Jews of the Outback:

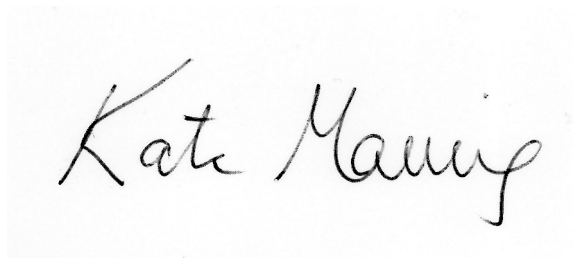# Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill

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I declare that the following thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Jews of the Outback: Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill
Abstract

In the late nineteenth century, Jews from the Russian Empire immigrated to the new world in great numbers. A small but significant community was established in the silver rush town of Broken Hill. Broken Hill – a European city in the middle of the desert – suited the Jews who came there. Within five years of its discovery in 1883, Broken Hill was producing more silver, lead and zinc (and royalties for government) than any other mine in the world. The massive boomerang shaped ore body produced a fortune for Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP), caused the deaths of hundreds of miners, kick started the Australian union movement and produced a society that is as proud and cohesive today as it was in the beginning. The Jews who came to Broken Hill contributed substantially to the development of this society. In return, Broken Hill provided the Jews with something rare in history: a home that was free and safe.

This thesis describes the Jewish community and their contribution to Broken Hill, which, at the turn of the century, was the third largest centre in New South Wales (after Sydney and Newcastle). The study surveys Jewish ethnic origins, the 'waves' of immigration, occupational profiles, the building of the Synagogue (which still stands and is now the home of the Broken Hill Historical Society), business successes, involvement in politics and wider society, and the eventual movement beyond Broken Hill to the capital cities. Finally 'Jews of the Outback: Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill' will attempt to characterise Jewish contribution to one of Australia's most important colonial cities and the impact of Australia on Jewish traditional lifestyles.

Jews of the Outback: Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill

CONTENTS

Introduction

On 21 January 2015, the city of Broken Hill in New South Wales became the only Australian city to be listed by the National Heritage Council. Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt said that Broken Hill exemplified 'the ethos of Australia': 'From Pro Hart to Priscilla to Perilya, it's a town that covers art and culture and mining and industry and the outback of Australia.'[1]

There was awareness that there had been a Jewish community in Broken Hill, and that the synagogue there was one of only three purpose built synagogues in rural New South Wales.[2] There was a broad understanding of the nature of the highly orthodox, Eastern European community. What was unknown was the extent to which the Jewish community contributed to Broken Hill, and therefore 'the ethos of Australia' recognized by the National Heritage Council. To this day there is a place in Broken Hill informally known as 'Mt Zion'; locations are described to the visitor as 'opposite where Griffs' used to be' or 'across the road from Dryen's'; the corner of the main street, Argent St, and Oxide St is still known as 'Krantz's Corner', after the original Krantz Bros. store there. The Jews may have gone, but Broken Hill's streetscape carries many reminders of their presence.

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[1] Andrew Robertson, 'Broken Hill is Nation's First Heritage City', *The Barrier Daily Truth*, 21 January 2015, 1.

[2] The others are Maitland, (1879-1901) and Newcastle, (1927 -). For a detailed discussion of the Maitland Jewish community, see Janis Wilton, *Maitland Jewish Cemetery: A Monument to Dreams and Deeds* (Maitland: Maitland Regional Art Gallery, 2010). Less has been written on the Newcastle Jewish community.

The Jews of Broken Hill have not been adequately recognized. Indeed, *Sharing the Lode: The Broken Hill Migrant Story*,[3] a project specifically written to celebrate migration to Broken Hill by the NSW Migration Heritage Centre, fails to mention Jews at all.[4] A central question in any study such as this is to identify factors that contribute to the survival of a Jewish community in a small town setting. In the case of Broken Hill, an unexpected finding was the Jewish contribution to the survival of Broken Hill itself, and importantly, the recognition of that contribution by those who live there today. By contrast, *Sharing the Lode: The Broken Hill Migrant Story* represents the typical treatment of Jews by non-Jewish authority: when Jews have been very successful, the majority appropriates their successes by absorbing them into the mainstream, rendering their Jewishness invisible. Harry Seidler is always described as an 'Austrian-born Australian architect', never a Jewish architect.   There is a temptation for Jews to assimilate in order to be accepted, but the Jews of Broken Hill enjoyed full acceptance from the beginning and did not need to convert or deny their Jewish background as happened in the Germanic states in the nineteenth century and even in Britain.

This thesis explores the story of these Jews: who they were, where they came from and why. It seeks to describe the particularly vibrant community, and to explain how the community lasted for fifty years in a place with no natural water, manifold climate and health challenges and at a time of

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[3] *Sharing the Lode: The Broken Hill Migrant Story.* Broken Hill: Migrant Museum, in association with Broken Hill Migrant Heritage Committee Inc, 2006. Exhibition catalog.
[4] The work mentions Afghans, Italians, Maltese, Croatians, Filipinos, Norwegians, Lebanese, Greeks and Yugoslavians, but no 'Russians' and no Jews.

extreme industrial unrest. As the first proper study into this question, much of what follows is descriptive. However, certain historical questions emerged relating to Jews' motivations for emigration, the variability of Jewish life in the nineteenth century depending on location and the role of Jews in the longevity of Broken Hill, the longest continuously operating mining city in the world.

The question, 'Who were the Jews of Broken Hill?' may appear simple, but upon examination reveals it is not straightforward at all. The follow up question, 'Why did they come?' unveiled further layers of complexity, with substantial differences of opinion amongst scholars; received family stories that were true, half true and sometimes deliberately false. Perhaps most frustrating was the lack of primary sources from the Jews of Broken Hill themselves, leaving their historian with a difficult and sensitive task of analysis from general Jewish literature, secular contemporaneous reportage, family histories and informed speculation.

First, the existing **literature** is reviewed.

Chapter One: 'Jews in the Barrier Ranges 1870s to 1890', looks at the Jewish population of far western New South Wales prior to the arrival of the 'Russians' who founded the congregation. These earliest Jews were British or Australian born, and came as part of the general movement to open up pastoral lands of the far west. Identifying Jews, never an easy task, was attempted via examination of electoral rolls, publicans' lists, Sands

Directories, Broken Hill/Silverton records and Beverley Davis Burial Data. Next came the so-called 'Germans', who were really from Prussia and therefore likely to be of Polish background. These Jews were middle-class Bavarians and Prussians seeking economic opportunities in opals and other minerals. National Archives and State Records were important sources of information, and all resources were checked against the research of demographer Charles Price.[5]

Chapter Two: 'The Barrier Ranges as 'habitat' for Jews' seeks to describe the 'wild west' nature of the 1880s Barrier, and occupational patterns of Jews during this early period. Contemporaneous reports show conclusively that speculation was the 'second job' of everyone in the Barrier, including Jewish residents. Their 'first jobs' were the time-honoured professions of storekeeper, merchant, caterer and draper. This chapter also seeks to show that, even prior to 1891, the Jewish population of the Barrier was contributing significantly to the development of the region in middleman professions, specialist crafts, and even mining. From a community perspective, these Jews' importance was in laying the groundwork of acceptance for when the 'Russian' Jews arrived. Thanks to the work of economic historian Cormac Ò Gràda[6], a comparison may be made between Jewish immigrants to Ireland and Jewish immigrants to Broken Hill, because of the commonalities of the experiences in both communities.

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[5] Charles A. Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia, 1788 – 1961,' *AJHS Journal and Proceedings* 5, no. 8 (1964): 357-412. Without Price's important work, this study could not have been attempted.
[6] Cormac Ò. Gràda, *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce: A Socio-economic History (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Chapter Three: 'The Ukrainian Crisis' explores the under-researched Jewish agricultural colonies movement in the Ukraine in the nineteenth century, the anti-Jewish action by the Russian authorities to shift Jews from the over-crowded north-west Pale to new farming lands in the Ukraine. This chapter draws primarily on secondary sources to establish the nature of the Jewish agricultural settlements and examines the different scholarly opinions on the rationale for the Russian agricultural experiment. It surveys the particular province, Ekaterinoslav, from which Broken Hill's first 'Russian' Jews came. In addition, the question of the draconian May Laws of 1881 is examined, as well as the variety of motivations behind Jewish emigration.

Chapter Four: 'The Shul – Orthodoxy comes to Broken Hill' is something of a misnomer. Although there was certainly an absence of Jewish practice in the Barrier before the arrival of the 'Russians', it is likely that earlier arrivals were at least in theory, orthodox. This chapter shows that there was in Broken Hill a tolerant spirit, one that even welcomed Jews from 'foreign' parts such as the Russian Empire. Into that environment, the Ukrainian Jews came, and relatively quickly began conducting services and supplying the needs of the community. Perhaps due to the isolation of Broken Hill and the confidence of the post 1891 Jews, there was an initial clash between established Anglo Jewry in Sydney and Melbourne and the Broken Hill congregation, which had to be resolved. This chapter also describes the building and the consecration of the Broken Hill synagogue.

Chapter Five: 'Moving Up' takes a much more detailed look both at the reality of life in the Barrier Ranges in the late nineteenth century, and the extraordinary achievement of many of the Jews who went there. It argues that the particular Jewish culture - almost every 'Russian' who came to Broken Hill originally came from one of three or four provinces in the North-west Pale making them, culturally speaking, 'Litvaks' - was critical to this success in the unforgiving Barrier Ranges. Hirsch Krantz is a case study. Krantz arrived in 1891 and worked as a peddler. Within two years Krantz owned two businesses, and had considerable property holdings by the turn of the century. At the end of his life Hirsch Krantz was a member of the Adelaide Stock Exchange and a highly respected member of the Australian community. The chapter also surveys that other measure of success for the migrant: acceptance by the majority. In Broken Hill society Jews became well represented in social, recreational, business and charitable organizations. However, individuals were almost never identified as Jews. By contrast, Broken Hill resident Kevin Sinclair articulated what many Broken Hill residents reported, and what became an important theme in this study. Sinclair, speaking for the people of Broken Hill, said: 'We all knew they were Jews and they were held in very high esteem.'[7] As a rule, any Jew held in high esteem by the non-Jew is, more often than not, so regarded *in spite* of their being Jewish. At best, a Jew is held in high esteem but their Jewishness is considered irrelevant and is therefore completely discounted. To be

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[7] Interview with author, Broken Hill resident Kevin Sinclair, 10 October 2011.

known as a Jew and *for that reason* 'held in high esteem' was an unexpected finding.[8]

Chapter Six: 'Big shots' surveys the influential and important Jewish citizens of Broken Hill. The style of *macher* ('big shot') changed as time passed, due to a dominant character, Frank Griff. Griff is used as a case study to explore the way power was exercised within the Jewish community and outside it. The chapter also includes a detailed look at the *shtetl* in Lithuania from which Griff came: Zidikai, in the Kovno province. The recent insights of scholars, particularly Gershon Hundert and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, show that the *shtetl* and its culture had a considerable degree of variability, depending on where each shtetl was located in the Russian Empire. Petrovsky-Shtern argues that the *shtetl* is a much neglected and misunderstood concept, having been reduced to 'a ramshackle place of poverty and pogroms'. Finally there is a review of Griff's personal contribution to industrial progress, and to Broken Hill socially and culturally.   This chapter supports the argument of Professor Hundert that the specific type of *shtetl* ('private town') created specific characteristics and attitudes in the Jews that came from them to Broken Hill.

Chapter Seven: 'Philanthropy, education and religious ministry' describes the opportunity taken by Jewish citizens to contribute to both causes of exclusively Jewish interest as well as those specific to the general population in Broken Hill. The plight of the miners before the wins of 1920 was

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[8] ibid.

significant, with terrible health outcomes due to injury, death and respiratory diseases. In the absence of affordable health care, Jews contributed as Lodge members and as members of Friendly Societies to the care of injured miners. Zionism was also a cause close to the heart of these Jews. The contribution to culture is described using the case study of Harold Griff. Education here describes Jewish education, and this chapter reports on the apparent reluctance of the community to invest in their children's formal religious education. The Australian Jewish Historical Society's archive revealed a series of letters and other records on the subject of religious ministry. The deliberate refusal to engage a minister led to significant conflict within the community, and contributed to its ultimate decline.

Chapter Eight: 'Decline of the Community' looks at those factors that caused Jews to leave Broken Hill. Broken Hill was almost always in industrial strife; the growing militancy of the Barrier Industrial Council was an issue, as was the ever-present shortage of clean water. The lack of ongoing ministerial leadership, educational opportunities and suitable marriage partners were significant. As the already small community declined, following movement to the cities, the remaining Jews tended to relax their practice and identify with Broken Hill itself. The failure of governments to facilitate Jewish re-settlement before and after World War II is surveyed. The ongoing difficulties of living in Broken Hill combined with the financial success of Jews there led to the decline of the Jewish community.

Chapter Nine: 'Comparison with Jews in other mining communities' reviews a limited number of mining communities where Jews made their homes, principally the California goldfields and the coalfields of Appalachia. This chapter investigates the issue of German Jewish immigration, and argues that there has been a tendency to see German Jews as a homogenous group bringing Reform to the new world. That is no longer a supportable position. The 'Germans' who went to Ballarat were quite different in religious practice than those who went to California. The particular experience of nineteenth century America encouraged new arrivals to (partly) jettison their cultural background to become 'good Americans'. This was not true in Australia, where the influence of Anglo-Jewry was a restraining influence but did not discourage orthodoxy. This may explain why Reform did not take off in Australia, even though the level of 'German' immigration was similar in both countries. The so-called 'Coalfields Jews' of Appalachia proved to be a much closer comparison to the Jews of Broken Hill than other communities.

'Conclusions': In Broken Hill, as elsewhere, Jews need a critical population base. The observant Jewish community survived on a bare one hundred and fifty people for a substantial amount of time. New arrivals need a larger community for support, access to education, community organizations, ministerial leadership and the ability to maintain *kashrut*. An inflow of new immigrants, had it occurred, may have maintained community vigour. The fact that Broken Hill had almost none of these factors points to the special difficulties of being a *remote*, as opposed to a 'small' or 'rural', town. It also suggests that other factors maintained the Jewish community in Broken Hill

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for as long as it did. Jewish participation in the city from its beginnings helped Broken Hill to form its unique identity.

'Jews of the Outback: Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill' seeks to shed light on understanding the existence of Jews living on the farthest edge of the diaspora. It seeks to understand why Jews living so far away from established Jewish life managed to maintain Judaism for half a century. It also seeks to illuminate the contributions of these Jews to the development to this uniquely cohesive society, a town with multi-ethnic origins and considerable internal harmony, as recognized by the National Heritage Commission in 2015.   As the world retreats from multiculturalism, that story is pertinent and timely.

Literature Review

In her preface to the second edition of her book, *The Edge of the Diaspora*, Suzanne D. Rutland writes:

> Today (The Australian Jewish community) is one of the strongest Jewish communities in the world with its comparatively low intermarriage rates, dynamic day school movement and strong commitment to Zionism and Israel.

The present work supports this view. 'Jews of the Outback: the history of Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill' is the story of the unlikeliest Jewish community imaginable: a *shtetl* in the desert. This was a small community of early Eastern European Jewish arrivals who contributed to the 'Australian way' of being Jewish while helping to build one of the most successful modern multicultural cities in the world. This thesis is the first significant attempt to discover who they were, where they were from and why they came.

Until 2010, almost all the literature dealing with Broken Hill mentions Jews only in passing[1], if at all. Similarly, works dealing with Judaism in Australia only briefly mention Broken Hill. There has been no previous peer reviewed study of the Jews of Broken Hill. A precursor to the present work, *Jews of the Outback: The Centenary of the Broken Hill Synagogue 1910-2010* contains some useful information, but insufficient analysis. The only other

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[1] Geoffrey Blainey, author of *The Rise of Broken Hill* (Melbourne, MacMillan of Australia, 1968) has no reference to Jews, Judaism nor the Hebrew Congregation. R.J. Solomon, author of *The Richest Lode: Broken Hill 1883-1988* (Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1988) only refers to 'Jews' on 271 and the 'Jewish congregation' on 273 as part of a broad overview of religious affiliations in Broken Hill.

material specifically related to the Jews of Broken Hill is by the eminent historian, the late Dr George F.J. Bergman. This unpublished manuscript, entitled 'The Jews of Broken Hill', was based on Bergman's visit to Broken Hill in 1968, correspondence with Rev. A. Bermann, newspaper accounts and document research. Dr Bergman's focus was the Synagogue, and so tended to emphasize those most active in the life of the *shul*. Neither work attempts to analyse the contribution of Jews to Broken Hill's business or industrial development, or to Broken Hill's significant cultural life.

The story of Broken Hill Jewry both follows, and does not follow, accepted understandings of Jewish immigrations to Australia. The accepted view of Jewish migration to Australia is that following the first few Jewish convict arrivals, there were free British Jewish settlers from the 1820s, then gold rush immigrants, largely German, of the 1850s, refugees from the Pale of Settlement fleeing pogroms between 1880 and 1914, and later Polish Jews arriving in the 1920s. This broad view of the world comes to us due to the work of Australian demographer, the late Charles Price, whose *Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788 – 1961*,[2] is invaluable to every student of Australian Jewish history. Price analyzed every second individual naturalized in Australia from 1857 to 1947, including 5,350 Jews.[3] Price's second source was census data. His exhaustive analysis of Jewish immigration from country of origin, country of immediate residence prior to arrival, of occupational group, and of settlement in town and country, is of unique importance. However, as with any statistical generalizations, there are

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[2] Charles Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788 – 1961' *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol 5(8)(1964), 357-412.
[3] Price, 'Jewish Settlers', 361.

subtleties that can change the picture significantly. For example, the naturalization records show that two brothers Israel Krantz (b.1875) were born in Odessa, and a third, Samuel, (b.1881) was born in St Petersberg – cities on opposite sides of the country. According to advice from NSW State Records archivists, naturalization records often record the point of emigration *departure* rather than the place of birth. Therefore some town and even country of origin information of the Jewish settlers, as recorded by Price, may not be accurate.

Although he was entirely diligent in separating out immigrants' countries of origin, Price made no separate category for Prussia. Therefore when he writes: 'The statistics show just how numerically important German and Austrian Jews have been to Australia – about seventy-five percent of the non-British total for the period 1830-1880….and thirty-five percent of the full total of Jewish immigrants (for the entire period)', Price inadvertently misleads us. The reason this matters is that our twenty-first century eyes have a view of what constitutes 'German' Judaism, that is, Judaism informed by the Reform movement, or 'Jewish Enlightenment': *Haskalah*. The Jewish Enlightenment was a movement that attempted to 'reform' Jewish belief and practice to make Judaism acceptable to the Gentile majority. The watering down of Jewish practice led to a tendency towards assimilation by Jews into the dominant culture. However what has emerged is how many Jewish 'Germans' were in fact ethnic Poles living in Prussia on the border of the Pale of Settlement, where Reform was not well established. Price refers to the German Jewish role in fostering Reform in the United States, and asks, 'Was

that also their role in Australia?' Avoiding the obvious conclusion, he suggests that in fact German/ Austrian Jewry *has* fostered Reform in Australia, in spite of the fact that the practice of Reform here is still quite small.[4]

Rutland's assertion that Australian Jewry is strong, in part due to comparatively low rates of intermarriage (an indicator of Orthodoxy rather than Reform) remains true, with 76.9% of married Australian Jews having a Jewish partner, compared with a 2013 Pew survey showing only 56% of American Jews having Jewish spouses. Thus, the Australian experience is not the same as that of the United States. Hasia R. Diner has argued persuasively that the tendency to impose a level of homogeneity on the idea of 'German-ness' cannot be sustained. The Broken Hill study supports the proposition that our Australian rates of intermarriage are low because our largest (non-British) 'German' immigrant population was not from (Western) Reform-minded Germany, but (Eastern) Orthodox Prussia/Poland. It is suggested that this is why, in spite of Price's assertion that German Jews made up 75 percent of the non-British total of Jewish immigrants between 1830-1880, Reform Judaism did not take root in Australia until the 1930s. It is suggested that the 'Germans' of Broken Hill were closer to the Orthodox 'Germans' (Polish Prussians) who founded the Ballarat community, than to the German *maskilim*[5] of Pittsburgh. Therefore, we should be cautious in making assumptions about Australian Jewish history based on the American experience.

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[4] Ibid, 373.

[5] Followers of the 'Jewish Enlightenment' (1770s- 1880s) that produced the Reform movement. This also tended to encourage assimilation into secular European culture.

Why did they come? The question of why is intimately related to 'where'. Immigration history has become less about numbers and more about ethno-historiography, within a 'new scholarly agenda about (ethnic) "identities" jostling for space and attention.' Prior to this, there was a broad perspective, fostered by contemporary reports that viewed Eastern European Jews from 'Russia' as escaping persecution and pogroms. The 1897 booklet, *The persecution of the Jews in Russia,* although clearly a work with an agenda, does not lie with regard to the treatment of Russian Jews. However the impression gained from studies of this kind is that *all* Jews from *all* parts of the Russian empire were asylum seekers or refugees. Broken Hill Jews were sometimes complicit in perpetuating this view. Bergman quotes 'Frank Dryen' (in fact Albert Dryen, according to descendent Robyn Dryen) as claiming 'he was sent to Australia by his parents to escape the antisemitic terror.' In fact Albert arrived with his parents on the *Oldenberg*, disembarking together in 1894. Albert's father Samuel had established a business in Broken Hill by 1895. In addition, members of the family, including three children, returned to Russia in 1899 for a six-month visit, suggesting fear of the 'antisemitic terror' was less than Dryen later portrayed it.

Students of Jewish history are familiar with the 'solution to (Russia's) Jewish problem': that the unofficial aim of the Russian government was 'to make one third of Jews migrate, one third die of disease and one third convert to Christianity.' Conversion to Christianity was to be achieved by forced

military service for a period of twenty-five years, during which time the practice of Christianity was mandated.[6]

As Dana M. Ohren shows in her book, *All the Tsar's men: minorities and military conscription 1874-1905,* the history of forced military conscription is a complicated one. Drafting of Jewish boys, with its cruel service period of twenty-five years, was abolished in 1855. Universal conscription was introduced in 1874. Therefore theoretically Jews were subject to the draft after 1874, and indeed high numbers served (3.46% of the Russian population were Jews compared to 3.5% of the Russian army). However Ohren shows that at the time of highest immigration to Broken Hill, in practice there still remained many exemptions, conditions and administrative means of avoiding the draft[7]. In the specific case of migration to Broken Hill, as will be shown in Chapter Three, it became evident from a detailed analysis of each interview that avoiding the draft was for the most part *not* the reason, in spite of the high number of Broken Hill descendants believing it to be so.

Why then, did they come? This study explored two sources of immigration to Broken Hill. First are migrations from the Jewish Agricultural Colonies in the Ukraine, and prior to that from the north-west Pale, Lithuania, Latvia and

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[6] Petrovsky-Shtern, Yohanan. 2010. Military Service in Russia. YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Military_Service_in_Russia (accessed July 17, 2017).
[7] Dana Ohren, All the Tsar's Men: minorities and military conscription 1874-1905 ((Bloomington: Indiana University, 2006), 180.

Belarus. Considerable assistance was received from the primary researcher on this subject, Chaim Freedman.[8]

Second, there were pogroms after the introduction of the May Laws in 1881, described precisely by I. Michael Aronson. Tomas Balkelis believes that the pogroms of 1881 did indeed spark significant migration. He writes that in the immediate aftermath of the pogroms almost thirteen thousand Jews left Russia for the United States, almost half the number that had gone to America in the entire 1870s. In contrast, immigration historian Yannay Spitzer believes that the 1881 pogroms did not spark specific immigrations, at least not to the same degree as those of 1903-1906.

However there is no dispute that the big spike in immigration from the Russian Empire did not occur until ten years *after* the pogroms of 1881. This occurred in 1891-2, exactly the period in which Jews arrived in Broken Hill. Balkelis suggests that there was a combination of factors, of which the most significant were the 1890 legalization and the rapid spread of Jewish Colonization Society offices throughout the Pale. These provided extensive information on how to emigrate, allowing some sixty thousand Jews to do so in 1892, fully 90 percent of the total migration for that year.[9]

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[8] Email correspondence between author and Chaim Freedman between 2011 and 2016, see http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html
[9] Tomas Balkelis, 'Opening Gates to the West: Lithuanian and Jewish Migrations from the Lithuanian Provinces, 1867-1914', *Ethnicity Studies* 1 no. 2 (2010): 54. http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/EtSt_Balkelis_2010.pdf.

Other scholars take issue with the idea of 'pogrom'. A pogrom is government-sponsored violence against Jews. Aronson, Klier and Lambroza all see the violence that occurred in the Ekaterinoslav province and surrounds as fueled by a peasantry displaced by emerging industrialization, and therefore, strictly, not a pogrom at all. Finally, the 1887 increase in 'numerus clausus' legislation, laws to prevent Jews from accessing secondary and higher education, undoubtedly would have firmed many Jews in their resolve to find a better life elsewhere.

An important population for Broken Hill originated in Lithuania, principally from the province of Kovno, and from the adjacent Latvian province of Courland. The 'pogrom' as a push factor is even less sustainable in the case of Lithuania than it is in the Ukraine, certainly for the period 1881 – 1894. There is agreement that there was little antisemitic violence in Lithuania. Following the work of economic historians such as Simon Kuznets and Eli Lederhandler, as well as increasing information becoming available from Russian archives, a picture emerges of the motives for emigration as more complex. Historians such as David Ceserani, John Doyle Klier, and Cormac Ò Gràda advocate for a view that sees much Jewish migration (particularly from the north west Pale) as determined by the 'pull' factor of economic opportunity.

Gershon David Hundert's important work *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century* provides a comprehensive description of the different *shtetlach* in Eastern Europe, with their different character and purpose.

Christianity was not finally established in Lithuania until 1417. Jewish life was therefore well established in Lithuania before the arrival of Christianity; it is no accident that the great seat of Jewish learning outside Jerusalem – Vilna - is in Lithuania. During the present study it became evident, thanks to the scholarship of Petrovsky-Shtern, Kuznets, Balkelis, Hundert, and Klier, that Jewish life in Lithuania was protected and to some extent privileged (in relation to that of Jews elsewhere) due to the importance of Jews as merchants and traders in an otherwise agrarian economy. The overlord relied on Jews for income, and therefore the position of Jews in Lithuanian Grodno was quite different to that of Jews in Polish Poznan, where significant restrictions applied. The recognition of the importance of Jews in the local economy, combined with their long established life in Lithuania gave *Litvaks* the confidence to seek opportunities elsewhere.

This was good news for the Broken Hill researcher, as the briefest acquaintance with Broken Hill Jewry was enough to appreciate that these Jews were no 'huddled masses yearning to breathe free'.[10] The Jews of Broken Hill arrived *with* their families, and without hesitation headed straight to Broken Hill. Many became very successful very quickly. Broken Hill Jews had more in common with similar Lithuanian populations who went to South Africa, and the coalfields of Appalachia than with the German Jews who went to California two generations before. These Jews knew where they were going. Yiddish journals of the nineteenth century were full of information

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[10] from Emma Lazarus's poem at the Statue of Liberty:
http://www.libertystatepark.com/emma.htm

about possibilities in the new world. The lure of the gold rush, the silver rush and even the coalfields attracted these nuggety small business people with a willingness to take risks.

In addition to the secondary sources discussed above, primary sources were significant in terms of building a clear picture of the role of Jews in Broken Hill. These sources reveal that they were not in any way marginal to the development of Broken Hill; indeed, they were essential to it. This assertion derives from original research, analysis and synthesis of a multiplicity of sources. The existence of *Trove*, the digital resource of the National Library of Australia, containing full records of newspapers from the beginning of the colony until 1954, permitted access to a range of contemporary records not accessible to Dr Bergman. *The Barrier Miner* and the *Hebrew Standard of Australasia* have been critical to piecing together the life of early Broken Hill and those who lived there, with contemporary reportage challenging twenty first century assumptions. It is commonly supposed that Australia was almost completely British until the nineteen sixties and seventies. Newspapers demonstrated the extent of multiculturalism in the Barrier Ranges in the late nineteenth century, as reports and articles referred to the cultural diversity of the local population.[11] The newspapers were also an important source in developing an understanding of the history of individual Jewish businesses, such as the business story of Hirsch Krantz, who went from peddling a fruit cart in Broken Hill to becoming a member of the Adelaide Stock Exchange. Advertisements proved that kosher meat was

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[11] for example*, Barrier Miner,* 13 October 1891, 2. The Jews referred to could be the Krantz family, who arrived between 1891 and 1893.

being sold in Broken Hill in 1905, and without newspapers there would be no detail available describing the establishment and history of the Broken Hill synagogue.

The extensive philanthropy of the Jewish community was recorded in documents retained by the Broken Hill Historical Society. The Australian Jewish Historical Society archives were also invaluable, holding the only remaining records from the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation itself. The National Archives of Australia permitted identification of Broken Hill Jews' naturalization records; at the other end of the scale, there are extraordinarily useful records made available through the voluntary labour of amateur historians. These include the digitized publication of Western New South Wales Hotel Publicans licenses (Rootsweb) and the publication of mining and pastoral records by the Internet History Resources group. Mention, too, should be made of the Australian Cemeteries Index, a function of NSW Births Deaths and Marriages, as well the unique Beverley Davis Burial Database. This study was underpinned by oral history involving a questionnaire[12] with Broken Hill descendents. A smaller number were interviewed and the interview recorded. Permission was received from the Human Ethics section at the University of Sydney, each interview was audio taped and all interviewees gave permission for their names to be mentioned in this study.[13]

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[12] Sample questionnaire may be found following bibliography
[13] Lawrence Lake, 30 May 2010; Robyn Dryen, 4 April 2010; Janette Rosenthal-Kahn, 28 April 2010; David Cohen, 5 June 2010; Tracey Griff, 15 June 2010; Dorothy Lazarus, 28 June 2010; Fay and Ben Isaacs, 3 July 2010; Syd Shenker, 27 July 2010; Dorothy Staska, 6 August 2010; Bernard Press, 22 August 2010; Iven Klineberg, 2 September 2010; Sidney Griff, October 2011.

Both questionnaire material and interviews were summarized, and were in part originally published in book <u>Jews of the Outback: the Centenary of Jewish Life in Broken Hill</u> (Melbourne: Hybrid Publications/Australian Jewish Historical Society, November 2010).

There is something special about a study with a bibliography that includes both Professor Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern of Princeton University and Gwen Rowe of Saltbush Corner, New South Wales. This thesis is the first attempt to write a comprehensive review of Jewish life in Broken Hill. Without question, there is more that can be done, particularly in relation to the contribution of Jews in Broken Hill/Barrier Ranges to Australian industrial history, and also to the unusually cohesive nature of Broken Hill itself. As such, 'Jews of the Outback: the history of Jewish Settlement in Broken Hill' is but a beginning.

**Chapter 1: Jews in the Barrier Ranges 1870s to 1890**

This is one story of the world's oldest civilization and its new life in the world's most ancient land. The foundational event of Judaism, the Exodus, took place in the desert. For much of their history Jews have lived and worked in cities. Broken Hill – a European city in the desert – suited the Jews who came there. Jewish successes and the lure of spectacular fortunes encouraged others to come.

The Jews of the Outback were ethnically diverse, reflecting the different waves of Jewish immigrants to Australia. The very earliest arrivals were English, or Australian born. They were amongst the first to open up the pastoral settlements of the Darling, a river more than 100 kilometres from Broken Hill.[1] Following were Prussian Jews, and Jews originating from the north-west Pale of Settlement. These Jews are thought to have been motivated by economic opportunities as well as legal discrimination against them in their homelands. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, ten years after the establishment of Broken Hill, yet two more groups of 'Pale' Jews came. The first group were country-dwellers in Ukraine in the south-west Pale, escaping persecution and poverty. The second group, who arrived from the Russian Empire via the British Isles, were newly urbanised, ambitious and acculturated to modernity. In the twentieth century, further migration was from Eastern Europe. This was in largely a consequence of

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[1] See map, following page
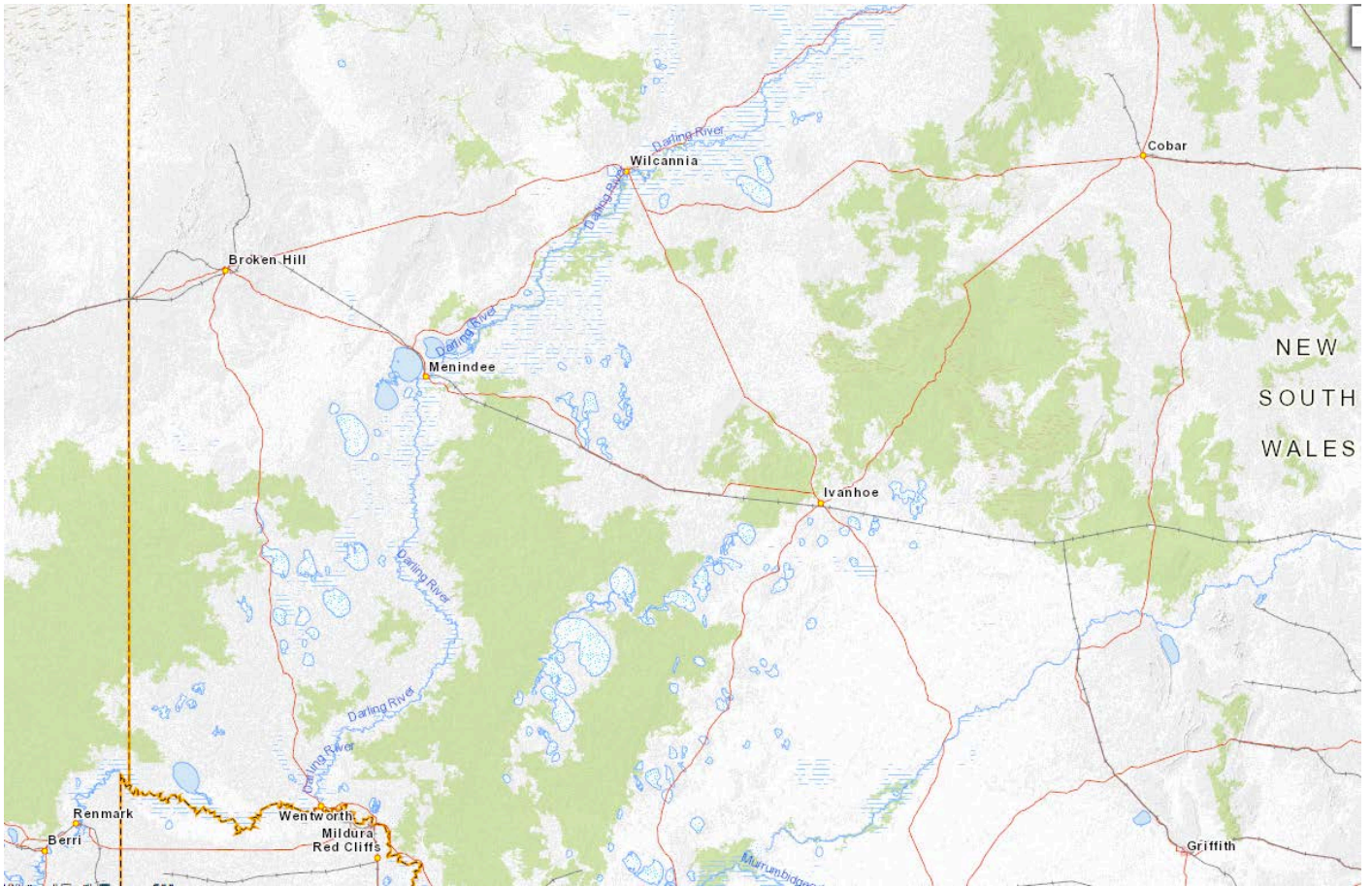
Map 1: Broken Hill, Darling River in Western NSW

Map data in public domain
http://www.naturalearthdata.com/about/

established Broken Hill Jews' ability to sponsor new arrivals, usually through family or '*landsmann*' connections. This chapter identifies these earliest arrivals, why they settled in the region, and the nature of their work they pursued.

