

CHAPTER 3
IN THE BEGINNING . . .
1886 - 1889

The general trends and broad patterns of Jewish settlement and resettlement have been discussed in the preceding chapter. The focus now moves to the origins and development of the first Jewish communities in South Africa. Jews originally settled in Cape Town before moving into the interior and later Johannesburg. The motives for Jewish migration to and settlement in South Africa will be discussed below with the predominance of attention on Johannesburg. The discussion will include an examination of the initial communal institutions that were set up to service the early life of the Jews in the burgeoning town and the religious organizations that ministered to the Jewish communities spiritual and religious needs.

Early Jewish settlement in South Africa

Jews were always a part of the colonization project of southern Africa by European nations. Initially their role was limited to academic and scientific contributions in the disciplines of navigation and cartography (Cohen, 1984; Abrahams, 2002). The reason for that limited involvement was due to the restrictions by the governments of various sea-faring nations that forbade Jews from becoming sailors or colonists, although there are reports of Jews secretly joining the ranks of various colonizing organizations, particularly the Dutch East India Company (Herrman, 1955).

Even after the Cape Colony had been established the legacy of religious intolerance continued and the Dutch pursued a policy whereby only Christians could settle and practise their religion at the Cape. Religious intolerance continued up until 1803 when the Cape was briefly placed under the control of the Batavian Republic (Howcroft, 1992). The Batavians had a more liberal approach to religion and allowed colonists of all faiths to settle there.¹ In 1806 the British took control of the Cape and ratified the policy of religious freedom entrenching it into the governing charter (Weiner, 2002). Although religious freedom was a fundamental part of the Cape's governance, many of the Dutch-speaking colonists left the Cape after it had been ceded to the British. They felt that the British had taken away their rights and freedoms and thus departed from the Cape in order to establish a homeland suitable for the neophyte Afrikaner nation somewhere in the interior of South Africa (Fitzpatrick, 1899).

It was, however, more than three years after the declaration of religious freedom when the first Jewish settler to openly disclose his Judaism arrived in the Cape. His name was Dr Siegfried Frankel and he was soon followed by Isaac Manuel (Cohen, 1984). After 1808 numerous Jewish families emigrated from Britain and St. Helena and formed the foundations of the Jewish community in South Africa (O’Kelly Webber, 1936; Herrman, 1955). The first formal Jewish service in South Africa was held to mark the Day of Atonement in 1841 at the private home of Benjamin Norden (Shain, 1983). It was only in 1849, however, that a synagogue was constructed on the corner of St. John’s and Bouquet Streets in Cape Town. Later that same year a burial ground was established and a permanent Rabbi was engaged by the nascent Jewish community (Abrahams, 2002). In the middle of the nineteenth century the Jewish community of Cape Town was predominantly comprized of Jews of British, Dutch, and German extraction whose cultural and religious practises were similar enough to provide a sense of kinship and solidarity amongst them (Weiner, 2002).

The mid-nineteenth century saw the Cape Colony facing a severe depression. The Jews who had settled in the Cape responded in one of two ways, either they returned to their native countries and tried to pick up the lives they had left there or they migrated into the interior of South Africa. Some of the main Jewish communities were established because of this outward movement from the Cape (Table 3.1) (Herrman, 1955; Cohen, 1984). A brief outline of the founding dates of Jewish communities in South Africa is set out in Table 3.1. Many people, including a number of Jews, were further attracted into the interior by the discovery of diamonds during the early 1860s and 1870s (Herrman, 1955). Although there had been a number of small strikes all over the Cape, the most influential and largest diamond find was at Kimberley in 1870. It very soon became the largest urban centre in Southern Africa, outside of Cape Town, until the founding of Johannesburg in 1886 (Library of Congress Country Studies, 1996a).

TABLE 3.1: The founding dates of the main Jewish Communities in South Africa.

Date Community was Founded	Town/City
1841	Cape Town
1862	Port Elizabeth
1875	Kimberley
1883	Durban
1887	Johannesburg
1889	Klerksdorp
1890	Pretoria
1894	Paarl
1896	Germiston
Source: Elazar and Medding, 1983: 153.	

Jews who arrived in South Africa during the 1870s and 1880s were drawn by the stories of the great wealth of the diamond mines and hoped to make their fortunes either through mining, prospecting, or providing services for the mining industry in South Africa (Weiner, 2002). Once again the early Jewish prospectors were generally of British and German extraction and in most cases were well-educated and highly assimilated (Abrahams, 2002). A number of Jews did very well out of the mines and used the money they earned from the diamond industry as capital for further mining and business ventures. Lewis and Marks, and Herbert Eckstein later of the Corner House Group, were some of the leading Jewish figures of the time (Hocking, 1986; Mendelsohn, 1991).

