

Congregation Beth HaTephila Cemetery

History

A cemetery is a landscape connecting a community to its history, memory, and tradition.

1885 - Riverside Cemetery was founded by a group of investors from the Asheville Cemetery Company as a Victorian, rural, garden, cemetery meant to be a place to recreate for tourists and locals, as well as to visit with the dearly departed.

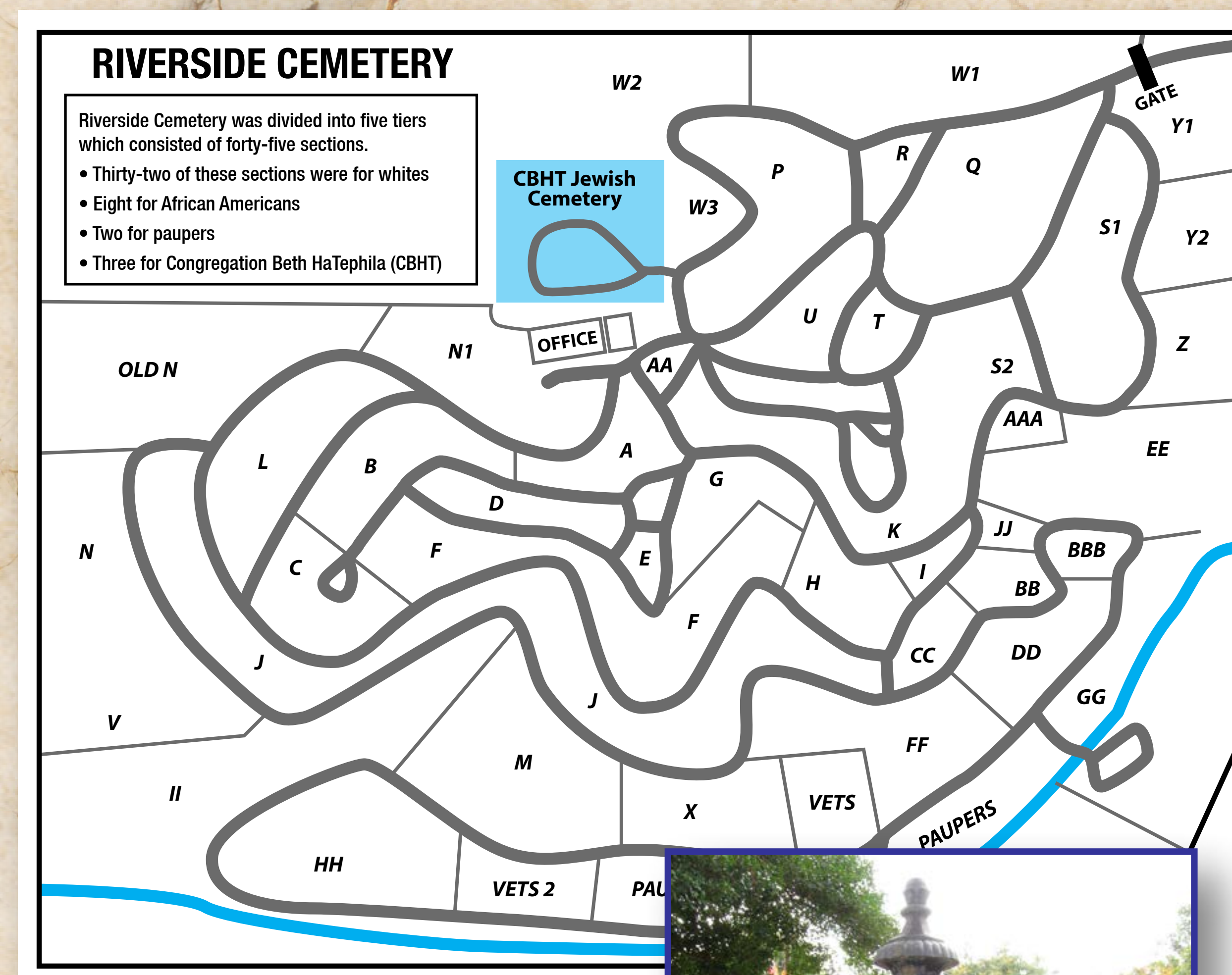


CBHT's first building on Spruce Street, 1902-1949.

