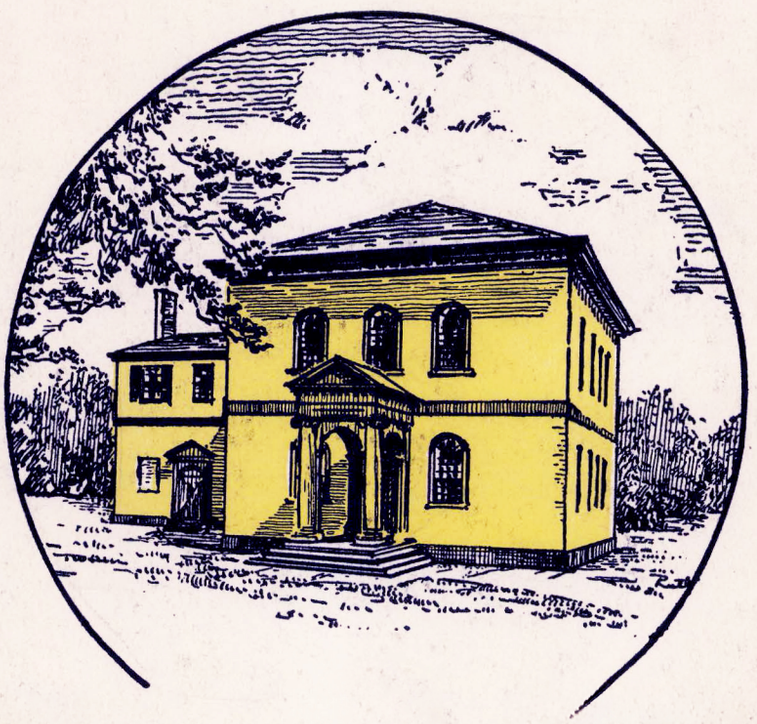
TOURO SYNAGOGUE

OF CONGREGATION JESHUAT ISRAEL

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

FOUNDED 1658



THE OLDEST SYNAGOGUE BUILDING IN THE UNITED STATES

DEDICATED 1763, DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1946

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PUBLISHED BY

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF TOURO SYNAGOGUE

NATIONAL HISTORIC SHRINE, INC.

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SOME NOTES ON THE TOURO SYNAGOGUE

BY D. DE SOLA POOL

Rabbi, Congregation Shearith Israel, New York, N. Y.

THE TOURO SYNAGOGUE in Newport, dedicated on the first day of Hanukah, December 7, 1763, has the distinction of being the oldest synagogue building in the United States. It is antedated in the Western hemisphere only by the Mikveh Israel Synagogue in Curacao, consecrated in 1732, and by the Zedek ve Shalom Synagogue in Paramaribo, Surinam, which was dedicated in 1737. In the United States, the first building ever erected for a synagogue was dedicated in New York City in 1730. But it had to yield to the city's growth after a little over a century of use, and the very street, Mill Street, on which it stood, has long since disappeared. At the time when Newport Jewry was building its synagogue, there were Jewish communities also in New York City, Charleston, Savannah, Philadelphia and Richmond. But none of these possesses a synagogue comparable in age to the Newport synagogue. Newport, the second oldest Jewish community in the United States, is proud to possess not only the loveliest but also the oldest synagogue building in the country.

When the synagogue was planned, Newport Jewry was made up of a small group, in the main of Iberian background. In the cemetery at the top of the street on which the synagogue stands, one may read inscriptions on their tombstones in Hebrew, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin, languages which testify to the general culture of Newport's Jews. But these Jewish settlers were but few in number, and they said of themselves in 1759 that they were "a congregation yet in its infancy." They therefore wrote to their fellow congregations a letter in which they said,



"Sincerely desirous to establish a regular Congregation in this Town we, therefore, have Lately purchased a suitable Lot of Land, whereon we design to Build a Synagogue; and for furthering our said Intentions, we have Likewise by Subscription raised a small Fund wherewith to Begin, and carry on the Work and which in due Time we hope to see fully completed. At present finding our Abilities not equal to our wishes, for finishing the Work in so short a time as we desire, we have resolved to crave the Assistance of the several Congregations in America."

In reply, the New York community sent £149.0.6, about one-tenth of the total cost of the structure. Smaller contributions were made by Congregation Shaar Hashamayim in Jamaica, Congregation Shaar Hashamayim in London, Congregation Mikveh Israel in Curacao, and Congregation Neveh Shalom in Surinam. From New York there were later received other gifts, such as the perpetual lamp hanging before the Ark that was the gift of Samuel Judah, the brass candlesticks set in front of the Ark and on the reading desk which were presented by Samuel Hart, and a hundred pounds of wax for making candles that was given by Hyam Myers. Of the other candelabra in the synagogue, the large central one containing representations of a human head was given by Jacob Pollock. The two smaller ones in the same style were presented by Naphtali Hart Myers and Aaron Lopez, while the six branched chandeliers were given in the name of Abraham, the three-year-old son of Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, and the six brass candlesticks were presented by Enoch Lyon.

The architecture of the building follows the standards of the Sephardic synagogues which look to that of Amsterdam as their mother synagogue. It is in this tradition that the seats are arranged not facing the Ark, but along the north and south walls at right angles to the Ark, so as to keep clear the space between the reading desk in the center and the Ark at the east end of the structure. In the same architectural tradition as that of the Amsterdam (1675) and the London (1701) Sephardic synagogues, the "banco" or



seat for the presiding officer, the "Parnas Presidente", is set in the middle of the north wall.

In the schoolroom adjoining the north gallery there is preserved another link with the historic Sephardic synagogue in London. This is a copy of a painting made in London in 1675 by Aron de Chavez. The original is on canvas which cost £1.17.6, while the artist was paid but £5 for his work. It presents the initial Hebrew words of the ten commandments with Spanish translation between the lines, and Moses and Aaron flanking the giant twin tablets. The only other painting in the building is over the Ark where there is depicted the two tablets of the ten commandments, surmounted by the crowns of the Torah, the priesthood and the royal house of David.

A striking and indeed unique, feature of the Newport synagogue building is the underground passage which starts beneath the reading desk and goes off towards the street. This may have been built for storage space, though local tradition, which often shows fine imagination, whispers that it was a hiding place and an unfinished channel of escape, constructed by men who in their new world of American freedom had not fully thrown off the boding sense of persecution and terror that had haunted their past.

The Touro Synagogue has its place in the general history of Newport. For from the days of the Revolution when the Jews of the town were scattered and Jewish religious services were no longer held, it was occasionally put to other uses. Thus, in 1780 the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island held its first meeting in the synagogue building after the evacuation of Newport by the British. In the words on the tablet affixed to the building when it was officially designated as a national historic site:

> "Here in 1781-84 the Rhode Island General Assembly met, and during Washington's visit to Newport in 1781 a town meeting was held here. The state supreme court held sessions here at that period."

Although there was some revival of the Jewish community of Newport following the Revolution, the remnants of the com-



munity gradually moved away to such towns as New York, Boston, Richmond or Savannah. There was no rabbi, reader or shochet (ritual slaughterer) left in Newport, and by 1791 the synagogue was virtually closed. The scrolls of the Torah were then carefully taken to New York and deposited there in the care of Congregation Shearith Israel. The proprietary rights in the synagogue and in its cemetery were eventually vested in the trustees of that congregation. They still technically hold the legal title to the land and the building,

> "in trust nevertheless and for the uses and purposes following, that is to say, to take possession of the said premises herein above described and every part thereof and to use and apply the same, or cause the same to be used, occupied and employed for the maintenance therein of the usual and stated Religious Services according to the Ritual, Rites and Customs of the Orthodox Spanish and Portuguese Jews, as at the time practiced and observed in the Synagogue of the Congregation Shearith Israel in the City of New York."

