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Contents

TO OUR READERS

Gary P. Zola, Editor

ARTICLES:

Jewish Women in the Central Appalachian Coal Fields, 1890–1960: From Breadwinners to Community Builders

Deborah Weiner

pp. 10-33

Deborah Weiner provides us with a fascinating examination of the essential role Jewish women played in the establishment and maintenance of Jewish communities in central Appalachian coal fields. Weiner places the story of these women in the context of the general migration of Jews to the United States and demonstrates that this migration occurred at the same time as the development of southern coal fields. Weiner’s research reveals a lesser-known dimension of American Jewish history—the small-town Jewish women of Appalachia whose travails and successes need to be recounted.

Between Brooklyn and Brookline: American Hasidism and the Evolution of the Bostoner Hasidic Tradition

Seth Farber

pp. 34-53

The impact of the American environment on Hasidic traditions and leaders has received little scholarly treatment. By examining the careers of two Hasidic brothers who served as Bostoner Rebbe, Farber’s article suggests that the local community cultures of Brooklyn and Boston contoured the character of a uniquely American Hasidic tradition. The evolution of their heritage and the styles of their leadership highlight the internal and external developments within the Orthodox world during the twentieth century and reinforce the common impression of the trajectory of Orthodoxy during the past three decades.
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT:

Jews and the American Military from the Colonial Era to the Eve of the Civil War

Jack D. Foner
Edited and Introduced by Eric Foner
pp. 54-111

One reason the story of United States Jewry is unique is that from the beginning of the American Republic, military service, which acted as proof of patriotism and the right to claim full citizenship, has not been denied to Jews. Before his death in 1999 the distinguished historian Jack Foner was working on a history of American Jews and their service in the military forces of the Republic. Unfortunately, only two chapters, which took the story from the Revolution to the eve of the Civil War, were completed before his death. Thankfully, his son Eric Foner of Columbia University has made them available. Jack Foner's narrative not only reveals that the American Jew served under arms from the time of the Revolution, but through their trials, failures, and successes we gain deeper appreciation of the role of American Jewry in the rights and obligations of citizenship.

DOCUMENT:

A Jewish Legal Authority Addresses Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Two Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

Translated and Annotated by David Ellenson
pp. 112-28

REVIEW ESSAY:

Social and Cultural Patterns in Twentieth-Century American Jewish Life

• Stephen J. Whitfield, In Search of American Jewish Culture
• Riv-Ellen Prell, Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men

Allan M. Winkler
pp. 129-34
BOOK REVIEWS:

- Lisa Endlich, *Goldman Sachs: The Culture of Success*, reviewed by R. William Weisberger
  pp. 135-38

- Naomi W. Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Leadership*, reviewed by Priscilla Roberts
  pp. 139-43

SHORT REVIEWS

pp. 144-46

NEWS FROM THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Kevin Proffitt
pp. 147-56

INDEX

pp. 157-67

THE B'NAIYAAKOV COUNCIL

THE EZRA CONSORTIUM
To Our Readers . . .

Our loyal readers will be pleased, we trust, that the editors expect that this will be the next to last in a series of special double issues. For the calendar year 2002, the American Jewish Archives Journal will again appear biannually—marking a return to the founding editor's original intention of having the American Jewish Archives publish "a semi-annual bulletin" containing "at least one article of scientific caliber."

This particular issue is the first of the new century. A fin de siècle typically provokes increased cogitation about the passage of time and changing realities. This is certainly true in regard to the American Jewish experience. During the last decade of the twentieth century, intense concern about the future of American Jewish life gave rise to a bevy of essays, articles, and books. Many questions about the future character of American Jewish life have accompanied the dawn of this new millennium: What will become of American Jewry in the twenty-first century? Will American Jewry survive the impact of intermarriage, assimilation, and persistent pressures to conform to the secular mainstream?

Though they specialize in analyzing the past, historians are often asked to predict the future. Nearly fifty years ago, for example, in 1957 the B'nai B'rith invited two eminent historians—Professor Oscar Handlin of Harvard University and Professor Jacob Rader Marcus of Hebrew Union College—to compose essays for its monthly magazine, in which they would describe the character of American Jewish life in the year 2000. It is interesting to consider the accuracy of futuristic expectations in the very year that once, long ago, seemed to be far off. That is why scholars now enjoy evaluating the work of Edward Bellamy's utopian Looking Backwards: 2000-1887, or George Orwell's gloomy 1984, and even Arthur C. Clark and Stanley Kubrick's vision in 2001: A Space Odyssey. Thus Handlin's and Marcus's predictions as to what United States Jewry would look like in the year 2000 also deserves notice.

Neither Handlin nor Marcus predicted the demise of American Jewry. To the contrary, both viewed Jewish endurance as a certainty. Both distinguished scholars anticipated changes in the character of North American Jewry, although Dr. Handlin's view of the future was clearly the most dour of the two. "The danger is not so much that the
Jewish community will disappear,” Handlin wrote, “but that its culture will become a museum piece, preserved out of curiosity and ancestral piety, but devoid of meaning.”

Dr. Marcus, on the other hand, predicted that the process of acculturation would intensify so that “in speech and dress American Jews will much more closely resemble their Gentile neighbors.” By the year 2000 he averred that American Jews would become so assimilated, family names may no longer function as “an identification of the Jewish family.” A small minority of Jews will continue to observe the dietary laws, Marcus opined, “but kosher style food will be popular both among Jews and Gentiles, ‘a delectable aspect of transculturation.’”

Even though the two historians agreed on the trends that would affect the character of United States Jewry by the year 2000, their respective essays reflected differing attitudes about the ultimate impact of these forces. The allure of American mass culture would be so overwhelming, Handlin asserted, that Jews and Gentiles may be “no more set apart than, say, the Methodists from the Baptists.” In contrast, Marcus suggested that assimilation, which was normally assumed to cause disintegration, would actually provoke “a tight Jewish community.” Though many attenuated Jews would fall away from Judaism by the dawn of the twenty-first century, Marcus asserted that “a tight Jewish community will have to come into being and a new fusion type of [Jewish] religion” may well be in the making.”

Reading these predictions a half-century after they were made—in the very year about which they were written—may well convince us that neither Handlin nor Marcus had an accurate crystal ball on hand. Still, their observations were unquestionably insightful and clearly, with regard to at least some of the projections, the proverbial jury of time has not yet rendered its final verdict.

We can safely assume that, many years from now—perhaps by midcentury—a new generation of historians will undoubtedly wish to reexamine Handlin’s and Marcus’s analyses, along with the many additional prognostications that were made at the dawn of this new century. Historians at midcentury will seek to ascertain how the present generation of American Jewry viewed its own future. To achieve this objective, they will look for historical documents and records that speak to these concerns. As long as there is an American Jewish Archives—and similar institutions—dedicated to preserving
To Our Readers...

this data, future generations will have the tools they need to reconstruct and interpret the past.

This issue of our journal contains a diverse array of scholarly essays. They vary in topic, but they all have one feature in common: the articles published herein deepen our understanding of the American Jewish past. A cursory examination of the notes that accompany the essays in this volume will illuminate the pivotal role our remarkable historical collection plays in the work of those who strive to reconstruct the history of American Jewry.

“A people that is not conscious of its past,” Dr. Marcus repeatedly observed “has no assurance of its future.” The American Jewish Archives is the nexus wherein the Jewish past and future meet, and it is our hope that this journal will continue to function as a window through which a broader audience can view the valuable and inspiring consequence of this union.

G. P. Z.
Cincinnati, Ohio

NOTES:


Postscript:
As we go to press Dr. David Ellenson has been named the eighth president of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. This issue, therefore, marks the first time in our journal’s fifty-three year history that a president of HUC-JIR has published his scholarly research with us. We are pleased and proud that Dr. Ellenson’s first work as president is appearing in the pages of The American Jewish Archives Journal.
Keystone, West Virginia, in the early twentieth century. The Telz family business on Main Street.
Notice the railroad tracks lining the street.
(courtesy Nancy Brandt)
Jewish Women in the Central Appalachian Coal Fields, 1890–1960: From Breadwinners to Community Builders

Deborah Weiner

When Bessie Zaltzman died in 1949, she left most of her estate to her son Louis. This was not a trifling amount, because entirely through her own efforts she had amassed a small fortune worth $84,000. Starting out fifty years earlier with nothing but a shiftless husband whom she divorced around 1905, she managed to acquire a cow and scraped together a living for herself and her three small children, selling butter and milk. Eventually she had a few cows, a small shop to sell her wares, and then some real estate. She became a landlady, owning small residential properties and overcoming crises that included floods, fires, and lawsuits. Not only was she a determined businesswoman, she was also determined until the end of her life to maintain her commitment to Orthodox Judaism. Of her two surviving children, she left only a token amount to her son Abe, who had disaffiliated with the Jewish community. She did, however, instruct Louis to make sure that Abe was never in economic distress and established a Kaddish fund to ensure that her errant son would be properly mourned after his death. She also left money to Jewish charities and three synagogues: one in Jerusalem and the others in Bluefield and Keystone, West Virginia, in the coal fields where she had spent her entire adult life after emigrating from Russia as a teenager.¹

Bessie Zaltzman was a woman of strong will, as her business enterprise and her frequent clashes with other members of Keystone’s Jewish community show. The outlines of her life represent a somewhat unusual, but by no means implausible, trajectory for an East European Jewish woman of her day. Although it is tempting to dwell in detail on the life of this fascinating woman, she is cited here as just one telling example of the role played by Jewish women in the coal fields of central Appalachia. From the late 1890s and well into the post-World War II era, women were essential to the creation and maintenance of numerous, small, Jewish coal field communities. Their economic
contributions allowed their households to survive and prosper within a notoriously unstable local economy, while their concern with creating a Jewish environment for themselves and their families led them to become the driving force behind Jewish communal organization. Not only did their efforts enable Jewish communities to flourish deep in the mountains of central Appalachia, their commitment to transmitting their heritage to their children under less-than-ideal conditions demonstrates how women in small-town America ensured the maintenance of Jewish continuity for future generations.

The Great Migration of East European Jews to America coincided with the development of the nation's southern coal fields, which began in earnest in the early 1880s and peaked during World War I. In just a few short years, the coal industry transformed a thinly populated region of Appalachian Mountain farm families to a rural-industrial society controlled by large companies, with a growing work force and a pressing need for commercial services to support the new industrial activity. Newcomers from a variety of ethnic groups flocked to central Appalachia, attracted by the opportunities of a booming economy. Most of them—African Americans from other parts of the South and immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe—went to work in the coal mines. But others, especially Jewish immigrants, sought to provide retail services to a growing population. The Jews who came to the region followed a pattern exhibited by a significant minority of East European Jewish immigrants; as many as 30 percent of the migration stream chose not to settle in New York and other major port cities, but rather to search for opportunities for self-employment in smaller cities and towns across the nation. In the coal fields, their success in constructing a niche within the small commercial sector of an overwhelmingly industrial economy enabled them to establish their own small yet vital communities. Between the 1890s and 1930s, Jews from Eastern Europe founded congregations in nine small coal field towns in southern West Virginia, southeastern Kentucky, and southwestern Virginia.\(^1\)

The survival of these Jewish coal field communities depended on three requirements. First, like everyone else in the region, Jewish families had to provide for themselves within the confines of the coal economy. Second, they had to feel comfortable enough with their social environment to make the commitment to stay. Third, they
Jewish Women in the Central Appalachian Coal Fields

couldn’t become so comfortable as to completely assimilate into the surrounding culture. An internal desire to maintain their distinct identity, their religion, and at least some version of their cultural practices had to motivate them. As many historians of small-town Jewry have noted, maintenance of Jewish identity was especially difficult for Jews who lived far from the centers of American Jewry as tiny minorities in the midst of an overwhelmingly Christian population. In all of these dimensions—economic, social, and cultural—Jewish women played a crucial role in sustaining their families and communities.³

***

Despite the opportunities of a growing economy, members of the region’s commercial sector faced daunting challenges. The boom-and-bust nature of the coal industry caused frequent periods of wage cuts and layoffs that shriveled the purchasing power of the local workforce. Strikes and other forms of labor conflict, endemic to the coal fields, also severely affected local merchants. National downturns, such as the Great Depression, hit coal fields even harder than other places because of the reliance on a single industry. Many local businesses faced the experience of losing everything and starting again from scratch, with bankruptcies not uncommon. Meanwhile, during the good times, payday Saturdays would find the stores crowded with shoppers and their owners would have to scramble to meet the demand.⁴

Like other groups in the U.S. and in the coal fields, Jews devised strategies based on their old-country traditions and experiences to overcome adverse economic conditions. One major strategy was a reliance on the family economy. Small Jewish businesses in America were true family businesses, with wives and children working alongside husbands and fathers to help make ends meet. Daughters as well as sons helped in the store from an early age. In the coal fields, young women as well as men not only worked for their parents, but also took jobs as sales clerks at other stores in order to contribute to the household income. Many coal field families in the early years took in boarders, a responsibility that fell entirely on the wives. Jews who grew up in the region during the 1920s and 1930s recalled that at the very least, their mothers “helped out” in the family store during busy times. But “helping out,” though it was the accepted term to describe a wide range of women’s economic activities, greatly understates the
contributions to the household economy made by many of these women.\footnote{The role of women in the family business was significant.}

Motivated by varying combinations of family need and personal fulfillment, Jewish coal field women often took on significant responsibilities in the family business. Some wives acted as their husband’s business partner in decision making and division of labor, if not in a legal or financial sense. The division was often based on personality, with the more outgoing partner serving customers and the more reserved one handling behind-the-scenes tasks such as bookkeeping. If the family owned more than one store, the wife sometimes managed a store. One man related that after his father went bankrupt in the Depression, his mother went to work in the family's next business venture out of necessity. Yet she remained active once conditions improved, which suggests that she was too important, or enjoyed it too much, to quit. One woman remarked that for her mother, the store “was her life.” She liked working and would spend most days at the store. Of course, this did not absolve her from
domestic chores, and she could often be found cleaning the house at 2:00 a.m. Another woman recalled that her mother did just about everything in their small, family, dry goods store, from serving customers to altering clothing to traveling with her husband to New York on buying trips. In many ways this was a hardship for the family; as the daughter stated, "We were latchkey kids." Yet she saw her mother as a role model of strength and ability, proudly calling her a "tremendous buyer." Meanwhile, her mother had "no social life," torn between work and home duties. But she looked forward to the New York trips, where she and her husband would splurge on the opera.6

Many immigrant groups of the era had a history of married women helping to earn income for the family, mostly by working in the home or in a family business. For Jewish women, religious custom made it even more acceptable to play a major economic role. Since the cultural ideal for Jewish men in Eastern Europe was a life devoted to religious study, a woman who could operate a business to support the family while her husband pursued his scholarship earned respect and praise. Although Eastern Europe's economic realities made this ideal possible for very few families, the concept of a married woman as breadwinner was ingrained in traditional culture. Jews who grew up in the coal fields recounted many instances of grandmothers owning or operating small shops in Eastern Europe, New York, or Baltimore, and their daughters who came to the region simply built on their example.7

Coal field census records and business directories from 1900 to 1920 listed married Jewish women as owners of clothing stores, dry goods stores, and confectionaries. In later years they owned pharmacies, jewelry stores, and even one auto supply business. Some of these women had husbands who operated their own separate businesses, such as Blanche Sohn, who owned a confectionary and then a dry goods store while her husband, Eli, operated a saloon and later a clothing store from around 1904 to 1920. When the couple went into business together, she did the buying, according to a 1920 local newspaper item that informed readers, "Mrs. Eli Sohn is in the markets purchasing spring millinery. She will buy largely for the approaching season. Mr. Eli Sohn is painting the front of his store building in a very handsome style." A few women entrepreneurs, such as Bessie Zaltzman, had husbands who either could not or would not support them. More common were widows who took over their late husband's business or started one after his death, sometimes in
partnership with grown sons. Mollie Gaskell, widowed in 1912 at age twenty-seven, became one of Williamson, West Virginia's, most respected merchants and a Jewish community leader as proprietor of the Williamson Bargain House (under the name M. V. Gaskell). Ethel Catzen Cohen inherited and managed her father's extensive business interests in Northfork, West Virginia, where he had been the chief real estate developer.  

Despite the respect local Jewish communities showed to most of these women, Bessie's story reveals it was possible to overstep the boundaries of accepted female behavior. As early as 1902 she became embroiled in a number of legal battles against Jewish businessmen which blazed in the local courts for years. One man tried to take advantage of her weak position as a divorced woman by holding her liable for a loan he had made to her ex-husband. His motivation may have been purely economic, but there is a hint of moral disapproval on the part of her opponents as well. Before her divorce, this man had spread rumors that she was having an affair—rumors that were probably true. Some years later, another Jewish man, whom she had sued over a sick cow she had purchased from him, advised her that she needed to get herself a husband. Her retort: "I don't have to have no husband. I have got good children and I have got good property."

Certainly the Jewish tradition of female entrepreneurship contradicted the modern, middle-class ideal that a woman's place was in the home. After the immigrant generation passed away, it became less common for women to be heavily involved in the family business—or operate their own business—except out of necessity. One woman interviewed for this article acted as her husband's business partner into the 1970s because she enjoyed it and because she had grown up in her parents' family business. Yet she saw herself as an exception. More typical in the post-World War II era was a woman described by her son as "99 percent a homemaker," a woman whose ambition "was to be a good hausfrau." Since she had been forced to quit school in the sixth grade in Baltimore to help her struggling family by working in the needle trade, the middle-class ideal probably came as welcome relief from a life of toil. Nevertheless, in many Jewish coal field families, single daughters continued to work as teachers, stenographers, nurses, and even manager of a local radio station, while a few married women remained active in the family business into the third generation, long after economic security had
been achieved. Once a family business became successful, women who did choose to stay involved often had their household duties relieved by a live-in maid (a common presence in middle- and upper-middle-class households in the coal fields and throughout the South).\textsuperscript{10}

Interviews with Jews who grew up in the region, men and women now in their seventies and eighties, reveal a sense of pride in their mother's strength, capability, and resourcefulness, as demonstrated to their children by their economic activities. As one man said approvingly, "my mother had a good business head on her." Another remembered his mother as a "bright, feisty little woman" who pragmatically chose to work as a saleslady in another family's dress shop as the best way to earn an income after her husband's early death. This same combination of determination and confidence in helping to meet their families' economic needs would also characterize the efforts of Jewish coal field women to meet the religious and cultural needs of their small communities.\textsuperscript{11}

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While women's economic activities built on East European customary practices and went against the tide of middle-class American life, their actions in the communal arena would be at odds with Jewish tradition and well in keeping with modern American religious and social trends. Jewish women in Eastern Europe may have been accepted as breadwinners in the marketplace, but their religious role was strictly confined to home and family. Their responsibilities were not trivial; since much of Jewish ritual takes place within the home, women's religious duties were recognized as significant. Nevertheless, their role was clearly subservient to that of men, who carried out the supreme command to study the sacred texts and who went daily to the synagogue to pray. As feminist historians have noted, one of those prayers provides a telling view of the female position in traditional Judaism, as the men expressed their thanks to God for not making them women.\textsuperscript{12}

A variety of factors converged to lead Jewish coal field women into the traditionally male communal realm. In the first place, somewhat paradoxically, Jewish immigrant women who settled in the region were more likely than their male counterparts to remain loyal to their traditional upbringing. After all, it was usually their husbands, fathers,
American Jewish Archives Journal

and brothers who had made the choice to follow business opportunities rather than remain in the sheltering embrace of Jewish neighborhoods in the cities. Women were often reluctant, or at least had reservations, about leaving their families behind to move to an area where few Jews lived and where it would not be easy to maintain a traditional Jewish life. As one woman said in an interview, "I can't tell you how my mother reacted coming from Brooklyn, New York, to Scarbro, West Virginia." Her mother in fact exclaimed to her husband, "You brought me to a wilderness!"13

Economic imperatives would continue to drive the men. Though many of them were attached to the traditions themselves, they were willing to make sacrifices because making a living had to come first. The first ritual to go, of course, was observance of the Sabbath, since Saturdays were the busiest shopping days at the coal fields. Spending the day in prayer, study, and rest was completely out of the question. The men also found it impossible to hold daily prayer services. Also, as Williamson Jewish leader Ida Bank stated in a 1926 speech reviewing the progress of her local congregation, "petty business jealousies" had prevented the men from coming together to address communal needs. Some men did take on religious and communal responsibilities, from merchants who acted as lay rabbis and community leaders to ordained rabbis imported by the local congregations. But women soon became the prime movers in attempts to maintain Jewish identity and practice both within and outside the home.14

Their efforts began in the home, where women observed as many rituals as possible. They continued to light candles on the Sabbath and tried to follow the dietary practices of Orthodox Judaism. Difficulties in obtaining kosher meat and other kosher foods led most of them to gradually abandon strict observance, but they continued to prepare traditional meals, especially on the holidays. Some of their strategies were clearly ineffective, if sincere: one man recalls that his mother brought her own knives to the local (non-Jewish) butcher and asked him to use them to carve her cuts of meat. Jews who grew up in the coal fields remember the strenuous attempts their mothers made to keep a Jewish home. Even if the women eventually had to give up various traditions, the effort in itself made a strong impression on their children and went a long way toward reinforcing a Jewish identity. With fathers consumed by work and rarely home, almost all the
people interviewed for this article pointed to their mother's influence as being decisive. As one woman typically remarked, "My mother instilled a lot of Judaism into us." The piety of an individual woman inspired one town's Jewish population to take its first steps toward communal organization. Sana Moskovitch Pickus came from Russia to join her three grown sons in Beckley, West Virginia, in 1921, and the small Jewish community held its first religious services in honor of her arrival. The following year, the town's Jewish women organized a religious school for the children, which they operated for more than ten years before the congregation itself was officially founded. Their action was highly typical of Jewish women in other small American towns, both in the coal fields and beyond. As their concern with maintaining a Jewish way of life in the home spilled into the communal realm, women in small towns often organized religious groups or activities well in advance of the formal establishment of congregations. For example, the Jewish Ladies Guild of Williamson convened in 1913 as the town's first Jewish organization. As one of its early leaders wrote, the Ladies Guild "was organized for social reasons and also to take care of the needy Jewish traveling poor who were very numerous at that time." The three motives that caused Jewish women in the coal fields to come together—to educate their children, to meet charitable needs, and to improve their social life—also typified the objectives that caused Jewish women in other American small towns to coalesce. Mutual aid and organized charity to the Jewish poor were deep-rooted concepts in religious and communal life. Traditionally, men oversaw these functions, but women in small-town America often took them over when the men failed to act. The activities of most of the coal field ladies aid societies started with assistance to transient Jews who were as much of an embarrassment to the Jewish community as anything.
else; generally, charity took the form of money for a meal and a train ticket out of town. The women also made donations or small loans to local families, Jewish and non-Jewish, that had fallen on hard times. In the context of providing charity, the women could also enjoy social gatherings with other Jewish women—a considerable incentive.17

As the women became more organized and expanded their fund raising, their activities reveal stronger assertions of Jewish identity. As a typical example, in the early 1920s the annual beneficiaries of the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society of Welch, West Virginia, included an orphan asylum in Palestine, the Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged in Cincinnati, and the matzo funds of New York and Baltimore. The women also raised money to help destitute rabbis and other poverty-stricken Jews in the old country, including the "hunger-suffering" sister of Keystone's rabbi. In later years, support for Zionist groups such as Hadassah became prevalent. Contributing to Jewish causes in faraway places, from Baltimore to Israel, kept the women in touch with the currents of modern Jewry and enabled them to keep from feeling isolated in their coal field homes.18

But the women recognized that these coal field homes deserved their attention as well and that there were local Jewish issues that desperately needed to be addressed. They soon turned their attention to the critical goal of passing their heritage on to their children. In Beckley this goal provided the motivating force to organize, and other coal field women's groups also considered it a key priority. The Williamson Ladies Guild founded a religious school in 1916—still several years before the congregation officially came into existence. In her 1926 speech, Ida Bank recalled that there were "five children who attended our first Sabbath School and I was their teacher, with no experience in this work, with no instructions, only with the will and ambition to do something for the children along religious lines and to help them on the path to Judaism." Another leader, Ida Nabe, identified the three main functions of the group: "First, religious instruction of our children; second, the support of our charities and institutions; third, helpful in all things congregational." A Jewish man who grew up in Logan, West Virginia, recalled that "the little [religious] education we had" was provided by women and the occasional visiting rabbi. The Welch congregation had a local rabbi to instruct their children, but he needed the occasional assistance of the women, whose role was "to make the children be good."19
Ida Nabe's phrase, "helpful in all things congregational," is misleading, since it sounds more like a supportive than a leading role. In actuality, after seeing to their children's education, the coal field women's groups embarked on an ambitious agenda to promote full-fledged Jewish congregations with regular religious services, programs, and, most important, places of worship. The women poured their energy into raising funds to build synagogues. They also organized and cooked for the religious/social events that held communities together: Hanukkah parties, Purim festivals, community seders. They organized trips to large cities to buy kosher and holiday foods. They made sure that the single men in their midst had a family to go to during Jewish holidays and they hosted visiting rabbis in their homes. When new Jewish families moved into town, they immediately visited the wives and applied peer pressure if necessary to get them to join in. They were not above a little arm twisting in their efforts to maintain group cohesion; members who missed meetings without a valid excuse received a fine.

The progression from an initial concern with charity to religious education of the children to congregational development—in other words, the evolution from Ladies Aid Society to Temple Sisterhood—was the common pattern of American Jewish women's groups of the first half of the twentieth century. Some historians, such as Jenna Weissman Joselit and William Toll, downplay the sisterhood role as being essentially auxiliary, while others, such as Jacob Rader Marcus and Sherry Blanton, recognize it as crucial to the very existence of Jewish communities in small towns. Beth Wenger notes that the role of Jewish women in congregational development was indeed significant but often masked because it took place offstage. She points out that Jewish women served as "unseen caretakers of communal needs. . . . It was not uncommon for women's groups to raise money and then allow male-dominated synagogue boards to allocate the funds."

Research from the coal fields supports the view that women's role in communal organization was critical, not merely auxiliary, yet, as Wenger suggests, often hidden. As elsewhere, men were the ones who actually incorporated Jewish institutions, spoke at dedication ceremonies for the newly built synagogues, and served on the boards. Certainly, some men did play a strong role in organizing religious activities and raising funds. But they often needed considerable
prodding, and women were a necessary behind-the-scenes force. For example, in Welch the men had a mutual aid society of their own. Yet the ladies, in a 1919 meeting, voted to help the men "in making their meetings more interesting and get the members to attend the meetings better." As might be guessed, this mostly involved serving meals. The men's society revived but eventually disbanded. Later, after the synagogue was built, the newly named Welch Sisterhood kept things together, since, as one woman put it at the time, the men "have had no real organization, only a few men taking any interest in Temple matters at all."22

So out of necessity, with the same pragmatism that guided their economic behavior, women moved their religious activities out of the home and into the communal realm previously denied them by tradition. With men spending most of their time on their businesses, Jewish coal field women began to see themselves as the guardians of religion, and the men were hard pressed to disagree. The women were participating in what Wenger has termed a "new, gender-based reorganization of Jewish communal life" that signified a "radical" alteration in women's traditional role. Yet in the coal fields, as elsewhere, this reorganization was not particularly controversial. For one thing, as long as women did not demand public recognition for their leadership, they did not overtly disturb preexisting notions about the proper communal power structure. Their new responsibilities could be seen simply as an extension of their customary task as nurturers and therefore, according to Joselit, "did not challenge prevailing assumptions."23

More important, women's new role conformed to prevailing American social patterns. In society at large, men had mostly abdicated religious leadership in their full-time pursuit of capitalist success. Their abdication was accompanied by what historians such as Paula Hyman have referred to as the "feminization" of religious life in America and other industrial societies. Religion now fell into the domestic sphere where women reigned. Thus, for Jewish men and women anxious to Americanize without abandoning their religion and identity, the emergence of women's communal role was a natural and welcome occurrence.24

Accompanying this development was a shift away from Orthodox Judaism and toward Reform Judaism, with its much less restrictive view of women. Almost all of the coal field congregations moved from
Orthodox to Reform during the 1920s, and the expanded activities of women certainly influenced this process. Yet even while breaking new ground, women clung to tenets of traditional Judaism that felt right to them. The Williamson Sisterhood, for example, sponsored an annual religious service in the 1920s which was led entirely by women. This surely would have been considered ridiculous in Eastern Europe, if not dangerously revolutionary. Yet the same women focused their education efforts on boys to make sure they were prepared for the traditional bar mitzvah. Many of them still tried their best to keep a kosher home, a practice considered obsolete by most followers of Reform Judaism at that time. In 1922 the Welch Sisterhood decided against affiliating with the Reform Movement's Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, instead opting to join the Women's League of the United Synagogue of America because "this league is Orthodox to its utmost." The following year the women changed their minds and joined the Reform group. Pragmatism had won out; the Federation had a West Virginia state affiliate that offered more in the way of resources and support.

Such contradictory and ambivalent behavior suggests that the process of change was not completely free of conflict. And despite societal support for women's increased communal involvement, some tension did occur along gender lines. In Logan controversy erupted when women tried to move their role from behind the scenes to the forefront, asking to be recognized as members of the congregation and entitled to seats on the board. The February 1925 minutes of the congregation, kept by Secretary Harry Stern, read as follows:

[The Sisterhood ladies said they] wanted to become members of our congregation and assist us in our work. They could not state how they could benefit us. This brought up considerable discussion pro and con with the result that it was decided to table this matter... until the Sisterhood could bring someone here who would be able to tell us more clearly the benefits of having the ladies of the Jewish community as active members of the B'nai El Congregation.

The men's response shows not only that there were boundaries women still would not be permitted to cross, but that their previous contributions, although critical, had gone unrecognized. The women
knew what to do about this, however. The following month the minutes note that the community seder normally held every year had been canceled, since “it would work a hardship on the ladies.” After that the minutes record increased consultation with the sisterhood on matters such as taking care of a visiting rabbi and renting a permanent space to hold services. The men still would not accept the official membership of women, but voted to have joint meetings with the sisterhood board on “matters of importance.”

Communal activities helped immigrant Jewish women adjust to a coal field environment that many of them had found alien on first arrival. The opportunity to socialize with women of similar background and to engage in cultural expressions that were important to them mitigated the consequences of living far from the centers of Jewish life and contributed to their willingness to remain in the region. Their daughters, who grew up in the coal fields, participated in Jewish women’s groups on reaching adulthood. Communal involvement helped them maintain an identity that had been instilled by their parents. This generational continuity was necessary for Jewish communities to continue to thrive in the face of Americanization and integration into coal field society.

Assimilatory pressures beckoned because, despite the feelings of displacement that new arrivals may have experienced, Jews were far from unwelcome in their new surroundings. The emerging middle class of coal field merchants and professionals was too small to reject any potential members. They saw Jewish families as fellow contributors to the development of the region—people who brought skills and networks that were needed to progress. Indeed, Jewish families were among the founders of several coal field towns. Jewish men joined other merchants as small-town boosters and contributed to town development through their commercial and civic activities. And yet their religious and cultural distinctiveness in an area of devout Christianity meant that Jews could never be complete “insiders,” even if they wanted to be. Torn between assimilating into middle-class society and maintaining their separate identity—and aware that by remaining religiously and culturally different, they would always be viewed by their neighbors as not quite fitting in—coal field Jews

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developed strategies to negotiate the subtle terrain between difference and belonging. Their communal organizations represented one key strategy: the congregations, the B’nai B’rith lodges, and the women’s groups helped to mediate between the Jewish collective and the surrounding society.27

The ladies aid societies and sisterhoods enabled Jewish coal field women to express their separate identity, yet in ways that were similar and acceptable to their middle-class Christian counterparts, since women’s church groups were extremely popular at the time. Without their own organizations they found themselves assimilating perhaps further than they intended: Jewish women in Welch first belonged to the Women’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church before organizing the Welch Hebrew Ladies Aid Society in 1915. With their own communal groups facilitating their interaction, Jewish women could freely and respectfully join with other middle-class women in social clubs and charity work. Their organizational activities extended beyond their own community, for example to Salvation Army rummage sales, Red Cross flood relief efforts, and distributing annual Christmas baskets to the poor during the Depression. They also held events to promote Jewish-Christian understanding and to educate their neighbors, who often showed considerable ignorance about Judaism. The Williamson Sisterhood held an annual “Neighbor Night,” when each member invited one of their Christian friends to Friday night services. The Welch Sisterhood participated in the Welch United Council of Churches in the late 1940s and early 1950s, although the Williamson Sisterhood bowed out of their local branch in 1947, having decided, according to one leader, that “we have no place in this organization.”28

Despite this hint that interfaith relations were not always pleasant, the coal field version of Jewish women’s religious articulation could take some rather ecumenical forms. In the 1920s, before the Beckley congregation acquired its own building, the sisterhood “aided in the holding of religious services . . . at the Beckley Presbyterian Church, with a non-Jewish choir, and with a student rabbi from the Hebrew Union College.” In preparing to furnish their new temple in 1922, Welch Sisterhood members visited some of the town’s newer churches to see how Christian women had furnished their places of worship. Things got a little ridiculous in 1935 when the Williamson Sisterhood minutes saw fit to report that “the flowers in the temple on
Easter Sunday were sent by Mr. Hammond of the Mark Russell Seed Co.  

While most socializing occurred within their own group, among people they felt entirely at ease with, Jewish women did not remain sheltered behind their ethnic associations. Indeed, some Gentiles became full-fledged sisterhood members; the History of the Beckley Jewish Community acknowledges the active contributions of women “who had married Jewish men, either with or without becoming formally attached [through conversion] to Judaism.” Most Jewish women mixed easily with other residents of coal field towns, and those from pioneering families were accorded particular respect. In a 1920 eulogy of one such woman, the Welch newspaper stated:

Mrs. [Pauline] Josephy was one of the most popular ladies of the city and enjoyed a broad friendship. She was active in business and charitable circles and her untimely death caused a shadow of sincere sorrow to sweep the entire city... She had been a resident of Welch for a number of years and assisted her husband in the conduct of a flourishing store here.

Mrs. Josephy’s friends in the Methodist women’s society (of which she had formerly been a member) passed a resolution expressing its “love for and appreciation of [her] life and beautiful character.” Local newspapers also noted the contributions of Jewish women to civic life and what passed for “high society” in these rugged little towns. In 1922 the Welch newspaper praised the “delightful” dinner served by the Welch Sisterhood at a Chamber of Commerce meeting. (On the menu: chicken fricassee, string beans, mashed potatoes, celery, liver salad, pickles, hot rolls, and French pudding with wine sauce.) A 1933 society column item called a sisterhood event “the most brilliant social affair to be held in Welch this season.”