Jews in the Boer Republics

The Dutch-speaking settlers who had left the Cape at the beginning of the 1800s had established five *Boer* republics; Potchestroom, Rustenberg, Zoutpansberg, Lydenburg, and the Orange River Republic by 1840. In 1864 all, except for the Orange River Republic, had been unified under a central government and called the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (Z.A.R.). It was headed by Andries Pretorius and Paul Kruger was his Commandant-General (Norwich, 1976).

In the Transvaal many Jews had been attracted by the discovery of gold (Rochlin, 1955). The precious metal had initially been discovered in the *Boer* Republic in 1853 but the amounts were not significant enough to provide a sustainable or profitable enterprise. At this time “the wealth of the Transvaal lay in its vast herds of cattle” (Cowen, 1889: 3) and was vastly under-populated. It took another 20 years, until the unearthing of gold at Mac Mac, Pilgrim’s Rest, and Sabie, for the region to become known for its gold (Rochlin, 1955). A few years later, in the mid-1870s, Lydenburg Goldfields provided a fourth site for gold digging and the *Boer* Republic suddenly experienced its own gold rush. Jews, mostly of British, Dutch, and German nationalities went to the goldfields with their non-Jewish compatriots, seeking fame and fortune. The Jewish miners, prospectors, and associated craftsmen established communities in the gold-bearing region (Herrman, 1935; Rochlin, 1955). The accoutrements necessary for Jewish life were constructed in a number of mining towns; Pilgrim’s Rest had laid out a Jewish cemetery by 1878; and the Barbeton Jewish community established a synagogue in 1889 (Sowden, 1955; Kaplan and Robertson, 1991). The early gold mines, however, in the rest of the *Boer* Republic would prove to be little more than samples to the main lode that would be found on the Witwatersrand before the end of the century.

With the discovery of significant amounts of gold in the late 1870s the British decided to annex the Transvaal. The reasons for the annexation lay in the Empire-building project of Britain and the Earl of Carnarvon's federation scheme. The British knew that the Z.A.R. was on the brink of bankruptcy and attacked the weakened state under the pretence that it was what the citizens wanted. The attempted annexation resulted in what the *Boers* called the First War of Independence and lasted from 1880-1881. It was eventually won by the *Boers*, who, in doing so, re-established control over their land and their national sovereignty (Barry and Law, 1985). In 1883 Paul Kruger, by then, famous for his role in the war and in repelling various 'native' incursions prior to it, became the president of the Z.A.R. and moved the capital from Potchestroom to Pretoria. The Transvaal *Volksraad* (or parliament) protected the interests of the Afrikaner people above those of anyone else ensuring that the Z.A.R. remained, fundamentally a *Boer* republic.

The Discovery of Gold and the Founding of Johannesburg

It is a common perception that before the discovery of gold the area on which Johannesburg now sits was uninhabited. This is a simplification of the facts, the district was in fact settled by a number of farmers, most of whom had laid claim to their farms by finding a piece of 'unclaimed' land, defining its borders according to a series of natural phenomena and registering the claim with the local *landrost* (local government official) (Beavon, 2004). Louis Cohen, a cousin of Barney Barnato's, described the area in the 1880s as,

“. . . [a] treeless tract itself seemed mournful and sad enough – a despairing, bare, sandy *veld*, with hardly a sign of life except here and there a poor *Boer* habitation, and some carrion birds lying around a stinking bullock's trunk festering on the road . . .”.

(Quoted in Manoim, 2003: no page number)

The farm Langlaagte, where gold was first discovered, was actually four different farms with the same name (Gray and Gray, 1937). It was on the Family Oosthuizen's plot (Fig. 3.1, section B) that George Harrison stumbled across gold on his way to work in 1886 and sparked the boom that would make Johannesburg the largest and the fastest growing town in sub-Saharan Africa (Gray and Gray, 1937; Leigh, 1993).

