



Stories for 100 years of Hollywood Temple Beth El

Rabbi Norbert Weinberg January 26, 2022

This is an account of the founding years of Hollywood Temple Beth El and the involvement of key figures in the newly established film industry who had made Hollywood their center of operations and their new home. It follows through with highlighting some key notables associated with the Temple during later years.

Early references to HTBE

Jan 26, 1922 was our official founding, though we actually go back a few more years, 1920, with services held at a bungalow at 1414 North Wilton Place, adjacent to what is now Home Depot on Sunset.

In 1922 a synagogue was built at 1508 North Wilton Place, one block north, just at the exit ramp of the 101(the primary reason we are no longer there!)

(Source:The Jewish Community in Los Angeles ,Compiled by Clifton L. Holland
www.prolades.com/glama/la5co07/jewish_community.htm)



This was the old Temple but now it is



a Hispanic Baptist Church

(source: <https://1947project.blogspot.com/2006/01/temple-beth-el-to-day.html>)

I found this oldest reference in the American Jewish Yearbook, 1922:

School: Classes, 2; teachers, 2; pupils, 11; sessions weekly, 5.

HOLLYWOOD

Cg. **BETH EL** (Hollywood Temple), 1414 N. Wilton Place. Org. 1921. Rabbi, Emanuel Schreiber; Pres., Ed. Wise; Sec., Louis Kirstein. Members, 65. *Services:* Sabbath, English and Hebrew. *School:* Classes, 4; teachers, 4; pupils, 60; sessions weekly, 1.

LOS ANGELES

Rabbi Emanuel Schreiber, President Ed. Wise, Secretary, Louis Kirstein. 65 Members with a school of 4 teachers and 60 students.

And this one from the B'nai Messenger(LA's Jewish paper of record in the 20th Century). It shows the opening of a religious school with an invitation to people in the community to enroll their children.

(These copies are preserved on line at the National Library of Israel,
<https://www.nli.org.il/en>)



Hollywood Temple Beth El Religious School Opens

The Hollywood Temple Beth-El will open its Sunday School on Sunday, September 10, at 10 o'clock promptly at 1414 N. Wilton.

Letters have been sent out to all members and Jewish residents of that community calling attention to the opening date and to the duty of every Jewish parent to see that his children have the advantages of securing a Jewish education. The letter also appeals to all interested to send the names of children who should be attending a religious school and who reside within the confines of the territory served by this congregation, to the secretary of the temple.

This school enjoyed a large attendance last season and it is hoped to enlarge its capacity this season.

Here is Bnai Brith Messenger announcing the new name" Beth El."

Beth El Is Name of Hollywood Temple

OFFICERS ELECTED AND PRE- LIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE

"Beth El," is the name chosen by the newly-organized Jewish congregation at Hollywood.

At a recent meeting officers were elected as follows: Ed. Wise, Pres., M. Nieuman, Vice-President, Shapiro, Treasurer, L. Kirstein, Secretary.

Board of Trustees, Wm. Weinstein, Chairman, L. Pollock, Secretary, G. M. Wurtzel, A. D. Cooper, Wm. Glatt, M. Nieuman, Ed. Wise.

Mr. M. Wuerzel, one of the trustees, has arranged to pay for the rental of a place of worship for the next three months until the business department of the new organization can be put into working order.

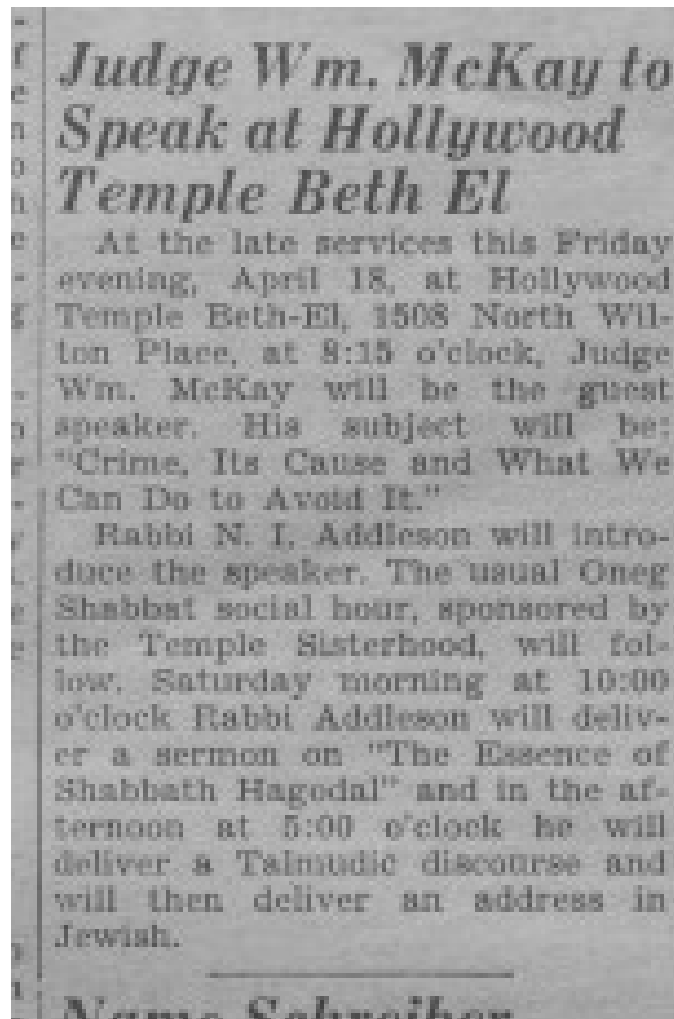
A beautiful Sefer Torah has been presented to his Congregation by the President, Mr. Ed Wise, while Mr. Wm. Glatt, one of the trustees has offered to pay for all the books to be used in the Sunday school. Large contributions for the cause have been made by Mr. Ed Wise and Mr. Wohlfinger.

Here are a few other clips from what used to be the paper of record of LA's Jews



BETH-EL ELECTS RABBI ADDLESON

Hollywood Temple Beth - El unanimously elected Rabbi N . I . Addleson as rabbi at a general meeting recently . Given a contract for five years dating from September 1 , 1938 , he will deliver his first sermon at the Temple on Friday evening , September 16 . . . Born in London , England , he received his education at the London Talmudical College , graduating with honors in higher Rabbinics , and is in possession of credentials (Semicha) - from renowned rabbis . He was a member of Bnai Brith in England , and honorary chaplain of the Order of Sons of Jacob . He is a member of the Misrad Harabbonim of Los Angeles , a member of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California , and an officer in Cedars of Lebanon Lodge , B nai Brith . The rabbi plans to build up the congregation in the Hollywood district , where there is a large field for activity for Hebrew education and religious life , with the cooperation of the congregation , the sisterhood and the proposed men s club . The Temple now has a Talmud Torah and Sunday school directed by Rev . Wellington .