1891 - Congregation Beth HaTephila (CBHT), which translates to House of Prayer, was founded by twenty-five men. One of the first priorities of a new Jewish community is to establish a cemetery.

1892 - CBHT purchased land within Riverside for \$500 for a cemetery where members of the Jewish

community could be buried according to the customs and laws of their ancestors. Jewish cemeteries are considered holy. They are separated by a border when located within a larger cemetery. CBHT is the only religious congregation to have its own section in Riverside.



1902 - The Jewish Ladies Aid Society made burial shrouds and took responsibility for care of the cemetery.

1927 - CBHT purchased an additional three acres adjacent to the original cemetery for \$3,000 from Montford Hills. This section has no headstones, only plaques.



Early entrance signpost to the CBHT cemetery, n.d.

Traditions

Attitude toward death - Judaism is more than a religion; it is a way of life. Jewish communities exist all over the world, adopting local customs while adhering to other customs that are universal to Jews. It is Jewish practice to bury the deceased as quickly as possible. Honoring, respecting, and caring for a person who has died is one of the greatest mitzvot (religious commandments). While people may visit a loved one year round, CBHT holds a communal memorial service at the cemetery around the Jewish New Year. On the anniversary of the person's death (Yahrzeit), the Kaddish prayer is recited in the synagogue and a 24-hour candle is lit.

Preparing the body - The body of the deceased is watched by a guardian or witness (Shomrim) from death until after the burial. The Shomrim, can be a member of the Chevra Kadisha (The Holy Society), the congregation, a friend, or acquaintance. The Chevra Kadisha also washes the body thoroughly. The body is not embalmed.

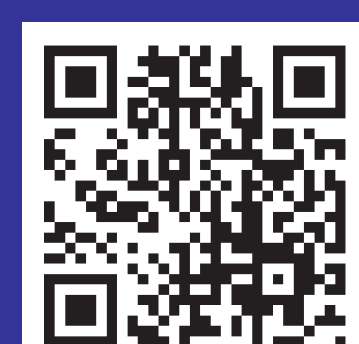
Burial - Traditionally, the deceased is buried wearing a white shroud, in a simple pine coffin, which will decompose over time. No metal nails or latches, or wood with a finish are used since these would slow the return of the body to dust. The casket is closed during the service, with prayers and eulogies being read by clergy, family members, and close friends. After lowering the casket attendees participate in the burial by shoveling earth into the grave symbolizing the primary responsibility of the family and the community to the

deceased. It is true act of kindness (chesed shel emet) for which no repayment is expected. Once the graveside service has concluded, guests form two rows creating a sheltered walkway for the bereaved family as they depart. As the family walks by, words of consolation are said.

Graves face east to Jerusalem. Soil from the land of Israel is placed inside each coffin.

Visiting the cemetery

- 1 Placing stones on graves is a Jewish tradition honoring the deceased by letting people know that their grave site has been visited and the person's memory lives on through their descendants.
- 2 Washing hands is symbolic, an ancient custom of purification, performed after contact with the dead. It is intended to turn the attention back to living and the value and dignity of life.
- 3 The bench near the entrance to this cemetery enables visitors to sit and contemplate their own departed interred here.



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Symbolism

Headstones tell a story about the people they mark. These Hebrew two letters translate to: **“Here Lies.”** Five Hebrew letters shown at the middle and bottom of this marker, translate: **“May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life.”**

Additional Hebrew wording might include attributes about the person, their name, and parents' names; and the date in the Hebrew calendar they died.