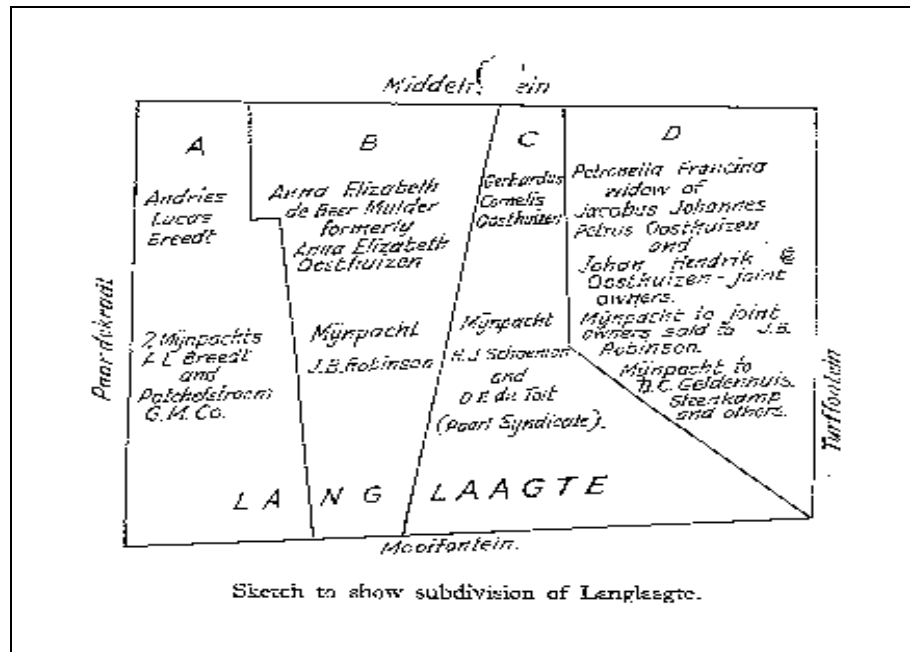


FIGURE 3.1: Map showing subdivisions of the farm Langlaagte.
(Source: Gray and Gray, 1937: 88)

It did not take long for hundreds of prospectors to hear about the potential riches in the area and set up camps on some of the surrounding farms (Leigh, 1993). The mining camps, known at the time as Meyer's Camp, Natal Camp, and Ferreira's Camp, were established on what later became known as Jeppestown and Ferreirastown (Fig. 3.2) (Musiker, 1987). All in all there were about six hundred people living in these camps before the area was opened as public diggings. The camps were rather crude and were collectively described as "a straggling settlement of primitive buildings constructed of any material which came handy" (Leigh, 1993: 12). The township² that later became Johannesburg, was not declared on any of these farms, rather the government used a dusty piece of ground, called Randjeslaagte, which lay roughly to the north of what would soon be the public diggings and mining camps (Fig. 3.2).

The triangular piece of land was *uitvalgrond*, or a remnant left, over from the piecemeal way in which the farms had been laid out (Beavon, 2004). The land aside from its geographical advantages and spatial location had one important attribute that none of the other farms enjoyed, it was government-owned (Hotz, 1966). All of the revenue from the 'sale' and settlement would go directly to the Z.A.R. government. The stands, however, were not sold in either a leasehold or freehold capacity, rather the *use* of the stands was sold, which simply entitled the 'owners' to use the stands in whatever way they saw fit. Not content merely with the income generated from ordinary sized plots, Kruger's government decided to capitalize on what they thought would be a mining town that would fade into insignificance within a few years. The surveyor, J.E. de Villiers, after whom present day de Villiers Street is

named, was instructed to create as many corner stands as practical because more rent could be charged for a corner stand than a regular stand (Leyds, 1964). The first sale of temporary rights for stands in Johannesburg took place on the 10th December 1886, and Johannesburg was on its way to becoming the greatest mining phenomenon ever seen in Africa (Cunningham, 1989).

