

Celebrating the sesquicentennial of the  
Jewish community in Evansville

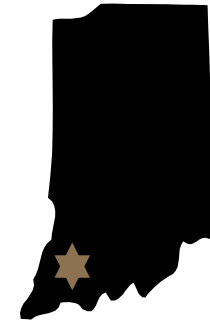


November 16-18, 2007  
Temple Adath B'nai Israel  
Evansville, Indiana

# Jewish Life in Evansville 1857-2007

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A brief history of the Jewish community  
in Evansville, Indiana



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Jewish community in Evansville

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Temple Adath B'nai Israel  
Evansville, Indiana

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### **Celebration Committee:**

Jeffrey Berger, Chair  
Elissa Bakke  
Cindy Fine  
Rabbi Barry Friedman  
Wendy Hass  
Hugh Lippmann and Jennifer Wampler  
Michele Malitz  
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### **Archives Committees Working on 150th Celebration:**

#### **Booklet:**

Written by Sue Barancik

#### **Contributors:**

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Jean Berger  
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Bob Levi  
Mark Senzell  
Philip Siegel

With input on the 1950s from Mary Ruth Oakley  
and Mary Dannettell

Mindy Barancik - booklet design

### **DVD-History of Evansville Jewish Community**

Written by Patricia Weinzapfel

Produced by Stan Newman, WEHT, Channel 25

Salm's "Style Without Extravagance" Salm's

Original Individual Distinctive

Welcome War Mothers

Autumn Hats

\$2.50 to \$15

The factor that accounts for the great popularity of Salm's Millinery section is that here women find at within-reach prices, hats with that chic and charm usually to be had only in much more expensive creations.



**Salm's**

Evansville's Premier Showing of Children's Hats, \$1 to \$5

## A Selection of Advertisements from the Past

Buy War Savings Stamps—Daily

Wonderful Presentation

### New Fall Suits



Stunning tailleurs with severe straight lines—new notes in convertible choker and fur collars — novel fastenings — apron and double-breasted effects. in Serges, Poplins, Velours, Oxfords, Velveteens.

Very Special at **\$35**

Dressy Broadcloths, Suede and Chamois Velours, Velvets, Crystal Cloth. Lavish fur collars and trimmings of the finest Beaver, Seal, Skunk, Opposum, Nutria.

Very Special at **\$50**

304-306 MAIN ST.  
**De Jong's**  
 CLOAKS & MILLINERY



**STROUSE & BROS**

**DVD-Interviews with Seniors**  
 Cindy Fine and Lynn Senzell-chairs  
 Patricia Weinzapfel-consultant

**Teen Interviewers:**

Natalie Farmer  
 Jessica Fine  
 Ben Haney  
 Natalie Malitz  
 Megan Senzell  
 Josh Trockman

**Seniors Interviewed:**

Bill Dumes  
 Isabella Fine  
 Myron Forman  
 Ruth Goldben  
 Roz Marver  
 Rae Senzell  
 June Zendell

Videographers - Black Tie Video

**Celebration Party**

Entertainment by Cantor Regina Heit and Mah Tovv Band,  
 Denver, Colorado

Party Buffet by Enjoy It!

## Temple Adath B'nai Israel

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### **Rabbi**

Barry R. Friedman

### **Administrative Assistant**

Marilyn Hufnagel

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### **Executive Board:**

President: Philip Siegel

First Vice President: Martin Barancik

Second Vice President: Elana Stone

Treasurer: Scott Lobel

Secretary: Merral Lewis

Ex-Officio: Robert Goldman

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### **Board of Directors:**

Elissa Bakke

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Sonnie Cibull

Michael Drake

Isabella Fine

Marc Fine

Jon Goldman

Ken Goldstein

Donald Lurye

Mary Present

Mark Senzell

Jeff Trockman



## Our Spiritual Leaders

### **B'Nai Israel -- Washington Avenue Temple**

Before the first temple was erected in 1865, about a half dozen men served as "Readers." This list begins in 1865.

Simon Hecht  
Edward Brown  
Isaac Schwab  
Meyer Erskin  
Falk Vidaver  
Rabbi Wittauer  
J.H. Chumaceiro  
Isaac Rypins  
Israel Klein  
Max Merritt  
Lee Levinger  
Edward Israel  
Jack Skirball  
Milton Greenwald  
Martin Ryback  
Bernard Lavine

### **Adath Israel**

Lists of early Rabbis at Adath Israel were not found. This list begins in the post-WWII era.

Max Landman  
Benjamin Teller  
Milton Rube  
Martin Douglas  
Joseph Topel

### **Adath B'Nai Israel**

Michael Herzbrun  
Mathew Michaels  
Arthur Abrams  
David Feder  
Barry Friedman

## **Community Farewell Dinner for Rabbi Max Merritt**

Hotel McCurdy  
September 4, 1919

### **Programme**

Address-Honorable Benjamin Bosse, Mayor  
Solo-Mrs. E.E. Hoskinson  
Address-Mr. Frank H. Hatfield  
Selection-Temple Quartet  
Address-Mr. Isidor Kahn  
Selection-Mixed Quartette  
Address-Honorable Albert J. Veneman  
Solo-Mrs. Elmer Dear  
Swan Song-Rabbi Max J. Merritt

### **Menu**

Canape Lorenzo  
Essence of Tomato  
Celery Olives  
Roast Young Turkey  
Cranberry Sauce  
Candied Sweet Potatoes  
Asparagus Tips  
Fruit Salad in Jelly, Wafers  
Baked Alaska

### **Word from the Archives Booklet Committee:**

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The Archives committee hopes that you thoroughly enjoy this history of our community and that you share it with your family. As with any publication of this sort, you can only work with the material that you either are given or can research. We apologize for any major or minor gaps in the recording of the history. Please feel free to insert any information that you have that will enhance your enjoyment of the booklet.

- S. B.

## In the Beginning...

The history of the Jewish community in Evansville began in 1837 with the arrival of the **Gumberts** family followed a year later by **Isaac Heimann**. By 1850, most Indiana towns had three or four Jewish families. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, early Hoosiers were German Jews who traveled across the Atlantic, arriving on the East Coast, crossing the Appalachian Mountains by pack-wagon or stage coach and finally floating down river from Pittsburgh by flat-boat. What made Evansville appealing was the large number of German speaking people among the 1800 residents as well as the fact that Evansville had been designated as the terminus for the largest canal project in the world. In addition, a branch of the new state bank was coming to Evansville, making business transactions easier.

