

**FIFTY YEARS' WORK OF
THE HEBREW
EDUCATION SOCIETY OF
PHILADELPHIA, 1848-1898**

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Fifty Years' Work of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, 1848-1898 by Various

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VARIOUS

**FIFTY YEARS' WORK OF
THE HEBREW
EDUCATION SOCIETY OF
PHILADELPHIA, 1848-1898**



REV. ISAAC LEESER
Charter Member.

Board of Officers, 1848-1849

Secretary, 1849-1850 Vice-President, 1859-1861

Board of Officers, 1861-1868, (died.)

Provost Maimonides College (English Literature, Logic and Homiletics.)

FIFTY YEARS' WORK

OF THE

Hebrew Education Society

OF

Philadelphia.



1848-1898.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

1899.

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P R E F A C E .

The first meeting for the formation of a society whose purpose was the education of Jewish youth in the city of Philadelphia was held on March 7, 1847; on June 4, 1848, a Constitution and By-Laws were adopted, and on July 16th the first regular meeting of the Society took place.

At the annual meeting of the Society, held March 13, 1898, it was decided to commemorate the close of the first half-century of the existence of the Society by the publication of a memorial volume.

A brief but comprehensive history of the inception and growth of the Society is accordingly presented in the following pages, compiled almost exclusively from its official records.

In this review of a half century of active communal effort, the life work of Isaac Leeser stands out as a landmark in the history of the Jewish educational movement which is so marked a feature of our present time. It was Isaac Leeser who brought the Hebrew Education Society into existence, and it has been the spirit with which he imbued the organization that has enabled it to overcome the obstacles which for a decade after his death beset its way. To him, furthermore, was due the early effort towards a higher education which took form in the Maimonides College, and, in order to make the record of that worthy undertaking more accessible to students of this subject, its plan, as embodied by its rules and regulations, has been printed in full.

Since 1851, when the first Hebrew School of the Society was established on Zane street, the development of its work has steadily proceeded, increasing in breadth and scope with the growing needs of the Jewish community of Philadelphia. The Hebrew school originally instituted has been continued, with various changes of location, in the central district of the

city, and two others have been established and maintained at outlying locations. To these have been added a number of English night schools, and industrial schools.

The policy pursued by the management during the last twenty years was not changed from former methods because of a desire to have something new, but for the reason that the public had evinced a positive disinclination to continue the support of the school as it was then conducted.

In the pursuance of its general objects, the present policy of the Society, as definitely laid down in its official declarations, may here be quoted as follows:

“To keep the expenditures within the income.”

“To allow the use of any available portion of the Society's buildings for charitable or educational purposes generally, free of charge.”

“Teachers to speak English without a foreign accent; preference to be given those studying for a profession or pursuing courses at a university for a general education.”

“English teachers to be High School graduates.”

The men and women of Philadelphia who have contributed their means to the Society, may feel content with the thought that it has been applied to the highest of philanthropic work—the instruction and uplifting of the children of their people.

The future holds greater possibilities than the past afforded. The community is awakening, still too slowly, to the import of these possibilities, and to the fact that the most far-reaching philanthropy consists in intellectual and moral education which renders the recipient self-reliant and self-sustaining.

Let us hope that a kind Providence, which has implanted in the hearts of the Members, Friends and Managers of the Hebrew Education Society the desire to maintain its good work, and which has watched over and supported them dur-

ing the last half century, will guide and direct them in the future, and instil in the hearts of their descendants and successors that love for Judaism, its culture and its history, which can alone perpetuate our religion and deliver it in its purity to our posterity.