This one from 1948 , announcing a Judge McKay as guest speaker . An interesting note at the end references Shabbat afternoon Talmud class delivered in “Jewish”, in other words, . Quite probably, Yiddish may have been the unofficial language of Hollywood at the time.

What brought Jews here?

This account was written by Rabbi Max Vorspan, who spoke here at many occasions when he was Senior VP of the University of Judaism. The past President, his colleague, Rabbi David Lieber, used to lead the overflow High Holy Days services here in my day(co-author: Prof Lloyd P. Gartner)

During this first decade of the twentieth century Louis Mayer, who had come from Russia with his parents to the Canadian Maritime Provinces and briefly followed his father into the junk business, began to exhibit films at an unprepossessing hall in Northampton, Massachusetts. Carl Laemmle summarily quit his clothing business in Wisconsin; Samuel Goldfish tired of selling gloves; Lewis J. Selznick gave up the jewelry trade in New York. All were lured by the fantasy of films and the reality of a business whose volume was increasing by \$25,000,000 annually.⁴² Men like these and the proletarian audiences they instinctively understood were nearly beneath the notice of the patent holders and their lawyers and respectable royalty-paying exhibitors and manufacturers. While Jews could be found on both sides of the struggle between the “independents” and the “trust,” having entered the business primarily as venture-some owners of elaborate theaters hungry for features, more of them stood among the “independents.” The meek-mannered Adolph Zukor (1873–) dreamed of making films the vehicle of “famous players in famous plays,” but a “trust” magnate curtly “predicted that he would ‘soon be back making button-holes.’”⁴³ The Motion Picture Patents Company trust unflinchingly insisted that the public would be interested only in one-reel films about ten minutes in length.

In short, Louis Mayer started with the junk business, Laemmle in the clothing business, Goldfish (later, Goldwyn) in the glove business, Selznick in jewelry. All were driven by the prospect of entering an industry that “genteel” (and “gentile”) society frowned upon and laughed at. The big money of the day “insisted that the public would be interested only in one-reel films about ten minutes in length.” History of the Jews of Los Angeles Hardcover – January 1, 1970 by [Max Vorspan](#) (Author), [Lloyd P. Gartner](#) (Author)

For a brief visual account, you will find this video to be eye opening:
<https://youtu.be/A6kLNp5uTfU>

(When Jews Ran Hollywood: Vaudeville, Immigrants, and the American Dream | Unpacked)

This is the account of the founding

, written by George Bilson, called " In the Beginning" (thanks to Judy Alkalay for sharing with us) ; this was written in 1952, at the time of our new building here at 1317 N Crescent Heights [My notes are in brackets]

"ONE DECADE, one score and one year ago, sixteen farsighted men met at the home of Ed Weiss to form a conservative congregation. This was the beginning of Hollywood's first synagogue which, for the next thirty years was to serve as a House of Worship, House of Study and House of Assembly for the rapidly-growing Jewish community of the Western Avenue-Sunset Boulevard district.

[Note: We precede our neighbor, Temple Israel by several years. The third Reform congregation in Los Angeles, was founded in 1926 by four men from Temple Beth El who wanted to create a more modern temple]

The first Friday evening services were held in a bungalow on Wilton Place just south of Sunset Boulevard. An improvised Ark, two Torah scrolls and some folding chairs transformed the living room into a House of Worship. The congregation elected Ed Weiss president; Samuel Tuch, vice-president [his grandson, Larry, was still on the board when I was her]; E. J. Peiser, recording secretary; Louis Kirstein, financial secretary; Joseph Miller, treasurer. A charter was granted by the State of California and the Congregation was incorporated January 26, 1922.

A few months later a lot was purchased for \$8,500 [Imagine finding a lot at that price today!] at 1508 North Wilton Place and plans for the erection of a temple were under way. The fund-raising slogan adopted in 1922 also served as a time schedule, *"for All To See In '23."* In September of that year, services for the High Holy Days were held in their new building. The interior was unfinished. The "Bima" consisted of a raised wooden platform with velvet draperies covering the raw lumber. But there was fervent religious spirit within its walls. The Congregation gave their temple a truly divine name, Beth El - House Of God.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris Rosen were among the first and most generous of the members. Their daughter (now Mrs. Joseph Seymour Brown) taught Sunday School , and their sons, Jack, Allen, and Joseph learned their "alef baiz" from old Rabbi Wellington in the Beth Hamidrash. [Morris actually paid the first electric bill! Grandson Roger Rosen is still one of our stalwarts! The family members were still active when I was here].

Rabbi Alstead was the first to occupy the pulpit and the little, 600-seat Temple began to attract men and women in all walks of life, many from the motion picture colony:

The essay goes on to list these members of the colony:

We can start with the father of all time studio chiefs, the Warner Bros- Benjamin Warner!


The Warner Brothers' Niles Connection

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Use the image ID, if listed. Example: PO1.1023

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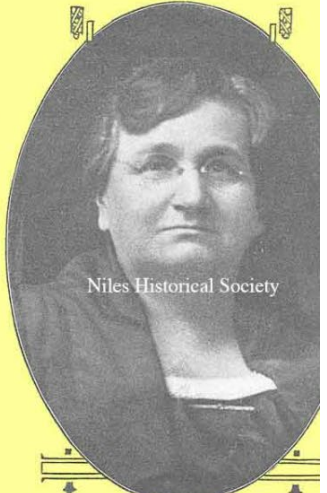
[E-Mail Us](#) Phone: 330.544.2143 Mail: PO Box 368 Niles, Ohio 44446



Where did the Warner Brothers get started in the movie business? New Castle, Pennsylvania may well have the honor of having the first Warner Theater built in 1907, but the Warner brothers began their show business in Niles, Ohio.

Harry Warner's father, *Benjamin Warner*, was a shoemaker, so it was natural for the oldest son to follow in that trade. According to the program listed below, Harry was 15 and working in the shoe shop and was a familiar figure to all who passed by his window on State Street, which was located exactly opposite the site where the Warner Theatre now stands. Harry was born in 1881, making the year 1896, when they started in the movie business.

Again the program mentions the start of the family in Niles. "Many residents of Niles will also remember the first exhibition of the motion pictures in this city given by *Mr. Albert Warner*, a crude affair perhaps when contrasted with the handsome edifice which now becomes the shrine of the silent art in this community, but as the art has developed so have its pioneers progressed with it and the Warner Theatre with its initial program stands as an eloquent example of the fact".



