

Grant County

Marion, the county seat of Grant County was settled in 1826. The original inhabitants of the area were the Miami Indians, but several battles and treaty negotiations ceded much of the land to the American government. Grant County has a strong Quaker history, who came in the 1820s and 1830s, drawn by the rich, fertile farmland. Natural gas was found in the county in 1887, stimulating growth, but this gas boom did not last for more than a decade. There are several larger communities in Grant County (Converse, Fairmount, Fowlerton, Gas City, Jonesboro, Marion, Matthews, Swayzee, Sweetser, Upland and Van Buren), but it was the city of Marion that attracted the majority of the Jewish population; a small community did flourish in Gas City.

Sinai Temple, a Reform congregation, was established in the 1920s to serve the needs of the Jewish community of Marion. In 1924, the ladies of the Sinai Temple community founded a Temple Sisterhood. By December 1924, the membership had grown to 25 women; in 1953 the numbers had grown to 60 women. The sisterhood raised funds to provide financial support to the Temple. The Orthodox Congregation eventually joined the Sinai Temple.

While having a formal synagogue, the Jews of Marion never had a separate cemetery, but rather were buried in the Independent Order Of Odd Fellows Cemetery in Marion in the Jewish section.

As in other communities, the Jewish settlers in Marion were business owners, not farmers. Jacob Baer owned *Blumenthal's*, but in 1863 he gave control to Morris Blumenthal, who partnered with David and Lewis Marks. Leo Nussbaum established *Canton Glass Company* in 1902. In 1923, Albert Rosenbaum opened *A. Rosenbaum and Co. Shoes*. Mark and Meyer Savesky and Joseph Kuppin established the *Challenge Tire*

Company in 1923. Wolf Jackson opened a dry goods store, and The Goldreich family three businesses - the *Goldreich Brothers Junk and Fur*, *Goldreich Fertilizer Company*, as well as the *Goldreich Tire Company*. David Maidenberg opened *Indiana Dry Goods*. Jacob Weinberg acquired *Jacob Weinberg News Agency* in 1928; *Klain Steel Supply, Inc* opened in 1929, Harry Lasky opened *Lasky's Shoe Store* in 1930, and *Leon & Strauss & Company* was owned by Sieg Leon. *Max Bernstein Clothing Store* was started by Max Bernstein and Nathan Schiff opened *Men's Clothing Store*. Other Jewish owned stores included *Meyer and Alexander Jewelers*, *Milton's Clothing Store*, *Newman's Store*, *Phil Lyons Clothing Store*, *Plank Auto Parts*, *Queen City Women's Clothing Store*, *Richard Clothing Co. (now known as Resneck's Women's Clothing Store)*, *Sam Levy Shoe Store*, *Tailor Shop*, *The Boys Shop*, *The Paris*, *The Union Store*, and *Zimmerman Brothers Clothing Store*. Marion had two jewelry stores: *Rogers Credit Jewelers* and *Gil Roskin Jewelers*.

Many influential members of community were Jewish. Tony Maidenberg was mayor, 1975-1979, while Ann Kallmeyer Sector served as a city council member.

Many of those praying at Sinai Temple lived and worked in Gas City, several miles from Marion. In addition, several Jewish merchants and Jewish owned companies were based out of Gas City including the *Gas City Mercantile Company*, established around 1909 by Ed and Ben Bloch; *Golden Eagle Men's Clothing* opened around 1896 also by Ed and Ben Bloch; and the *Twin City Shoe Store* started around 1923 by William Glogos and Samuel Siegel.

Footnotes

- ¹ Whitney H. Gordon, "Jews and Gentiles in Middletown- 1961," *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Apr. 1966, 41.
- ² Shonfield, 32; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 508, 662.
- ³ Shonfield, 33-34. *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1897-98*, Muncie, Indiana: Emerson & Dark Publishing Co., 1897, 553; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1915-16*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1915, 661; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1925-26*, Cincinnati: The Williams Directory Co, 1925, 552.
- ⁴ Rottenberg, 63, 93.
- ⁵ *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1921-22*, Muncie, Indiana: Emerson Directory Company, 1921, 569; R. L. Polk & Co, *Polk's Muncie City Directory, 1964*, R.L. Polk & Co., 1964, 436.
- ⁶ Shonfield, 33, 38.
- ⁷ Shonfield; 1897 Muncie city directory, 551.
- ⁸ *Ibid.* 38; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 397; *Emerson's* 1897, 345.
- ⁹ E.S. Watson, *Muncie Business Directory, 1898*, Muncie, Indiana.: The Neely Printing Co., 1898, 3; Rottenberg, 57, 93; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1931-32*, Cincinnati: The Williams Directory Company, 1931, 339.
- ¹⁰ Shonfield, 32; *Emerson's Muncie Directory, 1909-10*, Muncie, Indiana: Chas. Emerson, 1909, 508, 662.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 57; *Emerson's* 1931, 339.
- ¹² Alexander L. Shonfield, Preface to the History of the Jewish People and a Sketch of the Jewish Congregation in the City of Muncie, Indiana (Muncie, Ind.: n.p., 1922), 38.
- ¹³ Dan Rottenberg, *Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of An American Jewish Community*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997, 5, 63, 93; Seth Slabaugh, 20 April 1997, *Jews Not Welcomed*. The Star Press (Muncie, Indiana), F, 1, 1.
- ¹⁴ Gordon, 56-57.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.