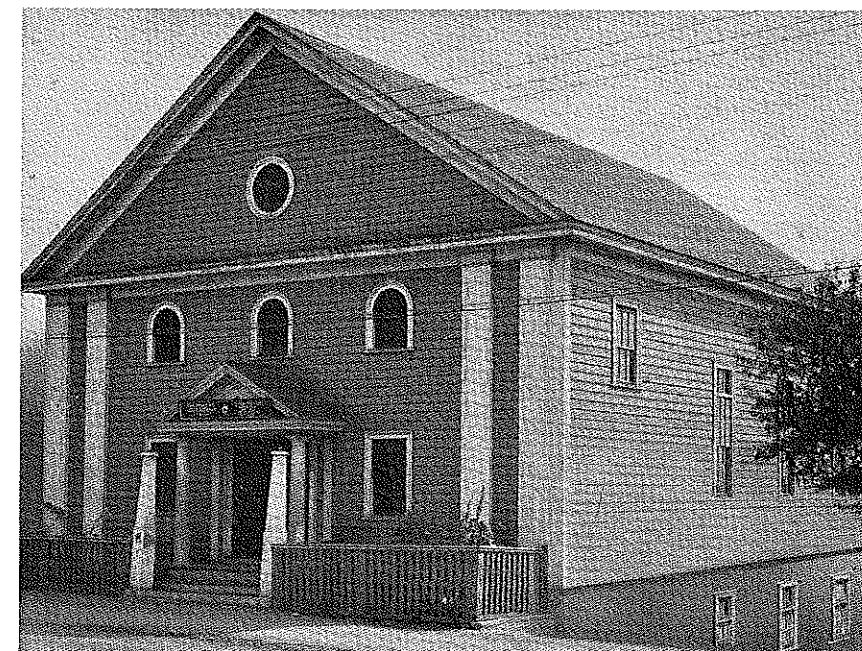


*WELCOME
TO THE WORLD OF BETH ABRAHAM.*

History, (his' tor y) n. A chronological record of events, as the life or development of a people or institution.

A simple definition for a very complex subject. What we commemorate here in this Journal are the fifty years since the dedication of the Beth Abraham Synagogue on York Street. But the history goes back well beyond that time. It begins with a sense of need on the part of the original seven founders for a place to worship in the orthodox manner to which they were accustomed in Russia. Even though accommodations were discussed for separate services at Beth Israel Synagogue (which had been established in 1888) these men deigned accommodation. They wanted their own house of worship. It was as simple as that. These men of humble origin were looking for a "shul." Thus the story of Beth Abraham begins ... welcome to our world.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS ON YORK STREET



1933



1983

Photo by Yehuda Inbar

On March 20, 1932, the three-story wooden shul was destroyed by fire. According to a Bangor Daily News article, Barney Cooper, president of Beth Abraham at that time, stated that the building cost \$20,000 and the contents were valued at nearly \$10,000. Among the valuable articles in the interior which were totally destroyed were several priceless volumes of the Five Books of Moses.

While the fire was raging, Shel David Striar, the oldest member of the congregation, entered the burning building and made his way to the place where a 150 year old silver crown from Russia was stored. He emerged from the blaze with many severe burns but holding the valuable crown in his hands. This silver crown was later exhibited at the dedication of the new home of Beth Abraham.



BETH ABRAHAM SYNAGOGUE

Aftermath of the disastrous fire on Carr Street, March 30, 1932.

Beth Abraham Synagogue Is Destroyed \$25,000 BLAZE RAZES JEWISH TEMPLE AND ENDANGERS HOMES

Several Dwellings Catch in Thickly Settled Carr
And Hancock Street District As Building Is
Reduced to Total Ruins — All Apparatus of
City Called Out to Fight Flames.

With the Beth Abraham Congregation's Synagogue on Carr Street a raging furnace when Box 18 was pulled in about 11:25 the Hancock Street section of the city got its biggest fire scare in recent years last night. Several dwellings, a monster wooden building used as a storehouse and stores and frame structures between which the distance is measured in feet were threatened and the huge wooden Synagogue was totally destroyed. A second alarm was sounded within a few minutes after the arrival of the fire department chiefs and soon the streets were lined with cars and several thousand people attracted by the spectacular blaze which was visible from all sections of the city.

When the firemen from the Hose 5 station on State Street arrived at the scene of the fire, the first apparatus to reach the fire, the flames were shooting skyward, giving the appearance that all of Carr Street was afire. Within a few minutes of that time 15 lines of hose were playing water on the Synagogue and surrounding buildings to keep the fire from spreading. From the outset it was seen that the building itself was doomed.

The recent heavy snow storm dampened the buildings nearby and contributed much to preventing what would have probably wiped out many of the frame dwellings on Carr, Hancock and Patrick streets.

COST \$20,000 WHEN BUILT

According to Barney Cooper, president of the board of directors for the Congregation Beth Abraham, the building cost \$20,000 to build and the contents were valued at nearly \$10,000. Among the valuable articles in the interior which were totally destroyed were several volumes of priceless parchment (known as the five books of Moses). The basement floor of the building was recently decorated and a large sum of money spent to make it attractive. The building was a three story frame structure, just off Hancock Street. Rabbi Leizor Lewin was the officiating clergyman.

FIRE DISCOVERED by WOMAN

Mrs. Jennie Robertson, who lives on Pine Street, looked over onto the next street and saw the flames coming through the upper story of the building and rushed to pull in the fire alarm. Within a few minutes

neighbors were awakened and there was a mad scramble to get onto the street and away from what had all the appearance of a conflagration.

Within a few feet of the fire on the Hancock Street side were several families living in a two and a half story frame apartment house. Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Morgan were awakened by their dog, Teddy, barking and looked out of their window to see the building next door a mass of flames.

NEARBY HOUSES CATCH ON ROOFS

Frequently while the firemen were fighting the Synagogue blaze the roofs of nearby houses would catch, and four different dwellings were burning a little at some time during the fire. The roof on a vacant house across the street, now being offered for sale, was among those lighted by flying embers.

Mrs. Melissa Dyer's house at 6 Carr caught at one time but the blaze was quickly extinguished by the firemen who were working on the roof.

FIREMEN IN DANGER AT TIMES

Twice during the fire as the walls were caving in firemen were obliged to leave the alleys from which they were fighting hard to keep the blaze from spreading in the thickly settled area. While replacing sections of hose that had split, in front of the building, several men had narrow escapes as huge pieces of burning wood fell from the roofs.

CROWDS ATTRACTED TO THE FIRE

From vantage points on all the streets nearby several thousand people attracted to the fire by the blaze and the sounding of the second alarm watched what at a time was a threatening fire.

In the rear of the mass of small dwellings and within a few hundred yards of the Synagogue itself is a monster building, facing on Patrick Street, used by A. Brown as a storehouse for tons and tons of copper, wool, etc.

Chief of Police Crowley and practically all members of the day force responded to the second alarm, augmenting the regular night men already there in charge of Capt. Ambrose Phillips.

Keeping the fire in the one building, the shell of which remained standing, was a difficult job but despite this the all out signal was sounded at 12:15 o'clock.