

## *Welcome to the Oldest Existing Jewish Cemetery in St. Louis*

The story of New Mt. Sinai begins in 1847 with the purchase of burial grounds by Imanu El Congregation on the south side of Cooper Street, just west of Pratte Avenue, in an area popularly referred to as “Campsprings.” In 1850, the other St. Louis Reform congregation, B’nai Brith Society, purchased a one-acre tract on Gravois Road, which is now part of New Mt. Sinai Cemetery. Two years later, due to a cholera epidemic and the resultant loss of members, the two congregations merged to form B’nai El.

Today, the cemetery covers more than 52 acres and is owned by Congregations B’nai El, Shaare Emeth and Temple Israel. Among the more than 10,500 people laid to rest here over the past 150-plus years are religious, civic and business leaders – many of the pillars of the St. Louis community.

### **Stop # 1 COMMUNITY MAUSOLEUM**

The first section of the only Jewish mausoleum in St. Louis was completed in 1969 with space for 364 crypts and two columbaria for the cremated remains of 72 persons. A new section, completed in 1990, contains 675 additional crypts, as well as eight columbaria for the cremated remains of 320 persons.

The stained glass “Window of Truth,” which forms the backdrop for services in the building’s 200-seat chapel, was designed by the renowned artist Sol Nodel, brother of the late Rabbi Julius Nodel of Congregation Shaare Emeth. It contains more than 3,500 individual pieces of mouth-blown, hand-painted glass and symbolizes one of Judaism’s basic teachings: the beginning and end of all truth is with God.

Prominent individuals interred in the mausoleum include Julius A. Schweig, former mayor of Clayton, brokerage executive and philanthropist John E. Simon, Arthur “Cubby” Baer, a member of the founding family of Stix, Baer & Fuller department store, and Samuel Sachs, founder of Sachs Electric.

### **Stop # 2 VETERANS MEMORIAL MONUMENT**

The more than 530 known veterans buried in the Cemetery represent every major armed conflict in which our country has been engaged since the Mexican-American War\*. The granite monument and surrounding garden were dedicated to their memory on July 4, 2003.

\* Note that the inscription on the monument referring to veterans of conflicts dating back to the Civil War is in error.

### **Stop # 3 HOUSE OF COMFORT**

In 1917, a place of rest was built for weary travelers who made the all-day trip from the city to visit the burial sites of loved ones. It was customary for families to carry picnic baskets with them in their horse-drawn carriages and have lunch on the Cemetery lawn. In the 1950s, the House of Comfort, as it became known, became the Cemetery office.

### **Stop # 4 RABBI SAMUEL SALE (1854-1937)**

Rabbi Sale of Congregation Shaare Emeth was the first native-born St. Louis rabbi. He came from Chicago in 1887 to succeed Rabbi Solomon Sonneschein (who left Shaare Emeth to lead Temple Israel) and served until 1919. He also served on the faculty of Washington University as Adjunct Professor of Hebrew and was instrumental in establishing Jewish Hospital.

### **Stop # 5 CAMPSPRINGS**

In 1872, the remains of 43 adults and 53 children were exhumed from the original Imanu El cemetery grounds in Campsprings and re-interred in Mt. Sinai. Some of the original grave markers remain. The oldest known remains are those of Emilie Straus, age 6 months, who died in 1838. In 1990, a granite monument, donated by Rosenbloom Monument Co., was erected in front of the original monument to preserve the wording of the inscription.

### **Stop # 6 MOSES FRALEY (1843-1917)**

Elected to the St. Louis Board of Alderman in 1877, Mr. Fraley later became president of the St. Louis Merchants Exchange. One of the original founders of Temple Israel, he later became its president. He also had a prominent role in the creation of the United Jewish Charities, a forerunner of today's Jewish Federation of St. Louis. When he died in 1917, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch referred to him as "probably the most widely known Jewish resident of St. Louis."

### **Stop # 7 OLD CEMETERY CHAPEL**

Built in 1905, the building served as a chapel into the 1940s. The basement contains four crypts that were used as temporary storage sites for bodies until they could be entombed while private, family mausoleums and the community mausoleum were being built. It is currently used for storage.

