

# Adventures in America and the Holy Land

JULIUS C. KERMAN

*The Reform rabbinate has never been uniform in its view of Jewish life, its attitude to Zionism, its sense of Jewish communalism, or anything else! Rabbi Kerman, the author of this memoir, is testimony to Reform rabbinical diversity.*

*A native of Pinsk, Byelorussia, Kerman was eighteen when he immigrated to the United States in 1913. Ordained a rabbi at the Hebrew Union College in 1928, he went on to serve congregations in the East, the Midwest, the Southwest, and the South.*

*The following pages offer excerpts from Rabbi Kerman's autobiography "The Story of My Life," a manuscript deposited with the American Jewish Archives.*

I landed in New York City on September 13, 1913, after a pleasant sea voyage which lasted two weeks. For several months I roomed with my friend Philip [Feldman, with whom I had begun first grade at "Dronzik's School" in Pinsk]. My first two jobs did not even pay for my food and I was expected to work seven days a week. I dropped them both. But I was intoxicated with America and its freedom. On my way to and from work I passed several policemen who paid not the slightest attention to me. They did not care who I was and where I lived, what I did and where I went. I definitely liked them. I had no passport and didn't need any. Frequently I wanted to cry out, "Hurrah, I am a free man!"

My third job was a definite improvement on the first two which had been in dark, dusty basements. This one was in a shirt factory. I folded shirts in a spacious loft with many windows; it was a bright and sunny place. My pay was \$5 a week which was more than I had received before. Most of the workers were young women, German Catholics, as I learned later. There were a few Jewish boys also. It was an English-speaking shop, which I particularly liked. In the first two shops Yiddish was spoken, and I was anxious to learn English.



Rabbi Julius Kerman



At my table three girls were working. They were all older than me. They spoke to me, and I replied as best I could. Sometimes they used slang and laughed; I tried hard to conceal my embarrassment and was too bashful to ask the meaning of the words. My vis-à-vis neighbor had very attractive features and never used any make-up. Older than me, she had graduated from a parochial school. Once she asked me, "Julius, will you let me lie under your apple tree?" I answered quite simply: "I live in a rented room and don't have an apple tree." The girls around the table laughed uproariously. I must have looked very sheepish. Another girl from the other end of the loft said to me, "Julius, take me out some evening." "I have no money for that," I told her. "I'll pay all the expenses," she said. "I can't agree to that," was my firm reply.

I devoted all my free time to the study of English. Several evenings a week I went to night school, which I found very helpful. I was promoted to the shipping department and given a raise. I was happy and planned to save a little money for a suit and shoes which I needed badly. But, after a couple of months, I had to go to Mount Sinai Hospital for a hernia operation. Since I was not yet of age, I needed my father's or a guardian's signature. I said that I had no relatives in America. My own signature was accepted. When I was discharged, two weeks after the operation, I was asked, "Where are you going for recuperation?" "To the people with whom I room." "Are they related to you?" "No." "How would you like to spend two weeks in the country?" "Oh, I have no money for that." I was assured that I did not need to worry about that. Since then I have always thought with gratitude about Mount Sinai Hospital and of the resort where I spent two very happy weeks and regained my strength.

When I returned to my room, I learned that my landlady had worried about me and that many other people on the block had shared her concern. A friend said to me, "You have no business working in a factory and dragging heavy cases. With your knowledge of Hebrew you can teach Hebrew here as you did at home." The first Hebrew school principal—a well-known educator—whom I went to see hired me after a short interview about my previous experience. "But you look so young," he remarked. "This is a girls' school. You'll have some pupils near your age and as big as you are." He advised me to raise a mustache, which I did for a few weeks.

At that time I knew nothing about educational psychology. I had not even heard of the subject. I had had no course in class management. The university was still a distant dream to me, tucked away in the back of my mind. But I loved Hebrew and imparted that love to some of my pupils. The school had eight or nine teachers. Every Friday afternoon we had teachers' meetings. I could tell that the principal, Mr. [Kalman?] Whiteman, was pleased with my work. Once I was absent from a meeting. A couple of days later I met one of the teachers. "You should be sorry you were not at the last meeting," he told me. "Mr. Whiteman told us, 'I wish all of you knew as much Hebrew as Kerman does.'" "On the contrary, I am glad," I answered. "If I had been there, he would not have said it."

