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Congregation Anshe Pele Zedek. ca. 1939-1940

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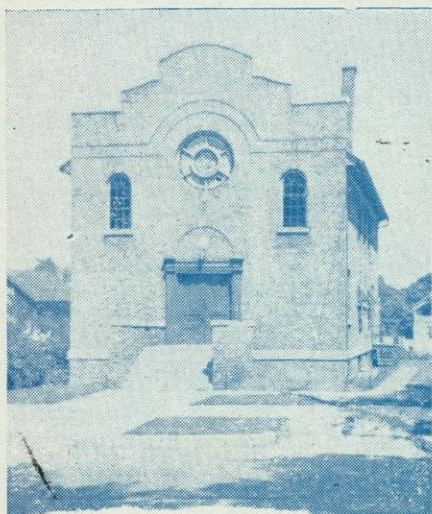
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CONGREGATION ANSHE PELE ZEDEK

Manitowoc, Wis.



Founded Feb. 18, 1900

To Worship God In This Great
Free Country

To Educate the Young In The
Traditions and History of their
Forefathers



New stone structure erected in 1925

Our Early Settlers

The history of Anshe Pele Zedek is the story of the middle European Jew who came to this section with the general migration to the new world, to make a living for his family, and to worship God in freedom.

That he has been in a measure successful is evidenced today with our gathering to celebrate the burning of the mortgage. He is free to worship as he pleases in this great land, and now by co-operation and hard work his synagogue is free of material debt.

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain as to whom to attribute the honor of being the first Jewish person in this vicinity. Jews have played an important part in settling and building this county and have left their mark to that effect. For instance, Mann Brothers, Joseph, Henry and Leopold operated a saw mill and large mercantile store at Two Rivers as early as 1860. In 1866, Joseph Mann was elected mayor. Citizens farther honored him by naming their library as the Joseph Mann Library principally because the Manns were heavy contributors to the social and charitable organizations in the community. A very early Jewish pioneer was a Mr. Brandeis who operated a fairly large store at Ninth and York Streets at Manitowoc.

The first Orthodox Jewish settler is believed to be J. Balkansky, and he too made his home in Two Rivers. Joe Sklute is believed to be the first to bring his family to Manitowoc, and that was about 1890. I. Green, another early settler, was influential in drawing many of his friends and relatives to this vicinity. They were followed by Davidson, Abe Schwartz, the Phillips, a Mr. Fink, a Mr. Roseman, Ed. Harris and others. About 1900 there were about thirty men in this vicinity, many of whom brought their families. However, by 1915 many of these early settlers had moved to other locations in Wisconsin and particularly to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Organized in 1900

The need of a "minion" brought these pioneers together in one of their homes and for a high holiday a hall was hired. Formal organization of a congregation took place on February 18, 1900, the gathering was in the home of I. Green, Tenth Street. Mr. Green was named first president, and Morris Green, his brother, secretary. Secretary Green apparently took pride in his minutes as the original records show a neat recording a follower of formality. Hardly had the year gone by when Secretary Green, for some reason, decided to return to Europe. Later President Green also moved away, going to Minneapolis, leaving the administration of the congregation to men, better known and remembered in our midst, such as Sam Golden, the Phillips, Stein, Schwartz, Balkansky and others.

The new congregation immediately set up a list of rules: The quorum for a meeting was seven; the majority rules; dues 25c a month and members absent on Saturday without cause were fined 25c.

Saturday Closing

What did most of these early Jewish men do to earn a living? Some were employed in the Manitowoc industries, a number at the Hamilton Manufacturing Company at Two Rivers. The others, from 25 to 30 men, took one of the hardest avenues of making a living that was open to the language handicapped immigrants and that was picking up junk. Peddlers were crowding one another in the limited area of the county, although many made their routes 30 or 40 miles away. Every effort was made to keep the Sabbath. On September 15, 1900, the congregation agreed on the following:

Peddlers not to work on Saturday.

Junk dealers should not work, themselves, on Saturdays.

