jindalee. Services were conducted for Jewish participants at the site and subsequently at the synagogue. Kosher food was arranged.

The words "THE BRISBANE SYNAGOGUE", and the Congregation's spiritual name, "KEHILLA KEDOSHA SHA'ARI EMUNA", were added over the arched entry to the synagogue during the Presidency of Mr. A. Newhouse.

At the new Mt. Gravatt Cemetery, a spectacular black granite monument was dedicated to the memory of the Martyrs of the European Holocaust. It was erected due to the efforts of a committee of survivors. Caskets of ashes from crematoria were sealed inside. The monument is the venue of the Annual Martyrs' Memorial Service and Warsaw Ghetto Commemoration.

Rev. B. Belfer, whose brother was Minister to the South Brisbane Congregation 20 years before, joined that congregation as minister.

Led by Eric Wemberg, who had been deported from USA for Nazi activities, a group of uniform-wearing Nazi supporters endeavoured to address a rally in a city park. It is estimated that over 2,000 spectators attended. The Jewish Community hastily organised a large opposing contingent which swept forward as Wemberg commenced to speak. Flags and other items were ripped from the hands of the Nazi supporters who were put to flight and the great rally ended as quickly as it had begun. Promises were made next day that they "would be back with reinforcements next Sunday", so the Jewish group, greatly enhanced in numbers, was in attendance, ready for all events. Even a first-aid post, staffed by young women, was set up. All that was missing was the Nazi group, and a newspaper report next day said they had

passed through Sydney on their way to Canberra saying, "Those b. . . . Jews in Brisbane are too tough!" However, one notorious member, "The Skull", did splash the abovementioned Martyrs' Memorial with red paint. He was arrested and fined \$200. When he fell behind with payment, the Chevra (which is the custodian of the monument) foreclosed and "The Skull" served out a jail sentence instead. The Press next reported on Wemherg a few years later, when he died in Central Africa. He was alleged to be carrying a huge sum of money from England, to set up a World Nazi Headquarters in Canberra. The money was not found, and the project was apparently abandoned.

1968/69 Rev. A. Sternfein was replaced by Rabbi H. Kustanovics until the appointment of Rabbi Emery Engel.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Magnus donated a silver Torah yad, and Mr. and Mrs. A. Newhouse donated a Kiddush cup.

1969/70 The Betar Maon, a club house for the local Zionist youth group, was acquired and refurbished to provide the necessary facilities for this active group. It is also used as a meeting place for other groups. Betar in Brisbane is now about 28 years old, and is almost entirely run by its youthful leaders. The formula for their smooth continuity seems to be that they have a hierarchy so that new leaders are ready to move forward as needed. Between one and five Betar leaders visit Israel annually and return after a year fully trained and inspired. Queensland has also been able to share the Shlichim who are sent to guide Betar groups in the larger centres. There have also been community Shlichim, who are sent to assist all youth groups, and not just the Zion-oriented groups.

1970/71 The Chief Rabbi, Dr. I. Jakobovits, visited Brisbane for the first time. Rabbis I. Porush, O. Abramson and J. Kemelman of the Sydney Beth Din visited to deal with many local matters. Mr. and Mrs. A. Newhouse donated a Sepher Torah.

1971/72 The old Palings organ, mentioned early in this history, was finally replaced by a modern electronic organ by the Women's Guild in memory of their late President, Mrs. Pauline Max. This was the 79th year of the Guild.

A Friendship Club was formed for entertaining the elderly of the community. The 25th Anniversary of Israel was the subject of a major celebration. The B'nai B'rith donated an English translation (about 20 volumes) of the Babylonian Talmud to the library of the University of Queensland. In the years since then it has proved to be one of their most used and valued contributions. A further effort was made by B'nai B'rith to establish a Hillel Foundation at the University of Queensland, but lack of a suitable councillor and the great cost have always been serious problems.

A long running success story has been "Shalom", Queensland J.N.F.'s monthly magazine. It was founded in 1964 by George Frey and at the time of writing he remains the editor, assisted only by some who occasionally write some articles. He has assistance from the Queensland State Zionist Office, which serves the United Israel Appeal, the State Zionist Council and the J.N.F. and has functioned for about 35 years. Mrs. A. Norris has served as Office Secretary for 25 years and surely knows the community better than the community knows itself.

The massacre of the Jewish Olympians at Munich shocked World Jewry. A synagogue service was held at which a spontaneous collection of funds was made, to aid the widows and children of these Martyrs.

1972/73 A Liberal congregation was founded and they have since fitted out a place of prayer known as "Temple Shalom".

1973/74 Rev. B. Skolnick, who succeeded Rabbi Engel, was inducted by Premier Bjelke-Petersen.

On the occasion of the Yom Kippur War a Memorial Service was held for the fallen and a large sum was donated for the support of their dependants.

Rev. Klein became Minister of the South Brisbane Congregation, followed by Rev. Gescheit. Rabbi Avnit succeeded Rabbi Ludwig at the Gold Coast.

1974/75 A delicatessen was established by the Women's Guild at the Synagogue Hall. Another facility, which goes back beyond living memory, is the provision of matzo and Pesach groceries, at the Hall. One or two weekends before the Festival, hundreds of Jewish families attend to purchase their Pesach supplies. Kosher items are available all year round.

1976/77 An apartment was acquired for the minister, a short distance from the synagogue, to save him the long walk from the house in New Farm. At the time of writing this essay, the latter is being sold.

An ambitious step forward was the launching in 1976, of the Jewish Community Centre Project at Burbank, east of Mt. Gravatt. In a brief period, despite the financial recession, funds were subscribed to buy the land comprising many acres of light bush, 3 swimming pools, and various facilities. The Brisbane Congregation subscribed \$5,000. Since then, thanks to the efforts of various other organisations and the Centre Committee, they have added more land, six retirement cottages, tennis courts, a major catering facility and a Mikvah. The premises have been utilised for a wide variety of communal functions, and it is a popular venue for social, cultural and sporting activities. The N.C.J.W. has recently added a functions hall.

1977/78 Rev. W. Bernstein was engaged as Second Reader and Shochet and Mrs. Bernstein assisted as a teacher. They later served the Gold Coast Congregation, before retiring to Brisbane.

The Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth was commemorated in the presence of the Governor, Sir James Ramsay. He inspected a Guard of Honour formed of Jewish Ex-Servicemen, one of whom was Sir Zelman Cowen, who was then Governor General Designate. The Reception filled the Memorial Hall beyond its capacity.

Soon after, Sir Zelman, who had achieved great results as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, was farewelled at the Centre at a major function before leaving to take up his appointment as Governor General of Australia.

1978/79 By this time it had become apparent that the area around the synagogue was rapidly to change from its run-down appearance. Next door, Minerals House was built, one of the tallest office blocks north of Sydney. The area was being rebuilt and historic old buildings renovated.

The celebration of the Second Seder in the Synagogue Hall was revived after many years and large numbers of congregants attend each year.

The South Brisbane Congregation's new synagogue, referred to earlier, was completed, and dedicated by Rabbi R. Apple of Sydney.

1981/82 Rev. Skolnick retired and Rabbi M. Boas, a seventh generation Australian and one of the few Australian-born rabbanim, was appointed in May 1982 and was later inducted by Rabbi Apple at a major function.

Israel's actions in the Lebanese War, though justified in Jewish eyes, caused a great falling-off in the popularity of Israel and of Jewish people in general. The State Zionist Council's response was to provide speakers wherever possible and the Board of Deputies Public Relations Chairman made a great contribution to that campaign. A record sum was collected locally by the United Israel Appeal.

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra visited Brisbane for the third time. A B'nai B'rith Committee worked hard to ensure that maximum public relations value resulted from the tour as well as to ensure very considerable ticket sales.

A Holocaust Exhibition was presented by B'nai B'rith at the City Hall, attracting thousands of visitors, and a great upsurge of understanding of that sad era resulted.

The 13th Commonwealth Games were held in Brisbane. Rabbi Boas was accredited as Jewish Chaplain and contacted Jewish participants, many of whom attended the synagogue for the High Festivals and accepted home hospitality. Rabbi Boas was also the Jewish Chaplain to the huge Scout Jamboree which was held on Brishane's western fringe in December 1982. In 1983 he was made a Jewish Chaplain to the Australian Army.

1982/83 Due to energetic work by Rahbi Boas, a Mikvah was constructed at the Communal Centre, and consecrated. (The Mikvah which was constructed at the request of Rabbi Gottshall, was no longer available once the house in Milton was sold after being submerged in the 1974 flood.)

1983/84 The Shir Li ("My Song") Hebrew Folk Singing Choir was formed by Maya Zetlin. It has proved a popular innovation, performing at Independence Day functions in Brisbane and the Gold Coast, bat mitzvahs, weddings, Anzac Day Services, Martyrs' Memorials, concerts, the opening of the Performing Arts Complex, the Brisbane Fiesta, and notably the 1985 Folkloric. For these latter occasions an Israel Folk Dancing Group was added and a professional programme was presented to the audience.

An "Over 80s" function was held at the Centre, at which many octogenarians were greeted by the large gathering and congratulated by the Mayor-Elect Sallyanne Atkinson.

Rabbi Boas resigned and the congregation was without a full-time spiritual leader for over a year. Aided by his dynamic wife, Rev. W. Bernstein helped out, and he conducted many Sabbath and Festival Services. Some of the congregants assisted at the services.

1984/85 Rev. A. Dobelsky, formerly a senior teacher at Mt. Scopus College, became minister of the congregation and principal of the Talmud Torah.

1985/86 The highlight of this period was the celebration of the centenary of the consecration of the Brisbane Synagogue. This was preceded by several functions, including a Masonic Service attended by large numbers of visiting Masons and local Jewish members of the Craft. The Shir Li Choir added to the harmony, and Rabbi Raymond Apple delivered the sermon. There followed a pilgrimage to the site of the former Toowoomba Synagogue and to the Drayton-Toowoomba Jewish Cemetery where a plaque was unveiled during a Memorial Service led by Rabbi Apple and Rev. Dobelsky.

Considerable renovations were carried out prior to the centenary, while some major new items were installed. Stained glass windows, each endowed by congregants, were added, and, also, a display of the tablets of the Ten Commandments as a memorial to Aaron Lewitzky (the donor's late husband) and to all the departed of the congregation. The Centenary Service was conducted by Rev. Dobelsky, assisted by the Shir Li Choir, and Rabbi Fabian occupied the pulpit. This Service, and the brilliant function thereafter were attended by His Excellency, the Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen and Lady Stephen, and by representatives of the Churches, the Commonwealth and State Governments, and of the City of Brisbane.

At the end of the second instalment of this history, the Ministers and Presidents up to 1965 were listed. The following have served since that time.

**MINISTERS OF THE CONGREGATION 1965-1986**

(Including Shochtim and Second Readers)

Rabbi B. Gottshall	Rev. B. Skolnick
Rabbi Z. Tapoohi	Rabbi M. Boas
Rabbi H. Kustanovics	Rev. W. Bernstein
Rev. A. Sternfein	Rev. A. Dobelsky
Rabbi E. Engel	

**PRESIDENTS OF THE CONGREGATION 1965-1986**

A. Newhouse	P.B. Frankel
M.S. Myers	L. Marcus
J. Lipski	L.A. Phillips
L.A. Phillips	J. Lipski

**DEMOGRAPHY**

In the Centenary History, I provided statistical data on adherents to the Jewish Religion, at the various Censuses 1861-1961. (a) in Queensland, (b) in Brisbane only, (c) in Local Government Areas and non-municipal towns. Below are the figures from the censuses conducted since June 1981.

Census	(a) Queensland			Census	(b) City of Brisbane		
	Males	Females	Total		Males	Females	Total
1966	839	790	1,629	1966	438	364	802
1971	789	513	1,302	1971	500	438	938
1976	807	723	1,530	1976	488	444	932
1981	1,031	977	2,008	1981	448	410	858

**(c) Local Government Areas Census 30 June 1981****Brisbane & Moreton Statistical Divisions**

Brisbane City including Logan City, Ipswich,  
Pine Rivers, Redcliffe City, Redland Shire  
Gold Coast City  
Remaining Shires

Males	Females	Persons
448	410	858
293	340	633
136	112	248
877	862	1,739
11	8	19
18	13	31
19	14	33
12	3	15
23	16	39
42	25	67
45	30	75
3	3	6
1,050	974	2,024

Sub Total

Wide-Bay Burnett Div.  
Darling Downs Div.  
Fitzroy Div.  
Central West & North West Div.  
Mackay Div.  
Northern Div.  
Far North Div.  
Migratory

State Total

When preparing my centenary history, the E.C.A.J.'s statistician suggested a 12% upward adjustment, in order to gain a more accurate estimate of Jewish population, when considering the numbers who claim Jewish Religion in a Census. Since then, there has obviously been a great increase in the number of people of all religions, who decline to state their affiliation, or who claim no religion, or whose response is registered as "not classifiable". At the 1981 Census, the percentage was 22.2% and the local statistician's office feels that the figure will exceed 25% at the Census in June 1986.

The adjustment which is probably applicable in the case of Jewish people is understandably higher than applies to the general community as a result of the Holocaust and other anti-semitic experiences. I have applied an adjustment of 25% to the figure of 2,024 to obtain a conservative estimate of approximately 2,530, which is possibly the best available guess at the population of Queensland at June, 1981. Though the 1986 Census will give an idea of Queensland Jewry's numbers, it will not be ready for publication till about April/May 1987. In an attempt to make a rough estimate of the Queensland Jewish population at the time of writing, I extrapolate, using the number of addresses, i.e. units of Jewish residence, in the local Zionist Office communal mailing list. At the time of the 1981 Census there were about 420 and today there are about 650 addresses. This gives an increase of 55%. Treating this very conservatively, by applying only 40% to the adjusted figure of 2,530 (June 1981), I estimate the current number at 3,542. However, one should never hope to meet them all, nor to make plans involving this number, for many of them are, and will remain, a statistic.

Our enhanced Jewish population consists mainly of (a) migrants from Sydney and Melbourne, many of them middle aged or elderly, who have moved to the Gold Coast to live in retirement or to conduct businesses; (b) academics who have come from the southern states, and a lesser number from overseas, to take positions at the three Queensland universities (most of these are younger than "middle aged"); (c) a number who are arriving here, mainly from the U.K., U.S.A., South Africa, East Africa, Canada and Israel. Most are below middle age. A good percentage are professionals or trades people.

The Board of Deputies took the total male membership of each Brisbane congregation and added about 150 to represent families from South Africa, Israel etc., most of which have not affiliated with any congregation. The grand total was multiplied by a figure representing the average number in a modern family and this resulted in an estimated total of about 1,600 Jewish people in Brisbane. By applying the abovementioned 25% adjustment to the Census figure of 858 we have a total for Brisbane of 1,072. So the best possible guess is "between 1,000 and 1,600", which is by no means a precise statistic.

There is the Yiddish expression, *Bis Hundred und Zwanzig* which translates literally "May you live to one hundred and twenty years" i.e. the life-span of Moses. The Brisbane Hebrew Congregation has reached and passed that milestone, while its synagogue was the centre of its centenary celebrations in July 1986. It is a popular pastime of some of the southern Jewish Press, and locals who contribute articles thereto, to refer to Brisbane Jewry as a dying Community. The shocking headline "Shall we say Kaddish for Brisbane Jewry?" actually appeared last year! This destructive criticism will be forgotten while the Community successfully negotiates its second 120 years.

†"Struck Oil" was the name of a play by the American actors, J.C. Williamson and his wife, Maggie Moore. The latter came to Queensland in 1894 when this play was



staged at Mount Morgan. About that time a gold-bearing reef was discovered in the district and a shaft was put down and called "Struck Oil". A canvas town of gold prospectors sprang up within this area. Most successful was William Usher whose Mount Usher mine promised to develop as a rival to Mount Morgan. Struck Oil became known as a small mining field and a village. Today, Mount Usher and Struck Oil are not a township but the area is a rural residential one a few kilometers south of Rockhampton. See, *Mount Morgan: Gold Copper and Oil* by John Kerr (1982); and, F.L. Golding, "An Old Mining Town in Queensland: Mount Morgan", *Journal*, The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 83.

## THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT GOULBURN

by Stephen J. Tazewell

Almost forgotten and remotely situated within the city confines, there remains a chapter in stone of the city's history. By 1848 Goulburn had the third largest Jewish population in Australia. Mostly merchants, storekeepers and money lenders they embraced many everyday callings. Today they are more especially remembered in the city's midst by the sad remains of the old Jewish Cemetery situated in Long Street beyond the War Memorial on Rocky Hill. There is another enduring example of the Jewish era in the old summer house on Lansdowne Estate which was used by the Emanuel family for worship, when they occupied the Estate, after they purchased it from the Bradley Estate.

The early Jewish families held their service of worship in their various members' homes. In the 1840s services were held in a private building at the rear of Moss Marks' Store in Auburn Street. The Jewish journal of that period, *The Voice of Jacob* of 6 June 1845, on page 174 records "... at Goulburn, a town 170 miles to the southward, services were performed at the residence of Mr. Elias Moses, who has recently given an acre of land for a Jewish Cemetery. About seventeen persons attended." This land was portion of section 23 of the Parish of Towrang. Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses owned two large allotments numbers 23 and 24. The official measurements of the Cemetery land are given as 312 feet by 71 feet, "an area of approximately 22 perches".

The need for a Jewish Cemetery had by this time becoming pressing. In November 1844, two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. John Moses were tragically drowned in a vehicle in a flooded river crossing. These two girls, Sarah and Hannah Moses, were buried in unmarked graves in what was soon to become the Goulburn Jewish Cemetery.

The first marked grave would appear to be that of Isaac Davis of Boorowa, who died as the result of an attack by bushrangers on his store on 9 February 1845. His rather damaged memorial still endures.

The building of the caretaker's cottage appears to have been well in hand by 1848. The stonework was then nearing completion, for in the *Goulburn Herald and Argyle Advertiser*, then new and the only newspaper in Goulburn, contained the following advertisement, on Saturday, 12 August 1848, "Tenders of Carpenter's, Joiner's and Plasterer's work at the house at the Jewish Burial Ground, Tourang. For plans and specifications apply at the Argyle Stores. N.B. All tenders must be lodged at the above stores by the 21st inst. Moss Marks, Hon. Sec. Committee Room, Goulburn." Tourang refers to the Parish of Towrang. This has often been confused with the village of Towrang about 12 miles away.

There appears to be little information as to when the house was completed or when it was first occupied. It is known that one room was especially reserved for burial services.

The final conveyance of the cemetery land from Benjamin and Moses is dated 28 January 1848. The first trustees were Nathan Mandelson, Samuel Davis and Solomon Moses.

The Goulburn Hebrew Association cash book is preserved in the archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney. The first entry is that of 7 January



MRS MOSES' GRAVE. FIRST JEWISH WOMAN MARRIED IN AUSTRALIA.



MOSS MARKS' HEADSTONE

1851, with a credit of 29 pounds, 14 shillings. There are entries of income and expenditure, some of which are in connection with the burial ground. The last entry is that of the 25 July 1877, and shows a credit balance of 18 pounds, 11 shillings and 3 pence.

During the 1880s there was a considerable exodus of Jews from Goulburn and the activities of the Hebrew Association appear to have ended in 1877. A letter from David M. Myers, a solicitor, written to Simeon Frankel, secretary of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, on 16 August 1883, states, "Keep Jewish burial ground in order. Instruct Messrs. Collins and Emanuel to pay money at their disposal for that purpose."

Information from the records of the Australian Jewish Historical Society indicates there would have been about 22 burials in the cemetery, many in unmarked graves. Most headstones have both Hebrew and English inscriptions on them. Some of the marked graves still existent are:

Isaac Davis of Boorowa, died 9 February 1845.

Rebecca Moses, the wife of John Moses, died 8 January 1854 aged 46 years. This is a particularly historic grave as deceased was the first Jewish woman to be married in Australia.

Another known grave, but unmarked, is that of Solomon Moses also known as Moss, who was drowned at Deep Creek in 1860. His sister Sarah was the wife of the Reverend A.A. Levi. Another just discovered memorial is that of Mark Elgin Davis, youngest son of David and Rachel, died 21 June 1860. Another memorial is that of Lydia, wife of Joseph Collins, who departed this life, Holy Sabbath Day, 15 March 1862, aged 24 years, "Many daughters have acted virtuously, but thou excelled them all. Grace is deceitful and beauty vain, but the woman who feareth the Lord, she alone shall be ever exalted". Louis, second son of E. and C. Mandelson, who departed this life 12 December 1863, aged 18 months. Saul Yeates, Esq. Solicitor late of London, who departed this life on 6 May, A.M. 5627, aged 79 years. In the Gregorian Calendar the year is 1867. His epitaph, "My soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from him". Moss Marks, "This for a testimony that beneath reposes the earthly remains of Moss Marks, who departed this life on Thursday, 5 August 5629, 1869. Aged 49 years".

Other memorials: Sarah Emanuel, died 3 November 1871 aged 3 months. Rose Una Alexander, died 13 December, A.M. 5639, 1879. A substantial memorial is that of Henry Isaacs Caro, died 11 Sept. 1877. 4 Tishri, A.M. 5688, aged 45 years. A very badly damaged memorial is that of Louis Mandelson, "in loving memory of my dear husband and our father, who departed this life, 11 March 1909, aged 71 years". Louis Mandelson was perhaps the longest Jewish resident of Goulburn. In announcing his death the *Goulburn Evening Post* of March 1 1909, stated that he had been a resident of the city for 50 years. He had carried on a business in Auburn Street as a tailor and outfitter. Besides his widow, he left a family of two sons and seven daughters. It was his wish to be buried in Goulburn.

Another known grave is that of Mrs. Lydia Yates. Possible graves of persons believed to be buried in this cemetery are, E.G. Abrahams, A.W. Goldstein, T. Isaac and R.S. Isaac. Later graves of this century are, Dr. Hugo Goldberger, died 17 July 1943 aged 56 years. Siegfried Vogel, died 9 October 1943, aged 56 years. Both these people were wartime refugees, Vogel purchased a small general store at Yarra, six miles from Goulburn from the aged Miskelly family who ran the store for many years. Mr. Vogel and his friend did not survive long after their European experience.

Over the years, the caretaker's cottage has been the subject of considerable discussion and controversy. Later caretakers, who probably also performed the function of sexton, have been quite varied. Several have recorded long occupancy. There are no apparent records of the earliest occupants. A Mr. O'Rourke, who resigned in 1909, is recorded as having 20 years occupancy. At this period W.G. Hunt was in charge of the cemetery. He lived in Bourke Street and on 22 October 1909 he let the house to a Mr. Leecount for one shilling a week. He appears to have stayed for some years. There are other families known to have resided there at various times but obviously with little caretaking attention. A family by the name of Batten lived there at one period. Robert O'Brien came there on 17 November 1933. This year was perhaps the height of the Great Depression and the caretaker's cottage was let to O'Brien for 6 pence a week with a tenancy agreement conditional on his repairing and keeping in order the fences around the cemetery and the like. He remained in occupancy until 1940, when he was removed by the trustees. The house was then vacant and by 1942 it was completely derelict. Around this period a Mr. Payten wrote to H.I. Wolff, the secretary of the Trust at the Great Synagogue, offering to purchase the iron off the roof for the sum of five pounds. There does not appear to be any evidence of a sale being effected. The roof was undoubtedly removed by around 1942, the old house demolished and the bricked-in well filled with a great

quantity of litter and rubble. All that remains today is some of the stone wall foundations.

For many years the cemetery fell into the most gross neglect with blackberries and weeds everywhere. The fences collapsed and cattle moved in and rubbed against memorials, breaking many. Today things have changed and due to the efforts of the Trustees the restoration of the cemetery is on the move. It has been re-fenced and the monumental mason has completed the work of the restoration of a considerable number of memorials. The help of the Goulburn City Council and some of the lads from St. Patrick's College has been most appreciated. The final restoration will bring considerable prominence to this hallowed and historic cemetery which is believed to be one of the very few country Jewish cemeteries outside the metropolitan area in New South Wales. An historic site, its restoration will provide a unique and permanent memorial to those early Jewish settlers who helped to establish the city of Goulburn.

## THE GOULBURN JEWISH CEMETERY A HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

*by M.Z. Forbes, B.A., LL.B.*

It has been generally accepted by Jewish communities throughout their long history that the departed must be treated with the utmost respect. Likewise, cemeteries were always preserved and were regarded as places not to be demeaned. When one recalls the Jewish name for the necropolis, *Beth Hayim* (House of Life) or *Beth Olam* (Place of Eternal Rest), it is not surprising that there are historic Jewish cemeteries which have been maintained for many centuries. Families and communities honoured and cherished the memory of their predecessors, for to do otherwise would have been unseemly.

From the earliest times, Australian Jewish settlers were concerned to establish places of worship and, also, burial grounds. Thus it was that in 1853 Crown Grants were made to Samuel Davis, Samuel Benjamin and Nathan Mandelson as Trustees for the Jews of Goulburn numbering then about 100 persons, for the erection of a Synagogue and School. No such building/s was ever erected and in 1891 the subject land was resumed by the Crown for other purposes. In 1940 the Supreme Court, on the application of the Trustees, being Messrs. John Goulston, Lewis George Cohen and Orwell Phillips, ordered that a scheme be settled in respect of the dormant fund of £2618/17/11. The Trustees advocated the establishment of a Hebrew School at North Bondi where services would also be held on the High Festivals and certain Sabbaths. It is of interest, in passing, that Sydney B. Glass acted as Solicitor for the Trustees, and P.J. Marks was amongst those who instructed Counsel.

Mr. S.J. Tazewell has outlined the history of the Goulburn Jewish Cemetery which, unlike the synagogue and the school, was established, and included within its grounds a small stone caretaker's cottage. When, in 1883, it was clear that most Jews had left the district, the Goulburn Hebrew Association, which had been responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery, remitted a sum of £400 to the Great Synagogue, Sydney, requesting that the cemetery be kept in order. It is most regrettable, however, that this little ground, the sole relic of a one time proud and active Jewish community, became much neglected. It was not until 1943 that S.B. Glass was instrumental in the Court ordering that the Great Synagogue should be the Trustee of the Goulburn Jewish Cemetery.<sup>1</sup> A period of some 40 years has elapsed since that date, during which time the process of neglect continued unabated until some remedial steps were recently taken. Those nominated as Trustees were Saul Symonds, Harry Lesnie and John Goulston. David J. Benjamin was the last surviving Trustee, and the cemetery remained completely without Trustees when he died in 1961.<sup>2</sup>

Those who would wish to learn more of the significant role of Goulburn Jewry in the earlier development of this southern tableland centre — beginning in the 'thirties of the last century and including the later gold rush period of the 'fifties — would do well to consult the chapters of that history by S.B. Glass in this Journal.<sup>3</sup> In its earlier heyday Goulburn was always seen as a busy and bustling place, and it was recognised that its Jewish citizens were prominent and closely identified with the life and progress of the town. It is perhaps a little strange that no synagogue, as

such, was built, although the Jewish community did provide itself with a burial ground. When, however, Glass wrote, he was most authentic, even poetic, in describing the appearance of the cemetery as one saw it from the height of the War Memorial's hill:

"Some distance away to the north of the city, in a secluded spot where the travellers along the Sydney Road pass by unheeding, is an area of ground sacred to the dead of the former Jewish community . . . Looking from the top of the tower on the dilapidated Chapel and the broken and disordered tombstones, one is oppressed with the sadness of the reminiscences. Between the two points the life-cord of a once thriving and important community has been severed. The pulse of the city's business life, the vigorous existence of the pastoral countryside, alike pass unthinking by the remains of the forgotten dead."<sup>4</sup>

The city, with a population today of 24,000, is an important market and wool selling centre for the area, from which some of the world's finest wool is grown. The region is, indeed, pervaded by a sense of history. "This place," as a modern writer says, "has long been lived in. It is adult. It possesses the style and texture which only time can bestow on a city." It is not, therefore, surprising that there were not lacking residents of Goulburn who have indicated their concern that the old Jewish cemetery was being allowed to fall into serious ruin and decay.

Correspondence with the Australian Jewish Historical Society shows that, in 1967, the Goulburn & District Historical Society was interested in the history of Goulburn's early Jewish community, and it was then stated that 15 headstones were still standing in the cemetery.<sup>5</sup> In 1972, Mr. W.M. Carey, of "Pineleigh", Common Street, wrote to the Jewish Cemetery Trust, Sydney. He was then concerned about the repair of fencing and the spread of blackberries.<sup>6</sup> About that same time the Secretary of the Leisurelands Tourist Association, Incorporating Crookwell Shire, City of Goulburn, and Mulwaree Shire, wrote to the abovenamed Trust, drawing attention to the neglect of the burial ground, and commenting: "In fact it is very difficult to see that it is a cemetery at all." The writer also added that, "The graves and headstones represent part of a very interesting past of this City and our Association are very keen to see them preserved together with other pioneer graves."<sup>7</sup> Following these enquiries, however, nothing further really eventuated until reports, early in 1981, were circulating that the cemetery had been ploughed and desecrated. These reports, some said, were exaggerated, but it was generally agreed that the cemetery site had been abandoned to the depredations of vandals and others. In response to an article in the *Evening Post*,<sup>8</sup> a member of the local Historical Society stated that members of the Society had repeatedly visited the cemetery and advised the Jewish authorities of its condition. "In a word," as Janet M. Ryrie wrote, "the Jewish community by its own indifference, has destroyed its own cemetery, which is behind the War Memorial."<sup>9</sup> On the same occasion, Stuart Hume, a great-grand-nephew of Hamilton Hume, the first Australian-born explorer, wrote critically of this long continued neglect, questioning belated expressions of concern. "Do you ever," he said, "scrabble your shoes over a neat ant's nest then retire to watch the inhabitants rush furiously around looking for gore?" He reminded the readers of Goulburn's one-time title of "Little Jerusalem", and he mentioned that Sydney's Jewish community had promised, in 1940, to restore the cemetery and the graves.<sup>10</sup>

Louise Rosenberg, Secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, visited Goulburn early in 1981, and was alerted by Alderman Miriam Naughton and others regarding the condition of the burial ground. The present writer, in his capacity as President of the Society, wrote to the *Australian Jewish Times*,<sup>11</sup> seeking communal support for necessary action and assistance in an attempt to preserve the historic cemetery. In a short Editorial this newspaper remarked: "Australia is a comparative-



ly young Jewish community by world standards and it is sad to think that this generation is letting its past be forgotten."<sup>12</sup> At this time also, a local journalist and historian, Jeanne Willis, who afterwards addressed the Sydney members of the Australian Jewish Historical Society on this subject, manifested a close interest in the cemetery and in the Jewish pioneers of the district. She contributed an article in the *Evening Post* under the caption, "Concern For Site",<sup>13</sup> which carried illustrations showing Alderman T. Lamarra and Mr. Bob Daly, chief health surveyor for the Goulburn City Council, inspecting some of the shattered headstones and "the remains of the former Jewish church laying in undergrowth". The newspaper was actually referring to the remaining foundations of the former caretaker's cottage and chapel. "In Goulburn there lies a field," Jeanne Willis remarked, "almost a potter's field — forgotten and uncared. Festooning the unkept, brambled ground are the last memories of the men and women who pioneered Goulburn." Very small in number, as the author went on to say, the Jewish community laid down the grass roots for the pioneers that came after them. "Now, the broken headstones," she said, "of these history makers blow away as so much dust . . . time and neglect must not be allowed to erase their memories from the annals of Goulburn's History."

