

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DRAFT

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Ahavas Achim Cemetery
 other names/site number _____
 name of related multiple property listing _____

Location

street & number 532 Pine Ridge Heritage Blvd not for publication
 city or town Cheektowaga vicinity
 state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14225

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
 In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 ___ national ___ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____
 walls: _____

 roof: _____
 other: STONE/granite and marble

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Ahavas Achim Cemetery is a congregational cemetery encompassing approximately 1.54 acres of land in Cheektowaga, Erie County, NY. The cemetery is divided from east-to-west by a concrete path and contains approximately 719 burial markers in forty-two rows that run north-to-south. Most rows contain anywhere from three to seven markers on either side of the path, with fewer markers on the southern side. The oldest markers date to the early 1920s and the cemetery is still in active use. All gravestones face east towards Jerusalem and range from good to excellent in condition. The space is bordered by a chain-link fence to the south and an iron fence with concrete posts to the east. The impressive Egyptian Revival style Isaac Hoenig Memorial Gateway (1918) provides entry to the site. The same style was also used for the Adler Chapel (1925), which is located twenty feet to the west of the gateway and is situated in the southern half of the cemetery. The chapel has a row of eight markers along its eastern elevation, which represent the resting places of those in the Adler family. There are a few instances of familial groupings at Ahavas Achim, likely in reserved plots, but the majority of graves are plotted in the order that congregation members died. The cemetery displays an array of funerary art, including several large, prominently located monuments that represent popular Eastern European Jewish marker styles. Over time, the cemetery may have imposed limitations on the styles of markers, leading to a more standardized assemblage of mid-to-late twentieth century gravestones. Most grave markers bear Jewish iconography, including outstretched hands denoting descentance from the Kohanim (a priestly caste), candles denoting women, images of nature, and general Jewish symbols such as the Magen David (Star of David). The cemetery represents the only extant, continuously used built resource associated with the Ahavas Achim Congregation and contains relatively rare examples of Egyptian Revival Jewish funerary structures. The property is owned and overseen by Beth Tzedek, the successor congregation.

Narrative Description

Location

The Ahavas Achim cemetery is located among a number of independently incorporated cemeteries in an area spanning approximately 450 square acres in Cheektowaga, NY, a suburb on the outer ring of the City of Buffalo. This collection of cemeteries is located between Mafalda Dr (to the north), Genesee St (to the south) and Harlem Rd (to the east). The western boundary is irregular and bounded by residential blocks, which border the site on all sides. The cemeteries are connected by Pine Ridge Heritage Boulevard, which runs roughly north to south and extends across the Kensington Expressway. The Kensington Expressway runs horizontally across the cemeteries, splitting the area in half. The cemeteries along Pine Ridge Heritage Boulevard are arranged on either side of the road over a mostly flat space. The cemeteries are planted with grass lawns and ornamented by trees and shrubs.

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Ahavas Achim Cemetery is located approximately a half-mile north of the Genesee St entrance. It is situated between the Temple Beth El Cemetery (to the south) and Old Beth Zion (to the north), adjacent to Anshe Ames Cemetery. These sites sit amongst a collection of Jewish cemeteries on the west side of Pine Ridge Heritage Blv, being: Old Brith Sholem (1903), New Brith (1915), Anshe Ames (Little Hickory, 1924), Brith Abraham ([Erie County Lodge No. 300, North Park Society], 1914), Brith Israel (Big Hickory, 1923), Holy Order of the Living (1909), Libowitz (Anshe Lubavitz [Pratt St. Shul], 1921), Mt. Carmel Lodge (formerly First Austrian and Galician Association, 1931), Workman's Circle (1917), Ahavas Achim (1917), Temple Beth David and Temple Beth David-Ner Israel (c. 1924, known later as Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Shalom). Two additional Jewish cemeteries, Ahavas Sholem (1908) and B'Nai Israel (1896), and a separate ohel (Hebrew: tent, tomb, mausoleum; 1910) are found on the east side of the road.¹

Ahavas Achim is a congregational cemetery part of a related synagogue membership body, as opposed to several of the cemeteries it borders which were fraternal and landsmannschaftn cemeteries (former hometown social organizations that combined burial and sometimes credit functions). In addition to these, there are numerous other Protestant and Catholic cemeteries around the Jewish cemeteries on both side of the road. These include Mount Calvary Cemetery, St. John's Cemetery and United German and French Cemetery.

The space is divided by a concrete path which stretches west-to-east through the cemetery from Pine Ridge to Carol Dr. The cemetery's terrain slightly slopes to the west with few landscaping features but represents the functional style of many Jewish cemeteries, which contain only a few shrubs, trees and a several rows of headstones.

Ahavas Achim Cemetery (ca. 1917, one contributing site)

Ahavas Achim (with Ahavas Achim Lubavitz) is a typical example of a multi-generational immigrant synagogue that experienced waves of development over its existence, which are reflected in its burials at the cemetery. The frontage of the cemetery faces Pine Ridge Heritage Blv and is separated by a wrought iron fence that marks the boundary between the private cemetery and the public thoroughfare. The fence is believed to date from the cemetery's opening in 1917 and has interspersed concrete posts, each with a decorative Magen David (Star of David) (Photo 1). The cemetery is immediately identified as a Jewish cemetery by its prominently displayed congregational Hebrew name: Ahavas Achim (Hebrew: Brotherly Love/Loving Brotherhood) cast overhead on its large arch. (Photo 2). Hebrew inscriptions are seen on the pillars of the arch and the chapel external wall. Nearly all the headstones include a Magen David, and most have Hebrew inscriptions (Photo 3).

The cemetery's overall design is typical for a small Jewish cemetery meant to maximize the number of graves; interments were organized in parallel rows set perpendicular to the central concrete path. All interment

¹ To see an overall map of Jewish cemeteries in this area, visit the Jewish Buffalo History Center's section on Cemeteries. Also see: William Hodge. *Buffalo Cemeteries: An Account of The Burial-Places of Buffalo, From the Earliest Times*. Bigelow Brothers, Buffalo, 1879, p. 22-23; Selig Adler and Thomas F. Connelly. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960. From copies of documentary materials including handwritten notes in the Cemetery Corporation of Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo: Buffalo City, Erie County, Deeds #1381, **Ahavas Achim**, 1917, p.496; Buffalo City, Erie County, Deed #1680, **Brith Israel**, 1923, p.602-603; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed #2168, **First Austrian and Galician Association**, 1931, p.440-441; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed #, **Libowitz** (Anshe Lubavitz [Pratt St. Shul], 1921) p. 117; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed #1381 **Holy Order of the Living** (1909), p.492; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed # 940 **Old Brith Sholem (1903)**, p. 459; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed # 1296, **New Brith (1915)**, p. 465; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed # 1739, **Anshe Ames (Little Hickory)**, 1924, p. 117; Buffalo City, Erie County Deed # 421, **Beth Jacob**, 1882, p. 504.

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headstones and markers face east (to Jerusalem – of religious significance). The gravestones cover about 85% of the enclosed surface area of the graveyard – with the graves generally descending the slope from earliest to latest. At present, there are over 700 recorded burials but the cemetery remains active today.²

A prominent feature is the Egyptian Revival style entrance gate designed by Eli W. Goldstein and erected in 1918, two years before the death of Isaac Hoenig, who commissioned the structure (Photo 4).³ The arch is faced in smooth dolostone, consisting of two square stone pillars of heavy massing topped by a cavetto cornice. At the top of the cornice is lettering that reads “The Isaac Hoenig Memorial” and above the head-jamb is additional lettering which reads “Cemetery Ahavas Achim”. The arch was originally designed with wrought iron gates that opened at the center, but these were removed at an unknown point, most likely after the 1970s.

The archway faces Pine Ridge Heritage Boulevard and displays two dedication plaques on either pillar, one in Hebrew and the other a rough translation rendered in English. Parts of the plaster have degraded, thus affecting the legibility of the longer Hebrew inscription which is missing some text.

The Hebrew inscription (Photo 5) on the left side is translated as:

**In memory of the generation [passed/gone]
Given in honor by Mar [Mr.] Yitzhak
son of Reb Chanuch ha Cohen [missing text]
Mrs. Liebbie daughter of Reb Shimri.⁴**

The last line gives the Hebrew date with the remainder of the text missing. The English inscription (Photo 6) on the right gate post reads:

In Memoriam

**This gate a gift of
1859 Isaac Hoenig 1920
and his wife
1860 Liebbie Hoenig 1920.**

At the bottom is an architect’s attribution, “Erected 1918 Eli W. [Goldstein] Architect.” (Photo 7)

The Adler Chapel (1925, one contributing building)

The Adler Chapel also utilizes the Egyptian Revival style, and sits to the south-west of the gateway with a small family plot along its easter elevation. It is named in honor of Herman Adler and his wife Sarah Adler, who were devoted members of Ahavas Achim and commissioned the building.

The chapel is a single-story, rectangular structure built of structural clay blocks and faced with regular, square-cut stone. It is flat roofed with a chimney near the north wall and sits on a stone foundation (Photo 8). Each of

² As of August 2024, there were 719 burials. The number registered on the Jewish Gen website is closer at 626 but it is also a 2010 figure.

³ “Ahavas Achim Cemetery Memorial,” *Jewish Review*, (later known as the *Buffalo Jewish Review*), Dec 10, 1920, p. 57.

⁴ This inscription follows the style of some orthodox gravestones by naming male paternal ancestors. Given in honor by Mr. Yitzhak (Hebrew form of anglicized Isaac). Son of rabbi Chanuch Ha Cohen - then missing text. Likewise, his wife, Liebbie is the daughter of Rabbi Shimri. Translation by Chana R. Kotzin, Ph.D and Charlotte Gendler.

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the four walls is slightly battered and the whole building is capped by a simple cavetto cornice. At each corner is an inset, rounded pilaster, with a fluted or bundled capital at the cornice level (Photo 9). Along the base of the east elevation are six headstones, the majority of which bear the name Adler (Photos 10 & 11).

The building's facade faces north and away from Pine Ridge Heritage Blvd. Two stone steps rise to meet the threshold of the doorway, which itself is framed by a simple stone surround with battered side-jamb. A modest cavetto cornice sits above the door's head-jamb with a plain, circular medallion at the center. Wooden double-doors with upper lights lead to the interior, and a single, narrow, rectangular window has been inserted on either side of the doorway (Photo 12).

The west elevation, which faces Pine Ridge Heritage Blvd, displays a similar configuration to that of the facade, but rather than an entryway with two narrow windows on either side, a dedication plaque bearing a Magen David (Star of David) has been placed at the center and gives both Hebrew names and family genealogy in its dedication (Photo 13). The dedication reads:

**This contribution by
Mar [Mr.] Tzvi Bar Shlomo
Adler
His wife Mrs. Sarah
Daughter of Rav Tzvi David
In the year of 5685/1925
Donated by
Mr. and Mrs. H. Adler
5685 -1925.⁵**

The north elevation of the chapel has three evenly spaced windows of the same type as is found on the other elevations. On the east elevation are three windows again, however here they are much closer together and the central window is slightly wider.

The interior of the chapel is dilapidated, with lath-and-plaster walls and a concrete floor. The space is divided into a main room, side room and small bathroom. A brick chimney is visible in the main room, as is a single band of terra cotta skirting at the foot of the walls. Some of the casement windows retain their sashes and simple wooden surrounds (Photo 14). The chapel was used to hold funerals and served as a space for prayer for those visiting their relations interred in the cemetery. With a capacity of about fifteen people, eventually its use lessened as other Jewish funeral homes were built with larger chapels for memorial services. Thereafter the chapel building became an office for the cemetery groundskeeper, and still later, fell out of use entirely.

