



*Mordecai Manuel Noah*  
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

# “Revive, Renew, and Reestablish”: Mordecai Noah’s Ararat and the Limits of Biblical Imagination in the Early American Republic

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There were not enough boats to transport the crowds that came to watch the dedication of Ararat, a Hebrew city of refuge on the Niagara River on 15 September 1825. Consequently, Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785–1851), Ararat’s founder and self-proclaimed “judge of Israel,” decided to conduct the inauguration ceremonies that sunny day in Buffalo’s St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Grand Island, a 17,381-acre isle in northern New York State where Ararat was to be erected, was just a few miles downstream the Niagara River from Buffalo. Noah, arguably early-nineteenth-century America’s most recognized Jew, there would “revive, re-new and reestablish the Government of the Jewish Nation” in America, “under the constitution of the United States.”<sup>1</sup>

Noah’s city of refuge became a nationwide *cause célèbre* in the weeks and months that followed his “Proclamation for the Jews” at the dedication and the elaborate speech he gave the following day. Ararat, however, never took off; nothing happened after the grand dedication. Still, it occasionally catches the attention of modern historians. Jonathan Sarna, for example, describes in an illuminating biography of Noah the events leading to Ararat’s dedication and contextualizes the scheme and its planner in Jewish, Jewish-American, and proto-Zionist history.<sup>2</sup> Noah’s failed venture also influenced several Jewish fiction writers, who perceived Ararat as an inspiring and visionary scheme. From Israel Zangwill’s *Noah’s Ark* in the late nineteenth century to the recent imaginative graphic novel by Ben Katchor, *The Jew of New York*, Noah and Ararat have proven a lively source for Jewish political imagination.<sup>3</sup>

However, we have yet to recognize the extent to which Ararat was defined by a distinct American political culture and have thus not fully appreciated the ways in which the planned Hebrew city and the events surrounding its announcement were the intellectual and cultural products of their time and place.<sup>4</sup> Most studies of Ararat tend to agree that Noah’s city of refuge failed because of European Jewry’s refusal to cooperate with the scheme. Hence, Ararat’s failure is commonly attributed to tens of thousands of Old World Jews *not* appearing on America’s shores, ruining Noah’s proto-Zionist dream.<sup>5</sup> However, the European Jews’ practical vote of no confidence may not have been the only reason for Ararat’s failure to materialize; in fact, its failure may have been due, at least in part, to internal circumstances.

The plan to erect Ararat necessitated, and reflects, the powerful political Hebraism and biblical imagination saturating the early American republic's public sphere. However, an autonomous Jewish entity within the United States entailed detrimental conflicts and tensions with the prevailing political and constitutional culture in America. As we shall see, Ararat, which manifested the distinct culture of early-nineteenth-century United States—a nation conceiving itself as God's new Israel—was also doomed from the start, a stepchild venture in the democratizing early American republic.<sup>6</sup>

## The Dedication

Ararat was not conjured up on the spur of the moment. Indeed, Mordecai Noah—"Tammany Hall Sachem," newspaper publisher, playwright, sheriff, militia major, and American ambassador to Tunis, North Africa—contemplated and planned his colonization scheme for several years. In early 1820 Noah asked the New York legislature to sell him Grand Island in the Niagara River to serve as a colony for the Jews of the world. Noah's petition sat idle for four years (for reasons that will be discussed later), but the legislature's decision to survey and sell Grand Island finally came in April 1825. The subsequent sale of tracts of the eight-mile-long island to various purchasers, among them Noah, spurred the Jewish entrepreneur to action.<sup>7</sup> By early September 1825, Noah was ready to announce to the world his utopian scheme. He orchestrated a solemn ceremony and arranged for a large cornerstone (still extant and showcased at the Buffalo Historical Society). The spectacular "Masonic and military ceremonies" that ensued on 15 September were advertised in advance and later reported in detail in many newspapers across the nation. The line of procession formed at 11:00 AM and marched through the streets of Buffalo. The pageant consisted of a band playing the grand march of Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* (commemorating the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire), militia companies, civil and state officers in uniforms, and marchers representing various professions and churches. Then followed Noah, the self-proclaimed "judge of Israel," in "robes of *crimson* silk, trimmed with ermine, wearing a medal of embossed gold." The spectacular procession approached the church, wherein on top of the communion table lay the cornerstone. A portion of the inscription was in Hebrew and read: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, The Lord is one." The remainder of the inscription was rendered in English and read: "Ararat, a City of Refuge for the Jews, founded by Mordecai Manuel Noah, in the month of Tishri, 5585, September 1825, and in the 50<sup>th</sup> year of American Independence."

After reading the "Proclamation to the Jews" (of whom, as historian Richard Popkin points out, there could not have been many in the crowded audience), a grand salute of twenty-four cannons was fired and the band played "patriotic airs." "A finer day," reporters remarked, "has not been known on any similar occasion."<sup>8</sup>



*Ararat cornerstone reproduction*  
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

## Biblicism in the Revolutionary Era and the Early Republic

We know the details of Noah's scheme, which the ceremony in Albany announced and celebrated, through the "Proclamation to the Jews" that was read aloud in St. Paul's on 15 September and through Noah's subsequent speech that he delivered the following day, both of which were published in numerous newspapers across the nation. Scholars have delineated various aspects of the plan of the Hebrew city of refuge, from its grappling with tensions pertaining to Jewish identity to the influence on Noah of ideas circulating in post-revolutionary France.<sup>9</sup> But we have yet to examine whether and how Ararat could have operated under America's unique constitutional system and within its dynamic republican political culture. In other words, we need a better understanding of Ararat as an event in American political history.