The present writer, in 1981, was urging the then President of the Great Synagogue to take some necessary measures for the protection of the cemetery and for the appointment of new Trustees. Similar action was being urged by Dr. Mervyn Doobov who had been a President of the Canberra Jewish community. He had already visited the cemetery, together with Earle Hoffman of Canberra and Terry Newman of Sydney, in 1978. He again inspected the site in 1981, accompanied by Alderman Lamarra, and believed that there had been no desecration beyond that due to neglect and the ravages of time. "I earnestly ask," Dr. Doobov said, "that this matter not be allowed to lapse now but that every effort be made to look after this acre that we, as Jews, should be very proud of it."<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, and in consequence of the representations made to it, agreement was reached between the Great Synagogue and the Australian Jewish Historical Society regarding the sharing of the costs of necessary work in restoration of the cemetery. A survey of the ground was done, and more importantly, new Trustees, being Messrs. R.I. Rosenblum, Sidney Sinclair O.B.E. and M.Z. Forbes, were duly appointed by Deed in 1982. It should be mentioned here that the appointment of new Trustees was also urged by the Goulburn City Council which, in 1980, had resolved that enquiries be made as to what could be done to prevent further deterioration of the Jewish cemetery.<sup>15</sup>

In May, 1983, Mrs. Anne Andrews, a member of the Great Synagogue, wrote to Rabbi Apple regarding her visit to the cemetery, enclosing a set of colour photographs, which have been handed on to the Australian Jewish Historical Society. She referred to the ground as being "really part of a paddock where cattle and sheep graze. The broken headstones lie amongst the grass and brambles. A very sad sight indeed!" She was informed at the War Memorial Museum that the Jewish and Anglican cemeteries are the oldest in Goulburn. To reach the cemetery, she said, "turn into Sydney Rd., off the Hume Highway just near the Willows Motel — turn into Cromwell Rd. — then into Heatherington Rd., and continue until Chiswick Rd. — go down Chiswick Rd. and take the first street on the left." The writer concluded on an optimistic note: "I am sure with many willing hands and a few weekends away, the area could be returned to a place of dignity once more."<sup>16</sup> However, it was not until the next year that the Trustees were able, when the conditions were more suitable, to arrange for the ground to be cleared of noxious weeds and undergrowth. The Trustees were most fortunate in having the full support of Stephen J.

Tazewell, a well known Goulburn identity who is prominent also in the local Historical Society. He is well familiar with the history of Goulburn Jewry and the cemetery, and notwithstanding some incapacity due to an accident, he has been in a position to liaise with the Trustees, the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and the City Council and others in connection with the restoration of the cemetery.

A step of considerable significance was the advice received by the Australian Jewish Historical Society in June 1984, that The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) had classified the burial ground and included it in the Trust's Register. The Register includes those buildings, sites and areas which are regarded as falling within the definition: "Those places which are components of the natural or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations, as well as for the present community." The Trust has recommended measures for the restoration and preservation of the site which it regards as "the only evidence of the important presence of the Jewish Community in Goulburn, and one of the two entirely Jewish cemeteries known in New South Wales."<sup>17</sup> In the Goulburn Heritage Study, 1984, it was also stated: "The neglected Jewish Cemetery forms part of the cultural and physical record of early Goulburn's growth and establishment . . . The Council and the Jewish community have a responsibility to conserve this heritage."<sup>18</sup> The Trust's classification has no legal force but at the same time it stems from increasing requests for the Trust's support in saving local cemeteries from conversion to rest parks. Cemeteries are now seen to be an important part of Australia's heritage. The gravestones and monuments form a valuable record of social, economic, artistic and technical development. It is, indeed, a pity that much irreparable damage to the Goulburn cemetery occurred before the growing public awareness of environmental and historical conservation, though the National Trust obviously deems the burial ground, even in its present condition, as worthy of conservation measures. In the case, however, of the Jewish community, it has to be said that there is less excuse for the neglect in question. The visible remaining links between the Australian Jewish community and its earlier pioneers are so few as not to justify any disregard whatever for their preservation. Moreover, in the case of a cemetery, Jewish traditional sentiments require positive action so that no disrespect, based on indifference and neglect, will be caused to the memory of the departed.

Further to the action of the National Trust, the present writer, in a letter to the *Australian Jewish Times*,<sup>19</sup> appealed to the community for its support. One of the very few to respond directly to that appeal was the Ambassador of Israel, His Excellency, Mr. Yissakhar Ben-Yaacov, who indicated his concern for the condition of the cemetery. He sent a personal communication to the same effect to the N.S.W. Jewish Board of Deputies.<sup>20</sup> His Excellency officially visited Goulburn on 4 December, 1984 when he was tendered a civic reception by the Mayor, Alderman Keith Cole. On that occasion the Ambassador, accompanied by Mr. Tazewell and others, took the opportunity to inspect the cemetery, and he expressed the hope that the Sydney Jewish community would be forthcoming with its support.

By 1985 the Trustees had put wire fencing in place and E.J. Greaves, a monumental mason of Goulburn, was employed to repair and re-site some of the broken and fallen memorials. During the year Earle Hoffnan and Harold Pearlman of the A.C.T. Jewish Community visited the cemetery when clearing work by the City Council was then in progress. The A.C.T. Jewish Community had felt that it had a moral responsibility to co-operate in the restoration task as the nearest organised body of Jewry. Only one Jewish family, Roger and Nina Moulton and their son were residing

at Goulburn. They had a small farm close to the city and they informed Mr. Tazewell that they, together with some other members of their B'nai B'rith group, would volunteer to assist in the clearing of the ground. It is sad to record, however, that the Moulton property was itself completely burnt out during the bushfires of February-March 1985.<sup>21</sup>

It was decided to erect a superior type of stone fencing, on concrete foundations, for the street frontage of the cemetery. The stone itself has been provided without cost. It became available from a Council demolition, from the property of a Mr. S. Charles, and also from a demolition contractor, Mr. J. McClelland. The Apex Club of Goulburn voluntarily assisted in some of the extraction and cartage of the stone. An unexpected hitch occurred when the stone mason suffered an injury precluding him from doing the work, which was then placed in the hands of Brian Doyle & Partners of Crookwell. Suitable wrought iron gates were procured and these will be located along the front of the ground. It is also understood that the Mayor and Council have promised to have appropriate trees and shrubs planted and to provide some periodic maintenance, having regard to the historic significance of the cemetery. Some pupils of St. Patrick's College, Goulburn had already assisted in clearing of the ground — a gesture of care and goodwill which is gratefully acknowledged.

It is now expected that it will not be long before the restoration work is finally completed so as to allow a rededication of the cemetery to take place. Although there is little more that needs to be said about the deterioration and destruction that developed over the last few decades, it is far more important, historically speaking, and also by way of future example, to record in some detail the measures taken in an effort to save this significant cemetery from extinction. Only recently there was published in *The Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), a short article by Stuart Wasserman, "Jewish '49ers".<sup>22</sup> The author wrote of the Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries in the gold rush towns of California, now preserved and under the protection of the commission for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks of the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley. The Jews of these townships would have had much in common with the pioneers of Goulburn's Jewry. The Director of the Museum points to an important aspect justifying the preservation of these cemeteries: "One of the anti-Semitic notions about Jews is they don't take part in the difficulty, but only come along afterwards to take advantage. Here are examples of Jews involved from the beginning in the building of modern California." The same kind of comment may appropriately be made with respect to the former Jewish community of Goulburn, many of whose representatives were prominent in the history of their town, contributing to its growth and sharing alike in the hazards and difficulties of those times. For this reason, as well as others, a burial ground such as that at Goulburn has an obvious heritage value for an Australian Jewish community. It is, however, a reflection upon the community that it accords little priority to the conservation of its history and heritage, satisfied to allow the burden and responsibility to be borne largely by the Trustees and by an organization such as the Australian Jewish Historical Society, without providing sufficient support to enable them to carry out the necessary tasks. The Society, together with the Trustees of the Cemetery, have been most fortunate that the people of the City of Goulburn are so aware of their heritage, anxious that the burial ground of their Jewish pioneers should be preserved. One is here mindful of the familiar text, "then shall relief and deliverance arise to th Jews from another place". (Est. 4:14.)

There is little, and in some instances virtually nothing, known about some of those buried in the Goulburn cemetery. It is therefore desirable to add a few notes

in this regard, some of which are derived from S.B. Glass' earlier articles, from data furnished by S.J. Tazewell, and from the writer's researches. The first burials in 1844 appear to have been Sarah and Hannah Moses, daughters of John and Rebecca Moses of Bowning. Both children had been visiting their uncle, Moses Moses of Yass when they were swept into a deep water hole as their father was attempting a crossing. The Press referred to this "distressing and melancholy occurrence", noting also that the bodies were brought to Goulburn "and buried according to the Jewish rites in their own burying ground which was given to that body by Benjamin & Moses".<sup>23</sup> Not long afterwards, on 7 February 1845, the public house of Isaac Davis where there was also the store of Isaac Levy, both of Burrowa, 48 kms from Yass, was attacked by armed and mounted robbers. Davis (referred to as "the brother of Mr. Davis of Goulburn")<sup>24</sup> was fired on and died from the wounds inflicted on him. The felons, it was reported, carried away four horse loads of goods which were the property of the storekeeper, Isaac Levy, who notified the public that, in addition to the reward offered by friends of the murdered man, £10 would be paid to free persons giving information, and that he offered a further sum of £10 reward for any information leading to the apprehension of the murderers and a further £20 to those who could assist in the recovery of the property stolen.<sup>25, 25a</sup> Isaac Davis was truly a pioneer who had set up business in Burrowa which was then surrounded by forests, the furthest point of settlement South West from Sydney. During the 'forties of the last century much economic hardship was being experienced throughout the Colony.

An earlier burial in 1854 was Rebecca Moses, nee Mary Connolly, who was married to John Moses, an emancipist of Hobart. They later came to Sydney where a marriage according to Jewish rites was celebrated, Mrs. Moses then assuming as her first name — Rebecca. She is now believed to have been the first known female proselyte, and her *Ketubah* evidences the first known duly recorded Jewish marriage in this country. Her headstone in the Goulburn cemetery is, therefore, an historic one, as Mr. Tazewell rightly observes. Ten years before her death two daughters of this marriage, Sarah and Hannah were interred in the same ground. Incidentally, it is only in more recent times that the full significance of the marriage of John and Rebecca Moses has been explained and has become more widely known.<sup>26</sup> John Moses of 365 Sussex Street, Sydney, died, aged 83, and was buried at Haslem's Creek. There were four children of his first marriage to Rebecca, and four children of a second marriage.<sup>27</sup>

In the chapters on the "Jews of Goulburn", the author there referred to "the third regular Jewish marriage in Australia",<sup>28</sup> being that performed at Bridge Street, Sydney between Solomon Moses and Deborah Hart in 1835. There is practically no further information in this *Journal* concerning Moses, though it is stated that, "having tired of hotelkeeping", Solomon Moses "became a storekeeper at Bungendore".<sup>29</sup> He had arrived in Sydney in 1832, and it is known that he was a Committee member of the formal congregation formed in that year, the early predecessor of Sydney's Great Synagogue. Many years later, in 1862, Solomon Moses was a member of a deputation from the York Street Synagogue to the Macquarie Street Synagogue, and Nathan Mandelson (formerly of Goulburn) led the deputation as the President at York Street. The *Journal* contains a photograph of Moses "in old age", and it is stated that he was born in England in 1800.

There was, however, another Solomon Moses who had been a storekeeper in Queanbeyan until 1851, when he moved to carry on business in Bungendore. It seems quite possible that S.B. Glass may have confused the Moses mentioned in the above previous paragraph with his namesake by saying that the Moses of the Royal

Hotel fame became a storekeeper at Bungendore. The only other conceivable explanation would be that both these gentlemen were to be found in Bungendore at about the same time. The Solomon Moses, who had left the township of Queenbeyan, in 1851 opened the Victoria Stores at Bungendore. That village then numbered only 63 persons and there were not more than a few hundreds in the district, so that it was not surprising that Moses' enterprise remained subject to much difficulty. Of him, the historian Lea-Scarlett writes, "it was his continuing struggles that gave the only subtle hint of permanency in an unstable environment".<sup>30</sup> In 1852 the Victoria Stores were flooded, and in the following year Moses opened new premises, the 'Beehive' Store, business remaining unsteady. When, in 1854, gold was found at Bungendore, Moses advertised: "Save at least 2/- in the £ — Remember — 'by saving your Silver you are sure to find Gold'".<sup>31</sup> In 1859 he opened, next to the Store, the 'Beehive' Hotel in substantial stone premises. The opening occasion was accompanied by gentlemen's and ladies' races, free ball and supper, and fireworks. Despite all these efforts, competition was too much and business was uncertain. Moses apparently fell into bankruptcy. During the week following his tragic death, Moses' Hotel at Bungendore was advertised as being, To Let, and in full trade on the main Southern road to the Snowy River Diggings.<sup>32</sup> The building contained 19 large rooms and commanded the whole of the traffic to Kiandra.

Solomon Moses of Bungendore, on 5 November 1856, was married at the Sydney Synagogue by Rev. Dr. Hoelzel to P. Levey, daughter of A.J. Levey.<sup>33</sup> A daughter was born to them on 19 February 1858 at the Beehive Store, Bungendore.<sup>34</sup> On 17 May, 1860 their son was born at the same store.<sup>35</sup> Moses' death, age 31, was duly notified in the Press.<sup>36</sup>

The newspapers reported that on 20 October 1860 there happened "another of those fatal accidents frequently occurring during wet season in our flooded creeks", another "melancholy affair".<sup>37</sup> Solomon Moses had left his home at Bungendore for Braidwood. When crossing the Deep Creek his horse suddenly sank, and although the horse escaped unscathed and was found straying a few days later, Moses was swept away and drowned. The body of the deceased was recovered upstream, it being reported that the burial would take place in the Jewish cemetery at Towrang, adjoining Goulburn. Solomon Moses left a widow and one child. He was said to have been 32 years old and a resident at Bungendore for many years. The news of this accident was conveyed to David Davis of Goulburn and an Inquest was held at Bungendore. The funeral was "well and respectably attended".

