

Ethnic Diversity and Civic Identity
*Patterns of Conflict and Cohesion in
Cincinnati since 1820*

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"A Sort of Paradise for the Hebrews":
The Lofty Vision of Cincinnati Jews"

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113. William J. Egan, *A Loving and Deserved Tribute to the Revered Memory of the Most Reverend Henry Moeller, D.D.* (Norwood, Ohio: Private Printing), 10.
114. M. Edmund Hussey, *A History of the Seminaries of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati 1829-1979* (Norwood, Ohio: Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West, 1979), 48.
115. CT, August 29, 1907, p. 4.
116. Ibid.
117. Moeller to N. J. Walsh, August 15, 1906, AAC.
118. X.B. Drexelius, Secretary, Norwood Heights Company, "Minutes," September 19, 1906, AAC; F. X. Dutton, CT, August 2, 1906, p. 4; CT, August 29, 1907, p. 4. Moeller added an important provision regarding his obligation to build a cathedral in Norwood Heights. He agreed to do so only "if conditions warrant it," namely if Cincinnati annexed Norwood and if a large population settled in the subdivision.
119. Ibid., August 27, 1908, p. 8.
120. Ibid., August 29, 1907, p. 4.
121. Moeller to Dempsey, August, 1911, AAC; Moeller to Dempsey, July 14, 1913; Moeller to Dempsey, August 1, 1913, AAC.
122. Moeller to Dempsey, April 30, 1915, AAC; Moeller to Samuel Hannaford, July 17, 1911, AAC. Despite all of Moeller's efforts to make sure the building was perfect in every detail, his successor, John T. McNicholas, abandoned it in favor of another mansion in College Hill and converted Moeller's home into the diocesan Teachers' College.
123. Egan, 9.
124. Ferdinand Brossart to Moeller, September 2, 1921, AAC; Moeller to Brossart, August 31, 1921, AAC; Brossart to Moeller, September 2, 1921, AAC.
125. Moeller to Brossart, September 4, 1921, AAC.
126. Ibid., May 2, 1922, AAC.
127. Moeller to William J. Anthony, December 2, 1922, AAC.
128. CT, September 2, 1915, p. 5.
129. Edward J. Dempsey to M.F. Ryan, March 18, 1918, AAC; CT, September 2, 1915, p. 5; Philipp Eiffers, Architects, Proposal for Renovating the Good Shepherd Convent, n.d., AAC.
130. Dempsey to Ryan, March 18, 1918, AAC.
131. Dempsey to Clarence S. Darrow, March 12, 1919, AAC.
132. Moeller to Cardinal De Lai, May 30, 1920, AAC.
133. Frank H. Rowe, M.D. to Elder, October 1, 1894, AAC. For more than twenty years Dr. Rowe took care of the medical needs of the orphans. John E. Hickey to Elder, July 14, 1897, AAC.
134. John B. Purcell to Hiram Powers, February 20, 1848, Cincinnati Historical Society.
135. *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 30, 1882, p. 8.

JONATHAN D. SARNA

"A Sort of Paradise for the Hebrews": The Lofty Vision of Cincinnati Jews

The Cincinnati Jewish community won widespread acclaim as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Writers, Jews and Gentiles alike, outdid one another in finding words adequate to describe it. Ohio's "wandering historian," Henry Howe, called it "a sort of paradise for the Hebrews." According to a Chicago newspaper, the *Jewish Advance*, "No other Jewish community accomplished so much good in the interest of Judaism and its people." Others termed it the "center of Jewish American life," and "the pioneer [Jewish] city of the world." According to Isador Wise, son of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, many of its Jewish children, even if scattered across the frontier, vowed to remember it eternally: "If ever I forget thee . . . may my right hand be withered."¹

Such extravagant tributes, which might have been appropriate for Jerusalem or New York, come in this case as somewhat of a surprise. Why Cincinnati? Its Jewish population was generally modest in size, especially in comparison to coastal Jewish communities. Its leading Jewish families may have acquired considerable wealth, but certainly not on the level of New York's Jewish elite. Nor was it a community characterized by extraordinary piety and learning, at least not in any traditional sense. Nevertheless, as the praises sung to it demonstrate, Cincinnati Jewry, especially in the late nineteenth century, occupied a singular position in American Jewish life. It was the oldest and most cultured Jewish community west of the Alleghenies, and had, many thought, a spirit all its own.

This spirit reflects Cincinnati Jewry's own onetime self-image, an image revealed in selected (mostly elite) writings and described by onlookers. Symbolically speaking, the community had come to represent a vision of the future, a Jewish version of the American dream, a "sort of paradise,"

not yet fully realized, but surely moving in the right direction. This vision, if not as unique as local Jews believed, was best articulated in the nineteenth century, when the city itself was at its height and most of its Jews were of Central European descent. Yet, in some ways, it continued to exercise a powerful hold long into the twentieth century, the city's relative decline in population and status, and the immigration of East European Jews notwithstanding. Today, for most Cincinnati Jews, this vision is but a dim memory, testament to a bygone era. But if the vision itself has largely been lost, its echoes still reverberate: the legacy of past generations who shaped the Cincinnati Jewish community and left their impress upon it.

The Vision of the Founders

Jews numbered among Cincinnati's earliest settlers. While none arrived in 1788, when the first organized group of white settlers landed, individual Jews may have passed through the city by 1814, when Israel Byer's name is recorded in a newspaper advertisement. Dr. Jonas Horwitz, usually remembered for his role in preparing the Hebrew text of the 1814 Dobson Bible, the first independently printed Hebrew Bible in the United States, turned up in Cincinnati in 1816 advertising a vaccine for smallpox. He seems to have beat a hasty retreat when local doctors attacked him for fear-mongering.² As a result, the man generally regarded as Cincinnati's "first Jew" was Joseph Jonas. A native of Plymouth, England, he immigrated to New York in 1816, joining some of his relatives who had preceded him there, and he later set out for Cincinnati arriving on March 8, 1817. In a memoir published in 1845,³ he reports that, as a young man, "he had read considerably concerning America, and was strongly impressed with the descriptions given of the Ohio River, and had therefore determined to settle himself on its banks, at Cincinnati." Warned by a Philadelphia acquaintance that "in the wilds of America, and entirely amongst Gentiles, you will forget your religion and your God," he "solemnly promised" to avoid both perils. He kept the promise, became a successful "mechanic" (watchmaker and silversmith) and later a state legislator, and in 1824 helped to found Cincinnati's first congregation, the forerunner of Congregation Bene Israel, now known as Rockdale Temple.

Jonas's memoir, the basis for much of what is known about the man, gives early expression to some of the central ideals that would in later years form the basis of the community's self-image and lofty vision. Even if not widely known in written form, the memoir's major motifs achieved

wide currency, for this was the history of the community as told by its "founding father," a patriarch who remained in the city for fifty years. We know from other sources that the contents of the memoir circulated in oral tradition and became embedded in popular folklore.⁴ As such, the document merits particularly close attention.

What strikes one first is the effort to cloak the mission of Cincinnati Jews with a divine aura. "The fiat had gone forth," Jonas reports, "that a new resting place for the scattered sons of Israel should be commenced, and that a sanctuary should be erected in the Great West, dedicated to the Lord of Hosts, to resound with praises to the ever-living God." Here was the Puritan "errand into the wilderness"—itself a biblical motif—cast anew into Jewish terms. Cincinnati Jews, Jonas implied, were following in the tradition of the patriarch Abraham, and going forth into the land that God had appointed for them. Rabbi James K. Gutheim, writing shortly after Jonas's memoir appeared, expanded on this same theme in a published sermon: "Here, where formerly the savage, under superstitious ceremonies, brought horrible sacrifices to his 'Great Spirit': arises now in a powerful chorus of many voices the sacred motto of our faith: 'Hear oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!'"⁵ Cincinnati Jews, then, believed that they had a special mission: to establish a Jewish "resting place" in a region where Jews had never penetrated before. One has the sense that being far from the center of their faith, they, like so many other pioneers, needed continual reassurance that theirs was holy and preordained work, imbued with ultimate divine meaning. Christians received similar reassurance in their churches. To be sure, even among the generation of founders, many Jews strayed far from their faith, violating traditional religious commandments with impunity. Jonas himself once wondered what great things might happen "if only a *few* of the most able and respectable would commence *sincerely* keeping their Sabbaths and festivals." He was, by his own account, the "Solitary," the only observant member of the (Bene Israel) congregation.⁶ Yet the community's larger sense of mission—its vision of Cincinnati as a "sanctuary" and a "resting place" for Jews, and as a bridgehead spreading Judaism into the "Great West"—continued to carry great power long after ritual practices had declined, and even into the twentieth century. This helps explain, among other things, why many Cincinnati Jews looked so unfavorably upon Zionism, a movement that saw only one proper "resting place" for Jews, the land of Israel.

