

Commemorating A Century



June 10-11, 1983

CENTENNIAL SERVICE

Friday Evening, June 10, 1983 - 8 O'clock
Temple Aaron

Anthem	Choir
Invocation	Rabbi Earl S. Stone
Lighting of Sabbath Candles	Mrs. Leon Rubin
Kiddush	Mr. Ronald Rubin
Worship Service	Rabbi Martin M. Weitz
Welcome	Mrs. Louis Cibull
Introduction of Guests	Mr. Randy Rubin
Introduction of Speaker	Mrs. Gilbert Sanders
Centennial Address	Dr. Jacob R. Marcus
Acknowledgments	Dr. Armin T. Keil

Rededication of the Generations

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Rubin
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Rubin
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Rubin
Nina and Benjamin Rubin
Gillian and Daniel Rubin

Reaffirmation of the Congregation

Concluding Service	Rabbi Sylvan D. Schwartzman
Benediction	Dr. Jacob R. Marcus
Recessional	Choir

**Centennial Reception
In the Social Hall
Immediately Following the Service**

THE SAGA OF A CENTURY

On July 23, 1883, seventeen Jews of Trinidad gathered at the home of Sol Jaffa, one of the partners in Jaffa Brothers General Store founded in 1871. The purpose was to celebrate the circumcision of Aaron Jaffa, named after his grandfather who had been a rabbi in Germany. They remained to organize a congregation, appropriately named "Congregation Aaron" in honor of the occasion.

After adopting a set of by-laws which was ultimately signed by twenty-four persons, they held elections. Henry Birnbaum, the oldest of the group and owner of several stores in the Southwest, was chosen president. Samuel Jaffa was made vice-president; S. Frankel, a railroad watchman, became secretary; and Jacob Sanders, who operated a wholesale liquor store, was elected treasurer.

The founding of Congregation Aaron was the culmination of early Jewish life in Trinidad. Jewish roots went back to the earliest travelers along the Santa Fe Trail, some of whom were traders; a few actually became settlers. In 1867 Abraham Jacobs extended his stagecoach line from Denver to Trinidad, and Maurice Wise set up a small general store on Main Street. By 1871 there were sufficient Jews in Trinidad and Elizabethtown, some 60 miles to the southwest, to form a **minyan** - a quorum of ten needed for worship daily and on the Holydays. Seven years later, in 1878, they established B'nai B'rith Lodge No. 293 with 29 members. Among the names of the charter members were Adolf Floersheim, David Gottlieb, Maurice Seligman, three Jaffas, two Ilefelds and four Rosenwalds.

At its incorporation in 1876, the city of Trinidad was the second city of importance in Colorado, and was steadily growing because of its commercial and industrial potential. The area produced two-thirds of Colorado's coal, had some 500 coke ovens, with ample supplies of high quality iron ore, pure silicon, clay and limestone, and Trinidad was known as the major smelting center on the eastern slope of the Rockies. Moreover, the city boasted of its natural beauty and climate, an excellent public school system, and a warm spirit of friendship among its many religious denominations.

All this served to attract Jews to Trinidad. Practically all had left Central Europe - chiefly Germany, Alsace-Lorraine and Bohemia - to escape the turmoil of the times. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, which wrested Alsace-Lorraine from France, had become the catalyst for unifying the various independent German states, thanks to the efforts of Count Otto von Bismarck. Unfortunately, in turning against the Liberal Party that had liberated the German Jews, Bismarck began using anti-semitism as a means for consolidating his power as Chancellor. Racist doctrines that called for revoking the rights of Jews as an "alien people" became widespread, sowing the seeds of Nazism in the Twentieth Century.

THE CENTENARY OF CONGREGATION AARON

The Jews who determined to leave came mainly to the United States. Some eventually made their way to Trinidad after short stays elsewhere. Here, amidst booming frontier conditions, they found a congenial community as well as good prospects for making a living.

And they responded to the needs of the city with zeal. At the time of its incorporation, Samuel Jaffa became Trinidad's first mayor, and Isaac Levy and Abe Mansbach were members of its first board of trustees.

