

A History of Jewish Life in Wood County
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Members of the Jewish Student Congregation at Bowling Green State University in 1958.
Photo Source: *The Key*, 1958, page 161.

Early Jews in Bowling Green and North Baltimore

Bowling Green, the largest community in Wood County, traces its origins to 1832 and the initial settlement was incorporated as a town 23 years later in 1855. By this time, Bowling Green was home to several churches including Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist Episcopal congregations. Local Catholics met in private homes. Not until the early 1880s, however, is there a clear record of a Jewish presence in Bowling Green. Fanny and Samuel Riess, together with their children, are the first Jewish family known to live in Bowling Green. Both parents were immigrants from Central Europe. Samuel and Fanny were wed in 1871 and relocated to Bowling Green in 1882. Fanny, whose maiden name was Wertheimer, was a native of Budapest, and she may have lived with family members in Defiance, Ohio, before her marriage.¹ Samuel, who was married once previously, was a businessman. By 1887, he was associated with the Wood County Dry Goods and Clothing House. In 1893, he began a new store, the Mammoth Double Store, which sold clothing, furnishings, carpets, and other dry goods. He remained with this business until his relocation to North Baltimore, 17 miles south of Bowling Green, in 1902.² In 1903, Samuel's new business caught fire, but the store recovered since ads continued to be placed for the business after the blaze.³ Samuel and Fanny raised ten children, including minors from Samuel's first marriage. Aside from Adolph and George Riess, however, all of these children appear to have eventually left Wood County. George Riess died young at the age of 17.⁴

By the mid-1890s, several other Jews arrived in Bowling Green or North Baltimore. These individuals included Joseph Goodman, Mose and Stella Lamfrom, Julius Less, Ellis and Rebecca Levine, Henry and Nettie Neiman, Benjamin Netzorg, George Newman, and Jacob Strauss. Most of these individuals were involved in local clothing retail. The prominence of Jewish entrepreneurs in the county's clothing retail sector was part of a larger national pattern that resulted from the timing of the trade's development and a period of increased Jewish immigration to the United States. Clothing retail developed on a large scale due to the invention of steam-powered looms and other machinery that allowed for the rapid production of clothing. This industry began to grow significantly in the United States by the mid-1800s just as a wave of Jewish immigration from Central Europe was entering the country. Faced with limited job

¹ "Mrs. Sam Riess has Passed Away," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune (Bowling Green)*, March 20, 1926.

² "Out of Business," *Daily Sentinel (Bowling Green)*, September 12, 1902.

³ "North Baltimore Blaze," *Daily Sentinel*, April 15, 1903.

⁴ Death of George Riess, *Daily Sentinel*, October 05, 1896.

prospects, Jews found work in the burgeoning clothing manufacturing and retail sectors and some of their descendants continued to play key roles in the area. Joseph Goodman and Ellis Levine were associated with the Bowling Green Dry Goods Company. This business, located on S Main Street, was founded in 1891 by Ellis after he relocated to Bowling Green.⁵ Initially, the store's stock primarily focused on clothing and shoes. By 1907, offerings expanded to include items such as carpets, hats, mats, and wraps. Around six years later, the business was known around Wood County as the Levine Glass Front Store. Joseph Goodman, a businessman from Dunkirk, Ohio, moved to Bowling Green in 1892 to take a job with Ellis at the Bowling Green Dry Goods Company.⁶ In 1895, Joseph relocated to the village of Cygnet, 12 miles south of Bowling Green, where he opened a dry goods store.

Mose Lamfrom, a native of Owosso, Michigan, lived in North Baltimore by 1889 and supported his family by operating a clothing store. During this time, both Bowling Green and North Baltimore were in the midst of an economic boom brought about by the discovery of local natural gas and oil deposits. Glass manufacturers, drawn by the promise of free gas, also contributed to the area's economic growth.⁷ North Baltimore's contemporary growth, however, did not proceed without setbacks. For example, on October 31, 1891, many residents, including Mose, experienced a disaster when a large fire destroyed most buildings along North Main Street. This fire was later named the Great Fire of 1891.⁸ The setback proved to be short-lived for most, however, as the region's economic boom continued and the community built back. Mose continued to manage his clothing store on Main until 1921, when he elected to move to Fostoria, Ohio, with his wife, Stella.⁹ He remained in business for many more years and at the time of his death in 1955, Mose was the oldest merchant in Fostoria.¹⁰ Julius Less moved to Bowling Green from Detroit in 1893 after marrying Jennie Riess, the daughter of Fanny and Samuel.¹¹ The Less-Riess wedding, which was attended by 150 people, was one of the first, if not the first, Jewish weddings celebrated in Wood County.¹² Once established in Bowling Green, Julius began

⁵ "Former Merchant Died at Cleveland," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, December 20, 1922.

⁶ "A Flattering Notice," *Daily Sentinel*, February 19, 1892.

⁷ "Bowling Green, Ohio," Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.achp.gov/preserve-america/community/bowling-green-ohio>.

⁸ "History of North Baltimore and Henry Township," North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society, accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.northbaltimorehistory.org/history/History>.

⁹ Obituary of Mose Lamfrom, *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, February 21, 1955.

¹⁰ "Merchant Celebrates Birthday," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, December 31, 1952.

¹¹ "Less-Riess Wedding," *Daily Sentinel*, February 15, 1893.

¹² *Ibid.*

to work with Samuel at his clothing store on S Main Street. In 1896, however, Jennie and Julius relocated to Detroit.

