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Congregation Rodeph Shalom – 100 Year Anniversary, 1975

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CONGREGATION
RODEPH SHOLOM
100 YEARS OF SERVING
ITS MEMBERS
AND
THE TOTAL COMMUNITY
1875—1975
To all our dear friends:

On behalf of the entire Rodeph Sholom Congregation, I would like to welcome you to our 100th anniversary rededication, and at the same time thank each of you for joining with us in this momentous occasion.

As one reflects on the events of this weekend, we must take note of the fact that only in America could a small Jewish Community be allowed to grow, and continue for 100 years in an atmosphere of uninterrupted religious freedom and a unique brotherhood among peoples.

Through your presence here, you are helping with our rededication to our faith, and the principals passed down from father to son for over five thousand years...and you are helping us live the words etched in stones on the front of our Synagogue, "Though how good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Rabbi Raphael Asher
Oscar Borochoff
Mrs. Oscar Borochoff
Hyman Esserman
Mrs. Hyman Esserman
Mrs. Joe Esserman
Bernard Kauffman
Mrs. Bernard Kauffman
Mel Moskowitz
Joe Rothman
Mrs. Joe Rothman
Dr. Murray Stein
Mrs. Murray Stein
Howard Wachsteter
Barry Weinstein
Mrs. Barry Weinstein

The entire Congregation of Rodeph Sholom who so willingly gave their time and efforts to all the committee-chairmen in order to make this celebration possible.

Lyons J. Heyman, Chairman
Mrs. Lyons J. Heyman, Co-Chairman

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE
Dear Members and Friends of Rodeph Sholom Congregation:

Please permit me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the 100th anniversary of Rodeph Sholom Congregation. This is a momentous and historic occasion, and I share the great pride I know all of you feel.

Members of the Jewish faith have played a significant role in the development of social and economic progress in Georgia, and Rodeph Sholom Congregation of Rome, as the sixth Jewish congregation to be established in our State, has always been in the forefront.

I send you greetings and wish you a most successful Centennial celebration.

With kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

[Signature]

406 East First Street
Rome, Georgia 30161
October 10, 1975

Officers 1975-76

Howard Wachsteter ........................................ President
Arnold Held .................................................. Vice-President
Mel Moskowitz ............................................... Recording Secretary
Lisa Sturt ..................................................... Corresponding Secretary
Sylvia Esserman ........................................... Treasurer

Board of Directors

DIRECTORS
Greer Henderson
Lyons Heyman
Joe Rives
Murray Stein
Barry Weinstein

DIRECTORS EMERITUS
Oscar Borochoff
Hyman Esserman
Charles Heyman, Sr.

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Jacob Kuttner
Isaac May
Presley Esserman
Sol Schwartz
Oscar Borochoff
Hyman Esserman
Daniel Lease
Michael Kraft
Ike Eplan

Ben Esserman
Louis Gavant
Jule Levin
Joseph Rothman
Joseph Esserman
Lyons Heyman
Murray Stein
Bernard Kauffman
Charles Heyman, Sr.

Rabbi: Raphael Asher
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President
Mrs. Howard Wachteter
1st Vice-President
Mrs. Oscar Borochoff
2nd Vice-President
Mrs. Meyer Levinson
Secretary
Mrs. Joe Rothman
Treasurer
Mrs. B. B. Miller

Past Presidents

Mrs. Oscar Borochoff
Mrs. Dave Miller
Miss Rebecca Mendelson
Mrs. Louis Gavant
Miss Bella Shepard
Mrs. Josh Shmukler
Mrs. Michael Kraft
Mrs. Hyman Shaffer
Mrs. I. M. Levinson
Mrs. Jule Levin
Mrs. Larry Schwartz

Mrs. B. B. Miller
Mrs. Joe Esserman
Mrs. Mose Esserman
Mrs. Herbert Blumberg
Mrs. Ben Esserman
Mrs. Joe Rothman
Mrs. Murray Stein
Mrs. Lyons Heyman
Mrs. Bernard Kaufman
Mrs. Dorah Kusnitz
Mrs. Meyer Levinson

TO THE CONGREGATION OF RODEPH SHOLOM

I take pleasure in sending greetings to you as you prepare to celebrate the joyous occasion of your one hundred anniversary on October 10.

During the last century, you have served the community of Rome with dedication. I know the pride you must feel at this time, and I trust this same pride will continue to be a source of strength as you carry on with your important work.

You have my warmest congratulations.

