
OUR BETH OLOM

Home of the Multitude

Mutual helpfulness was, next to the desire for a place of worship, the motivating cause of the actions that led to the formation of the parent body from which our congregation descended.

Facing the uncertainties of life in a strange land, with little or no knowledge of the ways or language of their adopted land, the little band of immigrants in Cincinnati in 1904 quickly learned the value of that great truth—"In unity there is strength."

So it happened that from its beginning what became the congregation actually started as a mutual benefit society. Its members paid dues of 50 cents a month—no small sum half a century ago when even pennies were precious. Out of this meager fund obtained from the 50 cent monthly dues the little group managed to provide such financial help as members occasionally needed when faced with serious emergencies or the accidents of fate.

But besides the blows of life the little group had to face those final sorrows that terminate all other problems on this earth. To provide proper care for the dead presented as serious a question as any others and so the group found a solution by buying a burial ground.

That was in 1908 when, under the leadership of Solomon Reitman, the group then known as Lev Achod (United Hearts) bought from the Beth Hamedrash Hagodol a piece of land in Covedale

for cemetery purposes. Now the group could rest easier for they had weathered not only the difficulties of getting settled in a new land but had organized their congregation and also extended their friendships with other groups.

The little burial ground on Price Hill was a bit of rough land that needed a lot of work to make it accessible. The congregation labored hard at this task but luckily they formed a merger that brought new strength to their work. The Lev Achod joined with the Agudas Achim (United Brothers) who at that time were led by Henry Freedman. The joint body then emerged under the name Anshe Sholom (Men of Peace).

The membership was only 70 but to that little congregation it seemed like a whole nation when they recalled their humble beginning. They turned heartily to the work of improving the burial ground in Covedale. Every body donated what he could—material or labor or both. With their own hands the men worked at grading, planting, weeding, providing walks. They built a chapel though few of them had ever worked in the building trades. It was a cheery sight to see shoemakers laying bricks and tailors working as carpenters.

Today the Covedale cemetery ranks with the most modern burial grounds in this community—a tribute to the sacrifice and vision of the little band of stout hearted men who saw the need for a Beth Olom befitting those who fear G-d and love his commandments.