Certainly this congenial atmosphere helped Jewish women become comfortable with their lives in the coal fields. For some, however, interaction with non-Jews had its dangers. One woman who grew up in the region admitted that her mother did not want her to have gentile friends, and especially discouraged her friendship with boys, fearing that it would lead to intermarriage. Another woman stopped speaking to her daughter for several years after she married a local non-Jewish man. Eventually intermarriage became a fact of life.
that the older generation was forced to accept, although their efforts to deter it were at least partly successful. Many second-generation coal field Jews stated in interviews that despite their friendships with non-Jews, their parents had passed on to them a strong aversion to intermarriage that caused them to make special efforts to find Jewish mates.31

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For at least three generations of Jewish women, communal work helped resolve the tension between the urge to fit in and Americanize, and the urge to preserve their cultural heritage and lead a Jewish life. Communal activities served as both expressions of Jewish values and ways to interact with non-Jews. Their organizations were in perfect social conformity with those of the churchwomen around them, thus allowing them to retain a distinct identity and blend in at the same time. Indeed, as many historians of small-town American Jewry have pointed out, forming their own religious groups helped legitimate the Jewish population in the eyes of the larger society, especially in the religion-soaked atmosphere of the South. That motivation no doubt pertained to the coal fields as well; the interfaith activities of Jewish women’s groups reveal a desire to interact with gentile women on equal terms. Alternatively, women’s communal activities enabled them to enter into larger coal field society, have social intercourse with others, yet have a familiar base to return to. This base provided a refuge not just from assimilation, but also from undercurrents of anti-Semitism which were certainly not absent and were occasionally felt by Jews who grew up in the region. Communal solidarity also helped assuage whatever underlying discomfort may have been caused by a ubiquitous Christianity that in some of its forms could be alienating or even threatening.32

Despite Jewish women’s successful efforts to foster community, factors undermined Jewish community life. Women who grew up in the region often went away to college (partly motivated by the desire to find Jewish husbands), and most of them did not return. They were replaced, in a demographic sense, when local Jewish men who went off to college brought wives back with them when they came home to enter the family business. Ultimately, however, economic conditions would prove fatal to Jewish life in the coal fields. Starting in the mid-
1950s, a drastic and sustained decline in the coal field economy caused local businesses to suffer and led young people to make their lives elsewhere. Of the nine coal field congregations, most disappeared by the 1980s, though two still remain today. But for the first half of the century, Jewish women’s communal, economic, and social activities helped carve out a place for Jewish communities in the coal fields. Their efforts advanced the cause of Jewish continuity by instilling a Jewish identity that persists in their descendants, wherever they may live.33

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NOTES:


Jewish Women in the Central Appalachian Coal Fields

Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (hereafter AJA); “Student Rabbi Survey, 1935-1936,” Hebrew Union College Collection (AJA).


4. On the economic conditions faced by coal field merchants, see Weiner, “Middlemen of the Coalfields.”


9. In 1902 Sam Katzen sued Jake Shore for slander for spreading the rumor that he and Bessie (separated from her husband but not yet divorced) were living together. Bessie and Jake were already engaged in a property dispute by that time. Sam eventually dropped his suit and paid all court costs, which suggests that there was some truth behind the rumors. One lawsuit that Bessie was involved in ended up in the West Virginia Supreme Court, which overturned a decision against her and sent the matter back for retrial. While the outcome of most of her court battles could not be ascertained, it appears that at least one case was settled out of court after many years, perhaps because of the weariness of all concerned. Circuit Court records 1902, 1909, 1910, Deed Book 102, McDowell County Courthouse; “Zolsman vs. Totz,” *West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals* Book 74 (June 1914): 604–6.


11. Bernard Gottlieb interview; Milton Koslow interview.


13. Jean Abrams Wein interview. In her memoir *The Jew Store* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1998), Stella Suberman offers an eloquent description of her mother’s reservations about leaving behind family and the Jewish community to accompany her husband to western Tennessee, where he opened a store.


15. Early on a few coal field towns had Orthodox rabbis who served as *schochets*. One or two Jewish merchants trained in *kashrut* took on the job of slaughtering chickens, but not all families had access to these sources of kosher meat. Some families tried ordering meat from Cincinnati, Ohio, or Charleston, West Virginia, but it often arrived spoiled. Lou Mankoff interview; Bernard Gottlieb interview; Milton Koslow interview; Jean Abrams Wein interview; Manuel Pickus interview; Sidney Fink interview; Reva Totz Hecker interview. The phenomenon of “kitchen Judaism” as an important component of ethnic identity has been commented upon by many authors. See for example Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity*, 158.


23. Wenger, “Jewish Women and Voluntarism,” 17, 21; Joselit, “The Special Sphere,” 223; Toll, “A Quiet Revolution.” One clue that women did not realize the radical nature of their foray into new gender territory was that they continued to refer to themselves by their husband’s name in all their organizational records. For the historian, some detective work is needed to discover that “Mrs. Hyman Bank” was really Ida. Sherry Blanton notes the same phenomenon in her study of the women of Anniston, Alabama.

Hyman analyzes the paradox of Jewish women as “guardians of religion,” pointing out how the role was at the same time tradition centered and modern, both assimilatory and nonassimilatory. By upholding tradition in the home, women conformed to family-centered notions of modern bourgeois religion; by their communal activities they attempted to preserve Jewish distinctiveness and Jewish culture while participating in larger American trends that ran counter to longstanding Jewish practice (see pages 26–31).


26. Logan congregation minutes, 1925.

27. See Mary Beth Pudup, “Town and Country in the Transformation of Appalachian Kentucky,” in Pudup, Billings, and Waller, eds., Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century, 270–96, on the welcoming attitude that coal field local elites showed to newcomers who they considered to be fellow boosters. An investigation of coal field newspapers from the first three decades of the century uncovered numerous articles praising the commercial and civic endeavors of local Jewish merchants. See Weiner, “Middlemen of the Coalfields.” Almost all of the people interviewed for this article expressed some version of the “insider-outsider” dichotomy. Many dismissed it as relatively unimportant to their lives, but for others it resulted in an ambivalence that emerged as they struggled to explain the subtle contradictions involved in their relations with non-Jews. Immigration historians have discussed how ethnic-based organizations, far from isolating their members and promoting separatism, actually aid in the assimilation process by mediating between old and new environments and helping immigrants adapt to their new homes. See for example Bodnar, The Transplanted.

28. Sisterhood records, Logan, Welch, Williamson. On Jewish communal groups mirroring middle-class Christian groups, see Toll, “A Quiet Revolution”; Hyman, Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History; Rogoff, “Synagogue and Jewish Church.”

29. Shinedling and Pickus, History of the Beckley Jewish Community, 127; Sisterhood records, Welch and Williamson. Evidently, the non-Jewish choir was not a particular innovation of Beckley Jews; according to Sherry Blanton, the Anniston temple choir “has been exclusively composed of Christians.” (“Lives of Quiet Affirmation,” 46).


31. Jean Abrams Wein interview; Reva Totz Hecker interview; Betty Gottlieb interview; Bernard Gottlieb interview; Sam and Harvey Weiner interview; Gail Bank interview; Sidney Fink interview. An undetermined percentage of coal field Jews did discontinue their association with Judaism and the Jewish community, either because of intermarriage or for other reasons. Interviewees could name several individuals and families who, for all practical purposes, had “stopped being Jews.” However, their number was far too small to threaten the existence of coal field Jewish communities.

32. On Jewish communal organization as a path to legitimacy in small-town society, see Evans, The Provincials, 93; Toll, “A Quiet Revolution”; Rogoff, “Synagogue and Jewish Church.” Interviews with coal field Jews reveal an overall attitude that denied the existence of anti-Semitism yet acknowledged that Jews could be made to
feel different by the larger society, sometimes uncomfortably so. Also, local Christian radio shows, attempts to impose prayer in the public schools, and other manifestations of aggressive Christianity occasionally disturbed members of the Jewish coal field population.

33. For details on the decline of Jewish coal field communities, see Shinedling, *West Virginia Jewry*, and Weiner, "Middlemen of the Coalfields."
Between Brooklyn and Brookline: American Hasidism and the Evolution of the Bostoner Hasidic Tradition

Seth Farber

One morning after services, a hasid [sic] approached his Rebbe and said: “Rebbe, I had a dream. I was the Rebbe and all of the hasidim [sic] revered me.” The Rebbe ignored the hasid. The next morning, the disciple once again approached the Rebbe and said: “Rebbe. I had the dream again! I was the Rebbe and all the hasidim revered me!” The Rebbe, unimpressed, once again ignored his disciple. On the third morning, the hasid approached the Rebbe. “Rebbe,” he said, “I had the dream again. How can you be sure that I’m not the Rebbe?” “My dear hasid,” responded the Rebbe, “when you dream you are the Rebbe, you can be certain that you are not the Rebbe. When your hasidim dream you’re the Rebbe, then you are the Rebbe.”

- A story told by R. LeviYitzchak Horowitz, the Bostoner Rebbe

“For years I nourished a desire...to witness this past and to experience the world destroyed before my birth, but from which I knew I came...But Brookline was not Brooklyn.”

-Samuel Heilman, Defenders of the Faith

Though Hasidism is rooted in the European religious conservative milieu of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its American descendants have demonstrated remarkable variance, both within the religious and social contexts and on a much broader scale in the political and cultural spheres. Little has been written about the dynamics of American Hasidism, and almost all of the literature has focused on the prominent Hasidic groups such as Lubavitch (Chabad) and Satmar. This paper seeks to correct this trend by analyzing and contrasting the careers of two American brothers who each became known as the Bostoner Rebbe. Though these rebbes are unique and the story of their Hasidic tradition anomalous, their history reflects a number of noteworthy issues that must be considered when evaluating the nature of the American Hasidic tradition in particular and the nature of American ultra-Orthodoxy in general.

To whom does the term Bostoner Rebbe refer? In his seminal essay on American Orthodoxy, Charles Leibman described the rebbe’s Palestinian and European origins. Stephen Sharot identified
the Bostoner Rebbe as the creator of an outreach (kiruv) movement in Boston. And HaModia, the newspaper of the ultra-Orthodox union Agudat Yisrael, suggested that he was the leader of a Brooklyn Hasidic court who represented the United States at the fifth Agudah convention in Jerusalem. Each of these descriptions, of course, relates to different Bostoner Rebbes: Leibman referred to Rabbi Pinchas Dovid Horowitz, the founder of Bostoner Hasidism, while Sharot referred to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Horowitz and HaModia to Rabbi Moshe Horowitz.

The history of the second generation of Bostoner Rebbes—Rabbi Moshe of Brooklyn and Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Brookline—provides an excellent opportunity to contrast the development of “in-town” and “out-of-town” American ultra-Orthodoxy. Rabbi Moshe established his court in New York, the center of American Hasidism, while Levi Yitzchak moved north to a community where Hasidism was peripheral to Orthodoxy’s core. Though these courts claimed loyalty to the same dynastic tradition, they developed in distinctive ways and took divergent paths. Their evolution raises the following questions: To what extent did the second generation of Hasidic rabbis in America maintain the already Americanized traditions of their parents? What were the effects of the development of a Hasidic center in Brooklyn on minor Hasidic sects? How were these differences manifested in the Bostoner courts in Brooklyn and Boston?

BACKGROUND

Pinchas Dovid Horowitz, a descendant of prominent Hungarian rabbis, was born at Jerusalem in 1876. After developing a reputation as a Talmudic scholar, Pinchas Dovid was sent to Galicia in 1913 to serve on a rabbinical court adjudicating the distribution of funds for the old Yishuv. Caught in Austrio-Hungary at the outbreak of the First World War, he escaped to America, sailing under the false name of Isaac Abraham. Although he spoke no English, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid was invited to serve as the rabbi of Congregation Rayim Ahuvim in Brownsville, New York, where he resided for almost a year. Because he felt indebted to certain Bostonians who helped him emigrate, he settled in Boston’s West End in 1915. Rabbi Pinchas Dovid’s first son, Moshe, was born at Jerusalem in 1909 and was separated from his father for more than eight years before the family reunited at New York in 1919. His second son, Levi Yitzchak, was born
in 1920 at Boston, thereby becoming, according to Bostoner tradition, the first Hasidic rebbe born in America. It is these two brothers who are the focus of this study.5

SOURCES
Before analyzing the careers of these two brothers, it is important to distinguish between the research resources available, as they clearly reflect the disparate careers of Moshe and Levi Yitzchak. The most comprehensive analysis of Bostoner Hasidism is found in Shalom Wallach's *Shushelet Boston*, a hagiography published in 1994 about the Hasidic dynasty. This text is important not only for the historical kernels found within it, but also because of the numerous documents it contains. Only one chapter in this book is dedicated to Rabbi Moshe, while the last six chapters chronicle Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's career. This qualitative disparity is characteristic of a general trend found in all writings about the Bostoner Hasidic tradition.

Sparse information about Rabbi Moshe is found in a number of newspapers such as *Di Yiddishe Vort*, the *Jewish Press*, and *HaModia*, as well as a number of Agudat Yisrael of America documents. By contrast, a plethora of information has been published about Rabbi Levi Yitzchak in almost every Jewish newspaper and in articles in Boston's secular press. Numerous journals, including the *Guide to Jewish Boston* and *The Jewish Catalogue*, have featured Levi Yitzchak. Two histories of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak were published by the Beth Pinchas Center in Boston, and a number of public relations pamphlets feature the activities of the New England Hassidic Center, Levi Yitzchak's organizational base. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is the subject of a book by the renowned Hasidic storyteller, Hanoch Teller. And, most remarkably, both Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and his wife published memoirs titled *And the Angels Laughed* and *The Bostoner Rebbetzin Remembers*, respectively. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak may also be the only living rabbi to be featured in Artscroll's *Judaoscope* series. Of course, these sources must be employed selectively and analyzed critically, but the very existence of so wide a range of accounts relating to a relatively minor Hasidic tradition is remarkable.

One issue that needs to be explored is why Rabbi Levi Yitzchak has received disproportionate attention in the press. Was his charisma so compelling? Was he indeed unique among Hasidic rabbis in America? In what ways did he stand out from his older brother?
EDUCATION OF THE BROTHERS

From the outset, the two Horowitz brothers were schooled in different environments. Though Moshe was born in Palestine, his formative years were spent in Europe, where he lived with his grandparents until 1920. He began his formal studies in 1921, after his family arrived in America. According to Wallach’s history, Moshe did not attend school but rather, in traditional Hasidic fashion, received home tutoring.

Rabbi Pinchas Dovid hired private tutors for his son who was then eight years old, and did not consider sending his son to public school, despite the “mandatory education law”... [He was brought to trial, and] defended his position by arguing... “I will only teach my son Torah.” The mandatory education law of our tradition is written in the Torah in the words “And you shall teach your children”... The judge could not accept these arguments, but he was so impressed with the Rebbe’s passion that he ruled that the Rebbe could teach his son at home, on the condition that private tutors for secular studies be employed to teach the curriculum of the public schools. Obviously, these tutors were only hired for show.

There is no way to ascertain the accuracy of the claim that Moshe did not attend public school. However, Wallach’s contention is suspect because of a similar claim he makes about Rabbi Levi Yitzchak:

The Rebbe also hired private tutors for Levi Yitzchak. This time, he was not brought to trial, for the authorities knew his intransigence and his stubbornness when it came to the education of his sons.6

Archival resources seem to contradict this claim. A 1955 newsletter from Torah Vodaas, the Brooklyn yeshiva which Levi Yitzchak later attended, described Levi Yitzchak’s early education as follows: "After receiving his secular education in the Boston school system, Rabbi Horowitz left for Israel to pursue an intensive training in Talmudic and Hasidic lore." Since this source says explicitly that Levi Yitzchak studied in public school, it is likely that Levi Yitzchak attended public school, even if Moshe did not. Most American Orthodox children in the early decades of the century attended public schools and received
a Jewish education only in supplementary schools. Orthodox Judaism had yet to confront the vicissitudes and possible deleterious effects of the public schools on Orthodox students. In later years Orthodoxy’s negative posture toward the public schools ultimately led to its failure to capture the spirit of America’s Jews during the first half of the century. In any case, Moshe learned English from private tutors during the early 1920s.

In 1924 Rabbi Pinchas Dovid sent his elder son Moshe to the yeshiva of Rabbi Asher Lemel Spitzer in Kurchdorf, Hungary. Rabbi Spitzer was an influential member of Agudat Yisrael, and Rabbi Moshe’s involvement with the Agudah can be traced to this point. This was a relationship critical to his later career. During Moshe’s three years in the yeshiva, he traveled to meet his father in central Europe and joined his father for a trip to Palestine. The significance of these trips was that Rabbi Moshe was exposed to many European Orthodox Hasidic leaders, some of whom he would meet again when he became the Bostoner Rebbe. In 1929 Moshe’s father sent him to the yeshiva of Rabbi Moshe Kliers in Tiberias and Moshe was married in Zidichov three years later.

While Moshe received a traditional European Hasidic education, his brother Levi Yitzchak was schooled in modern, non-Hasidic institutions. In 1934 Rabbi Pinchas Dovid left Boston for Palestine, taking his younger son and wife with him. Levi Yitzchak studied at Torah V’Yirah, a mussar yeshiva in Me’ah Shearim, under the guidance of Rabbi Aaron Katzenellenbogen and R’Zev Cheshin. Though Rabbi Pinchas Dovid had planned to settle in Palestine, his financial situation made this impossible and in 1936 the entire Horowitz family, including Moshe and his bride, returned to Boston. In 1938 Levi Yitzchak was sent to study at Mesifta Torah Vodaas in New York under the guidance of Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz and the tutelage of Rabbi Shlomeh Heiman.

Moshe studied in a nurturing environment for a Hasidic rebbe and was exposed to the Hasidic culture of Hungarian Orthodoxy. Levi Yitzchak, by contrast, studied in an alien environment. In Jerusalem he was known as the American kid, and in Torah Vodaas his Hasidic form of dress made him stand out from the other students. By providing differing modes of education for his sons, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid implicitly trained Moshe to be his successor. Moshe’s final teacher was his father, whom he served as apprentice (shamash).
during the 1930s. Levi Yitzchak's schooling, which was non-Hasidic and very American in nature, style, and content, did not foreshadow his future as a Bostoner rebbe. Torah Vodaas was a training ground for educated ba'alei batim (laymen), not rabbis. When his parents left Boston permanently, Levi Yitzchak was uninterested in returning there or having any involvement with the organized rabbinate.

**THE MOVE TO BROOKLYN**

Three primary factors motivated Rabbi Pinchas Dovid's decision to move to Williamsburg, New York, in 1939. First, Boston's West End had undergone a rapid economic decline in the 1930s, encouraging many Jews to move to the more suburban community of Dorchester. In addition, there were a number of personal considerations. Rabbi Horowitz's failure to establish a Talmud Torah in Boston, his inability to raise enough money for a settlement in Palestine, and the death of his close friend and confidant, Rabbi Solomon Jacob Freiderman, all convinced the rebbe to leave Boston. Finally, in order to be close to his son Levi Yitzchak, who was to study at Torah Vodaas, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid decided to settle in New York.

Williamsburg had sustained a flourishing Jewish community in the 1920s, but during the Depression era many of its wealthier Jews, wanting to be free of the Orthodox life patterns which dominated there, moved to other neighborhoods. In the 1930s a new era in Brooklyn Orthodoxy began, as a number of Hasidic rebbes moved their shteibels to Williamsburg. The pattern of customs and mores that had satisfied the Orthodoxy of the earlier inhabitants did not meet the Hasidic standards of these newcomers.

Rabbi Pinchas Dovid moved into his new apartment at 542 Bedford Avenue at the corner of Bedford and Wilson Avenues and set up a small shteibel. His main communal activity was his Friday night tisch, and like many other Hasidic rabbis he campaigned for community-wide Sabbath observance, kashrut, and family purity laws (taharat hamishpacha). Rabbi Pinchas Dovid's battle for observance in Williamsburg, however, was a source of tension between himself and many Orthodox Jews. Two examples illustrate this point.

While still in Boston, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid founded the Religious Literary Society, an association that promoted observance. This society published a Jewish calendar which outlined parameters and rituals for Halachic observance in America. When he moved to Brooklyn he published another calendar, this time directed to New
York’s Orthodox community. A comparison of the Boston calendar and the New York calendar highlights the nature and impact of Rabbi Pinchas Dovid’s activities in Brooklyn.

Since Boston's observant Jews read New York's newspaper, the *Morgen Journal*, it was natural that information relating to the Sabbath and holiday rituals would be extracted from that source. The New York newspaper did not print Sabbath candle lighting times for Boston. Rabbi Pinchas Dovid's Boston calendar showed accurate times for candle lighting in Boston. However, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid adopted a unique stringency relating to Sabbath time. He believed that the Sabbath should start earlier than the usual eighteen minutes before sunset and thus the Boston calendar listed candle lighting times approximately thirty minutes before sunset. In addition to the calendar, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid published an explanation justifying his schedules and an exhortation to his readers to observe the Sabbath. When he moved to New York, Rabbi Pinchas Dovid's candle lighting tables were no longer necessary, as they were readily available in the *Morgen Journal*. Nonetheless, he printed a new calendar (this time published by his disciples, as he was too frail to write the exhortation himself) which contained a more detailed legal analysis advocating early candle lighting. Further, a direct attack on those who did not observe the Sabbath—according to the Bostoner legal interpretation—was printed:

    Many people are stumbling (because of our sins) in the sin of Sabbath violation, even those who call themselves Sabbath observers, for they do not recognize the patterns of the stars, they delay the lighting of candles Friday evening and they end the Sabbath early when it is still light out, each making his own "Sabbath", thus violating a biblical principle...

    With this statement Rabbi Horowitz accused Sabbath observers who did not adopt his suggested custom of candle lighting times of desecrating the tradition. Statements such as these marked Rabbi Pinchas Dovid’s Brooklyn career and antagonized the Orthodox community.

Another of the rebbe’s rulings caused a rift between himself and Brooklyn’s synagogue rabbis. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak told the following about his father:
Wherever we lived, Father was always particular about having both a mikveh and a small shul in our home. In Williamsburg, our mikveh fit into a 6 foot by 6 foot area off our kitchen, but it was still a mikveh… Ours was the first private mikveh in Williamsburg. Everyone else used the community mikveh in the Polishe shteibel. When people asked why we needed our own mikveh, Father would say "How much does a mikveh cost? $500? People buy a bedroom set or a dining room set for $500. Why not a mikveh? That's certainly worth more than fancy furnishings."\(^\text{19}\)

Rabbi LeviYitzchak implied that the community questioned Rabbi Pinchas Dovid’s desire to maintain his own mikveh. But another archival source indicates that the community reaction went beyond mere curiosity. A letter from Rabbi Abraham Selmenovitz, a local Williamsburg rabbi, suggests that Rabbi Horowitz considered all the local mikvehs to be unsuitable.

I have read your opinion, and though I am unhealthy, and I cannot compose long letters, nonetheless, I did not hesitate to examine your letter, which heaps clusters of stringencies which are not accepted in any mikvehs in the world …which were certified by great elders whom all of Israel rely on. Nonetheless, despite all this, I do not oppose implementing your suggestions in our mikvehs, as long as it does not cause excessive financial expense, in order to appease you. In fact, I will encourage these implementations on the condition that you give your word that our mikveh is presently acceptable, and that you state that the renovations you demand…are purely stringencies.\(^\text{20}\)

Rabbi Pinchas Dovid's open criticism created a perception in the Orthodox community that the local mikveh was unusable. Rabbi Selmanovitz blamed Rabbi Pinchas Dovid for threatening his credibility and the credibility of the rabbis who had certified the mikveh.

Both the Sabbath and mikveh examples demonstrate that Rabbi Pinchas Dovid was a nonconformist. He refused to adopt the norms
or mores of Williamsburg's Orthodox community and was unafraid to challenge the local established leadership on matters of principle. Did this uncompromising spirit accompany his children as they assumed their roles as Bostoner rebbe? This question cannot be answered without comparing the community within which Rabbi Pinchas Dovid served and the communities in which Rabbi Moshe and Rabbi Levi Yitzchak operated.

SUCCESSION AND TWO BOSTONER REBBES

Rabbi Pinchas Dovid passed away in December 1940 just as Brooklyn was absorbing a large population of European Hasidim. Though Rabbi Pinchas Dovid requested in his will that no eulogies be recited at his funeral, Rabbi Moshe preached a short derasha after his father's interment, thus establishing himself as heir to his father's dynasty. Public pronouncements and flyers proclaimed Rabbi Moshe Horowitz the Bostoner Rebbe of Brooklyn, and a "committee for the perpetuation of the Bostoner dynasty" was formed.21

Despite rumors that Levi Yitzchak was destined to move to Boston, where Rabbi Pinchas Dovid had maintained contact with a few older Hasidim, Levi Yitzchak resisted entering the rabbinate. Upon finishing Torah Vodaas in 1943, Levi Yitzchak became a businessman, first becoming a diamond polisher and subsequently an investor in the Dainty Edges stationary company. Levi Yitzchak was a poor businessman and his career was short lived.22

After declaring bankruptcy in early 1944, the recently married Levi Yitzchak relocated to Boston and moved into his father's former house in the West End. If Moshe's transition into his father's seat was natural and obvious, Levi Yitzchak's first years in Boston were awkward and challenging. The members of the synagogue were all elderly men, three times Levi Yitzchak's age, and their native language was Yiddish, not English. Whereas Moshe concentrated his initial efforts as rebbe on maintaining his father's shteibel in Brooklyn, Levi Yitzchak's first act as Bostoner Rebbe was to uproot the shteibel from the West End and move it to Dorchester, which was experiencing unprecedented growth.

TWO COURTS: TWO LEADERS

The two Bostoner communities—one in New York and one in Massachusetts—developed in radically different ways, even as they maintained a connection and as their rebbes were involved in similar
activities. To begin, Levi Yitzchak, with no Hasidim to follow him and operating in an alien environment, had little to lose by opening a shteibel in Dorchester. Using the shteibel as a base during the 1950s, Levi Yitzchak developed a unique brand of Hasidism and surrounded himself with some of the most unusual Hasidim in America. Speaking with a perfect Boston accent, he integrated Boston’s cultural ethos into his Hasidic preaching. Rather than perpetuating a transplanted European-Palestinian tradition, Levi Yitzchak began preaching Hasidism with a distinctive Boston aura. Boston not only delineated the area from which this Hasidism emerged, but also exerted a powerful influence on and became a defining characteristic of Levi Yitzchak’s teachings. This was manifested in his interaction with Boston’s academic culture and his activities on Boston’s college campuses.

Before the 1960s the interface between the Orthodox community and Boston’s more than forty colleges and universities was limited. The distancing of the Orthodox community from the academic one was partly due to geographic factors. Once the center of the Orthodox community moved from Dorchester to Brookline, the universities in Cambridge and Boston became accessible.

Levi Yitzchak moved his Hasidic center to Brookline in the early 1960s, placing his court within walking distance of Boston University, MIT, Harvard, Radcliffe, and Boston College and close to Northeastern and Brandeis Universities. During a period of universal rebellion on college campuses throughout the United States, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak opened his home to Boston’s Jewish college students. The rebbe engaged university students and faculty in dialogue at the Brookline Chassidic Center on Beacon Street. The center became a focal point for Shabbatons, late-night discussions, and Torah classes, and his Hasidic shteibel was transformed into an outreach center. The youthful, charismatic, and dynamic Rabbi Levi Yitzchak perceived himself a fighter for lost souls of Jewish college youth, and to this end he created multiple environments to bring them back to the fold. He personally rented halls and gymnasiums to allow maximum participation of disaffected and alienated young Jewish students. One contemporary anthropologist of Hasidism associated Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s outreach activities with those of the Lubavitch and Bratslav movements. But the Bostoner outreach activities were a one-man operation. Rabbi Yitzchak also took his campaign for Orthodoxy to
the campus, battling with college deans and presidents about kosher food, minyan, and commencement celebrations on the Sabbath or holidays. Not everyone appreciated Rabbi Horowitz's outreach efforts, and he incurred the resentment of segments of the Orthodox community.26

Boston’s liberal, academic, and professional environment had another effect on Levi Yitzchak’s activities. Even as he struggled at Friday night meals or at a Havdala service to neutralize the secular values preached on university campuses, he also utilized universities to sustain his outreach efforts. The many stories published about the Bostoner Rebbe reveal a consistent pattern of demonstrating the accuracy of Jewish values with the help of university faculty. MIT professors contributed to the founding of the first Shaatnez laboratory in Boston, Harvard medical professionals confirmed the diagnoses of the rebbe,27 and, according to these stories, the rebbe utilized manuscripts in Harvard’s Weidner Library to discover how and where to do tevilah (ritual immersion) in Katmandu.28 Moreover, Levi Yitzchak developed connections with the major Harvard-affiliated hospitals in order to sustain his ROFEH (Reaching Out Furnishing Emergency Healthcare) organization, which provided medical assistance for Jews from outside of Boston. Boston’s Bostoner Hasidim often looked more like hippies or professors than the traditional Hasidim who had venerated Levi Yitzchak’s father. Levi Yitzchak was an atypical Hasidic rebbe, and his Hasidim were distinct from those in Brooklyn.

Rabbi Moshe pursued a different type of career in Brooklyn. Having experienced the resentment directed toward his father by some elements of Williamsburg’s Orthodox community, and having reconnected to the Hasidic rebbes whom he knew from his time in Europe, Rabbi Moshe was determined to mold his Hasidim in a manner that would allow them entry into Brooklyn’s developing Hasidic community. Rabbi Moshe was not involved in public outreach activities, but rather worked almost exclusively within Brooklyn’s Orthodox community. After serving for a short time as the principal of Torah Vodaas, Rabbi Moshe concerned himself with maintaining the Hasidic traditions of his father within his own circle. In the conservative, self-sufficient society of Williamsburg, Rabbi Moshe’s court consciously adopted the cultural norms of Hasidic Brooklyn and slowly the Bostoner’s Brooklyn community became indistinguishable
from the many other Brooklyn Hasidic communities of the 1950s and 1960s. While his brother moved his Hasidic court to the center of the academic community, Moshe entrenched himself in the core of the Hasidic community, living next-door to the Satmar rebbe in Williamsburg and, subsequently, adjacent to the Lubavitcher rebbe in Crown Heights.

Though both Rabbi Moshe and Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had an acute and personal awareness of American culture (Hasidim of each told me that their rebbe knew more Boston Red Sox statistics than the other) only Rabbi Levi Yitzchak sought to engage this culture. Brooklyn’s Bostoner Hasidic community underwent a form of acculturation, like many of the Williamsburg and Crown Heights Hasidic sects, and adapted to American culture in the areas of commerce, business, and politics. But Rabbi Moshe was more concerned with being accepted by other Hasidic sects than fitting into American society. If Levi Yitzchak’s brand of Bostoner Hasidism evolved because of Boston’s environment, then Moshe’s version of the Bostoner tradition evolved in an opposite direction because of where he resided.

The repercussions of this distinction are ironic. One might have expected that traditions unique to the Bostoner dynasty would more likely have been sustained in Brooklyn’s Hasidic environment than in Boston’s alien environment. Yet, the opposite is the case. Since Rabbi Moshe was concerned with conforming to Brooklyn’s Hasidic community, he abandoned some of the unique Bostoner traditions. By contrast, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, who adopted the norms of Boston’s cultural climate, was able to maintain some of the unique elements of Bostoner Hasidism. One example of this can be illustrated clearly.

Often a seemingly minor detail related to a ritual observance can reflect the entire gestalt of a particular trend or movement. In this case, the calendars issued by the Hasidic courts in Boston and Brooklyn characterize the distinguishing traits of the two Hasidic traditions as they evolved in the 1960s and 1970s. Earlier we compared the calendars issued in New York and Boston in the 1940s and noted how they reflected a *suigeneris* Bostoner tradition. How did later calendars issued by the rebbes in Brooklyn and Boston adhere to the *Halachic* tradition of the first rebbe?

In the Brooklyn calendar, the tradition of lighting candles thirty minutes before sundown is listed together with the normative candle lighting times. The calendar’s format encourages the normative
Orthodox Sabbath lighting times of eighteen minutes prior to sundown. The page also lists citations of American ultra-Orthodox leadership. The essay which accompanies the calendar, written by Rabbi Moshe’s son, Chayyim Avraham, provides insight into these innovations:

In 1917, my grandfather published his first luach, in which he listed the time for hadlakas neiros according to his psak halacha—one half hour before shkia—and the time for motzai shabbos—72 minutes after the shkia. He published a luach every year until his histalkus in 1941, after which my father continued to do so until his histalkus in 1985. The new Bostoner Luach follows the tradition established by my grandfather and records the zmanim of Shabbos according to his psak, as well as the zman of hadlakas neiros most commonly observed by today’s frum community—18 minutes before the shkia.

In this passage there is a tacit acknowledgment that while identifying the first rebbe’s tradition of lighting candles thirty minutes before sundown, the calendar also departs from tradition by listing the normative candle lighting time. The desire on the part of the Brooklyn branch to be part of the normative frum community is made even clearer in the Hebrew explanations which describe some of the other innovations of the calendar, such as learning a daily mishna. All of the innovations attempt to make the calendar acceptable to the frum community.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak also published a calendar for New York’s Orthodox population. But Boston’s calendar differs in form, scope, and content from that of Brooklyn’s. To begin, the Boston version was printed in the Siddur Tephilla Chadasha, a prayer book published by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to promote his father’s unique order of prayer (nussah ha-Tephilla). No apology (nor any mention) was made of the fact that the thirty-minute candle lighting times are not normative in the ultra-Orthodox community. Both the siddur and the candle lighting times suggest that even as Levi Yitzchak adopted a more positive and integrated posture toward modern American culture than his brother did in Brooklyn, he was able to maintain more of the family’s dynastic traditions.
AGUDAT YISRAEL, EDUCATION, AND OTHER HASIDIC REBBES

While developing a modern American Hasidic tradition that focused on college students, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak still maintained a connection to the normative Hasidic community in Brooklyn, perhaps by virtue of his brother’s prominence. While Rabbi Moshe established his reputation as a traditional, conformist Hasidic rebbe, he attained a high standing among both Hasidic and non-Hasidic Orthodox leadership. By the late 1940s Rabbi Moshe had become a member of the Agudat Yisrael in America and in 1964 he led the American delegation to the fifth Kenessia Hagedola (convention) in Jerusalem. Subsequently, he was appointed to the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah (council of rabbinic sages) of Agudat Yisrael in America. Although the influence of this group of rabbis on Agudat Yisrael has been debated, the fact that Rabbi Moshe served on this body indicates his high standing in the rabbinic community.32 Given Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s independence from the ultra-Orthodox community, one might have expected that his role in Agudat Yisrael would be more limited. Yet Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was a junior member of the Agudat Yisrael rabbinical board, and he took his brother’s seat when Rabbi Moshe passed away in 1985. Subsequently, he was asked to serve on the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah in Israel. This fact illustrates the potency of yichus (dynastic lineage) in the contemporary ultra-Orthodox community, even as it demonstrates that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak never completely abandoned normative Hasidut.

Rabbi Moshe’s high standing in the Orthodox community was derived in part from his activities in the educational sphere. In Williamsburg Rabbi Moshe founded an elementary school, Yeshivat Darchei Noam Hafloah, which became a base for Brooklyn’s moderate Hasidim, as well as some modern Orthodox Jews. The school was supported by a distinguished group of rabbinic organizations including the Agudat HaRabonim, the Agudat HaAdmorim, the Rabbinical Council of America, and the Iggud HaRabonim. Following a pattern set in Brooklyn’s other Hasidic communities, the Darchei Noam School opened a high school in the 1960s and a rabbinical college in the 1970s. The school’s development reflects the integration of Rabbi Moshe into Brooklyn’s normative Hasidic community.

