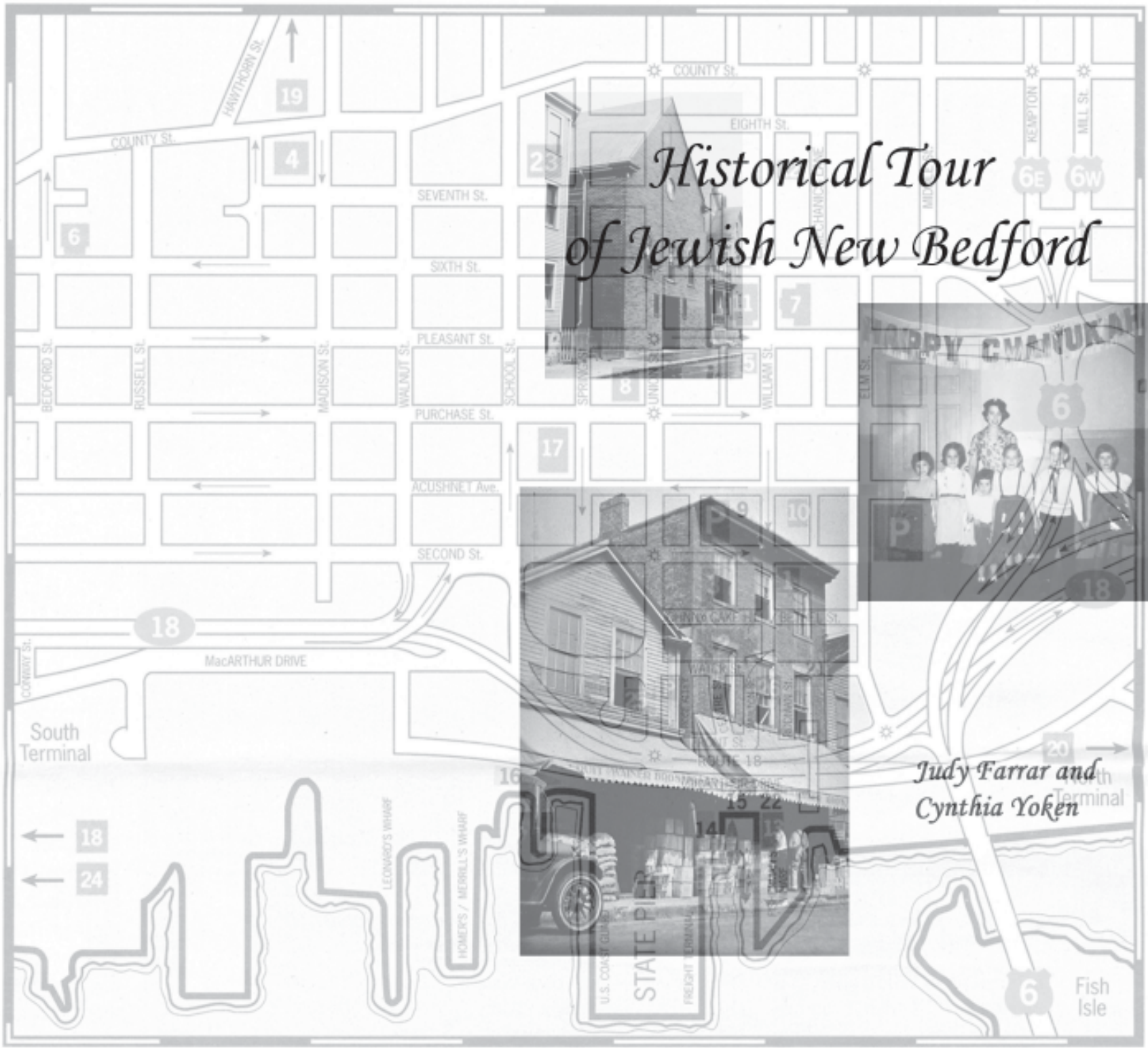
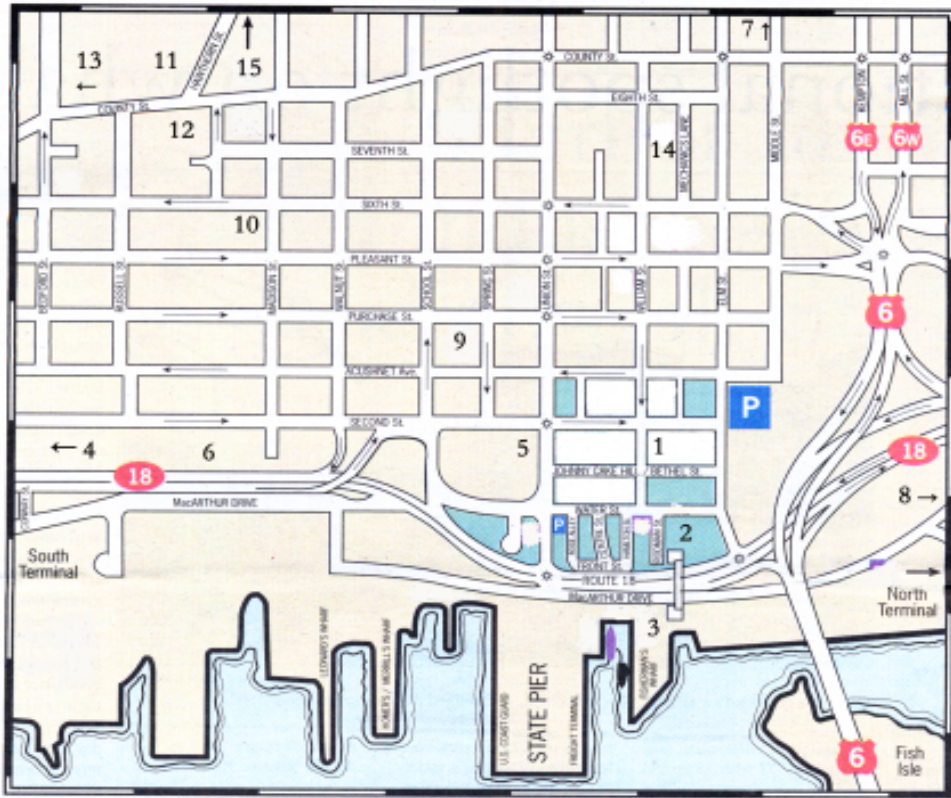


