David Lopez Jr.: Builder, Industrialist, and Defender of the Confederacy

Barry Stiefel

David Lopez Jr. (1809–1884), a pillar of Charleston’s Jewish community during the mid nineteenth century, was a prominent builder in an age when Jews had not yet ventured into the building trades. In addition to residences, commercial and public buildings, and even churches, Lopez’s building credits include Institute Hall, where the Ordinance of Secession was signed in 1860. Lopez also served as South Carolina’s general superintendent of state works during the “War Between the States,” as he would have called it. His most noteworthy accomplishment from the perspective of Jewish history was the construction of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) in 1839–1841, the first synagogue built by a practicing Jew in the Americas. Throughout his adult life, Lopez lived and worked in the midst of a deeply divided Jewish community, where early reformers struggled against traditionalists to define what American Jewish identity should be. He too became engrossed within the conflict. His KKBE served as a stage on which the drama of the reformer-traditionalist clash took place. The life story of this extraordinary Jew, builder, and Confederate that thoroughly investigates the primary sources—separating fact from the accumulated myths in the handful of secondary sources that mention him—has yet to be written. His merchant (half) great-uncle, Aaron Lopez (1731–1782) of Newport, Rhode Island, has so far been the primary focus of this prolific family. David Jr.’s older sister, Sally Lopez (1806–1902), has received attention as the founder, in 1838, of the second Jewish Sunday School in America. However, with the exception of his ornate tombstone, no monument honoring this Southern Jewish hero’s accomplishments has been erected. David Jr.’s time for recognition has come.

Early Life

David Lopez Jr. was born on 16 January 1809, the tenth of twelve children. He hardly knew his father and namesake, who died in 1812 at the age of sixty-two (1750–1812), two years after David Jr.’s birth. He was raised by his mother, Priscilla Moses Lopez (1775–1866), his older siblings, and household slaves.
age two, David Jr. was already a slaveholder in his own right. In his father’s will he was “bequeath[ed] in Manner aforesaid My Negro Boy Named Mathew (the Child of Nancy) and also two Union Bank Shares...” David Sr. was a past president of KKBE as well as founding president of Charleston’s Hebrew Orphan Society.

We can assume that the Lopez family was religious, following the Sephardic traditions of their ancestors. In an interview by Barnett Elzas, Sally Lopez (ca. 1900) reminisced about another family, the Benjamins—specifically Philip and his famous son, Judah P. (1811–1884)—and noted they were not as strict as her family since they kept their store open on the Sabbath. These two families were on opposite sides of the first schism between reformers and traditionalists in America: the Lopezes belonged to the traditionalist faction of KKBE and the Benjamins to the Reformed Society of Israelites. However, this did not alienate individuals from each other. In 1825, not long after the reformers split from KKBE, David Jr.’s eldest brother Moses (1794–1849) provided financial assistance to the Benjamin family so that Judah could attend Yale College. Surely, David Jr. was acquainted with Judah, since they were only separated by two years, though direct documentation is lacking.
At the College of Charleston’s Special Collections is a copy of *Seder Parashiyyot ve-haftarot kol ha-shanah / Quinque Libri Mosis*, published in Amsterdam ca. 1726 (Figure 2). It is a Hebrew Bible, or *humash*, produced in six volumes with some notes and commentaries in Spanish. Congregants use *humashim* (plural) to follow along with a Torah-reading service. Each volume contains one of the Five Books of Moses, or Pentateuch, with the sixth containing the *haftarot*. This particular copy was donated to the College of Charleston by Thomas J. Tobias (1906–1970), a Jewish Charlestonian, local historian, and Lopez relative. On the back cover of each volume are pasted bookplates by David Lopez. It is unknown when Lopez may have used this *humash* set. Due to the lingual contents, one can assume that he was likely familiar with Hebrew and Spanish—the languages of his ancestors—in addition to English; and that he may have brought the books with him to KKBE for services. From 1838 survives an oil painting (currently in the possession of KKBE) by Solomon N. Carvalho (1815–1897), produced from memory shortly after the great Charleston fire of that year, illustrating the synagogue Lopez attended as a youth. The only known literary description, dating from 1833, is by a visiting gentile observer:

I went to the Jews’ Synagogue, it being … their Sabbath, to see the ceremonies of the Hebrew Church. The Synagogue outside, is very much like all our churches. Inside, there was in the centre of an area a sort of elliptical staging [bimah] on which were mounted the Rabbi, chanting, praying and reading, all in Hebrew, —not much to my edification assuredly, for all that I could understand of the whole service was “the President of the United States and his Excellency the Governor of South Carolina,” a prayer probably uttered in the same breath for each. The chants were occasionally ended by the chorus of the Jews present, whose numbers were about one hundred or more. The noise then was almost deafening for man, woman, and child screamed quite as loud as their voices would permit. The men and boys all had over their shoulders, or twined around their bodies, a short shawl [tallit]—some of silk, some of worsted, and some of woolen, I believe. All the men kept their hats on, even the Rabbi. During the services a kind of cymbal, or rattle [Torah scroll decorated with a crown that was ornamented with small bells] was carried round the church by the Rabbis, and then deposited in the ark of the covenant, which was in the place where the pulpit usually is in our churches. Boys and men kept constantly going out and coming in. Many very pretty Jewesses were in the galleries.5

From the painting (Figure 3) and description, we can almost see young David Jr. dressed in his finest Sabbath clothing, with a tallit and hat, participating in the commotion. He would have had a volume of the *Parashiyyot ve-haftarot kol ha-shanah / Quinque Libri Mosis* chumash in his hand and a look of pride on his face as the Torah scrolls were taken in and out of the ark. This ark, dating from 1799, was built due to the initiative of his father, David
Lopez, Sr., when he was president, so it served to remind David Jr. of the father he had never known.6

In 1832, at age twenty-one, David Jr. married his first wife, Catherine Dobyn Hinton (1814–1843) of Edgefield, South Carolina. Catherine was a gentile who did not convert, which was surprising, considering Lopez’s religious background. However, although intermarriages were socially frowned upon, they were not uncommon in early American history. Lopez had six children with Catherine, two of whom died in infancy. A survey of his family tree reveals that of his siblings who married, all chose Jewish spouses, as did (nearly) all of Lopez’s children, from both his first marriage to Catherine and later, after Catherine’s death, his second, in 1846, to Rebecca Moise (1814–1858).7 In an intermarried family, where the husband was Jewish, he would sometimes continue as an active member of a synagogue, which is what Lopez did. Indeed, New Orleans’s Sephardic congregation and sister to KKBE, Shaarai Chesed, had many congregants like this.8

We know nothing about Lopez’s courtship and marriage to Catherine, nor do we know what took him away from Charleston, but his first-born son, John Hinton Lopez (1833–1884), was born in Spirit Creek, Georgia, near Edgefield. By 1834, the Lopezes were back in Charleston, where David officially launched his career with advertisements in local newspapers, including the Southern Patriot:

Carpenter & Joiner: Subscriber having returned to Charleston, will carry on the CARPENTER and JOINER’S business in all their branches and hopes by close personal attention, neatness, dispatch and Punctuality, to merit a share of pub. patronage.