The profound biblicism of the revolutionary era and the early republic was the intellectual backbone that enabled Noah to express, and for Americans to make sense of, a scheme of reestablishing the ancient Jewish government.<sup>10</sup> Perry Miller pointed out long ago that "[t]he Old Testament is truly so omnipresent in the American culture of 1800 or 1820 that historians have as much difficulty taking cognizance of it as of the air the people breathed."<sup>11</sup> Contemporaries' views certainly confirm such opinions of the pervasiveness of the Old Testament in the early nineteenth century. Harriet Beecher Stowe averred that early Americans "spoke of Zion and Jerusalem, of the God of Israel, the God of Jacob, as much as if my grandfather had been a veritable Jew; and except for the closing phrase, 'for the sake of thy Son, our Saviour,' might all have been uttered in Palestine by a well-trained Jew in the time of [king] David." Similarly, Henry Adams wrote in the opening pages of *The Education* that to be born to an elite family in contemporary Boston was similar to being "born in Jerusalem under the shadow of the Temple and circumcised in the Synagogue by his uncle the

high priest, under the name of Israel Cohen.”<sup>12</sup> Herman Melville concluded that America was “the Israel of our time.”<sup>13</sup>

Within such an entrenched early American biblicism, the contemporary discourse of the Mosaic constitution was particularly significant for Noah’s venture. The political history of the ancient Israelites offered Americans a historical model for the federal republicanism that they had invented during the creation of the state constitutions in 1776 and had been elaborating ever since. The biblically inspired republicanism that provided a context for understanding American independence as an escape from “Egyptian bondage” and the “British Pharaoh” is perhaps the most recognized component of such thinking.<sup>14</sup> It has thus helped republican Americans to reject the British monarch on biblical grounds.<sup>15</sup> It has also encouraged Americans to view, then and thereafter, the young republic as a chosen nation of latter-day Israelites, of tyranny-fighting Americans. However, revolutionary Americans also attempted to make sense of the novel constitutional arrangements of the young United States through the hallowed political models introduced through the history of the biblical Jewish republic.<sup>16</sup> The Mosaic constitution, “the oldest complete constitution in our possession,” according to one of its modern students, made available for Americans a divinely sanctioned, historic archetype of a federal republic.<sup>17</sup> In their attempt to reconcile potentially contradicting commitments—namely the authority of the Bible with the public politics of the times—revolutionary-age Americans came to read the Hebrew nation as a mirror image of America, a federation of statelike tribes, led by a presidentlike judge. These intellectual undertakings demonstrate the extent to which the biblical Jewish state, a nation composed of separate tribes that had its roots in God, was perceived as a republican and federal polity and thus nourished the American constitutional tradition in its formative age. These ideas, themselves taking part in a wider culture of a contemporary American biblicism, are crucial for understanding Ararat as an addition to an ongoing Hebraic political discourse. Indeed, without such a context it is impossible to understand how such a scheme was conceived, imagined, and at least initially tolerated—even endorsed—by a gentile public. Ararat’s ultimate failure exemplifies in turn the limits of the potent biblical imagination of the early American republic.

### Ararat, Its Critics, and the “Hebrew Republic”

Noah’s political plan for Ararat, although fragmentary and incomplete, was deeply historical and drew on contemporary interpretations of the ancient “Hebrew republic”: If the biblical Israelite state and its people were dispersed and disbanded two thousand years before, Noah intended to “revive, re-new and reestablish the government of the Jewish nation... as they existed... under the government of the judges.” That this restoration would take place in the land of a nation that conceived itself as “the second Israel” was deeply meaningful.<sup>18</sup>

The mere name of the planned city, Ararat, was emblematic, associated with the name of the city's founder: Mt. Ararat, the highest mountain in what is now Turkey, is the place where the book of Genesis situates Noah's Ark coming to rest when the flood receded. Mordecai Noah's choice of nomenclature, "Ararat," and his self-appointment as "judge of Israel" may hint at megalomania; yet those titles also manifest the politico-biblical cosmology that shaped his call for action. Although he invoked God to fulfill "the promises made to the race of Jacob ... his chosen people," his call did not rely on God but rather on human agency and action, advocating pragmatic measures, not dependence on divine intervention. If delusional (and Christian) individuals made Noah their hero after his proclamation as they became "prophesying Hebrews," he was never such.<sup>19</sup> Although a utopian schemer, his advocacy and pursuit of an "expedient" attempt to "re-organize the [Jewish] nation under the direction of the judges" was a sensible, if visionary, attempt. Ararat was a practical program, but it was stillborn because, as we shall see, its thrust encountered the dynamic constitutional and political culture of the young United States.

The biblical judges, the magistracy that Noah co-opted for leading Ararat (and for himself to act out), ruled the Israelites after Joshua's death until Samuel's ascendancy, which ended with the institution of hereditary kingship. Their purview embraced, as Noah recognized, "to all religious, military and civil concerns." However, while the judges "were absolute and independent like the Kings of Israel and Judah," they lacked "the ensigns of Sovereignty."<sup>20</sup> The biblical judgeship thus accorded with Noah's plans: An ancient, powerful, and revered office, it would not threaten, Noah believed, the sovereignty of American state and federal magistrates. However, as Noah recognized, reestablishing the government of the Jewish nation created practical problems. Such, for example, was the difficulty to decide in nineteenth-century America "with certainty on the manner and forms adopted in choosing the judges of Israel," since "[m]ost of the distinguished men who had filled that station were 'raised up' by divine influence." The problem of creating a secular government based on models that time and again benefited from a revelatory divinity was troublesome. One option, of course, was to select a judge by democratic (hence human) election, as opposed to divine selection. But since the Jewish nation was presently dispersed, there was "no possibility of concentrating the general voice" for choosing a judge by ballot. Noah came up with an extrajudicial solution: Paying lip-service to the "general consent and approbation," as well as—why not?—to "divine permission," Noah proclaimed himself "judge of Israel," declaring that he "will always be sustained by public opinion." If Ararat's first judge was to be appointed, not elected, he would still be judged by public opinion.<sup>21</sup>

Noah rightly expected that his innovative plan would draw harsh criticism. Even sympathetic contemporaries who had "no doubt of the genuineness of Maj. Noah's Proclamation to the Jews" still thought that some would surely suspect

his motives and that Noah should anticipate “a little *badinage*.”<sup>22</sup> Consequently, Noah attempted to preempt such censure by elaborating on the extent to which Ararat was compatible with the contemporary American political and constitutional *modus operandi*. Noah’s biographer Jonathan Sarna has argued that his greatest obstacle in founding Ararat was to reconcile “the seemingly opposite goals of maintaining a separate Jewish identity and integrating the Jews into American society as a whole.”<sup>23</sup>

Such identity-related tensions undoubtedly existed. Nevertheless, the problem of Jewish identity might not have been the only acute tension in the plan. Indeed, a deep political and constitutional dilemma lay at the heart of the Ararat venture: What did Noah’s call for a Hebrew city of refuge on the Niagara “under the constitution of the United States” *mean*? To be sure, Noah stated that the Jewish government he was reviving was “under the protection of the United States” or, as he put it elsewhere, “under the auspices and protection of the constitution and the United States.” He also made clear that Ararat and the U.S. Constitution and laws “conformed” with each other. However, it remained unclear exactly how his proposed plan of Jewish colonization would work within the intricacies of the American federal system and in relation to the dynamics of a vigorous democratizing culture.<sup>24</sup>

Noah did not have the opportunity to develop the ingenious blend of biblical imagination and pragmatic measures that pervaded his political scheme into a comprehensive plan. Ararat never took off after its spectacular commencement ceremonies and was destined to remain a vague, rudimentary sketch. However, even from the basic outlines of its political structure, the constitutional and political tensions between Ararat and its surrounding American world were evident.