Levi Yitzchak, by contrast, was able to be more creative in his educational initiatives, simply because he was based in Boston rather
than Brooklyn. During the late 1950s Rabbi Levi Yitzchak served on the educational committee of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s Maimonides School. The innovations at Maimonides included coeducational classes and Talmud study for female students, both of which were anathema in traditional Orthodox and Hasidic circles. Nonetheless, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak involved himself in the school and worked together with both Rabbi and Mrs. Soloveitchik on various aspects of the school’s development. Despite the fact that his children were being raised in a Hasidic milieu, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak sent them to the Maimonides School. Ultimately however, as a result of both pressure and competition from Brooklyn’s Hasidic branch, Levi Yitzchak eventually sent his children there to study and subsequently sponsored an ultra-Orthodox day school in Boston—the Torah Academy, which his grandchildren now attend.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was also able to maintain close links with Brooklyn’s ultra-Orthodox community through his activities in political and medical arenas. Having appointed himself Grand Rabbi of Boston, Levi Yitzchak used his title far beyond his sphere of influence, accessing and developing relationships with major personalities in Washington, D.C. Levi Yitzchak’s first political involvement was in the March of Rabbis on Washington in 1943 which protested immigration policies. In 1946 he petitioned Washington politicians to arrange for the transfer of his father’s remains to Palestine. John F. Kennedy visited the Hasidic center in Brookline when he was running for Senate, as did Tip O’Neill when he was running for the House of Representatives. With a wide range of contacts in the Capitol, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was often able to advance the political agenda of Brooklyn’s Hasidic community in a way that their Hasidic leadership was unable to do.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak also tended to the needs of individuals in Brooklyn’s Hasidic community through his medical organization, ROFEH. Leading Hasidic personalities received treatment in Boston’s Harvard-affiliated hospitals and were cared for by physicians associated with ROFEH. The Satmar rebbe, for example, spent a few weeks recuperating from an illness in a convalescent home directed by ROFEH in Boston. These personal connections guaranteed that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak did not completely abandon the ideology of the Hasidic community in Brooklyn. More important, they indicate that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak forged ties with Brooklyn’s Hasidic leadership out of mutual interest.
The parallel stories of Rabbi Moshe and Levi Yitzchak lead to the conclusion that acculturation is complex and multifaceted and may have unexpected or even counterintuitive repercussions. The fact that Levi Yitzchak moved “out of town” freed him from the fetters of the Brooklyn Hasidic community which restricted his brother Rabbi Moshe. Though Rabbi Levi Yitzchak adopted the Boston cultural ethos and worked within its framework, he also stayed true to his father’s traditions in a way that his brother in Brooklyn could not. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak maintained close ties to the Brooklyn community, both because of his family there and through a conscious effort to be needed by that community. Living in Brookline he developed an independent and original style of Hasidism. But creativity has its limits, and for Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, complete alienation from Brooklyn’s Orthodoxy was inconceivable.

There is no one Bostoner Hasidism, nor a singular Bostoner Rebbe. The Boston branch of this dynasty developed in the spirit of Boston, while the Brooklyn branch was contoured by the Hasidic culture there.

In 1980 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak proclaimed his two younger sons, Rabbi Meyer and Rabbi Naftali, rabbi and dayan of the New England Hasidic Center. Both sons studied in ultra-Orthodox Lithuanian environments of B’nei Brak and Lakewood, and their version of Hasidism resembles that of their uncle’s more than that of their father’s. In 1985, when Rabbi Levi Yitzchak moved to Israel, he organized a Bostoner community in Har Nof, which is now directed by Rabbi Meyer. Ironically, the process of acculturation that engulfed Rabbi Moshe’s Brooklyn court is presently repeating itself in Har Nof, this time with Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s Boston court. The community in Har Nof is composed of two Lithuanian-style kollels and a number of synagogues. The Hasidim conform to traditional Hasidic dress, although the population contains a number of professors and former hippies who will be happy to share the story of their conversion to Hasidism with any visitor.

CONCLUSION

The story of the Bostoner Rebbes suggests that the social ethos of American Hasidism is similar to that of other American culturally distinctive cooperatives. Its history is predicated on a tension between
being both part of and unique from the normative American community. Economic, educational, political, and demographic considerations must be taken into account in the analysis of this community. Modern means of communication bridge the gap between geographically disparate locales and changed the opportunities for diversity among scattered members of a similar tradition. And yet, despite its reliance on European (and in the case of the Bostoner tradition, Palestinian) Hasidic norms, American Hasidism has adopted a uniquely American ethos. Its penchant for pluralism on one hand and its acceptance of the reality that dynasties are only made when "the Hasidim dream that the Rebbe is the Rebbe" highlight the fact that America is not simply a place for the Hasidim, but a critical aspect of their culture.

The story of these Hasidic brothers who promoted the dynastic traditions of their families illuminates both internal and external developments within Orthodoxy over the course of the century. The impact of day schools and ultra-Orthodox immigration on American Orthodoxy pushed these more moderate Hasidim to conform to transplanted European norms of post-World War II Orthodoxy. And yet the recognition of the variety of American life and its profound impact on Judaism also pulled these Hasidic leaders in the opposite direction. Geography played a critical role in the different careers of the two brothers, but as the values of the Hasidic center in Brooklyn adopted some of the norms of the immigrant Hasidim, these attitudes permeated the core of Boston's version of Bostoner Hasidut. The careers of the brothers highlight the path that Orthodoxy has taken during the post-World War II era, yet reflect that Orthodoxy is ever changing, resilient, and malleable.

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NOTES:
1. This paper was originally presented at Bar Ilan University at the International Conference on Brooklyn November 25, 1998. I would like to thank Adam Ferziger and Gershon Bacon, both of whom made helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and Cantor Sherwood Goffin, who provided insight into the life of Rabbi Moshe Horowitz. I would also like to thank David Ellenson for his critique. For the best general description of American Hasidism, see Ira Robinson, "The First Hasidic


4. See note 25.

5. Despite claims that Rabbi Horowitz founded the Beis Midrash Mahazie Torah, the Yiddish press authenticates that the Beis Midrash existed for at least two years prior to Rabbi Horowitz’s arrival. See Shalom Wallach, *Shushelet Boston* (Jerusalem: Mosdot Boston, 1994), 278; *Di Bostoner Yiddishe Shtieme*, December 5, 1913. In Boston Rabbi Horowitz joined the faculty of a small yeshiva and worked together with Rabbis Solomon Jacob Friederman and Israel Mayer Jacobson. According to Wallach, this yeshiva was established to help students avoid military conscription, and it disbanded soon after the war.


8. This yeshiva was chosen after Rabbi Spitzer visited Boston on behalf of the Agudat Yisrael.

9. See *Der Tag*, September 7, 1925.


11. *And the Angels Laughed*, 65, 104.


16. The Brooklyn branch of Bostoner Hasidim saw mystical significance in the apartment number identifying it with the numerology of the Hebrew word Mevaser—forseer or diviner.

17. Rabbi Horowitz’s claim that he relied on the position cited by *Aruch HaShulchan* is not accurate. In *Aruch HaShulchan* the following appears:

> הלקחים לא נגבהו שיחזו ו. ינאות בוריהו והקוסמופים והלפיים ממלאתם ולוחות אום הגרות
>
> מקרמים ללקחים שבת במעין שותי קדוש הלוחות והגרות.


18. *Shushelet*, 314. *And the Angels Laughed*, 53–56, 118–19, 145–48; Rebbezsin, 134–36; Rabbi Horowitz was critical not only of the Sabbath observance of his contemporaries, but he considered the kashrut standards of 1940s Brooklyn to be insufficient. The historiographies are careful to mention that the kashrut standards in 1940s Brooklyn were unacceptable to the Horowitz family to the extent that one thousand new place settings were purchased for Levi Yitzchak’s wedding in 1943. The Horowitz’s insisted on owning their own matzoh oven so as not to rely on any other hashgachah. Rabbi Horowitz also refused to daven in a shul that had once served as a church, despite the fact that this was a common practice in the early 1940s.
19. *And the Angels Laughed*, 150.


23. *Rebbetzin*, 158. The membership patterns of the group Young Israel of Brookline reflect this geographical pattern as well, since a disproportionate percentage of its membership belonged to the academic communities of Boston University, Harvard, MIT, and Brandeis.

24. See for example *The Jerusalem Post*, September 19, 1975; and *Boston Jewish Times*, June 6, 1985. His openness toward secular education stemmed not only from his own experience in the Boston public school system, but also from the attitude of his teachers and contemporaries at Yeshiva Torah Vodass. Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz, director of the yeshiva, preached tolerance and even recognition of the value of a comprehensive secular education. Jerome Mintz, *Hassidic People: A Place in the New World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), chap. 3. Mendelowitz was also open to Hasidic tradition and used to bring his students to visit various Hasidic rebbes, among whom was the Bostoner.


27. Hanoch Teller, *The Bostoner* (New York: Feldheim, 1990), 138–45. The prohibition against wearing clothing that contains both linen and wool created a problem for Orthodox Jews who purchased their clothes from non-Orthodox manufacturers. In order to guarantee that the clothing did not contain both fabrics, Orthodox Jews utilized a chemical test that was performed in a laboratory.

28. *And the Angels Laughed*, 358.

29. For further examples of this phenomenon in Orthodox life, see Menachem Friedman, “Haredim Confront the Modern City,” in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry 2* (1986): 74–96. For a more general discussion, see Liebman, “Orthodoxy in American Jewish Life,” 40–41.


33. *Rebbetzin*, 170–71. In a letter from Mrs. Tonya Soloveitchik to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, dated October 17, 1958, the following appears: “We have been privileged to have you as a member of our Board of Directors for some time and have benefited by your devotion to our school.” This letter is found in the Maimonides School Archives. After Levi Yitzchak’s sons left Maimonides, they studied in Torah Vodass. Rabbi Naftali subsequently transferred to the Philadelphia yeshiva before attending Ponevich in B’nei Brak and Lakewood in New Jersey.

INTRODUCTION

The two essays that follow were originally conceived as the opening chapters of a book on the history of Jews in the American military by my father, Professor Jack D. Foner, who died in 1999 at the age of eighty-eight. At the time of his death, he had completed much of the research for the book but had only drafted these chapters, which take the story from the early colonial period to the eve of the Civil War. My father very much regretted that illness in the last year of his life prevented him from completing the book, and I know that he would have been very pleased that at least some of the fruits of his research are now being made available to readers interested in American Jewish history.

I am very grateful to the American Jewish Archives Journal not only for bringing these essays into print, but for accepting them without the usual scholarly apparatus. My father had not yet completed the task of incorporating footnotes into these chapters, and his system of note taking was so personal that it has proven impossible for me to reconstruct the notes. I can, however, vouch for the accuracy of all the information and direct quotations in these essays. My father was an indefatigable researcher and the material presented here was gathered from archives across the country as well as a wide array of memoirs, manuscript collections, newspapers, and historical studies. Much of this material has never been consulted by previous scholars of American Jewish history; hence, even without footnotes, it should be of considerable value to scholars in the field. All readers, I believe, will find these essays to be engaging accounts of Jewish participation in the military affairs of the colonial era, Revolution, and early Republic. They chronicle the contributions of long-forgotten individuals and offer careful evaluations and reevaluations of better-known figures.
such as Simon Magruder Levy, the first (or perhaps second) graduate of West Point, Uriah P. Levy (who was subjected to numerous court-martials during his military service), and David S. Franks (an aide to Benedict Arnold acquitted of complicity in Arnold’s treason). In addition, the essays offer information about nonmilitary contributions by Jewish merchants and financiers, shed light on anti-Semitism in early American history, and show how Jewish military service catalyzed the movement for the removal of religious qualifications for voting. In seeking to view military history within the broader perspective of American social history, these essays follow in the footsteps of my father’s two previous books: The United States Soldier Between Two Wars, 1865–1898 (New York: Humanities Press, 1970) and Blacks and the Military in American History (New York: Praeger, 1974).

Jack D. Foner’s life and career exemplify some major features of twentieth-century American politics, both praiseworthy and reprehensible, as well as modern trends in historical scholarship. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 14, 1910, the son of immigrant Jewish parents from the Russian empire, he graduated from City College in 1929. From 1935 he taught history at the downtown branch of CCNY, now Baruch College. He became active in the era’s left wing causes which included support for the Spanish republic, the trade union movement, and the rights of black Americans. In 1941 he was among some sixty faculty at the City University who were forced from their jobs in the wake of an investigation of alleged communist influences in higher education by the New York legislature’s Rapp-Coudert Committee. He was subsequently blacklisted and unable to obtain academic employment for almost three decades. In 1981 the Board of Higher Education apologized to the victims, terming the events of 1941 an “egregious violation of academic freedom.”

Foner served in the United States Army from 1942 to 1945. Possibly because of his political background he was assigned to nonessential duties—caring for horses at a barracks in the Midwest and later serving as a baker. He also taught illiterate recruits, mostly black and white Southerners, to read and write. Long after the war’s
end, he continued to receive grateful letters from his charges, for whom the acquisition of literacy was the turning point in their lives. After leaving the army, he supported himself as a freelance lecturer on current affairs to devoted groups of listeners in Long Island, New York City, Philadelphia, and Florida. He also joined his three brothers (including his prolific twin, historian Philip S. Foner), in the Foner Orchestra, which played swing music at Catskill resorts.

Foner received his M.A. in history from Columbia University in 1933. He nearly completed his doctoral dissertation in the next few years, only to see his research notes and only draft copy destroyed in a fire. In the 1960s, with academic blacklisting waning, he returned to Columbia and completed his Ph.D. in American history in 1967. Two years later he was hired at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, where he established the first Black Studies program in New England and became immensely popular among both black and white students. He retired from Colby in 1976 and was awarded an honorary doctorate by the college in 1982. The citation concluded: “Colby salutes you as a long-time opponent of racism and thanks you for your courage, your service, and your friendship.” He was also honored by Colby’s Student Organization for Black Unity, which praised him for “his quiet sincerity and integrity” and for his interest in black history long before it became an “intellectual fad.” In 1986 Foner received the Tom Paine Award from the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, along with his brothers Philip, Moe, a founder of Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Workers Union, and Henry, former president of the Fur and Leather Workers Union. After his retirement from Colby, Jack D. Foner moved to New York City and in the late 1980s began work on his study of Jews in the American military.

On a personal note, I would add that my father never retreated into bitterness at having his career destroyed. He remained a generous, gentle man, a true child of America’s Jeffersonian tradition, who believed that in the end the best side of human nature would come to the fore—a difficult faith to maintain during the dark days of McCarthyism. Most of what I have achieved as a historian I owe to the instruction and example of my father, who taught that visionaries and underdogs—Tom Paine, Wendell Phillips, Eugene V. Debs, and W. E. B. DuBois (a friend of my family)—were as central to the historical process as presidents and captains of industry. At home I learned ideas today taken for granted but then virtually unknown outside
black and leftwing circles: slavery was the fundamental cause of the Civil War and emancipation its greatest accomplishment; Reconstruction was a tragedy not because it was attempted but because it failed; the condition of blacks was the nation's foremost domestic problem. Most important, Jack D. Foner believed that the present can and must be illuminated by the study of the past. His writing and teaching on African American history was premised on the conviction that only by confronting its troubled racial past could the United States move toward a greater degree of racial justice. And he hoped that by illuminating both the contributions of Jewish soldiers and sailors and the barriers they faced, his last book would contribute toward a better understanding of the place of Jews in modern American life.

Eric Foner is DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University.

Marker (tablet) in the City Hall of Charleston, S.C. Commemorating Francis Salvador (American Jewish Archives)
The Colonial and Revolutionary Eras

Almost from the beginning of the colonial era, Jews have been part of the American population. And their connection with the military dates to the earliest days of settlement. Although one or two Jews may have been among the first immigrants to the colonies that would become the United States, the first permanent Jewish settlement on the North American continent was created by a contingent of twenty-three Jews who came to the settlement of New Amsterdam from northeastern Brazil in September 1654. These settlers were veterans of Dutch colonial expansion and the military conflicts it spawned. Since the 1620s the Dutch and Portuguese had warred over control of Brazil. In 1624 Dutch forces seized Bahia, only to be expelled by the Portuguese a year later. In 1630 a Dutch military expedition captured Recife. A number of Jewish mercenaries employed by the Dutch West India Company served in the expeditionary force. They were soon joined by hundreds of Jews from Amsterdam, attracted by the religious toleration offered by the Company and the Dutch government. In the militia established in Recife by the Dutch, all free citizens, including Jews, were enrolled. By 1637 about three hundred fifty militiamen—approximately half of the total—were Jewish. For a fee, a Jewish militiamen could claim exemption from guard duty on Saturday on the basis of “scruples of conscience.”

The Portuguese war for the reconquest of Brazil began in 1645 and lasted for nine years. Jews participated in the defense of Recife, which finally reverted to the Portuguese in January 1654. According to the capitulation agreement, Dutch citizens were given three months to either leave the colony, or remain as Portuguese subjects or alien residents. The Jewish community chose to disperse. Many returned to the Netherlands or settled in Dutch colonies in the Caribbean. One group, consisting of twenty-three men, women, and children, eventually made their way to New Amsterdam, arriving early in September 1654. It is with their arrival that American Jewish history begins.

It did not take long for them to discover that the tolerant treatment they had experienced in Holland and Dutch Brazil was not to be duplicated in New Amsterdam. Neither the Dutch Reform ministers nor Governor Peter Stuyvesant, “a committed anti-Semite,” attempted to hide their distaste for Jews. Referring to them as
members of a “deceitful race” and “blasphemers of the name of Christ,” Stuyvesant sought permission from the Dutch West India Company to expel the newcomers. He had already asked them “in a friendly way” to leave, but they had refused.

Stuyvesant’s efforts to oust the Jews was countered by a campaign launched by their coreligionists in Amsterdam including shareholders in the West India Company. In response to an appeal from Jews in New Amsterdam, a group of Dutch Jews, including several prominent merchants, reminded the company of the Jewish role in defending Dutch Brazil:

It is well known to your Honours that the Jewish nation in Brazil have at all times been faithful and have striven to guard and maintain that place, risking for that purpose their possessions and their blood.

In February 1655 Stuyvesant was directed to allow the Jews to remain. Excluding them from the colony, the company declared, would be “somewhat unreasonable and unfair,” since they had suffered heavy losses in Brazil because of their loyalty to Holland. Not for the last time, Jewish military service would become the basis for claims to equal rights.

The company’s decision, however, did not resolve the problem of what role these refugees would play in New Amsterdam. A new controversy quickly arose when, in August 1655, the governor and council ordered Jews excluded from service in the local militia (required of all free white males), since, they claimed, other members were unwilling to serve with Jews or remain in the same guardhouse. In return for this exemption, each male Jew between the ages of sixteen and sixty was to pay a special monthly tax.

On November 5, 1655, Jacob Barsimson and Asher Levy petitioned for the right “to keep guard” or to be exempted from the tax, since “they must earn their living by manual labor.” Unmoved, the governor and council replied that the petitioners could not serve and if they cared to leave the colony, were free to do so. Levy thereupon went over the head of local authorities, presenting his case directly to the West India Company in Amsterdam. The appeal was successful, and the New Amsterdam Council was ordered to grant Levy the right to serve in the local militia. Levy now carried his campaign for civic
Jews and the American Military

recognition one step further, insisting upon equal rights, since he kept "watch and ward like other burghers." With the support of other Jewish settlers, Levy was granted the "burgher right" (enabling him to engage in certain kinds of business in New Amsterdam), although he remained excluded from the "great burgher right," which included the ability to hold office. In subsequent years, Jews were granted the right to purchase real estate, be merchants and mechanics, worship freely in their homes (although not in public), and have their own burial ground. After the British occupied New Amsterdam in 1664, renaming it New York, Jews slowly gained additional rights, including that of public worship.

The Jewish population of the British colonies in North America expanded quite slowly in the eighteenth century. By the time of the American Revolution only about one thousand Jews resided in the thirteen colonies. Unlike the original Jewish settlers of New Amsterdam, mostly Sephardic Jews whose origins lay in Spain and Portugal, most eighteenth-century emigrants were Ashkenazi Jews of German-Polish background. They resided primarily in port towns along the Atlantic coast—Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah. Only a handful dispersed into the interior, to such locations as Easton and Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

By the time of the American Revolution, most Jews were merchants and shopkeepers. They engaged in trade throughout the Atlantic world—with the West Indies, Europe, and Africa—as well as in coastal shipping. Generally, they relied on contacts with other Jewish merchants in places like Curasao and London. Some, like other colonial merchants, participated in the African slave trade. They were active in frontier trade and land speculation west of the Alleghenies and served as purveyors, supplying British and colonial military forces, and as sutlers, selling provisions to the troops. For example, Aaron Lopez of Newport had commercial interests in the West Indies, British Isles, and throughout the American colonies. Some of his many ships carried Biblical names. The brothers Michael and Barnard Gratz of Philadelphia, and Joseph Simon and Levy Andrew Levy of Lancaster, engaged in extensive western trade and land speculation. The Gratz brothers established posts along the Western frontier and traded with the Indians.

In the British colonies, Jews eventually won the rights—sometimes in law, sometimes in fact—to be naturalized, participate in
business and commerce, work and worship in peace, and live in any neighborhood rather than being confined to ghettos, as in Europe. In colonial towns, Jews patrolled the streets as constables and members of the watch. In New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, Jews were able to attend college; one graduated from King’s College in New York in 1774. In fact, Jews possessed more rights than in contemporary Britain. On the other hand, they by no means enjoyed full tolerance and equality. They suffered from Sunday closing laws and in colonies with an established church were forced to pay religious taxes. Many colonies required attorneys and schoolteachers to take a Christian oath, effectively barring Jews from these professions. And Jews suffered from anti-Semitism, reflected in occasional acts of vandalism against their funeral processions, cemeteries, and even homes. As in the Old World, stereotypes of Jews were quite common, including those of the rapacious Jewish merchant and the people who had murdered Christ.

In at least seven colonies, where religious qualifications were required for voting, Jews were denied the franchise. In New York Jews voted until 1737, when, in a disputed election, the Assembly decided to bar them from the polls, since they could not vote for Parliament in England. However, the enactment was not rigorously enforced, and Jews seem to have voted in subsequent elections. Jews were reported to be voting in South Carolina in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Nowhere, however, were Jews permitted to hold "honorific office," since members of colonial assemblies were required to take a Christian oath. (Occasionally, this requirement was waived, as in the case of Joseph Ottolengu, who sat in the Georgia Assembly from 1761 to 1765.) In 1790 Moses Seixas of Newport reminded George Washington that Jews in the prerevolutionary era had been "deprived of the invaluable rights of free citizens."

As for the military, from the beginnings of English settlement Jews were expected to serve in the militia, although most colonies required militia officers to take a Christian oath. In Georgia, a sparsely settled military outpost in the 1730s, a group of forty-two Jewish immigrants were permitted to settle in spite of opposition from the trustees in London. One, Dr. Samuel Nuñez, effectively treated victims of an epidemic then spreading through the colony. Appreciative of his efforts and recognizing the potential military contribution of the group, mostly able-bodied young men, governor James Ogelthorpe allowed them to remain. Among them was Benjamin Sheftall, who
became the first lieutenant of the Georgia militia. "The German Jews in Savannah," wrote one observer in 1733, "drill with a rifle, as all soldiers do." Five years later, eleven Jews were enrolled in New York City militia companies. In Pennsylvania some Jews joined the First City Troop, an elite unit of light-horse cavalry. Joseph Levy served as a lieutenant in the South Carolina militia, beginning in 1757.

Individual Jews also participated as soldiers and occasionally held the rank of officer (despite British regulations excluding anyone who refused to take a Christian oath) during the four imperial wars that stretched from the 1690s to 1763. The first Jew to bear arms for the British in North America was Joseph Isacks, a butcher who enlisted in the New York militia in 1690, soon after the outbreak of King William's War. His reception by his fellow soldiers was not enthusiastic. In 1691 unknown persons—soldiers according to Isacks—removed his rifle from his lodgings, and he was instructed to return the weapon or pay five pounds for its loss. During Queen Anne's War, Moses Núñez served as a courier on the Georgia-Florida frontier, carrying messages to the front. In 1742 he commanded a small scout boat that monitored the movements of Spanish forces. King George's War, fought between 1744 and 1748, pitted the British, including colonists, against France and Spain. In 1744 Zacharias Cohen was a gunner on the privateer sloop, Queen of Hungary, which sailed from Newport. Another Rhode Islander, Jacob Cohen, lost his life during the war, and Jacob Judah, listed as "Jew Boston," was among those taken prisoner and subsequently released. Jewish soldiers were also involved in the Seven Years War, the worldwide Franco-British struggle for empire that lasted from 1754 to 1763 and was known in North America as the French and Indian War. Among the troops who served under young George Washington in an expedition from Virginia across the Allegheny
Mountains were Michael Franks and Jacob Myer, who received awards for gallantry. (Some doubt exists, however, as to whether Michael Franks was in fact Jewish.) Isaac Myer of New York City organized a company of volunteers, was chosen captain of the unit, and subsequently led it into action in the Ohio Valley. Aaron Hart, an English-born Jew who had come to New York with the British army, was a commissary officer in the campaign that captured Montreal in 1760. A number of Jews also served with the colonial militias, particularly those of Rhode Island and New York.

During the four colonial wars, Jewish merchants provided equipment and supplies for the British army and provincial troops. Between 1740 and 1743, Abraham Minis of Savannah operated boats shuttling supplies to James Ogelthorpe's troops. For some Jewish merchants, military contracts became an extremely lucrative business. Jacob Franks of New York and his son David of Philadelphia were the chief suppliers of the British army during the French and Indian Wars. They furnished the supplies used in General James Braddock's unsuccessful attack on Fort Duquesne in 1755 and helped equip George Washington's expedition that took the fort in 1758. Jacob and David Franks received over £750,000 for provisioning British armies and garrisons. Mathias Bush of Philadelphia, Joseph Simon and Levy Andrew Levy of Lancaster, and Uriah Hendricks of New York were also actively engaged in supplying the armed forces. And Jewish sutlers were stationed with the troops at forts on Lake George and along the upper Hudson River. It was also during these colonial wars that privateering became big business, and Jewish merchants joined in this hazardous but lucrative activity, either as individual owners or members of groups.

The war ended in 1763 with the French driven out of North America. But Britain and her colonies soon found themselves on a collision course. Just when the colonists no longer needed British military protection, the mother country looked to them as a major source of revenue to help pay off the war debt. Despite political restrictions imposed by colonial assemblies, Jews took part in the growing colonial opposition to British revenue laws. Jewish merchants were among the signers of nonimportation agreements during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765 and the controversy over the Townshend Duties in 1770. Jews also assumed significant positions in the local committees that enforced the regulations adopted by
Jews and the American Military

Congress in the Continental Association of 1774. Indeed, these extralegal bodies did not impose the restrictions on Jewish participation that had barred them from office in the legally constituted governments. For example, Mordecai Sheftall, a merchant, rancher, and businessman and leader of Savannah’s Jewish community, became the city’s dominant Whig leader. From 1774 to 1776 he served as chairman of the committee of Christ Church Parish, the de facto county government. In enforcing the boycott of trade with Great Britain, Sheftall’s committee broke into the Custom House and prevented ships from unloading their cargoes. The royal governor of Georgia later claimed that Savannah’s Jews “to a man” were “violent rebels,” who offered “fresh insults to the British every day.” South Carolina’s royal governor echoed this opinion. Francis Salvador, who emigrated from England to South Carolina in 1773, was elected to the colony’s first and second Provincial Congresses. In July 1776, while serving in the South Carolina militia, Salvador was killed in a skirmish with Tories and Cherokee Indians, the first Jew to die in the revolutionary war and, thanks to a memorial plaque erected by Charleston Jews, “the only Jewish soldier of the Revolution to be individually commemorated in the United States.”

Well before this, however, war between the American colonies and England had begun at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, in April 1775. Congress proceeded to organize an army, printed money to pay for it, and appointed George Washington as its commander. In response, Britain declared the colonies in a state of rebellion, sent thousands of troops, and ordered the closing of colonial ports. In July 1776 came the Declaration of Independence. In the eight years of war that followed, some two hundred thousand men bore arms in the Continental army (whose soldiers were volunteers) and state militias (where service was compulsory for every able-bodied man unless he provided a substitute).

The role of Jews in the revolutionary army, and the contribution of Jewish financiers and merchants to the war effort, has been extensively chronicled. Early Jewish historians tended to expand the list of Jewish soldiers uncritically, including all manner of individuals with Jewish-sounding names who were not in fact Jewish. The leading contemporary authority on Jews and the American Revolution, Samuel Reznick, estimates that of the approximately one thousand Jews in the American colonies, seventy-two served as soldiers and twenty-two as officers. But the experience of this small
cadre was significant. As Reznick notes, the Revolution "may well have been the first war in the western world in which Jews were permitted to serve on an equal basis."

Jews participated in many of the war's major engagements. In July 1776 a large British fleet and thirty-four thousand troops under the command of General Howe moved upon New York City. Washington's army of fourteen thousand took up positions on Long Island. Unwilling to remain under British occupation, the bulk of the Jewish population voluntarily fled the city for Connecticut and Philadelphia, taking with them the scrolls and records of their synagogue, Shearith Israel. Fighting began on August 27 at Brooklyn Heights, and by dusk Washington was already in retreat. Among the troops who fought under his command was Solomon Bush of Philadelphia. He had enrolled as a captain and adjutant early in 1776 in the Flying Camp of Associators of Pennsylvania. Isaac Franks, who at seventeen had enlisted in a regiment of New York volunteers, also participated. Years later he recalled:

In June, 1776, armed and equipped at my own expense, I joined the army in the City of New York, and in July following, in parade order attended the first communication of the Declaration of Independence, which was read to the troops: when we all as with one voice, Declared that we would support and Defend the same with our lives and fortunes.

After the Battle of Long Island, Franks retreated with his unit to New York City, where he was captured by the British and imprisoned. A young man of remarkable courage, he escaped after three months, crossed the Hudson in the dead of winter in a leaky skiff with one paddle, and eventually rejoined American forces in New Jersey. Assigned to the Quartermaster Department of the Continental army, he served as an assistant forage master at West Point. He retired from the service in 1782 at the age of twenty-three and settled in Philadelphia.

The British occupied New York City for the remainder of the war. In the summer of 1777, Howe embarked for Philadelphia with some fourteen thousand troops. Washington confronted him at Brandywine Creek with eleven thousand soldiers. Unable to prevent the capture of Philadelphia, the Continental army settled into winter quarters at
Valley Forge. Several Jews participated in this campaign. Lewis Bush, captain of the Sixth Pennsylvania Battalion, died of wounds received at Brandywine. Solomon Bush, a deputy adjutant general of the Pennsylvania militia, was wounded but survived. Taken prisoner in October, he was released soon afterwards on parole. His wound never fully healed, but in October 1779 he was commissioned a lieutenant colonel, thus becoming the highest ranking Jewish officer in a combat unit of the Continental army.

Among the troops who froze and starved at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-78 were Privates Asher Pollock of Rhode Island and Philip Moses Russell of Philadelphia. Russell had enlisted as a surgeon’s mate in 1777 and at Valley Forge was assigned to the Second Virginia Regiment as an assistant to Surgeon Norman. He saw action at Brandywine and subsequently at Monmouth. Exhaustion and an attack of camp fever affected his sight and hearing and he was forced to leave the service in 1780. He received a special commendation from Washington "for his assiduous and faithful attention to the sick and wounded, as well as his cool and collected decorum in battle."

Perhaps the most controversial Jewish military figure of the Revolution was David Solebury Franks, who was associated with Benedict Arnold during the time of his command in Philadelphia and his treason at West Point. No other Jew had relations with so significant a group of patriot leaders. Born at Philadelphia in 1740, Franks moved to Canada when the British assumed control in 1763. By 1774 he had become a successful merchant and president of the Jewish congregation in Montreal. He was imprisoned for sixteen days in 1775 for defending the right of a demonstrator to protest against King George III. When American General Richard Montgomery’s forces occupied Montreal in October 1775, Franks advanced funds to aid the revolutionary army and he was subsequently appointed paymaster for the garrison, again advancing his own funds. As Franks later wrote, “As many Officers... can vouch,... everything in my Power was done for them, while in Canada, and my good Offices and Purse were ever open to them, at a time when they had neither friend or money.” He left Canada when the defeated American army retreated in 1776, thereby incurring the displeasure of his father, a leading supporter of Quebec’s Governor Carleton, and the loss of his inheritance.
Joining the Continental army, Franks served as a volunteer in the Northern army and unofficially as an unpaid aide to General Arnold. When it became evident that the British were planning to abandon Philadelphia in 1778, Arnold was directed by Washington to take command of the city after the evacuation and Franks was attached to his staff as aide-de-camp, with the rank of major. On his arrival in the city, Arnold ordered the shops and stores temporarily shut, as directed by Congress, and forbade the sale of certain scarce goods. In February 1779 the Pennsylvania authorities presented Congress with eight charges of misconduct against Arnold, who had come under increasing fire for abusing his power as military commander. In April Congress referred four of the charges to a court-martial, whereupon Arnold resigned his post. After several postponements, on December 29, 1779, hearings on the charges began. Two of the four charges directly involved Franks. One accused Arnold of secretly ordering Franks to purchase goods for Arnold’s own profit when American troops entered Philadelphia. According to the deposition of Colonel John Fitzgerald, an aide to George Washington, Franks received an unsigned letter from Arnold, instructing him to purchase European and East Indian goods "to any amount" and to hide Arnold’s involvement in the transactions from even "his most intimate acquaintances." However, the scheme was aborted when Pennsylvania Congressman Joseph Reed directed Arnold to close all shops and permit no purchases whatsoever. In answering the charge, Franks contended that he had been planning to resign from the army and that the purchases were intended to help to set himself up in business. But at any rate, because he decided to remain in the army, no purchases were made. The second charge, of imposing menial duties on a militiaman, arose from an incident on October 4, 1778, when Franks ordered militia Sergeant William Matlack to summon his barber. Matlack complied but later complained both to Arnold and to his father, Timothy, Matlack, a major political figure in...
Philadelphia, that the order was unbecoming of a militiaman. Arnold responded that it was the duty of an orderly sergeant to obey every order "of my aides," not violating the law, "as mine, without judging the propriety of them." Never called to testify on this charge, Franks made no public reply. On January 26, 1780, the court dismissed the two charges involving Franks but found Arnold guilty of the two remaining charges of misconduct—allowing a vessel of which he was part owner to clear port when others could not and using public wagons for private purposes. The sentence was a reprimand from Washington.

In the meantime, starting in the spring of 1779, General Arnold had begun his secret correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton that was to last for sixteen months. On June 15, 1780, Arnold informed the British that he expected to be put in command of West Point, and shortly thereafter he succeeded in wrangling an appointment as commander of this strategic post from General Washington. He then entered into a plot to deliver West Point to the British in exchange for a commission in the Royal Army and £20,000. The final details of the surrender of the post were to be worked out between Arnold and Major John André, Clinton’s aide, in a clandestine meeting near West Point.

Arnold took command at West Point on August 5, 1780. Major Franks accompanied him as an aide. Franks was shortly joined by another aide, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Varick. Varick later testified that when he arrived, on August 13, he found Franks deeply distressed over "repeated insults" and mistreatment by Arnold. Franks had decided to leave his position with Arnold, which he had held for three years, and transfer to the staff of Rochembeau or some other French officer. On September 22 Arnold met with André and delivered the plans to the fort. But the plot was thwarted when Major André, on his way back to the British lines, was captured wearing civilian clothes and carrying incriminating documents. Arnold fled to the Vulture, a British warship then in the Hudson River. Meanwhile, Franks had begun to suspect that Arnold was involved in some kind of treachery. Reluctantly, he confided his suspicions to Varick, but the two concluded that the suspicions were unwarranted. Shortly thereafter, Arnold wrote to Washington exonerating Franks and the other members of his staff, insisting that they were "totally ignorant of any transactions of mine that they had reason to believe were injurious to..."
the public.” Nevertheless, Varick and Franks were placed under house arrest.

