



Best wishes of

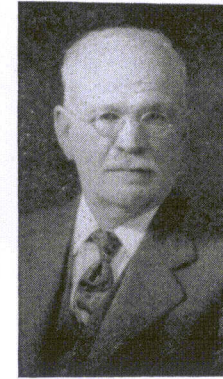
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Old Town



Hyman Lait



Edwin Cutler



Harry Goldberg

HISTORY OF CONGREGATION

The history of the founding of a Synagogue or Temple has had much the same beginning in all communities, in all lands, in all times.

In Old Town, Maine, two generations of men and women have played a part in the final achievement of building a new Jewish Temple, which is now being dedicated, to be known as Temple Israel.

In midyear 1913, the heads of all Jewish families here met for the purpose of forming an organization to provide local religious services. The first services were planned and held that year in what was known as the Lait Building on South Water Street.

The first High Holiday services, Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, held in Old Town, were observed in the year 1914, in the Cutler Building on North Main Street.

During these two years, rising interest was shown in a movement towards purchasing a building, that could be converted into a Synagogue. In late 1915 a building on Stillwater Avenue was purchased by five of the members

Jacob Hoos



Louis Solomon



Barney Ginsberg



David Goldsmith

in their own names, Edwin Cutler, Hyman Lait, Barney Ginsberg, Samuel Gordon and Israel R. Cutler.

A permanent organization was then formed to serve the Synagogue, and named B'nai Israel or Sons of Israel. The founders of the congregation were Joseph Alperin, Edwin Cutler, Israel R. Cutler, Barney Ginsberg, Harry Goldberg, Arthur J. Goldsmith, David Goldsmith, Samuel Gordon, Jacob Hoos, Hyman Lait, Louis Sklar, Louis Solomon and Philip Stone. The membership increased during the next few years and Nathan Shiro, Harry M. Goldsmith, Maurice Lait, Harry I. Goldsmith, Max Allen, Julius Mandell, Barney Green and Maurice Epstein became members.

In 1916 the congregation engaged the Rev. David Hornstein as religious leader and teacher of Hebrew to the children of the congregation.

In the early years the congregation kept no detailed records. It is noted in the minutes of a meeting held on November 5, 1916 that Hyman Lait was elected President pro tem and Philip Stone as Secretary pro tem.

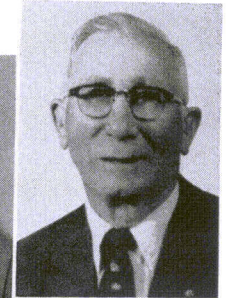
The first complete slate of officers on record was elected April 15, 1917; they were: President, Hyman Lait; Secretary, Philip Stone; Treasurer, Barney Ginsberg; First Sexton, Philip Stone; Second Sexton, Jacob Hoos; Financial Secretary, David Hornstein.

Philip Stone



Louis Sklar

A. J. Goldsmith



Israel R. Cutler

At a meeting in the spring of 1919, Israel R. Cutler was elected President, and continued in that office until 1953. At this 1919 meeting, Hyman Lait, Barney Ginsberg and Edwin Cutler were appointed a committee to raise funds to pay off the mortgage. In September, 1919 for the first time seats were sold to the congregation to raise funds, and the assessment was \$5.00.

It was decided, at a meeting on May 14, 1922 that the congregation should take over the deed of the Synagogue from the individual holders. At a meeting of celebration on November 14, 1922 the honor of burning the mortgage on the Synagogue was given to Mrs. Hyman Lait, in memory of her husband who had served as the first President of the congregation B'nai Israel.

No further records are available until October 1, 1945. In the intervening years, it is known that the congregation actively carried on year after year under the leadership of the President, Israel R. Cutler and Treasurer, Jacob Hoos. They never once failed to have services. They arranged each year to have a Cantor; they collected the dues; and under their leadership the congregation had no financial problems.

During this period Rudolph E. Brill served as Cantor for about twenty years. Mr. Brill was faithful to his trust. He won the most cordial regard and respect of the congregation. During the High Holidays throughout

this period, Mr. Brill and frequently his family were guests at the home of Jacob Hoos.

In 1945 interest in a proposed new Temple was growing and the purchase of a lot was discussed many times. After due consideration, a lot on Center Street was acquired. During the next five years frequent home meetings were held at which various committees brought to the members information as to size, design and construction cost of a new Temple.

On August 8, 1950 the members of the congregation voted to incorporate under the name Temple Israel, with the understanding that this name was to be given to the new Temple they contemplated building. It was voted that the corporation should provide, equip and maintain a building to serve as a house of worship and as a center from which all activities of the Jewish people would emanate. A code of By-Laws was adopted.

On October 16, 1952 an election of officers was held and Samuel Goldsmith was elected to serve as President; Samuel Shiro as Vice President; Bernard Sass as Secretary and Harold Hoos as Treasurer. Another generation had now taken the leadership and the desire for a new Temple had become very strong. Although the Synagogue on Stillwater Avenue was not all we had desired it had been an achievement built on the sacrifices of the first generation. How firmly it was established is witnessed by the fact that it never weakened.

On November 2, 1953 a Building Committee was appointed: Alexander Cutler, Abe Podolsky and Howard Gewertz. Many plans were submitted and carefully considered before one was finally accepted. In March 1954 the building on Stillwater Avenue was sold and the sum received from the sale was put towards our new Temple.

Bernard Sass officiated at the last High Holiday services held in the old Synagogue.

Ground-breaking ceremonies were held at the Center Street site on Sunday, July 12, 1953. Several notables from Old Town and Bangor attended the ceremony.

Rabbi Milton H. Elefant gave the invocation and delivered an address.

Rabbi Milton H. Elefant conducted the first High Holiday services in our new Temple, assisted by Maurice Stober as Cantor. Every seat in our Temple was filled by the members of the congregation and their families and guests.

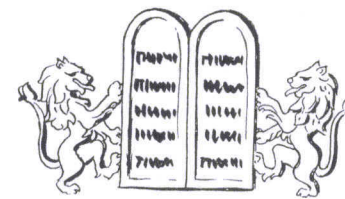
During the year a Sunday School was established, directed by Mrs. Harvey Hillson and Mrs. James Shiro.

Many social festivities were held, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Harold Hoos.

Men and women of every faith have contributed toward our Temple and this Dedication Book. Gifts have been gratefully received and the name of each donor is inscribed in our records. Every member has been prominent in the work of the Temple on one or more of the many committees. All have given freely of their time and labor and have served the best interests of the community.

We are deeply indebted to the Fund Raising Committee and the Building Committee for their many difficult months of planning and supervising the construction of the Temple with the attendant personal sacrifice.

All of the early records up to the year 1945 were written in Yiddish. They were translated by Bernard K. Hillson.



This page dedicated to
the TEMPLE ISRAEL Dedication Book
by
THE GOLDSMITH FURNITURE CO.
Old Town