

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Markhistoric name German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Markother names/site number Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew; Community Synagogue Center;
Community Synagogue Max D. Raiskin Center**2. Location**street & number 323 East 6th Street [] not for publicationcity or town New York [] vicinitystate New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10003**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination
[] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
[X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally
[] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
[] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
[] determined not eligible for the
National Register

[] removed from the National Register

[] other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property

New York County, New York
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility: church

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility: synagogue

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURY/Renaissance Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 7 Page 1German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State**7. Narrative Description****7. Narrative Description****Exterior**

The Renaissance Revival brick building at 323 East 6th Street in New York City has been in continuous use as a house of worship and center of community life for over 155 years. Built in 1847 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew, it soon thereafter became the home of another congregation, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark and served that group for 92 years. Since 1940 it has served as the home of the Community Synagogue Center (now Community Synagogue Max D. Raitskin Center), which was founded by local businessmen that same year.

The building is located on the north side of East 6th Street between First and Second Avenues in New York City's East Village. This block of East 6th Street consists of 19th-century brick row houses and tenement buildings.

The Renaissance Revival ecclesiastical building is constructed of red brick in running bond, set above a brownstone base. It is 57' wide by 82' deep, and 35' high from curb to highest point of the beams.¹

The building's main facade is organized as a double-height temple front. Four square brick piers support an entablature topped by a metal cornice and a central pediment; both cornice and pediment are adorned with modillions. As though superimposed over the central bay, an entrance bay projects slightly beyond the level of the four brick piers, creating the appearance of a double-pier enframed entrance porch. The piers sit on very tall bases. The building's main entrance, approached by a flight of steps from the sidewalk level, is through a set of paneled double wooden doors, set within a classical frame, with a paneled transom above. Two lanterns flank the entrance at the level of the top of the doors. In the area of the central bay above the entrance there is a panel, inscribed: "Community Synagogue, December 1940, Dedicated to the Glory of God and the Brotherhood of Man, Max D. Raitskin Center." The bays to either side of the entrance are largely taken up with blind windows, each with a brownstone sill and lintel, painted white.²

The sides of the building, on the east and west, are simple brick facades with tall window openings. In 1887, the church built a rear addition along the basement and first floor for a "director's room" and which is now used for the Rabbi's study and the office.

¹ According to measurements provided on Building Department Application to Alter, Repair, Etc., No 1135 of June 6, 1887, the building is 57' wide by 82' deep, and 35' high from curb to highest point of the beams.

² Photographs from the New York Public Library that were taken in 1934 show the church with its monochromatic palate. The synagogue has since painted it red with white trim.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 7 Page 2German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

A metal fence with gates runs in front of the entire length of the building's facade at the sidewalk line.³
 A metal fence with gates runs in front of the entire length of the building's facade at the sidewalk line.³

Interior

The building's main sanctuary is a simple, double-height box with a balcony on three sides. The balcony has a paneled wooden facing, and is supported on slender wood columns, five on either side and two in the back. The columns actually run through the wooden pews below them. Fluorescent lighting has been added under the balconies. Where the balcony meets the front wall, on either side, there is a doorway leading out of the sanctuary.

The angled wooden pews, which are laid out in four rows with a center and two side aisles - and an additional section facing perpendicularly to them at either front corner - date from at least the late 19th century, based on photographic evidence, and probably to 1848.⁴ A small *mechitza* (screen or grille)-- dividing the sanctuary between a men's and a women's section, as required in Orthodox Jewish custom - has been added on the east edge of the center aisle,

Four decorative leaded-glass windows on each side extend nearly the full height of the room. Records indicate that memorial windows were installed during the pastorate of Rev. Haas, probably in the 1890s. According to Max Isaacs of Community Synagogue, the windows, which are very simple in design, were kept when the synagogue took over the building. Some sections, such as the roundels at the balcony level, were replaced with Jewish motifs, and names of Community Synagogue members were added.⁵

The north wall is graced with a large wooden classical arch, set between fluted pilasters, that once defined the altar and now frames the ark. Nineteenth-century photographs date it to at least 1887, and date the "altar" rail and pulpit, which are still in use, to 1897.⁶ A painting within the arch, added after the building became a synagogue, shows the Lions of Judah flanking the tablets of the Law. A raised platform extends in front of the ark; on its east side, there is an angled wooden pulpit whose sides are adorned with panels, columns and arches. Elsewhere on the platform there are various synagogue furnishings, including two *menorahs* (candelabras) and several chairs.

³ This addition, according to the application, is 9' wide (front), 13' wide (rear) and 30' deep, built of brick on a stone base. Buildings Department "Application to alter....," June 6, 1887.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5; interview with Max Isaacs, Dec. 1, 1999.

⁶ *Zion-St. Mark's*, p.7.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section 7 Page 3German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

A number of memorial plaques have been affixed to the rear and west walls of the sanctuary. A number of memorial plaques have been affixed to the rear and west walls of the sanctuary. Staircases outside the sanctuary lead up to the balcony level. The balcony floor steps back in four levels, supporting three levels of built-in pews on the sides and at the back. The original church organ, with decoratively painted pipes, survives at the back of the balcony section, but it is partially hidden from view by newly added air-conditioning units. A number of memorial plaques have been affixed to the rear wall.

The sanctuary's flat ceiling is coved at the sides - the coved portion between ceiling and walls is set off by ribbed molding. A small chandelier hangs from the ceiling near the front. Additional lighting now comes from fluorescent lighting fixtures hidden behind the moldings, and recessed ceiling lights.

The stair halls that lead from the basement to the sanctuary and from the sanctuary to the balcony have been covered in modern paneling. Beneath the sanctuary, a large, modern-looking space includes a small worship space, a community room with a kitchen, and the rabbi's office in the back.

Alterations to the building, as attested to by Building Department records and an interview with Max Isaacs, include replacement of the staircases, tiling of the floors, redesigning of the plan of the basement rooms, and installation of fire exits and fire escapes.⁷

⁷ Interview with Max Isaacs, Dec. 1, 1999.

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all boxes that apply.)

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave
- ☐ **D** a cemetery
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1847-1940

Significant Dates:

1847, 1857, 1887, 1897, 1904, 1940

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:**Architect/Builder:****Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by historic American Building Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other repository: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 1German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State**8. Statement of Significance⁸****8. Statement of Significance⁸****Summary**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew, later the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark and today the Community Synagogue and Max D. Raitskin Center, survives today as a rare, little-altered pre-Civil War-era Renaissance Revival building. Built for a German-American community in 1847, and home to a synagogue since 1940, the building has strong ties to the history of two of New York City's immigrant communities. The building is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C: Criterion A for its place in New York's immigrant history, both German and Jewish, and Criterion C for its rare Renaissance Revival ecclesiastical design. Its period of significance is identified as 1847-1940; 1847 being the date of its construction, and 1940 being the date of its transformation into a synagogue.

