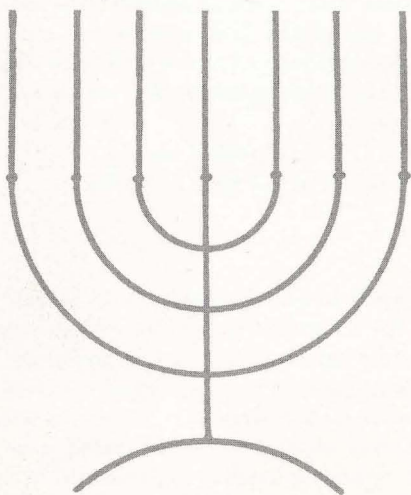


# THIS TEMPTING FREEDOM

The Early Years of Cleveland Judaism  
And Anshe Chesed Congregation

by  
Allan Peskin



This important essay dealing with the foundations of the Cleveland Jewish Community has been made possible through the following grants:

Edward N. Siegler Memorial Fund

Helen G. Levey Literary Prize Fund

Fairmount Temple Chapel Education Fund

# “This Tempting Freedom”

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## FOREWORD

The origins of Anshe Chesed Congregation are the origins of the Cleveland Jewish Community. Its history runs in a direct line back to the tiny group which in 1839 formed the first Jewish organization in what was then a tiny outpost of the Western Reserve. Split in two in 1841 and then happily reunited in 1845 as the Israelitic Anshe Chesed Society, the congregation has pursued through the years its goal of harmonizing its loyalty to traditional values with its intense determination to meet the needs of a new country and a new time. This called for both intensive Jewish education and an uninhibited willingness to experiment with new forms. It is significant that at its very beginning Anshe Chesed was able to boast a full-day school with an enrollment of eighty-five students which won the praise of the Cleveland general press. But its unabated respect for the past was mingled with its search for the new so that it moved forward responsibly without irreverence or unbridled assimilationism.

It is a source of pride to the members of Anshe Chesed today that descendants of the doughty Unsleben pioneers are still numbered in its ranks. Now grown to a community of almost 10,000 souls, Anshe Chesed still strives to keep faith with the past as it marches boldly into the future. Still alive, not free of discord, *baruch bashem*, and wrestling with the problems of Jewish identity and Jewish conviction, we take courage from our beginnings and face the demands of today.

Arthur Lelyveld  
March, 1973                      Rabbi, Anshe Chesed (Fairmount Temple)

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On the fifth day of May, 1839, a group of Bavarian Jews made ready to leave their native village of Unsleben for the final time. The last-minute decisions had all been made: what to take; what to leave behind. In their bags they had stuffed enough clothes and kosher food to last for months. The only luxury they allowed themselves to carry was a Sefer Torah, otherwise they travelled light. Their destination was America, where, although they could not yet know it, they would form the Jewish community of Cleveland and the congregation of Anshe Chesed.



## *A Parting Memento*

There were nineteen in the emigration party, drawn from all ranks and ages of Unsleben life. The nominal leader, possibly because of his relation with the Unsleben Parnass, or President, was Moses Alsbacher, who was taking his wife Yetta and daughter Yittle. The Torah was carried by Simson Hopfermann, who was transplanting his entire family to the New World; Sarah, his wife; Seckle (an affectionate diminutive for Isaac), his son; and his two daughters, Voegele and Zerle. Three Thormann children, Mayer, Simmle and Ramle, accompanied the party. Their eldest brother Simson (or Samson) had preceded them to America and they were on their way to join him. Also looking forward to seeing Simson Thormann once more was Reichel Klein, who was traveling almost five thousand miles to be his bride. Another family anxious to be reunited was the Rosenbaums, Moses and Hanna, whose brother was already in the New World. Rounding out the party were Sara Lubliner, the cantor's niece; Breinle Salb and her infant child; Schenele Dinkel, a widow's daughter, and Reuben Fleischauer, apparently an orphan.

As they were about to leave, Lazarus Kohn, the village teacher, gave them, as a parting memento, a list signed by 233 of their *landsmen*, lest they forget their old friends in the New World. Attached to the list was a letter full of good wishes and advice. These parting words were not the usual bon-voyage banalities one might expect on such an occasion, but instead give a disquieting impression, as if their author did not fully approve the venture which his departing townsmen were about to undertake. Beneath the measured, almost Biblical cadence of Lazarus Kohn's farewell one can detect a deep note of anxiety.

My dear friends Moses and Yetta Alsbacher:<sup>1</sup>

I give you by way of saying goodbye a list of names of the people of your faith with the dearest wish that you may present these names to your future heirs, yes, even to your great-grandchildren, of which may you have many, under the best family relationship and under pleasant economic circumstances. I further wish and hope that the Almighty, who reigns over the ocean as well as over dry land, to whom thunder and storms must pay heed, shall give you good angels as travel companions, so that you, my dear friends, may arrive undisturbed and healthy in body and soul at the place of your destiny, in the land of freedom.



## *Motives for Resettling*

But I must also, as a friend, ask a favor of you.

Friends! You are traveling to a land of freedom where the opportunity will be presented to live without compulsory religious education.

Resist and withstand this tempting freedom and do not turn away from the religion of our fathers. Do not throw away your holy religion for quickly lost earthly pleasures, because your religion brings you consolation and quiet in this life and it will bring you happiness for certain in the other life.

Don't tear yourself away from the laws in which your fathers and mothers searched for assurance and found it.

The promise to remain good Jews may never and should never be broken during the trip, nor in your homelife, nor when you go to sleep, nor when you rise again, nor in the raising of your children.

And now, my dear friends, have a pleasant trip and forgive me for these honest words to which the undersigned will forever remain true.

Your friend,  
Lazarus Kohn  
Teacher

Unsleben near Neustadt on the Saale  
in Lower Franconia  
in the Kingdom of Bavaria  
the 5th of May 1839.

The emigrants listened to these last words from their teacher, carefully folded his letter away to be preserved in the Alsbacher family archives down to this day, and began the first stage of their long journey to a new world.

This scene was not uncommon. With only minor variations it was being enacted in countless villages throughout Central Europe. All over Germany similar groups were waiting for the spring thaw to begin their journey to America. Ten thousand Bavarian Jews had preceded the Unsleben party to America; thousands more would follow. Before long, almost half of the Jewish youth of Bavaria would join them.<sup>2</sup>

What was the cause of all this activity, this uprooting and resettling on a scale unprecedented in the world's history? What was it that led Moses Alsbacher and Simson Hopfermann and so

## *The Bavarian Scene*

many others to seek a new home in a new land? Their motives were far more complex than generally realized and cannot be satisfactorily explained by facile generalizations about "anti-Semitism," or "the intolerable conditions of the old world," or other such pat phrases. Jews did not leave Bavaria in the 1830's in response to an accelerated, systematic scheme of persecution. On the contrary, ever since the Napoleonic Wars the legal status of Bavarian Jews had been steadily improving and, for the first time, they had begun to enjoy something close to religious freedom. Yet it was at this very moment, when the burden of centuries of oppression was at last beginning to be lifted, that thousands of Jews decided to leave Bavaria.