Countries of origin

Anglo-Jewish settlers

The 1870-71 NSW Electoral Rolls for the Balranald[2] districts, within which Broken Hill and Silverton are located, reveal names of established Australian-Jewish background, whose families had arrived as part of the earlier Anglo-migration either as convicts or free settlers. We find Jewish names in districts of Wentworth, Gogol, Murrumbidgee, Brewarrina, at Mt Gipps (the name of the Station within which Broken Hill sits), Brindigabbah and from Hay. All may be found in the Beverley Davis Burial Data,[3] and thus may be asserted definitively to be Jewish. However it is likely that Beverley Davis' list is incomplete; names on the 1870-71 electoral roll, and later associated with Broken Hill, include Golding, King, Stone, Symons, and Saunders. Descendents of Emmanuel and Vaiben Solomon appear very early in Broken Hill's history.[4] Resident in the Barrier five years *before* the

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[2] Accessed from New South Wales Family History Document Service, *Internet History Resources,* accessed 11 August 2011, https://www.ihr.com.au/documents.html. Hay is included in the Barrier at this earliest period because prior to 1888 Hay was where court cases were held for the entire region.

[3] BD-BD Grave IDs: Joseph Harris 3865; John Davis 23616; Henry Davis 32185; Joseph Lee 1048; John Lee 48399; Ralph Moss 37556; Henry Barnett 25192; the Rt. Hon. Edward Cohen 38180; Ernest Meyer 48314; Harris Cohen 3082; Elias Cohen 7421; George Davis 1234; Samuel Harrison 24102; Henry Davis relies upon 'Ailcey Salmon widow of Henry' 39015; William White 20899; Joseph Cohen 3529; Maurice Cohen 34828; Simon Moss 38413; Abraham Moss 34420; Alfred Tartakover 1883; Mitchell Tartakover 25100, and Louis Gerstman 2271. http://www.bd-bd.info/

[4] R.J. Solomon, author of *The Richest Lode: Broken Hill 1883-1988* (Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1988) is a descendent of Vaiben Solomon.

first discovery of silver in 1876, these Jews were engaged in pastoral activities.

Droving is thirsty work, and amongst the earliest publicans in the Barrier were Barnett Isaacs (Caledonian Hotel, 1877-1878); Mordecai Joseph Green (Crystal Hotel, 1891); Barnett Harris (Duke of Cornwall Hotel, 1877) and James Israel (Duke of Cornwall, 1889).[5] Traditionally, Jews were innkeepers in Europe and this economic profile continued in the newly emerging British colony of New South Wales, with many Jews acting as publicans and owning hotels in other country towns.[6]

Another well established Jewish name in early Broken Hill history was Boan. Henry Boan established the first major store, in 1886, with his brother Ernest. Boan Brothers was reported to have turned over a £1000 a week after just three years' trading.[7] The Boan Brothers did not come to Broken Hill by chance: their father, English born Thomas Boan, had been a miner.[8] Therefore, the earliest Jews of British origin had pastoral and mining interests as well as more traditional Jewish occupations.

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[5] 'AUS-NSW-WEST Mailing List Hotels and Publicans Licences,' last modified 23 July 2006, accessed 12 August 2011, http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~surreal/NSWW/Hotels/.
[6] Helen Bersten, 'Jews in Rural New South Wales,' *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 13, no. 4: 631. Appendix V includes a list of Jewish publicans in NSW country towns, e.g. Nathan Mandelson and Solomon Moses (Goulburn); Saul Lyons, Abraham Samuel and Solomon Levien (Maitland); Levy Vandenberg and Abraham Cohen (Forbes) and Baron Cohen (Parkes).
[7] The two brothers had a genius for marketing, employing brass bands to drum up trade as well as extensively using press advertising before such an approach was commonplace, see *Barrier Miner*, 7 March 1929, 2.
[8] Toby Manford, 'Henry Boan 1860-1941,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 8 April 2013. http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/boan-henry-5274.

But why? Why would established families such as Moss, Davis, Harris and Cohen endure the hardships of the outback? The answer lies in the expectation amongst nineteenth century Australians that gold would be discovered in South Australia. Gold had been found in Victoria, New South Wales and West Australia.[9] Common sense dictated that gold would be found somewhere in between; it was just a matter of time.[10] Maurice Coleman Davies was one amongst many who had staked a claim in Victoria, and in 1866 moved to Adelaide ready for the next discovery. Davies eventually became significant in Broken Hill's rise: he built the crucially important Stephens Creek Reservoir.[11] His son, D.W. 'Karri' Davies (later of Boer War fame) became a mining engineer in Broken Hill.[12]

Prussians, Poles, Lithuanians

Prussian and Polish/Lithuanian arrivals in the Barrier came originally to the town of Silverton in the early 1880s. Silverton, where silver was discovered in 1876, is easy to miss: records relating to its brief life as the first city of the Barrier are largely lost due to the Garden Palace Fire of 1882.[13] Even in 1883, *Skinner's NSW Gazetteer* offers that transport to the region from

[9] Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush that Never Ended A History of Australian Mining (*London: Cambridge University Press, 1963). Gold was first discovered in NSW in 1851 in the town of Hill End (13) and in Victoria, also in 1851, in Ballarat; (30). The West Australian finds began in 1886 in the Kimberleys, leading to the main gold rush towns of Coolgardie (1892) and Kalgoorlie (1893) (177).

[10] Brian R. Hill, 'The 'Merican Expert' L. R. Menzies and his Role in a South Australian Mining Fiasco,' *The Australian Mining History Journal* 9 (2011): 170.

[11] Manford, 'Henry Boan,' quoting the *Register* (Adelaide), 12 May 1913, 6.

[12] Russell Stern, 'David Walter "Karri" Davies,' *AJHS Journal* 19, no. 1 (2008): 35.

[13] 'Collections belonging to the Linnean Society and Arts Society of New South Wales were lost, as was the colony's census of 1881, documents relating to land occupation and railway surveys.' http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/fire accessed 11.18am 25 July 2017.

Sydney involves 'rail to Hay, thence coach 711 miles to Wilcannia'[14] with no mention of Silverton. However, Silverton grew from two hundred and fifty persons in September of 1883 to nearly two thousand within a year. An early, independent description of Jews (amongst others) is from Silverton in 1888, amidst the thrilling atmosphere of speculation and silver:

> On foot or in the saddle, by coach or by team, the diggers reached Silverton at last... A mighty throng of restless moving humanity of all nations, all colours and all creeds, bustled about...Here was a crowd of Irishmen want to 'shout' for everybody or to fight with anybody; there a patient cute-looking Chinaman or two...Behold a group of Germans, fair-faced, half mad with excitement, talking and gesticulating in the most frantic manner as if they had a world of business to do and no time to do it in. Englishmen were everywhere strong, resolute, surly... Scotchmen keen eager and silent, looking after the main chance... Australians bold, pushing boastful generous....**Jews were there peddling everything under the sun, and vowing that they lost money over all they sold or bought**. Afghans in many coloured raiments...Italians scream...and Frenchmen flew about like men distraught... This was Silverton, the capital of the Barrier in those days."[15]

The Jews described above by 'a special correspondent' in 1888 are clearly

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[14] 'Skinner's NSW Gazetteer', (Sydney: Batson and Atwater, General Printers, Sydney, 1883), accessed 11 August 2011. https://www.ihr.com.au/secure/html/skinner83.html.

[15] 'A special correspondent of the South Australian Register', *The Barrier Silver and Tin Fields 1888* (Adelaide: WK Thomas and Co, 1888), 2. Bold added by author.

differentiated by language and by occupation. Isaac Abrahams, who arrived in the Colony in 1874 on the ship *Collwyn* from St Petersburg,[16] is listed as 'hairdresser' but in Broken Hill, he became a hawker. Peddling permitted the new arrivals, especially those from the Pale, to earn a living while learning English. It did not require much capital investment, and, in the barren Barrier, there was a considerable market for everything.

Amongst this early wave of Jewish immigrants, there were a number of Prussians. They included Henry Levy,[17] naturalised 28 December 1868, who later became a partner with George Lewis, of Lewis and Levy, Pawnbrokers, Argent Street; Simon Harris,[18] naturalised 3 March 1870; and Samuel Rosenthal,[19] naturalised on 1 May 1872, one of the original committee members of the Broken Hill Synagogue. Records from the Silverton Hospital (1884) show the admission of 'Jew' Adolph Robert Rosenstock, 53, a cook at the Poolamacca Station, from 'Konigisberg, Prussia', and 'Jew' Simon Samuel, a 'travelling cook'.[20]   The Silverton Hospital 'List of Persons supplying Goods and Services, 24 October 1883-12 December 1887'[21] included Robert Isaac, spirits merchant, later the Broken Hill tobacconist. Though not included in Silverton lists of householders, Isaac was one of the signatories of the 1886 petition to have Silverton proclaimed a municipality.[22] Silverton Hospital wardsman, Julius Woolfe was buried in the Fawkner

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[16] Isaac Abrahams, NSW Certification of Naturalisation no. 143. 20 May 1887.
[17] Henry Levy, SRNSW: 3/91-[4/1202].
[18] Simon Harris, SRNSW: 3/105-[4/1202].
[19] Jacob Samuel Rosenthal, SRNSW: 3/127-[4/1202].
[20] Information from the Silverton Gaol and Historical Museum, Burke St, Silverton NSW 2880, Australia. These records are handwritten.
[21] 'Silverton Hospital Goods and Services list 1883-1887,' compiled by Royce H. Mew on 27 March 1978, BH Historical Society Genealogy Group.
[22] RHB Kearns, *Silverton a Brief History*, (Broken Hill: Broken Hill Historical Society, 1973), 21.

Cemetery in 1924.[23] A number of Prussians were associated with the opal trade, as listed in the *Barrier Miner*.[24] As will be discussed later, in the main these Prussian Jews did not participate in the life of the Broken Hill *shul*. However, there is evidence that Jewish ethical thought and practice informed the actions of those 'German' Jews who chose to move to Broken Hill, as seen with the financial assistance they provided for their Jewish brethren who arrived in Broken Hill after 1890.

The Silverton finds were nothing compared with what was found in Broken Hill. By 1885, Broken Hill Proprietary shares were gaining attention. A journalist from the Melbourne *Leader* was invited to inspect the lode. As Geoffrey Blainey records:

> ...Patches of silver 'glistened and sparkled as if they were set in diamonds'. No Silverton mine which (the journalist) had inspected had such glitter. Enquiring the width of the lode he was told, 'Well, we have gone 20 feet six inches and have not quite cut through it.'... At Silverton, a lode of five feet wide would have been regarded as impressive. In Broken Hill, the lode in places exceeded five *hundred* feet wide.[25]

Broken Hill rapidly overtook the earlier site and by the 1890s had emerged as a boom-town. Jewish immigrants took notice.

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[23] Beverley Davis Burial Data, record 34466.

[24] *Barrier Miner*, 25 March 1899, 2. They included Emil Guggenheim, J.C. Kleinhammer, Marcus Mannheim, and A. Vandenberg of Wilcannia, and Louis Klein and his White Cliffs associates, A. E. Goldstein and a Mr Benjamin. The first three are of Prussian origin.

[25] Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill* (Melbourne: Macmillan and Co., 1968), 24.

Many arriving in the Barrier Ranges before 1890 were from Poland. Lewis Berliner, of Berliner and Co. tailors, reportedly had an unpronounceable Polish surname. The family story claims the tailor chose the name 'Berliner' from a railway station sign he had seen en route to Australia.[26] Also from Poland was Sigmund Hoffnung, who was naturalised on 21 July 1870.[27] In 28 March 1888, Henry Edelman also from Poland, is listed in the naturalisation files.[28] There are difficulties in accurately identifying cultural background. For example, while 'Henry Edelman' is listed in naturalisation records as coming from Poland,[29] 'Albert Edelman' (nat. 30 April 1902) is recorded as from Germany[30] and 'Harry Edelman' (nat. 20 March 1903) is from Russia.[31] All are brothers in the same family. These differences also reflect the division of Poland between Tsarist Russia (including the Baltic countries), Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which remained in force from 1772 to 1919.

Another member of the family, Edward Edelman, general storekeeper at 504 Blende St, does not appear in currently accessible NSW records at all. However, a paper record held by the Broken Hill Historical Society[32] provides a fascinating clue as to how the 'chain' from 'Russia' to Broken Hill might have occurred. This states that Edward Edelman married Bessie Smith in 'Wexna, Russia'. Wexna is in the Kovno *gubernaya* in Lithuania. The Kovno

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[26] Broken Hill Historical Society information given by a grandson of Lewis Berliner to Margaret Price. Interview with Margaret Price, November 12, 2010.

[27] Sigmund Hoffnung, SRNSW: 3/108-[4/1202].

[28] Henry Edelman, SRNSW:10/230-[4/1209].

[29] Henry Edelman, SRNSW: 10/230-[4/1209].

[30] Albert Edelman, SRNSW: 16/322-[4/1215].

[31] Harry Edelman, SRNSW: 17/148-[4/1216].

[32] Birth record, Louis Edelman, held by BHHSoc, no. of Application 46/46363. Birth registered in the district of Broken Hill Alma and Sturt, 1906.

province was almost exclusively the source of the Jews who went to Ireland.[33]   Fifty percent of all Polish Jews and forty-three percent of Lithuanian Jews who immigrated to Australia between 1881 and 1920 (about three hundred and twelve people) came via the United Kingdom.[34] Mark Rubin (1867?-1919), pearl dealer and pastoralist, was born at Salantai in the province of Kovno, Russia (Lithuania), son of Louis Rubinstein, medical practitioner, and his wife Hannah, née Smitkin. Rubin was, for many years, a miner and opal dealer in White Cliffs.[35] Other Broken Hill Jews who came from Kovno include Louis Oberman (b. 1857 in Kadan, Kovno), his wife Lena Greenblat, also born in Kadan;[36] the Dubins, the Goulds (their original name, 'Goldfarb' became 'Gold' and then 'Gould' when spoken with the Irish accent![37]); the Bubs (later became Simons), and Israelis Silberas. Frank and Phillip Griff, who spent a period in Ireland, came from the town of Zidikai, also in Kovno. Other Jewish names mentioned by Ò Gràda as having been resident in Ireland include Hyman, Berman, Price and Goldberg.[38] All these are also Broken Hill names.

The very earliest Jews in the Barrier may not have inaugurated 'Jewish life' in a communal sense. However, they did establish a foundation upon which later arrivals were able to build. They provided social and financial assistance, enabling the next wave to prosper. For example, in 1891, just-off-the-boat

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[33] Ò Gràda, *Jewish Ireland*, 2.
[34] Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia,' Appendix IV. Price does not distinguish between England and Ireland.
[35] John Playford, 'Mark Rubin,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 19 December 2011 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rubin-mark-8292/text14533.
[36] Oberman Family Tree, supplied by Joe Gould.
[37] Joe Gould family history, supplied by Joe Gould.
[38] Ibid.., 7-8.

Israel Krantz was charged with obstructing the thoroughfare with an unregistered cart. Krantz was helped by the earlier arrival, J.C. Kleinhammer, who acted as an interpreter. As Kleinhammer was Prussian and Krantz Ukrainian, their language in common must have been Yiddish. The prosperous, well-established Kleinhammer could have felt little in common with the rough newcomer. The charge was proven and a fine imposed. Yet, the *Barrier Miner* reported that 'Mr Kleinhammer, who acted as interpreter, refused the usual fee allowed in such cases.'[39]

These early waves of Jewish migrants were also active in the civic and social institutions in Broken Hill, again mirroring similar patterns elsewhere in the colonies. The Edelman family were highly involved in community organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce board and various Masonic clubs. Samuel Isaac Solomon was captain of the Broken Hill Fire Department, and the Rosenbergs were stalwarts of the Barrier Temperance Alliance.[40] The extremely rapid progress of the Jews who arrived after 1891 owed something to the harmonious environment between Jews and non-Jews established by those first arrivals in Broken Hill.

Population

Price specified 29 Jewish men and 12 Jewish women as living in Broken Hill in 1881.[41] Of course Broken Hill did not exist in 1881; its earliest possible date is 1883, when boundary rider Charles Rasp discovered what he thought was tin. In 1881, the big town in the Barrier was Wilcannia. Writing in 1964,

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[39] *Barrier Miner*, 2 July 1891, 2.
[40] Curtis, *The History of Broken Hill*, 104ff.
[41] Price, 'Jewish Settlement', Appendix VI.

Price may simply have applied his findings to the 'big town' of the twentieth century, Broken Hill.

The numbers – 29 men and 12 women – are of interest. These numbers put Broken Hill above every other rural centre for 1881 except Tamworth, (45 Jews) and only just behind Maitland, (52 Jews) and Newcastle (50 Jews) both of which were both big, important commercial cities in 1881.[42] The figures are even more remarkable when one considers that Broken Hill/Wilcannia is not even a rural city but a *remote* one: just travelling there could take weeks; during droughts coach drivers refused to venture too far into the red desert, one reportedly warning over-keen passengers that 'Your bones… will be left bleaching on the plains.'[43] Water was so scarce that one intrepid traveller survived only by drinking his horse's blood.[44] Price's estimate of 41 Jews, then, appears to be a bold claim, especially when according to comparative census data between 1871 and 1881, there was a four per cent *decrease* in Jews living in NSW, from 48 Jews per thousand persons in 1871 to 44 per thousand in 1881.[45]

In 1871, taking only populations over fifteen persons, Jewish presence in rural New South Wales looked like this:

[42] Price, 'Jewish Settlers', appendix VI.
[43] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, 16.
[44] Ibid, 14.
[45] Australian Data Archive, (for NSW 1881 Census data; accessed 30 September 2011), http://hccda.ada.edu.au/.

Town	Jewish Men	Jewish Women	Total pop.
Albury	10	7	17
Bombala	11	5	16
Cooma	21	11	33
Goulburn	36	41	77
Grafton	10	11	21
Grenfell	17	9	26
Hay	10	17	17
Maitland	27	16	43
Newcastle	29	25	54
Tamworth	14	14	28
Young	8	9	17

[46]

In 1871, the Jewish population of Wilcannia is listed as two males.

However between 1871 and 1881, the population of Wilcannia *increased* from 264 people in 1871 to 1424 in 1881 – a population increase of 500 percent.[47] Nearby Menindee, which did not exist at all in 1871, had 261 people living there in 1881.

According to the Census, in 1881 there were 17 Jewish men and 8 Jewish women per thousand population in rural New South Wales. Therefore, Price

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[46] *Census of NSW 1871*, (Sydney: Thos. Richards, Gov't Printer, 1873).
[47] For comparison, Euston grew from 100 persons in 1871 to 117, and Wentworth 445 to 689.

has calculated the Jewish population of Broken Hill by combining the Wilcannia and Menindee figures:

<u>Wilcannia/Broken Hill JEWISH MEN</u>

1881   1424   1424 x .017 =   24.208

          Menindee

1881   261   264 x .017   =   4.437

24.208 + 4.437 = 28.645   rounded up   = **29 Jewish men**

<u>Wilcannia/Broken Hill JEWISH WOMEN</u>

1881   1424   1424 x .008 =   11.392

          Menindee

1881   261   264 x .008   =   2.088

11.392 + 2.088 = 13.48   rounded down   = **12 Jewish women**

He may well have been correct about the number of Jewish citizens in the Barrier Region, or Broken Hill as he defined it, in 1881.

However, his next estimate relating to the number of Jewish people in Broken Hill at 1901 may be less accurate. Price's estimate of 65 men and 38 women is almost certainly an underestimate of Jews in the Outback at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

These earliest Jews in the Barrier, with their mixture of British, Prussian, Lithuanian, and Polish backgrounds did not inaugurate an organised Jewish community in the region. They originally settled in Silverton, but the finds there were nothing compared with what was found in Broken Hill.

By the 1890s Broken Hill had emerged as a boom-town. After 1885 the centre of Jewish life moved to Broken Hill and a new phase in the history of the Jewish community in the Barrier region, with the formation of a more organised Jewish community. Those who founded the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation arrived after 1891. They also built the synagogue and significantly contributed to the commercial life of Broken Hill. These Jews, therefore, deserve a more detailed treatment, and will be discussed at greater length in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: The Barrier Ranges as 'habitat' for Jews

> *...*Most tradesmen are engrossed in making money in the mining world.
> The extent to which share-mongering is carried on has been referred to
> before. But I have since obtained from a competent authority an
> estimate of the share transactions in this town. He puts the amount
> down at not less than £70,000 a week.... [1]

> *- The Barrier Silver and Tin Fields, 1888*

In 1888, there were just five thousand people in Broken Hill. That such a
small population could engage in share trading worth £70,000 every week
shows that everyone in Broken Hill sought to participate in mining activity.
Within two years, Broken Hill's population had increased to *twenty thousand*
people, making it the third largest urban centre in NSW after Sydney and
Newcastle.[2] When the first 'Russians' arrived in 1891 Broken Hill was a well-
established mining city. This chapter will examine the socio-economic nature
of the Jews residing in Broken Hill during the early period of settlement.

Occupational Profile

The urban nature of Broken Hill is important. The European Jews who came
to Broken Hill after 1891 originated largely from towns and cities rather than
rural *shetls*. Price reports that during the period 1880 – 1920 'Australia
received an appreciable proportion of its east European Jewish migration

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[1] *The Barrier Silver and Tin Fields*, 1888, 19.

[2] There were 19,905 people in Broken Hill itself, and 23, 438 in the Broken Hill district, in 1891,
see *Barrier Miner*, 2, 14.02.1891 http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/44063195

from Vilna, Cracow and other centres of Jewish learning, and from large cities such as Odessa and Warsaw.'[3] Price's analysis shows that 27 percent of Jewish immigrants came from capital cities, and that 33 percent came from towns such as Libau, Kovno, and St Petersburg; that is, 60 percent of all Jewish arrivals between 1880 and 1920.[4] Thus, Jews from the Pale who arrived in New South Wales were educated and experienced in urban trades and professions. While it is true that some began life in the Great South Land in the time-honoured path of hawking and peddling, the statistics suggest that most had come from skilled backgrounds.[5]

As elsewhere in the world, in Broken Hill European Jews worked as shopkeepers, merchants and middlemen. The dominant occupations in Australia were tailoring (15.2%) and catering, (14.8%) with 'Russians' the main ethnic group working as tailors, (24.2%) and 'Germans' doing the bulk of the catering (25%).[6] The category 'catering' here includes fruiterers, butchers, bakers, grocers, general storekeepers and tobacconists.

What is striking is the absence of other occupations engaged in by immigrant East European Jews in other countries. In Ireland at a similar period, 20 percent of Jews worked as drapers; but in Australia between 1880 and 1920, only four percent did so. In Ireland, hawking or peddling was undertaken by 36 percent of Jews in 1891, reducing to 12 percent in 1911.[7] In Australia, an

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[3] Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', 378.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ò Gràda, *Jewish Ireland,* 18. Ò Gràda quotes the 1897 census of Kovno, a province of Lithuania, from which many Broken Hill Jews originally came. Jews made up 18.6% of all those employed. But they accounted for 49.9% of those in crafts and industry, 51.8% in professions and the civil service, and 91.2% of those engaged in trade and credit. Only 1.5% of Jews were engaged in agricultural labour.

[6] Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', Appendix V(e) 'Occupations'.

[7] Ò Gràda, quoting 'Census of Ireland General Reports 1891-1911', *Jewish Ireland,* 49.

average of two and a half percent of Jews were so engaged in the same period.[8] There were far greater numbers of Jewish jewellers in Australia at the time, 3.8 percent, compared with the Irish figures. Jewellers do not register among the main occupational groups in late nineteenth century Ireland at all.[9]

The use of the word 'draper' may well have a different meaning in Australia than in Ireland. In Ireland, the term draper usually meant 'credit draper', a style of peddler who offered goods on credit with weekly repayments.[10] In Australia, the term 'credit draper' is almost unknown, although the term 'cash draper' is found.[11] The absence of 'credit drapers' may reflect the absence of small villages in close proximity to one another, necessary for the 'weekly men' to ply their trade, as they did in Ireland. By contrast, many Broken Hill Jews positively discouraged credit. Krantz Bros advertised that their 'cash trading' allowed buyers to purchase for 20% less than other sellers.[12] Barrier Jews established themselves in shopfronts, and because the capital expenditure required was great, credit was less available. This 1909 ad for Henry Edelman's Mutual Stores, is an example:

> THE MUTUAL STORES "We do not give credit, and, therefore do
>
> not ask people to pay for bad debts," was given as the reason
>
> for the success of the Mutual Stores, at the corner of Argent and

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8 Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', Appendix V(e) 'Occupations'.

9 Ò Gràda, quoting 'Census of Ireland General Reports 1891-1911', *Jewish Ireland*, 49.

10 Such peddlers became known as 'weekly men'. In Ireland, the credit draper/peddler was able to wipe out native Irish peddlers, who operated on a cash only basis. The Jewish 'weekly men' were able to earn, learn English and get home in time for the Sabbath, see Ò Gràda, *Jewish Ireland*, 20.

11 Knight, A. S. & Rieben, Otto von & Knight & von Rieben (Firm) & Archive CD Books Australia 2008, *Barrier Miner business directory: 1891* (Archive CD Books Australia, Modbury, S. Aust.), 3.

12 Ibid.,18 January 1898, 3.

Sulphide streets. A fine window display at this store will give

one a very, good idea of the class of goods sold and prices are

marked up in plain figures...[13]

The Barrier Jews had much interest in opportunity and were willing to travel and take risks. As with a similar population that travelled to South Africa, the Jews who went to Broken Hill had almost certainly heard of the silver rush. The nineteenth century Yiddish newspapers in the Russian Empire had a wide circulation. They carried news from all corners of the world, especially 'newly discovered' regions with promise for immigrants in the Americas and elsewhere.[14]

Skilled and Unskilled Workers

Of those earliest European Jews to travel to the Barrier, there were a group of highly skilled, specialist jewellers and gem merchants. Eugen Guggenheim, an opal merchant and buyer in White Cliffs, came from a family of bankers and mill owners.[15] Marcus Mannheim was a jeweller of repute in Broken Hill. Originally from Samoczyn, Prussia (now Poland) Mannheim opened the first jewellers' shop in Broken Hill, narrowly beating Johannes Charles (J.C.) Kleinhammer, of Greifenhagen, Prussia, for the honour. Similarly, watchmakers A. Vandenberg and Son and gem merchants Klein Brothers (both of White Cliffs and Wilcannia) were attracted to business

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[13] *Barrier Miner*, 18 December 1909, 2.
[14] Prof. Natan Meir and Lorry I. Lokey Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at Portland State University, private email, 2 August 2011.
[15] Broken Hill Descendent Questionnaire, (Marie Shaddock), 3.

opportunities in Australia. Though not strictly speaking a 'Broken Hill Jew', the entrepreneur Sigmond Hoffnung began the first opal cutting business in Australia.[16] Though Hoffnung was well established in Sydney, he was sufficiently interested in the possibilities of Broken Hill to seek to establish a private water scheme in the late 1890s, sending his brother Abraham to London to acquire the finance for this scheme.[17] Hoffnung, who was born in Poland, was the son of a rabbi posted to Newcastle upon Tyne, later Exeter, in England. All these men arrived in the Barrier, bringing with them education and skills. There is no evidence that any of these Prussian/Poles left Europe due to persecution, and some evidence that they came for business opportunities.[18]

Even amongst Jews there was a proportion of unskilled labour: of German Jews, 9.1%, of Austrian/Hungarian Jews, 17.7% and amongst Russian Empire Jews, 9.5%.[19] During this period before the turn of the century, most Jews in rural NSW were in Newcastle, Maitland[20] or Broken Hill. It may be

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[16] George F.J. Bergman, 'Sigmond Hoffnung,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* " accessed 2 September 2013. http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hoffnung-sigmond-3779.

[17] 'Broken Hill Water Supply,' Fred Fullwood, letter to the editor, *Barrier Miner*, 24 September 1890, which provides the details of the situation and Hoffnung's efforts: To THE EDITOR OF THE *BARRIER MINER*. Sir, I have noticed in the local newspaper lately various reports of meetings of Broken Hill ratepayers on this question. It is pleasing to me to be able to assure tho people of Broken Hill that the Lake Speculation and Darling River scheme has well progressed. The works at the source have been well looked after, the company having stored in Lake Speculation a supply sufficient to provide the town with good fresh water for a period of about six years. Mr. Abraham Hoffnung has proceeded to London to carry out the financial portion of the undertaking, and it is believed that the water can be delivered into the town within six or eight months after the delivery of the materials. This is the only source of supply that can be looked upon as being permanent for this important and increasing population. I am, &etc. FRED FULLWOOD, Secretary.

[18] Descendent Marie Shaddock reports Guggenheim left Europe looking for business opportunities, and possibly due to a family dispute. Marie Shaddock email to the author, 6 August 2010.

[19] Price, Appendix V(e) 'Jewish settlers (European) by occupation'.

[20] Maitland, by the turn of the century, had declined significantly, with its Jewish population moving to Newcastle and Sydney.

surmised that some labouring Jews also headed for the silver-fields along with their gentile counterparts.

It is difficult to ascertain how many Jews worked as miners. A survey of the membership records of the Amalgamated Miners' Association for 1891, together with a review of Beverley Davis' burial data, suggest perhaps 20 likely Jewish miners were active in Broken Hill mines in that year:

1891 AMALGAMATED MINERS ASSOCIATION RECORDS

Allen	C. (Charlie?)	02.08.1935	34084	MINER	North Mine
Davidson	A(Abraham?)	17.02.1938	5711	MINER	North Mine
Brown	G (Gabriel)	10.12.1904	2068	MINER	North Mine
Green	J (JJudah?)	02.10.1914	35390	MINER	North Mine
Davis	J. (John?)	6 possible		MINER	South Mine
Davis	E. (Edward)	2 possible	4237	MINER	South Mine
Ellis	M.(Mondel?)	03.23.1894	40491	MINER	South Mine
Beare	Y. (Isaac?)	05.10.1936	32222	MINER	listed member 138, no workdays
Simmonds	W. (Woolf?)	30.04.1918	32263	MINER	South Mine
Ellis	J (Julian?)	01.06.1921	24151	MINER	South Mine
Daniels	S. (Samuel?)	17.07.1932	8711	MINER	South Mine
Jones	J. (Joseph?)	04.11.1908	36228	MINER	South Mine
Harris	M. (Morris?)	01.03.1928	47015	MINER	South Mine; b. Ballarat, d. Karrakatta WA
Barnett	E.?	many possible		MINER	Central Mine
Morris	S?	26.12.1933	47072	MINER	Central Mine, d..Karrakatta WA
Sampson	F. (Alfred?)	31.12.1897	36141	MINER	Central Mine
Diamond	J?	3 possible	34577	MINER 7526	Block 10 Mine
Solomon	F.	many possible		MINER	Block 10
Meyers	E?	24.01.1905	48314	MINER	Block 10
Price	HW?	30.11.1928	6631	MINER	Block 10

Wulff	C			MINER	Aust BH Consolidated
Meir	H?		no BD	MINER	Aust BH Consolidated
Jacobs	S. (Samuel?)	22.03.1894	45606	MINER	Bonanza Mine
Woulf'	Woolf' J.	2 possible	33934	MINER	Block 14 Mine
Samuels	?	many possible		MINER	Block 14 Mine

This information seems to imply that there were a number of Jews involved with mining at this stage, rather than hawking and peddling. However, given the itinerant nature of such labour and scant records remaining, it is difficult to be entirely sure.

Yet, by 1891, there were definitely a number of Jews who had moved up the socio-economic ladder from being mine workers and hawkers. Immediately prior to the 'Russian invasion', 1891, the Jewish presence in Broken Hill was dominated by the Boan Brothers. The *Barrier Miner Business Directory of 1891* shows the Boan Bros advertising on every page. The Directory lists only property-owners, and includes at least 14 Jews.[21] The Australian Jewish Historical Society (Melbourne) lists some 24 others, not property owners, as resident in Broken Hill before 1891, so that most of the Jews were still in the lower socio-economic groups.[22]

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[21] Berkholtz, J., hotelkeeper; Coen, J.,Temperance Hotel, Argent St; Hart, H.H. draper; Harris, J.W.hotelkeeper, Crystal St; Kleinhammer, JC watchmaker, jeweller; King, J., bricklayer, Morgan St; Kuntze, H., tobacconist; Mrs Levy, boarding house, Argent St; Lewis & Levy, pawnbrokers (George Lewis and Henry Levy); Mannheim, M., jeweller; Myers, A., quarryman, Argent St; Rosenberg, A., printer; Solomon, J.A., grocer, Lane St; Wertheim Sewing Co., Blende St. (Broken Hill only). Unpublished records AJHS (Melbourne).

[22] Isaac Abrahams, hawker; SP Barnett, smallgoods; Israel Bear, grocer; Louis Berliner, brewer; Lewis Dias, miner; C. Giescecke, butcher; W.K. Golding; S. and L. Goldberg; Samuel Goldman (ancestor of Grant Goldman, Broken Hill radio personality) H. Goldman; A.B. Goldstein, opal merchant; Judith Harris; M. Jacobs, tailor; Isaac Joseph; I.J.K. Cohn, unionist; M. Levy; J. Lyons, fruiterer; Leopold Nurrick; Louis Oberman, storekeeper; M. Rosanove, storekeeper; Dr Rosenfeld, White Cliffs general practitioner; H.J. Solomon; M. Tedeschi; C. Wolfe, unionist.

Conclusion

Following the earliest Anglo-Jewish pastoralists opening up the Darling region as noted in Chapter One, there were a number of well educated 'Germans' – really Prussian/Poles – who arrived to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the Barrier.   Other Jewish immigrants of various ethnic backgrounds came to Broken Hill to work as shopkeepers and suppliers to the mines.   These Jews were still well enough off to have established business premises. There is some evidence that a small number of Jews engaged in actual mining, and were active in the early trade union movement.[23]   Approximately a third of those identified in this pre-1891 Jewish group were sufficiently successful to be property owners and ratepayers, as indicated by their inclusion in the *Barrier Miner Business Directory* of 1891.

However – apart from the 1892 wedding of Mark Tedeschi and Rose Goldman, and the first Jewish death in the same year[24] – there is almost no contemporary reference to Judaism or Jews.   That was all about to change, with the arrival of the 'Ukrainians' escaping persecution, and the *Litvaks* looking for economic opportunities.

Excluding the two named women from both groups mentioned in footnotes 21 and 22, (Mrs Levy and Judith Harris) the number of individual males in both groups comes to thirty-six. AJHS records held in Melbourne indicate many of these men were married, e.g. Sarah Abrahams, Maud Levy, Rose Rosenove and Margretta Rosenberg ('Residents, their addresses and occupations in Broken Hill' unpublished AJHS record) thus increasing the likely numbers of Jews in Broken Hill in 1891.