Jewish Graveyard Layout

In Judaism, grave design is prescribed by specific guidelines. Each deceased individual is buried in a single grave, and the distance between graves should be six spans (or *tefah*, a unit equal to about four- and-a-half feet). According to the mandate: "The dead should not be buried one alongside the other unless a partition

⁵ Translation by Chana R. Kotzin, Ph.D., and Charlotte Gendler. This dedication lists Herman Adler's Hebrew name, Tzvi and Sarah's paternal lineage.

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separated them.”⁶ (While each individual is interred in a separate grave they may have a joint headstone). Sometimes a separate structure is used for burial and is known as an *ohel*. These are usually reserved for a revered rabbi, such as The Buffalo ohel, which is for Rabbi Eliyahu Yosef Rabinowitz.⁷

Marker Typology

A unique element of the Ahavas Achim Cemetery are the tall and lavish burial monuments situated alongside Pine Ridge Heritage Blv. (Photos 15 & 16). The styles of these monuments appear out of place in comparison with the typically simpler and more subdued style of grave markers in traditional Orthodox synagogue cemeteries.

This apparent contradiction is explained by their link to those who had recently immigrated. High vertical monument styles were typical of Eastern European Jewish graves, especially in Poland, Russia and present-day Ukraine, where many of the interred had immigrated from.

The ornately-carved upright monument style has been the study of both Monika Krajewska, in her book, *A Tribe of Stones: Jewish Cemeteries in Poland*, as well as David Goberman’s, *Carved Memories: Heritage in Stone from the Russian Jewish Pale* (includes parts of Ukraine). These researchers highlight the vertically of monuments that is typical of the popular style of East European gravestones. This type of gravestone often had an upper shaping of an arched, rectangular, or triangular line, which can be seen in many Eastern-European Jewish examples.⁸

Other than this dominant European style Ahavas Achim, other vertical grave markers include ornate carving, unusual shaping and forms including the obelisk with full point or lower flattened point. These obelisk style gravestones existed in both Jewish graveyards in Eastern Europe as well as in American cemeteries, Jewish and non-Jewish.⁹ These tall and varied monuments can be seen from the road and occasionally feature both Jewish and non-Jewish funerary designs upon the same headstone. For example, a ball on top of a grave representing the circle of life and eternity (Photo 17).

The later rows (those more removed from the road) adhere to a more regimented design plan with increasingly standardized and horizontal marker styles with smaller plot sizes (Photo 18). This variation may have occurred due to a ruling imposed by the cemetery, cost of labor and materials, and changes in mechanical production methods in monument and granite production. It also reflects a change in the aesthetics of gravestone design from the 1950s, which sought a less adorned contemporary styling. This may have been a result of a lack of skilled stone artisans, as well as a preference for contemporary American styles (Photo 19).¹⁰

Some stones have only English inscriptions, but most have Hebrew, with a number containing a considerable amount of Hebrew script. these markers typically only include English and Hebrew names and vital dates in

⁶ Shlomo Ganzfried, *Kitzur Shulchan Oruch* (1864). Translated and annotated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger. Jerusalem: Ortot Haim, 1989, p. 482:3.

⁷ To find out more, visit the Jewish Buffalo History Center's website.

⁸ David Goberman, *Carved Memories: Heritage in Stone from the Russian Jewish Pale*. New York, Rizzoli, 2000. Monika Krajewska, *A Tribe of Stones: Jewish Cemeteries in Poland*. Warsaw, 1993.

⁹ Banta, Melissa. *Pensive Beauty: Visions of Forest Lawn, Buffalo's First Rural Cemetery*. Edited by John Edens, Illustrated by Andy Olenick. Buffalo, Forest Lawn Heritage Foundation, 2024.

¹⁰ Email communication with Michael Komm, Komm Monuments, October 28, 2024.

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both the Hebrew and Gregorian Calendars, as opposed to those near the road. While some spouses are buried next to one another with individual markers, many headstones in later rows are marked with a single headstone for both spouses.

The gravestones are made from a variety of different materials, typically granite or marble, and their design depends on factors such as the year of interment, the wealth of the deceased's family, the rules imposed by the cemetery and recency of immigration.

Burial Practices and Grave Marker Symbolism

Jewish law dictates that individuals be buried so they will return to the earth ("dust"). Traditionally, the deceased are wrapped in a white linen or cotton shroud, kittl, (kittle) or tallit and placed within an undecorated pine casket, constructed without use of metal fasteners. Burials occur within one day of death and embalming and cremation are forbidden.

The integral role of burial in Jewish communal life resulted in the establishment of the of chevra kadisha, or burial society, to ritually clean and bury the dead. The chevra kadisha can be a group within the synagogue itself, as was the case for Ahavas Achim, or a separately constituted group, as is seen with B'Nai Israel on the east side of the road. While details of burial practices have varied somewhat throughout history, the Talmudic rabbis laid down certain core funeral practices. This involves: A. Tahara or preparing the body for burial. The body is purified with water and then dressed in a shroud of muslin, cotton or linen. If available, soil from Israel is placed over various parts of the body and sprinkled in the casket. From death until burial, an individual watches over the body and recites psalms. B. Eulogy. People may commemorate the deceased before burial. C. Funeral service or interment. Burial takes place as soon after death as possible to allow the body to decompose naturally. The cemetery staff lowers the body or wood casket into the grave, but the mourners themselves shovel the dirt. Custom dictates that the shovel be held backwards to distinguish its use from other life-affirming purposes. Each mourner puts the shovel back in the ground to avoid passing his grief on to the next. Participating in the burial is seen as the ultimate good deed, as the deceased cannot respond with payment or gratitude. For the same reason, joining the chevra kadisha was considered both humble and ennobling work.

Jewish Gravestone Design

Gravestones or monuments often have six elements, which generally follow this pattern: The first section includes carved decoration or iconography. The second line is optional, being an introductory phrase (Beloved Mother, Wife). The third line displays the person's name in Hebrew and English. The fourth line includes the persons date of death in both the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars. The fifth line indicates the age of deceased, and the sixth line includes an epitaph, ranging from traditional abbreviations to extensive verse.

Symbolism

Iconography generally falls into one or more of four main categories: 1. Symbols of nature (animals, plants and trees), 2. Symbols of gender (woman) or roles and professions (rabbi, Levite, Cohen), 3. Symbols of piety and 4. Symbols of Judaism. If a gravestone includes two hands with outspread fingers, this indicates that the deceased is a Cohen or descendant of Kohanim (Photo 20). Similarly, a Levi, also a priestly caste, is usually

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represented with a jug, pitcher or bowl. Other roles, such as a scholar, are indicated by books. Women's graves often include candles or candlesticks.¹¹ A crown can signify a revered rabbi. A shofar (ram's horn) indicates that the deceased was a blower of the shofar or was a religious functionary. A *tzedakah* (charity) box often indicates generosity and piousness. More general symbols include the Magen David or a menorah. Some Jewish tombstones include non-Jewish symbols indicating occupation, fraternal organization membership or military service.

Most of the grave markers at Ahavas Achim display funerary symbols and lettering at the top and bottom of the stone. The most common symbol for the top section is the Magen David (Photo 21) and a few grave markers include signs indicating descendancy from the Kohanim, or other iconography depending on the life of the deceased. The Hebrew acronym תנוצב"ה, derived from I Samuel 25:29, is transliterated as, "t'hay nafsho/ah tzrurah b'tzror hachaim" and translated as "May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life," can be seen at the top, middle or bottom of some gravestones, though usually at the bottom (Photo 22). Among symbols of gender and identity, candlesticks or a menorah are seen on some women's gravestones (Photo 23).

A common marker inscription or abbreviation that appears frequently is the inclusion of two Hebrew letters פ pey and נ nun, as an acronym for Poh Nikbar "Here is buried," with the Hebrew letter pey for the word "poh," meaning "here," and nun for "nikbar," meaning "buried" (Photo 24).

Other designs at Ahavas Achim are not exclusive to Jewish iconography but were broadly popular in late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Examples of this include a ball on the top of a stone or a carved circle. An urn symbolizes the body, being a container for the soul (Photo 25). A cut down tree or branch symbolizes that a person died before reaching old age (Photo 26). Portraits painted on porcelain plaques and affixed to the gravestone are seen in a few instances. Sometimes these plaques are exhibited in a frame, similar to a locket, with a hinged door or cover that would have to be lifted to view the image (Photo 27).

Conclusion

Ahavas Achim Cemetery is representative of a typical early-twentieth century Jewish cemetery. Its Egyptian Revival arch and chapel are distinguishing features among Jewish cemeteries in Erie County, and its large early gravestones represent the congregation's connection to its immigrant past. These gravestones give way to more uniform, arguably more Americanized, smaller grave markers, illustrating changing rules, styles, mechanics, carver skill base and aesthetics of burial Jewish practices.

¹¹ Candle lighting on shabbat (sabbath) is required of both men and women but has historically been associated with women. Generally, two candles are lit in order to remember the two versions of the biblical commandment, "to remember the Shabbat" and to "keep the Shabbat," but different customs have arisen with additional candles reflecting personal custom, such as adding a candle for each child. Some use candelabra that between 6 and 10 candles: 6, for the days of creation; 7, for the days of the week and 10 for the decalogue.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Jewish

Architecture

Period of Significance

1917-1975

Significant Dates

1917, 1918, 1925

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Eli X Goldstein (arch)

Period of Significance (justification)

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The period of significance begins in 1917, with the establishment of the cemetery, and ends in 1975, representing its ongoing use.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Ahavas Achim Cemetery meets Criterion Consideration D, for its association with historic settlement patterns of Central and Eastern European Jews in Buffalo, NY, as well as for its design, which represents Jewish burial principles, use of the Egyptian Revival style and inclusion of Eastern European style monuments.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Ahavas Achim Cemetery is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Jewish Ethnic Heritage. The congregational cemetery was initially established by a core of Polish Jews who immigrated to Buffalo in the 1890s, and quickly absorbed Jews from other parts of Eastern and Central Europe along with Jewish transmigrants within the United States. Ahavas Achim is an example of a small cemetery that evolved over time to suit the needs of its groups of different national origins and sub-communities within the congregation. Its collection of large, richly ornamented monuments were chosen by Eastern and Central European Jews who immigrated from Europe in the period of the 1890s through the 1920s to Buffalo, to honor their ancestors and European heritage. These monuments also reflect the community's economic success in the United States, known as "Goldene Medinah" (a Yiddish expression meaning, "The Golden Land,") used by eastern European immigrants to contrast the political and social oppression they faced in Europe with the opportunity they found in North America.¹²

The Ahavas Achim Cemetery continues as an active burial ground and provides an understanding of American immigrant life on the furthest westerly edge of New York State across more than a century of immigration, transmigration and home grown growth. Thus, the period of significance runs from 1917, the date of the cemetery's establishment, to 1975, as it continues to provide a final resting place for descendants of the two synagogues and their successor, Temple Beth Tzedek.

It is also significant under Criterion C, Architecture, for its Egyptian Revival arch and chapel, both constructed by local architects. The arch was designed by Eli W. Goldstein and erected in 1918. He was typical of a generation of Jews born in the 1880s, who made their way to college in one of the early waves in educational professionalization of Jews in Buffalo. The Adler Chapel, a separate building, was built in 1925 and is a rare example of an Egyptian Revival style Jewish funerary chapel (Photo 28).

Narrative Statement of Significance

¹² Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000*, University of California Press, 2004.