Washington, who did not believe Franks was “privy” to Arnold’s treason, on September 27 dispatched Franks to escort Arnold’s wife and child to Philadelphia. Franks, like many others, was convinced Peggy Arnold had nothing to do with her husband’s treachery. Only years later would it become known that she was deeply involved from the outset. Meanwhile, Franks had requested that a board of inquiry be convened to investigate his relationship with Arnold both in Philadelphia and at West Point. While in Philadelphia, Franks was examined by the Pennsylvania council, where he found himself accused of perjuring himself at Arnold’s court-martial. Nonetheless, Washington, who convened a court of inquiry, insisted that it confine itself to the conduct of Franks and Varick in connection with Arnold at West Point. Two investigations, one for Varick, another for Franks, opened in November 1780. Both were unusual in that neither officer was accused of disloyalty, nor was anyone prosecuting or appearing against them. The hearings consisted mainly of affidavits from prominent officers attesting to the innocence and integrity of the two aides and a series of questions directed by Franks and Varick at each other. The court cleared the two officers, and Franks urged Washington to publish the proceedings relating to him: “Many people are to this hour inclined to think that my connection with Arnold could not be devoid of criminality.” On December 8 Washington accepted the report of the court of inquiry and made public its conclusion that “every part of Major David S. Franks’s conduct was not only unexceptionable but reflects the highest honor on him as an officer, distinguishes him as a zealous friend to the independence of America, and justly entitles him to the attention and confidence of his countrymen.” Historians today agree that Franks had no part in Arnold’s treason. However, many of his contemporaries appear to have had some reservations about his personality. Jefferson considered him “light” and “indiscreet,” although “honest” and “affectionate,” and Silas Deane called him “volatile and trifling.”

After being acquitted of complicity in Arnold’s treason, Franks remained on the army rolls as a major but without a specific military assignment. In the summer of 1781, Franks was appointed by Robert Morris as a special courier to the Franklin mission in Paris. Doubtless his command of French from his Montreal days made him particularly
Franks remained in the army until January 1, 1783, when he retired. But his service to the young Republic continued, for he was selected to deliver copies of the final peace treaty with England to American ministers abroad. At this time, Charles Thomson wrote to Franklin: "Colonel Franks has great merit for the early part he took and the sacrifices he has made in the late controversy and for his steady adherence to our cause." Franks subsequently served as vice consul at Marseilles and as a staff member of the commission that negotiated a trade treaty with the emperor of Morocco. His final position was as assistant cashier of the Bank of North America in Philadelphia. Franks died there during the yellow fever epidemic that swept the city in 1793.

In the winter of 1778-79, Britain shifted the focus of conflict to the South. In November 1778, Clinton sent thirty-five hundred men from New York to the coast of Georgia, where they were to join two thousand troops coming up from St. Augustine in the hope of capturing Savannah. Mordecai Sheftall and a number of other Savannah Jews sent their families to safety in Charleston, which was more strongly defended. They themselves remained behind to help defend Savannah from the impending British invasion, Sheftall having been appointed a commissary officer when hostilities with Britain began, with his son serving as his deputy. At the same time, a company of Charleston militia known as "Jew's company" because it contained a considerable number of Jews, left for Savannah under Captain Richard E. Lushington to assist in the city's defense.

On December 1, 1778, the Charleston Gazette published an article impugning the loyalty of Savannah's Jews. Signing himself "An American," the anonymous writer denounced "the Tribe of Israel" as cowards who, with Savannah under siege, "fled here for an asylum with their ill-gotten wealth, dastardly turning their backs upon the country when in danger, which gave them bread and protection." The same would occur in South Carolina, the writer predicted. The attack was refuted by "A Real American and True Hearted Israelite," whose article in the South Carolina American General Gazette pointed out that the refugees were women and children. Not a single male "Georgia Israelite" had fled to South Carolina and, the writer noted, many Jews of Charleston had left to join their "brother citizens" defending Savannah.
Late in December 1778, the British captured Savannah. Mordecai Sheftall and his son were taken prisoner, beginning an unusual and harrowing odyssey. The British commander ordered that the elder Sheftall be guarded carefully as "a very great rebel." After being imprisoned on the British ship Nancy, the Sheftalls were released on parole. Eventually, fearing for their lives in British-held territory, they headed for Charleston, only to be intercepted by a British frigate which took them to the island of Antigua. Finally, in December 1780, they were again paroled and exchanged for British prisoners at Philadelphia. Almost immediately the younger Sheftall accepted an appointment to command the sloop Carolina Packet on a mission, under a flag of truce, to bring food and money to destitute American prisoners at British-held Charleston. And he managed to transport seventy persons, including his own mother and sisters, back to Philadelphia.

When in September 1779, American and French forces launched an unsuccessful attempt to recapture Savannah, two Jewish merchants, Philip Minis and Levi Sheftall, not only offered suggestions as to the most desirable landing places but served as guides for the attacking troops. (Following the fall of Charleston, however, Levi Sheftall took an oath of loyalty and received the king’s pardon. Only the strenuous efforts of his half brother Mordecai enabled him to regain his Georgia citizenship in 1784.) Minis’s mother, Abby Minis, a merchant still active despite having reached the age of eighty, made supplies available to the American and French troops. After the failure of the attack on Savannah, she and her daughters were forced to leave the city. Another Jewish participant in the campaign was Benjamin Nones, a merchant from Bordeaux who came to America in 1777 and immediately enlisted as a volunteer in the Continental army. He fought in Count Pulaski’s legion in Savannah and was praised for bravery by his commanding officer. Several Jews also took part in the defense of Charleston, which fell to the British in May 1780. A number of Jewish prisoners of war were subsequently deprived of their property and banished from the city. Abraham Mendez Seixas recorded in his prayer book that he was "banish’d from Charles Town as disaffected by the British Government and arrived in Philadelphia 29th May 1782."

Far more important than the contribution of the one hundred or so Jews who served in the Continental army and state militias were
the commercial activities of Jewish entrepreneurs who, in the words of Jacob R. Marcus, helped to “keep commodities flowing” to the army and advanced indispensable financing to the revolutionary government. Joseph Simon of Lancaster, for example, supplied the Continental army with rifles, ammunition, drums, blankets, and other supplies, and provided money to pay for a messenger service between the city and Washington’s army. Jewish entrepreneurs provided essential supplies by running the British blockade and serving as civilian purveyors to the armed forces. They also outfitted privateers and extended credit for the purchase of materiel and for paying soldiers. As brokers they served the revolutionary cause by selling government bonds.

Among the most daring of the blockade runners was the firm of Isaac Moses and Company, based in Philadelphia, whose ships made the run from Amsterdam to St. Eustatius in the Dutch Caribbean, which served as an American supply base until its seizure by the British in 1781. The new rulers vented their anger on local Jews, stripping them of their property and deporting thirty to the island of St. Kitts. The multifaceted efforts of Isaac Moses and his partners were of considerable significance to the American cause. To help finance the invasion of Canada in 1775, the company made available over $20,000 in specie in exchange for Continental paper currency. Moses was also among the more than twenty Jewish merchants involved in outfitting privateers who harassed British shipping during the Revolution. He also provided a personal bond of three thousand British pounds to provide supplies for the American army. Other Jewish merchants who advanced funds included Jacob Hart, who loaned money to pay Lafayette’s troops, and Philip Minis, who as paymaster advanced money to the Continental forces fighting in Georgia. Some, including Minis, were eventually repaid, at least in part, by Congress. Mordecai Sheftall, who had dipped into his own pocket to supply Continental troops, was not among the fortunate ones. After the war, he repeatedly appealed without success for a settlement of his pay accounts and reimbursement for his advances. “I want nothing but justice,” reads one of his petitions to Congress. Eventually, Sheftall received about five percent of what he claimed to be owed.

The best known of the Jewish financiers who served the revolutionary government was undoubtedly Haym Salomon. Born in
1740 in Lissa, Poland, he arrived in New York City in 1772, establishing himself as a commission merchant, dealer in securities, and ship broker. After serving as a sutler selling provisions to American troops stationed at Lake George, Salomon returned to New York, then under British occupation. In time he aroused British suspicion and was imprisoned. Owing to his fluency in German, the British found him useful in communicating with their Hessian soldiers. He was released from jail and soon resumed his business activities. Threatened with a second arrest in August 1778, he fled to Philadelphia, where he addressed a memorial to the Continental Congress, detailing his services to the revolutionary cause and asking for employment. Salomon claimed that while in New York, he had assisted French and American prisoners with money and helped them to escape.

When Congress proved indifferent to his appeal, Salomon opened an office as a dealer in securities. Within a few years he had become a successful broker. In 1781, when Robert Morris was named superintendent of finance for the Continental Congress, he engaged Salomon to assist him in raising funds. The "most energetic and successful" broker who served the revolutionary government, Salomon, with Morris's permission, advertised himself as "Broker to the Office of Finance." He was not a banker, nor did he loan his own money to the government; rather, he sold about $200,000 worth of government securities for a broker's fee. He did extend credit to members of the Continental Congress when their pay was late in arriving, notably to James Madison and Edmund Randolph, and he declined to charge them interest. Salomon died two years after the end of the war, eulogized by the Pennsylvania Packet as "a native of Poland and of the Hebrew nation...remarkable for his skill and his integrity in the profession and for his generous and humane deportment."

After his death, Salomon's name became involved in controversy.
For years his descendants sought compensation from Congress, making unsubstantiated claims that he had advanced large amounts of his own money to the government without being repaid. Subsequently, a myth developed that Salomon had been the “financier of the Revolution” who almost singlehandedly saved the new nation from collapse—an exaggeration of his nonetheless important contribution. (When a group of Polish Jews sought to erect a statue of Salomon at New York City in 1924, the B’nai B’rith’s magazine claimed that he had advanced the government $658,000 without receiving a penny in repayment.)

Like every other group of Americans, Jews divided in their response to the struggle for independence. Although most undoubtedly supported the patriots—including not only soldiers, suppliers, and financiers, but those who voluntarily left their homes to avoid living under British occupation—a number of Jews sided with the British. Indeed, several prominent Jewish families, such as Gomez, Lopez, and Hays, “divided into hostile camps—Whigs and Tories.” Among the Jewish loyalists were some who had taken part in the protests of the 1760s and early 1770s but drew back when the issues became war and independence. As merchants and shippers as well as suppliers to the British armed forces, not a few had profitable ties with the mother country. “The thought of revolution and secession,” writes Jacob Marcus, “frightened them. They had a great deal to lose.” The early patriotic historians of colonial Jewry minimized the number of Jewish Tories. It is now established that there were more than they acknowledged. New York, Newport, and Philadelphia were the homes of prominent Jewish loyalists. Although most Jews fled when the British captured New York in 1776, between fifteen and thirty Jewish families remained in the city during the long occupation. Some sixteen Jews were among the 948 New Yorkers who, on October 16, 1776, swore loyalty and pledged “true allegiance” to the British crown. The same number fought for the British in military units of loyalists headed by General Oliver DeLancey. A number of Jews also remained in Newport after the British occupation in October 1776, including Isaac Touro, hazan of the city’s synagogue, and the entire Hart family.

David Franks and his daughter Rachel were probably the best known Jewish loyalists. A prominent Philadelphia merchant, Franks had signed the nonimportation agreement of 1770. When war broke
out, he professed to be neutral. At first he served the Continental forces, providing supplies for British prisoners of war held in Pennsylvania stockades. When the British occupied Philadelphia, Franks and his family remained. He was soon employed by the British to provision their American prisoners. Franks opened his house to social events for British authorities and his daughter Rachel entertained British officers. In May 1778 she acted as one of the two Queens of Beauty at the famous Meschianza, an extravaganza organized by British officers as a farewell party for General William Howe.

When the Americans reoccupied the city in 1778, Franks was arrested as an alleged Tory but was released a month later, for Congress found no basis on which to try him. Two years later he was again arrested on the charge of having surreptitiously aided the British and was ordered to leave Philadelphia, but unlike other Tories, his property was not confiscated. Together with his daughter, he departed for British-held New York, and the two eventually made their way to Britain. Having married an officer, Rachel Franks remained in Britain, but her father obtained permission to return home after the war. He died at Philadelphia in 1793. Other Jewish loyalists were not so fortunate. Jacob Louzada of New Jersey was forced to flee to Nova Scotia and never returned. The Rhode Island Assembly deprived three members of the Hart family of their rights and property. Isaac Hart fled to Long Island where he met his death at the hands of patriotic Whigs.

"We have obtained our independence..." Mordecai Sheftall wrote his son in April 1783, as peace descended upon the new nation. "Of which happy event I sincerely congratulate you and all my friends. As an [entire] new scene will open itself, and we have the world to begin again." But Jews, like many other Americans, had fought a dual battle—to achieve independence and to expand equality in the new Republic. As far as Jewish patriots were concerned, the revolutionary struggle had not yet ended. There was an urgent need to revise state constitutions to reflect the egalitarian ideals spawned by the revolutionary struggle. (Like Jefferson and many other southern patriots, however, Sheftall, a slaveholder, did not push these principles to their ultimate conclusion.) Although the thirteen states had drawn up new constitutions during the Revolution, all but New York retained colonial provisions barring Jews from voting and holding public office.
Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Virginia, Georgia, and North and South Carolina limited office holding to Protestants. Delaware required state officials to swear a Trinitarian oath. Even Pennsylvania, with the era’s most democratic constitution, required officeholders to affirm the divinity of the Old and New Testaments, a provision also adopted in Maryland.

Jews deeply resented these religious test oaths. In petitioning for their removal, they repeatedly referred with pride to their multifaceted activities in support of the Revolution. Late in 1783 leaders of Philadelphia’s Jewish congregation petitioned the state Council of Censors to modify the constitution. “In behalf of themselves, and their brethren Jews residing in Philadelphia,” they called for the repeal of oaths that deprived Jews “of the most eminent right of freemen.” The Jews of Charleston, New York, Newport and other cities occupied by the British had suffered “for their attachment to the revolution principles,” and Pennsylvania Jews had served enthusiastically in the Continental army and militia and contributed to the support of the state government.

Published in *The Independent Gazetteer*, the petition was endorsed by the newspaper’s editors:

> The Jews of the continent...have been peculiarly firm and united in the great cause of America, and therefore, are of right entitled to all the privileges and amenities of equal government in common with every other body of people.

No action was taken on the Pennsylvania petition. But in October 1785 Virginia became the second state to guarantee Jews political equality when the House of Burgesses eliminated religious tests for public office.

The new federal constitution took a major step toward guaranteeing Jews political equality. Article 6, section 3, stipulated that no religious test should ever be required, “as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” (Should the president ever be a Jew, one newspaper commented during the debate over ratification, he might order the armed forces “to rebuild Jerusalem.”) Although the Constitution said nothing about qualifications for state office, its adoption spurred four additional states to eliminate religious tests. Between 1789 and 1792, Delaware,
Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Georgia eliminated provisions that barred Jews from holding public office.

Thus, Jewish patriots made their contribution to the winning of American independence and achieved partial victories in the struggle for civic equality. Future generations of Jews would labor to preserve and widen these accomplishments.

From the Revolution to the Civil War

By the time of the first census in 1790, the Jewish population of the United States numbered about fifteen hundred. Ten years later, it had risen to only twenty-seven hundred, the large majority of them native born, since immigration in these years was relatively low. Jews resided, as they traditionally had, in New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah, and two new locations, Richmond and Baltimore. In the early years of the Republic, a number of Jews served in the armed forces on both the local level—in the citizen militia and volunteer units—and nationally in the regular armed forces. Unlike during the colonial era, some Jews were able to become commissioned officers. Some were involved in the era’s dramatic confrontations. Israel Franks, lieutenant colonel in command of the Second Regiment of the Philadelphia County Militia, composed of citizens of Germantown and its vicinity, led his men into the disaffected area of western Pennsylvania during the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. On that occasion, too, Reuben Etting served as a lieutenant and subsequently captain in a Baltimore unit, despite the requirement of a Christian oath in Maryland. In Richmond, Virginia, a number of young Jewish men joined the Richmond Blues, an independent volunteer company called out in 1800 to suppress Gabriel’s slave rebellion and again in 1807, when a British frigate attacked the Chesapeake, inflicting severe casualties. Unable to purchase supplies, the British admiral threatened to land and take them by force, whereupon Virginia’s governor ordered out the troops. Although the threatened invasion did not materialize, the city council complimented “the Israelites of Richmond” for their response “when the country was in danger from a foreign foe.”

In the early years of the Republic, relatively few Jews sought professional careers in the law, medicine, or teaching. A number did become career officers in the army and navy. During the undeclared war against France during John Adams’s administration, Congress
augmented the size of the regular army and navy, created the Navy Department, and established the Marine Corps. Between 1799 and 1801, the navy secretary appointed a number of Jews as midshipmen. Once peace was restored, however, Congress reduced the navy’s size to a peacetime footing. The only Jews retained in the service were Midshipmen Barnard Henry and Joseph Israel, and both were involved in highly dramatic incidents in 1804 during the war with the Barbary pirates of Tripoli. Henry was a midshipman serving on the Philadelphia when the frigate ran aground off Tripoli. He, along with Captain William Bainbridge and the rest of the crew, were imprisoned on February 16, 1804. Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, with a raiding party of volunteers, slipped into the harbor, boarded the frigate, set it afire, and escaped. But it was not until the treaty of peace in June 1805 that Henry and the others were released. Henry was promoted to lieutenant in 1807, but resigned from the navy in May 1812.

Israel lost his life in a similar incident that ended less fortuitously. In 1804 Commodore Edward Preble dispatched the ketch Intrepid, loaded with explosives, into Tripoli Harbor with the aim of destroying the Tripolitanian fleet by exploding the small boat. The Intrepid was accompanied by two fast rowboats in which the officers and crew were to make their escape. Thirteen men, all volunteers, were on board the Intrepid, including Israel, although it is unclear whether he was an original member of the venture or, as one historian claims, “managed to get abroad unobserved” and when discovered was allowed to remain. In any event, on September 4 the tiny ship reached the harbor safely but then exploded prematurely, killing all on board. A monument to the six naval officers, including Israel, who fell in the Tripolitanian war, now stands on the grounds of the Naval Academy at Annapolis. During the First World War, the navy named a destroyer in Israel’s honor.

Two Jewish physicians served in the navy in the early years of the nineteenth century. Dr. Gershon J. Jacques served as a surgeon’s mate with the squadron off Tripoli in 1804 and was promoted to surgeon. He resigned from the navy in 1808. Manuel Phillips, the first Jewish doctor in Philadelphia, joined the navy in 1809, but his service was interrupted when he embarked on a prolonged trip to China and India, which kept him out of the country for six years. Upon his return, he remained on the navy’s rolls, but without assignment, until he resigned in 1824.
The first Jewish officer in the early regular army was Simon Magruder Levy, a member of West Point's "first graduating class" of 1802. Like Israel's, Levy's career was tragically cut short. Born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1774, he was the second son of Levy Andrew Levy, who, as we have seen, was a nephew and business partner of Joseph Simon. After the revolutionary war, the Levy family moved to Hagerstown and then to Baltimore. In 1793 Levy enlisted in the army and served as a member of the Fourth Infantry Regiment, perhaps fighting under General Anthony Wayne at the 1794 battle of Fallen Timbers, although the evidence on this point, as will be related, is unclear. On March 3, 1801, Levy, then a sergeant, was appointed by President John Adams as a cadet in the corps of artilleryists and engineers. Shortly after assuming office, the new Jefferson administration undertook to establish a tuition-free public institution for the education of prospective army officers. The initial step was to revitalize the military school begun at West Point in 1794 to train cadets of the artillery and engineers corps to become officers. One of Jefferson's first acts in carrying out his program was to install Jonathan Williams, a grandnephew and protégé of Benjamin Franklin, as superintendent of the school at West Point and to order the cadets, including Levy, to report there on September 1 for instruction. On September 21 the eleven cadets began a daily routine of morning classes, with afternoons devoted mostly to field sports. They were joined on October 12 by Joseph Gardner Swift of Massachusetts, who in 1800 President Adams appointed a cadet and assigned to Newport Harbor for training in engineering and fortifications. Major Williams took command of the school in December 1801. According to George W. Cullum, Swift's biographer, Williams quickly developed a special relationship with Swift, lending him books and often dining with him. Not until March 1802 did Congress officially establish a military academy at West Point for the purpose of training professional army officers. The act created a Corps of Engineers separate from the artillery and stipulated that promotions in this new corps were to be based on merit rather than seniority, as was the practice in the rest of the army. Jonathan Williams was named to head both the corps and the school with the rank of major, and shortly after its formal opening in April 1802, Levy, together with several others including Swift, were transferred as cadets of the Corps of Engineers. As Swift recorded in his memoirs: "In July [1802], by transfer I became a cadet of engineers. 
...The number of cadets at the academy was twelve. Among them was Simon Magruder Levy, from a respectable Jewish family of Baltimore,... promoted to cadet for his merit and mathematic attainments. He was now twenty-five years of age.”

The school’s curriculum was organized so as to ensure mastery of the basic skills required for command in all branches of military service; its emphasis on engineering came after the War of 1812. Cadets were to be commissioned when the instructors deemed them qualified. On September 11, 1802, the first public examination was conducted at the military academy, and on October 12 the institution held what came to be considered its “first graduation.” Two cadets were promoted to second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers—Swift and Levy.

Levy’s career as a commissioned officer lasted only three years and was embroiled in controversy. First, there was the question of whether he or Swift outranked the other. They had received identical letters from Secretary of War Henry W. Dearborn, notifying them of their appointments as second lieutenants in the Corps of Engineers. As West Point’s superintendent, Lieutenant Colonel Williams, as early as November 2, 1802, pointed out, “the letters of appointment do not state any priority of Rank between Lieut. Swift and Levy.” Since Williams deemed Swift “foremost as a Cadet,” he took it upon himself to rank him above Levy. “Although the letters [of appointment] are of the same date,” he continued, “it is indispensable that one or the other should preside, and former usage is the only ground I could take.”

In September 1803, the issue of relative rank surfaced again. Captain William Barron, temporarily in charge at West Point, raised the issue of “the present rank of Swift and Levy,” in a letter to Secretary of War Dearborn. The secretary turned the communication over to Adjutant General Cushing for his judgment. Four days later, the latter responded that the relative rank “appears to have been fixed” in the letter Williams wrote to him in November 1802. “Mr. Levy,” he continued, “cannot complain if Mr. Swift should stand first, because they have stood so from the beginning.” On the basis of this letter, Dearborn advised Barron that the question of rank had been decided “in favor of Lt. Swift.” He added, however, that since promotions in the engineering corps depended on merit, rather than rank, this issue was “of less consequence than in other Corps.” Nonetheless, to this day, controversy continues over whether Levy or Swift should be
considered "West Point's first graduate."

Levy remained on duty at the military academy until 1804. During his service there he was a founding member and recording secretary of the United States Military Philosophical Society and also served as secretary of the academy, keeping records and regularly communicating with Williams, who was often away from West Point. The latter position embroiled him in a lengthy exchange with Williams. Because Levy considered his duties as academy secretary to be outside his normal responsibilities, he urged Williams, without success, to have the secretary of war authorize additional compensation for his "extra services." As he wrote Williams in May 1803:

Were the time that was absorbed in performing those several duties, applied to Scientific pursuits, I should have had the happiness of possessing a greater proportion of useful knowledge, which exclusive of the personal benefits and satisfaction deriving therefrom, would, according to the standing of our Corps, in a superior degree, qualify me for an Additional Grade; — this time, of course, is in a measure lost, and in order to make amends for the same, I intend sacrificing to it, the intermediate hours and ensuing vacation, however indispensably necessary, a relaxation from study, the mind may naturally require.

While pursuing this question, Levy also became involved in a controversy over whether engineer officers possessed the right of command over troops of other branches equal to officers of the line. Williams and his successor, Major Decius Wadsworth, pressured the secretary of war, to no avail, to accept this principle. In November 1803 Levy added his voice to the debate in a letter to Wadsworth:

I have just given upwards of nine years of the bloom of life to a service that I have made professional, and can it be supposed that I will hold a commission in our Army without authority to command or to be obeyed by my inferiors in rank? I am, D[ear] Sir, situated in life as you represent yourself; my means will not afford me an independency, or I should immediately retire from the Army, if the adopted principle continues.
Soon, the issues of extra pay and equal command were overshadowed by Levy's deteriorating health. In February 1804 he wrote Williams (who had resigned from the army and returned to civilian life) that he was suffering acutely: "I fear the loss of the use of my right arm, & the pains have seized my feet." The "only hope for cure" was a change of climate. If he could not obtain a furlough enabling him to go south, he would have no choice but to leave the profession to which he had given "so many years of the bloom of life." The following month, Secretary of War Dearborn authorized a six-month furlough, enabling Levy to travel to Georgia to regain his health. When the furlough was about to expire, Dearborn denied Levy's request for a permanent transfer from the Corps of Engineers to some unit stationed "at the southward," meaning the Artillery Corps. Ordered to return to West Point, Levy failed to comply, remaining in the South and vainly reiterating his request for a transfer. Indeed, when requested by his father to provide information about Levy's whereabouts, the War Department in November 1804 responded that "no information had been received at this office from him" for over a month. By February 1805, Williams was hinting at a darker side to the story. To Lieutenant Swift he wrote: "I cannot bear to hear that a certain disease called the Rumitis should attack anyone [belonging to the Corps of Engineers]." Swift responded that he had heard Levy was at Fort Wilkinson, Georgia, and was in fact suffering from rheumatism. "Poor fellow," he went on, "from his account he must go from this World of pain and trouble soon." Meanwhile, in January 1805, Wadsworth had resigned to return to civilian life and was replaced by Williams, who assumed the position of superintendent for a second time.

By May 15, 1805, tired of Levy's repeated requests for transfer, Dearborn ordered him to return to West Point without delay. But events soon took an even more disappointing turn when Swift, in June, was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, passing over Levy, who believed himself entitled to equal consideration. To make matters even worse for Levy, Walker K. Armistead, who had graduated from West Point a year after Levy and Swift, received the same promotion. One month later, Levy submitted his resignation from the army "because of serious illness." "Levy has resigned," Williams wrote to Swift. "I suppose your promotion over his head roused his benumbed spirit and induced him to do what, from a conscientious sense of his
dependence on artificial spirits, he should have done long since." Two years after he left the service, Levy died "somewhere in Georgia." The place of his burial remains unknown.

Even after his death, Levy's record was bedeviled by curious developments. In the 1868 edition of George Cullum's Register of West Point graduates, a footnote was added which stated that Levy had been "appointed Cadet for his good conduct as Orderly Sergeant in the Battle of Maumee Rapids, August 20, 1794." In the 1891 edition, however, the footnote was transferred to the record of Walter K. Armistead, West Point's third graduate, whose name followed Levy's (listed, as usual, second to Swift). Three decades later, when the editor of The American Hebrew asked the adjutant general to clarify this matter, he was informed that no record existed of Levy having served at Maumee Rapids.

The second Jewish cadet at West Point was Samuel Noah. Born in London in July 1779, he came to the United States at the age of twenty, settling in New York City and soon becoming an American citizen. After unsuccessfully seeking to join the navy as a midshipman, he received an appointment to West Point in 1807. During his brief stay at the military academy, Noah served as an aide to the superintendent and, because of his exemplary handwriting, as a recorder at military courts. He was commissioned on December 9, 1807, and was appointed an ensign in the Second Infantry Regiment, which he joined after a long and tedious journey to Fort Adams, Mississippi. From 1808 to 1811 he spent his time studying the writings of Napoleon, tracking down smugglers along the Florida frontier, and marching from "one unhealthy post to another" in the Gulf states. Despite winning a promotion to second lieutenant in 1808 and first lieutenant two years later, Noah became increasingly discouraged by the "boring duty" and the appointment of "ignorant" civilians above him in rank. He resigned from the army on March 13, 1811.

Noah's career became far more eventful after leaving the army. In the summer of 1812 he joined with Augustus W. Magee—another West Point officer who had also resigned his commission, feeling slighted because a promised promotion had been denied him—to lead a filibustering expedition to free Texas from Spanish rule. The Republican Army of the North, as it was called, consisted of Americans, Mexicans, and Indians. Noah participated in the campaign that captured La Bahia (today called Goliad, Texas) in
November 1812. Years later Noah recalled his experience in Texas:

In our battle with the Spanish Royalists before we marched on San Antonio, we were perplexed to know how we could distinguish our Mexicans from the Royalists as both wore the same uniform. An expedient however, was soon presented and urgently recommended by a Lapan Indian chief, which was simply to paint the faces of our Mexicans with rouge, the same with which they painted their own which at once relieved us from our dilemma. It effectually disappointed the enemy.

After a four-month siege by Spanish forces, during which Magee died and was replaced by another American, Major Samuel Kemper, the army marched to San Antonio, with Noah in command of its rear guard. Routing the Spanish forces, they entered San Antonio in April 1813 and proclaimed the Republic of Texas. But Noah quit the expedition in disgust and returned to the United States after Mexican members of the Republican Army executed ten Spanish officers who had been taken prisoner. As we will see, this was not the end of his military career.

Another Jewish officer, Abraham Massias of Charleston, also took part in the quasi-legal military campaigns along America's southern borders in these years. After serving in the New York militia from 1802 to 1808, Massias entered the regular army as a first lieutenant in the Regiment of Riflemen. Rising to the rank of captain in 1809, he was stationed at Fort Norfolk, Virginia. Although his religion was not a bar to Massias’s appointment and promotion, he was the victim of anti-Semitic barbs. In 1810 a fellow officer, Captain John McLelland, left his military boots at a tavern in Petersburg and received permission to perform duty in "fair top" civilian boots. Massias objected strongly to this arrangement, and the result was a bitter verbal exchange during which he exclaimed, "Sir, if you are offended at anything that I have said, you know where my room is." To which McLelland replied: "Sir, I cannot condescend to look for the room of a little Jew." "Do you call me a Jew, Sir?" responded Massias. "Yes, Sir," McLelland answered, "I believe you are a damned Israelite." No blows were exchanged, and several weeks later, "through the interference of our brother officers," the two captains shook hands and were reconciled.

Massias's involvement in American efforts to acquire East Florida
from Spain began in 1812, a year after Congress had authorized President Madison to use the army and navy to secure the area if local residents desired or to prevent seizure by another foreign power. Massias at this point was third in command at Point Petre, Georgia, a fort on the Saint Mary's River just above Florida. In March 1812 Georgia's former governor, George Matthews, arrived at the fort accompanied by Ralph Isaacs, his Jewish secretary. Matthews had been commissioned a general by Madison and empowered to use the military to secure East Florida. Having recruited a "patriot army" inside East Florida, Matthews now sought reinforcements from the troops stationed at Point Petre.

With Lieutenant Colonel Smith absent, Major Jacint Laval was in command. He at first refused to allow any of his troops to join the expedition but later authorized the participation of fifty soldiers. Matthews and Isaacs, however, seeking to avoid direct governmental involvement, wanted these men to go as "volunteers," not regular soldiers. When Laval heard of this plan, he canceled his order. Behind Laval's back, Matthews sought to sow dissension at the fort and to raise volunteers for his expedition. According to Matthews, Massias and the other officers were ready to do everything required "for the benefit of their country," offering, if necessary, "to resign their commissions and act as volunteers." For his part, Laval stationed guards to prevent any soldier or officer from slipping away to join the insurgent army. Whereupon, on March 16 Massias confronted his commander, accusing him of acting "contrary to the wishes of our government" and suggesting that he "leave the post." When Laval ordered Massias to report to his quarters, Massias shouted that he would march the troops to East Florida himself and was placed under arrest. At this point Colonel Smith unexpectedly returned, dismissed the charges against Massias and confined Laval to his quarters. Smith, Laval complained to the secretary of war, had been "deluded by Matthews and his confidential Jew, Col. Isaacs." "Is it possible," he went on, "that the government cannot be better furnished with officers than with Jews, rogues, traitors, conspirators?"

Having resumed command, Smith agreed to give Matthews the aid he desired, and on March 17, 1812, the forces assembled by Matthews seized the town of Fernandina and the surrounding territory of Amelia Island. The leaders of the "patriot army" then issued a declaration of independence from Spain and adopted a flag
designed by Colonel Isaacs. Shortly thereafter, Matthews, with two companies of U.S. troops—one commanded by Massias—took over the area in the name of the United States. Then, the "patriot army" and American forces moved on to St. Augustine, the stronghold of Spanish power in East Florida, and laid siege to the city. In the meantime, Secretary of State James Monroe repudiated Matthews for having exceeded his authority and replaced him with Governor Mitchell of Georgia. In July Massias was appointed the American commander at Fernandina, remaining in charge for ten months. According to one authority, Massias "proved to be a brilliant occupation governor" who instituted "a series of tough rules and regulations that enabled him to run the town firmly but fairly." But growing opposition in Congress to the illegal occupation led the administration to abandon East Florida in 1813.

After being recalled from Florida, Massias was placed in command of a company of riflemen stationed at Fort Petrie. On September 17, 1814, he was promoted to the rank of major in the newly formed Fourth Regiment of Riflemen. However, in December the Senate rejected his appointment. Probably lingering resentment over the invasion and occupation of East Florida played a role in this turn of events. In any event, six years later the region was purchased from Spain.

Meanwhile, on June 18, 1812, Congress declared war on Great Britain. Like other Americans, many Jews viewed the War of 1812 as a second war for independence. It is estimated that 128 Jews (of a total Jewish population of around three thousand) participated in the war effort, serving on land and sea as privates and officers in the regular army and navy, in state and local militia, and in citizen volunteer units. Unlike most of the Jews who served during the American Revolution, those in the War of 1812 were largely native born.

Among the most prominent Jews to serve in the regular army was Mordecai Myers, who subsequently recorded a vivid account of his experiences. Because of previous service in the New York militia and his study of military tactics, undertaken "at the particular request" of the state's governor, Daniel Tompkins, Myers was commissioned a captain in the Thirteenth United States Infantry on March 12, 1812. "Sum must spill their blud," he wrote in his peculiar spelling to Jewish newspaper publisher Napthali Phillips, "and others their ink. I expect
to be among the former and hope you are amongst the latter.” Myers distinguished himself during General James Wilkinson’s offensive against Montreal, launched from Sacketts Harbor in the fall of 1813. On the evening of October 17 Wilkinson’s flotilla started down the St. Lawrence River. The night turned stormy and no fewer than fifteen boats were lost before the expedition reached the rendezvous at Grenadier Island. For more than a week severe winds and blizzards pinned the Americans down on the island. At this point it was decided to send back to Sacketts Harbor the men who had become too ill or disabled to proceed. About two hundred men were placed on two schooners and the vessels set out in a storm, only to be wrecked on rocks one mile from the mainland. Captain Myers initiated the rescue effort. As he later recalled:

I volunteered to General Boyd, then commanding on the island, to go to their rescue. He said that it was impossible in such a storm, but that if I would undertake it I might have as many men and boats as I pleased... With great difficulty we reached the vessels and found them lying on the rocks... We made thirteen trips to the shore and landed all, dead and alive, from both vessels.