There had been a time when Bavaria had been bitterly hostile toward Jews. In 1555, Jews were driven out of the land, as in Spain sixty-three years before. However, by the early eighteenth century Jews were once more drifting back to Bavaria. They found in this patchwork state one of the most backward and unenlightened regions in Germany, if not in all of Europe. The currents of rationalism and enlightenment which were then quickening European life scarcely touched Bavaria, a state which could barely afford one school teacher for every fifty thousand people.<sup>3</sup> Only in the number and ingenious variety of its penal executions could Bavaria claim distinction. Conversion to Judaism, for example, could be punished by beheading. Other barbaric penalties were common.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century the Bavarian government repeatedly passed laws designed to stem the flow of Jewish migration. Jews could not settle without a permit. Those few who enjoyed that privilege were hemmed about with restrictions and humiliations. They had to wear distinctive clothes, they could not testify against Christians in court, nor could they serve them as domestic help. Their occupations were restricted and they were burdened by extra taxes.<sup>5</sup>

Undeterred by these formidable legal barriers, Jews continued to settle in Bavaria, coming from places where — incredible as it may seem—they were even poorer and more despised. Some settled in the large cities, but most tended to congregate in tiny all-Jewish villages seldom larger than a few hundred people, of which Unleben was a typical example. In these villages Jews enjoyed a measure of self-government. So long as the taxes were collected and the laws obeyed, the state seldom bothered to interfere directly.



## *Unemployment and Emigration*

Thus, even though they were burdened by an oppressive network of legal restrictions, Bavarian Jews were at least able to shape their own community institutions. All the communal activities of Jewish life — charity, education, the synagoge, the mikveh — were directed by the community.

By 1813 the rulers of Bavaria had finally reconciled themselves to the presence of Jews. In a series of laws, culminating in a general edict of that year, the position of Bavarian Jews was regularized. The special taxes were abolished, Jews could now appear in court, they could own land and enter skilled trades — in fact they were encouraged to do so. Education was made compulsory, but a Jewish child was allowed to choose either a Jewish school or a public one, where he would, however, be excused from Christian religious instruction. Full freedom of conscience was guaranteed.<sup>6</sup> Jews could live a full Jewish life without persecution or restraint, and in the all-Jewish villages where so many lived they were virtually self-governing according to Jewish law and tradition.

What more could they ask? A great deal. For although their consciences were free, Jews were by no means free and equal citizens in Bavaria. Along with their new measure of religious freedom went two serious civil disabilities; Jews were severely restricted in their choice of occupations and in their opportunity to marry.

Jews were welcomed in Bavaria only if they followed a respectable trade, and peddling, the occupation of the overwhelming number of Bavarian Jews was regarded as distinctly disreputable by the Bavarian authorities. Time after time laws were issued outlawing or curtailing Jewish peddling, but despite the legal harassment over one fourth of the Bavarian Jewish population was supported by peddling even as late as the 1820's.<sup>7</sup> They did not put the pack on their back and trudge the highways out of choice, but out of desperation. A letter written by a German Jew to George Washington vividly describes their plight:<sup>8</sup>

You would be astonished, most mighty President, at the perseverance of a German Jew, if you could witness it. The great, nay perhaps the greatest part of them, spend almost their whole life on the highway in pursuit of retail trade, and the trader consumes for his own person nothing but a herring and a penny loaf; the nearest brook or well has to supply his drink. All that he earns besides he conscientiously lays



## No Wife . . . No Life

aside in order to bring it home on Friday to supply food and clothing for wife and children. . . . and would you believe it, this wretch . . . is nevertheless not infrequently envied by many Jews?

The laws designed to discourage peddling only added to their plight, for few Jews had either the training or the capital to become artisans or farmers. Faced with the choice between unemployment or emigration, many Jews chose the latter course.

There was an even more compelling reason to leave. Bavarian policy was frankly and openly designed to reduce the Jewish population. To achieve this goal, marriages among Jews were severely discouraged. Jews who wished to marry had to obtain a *matrikel*, or registration license, which was issued only to those who could prove that they followed a respectable trade, or had sufficient assets to support a family<sup>9</sup> (or, one presumes, were able to bribe the necessary officials). In Munich and elsewhere a complicated system was created which allowed only one child per family to marry and which required the approval of the police before the proposed marriage could take place.<sup>10</sup> Marriage quotas were established and often long waiting periods were required before the no-longer-young couple could begin life together.

Marriage in Jewish tradition has always been considered the natural and desirable state for man. "A man who has no wife," the Rabbis declared, "lives without joy, blessing, and good." Faced with the prospect of a wifeless, childless life, many Jews turned their hopes to the empty spaces of the New World, where large families and a growing population were welcome.

Yet, curiously enough, the marriage restrictions, harsh though they were, can not be regarded as wholly anti-Semitic in intention, since they were not confined to Jews. Under the Old Regime of the eighteenth century, peasants and apprentices had customarily required the consent of their masters or lords in order to get married. After the French Revolution and the collapse of the paternalistic Old Regime these controls on marriage could no longer be enforced. Coinciding with this more relaxed attitude towards marriage came a rapid increase in the population of Europe. The causes of this population growth are obscure, but one potent factor seems to have been the introduction of cheap new foods, especially the potato, which made larger families and earlier marriages economically feasible.<sup>11</sup>

## *Follow a Trade . . . Marry a Sweetheart*

Faced with a disastrous overpopulation, many German states, including Bavaria, attempted to restrict the marriages of those groups which were still under the control of the state, particularly Jews and paupers. In time, the Industrial Revolution would create enough jobs to absorb the growing population, but until it could, the surplus population was faced with the prospect of emigration. This was by no means exclusively a Jewish problem. Over 800,000 Germans, most of them non-Jews, were forced to leave their homeland from 1815 to 1849.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the Russian Jews who came to America by the millions from the 1880's until World War I in order to escape Czarist persecution and find a haven where they could live a Jewish life, the German Jews of the 1830's left a reasonably flourishing Jewish community behind them. In America, formal Judaism might be crude and unorganized in comparison with Germany, but at least a man could follow his trade and marry his sweetheart. Those who were strongly attached to the ideal of a close-knit Jewish community chose to stay behind rather than emigrate to a strange and Godless land. America, therefore, received those Jews whose attachment to the idea of a Jewish community was less firm, a fact not without significance in the subsequent development of American Judaism.

This explains why Lazarus Kohn's parting admonition to the Unsleben emigrants sounds such a pessimistic tone. One does not have to read very deeply between the lines to realize that he viewed the future of the emigrants with misgivings. True, he speaks of America as "a land of freedom," but the only freedom he specifies is freedom *from* Judaism — "the opportunity . . . to live without compulsory religious education." Their teacher had hit upon the central problem which would eventually confront the emigrants in far-off Cleveland: how to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. In Unsleben, a network of intercommunity discipline had enforced Judaism and maintained its traditional patterns. In the New World the emigrants would not only have to build a new life for themselves, but they would also have to create a totally new and unprecedented pattern of Jewish community organization. It was a heavy responsibility to place in the hands of eight men, ten women and a infant, but they were not yet aware of it as they left Unsleben on that May day in 1839 to begin their long journey.