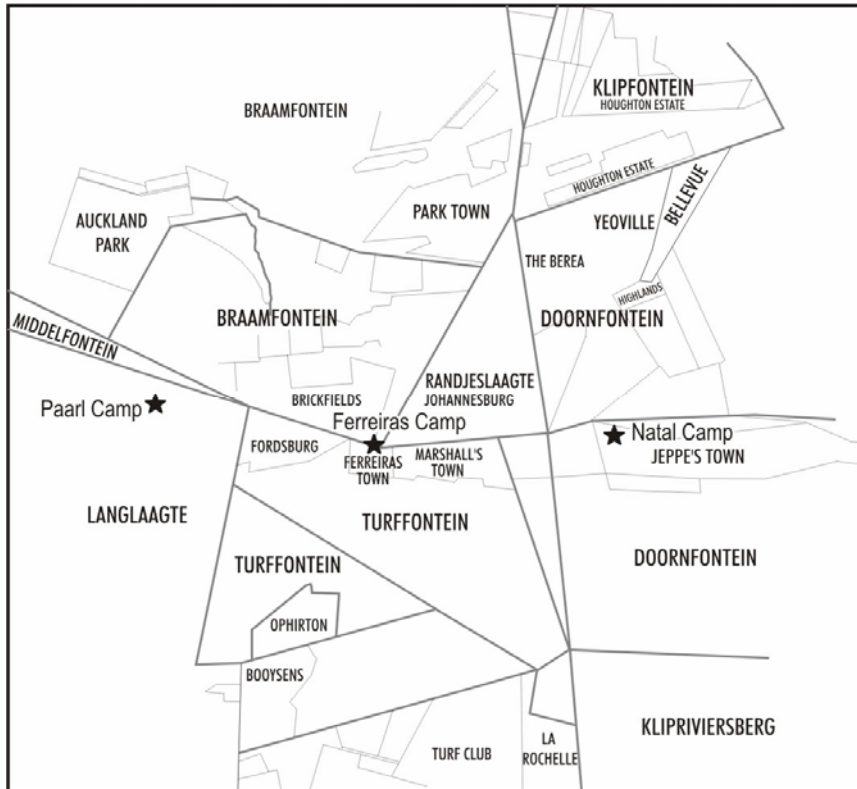


FIGURE 3.2: Map of early Witwatersrand Farms, including the first mining camps, *circa* 1886 (Source: Hart, 1974: 64)

In the next two years, de Villiers surveyed and marked out Jeppetown, Marshallstown, Paarlshoop, Fordsburg, Rossettenville, Ferreira’s Township (later Ferreirastown), Fordsburg, and Turffontein, all of which were included in the urban boundaries of Johannesburg (Leyds, 1964; Smith, 1971). The town, such as it was, was largely undeveloped, and although the various townships from which it was composed had been surveyed, they were sparsely populated, and had very few homes and businesses. As an illustration Ophirton and Heronmere were open spaces “covered with beautiful clear water and water lilies” (Becker, 1929: 32).

South Africa as an Option

It is at the time of the time of the discovery of gold that many Jews decided to immigrate to South Africa. As discussed in the previous chapter conditions in the Pale of

Settlement were worsening at the end of the nineteenth century. Many Jews felt they had to leave if they, or their children, were to have any hope for the future. The choice of where to go was a difficult one but 80 per cent of Jews from the Pale of Settlement chose the United States (Brown, 1979). It has been argued, on the one hand, that emigration to South Africa was simply an offshoot of the larger emigration to Britain and the United States (Beth Hafutsoth, 1983). On the other hand a case has been made within the literature to say that emigration to South Africa was seen as an interim step until emigration to the United States or Britain could be secured (Newman, 2000). There is evidence that contradicts both of these suppositions.

The very fact that the Jewish population of Johannesburg soared from 100 people in 1887 to almost 12 000 before the turn of the century, seems to imply that Johannesburg was more than a slightly attractive prospect (Sowden, 1955). Furthermore an analysis of the records of the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter in London indicates that over 40 per cent of trans-migrants who stayed in the shelter specified South Africa as their destination of choice (Newman, 2000).

Choosing to immigrate to South Africa, particularly to the Transvaal and Johannesburg, would appear to have been a rational decision based on a number of attractions. The ease of entry into the Transvaal, which had no defensible borders and no immigration policy, were major factors in attracting Jews to the area (Schrire, 2002a). Added to which the prospect of religious freedom and economic opportunities, both on and off the goldfields, suited to the skills and abilities of the Jews from Eastern Europe, freedom of settlement, and no obvious anti-Semitism from the *Boer* government must have been extremely tempting for people who had suffered social and economic degradation for most of their lives. The history of the founding of the Z.A.R. meant that concepts of religious and personal freedom were entrenched into the *Boers'* constitution and were seen as being of extreme, if not fundamental, importance. It must not be forgotten, however, that for all of the reasons just mentioned Jews were attracted to the Transvaal and to Johannesburg, it was ultimately gold and its associated commercial services that really drew the Jews to the rough and tumble mining camp in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

These factors in concert with the simultaneous worsening of the conditions within the Pale of Settlement combined to make Johannesburg a highly desirable option for many hundreds of Jews in the Pale at that time. In the next decade, they would be joined by literally thousands of their Eastern European co-religionists.

