

American Jewry in 1753 and in 1853

1753

BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Moses Lopez, an older half-brother of Aaron Lopez, who had come to America in the early 1730's, probably, and had been naturalized in 1740 or 1741, was licensed by the General Assembly of Rhode Island to make potash (*Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, VI [1897], 72).

Abraham Sarzedas, a merchant, became a freeman of New York in 1753 (*Ibid.*, p. 102). Abraham's son, David, was a lieutenant in the Georgia Continental Line.

David Mendez Machado, the great-grandfather of Mordecai M. Noah, who had left Lisbon, Portugal, in 1732, died in New York. He was the hazzan of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation Shearith Israel (*PAJHS*, II [1894], 44 ff.).

Joseph Solomon Ottolenghe, an Italian convert, who came to Georgia to superintend the new silk industry, received a grant of three hundred acres of land from the Trustees of the colony (*PAJHS*, X [1902], 90).

MINUTES OF THE CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL, NEW YORK.

MAY 14, 1753

K. K. SHERIT ISRAEL, 9TH YIAR, 5513.

At a generall meeting of the whole congregation, Elias Solomons was duly ellected in the room [place] of Asher Campanel, des'd [deceased], to serve the Kaal as *samaz* ["beadle"] under the following ristrictions, vizt.:

- 1st To keep the sinagogue clean, see that the *tamid* (perpetual lamp) is allways light, and attend duly there. Allso at berritts ("circumcisions") and funeralls.
- 2^d To make the candles for the use of the sinagogue.
- 3^d To call at the yehidims ["members"] houses on Fryday afternoons and Ereb Yomtobs ["eve of holidays"].
- 4th To keep the buring ground clean, and obey the parnazes ["presi-

dent's"] orders in everything that relates to the synagogue affairs, and act in the office of *samaz* in every shape whatsoever.

And in consideration of the above service, he is to be paid at the rate of twenty pounds, curr't money, p'r annum with his *massott* ["unleavened bread"], but no wood to be given him.

At the same meeting it was unanimously agreed to allow Rachel Campanel the sum of twenty pounds, curr't money, p'r annum, in consideration of her age and infermities, any law to the contrary, notwithstanding.

Ve Salom ("And let there be peace.").

Benja Gomez
Jacob Franks.

(*PAJHS*, XXI [1913], 69-70)

1853

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY TO APRIL

Erection of a new synagogue in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the corner of Sixth Street and Broadway. "It is a beautiful edifice" with "an imposing appearance" (*The Asmonean*, VII [1853], 185).

The congregation of Mobile, Ala., consecrated its new synagogue on March 11th. "The city authorities, the clergy, and a considerable number of citizens of both sexes attended by special invitation; and men of all denominations could have been seen moving toward the building, the first that ever was dedicated for that purpose in the State of Alabama" (*The Occident*, XI [1853], 114 ff.).

Organization of a congregation in Danville, Pennsylvania (*Ibid.*, p. 420).

Adoption of a new constitution by the Bnai El congregation of St. Louis, Mo., lately formed by a union of two previously existing communities (*Ibid.*, p. 123).

The German congregation of New Orleans, La., organized under its new charter, under the name of Shangarai Chassed, on the 25th of March, elected its new officers (*Ibid.*, p. 124).

In Chicago a mob interposed in favor of a poor fugitive slave who had been arrested by the Federal authorities and liberated him. The

mob was led by Michael Greenebaum, and a mass meeting was held that evening to ratify this act (*PAJHS*, V [1897], 154).

"It is generally understood that Mr. August Schönberg, formerly of Hanau, Germany—better known in this country by his Frenchified and beautiful alias of Auguste Belmont—lately Consul-General for the United States of his Royal-Imperial Majesty of Austria, but more recently an independent Democrat of this city, is an applicant for the post of chargé d'affaires at Naples.

"We don't wish to interfere in Democratic family matters, but we desire to show our appreciation of the effective and weighty character of the late Consul-General's services to the present administration and the cause of human rights and universal democracy in the late election. And, accordingly, we here add our voice to the various other Democratic recommendations which urge his appointment to that easy and luxurious place. There can be no doubt of his qualifications to represent the hard-fisted democracy at the Neapolitan Court, and to carry out there the Monroe Doctrine, Cuba and Mexico, fifty-four forty, and all other points of that energetic foreign policy which is going to be the glory of the Pierce administration. We hope there may [be] no delay in his nomination" (*The New York Tribune*, March 22, 1853. Quoted in *PAJHS*, XXVII [1920], 510).

The Reverend Dr. Isaac M. Wise, of Albany, N. Y., was elected again to officiate as chaplain to both branches of the legislature of the State of New York (*The Asmonean*, VII [1853], 305).

Samson Simpson, the president of the Theological Seminary and Scientific Institute in New York, donated to this institution five acres of valuable ground, in the most elevated part of Yonkers, for the building of school houses (*The Asmonean*, VIII [1853], 25).

From a report on the Jews in California: "The Israelites are steadily increasing in numbers and importance in that new state, and several hold public trusts. Mr. Joseph Shannon is treasurer of San Francisco County, and Mr. Sol Heydenfeldt is judge of the Supreme Court of the state. Mr. Elkan Heydenfeldt, his brother, and Mr. Isaac N. Cardozo, are members of the House of Representatives" (*The Occident*, XI [1853], 78 ff.).

MAY TO AUGUST

In an address delivered in the senate chamber of the Empire State, on May 31st, Senator Cooley, while criticizing the sale of rum, attacked the German Jews of America: "If the sale was confined alone to pure

liquors, the evil would be vastly less; but it is almost impossible to find a drop of pure liquor in New York, or Albany, or Troy. Adulterating establishments abound—German Jews mix up the adulterated poison, and it is working the greatest mischief to the community. This is about the only reason why we cannot have a decent government in New York" (*The Asmonean*, VIII [1853], 64).

