

# American Jewry One Century Ago, 1852

*Compilation from The American Jewish Press*

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## JANUARY

1 . . . Dedication of Covenant Hall, 56 Orchard Street, New York, by the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith. The ceremony was performed by the officers of the Constitution Grand Lodge, assisted by those of District Grand Lodge No. 1. The Reverend Dr. Max Lilienthal delivered the address, mentioning the action of Jeshurun Lodge of Baltimore, Md., on behalf of Louis Kossuth.

16 . . . In the Senate of the State of New York, prayer was offered by Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, the minister of Congregation Anshe Emeth, Albany, as the first Jewish chaplain of a legislative body. "Rabbi Wise is a German by birth, and is one of the most talented of the Hebrew Clergy in this country. His writings have great force and are marked with distinguished ability" (*New York Express*).

18 . . . Death of Mrs. Jehovath Marks, widow of Michael Marks and eldest daughter of Moses Isaac of New York, at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Anna Allen, in Philadelphia, Pa.

18 . . . Decision by members of Congregation Gates of Prayer, Lafayette, La., to seek a new and better location for a synagogue.

24 . . . Steps were taken by Temple Emanu-El Congregation of New York to dedicate Salem Field Cemetery as a burial ground.

26 . . . Judah P. Benjamin of New Orleans, La., "the most distinguished statesman, orator, and lawyer that American Jewry has produced" (Max J. Kohler), a member of the Louisiana state legislature, was elected a member of the United States Senate, for a term beginning March 3, 1853.

28 . . . The *New Orleans Weekly Delta*, announcing Benjamin's election to the United States Senate, paid tribute to his "remarkable versatility and untiring energy."

## FEBRUARY

1 . . . Organization of the Hebrew Beneficial Society in Richmond, Va.

In Mobile, Ala., Congregation Shaarai Shomayim purchased the hall of the Musical Association in order to rebuild it as a synagogue.

4 . . . First annual ball in aid of the fund of the Jews' Hospital in the city of New York.

17 . . . Testimonial of respect to the Reverend Mr. Isaac Leeser, at Congregation Shearith Israel, Charleston, S. C.

18 . . . Death of Abraham Eliezer Israel, sexton of Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.

## MARCH

3 . . . The Reverend Mr. Abraham de Sola, of Montreal, lectured before the

Montreal Natural History Society "On the Cosmogony of the World."

7 . . . The annual examination of the children attending the Montreal Sunday School was held in the schoolroom in the presence of the parents and other visitors.

14 . . . The examination of the pupils of the Philadelphia Hebrew Sunday School took place at the synagogue in Cherry Street. The Reverend Mr. Morais opened the meeting by reading the 15th psalm.

26 . . . Consecration of the new synagogue of Congregation Ohabei Shalom, Boston, Mass. The ceremony was attended by Benjamin Seaver, Mayor of Boston, members of the city government, and Boston's leading clergymen. Dr. M. J. Raphael preached the consecration sermon.

#### APRIL

13 . . . Birth of Henry Pereira Mendes in England. He was the son of Abraham Pereira Mendes of Kingston, Jamaica. Later, Henry emigrated to America and served as minister of Congregation Shearith Israel, New York, from 1877 to 1920.

15 . . . Founding of Congregation Beth Or, Montgomery, Ala.

18 . . . Examination of the pupils of the Hebrew School of Congregation B'nai Israel, New York.

30 . . . Death of Israel Bear Kursheedt, German-born son-in-law of "Rabbi" Gershon Mendes Seixas. Kursheedt was a trustee of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun and president of Shearith Israel, New York.

SPRING, 1852 . . . Judah Touro purchased a valuable property (the Paulding estate, for \$8,000) in New Orleans for the purpose of establishing a hospital.

The Jews of New Haven, Conn., are

about to build a synagogue. They elected Leopold Sternheimer as *hazzan* and teacher.

PASSOVER, 1852 . . . Samuel Adler was elected president of the German Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, Pa.

#### MAY

. . . Dr. Simeon Abrahams, in conjunction with Dr. M. Michaelis, Dr. M. Danziger, and Dr. S. Hirsch, aided by A. S. van Praag, surgeon-dentist, and M. L. M. Peixotto, as chemist and apothecary, announce that they will open a dispensary for the gratuitous medical and surgical treatment of sick and destitute Israelites at 31 Bleecker Street, New York.

8 . . . "We have learnt," wrote the editor of the *Occident*, "that a decree has passed, ordering all Jews to quit the Canton Basle, both the city and the country part, by the 8th of May."

16 . . . The first annual examination of the Hebrew Education Society, Philadelphia, Pa., was held at the schoolhouse. Prayer was offered by Mrs. Allen; the address was delivered by Isaac Leeser.