In 1822, Moses Lopez, the last survivor of the old Newport Jewish community, left the town. From that time onwards the synagogue remained closed except on rare occasions when it was opened for the funeral of a member of one of the old families whose remains were brought back to Newport for interment in the ancestral cemetery. On one occasion the synagogue was opened for a member of the Hart family, a lady over eighty years of age, who came from Savannah to revisit the synagogue and sit once more in the seat she had occupied in her childhood. She took with her from the cemetery of her fathers in Newport a handful of earth eventually to be added to her grave in Savannah.

On August 2, 1850, "after a suspension of about sixty years" the synagogue was reopened for religious services

> "by a few of the children of Israel temporarily sojourning in this city, and thus continued during the warm season whilst the requisite number remained to form a congregation."



However, the synagogue was not opened regularly in summer during the following two or three decades, even at the height of the season. Nevertheless, occasional public services were held, and the synagogue was not infrequently opened for private worship by Judge Philip J. Joachimsen in the 1850s, and in the next decade by Lawrence Blumenthal and his son the physician, Dr. Mark Blumenthal.

In 1881, the synagogue was used for services on the High Holy days in the fall, and by 1883, the Jewish permanent settlers in the town were once more numerous enough to reorganize the communitiy and open the synagogue regularly for Sabbath services.

At that time the synagogue received the gift of a scroll of the Law from Mr. Alfred A. Marcus, of Boston, a descendant from a family of the Newport community of a century earlier. Later he gave a parchment scroll of the Book of Esther in a Palestinian olive wood case, and still later a silver breast plate for the Torah and an olive wood frame for the Omer counting. In 1892, the congregation received two pairs of silver bells for the Torah from Mrs. Edward Cohen of Washington, D. C., a descendant of Moses Michael Hays of the Revolutionary community in Newport.

Prior to the reorganization of the community in 1883, on occasions when religious services were held in the synagogue, the scrolls of the Torah and other necessary ritual objects had to be brought from Congregation Shearith Israel in New York, to which they were returned when the synagogue was once more closed.

From 1883, the story of the synagogue has been one of continuous and uninterrupted development. From that time on, the synagogue served not only the local community, but also the special needs of the uniformed Jewish men training at Newport. Thus, at the end of September, 1883, the Rev. Mr. Mendes wrote to the commander of Fort Adams and the commander of the training ship, saying that:

> "I am informed that there are among the men under your command several of the Jewish persuasion. I therefore beg to present to your notice the fact



> the High Holy Days of our faith will take place as follows: New Year, Tuesday and Wednesday, October 2nd and 3rd, Day of Atonement, Thursday, October 11th. I venture to request that you will in the exercise of your authority, permit such men to attend the services of the synagogue and to take part in the solemnities of the season."

Among the visitors to the synagogue in the second half of the nineteenth century, there could often be found descendants of the pre-Revolutionary Newport Jewish community. Thus, when the synagogue was first reopened for religious services in 1850, it is recorded that the services "were performed by several individuals including descendants of some of the old congregation of the second, third and fourth generation." Or again, in 1855 the synagogue was visited by Naphtali Phillips at the advanced age of 82 years, who recorded that he visited it "after an absence of fifty years." He recalls also "I was married in this town 58 years ago."

Because of the historic interest of the synagogue building, its fine harmonious architecture, and its outstanding character, there were always numerous Christian visitors as well as those of Jewish faith who sought out the building. Indeed, the visitors' book of the synagogue for the eight years ending in 1861, shows a record of 103 Jewish visitors and no less than 762 Christian visitors. Among those who found their way to the synagogue and signed the visitors' book were men and women from all over the United States, from Hungary, Poland, Morocco, London, Curacao, Honolulu, Melbourne, Barbados, Gibraltar and Peking.

But the Touro Synagogue was now no longer only an historic shrine to be sought out by visitors. Gradually it was becoming once more the generating center of an active Jewish religious life. By 1926, there were in Newport approximately 125 Jewish families with some hundred children of school age. The old synagogue with its one class room could not accommodate a religious school for this number of children and they were sometimes compelled to meet in the open air on the synagogue grounds, even in the biting cold of winter. Nor could the simple old synagogue building make



room for the numerous communal activities which were centered in the congregation. Therefore at that time, the Jewish community purchased the old Sheffield house, facing the Mall, moved it to a plot of land on Touro Street opposite the synagogue, and reconstructed it to serve as a Jewish community center.

In 1759, the little Jewish community in Newport in appealing for help to build the synagogue had written:

> " . . . we reflect on how much it is our Duty to Instruct Children in the Path of Virtuous Religion; & how unhappy the portions must be of those Children and their Parents who are thro necessity, educated in a place where they must remain almost Totally uninstructed in our most Holy and Divine Law, our Rites & Ceremonies; . . . "

A century and a half later this new building was added to the synagogue, the educational, social and communal activities of the Jewish community of Newport having outgrown the facilities of the ancient synagogue. But their shrine remained and remains the spiritual center of Newport Jewry, and a beloved shrine of pilgrimage for Americans of every faith. Fitting indeed has been the action of the United States government in making it a national site "for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States."



PETER HARRISON

BY FISKE KIMBALL

Director of Philadelphia Museum of Art

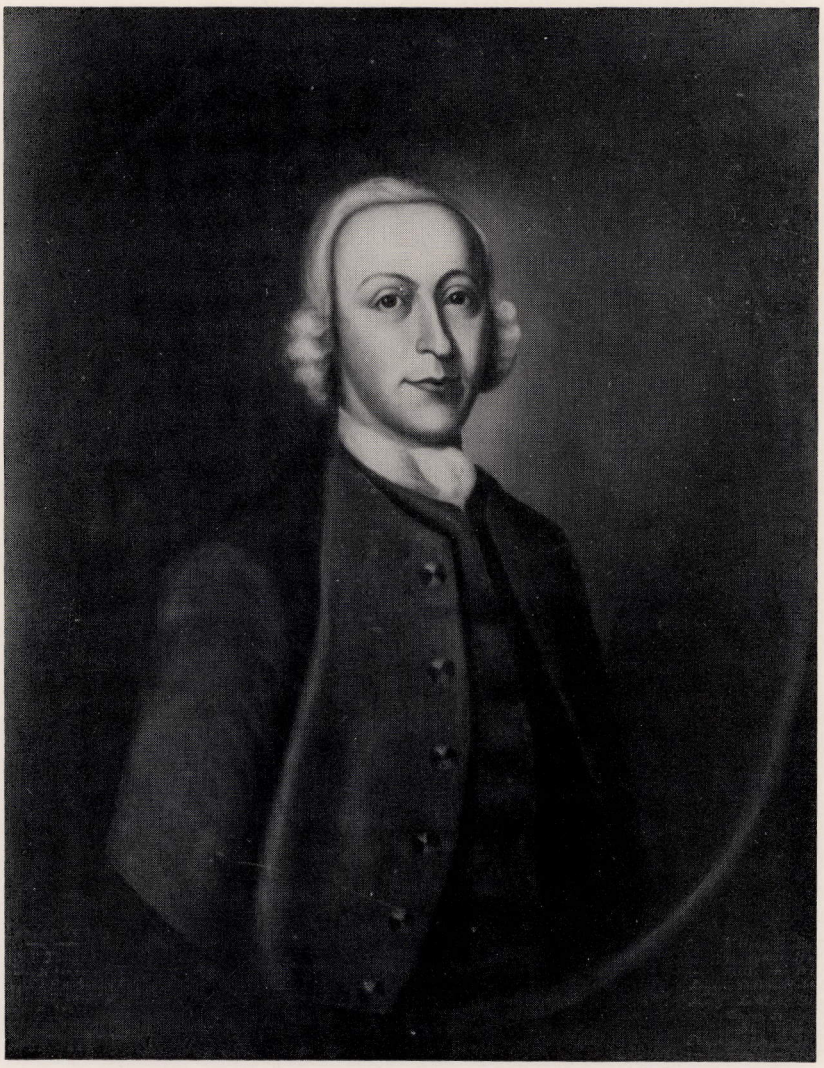
PETER HARRISON, the prince of the Colonial amateur architects, was born in England — probably at York — on June 14, 1716. He settled at Newport, Rhode Island in 1740, where he married and, in partnership with his brother, became a solid merchant in the import trade. The brothers moved in 1761 to New Haven, where Peter in 1768 became Collector of Customs, and lived until his death, April 30, 1775.