September 15, 1975

TO THE CONGREGATION OF RODEPH SHOLOM

It is a pleasure for me to send greetings upon the Centennial Celebration of the Rodeph Sholom Congregation. I regret I cannot personally be with you for this anniversary occasion.

Throughout the years, the Rodeph Sholom Congregation has made valuable contributions to the growth and development of Rome and Floyd County. As members of the Congregation, you can indeed take great pride in the honor and recognition which have come from your fine achievements.

Please know you have my best wishes for much success as you embark upon your next 100 years of service.

Sincerely,

George Busbee

Office of the Governor
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

October 6, 1975

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure for me to send greetings upon the Centennial Celebration of the Rodeph Sholom Congregation. I regret I cannot personally be with you for this anniversary occasion.

Throughout the years the Rodeph Sholom Congregation has made valuable contributions to the growth and development of Rome and Floyd County. As members of the Congregation, you can indeed take great pride in the honor and recognition which have come from your fine achievements.

Please know you have my best wishes for much success as you embark upon your next 100 years of service.

Sincerely,

George Busbee
WHEREAS, The year 1975 marks the 100th Anniversary of Congregation Rodeph Sholom of the City of Rome, Georgia; and
WHEREAS, From its inception the congregation has been a vital force in the life and spiritual growth of this city; and
WHEREAS, Its members throughout the years have in the highest tradition provided this city with a host of distinguished leaders in all phases of community life; and
WHEREAS, The present officers, trustees and members of this congregation devote much of their time and energies to the betterment of community life in the finest tradition of their predecessors; and
WHEREAS, Congregation Rodeph Sholom has designated the weekend of October 10, 11, and 12, 1975 as the official dates to celebrate its first one-hundred years of service; and
WHEREAS, A great many friends, relatives and distinguished Jewish leaders have gathered in our city to observe this significant occasion,
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Harold F. Hunter, Jr., First Commissioner of the City of Rome do hereby proclaim October 12, 1975 as RODEPH SHOLOM DAY in Rome, Georgia, as an expression of appreciation of the people of this city for the contributions of Congregation Rodeph Sholom of the City of Rome to the spiritual, cultural and material welfare of all of our people.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of this city to be affixed.

Rhos F. Hunter, Jr.
First Commissioner

[Signature]

100th Anniversary Events

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1975
8:00 P.M. Rededication Service at Temple Rodeph Sholom, Rabbi Raphael Asher and Rabbi Sanford Shapero, Regional Director of The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, officiating. Oneg Shabat, St. Peter's Episcopal Church

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1975
10:00 A.M. Morning Service at Temple Rodeph Sholom, Informal Talk by Professor David Steine, Trustee, Hebrew Union College
11:30 A.M. Kiddush and Light Refreshments
7:00 P.M. Cocktails, Coosa Country Club
8:00 P.M. 100th Anniversary Dinner, Dr. Ellis Rivkin, Principal Speaker, Entertainment by The Erev Duo

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1975
12:30 P.M. Open House at Temple Rodeph Sholom, Viewing of The Memorabilia Museum
1:30 P.M. Unveiling of the Centennial Plaque, Dr. Harry Epstein, Principal Speaker
2:30 P.M. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Opening the Israeli Art Show by The Consul General of Israel, Mahum Astar, at The National City Bank
Champagne Reception
REDEDICATION SERVICE
Friday Evening, October 10, 1975
At Eight O'Clock At The Temple

Mrs. John Ramsaur, Organist
Organ Prelude .......................... Frederick Jacobi
From “Arvit L'Shabbat”
Lighting of Sabbath Candles .............. Mrs. Howard Wachsteter
Sisterhood President
Processional, Oriental Chromatic March .......... Ernest Bloch
Remarks .................................. Rabbi Raphael Asher
Welcome ................................ Howard Wachsteter
Congregation President
Invocation and Ritual ...................... Rabbi Raphael Asher
Union Prayer Book
Sermon, “Rome’s Place in the 21st Century”  ... Rabbi Sanford Shapero
Regional Director, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Announcements ........................ Howard Wachsteter
Kiddush ................................. Rabbi Asher
Adoration ................................. S. Sulzer
Concluding Hymn, En Kelohaynu ............ Julius Freudenthal
Benediction ................................ Rabbi Asher
Organ Postlude .......................... #21 to Isidor Geller

Morris Shapiro and Nathan Bark. Beginning in 1956, Student Rabbis: Saul Rubin, Max Selinger, Fred Mogley, Matthew Derby, Stanley Relkin, Gustave Buchdal, Allen Maller, Roger Herst, Harvey Goldman, Mark Goldman, Leslie Gutterman, Sanford Marcus, Gerald Levy, Robert Orkand, Robert Kiser, David Glazer, Daniel Bender and presently, Raphael Asher have served the Congregation.

