

Cincinnati's Jewish History

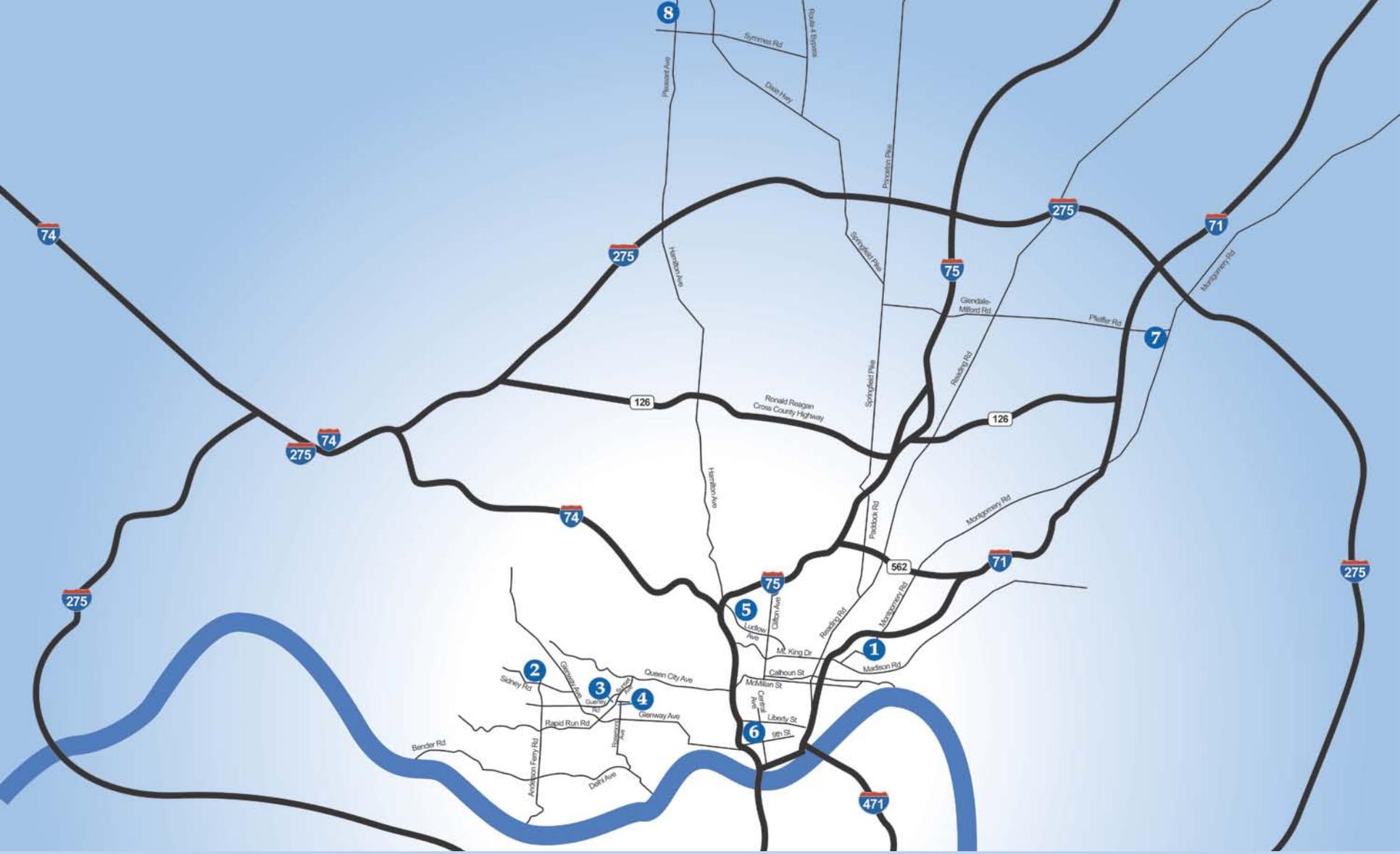
Jewish Cemeteries of Greater
Cincinnati

JEWISH CEMETERIES OF GREATER CINCINNATI

While Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati (JCGC) began operations just a few years ago in 2008, the cemeteries that are part of JCGC have a much longer and very rich history. We are pleased to be able to bring some of that history to you in this presentation.