In the summer of 1916 all Hebrew schools closed because of an epidemic. I left for St. Louis, where I had an uncle whose favorite nephew I was. I worked in his grocery store and saved my money. The following year, in 1917, I enrolled at the University of Missouri in the School of Agriculture. My plan was to settle in Palestine after graduation.

### **Into The Mississippi?**

The first Saturday night I was taken by my roommate, an ardent Zionist like myself, to the meeting of the Menorah Society. The speaker was Professor Charles Elwood, a noted psychologist and head of the department of psychology. The substance of his talk was that, if the Jewish people were a nation of prophets, they would justify their separate existence, but, as merchants they did not do so. The students were impressed and awed. They began asking questions: "Professor, what shall we do?" "How shall we live?" I got up and said, "No person and no ethnic group has to apologize for living. They have a right to live because they were born. The ancient Hebrews were not a nation of prophets. The prophets were a small group of inspired individuals. Since we are not prophets, does the speaker expect us to jump into the Mississippi?" I read consternation on many faces. When we walked out of the building, two students confronted me and asked me angrily, "Do you realize whom you were contradicting?" My roommate defended me: "Kerman has a right to state his opinion." "Of course," one of them conceded, "but as a freshman who has been here only one week, he should be seen and not heard."

I organized the student Poalei Zion Society. It became quite a popular and active group. Several townspeople who had been Poalei Zionists in the past joined and offered us their homes for meetings. They always served refreshments afterwards, which added to the popularity of the group. But the posters on the campus, which announced our meetings, were regularly torn down. I suspected my two chastisers. They were Isidor Lubin, a graduate student in economics, who years later became a consultant of the Jewish Agency, and Nathan Glaser, a senior in sociology, who became a professor of sociology and whose pro-Zionist articles I later read occasionally.

Professor Jesse E. Wrench, head of the history department, was an odd but popular person on the campus. Because of his initials, I used to refer to him as "Jew" Wrench. He visited the barber only rarely. He was past middle age, married, and the father of a cute little girl of eight or nine. He loved the company of students and treated them as equals. He rented out a couple of rooms to students. In my time these lodgers were Jews and friends of my roommate. I frequently accompanied him when he went to visit them. That is how I became closely acquainted with Professor Wrench. He always tried to convince me that Zionism was an illusion. "History," he would argue, "is against the Zionist ideal." I countered with, "That depends on how one interprets history." Privately he said to me, "When you have no speaker, invite me. I won't speak against Zionism. Personally I am not against the Zionist ideal." I don't remember whether I ever invited him to our Zionist meetings or not. At the beginning of the second semester he posted on the bulletin board a list of topics for semester papers. When he met me in the hall, he told me: "Add two or three Jewish topics to my list." I felt flattered and did so. One topic, I remember, was something like this: "Palestine's Suitability for a Modern Jewish Homeland." One Jewish student picked this topic, and Professor Wrench sent him to me for material—"This is Kerman's topic."

It was the night of November 3, 1917. It was very cold and heavy snow lay on the ground. Persistent knocking on the door awakened me from a deep sleep. I switched on the light. It was three o'clock. "Who could this be?" I mumbled to my roommate, who was now also awake. I opened the door. Framed in the doorway stood Professor Wrench. His feet were stuck into deep boots, and over his pajamas he had on an overcoat. "Boys," he said, as soon as he had

sat down, "I have wonderful news for you. I just read in the *Kansas City Star* that Great Britain has issued a statement today promising to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine." "Is that the complete statement?" I asked. "No, he replied, "but that is the gist of it." "I would like to read the entire statement," I said.

My roommate and I dressed quickly and all three of us walked over to the Missouri Union, turned on all the lights, spread out the *Kansas City papers*, and with the professor's aid easily found the item, dated November 2; it became known as the Balfour Declaration. The electrifying news, the cold air, made us wide awake. We returned to our room and talked excitedly for a couple of hours. This I remember vividly: the professor asked me, "Julius, what are you going to do now?" Unhesitatingly I answered, "If a Jewish military unit to fight in Palestine were organized now, I would enlist at once."