By 1850, there were enough Jews in Evansville for a minyan. Services were held in homes or buildings, such as the second floor of Keller's Gun Store. Most of the people were secular or non-practicing in their Judaism but they still wanted a religious presence in their new home. The first synagogue in Indiana was established in Fort Wayne in 1848, Indianapolis followed in 1856 and then Evansville in 1857. In neighboring Kentucky, Owensboro, Paducah and Henderson established synagogues in the late 1850s to 1880s. From the outset, congregations were liberal with mixed seating and preaching was in English and German and very little Hebrew.

## B'nai Israel Established

On August 13, 1857, the Jewish community organized as **B'nai Israel** with the first trustees being **Jacob Loewenthal, Louis Kahn, Simon Gumberts, Louis Frey** and **Simon Roser**. **David Heimann** was the first president. The *Evansville Daily Journal* of September 21, 1857 reported extensively on the congregation's first worship services, held the previous Saturday and *Sunday*. "Approximately forty male adults "who form an enterprising, industrious, and wealthy class" participated in the first service," said the newspaper report. The Jewish community was now a recognized religious entity in Evansville. The city directory of 1858 lists "**J. Wechsler**, as Minister, Services Fridays at early gas lighting; Saturdays at 8 am and Sundays at early gas lighting."

## Bits and Pieces

**So this is how the ladies used to run their organizations!**

### **By-Laws of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, 1860s**

#### **Article III Membership**

Sec.1. Any Hebrew lady of blameless reputation can become a member of the society by fulfilling the conditions of the Constitution and being in good health, provided however that in future no married woman be admitted whose husband is not a member of the Congregation B'nai Israel.

#### **Article VI Duties of Members**

Sec. 1 All members shall be present at the meetings and shall obey the commands of the President in regard to maintaining order.

Sec. 3 It is the duty of any member to accept an office given her by a majority vote. Any member refusing to accept an office to which she is elected shall be ineligible for the next three years.

#### **Article VII Aid and Assistance**

Sec. 1 In case of sickness of any member the society shall, if required, detail during daytime two and for the night three members to stand watch. The same shall be done during sickness of children of members but not in cases of contagious disease.

Sec. 2 The detailing of watches shall be done in regular order, according to the list kept by the secretary for that purpose.

Sec. 3 In the event of death, eight ladies shall also join the funeral procession for which purposes two carriages shall be provided and paid for out of the treasury.

**MARK SENZELL**—I arrived in Evansville by choice; I was born here 53 years ago! Evansville was the choice of my grandparents, Max and Freda Senzell. It's where my father, Irving, brought his bride Rachael so that the next generation could help run the family business. I spent many of my childhood days visiting my father's office at Kor-X-All and now I'm the dad behind the big desk. I met my wife, Lynn, in Evansville, and feel blessed with the home we've created. I've seen my children—Lauren, Aaron and Megan—walk through the doors of Harrison High School, just as we did. I've cheered for their teams on the same fields where I played. They attend services in the only Temple community I've ever known. Evansville represents continuity for me. It has been good to me and that is my hope for its future generations.

**DORIS SIEGEL**—In 1937, when I was just a toddler, my family was able to leave our home in Mannheim, Germany and emigrate to the United States. My father's store had already been closed by the Nazis. We had relatives in Indianapolis who sponsored us. My father, Alfred Kahn, opened a store in Indianapolis but was forced to close it because he was German. I met Phil, an Evansville native, when I was a freshman at IU and we were married in 1956. Phil and I agreed that we would not live in either Indianapolis or Evansville, but after he finished law school and was offered a position in an Evansville law firm, we decided to move back. We are both pleased that we made the right decision to live here. I returned to Mannheim several years ago with two of our daughters and a grandchild and found that no Jews remained in the city and that a swastika was embedded in a brick street for "decoration."

Early members of the Jewish community were successful in their business endeavors. The **Gumberts** and the **Anspachers** had clothing stores. The **Heimanns** had a wholesale grocery; **William Loewenthal** and **Abraham Lowenstine** were dry goods merchants; **Solomon Kahn** had a livery stable. In 1855, **Simon Gumberts** was licensed to practice medicine and in 1869, **Moses Weil** was admitted to the Indiana Bar.

The first burial society was created in the 1850s and in 1879 Rose Hill Cemetery was established in its home near the present Evansville Country Club.

Jewish community life flourished. In 1860, **Thisbe Lodge #24 of B'nai Brith** was established. It was the first B'nai Brith lodge in Indiana and the fourth lodge west of the Alleghenies. This philanthropic fellowship is still in existence today.

Not to be outdone by the men, in the same month that the B'nai Brith Lodge was established, **Mrs Louis Roser** became President of the newly established **Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society**. The women's group did not deal in trivialities—their first fund-raising efforts were focused on raising money to help support freed slaves who arrived in Evansville. The ladies held a benevolent ball in Evansville's Mozart Hall in 1864 that raised \$400 for the newly arrived Black population. The newspaper reported the evening as the "most handsome, eloquent, affair held in the history of the hall." Two orchestras and a lavish dinner prepared by the women made for a whopping success.

## The Civil War

Several members of the Jewish community served in the Union Army. Corporal **Herman Salm** served through the entire war with Evansville unit, Company B of the 25<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and was wounded in action. **Henry Gumberts** and **Moses C. Kohn** were "Hundred Days Volunteers" in 1864. **Aaron Joseph** and **Alfred Einstein** also served.

The Civil War provided great economic advantages to many Evansville businessmen and many prospered. Some prominent names on storefronts, manufacturing plants and offices were **Strouse, Ichenhauser, Brentano, Frank, Joseph, Weil, Bitterman, Gross, and Loewenstein**.

## B'nai Israel Gets a Building

In 1863, it was announced that the first synagogue building would be erected at Sixth and Division (now Court) following a design by local architects Mursinna and Boyd. It was planned as one of the most elegant religious edifices in Indiana—70 x 45 feet, seating 600 in the sanctuary and costing \$45,000. Civic leaders and the press attended the laying of the cornerstone in 1864 and the Evansville newspaper initiated a building drive for the temple to be supported by the public.



B'nai Israel was completed in 1865 and dedicated on August 3, 1866. Many dignitaries attended the dedication ceremonies, including the esteemed **Rabbi Isaac Meyer Wise** of Cincinnati. A brass band led the procession, followed by the pupils of the Hebrew School, twelve girls in white and twelve boys in black, then the clergy of the town, the officers of the congregation, the Mayor of the city and many others. A large choir from Memphis, TN performed. **Rabbi Simon Hecht** was hired as the rabbi for the congregation and one of his first duties was to officiate at the wedding of **Harry Joseph** and **Mary Gumberts** on October 18, 1866.

