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“SAME HORSE, NEW WAGON”

TRADITION AND ASSIMILATION AMONG THE JEWS OF WICHITA, 1865-1930

HAL ROTHMAN

Despite the emphasis on ethnicity and cross-cultural contact that permeates the New Western History, western historians have neglected the Jews of the American West. Often mislabeled as German ethnics because of their surnames or ignored altogether, Jews of the interior West in particular have been left out of the intellectual revolution sweeping the field. Their modern demographic distribution in coastal and urban areas has been mistaken for their historic presence, and their contribution to local and regional culture has been overlooked.¹ As a result, the Jews of large

urban areas in the West have received the vast majority of scholarly attention.² In existing historical treatments, Jews of the interior West were transient people of commerce and little else.

This inadvertent invisibility belies the complicated ways in which Jewish communities throughout the interior of the West began, evolved, and then gradually diminished. Initially the vast majority of western Jews were peddlers who aspired to be merchants, playing a social and economic role very similar to those open to them in medieval Europe. Over time, Jewish communities in the interior became sedentary, were transformed, and housed complicated intragroup rivalries and relations. Jews on the periphery faced questions of cultural survival that resulted from their role as a small minority group. Creating an hospitable cultural *milieu* required accommodation with the larger world, for they were and would likely remain few in number. Their choice of strategies and sometimes the abandonment of such strategies propelled them toward a unique combination of religion and ethnicity. Within the group, the tensions that such an accommodation compelled became the source of strife

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about cultural values and group identity. Played out in economic and cultural terms, these debates shaped the character of small Jewish communities on the Great Plains and throughout the West.

These tensions also reflected the dynamic push and pull between tradition and assimilation that has characterized the American Jewish experience. Like other members of ethnic and religious minorities, Jews faced choices that had an impact on their cultural and religious identity as well as their social and economic status. Negotiating this minefield of identity, economics, and social standing was what made western Jews as distinctively citizens of their region as southern or northeastern Jews. Westerners faced both advantages and problems as a result of being isolated from the large numbers of American Jews located in major cities. Their situation meant that retaining even the trappings of ancestral faith and culture required significant individual and community effort. Even when that effort was present, the meaning of that faith and its bearing on day-to-day Jewish life were changed by the circumstances of living in the American West.³

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA

The openness of American society precipitated structural change in the nature of Jewish communities. Unlike Europe, with its relatively rigid hierarchy and overwhelming anti-Jewish legal structure, American society not only removed restrictions, it seemed to reward precisely the kind of economic behavior that had been the only option for Jews in Eastern Europe. Particularly along the points of contact with indigenous cultures, Jews found a kind of exchange relationship that was the familiar legacy of their experience in the diaspora. In the fluidity that often existed before the institutions of modern America coalesced, a niche existed that made Jews both valuable and valued, the latter a distinctly different feeling than Jews had possessed almost anywhere in Europe. The result was a

regional identity that transcended religion, a time and place during which being Jewish engendered more admiration than envy, when social and economic barriers were much less restrictive and the rules that governed not only inter- but intra-group relations elsewhere in the nation did not hold.

Yet this scenario was also at cross purposes with the survival of cultural, ethnic, and religious identity. In a relatively open world, there was no premium on keeping to oneself and little social structure that assured the transmission of religious and cultural values. In Europe, Jews who wanted to assimilate found immense barriers in law, custom, and practice; Jewish culture in Europe was created and predicated upon being apart. In the interior West, in small groups that sometimes were too small for the ritual definition of a congregation, the famed "minyan" of ten, intermarriage, lack of observance, and a gradual sliding away from heritage became common. A diminished ability to transmit the subtle meaning of faith, ritual, and culture from generation to generation resulted.

Only widespread immigration slowed assimilation, and in the process it created a number of different enclaves within what were generally small Jewish communities in mid-sized cities. Between 1880 and 1920, the large Jewish migration to the U.S. spilled over into the American West.⁴ These newcomers, more closely tied to religious tradition, revived and transformed flagging communities, setting up a characteristic dynamic between the rewards of assimilation and the spiritual, cultural, and ethnic strength of heritage. The Jews of Wichita, Kansas, typified this process.

JEWS IN EARLY WICHITA

Present in the Wichita area since before the platting of the town in 1868, Jews were an integral part of the history of the community. As was characteristic throughout the West and the nation, their influence in commerce, philanthropy, and education far exceeded their numbers. Disproportionately represented in

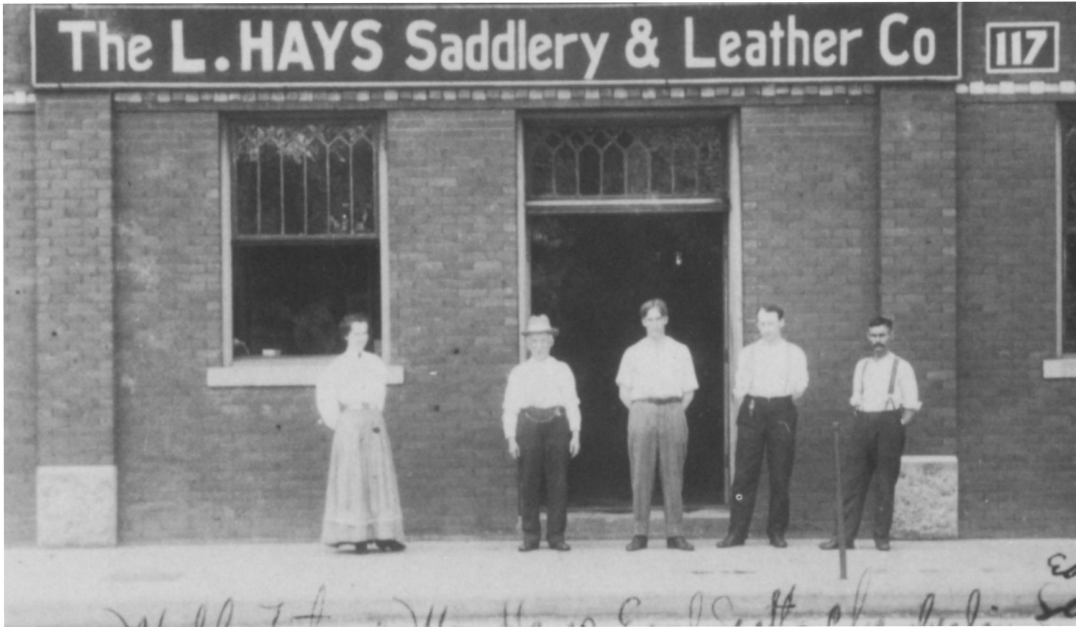


FIG. 1. Lee Hays (second from left) in front of one of his many businesses. Courtesy of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum.

civic, social, and official affairs, Wichita's Jews experienced a century-long set of problems inherent in their role of an easily assimilable minority: many sought to maintain religious identity and have a place in the secular world, objectives that were often at odds. Much more than any difference in the way in which they practiced their faith, this process created distinct and separate forms of Judaism in Wichita that independently defined religious practice and social interaction. In this process, the Jews of Wichita became people of the West, shaped and defined by the limits of the place they inhabited while being important contributors to the formation of the identity and economy of the larger community.

The first group of Jews in the Wichita area were typical of those who came West before the vast expansion of Euro-American western settlement. They were overwhelmingly young single men with entrepreneurial aspirations who sought to buy the products of the land

and broker them to the markets of the East. Among them was a buffalo broker named Leopold "Lee" Hays, who frequented the trading post that became early Wichita, and his brother, David. German-Jewish emigres who previously resided in Taylorsville, Indiana, the brothers bought hides and transported them to market further east. Buffalo hunting in central Kansas became a major industry in the early 1860s, and the Hays brothers followed it closely. Beginning in about 1864 or 1865, they built a network that included buffalo hunters in Kansas and hide brokers in Kansas City and St. Louis.⁵ They were typical of people of all kinds of backgrounds who sought to fashion a life on the periphery; their attraction to the place was its promise of great rewards for their efforts.