This is the grave stone of a husband and wife. Esther Lottie Goldblat Michalove (b.1887): Translation of the Hebrew inscription: A modest woman, Esther Zlata daughter of Eliyahu Aharon. May her memory be a blessing, passed away on 3 Cheshvon (the month) 5692 (Oct 14, 1931). Solomon Harris Michalove (b.1872): A precious man, Shalom Zvi son of Zev, of blessed memory passed away 27 Teves (the month) 5717 (December 31, 1956).



Nathan Bloom d.1909

This marker has the symbol of the **Woodmen of the World**, a fraternal organization founded in 1890 in Omaha, Nebraska, to help others, promote patriotism and civic responsibility, and protect family finances. They still sell insurance and annuities. A tree stump is a symbol of life interrupted, and the plant growing at the base tells us out of death comes new life.

Obelisks were popular from the 1880s to the 1930s. They symbolized rebirth and connection between heaven and earth. A book could be the book of life or mean a learned person. Tassels represent a curtain, cloak, or tunic; no need for clothing as the spirit has departed. Another interpretation is that the fabric is a curtain closing on life. The urn is a symbol of the soul, immortality, or penitence. It was also used as a place of safe keeping for the ashes of the dead in ancient times. Draped with a pall, it becomes a symbol of mourning. The hands are the blessing of the high priest. Flowers are symbols of plenty. Specific flowers have their own meanings.



Bobby Gross 1914-1922

The Lamb in Jewish culture is a symbol of childhood and innocence.



Hannah Lichtenfels Lippincott 1866-1905

People

Buried here are people of many nationalities, young and old, and all levels of society - retail business owners like many in the Lipinsky family, professionals like Karl Straus, children and adults who died from diseases, and the unidentified. Some, like Lewis and Aaron Blomberg, were immigrants from Eastern Europe who came for a better life. Others, like Carrie Cone Long, were second generation Americans who came from affluent families and already assimilated into life in America. Many of the more recent graves are people who moved to Asheville for its quality of life. Many of them made lasting contributions to the success of Asheville.



Rabbi Sydney Unger (1896-1972) served as the Rabbi of CBHT from 1946-1963. A strong personality, he participated in many civic organizations in

the city. “Hear O Israel,” his Saturday night radio show, broadcast on WWNC, offered educational programs to establish interfaith dialogue.



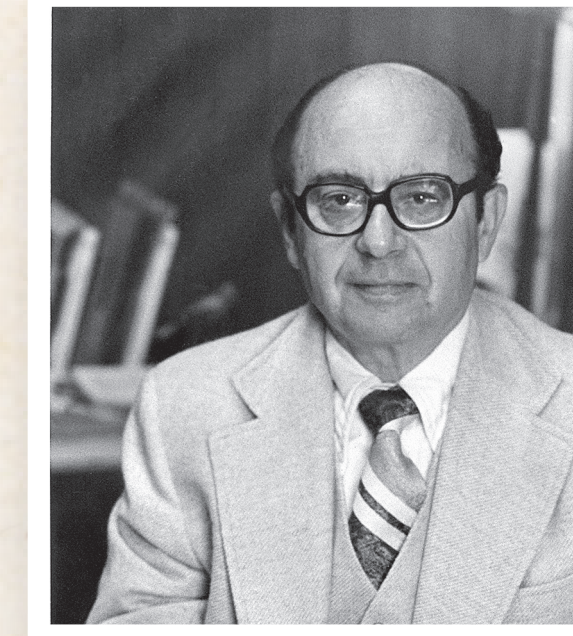
Dan Michalove (1893-1949) began his career as the manager of an Asheville movie theater and worked his way up to Vice President of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Along the way, he owned an Atlanta baseball club, the Crackers, and built

Western North Carolina’s first drive-in theater on Hendersonville Road in Arden with his brother-in-law, Charles Roth (1889-1974) who is also buried here.



Fan Rocamora (1891-1977) was one of a few, if any, women to run a restaurant supply business, Asheville Showcase and Fixture Company, after her husband died suddenly, in 1935. She kept a jug of moonshine in the back of

the store in case her customers were thirsty! Mr. Equip, the trademark of Asheville Showcase, is still visible in the doorway to 57 Broadway Street.

