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JEWISH COMMUNITY IN WICHITA, 1920-1970

SAME WAGON, NEW HORSES

JAY M. PRICE

For young Walter Katz, Wichita, Kansas, was a world away from his hometown of Jesberg, Germany. As the Third Reich consolidated power, the Katz family—mother, father, and three sons—decided to escape to the United States of America to make a new life among relatives near Stillwater, Oklahoma. With them came the Torah scroll from Jesberg's synagogue that Walter's brother had rescued from

destruction. Although he had limited English skills and was unfamiliar with local customs, Walter found himself enrolled in school and on the local football team within weeks of his arrival. A few years later, Walter's cousin, Aaron Youngheim, invited him to come to Wichita to learn the business of operating a menswear store. By the early 1940s, he was hard at work at the store, living with his relatives in the Lassen Hotel.¹

Katz found himself in a city and a local Jewish community that was still adjusting to four decades of changes and was now poised for an even greater transformation. Elders from established families were aging and new generations were coming into prominence. For Wichita as a whole, this meant the arrival of a new economy based on oil, aviation, and consumer goods. These industries brought in waves of new residents both native-born and immigrant, both Jew and Gentile. Jews coming of age in the 1920s and 1930s had to negotiate their identities to find a balance that was Jewish, Wichitan, Kansan, and American. Many had arrived in Wichita as adults or teenagers or were their children, mostly a community of newcomers. Very few had parents or

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grandparents who could remember the days of the bison hunts of the 1860s or the cattle drives of the 1870s. Family stories were more likely to have been set in Poland or Cincinnati than on the Chisholm Trail.

The Jewish experience in Wichita, Kansas, highlights the ongoing challenge of being Jewish in the Midwest. Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, Jewish life in the middle part of the country was quite different from that in cities like New York, which contained the largest concentration of Jewish Americans, and which has attracted most of the historical scholarship. In 1974 Robert Levinson's "American Jews in the West" in *Western Historical Quarterly* called for a greater appreciation of the Jewish story taking place outside the Lower East Side. Subsequent research has tended to consist of congregational histories, expanded genealogies, or brief overviews that give broad, sweeping narratives. Many pieces have concentrated on the nineteenth-century Jewish story or only go up to around World War II. This literature, in larger part because of its time frame, is still skewed toward discussing the German Jewish experience. The twentieth century's more complicated dynamics involving various Eastern European and Orthodox groups are often relegated to footnote status.²

There is also a tendency to see Jewish history in isolation compared to other ethnic and religious groups. In reality, there are striking parallels and contrasts with other immigrant groups such as the Mennonites and Volga Germans in the rural areas or the Lebanese in the case of urban Wichita. On the continent's plains and prairies it was the isolation and relative stability of rural populations that kept groups like French Canadians, Scandinavians, and Czechs living in relatively homogeneous communities. It also kept them rooted in a network of friends and relatives who reinforced local traditions. Compared to self-contained populations of Mennonites and Volga Germans, where Low German still peppered daily speech well into the twentieth century and distinctive patterns of dress or practice are still visible today, the region's largely urban Jewish population was in

some cases more assimilated than its Gentile neighbors. Although there were attempts at setting up agricultural communities, Jews had little to compare to these German Gentile populations whose settlements were near duplicates of villages back along the Vistula and Volga rivers, whose families stayed generation after generation, and who developed into the dominant presence for whole counties such as Kansas's Marion County and Ellis County.³

The Jewish presence in the Midwest, like that of the South and most of the Far West, varied from a family or two to modest communities. In a few instances, they lived in larger concentrations in places like Kansas City, St. Louis, Dallas, and Denver. Next in size were places like Omaha, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Wichita, where the numbers of Jews ranged between several hundred to just over 1,000 or 2,000. In contrast to rural ethnic communities that may not have had a major influx of new residents in living memory, Jewish Wichita experienced a steady stream of newcomers and the out-migration of others.

Jews of a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and levels of observance were connected to networks of relatives spread out nationwide, fostering frequent relocation to take advantage of educational opportunities, a new job, or an offer of marriage. Many of the older German Jewish families had ties to the Great Lakes or the Ohio River while their twentieth-century counterparts were apt to have ties to Colorado or Oklahoma. Rather than crowded into tenements across a couple of city blocks, extended Jewish families in the Midwest found themselves spread over several cities, if not several states. There were few Jewish "cocoon" consisting of Yiddish newspapers, kosher delis, and *shuls* (Eastern European Orthodox synagogues); many families went from *shtetl* to suburb in a single generation.

Mobility is an important feature of Jewish life in the Midwest. Regular moves show up in the stories of several families. In many instances, the arrival in a city like Wichita was not the first major move a family made—and was just as likely not to be the last. Both

scholarly and popular works display a striking preference for discussing the arrivals of families but ignoring their eventual departures from the given location being studied. Including the stories of people who leave reveals a much more fluid population than many realize. A city or neighborhood, taken in this perspective, is less a final destination as much as a stopping point for various families who end up going to other locations.⁴

As a case study of Jewish life in a smaller midwestern city, Wichita's Jewish community experienced a recurring pattern of waves of families who arrive, establish themselves, and then usually see their children or grandchildren move on. It is the rare family where two complete generations are born and die in the same location. The population, over time, comes to consist of new families rather than the descendants of the earlier migrants. German Jewish merchants were influential and visible parts of early Wichita in the 1880s and 1890s, but their presence seldom lasted into the 1900s. Some of the leading Jewish merchants of Gilded Age Wichita relocated to New York after only a short time in Kansas, after which a new cohort of merchants of German ancestry took their place. At the turn of the century, Wichita witnessed the arrival of a new Jewish population, Eastern European arrivals. These immigrants, along with arrivals from other parts of the United States, formed an interwar generation who established themselves in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. With names like Glickman and Levand, Levitt and Beren, they included entrepreneurs and rabbis, talmudic scholars and journalists, who built up and shaped the institutions of Wichita Judaism in the mid-twentieth century. Their children served in World War II and returned with spouses to build the postwar years, a return that was unique in the history of Wichita's Jewish families. Among the ranks of that postwar generation were several individuals who grew up in rural parts of Kansas but relocated to Wichita after World War II. Joining them were a number of refugees from Europe who escaped in the 1930s. Others joined friends

and relatives in Kansas after enduring the horrors of the Holocaust. This postwar generation, who were the junior members of society until the late 1950s, made its own mark in part by bringing in religious leaders who helped raise issues of religious observance and civil rights with Jewish community organizations and with both synagogues.

Their children and their grandchildren did not stay in Wichita; instead, they sought new opportunities and contacts elsewhere. In their later years, many of the men and women who came of age in the interwar years and dedicated decades of their lives to businesses and organizations found themselves moving to other parts of the country and even the world to be with their families. Others stayed with their friends and colleagues in Wichita and enjoyed their children and grandchildren only when they came to visit during the holidays. The cycle continues to the present day, with Jewish activities and institutions rejuvenated with new blood but with few direct links to the efforts of past individuals, save the names on prominent local buildings.

NEW GENERATIONS FOR A NEW CENTURY

From the 1860s to the 1880s, Wichita's early Jewish families tended to be first-generation immigrants from German-speaking areas. One of the city's first Jewish clothing merchants, M. M. Fechheimer, came from Bavaria, as did his wife, Gertrude. Leopold (Lee) and David Hays, who began as bison hunters and transitioned into mercantile ventures in the 1870s and 1880s, were from Grumbach, Prussia. Lee Hays even went back to Germany to get married. French-born banker Maurice Levy was the exception, although his wife, Sarah, was raised in Leavenworth, Kansas, by German-born parents. By the 1880s the Jewish population in Wichita hovered at around thirty families, mostly immigrant in background, German in ethnicity, Reform in terms of Jewish observance, and merchants in occupation. This was the population who established Congregation Emanu-El in 1885. It was a modest, lively com-

munity, but tiny compared to Leavenworth's roughly 400 Jews, by far the state's largest Jewish population in the late nineteenth century. Sol Kohn even served as Wichita's fifth mayor. Wichita was emerging as a city of potential, booming in the 1880s to a major center on the central and southern plains, for a short time even eclipsing Dallas, Texas, in population. It was this potential that drew the first Jewish families and promised to attract even more.⁵

The Jews came as individual families, unlike other German-speaking groups such as the Mennonites or the Catholic Volga Germans, whose community elders guided the relocation of whole villages en masse to new lives in Kansas. Attempts to create Jewish agricultural settlements such as Beersheba did take place but seldom lasted more than a few years. Consequently, there were few community loyalties that compelled Jewish families to stay in a given location. The collapse of the speculation boom of the 1880s marked a period of transition, with several leading figures leaving for other prospects. For several families, New York City was a final destination, not a point of origin. In the 1890s Fechheimer, now approaching retirement age, relocated his family to New York, as did Maurice Levy. The Kohn Brothers who had been so active in the 1870s had long since moved to New York City as well. Lee Hays did live out his days in Wichita, but his brother moved on to Wyoming. At his death, Hays had two living descendants (both granddaughters), one of whom stayed in Kansas, marrying into the Yabrof family, while the other lived in Youngstown, Ohio. As Max Wolkow later recalled, "There were few of these early Jewish merchants left in the city when I arrived in 1903."⁶ The families who stayed, like that of 1880s financier Hardy Solomon, were the exceptions, not the norm.

Taking their place were individuals like Henry Wallenstein, who had come to Wichita in the 1880s with his business partner (and brother-in-law) Charles Cohn. Henry Wallenstein's sister, Rose, ended up marrying another local businessman, Ike Goldsmith.

Isaac "Ike" Goldsmith came to Wichita in 1893 and established a book and stationery store that remained a local fixture for generations. Joining Wallenstein and other downtown merchants were figures like Sidney Croney, who came to Wichita in 1909 and established two businesses, a millinery and a ladies ready-to-wear store. Arkansas-born Cohn, Ohio-born Wallenstein, Missouri-born Goldsmith, and New York-raised Croney represented the second wave of Jewish merchants, often the children of immigrants rather than immigrants themselves.

Joining these American-born and reared Jews was a wave of arrivals from Eastern Europe. They tended to be Orthodox-leaning in their outlook and practice, establishing in 1907 the Orthodox Congregation of Ahavath Achim, more commonly known as Hebrew Congregation. Their families included those of Hyman Wolkow, who came from Bialystok in the Russian Empire in the 1890s and eventually brought his brothers Max and Benjamin and his sister Fannie over as well. Morris Chuzy began by working at Dold's meatpacking plant, but after being fired for accidentally breaking an ammonia line, went into the wholesale grocery business. Several families, such as those of Jacob Glickman and Ben Witrogen, started as peddlers or in the scrap or junk business. Sometimes they expanded and grew those businesses or transitioned into other opportunities. For example, the Russian-born Glickman came to Wichita in 1910 and initially started out in the iron and supply business before getting involved in activities such as oil. Ben Witrogen transitioned into the grocery business. Also among them were the brothers Joseph and Samuel Kamenesky whose families eventually established themselves in a number of ventures, from plumbing fixtures to the salvage of iron and metal. The turmoil in Europe at the end of the Great War continued what had already been a flood of Jewish refugees to the United States such as Sam Zelman, who came from the newly created Czechoslovakia. These immigrants brought a new level of complexity to the Wichita Jewish community.⁷

Several had arrived not through Ellis Island but through Galveston, Texas. This was part of the "Galveston Movement," the attempt on the part of national Jewish leaders to reduce the concentration of Eastern European Jews immigrating through New York. In response, Eastern European Jewish leaders in Wichita, including the Wolkows and the Kameneskys, met at the home of Hyman Wolkow to set up an immigrant aid society to assist the newcomers. Ellis Island was simply one among many points of arrival of Wichita Jewish families.⁸

These families, especially the Eastern Europeans, had both similarities and marked contrasts with another local immigrant, business-oriented population, the Lebanese. Arriving at about the same time as the Eastern European Jews, early Lebanese families such as the Farhas, Cohlmiyas, Ojiles, and Ablahs also began as peddlers, concentrating in Wichita as a base for peddling circuits. Later on, both Jewish and Lebanese families transitioned into wholesale businesses and grocery stores, among others. Early in the twentieth century, both populations were concentrated in their respective neighborhoods—the Jews south of downtown and the Lebanese on West Douglas west of the Arkansas River—and later on, proceeded to move out of those neighborhoods as economic status and social mobility permitted.