His fame rests in his designs in architecture, the most academic in the Colonies before those of Jefferson. The first drawings of his that we know are maps of Cape Breton and of Newport, the earliest being of 1745. In 1748 he designed the Redwood Library in Newport, following an engraving in Edward Hoppus' edition of Palladio, published in London in 1735. This itself follows a design by William Kent — the "proper priest" of Lord Burlington, the great English amateur — later engraved in Isaac Ware's *Designs of Inigo Jones and Others,* 1745, "a Garden Seat for Sir Charles Hotham". The Library was the first building in America to have a full temple portico, foretelling the classic revival.

All details of the Library were also drawn from English books, such as Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones,* 1727, "with some additional designs" including those of Lord Burlington's villa at Cheswick from which, or from Hoppus' repetition of the motif, the Palladian windows were derived. The bookcases came from a plate of Batty Langley's *Treasury of Designs,* 1745.

The same plate of Langley also served for the altarpiece of King's Chapel, Boston (1749-54). Other of its details were drawn from James Gibbs' *Book of Architecture,* 1728, and his *Rules for Drawing,* 1732.





PETER HARRISON, Esq.

1716 — 1775

DESIGNER OF THE TOURO SYNAGOGUE

From a painting by Louis Sands
(Copied from Smibert)
Owned by the Redwood Library, Newport, R. I.

For the Brick Market in Newport (1761) he followed the favorite academic formula of an order of pilasters over a high basement, as embodied notably in Inigo Jones' Somerset House, illustrated in the *Vitruvius Britannicus,* 1715.

For all these designs Harrison received no pay, taking his reward in votes of thanks and pieces of plate.

In 1761, also, he gave the design for Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and for this, a little off his beat, he did accept a payment of £45.

For the Synagogue in Newport — though it was built in 1762-63, after he left there — there is again no record of any payment in money. As before, he turned for inspiration to his books. The general scheme of the interior is that of one proposed for Whitehall Palace, illustrated in Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones* — a two-storied hall with colonnaded aisles, Ionic below, Corinthian above. Again, for the Ark of the Covenant, he followed the plate of Langley he had used for the altar of King's Chapel; the panel above was based on an overmantel in Kent's *Designs.* Other details were drawn from Gibbs and Ware.

All these were combined with rare sense of harmony and proportion. The little building, lovingly preserved, is well worthy of its status as a National Monument, one of the most perfect works of Colonial architecture.



THE JEWS OF NEWPORT, R. I. IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY DAYS

BY DR. MORRIS A. GUTSTEIN

Rabbi, North Park Congregation Shaare Tikvah, Chicago, Illinois
Formerly Rabbi, Congregation Jeshuat Israel, Newport, R. I.

ON A SMALL street in Newport that less than two centuries ago was barren land, in the outskirts of a growing and striving city then on the verge of becoming a metropolis, there stands a beautiful shrine, an old synagogue. No glamor or splendor of marble strikes the eye of him who beholds this sanctuary. No display of riches and wealth invites the attention of the passer-by. Yet awe-inspired and aware of a mighty past stand those who tread the "lone floors where reverent feet once trod."

With admiration and reverence one stands in this holy place before the mystery of Time and God, where the present vanishes, and the past flashes before the mind in beautiful pictures, making an everlasting imprint on one's memory.

The history of this synagogue is the history of the Jews of Newport. It is the most fascinating chapter in the history of the Jews in America.

Nature has bestowed upon Newport great beauty of environment. It was not the insignificant price of Aquidneck Island—forty fathoms of white beads, ten coats and twenty hoes—which persuaded John Clarke, Anne Hutchinson, William Coddington and other refugees from religious intolerance to purchase the island. What persuaded them was the surrounding sea, the fine commodious harbor, the luxuriance of the foliage and the variety of the countryside of that pleasant spot which in 1639 became Newport.

THE FIRST CODE

In the spirit of Roger Williams who advised them to purchase



that land, the settlers of Newport adapted the spirit of religious equality and tolerance in the very first principles of their government. The code of laws, drawn up in 1647, concluded: "And otherwise than thus what is herein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation in the name of Jehovah their God, forever and ever."

Such sentiments could have no other effect than to invite to the shores of Newport all those who because of their religious convictions could find no resting place elsewhere. Among these were Jews. Barely a decade after its settlement, the city thus received in its harbor a few Jewish families who had not been altogether welcomed by the stern Calvinists in what is now New York.

The first documentary evidence of the presence of Jews in Newport dates from 1658. In that year the document reads: "Wee mett att ye House of Mordecai Campunall and after Synagog Wee gave Abm Moses the degrees of Maconrie." This not only points to the early settlement of the Jews in Rhode Island, but it is the basis for the theory—which has been questioned by some—that the craft of Masonry was first introduced into America through the early Jewish settlers in Rhode Island, who seemed to have worked the degrees after religious services which were held in private houses.

In 1677, the "Jews and their Nation Society or Friends," purchased a plot of land for a burial ground. This is preserved to this very day, and is located at the beginning of the famous Bellevue Avenue, which at that time was named "Jews' Street."

The city grew gradually and with it the Jewish community. Practically a century was to pass from that time before the Jewish community of Newport became outstanding and laid the foundation of what is now the oldest synagogue building in America.

STRANGERS WELCOME

In 1684, the General Assembly voted: "In answer to the petition of Simon Mendez, David Brown, associates being Jews presenting to this Assembly bearing date June 24, 1684, we declare



they may expect as good protection here as any strangers being not of our nation residing amongst us, in His Majesty's colony, ought to have, being obedient to His Majesty's laws."

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the Newport Jewish community was greatly increased by a large group of settlers who came from Curacao. These Jews, like their coreligionists already living in the city, were of Spanish-Portuguese origin. With their natural energy and ability, which they immediately set to good use, they brought new grace to Newport.

The Jews found the city of Newport in its full bloom in the beginning of the eighteenth century. When Dean Berkeley was greeted by the people of every background upon his arrival in Newport in 1729, he is quoted as having said: "The town of Newport is the most thriving place in America for bigness."

The "bigness" was not solely in the economic and commercial pursuits of the island, but equally so in religious, cultural and social enterprises. It was an index of the vitality of religion in the life of the people to note in a town of but small streets and about a half dozen lanes and wharves, three Baptist churches, two Congregational, one Church of England, and one Friends' house of worship. At this time the Jewish congregation still held its services in private homes.

As the seed of religion was sown in the beginning of the colony, so was the seed of culture and education. In 1640 the city had a school supported by taxes. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, book-sellers flourished in Newport. As early as 1705 an attempt was made to establish a printing press in the city. In 1732 Newport had its first newspaper from the press and editorship of James Franklin, a brother of the famous Benjamin.

Dean Berkeley, upon coming to Newport found the city to be intellectually fruitful. He found here a receptive audience for his "Philosophical Society for the Promotion of Knowledge and Virtue by Free Conversation," which was organized for the purpose of discussing "Divinity, Philosophy, Morality and History." As one chronicler records: "The Quaker, the Baptist and the firm supporter of the Church of England maintained each his part; but



the Quaker preacher and the Jewish Rabbi alike tenacious of their rules and doctrine, listened respectfully to the preaching of Berkeley."