This item from the Niles, Ohio, historical society, about the first movie theater started by the sons of Benjamin Warner, who began his career as a shoemaker. Shown in the picture at the top, Benjamin Warner, above his five sons and to the right, the mother of the Warner Bros. <https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/Warner.htm>

In 10 years after the founding, father Benjamin was the President, and he brought the studio clout to bear in the 1932 New Year's celebration:

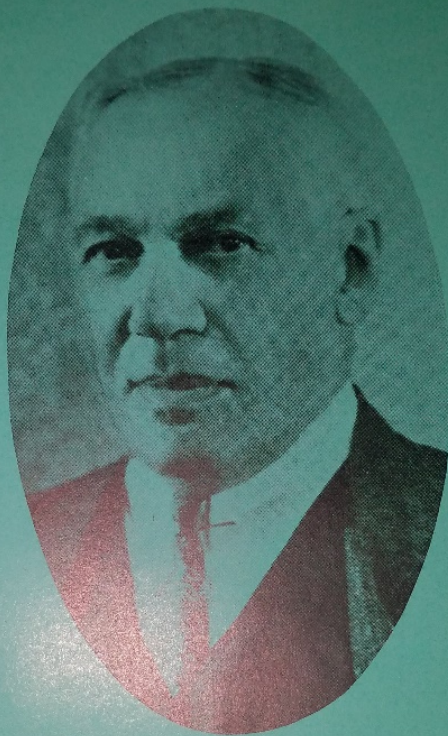


NEW YEAR EVE

1931 - 1932

WARNER BROS. SUNSET STUDIO
HOLLYWOOD CALIFORNIA

Our President



MR. BENJAMIN WARNER

*K*NOWN to the world for his association with his sons in the building of a great industry, Mr. Benjamin Warner is yet firmly identified, as are other great leaders in a world of accomplishment, in the church of his faith. Possessed of a deep devotion, sincerity of purpose and the will to do, Mr. Warner has brought to Hollywood Temple Beth El, of which he is the revered president, the same devout idealism for which his character is known by thousands of co-workers in business and the professions. He labors quietly and unstintingly for the needy; he labors tirelessly for the furtherance of the exalted purposes of Hollywood Temple Beth El.

A great personality, a great leader . . . Mr. Benjamin Warner.



*Warner Bros. and First National Stars Say
"Happy New Year" to Mr. Benjamin Warner*



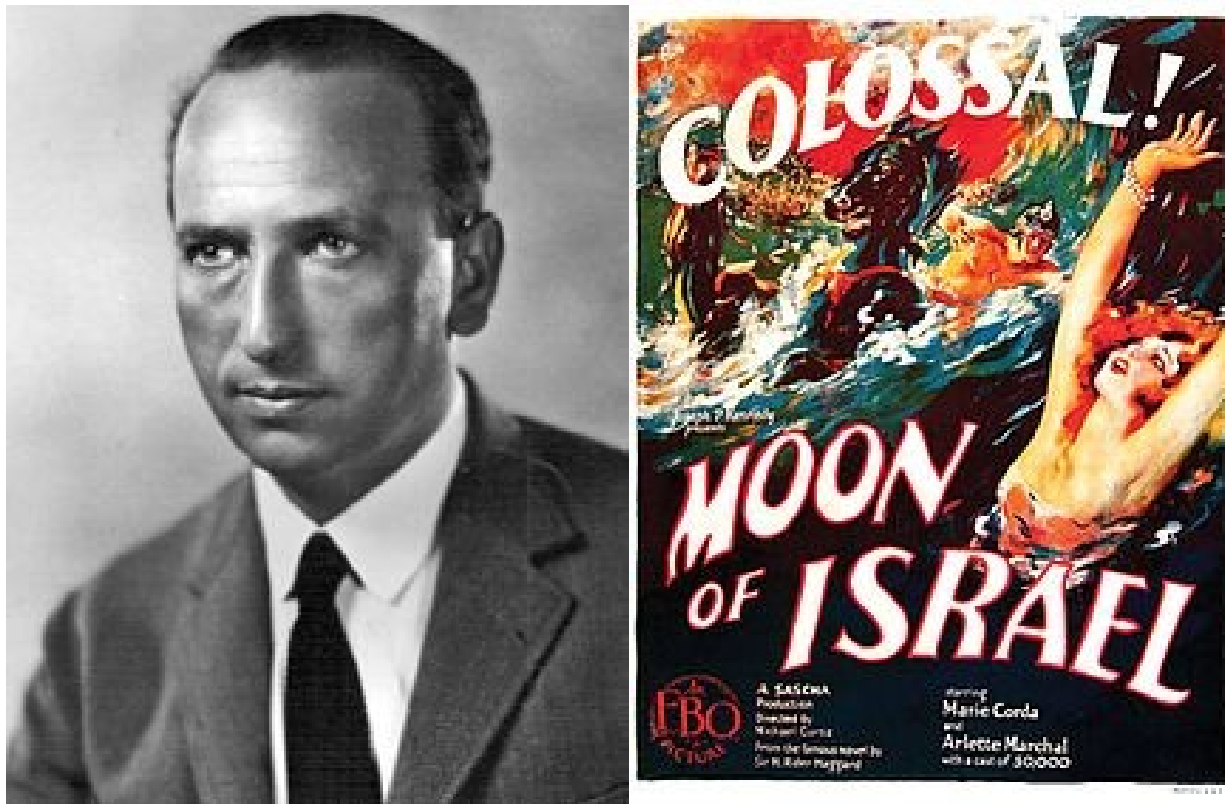
*These Warner Bros. Stars Add Their Wishes
to Mr. Warner and Temple Beth El*



It would be a natural magnet for people in the industry!

So a glance at others listed in the history essay

Michael Curtiz (/ k ɜːr ' t iː z / kur-TEEZ; born Manó Kertész Kaminer; Hungarian: Kertész Mihály; December 24, 1886 - April 10, 1962) was a Hungarian-American film director, recognized as one of the most prolific directors in history.: 67 He directed classic films from the silent era and numerous others during Hollywood's Golden Age, when the studio system was prevalent. Movie “ Moon of Israel”- a love story between Pharaoh and an Israelite slave. [Michael Curtiz - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Curtiz)
[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Michael_Curtiz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Curtiz)



Most famously, he is known for directing Casablanca (1942), a World War II-era romantic drama .. one of the most popular films ever made



Vera Gordon, Actress: 50 Million Frenchmen. American character actor of Russian heritage in silent films and early talkies. She emigrated with her family to the U.S. when she was seven years old. She became involved in the theatre even as a child and participated for several years in the Jewish theatre in New York. At the age of 34 she was cast by Frank Borzage in his version of 'Humoresque' .