However, there were also marked differences. Jewish families came from a host of different villages and cities from across the German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires. The more Reform-oriented German Jews and the Orthodox-leaning Eastern Europeans formed two very distinct populations. Meanwhile, the Eastern Europeans had their own groupings: Litvaks from what became northeastern Poland and Lithuania sometimes distinguished themselves from, for example, the Galitzianer from the eastern Austro-Hungarian Empire and the nations that later emerged. By contrast, the Lebanese families tended to be from a handful of villages near Marj'ayoun and Mahiathi in what is now Lebanon. Both groups were family-oriented, and families often had several relatives in the same business. However,

the Jews were less likely to share the Lebanese experience of vast extended clans governed by complex arrangements of patronage under the guidance of family patriarchs. Jews in Wichita could never quite replicate the *shtetl* the way the Lebanese could reestablish village dynamics from the Ottoman Empire.⁹

OIL, SCRAP, AND RETAIL: THE RISE OF THE INTERWAR GENERATIONS

Russian immigrant Harry Specter came to New York in the 1910s but quickly tired of sweatshop work there. He obtained a Model T and went west in search of better prospects, settling down initially in St. Joseph, Missouri. After serving in World War I, Specter returned, married a local girl, but decided not to stay in the area. Harry and his wife, Lily, relocated to Wichita. By the 1930s Specter set up a junk business in Lyons and traveled back to see his family in Wichita only on weekends. Tiring of the travel, he moved his family to Russell. The move took place just months before his son, Arlen, was to become *bar mitzvah*, so the family had to make regular trips back to Hebrew Congregation to complete Arlen's studies. Arlen Specter did not stay in either Russell or Wichita, later becoming U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, but he remained proud of his Kansas roots and his ties to Hebrew Congregation.¹⁰

The 1920s and 1930s were transforming times for Wichita. Oil money launched the aviation industry with figures like Clyde Cessna, Lloyd Stearman, and Walter Beech hiring workers and building companies. By 1927 Wichita was proclaiming itself "the air capital." A regional center for petroleum, Wichita was the center of a network of pipelines, drilling fields, and refineries extending from El Dorado to central and western Kansas. In addition, the city nurtured companies such as Coleman and Mentholatum, supported stockyards and meat-packing facilities such as Dold and Cudahy, and was the regional hub for farm equipment sales, flour milling, and grain elevators. Not since the cattle drives of the 1870s or the

investment boom of the 1880s had Wichita experienced such an influx of resources, ideas, and whole new populations ranging from white southerners to Mexican immigrants. The city was transitioning from a turn-of-the-century commercial center to a regional industrial hub.

Unlike in the 1870s and 1880s, when Jews held significant mercantile and financial roles in a small but growing community, in the interwar years Jewish clothing stores, groceries, and scrapyards tended to be support services for what was increasingly becoming a manufacturing city. The notable exceptions were the Jewish oilmen for whom the Wichita area (including El Dorado) was a base of operations for activities spread across several counties in south-central Kansas.¹¹

The interwar years saw the greatest increase in the Jewish population of Wichita as new arrivals came in. Immigration restrictions closed the channels for Europeans, but internal migration within the United States continued and in the Midwest included a number of Jewish families relocating to places such as Wichita. Among these internal migrants were Jacob and Ruth Lewin, who came to Wichita from Amarillo, opening a woman's boutique. It specialized in the latest fashions and was one of the first to bring the styles of designers like Christian Dior to Wichita. In many ways, the Jewish experience was similar to that of other ethnic and racial groups in the West and Midwest, such as the Chinese and even African Americans, who transitioned from a decentralized nineteenth-century pattern where many towns had at least one or two families, to a twentieth century one with concentrated populations in a handful of cities.¹²

A number of arrivals came as teams of brothers who reinforced each other in business. In 1923, for example, Isadore, Leo, and Henry Levitt founded "Henry's," one of Wichita's most popular shopping establishments. While the three Levitt brothers were the best known in town, a fourth brother, William, established a jewelry business.¹³ Another set of brothers included Max, John, and Louis Levand, who

arrived in 1928 to take over the *Wichita Beacon*. John and Louis were born in the Ukraine and came to the United States as children. The family initially settled in Ohio, where Max was born. The family relocated to Denver, Colorado, where the brothers joined the staff of the *Denver Post*. In the years that followed, Max went on to work for papers in Wyoming and Kansas City. Then, the three Levands decided to join forces on a single paper, the *Wichita Beacon*. Max was general manager, with John in charge of circulation and Louis, advertising. A fourth brother, Leonard, also came to Wichita and practiced as an attorney. When their sister, Belle, died in the influenza epidemic at the end of World War I, her daughters, Elenore and Maxine, moved from Los Angeles to be with their uncles in Wichita.¹⁴

The region's developing oil business was one of the most promising industries, drawing figures like Harry Gore. Originally from Russia, Gore began working on oil crews in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He went on to create his own ventures such as in the El Dorado field in Kansas. It was Gore, for example, who helped get Max Beren his start, setting the stage for that family's various endeavors. Gore also helped a young, Russian-born Talmudic scholar named Isador Molk to come to Kansas to teach Jewish law and practice. Eventually Molk, too, found the petroleum opportunities of the El Dorado field a viable enterprise. Having had to learn the business from the ground up, Molk went on to form a company called Cosmic that continued to drill in the 1920s and 1930s. He also was a kosher butcher and so could maintain a kosher way of life even in Butler County. Gore and Molk were just two of many Jewish figures in the local petroleum boom. Some, like Molk, were immigrants from Europe. Others, like Jay Kornfeld, were born in the United States (Minnesota in his case) and followed the oil business to Tulsa and later on, to Wichita. Some were locals who turned to new opportunities in the oil fields. One was Henry Yabrof, who operated a store in Towanda near the booming oil camp of Midian and married into the Hays family, one of the few families

whose ties extended back to the early days of Wichita. Others, like Dave Abels, went into the drilling supply business, operating Western Pipe and Supply in El Dorado. The Depression resulted in vast quantities of cheap pipes and casings that men like Henry Bennett bought up cheap. Bennett then leased the materials to other oil ventures, with the provision of being paid for the items only if the crew struck oil. The money made that way allowed Bennett to invest in oil rights himself and to become one of the leading investors in the Russell oil field in central Kansas.¹⁵

Geologically and financially, oil development in south-central Kansas is really the northern extension of the Oklahoma oil fields. For Jew and Gentile alike, petroleum connected Wichita to Tulsa farther south. Tulsa, which had a population roughly the same size as Wichita's, had a Jewish community almost twice the size. Oil families moved between the two cities regularly. For example, in 1931 Nevada-born Lester Greenberg moved from Tulsa to Wichita, operating the M. & L. Oil Company with his brother, Mal, to become among the most influential figures in Wichita's midcentury Jewish community.¹⁶

By contrast, Jews were not major players in what was becoming Wichita's signature industry, aviation. For reasons still not entirely clear, early local companies like Travel Air and its successors of Beech, Cessna, and Stearman tended to attract native-born farm boys rather than men and women from the region's immigrant groups. By the 1930s, however, there were a few Jewish aviation figures such as Sam Bloomfield, who served as the president and chief engineer of Swallow Airplane Company from 1934 through 1956. By this time, Swallow had largely moved out of the aircraft production business and concentrated on producing aircraft parts. Another aviation business was that of Morris Stone, an English-born immigrant of Russian Jewish ancestry who came to Wichita from St. Louis. His Stone Propeller Company helped many a Wichita-built aircraft get into the air. Family tradition suggests that Stone was

not particularly observant and may have converted to Christianity later in life.¹⁷

This interwar migration to Wichita resulted in a profound growth in the numbers of Jews in the city as well as a change in the relative size of the Jewish communities in Topeka, Leavenworth, and Wichita. In 1907 Leavenworth, still at the time an important urban center in northeastern Kansas, continued to have the state's largest Jewish population. In the early years of the twentieth century Topeka and Wichita, contenders for status as the state's second-largest city, also experienced growth of their Jewish communities. In 1918 Topeka's Jewish population, at 1,000, was the state's largest, with Leavenworth's second largest at 600 and Wichita's at 300. A decade later, in 1927, Wichita's Jewish community stood at 700, still third in size but growing. As the fortunes of Leavenworth and Topeka faded in comparison to the growth of greater Kansas City, the Jewish community of northeastern Kansas became increasingly concentrated in the rising metropolis that straddled the Kansas-Missouri border. Leavenworth's and Topeka's Jewish population shrank markedly during the 1930s. By 1937 Wichita's community was over 1,300, twice the size of Topeka's 675 and three times that of Leavenworth's 420. Between World War I and II, Wichita's Jewish community had grown by 1,000 and became the state's largest, although it was still small compared to those of other major cities of the central and southern Great Plains such as Omaha, Tulsa, Kansas City, and Denver.¹⁸

Wichita's influence in Kansas Jewish life extended beyond its being a center of population. Just as Wichita had emerged as the regional hub for communities across central and western Kansas, Wichita was also the center for those Jews who were outside Kansas City's orbit. Places such as Hutchinson, Great Bend, and beyond were at their apex in population and economic standing as regional centers connected to industries such as oil, salt, or railroads. For many years, the Mid-Kansas Jewish Welfare Federation had a stipulation that its board include at least one representative

from Hutchinson and one from El Dorado. A federation survey of Jews in Kansas identified individuals in McPherson, Russell, Dodge City, Augusta, Great Bend, Liberal, Newton, Chanute, Garden City, Parsons, Independence, Leon, Coffeyville, and Emporia. As in Wichita, Jews operated mercantile establishments and scrapyards or invested in oil in these communities. In Hutchinson these included, for example, such families as the Harelirks, the Silvers, and the Finkelsteins. Like their Wichita colleagues, they began as peddlers or small-scale entrepreneurs before transitioning into retail in the case of the Finkelsteins and scrap metal in the case of the Silvers. Family ties extended across several states such as Colorado.