Engaging in a socio-economic role familiar to the Jews of Europe, the Hays brothers showed all the characteristics of successful American entrepreneurs. After the end of

widespread buffalo hunting on the Plains, they adapted, buying hides from their former Native American trading partners who had been exiled to Indian Territory, processing them, and preparing them for market. Over time, they moved out of the role of middlemen.⁶ By the mid-1870s, the Hays brothers had become the largest purchasers of hides in Wichita, shipping more than \$50,000 worth of finished product during the first quarter of 1875 alone. At one point, the brothers owned two piles of dried buffalo hides that stretched a distance of more than two Wichita blocks from the banks of the Big Arkansas River. Later, they filled two large storerooms and several out-buildings with more than twelve thousand fine cured buffalo robes and wolf skins. Such a quantity represented a most significant business inventory.⁷

Early Wichita was a community of pragmatic dreamers with aspirations to match. The Hays brothers were at home there, as were Sol Kohn, who signed the town charter in 1868, and his brother, Morris. By the time the Kohn brothers reached Wichita, they already owned two other mercantile businesses in Kansas.⁸ Capturing the cattle trade to meet its new railroad terminus in 1872 confirmed the promise that Wichita's community leaders felt. Along with many other local notables, Sol and Morris Kohn helped recruit the railroad and the cattle industry. In addition, Sol Kohn became one of the directors of the newly organized Wichita and Southern Railroad.⁹

The cattle trade created new economic opportunities and brought all kinds of people, including a number of Jews, to Wichita. Those with capital or the ability to extend credit stood to profit immensely from the influx of business. In 1872 Sol Kohn opened the Wichita Savings Bank on the southeast corner of Main and Douglas streets in the heart of Wichita's thriving business district. The bank was directly across the street from Morris Kohn's New York Store, the brothers' initial business in the town.¹⁰ Most of the newcomers, Jewish and otherwise, were young and enterprising; all had great plans. Some, such

as Maurice W. Levy, left indelible imprints on the community.

Like the Hays and Kohn brothers, and much of the first generation of Wichita Jewry, Levy was no newcomer to the United States when he arrived in Kansas. Born in France, he immigrated to California, where his brother lived, as a young man. Levy studied law at the University of California and opened a practice in nearby Hayward. He moved to Denver, working as a specialist in land titles for the *Rocky Mountain News*. His experience prepared him for the economic and cultural realities of life in Wichita. Such awareness did not impinge on his sense of other Jews as members of an extended kinship group. Although Levy formed a partnership with a local gentile, J. M. Steele, to invest in real estate, he remained close to the other Jews in town. He married Sol and Morris Kohn's sister, Sarah, tying himself to the nascent Jewish community.¹¹

By the middle of the 1870s Wichita had a small but well-established Jewish population. Besides the Kohn brothers and Levy, at least eight other Jewish commercial concerns existed in the community. To compete with the Kohn brothers' New York Store, Aaron Katz opened the Philadelphia Store. Mayo M. Fechheimer, another recent arrival with much commercial experience as well as kinship ties to businesses elsewhere in the United States, prospered in Wichita. He ran a clothing business on the southwest corner of Main and Douglas, and later a saloon and a beer garden by the river called Fechheimer's Grove that offered an ice cream social every Sunday afternoon. Albert Hess began what by the 1890s became the largest wholesale grocery and produce business on the southern Plains.¹²

The success of the Jews in Wichita was reflected in the location of their businesses. The intersection of Main and Douglas was the heart of the city. By 1878, three of its four corners were occupied by Jewish-owned businesses. Along with the New York Store on the northeast corner, which topped \$60,000 in sales in 1875, and the Wichita Savings Bank on the southeast corner, Fechheimer's Eagle



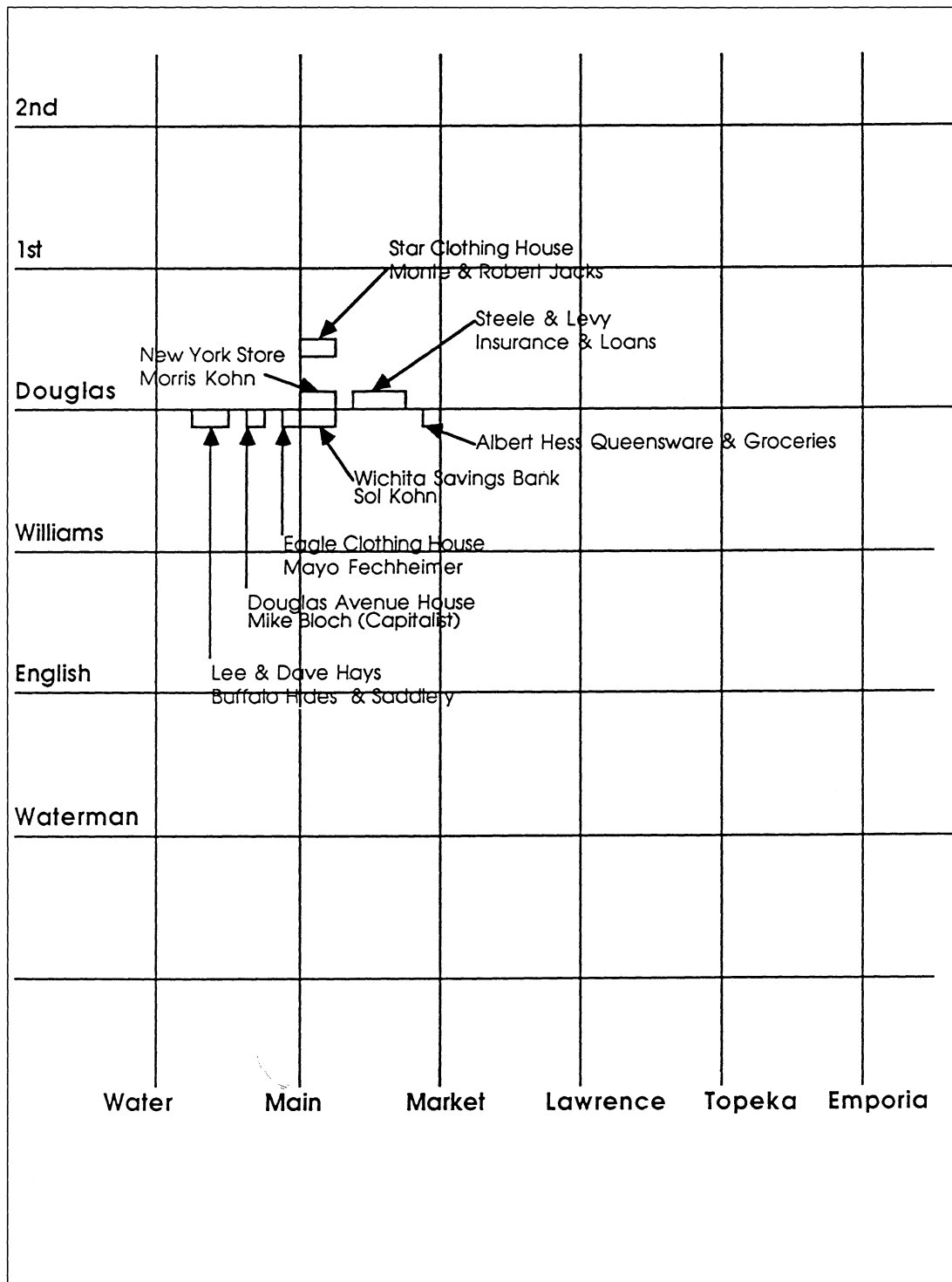
FIG. 2. *The New York Store, Sol and Morris Kohn's flagship business, in the 1870s.* Courtesy of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum.

Clothing House occupied the southwest corner. The following year Fechheimer centralized all his businesses in a four-story brick “skyscraper” he had constructed on the northwest corner of Main and Douglas.¹³

The predominance of Jewish businesses in this central location reflected the familial nature of Jewish economic endeavors in the nineteenth-century West. Most of the businesses in Wichita were extensions of other family enterprises elsewhere in the U.S. Many of the local businessmen had relatives in similar industries; others married into families with valuable commercial or wholesale ties.¹⁴ Nearly all of the Jewish businessmen in Wichita in the 1870s had worked elsewhere in the U.S. and most came to the Plains with some combination of capital and credit. While individual

initiative contributed to their success, so did a pattern of family and kinship-oriented endeavor that extended over great distance.

Commercial success facilitated community involvement for the few Jews in 1870s Wichita. Since their arrival, the Kohn brothers had been regarded as people of substance. Their well-stocked shelves elicited comment in local newspapers, and the improvements they made to their business were generally perceived as advantages for the entire community.¹⁵ The presence of Jewish businessmen on the boards of directors of entities important for local growth also enhanced the status of local Jews. As citizens of a fledgling city that valued entrepreneurial spirit above all else, Jews were seen as logical participants in leadership and governance.



MAP 1. Locations of Jewish businesses in Wichita in 1877-78. Map by Hal Rothman.