Rodeph Sholom Congregation has continued its record of outstanding service to the community in the past quarter century. Many of its members have distinguished themselves and the Congregation in myriad phases of business and civic life. During this last few years the Congregation has been fortunate to see a reversal of the diminishing membership as new, younger families have moved into the area. This is attributed to the growth and prosperity of Rome. As Rome continues its growth, hopefully additional Jewish families will be among the people seeking new opportunity in the City.

Although at this time of its centennial, the Congregation pays honor to its history, the members, as Jews, are careful not to become anchored in the past. They pledge themselves anew to the ideals of their forefathers, and with a spirit born of rededication, continue to strive toward a second century of service to God and their community.

Oneg Shabat immediately following services at St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Philip Cohen served as president of the Congregation from 1875 until 1885. His wife was Dora Kuttner, sister of J. J. Kuttner, who succeeded to the presidency in 1885. Jacob Kuttner served until his death in 1905. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, Isaac May, as president who served in this office until 1938 when the new Temple was completed. The Rabbi, David Esserman, served from 1898 until his death in 1917.

During the 1880's and 1890's many Jewish people came from Eastern Europe. It was during these years that the Essermans, the Lessers, the Mendelsons and the Abramsons settled in Rome. After the turn of the century, Rome had its greatest influx of Jewish residents. Gradually the community grew and the younger generation of Rome-born Jews was also beginning to make its way into the life of the general community. From the turn of the century until World War I the Jewish population of Rome was larger than at any time, as the trend for large families existed during this period.

A leader in the Masonic Order, Dewey Wollstein, poet, editor of "The Masonic Messenger" for the Masons of Georgia and "The Masonic News" for the lodge in Rome, was Worshipful Master of Cherokee Lodge No. 66 and Grand Worshipful Master of the State of Georgia. He served as Chairman of the Education and Historical Commission of The Grand Lodge of Georgia for twenty years. He was one of the founders and charter secretary of the Rome Shrine Club, one of the first organized in Georgia, and was also a teacher in the Congregation's Sunday School.

The Jewish Welfare Board was in charge of the U. S. O. in Rome. They remodeled a building at the rear of the City Auditorium for the U.S.O. - J.W.B. headquarters. Rabbi Rubin R. Dobin, U.S.O. - J.W.B. Director, enlisted the services of the Congregation. The members were active in the religious and social life of the enlisted men, patients, and personnel at the Battey General Hospital and as serving as hostesses at the U. S. O. The Congregation furnished the Torah, candelabra and an Ark cover for the chapel at the hospital, and attended Friday evening services there. The women had charge of the Oneg Shabbat.

Serving in the Armed Services during the Korean War were: Joe Stock, Charles Heyman, Jr., Marvin Aronoff and Leon Borochoff.

Until 1955 Rome had a full time Rabbi. Since then Student Rabbis from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio have been serving the Congregation during the school term on a bi-monthly basis and also during the High Holy Days. Rodeph Sholom congregation is affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Rodeph Sholom's Rabbis have been: David Esserman, Morris Miller, Samuel Rubenstein, Morris Jaffe, Selig Auerbach, Harold A. Friedman, Joseph Spear, and others.
100TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

FRESH FRUIT CUP

ROAST BEEF AU JUS WITH MUSHROOMS

OR

BROILED FILET OF FLOUNDER

GREEN BEANS ALMONDINE STUFFED POTATOES

TOSSED SALAD

DINNER ROLLS

CREME DE MENTHE PARFAIT

COOKIES

CHAMPAGNE

COFFEE

COCKTAIL HOUR 7:00 TO 8:00

ing the cemetery, was given by J. J. Kuttner, in 1897. Isaac May was one of the trustees named in the latter deed.

Hannie Kuttner was married in 1885 to Isaac May, who had come to America from Alsace-Lorraine. He became a leader in the civic and business life of Rome, and served as President of the Congregation the first year the new building on East First Street was occupied. Their two children were: Edna (Mrs. Joe L. Sulzbacher) and Blanche (Mrs. Leo Schwed).

