

WOONSOCKET CAN MAY 7, 1984

S. Berger, 94, Dies; Ex-City Industrialist

BERGER
SIEGMUND

Siegmund Berger, 94, of 10155 Collins Ave., Bal Harbor, Fla., retired Woonsocket industrialist, philanthropist and civic leader, died Saturday at home following a long illness. He was the husband of Rose (Schlansky) Berger.

He was the second prominent member of the Woonsocket Jewish community to die within a day. Israel Medoff, a close friend and business associate, died Friday.

Born Jan. 23, 1890, in Czechoslovakia, a son of the late Heinrich and Gabriele (Loebel) Berger, he was graduated with honors from the Textile Academy in Brunn, Czechoslovakia. He had arrived in the United States on Feb. 7, 1914, on a combination birthday-graduation present trip from his family when trapped here by the outbreak of World War I.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army in World War I, and after his discharge, became superintendent of a textile plant in Pascoag.

In 1922, he joined the late Arthur I. Darman as manager of Mr. Dar-



Siegmund Berger

man's Woonsocket business enterprise. He remained as manager until he founded the Berger Wool Co. in 1933 of which he was presi-

dent until retiring in 1959.

He was the first full-term president of Woonsocket Lodge, B'nai B'rith, and served two consecutive terms

as chairman of the United Jewish Appeal. He was a charter member of the Woonsocket Lions Club and was a former member of the Woonsocket Chamber of Commerce.

A former director of Congregation B'nai Israel, he was chairman of the dedication exercises for the new synagogue in 1962.

In 1922, he and the former Rose Schlansky were married. During World War II, he was instrumental in rescuing about 50 families from Nazi Germany and its satellite countries, many having to be routed through China.

In June, 1964, Mr. and Mrs. Berger were feted by more than 300 friends and relatives at a testimonial in B'nai Israel Synagogue upon their moving from 381 Blackstone St., Woonsocket, to Providence. At that time, the establishment of the Siegmund and Rose Berger Endowment Fund of Congregation B'nai

Israel was announced.

They were presented a scroll which read, in part, "Congregation B'nai Israel gratefully acknowledges the humanitarian, educational and religious contributions for the purpose of advancement of the Jewish community of the City of Woonsocket, of Siegmund and Rose Berger. He has served the Jewish community of Woonsocket as a member of the board of directors and of several of the important committees of the congregation for many years. His insistence on excellence and perfection made his presence noticeable in many facets of communal life in which he took a leading part."

At that time, he was also described as a "delightful friend and warm-hearted human being whose nimble wit, rousing voice and artistry at the piano keyboard have brought thousands of hours of gaiety and joy to many."

His close friend, Federal Judge Shapiro of Miami Beach, was quoted as saying, "To know him is to love him."

Mr. Berger was also a member of Temple Emmanuel, Miami Beach; the Providence Hebrew Day School; the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; the Rhode Island Jewish Home for the Aged of Providence; the Miami Jewish Home for the Aged; the American Jewish Congress; the Boston Wool Trade Association, and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

His wife is his only survivor.

The funeral will be held tomorrow, with a service at 1 p.m. in B'nai Israel Synagogue, Prospect St. Burial will be in Congregational B'nai Israel Cemetery.

Arrangements are by the Holt Funeral Home and the Chevra Kad-disha.