

Czech Scroll #334

**Rokycany, Bohemia, to Jewish Museum, Prague,
Prague to Westminster Synagogue, London,
London to Brockton, Massachusetts,
Brockton Massachusetts to Petaluma, California**

A Story of Migration

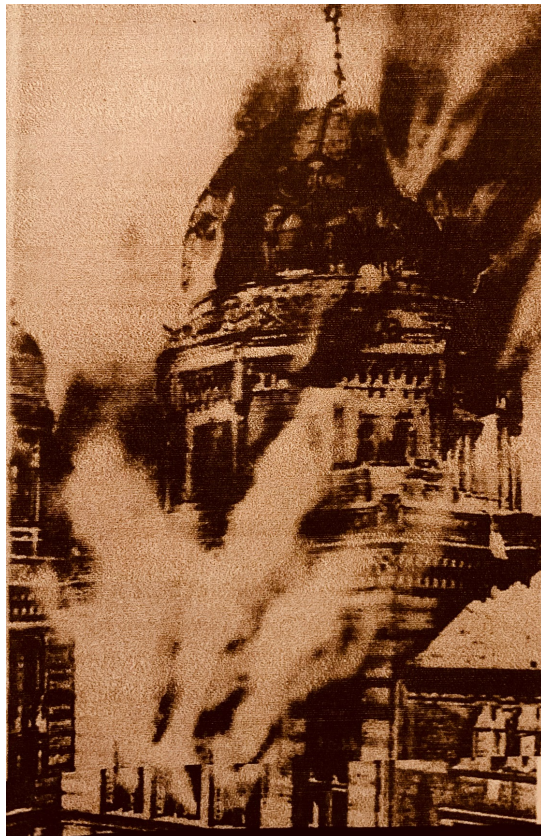
Czech Scroll #334 traveled first from Czechoslovakia to London in 1964. In the 1970s, Nathan and Ruth Richman attended an exhibition of the Czech Memorial Scrolls on a trip to Europe. They were determined to have this artifact, symbolic of survival, for their congregation of Temple Beth Emunah in Brockton, Massachusetts, where Nathan Richman was the synagogue president and co-founder.

For Richman, it was personal.

On Kristallnacht, November 9, 1938, Richman, an attorney, traveled by train through Germany. His assignment was to reach the survivors of a client in Massachusetts who left his estate to his siblings living in a shtetel in Lithuania.

Describing his impressions of Berlin from the view of a train window, Richman explained, "One thing the Reich will not be able to say - of that we may be certain - and that is that the Jews destroyed their synagogue themselves - of all the damning calumnies & fiendish accusations that the Reich has heaped upon the heads of Jewish people, this is one thing, thank God, that they cannot blame on the Jews."

The experience brought back his own memories. Born in Polonne, Ukraine Richman survived the Pogroms of the early 20th century. According to his letters, he recalled his most horrific nightmares during his 1938 mission, including his own personal conflicts and sense of helplessness; yes, he was a Jew, but unlike those trapped in Europe he carried an American passport.



*Synagogue in flames, Kristallnacht,
9 November 1938, Berlin, Germany. Atlas
of the Holocaust, Martin Gilbert,
Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc, 1982.*

In his letters to his wife, Richman described the horrors he witnessed, the burned ruins of synagogues, the reluctance of the family he had just met, the terror that beset the Jews he encountered, and the dangers in the shtetel. Richman was able to secure passage for his client's family to Canada, but only the men were allowed entry into the US, as the women were illiterate. They were returned to Europe and a most certain death.

When Temple Beth Emunah of Brockton closed, Howard Shore, the President of the congregation, and former Hebrew student of Ruth Richman, organized for the transfer of Czech Scroll #334 to Petaluma, where the Richman's daughter, Naomi Richman, is both congregant and Past-President of B'nai Israel Jewish Center.