A second theme stressed by Jonas in his memoir concerns Jewish-Christian relations in Cincinnati. Where throughout the world Jews faced

hatred and bigotry, and many were treated as second class citizens, he reports that such had never been the case in the Queen City:

From the period of the arrival of the first Israelite in Cincinnati, to this date, the Israelites have been much esteemed and highly respected by their fellow citizens, and a general interchange of civilities and friendships has taken place between them. Many persons of the Nazarene faith residing from 50 to 100 miles from the city, hearing there were Jews living in Cincinnati, came into town for the special purpose of viewing and conversing with some of "the children of Israel, the holy people of God," as they termed us. From the experience which we have derived by being the first settlers of our nation and religion in a new country, we arrive at the conclusion that the Almighty will give his people favour in the eyes of all nations, if they only conduct themselves as good citizens in a moral and religious point of view.⁷

Others agreed with Jonas, one historian describing Cincinnati of that day as a city "of mutual good will and understanding" where Jews and Christians interacted freely.⁸ In 1834, we are told, "fifty-two gentlemen of the Christian faith, our fellow citizens," donated \$25 each toward the building of the city's first synagogue. Christians had helped fund synagogue buildings before, notably in Philadelphia where Benjamin Franklin was one of the contributors, and the reason in both cases was probably the same. As a contemporary explained to readers of *The Western Messenger*, they "seem to have thought it better, that these children of Israel should worship God after the manner of their fathers, than not worship at all."⁹

What may be more important is the fact that Jews and Christians in early Cincinnati also interacted socially. We learn from an 1843 letter sent by Reverend Edward Winthrop, minister and writer, to his friend Harriet Boswell in Lexington, Kentucky, that they visited one another's homes and discussed religion together:

P.S. I forgot to mention that I have become acquainted with several of the most influential Jews in Cincinnati, and that I am quite a favorite among them. Many of them attended my lectures at St. Paul's and expressed themselves much delighted. A few weeks ago I spent the evening at the house of Mr. Jonas, the most learned and intelligent Jew I have ever met with. His wife is said to be the daughter of the richest Rabbi in London.¹⁰ She is coming to see Mrs. Winthrop. Mr. Jonas and I examined the prophecies together, and he read and sang Hebrew for me. Mrs. Jonas occasionally joined in the conversation, and afterwards regaled us with cake and chocolate. Mr. Mayer, another wealthy Jew, has also invited me to his house. He is the father of that pretty young Jewess that I saw married at the synagogue some

three months since. She and her husband attended my lecture on the signs of the times.¹¹

Of course, social interaction does not necessarily imply complete social acceptance. Much of the interest in local Jews sprang from motives of curiosity; the Jew was seen as an "exotic." What's more, many of those who befriended Jews continued to hope, with the pious editor of *The Western Messenger*, that they would ultimately "see that Christian principle diffused throughout the earth, is the only power that can restore the sceptre to Judah." Still, the image drawn by Jonas, and reinforced by other early Jews, was that of a community where Jews and Christians stood "upon the most intimate terms," as if realizing (as it had not been realized in Europe) the dream so long cherished by advocates of Jewish emancipation. Jonas made the point explicitly in 1836 when he spoke at Bene Israel's consecration. He used the occasion to contrast Jews' persecution in other lands with the "safe asylum" that they found "in this free and happy country."¹²

Although Cincinnati's first Jews, including the Jonas and Moses families, David I. Johnson, Samuel Joseph, and Jonas Levy were all from England, German Jews began immigrating to the city only slightly later. According to an unverifiable nineteenth century source, "The first German Israelite family came to Cincinnati in 1817 and met with so hospitable a reception that it wrote to its co-religionists in Germany letters which were full of praise and in which it was declared that the Lord of Heavenly Hosts had prepared for its people scattered throughout the world a land of freedom and happiness in the far-off West of America. These letters powerfully stimulated the Jews of Germany to migrate."¹³

Whether or not any German Jews actually arrived in 1817, they certainly came in growing numbers during the succeeding decades, from 1820 to 1870. From letters and newspaper reports that reached them before their emigration, many envisioned America in general, and Cincinnati in particular, as a promised land where economic opportunities abounded and Jews faced none of the restrictions that had so embittered their lives in the German states. We know, thanks to Stephen Mostov's careful research, that a large proportion of Cincinnati's German Jews originated in Southern Germany, particularly from the small Bavarian province of Upper Franconia and from the Rhenish Palatinate. Individual villages in these areas witnessed a great deal of chain migration: emigrants, in other words, called on their former *Landsleute* to come and join them.

Thus, the small Bavarian village of Demmelsdorf, which in 1811 had a total Jewish population of only 136, saw no fewer than thirty of its Jews (twenty-eight men and two women) emigrate to Cincinnati between 1830 and 1865, including virtually every young Jewish male in the community. The Pritz family, prominent Cincinnati distillers, were among those who hailed from Demmelsdorf, and, in later years, sang praises "to the sturdy industry and pristine rectitude" of that community's natives. No community of comparable size in all of Europe, Benjamin Pritz believed, "sent forth a larger proportion of inhabitants who have as successfully fought the battle of life."¹⁴

Whether they were German or English, the founding fathers of Cincinnati's Jewish community shared, as we have seen, a common dream: to find a 'promised land' in the American frontier where Jews could settle as citizens, succeed economically, practice their religion freely, and coexist happily and on equal terms with their Christian neighbors. It was a dream thoroughly compatible with the aspirations of the local citizenry as a whole. The first directory of Cincinnati (1819) spoke of residents' "liberal mode of acting and thinking," their "spirit of enterprise," their "temperate, peaceable and industrious character." Jesup W. Scott, writing in Charles Cist's *Cincinnati in 1841*, predicted "that within one hundred years from this time, Cincinnati will be the greatest city in America, and by the year of our Lord two thousand, the greatest city in the world." Horace Greeley, after visiting Cincinnati in 1850, proved only slightly less effusive. Cincinnati, he declared, was destined to become "the focus and mart for the grandest circle of manufacturing thrift on this continent."¹⁵ There was then during this period a widely shared "boom town" mentality, a spirit of boundlessness, a sense of unlimited potential for growth and development. Jews, recognized as being among the founders of the city, shared in this public mood. With their parallel vision of Jewish Cincinnati they then took it several steps further.

"Many of the Rich People of the City Are Jews"

The Jewish vision of Cincinnati, as it developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, rested on four central and interrelated premises: first, that Jews could succeed economically in the city; second, that they could interact freely and on an equal basis with their non-Jewish neighbors; third, that they had a mission, both as good citizens and as good Jews, to work for civic betterment; and finally, that they had an obligation to

develop a new kind of Judaism in Cincinnati, one better suited than traditional Judaism to the new American milieu. These assumptions all deserve to be explored at considerable length, and necessarily involve a fair degree of oversimplification, since one could obviously find individual local Jews who did not share them at all. For all of their limitations, however, they do explain much about the spirit of Cincinnati Jewry. They encapsulate the outlook that made the community historically distinctive.

To begin with, the vision that the founders of the Cincinnati Jewish community advanced needed a secure financial basis on which to rest. Economic motives loomed large among the factors that first impelled Jews to immigrate to America's shores, and it was the search for opportunity, the quest for the "American dream," that subsequently induced many to make the arduous journey across to Pittsburgh and down the Ohio River. In many ways, material success was the precondition that made everything else that Jews accomplished in Cincinnati possible.

The story of Joseph Joseph, founder of a distinguished Cincinnati Jewish family, is typical. "He was born near Frankfurt, Germany, on the 12th of July, 1847 . . . and at the age of seventeen years came alone to America. He had heard many reports concerning the opportunities of the new world that were attractive to him and he hoped to find better business opportunities than he felt he could secure in the fatherland."¹⁶ As it turned out, he found what he was looking for in Cincinnati, and his company prospered. Had he been less fortunate, or had Cincinnati offered him fewer opportunities, he would undoubtedly have moved somewhere else, as in fact many did. Dreams alone, in other words, could not sustain a Jewish community. To build the kind of community that the founders envisioned required a critical mass of Jews who both cared about being Jewish, and were at the same time successful, charitable, and secure enough to help bring some of these dreams to fruition.

Thanks to nineteenth-century Cincinnati's booming local economy, Jews did ultimately succeed in Cincinnati and some achieved substantial wealth. Yet, as Maxwell Whiteman discovered, most started off extremely modestly. They began in the most typical of all Jewish immigrant occupations—peddling:

Philip Heidelberg . . . arrived in New York in 1837. A fellow Bavarian helped him invest all of his eight dollars in the small merchandise that bulged in a peddler's pack. At the end of three months the eight dollars had grown to an unencumbered capital of \$150. Heartened by this splendid return Heidelberg headed for the western country, peddling overland and

stopping at farm houses by night, where for the standard charge of twenty-five cents he could obtain supper, lodging and breakfast. In the spring of that year Heidelberg arrived in Cincinnati. He peddled the country within a radius of a hundred miles from the source of his supply of goods, frequently traveling through Union and Liberty counties in Indiana. Before the year was out Heidelberg accumulated a capital of two thousand dollars.

Stopping in Chillicothe to replenish his stock, Heidelberg met [Jacob] Seasongood and the two men, each twenty-five years old, formed a partnership. They pooled their resources and for the next two years labored at peddling. In the spring of 1840 they opened a dry goods store at Front and Sycamore Streets in the heart of commercial Cincinnati under the firm name of Heidelberg and Seasongood. The new firm became a center for peddlers' supplies at once, and as their business expanded they branched into the retail clothing trade. Meanwhile Philip Heidelberg was joined by his brothers, and Seasongood was followed by other relatives. Their business prospered considerably and in 1860 the erstwhile peddlers established a banking house which continued until 1868 when Jacob Seasongood resigned as a partner of the firm to pursue other interests.¹⁷

Most Jews, as Whiteman points out, remained peddlers for only a short time. The road that they traveled once they cast off their packs, however, was a distinctive one, different from that traveled by other newcomers to the city. Like their counterparts in Europe and in other American cities, Cincinnati Jews concentrated in well-defined sectors of the economy, notably the garment industry. They developed an informal credit system of their own to stimulate investment in these sectors. At the same time, and in contrast to other immigrants, they kept their distance from such local occupations as pork packing, candle and soap making, brewing, iron works, machine and carriage making, and steamboat production. Why Jews made the economic decisions they did is a complicated question that cannot satisfactorily be answered here. Suffice it to say that previous occupational experience, local hiring practices, peer pressure, cultural attitudes, perceived potential for success, and a desire to work alongside other Jews were all important factors. Whatever the precise reasons, by 1860, according to Mostov, "the manufacture, distribution, and sales of men's ready-made clothing and other apparel supplied at least a portion of the livelihood for well over one-half of Cincinnati's Jews." Sixty-five of seventy wholesale clothing firms in the city were Jewishly owned. Thanks to Jewish entrepreneurship, as well as the Singer sewing machine introduced in the 1850s, Cincinnati itself had become, in Mostov's words, "the ready-made clothing capital of the West." In an unguarded moment,

Jews boasted in 1858 that they "almost monopolize[d] the Clothing Trade of the entire West and South West."¹⁸