## *Arrival in Cleveland*

Months later, worn out from their tedious, uncomfortable passage, the immigrants landed at New York. Simson Thormann was there to meet them at the dock and to escort them to the western city of Cleveland in Ohio, where he had made his home for the past two years. Although it had less than six thousand people, far-sighted observers predicted a bright future for this growing lake-port, and Thormann was able to convince his friends of the opportunities it offered.

With the arrival of the Unsleben party the history of the Cleveland Jewish community begins. There had, of course, been occasional Jewish settlers in the Cleveland region before 1839. Simson Thormann had made his home in Cleveland in 1837 and he was by no means the first. Other Jews had drifted in and out of northern Ohio almost since the very first days of settlement on the shores of Lake Erie, but not even such distinguished men as Dr. Daniel Peixotto could create a community single-handed. A handful of scattered Jewish settlers does not make a Jewish community. A community requires cohesiveness, common purpose and institutions; it is more than just a collection of individuals. Judaism is, above all, a community religion, and until Cleveland was able to muster a minyan it could have Jews, but not Judaism. The Unsleben settlers gave Cleveland Judaism more than a minyan, they provided an indispensable spark of common purpose to kindle the community enterprise of Cleveland Jews.

The future character of Judaism in Cleveland would be shaped by the circumstances of its foundation. Begun by a compact, cohesive group, in contrast to the unplanned, haphazard origin of most American cities, Cleveland Judaism would retain a distinctive flavor. For at least two generations, the leaders of Cleveland Jewry would be drawn from the ranks of the pioneers and their descendants, giving Cleveland Judaism, despite all its subsequent friction, essential continuity and direction.

The Unsleben immigrants were not the only Cleveland Jewish pioneers, but they provided the nucleus around which the others clustered. Before 1839 ended they were augmented by almost a dozen more. Abraham Rosenbaum and Nathan Tuch were fellow Unslebeners who, like Simson Thormann, had preceded the main party. The others, all from Germany, and most likely Bavaria as well, joined them soon after: Aaron Lowentritt, Moses Moses, Moses Sloss, Simon Newmark, Kalman Roskopf, Asher Lehman, Gerson Strauss, and S. L. Colman. These were the men who, to-



## *The First Synagogue*

gether with the Unsleben party, met in 1839 at the suggestion of Simson Hopfermann, Thormann and Lowentritt to organize the first synagogue in Cleveland — The Israelite Congregation, the direct corporate ancestor of today's Anshe Chesed Congregation.

This original synagogue was the progenitor of Cleveland's organized Jewish community but its beginnings were modest enough by any standard. Services were held in various private houses and the only salaried functionary was Seckle Hopfermann who served as combination *chazan* and *shochet* for fifty dollars a year. The congregation got its money's worth from the versatile Hopfermann, for, in addition to his services, he also contributed the Torah his family had carried from Bavaria. Within a year or so the congregation felt the need of larger quarters and purchased a house at the corner of Water Street and Vineyard Lane (now West 9th Street and Columbus Road), which they converted into a makeshift schule.<sup>13</sup>

The synagogue building was not, however, the first community institution of Cleveland Jews. That distinction was reserved for a cemetery located on Willet Street (Fulton Road), which was purchased for one hundred dollars. A burial ground may appear a curiously morbid way of commencing Jewish communal life, yet Cleveland was not unique in this respect; most American Jewish communities began in the same way.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the explanation can be found in the veneration in which Bavarian Jews held the great cemetery at Ratisbon, for centuries the resting-place of famous rabbis and the goal of pilgrims.<sup>15</sup> A more likely explanation, however, can be found in the hard-headed realism of the early Jewish settlers. Makeshifts could cope with other Jewish needs for the time being, but death was unpredictable and inevitable, and it was wise to be prepared. Their prudence was justified, for on Tisha b'Av of 1840 the cemetery received the remains of a Bavarian Jew named Kanweiler, who had journeyed a long way to a strange land only to find a Cleveland grave.<sup>16</sup>

Not death, but rather the prospect of new life had brought the Cleveland Jewish pioneers to this new world. This new life was soon achieved in its most literal sense. Taking advantage of the freedom from Bavarian marriage restrictions, Cleveland Jews celebrated the freedom of their new homeland without delay by marrying and having children. Simson Thormann was the first. Soon after the Unsleben party arrived in America he and Reichel Klein

## *Choosing a Trade*

were married, and soon after that, in 1840, the first native-born Cleveland Jew, Samuel Thormann made his appearance.<sup>17</sup>

Samuel Thormann was a boy, a cause for rejoicing in the Thormann household, no doubt, but a fact which could be a problem in many pioneer Jewish communities. How, in this strange land, could a Jew find a *mobel* on short notice? A problem elsewhere, perhaps, but not in Cleveland, where the planned, compact arrangement of the Unsleben emigration demonstrated its advantages. With admirable foresight the Unsleben party had included a trained *mobel*, Seckle Hopfermann, who performed Cleveland's first b'rith and who was, for years, the only *mobel* for all of northern Ohio and western Pennsylvania.

It was perhaps appropriate that Seckle Hopfermann himself should play an active role in another early Cleveland Jewish wedding, marrying his Unsleben companion, Hanna Rosenbaum, in 1842. This was, in a sense, the last anyone heard of Seckle Hopfermann, for in his new adult status the boyhood nickname was dropped for the more dignified Isaac. Before long Hopfermann was discarded as too cumbersome for American tongues, and in place of Seckle Hopfermann emerged Isaac Hoffman, the first, but not the last, Cleveland Jew to acquire a new name along with his new home.

Even with his monopoly, Isaac Hoffman could not support his family as a *mobel*, not at \$3 to \$5 for local and \$10 for out-of-town calls. At first, he opened a small grocery shop. Soon he began to specialize in meats and became a butcher. Possibly as an outgrowth of his butchering, he began to build up a sideline in hides and eventually became a full-time dealer in hides, a calling he followed for the rest of his life, leaving a prosperous business to his son at his death in 1870. His was not an unusual career. Back in Bavaria cattle-dealing had ranked just below peddling as the most common Jewish occupation.<sup>18</sup> Many American Jews were consequently familiar with the business, as was Simson Thorman (the final n had been dropped) who, like Hoffman, became a hide and wool merchant after trying his hand at dry-goods and groceries.

This restless mobility, trying and discarding business after business, was the common experience of most early Cleveland Jews. In Bavaria, their choice of occupations had been restricted by a government at once hostile and paternalistic. Next to marrying as they pleased, the freedom they most cherished in America was to



work as they pleased. Yet their freedom of choice was actually quite limited. Lack of capital and limited experience (deficient in both agriculture and the skilled crafts) inevitably led them into some form of retail trade. Early Cleveland city directories list only two men with likely Jewish names as "laborers." The rest are all scattered in a handful of businesses: cigar-making; hotel and bar-keeping; rag and scrap dealers or, less grandly, peddlers; a "banker," i.e., pawn-broker; and assorted butchers, shoemakers and the like.

