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Personalities

JEWISH COMMUNITY BLUE BOOK

Louis Bamberger

The Newark Museum will remain for all time a monument to the wisdom and generosity of Newark's foremost business man of this generation. Louis Bamberger is nationally known for two things; the great department store which bears his name, and the Newark Museum to which he has thus far given \$650,000 and which has attracted the attention of municipalities all over the country on account of the novelty of its plan.

Mr. Bamberger announced his original donation of \$500,000 to the Museum Association January 19, 1923 stating, "I do not propose to give to the Museum a sum of money. I propose to give to the Association a completed building suitable for its purpose to be with the tract of land whereon it stands, irrevocably dedicated to the Museum use, so long as the Association continues to function as contemplate by its charter."

The next day he amplified his statement: "I have felt for a long time that inasmuch as I had made a success of my business in Newark I owe the City the same thing. Newark has needed a Museum building and I am glad that it is possible for me to help the City have one."

Following the purpose outlined in his statement, Mr. Bamberger supervised the work of the building. On March 12, 1924, he added \$150,000 to the original outlay. Two days later he personally broke the first ground for the structure, located on the site of historic old L. Ward home on Washington Street.

The Department store of Mamberger & Company has been a powerful factor in making Newark the great industrial and business center that it is.

Mr. Louis Bamberger was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on May 15, 1855. His parents being Elkan and Theresa Hutzler Bamberger. He was educated in Baltimore public schools and entered the dry goods business in the service of his uncle at Baltimore and later went to New York with his father, Elkan Bamberger, opening a wholesale business. He wanted, however, to make a connection with the retail end of the business and believed that Newark provided an opportunity to do this. For two years he watched closely for a possible location here.

The chance he had waited for, came in 1892 with the bankrupt sale of Hill and Craig whose store was situated on the north-east corner of Halsey and Market Streets. He conducted the bankruptcy sale beginning December 13, 1892 so successfully that he decided within a week to put a new stock into the business and took Felix Fuld and Louis M. Frank in partnership with him.

The original store consisted of two floors and a basement. The dimensions of the floor being about 40' by 150'. The business grew so rapidly that it was necessary to add to the original store four or five times. The entire block bounded by Halsey, Market, Washington and Bank Streets was obtained and most^{of}/the present building was erected in 1912. An addition was made in 1922. The store now contains 23 acres of floor space and employs 2,800 persons.

He lives in South Orange and has for many years been leader in local philanthropy. As a Newark representative of the American Jewish Relief Society he donated \$10,00 to that organization in 1917. His was the first subscription for \$25,000 to the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association building fund in 1920 and in 1923 he gave and \$5,000 to the Palestine Foundation Fund,/\$2,500 to the Emergency Committee of the Jewish Refugees on October 7, 1924.

As vice-chairman of the Community Chest Drive, he opened that

campaign with a contribution of \$20,000 in November 1923.

He is the owner of letters written by Joseph Hewes of North Carolina, and John Penn of Virginia, both signers of the Declaration of Independence. He presented to the Newark Library in 1920, a bound file of the North Jersey Journal (Elizabeth) January to July 1783. This file is one of the earliest papers in the county and is considered of great value. In 1920 he gave the library a leaf of the first Guttenberg Bible, the page being valued at \$150. Other gifts of this nature include two portraits of James Miller, third Mayor of Newark during 1839, 1848, 1849 and 1859. One being presented to the Newark Museum and the other to the New Jersey Historical Society.

Among the many organizations with which Bamberger has been connected are: Trustee of the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Treasurer of the Newark Museum Association, President of the L. Bamberger and Company, Trustee of the New Jersey Historical Society, Trustee of the Newark Eye and Ear Infirmary, Director of the board of the Y. M. H. A., Director of the board of the Conference of Jewish Charities, Chairman of the Newark War Savings Stamp Committee, Committee member of the Liberty Loan Drives, Progress Club, Roosevelt Memorial Association, Musical Festival Association, Downtown Club, Newark Athletic Club, New York Harmonic Club, Museum of French Art of the United States, Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, Museum of Natural History of New York, Botanical Society of New York, and Trustee of the Provident Loan Association of Newark.

Mr. Louis Bamberger is not married.