Noah, a veteran of New York’s Democratic machine, conflated his neo-biblical plan with the available political idioms of the day: He spoke well in the republican and democratic language through his immersion in and identification with that idiom. He dubbed his proclamation and constructed it as “a declaration of Independence.” As in the case of Thomas Jefferson, who in his revered manifesto addressed “a candid world,” Noah proclaimed that “the world [had] a right to know what inducements have led to this declaration of independence” in Ararat. Noah was well aware of the strength of the patriotic chords such representation could strike in American hearts, a mere year after the jubilee of independence and the passing of Jefferson. Beyond positioning his proclamation within a contemporary discourse of “rights and privileges” and fashioning it as a “declaration of Independence,” Noah further described the Ararat judgeship in terms of a republican magistracy. Like its biblical counterpart, judgeship in Ararat would stem “immediately from the people” and would not be hereditary. Indeed, according to its founder, latter-day judgeship would resemble the position of “that of Chief Magistrate” to the American

presidency. If Noah were appointed Israel's first judge, it would only be out of necessity: Ararat's institutions and its governing body were not yet in place, and the Jews had not yet convened in America. His successors, however, would be elected in good republican fashion: Like the American president, "A Judge of Israel shall be chosen once in every four years." The judge would be elected "by the [Jewish] Consistory at Paris," which again, like the electoral college, would receive at the time of the election "Proxies from every congregation." Noah thus readily believed that the Jewish judges of Ararat would not offend American sensibilities since they were in essence republican institutions: They were not hereditary but "immediately from the people, mingling in their deliberations, directing their energies, commanding their armies, & executing their Laws." The republican, if not democratic, nature of judgeship in Ararat, reminiscent of the American presidency, would, hopefully, be "in accordance with the genius and disposition of the people of this [American] country."<sup>25</sup>

One of the most obvious manifestations of the American political system was its federal nature. Consequently, a most fundamental problem that Noah's plan faced was how Ararat and judgeship would operate in such a political environment. Accordingly, Noah emphasized that Ararat and the Mosaic constitution he advocated conformed to the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the land. If the biblical judgeship lacked "the ensigns of Sovereignty," its resurrection in America would not endanger civil authority with *imperium in imperia*. That neobiblical magistracy could also function well in a federal system based on, and admired for, its genius for dividing authority among distinct levels of government. At least potentially, Ararat could fit well in a union of semiautonomous states, which by 1825 was experienced with handling different spheres of sovereign power. That Noah presented himself as "*governor* and judge of Israel" is crucial to understanding how he imagined Ararat's operating within the American state-system.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of the symbols of sovereignty in Ararat, such as a flagstaff "erected for the Grand Standard of Israel," the Jewish nation in its emerging Araratic period would not be a sovereign nation but would reside under the auspices of the government of the United States.<sup>27</sup> The era of biblical Jewish independence would not be repeated (the proclamation being a Jewish "declaration of independence" nonetheless), and Israel, according to Noah's plan, would thus experience in America a postheroic existence: As a subservient national entity under the government of the United States, Israel would likely not "have again such generals as Joshua, David and Maccabees." However, "in blending our people with the great American family," Noah wished to see the children of Israel sustaining their "honor with their lives and fortunes." Here was a conscious, if moderate, Jewish reformulation of the sacred American trinity of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In the weeks following 15 September, information about Ararat abounded. Channels of information distribution had become increasingly efficient in early

nineteenth-century America—including scores of local newspapers that were proficient in republishing select articles from neighboring prints—and dozens of accounts reported on the announcement of the erection of Ararat, the plans of Jewish colonization, the details of the grand ceremony, and the texts of the proclamation and the speech.<sup>28</sup> While some consisted of brief reports, others provided lengthy descriptions that included the full texts of the proclamation and speech, many thousands of words long. Even those who merely reported the event without elaborating on the perceived merits—or faults—of Noah’s plans and conduct admitted that the proclamation was “most extraordinary.”<sup>29</sup> Some reporters tellingly reassured their readers that the news of the Hebrew city of refuge was “no hoax, as was at first supposed, but the proclamation was actually issued at the time and place.”<sup>30</sup> Not everyone was convinced, though. The *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics*, calling the proclamation of Ararat and the revival of the Jewish institutions “a most singular production,” pointed out that while some Americans saw the episode as “a *jeu d’esprit* on the part of the Major [Noah]; some look upon it as a serious production, designed to be what it purports and others consider it as a hoax put upon him, by some spirit of mischief.” The *Journal* concluded that “the character of the production gives some countenance of the last supposition.”<sup>31</sup>

Others, such as the reporter for the *Ithaca Journal*, preferred to remain on the fence and held a self-consciously neutral position. Because the Jews were “a populous and wealthy people, maintaining, wherever placed, a distinct nationality of character, and a strict adherence to their ancient usages and religion,” the fact that Noah’s Ararat was apparently a “Quixotic attempt” did not mean it might not prove successful. Some contemporaries did not commit to a stance on the issue merely because they did not know “how extensive and important may be its final result.”<sup>32</sup> Others pointed out, even almost a full year after the proclamation—and by then Ararat obviously a failed venture—that they had “no disposition... to speak lightly of Mr. Noah’s project” since “time alone,” they believed, could decide whether “a splendid speculation was concealed under a plan to ameliorate the condition of the Jews.”<sup>33</sup>