**Jacob Weil**, reminiscing in 1937, recounted that he entered the day school of the temple as a six year old in 1867. There were about 100 pupils; four of them not even Jewish! One of the non-Jews was a member of the prominent Igleheart family. The students studied English with “Daddy Knight” and German and Hebrew with Rabbi Hecht.

## Getting Involved in the Community

The Jewish community flourished and participated fully in the civic and philanthropic life of the area. A number served in governmental roles, including **Philip W. Frey** as Prosecuting Attorney in 1882. **Isidor Kahn** was elected County Attorney in the 1920s. The first Jew to serve in the City Council was **Henry Gumberts** in 1872 and he was followed by numerous other Jewish men. **Jacob Eichel** inaugurated the movement for the first electric light plant, the first brick streets, and the first tobacco warehouse. Newspapers were lavish in their coverage of Jewish cultural events always referring to the Jews of Evansville as being “highly successful and intelligent.”

**ALAN NEWMAN**—I’m in Evansville because it’s home! Grandma Winnie was feeding the group as Grandpa Alex hosted a building temple committee meeting when the call came that the fourth grandchild and second grandson had arrived! It was just about this time 57 years ago so I guess you could say that I was born as the same time as the new Adath Israel. Meanwhile, on my paternal side, Pappy (Julius) Newman, a member of the very reform Washington Avenue temple, was actually born in Evansville in the late 1800s. That surely makes our roots among the deepest remaining in the congregation.

As I sat on the merger committee and later on the board of the newly blended TABI congregation, I felt torn between those two distinctly different backgrounds. The merger brought a contentious and difficult time. I often wondered how my grandparents would have felt about the pulling and tugging, the giving and taking. Today, 27 years after the beginning of the latest chapter in our rich 150 year tradition, I suspect that both sides of the Newman/Hamburg clan would be so proud to know that TABI’s congregation is alive and well and celebrating as a “we” community. The essence of this noteworthy celebration is a great tribute to the memories of all who came before us.

**FANCHON SABEL**—When I was a junior at the University of Iowa, my roommate, Lois Schear, invited me to visit her in her hometown, Evansville. There was a gala party of young people home from college for the summer and I met a tall guy named Manny. By the end of the weekend, he had introduced me to his entire family— parents and six siblings— and his mother told me she hoped that “we would be very happy together!” A month later we were engaged and two months later we were married. After Optometry School for Manny in Memphis, we returned to live in Evansville. We raised our children and I earned my MS from UE and became a classroom teacher for 25 years at Harrison High. One of my fondest memories is of the two years I spent being “Miss Nancy” on the local edition of the television show, *Romper Room*. P.S. Lois met her future husband at the same party!



**JACOB GILL**—Born and raised on the south side of Chicago, I received my undergraduate degree in Economics from Stanford University in 2000. I arrived in Evansville in September of 2005 to begin a position as an Assistant Baseball Coach at the University of Evansville. Rosh Hashanah was to begin a few days after my arrival. My High Holy Day experience in Chicago required the purchasing of tickets so I contacted Rabbi Friedman at TABI about reserving tickets for the upcoming holidays. I could almost hear Rabbi Friedman chuckling on the other end of the email when he told me it was as simple as showing up! I'm very happy to be part of the Evansville Jewish community.

**JON GOLDMAN**—Moses Goldman came to Evansville from Chicago at the end of the nineteenth century after immigrating to the United States from what is now the Ukraine. After setting himself up as a cobbler, he sent for his wife Dora and their children Ellis, Abe and Rose. A fourth child, Sarah was born in the United States. Early in his Evansville life, Moses became a pawnbroker and the family business, Goldman's Pawn Shop, has had five generations of Goldmans behind the counter. Moses, Ellis, Ellis' son Jack and Jack's son Bob have all been in the business that Bob still runs with the summer assistance of his daughters Rachael and Andy, the fifth generation to serve.

Moses was an early member of Congregation B'nai Moshe but his children found their religious life at Washington Avenue Temple. Ellis and his wife, Sadie Shavitz, were active members and enjoyed attending Friday night services for many years. Jack and his wife, Roie, were also active members and Jack served as president of the temple. They were all active members of Clearcrest Country Club. Jack's sons, Bob and Jon, a lawyer at Kahn, Dees, Donovan & Kahn, have both been presidents of our merged congregation. Jon is married to Martha Korb and they have a daughter Beth. Bob is married to Debi Krugman and their daughters Rachael and Andy are mentioned above. The heritage of the Goldman family is deeply entwined in the history of Evansville's Jews.

However, as accepted as the Jewish community was by the general population, they did not completely assimilate. No Jews resided in the wealthy English-speaking section bordered by Upper Water, First and Second Streets. Social intermixing was minimal and intermarriage non-existent.

By 1899, B'nai Israel had 100 families and was described as having some of the "community's best citizens." In 1902, the congregation began to feel that it was outgrowing its space and they moved into a new building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Washington in 1904. An extensive expansion of the religious school building for the growing number of students occurred in 1925.



*"Washington Avenue Temple"*

On the very night of the dedication of the new Temple House, a fire broke out, completely destroying it. Immediate measures were taken to rebuild. B'nai Israel was now generally known as "Washington Avenue Temple" and it remained the house of worship for Reform Jews in Evansville until 1980 when the congregation merged with Adath Israel.

## **B'nai Moshe, the Second Evansville Temple**

As more Jews arrived in Evansville from other parts of Europe, they brought with them differing perspectives on the practice of Judaism. They wanted traditional, observant houses of worship to reflect their backgrounds. Two other congregations soon emerged.

**B'nai Moshe**, the Orthodox synagogue, was founded by Eastern European immigrants in 1870. Ten years later, the members built an edifice on Ingle Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at a cost of \$2500 and the first Rabbi was hired. **Reverend Abraham Lane** served for three years and was followed by **Dr. Jacob Jacobson**. By 1889, twenty-five families were members. They purchased their own cemetery, Mount Sinai, on Babytown Road on the west side. A fraternal lodge, Keshet Shel Barsel, was mainly comprised of B'nai Moshe members. It is not known when B'nai Moshe disbanded but it was still going strong in the 1920s.