The Lutheran Churches of St. Matthew's and St. Mark's

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew traces its history to 1664, when the Lutheran church was freed from the oppression suffered by non-Reform congregations under Dutch colonial rule. As the Lutheran population grew in New York, so did St. Matthew's, becoming the mother church to Dutch, German and English Lutheran congregations that sprang up during the 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1846, the Corporation of the United German Lutheran Church acquired three lots on the north side of East 6th Street, between First and Second avenues.⁹ In 1847, St. Matthew's began construction on the site for a new building, to be used as a branch of its church, then located on Walker Street and Broadway.¹⁰

The church's architect – whose identity remains unknown – designed a handsome, if somewhat unusually designed, Renaissance Revival building. Its brick façade is organized as four double-height clusters of square piers, supporting an architrave with a central pediment above. Its height

⁸ This account is based largely on a research report prepared by Marianne Percival for the Columbia University Historic Preservation program in 1999 (rev. 2000).

⁹ The three lots each measured 25' by 90'9". The site (block 448, lot 42) was originally part of a property owned by Nicholas William Stuyvesant. The Church Corporation purchased the lots from the Woodward and Gaines families for \$6,600. *Longworth's American Almanac, New York Register and City Directory for the Sixty Seventh Year of American Independence*, (New York: T. Longworth, 1842), p.254, 680. *Block Index of Reindexed Conveyances to 1917* (New York: The City), Book 53, Section 2, Block 448, pp. [1]-10. Deed recorded in *Liber 476* (New York: The City), p.366-370. *The Record of Tax Assessments, 17th Ward* (New York: The City, 1847) still listed Gaines and Woodward as holders of the property, at which time the assessed value for the lots totaled \$5,400 (p.41). The church was not listed until the 1848. The lot numbers in the assessment were 1690-1692; the *Block Index of Reindexed Conveyances* uses the revised single lot number for the merged lots. There are discrepancies between the *Block Index* and the *Record of Tax Assessments* regarding ownership of lot 42 during the 1830s and early 1840s. The *Block Index* has been given preference as a source.

¹⁰ Karl Kretzmann, *The Oldest Lutheran Church in America: A Brief Chronicle of Events in the History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint Matthew in the City of New York, 1664-1914*, (New York: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew, 1914), pp. 12, 35-36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 2German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

reflects the double height of the sanctuary, and helps give this small building an effect of monumentality. The façade follows Renaissance and Palladian precedent in the use and application of classical orders. At the time of its construction in 1847, the dominant styles in ecclesiastic architecture in New York were Greek Revival and Gothic Revival. The Renaissance Revival was employed more for commercial and residential architecture than ecclesiastical design.

The simple sanctuary inside has a balcony on three sides; a large wooden arch, once marking the location of the altar, now frames the ark. The sanctuary is lit by a series of tall, leaded glass windows which probably date to the 1890s.

The Congregation of St. Matthew's didn't occupy its new building for very long. In the fall of 1847, the Reverend August Held created another congregation – the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark – from the growing population of Germans flowing into New York. Its first services were held on Houston Street between Avenue A and First Avenue. In 1848, that congregation rented an empty church building between Second and Third Avenues, and shortly thereafter contacted St. Matthew's about renting the nearly completed church on East 6th Street.¹¹

German immigration to American was rapidly growing in the late 1840s and 1850s, mostly as a result of the revolutions of 1848 in the German states, and much of that population settled on New York's Lower East Side. A subsection of that district – Kleindeutschland (Little Germany) – became a center for German immigrants in New York. Originally located in the 10th and 13th Wards, around Rivington, Canal and Elizabeth Streets, the district spread north across Houston Street to the 11th Ward, following the jobs in the factories and shipyards along the East River, and then to the 17th Ward west of Avenue B. The German immigrants were largely skilled laborers, artisans, and shopkeepers who by the 1850s dominated the city's grocery and provisions industries, newsstands, cigar manufacturing, and retail. The 17th Ward, in which St. Mark's was located, was the last area developed, and considered the best residential area of Kleindeutschland¹²

In 1857, St. Mark's purchased the Sixth Street building from St. Matthew's for \$8,000 (the deed included a restriction that limited use of the building to a German Lutheran church; the restriction was revoked in 1898). In that year a missionary society was established, a Ladies' Aid society, open to the members of the community, was established in 1868; and in 1895, the youth of the congregation were among the first to join the Luther League.

The congregation grew through the 19th century. In one year, its second pastor, Hermann Raegener, performed 644 baptisms. The church building grew under George C.F. Haas, pastor from 1882 to

¹¹ *Zion-St. Mark's Lutheran Church: 1828-1992, 1847-1992: A History* ([New York: Zion-St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church], 1992), pp. 4-5. The rent for the first three years totaled \$300.

¹² Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 735, 745. Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion and Class in New York City, 1845-1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p.35.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 3German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

1920. A study was added to the back of the building in 1887. In 1889 a house at 64 East 7th Street, 1920. A study was added to the back of the building in 1887. In 1889 a house at 64 East 7th Street, directly behind the church, was purchased for use as a parsonage. The congregation sold the parsonage in 1908. New altar furniture, a new organ and memorial windows were purchased by the congregation and installed in the church around 1897.¹³

The Slocum disaster

In 1904, the congregation of St. Mark's suffered devastating losses in one of the New York City's most tragic accidents: the sinking of the steamship Slocum. Over 1,300 of the congregation's women and children, along with some of the men, had just boarded the excursion steam boat "General Slocum" for a trip to Locust Grove for the annual parish picnic. Within a few minutes of departure, a fire started in a storage closet full of flammable materials. Communications delays, combined with a crew inexperienced in firefighting, decrepit firefighting and lifesaving equipment, and panic, allowed the fire to rage. More than 1,000 lives were lost, including Pastor Haas' wife and two other family members.¹⁴ The Slocum disaster is generally considered to have been one of the worst disasters – and among the most costly in loss of life – in New York City history.

The church held on through the tragedy but was unable to rebuild the congregation, as an exodus of Germans to Yorkville and the suburbs that had begun in the 1880s and 1890s continued. By 1940, there were approximately 50 members left. The parsonage had already been sold, in 1908, and now the decision was made either to move uptown or unite with another bi-lingual congregation. The last Lutheran service was held July 28, 1940. In the course of its history as an independent congregation, St. Mark's clergy had baptized 21,950 and performed 11,080 marriages among the city's German-American population.¹⁵

The surrounding neighborhood today is known as the East Village, but it still retains traces of the immigrant groups that have passed through it. Several buildings still survive from the days of Kleindeutschland, including three – still identified by German inscriptions – that once served as cultural centers for that community: the Deutsch-Amerikanische Schuetzen Gesellschaft at 12 St. Mark's Place (a marksmen's club), the Freie Bibliothek und Lesehalle (now the Ottendorfer Branch of the New York Public Library) at 135 Second Avenue (National Register-listed 7-22-79), and the Deutsches Dispensary (now the Stuyvesant Polyclinic Hospital) at 137 Second Avenue (National Register-listed 7-22-79), all three dating from the mid-1880s. St. Mark's – by far the oldest of the

¹³ *Zion-St. Mark's*, pp. 5, 63. "Application to Alter, Repair, Etc., Plan No. 1135," (New York: Department of Buildings), June 6, 1887.