When I enrolled in the university, I had \$300 that I had saved up. To stretch my savings, I delivered the university paper, *The Missourian*; this yielded me about \$3 a week. Occasionally I would do some odd job. One day Dr. Granville D. Edwards, the dean of the Bible College [later renamed the Missouri School of Religion], who was in charge of the dormitory in which I roomed, came in to examine the door lock, about which I had complained. A Hebrew magazine on my desk caught his attention; he opened it. "Can you read this?" he asked. When I answered in the affirmative, he asked me to read a few lines, which I did. "I can't read that well," he admitted. "Do you know Hebrew?" I asked. "I have a Ph.D. in Hebrew from Harvard," he answered. With some pride he recited [the opening words of Genesis]: "*B'reishith barah Elohim et hashomayim v'et ha-aretz.*" He continued, "We'll be able to use you in our Bible College. In a couple of weeks Dr. [Alva] Taylor, our professor of Hebrew, will leave us. You can have his chair." I was elated: I wouldn't have to peddle papers any more. A couple of weeks later I stopped in his office and said, "Dean Edwards, I want to remind you of our conversation in my room two weeks ago." "You can occupy Dr. Taylor's chair tomorrow. But we have a by-law in our constitution that any one, employed by us, must be a member of our church." "What exactly does that mean?" "It does not mean conversion or baptism. You only have to enroll

as a member; just sign your name.” “No, thank you,” I replied, “I’ll continue peddling papers.”

One morning, near the end of the year, as I was walking to the main building to take a final exam in English, I passed a newsstand. All the papers had big headlines: “Germans Occupy Pinsk.” What about my parents and my three brothers? The question stuck in my mind and would not leave me. I took my seat and read over the examination questions on the board without comprehending them. I wrote my name on the paper and not another word. The question about my parents and my brothers kept gnawing at my mind. I had not heard from them for a couple of years. Because of the war, most of my letters to them had been returned to me. I handed in a blank paper. A couple of days later I was called to the professor’s office. “What happened to you? You didn’t even try to answer a single question.” I explained. She looked very sympathetically at me. I was not worried. My scholastic standing, especially in English, was good. I’d worry about grades when I returned from the war alive. When I received my grades, I had B-plus in English. I joined the Jewish Legion of the British army.

### Jerusalem Out Of Bounds

The Jewish Legion’s first camp was in Nova Scotia, Canada. Most of the volunteers came from the United States, and quite a few were Canadians. From there we were moved to England. Our next stop was Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt, between Cairo and Alexandria. Here we were given a name: 40th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. The only Jewish insignia we wore was a blue *magen david* on our sleeves. Most of the military training was done here. It seemed we were being prepared for combat. One evening a visiting general addressed us: “Shortly you will join the 38th and 39th Jewish Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers who are bravely fighting the Turks.” Time passed and nothing happened. The boys were saying: “The politicians in London changed their minds about us. We have become a political football.” David Ben Gurion and Itzhak Ben Zvi, who later became prime minister and president of Israel, respectively, joined us here. If they knew more than we did, they were not communicative.

Finally we were moved to Sarafand, Palestine [west of Lydda].

Several Zionist colonies and the city of Tel Aviv, a little town then, were within walking distance. Here our battalion was split in two. One half was attached to the 38th Battalion which had been brought back from the Jordan Valley where it had been entrenched opposite the Turks and had been depleted by malaria and war casualties. Among those that joined the 38th Battalion was my good friend from St. Louis, Nehemiah Rabin, who, after demobilization, remained in Palestine and married there. His son, Yitzhak, was the architect and hero of the Six-Day War, subsequently Israel's ambassador to the United States, and then prime minister.

The rest of us became the 39th Battalion. We received a batch of new volunteers from the United States, but that was already after the armistice of November, 1918. These late arrivals were nicknamed the Tomashefskys, because the well-known actor and theatre owner Boris Tomashefsky, of New York, had treated them to a free show before their departure. The 40th Battalion was filled with all Palestinian volunteers, some of whom, like Moshe Shertok-Sharett, Levi Shkolnik-Eshkol, and others were later among the founders and leaders of the State of Israel. We were like a peace-time army, doing some military exercises and guard duty. In our free time we visited the nearby colonies and Tel Aviv, which we particularly enjoyed.