On November 5 the flotilla resumed the descent of the St. Lawrence, and six days later Wilkinson decided to give battle to the British forces at Chrysler’s Field in Upper Canada. While leading his men in the attack, Myers was seriously wounded and was removed to the home of a local physician in upstate New York. “At one time,” wrote Myers, “the doctor feared that he could not save me.” But not only did Myers recuperate, he met and married Charlotte Bailey, the Christian daughter of a Plattsburgh judge. The marriage led Myers to reduce his ties with the Jewish community; indeed, his Reminiscences, published in 1853, do not mention his Jewish origins. Myers saw
additional service toward the end of the war and was discharged from the army in September 1815 because of his wound. Subsequently, he became active in business and politics, serving several terms as a Democratic member of the New York State legislature and, in the 1850s, twice as mayor of Schenectady. He lived to his ninety-fifth year and died in 1871.

Another Jewish officer to see action during the war was Captain Abraham Massias. In January 1815 a British expedition arrived off Cumberland Island, Georgia. Massias, with but eighty riflemen, was ordered to retreat from the nearby fort at Point Petrie if the enemy landed in force. "As my order contemplates a retreat," he wrote his commanding officer on January 10, 1815, "I have thought it best to prepare in time, . . . but I hope to have it in my power to give the enemy a brush before I leave the ground." The following day fifteen hundred British troops landed. Massias offered resistance and then made an orderly retreat. As he reported on January 15:

Alas! Our efforts were unavailing, the number of the enemy too imposing, a thousand to eighty was too much odds and... it was with reluctance I ordered a retreat, and which I am happy to state was effected in good order.

Massias received his honorable discharge on June 15, 1815. When he left the service he still had an unsatisfied claim against the government "for various services performed by me (other than military) during the occupancy of East Florida by the troops." Massias repeatedly pressed his claim, without success. In 1816 circumstances seemed to work in his favor. In that year Mordecai Manuel Noah, American consul at Tunis, was removed from his post. A letter from Secretary of State James Monroe cited Noah's Jewish religion as the primary cause. Embittered, Noah returned to the United States and distributed copies of the letter to prominent Jews. Several pressured Monroe, seeking to discover if anti-Semitism lay behind Noah's recall. The State Department enlisted Massias on its behalf, dispatching him to visit Isaac Harby, a prominent South Carolina Jewish journalist and playwright who had written "a passionate letter" in protest. The implication was that Massias's claim against the government would receive favorable consideration if he convinced Harby that "the religion of Noah formed no part of the motive for his recall." Massias fulfilled his part of the bargain, but his reward was not forthcoming.
In December 1820, however, Monroe, now president, reappointed Massias to the army as a paymaster with the rank of major. This time, the Senate approved his promotion. He retired in 1842.

Among the other Jews in the regular army were Dr. Jacob de la Motta of Charleston, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School who served as a surgeon, and Isaac De Young, born in Holland, who fought in a number of the major northern battles and was severely wounded at Lundy's Lane during a bayonet charge.

In the summer of 1814, as the British occupied and burned Washington and then headed up Chesapeake Bay toward Baltimore, Jews joined with other citizens to fortify and defend seaboard cities. Some forty served in the successful defense of Baltimore, including eight at Fort McHenry. Approximately ten Jews served under Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, the war's final engagement. Among the members of Philadelphia's militia units were Jacob, Benjamin, and Joseph Gratz, from one of the city's most prominent Jewish families. Benjamin wrote his sister, Rebecca, of his enthusiasm at marching like a "veteran soldier," but Jacob found the construction work less to his taste. "Jac...," Rebecca reported, "found a day's work at the fortification rather too severe. He has complain'd of burnt arms and shoulders ever since Wednesday." In New York Jewish volunteers included Samuel Noah, who had traveled to Washington after his adventures in Texas, seeking reinstatement as an officer in the regular army. When his petition was rejected by President Madison (on the grounds that he had been born in England), Noah, determined to rejoin the army, went to New York, where he volunteered as a private soldier with militia units engaged in the defense of Brooklyn and Harlem Heights. His military background enabled him to train the inexperienced citizen soldiers in the rudiments of defensive warfare. But the expected British attack never came.

Noah died in 1871 at the age of ninety-two, as the oldest surviving graduate of West Point. For years he had been living in straitened circumstances. In 1868 he inquired of Brevet Major General George W. Cullum, with whom he had been corresponding for some time, whether any provision existed "for a needy Senior Graduate, any allowance for his support when he becomes superannuated or in distress?" But no assistance was forthcoming, and he died in poverty and obscurity.
The best-known Jew to serve in the navy during the War of 1812 was Uriah Phillips Levy. Born at Philadelphia in 1792, he served in every position in the merchant marine between 1801 and 1812, from cabin boy to master. In the process he gained rich experience as a seaman. He also attended “an excellent naval school,” studying navigation. As soon as war was declared, Levy sought an appointment as a sailing master, a rank with no equivalent in today’s navy but which called for seamanship, skill in navigation, and the ability to keep a vessel in proper trim. Later in life he explained why he had chosen to apply for this post:

I sought this particular position in the belief that my nautical education and experience would enable me to render greater service to my country in this post, than in that of a midshipman—the grade in which the Naval Service is usually entered.

After receiving his appointment in October 1812 he was assigned to serve aboard the USS Argus, commanded by Captain William H. Allen, whose mission was to carry the country’s new minister, William H. Crawford, to France.

After delivering Crawford, the Argus began a spectacular career of raiding British merchant ships in the waters between England and Ireland. When the Betty, with an especially large cargo, was seized, Levy was selected to pilot the vessel to a French port. While en route, however, the British captured the ship, and Levy and the crew were taken prisoner. After being held in England’s notorious Dartmoor Prison for sixteen months, Levy was released in December 1814 and returned to the United States.

Another Jewish sailor imprisoned by the British was Levy Charles Harby of Charleston, who in June 1812 was the first Jew to receive an appointment as a midshipman during the war. Captured by the British on his way to assume his position, Harby was confined to a prison in Halifax, from which he wrote pathetic letters to his brother,
Isaac Harby, that were published in his newspaper, the Southern Patriot. He accused the American government of abandoning him and lamented that he "was wasting my prime of life" in prison. Released after the war, Harby remained in the service. Two decades later, while on leave of absence, he took part in the Texas War for Independence, an action which led to his dismissal from the navy for serving with a foreign government. After the annexation of Texas he was restored to duty as a captain in the Revenue Naval Service.

Only two other Jews served as midshipmen. Abraham Phillips of Charleston, assigned to the frigate Constitution, drowned when the vessel's out-cutter overturned, and Joseph B. Nones, son of a revolutionary war veteran, received an appointment, as he later wrote in his autobiography, as the result of the efforts of a friend of his mother's, "a lady of great influence with our government." Nones remained in the navy after the war, serving under Decatur in the expedition against the Barbary powers. He was wounded in one of the engagements and retired from the navy in 1821. Manuel Phillips was a naval surgeon, and Ezekiel Solomon, the son of Haym Solomon, served as a naval purser. Finally, in December 1814, Barnard Henry was recalled to service in the navy with the rank of captain and placed in command of a flotilla set up in the Delaware River to protect Philadelphia from British warships.

As in the American Revolution, Jews also contributed in nonmilitary ventures important to the war effort. Herman Hendricks, a New York businessman, was one of the largest individual subscribers to wartime bond issues, purchasing some $58,000. From Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, which they owned, Simon and Hyman Gratz and a non-Jewish partner furnished great quantities of saltpeter for the manufacture of gunpowder. A French Jew, Captain John Ordronaux became one of the war's leading privateers whose operations resulted in the capture of fourteen British vessels, including the frigate Endymion.

Although states newly admitted to the Union tended not to have religious tests for voting and office holding, many of the original thirteen states still denied Jews full political equality at the end of the war. Jews and their allies now launched a vigorous campaign to end this discrimination, insisting that their active role in both the Revolution and War of 1812 entitled them to full equality. "In times of peril and war," wrote Jacob Cohen of Baltimore in 1818, "the Jews have
borne the privations incident to such times, and their best exertions have been given to the utmost in defense of the common cause.”

Although Connecticut in 1818 and Massachusetts in 1833 allowed Jews to hold office, in Maryland legislative efforts to remove the religious test that required a Christian oath for political positions, officers of the state militia, and lawyers repeatedly failed. In 1824 Thomas Kennedy renewed the legal battle. The featured speech in support of Kennedy's bill (not infrequently referred to as the "Jew Bill") was delivered by Colonel W. G. D. Worthington. Worthington had submitted five questions about the role of Jews in America to Solomon Etting, a leader of the Baltimore Jewish community. The responses, on which Worthington elaborated, affirmed that Jews had fought in both the American Revolution and the War of 1812 and currently served as officers of the regular army and navy. In January 1826 the legislature finally repealed the test oath. A few months later, Solomon Etting and Jacob Cohen were elected to the Baltimore city council, the first Jews to hold elective office in Maryland. By 1840 all but four of the twenty-six states—New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Rhode Island—afforded Jews full religious and political equality. In 1842 Rhode Island removed the test oath, as did New Jersey in 1844.

There were still only about four thousand Jews in the United States in 1830. But the arrival of six thousand European Jews in the next decade helped boost the Jewish population to an estimated fifteen thousand by 1840. The next two decades witnessed the first mass influx of Jewish settlers, and the Jewish population reached one hundred fifty thousand on the eve of the Civil War. Large numbers of German, Galician, Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian Jews arrived on the east coast, spreading westward and southward. Most of those who traveled west started their careers as peddlers supplying goods to farmers in the Old Northwest.

During the period between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, a
number of Jews served as officers of the regular army and navy. In the navy the most prominent was Uriah P. Levy, who remained in the service after his release from Dartmoor Prison and quickly rose to the officers' ranks. While serving on board the USS Franklin as a second sailing master, Levy engaged in a duel with a lieutenant who had called him "a damned Jew." In the encounter the lieutenant was killed. Nonetheless, Levy applied for a commission under a recent act of Congress authorizing the promotion to lieutenant of masters of "extraordinary merit and service." An officers reviewing board unanimously recommended Levy for the promotion, and on March 5, 1817, he was commissioned.

During his stormy naval career, Levy stood trial at no fewer than six court martials. It was not uncommon in those days for naval officers to be court-martialed a number of times and to continue in the service. He was never fully acquitted, was sometimes reprimanded, and on two occasions was dismissed from the navy, only to be reinstated by Presidents Monroe and Tyler. He remained in the service until his death, although much of the time Levy was inactive, as the navy refused to put him in command of ships. He used his time on inactive duty to good effect. Between 1827 and 1838 he traveled extensively in Europe and commissioned Pierre David D'Angers, a French sculptor, to create an enormous bronze statue of Thomas Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence, which Levy presented to Congress (it now stands in the Capitol rotunda). Levy also invested in New York City real estate, increasing his wealth significantly, and in 1836 purchased Monticello, Jefferson's home.

Levy's quick temper, along with his vanity and acerbity, help account for his troubled relations with his fellow officers and numerous legal difficulties. But in addition he was resented for having risen through the ranks at a time when most officers entered the navy as midshipmen (in effect, officers in training) and for his opposition to flogging at a time when this punishment was widely accepted in the
navy. And the ostracism he encountered because of his religion played a part in his difficulties. On one occasion junior officers on the North Carolina unsuccessfully tried to keep Levy out of the officers dining room on the grounds that "he was a damned Jew." As Levy said of his naval career during the course of one of the trials:

May I not say that I have been marked out to common contempt as a Jew until the slow unmoving finger of scorn has drawn a circle round me that includes all friendships and companions and attachments and all the blandishments of life and leaves me isolated and alone in the very midst of society.

The most famous of Levy's court-martials occurred in 1842. Five years earlier, Levy had been promoted to the rank of commander, and in 1838 was assigned to the Vandalia in the West Indian Squadron. On assuming command Levy announced his intention to eliminate the flogging of seamen. For years, a few naval officers, as well as three secretaries of the navy, had urged the abandonment of this practice. In 1831 Secretary Levi Woodbury urged captains to substitute "pecuniary fines, badges of disgrace, and other mild correction" for the "humiliating practice of whipping." Under Levy's regime on the Vandalia, drunken seamen were forced to wear a black wooden bottle around their necks, while sailors found guilty of petty thievery had to wear a badge proclaiming their offense. Levy devised a special chastisement for John Thompson, a sailor said to have ridiculed and mimicked an officer. While the entire crew looked on, Thompson was strapped to a gun, his trousers were lowered, and a small amount of tar and parrot feathers was applied to his buttocks. What one newspaper called Levy's "innovating approach to discipline," won considerable praise. The New York Evening Star (owned by his cousin Mordecai Noah) declared that Levy's mode of discipline "demonstrated the advantages of suasive [sic] means over brute appliances, even with sailors." The article was reprinted in the Army and Navy Chronicle, the principal professional journal of the period.

But Levy's actions angered many fellow officers and charges were preferred against him by his first lieutenant, George Mason Hooe, who accused Levy, among other things, of cruel and scandalous conduct in his punishment of Thompson. The trial took place in April 1842. In his defense, prepared by Mordecai Noah, Levy contended
that the Thompson incident had been blown out of proportion, that the symbolic tarring was a far cry from tarring and feathering, and was preferable to the navy's customary flogging with a cat-o'-nine-tails. Besides, he insisted, his humane punishment assured the finest discipline of any vessel in the navy. The court, acting on the traditional naval belief that ridicule was a more severe punishment than flogging, found Levy guilty of illegal and cruel punishment, stripped him of his command, and dismissed him from the navy. But President John Tyler, noting that Levy's actions had been within the spirit of Secretary Woodbury's circular of 1831, returned the verdict for reconsideration by the court on the grounds that Levy's punishment was "exceedingly severe and disproportioned to the offense." When the court reaffirmed its original decision, Tyler reduced the sentence from dismissal to suspension for one year, thereby keeping Levy on the navy rolls. Levy went on to publish several articles on corporal punishment.

In 1844, soon after his suspension had expired, Levy was promoted to captain, the first Jew to reach what was then the navy's highest rank. But he received no further active assignment until the very end of his career. At the outset of the Mexican War, Levy pleaded in vain for active duty. Mordecai Noah appealed to Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft on Levy's behalf, noting that "the friends of Captain Levy . . . are not without apprehension that there may be some religious prejudice operating to his disadvantage." But Levy remained on inactive duty. As he complained to Kentucky Senator John C. Crittenden:

I stand in the navy register, 'No sea service.'... For this the 'Secretary of the Navy' should be censured, not me, as I have applied at least 18 or 20 times for 'sea service.'... In one of my applications for the command of the Macedonia Frigate, which was detailed to carry provisions to the starving Irish, I offered to give all my pay, and rations, during that service.

In 1850 a vigorous campaign was launched to persuade Congress to abolish corporal punishment in the Navy. At a public meeting in New York City, summoned by the mayor and "a large array of respectable citizens," former seaman John Haynes praised Levy, "a notable specimen of the sailor," for having abolished flogging on his vessel. "We want more such men in our service," he added. "They
would soon reform abuses." In September Congress approved a measure introduced by New Hampshire Senator John P. Hale, who had been influenced by Levy’s articles on the subject, which would abolish flogging in the navy. Levy testified before the Senate naval committee in support of Hale’s bill, brandishing a cat-o’-nine-tails to emphasize his point.

The greatest crisis of Levy’s career occurred in 1855. In that year Congress authorized the president to appoint a naval board to determine whether any officers were unfit for duty. Those so identified would be dismissed or retired from the active list. In June and July the board, which met in secrecy, called no witnesses, and did not confront the men they were discussing, considered 712 officers. It recommended the removal of 201, forty-nine by outright dismissal, and the rest to be retired or furloughed. The secretary of the navy and the president approved these judgments. Among those dismissed was Levy, who on September 13 received a “curt, bald statement on Navy Department stationary” notifying him that he had been judged incapable of further service and was therefore “stricken from the rolls” of the United States Navy.

Friends advised Levy to protest directly to Congress. Convinced that Levy had suffered an injustice, the prominent New York attorney Benjamin F. Butler, a former attorney general and secretary of war, became his counsel, joined by the distinguished Jewish attorney from Alabama, Philip Phillips. In a memorial to Congress in December 1855, Levy charged that his dismissal had nothing to do with competency: the navy objected to him because he had not risen through the ranks, had strongly advocated the abolition of flogging, and “last and chiefest of all, that he is by descent and religious faith, an Israelite, and one of the few of his race and persuasion in the American Navy.” Levy asked Congress to restore him to the rank of captain. Meanwhile, the affected officers, along with their friends, relatives, and political allies, had launched “a tenacious campaign to have the work of the board set aside.” The storm of protest had its effect and in 1857 Congress gave every dismissed officer the right to have his case reviewed before a court of inquiry. Levy’s convened at Washington in November 1857.

In seeking to justify Levy’s dismissal, the navy brought up the history of his past courts-martial and called a number of high-ranking officers to testify that he was temperamentally unsuited for his
position. In response Butler contended that since Levy had been promoted twice since the early courts-martial, they were irrelevant. And an impressive array of character witnesses testified on his behalf, including thirteen active duty officers and six others previously connected with Levy. Commodore Thomas Catesby Jones offered the opinion that Levy, like all high-minded public officials “faithfully discharging their duties,” had made enemies. “To the few clamorous opponents thus made,” he went on, “there may be added the Pharisees of the Navy... who profess to think that an Israelite is not to be tolerated in or out of the navy.” Former Secretary Bancroft testified that he had kept Levy out of the service not from a lack of personal respect, but because of “a strong prejudice in the service... which seemed to me, in a considerable part attributable to his being of the Jewish persuasion.” Despite his high regard for Levy, said Bancroft, he had been forced to take into account the need for harmony on naval vessels.

At the end of the hearing, Butler presented Levy’s eloquent (and lengthy—its reading lasted four days) final plea for reinstatement. Prepared in part by Butler, it reviewed Levy’s entire career and life as an officer. The issue, Levy insisted, came down to the question of “whether a Jew should be tolerated in the Navy.” He concluded:

This is the case before you... It is the case of every Israelite in the Union. Are all these to be proscribed?... And think not, if you once enter on this career that it can be limited to the Jew... What is my case today.... may tomorrow be that of the Roman Catholic of the Unitarian; the Presbyterian or the Methodist... There is but one safeguard... the wise the just, the impartial guarantee of the Constitution.

On December 24, 1857, the court unanimously declared Levy “morally, physically, professionally fit for naval service” and ordered him reinstated.

In 1858, on active service for the first time in fifteen years, Levy was given command of the Macedonian, with instructions to join the Mediterranean squadron. Five years earlier, at the age of sixty-one, Levy had married his eighteen-year-old niece, Virginia Lopez, of Kingston, Jamaica. (Such uncle-niece marriages were not prohibited in New York State until 1893.) Levy now received permission to have
his wife accompany him as far as Italy. When his ship reached
Palestine, Levy took on a wagonload of soil from Jerusalem to be
presented to his congregation, Shearith Israel in New York City, for use
in burial services. The British consul at Jerusalem, James Finn,
described Levy at this time:

This Captain Levy I had long wished to see, being the only
example I had ever heard, of a Jew commanding a ship-of-
war... He is a fine looking rosy old fellow... with strong
Jewish features which looked curious with cocked hat,
epaulettes and eagle buttons—with abundance of jewellery
[sic]... I find that the other officers dislike him. They represent
him as a coddled old woman.

Through his uncle, the influential Democratic Congressman
Henry M. Phillips of Philadelphia, Levy had applied for command of
a squadron. There was no excuse, he wrote, "for not giving me my
legitimate command, having passed through the fiery ordeal.”
Whether due to "Uncle Hen's” intervention, Levy in January 1860 was
made commander of the Mediterranean fleet. As was the custom in
the navy, Levy was henceforth known as commodore, although
officially that rank did not exist until 1862. On his return to this
country in July 1860, he retired from active service. When the Civil
War broke out, however, Levy, then seventy, again petitioned for a
command. Supposedly, he met personally with President Lincoln to
offer his “sword and fortune” to the Union but was told he was too old
for combat. Instead, he was called to Washington to serve on a board
of court-martial, an ironic assignment for one whose main experience
with naval justice was as a defendant. Here, Levy found time to
complete his Manual of Internal Rules and Regulations for Men-of-War,
which he published and distributed at his own expense. He died in
March 1862 in New York City at the age of seventy-two. He
bequeathed Monticello “to the people of the United States.” But a
nephew, Jefferson Madison Levy (later a congressman), successfully
contested the will and obtained ownership of Jefferson’s home.
During World War II the destroyer escort USS Levy was named in
Uriah P. Levy’s honor, and the first permanent Jewish chapel for
American armed forces, the Commodore Levy Chapel, was
established at the naval station in Norfolk, Virginia.
The changing interpretations of Levy provide a microcosm of how American Jewish history itself has evolved. Earlier generations, seeking to establish Jews' right to a secure place as American citizens, ascribed Levy's legal difficulties entirely to anti-Semitism. From the time he entered the navy, concluded Simon Wolf in 1897, Levy was hounded and harassed because he was a Jew, and James Morris Morgan, writing in the Century in 1899, characterized Levy as "an American forerunner of Dreyfus." More recent scholars have pointed to other sources of Levy's problems, including his abrasive personality. Abraham Kanoff, noting that Levy had risen to the rank of captain and that the Naval Board that dismissed him discharged two hundred other officers, termed the charge of anti-Semitism "questionable on the face of it." Jonathan Sarna concluded that the pugnacious Levy might have been found guilty in his several courts-martial "for reasons which had nothing whatsoever to do with religion." Most recently, Jacob R. Marcus, while noting the prevalence of "anti-Jewish" sentiment in the navy, pointed out that Levy "was consistently, however slowly, advanced despite all opposition."

In the years following the War of 1812, an increasing number of Jews joined the navy, intending to make careers in the service. Henry Etting, of the prominent Baltimore family, obtained a commission as a midshipman in January 1818 and advanced to the rank of purser in 1826. Etting was court-martialed in 1832 for wounding a fellow officer who had assaulted him and called him a "damned Jewish son of a bitch." "It is esteemed as the sacred right of all men," he told the court, "to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience." Etting was found guilty and sentenced to be reprimanded publically by the secretary of the navy. Other Jewish naval officers included Henry B. Nones, who entered the service in 1831, was appointed third assistant engineer in 1853, and resigned three years later, and Joseph Myers, who reached the rank of commander in 1841 and was retired in 1855.

A number of Jews also made careers in the regular army after the War of 1812. Most prominent was Alfred Mordecai, who in 1823 became the third Jewish graduate of West Point. Mordecai's father Jacob was a well-known Hebraic scholar who ran a boarding school for girls in Warrenton, North Carolina. Educated in his father's classrooms, Alfred had mastered geography, trigonometry, geometry, and Latin by the age of fifteen. "My intellectual development," he later noted, "was a good deal in advance of my years." Through the
influence of Senator Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina, Alfred in June 1819 secured an appointment at West Point. His fellow cadets found him, as one wrote, “frank, manly, and genial.” At the end of his second year, while still a cadet, he was appointed acting assistant professor of mathematics. During his last two years he was first in his class, and at the age of nineteen in 1823 was commissioned a second lieutenant. By virtue of graduating at the head of his class, Mordecai was able to choose his branch of the service and selected the Corps of Engineers.

At West Point Mordecai, like the other cadets, attended compulsory Presbyterian services on Sunday. He remained a Jew, although not a particularly observant one, and in 1836 married Sarah Ann Hays, a member of one of Philadelphia’s most prominent Jewish families. He subsequently noted that religion never came up in his association with other officers, except for philosophical discussions with Captain Ethan Allen Hitchcock. Like his Federalist father, Mordecai held conservative political views. While stationed in Washington he attended several sessions of the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-30 and expressed considerable displeasure at the broadening of suffrage rights. The convention, he wrote, had been unable to stem “the tide of democratic influence.” After attending with his brother George a lecture by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, Mordecai noted, “I have seldom seen George so much vexed and excited, and truly with good reason.”

Through writings, membership on commissions investigating military practices abroad, and scientific experiments, Mordecai made numerous contributions that were of vital importance to the development of the American army. At the request of Secretary of War Lewis Cass, Mordecai in 1833 compiled and published A Digest of the Laws Relating to the Military Establishment of the United States. As an officer in the Ordnance Department, to which branch he had been transferred and promoted to captain in 1832, Mordecai served as a member of the permanent ordnance board that periodically tested and evaluated new types of arms and set standards for American military weaponry.

In 1840, along with three other members of the board, Mordecai was dispatched to Europe by Secretary of War Joel Poinsett to report on the latest developments in European weapons manufacturing and to bring back various kinds of cannons for examination. Mordecai and
his companions received extensive exposure to European ordnance systems. They visited arsenals, foundries, iron mines, small-arms factories, and military posts in the British Isles, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Germany, Belgium, and France. Mordecai's travels introduced him to experiences that challenged his provincial attitudes. From Frankfurt he wrote to his wife about his encounter with a "curiosity in the way of a travelling companion . . . a colored woman, a pretty dark mulatto, travelling as a fine lady, on very familiar terms with her companion. [My] southern blood revolted a little," he continued, at hearing the woman address her companion as "my dear," and he was amazed to hear her speak German and French and discuss literature and the fine arts with "a learned Professor" sitting nearby. On their return the board members produced the army's first Ordnance Manual, mostly composed by Mordecai, and a few years later he wrote the board's report, a classic of its time, published as Artillery of the United States Land Service. Meanwhile, Mordecai conducted extensive experiments on the properties of gunpowder, which led to two reports, widely distributed throughout the army and within the scientific community, that paved the way for advances in the manufacture of explosives and the design of cannons, projectiles, and small arms. Translated into French and German, they became the basis of Mordecai's reputation in Europe. In 1853 he was elected to the American Philosophical Society, the nation's oldest scientific organization. The following year, in a period when promotions were "painfully slow," Mordecai rose to the rank of major.

In 1855 Mordecai once again was sent abroad to study changes in military practices, especially the impact of the Crimean War. He traveled with Major Richard Delafield and Captain George B. McClellan. Before departing Washington, the three officers attended a reception in their honor at the home of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, to which officers and ambassadors were invited. Davis's wife,
Varina, later recorded her impression of Mordecai: “Major Mordecai was a Hebrew, and one could readily understand, after seeing him, how the race had furnished the highest type of manhood; his mind was versatile, at times even playful, but his habits of thought were of the most serious problems... His moral nature was as well disciplined as his mental... He was an 'Israelite without guile.'”

The three officers reached St. Petersburg in June but were refused permission to travel to the front. They headed for Constantinople on their own, eventually making their way to Sebastopol, but too late to witness the final storming of the city. Mordecai was shocked by the conditions he encountered in Russia—"the cringing manners of the people; the debased and abject look of the crowds of poor (or rich) Jews." On their way home the Americans inspected the fortifications and military facilities in several European countries, taking careful notes on the latest improvements. They were particularly impressed by the “Napoleon,” a bronze, twelve-pound gun-howitzer, and urged its adoption by the American army. The Napoleon proved to be the most widely used (by both sides) and efficient artillery weapon of the Civil War. Mordecai’s report, published as a congressional document in 1860, also emphasized European developments in rifled and breech-loading guns. Along with the reports of his two colleagues, it was a “landmark in the new American military literature.”

In 1857 Mordecai, now a major, was placed in command of the country’s establishment manufacturing military weapons, the Watervliet Arsenal. And, through the influence of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis and President Franklin Pierce, he secured a cadetship at West Point for his son Alfred. Although Mordecai had “no wish to see him in the Army,” he felt his son could only obtain a proper education at the military academy.

Mordecai attended his last meeting of the ordnance board on February 4, 1861. Stanley L. Falk summarizes his contribution: “The system of artillery that he and his colleagues had developed... was, with a few additions and modifications, the system with which the Civil War was fought.” But Mordecai, as we shall see, resigned from the army rather than serve with either of the combatants.

The only other Jew to graduate from West Point before the Civil War was Abraham Charles Myers. A native of Georgetown, South Carolina, he came from a rabbinical family, his grandfather having been the first hazan of Congregation Temple Beth Elohim in
Charleston. In April 1826 Myers's father, a prominent Georgetown lawyer, received word from his congressman that his son would soon receive a cadetship at West Point. But Myers never received the official warrant of appointment, which instead went to the son of a local planter with more political influence. Despite a promise to appoint him the following year, Myers was passed over again. Only after his father wrote to Secretary of War James Barbour, complaining that Myers stood "upon a different footing from any other candidate" and appealing to the government "to measure out to my son that justice which belongs to the humblest citizen," did Abraham C. Myers finally receive his appointment. On July 1, 1828, he passed his examinations and was admitted as a cadet.

Unlike Mordecai, Myers was not an outstanding student at West Point. He was forced to repeat the plebe year after failing his examinations, and because he graduated in 1833 so low in his class, he was assigned to the infantry rather than the more prestigious engineers, artillery, or cavalry. Myers served against the Seminoles in the Florida campaigns of 1836–38 and again in 1841–42, after being promoted to captain in the Quartermaster Corps. (One of the posts at which he served, Fort Harbie, was subsequently renamed in his honor and became the major Florida city of Fort Myers.) Assigned to General Zachary Taylor's command in Texas, he moved with American forces into Mexico in 1846 and served as a division quartermaster under Taylor before being transferred to General Winfield Scott's command for the march on the Mexican capital.

From Puebla, midway between Vera Cruz and Mexico City, Myers described to his mother his impressions of a Mexican religious festival:

I have attended the Cathedral on their greatest Festa day, called the Fête de Dieu, the day of God. The ceremonies were not imposing so far as filling the soul with earnest and affecting devotion, but was rather a gorgeous pageant accompanied by sweet and rich music, like that of the Opera. ...There is one thing that cannot fail to impress you in a Catholic Church, it is the equality with which all worship the Diety. There are no pews or seats that distinguish the high from the low—all stand or kneel, after their form of worship, in a promiscuous crowd.

Myers performed exceptionally in the Mexican War. In the
“unlikely capacity” of a division supply officer, he had the distinction of receiving two brevet promotions—major and lieutenant colonel—for “acts of gallantry” at Palo Alto, Resca de la Palma, and Churubusco. General Taylor was so impressed with his performance that he put Myers in charge of quartermaster operations for the entire American army. After the war, Myers was stationed in various posts in the South, filling a number of important administrative positions in the quartermaster department. He married Marion Twiggs, the daughter of General David Emanuel Twiggs, a prominent figure in the Mexican War. At the beginning of 1861 Myers was appointed chief quartermaster of the Southern Department, with headquarters at New Orleans. But he shortly resigned from the army to join the Confederacy.

After Myers, no Jew graduated from West Point until the beginning of the Civil War. Henry Moses Judah, class of 1844, is sometimes referred to as a Jewish graduate, but in fact he was the son of a Christian minister. Levi J. Myers of Savannah was admitted in July 1840 but resigned six months later. James W. DeLyon, from a prominent Georgia Jewish family, was admitted in 1844 but was discharged in 1848 for deficiency in engineering. Six years later, Isaac Hyams of New Orleans entered West Point but resigned in the fall of 1856. Several Jews, however, did serve in the regular army’s Medical Department. Dr. Jonathan Horwitz, a Dutch-born Jew who received a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania, became assistant director of the army’s Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Dr. Philip Minis of Georgia was appointed an assistant surgeon in the U.S. Army in 1826 and promoted to surgeon with the rank of major in 1836. He resigned one year later. Another Jew who rose to the ranks of surgeon and major was Dr. David Camden De Leon, a South Carolinian who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania’s Medical School and entered the army in 1838. Assigned to duty in Florida, he served throughout the Seminole War, and in Mexico he is reputed to have led charges at Chapultepec and Molino del Rey, winning the sobriquet “The Fighting Doctor.” After the Mexican War he was stationed for seven years at outposts on the western frontier. In 1860, while visiting his brother Edwin, the United States consul general in Egypt, De Leon paid a call on the British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn, who had earlier seen Uriah P. Levy. “Thus,” Finn recorded in his diary, “I have seen in my time an officer of the Army, Navy and Civil Service of the
United States from the Jewish people.”

Another Jewish surgeon who served during the Mexican War and thereafter in the regular army was Israel Moses of New York, a grandson of the revolutionary era merchant and financier Isaac Moses. A graduate of Columbia College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, he volunteered for service in Mexico in 1846 and served with the Medical Department during the war. His subsequent service in the regular army covered a wide range of territory. In 1849 he took part in the famous March of the Mounted Riflemen from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Vancouver, the first military unit to travel the entire length of the Oregon Trail. Moses was one of only two physicians ministering to the medical needs of three full divisions. Thereafter, he served at numerous posts in the Oregon and Washington Territories, as well as in New Mexico and Texas.

Edward Coffman, a specialist in nineteenth-century military history, notes that officers’ correspondence occasionally contained “mild anti-Semitic comments (usually in the vein of using ‘Jew’ as a synonym for sharp trader).” Of Moses, one fellow officer, Lieutenant Theodore Talbot, wrote in 1851 that he had departed from Oregon to California “to make some speculations there.” “He is a Jew...” Talbot continued, “and retained at least, one of the grand characteristics of his nation, the desire to make money, an inclination which I must confess that I share with him but I do not know how to go about it.” Then, in a quite different vein, he continued, “We have had quite a treat lately in some new books which Dr. Moses received from New York.”

Early in 1855 Dr. Moses’ application for sick leave was granted and he left Texas for New York City. Shortly before his leave was to expire, he wrote to the surgeon general requesting an assignment elsewhere than on the southwestern frontier upon his return to active duty. Otherwise, he would have no choice but to leave the military service and return to civilian life and private practice. Four days later came the reply from Washington. The requirements of the service rendered it “imperative” that he return to Texas or go to New Mexico without
delay. Under these circumstances, continued the surgeon general, Moses' decision to leave the service was the proper course to pursue. "The demand for medical aid will be incessant on the extreme frontier, and those who remain must expect arduous field service. I think, therefore, your determination the best for yourself."

On May 31, 1855, after eight years of service, Moses resigned his commission. He took up a post as an attending surgeon to the recently opened Jews' Hospital (subsequently renamed Mt. Sinai), in whose founding he had played a key role while still in the army. His taste for military life had not ended, however, and the following year he joined William Walker's Nicaraguan army and served it as surgeon general for eight months. Following a year of study in Europe he resumed his post at Jews' Hospital.

Moses' connection with the army continued even after he returned to private practice. For a number of years, he had been dissatisfied with the "crude and uncomfortable" vehicles provided by the quartermaster department "for the transport of the sick and wounded." After studying European practices, he drew up plans for a vehicle specifically designed to serve as an ambulance and sent them to a carriage maker for construction. Convinced that his design would prove "more complete and useful than any hitherto constructed," he arranged for an official inspection of the completed vehicle by General Winfield Scott, general-in-chief of the army. Scott was so pleased, he recommended to the surgeon general that several of Moses' vehicles be purchased for use in Utah in the campaign against the Mormons. Apparently, however, no "Moses ambulances" were ever built. Moses subsequently reentered the army to serve the Union during the Civil War.

Since soldiering was viewed as a somewhat disreputable occupation, very few Jews entered the regular army as enlisted men. Quite a few, however, were members of the volunteer organizations in the individual states known as the "organized militia" or, more commonly, as the National Guard. In the 1850s, in line with the growth of "ethnic" National Guard units, Jews in New York City formed military companies of their own. Troop K, Empire Hussars, was composed entirely of Jews, as was the Young Men's Lafayette Association. A third unit, the Asmonean Guard, consisted of both Jewish and Christian employees of The Asmonean, one of the earliest Anglo-Jewish weekly newspapers. "Our employees," commented the
newspaper, "have been seized with this military mania, as they have enrolled themselves into an independent corps."