Henry and Nettie Neiman, who were natives of Poland, moved to Bowling Green in 1889. Within a year, Henry opened a new tailoring business known as Neiman's Tailoring Shop.¹³ This business, which remained active until 1943, counted among its customers President Grover Cleveland, who stopped in Bowling Green on his way to visit a sister in Toledo, and George Arliss, a noted actor during the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁴ Henry was also active in the local Democratic Party. As parents, Henry and Nettie had at least two children. Their names were Morris and Tressa. Morris, who was married to Helen Lamfrom, the daughter of Mose and Stella, worked as a clothier in North Baltimore before World War I. From 1899 to 1902, he served in the Philippine-American War as part of the 7th Infantry Regiment.¹⁵ Re-enlisting during World War I as a lieutenant in the United States Army, Morris was ordered to Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, Ohio. Here he died of pneumonia in October 1918.¹⁶ Morris was remembered as a popular personality in Wood County and he was active with the local Elks, Knights of Pythias, and Masons. Tressa Neiman established for herself a career in advertising and real estate. After working with a newspaper in Cincinnati, Tressa moved to Fostoria in 1917 to take an advertising position with the *Fostoria Review*.¹⁷ By 1923, however, she had relocated to Cleveland where she was reported as finding success in real estate.¹⁸ Benjamin Netzorg, George Newman, and Jacob Strauss, the final three individuals listed earlier as being among the earliest Jews in Wood County all operated clothing stores. Benjamin was in business in North Baltimore by 1892. By 1909, however, he had relocated to Detroit. George, who moved to Bowling Green from Fostoria, was the proprietor of the American Clothing Store. This store opened in 1894.¹⁹ Jacob was associated with Bowling Green's branch of the Boston Store, a national chain. He lived in Bowling Green by 1890.²⁰

¹³ "Henry Neiman's Career as Tailor Ended by Death," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, August 17, 1944.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Popular Soldier Died of Pneumonia," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, October 15, 1918.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "Miss Tressa Neiman on Fostoria Review," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 31, 1917.

¹⁸ "Tressa Neiman Making Good," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 21, 1923.

¹⁹ "New Clothing Store," *Daily Sentinel*, February 21, 1894.

²⁰ "Former Merchant Dead," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, August 28, 1918.

During the late-1890s, there is evidence that at least eight other Jews lived in Bowling Green or its vicinity. Not much is known about these individuals, and most likely lived in Wood County only for a short time. The recorded names of these residents are as follows, I. M. Dryfoos, Herman Feldstein, Isaac Fenberg, M. Friedlich, Charles Gershman, B. Lewenstein, S. E. Lieberthal, and Joseph Sittler. Three individuals, Herman Feldstein, Isaac Fenberg, and Charles Gershman lived in North Baltimore around 1896. Four others, I. M. Dryfoos, M. Friedlich, B. Lewenstein, and S. E. Lieberthal, lived in Bowling Green around 1898. Joseph Sittler, the final person listed above, lived in the village of Bradner, 12 miles east of Bowling Green around 1896. Many, if not most, of these individuals were involved in clothing retail. While little is known about these individuals, their Jewish identity is revealed through their involvement with an organization known as the Hebrew Society of Bowling Green. More about this group will be written in the following section.

Developments at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

By 1896, the Jewish population in Wood County was sufficiently large enough that organized religious services began to be offered locally. In earlier years, Jews living in Bowling Green or its vicinity primarily traveled to Toledo if they wished to attend a formal religious service. The possibility can not be ruled out, however, that small, informal religious gatherings for Jews living in Wood County were organized before 1896. Yet, the Hebrew Society of Bowling Green, which was formed in 1896, represents the first established Jewish organization to exist in Wood County.²¹ The Society was never a large organization, and the group is named differently in various sources. One recorded name, the Bowling Green Hebrew Social Club, points to the organization's role in providing social opportunities where local Jews could come together. Another recorded name is the Hebrew Club of Bowling Green. Meetings, which were organized monthly, were generally held in members' homes. George Newman hosted the first meeting of the group.²² Religious services organized by members included ceremonies for Passover, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. These services drew Jews not only from Bowling Green, but also localities such as Bradner, Cygnet, Findlay, Fostoria, and North Baltimore.²³ Relatives of local Jewish families who lived in

²¹ "Hebrew Social Club," *Daily Sentinel*, June 07, 1897.

²² *Daily Sentinel*, July 10, 1896, p 4.

²³ "Jewish New Years," *Daily Sentinel*, September 03, 1896.

Cleveland and Toledo also attended some holiday gatherings. It is not known, however, how long the Hebrew Society of Bowling Green remained active. While no references to the group could be found in local newspapers after 1900, the 1900-1901 edition of the American Jewish Yearbook records that Jewish holiday services were organized in Bowling Green.²⁴

By 1922, however, at least some local Jewish families are known to have traveled to Toledo for religious services. This likely means organized holiday services for Jews ended in Wood County by this date. Lifecycle events did, however, continue to bring local Jews together after 1900. For example, in 1907 Rabbi J. Zimmerman of Toledo visited Bowling Green to perform the bris, or circumcision, of Michael Vloman.²⁵ *The Daily Sentinel-Tribune* reported this was the first time such an event had occurred in Bowling Green in 18 or 19 years.²⁶ This statement is, however, known to be inaccurate since in 1896 it was also reported that Leo Newman, the son of George Newman, had his bris in Bowling Green.²⁷ Rabbi Joseph Levin of Toledo performed the service. In Jewish families a bris, or brit milah, is traditionally held eight days after a baby boy's birth or when the baby is healthy enough for the procedure. The ceremony marks the entrance of the person into the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants. No other references to the Vloman family have been located, however, and it is likely the family only lived in Bowling Green for a short time. The family was likely related to the Kanders, since members of the Kander family assisted in the service. More will be written about the Kander family later.

Beginning in 1881, increased violence against Jews began to occur in many areas of Eastern Europe due to economic and political turmoil combined with longstanding prejudices. This violence sometimes took the form of organized riots which became known as pogroms. Many Jews were killed during these violent outbursts and thousands of families were made homeless. Violence, compounded by oppressive laws, eventually compelled over two million Jews to immigrate to the United States by 1924. While more Jews sought to leave Europe after 1924, during this year the Johnson-Reed Act was passed by Congress to limit further immigration from eastern and southern Europe. This created a sharp decline in the number of new Jewish immigrants to the United States. Jewish immigrants who came to the United States

²⁴ American Jewish Yearbook Vol. 2, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1900, p 403, <https://ajcarchives.org/ajcarchive/DigitalArchive.aspx>.

²⁵ "Young Jew was Christened," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, June 18, 1907.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "A Jewish Ceremony," *Daily Sentinel*, February 24, 1896.

often first found work in large cities. In Ohio, the primary destination for immigrant Jews was Cleveland. Akron, Columbus, Toledo, and Youngstown were also among the major destinations in the state for immigrants, both Jewish and non-Jewish, during the early twentieth century. From major cities, many Jewish families found their way to smaller towns. Often the possibility of greater economic opportunities in a small town drew a new family. Other times, an existing family relation in the area brought new individuals. Between 1900 and 1910, at least two Jewish families, Baron and Kander, settled in Bowling Green.

