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A TALE OF TWO SYNAGOGUES: CULTURE, CONFLICT AND CONSOLIDATION IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF SAINT JOHN, 1906-1919

> If you think the gap in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* between the Capulets and the Montagues was greater, you are mistaken. There was no gap greater than that between the *shuls*.[1]

The rupture which occurred in the Jewish community of Saint John, New Brunswick, in the fall of 1906 is an example of the difficulties which arose in many communities when Jews of different ethnic and national origins were compelled by circumstance to co-exist as one community during the formative years of settlement in a new environment. Cultural, linguistic and economic differences between the groups worked against an easy collaboration, with fragmentation and mutual animosity often the result.

The early Jewish communities of Montreal and Toronto began as single communities under a single synagogue, much as Saint John. The ethnic, cultural, social and economic divisions which developed over time in these larger urban areas eventually served to divide these communities into several groups with different priorities and beliefs. These divisions tended to solidify and become ingrained as city and community continued to expand. We find a vastly different experience of community, however, in the Jewish colonies that emerged in smaller Canadian cities after

1900 such as Glace Bay, Moncton, Kingston and Lethbridge. These small-town Jews put aside most conflicts and worked together out of necessity in order to survive as Jews without the critical numbers and communal structures of the larger Jewish centres. The static, gradual nature of the small town fostered a communalism unheard of in the larger cities.

The Jewish community of Saint John does not fit precisely either model of community development. The history of the community's formation exhibits traits of both large and small-town Jews. The split into Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. Synagogue and Hazen Ave. Synagogues in 1907 follows the trend of the large Jewish centres towards increasing divergence of the various Jewish groups in the wake of immigration and the resulting conflicts. In Saint John, however, the community had in just over a decade begun to move towards the alternate model of small-town Jewry. This is most evident by the subsequent reunification of the two estranged synagogues into a single, unified *shul*, the current Congregation Shaarei Zedek, in 1918-19.

What situation did the Jews of Saint John find themselves in that would compel both groups to abandon almost two decades of animosity and work together as one community? In this investigation of the formative period of Saint John Jewry, the origins and character of both groups will be examined and the initial split will be explored with reference to other early Jewish centres in Canada. The circumstances that led to the reunification of the two synagogues will be reconstructed from the limited primary information available on the period and in light of the experiences of small-town Jewry in Canada. The story of Saint John Jewry is a portrait of a Canadian Jewish experience somewhat different from that of most large and small-town Jewish communities in Canada.

I

The Jewish community of Saint John dates from the arrival of the first permanent settlers, Solomon and Alice Hart, from England by way of New York, arriving in Saint John in 1858. A tobacconist

by trade, Solomon established a tobacco shop in Saint John, and within a year had done well enough to attract his brother-in-law, Nathan Green, also a tobacconist, who was residing in New York.[2] The year 1878 saw the arrival in town of the Isaacs brothers, Abraham and Israel, also from England and in the same line of work as their predecessors. With the marriage of Louis, son of Nathan Green, to Elizabeth Hart (daughter of Solomon and his late first wife) in 1882, and the subsequent marriage of the brothers Isaacs to two more Hart daughters, Saint John had the nucleus of a community,[3] the first significant Jewish community in the Maritimes.[4]

Subsequent Jewish immigration to the city swelled the ranks of the city's Jews beyond the core of the Hart-Green-Isaacs family. These immigrants were in the main from Western and Central Europe: England, Germany and Poland. Such names as Jacobson, Boyaner, Poyas, Brager, Corber, Komiensky, Shane, and Landau joined those who came before in forming a viable Jewish community,[5] and the attainment of community status was symbolised by the foundation of the Ahavith Achim (Brotherly Love) Society in 1896 and by the dedication of the Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. Synagogue in 1899.[6]

By the turn of the century, the original members of Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. Synagogue were well-established in Saint John, both socially and economically. Engaged primarily in small business, many of the more recent arrivals were soon to approach the social and economic status of the Hart-Green-Isaacs families. Relatively prosperous, the original Jews of Saint John sought acceptance into the greater community of Saint John. Seeing themselves primarily as British subjects, they attempted to strike a balance between remaining faithful to the Law of Jewish Orthodoxy and conforming to the prevailing standards of British-Canadian society, as the dedication notice of Ahavith Achim/ Carleton St. reveals:

> We are particularly pleased to observe that the Mayor of Saint John and other leading citizens of other religions were present at the dedication proving, thereby, their sympathy with our brethren

> and the respect which the Jews of our city are held by their fellow citizens.[7]

In terms of religion, the social acculturation practised in daily life was reflected in the type of services which were conducted in Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. The idea of introducing decorum and order to the so-called anarchy of the traditional Orthodox service, where people walked about or drowned out the Cantor with their arguments had, according to Stephen Speisman, evolved from the German Reform movement and found its way into the British practice of Orthodoxy.[8] The services of Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. reflected this trend of English Jewry of the era towards a more proper, dignified "Presbyterian-like" conduct during services while still remaining Orthodox, albeit with some English prayers and an English sermon. Ben Kayfetz described this pattern of belief as ". . . an orthodoxy native and in harmony with its environment."[9]

Until the end of the 1880s, the majority of Jewish immigrants to British North America were mainly of British and German origin, with the exception of an eastern European Jewish presence in Montreal, much as were the original Jewish settlers in Saint John.[10] The German-Jewish element in Canada did not have anywhere near the impact that it had in the United States. American Jewry was dominated by German Jews until 1900, and this faciliated a movement to Reform Judaism. The overhaul of Orthodox Judaism represented by Reform was the dominant model of the American Synagogue by 1880. The American Jew with his or her governing sense of being Americans before Jews was a very different person than his or her cousin in British North America.[11] The Jewish community of Canada was not so influenced by its smaller group of German Jews. The most significant Jewish component in both Toronto and Montreal Jewry was of either British origin or orientation and strictly Orthodox in their religion. The original Jews of Toronto looked to Britain for Rabbis and for their children's education, establishing themselves as part of the British and Loyalist order of the city.[12] While German Reform had some influence and adherents, especially in Montreal and Hamilton, the Jews of the large centres in Canada were basically true to

Orthodox practice until well after 1900. This orthodoxy did not prevent Canadian Jewry from adopting a British world view and ethos. The vestiges of monarchy and British institutions emphasizing ". . . peace, order and good government," were seen as protecting the distinctiveness of the Jews within Canadian society by the leading elements of the Jewish community, especially the Spanish and Portuguese establishment of Montreal headed by the influential de Solas.[13]

In his study of the Jewish community of Toronto, Stephen Speisman's usage of the term "Old Community" to denote those (primarily) English and German Jews who made up the original Jewish immigrants to Toronto with their British cultural background and outlook also aptly describes the original Anglo-Germanic Jewish inhabitants of Saint John, who shared the same mindset and values. The advent of the "New Community"[14] of Jews from the lands of Eastern Europe would soon change the character and composition of Saint John Jewry in ways which its founders had never anticipated.

II

The flow of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe into Canadian ports began as a stream in the 1890s, and became a veritable flood by 1905. Fleeing the mounting persecution of the authorities and of the non-Jewish population of Poland, Russia and the Ukraine as well as widespread famine and disease by 1900, these immigrants left Eastern Europe with little more than what they could carry. What funds they did possess were used to book passage from eastern ports bound for places such as Liverpool or Antwerp from where the final voyage was made, normally in appallingly crowded steerage conditions, to North America.

Saint John saw its share of these Jewish immigrants in its capacity as a winter port of entry. By 1896, the Jews of Saint John had established the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of Saint John, and published its consitution.[15] The Society was contemporary with immigrant aid efforts of the Baron de Hirsch Institute of Montreal,[16] and predated the United Hebrew Immigrant

Aid Society of New York (United HIAS) by twelve years. Its function was to give advice, shelter, food and clothing, and often monetary assistance to immigrants until they could establish themselves in Saint John or move on to Montreal, Toronto or further West, as the majority of immigrants did.[17]

Those who remained in Saint John were mainly from Lithuania and elsewhere in the Russian Empire, most of the Lithuanians hailing from the same village of Dorbian.[18] The majority of these families ended up settling in a self-made ghetto in the North End of the city, whereas most of the earlier immigrants lived in the wealthier neighbourhoods uptown.[19] The North End ghetto was presumably an attempt to recreate the old *shtetl* framework of Eastern Europe, a situation common in other parts of Canada; in Kingston, for example, Jewish immigrants established two to three *shtetl* groups and recreated the homogeneous lifestyle they lived in Eastern Europe.[20]

