

REMINISCENCES OF SAMUEL WESTHEIMER

(Dictated a few months before his death in St. Joseph,
Missouri in December, 1914)

After passing through our local school at the age of fourteen, I commenced learning the tinner's trade in a neighboring town (Furth) by name. At the age of fifteen and a half years, I came to the United States in a sailing ship which took thirty-nine days to cross the ocean. Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur coming during this trip I fasted on Yom Kippur the entire day. In this connection I wish to remark that I have fasted every Yom Kippur from the time I reached the age of thirteen years up to this writing. After arriving in New York I commenced to peddle in that City with small articles of notions, until I finally got work in the tin shop. The most of my compensation for this work being board and a bed to sleep in in an attic and most of my board consisted of rice and not relishing the Chinese delicacy I resigned my position with an air of injured pride. I then got a position in a more pretentious shop, this being on the East side of Broad Street about three or four doors South of Wall Street where I worked about a year and a half. From this place, I was engaged to take charge of the tin shop in Middleberg, New York, to the owner of which I was recommended by my brother Ferdinand, who then peddled in that part of New York State. This man came to New York and told me that he, having two stores, side by side, one dry goods store and one tin shop, which after agreeing upon my salary, which in those days was comparatively small, I made the stipulation of agreement that I was to have a vacation either in September or October, of about three weeks, each year. I took this vacation each year by going to New York City during our Holiday

Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur and the last time I took this vacation, I stayed in New York about three or four days longer on account of wishing to await the arrival from Europe of two of my cousins, viz Davida and Bernhart Kahn. When I came back to Middleberg, I went directly to the shop and commenced to work. As soon as I arrived my employer came into the shop and commenced to find fault on account of staying away three or four days longer than agreed upon. I told him why I stayed in New York, but this did not seem to have satisfied him, but as I had been chafing for some time to get out of this work where my chances were at best very limited and longed to get into some avocation where I could use my time and energy to ultimate better and more satisfactory results, thus now the culminating time had now arrived and I told my employer that I would from this day on quit the tin trade altogether. The next morning I went to Roundout, New York, where I knew I would find my two brothers, they having also just gone there from New York to arrange and load their merchandise for the Fall peddling. I told them that I was going to peddle and then selected sufficient goods from their stock to make up a good sized pack and started out from there in a new field of making my living with a pack on my back. My field of operating I made in Green County, Sacohara County, Delaware County and Ulster County, all in New York State. I started out happy and full of confidence of being able to succeed in this work. I continued this work for about four or five months the only unpleasant feature in this, to me, was the barking dogs in the farmer's yards. After a lapse of these few months, I was able to buy a horse and peddler's wagon. In this work I continued until 1857. At this time my lamented brother David, asked me

to go to Terre Haute, Indiana, where he had been in the retail Dry Goods business, which location however, he had to leave on account of his wife not being able to stand that climate. I went to Terre Haute where I and Leopold Epstein, who was a partner of my brother in that business. We packed all the goods and shipped these to Charleston, Illinois, in care of Elias Epstein, who was then living at Charleston, and was a brother of Leopold Epstein. I then bought a team of horses and peddler's wagon and continued in this work until February, 1859. About this time, the Pikes Peak mines being discovered, and St. Joseph becoming the principal outfitting place, I came to St. Joseph in March 1859. The Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad being finished, but shortly before, on account of much rain, the road was soft and several times, our train encountered freight trains off the track. Hence it took our train from Friday morning to Sunday morning to go from Hannibal to St. Joseph. About two weeks after my arrival I started the retail grocery business on Frederick Avenue. I continued this until 1862. This year I went to Europe to visit my parents, coming back from Europe in the Fall of 1862. I then went to Tennessee and remained there until Spring buying cotton and shipping same from time to time when we finally were invited, that is to say, myself and quite a number of others, by a commanding Military Officer of Jackson, Tennessee, to leave his military lines by the first train going North, noncompliance of which would subject us to be further invited to sojourn in the intrenchments being then built as a means of defense. Needless to say that line of work did not quite suit or taste. Myself and the others left the field for our homes.

After being home about two weeks, viz, some time in April 1863, I started in the wholesale grocery business on Felix Street, in which business I continued until 1869. In March 1870 I started into the wholesale liquor business, which business is in full force at this writing, August, 1913.

(SIGNED) Samuel Westheimer