- David Hoguet, Executive Director

*A special thanks to The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, located on the historic Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College, who provided content for the Walnut Hills Cemetery portion of the presentation.



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CHESTNUT STREET CEMETERY

CHESTNUT STREET

In 1821, when Benjamin Lieb (or Lape), who had not been known as a Jew, was dying, he begged to be buried as a Jew. There was no Jewish burial ground in the town. Morris Moses and Joseph Jonas, two of Cincinnati's six Jews, proceeded to acquire a small plot of ground from Nicholas Longworth to be used as a cemetery to bury Lieb.

The Chestnut Street Cemetery is the oldest Jewish cemetery west of the Alleghenies and is located in the Betts-Longworth Historic District in the West End. The Cemetery is sited on a small plot enclosed by high walls and a locked gate.



CHESTNUT STREET



The cemetery has 85 graves and has been closed since 1849 after the cholera epidemic filled it.

Tablet Marks Early Jewish Cemetery



Rabbi David Phillipson unveiled a bronze tablet yesterday afternoon at the old Jewish Cemetery, Central Avenue and Chestnut Street, which marks the first Jewish burial ground established west of the Allegheny Mountains. "The placing of this tablet," Dr. Phillipson said, "is a mark of piety. We of the present are leaving for future ages memories of the past.

"We owe great thanks to pioneers who made possible by their courage and enterprise that which exists today. This tablet shall remain a memento to their greatness."

Sidney J. Newman, a member of

Rockdale Temple, owners of the burial ground, donated the monument. Harry Meiss, President of the congregation, accepted it in behalf of the Temple.

Rabbi Phillipson, who has made a study of the gravestones in the cemetery, pointed out the names of many who made Jewish history in Cincinnati. He said the cemetery was bought in 1821 from the first Nicholas Longworth because a man, Jacob Leib, who died in that year, left a request that he be buried in consecrated ground. The tombstone marking Jacob Leib's grave has disappeared.

In another spot two sisters are buried. They married the brothers Joseph and Abraham Jonas, found-

ers of the Rockdale Temple, then called K. K. Bene Israel Synagogue. The sisters, Rachel and Lucia Orah, were daughters of Rev. Gershom Mendes Seixas, graduate of King's College, now Columbia University, and Rabbi of the Portuguese Synagogue in New York.

Another grave is the resting place of David I. Johnson, grandson of Fred A. Johnson, the first Jewish child born in Cincinnati, according to Rabbi Phillipson. Simeon Johnson, Cincinnati, attorney and former Vice Mayor, is David's grandson.

In another grave rests Solomon Millus, whose granddaughter, Mrs. Flora Faller, and great-great-granddaughter, Miss Marjorie Faller, still live in Cincinnati.

WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

The Walnut Hills cemetery opened in 1850. United Jewish Cemeteries was founded in 1854 by Rockdale Temple and Wise Temple to oversee and care for the cemetery. UJC grew to oversee and maintain all of Cincinnati's Reform Jewish cemeteries. The cemetery, which is 10.5 acres, contains the remains of many notables from Cincinnati's Jewish history.

WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, 1819 – 1900, envisioned an American Jewry for American Jews. The results of that vision – the Hebrew Union College, the Union for Reform Judaism and the Central Conference of American Rabbis – continue to this day to serve as the pillars of American Reform Judaism. As a pulpit rabbi, as a community leader (founder and editor of *The American Israelite*), as a rabbinic leader (publisher of *Minhag America*), and as a founding president of HUC, Isaac Mayer Wise was – and remains – one of the most influential shapers of Jewish life in America.



WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

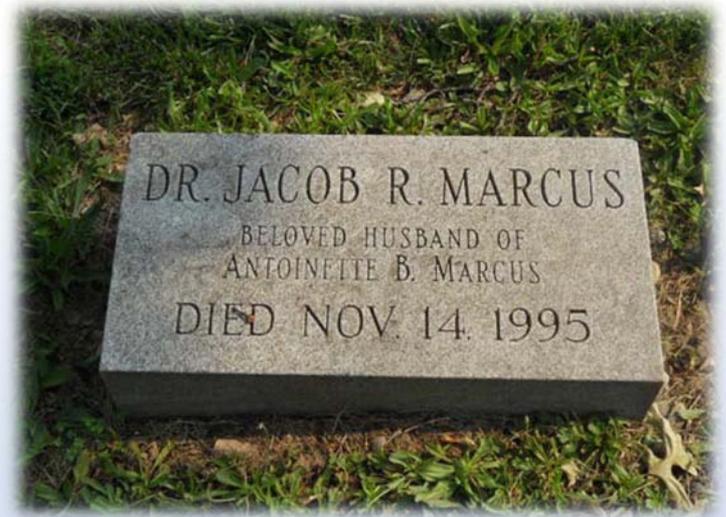
David Urbansky, 1843 – 1897, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry in battle at Vicksburg and Shiloh during the American Civil War – one of six Union Jewish soldiers to receive this award. Born in Prussia, Urbansky's family settled near Columbus, Ohio. He volunteered for the Union Army in 1861 at the age of 18 even though he was not yet an American citizen. Never regaining full health after the war, Urbansky died in Piqua in 1897. Sometime after, his family moved to Cincinnati and transferred his remains to Walnut Hills.



WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Jacob Marcus, 1896 – 1995, came to HUC as a 15- year-old student in 1911 and never left. Marcus joined the HUC faculty in 1920 immediately after ordination. After receiving a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin, Marcus spent his early years as an academic focusing on European Jewish history. In the 1940's he began to emphasize American Jewish history, resulting in his founding of the American Jewish Archives in 1947 and the American Jewish Periodical Center in 1956. Marcus was a prolific author and became known as the “Dean of American Jewish History.” In 1950 he served as CCAR president and was later named lifetime honorary President.



WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Murray Seansonood, 1878 – 1983, ignited the Charterite reform movement in Cincinnati with a fiery anti-tax speech (labeled by newspapers as the "Shot Heard 'Round the Wards") on October 9, 1923. He became Cincinnati's first Charterite mayor and served as Mayor from 1926 to 1930, becoming nationally known for his reform efforts. He was named as one of the 100 Greatest Ohio Citizens in 1974.



WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Max Lilienthal, 1814 – 1882, on the recommendation of famed German Rabbi Ludwig Philippson, was named the director of the Jewish school in Riga in 1839. In 1841, at the request of the Russian Minister of Education, Lilienthal was appointed to lead an effort to reform Russian Jewish schools by establishing state schools modeled upon European-style education. Lilienthal's efforts in this matter were entirely unsuccessful and were met by great resistance from almost all Russian Jews. In 1845 Lilienthal left Russia and came to the United States, where he served as rabbi of several congregations in New York City until 1850. He became rabbi at K.K. Bene Israel in Cincinnati in 1854, where he served until his death. He was an active reformer as well as a friend and supporter of Isaac Mayer Wise and of Wise's efforts to begin a seminary in Cincinnati.