This division of the community into its "uptown" and "downtown" elements was more than symbolic: It emphasized the real social and economic gap which separated the Old Community with its Anglo-Germanic roots from the New Russo-Lithuanian Community. While they were all Jews, the cultural differences between the more insular, Judeo-communal consciousness of the Eastern Europeans clashed with the British culture and class consciousness of the established families, especially that of the leading Hart-Green-Isaacs families. While the great families welcomed and helped the immigrants to establish themselves, they had little desire to associate with them socially, such was the gap separating the two groups.[21] This class division among uptown and downtown was mirrored in Montreal in the relations between the uptown Jews of Westmount and the downtown Jews of the St. Laurent (St. Lawrence) area. The wealthy "anglicized" Jews of Westmount were the definite leaders of the community, a fact not always appreciated by the poor immigrants who crowded into the tenements of the Main. In assisting the Eastern Europeans, the patricians of the community "... occasionally dispensed their help and advice with a condescension not untypical of Victorian society, but they dispensed it just the same."[22]

This divergence became most readily manifest in the one thing the two groups held in common—their Jewishness. As the New Community Jews came to attend services and prayer, their Orthodoxy came into conflict with the Old Community's more sedate interpretation of Orthodoxy. The stage was set for a conflict.

III

The exact details of the conflict in Saint John remain lost to the passage of time and the paucity of precise local records during the period in question. Oral testimonies and newspaper accounts, however, set into the context of the fragmentation of many other Jewish communities in Canada, allow us to reconstruct with a degree of certainty what actually occurred in Saint John.

As mentioned above, the divergence of the New Community immigrants from their old community cousins culturally, socially and economically was not unique to Saint John, but was present wherever both groups settled. In Toronto, the Old Community Jews had long been established when Eastern European Jews began to arrive in earnest a few years prior to 1900. In the Old Community *shul*, Holy Blossom, the gradual embracing of German-American Reformist ideas after 1900 caused a split between the Old Community and the New, which resulted in the polarization of the synagogue into opposing camps.[23] The New Community's conception of strict Orthodoxy had no room for the intrusion of outside elements into the service, such as prayer in English. They regarded such change as anathema, and definitely un-Orthodox, which they often castigated with the derogatory term *deitsh*. This term *deitsh* is used not simply in belittling the supposed German origins of the so-called assimilationists. It is according to Ben Kayfetz the description of an "attitude" of acculturation of Jews from many areas, not just from Germany. It applied in this sense to the Anglophile Jews of the Old Communities of Saint John, Toronto and Montreal as well.[24] According to Evelyn Kallen, the majority of Eastern European Jews followed a parallel strategy of "voluntary compartmentalization," whereby they kept separate

the public and private portions of their lives, interacting with the host society only as necessary, retreating to the comfortable realm of their orthodox world.[25]

To the Eastern European then, those who were *deitsh* were perceived at worst as assimilationist, at best not truly Orthodox. This attitude caused many Russo-Lithuanian Jews in Toronto to disassociate themselves from the *"Deitshische Shul,"* Holy Blossom, and to form into smaller, normally ethnically-based congregations often comprising members from one particular locale in the old country, and which often met over stores and in apartments, at least initially.[26] These were known as *shtibel shuls* (pl. *shtiblach*), or *landsmanshaft shuls*.[27]

By the fall of 1906 the Saint John Jewish Community, with a somewhat similar composition of Old Community Anglophiles and New Community Eastern European Jews as other communities, was experiencing many of the problems of her sister communities. The rigid Orthodoxy of the New Community would not allow them to accept passively the acculturated Orthodoxy of the old as genuine. The incessant arguments which erupted between the Russo-Lithuanians and the old community establishment over the conduct of services made a mockery of the "prim and proper" character with which Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. was founded. The incessant squabbling of the Yiddish-speaking *Litvaks* (slang from Jews from Lithuania),[28] combined with the class snobbery and condescension of the English-speakers,[29] served to make matters unbearable: They could not agree on anything.[30]

What must have been an uneasy state of co-operation had by 1906 degenerated to the point where the status quo could not be maintained much longer. Rabbi Samuel Rabinovitch, a learned and much respected man in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles,[31] had tried to placate both groups by holding traditional services on Friday evening and "reformed" services on Saturday morning.[32] As well, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services were similarly divided between traditional and acculturated observance.[33] This arrangement might have calmed the factions for a while, but the obvious differences between the old and new communities were becoming far too extensive to be contained in one building, as

newspaper accounts of the time reveal:

> It has been known for some time that the Hebrew Congregation which has assembled in the Carleton Street synagogue has not been a unit on certain matters . . . This division . . . was not on points of doctrine, as in this respect there was still unity, but certain other matters were not satisfactory. . . . There will be two congregations soon instead of one. Each will have a separate pastor. They will be distinct and separate from each other, though teaching the same doctrines.[34]

Matters came to a head when Louis Green bought out the mortgage of the bankrupt American Unitarian Church building, Hazen Avenue, on October 13, 1906 with a bid of $3000.00 to be paid by March of 1907.[35] The purchase was, according to Louis Green, "speculation, so as to hold it for the new body, who would shortly need it."[36] According to the press, there was no actual split at this time, but the "new congregation"—on whose behalf Green was acting—was obviously contemplating seceding when the opportunity to purchase the Unitarian property presented itself in June 1906.[37] This is confirmed by the existence of a set of blueprints which were prepared for a "Jewish Synagogue" by Mott, Myles & Chatwin Architects (MMC) of Saint John. These blueprints are of neither the Hazen Ave. building nor of the Ahavith Achim/Carleton St. building; thus, they were likely commissioned by the Louis Green faction in preparation for its separation in the immediate future.[38] These plans are for a larger, more elaborate synagogue than Ahavith Achim/Carleton St., which attests to the greater wealth of the leading Old Community families. The timely availability of the Unitarian Church building obviously made the process of disintegration that much more attractive, both financially and personally. The next mention in the press of the purchase came with the gala announcements of the "Hazen Avenue Temple Fair," which was held in December of 1906 at the York Theatre and was run by the women of the Daughters of Israel.[39] It seems that the Fair was held in order to raise the necessary amount to complete the mortgage arrangement.

It appears to have done so, allowing the new congregation to pay both the mortgage on time and for the extensive conversion work on the building for its transformation into a synagogue.[40]

The resplendent Hazen Avenue Synagogue was duly consecrated on February 28, 1907 with much fanfare. The Mayor of Saint John and many leading citizens attended, thus attesting to the elevated social standing of the members of the Congregation of the Hazen Ave. Synagogue. The same fanfare which greeted the foundation of the first synagogue of the Old Community also welcomed the opening of the second, and Rabbi Rabinovitch came over to serve as the first Rabbi.[41] The Russo-Lithuanians acquired their separateness, receding into the background and following their own definition of orthodoxy.[42]

The whole process of dissolution seems to have gone rather smoothly, the separation occurring over a period of time and not abruptly. Also striking is the fact that it was the Old Community families who left the synagogue which they founded in order to form another, thus defying the model established by most large Jewish centres, whereby the dissenting group was invariably the one forced or compelled to depart and form a new congregation.[43] The reasons why the Old Community Jews left Carleton St./ Ahavith Achim and did not push the Eastern Europeans out cannot be completely ascertained given the lack of precise records. However, the reasons may lie in an upper-class sense of responsibility for the immigrants' welfare as demonstrated previously, mixed with some degree of identification with their fellow Jews. Therefore, the Old Community, led by the Hart-Green-Isaacs families, took the *noblesse oblige* route and purchased a suitable structure as their new synagogue, leaving the older building to their co-religionists. In so doing, the Old Community Jews served to protect their reputation in the non-Jewish mainstream of Saint John society as being worthy of a place in "Christian" society as befitting their Anglophile nature.

IV

> The invisible gulf that separated the two (synagogues) was as originally great as it was mysterious[44]
>
> . . . We were always at knives' ends.[45]

As the above quotations imply, there was much animosity between the two *shuls* in the years following the rupture and initially not much interaction. The terms *Deitshishe Shul* and *Shtibel Shul* were constantly used in derogation by the New Community and the Old in reference to the other group.[46] The Hazen Ave. group held themselves above their poorer cousins, referring to them as being "rough,"[47] the "common people,"[48] the "working class;"[49] while they were known (mainly to themselves, one suspects) as the "cultured people,"[50] as hailing from the "right side of the tracks."[51] One member of the Community recalled that when she was a girl attending Hazen Ave. *shul*, she and her girlfriends would sneak over to Ahavith Achim and sit in the back row, watching them "yell" at each other, as their parents told them they did.[52]