Major Hopkins appointed me instructor of Hebrew. The major, a non-Jew, advised me: "Don't use the old-fashioned method of translation." Raising the book he had in his hand, he said, "Zeh sefer." He gave me the book and added, "This is the first book in our Battalion Library, and I appoint you librarian. We'll get some money for books from the Jewish Welfare Board of America." That same afternoon many soldiers registered for the study of Hebrew, among them a couple of fanatical Yiddishists. I also taught Hebrew privately to two officers who offered to pay me, which I refused, saying that the time I gave them belonged to King George. The library grew. Wherever I went, I asked for books. I visited all writers; they proved very generous. When I was mustered out, the library had 3,000 volumes in Hebrew, English, and Yiddish, and a few in Russian. The library offered me much pleasure. Some readers of Hebrew came back for explanation of words which they could not understand. Because I was the librarian, I was offered promotion to sergeant, which I refused, saying that I wanted to remain everybody's equal.

I received a letter from Berl Katzenelson, the editor of the *Kuntres*, the forerunner of the daily *Davar*, asking me to describe life in the battalion. A few days later Katzenelson called on me in person and said, "I sent requests to every battalion, and I liked your answer best: it was brief, and gave a clear picture of life in the battalion. How would you like to join our staff as foreign editor: to read and write up foreign news for the *Kuntres*?" I told him that I could not accept his flattering invitation, because I planned to return to the United States to finish my studies.

The outstanding officers were Lieutenant Vladimir Jabotinsky and Colonel John Henry Patterson. Jabotinsky, the father of the Jewish Legion, was a man with many gifts. He was attached to the 38th Battalion. Colonel Patterson, commander of the 38th Battalion, was an admirer of Jabotinsky and helped him organize the Legion in London. He came to see me to inquire whether I could sell in our library some of the books about the Legion he had written. Casually he asked, "Will you remain in Palestine?" I told him, "I have to return to the States to finish my studies." He turned his back on me and walked away. "I don't want to talk to you," he threw over his shoulder. Patterson was an interesting person. In the evening of the seventh day of Passover, when the 38th Battalion gathered for the evening meal, Patterson stood up and delivered the following little talk: "Boys, you may think that, because I am a *goy*, I don't know the *law*. I *do* know the law. Our camp is outside the traditional boundaries of *Eretz Israel* [the Holy Land] and, according to tradition, eight days of Passover are celebrated here. In Sarafand, where the 37th Battalion is encamped tonight, it is already after Passover, and they are served leavened bread. *We'll* get leavened bread tomorrow."

Before Passover, orders came from GHQ that Jerusalem was out of bounds to Jewish troops. I was incensed, but kept my resentment to myself. My St. Louis friend, Nehemiah Rabin, of the 38th Battalion, came to visit me. I told him, "I am planning to visit Jerusalem during Passover in spite of the prohibition." "But what about a pass?" I showed him my book of signed passes. "This is a reward for my knowledge of Hebrew," I told him. "I'll go with you," he said. When we got off the train at the Jerusalem station, two M. P.'s stopped us. "Jerusalem is out of bounds to you chaps." We showed them our passes. "These passes are O. K., but we have orders which we must carry out," they said firmly. I said, "Listen, buddies, all

our lives we have been dreaming about the Holy City and the Western Wall, and now that we are here, should we be denied the privilege? What would you do if you were in our place?" They were silent a while, exchanged glances, and the N. C. O. said, "Go ahead, but keep out of our way."

### **Daniel Still Spoke Hebrew**

In October, 1919, I was mustered out of the army. I obtained a job teaching Hebrew in a town not far from St. Louis. About two years later I married Ethel Vogel, of St. Louis (who now, in 1974, has been my wife for more than fifty years). We settled in Kansas City, Mo., where I had been offered a more remunerative job. After receiving my college degree, I wrote to the Hebrew Union College, applying for admission to the rabbinical school. In my letter I mentioned that I would have to work in order to earn a living. A prompt and terse reply arrived: "Poor students are not encouraged to come." I was angry: Did they accept only sons of millionaires? I had worked my way through the academic college; why couldn't I do so while attending the rabbinical school? I tore up the letter and threw it away. I tried to put the rabbinate out of my mind, but it lingered in the back of my head.