The Jewish presence in central Kansas's petroleum industry was evident. Among these households was that of David Litan. Born in Pennsylvania, Litan followed family ties to the Midwest, became an oilman in McPherson, and was one of three Jewish families in that city, traveling down to Wichita for holidays and other events. Jewish practice and devotion centered on the home and the family, allowing these families to continue varying levels of observance in such locales. Hutchinson's Jews even transformed a house into a Jewish Community Center where local families led Sabbath services and brought in a rabbi to officiate during the High Holy Days. However, families did come into Wichita and Topeka for special occasions as roads improved and automobile ownership became common. After World War II, shifting economic realities in central Kansas prompted a number of these outlying Jewish families to relocate to Wichita proper.¹⁹

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the numbers and resources were sufficient to enable both the Reform and Orthodox populations to construct new facilities. Originally meeting in a converted church, Hebrew Congregation had grown to such an extent that it required a new home, and in 1930 it constructed a building at Kansas and English streets just to the east of downtown. Congregation Emanu-El built and dedicated its own worship space at Second

and Fountain in 1932 as its members moved to the fashionable College Hill neighborhood. Both were modest two-story structures with art deco-inspired details, decidedly modern in style compared to the Moorish or Byzantine-revival synagogues popular in other parts of the country at the time. Perhaps modern styles seemed appropriate in forward-looking interwar Wichita.²⁰

An old joke suggests that "every Jew needs two synagogues nearby: one to attend and one to never set foot in." The stereotype had elements of truth to it in Wichita, where relations between Hebrew Congregation and Emanu-El ranged from informally warm to officially frosty, depending on who was rabbi at each location. Part of the difference was rooted in attitudes toward *halachic* practice of Jewish law as well as interactions with non-Jews. Hebrew Congregation saw itself as a supporter of traditional Jewish observance such as keeping the dietary laws of *kashrut*.

Emanu-El, meanwhile, prided itself on its ties to the Reform movement as well as ecumenical involvement in the city. Indeed, hosting visiting church groups was such a part of Emanu-El's way of life that Rabbi Harry Richmond mused in his book, *God on Trial*, how more Christians seemed to visit the temple in a given year than Jews. The differences over *halachic* concerns (Jewish law and practice) remained even in death. Into the early twentieth century, the city's Jewish residents were buried in a section of Highland Cemetery along Ninth Street. It served families of both congregations until Hebrew Congregation eventually established its own cemetery on Oliver Street across from what became Wichita State University. Emanu-El continued burying its members at Highland.²¹

However, differences between Emanu-El families and Hebrew Congregation families during the interwar years were as much about occupation as ethnicity and *halacha*. The leaders of Emanu-El tended to be in retail, especially department stores and apparel. They included Goldsmith, Wallenstein, and the Levitts, whose stores were in the downtown



FIG. 1. *Rabbi Richmond*. Photo courtesy of Congregation Emanu-El, Wichita, Kansas.

shopping district. Hebrew Congregation's leading families included those of Joseph and Samuel Kamenesky and Jake Glickman, who were more likely to be involved in scrap metal or industrial ventures. A significant number of Hebrew Congregation's key families were involved in the oil industry, including the Berens, Gores, and Greenbergs. At one point, over a third of that congregation's families had ties to petroleum.

Differences between Reform and Orthodox, immigrant and native-born, or German and Eastern European did not matter to the vocal anti-Jewish²² sentiment in Wichita, which lumped all Jews into a single category. Ivonne Goldstein, who grew up in Wichita, recalled how "her parents couldn't build on any lot or bank at any bank. She couldn't join the sorority when she attended Wichita High School East."²³ Within days of taking on the

Beacon, the Levands received a visit from the Ku Klux Klan to pressure them to leave town. The Levands refused, and for years the *Beacon* featured article after article challenging the Klan.

The paper also took on Wichita's most controversial figure of the era, Gerald Winrod. In 1926 Winrod founded a magazine called *The Defender*, dedicated to fighting "evolution in the schools and modernism in the pulpits." By the 1930s he and his organization became more vocal, blaming Jews for the problems they saw in modern society. Like other cities in the region, Wichita was known for its conservatism, and figures like Winrod hoped it could be a base from which to fight what he believed was an alliance between communists and Jewish financiers. His embrace of Nazi Germany as a bulwark against what he saw as collusion between wealthy Jews and Jewish communists eventually included a call to stay out of World War II, an attitude that gained him sympathies among the German-heritage Mennonites just to the north in Newton and North Newton but also eventually got him charged with sedition during World War II.

When Winrod announced plans to run for the Senate in 1938, a group of local clergy, including Rabbi Richmond, came together to raise an opposing voice. Catholic bishop Mark Carroll later noted in a letter, "Wichita, in that era, was a place of rampant racial and religious bigotry. The clergy (who supported inclusion) were often cursed by people they did not know and subjected to other insults. It took a great deal of courage," the letter continued, "to go on the radio and preach fraternity, amity, and understanding."²⁴ In addition to Richmond, these "Four Horsemen of Tolerance" included Msgr. Michael Farrell, rector of St. Mary's Cathedral; the Reverend Samuel West from St. James Episcopal Church; and the Reverend Dr. Henry Hornung from Plymouth Congregational Church. They had recently formed one of the earliest chapters of the National Council of Christians and Jews, and Winrod's campaign became the group's first major cause. Together, they went on a



FIG. 2. *Inda Fractman, Francis Boge, Esther Greenberg, Rose Berkowitz, Dora Levand, Esther Kamen, and Ruth Kamen at a Hadassah meeting in 1932. Photo courtesy of Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation.*

speaking tour of the state, showing the solidarity of Catholics, Jews, and Protestants. Winrod was defeated in the election, although his influence continued for years afterward.²⁵

Both as buffer from the Gentile world and to reinforce a sense of solidarity, Judaism has long fostered a deep and rich tradition of supporting its own community groups and organizations. Wichita's Jews were no different, although each congregation had its own brotherhoods and sisterhoods, the two congregations did come together to support local branches of certain national Jewish benevolent organizations. Lodge 857 was Wichita's chapter of B'nai Brith, the largest of the country's Jewish fraternal organizations. Organized in 1920, Lodge 857 grew to a membership of 200 and went far in helping overcome the differences between Jews of German descent and those of various Eastern

European backgrounds. Young men belonged to B'nai Brith's junior branch, known by the initials AZA, for the words *Ahavah, Zedekah, Ahdut* (love, charity, unity). For women, there was the local branch of Hadassah, a women's philanthropic and Zionist organization. As with B'nai Brith, Hadassah had its own junior membership for girls. Moreover, growing concern over the future of Jews in Europe was becoming a concern, prompting the formation of the Mid-Kansas Jewish Welfare Federation in 1935 as a coordinating body for Jewish philanthropy efforts. Jewish Wichita did not create its own newspaper, although local articles and announcements were regular features in the Oklahoma City-based *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*. Given that so many Jewish families were relatively recent transplants to Wichita, such organizations likely helped foster bonds

and ties to create a community out of a diverse collection of newcomers.²⁶

As the city's prosperity in the 1920s attracted both Jews and non-Jews, the Great Depression similarly paid little heed to ethnic or religious background. Clouds of dust from dried-up fields drifted on the breeze. Most of the city's aviation businesses failed. Jacob Glickman's son Milton cut short plans to go to college in Oklahoma, joining his brother William in the family scrap business. Out in El Dorado, Isador Molk had to reluctantly sell off what remained of his Cosmic Oil Company and repositioned himself in more promising fields in central Kansas. Small businessmen fell back on their peddler backgrounds, some supplementing the family income by selling things door to door. Arlen Specter remembers how he and his sister helped their father during the summers by going out as a family into small towns near Wichita selling cantaloupes. For some, however, the tight times were especially poignant. Sam Zelman had hoped to bring his wife and children over from Europe but had to wait until resources and a more amenable immigration situation permitted.²⁷

Even so, larger cities offered opportunities that smaller cities and rural areas did not, beginning a migration of both Jews and non-Jews from outlying areas into Wichita itself. A remarkable number of figures in the Jewish community arrived during the Depression years between 1929 and 1941. In 1935 Samuel Rudd relocated to Wichita from his native Denver, eventually establishing himself in the liquor business. William Cohen was trying to get back home to North Carolina when he ran out of money and ended up staying in Wichita. By 1937 he had established himself in the insurance business and founded Insurance Management Associates.²⁸

Eventually there were a few arrivals from Europe as well. Those who could tried to get relatives out of harm's way in the 1930s, as was the case of the Katz family, who left Germany, or Max and Emily Semberger, who fled Austria. Initially, the Sembergers were to go to Denver, but a last-minute change brought them to

Wichita, where Max found a job with Henry's department store.

These newcomers mixed with the children of turn-of-the-century arrivals who grew up in Wichita. A generation shift was starting to take place with the aging and passing of those who guided the turn-of-the-century German Jewish community from merchants such as Henry Wallenstein and Ike Goldsmith to figures like early automobile dealer M. L. Arnold. So too were the founding members of the Eastern European families such as the Kamenesky brothers, whose descendants often took the shortened name Kamen. This new cohort went on to guide the Jewish community through the turbulent 1930s, the World War II years, and into the early years of postwar prosperity.

THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II

It was 1940 and Sam Marcus was evaluating the possibilities of a defunct meatpacking facility. Marcus was born in Romania but came to the United States as a young child. The family moved frequently during their early years, spending most of their time in Omaha before going to Chicago. As a young man, he had established himself as an up-and-coming broker of meat products in Chicago but was looking for new opportunities. Then one of his contacts in the industry encouraged Marcus to consider taking over a small facility in Wichita. To many, including several of the company's workers, this Kansas firm was beyond hope. Marcus disagreed, however, convinced that he could link Kansas's established beef industry with his market contacts back in Chicago. It was a big risk for the family. Sam Marcus had to borrow the \$200 to finance the purchase. Undaunted, he brought his wife, Millie, and young sons, Howard and Jerry, out to the plains of Kansas. As the 1940s unfolded, Marcus's predictions proved correct.²⁹

The United States' entry into World War II was a watershed for Wichita. New government contracts revitalized the aviation business and with that change came scores of new workers. Stores opened for extended hours and

some even operated twenty-four hours a day to handle the rush. Meanwhile, the scrap and supply businesses of the various Kamen family members grew to meet war effort demands. Demand for oil resulted in new areas of exploration and development for the Berens, Lebows, Greenbergs, Gores, and others.