Illustrious in the history of Rome, Floyd County and Georgia was Max Meyerhardt. His vast contribution to Rodeph Sholom, which was founded by his father, was one of love and selfless devotion lasting a lifetime. He was a lawyer, Judge, poet and author of hymns published in the Union Hymnal. He was City Attorney, Judge of the City Court, a member and secretary of the City Council. He was instrumental in establishing the Young Men’s Library Association. Through his efforts the Rome Carnegie Library was founded. He was indefatigable in his efforts to convince others that the destiny of the New South must be realized through education. When the Carnegie Library Association was established in 1910, he became president of the Board of Trustees and retained that position until the time of his death. He helped to organize the Rome Public School system in 1882. He was a member of the school board and its secretary until 1909. Mr. Meyerhardt was elected Worshipful Master of Cherokee Lodge No. 66 in 1880 and served in this office for thirty-nine years, until his death. He served as Grand Worshipful Master Of Masonry in the State of Georgia for seven years. He established the Masonic Home for Orphaned Children in Macon.

Judge Meyerhardt founded the Rodeph Sholom Sunday School. Classes were held in the Masonic Temple Annex. He was superintendent for almost half a century. His family served as Sunday School teachers. They were also educators in the fields of public school, piano, violin and dance. Judge and Mrs. Meyerhardt had eight children: Rebecca (Mrs. Bertram Kauffman), Sarah (Mrs. Harold Asher), Ruth (Mrs. Maurice Poss), Esther (Mrs. Walter Nathan); Diana (Mrs. Sidney Patterson), Elizabeth, David and Sam Meyerhardt. His son, David, served as Assistant United States District Attorney.

The famous Nevin Opera House, with a seating capacity of one thousand, was built by Mrs. Thomas M. Jonas and M. A. Nevin in 1880 and was managed by Mr. Nevin, I. S. Jonas and Joe Speigelberg. It was the scene of many theatrical and musical events and was also used for political meetings. Unfortunately, this landmark was destroyed by fire in 1920.

At the beginning, the members of the Congregation probably met in individual homes for the observance of festivals and religious worship. They arranged sometime around 1890 to hold these services on the second floor of the Masonic Temple Annex on East Fourth Avenue.
the Congregation. The site on East First Street, where the Synagogue is located, was purchased from their neighbors, the St. Peter's Episcopal Church. The relationship between the churches of Rome with the Synagogue has exemplified mutual understanding. While remodeling the Episcopal Church, the Church held Sunday School classes in the Synagogue. Rodeph Sholom on several occasions has used the Church social hall for receptions.

The building of the Synagogue inspired the women to organize a Sisterhood in 1937, which affiliated with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods in 1938. The Sisterhood has contributed much through the years through financial efforts, social activities and aid with Sunday School. The Sisterhood bought the pews and altar for the new Synagogue and installed the wrought-iron rails on the steep steps leading up to the Temple.

The brick used in building the Synagogue was made in the Berry Schools' brick kilns. An unusual and beautiful chandelier, used in a Belgium cathedral years ago, was converted from a candlelight fixture to an electric fixture and was presented to the Congregation by Mr. I. D. Weitz of Atlanta. It hangs from the ceiling of the Sanctuary. The building is Colonial architecture. On the left entrance of the building a marble plaque is inserted in the brick, a Memorial to the memory of Abe and Harrison Abramson, who made the edifice possible. On the right is a marble plaque with the date 5698-1937.

The dedication was held on March 27, 1938, with Rabbi H. Epstein and Rabbi David Marx, both of Atlanta, officiating. In March, 1958, Rabbi Epstein officiated at the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the building.


Land atop Mont Aventine, one of the seven hills of Rome, was given to the congregation for a cemetery by J. J. Cohen, in 1875. The deed is recorded in the Floyd County Courthouse. An additional tract, adjoin-
As our country is approaching its bicentennial year, the Jewish people of Rome are commemorating the centennial of the Congregation Rodeph Sholom (Pursuers of Peace).

Rome, city of seven hills and three rivers, was founded in 1833, during the days when Indians roamed the hills and valleys of what is now Rome and Floyd County. Records in the Floyd County Courthouse show that the first real estate transaction by a Jewish citizen was made by Mordecai Myers in 1833. Since that time many outstanding Jewish citizens have contributed much to the history, welfare and progress of the Community. Among these early citizens mentioned it is found that in 1850 the Rome newspaper, known as the Rome Southerner, was owned and edited by O. A. Myers. J. J. Cohen operated a general mercantile store on Broad Street between Second and Third Avenue; as did David J. Meyerhardt and Magnus and Wise. There was Cohen's Grist Mill in South Rome. Other Jewish residents during this period and immediately following the War Between the States were: Morris Marks, Solomon Jonas, Solomon Seligman, Adolph Moses, L. Magnus, Dr. Fox, the Levensteins and the Lilienthals. These were mostly new immigrants from Prussia and Germany.