Although the fares were not expensive they still represented a large percentage of most Eastern European families' incomes.

The shipping companies not only lowered the standards of their accommodation and subsequently the prices of their tickets to attract the poor Eastern European migrants, but also actively encouraged migration by aiding the organizations that helped Jewish immigrants. Thus the Castle Line made a monetary contribution for each person staying at the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in London³ who had a ticket to travel on one of their ships (Newman, 1994). It has been suggested that the Castle and Union Lines did not just support travel to South Africa but artificially stimulated it (Newman, 1994). The evidence seems to support such a thesis as after years of Jewish immigration to South Africa being relatively minimal it suddenly increases in 1899 to comprise 30 per cent of all migration and the figures remain relatively high all the way through the Anglo-Boer War, which would seem unlikely unless there was some other reason for the migration (Newman, 2000). As mentioned earlier the shipping companies had won the tender for the mail contracts to and from South Africa and Britain and needed large numbers of passengers to make the route even more profitable, which may explain why they 'encouraged' Jews to go to South Africa. The strategy was clearly successful as the companies later merged (Fig. 3.3) and operated well into the second half of the twentieth century (Harris and Ingpen, 1994).

Economic opportunities for the Jews in the Transvaal

Some Jews were in the Transvaal before the establishment of the city of Johannesburg and had been involved in any number of enterprises. They were generally better educated and more skilled than many of the other early immigrants to the reef and were mostly craftsmen and artisans who had honed their skills in the pre-industrialized Pale of Settlement (Atlasowicz, *circa* 1998; Sowden, 1955). When gold was discovered it was just these skills that the burgeoning town of Johannesburg needed, tailors, liquor traders, blacksmiths, carpenters, and dairy-owners, to name but a few occupations in which Jews were involved (Hersh, 1958). The notion that all Jews who arrived in South Africa become *smouses* (itinerant salesmen or 'hawkers') is a gross oversimplification of the facts (Schrire, 2002b). Interestingly many of the Jews who came to South Africa changed professions completely when they emigrated or gave themselves significant promotions. As a result, men who were pharmacists' assistants in the old country became fully qualified pharmacists and painters transformed themselves into interior decorators, when they came to Johannesburg.

Based on the references cited in the previous paragraphs, it appears that many Jews did arrive in the mining camps near Langlaagte, and became miners, speculators, as well as

prospectors, and in essence can therefore be said to have been involved in the development of the mining industry in Johannesburg from its inception (O’Kelly Webber, 1936). A number of Jews made their fortunes in the sector and it was these men who became inspirational figures for the poor left behind in the *shtetls* of Eastern Europe. The successes of Jews in the South African mining industry were not, however, met with universal approval and led Boon, a noted diarist and anti-Semite of the time to write,

“ . . . the present [gold] companies are mostly being run by unprincipled frauds, of the past, and notably by the Benjamins of unquestionable fame, and last but not least, . . . other virtuous descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the old champion liars and tricksters of their race . . . I intend giving such facts and statements as will open the eyes of the blind and give the world another proof of how the Jew can borrow without ever thinking of repaying.”

(Boon, 1885: 427)

There were enough Jews living in Johannesburg’s mining camps for Ferreira’s Camp, to become colloquially known as the ‘New Jerusalem’, although whether that was because of the number of Jews who lived there or the promise of the goldfields remains an open question (Musiker, 1987: 18). Early Jewish settlers described growing up in the southern end of what later became known as Ferreirastown, originally Ferreira’s Camp (Fig. 3.4) and provide a picture of the poverty and alienation that many of the immigrants felt in their new environment; how they lived together, with, “no refinement. Birds of refuge . . . [re]building their mutilated lives” (Sachs, 1958: 11). With the development of the town, however, many Jews abandoned prospecting and the mining camps, and moved to the township where they engaged in a variety of commercial activities, following “traditional occupations”, such as tailoring, liquor distilling, carpentry, and metal work.⁴

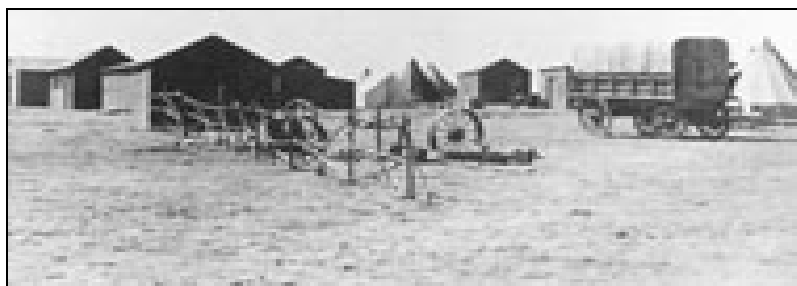


FIGURE 3.4: Ferreira’s Camp, *circa* 1886.
(Source: Manoim, 2003: no page number)