[23]I.J.K Cohn was the first president of the Barrier Amalgamated Miners Association, based in Silverton. He left the Barrier for the Kimberleys in 1886, see *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), 22 June 1886, 2.

[24] Infant Harry Joseph, son of Isaac and Rebecca Joseph, died in 1892, Reg. No.3524/1892.

Chapter 3: The Ukrainian Crisis

WANTED to Purchase, HORSE for Spring Dray.

Apply Krantz, Sulphide and Beryl streets.

- *Barrier Miner*, 1 June 1891

The advertisement above represents the first mention of the Krantz family in Broken Hill, who were amongst the earliest Jews from the Ukraine to settle in Broken Hill. Although in 1891 there were already many Jews in Broken Hill, there was as yet no Jewish community; it was the Krantz family, and their associated families Dryen, Gordon (Lekus) and Rosanove, who ensured Jewish tradition would be established in the Australian outback.

To the best of the family's knowledge, Hirsch Krantz, the eldest son of the family, and his brother Isaac, left the Russian Empire in 1890-1. On the way Hirsch went to Palestine, where the Zionist settlement was underway, following Baron Maurice (Zvi) von Hirsch's Jewish Colonization Association's work in Argentina. It is not known what drove Krantz there; but he made his way to Rishon LeZion, the first Jewish settlement of the modern era (1882).[1] One of the founders of that settlement was Menachem Mendel Roznovzki. According to Roznovski's great-great grandson, Stephen Rosanove, Roznovski had come from one of the Jewish colonies in Poltava, Ekaterinoslav. Hirsch may have been born in Poltava[2], so possibly there was a family connection. In any event, Hirsch met Roznovski's daughter, Rosa,

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[1] Stephen Rosanove, email to author, 2 June 2011.
[2] Robyn Dryen, email to author, 2 May 2011.

and they were married there[3] when Hirsch was 29.[4] Rosa and her brother, Abraham, had followed Hirsch to Australia by 1893.   Within the next few years Hirsch had brought out 44 members of his family, including twelve siblings, the spouses of those who were married, including Solomon Dryen (Druyan) and his parents, Samuel and Drosnya (Lakovsky) Krantz. All of these families were associated with the Jewish agricultural colonies in the Ukraine, a movement with particularly 'Russian' intent towards Jews.

This chapter examines the historical background which led to the establishment of Jewish agricultural colonies in Tsarist Russia in the 1840s, with a focus on the Ekaterinoslav Province in the Ukraine, where most of these families came from. It focuses on tracing the history and nature of these colonies, and the ways in which that history influenced the migration experiences, practices and values of the Ukrainian Jews who arrived in Broken Hill.

The Jewish Agricultural Colonies (Ukraine)

The Jewish agricultural colonies in the Russian Empire were of a different order to agricultural experiments elsewhere. In Germany, moving Jews onto the land was one strategy amongst the Jewish leaders of the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) in order to make Jews more acceptable to the gentile majority.   This led to the creation of the Jewish Colonization

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[3] Descendents of Menachem Mendel Rosanove family tree, supplied by Stephen Rosanove.
[4] However descendent Robyn Dryen believes Hirsch was 26 when he arrived in Australia, and there is no evidence that he returned to Palestine at 29, interview with author 27 May 2010.

Association in 1891, which established colonies in Palestine, North and South America, and parts of Eastern Europe. However, the Russian experiment began earlier, in 1807.[5] Unlike the western development, the Ukrainian Jewish Agricultural Colonies were a government initiative to solve a political problem by forcing Jews onto the land.

As a consequence of the partitions of Poland, Russia found itself with almost a million additional Jews ('the Jewish Question'). The economic plight of Jew and non-Jew meant terrible hardship; the existing territory of the Pale of Settlement could no longer accommodate them. One strategy was to move large numbers of Jews from the northern Pale - Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus - into the new territories in the South.[6] These lands cover roughly the modern territories of southern Ukraine, southern Russia and Bessarabia.

The Ukraine had been popularly known for centuries as the 'breadbasket of Europe', with its temperate climate, flat lands and rich black soil.[7] The government's purpose was to encourage the Jews of the poverty stricken north to become farmers. As incentives, the government promised the Jews 15 years' exemption from taxes, and exemption from forced military service.[8] With the further encouragement of financial assistance to set up the farming colonies, many Jews came.

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[5] Herman Rosenthal. 'Agricultural Colonies in Russia,' *Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v.*, http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/908-agricultural-colonies-in-russia, accessed 6 December 2013,.

[6] Chaim Freedman. 'Jewish Agricultural Colonies, Adjacent Towns and Villages in Southern Ukraine,' http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html accessed 2 December 2013.

[7] Zenon E Kohut, *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine, s.v.* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005), 17.

[8] Freedman, 'Agricultural Colonies,' http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html, accessed 2 December 2013.

The introduction of government-sponsored Jewish farming was contrary to what had gone before. Until the industrial revolution, the source of all wealth was land. For centuries, Jews had been denied the right to farm, or own agricultural land.[9] This is not to say that Jews lacked agricultural experience entirely. Even in Russia, there were some Jews who worked in agricultural management, having leased agricultural land from noble landowners. These Jews became significant in the highly profitable sugar beet trade. In 1860, sugar accounted for thirty eight percent of the Ukraine's workers and fully forty two percent of its output.[10] Jews themselves preferred associated roles. They were very involved in marketing produce, particularly grain and sugar beet, and they were tavern keepers and later distillers of vodka.[11]

There are different scholarly opinions as to the rationale behind the introduction of Jewish agrarianism. Some argue that the Russian government was anxious to develop this southern region by settlement from the rest of the Russian Empire, and at the same time relieve itself of the 'Jewish Question'.[12] Against this view is a contemporaneous account by L. Uleynikov, who in 1890 argued that to move a mere 10,000 Jews would hardly address the 'Jewish Question', a question that involved several million

[9] *Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, s.v.* 'Agriculture,' Jonathan Dekel-Chen, accessed 12 October 2013, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Agriculture.
[10] *Internet Encyclopedia of Urkraine, s.v.* 'Industry,' Iwan Koropeckyj, accessed 3 December 2013, http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\I\N\Industry.htm.
[11] ibid.
[12] Freedman, 'Introduction to the Study of the Agricultural Settlements in the Ukraine' accessed 12 March 2011,
http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/colonies_of_ukraine/Chaim%27s%20Introduction.htm.

Jews.[13] Another interpretation of the historical facts suggests that the move was initially an attempt to demote Jews from their *mechshanin* or *kupets* ('urban commoner' or 'merchant') *sosloviye* (social group) inherited from the Polish Partitions to the lower-ranking *krestyane* (peasant-agricultural) class.[14] 'Urban commoners' included people who had some real estate in a town, were engaged in some trade, craft, or service, and paid taxes. Jews in the north-west Pale were overwhelmingly members of this category; neither the peasants nor their masters were content with that as the status quo.

Whatever the rationale, officialdom was determined to pursue its policy. Immediately prior to the first Jewish agricultural colony, Alexander I issued his 'Statutes concerning the organisation of the Jews' (1804). This legislation ordered Jews to leave rural areas and forbade them to rent land in the interior of Russia. The statute did, however, allow Jews to acquire land as colonists in the new territories.[15]

Ekaterinoslav Province

A second wave of colonization occurred between 1845-1848 during the reign of Nicholas I, when six colonies were founded in the Alexandrovsk district[16] of the Ekaterinoslav province.[17] In 1846 the first group of Jewish colonists

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[13] *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, s.v. 'Jewish Agricultural Colonies of Ekaterinoslavskaya Guberniya,' by L. Uleynikov, (Moscow: Brokhause and Efron Publishing, 1906-1913).

[14] *Wikipedia,* s.v. 'Jewish Agricultural Colonies in the Russian Empire,' accessed 20 May 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_agricultural_colonies_in_the_Russian_Empire.

[15] Jonathan Dekel-Chen, 'Agriculture,' *Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. accessed 19 November 2013, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Agriculture.

[16] Boris D. Brutskus, 'Jewish Agricultural Settlements,' http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/Brutskus.htm.

[17] Freedman, 'Colonies of Ukraine,' accessed 19 November 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/Chaim%27s%20Introduction.htm.

set off from the rallying point Mogilev (Belarus) and headed for the Alexandrovsk region within the Ekaterinoslav *Guberniya*.[18]

The makeup of this group is of interest to Broken Hill. Of the 324 families, 83 came from Mogilev (Belarus); 175 came from Vitobsk (Latvia); eleven from Courland (Latvia); forty-one from Kovno (Lithuania) and just 14 from Kiev in the Ukraine itself.[19] Therefore, virtually all of the families who embarked on the Jewish agricultural experiment were not originally from the Ukraine at all, but from the north-west Pale: Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. Broken Hill matriarch Drosnya, born Lakovsky, was born in Vitebsk, in 1844 or 1845. According to the family memoirs of Philipena Noel, 'great-grandmother Drosnya' was 'a babe in arms when the trek across Europe began'.[20] Drosnya's date of birth, 1844 or 1845, is consistent with the date of establishment of the six colonies.

The Krantz family is more difficult to find. A few 'Kranz' families are recorded in Rezekne and Ludza[21] (Latvia). There are 'Lakovsky' families recorded in Latvia (and the Ukraine).[22] This adds weight to the family story that Riga was the place of birth of Drosnya Lakovsky Krantz in 1845.[23] The Druyans, pre-

[18] Ibid.

[19] Chaim Freedman, 'Appendix D: Country of Origin of Settlers', by accessed 29 April 2012, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/chart%20origin%20settlers.htm.

[20] Philipena Noel, unpublished Krantz Family History, held by Janette Rosenthal-Kahn.

[21] 'Surname KRANTZ (D-M code 596400) in Latvia or Estonia,' *Jewish Gen*, accessed 6 December 2013, http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg~jgsys~jgff~krantz~~LATV.EST.~DM~~~~~.

[22] 'Surname LAKOVSKY (D-M code 857450) in Latvia,' *Jewish Gen*, accessed 6 December 2013, http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg~jgsys~jgff~C.

[23] Philipena Noel, Krantz Family History, 1.

Ukraine, are also thought to be from Latvia.[24] In lists of families of the Jewish Agricultural Colonies there is no mention either of Krantz or of Lakovsky, though we find the Broken Hill names Druyen, Gordon, Gurevich, Feldman and Lekus.[25] These families all came from the Vitebsk Province, and have connections with the *shetls* of Ludza and Rezenkne.[26]

Some colonists in the Ukraine who became the Jews of Broken Hill were merchants and artisans rather than farmers. Chaim Freedman explains that alongside the colonies at Ekaterinoslav a number of small urban communities were established. 'As time passed,' Freedman writes, 'and many families found themselves unsuited to rural life, the urban communities were boosted by many who dropped out of the colonies.'[27] These communities included Ekaterinoslav, the capital, Alexandrovsk (now Zaparozhe), Pavlograd, Orekov, Tokmak, Melitopol, Berdyansk, and Mariupoi. Therefore, in the absence of concrete records, we may hazard that the Krantz family moved from their original settlement at Poltava where their first children were born. They relocated somewhere in the Alexandrovsky District, near the agricultural colonies Krasnocelka, Novozlatopol[28] and

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[24] '*The Pen and the Blade – the Super Family,*' interview by Chaim Freedman, quoted in Chaim Freedman, 'Dimantshtein Family,' *Chaim Freedman* (blog), accessed 5 December 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Ludza/blade.html#_edn4.

[25] Chaim Freedman, 'Archival Sources for the Jewish Colonists in the Nineteenth Century,' *Ragas Report,* accessed 3 August 2012. http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/colonies_of_ukraine/archival_sources_for_the_genealo.htm.

[26] Chaim Freedman, 'Lists of Jews of Vitebsk Governorate resettled in S. Novozlatopol,' accessed 5 December 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/novozlatopol/novo-en-lite.html.

[27] Chaim Freedman, 'Appendix H: A List of Nearby German Colonies and Ukrainian Towns Where Jews Resided*, Archival Sources for the Jewish Colonists in the Nineteenth Century,' *Jewish Agricultural Colonies, Adjacent Towns and Villages in Southern Ukraine,* accessed 3 August 2012, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html.

[28] Freedman, 'Ekaterinoslav Alexandrovskii District,' accessed 2 December 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/NovoZlatpol%27.htm.

Vesseleya where the Druyans, Gurevichs and Lekus families are recorded as agricultural workers.[29] Drosnya and Samuel Krantz would have married in the Colonies. Their eldest daughter, Sarah (Sophie/Sonia)), married Solomon Druyan in Alexandrovsk[30] and their second daughter, Gnesa, married Laizer Lekus. Lekus renamed himself Louis Gordon upon arrival in Broken Hill.

To attempt life on the land required something of a pioneering spirit. The journey from the north-west Pale to the Ukraine took three to four months. The earliest colonies were established in places without easy access to water;[31] there was no existing housing, and many families spent their first winter in tents.[32] Each family was originally granted a farm of forty *desyatins* per plot (one *desyatin* is equivalent to 1.1 hectares) of which thirty *desyatins* was granted for the direct use of the family and ten *desyatins* was for the Reserve Agricultural Fund, revenue from which went to the secular capital of the colony.[33] This soon changed. Non-Jewish peasants received seven to nine *desyatins* per registered person. Other groups received land as follows: Azov Cossacks, nine *desyatins* per adult male, Greeks 12 to 15, and Germans 60 to 65 *desyatins* per family. The Jews received what was left over: just four *desyatins* per household.[34]

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[29] Freedman, 'Ragas Report, Archival Sources for Jewish Colonists in the 19th Century, accessed 3 August 2012, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/colonies_of_ukraine/Appendix%20O.htm.
[30] Robyn Dryen, email to author, 21 May 2012.
[31] L. Uleynikov, 'Jewish Agricultural Colonies of Ekaterinoslavskaya Guberniya in 1890,' accessed 8 September 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html .
[32] Brutskus, 'Jewish Agricultural Settlements – Yekaterinoslav Government,' accessed 10 September 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html .
[33] ibid.
[34] Ibid.

The ability of the Jews to make headway in a foreign environment in a non-traditional occupation was accompanied by significant hardship. There were epidemics of cholera, scurvy and smallpox; there was 'cattle murrain', 'unfruitful wheat'[35] and it was prohibited to employ Christians (therefore difficult to gain sufficient labour to grow). Hebrew schools (*hedarim*) were prohibited in the Ekaterinoslav colonies,[36] though *heders*, religious primary schools, were established.[37]

In spite of the substantial effort made by the colonists, and their not insignificant successes, there continued to exist a view that Jews would never make farmers. Russian propaganda to this effect was promoted both within and without the Empire. Eugene Schuyler, Charge d'Affaires of the Legation of the United States in St. Petersburg reported on the settlement and explained the Russian attitudes:

> From 1835 on, the Russian government was very anxious to induce the Hebrews to become agriculturalists, and consequently granted many privileges to those who adopted this mode of life. These privileges consisted *inter alia* in free allotments of land for village and homestead; in aid in money for removing from one place to another, and for the first settlements; in the construction of houses for the colonists; in grain for

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[35] Freedman, 'Russian Sources on Jewish Agricultural Colonization,' accessed 5 December 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/russian_sources.htm.

[36] *Jewish Encyclopedia,* s.v. 'Agricultural Colonies in Russia,' by Herman Rosenthal, accessed 5 December 2013, http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/908-agricultural-colonies-in-russia.

[37] Freedman, 'Russian Sources on Jewish Agricultural Colonisation,' accessed 5 December 2013, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/russian_sources.htm. Chaim Freedman relies on 'Jewish Agriculturalists 1807-1887' by Victor N. Nitikin, (St. Petersburg, 1887), 420.

seed, and means of temporary subsistence at first; in freedom from money taxes for ten years, and from recruitment for twenty-five years; and finally, in honorary and money rewards for success in agriculture. 'But all such favors and privileges,' to quote the words of an official document emanating from the ministry of the interior, 'did not bring about the desired results, and the establishment of Hebrew agriculturists presents only a long series of facts showing the systematic and constant misuse of these favors. In view of these facts and of the general disposition of the Hebrews for petty trade rather than settled labor, the government being confirmed in the impossibility of making profitable agriculturalists of the Hebrews, repealed the law giving money assistance to Hebrews becoming agriculturalists as well as generally [illegible] special regulations concerning the Hebrew agriculturalists then in force. [38]

Yet, by 1890, about the time of the Krantz' first departures, a report to government by L. Uleynikov, 'Jewish Agricultural Colonies of Ekaterinoslavskaya Guberniya', concludes that the Jews had proven themselves to be more than adequate as farmers. After 45 years, 749 families were still on the land, farming not only their original four *desyatins*, but 46 percent of them, by renting, had increased their agricultural asset to

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[38] Correspondence by Eugene Schuyler, Charge d'Affaires of the Legation of the United States in St. Petersburg, Russia, to his superior, U.S. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, 1872. *Source*: House of Representatives Executive Document No. 192, 47th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 2030, accessed 5 December 2013, http://www.angelfire.com/ms2/belaroots/schuyler.htm.

between 12 and 15 *desyatins* per household.[39]   The colonists had built

every building, acquired tools, animals and machines. The government

official[40] writing the report could not fail to record the comparison with the

Russian peasant farmer:

> …Whether or not Jews are able to be farmers…The outcome has
>
> to be adjudged as more than satisfactory. We see the full picture
>
> of rural life, great volume of work, and considerable prosperity
>
> created by that work. Remarkable that among the Jewish
>
> population, more than 5,000 strong, any other elements of
>
> population are absent (in the Colonies). The number of Christian
>
> workers is negligibly small and amount of their work is dwarfed
>
> in comparison with the volume of Jewish work. There cannot be
>
> better disproof of wide-spread opinion about Jews avoiding
>
> physical labor.[41]

For centuries Jews were denied the right to own land, which limited their

agricultural experience. But Jewish resilience, innovation and willingness

to learn from the more experienced German farmers nearby enabled

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[39] Freedman, 'Russian Sources on Jewish Agricultural Colonisation,'
http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/russian_sources.htm, accessed 5
December 2013.
[40] Mikhail Krutikov, 'Yiddish Literature after 1800 (Binshtok, Yehudah Leyb 1836–1894),'
accessed 17 December 2016,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/yiddish_literature/yiddish_literature_after_1800.
'Uleynikov's work is highly statistical. For balance it should be noted that Uleynikov was a pen
name. The author's real name was Lev Moiseyvich Binshtok, (1836-1894) who worked as a
writer and as an 'administrative rabbi', one elected by Jews but confirmed by Russian
authorities. In 1892 Uleynikov went to Palestine to serve as the representative of Jewish
Farmers of Palestine Aid Society of Odessa.'
[41] L. Uleynikov, 'Jewish Agricultural Colonies of Ekaterinoslavskaya Guberniya in 1890,'
translated from the Russian by Joseph A. Komissarouk 2010, accessed 17 December 2016,
http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.html.

these Jewish families to create and maintain their farms as going concerns for half a century.

The Pogroms of 1881

An 1881 letter to the Hebrew Press reads:

> On the 5th of May a mob of peasants assembled from the village of Konsky-rosdor (Alexandrovsk district, Yekarterinoslav Government) and destroyed the shops of the Jews and spoiled everything therein. The priest of the village went out to preach to them with a gentle tongue to implore them to desist from evil, but the crowd did not heed his words... Yesterday a rumor spread that also the Jewish colonies in the Alexandrovsk and Mariupol districts were set upon by persecutors who gave vent to their wrath... Their houses were wrecked, their sheep and cattle and all the spoil they took and left...
> All the Russians here signed a decision to expel the Jews...
> -*Yosef, the son of David Hakohen.*[42]

The waves of antisemitic violence that followed the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 were more or less dangerous depending on where one lived in the Russian Empire. The worst of the violence occurred in south and south-western Russia, with perpetrators moving through towns following the train line. The April 1881, Elizavetgrad pogrom gave way to pogroms in Aleksandriia, Anan'ev, Tiraspol, Kiev, Brovary, Konotop, Kiev (a second time)

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[42] Trans. Chaim Freedman, 'The Pogroms 1881,' *Hamelitz,* May 13 1881, accessed 24 May 2012, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/colonies_of_ukraine/pogroms/pogroms1881.html.

and Zhmerinka. On 1 May, the victimizers arrived at the Ekaterinoslav colonies. Pogroms took place in Alexandrovsk (1 May), Orekhov (4 May), Berdiansk (5 May), and Mariupol (7 May).[43] These are the same towns Chaim Freedman identifies as amongst those urban communities that grew up near the agricultural settlements,[44] where the Krantz family lived. There were further acts of group violence by railway workers against Ekaterinoslav Jews in July 1883, which were serious enough to cause troops to open fire. Official reports suggest that these pogroms fuelled popular anti-Jewish sentiment where there had been little; Christians were amongst those shot by police.[45]

It has been shown that there was anti-Jewish violence in Ekaterinoslav towns adjacent to the Jewish agricultural colonies. Since the Krantzes were merchants in these towns, it is likely that they would have at least been aware of anti-Jewish violence, and indeed may have witnessed it. By the same token, there is no evidence of anti-Jewish violence in the agricultural colonies themselves, where the Druyans and others lived and worked. The first Broken Hill 'Russian' Jew, Hirsch Krantz, did not arrive in Australia until 1891. The question that arises, then, is why did the Krantz/Druyan/Lekus extended family not emigrate from the Russian Empire for nearly ten years?

[43] Aronson, 'Geographical and Socioeconomic Factors,' 30.
[44] Freedman, 'Appendix H: A list of nearby German Colonies and Ukrainian Towns where Jews resided,' accessed 21 May 2012,
http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/colonies_of_ukraine/otherplaces.htm.
[45] Official report of 25 July 1883, quoted by John Doyle Klier, *Russians, Jews and the Pogroms of 1881-1882*, 458.

Emigration of Jews and others from Russia, 1880–1914

[46]

The above table shows emigration patterns of Jews and non-Jews from Russia between 1880-1914. The first big spike in emigration (within which the Krantzes and other Jewish Agricultural families' departure falls) is in 1890-2, almost a decade after the imposition of the May Laws and outbreak of pogroms.

The Jews and the Russian Army

The world over, pogroms, persecution and the drafting of boys into the Russian army are given as the causes of nineteenth century Jewish emigration. For example, the reported experience of Lithuanian emigrants, such as Marks and Spencer founder Israel Sieff, are that 'even in England, in

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[46] Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland,* 20.

Leeds, the pogroms were fresh in his mind.'[47] Tracey Griff reports that her grandfather, Frank Griff, left Lithuania due to 'persecution by Russians taking young men (12 yrs) for Army'.[48] Krantz descendent David Cohen writes that his family left 'to escape pogroms and drafting of sons into the Russian army'.[49] Virtually all the descendants of Broken Hill Jews report versions of the same thing in their responses to the questionnaire that was conducted for this study.

However, as discussed the drafting of twelve-year old boys and the service mandated period of 25 years was abolished in 1855, during the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881). One of the inducements to persuade Jews to move to the Ukraine in the 1840s was an exemption from military service. Therefore, those at actual risk moved to the agricultural colonies to avoid it – an entire generation before that of Samuel and Drosnya Krantz. The agricultural colonies were certainly an attempt to undermine Jews and Judaism, just as the conscription of 12 year olds had been in the earlier era. However, no Jew from the Pale who emigrated after 1855 could claim flight was to avoid a childhood in military service.   In 1874 the law changed again. The colonists' exemption from military service was withdrawn as all Russians were subjected to conscription for a period of six years. For Jews, army service was organised around quotas. The local Jewish authorities, *kahals*, had the responsibility to deliver the required number of males for army service (which created its own problems within the Jewish community). Yet,

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[47] David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 248.
[48] Tracey Griff, Broken Hill Descendent Questionnaire, June 2010.
[49] David Cohen, Broken Hill Descendent Questionnaire, June 2010.

not every young man was required to serve. Therefore a statement such as 'At the age of eighteen *every boy* in Russia spent an enforced two years in the Army…. At a family conclave it was decided that as each boy was reaching his eighteenth birthday he should attempt to escape from Russia,'[50] offered as the rationale for leaving Russia is not accurate. It may be that memory is coloured by the Holocaust, and prior outrages inflicted on Russian Jews of an earlier generation have been imposed on the Broken Hill story.

In practice there still remained many exemptions, conditions and administrative means of avoiding the draft, (there were fully 1300 government circulars issued about the administration of the 1874 Law between 1874 and 1880).[51] Prejudice against Jews meant that government and people assumed a much higher rate of Jewish draft evasion than any other group.[52] The general belief that all Jews avoided their military responsibilities increased Russian resentment toward Jews. This charge may have been a contributing incentive to emigrate from the Russian Empire.

Pogroms, modernity and the displaced Russian peasant

There is no doubt that Jews in the Empire were subject to discriminatory legislation, which was increased and exacerbated by the 1881 May Laws. There was anti-Jewish violence in the southern provinces, though none is

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[50] Philipena Noel, Krantz Family History, 5.
[51] Ohren, *All the Tsar's Men,* 180.
[52] Ibid. In fact, in 1870 Jews made up 3.46% of the population and provided 3.5% of soldiers, whereas Muslims made up 10.1% of the population but only 3.2% of the army.

reported in Lithuania (origin of the Griff/Bub/Hyman families) between 1881 and 1914. As for centuries before, Lithuania was virtually pogrom-free.[53]

Further, the traditional definition of 'pogrom' is violence against Jews that is sponsored and generated by government. Undoubtedly such violence within that definition occurred in the Russian Empire, and certainly during the reign of Nicolai Ignatiev as Minister for the Interior, who was a member of the 'Holy League'.[54] However, the events of 1881-3 were more than pogroms. The received view is that antisemitic Tsarist government roused an antisemitic peasantry to take action against 'exploitative' Jewry. Indeed, this was the rationale, subsequently, for seeking to remove Jews from rural areas.

However, there is evidence that the rioters were unemployed people of urban origin, given support by local business people wanting to destroy their Jewish competition. The officially appointed Elizavetgrad municipal rabbi charged that the Jews' competitors from the trading and professional classes were the main inciters to rioting in his pastorate, as did the governor of Poltava, in a report on the pogrom in Lubny of July 1881. Government adviser Prince P. P. Demidov San Donato was convinced that 'if the enmity of the trading and industrial classes toward the Jews be not the chief cause of the anti-Jewish movement in towns, in any case it affords the movement considerable moral support.'[55]

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[53] O'Grada, *Jewish Ireland*, 14.
[54] The 'Holy League', extreme nationalists and antisemites, was a force behind numerous pogroms. Such pogroms were well organised with bands of hooligans brought in by train, well primed with alcohol and antisemitic indoctrination.
[55] Aronson, *Geographical and Socio-Economic Factors*, 23.

Following Hans Rogger and Schlomo Lambroza, Aronson asserts that the 1881 pogroms were not Tsarist sponsored, encouraged violence at all but were essentially an urban phenomenon, the result of Russia's accelerating modernization and industrialization process.[56] Against this argument is the multiplying effects of the May Laws as Jews were further restricted. Once trading on the Christian Sabbath was enforced, the Jewish merchant was at a considerable disadvantage, being forced to close on Saturdays and Sundays.

The May Laws were repeatedly revised. In 1891 the Governor General of Moscow 'celebrated' Passover by issuing an Edict of Expulsion that announced the ejection of all Jews from Moscow. However, the Krantz family had already made their decision; son Hirsch was already in Broken Hill. The rest would arrive by 1893-4.

It may be that Jews could manage the combination of government and popular antagonism, more or less; but once the law was changed to prevent Jewish children from receiving an education, a line had been crossed. In July 1887 the Ministry of Education decided that the proportion of Jews in all secondary schools and higher institutions subject to its jurisdiction was not to surpass 10% in the towns of the Pale of Settlement, 5% in the towns outside it, and only 3% in the capitals of St. Petersburg and Moscow.[57] This act, in

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[56] John Doyle Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, xv.
[57]Yehuda Slutsky, 'Numerus Clausus,' *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed 5 December 2013, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0015_0_14969.html.

1887, may best explain the timing of the Krantz migration[58] in 1891 as well as the ten-year gap between the enactment of the May Laws (1882) and the substantial migrations of Jews. The legalisation in 1890 and the rapid spread of Jewish Colonisation Society offices throughout the Pale (they provided extensive information on how to emigrate) was undoubtedly also of significance. As a result, in 1892 the Jews virtually monopolised the emigration from Russia, reaching more than ninety per cent of the 64,200 total for that year.[59]

Conclusion

Whether by government-sponsored pogrom or by a peasantry reacting against modernity, it is clear that the Jews of the Ukrainian agricultural colonies and surrounding townships were targeted for their ability to adapt, survive and prosper. As the reports of the time revealed, once a Jewish family left a property there was no shortage of peasants ready to appropriate it. Modernity was coming to the Russian Empire. The non-Jewish population, who had been serfs for a thousand years, had no resources to accommodate it. Jews who left the land itself settled nearby and returned to their usual

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[58] There is still no clear explanation as to why Hirsch Krantz came to Australia. A possibility is relationship to another set of Ekaterinoslav families who arrived in Australia before 1891. None went to the Barrier Ranges. The first was Moshe Rabinov Yovel, who left Russia in 1883. According to his descendent, researcher Chaim Freeman, Yovel chose to travel to Australia 'simply because that was where the first available ship took him.' He settled in Melbourne. There is one name of potential interest to Broken Hill in the Yovel chain: Shnookal. The Broken Hill 'Schnukals' came from the Ukraine. If Schnukal is also 'Shnookal', it might be hypothesized that there is an early connection between the three Ekatinerioslav families: the Melbourne 'Shnookals', arriving in the early 1880s, the Broken Hill 'Schnukals' and the Krantz family. If so, the original link in the chain from the Ukraine to Broken Hill may depend on a family who never went to Broken Hill at all.

[59] Tomas Balkelis, 'Opening Gates to the West,' 54. accessed 6 December 2013. http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/EtSt_Balkelis_2010.pdf.

occupations of storekeeper, merchant, trader and professional classes. Therefore, they created competition for the Christian shopkeepers and increased Russian anger, a wellspring of violence waiting for its opportunity. The change in the laws relating to conscription became another excuse to portray the entire Jewish nation as disloyal and untrustworthy. The introduction of *Numerus Clausus* legislation in 1887 limiting Jewish educational opportunities steeled Jewish resolve to leave the Empire.

For those who chose to migrate to outback Broken Hill, a generation or two of farming in the Ukraine was good preparation for life in the outback. The pioneering spirit that led to the urban Jews of Latvia and Belarus to move south to the Ukraine was preparation for the even greater move to the Southern Hemisphere. Indeed, it could be argued that Broken Hill was a perfect destination: it was a frontier society where the mores of Anglo-Jewry were not established, and an urban environment developing inside an isolated, rural setting. Broken Hill was a far-flung outpost of western civilization where Jews could contribute to the building of institutions, wealth and a new society. Broken Hill had one further advantage for these families. Compared with the situation in Tsarist Russia, the Ukrainian Jews were able to enjoy the comparatively free and multicultural social climate of Broken Hill, and they were able to thrive in their new world.

Chapter 4: The Shul – Orthodoxy comes to Broken Hill

As has been established, there were people of Jewish descent resident in the Barrier Ranges from the earliest European settlement. However those in Broken Hill who were *practicing* Jews still only numbered approximately one hundred and fifty people and they did not succeed in establishing the usual range of Jewish communal organisations – health, welfare, burial society and religious education – that existed in Sydney and Melbourne.[1] The synagogue, then, would become the chief focus of Jewish life in Broken Hill. At Beth Israel Synagogue, Wolfram Street - for a time - all the many needs of Jewish religious and cultural life could be met. That the *shul* was established almost exclusively by those Jews of Lithuanian/Ukrainian background meant that Jewish life in Broken Hill reflected the orthodox practice of nineteenth century Russian Jewry. Broken Hill was proudly, firmly, *frum.*[2]

The earlier Jewish arrivals had already established a Jewish cemetery. The Jewish burial ground had been consecrated nine years before, on 17 May, 1891.[3] The Rev. Abraham Tobias Boas had travelled to Broken Hill for the consecration, 'before a fair attendance of the Jewish community'.[4] The first recorded Jewish burial was one year later, that of Harry, the infant son of

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[1] Rutland, *The Edge of the Diaspora*. The Hebrew Philanthropic Society was formed in 1833; the Righteous Path Society, to provide free medical aid, was founded in 1848. The first Jewish educational institution, the Sydney Hebrew Academy, was founded in 1846, with a similar establishment opening in Melbourne in 1849 (31). Melbourne's first Jewish Day School was established in 1855 (69) and an Australian Beth Din (Jewish rabbinical court) was established in Melbourne in 1864 (74).

[2] 'Frum' is a Yiddish adjective meaning 'devout' or 'pious'; to be committed to the observance of Jewish law.

[3] For a discussion on Jewish burial, see Suzanne D. Rutland, *Jews in Australia*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 14-15. Also Janis Wilton, 'A Cemetery and its Stories,' *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 19, no. 4 (June 2010): 43-68.

[4] *Barrier Miner*, 18 May 1891, 2.

Isaac Joseph, in 1892.[5] The trustees of the cemetery included Rev. A.B. Davis, rabbi at the Great Synagogue in Sydney, but the other trustees were local businessmen: Marcus Mannheim, Harold Boas, John Senor Coronel, Isaac Joseph and Henry Levy[6]. It is indicative of the Jews' growing confidence that their community could become a permanent one at a time when Jewish numbers in country New South Wales were declining.[7] There is little evidence to show whether or not the earliest Anglo/German Jews in Broken Hill did more than bury their dead according to Law.[8]

The colonies were fearful of being overrun by hoards of starving Russian Jews. Antisemitic views were common, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne, and this was reflected in publications such as *The Truth, Punch* and the *Bulletin*. *The Truth*, first published in 1890, wrote in 1905 that the Russian pogroms were justified 'since the Jews had killed Christ and were responsible for all wars, they deserved such brutal attacks.'[9]

Coinciding with the arrival of the first 'Russian' Jews in 1891, the *Barrier Miner* began to publish general references to Jewish religious practice. In May 1891, the paper noted that although ten tons of Matzo was baked in Sydney for the use of Jews during Passover, the supply still ran out.[10] In

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[5] Ibid., 10 May 1892, 2; NSW BDM Reg. No. 3524/1892.

[6] Ibid., 28 May 1891, 3.

[7] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 168.

[8] Laymen acted in the role of minister, for example 'H. Ley, layman' at the funeral of Harry Joseph in 1892 and Henry Levy at the funeral of George Lewis in 1893, NSW Death Certificate Reg. No. 1893/003987 George Lewis.

[9] Rutland*, Edge of the Disapora,* 96, quoting *The Truth,* 12 November 1905.

[10] *Barrier Miner,* 25 May 1891, 3.

October, the paper referred to Yom Kippur [11] and the Feast of the Tabernacles; and shortly after, there appeared this curious reference:

> Apropos the statement frequently made that hardly any Russian Jews are tradesmen, it is asserted that in Broken Hill there are four brothers, Russian Jews, only recently from Europe, all of whom are tradesmen. One is a blacksmith, another a tinsmith.[12]

The *Barrier Miner* understood both the fears of the majority, and what was necessary to allay them. Russian Jews were useful. They knew *trades*. Their contribution was not just material: the Bishop of London, speaking on sexual morality, was quoted in the *Barrier Miner* saying that there had been a conspiracy of silence amongst Christians on the subject but that 'Silence is no longer possible. Jewish children and the Jews lead the purest lives,' he said.[13]

Someone was favourably positioning Jews and Judaism in the Broken Hill press. It may be that this person was Abraham Rosenberg. Rosenberg was born in Kadina, South Australia in 1869. His father, Julius Meyer Rosenberg, was a jeweller.[14] His son Abraham Rosenberg became a compositor,

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[11] Yom Kippur, or the 'Day of Atonement', is perhaps the most important holiday of the Jewish Year. Jews may not work, must fast, and attend synagogue on this day.

