

and the Eastern United States gathered in Lewis Franklin's tent store on Jackson Street to commemorate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

Franklin, 29, had come to the booming town from Baltimore. In a prophecy that would come to pass for many Gold Rush immigrants, he read from the Book of Ecclesiastes: "These shining baubles may lure the million," he read, "but they will take unto themselves wings, and flee from thee, leaving thou as naked as when thou were first created."

Those communal prayers, the first public Jewish worship service known to have been held in the West, led to the founding of San Francisco's two leading Reform movement synagogues, Congregation Emanu-El and Congregation Sherith Israel.

Less than 2 years after that first citywide Rosh Hashanah, in April 1851, ethnic disputes and class differences had spawned rival houses of worship, with the more traditional Poles establishing Sherith Israel and the more liberal Germans founding Emanu-El.

"German Jews came from refined society. It was the height of European culture," said Rabbi Stephen Pearce, the current spiritual leader of Emanu-El. "German Jews were more liberal and among the leading citizens of the city, people like Levi Strauss."

This month, as both congregations begin a year-long series of mostly separate anniversary events, echoes of that Gold Rush rivalry remain. Differences in leadership styles and a recent price war over membership dues have replaced ethnicity and ancient arguments over Jewish ritual as the bones of contention.

But Rabbi Martin Weiner, who has led Sherith Israel for 27 years, prefers to play down the differences and avoid discussing whatever rivalry remains.

"Every synagogue had slightly different traditions, but those divisions have faded," he said. "Both have served the community well."

This Sunday, on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, Weiner and Cantor Martin Feldman, a Sherith Israel fixture since 1960, will lead a traditional Rosh Hashanah service in the shadow of the TransAmerica Building. That is only a block from where the city's first Yom Kippur service was held, on Sept. 26, 1849, ending the city's first services for the High Holy Days.

Actors in period costumes will be featured this Sunday, along with the traditional sounding of the shofar, or ram's horn.

As it did for many of San Francisco's first religious congregations, fires and earthquakes kept the pioneer Jewish community on the move.

Sherith Israel's first quarters, at Merchants Court on Washington Street between Montgomery and Sansome streets, was destroyed by the great fire of 1851, as was the congregation's next home on Kearny Street.

The cornerstone of the congregation's present building at California and Webster streets was laid on Feb. 22, 1904. The interior of the landmark edifice, designed by Albert Pissus, retains an old world flavor with magnificent mahogany woodwork.

Members of Congregation Emanu-El have worshiped beneath their graceful dome at Lake and Arguello streets since 1926, when they abandoned and razed their twin-towered synagogue on Sutter Street. That edifice, on the side of Nob Hill above Union Square, had towered over the city scape since 1866, even after it lost its two onion-shaped domes in the great 1906 earthquake.

Congregation Emanu-El began its 150th anniversary celebration last month with an ar-

chitectural exhibit, running through January 2, entitled "Emanu-El—Image on the Skyline, Impact on the City." It brings together photographs, maps, drawings and blueprints to tell the tale of San Francisco's largest and most prosperous synagogue.

In 1854, Julius Eckman was hired as the first rabbi to preside over Emanu-El's original house of worship, a neogothic synagogue built on Broadway for \$35,000. A scholarly graduate of the University of Berlin, Eckman lasted only a year at the Reform-minded congregation.

Many of Congregation Emanu-El's early members were Gold Rush merchants, including some who went on to establish great fortunes, like the Levi Strauss clothing empire. Jesse Seligman, the son of a poor Bavarian farmer, founded a dry goods business in San Francisco in 1859, using that as a springboard into international investment banking.

Another Bavarian Jew who prospered as a Gold Rush merchant, 25-year-old August Helbing, arrived here from New Orleans in 1849. He founded the Eureka Benevolent Society, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary in its current incarnation, Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

In founding the charity, Helbing sought to care for "the Israelites landing here, broken in health or destitute in means."