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/gordon-vera>



Carmel Myers, born in San Francisco, California, on April 9, 1900, left a lasting impact on Hollywood as an **actress** and lavish entertainer. In a Hollywood that encouraged assimilation, she never denied that she was Jewish. She performed in over seventy films and became known for her vamp roles in silent films and

"talkies." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmel_Myers

In 1925, she appeared in arguably her most famous role, that of the Egyptian vamp Iras in *Ben-Hur*, who tries to seduce both Messala ([Francis X. Bushman](#)) and Ben-Hur himself ([Ramón Novarro](#))



[For those too young to know –especially those who never knew that Jewish women could be so attractive-- The noun *vamp* is somewhat old fashioned, implying a woman who uses her charisma and beauty to charm men into doing what she wants them to do. You can also use it as a verb, meaning to tease or flirt, especially in a showy and manipulative way. The word came into use in the early 1900's, from *vampire*. Some experts connect the first use of *vamp* with the role of "The Vampire" in the 1915 movie "A Fool There Was." <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/vamp>]

Mervyn LeRoy (/l ə ' r ɔɪ /; October 15, 1900 - September 13, 1987) was an American film director, film producer and screenplay writer. In his youth he played juvenile roles in vaudeville and silent film comedies.. During the 1930s, **LeRoy** was one of the two great practitioners of economical and effective film directing at Warner Brothers studios, the other his cohort Michael Curtiz.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mervyn_LeRoy

Jack Pearl, Actor. Vaudevillian. Years active. 1932-1952. Spouse (s) Winnie Desbrought. **Jack Pearl** (born **Jack** Perlman; October 29, 1894 - December 25, 1982) was a vaudeville performer and a star of early radio. He was best known for his character Baron Munchausen. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Pearl



Edward G. Robinson (born **Emanuel Goldenberg**; [Yiddish](#): עמנואל גאלדנבערג; December 12, 1893 – January 26, 1973) was a [Romanian-born American](#) actor of stage and screen during [Hollywood's Golden Age](#). He appeared in 30 Broadway plays^[1] and more than 100 films during a 50-year career^[2] and is best remembered for his tough-guy roles as gangsters in such films as [Little Caesar](#) and [Key Largo](#).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_G._Robinson

According to our records, not only was he a long time member, but also a President.



And not just a member and contributor, but also a knowledgeable Jew who could lead the weekday evening services for when he commemorated a yahrzeit, wherever he went, be it Indianapolis or Tokyo (more said later)

From Jewish Post of Indianapolis;

Mr. Friedman also has yahrzeit on the same day as Edward G. Robinson, and both of them attend the Hollywood Temple Beth-El that day. It is customary of course for a yahrzeit to daven before the omid, but Mr. Friedman, though by far the more regular worshipper, is blind; and so the leadership, one day each year, goes to Edward G. Robinson, who, it is said, davens very nicely, and respectfully waits until Mr. Friedman has finished the Shmonei Earei.

Mr. Friedman, whose grand-daughter Chana Rivka, is at present on her way to join a religious kibbutz in Israel, had also once been the Hebrew teacher of Jules Stein, who is head of MCA, the biggest talent agency in Hollywood. And Jules Stein's father Louis spent the last years of his life at Mr. Friedman's home.

Unfortunately, only the most gratuitous kinds of conclusions can be drawn from any of this data about Jewish life in Hollywood.

He also contributed regularly to to HTBE, which caught the attention of of McCarthy's committee during the witch hunting for Communists in those years. He was caught up in the witch hunt, as a result of his support for groups that opposed the Nazis, but as it turned out, were affiliated with the Communist party.

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TESTIMONY OF EDWARD G. ROBINSON

Donations

Date	Name	Amount
January 1939		
Dec. 16, 1938	Children's Village	\$25.00
Dec. 28, 1938	Regatta Theatre	25.00
Do.	Hebrew Sheltering Home for the Aged	25.00
Dec. 28, 1938	Y. Y. Israel Old Age Home	10.00
Jan. 3, 1939	Salvaging Army for survival	15.00
Jan. 6, 1939	Project Group of Prisoner Women	25.00
Jan. 13, 1939	Hebrew Club	5.00
Jan. 13, 1939	The Domes	5.00
Do.	Hollywood Temple Beth El	7.00
Jan. 3, 1939	Tom Stetinger	7.00
Dec. 1938	Boys Town of Hollywood	25.00
Jan. 23, 1939	Officers on Parade	10.00
Jan. 23, 1939	Budd Juch Bitterhead	20.00
Jan. 16, 1939	Ass. Alumni College, City of New York	4.00
February 1939		
Jan. 23, 1939	Juvenile Crime Prevention Bureau	25.00
Feb. 10, 1939	American Boys Club	25.00
Feb. 17, 1939	Community Committee	20.00
Feb. 24, 1939	Premier Exhibit of Full Photographs	11.00
March 1939		
Mar. 7, 1939	The Treasury, Inc.	2.00
Mar. 8, 1939	Pure Music (chair music, philharmonic test)	2.00
Mar. 27, 1939	California Committee of the Laffy	2.00
Feb. 23, 1939	Rural Friends Dinner dance	15.00
Feb. 23, 1939	Academy Refuge Committee	25.00
Feb. 24, 1939	Los Angeles Conference of Temple Brotherhood	100.00
Feb. 27, 1939	Hollywood Guild	50.00
Feb. 24, 1939	Mount Sinai Hospital	5.00
Feb. 27, 1939	Branch, E. J. Jewish Community Council	200.00
Mar. 4, 1939	Hollywood Committee of 26	100.00
Feb. 24, 1939	National Bureau for Blind Artists	2.00
Do.	E. C. Fidelity Bond B'nai Auxiliary No. 162	4.00
Mar. 7, 1939	Negro Fascist Movement	25.00
Do.	Community Synagogue	25.00
Mar. 4, 1939	Best Drug Store	10.00
Mar. 7, 1939	Film Writers League	22.00
Feb. 26, 1939	Spanish Child Welfare Association	20.00
April 1939		
Mar. 26, 1939	Hollywood Temple Beth-El	25.00
Do.	National Conference Jews and Christians	100.00
Mar. 23, 1939	Laville School for Blind	25.00
Apr. 10, 1939	Southern California Symphony Association	25.00
Do.	The Relief Guild	60.00
Do.	E. A. Orlowski Foundation	25.00
Mar. 20, 1939	The Refugee Fund	25.00
Mar. 20, 1939	National Society for the Prevention Blindness	10.00
Apr. 6, 1939	Sunday Evening Club	200.00
Apr. 6, 1939	Musical Artists of America	11.00
Apr. 3, 1939	American League for Peace and Democracy	4.00
Apr. 11, 1939	Hollywood Guild	20.00
Apr. 11, 1939	Palestine Orchestra Fund	100.00
Do.	Cher-Paul Com	15.00
Do.	Fund for Refugee Writers	100.00