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General Jewish Immigration from 1810s to 1920s

Between 1810 and 1880, the U.S.'s Jewish population rose at an unprecedented rate, growing from 3,000 to 250,000. This growth was far higher than that of non-Jewish emigres or the internal growth rate of the U.S. as a whole. Two-thirds of new immigrants came from German-speaking areas of Central Europe which included borderlands such as Alsace, Baden, Bavaria, Posen and Western Prussia. Some of the Jews who settled in Buffalo came from these regions. Deeply affected by intermittent coordinated attacks such as the Hep! Hep! Riots of 1819, anti-Jewish laws and a generally unwelcoming atmosphere, Jews left in greater numbers than their Christian counterparts who also experienced economic stress, famine, and political upheaval as the decades progressed. Christians, however, were not subject to the restrictions Jews labored under, which included control of their work, where they could live and under what conditions they might marry. Specific restrictions varied based on jurisdiction, and time period.¹³

While immigration lessened after the 1850s, German-speaking Jews continued to emigrate to the U.S. throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. With them they brought both traditional Judaism and reformist ideas that shortened services, reduced observation of all laws and customs, changed service decorum and eventually used more English than German or Hebrew in services. Reform Judaism, while a European import, offered adherents a way to align their "modern" North American selves, allowing for deliberative choice, flexibility and modern thinking in ritual and observance. This contrasted with inherited practices that were deemed both irrelevant to contemporary lives and considered a hinderance to acculturation in North America, where Judaic practices might be subject to external negative Christian scrutiny.¹⁴

As German-speaking Central European Jewish emigration declined (but did not cease), the opposite trend began for Eastern European Jewish immigration to the U.S. Sparked, from 1881 onwards, by thousands of pogroms - violent coordinated and antisemitic attacks that left destruction and death in their wake - Jewish emigration numbers quickly climbed as they left in the hundreds of thousands, a number which would grow to the millions. Other factors also pushed them to leave, including economic distress, grinding poverty, anti-Jewish legislation, the forced conscription of Jewish boys, and a social and political climate that grew increasingly dangerous and unwelcoming. Between 1880 and the onset of US immigration quotas in 1921 and 1924, over two million Jews left areas controlled mainly by Imperial Russian and Austria-Hungary. In Buffalo, some of these emigrants would go on to establish Ahavas Achim from the 1890s. The Bolshevik Revolution that produced the USSR and the instability experienced after WWI further added to more Jewish emigration.¹⁵

The Founding of the Early Jewish Community in Buffalo

¹³ Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut Walser Smith, eds. *Exclusionary violence: antisemitic riots in modern German history*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

¹⁴ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*. Wayne State University Press, 1995. Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, eds. *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*. New York, NY: UAHC Press, 2000. Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*. 2nd Ed. New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press, 2019.

¹⁵ John Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881-1882*. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Eugene M. Avrutin and Elissa Bemporad, eds. *Pogroms a Documentary History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. Eli Lederhendler, *American Jewry: A New History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

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Before the 1840s there were only occasional Jewish transients, temporary visitors and transmigrants from other parts of the U.S. The first Jewish person to travel to the area now known as Erie County was Captain Mordecai Myers, who was assigned to the Williamsville Cantonment in the War of 1812. Then in 1825, former consul, Mordecai Manuel Noah, acquired a plot on Grand Island with the intent of creating a utopian Jewish homeland, which he named "Ararat." His plan was partly based on his observations about the state of Jewry and their lack of rights in other countries. His plan was criticized by religious leaders in some Jewish communities; while others, especially younger Jews, saw it as a way to escape from lives circumscribed by antisemitic attitudes, legal restrictions and intermittent acts of violence. Although his vision was unrealized, the idea that the U.S. was a safer place for Jews than Europe became a long running leitmotif in American Jewish history throughout the nineteenth and the twentieth century and beyond.¹⁶

During the 1830s, Jewish settlement in Buffalo area began slowly, with the first known Jewish resident of the city being L.H. Flersheim. Flersheim, originally from Frankfurt, arrived in Buffalo as early as 1835 and worked as a German language teacher. Other early Buffalonian Jews included Barnard Lichtenstein, Salomon Phillip, Elias Bernheimer, Joseph E. Strass, Mark Moritz, Samuel Altman and Michael W. Noah. Those who settled in Buffalo represented a variety of cultures and nationalities, but the majority came from Eastern and Central Europe including land that is part of contemporary Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Netherlands, Germany and Austria.¹⁷

Until the mid-1840s, Buffalo's Jewish population was too small to support a formal congregation. However, in 1847, a sufficient number of Eastern European and German speaking Central European Jews organized a traditional congregation based upon Orthodox ritual, named themselves "Congregation Beth-El", and became Buffalo's first formalized Jewish congregation.

After the dispersal of Jews from their ancestral homeland, these diasporic Jewish communities settled across all continents, producing different Jewish cultures and traditions reflecting their Jewishness and their region of settlement, including *Mizrachi* (Mizrach – Hebrew: east, Jews from the Middle East and Central Asia); *Ashkenazi* (Hebrew: Germany, Jews from Eastern and Central Europe) and *Sephardi* (Hebrew: Sefarad meaning Hispania/ Iberia – communities from Spain, Portugal and North Africa). In mainland Europe, two main traditions predominated: Ashkenazi and Sephardi. Within Ashkenazi traditions, there were also multiple ritual and liturgical differences based on regional variations. In the early years of Jewish settlement in North America, Sephardi immigrants formed the majority. However, from the 1830s, Jews from Ashkenazi backgrounds increasingly formed the greater number of emigrants and eventually became the predominate group from which most contemporary Jews in the USA are descended. The Buffalo Jewish community was established in the post-1830s era, and its founders were mainly from German speaking lands of present-day Germany and Austria as well as Eastern Europe. These areas were in the control of various historical empires across time, including the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire, with changing borders that saw both Empires having ownership of parts of the same geographic area at different times, each leaving an imprint

¹⁶ Jonathan D. Sama, *Jacksonian Jew, The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah*, Holmes & Meier, 1981.

¹⁷ Selig Adler and Thomas Connelly. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960.

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of their influence and culture. Congregation Beth-El illustrated this history well as it used a “Hoch-Polish” liturgy, derived primarily from Eastern Europe with some German practices reflecting the congregation’s mixed national origins.

A second non-synagogal body was established in the city around the same time, the Jacobsohn Society, a mutual aid organization founded in October 3, 1847. In addition to mutual aid, they also provided a forum for mediating personal and legal disputes between members within the Jewish community rather than resorting to the city court system. The primary efforts of this group, however, focused on “visiting the sick, dispensing weekly benefits, and securing decent burial of the dead in accordance with Jewish rites.”¹⁸ Two generations later, with no surviving documentation, Rabbi Samson Falk, suggested that the name of the Jacobsohn Society derives from Genesis 47:29-30, where Jacob (called Israel) was close to death:

And when the time approached for Israel to die, he summoned his son Joseph and said to him, “Do me this favor, place your hand under my thigh as a pledge of your steadfast loyalty: please do not bury me in Egypt. When I lie down with my ancestors, take me up from Egypt and bury me in their burial-place.” He replied, “I will do as you have spoken.”¹⁹

Much confusion exists around the early Jewish cemetery properties bought by Beth El and the Jacobsohn Society, in part because the members of each organization overlapped and included different branches of the same families. The cemetery lands (located in the contemporary Fillmore Ave area) also lay physically next to each other. There was no firm barrier between the two areas, leading to additional confusion over burials. Eventually, in 1861, the two organizations were ordered to cease burying in these plots by the city. Beth El had also bought land near Stanislaus Street and used that until it bought its new cemetery on Pine Hill (later called Pine Ridge). The reinternment of the deceased became further complicated by the creation of two new congregations, only one of which survived. The cemeteries of Beth El and the Jacobson Society were eventually ceded for use by the surviving congregation (Temple Beth Zion). The slow transfer of remains began in the 1870s to the 1890s. While the formally organized Jacobson Society did not survive the 1860s, the issues related to its cemetery continued well into the 1870s and beyond.²⁰

The founding of Buffalo’s second synagogue linked the two early cemeteries together. At the start of 1850, Beth El struggled with staff and complaints about its school. Two factions arose within its membership that broadly, but by no means completely, split along *landsleit* lines led by a “German” contingency. Seeking a more observant traditionalism, the breakaway faction met in November 1850 and agreed to organize a new traditional congregation that they named Congregation Beth Zion. Familiar names from Beth El’s former leadership now filled the officer roles of this new congregation. Congregation Beth Zion continued in intermittent form until the middle of the Civil War when its membership began to experiment with Reform Judaism, which had spread across the U.S. from Germany. In 1864, the following year, the “Reformed

¹⁸ Samson Falk, "A History of the Israelites of Buffalo," in Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society, I, p. 292.

¹⁹ Genesis 47:29-30, *The Contemporary Torah*, JPS, 2006. Accessed via <https://www.sefaria.org/> October 23, 2024.

²⁰ The best source of this complicated family and organizational history is that provided by Selig Adler and Thomas Connelly. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960, pp., 52, 102, 104, 197, 418-419, 423.

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Congregation," incorporated officially as Temple Beth Zion with Dr. Isaac N. Cohen, a former medical doctor, appointed as the new temple's first minister.²¹

Beth Zion, in both its forms as Congregation Beth Zion and Temple Beth Zion, inherited cemetery property from the Jacobson Society along with burial rights, all of which eventually became part of Temple Beth Zion's extended cemetery on Pine Ridge, referred to as Old Beth Zion (located further north of the nominated property).²² In 1875, Temple Beth Zion allowed Congregation Beth Israel and Brith Sholem (Pine Street Shul) to use a rear section of its Pine Ridge cemetery.²³

The Buffalo Jewish community has varied in size over its history. From the end of the 1870s to 1900, it grew from approximately 1000 Jewish families to 10,000. By the 1920s, this number had increased to almost 22,000.²⁴ In 2024, it numbers between 8,000 to 10,000.

The Ahavas Achim Community, 1890s-1950

As an expanding metropolis with a small Jewish population and growing opportunity, Jews who founded Ahavas Achim arrived in Buffalo when the economy was booming, and workers were needed in all spheres. Immigrant Jews came to Buffalo through chain migration, word of mouth (business contacts, landsmann from the same former town in Europe) or through relocation organizations including the Industrial Removal Office (IRO), which was active in Buffalo in the early-twentieth century.²⁵ Men and women who made up the future membership of Ahavas Achim followed typical Jewish migration patterns into Buffalo that were well established by those who arrived over the previous five decades.

Ahavas Achim followed a pattern of founding, self-definition and merging during the upbuilding of the East Side and the movement uptown to North Buffalo. From the 1880s, the East Side Jewish neighborhood area saw the establishment of several synagogues that distinguished themselves through their community of origin or custom of worship. Eight major Orthodox synagogues were established from the 1880s to the late 1910s and were often known by the streets on which they settled. Their geographic names, like Pine Street, Little Hickory Street and Jefferson Street Shul situated them in their neighborhood surroundings, yet their Hebrew names reveal far more about the founders' values. Anshe Sokolovka (People of Sokolovka, founded 1917) recalled links to hometown origins. Ahavas Sholom (Lovers of Peace, founded 1890), Anshe Emes (People of Truth,

²¹ Selig Adler and Thomas Connelly. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960.

²² The name "Old Beth Zion" cemetery acknowledges its origins in its original orthodox form and distinguishes it from new sections of Beth Zion member burials at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo.

²³ Glenn R.P. Atwell. "Two Vanished Jewish Cemeteries in Buffalo." W.N.Y.G.S. Journal, Vol. X, No. 2, 67-69. [William Hodge. *Buffalo Cemeteries: An Account of The Burial-Places of Buffalo, From the Earliest Times. Bigelow Brothers, Buffalo, 1879, p. 22-23.*](#)

²⁴ Samson Falk, "A History of the Israelites of Buffalo," in Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society, I, *passim*. Selig Adler and Thomas Connelly. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960, *passim*.