In the 1870s Sol Kohn and Maurice Levy were particularly active in local government. Kohn served as city commissioner (councilman) in 1871, became chairman of the commission the following year, was appointed to a number of quasi-official positions throughout the decade, and was elected mayor by six votes over city co-founder William Griffenstein in 1879. In the 1880s and early 1890s, Levy was a trustee of Fairmount College, later Wichita State University, the first known instance in which a Jew sat on the board of a denominational college. Lee Hays also served a term on the city council, replacing Levy's partner J. M. Steele.¹⁶

This dramatic overrepresentation suggested that the Jewish community in early Wichita was highly influential. In 1877 there were fewer than twenty Jewish households in Wichita, and there were no Jewish institutions of any kind. Yet these Jews were respected members of the community, had some say in town affairs, and by any outward measure, experienced little or none of the discrimination common at the time. Like many places on the periphery, Wichita was too engrossed in its push for recognition as a city to be concerned with rigid hierarchical structures that determined status in a Social Darwinist or Victorian world.¹⁷

This first incarnation of Wichita Jewry had only a kind of cultural identification at its core. As in most small communities composed of young single men, religious practice remained peripheral. In this, the community mirrored European roots, for in western Europe after Napoleon, emancipated nineteenth-century Jews had presented themselves as German or French nationals of religious persuasion. For larger concentrations of American Jews of German descent elsewhere in the nation, this was an undesirable option. Defined as a national group rather than a faith throughout Europe in ways that strongly disadvantaged Jewish survival, American Jews sought to carve a distinct religious identity in a world that promised freedom of faith.¹⁸ Yet the station in life of most of Wichita's few

Jews and the absence of a local Jewish institutional structure encouraged an areligious self-image. The first Jews in Wichita saw themselves bound as much by ethnic identity as by faith.

JEWES AND WICHITA'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATURATION

The city boomed during the 1880s, and Jews became merchants to those in search of riches. They were a predominant force in the clothing business and an important catalyst in real estate and loans. Along with the New York Store, the Star Clothing House, owned and operated by Robert and Monte Jacks, Hays's store, and Fechheimer's Eagle Clothing House, four recently established Jewish-owned clothing businesses were operating in 1885. Spread throughout the downtown area, these eight stores controlled the largest share of the local market. In addition, Hardy Solomon was a prominent real estate investor, Albert Hess's wholesale business had grown, Maurice Levy headed the Kohn Brothers' bank, and Michael Bloch served as a loan agent.¹⁹ The importance of Jewish business continued to exceed the number of Jews in Wichita.

The community itself had begun to change. By the middle of the 1880s, there were a small but growing number of families in the local Jewish population. Lee Hays and his wife, Clara, for whom he returned to his ancestral home in Trier, Germany, to marry in 1873, had two daughters; Maurice Levy and his wife, the former Sarah Kohn, had four children, all born in Wichita. Mayo M. Fechheimer and his wife, Getta Gutman, were nearing retirement, but a number of their children had begun to marry and raise families. The first Jewish wedding in the community occurred in 1881, offering another vision of permanence, and in the aftermath of a tragedy, the birth of a still-born baby, in 1885, the community began a cemetery.²⁰ Jewish social, cultural, and religious institutions were becoming a necessity.

The burial of the baby was the catalyst for the beginning of institutional developments

for the Jewish community in Wichita. Later that year, the first congregation, called Holy Emanu-El and renamed Congregation Emanu-El in 1928, was chartered. The prosperous and venerable Fechheimer became president, Samuel Goldstein, the clothier, served as vice-president, Monte Jacks acted as secretary, and Levy occupied the treasurer's seat. Aaron Katz of the Philadelphia Store, Lee Hays, and Albert Hess were elected trustees. The leadership of the Jewish community fell to those with prominent roles in the larger community.²¹ A student from Hebrew Union College, a rabbinical college in Cincinnati, was hired to conduct services for the holiest time of the Jewish year, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which follows by ten days. Leasing the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, termed "the finest place in the city," the Jewish community turned out in force.²²

With the exception of Maurice Levy, the first generation of Wichita's Jewish community were all of German-Jewish heritage. Most were participants or progeny of the vast wave of emigration from Europe that followed 1830. This European demographic takeover of the Americas had many causes: population pressure, politics, natural disaster, famine, and for Jews, the opportunity to participate freely and openly in a society that did not restrict their economic, cultural, political, or religious activities. Those Jews who chose to emigrate were likely the most adventurous and indefatigable, the least tied to place and roots, and often among the less affluent even in emancipated countries such as France and Germany.²³

In Kansas, the German-Jewish community mixed easily in public venues. The political and civic roles that Jews played attested to their acceptance, and their importance to the local economy enhanced their public roles. U.S. Senator from Kansas Preston Plumb accompanied Maurice Levy and two other prominent Wichita entrepreneurs, A. W. Oliver and N. F. Niederlander, to lobby the Rock Island Railroad to build a terminus in

Wichita; the same triumvirate pushed to establish a city-wide electric system in 1883. Newspapers routinely congratulated individual Jews on professional and personal milestones; Jewish social events were also news.²⁴

The women in prominent Jewish families also played important roles in the fledgling community. Clara Hays served as first secretary of the Wichita Hospital, the only non-denominational medical institution in the community, for much of her adult life, while Rebecca Cohn Wallenstein, sister of Charles G. Cohn and wife of Henry Wallenstein, co-owners of the Boston Store, which became the most fashionable store in the city, actively participated in a number of women's organizations. The Jewish women of Wichita also formed their own club, called the *Entre Nous*, to facilitate social advancement. Their participation in such activities reflected the class, status, and aspirations of the Jewish community of the 1870s and 1880s.

Social matters were less integrated. Most of the accounts of Jewish social events offered guest lists, nearly all of whom are identifiably Jewish. While occasional instances occurred where young Jewish men and their non-Jewish friends shared living accommodations, young Jewish women were expected to meet both the standards of Jewish households and those of the upper classes. Except in rare circumstances, their social life was limited to the Jewish community. Adult social life also remained separate. Although public functions clearly included both Jews and non-Jews, when it came to the question of invitations to personal events, professional familiarity was not always sufficient to assure interaction between Jews and non-Jews.²⁵ Tolerance existed, but it could be uneasy.

Despite the lack of evident socialization, Jews played important roles in local fraternal organizations. Maurice Levy's mansion, a Queen Anne-style four-story home, became the first location of the Commercial Club of Wichita. Charles G. Cohn was one of the founders and served as president of the club from 1896 to 1907. Cohn also joined the



FIG. 3. *Maurice Levy's house in Wichita.* Courtesy of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum.

Scottish Rite Bodies of Wichita in 1887, serving as preceptor of the group until 1896. Levy, joined in 1890, and Wallenstein became a member of the Scottish Rite lodge in 1891, attaining the highest degree of the Masonic Order, serving as secretary after his retirement in 1916, and remaining an active member until his death. Merchants Morris Krailsheimer and Isadore Gross both joined in the late 1890s, and Lee Hays became a member in 1900. Levy also served as secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce in the late 1890s. Others belonged to the Elks and other social organizations.²⁶

Entrepreneur Hardy Solomon attracted the most flattering portrayals in the local press. Originally from South Carolina, Solomon arrived with capital and property and made a major impact on the community. He brought letters of introduction from Kansas notables, was acclaimed as an upstanding citizen of vast ability and sound judgment, and became a major developer. The *Wichita Eagle* announced Solomon's arrival in 1886 by quoting a flattering characterization from the *Leavenworth Times*, the newspaper from the Solomons' old home. "Enterprising and public-spirited," Solomon and his family were perceived as an

"addition to the social circles of [Wichita] to be much desired."²⁷ He also took it on himself to serve as a promotional agent for the city, advertising that if anyone wrote, he would send information about Wichita. Solomon built one of the "handsomest and pleasantest houses in the country" in the College Hill area and reaped the profits of the speculation boom of the 1880s.²⁸

Solomon's activities made him a respected member of a community on the move with an eye for self-promotion. Wichita *Eagle* editor Marshall Murdock headed the cast, proclaiming such names for the community as "Peerless Princess of the Plains." Although not generally an enlightened man about ethnic, race, and gender relations, Murdock had deep respect for Solomon and the other business people in the Jewish community. Solomon's efforts on behalf of the city attracted much of Murdock's attention; on one occasion, Solomon convinced sixteen men from Pittsburg, Kansas, to donate money to complete construction of the Wichita YMCA. Murdock referred to Solomon as "a Christian in his impulse and judgments" despite his Jewish faith, a statement surely intended as a compliment. In another instance, Murdock called the "pleasant and affable" Solomon, "one of the most prominent men of this city." Even Solomon's son was referred to as being "wholesome and [of] amiable disposition." First and foremost, Murdock was a capitalist and promoter, and his seeming distaste for people different from him did not extend to those who showed business acumen and social grace.²⁹

Nor were Wichita's Jews reticent about being in the local limelight. At a banquet held in honor of U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives John G. Carlisle, the Levys, the Solomons, and the Katzs were among those in attendance. Maurice Levy gave an "eloquent and witty" speech honoring the Speaker in front of all of Wichita's notables, further highlighting the integration of successful Jewish businesspeople into the structure of the community.³⁰

PLAINS-STYLE REFORM JUDAISM

The German heritage of most of Wichita's Jews was a considerable aid to comfortable relations. Since the enlightenment in Germany, Jews had become an important part of German cultural life; most young Jews, particularly those from less religious families, considered themselves as much German as Jewish, and their experience in American made relations with non-Jews even easier. Most spoke at least some German, were comfortable with the customs of Germanic culture, and felt at least a slight kinship to fellow emigres of other faiths.³¹ With its large German population, Kansas and Wichita seemed familiar.