Not all Cincinnati Jews, of course, were involved in the clothing trades. One study, based on census data, claims that "by 1860 Cincinnati Jews were involved in over 100 occupations." They worked, among other things, as peddlers, clerks, servants, salesmen, butchers, bookkeepers, doctors, teachers, artists and even as billiard table makers. Thirteen percent of the city's working Jews made their living in the dry goods business. Another seven percent, including the Pikes, the Freibergs, and later the Fleischmanns (more famous as makers of high quality compressed yeast) worked in the liquor trade—which, before Prohibition, was one of Cincinnati's most important industries. A substantial number of Jews were also engaged in the manufacture of cigars. Overall, then, and notwithstanding the industries that they avoided, the economic situation of Cincinnati Jewry looked bright indeed. Leon Horowitz, whose Hebrew guidebook to America, published in Berlin in 1874, was designed to stimulate Rumanian Jewish emigration to the United States, recognized this. The Queen City's Jewish population, he gushed, was "multiplying by leaps and bounds. . . . They are busy negotiating in every branch of trade, and many of the rich people of the city are Jews."¹⁹

By 1929, when Barnett Brickner surveyed Jewish occupations in Cincinnati, important changes had taken place. Given occupational and intergenerational mobility, few Jews now worked as laborers and peddlers, while the number of Jewish lawyers, doctors, and dentists had multiplied several fold. The clothing trade still employed a disproportionate percentage of Jews, but now a large majority of them were white-collar workers: Jewish tailors and garment workers did not encourage their children to follow in their footsteps. Numerous Jews, taking advantage of their right to own property, entered the real estate business, hoping (vainly as it turned out) to benefit from a boom. In addition, "practically all" of Cincinnati's auctioneers and pawnbrokers were now Jews, and one Jew, I. M. Libson, singlehandedly owned most of the city's major motion picture houses. Jews also owned or managed four of the city's largest department stores, secured almost half of the city's insurance business, and served as directors of leading banks. Nor does this by any means exhaust the list of Jewish occupations. To take just two unusual examples, Max Senior, one of Cincinnati's most prominent Jews, earned his living from the explosives business, and Sidney Weil, who made his money in the automobile industry, became in 1929 the first Jewish president of the Cincinnati Reds.²⁰

If Jews maintained a somewhat distinctive profile within Cincinnati's economy, they nevertheless sought to be integrated into the city's economic structure as a whole. Given their importance to the local economy, and the fact that they and their Gentile neighbors often came from similar German backgrounds, they were not usually disappointed. In 1895, Maurice J. Freiberg served as president of the Chamber of Commerce, an organization that took in Jewish members from the start. His father, Julius Freiberg, had been elected an honorary member of the same organization, the highest honor that the chamber bestowed, and was praised at his death for his "cosmopolitan citizenship . . . ever ready to serve the best interests of the municipality, supporting liberally every measure for the advancement and improvement of the city of his residence." This was an exceptional case, to be sure, but numerous Jews claimed membership in the Business Men's Club and other civic associations, and most seem to have carried on extensive dealings with non-Jews.²¹ The Ohio Valley National Bank, formerly the banking house of Espey, Heidelberg and Company, was even a Jewish-Christian commercial partnership, a rare but by no means unique case.²² All of this, of course, was completely in line with the Jewish vision of the city: "In Cincinnati," Max B. May, a future local judge, boasted in 1904, "the Jews play a prominent part in the commercial and professional life of the community . . . and the prominent Jews are large stockholders and officers and members of the boards of directors of the large national banks and trust companies."²³

Social Integration—Social Discrimination

Cincinnati Jews claimed equality with their neighbors not only in the economic realm. They believed, as we have seen, that Jews should be able to interact with their non-Jewish neighbors on an equivalent social basis as well. Isador Wise's depiction of Jewish-Christian relations in the city as "always" being "peculiarly pleasant, cordial, [and] mutually forbearing" gave voice to this belief and found many an echo. As late as 1939, the Hebrew weekly *Hadoar*, mostly read by immigrant East European Jews, reported that Cincinnati was proud of "the fine mutual relationship that continuously reigned between Jews and Christians from the very beginning."²⁴

We know from studying other cities that where Jews had "pioneer" status they generally fared better than where they were seen as latecomers and interlopers. We also know from John Higham's research on anti-

Semitism and from Judith Endelman's recent study of the Jewish community of Indianapolis that "the degree to which Jews were involved in the early growth of a city and had achieved a notable and respected place in public and private life . . . directly influenced how later generations of Jews were received."²⁵ It is nevertheless remarkable that the idyllic image of Cincinnati as a community where Jews and Christians "always" coexisted harmoniously lasted long into the twentieth century, despite available evidence to the contrary. The multiple rehearsals of the same theme underscore the fact that this was an article of faith for local Jews, an integral part of their image of themselves and their community.

Evidence that Jews and Christians in Cincinnati did often interact on a remarkably harmonious basis is not difficult to find. The city's leading rabbis in the nineteenth century, Isaac Mayer Wise and Max Lilienthal, set the pace, both priding themselves on their close friendships within the Gentile community. Wise was especially close to the local Unitarians, whom he considered "our allies," and was on intimate terms with their ministers, Moncure D. Conway and Thomas F. Vickers.²⁶ As for Lilienthal, he is credited with being the first rabbi to preach in a Christian pulpit, and according to an appreciative account published by Lafcadio Hearn, he "won the title of 'the Broad Church Rabbi,' having particularly, on one occasion, produced a sensation by gratuitously attending to all the duties of Rev. Dr. Spaulding of the Plum-street Universalist Church during the absence of that minister." Lilienthal also made a point of cultivating friendships among leading lay gentiles in Cincinnati, and was invited into their homes. His star student and later successor as rabbi of Congregation Bene Israel, David Philipson, followed his example in this respect, participating actively in interfaith activities and interacting socially with numerous non-Jewish friends.²⁷

Beyond the leadership level, one can find evidence of close Jewish-Christian interactions in clubs and discussion groups, and particularly close cooperation in German cultural activities, like the *National Saengerbunde*, forerunner of the May Festival. A select number of Jews also won recognition as members of the local elite. *The Blue Book and Family Directory* of Cincinnati (1890) and Clara Devereux's *Blue Book of Cincinnati Society* (1916–17) both included Jews in their registers of "prominent residents," and Ben LaBree's *Notable Men of Cincinnati*, published in 1903, listed no fewer than twenty-five Jews among the five hundred most important residents of the city, a ratio of 5 percent, or about the same as the ratio of Jews to the city's population as a whole. From a sociological

point of view, perhaps the best indicator of close Jewish-Christian relations is the intermarriage rate, evidence that the two groups not only interacted in business and formal settings but in intimate ones as well. How Jews and Christians felt about intermarriage, and what problems such unions created is not the issue here; the revealing fact is that such intermarriages took place at all. Barnett Brickner, in a study of Cincinnati Jewish intermarriages covering 1916–18, found that 20 of 439 marriages were intermarriages, a rate of 4.5 percent. How this compared to earlier rates cannot be determined, but intermarriages certainly involved well-known members of the community. In two well-publicized late nineteenth-century cases, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise's daughter, Helen, eloped with James Molony (They raised their children as Jews), and Charles Fleischmann's daughter, Bettie, married Christian R. Holmes.²⁸

However, another side to Jewish-Christian relations in Cincinnati exists, which does not comport to the regnant image, and has, as a result, been less frequently told. This is the story of anti-Jewish prejudice in Cincinnati, particularly manifestations of social discrimination. In 1848, for example, a Jew named Charles Kahn met with hostility when he purchased three acres of land on Ludlow Avenue to build himself a house in Clifton. According to Arthur G. King, Clifton's historian, a self-appointed committee of "gentlemen" soon visited Kahn and advised him that he would enjoy a happier life and find more congenial neighbors if he built his home elsewhere. "Very well gentlemen," Kahn is said to have replied, "if you do not care to have a Jew living near you, you cannot object to dead Jews, and shall have many of these, for many years, in no condition to offend you." Kahn then sold his lot to K. K. Ahabeth Achim ("The Holy Congregation of Brotherly Love"), which used the land for its cemetery.²⁹ Hatred of Jews also figures prominently in the first Jewish novel set in Cincinnati, entitled (perhaps revealingly) *Hannah; or, A Glimpse of Paradise* (1868) by H. M. Moos. Edgar Armhold, its Jewish hero, is born poor, achieves wealth, intermarries, loses his wife's love, changes his name to Clermont Harland, and dies after an unhappy life. In the interim, he faces considerable prejudice. "I only know he is a Jew, and I have a natural antipathy toward Jews," Hannah, his future wife says at one point. "I never did like to come in contact with them." Others agree with her. However stilted and unrealistic the novel as a whole may have been, the complex portrait of post-Civil War Cincinnati as a city where Jews as a class met with hate while

individual Jews were loved, and where Jews could attain great financial and social success in spite of continuing prejudice, certainly rings true.³⁰

In 1882, Isaac Mayer Wise, who witnessed and condemned a great deal of anti-Jewish prejudice in Cincinnati, especially during the Civil War, admitted in one of his rare negative comments about the city as a whole (written, it should be noted, in an obscure review distributed mainly to rabbis) that "there did exist a residue of that sectarian prejudice among Jews and Gentiles also in this cosmopolitan West and this enlightened city, which drew a line of demarcation, visible and tangible, in all social relations." He implied, by using the past tense, that conditions had since improved. In fact, however, anti-Semitism erupted in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Cincinnati too, as it did elsewhere in the country during this period, though given the status of local Jews, its effects were less severe than in some other communities. Several clubs, including the Cincinnati Country Club, the Cincinnati Woman's Club, the Commercial Club, the Junior League, and the Avondale Athletic Club refused (or in some cases ceased) to accept Jewish members, and with a handful of exceptions, "there was a general tendency to exclude German Jews from Gentile social gatherings attended by both sexes after six o'clock." The most prominent college preparatory school for girls likewise kept Jews out—even if the Jew happened to be the daughter of popular Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra maestro Fritz Reiner. Meanwhile, Jewish clubs that once had been prominently included in the community "blue book," no longer were; socialite Clara Devereux apparently decided that their existence had ceased to be a matter "of social interest." Most serious of all, Jews found themselves frozen out of positions in certain banks and law firms.³¹