CLIFTON CEMETERY

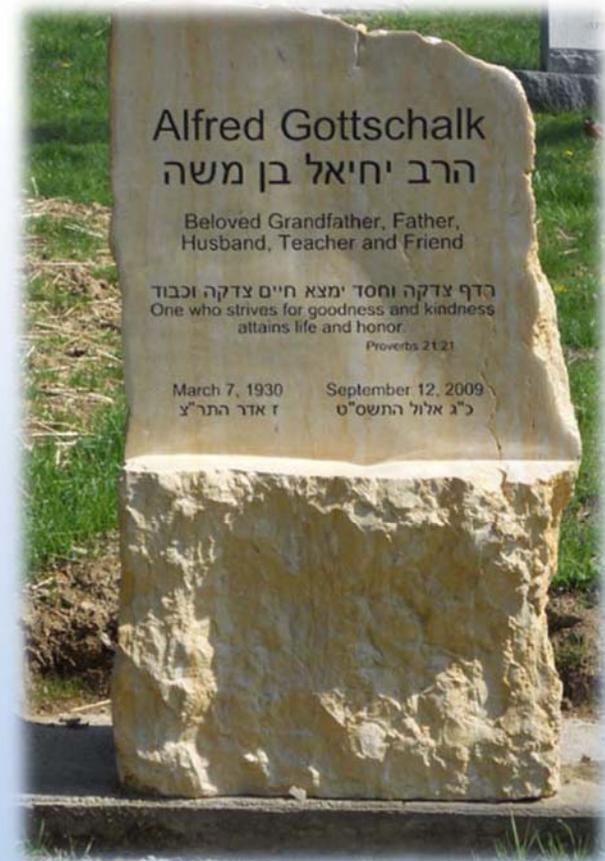
CLIFTON CEMETERY

Soon after buying the land the Clifton cemetery sits on in 1848, after his neighbors let him know they would prefer if he built his house elsewhere, Charles Kahn sold it to the Ahabeth Achim congregation (later Sherith Israel). Mr. Kahn said to his neighbors, “Very well, gentlemen, if you do not care to have a Jew living near you, you cannot object to dead Jews, and you shall have many of these, for many years, in no condition to offend you.” Sherith Israel merged with Wise Temple in 1931. The cemetery is 1.3 acres and about one mile from the HUC campus.

CLIFTON CEMETERY

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk, 1930 – 2009, born in Germany, grew up in Brooklyn, President of Hebrew Union College from 1971 – 2000. Ordained the first female US rabbi in 1972 and the first female rabbi in Israel in 1992. Instrumental in the development of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, opened in 1993, and President of Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust from 2000 – 2003. Dr. Gottschalk's monument is made of Jerusalem stone.



COVEDALE CEMETERIES

COVEDALE CEMETERIES

All the Covedale cemeteries are Orthodox cemeteries with the exception of **Northern Hills**, which is a Conservative cemetery. JCGC owns all the Covedale cemeteries except for **Knesseth Israel** (0.6 acres), which has its own entrance on Sidney Road. Most of the Covedale cemeteries opened in the early 1900's.

COVEDALE CEMETERIES

Anderson Ferry Entrance

The Anderson Ferry entrance leads to three Golf Manor cemeteries totaling 1.2 acres (**Golf Manor # 1, #2 and #3**), and two cemeteries Golf Manor took over, **Beth Jacob/Price Hill** (0.4 acres) and **Beth Hamidrash Hagodol** (3.9 acres), prior to the merger with JCGC.

American Beneficial Society (0.3 acres), which was established as a burial society in 1913, is also accessed through the Anderson Ferry entrance.

COVEDALE CEMETERIES

Sidney Road Entrance

Yad Chorutzim (0.6 acres) and **Tifereth Israel** (0.4 acres) were owned by North Avondale Synagogue, which closed in 1997. Tifereth Israel Congregation formed in 1906 and occupied a building on Victory Parkway in Walnut Hills from 1916 – 1948.

Northern Hills Cemetery (0.3 acres) was originally the cemetery of Congregation B'nai Avraham (Norwood Congregation) which was started in 1912. B'nai Avraham merged with Northern Hills Synagogue in 1967.

New Hope Cemetery (0.4 acres) was affiliated with New Hope Congregation, which started in 1939 to meet the needs and sensitivities of refugees and later survivors from Europe. New Hope Congregation closed in 1994.

COVEDALE CEMETERIES

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

KNESETH ISRAEL

Rabbi Eliezer Silver, 1882 – 1968, was born in Lithuania and immigrated to the US in 1907, where he accepted a rabbinical position in Harrisburg, PA. His Torah scholarship soon drew him into leading Orthodox circles on the national level. Rabbi Silver was active in relief efforts in World War I. In 1925 he moved to Springfield, MA. In 1932, he accepted an invitation to become Rabbi in Cincinnati at Kneseth Israel. He became head of the Va'ad Hoier, making him the ultimate halachic authority over other synagogues belonging to the Va'ad. In 1939, Silver convened an emergency meeting in New York City to discuss the recent developments in Nazi-occupied Europe. At this meeting the Va'ad Hatzalah, or Rescue Committee, was formed, with Rabbi Silver as president. He launched a fund-raising campaign, collecting more than \$5 million, which helped to provide 2,000 visas to Jewish refugees in Eastern Europe.