The war transformed Wichita's Jewish families. Thelma Kornfeld Menaker remembered that "the Synagogue was filled each week with probably the largest number of adults ever to attend services, lectures or study groups held in our halls."³⁰ Families supported the war effort in a variety of ways. Sarah Mondshine, a recent transplant from Texas, met troop trains and organized efforts to support men stationed at the naval air base in Hutchinson. Mondshine even had a radio talk show in which she provided guidance about fashion and wardrobe.³¹

The war-industry boom extended into the city's seedier side, and few individuals were more colorful than Max Cohen. Originally from Ardmore, Oklahoma, Cohen established himself as the city's prime operator of dance clubs and gambling establishments. He was directly or indirectly connected to most of Wichita's best-known 1940s hotspots, including the Blue Moon, the Esquire Club, the Willows Club, and the 400 Club, venues that brought in musicians from Benny Goodman to Tommy Dorsey. Patrons of the clubs demanded alcohol and gambling. However, even owning gaming equipment was against the law, and Kansas remained a dry state until 1948, so Max Cohen supplied those needs by also getting into the bootlegging and gambling businesses. From his "office" at the Fairland Cafe, Cohen made sure that the liquor kept flowing, the gambling kept going, and traveling striptease acts continued to come to town. These connections were informal, unlike a stereotypical mafia ring. One local described it as "disorganized crime." Even so, lore suggests that Cohen's hold on local affairs was strong enough to prevent rival crime outfits from Kansas City from moving in.³²

The influx of workers and the deployment of servicemen had an additional, personal benefit for those coming of age in the 1940s: a larger

pool of potential marriage partners. Marriage to non-Jews was strongly frowned upon,³³ and the relatively small number of Jewish families in the area made dating and finding a spouse a challenging prospect. In particular, women found marriage partners among the servicemen who were stationed in the vicinity. Doing so meant that several local daughters moved away to join their new husbands after the war, while men who served came back with new brides.³⁴ For example, Ted Gore, son of oilman Harry Gore, was stationed in Dallas, Texas, where he met and married the El Paso-born Rosalyn Weinstein. Together the couple returned to Wichita after the war.³⁵

The sons and daughters of the interwar families found themselves with a chance to serve their country—and fight Adolf Hitler. Max Wolkow estimated 105 Jewish Wichitans served during World War II. For some, such as Walter Katz, it was also a chance to gain U.S. citizenship. Katz also served overseas, finding himself stationed at the end of hostilities in the same part of Germany where he grew up. For others, it was a second time in uniform. Rabbi Richmond received orders to return to military service as a chaplain, having also served as a rabbi in France during the Great War. In early 1941 he went to Hawaii, and was at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked on December 7. Afterward Richmond was one of three chaplains to conduct funeral services for those killed in the attack. It was not until late 1945 that he returned to Wichita once again to become rabbi at Emanu-El.³⁶

As with Jews throughout the United States, the community could never be far from the Holocaust. After the outbreak of the European phase of the war in 1939, there was still some hope for those in the Soviet Union. However, the German invasion in 1941 resulted in nearly all Jewish communities of what had once been the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires falling under Nazi control. These years were agonizing, as contact with Europe evaporated and newspaper accounts of the concentration camps increased. Throughout the 1930s Isador Molk sent money back to his brother, Simon,

in the Soviet Union and tried to get him and his wife out, but limitations on getting a visa did not permit it. A short letter from Simon in 1941, in which he still expressed hope for a visa, was the last contact Isador ever received from him.³⁷

For Sam Zelman, whose immediate family remained overseas, the Holocaust was wrenching. Only his daughter, Esther, who endured Auschwitz and Buchenwald, survived. When her camp was liberated, she yelled out "Wichita" to the arriving G.I.s, hoping one would be able to reconnect her to her father. It turned out that one G.I., Harold Cochran, was from Wichita and informed Sam Zelman that his grown daughter was alive. Zelman wept at the news. He began the process to bring her to the United States. While in a displaced persons camp following the war, she met Herbert Moses, who had grown up in Germany and had unsuccessfully attempted to flee the Nazis by going to Belgium and France. Herbert came to the United States, initially to New York and, after corresponding with Esther, came out to Wichita just for what he thought was a visit. He never returned to New York. Instead, he married Esther and for decades helped Sam Zelman manage a clothing store on East Douglas Avenue.³⁸

Esther Zelman Moses was one of a few Holocaust survivors who came to Wichita. Another was Michael Pinchuk, a Pole who escaped a Nazi work camp only to be captured by the Soviets and sent to a camp in Siberia. At the end of the war, he was released, returned to Poland, and then immigrated to the United States. Years later, at a national Holocaust survivors' reunion, ten survivors from Kansas attended, including Herb and Esther Moses and Bernard Novick, another native of Poland who became the owner of the Novick Iron and Metal Company. The presence of this small group of survivors reminded Jews and Gentiles alike of the horrors of the Nazis, although official Yom HaShoah commemorations and discussions of the Holocaust in the local papers did not appear until the 1970s and 1980s, when these individuals were in their later years.³⁹

THE POSTWAR YEARS

The Okmar Oil Company belonging to Adolph, Harry, and Israel Henry Beren barely survived the Great Depression. It held out, however, after World War II, and was ready to expand in Kansas's postwar petroleum economy, along with the careers of Adolph's two sons, Robert and Sheldon. Robert Beren, for example, went to Harvard University and then became an analyst for Standard Oil. In the 1950s, however, he left to work with his brother in developing oil resources along the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. By the 1960s the two men formed their own company, Beren Corporation, as an outgrowth of Okmar. In time, the Berens had become successful petroleum producers in Kansas, Robert heading up a company called Berexco, and Sheldon, Berenergy. Meanwhile, a cousin, Stanley Orville ("Bud") Beren, arrived in Wichita after World War II. His family had established itself in the oil industry, thanks in part to Harry Gore, in West Virginia. Starting with a company called Misco that emerged out of the oil supply business, Bud Beren helped create ventures that embodied the issues and ideals of postwar America, from the KAKE television station to Hutchinson's Underground Vaults and Storage, inspired by a vision to create a storage facility deep enough to survive bombing attacks.⁴⁰

The changes that took place during the decades following World War II were among the most profound for the nation's Jewish population, including those in Wichita. The children and grandchildren of immigrants were moving into the mainstream of American society. The shock of the Holocaust showed to the world what unchecked racial and ethnic hatred could produce, and overt expressions of anti-Jewish attitudes were fading from public discourse.

The anti-Jewish attitudes that plagued earlier generations remained, albeit in less blatant forms than letters from the Klan. Jews were still not accepted or welcome in certain parts of Wichita society. Even leading families

still found themselves barred from joining the Wichita Country Club, as did their colleagues in the Lebanese community. Although several families were major patrons of the arts, some community arts organizations had unspoken rules to not allow Jews to sit on their boards. For some Gentiles, the *Wichita Beacon* still carried the stigma of being a "Jewish" paper. Gerald Winrod was still a visible presence even if he was no longer campaigning across the state. Moreover, the oil and aviation industries brought in a wave of blue-collar southerners from places like Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri. With these arrivals came southern attitudes on matters of race, ethnicity, and religion, making local cultural and social dynamics even more complicated.⁴¹

Wichita's roughly 320 Jewish families⁴² tended not to dwell on such issues, however, preferring to emphasize the opportunities that the postwar economy brought. The struggles the immigrant families faced in the 1920s and 1930s faded, and to a large extent Wichita's Jews moved within the city's middle class and well-to-do circles, a few becoming major "movers and shakers" by the 1960s. Although Jews were only about half of 1% of the population, several families, such as the Litwins and the Marcuses, displayed a remarkable degree of visibility throughout the city.

The postwar boom invigorated the Jewish-owned clothing and department stores along Douglas and the nearby streets downtown. The Levitt brothers' store, Henry's, was probably the best known, eventually opening a new three-story building on South Broadway in 1947. Nearby was Brick's Menswear, which had served Wichita's shoppers since 1916, and Walter Katz's The Hub, a relative newcomer to the scene. Zelman's clothing stood at the east end of the shopping district. Then there were the women's ready-to-wear stores such as Lewin's, Croney's, and The Model, again Jewish-owned. Tradition has it that Sidney Croney's store was the first to bring neon lighting to the city. Nearby were jewelry stores such as those of William Levitt and Mel Saffier. On South Topeka Street, Goldsmith's expanded

from selling stationery and books into selling furniture, office and school supplies, and sporting goods. Not all stores downtown were Jewish-owned, of course, with the Innes Department Store and its beloved tearoom being one example.⁴³ Still, there was certainly a distinct Jewish presence in the Wichita commercial scene.⁴⁴

As shopping centers began to emerge, the downtown stores responded by constructing additional locations. Henry's, for example, added a second story to an old Safeway at Douglas and Oliver streets (across from Lincoln Heights Shopping Center) and remodeled the building along the lines of the latest modern tastes. Henry's then took over a grocery store across the street and transformed it into a store that specialized in children's wear. When Towne East Shopping Center opened a few years later, Henry's closed the Lincoln Heights store and relocated to Towne East. In addition, Henry's also developed a branch store on the west side of town in the new Twin Lakes Shopping Center, and later had a store at Towne West Shopping Center. Retail was not the only business moving to the city's outskirts. Lodging followed this trend, as Walter Schimmel, who arrived in 1942 from Omaha to become the Lassen Hotel's manager, remained as one of the city's main hotel managers until the 1960s, opening the Schimmel Inn on East Kellogg.

North of downtown, along Twenty-first Street, was another concentration of Jewish-owned businesses. Some were branches of the downtown stores. Others included scrap metal businesses such as those run by the Bachuses, Boges, Glickmans, Hartsteins, Novicks, Kameneskys (whose descendents shortened the name to Kamen), Silvers, Stekolls, and Zackers. Robert Beren estimated at least seventeen Jewish families were in the scrap business in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the Marcuses' facility was an important part of the city's meatpacking industry. Farther out were the pumpjacks and tanks of oil development, the work of families with names like Abels, Beren, Bennett, Bloch, Greenberg, Kornfeld,

Lebow, Litan, Litwin, Morgenstern, Pack, and Schofer. Wichita's reviving aviation industry provided an additional set of opportunities. For example, the Bachus family, which had relocated to Wichita from southwestern Kansas in the 1930s, established a facility for surplus Beech property in 1946. It formed the basis of today's surplus store known as The Yard.

Within these stores and companies were young men and women who were learning the business in preparation for their eventual start in entrepreneurship. Milton Glickman took over the family scrap business that his father, Jake, had established. Ike Goldsmith died in 1944, after which his daughter Maryon Goldsmith Arst ran the family business. When Herman Brick died in 1940, his son Adolph took over running the family's menswear store. At Fruhauf Uniforms, Fred Fruhauf succeeded his father, Ludwig, to become a rare third generation to run a local family business. Even at the *Wichita Beacon*, the Levand brothers' nieces, Elenore and Maxine, began to learn the family trade by working for the newspaper. Stanley "Bud" Beren received a master's degree in business from Harvard before taking over his father's Mountain Iron and Supply Company in 1957. When Dave Abels's son, Jerry, returned from the University of Texas, he remained in the oil business, becoming a land manager for the Murfin Drilling Company. Ted Gore continued the business traditions that his father, Harry Gore, had established. Harry Litwin, son of a Russian-born Kansas City tailor, earned a degree in chemistry and went to work for the Winkler-Koch Engineering Company in the 1930s before founding his own company in 1955. Bert Lebow returned from the war initially to start an appliance store, but he branched out into the oil business, working with relatives based in Tulsa.

Meanwhile, others returned to Wichita but then diverged in new directions. Morris Chuzy's son Carl got into real estate and became a well-known local developer. Ben Witrogen's son, Mel, grew up in Wichita, attended the University of Oklahoma, received a BA from Bard College in New York, and went

to Columbia University. The younger Witrogen returned to Wichita and established himself in the public relations business.⁴⁵

Indeed, one of the unique aspects of this phase of Wichita's Jewish history is how many of the children stayed (or returned) and put down roots. Unlike generations prior and since, those who grew up between the 1920s and the 1940s showed a remarkable willingness stay in the city that their parents chose. Wichita's postwar potential (some predicted, incorrectly, that the city would grow to over 1 million in a few decades) created unprecedented opportunities for those willing to join the family business or branch out into their own ventures. Wichita prided itself on its entrepreneurial heritage, pointing to local icons that had become well known nationwide, including Beechcraft, Cessna, Mentholatum, and Coleman, a tradition that continued with companies such as Pizza Hut and Lear. The city was undergoing one of its greatest growth spurts and consolidating its influence throughout southern and western Kansas. It was a good time to be in business in Wichita.

