

PLANS MADE FOR DIAMOND JUBILEE

For Beth Israel and the world at large 1963 is an auspicious year. As the Congregation was about to enter its seventy-fifth year, plans were made for the celebration of its Diamond Jubilee anniversary. At the October, 1962 meeting of the Board of Directors, Rabbi Avraham Freedman was appointed General Chairman of the Anniversary Committee, Harold R. Epstein as Co-chairman, and Albert and Sidney Schiro, as Co-chairmen of the Fund Raising Committee. Henry H. Segal was named as Editor and Historian of the Jubilee publication. A large and active committee was later named to assist Rabbi Freedman in the shaping up of the plans for an appropriate celebration. One of the goals of the 75th Anniversary program was to free the congregation of all indebtedness incurred in the renovation of the synagogue building. More than \$20,000.00 in gifts were contributed toward the Jubilee Fund. The President, Harold R. Epstein was able to announce that all indebtedness had been lifted from



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the congregation through the use of part of the gifts. The congregation of a "minyan" in 1888 has now grown to 250 families.

1963 and our seventy-fifth anniversary year witness more billions poured into defense and foreign aid. In addition to giving millions to the United Jewish Appeal, Jews are continuing to buy Israel bonds. The nuclear bomb and mutual distrust fills the world with fear even though a partial test ban treaty has been signed. Man stands tremblingly seeking through the darkness that surrounds him to discern the signs of a brighter future. Gigantic programs have been launched by the world powers to conquer space. For centuries thinkers have deliberated on the mystery of our world's beginning; today they direct their attention to its possible end. The most pressing problem facing mankind today is not whether there is human life on the moon, but whether there will be any human life left on earth.

Of this we are convinced, that we need desperately the faith of our fathers in these times. We need the faith of the founders of this congregation who believed that by walking in God's ways and fulfilling His commandments we might help to build His kingdom on earth. As we pay tribute to those who built our house of God, we rededicate ourselves to Him.

"Tekiah Godolah" . . . the sound of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, 1963, is as symbolic to Bangor Jewry today as it was three quarters of a century ago. The broken notes are heard. So are the notes that rise and fall. But, most important, the long call is heard—the call to ever lift our voices to God in the moving prayer:

"Look with compassion upon Thy children and grant us strength of love and purity of purpose, that we may live together in peace and concord, so that the well-being of all may be promoted and Thy name, O God, be glorified in all the earth."



The Sanctuary of Beth Israel

Conclusion

And so, in 1963 WE FIND OUR CONGREGATION 75 YEARS—THREE QUARTERS of a century old. It now numbers a membership of nearly 300 families. A mighty tree has sprung from the "First Minyan." The Congregation is now old in years and experience, but not in ideals—for these will never age.

This is the conclusion of a story of a congregation, but in reality, it is only the beginning. Unlike a novel, a history does not have a "happy ending." In fact, the history of a living organization has no ending at all; only the story of an extinct culture comes

to a definite close. The first 75 years of the history of Beth Israel will merge imperceptibly with the years to come; the bequest of the first 75 years is not an assurance, but a challenge. The light of the Synagogue will continue to cast its rays with ever-increasing brilliance.

Passing years and changing times bring new anniversaries, new leaders, new ideas. As the spiritual and cultural leadership of the Synagogue continues toward its Centennial, we can be strong in the faith that the "building of a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel" will never halt.
THIS, THEREFORE, IS NOT THE END.