The Philosophical Society was the intellectual forerunner of the Redwood Library, that living testimony of the culture of Newport in the early part of the eighteenth century. The Jew played his part in this intellectual growth of the city. Among the earliest members of the Redwood Library in 1747 were Abraham Hart, Moses Lopez and Jacob Rodriguez Rivera.

JEWISH MERCHANTS

These men were three outstanding Jewish merchants of colonial Newport. In the commercial prosperity of the town the Jews occupied high rank. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Jewish merchants in town owned seven vessels engaged in inter-colonial and foreign trade.

As active as they were in business, so were they active in manufacturing. As early as 1705, they had introduced into the colony the manufacture of soap. They joined in the established foundries as workers of brass and iron. They also worked as silversmiths. In the Seventeen Forties the Rivera family established the first spermaceti candle factory. The year 1750 saw "The Scotch Snuff Manufactory, Between Lopez Rivera & Cordoza in Comy." In 1753 the General Assembly granted a license to Moses Lopez for the manufacture of potash. And in 1761 James Lucena introduced in the colony the manufacture of Castile soap.

In the armed forces of the colony, there were Jewish soldiers from earliest times. Jacob Judah served in the French and Indian War in 1747. Michael Isaacs volunteered in the campaign of 1755. Isaac Moses marched in the company of Captain J. Whiting in 1757.

Thus in Newport, Christian and Jew, though worshipping separately in different forms and languages, had the same aspirations and met on equality in the street, in the home, in the club or society, at the library, in the factory, on the vessels, in the store, in the army, and in the assembly, throughout the early part of the eighteenth century. This mutual friendship, understanding and



good relationship fostered at the time, were fruitful later of noble consequences.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In the middle of the eighteenth century the fame of Newport attracted to its shores many important Jewish families, among them the Lopez family who fled to Rhode Island to find religious freedom. These families could live abroad only as secret Jews at the danger of losing their lives when found out. The story of Abraham Lopez, another brother of the famous Aaron, is typical of the dual life of these Marranos in Spain and Portugal and their escape to freedom in this land of liberty.

He was born in Lisbon, Portugal, where he was christened Michael. He married according to the Catholic rites, and his wife, Joanna, bore him three sons, christened Edward, Joseph and John, respectively. Having been threatened by the Inquisition, the entire family emigrated to America where they threw off the religious mask and openly avowed their Judaism. Michael and Joanna remarried according to the Jewish law, and changed their names to Abraham and Abigail respectively. The names of their three sons were changed to Moses, Samuel and Jacob.

However, so deep was the habit of the outward religion which they had before professed overseas that some of the Jewish women settlers in Newport would count beads like rosaries while they repeated their Hebrew prayers.

THE FIRST SYNAGOGUE

These Marranos who came to Newport and resumed the open practice of their secret Judaism soon planned the erection of a sanctuary dedicated to the God of Israel. They longed for a synagogue where they might freely chant the psalmodies, commune with the God of their fathers, and practice ancestral rites of which they had been deprived in the lands of their birth.

On August 1, 1759, the cornerstone of what is now the oldest synagogue in the United States was laid on a lot of land on Griffin street, now known as Touro street. In present exchange the land cost $187.50. Aaron Lopez and Jacob Rodriguez Rivera were honored with laying the first two stones.



INTERIOR OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Photograph shows the southwest corner

The Ionic columns support the women's gallery, Corinthian columns support the ceiling; reading desk is in the center. Two of the ancient candelabra are shown suspended from the ceiling.

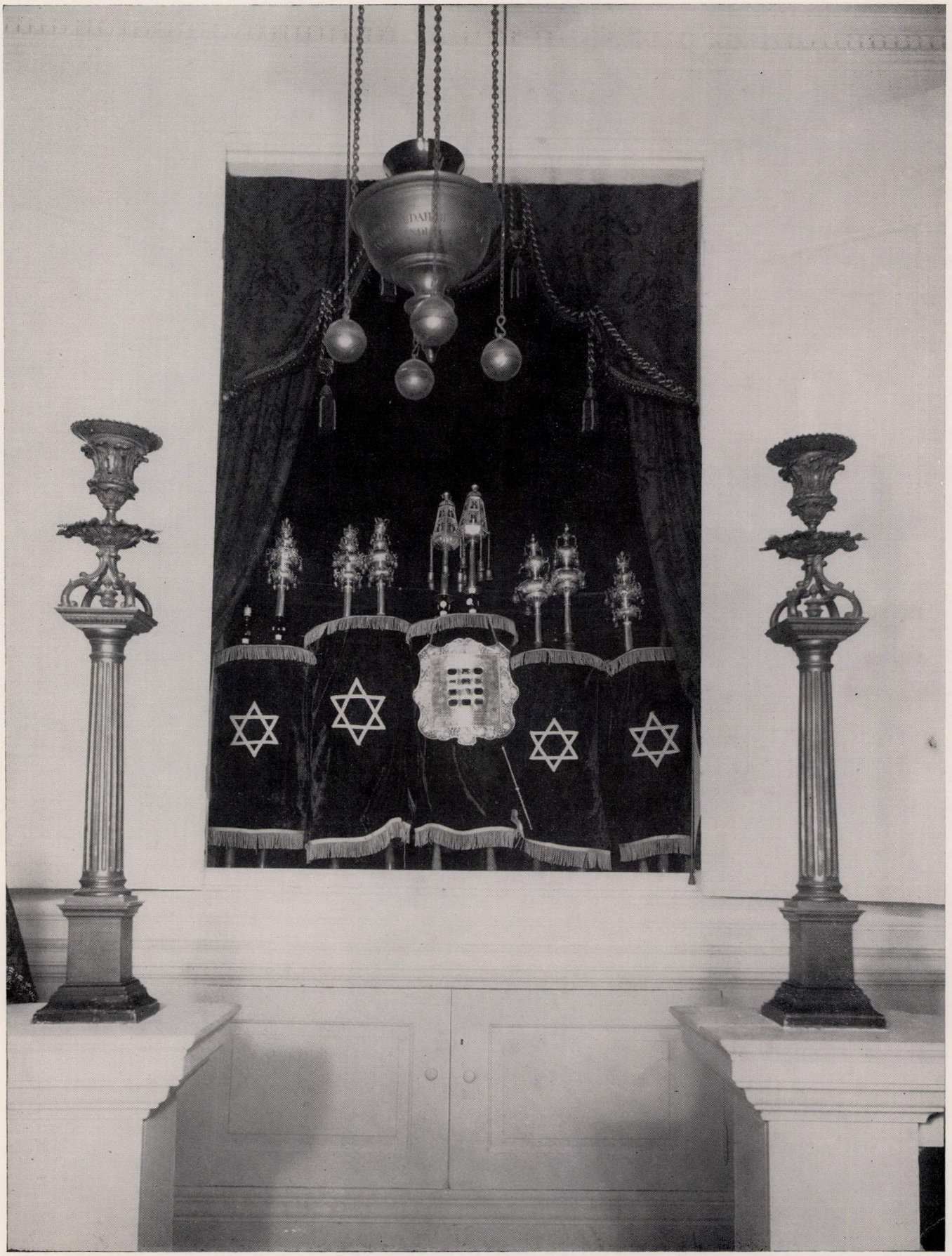




INTERIOR OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Photograph shows the east wall and southeast corner. The Holy Ark is closed. Above the Ark are the Ten Commandments. The Ner Tamid (Perpetual Flame) and two candelabra, suspended from the ceiling, are in front of the Ark. On the balustrade are four candle sticks (gift of Enoch Lyon, 1766) and lectern.