By far the most common trade, outnumbering all the rest combined, was the clothing business, either the manufacturing or the retail end, which in the days before mass production often tended to be interchangeable. Their old-world peddling experience, often in rags and old clothes, had familiarized Jews with the essentials of this trade, and their lack of capital was not a severe handicap in a business that usually required only a modest initial investment. Furthermore, the garment industry was a new one, not yet monopolized by entrenched older settlers. What the clothing business might have lacked in prestige was amply compensated for by the independence, flexibility and opportunity it offered.

On the eve of the Civil War, Cleveland Jewry exhibited clear signs of the "pleasant economic circumstances" Lazarus Kohn had wished for. A visitor approvingly noted that, "though but few of them are wealthy, they are generally in comfortable circumstances; few if any require any charity."<sup>19</sup> Most owned their own homes and many their own businesses. Within a few years some of them would achieve a remarkable degree of success. In 1885, when the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* compiled a list of local millionaires, three Jews had worked their way into that select company. They were S. Mann and Kaufman Koch, manufacturers and retailers of ready-made clothes who had profited from the demand for Civil War uniforms, and Simon Newmark who, like so many others, had graduated from a grocery store into the wool and hide business and ultimately to high finance.<sup>20</sup>

These millionaires' careers were inspiring but hardly typical. History celebrates success but too often forgets the bankrupts, the drifters, the obscure clerks and salesmen, and the many others who found the promises of a new world empty. To most Cleveland Jews of the early nineteenth century, however, came neither tragedy nor dazzling success, but an unspectacular opportunity to raise their families in modest middle class comfort. In this respect, the



## *Anshe Chesed and Education*

experience of Cleveland's Jews is scarcely distinguishable from that of other immigrants of the era, especially those from Germany. It was not in their material adjustment to American life that Jews faced unique problems, but in the adjustment of their religious institutions.

These adjustments had to be made because the community institutions of the old world were not transferable to the new. In Europe, the community had pre-empted the center of Jewish life, directing all Jewish activities, including the synagogue. In America, bereft of formal, state-supported Jewish community organization, the synagogue itself for a time took over the functions formerly exercised by the community. This was all well and good so long as there was but one synagogue to a city, but with the rise of rival synagogues this pattern was shattered.

The latent frictions inherent in American Jewish life made themselves felt almost from the very beginning of organized Judaism in Cleveland. Less than two years after the formation of the first synagogue, Cleveland Jews began their first quarrel. In 1841, the Israelite Congregation was split asunder when the greater part of the membership walked out and formed their own congregation which they called Anshe Chesed, "The People of Loving-kindness." Renting a room next to the Masonic Hall on Prospect Street, they applied for a charter from the state and began operations in competition with the original congregation.<sup>21</sup>

From its very first days, Anshe Chesed demonstrated a trait that would continue to distinguish this congregation — a devotion to education. By 1844 twenty-two pupils were busily studying both Jewish and secular subjects in Anshe Chesed's day school. This was not only the first Jewish school in Cleveland but it was also the first all-day parochial school established by any Cleveland religious group.<sup>22</sup>

The reasons for the secession of Anshe Chesed were obscure, and probably petty, but it is significant that neither of the two leading spirits behind the split, Seligman L. Stern and Joel Engelhart, were members of the original pioneer contingent. No doubt resentful of the entrenched position of the pioneers and their exclusive reliance on Unleben peculiarities of ritual, the separatists desired a congregation of their own for social as well as ritual reasons. Carried to its extremes, this tendency could have left American Judaism fragmented into tiny splinters, with separate congregations for the *landsmen* of every European village. One

## *The Eagle Street Synagogue*

of the first, and hardest, lessons American Jews would have to learn was that European rivalries had no place in the New World. In Europe each Jewish community could live in isolated contentment, guided by local traditions and dominated by prominent families. If American Judaism were to survive it would have to discover some technique for submerging petty differences so that the energy of the Jewish community could be united, rather than wasted on internal quarrels.

The two congregations pursued their separate paths for a few years even though the Cleveland Jewish community was scarcely large enough to support one congregation properly, much less two. Anshe Chesed had a school; the Israelite Congregation had a cemetery. Logic would seem to dictate a merger, but often logic has to be prodded by necessity. In 1845, the Water Street building used by the Israelite Congregation burned down. Only Simson Hopfermann's Torah was salvaged from the blaze, everything else was destroyed. Reunion with Anshe Chesed was now a necessity, and out of the flames emerged "The Israelitic Anshe Chesed Society of Cleveland," with sixty members, once more the united voice of Cleveland Jewry.

The fruits of the merger were soon apparent. Divided, neither congregation had had a synagogue worthy of the name. United once more, they quickly turned their energy to the construction of a suitable building to replace the ruined Water Street quarters. A lot was purchased on Eagle Street and the cornerstone was laid on October 6, 1845.<sup>23</sup> The work went quickly, aided by contributions from congregations as far away as Philadelphia and Charleston, South Carolina. Philanthropic Cleveland Christians helped the work along, especially Leonard Case and J. M. Woolsey, the founder of what would later become the Western Reserve Medical School.

While the construction was in progress, the congregation took steps to organize itself on a more formal basis than the somewhat casual manner under which it had previously operated. In the middle of May, the active members gathered together, elected trustees and moved to apply for a state charter in accord with Ohio incorporation laws. J. Engelhart, A. Tuch, F. Goldsmith, D. Frank, and S. Newmark were chosen as trustees and Gerson Strauss was elected clerk.<sup>24</sup>

Thus organized and incorporated, Anshe Chesed was ready to



## *A Full Time Rabbi*

occupy and enjoy its new synagogue on Eagle Street. Solidly constructed of brick throughout, the Eagle Street Synagogue measured only 35 by 50 feet on the outside and was 28 feet high, with a substantial stone basement. A ladies' gallery ran along three sides. The fourth, which held the ark and the eternal light, was adorned, as was the American custom, with a representation of the tablets of the law. Except for the absence of a steeple, the building reminded observers of the local Baptist Church; a resemblance no doubt related to the fact that the same architect had designed them both.<sup>25</sup> The building was dedicated on August 6, 1846 with appropriate ceremonies following the traditional rites. A significant concession was made to modern times: a speech in English by Aaron Lowentritt urging his fellow-congregants to live in "bonds of charity with all mankind."

The remainder of the 1840's were spent in quiet growth, with the congregation devoting much of its energy to education. By early 1850 between six and seven hundred Jews had made their home on the shores of Lake Erie.<sup>26</sup> Anshe Chesed had a membership of approximately eighty families, large enough now to support a full-time rabbi, Isidor Kalisch, who was hired in the early part of 1850. Born in Prussia, his education had been secular as well as religious. Not only was he a trained *chazan*, he had also studied philosophy at such universities as Berlin, Breslau and Prague. There he had been caught up in the wave of German nationalism which influenced so many German intellectuals of his day. He wrote patriotic songs as well as cantorial chants, but when the Revolution of 1848 broke out among the students he put down his pen to man the barricades and was forced to flee his homeland when the revolution collapsed.

