



Carnegie Shul Chatter

July 2, 2020



Light candles 8:35pm Shabbat service 9:20am

Hot Dog!

Okay, this week let's talk about something we have never talked about before in the Chatter: the hot dog!

With the Fourth of July just a few days away, many of us will be picnicking (if we can find a safe place to do so) on traditional All-American foods like hamburgers and hot dogs. But did you know that hot dogs are actually a Jewish invention?

Below is an article from *The Times of Israel* that tells the story.

Stay Well!

Sadly, Allegheny County has experienced a dramatic increase in Covid 19 cases over the past week.

Just when it seemed that perhaps we had put this pandemic behind us, at least locally, things have taken a turn for the worse, and it is obvious that we still have a long way to go until things return to normal.

But at least we are back in Shul with our services being conducted as safely as humanly possible.

Yes, it is not ideal to wear a mask at Shul, and to not have the camaraderie of our Kiddush together after services, but we are having minyans, we are reading the Torah, we are praying together, and we are allowing our members to be able to say Kaddish as they observe the Yahrzeit of their loved ones.

In trying times such as these, we can all use some emotional support, and what better way to get it than to come to services and pray as a community to Hashem.

Please come to services to help us be sure of having a minyan each and every Sabbath. You will be performing a great mitzvah.

Baruch Hashem.

Frankly Surprising

Hot dogs are the greatest American Jewish food

The iconic wiener is synonymous with Americana like baseball games and 4th of July barbecues — and like so many great US phenomena, was popularized by a couple of immigrants in NY.

*By Joel Haber
30 June 2020*

The Nosh via JTA — American Jewish food is most typically defined as pastrami sandwiches, chocolate babka or bagels and lox. But I am here to argue that the greatest American Jewish food may actually be the humble hot dog. No dish better embodies the totality of the American Jewish experience.

What's that you say? You didn't know that hot dogs were a Jewish food? Well, that's part of the story, too.

Sausages of many varieties have existed since antiquity. The closest relatives of the hot dog are the frankfurter and the wiener, both American terms based on their cities of origin (Frankfurt and Vienna, respectively).

So what differentiates a hot dog from other sausages? The story begins in 19th century New York with two German-Jewish immigrants.



The original 1916 Nathan's Famous location on Coney Island, September 4, 2009. (Flickr/ CC-BY-2.0/ Tony Fischer)

In 1870, Charles Feltman sold Frankfurt-style pork-and-beef sausages out of a pushcart on Coney Island, Brooklyn. Sausages not being the neatest street food, Feltman inserted them into soft buns. This innovative sausage-bun combo grew to be known as a hot dog (though Feltman called them Coney Island Red Hots).

Two years later, Isaac Gellis opened a kosher butcher shop on Manhattan's Lower East Side. He soon began selling all-beef versions of German-style sausages. Beef hot dogs grew into an all-purpose replacement for pork products in kosher homes, leading to such classic dishes as franks and beans or split pea soup with hot dogs. Though unknown whether Gellis was the originator of this important shift, he certainly became one of the most successful purveyors.

Like American Jews, the hot dog was an immigrant itself that quickly changed and adapted to life in the United States. As American Jewry further integrated into society, the hot dog followed.

In 1916, Polish-Jewish immigrant Nathan Handwerker opened a hot dog stand to compete with Feltman, his former employer. Feltman's had grown into a large sit-down restaurant, and Handwerker charged half the price by making his eatery a "grab joint." (The term fast food had yet to be invented, but it was arguably Handwerker who created that ultra-American culinary institution.)

Nathan's Famous conquered the hot dog world. Like so many of his American Jewish contemporaries, Handwerker succeeded via entrepreneurship and hard work.

His innovative marketing stunts included hiring people to eat his hot dogs while dressed as doctors, overcoming public fears about low-quality ingredients. While his all-beef dogs were not made with kosher meat, he called them "kosher-style," thus underscoring that they contained no horse meat. Gross.

The kosher-style moniker was another American invention. American Jewish history, in part, is the story of a secular populace that embraced Jewish culture while rejecting traditional religious practices. All-beef hot dogs with Ashkenazi-style spicing, yet made from meat that was not traditionally slaughtered or "kosher," sum up the new Judaism of Handwerker and his contemporaries.

Furthermore, American Jewry came of age alongside the industrial food industry. The hot dog also highlights the explosive growth of the kosher supervision industry ("industrial kashrut").

Hebrew National began producing hot dogs in 1905. Its production methods met higher standards than were required by law, leading to their famous advertising slogan, "We Answer to a Higher Authority."



Illustrative: Kosher butchers picket outside a shop in the heart of a Jewish neighborhood on Orchard Street in New York's Lower East Side, October 4, 1937. (AP Photo)

While the majority of Americans may be surprised to hear this, Hebrew National's self-supervised kosherness actually was not accepted by more stringent Orthodox and even Conservative Jews at the time. But non-Jews, believing kosher dogs were inherently better, became the company's primary market. Hebrew National eventually received the more established Triangle-K kashrut supervision, convincing the Conservative movement to accept its products. Most Orthodox Jews, however, still don't accept these hot dogs as kosher.



But over the last quarter of the 20th century in America, the Orthodox community has gained prominence and its opinions, and food preferences, hold more weight in the food industry.

The community's stricter kashrut demands and sizable purchasing power created a viable market, and glatt kosher hot dogs hit the scene. Abeles & Heymann, in business since 1954, was purchased in 1997 by current owner Seth Leavitt. Meeting the demands of the Orthodox community's increasingly sophisticated palate, A&H hot dogs are gluten-free with no filler. The company

has begun producing a line of uncured sausages and the first glatt hot dogs using collagen casing.

Glatt kosher dogs are now available in nearly 30 sports arenas and stadiums. American Jews have successfully integrated into their society more than any other in history. So, too, the hot dog has transcended its humble New York Jewish immigrant roots to enter the pantheon of true American icons. So when you bite into your hot dog this summer, you are really getting a bite of American Jewish history and the great American Jewish food.

Annual Meeting

The Carnegie Shul's Annual Meeting was held last Sunday, June 28, via Zoom.

At the meeting, President Larry Block updated the 20 or so attendees on developments in the Shul over the past year, particularly the changes we have made to services due to Covid 19, and the leasing of our downstairs to the Carnegie Performing Arts Center.

We also elected a new secretary, Wendy Panizzi, to replace Elaine Rosenfield, who decided to step down after many years of faithful service to the Shul. Additionally, Gerry Kettler was elected to complete the remainder of Wendy Panizzi's term as a Board member.

Our guest speaker, Zack Block, gave a very enlightening talk about Repair the World, an organization that he has served as Executive Director for seven years, and the work that they are doing to advance community relations in Pittsburgh and across the country.



Recent donations to the Carnegie Shul:

Lawrence and Sharon Block - Yahrzeit of David Fred Block

Robert D. Bodell - General Fund

Lois Ash Metlika - Yahrzeit of Sarah Lee Backal

Elaine B. Rosenfield - Yahrzeit of David Rosenfield

JFunds

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted so many in the Jewish community, including those who never needed assistance before and JFunds is available to help.

JFunds is a network of Jewish financial support services, which also offers grants, loans, counseling and food resources for Pittsburgh's Jewish Community.

Please visit JFundsPgh.org for more information.