Nov. 12, 1946	do.	7.50
Nov. 21, 1946	do.	60.77
Oct. 28, 1946	12th Nite Club	2.50
Dec. 4, 1946	University Religious Conference	100.00
Do.	Negro Actors Guild of America	50.00
Dec. 14, 1946	Hollywood Temple Beth El Building Fund	100.00
Dec. 4, 1946	Artists Fellowship, Inc.	100.00
Dec. 14, 1946	Desert Battalion, Inc.	43.75
Dec. 9, 1946	do.	271.62
Nov. 29, 1946	European Children Relief	20.00
Dec. 19, 1946	Desert Battalion, Inc.	39.55
Dec. 16, 1946	do.	18.54

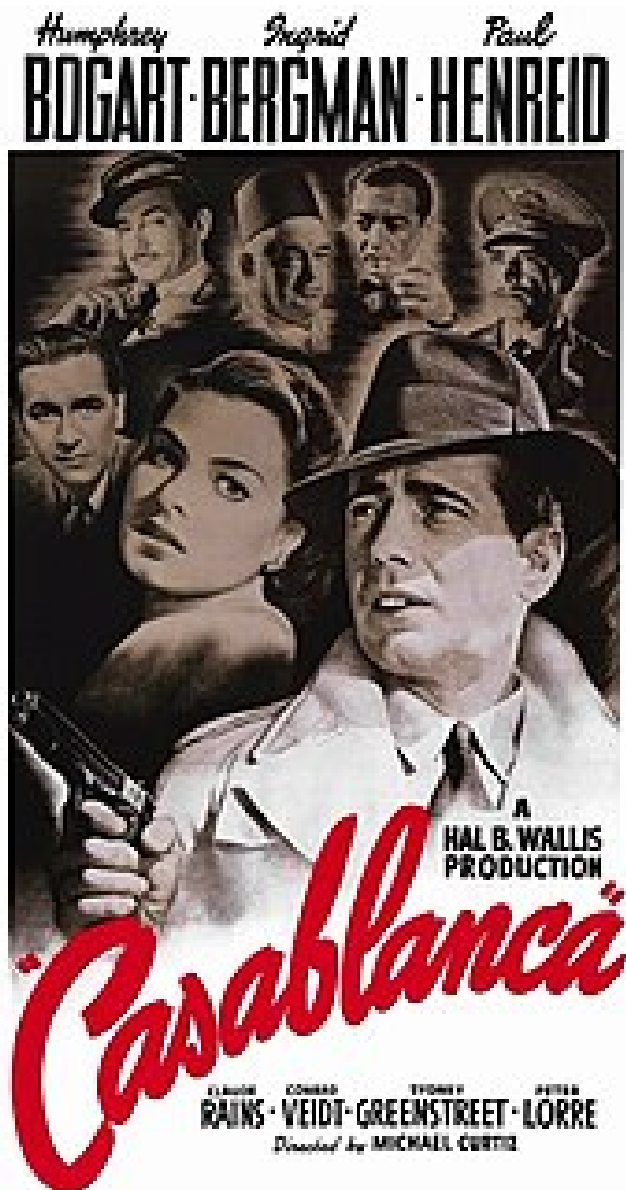
1947		
Feb. 10, 1947	Progressive Citizens of California	200.00

Samuel Bischoff (August 11, 1890 – May 21, 1975) was an American [film producer](#) who was responsible for more than 400 full-length films, two-reel comedies, and serials between 1922 and 1964.

George Sidney, (born October 4, 1916, [New York City](#), New York, U.S.—died May 5, 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada), American [film](#) director who directed a number of the most popular movie musicals of the 1940s and '50s, including *Anchors Aweigh* (1945), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), *Show Boat* (1951), and *Kiss Me Kate* (1953)- could also refer to his uncle, George Sidney, a noted actor in his day

Hal B. Wallis, American motion-picture producer, associated with more than 400 feature-length films from the late 1920s to the mid-1970s. For example, *Casablanca*, three Academy Awards for best picture, director, and screenplay.“ Who can forget Bogart,” Play it once, Sam. For old times' sake” or “Here's looking at you, kid ?”
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hal_B._Wallis





Louis Halper, brother in law to Warner Bros, helped run the studio-and involved in production of their 1st full feature talkie.

Mike Gore, As the president and cofounder of West Coast Theaters, Gore appropriated more than \$5,000,000 in 1924 for the immediate construction of 28 new neighborhood theaters in Los Angeles. This was done to keep pace with the area's tremendous growth. He received a star on the [Hollywood Walk of Fame](#) for his work in [Motion pictures](#).^[2]

William Koenig was born on January 1, 1885 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. He is known for his work on [Dance Hall](#) (1941), [Castle in the Desert](#) (1942) and [El cantante de Napoles](#) (1935). He was married to Nancy. He died on May 29, 1943 in Beverly Hills, California, USA.

Carl Laemmle ([/'ləmli/](#) ([listen](#)); born **Karl Lämmle**; January 17, 1867 – September 24, 1939) was a German-American film producer and the co-founder and, until 1934, owner of [Universal Pictures](#). He produced or worked on over 400 films. Regarded as one of the most important of the early film pioneers. Think of [The Hunchback of Notre Dame](#) (1923), [The Phantom of The Opera](#) (1925), both with Lon Chaney Sr. in the title role. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Laemmle

He also personally undertook to save many Jews during the Holocaust!



Joseph H. Nadel (1892–1950). Producer | Production Manager | Assistant Director. **Joseph H. Nadel** Picture.

Lewis Seiler (September 30, 1890 – January 8, 1964) was an American film director. He directed more than 80 films between 1923 and 1958.

Joe Pasternak, one of Hollywood's top film producers, assumed the office of Chairman of the Board of HTBE!

Joseph Herman Pasternak (born **József Paszternák**; September 19, 1901 – September 13, 1991) was a Hungarian-born American film producer in [Hollywood](#). Pasternak spent the Hollywood "[Golden Age](#)" of musicals at [MGM Studios](#), producing many successful musicals with female singing stars like [Deanna Durbin](#), [Kathryn Grayson](#) and [Jane Powell](#), as well as swimmer/bathing beauty [Esther Williams](#)' films. He produced [Judy Garland](#)'s final [MGM](#) film, [Summer Stock](#), which was released in 1950, and some of [Gene Kelly](#)'s early breakthrough roles. Pasternak worked in the film industry for 45 years, from the later silent era until shortly past the end of the [classical Hollywood cinema](#) in the early 1960s.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Pasternak





This is the continuation of Bilson's essay:

WWII- our younger members left to fight for Freedom's cause. Some never returned. Boys who but a few years previous had recited their bar mitzvah speeches from our pulpit became names on the memorial tablet in the Temple's foyer - Jacob J. Moidel, Budd Peiser, Stanley Sidell, Theodore J. Steiner, Herman Addleson, Jerome Freman, Derrick R. Landau, Maurice W. Imberman, Bernard H. Glogas, Leon A. Rutberg, Mieren B. Oswell, David E. Sandler, and Sheldon Finn. May their souls rest in peace.