Harry Baron, a native of Lithuania, immigrated to the United States in 1904 or 1905. Before this, he served as a lieutenant in the Russian Army during the Russo-Japanese War, which ended on September 5, 1905.²⁸ By the end of September 1905, Harry was living in Bowling Green.²⁹ Like many contemporary Jewish immigrants, he found work in the scrap metal business. Aside from a period of ten months in Toledo, Harry lived in Bowling Green until his death in 1954.³⁰ His scrap business grew to become known as the Baron Iron and Metal Company.³¹ For many years this firm was located at 416-426 North Summit Street. In 1910, Harry married Pauline Jaffe, who was also an immigrant from Lithuania.³² Pauline had spent time living in Philadelphia before moving to Ohio.³³ The couple had five children, Frieda, Isadore, Jerry, Marian, and Sidney. Harry and Pauline were both active in regional Jewish organizations and the local Bowling Green community. Within the Jewish community, Harry was a member of B'nai B'rith, a fraternal organization, and Congregation Anshai Sfard in Toledo. He also volunteered with the United Jewish Appeal by serving as the chairman for collection efforts in Bowling Green.³⁴ Harry and Pauline's philanthropy also extended to other causes in Wood County. For example, Harry was among the first donors to support the construction of the Wood County Hospital in 1951. Harry was also active in efforts to reduce the prevalence of polio and tuberculosis in Wood County and supported the Boy Scouts.³⁵ After Harry's death, the Baron family created the Harry Baron Scholarship at Bowling Green High School. This scholarship is awarded to a local student who attends Bowling Green State University.

²⁸ "Those Baron Boys," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 20, 1948.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ "Harry Baron Dies at Age 75," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, June 12, 1954.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "Mrs. Harry Baron Died in Toledo," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 14, 1930.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ "Harry Baron Dies at Age 75," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, June 12, 1954.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Like Harry Baron, Harry Kander was an immigrant from Lithuania and he lived in Bowling Green by 1907. For a time, he worked with Harry Baron, who was his uncle. By 1910, however, Harry Kander went into business for himself by creating Kander's Iron Yard. This scrap company was later renamed Kander Iron & Metal Company.³⁶ In 1913, Harry married Bessie Kander, who was a niece.³⁷ Due to legal barriers in Ohio, the wedding took place in Providence, Rhode Island. Bessie was 22 years old while Harry was 28.³⁸ Harry Kander was, like Harry Baron, an active member of the Bowling Green community. According to the book *Eminent Jews of America*, published in 1918, Harry was a member of B'nai B'rith, the Knights of Pythias, and Odd Fellows.³⁹ *Eminent Jews of America* contained biographical profiles of many Jewish entrepreneurs, particularly from the Midwest. Harry was also active in the Knights of the Maccabees, a nonsectarian fraternal and benefit society, and Congregation B'nai Israel in Toledo. For a time, a brother, Michael Kander, worked with Harry. By 1916, however, Michael relocated to Toledo with his wife, Sara.⁴⁰

World War I and the Roaring Twenties

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and formally entered into World War I. Like millions of Americans, residents of Wood County, both Jewish and non-Jewish, did their part to support the war effort. Morris Neiman, who has already been mentioned in this work, served as a lieutenant in the United States Army and died of pneumonia in October 1918 while serving at Camp Sherman.⁴¹ On the homefront, Jews also involved themselves in volunteer efforts to assist those in the service. For example, Phillip Levine, the son of Ellis and Rebecca, was active as a fundraiser with the National Jewish Welfare Board.⁴² This organization, formed on April 9, 1917, was one of seven war relief charities charged by the United States government with providing assistance to Americans in the service. One area the National Jewish Welfare Board was entrusted with was providing training for Jewish military chaplains and resources to support Jewish chapels in military camps and other installations. The

³⁶ "Harry Kander is Dead at 76," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 11, 1960.

³⁷ "Providence Makes H. Kander Happy," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, September 02, 1913.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ S. B. Goodkind, *Eminent Jews of America* (Toledo: American Hebrew Biographical Company, 1918).

⁴⁰ "Brother Dies in Toledo," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, January 03, 1950.

⁴¹ "Popular Soldier Died of Pneumonia," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, October 15, 1918.

⁴² "Appeal for Help," *Perrysburg Journal (Perrysburg, Ohio)*, October 24, 1918.

other six war relief organizations recognized by the United States government as significant partners were the Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Knights of Columbus, American Library Association, War Camp Community Service, and Salvation Army. Following the war, Phillip married Mary Stern of Cleveland in 1920.⁴³ Phillip and Mary lived in Bowling Green for a short time before relocating to Cleveland. Hulda Levine, Phillip's sister, had moved to Cleveland in 1918 following her marriage to Edward Curtis in Toledo.⁴⁴ Ellis and Rebecca followed their children by December 1922. While the Levine family had entirely departed Bowling Green by the end of 1922, other new Jewish families arrived in Wood County during the 1920s.

Between the years 1921 and 1928, at least three Jewish families arrived in Bowling Green. The heads of these families were Louis and Sarah Canen, Henry and Pearl Rappaport, and Hattie and Meyer Zimmerman. Louis and Sarah Canen moved to Bowling Green in 1927 from Rossford, a town just outside of Toledo, with their three children Mae, Reynold, and Rosalyne.⁴⁵ Once established in Bowling Green, Louis opened the Canen Dry Cleaning Shop at 151 N Main Street. This business, which was also known as Canen's Dry Cleaning Shop, moved to 131 W Wooster Street in 1930. Canen's remained in operation on Wooster Street until September 1944, when the business was purchased by W. R. Grant, who continued it as a dry cleaner. Henry Rappaport moved to Bowling Green from Ottawa, Ohio, in 1921 after purchasing a variety store owned by Walter Rust.⁴⁶ This store, located at 127 S. Main Street, was renamed Rappaport's and it remained in business until 1958. In 1922, Henry married Pearl Friedlander, who lived in Toledo before her marriage. The couple had three children, Aileen, Constance, and Suzanne.