²⁵ The Industrial Removal Office was part of the Jewish Agricultural Society. The philosophy behind the IRO was to assimilate immigrants into American Society, both economically and culturally and disperse them away from cities. To learn more about the Industrial Removal Office, see, Jack Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998. The IRO records are available for research at the Center for Jewish History. [\](#)

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founded 1912) and Ahavas Achim (Brotherly Love/ Loving Brotherhood, founded 1897) spoke heavily to their founders' aspirations and identity.

Congregation Ahavas Achim was primarily incorporated by Jews primarily from Polish areas of the Russian Empire in 1897.²⁶ Like many other immigrant synagogues with few resources, Ahavas Achim started in a family home, that of the William Laufer family. In the early days, most of the congregants were trades and businessmen working, sometimes living, in the vicinity. Family names included: Samuel Davis, Joseph Elster, Jacob Sarnofsky, Samuel Cohen Joseph Cohen and Morris Diamond. Solomon Yochelson (father to Dr. Samuel Yochelson) worked as a shochet (ritual slaughterer), as did Louis Silverstein (Leibish Zilberstein).²⁷ Silverstein would go on to lead the synagogue from the 1920s until the 1940s. Some of its earlier members, including Louis, were from the village of Nasielsk, outside of Warsaw, and came to Buffalo from the 1890s to the 1920s. The name of the town in Yiddish was Nashelsk and fellow Jewish members were known as Nashelskers. As members of the Nashelsker community later relocated to different cities, their regular reunions allowed family and friends to maintain ties to Buffalo. Eventually, like many immigrant communities that had dispersed from their initial place of settlement, these reunions ceased over time. Individual and family ties remained however, through trips to remaining family and friends in Buffalo and visits to the Ahavas Achim cemetery to leave a stone on each relative's grave. The cemetery now functions as a connection between individuals, families and their descendants, as well as the history of Jewish Buffalo.

In 1911, the congregation hired Buffalo society architect Henry Osgood Holland to design a synagogue near Broadway.²⁸ At that time, John E. Brent, Buffalo's first African American architect, was employed by Holland as a draftsman and drafted synagogue's plans.²⁹ The result result was an Art Deco-influenced brick building located at 833 Fillmore Avenue, hence the congregation's other name: the Fillmore Avenue Shul. Between the 1910s and 1920s Achavas Achim experienced its heyday. It grew mainly through the expansion of member's families and the attachment of multiple generations to the congregation. Like many synagogues, Ahavas Achim offered not only a place to pray and observe the Shabbat and Jewish Holidays, but also social links that supported interconnectivity. It had a religious school, thriving Men's and Women's Clubs (later known as the Brotherhood and Sisterhood), as well as a Young People's group. The basement of the temple held many family functions including bar mitzvah celebrations.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Jews escaping the Nazi orbit came to the US though multiple routes, not all of whom were of German origin. Some who left Germany in the 1930s had eastern European roots. Families who joined the congregation had captivating stories of hardships and perseverance. For example, the Messinger's were originally from Poland and settled in Berlin where Zolman (Sam) worked as a tailor and Paula maintained the family home, their son Salo (Sol) was born in Germany in 1932. After his father was arrested in 1938 and deported to Poland, Sol and his mother waited for his return and their US visa numbers. Eventually they all obtained passage on the ill-fated St. Louis, a refugee ship bound for Cuba that was refused entry and turned back to Europe in 1939. The Messingers experienced further displacement when Belgium was invaded by the

²⁶ To read more about the synagogue, visit the Jewish Buffalo History Center website.

²⁷ Laufer family members, Joseph Cohen, Sholom/Solomon Yochelson and Louis Silverstein are buried at Ahavas Achim Cemetery. For Louis Silverstein, see: "Louis Silverstein: Buffalo's Last Shochet," *Buffalo Jewish Review*, July 9, 1976, p.2-3.

²⁸ Holland was also finishing Temple Beth El. Jewish Buffalo History Center, "Temple Beth El," Viewed on February 27.4 2025.

²⁹ BuffaloResearch, "In Search of Buffalo's First Professional African-American Architect," Viewed on 22 Feb. 2023.

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Nazis. The family fled to France, only to be eventually arrested and put in an internment camp. In 1942, during WWII, when a sea journey risked a torpedo strike, they eventually made it out through Portugal via ship to the USA. They came to Buffalo soon after and are buried at Ahavas Achim Cemetery.³⁰ In the post WWII war era, when Ahavas Achim became a joint congregation with Anshe Lubavitz, survivors would become prominent members.

The Anshe Lubavitz Community, 1890 – 1949/50

Anshe Lubavitz was founded as a Hasidic Shul and originally incorporated in 1890, with many members hailing from Russia. The congregation initially met in private homes too, but by 1911, they built a large synagogue at 115 Pratt Street on Buffalo's East Side. Thereafter Anshe Lubavitz became known as the Pratt Street Shul. The sanctuary at 115 Pratt St (demolished) seated 650 people and was served by Cantor Mendel Gilden who was succeeded by Cantor Perez Freedman until 1949.³¹ As congregational records are lacking for both Ahavas Achim and Anshe Lubavitz today, we mostly rely on information from the research of Selig Adler, who had access to congregational records prior to their disappearance. As with most synagogues, it is likely that Anshe Lubavitz formed before 1890 informally. All early members were landsmann and Hasidic. The original trustees include Louis Bernstein, Israel Slater, Peter Raiken, Z. Dickman and Israel Barkun. Its long serving leader was Joseph Rosokoff, who came to Buffalo in 1890 and worked as a jeweler, later becoming an early entrepreneur in the motion picture industry. He opened a Penny Arcade in 1904 and then converted it into a Nickelodeon.³²

The merged Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz Community, 1950-1969

In the mid-twentieth century, changing employment patterns and increasing wealth led to the Jewish community's movement away from the East Side. This corresponded with a generational shift amongst Jews and Non-Jews moving to North Buffalo, and subsequently, some synagogues closed or merged. Ahavas Achim and Anshe Lubavitz chose to merge, forming Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz in 1950. And in 1951, they erected a new building at 345 Tacoma Avenue in North Buffalo designed by Jack Kushin.

The new sanctuary had a seating capacity of 900 people, demonstrating an optimism that the merged congregation held for their future. Its modernist design had a distinctive flat rising façade formed of yellow brick, with large Lions of Judah and Star of David embellishments proudly displaying a public Jewish identity.

³⁰ Sol Messinger, Biographical Profile, "Echoes and Reflections," Anti-Defamation League, USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem, 2013. Sol Messinger, "Holocaust Survivor Sol Messinger Testimony," USC Shoah Foundation, Beth Wainwright, 1996. "Sol Messinger," The U.S. and the Holocaust, PBS, Viewed February 27, 2025. Sol Messinger, "Oral History Interview with Sol Messinger," Oral History Interviews of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1989. Dr. Messinger became a pathologist in the Kaleida Health System and a clinical professor at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine. He served as a long-time member of the Board of Directors of the Kadimah School and was the principal benefactor of the school's capital and endowment campaign. The school's building was named in his parents' memory.

³¹ Selig Adler and Thomas F. Connelly. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960, p.195.

³² Obituary for Jacob Rosokoff, *Buffalo News*, Oct 9, 1940, p. 27. Rosokoff was known for his philanthropy and when the Great Depression hit, he ran his own bread line to provide for local families in need.

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The exterior was subsequently modified when the building became a church, but the cornerstone and remaining decorative elements declare its origins.

The president of the newly formed merged congregation, Samuel Benatovich, served for more than two decades and was instrumental in appointing the newly merged synagogue's first Rabbi in 1952.³³ At just 24 years of age, married and with an infant son, Rabbi Alvin M. Marcus of Hoboken New Jersey brought a youthful dimension to his position at the Orthodox shul, where services remained traditional and were conducted mainly in Hebrew. Cantor Morris Markowitz served the congregation alongside Rabbi Marcus, and Rabbi David Massis led the religious school.³⁴

When Rabbi Marcus left in the mid-1960s, he was replaced by Rabbi Leonard M. Buchen. Although the synagogue retained its younger demographic, many of these families were moving to the suburbs. Largely through their efforts, a school building was opened on North Forest Road in 1969. While it began as a religious school building, it eventually expanded into a new suburban synagogue that became B'nai Shalom, and later part of Temple Beth Tzedek.³⁵

Without congregational records, it is hard to definitively comment on the congregational cultural styles, especially Anshe Lubavitz. However, Yiddish was actively spoken through the 1920s by at least some members of Ahavas Achim and was used at the dedication of the new chapel at Ahavas Achim Cemetery.³⁶

When the congregations were combined in the 1950s, Ahavas Achim Lubavitz saw significant growth in members as a new wave of immigrants, many of whom had survived the concentration camps, relocated to Buffalo. They came from Jewish towns across Europe that had been destroyed by the Nazis and many had lived in Displaced Persons' (DP's) camps for years. Some came to Buffalo with young families and whose children joined both the local public schools and the synagogue religious school. Almost all these adult DP's had experienced interruptions in education, first because of Nazi exclusion and later their subjection to imprisonment and internment. Many initially worked in local factories, including at Bethlehem Steel.³⁷ Both the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century waves of immigration experienced similar acculturation patterns. New immigrants of either generation worked in Jewish businesses through referrals as well as in businesses they founded themselves, starting work as peddlers, scrap pickers, or in unskilled laborers, which they

³³ Samuel "Sam" Benatovich was born in Buffalo in 1909. He studied at Canisius College and John Marshall School of Law in Cleveland. He and his brothers: Harry, Louis and Hyman began their food market chain with a fruit and vegetable stand at the edge of the park (hence their business name). Together with three others they founded Park Edge Super Markets, with a first branch at McKinley Parkway, that expanded into a multi-branch enterprise. The Benatovichs' were known as the "Strawberry Boys" because they sourced strawberries from across the Atlantic seaboard. See: Chana Revell Kotzin, *Jewish Community of Greater Buffalo*. Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013, p. 19 and p.91. He served as the President of Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz Synagogue for its first 25 years. He was a strong fundraiser for Israel Bonds, serving as past chairman of the local bond drive and a founding member of the Prime Ministers Club of the State of Israel Bonds. He received an award for outstanding service to the Jewish community from the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, among many other awards. He died in March 1990. Obituary for Samuel "Sam" Benatovich, *Buffalo News*, March 31, 1990.

³⁴ The synagogue building had a large basement area where basketball games were played, but where the space could function as an area for community events, supported by its large commercial kitchen. The synagogue grew rapidly and in 1961, an addition for the religious school building was built. This space also functioned as one of the sites used by Kadimah School from 1962.

³⁵ For more on Congregation B'nai Shalom and Temple Beth Tzedek, visit the Jewish Buffalo History website.

³⁶ "Dedication of Ahavas Achim Chapel," *Buffalo Jewish Review*, September 9, 1926, p. 52

³⁷ Conversation with Irv Weiser, August 14, 2024.

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subsequently developed into other opportunities. Almost all of their children, however, went to college and established themselves in the professions, for example as lawyers or doctors, many of whom ended up finding opportunity in other cities.