These and other manifestations of social discrimination, did not seriously threaten Jews' economic well-being, much less their physical security. Old line Jewish families remained as prominent as they always had been, and Jews continued their active participation in business, the professions, civic affairs and local politics. Yet, evidence of local anti-Semitism pointed up a more general problem: a disturbing disjunction between Cincinnati as Jews envisaged it, and Cincinnati as it actually was. For a long time, Jews lived with this contradiction. They overlooked it, suppressed it, or rationalized it away. In the long run, however, it would have to be confronted. For in many ways, the Jewish vision of Cincinnati was simply too good to be true.³²

"If It Were Not For The Support of the Jews"

The Jewish vision of Cincinnati, starry-eyed as it may have been, did not encourage communal complacency. To the contrary, in what we have listed as one of their major tenets, local Jews stressed that as good citizens and good Jews they had a mission to work for civic betterment. Education, culture, philanthropy, social work and good government stood among the leading causes that Jews embraced, often in a spirit of civic pride and noblesse oblige, or as part of the Jewish Social Justice movement, roughly equivalent to the Protestant Social Gospel. Feeling that "he must do something for the public good," Rabbi Max Lilienthal, to take just one example, "was for years member of the School Board, member of the Board of examiners, member of the University Board, president of a medical college, member of the City Relief Board and other benevolent organizations, and was . . . popular and influential in the city of Cincinnati and far beyond its confines, more so, perhaps, than any rabbi ever [previously] was in America"—at least that was the opinion of his friend, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise. Writing more than half a century later, in 1938, journalist Alfred Segal spoke of a "Jewish aristocracy" in Cincinnati, "whose merit was in its culture, its abundant philanthropy, and its devotion to the highest civic responsibilities." For some, indeed, these "merits" almost appear to have been religious duties. They substituted for more traditional rites and worship long since abandoned.³³

Philanthropy was for many years the hallmark of Cincinnati Jewry, what set it apart from other Jewish communities across the United States. Boris Bogen, who wrote the standard textbook on Jewish philanthropy (based in part on his own work in Cincinnati), and who was one of the pioneers of scientific charity, considered the city's Jewish community to be nothing less than "the exemplar [*sic*] of social service for the eyes of all other Jewries." Isador Wise, writing for a Gentile audience, made the same claim. Nor, as we shall see, was it an idle boast. Cincinnati introduced numerous innovations into the world of Jewish social service, and in the early decades of the twentieth century served as the training ground for Jewish communal service professionals. In 1913, community leaders even established a short-lived School of Jewish Social Service in the city. "For a number of years," its brochure read, "Cincinnati has been the home of the leading spirit in organized Jewish charity. . . . [It has] acquired a reputation for efficient[ly] training social workers and has supplied leading workers to many cities."³⁴

The history of Jewish giving in Cincinnati dates all the way back to the first half of the nineteenth century. By 1850 the community boasted the first Jewish hospital in America, founded in that year, as well as several mutual aid, benevolent, and ladies' charitable societies, and even a fund to aid the needy of Palestine. Jewish charities increased in number during the second half of the century, especially with the onset of mass East European Jewish immigration in the 1880s. A particularly significant development occurred in 1896 when major Jewish charities in the city federated into the United Jewish Charities, only the second Jewish federation in the country (the first was in Boston). Among other things, the new federation encouraged administrative efficiencies, set up a combined city-wide campaign for funds, and introduced "the most progressive and far-reaching methods in its work," including preventive social work techniques, the so-called Cincinnati method of caring for tubercular patients, widows' pensions, and special efforts "to rehabilitate the family wherever possible." It also initiated the call for a National Conference of Jewish Charities, and hosted the first meeting of that organization, forerunner of the Council of Jewish Federations.³⁵ Thanks to their new federation, Cincinnati's twenty-eight thousand Jews also gave more money to Jewish charities than ever before. During the first year of joint solicitation by the United Jewish Charities the amount raised was "double . . . the totals of all moneys previously raised by the constituent associations." In 1910, \$117,372 was raised, the highest per capita rate of giving of any major Jewish community in the United States, and \$15,000 more than was raised in that year by the three hundred thousand Jews of Brooklyn.³⁶

Cincinnati Jews took an active role not just in their own charities; they were deeply involved in non-Jewish charities as well, realizing that they played no less important a role in improving the quality of the community. Rev. Charles Goss's history of Cincinnati, for example, portrays Charles Fleischmann as a man who contributed to practically "every charitable institution in his home city. No worthy object, public or private, was ever denied his earnest support." The same volume describes Millard Mack as "a liberal contributor to all charitable organizations." Other Jews, we know, participated in the work of the National Citizens League, the Tuberculosis League, and the Avondale Improvement Association. It was, however, in the Associated Charities of Cincinnati (founded in 1879) and the Community Chest (founded in 1915) that Jews played particularly active roles. The former published a list of bequests and endowments that includes numerous Jewish names, headed by the Hebrew Orphans Fair

that made its bequest back in 1881. In 1894, Henry S. Fechheimer helped to incorporate the Charities, and two years after that Rabbi David Philipson served as one of its vice-presidents; thereafter, Jewish names were never absent from its Board of Directors. The Community Chest was actually modeled in part on the federation concept introduced by the city's United Jewish Charities. It listed Boris Bogen as one of its "pioneers," David Philipson as one of those who "stood out conspicuously in their active service," and at least twenty-four other Jews who served either as members of its Board of Directors or as leaders of its annual campaign. Perhaps for this reason, the Chest contributed some \$200,000 to Jewish Foreign Relief in 1920, more that year than it contributed to any other individual cause. Indeed, the Community Chest proved so successful, and worked so closely with the Jewish community, that some leading Jews eventually abandoned "parochial" Jewish philanthropy altogether, and devoted all of their communal attention to the Chest. It became their symbol of Jewish universalism, the comfortable synthesis that permitted them to display "Jewish values" while helping the community at large.³⁷

Both Jewish and general philanthropies in Cincinnati rallied in the twentieth century behind the aims of "scientific charity." No longer were donors content, as once they had been, to (in the words of the United Jewish Social Agencies) "relieve the deserving poor . . . prevent want and distress and discourage pauperism." Instead, they spoke of "prevention," "social philanthropy" and "education," and supported projects aimed at improving community (and especially the immigrant community's) health, welfare and "happiness." The Jewish Settlement (later Community House), founded in 1899 and inspired by Jane Addams's Hull House, embraced many of these goals. Among other things, it supported tenement reform, pure milk for babies, and medical inspection for school children, sponsored Americanization classes, vocational training, kindergartens, and Camp Livingston, and helped initiate the Big Brothers Association, and later the Big Sisters, to help disadvantaged youth and to fight juvenile delinquency. The social work principles of "scientific charity" also inspired such local Jewish sponsored or aided projects as the United Jewish Charities playground; the Pay-Heath clinic; the mental hygiene program; the Penny Lunch Association, which in Orthodox areas of the city served kosher lunches; the United Jewish Social Agencies bakeshop, founded in 1929 and particularly important during the Depression; and even, although the origins of the idea were far more ancient, the Hebrew Free Loan Society, organized on a self-help basis by the immigrant East European Orthodox

Community. All alike did their part to realize the lofty vision that Cincinnati Jews had cherished from their earliest days in the city: to make theirs a model community, a "sort of paradise."³⁸

The same ultimate aim stood behind local Jews' concern for education and culture. In the case of the former, a traditional Jewish value, it was Rabbi Max Lilienthal who again took the lead: he served as a member of the board of education, promulgated educational reforms, authored a textbook, and served as a regent of McMicken University (later the University of Cincinnati). After the public schools were, with Jewish support, established on a firm and nonsectarian footing in the 1860s,³⁹ Cincinnati Jews abandoned the last of their Jewishly sponsored private and parochial schools, and became prime public school supporters, relegating Jewish studies to afternoon and Sunday schools (new Jewish day schools were founded in the twentieth century). Jewish students achieved exemplary public school records, and a disproportionate number went on to finish high school: for several decades beginning in the 1880s, Jews are said to have comprised between 20 and 30 percent of each year's high school graduating class. Subsequently, many Jews (how many is uncertain), including women, went on to college: some went to Harvard and other East Coast universities, others stayed closer to home in Ohio. Nor did concern for education end there. From the late nineteenth century onwards, at least one Jew usually won election to the board of education (the most notable were Board Presidents Samuel Ach and William Shroder for whom public schools were later named) and numerous Jews served as school room teachers. Indeed, what Lafcadio Hearn wrote of Cincinnati's Jews in the 1870s continued to be true long afterward: "They make the education of their children a sacred duty, and in this they patronize the Public Schools and the Public Library. They are the most firm supporters of our public educational system."⁴⁰

Jews also firmly supported local institutions of culture. That so many first-generation Cincinnati Jews had been exposed to culture in Germany, and therefore valued music, art and theater, much as their non-Jewish German neighbors did, certainly explains much of this interest. Thanks to their new wealth, and the relative openness of Cincinnati society, even pre-Civil War Jews were known for being "sociable and . . . disposed to enjoy themselves."⁴¹ But culture, especially to newly emancipated Jews, also meant more: It represented a commitment to western civilization and its canon, an embrace of artistic and humanistic values, and an almost religious exultation in what the human mind could create. By bringing

culture to Cincinnati, then, Jews sought to raise the city to a metropolis of the highest rank, on a par with London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. This endeavor was all part of their overall commitment to the city and its development.