Hattie and Meyer Zimmerman, the final couple listed above, moved to Bowling Green in March 1922. Previously, the Zimmerman family lived in Deshler, 24 miles to the southwest of Bowling Green.⁴⁷ Meyer supported his household by operating Zimmerman's Dry Goods Store, which was located along S Main Street. Meyer purchased the store property from Ellis Levine, who has been referenced earlier in this work. Nine months after his retirement, Ellis died in Cleveland.⁴⁸ In 1933, Zimmerman's Dry Goods Store was renamed Zimmerman's Five Cents to

⁴³ "Stern-Levine," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, November 22, 1920.

⁴⁴ "Levine-Curtis," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, January 15, 1918.

⁴⁵ "Louis Canen Dies at His Home Here," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 01, 1944.

⁴⁶ "Henry Rappaport, 63, Dies," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, February 14, 1958.

⁴⁷ "Deshler Man Buys E. Levine Store," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 27, 1922.

⁴⁸ "Former Merchant Died at Cleveland," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, December 20, 1922.

Five Dollars Store.⁴⁹ Two years later, Meyer died and his wife, Hattie, carried on the business until 1937, when she retired due to poor health. Fred Uhlman then purchased the business and incorporated it into the family's chain of stores.⁵⁰ Hattie and Meyer had three children Esther, Morris, and Selma. Morris went on to have a notable career as a mortician in Toledo.⁵¹

Before moving into the mid-twentieth century, one additional Jewish resident of Bowling Green will be highlighted. Belle Yonker, the wife of Lewis L. Yonker, was a prominent figure in the civic and cultural life of Bowling Green from 1892 until her death in 1931.⁵² While Lewis Yonker was not Jewish, Belle was the daughter of Antoinette and Julius Goldamer, who were both Jews.⁵³ Julius Goldamer was a prominent rabbi who served congregations in both Cincinnati and Nashville before his death in 1888.⁵⁴ Belle met Lewis while attending Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Both were students in the College of Dentistry.⁵⁵ Lewis, who graduated from Vanderbilt in 1888, was a noted dentist in Bowling Green for over 30 years. The couple were married in Cincinnati on June 20, 1892.⁵⁶ Shortly after moving to Bowling Green, Belle helped to create the Emerson Club, a women's salon, and the Bowling Green Literary Society.⁵⁷ The Literary Society was formed in November 1893, while the Emerson Club was in existence by 1896.⁵⁸ Belle also worked as a school principal for many years with institutions in Hancock and Wood counties.⁵⁹ She also served on Wood County's Board of School Examiners and was an early member of the Shakespeare Club, which was in existence by 1891. In 1914, this women's literary group organized Bowling Green's first public library on West Wooster Street.⁶⁰ This library was a precursor to the Wood County District Public Library. It is not known, however, if Belle maintained a connection with a formal Jewish community while living in Bowling Green. Antoinette Goldamer did, however, live with her daughter in Bowling Green for at least four years later in her life. She died only a few weeks after Belle in 1931 at the age of 94.⁶¹

⁴⁹ "Newly Improved Zimmerman Store to Open Saturday," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 30, 1933.

⁵⁰ "Fred Uhlman Buys Zimmerman Store," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 29, 1937.

⁵¹ "Former Resident Opens Mortuary," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, November 18, 1937.

⁵² Obituary of Mrs. L. L. Yonker, *American Israelite (Cincinnati)*, March 26, 1931.

⁵³ "Follows Daughter to Grave in Month," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 21, 1931.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ "Mrs. L. L. Yonker Dies from Stroke," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 21, 1931.

⁵⁶ "Dr. L. L. Yonker's Marriage," *Daily Sentinel*, June 17, 1892.

⁵⁷ "Mrs. L. L. Yonker Dies from Stroke," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 21, 1931.

⁵⁸ "The Literary Society," *Daily Sentinel*, November 15, 1893.

⁵⁹ "Mrs. L. L. Yonker Dies from Stroke," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 21, 1931.

⁶⁰ "Public Library," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 27, 1925.

⁶¹ "Follows Daughter to Grave in Month," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 21, 1931.

The Beginnings of Organized Jewish Student Life at Bowling Green State University

On September 15, 1914, the Bowling Green State Normal School was opened. By 1926, enrollment had grown to over 900 students. Three years later, in 1929, the institution was renamed Bowling Green State College by the State of Ohio. While it is likely that a small number of Jews were among the early classes at Bowling Green State Normal School and Bowling Green State College, it is not known when the first Jew enrolled at the school. One early Jewish student was Macs Leitman. A native of Portsmouth, Virginia, Macs arrived at Bowling Green in 1926 after studying for one year at Lynchburg College.⁶² He was recruited by Bowling Green's new football coach, Paul Landis. Coach Landis had previously worked at Woodrow Wilson High School in Portsmouth.⁶³ Macs also played baseball at Bowling Green and, after graduating in 1930, he briefly played with the Allentown Dukes in Pennsylvania.⁶⁴ By November 1930, however, Macs was back in Bowling Green, and operating the new Thrift Dry Cleaning Company at 105 East Court Street alongside Ralph Turner. During this same year, Macs married Sadie Adelston of Norfolk, Virginia. In 1941, Macs and Sadie expanded the dry cleaning business, which had moved to N Main Street, to include a men's clothing store.⁶⁵ By 1942, the business, which would eventually become exclusively dedicated to clothing retail, was known as Leitman's Men's Wear. Some years later, in 1951, Macs opened the Corner Grill at 200 North Main. While Macs left Bowling Green in 1974 to retire in Virginia, the Cornell Grill remained open until at least 2016. Macs and Sadie also had two children, Donald and Rosalind, who were both born in the 1930s. In 1971, Macs was inducted into the Bowling Green State University Athletic Hall of Fame.

Returning to Bowling Green's Jewish students, by 1931, it was reported by the campus newspaper, *Bee Gee News*, that seven Jews were enrolled on campus out of a student body of 1,005.⁶⁶ In addition, 43 students provided no response when asked about their religious preference. This population may have included Jewish students who did not wish to publicly identify as Jews. This survey information was obtained by the college through an annual voluntary questionnaire sent to students. This same annual survey reported four Jewish students

⁶² "Star Kicker Arrives," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, September 11, 1926.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Doc Lake, "Doc's-Ology," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 10, 1930.