By the 1950s, some congregations began to move from Orthodoxy to Conservative Judaism. Such is the case of Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz as it evolved into Congregation B'nai Shalom, a congregation eventually absorbed into Temple Beth Tzedek. B'nai Shalom, built at 1641 North Forest Rd in 1968, was initially the Orthodox suburban religious school of Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz. It soon doubled as a suburban synagogue for members that did not want to make the journey to the city. As the congregation began its journey towards Conservative Judaism, a kitchen and sanctuary were added in later remodels. The Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz synagogue building at Tacoma Ave. was sold as B'nai Shalom transitioned from its role as a religious school to fulfill all synagogue functions. In 2017, Congregation B'nai Shalom merged with Temple Beth Tzedek (then located at 621 Getzville Road), the location of the former Shaarey Zedek. Temple Beth Tzedek itself was a merger of Temple Beth El and Temple Shaarey Zedek. Ground was broken in 2017 at North Forest site for the newly expanded home of Temple Beth Tzedek, which incorporated the B'nai Shalom building and added a new award-winning sanctuary, classrooms and offices, dedicated in 2018. As of 2018, the contemporary Temple Beth Tzedek represents the consolidation of multiple synagogues including Ahavas Achim, Anshe Lubavitz, Ahavas Achim-Lubavitz and B'nai Shalom, Beth El and Shaarey Zedek as well as older mergers, such as Temple Beth David, Temple Beth David Ner-Israel, and Temple Emanu-El.

The Creation of Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Although it is common for a Christian graveyard to be on land attached or next to a church, most Jewish cemeteries in Greater Buffalo, as in other Jewish communities, are sited far away from their associated synagogues. This separation is due to rules concerning Kohanim, a priestly caste, coming into contact with the dead. The Talmudic tractate *Bava Batra 25a* rules that a cemetery must be located at a minimum distance of approximately 75 feet from the city (Talmudic tract: *Bava Batra 25a*).³⁸ Historically, however, there are deviations from this rule, most notably in Prague and other historical Jewish ghettos, where high walls were erected around the cemetery to act as a partition for the Kohanim.

In the Jewish tradition, cemeteries have many names and each emphasizes a particular link to the living rather than the dead. A basic Hebrew term for a cemetery or graveyard is *beit kevarot* (Hebrew: Beit=house, kevarot=graves) from the biblical passage, "graveyard of my ancestors" in Nehemiah 2:3.³⁹ An alternative term, *beit avot* (Hebrew: Beit=house, avot=fathers or ancestors) stresses the links between generations. A third term is, "house of the living" (in our memory) *beit chayim* (Hebrew: Beit=house, chayim=living). The term *beit olam* (Hebrew: Beit=house, Olam=eternity), is from Ecclesiastes, 12:5, which references an "eternal abode". The Aramaic term for house of eternity or eternal abode is similar to the Hebrew and used by some, *beit olmin* (Beit=house, Olmin=eternity). A third biblical passage – Job 30:23– references the "the house

³⁸ Bava Batra, Line 2, The William Davidson Talmud with Modern Hebrew and English translations by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz, Koren Noé Talmud, accessed on Sefaria on October 22, 2024.

³⁹ Nehemiah, 2:3, *JPS TANAKH, The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1985. Accessed on Sefaria on January 15, 2025.

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assigned for all the living,” rendered in Hebrew as *Beit moed le-chol chai* (Hebrew: Beit=house, moed=meeting, le-chol=for all, chai=living).⁴⁰ Any of these terms may be used to refer to Ahavas Achim Cemetery, as these terms are dependent on generational and personal preferences.

Through the synthesis of national origin and customs, the movement of synagogues to progressively more affluent areas and the continual accretion of congregations, the Ahavas Achim Cemetery represents the oldest, extant, continuously used built resource associated with that congregation. The previous synagogue buildings have been demolished or converted into churches, altering their ability to communicate their Jewish heritage. For over a century, only the cemetery has remained intact and represents the final resting place of generations of Buffalo Jews. Its continual use creates a tangible connection to ancestors and represents the dynamics of immigration in the United States.

The Ahavas Achim (Hebrew: Brotherly Love/Loving Brotherhood) cemetery was established in 1917 on land originally owned by Charles and Libbie Willyoung conveyed to Charles Polakoff, a commercial real estate agent (and a member and president of Temple Beth El). He then sold the land to Ahavas Achim for \$1. Although Congregation Ahavas Achim was located in in the heavily Polish area of the East Side of Buffalo around Broadway and Fillmore Ave, the cemetery is located in Cheektowaga.

While it bears the name of Ahavas Achim alone on its gateway, the cemetery encompasses burials from both Ahavas Achim and Anshe Lubavitz. Anshe Lubavitz initially had a separate cemetery, named Libowitz (reflecting differing pronunciation and transliteration styles at different times), for burials of members before 1950, while Ahavas Achim Cemetery has congregational burials from 1920 and its post-1950 form as Ahavas Achim Lubavitz. Burials for members of Ahavas Achim before 1920 may have occurred in B’Nai Israel, on the east side of Pine Ridge, which was a cemetery composed of members of a *chevra kadisha* who were not affiliated with a particular congregation, did not have a congregational *chevra kadisha*, did not have burial lands, or did not belong to another fraternal group or landsmannschaftn. B’Nai Israel allowed for burials from across the Jewish community under certain rules such as membership of its organization and Orthodox Jewish adherence.

Isaac Hoenig Gate

The arch was a gift of Isaac Hoenig, who died on February 13, 1920, one day after the death of his wife, Libbie.⁴¹ Both are buried in the first five rows of the cemetery. They lived on Bailey Avenue, but at the time of their deaths (occurring within a day of each other), were vacationing in Florida. Isaac Hoenig was originally born in Galicia, Poland. He migrated to the United States in 1859 and settled in Buffalo where he began work as a tailor. He then entered the wholesale and retail clothing business on the East Side followed by a clothing store at Broadway and Clark Street. He continued working at this store until 1916 when he retired. Libbie worked as a homemaker. In his will, Isaac left \$2,000 to the Buffalo Hebrew school on Hickory Street, and

⁴⁰ Job 30:23, *JPS TANAKH, The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1985. Accessed on Sefaria on January 15, 2025.

⁴¹ Libbie is spelled Liebbie on the archway connecting it to its Yiddish roots: “my beloved.”

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similar amounts for Ahavas Achim and the Jewish Orphan Asylum. He also created the Isaac Hoenig Memorial Fund for Jewish college students through the establishment of an \$50,000 Endowment Fund.⁴²

Eli W. Goldstein, the architect of the gateway, was born in Buffalo in 1887 and worked as an architect for more than thirty years. He was a designer of many Buffalo residences and downtown buildings including the Little Theatre, the Sherwood and Elliot apartments, the Mercury Theatre, 193 Delaware Ave, 228 Franklin St and a range of other buildings including the Colvin Theater in Kenmore. He worked on plans for Temple Beth El in Ithaca with builder Jacob Lewis. Goldstein was a graduate of Central High School and Cornell University and a member of the Architects Institute of America, The Cornell Club, The Elk Club, The Wilmont Town and Country Club, the Greater Buffalo Advertising Club, Temple Beth Zion, and Perseverance Lodge. He had a regular column in the *Buffalo Jewish Review* entitled "Talk on Building Construction." He died on January 21, 1945, at the age of 58.⁴³

The Adler Chapel

The chapel at Ahavas Achim Cemetery was built over the course of 1925 to 1926 and dedicated on Sunday, September 5, 1926, with a ceremony at the cemetery in Cheektowaga.⁴⁴ The event was well-attended, with many members of the congregation, community rabbis and religious functionaries from other congregations in attendance. Rabbi Eichler, the Rabbi of Ahavas Achim, led the English language ceremonies alongside Hebrew prayers with Rabbi Franklin and Cantor Schachtel of Beth El, while Rabbi Gitin addressed the crowd in Yiddish. In the evening, approximately 300 people attended a free Congregational banquet in the basement of the Ahavas Achim Synagogue with speeches given by Rabbis Franklin, Gitin and Eichler.

The donor of the chapel, Herman Adler was the founder of a store named "Adler's" a women's apparel store at 1000 Broadway, Buffalo. Born in Austria, he came to Buffalo in 1896. He established his business in 1905 and retired in 1920, after which point his sons took over the business. He died at the age of 87 and is buried along with his wife and other Adler family members next to the chapel.

Both the gate and the chapel use the Egyptian Revival style. The use of this style for Jewish religious structures began in the mid-nineteenth century. The first wave of Egyptian Revival architecture occurred in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, following Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The nineteenth century is well known for its flurry of revolutions, unifications, and the formalization of national identities. One common method of demonstrating these newly-bounded nationalities was through architecture, with styles harkening back to the "glory days" of any given ethnicity or location.

This posed a challenge for Jews, and American Jews in particular, their community that had faced millennia of persecution and exile, and thus lacked a corpus of permanent architectural styles to draw from. As such, the

⁴² "Isaac Hoenig Memorial Fund Will Aid Jewish College Students," *Buffalo Jewish Review*, June 12, 1925, p. 1, 6.

⁴³ Obituary, Eli W. Goldstein, *Buffalo Jewish Review*, Jan 26, 1945.

⁴⁴ "Jews to Dedicate Cemetery Chapel Sunday Afternoon," *The Buffalo Times*, September 1, 1926, p. 3; "Dedication of Ahavas Achim Chapel," *Buffalo Jewish Review*, September 3, 1926, p. 52; "Congregation Ahavath Achim Dedicates Memorial Chapel at Pine Hill Cemetery," *Buffalo Jewish Review*, September 10, 1926, p. 5.

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Egyptian Revival style served as a substitute that held comparable connotations of age and geographic area for the Jewish community. The use of Egyptian Revival can be seen in several East Coast cemeteries: the Old Granary Burial Ground in Boston (1840, NRHP 1974), the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge (1842, NRHP 2001), and notably, the “Old Jewish Cemetery” in Newport (1843, NRHP 1973), the oldest surviving Jewish burial site in the country. The Ahavas Achim Cemetery also features an Egyptian Revival style entrance gate, built in 1918.

This first Egyptian Revival movement was limited in length and Moorish or Islamic Revivals were instead adopted as a common style for American Jewish architecture throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. However, in 1922, archeologists discovered the Tomb of King Tutankhamun, which ushered in a new flood of Egyptian Revival architecture, furniture, and art. The style’s connection to ancient tombs rendered it a psychologically appropriate style for funerary buildings and art, conveying associations with eternity and the afterlife. The choice of a restrained Egyptian Revival style for the chapel and gate likely resulted from a combination of these influences.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Jewish Buffalonians have created a diverse array of local institutions over the last two centuries, of which synagogues and fraternal organizations have been central to community development since the first families emigrated to Buffalo. They reveal a key pattern of lives in American Jewish communities: constant invention and reformulation. Synagogues and organizations appear, merge, revive, change their religious, social or cultural practices and even close, as their leadership, members, locations and forms of worship or their mission changes. When they close, their buildings are often sold to other organizations or demolished, and the physical connection to a Jewish past may appear severed. But one physical link between Jewish organizations like synagogues or an independent Chevra Kadisha and their institutional past remains: their cemeteries. These must be maintained even if the organization no longer exists. Row after row, the names of individuals who lived and contributed to their communities, along with the names of the cemeteries themselves memorialize bygone groups who made a mark in Buffalo. This is one such legacy of the Ahavas Achim cemetery.

From its first elaborate Eastern European monuments, prominently sited by the public thoroughfare, to the regimented, increasingly modest gravestones which fill the subsequent rows, Ahavas Achim Cemetery provides a map to understanding the development of Jewish immigrant life in Buffalo. The use of large monuments by the congregation’s earlier generation connects subsequent generations to their European heritage. Their ornate carvings, which required extensive skill in funerary art, convey messages of prosperity and connection to their former homelands.

The increasing uniformity of the later rows of stones represents the changing tastes in monument styles, monument production and artisan skills. It also signals religious preferences found in many American Orthodox Jewish cemeteries that adopted a simpler style of gravestone design in keeping with their interpretation of traditions that, by coincidence, mirrored post WWII design aesthetics and trends. And although

⁴⁵ Campbell Higle, “Adler Chapel Resource Evaluation,” NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation, May 30, 2024.