Prior to the war, Wichita's Jews were primarily business owners and merchants. There were relatively few professionals. All that changed in the postwar years, when a new generation of engineers, doctors, and lawyers emerged from colleges and universities. Among the doctors were Maurice Tinterow, an anesthesiologist who began his career at Wesley Hospital in 1946, and brothers Frederick and Benjamin Matassarin. Their father had been in Wichita earlier in the century, even starting St. Francis Hospital's free clinic but moving to Leavenworth when he considered Wichita to be getting "too big." His sons, however, went to medical school and returned to Wichita in the 1930s, becoming among the city's respected doctors. Their sister, Florence Freedman, was a respected nurse in her own right. When the 1952 polio outbreak struck, it was Ben Matassarin who cared for Mel Saffier's stricken wife, Annabelle Levand. Although Annabelle remained paralyzed for the rest of her life, the Saffiers were always grateful to Ben for saving her life.⁴⁶

Jewish women were equally active. While some joined their husbands and fathers in the downtown stores, for most, raising families was a key contribution. Jewish tradition placed a great emphasis on the role of the mother on maintaining observance in the home. Among many families, it was the wives and mothers who supported the activities of the temple or synagogue, who made the meals for the various events, and who guided the children through their religious education. The men were more caught up in work and civic activities. As a fundraiser for the religious school and other projects, Emanu-El's sisterhood held a "food bake." In the years that followed, the bake became "Food-A-Rama"⁴⁷ and eventually a popular event for both Jews and non-Jews across the city known as Deli Days. Meanwhile the Sisterhood at Hebrew Congregation held elegant teas featuring holiday foods, drawing Jewish and non-Jewish visitors alike.⁴⁸

Activities such as these helped several women who followed their husbands to new lives in Wichita to integrate into their adopted community. Reta Kamen recalled that when she arrived in 1952 as a new bride, "I was initiated into Temple life by way of the kitchen—the back door." While there, she learned from the leading ladies of the congregation "how it was to be done from scratch. They called it 'their way.' There was their way and the wrong way, that was it, no other way." Fortunately, she was not alone. "There were about six of us who were new brides and we learned to do it their way, fast." A number of these women, like Robert Beren's wife, Joan Schiff, became leaders in their own right in the years to follow.⁴⁹

By the 1950s many of the up-and-coming generation who had served in World War II were establishing households of their own. They—and the developers—took advantage of the G.I. bill. Since the 1920s Wichita's leading and well-to-do families, including its leading Jewish families, had lived in College Hill. Emanu-El was in the heart of the neighborhood, while Hebrew Congregation was between College Hill and downtown. Following World War II, the migration of these families, Jewish

and non-Jewish alike, to even newer subdivisions farther east continued. At first, there were upscale neighborhoods like Crown Heights. By the late 1950s Wichita's Jewish families tended to live in an arc of ranch-house-dominated suburban neighborhoods extending from the University of Wichita down along Woodlawn to the separate city of Eastborough.

As with suburban Jews throughout the country, the synagogue and Jewish community organizations emerged to offer social and educational programs. With Nazi Europe no longer the guiding issue, the Mid-Kansas Jewish Welfare Federation repositioned itself from an immigrant aid organization to one that both supported the newly established state of Israel and provided social and educational services for the local Jewish population. Indeed, there were even a few families who did not officially belong to either congregation, perhaps because of cost or because they found it unimportant, but expressed their Judaism through the support of federation events. Then there were those who found federation activities a welcome chance to get beyond the Emanu-El/Hebrew Congregation divisiveness. Lists of the federation's boards of directors read like a who's who of the city's leading Jewish families. Most were from older families, although new arrivals did appear as well. They were usually men, but women did serve both as regular board members and as ex-officio members. One of the 1930s European refugees, Emily Semberger, served for decades as the secretary for the organization.⁵⁰

More than just worship space, synagogues were themselves social centers for a wide range of activities. This was the heyday of synagogue attendance and participation nationwide. As was the case for so many Jewish congregations around the country, both Emanu-El and Ahavath Achim decided to construct new facilities. This time, Emanu-El was first, building its new temple along Central Avenue in 1961. Hebrew Congregation was next, opening a substantial edifice on North Woodlawn in 1962. Surrounded by vast, near-parklike settings, both facilities had classrooms, office



FIG. 3. In January 1941, Hebrew Congregation gathered to celebrate the burning of the synagogue's mortgage. Photo courtesy of Gillard Cohen.

space, dining facilities, and in the case of Hebrew Congregation, a kosher kitchen. In an attempt to make Jewish activities more child-friendly, a host of youth organizations flourished. In Wichita, for example, there were Sunday school classes for both congregations, initially housed in the crowded and increasingly out-of-date synagogue and temple. Members of Zionist groups like AZA attended regional conferences in Kansas City and St. Louis. Even today, people like Robert Gelman and Sheldon Kamen have fond memories of AZA events that they attended when they were young. There was a wide range of youth activities, such as when Hebrew Congregation hosted a Jewish music festival in 1959, as well as "Camp Maccabee" for the kids. These activities

helped bind together a Jewish community that included both those who grew up in Wichita and a significant cadre of interwar and postwar newcomers.⁵¹

Although Wichita offered more opportunities to maintain a Jewish way of life than did the smaller towns and cities in Kansas, some practices, such as keeping kosher, remained an exercise in creativity and compromise. Many families avoided bacon and ham but did not bother seeking out kosher-butchered meat. For those who wanted meat slaughtered under proper conditions of *kashrut*, options were limited. The Marcus family, who established one of the area's biggest meatpacking facilities, was Reform and did not consider providing kosher meats profitable enough to maintain as



FIG. 4. *Hebrew Congregation constructed this synagogue in the 1930s. Photo by the author.*

a part of the business. Some relied on authorized individuals to work with local butchers or have kosher meat shipped in from Kansas City. Among the postwar arrivals was Ellis Bank, who opened a kosher delicatessen and butcher shop on East Douglas. For decades, Bank's "Fancy" Deli was the main local source of kosher foods. Lou Rosenblatt later operated the market, which closed in the early 1960s. Communal observance was a major point of concern and debate, even if individuals and families did not themselves always embrace the same level of observance. Larger community events demanded a greater respect to *halachic* concerns on the part of Jewish Wichitans, even among those who did not keep kosher at home. Eating out posed its own challenges, in part because of kosher issues and in part because

Wichita was still limited in its restaurant options, although Albert's Chinese Restaurant on Kellogg remained a popular eatery for many a Jewish social event.⁵²

For both synagogues, the late 1950s and early 1960s proved to be times of transition, especially as the young families of the early postwar years began emerging as leaders in their own right. Since 1948, Benjamin Eisenberg served Hebrew Congregation as rabbi, working in tandem with the amiable Jake Glickman as congregation president. As the interwar generation of leaders began to die, however, the next generation who came of age during and just after World War II, including Hilda Morgenstern, Bert Lebow, and Robert Beren, began to take the synagogue in a new direction. Embodying this change was a

new rabbi, Norman Bernhard, who arrived in 1958. A graduate of Yeshiva College, Bernhard considered his observance to be “authentic” rather than “orthodox” Judaism. His passion for encouraging the study of Torah and traditional practice alienated some in the congregation, but inspired others. Decades later, members of Ahavath Achim recall him as one of their more controversial rabbis. He served the congregation for a few years in the early 1960s before returning to New York to head the city’s Metropolitan Council of Orthodox Synagogues. Following Bernhard, Norman V. Weitzner came to Wichita having served as the director of the Jewish Culture Foundation at New York University. Like Bernhard, Weitzner moved on after just a short time in Wichita, in his case to serve the Hillel Foundation at the University of Colorado.

Abraham Mann, the next rabbi, had been an army chaplain and was still in uniform when he arrived. He represented a new generation of Orthodox rabbis who sought to fuse adherence to Jewish law and practice with a twentieth-century awareness. “I am out to fight the impression of a long beard. . . . I don’t look antiquated and I don’t act antiquated.”⁵³ For him, Orthodox Jews could be modern. Here was a Jewish man who kept kosher and walked to synagogue in a city characterized by spread-out suburbs and a love affair with driving. However, he also liked the Beatles, and his wife, Vivian, taught art history at Wichita State University. Over time, these rabbis helped establish a new awareness of *halachic* observance among the members of Hebrew Congregation. Individual conversations and small classes in the 1950s and 1960s fostered a growing comfort in Jewish observance that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. They set the stage for a way of life that was especially evident among congregation members’ children, who grew up and moved away but remained Jewish.⁵⁴

While Hebrew Congregation’s younger generation wrestled with maintaining Jewish observance, Emanu-El’s members struggled to live up to the activist heritage of Rabbi



FIG. 5. Interior of Temple Emanu-El. Photo by the author.

Richmond, who retired in 1954. In his wake, the congregation called a series of equally progressive rabbis. The first was Benjamin Bernfield, followed by Judea Miller and Stephen Arnold. Several combined other professions with their clerical duties. Rabbi Arnold, for example, left Emanu-El to study counseling and psychiatry at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka before taking his next appointment in St. Joseph, Missouri. As civil rights emerged as local and national issues, rabbis like Miller became outspoken supporters of the cause, known for trips down South to participate in civil rights activities. Judea Miller recalled that “I have in my congregation people who have become ‘fire eaters’ when it comes to either Israel or civil rights.” Miller called these individuals his “*Hasidim*” (righteous ones). Through it all, congregants, rabbis, and even other local clergy kept in contact with the now-aging Rabbi Richmond, who remained as a symbolic guiding presence until his death in 1976. These

were risky positions to take. Rabbi Arnold received threatening phone calls because of his activities, being called a “goddamn Jew” for the first time since grade school. Activities of some Jews on the part of civil rights issues drew the ire of the John Birch Society, which had a strong presence in Wichita in the postwar years.