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The Holy Ark, showing five Scrolls of the Law. One of the Scrolls, believed to be about four hundred years old, was brought to the New World from Spain.

The building continued at a slow pace. It was not easy to get building material. The bricks had to be imported from abroad. The 196,715 bricks used for the structure were paid for on August 25, 1760.

CONSECRATION OF THE SYNAGOGUE

After practically four years of building, the dedication of the new synagogue took place on December 2, 1763. The ceremony of the dedication was planned to bring out all the beauties of the synagogue and its service. The invited audience consisted of both Jews and Christians, including a great number of notables of the city and guests from other localities. Early in the afternoon they began to gather in the synagogue, the men taking their places downstairs, the women seating themselves in the balcony.

The consecration service made a deep impression on all present. When the Newport Mercury appeared three days later it expressed the sentiments of those present when it described the ceremonies in the following words:

> "In the afternoon was the dedication of the new Synagogue in this town. It began by a handsome procession in which was carried the Books of the Law to be deposited in the Ark. Several Portions of Scripture, and of their Service with a prayer for the Royal Family were read and finely sung by the Priest and People. There were present many Gentlemen and Ladies. The Order and Decorum, the Harmony and Solemnity of the Music, together with a handsome assembly of People, in the Edifice the most perfect of the Temple kind in America, and splendidly illuminated, could not but raise in the Mind a faint Idea of the Majesty and Grandeur of the ancient Jewish Worship mentioned in Scripture."
>
> "Dr. Isaac de Abraham Touro performed the Service."

The synagogue, which has not been changed since either in the interior or on the exterior, measures but about forty by thirty-five feet. It stands at an acute angle to the street so that the Ark where the Scrolls are found is in the exact east. The plan of the interior is a miniature parallel to the ancient Holy Temple in Jerusalem and resembles closely the plan of a Masonic Lodge Hall.



From the domed ceiling are suspended five large bronze candelabra, one of which according to tradition once adorned a monastery in Spain. In front of the Ark, also suspended from the ceiling, hangs the perpetual lamp which burns continuously. At the Reading Desk in the center of the synagogue the prayers are chanted in Hebrew in the old traditional melodies.

The balcony reserved for the women worshippers is reached from the side room adjacent to the synagogue at the outer northern wall. It is supported by twelve columns extending to the ceiling which are said to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The entire structure has the richness of simplicity and the glory of sanctity. It is a miniature of the Temple in Jerusalem, where

> "The weary ones, the sad, the suffering
> All found their comfort in the Holy Place,
> And children's gladness and men's gratitude
> Took voice and mingled in the chant of praise."

THE REVOLUTION

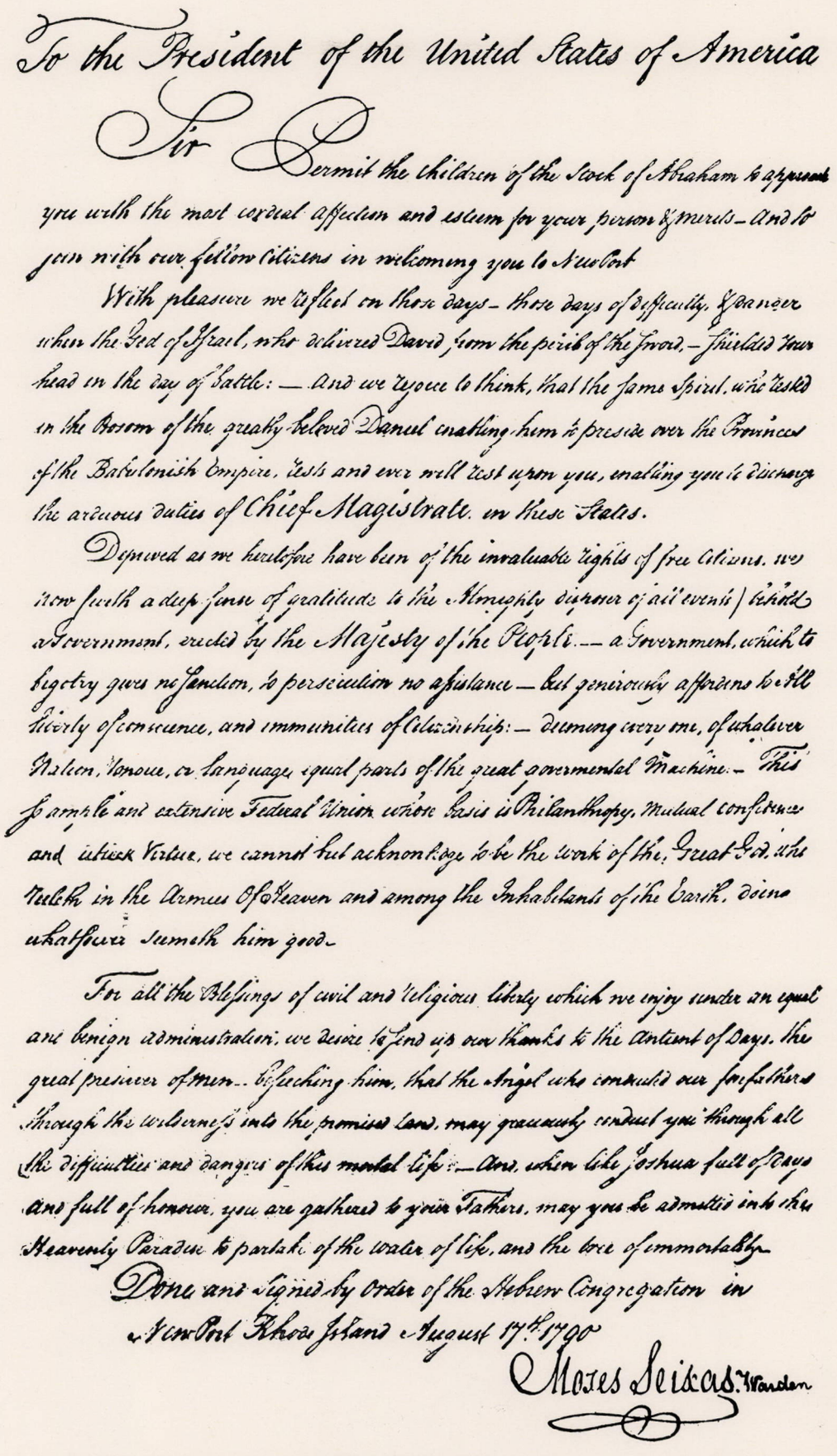
All this crashed with the approach of the British and their invasion of the city. Most of the Jews left the city. The few that remained, among them the Reverend Isaac Touro, were not in sufficient number even to hold religious services at the synagogue.

The Jews of Newport gave their full support to the Colonial cause. Moses Isaac, who later had the honor of entertaining George Washington in his home, Abraham Isaacs, Solomon Rophee, David Sarzedas. Abraham Seixas and many others joined the fighting forces. Many others contributed money, ammunition, boats and even cannon to further the Revolution.

When the General Congress in Philadelphia ordered the Continental Fast Day through the United Colonies, the Congregation Jeshuat Israel, as the Jewish Congregation was called, gathered at the synagogue to join in prayer with the other colonists.

After the evacuation of the British, despite the attempted revival of commerce, the community never regained the prominence it occupied in pre-Revolutionary days. After the Revolution many Jews returned to the town, but Aaron Lopez, the most outstanding merchant on whom high hopes were set, met with an accidental





To the President of the United States of America

Sir

Permit the children of the Stock of Abraham to approach you with the most cordial affection and esteem for your person & merits — and to join with our fellow Citizens in welcoming you to Newport

With pleasure we reflect on those days — those days of difficulty, & danger when the God of Israel, who delivered David, from the perils of the sword, — shielded your head in the day of battle: — and we rejoice to think, that the same Spirit, who rested in the Bosom of the greatly beloved Daniel enabling him to preside over the Provinces of the Babylonish Empire, rests and ever will rest upon you, enabling you to discharge the arduous duties of Chief Magistrate in these States.

