

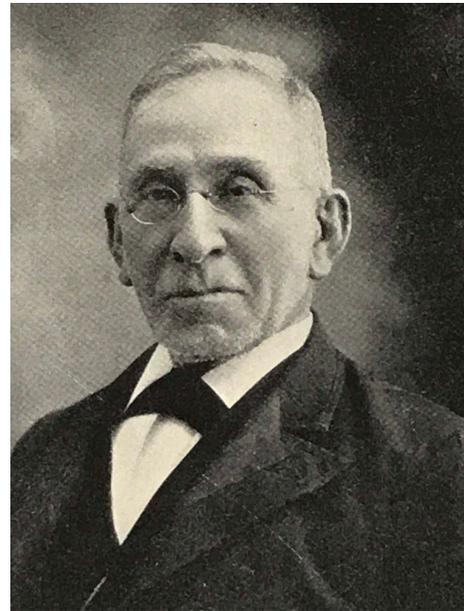
While B'nai Israel's Descendants' Day project focuses on families that have been involved with our congregation's long history, we also recognize that our beautiful sanctuary was built by another congregation. B'nai Israel bought the former Chizuk Amuno synagogue building in 1895 and has been worshipping here ever since. We owe a debt of gratitude to the early founders of Chizuk Amuno who built our home and worshipped here for 19 years from 1876 to 1895.

This profile explores one of the early founders on Chizuk Amuno who never wanted to leave Lloyd Street and represents the desire still found in our congregation to retain a Jewish presence and regular worship services in the orthodox tradition in downtown Baltimore.

Henry S. Hartogensis (1829 - 1918) – Sometimes You Have To Say No

by Fred Shoken

Henry S. Hartogensis was born in 's-Hertogenbosch, Holland on October 27, 1829. He was the son of a banker, Talmud scholar and philanthropist. In 1848 he moved to Baltimore via New York to earn a living after suffering financial setbacks due to the impending European revolutions. He started a stationery business and printing firm, before establishing a large sporting goods store on East Baltimore Street at Frederick Street.



Mr. Hartogensis took an active interest in Jewish affairs and was a member of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation then worshipping in the Lloyd Street Synagogue. Strictly orthodox, he joined with other members who left Baltimore Hebrew in 1871 when that congregation shifted to Reform Judaism, and he served as the Recording Secretary of the new Chizuk Amuno Congregation for nineteen years.

He helped establish a learning center for the shul and pledged money to build their permanent home on Lloyd Street, which is now the home of B'nai Israel. Although he had no formal rabbinic training, H. S. Hartogensis often served as a chazzan for the new shul. A brief biography of him in the 1910 book, *The History of the Jews of Baltimore*, states "He was highly esteemed as assistant chazan, officiating frequently, and always on holidays and fast days."

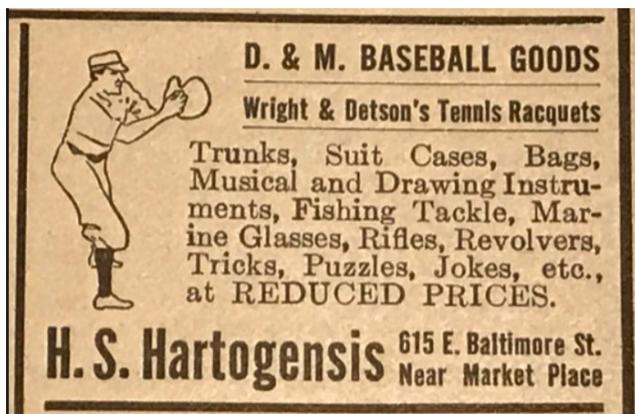
By the 1890s, Baltimore's German Jewish community had prospered, and many moved from downtown to a new neighborhood in the "near" northwest bounded by Lanvale Street, Bolton Street, North Avenue and McCulloh Street. Baltimore Hebrew had moved from Lloyd Street to Madison Avenue and Robert Street in 1890. Unlike other members of Chizuk Amuno, H. S. Hartogensis did not move from the old neighborhood. He lived on Baltimore Street near Exeter Street within walking distance of both his sporting goods business and the shul.

By 1893, Chizuk Amuno considered establishing an uptown branch, but the board soon decided to buy a property at McCulloh and Mosher streets and relocate the shul to that location. A vote of the membership was held to move the shul from Lloyd Street, 26 were in favor, 4 abstained, and the only

dissenter was H. S. Hartogensis. After the shul building was sold to B'nai Israel and moved "uptown" Henry S. Hartogensis formally resigned from Chizuk Amuno.

He did not join B'nai Israel which was a Russian congregation with a different minhag than he was accustomed to, instead he started a new shul with some members of Chizuk Amuno who also stayed in the old neighborhood. He named the shul Zichron Yakov in memory of a recently deceased son. The congregation met at McLaughlin's Hall at Baltimore and Eden streets with H. S. Hartogensis serving as president, chazan, major financial officer, etc. Eventually as he got older, he had to move in with his son in the near northwest suburbs. The shul he started closed, and he became a regular worshiper at Shearith Israel which had also relocated to McCulloh Street (today that congregation is known as the Glen Avenue Shul).

Saying no may have been a habit for Henry S. Hartogensis, at the age of 79 he was seriously ill with a stomach ailment. Doctors were called in and recommended immediate surgery to save his life. But, Mr. Hartogensis refused to go to a hospital and would only allow the surgery if it would be done at his home. Surgical instruments were sent for and his library was converted into an operating room. When anesthesia was about to be administered, he again refused. He stated, "I objected to a surgical operation in the first place and when I had to submit to it I wanted to see what was being done to me... Surgeons are too free with their knives. There is too much experimenting with patients by physicians. I put my entire trust and confidence in God, the great healer." The surgeons doubted he could survive the operation while awake, but he showed no effects of shock throughout the procedure and recovered fully in two weeks.



Another incident in his life showing his nerves of steel took place during the Great Baltimore Fire of February 1904. His sporting goods business was in the path of the flames and he feared that if his business caught fire, several thousand rounds of ammunition he had in stock could explode inflicting injury on firemen fighting the blaze. Somehow he was able to procure a horse and wagon and removed the ammunition from his business at midnight while nearby buildings burned. The ammunition was taken to the Eastern District Police Station for safe keeping.

Henry S. Hartogensis passed away at the age of 89 during an era when average life expectancy was about 55. He was a well-respected businessman, synagogue leader and served on the board of several Jewish charitable organizations. One of his sons, Benjamin H. Hartogensis, continued his tradition in Baltimore Jewish life and was a well-known attorney, writer and historian. Along with Henrietta Szold he helped to establish educational programs for Russian immigrants to Baltimore and regularly wrote articles for local newspapers on matters of interest to the Jewish community.

Without men like H. S. Hartogensis, B'nai Israel would not have a beautiful place of worship in downtown Baltimore. Continuing his legacy, B'nai Israel strives to retain an Orthodox Jewish presence in the historic center of Baltimore's Jewish Community.

Images

Photograph of H. S. Hartogensis is from the 1910 book, *History of the Jews of Baltimore*.

Advertisement for his sporting goods store is from the 1910s.