Some of the notable B'nai Moshe members in the 1920s were **Harry Newman, Sam Rifkin, Dave Wolf, Max Michaelson, Louis Klein, Louis Berkower, Mandell Sabel, Fred Drucker, Lee Fisher, Maurice Cohen, Morris Wolf, H.L. Greenberg, Sam Friedman and Max Richmond.**

## The Advent of Adath Israel

The name Adath Israel is mentioned for the first time in a German printed newspaper in the year 1883. During that year, a handful of newly arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe organized a congregation and received their charter. The members of Adath Israel quickly found a place in the community. They initially formed a coalition with B'nai Moshe but then went their separate ways and formed their own congregation of 10 members. The minutes of September 8, 1901 indicate that **Elias Horn** was the first president and **Julius Trockman** Vice President. Trustees were **Jacob Baker, Isaac Brenner, Ike Berman** and members were **D. Lewis, M. Ragovin, Dr. Ravdin, Louis Becker** and **S. Silverman**. Together they paid total dues of \$7.50.

Minyans were held in the homes of different members and membership grew. A Sefer Torah was purchased and the cemetery was named "Mount Carmel. By 1904, Adath Israel had 23 members and the cornerstone was laid for a building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Vine Streets.

Every means of raising money was used; pews and seats were sold, picnics, balls, concerts and boat excursions were given in order to pay for a synagogue that cost \$10,000. The Ladies Council, headed by **Mrs. Julius Trockman**, proudly gave \$159.60 toward furnishing the synagogue. By the end of 1905, there were 39 members, including young men over the age of thirteen who paid dues of 50 cents a month.



*Adath Israel*

A combination rabbi, shochet and teacher was kept on hand at all times and the first strictly kosher butcher shop opened in 1907. Friday night services were added in 1925 and membership continued to grow.

## Evansville, My Home Sweet Home

**JEFFREY BERGER**—I moved to Evansville in 1996 as the Executive Director of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra. I met my future wife, Erin, three months later and we decided that we wanted to stay in Evansville and raise our family. TABI became an important part of my life soon after moving to Evansville. It was important for me to be a part of the Jewish community and I wanted to be sure that Jewish life in Evansville would flourish for many years to come.

**DAVENA DAY**-Originally from the western suburbs of Chicago, I fell in love with UE with its intimate campus and international students. Little did I know that I would find my soul mate while I was at school. Even then the Evansville Jewish community opened its doors to me. Carol and Howard Abrams made sure that I never spent a Jewish holiday alone which made my family very happy. I did leave Evansville after graduating to go and live in Israel, but I had left my heart back here and although I loved my experiences in Israel, Evansville is where I wanted to be. With two small children and dual careers, we still find time to be involved in the Harlaxton Society and the UE Theatre board.

**LINDA ELLENSTEIN**—Although I have lived in Evansville all my life, my history in the Jewish community began when I was a student at UE and began studying religion. In graduate school at IU, I continued study and converted to Judaism in Indianapolis in the conservative branch. After returning to Evansville, TABI became my home. My five children, Ami (now Aviva), Anji, Adam, Abbi, and Aaron each found strength, compassion, warmth and wisdom in our community. I have found great pleasure talking about my experiences in the Jewish community of Evansville in my academic career.

**BOB FORMAN**-Our family arrived in Evansville in 1945. Our family furniture manufacturing business had been suspended for the war effort and it was time to start over. My parents, Myron and Babs, both in their mid-thirties, selected this area for our business in no small part because of the viable Jewish community and it even had Clearcrest, a Jewish country club. The area was friendly, healthy and had an available work force. The business ran until we sold it in 1997. Now Bonnie and I live half the year in Florida, our three children live in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Newburgh, but this is still home for all of us.

## Bold Face Names of Today

**Carol Abrams**—Known as “The Connector” because of her amazing ability to know just about everyone as a result of her participation in a myriad variety of causes throughout the years, Carol has concentrated the last decade on leading the *CYPRESS* organization, a volunteer group dedicated to promoting respect in the schools via the lessons of the Holocaust. She and her husband, Howard, have been honored for their contributions to the Evansville community

**Deena Laska Lewis**—A Julliard-trained ballerina, Deena is the artistic director and driving force behind the Children’s Center for Dance Education with several studios in the area. Not only does she teach classes and choreograph hour-long adaptations of classic ballets for many public performances, she has been honored for her outreach work with diverse populations, including Patchwork Central, the Evansville Psychiatric Children’s Hospital and for other special needs children

**Stan Levco** — Prosecutor of Vanderburgh county, was quoted in *Time Magazine* in 2003 on his views about the death penalty.. “When I first became prosecutor and had a death-penalty case, I looked forward to it ... Now I get one and dread it,” says Stanley Levco, who has been the prosecuting attorney in Vanderburgh County, IN., since 1990.”

**Steven Sater**—Tony award winning playwright for this year’s Best Musical, “*Spring Awakening*,” Steven is the son of long-time TABI members, Alvrone and Ronnie Sater. *Spring Awakening* and his earlier productions have garnered accolades for our Evansville boy made good.

**Wayne Trockman**—Chief Judge of Vanderburgh County Superior Court. In 2006, his court became the first in Indiana to allow news cameras to document the proceedings. For the last eight years, he has headed a highly successful Drug Court, a program designed to rehabilitate drug users, as one of his major responsibilities.

**Jonathan Weinzapfel**— Mayor of Evansville. Jonathan is not only considered to be an excellent mayor of our fair city, but this west side boy married a WFIE newscaster, Patricia, and the couple and their three young children are becoming an integral part of the Temple.

In 1916, The United Hebrew Institute was built next to the synagogue. It was an impressive three story building costing approximately \$20,000, funds being raised by the Jewish community at large. All the Jewish community affairs were held there but increasing expenditures made it necessary to lease the building to the Evansville College.

In 1952, with an ever-increasing membership and 100 students in its religious school, the synagogue, now officially affiliated with the Conservative movement, purchased land for a new building further east on Washington Avenue, near Green River Road.

With **Rabbi Max Landman** as spiritual leader and **Max E. Hamburg** as building chair, the congregation enthusiastically pledged \$125,000 toward the building fund. By the end of 1959 there were 175 members.

When the building was dedicated in 1960, after eight long years of work, a great celebration was held.



Max E. Hamburg

## Across the River & Over the Bridge - Adas Israel

**Hanna Oberdorfer** and her husband arrived in Henderson from Germany via the port of New Orleans in the mid 1860s. They opened a hotel. After her husband’s death, Hanna built a home at 235 South Main Street and socialized with the other newly arrived Jewish settlers in Henderson as well as her co-religionists across the Ohio in Evansville.

In the year 1879, in the parlor of the Oberdorfer home, the widow **Hanna** and her good friend, **Jennie Heilbronner**, gathered their lady friends together. They wanted to garner support to raise funds for a synagogue and religious school for the small Jewish community of Henderson. Working right alongside them were **Cecilia Heilbronner** and **Bertha Mann**. They established the Hebrew Ladies Auxiliary Society of Henderson to further their goal. While the building was being planned and funds were being raised, the members of the Jewish community met above the Old Kentucky Bakery on Main Street.