One of several infant children buried in the cemetery was Mark Elgin Davis who died in June 1860, then only 13 months of age, son of David Davis of Old Commercial Stores, Goulburn. Mr. Tazewell has also referred to the grave of Louis Mandelson, another infant, youngest son of Emanuel and Caroline Mandelson.<sup>38</sup>

Lydia Collins, wife of Joseph Collins, who was a leading member of Goulburn's Jewish community and prominent in public affairs, died on 15 March 1862, aged 37 years. She was married at the York Street Synagogue in 1847 and was the mother of six children. The genealogy of the Collins family has been the subject of a special article in the *Journal*. Lydia's brother, Abraham Marks, was in business on the Lambing Flats and Forbes goldfields, and on learning of the death of Mrs. Collins, he arranged for *Minyan* to be held. As a contemporary newspaper stated, Marks "went around among the portion of the Jewish family residing in Forbes, who assembled together for prayer morning and evening for several days after the melancholy intelligence was received".<sup>39</sup> As to Joseph Collins — who had been a treasurer of the Goulburn Hebrew Association and later an Alderman of the City — he was one of



the last of the Jewish community to remain within the locality. He was finally responsible for handing over to the Great Synagogue the sacred and other paraphernalia and records of the former Congregation.<sup>40</sup>

More needs to be ascertained regarding Saul Yates, Solicitor, who died, age 79, at Emily Cottage, Munday Street, Goulburn, on 6 July 1867 at the residence of his son-in-law, Jacob Alexander.<sup>41</sup> The headstone in the Jewish cemetery indicated his Hebrew name as Pinchas ben Benjamin. Yates had practised as a solicitor in London and, later, in Sydney. There is no reference to him in the *Journal* nor by Wyatt in his Goulburn history. Yates' younger daughter, Emily, was married by Rev. Solomon Phillips at the residence of Maurice Alexander M.P. to Joseph Alexander of Goulburn. The newspaper notice referred to the bride as being the granddaughter of the late Rev. Benjamin Yates of Liverpool.<sup>42</sup> A decade later notice was given of the death of Saul Yates' wife, Sarah, age 65, at Auckland on 1 August 1872.<sup>43</sup> Frederick, son of the late Saul Yates was married at Macquarie Street Synagogue (Sydney) by Rev. I.M. Goldreich to Katie, daughter of Bernard Keesing of San Francisco.<sup>44</sup> Further items of interest relating to the Yates family are furnished by Rabbi Goldman in *The History Of The Jews In New Zealand*. That writer mentioned, in passing, the London solicitor, son of Benjamin Eliakim Yates, "the first Jewish minister and founder of the Liverpool Hebrew community in England (the name had been anglicized from Goetz)". The daughter of Solicitor Yates, Julia, eloped with one, Charles Davis, arriving in New Zealand from England. A son of Saul Yates, Samuel, later followed his sister to New Zealand. His career was a rather exotic one and further details are given by Goldman.<sup>45</sup>

Also buried in the Goulburn cemetery was Moss Marks who died on 5 August 1869, † aged 53 years. He had been manager for Benjamin & Moses in the Argyle Store and afterwards their successor in that business. In June 1854 he was married by the Reader of the Hebrew Congregation to Esther, relict of Isaac Davis of Burrowa. Marks, it appears, was responsible for securing a grant of Crown land for the erection of a proposed synagogue and school. He was a particularly public spirited citizen and a Justice of the Peace. He was on the committee which organised the campaign for a new bridge over the Mulwaree River, was active in the social arrangements for the first Circuit Court, was on the committee of the Goulburn Hospital, and played a leading role in meetings relating to the new Constitution Bill.<sup>46</sup> Failing health led to a serious deterioration in his eyesight, and becoming very low in spirit, Marks took his life. The funeral was held in the Jewish burial ground, many freemasons being in attendance. The deceased was survived by his widow and several daughters. The Press noted that Marks had been in the district for almost 30 years, speaking of him as a studious person, possessed of musical tastes, a writer of verses and letters to the Press, and as the author of a pamphlet on Railways, under the pseudonym, "Publicus". He had built the handsome and substantial New Argyle Store.<sup>47</sup>

In searching through the newspapers for some reference to the death of Henry Isaac Caro on 11 September, 1877, aged 45 years, the writer located an item under the heading, "Shocking Suicide at Binalong".<sup>48</sup> Caro was a storekeeper in Cooma Street, Binalong for some years. He was eventually forced to assign his estate to trustees, and later opened a small store in Goulburn which Caro left in charge of his son whilst he went hawking. He was regarded as a highly respectable person who had come to this country with his son and nephew, leaving six children with his wife in England, the wife having refused to accompany him to Australia. Caro was said to have been of German origin, and the circumstances surrounding his death by suicide may have resulted in the report that he was not of the Jewish persuasion. How-

ever, Henry Isaac Caro was interred in the Jewish cemetery at Towrang. The headstone indicated the Hebrew name, Zevi ben Yitzhak, died 4 Tishri, 5638.

Louis Mandelson, an old resident, age 71 years, died at Kenmore in 1909. In addition to that which Mr. Tazewell mentions, Mandelson was known as a man with an abundant sense of humour. He had been a member for many years of Goulburn's Sons of Temperance. His desire was that he should be buried in the Jewish cemetery.<sup>49</sup> It should be added that Mandelson had known and befriended the strange character, Leopold Weissberger, who predeceased Mandelson, in Goulburn, by 21 years. With regard to Weissberger, of whom Glass wrote at some length, it appears that he was buried by an Anglican minister, but no record establishes the actual place of burial. Though no evidence is available, one way or the other, Glass thought that, "A tempting suggestion is that Weissberger was buried in the Jewish cemetery by the Anglican clergyman".<sup>50</sup> Yet, as in life, so also in his death, any discussion on the subject of Weissberger is clouded by doubts and speculation.

Nathan Mandelson, who was a long time resident of Goulburn and one of its best known citizens, died on 3 July, 1867, aged about 62 years. He had earlier relinquished his hotel business in the town and left for Sydney where he acted as a general commission agent and as a purveyor of wines and spirits.<sup>51</sup> Prior to his departure a number of Mandelson's co-religionists, in 1854, met at Samuel Davis' Australian Stores to present their friend with a testimonial, a "splendid gold watch and chain", drinking his health at a champagne supper.<sup>52</sup> Mandelson was active in Jewish affairs in Sydney, occupying the position, in 1862, of President of the York Street Synagogue. He later returned to Goulburn where he resumed his former hotel interests. The news of his sudden death, it was said, cast "quite a gloom over the town". The deceased was a widower with a large family grown up. It was stated that he was "entirely free of enemies". A Masonic service was conducted by Chaplain Ross prior to the transfer of the body to Sydney for burial.<sup>53</sup>

Work on the burial ground is now in its final stages, the local Press recently reporting a "Cemetery Facelift" with the construction of the stone wall in Long Street.<sup>54</sup> Some funds will be required to defray building costs and future maintenance. Visitors on and around the City's silent Sentinel on Rocky Hill will see below the newly erected wall — its stones themselves old — of the small cemetery. The wall, and the ground which it surrounds, will become a further symbol of a city's heritage. Most of the stones have been salvaged from a wall which stood in Church Street, behind the old Brackley Cottage. Bearing in mind the help voluntarily given from various circles in Goulburn, the restoration work can be seen to be, in a sense, an ecumenical project. There may perhaps be some who will question this restorative effort, claiming that the result is not truly authentic. It has to be appreciated, however, that natural forces, together with man's action and inaction, inevitably produce marked changes in the environment. Nonetheless, conservationists, including those who know and understand the history of their particular environment, are acutely mindful of their role and responsibility. Appropriate and necessary decisions have to be made, based on "heritage interpretation". This, in itself, has so aptly been described as "an exercise in relevance as well as accuracy, in credibility as well as truth". These remarks of David Lowenthal, in the course of a keynote address, are most apposite and worthy of notice:

"The public heritage of any society should reflect a natural and cultural past as little falsified as professionals can make it, but also one that connects fruitfully with its inheritors, a legacy they will wish both to enjoy and to hand down to their descendants with their own alterations and additions."<sup>55</sup>

The preservation of this cemetery, albeit with necessary alterations, has relevance both for the people of Goulburn as well as Australian Jewry. As long as 150 years ago Jews were actively associated with the life of this town, firstly, amongst its pioneers in the 'thirties, and later, as leading citizens, particularly in the 'fifties and 'sixties of the last century. It is of interest to notice that, as early as the 'forties, the Census for the year 1841 showed that there were 22 Jews at Goulburn, more than the Wesleyan Methodists who then numbered 2, and Other Protestant Dissenters who numbered 14.<sup>56</sup> An early local historian, Charles MacAlister, recorded his tribute to the Jews:<sup>57</sup>

"Goulburn owed much in the formative years to the commercial genius of the Hebrew race. In fact, the term 'as solid as a Goulburn Jew' almost threatened at one time to pass into a proverb."<sup>58</sup>

Although the town's Jewish community was small in numbers, its influence was strongly felt, whether as the district's principal storekeepers, innkeepers, gold buyers, and involved, also, in the social and political affairs of the general community. Moreover, Australian Jewry today, and not only the general public of Goulburn, should appreciate the relevance and heritage value of the Jewish cemetery as a tangible link with some of the early pioneers in this country. One suspects, indeed, that there is not too much perception of heritage at this grass-roots level, and credibility is lost if this exercise at Goulburn is regarded as significant only for historians, especially those with an "antiquarian" bent. For the Jew and non-Jew alike, the attempted restoration of this burial ground gives expression to a genuine sentiment, without which the community would be thoughtless if it failed to notice the valuable contribution by these pioneers. If not a country churchyard, Goulburn's Jewish cemetery still evokes in the mind the poet's noble lines:

"Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,

\* \* \*

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculptures deck'd,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

It is clear that the compiler of the history of "Jews of Goulburn" did not proceed beyond the year 1856, intending to add some further chapters. It is, however, evident that the subject merits continued research. The Jewish settlers of Goulburn, without doubt, played a distinguished role in the early development of the town but historians cannot be expected to do justice to this story if there is no programme of ongoing research. Nobody has questioned, for example, and having asked, has explained, the failure of the Goulburn Jewish community — which was so strongly motivated in so many directions — to build a house of worship. It is so easy to be wise after the event and to simply assume that these people must have realised that their community was without any future. According to S.B. Glass, a special place of worship must have been located in one of the large rooms at the rear of the Argyle Store (conducted by Benjamin & Moses, and later, by Moss Marks). It is also known that family members and others held services in a summer house within the grounds of the Emanuel family at Lansdowne.<sup>59</sup> Samuel Emanuel was the owner of much Goulburn property and was a most influential citizen. Today, the bare ruins of the chapel house, referred to by some as the "Jewish Synagogue", may still be seen. What can be the explanation for the failure of such a strong community — so conscious of its public image — to erect a permanent place of worship, leaving after them only the cemetery and the ruins of a tiny family chapel? By way of contrast,



one notes that the Jewish communities, for example, at Launceston, Geelong, Forbes, Maitland and Toowoomba built permanent Synagogue as well as providing local cemeteries. In avoiding any unjustified adverse conclusions, it is still fair and desirable that the historian, in the case of Goulburn, should raise these questions. In the meantime, judging these pioneers charitably, *Lkaf Zecos*, the superstructure of a comprehensive history of New South Wales Jewry will be firmly based if the foundations are thoroughly excavated. As in the case of the Goulburn community, there remains scope for further researches by the historiographer who should take note of data, and adopt an approach, which will also be meaningful for readers who are themselves members of a Jewish community.

#### NOTES

1. *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 374.
2. Israel Green held a Power of Attorney of 1958 from D.J. Benjamin in respect to the land; Letter of 2.9.1980 from Town Clerk, Goulburn, to Israel Green.
3. *Journal*, Vols. 1 & 2.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. 1, pp. 199, 201.
5. Letter of 25.7.1967.
6. Letter of 8.3.1972 from Jewish Cemetery Trust to W.M. Carey.
7. Letter of 7.3.1972.
8. 26.3.1981.
9. *Evening Post*, 30.3.1981.
10. *Ibid.*
11. 9.4.1981.
12. *Ibid.* 9.12.1981.
13. 17.6.1981.
14. Letter of 20.3.1981 to Rabbi Apple.
15. See, Letter, Note 2 above.
16. Letter of 31.5.1983.
17. Letter of 14.6.1984 from National Trust to A.J.H. Society.
18. At p. 275.
19. 26.7.1984.
20. Letter of 24.12.1984.
21. *Hamerkaz*, Canberra, 5.4.1985.
22. 12.6.1986.
23. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28.11.1844.
24. Probably, Samuel Davis; *S.M.H.*, 14.2.1845.
25. *The Sentinel*, 19.2.1845. The headstone indicated deceased was aged 33 years.
- 25a. *The Australian Journal*, 13.2.1845, referred to this bushranger incident, noting that publican, Davis, was a brother-in-law of Isaac Levy of Sydney. Levy established the Australian Stores at Goulburn in partnership with Samuel Davis in 1837; *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 147; Ransome T. Wyatt, *The History of Goulburn*, (1941), p. 280.
26. *Journal*, Vol. 8, pp. 404-412.
27. T.D. Mutch, *Index of Deaths, Births & Marriages*.
28. *Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 243.
29. *Ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 147.
30. Lea-Scarlett, *Queanbeyan District & People*, (1968), p. 231; *Goulburn Herald*, 4.10.1851.
31. *Goulburn Herald*, 27.5.1854.
32. *Ibid.* 27.10.1860.
33. K.G. & F.F. Laycock, *Canberra & District Lives*, (1979), Vol. 2; particulars extracted from *S.M.H.*, 10.11.1856.
34. *Ibid.* From *S.M.H.*, 24.2.1858.
35. *Ibid.* From *S.M.H.*, 22.5.1860.
36. *Ibid.* From *S.M.H.*, 10.11.1860.
37. *Goulburn Herald*, 24 & 27.10.1860.
38. *Goulburn Herald*, 23.6.1860.
39. *Journal*, M.Z. Forbes, Vol. 4, p. 18; and see *Canberra & District Lives*, Vol. 1, From *S.M.H.*, 20.3.1862.

40. Wyatt, pp. 424-5.
41. *Canberra & District Lives*, Vol. 4; *S.M.H.*, 8.7.1867.
42. *Ibid.* Vol. 1; *S.M.H.*, 27.2.1862.
43. *Ibid.* Vol. 4; *S.M.H.*, 17.10.1872.
44. *Ibid.* Vol. 4. Note that Saul Yates commenced practice at 201 York St., Sydney — a few doors from the Synagogue — in 1852. He was later at 9 Lower George St., Sydney, but is not listed in the Directory after 1865; Sands, *Commercial And General Sydney Directory*, 1863, 1865.
45. Goldman, pp. 70-71, 136-137.
46. *Goulburn Herald*, 9.7.1853; 16.7.1853; 28.1.1854; 25.11.1854; Wyatt, p. 177.
47. *Goulburn Herald*, 15.8.1867. Marks was the Chairman of the Meeting, and his name heads the list of Petitioners, under the Municipalities Act of 1858, seeking that Goulburn be declared a Municipality; *Gazette*, 7.2.1859. Goulburn was proclaimed a Municipality shortly afterwards; *Gazette*, 8.6.1859.
48. *Goulburn Herald*, 15.9.1877.
49. *Goulburn Evening Post*, 18.3.1909.
50. *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 451.
51. *Goulburn Herald*, 5.8.1854.
52. *Ibid.* 1.7.1854.
53. *Ibid.* 6.7.1867.
54. *Goulburn Post*, 25.8.1986.
55. Professor Emeritus at University College, London, speaking in 1985 at the first World Congress on Heritage Presentation: *Heritage*, 1986, at p. 45 et seq.
56. Wyatt, p. 47.
57. *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South*, (1907), p. 96; Wyatt, p. 257. Note his reference to "the pretty (Hebrew) cemetery at the foot of the Governor's Hill" (at p.96).
58. *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 150.
59. *Bulletin*, No. 184, The Goulburn & District Historical Society, p. 3.

† Was 1867, and not 1869, the year of his death?; note 47.

## The Brothers Cohen — Unlauded Entrepreneurs

by Lynette Ramsay Silver.

As part of the historical research for my book *A Fool's Gold?*, it was imperative to establish the day to day life of the central character, a mineralogist William Tipple Smith, as well as reconstruct the mineral background of the time. Using old directories, maps, drawings, first hand recollections of individuals and personal advertisements placed in the newspapers of the period, it was possible to locate the businesses of some of the key figures in the story.

Two of W.T. Smith's contemporaries, the brothers Cohen, were such key figures.

We are told by several people of the period of the existence of a goldsmith/jeweller in Sydney's George Street North in the early 1840s. Provided that the time frame and address are accurate, the jeweller concerned must have been Mosely Moss Cohen, who first surfaced in the business sense in 1830, working from rented premises above a Sydney shop. Using silver dollars we are told he managed to create a silver salver which was presented to Major Innes after being displayed to the public.<sup>1</sup> In 1832, Mosely married Caroline Pendray<sup>2</sup> and then established himself at 3 Denmark Place, George Street, making and mending jewellery, repairing watches and musical boxes, and selling a choice selection of fashionable dress ornaments as well as the usual jewellery lines.<sup>3</sup>

The business was undoubtedly prosperous for Cohen accumulated property including an orchard at Burwood which he leased for the time being. In 1836 he moved his business into George Street North where he continued to both sell and repair all manner of jewellery items.<sup>4</sup> Whilst M.M. Cohen was establishing the business on the new site, a fellow jeweller/mineralogist William Tipple Smith, was doing likewise. Although it has not been possible to ascertain whether the two men actually shared the same building, they must have been no more than two doors away from one another, since both described the location of the respective shops as being 'directly opposite the bank of Australasia'.<sup>5</sup>

This particular George Street site was just south of Bridge Street, adjoining the old lumber yard, where the Metropolitan Hotel now stands.