Historical Tour of Jewish New Bedford



Judy Farrar and
Cynthia Yoken
South Terminal

6 Fish Isle



MAP COURTESY CITY OF NEW BEDFORD OFFICE OF TOURISM & MARKETING 1-800-568-5353

1. National Park Service Visitor's Center
2. Rodman Candleworks
3. Waterfront Visitor's Center
4. Location of Water Street businesses
5. Location of Whaling Outfitters
6. Original Howland Street location of Ahavath Achim
7. To Mt. Pleasant Street to Peckham West Cemetery
8. Original Kenyon Street location of Chesed Shel Emes
9. Location of State Theatre, now the Zeiterion
10. Original Tifereth Israel, Sixth and Madison Streets
11. Ahavath Achim and Segall Square
12. Jewish Community Center
13. To Kaplan Square
14. Temple Sinai (now Gallery X)
15. To Jewish Convalescent Home, Buttonwood Park memorials, and Tifereth Israel.

On the cover, top: Chesed Shel Emes, North End, c. 1904; **center:** Chanukah celebration with Girl Scouts, Ahavath Achim, 1950s; **bottom:** Wainer Brothers Fruit and Produce on Water Street, 1927.

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Text and pictures by Judy Farrar, Archives and Special Collections Librarian, and Cynthia Yoken, Co-Director of the Center for Jewish Culture. Historical photographs courtesy of the Archives of the Center for Jewish Culture at the University of Dartmouth Library Archives and Special Collections, North Dartmouth, Mass.

A special thank you to Barbara Kaplan, Judy Barry, and Rabbi Barry Hartman for their assistance with the research and proofreading of this booklet.

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Center for Jewish Culture

The Jewish Community Today

Professor Robert Waxler (left) and Rabbi Bernard Glassman (right), with Samuel Shafler, a guest speaker, at the 2nd annual Rusitzky lecture, 1987



New Bedford is still a place where Jewish families, young and old, have an opportunity to share their heritage. Whether families have lived here for years or have just moved into the area, there are ample opportunities to share the Sabbath and holiday traditions at the two synagogues in the city. Established in 1973, the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford took over where the Jewish Community Center left off. Several executive directors have served the Federation, including Jerry Kleinman, Steve Edelstein, Jerry Nieman, and since 1992, Wil Herrup. Under their guidance and with a board of directors and executive board which meet monthly, the Greater New Bedford Jewish Community continues to grow and thrive with exciting programs for all ages. The Federation office can be reached at 508-997-7471.

The Center for Jewish Culture at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth was established in 1981. The Center, which instituted the annual Judaic Institute from 1982-1995, takes great pride in bringing to faculty, students, and local residents from Fall River and New Bedford a series of enlightening programs annually. Over the past 25 years, it has been able to take a look at the history of the community of New Bedford and Fall River through its archives which have become a depository for the records of various Jewish organizations, individuals and families. Judy Barry and Barbara Kaplan have been responsible, through the years for collecting memorabilia and oral histories of the elders of the community following Professor Robert Waxler and Carol Marlin's initial interviews with Fisher Abramson in 1982. Thanks to Rabbi Bernard Glassman and Dr. Robert Waxler, co-founders of the Center, and their vision, the Center has benefited also from the expertise of their university colleagues who have also shared their vision, their expertise and contributions. Housed in the University Library at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the Center's Archives continue to expand and thrive through the efforts of Cindy Yoken and the guidance of Archives and Special Collections Librarian Judy Farrar, who can be reached at the Archives at 508-999-8686.



North End merchant Amos Mechaber out for a ride.

A Tour of Jewish New Bedford

New Bedford has benefited from a vibrant Jewish community with roots back in the mid-18th century when the city was a lively whaling port. Although the urban landscape has changed over the years, many sites important to the history of the Jewish community exist in the city today. This publication will help to provide directions to visit some of the places which would have been familiar to the Jews who lived in the city.

According to a study compiled in 1924 by Samuel Barnet, a prominent local judge and active member of the Jewish community, life for the Jews in New Bedford can be divided into three distinct migrations. The first dates back to the whaling era in the mid-18th century with a small number of Portuguese and Spanish Jewish immigrants; the second wave was Jewish immigrants from Germany, and the third and largest wave came from Eastern Europe in the late 19th century. The latter are the ancestors of many in the Jewish community today.

The tour is organized chronologically. Although all sites can be visited independently, we suggest, if you choose to drive this tour, to begin in downtown New Bedford, at the National Park Service Visitor's Center on William Street (508-996-4095). After visiting an early site in the North End as a second stop, you will return to the downtown and South End for sites important to the Eastern European immigrants. Finally, the tour moves to the West End, where the center of the community eventually moved.

Beginning the Tour – Downtown New Bedford

In the vicinity of the National Park Service Visitor’s Center on William Street, several historical sites can be viewed on foot that are not included in this publication. *From the Visitor’s Center, turn left, and continue down William Street to Second Street. Turn left onto Second Street, and directly across the street is the Rodman Candleworks.*



Rodman Candleworks at 72 North Water Street, would have been a familiar place to Aaron Lopez, a Portuguese-Jewish merchant from Newport, RI who came to New Bedford in the mid-18th century to work with Samuel Rodman and to learn the art of the spermaceti candle-making.

The Rodman Candleworks, which houses the Candleworks Restaurant, was built in 1810 by local Quaker Samuel Rodman in the Federal style.

The adjacent streets in this historical area of “Bedford Village” were filled with merchants and shipwrights who provided the whaling ships with necessary supplies in between whaling voyages.



Looking toward the waterfront, down Hamilton Street, from Water Street.

Holocaust Memorial



The Holocaust Memorial in Buttonwood Park was designed by University of Massachusetts Dartmouth art professor Peter London. Erected in May 1998 on Rockdale Avenue near the corner of Hawthorn Street, it was the dream of Abraham Landau, the Holocaust survivor who survived 13 concentration and labor camps. Mr. Landau had been a resident of New Bedford, with his wife, Frieda, and family, since 1950. He died in 2000. Under the auspices of the Holocaust Education Committee of the Greater New Bedford Jewish Federation, Ed Rudnick, Abe Landau, and Peter London solicited funds from the citizens of New Bedford for this monument. The bronze sculpture was created by UMD art professor Eric Lintala and Visiting Artist Stacy Latt Savage. It was cast at a Rhode Island Foundry. The Yom Hashoah program is commemorated annually at this site in April or May.