Occasionally, Jewish militiamen were obliged to take part in activities on the Sabbath. Their presence in the 1851 procession honoring Louis Kossuth, which took place on a Saturday, brought an angry rebuke from Samuel Isaacs, a hazan at a New York synagogue and subsequent owner of the Jewish Messenger. "What plea," he asked, "can such men offer for so grossly violating the sanctity of the holy Sabbath?" In response, E. I. Louis, commandant of a New York militia unit, pointed out that Jewish soldiers had marched on orders from military authorities. "Does the Reverend gentleman," he asked, "intend to counsel the inhabitants of New York of his persuasion to disobey the laws of the land?" And in December 1860 a candidate was rejected by the Cincinnati Zouave Guard because of his "Jewish parentage." The Israelite, which was published in the city, responded that the company ought to be disbanded, for it was "dangerous to arm such men," who "erect an inquisition right among us in defiance of all principles set forth in the declaration of independence and the constitution."

Jews also volunteered for service in specific military campaigns. Meyer M. Cohen, a Charleston schoolteacher and lawyer who had served in the state legislature, was among the volunteers who arrived in St. Augustine in January 1836 to fight in the Second Seminole War. Unlike most of the volunteers who soon returned to Charleston, Cohen chose to remain. He was commissioned a staff officer and participated as a lieutenant of the so-called "Left Wing" in General Scott's unsuccessful three-column movement against the Seminoles. After returning to Charleston in May, Cohen wrote a book about his experiences which was published in 1836 as Notices of Florida and the Campaigns. Another Jew who volunteered to fight the Seminoles was Leon Dyer, who had been Baltimore's acting mayor during the bread riots caused by an economic crisis in 1834. He later joined a New Orleans volunteer unit as a private and rose to the rank of regimental quartermaster and assistant commissary.

After serving in Florida, Dyer returned to New Orleans and joined another military unit, the Louisiana Grays, to fight for the independence of Texas. He was commissioned a major in the army of the Lone Star republic. Several other Jews also took part in the Texan war. Perhaps most prominent was Dr. Moses Albert Levy of
Richmond. Upon arriving in Texas, Levy was assigned to the post of surgeon-in-chief of the Texas Volunteer Army. When the Texans retook the Alamo at San Antonio in 1836, Dr. Levy played an active part in the engagement and was cited for bravery. To his sister in Richmond, Levy described his role:

I worked in the ditches, I dressed the sick and wounded, I cheered the men, I assisted the officers in the counsels, for five days and nights I did not sleep that many hours, running about without a coat or hat, dirty and ragged, but thank God escaped uninjured.

The largest and most controversial military undertaking between the Revolution and Civil War was the Mexican War of 1846–48. It aroused considerable public opposition, both as a war of aggression and on the grounds that it was intended to add slave states to the Union. Although no Jewish leaders raised their voices against the Mexican War and no Jewish community took a public stand in opposition, a smaller number of Jews volunteered for service than in the nation’s earlier wars. After General Scott occupied Mexico City in 1847, Rebecca Gratz reported that she and many of her friends in Philadelphia had refused to participate in the victory celebrations:

I feel so much more sorrow and disgust, than heroism in this war... When we were obliged to fight for our liberty—and rights—there was motive and glory in the strife. But to invade a country and slaughter its inhabitants, to fight for boundary or political supremacy, is altogether against my principles and feelings.

Nonetheless, some Jews did volunteer to serve in Mexico. One of them, Jacob Hirschorn, later recalled his experiences in graphic detail. Enlisting as an immigrant boy of sixteen in the First Regiment of New York Volunteers, Hirschorn sailed for Mexico late in 1846. He took part in the siege of Vera Cruz, where “the bombardment commenced by land and sea forces:

So awful a sight, but still grand, I have never seen, especially at night, when one could follow the bomb-shells with the eye, as they were fired from the huge mortars on the frigates and
line ships. The houses in the city began to burn, and after two days’ bombardment, the castle and city capitulated, the Mexican flag came down, and the ‘Stars and Stripes’ were hoisted.

After Vera Cruz, Hirschorn participated in all the battles that led to the capture of Mexico City and was one of the two hundred special volunteers who on September 13, 1847, stormed the heights of Chapultepec by clambering up scaling ladders. “The Mexicans,” he later recalled, “fought bravely; we forced them back however, and finally entered the city, opposed by the retreating enemy, who defended every foot of ground stubbornly.” For his service in Mexico, Hirschorn was promoted to corporal and awarded the Silver Star Medal. As has been noted, Uriah P. Levy, then on the inactive list, sought unsuccessfully to participate in the Mexican War. His younger brother, Jonas, however, did command a steamship, The American, which transported men and supplies to the war zone. After the capture of Vera Cruz, General Scott appointed Jonas Levy captain of the port.

In the aftermath of the Mexican War, the issue of slavery in the territories came to dominate American politics. By the mid-1850s civil war between pro- and antislavery settlers was raging on the plains of Kansas. Three Jewish volunteers, August Bondi, Jacob Benjamin, and Theodore Wiener, joined up with John Brown during his involvement in Bleeding Kansas. Bondi, at the age of fourteen, had taken part in the March 1848 revolution in Vienna. Six months later, fleeing the counter-revolution, the Bondi family migrated to the United States and settled in St. Louis. In 1855 Bondi decided to go to Kansas “to repel and punish the Border Ruffian invasion from Missouri.” The three Jewish volunteers fought in several engagements under Brown’s leadership. Only Wiener was present at Potawatomie, where Brown’s men killed five proslavery settlers. Wiener and Benjamin subsequently left Kansas, but Bondi remained for the rest of
his life. He became an active member of the Free State Party and in 1857 stumped the entire territory for the antislavery cause.

No Jews served with Brown in the assault on Harper's Ferry in October 1859. But Lieutenant Israel Green commanded the Marine contingent that stormed the engine house where Brown and his men had taken cover. In the affray, Green struck Brown with his light dress sword and as the old man fell, Green beat him on the head until Brown was unconscious. Brown subsequently complained that Green had delivered "several Saber cuts" to his head and "Bayonet stabs" to his body after his surrender, a charge that Green later denied, insisting he had exercised proper restraint.

Despite the failure of his attempt to spark a slave rebellion, John Brown's raid pushed the country even closer to civil war. When the war came, it would find American Jews, like the rest of the nation, divided.
October 28, 1965, will stand as a milestone moment in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations. On that date the Second Vatican Council, in response to a call first put forth by Pope John XXIII in 1960, issued a statement on the Jews, Nostra Aetate. This document provided a positive assessment of the role played by the Jewish people throughout history and sought to repudiate anti-Semitism. In many Jewish circles Nostra Aetate was received with enthusiastic, albeit cautious, optimism. After all, the spirit of openness found in its pages contained a promise of hope. Its proponents heralded it as marking the advent of a new era in which almost two millennia of an often-tragic history between Jews and Christians might be coming to an end. The document chartered new directions for Catholic-Jewish relations throughout the world, and the spirit of religious ecumenicism and tolerance contained in its pages opened the floodgates for Jewish-Catholic dialogue and debate.

The Orthodox Jewish world was not impervious to these developments. Indeed, foremost among those who paid careful attention to these trends was Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895–1986). Born to a prominent rabbinical family in Uzda, Belorussia, Rabbi Feinstein arrived at the United States in 1937. He served from 1937 until his death as head of Metivta Tiferet Jerusalem in New York, and his multivolumed collection of responsa, published under the title Iggerot Moshe, gained him worldwide recognition as a decisor (posek) and interpreter of Jewish law. In the United States no Orthodox posek was more authoritative than Rabbi Feinstein was during his lifetime. A leader of what is commonly labeled “sectarian” or “traditionalist” Orthodox Judaism, his was a brand of Orthodox Judaism that has been described as “committed to resistance... to the surrounding
Feinstein served as president of the Agudat HaRabonim (Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada), an organization first established in 1902 by sixty Yiddish-speaking Orthodox rabbis. This group, in the words of Jeffrey Gurock, was from the outset "strident" in its "nonrecognition of the Americanized Orthodox rabbinate." Rabbi Feinstein also came to occupy the post of chairman of the American branch of Mo'etzet Gedolei ha-Torah (Council of Torah Sages) of the sectarian Orthodox Agudat Israel, a European-born organization that was initially planted in the United States in 1938. This group, to cite Gurock once more, was critical of what it regarded as "the old-time American rabbis' non-adherence to uncompromising principles." Rabbi Feinstein gave expression to these principles in 1956 when he, with a number of other authorities in the world of the American yeshivot, issued a joint herem (ban). This ban stated that Orthodox rabbis were "forbidden by the law of our sacred Torah" to be members of organizations such as the Synagogue Council of America or local boards of rabbis where these Orthodox men would cooperate "with their Reform and Conservative counterparts." In view of all this, it is hardly surprising that the ecumenical developments surrounding Vatican II concerned him. Indeed, his concern was such that he issued two responsa in 1967 on the issue of interreligious Jewish-Christian dialogue that mirrored the attitude he had adopted a decade earlier regarding intrareligious discussions. They are presented here in English translation and reflect a consistent sectarian stance on his part.

The first responsum, dated 19 Adar I, 5727 (March 1, 1967), was addressed to Rabbi Bernard Lander, then a young Orthodox rabbi, today president of Touro College, who was scheduled to attend a Protestant-Catholic-Jewish dialogue four days later. The rabbi had apparently promised to attend this meeting and expressed concern over his obligation to attend in light of this promise. He wanted to know from Rabbi Feinstein whether such attendance was permissible from the standpoint of Jewish law. The alarm Rabbi Feinstein felt over such matters is palpable in this document and his refusal to sanction Jewish attendance at such meetings was absolute.

Clearly agitated by the issue, Rabbi Feinstein wrote less than three weeks later to Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (1903–1993), expressing his uncompromising determination to prohibit such dialogue. In writing
to R. Soloveitchik on 9 Adar II, 5727 (March 21, 1967), R. Feinstein was not only addressing a man who was his relative, he was communicating with the man who was the foremost leader of modern Orthodox Judaism in America. R. Soloveitchik himself stemmed from the same sectarian Orthodox Jewish world that had spawned R. Feinstein. Indeed, his family was famed in his native Lithuania for its genius in the study of Talmud, and R. Soloveitchik brought that tradition with him to America. In 1941 he became Rosh Yeshiva at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) of Yeshiva University, succeeding his father, Moses, in that post. His presence linked RIETS to the realm of the Lithuanian yeshiva, and his ascribed and earned status in the Orthodox world can hardly be exaggerated. However, despite his ties to the world of sectarian Orthodoxy, R. Soloveitchik also affirmed the worth of secular culture. He received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Berlin for a dissertation on the work of Hermann Cohen, and he championed the universe of "modern" Orthodox Judaism. This universe, in contrast to the realm of sectarian Orthodox Judaism, "explicitly advocates accommodation to the surrounding culture."  

Rabbi Soloveitchik had already publicly expressed his views on the issue of ecumenical dialogue with Christians three years before R. Feinstein approached him on this matter. As Aaron Rakkefet-Rothkoff explains:

With the advent of the ecumenical thrust of the Catholic Church in the 1960s, the Rav was consulted regarding Orthodox participation in the dialogue initiated by the Vatican with Jewish leaders. Rabbi Soloveitchik opposed many aspects of this dialogue. He held that there could be no discussion concerning the uniqueness of the respective religious communities. Each, he held, was an individual entity which could not be merged or equated with the other, since
each was committed to a different faith. The Rav presented a paper entitled "Confrontation" on this topic at the 1964 midwinter conference of the Rabbinical Council.11

Rabbi Soloveitchik published this paper in expanded form later that year in Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought, under the same title as his address, "Confrontation."12 While Rakkefet-Rothkoff is certainly correct in asserting that R. Soloveitchik opposed dimensions of the dialogue, an examination of the Soloveitchik essay indicates that there were also elements in the Jewish-Christian dialogue that R. Soloveitchik strongly endorsed. At the outset, the rabbi maintained that there was value in there being formal relations between Jews and non-Jews. In addition, he viewed Christianity as more than a source of hatred toward Jews, and he recognized that the modern world had witnessed significant transformations in the attitudes Gentiles adopted toward Jews. This meant that there were areas in which Jewish-Christian cooperation was surely desirable. His open yet cautionary attitude is best captured in the following statement:

We cooperate with the members of other faith communities in all fields of constructive human endeavor, but, simultaneously with our integration into the general social framework, we engage in a movement of recoil and retrace our steps. In a word, we belong to the human society and, at the same time, we feel as strangers and outsiders.13

As spiritual head of the modern Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), R. Soloveitchik's stance led the RCA to adopt a policy statement on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue at its 1964 convention. As a policy statement of the rabbi's opinion on the subject, the resolution is worth citing in full precisely because its tone, as well as parts of its nuanced content, stand in such sharp contrast to the position put forth by R. Feinstein, a position contained in the translation below. The statement reads:

We are pleased to note that in recent years there has evolved in our country as well as throughout the world a desire to seek better understanding and a mutual respect among the world's
major faiths. The current threat of secularism and materialism and the modern atheistic negation of religion and religious values makes even more imperative a harmonious relationship among the faiths. This relationship, however, can only be of value if it will not be in conflict with the uniqueness of each religious community, since each religious community is an individual entity which cannot be merged or equated with a community which is committed to a different faith. Each religious community is endowed with intrinsic dignity and metaphysical worth. Its historical experience, its present dynamics, its hopes and aspirations for the future can only be interpreted in terms of full spiritual independence of and freedom from any relatedness to another faith community. Any suggestion that the historical and meta-historical worth of a faith community be viewed against the backdrop of another faith, and the mere hint that a revision of basic historic attitudes is anticipated, are incongruous with the fundamentals of religious liberty and freedom of conscience and can only breed discord and suspicion. Such an approach is unacceptable to any self-respecting faith community that is proud of its past, vibrant and active in the present and determined to live on in the future and serve God in its own individual way. Only full appreciation on the part of all of the singular role, inherent worth, and basic prerogatives of each community will help promote the spirit of cooperation among the faiths.  

In practical terms, this meant that R. Soloveitchik and members of the RCA endorsed Jewish-Christian dialogue on social and political issues of general human concern. At the same time, they were opposed to such dialogue on matters of faith. Each religious community is singular and its theological postures are axiological. They cannot be the subjects of joint discussion. Of course, precisely how this line can be drawn in praxis is unclear. After all, the social concerns and political commitments that religious persons adopt are presumably extensions of the faith affirmations they possess. Nevertheless, this was the policy position R. Soloveitchik and his followers advanced and it has informed and guided the stance which numerous Orthodox rabbis and Jewish laypeople have taken toward
American Jewish Archives Journal

Jewish-Christian dialogue for over three decades.\textsuperscript{15}

In looking at the Feinstein letter to R. Soloveitchik on the topic, no element of Jewish-Christian dialogue is endorsed. R. Feinstein, in contrast to R. Soloveitchik, expressed the view that ecumenicism and the Jewish-Christian dialogue such ecumenicism fostered were nothing more than a thinly veiled plot designed by the Catholic church to convince Jews to abandon their faith and convert to Christianity. Only two types of Jews would participate in such efforts. The first were individuals like Reform and Conservative rabbis, people who advocated positions that could only lead to the assimilation of the Jewish people. The second were well-intentioned yet naive people like the young Orthodox rabbi who had approached him earlier on this matter. Their participation in such dialogue could lead to no positive end. Rabbi Feinstein was particularly concerned that this latter group could inadvertently create an atmosphere that would allow the church to entice Jews into abandoning their faith. However pure their motives, these Jewish leaders would be responsible for the apostasy of these Jews and Jewish law would therefore hold them culpable. It was this group he particularly sought to address, and R. Feinstein saw R. Soloveitchik as his natural confederate in this matter, as the influential authority the two men could exercise together in the Orthodox world was considerable.

In reading the Feinstein responsa, it seems clear that Rabbi Feinstein viewed the relationship between Jews and Christians as unaltered by modern developments such as Vatican II. From his perspective, only isolation from Christians and their representatives could ensure the survival of Jews as a minority community. He could perceive no motive for joint religious dialogue other than conversion. Furthermore, his responsa—inasmuch as they advanced a completely negative position regarding such dialogue—implicitly reveal that he had theological-legal grounds for rejecting such discussions, for R. Feinstein clearly maintained a classical Jewish posture that negatively viewed Christianity as a form of idolatry.

According to Jewish law as recorded in Sanhedrin 56a, God enjoys a universal relationship with all humanity. This relationship, known in Jewish tradition as the Noahide Covenant, caused the rabbis to assert that God issued seven commandments through Noah to all humankind. Among these seven commandments is one that prohibits idolatry.
A Jewish Legal Authority Addresses Jewish-Christian Dialogue

The relevance of this for understanding the positions of Rabbi Feinstein and Rabbi Soloveitchik on the question of Jewish-Christian dialogue is vital. This passage led rabbinic authorities to ask whether Christian belief in God violated the Noahide stricture against idolatry. If so, then relations with Christians had to be circumscribed not only because Jews should distance themselves from such false beliefs, but also because interactions with Christians might lead Christians to swear by an "idolatrous deity," an act condemned as sinful by the Talmud in Sanhedrin 63b. Indeed, in such instances the Jew would be held culpable for this transgression by Jewish law, for the Jew would be the proximate cause for the Christian having committed this sinful act.

Of course, Christians insisted that their doctrines regarding God adhered to monotheistic standards. However, a number of Talmudic sages disagreed, and they explicitly condemned early Christian expressions concerning the doctrines of Trinity and the incarnate man-God, Jesus, as untrue and in opposition to genuine monotheism. Most importantly, these attitudes caused no less an authority than Moses Maimonides to affirm that these doctrinal differences were of such import that Christians could be assigned to the Talmudic category of "'ovei kochavim u'mazalot—worshippers of idols." These legal sources reflect the doctrinal emphases that have classically distinguished Jewish from Christian faith and possess normative implications that limit Jewish-Christian interactions on religious grounds. Rabbi Feinstein obviously stood upon these legal sources in issuing his views. He not only feared that such discussions would lead to Jewish apostasy, he also never modified his definition of Christianity here as idolatry.

However, other voices in Jewish tradition took a different stance on these matters. They would not consign Christianity to the category of idolatry, nor, by extension, would they accept a definition of Christians as idol worshipers. In a comment on Sanhedrin 63b, Rabbi Isaac of late—twelfth-century France, the nephew of Rabbenu Tam, spoke of Christians and Christianity in the following terms:

... Although they [Christians] mention the name of Heaven, meaning thereby Jesus of Nazareth, they do not at all events mention a strange deity, and moreover, they mean thereby the Maker of Heaven and Earth too; and despite the fact that they
associate the name of Heaven with an alien deity, we do not find that it is forbidden to cause Gentiles to make such an association,... since such an association (Shituf) is not forbidden to the sons of Noah.19

In taking this stance, Rabbi Isaac offered a distinction that was unknown in Talmudic Judaism: that while Trinitarianism constituted idolatry for Jews, it did not for Christians. Indeed, the historian Jacob Katz has characterized its significance in the following way. Katz writes, “The assertion that the Gentiles are not bound to uphold the strict unity of the Godhead opens up the possibility of condoning Christian adherence to the doctrine of the Trinity so far as the Gentiles, though not the Jews, are concerned.”20 Katz further notes that this view was taken up and expanded upon by Rabbi Menachem Ha-Me’iri of Provence who, writing in the early 1300s, stated that Christians “recognize the Godhead” and “believe in God’s existence, His unity and power, although they misconceive some points according to our belief.” In fact, Ha-Me’iri explicitly refused to place contemporaneous Christians in the Talmudic category of “idol-worshipers,” declaring, “Now idolatry has disappeared from most places.”21 Katz, commenting upon these writings of Ha-Me’iri, noted “that the exclusion of Christians... from the category of the idolatrous—an exclusion that had been suggested purely casuistically by earlier halakhists—was to be acknowledged as a firm and comprehensive principle.”22

The trajectory that marked these rulings came to dominate among later generations of Jewish legal writers. The eighteenth-century Rabbi Yehuda Ashkenazi, writing on the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 151:2, in his authoritative Ba’er Heitev, echoed both Rabbi Isaac and Ha-Me’iri and granted their position normative Jewish legal status. His commentary there on Christians and their faith states, “In our era, ... when the gentiles in whose midst we dwell ... [speak of God], their intention is directed towards the One Who made Heaven and Earth, albeit that they associate another personality with God. However, this does not constitute a violation of Leviticus 19:14, ‘You shall not place a stumbling block before the blind,’ for non-Jews are not warned against such association (Shituf).”

R. Soloveitchik obviously stood upon this latter position in Jewish law. Had he not, he would simply have been compelled, as would
have R. Feinstein, to consign contemporary Christians to the Talmudic category of "'oodei 'avodah zarah"—idol-worshipers," in which case all dialogue with them would have been forbidden. The fact that R. Soloveitchik did not prohibit but, in fact, allowed for Jewish-Christian dialogue on matters of common human concern indicates that he felt that Christian faith was an acceptable form of monotheism for Gentiles. It also reflects his conviction that Christians, not just Jews, were capable of performing beneficent acts on account of their religious beliefs that would contribute to the repair of the world and that their sole motive for such dialogue was not conversion.

As a result, R. Soloveitchik did not respond to this overture that R. Feinstein made to him. He would not condemn Jewish-Christian dialogue in the harsh and overarching terms that R. Feinstein did. Nor would he reverse the position he expressed on this matter in "Confrontation." There is no indication that R. Soloveitchik signed the declaration that R. Feinstein appended to this letter, nor is there any record that R. Soloveitchik offered an alternative formulation. Had he agreed to do either of these two things, then a document condemning dialogue of all types between Jews and Christians would have been issued by the two foremost leaders of late—twentieth-century American Jewish Orthodoxy. The Feinstein documents, considered in concert with the position put forth by R. Soloveitchik and the RCA, reflect the diverse sensibilities and differences in policy that emerged among the two camps of American Orthodoxy on this issue at that time. They reflect the commitments and principles that informed and guided each of these men. R. Feinstein did not hesitate to publish these documents as expressions of his views on the matter, nor did R. Soloveitchik—in view of his own writings on this issue—feel constrained to respond in any way.

These responsa are therefore significant sources for understanding the diversity that then marked Orthodox Judaism in the United States and for illuminating the ethos that then separated the ethos of sectarian Orthodox Judaism from the greater openness which characterized the more modernist camp. Those differences remain current. These documents thus not only shed historical light on Orthodox Judaism in America, they remain important sources for comprehending the diverse precincts in American Orthodoxy today.

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121
I (19 Adar I, 5727 – March 1, 1967)

In regard to the matter wherein you promised to attend a gathering on 23 Adar I, 5727 (March 5, 1967) where Catholics and Protestants will assemble together with Jews who are members of the Synagogue Council of America as well as rabbinical colleagues from the Rabbinical Council of America. Even though what you will discuss there will be nontheological in nature, it is clear and simple that such participation constitutes a grave violation of the prohibition against appurtenances to idolatry. For a plague has now broken out in many locales on account of the initiative of the new pope, whose only intent is to cause all the Jews to abandon their pure and holy faith so that they will accept Christianity. Indeed, it is much more convenient to convert them in this manner than to employ the methods of hatred and murder that popes prior to him utilized. Consequently, all contact and discussion with them, even on worldly matters, is forbidden, for the act of “drawing near” is in and of itself forbidden, as it falls under the category of the grave prohibition against “rapprochement with idolatry—hitkarvut ‘im ‘avodah zarah.”

And one should also consider this [drawing near] as falling under the category of prohibition against the “the one who entices (Ha-meisit) and the one who leads astray (Ha-madiah).” For even though you and the other Orthodox rabbis (rabbanim) who will go there will surely be cautious about what you say, and will also not behave obsequiously toward the priests and their faith, as is the wont of the Reform and Conservative rabbis (rabbis) who by definition fall under the category of “those who entice and lead astray,” nevertheless, many
people will learn from your example and they will attend the sermons of missionaries and the like. Similarly, you should not even send a letter there expressing what you might be prepared to discuss, for all contact with them assists them in their most evil plot.

Similarly, it is forbidden to participate in any way in meetings like the ones I heard that they propose to hold in Boston and Rome. Anyone who participates with them, whoever they may be, will be considered among "those who entice and lead the community of Israel (klal yisrael) astray." Catholic missionaries have labored for years to convert the Jews. Nevertheless, they succeeded only in rare instances. God forbid that it would be possible that many more Jews would convert to Christianity on account of such joint ventures and because of rabbis like these, rabbis who lack good sense and who desire to engage in such joint meetings with them. And one cannot put forward a claim on behalf of the "one who entices" that this was not his intent, for their souls will be culpable, God forbid, in this world and in the world to come.

You should pay no attention to the fact that you will not have fulfilled your promise to go there and speak. On the contrary, perhaps through your decision not to attend on account of the prohibition, others too will not go. In this way, you will be among those who gain merit for the public.

II (Addressed to R. Joseph Soloveitchik on 9 Adar II, 5727 – March 21, 1967)

I am writing because of my concern over those young rabbis who are trapped in the snare laid by the Head of the Priests in the Vatican in the name of the Ecumenical Council, whose intent is to cause all the Jews to convert to their faith, God forbid. The cardinals and the bishops are commanded by him to establish connections between priests and rabbis through committees and conventions in every locale. This deed of Satan has succeeded, as a number of rabbis have engaged in such associations on the basis of a heter (permission) that allows for interreligious dialogue on social-political, albeit not religious matters. For, aside from the fact that nearly every matter is one of religion, as the priests have another way of viewing such matters, and aside from the fact their only intention is to exploit these meetings to arrive at matters of faith, it is obvious that there is an issur (prohibition) against any connections with them, even on ostensibly social-political matters, at all times during every era. It is all the more so now as regards this evil design that emanates from the Head of the
Priests. For we have seen that the newspapers take pride in the fact that this has already led to a leveling among faith and opinions, to joint worship and the like. I was recently asked by one of the young rabbis being sent by the RCA to speak at some type of joint meeting in New York on 23 Adar I between priests and l'havdil,²⁸ rabbis if it was permissible (mutar) to go there, since they will not discuss matters of faith.²⁹ I told him it was forbidden, as the grave prohibited category (issur hamur) of "meisit—one who entices" applies, even if this was not his intent. Thank God, he listened to me.

And now there will soon be another larger convention like this one in Boston. Therefore, to overturn the conspiracy of the evil ones and the success of the deeds of Satan, as well as to rescue the Jewish people from apostasy (sh’mad), God forbid, it is my desire that Your Excellency sign the document I have included in this letter. It declares that there is an absolute prohibition (issur gamur) against associating with priests in any way. One can neither speak with them on social-political matters (devarim b’alma), nor attend the convention that will be held in Boston. This applies to any such convention with them in any place, neither in this country, nor in Europe. One cannot in any way aid the conspiracy that the Head of the Priests has concocted through his ecumenicism. And I hope that the legal ruling issued by both of us will prevent any rabbi from joining in this, and the conspiracy that the wicked ones have hatched with the ecumenical policy they pursue will thus be thwarted.

Or perhaps Your Excellency wants to write a document himself. If so, please send me a copy of your formulation. And I know of the trouble Your Excellency is experiencing during these days, May God have mercy.³⁰ But it is for the honor of God to stand in this great breach. Therefore, I am certain you will repress your distress and sorrow and immediately sign the document, stating that it is prohibited to attend such gatherings, and send it back to me.

**Formula of the Prohibition**

Concerning the matter of ecumenicism that has been spread through the conspiracy concocted by the leaders of the Christian faith, whose only intent is to cause Jews to apostasize, God forbid. This act of Satan has succeeded in enticing a number of rabbis to join with priests in joint fellowship on permanent committees established in every locale, as well as in conventions held here in this country and in Europe. Behold, we declare that there is an absolute and clear
prohibition against joint meetings of rabbis and priests. One should not participate in the convention to be held in Boston, nor anywhere, either in this country or any countries. Just as it is forbidden to dialogue on matters of faith and religion, so there should be no joint discussion on matters of social-political concern and there should be no excuses or rationalizations offered [by any rabbis for participating]. Indeed, it is prohibited to aid the project of ecumenicism in any manner, as the participants in such conversation fall under the issur (prohibited category) of "one who entices—meisit," even though those who participate in such joint Jewish-Christian endeavors have no intention at all of engaging in this. On account of this, we have come to sign this document so as to proclaim the issur (prohibition) against this to all rabbis who preserve the religion of our holy Torah, and we stand up against the breach on this day of the Fast of Esther, 5727.

NOTES:
1. For a brief biography of Rabbi Feinstein, see Rod Glogower, "Feinstein, Moshe," in The Encyclopedia of Religion.
5. This description of Agudat HaRabonim is taken from Jeffrey S. Gurock, American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1996), 7.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 56.
8. Rabbi Feinstein’s grandfather, Rabbi Yehiel Yitzhak Davidovich of Karelitz, was
the great-grandfather of Rabbi Soloveitchik. R. Davidovich's daughter Faya Gitel was
the mother of R. Feinstein, while her sister Guta Chisa was the mother of Rabbi
Soloveitchik's mother, Pesia. Pesia, the first cousin of R. Feinstein, married R. Moses
Soloveitchik, and that union produced Joseph Baer. For the family tree, see Aaron
New Jersey: Ktav, 1999), 41.

9. For a fine description and analysis of the preeminent role Rabbi Soloveitchik
played in Orthodox communal life at this time, see Charles Liebman, "Orthodoxy in


15. Lawrence Kaplan, "Revisionism and the Rav: The Struggle for the Soul of
position well when Kaplan writes, "The Rav, with his delicate balance between
universalism and singularism, never opposed interfaith dialogue. What he opposed,
as he states in 'Confrontation', was interfaith *theological* dialogue. He always, however,
approved of interfaith dialogue about matters of general ethical and social concern."
Kaplan also points out that R. Soloveitchik issued a second statement on this matter
two years later that reaffirmed the policy position R. Soloveitchik had advanced
earlier in "Confrontation." This statement is published as an appendix to
"Confrontation" in N. Lamm and Walter Wurzburger, eds., *A Treasury of Tradition*

16. For example, see Exodus Rabbah 29:5. On this passage, see Samuel Tobias
Lachs, "Rabbi Abbahu and the Minim," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 60, no. 3 (January
1970): 200; and Lieve Tugels, "The Background of the Anti-Christian Polemics in

17. For example, see his *Commentary on the Mishna, Avodah Zarah* 1:3, and *Hilchot
Akum* 9:4. Of course, in fairness to the Rambam, his stance on this issue is complex.
For instance, in his legal rulings of Responsum #364, Maimonides writes that "it is
permissible to teach the commandments to Christians—*mutar l'amid ha-mitzvot
l'notzrim.*" This indicates that dialogue with them is permitted in certain instances and
implies that Christians do not fall under the category of "*ovdei avodah zarah*—idol-
worshippers." I, therefore, want to be clear that I am not offering a complete exposition
of Maimonides's perceptions concerning the legal status Christianity enjoys in Jewish
law. That would be far beyond the limits of this paper. Rather, it should be noted that
his stance on Christianity is not simple and cannot be summarized in only a few
sentences. At the same time there are sources that serve as warrants for the
contention that Christianity can be assigned to the category of "idol worship" in
Maimonidean jurisprudence, and the trajectory that marks these sources appears to
have informed R. Feinstein's views regarding Christianity. Indeed, I would unhappily
note that this is probably the majority position in *halakhic* jurisprudence.

18. This commentary is often wrongly attributed to Rabbenu Tam, Rabbi Jacob
Ben Meir Tam (1100–1171), a grandson of Rashi and a leading French tosafist (medieval rabbinic commentator on the Talmud) and twelfth-century scholar. However, in Shalom Albeck’s, “The Relationship of Rabbenu Tam to the Problems of His Era” (Hebrew), Tzioni 18 (1954): 109, he convincingly demonstrates that Rashi’s nephew, Rabbi Isaac, another tosafist, was the author of this commentary upon Sanhedrin 63b.

20. Ibid., 36.
21. Ibid., 121 and 136.
22. Ibid., 115. The underlining is mine. For an extensive recent discussion of Ha-Me’iri and medieval and modern scholarship on his position, see Israel Ta-Shema, Exegetical Literature on the Talmud in Europe and North Africa (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000), 167–70.
23. The precise Hebrew here is “divrei b’alma,” literally, “mere words.” In employing this phrase, Rabbi Feinstein is referring to a position undoubtedly put forth by his interlocutor. This position, commonly advanced in modern Orthodox circles, holds that interreligious dialogue between Jews and adherents of other faiths on nontheological matters is permissible. Hence, discussion on matters of common social and human import between Jews and Christians can be held, as such discussions reflect a common task advanced by both religions and do not touch upon the unique religious posture that informs and characterizes each community. The foremost advocate of this stance in the Orthodox world, as explained in the introduction to these translations, was Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik. For this reason, I have here elected to translate this phrase as “nontheological in nature.” Elsewhere, I have translated these words as “social-political matters.” Such translations capture the sense, if not the literal meaning, of these words.
24. Throughout history there have been Christian proponents of outreach to the Jews who felt that a kind missionary approach marked by love might well lead significant numbers of Jews to abandon Judaism and convert to Christianity. Perhaps the most prominent among them was Martin Luther who, in his 1523 pamphlet, “That Jesus Christ Was Born A Jew,” states, “I hope that if the Jews are treated kindly and are instructed kindly through the Bible, many of them will become real Christians…” Of course, when virtually no Jews responded to this approach, Luther’s fury against the Jews knew no bounds. In 1543 Luther, in his “Concerning The Jews And Their Lies,” queries, “What then shall we do with this damned, rejected race of Jews?” These documents are found in Jacob R. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World (New York: Atheneum, 1938), 165–69. Professor Marcus, in commenting upon these passages on page 165 of his introduction to these sources, observes, “In a work written as early as 1523… Luther was very sympathetic to the Jews because he hoped that he might induce them to Protestantism… Later in life Luther turned bitter against the Jews… the Jews did not flock to his new Christianity…”

In light of the suspicions R. Feinstein expressed concerning Catholic motives for Christian dialogue with Jews, it is fascinating to note an entry recorded by Theodor Herzl, The Diaries of Theodor Herzl (New York: Dial Press, 1956), 420–31, concerning audiences he held with Pope Pius X and Cardinal Merry del Val, the Vatican secretary of state, in January 1904. In these pages, Herzl states that he asked the Holy See for
assistance in creating a Jewish State. The Cardinal, according to Herzl, turned down the request. He also said, "So long as the Jews deny the divinity of Christ, we certainly cannot side with them... A Jew who accepts baptism out of conviction is for me the ideal person... In order that we should come out for the Jewish people in the way that you desire, they would first have to accept conversion." To this, Pope Pius X added, "If you come to Palestine and settle your people there, we will be ready with priests and churches to baptize all of you."

While there is no reason to believe that R. Feinstein had actually read either these statements or those of Martin Luther, the attitudes expressed by all these men are surely emblematic of positions long held by many Christian leaders regarding the Jews, and R. Feinstein clearly knew that. He also obviously regarded such postures as reflecting the true position the church adopted toward Jews on these matters. He disregarded the pronouncements of Vatican II that ran contrary to this position. Obviously, he could not conceive the modern Catholic position on ecumenicism that emanated from Vatican II as anything other than a ploy on the part of the church. The classical evangelical stance the church had adopted toward Jews was the only one R. Feinstein could imagine the church would ever take.