Religious freedom and communal development in Johannesburg

Coupled to the prospects of sharing in the wealth that the goldfields offered was the freedom to be Jewish. Jews had faced prejudice at all levels of Russian society, and been stripped of many of their religious and social freedoms, as previously discussed. The

Transvaal offered an opportunity for religious freedom and expression while ensuring that no one was excluded from entering the country based on race or religion (Leibowitz, 1966; Saron, 1977). A contributor to the magazine *The American Hebrew* described the situation as one in which, “. . . no one is ever debarred entrance to any public institution in Johannesburg, nor are the rights and privileges of citizenship denied him on account of creed or nationality . . .”.⁵ Although such a reckoning is not strictly accurate as Jews, Roman Catholics, and other *uitlanders* (or people not of Afrikaner extraction) were not given the franchise, nor allowed to serve in the military (which may have been a considerable relief for the Jewish immigrants given the history of conscription that existed in their native land), and were not allowed to hold government posts, the Jews from Eastern Europe, however, still found more freedom in the Transvaal than they had in their countries of origin (Herrman, 1935).

The mid-1880s in Johannesburg were still very quiet and “half the Jews went to Church on Sunday just to pass the time away”.⁶ The first recorded formal religious service was held in a forage store on the Market Square in about 1886⁷ (Sowden, 1955) and in 1887 and 1888 temporary synagogues were set up in Ferreira’s Camp and the Rand Club (an irony that is not lost on the later generations of Jews who were barred from entering this illustrious establishment because of their religion). It is not surprising that the synagogues originally centred around these areas given the fact that the Market Square was essentially the commercial and social axis around which Johannesburg moved (Fig. 3.5).

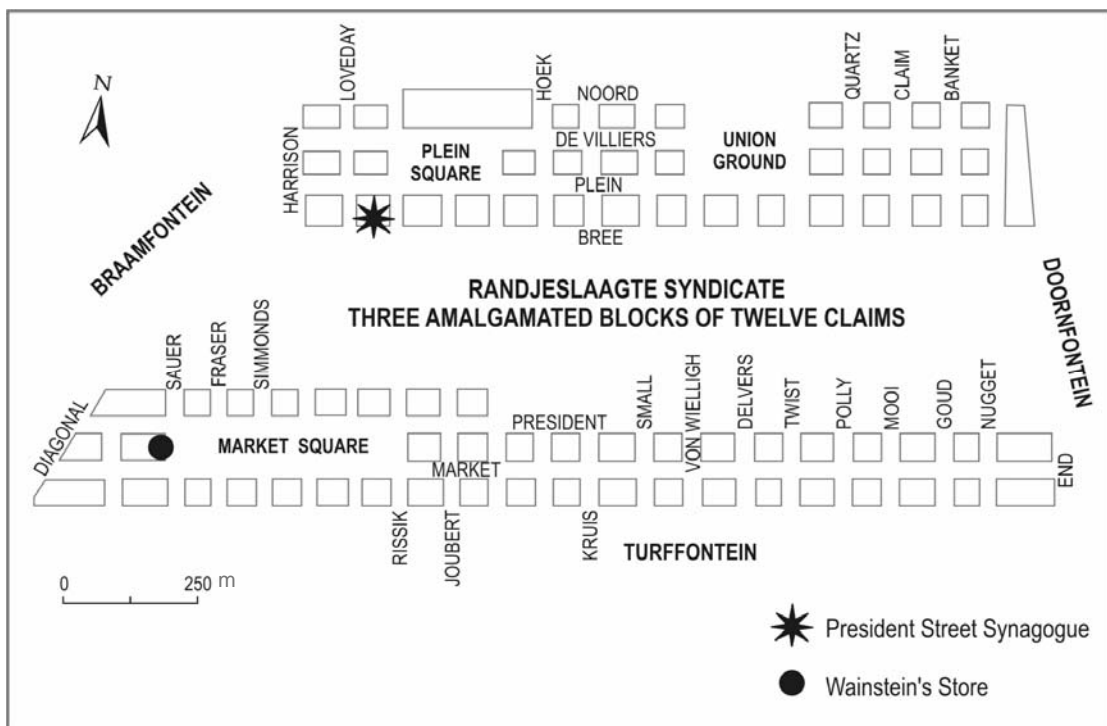


FIGURE 3.5: The initial survey by Jos de Villiers of the first stands in Johannesburg, 1886. (Source: Appendix I)