Abe Landau, left, and Peter London, right, with a scale model of the memorial.



Conceptual drawing of the sculpture.

Memorial to Jewish War Veterans



This memorial was erected in 1962 in Buttonwood Park, on Rockdale Avenue near the corner of Hawthorn Street. The granite structure with six fourteen foot columns honors soldiers of Jewish faith who died in the United States Armed Forces. The Jewish War Veterans New Bedford Post 154 and its auxiliary organized the effort to have the monument built. A committee of the JWV raised \$10,000 from 500 donors. It was dedicated on Veterans' Day, November 11, 1962. Charles Golenpaul and Louis Barroll co-chaired the dedication ceremonies. Eli Heimberg, George Levenson and Harold Hurwitz co-chaired the fundraising effort.



Early postcard of the waterfront area during whaling days.



Photographs taken at the dedication ceremonies, November 11, 1962



North Water Street today, looking south



German Jews Emigrate to New Bedford, mid-19th century

In the middle of the 19th century, New Bedford saw the immigration of German Jews. They were characterized as itinerant vendors who sold their wares from farmhouse to farmhouse. One of these early settlers was Leopold Morse who came to New Bedford from Tamworth, New Hampshire and later moved to Boston. There were enough Jewish residents here at the time to form the B'nai Israel Society in 1857 which purchased an eternal resting place at the Peckham West Cemetery on Mt. Pleasant Street.

Peckham West Cemetery



To reach the Peckham West Cemetery from downtown New Bedford, drive up Elm Street to Cottage Street. Turn right on Cottage and continue north. Cottage runs into Mt. Pleasant after Durfee Street; continue on Mt. Pleasant past the Holy Name Church, the Mt. Pleasant School and just before the Ashley Ford Car Dealership will be the cemetery on the left.

In the middle of the cemetery is the Jewish plot with approximately 16 grave-stones. If you take the main driveway through the cemetery, it will be approximately 50 feet to the left, in the center. This 35 x 50 foot plot was deeded to the B'nai Israel Society in April of 1857. It served as the Jewish cemetery for the second half of the nineteenth century. The first person to be interred there was Zipporah Mindel Feibelman, daughter of Wolf Feibelman who came from Pozen, Germany. She was laid to rest on November 27, 1857.



Rabbi Raphael Kanter



Cantor Nathaniel Schudrich

Rabbi Bernard Ziskind was the first rabbi in the new building, followed by Rabbi Theodore Gluck. Rabbi Bernard Glassman was the spiritual leader from 1970 to 1995. From 1995 to 1998 Rabbi Moshe Ulmer was interim rabbi. The present rabbi is Raphael Kanter and the cantor is Nathaniel Schudrich. The building houses the main sanctuary, a social hall, a kitchen, offices for the rabbi, cantor and staff, a chapel dedicated to the former members of the North End synagogue, Chesed Shel Emes, a library, a gift shop, and the Bernard H. Ziskind Hebrew School as well as the nursery school. The Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford also has its offices here. There are 2 services daily. For information call 508-997-3171. In 2006 the congregation celebrates its 40th anniversary in the building.



1964 fundraising postcard, left, and Philip Barnett, chair of the building committee, right, as he appeared in the 1966 dedication book.

Tifereth Israel Synagogue (formerly at Sixth and Madison Streets)

In 1966, more than 800 people attended the dedication ceremonies at the new Tifereth Israel Synagogue as the Torah scrolls were transferred from the old building on Sixth Street. Rabbi Ziskind offered the benediction assisted by Cantor Charles Freedland and the synagogue choir. Samuel Ades, building campaign chairman, lit the Eternal Light. Philip Barnet, chairman of the building committee, presented the keys of the new synagogue to Alvin Schwartz, President and Dr. Nelson Portnoy, Vice-president. Ruth Ades was then President of the Sisterhood.

From the Jewish Convalescent Home, continue up Hawthorn Street, one block past Rockdale Avenue to Tifereth Israel on the corner of Brownell Avenue and Hawthorn Streets.



The last person to be interred was Bashie Levine in 1899. A complete list of those interred here follows. This cemetery was superceded by the Hebrew Cemetery on Plainville Road, which was purchased in 1900. Both Tifereth Israel congregation and Ahavath Achim synagogue have plots for their congregants. Thanks to the efforts of local resident Herb Seltzer, the Peckham West plots continue to be maintained by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford.

- Jacob Altman, son of Isaac
- Morris Bergman, 52 years
- Abraham Berkowitz, September 5, 1885,
age 18 years
- Bloome Cohen
- Louis Cohen, born June 10, 1860,
died December 18, 1898
- Abe Zalmon, Ben Rav David Behr (Eiskovitz),
son of David Eiskovitz, died 1895
- Zipporah Mindel Feibelman, daughter of Wolf,
died November 27, 1857 age 54 years (at right)
- Frume bat Rav David Ginzberg, age 49 years
- Hinda Leah Goodman, age 37 years
- Louis Grodzinski, October 4, 1885, age 13 years
- Salomon Herstoff, age 22 years
- Solomon J. (Levine), son of Falk Levine, died 1894
- Dorah Medof, October 1884, age 12 years
- Fannie Richmond, April 6, 1886
- Leo Salomonsky, February 26, 1892
- Abraham Semiansky, March 28, 1886
- Augusta Winebarg, 1862
- Simon Winebarg, born May 3, 1860,
died April 20, 1861 (picture below)
- Lizzie Winasky, August 31, 1885, age 11 months
- Bashie Levine, 1899



Peckham West in 1954



South End Jewish Community Beginning in the late 19th century

Many in the present Jewish community are descendants of those who came here from Eastern Europe starting around 1877, thirty years after New Bedford was incorporated as a city. One of the earliest settlers at that time was Isaac Goodman, followed shortly thereafter by Simon Simiansky. A partnership was established between Simon Simiansky and Simon Davidson, and when there was a sufficient number of Jews to form a minyan, services were held daily in the home of Simiansky on South Water Street.

