

## **B'nai Israel Cemetery (Jackson, TN)**

Sam Baum was the superintendent of the cemetery from 1911-1962. The excerpts below are from a transcription of his history of the cemetery (written in 1956). Moses Tuchfeld was superintendent of the cemetery prior to Sam Baum. George Axelrad, Maxie Zachariah, David Crane, Janet Silver, and Chip Rayman followed Sam Baum as caretakers of the cemetery.

Sam Baum mentions unmarked graves for-- •Frank Zimmerman • a child whose surname is Greenfield • Mihalovitz infants (2) children of Kobie Mihalovitz.

### **Old Cemetery 1873-1895**

### **New Cemetery 1896-to present**

*The old original cemetery was located on the south side of what is now known as E. Madison Street. Situated next to and on the east side of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. Now the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad.*

*It was a small cemetery enclosed with a solid ten foot high plank fence surrounding it, and was kept under lock and key at all times to keep vandals out as they committed some damage to the graves and tombstones at various times.*

*All of the remains were moved to our present cemetery B'nai Israel which is located on Hollywood Drive of this city, at the time same was purchased. November 30, 1896 deed filed and recorded as of December 22, 1896. [Deed Book #55, Pages 66-67]*

*All remains were interred in a special plot in the rear of the cemetery surrounded by concrete curbing and well taken care of. [Section C-Plot 1 and Section D-Plot 1] All tombstones were put up at the new graves. There were quite a number of the children's remains that could not be identified as there were no tombstones at their graves. The vandals may have destroyed them.*

*Wherever children's remains were buried, where their names were unknown, we had the word "unknown" imbedded in the concrete curbing at the head. And the few that were known ,their father's name was imbedded in the curbing.*

*There were remains of two persons buried in this plot that died in later years, that you might say were transients. The first was that of Harry Yoachim who died May 23rd 1892, age 31 years. He was a barber and was working here at the time of this death. It is my recollection that his home was in Indiana and that his relatives were notified and they refused to do anything about it; so we buried him here and placed a tombstone at the head of his grave at the expense of the congregation and his grave has been taken care of ever since.*

*The other grave mentioned is that of an old gentleman by the name of Frank Zimmerman that was killed by a Mobile & Ohio freight train just south of this city on the 2nd day of April 1913. Every effort possible was made to locate some of his relatives at the time, but to no avail. I personally made several attempts in after years to locate some of the relatives that of course could not have any idea what-ever became of him, and would not doubt be very happy and*

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*grateful to know where he was buried and that his grave was well taken care of these many years.*

*I have brought the matter up several times at a Trustees meeting requesting that we put up a marker or slab at his grave, but a certain member always objected and saw to it that I was voted down. I hope some day I will be able to get some sympathetic hearts to stand by me, and to see that his grave is properly identified. Of course, his relatives will never know it. But I know if it was my father, grandfather or great grandfather I would be grateful to anyone that would do this kindly service.*

*I have a record of a Greenfield child supposed to be buried in the first grave north of Sarah Englander's grave, but this name does not show on the concrete curbing. It would be grave #15 on the east side of the plot. There was a Leon Greenfield that lived here about a year 1878. The family returned to their former Brooklyn, N.Y. home. The Kobie Mihalovitz infant is buried in a lone grave just east of the above mentioned plot. [NOTE: there were 2 infants according to cemetery records.]*

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### **Sam Baum's listing for Section C - Plot 1**

*J. J. Lonsberg*

*Rebecca Lonsberg*

*Adaff Rosenberg*

*Davison*

*Vanderuncle*

*Knable*

*Plus 7 Unknown Persons*

*"All persons interred in this section were moved from the cemetery."*

### **Sam Baum's listing for Section D - Plot 1**

*Louis Solomon*

*Nathan Streiltz*

*Harry Yoachim*

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*Lisetta Laser Englander*

*Sarah Englander*

*"All the above were moved from the original cemetery"*

### **1965 – New Cemetery Entrance Gate**

*Just lately the Congregation completed a beautiful brick and marble entrance gate at our cemetery of which we all have good reason to be proud of. There was a marble plaque placed on each column which reads as follows:*

***B'nai Israel Cemetery  
1896***

*I failed to state that I have been living in Jackson longer than any Jewish person now living here. My parents having come here in the latter part of 1871, 84 years ago. I am now 85 as stated before.*

*I feel honored that the congregation saw fit to place my name on one of the entrance gate columns as superintendent.*

***Sam Baum Supt.  
1912 – 19\_\_***

**NOTE: The entrance columns were torn down and completely rebuilt in 2000.**

From a note handwritten by Sam Baum:

### ***NO RECORD***

*No record of the following children. May have been buried in the Old Cemetery and removed to our present cemetery and among those marked as unknown, buried in the rear of our present cemetery.*

*Joseph Baum – 6 weeks old – Son of Nathan and Nettie Baum*

*Daughter (child) of Julius and Babette Felsenthal*

*Child of Henry Baum, Sr. and Josephine Baum*

*Stone partly buried at foot of tree, could possibly be some unknown child.*

*Child of Mr. and Mrs. Alf Bensinger*

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From the Vertical Files, Tennessee Room, Jackson-Madison County Library

### **JEWISH CEMETERY**

WHIG AND TRIBUNE, Jackson, Tennessee, July 19, 1873:

JEWISH CEMETERY. Mr. J. Samuels, a leading manufacturer of this city, recently purchased a plot of ground, some two acres, on Mobile Avenue, of Dr. William Butler, to incorporate as a Jewish Cemetery. The Israelites of the city and our citizens generally are subscribing to pay for the ground and necessary improvements. We learn that it will be highly ornamented with evergreens and flowers, laid off in small and large lots and intersected with gravel walks. Heretofore our Jewish fellow-citizens have been forced, at heavy expense, to carry their dead to Memphis for burial.

WHIG AND TRIBUNE, Jackson, Tennessee, September 20, 1873:

JEWISH CEMETERY. On Wednesday, in company with Mr. J. Samuels, we visited the Jewish cemetery, located in the south-east portion of the City, at the foot of Middle Avenue and on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. It is a small but . . . [unreadable] . . . a beautifully arched gate, elegantly ornamented. The ground was but recently purchased by Mr. Samuels, and everything thus far in regard to it has been done by him and at his own expense. It is hoped, however, that the Jews of the City will promptly step forward and aid Mr. Samuels in his worthy efforts. So soon as the congregation is organized, the Cemetery will be dedicated and will assume the name of the Congregation.

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**Cemetery History Continued  
by Joel Newman (2003)**

### **SINCE 1962...**

When Sam Baum retired as superintendent of the cemetery in 1962, George Axelrad assumed the position. He continued in the tradition of Sam Baum and saw to the maintenance of the cemetery and administered to the needs of the congregation with regard to the cemetery. There was no known special record keeping or charting of the cemetery at that time. The only records regarding deaths and burials were in the Minutes of Board of Trustee Meetings of Congregation B'nai Israel.

In 1967, Maxie Zachariah, a long time member of the congregation, a civil engineer by trade, took it upon himself to begin a history of the Congregation B'nai Israel Cemetery. He drew maps, which divided the cemetery into sections and designated plot numbers within each section. Meticulously, he traced back to the beginning, all those interred in the cemetery. He recorded his findings in a yellow spiral notebook in his own hand. First, he recorded by section and by plot number each of the names, noting both dates of birth and death. Upon completion of this phase, he made an alphabetical index, with a cross reference of the section and plot number. He also numbered all the pages so that the page number could also be cross-referenced.

In about 1972, Congregation B'nai Israel established a Cemetery Trust Fund. The Committee, David Shatz of Union City, Joe Lipschie, David Crane, George Axelrad and the Lindy Family, all of Jackson, set-up the Trust and administered it. It was hoped that the Trust would provide the opportunity for the cemetery to become self-sustaining. It did so in about 1995.

About 1975 David Crane took over as the Chairman of the Cemetery Committee (same as superintendent). Mr. Zachariah continued his record keeping until 1978 when he moved to Memphis. At that time all records were turned over to David Crane since 1978, David has maintained all of these records, kept them updated, and has supervised all of the activities related to the cemetery. The original yellow spiral notebook is currently in Mr. Crane's possession.

The entrance columns to the cemetery were torn down and completely rebuilt in 2000. In 2002, twenty flowering plum trees were planted around the front and side perimeters of the cemetery.

To ensure the accuracy of the records of Maxie Zacariah, David Crane and Joel Newman, current President of the Congregation, went to the cemetery,

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verified the records in the spiral notebook, and updated the records of people not listed in the notebook. We believe that the records now computerized are the most up-to-date and the most accurate in existence.

This commentary is being written in January of 2003 as part of a renewed effort to learn about the history of Congregation B'nai Israel—its beginning, its growth, its membership and its integration into the Jackson, Tennessee Community. Hopefully this will serve as the basis for researching all of these aspects. Those interred in this cemetery built the foundation upon which the Jewish Community was able to grow and flourish. As we learn more, it will serve as an inspiration for us to continue to their efforts and to contribute to the rich history of our community.