### **Stop # 8 IGNATZ HARTMAN (1841-1902)**

Ignatz Hartman fought with the First Infantry of the Union Army during the Civil War and was active in the Great Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), the major organization of Union Army veterans. The carvings in the marble monument to the left and right of his name depict the medals he was awarded resulting from his service with the Union Army and with the Army of the Potomac.

### **Stop # 9 ROSENBLATT MONUMENT**

This is one of 40 private mausoleums in the Cemetery. Among those buried here are three prominent St. Louisians.

**Meyer Rosenblatt (1841-1888)** moved to St. Louis from Nevada following the Civil War. Here, in 1880, he established the Hebrew Free School and later became chairman of the Missouri State Republican Committee.

His son-in-law, **Louis P. Aloe (1867-1929)**, was a businessman (Aloe Surgical Supply, founded by his father) and civic leader. In 1915, he was elected president of the St. Louis Board of Alderman and he served as acting mayor during the illness of Mayor Henry Kiel. Louis P. Aloe Plaza (with Milles Fountain), located directly across Market Street from Union Station, was dedicated in his memory in 1940.

**Howard F. Baer (1902-1998)**, son-in-law of Louis P. Aloe, headed the family's surgical business until it merged with Brunswick Corp. A civic, cultural and business leader in St. Louis for 50 years, he is credited with developing the City/County Zoo Museum District.

### **Stop # 10 RABBI ADOLPH ROSENRETER (1858-1930)**

Rabbi Rosentreter served B'nai Amoona, a Conservative congregation currently operating on Mason Road in Creve Coeur, from 1885 to 1905, while it was still an Orthodox congregation. He was a leading advocate for the establishment of a Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home, which was ultimately built on East Grand and Blair in north St. Louis in the early 1900s.

### **Stop # 11 RABBI SOLOMON SONNESCHEIN (1839-1908)**

This pioneer of Reform Judaism moved from New York to St. Louis in 1869 to become the first rabbi of Shaare Emeth. More traditional congregants were unhappy with his ultra-liberal beliefs. This ultimately caused his abrupt resignation from his position at Shaare Emeth in 1886 in order to become the first rabbi of the newly formed, more liberal Temple Israel.

### **Stop # 12 DR. MAX GOLDSTEIN (1870-1941)**

This prominent St. Louis physician is best known as the founder of the Central Institute for the Deaf, a nationally acclaimed institution providing a multitude of services to members of the deaf community. Dr. Goldstein is also recognized as a pioneer in the areas of child care, pre-school health needs and the education of young mothers regarding food and nutrition. Note the gated and staired entrance to the sarcophagus.

**Stop # 13 MAJOR ADOLPH PROSKAUER (1838-1900)**

A resident of Mobile, Ala., he enlisted in the Confederate Army as a private and rose to the rank of major as a result of battlefield heroism. He organized a company of German Jews known as the Independent Mobile Rifles, which later became Company C of the 12<sup>th</sup> Alabama Volunteers. Following the war, he moved to St. Louis to pursue a career as a cotton commission merchant and, in time, became president of the Merchants and Cotton Exchange. An original supporter of Jewish Hospital, he was also a board member of Temple Israel.

**Stop # 14 RICE-MICHAEL MAUSOLEUM**

Among those entombed here are:

**Jonathan Rice (1848-1903)**, who joined his brother, Harry, and William Stix to open a mercantile store in St. Joseph, Mo., where they sold supplies to the Union Army, including a regular customer named Ulysses S. Grant. He moved to St. Louis and became a partner with Benjamin Eiseman in Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., which moved here from Memphis following an outbreak of yellow fever. A member of the executive board of the 1904 World's Fair Exposition, he died a year before it opened.

**Aurelia Stix Rice (1854-1924)**, who was the wife of Jonathan Rice and sister of his business partner, William Stix (who is also buried in the Cemetery). Known as a patron of the arts and the author of poems and short stories, she was also a founder of the Home for Chronic Invalids on Fee Fee Road, president of the Associated Jewish Charities (which provided assistance to newly-arrived eastern European immigrants) and an active supporter of non-sectarian organizations which aided young women facing domestic problems.