Smith's shop had been formerly occupied by James Tegg, the publisher, who had arrived aboard the 'James Craig' in 1832. In April 1836, the shops of Smith and Cohen were still standing, the sole survivor of Sydney's pre-1837 commercial buildings.<sup>6</sup>

By the 1830s Sydney had at last begun to take on the look of a substantial town — roads were properly laid out and buildings were of more solid construction, replacing the flimsy erections of the previous years. The shops of Smith and Cohen faced the impressive Bank of Australasia which stood on the western side of George Street. To the rear ran the Tank Stream, on its way to Sydney Harbour, spanned by a small bridge nearby which gave its name to the street. Further up Bridge Street was the Colonial Secretary's residence and beyond that stood several windmills interrupting the skyline. It was in this environment of change from the temporary to the more permanent that Smith and Cohen now sought to establish themselves. Cohen's relatively peaceful existence was apparently disturbed by the entry into the business world of Joel John Cohen, the widowed husband of Mosely's sister Rebecca.<sup>7</sup> Shortly

after J.J. Cohen's appearance on the retail scene of 1839, Mosely Cohen began to have published the first of a series of advertisements in which he firmly dissociated himself from 'any other business in the colony'. Joel John, who ran 'The Temple of Fashion' in George Street at this time, also dabbled in the jewellery trade. Although Mosely had an ex convict brother starting up business also at this time, he seems to have led a trouble free life, which was not the case for Joel John. The unnamed undesirable with whom Mosely wanted no connection was possibly his brother-in-law, for Joel was evicted by his irate landlord in 1843 for the non payment of rent, or rather for the attempted payment using a dishonoured cheque, an action which was publicly denounced by Mr Gill in the newspaper.<sup>8</sup> Mosely Moss Cohen, respected businessman, philanthropist and pillar of society, who expected even his gardener to have impeccable references attesting to his 'honesty, sobriety and capability', would hardly wish to be connected in any way with such a business or person.<sup>9</sup>

While both Mosely and W.T. Smith were busily engaged in the serious business of running a viable and respectable enterprise, far away on an isolated sheep run near Wellington a shepherd named McGregor was quietly occupied in the peaceful tending of his master's sheep. The life of a shepherd is a solitary one, with little excitement to break the day to day monotony. Idly watching the tranquilly grazing sheep, McGregor's attention was caught by the unmistakable glitter of gold in the quartz outcrops which abound in the area. He chipped off bits of the milky quartz and, whenever the opportunity presented itself, managed to transport them to Sydney.

Gold has an attraction which cuts across all lines of creed, colour and race, and the gold of McGregor was no exception. The shepherd, finding a ready market at the shop of Cohen the goldsmith and jeweller, promptly sold them whenever he had the chance, and soon became known as 'a gold-finder'.

By displaying the gold samples in the window of his shop, M.M. Cohen not only made himself a talking point but he also created an Australian 'first', for the exhibition of McGregor's gold is almost undoubtedly the first exhibition of Australian gold in its *natural* state.<sup>10</sup>

In 1844, Cohen closed down his business and retired to enjoy the life of a gentleman on his estate 'Caridale' at Burwood.

Meanwhile the plot thickened, for as M.M. Cohen faded into genteel obscurity, his brother Edward Daniel Cohen, the former convict, was set to play his part on the golden stage. A discussion with Mr Forbes, whose addendum appears at the foot of this article, enabled me only very recently to link M.M. Cohen with E.D. Cohen, providing the necessary information which sheds new light on the known activities of E.D. Cohen. On the assumption that it was most likely M.M. Cohen who first put McGregor's specimens in his shop window, the action taken by E.D. Cohen shortly afterwards seems very logical.

Edward Daniel, born in 1800 in Birmingham, was transported to New South Wales following his conviction in the Liverpool Court for stealing a watchcase. He arrived in the colony in 1830, on board the 'Burrell' to serve a life sentence, but obtained his ticket of leave in 1839,<sup>11</sup> setting up business as a watchmaker in Windsor by August 1840.<sup>12</sup> By June 1844 he had moved to Sydney, opening up an optical/watchmaking shop three doors south of the Royal Hotel in George Street.<sup>13</sup> At about the same time that his brother Mosely retired, Edward Cohen took a great interest in the gold of McGregor, for in 1844 he was alerting the surveyor general to the presence of gold and placing some of McGregor's samples before him in an at-

tempt to stimulate some action from the government. Cohen even went so far as to personally escort McGregor on several occasions to the surveyor general's office for questioning, apparently without result, for there was no official action taken.<sup>14</sup> By December 1845, after a fruitless campaign, lasting well over a year, to have the surveyor general, Sir Thomas Mitchell take an interest, he managed to have the newspapers stir up some publicity by reporting his gold activities in the press.<sup>15</sup> The newspaper announced that Cohen had purchased gold from a shepherd and with the help of his young son Moses, had washed the specimen and melted the gold down, a job which earned the lad one shilling.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it was this gold which Edward used to fashion a ring for Queen Victoria, and which Sir Thomas Mitchell, home-ward hound for England, promised to deliver to Her Most Gracious Majesty, along with the information that it was the produce of the colony. What Queen Victoria thought of this gift is not known, for Cohen's generosity was never acknowledged.<sup>17</sup>

Cohen was persistent. His advice unheeded by Mitchell, he also tried to interest members of the Legislative Assembly in McGregor's gold and also tried to gain title to the land where it had been found, at Mitchell's Creek, near Wellington.<sup>18</sup> He failed dismally. The Legislative Assembly had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo<sup>19</sup> and the government eventually declared, at a much later date, the land Cohen sought a 'gold reserve'.<sup>20</sup> Despite petitions by his widow as late as 1851, the Cohen family benefited not one scrap from Edward's efforts. Cohen himself died in October 1847 and was never to know that his information would be proved correct in a matter of weeks.<sup>21</sup>

One hundred and fifty years have passed since Mosely Cohen, full of hope and enthusiasm, launched his successful business venture. In the normal course of history, such an ordinary event would have passed unnoticed and gone unrecorded. The more enterprising efforts of his brother to publicise gold are buried away in government files. Had Edward Cohen lived, he may have been able to have gained some benefit from his initiatives and attained a more prominent part in history. Mosely M. Cohen would undoubtedly have faded into almost total obscurity had he not possessed the quietly dignified entrepreneurial style to realise that the universal language of gold 'speaks', and speaks loud and long, with or without the help of man. The call was heeded by his fellow businessman, the mineralogist William Tipple Smith, who, putting a mineralogical two and two together, later went on to discover an enormous payable goldfield at Ophir in late 1847.

But that my friends, is quite another story.<sup>22</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Newspaper accounts credit the salver to M.M. Cohen. However the historian Hawkins credits the making of the piece to H. Cohen; *Australian Silver*, 1800-1900, pp. 16, 18.
2. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22.11.1832
3. *Australian* 31.5.1833
4. *Ibid* 3.3.1842
5. *A Fool's Gold?* L.R. Silver footnote 30 Chapter 1.
6. Under demolition order 1986 to make way for a 31 storey office block.
7. *Sydney Morning Herald* 13.9.1832.
8. *Ibid* 22.6.1843
9. *Ibid* 11.7.1844
10. The first exhibition in a refined state was that of Lhotsky, vide Silver op. cit. p 3.
11. *The Forefathers*, J.S. Levi, pp.29-30.
12. *Sydney Morning Herald* 4.8.1840
13. *Ibid* 22.6.1844
14. A full account of the action taken by Cohen is in Colonial Secretary Letters, Esther D. Brocksalyn, July 5 1851.

15. *Cumberland Times & Western Advertiser*, 20 Dec. 1845
16. Mitchell Library, P1/C; Moses Cohen notes that this was the 'first' showing of Australian gold, a statement based allegedly on words spoken by McGregor to the lad, a mere boy at the time. However, this is at odds with the statement made by Mrs Brocksalyn *op cit.*, who puts the date at least 12 months before. Mrs Brocksalyn, an adult eyewitness of the events, recounted in great detail, would be the more reliable witness.
17. Brocksalyn *op. cit.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Silver *op. cit.* p 13
20. Brocksalyn *op. cit.*
21. Silver *op. cit.* p 12
22. The entire account of the discoveries of W.T. Smith is found in Silver *op. cit.*

The writer is indebted to Mr M.Z. Forbes for kindly supplying the sources of the information referred to in footnotes 11, 15 and 16.



Ophir, 1851 (lithograph, George F. Angas, National Library).

## Hargraves' 'Mishter Cohen' A Prelude To The Goldrushes

by M.Z. Forbes, B.A., LL.B.

Early this year there appeared a short letter in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by Lynette Silver urging the preservation of certain premises standing since the 'thirties of the last century in George Street, Sydney, near Bridge Street. The writer of the letter mentioned that the premises had once been occupied by Mosely M. Cohen, a jeweller who had there exhibited, perhaps for the first time in Sydney, specimens of gold found some years prior to the famous discoveries in 1851 by Hargraves. I then made contact with Mrs. Silver who kindly invited me to the official opening, on 8 May last, of the GOLD exhibition at the Geological & Mining Museum where, at the same time, her new book, *A Fool's Gold?*, was launched. The book tells of the finding of payable gold by William Tipple Smith, an unassuming mineralogist whose role has long been unrecognised. Further, Mrs. Silver readily accepted my suggestion that she contribute an item to this *Journal* regarding Mosely Cohen and others who may have been involved in this early gold saga. It will be seen that the brothers, Mosely Moss Cohen, and, probably more particularly, Edward Daniel Cohen, both fill a small lacuna, worthy of notice, in the history of the Jews in the earlier days of settlement in the Colony of New South Wales.

Although there had been evidence of several findings of gold since 1823 and thereafter in the region West of the Blue Mountains, and especially around the Bathurst districts, Governor Sir George Gipps believed that search for the precious metal would disadvantage the Colony during a period of serious depression. When ever reports reached the Government of findings of small quantities of gold, the official policy of the administration was to maintain secrecy and to discourage the public from searching for gold. One of the fossickers was the shepherd, Hugh McGregor, who was employed on the pastoral lands of Nanima station, near Wellington. These extensive holdings, until about 1849, were then under lease from the owner of the property, Joseph Barrow Montefiore. Of McGregor himself, only a few bare facts are recorded, and not even the catalogues of the Mitchell Library contain any entry furnishing clues and data for the historian. McGregor had found gold in the area of Mitchell's Creek and seems to have regularly forwarded samples to Sydney. He was at first a poor man. "Of course", said a writer, "if he were rich he would not have been minding sheep."<sup>1</sup> The secret of his discoveries leaked out. McGregor had mined a quartz vein which became worked out, and he eventually left the district.

Having regard to the paucity of information relating to McGregor including the secrecy with which he and others went about their gold searches, it is not surprising, also, that until now writers have not been concerned to identify those with whom, in Sydney, McGregor had dealings. Thus, in a recent publication, *The Cradle Of A Nation*, the author states: "From 1846, McGregor made regular trips to Sydney, selling his gold to Cohen's jewellery in George Street. There soon remained few people who had not heard of the mysterious shepherd."<sup>2</sup> Writing on this same subject, a modern historian has quoted from the *Bathurst Free Press*, as follows: "A little temporary curiosity would occasionally be excited whenever the news was spread

around, that old McGregor, the gold-finder from that district had passed per mail on his way to the metropolis, as was always believed, laden with auriferous treasure. This subsided and nothing more would be heard of the matter for a long interval, then an occasional rumour that he had rejected some temporary offer held out by a Sydney jeweller, or Wellington settler, as an inducement to disclose the secret of the locale whence his treasure was derived."<sup>3</sup> The most recent book by Lynette Silver, likewise, makes reference to McGregor, though only very briefly and incidentally, to the jeweller, Cohen. Since the publication of her book, the author, as will be seen from her article in the *Journal*, has made a little further research with the object of identifying the jewellers who bought gold from McGregor. Some of the latter's samples, as Mrs. Silver writes, "milky white quartz with gold embedded in it, were exposed from time to time to the public gaze in the shop window of Cohen, a jeweller in Sydney's George Street North. Mosely Moses Cohen, goldsmith and jeweller, had set up his shop on the George Street site, directly opposite the Bank of Australasia, in 1836, having previously started business in nearby Denmark's Place in 1832. His exhibiting of McGregor's specimens caught the attention of the passing public and undoubtedly the attention of a mineralogist, who, coincidentally, if he did not actually share Cohen's shop, set up an identical business at about the same time as Cohen, no more than three doors away, and also described as being opposite the Bank of Australasia."<sup>4</sup> The name of that mineralogist was William Tiple Smith, and the same writer adds that, "It seems highly probable that he would have taken an intense interest in the specimens exhibited by Cohen, ... recognising them for what they really were."<sup>5</sup> There is, however, but scant information connecting Mosely Moss Cohen with McGregor, although there is apparently a letter to Sir Roderick Murchison from Captain Phillip Parker King, it being there mentioned that Cohen, of George Street, North, exhibited gold specimens in his shop.<sup>6</sup> For what that evidence may be worth, it may be conceded that the premises of Mosely Moss Cohen, just South of Bridge Street, were located in a section of Sydney which was then known as George Street, North. There is, on the other hand, more than ample evidence that Edward Daniel Cohen, who was a brother of Mosely Moss Cohen, also carrying on business as a jeweller during the 'forties at his premises in George Street — near the Royal Hotel and the Markets — had regular dealings with the shepherd, McGregor.

In *The Forefathers*, by Rabbi John Levi, there appears an item relating to Edward Daniel Cohen, a transported convict, from which the following data is extracted:

Born Birmingham 1800. Jeweller. Convicted Liverpool Borough Session Jan. 1830 for stealing a watch. Transportation for life. Arrived N.S.W. per Burrell Dec. 1830. Note in ship's indent reads "Some expectation was held out to him by Sir Robert Peel in case of his good conduct for three or four years. The Governor subsequently wrote 'no reason for interfering'." Daniel was the brother of M.M. Cohen. Assigned to work for the Australian Agriculture Co. He was bartered for two other convicts by Moses Brown and set up in business (illegally) as a watch maker and taken over for £25 by M.M. Cohen when he arrived in Australia. Daniel Cohen was sent back to the hulks and then volunteered for service as an overseer at Port Macquarie (1833). Married Esther Isaacs born 20 March, 1841. Died Sydney 5 Oct. 1847.<sup>7</sup>

In *Australian Genesis*, there is a most significant item, which will be referred to later, with respect to E.D. Cohen,<sup>8</sup> but no mention is made of his brother, presumably because he had no connections with the Jewish community. The authors of that work specify, during the period 1835-1840, a number of well-known Sydney



jewellers, including Edward Daniel Cohen's "City Hall of Arts" known by its two "mechanical clocks" and the large mirror at the end of the shop.<sup>9</sup>

When writing on "Jewish Voters in Sydney's First Election",<sup>10</sup> which was held on 1 November 1842 when certain citizens were permitted to vote in the election for the City of Sydney, E.S. Marks drew attention to the Jewish names in the Citizen Lists published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Marks compiled therefrom two Lists. In List A he included names of those recorded in the first report of the York Street Synagogue, 1845, or, the names of fathers of Jewish children in a Census of 1846 prepared under direction of the Synagogue Board. In that List Marks included, "Daniel E. Cohen, shop, King Street",<sup>11</sup> noting that Cohen was specified in the list of seatholders and subscribers to the Synagogue. He could have added, however, that the same Cohen was also indicated in the abovementioned Census as being the parent, together with his wife, Esther, of Moses Cohen, born at Sydney on 20 March 1841.<sup>12</sup> But, Marks further compiled, in his List B, the names of citizens suggesting the strongest probability that they were in fact Jews. In that shorter List was included the name of Mosely Moss Cohen, "house and shop, George Street."<sup>13</sup> In the *Journal* he seems to have received at least one mention, or rather, in the reprint of the 1845 Report of the York Street Synagogue where M.M. Cohen's name is listed amongst those who made contributions to the Sydney Synagogue of Articles used in the performance of Divine Service. Cohen's gift was an Eight-day Clock.<sup>14</sup>