⁶⁵ "Macs Leitman Opens His New Store Here," *Daily Sentinel Tribune*, February 18, 1941.

⁶⁶ "Student Church Census," *Bee Gee News (Bowling Green)*, October 06, 1931.

on campus in 1933.⁶⁷ In 1935, however, only one Jew was identified on campus.⁶⁸ Three Jewish students at Bowling Green during the early and mid-1930s were Frieda Baron, Sidney Baron, and Herman Kander. Sidney, the son of Harry and Pauline Baron, graduated from Bowling Green State College in 1933.⁶⁹ He went on to have a notable career as a conductor and violinist. This career included guest appearances with the New York Philharmonic, American Little Symphony in Philadelphia, and Berkshire Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts.⁷⁰ Frieda, who was Sidney's sister, was born in Bowling Green around 1915. She attended Bowling Green before her marriage to Wilfred Williams in 1938.⁷¹ Later in life, Frieda and Wilfred helped to create two scholarships at Bowling Green, the Baron Family Scholarship Fund and the Wilfred Williams Scholarship Fund, which supports students studying engineering.⁷² Herman, the son of Bessie and Harry Kander, was born in 1915 in Bowling Green. As a young man, he attended Bowling Green for a time before transferring to the University of Toledo.⁷³ Shortly after marrying Helen Duchon in 1941, however, Herman's life was cut short when he was murdered during a robbery at the Toledo Ice and Coal Company.⁷⁴ The gunman, Thomas Williams, also murdered Samuel Arnovitz and wounded Ernest Zimmerman.⁷⁵ Herman was buried in Toledo.

In 1935, Bowling Green State College was renamed Bowling Green State University. Jews who attended Bowling Green State University during the late 1930s included Robert Baron, who was the youngest son of Harry and Pauline. Robert, who was more popularly known as Bob, later worked with his father at the Baron Iron and Metal Company. He was also associated with his oldest brother, Jerry, who created the Baron Steel Company in Toledo.⁷⁶ While Jewish students were enrolled at Bowling Green before World War II, the population was modest in size and it is likely that no formal group for Jewish students existed on campus before the late 1940s. Students who wished to attend religious services either traveled to Toledo or went back home to be with their families. Rabbis did, however, occasionally visit Bowling Green before World War

⁶⁷ "Student Church Preferences," *Bee Gee News*, October 04, 1933.

⁶⁸ "Students and Their Churches," *Bee Gee News*, October 23, 1935.

⁶⁹ "Sidney Baron to be Honored as B. G. Alumnus," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, January 12, 1952.

⁷⁰ "Sidney Baron to Conduct His Own Symphony in Toledo," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, September 17, 1949.

⁷¹ "B'nai Israel Synagogue Scene of Lovely Wedding When Frieda Baron is Bride," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 15, 1938.

⁷² Obituary of Freida Williams, *The Blade (Toledo)*, May 26, 2013.

⁷³ "Herman Kander Dies of Bullet from Bandit Gun," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, August 04, 1941.

⁷⁴ "Herman Kander Dies of Bullet from Bandit Gun," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, August 04, 1941.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ "Baron Firm Spends \$750,000 for Toledo Steel Bar Mill," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 04, 1962.

II to lecture on campus. In 1937, Rabbi Barnett Brickner of the Euclid Avenue Temple in Cleveland delivered the commencement address at Bowling Green.⁷⁷ Three years later, in 1940, Rabbi Leon Feuer of the Collingwood Avenue Temple in Toledo was the primary speaker at the Baccalaureate service at Bowling Green.⁷⁸

During World War II, enrollment contracted at Bowling Green and the students who remained on campus did their part to support the war effort. These efforts included organizing blood drives and war bond fundraisers. Off campus, residents of Wood County also contributed. Within the Jewish community, at least five locals served. Their names are Robert Baron, Sidney Baron, Reynold Canen, Milton Kander, and Morris Zimmerman. It is also remembered that Morris Chasin, the husband of Esther Zimmerman, died in action during World War II.⁷⁹ Esther, who was the daughter of Hattie and Meyer, married Morris Chasin in 1938 and the couple lived in Toledo.⁸⁰ Harry Baron was particularly engaged in local volunteer activities to support the war effort. By 1941, Harry had built up a significant real estate portfolio in Bowling Green. During the war, he donated space for the Wood County chapter of the Red Cross to work.⁸¹ After the end of World War II, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more popularly known as the G.I. Bill, led to a significant increase in the number of students attending colleges and universities. This trend was also true for Bowling Green State University.

At Bowling Green, the rapid increase in enrollment led to the creation of temporary structures to house students. By 1950, enrollment totaled over 5,000 students. Bowling Green's Jewish enrollment, while modest, was also growing. A *Bee Gee* article from 1946 reported that 15 students on campus self-identified as Jewish.⁸² This survey of religious preferences was organized by an organization known as the Student Christian Fellowship.⁸³ This same organization occasionally invited rabbis, such as Morton Goldberg from Congregation B'nai Israel in Toledo, to speak on campus.⁸⁴ Additionally, the first known Jewish faculty also arrived at Bowling Green during the 1940s. One early Jewish professor was Maurice Newburger, who was associated with the Department of Psychology by 1942.⁸⁵ Dr. Newburger also worked with

⁷⁷ "Congregational Activities," *Jewish Independent (Cleveland)*, June 11, 1937.

⁷⁸ "Baccalaureate at University Sunday," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, June 07, 1940.

⁷⁹ "Pfc. Morris S. Chasin Killed in Action," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 28, 1945.

⁸⁰ "Esther Zimmerman is Holiday Bride," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 31, 1938.

⁸¹ *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, January 08, 1945, p 5.

⁸² "Methodists Lead Religious Preference," *Bee Gee News*, October 16, 1946.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ "Dr. Goldberg Speaks at SCF Sunday," *Bee Gee News*, March 19, 1947.

⁸⁵ "Juvenile Research Department Here," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 10, 1942.

the local State Bureau of Juvenile Research and was active in Wood County's chapter of the Society for Crippled Children.⁸⁶ In 1955, Maurice moved to Tiffin, Ohio, to take a job with Seneca County.⁸⁷ Another early Jewish faculty member was Richard Eckler, who was associated with the College of Musical Arts by 1950. Dr. Eckler also worked with the Toledo Symphony.