David Lopez9

Where did Lopez learn how to be a carpenter and builder? His father had owned a store on King Street that sold architectural ornaments (among other things), and his merchant great uncle, Aaron Lopez, also toiled in building and ship construction, though no significant buildings are attributed to him. Aaron experimented in what today is called prefabricated housing.10 These family role models, however, had both died years before David Jr. came of age, and no one else close to him is known to have engaged in the profession. Prior to the eighteenth century, dating back to the Middle Ages in Christian Europe, Jews did not work in the building trades because they were not permitted to join guilds. The exceptions were a few “jacks of all trades, masters of none,” restricted to the meager clientele of the Jewish quarter; or Jews who converted to Christianity at some point in their lives, such as Balthasar da Fonseca (who returned to Judaism in seventeenth-century Dutch Brazil).11 Although the collapse of the guild system in the eighteenth century ended the restrictions of Jews from the building trades,
decades passed before they as a group considered it a viable profession. For instance, as a youth (ca. 1800), Mordecai M. Noah (1785–1851) apprenticed in New York as a “carver and gilder” and would have made exquisite furniture and luxurious adornments in the interior rooms of the upper class. Instead, he sought higher education and became a lawyer, journalist, and diplomat.¹²

Though this investigation cannot confirm it, circumstances suggest that Lopez’s teacher was not Jewish. Could this teacher have been Mr. Hinton, Lopez’s father-in-law?¹³ At this time the answer remains a mystery. No matter how he learned, Lopez’s trade quickly proved fruitful. Later in 1834 he announced in the newspapers:

Wanted Immediately,

Five or 6 good CARPENTERS, for whom good wages will be punctually paid and constant employment given. Inquire of the subscriber at 29 Broad St.

David Lopez¹⁴

Three years later, Lopez purchased his first slaves, a total of five, including one by the name of Kit (also known as Christopher) who is specifically mentioned as “a carpenter by trade.”¹⁵ It is at this time that Lopez constructed his earliest known building, 153–155 Queen Street, which he owned and leased as apartments (Figure 4).¹⁶ He also made ends meet as a supplier of building materials for other contractors.¹⁷ With the additional slave and the white help he found from his first advertisement, Lopez was now in an excellent position for the next phase of his career in the aftermath of the catastrophic fire that decimated Charleston in 1838.

Reconstruction After the Fire of 1838

While disastrous for Charleston, the conflagration of 28 April 1838 launched Lopez’s career. Indeed, he became so busy that the following year he purchased a second enslaved carpenter, named George.¹⁸ Lopez’s first projects included his own house on South Street and apartments at 18–20 Wentworth

Figure 4: 153–155 Queen Street, built in 1837–1838 by David Lopez, Jr. It is the earliest known building attributed to him.

Photograph by the author.
Street, which he co-owned with his (future) brother-in-law Isaac Moise (1800–1857). Lopez’s house on South Street included a rare innovation for Charleston—indoor plumbing that provided hot and cold water to all three floors of the building. We can also assume that Lopez built and repaired numerous other structures as the city recovered. However, his big break came when he obtained the contract for KKBE’s second synagogue, his first architecturally significant project.

Whether Lopez was personally approached about the synagogue project, heard about it by word-of-mouth, or simply read about it in newspaper advertisements is unclear. However, New York architect Cyrus L. Warner submitted the winning bid for a Greek Revival design, with Tappan & Noble, a local firm, assisting. The new synagogue was built on the same parcel as the first, reusing the old iron fence and gate on Hasell Street that survived the fire. It may seem perplexing to us that Greek Revival would be selected for the new synagogue’s architecture, considering the historic origins of the style and the ancient conflict Judaism has had with Hellenistic culture (such as the Maccabean Revolt, 167–160 BCE). However, this was not at the forefront of the congregation’s minds when Warner’s proposal was approved. During the early nineteenth century, Greek Revival represented the democracy of the young American Republic, a sentiment Charleston’s Jews shared. New government buildings, such as Philadelphia’s Second Bank of the United States (built 1816), used this style. Greek Revival became the style of choice for new construction in the area affected by the fire. Greek Revival-style churches dot the landscape of Charleston’s historic urban core. Other American Greek Revival synagogues from the period include Baltimore’s Lloyd Street Synagogue (built 1845) and New Orleans’s Nefuzoth Yehuda (built 1857).

Signed on 25 September 1839, KKBE’s contract with Lopez to build the sanctuary set a historical precedent: This was the first synagogue in the Americas erected by a practicing Jew (Figure 5). The architectural history of KKBE has been studied and scrutinized in great detail. What this analysis will add are specific nuances pertaining to Lopez, slavery, and special furnishings, such as the infamous organ. It has been assumed, and rightly so, that slaves were involved in the building of KKBE. Based on conjecture, one can
infer that Lopez’s slaves—including, most likely, Kit and George, carpenters by training—worked on the building. However, Lopez’s slaves were not the only ones involved. Recorded in the KKBE minute book—the official minutes of the congregation’s meetings—on 3 November 1839 is a “Negro hire,” a slave rented from someone else, at a cost of $48. On 27 December 1840, as part of the cleanup and rebuilding effort we find “a colored man, who works with Hayden & Gregg [Jewelers], recommended by Mr. [?] Levy, had offered to repair the [silver] rimonim [Torah scroll finials], and he would ask the sanction of the Board to employ him…” A few months later, on 7 March 1841, we find a motion for the congregation’s secretary to “employ Mr. Lazarus’s colored man Beverly in Synagogue on [a] trial [period]” to paint the Ten Commandments and Thirteen Articles of Faith on the east wall under the supervision of “Rev. Hasan.” This documentation reveals that in some instances, highly skilled slaves were also involved in the making and maintaining of synagogue ritual objects and art. Moreover, these slaves did not attend KKBE for purposes of worship, since Charleston Jewry did not try to convert them to Judaism. If they practiced any religion openly it was, most likely, a sect of Protestantism.

A discussion of KKBE’s ritual objects for the 1841 building must include its organ and the controversy that ensued, resulting in the traditionalist faction breaking away and forming congregation Shearit Israel. In the minute book, a proposed organ for the sanctuary is repeatedly discussed during July and August of 1840. Since Lopez was the synagogue’s builder, it is intriguing to wonder what his position was on the proposed instrument. As it turns out, Lopez was not in Charleston during that time. On 2 September 1840, the minute book references a letter by Lopez to the KKBE’s executive board explaining that he was in New York, supervising the construction of the hechal—the Sephardic term for ark, or aron ha-kodesh. Overseeing the hechal’s construction may have been personally important to Lopez, considering the connection his father had with the one in the previous synagogue. Additionally, this note supports the assumption of architectural historian Gene Waddell that KKBE’s hechal imitates the one at New York’s Sephardic synagogue, Shearith Israel. Erben & Company of New York, one of the most prolific organ builders in nineteenth-century America, made KKBE’s organ. The question begs to be asked, since Lopez was in New York, was he also KKBE’s representative who approached Henry Erben (1800–1884) about purchasing an organ? Records for Erben & Company could not be located.