During the War years the Temple Sisterhood worked countless hours sewing garments for the Red Cross. The product of their fingers kept many a soldier warm in foxholes on the battlefronts of Europe and Asia...At War's end, they continued to sew for the people of Israel. To their undying glory was the "adoption" of six European orphans through the Youth Aliyah.

Moving to our new location:

From the moment Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Levine joined the Congregation it was evident that they were heart-and-soul Jews who believed in religion as a way of life. Hyman Levine was a man with vision, courage and faith. He recognized the fact that the new Hollywood Freeway, pushing its way relentlessly from the East, was compelling many worshippers, whose homes were in its path, to move from the district. He recognized, too, that the modern generation needed a more modern building. This thought had been in the minds of most officers and board members for many years, but it was under Mr. Levine's presidency that the plan was activated. That the idea succeeded so well is due in a great part to his brilliant leadership, his personal contributions, and to the encouragement of his dear wife. Hyman Levine served as president from 1946 to 1949 and was subsequently made Honorary Life President, an honor he shares with Samuel Tuch. To add to the driving force behind the new project came their three sons, Isadore, Sid [who smuggled weapons for the Haganah and whose son Mel, became congressman <https://forward.com/news/449105/our-father-taught-us-tzedakah-one-bag-of-fish-at-a-time/>] and Dr. Ben. Standing shoulder to shoulder with the sons and daughters of other older leaders, they represented the youth and strength that would bring the ideas to full fruition. In April 1948 a large lot was purchased 1317 N Crescent Heights Boulevard and the new Hollywood Temple Beth El was soon in the blueprint stage.

A gala fund-raising show at the Biltmore Bowl, spearheaded by Dave Leviloff, Maurice Katleman, Hyman Levine and other Board members. Over \$40,000 was raised at the Biltmore Bowl affair at which Eddie Cantor was master of ceremonies. This was the "shot in the arm" that revitalized the entire organization. A new slogan echoed across the Hollywood Hills, *"God Willed It, Let's Build It!"*

.....

"In the Beginning..."

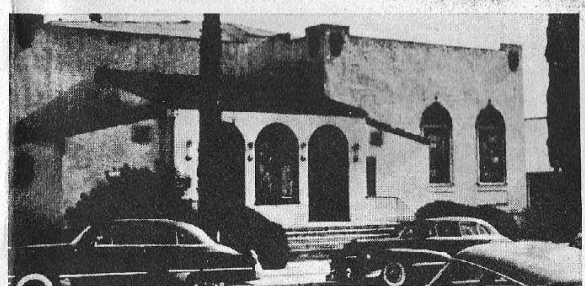
by GEORGE BILSON

ONE DECADE, one score and one year ago, sixteen farsighted men met at the home of Ed Weiss to form a conservative congregation. This was the beginning of Hollywood's first synagogue which, for the next thirty years was to serve as a House of Worship, House of Study and House of Assembly for the rapidly-growing Jewish community of the Western Avenue-Sunset Boulevard district.

The first Friday evening services were held in a bungalow on Wilton Place just south of Sunset Boulevard. An improvised Ark, two Torah scrolls and some folding chairs transformed the living room into a House of Worship. The congregation elected Ed Weiss president; Samuel Tuch, vice-president; E. J. Peiser, recording secretary; Louis Kirstein, financial secretary; Joseph Miller, treasurer. A charter was granted by the State of California and the Congregation was incorporated January 26, 1922. A few months later a lot was purchased for \$8,500 at 1508 North Wilton Place and plans for the erection of a temple were under way. The fund-raising slogan adopted in 1922 also served as a time schedule, "For All To See In '23." In September of that year, services for the High Holy Days were held in their new building. The interior was unfinished. The "Bima" consisted of a raised wooden platform with velvet draperies covering the raw lumber. But there was fervent religious spirit within its walls. The Congregation gave their temple a truly divine name, Beth El—House Of God.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris Wulinger were true pioneers in the building of the Temple. Among their many donations were memorial lights for the pulpit. Mr. and Mrs. Morris Rosen were among the first and most generous of the members. Their daughter (now Mrs. Seymour Brown) taught Sunday School, and their sons Jack, Allan, and Joseph learned their "alef, baiz" from old Rabbi Wellington in the Beth Hamidrash. Mitchell Moidel, well-known attorney, served for many years as principal of the Sunday School, and performed outstanding service. The first Torah was donated by Mrs. Sarah Esther Levine, whose daughter Saraphine Davidoff is still an active worshipper. The Sam Yellen family were among the early leaders. Sam enjoyed congregational work and took pride in honoring others with Torah readings. And who shall ever forget the years of loyal service by Mark Rappaport, our recording secretary. Through the efforts of Mrs. Ed Weiss a Sisterhood was started, with Mrs. Lena Schwartz, Mrs. Julia Mintz and Mrs. Esther Greenwald, her able assistants.

Rabbi Alstead was the first to occupy the pulpit and the little, 600-seat Temple began to attract men and women in all walks of life, many from the motion picture colony: Michael Curtiz, Vera Gordon, Carmel Myers, Mervyn



Since 1923 Temple Beth El on Wilton Place has served the Jewish people of Hollywood. The new Freeway removed many of the homes of the Temple members and worshippers. Changing conditions and declining population of the area compelled the closing of the old Temple's doors.

LeRoy, Jack Pearl, Mme. Reinhardt, Edward G. Robinson, Sam Bischoff, George Sidney, Hal Wallis, Benjamin Warner, Louis Halper, Mike Gore, Ike Briskin, William Koenig, Carl Laemmle, Joe Nadel, Abe Cohen, Lew Seiler, Harry Maizlish, Arnold Pressberger and many others.