On the 3rd of May, the Jews of Philadelphia held a meeting for the purpose of buying a suitable plot of ground for a cemetery (*The Occident*, XI [1853], 184).

Solomon Cohen, a citizen of Savannah, Ga., who was elected a member of the representative branch of the state legislature in 1830, and was appointed by President Martin Van Buren district attorney of the United States, for the District of Georgia, in 1840, "has been invested with the responsible and honorable post of U. S. Postmaster, at Savannah, Ga., tendered to him unsought, and urged on his acceptance by President Pierce and his cabinet" (*Ibid.*, pp. 267 ff.; *The Asmonean*, VIII [1853], 99).

Under the name of "The Well of Life" a new congregation was organized and a synagogue was dedicated in Cumberland, Maryland (*The Occident*, XI [1853], 187).

Election of M. Seligson, formerly a resident of Philadelphia, as mayor of Galveston, Texas (*Ibid.*, p. 188).

Establishment of a Hebrew Benevolent Society in Marysville, Calif. Isaac Leeser, of Philadelphia, was elected an honorary member of the Society (*Ibid.*, p. 329).

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

From a report on the yellow fever in New Orleans: "The first interment (in the German Hebrew Burying Ground) took place on July 10th, and the last on September 23rd. Such a vast amount of death among a comparative small population is truly appalling. Whole families have been swept away, and left perhaps a lonely survivor" (*Ibid.*, p. 537 f.).

From a letter written by the Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans to *The Occident* on the epidemic: "The season we have just passed may justly be said to have tried men's souls. Those who were eye-witnesses to the devastating effects of the pestilence saw distress, affliction, suffering, death, and desolation, on every side. At home, old

and young, rich and poor, were engaged day and night in attending to the wants of the sick, in performing the last offices to the dead, in relieving the distresses of the bereaved and destitute; whilst from all sections of our country charitable contributions were sent in aid of the sufferers" (*Ibid.*, p. 582 f.).

In September, the congregants of Shangarai Chassed of New Orleans, who "have nobly fulfilled their sacred duties," appealed for aid to the Jewish congregations of America (*The Asmonean*, VIII [1853], 160).

The synagogue of the Bnai Israel congregation in Cincinnati, Ohio, was consecrated with the usual ceremonies on the 14th of September. Dr. Morris J. Raphall of New York delivered an impressive oration. The services were conducted by the Reverend Hart Judah, the local minister (*The Occident*, XI [1853], 423).

A new Portuguese congregation, "Gates of Heaven," was organized in San Francisco, California (*Ibid.*, p. 427).

A congregation was organized in Sacramento, California (*Ibid.*, p. 329). The First Hebrew Benevolent Society of San Francisco was reorganized under a new constitution (*Ibid.*, p. 329).

On October 27th, Isaac M. Wise of Albany was unanimously elected minister of Congregation Bene Jeshurun in Cincinnati (*Ibid.*, p. 532).

The Mount Sinai Cemetery Association of Philadelphia was organized under the presidency of Mr. Henry Mayer. "They have purchased a considerable tract of land, and have laid out a portion in family burying lots" (*Ibid.*, p. 476).

Samson Simpson of New York laid the cornerstone for the building of a hospital on the lot presented by him to the Jewish Hospital Society, on Twenty-Eighth Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Mr. Henry Hendricks, the treasurer of the Society, made an address, and handed Simpson a silver trowel to do the work expected of him. Thanking him for the honor, Simpson placed a box containing the usual mementoes in the corner-stone (*Ibid.*, p. 530 f.).

The death is announced of Solomon Mencken, "who originated and aided in establishing the first synagogue ever erected in Cincinnati" (*Ibid.*, p. 540).

Dr. Isaac M. Wise paid a formal visit to Cincinnati and preached in

all the congregations to the "great satisfaction" of their members (*Ibid.*, p. 587).

Joseph Simpson, a resident of Baltimore, a generous, learned, highly respected man, and a well-known lapidary seal engraver, published a pamphlet entitled *The Scapegoat*. The title page showed a scapegoat riding a rooster. He refuted an anti-Jewish article, written probably by a Christian missionary, and published in one of the Baltimore newspapers under the title "On the Day of Atonement" (*PAJHS*, XI [1903], 160).

This year marked the publication of the first complete English translation of the Holy Scriptures by a Jew. This was the Leeser Bible, a pioneer work, written for Jews by the Reverend Mr. Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia. It was the only English Bible which American Jewry used until the year 1917.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

February 16, 1953

Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, Editor
American Jewish Archives
Cincinnati 20, Ohio

My dear Sir:

As Managing Editor of *Jewish Life*, I wish to record certain facts about the auspices under which the magazine has been and is published, in order to correct misstatements on this point by Ellis Rivkin in the *American Jewish Archives* of January, 1953.

Jewish Life was published by the Morning Freiheit Association from November, 1946, to July, 1950, and then by Morgen Freiheit, Inc., from August, 1950, to July, 1951. These bodies also published the Yiddish daily newspaper, *Morning Freiheit*, which, however, is *not* an official organ of the Communist Party of the United States, any more than is *Jewish Life*.

Since August, 1951, *Jewish Life* has been published by Progressive Jewish Life, Inc. These facts about the publication of *Jewish Life* may help your readers determine the validity of Dr. Rivkin's attempt to divert attention from the merits of Morris U. Schappes's *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875* by the statement, not only of questionable relevancy but untrue, that *Jewish Life* is an official organ of the Communist Party.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) LOUIS HARAP

Managing Editor