The dividing line, however, between the two *shuls* was never hard and fast. Some families crossed over from Ahavith Achim to the Hazen Avenue synagogue, as they moved from the North End *shtetl* to the uptown, and some belonged to both.[53] The Daughters of Israel remained under the control of the same Old Community women who founded the Chapter in 1899 in the years after the rift.[54] But, according to minute books, ledgers and membership records, the organization was open to any woman of either congregation who could pay the membership fee and whose husband belonged to either *shul*. Although not many Ahavith Achim women joined in the years immediately after the schism, within five to ten years an increasing number of Ahavith Achim women did in fact enlist.[55] This points to a growing interaction between the women of both groups and the growing affluence and

consequent acculturation of the Russo-Lithuanians to Saint John and to Canadian society.

The functioning of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society in this time period was also a place of interaction between the two groups. The directors of the Society in 1906 were all soon-to-be members of Hazen Ave.[56] It seems that there was cooperation between the two *shuls* on immigrant aid on a fairly regular basis.[57] By 1917, when the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of Saint John was incorporated,[58] members of both synagogues were listed as its officers.[59] The First World War also brought the two *shuls* closer. The war effort caused both groups to rely on one another in looking after Jewish Servicemen who were in the City through the "Red Magen David" women's organization, and probably in the co-ordination and execution of relief efforts through the Wartime Relief Society.[60]

The increasing interaction and cooperation between the members of Ahavith Achim and Hazen Ave. synagogues in the years after the initial separation point to a growing feeling of *gemeinschaft* between the two *shuls*. The economic advancement of the Russo-Lithuanian Jews and their greater acculturation to the mainstream of Saint John society would facilitate this sense of *gemeinschaft* in reducing the cultural distance between the communities. This, combined with the greater interaction of the members of the next generation, who were not as interested in their parents' battles and biases and who knew each other socially through school and business, served to further solidify the developing sense of community. In recalling this period, one member of the community maintains that the "culture" of Hazen Ave. rubbed off on the Russo-Lithuanians as the latter became established in business, learned English and gradually emerged from the security of the North End *shtetl*; in short, that ". . . they bettered themselves." She also stated that it was the children of the immigrants who acclimated to Saint John society the quickest, thereby giving their parents a means of understanding and interacting with the host society which made their own adaptation that much easier.[61]

Thus, over time, the two groups came together socially. Then

came the institutional reconcilation. Although the recorded details are sparse, it is possible to offer a reconstruction of the events leading to unification of the communities. One thing is certain: The negotiations were delicate, as remembered by one witness to these events:

> With a master stroke of persuasion, diplomacy . . . good humour and some wit, (the two were) brought . . . together. The *Deitsh* gave up Hazen Ave and sold it to the School Board and the *Shtibel* gave up their *shul* and together they bought the Calvin Church, which we now occupy.[62]

Just as the Unitarian Church's availability sparked the original split between the Old and the New Communities, so the impending sale of the magnificent Calvin Presbyterian Church upon the amalgamation of its Congregation with that of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk in May or June of 1918 seems to have given similar impetus to the reunion of the Old and New Communities.[63] It was the group at Hazen Ave., under the presidency of William Webber, which apparently initiated discussions regarding the purchase of the Church from the Trustees of St. Andrew's.[64] The purchase must have been too substantial for one synagogue, no matter how affluent its members. Webber and his crowd then probably turned to the members of the other congregation. The purchase of the new building could have been no later than the fall of 1918, with ample time to remodel the building in time for its consecration as a synagogue on March 23, 1919.[65] The new body installed the ark of Hazen Ave. (*Oren Kodesh*) in the new synagogue,[66] sold the Hazen Ave. building to the Board of School Trustees,[67] and retained the smaller Ahavith Achim building as the Hebrew School (*Cheder*) and Auditorium.[68] In 1921 the new synagogue became incorporated as the Congregation Shaarei Zedek (Gates of Righteousness).[69]

Until this amalgamation, the Jewish community of Saint John had exhibited many of the characteristics of the large Canadian Jewish centres of Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg in terms of the composition and Anglophile outlook of the Old Community, the prevalent *shtetl* mindset of the New Community of Eastern

European Jews that was in sharp contrast to the Jewish establishment, and in the resulting "congregational splinterization."[70] The experience of Saint John Jewry was thus on the surface a microcosm of the experience of urban Jewry in Canada at that time.