Their dream became a reality and the cornerstone for the Adas Israel Temple, on the corner of Alves and Center Streets was laid by Masonic Lodge #9 in 1891.

The temple site was donated by **Henry and Maurice Baldauf**.

The building was dedicated on September 17, 1892 and at this gala service the choir was led by **Mrs. J.M. Bach** with **Professor Bach** at the organ. **Rabbi I.L. Rypins** of Evansville and **Rabbi Gries** of Terre Haute officiated at the ceremony.

Officers of the Temple were **H. Schlesinger**, president; **Henry Baldauf**, vice president, **H. Lauchheim**, treasurer, and **Henry Levy**, secretary.



*Adas Israel Temple, Henderson*

As the community grew, student rabbis from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati traveled to Henderson twice monthly to conduct Shabbat services. A religious school was organized and the Sisterhood was affiliated with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. Mount Pisgah Cemetery was consecrated in the latter part of the 1800s.

One could shop downtown at **Simon's Shoes** in its building dating from the 1870s and at **Bernstein's Department Store** and **Mann's Department Store**, all stalwart member families of the Jewish community. As membership dwindled with the loss of Jewish families in the community, services were discontinued and members began attending either Adath Israel or Washington Avenue Temple in Evansville. The Torah was moved to Adath Israel prior to the merger of the Evansville congregations. Currently, the old Adas Israel Temple is the home of Christ Corner Church. Nine Jewish families remain in Henderson and the surrounding area.

**Ferd A. Gumberts**, President and treasurer of the Rosenthal & Gumberts Furniture Company, married Florence Bitterman of Evansville.

**Clarence B. Kahn**. President of S. Kahn's Sons, wholesale grocers, married to Delia Bitterman

**Isidor Kahn**, attorney, founder of Kahn, Dees, Donovan & Kahn. Vanderburgh County Attorney, member of many organizations, including B'nai Brith and Washington Avenue Temple. Married Celia Kahn.

**Henry Levy**, Owner of The Hub, haberdashery, civic leader, married to Corinne Rosenheim of Louisville

**Harry Lowenthal**, president of Holt & Brandon, a cold storage and ice firm, president of the Rotary Club. Married to Julia Bitterman.

**Harry Raphael**, Treasurer of family business, Raphael Brothers, wholesale dry goods. Married to Sarah Trockman.

**Sol A. Reese**, secretary and treasurer of the Southern Stove Works, married to Hattie Mannheimer

**Norman A. Shane**, president of the Southern Sweat Pad Company, married to Margaret Ichenhauser

**Abe Strouse**, Strouse's Clothing stores, member of school board, married to Madeline Roser

# Evansville's Jews Serve Their Country

## Our Early Notables

Biographies of the following were in the 1923 edition of **History of Indiana From its Exploration to 1922** by Logan Esarey, and **An Account of Vanderburgh County from its Organization** by John E. Iglehart.

**Adolph Bitterman**, executive head of Bitterman Brothers Jewelers, highly regarded for his ethics and commitment to the community, married Racie Ancker of Cincinnati.

**David S. Bernstein**, president of the Triangle Overall Company of Evansville, first man to introduce high grade dress trousers to Evansville, president of Child Welfare Work Board, member of Board of Washington Avenue Temple Charities, married to Nannie C. Paul of Evansville.

**Sol A. Brentano**, treasurer of the Midland Furniture Company, construction engineer, first building inspector of Evansville. Married Kathryn Doyle of Keokuk, Iowa.

**Charles J. Eichel**, President of White Swan Laundry, civic leader, active in Democratic Party, married Carrie Beasley of Newburgh, Indiana

**Sidney J. Eichel, M.D.**, brother of Charles, prominent surgeon, president of the Vanderburgh County Medical Society, married Rose Bonn Reinhart of Henderson, KY.

**Moses Goldman**, Real estate and loan entrepreneur, married to Dora Zarutsky

## World War I



*Sgt. Isadore Drucker  
Co. F, 28th Infantry, 1st Division*

**Isadore Drucker**—engaged in battle on the Meuse River in France when he received a fatal wound from a machine gun bullet.

**Roy Lowenthal**—an established businessman and attorney, he responded to the call for men over 30 years of age and entered Officers Training School. But three weeks later, he was stricken with Spanish Influenza, which developed into double pneumonia and caused his death.



*Pvt. Roy L. Lowenthal  
17th Observation Battery,  
Field Artillery*

**Sidney J. Eichel, M.D.**

**Isadore Fine**  
**Isidore Kahn**  
**Julius Kahn**  
**Lester Kahn**  
**Louis Levi**  
**Morris Levi**

**David Levine**

**Jack Lowenthal**  
**Mr. Neustadt**  
**Harry Raphael**  
**Norman A. Shane**  
**Mr. Simon**



*Morris R. Levi*

**Morris Levi**, the city editor of the *Evansville Journal and News*, entered the service in 1917 and was with the first American contingent to cross the line in what had been German territory before 1914. He served during the drive from the Marne to the Vesle River. Lieutenant Levi, promoted to First Lieutenant, was assigned as an instructor back in America, commanding a company of colored troops. He became one of the organizers of the American Legion in Indiana and was the first state vice-president.

## World War II

**Lester Joseph** was the only fatality from the Evansville Jewish community. He lost his life during the Battle of the Bulge.

**Jack Bate**  
**Bob Berman**  
**Maurice Cibull**  
**Herman Cohn**  
**Bill Dumes**  
**Hy Dumes**  
**Irene Dumes**  
**Donald Ellenstein**  
**Jerry Goldberg**  
**Jack Goldman**  
**Robert Green**  
**Leonard Greenberg**  
**Ferd Kluga, Jr.**  
**Henry Levi**

**Richard Levi**  
**Irving LeVine**  
**Alvin Levy**  
**Hy Lieberman**  
**Nathan Lieberman**  
**Gilbert Magazine**  
**David Neustadt**  
**Lenard Pearson**  
**Lester Raphael**  
**Irving Senzell**  
**Sidney Shapinski**  
**Larry Simon**  
**Philip Trockman**



*Bill Dumes in front of his plane*

**Bill Dumes** served as a bomber pilot flying B-17s and B-24s, serving in the Pacific arena. His experiences, both good and bad, are as fresh today in his mind as if they were yesterday. He served five years in the active military and another seven years in the reserves. Someday he'd like to go back to Saipan and see how it has changed!