Deprived as we heretofore have been of the invaluable rights of free Citizens, we now finith a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty disposer of all events) behold a Government, erected by the Majesty of the People — a Government, which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance — but generously affords to all liberty of conscience, and immunities of Citizenship: — deeming every one, of whatever Nation, Tongue, or language equal parts of the great governmental Machine. — This so ample and extensive Federal Union whose basis is Philanthropy, Mutual confidence and virtuous Virtue, we cannot but acknowledge to be the work of the Great God, who ruleth in the Armies of Heaven and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, doing whatsoever seemeth him good.

For all the Blessings of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy under an equal and benign administration, we desire to send up our thanks to the Ancient of Days, the great preserver of men — beseeching him, that the Angel who conducted our forefathers through the wilderness into the promised land, may graciously conduct you through all the difficulties and dangers of this mortal life. — And, when like Joshua full of days and full of honour, you are gathered to your Fathers, may you be admitted into the Heavenly Paradise to partake of the water of life, and the tree of immortality.

Done and Signed by Order of the Hebrew Congregation in Newport Rhode Island August 17th 1790

Moses Seixas Warden

Facsimile of letter written by Moses Seixas, Warden of the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, to President Washington on August 17, 1790, felicitating him on his election to the Presidency.

death on his return journey. Gradually the Jews left the town, and before the century was ended the synagogue was closed because of the lack of the quorum of ten men required to hold services.

WASHINGTON'S LETTER

It was destined however that even in this period history should record highly significant expressions on religious liberty and equality, which came from the pen of Moses Seixas and George Washington in 1790.

In that year President Washington visited Newport. He was presented with an address by Moses Seixas in the name of the Hebrew Congregation which read in part "With pleasure we reflect on those days, those days of difficulty and danger, when the God of Israel who delivered David from the peril of the sword—shielded your head in the day of battle—and we rejoice to think that the same Spirit who rested in the bosom of the greatly beloved Daniel, enabling him to preside over provinces of the Babylonish Empire, rests, and ever will rest, upon you, enabling you to discharge the arduous duties of Chief Magistrate in these states.

"Deprived as we heretofore have been of the invaluable rights of free citizens, we now (with a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty Dispenser of all Events) behold a Government erected by the majesty of the people, a Government which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance; but generously affording to all liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship, deeming everyone, of whatever nation, tongue, or language, equal parts of the great Governmental machine."

To this George Washington replied in the classic words recorded elsewhere in this pamphlet.



A STORY OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

BY JOSEPH M. PROSKAUER

President, The American Jewish Committee

"AMERICA", said Daniel Webster in 1843, "has furnished the world the character of Washington." Since he spoke, over a century has passed in which the struggle for freedom has sharpened and spread over the earth.

Washington shaped a nation and moulded the character of his countryman. In spoken and written phrases, he revealed a delicate sensitivity to the true meaning of the brotherhood of man. He despised the concept of tolerance as a condescension. That is why he wrote to the Congregation of Touro Synagogue: "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights."

This letter contained the celebrated affirmation, "happily the Government of the United States . .. gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." It was one of many acknowledgements to various congregations which paid their respects to the first President. But to the Jewish residents of Newport, with their still vivid memories of old world persecution, it was a reassurance of safety, a warm-hearted welcome to the American fold. To their Christian neighbors, George Washington's letter to the Jewish congregation was a reminder that religious liberty was a basic foundation of the new American nation.

And so it has proved. From the exercise of religious liberty has come the peculiar genius of the American people for liberty in every sphere of human endeavor. Freedom of worship opened up new frontiers for the individual. Many of the Constitutional guarantees we now take for granted stemmed from Washington's interpretations of certain liberties as *rights*. He believed, and he never overlooked an opportunity to state his belief, that "the liberty



To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport

Rhode Island.

Gentlemen.

While I receive, with much satisfaction, your Address replete with expressions of affection and esteem; I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you, that I shall always retain a grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced in my visit to Newport, from all classes of citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are past is rendered the more sweet, from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity and security. If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good Government, to become a great and a happy people.

The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my administration, and fervent wishes for my felicity. May the children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.

G. Washington

The famous letter by President George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, August 21, 1790, in which religious freedom is laid down as a basic principle of the new republic.

enjoyed by the People of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreeable to their consciences is not only among the choicest of their belongings but also of their rights."

With every generation, Americans have strengthened and broadened the meaning of civil rights, until the term today embraces such bread-and-butter essentials as the right to good education, a fair livelihood, an equal chance to better one's lot. Indeed, it is now recognized that as long as these rights are lacking anywhere in the world, peace remains insecure. This conviction has spurred the great crusade of our generation — the drive of the democratic nations to assert the human rights of men and women everywhere. The United States leads in this crusade, not because of a few men at the helm, but because the ethics of the American people as a whole impels that leadership.

This was forcibly brought home to me only a few years ago, when I had occasion to speak on a radio forum on intergroup relations. At that time, I proposed a four point "Pledge for American Unity," a simple statement of what I consider to be sensible and fundamentally American principles of behavior:

1. I will spread no rumor and no slander against any sect.

2. I will never try to indict a whole people by reason of the delinquency of any member.

3. I will daily deal with every man in business, in social and political relations, only on the basis of his true individual worth.

4. In my daily conduct I will consecrate myself, hour by hour, to the achievement of the highest ideal of the dignity of mankind, human equality, human fellowship and human brotherhood.

These plain words brought emphatic approval from thousands of people. Letters came from individuals and groups all over the country, from high church dignitaries of every denomination, from ordinary folk who wanted copies for their friends. The pledge even appeared on posters in store windows in several hundred cities.

This spontaneous response to a modest, unheralded radio program was eloquent testimony that the spirit of Washington lives on in the hearts of Americans, influencing personal conduct and animating the national outlook.



And as a nation believes, so does it act. This I know to be true, for I was in San Francisco in the spring of 1945, when the United Nations Charter was being created. To represent the American people, forty-two citizens' associations—religious and educational societies, farm, labor and business organizations and veteran groups—were invited to send consultants to the American delegation. As president of the American Jewish Committee, I had the rare privilege of being among the consultants so designated.

The experience was just cause for pride in America. For there, at San Francisco, I saw the American people in the vanguard, pleading the cause of liberty and justice for all humanity. It was as if with one voice, and in one mighty upsurge of feeling, Americans had arisen to say: "We are of many tongues, of many births, of many races and religions, but we live happily together, under one flag, because we respect the differences among us, differences natural to all men. We live in peace, because we value the individual, his worth and his rights. The protection of the individual is the business of nations and of councils of nations. The United Nations must establish a committee on human rights. We must have an international bill of rights."

The results are engraved in the Charter of the United Nations, which sets forth the aim of "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

Yet we know that the United States has not yet become a perfect product of its founders' ideals. We have the weaknesses of every organism of nature that grows too quickly. Throughout our history, the forces of bigotry and ill-will have worked hard and sometimes effectively, to deny to some Americans, on the ground of creed or race, the birthrights of freedom guaranteed to all alike. Often, far too often, these malevolent forces have managed to slow the swift current of our progress. But the direction of the current flows always toward greater happiness for all the people, regardless of religious creed, ancestry or color.

The truth of this was emphasized only recently, when the President's Committee on Civil Rights published the result of a year-long survey of our liberties. This magnificent report, "To



Secure These Rights," describes in blunt, hard-hitting language the chasm between promise and reality which confronts millions of Americans, barred from their just rights by racial and religious prejudice. The Report is in that aspect disturbing. Even so, it is well to remember that a frank admission of shortcomings is in itself a sign of strength. No government, except that of a free people would dare to broadcast its own faults. In this, the first re-appraisal of our liberties since the Emancipation Proclamation, we assert once more our faith in our way of life and our determination to realize its full potentialities.