Favorable reactions to Noah’s attempt were forthcoming as well, as in the *Essex Register*, which published that it was “gratified to perceive... a declaration of Independence, and the revival of the Jewish government under the protection of the United States.”<sup>34</sup> The *Salem Gazette* asserted that “[t]here can be no doubt of the genuineness of Maj. Noah’s Proclamation to the Jews” and that “[w]ith an unsullied conscience and a firm reliance on Almighty God, he offers himself as a humble instrument of the divine will, and solicits the confidence and protection of his beloved brethren throughout the world.” The *Gazette* was further impressed that Noah was willing to “cheerfully surrender” his judgeship “if there be any person possessing greater faculties and a more ardent zeal in attempting to restore the Jews to their rights” than he.<sup>35</sup> Such self-effacement

and the willingness to serve the public good were still perceived as the essence of virtuous republicanism. Others, who were aware that Ararat might fail before it even lifted off the ground, thought that “the project is a benevolent one, and its author should have the best of motives attribute [*sic*] to him.” They added with some concern, however, that the judge of Israel’s “judgment might be questioned.”<sup>36</sup>

Most reactions to Ararat, however, were neither positive nor neutral. The majority of accounts deemed the plan a hoax, suggesting that a “strange and silly” scheme such as the consecration of the Hebrew city of Ararat “must have been written in burlesque and [thus] intended to be so understood.” Others presented Ararat under headings such as “Strange doings in Buffalo,” deeming it “ludicrous” or a “grand farce,” naming Noah a “pseudo-restorer.”<sup>37</sup> There were various reasons for such negative reactions. One was Noah’s perceived motives, allegedly originating in self-ambition and aggrandizement; the “many mutations” he had undergone, from editor and sheriff to playwright, consul, and now judge of Israel, made him further suspect and hard to categorize.<sup>38</sup> But on a more basic level, Ararat simply seemed to have rubbed most Americans the wrong way. Citizens in the early republic perceived the plan of Jewish colonization and partial autonomy as going against the cultural direction toward which the young United States was heading—namely federalism, democracy, and constitutionalism.

Widespread skepticism emerged in the weeks after the news of Ararat’s dedication spread. In fact, the same issue of the *Essex Register* that recounted the events in Buffalo concerning the Hebrew city also published a scathing item about Ararat under the heading, “Another Potentate.” This piece criticized Noah, “a high and mighty prince who has sprung up within our own borders.” Criticism quickly became mockery of the “Prince of Israel,” who but “ten days since... walked like other men, even the humblest of his subjects, upon the plain flag pavements of Wall-street, and cracked his jokes most merrily.” Noah’s conscious effort to defend his choice of biblical judgeship as a republican institution obviously did not convince all Americans. The *Register* not only ridiculed the notion of a “prince” in America; it particularly pointed to Noah’s unrepudiated conduct during the ceremony, “clothed in judicial robes of *crimson* silk, trimmed with ermine, wearing a medal of embossed gold; issuing his proclamation for the revival of an empire, and dispensing laws to his scattered subjects over the whole globe!” Deriding Noah for what seemed the delusional pretentiousness of a would-be prince and for his monarchical ambition to rule over “subjects” in a newly founded “empire,” the *Register* sarcastically “dare[d] say” that Noah “will make a mild and benevolent judge and governor, and... will sway the destinies of his empire with a wisdom and virtue that will put the Holy Alliance to the blush.”<sup>39</sup> The *Farmer’s Cabinet* found Ararat objectionable not only because “the plan of such a city was chimerical enough in all conscience,” but even more so

because “an individual in a republican country [has] style[d] himself Judge in Israel.” The mere notion of a princely judge in America seemed a monstrosity, the importation of a corrupt European institution into a republican land. But there was an additional element that the *Cabinet* found objectionable: Noah proclaimed himself judge “without condescending to tell us from whom his authority came.” Such conduct struck democratic American sensibilities as “insane” and “impious” as the delusional, and unidentified, “wretched being who a few years since sent his proclamation from the western country as Jesus Christ.”<sup>40</sup> Criticism of Noah was thus not restricted to the “princeliness” of his assumed position but also to his insultingly undemocratic self-appointment. Even a mild report such as that in the *Eastern Argus* wondered by what authority Noah was assigned, while others emphasized that Noah “styles himself” judge of Israel, pointing out the “absurdity” of his assuming the authority to appoint himself judge.<sup>41</sup>

The absurdity and danger seemed to lie not only in the fact that Noah “announced himself to the world as a judge and leader in Israel” but also that he had “assumed accordingly the absolute authority of a Sovereign.” After assuming power, according to the *Rhode Island Republican*, Noah continued to forbid polygamy, ordered a census of all the Jews “in the universe,” called for the colonization of Ararat, decreed Jewish neutrality in European entanglements (particularly in Greece’s struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire), and planned to levy a tax of “three silver shekels per head.” All these seemed an obvious exercise of political sovereignty. Some even believed that his next step would be to “establish a bank at Ararat,” a still-contested and potentially threatening concept in Jacksonian America, as the Bank War of 1832 would make evident.<sup>42</sup> What seemed fantastic to contemporaries was that Noah proposed “to reconcile these unaccountable proceedings with the genius and spirit of the American government and people!”<sup>43</sup> Americans found Noah’s Jewish city of refuge on Grand Island loudly dissonant with the political and constitutional culture of the young United States. An unelected, semisovereign magistrate seemed European, monarchical, corrupt, and antirepublican. In other words, it was profoundly un-American.

That it was Jews who were to settle in Ararat was also the subject of discussion. Commentators acknowledged the suffering of “the children of Israel”; even some of Noah’s critics wished

success to his enterprise, if it will ameliorate the condition and promote the happiness and prosperity of his afflicted countrymen in Europe. The ark of judge Noah, governor of Israel, has long been tossing upon the uncertain sea of politics, and we must give him joy at the prospect that it will finally rest in Ararat.<sup>44</sup>