Below: Big 4 Clothing Company run by the Shapiro Brothers on South Water Street, c. 1912



South Water and Howland Streets, c. 1900

The South End, particularly the area of South Water Street (now Route 18), was the area where the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe lived and owned businesses. Several of these businesses included Kroudivird's Bakery at 2 locations in the South End, at Grinnell and Howland Streets, Zeman's Delicatessen at 481 South Water Street, several kosher meat markets, Pildis' chicken place, Sokol's shoe store, Miller's Public Market at 876 S. Water Street, Genensky & Levine Clothing Stores, Kaplan Brothers Furniture Store at 1020 South Water Street, Philip Shwartz's Universal Hat and Cap Manufacturing at 1077 South Water Street, and later, Danis Jewelry Company, and Lesco's near the Orpheum Theatre, which is still standing today.



A South End residential community today.



View of the home today



Rubye M. Finger in 1981



Jewish Convalescent Home

Building began for the New Bedford Jewish Convalescent Home in November 1964 on the grounds of the Hawthorn Street estate of Edward D. Mandell. The first residents were admitted in March 1966. The New Bedford Jewish Convalescent Home has established a “tradition of excellence.” In addition to regular services for Jewish seniors, the home offers Kosher meals for its residents as well as Kosher meals for the “Meals on Wheels” citywide program. Ruby Finger was the campaign coordinator of the Building Fund Campaign, responsible for this worthwhile project. She later served as Director of the home from 1971 to 1973. In 1966, the administrator was Mrs. Harvey Shanbrun. The first president was Melvyn A. Holland, assisted by vice presidents, Dr. Eli Nochimow and Dr. Irving Weinschel; Mrs. Harvey Kroudvird was recording secretary and Louis D. Finger was treasurer.

The stone wall of the original Mandell estate remains in front of the Convalescent Home today. *To get to the home, from County Street, drive west up Hawthorn Street; the Convalescent Home will be on the left after Page Street.*



Groundbreaking for the Jewish Convalescent Home, November, 1964

Drive south on Route 18 from downtown and imagine thriving Jewish merchants doing business.



Mr. Hyman Miller in his store in the public market at 876 South Water Street, c. 1930.



Danis Jewelry Company, South Water Street, 1950s

Ahavath Achim, First synagogue in the city, South End



It was in 1893, when the Jewish community had grown large enough to require a place of worship other than a private residence, that the first synagogue was established, Ahavath Achim. The first president of the congregation was Nathan Lumiansky, brother of Bernard Lumiansky, who later became the first president of Tifereth Israel Synagogue. Rosh Hashanah services were held at his home. Cantor Reverend Israel Isaac Yochilovitz chanted the prayers and he also served as a shochen, a slaughterer of animals for kosher meat.

Five years later, in 1898, on the Howland Street site, ground was broken for the building of the Ahavath Achim Synagogue. Aaron Simiansky had the honor of presenting the first rabbi of the synagogue, Rabbi Aaron Harris Silverblatt, with the silver trowel. Ahavath Achim was completed and formally dedicated in 1899. Rabbi Hyman Papkin was the second rabbi, and served Ahavath Achim from 1900 to his death in 1960.



Howland Street looking toward Water Street



Corner of Howland and
Second Street

When driving south on Rt. 18, after the Alfred J. Gomes School, turn right at the light (Potomska Street) and proceed one block, turning right onto Second Street. Driving north on Second Street, you pass Grinnell Street and the next street is Howland Street.



Ahavath Achim Academy building on County Street, which opened in 1961



Groundbreaking for the new Tifereth Israel, October 12, 1964

Pictured from left are: Sidney Frauwirth, Louis Stone, Fisher Abramson, Rabbi Bernard Ziskind, Samuel Ades, Alvin Shwartz, Samuel Barnet, Samuel Finger, Annette Lipman, Lee Rosenthal, and Philip Barnet.



HAWTHORN STREET, NEW BEDFORD, MASS.

Hawthorn Street postcard from the 1950s

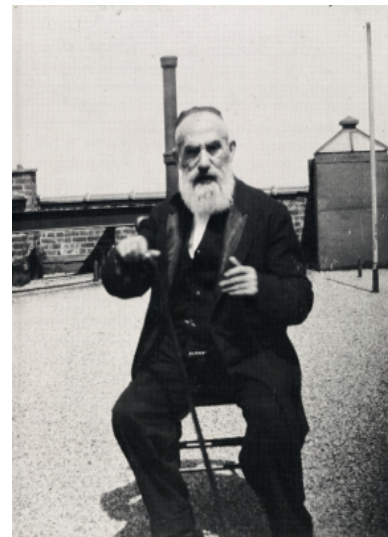
Moving to the West End of New Bedford

From the 1960s on, more and more families moved from the South and North Ends of the city to the West End and into Dartmouth, the neighboring town. It was, therefore, important that Tifereth Israel move to accommodate the majority of its congregation. The Orthodox community had been worshipping at the new Ahavath Achim since the 1940s and the conservative synagogue, Tifereth Israel moved to its new location at the corner of Hawthorn Street and Brownell Avenue in 1966. It was hoped that the new synagogue building would be the new center for the Jewish community. Here, the Jewish Federation established its office, which it still maintains. The Bernard H. Ziskind School of Judaism was established, as well as the New Bedford Early Childhood Center. In 2006 Tifereth Israel celebrates its 40th anniversary in this building. Rabbis who have served Tifereth Israel since 1966 are Rabbi Theodore Gluck, Rabbi Bernard Glassman (of Blessed Memory), Rabbi Moshe Ulmer, and Rabbi Raphael Kanter. Cantors who have served Tifereth Israel have been Cantor Aaron Marcus, Cantor Jeffrey Shapiro (of Blessed Memory), Cantor David Axelrad, Cantor Shira Belfer, Cantor Scott Buckner and Cantor Nathaniel Schudrich.

The building was completed in 1899 and was home to the congregation from 1899 to 1940. In the 1960s Howland Street fell victim to urban renewal. Most of Howland Street was removed for the development of Route 18, and at the site of the original synagogue now sits the Alfred J. Gomes Elementary School.



The stained glass window at the top of the building is a copy of the original one moved from the Howland Street building. This copy was made by Alvin Glaser of the Morris Glaser Glass Company after the 1991 hurricane destroyed the original.