The earliest marriage recorded of a Jewish couple in the courthouse was that of Solomon Jonas and Hannah Levenstein, on January 26, 1858.

During the War Between the States, men and women of Rome were involved in many ways in helping the cause of the Confederacy. Among Romans serving in the Floyd Infantry, organized in 1861, were: Corporal Henry Cohen, Philip Cohen and Adolphus Jonas. The Ladies' Aid Society, which was formed in 1861 to help supply the needs of the soldiers, listed among its members: Mrs. J. J. Cohen, Mrs. Morris Marks and Mrs. Lilienthal. Hospitals were crowded beyond capacity, room was needed for the wounded soldiers who were coming back from the front, which necessitated opening a hospital. Dr. Fox was in charge of the first hospital opened in Rome in 1862. Many years later his son taught in the Rome Hebrew Sunday School.

Destroyed during this war were David J. Meyerhardt's storehouse on Broad Street, as well as Cohen's Grist Mill in South Rome. Other merchants with stores on Broad Street during these years were Magnus and Wise, Morris Marks and J. J. Cohen.

The Rodeph Sholom Congregation was probably formed in 1875 (some say 1871) by David Jacob Meyerhardt. Names of members are not listed, but with information from all available material, it is believed that among the members were: Jacob Kuttner, Philip Cohen, J. J. Cohen, G. Karlsruher, M. Rosenberg, A. Moses, David Meyerhardt, Morris Marks, Adolphus Jonas, L. Magnus, Henry Cohen, Moritz Spiegelberg, Thomas Jonas, and the Misters Lilienthal, Rossett and Wise. Conducting classes for instruction in the Jewish religion were David Meyerhardt, his son, Max, and Dr. Fox.

Several Jewish organizations had chapters, at one time or another, in Rome, some still in existence. These included B'nai B'rith (organized around the turn of the century, reactivated after World War II), Youth Groups, Brotherhood, Sisterhood, Hadassah and Judeans. Scout troops for girls and boys of the Congregation were organized prior to World War I.

In the Armed Services during World War I were: Charlie Mendelson, Joseph H. Lesser, Hyman Esserman, Sidney Sturman and Casper Stock. Women of the Congregation were active in Red Cross, making bandages, knitting for the soldiers and helping the war effort in every way possible. In the 1920's and 1930's more Jewish people moved to Rome, attaining stature as leaders in the Jewish community and in the civic and business life of Rome.

In 1931 the first Confirmation Service was held by the Congregation, with Rabbi Benjamin Parker, of Ochs Memorial Temple in Chattanooga, officiating. Rabbi Abe Feinstein, also of Ochs Memorial Temple, had charge of the second Confirmation service in 1933. Many Confirmation Services have been held since that time.

In 1937 a member who lived in Adairsville, Abe Abramson, died and left a sum of money to the Congregation, which became the nucleus of a building fund for a House of Worship, which had long been a dream of...
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Rodeph Sholom Congregation
100th Anniversary Celebration
1875-1975

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1975
8:00 P.M. Rededication Service at Temple Rodeph Sholom, Rabbi Raphael Asher and a Representative of The Union of American Hebrew Congregation officiating. Festive Oneg Shabbat at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1975
10:00 A.M. Morning Service at Temple Rodeph Sholom Followed With Remarks by Professor David Steine of Vanderbilt University and Member of the Board of Hebrew Union College.
11:30 A.M. Special Kiddush and Light Refreshments.
7:00 P.M. Cocktails, Coosa Country Club.
8:00 P.M. Gala Centennial Banquet. Principle Speaker, Dr. Ellis Rivkin, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Entertainment by The Erev Duo with Mike Greenspan and David Goodfriend.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1975
1:30 P.M. Unveiling of The Centennial Plaque at Temple Rodeph Sholom. Dr. Harry Epstein, Ahavath Achim Synagogue, Atlanta, Georgia, Officiating.
2:30 P.M. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony by a Representative of The Government of Israel, Opening the Israeli Art Exhibit at The National City Bank. Champagne Reception.
4:00 P.M. The Israeli Art Exhibit Opens to the Public.