[12] *Barrier Miner,* 13 October 1891, 2. The Jews referred to could be the Krantz family, who arrived between 1891 and 1893.

[13] Ibid, 1 April 1898, 3.

[14] The Rosenbergs were long established in South Australia: at his death in 1894, Julius was said to have lived for 33 years in Kadina. Kadina was not surveyed until 1861, so if the newspaper is correct the elder Rosenberg was one of the town's very first residents. Although his obituary

learning his trade at the *Kadina and Wallaroo Times*. In 1888 he headed to Broken Hill and became a linotype operator at the *Barrier Miner* where he worked for thirty-six years.   With the exception of a year in Sydney and his last few years in Adelaide, Abraham Rosenberg lived all his life in Broken Hill.[15] Bylines did not exist until well into the twentieth century, so it cannot be asserted definitively that Rosenberg wrote for the paper as well as producing it.   However, at the same time as the *Bulletin* in Sydney consistently caricatured Jews as 'John Bull Cohen' - foreign, secretive, capitalist enemies of Australia[16] - the weight of positive material about Jews and Jewry coming out of the *Miner* in the late nineteenth century strongly suggests that someone was doing so.   Abraham Rosenberg was employed at the *Barrier Miner*, and his life shows a strong commitment to community, social justice, and labour values. It may be that the first 'Russian' Jews in Broken Hill awakened a determination in Rosenberg that in the Barrier Ranges at least, Jews would receive a 'fair go'.

Another possibility is William Levy.[17] Levy started in journalism at the age of 14 on the *Barrier Miner*. He married Emma Jacobs in Broken Hill, in 1901. In 1913, he set up business in Adelaide as a printer. He was a district correspondent on the Adelaide *Register*, and in 1930 joined the literary staff of the *Advertiser*.[18] Levy was the first Secretary of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation, serving in that role every year until 1912 (with the exception of

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records his membership of the London Society of Oddfellows, Rosenberg was not English, but a native of Gollancz, Prussia, now Poland.

[15] Obituary, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954)*, 9 March 1936, 7.

[16] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 95.

[17] Naturalisation records lists William Levy, certificate issued in 1901, as originally from the Argentine Republic NSWSR 4/2123/139.

[18] 'Death Of Mr. W. Levy,' *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954)*, 19 June 1944, 7.

1910 when Marcus Feldman was elected). In his obituary, the *Advertiser* praised Levy as 'a reliable and versatile reporter, with a special faculty for gathering news during notable industrial upheavals.'[19]

Building a religious community

The 'Russian' Jews' arrival began in 1891 with the Krantz Family. It was this family, and in particular, son-in-law Louis Gordon, who ensured that traditional Jewish observance became part of the Broken Hill landscape. Louis Gordon had been engaged as a tutor to the Krantz children, and had married their second daughter, Gnesa.[20] Family records indicate that the Gordons arrived in Adelaide in 1892.[21]

If this date of arrival is accurate, then one of Louis Gordon's first acts in Broken Hill was to preside at Broken Hill's first formal religious services. This was Rosh Hashanah[22] in 1892,[23] and was held at the residence of Isaac Joseph, Oxide Street. The newspaper report of 24 September 1892 asserts that the services were well attended, with about 50 worshippers present. Rev. Boas received thanks for 'having kindly placed at the disposal of the

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Descendants of Zvi Yehuda Krantz, unpublished family history, supplied by descendent Robyn Dryen

[21] Ibid.

[22] Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year and is celebrated over two days.

[23] September 1892 is the date of the first Jewish services in Broken Hill, held at the home of Mr I. Joseph, Oxide St., according to *Barrier Miner* September 24, 1892, 2. It was not 1898 as claimed in Mann et al. *Jews...the Centenary,* 49.

Broken Hill congregation the necessary books (the *Torah* and *Schoufer*)'.[24]
According to the family history, Louis:

> ...despite the need for a great deal of time to be given to
> business affairs to support his family, was devoted to the study
> of religious texts... he played the 'role' of a rabbi to the Jewish
> people of Broken Hill when no rabbi could be appointed and
> carried out his duties with the great respect of the
> Congregation.[25]

As there was rarely a rabbi in Broken Hill, Louis Gordon's services were in high demand. Seven years later, in 1898, the *Hebrew Standard* reported Louis Gordon was still presiding at the celebration of High Holy Days in Broken Hill:

> The Jews of Broken Hill held services on two days of Rosh
> Hashanah in the Masonic Hall. Mr L. Gordon officiated assisted
> by Mr Bernard Stone. There was a choir consisting of Messrs
> D Stone, William Stone, H. Stone and Solomon Spielvogel. Mr
> Moses Isaac Oberman sounded the *Shofar* and Mr M Rosanove
> gave a *droshe* entitled 'The Poor of Palestine'. The ladies of the
> little congregation provided refreshments after the services...

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[24] 'Schoufer', more commonly spelled today as 'shofar', is a ram's horn, blown like a trumpet. It is a call to repentence.
[25] Philapena Noel, Krantz Family History, 2.

Yom Kippur was ushered in with due solemnity in a

thoroughly orthodox Jewish manner.[26]

In the years between these two services, community connections were made with the congregation at Ballarat. At least one participant – Solomon Spielvogel[27] – was associated with the congregation in Ballarat.[28] Louis Gordon, who had conducted the New Year services, would be elected the Congregation's first President, in 1900.[29]

From this point on, regular meetings of the Broken Hill Jewish community were held. There are hints of what might most charitably be described as differences in style within the Jewish community at Broken Hill. The Dreyfus Affair had been making news since 1894. After the revelations of Esterhazy's guilt in 1896, a meeting of Broken Hill Jews announced that it would abandon all French goods, forego all dealings with the French and would boycott the Paris Exhibition, 'although some of them had intentions of being present on that occasion.'[30] These quixotic assertions might have been politely ignored, had those Jews present not then invited *all* Jews in *all*

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[26] 'Broken Hill', *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia,* 7 October 1898, 9.

[27] Nathan Frederick Spielvogel, 'The Beginnings of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation,' *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 1, no. 4 (1940): 111-112. For more on the Ballarat Jewish community see: Newman Rosenthal, *Formula for survival: the saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1979).

[28] Other members of the choir mentioned bear the name of Stone. Ballarat's Bernard Stone is therefore a distinct possibility, but there were also 'Stone Brothers' in Broken Hill until about 1905. The *Barrier Miner* reports on the wedding of Bernard Stone 'of Broken Hill' and Hannah Bernstein, of Ballarat East. In any event, the Ballarat co-religionists may have come to Broken Hill because of the recently connected railway to Adelaide, or due to conflict within the Ballarat congregation. They may have come simply to scout commercial possibilities.

[29] The first officers of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation, established in 1900, were: President, Louis Gordon; Treasurer, Israel Krantz; Secretary, William Levy; Trustees, M. Jacobs, George Edelman, Samuel Dryen. Committee: S. Rosenthal, W. Stone, B. Krantz, Alex Warshaw, ? Brown, (sic) A Berstein, B. Stone, A. Edelman, S. Bernstein.

[30] *Barrier Miner,* 3 October 1898, 2.

the colonies to follow their example. This was too much for Anglo Jewry. Within days Melbourne's Rabbi Joseph Abrahams responded to questions saying that 'a few hot-headed utterances of one or two illiterate and angry men' could not be taken to represent the attitude of Australian Jewry, or even Broken Hill Jewry.[31]

Abrahams was reflecting the views of the Jewish establishment of the time. English Jews were fearful that the freedoms they enjoyed in their new land would be lost if 'foreign' Jews 'frightened the horses', thereby rousing in Australians the age-old threat of Jew-hatred.[32]   Rabbi Abrahams took the opportunity to assure the rest of Australia understood that Jewish support for Dreyfus was due to fact of his innocence, not his Jewishness. Indeed, *any* loyal British subject - an *Englishman* such as *himself*, said Abrahams - would support Dreyfus 'were he a Mohametan'.[33]

Newspapers around the country took up the story. The *Advertiser* begged Broken Hill Jewry not to carry out 'their awful threat not to patronise the Paris Exhibition of 1900'.   The *Perth Morning Herald* both managed to ridicule Jewish 'revenge' while also suggesting the real possibility of a worldwide Jewish action, 'especially if the Rothchilds and other great Hebrew financiers used their influence against the French...'[34]

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[31] The use of the word 'illiterate' is illustrative of the way Anglo Jewry sought to distance themselves from 'foreign Jews' and align themselves with the 'British' majority. The use of the word 'illiterate' as a descriptor of the newcomers was obviously inaccurate.

[32] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 169. As late as 1928, the Australian Jewish leadership welcomed restrictions on immigration of Eastern European Jews, particularly in Sydney under the leadership of Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen.

[33] 'The Dreyfus Case,' *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NS : 1888 - 1954)*, 3 October 1898, 2, quoting the *Perth Morning Herald*

[34] 'Concentrates,' *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954)*, 15 October 1898, 2.

The 'Broken Hill Dreyfus Affair' caused the new arrivals to learn a sharp lesson in Anglo Jewish 'decorum'. Decorum had become the six hundred and fourteenth commandment of the British Jew three centuries before, since the famous diarist Samuel Pepys expressed dismay at the 'abandon of Oriental fervour' he saw in a London synagogue.[35] British Jews learned to value 'the calm reserve of Western manners' over 'excessive' piety. Although the Australian Jewish leadership acknowledged every synagogue was strengthened

> … by the earnest piety of some of our Russian brethren, this benefit scarcely extends to the many little points of manners and decorum due to Slavonic social ideas than to any Jewish feeling or Hebrew tradition. We are not claiming that Sydney is the hub of the universe, but it is after all a great modern city and among its leading Jewish citizens are some of the most refined and dignified of its inhabitants. These very naturally desire that the courtly manners of their own social circle shall be even surpassed by the dignity and refinement in their House of Worship....[36]

The reaction to this by those Broken Hill Jews from the homeland of the *Gaon* of Vilna may only be imagined.

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[35] 'Wednesday 14 October 1663,' *The Diary of Samuel Pepys,* accessed 23 October 2016, http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1663/10/14/.
[36] Editorial, *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia,* 20 January 1911, 8.

Building the Shul

Following New Year services in 1900, the practicing community decided to establish a formal congregation and to build a synagogue. A report in the *Barrier Miner* described the meeting:

> A MEETING of Jewish residents of Broken Hill was held at Tait's Masonic Hall on Monday night, with the object of forming a Jewish congregation and building a synagogue in Broken Hill. There was a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Bernard Stone was voted to the chair.... He considered that the time had now arrived when the Jewish residents should band together and build a house of worship of their own. A school of instruction was badly needed here also for the teaching of the young children in the faith of their forefathers; and the outcome of the establishment of a congregation in Broken Hill would be the formation of a Sunday school and many other institutions connected with the Hebrew congregation. After various speakers had voiced their opinions, it was resolved that a congregation be formed, to be called the "Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation." [37]

The congregation had to raise the money themselves. In 1901, the *Miner* reported £60 had been raised, adding to the original £41 donated at the original meeting the year before. In 1902, the available funds had been

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[37] *Barrier Miner*, 2 October 1900, 2.

reduced to £58, and, owing to the economic depression, courage to pursue the building project waivered.[38] Matters had not improved by 1903, and the congregation decided at their August meeting to turn over the funds to the trustees of the Jewish Cemetery, to build a fence around their portion there.[39]

Confidence returned to Broken Hill in 1905 when advances in zinc treatment and smelting created new sources of wealth.[40] The general improvement in economic circumstances aided the Jewish community, too, allowing them to contribute a donation to the persecuted Jews of Russia and to engage their first minister, the Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum.[41] A year later, £110 had been raised and a committee of three was appointed to locate suitable land for the erection of the synagogue.[42]

In 1908 the building committee offered two different proposals for the synagogue, one a wood and iron building, and one of stone. The stone structure was preferred, at an estimated cost of £300 with an anticipated further £200 for its interior. The congregation was perhaps a little hopeful in its planning, as the same meeting reported a credit balance of a mere £60, 'the overdraft being practically wiped out'.[43] However, in 1909, president George Edelman reported that there was 'something like' £250 in the bank, and that the Wolfram St site had been purchased 'some three years' before.

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[38] Ibid., 19 March 1902, 3.
[39] Ibid., 11 August 1903, 3.
[40] Richard Hugh Bell (RHB) Kearns, *Broken Hill 1894 – 1914: the uncertain years. (*Broken Hill: Broken Hill Historical Society, 1974). 35.
[41] *Barrier Miner,* 21 November 1905, 3.
[42] Ibid, 24 April 1908, 3.
[43] Ibid., 4 April 1908, 3.

By contrast, the *Jewish Herald* reported that the cost of the site and the synagogue and the minister's residence was to be £700. This figure did not include fixtures and fittings.[44]

In fact 165 Wolfram St was purchased two years before, in July 1907.[45] According to the *Rules and Laws for the Government of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation*, property belonging to the congregation was to be vested in the trustees.[46] The trustees at the time of purchase were Abraham Rosenberg, Samuel Dryen and Albert Edelman.[47] It may be that the original purchase was partially funded by Albert Edelman. Edelman was granted an interest free loan of £200 in July 1907 [48] as a consequence of his membership of an early micro-finance cooperative, the Starr-Bowkett Society. Starr-Bowkett loans were given exclusively for the purchase of property, so it is possible that Edelman used this loan to purchase Wolfram Street.

On a warm Sunday in November 1910 the community gathered to lay the foundation stone for their new house of worship. The president of the Adelaide Congregation, Solomon Saunders, was invited to do the honours. The event was witnessed by 'a large concourse of people, including representatives of other denominations...(it was) a splendid gathering, thoroughly representative of all sections and interests of the Silver City.'[49]

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[44] *Jewish Herald*, quoted by Leon Mann in *Jews...the Centenary,* 53.
[45] NSW Department of Lands, (Land Grant) Vol. 1315, Folio 47 (new Folio21/5/759092).
[46] *Rules and Laws for the Government of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation*, paragraph II. Australian Jewish Historical Society Archives Broken Hill Archive AB261. University of Sydney
[47] NSW Land title Req:E061008 /Doc:CT 969-142 /Rev:12-Mar-2009 /Sts:OK.OK /Prt:13-Apr-2013 14:04 /Pgs:ALL /Seq:1 of 2 Ref: /Src:X.
[48] 'Starr-Bowkett Societies,' *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW: 1888 - 1954),* 3 August 1907, 4.
[49] *Jewish Herald,* December 23, 1910, 8. The Foundation Stone was laid on 30 November 1910.

Behind the foundation stone was a sealed casket containing the daily papers, six coins of the realm and a scroll describing the events of the day, and the congregation's hope for God's blessing.[50] A reception for Saunders at the home of Broken Hill congregation president George Krantz followed, and afterwards a fundraising concert at the Broken Hill Town Hall.[51]

The construction of the synagogue took just three months. On 26 February the consecration ceremony was held. On 24 February 1911, the *Hebrew Standard* correspondent reported:

> The Synagogue, which is now completed, is a decided acquisition to the architecture of Broken Hill, and everyone is highly pleased with the fine, substantial structure. Seats have been placed in position, and electric light installed. Although the ceiling is still wanting, and one or two other details usually seen in an orthodox Synagogue, our small community can be justly proud of our House of Worship.[52]

Although the Broken Hill congregation relied on Adelaide for most things, for the consecration of the Synagogue they looked to Sydney. The *Hebrew Standard* saw this as entirely fitting: '...it is particularly appropriate that the congregation there should desire to have the finishing touch put to their labours by a representative of the Sydney Congregation, which may be

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[50] Mann et al., *Jews...the Centenary,* 56.
[51] *Jewish Herald,* 23 December 1910, 8.
[52] *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia,* 24 February 1911, 8.

termed the Mother Congregation of Australia'.[53] The paper editorialised that it was 'probably unknown in the annals of Anglo Jewry ... that a minister is called to travel a distance of some 1400 miles to take part in a ceremony in his own sphere of ministration'.[54] It congratulated the Great Synagogue Board of Management for facilitating the journey to Broken Hill by Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen, senior minister at the Great Synagogue, Sydney.[55]

Francis Lyon Cohen was an Englishman, a musician and a scholar. Thus far, his only connection with Broken Hill Jewry had been to assure Australians in 1908 that claims that Jewish children in Broken Hill had refused to salute the flag were 'simply a misunderstanding'.[56] By 1911 that minor scandal was forgotten, and the English rabbi graciously consented to consecrate the new synagogue. Broken Hill Jewry greatly wanted acceptance from their co-religionists in their new country; therefore they invited that model of 'synagogue dignity and decorum'[57], Francis Lyon Cohen, to consecrate their synagogue.

Cohen arrived on the Friday to celebrate a service on Friday evening. The Rabbi had an exhausting three-day journey from Sydney via Melbourne and Adelaide, by boat and train, followed by a drive of three hundred and twenty

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53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 The only reference to the Broken Hill Congregation contained in the Great Synagogue archives records the latter's willingness to pay for Cohen's trip to Broken Hill for the consecration of the Synagogue, *1911 Annual Report, no.14.*
56 *Barrier Miner,* 22 May 1908, 8.
57 Suzanne D. Rutland, 'Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862–1934),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography, s.v.* National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed May 22, 2013, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-francis-lyon-5710/text9655.

miles by motor-car to Broken Hill.[58]   The Outback welcomed the Rabbi with a violent dust storm, which blew in at the conclusion of the service.[59]   Dust storms in the Barrier Ranges can turn the sky black and make even those born and bred in the desert disoriented; perhaps Cohen was moved to reflect on the courage and commitment of those who built this temple in the wilderness.   On Saturday, ordinary services were held with non-Jewish observers, and, even though another dust storm threatened, the consecration itself took place on the Sunday.

Rabbi Cohen and Rev. Mandelbaum entered the new House of Israel with Torah Scrolls, presents from the Adelaide congregation.   Rabbi Cohen exclaimed, 'Open unto me the gates of righteousness. I will enter therein, I will give thanks to the Lord.'[60] At this point, past and future president of the congregation, Abraham Rosenberg, entered, as Cohen chanted from the psalms; two candles of eternal light were lit by Solomon Dryen. Aaron Wine then relieved Rev. Mandelbaum of the Scrolls, and Rabbi and Mr Wine circled the Ark seven times.   After this, the Torah Scrolls were handed to William Levy, who placed them in the Ark.   Then Rabbi Cohen delivered his sermon. He recalled in the legends of the Midrash how Jacob, before setting out for a new home in Egypt had assured his sons

> Through all the changes of their experience in a strange land
>
> there remained before them the certain prospect of 'eventual

[58] *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia,* 10 March 1911, 6.
[59] Ibid., 4.
[60] Ibid, 11.

enlargement' from their cares, and the glad day would
eventually come when they might set up a holy Tabernacle
where to commune in freedom of heart and soul with the God
of their fathers.[61]

The brief ceremony was followed by a warm and dignified reception for Cohen in the home of president George Krantz. The ladies of the congregation had 'tastefully' decorated the room.[62] On behalf of the Broken Hill congregation, Abraham Rosenberg gave thanks to Rabbi Cohen and to the Sydney congregation for allowing him to visit their brethren in the Barrier. Rev. Mandelbaum commended Rabbi Cohen for his intellect and cultured personality. Rabbi Cohen gave tribute to the tiny community for upholding the ancient traditions of Judaism in the remote Barrier. Finally, he impressed upon those present that caring for children by instruction in the faith was a Jewish duty of the first importance.[63]

At their meeting of 9 April 1911, a system of monthly collections was adopted 'in order to liquidate the debt on the Synagogue.'[64] By October the overdraft had been reduced 'by £60' and 'hopes were entertained of still further reducing the outstanding liability.'[65] Charitable film screenings, euchre games, concerts and other fundraising activities to reduce the synagogue debt were conducted for a number of years. In October 1914, the President,

[61] Ibid.
[62] The included Mesdames G. M. Hains, A. Dryen, G. Krantz, W. Levy and Miss R. Dryen, as reported in *Barrier Miner*, 27 February 1911, 5.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 10 April 1911, 4.
[65] Ibid., 30 October 1911, 5.

Abraham Rosenberg, reported to the Hebrew Congregation that the overdraft on the synagogue buildings had been met. A synagogue had been built in the Australian desert, and the Jews of the Outback were finally free of debt.[66]

As Rabbi Cohen noted in 1911, the earliest Jewish congregation in Broken Hill 'had no stability and consequently had the briefest existence.'[67] It was the newer arrivals, the 'Russians', with their 'slavonic social ideas' and failure to apprehend the finer feelings of Anglo-Jewry, that established a viable congregation and built a Tabernacle in the desert. If the Tabernacle was a small one, the fervour and sincerity of worship were great. Against all odds, the Jews of the Outback had built a sanctuary to honour the Divine Name.

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[66] Ibid., 12 October 1914, 3.
[67] *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia,* 10 March 1911, 1.

Chapter 5: Moving up

Everybody who came to Broken Hill was attracted by the opportunities to make money. Realistically, no one would come to the Barrier, especially with a family, if they were already persons of means. Apart from established families such as the Boans, it is likely that most immigrants would have arrived with virtually nothing. Like Jews elsewhere, Russian-Jews escaping persecution were attracted to cities, principally Sydney and Melbourne. However, the depression of the 1890s saw Jews of a more entrepreneurial disposition move to rural and mining districts where they thought there would be more opportunities for employment. The 'German' and 'Russian' Jews rapidly established themselves in the typical Jewish occupations of shopkeeping, 'middleman' and white-collar roles. As discussed in this chapter, they replicated economic patterns from the Russian Empire, where 29 percent of Jews were engaged in commerce, and 35 percent in industry, but only two and a half percent were represented in agriculture (contrast 73 percent of Ukrainians in agricultural labour).[1] As well, this chapter will provide the case study of Hirsch Krantz, who arrived from the Ukraine with other members of his extended family and rapidly became very successful financially, and finally with discuss the social acceptance of the newcomers within Broken Hill society.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Russian Jews

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[1] *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* s.v. 'Ukraine,' accessed 10 October 2013, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Ukraine#id0enf.

Jewish immigrants to Australia from the Russian Empire between 1881 and 1920 were overwhelmingly represented in 'skilled' occupations. Price notes that 42 percent of 'Russian' Jews were jewellers, mechanics, carpenters, and tailors, and 22 percent were in finance, trading, sales and drapery.[2] What was different in Broken Hill was that these traditional occupations could, for some, be combined with mining related activities including speculating and share trading, and property. Thus, Johannes Carl Kleinhammer, established Argent St jeweller and watchmaker, is listed amongst the 'some leading citizens of Broken Hill 1908' as 'Mr J. C. Kleinhammer, J.P. *sharebroker'*.[3] The ability to combine traditional occupations with mining related activities meant that many Broken Hill Jews quickly became rich.

The flexibility of Broken Hill Jews to accommodate opportunities outside their traditional occupations was perhaps partly shaped by *Litvak* culture and heritage, which gave the Jews of the Outback confidence and resourcefulness. *Litvaks* were well established in their Baltic countries of origin (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), with a specific and important role in the economy of the north-west Pale.[4] Indeed, at the end of the nineteenth century, Litvak Jews were so successful that Christian peasants in Lithuania were portrayed by the secular nationalists and the Catholic clergy as needing 'economic emancipation' from Lithuanian Jewish merchants, contributing to the growth of antisemitism there.[5] The *Litvaks* were, relatively speaking,

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[2] Price, *Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788-1961*, Appendix V(c).
[3] Curtis, *Rise and Progress*, 134.
[4] Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century*, 34 ff.
[5] Klaus Richter, 'Antisemitism, "Economic Emancipation" and the Lithuanian Co-operative Movement before World War I,' *Quest Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 3 (July 2012).

used to being equal with, if not socially and economically superior to, their gentile fellow countrymen.

Whether by good luck or good judgement, these Jews were able to arrive in Broken Hill with certain expectations, as seen in the lifestyle they established on arrival there. They had no intention of working for anyone else and they were not going to work in factories, or down mines. Further, they were not coming alone; apart from later arrivals in the 1920s, these Jews did not leave their families behind. The arrival of so many intact family groups may be explained by the fact that many Broken Hill Jews (and indeed nineteenth century Jewish immigrants generally) had spent time in other places such as England, Ireland, South Africa and Palestine prior to arrival in Australia. Between 1881 and 1920, 43 percent of Lithuanian Jews had resided in the UK prior to arrival in Australia in contrast to 25 percent who came directly.[6] Therefore, the Jews who arrived in Broken Hill in the 1890s were archetypal small businessmen. Supported by their wives and children, they ran many 'milk bar' type shops, dotted all over Broken Hill.

To appreciate the achievement of all who did well in Broken Hill, it is necessary to appreciate the life situation in the Barrier in the 1890s-1900s. Typhoid was rampant, due to the polluted drinking water. Housing was inadequate against the extreme heat. There was lack of fresh food. Conditions were unsanitary; when the first health inspector was appointed in 1888, it was reported that he had had to destroy by fire some 80 dead animal

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[6] Price, *Jewish Settlers in Australia* 1788-1961, Appendix IV.

carcasses that had been allowed to accumulate on the city's streets.[7] The death toll in Broken Hill was twice the state average, and infant mortality figures recorded in 1888 showed an appalling 358 infant deaths for every one thousand live births.[8] This was at a time when Broken Hill was the third largest centre in the New South Wales after Sydney and Newcastle, and the site of Australia's richest single lode.[9] It was into this environment that Eastern European Jews arrived to seek their fortunes.

Arriving in Australia from the Ukrainian Jewish agricultural colonies, the three adult children of Nahum Lakovsky (Norman ('Nahum') Lakovsky, Drosnya (Lakovsky) Krantz and Thomas ('Tuvia') Lakovsky) all came to Broken Hill. The descendents of Norman did least well, suffering during the First War due to industrial strife. They left and set up a pickle factory in Marrickville, and were partly supported by the Thomas family.[10] The Thomas branch of the family used Broken Hill as a stepping-stone to wealth and prosperity in Sydney and beyond, producing distinguished and talented Australians. These include MGM General Manager in Australia, David Lake; historian Janette (Lake) Biber, and Dr Max Emory Lake, hand surgeon and renowned winemaker of *Lake's Folly*.[11] The Drosnya family is most associated with Broken Hill. Drosnya's thirteen children were born in Ekaterinoslav. All of them were in Broken Hill by 1893-4. The eldest daughter, Sophie, married

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[7] Kearns, *Broken Hill 1883-1893*, 22.

[8] Edward Stokes, *United We Stand* (Canterbury: Five Mile Press, 1983), 112.

[9] Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush that Never Ended* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 143.

[10] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* 126-134. (Interviews with Lawrence Lake, Dorothy Lazarus).

[11] Lake's Folly was the first boutique winery in Australia, see 'Historical Highlights,' *Lake's Folly*, accessed 21 November 2014,
http://www.lakesfolly.com.au/templates/lakes_folly_content.aspx?pageID=4374.

Victor, the third son of Adelaide Lord Mayor, Sir Lewis Cohen. Cohen's second daughter, Gladys, married Sophie's younger brother, Ralph Krantz.[12] All did well, but perhaps none so spectacularly as Drosnya's eldest son, Hirsch.

Hirsch Krantz (1885-1938)

Hirsch Krantz arrived in Australia in 1891, followed by the remainder of his family. Yet by 1893, after a mere two years in Broken Hill, Hirsch Krantz had managed to buy out his brothers Isaac and David. By then the Krantz Brothers, fruiterers and general storekeepers, ran two outlets, one in Broken Hill and one in South Broken Hill. The partnership between the brothers was formally dissolved in 1893 and the ownership of the business transferred to Hirsch alone.[13] In 1897, Hirsch was granted a spirit merchant's licence[14], a veritable 'gold mine' in that challenging (and thirsty!) part of the world. Shortly after in 1901, the Krantz Brothers advertised their first rental property: the South Broken Hill shop and dwelling.[15] Hirsch added to this property and the area later became known as 'Krantz's Corner'.[16] In 1901 the properties at Argent and Oxide Streets were valued at £7,000.[17] Later, Hirsch was to list

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[12] Ralph Krantz, who married the daughter of Sir Lewis Cohen, was an entrepreneur and a 'colourful character' associated with many scandals. The notorious Tin Hare scandal was ultimately subject to a NSW Government inquiry, see 'Tin Hare Inquiry,' *The Argus* (Melbourne, Victoria: 1848 - 1957), 10 August 1932, accessed 4 October 2014, http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4467558.
[13] *Barrier Miner*, 19 April 1893, 2.
[14] Ibid., 6 October 1897, 2.
[15] Ibid., 29 January 1901, 4.
[16] Ibid., 25 March 1898, 3.
[17] Ibid., 5 September 1901, 3.

the business and sell shares to his family,[18] and in 1929 he sold the Argent St property to P. Coochiroff, for £20,000.[19]

In 1906, Hirsch began the first of his mining endeavours, the King's Bluff Gold Mining Company.[20] Situated in Olary, South Australia, the discovery of alluvial gold was made in March 1887 in a dry creek gully 400 metres wide by 3.2 km in length.[21] This was one of many small finds in South Australia. King's Bluff did not make Hirsch's fortune, but must have whetted his appetite for minerals. Following a highly successful business career with companies including the Krantz Knitting Mills,[22] the Horseshoe Hotel in Moana[23] and Yellow Cabs South Australia Ltd[24], as well as the original drapery businesses in Broken Hill and Adelaide, Hirsch applied for registration of the Great NorWest Tinfields Syndicate. This company was formed to exploit mineral leases in the Pilbara, with capital of £20,000.[25] In 1936, Hirsch also is listed as a director of the Ooloo Silver Lead Mine in Murnpeowie, South Australia.[26] However, the real money came from the Gwalia Mine, Leonora, Western Australia. This was originally established by (later US President) Herbert Hoover, in 1897. Hirsch's grandson, Michael Spivakovsky, reported that Krantz relatives were commandeered to make the trek from Adelaide to the West, accompanied by camels.[27] As of 2016, (the

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[18] *Sunday Times*, 29 October 1916, 4.
[19] *Barrier Miner*, 30 April 1929, 2.
[20] *Barrier Miner,* 6 August 1906, 3.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *The Advertiser*, 24 May 1924, 3.
[23] *The Chronicle,* 6 October 1928, 4.
[24] *The Mail,* 20 June 1925, 3.
[25] *The Register*, 17 September 1927, 7.
[26] 'The Oloo Silver Lead Mine,' Flinders Ranges Research, accessed 7 October 2013, http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/ooloo.htm.
[27] Michael Spivakovsky, telephone conversation with author, 5 October 2011.

still operational) Leonora Gwalia Mine has produced over four million ounces of gold.[28] On the occasion of the birth of his only child, Hirsch showed his appreciation by naming her Leonora.[29]

At the time of his death in 1938, Hirsch Krantz owned Albyn House, a grand estate on thirty blocks of prime land on the Yarra; his daughter had married the internationally renowned pianist, Jascha Spivakovsky; Krantz himself was a member of the Adelaide Stock Exchange, and, with his wife Rosa Rosanove, Hirsch led a sparkling social life, entertaining the likes of Paderewski, Melba, Benno Moiseiwitsch and Chaliapin.[30] Although determined to achieve social acceptance as well as financial success, Krantz was a private man who eschewed the limelight.   Perhaps inevitably over time, Hirsch Krantz lost much of his connection to Broken Hill. Yet for all of this life and for three years after his death, Hirsch is recorded as a financial member of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation.[31]

Hirsch Krantz' story is but one of many success stories. Others include Solomon Bernstein, a pawnbroker, who became Harry Burleigh. Burleigh made a fortune and eventually owned the Strand Arcade, Sydney;[32] the Dryens, whose iconic store in Broken Hill led to significant landholdings in

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[28] St Barbara Ltd, operator of the Gwalia Gold Mine, Leonora, WA, accessed 26 December 2016, http://www.stbarbara.com.au/our-operations/leonora/
[29] *Adelaide News*, 9 February 1929, 5.
[30] Elizabeth Warburton, *The Paddocks Beneath, A History of Burnside,* (Burnside: Corporation of the City of Burnside, 1981), 8.
[31] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* 71.
[32] Sidney Griff, interview by author, 25 October 2011.

Bondi[33] and Marie Wajntraub, a Polish refugee sponsored to Broken Hill, who grew up to become Mary, Lady Fairfax.[34]

Acceptance by the General Community

Financial success is but one measure of 'moving up'. Another is the extent to which an immigrant minority group becomes accepted by the majority.[35] The Jews of Broken Hill embraced Broken Hill social and recreational institutions with enthusiasm, becoming keen supporters of such organisations.   The Jews of the Outback were in turn accepted and indeed welcomed by the British Broken Hillites.

Samuel Curtis' 1908 *The History of Broken Hill: its Rise and Progress* records Jewish acceptance in Broken Hill's civic life. On the Board of the Broken Hill Chamber of Commerce, there were Albert and George Edelman, and William Roden;[36] on the Board of the Benevolent Society, Marcus Mannheim,[37] and as 'a senior member of the Order of Rechabites', Abraham Rosenberg was honoured.[38] The Barrier Temperance Alliance committee membership is noteworthy for the inclusion of Samuel Rosenberg, along with almost every member of Broken Hill's Christian clergy.[39] He clearly became

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[33] Robyn Dryen, interview by author, 16 April 2010.
[34] NAA: A446, 1954/52308
  Mary Wajntraub was born in Poland on 15 August 1922 and came to Australia with her parents Kiwa and Anna, and her brother Paul on the SS Oronsay, arriving in Melbourne in 1926. The family, renamed 'Wein', went to Broken Hill in 1928, living at 82 William St Broken Hill. They were naturalised Australian citizens in 1933.
[35] Peter Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1968), 7.
[36] Curtis, *Rise and Progress*, 123.
[37] Ibid., 131.
[38] Ibid., 168.
[39] Ibid., 169.

involved for social reasons, because wine plays a key role in Jewish tradition and, as well, Jews have a very low rate of problems with alcohol.[40]

Members of the Jewish community were also active in Freemasonry, which developed in the seventeenth century and grew out of craftsmen's associations. The Freemasonry Constitution declared only that to be admitted, one must be 'true and honest', whatever denomination, and believe in a Supreme Being.[41] Jews became active in Freemasonry, and in Broken Hill, as elsewhere, Jews were well represented. Willyama Lodge No 178, established in 1888, boasted amongst its members from 1894 to 1938 the names Marks, Berkholtz, Mannheim, Sampson, Hains, Gurewitz, Feldman, Griff and Hamery.[42] At the Barrier Lodge No 173, members from 1888 to 1938 included J.C. Kleinhammer, J. Saunders, F. Simpson, J.P. Gold, J.W. Harris and H.R.C. Reuben.[43] Lodge 199's members included the names Harris, Saunders, Clarke, Sayers, Solomon, Gordon and Hains,[44] and Masonic Lodge Barrier Lodge No 13's membership lists reveal the names of Saunders, Harris, Clarke, Boan, Sayers, Mannheim, Hains and Krantz.[45] Many Broken Hill Jews were simultaneously members of several different lodges. Undoubtedly there were business advantages in belonging to the

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[40] Barry Glassner and Bruce Berg, 'How Jews Avoid Alcohol Problems,' *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 4 (August, 1980): 647-664, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095014. Interestingly Glassner and Berg show that alcoholism is also extremely rare amongst non-Orthodox and assimilated Jews.