Rabbi Kalisch's chief responsibility was Anshe Chesed's thriving school, which met in the synagogue basement. By 1850 it enrolled almost eighty-five students, both boys and girls, most of whom were less than twelve years old. Asher Lehman, from Neustadt, near Unsleben, conducted the religious classes in both Hebrew and German, and a native Clevelander was hired to teach the rudiments of a secular English-language education. The entire expenses of the school amounted to only eight hundred dollars per year, but the results were highly satisfactory even to a group of local notables, including the mayor, the City Council and various journalists who concluded after a tour of inspection, that "we



## *Disagreement and Division*

cannot but admire the proficiency which has been made in the mastery of what seem to us insurmountable difficulties."<sup>27</sup>

Impressed by Jewish zeal for education, the *Cleveland Daily True Democrat* commended their example to their Christian neighbors. "Our friends, the Jews of this city," they observed, "have shown their devotion to education and the good of their race by establishing schools here. We cannot but compliment our Hebrew friends on the zeal and energy with which they act in their educational efforts. They do not leave it to this or that man, but all take an interest. . . . So united, so wise."<sup>28</sup>

Within a few months, Anshe Chesed was torn apart by another feud.

The trouble apparently began over Rabbi Kalisch. Soon after he took office a majority of his congregants voted for his dismissal. This hasty action split the congregation in two as those who remained loyal to Rabbi Kalisch deserted Anshe Chesed with him in order to form a new congregation which they called "Tifereth Israel," "The Glory of Israel" (now The Temple at Silver Park). At the first meeting, on May 26, 1850, over fifty members pledged their financial and moral support in order to begin the work of the new synagogue.

A clue as to the possible reason for the split can be seen in the list of names of those who attended the organizational meeting.<sup>29</sup> Not a single Unsliebener can be found among the seceders, nor, for that matter, any of the original founders of the Israelite Congregation, while only five of those who were present at the 1846 incorporation meeting of the reunited congregation threw in their lot with the new organization. Tifereth Israel was clearly begun by those late-comers who resented the earlier settlers for much the same reasons that the men of Anshe Chesed had once resented the Israelite Congregation. These later arrivals were Germans, but not Bavarians, as can be seen by their choice of the *minhag* of Frankfort-am-Main for their ritual. Once again, and not for the last time, rivalries born in Europe would sunder the American Jewish community.

Unlike the earlier split this one could not be healed. Despite periodic merger proposals, from first one and then the other group, the two congregations continued to go their separate ways. This process of fragmentation gathered momentum as the Cleveland

## *The Beginning of B'nai B'rith*

Jewish population grew larger. By 1852, that population numbered 120 families, including a sizable contingent recently arrived from Hungary and Bohemia. By 1865, these Hungarians had formed their own synagogue, Bene Jeshurun, now the Temple on the Heights. Even before that, a small Polish synagogue, Anshe Maariv, The Men of the West, had, in 1857, signalled the arrival of Eastern European Jews, followed soon after, in 1860, by Beth Israel Chevra Kadisha, a Lithuanian congregation. Besides these more-or-less formal congregations, a host of tiny schules, little more than minyans, sprang up, usually around the holiday season, to cater to the spiritual needs of Cleveland Jews.

Because of this proliferation of congregations the synagogue began to lose its accustomed place at the center of the Jewish stage. Unable to speak for the entire Jewish community it had to surrender many of its traditional functions, confining itself increasingly to activities of a purely religious or educational nature. Other activities, especially those of a social, communal or charitable nature, which in Europe had been governed by the community, came increasingly under the jurisdiction of private, voluntary associations.

In this reliance on private organizations, American Jews were following a typically American pattern of behavior. Few things struck foreign observers so forcibly as the American propensity to band together for a common purpose. "Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations," noted that keen observer of nineteenth century American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville.

The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; they found in this manner hospitals, prisons and schools. If it be proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society.<sup>30</sup>

The B'nai B'rith was the first, appearing in Cleveland, significantly enough, in 1853, the year after the split which had sundered the two major congregations. Organized along the lines of the many secret and semi-secret societies that flourished in nineteenth century America, the B'nai B'rith catered to the recent immigrant's need for some sort of social distinction. Near the bottom



## *A Community for Charity*

of the American social scale, the immigrant found compensatory status in societies which gave him fellowship and the respect of his colleagues, as well as some resounding title to bolster his morale. The B'nai B'rith was the most successful Jewish lodge of its day. By the 1860's Cleveland had two chapters, Solomon and Montefiore, each pursuing a full round of social, cultural and charitable activities. The loyalty and energy which these societies drew from their members were obtained, ultimately, at the expense of the synagogue, which now found itself faced with what was, in effect, a secular counterpart.

The specifically Jewish content of most of these voluntary organizations was negligible. The Young Men's Hebrew Literary Society, for example, despite its name had nothing to do with Hebrew literature, but was rather a self-improvement and cultural association which held debates, read and discussed English and German books, and staged such un-Hebraic plays as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Before long it was absorbed into the B'nai B'rith.

It was in the field of charity that the voluntary association most dramatically usurped the place of the synagogue. Beginning in 1855 the Hebrew Benevolent Society and its various successors assumed the task of raising funds for a host of worthy causes, both Jewish and non-Jewish. A favorite fund-raising device was the annual ball, hardly the sort of activity the synagogue would foster. Traditionalists might object to dancing at the expense of the poor, but the dances continued, more, one suspects, for their own sake than for the sake of charity. In addition to entertainment and good works, the charitable societies performed a further valuable function. They provided a non-controversial outlet for Jewish energies, one in which all Jews, regardless of their background or synagogue, could cooperate on common ground. After the synagogues split, virtually the only time Cleveland Jewry acted as a community was when they were raising money.

Charity only partially counteracted the centrifugal tendencies in Cleveland Jewish life, tendencies which taken together could only result in diminished prestige for the synagogue which could no longer claim to represent the Jewish community as a whole. A further blow to the position of the synagogue was found in the American preference for lay, rather than rabbinic, control. In part this reliance on laymen was due to the general American distrust of the specialized expert, the feeling so prevalent in the

## Growing Pains

current Jacksonian Democracy that the common man was capable of making his own decisions. As President Jackson himself put it: "the duties of all public offices are . . . so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance. . . ."31

In the case of American Jews this distrust of the expert was reinforced by the severe shortage of trained rabbis on this continent. There was no place in the New World where native rabbis could be trained. All our rabbis had to be imported from Europe and few would voluntarily choose to cut themselves off from their Jewish communities in order to minister to the wilderness. It was estimated that in 1855 only nine ordained rabbis served the entire United States.<sup>32</sup> Most congregations, if they could afford a minister at all, hired a *chazan*. Otherwise, more-or-less trained laymen had to fill in as best they could. With such untrained, unrespected leadership, the synagogue could hardly hope to maintain its position as the sole spokesman for the American Jewish community.