There was the Pivar family, Maury, Ben and Edward who occupied an entire pew in the Beth Hamidrash where their father, the beloved Adolph Pivar sang the Kol Nidre with tenderness and heartfelt emotion. There was the Goldstone family, Phil and his mother, Mrs. Rae Goldstone, and his sister, Mrs. Dora Levine, and her husband, Abe. The Temple, Chapel and schoolrooms are studded with plaques and mementos, reminders of the contributions made by Phil Goldstone, one of the great Jewish philanthropists of Los Angeles. There were other staunch supporters such as the families of Abe Herman, Jacob Herman, Sr., George Heltzer, Mrs. Rose Simon, Dave Marantz, E. J. Margolin, Dave Matuso, A. A. Schnierow, Henry Davis, Herman Deutsch and his sons, Lester and Alex; Sam Engleman and his son, Alex, Sam "Pop" Feldman, Ben Feldman, the Moidel family, Jacob Borstein, Morris Landau, Max Fersko, Maurice Katleman, Joseph Koch, Henry Davis, George Bilson, Abraham Dratwa, Sol Behr, Joe Chlavin, Al Galvin, Abe Rosenfeld, Max Buky, Milt Nebron, H. Schoenwald, Joe Schwartzman, Sol Silpa, Stanley Stone, Morris Weiner, the Mintz family, and their sister, Mrs. Schwartz; the Isadore Sharpe family, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Solomon, Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Sackin, the Lipnick family, the Glesby family, and many, many others. To list the names of all who helped build Temple Beth El, and all who helped keep open its doors, would require more space than is possible in this limited brochure. Mark well their names for without their contributions and hard work, the Temple's history might have ended long before this.

Following the term of Edward Weiss, the Congregation elected Abraham Cohen to the presidency. With great fervor he carried on the policy and tradition of his predecessor. There was no money in the treasury and debts were

piling up, but Abe Cohen saw to it that nothing was lacking to fulfill the Temple's threefold purpose, worship, study and assembly.

Stanley Miller followed Abe Cohen into office. Mr. Miller and his charming wife performed invaluable services and much was accomplished during his term of office. The fourth president was Harry K. Cohen, well-known local attorney. He served during the days of national economic depression. At times it was necessary to collect a few dollars at board meetings to pay for gas, electricity, and other utilities. Yet the doors were always open and the Jews of Hollywood knew they could depend upon Temple Beth El for a "minyon" three times daily.

One of the early presidents was Benjamin Warner, father of the Warner Brothers of motion picture fame. He was a man of integrity and good repute and a student of the Torah. His term was a progressive one and the Temple gained much by his sound judgment and hard work. He realized that only through a larger and active membership could the Temple overcome its difficulties and he campaigned relentlessly for new members.

Harold E. Sackin was next elected to the presidency. Mr. Sackin, a prominent lawyer, was the author of the Temple's by-laws and constitution. He contributed his time to take care of all the Temple's legal matters. For many years he taught Sunday school. He brought wisdom and distinction to the office of president. Ill-health forced him to decline renomination, but he continued to work for the Temple to the full extent of his physical capacity. Much of the information in this story was prepared by Mr. Sackin with the assistance of E. J. Peiser. Harold continues to be a source of inspiration to the entire congregation.

Samuel Tuch had held many offices prior to the presidency and had proved himself to be a brilliant economist, a dynamic leader and a devoted Jew. No task was ever too large or too small for him. He gave his time, his money and his energy to the Temple and was a motivating force in its progress. He presided over the Temple's affairs with a firm hand. He presided over his family with tenderness and fatherly devotion. It was a delight to see him enter the Temple with his dear wife and children, Harry, Alfred, Freida (now Mrs. Isadore Levine), Irving and Ben, (now Dr. Benjamin Tuch, eminent physician and surgeon). Temple Beth El is part of Samuel Tuch, and Samuel Tuch will always be part of Beth El. Little wonder that in subsequent years he was given the Temple's highest award, the title of Honorary Life President.

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Barney Katz, Sarah (Mrs. Dave Leviloff), Reuben, Dora, Alfred and Robert, were youngsters when Barney first joined the Congregation. It was inevitable that his generosity, wisdom and knowledge of the Torah should carry him to the presidency. All the Katz family are active in the Temple's affairs (except Dr. Robert Katz who is now a nationally famous research biochemist living in New Orleans). Barney Katz's son-in-law, Dave Leviloff and his devoted wife, Sarah, played important roles in the Temple's history and have been a tremendous influence in its progress. Dave has a heart as big as himself. He exemplifies the joy of giving. Always the first to stand up and be counted, he contributes generously to all appeals. Few men have given more of themselves to Temple Beth El than Dave Leviloff. Although he never aspired to office higher than vice-president, he has been a bulwark in all administrations. He helped Barney Katz carry some of the burdens of his term as president during some of its darkest days.

Next to occupy the president's chair was Maurice Katleman. Maurice, his wife, and his son, Beldon, had been members since the late 20's, holding many important chairmanships. Maury was not the fiery, aggressive type of leader. He

was a leader by example, and his deeds inspired others. He set a pattern of life that exemplified true religion; a deep-rooted faith in the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Everyone was Maury's friend. Maury was everyone's brother.

Louis A. Rose was president when World War II broke out. Many of our sons left to fight for Freedom's cause. Some never returned. Boys who but a few years previous had recited their bar mitzvah speeches from our pulpit became names on the memorial tablet in the Temple's foyer — Jacob J. Moidel, Budd Peiser, Stanley Sidell, Theodore J. Steiner, Herman Addleson, Jerome Foreman, Derrick R. Landau, Maurice W. Imberman, Bernard H. Glogas, Leon A. Rutberg, Micren B. Oswell, David E. Sandler, and Sheldon Finn. May their souls rest in peace.

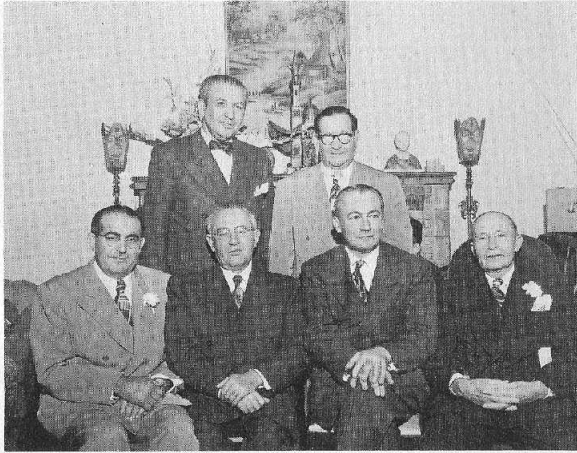
In Europe, Hitler introduced a new phenomenon, genocide. His campaign to exterminate our race brought thousands of Jews to America. One of them, Edmond Schloss, became our sexton. He and his dear wife have endeared themselves to our hearts.