While we know that Lopez and his family left KKBE with the traditionalist minority to form Shearit Israel of Charleston, the following evidence suggests that the controversy, or at least its beginning part, is far more complicated than conventionally portrayed. The congregation at first did not own KKBE’s organ. Members within KKBE who were interested in an organ formed the Hebrew Harmonic Society, which raised funds for the instrument’s purchase.
and “loaned” it to the congregation. Listed as members of this society on 1 July 1841 are David Lopez Jr. and his brother, Moses.31 There may have been other families like the Lopezes who were at first receptive to the organ and then changed their minds. The precedent for organs in synagogues of Germany, France, and Bohemia is cited in the minute book, although specific congregations are not mentioned. A review of published sources has revealed that the following synagogues had permanent organs at the time KKBE installed theirs: French synagogues in Marseilles and Nancy, France (both built ca. 1840); German synagogues in Seessen (built 1810) and Hamburg (built 1818); and the Altshul in Prague (built in the mid-1200s, with the organ installed in 1837). Other synagogues, such as Prague’s Alteneushul (built ca. 1290) and Meisel Synagogue (built ca. 1594), had a transportable organ at one time or another.32 Not mentioned is Italy, with the Scuola Spagnola of Venice (built ca. 1589, with an organ installed in 1830). However, only those in Seessen and Hamburg, and the Altshul in Prague, are confirmed as declaring themselves Reform in the early 1840s.33 The others, which constitute a slight majority of synagogues with organs, had not done so at that time. Indeed, in 1865, Sephardic (Orthodox) Mikve Israel of Curacao installed an organ to bring back members who had left it for Temple Emanuel, the island’s self-declared Reform congregation. Temple Emanuel did not complete its building until 1867.34 New York’s Shearith Israel, North America’s first and oldest congregation, and always “officially” adherent to Sephardic Orthodoxy, installed an organ in 1881 in its former synagogue on Nineteenth Street.35

Finally, in respect to the issue of synagogue organs, there was also debate concerning when the instrument could be played. At Prague’s Alteneushul and Meisel Synagogue, as well as New York’s Shearith Israel, organ playing did not occur on the Sabbath and holidays. In others, such as Curacao’s Mikve Israel, a gentile was hired to play on these special days. KKBE’s organ was played on the Sabbath and holidays between 1841 and 1843 by a Jewish organist, C.A. Dacosta. However, we find in the minute book that this practice changed in July 1843:

Resolved - That the first Hebrew Hymn known as Mizmor Ledavid and Lecha Dody, which, on & after the consecration of the Synagogue were sung with the Organ, may again be sung with the same, but that, of the Mizmor Shir Leyom Hashabat, which is the proper beginning of the Sabbath, the Organ must cease playing & must not again be used until the following Friday Evening; that these regulations be considered as the proper regulations of the Synagogue, & that the services of Mr. [C.A.] Dacosta will not be required after the two above named Hymns on Friday Evening, nor on the Sabbath day…. Unanimously adopted.36
After the split of Orthodox Shearit Israel, there were still traditionalists in KKBE who felt musical accompaniment on the Sabbath and holidays was inappropriate. Playing the organ on these special days did eventually resume. The discussion of Reform Judaism and the role organs had during these early years is a topic that needs to be revisited.

In 1846, Shearit Israel was incorporated by South Carolina, with David Jr.’s brother, Moses Lopez, as a signatory. The following year the congregation built a synagogue on Wentworth Street (Figure 6). David Jr. did not build this synagogue, however. Instead we find his nephew, David Lopez Cohen (1820–1893), acknowledged as the builder. This synagogue was the second in the Americas to have been built by a practicing Jew. It is probable that Cohen learned this trade from his uncle, but further research is warranted to understand the dynamics of their relationship. That Cohen was a member of KKBE as of January 1847 raises the question of whether this was exclusively a business relationship or if he, among other Jewish Charlestonians, may have had dual memberships with KKBE and Shearit Israel. Cohen also had a second profession: trading slaves between Charleston and Savannah and, to a lesser extent, New Orleans. By 1850, Cohen had relocated to Savannah with his family and ten slaves, where in 1852–1853 he conducted the renovation work for Mickve Israel’s synagogue. Among his other projects in Savannah are St. Andrew’s Hall (built 1850), St. John’s Episcopal Church (built 1851–1853), 18–32 East Taylor Street (built 1852), 108 East Jones Street (built 1855), Black Star Line Wharf (built 1872), and a warehouse for the United Hydraulic Cotton Press Company (built 1874). It is clear that Cohen was as ambitious as his uncle. David Lopez Jr.’s sons, John Hinton Lopez and Moses E. Lopez (1836–1907), also learned their father’s profession, eventually forming D. Lopez & Sons. John Hinton Lopez is attributed as the builder for 30, 32, and 34 Montagu Street (all built ca. 1854), where he and his family resided (34 Montagu), as well as Ahren’s Grocery Building at 237 King Street (built 1870).

The records for Shearit Israel could not be located. David Lopez Jr. may have declined the opportunity to build the breakaway synagogue because his
first wife, Catherine, who died 17 June 1843 without having converted to Judaism, was refused burial in Shearit Israel’s new cemetery. Therefore, Lopez purchased a plot of land adjacent to the cemetery on Coming Street for his wife and to serve as a family burial ground (Figure 7). His feelings for Charleston’s new Jewish congregation, with whom he sided at the end of the organ controversy, were most certainly dampened. Nonetheless, he involved himself in communal organizations. In the September 1847 issue of the Occident and American Jewish Advocate—the same edition that mentions Cohen as the builder of Shearit Israel—Lopez is listed as one of the managers for the “Ball for the Benefit of the Hebrew Benevolent Society,” which took place 18 March of that year. He also faithfully maintained his membership with Charleston’s Hebrew Orphan Society, with which he had been involved since 1834.

In 1846, the same year that Shearit Israel was officially incorporated, Lopez married his second wife, Rebecca Moise, the daughter of Aaron and Sarah Moise, with whom he had six children, two of whom died in infancy. According to her past suitors, which included Joseph Lyons (1813–1839), she was a “sweetheart.” Rebecca was Jewish; however, we find another cross-confessional relationship outside of the synagogue, besides the one mentioned earlier with the Benjamin family and the Reformed Society of Israelites. The Moise family was composed of prominent reformers and was active within KKBE. Indeed, in a testimonial at the Rev. Gustav Poznanski’s retirement as hazzan in 1850, Aaron Moise, Lopez’s father-in-law, could only offer praises. Nonetheless, his relationship with Lopez was, most likely, cordial. Dated from 1847 is a bill of sale by Lopez for a slave “named Nancy and her three children,” witnessed by Aaron Moise.

From the 1840s, Lopez was an active member of the local Democratic Party, as well as non-Jewish organizations such as the Apprentice Library and Work House. Following the death of South Carolina’s distinguished Senator John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), Lopez was appointed to the mayor’s committee that oversaw preparations for the procession and burial. In 1846, Lopez chaired Charleston’s Board of Fire Masters, though the date of his appointment is not
known, since the earliest surviving Board of Fire Masters records date from 1848. The state armory that he built and oversaw in Greenville during the Civil War was also plumbed with six hundred feet of wood piping and used a fire engine on loan from Charleston’s Vigilant Fire Engine Company. Based on this suggestive evidence, Lopez was most likely a local pioneer in fire safety practices and design. He probably became receptive to fire prevention after losing property due to fire in 1838, 1851, and 1861.

