Simon Silberman

(9,11)

1863-1873

1882-1883

Simon Silberman, a noted Philadelphia businessman and philanthropist, served two nonconsecutive terms as President of Keneseth Israel. During his first term, from 1863 to 1873, Keneseth Israel enjoyed substantial growth. The congregation bought a new plot of land at Sixth and Brown Streets to build a new Temple, which was dedicated on September 23, 1864. Silberman, himself, led the building committee. Keneseth Israel purchased a new organ for this new Temple and hired a Reader, William Armhold, to fill the role that had once been occupied by a Chazzan before the arrival of Rabbi Einhorn.

In 1866, Rabbi Einhorn left Keneseth Israel to lead a congregation in New York, and Silberman hired Rabbi Dr. Samuel Hirsch, the former Rabbi of Dessau and the Grand Rabbi of the Duchy of Luxembourg, in August of that year. Rabbi Hirsch made additional changes to the congregation’s customs, including abolishing the wearing of hats in synagogue, instituting the Sunday lecture, introducing the three-year cycle of Torah reading, and discontinuing Friday evening services.

 Silberman was born on February 28, 1826 in Frankfurt, Germany. He immigrated to Philadelphia as a young man, and took up work in notions and clothing. He had a talent for business, and quickly built up a successful operation: B&L Tailoring at 77 Fourth Street, with his partner Joseph Bress. Silberman was widely known for his business acumen and Jewish charitable activities, and was well-liked and well-respected. He was married to Ida Bannara, with whom he had four children: Jane, Mary, Frances, and Martha. They lived at 1727 Spring Garden Street in Philadelphia, although at the time of Silberman’s death he lived at 716 North Sixth Street. Silberman died on January 10th, 1883. His wife donated the pulpit for Keneseth Israel’s Broad Street home in his honor at the 1892 consecration. Silberman is buried at Mt. Sinai Cemetery.