The Civil Rights Report has galvanized Americans into action. All over the land, citizens' committees are already pursuing the program outlined by the Committee. They are sharply scrutinizing their communities, bent on outlawing such discredited practices as discrimination in employment, restrictive covenants in housing, religious and racial barriers to education. As never before, there is an urge to self-examination, a desire to make sure that in our everyday relationship we give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

That is why we can truthfully say that we, the American people, are Washington's most lasting memorial. That is why his name, as Daniel Webster said, "will forever be pronounced with affectionate gratitude by everyone in whose breast there shall arise an aspiration for human rights and human liberty."



IN THE EARLY DAYS

By LEE M. FRIEDMAN

President American Jewish Historical Society

IN RHODE ISLAND, for the first time in modern history, was put into practical operation the great ideal of religious liberty. Here was first established that the right of the individual freely and without governmental restraint to follow the dictates of his own conscience in religious worship could be exercised without danger to the state. Here originated the first demonstration of that principle which has given the United States its leadership among nations — the principle dissociating theological opinion from political rights, and proclaimed by President Roosevelt to the world as the second of the vital Four Freedoms—the "freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world."

The synagogue of Jeshuat Israel, started in 1759 and formally dedicated in 1763, and in 1947 rededicated as a national historic shrine, is one of the oldest monuments of the American system of government, of "the noblest innovation of modern times" in human progress, the total separation of state and church. This principle is embodied in the very first provision of the Bill of Rights that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Although many of our American colonies were settled to afford religious asylum for oppressed sects — Massachusetts for the Puritans, Maryland for Catholics, and Pennsylvania for Quakers — none welcomed a dissenting minority. It was not until the day of Roger Williams and the settlement of the Providence Plantations and the formation of Rhode Island, that those whose religion differed from that of the ruling majority found a shelter free from persecution where "all men may walk as their conscience



persuade them, every one in the name of his God."

When, in 1636, at the age of thirty-three, Roger Williams came to settle in Rhode Island, this talented, aggressive, religious radical, writer of bold and vivid phrases, cultured and wise pupil of that greatest of English lawyers, Sir Edward Coke, had already back of him years of experience as a member of a religious minority group, both in England and in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. At that time, in every country, Christian and Mohammedan as well, Church and State were united. No state was free from the fetters of Church, and no Church was free from the control of politics. In England, as a Puritan, Williams had been at odds with the Established Church. Then in America he clashed with his Puritan associates who formed the theocratic hierarchy governing Massachusetts. He had proved himself a theological iconoclast, but happily for mankind he stalwartly maintained that it was an inherent fundamental human right to be free, independent, and individualistic in religious ideas. Politically and spiritually, the years of his personal experience and study had brought him to the firm conviction that it was "soul-rape" to enforce religious conformity.

In this new Rhode Island settlement he proposed a shelter for "persons distressed for conscience", where, whether heathen, Turk, Jew, or Papist, each should be free to worship his God according to his conscience, and only in civil things should he conform to the democratic rule of the majority.

To him in 1655, it was given to speak a parable which, written to "Loving friends and neighbors" of the town of Providence, silenced accusations that his radical ideas of religious liberty were destructive of civil Peace:

"There goes many a ship to sea with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common, and is a true picture of a Commonwealth, or a human combination or society. It hath fallen out some times, that both Papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal I affirm, that all the liberty of conscience that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges, that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews or Turks be forced to come to the ship's prayer or worship, or compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they



practice any . . notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course, yea, and also command that justice, peace and sobriety be kept and practiced both among the seamen and all the passengers."

He was indeed, as a noted authority has pointed out, "the most provocative figure thrown upon the Massachusetts shores. . He was the 'first rebel against the divine church-order established in the wilderness' as Cotton Mather rightly reported. But he was very much more than that; he was a rebel against all stupidities that interposed a barrier betwixt man and the fellowship of their dreams."

Thus, crying out that the civil state ought to give each individual "the civil rights and privileges due him as a man, subject, and citizen," Roger Williams in Rhode Island welded diverse elements into a modern civil society granting liberty of conscience, liberty of speech, and separation of Church and State. This great experiment had succeeded.

As early as 1652, Roger Williams had written, "I humbly conceive it to be the duty of the civil magistrate to break down that superstitious wall of separation (as to civil things) between the Gentiles and the Jews, and freely, without their asking to make way for their free and peaceable habitations amongst us." For, as 'The Bloudy Tenant of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience' read, his famous and revolutionary tract of 1644, "who knows not but many of the Jewish religion may be clear and free from scandalous offences in their life, and also from disobedience to the civil laws of the state."

Thus was prepared the pioneer haven of American religious liberty where, for the first time, Jews were welcomed on a basis of religious equality.

Portuguese Marranos, to escape the Inquisition, had long settled in Brazil. After 1631, when the Dutch conquered the country, these Jews had openly professed and practiced their Judaism. They found themselves faced with the threat of yet another inquisition in 1654, when the Portuguese succeeded in defeating the Dutch and once again became rulers of the country.



They turned their faces back to their free and tolerant mother city of Amsterdam, and one group came to the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam, to seek in the new world a haven of safety. In 1652, Rhode Island had already declared that

> "all men, whatever nation soever they may be, that shall be received inhabitants of any of the towns, shall have the same privilege as Englishmen any law to the contrary notwithstanding",

and rumors of the religious freedom to be found in the settlement finally drew some of these refugees to the shores of Narragansett Bay. There, as early as 1658, some fifteen of these Jewish families reached the nineteen-year-old settlement of Newport, to make it henceforth their home. There they found such good relationship with their Gentile neighbors as enabled them to live happily, free from fear of perscution. When, in 1684, an attempt was made to question their rights as dwellers in the colony of Rhode Island, its General Assembly voted that

> "We declare that they may expect as good protection here as any stranger being not of our nation residing amongst us in his Majesty's colony ought to have being obedient to his Majesty's laws."

The development of this Jewish community of Newport is a proud chapter in early American history. Through energy, daring and skill, these Jews helped considerably to make Newport one of the cultured and important trading ports of the Colonies. They introduced new manufactures — sperm oil, candles, and furniture; operated rope walks, built ships, refined sugar, and sent their frail sailing vessels up and down the coasts of America and across the Atlantic. Indeed, Newport's Jewish merchants and shipowners were an important factor in making it in the middle eighteenth century the third commercial city of the Colonies, exceeded only by Boston and Philadelphia.

So loyally did most of the Jews of Newport support the Revolutionary cause that when the British captured the town in 1776, they were forced to flee before the advancing enemy, never



again to return to their old home.

Thus ends the first chapter of American Jewish Newport history.

Humbly and with reverence we pay tribute, in the rededication of this Newport Synagogue as a national historical shrine, to the great idealists who planted the seeds of religious freedom on Rhode Island soil and to the patriarchal Jewish pioneers of the past who helped demonstrate the practicability of their ideal. This noble edifice, the synagogue of Jeshuat Israel, stands a national shrine and symbol of the greatness and idealism which is America.

"For he who buildeth high and wise,
Nor pauses in his plan,
Will take the sun out of the skies
Ere freedom out of man." *Emerson*



JUDAH TOURO

By LEON HUHNER, A. M., LL. B.

THE NAME TOURO has been commemorated by the city of Newport in several of its landmarks. There are Touro Street, Touro Park, and the beautiful Touro Synagogue, which has recently been designated by the United States Government as a national historic site.