**Halcyon Days for Lopez’s Building Career**

The 1850s and 1860s were the height of Lopez’s career. This era began with another residence built in 1852 at 192 Queen Street, called the Lopez House, in the Carpenter Gothic style. Next, and in that same year, was the commercial building Browning & Leman Department Store, 225–227 King Street. Architect Edward C. Jones designed the four-story neoclassical building, which was demolished in 1939 to make way for the Riviera Theatre. So majestic was the edifice in the antebellum South that its grand opening was reported in newspapers as far away as Memphis. The *Memphis Daily Appeal* praised it:

> Charleston in the construction of this building, will show to our friends at home and abroad that we have mechanics here among us of taste and capacity, who are able to execute with the greatest dispatch buildings on an extensive and ornamental plan, and it affords us pleasure in the brief notice of this building, to compliment the general contractor, Mr. David Lopez, Mr. C. C. Trumbo, bricklayer, and Mr. Daly, the plasterer.

Following the completion of the Browning & Leman Department Store, Lopez worked on the Farmers’ & Exchange Bank, another project in 1853–1854 that furthered his reputation. Designed in the Moorish Revival style by primary architect Edward C. Jones and his assistant, Francis D. Lee, the Farmers’ & Exchange Bank is a sophisticated, architectural novelty. In 1973 the edifice was listed as a National Historic Landmark—the country’s highest honor for a historic building (*Figure 8*) — not only due to its unusual architecture but also because of the quality of its construction by Lopez and C. C. Trumbo. Jones also served as the architect for 30, 32, and

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*Figure 8: Farmers’ & Exchange Bank, 141 East Bay Street, built by David Lopez, Jr. in 1853–1854. Photograph by the author.*
34 Montagu Street, built by John Hinton Lopez (ca. 1854). Together, David Lopez Jr., C. C. Trumbo, Francis D. Lee, and Edward C. Jones developed a synergetic relationship that erected exquisite buildings. This prepared them for their next project, also in 1854, which became one of the most important buildings of mid-nineteenth-century American history: Institute Hall.

Funded by the South Carolina Institute, a society whose purpose was to promote the development of industry and agriculture in the state, the Italianate-style building served as a convention center. Its most famous convention was that of the Ordinance of Secession, ratified there on 20 December 1860. The ordinance declared that the state was no longer part of the Union and thus its own independent country. Institute Hall was the Confederacy’s unofficial Independence Hall and was renamed Secession Hall (Figure 9). In 1861, the building was destroyed by fire while the Union Army laid siege to the city.

In 1858–1859, Lopez again worked with architect Jones on another exceptional project: the building of Zion Presbyterian Church, a congregation of slaves, formerly located on the southeast corner of Meeting and Calhoun Streets. It was, most likely, the second church in the Americas built by a practicing Jew (the first being St. John’s Episcopal Church in Savannah, built by David Lopez Cohen in 1851–1853). The congregation was founded in 1850 when the black members of Second Presbyterian Church withdrew with permission to create a
church under white supervision. The client that Lopez and Jones worked with would have been the white elders of Second Presbyterian, since they were the mother church and sponsors. Prominent among this group was the Adger family, including Reverend John B. Adger (1810–1899), who served as a pastor. The Adger and Lopez families were familiar with each other, at least in business. At approximately the same time (ca. 1859) that Lopez built the church, he also worked on a renovation project of Adger’s Wharf.

Zion Presbyterian Church was demolished in 1962 as part of a redevelopment project. Despite the camaraderie Lopez had with Trumbo, Lee, and Jones, he also worked on projects during the 1850s without them. Examples include the Italianate-style S.G. Courtenay & Company Building at 11 Broad Street (built 1856) with Edward B. White as architect. Lopez also worked with others on the steeple addition to St. John’s Lutheran Church (added 1859) and a commercial building at 30 Broad Street (built 1860), though their names have been forgotten. It is also at this juncture that Lopez’s career went through a significant change, coinciding with the death of his second wife, Rebecca, in 1858.

Lopez and Slavery on the Eve of the Civil War

The building of Zion Presbyterian Church, a congregation first of slaves and then freedmen after the Civil War, raises a number of questions pertaining to Lopez and the issue of slavery. Of the primary sources found on him, there is no detailed discussion on slavery in his own words. Based on extant records, such as during the construction of KKBE, we know that Lopez not only used slave labor in his building projects but that at least some of his slaves were skilled tradesmen. Thus his slaves are also deserving of recognition for the projects attributed to Lopez. In 1860, Lopez owned fourteen slaves spanning the ages between two and forty. The five youngest, age twenty and younger, are all listed as “mulatto”; the rest are “black.” Eight of his slaves were also female, and six of these were over the age of twenty. Though children are listed among his slave purchases, such as “Jane and her children Betsy and James” in 1837, we are led to wonder—since we are unable to conduct genetic testing—if Lopez fathered children with his female slaves. The heirs listed in his will, dated from 1882, only mention relatives who were white. Like other slave-owning Jewish Charlestonians, none of his slaves are known to have taken any interest in Judaism. It is possible that some of Lopez’s slaves may have attended Zion Presbyterian Church, since they were involved in its construction. Based on surviving newspaper advertisements, we know that Lopez trained a skilled labor force, at least among his male slaves. In 1864, he advertised in the Charleston Mercury:
$200 Reward

Runaway from Columbia, on the 8th [of May], my carpenter fellow JIM – (calls himself Jas. Linn). He is a dark mulatto, about 5 feet 10 inches high, wears a moustache and stoops very much in his shoulders. He is very insolent in his language and manner when excited. As he went off without the slightest cause, I apprehend that he has been enticed away. He was raised by myself in Charleston, and may have made his way there. The above reward will be paid upon his delivery to any jailor in this State.

David Lopez, May 26

Lopez’s claim to have raised Jim makes one wonder if he had more invested in him than financial return, such as paternal affection, even if they were not genetically related. Nevertheless, in May 1864, emancipation for Lopez’s slaves was just around the corner with Charleston’s surrender in February 1865.

Civil War: Building for the Cause

With the political turmoil of 1860, which included the election of Republican Abraham Lincoln and the Ordinance of Secession at Charleston’s Institute Hall, Lopez’s attention was captivated by the current events taking place around him. Politics and committing himself to the Cause would have been an escape from the death of his second wife, Rebecca, in 1858. In 1859, he had his first state government contract “fitting up the Hall of Representatives” and “Senate Chamber,” which included minor carpentry work and carpeting at the former statehouse, rehabilitated into the Charleston County Courthouse when the capital was transferred to Columbia in 1790. However, this was only the beginning. The Weekly News & Courier reported in February 1897 an eyewitness account from former Charleston Mayor William Ashmead Courtenay (1831–1909) of the Battle of Fort Sumter. The report included a revealing testimonial to Lopez:

Figure 10: Cannons at Fort Moultrie in action during the Civil War. The cannon carriages were rebuilt by David Lopez, Jr. following their vandalism by Major Robert Anderson (1805–1871) in 1861, The Illustrated London News, 6 June 1863, XLII, no. 1207.
(Courtesy Special Collections, College of Charleston Library)
When Major Anderson burned the gun carriage at Fort Moultrie a new trouble was presented. Governor Pickens sent in haste for Mr. David Lopez, the leading carpenter contractor of the city. New heavy gun carriages had to be constructed forthwith. No such thing had ever been built in Charleston. Mr. Lopez replied ‘if I can see one, or the remnants of one, I can build them.’ Seasoned timber had to be found, iron machinery improvised and the work started so that Moultrie’s guns could be restored to their positions. The writer later placed a copy of the latest edition of the United States Ordinance Manual in Lopez’s hands soon after the work begun, which, of course, expedited the work.67

Confirming Courtenay’s account are orders from both Governor Pickens and Brigadier General Pierre G.T. Beauregard, stating that “Major Gwynn will order of Mr. Lopez the pintle-blocks, traverse circles, and platforms required for the new batteries on Sullivan’s Island” (Figure 10).68 Besides Fort Moultrie and Sullivan’s Island, Lopez was also involved in the construction of siege and coastal defense works around the Charleston harbor area, including Mount Pleasant and Morris Island.69 It is clear that Lopez was indispensable in making ready South Carolina’s cannons that initiated the Civil War. As in his construction business, Lopez’s sons John Hinton and Moses E., in addition to his son-in-law Daniel S. Hart (1839–1877), joined him in this new venture.70 All three younger men served in the Palmetto Guards. Moses E. was stationed at Morris Island’s Ironclad Battery for the bombardment on Fort Sumter.71 There probably was not a family more committed to the start of the War Between the States than the Lopezes of Charleston.

