

BROKEN HILL/KABWE

The first modern town to emerge along the Line of Rail was Broken Hill, now Kabwe. Its lead and zinc mine was developed from 1902 by Edmund Davis, an Australian entrepreneur of French Jewish descent, who also started the Silver King and the Crystal Jacket mines which were the first modern copper mines in the country in the area known as the Hook of Kafue, now in the Kafue National Park.

After the arrival of the railway in 1906, Broken Hill became the first commercial and administrative centre in central Zambia. Early Jewish traders included Messrs. Salomon and Rollnik, represented by J. R. Rollnick, who moved on to the Congo; Ludwig Deuss's Northern Rhodesia Trading Company (based in Hamburg, Germany, it was closed down after the outbreak of World War I in 1914); and the Beemer brothers, Harry and Joseph, who came from Lithuania and founded the Broken Hill Trading Company.

Other Jewish residents in the 1920s and 1930s included Chaim Hochstein from Ukraine, with his London-born wife Rebecca, and Maurice (Moshe) Thal, from Latvia. Thal was president of the Hebrew congregation for several years; he was an intellectual as well as a trader, and his Irish-born wife, Celia Rubinstein, was a talented musician.

KITWE

Jewish entrepreneurial families played a significant part in the development of Kitwe, which until independence was Zambia's largest town. They included the Gersh, Kollenberg and Herr families. Prominent community members included the retail magnate Sidney Diamond and Maurice Gersh, who served as mayor of the town in 1954-6. In 1931, Diamond founded Standard Trading, described as the best department store in central Africa. Unlike his rivals, he achieved this without a kinship network or financial backing from abroad. The Gersh brothers owned African Commercial Holdings in Kitwe, and later established an iron foundry there. Maurice Gersh employed Elie Lurie, who arrived in 1935 and worked for twenty years in Economy Stores and Morris Goldstein, who went on to establish a mineral water factory and a garage. In 1938, David and Joan Kollenberg moved to Kitwe, where David was involved in numerous business ventures until his death in 1968. The Kitwe synagogue was built in 1948.



Nkana Hotel



Ann and Max Melamed - Kitwe



The Jewish community of Kitwe gathers outside the synagogue, circa 1960



*Pesach Seder - Kitwe
Left to right: Mrs Bently, Colin Shmul (Accountant of the Nkana Hotel), Mrs Mandel, Fay Dobkins, Moss Dobkins (standing), Mr Mandel, Ann Melamed, Ian Melamed, Aunt Deb Mishkin, Mr Bently*



Plaque commemorating the visit to Kitwe of the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, The Very Reverend Israel Brodie, in 1950