I was offered the principalship of a large Hebrew school in St. Louis and cheerfully accepted. I loved my wife, her family, the city she came from, where I had spent several pleasant years and had many friends. I became acquainted with Dr. Samuel Sale, rabbi emeritus of Temple Shaare Emeth, the oldest Reform congregation in St. Louis. He asked me to read modern Hebrew with him, particularly *Ahad Haam* and *Bialik*. We met twice a week. After every session he would say to me, "You don't have to be a Hebrew teacher; you should be a rabbi." I told him of my experience with the Hebrew Union College. "Don't let that discourage you; try again. Don't write, go down and talk to Dr. Morgenstern. You'll find that he remembers you." He persuaded me. One Saturday evening in the fall of 1925 I took the train for Cincinnati and arrived there the following morning. Our son, Daniel, was seven months old, and he babbled a few Hebrew words. Hebrew was his first language. Remembering my unfortunate try of four years earlier, I entered Dr. Morgenstern's office, introduced myself, and mentioned that Dr. Sale had presented me to him when the rab-

binical conference was held in St. Louis. "I have a bachelor's degree," I told him. "Here is my diploma. I would like to enroll as a student of the college" "We want students like you," he replied graciously. I asked for advanced standing. "See the various professors, and whatever credit they give you, is yours."

I met Dr. Abraham Z. Idelsohn in the hall. I recognized him because I had seen his picture. I knew that he had been a teacher of music in Jerusalem. I addressed him in Hebrew, which pleased him. After a short conversation, he said to me, "I give you credit for all my courses." Dr. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, professor of Talmud, asked me to read and explain a page of the Mishnah. I was granted credit for that. Professor Henry Englander asked me to read the biblical commentaries of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radak. He was satisfied. He began quizzing me on Hebrew grammar. I answered all his questions satisfactorily. After my next answer, he exclaimed boyishly: "I knew I would catch you! You are wrong this time." He stated his opinion. I was neither frightened nor confused. Quoting a verse from Job, I explained that this verb had two roots, which made both of us right. He thought a while and said, "I accept your opinion. Why didn't you come here last year?" he asked. "What would have happened?" "I was sick a long time and you could have taught my classes." I thanked him for the compliment; I wanted to cry out, "You kept me out of here!" But he looked so gentle and honest that it was hard to believe that he had been the author of that bureaucratic letter I had received four years earlier. We often walked home together, and I found him to be a gentle and lovable person.

After two hours I reported to President Morgenstern. "I have to receive the official reports from the professors, but you may assume that you are already a student of the Hebrew Union College."

Since the college had no accommodations for students with families, we found a small apartment not far from the school and adjusted ourselves quickly to the life of a student. I soon started earning some money, almost enough to cover our living expenses. I tutored two fellow students who had difficulty with Hebrew. I read the Hebrew text for an elderly rabbi who was working on his D.D. I taught several children of a very wealthy family who paid very well. (This was on President Morgenstern's recommendation.) Every Sunday I taught Jewish history to an adult group at the

Bureau of Jewish Education. (This, too, paid very well.) My wife and I did translation work for the B'nai B'rith, which then had its main office in Cincinnati. We translated letters, pamphlets, and magazine articles from French, German, Hebrew, and Yiddish. Even Russian material came occasionally. We did all these translations at home and then returned them to the B'nai B'rith office. During two summer vacations that we spent in Cincinnati, I worked at the B'nai B'rith office full time. Adding up the annual scholarships that I received and the bi-weekly position that I had in Hamilton, Ohio, during my senior year, we knew no want.

My wife was more helpful than a part-time bread winner. Endowed with a keen sense of the English language, she made valuable linguistic suggestions in my written work. She had read German and French classics in the original. We also read Hebrew together, both the Bible and secular literature. Thus she developed a working Hebrew vocabulary. When Daniel was three months old, I suggested that we raise him on the Hebrew language. Doubtfully she said, "How can I teach him Hebrew if I don't know it myself?" "You know enough to make a start. In the evening I'll give you the names of a few objects in this room, which you'll teach him during the day. We'll regard this as an experiment."

Danny was a good sleeper. Put to bed at 6 P. M., he would sleep till 6 in the morning. He did not wake up crying, but instead would repeat to himself the Hebrew words he had heard during the previous day. "He is doing his home work now," I joked. We enjoyed it. When he had learned a couple of verbs, we heard him use verbal forms which he had not been taught. "The language is growing within him naturally," I said. "I think our experiment is succeeding." While teaching him, my wife learned to speak Hebrew.