¹⁴ Captain Van Schaick was convicted of manslaughter and sent to Sing Sing prison at the age of 69. The owners of the vessel who had not maintained her properly and the inspectors who had passed her fire and safety equipment earlier in the year were never indicted. President Taft pardoned the captain based on support from citizens who felt he had been made a scapegoat. Francis James Duffy, "The Hell Gate Steamboat Horror," *Daily News Magazine*, June 4, 1989, pp. 22-23 in *Zion-St. Mark's*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁵ St. Mark's merged with Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church on E. 84th Street in 1946, the congregation having shared quarters with other institutions for six years. The black walnut altar furnishings were reinstalled in the 84th Street church. *Ibid.*, pp. 6,8. *Block Index of Reindexed Conveyances*, Book 53, Section 2, Block 448, p. 43.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section 8 Page 4German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

group, and the only church – completes this grouping, and as such remains an important monument
~~group, and the only church – completes this grouping, and as such remains an important monument~~
 of the early German-American community of New York City.

The Community Synagogue

Since 1940, the building has served as the home of the Community Synagogue Center (now Community Synagogue Max D. Raitskin Center).

Jewish settlement on the Lower East Side dates back to the 1840s, and the arrival of German Jewish immigrants who settled around Grand, Stanton, Ludlow and Pitt Streets. By 1859, the Jewish population of the city had increased to 40,000 and by the following year the city could count 27 synagogues. The size and national origin of the Jewish population of the Lower East Side changed in the decades of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as newly arrived Eastern European Jews settled in the neighborhood.¹⁶ During the early 20th century, the Lower East Side formed the world's largest Jewish community.

In 1940, a group of Second Avenue businessmen under the leadership of Saul Birns rented the Hebrew Technical Institute to hold High Holy Days services. The response was overwhelming, and a new congregation, Community Synagogue Center, was formed later in the fall of 1940 with about 200 members. Birns, who owned a building on Second Avenue near the church, was acquainted with St. Mark's pastor, Reverend Emil Podszus, and agreed to purchase the building. The conveyance records indicate a sale price of \$27,000. According to Max Isaacs, one of the founding members, the congregation was active in the community and city politics, with many members who were judges and lawyers. In 1982-83, Community Synagogue absorbed the Max D. Raitskin Center,

¹⁶ Burrows, *op. cit.*, pp. 745, 748-749. Jan Chien Lin, "The Changing Economy of the Lower East Side," in Janet L. Abu-Lughod and others, *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), table 2.2, p.54.

NPS Form 10-900a
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OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

a school at 8th Street and Avenue B, and added the name to theirs.¹⁷ The synagogue continues today
a school at 8th Street and Avenue B, and added the name to theirs. The synagogue continues today
in active use.

¹⁷ "Old Edifice Sold by Congregation: German Evangelical Church of St. Mark Will Become Jewish Temple," *The New York Times*, December 25, 1940, p.41. Max Isaacs, interview with author, December 1, 1999. Deed recorded December 24, 1940 in *Liber 4087*, (New York: The City, 1940), p. 359-361. Mr. Isaacs told the author that the price was \$40,000.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 9 Page 1German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State**BIBLIOGRAPHY****BIBLIOGRAPHY**Books and Articles

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 9 Page 2

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Zion-St Mark's Lutheran Church: 1892-1992, 1848-1882, A History [New York: Zion-St. Mark's
~~Zion-St Mark's Lutheran Church: 1892-1992, 1848-1882, A History~~ [New York: Zion-St. Mark's
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NPS Form 10-900a
(8-88)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

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-----1855-1896. New York: City of New York.

Record of Tax Assessments, 17th Ward, 1839-1848. New York: City of New York.

Interviews

Max Isaacs, interview by author, handwritten notes, New York, N.Y. December 1, 1999.

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property

New York County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 8 5 8 5 5 1 3 4 5 0 8 7 3 2
Zone Easting Northing
Zone Easting Northing

3 1 8
Zone Easting Northing
Zone Easting Northing

2 1 8

4 1 8

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By (* See Continuation Sheet for author*)

name/title Contact: Kathy Howe, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation date 3/21/03

street & number Peebles Island, PO Box 189 telephone (518) 237-8643, ext. 3266

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188-0189

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Community Synagogue Max D. Raiskin Center

street & number 323 East 6th Street telephone (212) 473-3665

city or town New York state NY zip code 10003

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

NPS Form 10-900a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated on the attached Sanborn map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the church and, later, the synagogue.

NPS Form 10-900a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 11 Page 1

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

11 Form Prepared By

11. Form Prepared By

Author:

Anthony Robins
Architectural Historian
Thompson & Columbus, Inc.
50 West 67th Street, Suite 1-F
New York, NY 10023
(212) 877-7637

Additional Research by:

Marianne S. Percival
67 Burns Street
Forest Hills, NY 11375

NPS Form 10-900a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 11 Page 2

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Additional Documentation

Additional Documentation

Photo List

Former German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark/
current Community Synagogue & Max D. Raitskin Center
323 East 6th Street
New York County, NY
Photographer: Kathy Howe
Date of photos: 2/12/03
Negatives on file: NYSOPRHP

Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

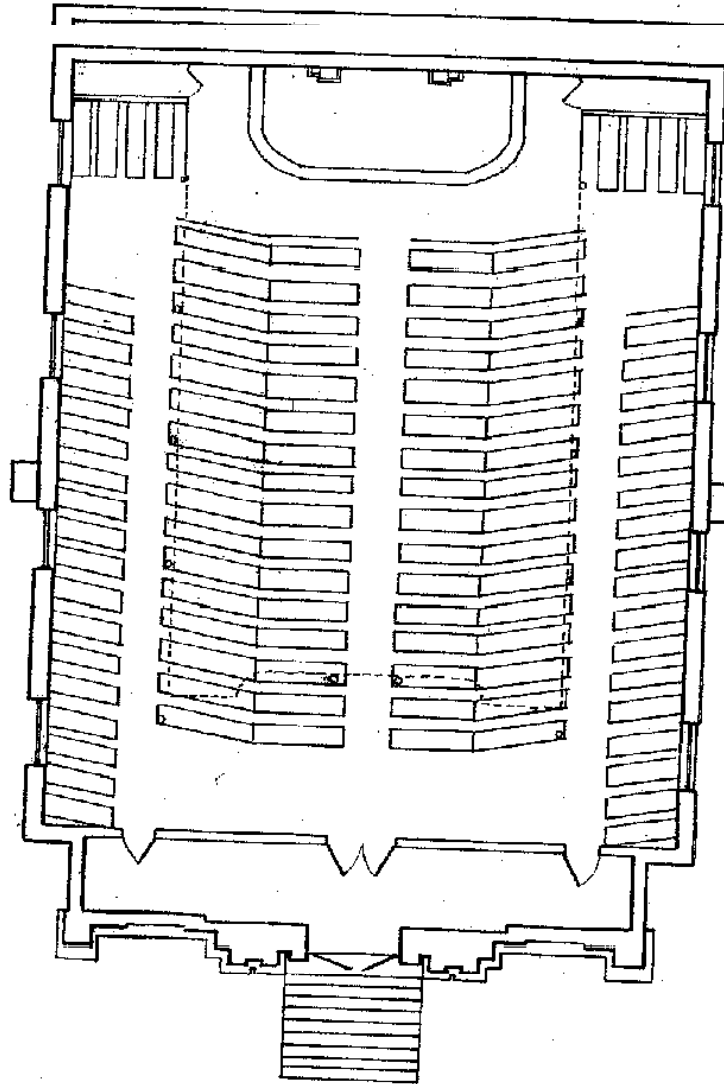
1. West (partial) and south facades, facing northeast on East 6th Street.
2. South façade, facing north.
3. East (partial) and south facades, facing northwest on East 6th Street.
4. Sanctuary, north and east walls, facing northeast from balcony.
5. Sanctuary, west and north walls, facing northwest from balcony.
6. Sanctuary, east and south walls showing balcony and organ pipes, facing southeast.
7. Sanctuary, east wall and balcony, facing east.
8. Sanctuary, view of pews and west wall, facing southwest.
9. Sanctuary, below balcony, north and east walls, facing northeast.
10. North wall of sanctuary, facing north.
11. Pulpit in sanctuary, north end, facing northeast.
12. Organ pipes behind modern A/C units at south wall of balcony, facing southwest.
13. Entrance hall (former narthex) with stairs leading to balcony, facing east.
14. Sanctuary spaces in front southwest section of basement. Facing northwest.
15. Meeting hall in basement (below main sanctuary), facing north.

Exhibits

- A. First floor plan of the sanctuary (Marianne S. Percival, 1999).
- B. South elevation (Marianne S. Percival, 1999).
- C. Historic photograph of the south façade, 1934. (Photographic Views of New York City from the New York Public Library).
- D. Historic photographs of the sanctuary of St. Mark's in 1887 and 1897. (*Zion-St. Mark's*).
- E. "Montage of Memories" (Herbert Latner, Community Synagogue Max D. Raitskin Center).
- F. "The Hell Gate Steamboat Horror," (Francis James Duffy, June 4, 1989).

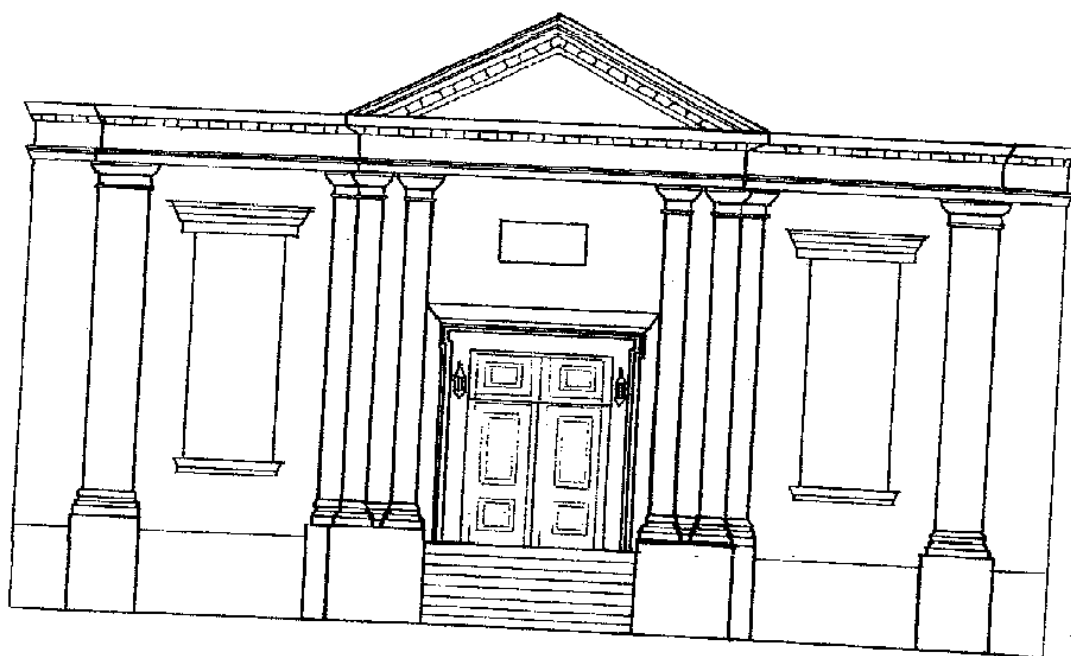
Exhibit A

First floor plan of the sanctuary, 1999.



PLAN - FIRST FLOOR
Scale 1/8" = 1'

Exhibit B
South elevation, 1999.



ELEVATION
SCALE 1/4" = 1'

Exhibit C
South façade, 1934.

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OF THE
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SAN FRANCISCO