Both congregations had individuals who were involved in civil rights. This included Robert Beren, who worked with the Urban League and, as president of the school board, helped push through elementary school desegregation. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that all Jews were active participants in civil rights. Rabbi Miller’s *Hasidim* were notable because of their unusually strong commitment to such causes. Many others were lukewarm or indifferent. There were downtown merchants who hired African Americans but did not speak out about the city’s segregated facilities. Others did not hire African Americans at all. In the early 1960s the NAACP encouraged its supporters not to patronize certain businesses that did not hire people of color; among the list were several Jewish businesses, including Lewin’s and The Model. Nor were Jewish Wichitans immune from the prejudices and biases that characterized their Gentile neighbors, attitudes that showed up in practices from white flight in housing to off-color jokes told in private.⁵⁵

While ancestry, occupation, ecumenical activities, and *halachic* observance defined and sometimes strained relations between the two synagogues, complete separation was not a luxury feasible for such a small Jewish population. Beneath official differences of opinion, members of both congregations gathered, worked, and played together. Marriage ties and friendships crossed synagogue-temple boundaries. To someone accustomed to very distinct Jewish congregations and even neighborhoods, the “get along, fit in” attitudes of Midwestern Jews, their close business ties and friendships with Gentiles such as the Orthodox Christian Lebanese, and even dual temple-synagogue membership for a few, all seemed unlikely to foster any sort of Jewish observance. Rabbi Bernhard’s observation at the dedication of

the new synagogue for Hebrew Congregation suggests almost a sense of astonishment that “when some 140 Nuclear Age Mid-Western families erect such an edifice—this is a remarkable act of faith in the future of Yiddishkeit in our community and in our country!”⁵⁶ Like many cities in the Midwest and West, Wichita likely was not an attractive option for those who wanted to maintain a truly Orthodox way of life.⁵⁷

American Judaism’s tripartite division into Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform broke down in a city with only two synagogues. Nationwide, Conservative Judaism was emerging as a modern, “American” balance of tradition and contemporary suburban society, with both Orthodox and secular groups declining in numbers during the 1950s. In Wichita, there was enough support in numbers and resources to construct new facilities for the existing congregations but there was not enough to found a separate, Conservative synagogue. Those who would have supported a Conservative congregation elsewhere had to choose between an openly Reform and liberal Emanu-El and a Hebrew Congregation whose members’ practices ranged from Orthodox to nominally observant (later estimates of the percentage of synagogue families who kept kosher ranged between 10% and 40%). Had it been located in a place with a strongly observant Orthodox *shul*, Hebrew Congregation might well have developed into a “Conservadox” if not Conservative synagogue. In a city where even Conservative Jews did not have a synagogue, other approaches, from Reconstructionism to Hasidic groups, simply were not viable in Wichita during this time.

A COMMUNITY BECOMES A DIASPORA

Milton Glickman’s recycling business prospered,⁵⁸ enabling his children to go to college out of state and set up lives in places like Palo Alto, California, and Washington, DC. The best known of the Glickman children was Dan, who went to the University of Michigan and then to George Washington University for his JD, beginning a lifelong career in national

politics. In 1970 he returned to work for the family's recycling firm but soon established himself in law and politics. In 1976 he ran for the Fourth Kansas congressional seat and won. A Jewish Democrat represented a very Republican and Christian constituency until 1995, when he took on the role of Secretary of Agriculture, itself an unusual position for someone with an urban Jewish background. When Milton Glickman died in 1999, there were few descendants left in Wichita. The Glickmans were not alone in this regard.⁵⁹

In the 1960s and 1970s, Wichita's postwar Jewish community seemed to come of age. Within this prosperity and influence, however, were the roots of change, the full impact of which would not be evident for decades, as the interwar and postwar business leaders aged and passed on. The Levand family was one of many examples. Louis Levand died in 1953, followed by his brother Max in 1960. Their passing allowed the *Wichita Eagle*, which had waged a long, hard battle against the *Wichita Beacon*, to finally win the struggle for local news dominance. Max's son Elliot sold the family paper to the *Eagle* in 1960 and turned his attention to a new career as a stockbroker. Elliott's brother, Marvin, was also with the *Beacon*. After the sale he stayed in town to run a medical supply company. The once venerable rival became the *Eagle's* afternoon-delivered edition.⁶⁰

In the Midwest, Jews have been something of a barometer for the local economy. Less tied to a single place than agricultural populations, they have proven willing to relocate to a new area when opportunities emerged. They have also been more likely to sense a change in economic conditions and adapt to new circumstances by either going into a different business or moving somewhere else. The Kohns and the Fechheimers arrived from places like Cincinnati and stayed for a while, only to relocate when the boom times ended. Turn-of-the-century families took advantage of the potential that Wichita offered as opposed to rural areas. Several individuals came to southern Kansas as part of the oil boom, only to turn their attention farther west as new discoveries

were made. The postwar generation's return to Wichita after World War II was part of the last great heyday of the local, family-run business.

Since then, things have changed. Economic and social trends in the Great Plains increasingly favor larger metropolitan areas to the detriment of rural populations and even small cities. In fields as diverse as aviation, retail, and petroleum, Wichita's economy has shifted from local business to branches of national companies based elsewhere. In a city where even local icons like Pizza Hut have relocated their headquarters or firms such as Beechcraft function as extensions of other firms, the days of Wichita as a place of company owners and top executives seem numbered. In many cases, Jewish families at midcentury happened to be in the very lines of business most impacted by this trend toward national chains and corporations. A few establishments, such as Brick's, have survived to the present, but the majority, including Lewin's, Goldsmith's, and Henry's, closed because of the changing economic climate and because few members of the next generation were interested in running them—or were even living in Wichita to take them on.

By contrast, real estate, construction, building, and finance have remained local with mainly Gentile families such as the Ablahs, Farhas, Chandlers, Garveys, Kochs, Ruffins, Cornejos, and Weigands still influential in community affairs. Some have had a better track record in keeping their children nearby than their Jewish neighbors. In spite of its Bible Belt image, Wichita has significant numbers of Catholics. These included many notable business families who tended to have more children than Jewish families, with greater chances of having at least one or more child staying nearby. The extent to which even these families' descendants will continue to stay in the region is another matter. Determining whether Jewish families experienced unusually significant out-migration compared to their Gentile colleagues, or whether they simply experienced the change before it hit the Gentile families, would take a larger demographic study beyond the scope of this article.⁶¹

Unlike the interwar years, where teams of brothers tended to go into the same business, younger Jews took individual paths and often went into the professions rather than continuing in the family's retail establishment or industrial venture. Wichita Jewish families supported Wichita State University through scholarships and endowed features but sent their children to schools out of state. Unlike the early postwar young adults, these baby boom college graduates were less likely to return to Wichita with families in tow. Some families such as the Marcuses and Kamens did better in keeping the kids involved with the family business, although the ties to Wichita were weakening among them as well. Sam's sons Howard and Jerry stayed in Wichita but their children tended to move away, while telephone and computer systems have allowed one of Howard's sons to remain in the business but work from Texas. Meanwhile, the firm moved its facility out of Wichita to western Kansas, closer to the cattle that they processed. The Marcuses were not alone. By the end of the twentieth century, Wichita's once well-known stockyards and meatpacking industry were gone.⁶²

Mobility, not stability, has always been the defining feature of Wichita's Jewish community. Unlike the Mennonites or the Volga Germans, whose rootedness contributed to a vast network of relatives and potential marriage partners, even within the same county, Jewish extended families were spread out across the country and even to other countries. Even when a team of brothers built up a business, from the Berens and the Kameneskys to the Levands and the Levitts, there was usually at least one close relative who lived elsewhere. Many Jewish families came to Wichita because they already had relatives there. In later decades that meant, of course, that the reverse was also true: it was easy for children and grandchildren to relocate to Texas, California, Illinois, or New York because relatives were nearby. These networks helped predispose the Jewish community of Wichita to a future of mobility and migration.

It was a situation quite different from populations such as the Lebanese, who arrived in Wichita at about the same time. Among that population, there was a much stronger tendency for families to be concentrated in Lebanon and a handful of places in the United States. The Lebanese had also kept more of their younger generations nearby, with their emphasis on children attending local Wichita State University and continuing in local business instead of professions.

No longer tied to running a company in a given city, out-migration continued as younger generations sought the best opportunities for increasingly mobile career paths. Others moved to be with in-laws or near relatives who lived in other parts of the country. Those who wanted to maintain a Jewish way of life found it easier to relocate to larger, more vibrant Jewish communities. The days of the young couple settling down and staying active in Jewish affairs for decades were gone. In Temple Emanu-El's bulletin, Elenore Rudd's "Ramblings by Rudd" column was filled with reports of congregation families visiting children and grandchildren in the rest of the country. At a 2007 talk at Hebrew Congregation, Senator Arlen Specter returned from Pennsylvania to reminisce about his boyhood experiences in Wichita. As he recounted the families who were major parts of Hebrew Congregation, he paused and noted how few of those family names were in the audience listening to him. The figures he knew were largely gone now and their descendants were living in other states and other cities. Only David Litan remained as a representative of a Hebrew Congregation that had long since passed. Both congregations watched nervously while what should have been their next generation of leaders settled down in other parts of the country.⁶³

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, Jewish Wichita appeared more rooted and stable than perhaps it really was, thanks in large part to the decades-long efforts of a number of major individuals and their households. So long as there was a Gore, a Marcus, a Beren, a Levand, or a Glickman in some form

of leadership, things seemed to be progressing as they always had. These leaders of the interwar and postwar generations were like mighty oaks, impressive in their visibility and involvement in the community. As those great trees started to fall, what remained were saplings, mostly transplants from outside rather than offshoots of what was there.

Scholar Lee Shai Weissbach, in her study of small-town Jewish life, suggests that 1,000 is a critical mass for maintaining a Jewish community over time. Since World War II, those communities under 1,000 tended to experience dramatic declines in population unless something truly unique, usually involving the growth of a major city nearby, took place. Although Wichita's Jewish community was still over 1,000 in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the declining support for institutions and out-migration of families that had impacted the modest-sized Jewish communities in small cities like Topeka and Amarillo in the middle of the twentieth century was starting to catch up to medium-sized regional cities like Wichita.⁶⁴

By the later years of the twentieth century, even long-time pillars of Emanu-El or Hebrew Congregation went to live with children or in-laws, some moving as far away as Israel. For example, Walter Katz's daughter had gone to Arizona State University, married, embraced an Orthodox way of life, and eventually relocated to Israel. In the years after he retired, Walter traveled to Israel and kept in touch through long-distance phone calls. Even this, though, became more challenging as Walter, now a widower, was facing his own health problems. In early 2007 Walter left his friends in Wichita and moved to Israel to be with his family, relocating to what would be the third country of residence in his life. Walter passed away that November.

Yet, as in earlier eras, out-migration has been accompanied by the arrival of new Jewish families. The next wave of Jews began to arrive in the 1970s. In time, the medical profession and Wichita State University began to replace the downtown merchant establishments and the Twenty-first Street industries as the key

occupations for Wichita's Jewish community. This brought in new figures, new families, and new perspectives. Immigration again played a significant role. The collapse of the Soviet Union and rising anti-Semitism there resulted in an exodus of Jews to Israel and the United States. By 1990 a program of the United Jewish Appeal called "Operation Exodus" helped several of Russian Jews to relocate to Wichita. It would be up to this population of new arrivals, joined by a group of recent converts, to shape the next phase of Wichita's Jewish history. Once again it fell to recent arrivals to redefine the community's dynamics and take advantage of opportunities in a changing city and a changing business environment. The Wallensteins, the Levands, the Glickmans, and the Kameneskys would have understood. It is a chapter of the story that is still unfolding and whose ultimate impact on Jewish Wichita is still a proverbial work in progress.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The subtitle is intended to echo the title of the late Hal Rothman's article on Wichita's Jewish families, "'Same Horse, New Wagon': Tradition and Assimilation Among the Jews of Wichita, 1865-1930," in the Spring 1995 issue of *Great Plains Quarterly*. The hope is that this piece will honor Rothman's memory by continuing the story that he began. In addition, enormous thanks must go to the many people who helped with the preparation of this article, including Lindy Andeel, Joan Beren, Ginger Bynorth, Gillard Cohen, Rabbi Michael Davis, Sandy Diel, Donald Douglas, Joel and Kelly Fein, Elly Fitzig, David Goldschmidt, Leonard Goldstein, Sheldon Kamen, Walter Katz, Amos Leitner, David Litan, Howard Marcus, David Moses, Matthew Namee, Keith Pickus, Judy Press, Moti Rieber, Mel Saffier, Laurie Silver Caspe, Jim Stone, Dudley Toevs, Rabbi Nissim Wernick, Dr. Stephen Zacker, Nancy Zarnow, the students of the Wichita State University Public History Program (Luke Chennell, James Crawley, Kathy Gale, John Grow, Shannon Kraus, Ashley Nicks, Kevin Pyle, Andrea