No cigarette smoking.

Violators were to be fined by the congregation.

Keeping kosher homes was also uppermost, and on March 18 of 1900, there appears in the minutes the name of Rabbi Samuel David Cohen as the first shochet. He was hired at a regular weekly wage of \$6 with an opportunity to increase his earnings from his fees by performing various duties for the members. Rabbi Cohen also acted as secretary to the congregation in place of Green.

Buy Building

Two months after organization of Pele Zedek, April 18, 1900, a committee was appointed for the purpose of buying a building. This was realized two years later with the purchase of the old school of the First Norwegian Lutheran Church, corner North 8th and State Streets. The cost of the building was \$100, moving \$100 and the lot \$500. President Green made the purchase of the lot at 1221 So. Thirteenth Street, the present site of the new building. Jewish carpenters and carvers, a Mr. Feldman, and a Mr. Weinstein did much of the interior and some of their handicraft is still in use in the newer building.

Congregation Pele Zedek today is housed in a beautiful brick edifice costing \$16 000 — yes, 160 times as much as the old building. This was erected in 1925. Realizing that the cost of the building was borne by

First Officers

And

Charter Members

I. Green	.....	President
Max Stein	.....	Vice President
Morris Green	.....	Secretary
Joseph Sklute	.....	Treasurer
Max Fink	.....	First Trustee
Max Phillips	....	Second Trustee
Morris Davidson		
Abe Schwartz		
David Balkansky		
Gershin Lipschultz		
Isaac Phillips		
Isaac Shapiro		
Ben Shomer		
L. Phillips		
Sam Schwartz		
Hyman Maslan		
Ed Phillips		
Morris Wasserman		
Joe Levin		
Hyman Ginsburg		
Sam Golden		
Salmon	— — — — —	
Simon Salkavitz		
Sam Plotnick		
Abe Golden		

Our Early Settlers

(Continued)

a very small group, as the average Jewish population in Manitowoc and Two Rivers remained for 30 years at about 30 families, this was indeed a prodigious job. Everyone put his shoulders to the wheel. Careful planning for a number of years showed a balance of \$3,000 according to the report of Alfred Muchin, then secretary. This \$3,000 was the nucleus for the building committee composed of Ed. Phillips, Ed. Harris, Abe Schwartz, and Alfred Muchin. A fund raising committee composed of Dave Balkansky and Sam Golden raised \$6,000. Another \$1,000 was contributed by the Ladies Aid Society through the hard work of Mrs. Ed. Harris, its president. Another indefatigable worker was Abe Koritzinsky.

Non-Jews also came to the support of this ambitious group. The estate of the late John Schuette made the biggest contribution and this was \$1,000. The Manitowoc Shipyards gave \$700. The Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company \$400, and the Hamilton Manufacturing Company, \$250. There were a number of smaller contributions from others.

From here the work of David Balkansky was at its best. He was tenacious particularly among the members of the congregation. And he followed up his campaigning to defray the mortgage, and particularly among the later newcomers of this town. One of his ambitions was to see the Shule free of debt.

A Leader

We Will Always Remember



DAVID BALKANSKY

To no one does this Jewish community owe more for this occasion than to the late David Balkansky.

When the congregation was organized, Dave (that is the way we liked to call him) was hardly 20 years old. From the first gathering on he was to the front, working for the welfare of the *Anshe Pele Zedek*. For 37 years he was an active worker, leader, holding the presidency and other offices of the Shule more years than any other man.

Not only in life did Balkansky have the welfare of this community at heart, but in death too. When his will was read it was found that he left \$1,000 to the Manitowoc Jewish community, with provisions that his surviving fellow members and co-workers do with the money the best within their judgment.

Knowing that the Shule was first in his heart, the committee used \$600 of the money to pay up the balance of the mortgage. It was the match that turned to ashes our legal indebtedness. The other money was entrusted to the Manitowoc Federation, to be passed on to worthy Jewish charity. The Federation was second in Balkansky's heart and he served it as secretary or president since its inception.