Rabbi Aaron Harris Silverblatt, c. 1898



Rabbi Hyman Papkin

North End Jewish Community

As more Jews immigrated from Eastern Europe, the community grew by leaps and bounds. Many Jewish families found their way as far north as Coggeshall Street, then the main thoroughfare in the North End. The North End is considered that part of town north of Union Street. It was populated by immigrant families attracted to opportunities for jobs in the textile mills or in services that supported the population.



Mrs. Mechaber in front of one of the family's stores.

The area around Kenyon Street and Coggeshall Street was home to the Jews of the North End who lived with the Portuguese, Polish, and the French in 3-tenement houses. These immigrants worked in the neighboring mills. Many Jews operated businesses in the area, and there were several kosher stores. Some of these families and businesses in the North End part of the city were Eisenberg's Dry Goods store, Abe Portnoy's dental office on Nash Road, Mechaber's, Portnoy's store at Belleville and Coggeshall Streets, Braudy Insurance on Weld Square, a second Kaplan Brothers Furniture Store at 1182 Acushnet Avenue and Kroudvird's Bakery. Some prominent families living here were the Mechaber, Portnoy, Abeshaus, and Rosen families. Later, an enclave of Greek Jews moved further north represented by the Samuels, Jacobs, and the Modiano families.



Wamsutta Mills, North End



Corner of Coggeshall Street. On the outside wall of the building on the left is a sign for Portnoy's. This photo is dated 1907.

Young 'Commuting Rabbi' Serves Temple Sinai

By ROGER H. ALLEN
Standard-Times Staff Writer

The airways, railways and roadways between New York and New Bedford are becoming very familiar to Lewis C. Littman. He's the "commuting rabbi" serving Temple Sinai, the city's newest — and first Reform — Jewish congregation.

Every other Friday, Rabbi Littman boards a plane from LaGuardia Airport for New Bedford or a train from Pennsylvania Station to Providence and then a bus to the Whaling City. And every other Sunday he takes the same route in reverse. He made the trip last weekend. He'll do it again next.

Between those Fridays and Sundays he conducts services for the 50-plus family congregation, teaches confirmation and pre-confirmation students, leads a youth group, attends various committee meetings, conducts an adult education seminar, leads a class in conversation Hebrew, visits hospital patients and does pastoral work.

Attends College

Between the weekends, he's a third-year student (with two more years to go) at Hebrew Union College of the Jewish Institute of Religion.

A 23-year-old bachelor, Rabbi Littman already holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Rutgers University. Last month he won a Bachelor of Hebrew Literature degree from Hebrew Union College.

Of commuting, Rabbi Littman says, "It's physically and mentally tiring." But he adds quickly, "It's very necessary."

He likes the people who make up Temple Sinai's congregation. And he likes the congregation's temporary synagogue, the former Pilgrim Church at 169 William Street.

But he doesn't like contending with late or rescheduled trains and planes. Still, he prefers commuting by public transportation because he "can get a lot of work done on a plane or train and you can't do that while driving."

Looks Like Lawyer

A quick-smiling, dark-haired man, Rabbi Littman looks more like a lawyer than religious leader. But law is one field he has not tried.

However, he spent two undergraduate years as news director of Radio Station WAAT in his native Trenton, N. J. And he worked for Radio Station WBCB in Levittown, Pa.

He's also served in educational capacities on the staff of Trenton Jewish Community Center. And he was cantor at Anshe

—Standard-Times Staff Photo

COMMUTING RABBI—In rabbinical garb, Lewis C. Littman conducts service for Reform Temple Sinai. A New York theological student, he commutes to New Bedford every other week.

1964 newspaper clipping from the *Standard Times* about Rabbi Lewis C. Littman's service to Temple Sinai.

Other rabbis who served this congregation, in addition to Lewis K. Littman, were Lawrence M. Cotton, Philip J. Bentley and Arthur Schwartz.

Temple Sinai

In 1964, just prior to Tifereth Israel's move to the West End, a group of more than 40 individuals established a Reform Congregation, Temple Sinai. In 1968 the congregation purchased the Pilgrim Church at 169 William Street to hold services. The congregation operated there from about 1965 to 1977. The building, which housed Temple Sinai was originally built in 1854 when it was home to the Universalist Church (1854-1933). In 1933 it became Pilgrim Church and today is the home of Gallery X. *From Union St., turn north on County Street, then after one block, turn east on William Street. Temple Sinai was located on the left-hand side of the street in the white church.*



If you drive north from downtown, you would reach this area by driving along Purchase Street past the Morris Glaser Glass Company building, pictured below.



Downtown New Bedford

Cultural life was very important to the Jews who contributed to the development of the growth of New Bedford. The Capitol theatre was in the North End. Downtown, Jews owned the Olympia Building where the Olympia theatre was located, the Empire and State Theatres and the Bristol building.

If you drive down Union Street toward the waterfront, you will see some of these buildings or lots where they had been.

Jewish merchants owned businesses that were in the area including Gerstein's Fruit Market, Horvitz Whaling Outfitters, Harry Bloomingdale's Surprise Clothing at 962 Purchase Street, Krantzler's Antiques, Wainer's first Fruit Market (Union & Water Streets, where the YMCA is now located) and Simon's Supply Company.

**Chesed Shel Emes,
2nd synagogue in the city, North End**



An enclave of Jewish families in the North end grew large enough to warrant the establishment of a synagogue in this part of town. In 1898, the Congregation Chesed Shel Emes was incorporated with a membership of twenty-three. Many felt it was too far to travel to the South End synagogue, Ahavath Achim, on Howland Street. Rabbi Papkin served this congregation in addition to his responsibilities as Rabbi of Ahavath Achim. Services were held daily for some time at the home of one of its members and holiday services were conducted in the Saxon chapel on Purchase Street, near Hazard Street and also in the Dawson Building on Purchase and Linden Streets.



Kenyon Street sign near the Interstate 195 overpass.



Contemporary photo of the corner of Cedar Grove and Kenyon Streets, near the location of Chesed Shel Emes.

Clasky Common Park

To reach this park from downtown New Bedford, drive up Union Street to County Street. Turn right on County Street and continue to drive north for about 2 miles. Across from the Parker Elementary School is the Clasky Common Park. Clasky Common is a park on County Street named for Harold J. Clasky, a popular political figure in New Bedford. The park was dedicated on October 13, 1969. Each year during the holidays in December this park is lighted and decorated.