## Evansville Daily Journal

*circa 1905*

### Disappears From Home

*Police Are Looking for Philip Sigel (sic), The Second-Hand Merchant*

**Philip Sigel**, the second-hand dealer in Locust Street, near Second Street, has disappeared and the police have been asked to look for him. It is believed Sigel has gone to the old country.

Several months ago Sigel took all the money in the store and went to Russia. In the course of time he wrote to his wife asking her to send him enough money to pay his fare back home. The wife did this after an effort, and the husband seemed satisfied to be at home once again. The second time home lost its charms for Sigel and he suddenly left. The police believe he will turn up all right again.

## Evansville Journal-News

*August 30, 1918*

### KAHN ESTATE GOES TO RED CROSS

**Gift of vast sum in made to U.S. Mercy Organization: Entire wealth of late Charles S. Kahn given to Red Cross by terms of will—believed largest single gift by private citizen in America**

One of the largest gifts from a local citizen to the American Red Cross organization is that of the late **Charles Kahn**, retired wholesale grocer, who died recently, and who by his will left his entire estate to the beneficent organization. It is estimated that the sum bequeathed will be in excess of \$100,000.

Mr. Kahn made his will on the day he left Evansville for Battle Creek on June 11 last. He did not desire that anyone should know of his intention at that time and it was not known among his relatives that he contemplated the necessity for a surgical operation to relieve him from an ailment that had given him a great deal of trouble, but which it was thought would succumb to treatment. The surprise of the will was as great to his relatives, it is understood, as was his death as they had not been advised of his serious condition and were not informed that he had decided to submit to the surgeon's knife.

**EXTRA! EXTRA!**  
**Read All About It!**

**Evansville Journal**  
**January 8, 1861**

**Feud Results in Death for Evans Boys  
Innocent Bystander Killed**

John Paul Evans and Robert Evans, grandsons of Robert Evans who founded the city of Evansville with Hugh McGary, attended a ball last evening. Both boys were inebriated and were involved in a seething feud. "Paul drew his knife and threatened Robert, who drew his six-shooter. Paul...drew his six-shooter and Robert drew his knife and put it between his teeth...Each fired six shots." When it was over, the brothers had killed each other. A 16-year old bystander, **Solomon Gumberts**, was caught in the crossfire and also died.

**Evansville Daily Journal**  
**January 2, 1867**

**At Home**

At the residence of Miss **Jennie Levi**, on Sixth Street, everything was brilliant yesterday and last night. The table was loaded with delicacies, and the ladies who assisted Miss Levi looked lovely in their evening costumes. They were: Miss **Teck Gross**, white surah, trimmed with Valenciennes lace, ostrich tips; Miss **Manda Roser**, velvet and moiré; Miss **Millie Weil**, white satin, Duchess drapery; Miss **Bertha Roser**, black silk with jet trimmings; Miss **Bertha Gumberts**, Nile green silk and pink brocade; Miss **Minnie Frey**, black and white silk; Miss **Lou Gumberts**, cherry velvet, black lace drapery; Miss **Fannie Roser**, white surah and natural flowers; **Mrs. Ed Starr**, Henderson, KY, handsome blue velvet and old gold trimmings; Miss **Jennie Levi**, peachblow silk, trimmed in lace and parrots. Many friends called during the day and exchanged greetings with the ladies.

**The Women during World War II**

The Jewish Welfare Board involved the women of the Jewish community with bringing hospitality and support to the soldiers stationed at Camp Breckinridge at Morganfield, Kentucky. Thousands of soldiers participated in recreational and social events planned by the women. Home hospitality was offered and a dormitory was set-up initially at Adath Israel and then transferred to the larger Washington Avenue Temple when even more soldiers required weekend housing. Holiday celebrations brought a feeling of home to the soldiers as well as visits by our women to the soldiers who were ill. The Jewish women of Evansville were also very active in USO sponsored canteens at the railroad station, where they handed out sandwiches, drinks, and friendly smiles to soldiers en route to military bases. **Irene Dumes** served in the Navy as a WAVE and **Mrs. Morton Mannheimer** had an active role in the American Red Cross.

**The Korean War**

<b>Jerry Goldberg</b>	<b>Stanley Sater</b>
<b>Robert Levi</b>	<b>Milton Siegel</b>
<b>Roger Levi</b>	<b>Allen Trockman</b>
<b>Irving Richmond</b>	<b>Stanley Trockman</b>

## Life in the Fifties

The Jewish population reached about 350 families with both congregations filled with young families. Both synagogues had large religious schools with students studying to prepare for their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and/or Confirmations. Sisterhood members were committed to raising funds for new endeavors, planning many social, educational and philanthropic programs. Both congregations had extensive numbers of working committees of men and women giving time and effort to keeping the Jewish community live and well. When **Max E. Hamburg** served as the Chair of the Building Commission for the building of the new Adath Israel synagogue in the 1950s, he supervised the activities of 37 active committees engaged in the building endeavor!

Here's a quick trip down Memory Lane as we travel downtown on a beautiful autumn day in the mid-1950s. Put thirty cents worth of gas in the DeSoto and off we go!

**All of these businesses were owned by members of the Jewish community.** How many do you remember?

### Main Street—South Side

Stratham Gourmet	Druckers
Strouse's	Kruckemeyer & Cohn Jewelers
Wells Ladies Shop	Rechnics
Schamberg's	Gem Furniture
Hoffman's Men's and Boy's Shop	Nate's Pharmacy
Saters Department Store	Kramer's Uniforms

### Main Street—North Side

R & G Furniture	Schultz's Ladies
Carlton Theatre	DeJongs Department Store
Hallert's Menswear	Salm's Ladies
Bitterman Jewelry	Kaiser's
Weingarten Furs	Acme Jewelers
Marver Brothers Wholesale Jewelers	Shoe Box
Wintner's Bowling Alley	

## Our Future -- The Next 150 Years

We've spent time talking about the past glories; it is time to look to the future. What will our future be—will there be a Jewish presence in Evansville for the next 150 years? Here is our future. Cherish the children; teach them well; bring them up to do good deeds and to honor each other and their religion.