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NOTES

1. Walter Katz, taped interview by Jay M. Price, December 9, 2004. Unless otherwise noted, copies of taped interviews and transcripts are available at Wichita State University Libraries, Department of Special Collections, and at the Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation.
2. Robert E. Levison, "American Jews in the West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 5 (July 1974): 285-94; Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Amy Hill Shevitz, "Past and Future: The Life of the Oklahoma Jewish Community," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 75 (Spring 1997): 4-19; Henry Jack Tobias, *The Jews in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980). See also, for example, Joseph P. Schultz, ed., *Mid-America's Promise: A Profile of Kansas City Jewry* (Kansas City, MO: Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City, 1982); Kay Horowitz, *The Spirit Unconsumed: A History of the Topeka Jewish Community* (Topeka: Temple Beth Shalom, 1979); and Ida Liebert Uchill, *Pioneers, Peddlers, and Tsadikim: The Story of Jews in Colorado*, 3rd ed. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2000); Marjorie Horbein, *Temple Emanuel of Denver: A Centennial History* (Denver: Congregation Emanuel, 1974).
3. See, for example, James R. Shortridge, *Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), especially chap. 4.
4. Carol Kammen's work on the practice of local history was one of the first that inspired this author to consider those who leave a place as still part of that community's story. Consider, for example, her chapter, "The Great Document Exchange," in *On Doing Local History*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2003).
5. For Wichita's early Jewish history, see Hal Rothman "'Same Horse, New Wagon': Tradition and Assimilation Among the Jews of Wichita, 1865-1930," *Great Plains Quarterly* 15 (Spring 1995): 83-104; Rothman, "Building Community: The Jews of Wichita 1860-1900," *Kansas Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1993): 77-86; "Maurice Levy Played Square in Every Way," *Wichita Beacon*, February 11, 1923, 6A; "Mrs. M. W. Levy Claimed by Death," *Wichita Eagle*, June 30, 1933, 2; "Wichita's Old Timer Recalls Old Days," *Wichita Beacon Sunday Magazine*, October 9, 1921, 2.
6. Max Wolkow, "A History of the Jews of Wichita from 1870's to 1920," March 1961, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH; "Town Topics," *Wichita Beacon*, August 9, 1895; "Mayor of Wichita in 1879, Sol Kohn Dies in N.Y. City," *Wichita Beacon*, November 19, 1920, 18; "Mrs. M. W. Levy Claimed by Death"; "Lee Hays Dies; A Citizen Here Half a Century," *Wichita Beacon*, September 9, 1922, 2.
7. Wolkow, "History of the Jews of Wichita"; Melvin Saffier, taped interview by Jay M. Price, February 3, 2005.
8. Rothman, "'Same Horse, New Wagon'" and "Building Community"; Laura Lent, "With Pennies in Their Pockets: The Settlement of Jews in Wichita, 1869-1933" (master's thesis, Wichita State University, 1983); and Scott Dalrymple, "Central Plains Entrepreneurs: The Rise and Fall of Goldsmith's, Inc., 1878-2003," *Kansas History* 26 (Winter 2003-2004): 238-51; Wolkow, "History of the Jews of Wichita"; Thelma Kornfeld Menaker, "Hebrew Congregation—The First 100 Years," unpublished history. See also "Henry Wallenstein, Beloved Wichitan, Passes at Age of 81," *Wichita Eagle*, November 30, 1936, and "Morris Chuzy, Wichita, Dies," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1966, 16.
9. Kelly Caswell, "Lebanese Immigration into Wichita, Kansas: 1890s to 1940" (master's thesis, Wichita State University, 1996), e-mail from Matthew Namee to Jay Price, October 4, 2008.
10. Senator Arlen Specter, presentation at Hebrew Congregation, May 25, 2007, videorecording produced by Joel Fein and Ginger Bynorth in association with Hebrew Congregation, 2007.
11. H. Craig Miner, *Wichita, the Magic City* (Wichita: Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum Association, 1988), 119-76; H. Craig Miner and Frank Joseph Rowe, *Borne on the South Wind: A Century of Kansas Aviation* (Wichita: Wichita Eagle and Beacon Publishing Company, 1994); James R. Shortridge, *Cities on the Plains: The Evolution of Urban Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 247-59.
12. Beccy Tanner, "Mrs. Lewin Kept Wichita Well-Dressed," *Wichita Eagle*, February 26, 2004; Bud Norman, "Lewin's Closing, along with Era, the Upscale Women's Clothing Shop, a Wichita Institution since 1923, Will Close Its Doors within 90 Days," *Wichita Eagle*, December 4, 1999.

13. Ramona Jones, "Isadore Levitt Devoted Most of His Life to Henry's Stores," *Wichita Eagle*, September 1, 1985; Mal Elliott, "The End of an Era: The Henry's in the 1930s, Henry Levitt Sponsored the Best Basketball Teams in the World," *Wichita Eagle*, July 25, 1993; "A Man of Action' Passes from the Wichita Scene," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1968, 13.
14. Irene Saunders Goldstein and Eileen Polakoff, *Entrepreneurial Spirit in America: Rudd, Kortz, Finkenstein, Levand* (New York: published by the authors, 2002), 157-66; "Levand Rites on Wednesday," *Wichita Eagle*, March 22, 1960; "Hustling Levand Brothers Produce Largest Newspaper in State," *Kansas Publisher* 27 (December 1950); "Dora Levand, Prominent Former Wichitan, Who Died in Dallas on April 6, 1985, at the Age of 90, is Mourned," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, June 1985, 2.
15. Isador Molk, *The Making of an Oilman* (New York: Citadel Press, 1958); Lent, "With Pennies in their Pockets"; Suzanne Perez, "Dancing Was Top Activity for Oilman Jay Kornfeld, 94," *Wichita Eagle*, August 22, 1993; "Abraham J. Kornfeld, Lubbock, Dies," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, December 1973, 2; Gerald "Jerry" Abels, obituary, *Wichita Eagle*, March 9, 2007.
16. "Prominent Wichitan, Samuel Rudd, Dies at 78," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, March 1986, 2; Elliott, "The End of an Era"; Nickie Flynn, "William Cohen Easily Meshed with All Others," *Wichita Eagle*, March 13, 1990; Nickie Flynn, "With \$80 Million at Stake, Family Feud Heads to Court: Wichita Couple's Estate Sparks Long, Bitter Battle," *Wichita Eagle*, June 2, 1991; "Prominent Wichitan Dies," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1965, 17; "Mal Greenberg, (Wichita, Kansas)," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1971, 9.
17. Rhonda Holman, "Distance Didn't Deter Support for the Arts," *Wichita Eagle*, February 1, 1996; Bloomfield Distinguished Engineer in Residence Program, <http://www.engr.wichita.edu/sambloom.htm>. For more information about Sam Bloomfield and Swallow Aviation, see the Samuel Bloomfield Papers at Wichita State University Libraries, Department of Special Collections (Jim Stone, e-mail to author, October 29, 2007).
18. Some sources count synagogue membership while others list people identified as Jews regardless of religious membership. Many sources include Kansas City, KS, in the counts of Kansas City, Missouri's Jewish population. Tobias, *Jews in Oklahoma*, 10; Works Progress Administration, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Kansas*, with new instruction by James R. Shortridge (reprint, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 115; Shortridge, *Cities on the Plains*, 208-81; Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America*, 340; Horowitz, *The Spirit Unconsumed*.
19. Charles Jackson, "Student Rabbi Serves Hutchinson Jews," *Wichita Beacon*, September 27, 1968; Beccy Tanner, "Historical Listing Sought for Old Synagogue," *Wichita Eagle*, May 25, 1995; "Mrs. Geraldine Lee Harelik," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, March 1967, 10; e-mail from Laurie Silver Caspe to Dudley Toevs, July 3, 2008; David Litan, taped interview by Andrea Schriepp, October 10, 2005.
20. Lent, "With Pennies in Their Pockets"; Rothman, "Same Horse, New Wagon"; Wolkow, "History of the Jews of Wichita." For larger context on architecture, see Rachel Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), 94-132.
21. "Reminiscences," unpublished narrative of Emanu-El, 1939, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH; Rabbi Harry Richmond, introduction to *God on Trial* (New York: Bond Wheelwright Company, 1955).
22. For Wichita, "anti-Jewish" is more correct than "anti-Semitic" as the city's Lebanese population also consider themselves Semites.
23. Carolyn Ramsey, "Ivonne Goldstein—Full Steam Ahead, with Style," *East Wichita News*, November 1997.
24. From a June 28, 1966, letter printed as "Ecumenism in Wichita" in *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1966, 16.
25. "Defenders Begin Publication of a Wichita Magazine," *Wichita Eagle*, March 28, 1926; "Rabbi Returns Here from Brooklyn for Final Rites of Catholic Friend," *Wichita Eagle*, June 28, 1966; Goldstein and Polakoff, *Entrepreneurial Spirit in America*, 165; James C. Juhnke, *A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1975), 137-43.
26. Joseph Schultz, "The Consensus of 'Civil Judaism': The Religious Life of Kansas City Jewry," in *Mid-America's Promise*, 1-4; Wolkow, "History of Jews in Wichita," 12-13.
27. Molk, *Making of an Oilman*; "Milton and Gladys Glickman," in "Portraits: Scenes from a Community," by Ruth Ann Messner and Jo Doty, in *The Wichitan*, February 1981, 31-34, 47, 52-59, 70, 59; Senator Arlen Specter, presentation at Hebrew Congregation, May 25, 2007.
28. Cohen teamed up with a Gentile colleague named Steenrod, allowing the firm to negotiate what was at times still an awkward relationship between Jew and Gentile in midcentury Kansas. For clients comfortable working with Jews, Cohen was the main contact. For those whose anti-Semitism was still evident, the non-Jewish Steenrod was the main contact.
29. Howard Marcus, taped interview by Jay M. Price, December 7, 2006.

30. Menaker, "Hebrew Congregation—The First 100 Years."

31. See Eileen O'Hara, "The Way to a Man's Heart," *The Wichitan*, February 1981, 36, 38-40, 42.

32. Beccy Tanner, "Blue Moon Was Place to Be," *Wichita Eagle*, June 11, 2007. Information about Max Cohen has come from a series of untaped conversations in 2007 with Lindy Andeel and George Polous, both of whom worked with Cohen, either directly or indirectly. See also Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, *U.S.A. Confidential* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1952), 277-80.

33. While rare, intermarriage was not totally unheard of. Henry Wallenstein's son, Henry Jr., married Dana Stevens in 1922 at Wichita's Unitarian Church. Ms. Stevens was herself the daughter of a Jewish mother from Russia and a Gentile father from Missouri. See "Stevens-Wallenstein Wedding Fashionable Affair Wednesday at Unitarian Church," *Wichita Eagle*, morning edition, June 15, 1922.