Several Cincinnati cultural institutions, including Pike's Opera House and Krohn Conservatory, have carried Jewish names. The art museum, the symphony orchestra, the public library, the theater, the May Festival, and numerous other cultural programs and institutions, to say nothing of the arts' fund, heavily depended (and still depend) on Jews for much of their support. "None of the great charities, none of the theatres, none of the societies of art, artistic development or music, could live if it were not for the support of the Jews," William Howard Taft once said, speaking of Cincinnati. However much he exaggerated for the benefit of his Jewish listeners, it nevertheless remains true that Cincinnati Jews played a central role in creating and maintaining their city's cultural institutions.⁴²

For all of these efforts, Jews probably made their most important contribution to civic betterment in Cincinnati through their work in the sphere of politics. This marked a significant change, because before the Civil War Cincinnati Jews took pride in their "lack of political office-seeking," an attitude that both made a virtue out of traditional Jewish necessities and reflected widespread popular suspicions of those who declared politics their calling. We know that Henry Mack served on the city council as early as 1862, and that one year later Isaac Mayer Wise was nominated for the Ohio Senate, a nomination that, at the insistence of his congregation, he declined. By the last third of the nineteenth century, however, local Jews were serving in a full range of elective and appointive offices. A 1904 account lists some fifty different Cincinnati Jews who at one time or another engaged in "public service," and includes individuals who served as mayor, common pleas judge, county solicitor, prosecuting attorney, county clerk, state senator, member of the state house of representatives, county commissioner, appraiser of customs, city council member, school board member, police commissioner, U.S. commissioner, sinking fund trustee, and justice of the peace. In 1900, two Jews actually ran against one another for the mayor's chair: Julius Fleischmann, who won, and Alfred M. Cohen. That Jews could attain such offices was in part a tribute to the city's political machine: It made sure that Jews received their due. Jewish involvement in politics also reveals much about Jewish-Christian relations in the city: social prejudice, as it existed, did not apparently stand in the way of Jews' political advancement. What may

even be more revealing, however, is the fact that Jews sought these offices in the first place. Some no doubt enjoyed the power and prestige; others, it later turned out, misused their power for personal gain. Yet for many, public office was a burden; it meant time away from business and family. They served less out of joy than out of a sense of duty and calling, the same Progressive-era feelings of paternalistic altruism that motivated elite non-Jews. At least in some cases, they used their time in office to promote their vision of what Cincinnati should become.⁴³

The good government movement, culminating in the passage of a new city charter in 1924, serves as an obvious case in point. Murray Seasongood, the Jewish lawyer who spearheaded the anticorruption campaign, had a vision of how local government could work more efficiently and better, without corruption and at reduced costs. His foray into the political arena stemmed from his desire to effect the kind of changes that he advocated. He was a man with a mission, and Jews were prominent among those who flocked to his side. "From its inception," Brickner reports, "the Charter Movement received the support of the Jewish element. A good part of the funds for the campaign, as well as the leadership in the district and ward organizations, came from the Jewish groups. The Jewish women were particularly helpful in the organizational side of the campaign." In addition, Rabbi David Philipson threw his own weight and prestige behind the good government cause: urban reform appealed to his sense of justice and holiness. To be sure, some Jews did not support Seasongood. Republican Gilbert Bettman, later State Attorney General, for example, believed "that a party was better reformed from within than from changing the form of government." Still, he too acknowledged that reform and good government were fundamentally necessary. The ideals that Cincinnati's Jewish leaders cherished for their community—their sense of obligation and mission as well as their vision of what the community could become—demanded nothing less.⁴⁴

"To Endear and Preserve Our Religion"

The vision of Cincinnati Jews that we have been tracing might be described as a kind of civil religion, independent of church, socially integrative, and reflecting "deep-seated values and commitments." While selectively derived from Judaism, the central tenets that Cincinnati Jews upheld cannot themselves be described as Judaism: essential commandments, traditional rituals, and historical consciousness were all left out.⁴⁵

Traditional Judaism, however, found few exponents in Cincinnati. As we have seen, even in Joseph Jonas's days, religious laxity was the rule. The traveler I. J. Benjamin described the Jews he met as having "little interest in spiritual matters." According to Stephen Mostov's figures for 1851, over one-fifth of the community did not affiliate with any synagogue at all. Although by 1851 there were four different synagogues to choose from—Bene Israel (English and Dutch Jews), Bene Yeshurun (German Jews), Ahabeth Achim (German Jews living in the Over-the-Rhine), and the so-called Polish Congregation, the forerunner of Adath Israel—the majority of Jews who did affiliate attended only on an irregular basis. The fear, an understandable one, and one by no means unique to Cincinnati, was that Judaism would be unable to survive its encounter with the New World: Ritual laxity, assimilation, and intermarriage, many thought, would eventually bring about Judaism's demise.⁴⁶

Religious reform, evident already in the 1840s, was an effort to stem this tide. In 1848 Bene Israel and Bene Yeshurun both revised their constitutions "to prevent disorder and impropriety." Various traditional and customary practices, such as kissing the Torah, or banging on the desk for order now fell under the ban. Such practices, in the words of one Bene Israel regulation, tended "to create irreligion and derision rather than a due respect and reverence for the precepts of our holy religion." Increasingly, the wealthy and socially conscious men who ruled Cincinnati's synagogues sought dignity and decorum in their religious life: services that both comported with their own Americanized mores and that could be proudly displayed to gentile visitors. Concerned more with aesthetic than with ideological reforms, they sought a new balance—one that would preserve Jewish identity, even as it heightened Judaism's appeal to outsiders, unaffiliated Jews, and the young.⁴⁷

The history of Cincinnati Judaism, indeed of American Judaism as a whole, changed in 1854 with the appointment of Isaac Mayer Wise as rabbi of Bene Yeshurun. Born in Steingrub, Bohemia, in 1819 and trained in Germany, Wise immigrated to the United States in 1846 and quickly established himself as a "Reformer." In his first major pulpit, at Congregation Beth El in Albany, he stirred controversy with a series of ritual modifications aimed at improving decorum; he also organized a mixed choir. This helped precipitate his firing, led to a memorable melee on the holiday of Rosh Hashanah when the congregation's president lashed out at him and knocked off his hat, and soon resulted in the founding of a new congregation, Anshe Emeth, which he served as rabbi until being called to

Cincinnati. How much Bene Yeshurun's leaders knew of all this when they appointed him (and agreed to his demand for a life contract) is not clear, but they surely realized that, in Wise, they were getting one of the most able young men then serving in the American rabbinate: a leader who combined within himself traditional and modern learning, boundless energy and ambition, facility in both German and English, and remarkable personal charisma.⁴⁸

In accepting the Bene Yeshurun position, Wise made clear that he shared the vision of those who hired him. He promised to elevate his new synagogue into "a model congregation for the whole West and South," and pledged "to maintain and defend the honor of our sacred faith opposite all religious sects." He was, he pointed out, "a friend of bold plans and grand schemes."⁴⁹ In a city filled with bold planners and grand schemers, one that envisaged itself becoming the greatest city in America if not the world, he found himself right at home.

Years later, Wise compared Bene Yeshurun in 1853 to "a company of brave and daring men, each longing to do some noble and heroic deed, but unable, because there was no true and capable leader." With his arrival, he wrote, the congregation "having at last found one in whom it could put implicit faith, readily submitted itself . . . and marched forward bearing the glorious banner, 'Reform.'" Bene Yeshurun's members, however, did not imagine that in following Wise they were creating a separate movement or denomination within Judaism. Instead, they and Wise saw themselves as the harbingers of *American* Judaism, a legitimate heir to the Judaism practiced by different waves of Jewish immigrants. They believed, in other words, that the Reform Judaism that they were establishing in Cincinnati—the "forms, formulas, customs and observances" that Wise modernized—would in time be recognized as the rite, or *minhag*, of *all* American Jews, displacing the Spanish-Portuguese, German, and Polish rites then practiced by different synagogues. From a Cincinnati point of view, of course, this was only fitting; it was a logical Jewish extension of the "Cincinnati dream." The city that represented the future of America as a whole, the "gateway to the west," would shape America Jewry's destiny as well. The Reform rite established at Bene Yeshurun would become the "American rite"; its prayerbook (which Wise optimistically entitled *Minhag America*) would become the prayerbook of Jews nationwide.⁵⁰

This nexus between Cincinnati's destiny and that of Reform Judaism helps explain why, even in a city where so many Jews observed Judaism in the breach, Reform Judaism nevertheless became part and parcel of the

local Jewish ethos. To help spread Reform became, if nothing else, an act of local patriotism, a means of boosting Cincinnati's nationwide status. As a result, Reform grew rapidly in Cincinnati; it also penetrated further than it did in most other American cities. As early as 1854, Congregation Bene Israel, impressed by Wise's manner and ideas and probably worried that he might lure members away from its congregation, decided that it too would elect him rabbi; they even agreed to pay half of his salary. Bene Yeshurun wouldn't hear of the idea, however, so Bene Israel hired "a reformer" of its own, Rabbi Max Lilienthal, whom they took on Wise's recommendation. The two congregations proceeded, if not always at the same pace, to introduce a series of aesthetic and liturgical reforms. Changes included shorter and more decorous services, organ music, vernacular prayers, mixed choirs, abolition of headcoverings, abandonment of the second day of Jewish holidays, and more. "We want Reform in order to endear and preserve our religion," Wise explained, "we are practical."⁵¹

The strategy apparently paid off, for both congregations grew in size and wealth. In 1865, Bene Yeshurun laid the cornerstone for a magnificent new Moorish-style synagogue building to be erected on Plum Street. It wanted the building to be not only a Jewish but also a Cincinnati landmark, and made sure that it was designed by one of the city's foremost architects, James Keys Wilson. Significantly, the site chosen was just opposite the city's leading Catholic and Unitarian churches, symbolic of the coequal role that Wise believed Judaism should play in the city. Bene Israel followed suit in 1869 dedicating an imposing Gothic building on Eighth and Mound streets, opposite the Quaker Meeting House. While not as impressive as the Bene Yeshurun building, it too was designed to be an architectural monument. Indeed, both buildings, in accordance with Reform Jewish ideology, were designated "temples," not synagogues. Rather than await the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, Reform Jews now declared that each synagogue was to be a temple unto itself.⁵²