On May 29, 1948, Zeta Beta Tau established the Beta Eta chapter on Bowling Green's campus.⁸⁸ This fraternity was Bowling Green State University's first organization for Jewish students. The students who joined the new chapter were originally part of a local fraternity, Phi Beta Mu. This group, composed of 12 Jewish students, was founded in February 1947.⁸⁹ Zeta Beta Tau, which was formed in 1898 in New York City, is known as the world's first Jewish collegiate fraternity. While the fraternity opened its membership to non-Jews in 1954, the organization continues to maintain ties with its Jewish heritage. At the time of Zeta Beta Tau's creation, many existing Greek societies were closed to Jewish members. Locally there is also evidence that some Greek organizations at Bowling Green were closed to Blacks and Jews until at least 1950, and this practice was discussed by some students publicly through the *Bee Gee* newspaper.⁹⁰ The Beta Eta chapter at Bowling Green was the 45th chapter of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity and the 4th chapter created in Ohio. The first officers of the Beta Eta chapter were as follows: Joseph Finkelstein, president, Harold Jaffe, vice president, Herbert Siegel, treasurer, Michael Billig, secretary, and Ted Nye, historian.⁹¹ Henry Rappaport served as the fraternity's first advisor-trustee.⁹² The Zeta Beta Tau house was originally located at 130 South Prospect Street. By 1950, the organization moved to 611 N Main Street. Zeta Beta Tau continued to have a presence at Bowling Green until at least 2000. By 2008, however, the group had become inactive.

While membership in Zeta Beta Tau was only open to males, the organization in its early years was regarded as the representative group for Jewish students on campus. Zeta Beta Tau members participated in programming such as Religious Emphasis Week as representatives of the student Jewish community.⁹³ By 1951, however, another Jewish organization, the Jewish

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Former BGSU Professor Serves County as Child Psychologist," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, December 22, 1955.

⁸⁸ "Phi Beta Mu Becomes Zeta Beta Tau Saturday," *Bee Gee News*, May 27, 1948.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Selden Rockowitz, letter to the editor, *Bee Gee News*, December 15, 1950.

⁹¹ "Phi Beta Mu Becomes Zeta Beta Tau Saturday," *Bee Gee News*, May 27, 1948.

⁹² "Zeta Beta Tau to Install Chapter on Campus Here," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 20, 1948.

⁹³ "Religious Emphasis Week on Campus Opens Sunday," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, December 03, 1949.

Student Congregation at Bowling Green was formed and included men and women as members. On October 28, 1951, the B'nai B'rith lodge in Toledo donated a Torah scroll to the Jewish Congregation for use in its religious services.⁹⁴ The dedication service for the Torah was held in Prout Chapel and Rabbi Melbourne Harris of Toledo officiated.⁹⁵ Both Jewish and non-Jewish students were invited to the service.⁹⁶ Shabbat services were organized every Friday by the Jewish Congregation in Prout Chapel and drew around 36 people each week.⁹⁷ Guest speakers were a common feature of these services. To properly store the Torah scroll, Toledo's B'nai B'rith lodge also donated a portable Torah ark to the congregation.⁹⁸ Rabbi Carl Miller of Elyria,



Dr. Melvin Hyman, row 1 far left, with members of the Jewish Congregation in 1957

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Ohio led this dedication service.⁹⁹ In 1952, the following students served as officers of the Jewish Congregation: Howard Klein, president, Mel Birnbaum, vice president, Joyce Baron, secretary, and Erwin Falkenheim, treasurer.¹⁰⁰ Another student, Joseph Appel, often acted as a service leader.¹⁰¹ Dr. Melvin Hyman was likely the group's first faculty advisor. Dr. Hyman, a professor of speech at Bowling Green, arrived on campus in 1952.¹⁰² By 1961, he served as the director of the Bowling Green State University Speech and Hearing

Clinic.¹⁰³ In total, Dr. Hyman's career at Bowling Green spanned 35 years.¹⁰⁴ His legacy on campus is still felt through the Mel Hyman Scholarship Fund, which supports students studying communication disorders.

⁹⁴ "To Dedicate Torah in Chapel Sunday," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, October 27, 1951.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ "Students get Torah," *The B-G News (Bowling Green)*, October 26, 1951.

⁹⁷ "Rabbi Miller to Dedicate Chapel," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, March 29, 1951.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ "Jewish Congregation to Start Services," *The B-G News*, October 10, 1952.

¹⁰¹ "Jewish Congregation to Start Services," *The B-G News*, October 10, 1952.

¹⁰² "Professors in Speech Named at B.G. Campus," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, September 13, 1952.

¹⁰³ "Dr. Hyman Heads Easter Seal Drive," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, February 08, 1961.

¹⁰⁴ Obituary of Dr. Melvin Hyman, *The Blade*, July 12, 2006.

Returning to B'nai B'rith's early support of the Jewish Congregation, it should be noted that B'nai B'rith lodges across the United States were active in supporting Jewish students. The local lodge's actions were part of a wider national trend within the organization. On campuses with larger Jewish populations, B'nai B'rith Hillel chapters existed to meet the religious needs of Jewish students. While Bowling Green's Jewish population was too small in the early 1950s to support a full-fledged Hillel chapter, the organization would arrive on campus by 1991. This arrival will be discussed later. It should also be noted that, while the B'nai B'rith lodge in Toledo is the only lodge credited with providing early support to Bowling Green's Jewish students, it is likely that more local B'nai B'rith members also provided assistance. B'nai B'rith, in addition to its presence in Toledo, was active in Bowling Green and nearby towns. The local lodge, known as the Inter-City B'nai B'rith Lodge No. 1399, was in existence by 1939. Lodge 1399 drew its members from Bowling Green, Carey, Fremont, Kenton, Napoleon, and Tiffin.¹⁰⁵ Other members came from Findlay and Fostoria.¹⁰⁶ Lodge members in Bowling Green around 1953 included Harry Baron, Harry Kander, Milton Kander, Martin Krauss, and Macs Leitman. Meetings of the lodge were also sometimes held in Bowling Green. For example, in 1959, 53 people attended the organization's officer installation banquet in the Carnation Room of the new University Union.¹⁰⁷ This was reported as a record attendance for the annual event by the *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*.¹⁰⁸

