

B'nai Sholom Temple

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427 N. 9th

427 North Ninth Street - Modified Moorish - 1869 - Architect unknown

The first Temple organized by the Jewish people of Quincy was formed December 14, 1856. At that time, there were only 23 members. There is evidence, though, that as early as 1848 a few Jews had settled in Quincy after migrating through the Ohio River valley. On January 29, 1857, the congregation was named B'nai Avraham (Children of Abraham).

The first house of worship was located on Hampshire Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets. A separation in the congregation occurred on October 20, 1864, when a small group broke away from the main group in order to organize a Reform Congregation. These people met in what was then called Fisher Hall located on Fourth Street near Hampshire. This group, organized by Osaac Lesem, Manhein Jackson, Moses Jacobs, Wolf Joseph, Moses Kingsbaker and Simon Berger, then formed B'nai Shalom Temple (Children of Peace) for the purpose of maintaining a Reform Jewish congregation. Reverend M. Wetterhahn was engaged as their religious leader and officiated for several years.

In 1866, this congregation rented the old Baptist Church on the northwest corner of Fourth and Jersey Streets at which time Reverend Fleugal became their leader. The B'nai Avraham Temple continued to hold services and to maintain their Orthodox form of religious prayer. They constructed a frame Synagogue on Sixth Street between Vermont and Broadway in 1866. The building was dedicated on August 3, 1866 by Reverend Dr. Vivader of New York City. On Sunday night, May 16, 1869, a fire destroyed the home of Rabbi Henry Loewenthal, located next to the Temple, and also damaged the Temple itself. On July 29, 1872, this congregation joined with the B'nai Shalom Temple.

During the years 1866-1870, the Jewish congregation increased in membership, and it was decided by the Reform group to build a new Temple. The members, especially the women, became extremely active in Temple events. Money was raised by this group and used to purchase the present property on north Ninth Street and also the beautiful stained-glass windows that still appear in the Temple.

The lot was secured from James Woodruff and Robert Bunce was engaged as the contractor. The present beautiful brick and stone building was erected. The original Temple, costing \$15,000, was 42 feet wide and 80 feet deep and seated 651 people. Originally, each of the towers on either side of the entrance were topped by ornate Moorish onion-shaped domes, reaching a height of 80 feet. These towers are nine feet square at the base. At the second stage they take on an octagonal plan. Beyond this point eight columns and arches supported the dome topped by a spire. This upper structure of each tower was severely damaged in the 1945 tornado and had to be removed. The front portion of the building reaches a height of fifty feet and contains a large window 7 feet 6 inches in diameter. Below this is the front entrance, 11 feet wide and 25 feet high and projecting 5 feet from the front. Above the entrance is a representation of the open Bible containing the Ten Commandments and backed with a field of radiated light.

Inside, the auditorium is reached by twelve steps and is 65 by 37 feet and 28 feet high. The gallery across the east end is supported by an arcade. Each of the side windows has the appearance of an elaborate monesque panel and arch supported on antique columns. All other openings and the Ark are treated in the same manner, the circular opening immediately over the Ark being a representation of the All-Seeing Eye. The auditorium is divided with two aisles, four feet wide, with four tiers of pews. The organ in the Temple is no longer in playing condition. At the time of dedication of the Temple, September 8, 1870, 500 members represented the congregation.

In 1958 an addition donated in the memory of Marcella Rosen was built at the rear of the Temple and consists of a classroom and a private study for the Rabbi. The B'nai Shalom Temple in Quincy represents the second oldest Reform congregation in the United States.

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