In early March 1862, Lopez was officially made South Carolina’s superintendent of state works for “making cannon and so forth.”72 At this point a makeshift armory had already been established in Columbia on the state capital grounds. This would not do for Lopez, and he immediately set about developing a more proper installation. By 12 March, Lopez had found his spot: Greenville, South Carolina. Why Greenville, a small, sleepy town in the South Carolinian Piedmont region, and not Columbia or Charleston, the major cities of the state? This is where the brilliance of Lopez as a builder and project manager exhibits itself. In the mountains around Greenville, particularly around King’s Mountain—an old Revolutionary War battlefield—was iron ore, a necessary resource in the development of weaponry, as well as abundant timber and a steady supply of fresh water from mountain streams. King’s Mountain Iron Company and Nesbit Iron Manufacturing Company, where the ore could be smelted, were only a short distance away. The village was also a terminus on the Greenville-Columbia line of the South Carolina Railroad Company, connecting it to the rest of the state. Materials, weapons, and laborers could be easily transported to where they were needed.73 Furthermore, Lopez argued in his letter to South Carolina’s Department of the Military, the isolated location

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*David Lopez Jr.: Builder, Industrialist, and Defender of the Confederacy* • 67
would not only keep the armory’s employees focused on their work, since they would have no city nearby in which to spend their income on gambling and other vulgar recreational activities, but its remoteness and obscurity would be less likely to draw the attention of the enemy. Vardry McBee (1775–1864), a prominent landowner in the region, donated twenty acres of land to the state for the armory, on which Lopez built a complex of more than fifteen buildings. These included a carpentry shop, small arms shop, machinist shop, blacksmith, foundry, office, smokehouse, storehouses, barracks, hospital, kitchens, stables, and tool houses. The armory was small in comparison to others built by the Confederates, with the most significant being in Richmond, Virginia.

By April 1862, Lopez’s wisdom showed itself when Nashville, its armory, and much of Tennessee fell to the Union Army. Subsequently, many of the Confederacy’s cities with armories fell to the Union, including New Orleans (April 1862), Baton Rouge (May 1862), Memphis (June 1862), Jackson (May 1863), Little Rock (September 1863), Atlanta (September 1864), and Savannah (December 1864). Not until 2 May 1865 was Greenville captured by Union forces—more than a month after the Battle of Appomattox Court House (9 April 1865), the “official” end of the Civil War.

On 26 April 1862, Lopez, who was in Atlanta at the time, contacted Isham Harris, governor of Tennessee, inquiring if he would bestow to South Carolina the machinery from Nashville’s armory being held in Georgia for an amount that would be settled on following the war’s conclusion. Governors Harris and Pickens both consented to the deal, and Lopez was hailed as a hero for his quick thinking. Thus did South Carolina acquire much of Tennessee’s machinery for making weapons at the Greenville Armory, in addition to what had already been collected from Charleston and Columbia.

Lopez’s duties as general superintendent not only included building the armory but also overseeing the manufacture and repair of weapons. Again, we might assume that Lopez threw himself into work to escape another tragedy in his domestic life. On 11 September 1862 his son David Lopez III (1834–1862) died. Cause of death is not mentioned in the obituary. With the armory up and running, Lopez’s first order of business was to oversee the making of pikes, parts for cannons, ammunition, and one thousand Morse breech-loading carbine rifles for South Carolina’s militia. To recruit employees, Lopez advertised in newspapers across the state: two messages of solicitation, one for whites and the other to owners of slaves skilled in the building trades.

To Machinists, Finishers and Gunsmiths

Good employment and wages will be given at the state works, at Greenville, for machinists and gunsmiths. The same exemption from Conscription and Military Duty apply to men engaged in “these works” as in other Government Works. Provisions and living is much cheaper than in other sections of the state.
To Owners of Negro Mechanics

Wanted at the state work in the interior of this State, in a healthy and safe location, carpenters, blacksmiths, machinists, and wheelwrights. They will be taken care of and good wages paid. Apply to David Lopez, Spartanburg or M.H. Nathan, corner of Wentworth and Meetings Streets, March 3.

By 1863, the Greenville Armory had a workforce of 144, of which eighty were slaves.

Dismissal and Defeat at the End of the Civil War

In August 1863 Lopez was dismissed from his position as general superintendent. The cause for his termination was due to an incident involving two of his employees, E.A. LeBlanc and Moses E. Lopez, his son. From the incident’s investigation survive the depositions of E.A. LeBlanc, Phillip A. Mullani, Daniel S. Hart (Lopez’s son-in-law, mentioned earlier), William Walton Smith, and G. Ralph Smith, who would replace Lopez as superintendent. All statements, except for LeBlanc’s, are in close agreement with one another; however, we lack Lopez’s first-hand account. Hart’s testimony is presented here as a description of the event:

On the Afternoon of August 14th LeBlanc entered Mr. Lopez’s office and in a very abrupt manner asks Mr. Lopez if he intended charging him with a piece of bacon [purchased for $15.00 on July 25th] he had refused to keep [due to spoilage]. Mr. Lopez replied certainly, whereupon LeBlanc called him a swindler and made some other remarks which I cannot call to memory. Mr. Lopez ordered him out of his office, and threatened to discharge him if he did not return to his work immediately. LeBlanc then used the most indelicate language, which caused Mr. Lopez to curse him, and proceed to put him out of the office by force. LeBlanc then said, placing his hand on a gun that was by him “If you do, I’ll blow your brains out.” Some few words passed between them and the affair ended.

Very respectfully, Daniel S. Hart

The incident of 14 August 1863 is strange. Most likely there was a history of bad blood between David Lopez Jr. and E.A. LeBlanc. We are also missing context, tone of voice, and body language. Absent from Hart’s testimony but appearing in William W. Smith’s was the statement by David Lopez Jr. “that if it [the bacon] was charged on the books it would stand so,” since nearly three weeks had lapsed from when LeBlanc had purchased it. G. Ralph Smith investigated the bacon in question, finding that “I examined this (rotten) bacon,
and found two-thirds perfectly sound, and the balance preferred (by the negroes) to beef... I will add, that the bacon when given to LeB[lancl] was pronounced sound and [?] by several of the best men here, some of whom were anxious to get it...."85 Though Lopez was exonerated in regard to the bacon, a general superintendent with a son and employee who was quick to pull a gun in an argument could not be tolerated, especially at an armory filled with munitions.