The reunification of Saint John Jewry into a single community with a single synagogue after the WW I stands in defiance of the aforementioned model of large centre fragmentation. What changed in such a short period of time in order to bring the disparate groups back together? The growing level of interaction between members of the two communities in the years following the separation has been discussed above. On numerous levels, the Jews of Saint John came together through their organizations to work together for mutual benefit. This intense level of interaction whereby the majority of Jews in an urban centre could come to know one another regardless of socio-economic status is all but unheard of in large Jewish centres. *Landsmanshaften*, political and Zionist societies, *Yeshivoth*, Talmud Torah day schools, a Jewish press and countless other expressions of a growing Jewish society had proliferated in the large Jewish centres after 1900. Jews in these centres constituted what Gerald Tulchinsky terms a "critical mass," that is, Jews being present in significant numbers in all areas of urban life.[71]

Saint John, for its many similarities to the major Jewish centres in terms of community orientation and composition, was a city lagging far behind in terms of the economic growth rates of the major immigrant destinations. Much of the viability of a Jewish community in a particular urban centre is dependant on the social and economic growth or stagnation of that centre. While Saint John was in fact the third-largest city in Canada after Montreal and Toronto in 1871,[72] economic developments from the mid-1890s to the 1920s shifted Canada from an Central Eastern to a Central-Western axis. While the West rapidly expanded, the traditional economic centres of the East as represented by Saint John stalled, changing from hub to periphery in the space of a few years. Saint John became over a short period an environment much more like the mono-synagogue small town

than multi-*shul* Montreal, Toronto, or Winnipeg.[73]

Thus, Saint John gravitated towards the experiences of small Jewish communities. As mentioned above, the experience of the small-town Jew differs greatly from that of his or her cousin in the large Jewish centre. The modest number of Jew in these small comunities precluded the establishment of any sort of *shtetl*-like neighbourhood. The small-town Jew had to adapt rather quickly to living among and dealing with their non-Jewish neighbours, while at the same time maintaining and defending their Jewishness from the host culture and community.[74] Traditionally lacking the Jewish cultural and religious framework of the large centres, the life of small-town Jews is centred on the synagogue and the organizations that parallel it, such as B'nai Brith, Hadassah, etc. and later Zionist groups. In their study of the Jews of Atlantic Canada, Sheva Medjuck and Morty Lazar emphasize the centrality of the *shul* to keeping one's identity as a Jew in the face of the overwhelming "British uniculturalism" of Atlantic Canada.[75]

V

The Jewish community of Saint John, Old and New, thus reunited as Congregation Shaarei Zedek, could count on a membership of approximately eight hundred and fifty persons.[76] With such a sizable, enterprising membership base to draw upon, the community quickly flourished. This prosperity is manifest in the establishment of branches of the Y.M.H.A., B'nai Brith, Hadassah, Young Judea, and JIAS[77] in the years after 1919. This renaissance of community organization demonstrates decisively the near total integration of the New Community with the Old Community Jews into one *relatively* harmonious and integrated community within a very few years. It would be naive to assume that all the old rivalries and divisions ceased to exist following reunification. It seems that the former luminaries of Hazen Ave. remained the social élite of the New Community, but their ranks were in time swelled by a number of Russo-Lithuanian families whose status in business would rival that of the established families.

The initial Jewish settlement of Saint John, New Brunswick

and subsequent community development closely parallels on a smaller scale the development of the main Jewish centres of Montreal and Toronto. The Anglophile nature and composition of the early settlers in the three cities gave rise to an Old Community establishment that found itself in conflict with the attitudes and beliefs of the New Community Jews from Eastern Europe. The economic decline of Saint John and the Maritimes in general, however, changed the nature of Saint John and had an effect on the attitudes of the two Jewish communities. The stagnation of the population and economy apparent by the First World War, combined with an increasing cooperation on both a personal and institutional level brought the Jews of Saint John closer to the small-town *gemeinschaft* model. Saint John Jews found a community of interest, joining together to achieve a greater prosperity than was possible separately. The formation of Shaarei Zedek heralded the "golden age" of Saint John Jewry in the 1920-1950 period. Saint John had most of the institutional trappings of large Jewish centres, while maintaining a sense of *gemeinschaft.* In exhibiting the characteristics of both large urban Jewish communities and small-town Jewry, Saint John is thus an instructive case study in the history of Canadian Jews.

