

(Rosenbaum - continued from page 4)

ces, Ruth (my mother), and Doris. Their marriage lasted fifty years, ending with L.N.'s death in 1955.

Fani's Death

When Fani died on April 21, 1910, she had lived in Seattle only five years. She was not yet sixty years old. According to her death certificate, her home was at 768 Bellevue Avenue North; she was a widow and housewife, and the cause of death was heart failure complicated by Bright's disease. As reported in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, funeral services were held at the chapel at Butterworth and Sons, 1921 First Avenue, at 11 a.m. on April 22, 1910, prior to her burial at Herzl Memorial Park.

By 1914, L.N., Bella, and their children had moved east, with L.N. going into business on Wall Street. He became an extremely wealthy man who helped finance business and real estate transactions across the United States. Unlike so many others, L.N. did not invest in the stock market and came out of the Depression even richer than he was before the market crashed. His family resided in a spacious Park Avenue apartment, and all of his children attended university.

The Memorial Chapel

The seven thousand dollar donation for the construction and furnishing of the Fani Rosenbaum Memorial Chapel was apparently the result of a special visit made to L.N. in 1936 (presumably in New York City) by Rabbi Philip A. Langh of Herzl Congregation.

The architect of the Fani Rosenbaum Memorial Chapel was B. Marcus Priteca, a Scottish Jew famous for the many theatres he designed for the Pantages chain. Although he was not the primary architect, Priteca also was involved in the design of the Paramount Theater apartments and commercial building which was one of L.N. Rosenbaum's many real estate ventures in Seattle. When Priteca was hired to design the Memorial Chapel, he was known throughout Seattle's Jewish community as the architect of Congregation Bikur Cholim (1912-1915) and of the Jewish Settlement House Educational Center (1914-1916).

Although The Jewish Transcript reported that the design of the chapel was "modeled on Hebrew University" in Jerusalem, my mother told me that the domed structure was based on Rachel's Tomb. Rachel -- wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph - went into labor and died on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem while giving

birth to Benjamin. Jacob buried his wife by the side of the road, marking her grave with a stone monument. Some doubt whether the structure known as Rachel's Tomb (now a building constructed by Sir Moses Montefiore in 1841 and more recently fortified as a result of on-going political instability in that part of the world) shelters her actual grave. I cannot tell you whether there were any domed buildings on the campus of the Hebrew University in 1936; the University had opened its doors only in April of 1925.



Photo by Don Silverman

The Fani Rosenbaum Memorial Chapel was dedicated on Sunday, September 12, 1937, and a dinner in L.N.'s honor was held in the Herzl Synagogue vestry at 6 p.m. As reported in the Transcript, dedication of the Memorial Chapel was the result of "20 years of activity by Peter Thomas, auto body builder and longtime Herzl congregational worker, as president of the synagogue's Chevra Kadisha, burial society." Apparently, completion of the interior of the chapel, its furnishing and the installation of seats, took place several years later.

And so we remember Fani Rosenbaum -- immigrant, wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother - a humble homemaker who devoted herself to her family and who died before the age of sixty. We can only imagine how many other women - nameless and faceless -- lived similar lives, offering their children the American dream. Fani, however, in one way was privileged, by having a chapel built in her honor and named after her by a successful and devoted son. So, the next time you enter or pass the Fani Rosenbaum Memorial Chapel, I hope that you will think of Fani and all those other anonymous women, who did not make it into the history books, but whose descendents today live comfortably and prosperously across the United States.

Judith W. Rosenthal, great-granddaughter of Fani, and granddaughter of L.N., lives in Edison, NJ; she is a "long distance" member of the WSJHS.