Yet some of the critique of Ararat stemmed from the possibility that such an enterprise would actually harm the Jewish nation. Noah may have been recognized as “one of the most gifted and conspicuous of his brethren,” a people considered “ancient and extraordinary.” Yet “by the nature of the proceedings with which he has accompanied the founding of Ararat”—that is, his appearance as a self-proclaimed “prince”—“he has done more than any other individual to discredit every rational scheme for colonizing his countrymen by incurring to the utmost their aversion and contempt, and bringing upon himself the unsparing ridicule.”<sup>45</sup> An article in the *Salem Gazette*, appearing a year and a half after Ararat’s inauguration, deemed the whole affair “silliness,” an “absurdity” that “has not been surpassed or equaled since the Ark of our friend’s great namesake [Noah] ‘was lifted up by the waters.’” The commentator mistrusted Noah, “a silly fellow” who “took it into his head that he would get up a town on an extensive plan,” of “being, or pretending to be, of the Stock of the children of Abraham.” Noah’s “Israelitish corporation... whose Hebrew immaculateness no Samaritan, or Gentile, or Porker, or thing unclean, should ever sully,” could not have but failed. Criticism included the decision to name the city “Ararat,” as “Ararat ‘is scarcely known’ to have been the name of a city, but is generally supposed by the Gentiles to have been the name of a mountain.” Noah, who “disgorged himself of a grand speech on this grand occasion,” depicted “grand things which were to happen to the scattered tribes of Israel.” Those grand things, however, depended on the Jews following Noah’s call and migrating “with their flocks and their herds, their wives and their little ones and their ‘shekels of silver’ (an important and not forgotten item) to this grand city which he, the self-elected governor and Judge of Israel, was then founding on Grand Isle.”<sup>46</sup> The *Gazette’s ad-hominem* attack on Noah may have been contaminated with antisemitism. Nevertheless, one need not be prejudiced in the early republic to oppose Ararat.

## Noah’s City of Refuge and the Failure of Early American Colonization Schemes

Although contemporaries described Noah’s plans as “singular in character,” in many ways they were a product of their time.<sup>47</sup> When examined in context, the “curious” affair of “establishing the old Jewish government” on Grand Island was not so odd.<sup>48</sup> Upstate New York of the early republic was known as the “Burned-Over District,” a region that experienced repeated evangelizations during the early decades of the nineteenth century, harboring and giving birth to radical movements on the fringes of reformed Christianity, from the Millerites and the Oneida Society to the Mormons.<sup>49</sup> Historian Daniel Howe has noted that part of Ararat’s appeal stemmed from American Christians’ sympathy because “[b]oth pre- and postmillennial Christians have typically been interested in the restoration of the Jews... since that is one of the events prophesized as

heralding the Second Coming.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, contemporary Christians could interpret the prospects of the revival of the Jewish government eschatologically, believing that it signaled the immanent building of “a New Jerusalem and Temple of the Lord in ‘this American Land.’”<sup>51</sup> Enthusiasts who were given to delusional visionary missions as “Hebrew prophets” took Noah for their hero.<sup>52</sup> Ararat seems, then, less of an outlandish affair when understood within the religious and social ferment associated with the Second Great Awakening. As an attempt to better the conditions of a suffering people, Ararat may also be seen in light of the wide swath of social reforms in nineteenth-century America (which in turn was associated with the aroused evangelical sensibilities of the Great Awakening).<sup>53</sup>

Noah was not alone in wishing to resettle a suffering population. Colonization was on the minds of many Americans during the 1820s and 1830s, as various groups searched for a measure that could cure the nation’s perceived ills. Colonization was actively encouraged, for example, as a measure of removing and resettling Native Americans and blacks who either blocked the advancement of American (i.e. white Protestant) civilization or threatened the nation’s racial purity. As historian Nicholas Guyatt points out, there was “a good deal of similarity in the proposals to remove free blacks to Africa and Indians to the American West: both were presented as voluntary schemes for ‘colonization.’”<sup>54</sup> Those debates culminated in the resettlement (“colonization”) of thousands of Native Americans, who were driven out of their eastern lands to the trans-Mississippi West. On another front, the American Colonization Society was founded to promote a vast, and futile, colonization project to solve the “problem” of free blacks by settling them in Africa.

While colonization of nonwhites was the most obvious manifestation of a nineteenth-century “colonial imagination,” attempts to colonize European immigrants in America were the schemes that most resembled Noah’s venture. Germans and the Irish, the largest groups of immigrants during the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, hoped to maintain their social bonds and to ease relocation of their kin in the New World by settling together en masse. Their eyes were set on western lands that were still in the territorial phase and had not yet become states. Hence, legal and political questions regarding the future of the western territories became relevant during these years in light of repeated attempts to secure land grants from the United States to attract and settle immigrants. German Americans, for example, believed that if they could geographically concentrate German immigrants they would be able not only to attract many settlers but also to found a sustainable German cultural autonomy. Decades ago, historian Marcus Hansen pointed out “innumerable schemes” that German nationalists devised to create such social enclaves in America in which “speech and folkways involved a minimum of novelty” for newcomers from the German principalities. The more modest plans merely foresaw a new

town or city that would serve as a cultural center for German settlers, while more ambitious designs discussed “peopling one of the American states and, as was entirely possible under the Constitution, adopting German as the official language.” The German schemes failed to the very last. In explaining such failures, Hansen noted that in most cases either a colonization plan’s promoter proved incompetent, or, as usually was the case, “the members themselves were... at fault.”<sup>55</sup> As in the case of Ararat, historians tend to give the reasons for failed colonization schemes as internal, not external, to the plans. There might be reason to believe otherwise.

Other colonizers who represented similar, if not identical, interests to Noah’s recognized that their plans required land. The Irish Emigrant Society of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Pittsburg petitioned for land grants in the Indiana Territory in 1818 (only two years before Noah’s petition to the legislature of New York in 1820). Burdened by many charitable cases, these societies wished for cheap (or even better, free) western lands on which they could settle their dependent brethren. Like the Jews, the Irish felt “the peculiar pressure” their people had borne, and like Noah, they emphasized their “unalterable attachment to the laws and constitution”; they, too, hoped to be “cherished and protected by the government of the U. States.”<sup>56</sup> Congress established a special Committee on the Public Lands, which delivered an unfavorable report on the society’s petition. Since the House had dismissed other “analogous cases,” according to the report, the committee stated that the petitioner’s request for “a portion of the public land lying in the Illinois Territory, [that] may be set apart for the purpose of being settled by emigrants from Ireland... ought not to be granted.” After a debate that “continued for four hours... the question on this motion was finally taken.” Taking the committee’s recommendation seriously, Congress voted seventy-one for the amendment and eighty-three against it.<sup>57</sup> Congress thus denied Irish immigrants the land grant, establishing a *de facto* precedent that it would be undesirable to concentrate alien peoples geographically, especially in the unruly West. Hansen evaluated this decision as the most significant in the history of American immigration policy, since designated groups would henceforth not enjoy special privileges to encourage their immigration.<sup>58</sup> No less important was the more general implication: that minorities would not enjoy governmental sanction or support to create cultural enclaves. Although the Constitution did not bar such settlement, the prevailing political culture, later to evolve into the “melting pot” ethos, resisted ethnic colonization in America.