The kind of Judaism that could be practiced on the periphery inadvertently promoted assimilation. Predisposed to see themselves as members of a national group first and a faith second, Jews sought harmonious relations with the larger Wichita community. They were among people of similar cultural and linguistic background, and general admiration for their commercial efforts and significant Jewish influence in local affairs combined to lessen socio-religious barriers between Jews and the larger community. Many in the Jewish community had backgrounds similar to Aaron Katz. Raised in Philadelphia, he received both religious and secular education and was described by a fellow member of the community as "thoroughly Jewish, but of the character that is broad-viewed and sensible; averse to all that of the past [that] cannot benefit the present, yet so enthusiastically Jewish as to suffer no encroachment upon [its] principles."³² In short, Katz had become an American; he was devoted to a form of religion that made allowances for the need to interact with a non-Jewish world. He had modified his religious identity so that he fit in the world he inhabited, while simultaneously holding that identity close. Katz had become an ethnic.

Katz typified those who embraced the modernized form of Jewish ritual called Reform Judaism. They chose to follow a version of

their faith that had spread in the nineteenth-century U.S. in no small part because it allowed Jews to become members of national groups by dispensing with portions of the traditional core of Jewish religious practice that would make interaction more difficult in a secular climate. Reform Judaism had roots in the American South, where, like the West, there were few Jews and commercial interaction made accommodation with the larger world a necessity. More malleable than orthodox Judaism, Reform involved a compromise of faith in return for religious sanction of a certain degree of cultural assimilation. It also highlighted the declining attraction of minority faith in a land that espoused religious freedom and the need for that faith to be responsive to the circumstances of life on the periphery.³³

It was easier to be Reform in an outpost like Kansas, for this form of faith did not require strict adherence to complex Jewish ritual. Kashrut, Jewish dietary laws, were relaxed, as was prayer, much of which occurred in English instead of Hebrew or Aramaic, and other forms of worship. Reform congregations such as Wichita's often had organists, something more traditional congregations eschewed, and in some places, most notably in the South, Reform congregations dressed their leaders in ministerial robes. Even the trademark skullcap, the yarmulke, was not required in many communities.³⁴ Despite its obvious religious character, in towns such as Wichita, Reform Judaism facilitated cultural assimilation.

By the late 1880s, the Jews of Wichita looked, acted, talked, and prayed like anyone else. Like other groups in south central Kansas, they had leaders of their community with deep roots, and they, too, brought relatives and friends from other parts of the country to enjoy what most saw as the success of Wichita. Their values and beliefs spanned the local spectrum; they belonged to political parties, clubs, and fraternal and women's organizations, had their say in political, economic, and to a lesser degree, social affairs, and played a meaningful role among Wichita's elite. Their

religious ceremonies were afforded the protection of the law and the respect accorded that of other groups. This small enclave of Jews found a home in Kansas.

Choice, remote location, and minute numbers combined to move their peripheral religiosity toward ethnicity. Even the initiation of a congregation, complete with plans for a religious school, did little to transform Wichita's Jews. They remained a loose-knit group that self-identified, interacted socially, and distinguished themselves by adherence to a set of symbolic forms that were different from those of others in the community.

The limits to their religious practice reflected this reality. Despite the affluence of the community, it did not construct a house of worship. There was little need when the largest gathering might include forty people. Nor did the congregation actively seek religious leadership, relying instead on lay leaders and visiting rabbinical students to conduct important holiday services and celebrations of special events.³⁵ Some of the members of the community were well educated in religious affairs. Two, Lee Hays and Sam Goldstein, possessed Torahs, the scrolled parchment that contains the Hebrew Bible from which the appropriate passage was read at each Sabbath service. Most often, the sporadic weekly worship services met in homes, although by the early 1900s, it was common to hold holiday services in a rented hall.³⁶

The greatest problem this community faced was self-perpetuation. Without a large population, significant numbers of children, skilled religious leadership, or other stimuli to assert the meaning and necessity of their faith, and surrounded by people of similar cultural, national, and language background, Wichita's small Reform Jewish congregation seemed likely to disappear among the larger population as had much of the Sephardic Jewish population of the pre-1850 East and South.³⁷ Fitting in ranked as high as maintaining tradition with this group, particularly as barriers to socialization fell. Inter-marriage, loss of tradition and

understanding, and irrelevance of faith loomed as obstacles to the long-term survival of the community. Judaism in smaller towns and cities always seemed one generation away from self-induced destruction that resulted from economic success and the relative lack of social barriers.

EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWS IN WICHITA

The changing demography of American Judaism offered a future for Jewish communities in places like Wichita, but it was a different path to survival and permanence than the Jews who lived there in 1880 could anticipate. In Eastern Europe, Jewish survival had always been a tenuous proposition, and the broadly accepted view that America was a haven of toleration and prosperity propelled migration. Of the roughly thirty-five million people who came to the U.S. between 1865 and 1915, more than two million were Jewish.³⁸

There had been a small Eastern European Jewish presence in Wichita since the late 1880s. Very few of the first wave of migration to the United States found their way West. The first identifiable Eastern European Jew to reach Wichita, Solomon Giwowsky, came in search of work. In 1887 Giwowsky went to work in a new suit and overall factory. By 1893 he owned it. Others had more complicated histories. Bernard Levitt had been part of a Jewish agricultural cooperative called Hebron near Medicine Lodge, Kansas. As in the vast majority of these endeavors, the capital available was not sufficient to overcome adverse conditions and erratic climate. The venture collapsed, Levitt gave up farming, and for the next three years, he walked all over the U.S. peddling goods without much success. He then returned to Russia, married Rose Steinberg, and when she became pregnant, the couple left for the U.S. Their youngest daughter remembered that they "did not want their child born in a land where Jews died for their beliefs." Within a few years, the Levitts gravitated from small Childs, Kansas, to the greater opportunities available in Wichita.³⁹

Still others fit the mold of the earlier German-Jewish arrivals. Joseph Kamenensky came to Wichita in 1896, four years after he arrived in the U.S. He peddled from a backpack, soon acquired a horse and wagon and became a junk dealer. In 1902 he opened his first stationary scrap business. Ninety years later, the Kamens remain a prominent Wichita commercial family that had produced civic leaders, mayors, and other local notables.⁴⁰

Like the initial German-Jewish settlers, most Eastern European arrivals had lived elsewhere in the U.S. before moving to Wichita. None were "greenhorns," the term applied to immigrants fresh from Europe. The newcomers became as skilled in business as their predecessors, starting with very little, utilizing the labors of all family members, and becoming owners of prosperous small businesses in a very few years. Most chose businesses in which they dealt in cash, for in Europe, Jewish tangible assets were always subject to seizure. Besides dry goods, scrap metal businesses, pawnshops, and grocery stores became common. Like their predecessors, these new businesspeople earned the respect of the community.

Yet in their private lives, people such as the Levitts and Kamenenskys practiced their faith in a more traditional manner than the German Jews of the generation before. One of the first among the newcomers to own their own home, Joseph and Sarah Kamenensky also possessed an indoor bathtub. The tub became community property, as the more religious members of the Jewish community lined up at the Kamenenskys to bathe in order to welcome the Jewish Sabbath, which began Friday at sunset. They rented halls and had worship services, forming a congregation, *Ahavat Achim*, Hebrew Congregation, in 1906. These newcomers were committed to retaining as much of traditional Jewish ritual as was possible in their new home.⁴¹

The small number of Jews in Wichita and the need to retain favored status assured a relative level of harmony within the Jewish community. The more established Reform Jews saw

the newcomers as an entrepreneurial class like they themselves had been twenty years earlier. Little of the tension that characterized intra-Jewish relations in larger cities appeared in Wichita.⁴² There were so few Jews that the established families welcomed the newcomers, feeling both that they restored a kind of Jewishness absent in Wichita and increased the pool of potential spouses for children. Older members of the community may have seen more religious younger people as a way to slow the threatening current of assimilation and intermarriage. Despite differences in appearance, religious practice, and native language, these newcomers made homes in Wichita.