Religious School Roster  
2007-2008

**Pre-K/Tots—Teacher Robyn Merkel and Natalie Farmer, Assistant Madeline Berger, Addison Day, Skylar Day, Levi Jones, Mackenzie Mahlinger, Phoebe Merkel, Adinah Moss, Isiah Moss, Soren Troffkin**

**Grades 1 and 2—Teacher Anya Niazov and Megan Senzell, Assistant Jakob Asher, Alex Bakke, Abigail Barancik, Robert Hass, Aidan Merkel, Jenna Pajdo, Benjamin Weinzapfel, Eleanor Weinzapfel, Nathan Weinzapfel**

**Grades 3 and 4—Teachers Dana Lobel and Heather Mahlinger Jordan Bakke, Hannah Barancik, Harry Loeb, Ben Lobel, Taylor Mahlinger, Mark Malitz, Asher Trockman**

**Grades 5 and 6—Teacher Saul Cohen Tim Gold, Jacob Lobel, Erica Malitz, Jacob Moscovith, Joy Pajdo, Morissa Parker, Elliott Stone**

**Grades 7,8,9—Teachers Jessica Pajdo, Rabbi Friedman, Tal Rosen Sam Haney, Leah Hill, Ben Loeb, Max Loeb, Arielle Moss, Noah Moss, Juliana Pajdo, Jonathan Stone**

Principal - **Elissa Bakke**  
Hebrew Instructor - **Nancy Wabner**  
Educational Consultant - **Tal Rosen**  
Librarian - **Sue Barancik**



## Our New Building and Our Activities

Another milestone in the Jewish community was the building of our present synagogue. The Washington Avenue building was sold to St. Mary's Hospital to be razed and then built as a much-needed parking lot for the hospital. After long months of planning and work under the aegis of **Jeff Trockman**, building chair, the members moved into the new building on Newburgh Road in April of 2003. It was truly a wonderful day for the Evansville Jewish community as the Torahs were carried from one building to the next.



*Our New Home*



Social action and tikkun olom (repairing the world) led to our involvement in the building of a Habitat for Humanity home with the First Presbyterian Church and the Evansville Islamic Center. We prepare Thanksgiving baskets for the less fortunate; we march in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure; our religious school students select agencies to receive their tzadakah money.

*Alan Newman at the Habitat for Humanity Building Site*

The women of the temple had been without a Sisterhood or Hadassah group for ten years. In 2006, several women bonded together to establish a new group, TABI Women, to meet the educational, recreational and social needs of the female members of the temple and to help other members in need of special assistance in a "Gemilut Chasidim" outreach. **Elissa Bakke** is serving as the first president of this new group with **Jessica Pajdo, Danelle Moscovith, Sonja Eskind, Shelley Haney, Nancy Friedman, Lillian Lurye, Sue Barancik, Lillian Lurye, Rae Senzell, and Connie Grobstein** in board positions.

### Fourth Street:

Shavitz's Department Store  
Joan Shop  
Schear's Department Store  
Siegel's Men's Wear  
People's Pawn Shop

Goldman's Pawn Shop  
Goldberg's Bakery  
Al Zeissman Military  
Kweskin's Delicatessen  
Silver's Records

### Other downtown and nearby shops and businesses:

Sharman's Department Store  
Calvacade Bar  
Canal Department Store  
Atlas Department Store  
Baum's Department Store  
The Red Pig Barbecue  
A & H Grill  
Baker & Sons  
Shane Uniform

S. Kahn Wholesale Groceries  
Oberman Wholesale Nuts  
Fink's Furniture  
Al Berman & Sons Pinball Machines  
Korxall Cleaning Products  
Lerner's Department Store  
Breskow's Perfect Cleaners  
Maurer Auto Parts  
Keller Crescent Advertising

### And a little further afield:

Newburgh—Chivian's Department Store  
Chandler—Shapinsky Pharmacy  
Boonville—Kindermann's Hardware  
Mount Vernon—Rosenbaum's Department Store  
Winslow—Eskind Furniture Store  
Henderson, KY—Simon's Shoes, Bernsteins, Mann's Department Stores  
Lawrenceville, IL—Loeb Oil

### Our Salvage/Waste/Recycle Businesses from the Fifties:

General Waste  
Liberty Auto Salvage  
Dumes Brothers

Fliegetaub  
J. Trockman  
Silver's

Oh, our aching feet! Time to go home and watch that brand new 12" Philco television. Let's turn on WFIE (First In Evansville), on channel 62, owned by **Jesse, Isadore and Oscar Fine**. It was the sixth television station in Indiana. The Fines sold the station in 1956.

If we really ache, we can go to one of our Jewish physicians: **Bernard Rosenblatt, Abner Bennett, Harold Zimmerman, Harold Nisenbaum, or Isadore Ravdin**. Dentists of the 50s were **Robert Koplowitz, Hy Lieberman, Bob Berman and Maurice Baum**. To get our eyes checked, we can make an appointment with **Emanuel Sabel** or **Nathan Adelman**.

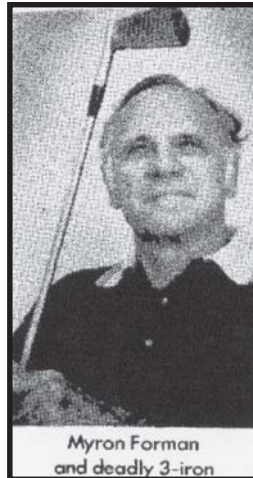
For legal advice, our choices of Jewish attorneys would have included **Isadore Fine, Oscar Fine, Howard Trockman, Isadore and Robert Kahn, Morton Newman, Phil Siegel, and Sidney Berger**.

Did we forget your favorite store, doctor, or lawyer? We're sorry; the contributors to this section racked their brains to the best of their (aging) abilities!

## Having a Good Time

### Clearcrest Country Club

In the 1920s, when Jews were not accepted for membership in the area country clubs, members of B'nai Israel established the Clearcrest Country Club. Located on Darmstadt Road, it was considered quite a "shlep" in the wintertime, so The City Club, in downtown Evansville, served as an in-town location in the early years. Clearcrest members journeyed to the club to swim, play golf and tennis, eat good food, and socialize over the bridge and mahjong tables. The kids enjoyed each other's company and romances flourished among the teens as they took moonlight walks on the beautiful property. Alas, good things often come to an end. Clearcrest was sold in the early 1980s as Jewish membership dwindled.



Myron Forman  
and deadly 3-iron

### Resettling of the Rudkevich family

One of the greatest achievements of the total Jewish community in Evansville in the twentieth century was the Soviet Jewry campaign. This massive fundraising campaign of the Jewish Community Council helped a Soviet Jewish family settle in Evansville in 1979. The resettlement was handled under the guidelines of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society. The resettlement committee consisted of 48 members of the Evansville Jewish community developed under an executive committee of **Joel and Lou Lasker, Maxine Fink, Susan Shovers, Ervin Weil, Sandy Trockman, Pam Burg, Jean Mann (Berger), Rabbis Topel and Lavine**.