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the forms of these monuments grew more restrained, they remained adorned by traditional Jewish iconography, proudly displaying their religious and cultural identity.

Additional Context, Proposed Architects for the Adler Chapel:

Unlike the gateway by Eli W. Goldstein, there is no architectural attribution for the Adler Chapel on the building itself. Several architects are proposed as possible contenders. Eli W. Goldstein, who designed the arch, is a possibility, but there is no surviving documentary evidence to substantiate this. Thus, other alternatives, John E. Brent and Louis Greenstein are also proposed. However, it is also acknowledged that none of the named candidates may have been responsible. Without further records the architect or builder cannot be definitively established, permits may not have been required for the structure, and if such documentation existed, it has since been lost or destroyed in a purge of records during the 1950s.⁴⁶ To add complication, the name of the architect was omitted in newspaper clippings.

Eli W. Goldstein as proposed architect

There is evidence of a business relationship (and perhaps friendship) between Eli. W. Goldstein and the Adler family, and his previous commission of the Ahavas Arch renders him the most likely candidate for the design and building of the Adler Chapel. During the 1920s, soon after his work on the arch, he worked as a general contractor with Isidor Adler and may have built both a home for the Adler family and a service station. Goldstein also designed a storefront and office for Adler at Main and Tupper.⁴⁷

In a review of the evidence, and the size of the building in a cemetery, several factors have contributed to the difficulty of obtaining documentary evidence for a definitive proof of architect. The laws on building permits for cemeteries might not have required permitting at this time. FOIL applications revealed no permits, and the records in Cheektowaga were purged in the 1950s.

John E. Brent as proposed architect

John E. Brent was born around 1892 and raised in Washington, D.C. He studied at the Tuskegee Institute in 1904, graduating with an architecture degree in 1907. He later entered the School of Architecture at Drexel Institute, graduating in 1912 at the age of 20. During this period, Buffalo was a center of architectural opportunity, prompting John Brent to move to the city. He initially worked as a draftsman and then set up his own architectural practice in 1926. While a draftsman, he was responsible for drafting the plans for Ahavas Achim synagogue, designed by Henry Osgood Holland. This work establishes a prior relationship to the congregation. As he was starting to set up his own practice in the mid 1920s, he may have been commissioned by the Adlers. However, a well-researched compilation of his works does not list the chapel as

⁴⁶ Phone conversation with Maureen E. Gleason, Cheektowaga Town Historian, August 5, 2024.

⁴⁷ Entries in the *American Contractor* suggest several connections. Eli W. Goldstein built the Adler house on Richmond Ave on September 11, 1920, p. 40; Goldstein designed a storefront and office for Adler at Main and Tupper, Feb 19, 1921, p. 60, and finally, on March 19, 1921, p. 63, Goldstein created a service station for Adler. This data is provided by Doug Kohler, August 2024.

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part of his output. Prior to his own practice he worked for Max G. Beierl; H. Osgood Holland; Waterbury & Mann; Julius E. Schultz; North Shelgren & Swift; Oakley & Schallmore. In his own practice, he designed the Entrance Court to the Buffalo Zoo, Westbrook Luxury Apartments (675 Delaware Avenue), and Houghton Park (1675 Clinton Street). He was active in several civic organizations including the Buffalo chapter of the NAACP and the Local Council of the State Commission Against Discrimination. He left Buffalo for several years to work on the design and planning of Howard University from 1931-1934. He died on October 27, 1962, and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Section 37, Lot 94.

Louis Greenstein as proposed architect

Louis Greenstein was born in Buffalo in 1886, at a time of significant Jewish immigration to the city. He initially trained as a draftsman in Buffalo with two architectural firms, first at McCreary, Wood and Bradney and then at Green and Wicks. By 1907, he had designed the first Buffalo city flag, demonstrating design interests beyond the built environment, a practice he continued throughout his life. A year later, he left Buffalo to work for the firm Edgar E. Joralemon in the company's New York City Office. This enabled him to study at both Columbia University and the Columbia Atelier of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects. In 1914, he returned to Buffalo and set up his own practice in the Guaranty Building.

He incorporated both new construction and remodeling projects into his practice, including the Coplon Family Mansion at 4380 Main Street, Amherst, in an Italian Renaissance style, and the Willowdale County Club in a Tudor Revival style. This was quickly followed by Temple Beth David on Humboldt Parkway. In addition to these new designs, he also worked on what would now be regarded as an adaptive reuse project for Temple Emanu-El at Colvin and Tacoma in North Buffalo. Originally designed as a church, Greenstein reworked its interior and created a striking wooden bimah. He also designed the Egyptian Revival Beth El chapel (demolished) in the cemetery immediately adjacent to Ahavas Achim, built during the same period as the Adler Chapel. They share many common features and elements, although the Beth El Chapel was considerably larger, in both size (and likely) budget. From an execution point of view, the Beth El Chapel was considerably more refined. However, it was not unheard of for architects to provide pro bono plans for religious projects, and the much smaller Ahavas Achim chapel may have been a gift to Ahavas Achim and the Adler family.

Alongside civic buildings and Jewish religious buildings like Temple Beth David-Ner Israel (1959) in North Buffalo, Greenstein designed stores and manufacturing spaces, including the Art Deco styled Lederman's Furniture Store (1929), and Riverside Men's Store in the 1940s. During the 1940s, he also undertook a notable renovation project on the Seeberg Building at 121 Genesee Street in Buffalo. These clients were all members of Ahavas Achim, but it is noted that the work for these buildings was completed after the chapel was built.

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Despite a long architectural legacy, Louis Greenstein is most remembered for his design of two flags for the City of Buffalo, as well as its official seal. Louis Greenstein was interred at Forest Lawn Cemetery in 1972 within the Aaron Family Mausoleum constructed by the William Crawford Company, Buffalo, NY.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Designs of religious buildings, such as churches, or in this case, a cemetery chapel, were sometimes offered as a gift to the congregation, especially if an architect was a member of the congregation or had a personal connection. The need to attach an attribution name was less important in this case. No money would have been exchanged and likely no contract made, just an agreement to provide a plan, a contractor or a builder or to jointly work as a team without the necessity of acknowledgment.

The legal requirement for permitting has a mixed history in Buffalo and Cheektowaga. For houses, there are often no municipal records of an architect. Buildings plans were not submitted, and in some cases, only a brief description sufficed to get a permit. An architect may not have been necessary for this type of building, and its design could have been the work of a builder-contractor. In the 1920s, cast stone was cheap and available via mail order. Thus, some elements may not have required great skill to reproduce and could have been completed by a range of individuals, with or without the oversight of an architect. Locating the records of architects is difficult, but it is even more challenging for those of contractors or builders.

The *American Contractor* publication was a substantive publication that detailed small building and even monuments for a wide geographic area, including Buffalo and Cheektowaga. But after 1923, the publication changed focus and significantly reduced its range of coverage and depth. The *American Contractor* for 1925 lists an award of contract to Louis Greenstein for the design of the Beth El cemetery chapel. There is no reference to an offer to any architect or contractor for the Adler Chapel that same year.⁴⁹

Although cases can be made for at least three architects as designers of the chapel, the most likely is Eli W. Goldstein, given the former direct relationship with the congregation and close ties to the Adler family.

Additional Context, Glossary:

Ashkenazi/Ashkenazim (Yiddish/Hebrew: Jews from "Ashkenaz," Germanic lands).

Jews of German origin, later applied to Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, and their descendants, including most of North and South American Jewry. Those who followed Ashkenazi ritual style.

Beit Avot (Hebrew: House of The Fathers/Ancestors)

A Jewish cemetery. Also Beit Chaim (Hebrew: House of Life); Beit Kevarot (Hebrew: House of graves from kever, Hebrew for grave), Beit Olam (Hebrew: House of Eternity) and Beit Shalom: (Hebrew: House of Peace).

⁴⁸ To learn more about Greenstein, see: "Louis Greenstein, A noted architect is dead at 84," *Buffalo News* 22 April 1972, p.2; Greenstein's page on the Jewish Buffalo History Center website; and see: Hoist a Piece of History: Louis Greenstein and the Buffalo Flag, By Joey Duggan, Associate Historian at Preservation Studios, The Preservation Exchange.

⁴⁹ Conversations with Francis Kowsky, Martin Wachadlo and Paul McDonnell 18-21 August 2024.

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Chevra/ Hēvra Kadisha (Hebrew: Holy Association)

A society of Jewish members who perform the rituals associated with burying the dead. A burial society.

Kaddish (Hebrew: From Kadosh, Meaning Holy)

Aramaic prayer praising God, recited within a quorum or minyan, with a specific form that is recited in memory of a recently deceased person.

Kohan/ Kohanim (Hebrew: priest).

A member of the Jewish priestly family. Kohanim are not allowed to come into contact with the deceased.

Kittel (Yiddish: Coat/Robe)

White robe worn over clothing on religious occasions such as at the Yom Kippur service and at a wedding by the bridegroom and at death. Variant spelling: kitl.

Magen David (Hebrew: Shield of David).

Religious star shaped symbol based on the legend that King David used a hexagram for the shape of his shield. Commonly translated as "Star" of David.

Minhag (Hebrew: Custom)

Religious custom.

Mitzvah/Mitzvot (Hebrew: A Commandment)

An action that is required under Jewish law having been commanded by God. Sometimes colloquially used to refer to a charitable or beneficial act performed by another person.

Ohel (Hebrew: tent)

Tomb or mausoleum for revered person, generally a Rabbi.

Pogrom (Russian: Devastation)

Violent riots, attacks and rampages, sometimes murderous, against Jews often carried out in eastern European communities.

Shivah (Hebrew: seven)

The seven-day mourning period that begins immediately after burial. One is said to "sit sivah."

Shul (Yiddish: Synagogue from German Word for School)

Used as word for "synagogue."

Tallit (Hebrew: Prayer Shawl; A Shawl with Tzitzit -Ritually Knotted Fringes)

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A traditional tallit is all wool, white with black or blue stripes near the edges with tzitzit on each of the corners, that was traditionally worn by Jewish men during prayer, but is also used by women in egalitarian streams of Judaism. Some individuals choose to be buried in their tallit.

Yahrzeit (Yiddish: Anniversary Date of Death)

The anniversary date of the death of a person.

Z"L (Hebrew Abbreviation: Zichrono/Zichronah L'vracha)

May his/her memory be a blessing.

