

## The Jewish Community in Ligonier

Lois Fields Swartz, author of "The Jews of Ligonier —an American Experience" noted that "high taxes, loss of personal freedoms and political animosities against the Jews led the list of reasons" for the migration of Jewish people to the United States from Germany. Although they were trained in a variety of trades, many earned their livelihood as peddlers. After establishing a customer base, it did not take long to become the owner of a store. Two of these immigrant peddlers were Solomon Mier and Frederick Straus, who arrived in Ligonier in the 1850's. They wrote to friends and relatives in Prussia urging them to come to this growing community.

In a few years there were more than 500 Jewish people living here. The Jewish community including most of the city's merchants, bankers and professionals, as well as most of the city's wealth. For 80 years, from 1854 to 1928, the Jewish community was an integral part of Ligonier and very influential in its growth and success.

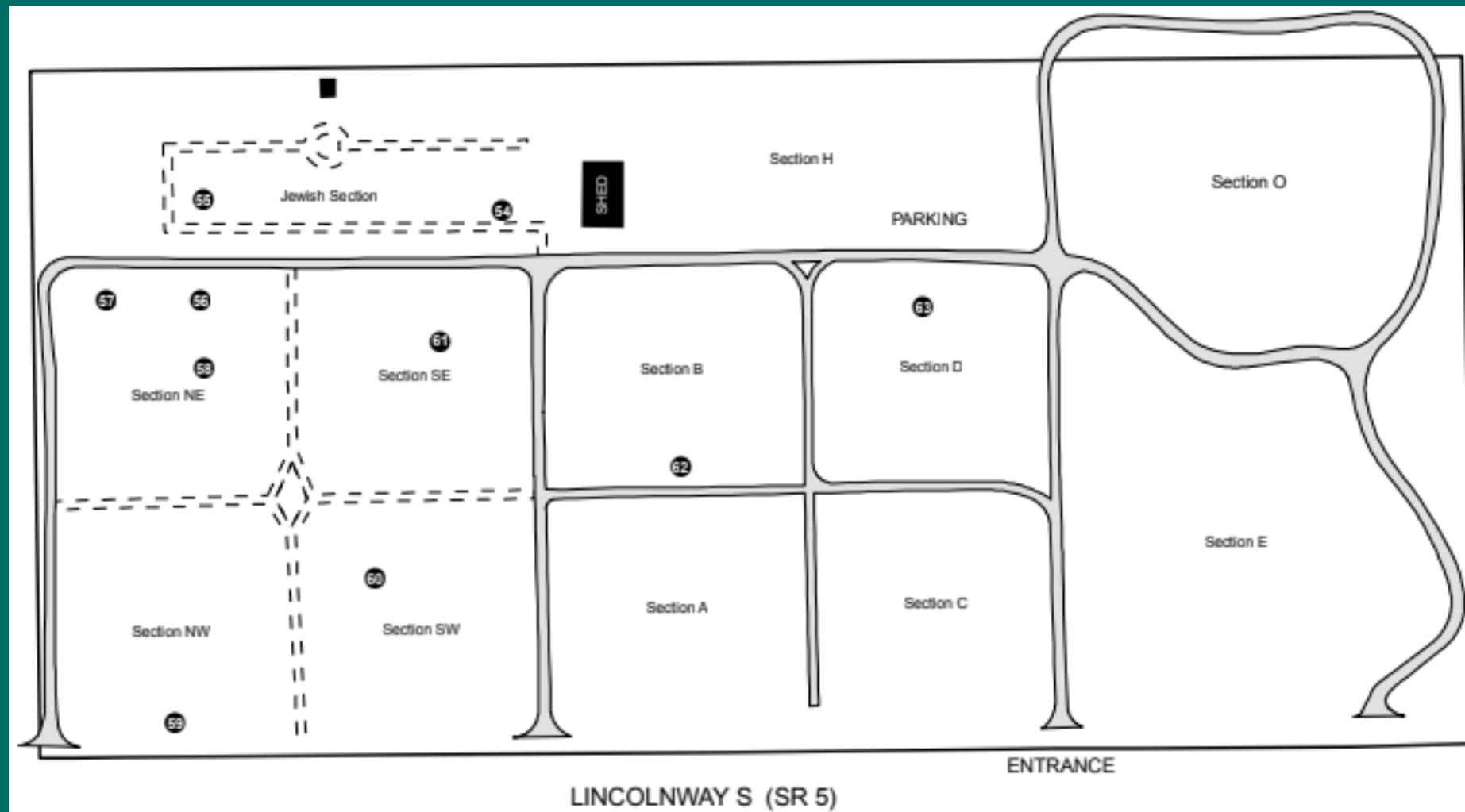


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## Dr. Adam Gantz

*Dentist and Local Leader*

Gantz was born in Ohio on Oct. 8, 1838 and moved to Ligonier after mastering dentistry. He opened his first office with a cash capital of \$1.50 in 1859. He succeeded in this business and was the only dentist in the city for 20 years.

He had an active interest in political affairs since he was young. He aligned with Republican principles after he heard the speech of a liberated enslaved person who visited his neighborhood. This was at a time when a Republican was entirely unknown in his community. He cast his first presidential vote for Abraham Lincoln in 1860. In 1899, he was elected to the 61st general assembly of the State of Indiana. While serving there, Gantz was appointed to the committee on vital statistics, the committee on prison reform and three other important committees.

## Leland Thompson

*Editor & Publisher of the Ligonier Leader*

Leland was born in 1892. During World War I, he served as secretary to Republican Congressman Fairfield in Washington, D.C. He joined his father, Edwin G. Thompson, as assistant editor of the Leader in 1920. He took over as sole editor and publisher of the Leader when his father died and it remained in the Thompson family until 1966.

## Robert Creps

*World War II Veteran & Business Owner*

Creps was born in 1917 and was working at the family bakery, Ligonier Quality Bakery, with his parents when World War II broke out. He enlisted in the Army at Fort Benjamin Harrison on Feb. 12, 1942. Robert married Virginia Pearson and they took over the bakery two years after his father's death. This bakery was popularly known as "Creps Bakery". Their son, Jim, joined the business in the early 1970s. Jim's daughter, Heather, was associated with the bakery, making it a fourth-generation business.

## Edwin G. Thompson

*Successful Publisher of the Ligonier Leader*

After apprenticing at Newspapers in Michigan, Ohio, Iowa & Wisconsin, prominent Republicans in Ligonier urged Thompson to come to Ligonier and start a newspaper. Twenty-five-year-old Edwin printed the first Ligonier Leader on June 4, 1880. That issue was two pages of local news, printed on a small hand press. He sold out all 600 copies printed. The success continued, and in less than twenty years, New York advertising agents Geo. P. Rowell & Co. certified that "The Ligonier Leader is credited with a higher circulation rate than any other issued in Noble County."