During my second year, I used to carry him every Saturday morning to the college chapel for religious services. Seeing so many students milling around, he exclaimed, "Zoi, zoi, kamah anashim!" [What a lot of people!] The students looked at him with amazement. Prof. Samuel Cohon, a fine Hebraist, warned me, "Julius, you are making a mistake teaching your child Hebrew. He will never know English well." President Morgenstern said, "When the boy graduates high school, I want him here." I replied, "It will be up to him." Several years later, when I was already a functioning rabbi, Prof. Cohon surprised us with a visit. He dropped by the

house to inquire whether "Daniel still spoke Hebrew." I told him, "Even his little brother, David, speaks Hebrew now." Danny was about five years old when he learned to read Hebrew. He would sit on my lap, and I would teach him the Bible. No translation was used, because he already spoke Hebrew fluently. He also read children's Hebrew books. He grew up bilingually and graduated high school with honors at the age of sixteen. His younger brother, David, also had a good command of Hebrew and English.

My three years at the Hebrew Union College passed pleasantly. As the third and last year was drawing to an end, I began wondering what kind of community might be allotted to me. Prof. Lauterbach, who was friendly, recommended me to two congregations in the South. The reply was, "Under no circumstances would we consider a candidate who was born in Eastern Europe." Having been fortified by reading Sholem Aleichem about the attitude of German Jews toward the *Ostjuden*, I did not even react.

### Stay Home And Hear The Rabbi

In my forty-three years in the rabbinate I served several communities, enjoying everywhere happy relationships with young and old. The thought that I have influenced some persons to think and live more Jewishly makes me happy. Some became close and devoted friends from whom we hear often, either by mail or by telephone. As a civilian chaplain I regularly visited five air bases in Texas and New Mexico. Utilizing these visits, I organized five Jewish communities which I served regularly. I was nicknamed the "Bishop of the South Plains."

In Lubbock, Texas, I taught Hebrew to a small group of Christians—four Methodists and one Presbyterian, the latter a professor of biology at Texas Technological College. A Christian lady, a Methodist, had initiated the project. She had started coming regularly to Sabbath eve services. She acquired a *Union Prayer Book*, learned many of its prayers by heart, and used them in devotionals at the ladies' meetings of her church. Once she said to me, "Now that I know your English prayers, which are beautiful, I'd like to learn them in Hebrew." I told her, "I won't give you private lessons, but if you organize a little group, I'll be glad to teach them." They came to our house every Saturday afternoon

and in three months they learned to read Hebrew and had already begun to read the Hebrew Bible. They were in the holiday mood and said, "The Bible in Hebrew tastes altogether different!" This continued as long as we were in Lubbock. When it became known that I had accepted a new post, the leader of the group said to me, "I want to be the last one to speak with you when you leave." I objected, "You'll have to get up too early; we plan to leave at 5 A. M." At 5 o'clock in the morning our telephone rang; after wishing us good luck in our new post, she added: "You ministers are terrible: You come to a town, make friends, and suddenly you leave, and you don't care how many hearts you break."

In Lubbock, I started to speak on the radio and continued to broadcast regularly wherever I served until I retired from the rabinate. I received "fan mail" from various communities in Texas and New Mexico. When I preached on the Twenty-third Psalm, I received sixteen requests for copies from a Presbyterian church. A very prominent Episcopal woman in Lubbock was asked why she had been absent from church a number of times. She answered, "Why should I go to church to listen to our preacher? I can stay home and hear the rabbi."

My last post was Jamestown, N. Y., seventy miles from Buffalo, where our son Daniel is rabbi of Temple Beth Am. In Jamestown, instead of taking it easy, as I had hoped to do, I was busier than ever before. Unable to say no, I spoke in nearly every church in town, in some more than once, and in several out-of-town churches. Public school and church school teachers, including those of Catholic schools, brought their pupils to see the temple and to listen to explanations of Judaism. As a result I received many requests for copies of my radio talks.