Following his termination from the Greenville Armory, both David Jr. and Moses E. Lopez returned to Charleston. What David Lopez Jr. did in Charleston for the remainder of the war is unclear. According to Jacob S. Raisin (1878–1946), KKBE’s rabbi from 1915 to the 1940s, Lopez “is credited with the invention of the forerunner of the modern torpedo boat, the “Little David” which attacked the United States ironclads during the Civil War [October 1863].”86 Numerous historians have cited this claim, some declaring that the ship was named after Lopez87; however, no primary sources could be found to corroborate this claim. As of August 1863, with Lopez still in Greenville as general superintendent, the ship was already under construction. Some historians have cited St. Julien Ravenel (1819–1882) designer of the Little David, with David C. Ebaugh (1824–1895) working as head mechanic, assisted by master carpenter Samuel Easterby and engineer John Chalk.88 Moreover, this investigation could not locate primary sources that would uncover Lopez’s activities following his dismissal from Greenville. Other David-class torpedo boats were built following Little David in Charleston—as many as nine, if not more. Not all of the builders of the subsequent ships are accounted for. It is possible that there is some truth regarding the myth of Lopez as builder of torpedo boats, as Raisin mentioned, but documentation is lacking.89

Life During and After Reconstruction

With the Union conquest of Charleston in 1865 and enforcement of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the city’s slaves, including those owned by the Lopezes, were freed. The end of the Civil War signaled a time for rebuilding and reconciliation, for both the nation and Charleston’s Jewish community. In December 1865, due to the toll taken on both congregations during the war, KKBE and Shearit Israel began the process of amalgamation. The reconstituted congregation would use the KKBE name and the building that Lopez constructed in 1839–1841. The controversial organ, which had been sent to Columbia for safekeeping during the Civil War and subsequently destroyed by fire when General William T. Sherman conquered the city in February 1865, would not be replaced until 1872. After years of neglect due to the war, KKBE’s synagogue needed repair. Lopez was called on as part of a committee to complete this task as well as a second committee to amend the congregation’s constitution.90 At first Lopez and his building committee recommended that the synagogue be sold and a new one erected elsewhere in
the city due to high costs. This proposal was rejected; the congregation was too enamored with Lopez’s building. Shearit Israel’s building, which survived the war, would be sold to generate the revenue. In November 1866 it was sold to Bishop Patrick N. Lynch (1817–1882), head of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston. The building was reconsecrated St. Peter’s Church in 1868, and it served the city’s Catholic African Americans who needed a parish of their own following emancipation.91

Meanwhile, Lopez restarted Charleston’s Hebrew Orphan Society, which had been closed due to the war, and was elected its president from 1866–1868. His father had founded the institution in 1801, and David Jr.’s sons, John Hinton and Moses E., also became members in 1866. To generate revenue for the society, the board authorized Lopez to lease parts of the Orphan House to the U.S. government for use as a temporary courthouse. The society also allowed the Hebrew Benevolent Society—another Jewish institution that Lopez was involved with—to use its buildings for meetings.92

On 2 July 1868 Lopez abruptly resigned from KKBE. His letter of resignation stated:

Dear Sir [Philip Wineman, President, KKBE]

Not being disposed to contribute to the fund of the Congregation to be applied to carry on a mode of worship not (in my conception) ever contemplated by the contract made between the two Congregations, I beg you will consider this as my letter of resignation. Very respect[fully] yours, David Lopez93

What Lopez was specifically referring to is hard to determine. On 1 July, the day before, there was a congregational meeting at which several resolutions were adopted, at least one of which he could not reconcile. One he may have staunchly opposed was the hiring of Joseph Haim Chumaceiro (b. 1844) as the next spiritual leader of KKBE. Two other members, S.L. Moses and Samuel Hart, Sr. (1805–1896), also resigned that day.94 John Hinton Lopez, David Jr.’s son, resigned the next month; he had only been a member for one year, following the troublesome application process due to his mother not being Jewish.95 Though born in Amsterdam, Chumaceiro grew up in Curaçao, where his father Aron Mendes Chumaceiro (1810–1882) was rabbi at orthodox Mikve Israel. Rabbi Aron Mendes Chumaceiro permitted the installation of an organ in this synagogue in 1865.96 This precedent, though instituted by the senior Aron Mendes, may have appealed to some at KKBE, hoping that the younger Joseph Haim might do the same in Charleston, but not Lopez. He could have been very skeptical of Chumaceiro. Lopez had been a staunch supporter of M.H. Meyers, Chumaceiro’s predecessor, who only served as KKBE’s spiritual leader from 1866–1868. In the end Chumaceiro never pushed for a replacement organ. Indeed, he resigned in 1874, when KKBE simultaneously installed its second
organ and joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.\textsuperscript{97} Chumaceiro was liberal but not a devout reformer.

In 1870 Lopez became the superintendent of the Coosaw Mining Company, which had been formed by Charleston capitalist Robert Adger (1814–1891). The company quarried phosphate ore—an important element for industrial manufacturing and fertilizer—near Beaufort, South Carolina. Lopez developed underwater mining technologies and techniques for rivers and managed more than six hundred employees. His son, Moses E., assisted him at the mine and built the physical plant and dredges.\textsuperscript{98} Together, they made the Coosaw Mining Company extremely profitable and positioned South Carolina prominently in the global phosphate mining industry. Lopez’s success at mining was most likely due to the experience he acquired during the Civil War while general superintendent of state works at the Greenville Armory. By 1881, the Coosaw Mining Company and its assets had an estimated net worth of more than one million dollars.\textsuperscript{99} Following David Jr.’s death, Moses E. took on the mantel of his father’s position at the company.

In 1877, Lopez’s son-in-law Daniel S. Hart died, leaving his daughter Priscilla Lopez Hart (1839–1882) a widow with six children to care for. The 1880 census lists Lopez as living with his daughter and her children, who were between the ages of seven and sixteen. His older sister Sally Lopez, who had never married, also joined them. Lopez’s employment as superintendent of the Coosaw Mining Company made him the breadwinner for a family of nine. Up until 1865, the large family had had help from the domestic slaves that they owned. During the 1870s and early 1880s, they employed two white house servants, Ellen and Elizabeth Logan, of Irish origin. Sadly, Lopez outlived his daughter Priscilla, who died 9 August 1882, leaving him with orphaned grandchildren to look out for.\textsuperscript{100}

Lopez died suddenly on 21 April 1884, at the age of seventy-five, while on a trip to Pennsylvania. His obituary in the \textit{News and Courier} described him as a remarkable man, he had a fine mind, great originality of ideas and a wonderful broadness of grasp, and better than all he was high above all petty meanness. The tidings of his death will be heard with deep regret in the city of his nativity, where he lived during his long and useful life, and where his ashes will now rest in peace.\textsuperscript{101}

The minute books of Charleston’s Hebrew Orphan Society and Hebrew Benevolent Society contain eulogies and memorialization of David Lopez Jr., but his name does not appear in KKBE’s records, despite the substantial overlap in membership among these three Jewish organizations.\textsuperscript{102} The issue of reform had created an abyss that separated Lopez from KKBE. He is buried in the Lopez family burial ground originally purchased for his first wife, Catherine Dobyn Hinton.
At the time of Lopez’s death, only two children from his first marriage, John Hinton and Moses E., survived him; surviving children from his second wife, Rebecca Moise, were Aaron M. (1848–1899), Julian L. (b. 1852), and Edward H. (1853–1914). In the following month John Hinton also died. Lopez’s last will and testament named Moses E. as executor, but the document was not sufficiently up-to-date in respect to what percentage of the estate should be inherited by the living children, grandchildren, and sisters (Sally and Louisa A. Lopez Moise [1810–1890]). A lawsuit ensued, pitting the children of Rebecca against those of Catherine. The suit concerned the bequest of $25,000 originally intended for the deceased Priscilla, a daughter of Catherine, thus affecting her orphaned children’s inheritance. Lopez v. Lopez made its way to the South Carolina Supreme Court, which ruled on 18 July 1885 that the money allocated for Priscilla should go directly to her children, instead of being equally divided among her living siblings. Ultimately, the court case aired the Lopez family’s dirty laundry. Relations between the children of Catherine Dobyn Hinton and Rebecca Moise, all David Lopez Jr.’s descendants, were anything but cordial after his death.