[41] 'Freemasons,' *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed 9 October 2013, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0007_0_06772.html.

[42] *Lodge Willyama No 178 Jubilee 1888-1938 75th Anniversary* (self-published, 1963). However, it is interesting that Rosenberg was on the committee, given the key role alcohol plays in Judaism that he was involved in the Barrier Temperance Alliance.

[43] *A Brief History of Barrier Lodge No 173* (Broken Hill: AB Wallace & Son, 1938).

[44] RH Nankivell, *A Brief History of Broken Hill Lodge No 199, 1891-1966* (self-published, 1941).

[45] CW Maiden, *History of Barrier Lodge No 13 of Mark Master Masons of New South Wales 27 June 1891 – 27 June 1941* (self-published, 1941).

Masons. In addition, membership increased Jewish acceptance into the broader community and was a feature of Jewish life in the other Australian colonies.

A former employee of Harold Griff's, Kevin Sinclair, who is still resident in Broken Hill, reported in 2011 that other immigrant communities tended to live in groups, but that Jews lived 'all around the town'.[46] That they did not feel the need to live *en masse* in Broken Hill demonstrates the degree of acceptance Jews themselves believed they enjoyed. Kevin Sinclair confirmed that the British Australian majority 'all knew they were Jews' and that the Jews 'were held in very high esteem'.[47]

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the way the Russian Jews were able to quickly move up the socio-economic ladder in Broken Hill. Their financial success and their concentration in the merchant class reflected occupational patterns of Jewish communities in other parts of the world. One factor in this success was the Jewish stress on the importance of literacy. It was the requirement for every Jewish male to be literate in order to be able to study Torah, a requirement mandated by the reformulated rabbinical Judaism after 70 CE.[48] Due to the historical ban on owning property, Jews never went into agriculture or manual labour in any numbers. As discussed, they gravitated to cities, acquiring the skills for business and trade. Political scientist, Peter

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[46] Kevin Sinclair, interview by author, Broken Hill, October 2011.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, *The Chosen Few: How Education Shaped Jewish History 70-1492* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2012), 69.

Medding, has argued that Jews are primarily urban people and developed from their experience in business personal attributes necessary for success: care, foresight, moderation, the ability to make the most of opportunities, the anticipation of alternatives and the cultivation of clients and customers.[49] The cohesive nature of the Jewish community militated against an overemphasis on individualism. Hence, the Jews of the Outback assisted one another. Records held both by the Broken Hill Historical Society and in the Australian Jewish Historical Society Archive show that financial support was given to new arrivals and indeed to any Jew in special need. From the interviews conducted for this study, it appears that the Anglo-Australian majority recognized in their Jewish neighbours values they esteemed, such as independence, the desire for achievement, reliability, and a willingness to share in the daily struggle. The 'high esteem' in which Jews were held in Broken Hill reflected these qualities along with other civilizing influences specifically attributable to Judaism: emphasis on education, strong family life, sobriety, cleanliness and charity.[50]

'Moving up' in Australian society is one thing, but being a *macher* – a 'big shot' - in Jewish society is another. Merely making money and having the esteem of the wider community did not make one a 'big shot' in Broken Hill. Hirsch Krantz, for all his wealth, would not have passed that test. To be a *macher*, someone who gets things done, required more than money. What was needed was money plus influence. The extreme and often lawless conditions in the Outback meant that *machers* in Broken Hill also had to take

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[49] Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival,* 24.
[50] Ibid., 2.

risks. The next chapter will analysis this key concept of a *macher*, which has

traditionally been part of Jewish society.

Chapter 6: Big shots

The very idea of '*macher*' is an ambiguous one, just as is its English equivalent, 'big shot'. The *macher* is a person of importance and influence. However the word is also used ironically. In Broken Hill, the Boan Brothers, Henry and Ernest, were obviously important.[1] But in community terms, they were not influential. There were Solomons from Adelaide, obviously important and influential – but in Adelaide, not Broken Hill. Maurice Coleman Davies and his son, D. W. 'Karri' Davies were exceptionally important as the builders of the Stephens Creek Reservoir, without which Broken Hill could not have continued to exist. All these men are listed in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* as Jews of importance and influence.[2] Yet, they do not pass the *macher* test in Broken Hill. This chapter will discuss the general phenomenon, with different examples, and then discuss in detail the history of Frank Griff as a case study of the *macher*.

General Overview

This is perhaps, because the *macher* in Broken Hill is, like his gentile equivalent, not merely important and influential but a mover and shaker, a deal maker, a kingpin. The earliest *machers* who identified as Jews were of

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[1] Boan Brothers ran 'header' advertisements on every page of the *Barrier Miner Business Directory*, compiled and published by Knight and Von Rieben, Barrier Miner Newspaper Office, Argent St, Broken Hill, 1891.

[2] For example, see Peter Donovan, 'Solomon, Vaiben Louis (1853–1908)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/solomon-vaiben-louis-8577/text14973, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 24 May 2017 and J. R. Robertson, 'Davies, Maurice Coleman (1835–1913)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/davies-maurice-coleman-295/text5109, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 24 May 2017.

German/Prussian background, successful businessmen who sought leadership in the community generally. Johannes Kleinhammer was a person of significance. Kleinhammer first 'pegged off' land in 1888, in West Broken Hill, where he lived in a one room hut. So successful was he by 1908, that his story was used by Leonard Samuel Curtis in his landmark *The History of Broken Hill* as a prime example of the prosperity possible in the Silver City, complete with 'before' and 'after' photographs of his dwellings.[3] Solomon Marks was an alderman in the Broken Hill Municipal Council;[4] George and Abraham Edelman, and William Roden are listed as board members of the Broken Hill Chamber of Commerce. [5] Two further Edelmans, Edward and Henry, were pictured amongst others under the title, 'Some of the Leading Citizens on the Hill, 1908' in the same work.[6]

After the 'Russians' arrived, the leadership style changed. As we have seen, the 'Russian' arrivals between 1890 and 1914 were not Russian at all, but from Lithuania, Belarus and Latvia. Culturally, these Jews came from *shtetlach* in societies where non-Jews (as well as Jews) relied on Jewish economic activity for survival.[7] Recent scholarship challenges popular misconceptions of the *shtetl* as an exclusively isolated, ramshackle Jewish village stricken by poverty and pogroms.[8] Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern argues that, in its heyday from the 1790s to the 1840s, the *shtetl* was a thriving

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[3] Curtis, *The History of Broken Hill*, 104.
[4] Ibid., 106.
[5] Ibid., 123. William Roden married Annie Krantz. He is listed on Beverley Davis' Burial Data, grave ID 5415, accessed 8 June 2014, http://ajhs.info/cemetery/.
[6] Curtis, *Rise and Progress*, 148.
[7] Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 30ff.
[8] Scholars include Hundert, Rosman, Teller, Petrovsky-Shtern and Shandler.

Jewish community as vibrant as any in Europe.[9] The 'can-do' character of the Lithuanian *shtetlach* produced in Broken Hill a network of *machers.* They were interconnected by kinship, common goals and migration sponsorship. Of the names of those who continued to be contributors[10] to the synagogue in 1940, six families – Gould, Gordon, Hyman, Silver, Simon (Bub) and Griff – were interrelated by marriage before arrival in Broken Hill.[11] The Edelmans also had connections with the Kaunas (Kovno) province in Lithuania, as did the aforementioned families. In Broken Hill, their progress was unencumbered by the prejudice and systemic persecutions of the Old World. The *macher par excellence* in Broken Hill was Frank Griff.

Case study: Frank Griff

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[9] Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl*, 3.

[10] *Broken Hill Receipt Book No. 8 for 1940* lists Berman, Burleigh, Dryen, Edelman, Gould, Griff, Gordon, Hamery, Hyman, Kronenberg, Press, Silver and Simon (Bub).

[11] Avraham Griff descendants.pdf supplied by Joe Gould, 15 December 2010; Hyman family History; Joe Gould, email to author, 12 December 2010. Yetta Gordon married Barnett Gould (1872, Lithuania); Philip and Frank Griff married sisters Rose and Sophie Gordon; the Griffs and the Goulds were resident in Limerick (c.1895-1903); sister Ida Griff married Israel Silver in Lithuania; Doba Griff married Shimon Bub in Lithuania; sisters Pesha and Betty Bub married brothers Sam and Harry Hyman, all from Lithuania.

Figure: Map of Lithuania showing Latvia, Baltic Sea, East Prussia/Germany, Poland, Belarus, and towns including Zhidiki/Zidikaii, Akmyan/Akmené, Popeliany/Papilé, Telz/Telśiai, Kursenai/Kuršenai, Shavel/Siauliai, Plungyan/Plungé, Kaunas/Kovno, Vilnius/Vilna.

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Frank Griff was an extraordinary figure who lived an extraordinary life due to his natural ability and his willingness to run risks. In the borderline lawless conditions of Broken Hill,[13] Frank Griff became a rich man. Afterwards, Griff contributed diligently to the community, took care of his workers and his family. He and his wife, Sophie, sponsored many families to come to Broken Hill, including the Hymans, the Slonims, the Weins and the Manns. He earned respect and gratitude from generations of these families. As the

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[12] O Grada, *Jewish Ireland,* 24. Figure 1.3 : The Litvak Shtetls.

[13] *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 3 May 1909. Broken Hill was always a place of extremes, where capital and labour, citizens, police and government clashed repeatedly. In 1908, at the time of the second of three great strikes, South Australian MP and BHP Chairman John Darling announced: 'If the police could not maintain order and ensure respect for the law, then the military should be called in. Either that or the Government should give the mine-owners power to protect their own lives and property.' The miners responded by hanging Darling in effigy on company property.

Holocaust loomed they literally owed him their lives. Frank Griff became the single most important player in the Jewish community and beyond.[14]

It is tempting to romanticize the origins of Griff, partly because he romanticized them himself.[15] Griff told his children that he took the name 'Griff' after seeing a billboard for 'Griffith's Teas' from a train window after he arrived in Australia.[16] This story is apocryphal; Frank's relative, Joe Gould, reports that Griff was using that name for years before, when he lived in Ireland.[17] Frank's youngest son, Sidney, reported that they never really knew how old their father was, and that Frank arrived in Broken Hill in the 1890s.[18] Neither is true; Frank did know when he was born, though he occasionally changed his mind about the date. He was born on 14 April, 1885,[19] in Zidikai, Kovno, Lithuania. The LitvakSIG All Lithuania Database records the following family names in Zidikai between 1846 and 1912: Graf, Grib and Grob.[20] The most likely family is that of Grib.[21] Abram Grib is recorded as a 'well to do' day labourer in the town of Zidikai, with a family of nine.[22] In

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[14] Mann et al., *Jews …the Centenary,* 40. Sophie, Mrs Frank Griff, 'worked tirelessly with her good friend Dr Fanny Reading to assist refugees by sponsoring them to Australia.'

[15] Even historian Dan Kenny was sold the 'Griff blarney'. In a speech to the Broken Hill Historical Society in 1977, Kenny said that Griff had arrived in Australia at Port Adelaide, where he spent some time as a pedlar before arriving in Broken Hill in the 1890s, still selling goods out of a suitcase. This is also incorrect.

[16] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* 131. Story told both by Tracey Griff and Sidney Griff.

[17] Joe Gould, email to author, 3 September 2011.

[18] Sidney Griff, interview by author, 14 October 2011.

[19] Date taken from Griff's application for naturalisation of 1938, NAA: A1, 1938/7023. In an earlier application, (1908) Griff claims to be born on April 15th 1886. NAA: A1, 1938/7023, 7.

[20] Tax and Voter Lists, LitvakSIG, http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/jgform.php Archive KRA/I-49/1/13612, Record 103, p. 17, accessed 5 April 2014.

[21] In Hebrew (and indeed Russian) the letters 'b' and 'v' can be interchangeable. In that case, the surname may have been 'Griv' which became 'Griff'. To add to the confusion Frank himself suggested to his family that his original name was Graff. However, there is no 'Abram Graff' listed in the database.

[22] LitvakSIG,Tax and Voter Lists, http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/jgdetail_2.php KRA/I-49/1/17256, record 26, page 44.

1892, 'Abraham Griff' and his wife Devorah had seven children.[23] They were 'box taxpayers' (*korobochnyj sbor);* those who could afford to pay a special tax on kosher meat for the benefit of Jewish communities and local administration.[24] Frank was their fifth child.

Zidikai, or *Zhidik* in Yiddish, is far to the north, bordering on Latvia. It was founded in 1568, when an estate was granted by the king to the noble Hudkevitz.[25] From 1614, the town was owned by the Jesuits of Kraziai; in 1780, the first synagogue was built.[26] Zidikai's Jews were governed by a *kahal* until 1844. After the partitions, Zidikai became part of Russia. Jewish government was taken over by the new administrative district of Kovno. In 1897, about the time Frank Griff would have left Lithuania for Limerick, there were 1243 people in Zidikai, of whom 914, or 73 percent, were Jews.[27]

Zidikai was conservative. After the Russian takeover, life in the remote backwater continued much as before. *Hasidism* made no inroads in Kovno and Courland.[28] The attempt to replace hard prayer stands (*shtenders*) with more comfortable benches for praying met with the bitterest opposition.[29] There was a *heder*, a *Hevrah Kadisha*, and a *Bet Midrash*.[30] Zidiaki would

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[23] Abraham Griff descendents.pdf. In 1892, the children listed are: Ida, Philip, Devorah, Hinde, Frank, George and Fanny.

[24] Vitalija Gircyte, 'Kaunas Regional Archives,' accessed 8 April 2014, http://www.rtrfoundation.org/webart/B&LChInsert-Kaunas-Vitalija.pdf.

[25] Josef Rosin, 'Zhidik,' in *Protecting Our Litvak Heritage*, (Florida: Friends of the Yurburg Jewish Cemetery/JewishGen Inc., 2009),430

[26] Ibid.

[27] Miki Lentin, 'Zidikai, Lithuania', accessed 27 December 2016, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Zidikai/History.htm

[28] Rosin, 'Zhidik,' 206-7.

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Heder*: a school for Jewish children where Hebrew and religious knowledge is taught; *Hevrah Kadisha*: 'Holy Society', an organisation of Jewish men and women who ensure that the bodies of

not be dictated to: in 1888 the residents tried to get rid of the local rabbi for his decision to import a permanent doctor at a cost to the community of six rubles per week. They accused the rabbi's sons of avoiding military service, an allegation that put the rabbi in prison. Only the intervention by the local nobleman with the Russian authorities managed to secure the rabbi's release.[31] Zidiaki was also charitable: 43 Zidikai Jews are listed in *HaMagid* as contributors to the victims of the great Persian famine of 1871-72.[32] In 1897, the town had three leather-processing shops, many stores and conducted regular market days and fairs; as late as 1931, 86 percent of all stores were operated by Jews, and Jews owned the power station and the flour mill. The village's Jews used their commercial and managerial expertise for the benefit of the local aristocrat, who in turn provided peace, security, good order and relative autonomy.[33]

Frank Griff's character was determined by the world from which he had come. Lithuania had been home to Jews since at least the fourteenth century[34] and probably earlier. From 1569, with the political union of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the largest country in Europe, a state of affairs that lasted until the partitions of 1772-1775.[35] In 1765, 27 percent of the Commonwealth's 750,000 Jews lived in Lithuania where they dominated

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deceased Jews are prepared according to Jewish law; *Bet Midrash*: 'House of Learning', a study hall located in a synagogue or other building.

[31] Rosin, 'Zhidik,' 206-7.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century,* 105.

[34] *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* s.v. 'Lithuania,' accessed 4 April 2014, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Lithuania.

[35] *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* s.v. 'Poland,' accessed 5 April 2014, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Poland/Poland_before_1795#id0es5bg.

urban commerce and production.[36] According to Hundert, two thirds of towns in the Commonwealth at this time were 'private towns' (a type of *shtetl*[37]) that is, owned by the local nobleman.[38] Jews in private towns enjoyed special protections and privileges due to the dependence of the noble on Jewish income from Jewish commercial activities.

By contrast to the Jewish experience in 'crown cities' such as Krakov, Lvov, Lubin and Poznan, where Jewish economic activity was subject to limitations and restrictions, 'private town' Jews had the privilege of being able to buy and sell any commodity they wished. The nobleman/town owner, who was the authority in his lands, even defended Jews against Christian merchants. A town owner quoted by Hundert rejected the objections of the Christian merchants as 'by law, Jews are equal to other burghers in every respect.'[39] Thus, antisemitic legislation familiar to students of Jewish history – classifying Jews as foreigners, the prohibition of Jews to engage in retail trade, lease shops, join guilds, or import and sell goods in competition with Christian merchants – did not apply in the 'private towns' of the East. These Jews could live in a substantially Jewish universe with security, freedoms and possibilities.

As a result of several centuries of this more or less workable arrangement, Jews from private towns developed a different kind of confidence. Hundert

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[36] Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century,* 28.
[37] Prof. Gershon Hundert, email to author, 11 April 2014. In email correspondence, Prof. Hundert states that the reverse is not always true, that is, a *shtetl* is not necessarily a private town.
[38] Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century*, 36.
[39] Ibid., 46-47.

identifies four contributing aspects: first, private town Jews were concentrated in large numbers within a population; second, their experience of the frequently violent, immoral and drunken gentile peasantry gave them a continuing attitude of superiority; third, they enjoyed a sense of security due to their indispensable economic role, and fourth, there was a general absence of what Hundert calls the 'beckoning bourgeoisie' – what Anglo Jewry in nineteenth century New South Wales might have called 'decorum'. These four factors, in addition to the cultural strengths of Judaism experienced by Jews everywhere, brought about a deepened, more positive sense of Jewish identity.[40] This is the world that formed Frank Griff. This model would be one that Griff would follow in Broken Hill, except that in Broken Hill, Griff negotiated not with the aristocracy, but with the 'king of Broken Hill', the powerful unionist Paddy O'Neill.[41]

The rise of Frank Griff was slow and measured. After his arrival in Broken Hill in early 1905, Frank was exclusively involved in establishing his business with Abraham Marks Berman,[42] *Berman and Griff*, of Argent St. There is no record of Griff at all until 1908, when the *Barrier Miner* reported on a coronial inquiry into a suspicious fire at Griff's home in Wolfram Lane.[43] The coroner

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[40] Ibid., 4.

[41] Dan Kenny, 'The Jewish Community of Broken Hill,' address to the BHHSoc, 12 September 1977. Kenny reports that O'Neill and Griff were 'personal friends'.

[42] Abraham Marks Berman was in partnership with Griff in Ireland and South Africa before arrival in Australia, according to son, Sidney Griff, interviewed by the author in October 2011. At the time of the coronial inquiry, Frank owed Abraham Marks Berman £250. Immediately after the verdict, Berman left Broken Hill. Berman was not traceable by any of the usual methods. He does not come up on Beverley Davis Burial Data, he does not appear in any newspapers, and he does not come up in any other death records or business records surveyed.

[43] *Barrier Miner*, 18 June 1908, 2.

brought in a formal verdict that a fire[44] had occurred on the night of 27 May, on the premises of Frank Griff of Wolfram Lane, and that there was no evidence to show how it originated.[45]

Frank Griff General Furnisher, lately *Berman and Griff*, produced a wide variety of much needed goods for the burgeoning Barrier. In 1909, he advertised his large and varied stock of household furniture, leather goods, and linoleum, cash or terms, to suit every budget. His original store, 169 Argent St, was situated next to the Silver Age Hotel; shortly, Frank bought the Hotel, and thereafter all the adjoining shops.[46] In due course he owned two thousand four hundred square feet of prime Broken Hill retail space and in time had a ledger of 25 – 30,000 customers: that is, all of Broken Hill at its most populous.[47]

As elsewhere, a Jewish merchant often had several strings to his bow. Son Sidney Griff asserts that his father was always interested in mining and it would be surprising if Frank had not engaged in share trading in that place at that time. Geoffrey Blainey, an historian with expert knowledge of mining in Australia generally, calls Broken Hill the 'first national mining boom': 'Most silver investors probably did not care if the mines were poor or rich. Any

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[44] Broken Hill was a fire-prone territory. For that reason, coronial inquiries only occurred where there was some cause to believe that arson was a possibility. In this case, Griff's home had contents that were vastly over-insured, there was evidence that the fire began in two separate locations, and the Fire Brigade had been called out immediately before on a false alarm. However, perhaps in part because until 1955 in NSW the penalty for a proven charge of arson was the death sentence, there was no such finding in this case, or indeed in any other case of a suspicious fire in Broken Hill.

[45] *Barrier Miner*, 18 June 1908, 2.

[46] Sidney Griff, interview by author, October 2011.

[47] Ibid.

share was worth buying so long as it could be sold at a profit a week later.' [48]

Frank's ability to buy so much prime real estate shows that his business interests extended beyond furnishings and homewares.   Frank certainly invested in Broken Hill South Limited.[49] This was shrewd, as it was originally one of the weaker companies; but by 1905 its dividends began to soar.[50]

Sidney Griff reports that a family member, Albert Silver, was a mining engineer at Broken Hill North.[51] If so, the Griffs may have had access to some inside knowledge of the fortunes of the mines.

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[48] Geoffery Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 150.
[49] Share certificate no. 3143, Broken Hill South Ltd, issued 28 October 1921.
[50] Blainey records that by 1963, Broken Hill South had produced dividends of £25,000,000. *The Rise*, 156.
[51] Sidney Griff, interview by author, October 2011.

Frank's arrival in Broken Hill also coincided with the solving of the 'sulphide problem', the issue of separating out zinc from lead. This meant that in due course thousands of tonnes of tailings could be re-processed to extract valuable zinc. Due to the fact that what had been dumps, tailings and slimes were now a further source of real wealth, Broken Hill experienced a second boom. More men were employed on the line of load between 1906 and 1913 than ever before or after – some eight thousand workers.[52] Eight thousand men and their families were good news for the merchant-Jews of the Outback; for a *macher*-in-training, they were a necessity. Broken Hill resident Kevin Sinclair reported that the mines had 'amenities schemes', which allowed workers to buy goods through the mine system, repaying their debt from wages at two percent interest. The mines acquired their supplies from Griff's.[53]

Between 1908 and 1920, six leading mining companies paid out £10 million in dividends and added greatly to their own reserves. At the same time, the NSW Government's 1920 investigation into industrial diseases, the Chapman Commission, found abundant evidence of 'miner's disease', or pneumoconiosis, in those who worked underground. However, BHP paid less than a farthing (one quarter of one penny) per person per week toward the medical costs of those damaged and/or killed by mining.[54] Another strike was inevitable.

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[52] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, 77.
[53] Kevin Sinclair, interview by author, Broken Hill, June 2011.
[54] Blainey, *The Rise,* 137-138.

This was the strike that Broken Hill had to win – and they did.   Geoffrey Blainey records:

> 'The (1919-1920) strike made the 1909 strike look like a tea break. It lasted for eighteen or nineteen months ...But the most sensational statistics of the strike were the concessions which the unions won...'[55] These included the 35-hour week, paid lunch breaks, the abolition of the contentious night shift, pensions for the 259 men suffering from pneumoconiosis and tuberculosis, two weeks' paid holiday and the increase in wages of all workers above as well as below ground.[56]

The only way to beat the mining companies was to find a way to stay out for as long as it took.   Historian Geoffrey Blainey argued that the very length of the strike was a crucial factor in the extraordinary concessions it won.[57]

 Although everyone in Broken Hill over a certain age knows it existed, there is no documentary evidence of 'the deal' between Frank Griff and Paddy O'Neill to assist the miners in maintaining strike action over an 18 month period.[58]   However, everyone in Broken Hill is aware of it. If one asks about 'the deal' between Paddy and Frank, the Broken Hill resident

[55] Ibid., 141

[56] Blainey, *The Rise,* 142.

[57] Ibid.

[58] O'Neill's grandson, CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Mr John Lynch, confirmed that Paddy's private papers were given to the late (Broken Hill born) NSW Chief Stipendary Magistrate Murray Farquar, who intended on writing a book. However before he could do so, Farquar was gaoled and died while on trial for conspiracy to obtain stolen passports in 1991. The O'Neill papers were never returned.

will typically say, 'Oh yes, my grandfather told me about that,' although they tend not to know the details. According to Broken Hill Historical Society historian Margaret Price (whose father told her the story) in 1919, O'Neill, then a night-cart driver with the Municipal Council, negotiated with Frank Griff (on behalf of the shopkeepers of Broken Hill) to continue to supply Broken Hill striking mineworkers and their families with goods and services for the duration of the strike. It is not known what Paddy offered the shopkeepers in return. Geoffrey Blainey was of the view that:

> The great advantage of the strikers at Broken Hill was their unique bargaining position. They were able to remain month after month on strike, living largely on a diet of potatoes and onions, because shopkeepers and particularly landlords had to carry the strikers' debts: in a one-industry town they had no other customers or tenants.[59]

However, Blainey did not acknowledge that Broken Hill merchants, particularly Jewish shopkeepers, were demonstrably mobile.[60] It is not conceivable that they would have stayed there because they were being held to ransom by striking mineworkers. Yet, not only did they stay, they were generous: Alfred and George Edelman owned four stores. During the Great

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[59] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill,* 141-2.

[60] All the evidence is that the Jewish shopkeepers were very willing to travel and to move permanently, if necessary. Louis Gordon had already left Broken Hill for Adelaide, and had returned. Jewish merchants came and went; by 1919 the Krantz family had businesses in Broken Hill and in Adelaide, along with a number of others. The Jewish merchants had already travelled some fifteen thousand miles by the time they came to Broken Hill.

Strike of 1919-1920, they provided their customers with credit, along with other storekeepers[61] contrary to their usual practice as 'cash drapers'. Clearly, the Jews of the Outback sympathised with the position of the miners.

There was an existing system of 'coupons' (issued in lieu of pay to striking miners) that provided the mechanism for compensation to the Jewish shopkeepers.[62] The coupon system continued throughout the Great Strike of 1919-20 with support from the Amalgamated Miners' 'Distress loan committee', cooperative stores and the Benevolent Society. Coupons were issued to those in need. They could be used, along with cash, to purchase essential goods. The coupon system provided additional means for Frank Griff to increase his wealth, as reported by his son, Sidney Griff.[63] Frank offered cash discounts in exchange for extra coupons. The additional coupons allowed Griff to acquire more wholesale goods for less cash.

This was a pattern that would continue, including into World War II when the Australian Government backed the coupon system. Frank offered Broken Hill cash discounts, and Broken Hill handed over their valuable coupons, allowing Frank to obtain more wholesale goods for less. Frank was generous with his own: Kearns reports that in the *Barrier Miner* in 1919 Frank Griff was advertising '6 piece dining room suites for £4/2/6'.[64] In Perth, similar goods were priced at £9/10s[65] and in Adelaide, £6/15s.[66] By 1946, the

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[61] Jenny Camilleri, Broken Hill Historical Society Secretary, interview by author, October 2011.
[62] *Barrier Miner*, 20 July 1892, 4.
[63] Sidney Griff, interview by author, October 2011.
[64] Kearns, *Broken Hill 1915-1939*, 7.
[65] *The West Australian*, 2 May 1919, 9.
[66] *The Chronicle*, 23 August 1919, 11.

authorities became suspicious and the Prices Commission began an investigation. The inspectors found that Griff's gross profit margins had fallen despite substantial increases in sales.[67] Griff was investigated for three years, but no prosecution was instigated.[68]

There is evidence that there was a real friendship between Paddy O'Neill and Frank Griff, who used to meet regularly at the Hibernian Club.[69] It may be hypothesized that 'the deal' brought about an informal agreement that maintained body and soul for the striking miners and Jewish businesses. One outcome saw the sanitary cart driver O'Neill transformed, in 1923, into the president of a new and powerful union movement, the Barrier Industrial Council (BIC).[70] The win of the eight-hour day, with pay and conditions never before seen in Australia, was the other. As Geoffrey Blainey writes: 'It is doubtful if any other strike in Australia ever won so much.'[71]

Frank's industriousness as a businessman benefited the community. For the congregational subscription records that remain (from about 1933 to 1944 after which the name 'Frank Griff' does not appear) Frank's was always the most generous contribution, frequently at least double the next highest

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[67] Frank Griff was a general furnisher. At a time when no mineworker was being paid, one would expect Griff's business to be reduced. Yet in 1919, the first year of the Long Strike, he doubled his advertising to one hundred advertisements in 1919 up from forty-six in 1918 (forty-six in 1917 and sixty-four in 1916). In 1920, the second year of the strike, he published one hundred and twenty advertisements in the *Barrier Miner*.
[68] The Prices Commissioner, Mr J. H. Mitchell, reported on 8 June 1948: 'The gross and net margins on sales shown by this company are below general trader levels ...there is probably some stock discounting and I think the company could be paid a visit when our officers next visit the town.'
[69] BHHSoc Margaret Price, telephone conversation with author, 23 March 2014.
[70] *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* s.v. 'O'Neill, Eugene Patrick (Paddy) (1874-1953),' by Brandon Ellem and John Shields, accessed 10 June 2014,
http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/oneill-eugene-patrick-paddy-13140.
[71] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, 142.

subscription. In 1941, when his subscription was £2, Frank contributed a substantial £15/15 shillings for essential sewerage works at the synagogue.[72] Even after Frank left Broken Hill in the 1940s, his son Harold Griff made in 1944 charitable donations of £100 /13 shillings.[73] No other contributor came close.

A prime reason that Frank Griff remained the main mover and shaker in Broken Hill was that his business successes were always shared with the community, and not just the Jewish community. Griff supported the Broken Hill Hospital, the schools, the Miners' Relief Fund, the Far West Scheme, the Broken Hill St Patrick's Day Races; he built the Golde Griff Art Gallery, supported the Brushmen of the Bush, in particular, Pro Hart, and the football clubs (especially 'Norths').[74] Frank's son, Harold, continued this tradition after his father had moved first to Adelaide and later Sydney. Kevin Sinclair, a talented young footballer, was invited to play for Norths when he was nineteen, but could not do so because he did not finish work until five pm. The coach asked Kevin to go and see Harold Griff. Mr Sinclair tells the story as follows:

Sinclair: Excuse me, Mr Griff, Laurie asked me to come up and see you.

Griff: Mr Griff! My name's Harold! I hear you're having trouble getting to training. Would you like to work for me?

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[72] Broken Hill Congregation Receipt Book No. 7, AJHS Archives.
[73] Broken Hill Congregation Receipt Book No. 10, AJHS Archives.
[74] *Barrier Miner*, 28 September 1953, 3.

Sinclair: Well, Harold, I don't think I can. I'm getting £2/10s at Woodsons'.

Griff: Ah. Well, I'll make that £5 and you can knock off early on Tuesdays and Thursdays to train with Mick McGuinness. Will that do?[75]

The pattern identified by Gershon Hundert – the experience of Jews from private towns in the old Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth – explains well the mentality of a *macher* such as Frank Griff. Unlike the German and Anglo Jews of the earliest settlement, Griff had no need for 'acceptance' by the majority. He had an image of himself as a leader of the commercial class, necessarily superior to the industrial workers, and one with the ability and entitlement to make deals both inside and outside the Jewish community.

Yet, a thoughtful observer such as former president of the Broken Hill Historical Society, Ross Mawby, believes that although both the Barrier Industrial Council and the Jewish merchant class both saw Broken Hill as something of 'a law unto itself',[76] - with themselves as 'the law' - both had the welfare of the residents at heart. Care for the people accompanied by self-interest was the pattern. Mawby reports that Frank Griff let the residence at the *shul* to a non-Jew called Bill Holt and his family for many years, for very little rent. Asked why, Mawby said it was because Bill Holt was involved in the railways and made useful information available to Griff for the good of the town.[77] Frank Griff, like Paddy O'Neill, was no democrat. Deals would be

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[75] Kevin Sinclair, interview by author, Broken Hill, June 2011.
[76] Ross Mawby, interview by author, Broken Hill, June 2011. Mr Mawby said that Trades Hall was known locally as 'the Kremlin' due to its overwhelming influence on the city.
[77] Ross Mawby, interview by author, Broken Hill, June 2011.

done within the congregation and outside it. They would be done amongst others with authority and without public discussion or consultation. Griff left few records. He always managed, just, to stay on the right side of the law.

Unlike Hirsch Krantz, Frank Griff maintained a real, lifelong commitment to Broken Hill, even as he developed larger business interests elsewhere. Kevin Sinclair reported that in 1978, when Norths won the premiership, Harold as the Club's Patron lent his own house at 385 Cummins St to the celebrating players, as he took himself off to a motel. Later as the celebrations continued at the Football Club, Frank's son, Harold, was behind the bar. The Club's secretary, John Kineer, asked Harold to get him a beer. Harold, a non-drinker, said, 'Get it yourself,' to which Kineer replied in good spirit: 'Harold, if you're not serving you should get out from behind the bar! Who do you think you are, do you reckon you own the place?' Harold, the son of Frank Griff, considered this idea for a moment. 'I reckon, I do, just about,' he replied.[78]

Conclusion

Frank Griff's story represents the type of activity a macher within a Jewish community would undertake. Normally a male, the person would be active both within the community itself, but also be involved in and respected by the general population. Thus, financial success was one ingredient, but community involvement and philanthropic endeavour was another. The deep concern for charity and philanthropy in Judaism was very real in Broken Hill.

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[78] Kevin Sinclair, interview by author, Broken Hill, 10 October 2011.

The 'Big Shots' of Broken Hill ensured that all who lived there, Jew and non-

Jew, were its beneficiaries.

Chapter 7: Philanthropy, education and religious ministry

The Jews of Broken Hill did not institute the range of Jewish organisations, activities and services usually associated with a Jewish community. While there was Jewish philanthropy for specific Jewish causes, Jewish charity in Broken Hill was enacted with and through non-Jewish organisations, clubs and other groups that were native to Broken Hill. This is to some degree a pattern that can be found elsewhere in Australian country towns,[1] but Broken Hill did not always conform. For instance, Newcastle, a town with an equivalent Jewish population, which formed specifically 'Hebrew' social, educational, and cultural groups, was not matched by Broken Hill.[2] Furthermore they did not affiliate with larger organisations, as did Maitland when it associated with the Anglo-Jewish Association in 1915.[3] It is unlikely that Jews failed to initiate their own communal groups because they had already become assimilated into Australian society. It is likely that the Jews – like everyone else in Broken Hill – did not expect the settlement to be permanent. In addition, non-Jews in Broken Hill supported specifically Jewish causes. Those who came to Broken Hill benefited from their early arrival in a new settlement, leading to broad awareness[4] and even identification, amongst non-Jews, with Jewish concerns. Appreciation of

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[1] Glen Gordon, 'Aspects of Isolation -- The Challenges of Maintaining Jewish Life and Culture in Rural and Regional Australia,' *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 19, no. 4 (2010): 97.

[2] Ibid., 88ff.

[3] Ibid., 77-8.

[4] *Barrier Miner*, 26 April 1892, 3. Awareness of the life situation of world Jewry was marked in Broken Hill. As early as 1892 the *Barrier Miner*, under the title 'Jews as Yankee Farmers', reported on the establishment of a charitable fund to support escaping Russian Jews to become farmers in North America. According to Trove, the *Barrier Miner* was the only Australian newspaper to report the story.

Australia and the 'fair go' extended to them led Jews to commit to charitable action beyond the Jewish community. This chapter will examine the three major elements of Jewish communal life: philanthropy in Broken Hill for both local and Jewish causes, together with the major donors; Jewish education, and the ministry that served the religious needs, in order to create a more detailed picture of the overall activities of the Jews of Broken Hill at both the individual and community levels.

