Temple Beth-El

National Register of Historic Places Celebration

October 9, 2016
What is the National Register of Historic Places?

• The official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation

• Part of a state & national program to identify and protect America's historic resources
What is the National Register of Historic Places?

- More than 90,000 properties listed
- First step toward eligibility for grant programs
- Must meet National Register Criteria including property’s age, integrity, and significance
How and Why did Temple Beth-El qualify?*

Criterion A: Religious Property

A religious property can be eligible if it is directly associated with ...a broad pattern in the history of religion

• “Temple Beth-El was eligible in the area of social history for its association with the development of a Jewish community in a small city in New York State.”

• The building “reflects the pattern of Jewish settlement across NYS and points west.”

* From the NRHP application
How and Why did Temple Beth-El qualify?*

Criterion C: The building embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction

• Temple Beth-El was eligible “for its modest intact design that follows a familiar form seen in other synagogues...throughout the state.”

• “Temple Beth El is best described as being a “Minimal Traditional” building in style. The one story structure was designed to be simple and functional, making the most of a small plot of land. “ *

* From the NRHP application
Hornell’s Jewish history reflects settlement across NYS and points west...

First Came the Peddlers...
...and some of them stayed, like colorful Julius Cohn

“JULIUS COHN has sold more clothing with his own hands...than any other man in the State of New York”

“Steuben and Allegany Farmers: It would be no object for you to come 40 miles to buy your supplies of me. If you don’t come soon then I shall go to Utah!! Only I’m afraid they’ll shoot me!”

“Remember JULIUS COHN The Cheap Clothing Pedlar from Elmira”

From the Hornellsville Tribune, April 1, 1858 p. 2
And his brother, David...

COFFEY, SIMON, (Hornellsville,) boot and shoe manufacturer, 91 Loder.

COHN, DAVID, (Hornellsville,) dealer in ready made clothing and gents' furnishing goods, 100 Main.

COHN, JULIUS, (Hornellsville,) dealer in ready made clothing and gents' furnishing goods, cor. Main and Church.

COLE, JEARY C., (Hornellsville,) lumberman.

From Gazetteer & Business Directory of Steuben County, NY for 1868-1869, p. 189

From the Hornellsville Tribune, April 21, 1864
A CARD

“I wish my old customers and the citizens of Steuben and Allegany County generally to understand that I have no interest in my brother’s, David Cohn’s clothing store, and that he has no interest in mine. I wish it distinctly understood, that who trades with JULIUS, trades with JULIUS, and who trades with David trades with David.

JULIUS COHN
Hornellsville, May 24, 1865

From: Hornellsville Tribune, June 8, 1865, p. 3
Other early Jewish businesses...

**Clothiers.**

- Allen, N. F. & Co. 120 Main.
- Cohn, Julius. Main Cor Broad.
- Donnelly & Brown. 129 Main.
- Epstein, David. 59 Loder.
- Erlich & Frank. Main Cor Church.
- Lichtenstein, Jacob. 107 Loder.
- Schaul Bros. 140 Main.

**Coal and Wood.**

Charles Corn advertisement

From: Hornellsville Tribune, June 22, 1865

Charles Corn,

Having recently opened an inviting stock of Hats, Caps, Furs, Straw Goods, and Gent’s Furnishing Goods, In the former old Stand of I.E. Sharp, 4 doors west of Church Street opposite the old Bank Building, respectfully solicits the people of Hornellsville and the surrounding towns to call and examine his goods and prices, and when satisfied that they can purchase of him much cheaper than at any other store in this section of country, to favor him with their patronage.

Hornellsville, April 27, 1865
From Hornellsville Tribune, Dec. 27, 1866, p.3

Tobias Erlich advertisement
The business was taken over by Joseph and Samuel Erlich in 1884.

With a critical mass of Jews in the area, Congregation Ahavet Achim (Brotherly Love) was established 1867
Following a typical pattern of Jewish settlement, the congregation buys lot 200 in Hope Cemetery in 1869.
1880: Phillip Nast acquires lot on Church Street

This lot has stayed mostly within the Hornell Jewish community since 1880!

Max and Margaret Landman took ownership in 1946 and later transferred the land to Temple Beth El.
1869: Sigismund Schaul becomes Rabbi but by 1890 conflicts are evident...