In the abovementioned Report of 1845, E.D. Cohen is shown as being a Synagogue Seatholder Member and also as being a donor of money towards the building expenses of the Synagogue.<sup>15</sup> Again, in the Report of the Synagogue for 1847 Edward Cohen is included in the names of those holding seats.<sup>16</sup> Ten years previously, when he was at Port Macquarie, Daniel Cohen, as the York Street Marriage Register records, there married Esther Isaacs.<sup>17</sup> He commenced business in 1840 at Windsor, but by 1842 he removed to 5 West King Street, Sydney.<sup>18</sup> Two years later Cohen was established at the City Hall of Arts, 392 George Street, Sydney. He inserted advertisements in the Sydney Press, some of which were obviously designed to attract attention: "FORGET ME NOT — When you want your watches repaired, as they will be well done, and to the appointed time — REMEMBER The immense Stock of Spectacles."<sup>19</sup> His death at the above address at his residence in George Street was notified in 1847, it being stated that Daniel Cohen was then aged 45 years, formerly of Liverpool.<sup>20</sup>

The *Cumberland Times And Western Advertiser*, which was printed in Parramatta, carried a small news item in 1845, that E.D. Cohen was exhibiting a specimen of virgin gold which was stated to be "in its pure state, and on melting down, is found to be the purest gold."<sup>21</sup> Relevant references appear in the last Chapter of *Australian Genesis* where the opening words appropriately read: "The first Chapter in the History of European Settlement in Australia begins with exile and ends with gold."<sup>22</sup> It was true, indeed, that the ex Jewish convict, E.D. Cohen, was one of the first to publicise the discovery of gold in Australia, even before Hargraves came on the scene and started the goldrush of 1851. The Mitchell Library Manuscripts contain a Postcard, apparently in the handwriting of Moses Cohen, son of Daniel Cohen, to which is also attached a photograph of Moses Cohen. It may be questioned, perhaps, whether the latter had a personal recollection of the matter about which he wrote, many years later, seeing that the event in question took place when Moses Cohen would have been a child, aged no more than 4 or 5 years. After stating that gold was discovered by the shepherd, McGregor, in 1844 and 1845, Cohen went on to write that McGregor sold "to my Father, E.D. Cohen, watchmaker and jeweller,

George St. Sydney ... and gave it to me in front of the shop to carry it in. I helped to clean it with him and Father, and when he was paid for clean gold, he gave me a shilling for helping clean it, and said, you are the 1st Australian white boy to carry and help clean and spend the first shilling from the first gold got in Australia", adding that it was dug out of the ground at "Namina" near Wellington.<sup>23</sup> It seems to be clear enough, that this same earlier discovery of gold, together with E.D. Cohen's involvement with it, was the subject of subsequent comment by Captain John Henderson (78th Highlanders), writing in 1854 in *Excursions And Adventures in New South Wales*: "So far back as about 1843, I had been informed by a gentleman in New South Wales, that a jeweller and goldsmith in Sydney, had been for years in the habit of buying pieces of stone with gold attached to them from a shepherd belonging to the Bathurst district, who carried them down once a year when he went to the capital to make purchases for himself and his family. I certainly asked where the shepherd obtained these specimens, but was told that he kept it a profound secret."<sup>24</sup> This author, who has been referred to in a previous *Journal*, quite evidently had a dislike for Jews. A few paragraphs later he writes of the Victorian goldrush, saying that one is "compelled to elbow at every corner escaped convicts, emancipated Jews, and unkempt ruffians of every description."<sup>25</sup> Henderson, a soldier turned author, must have nurtured an unmitigated aversion to Hebrews, for, when speaking of the enormous increase in property values at Melbourne, finds it incredible that such people were making fortunes: "... , while (it almost takes away one's breath to think of it) a Jew, twelve months after his arrival in the Colony, in a penniless condition, offers for the Royal Hotel £10,000"<sup>26</sup> (to the then tenant). However, leaving aside this digression, there is nothing to show that E.D. Cohen had accumulated riches, though he rose from the emancipated ranks and, doubtless, made a contribution to Sydney's trade as a silversmith and goldsmith, watchmaker, jeweller and optician during a short period of about five years, when economic conditions in the Colony were most difficult. At a time when it was Government policy to discourage the discovery of gold, traders such as Daniel Cohen maintained close links with searchers of whom McGregor was a prime example. Cohen would have merited, in retrospect, the expectations which, on his transportation, were said to have been held out to him.<sup>27</sup> It is also creditable that he proved himself to be a loyal Jew who identified himself with his co-religionists.

Edward Hargraves won the Government's support as the first discoverer of payable gold and received a substantial reward, notwithstanding that his claims were challenged, stirred controversy, and were regarded by some as being exaggerated and even falsified. He had failed to acknowledge the claims of those who had worked with him, and he generally discounted earlier significant findings of gold. Captain Phillip Parker King, for example, seemed to think that Hargraves was "an impostor of science" who made "impertinent assumptions."<sup>28</sup>

When, in 1855, there was published in London, Hargrave's book, *Australia and its Goldfields*, it is noteworthy that its writer alluded to the purchases of gold by E.D. Cohen, albeit, by using the occasion as an opportunity for ridicule of the Jews referred to in the story. In the course of his inspections of various gold sites, Hargraves, in 1851, went to Mitchell's Creek, near Wellington, where he met a Mr. Brockstain who had married the widow of E.D. Cohen. The reports, according to Hargraves, which were given to him by Brockstain, left him with feelings of disgust:

"You know", said he, "dish isht de vay it washt — McGregor got de gold long time ago, ten — twelve years ago, and sell to von Mr. Cohen. Mr. Cohen ish dead, and I marry de widder. My wife tells me every time him comes to Sydney

vid de sheeps, dat isht vonce a year, always bringht de gold and sells it you see to Mishter Cohen. Mishter Cohen sell two three pieces to Sir Thomas Mitchell, and Mr. Clarke the gemmologist buy some too."<sup>29</sup>

Hargraves' attitude towards Jews, which emerges from the above remarks, may not have been too exceptional in the social climate of those times,<sup>30</sup> though it should also be said that such comments do not reflect credibly on one who constantly demanded recognition, often demeaning and disregarding others who merited consideration. "Mishter Cohen" was, of course, Daniel Cohen, and this evidence furnished by Hargraves, establishes beyond any argument that Cohen, in his dealings with McGregor, by exhibiting gold in his business premises, and by his contacts with the Surveyor General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, played a significant role — even if a relatively minor one — in promoting the search for gold prior to the onset of the rush a few years later.

Mosely Moss Cohen was reported to have retired from his Sydney business in 1843;<sup>31</sup> and there is no indication from the Directories that he afterwards resumed his jewellery business. However, with reference to the general excitement immediately generated in 1851 by Hargraves' discoveries, Professor Manning Clark's History mentions a few of the popular reactions to the stirring events of the day, including, for example, 'Have you seen a magnificent specimen of virgin gold in the jeweller's window in George Street?'<sup>32</sup> If, indeed, there was such an exhibition of gold in 1851, then, without now pursuing the matter further, there were at that time two well known jewellers in George Street, namely, J.J. Cohen & Sons, Temple of Fashion, 479 George St. North, and Cohen & Co. of 491 George St. North.<sup>33</sup> Either of these establishments may have been the scene of a gold display in 1851.

The information which has been uncovered by Lynette Silver, as well as by my own researchers, adds a little flesh and blood to the isolated references which have hitherto been available. The story of Daniel Cohen, and perhaps others too, fills a niche in the events which finally led up to the dramatic goldrushes. Cohen and McGregor, in their mutual dealings, were well known to each other. McGregor's fossickings, in that very region near Ophir, which was the scene and focus of the first Australian goldrush resulting from Hargraves' explorations, contributed to some of the subsequent discoveries. These goldrushes, of course, had an extraordinary impact on colonial society and the economy, when migrants, in their thousands, were drawn to Australia by the lure of gold. This same large scale immigration substantially augmented the Jewish population, thereby adding new vigour to the small pioneer Jewish communities. With few exceptions, the historian has been contented with broad surveys, occasionally examining movements and institutions, and sometimes a history, though it may supply useful source materials, is crammed full of data, the writer not pausing to follow up interesting and fascinating sidelights. Again, the exceptions proving to be the rule, there has been but little Australian Jewish biography, and biographical details of many lesser figures — not without significance — are seldom noticed. "The time has come", as a leading historian has observed, "to think of Australia as men and people, not as land and resources."<sup>34</sup> The human aspects of Australian Jewish history, in which individuals are seen to have made worthy contributions without them being fully conscious of the value of their efforts, merits further and closer study. The historian would do well to include within his purview of the golden 'fifties the roles of a simple shepherd, McGregor, of Daniel Cohen, a Sydney jeweller whom contemporary writers would not have noticed except, perhaps, to relegate him to the "Ten Lost Tribes", and of William Tipple Smith who provides a challenge to the myth that Hargraves was the sole discoverer of payable gold.

## NOTES

1. History of Wellington, Robert Porter (1906), pp. 19-20
2. Part One, (1979), p. 7
3. 25 May, 1850: *They Came to a Valley*, D.I. McDonald, (1968), pp. 86-87
4. *A Fool's Gold?*, (1986), p. 7
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11
6. *Ibid.*, Footnote 28, p. 150
7. pp. 29-30
8. J.S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman, (1974), p. 316
9. *Ibid.*, p. 214
10. *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 272
11. *Ibid.*, p. 275
12. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 79, "An Early Census", Ernest S. Marks, and at p. 83
13. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 276
14. Y. 16
15. Y. 11
16. *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Vol. 5, p. 80
17. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, "Early Jewish Settlers in Port Macquarie", Sidney Schultz, p. 345
18. *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 275
19. *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 28 Feb. 1846
20. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 & 13 Oct., 1847
21. 20 Dec. 1845
22. p. 316, and note 8, above
23. Mitchell Library, P1/C; also, *Australian Genesis*, p. 316
24. Vol. 1, pp. vii-viii
25. *Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi
26. *Ibid.*, p. xxiii
27. see, note 7, above
28. *A Fool's Gold?*, p. 58
29. Quoted by Simpson Davison, *The Discovery and Geognosy of Gold Deposits in Australia*, (1860), p. 295
30. See, *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Vol. 9, 609-612; to which may be added the following item from *The Land of Promise, or, My Impressions of Australia*, London, (1854), at pp. 7-11, 51-52, by W. Shaw quoted in *A Documentary History of Australia*, Vol. 2, Frank Crowley, p. 221: "Clothiers are numerous; the method of thrusting out apparel for sale, and the gloomy aspect of the interior, remind us of Hebrew establishments, and we are reflecting on the confidence these traders must have in the integrity of passers-by, when, partially screened by habiliments, we observe dark men with hooked noses and unclean hands standing ready for "the receipt of custom." The keen eyes of one instinctively fathoms the contents of a parcel we are carrying; we resist the impetuosity of his attack, and pronounce him to be a Jew. Judging from the peculiar patronymics that often occur, we should conclude that "the Ten Lost Tribes" have found their way thither, and are true to their calling."
31. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 June, 1843
32. *A History of Australia*, Vol. IV, p. 5
33. *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Vol. 9, p. 621
34. *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 46, "The Biographical Approach to History", James J. Auchmuty, p. 111

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### THE SELF-MADE ANTHROPOLOGIST (A life of A.P. Elkin)

*by Tigger Wise*  
*Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1985*

Professor Elkin, first Australian-born Professor of Anthropology at Sydney University, member of the University Senate; a well-known name in Sydney for decades. But how many knew how wide was his influence? From grand designs like International House, the newest residence of its time on the Sydney University campus to house students of different denominations and nationalities, to suggestions for signs to indicate the presence of marked pedestrian crossings on roads. Those two trousered legs on a yellow background at every pedestrian crossing were Elkin's suggestion from signs he had seen in Sri Lanka.

A cold, intensely private man, he was financially a wizard. Behind his prim clergyman's image and attitude, who would have guessed that his grandfather was Moses Elkin, who with his wife, Deborah, was sent to New Zealand in the middle of last century by the Chief Rabbi to become Minister of Emily Place Synagogue in Auckland? For fifteen years they laboured to keep the congregation viable, but finally returned to England dispirited. Their son Rheuben had left home earlier and finally came to Singleton in New South Wales where he married Ellen Bower and had a son, Adolphus Peter Elkin.

I knew Elkin as an Emeritus Professor lecturing on Pre-history and the Aborigines in the anthropology course at Sydney University in the 1960s. An elderly man, his lectures were dry and humourless but full of intricate detail. His attitude to the Aborigines — narrow, looking back to their position in Australian society as he had seen them in the 1920s. In short, he seemed a one-dimensional man.

I approached this book with interest to find out something about the man, and found it so well written that he became a fully three-dimensional figure before I had read a quarter of the book. It is a fascinating insight into the private and public life as well as the emotions and experiences of the man. He comes alive from his first enthusiasm as an inexperienced young man, to the final bitter committee struggles as an old wily "numbers" man.

Tigger Wise, who followed the trail of Elkin's life through his papers, from speaking to his family and friends and from reading many background hooks, has done an excellent job with what could have been very dry material. Elkin was apparently a very meticulous man; there must have been a great deal of chaff to sort through. She follows his philosophical development and makes us part of it. She ably places us in the correct time zones by brief references to contemporary events outside Elkin's obsession with anthropology. She has cleverly introduced now well-known people who had dealings with Elkin and yet presented them in their time as young fledglings — Stephen Roberts, Jack McEwen, Paul Hasluck.

It is a book that one can indulge in nostalgically. After all, Elkin's life spanned nearly nine decades during which many exciting events occurred in Australia and he took part in many of them.

Tigger Wise puts many homely touches in drawing thumbnail sketches of the many characters in this biography. She highlights peoples' weight, little habits, par-

ticular facial features. She uses her source material well, sometimes weaving it unobtrusively into her text, sometimes using it surprisingly, bringing the man and his era truly alive. She even uses such ephemeral objects as dinner menus and conference lapel tags in this ingenious manner, while mention of meat safes and the unfinished arches of the Sydney Harbour Bridge place scenes in their right times.

If you knew the man, it throws a floodlight on his character; if you didn't, the book is worth reading for the influence that Elkin had on contemporary events in anthropology and Aboriginal affairs over five decades.

Technically, the book is well presented. The chapters have catchy titles as they carry the reader from decade to decade, the photographs are interesting with brief notes beneath them. The sources and notes section is scholarly detailed and the index (mostly of names) is precisely listed.

My only criticism of this most readable book would be a feeling that the author's obvious sympathies for Elkin in the beginning turn sour towards the end.

Helen Bersten

## VOICES OF JACOB, HANDS OF ESAU: JEWS IN AMERICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

*by Stephen J. Whitfield, Archon Books, 1984*

“Composed out of a certain wonder at the paradox of so ancient and fragile a people replenishing itself in the social flux of the United States,” Stephen Whitfield has gathered and introduced a collection of his own articles and review essays published between 1979-82.

Any student of American history will warm to essays on the Jews and the South, the Trade Union movement and performing comedy. The collective attempt to reconcile Judaism and the American experience may be full of complexity and tension but has yielded mutual rewards. The United States is the ultimate paradox; her distinctive national character is a “nation of nations”. Jews have nurtured the paradox. They have shared in every wave of immigration and then adjusted their voice and customs. They are free to submerge or to interact with the larger group. Isaac Stern explained the first exchange of classical musicians: “they send us their Jews from Odessa, and we send them our Jews from Odessa”.

One gets dizzy remembering how many Jewish performers, or their parents, have changed their names. Did you know that Lauren Bacall (nee Betty Persky) is a cousin of the former Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres (ne Persky)? Somehow it seems proper that Irving Berlin should compose “White Christmas” and Allen Ginsberg should describe himself as a “Buddhist Jewish pantheist”. Israel Zangwill and the chief character of his play, “The Melting Pot” (1908) were outspoken Jews with a message for all mankind.