Philanthropy

By 1905, the *Barrier Miner* had begun soliciting donations for the relief of Russian Jews, reporting contributions of individuals from Broken Hill; not all these were Jews.[5] In January of the following year the paper received a letter from Rabbi Cohen in Sydney, thanking Broken Hill Jewry for its donation of £28/18.[6] Given the extreme level of poverty and hardship, the generosity of Broken Hill toward Jewish victims of the pogroms was remarkable. The average wage in 1906 was approximately £2 per week.[7] £28/18 was therefore a substantial sum for workers on 8s/7d a shift,[8] and all the more remarkable for having been raised over a mere three-month period. The generosity of all of Broken Hill toward the suffering, but distant Jews of Russia, demonstrates the embedded sympathetic perspective toward Jewish

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[5] Ibid., 24 November 1905, 3. On 22 November 1905, G. Stevenson gave 10s 6d and H. Solomon 5s; on 23 November, Fr Connolly gave 10s 6 d and A. Burnstein £1 1s. Other names listed are John Torpy, H. Pengel and A.A. Brice.

[6] Ibid., 13 January 1906, 4.

[7] The Harvester Decision in 1907 concluded that a basic wage could be no less than 42s per week. There were 20 shillings to the pound.

[8] Stokes, *United We Stand*, 14.

causes. It may be that the spirit of *tzedakah* brought to Broken Hill helped create a general 'Broken Hill ethic', not too far from '*tikkun olam*'.[9]

The notorious failure of the New South Wales government[10] to support the town, along with the equally tight-fisted approach of BHP (Broken Hill Pty Ltd), meant that essential services such as hospitals had to be provided by the people themselves. The first major miners' strike took place in 1892, which was followed by the 1895 South Mine Disaster. There was the epidemic of lead poisoning, which caused the destruction of the nervous system; until about 1906 it was a frequent sight in Broken Hill to see men falling down in the street with 'lead fits.[11] In 1897, there was a Royal Commission to look into the appalling frequency of accidents in the Barrier. There was a seven-year drought, and the ever-present threat of typhoid, caused by the lack of clean water. The health figures for Broken Hill at the time were shocking. In New South Wales, there were 209 deaths from typhoid in 1916; in Broken Hill alone there were 141.[12]

In the early part of the twentieth century, workers were responsible for their own health costs. Once a man had fallen ill from working in the mine, there

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[9] *Tikkun olam*: a phrase first found in the Mishnah, a Jewish concept defined by acts of kindness performed to perfect or repair the world.

[10] The *Barrier Miner* regularly reports on the parsimony and deceit of the 'Sydney Government'. For example, from a report on a Bill to supply water to Broken Hill: '...the plain duty of the Government is to bring in a measure themselves, and relieve the Broken Hill people (who contribute largely to the revenue of the colony) from the evils of drought. The fact is that the Barrier people have, in return for such contributions, so far experienced nothing but niggardly, stepmotherly treatment at the hands of the Sydney Government.' *Barrier Miner*, 4 September 1890, 2.

[11] Stokes, *United We Stand*, 52.

[12] Robert J. Solomon, *The Richest Load: Broken Hill: 1883 – 1988* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1988), 328-9.

was no income and no protection for himself or his family. Friendly

societies grew up to meet these needs.[13] Broken Hill's Jews contributed

substantially to local causes as members of various societies and clubs. The

Masons provided £1 a week to the sick breadwinner. They also had

contracts with doctors, so sick men were provided with medical care.[14] As

discussed previously, Jewish names are recorded in various Masonic lodges

from the 1890s, with names such as Smart, Marks, Berkholz, Mannheim,

Sampson, Davies, King, Hains, Gurewitz, Harris, Feldman and Tonkin

registered with Broken Hill's earliest established lodge, the Lodge Willyama

No. 178 (1888). Jews were also active in the Red Cross Society.[15]

The tiny community also gave generously to specifically Jewish causes. The

Broken Hill congregation established a Zionist Society in 1907,[16] only 13

years after the first organised Zionist movement, the *Chovevei Zion Society*,

in Sydney in 1894.[17] Congregational records date from 1923, when the

World Zionist Organisation in London acknowledged two bank drafts for £10

and £20;[18] in 1924, Charles E. Sebag Montefiore wrote thanking Broken Hill

for the £10 given to the Fund for the Relief of Jewish Victims of the War in

Eastern Europe[19] and in 1925 the community received a 'Golden Shekel

Certificate' in recognition of their ongoing support. The Federation of

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[13] 'Friendly Society', *Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc*, Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed 23 August 2017, https://www.britannica.com/topic/friendly-society.
[14] Stokes, *United We Stand,* 148.
[15] *Barrier Miner*, 26 June 1915, 6. Mentions the names Berkholz, Manuel and Griff as on the Railway Town Red Cross Society Committee.
[16] Ibid*.,* 22 August 1917, 6.
[17] 'Early Australian Zionism (1894-1927),' by Marianne Dacy, accessed 4 September 2014, http://judaica.library.usyd.edu.au/histories/zionism.html*.*
[18] Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation Archives 1923, AJHS.
[19] Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation Archives, letter dated 1 September 1924.

Ukrainian Jews received £13/1s/3d the same year.[20] The congregational records that remain are full of letters acknowledging donations for diverse causes including the Misgav Ladach Hospital in Jerusalem (£30 in 1925), the Eastern European Relief Fund (£24 in 1928) and the Palestine Emergency Fund (£25 in 1930).[21]

Zionism remained a significant area of philanthropic action for Broken Hill's Jews. In November of 1933, Dr Benzion H. Shein, M.D., special emissary of the World Zionist Organisation in Jerusalem, visited Australia and spent four days in Broken Hill as the guest of Philip Griff and the Rev. Eisen.[22] Dr Shein had embarked on a national tour of Australia and New Zealand on behalf of *Keren Hayesod* (Jewish National Fund) to press citizens on the urgent need to resettle Jews in Palestine. Broken Hill was hospitable to Dr Shein. Their intelligence was almost equal to his: both Frank and Philip Griff had cancelled all orders from German firms at least eight months before.[23] By July of that year Broken Hill had sent £45/8s to the secretary of the Relief Committee in Sydney, Sydney B. Glass, with a request that a list of individual donors be published in the *Hebrew Standard*.[24]

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[20] Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation Archives, letter dated 6 May 1925.
[21] Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation Archives, 1925-1930.
[22] *Barrier Miner*, 9 November 1933, 3.
[23] *Barrier Miner*, 16 March 1933, 2.
[24] Letter from Phillip Griff to Sidney B. Glass, 27 June 1933. Names published in *Hebrew Standard*, 7 July 1933 were: F. Griff, P. Griff, Burleigh, I. Krantz, Goldberg, Diamond Bros., Hamery, A. Price, Silver, King, Shenker, Shnukal, Gould, L. Press, G. Dryen, S. Gordon, S.L. Gordon, A. Edelman, Mendelson, Eisen, L. Dryen, Gould, Mrs S.L. Gordon, Belfer.

The Griff family in particular supported many local causes, from the hospital to the football clubs.[25] In addition, there is evidence that the Griffs paid for the funerals of employees,[26] indicating the Jewish sense of responsibility to the paid worker.[27] In a delightful reversal of the traditional Aussie charitable action in paying for bush children to have a holiday by the sea, Frank Griff used to pay for poor children in Adelaide to have a holiday in the desert – in Broken Hill.[28]

Special mention should be made of Frank's son, Harold Griff. Born in 1917, Harold Griff stayed in Broken Hill long after the rest of his family had moved elsewhere. He managed the family businesses while he engaged in his favoured role, that of premier Broken Hill philanthropist. According to Broken Hill's Kevin Sinclair, who worked for Harold, there were daily appeals for financial assistance to which he responded. The younger Griff would supply money and goods for Broken Hill's children to take holidays in the Sydney seaside suburb of Manly. Sinclair recalled: 'Harold got me to take the kids over to Dryens, to get them a pair of trunks, shorts, T-shirts, and £5 spending money. I did this every year I worked for him.' He also recalled that whenever there was a strike, Harold Griff, an employer of 40 people, always contributed to the strike fund.[29] Broken Hill Historical Society's Margaret Price reported that the Dryens were similarly kind employers, and

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[25] The Broken Hill Historical Society holds numerous pamphlets for hospital drives, cultural events and school anniversary events showing sponsorship by Frank Griff.

[26] Jane Simpson (*Barrier Miner,* 18 July 1923, 2); Jane Rowe (*Barrier Miner*, 28 November 1929, 2) and Elizabeth Ida Davies (*Barrier Miner*, 5 June 1947, 2.).

[27] Jewish law goes to some lengths to describe proper employer-employee responsibilities. For example, employers are forbidden from delaying payment to workers, and employees are required to work diligently and not to steal employers' time.

[28] Kevin Sinclair, interview by author, October 2011.

[29] Ibid.

that it was common for Jewish merchants to give furniture and other household items to young married couples, advising they could pay for them when they had the money.[30]

The Jews of Broken Hill were involved in creating much needed recreational activities. A prime mover was Ralph Krantz, who was in turn a hotelier, a clarinet player, a racing identity, a theatre manager, an ice rink owner, a bowling alley owner and a theatrical impresario.[31] Krantz contributed significantly to Broken Hill's social life and entertainment industry, both unusually important for a 'city on the edge of sundown'.[32]
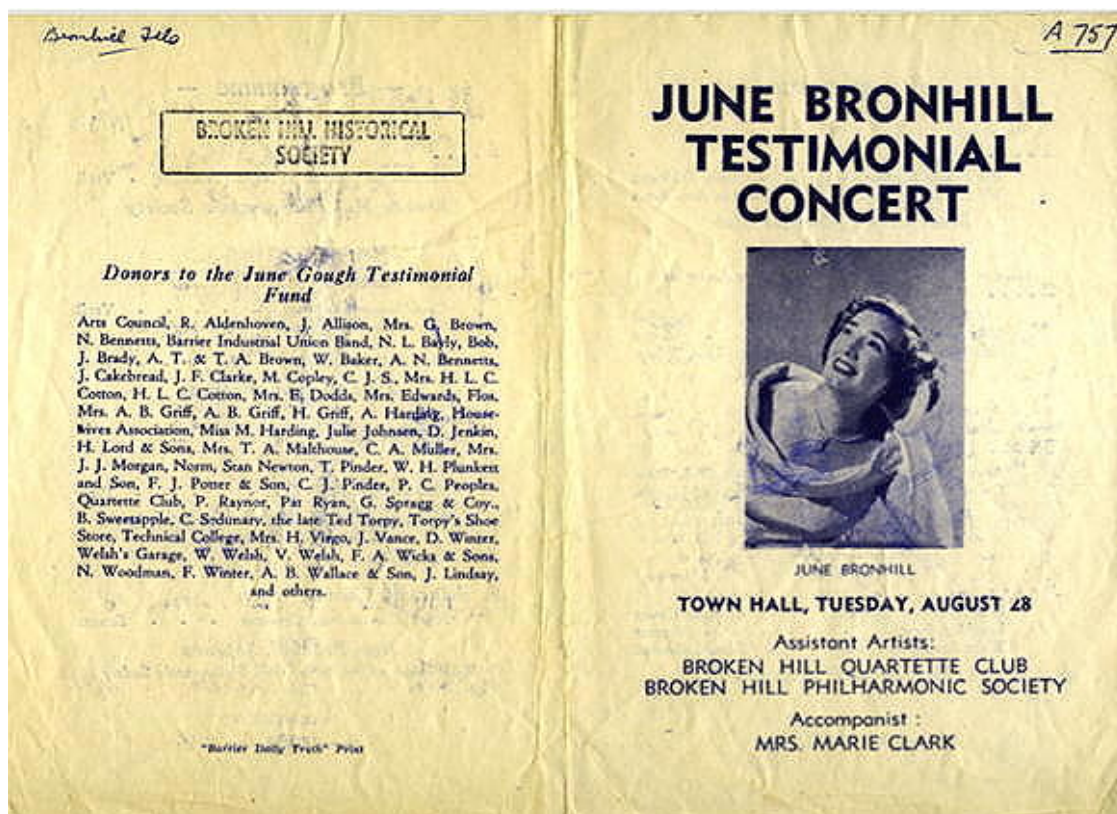
[30] Margaret Price, interview by author, October 2011.
[31] This is in addition to being a financier, sharebroker, hotel-broker, insurance and commission agent with his own business, the Barrier Finance Company.
[32] 'As Broken Hill is on the edge of sundown, nobody seems to care what you do out there.' – NSW Premier John Story in 1920, quoted by Solomon, *The Richest Lode*, 13.

Mr and Mrs A.B. Griff and Mr H. Griff, listed as donors to the 1951 June Bronhill (Gough)

Concert. The concert raised the money to send Miss Bronhill to London, where she based

her international operatic career.[33]

Jewish Education

The community failed to establish ongoing Jewish education, despite a number of efforts. The first Sunday School class was announced to be held on 21 October 1900, held in the Krantz Brothers' Mutual Stores Building.[34] However, there is no further reference to the education of Jewish children until 1904, when the *Miner* reported 'the congregation decided to open a Sunday school for the children of the congregation 'immediately'.[35] However, it did not. After his arrival in 1905, there appears to have been some disconnect between Rev. Mandelbaum and the community. Mandelbaum was perhaps unwilling to educate children when their parents did not keep the Sabbath,[36] although the rules of the congregation specified that 'the minister shall be the headmaster of the Sabbath and Sunday Schools.'[37] The *Jewish Herald's* 'Broken Hill Correspondent criticized 'the utter disregard of the festivals by many Jewish business men, 'who kept their places of business open as usual. The majority of them were Russians, who

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[33] June Bronhill programme housed with the Broken Hill Historical Society.
[34] *Barrier Miner*, 17 October 1900, 2.
[35] Ibid., 13 September 1904, 3.
[36] '…Though given in the Yiddish dialect, Mr. Mandelbaum was forceful, and held the attention of his congregation. He laid great stress upon the laxness in the observance of this great festival by many of the Jewish residents, and deplored the fact that a few of the businesses were kept open on the sacred day.' – *Jewish Herald*, 18 October 1907, 6.
[37] *Rules and Laws for the Government of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation*, paragraph XX(g). Australian Jewish Historical Society Archives Broken Hill Archive AB261. University of Sydney.

should have known better.'[38] Perhaps 'the Russians' knew enough of the essentials to home-school their children. The Lakovsky family included a rabbi and a *shamus*;[39] Louis Gordon's religious role was widely acknowledged and Louis Edelman was a *shochet.*[40]

When the synagogue was opened in 1911, Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen made special emphasis on the necessity of looking after the children's doctrinal and moral training.[41] However between 1900-1910, the Broken Hill Jewish community was preoccupied with building the synagogue, staying solvent and staying alive.

After Mandelbaum's departure in 1914, the next specific reference to the education of children was an acknowledgement of payment in 1928 for the book *Hebrew Treasures for Tiny Tots,*[42] purchased from the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation, at a cost of 10s/2d.[43] The rabbi's residence was never used as schoolroom, nor is there any record of payment to a professional teacher for the Jewish children of Broken Hill. The absence of any references may be due to the loss of congregational records. It may also be that the firmly Orthodox of Broken Hill were confident in their ability to teach their own children.

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[38] *Jewish Herald,* 19 October 1906, 7.

[39] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary*, 123.

[40] Ibid., 115. Louis' death in 1905 may have been the impetus for the establishment, in 1905, of a commercial kosher butcher, Bromleys, see *Barrier Miner*, 6 July 1905, 3.

[41] *Hebrew Standard*, 10 March 1911, 6.

[42] Nathan and Evelyn Levine, *Hebrew Treasures for Tiny Tots..The Little Israelites Illustrated Hebrew Alphabet* (Mercantile Press: Port Elizabeth, 1925).

[43] Archive of Judaica, University of Sydney, Broken Hill file.

Ministry

Although Judaism can function without an ordained minister, it is widely held that a minister or rabbi is desirable, especially in an isolated setting.[44] Yet it appears that Broken Hill actively avoided the appointment of a permanent minister, for reasons that are not clear.

After Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum's departure in 1914,[45] the congregation placed the following advertisement in the *Hebrew Standard of Australasia:*

BROKEN HILL HEBREW CONGREGATION.

APPLICATIONS for the position of Shochet, accompanied by Testimonials, are invited by the above Congregation. Salary, £2/0/0 per week with residence. RALPH KRANTZ, Hon. Secretary[46]

In October, the *Hebrew Standard* reported that the Broken Hill congregation had accepted the application of I. Isaacman, on the recommendation of Perth's Rev. David Isaac Freeman. Isaacman was expected to arrive in a few days to take up the position of *shochet* and reader[47] but this failed to eventuate. The community applied to the Chief Rabbi, Dr Hertz.[48] Through his intervention, a little over a year later, a *shochet*, Samuel Nathan Salas from London, travelled to the Barrier to take up duties with the Broken Hill

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[44] Gordon, 'Aspects of Isolation', 107.
[45] Mann et al., *Jews...the Centenary*, 61.
[46] The advertisement appeared twice in the *Barrier Miner,* on 18 September 1914, 9, and 25 September 1914, 7.
[47] *Hebrew Standard of Australasia,* 23 October 1914, 7.
[48] Ibid., 25 June 1915, 10.

Congregation in December 1915.[49] The only record of Salas' contribution was one speech given to the Broken Hill Zionist Society, in September 1917.[50] Rev. Salas was most certainly planning to leave Broken Hill before July of 1918,[51] when secretary Cyril Gurewitz advertised for a 'reader, teacher and *shochet'* in the *Hebrew Standard*.[52] Salas was in Melbourne by 1919[53] and moved to Auckland in 1920.[54] The little congregation carried on with the occasional services of Rev Boas. After his retirement in 1918,[55] they approached Rev. Rosenthal, also of Adelaide, to conduct New Year's services in 1920, but he declined.[56]

There is no evidence of ministerial leadership from 1918. By 1923 the *Barrier Miner* advertised services for Pesach, but not for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.[57] Congregational accounts for 1926 show that the minister's house had been let.[58] In 1927, a letter arrived. The writer, R. Glik of Melbourne, wrote seeking appointment as a *shochet* in Broken Hill. He was 31, married with two children, and wrote that the Melbourne Beth-din 'greatly approved of my 'Cabolli' and they only regret that there is no vacancy here for me.'[59] However, 1928 Treasurer's Report noted:

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[49] *Barrier Miner,* 16 December 1915, 4.
[50] Ibid., 22 September 1917, 5.
[51] Ibid., 23 October 1918, 2. Reports that Salas left Broken Hill on this date.
[52] *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 19 July 1918, 7, and 26 July 1918, 10.
[53] Ibid, , 28 February 1919, 10.
[54] *Jewish Herald,* 25 June 1920, 8.
[55] *Adelaide Advertiser*, 21 October 1918, 10.
[56] *Jewish Herald*, 6 February 1920, 7.
[57] *Barrier Miner*, 29 March 1923, 2.
[58] BHHC Balance Sheet 1926, AJHS archives.
[59] Letter from R. Glik to Mr L. Dryen, 6 March 1927, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

During the year 2 or 3 gentlemen wrote for positions as minister to the congregation and I made enquiries as to what they required. In each case the salary required was either too high or the gentleman too old and in one case the applicant had no knowledge of English. Therefore nothing was done in this regard.[60]

There is no record of a reply to Mr Glik, who was not too old and had excellent English, as to whether a salary was offered (and rejected). The treasurer who wrote the report was Philip Griff.[61]

In 1929, N. Nossell wrote asking 'to know by wire if you require my services to officiate during the same Holidays... as there are several other places open requiring a man...'[62] He was turned down by secretary David King, by telegram on 18 September.[63] Again, in 1931 Leopold Goran wrote on the advice of Mrs Schnukal of North Carlton, seeking employment as a 'minister, teacher, *shochet'*. Goran advised that Mrs Schnukal, 'also intimated to me that you are in quest of such a person who understands well the English language. I can therefore more readily state that I speak it thoroughly as well as other languages.' In fact, Goran had twelve other languages, having been born in Russia and having worked in England and Europe.[64] There is a note on the letter, 'replied asking salary required'.[65] Goran had been a

[60] 1928 Treasurer's report, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[61] Phillip Griff was the elder brother of Frank Griff.
[62] Letter from N. Nossell to L. Dryen, 12 September 1929 BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[63] Telegram from D. King to J.E. Stone re Nossell, 16 September 1929, BHHC records, AJHS achives.
[64] *The Courier Mail*, 24 September 1926, 16.
[65] Letter from Rev.. L. Goran to the President, 8 January 1931, BHHC, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

minister in Ballarat, and moved onto the Carlton United Hebrew Congregation in 1927.[66] He had had a distinguished military career, serving with the Royal Horse Artillery in the First War, serving on the Somme,[67] after which he was sent to Italy with the Intelligence Corps.[68] He arrived in Australia in the 1920s and went to Hobart, registering as a minister under the Marriages Act there in 1922.[69]

Broken Hill recognized a man of quality. They wrote on 25 February 1931 that they 'recognize your ability and qualifications ...(we) feel honoured to receive such favour from you...'. They also informed Rev. Goran they would call for other applicants, and put off appointing a minister for three months.[70] He wrote, saying that he had been told by the informative Mrs Schnukal that 'your congregation is prepared to offer £260 per annum plus a house and lighting ...I am prepared to accept your offer.'[71] However even though Rev. Goran fulfilled all their requirements, the synagogue Board failed to follow up. He was well educated, had very good English, had a young family, and was willing to undertake the role of *shochet* as well as minister to the community. He was even born in the Russian Empire. However, no formal offer was made, and Rev. Goran went to Horsham instead.[72]

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[66] *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 26 August 1927, 6.
[67] *The Courier Mail,* 10 October 1936, 27.
[68] *The Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 25 September 1936, 5.
[69] *The Mercury*, 5 December 1922, 4.
[70] Letter from Louis Press to Rev.. Leopold Goren, 25 February 1931, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[71] Letter from Leopold Goran to 'Louis Greff' (sic), 9 February 1931 BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[72] *The Horsham Times,* 3 October 1933, 4.

In 1932 J.E. Stone, wholesale sponge and chamois leather merchant in Melbourne, wrote to the president of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation, recommending a Rabbi Lew as minister. Lew was about 33 years old, with a wife and child, and came originally from Jerusalem. He was, according to Stone, 'a man who would do you admirably.'[73] There was an unrecorded reply, and a further letter from Stone, with a comment 'and I hope it (the appointment) may now be means of holding you together as a Jewish Community.'[74] Again, there is no further mention of Rabbi Lew after this.

In August 1932, one minister managed a breakthrough. 'E. Isen' – Rev. Mordechai Eisen – had been writing and sending telegrams to Broken Hill. In reply, Frank Griff apologized for failing to acknowledge Rev Eisen, as he had been away, and invited him to come to Broken Hill 'about the 20th September, by yourself, on a trial, so that you can see for yourself.'[75] In fact it was Rev Eisen who had raised the question of a trial, as his telegram of 19 August 1932 shows.[76] He took the precaution of gaining an unimpeachable reference:

I hereby desire to state that Mr Mordechai Eisen who is (to) take up duties as a shochet, teacher and reader of your congregation is a fully qualified *shochet* holding as he does the certificate of license of the Melbourne Beth Din. I am confident that Congregation will find in him an

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[73] Letter from J.E. Stone to Frank Griff, 6 January 1932, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[74] Letter from J.E. Stone to Frank Griff, 28 January 1932, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[75] Letter from Frank Griff to 'E. Isen' (Rev. M Eisen), 26 August 1932 BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[76] Telegram from Eisen to Frank Griff, 19 August 1932, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

earnest Jew and a man anxious to promote the welfare of Judaism in your midst.

With best wishes for the New Year, Yours Faithfully, Israel Brodie, Rabbi[77]

There could hardly have been a more distinguished Jew in Australia than Israel Brodie, later to become Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth. With Rabbi Brodie's backing, Broken Hill could not say 'no' to Rev. Eisen. He and his wife arrived on between 25 and 30 September, in time for the High Holyday services on 1 October 1932.

Although the relationship with the Committee was not strong, from the point of view of education, Rev. Eisen was a singularly important influence in Broken Hill.[78] He did not hold qualifications of the highest order, but he did have a genuinely thorough knowledge of Torah. He also had a real interest in what would these days be called interfaith dialogue and regularly held biblical discussions with the Christians of Broken Hill. The Seventh Day Adventists there, in gratitude, gave him a Bible, now owned by his great

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[77] Letter from Rabbi Israel Brodie to The President, Broken Hill Congregation, 20 September 1932, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

[78] Fay Isaacs (daughter), interiew by author. Eisen, a 'Russian' Jew, had a colourful history. At a time when every Jew did everything possible to avoid army service, Eisen joined the army. He did so on the basis that 'the Czar believed in G-d and the Communists did not.' Suffering religious persecution in the Russian Army for wearing a phylactery, Eisen was assaulted by a Christian soldier. He escaped, hiding in the cellar of a grand house in Odessa. According to the family's story, the home was owned by a wealthy industrialist by the name of Schmuelovitch, who was a manufacturer of armaments. It was there that he met daughter, Malka, whom he married. The Eisens moved to Melbourne in about 1927 where the young Mordechai worked as a hawker for the Myer company. Again, according to the family, he refused to sell on the Sabbath and was discharged. Eisen gained his qualifications as a *shochet*, and was in a good position to be recommended as a minister in far off Broken Hill in 1932. The Australian authorities did not make it easy. The left-handed Eisen was forced to learn to slaughter animals correctly, that is, with his *right* hand. Eisen's daughter, Fay Isaacs, recalled that an animal slaughtered in Broken Hill had 'suet' remaining on its liver, requiring the whole animal be thrown out.

grandchildren. Rev. Eisen was a teacher of Hebrew and a Torah scholar, and, either foolishly or courageously, corrected Christian ideas of Messianism via the letters page of the *Miner*.[79] To the credit of all, a correspondence continued between Jew and Christian in the letters' pages. These exchanges were without rancour, and thoughtful interest was shown toward the views of the other.[80]

However, there was dissatisfaction with Rev. Eisen. In less than three years, Eisen had returned to Melbourne with sharp correspondence exchanged between the former minister and the congregation.[81] There is some further evidence of a real controversy shown by the fact that the congregational contributions dropped from 21 families in 1933 to 11 families in 1934, and rose to 16 families in 1935 after the Eisens left Broken Hill, but no indication of the reasons for this dispute, which may have also related to financial issues but could have been dissatisfaction with Eisen's teaching style.[82] Whatever the rights and wrongs of the matter, from the point of view of Jewish education, the departure of Mordechai Eisen was a great loss. Of all the ministers who spent any time in Broken Hill, Eisen demonstrated a genuine religiosity, expert knowledge of the scriptures and an almost modern interest in outreach to Jew and non-Jew.

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[79] *Barrier Miner*, 3 February 1934, 2.
[80] Letter from Rev.. C.T. Symons, 7 February 1934, 2.
[81] Letter from Louis Press to Mordechai Eisen, 19 September 1935, BHHC records, AJHS archives. The issue appeared to be to do with money. Then secretary Louis Press wrote to Eisen on 19 September 1935 confirming the congregation's decision to withhold stipend due to monies spent by Eisen, apparently without congregational permission. 'This congregation feels that you have over indulged in their kindness towards you, and expect you to at least express your appreciation for the benevolence and assistance extended to you by preventing further unpleasantness and closing this controversy.'
[82] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* 70

Two years passed. In January of 1936, Rabbi Brodie tried again:

> About a fortnight ago I addressed a letter to the President of the Broken
> Hill Congregation in reference to the position of Shochet and Reader to
> your congregation. I have not received a reply as yet... I am writing to
> inquire if you are seeking the services of any anyone for your
> Congregation. At present there is a young man by name Mr Morris
> Lutman... who, in my opinion, would be suitable for your Congregation. I
> hope to hear from you at your earliest, I am Yours Truly, Israel Brodie,
> Rabbi[83]

Lutman appears to have already written to the Congregation. An undated
letter in the archives refers to an earlier application and the reference
supplied by Rabbi Brodie, and asks if his first application 'was brought for
consideration at all.'[84] Broken Hill responded in February to Rabbi Brodie,
saying that due to the financial position of the Congregation, they would
have to decline his recommendation. The letter refers to the departure of
'several members during the past two years reducing the Congregation to a
mere handful...the decline in our income obliged us to dispense with the
services of the Teacher and *Shochet* about six months ago.'[85] This is curious,
as a previous analysis of the Broken Hill congregation between 1932-1937,
the congregation had a seventy percent retention rate.[86] In August, the
secretary, Louis Press, wrote to Lutman. 'I am instructed by the Board to

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[83] Letter from Rabbi Israel Brodie to Frank Griff, 23 January 1936, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[84] Letter from Morris Lutman to G. Edelman, undated, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[85] Letter from Hon. Sec. to 'Rabbi M Brode' (sic), 14 February 1936 BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[86] Mann et al., *Jews...the Centenary,* 72.

thank you for your application and to advise you that the Board has no intention of filling the vacancy.'[87]

However, it appears that Press was dissatisfied with the situation. In September he sent a letter of resignation:

[87] Letter from Hon. Sec. to Mr M. Lutman, 6 August 1936, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

369 Argent Street, Broken Hill

'PHONE 96

DISTINCTIVE
PATTERNS

PRESS BROS.

EXPERTS IN
SPORTS WEAR

THE BIG VALUE TAILORS

16th September, 1936.

The President,
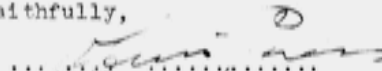B. H. Hebrew Congregation,
BROKEN HILL.

Dear Mr. Hamery,

It is with deep feelings of regret and
disapointment that I ask you to accept my resignation as Secretary
so early after my recent re-election to that office, and it is
with reluctance that I sever my official connections after several
years active participation.

The general apathetic disposition of
members and disregard for resolutions passed at meetings, renders
my position unnecessary and untenable.

Recents events and attacks directed
against the harmonious functioning activities of the Congregation,
have given me much to reflect upon, and after careful consideratio
reached my above decision.

Finally, believing that the present dis-
regard of members to their responsibilities and duties are not
worthy of my repeated efforts to create enthusiasm and interest
towards a proper established community, remaining in office can
serve no useful purpose.

Yours faithfully,

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Dr G.M. Hains took over the position. In November, Dr Hains wrote to Rabbi

Levy at the Great Synagogue, Sydney, asking for his recommendation for a

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88 Letter from Louis Press to The President Broken Hill Congregation, 16 September 1936, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

133

minister. Levy replied that he could not recommend anybody personally, and advised the congregation to take out an advertisement in the *Hebrew Standard*,[89] but they did not follow this advice. In December, Rabbi Gurewicz of Melbourne wrote saying that he was still looking for suitable candidates, and that there were two men on their way from Poland that he hoped would be suitable.[90]

In 1937, the persistent Rabbi Gurewicz recommended Nathanael Slominsky, who had recently arrived from Bialystock, Poland. On this occasion Gurewicz was uncharacteristically direct: 'As he is prepared to accept the position, I would be extremely obliged if you would communicate with me at your earliest convenience.'[91] Although Slominisky, who changed his name to Slonim, was well liked and stayed in Broken Hill for some three years,[92] his official appointment was confirmed for a mere five weeks. [93] The Congregation gave Slonim a complimentary reference on departure from his paid role, dated 13 October 1937.[94] He returned to Melbourne in 1940.

At the end of 1937, Cantor Henry Rakman applied to Broken Hill. Rakman had been a minister for many years of the Machseeki Hadas Congregation and Synagogue, Bondi Beach, and assisted at the Great Synagogue, Sydney, under Rabbi Levy. He was widely held to be a most able cantor,

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[89] Letter from Rabbi Levy to J.G.M. Hains, 25 November 1936, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[90] Letter from Rabbi Gurewicz to the Secretary, 4 December 1936, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[91] Letter from Rabbi Gurewicz to Mr J.G.M. Hains, 4 July 1937, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[92] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary*, 62.
[93] Letter from Hon Sec to Rabbi J.L. Gurewicz, 10 July 1937, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[94] Reference from BHHC re Mr N. Slonim, 13 October 1937, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

and officiated at High Holy Day services in Bondi.[95] The Cantor was well connected, having married Rebecca Z. Moss, only child of Israel Isaac Moss, at the Great Synagogue. The marriage was conducted by Rabbi Frances Lyon Cohen. However, Rakman was unlucky: his son contracted an illness that left him completely blind,[96] and Rakman himself suffered serious respiratory illnesses that inhibited his ability to work, from about 1936. Perhaps for this reason, Cantor Rakman applied for a post in a desert setting where his lungs could recover, in November 1937.[97]

There was no reply. In December, Rakman wrote again, reminding the Committee that he wrote on the advice of 'our Chief Minister, Rabbi E. M. Levy, MA'.[98] He must have written a third time, for a letter refers to 'your letters of December 1937 and 28th February 1938. Secretary Dr Hains, writing in some frustration, asked that Cantor Rakman write to committee members individually. Those mentioned are Louis Press, Morris Hamery, Philip Griff, Frank Griff, and Sol Gordon.[99] This letter was acknowledged on 4 March. On 11 March, Hains wrote again, inviting Cantor Rakman to come to Broken Hill to conduct Passover services:

> We consider it better to appoint you just for the Passover to permit
>
> all concerned to become acquainted with you so that if you care to
>
> remain in Broken Hill we will decide upon the length of your

[95] *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 7 August 1931, 4.

[96] Ibid., 24 August 1934, 4.

[97] Rakman may also needed a 'clean slate': in 1932, he was the subject of action by Rabbi F.L. Cohen, for having accepted a proselyte into the faith without proper authorization, see Suzanne D. Rutland, MA thesis, 'The Jewish Community in NSW 1914-1939,' University of Sydney, 1978, 265.

[98] Letter from Henry Rakman to the President of the BHHC, 2 December 1937, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

[99] Letter from Secretary (Hains) to Mr H. Rakman 4 March 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

appointment... Should you remain in Broken Hill permanently, the salary you will be given will be £4/10s and a house rent-free.[100]

Cantor Rakman replied on 23 March, accepting these conditions with enthusiasm, and advising he would arrive on 11 April 1938. On 4 April 1938, Louis Gordon resigned as president of the Hebrew Congregation.[101]

Rakman lodged with Louis Press and family,[102] and conducted Passover services for the community in 1938. Following his return to Sydney, Cantor Rakman threw himself into additional study and work to gain experience as a *shochet.* He wrote:

I have every day been travelling 22 miles out from Bankstown to the Campbelltown slaughter yards to do slaughtering there, as I found that Mr Luydal the shochet here was ill and would not be able to assist me for a few weeks. I have been slaughtering 60 head of cattle per day...I would like to know what progress is being made with the home and I have not received the contract yet which you promised to send me...[103]

On 30 May, Frank Griff wrote to Secretary Hains, advising of his resignation as Treasurer of the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation.[104]

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[100] Letter from Secretary to Rabbi H. Rakman, 11 March 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[101] Letter from L. Gordon to Mr Hains, 4 April 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[102] *Barrier Miner*, 13 April 1938, 4.
[103] Letter from H. Rakman to G.M. Hains, 13 May 1938 BHHS records, AJHS archives.
[104] Letter from Frank Griff to G.M. Hains, 30 May 1938, BHHS records, AJHS archives.

