

MR. DAVE COBLIN - (Richmond & Delta Jewish Community Association)

INTERVIEWED:

May 5, 1975

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Mr. & Mrs. Coblin came to Richmond in 1958 and the nearest synagogue was 27th & Oak St. in Vancouver. There were about 12-20 Jewish families in Richmond attending one of the three Vancouver synagogues.

As Richmond was growing heavily in the 1960's there were eventually 120 families in Richmond. Rabbi Harold Rubens organised a wine & cheese party in November 1970 in Vancouver and of the Richmond families attending some met to form the Richmond & Delta Jewish Community Council.

Their charter was granted under the name of the Richmond & Delta Jewish Community Association in February 22, 1971.

The group was made up of people moving from Vancouver and also other parts of Canada.

#### Structure of Group

Composed of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and six Board members.

The first priority was to establish a kindergarten and Jewish education for the children.

#### Committees:

- Education
- Youth Activities
- Adult Activities
- Religious
- Ways & Means (fund-raising)
- Land & Building Acquisition

The kindergarten was started at the Richmond United Church in 1972, for 3, 4 & 5 year olds. The Hebrew school is from 3:30 - 5 p.m.

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Adults meet in private homes for Hebrew language and culture sessions.

### Observations of High Holidays

First one in 1972 at the Airport Inn, Richmond, under the direction of Rabbi Leonard Oberstein with Cantor Leon Wenger. There were over 100 people in attendance during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The same celebrations with the same leaders were held in 1973. In 1974 the services were under the Conservative Rabbi available so Chaim Cornfeld was Cantor and he was assisted by Howie Nixon. There was at this time no separation of men and women, and families sat together. Under Orthodox tradition, men and women worship separately (explanation given).

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### Role of Women

Full status in the Association. In the Reformed Movement, there are some women Rabbis. The Jewish mother has a different though not lesser role from men. There are women teaching the kindergarten and will be teaching the adult class in the fall of 1975.

### Special Events

In order to acquire land and put up a building, various projects were undertaken - raffles, bingos, casino nights. In 1973 an Art Auction was organized under Helene Rosen at the Richmond Inn, raising about \$4,000.00. The auction in 1974 raised about \$6,000.00 and another will be held May 14, 1975. Also in 1975 in April, they sponsored a Carnival at the Minoru Park and will try another.

### First Confirmations

In 1973 they celebrated a Bat Mitzvah for Cheryl Reiser, and the first Bar Mitzvah was in March 1974 of Sheldon Silverman. At the High Holiday services of 1975 a Bar Mitzvah will be celebrated.

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### Silver Anniversary of Israel

This was celebrated in 1973 and the group sold Israeli bonds and received a certificate for this.

### Plans for the Future

Plans for a building are awaiting official approval. Land was acquired mid-1973 at Geal & Williams Road.

### Plan

Will be a Jewish Community Centre, composing a large multi-purpose room with a stage of 60' x 60', with a high ceiling for games. Attached to this structure will be a 2-story building, housing meeting-rooms, classrooms and a permanent sanctuary for religious purposes. The building will be solely for Jewish people to encourage the identity of the Hebrew people using it.

### Architect

Under the guidance of Mr. David Caplan.

### Heating

Will have 2 natural gas furnaces heating each floor in the educational wing and the multi-purpose room will have 2 suspended space heaters.

### Building Materials

Will be wood frame with much cedar, and roof of tar and gravel. Parking will be at side and rear.

### Price

The building, less furnishings, will be in the neighbourhood of \$200,000. The Ark for the Torah will be made locally. There are sources of interest for obtaining a Torah.

### Contractor

Tenders have gone out, but not among any members of the Association.

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Role of Mr. Coblin

Has served as President of the Association for the 1974-75 term and has been elected for a second term.

If the building is not ready for the fall of 1975, the High Holidays will again be celebrated at the Richmond Inn.

MURIEL NOBLE.