Death and Legacy

Lopez’s personal life was complicated. While a self-declared traditional Jew, his first wife was a Christian and his second from a family that was involved with the Reform movement. Based on his actions and words, Judaism as practiced in the synagogue was a sacred, intangible heritage passed down from one’s ancestors. There was no place for innovations that disrespected the past, such as the organ, since musical accompaniment was traditionally forbidden on the Sabbath and holidays. In other words, devoutness in religious “orthopraxy” in the synagogue, more so than “orthodoxy,” was what was important to Lopez. What one did at home in private was a different issue. Therefore, one could marry a non-Jew or someone with a different Jewish background. What made one Jewish was also a matter of personal conviction. This line of thinking rationalizes Lopez’s justification for accepting his son, John Hinton Lopez, as a member of KKBE and Charleston’s other Jewish communal organizations.

While committed to his work, Lopez was also devoted to his family and community. The institution of slavery does not appear to have bothered him; he owned and used slaves from the time he was a child well into adulthood. Lopez was also a staunch Southerner, doing all he could to assist the Cause for Confederate independence, from preparing the guns at Fort Moultrie for their firing on Fort Sumter, to developing and running the armory at Greenville. He also played an important role in developing South Carolina’s phosphate mining industry, the state’s most important economic sector during Reconstruction.

Until now most architectural historians have overlooked Lopez’s accomplishments. However, when assessing his body of work in its entirety, it
becomes clear that he was no run-of-the-mill carpenter. KKBE synagogue and Farmers’ and Exchange Bank are both National Historic Landmarks (1980 and 1973, respectively) due to their skilled craft and architecture. If Institute Hall, Browning & Leman Department Store, Zion Presbyterian Church, and the Greenville Armory had survived, it is likely that they would have also been bestowed this historical designation due to their importance in American history and architecture. Courtenay & Company Building, as well as other commercial and residential buildings that Lopez built, are listed as contributing to Charleston’s historic district, which is on the National Register of Historic Places (1966). St. John’s Lutheran Church, Charleston County Courthouse, and Fort Moultrie are all important buildings that he modified and are significant to history. Thus, Lopez was a master builder of high caliber in the American South who, of course, used slave labor.

Early American architects did design synagogues. The most famous example is Peter Harrison’s (1716–1775) Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, built in 1759–1763. William Strickland (1788–1854) also designed a synagogue for Philadelphia’s Mikveh Israel in 1825. However, master builders are in a class apart from their architect colleagues. It is a profession with different expertise that has not always been given its due credit. As a builder of both early American synagogues and churches, Lopez is the most significant of his peers. Little is known about his predecessors, such as Stanley Holmes (built New York’s Shearith Israel in 1730), Joseph Hammond (built Newport’s Touro Synagogue in 1759–1763), John Donohue and Edward McKegan (built Philadelphia’s Mikveh Israel 1782 building), James and Charles Steedman and Peter and John Horlbeck (designed and constructed KKBE ca. 1794 building), and John C. Evans (built Savannah’s Mickve Israel first synagogue in 1820). With the exception of the Horlbecks, who are associated with Charleston’s Exchange Building (built 1771), the contributions of these other builders have been forgotten. Indeed, in many instances well into the nineteenth century, the names of builders for early American synagogues have been lost. Lopez’s name came to be remembered because he was a well-accomplished contractor at a time when few Jews ventured into the building trades. Additionally, Lopez left a living legacy, teaching the profession to his sons John Hinton and Moses E. Lopez; nephew, David Lopez Cohen; as well as slaves like Jim.

Yet, while Lopez’s sons, nephew, and freed slave followed in his footsteps, they did not do so ideologically as building innovators. In 1884, the year that Lopez died, the construction industry saw big changes. The world’s first skyscraper was built: the Home Insurance Building in Chicago. Buildings such as these were beyond the capabilities of apprenticed-trained builders like Lopez, with their teams of carpenters and masons. The next generation of construction pioneers had educations in engineering and utilized structural iron and steel. The Jewish torchbearer of this sector was Dankmar Adler (1844–1900),
who modernized city skylines to new and dizzying heights. Besides being one of the leaders of the Chicago school of architecture (ca.1885–1930), Adler’s accomplishments also included four synagogues.106

Barry Stiefel is an assistant professor in the joint program in historic preservation with the College of Charleston and Clemson University. He received his doctorate in historic preservation (2008) from Tulane University. He has a forthcoming book titled Jewish Sanctuary in the Atlantic World: A Social and Architectural History. Stiefel’s research focuses on the preservation of Jewish heritage.

Notes

1My sincere thanks to the following for their research assistance: Christina Shedlock at the Charleston County Public Library, Patrick McCawley at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Harlan Greene and Sarah Dorpinghaus at the College of Charleston Special Collections, Diane Miller at the College of Charleston Historic Preservation and Community Planning program, and Haley Grant. I am also indebted to Dale Rosengarten at the College of Charleston Special Collections for reviewing earlier drafts of this paper.


2Will of David Lopez [Sr.], 27 January 1812, Charleston County Wills, vol. 32, 521–522, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room (hereafter CCPLSCR), Charleston, SC.


4Yale College is now Yale University. See Evans, Judah Benjamin, 14.


13 The 1830 U.S. Census lists a John Hinton of Edgefield, South Carolina, who was of appropriate age to be Catherine’s father. His profession is not mentioned. David Lopez Jr. and Catherine’s first-born son was named John Hinton Lopez. Based on conjecture, it is reasonable to assume that John Hinton of Edgefield might be David Lopez Jr.’s father-in-law, but documentation verifying this connection could not be found.


15 Isaac Fripp of St. Helena Parish, District of Beaufort to David Lopez, Bill of Sale for a Slave Named Kit or Christopher, a Carpenter by Trade, 30 June 1837, series S213003, vol. 005T, p. 200, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (hereafter SCDAH), Columbia, SC.


18 B.R. Carroll to David Lopez, Bill of Sale for a Slave Named George, a Carpenter, 11 June 1839, series S213003, vol. 005W, p. 22, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.

19 See Roger G. Kennedy and John M. Hall, *Greek Revival America* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1989), 22 and 141 specifically place the second KKBE synagogue building within the context of Greek Revival architecture in the United States.


30 See Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron,


36*Board of Trustee Minute Book (1838–1843)*, 289, 3 July 1843 / 5 Tamus 5603, KKBE Collection, box 1, folder 1, SCCC, Charleston, SC.