Anshe Chesed managed to do without a professional minister for over ten years after the dismissal of Kalisch. Services during that decade were conducted by two laymen: B. L. Fould and Joseph Levy. Kalisch was contemptuous of their qualifications: "One is a cigar maker, and the other a peddler," he sneered, "neither of whom possesses the smallest Talmudic or scientific knowledge."<sup>33</sup>

But by 1856 Kalisch himself was dismissed from Tifereth Israel. The congregation had just built its first permanent home, a "plain but handsome" synagogue on Huron Street.<sup>34</sup> Very likely the expenses of the new building were more than they had anticipated. Faced with the choice of supporting either a rabbi or a building, they unhesitatingly chose the latter.

With Kalisch gone, Tifereth Israel searched for a cheap replacement, hoping to find a combination *chazan*, teacher and *shochet* for \$75 a year. After a fruitless search for such a paragon, a layman, Jacob Cohen, was selected as a stopgap to fill all of these positions except *shochet*, and in 1858 he was being paid \$100, only \$25 more than the *shammass*.

With its larger membership, Anshe Chesed was able to afford a somewhat more ambitious program than its rival. By 1858, its membership had climbed to an even hundred, two-and-a-half times that of its younger competitor. It could afford, among other things,



its own *mikveh* and a resident *shochet*, paid at the going rate of two cents a chicken. The school, however, was its chief pride. While Tifereth Israel could barely support an on-again-off-again, part-time educational program, Anshe Chesed was able to conduct a full-time religious day school, with 130 pupils studying an English and Hebrew curriculum. Perhaps the school was too ambitious. In any event it was forced to close its doors in 1858 as too heavy a financial burden for the congregation to continue to assume. Isaac Mayer Wise, the pioneer Reform rabbi and a regular observer of the Cleveland Jewish scene, was distressed by this development. "Without a school, Judaism has but a gloomy future," he predicted.<sup>35</sup>

Wise was convinced that Anshe Chesed was doomed to frustration unless it could curb its incessant factional bickering and learn how to work in harmony. Anshe Chesed, he scolded, counts 120 contributing members and is well able to support a minister and school, still they have neither. The cause is the want of harmony prevailing. One party wishes to build a new synagogue and schoolhouse, another wants a minister who can instruct and lead a choir and superintend a school, and again another wants a good preacher. . . . There is no conciliation on either side and one party checks the efforts of the other.<sup>36</sup>

This friction so deplored by Wise was no longer a simple matter of personalities, but one of principle, for lurking behind the scenes was an issue soon to split the Cleveland Jewish community apart once more — the Reform movement.

The Reform impulse came late to Cleveland. In 1857, Isaac Leiser, the watchdog of American Jewish conservatism, had commended Cleveland as a beacon of orthodoxy. In all other western Jewish communities that he visited, the Sabbath was regularly profaned; but in Cleveland, Leiser was pleased to note, "there are many who keep it holy." Reform might plague Leiser elsewhere, but not in Cleveland where all the congregations were staunchly orthodox, "and do not desire the modern reform; for though it too has its advocates there, it does not seem to have made rapid progress."<sup>37</sup>

Yet only a few years later Isaac Mayer Wise could rejoice (a trifle prematurely) to his Reform colleagues that "the synagogue Anshe Chesed is permanently ours,"<sup>38</sup> while Tifereth Israel was so deeply sunk in reformism that Leiser washed his hands of it

## *The American Pattern*

completely. Aghast at their "conversion of a Synagogue into the style of a Christian church," he suggested that the state revoke its charter and that the erring congregation be formally excommunicated.<sup>39</sup>

Leeser need not have acted so shocked. Reform, to one degree or another, was the universal reaction of American Jews to their new environment. Not even those congregations that called themselves Orthodox could entirely escape the Reform impulse. This was more than a Jewish reaction, it was a typical American pattern of behavior, evident in all branches of Christianity as well. De Tocqueville was particularly struck by the general American distaste for "the minute individual observances" of religion. "I have seen no country," he declared, "in which Christianity is clothed with fewer forms, figures, and observances than in the United States."<sup>40</sup> Reform in the ritual, therefore, was simply one more way in which American Jews accommodated their manners to the habits of their adopted country.

Other signs of Americanization were even easier to spot. By the 1860's, an occasional English sermon could be heard in the synagogue. From the 1840's on, Cleveland Jews began to take out naturalization papers and, as they did, even their names became Americanized, as Breinle Salb became Babetta and Reichel Klein Thorman was metamorphosed into the more genteel Regina. To these new women, proud of their status as free and almost equal partners of their husbands, the segregated women's gallery seemed a relic of the submissive old world *hausfrau*. Often the crucial commitment to Reform in many congregations was precipitated by the question of whether to install family pews, in the American manner. It was a question that could not be evaded when the time came to rebuild or enlarge the existing synagogue.

If the women objected to segregated seating, their husbands resented the business they lost on the Sabbath. In Europe, Jews could keep the Sabbath holy and work on Sunday. In America, the land of freedom, the gentile sabbath was imposed on Jew and Christian alike, causing hardship for the harassed Jewish merchant who was sometimes forced to close down two days each week.<sup>41</sup> In 1857, Leeser had congratulated Cleveland Jews for their adherence to the Sabbath, but in 1865, when the president of Tifereth Israel tried to induce his congregation to agree to close their businesses on Saturday, he was coolly rebuffed and the suggestion was dropped.



## *New Rates and Old Reactions*

Reform was in the air. It was especially congenial to the older settlers, men who had had time to adjust to American ways and who could see themselves and their religion through American eyes. Seen in that manner, there was much in the traditional service that was unsatisfactory. By American standards, the schule lacked gentility. The casual spontaneity of prayer, the free and easy coming and going, the uninhibited enthusiasm alternating with bored, half-hearted mumbling, made the synagogue a place of casual anarchy, suitable perhaps for "greenhorns," but not for those who aspired to social acceptance by their new countrymen. It was this "awful confusion" which reigned in the traditional synagogue that was, according to Isaac Mayer Wise, "the first cause of our Reform endeavors."<sup>42</sup>

In an effort to preserve decorum, Anshe Chesed adopted a new set of rules:

No one was to speak to his neighbor during the service;  
no one was to enter or leave while the Ark was open;  
no children under five were admitted during the service; and  
"the gathering of the people on the sidewalk before the synagogue or on the steps is forbidden."<sup>43</sup>

The net effect of these rules was negligible and Anshe Chesed continued to be embarrassed by the excessive enthusiasm of its turbulent congregants. A climax of sorts was reached in 1861 when what the newspapers referred to as "a little difficulty . . . in the Eagle St. synagogue," erupted into a near-riot leading the police to haul three worshippers away on charges of disturbing the peace.<sup>44</sup> Advocates of Reform hoped that their measures would instill decorum in the ritual and thus give Jews a sense of dignity and restraint which would win the respect of the gentile community.