- Typically, rabbis of this period were born in Europe and were Orthodox
- With assimilation Jews were often unwilling or unable to adhere to Orthodox practices
- Many merchants did not want to be closed Saturdays and Sundays
- This pattern is reflected in the growth of Conservative and Reform movements

Rabbi Schaul and his family stay in Hornell

S. Schaul and many of his descendants are buried in the cemetery in Hornell. Photo by M. Colomaio.

1892: Ahavat Achim disbands

Among the other religious societies which in the past have had an existence in the city, may be mentioned the First Universalist church, organized May 23, 1868, by Rev. A. G. Clark; also we may recall the Jewish congregation, Ahavat-Achim, organized in June, 1876, by Rabbi Israel Erlich, and which passed out of existence about 1892. The Seventh Day Baptist believers formed a society in the village.

1896: Cemetery lot transferred to the Erlich brothers, Samuel and Joseph.
1890’s - - Hornellsville/Hornell’s Jewish citizens are active members of the community...Here are a few examples:

- **1891**: S. Erlich, J. Schaul, and S. Ossoski elected officers of Hornellsville Lodge

- **1892**: S. Ossoski named “Master of Ceremonies” of Hornell Consistory No. 40

- **1893**: S. Ossoski appointed manager of Hornellsville Opera House; named assessor by acclamation for county Republican convention
1890’s - - Hornellsville/Hornell’s Jewish citizens are active members of the community…more examples:

• **1923:** Joseph Schaul and Harold Lieb on the Board of Directors of Maple City Co-Operative Savings and Loan

• **1923:** Contributors to the American Legion Fund include Henry Erlich, the Erlich Bros. store, Frank Spitulnik, Gus Veit, Schaul & Roosa store

• **1923:** Max Landman becomes “Santa Claus” – donates $100 worth of toys from his store’s stock for needy families

• **1925:** Erlich Brothers Store celebrates 41st Anniversary
1938 (?) Erlich Hebrew Center established at 97 Main Street

Rabbis:

Rabbi Benjamin Unger
Rabbi Karl Weiner
Rabbi Myron Movsky
1940: Name changed from Ahavat Achim to Erlich Hebrew Center
June 18, 1945:

Minutes of EHC to approve building of the Temple

Carried all.

The Treasurer reports $140.00 balance in the Treasury and he reported that it was his understanding that the Rabbi was to receive his regular wages during the summer months and that he was to have a four weeks vacation period.

Under the heading of old business Joe Soppe reports that he has had bids regarding the building of the Temple, which were not satisfactory. However, he further reported that Architec D. Angeles was working with a Hornell man who will submit a bid not to exceed the amount of $18,000. This started a general discussion headed by M. Breshe, as there seemed to be some question about the location. A vote was finally taken and the majority present voted that the location on Church Street was satisfactory. Mr. Joseph Cropp asked for the floor and he made an appeal calling for specific planning and to adopt a system of taking care of the various appeals that are coming to the community, and feels that we should have a Federation of Charities and that a committee should be appointed to submit a plan. At this time J. Soppe suggested that another meeting be held when there was more time to talk this matter over further and to formulate a plan. J. Cropp also suggested that we have a dinner that would stimulate the congregation as to collection of funds. Mr. Cropp made a motion that it was a good time to appoint a committee now and this was seconded by M. Breshe and the President appointed the following committee:

M. Landman
J. Cropp
M. Breshe
F. Katz

There was also a discussion at this time regarding the B'nai B'rith organization.
December 4\(^{th}\) 1945:

Name changed from Erlich Hebrew Center to Temple Beth El
This document stipulated:

- Temple must be completed by January 1, 1949
- Property reverts to Landman family if not used as Jewish place of worship for “a continuous period of two years.”
Construction Images
Construction Images
Dedication Ceremony
September 7, 1947
Temple Beth-El Dedication Ceremonies Held Sunday

More than 200 persons attended the dedication ceremonies of Temple Beth-El held Sunday at 8 p.m. in the Temple.

Rabbi Aaron Solomon of Rochester gave the dedication address and was in charge of ceremonies.

The Rev. Ward B. Flaxington, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, spoke of "The Value of the Building to the Community". An address of welcome was given by President Charles Wineburg.

