OLD TEMPLE SERVED CONGREGATION HERE FOR SIX DECADES
Worshippers Once Were All Living In Close Proximity To Building

NEW TEMPLE BETH-OR IS LOCATED ON NARROW LANE ROAD
Today's Numerous Congregation Began With 19 Members In 1852
Members of the congregation served in two world wars. Capt. Julian Strassburger and Lt. Julian Hohenberg gave their lives in World War I, and Lt. Albert Loeb gave his in World War II.

Today, Kahl Montgomery has an imposing new place of worship on Narrow Lane road. An automobile sales lot will occupy the site of the old temple.

The fact that the congregation observed the 300th anniversary of its founding 10 years ago points up the fact that the Montgomery Jewish community has played a prominent role in city affairs for generations.

Actually, the first white man to settle in this area permanently may have been a Jew. Abraham Mordecai came here from Pennsylvania as far back as 1765, acquiring an Indian wife and numerous offspring and reputedly living to be 100.

Montgomery's first Jewish citizen was Jacob Sacerdote, who operated a restaurant on Court Square where Liggett's Drug Store stands now.

By 1849, Jews were numerous enough here to feel the need to organize a congregation. Its officers were Josiah Weil, president; H. Lehman, vice president; Emanuel Lehman, secretary; Jacob Meyer, treasurer; and M. Englander and H. Weil, trustees.

Three years later the constitution of Kahl Montgomery was drawn up and the congregation had its official beginning. Among its provisions was a 50-cent fine for members who were absent from meetings without valid excuses.

Josiah Weil remained as president of the religious society. Jacob Myer was vice president, Henry White secretary, F. Benedict treasurer, and J. Abraham and S. Marks trustees.

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Services at first were quite orthodox, but in 1874 the reform ritual was adopted.

Twenty-one rabbis have served the congregation, of whom the latest is Eugene Blachschleger. Gaston Greil is the present president of the congregation.

Family names and lines of descent have maintained a continuous link with the past. At a tree planting ceremony of the 100th anniversary honored the charter members, the planting was done by Phil Henle, a great-great-nephew of the first president, Josiah Weil. The congregation also numbers numerous other descendents of its founders.