In Cleveland, Reform spoke with a German accent. Only the two German-Jewish congregations were affected; the others held aloof. The Germans were earlier arrivals and had had more time to adjust to American ways. Furthermore they came from the homeland of nineteenth century liberal rationalism and were, on two counts, more susceptible to the Reform impulse than were the newcomers from the more rigidly pious Hungarian or Polish communities. Even in backward Bavaria, German Jews had been exposed to a secular education and had absorbed, half-unconsciously, commitment to the reigning catchwords of "progress", "humanity", and "reason". Yet, despite this Reform-favoring com-

## *A House Divided*

bination of German heritage and American aspirations, Cleveland Jews were slow to take a decisive step. Before 1860 scarcely a ripple of Reform could be discerned, even though many similarly situated congregations in the Midwest had already taken the plunge. Yet by the end of the decade both Anshe Chesed and Tifereth Israel had gone completely over to the new camp, and with an enthusiasm that belied their earlier hesitation.

Anshe Chesed began tinkering with the service in 1852. A few prayers were eliminated, sermons were introduced (in German, of course) and the "unseemly" custom of auctioning off parts in the service to the highest bidder was abolished. These were tentative, half-hearted moves, certainly not intended as harbingers of a general and sweeping reform. Anshe Chesed continued to adhere to orthodoxy so rigidly that by 1858, B. L. Fould, one of the two ministers of the congregation, felt compelled to resign in protest.<sup>45</sup>

If Fould was hoping to find a congenial home for his Reform views at Tifereth Israel, he must have been disappointed. Although Isaac Mayer Wise suspected that Tifereth Israel harbored a secret hankering for Reform,<sup>46</sup> nothing in their actions gave any basis for that belief. In 1859, during one of the periodic (and fruitless) merger negotiations between the two congregations, Anshe Chesed suggested that they pool their resources to hire "a preacher or lecturer of reformed principles." The more conservative Tifereth Israel negotiators modified this clause to read: "preacher or lecturer of liberal principles, who shall not overreach the Laws of Moses."<sup>47</sup>

This flirtation of Anshe Chesed with Reform was a temporary one, for by April of 1860, the congregation was once more staunchly orthodox, as can be seen by their choice of a rigid traditionalist, Elkan Herzman, formerly of New York, as their minister. Yet that same summer Anshe Chesed turned suddenly to the left again. The old Eagle Street synagogue had become grossly inadequate for a congregation of over 110 members. Plans for the enlargement included such innovations as an organ and a mixed choir of men and women. The organ was to be installed in December, and in November Elkan Herzman walked out. He was replaced the following May by Gustavus M. Cohen, a German cantor with experience at various American Reform congregations, including New York's Temple Emanu-El. Thus within the space of two years, Anshe Chesed had veered back and forth from traditionalism to Reform. These twistings and turnings indicate that the congrega-



tion was sharply divided on the matter, with first one camp and then the other gaining the upper hand. The appointment of Cohen did not, however, mean total victory for the Reform faction. Aside from the confirmation ceremony (which may have been introduced earlier) Cohen made few innovations. Lacking a clear mandate from his congregation he was compelled, despite his inclinations, to stand pat.

Meanwhile, at Tifereth Israel, the Reform movement gathered speed. From 1861 to 1865, in rapid succession, it introduced an organ, tore down the ladies' gallery and installed family pews, turned the reader around so that he faced the audience rather than the Ark, and eliminated many prayers.<sup>48</sup> Men still wore their hats at prayer, but before the decade was out hats would be dispensed with, as would the rabbi's vestments, the cantillation, the second day of the holiday, the calling up of members to read the Torah, and the one-year cycle of Torah reading (to be replaced by a three-year cycle in the less tedious Sephardic manner). By 1870, prayers at Tifereth Israel would be delivered in both German and English and the congregation would be, in all respects, the very model of up-to-date nineteenth century liberalism, as "reformed" as any congregation in the land.

The Reform-minded wing of Anshe Chesed watched these developments with envy. In December of 1865, they saw their opportunity. Tifereth Israel had placed an advertisement in the *American Israelite* for "a Preacher of reformed principles, who is sufficiently conversant in both the German and English languages to be able to lecture in either."<sup>49</sup> When the reformers at Anshe Chesed read this they immediately thought of the very man to fill the post — Gustavus Cohen of Anshe Chesed. Within a week over twenty five members of Anshe Chesed had resigned and applied for admission to Tifereth Israel in a body. "Our hands are bound," they explained, "and we are stopped in the way of progress, we have outlived the dark and superstitious ages. . . ."<sup>50</sup> In contrast to the earlier secessions of 1842 and 1850 this one was composed of some of the oldest and best-established Jewish families in Cleveland. At least five charter members of Anshe Chesed were among the dissidents, including such pioneers as Asher Lehman, Gerson Strauss, Moses Alsbacher and Isaac Hoffman. Their migration gave Tifereth Israel a membership of almost eighty members, enabling it, for the first time, to rival Anshe Chesed in both numbers and prestige.

## *Reaching Maturity*

The new members set as a condition of their joining that Gustavus Cohen be hired as minister. This was "gladly" accepted and in June of 1866, when his contract expired, Cohen moved over to Tifereth Israel. It was an unhappy association. Cohen, for all his Reform enthusiasm, was essentially a cantor and Tifereth Israel wanted a preacher of suavity and polish to represent them, not an old fashioned *chazan*. In 1867, Cohen left for a Milwaukee synagogue, to be replaced by Jacob Mayer, a secularly-trained Orientalist who sported an up-to-the-minute, skeptical, rationalist brand of Reform, which was more to the taste of his fashionable congregation.<sup>51</sup>

Cohen's stay in Milwaukee was even shorter than his brief Tifereth Israel term of office. Anshe Chesed had not been satisfied with his successor and had begun to look back wistfully on Cohen's tenure. The now-chastened congregation sent a delegation to Milwaukee to persuade him to come back. With a substantial salary raise and a secure long-term contract, Cohen returned to Cleveland to resume his post at Anshe Chesed. He remained until 1873. During those years Anshe Chesed settled down, in relative peace and unanimity, to become a full-fledged Reform congregation, following the path blazed a few years earlier by Tifereth Israel.

Thus, by 1870, as they entered upon their fourth decade, both Anshe Chesed and the Cleveland Jewish community had reached maturity. Despite the recent schism, Anshe Chesed's membership had risen to 150 while the growth of the Jewish population of Cleveland had been even more spectacular, climbing from less than two dozen in 1839 to between three and four thousand by 1870.<sup>52</sup> The coming decade would be relatively uneventful; a much-needed breathing spell during which time Cleveland Jews, increasingly prosperous and Americanized, would consolidate their position and solidify their institutions.

In the 1880's this calm would be shattered by a massive influx of Eastern European Jews which would strain, but not snap, the Cleveland Jewish community structure. The communal and religious adjustments developed over the years would prove strong enough and flexible enough to cope with this problem and with the even greater challenges to come. Very likely, Lazarus Kohn would not have entirely approved of the way in which his Unleiben friends and their descendants had met that "tempting freedom" he had warned against. Yet, in their own way, and with remarkable ingenuity, they had devised new and successful answers to the age-old problem — how to sing the Lord's song in a strange land.