25. These Jewish legal categories stem from Deuteronomy 13. Verse 7 reads, "If your brother, your own mother's son or you, your son or daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your closest friend, entices you (y'si'tekha) in secret, saying, 'Come, let us worship other gods..." This is followed in verse 11 by the admonition, "You shall stone him so that he dies, for he sought to lead you away (l'hadihakha) from the Lord your God..." One should also consult verse 14 in the same chapter, where the warning concerning those who "have led the inhabitants of their city astray" is repeated. Hence, the terms "meisit," the one who entices, and "madiah," the one who leads astray, are the noun forms of the Hebrew that appears in verbal formulation in the biblical text. As the penalty of stoning that the biblical text prescribes for such people suggests, the Jews to whom these categories apply are guilty of a most severe infraction of Jewish law. R. Feinstein's application of these categories in his responsa indicates the gravity he attached to this issue.

26. Here, as in other legal writings of R. Feinstein, Orthodox rabbis are referred to by the Hebrew term "rabbanim," while, when speaking of Reform and Conservative rabbis, R. Feinstein simply transliterates the English term "rabbis" into Hebrew letters.

27. Ibid.

28. "L'havdil" is an idiom that can perhaps best be rendered as, "not to be mentioned in the same breath."

29. See the first responsa translated in this article.

30. R. Soloveitchik's wife, Dr. Tonya Lewitt Soloveitchik, was sick at this time and in fact died on the Fast of Esther, 5727 (1967), the date mentioned at the conclusion of the document R. Feinstein appended to the letter. For the date that Mrs. Soloveitchik died, see Rakkefet-Rothkoff, The Rav, 2:8. R. Feinstein was likely referring here to the anguish her illness undoubtedly caused R. Soloveitchik.
How have Jews fared in the twentieth century in the United States? What contributions have American Jews made to the larger society? And how have they worked out personal and professional issues as they interacted with and assimilated into the larger culture? Stephen J. Whitfield, professor of American Studies at Brandeis University, and Riv-Ellen Prell, professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, perceptively address these questions and a host of others in two new books that provide new perspectives on the American Jewish experience over the past one hundred years.

The authors approach this experience from different angles. Whitfield is most concerned with the dynamics of American Jewish culture and the contributions Jews have made. Prell is most interested in the stereotypes Jewish men and women held of one another and how these changed over time. Together, they address the larger question of how a small but articulate minority became a part of the larger culture while changing it in the process.

Whitfield argues in his rich and detailed account that Jews have had a profound impact on American culture in the twentieth century. In a variety of different areas, including theater, music, literature, and film, he observes that they made contributions far out of proportion to their numbers and left the culture more colorful and intense than it was before.

Culture is a complex phenomenon, and Whitfield cites
anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss’s comment that every culture is “the result of a mishmash.” (4) He questions at the start what works should be included in such a compendium: “Should American Jewish culture be allowed to include works that do not bear directly on the beliefs and experiences of the Jews as a people? Or is any intellectual or artistic activity that they have initiated in the United States, whether or not such work bears traces of Jewish content, a contribution to American Jewish culture?” (19) Both are important, he concludes, and proceeds to assess “whatever individuals of Jewish birth... have contributed to art and thought.” (20) Many such contributions were urban in character. And most, he notes, were related to the world of mass entertainment.

Whitfield’s book begins with two absorbing chapters on musical theater and music. Jews filled half the seats in Broadway theaters, he tells us, and Jewish songwriters and composers helped shape the productions that entranced crowds. He records one account of Cole Porter asking George Gershwin for the secret of his success and being told to “write Jewish.” (62)

Whitfield is at his best in analytic vignettes about such figures as Gershwin, composer of Rhapsody in Blue, which remains one of the most frequently performed piano concertos of the century. He describes how Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II embraced a transcontinental culture in Oklahoma! and recounts how Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein, and Stephen Sondheim collaborated on their popular retelling of the Romeo and Juliet tale in West Side Story.

The book is filled with engaging anecdotes about such figures as songwriter Irving Berlin. “It was singing in shul that gave me my musical background,” Berlin once observed. “It was in my blood.” (98) Whitfield describes how Berlin composed what he considered “the best song I ever wrote,” indeed, “the best song anybody ever wrote.” (96) It was, of course, “White Christmas” for the film Holiday Inn, sung by Bing Crosby and more than three hundred artists in other recorded versions.

In “Shoah,” Whitfield provides a powerful chapter on the growing awareness of American Jews, and American culture, of the Holocaust. He begins by noting sociologist Nathan Glazer’s astonishing observation in 1957 that the Holocaust registered a “remarkably slight” “impact on the inner life” of American Jewry and points out that in the fifteen years between 1950 and 1965, the Jewish Publication
Society published only one book on the Holocaust. (171) He then traces the story of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and notes how the first stage version tended to minimize the Jewish part in favor of a more universal interpretation of the experience, complete with a hopeful ending that highlighted Anne's courage and confidence in the future, despite her actual death in a Nazi camp.

Whitfield goes on to note the impact of the television miniseries *Holocaust*, Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize-winning comic book novel *Maus*, and finally Stephen Spielberg's brilliant Academy Award-winning film *Schindler's List*. These works helped Americans, and audiences around the world, confront the enormity of the barbarism that killed six million Jews.

As Whitfield draws toward the end of his account, he confronts the question of Jewish faith. "In the case of conflict with prevailing American norms of secular origin," he observes, "it is religion that is expected to compromise, or to adapt, or to surrender." (199) Sometimes, however, Jews resisted compromise. Whitfield records the stories of baseball players Hank Greenberg and Sandy Koufax, both of whom chose not to play in important games (in Koufax's case, the World Series) to observe Yom Kippur instead. In other circumstances, though, he notes the propensity to redefine holidays in contemporary terms, even to the extent of seeing how it might "be packaged as a Jewish counterpart to a Christian holiday." (200)

All this leads Whitfield to his final chapter. "Prospects," which suggests that "Only religion can form the inspirational core of a viable and meaningful Jewish culture." (224) In other words, the fate of Jewish culture "depends on faith." (224) After his lengthy and entertaining overview of different kinds of Jewish culture, Whitfield suggests that this culture cannot survive if Jewish religion disappears. Like other commentators who worry about assimilation and the disappearance of a strong sense of Jewish identity, he argues that this phenomenon threatens to undermine Jewish culture itself. Although the conclusion seems abrupt, and might have been foreshadowed in the statement of the argument earlier, it forces the reader to reflect on the stories that have come before with a sense of added concern.

Riv-Ellen Prell is less concerned with Jewish culture and more interested in Jewish identity. In her thoughtful and engaging book, she seeks to describe how Jews represented themselves in popular culture over the course of the twentieth century and to understand the
process of acculturation. Specifically, she seeks to understand both the external hostility they faced and the inner ambivalence they experienced as they struggled to survive and prosper in the larger society.

Prell begins her book by describing a workshop sponsored by the United Jewish Appeal in 1994 called "Jewish Men and Women: Can We Talk?" At the session, participants were asked to fill in the blanks verbally in the sentence "A Jewish man is. . . and a Jewish woman is..." (1) Jewish men and women then shouted out stereotypical descriptions of one another. Men declared that women were "calculating, narrow minded, spoiled, . . . challenging, . . . nagging, . . . demanding." Women declared that men were "egoentric, materialistic, . . . driven, spoiled, . . . looking for perfection, . . . and driven by power." (2) Such images, Prell suggests, are nothing new. They reflect "startling continuity" with similar stereotypes over the course of the century. (3)

Seeking to understand broader trends, as Jewish children moved beyond the bounds perceived by immigrant parents, Prell argues that "Children's loathing for their Jewish parents and Jewish women's and men's loathing for one another are some of the legacies of Americanization." (9) Jews sometimes internalized the feelings of other non-Jewish Americans who saw Jews as "marginal, obsessed with money, uncivil, and unworthy of citizenship" and applied them to one another, complicating the already difficult process of acculturation. (13) Prell's intriguing assessment is that "The tightly woven patterns linking class, gender, and ethnicity demonstrate that American Jews projected onto one another what frightened them most as they found their way into the Promised Land." (14)

Having established her focus, Prell looks at the "Ghetto Girls," Yiddish-speaking women from the East Side of Manhattan whose pictures often appeared in the socialist, working-class newspaper, the Jewish Daily Forward. The stereotype was of someone embodying not simply vulgarity but unregulated desire. Both middle-class Jews and non-Jewish progressive reformers (who were often anti-Semitic) looked down on such women.

Marriage, Prell observes, was important to these women and their male counterparts, for it contributed to a much-desired Americanization. Using fiction to support her historical arguments, Prell notes how author Anzia Yezierska captured this sense of longing
in her short stories for a marriage of one's own choice, rather than an arranged marriage. Intermarriage occurred but was not widespread. Jews wanted to marry Jews, yet the process of "New World marriage produced anxiety and uncertainty about whether it could deliver its promises of class mobility and Americanization." (77) Abraham Cahan's novel *The Rise of David Levinsky* captured best of all a man caught between two worlds as he managed to achieve worldly success but never found the love he craved.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Prell suggests, "the Young Jewish Woman in Search of Marriage" threatened Jewish men. Women hoped to get ahead through marrying well at the very time that men were struggling to succeed in America. And so, she concludes percutively, "These children of the immigrant Jewish working class fought one another on the battleground of middle-class hopes." (103) Most Jewish men who made it into the middle class did so by working, saving, and investing. Most women who managed to enter the middle class did so primarily as consumers.

Then, in Prell's chronology, World War II intervened and changed the nature of the debate. Between 1935 and 1945, American Jews were preoccupied with the horrifying events in Europe and with a corresponding anti-Semitism in the United States that limited mobility and undermined the effort to save victims of the Holocaust. In the 1940s, she declares, 15 to 24 percent of the overall American population considered Jews a "menace to America." (125)

Gender-rooted stereotypes returned in the 1950s, particularly in the guise of the Jewish Mother. She "pushed, wheedled, demanded, constrained, and was insatiable in her expectations and wants." (143) She also created in husbands and sons an overwhelming sense of guilt. Significantly, though, the stereotype was not solely confined to Jews. This was the time when author Philip Wylie, in his book *Generation of Vipers*, claimed that American mothers of all classes and religions had undermined national morale and weakened the moral fiber of the nation by their emasculating treatment of their sons.

Then, in the 1960s and 1970s in Prell's analysis, came the Jewish American Princess as a "ubiquitous stereotype of Jewish life." (178) The mirror image of the Jewish Mother, she too was insatiable in her demands while reluctant to do anything herself. In a highly entertaining but devastating chapter, Prell records some of the classic jokes, such as "What does a Jewish American Princess make for
Ironically, though, at the very time the stereotype came to the fore, American society was experiencing the challenges that destroyed the cultural consensus of the postwar years and contributed to the rise of feminism in the United States.

Finally, in a chapter titled "Talking Back through Counter-Representations," Prell addresses the last several decades of the twentieth century. In a fascinating section, she describes the sketches of Gilda Radner—and her Jewish American Princess character Rhonda Weiss—on television’s Saturday Night Live. Radner, Prell argues, created a character that no one hated.

Yet, Prell concludes, Jewish stereotypes still remain. Looking back at the entire century, sometimes reflecting on the experience of her own family, she notes the tensions and pressures that Jews still face, even after their achievement of social and economic gain. In her final paragraph she observes that “the astonishing persistence of Jewish gender stereotypes serves as a reminder that winning the fight to become Americans exacts a devastating price.” (245)

While Stephen Whitfield and Riv-Ellen Prell address the social and cultural patterns of twentieth-century American Jewish experience from different perspectives, both give us a vivid sense of the complicated issues of Jewish life. Whether dealing with the creative urge or the emotional imperative, Jews struggled with themselves and with the outside world to achieve the recognition and acceptance they craved. And though they often succeeded, whatever their quest, success came at a cost that sometimes left uncertain the future of Jewish culture and Jewish life.

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Goldman Sachs has been a first-tier Wall Street investment firm since the last decade of the nineteenth century. However, this powerful German Jewish brokerage house has received minimal attention from historians of finance. Lisa Endlich, a former vice president of and a foreign exchange trader for Goldman Sachs, has written the most comprehensive history of this major firm yet. In seven chronologically arranged chapters, Endlich presents a fascinating institutional account of this investment house and shows with great precision and thoroughness the many fields in which this firm excelled. Moreover, she effectively utilizes collective biography to describe and assess the achievements of Goldman's many and varied leaders in the world of finance. This study is based on important business records of this firm, other primary sources relating to the securities industry, and both oral histories and personal interviews. In this work, Endlich develops a cogent thesis: namely, that cooperation and teamwork have served as the basis of Goldman's business culture throughout its history and have contributed to its great success on Wall Street.

The primary reasons for the institutional success of Goldman Sachs through the years are impressively explained in the first chapter. The author claims that this firm has operated according to a simple horizontal management structure. Moreover, Goldman Sachs, for the most part, has been provided with capable leadership. Endlich also maintains that its leaders historically have emphasized the importance of long-term relationships with clients. She also believes that until recently becoming a public company, this firm operated quite well and profitably as a partnership that was cloaked in much secrecy.

The second chapter, which is titled "The Family Firm," traces the origins and development of Goldman Sachs as a private investment house between 1869 and 1976. Endlich identifies several major features that characterized this firm during these years. Marriage, a viable partnership structure, and cautious leadership enabled Goldman Sachs to develop into a prominent institution on Wall Street.
The author also presents vivid profiles of the firm's leaders during this era. A Philadelphia peddler and shopkeeper who came to America during the aftermath of the 1848 German revolutions, Marcus Goldman went to New York City in 1869 to open on Pine Street a firm that purchased and sold promissory notes. Endlich illustrates that Goldman's firm proved to be very lucrative. To increase and preserve his business, Goldman in 1882 formed a partnership with his son-in-law Sam Sachs; Goldman in the 1880s also brought into this partnership his son Henry and his son-in-law Ludwig Dreyfus.

After Goldman's retirement in the late 1890s, new leaders emerged at Goldman Sachs. Endlich offers an astute assessment of the firm under Henry Goldman and Sam Sachs. Under their direction, Goldman Sachs developed a huge underwriting business during the first two decades of the twentieth century; it earned great profits from the selling of railroad bonds and from the marketing of stock for Sears, Roebuck and Company, May department stores, and other retailers. Endlich especially makes a persuasive case for the leadership role of Sidney Weinberg. He was neither a Goldman nor a Sachs but served as an effective chairman of the firm's board between 1930 and 1969. Weinberg was a shrewd investment banker and became known for developing enduring and trustworthy client relationships with such firms as General Electric, Ford Motor, and Proctor & Gamble.

Endlich explains in the next four chapters how Goldman Sachs evolved into a "world-class player" between 1976 and 1994. Under the leadership of John Weinberg and John Whitehead, its management structure during the eighties improved; they, among other things, strengthened the committee operations of Goldman Sachs, insisting that department heads help in the formulation of policies through committee input. Through cooperative efforts especially on the committee level, the firm experienced dynamic expansion at this time: Goldman Sachs became a leader in the realm of mergers and acquisitions and was known for effectively utilizing a raid defense strategy to protect its clients from hostile buyers. As the guard began to change in this investment house, the talented and aggressive Bob Rubin and Steve Friedman were appointed in December 1991 as its co-chief executive officers; both men brought about positive change at Goldman Sachs. They moved this firm into the expanding businesses of principal investments and of proprietary trading. Endlich as well presents a convincing argument to demonstrate that Rubin and
Friedman were capable in managing risky situations. Both men well handled the Robert Maxwell fiasco and other unfortunate investment situations.

In the last chapter, Endlich discusses the problem between 1995 and 1999 of Goldman Sachs becoming a public company. She explains that as a result of declining profits in 1994 and 1995, Goldman Sachs, then under the leadership of Jon Corzine and Hank Paulson, was required to implement significant changes; both men between 1994 and 1996 succeeded in reducing costs in many of the firm's departments and developed effective systems to control investment risks. They also revamped the firm's executive committee and took action to transform Goldman Sachs into a limited liability partnership. Moreover, its partners in 1996 rejected the executive committee's proposal concerning the firm's going public; however, this proposal would be studied carefully during the next two years. Endlich correctly argues that mergers between several major Wall Street firms between 1995 and 1997 forced leaders at Goldman Sachs in 1998 to reconsider the issue of a public offering. After heated debate in the summer of that year, the majority of partners within the firm voted in favor of selling stock to the public. In 1999 Goldman Sachs ended its long legacy of being a private partnership and became a public corporation.

This fine study has much to recommend it. The book is gracefully written and carefully crafted; it is well organized and contains an extensive bibliography. Endlich's thesis concerning the firm's cooperative management culture is consistently developed throughout her book. The author as well explains the achievements and importance of the many eminent Jewish financiers who provided Goldman Sachs with leadership. However, the book falls short in several respects. A strong conclusion would have greatly enhanced this study. In that chapter, the author could have compared the accomplishments of leaders from Goldman Sachs with the contributions of leaders from rivaling Wall Street firms during the past one hundred thirty years. Furthermore, an appendix which listed the revenues of major departments at Goldman Sachs and those at other leading Wall Street investment firms would have been most helpful to readers. Nevertheless, these are minor criticisms about the best institutional history to be written about Goldman Sachs.

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Naomi W. Cohen has published numerous distinguished books on the American Jewish experience. Her latest volume, a welcome and thoroughly researched study of the preeminent Jewish banker Jacob H. Schiff, draws together threads from many of her previous volumes, which include well-regarded works on American Jewish responses to Zionism and efforts for religious equality with Christians, the German Jewish experience in the United States, the American Jewish Committee, and a biography of Schiff’s close friend Oscar S. Straus, the first American Jew to hold a cabinet position.

A new look at Schiff is decidedly overdue. Now—as Cohen reminds us—almost forgotten, even among American Jews, in his time he was the most eminent Jewish layman in the United States, from whom his coreligionists almost automatically expected leadership and assistance. A somewhat hagiographical family-sponsored Life and Letters, written by his close associate Cyrus Adler, appeared in 1930. He features prominently in assorted articles and books by Gary Dean Best, Zosa Szajkowski, and Cohen herself on American Jewish leaders and European issues, by Evyatar Friesel on his involvement with Zionism, by myself on Kuhn, Loeb and Company international activities, and by Stephen Birmingham on New York’s leading Jewish families. None of these works, however, gives more than a partial picture of Schiff. Cohen’s new volume, which does not claim to be a full biography, concentrates on Schiff’s role as a Jewish leader. Even so, she provides a useful summary of his life and business career which, given the (probably deliberate) weeding from Schiff’s and his partners’ papers of substantial materials relating to Kuhn, Loeb and Company’s business dealings, may well represent the fullest biographical treatment he is likely to receive.

Schiff’s position among American Jews derived in part—but only in part—from the wealth which he accrued from a successful career in business. Born at Frankfurt-am-Main in 1847, the son of a successful Jewish banking family with ties to the Rothschilds, at the age of seventeen Schiff immigrated to the United States. Apart from eighteen months or so in the early 1870s, when he briefly took a position with the Warburg banking firm in Hamburg, Schiff spent the rest of his life in the United States, quickly becoming an American
citizen. After marrying into the small but respected New York banking house, Kuhn, Loeb and Company in 1875, Schiff built it up into the country’s second most prominent investment bank, surpassed only by J. P. Morgan & Company. Schiff himself became one of New York’s leading financiers, respected both for his financial acumen and his somewhat rigid, even puritanical character. Kuhn, Loeb’s ability to utilize Schiff’s European connections to raise extensive funds overseas, and his close alliance with railroad tycoon W. H. Harriman, who rescued the Union Pacific and made it one of the country’s leading railway lines, were both important assets to the firm’s success.

A workaholic, Schiff effectively led a double life. From early in his career his enormous energies were directed not just to promoting his business, but to anything bearing upon the American and international Jewish communities. Schiff took seriously the strong Frankfurt Jewish tradition in which he had been educated, an outlook which mandated tithing oneself for charity and demanded that the wealthy undertake extensive philanthropic activities. His upbringing neatly accorded with the contemporaneous American “gospel of wealth,” which held that the rich had a charitable obligation to the society to which they belonged. From the 1880s until his death in 1920, Schiff’s presence and financial support was a virtual sine qua non for any American Jewish institution. Cohen provides a comprehensive survey of the vast range of Schiff’s activities, by no means all of which were narrowly Jewish; he was, for example, a generous backer of Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute and wrote to President Woodrow Wilson demanding the removal of the color bar in federal government appointments. His efforts to assist fellow Jews ranged from isolated acts of personal charity through long-term support for, and detailed involvement with, such institutions as the Montefiore Home for Incurables and the Henry Street Settlement in New York, to Schiff’s endeavors to pressure and even undermine the anti-Semitic tsarist Russian government by utilizing his firm’s financial might to deny it loans and by lobbying successive American presidential administrations to demand equal rights for Russian Jews and abrogate a longstanding Russian-American commercial treaty. Schiff was tireless in demanding equal treatment for American Jews and in combating anti-Semitism, be it in the law courts, the universities, or the allocation of government jobs.

Cohen delineates Schiff’s ambivalent attitude toward the
increasingly strong demands of American and international Zionists for a Jewish national home in Palestine and his gradual conversion to "cultural Zionism," the establishment of a center of consciously Jewish life. To some degree Schiff's acquiescence in this cause reflected his and other American Jewish leaders' realization that the popularity of Zionism among the increasingly numerous American Jewish masses was such that continuing opposition might cause their own rejection and the loss of authority. Another reason, however, was Schiff's own fear that Jews in the United States and other Western countries had become so fully integrated into their host societies that they were in danger of forgetting their own cultural and religious roots. Schiff himself consistently stressed his dual pride in being both an American and an observant Jew, but even within his own family his children and still more his grandchildren lacked his deep understanding and attachment to Jewish faith and ritual. In practice, the integration into American life which Schiff persistently sought for American Jews often led to a dilution of Judaism and ultimately to assimilation.

One theme of Cohen's study is the role of Schiff and his fellow Jewish leaders as "stewards," self-appointed, enlightened despots who attempted to set policy for the entire American Jewish community. A strong element of benevolent paternalism undoubtedly characterized Schiff's leadership, and in most cases the implicit reward for his substantial contributions of both time and money to some cause was his near automatic appointment to a prominent position therein. Cohen rightly points to the element of social control in the efforts of American Jewish leaders of predominantly German origin to "Americanize" the two million Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia who poured into the United States between 1880 and 1914. Alarmed by the clustering of Jewish immigration in ghettos in New York and other cities of the United States East Coast, Schiff himself attempted, with limited success, to disperse Jewish settlement into the South and West. Even so, Schiff's personal qualities, especially his readiness to take a detailed and sympathetic personal interest in individuals and small-scale philanthropies and to support all Jewish endeavors, effectively mediated the resentments which such undertakings might otherwise have provoked. His underlying humanitarian emphasis was probably another reason why Jewish immigrants of the Lower East Side fondly referred to him as "unser Yankele" (our little Jacob). Schiff consistently opposed legislation
intended to reduce Jewish immigration to the United States. A moderate who believed that “responsible” trade unions had an important social role, on occasion he supported strikes, particularly among the overwhelmingly Jewish employees of the New York garment trade, and demanded that employers treat their workers fairly and humanely, views which led him to endorse child labor legislation and government regulation of working conditions. And, however elitist, Schiff was sufficiently shrewd and flexible to yield ultimately to pressure on Zionism and other issues, acceding in 1906 to demands to establish an American Jewish Committee to protest against tsarist oppression of East European Jews and in 1908 to the establishment of a kehillah, or united Jewish organization, for New York City. Through such concessions, Schiff and other established Jewish leaders cannily ensured themselves continuing influence within broad American Jewish counsels, even as they acquiesced in greater democracy.

The one aspect of Schiff’s career which Cohen perhaps underplays is his international role. She rightly points out that his ability to mobilize international capital to finance American security issues was crucial to his business success, and this also draws attention to Schiff’s close links with such overseas Jewish leaders as Paul Nathan, Lucien Wolf, the Rothschilds, Max M. Warburg, and Baron de Hirsch. She perhaps does not stress sufficiently the weight which, by the late nineteenth century, the relatively recent Jewish presence in the United States carried in international Jewish deliberations and the manner in which this developing American influence paralleled the broader trajectory of the conscious growth of United States power around the turn of the century. Schiff’s key role in providing finance to Japan during the Russo-Japanese War while denying such funds to Russia—a policy which he could not always persuade European Jewish financiers, let alone American gentile bankers, to emulate—was a startling demonstration of both his country’s growing economic strength and of Schiff’s readiness to utilize his influence to defend Jews elsewhere. One can plausibly argue that the early development of an anti-Russian American Jewish lobby on international issues anticipated the tactics which late—twentieth-century African Americans would employ when persuading their government to move against South Africa’s racial policies.

More information placing Schiff’s international posture in the
broad context of other contemporary American and European businessmen's attitude toward the outside world would have been useful. Cohen mentions Schiff's general pre-1914 support for international peace but not his endorsement of the 1912–14 attempt of three fellow European Jewish businessmen, Hamburg banker Max M. Warburg, shipping magnate Albert Ballin, and his close British friend Sir Ernest Cassel, to facilitate an Anglo-German entente. As historians David S. Patterson and C. Roland Marchand have demonstrated, the prewar international peace movement was a cause broadly popular with moderately enlightened American businessmen. Cohen briefly mentions Schiff's wartime support for American financing of European reconstruction but not the degree to which other leading American bankers shared his view. She also ignores Schiff's—and other Kuhn, Loeb partners'—early funding in 1919 and 1920 of the infant Council on Foreign Relations. She might, too, have perhaps slightly expanded her treatment of Schiff's postwar sponsorship of anti-Bolshevik activities in Russia.

Such minor quibbles should not, however, detract from Cohen's accomplishment in producing an excellent and much-needed study of one particular Jewish leader. Schiff's position in American Jewry was, as she points out, *sui generis*, the product of a particular time and place as well as his own personal qualities. The growth of professionally managed institutions which characterized the progressive period in general, as well as the increasing numbers and diversity of the American Jewish population, made it impossible for any successor to replace Schiff or even aspire to his multifaceted involvement in American Jewish affairs. Cohen does full justice to Schiff as a man of conscience, a complex, individualistic, sometimes domineering but fundamentally generous, humane, and enlightened American Jewish leader.

*Priscilla Roberts is a lecturer in history at the University of Hong Kong and director of the university's Center of American Studies.*

More than thirty years before the creation of the state of Israel the first kibbutz communities were formed. The great majority of these mostly rural, agricultural cooperatives based their social structures and values on socialist Zionism. Communal values took precedence over the individual. Naama Sabar, an education professor from Tel Aviv, explores the reasons and circumstances that drove people to emigrate from kibbutzim to America. In some respects the decision to move reflects a younger generation’s attitudes. Those born into kibbutzim were not necessarily wedded to its ideology. Sabar relies heavily on the extensive interviews she conducted of young kibbutz-born Israelis living in Los Angeles in the 1980s and early 1990s. These life histories also suggest some of the factors that cause kibbutzniks to remain in America. The underlying theme that runs through this short book is the emigrants’ search for identity as they try to adjust to the openness of American society.


How have American Jews been able to maintain their sense of community and a specifically Jewish culture while acculturating into the American mainstream? This is the central question that permeates ten essays by Columbia University Professor Arthur A. Goren. The challenge facing the four generations of American Jews in the twentieth century, according to the author, has been finding a way to live “harmoniously in two cultures,” one Jewish and one American.

The essays are divided chronologically into two sections. The six essays in Part I, which covers the period from 1900 to 1940, examine some of the strategies used by Jewish immigrants to help remind them of their distinctiveness as a group. One of the early essays looks at the way funerals of prominent Jewish leaders and commemorations of historic events—such as the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jewish settlers in North America—served as civic rituals of affirmation and self-definition. Along with these expressions of public culture, Goren also focuses on the politics of American Jews. Part II, which
covers the period since 1940, highlights the diverse interests exhibited by American Jews. They fought against all sorts of religious, ethnic, and racial prejudice at home. At the same time, Zionists mobilized support for the creation of a Jewish state in the making.

This collection of previously published essays reflects the author's abiding interest in the changing patterns of American Jewish communal life and culture in the twentieth century.

Compiled by Christine Crandall.


*The Jewish Victorian* is a great place to gain insight on Jewish societal life in the late nineteenth century. The book mainly consists of excerpts from the *Jewish Chronicle, Jewish Record,* or *Jewish World,* most of which tell of births, deaths, marriages, and community events. By reading about these events, life in Anglo-Jewish circles and how each related to the other become more understandable. These small articles may provide information omitted from standard newspaper sources. For instance, a list of visiting out-of-town maternal relatives would often be published in these local papers. This is an incredibly valuable resource to genealogists. The only thing lacking is a brief explanation of Anglo-Jewish society in the late nineteenth century. Some background knowledge of this time is needed for the information to be more widely relevant. However, the book is arranged intelligently with surnames listed alphabetically. Any cross references between names can be found in the complete index. The book itself is of a durable paperback, making it lightweight enough to carry as a reference book while conducting research. With the proper background information, this book can be an invaluable resource, although simply leafing through it and reading the vignettes of these people's lives is also entertainment in itself.


This book is extremely useful to genealogists and researchers as a starting place for their research. The first twenty pages explore the history of the most prominent Jews of New Orleans. The remainder of the book lists local and national repositories which could be of use when researching New Orleans. In addition to the list, some brief
descriptions of the most pertinent collections are also given, as well as contact information. *Jews of New Orleans* contains a coherent table of contents and index, which combined with the alphabetical repository listing, makes the book user friendly. Being in paperback format, the book may not last too long with heavy usage, but altogether this is a practical guide for researchers beginning their investigation.


*Genealogical Tables of Jewish Families* is a wondrous resource for anyone conducting genealogical research on Jewish families. These books are easy to read and the stories are captivating. Within the pages of Volume I are beautiful illustrations of the people and places mentioned in the text. The Fraenkels' book goes beyond mere names and dates of Jewish families to include stories which convey the emotions and events of everyday life. This brings all of the names to life, giving them real personalities. Fraenkel does not forget to include pertinent background information on the state of Europe throughout this period. These history lessons are intermeshed with letters and stories to create a smooth narrative. By including these tales, the books create a real empathy with the past. Volume II consists of charts and tables as one would expect of a genealogical study. Over eleven thousand names are listed, making this book invaluable to those searching for any information in the aftermath of the Holocaust. There is a biographical glossary in the back of Volume I which, along with the index of names and table of contents, makes these books easy to navigate. There is even a small Danish and Hebrew glossary to make the letters included more understandable. In addition to the information contained, the volumes are handsomely produced. Placed within a holder and printed on acid-free paper, they will last a lifetime.
The American cantorate has a rich and ongoing history. The first known cantor in this country was Saul Brown (né Pardo), an emigrant from the West Indies who, according to Jacob Rader Marcus, descended from "a brilliant and illustrious family of religious leadership." Settling first in Newport, Rhode Island, Brown came to New York in the mid-1680s where, Marcus writes, "he was the first ... cantor known by that name."  

Early American cantors (hazan) performed many tasks, often to the point where they achieved the status of quasi rabbis. They served as mohelim (circumcisers), shochtim (ritual slaughterers), led prayers, and performed other ceremonial and clerical duties. Yet, as Dr. Mark Slobin, one of the leading historians of the American cantorate has noted, the arrival of "Reform-influenced rabbis" in the 1840s altered the role of the cantorate—and not necessarily to their benefit. Slobin writes that reformers such as Isaac Mayer Wise "had little use for the old-style hazan who might interfere with the rising dominance of the new American rabbi." As a result, the role and often the presence of cantors in those communities declined during this time.

However, the arrival of the East European Jews in the 1880s helped to reinvigorate the American cantorate. "The soothing or heaven-storming sounds of the sacred singer," Slobin writes, "deeply moved the masses of oppressed Eastern European Jews." With hopes of employment and the possibility of greater status and prestige now available in the U.S., many well-known and celebrated cantors from Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Romania immigrated to this country and reveled in their new-found position. Some even went so far as to take their talents into the secular community to became opera and recording stars.

Slobin notes that the ongoing influx of European cantors more than satisfied the American Jewish community's demands for cantors into the twentieth century. Yet, following the Holocaust, this source of European-based talent was forever lost. To fill the continuing need, many American Jewish institutions began their own cantorial programs, and the first generation of American-trained cantors came
into being. The first cantorial school in the United States opened in 1948 when the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion began its New York-based School of Sacred Music. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America followed shortly thereafter with its Cantors Institute, while Yeshiva University opened the Cantorial Training Institute.

As American Jewry has evolved and changed through the years, so too has the American cantorate. Many factors, including the impact of modernity on American Jewish life and culture, increased numbers of congregations, the suburbanization of the American synagogue, the evolution and development of new forms of worship, the professionalization of the cantorate and the resulting formation of groups such as the American Conference of Certified Cantors and the Cantors Assembly of America, together with perhaps the most dramatic development—the entry of women into the cantorate—have all worked together to evolve the role, position, and function of the American cantor.

Unfortunately, as Slobin notes, the cantorate has been one of the "most neglected institutions of American Jewry." Archival records are scarce and little scholarship beyond Slobin's study has been devoted to this subject.

With this in mind, Dr. Gary P. Zola, executive director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, has begun an initiative to more fully document the activities and history of the American cantorate. Focusing more on the documentary evidence of American cantors and their institutions (i.e., letters, papers, diaries, manuscripts, etc.) than on musical performances or scores, this initiative is an attempt by the American Jewish Archives (AJA) to fill the lacunae in the documentation of this important area of American Jewish life and culture.

The AJA has an existing, albeit small, collection of cantorial materials. Included in this collection, among others, are papers and materials of Cantors Jacob Abramowitz, Reuben R. Rinder, Walter Davidson, Eric Werner, Irving Mayer Podet, and Moishe Oysher. However, the AJA is now making a concerted and organized attempt to identify and acquire significant collections pertaining to the American cantorate. These plans will continue to be developed and implemented in the coming months, but we are pleased to list here a few early accessions to this collection received from the following
donors:

- Ms. Fanny Brooks, San Antonio, TX. Collection of seventy-eight phonograph records of Hebrew and Yiddish performances by various cantors throughout the U.S., dating to the early twentieth century.
- Rabbi Kenneth A. Kanter, Nashville, TN. Four cartons of sheet music and other music-related materials, gathered from various publications and magazines, 1901–37.
- Cantor Sheldon F. Merel, San Diego, CA. Collection of personal papers and memorabilia pertaining to his career. Cantor Merel has been most generous in providing his personal materials, as well as in identifying and locating other useful collections of records.
- Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music (SSM), New York, NY. Collection pertaining to programs and events held at the SSM, including copies of music and recordings of performances.

If you possess or can locate material pertaining to cantors, their work, and their activities, we invite you to contact the AJA at the address listed below:

Chief Archivist
American Jewish Archives
3101 Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
513.221.1875

NOTES:


NEW ACCESSIONS FOR 2000

Here are brief descriptions of selected new accessions received by the American Jewish Archives in 2000:

PERSONAL PAPERS


Correspondence of Richard A. Eliasberg, president of The Eliasberg Family Foundation, Inc., of Baltimore, MD, concerning donations made by the Foundation for the repair and preservation of Temple Mishkan Israel (Selma, AL).