By 1907 a sizable Eastern European Jewish population had developed in Wichita. The Kamenenskys and Levitts both encouraged relatives to come, and *landsmann*, people from the same community or region, were always welcome. Rose Steinberg Levitt's brother, Jack, her sister Manya Gerson and brother-in-law David Gerson, and his sister, Esther Gerson, were early arrivals. Kamenensky brought his wife, Sarah, his brother and sister-in-law, Samuel and Fanny, and other family members. This in turn spawned another wave of newcomers, related to the previous wave of newcomers. In 1904, Osip Yabrof, a thirty-two-year-old refugee from the twenty-five year conscription of Jews into the Russian army, fled Russia along a sort of underground railroad. He arrived in Wichita because his wife Rose's sister and brother-in-law, the Sheffreys, who were cousins of the Gersons, were already there. They loaned him a horse and wagon and he sold produce, shortly after sending for his wife and children.⁴³

These newcomers, refugees from persecution, conscription, and poverty, were changing Wichita's Jewish population. No longer were the Jews who arrived experienced in the ways of America. Instead they were very poor, completely unfamiliar with English, far more religious than even Eastern European predecessors who had been in the U.S. for a time, and relatively unprepared for economic life in

their new home. Everything about them—their appearance, mannerisms and manners, language and speech—was foreign to Wichita. Culturally, religiously, and ethnically Jewish, they brought a stronger flavor of *Yiddishkeit*—Jewish culture—to Wichita.

Wichita had a welcoming network for its new and important source of Jewish immigration, but it highlighted the growing differentiation of responsibility within the Jewish community. The Eastern Europeans in Wichita, established by 1907 although not as affluent as the German-Jewish community, took care of their own. When the usually young single men reached Wichita, Joseph Kamenensky met them at the train station and, in Yiddish, explained that he had found them day labor work at one of Wichita's meatpacking plants. This was to be a beginning for such newcomers as Jake Glickman and Morris Chuzy, Ben Witrogen, and Nathan King, who all arrived together in 1908. Chuzy started work at Dold's Packing Plant, knocking frost from ammonia lines. He found himself summarily dismissed after severing one of the lines. Undaunted, he borrowed money to buy a horse and wagon and began to peddle ice and ice cream in the affluent neighborhoods north of downtown. Keeping the same horse and buying a new wagon, he soon entered the produce business. Within a few years, he opened his first grocery store, the same business Ben Witrogen and Nathan King eventually selected. After similar day labor, Jake Glickman began a scrap metal business that became the basis of an economic empire.⁴⁴

CHALLENGES TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The arrival of these newcomers precipitated new tensions in Wichita. Leaders of the small but growing Eastern European population recognized that the new immigration was doubled-edged. It increased the number of Jews but enhanced the need for rapid assimilation of them. Instances such as the accidental death in 1913 of Maurice Kamenensky, a recently

arrived cousin, in an altercation with a farmer over the way in which the newcomer squeezed his fruit highlighted the problems of the rapid influx of people.⁴⁵ The Jewish community had to have strong institutions as well as personal commitment to newcomers to manage its growing population.

The surge in immigration added new dimensions not only to the Jewish population of Wichita as a whole, but to those of Eastern European background as well. These were the first Jews in Wichita not to be related to previous local residents by blood or marriage, or even to have ties based on place of origin. Like German-Jewish Wichitans in the 1860s and 1870s, they were predominantly young single men, but they entered an established community willing to invest in their success. By upbringing and experience, these were traditional Jews, fueling a kind of cultural and religious revival within the small Jewish community.

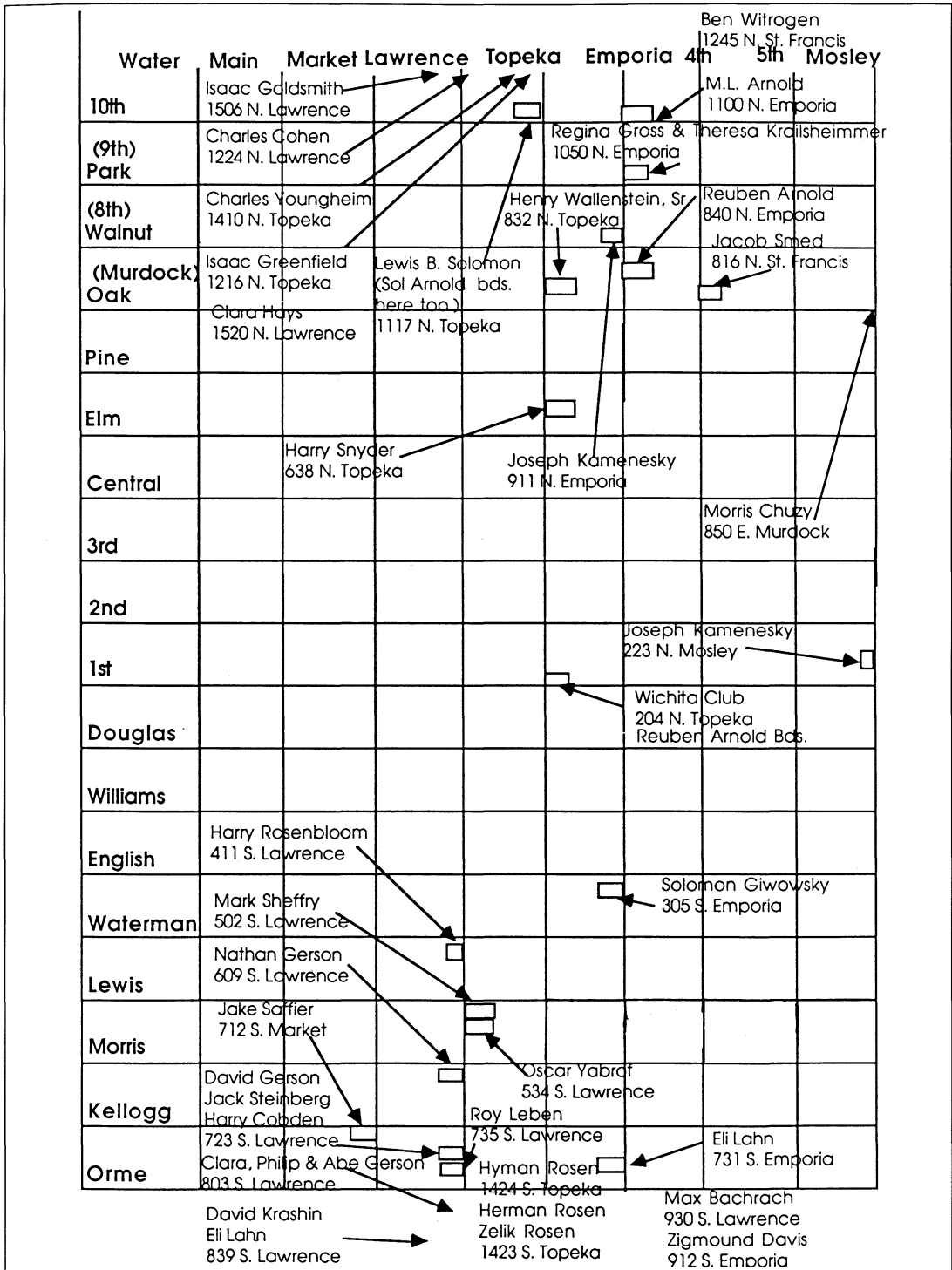
By 1910 a considerably larger number of Eastern European Jews than German Jews resided in Wichita. The 1910 Census identified 393 residents of 111 addresses as being of "Russian Yiddish" or "Russian Hebrew" origin or descent. Thirty-three addresses were those of single men, and a number of families boarded single men. Most lived south of downtown in a thirty-square block area bounded by Water Street on the west, Orme on the south, Emporia on the east, and English on the north. This area became the center of a thriving Jewish community. It included a kosher butcher shop, two grocery stores, and in 1913, in the heart of the neighborhood, the first synagogue building in Wichita. Although the Eastern European Jews remained less affluent than the German Jews, seven years after the founding of their congregation they raised the funds necessary to build their own building.⁴⁶ This neighborhood was most certainly the only place in early twentieth-century Kansas where Yiddish was commonly spoken.

The women in these families also played a wider variety of roles than had the German-Jewish women of the generation before. For

economic reasons, the Eastern Europe women participated in economic activity. Sarah Kamenensky sold china and other housewares in a business separate from her husband's, Belle Pinsker actively participated in the family grocery business with her husband, Abraham, Manya Gerson was instrumental in the family pawn business, and Ida Smed ran Wichita Waste Paper, her family's business. Only in the most affluent families, of which the Levitts became one, were the women able to participate exclusively in volunteer activities. Rose Levitt, wife of Bernard Levitt, was "the leader in many Wichita charities."⁴⁷ But most of the Eastern European women led lives dominated by the experience of immigrants; they worked alongside their husbands at whatever business.