## FOOTNOTES

1. This translation of the Alsbacher Document was prepared under the auspices of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation. I am also greatly indebted to the Federation, and especially to Judah Rubinstein, for their kind assistance on this project and for the generosity with which they allowed me to examine their archives. Much of what follows is based on the material I found there, especially the magazines and serials not otherwise available in Cleveland libraries. Had it not been for their help this paper could not have been written without a great deal of further effort, and perhaps not at all.
2. Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860. A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger (New York, 1961), 139; Chester Penn Higby, *The Religious Policy of the Bavarian Government During the Napoleonic Period (Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, V, 85, no. 1, New York, 1919), 318.
3. Higby, *Religious Policy of Bavaria*, 26-28.
4. *Ibid.*, 26, 34-35.
5. *Ibid.*, 44-46.
6. *Ibid.*, 147-173.
7. *Ibid.*, 315-316.
8. Cited in, Jacob Lestchinsky, "Jewish Migrations, 1840-1956," in Louis Finkelstein, ed., *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion* (2 v., 1960), II, 1547-1548.
9. Gotthard Deutsch, "Dr. Abraham Bettman, a Pioneer Physician of Cincinnati," in American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, no. 23 (1915), 108.
10. Higby, *Religious Policy of Bavaria*, 151-152.
11. See, William L. Langer, "Europe's Initial Population Explosion," *American Historical Review*, LXIX, no. 1 (October, 1963), 1-18.

12. Wolfgang Köllman, "The Population of Germany in the Age of Industrialism," in, Herbert Moller, ed., *Population Movements in Modern European History* (New York, 1964), 101.
13. *The Occident* (Philadelphia), v. 10, no. 6 (September, 1852), 306.
14. Lestchinsky, "Jewish Migrations," 1559.
15. Salo Wittmayer Baron, *The Jewish Community, Its History and Structure to the American Revolution* (3 v., Philadelphia, 1942), I, 283.
16. *The American Israelite* (Cincinnati), v. 5, no. 7 (August 20, 1858), 53.
17. The first native-born Jew in North-east Ohio was the son of Joshua Sexias, born in Oberlin in October, 1835. Another 1835 birth was that of Raphael Peixotto, born in Willoughby.
18. Deutsch, "Dr. Abraham Bettman," 108.
19. Isaac Leeser, in *Occident*, v. 16, no. 6 (September, 1857).
20. *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), February 21, 1885.
21. *Cleveland Herald*, February 7, 1842; *Jewish Review and Observer*, v. 38, no. 13 (March 22, 1912).
22. *Occident*, v. 7, no. 6 (September, 1849), 331.
23. *Cleveland Herald*, October 7, 1845.
24. *Jewish Review*, February 21, 1896; see also, *Jewish Independent*, v. 13, no. 3 (March 15, 1912). Those present at the meeting were: A. Lewin, A. Lehman, Jacob Richard, Michael Wiener, I. Stern, Kalman Roskopf, David Heller, D. Frank, J. Engelhart, W. Riglander, H. Strauss, Moses Moses, Michael Baer, L. Ehrlich, Moses Schott, S. Newmark, A. Tuch, L. Erlanger, F. Goldsmith, Jacob Silverman, Joseph Grumpan, I. Ansel, Jacob Frank, S. Thorman, M. Thorman, I. Hoffman, S. Hoffman, G. Strauss, S. L. Colman, A. Lowentritt, M. Alsbacher, N. Tuch, M. Lowenthal, I. Michael and S. L. Stern.
25. *Cleveland Herald*, October 7, 1845; *Occident*, September, 1846.



26. The total American Jewish population at this time numbered approximately fifty thousand, about one quarter of whom lived in New York City. There were thirty or so congregations in the country, thirteen of them in New York City.
27. *The Plain Dealer*, April 22, 1850.
28. *The Daily True Democrat* (Cleveland), December 18, 1849.
29. This list, and other information concerning Tifereth Israel, can be found in the Tifereth Israel Minute Books which have been carefully preserved since the congregation's earliest days. The minutes for the early period are entirely in German and I am indebted to the Jewish Community Federation for translating pertinent sections of them into English.
30. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Richard D. Heffner, ed. (New York, Mentor edition, 1956), 198.
31. See Leonard Dupee White, ed., *The Jacksonians; A Study in Administrative History, 1829-1861*. (New York, 1954), 318.
32. Joshua Trachtenberg, *Consider the Years* (Easton, Pa., 1944), 145.
33. *The Plain Dealer*, October 23, 1851.
34. *Cleveland Leader*, January 5, 1856.
35. *American Israelite*, v. 5, no. 7 (August 20, 1858), 54.
36. *Ibid.*, v. 6, no. 8 (August 26, 1859), 63.
37. *Occident*, v. 16, no. 6 (September, 1857).
38. *American Israelite*, v. 7, no. 25 (December 21, 1860), 198.
39. *Occident*, v. 9, no. 2 (May, 1861), 87-88.
40. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 154.
41. See the *Cleveland Leader*, July 27, 1847 and March 28, 1856, for the arrests of Sigmund Stein and Lewis Cohen for selling liquor illegally on Sunday. In still another respect, America proved less tolerant than Germany. In Bavaria, Jewish children who attended the public schools were excused from religious instruction, but in at least one instance in Cleveland a Jewish child was dismissed from school for refusing to read the New Testament. *Cleveland Leader*, April 28, 1854.

42. Jacob Rader Marcus, ed., *Memoirs of American Jews: 1775-1865* (3 v: Philadelphia, 1955), III, 22.
43. *Jewish Review and Observer*, v. 38, no. 13 (March 22, 1912).
44. *Cleveland Daily Leader*, September 29, 1861.
45. The other minister, Joseph Levy, was more conservative than Fould. Isaac Mayer Wise, no friend to orthodoxy, paid Levy a grudging compliment as "a staunch, unyielding and learned rabbinical Jew of the oldest stamp. The old gentleman," Wise added, ". . . stands firm upon the basis of the rabbinical literature, and commands respect from his religious position by his simple, firm and decided language." *American Israelite*, v. 2, no. 16 (October 26, 1855), 132.
46. *American Israelite*, v. 6, no. 8 (August 26, 1859), 63.
47. Tifereth Israel Minute Books, 1859.
48. *The Plain Dealer*, August 24, 1861. See also, *Jewish Messenger*, v. 12, no. 16 (October 24, 1862), 123.
49. *American Israelite*, v. 12, no. 4 (December 18, 1865), 187.
50. Tifereth Israel Minute Book, December 29, 1865.
51. Rabbi Mayer ultimately came to a sad end. While in Cleveland he was continually in hot water over some of his more extreme views. The *Cleveland Leader* editorially scolded him for implying that the Bible was superseded by science (September 30, 1869) and even his fellow Reform rabbis refused to associate with him. (*Jewish Times* v. 3, no. 19 [July 7, 1871], 297). After he left Cleveland for a pulpit in Baltimore he was exposed as a former Christian. Mayer evaded the charges, claiming finally that it was a twin brother (whom he was unable to produce) that had, in fact, been the apostate, but few were convinced, and his rabbinic career was destroyed.
52. *Jewish Times*, v. 2, no. 24 (August 12, 1870).