The critical letter was written on 1 June 1938. It is from secretary Dr Hains, to Isaac Krantz and Frank Griff, written to their addresses in Adelaide. Hains writes:

> I have to advise that the Broken Hill Hebrew Congregation has decided to employ a resident Minister at a salary of £4/10s/0 per week. In order to carry this out it is necessary for all members to make a donation monthly, payable in advance...[105]

There is a gap in the record. It appears that Rakman's appointment became contingent on receiving the proper authority to slaughter beasts.[106] Louis Press once again become president, and he wrote an urgent appeal to the secretary of the Great Synagogue, Isaac Herbert Wolff, begging the Great Synagogue Board to assist. Press claimed that Rakman's brief visit had brought about a revival of interest in Judaism itself, leading to a renovation of the synagogue and residence 'which is to include teaching facilities.'[107] For Louis, the 'warm reception' given to Rakman by the ordinary members gave hope that the apathy of the past was gone and a new era of Jewish commitment would begin. It all relied on approval from Sydney.

Sydney, as ever for Broken Hill, proved disappointing. First, Wolff wrote back saying that the matter was outside his jurisdiction, and that Press' letter had

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[105] Letter from Secretary Hains to Mrs I. Krantz and Mr F. Griff, 1 June 1938, BHHS records, AJHS archives.

[106] Cantor Rakman had had difficulties with the Sydney Beth Din before, in 1931, when that body judged him insufficiently trained to be granted the title 'Reverend', see Suzanne D. Rutland, MA thesis, 79-80.

[107] Letter from Louis Press to Mr I. Wolff, 20 June 1938, BHHS records, AJHS archives.

been sent to the Beth Din. Press, of course, had not asked the Great Synagogue for a decision, but for assistance. Rabbi Falk replied on behalf of the Beth Din on 27 June. He was willing to approve Rakman as a *shochet* of poultry only, apparently on the basis that his original application referred to poultry. In response to Press' almost desperate appeal for the minister to be approved 'for the strengthening of Judaism', Falk advised curtly that he was sure that '(Rakman's) services in the capacity of poultry *shochet* will be of the utmost help in strengthening Judaism in your Congregation.'[108] Press had lost.

On 5 July, he wrote to Cantor Rakman that 'in view of the present divided opinion of members of the congregation regarding this matter, a general meeting is to be held to finalise this problem.' In a clear outline of strategy toward the meeting, Press urges that Rakman not insist on money owing:

> ...Following Mr F. Griff's resignation, and the withdrawal of his financial support, my task of pacifying members has increased with difficulties and unpleasantness...I am in sympathy with your position, I am forced to adopt a middle course to retain the confidence of the members in your interests.[109]

Press had also copied all the correspondence to Rakman's father-in-law, Israel Moss, 'and assure you of my best endeavours in Mr Rakman's

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108 Letter from Rabbi L.A. Falk to Louis Press, 27 June 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
109 Ibid.

interests.[110] Rakman came out fighting, supplying statutory declarations from J.W. Stradling, Meat Inspector, Inspector Donald Macdonald, who worked with *shochets*, Phillistein, Schnider and Chester, and George Spiegal, 'a most learned Jewish man' as to Rakman's competence as a slaughterer of kosher meat. If the Beth Din were to continue to be obstructive, Rakman said, he would apply to the Chief Rabbi in London for permission 'as Broken Hill is so isolated and ...must have kosher meat.[111]

On 15 July, an increasingly desperate Cantor Rakman wrote of the onerous efforts he was making to acquire the requisite qualifications. In this letter, Rakman refers to a General Meeting on 1 May that decided that Rakman was to be appointed for a period of twelve months and that the residence would be ready in a fortnight from that date.[112] Rakman complained that he has been delayed in Sydney through no fault of his own, and was willing to go to Broken Hill immediately.

The matter just got worse. Cantor Rakman believed, with some justification, he had been appointed minister; as his father-in-law wrote in protest, Rakman had suffered considerable expense in maintaining his family, without pay, while waiting for Broken Hill to fulfil its commitment to him. He had been recommended, as he reminded everyone constantly, by the Great

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[110] Letter from Louis Press to Mr I.I. Moss, 7 July 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[111] Letter from Henry Rakman to Louis Press, 8 July 1938, BHHC records AJHS archives.
[112] Ibid.

Synagogue's Rabbi Levy.[113] On 30 November, Israel Moss sent Hains a telegram, again asking for a reply.[114] There is no reply on record. Cantor Rakman gave up.

1939 saw a few further applications.   All received notice that their applications were unsuccessful.[115] Instead, on 18 June 1939, a meeting with Frank and Philip Griff, Dane, Symon, Gould, Edelman, Gurewitz, Hyman, and Abe Griff, decided to appoint as minister Rev. Abram Bermann, who had applied almost a year before.[116] The motion was moved by Philip Griff and seconded by Frank Griff.[117]

Why the committee suddenly appointed a minister without the very qualifications they wanted – well qualified in Judaism with a good command of English – is hard to understand. Abram Bermann had poor written and spoken English. There is no agreement about his origins; he himself wrote to Louis Press that he was born in Jerusalem in 1909[118] although other sources cite Bermann's place of birth as Eydtkuhnen, Germany.[119] The arrangement soured quickly. By August of 1940, the committee wished to

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[113] Letter from I.I. Moss to Secretary Hains, 7 November 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives. By that stage Rabbi Levy, who had conflicted with the Great Synagogue Board, was no longer synagogue rabbi.

[114] Telegram from I.I. Moss to Hains, 30 November BHHC records, AJHS archives.

[115] Australian Jewish Historical Society Archives: Martha Rosenthal of St Kilda recommended Rudolph Sabor, 'a refined Berlin cantor' lately from Capetown; S. Rudd, a graduate of the Lomza Yeshiboth and Seminary in Poland, with references from Rabbi Dr Harry Friedman and Rabbi Gurewicz, offered his services; as did a Mr Walter, recommended by C. Hayman.

[116] In September 1938, Rev. Abram Bermann wrote from Palestine, asking for consideration as a teacher of Hebrew and as a *shochet*. On 12 October, an exhausted Hains replied to Bermann that the congregation had decided 'to let the matter stand over for 12 months.'

[117] Minutes of meeting 18 June 1939, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

[118] Letter from Abram Bermann to Louis Press, 14 September 1938, BHHC records, AJHS archives.

[119] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* 62.

dispense with Bermann, and advised him that the house would cost 30s, if he decided he wished to continue to live there.[120] Bermann refused to be dismissed, saying that the 'decision had not been consented by all members of the community'.[121] The special congregational meeting was held on 18 August and Bermann's services were retained, but his salary was halved.[122] Bermann left Broken Hill in 1944 for Adelaide,[123] opining that the congregation had begged him to stay. 'They said that if I left they would be compelled to leave Broken Hill... when we left, as they predicted, they began to leave Broken Hill for other communities.'[124] Bermann came back once, in 1945, to bury Dr G.M. Hains.[125]

It is clear from the congregational records that there was a tension between the *machers*, notably between Frank Griff and Louis Press. Griff did not want a minister in Broken Hill. Louis Press, who told his children stories about the *Gaon* of Vilna,[126] knew that religious leadership was necessary to combat religious 'apathy'. In the end, once Frank withdrew his financial support, the game was over. It is remarkable that so many ministers with good credentials wished to come to Broken Hill, and even more remarkable that almost the least qualified among them, Abram Bermann, was the man who got the job.

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[120] Letter from BHHC to 'Mr A Burmann' (sic), 1 August 1940, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[121] Letter from A. Bermann to Louis Press, 7 August 1940, BHHC records, AJHS archives.
[122] *Barrier Miner*, 21 January 1941, 1. Perhaps in reaction to this, Bermann went into business with Louis Dubin, draper. This came to light in January of 1941, when Bermann charged Dubin and his sons with assault.
[123] *Barrier Miner*, 25 January 1941, 4. Bermann had come to inspect the stock and the invoices, and, according to the Magistrate, had come to cause trouble. The charge though proven, was dismissed. Unsurprisingly the business partnership was dissolved.
[124] Bergman, 'The Jews of Broken Hill'.
[125] Ibid., 30 May 1945, 6.
[126] Mann et al., *Jews...the Centenary,* 41.

In the case of Broken Hill, the lack of proper ministerial leadership and the resulting damage done to the congregation was a significant factor in the community's decline. Bermann left in 1944. In 1947, the *Hebrew Standard* wrote a story with the headline:

OUTPOST OF NEW SOUTH WALES JEWRY

...When representatives of the United Jewish Overseas' Relief Fund paid an official visit last week-end to this far western outpost of N.S.W. Jewry, they were agreeably surprised to find this quaint but neat Jewish House of Worship... they were accorded an enthusiastic welcome by the small Jewish community of Broken Hill. Very little is known by the local Jewish residents about the early history of the Synagogue, which was built in 1910 when there was a much larger congregation of Jewish families in the mining district... There are only 12 Jewish families in Broken Hill today.[127]

Conclusion

The three main pillars of Jewish life are religion, education and philanthropy. As discussed in this chapter, Broken Hill Jews and were generous in their support of both local and overseas Jewish charities, particularly in relation to the Russian Jews for the latter. However, they did not form separate organisations but provided their support either through local organisations or by donating to overseas funds. In terms of

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[127] *Hebrew Standard,* 4 September 1947, 7.

Jewish education and religion, the involvement of the community was weaker, largely due to the failure to attract calibre religious leadership after Rev Mandelbaum left the community and the ongoing infighting and personality clashes within the community. Such personality clashes and internal tensions are a feature of Jewish life, but Broken Hill Jewry was too small to sustain itself without effective religious and educational leadership, leading to the decline of the community, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Decline of the Community

Between 1901 and 1960, Broken Hill's general population was remarkably stable, fluctuating between 25,000 and a little over 30,000.[1] By contrast, the Jewish population more than halved between 1901 and 1921.[2] There was a small increase between 1921 and 1933, when an official estimate of 37 persons rose to 63, as some Jews affected by the depression sought employment there.[3] However, after 1933 the community continued to decrease: 63 became 39 by 1947, 31 by 1954, and a mere 15 in 1961.[4] Push factors included industrial strife, the challenging physical environment including the lack of clean water, inadequate Jewish educational opportunities, and the restrictive migration policies towards Jewish refugees during the interwar period.

Initial Decline 1914-1921

Paradoxically, the greatest drop in Jewish population occurred during the period of Broken Hill's greatest growth, 1901 to 1921. In the decade before the First World War, the average number of men working on the line of lode was high, reaching just on nine thousand in 1907 and again in 1913.[5] These numbers demonstrate that the merchants of Broken Hill had a large, ready market in a very isolated territory. As this period of very high employment coincides with the most substantial Jewish exodus from Broken Hill, other

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[1] Table 3H, 'Economic Review Committee Report,' 1980; 'Department Industrial Development & Decentralisation Report,' 1983, quoted by Solomon, *The Richest Lode,* 388.
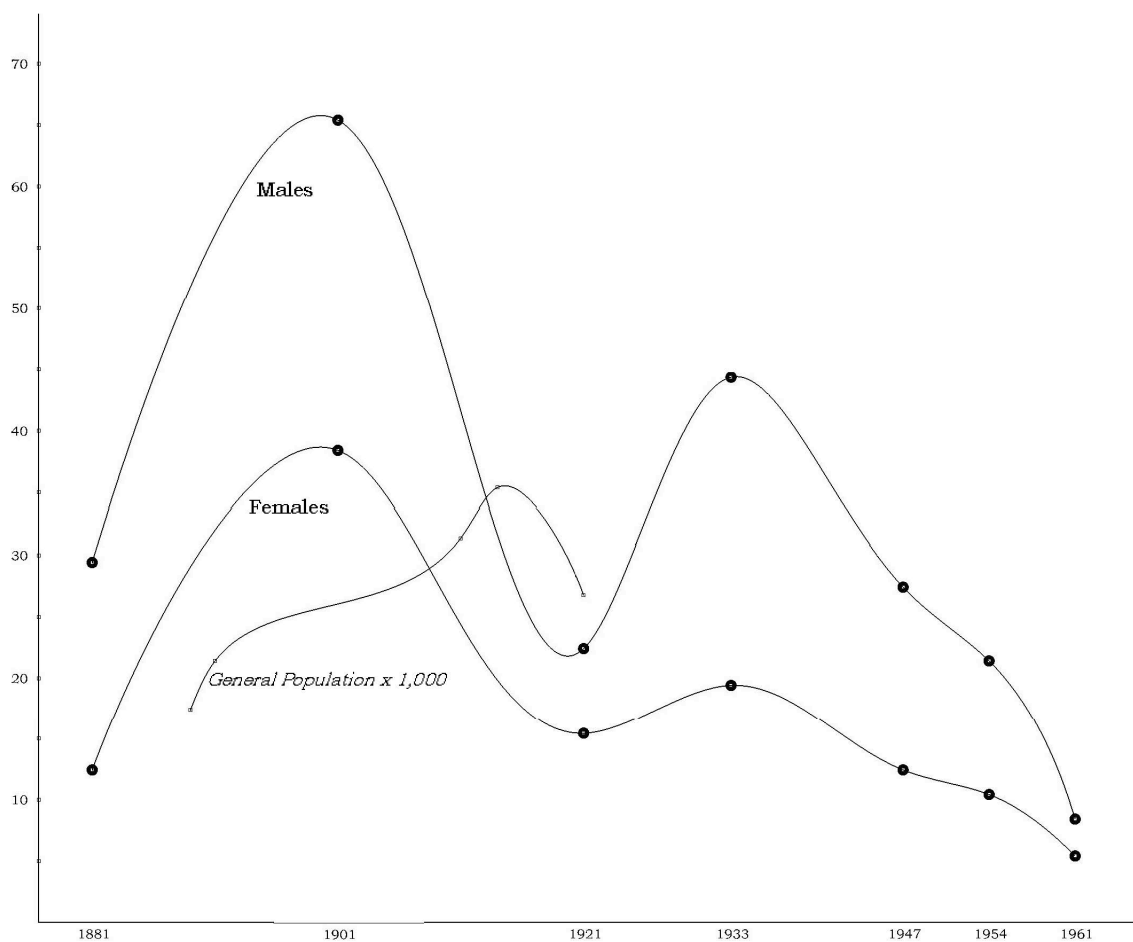[2] Charles Price, Appendix VI, *Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788-1961.*
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, 153.

factors were at play. From 1888, Broken Hill's fabulous profits had attracted newcomers. However, for families, the price of the mining adventure was high. In the early part of the twentieth century, intransigent governments, militant unionism, creeping assimilation and natural disasters - particularly the lack of water - were a combined challenge. Ultimately these lead to out-migration.

70
60 Males
50
40
30 Females
20 General Population x 1,000
10
1881   1901   1921   1933   1947   1954   1961

Broken Hill - Jewish population

6

There is no evidence of union disputes with shopkeepers. However, industrially, Broken Hill was in a class of its own, having won the eight hour

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6 Graph by AJHS member Gary Luke, originally published in *Jews…the Centenary*, 37.

day during the Great Strike of 1919-1920 when miners elsewhere were still working forty-eight hours a week. From its inception in 1925, the Barrier Industrial Council produced extraordinary gains for working men. Miners were entitled to a share of the mine profits based on the price of lead, in the form of the 'lead bonus'. According to Blainey, in the twenty years between 1945 and 1964, employees of the field received more than £55,000,000 in lead bonus payments.[7] Broken Hill Historical Society's Margaret Price reported that the deposit on her family home was paid, not out of wages, but out of the proceeds of her father's lead bonus.[8] Broken Hill became a place of exceptions. Uniform working conditions in all Broken Hill mines and mills were demanded, unlike elsewhere.[9] In 1900, Broken Hill elected Australia's first Labor Mayor. In the State of New South Wales, hotels had six o'clock closing until the mid-1950s. This was the law everywhere except in Broken Hill, where the union negotiated Yancowinna Agreement in relation to the closing hours of hotels.[10] There was never six o'clock closing in Broken Hill.

Broken Hill was a closed shop long before the term existed: every trade and occupation was one hundred percent unionized, including shop assistants. According to former president of the Broken Hill Historical Society, Ross Mawby, sometime in the late-1940s, the union won for shop assistants a loading on the wages that were paid in Adelaide or Melbourne. This was to ensure that Broken Hill workers in non-mining jobs were not living at a

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[7] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, 149.
[8] Margaret Price, interview by author, Broken Hill, 4 September 2011.
[9] Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, 136.
[10] Ross Mawby, President Broken Hill Historical Society, interview by author, 5 September 2011.

standard below that of miners.[11] The effect of this was to discourage employment in existing workplaces, and to prevent new businesses from starting up.

Another idiosyncrasy of workplace relations in Broken Hill was the union insistence on *birthplace* as a pre-requisite to employment in Broken Hill. That is, if there was a person born in Broken Hill ('an A-lister') who needed employment, an employer was prevented by the union from employing a person of their choice, if that person was not born in Broken Hill. This practice occurred on the mines and in every other business. If an employer was foolhardy enough to go against the union, that employer would be blackballed. His garbage would not be collected. His wife and children would be frozen out of society.[12] Sidney Griff reported that employers effectively had no right to fire an employee in Broken Hill.[13] It is hard to imagine that the rugged Jewish individualists would have been sanguine about even the potential for union interference in their businesses. When in 1913 Congregational president Abraham Rosenberg wrote to the Great Synagogue's Louis Phillips seeking financial aid for a £300 debt, he wrote that the cause of the debt was that many Jews were leaving 'due to unsettled state in industrial matters, water famine and the fluctuations in the metal market'.[14] Members of the Dryen family left in 1911,[15] followed by some

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Sidney Griff, interview by author, October 2011.
[14] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* 60, quoting Louis Phillips letter, Mitchell Library.
[15] *Barrier Miner*, 5 December 1911, 3.

members of the Krantz and Edelman families.[16] The entire Lake (Lakovsky) family left during World War I.[17]

Apart from economic factors, the lack of educational facilities, in terms of both general and Jewish learning could have also contributed to the departure of those Jewish families for whom education was important. The departure of Rev Mandelbaum, who had been a key figure in ensuring religious practice and Jewish education would have also contributed to the decline of Broken Hill's Jewish population. Those who chose to remain were more likely to assimilate and lose their Jewish identity.

Creeping Assimilation

The second factor in the community's final decline was a creeping assimilation. As with elsewhere in the New World, immigrants of all backgrounds began to pick and choose which aspects of their ethnic/cultural backgrounds with which they would identify. Jews still felt themselves to be Jews, but began increasingly to identify with the values and attitudes of the distinctive community in which they lived. The Jewish community was apparently healthy with just one hundred and fifty people in 1900; but once the number of identifiable Jews in Broken Hill had reduced to fifteen in 1961,[18] it was not possible to maintain an organised Jewish community so that those who remained drifted away and married out. Harold Griff's name does not appear as a member on the Synagogue's 1944-45 receipt books,[19]

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[16] Mann et al., *Jews...the Centenary,* 61.
[17] Ibid., 126.
[18] Price, Appendix VI, *Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788-1961.*
[19] The only Griff listed is Abe Griff, second son of Philip Griff.

though he was certainly living in Broken Hill at that time and running the family businesses there. Without the support of a larger Jewish community, Harold became involved and contributed ever more generously to various non-Jewish charitable activities, in particular his beloved Norths' Football Club. Alwyn Edelman married out.[20] He and Griff were the final trustees of the synagogue, but the income from rentals there was not put toward the community, or even the building.[21] Ross Mawby recalled his puzzlement that Edelman had permitted the synagogue to fall into disrepair, and Edelman's insistence that Mawby wear a head covering in the derelict building. 'The more often we came, the less insistent Alwyn was about the head covering,' Mawby said.[22]

Other contributing factors
Lack of Water

Other factors contributed. Water, or rather the lack of water, would have been a central consideration in deciding to move away from Broken Hill. Broken Hill has no natural water source. The water sources west of the Darling only run for short periods after rain, and usually peter out in shallow depressions. The water then dissipates in soakage and evaporation.[23] The arrival of the 'Russian' Jews in the early 1890s coincided with the beginning of a ten-year drought; water was brought in by train from Adelaide, until the completion of the Stephen's Creek Reservoir in 1892. Thus, when the great fire of 1888 broke out, Broken Hill had no way to protect itself. Typhoid set

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[20] Alwyn Edelman was married to Elva, a non-Jew, according to BHHSoc's Margaret Price.
[21] Ross Mawby believed that the rental monies from the *shul* were collected by Edelman and Griff, but sent on to Melbourne.
[22] Ross Mawby, interview by author, 5 September 2011.
[23] Bobbie Hardy, *Water Carts to Pipelines: A History of the Broken Hill Water Supply (*Broken Hill: The Broken Hill Water Board, 1968), 3.

in. Forty-four percent of all deaths in Broken Hill in 1888 were from typhoid, diarrhoea or dysentery. Infant mortality in that year was 350, eight deaths per thousand births, more than double the Sydney average.[24] In 1889, before the properly organised supply of water, Broken Hillites were confined to two and a half gallons of water per person per day (by contrast, by the 1960s, people used seventy-five gallons per person per day).[25] Even after the water supply was sufficiently organised to ensure survival, the quality of the water remained problematic.

[24] Brian Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale: A Social History of Broken Hill, 1883-1921* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1978), 38.
[25] Ibid., 9.

Our Drinking Water.

Microbes and Chemicals Galore.

What with disease germs from back yards and the chemicals of capitalism there is an ominous outlook for Barrierites.
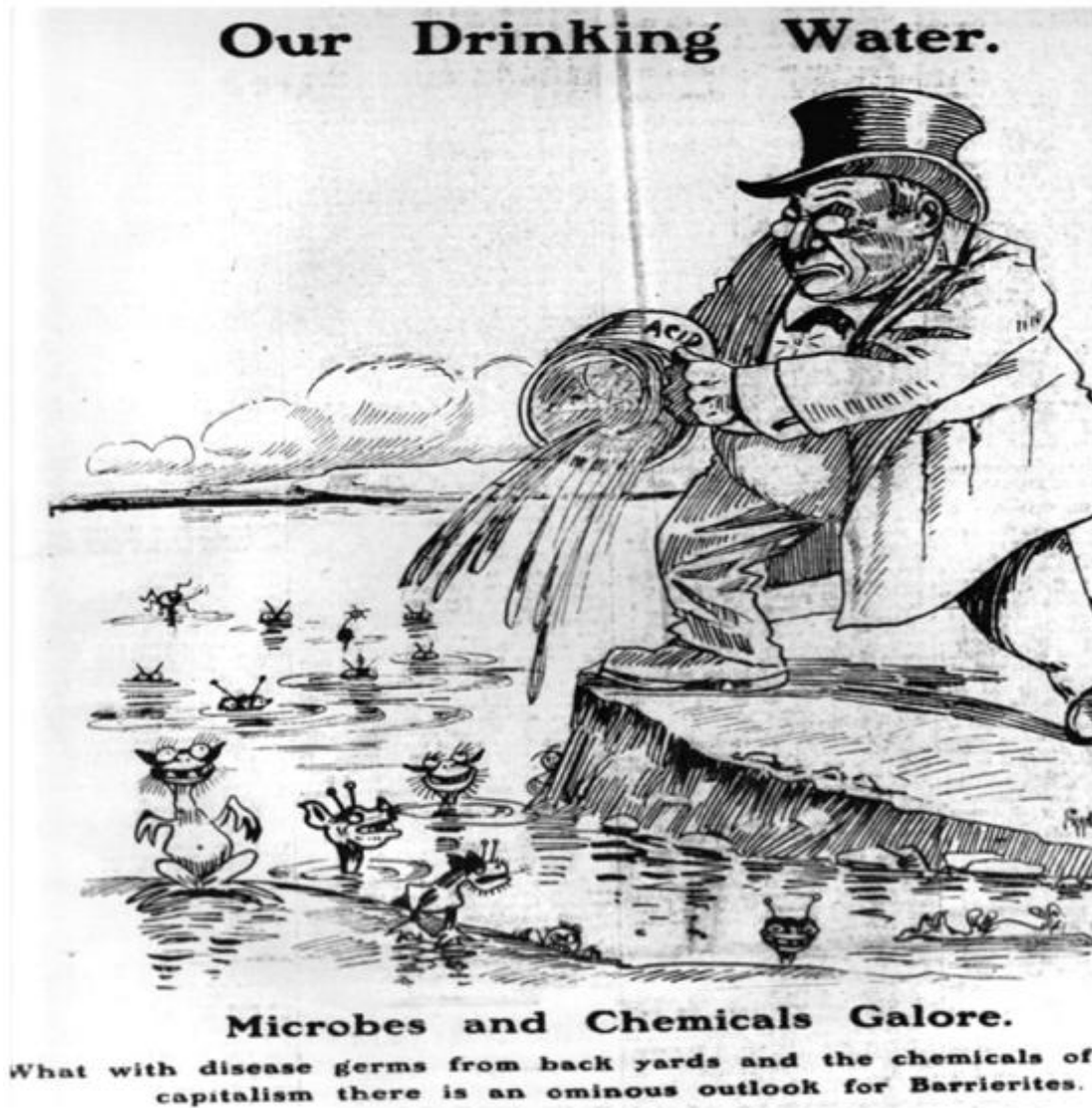
[26] 'Our Drinking Water', published in the *Barrier Miner*, date unknown

Thus, the 'push factors' during this early period of decline (1901-1921) included industrial tensions, economic hardships generally in the community, and the manifold ramifications of the lack of a clean water supply. To this may be added the loss of ministerial leadership in 1914, which, amongst other repercussions, limited the community's ability to educate their children in readiness for their *bar mitzvah*, at the age of 13. There was a genuine need to access better general educational opportunities for Jewish children.

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[26] Cartoon, 'Our Drinking Water,' published in the *Barrier Miner*, date unknown, supplied by Broken Hill Historical Society

Inadequate educational facilities

Many descendants reported versions of Jewish wives telling their husbands: 'This is no place to bring up *yiddisher kinder* (Yiddish for 'Jewish children')!'[27] as a reason for leaving Broken Hill, often in reference to the lack of educational opportunities. Broken Hill was disadvantaged in educational terms because of the generally held view that the settlement was temporary. The 'Department of Public Instruction' (as the Department of Education was then named) was legally obliged to meet the educational needs of Broken Hill's children. Yet, it was also obliged to administer public money prudently. Therefore, the Department was cautious about committing resources to a settlement that might prove temporary.[28] The first government school, a building of wood and iron 35 feet by 25 feet, was constructed in 1886. There was no water available there. The one-teacher school had an enrolment in 1887 of 191, with an average daily attendance of 97.[29] Two additional schools were opened in South Broken Hill and North Broken Hill respectively, by 1889. However, there was no secondary school until 1919, when Broken Hill High School was established.[30] A second high school was not established until 1974.[31]

Therefore, for most of its history, school education ceased for Broken Hill's children by the age of 12 or 13. Jews, along with some non-Jews, routinely

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[27] Descendants Janette Rosenthal-Kahn, Tracey Griff, Robyn Dryen and Bernard Press amongst those who so reported in interview/questionnaire.

[28] Solomon, *The Richest Lode,* 315.

[29] Ibid.

[30] The School of the Air, still based in Broken Hill, began in 1956. This service was based on a earlier model started in Alice Springs in 1951.

[31] Solomon, *The Richest Lode,* 315.

sent their children for secondary education to Adelaide. Almost all descendants interviewed reported that their ancestor had been sent away to board at a private school in the South Australian capital.[32] For many, the inability of Broken Hill to provide a quality secondary education was a primary cause for moving, over and above the difficulties in maintaining a kosher household in the 'Silver City'. In the words of descendent Dorothy Lazarus, 'My grandfather (Tuvia Lakovsky) wanted a good education for his family, and for him that meant leaving Broken Hill.'[33]

Many descendants also reported that the small size of the community in Broken Hill meant that there were relatively fewer potential marriage partners. Marrying within the faith is regarded as essential in Judaism. By 1921, the official estimate of resident Jews was a mere thirty-seven persons.[34]

Restrictive Immigration Policies: Polish and Russian Jews

The Jewish community in Broken Hill might have rallied and even prospered during the period between the wars, as it did in Melbourne,[35] had it not been for the prescriptive approach to Jewish immigration by successive Australian governments. As is well known, one of the first actions of the first Federal Parliament in 1901 was to enact the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*. The

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[32] Private schools in Adelaide were attended by Dryen, Krantz, Lakovsky and Press families, amongst others.

[33] Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary*, 133.

[34] Price, 'Jewish Settlers', Appendix VI.

[35] Price estimates that between 1921-1930 non-British Jewish immigration to Australia increased to 1532 persons, with 3754 people admitted between 1933-40. Only 52 non British Jews sought admission to Australia during the First War, see Price, *Jewish Settlers in Australia,* Appendix II. Most went to Melbourne in this period, see Appendix I.

Act specified that exclusion was to be on the basis of performance on a dictation test and was aimed at barring non-Europeans from settling in Australia. The dictation test was directed at restricting non-white immigration, and therefore Jews were not, to begin with, subjected to it; however fears about influxes of Russian and Polish Jews led authorities to bring other restrictive practices into operation. Writing in 1916 to the president of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation, Phillip Frankel, the Department of External Affairs Secretary Atlee Hunt gave assurances that there would be no change to the practice of admitting those of 'European race' to Australia without the imposition of the dictation test. However, Hunt foreshadowed that the introduction of health tests were likely to be brought in, probably by the end of the war.[36]

By 1921, the Australian government decided not to 'give encouragement' to Russian Jewish refugees, even after requests to do so by the British government.[37] Even representations by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill, failed to move the Australians, who preferred to rely on the private views of one Sergeant F.C. Derbyshire, a passport officer based in Poland. Writing from Warsaw to the Passport Officer in Charge, London, Derbyshire opined that 'Polish Jews could not be considered a desirable type of emigrant' owing to their 'poor physique'. In addition, Derbyshire warns that 'it would also be difficult for me to take responsibility for their political views.'[38] Derbyshire's views were repeated in a number of

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[36] Admission of Refugee Russian and Polish Jews NAA: A1, 1916/10708.
[37] Admission of Jews to Australia, NAA: A434, 1949/3/3196, 77.
[38] Ibid., 68.

memoranda within government in discussion of the issue.[39] In 1924, the government enacted its first restrictions on European migrants, insisting that intending entrants must possess either £40 landing money (as well as the fare to Australia) or a written guarantee of sponsorship. In 1926, the usually cautious Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen wrote to the Secretary, pointing out that while Canada had accepted almost 4,500 Jewish refugees every year between 1921 and 1926, Australia had never, in any one year, accepted any more than 150.[40] In 1928, the Commonwealth government introduced a quota system for immigrants from Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Estonia. Jewish immigration societies requested that a special quota be introduced for Eastern European Jews. This request was denied by government, a decision supported by the Sydney Jewish leadership and the Jewish press. To its discredit, the *Hebrew Standard* failed to take a strong editorial line supporting the mass immigration of Jews to Australia at any time, even during the 1930s.[41] In contrast to the disdainful attitude of the *Hebrew Standard* toward non-Anglo Jewry, the *Barrier Miner* was supportive of Jewish immigration. In 1938, the paper supported the NSW Trades and Labour Council decision that Jewish refugees should be admitted to Australia, and that the Federal Government should take financial responsibility for them.[42]

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[39] Ibid., 57.

[40] Ibid., 43.

[41] *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia* published twenty-six articles about 'Jewish emigration' in the decade before the war. Most were to do with emigration to Palestine, or later emigration out of Germany. Even when it reported the suicide of 2,000 Jews following the Anschluss, along with the imprisonment of 12,000 Jews (3 June 1938) and the inability of Austrian Jews to find a home anywhere in Europe, the *Hebrew Standard*'s editorial merely reprinted an American piece recognising the Jewish contribution to American life, along with the settlement of a mere 20,000 German Jews in the US in the five years to 1938.

[42] *Barrier Miner*, 18 November 1938, 2.

During the 1930s, Australia discouraged immigration generally due to the world-wide depression, and concerned itself with Jewish migration only insofar as it was thought to affect employment.[43] As Paul Bartrop observed, few Jews were interested in coming to a jobless country,[44] and the permanent departures to Australia exceeded the arrivals by twenty thousand people.[45] As far as can be determined, the thirty Jews who arrived in Broken Hill between 1921 and 1933 were largely those who already had a connection to existing Broken Hill residents.[46] Of the half a dozen names appearing on the Broken Hill Synagogue members' list, most were related by marriage *prior* to arrival in the Silver City.[47] A minority of arrivals were unconnected to the existing community. One notable arrival in Broken Hill from Sydney in 1930[48] was Louis Press. Press was a tailor and early adopter of the 'ready to wear' clothing model, who succeeded David King as secretary of the Broken Hill congregation in October of 1930.[49]

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[43] Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 42.

[44] Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing 1994), 6.

[45] Klaus Neumann, *Refuge Australia: Australia's Humanitarian Record* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003), 16.

[46] Evidence from interview undertaken for *Jews… the Centenary* state that Nachum Meir Shenker left his home in Latvia in about 1902 and made an almost exactly similar journey as Frank Griff had made ten years earlier, to Great Britain and South Africa, before arriving in Broken Hill in about 1925. Descendent Syd Shenker reported that 'The great Frank Griff influenced my father Nathan to come to Broken Hill in 1925 and in turn Nathan had influenced Lippe Efron to come in 1934.' Simcha Schnukal, believed to have arrived in Broken Hill before 1923, married Rachel Morgenstein, who was from the (Ekaterinoslav) Jewish Agricultural Colony at Slavgorod, in 1906. The Schnukal family, which may also have had Latvian connections (see Chapter 3, 55), would certainly have had known the Krantz family, as both worked in the Ukrainian Jewish Agricultural Colonies before migrating to Australia.

[47] The 1944-45 Synagogue Receipt Book shows the names Dubin, Gordon, Gould, Griff, Hyman, Kronenberg, Mendelsohn, Press, Silver and Simon. All are related by marriage except Kronenberg, Mendelsohn and Press, see *Descendents of Avraham Griff.pdf.*

[48] *Barrier Miner,* 16 June 1930, 3 records Louis Press as having committed a minor traffic offence. Therefore, contrary to the family story contained in *Jews the Centenary*, Press did not arrive in 1932, but was already in Broken Hill by 1930.

[49] Letter from E. Belfer addressed to Mr L. Press, Hon. Sec., 1 October 1930, Broken Hill Congregation archives, AJHS, Sydney.

Between the wars, Broken Hill boomed and labour was in short supply. The humanitarian crisis in Europe might have provided a practical solution for that practical problem. However, the city's anxieties about labour, the prejudiced view that Jews could not assimilate, as well as the racism of the age, meant the Commonwealth of Australia failed to grasp the opportunity history offered.