It was, however, not just its temples that made Cincinnati the center of Reform Judaism. Far more important was the fact that the city became home to Reform's premier newspaper and to its central institutions and organizations: the *American Israelite* (the name itself is significant), founded as the *Israelite* in 1854 and renamed in 1874; the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, founded in 1873; Hebrew Union College, founded two years later; and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, founded in 1889. Cincinnati Jews, led by Rabbis Wise and Lilienthal, took the lead

in creating, nurturing, staffing, and supporting all of these, willingly so, since they saw them as instruments through which both Reform Judaism's destiny and Cincinnati's might ultimately be realized. Hebrew Union College, which at the time of its founding was the only rabbinical seminary in America, became particularly important in the life of the city. It served as a magnet for attracting important Jewish scholars, drew in highly motivated students from around the country (many of whom simultaneously studied at the University of Cincinnati), brought to the city important speakers and programs, and spread Cincinnati's name throughout the entire Reform movement and across the world of Jewish scholarship. Moreover, the college demonstrated anew the sense of shared destinies that we have seen to be so characteristic of the entire Cincinnati Jewish relationship. Typically, in promoting the college to American Jews, Cincinnati Jews promoted their fair city as well:

On account of her high culture and her love for music and art Cincinnati has come to be called the 'Paris of America.' Her public schools, her colleges and other educational institutions, together with her unequaled Public Library rank second to none in the United States. The Cincinnati Jews rank first in intelligence, culture, education and—Judaism. What more fitting place then could have been selected wherein to locate the College? Is it not perfectly natural that it should be located among such a people with such advantageous surroundings?⁵³

Still, despite all of this, Reform Judaism never gained a monopoly in Cincinnati. Traditional Orthodox Judaism maintained a continuous presence in the city from Joseph Jonas's day onward, and the city directory always listed at least one Orthodox synagogue, usually more. Of the pre-Civil War synagogues, Adath Israel, known for years as the "Polische Schule" (Polish Synagogue), was founded sometime in the 1840s (possibly under a different name),⁵⁴ and maintained its Orthodox orientation into the twentieth century, when it affiliated with the Conservative movement. Congregation Ahabeth Achim, the only German synagogue in the upper west end part of the city, was founded in 1847, and maintained its orthodox orientation into the 1870s. Congregation Sherith Israel ("Remnant of Israel"), founded in 1855, consisted of the "remnant" of Bene Israel that remained Orthodox and opposed the Reforms promulgated by Max Lilienthal. Its rabbis included Bernard Illowy, one of the most learned and influential early Orthodox rabbis in the entire country. After the Civil War and particularly once East European Jewish immigration to the city increased

in the 1880s, several new Orthodox synagogues were founded. In 1866, Schachne Isaacs, who had immigrated to Cincinnati from the Lithuanian province of Suwalki back in 1853, founded Congregation Bet Tefillah ("Reb Schachne's Shul"), in time the largest Orthodox synagogue in the city. Other Orthodox synagogues founded by immigrants included Beth Hamidrosch Hagodol (Lithuanian), Ohav Shalom (Russian), Anshe Shalom (Rumanian), B'nai Jacob (Polish) Yad Charutsim (artisans), Kneseth Israel, B'nai Avraham, and New Hope (Tikwoh Chadaschah), the latter founded by German emigres in 1939.⁵⁵

At least through World War II, however, Orthodox Judaism maintained its own separate existence; it never became part of the larger Jewish community's vision of itself. In the eyes of most Jews, Cincinnati was still the "home" of Reform. Reform Jews continued to be the wealthiest, most numerous, and most visible Jewish element in the city. Furthermore, unlike in the East where the Conservative Movement grew rapidly, in Cincinnati the tide still seemed to be moving Reform's way. Two German Orthodox synagogues founded before the Civil War, Ahabeth Achim and Sherith Israel, merged in 1907 into the Reading Road Temple (not synagogue), and instituted moderate reforms. Twenty-four years later, during the Great Depression, the temple became part of Isaac M. Wise Temple (formerly Bene Yeshurun); its members "joined the crowd." Cincinnati Jews who believed in the inevitability of Reform naturally took this as confirming evidence that they had been right all along. Reform, the Judaism that they had developed and promoted for so many years, was destined to become just what they had envisioned: American Judaism. They assumed that the children of the East Europeans, as good Americans, would soon become Reform Jews too, and that Orthodoxy would eventually wither away and disappear.⁵⁶

Paradise Lost

The Jewish vision of Cincinnati, the tenets that the community upheld and the hopes that it cherished, remained largely unrealized. The city became neither the urban center that the first immigrants foresaw nor the model community that their children strove to create. Instead, later generations, unfamiliar with past history, saw Cincinnati as just another middle-sized American Jewish community, one far less important than Cleveland or Chicago. The dreams that once made the city exceptional in Jewish eyes were, with the passage of time, forgotten.

To some extent, Jews themselves were to blame: the utopia that they wished for, the "new era" that once stood at the center of their hopes, was, in retrospect, only a pipe dream, more a testimony to post-Emancipation fantasies than to local realities. No matter how unrealistic the local Jewish vision may have been, however, the fact that Cincinnati failed to remain even a regional Jewish center must largely be attributed to the weakening of the city itself. Just as the rise of the community had been tied to Cincinnati's own destiny, so too its subsequent decline; the two went hand in hand. The numerous factors associated with that decline—the collapse of the river trade, the development of the Far West, the routing of railway lines through Chicago, the rise of competing midwestern cities, political mismanagement, and so forth—affected the city's Jews no less than their Gentile neighbors.

As Cincinnati's character changed during the twentieth century, the assumptions that formerly guided its Jewish life were increasingly called into question. For one thing, where Jews formerly depended on being able to succeed economically in the city, now they no longer could. Some of the wealthiest old-line families fell on hard times. Potential newcomers found that opportunity knocked louder for them in Chicago or in the booming cities of the two coasts. Jews did still interact with their non-Jewish neighbors in Cincinnati, more so than in many another city. But they could no longer deny that they faced blatant social and religious discrimination in the city as well. Several local employers refused to hire Jews, well-known social clubs refused to admit them, and many Christian homes were closed to them at night. The sense of belongingness that early Jews had so cherished grew more and more attenuated.

In the area of civic betterment, Jews continued to play an exceptional role, participating actively in the major educational, cultural, philanthropic and civic organizations that the city offered. But they no longer did so from a sense of mission, as if from their efforts alone a great society could be brought about. Nor did they anymore expect Jewish charities to assume a pioneering role in social and community work. Instead, support for Jewish charities markedly declined. Where once, as we have seen, the city took first place nationwide in terms of per capita Jewish giving, by the last quarter of the twentieth century it had fallen to the bottom half of the national scale, ranking below most other midwestern cities.

Finally, Cincinnati's relationship with Reform Judaism underwent a change. Once the acknowledged center of American Reform, believed by its adherents to adumbrate what American Judaism as a whole would

become, the community in the twentieth century lost both its sense of Jewish mission and its certainty regarding Reform's future. Already in the 1930s, the city's leading Orthodox rabbi, Eliezer Silver (who considered himself the chief rabbi not only of the city but also of North America as a whole), consciously challenged Reform's domination, seeking to demonstrate that Orthodoxy too could flourish under American conditions. During the next three decades, he built up Cincinnati's reputation as a center of Orthodoxy, created a range of new Orthodox institutions, trained a generation of young people, and gathered around him a coterie of wealthy laymen who supported the projects that he initiated.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, following World War II, Reform's principal lay body, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, left Cincinnati and moved to what had clearly become the new center of American Judaism, New York. Hebrew Union College remained firmly ensconced on Clifton Avenue, despite abortive efforts to move it, but Cincinnati became a less important part of its overall identity too. No longer did the "Cincinnati School" train virtually all American Reform rabbis, as once it had. Now it shared that task with three other branches of the school: New York (formerly the Jewish Institute of Religion), Los Angeles, and Jerusalem.⁵⁸

Yet for all that it had lost, the Cincinnati Jewish community remained distinctive, quite unlike communities of similar size like Kansas City, Rochester, Buffalo, or Providence. The legacy of the past explains why. The nature of the immigrants who settled and shaped the community, the kind of Judaism that they practiced, their lofty communal vision—all of these left an impress on the community's character that continues to be evident even today. A recent article seeking to explain "what is so special about Cincinnati Jewry" still found the answer in the history of the German Jewish community, its "ambition," "eagerness to assimilate," and "premonition of success."⁵⁹ The era of German Jewish hegemony has long since passed, and by now the city's East European Jews have prospered and come into their own. But, as Cincinnatians know, the memories linger on.

Perhaps the central surviving symbol of Cincinnati Jewry's nineteenth-century grandeur is 'historic' Plum Street Temple: magnificent, gaudy, and now considerably faded, a tourist attraction. Looking at it, one is struck anew by the vision that it represents: its boundlessness, triumphalism, and daring. Yet at the same time the vast, Moorish-style edifice seems cold and remote, thoroughly out of place in Cincinnati, in jarring contrast to the image evoked by the city's Jewish community today. In fact, Plum

Street temple has also long since been superseded; Bene Yeshurun (now Wise Temple) maintains another synagogue building with a quite different and more contemporary ambience in suburban Amberley. Still, historically minded members of the community continue to preserve Plum Street, and the building remains in use for religious services, weddings and communal events. The ornate structure, now a National Historic Landmark, serves a useful purpose, standing as a monument to days gone by when Reform was young, Cincinnati was booming, and hopeful dreams abounded.

Table 4.1. Estimated Jewish Population of Cincinnati.

Year	Population
1820	16
1830	100
1840	1,000
1850	2,800
1860	7,500–10,000
1870	8,000–12,000
1880	8,000–12,000
1890	15,000
1900	16,000
1910	28,000
1920	25,000
1930	23,500
1940	21,800
1950	22,000
1960	25,000
1970	28,000
1980	21,500
1987	25,000

Source: Stephen G. Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem on the Ohio.' The Social and Economic History of Cincinnati's Jewish Community, 1840–1875." (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981), 76; Barnett Brickner, "The Jewish Community of Cincinnati, Historical and Descriptive, 1817–1933" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1933); The American Jewish Year Book; *Demographic Study of the Greater Cincinnati Jewish Community* (1987).