ENDNOTES

[1] *Shuls* is the Yiddish term meaning synagogues. The quote is from Benjamin (Ben) Guss, Q.C., interview with Marcia Koven. All interviews by Marcia Koven are from the oral history collection of the Saint John Jewish Historical Museum Archives.

[2] Marcia Koven, *Weaving the Past into the Present* (Saint John, 1989), pp. 2-3.

[3] Eli Boyaner, "The Settlement and Development of the Jewish Community of Saint John," *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* 15 (1959): 81-82.

[4] Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto, 1992), p. 85.

[5] Boyaner, "Settlement and Development," p. 83.

[6] Arthur D. Hart, ed., *The Jew in Canada* (Toronto, 1926), p. 164. The *Globe*, Saint John, and the *Jewish Times*, Montreal, both refer to the Synagogue as Carleton St., not as Ahavith Achim. It seems that this name was mainly used in reference to the Ahavith Achim Society, the corporation which owned the

Synagogue and Cemetery plot, and not for the synagogue itself.

[7] *Jewish Times*, Feb. 3, 1899.

[8] Stephen A. Speisman, *Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (Toronto, 1979), p. 41.

[9] Ben Kayfetz, "The Evolution of the Jewish Community of Toronto," in Albert Rose, ed., *A People and its Faith* (Toronto, 1959), p. 27.

[10] Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, p. 93.

[11] Gerald Tulchinsky, "The Contours of Canadian Jewish History," in Robert J. Brym, William Shaffir and Morton Weinfeld, eds., *The Jews in Canada* (Toronto, 1993), pp. 11-12.

[12] Kayfetz, "Evolution," p. 19.

[13] Ibid., pp. 12-13, Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, p. 59.

[14] Speisman, *Jews of Toronto*, p. 69.

[15] Joseph Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving: The Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada (1760-1960)* (Montreal, 1962), p. 52. According to B.G. Sack, "This was the first organization of its kind in Canada to consider its work more of a social duty than a philanthropic enterprise," from his *History of the Jews in Canada*, v.1, (Montreal, 1945), p. 229.

[16] Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving*, p. 50.

[17] Boyaner, "Settlement and Development," p. 84.

[18] Koven, *Weaving the Past*, pp. 5-6. The entire initial group of Jewish immigrants to Moncton, N.B. were also from Dorbian. See Sheva Medjuck and Morty Lazar, "Existence on the Fringe: The Jews of Atlantic Canada," in M. Weinfeld, W. Shaffir, and I. Cotler, eds., *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic* (Toronto, 1981), p. 250.

[19] Ibid., p. 7.

[20] By 1908, the groups had united to form a community.

[21] Personal interviews, Julia Isaacs and Bella Hamberg.

[22] Erna Paris, *Jews: An Account of their Experience in Canada* (Toronto, 1980), p. 30.

[23] Speisman, *Jews of Toronto*, p. 47.

[24] Kayfetz, "Evolution," p. 17.

[25] Evelyn Kallen, *Spanning the Generations: A Study in Jewish Identity* (Don Mills, 1977), p. 46.

[26] Ibid, p. 104.

[27] Ibid., p. 102. *Landsmanshaften*, or *Landsmanshaft shuls*, denoted a relationship of mutual aid functions to the synagogue which served men who hailed from the same village or area. There also existed in Toronto sick benefit societies and *hilfsfarein* (relief societies) formed along the same lines. See Kayfetz, "Evolution," p. 23.

[28] Harry Cohen, interview with Marcia Koven.

[29] Sam Jacobson, interview with Marcia Koven.

[30] Nathan Lipshetz, interview with Marcia Koven.

[31] *Globe*, Nov. 7, 1903 and Mar. 21, 1905.

[32] "Reformed" as in altered Orthodox, not as in the Reform Movement. Ibid., Oct. 30, 1903 and Saint John *Star*, Oct. 30, 1903.

[33] *Globe*, Sept. 9 and Sept. 17, 1904.

[34] "Unitarian Church Sold at Auction," Ibid., Oct. 13, 1906.

[35] Mortgage No. 79335 - Louis Green et eux to John W. Michaelson's Trustees, Nov. 28, 1906, Registry of Deeds, Province of New Brunswick.

[36] *Globe*, Oct. 13, 1906.