The Jewish input may take strange and subtle transformations in “the legacy of Radicalism”. Most, as individuals, are unobservant, even ignorant. However, the dogma, Messianism and bookishness of their tradition may seek a substitute or outlet. They know Hillel’s Golden Rule and his call to serve, even if they have forgotten his name. They have absorbed the role models of priest, scholar, wanderer and guilty son. Theories of “status deprivation” are insufficient because other minorities provide such a different outcome.

So many scholars have tried to explain Humour that it is no longer funny. A rich Jewish tradition has developed it as shield and opiate, and America’s Hollywood and

vaudeville houses have provided ready employment. The Jewish comedians run from A to Z, from Allen and Benny to Youngman and Zero (Mostel). The verbal flair of Jules Feiffer and Woody Allen has a Jewish source. You don't have to be Jewish or Yiddish-speaking to appreciate the tonal subtleties of Leo Rosten's *The Joys of Yiddish*, although he enters this book in his professional capacity as a sociologist and pioneering student of the media.

Anti-Jewish prejudice has appeared in the South but Whitfield finds it unsystematic and shallow. Perhaps it has been deflected elsewhere in ways known to other countries. The region's Jews have been few and adaptable and find affinity with the true Southerner's sense of family, place and tradition. On its tree-lined way to Tulane University, New Orleans, where I took my doctorate, the St. Charles Avenue tram passed the Jewish Community Centre and two synagogues. Jews were prominent, but not too prominent, among the Orchestra Committee, the doctors and Garden District mansions. The community has produced the noted author, Lillian Hellman, and the philosopher, James Feibleman, who still taught at Tulane. It was old, well-established and never more than 10,000 people. They were visible but very much part of the South.

A flourishing community in colonial Newport, Rhode Island, erected the first synagogue in the United States in 1763 which still stands as a splendid example of the classical Georgian style. The poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, visiting the Jewish cemetery ca. 1850 wrote: "The groaning earth in travail and in pain/ Brings forth its races, but does not restore./ And the dead nations never rise again." Whitfield quotes and deems him a bad prophet, for Jewry has flourished in the United States and a new community was later formed in Newport.

But Longfellow in another stanza writes: "Gone are the living, but the dead remain./ And not neglected; for a hand unseen,/ Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain./ Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green." It is the task of the historian to explain the "hand unseen" and why Jewish communities in the Diaspora survive, adapt and are replenished.

L.E. Fredman

## PHILLIP BLASHKI — A VICTORIAN PATRIARCH

by Gael Hammer, P. Blashki & Sons Pty Limited 1986

This is Gael Hammer's first published book, but her name is well known amongst A.J.H.S. members for her interest in historical and family documentation. She has had several papers published on the subject, and delivered a paper on the life of the artist Miles Evergood (Myer Blashki), the eleventh child of the Blashki family. The author is also a member of this extended family being one of the eighty-eight great-grandchildren of Hannah and Phillip Blashki.

In compiling such a book and the arduous task of rounding up the descendants of this long standing Australian family, Gael Hammer genealogically embraces a time span of 128 years and seven generations. The result is more than dry factual accounting of who-begat-who (although there is, for the general reader, perhaps more than enough). What emerges as a *raison d'être* for such detailed research is a picture of the life and character of the founding figures, set against a changing backdrop of Australian economic conditions and social mores. After all, the founding of the Blashki family almost coincided with the founding of Melbourne. Hannah and Phillip arrived (from Poland via England) in 1858, only two years after Victoria was separated from N.S.W.

The writing is unpretentiously forthright and faithfully substantiated by quotes from letters, reports, personal memoirs and recollections, together with old family photos, which add visual flavour to the author's written description. Often self-consciously posed in oval frames, the family is portrayed in starched collars, morning coats and neck-ties, as stiff and formal as the Victorian respectable bourgeois society to which (with a few renegade exceptions) they aspired.

The story begins with Phillip Blashki (born Favel Wagczewski, in 1837) escaping before the age of 18, going to Manchester where his English employer named him Phillip Blashki. Working as a tassle maker, he met and married the elegant, high-bosomed, willow waisted Hannah nee Immergut. Already at 23 she had borne four children, three of whom had died. She was inured to the trials and tribulations that awaited the couple when they decided to start a new life in the New World, meaning America, to which they had paid their fares, shipped ahead all their worldly belongings, then missed the boat. Accepting their fate, they took the next boat, which happened to be going to Australia.

They arrived in Melbourne in the midst of the gold rush. On borrowed capital Phillip became a "hawker", while Hannah gave birth to the first Jewish twins in Australia. Now a dealer, Phillip was trading jewellery for gold on the diggings. The family moved to Geelong to reduce the time he spent away from home. The mines were producing abundantly and he was beginning to make something of a living, which he needed, as by the age of 30 he had fathered nine children. His fortunes fluctuated when he was robbed of £700 of jewellery (all his capital), jailed for suspected collusion for the insurance, declared bankrupt, and eventually vindicated with some of his goods returned. He opened a shop in Bourke St. with residential premises above to pack in his wife and expanding family. In 1876, when Hannah was 43, there were 14 children (altogether she bore 18 of whom 15 survived). As Aaron, the second eldest son, wrote, "Mother slaved from early morning till late at night and this went on until my sisters were old enough to lend a hand". Apparently, money was still too short to provide much outside help, but by 1889 Phillip could afford to send the two youngest girls to the Presbyterian Ladies' College. Their climb to middle class prosperity and respectability in the community was complete. The firm of P. Blashki and Sons achieved recognition and prestige when they won the tender to manufacture the coveted Sheffield Shield for cricket, which is still competed for.

Throughout all the vagaries of time and place in his life, Phillip Blashki retained with tenacity and unquestionable faith his commitment to the tenets of Judaism, and saw to it that the rest of his tribe followed suit. In business and civil life he was both shrewd and determined and at home he was the complete authoritarian. When his daughters attempted to teach Hannah English (she was illiterate), Phillip objected, saying she didn't need it.

The family was badly hit by the Depression in 1893, and after that Phillip left the problems of the firm to his eldest sons, while he retired to carry on the voluntary charitable activities in which he had become involved. He became a man of some standing in the general community, in the Freemasons, on the Magistrates' Bench and in business, founding the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures and the Victorian Employers Federation. In the Jewish community he was on various charitable boards, pioneered Jewish education in schools and founded the Jewish Aid Society (with Hannah's encouragement) and the Chevra Kadisha.

Their two characters, his strong, principled and benevolently autocratic, hers more gentle, seem to be confirmed in the family photos, such as those reproduced on the lid of the chocolate boxes given to each member of the family who attended



their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1907. To this event the prodigal son, Myer (now established as the artist Miles Evergood), sent a beautifully framed sepia photo of one of his acclaimed paintings from New York. However, as he had married out of the faith, this gesture did not melt his father's heart. He was still considered an embarrassment to the family and disinherited.

From the day Phillip and Hannah Blashki arrived in Australia to the present day, there have been about 500 descendants who have made their mark in commerce, professions, academic posts, and generally contributed to the economic and cultural growth of Australia, U.S.A., Europe, South Africa and Israel. The firm of P. Blashki and Sons, which is still in operation, has existed for 128 of Victoria's 151 years, thus making it, indeed, one of the oldest firms in Australia.

The book includes a Roll of Honour of those who have served or died for their country in war. Those who perished in the Holocaust appear in independent genealogical charts that punctuate the narrative.

Ruth Faerber

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Annual General Meeting of the Society, held on 10 December 1985, was notable for the major changes of office bearers. Mr. Forbes, who had been president for the past 12 years, retired and Rabbi Apple was elected the Society's 6th president. The founding president, in 1938, was Percy Joseph Marks, the prime mover and initiator of the Society, who held office until his death in 1941. He was followed in fairly quick succession by Arthur W. Hyman and Ernest S. Marks — the brother of Percy Marks, and a former Lord Mayor of Sydney. On the death of Ernest Marks in late 1947, Rabbi Porush assumed the presidency, holding office for 26 years until he left Sydney in 1974 to live in Melbourne. He then became a patron of the Society. Mr. M.Z. Forbes, who has been associated with the Society for 35 years, took on the dual office of president/editor. Now he retires from the presidency to continue the important work of editing our Journal and to become the first to officially hold the office of past president. This meant there would be other changes: Clive Kessler joined Rabbi Dr. A. Fahian as co-vice-president, and the result of nominations received indicated that there would be five resignations from the committee — Terry Newman, Nancy Keesing, Rabbi Brian Fox and Clive Kessler (who was to become a co-vice-president). The new committee now comprises Anne Andgel, Dennis Bluth, Sophie Caplan, Gael Hammer, Godfrey Lee, Bruce Le Bransky, Neville Levien and Suzanne Rutland. Helen Bersten remains honorary archivist. The constitution was altered at the meeting to establish the office of past president.

At the Annual Meeting Mr. Forbes read an address the text of which was subsequently to be an annexure to our *Newsletter* (No. 3), issued in January, 1986. Rabbi Apple was later to say that as president, he did not intend making any radical change in the Society's long-established and well-tried policies and patterns, but that "the style and emphasis may differ and every endeavour will be made, especially as Australia and with it Australian Jewry approaches the Bicentennial, to arouse new awareness of the history of Jews and Judaism in this part of the world". Books were donated to Mr. Forbes and to the Society in honour of his term as president.

The speaker at the Annual General Meeting was Myer Samra, reading his paper, "*The Politics Of Immigration — Sephardi Jews In Australia*." This paper was based largely on oral histories taken from members of Sydney's Sephardi community. It was prepared in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, and it examined the ways in which Sephardi Jews sought to overcome the restrictive policies they found when arriving in Australia from Asia, to establish themselves within the Jewish community here.

At the meeting, the announcement was made that the Heritage Council of New South Wales had placed an interim conservation order on the former Maitland Synagogue building to enable a decision to be made about a permanent conservation order. Sophie Caplan, Terry Newman and Dennis Bluth donated to the Society the extensive computer print-out of Gary Mokotoff and Shmuel Gorr's collection of family names which have been Hebraicised in the past 37 years.

The Society's quarterly Newsletter was recommenced in August, 1985 after a gap of some 15 years, and its editor, Dennis Bluth, has maintained a high standard of publication since then.

It was decided that during 1986, we would hold an extra (occasional) general meeting — making four, throughout the year. The extra meeting was to bring before the community some of the essays which had achieved distinction in the Hans Kimmel Memorial Essay Competition, now part of the Moriah College curriculum. The five students who on 19 February 1986 read their essays were Joel Pearlman, reading "*The Life Of Abraham Pearlman Of Boggabri*"; Simona Amzalak, reading "*My Grandfather, Moric Stark*"; Lionel Briggs, reading the biography of his great-grandfather, "*The Reverend Leopold Goran*"; Robert Goodman, reading "*Samuel Goodman Of Central Synagogue*", 1875-1953, and Ginni Rosenblum, reading "*A.M. Rosenblum Of The Great Synagogue*". This meeting was an unqualified success, with a record attendance of about 250 members and friends.

Rabbi Apple's report referred to the Society's "hospitable home within the precincts of the Great Synagogue, and the historic ambience of the mother congregation of Australian Jewry which continues to inspire all who work in or utilise our offices and archives". On the subject of the recent extensions to the Society's quarters, he said, "Until now, our quarters have been a little cramped. Alterations have just been completed to enable us to enjoy more space and to accommodate our growing archive collection more fittingly." With the extended offices, we have obtained a second compactus to hold our expanding records. Rabbi Apple has suggested that in due course we shall be holding an official opening of the new A.J.H.S. headquarters.

The General Meeting in May was also a gratifying success when we had as speaker, our corresponding member for the United Kingdom, Dr. Anthony P. Joseph, here with his daughter. Dr. Joseph was in Australia as one of the participants to the Fourth Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry held in Canberra. He spoke to our meeting on Australian-Jewish genealogy, surveying the growth of Australian Jewish records and their British source materials and connections.

The President's Report to the May meeting referred to the possibility on the academic level of the proposal to introduce a segment on Australian Jewish history into the Jewish Civilisation courses that commenced this year at the University of Sydney. It also referred to the assistance rendered by our Society's archives and personnel to some recent publications. These included Gael Hammer's history of the Blashki family, Serge Liberman's Bibliography of Australian Judaica, Len Fox's biography of E. Phillips Fox, Australia's first Impressionist Artist, Rabbi Apple's study of Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen, and those books on Victorian Jews which were written by W.R. (Bill) Rubinstein and his wife, Hilary L. Rubinstein, to commemorate that State's 150th anniversary.

Len Fox, a great-nephew of E. Phillips Fox, donated to our Society an autographed copy of his biography, as well as a copy of his earlier work, *Old Sydney Windmills*. The chapter in this latter book entitled "Strangest Windmill in the World?" is concerned with Barnett Levey's windmill, built on top of his building situated in George Street, Sydney.

Rabbi John Levi of Melbourne advises that he is arranging for the reprinting of *Australian Genesis*, for early release. The reprint of this important work by John Levi and the late George Bergman will be eagerly awaited. Rabbi Levi also plans a Volume Two of *The Forefathers*. This new book will take the names, with brief biographical sketches, of all Australian Jews up to 1850. Volume I, published in 1976, was *A DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY OF THE JEWS OF AUSTRALIA, 1788-1830*.

Our Newsletter No. 4 featured Rabbi Shmuel Gorr's item about a prenumeraunt in Australia. It was the story of the bibliophile, David S. Blumberg of Brisbane, and it

is worth noting here that Blumberg's name, together with those of seven other Queensland Jews, is recorded in *THE AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK*, 5674, 1913-1914 as being members of the Jewish Publication Society of America. The names of the other Jews are J.A. Blumherg, P. Frankel, A.M. Hertzberg, Abraham Hertzberg, Reverend A. Levy, S. Phillips and Lionel Phillips.

We have received a complementary copy of the new publication, *HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES*, an international journal published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, of Jerusalem. The aim of the new journal is "to publish the foremost scholarly material reflecting the best in contemporary thought on the Holocaust and the related study of genocide". Subscription to this biennial publication may be arranged through Pergamon Press Australia. The first issue is an impressive production containing more than 168 pages of some 12 articles, book reviews and bibliographies.

Volume 10 of the Australian Dictionary of Biography contains a number of contributions by members of our Society, including M.Z. Forbes, Professor Lionel Fredman and Suzanne Rutland.

We have received some interesting visitors to our headquarters during the past few months. These include Wendy Feder, a member who lives in New York. She is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Esther Abrahams, and she told us the name of a lady living in Sydney who possesses the portraits of Esther and her daughter, Julia. As a result of our having made contact with this lady, our Society has received copies of the two portraits. Another visitor, Marlene Gould, of Manchester, is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Moses and Rosetta Joseph. She became a member of our Society, and obtained information from our records which will help her establish her identity as one of the claimants of the estate of Moses Joseph, now held in Chancery in England. Yet another visitor was Mrs. Kitty Franklin of Vacluse, who gave us some valuable material relating to her period as a teacher at the Hillel College Rabbi Porush Kindergarten at Bondi Junction. She has kept — and loaned to us — scrap books relating to her 40-year career in Australia, sometimes as a teacher, sometimes as an author of children's books, and as a musician conducting children's choirs at the various Jewish Day Schools.

Another recent acquisition to the Society's records is a folio of seven large (250mm x 200mm) photographs from the Western Suburbs Synagogue. They consist of six views — internal and external — of the Synagogue, and the seventh picture is of the 1975 Board of Management, together with the then minister, Reverend R. Fisher. Included are the names of the ten lay leaders, each one identified.

Once again the AJHS EDGAR SEITEL NEWMAN AWARD is under way. We would like to see all States well represented.

The Canberra (ACT) Branch of the Society reports on its continued close collaboration with the Canberra and District Historical Society in numerous ways, including the building up of a list of graveyards and inscriptions in the region and information on Jewish plots. The Branch has established that the Chevra Kadisha had been advised of Jewish burials at Yass and Woden cemeteries. The Branch has been taping the reminiscences of such long-standing Jewish residents of the ACT as Sadie Lipman and Kurt Gottlieb. At the Fourth Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry, the Branch was host to Dr. Anthony Joseph, and its members attended to hear his address at the Congress.