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Name of Property

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.54

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery
Name of Property

Erie Co., New York
County and State

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.926568 | Longitude: -78.793055 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary reflects the current legal parcel associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Chana Kotzin, edited by Campbell Higle, Survey/NR
organization _____ date 2/25/2025
street & number 6424 N Spruce Ave telephone _____
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64119
e-mail crkotzin@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

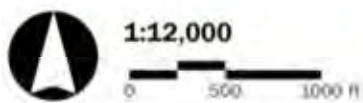
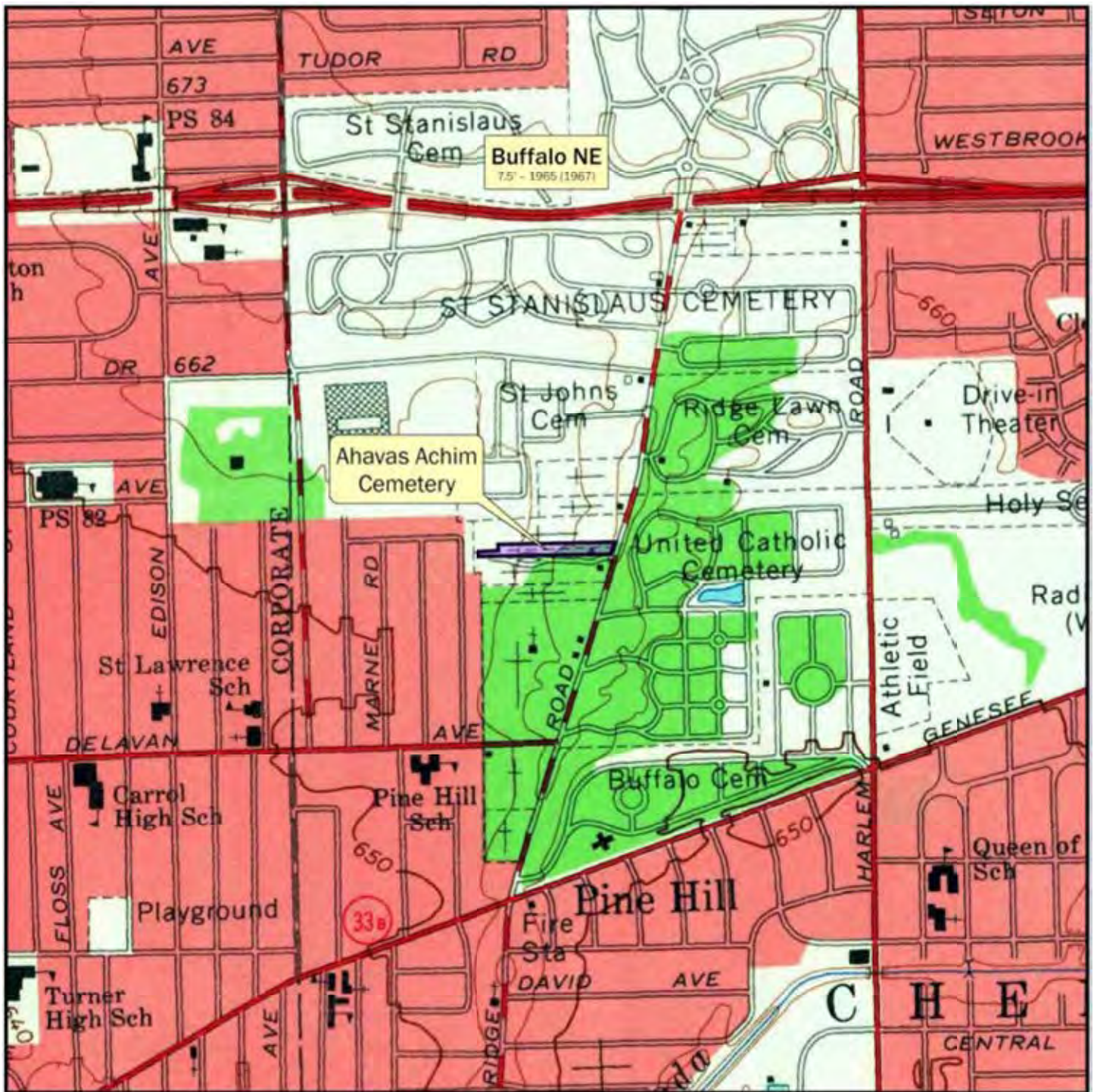
Submit the following items with the completed form:


- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Erie Co., New York
County and State

Name of Property



 Ahavas Achim Cemetery



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

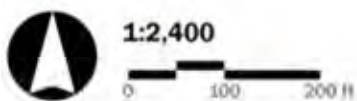
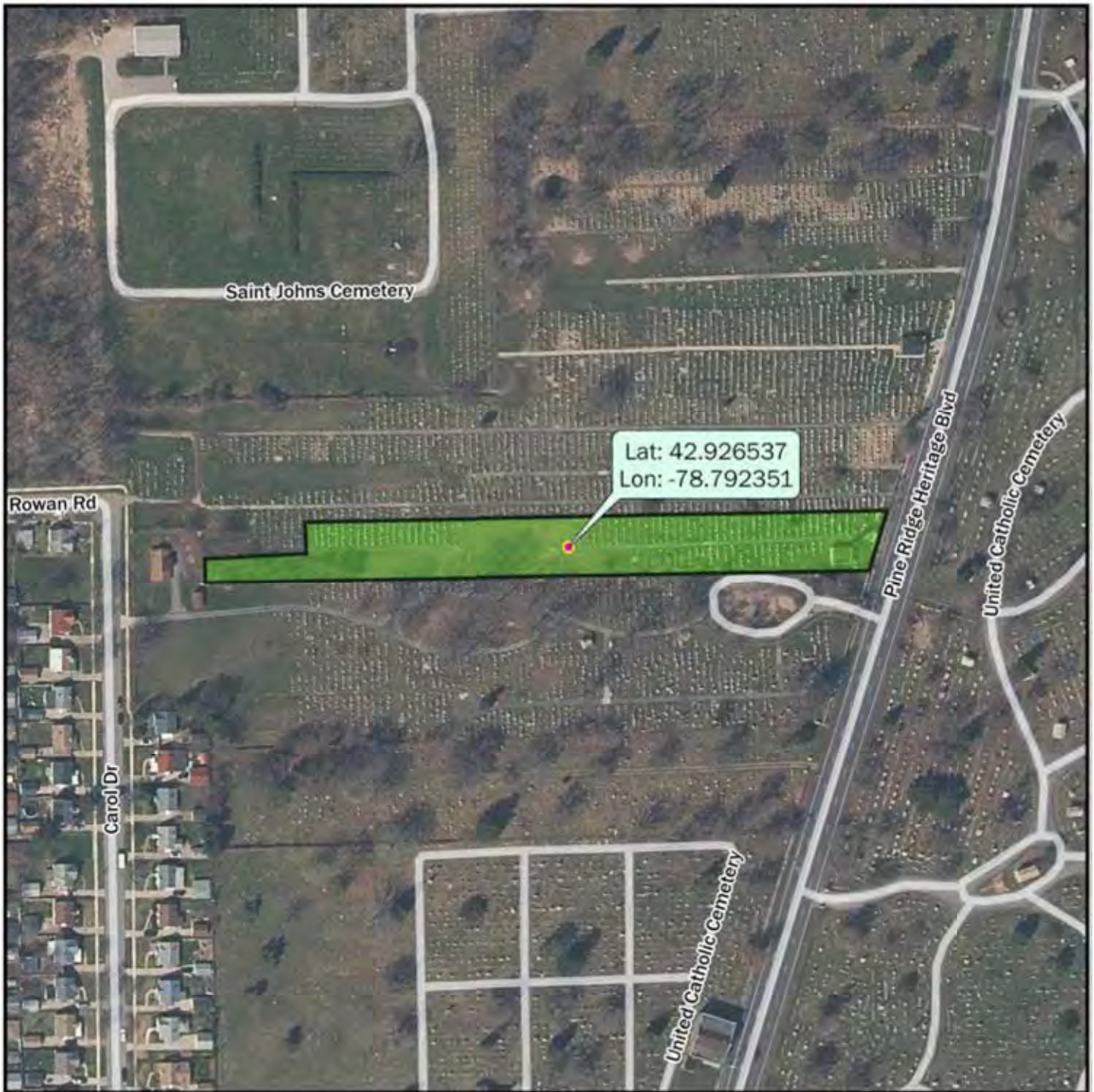
Mapped 11/21/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO


DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Name of Property

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 Nomination Boundary (1.58 ac)



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

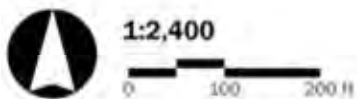
New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2020



Mapped 11/21/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

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Name of Property



 Nomination Boundary (1.58 ac)  Tax Parcels



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

Erie County Parcel Year: 2023

Mapped 11/21/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Name of Property

Erie Co., New York
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Jews to Dedicate Cemetery Chapel Sunday Afternoon

The dedication of the chapel of Ahavas Achim Cemetery, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Adler of Richmond Avenue, will take place Sunday, September 5th at 2 o'clock, at the Ahavas Achim Cemetery at Pine Hill. Many prominent rabbis will take part in the ceremonies at the cemetery. Rabbi Elchler and Cantor Schachtel of Beth-El, and Rabbi Franklin and Rabbi Gitin, the latter who will speak in Yiddish, will take part.

The ceremony at the cemetery will be followed by a congregational banquet to be given free of charge, and to be held in the basement of the Ahavas Achim Synagogue, No. 835 Fillmore Avenue, at 6 P. M.

The synagogue will be open every evening from now until the holidays, including all day of Sunday, September 5th, for the sale of seats.

Figure 1: Dedication of Adler Chapel, September 1, 1926.

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Name of Property

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County and State

DEDICATION OF AHAVAS ACHIM CHAPEL

The dedication of the Chapel of Ahavas Achim Cemetery, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Adler of Richmond avenue, will take place Sunday, September 5th, at 2 o'clock at the Ahavas Achim Cemetery at Pine Hill. Many prominent Rabbis will take part in the ceremonies at the cemetery, with Rabbi Eichler and Cantor Schachtel of Beth El, as well as Rabbi Franklin and Rabbi Gitin, the latter will speak in Yiddish.

The ceremony at the cemetery will be followed by a Congregational banquet to be given free of charge, and to be held in the basement of the Ahavas Achim Synagogue, 835 Fillmore avenue, at 6 p.m. The committee are cordially inviting all the former members of Ahavas Achim, together with the present members, to unite with them in this happy occasion. They have also provided a splendid program of entertainment which will follow the Congregational banquet.

Figure 2: Dedication of Adler Chapel, September 3, 1926.

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Name of Property

Erie Co., New York

County and State

Congregation Ahavath Achim Dedicates Memorial Chapel at Pine Hill Cemetery

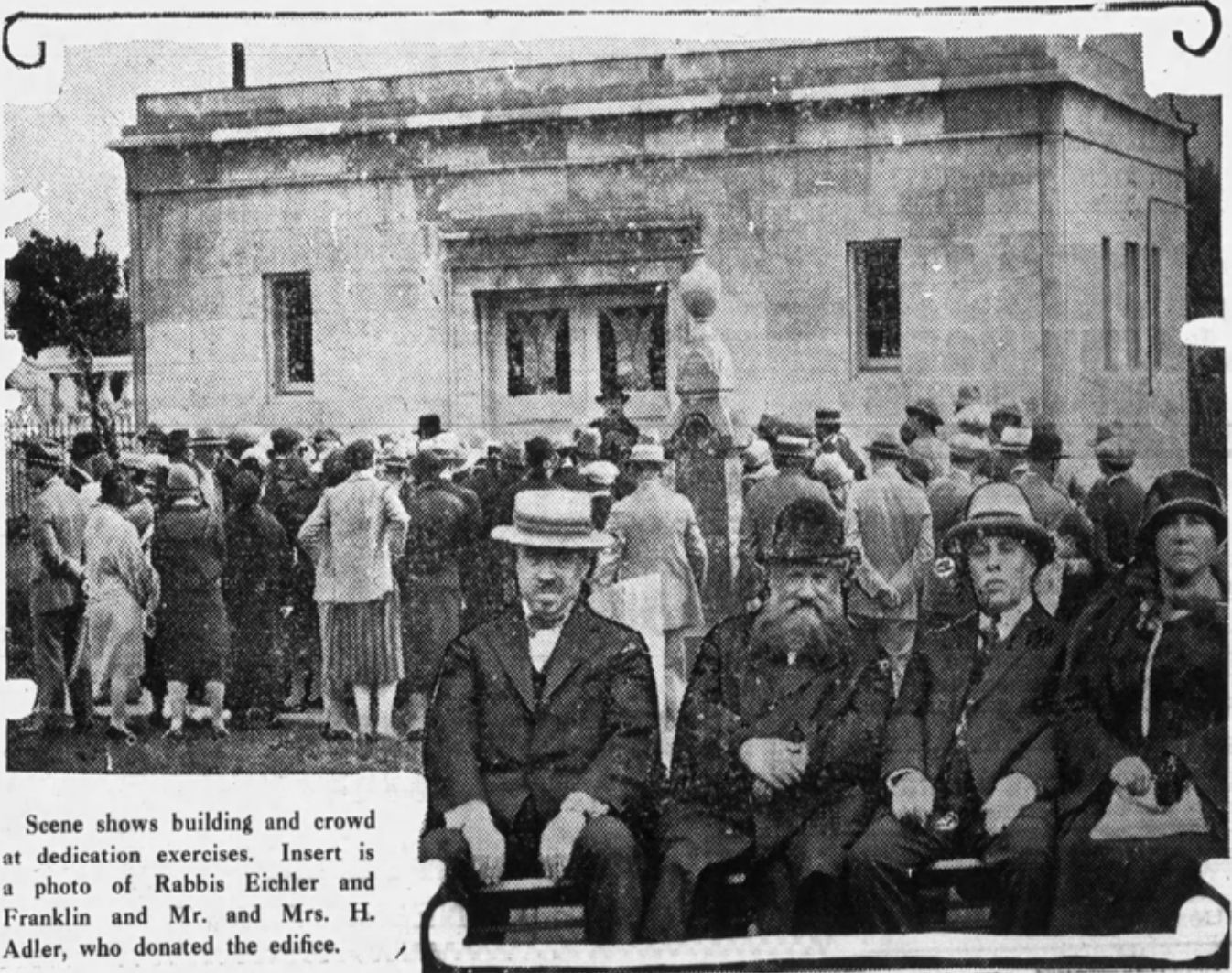


Figure 3: Dedication of Adler Chapel, September 10, 1926.

