

THE BEGINNING . . .

It was a cold, biting night in December 1954 when the nucleus of what would be the Tobay chapter of Hadassah met at the home of Betty Lublin on Gary Road in Syosset. Though most of the women wouldn't admit it to their closest friends, they had come out that night just to get out of the house. Most had little knowledge of Hadassah and the idea of giving birth to a new chapter the furthest thought in their minds. The majority had recently moved into their new homes and were eager to get away from all the unpacking, furniture arranging and measuring of windows for new drapes.

Though their intentions might not have been to organize a chapter, the women present were soon under the electrifying influence of Hadassah Long Island Region President Bernice Saltpeter (who later became Bernice Tannenbaum, National President of Hadassah), and V-P Hilda Ruby. Both women were so dynamic and contagious in their love for Hadassah that before the evening was over, officers were elected and Sylvia Frank unanimously chosen Tobay's first president.

The name Tobay was suggested by Irv Lublin. Not only was this the first Hadassah chapter to be formed in the Town of Oyster Bay, but everyone thought that Tobay was a Hebrew-sounding name.

Enthusiasm for the fledgling chapter spread quickly. Everyone wanted to work and members signed up by the dozens. Hadassah was one of the first organizations to form in the area. In those early days members tied banners reading "Join Hadassah" to their cars and drove through the local streets. Board meetings were held at the diner with the requirement that everyone spend at least 50 cents each. General meetings took place in the barn of the new Midway Jewish Center which had no water facilities and no bathroom. Lots were drawn to determine who had the dubious honor of making coffee in the neighboring house. A year or so later Tobay meetings were switched to the East Nassau Hebrew congregation, returning to Midway in the mid 1960's.

The rest is history . . .

Aileen Novick