34. Marriage connections did work in reverse on occasion as well. For example, Wichitan Sarah Smed met Sol Zacker at the 1939 World's Fair. After they got married, Zacker, after considerable persuasion, agreed to relocate to Wichita in the 1940s (Menaker, "Hebrew Congregation—The First 100 Years").

35. John Roe, "Roz Gore Was Loved for Her Graceful Gifts," *Wichita Eagle*, October 7, 1994.

36. "Rabbi Richmond to Camp Robinson on January 5 as Chaplain," *Wichita Eagle*, December 31, 1940; "Second Book of Season Next Thursday," *Wichita Beacon*, November 16, 1952; Dot Neises, "Congregation Plans Home for Rabbi," *Wichita Eagle*, January 20, 1947; Wolkow, "History of the Jews of Wichita," 13. Providing a useful context is Deborah Dash Moore's *G.I. Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004).

37. Katz interview, December 9, 2004; Program, Narrative of the Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation's Program Honoring Joan Schiff Beren and the Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation's Giving Special Recognition to Emmy and Max Semberger, November 18, 1984, at Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation offices; Molk, *Making of an Oilman*, 244-47.

38. Don Douglas, unpublished manuscript about Wichita Holocaust survivors; John Ellement, "Wichitan Finds Kin," *Wichita Eagle Beacon*, April 9, 1983; David Moses, taped interview by Kathy Gale, July 17, 2006.

39. "Services Set for Survivor of Nazis," *Wichita Eagle Beacon*, July 28, 1974, Patricia O'Brien, "Holocaust Survivors Reunion," *Wichita Eagle Beacon*, September 17, 1982; Ellement, "Wichitan Finds Kin"; Timm Kidd, "Holocaust Burns in Memories," *Wichita Eagle Beacon*, July 28, 1974.

40. Guy Boulton, "Robert Beren's Empire of Oil, World of Charity," *Wichita Eagle*, August 9, 1992; Bill Wilson, "Business Leader, Arts Patron Beren Dies," *Wichita Eagle*, September 4, 2007. See also "Remarks by Robert M. Beren," unpublished paper of speech given at Hebrew Congregation, November 9, 2007, hereafter referred to as "Robert Beren remarks."

41. Ramsey, "Ivonne Goldstein—Full Steam Ahead, with Style." Because policies tended to be informal and not official, details survive only in recollections of Jewish and non-Jewish long-time Wichita figures, many of whom spoke of these matters only in the course of informal conversations.

42. Weissbach lists about 1,000 Jews in Wichita in 1950 (Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America*, 340). A 1962 survey of Jewish demographic data listed the figure at 1,200, and only 315 in Topeka (now less than half of that city's 1937 population, according to Weissbach). See American Jewish Committee, *American Jewish Yearbook*, 64 (New York: American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication Society of America, 1963): 70-71. The same edition of the yearbook lists the populations of Jews in Omaha as 6,950 (2% of the population), 2,000 in Oklahoma City (0.6% of the population), 3,000 in Des Moines (1.4% of the population), and 2,600 in Tulsa (0.99% of the population). Kansas City had the largest community at 22,000 (about 5% of the population for just Kansas City, MO, and 3.5% if Kansas City, KS, is included). Percentages computed using 1960 census statistics for the cities given.

43. Surnames are not a good indication of the ethnicity of business owners in a place like Wichita where there are so many Germans and members of other immigrant groups. A number of business families in Wichita had Jewish-sounding names but were really Gentiles, the Israels being a notable example. Allen Hinkel, who took over Wallenstein and Cohn's Boston Store, was a Scotch-Irish Congregationalist. Harry Shepler, who founded the city's signature western-wear store, was a Catholic from southeastern Kansas, but his company did have the Jewish Lou Cohen as company president.

44. Dalrymple, "Central Plains Entrepreneurs," esp. 245-48; Lent, "With Pennies in Their Pockets," 40-57; Rothman, "'Same Horse, New Wagon'"; Saffier interview, February 3, 2005; Katz interview, December 9, 2004; David Goldschmidt, taped interview by Kathy Gale, June 19, 2006; Menaker, "Hebrew Congregation—The First 100 Years."

45. Deb Gruver, "Wichita Leader, Philanthropist Milton Glickman, Dies at Age 83: Funeral Services for the Father of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman Will Be at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Hebrew Congregation," *Wichita Eagle*, December 27, 1999;

Dalrymple, "Central Plains Entrepreneurs," 246; Phillis Jacobs Griekspoor, "Uniform Company's Head Found Joy in Business, Life," *Wichita Eagle*, March 1, 2007; Frank Garafalo, "Walter Schimmel Elevated Service to a Way of Life," *Wichita Eagle*, May 1, 1990; Joe Harder, "Elaine Witrogen Leaves a Long Musical Legacy," *Wichita Eagle*, January 3, 1993; Jim Cross, "Mel Witrogen Started a Lot of Things," *Wichita Eagle*, November 28, 1992; "Meet Mel Witrogen," *Newsletter, Kansas Chapter, Public Relations Society of America*, March 1972, 2; "Phillip Litwin," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1968, 14; Carolyn Kortge, "S. O. Beren" in "Patrons of the Arts," *Wichita Eagle Beacon*, June 26, 1977; Harry Litwin, taped interview by Kevin Pyle, December 3, 2005; "Bert I. Lebow, Former Wichitan, Dies in Jerusalem," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, March 1983, 4; Gerald "Jerry" Abels obituary. For more information about Mel Witrogen, see Mel Witrogen Papers, Wichita State University Archives, Department of Special Collections. See also Andeel conversation, 2007; Saffier interview, February 3, 2005; Katz interview, December 9, 2004, Litan interview October 10, 2005.

46. "Mrs. Melvin J. Saffier, Wichita, Dies" and "A Memorial Tribute to Mrs. Florence Freedman of Wichita, Kansas," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, December 1973, 8; Saffier interview, February 3, 2005; Dorothy Belden, "Harry Litwin" in "Patrons of the Arts," *Wichita Eagle Beacon*, June 26, 1977; Robert Short, "Medicine Gave Maurice Tinterow Three Careers in Healing, Teaching," *Wichita Eagle*, February 18, 1993; Beccy Tanner, "Civic Activist Thelma Menaker Dies at 80," *Wichita Eagle*, May 9, 2002.

47. Over the years, the event's name went through several spellings, including "Foodarama" and "Fooderama."

48. Letter of Marvin Levand to Richard Matassar, April 29, 1982, Levand family collection; Kathleen Kelly, "Temple Emanu-El Foodarama Benefit Set," *Wichita Eagle*, November 2, 1977; Congregation Emanu-El, 2007, Sisterhood Donor Luncheon Committee, "Divine Secrets of the Temple Sisterhood: Celebrating the Women of Congregation Emanu-El," June 10, 2007, 21.

49. "Divine Secrets of the Temple Sisterhood," 11-12.

50. Nancy Matassar, "Reflections" in "Dedication Volume of the Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation," March 16, 1986, housed at Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation offices in Wichita. See also "The Mid-Kansas Jewish Welfare Federation Report to the Board of Directors and to the Jewish Community," December 31, 1950, and the September 1959 edition of "The Digest: The Official Publication of the Mid-Kansas Jewish Welfare Federation, Inc.," both reprinted in the same volume listed above.

51. "Dedication Volume of the Hebrew Congregation-Ahavath Achim," December 30, 1962, Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation office files. For context, see Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States*, 135-85; Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 283-304; Sheldon Kamen, taped interview by Kevin Pyle, October 4, 2005; Robert and Bernadine Gelman, taped interview by Kevin Pyle, October 5, 2005. For context, see Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 274-93.

52. Later on, the Safeway on Central and Woodlawn also offered kosher products (Robert Beren remarks).

53. Quote from Jerry Williams, "Rabbi a 'Swinger,'" *Wichita Beacon*, August 6, 1966.

54. "Rabbi Finds Wichita Tension Free Community," *Wichita Eagle*, morning edition, November 8, 1961; "Rabbi Bernhard Takes Post in New York City," *Wichita Eagle*, July 14, 1963; Williams, "Rabbi a 'Swinger'"; "Wichita Rabbi is New Hillel Director," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, December 1965, 18; "Army Chaplain Wichita Rabbi," *Wichita Beacon*, June 9, 1965; "Rabbi Mann Accepts Call to New York," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, March 1971, 8; "Former Army Chaplain Serves Wichita Congregation," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1965, 16; Robert Beren remarks.

55. "Leader of Congregation Takes Interest in People," *Wichita Eagle*, morning edition, October 24, 1961; "New Rabbi Takes Duties at Synagogue," *Wichita Eagle*, July 21, 1965; "Rabbi Miller Leaving City," *Wichita Beacon*, April 20, 1965; "Rabbi Arnold Undertakes Year of Study at Menninger," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1969, 14; "Former Wichita Rabbi Studies at Menninger Foundation in Topeka," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1969, 12; "Ohioan Assumes Wichita Pulpit," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1965, 16; Letter from Rabbi Stephen Arnold to Rabbi Judea Miller, August 29, 1966, and Rabbi Judea Miller to Stan Cheyt, June 3, 1965, Judea Miller Letters Collection, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives; Gretchen Eick, *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-72* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 72, 79-80, 143, 175-83.

56. Hebrew Congregation dedication volume, 29.

57. Samuel Heilman, in his study of Orthodox synagogue life, described how respondents felt that cities in the West, in this case Phoenix, were unattractive options for relocation. The Orthodox Jews he studied did not believe they could maintain an Orthodox way of life in such a place. Samuel C. Heilman, *Synagogue Life: A Study in Symbolic Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 8.

58. In addition to his scrap business, Glickman also was owner of the Wichita Aeros baseball team.

59. Bonnie Bing, "Jokes Fly Fast at Milton Glickman's 75th Birthday Bash," *Wichita Eagle*, December 29, 1991; Bonnie Bing, "Special Night for Glickmans Full of Happiness," *Wichita Eagle*, April 14, 1994; "Wichita Leader, Philanthropist Milton Glickman, Dies at Age 83"; "Daniel Glickmans Establish Home in Virginia" and "Norman Glickmans Establish Denver Home," *Southwest Jewish Chronicle*, September 1966, 5.

60. Max Levand obituary, *Wichita Eagle*, March 22, 1960; Robin McDonald, "Dora Levand Devoted Life to Family," *Wichita Eagle*, April 13, 1985; Beccy Tanner, "Beacon Flourished in 1880s, Cowboys Made News, Bought Papers," *Wichita*

Eagle, September 7, 1989; Bill Hirschman, "Elliott Levand Scrubbed Off Ink to Sell Stocks," *Wichita Eagle*, February 4, 1991; Tanner, "Former Beacon Advertising Director Dies," *Wichita Eagle*, June 10, 1998; Tanner, "Former *Wichita Beacon* Vice President, 77, Dies: Jack Levand, Whose Father and Uncles Owned the Newspaper for More Than Three Decades, Died Tuesday," *Wichita Eagle*, July 3, 1999.

61. Shortridge, *Cities on the Plains*, 282-95, 305-15; Miner, *Wichita, the Magic City*, 199-213.

62. Marcus interview, December 7, 2006.

63. Senator Arlen Specter, presentation at Hebrew Congregation, May 25, 2007.

64. Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America*, epilogue.