Most of the approximately forty German Jewish families were located in one area of the city, the more affluent near-north side. Here lived Isaac "Ike" Goldsmith, owner of Goldsmith's Book and Stationary Company, and his wife, Rose Wallenstein Goldsmith, and Henry Wallenstein and Charles Cohn and their families. M. L. and Sade Arnold, owners of the Arnold Automobile Company, also lived in the vicinity, as did Samuel Goldstein and other Jewish businessmen. Their neighbors were leaders of the city: entrepreneur J. O. Davidson, physician Martin Hagan, and A. A. Hyde, the inventor of mentholatum and owner of a production plant.⁴⁸

The Reform Jewish community still had not developed the institutional structure of its coreligionists. Nominally orthodox in its religious orientation, Hebrew Congregation had a rabbi and religious school from its inception.⁴⁹ The proximity of much of the Eastern European community to the synagogue and the tradition of institutions serving as both religious and social meeting places combined to create a vibrance not possible in the more loosely knit Reform community. Although the Reform Jews met regularly and held a weekly Sunday School at the spacious Wallenstein home, they did not emulate the cultural intensity of their counterparts.⁵⁰



MAP 2. Locations of Jewish Residences in Wichita in 1925. Map by Hal Rothman.

Yet membership in Holy Emanu-El increased even though the immigrants who came to Wichita were generally from religious backgrounds. A number of the younger men were less tied to ritual religious practice, and correctly perceiving that the Reform community was better established and more affluent, they chose to affiliate there in the hopes of shedding what they saw as an inhibiting past. Some also sought to develop connections that would help them in business. Henry Yabrof, Sr., made no bones about his choice in the matter. Seeking to become more American and willing to forgo the ties of traditional faith, he was one of many who opted for Reform Judaism. Yabrof later served two terms as president of Congregation Emanu-El.⁵¹

The potential economic benefits that newcomers could derive from the Reform community were vast. A number of the most important players in the city belonged to the congregation, including Wallenstein, who was so well-known and liked and was so prominent that when he died in 1936 the city held a moment of silence in his honor.⁵² Many of the other members owned businesses that employed large numbers of workers, and there were a number of potential spouses with prominent parents as well. For an opportunistic individual eager to shed the trappings of Eastern Europe, Wichita's brand of Reform Judaism held a number of attractions.

The public schools also promoted the Americanization of incoming Jews. Although occasional incidents of outright discrimination and ignorance occurred, such as when a young Mel Witrogen was told by his teacher that he could not be both a Jew and an American, they were not systematic. Jewish youngsters were spread across the schools of the city, absorbing American culture along with their studies. The school system made minor allowances for these students; in some instances when Jewish students missed examinations because of religious holidays, they were allowed to make up the work, but this was not policy. Even adult immigrants took advantage

of the opportunities in the school system. In 1917 a tailor at the Ennis Department Store, Herman Fruhauf, convinced the school district to organize English language classes for newcomers. Immigrant Jews like Fruhauf were well represented in the classes.⁵³

Education became the avenue for the transformation of the status not only of Wichita's Jews but of those throughout the nation. Many immigrant Jews kept small businesses; their children became part of the professional classes. Benjamin and Yetta Lampl came to Wichita and developed a grocery and a produce company. Their son, Henry, became an attorney and mayor of the city. The Pinskers ran a grocery. Their son, Jacob, became a physician. Often the youngest children had the greatest educational opportunities. David Yabrof, younger than his two brothers by nearly a decade, earned a Ph.D. in chemistry. His older brothers worked in retail and insurance. Even families who migrated out of the faith followed a similar socio-economic pattern. Moses Ratner, who had been a farmer at one of the Jewish agricultural cooperatives in Kansas in the 1880s, watched as some of his family became Episcopalians. In his view, the only advantage to this change was that a grandson, attorney Payne Ratner, could become governor of Kansas, an opportunity not really open to Jews in the late 1930s.⁵⁴

The paths to economic opportunity and the demands of cultural cohesion illustrated the tension within Wichita Judaism. To a certain degree, people could have both, but fidelity to faith and the demands of success could easily become mutually exclusive. Weekend work conflicted with Sabbath celebrations and contravened strictures against work on holy days. Adherence to religious holidays could mean missed days of work as well as the mortifying experience of having to explain to non-Jews what each holiday entailed and why it was important to observe it. Even more problematic, people tended to view their economic success as individual, and succeeding in commerce, they easily assumed many of the values

of the American middle and upper-middle class. Such circumstances quickly devalued the importance of traditional culture.

As long as a fresh stream of immigrants continued, many of the long-term problems of cultural survival were minimized. The assimilation of some younger Jews for economic and cultural reasons or even by changing religious affiliations within the community had little impact. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, new arrivals continued to reach Wichita from overseas, new businesses opened, more relatives came, and the Jewish population continued to grow. The National Origins Act of 1924 nearly eliminated extranational immigrants, but economic booms in oil and natural gas brought many Jews to the greater south central Kansas area. Nearby towns such as El Dorado and Hutchinson developed stronger or new Jewish institutions. The influx of Jewish families from smaller Kansas towns, where there were often Jewish storekeepers, also helped maintain a flow of newcomers. Such families usually arrived at the time their children were in need of religious training, making them particularly desirable to a culture group that determined its health by the number of children in its midst.

As a result of the steady influx, intermarriage and disavowal of faith were seen as personal and not community problems. Individuals might leave the Jewish community by choice, but their departure did not threaten the community. Those who left were replaced by newcomers who began their own migration through religious and secular institutions and made choices of their own about adherence to their various communities. As long as the kind of economic opportunity that attracted newcomers to Wichita was available, the community had a charter for permanence.

By the 1930s, despite an increasingly hostile climate that resulted from Gerald K. Winrod and his *Defender Magazine*, a local magazine with wide national readership and an open and offensive anti-Semitic tone, Wichita's Jews were part of the community. In

1932 the Reform congregation built its first religious building in the fashionable new College Hill neighborhood, where affluent Jews from both congregations joined other well-off Wichitans in escaping downtown. More sensitive to the stricture that the synagogue be accessible on foot, one of the traditions that Hebrew Congregation chose to keep, its new synagogue, dedicated in 1930, was located about halfway between the old immigrant neighborhood south of downtown and College Hill. The religious schools of both institutions averaged between fifty and seventy-five students between the ages of five and thirteen. A community that typified the impact of Kansas on ethnic and religious groups reached a kind of equilibrium both economically and ethnically.

CONCLUSION

By the 1930s Wichita's Jews had learned to place their same horse with a new wagon. A number of factors made this process possible. When the wave of Eastern European immigration arrived in Wichita, both its Jewish communities were established. There were a significant number of Jews of stature who had served in public roles, elective offices, and other positions of prominence since the founding of the city. Wichita's Jews had earned respect and admiration, limiting negative response to newcomers. In a community that cherished its entrepreneurial tradition and contained an evident history of Jewish business success, newcomers were more welcome than they might have been elsewhere.

Nor was the Jewish community dependent on Gentiles for its sustenance. Most local Jews owned businesses, which meant that they could hire incoming co-religionists. When they could not, they had strong economic ties to non-Jews who could. As a result, incoming Jews were rarely without a job for long, and they were never seen as a burden on the larger community. The number of Jews selling everything from produce to ice door-to-door

attested to a work ethic that Wichitans were proud to claim as their own. With a history of Jewish entrepreneurial activity, new Jews were welcomed as a part of a tradition that helped everyone become more prosperous.

Although Jewish institutions in Wichita were not fully developed, they were strong enough to absorb the relatively small number of immigrants. When the newcomers were relatives, family ties assured a protected environment and rapid socialization. By the time people who were strangers arrived in any numbers, the Jewish community was well enough established to embrace newcomers as if they were relatives. The possibility of a wider selection of marriage partners for local Jewish children helped limit any resentment within the community. Local Jews had much to gain and little to lose by accepting new immigrants.

Within the broad bounds of faith and ethnicity on the periphery, a dynamic tension between tradition and assimilation existed for Wichita's Jews. As in any community of an ethnic, racial, or religious group, the range was vast. There were Jews who had thrown off what they considered the shackles of their heritage, some even converting to Christianity. Others drifted away from the faith, remaining and identifying as Jews, but not participating in the affairs of the community except occasionally to support its causes. A mainstream Reform congregation existed, tied to traditions that helped make Wichita's Jews visible and respected members of the Wichita community. The traditional community had its own range, from intensely religious people who had as little to do with the non-Jewish world as possible to fervently observant ones who kept their faith and managed to straddle the line between ethnic and religious identity and the modern world. This group invested its energy in keeping tradition vibrant. A generation after the influx of a significant number of Jews, Wichita's Jewish community contained a wide array of points of view about how to be simultaneously American and Jewish.

In this push and pull between tradition and assimilation is the crux of the Jewish experience in the American West. Except in coastal areas with large Jewish populations, maintaining tradition over time became first a challenge and ultimately an end in itself. There were relatively few people with whom to share an overt sense of identity, and it was easy to drift away without the all-encompassing grasp of an extended network of kinship, dominant religious and cultural institutions, and boundaries set up by an outside world that rejected assimilation.