6th Street - No 323-

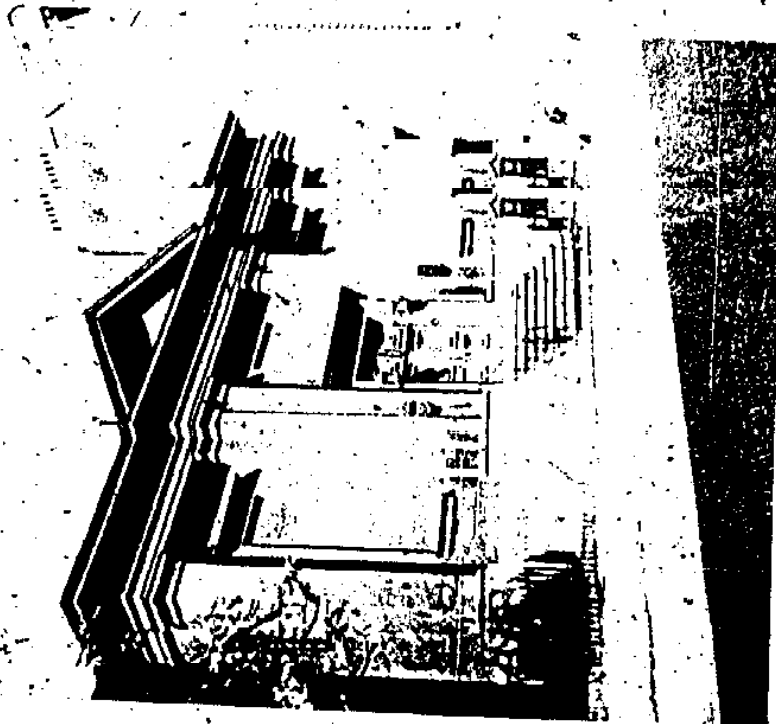
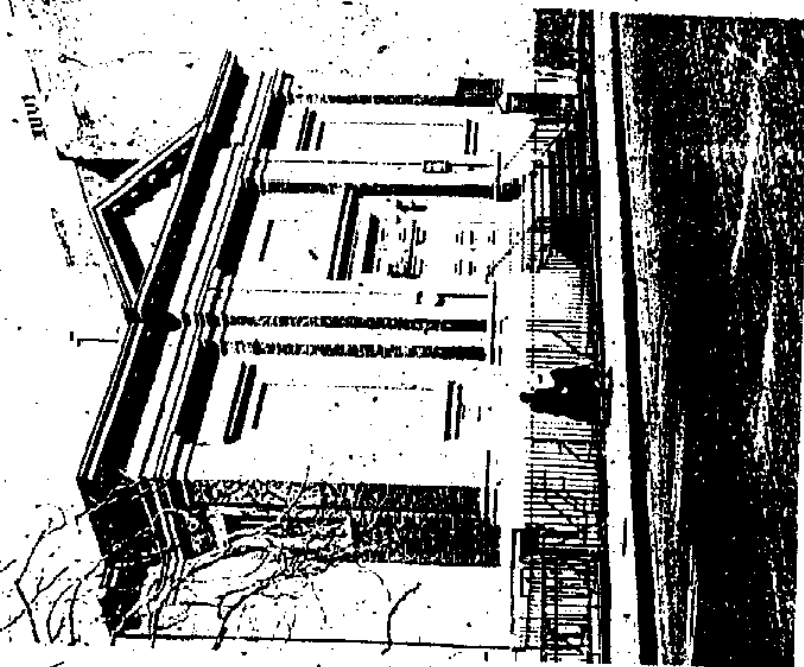


Exhibit D
Sanctuary in 1887 (top) and 1897 (bottom).



Das Innere der Kirche, 1887-97.



Das Innere der Kirche, restauriert.

Exhibit E

MONTAGE OF MEMORIES

by

HERBERT LATNER

The sights and sounds and smells of our neighborhood in the year 1940 were far dif-

The sights and sounds and smells of our neighborhood in the year 1940 were far different from what they are today. In those days this area was called the "LOWER EAST SIDE" and the terms "YUPPIE" and "GENTRIFICATION" had not yet been thought of; there was no such place as the "EAST VILLAGE." Back then, when the word "DELI" was heard, it referred to the many Kosher Jewish delicatessen stores which were all around us--rather than the dozens of Indian restaurants up and down Sixth Street. Although World War II had been raging in Europe, America had not yet become involved.

On November 19, 1940 Messrs. Jack and brother Edward Goldberg drew up and filed a Certificate of Incorporation for the Community Synagogue Center and together with a committee of local public-spirited citizens officially established this house of worship. Among the other founding members were the following: David Robson, Abraham Harmatz, Abraham Meller, Saul Birns, Maurice Bierman and Sadie Wolinsky. The synagogue was to be located in an attractive building which had formerly served as a Lutheran church around the turn of the century. However, On June 15, 1904, their annual Sunday School picnic turned into a terrible disaster when their steamboat, The General Slocum, caught fire and sank in the East River, with over 1,000 casualties. After the tragedy, many of the survivors moved out of the area, and their building was not in use for the next several decades--until 1940, when it was refurbished and rededicated as the Community Synagogue Center, with its logo being, "TO TEACH AND EXEMPLIFY JUDAISM."

Interestingly, although this institution was founded as a traditional orthodox synagogue the first president of the congregation was a woman, Mrs. Esther Meller--and this was many years before the Women's Liberation and Feminist movements. Mr. Jack Goldberg, an attorney, served as the first secretary of the Board of Trustees, and then following Mrs. Meller became the next president of the congregation. Mr. Goldberg now lives in Rego Park, and I had the pleasure of speaking with him in preparing this material.

The following individuals served as presidents of the congregation, after Mr. Goldberg's tenure down to the present time: Moses Herzog, Nathan Yehnowitz, Maxwell Isaacs, David Garfein, Nathan Skolnik, Samuel Borowich and Al Lerman. Of this group of past presidents, Messrs. Borowich and Skolnik continue to worship regularly with us and share their wisdom and experience when requested. Mr. Maxwell Isaacs continues to be an active member of our Board of Trustees, the energetic chairman of the Building Committee and the leader and dynamic spark plug of our daily "boker tov" minyon.

At this point, I wish to take a point of personal privilege to publicly express my thanks and appreciation to Max Isaacs for his kindness, courtesy and generous assistance in sharing his vast treasurehouse of anecdotes and experiences and for opening up his prodigious memory to provide so many important facts and details about the founding and development of our beloved synagogue. I also want to express my appreciation to another dedicated, hard-working lady, Mary Gartner, for her magnificent contributions over the years and for her help to me personally. Both of these individuals are representative of the type of leadership that can bridge the gap between the past, present and future and can provide the effort, experience and continuity necessary for our continued existence.

MONTAGE OF MEMORIES

Page 2

In addition to the distinguished people previously mentioned who have served as presidents of the congregation, we have also been fortunate in having the following presidents of the congregation, we have also been fortunate in having the following outstanding individuals as chairmen of our Board of Trustees: Saul Birns, David Robson, Nicholas Atlas, Edward Goldberg, David Garfein, Milford Balick, Dr. Martin L. Kaye, Abraham Schapira, Boris Shteinshleifer, and Dr. Meyer Tendler.

Our spiritual leaders have included the following gentlemen: Rabbi Mathews, Rabbi Szobel, Rabbi Norman Strizower, Rabbi Philip Book, Rabbi Abraham Hartstein, Rabbi Louis Herring and Rabbi Murry Penkower.

Several years ago when the East Side Hebrew Institute closed its doors and sold its building, they joined us and the name of our institution was enlarged to the "COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE MAX D. RAISKIN CENTER" to include the name of the late beloved Rabbi Raiskin, the founder of ESHI. In addition, we acquired some very valuable new members, including our current president and chairman of the Board of Trustees.

When we began planning for this 50th anniversary celebration, I wrote a letter to members and friends asking them to search their memories for any historical background information, nostalgic feelings, and reminiscences about the early days and years which they might like to share with us. Several people were kind enough to take the time to respond; here are a few of their replies:

"To me the Synagogue has always meant my parents and all of the wonderful people, most of them gone, who worked so hard with them to make a reality from a dream born of a tragedy."

--Morton Robson

"The Synagogue felt like one of the centers of my life. Like a magnet, it drew and discharged each Saturday all of the important people in my life. I remember: Rebecca Borowich's radiant smile; my father, Nathan Wirklich in perpetual motion; the twinkle in the Shamas' eye; the kindness of Max Isaacs; and I think, my first kiss -- from Alan Gartner -- somewhere on the premises!"