NOTES

1. Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Norwalk, 1896), 787 (originally written in 1877); on Howe, see Larry L. Nelson, "Here's Howe: Ohio's Wandering Historian," *Timeline* 3 (December 1986):42-51; "Cincinnati Jews," undated clipping (c. 1884) pasted into the 1879-81 volume of the (Chicago) *Jewish Advance*, Klau Library, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio; *St. Louis Tribune* quoted in Barnett R. Brickner, "The Jewish Community of Cincinnati, Historical and Descriptive, 1817-1933," (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1933), 17; Isador Wise, "Judaism in Cincinnati," in *Cincinnati: The Queen City*, ed. Charles F. Goss (Chicago, 1912), II, 21.
2. Ann Deborah Michael, "The Origins of the Jewish Community of Cincinnati, 1817-1860" (M.A. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1970), 28, 56; idem, "The Origins of the Jewish Community of Cincinnati 1817-1860," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 30 (1972), 155; *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, April 8, 1816; Joseph Levine, "Economic Activity of Jews in Cincinnati Prior to the Civil War" (Prize Essay, Hebrew Union College, 1957). On Horwitz (sometimes spelled "Horowitz," he also was variously known as Jonas and Jonathan), see also M. Vaxer, "The First Hebrew Bible Printed in America," *Jewish Journal of Bibliography* 1 (1940):20-26; and Edwin Wolf 2d and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Philadelphia, 1975 [1956]), 308-13.
3. Joseph Jonas, "The Jews Come to Ohio," reprinted in Jacob R. Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews 1775-1865* (Philadelphia, 1955), 1:205-15 (hereafter *Marcus-Memoirs*); also in Morris U. Schappes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875* (New York, 1971), 223-35.
4. According to the most famous story, quoted by David Philipson in the name of Jonas's daughter, an old Quaker lady came to see Jonas, and said "'art thou a Jew? Thou art one of God's chosen people. Wilt thou let me examine thee?' She turned him round and round and at last exclaimed, 'well, thou art no different to other people.'" David Philipson, "The Jewish Pioneers of the Ohio Valley," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 8 (1900):45; for other details of Jonas's life see *ibid.*, 56.
5. James K. Gutheim, *Address Delivered At the Laying of the Corner Stone of the Congregation "Bnai Yeshurun" . . . 14 October 1846* (Cincinnati, 1846), 1. Interestingly enough, this same theme was implied as early as 1825 in a fundraising letter sent out by Bene Israel's leaders. "We have congregated," they wrote, "where a few years before nothing was heard but the howling of wild Beasts, and the more hideous cry of savage man." See "Appeal for Congregational Assistance" (1825), reprinted in Schappes, *A Documentary History*, 178.
6. *Marcus-Memoirs* 1:215. Dr. Jacob R. Marcus suggests to me that members of the Moses family were also traditionally observant. Jonas, he says, may have been "solitary" only in terms of his own family.
7. *Marcus-Memoirs* 1:205-6.

8. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 319 on the basis of contemporary comments.
9. *Marcus-Memoirs* 1:209; [Samuel Osgood], "First Synagogue in the West," *The Western Messenger* 2 (October 1836): 204; for Philadelphia, see Wolf & Whiteman, *History of the Jews of Philadelphia*, 143.
10. Jonas's second wife was Martha Oppenheim (London *Jewish Chronicle* [May 14, 1880]:5). She may have been the daughter of Simeon Oppenheim, secretary of London's Great Synagogue, but I have been unable to confirm this.
11. Edward Winthrop to Mrs. Harriet Boswell, February 1, 1843 (Special Collections, King Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.) Harriet Boswell's interest in Jews may have been stimulated by the family's ties to the Gratz family (Benjamin Gratz's second wife was Ann Boswell). For a parallel relationship between a Christian minister and prominent Jewish laymen, see Arthur A. Chiel, "Ezra Stiles and the Jews: A Study in Ambivalence," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. B. W. Korn (Waltham, 1976), 63-76. On Jonas's interest in theology and "the Prophecies," see Philipson, "Jewish Pioneers," 56.
12. [Osgood], "First Synagogue in the West," 205, 206; Philipson, "Jewish Pioneers," 45.
13. Armin Tenner, *Cincinnati sonst und jetzt* (Cincinnati, 1878), 47, as translated in Rudolf Glanz, *Studies in Judaica Americana* (New York, 1970), 54. The first German Jews in Cincinnati, according to Joseph Jonas, arrived in 1820; *Marcus-Memoirs* 1:206. For the names of early English Jews, see the 1825 *Cincinnati Directory* as reprinted in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 9 (1901), 155.
14. Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 75-81; Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City* 4:326 (Although Goss does not directly attribute the quoted words to Pritz, subjects are known to have supplied their own biographies). See also Marc Lee Raphael, *Jews and Judaism in a Midwestern Community: Columbus, Ohio, 1840-1975* (Columbus, 1979), 17: "Almost every Bavarian Jewish family [in Columbus] was from Mittelsinn, a tiny village on the Sinn River."
15. *City Directory* (1819) quoted in Clara Longworth de Chambrun, *Cincinnati: Story of the Queen City* (New York, 1939), 137-38; J. S. Scott quoted in Mostov, "A Jerusalem on the Ohio," 54, 71; Greeley quoted in *Cincinnati: A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors* (Cincinnati, 1943), 50.
16. Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City*, 117.
17. Maxwell Whiteman, "Notions, Dry Goods, and Clothing: An Introduction to the Study of the Cincinnati Peddler," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 53 (April 1963): 306-21, esp. 312-13.
18. Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 110-14; Stephen G. Mostov, "Dun and Bradstreet Reports as a Source of Jewish Economic History: Cincinnati, 1840-1875," *American Jewish History* 72, no. 3 (March 1983): 351; *American Israelite* (June 18, 1858) quoted in James G. Heller, *As Yesterday When It Is Past* (Cincinnati, 1942), 21-22. On Jews in the clothing trades, see Judith Greenfeld,

"The Role of the Jews in the Development of the Clothing Industry in the United States," *YIVO Annual* 2-3 (1947/8): 180-204; Moses Rischin, *The Promised City* (New York, 1962), 61-68. The Jewish traveler I. J. Benjamin, describing his visit to Cincinnati on the eve of the Civil War, observed that an important Cincinnati business "although not engaged in by Jews—is the trade in salted pork." I. J. Benjamin, *Three Years in America*, trans. Charles Reznikoff (Philadelphia, 1956), 1:315.

19. For three somewhat divergent accounts, see Michael, "The Origins of the Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 107-26, esp. 116, 122; Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 254-78, 465-82; and Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 86-141. For the quote, see Leon Horowitz *Rumaniyah VeAmerika* (Berlin, 1874), 25; and Randi Musnitsky "America's Goodness: An Edited Translation of Leon Horowitz's *Tuv Artsot Habrit*" (Ordination thesis, HUC-JIR, 1983), 59.

20. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 254-78, 465-82.

21. Goss, *Cincinnati The Queen City* 2:361; 3:866. See also the many biographies of local Jewish notables in volumes 3 and 4.

22. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 273; cf. Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 116: "For the entire period from 1840 to 1865 only five business firms in Cincinnati are known to have included both Jewish and non-Jewish partners." The situation changed somewhat after the Civil War.

23. Max B. May, "The Jews of Cincinnati," in ed. Charles T. Greve *Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens* (Chicago, 1904), 1:948.

24. Wise, "Judaism in Cincinnati," 21; Samuel Cohon, "Introduction," *Hadoar* 19 (June 9, 1939): 513 (translation mine).

25. Judith E. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis* (Bloomington, 1984), 3; John Higham, *Send These To Me*, 2d ed. (Baltimore, 1984), 142-43; Richard L. Zweigenhaft and G. William Domhoff, *Jews in the Protestant Establishment* (New York, 1982), 87-88.

26. Benny Kraut, "Judaism Triumphant: Isaac Mayer Wise on Unitarianism and Liberal Christianity," *AJS Review* 7-8 (1982-83): 187-91.

27. Allan Tarshish, "Jew and Christian in a New Society: Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Relationships in the United States, 1848-1881," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus* ed. B. W. Korn (Waltham, Mass. and New York, 1976), 579; Lafcadio Hearn, *Barbarous Barbers and Other Stories* (Tokyo, 1939), 264 (copy in Klau Library, Hebrew Union College); see David Philipson, *Max Lilienthal* (New York, 1915), esp. 70-75, 96-100; and Douglas Kohn, "The Dean of American Rabbis: A Critical Study of the Life, Career and Significance of David Philipson as Reflected in His Writings" (Ordination Thesis, HUC-JIR, 1987). Philipson quotes Lilienthal as claiming that "Cincinnati took the lead in fostering a brotherly sentiment between Jews and Christians (p. 73)."

28. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 282, 286, 319-23, 458; Carl Wittke, "The Germans of Cincinnati," in *Festschrift German-American Tricentennial Jubilee: Cincinnati 1983*, ed. Don H. Tolzmann (Cincinnati, 1982), 8;

Susan W. Dryfoos, *Iphigene: Memoirs of Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger of The New York Times* (New York, 1981), 12-13; Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City* 4:324. In determining the intermarriage rate I have recalculated Brickner's figures (p. 458), and deleted the year 1919, which saw an unusual number of postwar marriages and skews the intermarriage rate downward. If the 1919 data is included, the intermarriage rate falls to 3.6 percent. *The Double Triangle News-YMHA Newsletter*, November 1921, places the intermarriage rate for 1915-1920 at 4 percent.

29. Michael, "The Origins of the Jewish Community," 43; Arthur G. King to Jacob R. Marcus (August 12, 1961), American Jewish Archives. For earlier evidence of prejudice, see Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews* 1:359, where Henry Seesel reports that in 1844 "some ruffian from the country . . . knocked me out into the middle of the street, calling me a 'damned Jew dog.'" See also the slurs contained in local credit reports about Jews as quoted in Mostov, "Dun and Bradstreet Reports as a Source of Jewish Economic History," esp. 343-53.

