Daniel Merz

(15)

1898-1902

Daniel Merz was appointed to succeed the late Philip Lewin as President of Keneseth Israel in 1898, where he served until his own death in 1902. During his tenure, Rabbi J. Leonard Levy was granted a leave of absence to serve as a chaplain with Colonel Kagan’s brigade in the Spanish-American War, and subsequently left the congregation in 1901 to assume the pulpit of Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Pittsburgh.

Daniel Merz was born on January 1, 1841 in Bad Duerkheim, Bavaria. He first immigrated to West Point, Georgia with his brother Louis. In West Point, Merz served as President of the Board of Education. After Louis was killed in the Civil War, Merz started a general merchandise firm, Heymann, Merz & Company. He later moved to Philadelphia, where he and his brother-in-law John J. Hagedorn ran a ladies’ shirtwaist manufacturing firm called Hagedorn & Merz, located at Third and Brown Streets. In 1870, Merz married Regina Herrberg of Philadelphia. They had seven children: Louis, Millard, Eugene, Leon, Jennie, and two additional daughters listed as Mrs. Leon Schloss of Baltimore and Mrs. Leon Simon of New Orleans. They lived at 714 North Fifth Street. In Philadelphia, Merz continued to be civically engaged. He was at various points Master of Ivanhoe Lodge, F. and A.M., a member of other lodges and orders, a member of the Mercantile Club and all local Jewish charities, Director of the Jewish Publication Society, and Director and Vice-President of the Orphans’ Guardians, in addition to serving as President of Keneseth Israel. Merz died on May 19, 1902 of heart disease. He is buried at Mount Sinai Cemetery.