The **Rudkevich** family—parents Boris and Fanya, children Viktoria, age 16, and Yvgeny, age 9, and grandmother, Mina—were, via the assistance of many individuals in our community, thoroughly assimilated into American life. A fully furnished apartment with clothes hanging in the closets and a stocked refrigerator awaited them; job opportunities for Boris were made available; Fanya and the children were enthusiastically introduced to life in Evansville. For the members of the committee, this was almost a full-time job for several months.

## CYPRESS

It was a \$3000 grant from the Jewish Community Council in 1999 that enabled a handful of women from our community to establish a committee created to bring information about the Holocaust to area teachers so that they, in turn, would instruct their students about the dangers of injustice and intolerance. CYPRESS, The Committee to Promote Respect in Schools, has grown to be a nationally recognized organization in the eight years since its inception. Leading the charge from the onset were **Sandy Trockman, Carol Abrams and Nancy Trockman**.

## The Contributions of Sol and Arlene Bronstein

Two members of the Jewish community, **Sol and Arlene Bronstein**, passed away in the late 1970s. Their wills established the Sol and Arlene Bronstein Foundation which supports the efforts of many facets of the Jewish and general population. Temple Adath B'nai Israel receives generous funding from the Bronstein Trust each year which is used in a variety of ways to enhance the educational and cultural life of its members. Because of this trust, we have been able to bring to Evansville nationally renowned speakers and programs, many of the programs open to the public at no charge. How many Jewish communities the size of Evansville can boast of hosting Elie Wiesel, Simon Wiesenthal, Theodore Bikel, Chaim Potok, Rabbi Harold Kushner and many others? During the 1980s and early 1990s, The Bronstein funds subsidized the teenagers of our Jewish community to go to Israel for six weeks with the Reform youth movement. For the last several years, Bronstein funds have allowed confirmation classes to spend Jewish-ly oriented weekends in New York City.

Beyond Evansville, the Bronsteins sponsor the Sol and Arlene Bronstein Chair of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati as well as many other scholarships and grants nationwide.

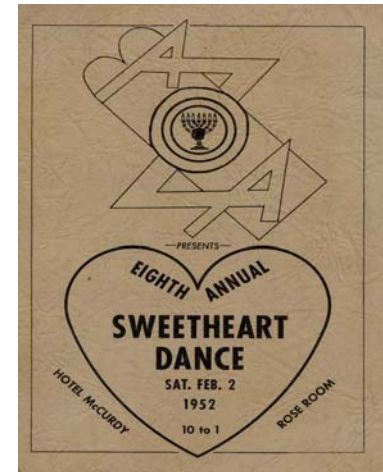
## The Jewish Community Council

One group that is not new but that is maintaining its hold on Jewish philanthropy in Evansville is the Jewish Community Council. Chairwoman **Sonnie Cibull** says that the JCC is at least fifty years old. Its main purpose is to raise money for various Jewish causes, primarily Israel. Money is raised in Evansville in an annual drive and is distributed in Israel through United Jewish Communities to needy individuals and institutions. Other money is spent in the US for Jewish education, camps, the Hillel Foundation, and the American Zionist Reform Organization.

## AZA Boys Just Want to Have Fun!

B'nai Brith continued to flourish through the first half of the twentieth century. Teenage boys joined AZA, a national youth group, part of the B'nai Brith organization. The young men wiled away their time with baseball and basketball games and sweetheart dances while forming life-long friendships. Some active members of AZA in the fifties were **Phil Siegel, Ronnie Sater, Bob Forman, Allan Trockman, Milt Siegel, and Stewie Duvin.**

Every year there was a Sweetheart Dance where the guys got up the nerve to ask those cute girls they saw at "Boy-Girl Socials" or from their Confirmation class. A highlight of the evening was voting for "Sweetheart of the Year."



*Program from the 1952 AZA Sweetheart Dance, held at the McCurdy Hotel*

### Sweethearts of the Year:

1944	Gloria Trockman
1945	Shirley Cristil
1946	Sylvia and Rosalie Simon
1947	Marilyn Opie
1948	Sondra Kessler
1949	Barbara Trockman
1950	Helen Ann Chivian

## Hadassah -- Having Fun While Doing Good

In 1935, fifteen women gathered in the living room of **Jennye Grusin** and discussed the worsening situation in Germany. No doubt, a number had relatives living in Germany and other European countries. The women joined together to begin raising funds to help refugees. This little gathering of friends—**Leona, Winnie and Ella Hamburg, Lil Sater, Henrietta Dubin, Lil Siegel, Ida Trockman, Flora Opie, Celia Perlmutter, Ethel Olshan, Bettye Kessler, Celia Danenberg, Babs Hamburg, Adele Chivian, Sara Goodman and Frieda Senzell**—evolved into becoming part of the growing Hadassah movement. Hadassah, the Zionist organization, started by Henrietta Szold, was gathering strength as women around the country began fund raising for Hitler's victims and then for the establishment of the state of Israel.

As the years passed, Hadassah in Evansville became increasingly popular among the women in the community. Although most also belonged to the Sisterhoods of their temples, Hadassah was a group that encompassed members of both congregations, united in their common purpose. There were years of elegant fashion shows and luncheons, guest speakers and performances, conferences and educational offerings, raising money in a variety of ways. The Evansville newspapers covered the Hadassah doings with great interest. Although many women worked hard for Hadassah over the years, **Jean Mann Berger, Susan Shovers, and Neece Newman** are three who spent hours making the organization the success that it was.



## Community Involvement

**Washington Avenue's annual conference on Judaism for the Christian Clergy in the 1940s**

**Lecture series at Washington Avenue Temple.**

**The yearly Rummage Sale with its boutique "French Room"**

**Hadassah's annual Food Fair with a roomful of briskets, kugels, and strudels for sale.**

**Thanksgiving baskets for lower income families**

## The Two Congregations Become One

At the end of the 1970's, both congregations had dwindled in membership and their existence as viable congregations was threatened. After lengthy discussions, the two congregations decided to merge as a single house of worship, **Temple Adath B'nai Israel**. Since both Rabbis were retiring, **Rabbi Lavine** from Washington Avenue Temple and **Rabbi Topol** from Adath Israel, it was also the time for a new Rabbi to lead the merged congregation. **Michael Herzbrun** was selected to serve as the rabbi and **Regina Heit** was hired as the congregation's first (and only) full-time cantor. The merger occurred in 1980, after many months of deliberation and discussion, and the members of Washington Avenue Temple moved into the Adath Israel building. Many of the stained glass windows, bimah furniture and woodwork that had so beautifully adorned Washington Avenue Temple were moved to Adath Israel. The Washington Avenue building was sold to Patchwork Central, a non-profit group serving the diverse needs of a less economically advantaged clientele.