Considering the list of B'nai B'rith members from Bowling Green presented above, the names Harry Baron, Harry Kander, and Macs Leitman are not new. Martin Krauss is, however, new to this work, and he numbers among a small group of Jews who moved to Bowling Green during the two decades following World War II. Other newcomers included Edward Karlin, Maurice Mandell, and Benjamin and Lillian Segall. Martin Krauss, a native of Toledo, moved to Bowling Green in 1953. He worked as vice president and treasurer for the local Midwest Stamping and Manufacturing Company.¹⁰⁹ He was also active in the local Kiwanis Club before his death in 1958.¹¹⁰ Martin left his wife, Evelyn and three children. Edward Karlin, a native of New York, moved to Wood County in 1957 after completing his Ph.D. at Cornell University to take a position as Assistant Professor of Biology at Bowling Green.¹¹¹ He remained on campus

¹⁰⁵ "B'Nai Brith Banquet Held in Carnation Room," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 29, 1959.

¹⁰⁶ "Jan Bart will Appear on Free Public Program," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 24, 1954.

¹⁰⁷ "B'Nai Brith Banquet Held in Carnation Room," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 29, 1959.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ "Martin Krauss Dies at 46," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, December 23, 1958.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ "Three Appointed to BGSU Faculty to Teach Biology," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 16, 1957.

until his death in 1962. To honor his memory, Dr. Karlin's family established the Karlin Fund, which provides one scholarship annually to a student studying biology at Bowling Green.¹¹² Maurice Mandell began working as a professor of business administration at Bowling Green by 1954. In 1956, he married Natalie Gould, who worked as an administrative assistant to President Ralph McDonald. The wedding was held in Prout Chapel and was officiated by Rabbi Stephen Schafer of Toledo.¹¹³ The couple remained in Bowling Green until at least 1968.

Benjamin and Lillian Segall, the final names listed above, arrived in Bowling Green in 1946 after Ben and Lyman Burnett, a business partner, purchased Sanitary Dry Cleaner.¹¹⁴ This business was originally located at 139 E. Wooster Street and it had a separate cleaning plant at 345 N. Maple Street. By 1969, Sanitary had expanded to three locations in Bowling Green. Earlier, in 1956, Ben also opened the Segall Record Shop, known popularly as Segall's, at 534 E. Court Street. This store sold books, cosmetics, paper, records, and other items in addition to offering dry cleaning services. In 1962, however, Segall's was closed after Bowling Green State University successfully petitioned the State of Ohio to buy the land through eminent domain. Ben was paid \$32,000 for the property.¹¹⁵ Despite this court proceeding, Ben and Lillian maintained several ties with the university. For example, the couple engaged with members of Zeta Beta Tau and Ben may have been an advisor for the organization after Henry Rappaport's death in 1958. Later, the couple created the Lillian and Ben Segall Scholarship at Bowling Green. Ben and Lillian were also active in the wider Bowling Green community. For example, Ben was chair of the annual Easter Seal campaign for at least eight years. This effort raised money to aid incapacitated children.¹¹⁶ He also served as president of Rotary for a time and was active in efforts to create Wintergarden Camp. In 2023, this area is known as the Wintergarden Nature Preserve. Lillian volunteered with March of Dimes and Meals on Wheels.

Bowling Green's Jewish Student Congregation continued to exist into the 1960s. There is also evidence that faculty and Jews from the off-campus community participated in the organization's activities. Religious services continued to be held on Fridays at Prout Chapel and on major holidays, like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, arrangements were made for students

¹¹² Obituary of Dr. Edward J. Karlin, *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, April 25, 1962.

¹¹³ "Natalie Gould Becomes Bride of Dr. Maurice I. Mandell," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 31, 1956.

¹¹⁴ "Veterans Purchase Sanitary Cleaning Business Here," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 25, 1946.

¹¹⁵ "Segall to Receive \$32,000 for Store," *B-G News*, October 05, 1962.

¹¹⁶ "\$10,000 Goal Set for Easter Seal Campaign," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, May 03, 1958.

to attend synagogues in Toledo.¹¹⁷ In 1965, David Alex and Stanley Osur served as leaders of the Jewish Congregation.¹¹⁸ B'nai B'rith also continued to provide support for the organization. In



Jewish Student Congregation service at
Prout Chapel in 1965
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October 1962, representatives from the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation traveled to Bowling Green to meet with four students and discuss the possibility of the campus Jewish group joining the larger Hillel organization.¹¹⁹ While it appears that Hillel did not establish a formal chapter at Bowling Green, the meeting itself shows that Bowling Green had a large enough Jewish population at this time for the national organization to be notified. Moving into the 1970s, however, it appears Bowling Green's Jewish student population contracted. Despite

this development, an organized Jewish presence remained on campus, and the population would again grow during the late 1980s and 1990s. This period will be discussed in the next section.

Into the Twenty-First Century, Developments from 1970 to 2000

While Bowling Green's Jewish student population was small during the 1970s, David Weinberg, a professor of history, and Judy Weinberg played an important role in supporting an organized Jewish community locally. David and Judy arrived on campus in August 1971.¹²⁰ Dr. Weinberg specialized in Jewish history but taught classes covering various historical areas.¹²¹ He continued teaching at Bowling Green, with the exception of two years during which he was a visiting professor at other universities, until 1995.¹²² Around 1971, the Jewish Student Congregation was reorganized as the Jewish Student Group. In a few sources, the name Jewish Student Organization is also found. Activities organized by the group's members included film

¹¹⁷ Bowling Green State University, *The Key* (Bowling Green, Ohio: 1965), 135, accessed on May 1, 2023, <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/yearbooks/32/>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ "Kampus Kaleidoscope," *B-G News*, October 30, 1962.

¹²⁰ David and Judy Weinberg, interview by author, phone, 2023.

¹²¹ "BGSU Trustees Approve Numerous Changes in Personnel," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, July 08, 1971.

