

The Rev. Mr. Barker one of the founders of VECA, tried to help stabilize a biracial neighborhood and led the church into programs related to integration. The McLean chapel was used frequently for VECA meetings. The church housed a Headstart program, which occasioned some controversy. "A bus ministry was begun in the area to reach children both black and white who had no church connection."¹⁸ After fifteen years as pastor Barker resigned June 30, 1975, saying the church needed new leadership, and he began work on his doctorate at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.¹⁹ Today the Reverend Mr. Barker is back in Memphis at the Forest Hill Baptist Church.

In July 1976 the church called The Rev. Boyce Moon as pastor. The church currently has a membership of 420 with probably half of the members residing in the immediate area.²⁰

LINDSAY MEMORIAL UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1663 Tutwiler Ave.

Lindsay Memorial is the result of the merger of two churches in the early 1930s. The building at the corner of Dickinson and Tutwiler was built in 1927 by the members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The church had been organized in 1902 in the Odd Fellows Building on North Court Avenue and had subsequently moved to the corner of Eastmoreland and Pauline before finally purchasing the Tutwiler property. Since all of its former pastors had been named Lindsay, the congregation voted to change its name to Lindsay Memorial. Due to the financial stresses of the early 1930s the Church decided to merge with its former Court Street neighbor, the Court Avenue Presbyterian Church, which found its membership dwindling. Court Avenue Presbyterian was a continuation of the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Memphis, which had been organized in 1840. In 1906 this church voted to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and adopted the name of Court Avenue Presbyterian Church.²¹

When the old Court Avenue Church was torn down in 1933, two beautiful memorial windows were placed in the Lindsay Memorial sanctuary. One window was in memory of Mr. C. W. Goyer (1824-1881), president of the Union Planters Bank and a generous contributor to the Leath Orphanage Asylum. The other window was in memory of General Nathan Bedford Forrest (1821-1877), Confederate hero. Family descendants were church members. The bell was also removed from the Court Avenue Church and brought to the present site.²²

In 1933 Dr. Josiah Sibley became pastor of the united congregation. He was followed by Dr. Raymond C. Rankin, who served from 1944 until 1952. The church was renovated in 1953 at a cost of \$64,000 under the leadership of The Rev. John S. Hall. The membership peaked at approximately 600 in 1955. In 1956 Dr. H. Gordon Harold became pastor. The church acquired the property next door and converted it for use in the youth program. During the 1960s Lindsay Memorial organized two new churches, Eastminster and Trinity.²³

The church was one of the seven neighborhood churches to participate in the founding of VECA. In 1979 it made office space available to VECA. (See picture)

The church contributes to the Food Pantry at Evergreen Presbyterian Church. There are currently 175 members; the minister is The Rev. Pat S. Wright.

BARON HIRSCH, 1740 Vollintine Avenue

There was a group of Orthodox Jews in Memphis as early as 1862. Though they worshipped regularly they did not apply for a charter until 1892. That year they purchased an old wooden building, a former Negro church, at Fourth and Washington Streets for which they paid \$5,000. They chose the name Baron Hirsch Benevolent Society to honor

Baron Maurice D. Hirsch, an Austrian Jewish capitalist. He had given much of his wealth to aid Jewish victims of persecution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁴

In 1915 the congregation built a new place of worship at the same site and hired their "first Americanized rabbi," handsome, well-educated Henry Raphael Gold, who served until 1919.²⁵ By the 1930s the Jewish community had a growing desire for a new synagogue. Though it met with some opposition, a resolution was passed in 1945 authorizing the board to sell the facilities at Fourth and Washington and to construct a synagogue and educational building at a cost not to exceed \$500,000.²⁶ In 1945 fourteen acres at Vollintine and Evergreen were purchased for the new synagogue. This land had formerly been the site of the Vollintine Golf Course.

In 1947 George Awsumb was engaged as architect. Will Gerber supervised the planning stage of the construction and then turned the presidency of the congregation over to Philip Belz who was to be "The Temple Builder in Memphis."²⁷

The educational building was constructed in 1952. The cornerstone of the Baron Hirsch sanctuary was a block of Jerusalem marble brought home by Mr. and Mrs. Philip Belz from a trip to Israel; it was unveiled November 27, 1955. Rabbi and Mrs. Isadore Goodman obtained a sack of earth from Mount Zion which was mixed with the mortar. "The stone and earth symbolized the Baron Hirsch bond of unity with Zion."²⁸ The synagogue was completed and dedicated in 1957.