The building committee headed by Joseph Cropp, chairman, led the procession followed by President Wineburg, past presidents, other officers and Rabbi Solomon carrying the Scrolls of Torah, which were deposited in the Ark.

The Maariv was led by Morris Bear.

Guests were present from Rochester, Buffalo, Towanda, Batavia, Elmira and Hornell.

On the receiving line were Mrs. Harvey Miller, Mrs. Benjamin Bear, Mrs. Gus Veit, Mrs. Joseph Cropp, Mrs. Morris Barash and Frank Spulnik.

In charge of refreshments were Mrs. Norman Spiro, Mrs. Al Nobishek, Mrs. Max Arnow, Mrs. Harold Commins, Mrs. Max Goodman, Mrs. Henry Gerry, Mrs. Hyman Jacobson, Mrs. Ben Katz, Mrs. Sam Leland, Mrs. Irving Lipkin, Mrs. Frank Spulnik, Mrs. Benjamin Spulnik, Mrs. Isadore Spulnik, Mrs. Alfred Kargen, Mrs. Sam Jaffe, Mrs. Max Landman, Mrs. Miss Pauline Spulnik, Mrs. Irving Freedman, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Bear, Mrs. Veit, Mrs. Cropp, Mrs. Barash.

Ushers were Richard Miller, Lester Katz, Richard Herz and Jerry Veit.

Auxiliary of V.F.W. Held Meeting Socially.
Some early Temple Beth El milestones & events...


Rabbi Sodden Receives Permanent Appointment

Rabbi Joshua Sodden of Brooklyn has been named permanent rabbi at Temple Beth-El in this city and began his duties Friday evening when he gave his first sermon.

Rabbi Sodden was ordained in September 1947 after graduation from Beth Joseph Seminary in Brooklyn. His father is also a rabbi, serving in Brooklyn and a brother is a rabbi in the Bronx.

Children Guests At Chanukah Party

Children of Temple Beth-El were entertained in the Temple social room Sunday afternoon at a Chanukah party. Twenty-three children participated in a program of entertainment under direction of Mrs. Isadore Spitalnik.


Children were given gifts by the Beth-El Sisterhood which were distributed by Isadore Spitalnik and each other received gifts from their parents. Refreshments were served.

Chanukah Party (undated photographs)
Rabbi Zwick in Charge Of Beth-El Congregation

Rabbi Harry Zwick of Clinton, Mass., has assumed charge of Beth-El Temple congregation as spiritual leader, it was announced today.

Rabbi Zwick received his baccalaureate degree from Yeshiva University in New York City and was ordained Rabbi by the Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York City. For the last six years he was spiritual leader of congregation Shaarei Zedek at Clinton, Mass. He was active in community affairs of the city and was secretary-treasurer of the ministerial association there.

Rabbi Zwick served as chaplain at the Lancaster School for Girls and was lector at the Sterling Methodist Summer Camp, both near Clinton.

Services are held at Beth-El Temple every Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 6 p.m. Religious instructions for the children of the congregation are given every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon.

Officers of the congregation are Isadore Spitzalk, president; Dr. Louis Eisenberg, vice president; Joseph Cropp, financial secretary; Edward Schlussman, recording secretary, and Hyman Jacobs, treasurer.

Rabbi Zwick is residing with Mr. and Mrs. Isadore Spitzalk at 575 W. Main St.

TEMPLE BETH-EL

SEASON’S GREETINGS

To Its Friends and Neighbors

At this happy season, it is good to remember that the brotherhood of man, broader than race or creed, has within it the power to bridge every chasm of misunderstanding. May the coming year be enriched by this sense of kinship, and may God bless all mankind with peace.

Rabbi Harry Zwick
Temple Beth-El

From: Hornell Tribune, March 6, 1950. p. 3.

“Temple Beth El is the physical manifestation of the dreams and aspirations of a small and changing Jewish community that has been in existence since the 1860’s.”

From the NRHP application
“It now serves the small but active population of Jewish families spread over a wide area of rural Steuben, Allegany, Chemung, and southern Livingston counties.”

From the NRHP application
“In spite of it’s infrequent use, it is very much treasured by the citizens of Hornell, by the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of its original founders, by the Jewish families who have settled or passed through the area, and by generations of Jewish students at...Alfred University and Alfred State College.”

From the NRHP application