Starting in Manitowoc as a young man, Dave Balkansky died a young man at the age of 57. His youthful energy, his jovial character, will remain forever in the memory of those he left behind. Despite his prominence in industry and society he always remained a friend to all.

Sam Golden



The Late Mr. and Mrs. Sam Golden

The driving force to keep Manitowoc an orthodox Jewish community was Sam Golden.

For many years the tall, bearded figure of the late Mr. Golden was a familiar figure in this city. Coming to this country in the middle nineties he soon took a very active part among the other Jewish settlers. As a charter member of Congregation Pele Zedek he fought for strict adherence of the Sabbath and for keeping kosher. Members of the congregation often heard his admonition.

Like the Max Stein home, the Golden house was open to the incoming immigrants and there they were provided for by Mrs. Golden until they established their own homes.

Sam Golden led the fight and prevailed upon the Wisconsin State Legislature to enact the so-called 'Kosher Law.' And today this law is in effect and no restaurant or meat market can advertise 'kosher' meals or meats unless they are absolutely so.

Mr. Golden helped build the first shule as well as the second and indeed the entire city of Manitowoc felt the loss keenly when he passed away eleven years ago. Mrs. Golden followed him a year later.

Abe Schwartz



The only charter member active and living in Manitowoc is Abe Schwartz.

The Schwartz name appears in the first minutes of the shule and it can be said without contradiction that the name appeared in all the minutes of the meetings thereafter. Mr. Schwartz served the congregation in various capacities and has held the presidency for a long period.

Another distinction of Abe Schwartz is that he was the first Jewish man to be married in the City of Manitowoc. The bride was Martha Stein, daughter of the late Max Stein, who too held various offices in the Congregation.

A brother of Abe, the late Sam Schwartz of Two Rivers, who lived many years ago in Manitowoc, was also active in the affairs of the congregation.

About 1899 Mr. Schwartz and Dave Balkansky formed a partnership, buying out a Mr. Fink and Mr. Roseman. This partnership flourished and despite their many business interests, they, together with Sam Golden, took the active lead in all the Jewish affairs of the city.

No activity in the community is undertaken today by the younger men without first consulting Abe Schwartz. He not only gives them his advice based on the many years of experience, but also takes part in the work.

There are a few other charter members alive besides Mr. Schwartz but we have no complete information. We know, however, the following charter members are still living: Max Phillips, Eau Claire; Abe Golden, Sheboygan; and Gershin Lipschultz, Minneapolis.

Today

Today there are about 50 Jewish families in Manitowoc and Two Rivers.

A general spirit of cooperation prevails.

In addition to the synagogue there are three organizations through which the charitable, cultural and social activities function.

Since January 18, 1927 the men have centered their efforts in the Bnai Brith. The Ladies Aid Society was succeeded by the Manitowoc section, National Council of Jewish Women. Organization of the section was deemed wise in order to work more purposefully with the guidance of a national organization.

The Bnai Brith and the Congregation Pele Zedek later sponsored the Manitowoc Federation, the medium through which drives for charity are made and it also takes care of the disbursements of the money. The Womens Council has concentrated its efforts on various charitable purposes, cultural programs and the sponsoring of the Sunday school.

No narration of the present day activities would be complete without a word a'out Rev. B. Horovitz who has served the congregation for 15 years. He not only takes care of the kosher meat but also leads in the services, performs the circumcision rites and has married a number of young Manitowoc people. Although some of the younger generation do not adhere to the strict orthodoxy, Rev. Horovitz has the highest respect and admiration of all. His is a task to serve a small group but with many divergent viewpoints and demands and to keep peace with them all is indeed a task well done.

Officers of Congregation

Anshe Pele Zedek

For 1939 — 1940

Israel Axel, President

Sam Boriss, Vice President

Jake Muchin, Secretary

Meyer Schwartz, Treasurer

Alfred Muchin, First Trustee

Abe Schwartz, Second Trustee

Bernard Balkansky, Third Trustee