The present office bearers of the Branch are as follows: president, Earle Hoffman; treasurer, Harold Pearlman; secretary, Sylvia Deutsch. Committee: Margaret Bead-

man and Barbara Dickens. The General Meeting, held in March, 1986, marked the Branch's second anniversary — it was inaugurated early in April, 1984. During the period the membership has increased to 16, and eight meetings have been held. The Branch has been seeking to build up material that can provide the basis for historical studies. One of its current aims is to obtain evidence of the history of Jewish use of leasehold property in ACT, including the site of the National Jewish Memorial Centre, and to establish an archive of the ACT community. Mr Hoffman, together with Margaret Beadman and Barbara Dickens, will be working on this project during the next few months. The Branch's report notes, "We are only trail-breakers in this region of Jewish historical effort. Others will follow and build on our first small steps. Everything in Jewish history tells us to persevere."

Our Society records with deepest regret the deaths of members Israel Green, William Holloway, Wanda McPherson and Phoebe Davis. Dr. and Mrs. A.M. Hertzberg made a generous donation honouring the memory of Phoebe Davis. This gesture has prompted a number of other friends of Phoebe to make similar offerings for the establishment of a project in her name.

Mrs Helen Moss, mother of Primrose Moss and Penny Meagher, and sister of Paul Cullen, died in May. Helen Moss was the only daughter of Sir Samuel S. Cohen, and amongst her father's valued treasures were included the silver trowel presented to him by the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, "The first President of the congregation on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the 'Beth Israel' Synagogue, on May 29th, 1927"; the silver trowel presented to Sir Samuel on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stones of the *Tabara House* (funeral parlour) and Hall of Remembrance on 27 June 1948, and the silver key of the North Bondi Hebrew School and Kindergarten, presented to Sir Samuel at its official opening on 14 February 1943. Mrs. Moss's family wished our Society to have custody of these items.

## VICTORIAN BRANCH REPORT

**A** most successful meeting was held on 27 June 1985 in conjunction with Temple Beth Israel, when Dr. Hilary Rubinstein presented a chapter from her book *Jews in Victoria 1835-1985* entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Temple of Israel" — Australia's very first, tragi-comic, Progressive congregation, founded in Melbourne 100 years ago (nearly 50 years before the foundation of the present Temple Beth Israel).

Dr. Rubinstein is also working on a commissioned textbook of Australian Jewish history for use by high school students and undergraduates. She is currently employed in cataloguing one of the largest private collections of Judaica in Australia.

At that meeting members and visitors were also addressed by Mr. Lloyd Solomon concerning a ceremony to take place at the Melbourne General Cemetery on 7 July 1985 in conjunction with the American Legion Group "Yanks Down Under", who have discovered the grave of an English Jew who fought on the side of the Union in the Civil War, and who later came to Australia. There was to be a dedication of a bronze plaque, flown out from Washington, USA, with various representatives in authentic uniform, and in the presence of several descendants of the soldier. The media was expected to provide suitable coverage of this rare event.

Dr. Rubinstein's book was successfully launched in a hard-covered, numbered, limited edition; a soft-cover version was released a few months later.

It was with great regret that we recorded the death in August of Miss Ivy Rosenberg of Geelong, who together with her sister Miss Frances was a staunch member of the Victorian Branch since its foundation in 1954; only recently had they been unable to make the long journey by train for our meetings.

Special congratulations were extended to a past president and current committee member, Rabbi John Levi, on the 25th anniversary of his induction as a rabbi of Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne, and on the recent award of an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem.

The final meeting for 1985 took place on 24 October, when the Honorable Walter Jona delivered a paper on "Jews in Victorian Policies: from Levi to Jona". As Mr. Jona had just retired after 22 years involvement in the Victorian political scene, he demonstrated a deep interest in, and knowledge of, his topic. A fitting vote of thanks was delivered by Rabbi Levi. Mr. Jona's paper appears elsewhere in this Journal.

Many valuable additions have been made to our reference Library, including the purchase of a set of 787 microfiche being the Civil Indexes to Births Marriages and Deaths in Victoria from 1837 to 1895; the donation by the Auckland Hebrew Congregation, New Zealand, of three rolls of microfilmed Birth Marriage and Death Registers of the A.H.C. from 1843 to 1985; the purchase of microfiched Civil Indexes to pre-1900 births marriages and deaths in South Australia, Queensland, and West Australia; and a set of 53 microfiche containing a complete alphabetical listing of all burials and cremations at the Necropolis, Springvale, up to December 1985. We have also been given, or have purchased through the Library Fund, a number of general works on Australian and English Jewish history, which, together with the microfilmed *Jewish Herald* from 1879 to 1928, form a major part of the resources available for researchers and genealogists.

The Branch held its 32nd Annual General Meeting on 18 March 1986; with the

resignation of Mrs. Rachel Dzienciol, and the co-option previously of Dr. Bill Rubinstein, the executive and committee are now as follows: president, Dr. Howard Freeman; honorary secretary, Mrs. Beverley Davis; honorary treasurer, Dr. Serge Liberman. Committee: Dr. Harvey Cohen, Trevor Cohen, Rabbi John Levi AM, Dr. Hilary Rubinstein, Dr. William Rubinstein, Isidor Solomon, and David Sonenberg.

Two speakers addressed the meeting on "Jewish Involvement in the Australian Literary and Art Scene in the 1930s and 1940s". One was Ms. June Factor, who writes, edits and reviews books; the other, Dr. Richard Haese, author of *Rebels and Precursors*, a study of Australian art and culture of this period, and the most authoritative book on the topic yet written. Ms. Factor discussed at length the works of Pinchas Goldhar, Hertz Bergner and Judah Waten, and Dr. Haese dealt with artist Yosl Bergner.

The next meeting took place on 19 May 1986, when we were pleased to host Dr. Anthony Joseph, from Birmingham, England. He was in Australia to deliver a paper at the Fourth Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry in Canberra in May (attended also by our honorary secretary, Beverley Davis), and he addressed our members on "Anglo-Australian Jewish Records". His talk was well-received and prompted a number of pertinent questions from eager family historians, some of whom were surprised to discover the extent of the resources of our own reference library in this field.

We also marked the completion of the 8th year of regular publication of our Branch Newsletter, which is sent to all Victorian members with meeting notices.

## OBITUARY

### PHOEBE DAVIS

**P**hoebe Davis (born Goldberg) and formerly Sulman, who died on 9 June 1986, had lived a good, long, fruitful life — she died a few months short of her 87th birthday. She had worked, consistently, since the age of 16 years — except for the decade during the 1920s and early 1930s when she was bringing up her two children, Betty and David. She was the eldest daughter — and third child — of the seven children of Joel and Dinah Goldberg. Her family background was noteworthy: On her father's side she descended from a rabbinic family which originated in Shillel, Russia. Phoebe's father, Joel, was one of the 14 children of Samuel Ben Meir Zecharovitz (a miller) and Hannah Esther (nee Kirchstein — or possibly, Hirsch Stein). Samuel Ben Meir was a Shochet-Bodek, and his wife, Hannah, was connected to the same family which produced Rabbi Sir Israel Brodie, a Chief Rabbi of England. All of the Zecharovitz sons were trained as Shochtim, and one of them, Leon, continued the tradition in Australia. Five members of the family came to Australia to live, including a sister, Malcha, who was married to Myer Levy. Three of the brothers changed their names to Goldberg. The fourth — the eldest son of the family — became Rabbi Abraham Eber Hirschowitz — see Rabbi Apple's article, RABBINIC RESPONSA — ABRAHAM EBER HIRSCHOWITZ, AJHS Journal, Volume IX, Part 6.

Phoebe Goldberg grew up within the congregation of the Newtown Synagogue, which her father, his two brothers and brother-in-law, Myer Levy, helped establish in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her father, Joel, was president of the congregation during the years the synagogue was being built in Georgina Street. In 1920, Phoebe was married there to Leslie Shulman. At the age of 48 she was widowed; later she married Maurice Davis, but was widowed again when she was still in her early 50s.

Besides her work as secretary of a firm of textile manufacturers, Phoebe followed the family tradition of service to the community. Her maternal great-grandfather, John Isaacs, who arrived here from England in 1847, was a treasurer of the York Street Synagogue, and, together with his son-in-law, Elias Cohen, founded the Hebrew Denominational School in the 1860s. Phoebe worked for many years on the Board of Education at the Newtown congregation, where she was also secretary for 17 years. She was secretary of the Help-in-Need Society for over 50 years; treasurer of the Australian Jewish Historical Society for 10 years, as well as doing the typing of the Society's membership lists and envelopes, and helping dispatch journals and notices. During the war, when her husband and son were on active service, Phoebe worked with other ladies making camouflage nets and helping man the Anzac Buffet in Hyde Park. She gave her services willingly to the Great Synagogue Ladies' Auxiliary, and to the A.M. Rosenblum Jewish Museum after it opened in 1982.

Phoebe Davis radiated life, nobility and magnanimity and she will be remembered for her breadth of vision and perception as much as for her warm hearted hospitality. Twice a year, on Seder night and Rosh Hashanah, she would prepare a banquet for upwards of fifteen family and friends. Sometimes she would find a pretext for an even larger occasion, as last October when she wished to celebrate the centenary



of her father's arrival in Australia. There were 25 of the 44 direct descendants present.

A visit to her home in Double Bay meant that Phoebe would give the guests a meal, with a "sense of occasion".

After having worked as secretary for the Help-in-Need for so long, Phoebe was greatly saddened in September, 1985, to have to advise the Society's members that after 95 years, it would, "in accordance with the constitution of the Society" hand over its funds to the Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home. Her final communication to its members added, "The President and Committee regret having to take this action, but because the majority of the committee have reached that "certain age" they feel unable to carry on . . ." It is worth noting here that she had been resisting the move for the previous ten years.

Several of her colleagues in the Australian Jewish Historical Society have suggested that a project be named in Phoebe's honour. With this in view, a number of her friends have contributed donations.

Louise Rosenberg

## **NAOMI LANDA GROSS** **and** **LIONEL GROSS**

The Jewish communities of Melbourne and Sydney mourn the tragic and untimely death of Naomi Landa Gross and her husband Lionel Gross in a car accident in the south of France.

Naomi, the daughter of the Honorable Abe Landa, Minister in the N.S.W. Labor Cabinet from 1953 till 1965 and later Agent General of N.S.W. in London, grew up in Sydney and moved to Melbourne on her marriage to Lionel Gross, who was a well known textile manufacturer and was later interested in the mining industry.

After her three children grew up, Naomi went back to study and took out an Arts degree and a librarian's qualification. She also worked as a loved voluntary guide at the National Gallery of Victoria for 17 years.

However, her great love became Judaism and she was involved and instrumental in the foundation and development of The Jewish Museum of Australia. She was Co-Chairman and was later Vice-President until the time of her death.

Naomi worked tirelessly for the Museum and infused it with her unique warmth and vitality. The character of the Museum is stamped with her deep appreciation of Jewish history, tradition and ritual and with her desire to share this respect with others.

Naomi and Lionel shared an enormous enthusiasm for life and all things beautiful that it offered. Their involvement in communal and cultural affairs was prodigious. Their friendship circle was wide and varied.

Their loss is deeply mourned and their memory is a blessing to us.

Helen Light, Curator, The Jewish Museum of Australia, Melbourne.

## GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES

This third genealogical list is supplementary to the previous lists in *Journal*, volume IX, parts 7 and 8. If members themselves did not initiate the enquiry and can provide more information, or are seeking information about the families listed below, please write to the Secretary at 166 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, 2000.

ASSENHEIM, Joseph, Sarah, Isadore and family

ARMIDALE and TAMWORTH Jewry

ABRAHAMS, Abraham, married to Rachel Haines and family Sophia, Isaac, Jacob, Hyman, Henry

BLOOM, Hannah, daughter of David Bloom and Kate Hart, married to Barnet Keesing

BOCKERAH, Solomon

CASSRELS, Asher, married to Annie Brodziak

COHEN, John, married to Sophia Abrahams

COHEN, Laurie (doll manufacturing company)

DAVIS, David and Elizabeth (nee Myers), parents of John Jacob Davis

ELLITT family

FIELD, George, married to Ruth Rebecca Penfold; and family, Esther, Rachael, George, Ruth, Marie

FRIEDMAN, Rev. Isaac, married to (1) Rebecca, son Francis; (2) Maria Nathan, 3 sons, 1 daughter

HECHLER, Rev. William H. (1845-1931) and son, Ernest, lived in South Australia until 1960

HART, John and Rose, son Benjamin born Hobart 1833, married Sandhurst, Victoria, 1860

HERMAN, Rev. Samuel, first President of Victorian Beth Din. Died Geelong, 1879, married Esther (nee Jacobs), then Sarah (nee Levek). Father of 7 children

JACOBS, Hannah, married to Joel Phillips

LAZARUS, Moses, Henry, Rose, arrived Melbourne, 1838, 1844, 1845 respectively

LEE, Henry, son of Rebecca and Benjamin, died 1924

LEO(N), Lewis, convict. Arrived via *Waterloo*, 8.2.1838

LEVI, Ernest Jeffrey and ancestors

LEVINSOHN, Lipman Alexander, married to Fanny Cohen, 10.6.1891

LEVY, Phillip, married to Mary Moses in Hobart 1842. President of Synagogue. Left for Melbourne 1874. Mary died 28.6.1904, St. Kilda. Possibly 12 children including Priscilla, wife of Rev. Israel Goldreich

MANDELSON (or Mandelsohn), Louis. Possibly originally MARJOLINSKI(Y), married Ernestine Hirsch

MONTEFIORE, Arthur, married to Edith Vowles

MONTEFIORE, Charles Monte, married to Ada Josephine Chauncy

MONTEFIORE, Frederick, married to Annie Elizabeth Abel

MOSES, Emanuel ("Money"), arrived Van Diemen's Land on *Lord Lyndoch*, 1841. Died same year

MOSS, John, convict, arrived on *Waterloo*, 8.2.1838

MYERS, Phillip and Eleanor (or Ellena) nee Alexander, married London. Phillip born 1803, died Sydney 1865, Eleanor born 1812, died Brisbane 1899. Ancestors wanted

NATHAN, Jacob, married Rachel Simmons 1886 or 1887  
RAPKIN, Nahum, married to Priscilla, father of Phoebe (Solomon)  
RIEUBEN, Samuel Amos, married to Phoebe Davis at Young, 1878. Information required about son, born Cowra, 1879  
ROSENBERG, Barnet, married to Milly Goodman. Ancestors required  
ROSENBERG, Elias Abraham, lived in Honolulu, 1886-7  
SAUNDERS, John, convict  
SIMMONS, James, married to Agnes Thorley 1821  
SOLOMON, Mark, married to Rachel Blanche Jones  
SOLOMON, Samuel, married to Rebecca Moss (died 1864), father of Mrs Lewis Wolfe Levy  
YATES, Jessie, married to Hyam Abrahams  
SUPER, Isaac Jacob, married Lena Bull; and ROTHSTADT, Isaac, married Rachel Cohen (Inquiry by Sandra Marx)

Helen Bersten  
Hon. Archivist

## **JEWISH COMMUNAL APPEAL**

This Society is joined with others as a participating organisation in the above New South Wales Appeal which strives to raise adequate finance for the support of vital local Jewish institutions, whether charitable, educational, cultural, or community services. All donations to the Appeal are tax deductible. (The Australian Jewish Historical Society is itself a body to which contributions are tax deductible, provided the donation is made to its Library Fund.)

It behoves all our Jewish members to support the Appeal especially as this Society has gained acceptance from the Appeal. By generously subscribing to the current campaign, our members are assisting to maintain essential services provided to the Jewish community by the participating organisations, including our own Society whose work will be enhanced and expanded by the additional funds that will flow from contributions made to the Appeal. The Executive and Committee of the Australian Jewish Historical Society commend this cause to its membership.







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JUDAH AND FANNY ELLIS  
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CELIA ROSENBERG  
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SYDNEY SCOTT

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