--Mary Joan Gerson

"As president of the Junior League in 1941, I came to know and work with many of the early members. I was subsequently elected corresponding secretary of the Synagogue. There were many community leaders who were active in the beginning including Mr. and Mrs. David Robson, Mrs. Esther Meller, Mr. and Mrs. Kaminstein, Mr. Nicholas Atlas, Mrs. Mary Gartner, and others. The Rabbis I recall were Sigmund Szobel and Norman Strizower. The Junior League was quite active but was somewhat deactivated because of World War II.

"Max Raiskin and I attended J.H.S. 64 together, as well as the Zitomer Talmud Torah Darche Noam (Ave. B and 8th St.). He was a chubby and affable youngster and was editor of the "64 Reporter."

--Eli Mason

MONTAGE OF MEMORIES

Page 3

Here is a personal recollection of my own which I wish to add: It deals with a

Here is a personal recollection of my own which I wish to add: It deals with a vivid memory I have and one which goes back a long time--to my childhood. As some of my friends know, when I was growing up, I had been a child actor in the Yiddish theater (as was another of our congregants, Hy Parness--who had been very talented and successful). Since 2nd Avenue contained several Yiddish theaters, and some of the actors lived in the area, I came to know a few of them. I can clearly remember that every Yom Kippur--for many years--Maftir Yonah was given to that well-known Jewish actor and radio personality, Zvee Scooler, who did a magnificent job of chanting it in his beautiful, deep and mellifluous voice. I used to feel that we were very special to have such a big celebrity grace us with his chanting. (In later years, Moshe Borodkin carried on with this honor in his own excellent, distinctive style.)

The success and achievements of any organization ultimately rest on the quality of its members and leaders. In this respect, the Community Synagogue Max D. Raiskin Center has been blessed with ladies and gentlemen of the highest caliber. No stroll down the memory lane of our existence over the past fifty years would be complete without briefly touching on some of the individuals who have made a significant impact on our synagogue.

In the early years, the Community Synagogue had a reputation of attracting many lawyers, politicians and judges. Several of the founders were lawyers, and they, in turn, attracted others like themselves: Judge Arthur Klein, Judge Birdie Amsterdam, Judge Milton Sanders, Judge Bernard Newman, Judge Max Meltzer, and Federal Judge Edward Weinfield. Later on, Louis Lefkowitz became a member of the Board of Trustees; when he was elected N. Y. State Attorney General, the synagogue sponsored a breakfast in his honor--and there was standing room only. (Every lawyer for miles around showed up.)

Nicholas Atlas was one of the most colorful individuals who ever chaired our Board. He was an outstanding lawyer, an assistant district attorney, and a Hebrew scholar besides. His wife Irma was also a lawyer, but she never practiced law. He was a dynamic, eloquent man who spoke 12 languages fluently. Their two sons Tony and Jeffrey also both became lawyers.

State Supreme Court Judge Birdie Amsterdam and her brother-in-law Judge Milton Sanders have been holiday worshipers here and presented a beautiful torah to us recently. Other prominent attorneys who served as officers include: Jack and Edward Goldberg (two of the founders), Nathan Skolnik, Milford Balick and Meyer Mencher, whose late wife, Mildred (Bobbie) Mencher was a very dedicated worker and member. In this connection, Nat Skolnik's wife, Rose Skolnik continues to be an active, involved and conscientious sisterhood member and a regular worshiper.

Other ladies of note who have contributed immensely to the betterment of our congregation and our sisterhood include: Dora Bierman, Flora Spitz, Cele Hollander--who are no longer with us. Helen Lichtenstein who is very much with us serves as a very active member of the sisterhood and the congregation; she worships with us regularly, and her beautiful voice can clearly be heard during the services. Sophie Kaminstein who together with her late husband, Sam Kaminstein were among the early founders and builders. Sophie continues to participate as an important, involved leader right up to the present time.

MONTAGE OF MEMORIES

Page 4

It was Fred and Flora Spitz who contributed the beautiful blue fabric which lines

It was Fred and Flora Spitz who contributed the beautiful blue fabric which lines the inside of the Torah ark, and for many years they donated the lovely flowers which decorated the bimah during the high holidays. It was Dr. Welkowitz who donated the four ornate red chairs which adorn the bimah.

When Moses Herzog was president and then again when Max Isaacs served in that office, they were faced with a delicate and unusual situation. It seems that the synagogue ran out of operating funds during the summer months--when donations had slowed down to a tiny trickle. It was, therefore, necessary for both Messrs. Herzog and Isaac to assume the financial obligations of the synagogue for several months--until the high holidays--when contributions would again be received and the synagogue would be able to sustain itself.

David and Virginia Garfein occupied a very special place in the hearts of all our congregants and friends. David Garfein served as the 5th chairman of the Board of Trustees and also as the 6th president of the congregation; he was a meticulous, dynamic and demanding leader. Many of us fondly remember his clever and amusing quips and anecdotes as he would make his announcements closing the Sabbath services. Both he and his lovely wife had impeccable taste and refinement. The colorful rose bushes growing on our front lawn and the bright, attractive memorial windows of our vestry room serve as constant reminders of Virginia and David Garfein.

Their dear friend and neighbor Dr. Martin L. Kaye became our 7th chairman of the Board and together with his charming wife Ruth rendered outstanding service and leadership not only to our synagogue and sisterhood but to the entire East Side community, where they were loved and respected as they administered medical care and "caring" (and in some cases, medical "miracles," as well). When Dr. Kaye passed away several years ago, the esteem in which he was held was shown by his obituary which appeared on the front page of New York's largest newspaper--in the form of a featured news story. Their daughter Brenda has remained active in our synagogue and is carrying on the fine family tradition.

When Max Isaacs was president, he established the YAL (Young Adults League), a social club for young, single people and arranged many social events. Some of these socials resulted in "matches" and at least three marriages; in fact, our current president met the young lady who was eventually to become his wife at one of these affairs.

Harold and Mary Gartner were among the leaders and workers in the early years who contributed substantially to the renovation and refurbishing of the building and its facilities. As I mentioned previously, Mary Gartner continues to be a tireless and energetic member of our Board and our sisterhood.

When Samuel Borowich was president, he attempted to again shift the emphasis on youth by engaging the very young Rabbi Louis Herring, who did manage to attract a youthful following of congregants during his tenure. It was also while Mr. Borowich and Mr. Shteinshleifer were in leadership positions, that they, together with Mr. Abraham Schapira, brought in and expanded some local Zionist activities.

MONTAGE OF MEMORIES

Page 5

Our Religious Committee over the years has included such people as the following: Nick Atlas, Max Isaacs, Sam Rosenthal, Nat Wirklich, Rev. Louis Wall, Joseph Ehrenshaft, Sam Borowich, Sidney Bachrach, Ben Gorodinsky, Sam Lerner, and Max Feld. To this very day, Max Feld continues to be actively and conscientiously involved as chairman of the Religious Committee on a regular daily basis as well as serving as a member of the Board of Trustees.