The sanctuary seats 2,000 and can be combined with the Belz Auditorium for overall seating for 3,000.²⁹ There are numerous Jewish symbols made of bronze. Twelve stained glass windows on each side of the main sanctuary depict Jewish history starting with the flood and ending with a map of modern Israel; they were designed by miniature artist, Jack Grue.

The synagogue remains the center of life for Orthodox Jews. It had a peak membership of some 1070 families in 1954. In 1973 about one-third of its members lived in the VECA neighborhood.³⁰ There has been considerable movement away from the neighborhood by the Jewish families. Presently the roll of the Synagogue shows approximately 900 families. Though this represents a decrease Baron Hirsch still qualifies as the largest orthodox synagogue in the world.³¹

A few of the families who moved kept shabbos or sabbath homes in the neighborhood. These homes were kept so the people would be close to the synagogue and would be able to walk to services. Hence they spent Friday nights and special religious holidays in their shabbos homes. The Joe Margolins and the Marlin Grabers own a sabbath home at 1037 Monticello. Sam and Rose Margolin own a home at 934 North Idlewild which they bought in 1957. They added five bedrooms and three and a half baths, so their children and seventeen grandchildren can sleep there.³² This is less necessary today, because duplicate services, except morning weekday, are held at Baron Hirsch East.

It seems only a matter of time before Baron Hirsch moves, since the present synagogue is for sale. The congregation purchased the former Isaac Hayes home, situated on a ten-acre site at 5631 Shady Grove Road, in a foreclosure sale from Union Planters Bank on January 21, 1977.³³

In the spring of 1980 Rabbi Rafael Grossman and his family will move to a home the congregation is building on the east property. In a year or two they hope to move everything there. Rabbi Grossman is concerned about the VECA neighborhood and does not want to upset it. For that reason the congregation is moving very slowly. He feels the biracial VECA neighborhood should be preserved, but he sees no whites moving into the area around Baron Hirsch. Some members feel that the present location has become a dangerous one. Leonard Yormark, Youth Director, moved, because he was robbed. Hubcaps have been stolen, and some just fear driving to Baron Hirsch.³⁴

Knowledgeable people in VECA do not like to think about Baron Hirsch moving because they see the synagogue as a stabilizing force in the neighborhood. The neighborhood

has been enriched by the cultural activities presented at Baron Hirsch and by the religious customs of its members. A familiar scene in the neighborhood has been the devout Jewish man, his head covered, walking with his family to the synagogue, the center of his faith.

All wish Baron Hirsch could remain, but Rick Thomas, Sociology professor at Southwestern, believes that a move would not be as critical now as it would have been six or seven years ago. In 1973 or 1974 it would have been very bad;

things were at that time hanging in a balance as far as racial turnover went and the white flight . . . Since then, the influx of young white families and also fairly young black families has given a certain stability and vitality to the community that would offset the loss of Baron Hirsch.³⁵

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, EPISCOPAL, 1971 Jackson Ave.

When the church bell rings for special events, it reminds the congregation that this church began in 1865 in the Greenlaw area. The bell was removed from the original church which was founded by the Rev. J. J. Vaulx as a mission in Chelsea to serve the English immigrants who settled near that area. Members met in the home of a Mrs. Wood before building their first church on the northwest corner of North Fourth and Mill in the Greenlaw neighborhood. They were designated a parish in 1872, and the church grew in spite of adversities. By 1897 the congregation had built a new church building on the same corner, Fourth and Mill.³⁶ Most of the church members had moved from Greenlaw by 1943 when the Church of the Good Shepherd moved to its present location at 1971 Jackson Avenue. The cornerstone was laid in 1945. At that time The Rev. Guy S. Usher was rector; he served until 1951.

The Rev. Homer C. Carrier arrived at the church in 1955 to face "formidable difficulties."³⁷ The church's survival was in question due to dwindling attendance and the lack of funds. The actual communicants numbered