By 1887, a community spirit began to prevail and the earliest Jewish communal institution was established, the Witwatersrand Goldfields Jewish Association (United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg, 1947). The Association was set up because of the death of a Jew named Rosettenstein. According to Jewish religious law, he needed to be buried in consecrated ground with full Jewish rites. To that end a burial site was procured in Kazerne (where the central railway station was established later in the century), and the service was conducted by Rev. Rabinowitz (United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg, 1947). The Kazerne cemetery, at the time, was small and unencumbered with walls or fences and was often used as a shortcut by wagoners and pedestrians alike (McKibbin, 1989). In 1888 the Jewish cemetery was moved from Kazerne to Braamfontein and a section was sanctified for the burial of the Jewish dead.

With a Jewish cemetery and growing Jewish community the Witwatersrand Goldfields Jewish Association was seen as the governing body of the Jewish community. Their first meeting was held in B. Wainstein's store on Market Square (Fig. 3.5, indicated by a black dot) and 88 people attended. It was at this meeting that it was decided to build a synagogue (Leyds, 1964). By 1888 two plots on President Street had been bought and the foundation stone laid, at the same time the Association changed its name in order to recognize the transition from an association to a congregation (Abrahams, 2001). The new name was the Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation (Norwich, 1988). The President Street Synagogue (Fig. 3.5, indicated by a black star) was opened on the 22nd September 1889.⁸ In the same year a Jewish day school was opened adjacent to the Synagogue, in order to provide a Jewish education to the growing Jewish youth of Johannesburg (Rochlin, 1947). Although the first Jewish school was actually established in 1887 and located on the site later occupied by the Langham Hotel.⁹

Although initially a quiet settlement the city of Johannesburg grew rapidly and with its growth came all the vice and misery associated with a booming mining town (van Onselen, 2002). It is in this context that the Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society (*Chevrah Kadishah* – literally translated as the Blessed Friends) came into existence on the 2nd September 1888 (Rochlin, 1947). The death of Mr Rosettenstein had not only initiated the formation of the Witwatersrand Goldfields Jewish Association but also the creation of the Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society. This organization began as purely a burial society but eventually grew to meet many of the needs of poorest sections of the Jewish community (Hellig, n.d.). One of the major foci of concern was the White slave trade and the Jewish women who had been 'imported' to supply the increasing demand for White prostitutes. Due to the fact that the population of the town, at this time, was predominantly constituted of single males, most of the leisure activities revolved around, drinking, gambling, and whoring

(Krut, 1987; van Onselen, 2002). In an unfortunate number of cases the women were duped or coerced into lives of prostitution by a ring of Jewish White slave-traders that mainly operated out of New York and London. The *Chevrah Kadishah* resolved to help these women out of the situations in which they had often been forced to work (van Onselen, 2000). They were taken into the people's homes, married off, or repatriated but the community was still very embarrassed that many of the prostitutes were Jewish and the Jewish organizations did their best to help these women and aid the authorities in clamping down on these activities.

The relationship between the *Boers* and the Jews

The Jews of Eastern Europe had been accustomed to a type of 'separate development' between themselves and their non-Jewish co-habitants of the *shtetls* and towns that they had come from. Chaim Weizman, notable Zionist and one of the founding fathers of the State of Israel, described the relationship between the two groups in his hometown of Motol in the Pale of Settlement thus: "Even in the townlet we lived mainly apart. And much more strikingly than the physical separation was the spiritual. We were strangers to each other's ways of thought, to each other's dreams, festivals, and even languages" (quoted in Barnavi, 1992: 1). The *Boers* and the Jews in the latter part of the nineteenth century identified with each other. The *Boers* interpreted their trek to the Transvaal as analogous to the Jews' escape from Egypt (Saron, 1971). The Afrikaners' ardent belief in the Bible and biblical studies meant that they had a great deal of respect for the Jews who found their way to the Transvaal and the Jews saw in the *Boers* the spirit of belief and learning which they so respected (Saron, 1971). This created a fellow feeling and a degree of understanding that neither group shared with the British or western European immigrants of the time. The relationship, however, should not be romanticized. Although the perception of the Jew as 'Man of the Book,' and therefore deserving of respect, was not an attitude that existed throughout Southern Africa, and with time and changing economic conditions it became less and less prevalent. By the beginning of the Anglo-*Boer* War in 1899 the Jews were being labelled as a '*Boerverneukers*' (persons who cheat or swindle the *Boers*) and the earlier more relaxed relationships between the Jews and the *Boers* were already beginning to break down (Shain, 2002).