The Building Committee has had as members: Harold Gartner, Irving Matalon, Maurice Bierman (who together with his family donated the small Bet Hamedrish, in memory of his daughter), Virginia Garfein, and Max Isaacs. At the present time, the Building Committee is chaired by Max Isaacs.

Of all the individuals and groups which have contributed to our success over the past 50 years, no one person or group has been more dedicated or devoted than has been the sisterhood. The ladies of the sisterhood have set the highest standards of excellence in the maintenance, beautification and the continued existence of the Community Synagogue Max D. Raitskin Center. They have led the way in demonstrating how an organization should be run. They have been indispensable!

It is impossible to summarize the achievements and accomplishments of 50 years of devoted and faithful service and work in these few pages; it was also impossible to include the names of all of those men and women--past and present--who gave of themselves and of their resources.

I have, nevertheless, attempted to mention briefly the names of some of the people who typified the dedication and devotion which turned these old brick walls into a warm, beautiful house of worship, study and social companionship--an institution which has rendered service to the Jewish community for fifty continuous years.

We look forward to the future with faith in G-D and hope that we will be worthy of those who founded and built the Community Synagogue Center and that we will have the ability to carry on in the great tradition that they have established.

SHALOM.

JUNE 4, 1959

Tales Of Old New York

THE HELL GATE

THE HELL GATE

STEAMBOAT HORROR

MOST OF THE German immigrants who came to New York at the turn of the century settled in the enclave between 14th and Houston Streets —

"Little Germany" — and among their annual joys was the Sunday School picnic run by the St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church on E. Sixth Street. For the 17th annual picnic on Wednesday, June 15, 1904, the Rev. George Haas chartered the sidewheel excursion steamer General Slocum, for \$350, to take more than 1,300 of his flock to Locust Grove, L. I.

Once a prize charter steamboat in the Port of New York, sought after for such events as the International Yacht Races off Sandy Hook, the General Slocum was now one of the older boats in this new day of screw steamers, and her reputation was not the best: She had suffered a series of accidents, groundings and breakdowns, and the Knickerbocker Steamboat Co. had paid fines on her account. On this day, her captain and first and second pilots were all experienced men — but her first mate, Edward Flanagan, was unlicensed.

It was a sunny summer day. The Slocum came around the tip of Manhattan past the Battery from her overnight berth at W. 15th Street on the Hudson River. She would pick up her church charter from the covered recreation pier at the foot of E. Third Street, on the East River. Even after 13 seasons in the harbor, she was still a handsome sight. The walking beam on the steam engine was swaying aft of the two tall yellow stacks, banners and flags were flying and the words "GEN SLOCUM" stood out in large, gilded letters on each side

Some passengers thought it was the clam chowder boiling over, but the General Slocum was already a crematory.

By FRANCIS JAMES DUFFY

of the paddle boxes. Her three decks were repainted a clean white for the new season. Her interior was polished mahogany, fancy wood carvings, carpeting, wicker furniture, all topped off with red velvet.

At 8:30 a.m., she tied up at the E. Third Street pier and started to load the happy passengers. Because it was a workday, most of the excursioners were women and small children; fewer than 100 men came aboard. There was plenty of hearty German food and, of course, soda and beer. To make sure the beer was properly served, three barrels of drinking glasses, packed in salt hay, had been brought aboard the night before by men from the church.

"Professor" George Maurer's band played a hymn as the Slocum left the dock at 9:40 a.m. to sail up the East River to Long Island Sound. People watched the steamer pass from shore, listening to laughter and music drifting over the water. She sailed up the river, entered West Channel off Blackwell's Island — and started the Hell Gate passage.

Captain William H. Van Schaick, 67, master of the Slocum since she'd been built 13 years earlier, joined his two pilots, Edward Van Wart and Edward Weaver, in the wheelhouse when the boat started to make the large S-curve to pass through Hell Gate. Even today, following the removal of most of the bad rocks and reefs blown up by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Hell Gate has only four minutes of slack water and there's always a five-knot current.

Captain Van Schaick remembered the Seawanhaka that had burned off 130th Street in 1890 with the loss of 60 passengers; he shared with most inland-waterways men a deep respect for Hell Gate.

The first passengers who smelled the smoke thought it was merely the clam chowder boiling over.

Deckhand John Coakley was enjoying a beer when a boy rushed up to him and told about the smoke coming from the port side forward. Coakley reluctantly left the beer to check below. He entered a storage cabin containing paint, oil, old furniture, and hemp lines, and found the barrel used to pack the drinking glasses. He grabbed the nearest thing he could find to throw on the fire — some bags of charcoal — and went to look for help. He found Flanagan, the first mate, and some other crew members, and together they faced one of the biggest dangers afloat — fire.

Trying quickly to pass the buck, the inexperienced Flanagan went to the chief engineer — who, appalled, ordered him to alert the captain and break out the standpipe fire hose.

Flanagan passed the word to the captain, at a point when the boat was coming into Middle Grounds, just off Sunken Meadow Island to the port. This area is now north of the Hell Gate railroad bridge in the East River. This was the first knowledge the captain had of the fire. The mate started to hook up the fire hose while the chief engineer started the steam donkey engine to get water pressure on deck.