By 1944, the community was in permanent decline. In 1947, Price records a mere 27 men, and 12 women as making up the Jewish population in Broken Hill.[50]

It may be asked why survivors of the Holocaust did not settle in Broken Hill. As has been shown, settlement in Broken Hill was strongly due to 'chain migration'. By 1947, many Broken Hill Jews had already moved to Adelaide, Melbourne or Sydney. Those who remained were in less of a position to provide the family sponsorship and accommodation guarantees that the Australian immigration authorities required.[51] Tragically, Lithuanian Jewry (which for these purposes includes parts of Latvia, Belarus and Poland) in 1939 numbered about a quarter of a million, or ten per cent of the population. After the Nazis and Lithuanian collaborators had done their worst, there were fewer than twenty-five thousand Jewish people in the region.[52] Thus there may have been no Jews left to save via the Lithuania-Broken Hill chain. One

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[50] Price, 'Jewish Settlers', Appendix VI.
[51] Rutland, *Edge of Diaspora*, 229.
[52] *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* 'Lithuania,' accessed 27 July 2015, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Lithuania.

of the fortunate few families was the Hyman family, Harry, Pasha and daughter Janet. Born in Zidikai, Lithuania, and related to the Griffs, Harry alone had been granted approval to immigrate to Australia; but for the determination of Pasha's sister, Leah, who persuaded Harry to obtain the necessary papers for his wife, child and sister-in-law to travel to Australia in 1939, Pasha and Janet would not have survived.[53]

A few, without benefit of an existing Broken Hill connection, made their way there after the war. A notable arrival was Dr Tibor Ronai, a Czech refugee, who had spent his war in the British Army. After demobilizing he went to Hong Kong, from where he headed to Australia. According to Broken Hill historian, Margaret Price, Dr Ronai originally came to Broken Hill for a six-month working holiday in 1949.[54] He ended up staying for 32 years, and delivered an entire generation of Broken Hill 'A-listers'.[55]

Eugenie and Ernie Fry left Poland for France in the 1930s. The Frys were 'extremely cultured'[56], and introduced French and German classes to Broken Hill.[57] The Dubin Brothers, Werner, Rudy and Louis, arrived in Broken Hill by 1940, where they managed Efrons' Store.[58] The Dubins were the first ladies' outfitters, in 1954, to stock the new 'Terylene' shirts.[59]

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[53] Janet Bromberger *nee* Hyman, 'A Walk Down Memory Lane,' unpublished BHHSoc records.
[54] *Barrier Miner*, 22 April 1949.
[55] 'A-lister' is a term commonly used by Broken Hillites for those born in Broken Hill.
[56] Kay Ronai writing on Eugenie and Ernie Fry, unpublished BHHSoc records.
[57] *Barrier Miner*, 18 September 1947, 5.
[58] Ibid., 25 January 1941. There was a minor scandal in 1941 between the Dubins and minister Rev. Abram Bermann, a sleeping partner in the business, after fisticuffs broke out.
[59] Ibid., 3 April 1954, 4.

Few Jewish individuals or families, therefore, settled in Broken Hill after the war. Due to the smaller community that existed in 1945, there was a limited ability to supply sponsorship and provide an accommodation guarantee as required. It is also the case that Broken Hill would have been a far less attractive destination than Sydney or Melbourne, where the vast majority of Jewish refugees settled.[60]

Conclusion

It is hard to be Jewish in isolation.[61] Increasing success pulled Broken Hill Jews to new challenges in the cities and union restrictions in Broken Hill pushed them away. The combination of industrial strife, failure to attract new arrivals or give shelter to European refugees, and the ever-present problem of the lack of water were sufficient conditions to fatally undermine the Jewish community of Broken Hill. Added to these factors was the problem of creeping assimilation. Subsequent generations were no longer imbued with Judaism the way many of their immigrant parents had been in their shtetls in Eastern Europe.

In this, Broken Hill was following the trend of country towns all over Australia. Despite the increased immigration from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Jewish population in country towns steadily decreased, as people moved to the cities. Unlike other mining towns such as Kalgoorlie and Ballarat, Broken Hill was not in economic decline, nor had the

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[60] Rutland, *Edge of Diaspora*, 255.
[61] John S. Levi, quoted by Mann et al., *Jews…the Centenary,* forward, vii.

non-Jewish population decreased.[62] The causes for the decline of the Jewish community in Broken Hill are, therefore, not primarily economic. For new arrivals, distance and lack of connection to the existing population was significant; for 'old timers', success in the 'Silver City' created *entre* to the metropolitan centres and a greater wealth of Jewish life and culture. By the 1960s, the vigorous community that lovingly built the third synagogue in New South Wales had been reduced to a mere handful. The Jews of the Outback, like old soldiers, were fading away.

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[62] Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia,' 387.

Chapter 9: Comparison with Jews in other mining communities

The nineteenth century was a period of upheaval due to technological, economic and political changes. This resulted in the mass migrations between 1850 and 1913 when more than forty million people emigrated from Europe to the New World.[1] Many were seeking better economic possibilities and, as with Broken Hill, the discovery of gold, silver or other valuable mines attracted migrants from Europe. Jews also sought to escape poverty, discrimination and persecution. It is valuable to compare and contrast the experiences of Broken Hill Jewry with those of Jews seeking a new life in other isolated areas, including the Victorian and the Californian gold fields, and the 'Coalfields Jews' of Appalachia, also in the United States.

Jewish emigration to Australia had some similarities with immigration to the United States. Like America, toward the beginning of the nineteenth century, non-British Jewish emigrants came principally from German-speaking lands. In the United States, German Jewish migration began in earnest from 1836,[2] prior to the Californian Gold rush. However, in Australia, German Jewish arrivals began in the 1850s, coinciding with the discovery of gold in Ballarat, Victoria and Orange, New South Wales, in 1851. There are some parallels between the 'German Jewish' immigrants to California and those who went to

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[1] Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'What Drove Mass Migrations from Europe in the Late 19th Century?' *Population and Development Review* 20, no. 3 (September 1994): 1-27
[2] Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 167.

the Victorian goldfields and later, to the Barrier, as well as significant differences.

There is an emerging issue for historians about the so-called 'German migrations'. Scholars have tended to characterise Jewish migrations to the USA as 'Sephardic' (1654-1820) 'German' (1820-1880) and 'Eastern European' (1880 -).[3] In the Australian context the three categories are 'First Fleet/Free English settlers' (1788-1830), 'German' (1830-1880) and 'Eastern European' (1880-).[4]

There is now thought to be much greater variety in migrants' countries of origin and historical/cultural experiences than may be encompassed by the term 'German'. Therefore, the tendency to impose a level of homogeneity on the idea of 'German-ness' cannot be sustained. At the time of the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 there were more than five hundred independent German states. The socio-economic, cultural and historical life-situations between the Jews of Posen in the East and Bavaria in the South could hardly have been more different; as it was, in the year 1816, just over half of all Jews in 'Germany' in fact lived in Prussia.[5]

Stern and Kramer have identified the fact that many Jewish immigrants from Prussian Posen were recorded as Germans by US immigration officials, because they spoke German or because they embarked from a German

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[3] Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering, the Second Migration 1820-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 1.
[4] Dr Price asserts that German and Austrian Jews made up 75% of the non-British total for the period 1830-1880, see Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia,' *AJHS Journal* 5, no. 8, 372.
[5] Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 9.

port.[6] Jews in German states were strongly encouraged to learn German, to conduct business in German and discouraged from speaking Yiddish, as part of the process of *Haskalah*, or 'enlightenment'. Even the designation 'Prussian' is culturally misleading, because Posen is of course Poznan, called *Wielkopolska* in Polish until 1793, literally 'Greater Poland'. This region was the historical centre of the Polish nation from the tenth century. As discussed, by the nineteenth century, Poland-Lithuania itself had been home to the largest, most significant community of Jews in the world for nearly a thousand years.

In fact, Jews were never more than 1.3% of the population of Germany itself. In 1820, the figure stood at 270,000.[7] Jews were spread unevenly through the German states. They tended to concentrate in the east on the Polish (Prussian) fringe of Poznan and Silesia. This region was home to half of all 'German' Jews in 1816 and 70% by 1871. To a lesser degree, Jews lived in Bavarian towns along the Rhine in the southwest. Bavaria was the second densest population of German Jews, with 25% of all 'German' Jews living there in 1818.[8]

The Jews who went to America after 1836 did so before gold was discovered. Their story is also as much about 'push' as 'pull'. When, in 1812, the Prussian authorities offered emancipation to its Jews, it excluded Poznan, 'limiting the offer to those who spoke German and conformed to the

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[6] Norton B. Stern and William M. Kramer, 'The Major Role of Polish Jews in the Pioneer West,' *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 8 (1976): 326-44.

[7] Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 9.

[8] Ibid., 10.

image of the refined Jew.'[9] Poznan's Yiddish speaking Jews had withstood the efforts of authorities for their Germanisation. There is a suggestion that the incentives offered by government authorities to become less Jewish and more German not only succeeded with many German Jews, but caused those German Jews to look down upon the so called *ostjuden* in their midst.[10]

By 1833, 90% of Poznan Jews were still not eligible to become Prussian citizens. Later that year, the Prussian authorities closed the Jewish *Winkelschulen* and replaced it with compulsory Prussian elementary schools.[11] This act coincides with the beginning of large-scale 'German' migration to the United States.[12] Thus, the more modern village Jews of the nineteenth century, those with more means and greater rights, stayed in Germany, moving to cities, while the least modern with the fewest rights set out for America.[13]

A generation later, the southern German Jews who came to Australia were becoming urbanised, and for whom the willing dilution of identity had been traded for civic acceptance. The 'German Jews' of White Cliffs were much more middle-class than the 'German Jews' of the California goldfields. Eugen Guggenheimer was born in 1865 in Stuttgart, in Baden-Wurttemberg,

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[9] Ibid., 28.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 28.

[12] Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Goldrush* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 37. Ava F. Kahn records that Californian Jewry was, from its beginnings, conflicted. Its German and Polish communities had, by 1849, two separate congregations in San Francisco: the German (with some French and Sephardic) *Emanu-El* and the Polish *Sherith Israel*.

[13] Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 9.

southern Germany.[14] He came to Australia to deal in opals. Others, such as Marcus Mannheim, Jacob Marks, Abraham Vandenberg and Abraham Bernstein (A. Smart & Co)[15] were all highly skilled, well-educated craftsmen and merchants. Along with others, these 'German Jews' arrived after gold was discovered in 1851. Their immigration stories were more 'pull' than 'push'. The willingness to participate in the Germanizing process won for these Jews the gains of emancipation. The southern Jews of Bavaria and Wurtemberg had achieved the potential of creating for themselves, at least in theory, the same possibilities as any other citizen.

Therefore, the 1,307 'German' Jews who dominated immigration to Australia between 1830 and 1880 were likely to have had very different experiences than those who emigrated to the United States a generation before. By characterising as 'German' all middle nineteenth century Jewish immigration to the United States and Australia, it suggests that one way of being Jewish was exported to the new world – reform-minded, anti-Zionist, and assimilationist. United States and Australian experience show there was significantly more variety in the Jewish 'German' experience than the traditional characterisation of 'German' Jewishness has shown.

There is a second, fascinating parallel between Broken Hill Jewry and a United States community – that of the so-called 'Coalfields Jews' of Appalachia.

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[14] Headstone (photographed by author) reads: 'Emil Guggenheimer, 'Born at Stuttgart, Germany, died at White Cliffs, 20 September 1903. Aged 38 years. At Rest.' The headstone is marked by the symbol of the Freemasons.
[15] See Chapter 2, 37.

The post 1890 Broken Hill Jews were from small towns in Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus. Amongst the last places to adopt industrialisation, the *Litvaks* would have seen the writing on the wall. These Jews would have seen immigration as a means of finding an environment in which they could do what they had done for centuries – to engage in trade, act as middlemen, earn their living as merchants. In this way, their immigration may be seen not altogether as a radical step but in a sense as a conservative one. In this, they resemble less the Jews of the California goldfields and more the Appalachian 'Coalfields Jews'.[16]

These Jews arrived in the United States during a similar period and were, also, overwhelmingly from Lithuania.[17]   Like the 'Outback Jews', the Coalfield Jews came from small towns and rural settings – 60% came from towns of five thousand or less. They came from parts of the country yet to be industrialised, so those who immigrated did not have the industrial skills that a later group would have. They were small traders, merchants and artisans who had arrived in Appalachia well before the pogroms of 1905-6. According to Deborah R. Weiner, the Coalfields Jews were able to treat their West Virginia home much as a *shtetl*. They could provide goods and services, and occupy an economic niche very similar to that which they had done back in Kovno or Courland provinces. Like the Jews of Broken Hill, the Appalachian Jews had 'economic adaptability, a high tolerance for risk taking and an ability to start a business on a shoe-string.'[18]

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[16] Deborah R Weiner, *Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 15.

[17] Belkelis, 'Opening Gates,' 53.

[18] Weiner, *Coalfield Jews*, 47.

Another important similarity is the fact that the West Virginia/Kentucky Jews of the Coalfields arrived at the effective establishment of these coalfields towns. Thus, they did not start off as a 'foreign' element but as one of many of the European groups in the region. They were not at any competitive disadvantage by having arrived at an already established market. Like the Broken Hill Jews, the Coalfields Jews accorded with the 'pedlar to merchant' paradigm. They did not, as a rule, engage directly in the business of mining.[19]

Broken Hill Jews and the Coalfields Jews also shared a similar position in the social and civic order. As the mercantile class, they sat in between the miners and the company; however, they did not side with corporate interests, yet played a more dynamic role within the cultural, social and commercial affairs of the society.

There are at least two significant differences. Weiner asserted that the Coalfields Jews had first migrated to New York, and later moved to West Virginia in an effort to escape urban poverty and the sweatshops.[20] This is in contrast to the Jews of Broken Hill, who got off the boat in Melbourne or Adelaide, and went straight to the Silver City. It may be that the Jews who went to Broken Hill had greater hopes of deriving wealth from speculation in the precious metal, along with the traditional occupations than could be expected in a coal mining setting. The second significant difference is in the numbers. At its height Broken Hill had approximately 150 active Jews in a

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[19] Ibid., 48.
[20] Ibid., 18.

town of 35,000. In West Virginia/Kentucky, there were nine towns with Jewish congregations: Beckley (Raleigh County); Bluefield (Mercer County); Welch, Kimball and Keystone (McDowell County); Logan (Logan County); Williamson (Mingo County); Harlan (Harlan County) and Middlesboro (Bell County).[21]

Deborah R. Weiner wrote in 2006:

> The vibrant Jewish communities that thrived in the coalfields from roughly the 1890s to the 1970s have largely disappeared, victims of the drastic economic decline that hit the region in the 1950s. Only two of the nine congregations profiled in this study still exist, both in much reduced form. It is hard to believe that thousands of Jews lived in the coalfields during that eighty-year time span that Jewish life once flourished there.[22]

Although the coalfields have lost economic impetus, there remain two Jewish congregations in Appalachia, albeit 'much reduced'. It may be that the size of the Jewish population in relation to the non-Jewish population is relevant. In Keystone, West Virginia, Jews made up 10% of the population of one thousand. This is similar in terms of actual numbers, but significantly larger proportionately, compared with Broken Hill.

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[21] Ibid., 3.
[22] Ibid., 6.

A further, fascinating difference between the American and Australian experience is the question of religious practice. The Jews of the Coalfields arrived as Orthodox believers, but 'typically gravitated toward Reform Judaism'.[23] The Jews who arrived in Australia after 1850 (but before 1890) were much further along the path of 'emancipation', and had exchanged a level of traditional practice for a better place in civil society. Yet, Reform Judaism did not take off in Australia at this time. In the United States, however, Reform became, overwhelmingly, the dominant form of Judaism. How can this be explained?

The ideas of Mendelsohn – the belief in the 'Torah of Man', of reason and universality which would lead to full social, political and cultural integration of the Jews into European society – had not reached their full flowering by 1836. It was not until after 1840 that governments and other authorities sought to adopt any reforms.[24] It is likely that all Jews would have been exposed to these ideas, even though the *maskilim* were scholars, unlikely to deal with the ordinary people. However, modernity was approaching. Prior to the nineteenth century, Judaism was not a religion, or Jewishness a matter of culture. In contemporary parlance, Jews lived as an indigenous people, albeit mostly cut off from their land. After the onset of modernity and the Jewish Enlightenment, Jews began to pick and choose aspects of their faith to which they would adhere, to 'construct' their Jewishness.[25] Traditional Jews, arriving in the new world as welcome as any other new arrival,

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[23] Ibid., 4.

[24] *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* s.v. 'Haskalah,' accessed 14 September 2015, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Haskalah.

[25] Jacob Katz, (editor) *Toward Modernity: the European Jewish Model,* discusses the impact of Haskalah, and the breakup of Jewish traditional society on Jewish self-understanding. Jewish 'emancipation' brought about integration into wider society and ultimately an imperative for individuals to make choices constructing new social, political and personal identities within their experience of Judaism.

must have been intoxicated with freedoms and acceptance never experienced before.

It is suggested that it was the experience of America itself that encouraged Reform. Ava F Kahn asserts that Jews 'flourished in California and especially in San Francisco because the new pluralistic, heterogeneous society accepted and even celebrated economic and religious freedom.'[26]   Like the Jews of Broken Hill, the Jews of California were there at the beginning. They had as much right to be there as anybody else, apart from the Chinese and African-Americans, who continued to suffer discrimination. Indeed, the fact that Jews were not, for once, lumped in with other marginalised groups would have affirmed their social and cultural acceptance. Kahn also emphasises the critical role of the American Civil War, as well as the period after, following the assassination of Lincoln, in forging an American Jewish identity.   When news of the assassination reached the congregation of Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco, in 1865, Kahn notes the spontaneous words of Rabbi Elkan Cohn, whose response to the tragedy showed the congregants felt themselves fully American, even though most were still born elsewhere:

> Abraham Lincoln, the twice anointed High Priest in the sanctuary of our
> Republic, has fallen... he stood amongst us like a mighty giant... his mind
> full of wisdom, his great heart full of love, his whole being, a true type of
> the American liberal character!...The great principles (Lincoln) so nobly
> and fully represented are the very nerve and essence of our people, and so

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[26] Kahn, *Jewish Voices*, 41.

long as there is upon our soil a mind to think and a heart to feel, these
principles will be defended and upheld to the last drop of blood...[27]

Thus, to embrace Reform Judaism became linked with being 'a good American'.
By 1873, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900) formed the American Union of
Hebrew Congregations, which would become the Union of Reform Judaism.[28] By
1885, Reform Judaism was sufficiently well established that an alliance of
reformers from the East Coast and the German reform movement promulgated
the 'Pittsburgh Platform'. This position statement explicitly denied that Jews were
a nation and reduced Judaism to that of a simple religious community.[29] Although
American Reform had, and has, many different manifestations,[30] Reform remains
the dominant form of Jewish expression in the United States.

By contrast, the German Jews of Ballarat and Bendigo were 'Orthodox' Jews. A
particular type of 'Australian orthodoxy', one that had emerged due to the British
influence, perhaps influenced their orthodoxy. Anglo-Jewry had fashioned itself
on the English established church. Despite the fact that there was no established
church in Australia, Anglo Jews applied the veneer of the British establishment
upon their faith and practice. In Anglo-Jewish orthodoxy, structure was everything
and personal religious practice was generally lax.[31] In Australia while Anglo Jewry
tended to assimilationism, it was still Orthodox; therefore, although there were
many arguments between the Anglo establishment and various waves of

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[27] Kahn, *Jewish Voices*, 423-4.
[28] Ibid.
[29] 'Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform,' *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed 4 September 2015, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/pittsburgh_program.html.
[30] Jonathan D. Sarna, 'New Light on the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885,' *American Jewish History* 76, no. 3 (1987): 258-368.
[31] Rabbi Raymond Apple, email to author, 9 September 2015.

newcomers, there was no serious argument about the orthodoxy of Jewish faith and practice, merely but rather about 'decorum'. An attempt to introduce Reform Judaism at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne in the late nineteenth century was unsuccessful, as were similar experiments.[32] Liberal Judaism was not introduced into Australia until the 1930s, at Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne and Temple Emanuel, Sydney.

Broken Hill Jews were Orthodox because they knew nothing else. Nonetheless, unlike Anglo Australian orthodoxy, Broken Hill Jewry was outspoken on issues relating to social justice (Dreyfus, Ukrainian refugees) and on Palestine and the nascent Zionist movement.

The traditional class divide prevented Australians from developing the sense of unanimity Americans enjoyed. In Australia, Broken Hill's Jews learned that provided it did not draw too much attention to itself, any religion was acceptable.

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[32] Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria, (1835 – 1985)* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1986), 57-58.

Conclusions

'We all knew they were Jews and they were held in very high esteem.'

 - Kevin Sinclair, Broken Hill resident[1]

It is a characteristic of remote towns in Australia and most other parts of the world that they tend to have small populations. Broken Hill, eleven hundred kilometres from Sydney, has a population of 18,557 as at June 2016.[2] Settled from 1883, it did not even have a reliable water supply until 1952 when the pipeline from the Darling River was finally completed. It was never likely that Jews would stay there in large numbers. Broken Hill was a safe refuge, thousands of miles from persecutions and poverty; it was a frontier town, the 'El Dorado of the South' where breath could be caught and fortunes could be made. It was a place where the adventurous and the entrepreneurial could begin life in the New World, before moving on to larger centres and greater possibilities. The town lacked quality secondary education, sufficient suitable marriage partners, and its economic opportunities were ultimately more limited than in metropolitan centres. There is no mystery in why Jews finally left Broken Hill. The greater mystery is why they stayed as long as they did.

Jews were present and active as Jews in Broken Hill for fifty years; from the 1890s until the mid 1940s, with the synagogue closing its doors finally in 1962. The town's isolation may itself have been a factor in the community's

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[1] Interview with author, Broken Hill resident Kevin Sinclair, 10 October 2011.
[2] Broken Hill City Council, accessed 16 June 2016,
http://profile.id.com.au/broken-hill/population-estimate

longevity. In the words of descendent, Kay Ronai: 'Jews went where they could be safe'.[3] Having been there from the beginning Jews were as much part of the town as anyone in Broken Hill. The 'Russian' Jews who were at the heart of the congregation were assisted by earlier arrivals from Anglo or 'German' backgrounds. Johannes Kleinhammer, Marcus Mannheim and Samuel Solomon gave social and financial assistance to new arrivals, Krantz and Dryen; they in turn gave assistance to Hymans, Lews and Silvers. This connectedness enabled new waves of arrivals to gain a high degree of security and prosperity in their new land. This was very much part of Jewish tradition, as seen in the discussion in Chapter Five.

The idea of 'safety' is not simply physical safety. Jews felt safe because there were comfortable parallels between life in the old world and life in the new. For the most part, Jews acted as merchants and shopkeepers, hoteliers and jewellers, functioning as a mercantile 'middle class' in Broken Hill society, as the non-Jewish miners were the working class. As discussed in Chapter Two, this occupational profile for both Jew (and non-Jew) in Broken Hill largely reflected familiar circumstances in the North West Pale where Jews were middlemen and the lower class non-Jews were agricultural labourers, working for the landowners or on their own, tiny plots of land following emancipation. Despite the contrast in temperatures, the respective roles of the two groups were similar to those experienced by both groups in the Old World.

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[3] Email from Kay Ronai to the author, 4 August 2015

Compared with Europe, Australia offered a tolerant climate to European Jews, who did not face legal restrictions. That is not to say that there was no antisemitism: for example, in 1908 the Royal Sydney Golf Club committee 'bowed to the pressure of general social opinion and ruled that with the exception of one candidate already before it, no further members of the Jewish faith would be admitted.'[4] By contrast, Samuel Curtis's 1908 *Broken Hill: it's Rise and Progress* notes Jews on the boards of the Chamber of Commerce, Broken Hill District Hospital, the Fire Brigade, the Barrier Temperance Alliance, the Benevolent Society and of course, the Freemasons.[5] Therefore, Jews were not only better off in Australia than they had been elsewhere; they were socially better off in Broken Hill than in other parts of Australia.

As discussed, there was a high degree of willingness by non-Jews to admit Jews into civil society in Broken Hill with clear evidence that Jews mixed in social, cultural and business circles as easily as others did. The sense that Broken Hill was 'safe' for Jews was fundamental to their lives there. The town was built by a highly multicultural population that included Jews. Their contribution was out of proportion to their numbers, and was greatly valued. This thesis highlighted the fact in Chapter Six that Jewish *macher* Frank Griff was a close friend of the industrial 'king' of Broken Hill, Barrier Industrial Council's Paddy O'Neill. The two 'big shots' met regularly, as described in Chapter Six. Credit was made available to striking miners during the long

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[4] C. Tatz and B. Stoddart, *The Royal Sydney Golf Club* (Sydney: n.p., 1993), 46.
[5] Curtis, *Broken Hill: Its Rise and Progress*, 130ff.

strike of 1919-1920.[6] Isolation, tolerance and significantly, the overt respect of the non-Jewish community toward them created a place 'where Jews could be safe'.

Although the evidence is circumstantial, it does seem likely that the Jewish merchants and shopkeepers helped the striking miners to stay out for nearly two years, during the Great Strike of 1919-1920. They did so by offering credit described in Chapter Six, contrary to the practice of 'cash' businesses usual in Broken Hill. The Jewish middlemen, who acted as the middle class, supported the struggle of labour, helping to create a rare social cohesiveness identified when the city of Broken Hill was included in the National Heritage Register, in 2015. Perhaps the experience of *tzedakah*[7] offered by Jews to non-Jews contributed to Broken Hill's determination for justice.

Access to good education, to Jewish education, the existence of community organizations, ministerial leadership and the ability to maintain *kashrut* are all important factors in maintaining a Jewish community.   Additionally, remote communities require assistance from larger communities, which suggests the need for good communication between larger centres and small ones. Some scholars suggest that regular immigration is important, such as the immigration by South African Jews to the Perth community from the 1970s, leading to an impact that was 'spectacular' in reviving the population there.[8]

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[6] Not only credit was offered. Throughout the period of the strike, Frank Griff advertised goods as 'below wholesale prices'.

[7] *Tzedakah* is understood as 'charity' but charity as justice.

[8] Suzanne Rutland and Sol Encel, 'Smaller Jewish Communities in Australia,' *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1/2 (2009): 11.

In this discussion, we again arrive at the uniqueness of Broken Hill and the definition of 'remote'. Much academic discussion about 'remote' communities is in fact about 'small' communities. In this context it is not possible to compare the allegedly 'remote' British community of Coastline[9] (242,495 km², UK population density 267 to each square kilometre) with that of the *actually* remote Broken Hill (7.692 million km², Australian population density 3 to each square kilometre).

In the case of Broken Hill, there is some evidence that the Jews there, along with the non-Jews and successive NSW governments, did not expect the town to survive. It is true that they built a substantial synagogue. But they did not commit to religious education, and they routinely sent their children to Adelaide for secondary education. Although they participated enthusiastically in Broken Hill's community groups, they did not create specifically Jewish community organizations. It is unlikely that families would have been able to keep kosher strictly in the rugged, dry environment of the Barrier.

The Jewish population in Broken Hill existed broadly as a result of chain migration from Eastern Europe, and the town did not attract new migration following World War II. Critically, there is evidence outlined in Chapter Seven, that the leadership in Broken Hill actively discouraged new ministerial leadership after the departure of Rev Mandelbaum in 1914. There was no

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[9] Maria Diemling and Larry Ray, 'Where Do You Draw the Line?,' *Food Culture and Society* 17, no. 1 (March 2014), 127.

real appointment of a minister until Rev. Bermann in 1939, at which point the community was at the beginning of the end.

It could be argued that in leaving Broken Hill, Jews were making a very 'Jewish' choice: they sought to better themselves and their circumstances through the superior educational possibilities in the capital cities. They sought larger communities to ensure Jewish marriage partners for their children. They found business opportunities to cement their futures in their new land, and provide peace and safety for their descendents.

However, in choosing to move to larger cities, Broken Hill Jews were part of the general trends of the wider society, both with the growing urbanisation and the loss of individual difference because of the Western tendency to encourage assimilation.[10] The great-grandson of Sir Lewis Cohen, (South Australian parliamentarian and a Lord Mayor of Adelaide) and Selina Marks of Broken Hill, is Professor David Cohen, geologist and an evangelical Christian of the Sydney Archdiocese.[11] Yet, along with other contemporary Jews in the Western world, most descendents of Broken Hill Jewry continue to identify as Jews by culture, history and descent. It may be too early to

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[10] Within a generation, the Lakovskys had become 'Lake' and some Krantz family members had chosen to become 'Cranston'. Orthodox practice shifted to Reform, or to no observance at all; religious belief had been reduced to cultural identification; some descendents, including descendents of Louis Press, have married 'out' and sent their children to Church of England schools.
[11]'The Deep Time Issue - A Christian Geologist's Perspective,' Christians in Science and Technology Lecture by Professor David Cohen, accessed 17 December 2016. http://www.iscast.org/event_2010_10_18_deep_time. Prof Cohen is closely associated with the highly conservative Christ Church St Ives Sydney evangelical community.

assume an inevitable decline in Jewish adherence to the ancient faith based on contemporary assumptions about assimilationist practices.[12]

On 20 January 2015, Broken Hill was included in the National Heritage Register.[13] It is the only city in Australia to be so recognised. The Australian government recognized Broken Hill as having outstanding heritage value to the nation in part because of the place's 'strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.' The *Gazette* proclaims:

> The City of Broken Hill is valued for its strong community spirit, self-reliance and for exhibiting the resilience of a remote inland community…There is a deep, enduring and shared link between the existing community, past residents and the 'city in the desert'. This strength, depth and long-held connection between the community and the place Broken Hill and its outback landscape is made tangible by: its remoteness; the design and landscaping of the town with its 'oasis' like character and regeneration areas; an appreciation of the distinctive residential 'tin' architecture recalling the harsh living conditions; and the murals, public art and memorials located

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[12] Leonard Saxe et al argues that such findings (in the American context) ought not be interpreted as evidence of accelerating assimilation, see 'Pew's Portrait of American Jewry: A Reassessment of the Assimilation Narrative,' *American Jewish Yearbook (2014)*: 71-81.
[13] Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, *Inclusion of a Place in the National Heritage List – City of Broken Hill*, 22 December 2014, accessed 4 March 2016, https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2015G00102.

throughout the urban area.   The social value of Broken Hill is represented by pride in being a Broken Hill resident...[14]

The recognition of the synagogue as a heritage listed building indicates that their contribution to Broken Hill society has been recognised. The fact that the Broken Hill Historical Society purchased the building and is located there, further reinforces this recognition of the Jewish contribution to this outback town.

As noted in the Introduction, the contribution of Jews as a specific group is rarely recognized by the mainstream histories. In Broken Hill, Jews were an important group amongst other newly arrived immigrant groups, important for the economic position they held and the goods and services they supplied; yet more important are the values that these Jews shared with the general community and the practices that derived from them, such as philanthropy, charitable justice toward employees and practical support of industrial rights for miners. This is why Jews were, and are, held in such high esteem by Broken Hill; why Jews could live 'scattered all around the town',[15] not needing the security of a Jewish district to feel safe, and why Australian descendents of Broken Hill Jews are comfortable and willing to recall, with pride, their family's Broken Hill story.

European culture has, historically, required a high level of cultural conformity and will coerce minorities to achieve it. This tendency - 'Christianity plus

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Interview with author, Broken Hill resident Kevin Sinclair, 10 October 2011.

power' - has also, repeatedly, yielded horror.[16] There was horror enough in Broken Hill due to early mining conditions and clashes with police, but there was none amongst Broken Hillites themselves. There is no record of violence toward any group on the basis of race or religion in Broken Hill. This, too, was recognised by the National Heritage decision.

Perhaps it was the isolated desert environment that inspired Jews and others to behave toward one another as though each had equal rights and value.[17] Whatever the reason, on the whole Broken Hill broke with the usual tendency of Western societies to enforce minorities to adopt the culture and practice of the majority. In response, Jews did not isolate themselves. Nor did they feel that they needed to hide their Jewish identity. They entered into the life of the city not as outsiders, but as Jews. By a confluence of circumstances, Broken Hill enabled Jewish arrivals 'the right to be different', in Boyarin's phrase.[18]

In the comfort of that acceptance, Broken Hill Jews contributed and prospered. They provided traditional wisdom, insight and material support to others. In return, Broken Hill looked after, respected and embraced their Jewish population, because they were both different, and valued, as true citizens of the town.

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[16] Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, 'Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,' *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (1993): 693-725.
[17] It may be that Broken Hill's Anglo majority of the time deserves further study, given how little discrimination existed there, and how much elsewhere in Australia at a similar period and after.
[18] Boyarin and Boyarin, 'Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,' *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (1993): 697.

This thesis has sought to document their history and create a picture of their settlement in Broken Hill, their occupational profile and the challenges they faced in maintaining a Jewish life style. Eventually the community declined, but for over two generations the 'Jews of the Outback' were one of the most Jewish communities in the world.

JEWS OF THE OUTBACK
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Jan Biber	(daughter, David Lake (Lakovsky)
Jenny Camilleri	Broken Hill Historical Society
Bette Carson	(daughter Casper Gordon and Millie Lake)
David Cohen	(grandson, Sir Lewis Cohen)
Robyn Dryen	(great granddaughter Sara Krantz and Solomon Dryen)
Sidney Griff	(son, Frank Griff)
Joe Gould (Gilad)	(descendent, Baruch Gordon and Leah Fisher)
Tracey Griff	(granddaughter, Frank Griff)
Ben Issacs	(grandson, Rev. Mordechai Eisen)
Fay Isaacs	(daughter, Rev. Mordechai Eisen)
Janet Isaacs	(descendent, Rev. Mordechai Eisen)
Victor Isaacs	(descendent, Rev. Mordechai Eisen)
Carol Kennett	(daughter, Jack Starr (Stein))
Iven Klineberg	(resident, 1954-1958)
Lawrence Lake	(grandson Leon Lake (Lakovsky) and Clara Larin)
Dorothy Lazarus	(daughter, Tuvia (Thomas) Lakovsky)
John Lynch	(grandson, Paddy O'Neill)
Ross Mawby	Broken Hill Historical Society
Brian Potter	(son of FJ Potter Undertaker)
Bernard Press	(son of Louis Press)
Margaret Price	Broken Hill Historical Society
Kay Ronai	(daughter, Dr Tibor Ronai)
Janette Rosenthal-Kahn	(daughter, Annie Krantz and William Roden)
Sandra Rosen	(niece, Louis Press)
Sue Rubenstein	(descendent, Lazarus and Rosanove families)
Marie Shaddock	(descendent,Emil Guggenheimer)
Kevin Sinclair	(employee of Harold Griff)
John Solomon	(descendent Samuel I. Solomon)
Dorothy Staska	(descendent Simcha Snhukal)
Tania Teague	(descendent Simcha Snhukal)
Lindy Weizman	(daughter, George Dryen)
Margaret Wise	(descendent Hyman family)

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Jews of the Outback: The Centenary of Jewish Life in Broken Hill

*These questions form the basis of the interview you have agreed to about your family
and the Broken Hill Story. Complete these questions and return to:*
Kate Mannix email: kman3568@sydney.edu.au or fax 02 9876 3185

1.   What is your name?

_____

2.   When and where were you born?

_____

_____

(go to 3a or 3b)

3a.   When did you leave (country)?

_____

_____

 3b.   When did your family leave (country)? What were the names of the first members of your family in Australia?

_____

_____

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Version 1, May 3 2010

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4.   Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.   When did you/your family arrive in Australia?

_____

_____

6.   When did you/your family arrive in Broken Hill?

_____

_____

7.   **Why** did your family come to Broken Hill?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8.   How long did your family reside in Broken Hill?

_____

_____

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Complete these questions and return to:
Kate Mannix email: kman3568@sydney.edu.au or fax 02 9876 3185

9.   What work did you/your family do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10.   Why did you/your family leave Broken Hill?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for filling out this background questionnaire. Please return to:

    Kate Mannix
    Email: kman3568@sydney.edu.au
    Fax: 612 9876 3185
    Mail: 51 Carlingford Rd, Epping NSW 2121

Interviews are to be included in a booklet which is to be part of the celebrations for the centenary of the Broken Hill Synagogue. The booklet is to be published by the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and edited by a team led by Prof. Suzanne D. Rutland, University of Sydney.
For more information on the events, go to http://brokenhillsynagogue.org/