

Obituaries

MRS. HYMAN BLIEDEN
Funeral services for Esther
"Blieden, 84, who died Tues-
day at the Jewish Home for the
Aged, were held Wednesday at the
Arman Memorial Chapel. Bur-
ial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery.

Russian immigrant who
worked in a New York sweat
shop, she went on to become a co-
founder and an original owner of
Warwick Shoppers World.

Mrs. Blieden, formerly of 10
Shuena Drive, Warwick, was
widow of Hyman Blieden, who
died in 1946.

She, her son, Milton, and Mil-
ton's brother-in-law, Edward
Katchkenbaum, opened the first
Warwick Shoppers World on War-
wick Avenue in Warwick in 1955.
That year, according to Milton
Blieden, it had sales of \$1,800,000.
By 1970, there were 10 War-
wick Shoppers World Stores, with
gross sales and income from lease-
agreements of about 55 million
dollars, Mr. Blieden said. That
the year the Warwick Shop-
pers World chain was acquired by
Zayre Corporation.

From 1955 until she became ill
in 1967 one could usually find

Mrs. Blieden during the day at her
customary place on a seat near the
cash register at the original War-
wick Shoppers World store. It was
from that post that she greeted
customers, helped them find what
they were looking for and dealt
with their complaints. She also
used that post for quick access to
the candy counter so she could get
candy and popcorn and distribute
it free to children from poor fam-
ilies.

Mrs. Blieden became known as
"Ma Blieden" in the early 1940s
because of an advertising gim-
mick. In 1939, when the Blieden
family came to live in Rhode Is-
land, Mrs. Blieden and her son,
Milton, opened "The Smart
Shop," a woman's store in West
Warwick. A few years later, they
opened "The Junior Shop," a chil-
dren's store, also in West War-
wick.

Mr. Blieden said the stores used
to have "Ma Blieden" sales and it
was because of the newspaper ad-
vertisements for these sales that
people began to call her "Ma Blie-
den." Both stores were sold in
1955, when the Warwick Shoppers
World was opened.

Mrs. Blieden was born in Russia
on September 15, 1889, a daugh-
ter of the late Chaim and Rebecca
(Draisin) Kaufman. She came to

the United States in 1898 to work
in what Mr. Blieden described as a
sweat shop, a blouse factory on
the lower East Side of New York
City. Milton said it was because of
her experience there that she later
idolized Eleanor Roosevelt, a
champion of improved working
conditions for women and chil-
dren.

In 1911 she married Hyman
Blieden, a retail merchant from
Mississippi whom she had met
when he visited New York. They
lived in Mississippi for two years,
then moved to Memphis, Ten-
nessee, for a 10 year stay.

She and her husband then
moved to Staten Island, New
York. They lived there until mov-
ing to Rhode Island in 1939. By
that time, her husband was se-
riously ill and was unable to work
in the Smart Shop.

She was a member of the
United Hias Organization of New
York and was a contributor to
many organizations, including St.
James Church in West Warwick
and the Greek Orthodox Church
in Providence.

Besides Milton, who lives in
Warwick, she is survived by two
other sons, Stanley Blieden of
West Warwick, and Dr. Robert
Blieden of Smithtown, Long Is-
land, New York; one daughter,
Lillian Ianora of Jamaica Estates,
Long Island; six grandchildren and
one great-grandson.

BLIEDEN, ESTHER

R.I. HER 8-16-74

Mrs. Esther Blieden, chain store founder

PROVIDENCE—Mrs. Esther "Ma" Blieden, 84, a Russian immigrant who worked in a New York sweat shop and then went on to become a co-founder and an original owner of Warwick Shoppers World, died Tuesday in the Jewish Home for the Aged.

Mrs. Blieden, formerly of 10 Mashuena Drive, Warwick, was the widow of Hyman Blieden, who died in 1946.

She, her son, Milton, and Milton's brother-in-law, Edward Zwetchkenbaum opened the first Warwick Shoppers World on Warwick Avenue in Warwick in 1955. In that year, according to Milton Blieden, it had sales of \$1,800,000.

By 1970, there were 10 Warwick Shoppers World Stores, with gross sales and income from leasing agreements of about 55 million dollars, Blieden said. That was the year the Warwick Shoppers World chain was acquired by the Zayre Corporation.

From 1955 until she became ill in 1967 you could usually find Mrs. Blieden during the day at her customary place on a seat near the cash registers at the original Warwick Shoppers World Store. It was from that post that she greeted customers, helped them find what they were looking for and dealt with their complaints. She also used that post for quick access to the candy counter so she could get candy and popcorn and distribute it free to children from poor families.

Mrs. Blieden became known as "Ma Blieden" in the early 1940s because of an advertising gimmick. In 1939, when the Blieden family came to live in Rhode Island, Mrs. Blieden and her son, Milton, opened "The Smart Shop," a woman's store, in West Warwick. A few years later, they opened "The Junior Shop," a children's store, also in West Warwick.

Milton Blieden said the stores used to have "Ma Blieden sales."

It was because of the newspaper advertisements for these sales that people began to call her "Ma Blieden." Both stores were sold in 1955, when the Warwick Shoppers World was opened.

Mrs. Blieden was born in Russia on Sept. 15, 1889, a daughter of the late Chaim and Rebecca (Draisin) Kaufman. She came to the United States in 1898 and went right



Mrs. Esther Blieden

to work in what Milton Blieden described as a sweat shop, a blouse factory on the lower East Side of New York City. Milton said it was because of her experience there that she later idolized Eleanor Roosevelt, a champion of improved working conditions for women and children.

In 1911 she married Hyman Blieden, a retail merchant from Mississippi whom she had met when he visited New York. They lived in Mississippi for two years, then moved to Memphis, Tenn., for a 10-year sojourn.

She and her husband then moved to Staten Island, N.Y. They lived there until moving to Rhode Island in 1939. By that time, her husband was seriously ill and was unable to work in the Smart Shop, which she and Milton opened.

She was a member of the United Hias Organization of New York, and was a contributor to many organizations, including St. James Church in West Warwick and the Greek Orthodox Church in Providence.

Besides Milton, who lives in Warwick, she is survived by two other sons, Stanley, of West Warwick, and Dr. Robert Blieden, of Smithtown, Long Island, N.Y.; one daughter, Mrs. Lillian Ianora, of Jamaica Estates, Long Island; six grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Her funeral was held at 1 p.m. yesterday at the Sugarman Memorial Chapel, 458 Hope St., Providence. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.