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery

Name of Property

Erie Co., New York

County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Ahavas Achim Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Cheektowaga

County: Erie

State: NY

Photographer: Chana Kotzin (CK), Judy Sperry (JS), Jonathan Schecter (JSc), Grace Di Virgilio (GDV)

Date Photographed: Chana Kotzin, 2021. Judy Sperry, 2024. Jonathan Schecter, 2024. Grace Di Virgilio, 2019.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 of 0028: Emil Laufer rededication plaque for Ahavas Achim gateway (JS)
- 0002 of 0028: Isaac Hoenig and Ahavas Achim Gateway inscription (CK)
- 0003 of 0028: Hebrew inscriptions on headstones at Ahavas Achim (JS)
- 0004 of 0028: Arch by Eli W. Goldstein, architect (CK)
- 0005 of 0028: Ahavas Achim Hebrew inscription on Isaac Hoenig gate (CK)
- 0006 of 0028: Hoenig Arch dedication in English (CK)
- 0007 of 0028: Architect attribution and date 1918 (CK)
- 0008 of 0028: Chapel Features and Chimney (JS)
- 0009 of 0028: Cavetto cornice and Pilaster (JS)
- 0010 of 0028: Extended Adler family headstones (JS)
- 0011 of 0028: Adler Family Marker (JS)
- 0012 of 0028: Adler Chapel Entrance (JSc)
- 0013 of 0028: Hebrew inscription on Adler Chapel (JS)
- 0014 of 0028: Interior of chapel showing multiple features (JS)
- 0015 of 0028: Ahavas Achim cemetery vertical headstones (JS)
- 0016 of 0028: Large headstones at Ahavas Achim (CK)
- 0017 of 0028: A ball on the top of a stone indicating eternal life, grave of Rebecca Bernhard (GDV)
- 0018 of 0028: Star of David and Hebrew on standardized headstones at Ahavas Achim (JS)
- 0019 of 0028: Smaller more standardized headstones at Ahavas Achim (JS)
- 0020 of 0028: Hands symbol indicating descendant of Kohanim, Grave of Sam Messinger (JS)
- 0021 of 0028: Prominent Star of David, Louis and Lila Silverstein (JS)
- 0022 of 0028: Hebrew acronym, "May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life." Grave of Sam and Minnie Benatovich, (GDV)
- 0023 of 0028: Candelabra or menorah image, associated with women (JS)
- 0024 of 0028: Hebrew acronym, Poh" (meaning "here"), and nun for "nikbar" (meaning "buried"), Grave of Seeburgs (GDV)
- 0025 of 0028: Urn symbolizing a container for the soul, Grave of Y. Silverstein (GDV)
- 0026 of 0028: A tree or branch cut down indicating died young (GDV)
- 0027 of 0028: Porcelain cameos or metal-encased photographic portraits at Ahavas Achim, grave of Klein Family (JS)
- 0028 of 0028: Adler Chapel (JS)

DRAFT Ahavas Achim Cemetery
Name of Property

Erie Co., New York
County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Temple Beth Tzedek
street & number 1641 N Forest Rd telephone (716) 838-3232
city or town Williamsville state NY zip code 14221

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

J
**MT. CARMEL LODGE
CEMETERY**
cemetery@buffalojewishfederation.org
MANAGED BY
**JEWISH FEDERATION
CEMETERY CORPORATION**

532
• Pine Ridge Heritage Blvd •

ENTRANCE REDEDICATED
IN MEMORY OF
EMIL LAUFER
1992 5753



THE ISAAC HOENIG MEMORIAL

CEMETERY AHAAS HIM





DE BELOVED HUSBAND
 AND DEAR FATHER
HARRY
TANNENBAUM
 BORN AUG. 15, 1866
 DIED AUG. 25, 1938

FATHER



פנ
 רחל בת ר' חזקאל
 נפ כו מבח תשה
 ח נ צ ב ה
 BELOVED MOTHER
RACHEL
TANNENBAUM
 1873 — 1945

MOTHER



SAMUEL
 STERNBERG
 1912 — 1991

THE ISAAC HOENIG MEMORIAL

CEMETERY AHAVAS HEM

קונצין קום
למנו ריפא אונזער
און אונזער
און אונזער
און אונזער
און אונזער

IN MEMORIAM
THIS
BY ISAAC HOENIG
AND HIS WIFE
1880-1930 HOENIG 1870

REGULAR



לנשמת אביו
נצח נצחית הנפטר מן העולם
ביום י"ד תמוז ה'תש"ח

מרת ליבי שבת שמואל תלמידי
שנת תרע"ט לבק

IN MEMORIAM

THIS

1859

ISAAC HOENIG

AND HIS WIFE

1860

LIEBBE HOENIG

FREQUENTED 1918

ELI W. G.

SEPT. 1887

FRED JED 1918

EL W CO

REF LOT



Star of David symbol and Hebrew text on the building's facade.

Gravestone for ADLER with Hebrew text and Star of David symbol.

Gravestone with Hebrew text.

HANNAH LAUFERS ADLER
BORN MAY 8 1893
DIED MAR 2 1992

LEO ADLER
BORN APRIL 21 1933
DIED APRIL 5 1994

SCHAEFFER
DEAR HUSBAND
1871-1952
BELOVED WIFE
LEONIA
1892-1984







ADLER





זאת נדבת

מר צבי בן שלמה

אדלער

וזונתו מרת שרה

בת ר צבי דוד

שנת תרפ"ה

DONATED BY

MR & MRS H ADLER

5685

1925





ENTRANCE DEDICATED
IN MEMORY OF
EMIL LAUFER
1887 1952

BERNSTEIN

THEODORE LAUFER
1881 - 1917
BORN LAUFER LIPS
1884 - 1919

HARRY
TAMMERMAN
BORN 1888
DIED 1958

MAXIMILIAN

LOMBARD

BENJAMIN
SCHRUTT

1883 — 1940

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF OUR BELOVED
FATHER

בנימין בן מרדכי
נפ בו שכמ ת"ש

ESTHER
SCHRUTT

1883 — 1958

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF OUR BELOVED
MOTHER

אסתר בת ר אברהם אלחנן
נפ ז' חשוון תשי"ט



REBECCA
BERNHARD
DIED
MAY 8, 1951
AGED 85 YRS.





POHL

ה'תרע"ח
ה'תש"ח



יאכעט בת ר
משה לוי נפ' ז' ניסן
תש"ח ה'תש"ח

MOTHER
YETTA
ROSENFELD
1876 - 1980

פ ו

אברהם יצחק בר
מרדכי נפ' כ"א אדר א'
תש"ד ת"נ א' ב' ה'

FATHER
ABRAHAM I
ROSENFELD
1864 - 1944



FATHER
BENJAMIN
STEINHAUS
1878 - 1956
דוב בער בר
ה'תשע"ד

COHEN

KAPLAN

DELA
JUNE 28 1944

ANNA BERNHEIM

ABRAHAM
FINEGOLD
1870 - 1951



סגול
NOBLE
אמנו היקרה ניצל
בת ר בצלאל נפ
כט אדר תשע
MOTHER
GERTRUDE S. NOBLE
DIED MAR 30 1949
אלה שני ימי

BELLA ESTHER
KULICK
ב יקרה בת מאיר
1907 1987

נוסח פירוש
בת רב אסתר אבי
נפח השעה כאב
הרצח
הנצבה
DAUGHTER
HENRIETTA
WAHRSACHE
1895 - 1932 A.T. 37



MESSINGER

SAM
1901 — 1962
יקוּחַדֵּשׁ אֶמְתּוֹ
בֶּן דּוֹב גַּבְרִיֵּל
נפ א א

PAULA
1905 — 1998
פִּטְסֵף
כֶּתֶב בְּעֵרֶךְ הַחַיִּים
נפ י"ד טבת ה'תשנ"ח

WIFE OF BORIS
FREDA
ZUBIN
1912 — 2003
בת שבעה

HUSBAND & FATHER
JACOB
ZUBIN
1909 — 1967
נפא בר
ה'תשכ"ז



SILVERSTEIN

LYLA

1896 — 1978

לאה בת

ד שמואל אשר

נפ טז מרחשוון תשל ט

LOUIS

1897 — 1988

יצחק בייבוש

בר יוסף יקר

נפ א פרה תשמ ט

ת נ צ כ ה



תְּנִיבָה

BENATOVICH

OUR BELOVED

HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER

WIFE, MOTHER, GRANDMOTHER

SAMUEL Z.

MINNIE W.

1909 — 1990

1912 — 1989

כתריאל בר חיים

מינה פיינה בתר' מנשה

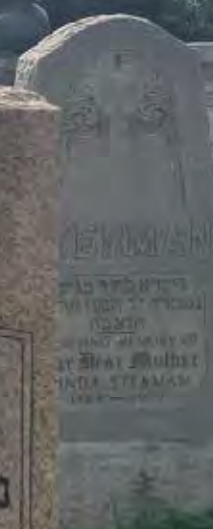
FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS



ב
 ה' אשתי אהובתי
 רחל אשה צנועה
 נפ כ"ט תשרי תשכ"ט
 ת"ע"ב ה'

MY BELOVED HUSBAND
 AND OUR DEAR FATHER
JOSEPH Y. SILVERSTEIN
 DIED SEPT. 11, 1968
 AGE 65 YEARS

אמנו היקרה
 האשה הצנועה
 ריקל בת ר' יהודה
 נפ כ"ט תשרי תשכ"ט
 ת"ע"ב ה'
 MOTHER
**RACHEL
 SILVERSTEIN**
 1875 — 1968





SEEBERG

ISENBERG

FATHER
CHARLES
1878 - 1961

MOTHER
JENNY
1875 -

יחזקאל בר אברהם צבי
נפ כ"א אדר תשכ"א

ר' מאיר
ד' תשכ"ב

שמריהו בר מרדכי

נפטר כ"ז אייר תרצ"ט תנצבה

FATHER
SAMUEL

1862 — 1939

חיה רייזל בר יצחק

נפטרה ד' ניסן תש"ג תנצבה

MOTHER
IDA

1873 — 1943