One evening in July, 1959, the chaperone of the Chautauqua Junior Orchestra called up to ask "whether two Jewish young ladies—members of the Junior Orchestra, Barbara Wolfson of Temple Beth Zion, and Betty Shine of Temple Beth Am of Buffalo, may attend your Sabbath eve services." "Of course, they may, but it is only a brief service, lasting only fifteen minutes; it is conducted by a layman and there is no sermon. It is hardly worthwhile traveling fifteen miles each way." "Well, then," she asked, "would you come to Chautauqua Saturday morning?" "Since I don't have services in Jamestown on Saturday morning, I'll be glad to come to Chautauqua at 10 o'clock." The lady was pleased. It was a

lovely July morning. Taking twelve copies of the *Union Prayer Book* with us, my wife and I drove into Chautauqua Institution and reported as directed to the Hall of Missions. About thirty-five young people waited for us. Among them was a fine young cantor and his wife, an excellent choir director. The place looked inviting. There were lovely flowers on the pulpit, provided by the mission ladies in charge of the hall. We felt at home, and the services were well received. Services followed on subsequent Saturday mornings; the number of worshipers increased from week to week, until we were cramped for space. I looked for a larger place but found none.

One Saturday morning we were told that Judge W. Walter Braham, the president of Chautauqua Institution, did not approve of our services and that the Hall of Missions was no longer available to us. I promptly called on the president. He told me, "This is a Christian institution and it isn't right that Jews should hold services here." Through the window of the president's office my whole congregation—a goodly number—could be seen awaiting the outcome of my negotiations. Wishing to avoid a religious disputation, I said, "I would hate to go back to Jamestown and report that I was not allowed to hold services in Chautauqua." For a moment Judge Braham was lost in thought. He knew that the president of my congregation in Jamestown was chairman of the Chautauqua fund raising committee. He picked up the telephone and called the Hall of Missions: "Let the rabbi conduct services until he makes other arrangements." We returned to the Hall of Missions.

I called on the Episcopal bishop, William Crittenden, who was a member of the board of Chautauqua Institution. I found him to be a kindly person with a sense of humor. He said to me, "I'm glad you are in trouble; this way I got to meet you." He was very encouraging: "I am 100 percent for you to hold services on the grounds. The majority of the board is for it, too. The judge will quit in a couple of weeks; his time is up. Hurlbut Memorial Church is the only church on the grounds that does not belong to the Institution. I'll speak to Rev. Aldrich." I knew the Rev. Aldrich, and his church knew me, as I had spoken there twice. Besides, my Sunday morning radio programs were popular in the area, and I received many requests for copies of my talks. I also received encouragement from Dr. Randall, a retired Congregationalist minister. He visited me in my study to assure me that I had the good will of the

board of trustees of the Hurlbut Memorial Church. Shortly after that I received a short note from him: "I am bedridden. I listen regularly to your Sunday morning radio talks. God bless you for your contribution to the religious life of the community."

A couple of weeks later Rev. Aldrich telephoned me: "Last night my Board of Trustees voted unanimously to let you hold services in our church." He was very happy and so was I. I conducted services there for twelve years. During that time three different ministers served the church; they were all equally kind, helpful, and considerate. At first we used a large hall, the church's social hall. Then one minister said to me, "I see no reason why you can't hold services in our sanctuary." There was a portable cross on the table, but we never saw it on Saturday morning: the minister always removed it and put it out of sight. The church even stored our property from Saturday to Saturday, and at the end of the season: our prayer books, Hebrew Bibles, *yarmelkes* (skull caps), and *taleisim* (prayer shawls); all these were safely stored until the following year. The church always received an annual gift from the Chautauqua Hebrew Congregation; it was always voluntary.

Our services lasted exactly one hour: from 10 A. M. to 11 A. M. My sermons usually lasted no more than 10 minutes, based either on the scriptural [pentateuchal] portion of the week or on its Haftarah [prophetic portion]; occasionally on an important Jewish event or personality. We adopted the *Union Prayer Book*, not for ritual reasons, but for convenience. I read as much Hebrew as time permitted. *Yarmelkes* and *taleisim* were optional. The number and character of worshipers were most interesting. They came from all religious backgrounds: from extreme Orthodoxy to radical Reform, and from different homes and various states and Canada. Some Christians also attended our services. One Christian professor of Bible from an Ohio college never missed a service. He told me once, "I always learn something here and then I pass it on to my students." The attendance was small at the beginning of the season, but it grew from week to week until it exceeded 200, all vacationists. They represented all segments of the Jewish population in North America. The relationships were ideal. They all appreciated the opportunity to worship. Their participation was inspiring. Quite a few knew and chanted the Haftarah [weekly

prophetic portion] in the best traditional manner. On leaving, some engaged me in a Hebrew conversation which I enjoyed very much. One of them was a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel.

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