Meanwhile Congregation Aaron was making progress. For a while it met in a local hall. Then, in 1883, it moved to the splendid new Jaffa Opera House on Main Street. The same year, while Samuel Jaffa who had founded the Las Animas Lodge served as Worshipful Master, the congregation purchased a burial ground from the Masons. In 1887 it engaged its first rabbi.

The highwater mark for Congregation Aaron was 1889 when Rabbi Leopold Freudenthal became the rabbi and was destined to serve as its spiritual leader for 27 years. That year also witnessed the formation in June of the Ladies Aid Society, and the dedication of its own synagogue building in December. Erected at Third and Maple by the 54 members at a cost of nearly \$12,000--of which half was borrowed from the B'nai B'rith District, and the rest pledged by the members--the red-brick edifice was a combination of Moorish and Victorian architecture, with a sanctuary seating some 250. Services were conducted in both German and English, and along moderate Reform lines.

Until his death in 1916, Rabbi Freudenthal served both the congregation and the community with distinction. Greatly admired by all citizens, he was active in the Masons and in civic life generally--serving as secretary of the School Board among other things--and Congregation Aaron prospered spiritually under his guidance. But the Jewish community failed to grow, and economic conditions in Trinidad started to deteriorate. It now became a constant struggle to maintain the congregation. Periodic special assessments of the members, and even reductions in the rabbi's salary, became necessary. And, after a futile attempt to support a rabbi following Dr. Freudenthal's death, the congregation drew upon students from the Hebrew Union College to conduct the High Holyday worship. For the rest of its religious activities it called upon its own members.

As a result, the temple developed a ministry of devoted laypeople--chiefly the Sanders family--who carried on congregational life. Leopold Sanders led the weekly services until 1935. He was then succeeded by his younger brother, Gilbert Sanders, one of the city's best-known attorneys. Upon his death in 1952, his widow Beatrice has continued the Sanders tradition. Both she and her late husband were recognized by the Hebrew Union College with honorary doctorates for their outstanding service to Jewish life in Southern Colorado.

THE CENTENARY OF CONGREGATION AARON

As the membership of Congregation Aaron continued to shrink, the establishment of the Dr. Alfred Freudenthal Foundation began to provide for its essential religious needs. It also made possible the securing of a rabbi from the Hebrew Union College to conduct High Holyday Services. But the Freudenthal Foundation, created by the Rabbi and his two sons, Samuel, an attorney, and Alfred, a physician, has contributed greatly to the welfare of Trinidad and beyond. It has given generously to innumerable causes, including civic clubs, religious institutions of all faiths, and particularly the Junior College, dear to the heart of the Freudenthal family. And it has aided the needy in scores of ways that include milk and eyeglasses for children, playgrounds, books, and much more. From its inception, and for many years, the Fund was administered by Albert Moses, a leading local merchant, Leo Gottlieb, a well-known insurance executive, and Gilbert Sanders, lay-rabbi and president of Congregation Aaron for many years. The Foundation's current trustees are Beatrice Sanders, Leon Rubin, Yetta Cibull, Ruth Elliot and Rabbi Sylvan Schwartzman.

Though the temple has only a tiny membership today, its centennial looms large in the saga of Colorado and the whole of Southwest Jewry. Its temple remains the oldest synagogue in continuous existence in Colorado, and that very presence bespeaks the courage of countless Jewish pioneers of the West, continuous faith in the American dream, a spirit of warm humanitarian concern for all people, and unstinting devotion to God. Indeed, these words pronounced by Dr. Freudenthal on June 19, 1889, at the laying of the temple's cornerstone epitomize the hundred years of Congregation Aaron --

Allegiance to God and good will toward mankind has ever been -- and shall ever be -- the watchword of Israel. For it is neither the grandeur of this edifice, its architectural design, nor the master's art, that will cause the **Shechina**, the glory of God, to dwell therein, but the sentiments of truth and of love, of virtue and of righteousness, that will make it what the prophet so vividly pronounced it: "A house in which all nations will assemble to praise God and worship Him."