**Charles M Rice (1882-1950)**, who was the son of Jonathan and Aurelia Stix Rice. A prominent attorney, he was a founder of the St. Louis law firm, Louis Rice & Fingersh.

**Elias Michael (1854-1913)**, who was 15 when he joined Rice-Stix as a stock clerk and eventually became its president. His only child having died at age 7, his strong interest in childhood education led him to service on the St. Louis Board of Education. The Elias Michael School for the Orthopedically Handicapped was named after him.

**Stop # 15 DR. HANAU LOEB (1865-1927)**

Dr. Loeb, who specialized in ear, nose and throat medicine, was one of the members of Jewish Hospital's first medical staff. Other members of the initial staff buried in the Cemetery are: **Dr. Herman Tuholske, (1868-1922)** – surgery, **Dr. Jacob Friedman (1861-1918)** – medicine, and **Dr. Henry Wolfner, (1861-1935)** – ophthalmology.

**Stop # 16 BENJAMIN EISEMAN (1833-1911)** was born in Germany and came to the U.S. at age 18. After moving to St. Joseph, Mo., he joined Henry Rice and William Stix in developing what in time became the wholesale dry goods firm, Rice, Stix and Co. A founder of Temple Israel and the Home for Aged and Infirm Israelites, he was president of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce.

Note the stone for the triplet sons of Benjamin who died within three weeks of their birth on July 28, 1886.

**Stop # 17 JACOB HIRSCHHORN (1829-1906)** arrived from Bavaria in New York in 1846 at age 16. He enlisted in the First Regiment of the New York Volunteers which engaged in bloody battles during the war with Mexico. Only 260 out of 1200 volunteers returned to New York. Years after the war, he moved to St. Louis. His memoirs - "The Mexican War - Reminiscence of a Volunteer" - described his personal accounts of various battles.

**Stop # 18 FREUND FAMILY MONUMENT** is among the tallest in the Cemetery. Members of this prominent St. Louis family were engaged in a number of different businesses through the years. **Jane Freund Harris (1920-1999)** was named a St. Louis Globe-Democrat "Woman of Achievement" in 1997 for her volunteer efforts in behalf of numerous organizations.

**Stop # 19 ADOLPH LINCOLN MARKS (1861-1937)**, who died on February 3, 1937, fought for the United States in the Spanish American War which took place between 1898 and 1902.

**Stop # 20 ISAAC FULD (1834-1925)** was born in Germany and in 1853 arrived in St. Louis, where he started Fuld-Goodwin Mercantile. Although raised as an Orthodox Jew, he was a founder of Shaare Emeth (a Reform congregation). He was a strong supporter of Abraham Lincoln and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

**Stop # 21 FANNIE HURST (1885-1968)**, a graduate of Soldan High School and Washington University, was a prominent writer, journalist and social activist. The best known of her many literary works was the novel, "Back Street." Although she lived most of her life on the East Coast, her body was returned here for burial in her family's lot.

**Stop # 22 LT. JEROME L. GOLDMAN (1888-1918)** enlisted as a private shortly after the U.S. entered World War I. After receiving his commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, he was sent to France in January of 1918. Six months later, he was killed while leading an attack on the German lines during the battle of Belleau Woods. Lt. Goldman was buried in a military cemetery in France until 1921, when his remains were returned to his family in St. Louis.

**Stop # 23 EMMER BROTHERS. PFC Raymond Emmer (1925-1944)** and his brother. **Capt. Wallace Emmer (1917-1945)**, gave their lives for our country while serving on active duty during World War II. Wallace (Bud), a highly decorated double ace fighter pilot (DSC, Silver Star, DFC(2), Air Medal (25) shot down 14 enemy aircraft while flying with the 354<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Mustang Fighter Group, died while in a POW camp. Raymond, with the 99<sup>th</sup> Division, was killed on 11/18/44 near the Belgian-German border...it was on his brother's birthday.

**Stop # 24 RABBI MORITZ SPITZ (1848-1920)** was the spiritual leader of B'nai El Temple from 1878 to 1920. He was also editor of "The Voice," a St. Louis Jewish community newspaper, and a significant supporter of the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), the predecessor organization to the Jewish Community Center (JCC).