Joel Newman  
October, 2003



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**CEMETERY DEED**

The State of Tennessee }  
 Madison County } Parvency appeared before me  
 John Mageony Deputy Clerk of the County Court of  
 said County D. S. Lacy the Registrar to the attached  
 instrument, with whom I am personally acquainted  
 and who acknowledged that he executed said instru-  
 ment for the purposes therein contained.  
 Witness my hand, at office, this 22 day of Decr 1896  
 John Mageony D.C.

State of Tennessee }  
 Madison County } I, Robt. B. Lindsey Deputy Register  
 of said County do hereby certify that the foregoing  
 instrument which Deputy County Court Clerk Parvency  
 therein, was filed in my office for registration on  
 the 22nd day of December 1896, at 10<sup>o</sup> o'clock  
 A.M. and is noted in Note Book No 8 on page 45,  
 and was duly registered this day.  
 Witness my hand, at office, this 23rd day of Decr 1896.  
 Robt. B. Lindsey Deputy Register.

Hollywood Cemetery  
 To 2/3 Deed  
 Congregation B'nai Israel  
 Filed December 22, 1896

For and in consideration of  
 the sum of Two Hundred  
 and Seventy Five (\$225<sup>00</sup>) dollars,  
 paid and to be paid re-  
 hereinafter set out, the Holly-

wood Cemetery, a Corporation under the laws of  
 the State of Tennessee, do by these presents sell  
 transfer and convey unto Congregation B'nai Israel  
 of Jackson Tenn., a corporation under the laws of  
 the State of Tennessee, for the purposes hereinafter  
 set out, the following lot of ground, lying in the  
 15th Civil District Madison County Tennessee, and  
 being a part of the Hollywood Cemetery grounds North  
 west of Jackson Tennessee as bounded as follows:

Begins at a stake on the Poplar Corner  
 Road and runs in a North westerly direction with the  
 East side of said Road Three Hundred (300) feet to  
 Rosens corner: then in a North easterly direction with  
 Rosens line Three Hundred (300) feet to a stake: then  
 South Three Hundred (300) feet to a stake: then in  
 South westerly direction Three Hundred (300) feet to the  
 beginning.

To have and to hold the same to the said B'nai  
 Israel Congregation forever.

The Hollywood Cemetery covenants with said B'nai  
 Israel Congregation that it is lawfully seized of said  
 land, have a good right to convey it, and that it  
 will warrant and defend the title to the same against

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the lawful claims of all persons, whomsoever.  
 This conveyance is made to said B'nai Israel Congregation, for said Congregation's use, and benefit as a burial ground for its dead, which the parties all agree shall not be used for any other purpose but as a burial ground, and what is necessary and incident to such, and in case it shall be diverted from said cause the title to revert to the grantor.

The consideration of \$225.00 is paid as follows: One fourth cash, the receipt of which is acknowledged. The balance due is payable in 3, 6 and 9 months, for which the Congregation B'nai Israel has given its notes. A lien being retained on the land for their payment. The notes not to draw interest until after due.

In Witness Whereof the Hollywood Cemetery has caused its name to be hereunto attached by its President, and attested by its Secretary.

This Nov. 30, 1896.

M. J. Neely, Pres't  
 C. E. Griffith, Sec'y.

The State of Tennessee }  
 Madison County } Personally appeared before me John Mageoney Deputy Clerk of the County Court of said County M. J. Neely, Pres't and C. E. Griffith, Sec'y the bargainor to the attached instrument, with whom I am personally acquainted and who acknowledged that he executed said instrument for the purposes therein contained.

Witness my hand, at office, this 30<sup>th</sup> day of Nov. 1896  
 John Mageoney D.C.

State of Tennessee }  
 Madison County } I, Robt B Lindsey Deputy Register of said County, do hereby certify that the foregoing instrument, with Deputy County Court Clerk's certificate thereon, was filed in my office for registration on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of Decr 1896, at 2 o'clock P.M. and so noted in Note Book No 8 on page 45, and was duly registered this day.

Witness my hand at office, this 23<sup>rd</sup> of Decr 1896.  
 Robt. B. Lindsey Deputy Register.

17631 The Farmers Building 4d Savings & Loan Assoc to 3 Released O. W. R. 1, 1, 1, 1	Release of Mortgage Deed. On the 5 <sup>th</sup> day of February 1892 a mortgage deed was executed. O. W. R. 1, 1, 1, 1
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