Similarities between the schemes to settle Germans and Irish in the West and Noah’s Ararat are evident. There are also evident dissimilarities, however. The most striking difference is in the constitutional realm: While Ararat was conceived as a colony within an existing state and was eventually authorized by its legislature (in part because the island had been occupied by squatters), the

Irish and German schemes eyed Congress-controlled western lands and were denied. Hence, another context within which to appreciate Ararat is through the contested notions of autonomy and authority in America during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The rapid westward expansion of white settlement—at a pace even faster than in previous centuries, as thousands of Americans spilled over into trans-Appalachia—gave rise to questions about control and state-building in the western territories. Particularly, constitutional questions regarding the role of the federal legislature in authorizing and regulating the newly settled territories were quick to emerge.<sup>59</sup> Was Congress sovereign in the territories, or was the federal legislature a mere trustee on behalf of the existing states? The Constitution did not answer this explosive question; it merely empowered Congress to make “rules and regulations” for federal territory and provided that “new states may be admitted by Congress into the Union” (Article IV, section 3). The Missouri Crisis of 1819–1820, when northern statesmen demanded that Missouri join the Union as a free state while southerners wished it to join as a slave state, witnessed the extent to which questions pertaining to Congress’s authority over, and relationship with, western territories became dangerously sectional. The procedure that regulated the Union’s future expansion was forged in the compromise that ended the crisis and remained intact for the next three decades. (Missouri would enter as a slave state; future states forged out of the Louisiana Purchase above the parallel of 36 degrees, 30 minutes north would be free; slave and free states would join the Union simultaneously.) But it did not solve important questions about the relationship between the center and the periphery, the federal government and the states—a bond that was to be contested repeatedly until dissolved, temporarily, in 1861.

When, in April 1824 (four long years after his initial petition), the New York legislature allowed surveying and selling lots on Grand Island, Noah was finally permitted to go ahead with his long-contemplated plan. However, when he first petitioned the legislature to purchase Grand Island in 1820 as a locus for Jewish settlement, unfriendly New York lawmakers, like their national counterparts in the case of the Irish societies, disliked the notion of offering “preferences to any sect.” They were concerned that the eventual outcome would be that “Dutch, Swiss, French &c. might wish similar assistance.”<sup>60</sup> Since ethnic groups were frequently also religious minorities with their own churches, lawmakers feared that land grants on such a basis might easily be interpreted as, and lead to, an infringement of preference clauses and of the ethos of church and state separation. The U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment stipulated that Congress would not make any “law respecting an establishment of religion.” New York State’s revised constitution of 1821 similarly promised “[t]he free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship,” which, while guaranteeing a secure haven for Jews as individuals, forbade “discrimination or preference” of specific religions and churches.

By the time the New York legislature decided to sell land on Grand Island in 1824, the concern over religious preference had been neutralized, as the sales were approved without providing preferred status to any potential buyers, including Mordecai Noah. When Noah first submitted his petition in 1820 the chairman of the select committee which handled the bill suggested that the state transfer the whole of Grand Island to Noah, after which he could do with the land whatever he found fit. When selling the island was finally authorized, Noah was competing with eleven other merchants and lawyers who, according to Sarna, “speculated either for themselves or on behalf of a proposed private high school.” After years of waiting, whatever the amount of land that Noah eventually bought (the exact area is not clear), he purchased it with no special status or privileges.<sup>61</sup> In the early republic neither Jews nor any other minority would hold preferred status for colonization schemes. Ethnic colonies were incongruent with principles and values that in later years would meld into a most fundamental ethos of the United States.

Yet another telling context for Noah’s colonization attempt involves the repeated clashes of southern states with their Native American populations after the conclusion of the War of 1812, when western lands were opened for white settlement. In 1830, five years after Ararat’s dedication, President Andrew Jackson elaborated in his annual message on “a portion... of the Southern [Native American] tribes, [which] have lately attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia and Alabama.” The president’s speech explained the intentions of the Indian Removal Act, which had been passed seven months earlier, in May 1830, for the purpose of opening Native American-held lands east of the Mississippi for white settlement. The concept of independence had, of course, a formidable significance in the United States, reverberating also in Noah’s own Jewish “declaration of independence.” The question confronted by the president, and the Union over which he presided, after the states claimed to be the only sovereign within their territories, was “whether the General Government had a right to sustain those people [Native Americans] in their pretensions” for tribal independence. Jackson recognized that the Constitution forbade new states from being formed within the jurisdiction of any other state, “without the consent of its legislature.” Much less, Jackson added, could the federal government “allow a foreign and independent government [i.e. a Native American nation] to establish itself” within an existing state. Jackson asked rhetorically: “Would the people of New York permit each remnant of the Six Nations within her borders to declare itself an independent people under the protection of the United States? Could the Indians establish a separate republic on each of their reservations in Ohio?” Perpetuating Jackson’s reasoning, one might have asked if the people of New York would permit *Jews* within the state’s borders to declare themselves an independent people under the protection of the United States? Could *Jews* establish a separate republic, even

only a semiautonomous polity, within the borders of an existing state? Jackson had no doubts as to what New Yorkers would feel about such questions and what they would do if confronted with such dilemmas.

The connection of the political and constitutional questions pertaining to Native Americans' autonomy with the attempt to colonize Jews in Ararat is particularly telling once we realize that Noah was convinced that the lost Jewish tribes "were the ancestors of the Indians of the American Continent." Noah evoked in his proclamation to the Jews and in his Ararat speech an intellectual tradition already three centuries old that connected the ten lost tribes of Israel to Native Americans.<sup>62</sup> Later in his life he would publish a lengthy *Discourse on the Evidences of the American Indians being the Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel* (1837), but already in 1825 Noah speculated that the Hebrews who had suffered under "Egyptian bondage... bent their course in a northwest direction, which brought them within a few leagues of the American Continent and which they finally reached."<sup>63</sup> "Should we be right in our conjecture," Noah said, then the Jews would be "the first of people in the old world, and the rightful inheritors of the new."<sup>64</sup> The presence of Native American Chief Red Jacket in Ararat's dedication attests to Noah's robust belief in this genealogical theory. At the time this connection might have seemed to make a strong case for historical rights of Jewish settlement in America, but in retrospect it seems unfortunate: Both Native Americans and Jews would suffer much agony in coming years before being offered national solutions that would, at least partially, enable them to turn their backs on their troubled pasts.