**Stop # 25 RABBI JULIUS NODEL (1915-1992)** was spiritual leader of Congregation Shaare Emeth from 1959 to 1971. He was the brother of Sol Nodel, the designer of the stained-glass window in the Cemetery's community mausoleum. Before retiring and returning to St. Louis, Rabbi Nodel served as rabbi of a reform congregation in Honolulu, Hawaii.

**Stop # 26 DAVID SOMMERS (1867-1925)**, an investment banker, was active in both the Jewish and secular communities. He is credited with building the St. Louis Theater on Grand Ave., which is now Powell Hall. In addition to his remains, the memorial sarcophagus contains the remains of Mr. Sommers' wife and two children who died in an automobile accident in 1913.

**Stop # 27 AARON WALDHEIM (1863-1938)** moved to St. Louis to manage the local outlet of May-Stern Co., a retail furniture business he started with David May and Harry Stern. After accumulating considerable wealth in the investment and real estate businesses, he became one of the city's most generous philanthropists, contributing to both Jewish and non-Jewish causes. One of the founders of Jewish Hospital, he served as its president until his death.

**Stop # 28 DAVID P. WOHL (1886-1960)** worked as a shoe clerk before opening his own store in 1916. He conceived of the idea of operating leased shoe departments in existing retail stores and, in time, had such departments in leading department stores throughout the country. His son was killed on a bombing mission over Berlin in 1944. With no family successor in the business, he sold it to Brown Shoe Co. in 1951. Among the numerous recipients of his benevolence are the Jewish Federation, Jewish Hospital, the YMHA and Washington

University. The main building on the Jewish Community Center campus on Schuetz Rd. is named for his wife, Carolyn H. Wohl.

**Stop # 29 RABBI JULIUS GORDON (1897-1954)** was rabbi of Congregation Shaare Emeth from 1929 to 1954. An excellent orator, his Friday night sermons drew huge crowds, particularly when he reviewed current books.

**Stop # 30 RABBI BERTRAM KLAUSNER (1908-1991)** was a chaplain in the United States Air Corps during World War II, prior to serving as rabbi of B'nai El Congregation from 1956 to 1974. He was one of a new generation of Reform rabbis who began to introduce more traditionalism into the service.

**Stop # 31 MARK C. STEINBERG (1881-1951)** was highly successful in the brokerage business, but is best remembered as a benefactor of the St. Louis Art Museum and other causes. His name is preserved in many ways, most notably the Mark C. Steinberg Skating Rink in Forest Park.

**Stop # 32 STANLEY GOODMAN (1910-1992)** came to St. Louis to accept a position with Famous-Barr and rose to the presidency of the May Department Stores Co. A proficient violin player and lover of fine music, he served as president of the St. Louis Symphony during its move to Powell Hall. The unusual granite boulder memorializing the Goodmans was selected from a southeast Missouri location and helicoptered to the Cemetery.

**Stop # 33 KOPLAR MAUSOLEUM.** The Koplars family owned and operated the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel during its original heyday. They also owned television station KPLR. Samuel Koplars daughter, Lillian, was an attorney. She was married to Morris Shenker, an attorney best known for representing members of the Teamster Union hierarchy. Both are buried in the mausoleum, together with Lillian's father, mother and siblings.

**Stop # 34 RABBI FERDINAND M. ISSERMAN (1898-1972)** served Temple Israel from 1929 to 1963. Like his predecessor, Leon Harrison, he was one of the first rabbis to champion interfaith dialogue with other religious and racial groups in St. Louis. Following a trip to Germany, he was also among the first to predict the coming Holocaust. The Isserman Monument was designed by the prominent sculptor, Robert Crombach.

**Stop # 35 CHARLES YALEM (1893-1978),** who was originally a dentist, founded Aetna Finance and became a highly successful member of the financial community. Among the many institutions and causes to which he contributed were Congregation Shaare Emeth and the Jewish Community Center. He also donated funds to build the original Children's Zoo, a feature of the St. Louis Zoo in Forest Park.

**Stop # 36 RABBI JULIAN MILLER (1881-1961)** served as spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai El from 1919 to 1956, following the 42-year tenure of Rabbi Moritz Spitz. Also buried in the family plot is his son, Julian, founder of Prom magazine, a favorite publication of local high school students for many years.