SHEBUOTH, 1852 . . . Public confirmation of children of members of Congregation Anshe Chesed, New York.

SHEBUOTH, 1852 . . . Confirmation of children of members of Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, Pa.

23 . . . At the annual meeting of the Educational Society, Philadelphia, Pa., a proposition was submitted to the German Congregation Rodeph Shalom to place their Hebrew School in charge of the Society.

28 . . . Protest of Robert Lyon, editor of the *Asmonean*, against the discrimination practiced against Jews in Switzerland. He suggested "that the problem be solved by bringing Jews of Europe to the United States."

28 . . . In an article, "A Call to the American Israelites," which appeared also in the *Asmonean*, Isaac M. Wise called on the Jews to take united action in preparing a suitable petition to be presented to "Congress requesting our government to protest against the illegal, inhuman, and degrading laws which have been thrust upon our brethren."

### JUNE

. . . From an article in the *Jewish Gazette*, reprinted in the *Occident*: "The decree of banishment against the Jews (of Basle) has been executed with all rigour. Out of the city, five wholesale dealers, resident there, have been removed, and from the country district, fifty more families. The most remarkable circumstance is that the authorities of the cantons who have banished them have furnished them with the most laudatory testimonials, and were compelled to designate them as moral and blameless men, of unblemished character. The Supreme Tribunal of Basle expresses, in its report to the Court of Appeals, its regret that it was compelled to proceed with such rigour against houses so every way honorable. . . . The banishment had no other motive than commercial rivalry."

8 . . . From a letter of Henry Mack, a prominent citizen of Cincinnati, Ohio, to the editor of the *Occident*: "We have in this city four congregations, namely, the congregation Bnai Israel, the oldest, numbering from 160 to 170 members; the congregation B'nai Jeshurun, with 180 members; the congregation of Brotherly Love, numbering 80 members; a Polish congregation which was started lately. We have one Gentlemen's Benevolent and one Beneficial Society, both of which extend great aid to the resident poor and indigent strangers. We have three Ladies' Benevolent Associations and one Sewing Society which are constantly engaged in the sacred mission of charity."

13 . . . The members of Congregation

Shearith Israel, Charleston, S. C., resolved at a meeting to invite the Reverend Isaac Leiser of Philadelphia to become a candidate for the office of *hazzan* and lecturer.

### JULY

23 . . . The Reverend Mr. M. N. Nathan wrote from Galveston, Texas, to his congregation, K. K. Nefutzot Yehuda in New Orleans, La., that he intended to withdraw from public life.

SUMMER, 1852 . . . "Disturbing rumors began to appear to the effect that the Swiss treaty would still allow discrimination against Jews." (A clause in the first article of this treaty of commerce, about which the government of the United States and the Swiss Confederation had been negotiating since 1850, contained these words: "On account of the tenor of the Federal Constitution of Switzerland, Christians alone are entitled to the enjoyment of the privileges, guaranteed by the present Article, in the Swiss Cantons." This clause aroused the indignation of the American Jews, as it would have prevented them from trading or settling in certain cantons of Switzerland. In 1851, the well-known Jacob Ezekiel, of Richmond, Va., requested a member of the U. S. House of Representatives and the Secretary of War to influence the Senate against the ratification of the treaty.)

SUMMER, 1852 . . . Jacob Ezekiel protested, in a letter he wrote to a member of the House of Representatives, "against the acceptance by our Government of a block of granite sent by the Swiss authorities to be placed in the National Washington monument."

27 . . . Representative Emanuel B. Hart, of New York City, asked, in a letter he addressed to the State Department, about the status of the treaty with Switzerland.

SUMMER, 1852 . . . From a report on St. Louis Jewry to the editor of the *Occi-*

*dent*: "It is with much regret that we are informed that the contemplated union of the Israelites into one body has not been consummated. It seems that the elements were too discordant to produce an harmonious fusion, so it is best, perhaps, that each of the former bodies should endeavour to proceed in the best manner by itself. The Bohemian Kahal, in consequence, under their new president, Mr. Isidore Bush, purchased a lot on Jackson Street, in the southern part of the city, for the purpose of building a synagogue on it."

SUMMER, 1852 . . . Resignation of Samuel Adler, president of Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, Pa.

#### AUGUST

1 . . . The new congregation of Williamsburg, N. Y., consecrated its new synagogue. The Reverend S. M. Isaacs delivered the sermon; Dr. Raphall and Dr. Lilienthal, the addresses.

8 . . . The members of Congregation Shaaray Shamayim, Pittsburgh, Pa., bound themselves, of their own free accord, to attend service regularly every Sabbath and holiday.

19 . . . Seligman J. Strauss, who became a very well-known judge and one of the founders of the B'nai B'rith Orphanage at Erie, Pa., was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

23 . . . The Jews of Washington, D. C., organized a congregation and bought a piece of land for a synagogue (Washington Hebrew Congregation).