[37] "Church will be sold," Ibid., Jun.11, 1906.

[38] Interview with Bob Boyce, MMC Architects, Ltd., Saint John, N.B., 1991.

[39] Daughters of Israel membership lists, Saint John Jewish Historical Museum Archives; *Globe*, Dec. 10, 1906.

[40] *Globe*, Feb. 28, 1907.

[41] Ibid., Mar. 1, 1907.

[42] Eli Zebberman, interview with Marcia Koven.

[43] Speisman, *Jews of Toronto*, pp. 102-3. Speisman gives numerous examples of the formation of small *landsmanshaften* as a result of disagreements between groups, primarily over Orthodoxy and conduct of service.

[44] Ben Guss, interview with Marcia Koven.

[45] Sam Jacobson, interview with Marcia Koven.

[46] Personal interview, Bella Hamberg; Nathan Lipshetz, Ben Guss, interviews with Marcia Koven.

[47] Adah Amdur Siegal, interview with Marcia Koven.

[48] David Goldman, interview with Marcia Koven.

[49] Nathan Lipshetz, interview with Marcia Koven.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Carl Bassen, interview with Marcia Koven.

[52] Bertie Elman (Boyaner), interview with Marcia Koven.

[53] Ben Guss, interview with Marcia Koven. This is similar to the example of Holy Blossom in Toronto, where the more affluent members of the "Litvak Shul," Goel Tzedec, belonged to Holy Blossom as well. See Speisman, *Jews of Toronto*, p. 99.

[54] Daughters of Israel membership lists.

[55] Daughters of Israel membership lists, Minute Books and Ledgers.

[56] *Saint John Star*, Oct. 17, 1903, *Globe*, Oct. 18, 1903, Dec.3, 1904.

[57] Daughters of Israel minute book and ledgers.

[58] Simon Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates: A Review of Jewish Immigration, Colonization and Immigrant Aid Work in Canada, (1840-1940)*, (Montreal, 1966), p. 88.

[59] Letters Patent Incorporating "The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of Saint John," 1917, Corporate and Trust Affairs, Province of New Brunswick.

[60] Koven, *Weaving the Past*, p. 36.

[61] Bertie Elman, interview with Marcia Koven.

[62] Ben Guss, interview with Marcia Koven.

[63] *Saint Andrew's Kirk, Saint John, N.B.: 1784-1959* (Toronto, 1959), p. 52.

[64]All the records are under Webber's name. City of Saint John Property Assessment Records, 1918-1923, Kings Ward, pp. 44,49,56; Deed No. 98053 - St. Andrew's Church to Hazen Avenue Synagogue, Nov. 8, 1919, Registry of Deeds, Province of New Brunswick; *Globe*, Mar. 21 and 24, 1919.

[65] "Dedication of New Synagogue," *Globe*, Mar. 24, 1919.

[66] Hyman Rozovsky, interview with Marcia Koven. The ark of Hazen Ave. was constructed by the woodworking firm of Scott & Lawton, the first such structure to be built in the region. *Globe*, Feb. 28, 1907, p. 10. The ark survives to the present day.

[67] The building, which was used as an annex of Saint John High School, was demolished with the old High School in 1932. City of Saint John Property Assessment Records: (1) 1918-1923, Kings Ward, p. 49; (2) 1926-1935, Kings Ward, p. 45; City of Saint John Directory, 1922; Hyman Rozovsky, interview with Marcia Koven.

[68] Boyaner, "Settlement and Development," p. 85.

[69] Corporate and Trust Affairs, Province of New Brunswick.

[70]The phrase is from Kayfetz, "Evolution," p. 27.

[71] Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, p. 160.

[72] Ibid., p. 85.

[73] This stagnation is evident in comparing Saint John and Winnipeg in this period. While the Jewish population of Saint John doubled between 1900-1911, that of Winnipeg grew by 800 percent. The city's general population increasing by 300 percent in the same period while Saint John stayed almost level. Ibid., pp. 159-160 and 163.

[74] Ibid., p. 160.

[75] Medjuck and Lazar, "Existence on the Fringe," pp. 242-244; Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, p. 160.

[76] Hart, *Jew in Canada*, p. 469.

[77] Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada, founded by the Canadian Jewish Congress on June 23, 1920. The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of Saint John was later incorporated into JIAS; see Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving*, p. 69.