**Stop # 37 SIDNEY SALOMON (1910-1986),** a successful insurance executive, was a member of the National Committee of the Democratic Party. A lover of sports, he established the first National Hockey League franchise in St. Louis: the St. Louis Blues.

Other noted sports figures buried in the Cemetery include Ben Kerner, who brought professional basketball to St. Louis with the St. Louis Hawks, and Richman Bry, who as an agent represented such athletes as Lou Brock of the St. Louis Cardinals.

**Stop # 38 SHOENBERG AND MAY MAUSOLEUMS. Moses Shoenberg (1852-1925) and David May (1848-1927)** opened a dry goods store catering mainly to miners in Leadville, Colorado in 1878. May married Shoenberg's sister, Rosa, and opened the first May Co. department store in Denver in 1888. After pursuing their own business interests for about seven years, both men moved to St. Louis where they purchased two

stores, which they combined to form the Famous-Barr Co. The May family continued to operate the May Department Stores Co., while members of the Shoenberg family operated a successful private investment firm and co-founded CIT Financial Corp. The Shoenberg and May families have made major contributions to philanthropic, civic and cultural efforts in St. Louis. Members of both families are buried in their own mausoleums.

**Stop # 39 CHARLES STIX (1861-1916)** owned a retail store called “The Famous,” which was purchased by David May and Moses Shoenberg. Combined with the William Barr Dry Goods Co., the store became known as Famous-Barr. In the meantime, brothers Julius and Sigmund Baer had arrived in St. Louis from Ft. Smith, Ark., where they had operated a store with their brother-in-law, Aaron Fuller. The Baer brothers brought Charles Stix into their business and, together with Aaron Fuller, organized the Stix, Baer and Fuller Department Store which opened for business in 1892 as the Grand Leader. The company was ultimately purchased by Dillards Department Stores.

**Stop # 40 NATHAN FRANK (1852-1931)** moved to St. Louis from his birthplace in Peoria, Ill. following the Civil War. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1889, making him the first and only Jew to represent Missouri in either house of Congress. He was a successful lawyer and a founder of the St. Louis Star newspaper, which later became the Star-Times. He provided funds for the Nathan Frank Bandstand, which stands in Forest Park opposite the Muny Opera.

**Stop # 41 RABBI LEON HARRISON (1866-1928)** was raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. where he was rabbi of Temple Israel. In 1891, he came to St. Louis, where he served as rabbi of Temple Israel until his untimely death in a subway accident in New York in 1928. An outstanding orator and champion of liberal Reform Judaism, he often exchanged pulpits with Christian clergymen.

**Stop # 42 MARK EDISON (1895-1951) AND IRVING EDISON (1899-1989).** By 1922, members of the Edison family had opened several women’s shoe stores in Atlanta. Their St. Louis connection began when Mark, one of the five Edison brothers, came here to buy shoes and open a retail store. In time, the four remaining brothers (Simon, Samuel, Henry and Irving) joined Mark in St. Louis to open more stores and establish the company’s headquarters here. Edison Brothers grew to become one of the largest shoe merchandising organizations in the country. Unfortunately, after diversifying into other fields, the business filed for bankruptcy in the late 1990s. The Edison Theater at Washington University bears the name of this benevolent family, members of which are buried throughout the Cemetery.

**Stop # 43 BAER AND FULLER MAUSOLEUMS.** The Baer and Fuller families, founders of the Stix, Baer & Fuller department store (Grand Leader), played prominent roles in the history of business and philanthropy in St. Louis. They were important benefactors of Jewish Hospital (now Barnes-Jewish), Temple Israel, the St. Louis Community Fund (forerunner of the United Way) and the Home for Aged and Infirm Israelites  
(forerunner of the Jewish Center for the Aged).

*Special Thanks to DR. WALTER EHRLICH whose two-volume narrative “Zion in the Valley” provided much of the information included here. It is the most comprehensive history of the St. Louis Jewish Community from the arrival of the first identifiable Jew in 1807 to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

*We also wish to thank WILLIAM B. EISEMAN, a past-president and long-time board member of the New Mt. Sinai Cemetery Association for his contribution in the form of personal reflections, inciteful comments and fond remembrances.*