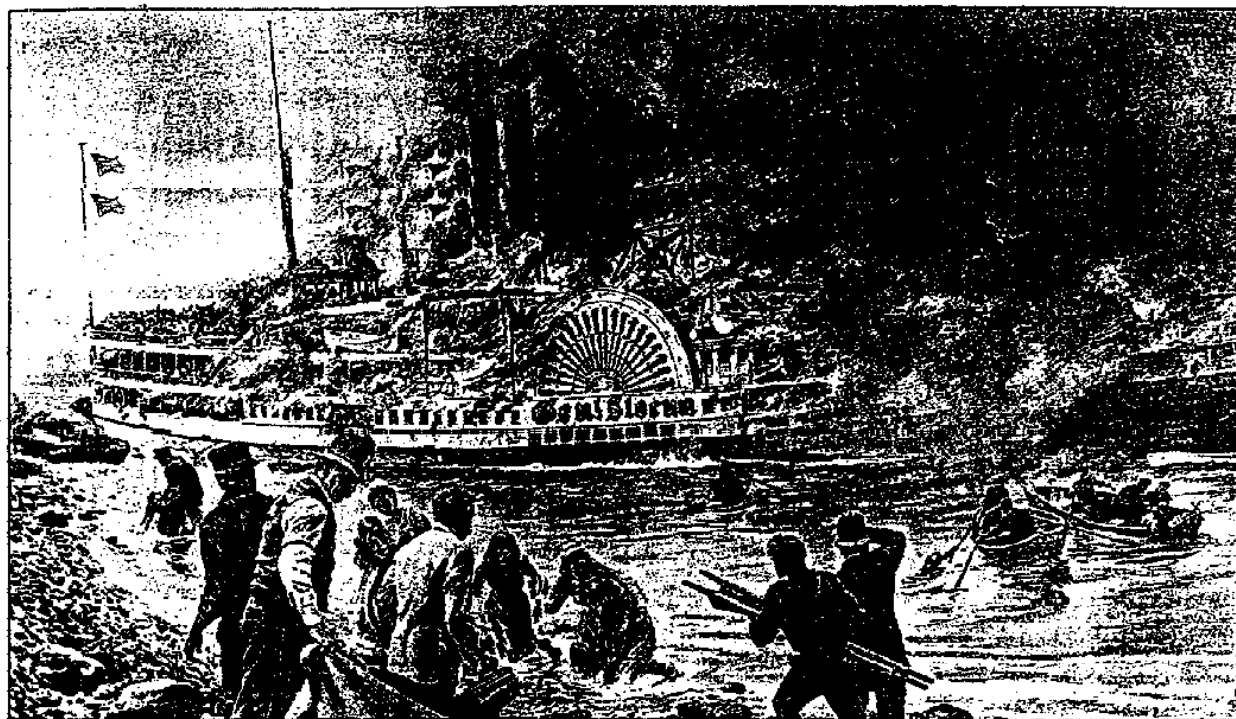
When Flanagan finally got the hose down from the storage rack, high up on the bulkhead, and hooked it to the standpipe he turned on the water. As soon as the water entered the hose, it burst and the coupling flew off the standpipe. A futile effort was made to substitute another rubber hose, but a reducer could not be found. At this point, the strong wind and speed of the boat placed the fire out of control. Panic had set in with the crew and passengers and the General Slocum quickly became a crematory.

The elderly Captain Van Schaick took much blame — then and since — for not beaching the boat sooner. But other students of the Slocum disaster are of the opinion that the captain made the only possible move because he knew the conditions in Hell Gate: If he had tried to stop, or beach the boat anywhere else, there might have been no survivors at all.

Captain Van Schaick ordered the steamboat full speed ahead and had pilot Van Wart steer for the Bay of Brothers, off the shores of the Bronx, to beach the boat on North Brother Island, then a contagious disease hospital. The Slocum did veer for a few minutes towards the Bronx shore, but Van Schaick, seeing the lumberyards, oil tanks and naphtha launches, ordered the boat on to the island's northeast shore.

While the fire raged out of control, passengers went for the life belts before trying to jump overboard to safety — and found that some of them had been wired into place overhead. When the bells and jackets were finally obtained, their canvas, still stenciled 1891, fell apart and the cork filling turned to dust. The six all-metal lifeboats were also wired in place, and their chocks were glued to the bottom of the boats with years of paint. The crew never even tried to launch them.

In 1904, the river still had heavy traffic and as the Slocum steamed on to



While the fire raged out of control, rescuers tried to aid the General Slocum's surviving passengers.

North Brother Island, burning and dropping passengers into the water, boats gave the four-blast warning whistle. She was going so fast that most of the vessels that tried to come to her aid could not catch up with her. Just before she reached the island, a sharp turn off the Bronx shore sent many of the passengers on the upper deck crashing against the rails, which gave way under the weight, dumping them into the river. In spite of the efforts of the pilot to beach the boat on the starboard side, the current swung it out and around so the front was pointed into the island, over the shallow water, but the stern, where many of the passengers were, was still over deep water.

They came from all parts of the river, boats of every description, anything that could float, rushing to the aid of the General Slocum. Some, like the tugboat Arnot, tried to tie alongside, but the fire was too intense, and the tug had to cast off and wait until the Slocum was beached. The Health Department's steam ferryboat Franklin Edison was powerful enough to stay alongside the burning boat, and took off 50 women and children — until she, too, caught fire. Everyone wanted to help; prisoners from nearby Rikers Island grabbed a shuff and rowed out, while even patients from the

hospital on North Brother Island went to the aid of the people in the water.

It was all over for the Slocum's passengers at 10:20 a.m., just 40 minutes after the boat had sailed so happily from the Third Street pier. On the first day, 498 bodies were recovered. When the count was completed, including those that had died after being rescued, there were 1,021 dead. The General Slocum entered maritime and fire disaster lore. It was the second-largest inland water disaster in U.S. history, surpassed only by the 1866 boiler explosion aboard the steam packet Sultana, which took 1,438 lives. It also was the largest fire fatality in New York City history. The name Slocum, which came from the great civil war Major General Henry Warner Slocum, would forevermore be associated with the great disaster.

The Rev. Haas lost his family, and most of the members of the parish of St. Mark's church were wiped out as some 600 families of the small community lost loved ones in the holocaust. Fathers returned from work that day to learn there was no one left in their families. There were few doors in "Little Germany" that did not have flowers announcing that death had visited. On June 18, there were 156 funerals in the East Village.

Before the funerals were over, a coroner's inquest was held in the Bronx. The truth quickly came out; the boat had been cleared by the steamboat inspectors in May, but the facts refuted the inspectors' reports. In no way had the life preservers been checked, or lifeboats swung out on the davits. If pressure had been applied to the standpipe fire hose system, the rotten hoses would have been found. Crew members testified to having never had a fire drill.

The hearings were over in four days. Knickerbocker's owners and Captain Van Schaick were placed on bail and held for a federal grand jury.

On Jan. 10, 1906, the elderly Van Schaick went on trial for manslaughter. The jury found him guilty of failing to hold fire drills, train his crew and maintain adequate firefighting apparatus. He was sentenced to 10 years in Sing Sing. Company officials, however, went unindicted — as did the inspectors.

Plainly the scapegoat of the affair, the old mariner won public sympathies — and a quarter-million-signature petition. He was pardoned by President William Howard Taft. Released on Christmas Day 1911, he retired to an upstate farm and died

in 1927, a day after his 90th birthday.

The saddened City of New York placed a monument to honor the Slocum dead in Thruppins Square Park, outside the playground. The monument stands today, 85 years later, though the wording and the image of the children looking at the steamer have long since been worn down by weather and time. Few who pass it know the story or can read the inscription: "They were the earth's purest children, young and fair."

A second monument stands in the Lutheran Cemetery in Middle Village, Queens, where 958 bodies are buried, including 61 never identified.

Francis James Duffy is a freelance writer specializing in maritime history.

The public is invited to the Organization of the General Slocum Survivors' annual Slocum Memorial Service, to be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 61-70 Dry Harbor Road, Middle Village, Queens, next Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Following the service the congregation will proceed to Lutheran Cemetery for the placing of the memorial wreath.

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Mark
323 East 6th Street
New York County, New York

Nomination boundary indicated by dark line
(Source: Sanborn Manhattan Land Book of the City New York, 1998-99, pl. 28.)
Scale: 1/4" = approx. 25'
Calc. 1/4" = approx. 25'



USGS
Brooklyn Quad
1:24000

