

“And They Shall Build For Me A Sanctuary”

Like the story of the Jewish people, the story of our Congregation is one of continual search for a resting place.

And again, like the story of the Jewish people, that of this Congregation has been marked by a singular devotion and profound faith; that no matter how uncertain its wanderings, the Ark of the L-rd securely abided among its people.

The progress toward the goal was not only slow and at times painful but was beset with doubt and fear. Always, however, the Congregation was blessed with leaders who were men of stout courage, enthusiasm and vision. They set the example of perseverance and team work that culminated in success.

In rented halls in Cincinnati's West End two diverse groups from two different parts of Europe met regularly to pray to the G-d of their Fathers. Little did these handful of immigrants realize the profound and far reaching influence they would play in the religious and cultural development of Cincinnati. In due time, as their worldly possessions increased, two Congregations with two Synagogues appeared upon the horizon, the Bnai Jacob Congregation with a structure on Clinton Street and the Anshei Sholom meeting in their own home on Clark Street.

With the advent of years and the change of the neighborhood, the Bnai Jacob, or the Polish Congregation, as they were known, purchased a house on Hale Avenue which served as a temporary home in Avondale till they acquired the edifice on Forest Avenue, which served them for 30 years. Meanwhile, the Romanishe, or as they were known officially, the Anshei Sholom, conducted their affairs at 422 Clark Street. By this time Cincinnati's population had shifted widely. Thousands of families had left the downtown area to find homes in the attractive suburb, Avondale.

When it was evident that a Synagogue was not needed in the West End any longer, a merger was carried out by the Anshei Sholom and the Bnai Jacob Congregations to form the present Agudath Israel Congregation.

For a quarter of a century the status quo remained, then once again the Jewish community made a grand exodus, this time to the northern suburbs. As in the past, the Congregation was blessed with men of vision and foresight, who approached the problem with great determination.

The present, beautiful and awe-inspiring edifice in Golf Manor is the end result of 75 years of constant effort and tireless work, to find a suitable resting place for the “Ark of the Covenant.”