COVEDALE CEMETERIES

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

TIFERETH ISRAEL

Rabbi Bernard Kalchman, 1898 - 1966, Rabbi at Beth Israel, Hamilton, from 1933 – 1946, later became rabbi at Yad Chorutzim (North Avondale).



PRICE HILL CEMETERIES
West Side of Sunset
Avenue

PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Judah Touro

Judah Touro (8.5 acres) was one of the first cemeteries established in Price Hill and is a Reform cemetery. Its constitution was established in 1855 and the first burials took place in 1856. Judah Touro has a house on the property which is lived in by a family who now performs security work for JCGC on all the Price Hill cemeteries. Members of this family have served as caretakers at Judah Touro for some time.

PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Schachnus/Montefiore

Schachnus/Beth Tefyla (1.9 acres) was established in 1874 subsequent to the founding of Beth Tefyla congregation by Rabbi Schachne Isaacs and is an Orthodox cemetery. **Montefiore Mutual Benefit Society**, founded in 1871 to provide a social or educational framework for members and their families to support each other, also functioned as a burial society and later purchased land (0.5 acres) for its cemetery from Beth Tefyla. Schachnus and Montefiore share an entrance.

PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Schachnus/Beth Tefyla

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Schachne Isaacs, 1811 – 1887, immigrated from Lithuania and arrived in the Cincinnati area by way of New York in 1856. He opened a general store in Darrrtown, later moving to Cincinnati where he entered the wholesale dry goods business. He was vigilant in the observance of Orthodoxy. When his congregation failed to include plans for a mikvah in a proposed building, he resigned in protest and started his own congregation, Beth Tefyla, in 1869. It is still known as Reb Schachne's Shul.

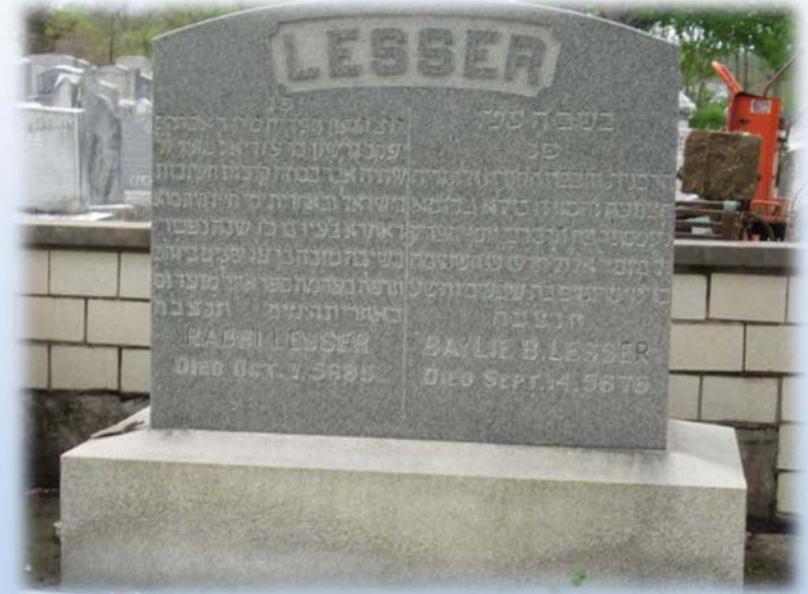


PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Schachnus/Beth Tefyla

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Rabbi Abraham J. G. Lesser, 1835 – 1925, was a rabbi in Russia and came to Chicago in 1880 where he was elected president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. He came to Cincinnati in the 1890's and was considered Cincinnati's Orthodox chief rabbi in the first decade of the twentieth century. Grave Location – Private plot on the right at the walkway that goes in to the cemetery.



PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Schachnus/Beth Tefyla

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Rabbi Betzalel Epstein, 1878 – 1938, originally from Estonia, became Rabbi of Bnai Jacob in 1929; Bnai Jacob merged with Agudas Israel (Golf Manor) in 1933, with Rabbi Epstein becoming the Rabbi of the merged congregation. Rabbi Epstein clashed with Rabbi Silver as he supervised his own Kashrut and did not join the Va'ad Hoier organized by Rabbi Silver in the 1930's.



PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Hirsh Hoffert / Chesed Chel Emmes

Hirsh Hoffert (1.3 acres) and **Chesed Chel Emmes** (1.2 acres) are to the west of Judah Touro and share an entrance. Both cemeteries are Orthodox. Hirsh Hoffert started as a burial association. Chesed Chel Emmes was founded in 1921 and historically provided burial space to members of the community whose financial circumstances might not allow them to pay any or all of the costs of a burial space. Chesed Chel Emmes is not part of JCGC.

PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

East Side of Sunset Avenue

PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Adath Israel Cemetery

Adath Israel Cemetery (4.9 acres) is the northernmost cemetery on the east side of Sunset Avenue and has its entrance on Sunset. It is affiliated with Adath Israel Congregation which was started in 1846 by German Polish Jews. It is a Conservative cemetery.

PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Adath Israel Cemetery

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Rabbi Bernard Illowy, 1814 – 1875, born in Bohemia, came to the US in 1848. He was the rabbi at Shaare Zedek in New York City, Rodelph Shalom in Philadelphia, United Hebrew Congregation in St. Louis, Kneset Shalom in Syracuse, Stadt Shule in Baltimore, and Shangarai Hased in New Orleans. He came to Cincinnati in 1865 as Rabbi of Ahabeth Achim, which later merged with Sherith Israel. He was known as an eminent Talmudist, a powerful preacher, and a strict adherent of Orthodox Judaism. He engaged in fierce, polemical warfare with the leaders of the Reform movement but was also great friends with these leaders. Rabbis Wise and Lilienthal gave eulogies at his funeral. He died in an accident when the axle of his buggy broke and he was thrown to the ground, leaving him paralyzed.



PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

Adath Israel Cemetery

NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Rabbi Louis Feinberg, 1887 – 1949, born in Lithuania, attended high school in Philadelphia and college at University of Pennsylvania, ordained at Jewish Theological Seminary in 1916. He was rabbi at Adath Israel from 1918 – 1949. He modernized the life and program of the synagogue in religious, educational and cultural matters, and also moved the congregation to its Lexington and Reading Roads location in 1927.



PRICE HILL CEMETERIES

United Jewish Cemeteries – Price Hill/ Love Brothers

United Jewish Cemeteries – Price Hill (1.9 acres) is to the south of Adath Israel and has its entrance on Rosemont Avenue. This cemetery was originally the Sherith Israel cemetery, established in 1857, and became a United Jewish Cemeteries member after the 1931 merger of Bene Yeshurun Congregation with Congregation Sherith Israel to form the Isaac M. Wise Temple. It is a Reform cemetery.

Love Brothers Cemetery (7.2 acres) is to the south of UJC – Price Hill and also has its entrance on Rosemont. It is affiliated with Ohav Shalom Congregation. Ohav Shalom was founded in 1882 and the cemetery was incorporated in 1903.

Spanish – Hebrew Society (0.1 acres) is located inside Love Brothers and is not part of JCGC. The cemetery was affiliated with the Sephardic Beth Shalom Synagogue which started in 1913 and closed in 1993. Love Brothers is a Conservative cemetery and Spanish-Hebrew is an Orthodox cemetery.

MONTGOMERY CEMETERY

MONTGOMERY CEMETERY

By the 1960s, a large segment of Cincinnati's Reform Jewish community had migrated to the northeastern quadrant of the community. UJC acquired land in the community of Montgomery and developed a cemetery, now JCGC's most active cemetery. The cemetery subsequently developed a Conservative section, as well as a section for Adath Israel Congregation. The cemetery is 11.5 acres.

HAMILTON CEMETERY

HAMILTON CEMETERY

For many years, a vibrant Reform Jewish community in Hamilton, Ohio, worshiped at Temple Bene Israel, which maintained a small cemetery on Pleasant Avenue, adjoining a cemetery owned by a Conservative congregation there. As highways and automobiles improved, many of Bene Israel's members migrated to larger congregations in Cincinnati. In 1970, Bene Israel became affiliated with Wise Temple, and subsequently the cemetery, which is .9 acres, became part of UJC.

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