In attempting to situate Ararat within the context of Native American tribes' struggle for autonomy and independence within a Union still oriented to states' rights, we should pay heed to President Jackson's view of ethnic groups who wished to declare themselves independent and establish separate republics within existing states. Jackson's assertion on Congress's inability to "restrict" or "dismember" states through constitutional power took for granted American states' intolerance toward attempts to preserve, not to mention gain new and unprecedented, sovereignty and autonomy within their respective jurisdictions. The greatest innovation of the American Constitution—arguably of American political thought—was the separation and distribution of federal and state sovereign power. The opposition to further competing sovereignties within this already intricate federal system, similar to the potential threat that Ararat might pose were it to go beyond the drawing board, was entrenched on all levels of government in the United States and in American political philosophy. Once sovereignty was divided between the federal and state sphere of power, no room was left for further divisions.

## Conclusion

On 26 October 1825, a month and a half after Ararat's dedication, the construction of the Erie Canal, connecting the Great Lakes to the Hudson River, was completed. An unprecedented feat of engineering and entrepreneurial vision, the historic event was marked by a statewide "Grand Celebration," culminating in a flotilla of boats sailing from Buffalo to New York City. At the end of the spectacular sail, New York's Governor De Witt Clinton would ceremonially pour Lake Erie water into New York Harbor to mark the "Wedding of the Waters." Mordecai Noah, presumably still optimistic about the prospects of his colonization venture, wished to sail in the convoy, navigating a sailboat he named, not surprisingly, "Noah's Ark." Like its biblical namesake, the hull would be "freighted with all manner of animals, and creeping things"; the craft would "enter the Canal from Lake Erie on the eighteenth" and arrive at New York City with the rest of the celebratory fleet.<sup>65</sup> Once more, reporters found it necessary to reassure readers that the account "in relation to Noah's Ark, was as serious as sober prose could make it." Even three days after the flotilla sailed from Albany, the *Boston Patriot* reported that "the Ark is not only completed, but that several animals have already been gathered into it, that many more are in readiness to take refuge therein." The biblical reenactment of the ark harboring representatives of various species of animals and birds (this time, however, *leaving* Ararat for its destination) was supposed to take place—was the reporter writing tongue in cheek?—"when the waters shall cover the dry land."<sup>66</sup> That, however, would never happen. The *Essex Register* confirmed on 10 November that "Noah's Ark, from Ararat, having the bears and Indians, fell behind, and did not arrive in Albany in season to be taken in tow."<sup>67</sup> The *New Hampshire Sentinel* could inform its readers that the mishap occurred when the ark "met with an accident in coming through the locks, which prevented her joining the Canal procession."<sup>68</sup>

Noah's failure to sail his ark on time for the grand procession was symbolic in light of Ararat's meltdown. As a contemporary commented two years after the marvelous dedication of the Hebrew city, "the affair died away." While Noah never lost hope of ingathering the people of Israel, his future plans called for settling Ottoman Palestine as a Jewish homeland. What seemed in the first half of the nineteenth century an unrealistic utopia was to become by the end of the nineteenth century the pragmatic political program of modern Zionism. A few decades later, that utopia would become a reality. Could Noah's earlier plan to settle the Jews in America have reaped similar success?

Historians in the past attributed Ararat's failure to Noah's inability to convince the Jews of Europe to flock to his projected city of refuge in America. However, a fundamental problem of Noah's scheme was that it opposed, or at least was perceived as opposing, central currents in American political culture. Despite Noah's attempts to depict his project as a humane, rational,

enlightened, and republican Jewish declaration of independence, central attributes in his scheme simply could not pass public scrutiny. An attempt to congregate a religious and ethnic minority on an island located within the jurisdiction of an existing state was perceived as a challenge that American federacy would not tolerate. There were broad yet strict limits to what the potent biblical imagination of the early American republic could accomplish.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Noah's speech at the cornerstone of Ararat is reprinted in the *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (PAJHS)* 21 (1913): 230–252.

<sup>2</sup>Jonathan Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981). For Noah as proto-Zionist see Jacob Rader Marcus, ed., *The Jew in the American World* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 179. See also Richard H. Popkin, "Mordecai Noah, The Abbé Grégoire, and the Paris Sanhedrin," *Modern Judaism* 2 (1982): 131–148.

<sup>3</sup>See also Michael Feldberg, "Noah's Second Landing at Ararat," in *Blessings of Freedom*, ed. Michael Feldberg (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 2002), 206–207; Abraham Kaplan, *From the Ends of the Earth: Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1991). When Ararat is mentioned in general histories of nineteenth-century America, such as Daniel Howe's Pulitzer Prize-winning *What Hath God Wrought* and Walter McDougall's acclaimed *Throes of Democracy*, it is only in passing. Howe mentions Ararat to illustrate the bustling apocalyptic expectations in the Burned-Over District; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America: 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 301; Walter McDougall does so for its representativeness of the convergence of capitalistic market forces and utopian schemes in early nineteenth-century America; McDougall, *Throes of Democracy: The American Civil War Era* (New York: Harper, 2007), 120.

<sup>4</sup>Similarly, Walter McDougall points out that Ararat could "not have been more American." McDougall, 120.

<sup>5</sup>Jonathan Sarna persuasively argues that Noah had misread the world Jewish situation; Sarna, 74. Consequently, Howe points out that "European Jewish opinion was not prepared to entertain [Noah's] plan," Howe, 301. For a view of Ararat's failure due to Noah's charlatanism see James L. Erwin, *Declarations of Independence: Encyclopedia of American Autonomous and Secessionist Movements* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2007), 8.

<sup>6</sup>Popkin, who places Ararat within the context of European and Enlightenment ideas, seems to realize that one needs to understand Noah's ideas, Ararat, and its ultimate failure within an American framework; "Mordecai Noah, The Abbé Grégoire, and the Paris Sanhedrin."

<sup>7</sup>Although we know that Noah bought land on Grand Island, we do not know exactly how much. Sarna, 62, 65.

<sup>8</sup>The events of the day, including transcriptions of Noah's speech and proclamation, were reprinted in many newspapers. For example, see the *Essex Register* (26 September 1825): 2. Popkin, op. cit., 134.

<sup>9</sup>Sarna, op. cit.; Popkin, op. cit.