According to one who knew him, “Senator Clasky was a most approachable and magnanimous man who served as a model of inspiration to every one, no matter his or her faith, background or creed. He always had courage and will for a devoted and longtime career for public service. He brought no arrogance of power to office, only dedication, devotion and a loyalty to the people he represented—a rare example of a man of the highest integrity and principle. Succinctly, he was an outstanding man of our times, a man of singular achievement, a righteous American, a superb politician and, above all, a decent human being of quintessential good will and civility.” (quote from Mel B. Yoken, Ph.D., Chancellor Professor of French, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth). Clasky’s daughters are Maxine Sinderoff of Fall River and Roslyn Glaser Bernstein of New Bedford.

Some Prominent Jews in the Community

Many Jews contributed to the political life in the city. In the late 1800s, Kopel Cohen served as a member of the Overseers of the Poor. In the early to mid 20th century, Samuel Barnet was elected a member of the School Board. Fisher Abramson, a prominent lawyer in New Bedford, was called upon to serve on a number of boards in the city, banks, and other charitable organizations. He served under Mayor Ashley as City Solicitor. Attorney Abramson worked tirelessly for the New Bedford Jewish Community from 1920 to 1980 just prior to his death in 1982. William Saltzman served as City Councilor from 1965-1983 and from 1985 until his death in 1987. With his brother-in-law, Leo Bromberg, he owned United Fruit Stores on Acushnet Avenue in the North End and on South Water Street, a business they started in the 1930s. He was known as a colorful and feisty figure in New Bedford politics.



Samuel Barnet as a young man



Fisher Abramson in his office

Harold Clasky was a Jewish state senator noted for work he accomplished in the community. Born in Russia in 1896, he lived his early life in Brockton and moved to New Bedford in 1931. He served as a New Bedford Councillor-At-Large from 1952-1953 and 1956-1965 and as a Massachusetts State Senator representing the 3rd Bristol District from 1965 to 1969. Originally a life insurance agent by trade, he was involved in a number of local organizations including the American Legion, the Jewish War Veterans, and the Jonah Lodge of the B'nai Brith. He died in 1969.



Harold Clasky

This arrangement was fine for several years, and then in 1903, a site was purchased at 86 Kenyon Street for permanent house of worship to be erected. The building for the Chesed Shel Emes congregation was completed in 1904. Taking part in the laying of the cornerstone were four members of the original congregation instrumental in establishing the synagogue – Rachmiel and Simon Mechaber, Abram Mendelson, and Moshe Goldstein. Chesed Shel Emes in Hebrew literally means “true kindness.” Attorney Sheldon Friedland was the last president of this congregation. The building was demolished for the construction of Interstate Highway 195.

To find Kenyon Street, drive north on Rt. 18, turn right at Coggeshall Street, then turn right onto North Front Street or the next right, onto Belleville Avenue. The site of the synagogue was between North Front and Belleville. You will find the sign that says Kenyon Street, but the synagogue was demolished in the late 1950s as part of a Federal urban renewal project that resulted in the construction of Interstate highway 195.

Eastern European immigrants

Immigrants from Poland and Russia started coming to America in the 1880s to escape harsh conditions in their native shtetls where life for the Jews became more and more difficult under the Tsar Nicholas II. Many young men came here to escape conscription into the Russian army. After coming to Ellis Island in New York City and various other ports along the east coast, families were sent to communities across the country by an organization called HIAS. Those who moved to New Bedford were attracted by the opportunity to work near the textile industry in New Bedford and Fall River. Many were peddlers, grocers, farmers, merchants, and businessmen who supported a population working in the mills. A few worked in the mills and others became financial investors in local mills.



Photographic postcard of the Statue of Liberty

Junk collector's badge of Abraham Shuster



Samuel Lipman and parents



Isaac Rothkopf and family



Birth Announcement

Below: Dedication ceremony, 1947

Pictured from left, Mrs. Hyman Hochman, Raphael Mutterperl, Samuel Ades, Fisher Abramson (cutting the ribbon), Charles Golenpaul, Rabbi Bernard Ziskind, Samuel B. Finger and George B. Goodman.



When the Rotch mansion, owned by Walter Langshaw from 1919 to 1945, went on the market, the synagogue quickly purchased it. The building was then renovated for the purpose of housing the Jewish Community Center. The formal dedication of the Center was held on March 23, 1947 (pictured at left).

Once the focus of the community shifted to the West End, with the opening of the new Tifereth Israel synagogue in 1966, the center eventually closed and many of the activities shifted to the Brownell Avenue location. In 1972, the building was sold to the Swain School of Design and housed painting studios and administrative offices. The Swain School closed in 1988, and today the building is the home of an insurance company and several lawyers' and doctors' offices.



Bowling banquet, 1950s.
Pictured, from left, Elliot Horowitz, Betty Horowitz, Bunny Russo, Jack Gould, Ann Gould, Ann Eisner and Izzie Eisner.



Nursery school, 1966-1967

Jewish Community Center, 1947-1972

After the Second World War Jewish life continued to thrive, especially with the purchase of a building to serve as the Jewish Community Center.

This magnificent Greek revival mansion at 388 County Street, better known as the William Rotch Rodman Mansion, was home of the first mayor of New Bedford and site of the Jewish Community Center from 1947 to 1972. The process of acquiring a building for the Jewish Community Center of New Bedford began in 1940 when Tifereth Israel Synagogue purchased the Nowell Estate property (95 Madison St.) with funding from the New Bedford Council of Jewish Women and the Young Women's Hebrew Association.



However, the Nowell Estate was never used as a Jewish Center, but was rented and occupied by the Women's Civilian Defense Corps during World War II. The property was then sold, and the synagogue purchased this property at 388 County Street, which is pictured above.

The building housed classrooms for the synagogue's Hebrew and Sunday Schools, the Sisterhood Library, synagogue offices, rooms for Boy and Girl Scout troop meetings, as well as various meeting rooms, lounges, and a music room.

The nursery school was in the basement and the Hebrew school on the 3rd floor. A scout annex occupied the garage behind the building. The purpose of the center was to foster Jewish cultural and spiritual values as well as to organize and support programs that would enrich and guide all aspects of Jewish life. There were many activities for men, women, and children including social, cultural, educational events, music, art, drama, and athletics.



