

M513 Minneapolis Jewish Cemetery Association. Records, 1905-1963.  
3 rolls positive microfilm. Originals loaned by the association.  
Collation of the originals: 1.5 ft., incl. 9 vols.

#### HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Minneapolis Jewish Cemetery Association was originally chartered in 1890 as Minneapolis Lodge Number 63, Order Brith Abraham Cemetery Association (O.B.A.). The O.B.A. was affiliated with the United States Grand Lodge Order Brith Abraham. By 1924 the O.B.A. owned four acres of land, lots 35-40 of Sabin's Lake Harriet Garden Lots, on the southwest corner of 70<sup>1-2</sup> Street and Penn Avenue South, Richfield.

In the early 1920s a secessionist group broke away from the O.B.A. to form the Independent Minneapolis City Lodge Number 1, a voluntary unincorporated association. In March, 1924, Hennepin County District Court appointed a board of trustees for O.B.A., which suggests that there may have been a legal contest for control of the board. This court-appointed board moved quickly to form a new organization. At the January, 1925, annual meeting, lot owners of the O.B.A. voted to change the organization's name to the Minneapolis Jewish Cemetery Association, which was to be affiliated with neither the O.B.A. nor the Independent Minneapolis City Lodge.

Abe Kaplan served as chairman of the Minneapolis Jewish Cemetery Association's board of trustees until his death in 1933. During this period the organization met at Keneseth Israel Hall in North Minneapolis. It developed a close working relationship with the Independent Minneapolis Chevra Kadisha, a burial society whose members performed services for the dead and prepared bodies for burial in accordance with Jewish tradition and law. This close relationship with the Chevra Kadisha was reflected in the special joint meeting of the two organizations that was held to select a new chairman for the association's board following Kaplan's death. By the early 1940s, members of the cemetery association's board were included as members of the Chevra Kadisha, and the association eventually took over all fiscal arrangements for the burial society, collecting fees for its services at funerals and managing its funds.

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the Chevra Kadisha, and the association eventually took over all fiscal arrangements for the burial society, collecting fees for its services at funerals and managing its funds.

In 1926 the association began planning the construction of a chapel at the cemetery "from where funeral services may be conducted with the assistance of the Independent Minneapolis Chevra Kadisha." Raising the funds for the building proved difficult, however, so in 1931 the association's board of trustees obtained a loan of \$3,500.00 from the Independent Minneapolis City Lodge. Work was completed on the chapel that same year; the total cost of the project was \$7,470.68.

Meyer Swiller succeeded Kaplan as chairman of the board in 1933, and served until 1941. During these years the association experienced slow financial growth, hindered by the economy and by its debt to the Minneapolis City Lodge. The organization continued to meet at Keneseth Israel Hall.

In 1941 Max Kaplan replaced Swiller as chairman, and a number of changes began to take place. The site of the organization's meetings was moved to the Emanuel Cohen Center, and the board began to invest the association's funds initially in United States War Bonds.

By 1945 the association's capital had increased enough so that it could consider expansion. Much of the original cemetery was full, and the future of the organization depended on obtaining more burial space. In order to comply with

state laws governing corporations, two board members purchased a seven-acre farm in Richfield with the understanding that if the village granted the cemetery association a permit to use the land for a cemetery, the board members would turn the land over to the association for the amount paid. When the village of Richfield refused to grant a permit, the board approached the Gemelus Chesad Congregation's cemetery association, which owned the land adjacent to the Minneapolis Jewish Cemetery Association's property, about purchasing some of its land. Negotiations were delicate and were not completed until 1953. Two acres of land were purchased in 1954, and a second purchase of two and one-half acres was agreed to in 1960.

The information in this historical sketch was taken from the minutes of the cemetery association.

F. Hampton Smith  
June 1986

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Minute Books, 1924-1963 (volumes 1-3) include minutes of board of trustees meetings and annual lot holder's meetings, with annual financial statements filed following the annual meeting minutes. They also include articles of incorporation and amendments. Volume 2 also contains a register of lot owners.

Volume 4 is a Plot Book, circa 1925-1950s. The entries, which are recorded in Yiddish, contain information dating back to 1904. The entry for each plot gives the person's name, age and/or birth-date, and death date and/or burial date. Some entries also give the person's address and relationship to another individual. The volume contains a personal name index, also in Yiddish.

Burial Records, 1940-1955 (volumes 5-6) include the name, address, sex, age, place of birth, and place of death of the deceased; date and cause of death; date of burial; location of the grave; and survivors.' Each volume is arranged alphabetically by the first letter of the person's surname and in reverse chronological order within each letter of the alphabet.

Volumes 7-9 are financial records. Volume 7, Cash Received on Lot Owner Accounts, 1905-1911, is arranged chronologically. Volume 8, Lot Owner Accounts Ledger, 1906-1910, is arranged by name of lot owner. Volume 9 is a chronological record of cash receipts and disbursements, 1932-1933, in Yiddish.

The final item in the collection is a card that includes a transliteration of the Kaddish (mourner's prayer).

### ROLL CONTENTS LIST

Roll 1.	<u>Frame</u>
Volume 1. Minutes of Meetings, 1924- January' 6, 1941.	1
Volume 2. Minutes of Meetings, January 6, 1941 - January 8, 1948.	71
Volume 3. Minutes of Meetings, March 25, 1948 - June 9, 1963.	200
Volume 4. Plot Book, 1920s-1950s.	412
Roll 2.	<u>Frame</u>
Volume 5. Burial Record, 1941-1950.	1
Volume 6. Burial Record, 1950-1955.	560
Roll 3	<u>Frame</u>
Volume 7. Cash Received on Lot Owner Accounts, 1905-1911.	1
Volume 8. Lot Owner Accounts Ledger, 1906-1910.	204
Volume 9. Cash Receipts and Disbursements, 1932-1933.	427
Kaddish Card, undated.	495.