- <sup>10</sup>For a recent analysis of colonial biblicism see *Hebraic Political Studies* 4, no.2 (2009), special volume on “Hebraic and Old Testament Politics in Colonial America.”
- <sup>11</sup>Perry Miller, quoted in Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll, *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 5–6.
- <sup>12</sup>Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York: Bnpublishing.com, 2008), 13.
- <sup>13</sup>Herman Melville, *White-Jacket* (London: Richard Bentley, 1850), Ch. 27.
- <sup>14</sup>Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).
- <sup>15</sup>Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, “‘The Divine Right of Republics’: Hebraic Republicanism and the Debate over Kingless Government in Revolutionary America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2009): 535–564.
- <sup>16</sup>Eran Shalev, “A Perfect Republic: The Mosaic Constitution in Revolutionary New England,” *New England Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (2009): 235–263.
- <sup>17</sup>Quote in Daniel J. Elazar, “Deuteronomy as Israel’s Ancient Constitution: Some Preliminary Reflections,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 4, no.1 (1992): 3–39, quote on p. 3.
- <sup>18</sup>For a comparative view of nationalism and chosenness see William Hutchinson and Hartmut Lehman, eds., *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International Press, 1994).
- <sup>19</sup>Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 64.
- <sup>20</sup>Demonstrating ironically how different the modern judge was from the biblical judge, Benjamin Seixas, the *pro tem* secretary of Ararat, signed as “judge.”
- <sup>21</sup>Mordecai Noah, *The Select Writings of Mordecai Noah*, ed. Michael Schuldiner and Daniel J. Kleinfeld (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999), 113.
- <sup>22</sup>“Noah’s Proclamation,” *Salem Gazette* (27 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>23</sup>Sarna, *op. cit.*, 70.
- <sup>24</sup>Noah, *Writings*, 105, 109, 113.
- <sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 110.
- <sup>26</sup>“Interesting news,” *Connecticut Courant* (27 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>27</sup>“Revival of the Jewish Government,” *Essex Register* (26 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>28</sup>Richard B. Kielbowicz, “The Press, Post Office, and Flow of News in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 3 (1983): 255–280.
- <sup>29</sup>*Middlesex Gazette* (28 September 1825): 3.
- <sup>30</sup>“To your Tents, O Israel,” *Village Register* (29 September 1825): 3.
- <sup>31</sup>“Major Noah,” *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* (1 October 1825): 2.
- <sup>32</sup>*Ithaca Journal* (28 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>33</sup>“Grand Island,” *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* (10 June 1826): 1.
- <sup>34</sup>“Revival of the Jewish Government,” *Essex Register* (26 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>35</sup>“Noah’s Proclamation,” *Salem Gazette* (27 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>36</sup>“Grand Island,” *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* (10 June 1826): 1.
- <sup>37</sup>*Rhode Island Republican* (29 September 1825): 3; *Salem Gazette* (2 March 1827): 3.
- <sup>38</sup>*Haverhill Gazette* (8 October 1825): 2.
- <sup>39</sup>“Another Potentate,” *Essex Register* (26 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>40</sup>“City of Ararat,” *Farmer’s Cabinet* (1 October 1825): 2.
- <sup>41</sup>“The Hebrew City,” *Eastern Argus* (27 September 1825): 1; *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* (1 October 1825): 2; *Rhode Island Republican* (29 September 1825): 3.

- <sup>42</sup>*Haverhill Gazette* (8 October 1825): 2. Noah, *PAJHS* 21 (1913): 246.
- <sup>43</sup>*Rhode Island Republican* (29 September 1825): 3.
- <sup>44</sup>“Another Potentate,” *North Star* (11 October 1825): 3.
- <sup>45</sup>*Rhode Island Republican* (29 September 1825): 3.
- <sup>46</sup>*Salem Gazette* (2 March 1827): 3.
- <sup>47</sup>“The Hebrew City,” *Eastern Argus* (27 September 1825): 1.
- <sup>48</sup>“Revival of the Jewish Government,” *Ithaca Journal* (21 September 1825): 2.
- <sup>49</sup>The classic study is still Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York State, 1800–1850* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1965); See also Johnson and Wilentz, op. cit.
- <sup>50</sup>Howe, op. cit., 301.
- <sup>51</sup>“Mount Ararat and New Jerusalem,” *New Hampshire Gazette* (1 November 1825): 2.
- <sup>52</sup>Johnson and Wilentz, op. cit.
- <sup>53</sup>For the evangelicalism and nineteenth-century social reform see Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- <sup>54</sup>Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607–1876* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 174. On the prospects for Native Americans in the aftermath of the War of 1812 see Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Kansas City: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 5–9.
- <sup>55</sup>Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1940), 131, 133.
- <sup>56</sup>“Emigrant Societies,” *Niles Register* (23 May 1818): 213.
- <sup>57</sup>“Credit for Lands to Emigrants,” *Annals of Congress* 31 (15 Cong., I sess.), 1013–1014; “Irish Emigrant’s Petition,” *Annals of Congress* 31(15 Cong., I sess.), 1053–1054.
- <sup>58</sup>Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History*, 132.
- <sup>59</sup>Peter S. Onuf, “Territories and Statehood,” in *Encyclopedia of American Political History*, vol. 3, ed. Jack P. Greene (1984), 1283–1304. See also Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607–1788* (New York: Norton, 1986).
- <sup>60</sup>Quoted in Sarna, 62.
- <sup>61</sup>Sarna, op. cit., 62–63, 65.
- <sup>62</sup>Shalom Goldman, *God’s Sacred Tongue: Hebrew and the American Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 15–30.
- <sup>63</sup>Mordecai Noah, *Discourse on the Evidences of the American Indians being the Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel* (1837). Noah’s speech, *PAJHS* 21 (1913): 230–252, quote on 248.
- <sup>64</sup>Noah’s speech, *PAJHS* 21 (1913): 249; this may be why Noah planned to have “young Indian hunters of the Seneca tribe, dressed in their costume,” with him at the celebration at New York City. *New Hampshire Sentinel* (18 November 1825): 4.
- <sup>65</sup>“From Ararat,” *Boston Commercial Gazette* (6 October 1825): 2.
- <sup>66</sup>*Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser* (29 October 1825): 1.
- <sup>67</sup>“Grand Canal Celebration,” *Essex Register* (10 November 1825): 1.
- <sup>68</sup>*New Hampshire Sentinel* (18 November 1825): 4. Even after Grand Island’s failure, Noah still retained Noah’s Ark on his newspaper masthead.