28 . . . The Reverend Jacob Rosenfeld, minister of B'nai Jeshurun Congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, was re-elected for the term of three years as *hazzan*, lecturer, and superintendent of the Talmud Yelodim School.

29 . . . Consecration of a burial ground in Galveston, Texas. Prayers and ad-

resses were delivered by M. N. Nathan, minister of the Portuguese congregation of New Orleans. "The services were the first ever performed publicly by a Hebrew minister in Texas."

#### SEPTEMBER

3 . . . Dedication of a synagogue in Sacramento, Cal.

8, 9, 10 . . . At a convention in Syracuse, N. Y., Ernestine Rose, the advocate of "Woman's Rights, Anti-Slavery, and Religious Liberty," who was presented to the conference as "a Polish lady educated in the Jewish faith," served as head of the Nominating Committee, as a member of the Business (Resolutions) Committee, and as vice-president. In one of her speeches at the convention she called herself "a daughter of . . . the downtrodden and persecuted people called the Jews."

10 . . . In the *Asmonean* appeared the following announcement by Isaac M. Wise: "According to an agreement made between the editor of the *Asmonean* and my humble self, I have taken charge of the theological and philosophical department of this paper, and I deem it my duty to inform the public of the leading principles which will guide me in my task."

22 . . . Death of Mrs. Fanny Etting, eldest child of the late Michael Gratz, widow of the late Reuben Etting, in her 81st year, in Philadelphia, Pa.

FALL, 1852 . . . Report from California: "A vessel sailed for California not long ago from Havre; all the passengers of which were Israelites, who carried out with them a *Hazzan*, *Shochet*, *Mohel*, two *Sepharim* and, in short, all that is needed to conduct duly a Jewish worship."

#### OCTOBER

13 . . . Marriage of David H. Solis to

Elvira Nathan, daughter of the late Seixas Nathan, in New York.

26 . . . Founding of Congregation Ohev Sholom, Harrisburg, Pa.

#### NOVEMBER

3 . . . Mrs. R. Hays, Miss Gratz, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. R. Moss, Mrs. S. Hart, and Mrs. Abraham Hart were elected officers of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society in Philadelphia, Pa.

3 . . . Samson Simpson of New York presented lots for a hospital and for an asylum for the helpless. He intends the establishment of a theological faculty and of an orphan asylum.

26 . . . The *Charleston Standard* has the following to say about the painter S. N. Carvalho and his picture of the "Intercession of Moses for Israel": "In justice to our artist, we have devoted some time to the examination of this picture, recently exhibited at the South Carolina Institute. 'Tis seldom we are called upon to inspect an original historical or scriptural picture, executed by a native artist, and when one of the above character emanates from the studio of a Charlestonian, possessing, as it does, evident marks of genius in the conception and composition, correct and easy drawing, and a decided practical illustration of the effect of colour and light and shadow, as well as the important consideration of telling its own story in the most comprehensive manner, we cannot withhold our meed of praise. . . ."

#### DECEMBER

5 . . . The Reverend B. H. Gotthelf was unanimously re-elected *hazzan* of Adas-Israel Congregation, Louisville, Ky.

7 . . . Mr. Barnett Phillips of Philadelphia delivered a lecture before the Maryland Institute at Baltimore on "Toxicology, or the Science of Poisons."

22 . . . Adolph Moses, who was to receive the Democratic nomination for judge of the Superior Court in 1879, in Chicago, Ill., and who was to become president of the State Bar Association in 1897, arrived in New Orleans from Germany.

23 . . . Death of Mrs. Phila Pesoa, widow of Isaac Pesoa and daughter of Jonas Phillips and Rebecca Machado, in Philadelphia, Pa. She was "one of the oldest native Israelites."

#### OTHER EVENTS OF THE YEAR

Birth of Rose Frank in Philadelphia, Pa. She became the founder of the Nurses Training School, an institution closely connected with the Jewish Hospital of Philadelphia.

Birth of William Salomon, great-grandson of Haym Salomon, in Mobile, Ala. He became one of the leading bankers of America, chairman of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, and one of the directors of the Educational Alliance of New York.

Death of Aaron Levy (1771-1852), son of Hayman Levy and son-in-law of Isaac Moses. Levy was a well-known merchant and editor of catalogues of art collections, and one of the officers of Shearith Israel, New York.

Lazarus Straus, father of Oscar Straus, came to America from Germany at the age of forty-one and settled in Georgia.

Julius Houseman, afterwards a prominent citizen and member of Congress, moved to Grand Rapids, Mich., and became that city's first Jewish resident.

Moses Aaron Dropsie, a lawyer and opponent of slavery, became the candidate of the Whig party for mayor of the Northern Liberties District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.