The end of the decade

Johannesburg boasted a *shochet* and a *Kosher* butchery by 1888¹⁰ and by 1889 the Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation and the Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society had been established. Thus the very basic facilities for the survival of a Jewish community had been initiated but it was not the social or political future of the community that became a

concern but rather Johannesburg's economic base which began to look uncertain by the end of 1889.

Initially the gold that had been mined in the area came from well-weathered surface or near surface ores, which made the mining and extraction process relatively easy. The technology used for extraction was quite simple. The ore was crushed and mixed with mercury. The amalgam was then heated and the gold and mercury separated, the mercury was allowed to drain away and the precious metal was carefully collected (Osborn, 1933). The surface gold was depleted quite quickly and by the end of the decade miners were forced to dig deeper into the earth to find their fortunes. The ore brought to the surface was unweathered and mixed with iron pyrites which did not allow it to respond to the amalgam process. Suddenly mining on the Rand became a great deal more expensive, additional labour was needed for the deeper level mining and new and better technology was necessary to extract the gold. The investment for the 'new' or deeper level type of mining could not be found on the Witwatersrand and mining went from being an easy proposition to a risky business (van Onselen, 2002). In the next decade thousands of Jews migrated into the city and its surrounding townships but they faced increasingly uncertain times both economically and politically, the details of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes for Chapter Three

¹ France peacefully took control of the Netherlands during the Napoleonic Wars, and renamed it the Batavian Republic after the Dutch's ancestors the Batavii and the constitution of the new Republic was based on the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. As part of the Treaty of Amiens which had been signed in 1802, the Cape Colony was put under the control of the Batavians and the religious and social freedoms that had been legislated in Europe were instituted in the Cape. In doing so the Batavians created a situation of tolerance that had not existed under the British (Howcroft, 1992).

² The word 'township' can be misleading in the South African context. In the lexicon of apartheid a 'township' was an area or suburb 'reserved' for Black South Africans. Such areas were tightly controlled by the apartheid government. 'Townships' in this sense is a term loaded with historical and racial significance. Technically, however, the word describes all suburbs in what was the Transvaal, irrespective of racial occupation and goes back to the early Gold Laws of the former Transvaal. The term 'stand' has a similar origin and elsewhere in contemporary South Africa is usually referred to as a 'plot' or 'erf'.

³ The vast majority of Eastern European migrants travelled across the Atlantic to Britain and then continued their journeys from there. It was generally the cheapest and most convenient option. The vast numbers of poor Jews arriving in Britain would often have to wait a few days or weeks until they could get tickets for their onward journeys. Most Jewish communities in the various ports made provision for the Jewish immigrants. The largest of these was the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter in Whitechapel in London. The Shelter was established in 1885 and hosted thousands of emigrants over its almost 30 years of existence. It fed, housed, clothed, and facilitated the travelling plans of the Eastern European Jews. The Shelter was actually a series of hostels and buildings in a wide range of conditions and states, but after its first few years was regulated by the British Board of Deputies. More details can be found in the work done by Newman (Newman, 1994, 2000).

-
- ⁴ Dantzig, E.Y., 1899: Letter to the Editor, *Hamelitz*, (weekly newspaper) 29th September 1899, SABJD Archives.
- ⁵ Anon, 1889: A view of the Transvaal, an extract, *The American Hebrew*, (weekly newspaper) 22nd November 1889, South African Board of Jewish Deputies (SABJD) Library.
- ⁶ Extract from a transcript of an interview with Frederick Henry Ansell by Dora Sowden, for the South African Jewish Sociological and Historical Society interview series, 28th August 1951, SABJD Archives.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ American Hebrew, 1889: Letter to the Editor, *The American Hebrew*, (weekly newspaper) 22nd November 1889, SABJD Archives.
- ⁹ Extract from a transcript of an interview with Sarah Rosenthal by Dora Sowden, for the South African Jewish Sociological and Historical Society interview series, 7th September 1951, SABJD Archives.
- ¹⁰ The Star, 1887: Advertisement in the classified section, *The Star*, (daily newspaper) 25th June 1887, Johannesburg, Johannesburg Public Library (JPL) Archives.