30. H. M. Moos, *Hannah: Or a Glimpse of Paradise* (Cincinnati, 1868), 28. Moos's last lines (p. 351) may have been directed at Cincinnati Jews: "But where is the glimpse of Paradise? There, there, kind reader, where he sleeps in peace, beyond the reach of all earthly woes."

31. *The Hebrew Review* 2 (1881-82): 189; Brickner, "The Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 306-19, 321, 347; Zane L. Miller, *Boss Cox's Cincinnati* (Chicago, 1968), 52; David Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew* (Cincinnati, 1941), 172; Polk Laffoon IV, "Cincinnati's Jewish Community," *Cincinnati Magazine* 10 (April 1977): 47, 49; Iola O. Silberstein, "Diversity on Converging Pathways: Mary H. Doherty and Helen G. Lotspeich," *Queen City Heritage* 41 (1983): 8, 12. Cincinnati's Jewish Clubs and their members are listed in *The Blue Book and Family Directory* (Cincinnati, 1890), 87-92, but not in Clara Devereux's *Blue Book of Cincinnati Society* (Cincinnati, 1916). See also Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio*, 787: "There is but little visiting between the families of Jews and Gentiles (1877)."

32. On the problem of myth and reality, see Jonathan D. Sarna, "The 'Mythical Jew' and the 'Jew Next Door' in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Anti-Semitism in American History* ed. David A. Gerber (Urbana, 1986), 57-78.

33. *Hebrew Review* 2 (1881-82): 188-89; Alfred Segal quoted in Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew*, 497.

34. Boris Bogen, *Born A Jew* (New York, 1930), 80; Isador Wise, "Judaism in Cincinnati," 22; [Prospectus for A] *School of Jewish Social Service Conducted Under the Auspices of the Jewish Settlement* (Cincinnati, 1913), 4-5.

35. Heller, *As Yesterday When It Is Past*, 22-33; Brickner, "The Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 180-253; Max Senior, "Cincinnati: The Pioneer in Federation," *Jewish Charity* 4, no. 6 (March 1905): 181-82; Max Senior, "Tuberculosis Cases in Cincinnati," *Jewish Charity* 3, no. 6 (March 1904): 138-39; Harry Viteles, "Preface," *Cumulative Index of the Twenty-One Annual Reports of the United Jewish Charities of Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati, [1918]), 2-6.

36. Senior, "Cincinnati: The Pioneer in Federation," 182; Boris Bogen, *Jewish Philanthropy* (New York, 1917), 52.
37. Goss, *Cincinnati The Queen City* 4:325, 776, 716, 301, 690; James Albert Green, *History of the Associated Charities of Cincinnati 1879-1937* (Cincinnati, 1937), 27-29, 33, 70-71, 82-84; The Community Chest of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, *The First Twenty Years 1915-1935* (Cincinnati, 1935), 1, 20, 32, 135-41, and attached table; Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 236-38.
38. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 180-253; Viteles, "Preface," 2-6.
39. Emblematic of Jews' insistence on nonsectarian public school education was their firm opposition to Bible reading in the public schools. In a celebrated court case (1869-72) that included Jewish depositions (*Minor v. Board of Education of Cincinnati*), the Ohio Supreme Court upheld the right of Cincinnati's Board of Education to dispense with Bible reading in the public schools; see *The Bible in the Public Schools* (New York, 1967); Robert Michaelsen, "Common Schools, Common Religion?" *Church History* 38 (1969): 201-17; F. Michael Perko, "The Building Up of Zion: Religion and Education in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980): 97-114; Philipson, *Max Lilienthal*, 474-87.
40. Hearn, *Barbarous Barbers*, 132, 264; Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 340-49; cf. Lloyd P. Gartner, "Temples of Liberty Unpolluted: American Jews and Public Schools, 1840-1875," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for J. R. Marcus*, ed. Korn 157-89. In an 1883 visit to Cincinnati, Henrietta Szold found that at the University of Cincinnati, "most of the lady students are Jewesses;" quoted in Alexandra L. Levin, *The Szolds of Lombard Street* (Philadelphia, 1960), 162.
41. Benjamin, *Three Years in America* 1:312.
42. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 279-85, see p. 279 for the Taft quote; see also Laffoon, "Cincinnati's Jewish Community," 46.
43. May, "Jews of Cincinnati," 948; Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 15, 324-32; Miller, *Boss Cox's Cincinnati*, 173-241.
44. Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 332-36; Miller, *Boss Cox's Cincinnati*, 133, 185; for Bettman, see Iphigene Molony Bettman file, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
45. Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *American Civil Religion*, eds. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York, 1974), 23, 28; see also John F. Wilson, *Public Religion in American Culture* (Philadelphia, 1979); and Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington, Ind., 1986).
46. On Jonas, see text at note 6 above; for other evidence of laxity, see Benjamin, *Three Years in America*, 2:278; Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 150, 162.
47. Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 164-68 (quoting original syna-

gogue minutes). For the emphasis on preserving Judaism into the next generation as a motive for Reform, see the 1824 petition to the Charleston Congregation Beth Elohim reprinted in Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, *The Jews of the United States 1790-1840: A Documentary History* (New York, 1963), 554; and Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Debate Over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Cambridge, 1987), 375.

48. Isaac M. Wise, *Reminiscences* (1901; 2d ed., New York, 1945); James G. Heller, *Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work and Thought* (New York, 1965), 124-83; Naphthali J. Rubinger, "Dismissal in Albany," *American Jewish Archives* 24 (November 1972): 161-62; Leon A. Jick, *The Americanization of the Synagogue 1820-1870* (Hanover, N.H., 1976), 115, 121-29, 154-55.

49. Quoted in Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," 170.

50. I. M. Wise, *The History of K. K. Bene Yeshurun . . . Published in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of its Incorporation*. (Cincinnati, 1892), 1, 19; cf. Kraut, "Judaism Triumphant," 183-85.

51. Heller, *As Yesterday When It Is Past* and Philipson, *The Oldest Jewish Congregation in the West* trace the histories of Bene Yeshurun and Bene Israel; see also Alan I. Marcus, "Am I My Brother's Keeper: Reform Judaism in the American West, Cincinnati, 1840-1870," *Queen City Heritage* 44 (Spring 1986): 3-19. Wise's quote is from the *American Israelite*, August 14, 1863, as quoted in Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 59. According to David Philipson, Lilienthal came to Bene Israel on the recommendation of "prominent Jewish families" whose sons attended his New York boarding school, *Max Lilienthal*, 59.

52. Rachel Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1955), 70-73, 76.

53. *The Sabbath Visitor* 16 (August 1886): 1; Steven A. Fox, "On the Road to Unity: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and American Jewry, 1873-1903," *American Jewish Archives* 32 (November 1980): 145-93; Michael A. Meyer, "A Centennial History," in *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years*, ed. Samuel E. Karff (Cincinnati, 1976), 7-283.

54. The founding date of Adath Israel presents something of a puzzle. Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851* (Cincinnati, 1851), 82-83 and *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1859* (Cincinnati, 1859), 198 refers to a "Holy Congregation, Gate of Heaven" (Shaar Hashomayim), which Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' on the Ohio," p. 155, takes to be the forerunner of Adath Israel. He claims that it was founded in 1850, dissolved in 1852, and reestablished as Adath Israel in 1853. Isador Wise, "Judaism in Cincinnati," p. 41, claims that the congregation was actually founded "somewhere around 1846." When cited by Ann Deborah Michael, "The Origins of the Jewish Community of Cincinnati," p. 45, this becomes "in 1846." Barnett Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," p. 103, argues that the congregation was actually founded earlier in the 1840s. In 1847, according to his account, the congregation split up, and in 1854 Adath Israel received its charter. On the other hand, Louis Feinberg, Adath Israel's

longtime rabbi, claimed in an article in *Hadoar* (19, no. 29 [June 9, 1939]:520) that the congregation was actually founded in 1847. Until better sources are located, the question remains open, but it is worth noting that Isaac Leeser found *two* Polish congregations in existence when he visited Cincinnati in 1851, one of which he names as "Gates of Heaven," while the other he does not name at all. Subsequently, he reports, the two congregations merged; see *Occident* 10 (1852): 47.

55. Louis Feinberg, "The Orthodox Community," *Hadoar* 19 (June 9, 1939): 520-21; Brickner, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 106-11; Elcanan Isaacs, "Nathan Isaacs," in *Men of the Spirit*, ed. Leo Jung (New York, 1964), 575-77. On New Hope congregation, see Benny Kraut, *German-Jewish Orthodoxy in an Immigrant Synagogue: Cincinnati's New Hope Congregation and the Ambiguities of Ethnic Religion* (New York, 1988).

56. On the assumed inevitability of Reform, see Brickner's discussion of the Reading Road Temple, "Jewish Community of Cincinnati," 93; and David Philipson's private thoughts on the dedication of Adath Israel in 1927: "I have no fear for the future of liberal Judaism in the United States. This is the only form that can appeal to American-born and American-reared youth! [*My Life As An American Jew* (Cincinnati, 1941), 378]."

57. Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Silver Era in American Jewish Orthodoxy* (Jerusalem and New York, 1981), esp. 77-92, 166. ("Here in the . . . home of Reform Judaism, Silver wanted to raise the [Orthodox] Agudah's banner."); see also the special Cincinnati section of the *New York Morning Journal* (April 14, 1948) dedicated to Silver. I am indebted to Prof. Jacob R. Marcus for this item.

58. The UAHC's move to New York engendered a revealing debate. See *American Israelite* 95 (October 25, 1948 to November 25, 1948) especially the letter by Isaac M. Wise's son and namesake in the issue of November 25, 1948, p. 3: "Cincinnati will not allow herself to be deprived of her position as the center of American Israel."

59. Polk Laffoon IV, "Cincinnati's Jewish Community," *Cincinnati Magazine* 10 (April 1977): 46.