An awkward kind of balance existed. Those who embraced the ethic of the region most wholly, who subsumed their heritage and beliefs in a process that led to wealth, respect, prominence, and acceptance, who even acquired the characteristic twang of the southern Plains, played an important role in creating a situation in which less assimilated newcomers could come and thrive. The more traditional adherents kept Jewish culture vibrant and distinct, serving as a potential check on any tendency to migrate too far into the mainstream. Wichita's Jews were engaged in an ongoing negotiation about the viability of both faith and culture, a trade-off with advantages and disadvantages in both directions. Individuals made choices about what was best for themselves, but did so in the shadow of the institutions of their religious community. Free from the oppressive past of Europe, Wichita's Jews created a dynamic ethno-religious world that fit their circumstances; they invented a form of western Judaism that while imperfectly transmitting cultural and religious values, allowed the community to mitigate the problems of its survival.

NOTES

"Same Horse, New Wagon" is a phrase coined by Carl Chuzy in an interview with the author, 12 June 1989.

1. This situation stems more from omission rather than commission. In one example of the neglect, Patricia N. Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II,

and Charles Rankin, eds., *Trails Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), mention all sorts of ethnic groups but ignore Jews altogether. A photograph of Kiowa Indians and the Spiegelberg brothers, prominent nineteenth-century Jewish mercantile traders, is captioned as an example of the diversity of the West. The text lists twenty-three ethnic or national groups present in the West, and never mentions either the Jewishness of the Spiegelbergs or Jews in general. Despite scholarly neglect, there was a strong and visible Jewish presence in the West. Levy, New Mexico, and Rosenberg, Texas, are among town names that testify to a more diverse past, and Jewish names are prevalent in nineteenth-century city directories from all over the West. In one example, the Cheyenne, Wyoming, city directory for 1868, compiled by Emmanuel H. Saltiel, a Sephardic Jew from England, includes twelve distinctively Jewish names in professions characteristic of nineteenth-century Jews. Others appear in first-hand and newspaper accounts. Fabiola Cabeza de Baca, in *We Fed Them Cactus* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), p. 62, reports the death of storekeeper Levi Herstein, killed chasing bandits who robbed his store. He is buried in the Jewish section of the Las Vegas, New Mexico, cemetery along with nearly 200 other Jews. Some of the names show how rapidly assimilation occurred. Cecilio Rosenwald is buried there. Stanley Vestal, in *Queen of the Cowtowns: Dodge City* (New York: Harper and Row, 1952), pp. 82-84, includes a newspaper account of a practical joke played on a Jewish traveling salesman by local Jewish businessmen and their gentile friends. Nearly every other local history mentions Jewish members of communities, rarely identifying them by faith and generally commenting on their upstanding nature. But Jews are often missing from the larger syntheses. Only Richard White, in his *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 451-53, offers a few generalizations, but White, in conversation with the author, noted that he could only work with the extant case studies, Portland and San Francisco, in his synthesis.

2. Historians who do write about the Jews of the West tend to approach the subject from the perspective of American Jewish history rather than western history. See Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1970); Moses Rischin, ed., *The Jews of the West: The Metropolitan Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Fred Rosenbaum, *Free to Choose: the Making of a Jewish Community in the American West:*

The Jews of Oakland, California from the Gold Rush to the Present Day (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and to a lesser degree, William Toll, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class: Portland Jewry over Four Generations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982). One exception is Janet E. Schulte, "'Proving Up and Making Up': Jewish Homesteading Activity in North Dakota, 1900-1920," *Great Plains Quarterly* 10 (Fall 1990): 228-44.

3. Jews of large urban areas and the East Coast have been extensively studied, the most important book being Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the Eastern European Jews to American and the World They Found and Made* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976). For the South, Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (New York: Atheneum, 1980), highlights some of the same issues that are common in existing furtive glances into the western Jewish past. One example is Leonard Dinnerstein, "From Desert Oasis to Desert Caucus," in *Jews of the American West*, ed. Moses Rischin and John Livingston (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), pp. 139-63, in which he notes that "the names of [Jewish] pioneers are to be found on the streets, businesses, and schools [of Tucson], but their grandchildren and great-grandchildren affiliate with a variety of Christian denominations" (p. 140). Floyd S. Fierman, in *Roots and Boots: From Crypto-Jew in New Spain to Community Leader in the American Southwest* (New York: KTAV Press, 1987), p. 142, explains Dinnerstein's observation by saying that "The Jew, in the American Southwest, in the latter half of the nineteenth century was a messenger who did not deliver the message. He knew the teachings, but did not transmit them to the next generation." My argument here is that the Jew did deliver the message; the circumstances of the West changed that message. For an irreverent view of the breadth of diversity in the Jewish-American population today, see Ze'ev Chafetz, *Members of the Tribe: On the Road in Jewish America* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988).

4. Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), pp. 2-5.

5. Laura Lent, "'With Only Pennies in Their Pockets': Wichita's Jewish Community 1869-1929," (master's thesis, Wichita State University, 1990), p. 7. There have been a number of works about western Jewry, but most are overwhelmingly anecdotal. Harriet and Fred Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), is a popular general overview. Floyd S. Fierman, *Guts and Ruts: The Jewish Pioneer on the Trail in the American Southwest* (New

York: KTAV Press, 1985), and *Roots and Boots* (note 3 above), are basic sources, as are two of Fierman's monographs, *The Spiegelbergs of New Mexico: Merchants and Bankers, 1844-1893*, Southwestern Studies Series #4 (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1964), and *The Schwartz Family of El Paso: The Story of a Pioneer Jewish Family in the Southwest*, Southwestern Studies Series #61 (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1980). Fierman follows a pattern of writing about Jewish families, although his later work begins to address community issues. Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (Dallas: Texas Heritage Press, 1989), is generally more interested in families than in community. M. L. Marks, *Jews Among the Indians: Tales of Adventure and Conflict in the Old West* (Chicago: Bennison Books, 1992), also follows the anecdotal path, writing about the experiences of individuals without putting them into historical context. Only Henry Tobias, in *The Jews of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), begins to address the issues of community.

6. H. Craig Miner and William E. Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas: A Story of a Cultural Revolution, 1854-1871* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1978), address Indian removal and the economic and cultural consequences it spawned; *Wichita Beacon*, 4 June 1879 and 12 November 1879.

7. H. Craig Miner, *Wichita: The Early Years, 1865-80* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 59-60; Henry Yabrof, Sr., interview by Laura Lent, Spring 1990. Yabrof's first wife was Lee Hays' granddaughter. At the time of the interview he was nearly one hundred years old. Transcripts of the interview, as of other interviews cited here, are located at the Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation offices in Wichita.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35, 46; Lent "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), p. 4; *Wichita Vidette*, 17 September 1870; Edith Goldschmidt, "Centennial History of Congregation Emanu-El," (*Wichita: Congregation Emanu-El*, 1985), p. 1.

9. Miner, *Wichita: The Early Years* (note 7 above), pp. 77-80; Edith Goldschmidt, miscellaneous notes in preparation for centennial history of Congregation Emanu-El, in possession of the author; for a new view of the importance of the meeting between the railroad and raw materials and the concentric rings of influence it created, see William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991).

10. *Wichita City Directory*, 1878.

11. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 20-22; William C. Ellington, Jr., "Mr. Levy's Downtown Mansion," *Wichita*

Downtown News, 5 November-3 December 1985, pp. 21, 30; H. Craig Miner, *The Magic City* (Wichita: Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Society, 1988), p. 17, notes that Steele and Levy both joined the top one per cent of the city in wealth while still in their mid-twenties.

12. *Wichita City Directory*, 1878, lists the business community; *Wichita Eagle*, 16 July 1879; Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 12-16; Miner, *The Magic City* (note 11 above), p. 16; Edith Goldschmidt to Michael B. Husband, 8 November 1985, Director's correspondence files, Old Cowtown Museum, Wichita. Goldschmidt also corresponded with Richard Fehheimer of San Diego, one of Mayo M. Fehheimer's great-great-grandchildren. Copies of that correspondence are on file at Old Cowtown Museum in Wichita.

13. Miner, *The Early Years* (note 7 above), pp. 78-79, 107.

14. Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews* (note 5 above), pp. 51-82, 107-40, addresses the development of kinship networks in Jewish business in the West; William J. Parish, *The Charles Ilfield Company: A Study of the Rise and Decline of Mercantile Capitalism in New Mexico* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), is the classic study of a familial economic network, while Henry J. Tobias, *The Jews of New Mexico* (note 5 above), pp. 51-135, offers case studies.

15. In one example, the *Wichita Beacon*, 9 July 1879, recounted that the Kohn Brothers Bank installed "elegant and costly French plate glass" to replace more ordinary windows destroyed by a hail storm. The paper pronounced the improvement "a very handsome front."

16. *Wichita Eagle*, 2 April 1879 and 9 April 1879; *Wichita City Council Minutes*, 10 December 1875.