During the War years the Temple Sisterhood worked countless hours sewing garments for the Red Cross. There were Mrs. Rose Simon, Mrs. Lena Dratwa, Mrs. Weiss, Mrs. Marantz. The product of their fingers kept many a soldier warm in foxholes on the battlefronts of Europe and Asia. So faithfully did they perform their duties that the American Red Cross honored them with certificates citing their extraordinary service. At War's end, they continued to sew for the people of Israel. To their undying glory was the "adoption" of six European orphans through the Youth Aliyah. The Sisterhood worked night and day to keep abreast of the changing times. Under the presidency of the beloved Mrs. Rose Simon, they brought their membership together at luncheons, raised money at parties, put on Purim programs at which their own members entertained with singing and dancing. Mrs. Lena Dratwa was always ready with a song, a kind word and wise guidance. For years she was chairlady of the Oneg Shabat following the Friday night services. To mention just a few of the others, there were Mrs. Sarah Weiss, Mrs. Clara Elstein, Mrs. Minnie Mayer. They followed in the spirit of all the great women who served the Sisterhood as presidents: Mrs. Louis Kirstein, Mrs. Bessie Peiser, Mrs. Hilda Goldman, Mrs. Dora Levine, Mrs. Rose Moore, Mrs. Rose Sigelman, Mrs. Eva Marantz, Mrs. Lena Schwartz, Mrs. Sarah Clesby, Mrs. Jenny Rothman, Mrs. Muriel Wollman, Mrs. Rose Simon, who was recently elected Honorary Life President, Mrs. Jean Ruffenstein and Mrs. Betty Baltimore. The Temple has been enriched with the gifts of their hearts and the spirit of their devotion.

Tragedy struck when Louis A. Rose passed away during his term as president. For years he had served the Temple well, for he was a learned Talmudic scholar as well as a fine leader and a devoted husband and father. His dear wife helped fill the void left by his passing, and his daughter, Mrs. Betty Baltimore, is doing an outstanding job as president of the Sisterhood.

It was not easy to find a man to replace Louis Rose who had served faithfully from 1938 to 1944. Sam Tuch was pressed into service again and carried on for three years with the help of Dave Leviloff, Barney Katz, Maurice Katleman and Hyman Levine, who was scripted for the presidency in 1946.

From the moment Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Levine joined the Congregation it was evident that they were heart-and-soul Jews who believed in religion as a way of life. Hyman Levine was a man with vision, courage and faith. He recognized the fact that the new Hollywood Freeway, pushing its way relentlessly



Seated (Left to Right) DAVID LEVILOFF, HYMAN LEVINE, LEON HELMAN, BARNEY KATZ.
Standing: MAURICE KATLEMAN and SAM TUCH.

These far-sighted men made our New Hollywood Temple Beth El possible. Their dream came into reality in 1952 aided and assisted by many others of our Temple family. While all of the men pictured above have since departed their dominant spirit continues to inspire us.

"In the Beginning . . ."

from the East, was compelling many worshippers, whose homes were in its path, to move from the district. He recognized, too, that the modern generation needed a more modern building. This thought had been in the minds of most officers and board members for many years, but it was under Mr. Levine's presidency that the plan was activated. That the idea succeeded so well is due in a great part to his brilliant leadership, his personal contributions, and to the encouragement of his dear wife. Hyman Levine served as president from 1946 to 1949 and was subsequently made Honorary Life President, an honor he shares with Sam Tuch. To add to the driving force behind the new project came their three sons, Isadore, Sid and Dr. Ben. Standing shoulder to shoulder with the sons and daughters of other older leaders, they represented the youth and strength that would bring the ideas to full fruition. In April 1948 a large lot was purchased on Crescent Heights Boulevard and the new Hollywood Temple Beth El was soon in the blueprint stage.

In 1949, a new voice was heard; not new in terms of membership, but new as a prospective leader. For years Harry Sherman had spoken from the sidelines. Now he would speak from the president's chair. Once in office, Harry Sherman put on a gala fund-raising show at the Biltmore Bowl, spearheaded by Dave Leviloff, Maurice Katleman, Hyman Levine and other Board members. Over \$40,000 was raised at the Biltmore Bowl affair at which Eddie Cantor was master of ceremonies. This was the "shot in the arm" that revitalized the entire organization. A new slogan echoed across the Hollywood Hills, *"God Willed It, Let's Build It!"*

Leon Helman was made chairman of the building committee and he worked night and day to organize the million-and-one details of the building program. The zealotness with which he worked, through long days and nights, was motivated by his desire to get the structure finished in the quickest possible time, for he knew his days on this earth were limited. He passed away without seeing the new Temple completed. But he left a great legacy in the love of his wife Claire and his brother, Israel "Babe" Helman, who are carrying on his work as he would have wanted them to. The new building committee chairmen, Jacob Helman, Sr. and Joseph Koch, are fitting successors to Leon Helman, devoting their entire time to the supervision of construction. There is a labor of love born of years of service to the Temple.

Joe Pasternak, one of Hollywood's top film producers, assumed the office of Chairman of the Board. Dave Leviloff got out of his sick bed to put on a fund-raising campaign with the help of Reuben Katz. Sigmund Altman, active and vigorous at 86, chaired the Board of Education. A Brotherhood of the Temple was formed through the efforts of Isadore Levine, with Arnold Clejan as president. The foundation of the new building was laid. Steel-work was completed. The Temple started to take form.

To the older members, watching the steel arms rising toward the heavens, and recalling the early days on Wilton Place, it must seem like history is repeating itself. To their sons and daughters, many of whom first heard of Temple Beth El from the laps of their parents, it is a new, living and soul-satisfying experience. For how many times in a lifetime does one have the blessed privilege of helping build a religious edifice? One dominant thought motivates the efforts of both young and old. They know they are building for their children, and their children after them, so that future generations of Jews may walk in the path of righteousness toward a full and fruitful life in Temple Beth El, House of God.



ABE COHEN
Past President



SAMUEL TUCH
Past President
Honorary Life President



HYMAN LEVINE
Past President
Honorary Life President



MAURICE KATLEMAN
Past President
2nd Vice President



BARNEY KATZ
Past President
Treasurer



HAROLD E. SACKIN
Past President
Chairman Legal Committee



HARRY SHERMAN
President



JOE PASTERNAK
Chairman of Board



DAVE LEVILOFF
First Vice-President



HARRY TUCH
Third Vice-President



ISADORE LEVINE
Chairman Ways & Means Comm.



GEORGE BILSON
Chairman Publicity Committee
Vice-President Men's Club



JACOB HERMAN, SR.
Chairman Building Committee



JOSEPH KOCH
Co-Chairman Building Committee



REUBEN R. KATZ
Co-Chairman Ways & Means
Committee



ARNOLD CLEJAN
Pres. Men's Club



MRS. LOUIS BALTIMORE
Pres. Temple Sisterhood



I. B. HIELMAN
Co-Chairman Publicity Committee



MRS. ROSE SIMON
Honorary Life President
Temple Sisterhood



SIGMUND ALTMAN
Chairman Educational Committee



TILLIE LEVER
Recording Secretary



E. J. FEISER
Financial Secretary



JULIAN M. WHITE
Rabbi



NATHAN KATZMAN
Cantor

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“And you shall tell your child...”

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