Indeed, the Gold Rush is full of stories about people going from rags to riches, and back to rags. In their book, "Pioneer Jews—A New Life in the Far West," Harriet and Fred Rochlin tell the story of Morris Shloss, who docked in San Francisco on September 25, 1849, amid the first High Holy Day services.

Shloss, a 20-year-old Polish merchant, made his first sale right on the dock. In New York, he had paid \$3 for a large wooden box to carry his wagon with him to San Francisco. Keeping the wagon, he sold the box for \$100 to a cobbler who wanted to use it as a workshop and bedroom.

The enterprising Shloss used that money to buy stationery, reselling it at a makeshift stand for a handsome profit. He worked at night as a fiddler at the El Dorado, a gambling hall at Washington and Kearny, getting an ounce of gold, worth \$16, for each three-hour gig. He soon managed to rent a tiny store next to the El Dorado for \$400, where he bought trunks from miners eager to lighten their loads before heading up the gold fields.

In just two months, he had earned between \$5,000 and \$6,000. Then, on Christmas Eve, he lost it all when a fire in an adjacent hotel leveled his store.

Destitute, he sailed off to follow another purported Gold Rush outside Eureka, which turned out to be a hoax. He survived for four months on clams and crackers until a schooner brought him back to San Francisco. He started two more businesses in 1852 and 1853, both of which were destroyed by fire. His brother was killed in a shipwreck after coming out to help him. Nevertheless, Shloss started another business and soon made enough money to bring his fiancée to San Francisco.

Most of the city's pioneer Jews, the Rochlins wrote, "bore the imprint of centuries of European oppression: pogroms, expulsions, segregations, exploitative taxes and barred occupations."

But in the wide-open West, they "Americanized and regionalized with speed, energy and élan."

"Most Jews who responded to the glittering promises of the far western frontier

and rose to its awesome obstacles were intrepid, resourceful and individualistic," the Rochlins write. "For the most part, they were also literate, sober and drive to prove themselves."

HONORING TOMAS REYES FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DELAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to join the New Haven Hispanic community to thank my dear friend, Tomas Reyes, for his commitment and dedication to our community. I regret that I am unable to join the friends, family, and community members who will gather this evening at Casa Otonal's annual celebration to pay tribute to Tomas for his many years of service to the City of New Haven.

An icon in the city for nearly two decades, Tomas Reyes recently announced his retirement as President of New Haven's Board of Aldermen. As Alderman of the 4th Ward, Tomas spent his 18 year tenure making sure the City of New Haven was able to meet the many challenges that have faced our city. Under his membership and direction of the Board, programs such as Headstart, Latino Youth Development, Inc., New Haven Family Alliance, Youth Fair Chance, and the Hill Development Corporation were implemented to meet the changing needs of our residents. Tomas was an avid and vocal supporter of city funding for these programs because they provide much needed services to our city's neediest families.

Tomas once said that he wanted to be actively involved in politics in order to change his neighborhood. He challenged himself to meet a variety of needs, and he succeeded. Tomas has served the City of New Haven with integrity and has improved the quality of life for many.

As the only Latino elected to the Board of Aldermen in 1981, his initial efforts were focused on strengthening representation of the Hispanic community and encouraging the Latino community to become involved in city politics. His strong character and enthusiasm have motivated New Haven's Hispanic community to be both active and vocal. Tomas has long been involved with young people in our community and continues to support many programs and projects designed to assist the children of less fortunate families. As co-founder of Latino Youth Development, Inc., he created a venue for inner-city kids to develop the skills necessary to be successful in today's technological society.

I am fortunate enough to call Tomas a close friend not only in the political arena but personally as well. He has been a long-time colleague of my mother, Louisa, on the Board of Aldermen, and a dear friend to us both. His energy and conviction have been a source of inspiration—not only to myself but to the entire community.

It is with great pleasure that I rise today and join the New Haven Hispanic community to