And to this vision, Congregation Aaron remains forever dedicated.

THE CONGREGATION

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cibull
Mrs. Simon Elliot
Mrs. Ben Floersheim
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Geisman
Dr. and Mrs. Armin T. Keil
Mrs. Albert Moses

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Rubin
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Rubin
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Rubin
Mrs. Gilbert Sanders
Miss Miriam Edith Tauff
Mr. Gerald Valdez

THE CENTENARY OF CONGREGATION AARON

THE CENTENNIAL SPEAKER



Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, the Centennial speaker, is no stranger to Congregation Aaron and Trinidad. Indeed, for many years he officiated at the congregation's High Holyday services, and while in the community, addressed the many civic clubs and local groups throughout the area. It is particularly appropriate, therefore, that he return on this signal occasion.

Dr. Marcus is the Distinguished Service Professor of American Jewish History at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. He is also the Director of the American Jewish Archives and the American Jewish Periodical Center, both devoted to the collection and preservation of the historical records of American Jewry.

A prolific writer and speaker, he is universally recognized as a pioneer in the field of early American Jewish life, and his scholarly research has produced a dozen major works in the field. He is a former president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the American Jewish Historical Society. He has been honored for his outstanding achievements with honorary degrees from numerous universities, and has received many awards of distinction.

THE CHOIR

Mrs. Roy Boyd, **Director**

Mrs. William Bowie, **Organist**

Mrs. Joe Bowles

Mr. Roy Boyd

Rev. Leonard Goering

Mr. Douglas Holdred

Mrs. C.A. Miller

Mr. Joe Ernest Montoya

Miss Miriam Edith Tauff

THE CENTENARY OF CONGREGATION AARON

CONGREGATION CENTENNIAL DINNER

Saturday Evening, June 11, 1983 - 7:30 O'clock

Holiday Inn

Invocation

Havdala Ceremony of
Thanksgiving

HaMotzi

Rabbi Sylvan D. Schwartzman

Rabbi Martin M. Weitz

Mr. Louis Cibull

Dinner

Toast

Grace After Dinner

Introduction of Guests

A Moment of Recollection

Introduction of Speaker

Address

Acknowledgments

Commemorative Presentation

Congregation Centennial Prayer

"En Kelohenu" and "America"

Benediction

Mr. Randy Rubin

Mrs. Ronald Rubin

Mrs. Louis Cibull

Mrs. Simon Elliot

Mrs. Gilbert Sanders

Dr. Jacob R. Marcus

Mrs. Randy Rubin

Mr. Leon Rubin

Mrs. Armin T. Keil

Miss Miriam Edith Tauff
and Congregation

Rabbi Martin M. Weitz

**Pre-Dinner Reception at the Home of
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cibull**

THE CENTENARY OF CONGREGATION AARON

REAFFIRMATION OF THE CONGREGATION

At this historic service, we recall with signal pride those who founded this Congregation, and those who by their singular devotion have sustained it over these many years. Their spirit lives on within us, and inspired by them we pledge ourselves to carry on their sacred task.

With conviction and courage we rededicate ourselves this night to the ideals they championed: abiding faith in the Almighty, devotion to His righteous demands, concern for the Children of Israel and all humanity. Though few in numbers, we pledge our strength to preserve the exalted traditions of Congregation Aaron that its light may continue to shine for blessing into a second century. And so may it be Thy will, O Lord Our God. Amen.

CONGREGATION CENTENNIAL PRAYER

As the past century looks down upon us, O Lord, we are joined with all the generations past to offer Thee thanks for the heritage of Congregation Aaron. We have indeed been blessed, and gratefully do we voice our thanks in the hallowed words of tradition:

Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has preserved us, sustained us and enabled us to commemorate this historic occasion.

May we be worthy of all the sacrifices of those who have gone before. May we carry forward their quest for the sanctification of life through the faith of Israel. And may we persevere for the preservation of our historic synagogue so that, even as we, future generations may claim their rightful place for blessing within Congregation Aaron. Amen.