¹²² "Careers of Faculty Retiring This Month are Highlighted," *Monitor (Bowling Green)*, July 17, 1995.

screenings, holiday programs, lectures, and Friday night Shabbat services. In addition, during the early 1970s monthly socials for Jewish faculty and students were organized at the Weinberg home on Holley Drive. In 1974, around 12 students were active in the Jewish Student Group.¹²³ Participants included both graduate and undergraduate students. In 1978, *The Key*, Bowling Green State University's yearbook, quoted Dr. Weinberg as saying, "[The Jewish Student Group] is the only Jewish organization in Bowling Green... We're not large, so it's important that we act together as a community. The group of six or seven regular students who attend the functions are very close-knit."¹²⁴ While six to seven students were regularly participating in the Jewish Student Group, the Jewish population within Bowling Green was certainly larger. This population included a few faculty members in addition to David Weinberg. For a short time, Judy Weinberg organized a Sunday School for local Jewish children, who were primarily related to faculty members.¹²⁵

Despite being modest in size, members of the Jewish Student Group organized to support charitable causes during the 1970s. For example, in 1973, members of the group created a fundraiser to purchase medical supplies for use in Israel.¹²⁶ Enough funds were raised from the local community to purchase 250 plasma kits.¹²⁷ The impetus for this fundraiser was the Yom Kippur War, which Israel fought from October 6, 1973, to October 25, 1973. In some sources, this conflict is also known as the Ramadan War or October War. Four years later, in 1977, the Jewish Student Group organized a fundraiser for the United Jewish Appeal.¹²⁸ Another area of activity for the Jewish Student Group during the 1970s and 1980s was organizing programs to remember and inform the public about the Holocaust. For example, in April 1980, the group organized a Holocaust memorial service on the Union Oval.¹²⁹ A similar service was also organized in April 1982 with 20 faculty, staff, students, and community members participating.¹³⁰

In 1984, Dr. Weinberg estimated that Bowling Green had 250 to 300 Jewish students but only 10 to 15 regularly participated in the Jewish Group.¹³¹ During this same time, Emil Dansker,

¹²³ "Jewish Students Deplore Recent U. N. Decision," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, November 28, 1975.

¹²⁴ Bowling Green State University, *The Key* (Bowling Green, Ohio: 1978), 29, accessed on May 1, 2023, <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1138&context=yearbooks>.

¹²⁵ David and Judy Weinberg, interview by author, phone, 2023.

¹²⁶ "Jewish Group Creates Plasma Kit Fund," *Daily Sentinel-Tribune*, October 10, 1973.

¹²⁷ *BG News*, November 06, 1973, p 2.

¹²⁸ Reva Remer, letter to the editor, *BG News*, April 05, 1977.

¹²⁹ "Holocaust Memorial Service," *BG News*, April 16, 1980.

¹³⁰ "Jewish Mourners Commemorate Nazi Holocaust," *BG News*, April 21, 1982.

¹³¹ Jill Trudeau, "Jews Welcome New Year," *BG News*, September 27, 1984.

a professor of journalism, was also a supporter of the Jewish Student Group. Dr. Dansker, along with his wife Charlene, sometimes hosted group members in their home. Emil was also periodically quoted in *The BG News* discussing Jewish holidays.¹³² Charlene and Emil arrived in Bowling Green by 1971. Popular events sponsored by the Jewish Student Group during the 1980s included an annual Hanukkah party and bagel brunches. In 1991, the Jewish Student Group changed its name to Hillel and officially joined the larger Jewish campus organization. Hillel's first activity at Bowling Green was a Shabbat service and dinner held in the Alumni Room of the University Union on September 6, 1991. Sherry Naselsky served as president of the new chapter.¹³³ In 1995, Hillel welcomed its first campus professional, Sheri Knauth. Sheri, a native of New York, worked with both the Bowling Green Hillel chapter and the University of Toledo Hillel.¹³⁴ In addition to her work on the two campuses, Sherry taught Jewish students at B'nai Israel in Toledo. During 1996, Hillel had about 70 members at Bowling Green.¹³⁵ Two years later, in 1998, the organization created an office inside the United Christian Fellowship Center at 313 Thurstin Street. This space included a library. About 200 Jews were believed to be enrolled at Bowling Green during 1998.¹³⁶ Another source from 2000, however, states that around 200 Jews lived in Bowling Green, including faculty and other off-campus community members.¹³⁷ Some of these faculty members and other locals participated in programming organized by Hillel. Hillel's largest annual event during the late 1990s was Jewish Awareness Month.¹³⁸ Members of the organization were also occasionally invited to events off-campus to provide a Jewish perspective or presence. As the twenty-first century moved on, a modest Jewish presence has continued in Bowling Green.

Contemporary Jewish Life in Bowling Green

Hillel has continued to exist at Bowling Green throughout the twenty-first century. As of 2023, the Hillel chapters at Bowling Green and the University of Toledo remain closely related, sharing certain programs and resources. The regional Hillel chapter is known as Hillel419. In

¹³² Ron Coulter, "Festive Passover Commemorated," *BG News*, April 24, 1986.

¹³³ *BG News*, September 05, 1991, p 8.

¹³⁴ "UT, BGSU Hillel Director Appointed," *Toledo Jewish News*, September 01, 1995.

¹³⁵ David DuPont, "Hillel Promotes More Awareness of Judaism in B.G. Community," *Sentinel-Tribune*, September 20, 1996.

¹³⁶ Brandi Barhite, "Hillel Honors Jewish Holiday," *BG News*, February 11, 1998.

¹³⁷ Irene Sharon Scott, "Jewish Students Frustrated With U.," *BG News*, March 31, 2000.

¹³⁸ Jeff Fearnside, "Bulgarian Siblings Find Jewish Roots in BG," *Sentinel-Tribune*, April 11, 1997.

2010, it was again reported that Bowling Green had around 200 Jewish students.¹³⁹ In 2023, Hillel International estimated that 300 Jewish students were enrolled at Bowling Green and the University of Toledo combined. Local faculty and staff have also continued to participate in Hillel's activities. Major events over the past several years have included alternative spring breaks, Hanukkah parties, Passover seders, and various social programs. Hillel maintains an office at 507 East Merry Avenue. While small in size, today's Hillel members carry on a 127-year-long tradition of Jewish life in Wood County.

¹³⁹ Amber Battaglia, "Hillel Begins to Celebrate Jewish Culture Month," *BG News*, August 25, 2010.

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