

## WERE YOU BORN ON BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE??

If you were born on Buffalo's East Side, and now live in the city of Buffalo, Amherst or Clarence, we need your stories!! The course that the Adult Education Department of the Bureau of Jewish Education is offering: EAST SIDE/WEST SIDE – ALL AROUND THE TOWN needs two things to make it memorable: teacher: Dr. Chana Kotzin, our community archivist and historian – and YOU!

Chana can provide the history and trace the migration of the Buffalo Jewish Community from Pine, Humboldt and Butler, to Linwood, Ferry and Richmond, to Hertel and Parkside, to Colvin and Kenmore, to Sheridan and North Forest, and to Transit Road and Spaulding Lake...but only YOU can provide the stories and tell about the journey!

We are postponing the winter/spring dates of February 2 – March 30 until the “snow-birds” fly home and can attend

the course...telling wonderful tales of what it was like “in the good old days!” The new dates will be after Passover: Thursday, April 27 – Thursday, June 22, 2017 (with one day off for Shavuot). Please check your calendars, join us, and have some fun sharing your experiences on 8 Thursday afternoons from 1:00 – 2:30 PM at the Jewish Center on North Forest Road in Getzville. Tuition is \$90 and the textbook is “The Jewish Community of Buffalo” written by Dr. Kotzin.

**Tell your friends and register early as this course with its new dates will fill up fast! Scholarships and payment plans are available. Go to [www.bjebuffalo.org/adulted](http://www.bjebuffalo.org/adulted) to register or email Ethel Melzer, Director of Adult Education at the Bureau of Jewish Education at [ethel@bjebuffalo.org](mailto:ethel@bjebuffalo.org) or call the BJE office at 716-204-5380.**

## A Temple on Delaware: 805 Delaware Avenue

By Chana R. Kotzin, Ph.D. - Jewish Buffalo Archives Project

In April 2017, the Temple Beth Zion sanctuary building at 805 Delaware Avenue will turn fifty. This “new” sanctuary replaces an earlier “Temple on Delaware” at 599 Delaware, which was completely destroyed in a fire in 1961. For the following six years, temporary sites served as “homes” for the congregation in churches and office buildings in the city, and the Delaware Jewish Community Center, as well as the school building at Sweet Home. As the former sanctuary had been a landmark on Delaware Avenue for over sixty years, discussions varied as to where to locate the new synagogue and a number of sites were considered including the existing site, which was eventually deemed too small. Talks also swirled around the architect, and several nationally renowned designers were approached, including Marcel Breuer and Minoru Yamasaki, as well as the Buffalonian and Albright Knox addition architect, Gordon Bunshaft. Eventually, architect Max Abramovitz was secured to design the new sanctuary, on the same street, just up the road at 805 Delaware Ave. Groundbreaking was celebrated in 1964, and the project was completed in 1967. A week-long series of dedications ceremonies began on April 19 and concluded on April 23, 1967.

The new building was a breathtaking and bold break with the former temple design, and by a designer more commonly known for his industrial, commercial and military buildings. Yet Max Abramovitz had always dreamed of designing a temple as an early college paper outlined, and while he had devised chapels, this was his first and only synagogue. Utilizing Brutalist elements, he designed his open, spacious and light-filled temple with the goal of connecting individual congregants to “the heavens” with the use of light above and at the sides of the building through the great art windows designed by Ben Shahn, an artist he recommended for the project. The building was shaped into ten scalloped curves, and set at an angle outwards of 15 degrees to replicate hands raised in prayer, and was built to hold 1000 people downstairs and a further 400 people upstairs. In order to bring Max Abramovitz’s design to fruition, anchoring innovation required significant foundational depths, and poured concrete went into handcrafted molds made by journeyman carpenters. The inside concrete walls were bush hammered to give an aged effect and the external concrete was clad in Alabama limestone. J. Fruchtbau, Engineers, and Siegfried Construction managed the technical side of translating design into reality.

The design and angle of the building was not the only technological feat. Each part of the sanctuary was in some way exceptional. The two magnificent stained glass art windows anchored the building opposite each other, and were


innovative in several ways as well. In order to enable unobstructed views of the beautiful window designs while still incorporating the essential structural elements to support their size and weight, Robert West of West, Preston and Sollenberger Associates of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, gave technical engineering advice in consultation with Ben Shahn. The beautiful Ben Shahn window design was created by Willett Glass and their stained-glass artist, Benoit Gilsoul, used specialized glass that utilized a fused technique rather than a surface one in order that a lasting luminescence was achieved.

The largest window illustrated a verse from the Book of Job, and the smaller window facing onto Delaware Avenue, featured Psalm 150th which was sung at the dedication of the first Temple Beth Zion in 1865. Ben Shahn’s artistry continued in the calligraphy design of the letters on the bimah, and a free-standing menorah. A 46 rank organ, opus 2870, was made by Casavant Frères Limitee, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada, with trumpets from the Lafayette Theater, under the Tonal Director of Lawrence I. Phelps of Casavant and Hans Vigeland of Westminster Presbyterian Church. It was installed in front of the smaller Shahn window by Paul-Guy Servais of Casavant with voicing under the direction of Roger Chicoine and Gérald Archambault also of Casavant. By commission, Darius Milhaud, composed Cantata for Job, Opus 413, for the opening of the new sanctuary with a first performance on April 24, 1967 dedicated to the memory of Nellie B. and

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### EAST SIDE/WEST SIDE-ALL AROUND THE TOWN



**NEW DATES!**

**Thursday afternoons,  
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (8 wks)**

**April 27,  
May 4, 11, 18, 25,  
June 8, 15, 22**

**Jewish Community Center  
2640 North Forest Road, Getzville NY, 14068**

**Instructor: Dr. Chana Kotzin**

**\$90 (plus textbook)**

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For more information contact **Ethel Melzer**, Director of Adult Education of the Bureau of Jewish Education, at 204-5380, [ethel@bjebuffalo.org](mailto:ethel@bjebuffalo.org). Register online at [www.bjebuffalo.org/adulted](http://www.bjebuffalo.org/adulted).

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**EAST SIDE/WEST SIDE - ALL AROUND THE TOWN - Registration 2017**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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Attention: Ethel Melzer



Building Temple Beth Zion's Sanctuary

*In April 2017, the Temple Beth Zion sanctuary building at 805 Delaware Avenue will turn fifty.*

Eugene Warner.

Designed as a complex to facilitate religious and community life, the site also included the Sisterhood Chapel running in parallel, slightly south of the sanctuary and the Joseph L. Fink Auditorium, which was built to seat 1000. The complex also included classrooms, a kitchen and a rabbis' study, as well as a library and a boardroom among other features. The outstanding building design, and especially the Ben Shahn windows were

recognized in 1971 with an award from New York State Council on the Arts. Parts of the space were eventually adapted into a significant regional Judaica Museum, the Benjamin and Dr. Edgar R. Cofeld Judaic Museum of Temple Beth Zion. The Delaware Avenue entrance was also restored and refurbished in 2005 and further renovations were made to the Sisterhood Chapel in 2011. As Temple Beth Zion approaches the fiftieth anniversary of this unique modernist building, the sanctuary continues to inspire and uplift.

*To explore these materials and more, please check the BJE website at [www.bjebuffalo.org/jbap](http://www.bjebuffalo.org/jbap) and click on the Temple Beth Zion link to plan your trip to the University at Buffalo archives. You can also contact Chana Kotzin at [archivesproject@bjebuffalo.org](mailto:archivesproject@bjebuffalo.org) or call 716-204-5380 for more information.*



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