William Fleisch on his farm in Acushnet

Several immigrants who lived in New Bedford became farmers and bought farms in Acushnet, Rochester, and Dartmouth. Sy and Ruben Goldstein's father bought a dairy farm in North Dartmouth as did Harry Helfand. Barney Helfand, Harry's son, also bought a farm in Mattapoisett and Samuel Fleisch bought a farm in Acushnet with his friend Mr. Arenberg, who later bought his own farm in Rochester.

Samuel Cronig worked on the Fleisch farm before moving to Martha's Vineyard where he became a successful businessman. Many local markets, such as Wainer's Fruit market, now called Sid Wainer and Son, purchased their produce from these farms. Wainer's today grows its own produce and imports products from all over the world.



Wainer's Fruit and Produce, Water Street, 1927



Sam Goldstein and Nathan Kaplan in their blacksmith shop

Hebrew Education

In the early 20th century, Jewish children attended Hebrew school after public school. One was conducted by the Hebrew Educational League, Inc. and the other by the Congregation Chesed Shel Emes in back of its building. Louis R. Liss reported in his interview that the Talmud Torah, or Hebrew School, was around the corner from the synagogue on Acushnet Avenue just a bit below Howland Street. Lillian Feingold remembers being the only girl to attend Hebrew classes on Washington Street with Mr. Rothkopf as her teacher. This was a time of great Jewish learning in New Bedford as early immigrant families wanted a connection to their Jewish heritage. Later schools were based at the synagogues, Ahavath Achim and Tifereth Israel.



Above: Chesed Shel Emes Hebrew class, 1929-1930

Pictured, first row, left to right: Bert Plotnick, Nelson Portnoy, _ Zeman, Anna Cohen, Dolly Goldstein, Morris Chapman. Second row, left to right: Bill Abesh, Rubin Cohen, Donald Zeman, Anna Cohen. 3rd row, left to right: Sam Miller, Sammy Rosenfield, Sydney Siegel, Gersh Cohen. 4th row, left to right: Arnold Minkin, Marty Miller, Pearl Stupinsky. 5th row, left to right: Estelle Rosenfield, Jimmy Abeshaus, Leon Braudy, Eleanor Kirschner. 6th row: on the left is the leader, Philip Cohen, in the center, an unidentified student, and on the right is Julius Miller.



Hebrew Education League class, with Hyman Rothkopf as teacher, right.

Cohen Square in Dartmouth



Private Gary Martin Cohen

At the intersection of Faunce Corner Road and Hixville Roads, just north of the Dartmouth Mall in Dartmouth is a square dedicated to Army Pvt. Gary Martin Cohen. A native of North Dartmouth, Cohen was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Cohen. He was killed in the Vietnam conflict in March of 1971, a few days before his tour of duty was to end. The memorial was sponsored by the Jewish War Veterans New Bedford Post 154 and dedicated on Sunday, April 30, 1975.

To reach Cohen Square, take Route 18 north to Interstate 195 west. Exit at 12A, Faunce Corner Road. Traveling south on Faunce Corner Road, the monument is on the right across from Firestone Tire, at the intersection of Hixville Road. This is between the 2nd and 3rd set of lights after the exit.

Kaplan Square

If you take County Street south to Fair Street, and turn right, you will drive straight to this monument in the middle of a largely Portuguese residential community, which was at one time populated by many Jewish families.



Kaplan Square, at the intersection of Fair and Bolton Streets in the South End of New Bedford, was named for PFC Irving Kaplan, born in 1915 in New Bedford. Kaplan was killed on August 25, 1945, while serving in the Army Signal Corps in Germany during World War II. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Kaplan. Before enlisting, the young Irving Kaplan practiced law in New Bedford, with offices in the National Bank Building. He had attended Boston University and Harvard University Law School. Members of the Jewish War Veterans New Bedford Post 154 are responsible for having the monument erected. It was dedicated on June 19, 1949 accompanied by a parade and memorial service.



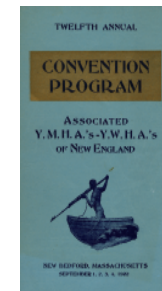
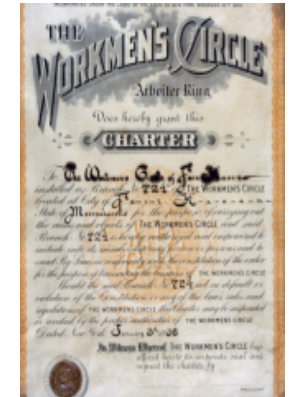
In 1997, the 6th grade class of Mrs. Susan Baroody of the Congdon School took it on as a local beautification project to refurbish and replant the Kaplan memorial. It was rededicated on June 18, 1997 by the Jewish War Veterans in conjunction with the city of New Bedford. Myer Halpren, representing Post 154 is seen in the above photograph, second from the right.

Social and Charitable Organizations

Social service Jewish agencies were established as early as 1906 with the Hebrew Ladies' Helping Hand (as well as fraternal societies offering both sick and death benefits). In 1911, the Young Men's Hebrew Association was formed. It offered classes in Yiddish and Americanization and was the headquarters for all Jewish activities, including the War Relief Welfare Drive, the Keren Hayesod, Zionist meetings and even the organizational meeting for the Tifereth Israel Congregation. Other societies that helped in the general development of the Jew were the Young Women's Hebrew Association, the National Council of Jewish Women (established in 1915), and the Haym Salomon Lodge of B'Nai Brith.



Pictures at right is the charter of the Workmen's Circle, a fraternal organization which founded a branch (# 723) in New Bedford around 1900. A main benefit of membership was cemetery rights, and another was sick benefits. The group had its own doctor that members could go to for a set price. Meetings were held in Cornell Hall, on Pleasant Street. According to some, it was mostly North End residents who joined. The charter at right is from a Fairhaven branch from 1936.



Left : YWHA group on an outing, (date unknown) Right: Program cover for the New England YMHA and YWHA convention held in New Bedford in 1922.

The Original Tifereth Israel Synagogue

From downtown New Bedford, take Union Street west to Sixth Street; turn left and drive several blocks to Madison Street. The original Tifereth Israel Synagogue building is the Byzantine style building on the corner.



The original Tifereth Israel building sits at 42 South Sixth Street, on the corner of Madison Street. It currently serves as home to the Iglesia de Dios, Church of God, with a congregation that is largely Spanish-speaking.