17. Miner, *Wichita: The Early Years* (note 7 above), pp. 142-80.

18. Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), pp. 254-56.

19. Laura Lent and John Lent, "Map of 1877-78 Jewish Businesses in Wichita," and "Map of 1887-88 Jewish Businesses in Wichita," prepared for Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation, Local Jewish History Series, Talk #3, Temple Emanu-El, 4 March 1990, given by the author; *Wichita City Directory*, 1885.

20. Miner, *The Magic City* (note 11 above), p. 37. By the 1990s, there were two Jewish cemeteries in Wichita. A new cemetery was consecrated in the 1930s for Hebrew Congregation, while Highland Cemetery retains a Jewish section. In the far southwestern corner of that section, down the hill and away from the majorities of the burials, lay the

Arnstein family, all next to each other nestled under an aging oak tree.

21. Goldschmidt, "Notes for the Centennial History" (note 9 above), describes the founding of the community; Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews* (note 5 above), demonstrated that the structure of Wichita's nineteenth-century congregation was quite typical.

22. Ben Yaakov, *American Israelite* Cincinnati, 9 October 1885. *Ben Yaakov* translates as the Son of Jacob, along with *Bnei Avraham*, Abraham's children, a common Jewish self-definitive term. It is also possible that *Ben Yaakov* was expressing his Hebrew name, meaning that he was literally the son of a man named Jacob.

23. Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (note 18 above), p. 7; Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (note 3 above), pp. 1-67; Stanley Feldstein, *The Land that I Show You: Three Centuries of Jewish Life in America* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), pp. 41-83, 118-73; Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 A. D.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), details the concept of demographic takeover.

24. Miner, *Magic City* (note 11 above), pp. 52, 55; *Wichita Beacon*, 22 February 1887, p. 1; 11 March 1887, p. 4; *Wichita Eagle*, 8 September 1887, p. 8; 13 September 1887, p. 4; 11 February 1936.

25. *Wichita Beacon*, 22 February 1887, p. 1; *Wichita Eagle*, 8 September 1887, p. 8; 13 September 1887; 13 August 1887, p. 4.

26. *Wichita Beacon*, 31 March 1886; *Wichita Eagle*, 31 March 1886; "Obituary of Lewis B. Solomon," 9 November 1932; "Obituary of Edgar Krailsheimer," 16 September 1927; Clay Hedrick to Fred J. Mankoff, 25 April 1963, Auditor of State, Executive Department, Files; N.A., "Hebrew Community Membership in the Scottish Rite Bodies of Wichita," in possession of Robert Rich of Wichita.

27. *Wichita Beacon*, 31 March 1886; *Wichita Eagle*, 31 March 1886.

28. *Wichita Eagle*, 19 March 1886, p. 6; *Wichita Beacon*, 18 June 1886, p. 4; 4 September 1886; 1 November 1886, p. 1; 6 November 1886; 11 December 1886. Leavenworth, Kansas, had a large Jewish population at this time. Most were in professions that supplied the military, so they became an integral part of the community. This may account for the ease with which Solomon was accepted into Wichita. Today, all that remains of Leavenworth's Jewish community are a few recent stragglers and a cemetery.

29. *Wichita Eagle*, 14 July 1887, p. 4; 8 December 1889, p. 5; 11 April 1891, p. 5; Miner, *Magic City* (note 11 above), pp. 20, 27, 45-69.

30. *Wichita Beacon*, 29 September 1886.

31. Stephen Birmingham, *The Rest of Us: The Rise of America's Eastern European Jews* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), pp. 11-15; Henry L. Feingold, *Zion in America: The Jewish Experience from Colonial Times to the Present*, 2d. ed. (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1981), pp. 96-112; Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), pp. 341-47, 404-08.

32. Ben Yaakov, *American Israelite*, 29 October 1886.

33. Feldstein, *The Land that I Show You* (note 23 above), pp. 70-75; Feingold, *Zion in America* (note 31 above), pp. 96-112; Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (note 18 above), pp. 137-40.

34. Ben Yaakov, *The American Israelite*, 29 October 1886; Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (note 18 above), p. 144; Feldstein, *The Land that I Show You* (note 23 above), pp. 74-75; Feingold, *Zion in America* (note 31 above), pp. 97-101.

35. Even today, in smaller Jewish communities, the practice of hiring a temporary rabbi for major holidays and special events persists. Some congregations seek out experienced rabbis or cantors to augment their regular rabbi. Others bring in rabbinical students nearing ordination in an effort to establish the kind of relationship that will lead to a commitment. It is a process of wooing each other. Smaller congregations need clergy and young rabbis and rabbinical students need employment.

36. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), p. 18.

37. Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (note 18 above), p. 91; Evans, *The Provincials* (note 3 above), pp. 39-50.

38. Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (note 18 above), p. 152; Feldstein, *The Land that I Show You* (note 23 above), pp. 119-33; Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (note 3 above), pp. 26-36.

39. Laura Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 19-20; Hal Rothman and Laura Lent, interview with Edith Goldschmidt, 12 June 1989; *Wichita City Directory*, 1887, 1888, 1893; Feldstein, *The Land that I Show You* (note 23 above), pp. 145-58; for a detailed study of Jewish agricultural cooperatives, see Robert A. Goldberg, *Back to the Soil: The Jewish Farmers of Clarion County, Utah, and the World They Made* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986); and L. David Harris, "Sod Jeruselems" (unpublished ms., 1984), Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

40. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 24-25; Obituary of Joseph B. Kamenensky, *Wichita Beacon*, 12 November 1931.

41. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), p. 25; Hal Rothman and Laura Lent, interview with Carl Chuzy, 12 June 1989.

42. Birmingham, *The Rest of Us* (note 31 above), pp. 3-32; Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (note 3 above), pp. 90-99; Feldstein, *The Land That I Show You* (note 23 above), pp. 185-96.

43. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 16-25; Laura Lent, interview with Henry Yabrof, Sr., 21 July 1989; Hal Rothman, interview with Lillian Kamen(ensky) Finkstein and Helen Kamen(ensky) Rothenberg, 12 June 1989; —, "The Yabrof(f) Story," unpublished typescript, possession of the author.

44. Laura Lent, interview with Mel Witrogen, November 12, 1989; Hal Rothman and Laura Lent, interview with Carl Chuzy, 12 June 1989. Jake Glickman's grandson is former U.S. Representative from Kansas and current Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman.

45. *Wichita Beacon*, 11 August 1913.

46. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Manuscript Census, Population Schedules: 1910* (Washington, D.C., 1910) Hal Rothman and Laura Lent, interview with Carl Chuzy, 12 June 1989; *Wichita City Directory*, 1913; Laura Lent and John Lent, "Map of 1913 Jewish Residences in Wichita," prepared for Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation, Local Jewish History Series, Talk #3, Temple Emanu-El, 4 March 1990. The 1910 census does not differentiate people by religion, but its place of origin and birthplace of parents categories provide defining information for the Eastern European Jewish population. Wichita census-takers were fond of the "Russian Yiddish" and "Russian Hebrew" labels.

47. *Wichita City Directory*, 1907; *Wichita City Directory*, 1912; "Death Claims Pioneer Here," *Wichita Beacon*, 7 November 1931; "Mrs. Rose

Levitt, Charming Wichita Mother, Dies Here," 18 January 1939.

48. 1910 Census, Wichita, Kansas; *Wichita City Directory* 1913; Hal Rothman, "132 N. Waco: A History of the First Coal-Gas Plant in Wichita," (Kansas City: EMI, 1988), pp. 24-31; Miner, *The Magic City* (note 11 above), pp. 50-68, 129-31. The German-Jewish count is less precise. Most of this community had been in the U.S. more than one generation by 1910, and they are not as easily identifiable. One prominent Jew, Henry Wallenstein, Sr., for example, is listed as originating from Ohio.

49. Hebrew Congregation did not adhere to all the rituals of Orthodox Judaism. In one example, the congregation determined that it did not need a common feature of orthodox synagogues, the *mechitza*, a cloth partition separating the men's and women's sections of the synagogue. Decisions such as this made the congregation fit more easily among what have been termed "midwestern traditional" congregations than orthodox ones.

50. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 37-38.

51. —, "Yabrof(f) Story"; Laura Lent, interview with Henry Yabrof, Sr. (note 43 above).

52. Louis Kauffman, "The Life of Henry Wallenstein," (master's thesis, Wichita University, 1939); *Wichita Beacon*, 30 November 1936; 3 December 1936.

53. Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets," p. 23 (note 5 above).

54. Harris, "Sod Jerusalems" (note 39 above), pp. 86-87; Lent, "Only Pennies in Their Pockets" (note 5 above), pp. 21-23, 62-65; Laura Lent, interview with Mel Witrogen, 12 November 1989; Miner, *The Magic City* (note 11 above), p. 197.