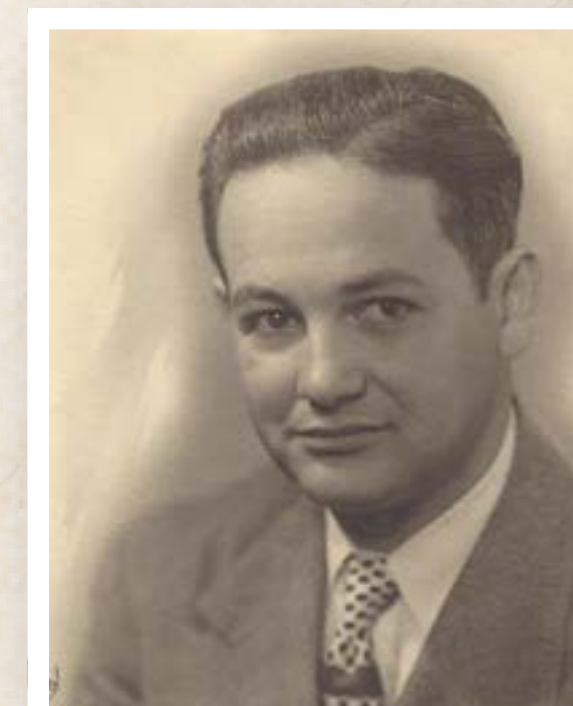


Karl Straus (1921-2017) practiced law in Asheville for over 50 years. He came to WNC in 1936 from Manheim, Germany to escape the Nazi regime. He considered intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination diseases to be eliminated. For the opportunities America gave him, he wanted to make a difference in Asheville’s civic, educational, religious, and philanthropic endeavors. To do this he served on many nonprofit boards and encouraged his clients to be philanthropic.



Hilda Hoffman (1920-2011) arrived in Asheville in 1946. She was a Holocaust survivor determined to be involved with her new family: the Asheville Jewish community. She had been a child caregiver as a

teenager in Germany, so it was natural that she would be part of the preschool program at the Asheville Jewish Community Center (JCC). Hilde’s House was named in her honor and continues to serve as the JCC infant daycare facility.



Harry Winner (1910-1983) was a businessman and civic leader. He opened Winner’s Department store on Haywood Street in 1946 and promptly took out the colored and white water fountains and replaced

them with a single fountain. Ever a leader in equal rights, his was the first white business to display a Black mannequin. In the 1960s, he convinced the other department store owners to hire Black salesclerks all on the same day to avoid boycotts for integrating their salesforce.

Amy Emanuel (1884-1963) was a nationally recognized court reporter inventing a new machine and writing mystery novels.

Jeanette (1912-1995) and Joseph Vandewart (1914-1985), both Holocaust survivors, founded the Asheville Chamber Music Series.



Carrie Cone Long (1861-1927) was known for her charitable work uplifting and giving assistance to those in need. She was also the President of the North Carolina Association of Jewish Women and active in

the women’s suffrage movement and elementary education. Her husband Moses D. Long (1853-1936) was among the founders of CBHT. He oversaw the Cone family operation known as The Asheville Cotton Mill.

Lillian Schochet Levy (1904-1986) was a member of the VFW Auxiliary, the Salvation Army Auxiliary, and a founder of the Irene Wortham Day Care Center.



Leah Karpen (1920-2020) was a resolute philanthropist, volunteer, and activist. When she saw a need, she joined the cause which included education, literacy, affordable housing, French Broad River revitalization, social justice, voter education, and women’s issues. She was an Asheville native, who along with her husband Morris, were major supporters of the University of North Carolina Asheville and CBHT.

Websites for Additional Information

Video tour of the cemetery: <https://www.history-at-hand.com/video-tour/>

Riverside Cemetery Interactive Map: <https://avl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5648cfede6f94ff2a57acd725ccca41c>

Name Search

<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~ssjdb/genealogy/HaTephila.htm>

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/48586/riverside-cemetery>

<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/>