By 1920 the Jewish population in New Bedford had outgrown the original South End synagogue, Ahavath Achim, and there was talk of building a new and larger synagogue. Abram Herman, Samuel Genensky and Samuel Horvitz spearheaded the planning campaign. In 1921, 18 members of Ahavath Achim met at the YMHA and among them subscribed \$1,800 for the effort. The charter and articles of incorporation were created, and planning began.



The building around 1924, when construction was nearly complete.

Joseph I. Segall Square

After World War II, many of our Jewish young men came back from the war, returned to school, and opened businesses in the city. For several young Jewish men who were killed in battle, monuments had been erected in their memory. One such monument called Segall Square is in front of the Ahavath Achim Synagogue on the corner of County and Hawthorn Street. Another memorial is the Kaplan monument in the South end on Bolton St. A third monument to Gary Cohen is on Faunce Corner Road in Dartmouth at the juncture of Hixville Rd just behind the Dartmouth Mall.



Ensign Joseph Segall



The city square at Hawthorn and County streets was named the "Ensign Joseph Irving Segall Square" by City Council on June 24, 1948. Ensign Segall, born in 1917 in New Bedford, was the first Jewish youth killed in World War II. The son of a prominent local physician, Segall was killed when his plane crashed in the North Pacific in July of 1942, while serving in the Navy.

Through the efforts of the Jewish War Veterans New Bedford Post 154, under the leadership of post commander Louis Barroll, the square was dedicated, and a plaque installed on a wall in front of the Jewish Community Center on April 10, 1949. The wall was later knocked down in an accident, and the plaque moved to its current site across the street, on the grounds of Ahavath Achim.



Dedication parade, April 10, 1949

World War I soldiers Louis Kowalsky, Nathan Herman and Eli Meltzer



Hyman Krivoff,
World War I



Robert Zeman, 1940s

Jewish Service in World Wars I and II

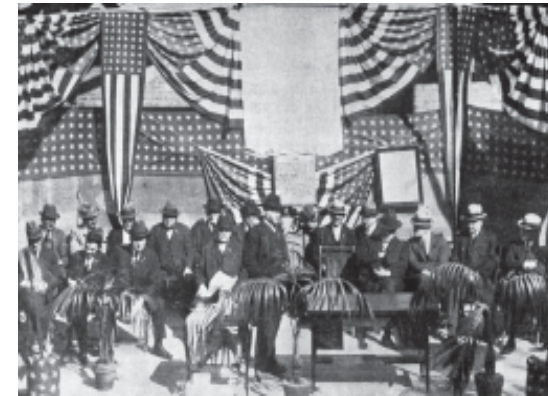
During World War I, local Jews served in all branches of the military. Forty five died for their country. During World War II countless more served, and twenty-four Jews died. During the wars, local civilians participated in the War Chest, Liberty Loan drives, the USO, and Red Cross. During World War I, Jewish organizations entered floats in both the War Chest and Liberty loan parades, and on both occasions took first prize.

Rabbi Bernard H. Ziskind of Tifereth Israel was called into the service as Army Chaplain in 1943, and an interim Rabbi, Rabbi Frank Plotke served in New Bedford from 1943 to 1946.



Liberty Bond Float, 1915

The Jewish War Veterans established a post (#154) in New Bedford in May of 1938. The Ladies' Auxiliary was established at the same time. According to their bylaws, the purpose of the post is to sponsor entertainment for servicemen and veterans, to wage a battle against anti-Semitism and bigotry, to provide assistance to veterans and their families, to provide assistance to underprivileged children through the Child Welfare Program, to send aid to Israel in the form of medical equipment and supplies, and to provide scholarships.



Tifereth Israel building dedication, September 14, 1924

The name "Tiferes Israel," or "Beauty of Israel," was settled on, which reflected the pronunciation used by the Askenazi community at the time (the congregation now uses "Tifereth" Israel, which reflects the Sephardic pronunciation). Later in 1921, a plot of land was purchased for \$65,000. A noted New Bedford architect Nathaniel C. Smith (1866-1943) was hired to design the building; he eventually settled on the Byzantine style. Tifereth Israel was dedicated on Sunday, September 14, 1924. The dome and ark were the gift of Isaac Abramson and the large chandelier inside, the gift of the Sisterhood. Rabbi Papkin presided, but the first rabbi was officially a young Nachman Arnoff.

Rabbi Alexander Burnstein was second rabbi, and then Rabbi Bernard Ziskind, who took over in 1930 and served the congregation for over 40 years. Cantor Boris Alper from 1928-1947 and Cantor Lipp from 1947-1966 also served the congregation. The congregation of Tifereth Israel relocated to the West End in 1966.



Original bimah inside Tifereth Israel

**Ahavath Achim, 385 County Street
(formerly on Howland Street)**



Ahavath Achim at 385 County Street, the converted estate of Cornelius Grinnell, Jr., opened on Rosh Hashanah in 1941. Krivoff Social Hall was added in 1955. The offices and school are located in the Eli Nochimow building, built in 1963 and named for Dr. Nochimow, physician and longtime president of the synagogue in 1982. After Rabbi Papkin retired in 1956, he was succeeded by Rabbi Zalman Schachter, Rabbi Sholem Kowalsky, Rabbi Norbert Weinberg, Rabbi Nathan Wise, Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg, Rabbi Chaim Feller, and Rabbi Jacob Rand. In 1979, Rabbi Barry Hartman took over, and is the current spiritual leader of Ahavath Achim. Rabbi Hartman continues to keep up the tradition of community. His congregation is a welcoming place for new Russian immigrants and hosts Shabbaton weekends with prominent Orthodox scholars-in-residence. The building is also the site of the kosher nutrition program for the elderly, the “lunch and learn” program every other Tuesday and Talmud classes on Monday evenings.

From the old Tifereth Israel on Sixth Street, continue one block south to the next corner; turn right on Cherry Street and drive west to County Street. Make a left on County Street. Ahavath Achim is on the opposite corner. Also at this intersection is the Jewish Community Center and Segall Square.



Holocaust memorial inside the synagogue



Mortgage burning celebration, 1961



View of the interior of the synagogue showing the center railing which separates the men from the women for worship, as is Orthodox custom.



Orthodox wedding



Rabbi Barry Hartman