Received from Millard Mack, Cincinnati, OH.


Passport application for Lewis England to visit the kingdom of Bavaria. Witnessed by a notary public, together with affidavits from relatives.

Received from Richard England, Washington, D.C.


Sermon titled, "The Jewish Ideal of the Twentieth Century," delivered by Rabbi Greenburg at Temple Emanu-El (New York, NY). William H. Greenburg was born in London, England, in 1868, received his ordination at Jews' College in London, and served for many years as a rabbi in Dallas, TX.

Received from Stuart M. Geller, Lynbrook, NY.

Haber, Samuel L. Personal items. 1975–76. 2 audiocassettes and miscellaneous items.

Audiorecording of a tribute to Haber, given by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), 1975, featuring remarks by Edward M. M. Warburg and Boris Smolar. Together with an audiorecording of an address by Haber during a 1976 trip to South Africa; and personal effects belonging to Haber. Samuel L. Haber was executive vice-president of the AJJDC and a longtime staff member there.

Received from Mrs. Samuel L. Haber, New York, NY.


Two letters, dated July 14 and September 1, 1944, sent by Helen Jacobson, wife of Rabbi David Jacobson of Temple Beth-El (San Antonio, TX), to members of the congregation serving in the armed forces during World War II.

Received from Barton G. Lee, Tempe, AZ.

Leffler, Marjorie B. Diploma. 1928. 1 item.

Graduation diploma from Wellesley College for Marjorie Ballin (later
Marjorie Leffler), the mother of Rabbi William Leffler.  
Received from William Leffler, Kennebunkport, ME.

**Levine, Aaron.** Personal papers. 1968–70. 36 pp.  
Papers relating to Levine’s student years at the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion’s School of Education. Includes correspondence, registration materials, transcripts, bills, and catalogs. Aaron Levine, a long time friend of The Marcus Center, served as comptroller of HUC–JIR, as well as special counselor to the president of the College-Institute, and on the school’s Board of Overseers.  
Received from Aaron Levine, Cincinnati, OH.

**Levy, Richard N.** Address. 1999. 1 audiocassette.  
Presidential address given by Rabbi Levy, executive director of the Los Angeles Hillel Council, to the 110th annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.  
Received from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, NY.

**Schleifer, Helen C.** Ketubah. 1949. 1 item.  
Marriage ketubah for Helen Chopek and Harold Schleifer, signed by Rabbi Abraham Saltes, Congregation Rodef Shalom (New York, NY).  
Received from Helen C. Schleifer, Punta Gorda, FL.

**Silver, Eliezer.** Affidavit. 1940. 1 p.  
Affidavit signed by Rabbi Eliezer Silver and Mr. Joseph Tiger, president of Kehillath B’nai Israel (Cincinnati, OH), stating that they have set aside $2,000 for the purpose of guaranteeing the salary of Rabbi Max Adler of Germany in hopes of securing a visa for Rabbi Adler’s departure from Nazi Germany. Ultimately, all attempts to gain a visa for Rabbi Adler failed and he perished in the Holocaust.  
Received from Mrs. Ernst D. Frankel, Cincinnati, OH.

**Zimmerman, Sheldon.** Address. 1999. 1 audiocassette.  
Address to the 110th annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis titled, “Finding God in the Moment.”  
Received from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, NY.

**ORGANIZATIONAL AND SYNAGOGUE RECORDS**

**American Israelite (Cincinnati, OH).** Correspondence and essay. 1929–35. 107 pp.  
Correspondence concerning the sale of the *American Israelite*, a weekly
newspaper founded in 1854 by Isaac Mayer Wise. Also includes materials concerning the resolution of a debt owed to Adolph S. Ochs, a subsequent owner of the *Israelite*. Together with an essay by Brian L. Meyers titled, "The American Israelite Story."

Received from Millard Mack, Cincinnati, OH.

Proceedings of the inaugural conference of representatives from rabbinical training programs in North America. The collection consists of programs, presenter lists, readings, attendees list, and goals. Also includes a labeled photograph of attendees.

Received from Samuel Joseph, Cincinnati, OH.

**Congregation B’nai Israel (Sacramento, CA).** History. 2000. 1 videocassette.
Video history of the congregation and the Jewish community in Sacramento titled, "Congregation B’nai Israel: 150 Years of Faith and Community."

Received from Congregation B’nai Israel, Sacramento, CA.

**Jewish Federation of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH).** Minutes. 1967–80. 7 microfilm reels.
Received from the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, OH.

Records of the organization, including minutes, correspondence, and other materials gathered during the presidency of Sam Kaltman.
Received from Roma Kaltman, Cincinnati, OH.

**Temple Beth Israel (Jackson, MI).** Cemetery records. 1858–98. 22 pp.
Burial lists for the Temple Beth Israel cemetery, with plot map, compiled by Mildred E. Sussell.
Received from Roberta P. Ponn, Jackson, MI.

Records of Temple Beth Jacob, including a 1960 constitution; board of directors minutes, 1979–84; correspondence, n.d.; and materials pertaining to the temple’s disbanding and final service, 1991.
Received from David A. Henig, Sylvan Lake, MI.
Drawings of Temple of Israel, including a view from the front and two sides, drawn by Jeanet Dreskin.
Received from Temple of Israel, Greenville, SC.

BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS, AND ORAL HISTORIES

Received from Jonathan M. Brown, State College, PA.

Loewenberg, Ernst. Memoir. 1940. 100 pp.
Memoir of his youth in Germany titled, "Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach dem 30 Januar 1933."
In German.
Received from J. R. Loewenberg, Milwaukee, WI.

"A Winter Nightmare: Stalag IV B," a memoir recounting Schechter's experiences as a prisoner of war during World War II.
Received from Irv Schechter, Quincy, IL.

Term paper submitted to Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion by Shari Heinrich. Titled, "An Oral History of Jay Stein," the paper contains a brief biography of Jay Stein—president of the Stein Mart Corporation—and the Stein family; includes a transcript of an oral history interview with Stein concerning his life and upbringing in the South.

GENEALOGIES AND FAMILY HISTORIES

Family tree compiled by Joan Adams, concentrating on the Einstein and Rosenbloom sections of her ancestry. Includes family charts and copied obituaries.
Received from Joan Adams, Rancho Santa Fe, CA.

Genealogy chart for the Elsas family, compiled by Marian Brown.
Received from Marian Brown, Cincinnati, OH.

A Chasman Family History: Rabbi Mordecai David Chasman from Virbalis and his Direct Descendants. A family history tracing the direct descendants of
Rabbi Mordecai David Chasman, with an index of seven hundred names. Written and compiled by Annette Feldman.
Received from Annette Feldman, Bethesda, MD.

Our Family in America, dealing with the Fine and Kudlick families. Written by Paul Alan Fine.
Received from Paul Alan Fine, Minnetonka, MN.

The Klingenstein family tree, including a history of the family and its related branches; written and compiled by Nancy K. Simpkins.
Received from Lance J. Sussman, Binghamton, NY.

Wiener, Jay L. Family history. 1998. 2 v.
In Their Own Words: A History of the Descendants of Mary Gross and Jacob Loeb, by Jay L. Wiener.
Received from Jay L. Wiener, San Francisco, CA.

From Kaluszyn to Charleston: The Yaschik Family in Poland, Argentina, and South Carolina, by Henry Yaschik.
Received from the South Carolina Jewish Historical Society, Charleston, SC.

MONOGRAPHS, THESES, AND TERM PAPERS
Received from Franklin A. DeWoskin, Cincinnati, OH.

Received from Gary P. Zola, Cincinnati, OH.

“Rescue and Resettlement: Thousands Saved from Nazi Germany,” a
narrative and documentation by Allen Hepner. Focuses on attorney David Glick’s mission to rescue Jews in Nazi Germany between 1936 and 1939. Includes lists of archival resources about Glick, who was a representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Received from Allen Hepner, Narrabundah, Australia.


Received from Evan Moffic, San Francisco, CA.

**Wildstein, Jeffrey.** Term paper. 2000. 15 pp.


Received from Jeffrey Wildstein, Cincinnati, OH.

A

Adams, Joan, 154
Adler, Cyrus, 139
Adler, Max, Rabbi, 152
African Americans, 12
Agudat HaAdmorim, 48
Agudat HaRabonim (Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada), 48, 114
Agudat Yisrael of America, 36, 37, 52n8; and Moshe Feinstein, 114; and Moshe Horowitz, 38, 48
American cantorate, 148; archive established for, 149; and immigrant cantors, 148-49; schools for training, 149
American Conference of Cantors, 149
American Hasidism, 35-53; European roots, 35
American Hebrew, 84
American Israelite, 152-53. See also the Israelite
American Jewish Orthodoxy, differences within, 121. See also Moshe Feinstein; Joseph Soloveitchik
American Philosophical Society, 102
American Revolution. See Jews in the revolution
André, Major, 69
And the Angels Laughed, 37
anti-Jewishness, 100, 106; barbs, 6
anti-Semitism, 56, 85, 86, 89; in coal fields, 32-33; in colonial period, 59-60, 62, 99; in the 1940s, 133 and progressive reformers, 132; repudiation of, 113; Uriah P. Levy, 100
Appalachia, migrations to, 12. See also coal field Jewish communities
Arnold, Benedict, 56, 67, 68; and treason, 69-70

Artillery of the United States Land Service, 102
Artscroll, 37
Ashkenazi, Yehuda, Rabbi, 120
The Asmonean, 107-108

B

Bank, Ida, 18, 20
Barsimson, Jacob, 60
Beckley, WV, 19; and religious education, 20; religious services, 25
Beckley Sisterhood, and gentile members, 26
Beis Midrash Mahaziei Torah, 52n5
Bellamy, Edward, 7
Benjamin, Jacob, 110
Berger, Doreen, 145
Berlin, Irving, 130
Best, Gary Dean, 139
Beth Pinchas Center (Boston), 37
Birmingham, Stephen, 139
Blacks and the Military in American History, 56
Blanton, Sherry, 21
blockade runners, 73
B’nai El Congregation (Logan, WV), 23-24
B’nai B’rith, 7
B’nei Brak, 50
Bondi, August, 110-11; illustration, 110
Boston, academic community, 44; and Jewish community, 40, 43; New York Bostoner community, 43-44
Bostoner Hasidic tradition, diversity of, 50; in Har Nof, 50; under Levi Yitzchak Horowitz, 44; sources for, 37
Bostoner Rebbe, defined/described, 35-36. See also LeviYitzchak Horowitz; Moshe Horowitz; Pinchas Dovid Horowitz
The Bostoner Rebbetzin Remembers, 37
Boston Red Sox, 46
Braddock, James, 64
Bratslav movement, 44
Brazil, Jews in, 59; dispersal of, 59
British colonies, and Jewish naturalization, 61-62; and the franchise, 62
Brookline, 44
Brooklyn, 40
Brooks, Fanny, Ms., 150
Brown, Marian, 154
Brown, Saul, 148
Bush, Lewis, 67
Bush, Mathias, 64
Bush, Solomon, 67

C
Cahan, Abraham, 133
calendar (hasidic), 40-41, 46-47
Cantors Assembly of America, 149
cantors, paper and materials in the American Jewish Archives, 149; new acquisitions, 149-50
Catholic-Jewish relations, 113
Charleston Gazette, 71
Charleston congregation, 103-104
Chassidic Center (Brookline), 44-45
Christian oath, 62, 63, 78. See also religious tests
Christianity and idolatry, 119-20
Cincinnati, 20
Clark, Arthur C., 7
cal field Jewish businesses, 12; family businesses, 13; founding of, 12-30; survival strategies, 12-13. See also illustration, Totz family business
cal field Jewish communities, 11; activities of, 21; Americanization, 27; and Christian environment, 24-26; communal organizations, 19, 20; congregations 21, listed, 28-29; decline of, 27-28; disassociation with Judaism, 32; illustrations of Totz family, women, 14, 19; immigrant adjustment, 24; importance of women in, 11-12; kosher homes, 23; mutual aid/charity, 19-20; survival factors, 12-13. See also Jewish women in Central Appalachian coal field communities
Coffman, Edward, 106
Cohen, Ethel Catzen, 16
Cohen, Hermann, 115
Cohen, Jacob, 92-93
Cohen, Meyer M., 108
Cohen, Naomi W., 139-43
Cohen, Zacharias, 63
colonial wars, 63-64
Conference on Rabbinic Education, 153
Congregation B'nai Israel (Sacramento, CA), 153
Continental Association, 64-65
constitutions and religious tests. See religious tests
Corzine, Jon, 137
Crandall, Christine, 145

D
Debs, Eugene V., 57
Declaration of Independence, 65, 94
Defender of the Faith, 35
De Leon, David Camden, Dr., 104-105
DeLyon, James W., 104
DeWoskin, Franklin A., 155
DeYoung, Isaac, 90
The Diary of Anne Frank, 131
A Digest of the Laws Relating to the Military Establishment of the United States, 101

158
donors to the American Jewish Archives, 150-56
Dreyfus, Ludwig, 136
DuBois, W.E.B., 57
Dutch West India Company, 59, 60
Dyer, Leon, 108
dynastic lineage.  See yichus

E

Eastern European Jews, in coal fields, 11, 12; congregations founded by, 12
ecumenical activity, Feinstein position, 114, 118, 119
Eliasberg, Richard A., 151
Ellenson, David, 9, 113-28; identification, 121
Endlich, Lisa, reviewed, 135-37
England, Lewis, 151
equality, 92-93
Etting, Henry, 100
Etting, Reuben, 78
Etting, Solomon, 93
Evening Star (New York), 95

F

Falk, Stanley L., 103
Farber, Seth, 35-53; identified, 51
Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 23
Feinstein, Moshe, Rabbi, 112; biography, 113, 126n8; Christianity as idolatry, 118, 119; difference from Rabbi Soloveitchik, 116-17, 121; fear of conversion, 118; Iggerot Moshe, 113; and interfaith dialogue, 114, 118, 119; Responsa, 122-25; status, 113-14.
See also ecumenical activity
Feldman, Annette, 154
Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men, reviewed, 128-38
Fine, Paul Alan, 155
Foner, Eric, 55-58; influence of Jack Foner on, 57-58
Foner, Henry, 57
Foner, Jack D., biography, 56-58; academic career, 56, 57; blacklist, 56; education, 57; honors, 57; military service, 56-57
Foner, Moe, 57
Foner Orchestra, 57
Foner, Philip S., 57
Fraenkel, Henry, 146
Fraenkel, Louis, 146
Franks, Jacob, 64
Franks, David, 64, 75-76
Franks, David Solebury, 56, 67-68; and Benedict Arnold, 56, 70; as courier, 70-71; death, 71
Franks, Isaac, 66; illustration, 68
Franks, Israel, 78
Franks, Michael, 64
Franks, Rachel, 75-76
Frederman, Solomon Jacob, Rabbi, 40, 52n.5
Friedman, Steve, 136-37
Friesel, Evyatar, 139
future of American Jewry, 7-9

G

Gaskell, Mollie, 16
gender roles, 31; stereotypes, 132, 133-34
generation conflict, 132
Generation of Vipers, 133
Gerber, Edward, 52n7
Gershwin, George, 130
“Ghetto Girls,” 132
Glazer, Nathan, 130
Goldman, Henry, 136
Goldman, Marcus, 136
Goldman Sachs: The Culture of Success, reviewed, 135-37
Gomez family, 75
Goren, Alfred A., 144-45
Grand Rabbi of Boston, 49
Gratz, Barnard, 61
Gratz, Benjamin, 90
Gratz, Hyman, 92
Gratz, Jacob, 90
Gratz, Joseph, 90
Gratz, Michael
Gratz, Rebecca, 90, 109
Gratz, Simon, 92
The Greater New Orleans Archivists, 145-46
Green, Israel, Lieut., 111
Greenberg, Hank, 131
Greenburg, William H., 151
Guide to Jewish Boston, 37
Gurock, Jeffrey, 114

Haber, Samuel L., 151
Hadassah, 20
Hagedorn, Leah E., 155
Ha-Me'iri, Menachem, Rabbi, 120
Hammerstein II, Oscar, 130
HaModia, 36, 37
Handlin, Oscar, 7, 7-8
Harby, Isaac, 89
Har Nof, Israel, 50
Hart, Aaron, 64
Hart family, 75, 76
Hart, Isaac, 76
Hart, Jacob, 73
Hasidism. See American Hasidism
Hays family, 75
Hays, Sarah Ann, 101
Hebrew Ladies Aid Society (Welch, WV), 20
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music, 149, 150
Heilman, Samuel, 35
Heiman, Shlomeh, Rabbi, 38
Hendricks, Herman, 92
Hendricks, Uriah, 64
Henry, Barnard, 92
Hepner, Al, 155-56
Hirschhorn, Jacob, 109-110
History of the Beckley Jewish Community, 26
Holiday Inn, 130
Holocaust, awareness of, 130-31, 133
Holocaust, 131
Horowitz brothers, differences between, 38, 45, 50; in development, 51; environmental causes, 46
Horowitz, Chayyim, 47
Horowitz, Levi Yitzchak, 35, 36, 37, 43; and Agudat Yisrael, 48; businessman, 43; and calendar, 47; education, 38-39; educator, 48-49, 53n24; father's successor, 47; Grand Rabbi of Boston, 49; and Jewish college students, 44; links beyond Boston, 49; moves to Boston, Dorchester, Brookline, 43-44; and new Boston Hasidism, 44; outreach, 44-45; and rabbinate, 43; and secular values, 45; sons, 50; sources for his life, 37; wedding, 52n18. See also New England Hassidic Center
Horowitz, Meyer, Rabbi, 50
Horowitz, Moshe, 36, 43; and Agudat Yisrael, 48; and calendar, 46-47; education, 38, 39-40; educator, 48; father's successor, 43; within Orthodox Hasidic community, 45-46, 47; sources for his life, 37
Horowitz, Naftali, Rabbi, 50
Horowitz, Pinchas Dovid, 36, 43, 52n5, 52n7; biography, 36; controversy with Orthodox rabbis, 41-42; education of sons, 38-39; and Halakhic calendars, 41; and kashrut, 52n18; and mikveh, 42; move to Brooklyn, 40; nonconformity of, 42-43; and Orthodox observances, 40-41, 42; and Sabbath observance, 41
Horowitz, Mrs., 37
Horwitz, Jonathan, Dr., 104
household economy, roles, servants. See coal field Jewish communities
Hyams, Isaac, 104
Hyman, Paula, 22, 32
idolatry, 118, 119
Iggerot Moshe, 113
Iggud HaRabonim, 48
Illustrations: August Bondi, 110; Captain Mordecai Myers, 88; Col. Isaac Franks, 68; Haym Salomon, 74; Jewish women (unidentified, Rebecca Spector, Bessie Spector), in a coal field community, 19; marker commemorating Francis Salvador, 58; Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, 112; Totz family business, Keystone, West Virginia, 10; Totz family portrait, 14; Uriah P. Levy, 1792-1862, 91, 93, 94
Independent Gazette, 77
In Search of American Jewish Culture, reviewed, 129-38
interfaith activities, 25-27; in Christian world, 32; interfaith dialogue, 113-19, 121
intermarriage, 26-27, 88
Isaac Moses and Company, 73
Isacks, Joseph, 63
Isaacs, Col., 86, 87
Isaacs, Samuel, 108
The Israelite, 108. See also the American Israelite

J

Jacobo, Helen, 151
Jacobson, Israel Mayer, Rabbi, 52n5
Jacques, Gershon J., Dr., 79
the Jewish American Princess, 133-34
The Jewish Catalogue, 37
Jewish Daily Forward, 132
Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, 153
Jewish holidays, 131
Jewish identity, 131-34
Jewish Ladies Guild (Williamson, WV), 19
Jewish Men and Women: Can We Talk?, 132
Jewish merchants, 56
Jewish Messenger, 108
Jewish military doctors. See Jonathan Horwitz; Philip Minis; David Camden De Leon;
Israel Moses
the Jewish Mother, 133
Jewish population, in British colonies, 61; by Civil War, 93; economic patterns of, 61; by 1840, 93; at first census, 78; settlement patterns, 61, 78; Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, 61
The Jewish Press, 37
Jewish Publication Society, 130-31
Jewish Survivors from Nazism in Cincinnati, 153
Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Cantors Institute, 149
Jewish tories/loyalists, 75-76
The Jewish Victorian: Genealogical Information from the Jewish Newspaper, 1871-1880, 145
Jewish volunteers, 108; with John Brown, 110; in the Mexican War, 109-110
Jewish women in Central Appalachian coal fields, 11-33; communal importance/responsibilities, 12, 18; and Eastern European tradition, 15; economic importance of, 12, 13-16, 17; expanding role of, 23; generational differences, 16-17; guardians of religion, 32; marital status, 15-16; mothers, views of, 17; religious roles, 17; religious loyalty (Orthodoxy), 17-18; store ownership, 15; view of themselves, 31
Jewish women in middle class America, as consumers, 133; marriages, 132-33. See also women in Central Appalachian coal fields; "Ghetto Girls"; Jewish American princess; the Jewish Mother
Jews and American culture, 129-30, and religion, 131
"Jews company," 71
Jews as financiers/military suppliers, 64, 73-74, 92
Jews and franchise, and military service, 56; in new state constitutions, 76-77; and religious tests, 77
Jews and gender stereotypes, 132
Jews as mercenaries, 59
Jews in military after revolution, 78; as career officers, 78-79, 100; in navy, 79; doctors in navy, 79
Jews as militiamen, in Brazil, 59; in New Amsterdam, 60-61; in Georgia, 62-63; in New York, 63; in the revolutionary war, 72-73; on the Sabbath, 108
Jews in the revolution, 65-78
Jews at Valley Forge, 67
Jews at West Point. See Abraham Charles Myers; Alfred Mordecai; Alfred Mordecai, Jr.; James W. DeLyon; Levi J. Myer
Joselit, Jenna Weissman, 21, 22
Josephy, Pauline (Mrs.), 26
J.P. Morgan & Company, 140
Judah, Henry Moses, 105
Judaism, 37
K
Kanoff, Abraham, 100
Kanter, Kenneth A., Rabbi, 150
Kaplan, Lawrence, 122
Katzenellenbogen, Aaron, Rabbi, 38
Katzen, Sam, 30
Katz, Jacob, 120
Kennedy, John F., 49
Keystone, WV, 10, 11, 20
Kibbutzniks in the Diaspora, reviewed, 144
"kitchen Judaism," 31
Korn, Eugene, 122
kosher, 18, 23; Hasidic kosher standards, 52n18
Koufax, Sandy, 131
Kubrick, Stanley, 7
Kuhn, Loeb and Company, 139
L
Lakewood, NJ, 50
Landers, Bernard, Rabbi, 114
Leffler, Marjori Ballin, 151-52
Leibman, Charles, 35-36
Levine, Aaron, 152
Levi-Strauss, Claude, 130
Levy, Asher, 60-61
Levy, Charles Harby, 91-92
Levy, Jefferson Madison, 99
Levy, Jonas, 110
Levy, Levy Andrew, 61, 64, 80
Levy, Moses Albert, Dr., 108-109
Levy, Richard N., 152
Levy, Simon Magruder, 56, 80-81; controversy about, 81-84
Levy, Uriah Phillips, 56, 91, 94-100, 110; anti-Semitism and, 100; and Civil War, 99; controversial career, 94, 95; dismissal, 97-98; and flogging, 94-95, 96, 97; inactive status, 94; illustrations, 91, 93, 94; interpretations, 100; marriage, 98; reinstatement, 98. See also Declaration of Independence; Monticello
Levi-Strauss, Claude, 130
Levine, Aaron, 152
Leibman, Charles, 35-36
Leffler, Marjori Ballin, 151-52
Leibman, Charles, 35-36
Levine, Aaron, 152
Levi-Strauss, Claude, 130
Levy, Asher, 60-61
Levy, Charles Harby, 91-92
Levy, Jefferson Madison, 99
Levy, Jonas, 110
Levy, Levy Andrew, 61, 64, 80
Levy, Moses Albert, Dr., 108-109
Levy, Richard N., 152
Levy, Simon Magruder, 56, 80-81; controversy about, 81-84
Levy, Uriah Phillips, 56, 91, 94-100, 110; anti-Semitism and, 100; and Civil War, 99; controversial career, 94, 95; dismissal, 97-98; and flogging, 94-95, 96, 97; inactive status, 94; illustrations, 91, 93, 94; interpretations, 100; marriage, 98; reinstatement, 98. See also Declaration of Independence; Monticello
Life and Letters (Jacob H. Schiff), 139
Lithuanian ultra Orthodoxy, 50
Logan, WV, 20; controversy in, 23
Looking Backwards: 2000-1887, 7
Lopez, Aaron, 61
Lopez family, 75
Lopez, Virginia, 98-99
Louzada, Jacob, 76
Lubavitch movement, 44-45
Lushington, Ricard E., Captain, 71

Marcus, Jacob Rader on future of American Jewry, 7, 8; and revolutionary war, 73, 75; Saul Brown, 148; sisterhoods, 21; Uriah P. Levy, 100
Massias, Abraham, 85; anti-Jewish feeling and Florida campaign, 85-87; government service, 89; reappointment to army, 90; War of 1812, 89
matzo fund, 20
Maus, 131
M.V.Gaskell, 16
men in the coal fields, communal responsibilities, 18; economic imperatives, 18; leadership positions, 21-22; religious observance, 18
Mendelowitz, Shraga Feivel, Rabbi, 38, 53n24
Merel, Sheldon F., Cantor, 150
Mesifta Torah Vodaas, 38
mikveh, 42
military history, 56
Miller, Robert, 144
Minis, Abby, 72
Minis, Abraham, 64
Minis, Philip, 72, 74
Minis, Philip, Dr., 105
Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah/ Mo'etzet Gedolei ha-Torah (Council of Torah Sages), 48
Moffic, Evan, 156
Monticello, 94, 99
Morrdecai, Alfred, 100-103; American Philosophical Society election, 102; and Civil War, 103; and Crimean War, 102, 103; education, 100-101; marriage, 101; ordnance expert, 101-102, 103; political conservative, 101; religious identification, 101; Southern views, 102; Watervliet Arsenal, 103; writer, 101, 102
Morrdecai, Alfred, Jr., 103
Mordecai, George, 101
Mordecai, Jacob, 100
Morgan, James Morris, 100
Morgen Journal, 41
Moses ambulances, 107
Moses, Isaac, 73, 106
Moses, Israel, Dr., 106-107
Motta, Jacob de la Motta, Dr., 90
Myer, Isaac, 64
Myer, Jacob, 64
Myers, Abraham Charles, 103-105; marriage, 105; military service, 104-105
Myers, Joseph, 100
Myers, Levi J., 105
Myers, Mordecai, 87-88; civilian career, 88-89; illustration, 88; marriage, 88

N
Nabe, Ida, 20, 21
National Guard units, Jews and, 107-108
New Amsterdam, Jews in, 59; debate over role, 60-61; citizenship in, 60-61
New England Hassidic Center, 37
News from The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, 148-50
New York, and Jewish rights, 61, 61-62; 1984, 7
Noahide Covenant, 118; and Christian-Jewish dialogue, 119; and idolatry, 119
Noah, Mordecai Manuel, 89; 95-96
Noah, Samuel, army career, 84, 90; career as filibuster, 84-85
Nones, Benjamin, 72
Nones, Henry B., 100
Nones, Joseph B., 92
Northfork, WV, 16
Nostra Aetate, 113

Notices of Florida and the Campaigns, 108
Nuñez, Moses, 63
Nuñez, Samuel, Dr., 62

O
Oklahoma, 130
O'Neil, Tip, 49
Ordnance Manual, 102
Ordronaux, John, Captain, 92
Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged (Cincinnati), 20
Orthodox Jews and public schools, 38-39
Orthodox Judaism, and compromises with, 22-23; and nostra aetate, 113, 118, 121
Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), 116
Orwell, George, 7
outreach, 44-45

P
Paine, Tom, 57
Palestine, aid for, 20; Pinchas Dovid Horowitz remains to, 49
Pardo. See Saul Brown
Paulson, Hank, 137
Pennsylvania petition, 77
Pickus, Sana Moskovitch, 19
Phillips, Abraham, 92
Phillips, Henry M., 99
Phillips, Manuel, Dr., 79, 92
Phillips, Naphtali, 87
Phillips, Phillip, 97
Phillips, Wendell, 57
The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews, reviewed, 144-45
Pollock, Asher, Private, 67
Porter, Cole, 130
Portnoy, Joseph, Cantor, 150
Prell, Riv-Ellen, reviewed, 129-34
privateers, 92
Proffitt, Kevin, 148-50
progressive reformers, as anti-Semitic, 132
Rabbenu Tam, 119
Rabbi Asher Lemel Spitzer yeshiva, 39, 52n8
Rabbi Isaac, 119-20
Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), 115
Rabbi Moshe Kliers yeshiva, 39
Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), 48; and interfaith dialogue, 117
Radner, Gilda, 134
Rakkefet-Rothkoff, Aaron, 115-16
Rapp-Coudert Committee, 56
RCA. See Rabbinical Council of America
Reaching Out Furnishing Emergency Healthcare (ROFEH), 45, 49
Reform Judaism, move to, 22-23
religious community/organizations, 19
religious education, 20
religious life, feminization of, 22
Religious Literary Society, 40-41
religious observances, 18, 23, 30-31.
See also Pinchas Dovid Horowitz
religious tests, 62, 77-78, 93
Reminiscences, 88
revolutionary (anti-British) activities and Jews, 64-65
revolutionary war battles/actions, 66-67, 71-74
Reznick, Samuel, 65
Rhapsody in Blue, 130
RIETS. See Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary
The Rise of David Levinsky, 133
Roberts, Priscilla, 139-43; identified, 143
Rodgers, Richard, 130
ROFEH. See Reaching Out Furnishing Emergency Healthcare
Rubin, Bob, 136-37
Russell, Philip Moses, Private, 67
R'Zev Cheshin, 38
Sabar, Naama, 144
Sabbath, 41-42, 46-47, 108
Sachs, Sam, 136
Salomon, Haym, 73-74, 92; career, 74; controversy over, 74-75; illustration, 74; myth, 75
Salvador, Francis, 65; marker commemorating, 58
Sarna, Jonathan, 100
Satmar rebbe, 49
Saturday Night Live, 134
Savannah Jews, loyalty impugned, 71; in revolutionary war, 72
Schiff, Jacob H., 139-43; and American Jewish Committee, 141; as American Jewish leader, 140-43; biography, 139-40; financier, 140; international role, 142-43; as a "steward," 141; and social issues, 141-42; and Zionism, 141
Schindler's List, 131
Schleifer, Helen C., 152
Seixas, Abraham Mendez, 72
Seixas, Moses, and George Washington, 62
Selmenovitz, Abraham, Rabbi, 42
Sharot, Stephen, 35-36
Shearith Israel (NYC), 66, 99
Sheftall, Benjamin, 62-63
Sheftall, Levi, 72
American Jewish Archives Journal

Sheftall, Mordecai, 65, 76; and revolutionary war, 71, 73; as British prisoner, 72
Shoah. See Holocaust
Shore, Jake, 30
shteibel. See Pinchas Dovid Horowitz
Siddur Tephilla Chadasha, 47
Shushelet Boston, 37
Silver, Eliezer, 152
Simon, Joseph, 61, 64, 73
Simons, Andrew, 145
Simpkins, Nancy K., 155
sisterhoods, importance of, 20
Slobin, Mark, Dr., 148, 149
Social and Cultural Patterns in Twentieth-Century American Jewish Life, review essay, 129-38
Sohn, Blanche, 15
Sohn, Eli, 15
Solomon, Ezekiel, 92
Soloveitchik, Rabbi and Mrs., 49
Soloveitchik, Joseph, Rabbi, 114-16; differences from Rabbi Feinstein, 116-17; and interfaith dialogue, 115-117, 119; and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), 115; view of Christian monotheism, 120-21. See also Rabbi Moshe Feinstein
Soloveitchik, Moses, 115
Soloveitchik, Tonya Lewitt, Dr., 128n30
South Carolina American General Gazette, 71
Stern, Harry, 23
Stuyvesant, Peter, 59-60
Sunday closing laws, 62
Synagogue Council of America, 114
synagogues: Bluefield, WV, 11; Jerusalem, 11; Keystone, WV, 11. See also individual congregations, temples
Szajkowski, Zosa, 139

T

teller, Hanoeh, 37
Temple Beth-El (San Antonio), 151
Temple Beth Elohim (Charleston), 103-104
Temple Beth Israel (Jackson, MI), 153
Temple Beth Jacob (Pontiac, MI), 153
Temple Emanu-El (New York, NY), 151
Temple of Israel (Greenville, SC), 154
Temple Mishkan Israel (Selma, AL), 151
toll, William, 21
Touro Academy, 49
Touro Vodaas (Brooklyn), 38, 43, 53n24
Touro V'Yirah, 38
Totz family illustrations: family business, 10; family portrait, 14
touro college, 114
Touro, Isaac, 75
Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought, 116
2001: A Space Odyssey, 7

U

United Council of Churches (Welch, WV), 25
Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. See Agudat HaRabonim
United Jewish Appeal workshop. See Jewish Men and Women: Can We Talk?
United States Soldier Between Two Wars, 1865-1898, 56

W

Wallach, Shalom, 37
wars of the early republic, 78-87; against Britain, 87-92
Washington, George, 62
Index

Watervliet Arsenal, 103
Weinberg, John, 136
Weinberg, Sidney, 136
Weiner, Deborah, 11-33; identified, 28
Weisberger, R. William, 135-37; identified, 137-38
Welch Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, 25
Welch Sisterhood, 22, 23, 25, 26
Welch, WV, 20, 26; and men’s mutual aid society, 22; and religious education, 20
Wenger, Beth, and role of women, 21; and gender roles, 22
Weiss, Rhonda. See Gilda Radner
West Point. See Jews at West Point
West Virginia, Federation of Temple Sisterhoods affiliate in, 23
“White Christmas,” 130
Whitehead, John, 136
Whitfield, Stephen J., reviewed, 129-134
Wiener, Jay L., 155
Wiener, Theodore, 110
Wildstein, Jeffrey, 156
Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and Hasidic community, 40
Williamson Bargain House, 16
Williamson Ladies Guild, and religious education, 20
Williamson Sisterhood, and religious service, 23; and new temple, 25-26
Williamson, WV, 16, 18, 19. See also Williamson Ladies Guild; Williamson Sisterhood
Winkler, Allan M., 129-34, identified, 134
Wise, Isaac Mayer, 148
Wolf, Simon, 100
Women’s Missionary Society (Welch, WV), 25
World War II, impact on gender stereotypes, 133
Wylie, Philip, 133

Y

Yaschik, Henry, 155
Yeshivah Darchei Noam Hafloah, 48
Yeshiva University, Cantorial Training Institute, 149
Yezierska, Anzia, 132-33
yichus (dynastic lineage), 48
DiYiddishe Vort, 37
Yom Kippur, 131
Young Israel (Boston), 53n23

Z

Zaltzman, Abe, 11
Zaltzman, Bessie, 11, 15; as business woman, 11; controversy over, 16, 30; as Orthodox Jew, 11
Zaltzman, Louis, 11
Zimmerman, Sheldon, 152
Zionism, Jacob Schiff and, 139
Zionist causes, 20
Zola, Gary P., 7-9, 149
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<thead>
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<td>Rabbi Gaylia R. Rooks</td>
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<th>Rabbi Kenneth D. Roseman</th>
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