

Eulogy for Charlotte Freidman July 25,1996

Today is Tisha b"Av, the 9th day of what is considered to be the saddest day in Jewish history. On this day the Babylonians destroyed the first Temple in 586 B.C.E. and the Romans burned down the second Temple in 70 C.E. The events commemorated by Tisha b'Av are so tragic that almost 2000 years ago the rabbis ordained that Jews should refrain from most pleasurable activities from the beginning of the month. Traditionally Jews have observed this day by not eating, bathing or wearing leather shoes.

Therefore I find a connection between this day when we mourn the loss of the two greatest symbols of our faith's history and the loss of one of our own community's matriarchs, Charlotte Friedman. For just as the high priests of the ancient temples guided the early Jews in their religious activities it was people such as Charlotte who helped maintain the organizations and institutions that have provided for the rich Jewish life that our small community enjoys today.

When I heard the news that Lottie passed away I looked through some of the records of the early meetings of the group that founded Beth Shalom Synagogue in the early 30's and found references to Lottie and Israel Friedman. They are recorded as having been in attendance at one of the first meetings of the still unnamed congregation on October 14, 1932. This must have been quite a challenge for Lottie as her first son David was born only 2 weeks later. I wonder if she was among those who voted to hire the shul's first spiritual leader, Rabbi Eisen for the sum of \$1800 per year. A plaque above the entrance to our sanctuary records I.R. Friedman as a member of our Board of Governors of the synagogue in 1950 when the new building was open. Another plaque records the names of Mr. and Mrs. I.R. Friedman as contributors to the fund raising activities that led to the beautification of the sanctuary. I.R. Friedman was instrumental in selling dedications for the stained glass windows which went a long way towards retiring the mortgage the synagogue had at that time. He also served as synagogue president.

In her own right Lottie was a president of the Edmonton Branch of the National Council of Jewish Women, a life member of Hadassah-Wizo who used her retail training to help organize the Hadassah Bazaars, and an active member of the Beth Shalom sisterhood.

In a few minutes you will hear more of Lotties personal and business life and loves from someone who knew her for most of his life but I just wanted to mention a few of the reflections that the family shared with me last night.

Very often when we gather to remember a woman who lived to the age of 95 we hear how her last few years have been spent in a hospital or convalescent home. This was not the case with Lottie who lived life to the fullest in her own apartment till days before she passed away. Only last Thursday she enjoyed a full and hearty lunch at Earl's Tin Palace. It was only in the last few months that she participated in the lunches and activities at the Jewish Drop-In Centre. Apparently she felt that the other members were just a little too old for her. But she loved playing Bingo as did one of her caregivers so she finally decided that the time to join had arrived.

Alexis recalls her grandmother as being very loving and generous. Apparently her driving skills were not to her grandchildren's liking and whenever they went for drives they urged her to let I.R. drive.

Lottie loved being the centre of attention. Her personality and sense of humour drew people to her and after a few minutes they recognized her genuine affection for her family and friends. Even though Alexis moved to Vancouver they talked every week with Lotties last words on the phone always the same--I love you--I really do.

Lottie's devotion to family instilled in them a sense of their past and a love for our religion and our institutions. Even the simple act of her lighting the Shabbat candles at Friday night dinner serve as an inspiration to her

children David and Harry, their wives Cori and Elaine, her grandchildren Jackie, Lisa, Melanie, Randall and Alexis, and great grand children Noa, Sari and Yotam as they carry on the tradition of community devotion that the Friedmans brought to Edmonton.

Although I hadn't talked to her for many years I too respect the integrity and hard work she exhibited together with her husband of 54 years, Israel Friedman, as they helped establish this community for myself and my children.

There is only one happy association with the holiday of Tisha b'Av. According to an ancient Jewish tradition the Messiah will be born on this day. So even today as we mourn for our destroyed temples and our beloved Charlotte Friedman we can take time to reflect on the full life she lived, her vitality, her spirit, her love of community and family and the legacy she left us.

Peter Owen was like an adopted nephew to Lottie and I look forward to his memories of her life.