38See *Board of Trustee Minute Book (1846–1852)*, 20, 10 January 1847 / 5607, KKBE Collection, box 1, folder 2, SCCC, Charleston, SC, where “D.L. Cohen” is inscribed.


41See James C. Potts, “David Lopez Cohen (1820–1893), Savannah Builder-Carpenter,” 1 August 1977, vertical files: biographies, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. Also see Slave Schedule, Chatham County, Georgia, 1850, 149.


44See “Consecration of the New Synagogue, Charleston, S.C.” and “Ball for the Benefit of the Hebrew Benevolent Society,” *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* 5, no. 6 (Elul 5607 / September 1847): page unavailable.


47Breibart, *Explorations*, 60.


50“Office Board of Fire Masters,” *Southern Patriot* 55, no. 8282 (25 February 1846): 2. David Lopez Jr. does not appear in the Board of Fire Masters records between 1848 and 1850 either, CCPLSCR, Charleston, SC.


52Poston, *Buildings of Charleston*, 549.


Thomas, “Complex,” Charleston, SC.


See Otis W. Pickett, “‘We are Marching to Zion’: Zion Church and the Distinctive Work of Presbyterian Slave Missionaries in Charleston, South Carolina, 1849–1874,” master’s thesis (College of Charleston and The Citadel, 2008).

Within the article “Improvements,” *Charleston Mercury* (17 June 1859): 1, the renovation of Adger’s Wharf by Lopez is mentioned.


*Will of David Lopez*, 9 August 1882, Charleston County Wills, no. 76097, CCPLSCR, Charleston, SC.

The Zion-Olivet United Presbyterian Church records, 1854–1991 at the Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC, primarily date between 1960 and 1980. Baptismal records from the nineteenth century were inconclusive on church membership, including whether Lopez’s slaves attended.


Report to the Committee of Claims and Grievances (Senate), General Assembly (S165005), 1860, no. 239 and no. 2024, SCDAH, Columbia, SC; and Carl R. Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse: An Architectural History of South Carolina’s Colonial Capitol and Charleston County Courthouse* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 163, n155.


“To David Lopez,” Comptroller General (S126175), Records of the State Auditor, Board of Ordinance receipts, 16 April 1861, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.


D. Lopez to J. Chesnut, general correspondence. Executive Councils of 1861 and 1862 (S160003), 12 March 1862, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.

David Lopez to Governor Isham Harris, general correspondence, 26 April 1862, Governor Isham Harri Papers (1857–1862), box 2, folder 8, Tennessee State Library and Archives; and South Carolina and Francis W. Pickens, *Convention Documents: 171–174*.


*Classified ad 2, Charleston Mercury* (21 March 1863): 2.

*Classified ad 1, Charleston Mercury* (3 March 1862): 2.

*Report to the Committee on the Military (Senate), General Assembly (S165005), 1863, no. 363, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.*

Daniel S. Hart, Correspondence from Report of G. Ralph Smith, 21 August 1863, Comptroller General, State Auditor, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.

William Walton Smith, Correspondence from Report of G. Ralph Smith, 21 August 1863, Comptroller General, State Auditor, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.

G. Ralph Smith, Correspondence and Report of G. Ralph Smith to Mr. James Tupper, State Auditor, 21 August 1863, Comptroller General, State Auditor, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.


In contrast to Jacob S. Raisin’s claim, the most authoritative published history on Charleston Jewry was Barnett A. Elzas’s *The Jews of South Carolina*. In it he makes no mention of David Lopez Jr. in association with torpedo boats, though he does list Lopez’s other great accomplishments. The Southern Torpedo Company—a consortium of Charleston capitalists—funded the project and loaned the torpedo boats to the Confederate States Navy. The “Little David” was given its name by Harriett H. Rutledge Ravenel, St. Julien’s wife, as an analogy to the biblical story of David and Goliath, since the boat was small and the Union Navy blockading Charleston a giant. However, David C. Ebaugh also claims that it was named after him. Other David-class torpedo boats were built following “Little David,” but little is known about them other than their funding by the Southern Torpedo Company. David-class torpedo boats were cigar-shaped and semisubmersible, in contrast to the *C.S.S.H.L. Hunley*, which was a submarine. Francis D. Lee, Lopez’s former colleague in architecture and construction before the war, was a captain in the Confederate Torpedo Service. Documentation is lacking, but the possibility remains that Lopez may have constructed subsequent David-class torpedo boats, which could be the origin of the legend. Ebaugh only claimed to have built a total of three torpedo boats. When the Union Army took Charleston in February 1865, nine scuttled David-class torpedo boats were found...

90 Board of Trustee Minute Book (1857–1866), 266–233, 25 March 1866–8 April 1866, KKBE Collection, box 1, folder 3; and Board of Trustee Minute Book (1866–1875), 4–13, 19 March 1866–6 May 1866, KKBE Collection, box 3, folder 1, SCCC, Charleston, SC. There is a fair amount of time overlap between the beginning and end of both minute books.

91 See papers in 34 Wentworth Street / St. Peter’s Church, box 1, folder 1, Catholic Diocese Archives of South Carolina, Charleston; this includes the bond and deed of sale of the Shearit Israel building by KKBE to Bishop Patrick N. Lynch.


93 David Lopez to Philip Wineman, president KKBE, correspondence, 2 July 1868, Charleston. KKBE Collection, SCCC, Charleston, SC.

94 Board of Trustee Minute Book (1866–1875), 149–152, 1 and 5 July 1868, KKBE Collection, box 3, folder 1, SCCC, Charleston, SC.

95 In May 1867 John Hinton Lopez applied for membership to KKBE. A pew had been purchased on his behalf by his brother-in-law, Daniel S. Hart, who was also a KKBE trustee. The board first rejected his application because he was “religiously disqualified” due to his lack of official conversion and his mother’s status as a gentile. Following Hart’s resignation from the trusteeship in protest, the board reconsidered and accepted Lopez. Board of Trustee Minute Book (1866–1875), 93–94 and 154, 5 and 26 May 1867 and 2 August 1868, KKBE Collection, box 3, folder 1, SCCC, Charleston, SC.

96 See Congregation Mikve Israel-Emanuel, Our “Snoa” 5492–5742.


102 Board of Trustee Minute Book (1866–1896), 263, Hebrew Orphan Society Records Collection, box 1, folder 1; and Board of Trustee Minute Book (1867–1922), 149–151, Hebrew Benevolent Society Records Collection, box 1, folder 1, SCCC, Charleston, SC.

103 See David Lopez, Last Will and Testament, Charleston, SC, Solomon Breibart Professional Papers, vertical files: David Lopez, SCCC, Charleston, SC.


Dankmar Adler was formally trained as a drafter and received his training as an engineer serving in the Union Army during the Civil War. Adler’s great achievements, along with his (non-Jewish) partner, Louis Sullivan (1856–1924), were St. Louis, Missouri’s Wainwright Building (built 1891), the world’s first steel-framed building; Chicago’s (first) Stock Exchange Building (built 1893, demolished 1972); and Buffalo, New York’s Guaranty Building (built 1894). Adler’s Jewish architectural accomplishments include Sinai Temple (1875), Zion Temple (1885), Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue (built 1890–1891), and Temple Isaiah (1898), all located in Chicago. See Barry Stiefel, “Dankmar Adler: German-born Architect and Engineer,” in *Great Lives from History: Jewish Americans*, ed. Rafael Medoff (Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 2011), 9–10.