The great Jewish merchants who brought colonial Newport to the height of its commercial prosperity, were of Spanish and Portuguese origin, and in 1759 they employed Peter Harrison, a prominent architect, to build the synagogue above mentioned. They had selected the Rev. Isaac Touro, a native of Holland, as their minister and he officiated at the synagogue consecration. In 1773 he married Miss Reyna Hays, the sister of Moses Michael Hays, who subsequently became a prominent merchant of Boston and one of its patriotic citizens.

The American Revolution put an end to Newport's commercial prosperity, for the city was occupied by the British and held by their victorious soldiers. Its great merchants removed to patriotic centers, particularly Boston and Philadelphia. The Rev. Isaac Touro went to Jamaica, West Indies, and died there in 1784. His widow with her children returned to New England, making her home with her brother in Boston.

The Touro children were very young at the time, the eldest Abraham, having been born in 1774. The second son, Judah, the subject of our sketch, was born on June 16, 1775, on the very eve of the Battle of Bunker Hill. The boys were brought up by their uncle, from whom they received a sound business training. Judah gave great promise and in 1798 was sent by Mr. Hays as supercargo with a shipment to the Mediterranean. The young man displayed considerable courage when the ship was attacked by a French



privateer, and finally returned to Boston with the profits of the enterprise.

Tradition has it that Judah Touro had fallen deeply in love with his cousin Catherine Hays, but that her father would not permit them to marry because of their close relationship. Young Touro finally decided to leave Boston and start life anew in some distant part of the country. He had been impressed with the great commercial possibilities of the vast French territory of Louisiana, and accordingly went to its leading seaport, New Orleans, where he arrived in February, 1802.

New Orleans at the time was a small unattractive town of about 8000 inhabitants. It had no paved streets or any of the usual conveniences, but it already displayed considerable commercial activity. Touro opened a store for general merchandise and turned to good account the connections he had made in Boston. He was an incessant worker and his success was phenomenal from the start. Due to his ability and integrity, almost every vessel from New England brought him profitable consignments, so that within a few years he was numbered among the wealthy merchants of New Orleans.

When the War of 1812 broke out, Touro volunteered to fight in the militia under General Andrew Jackson for the defense of New Orleans. In the battle which ensued he was severely wounded and his life was despaired of. But he was found on the battlefield by his friend Rezin D. Shepherd, who brought him to a place of safety, where he was nursed back to life. An appreciative account of Touro's patriotism in this connection may be found in James Parton's "Life of Andrew Jackson." Touro finally recovered and the friendship between him and Shepherd continued throughout both their lives.

After the war, Touro resumed his commercial activities and expanded his ventures on a large scale. He became an extensive ship owner, and sent his ships loaded with cotton, sugar and other merchandise to distant parts of the world. They went not only to the West Indies and the British Isles, but even as far as India. Touro's enterprise was remarkable. He was one of the earliest



merchants to appreciate the advent of steam navigation, and he figures as co-owner of several such vessels. He was over seventy when gold was discovered in California, yet one of his ships was among the earliest vessels going from New Orleans to San Francisco, where it arrived in 1849 after a voyage of 214 days.

In addition to these ventures, Touro had also become an owner of valuable real estate, which he improved with a number of fine buildings, the "Touro Block" being prominently mentioned in that connection.

From the start, Touro had become favorably known as a public spirited citizen. He was interested not only in beautifying New Orleans, but in improving its educational facilities as well. In 1824 he was associated with the Free Library Society and he offered to put up a library building at his own expense. The gift was gratefully accepted and the library named in his honor. "The Touro Free Library of New Orleans" became one of the great cultural influences of the city.

Judah Touro's name stands out most prominently as a philanthropist. He was among the foremost American philanthropists before the Civil War.

In New Orleans his name is associated with various charities, irrespective of race or creed. A prominent example of his broad-minded spirit is recorded in connection with the First Congregational Church, which had suffered great reverses. Its church building had been sold by creditors at public auction. It was purchased by Touro who immediately gave the use of the building to its former owners, with practically no compensation, and refused many tempting offers for the property. This church later became one of the most fashionable in New Orleans, and Touro's generosity was gratefully recalled at an elaborate celebration in 1933.

In Boston, Touro's name is associated with the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Asylum for Indigent Boys, the Female Orphan Asylum, the Humane Society, and similar institutions.

For many years yellow fever had been the great scourge of New Orleans, claiming thousands of victims. Judah Touro not only contributed funds to combat the plague, but he established a hospital in that connection. He also established one of the foremost



hospitals of the South, namely the well known "Touro Infirmary."

We have already mentioned his patriotism and public spirit. In his native Newport he did much to preserve its historic landmarks. He assisted the Redwood Library, and saved from demolition the "Old Stone Mill" also known as "Newport Tower", an ancient structure supposed to have been built by the Norsemen, centuries before the discovery of America by Columbus. By his will Touro beqeathed a fund to the City of Newport for the acquisition of grounds surrounding the mill to be laid out as a public park. This historic plot is now known as Touro Park.

His name is also connected with one of the nation's foremost monuments, namely "The Bunker Hill Monument" of Boston. The cornerstone had been laid by Lafayette in 1826 on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. But despite the efforts of Daniel Webster and Edward Everett, the money to complete it was not forthcoming, until Amos Lawrence of Boston and Judah Touro of New Orleans furnished the funds to complete the monument, which was dedicated in 1843.

For many years, Touro was virtually the only Jew in New Orleans, but he never forgot his origin or his faith, and he assisted the Jewish community when it became sufficiently numerous to have an edifice of its own. Later on, when a Spanish and Portuguese Congregation was established, he purchased a large church building, and had it remodelled for synagogue purposes at great expense. He devoted much time to the furnishing and embellishment of this edifice as well as the selection of its minister.

Nor were his Jewish activities limited to New Orleans. He took an interest in the efforts of Sir Moses Montefiore on behalf of his people in various parts of the world, and gave assistance to alleviate the plight of the unfortunate Jews in China, and in the Holy Land. Under the provisions of his will almshouses were established in Jerusalem which are still functioning.

In Newport he remembered the famous Jewish Cemetery around which he erected a granite wall with a handsome gateway, and by his will he created a fund for the repair and upkeep of the historic synagogue, which had been closed since the days of the



Revolution. He also created a fund for defraying the salary of a minister if a sufficient number of Jews again resided there. These funds are now being used for the purposes designated.

Judah Touro died at New Orleans on January 18, 1854. About two weeks before his death, he executed his famous will which provided liberally for various charities, Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic. There were bequests to six Christian Orphan Asylums in New Orleans, including St. Anna's Asylum, St. Mary's Catholic Boys Asylum, the Milne Asylum, and a fund for the establishment of an Almshouse, now known as the Touro-Shakespeare Almshouse.

Touro's will is of interest in American Jewish annals, for it furnishes an almost complete index of the more important congregations and Jewish institutions of his day. Many of the foremost of these, like the Mount Sinai Hospital and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York, were placed on a firm financial basis by his bequests.

The citizens of New Orleans manifested the most profound grief at Touro's death and many were the eloquent tributes to his memory.

Judah Touro had never married. In accordance with his wish his remains were taken to Newport for burial. That city decreed a public funeral, which was attended by the Mayor and the leading city officials. "It was the most elaborate and impressive function at Newport, since the funeral of Commodore Perry in 1826." The tombstone over his grave bears the appropriate inscription, "The last of his name, he inscribed it in the book of philanthropy, to be remembered forever."

The City Council of New Orleans adopted a resolution for the erection of a monument, but this was never carried out. Nevertheless Touro's memory has been perpetuated in various ways. When the new State Capitol of Louisiana was erected at Baton Rouge, one of the sculptured panels on its exterior was devoted to Judah Touro. The great Touro Infirmary and the Almshouses in Jerusalem have already been mentioned. Tulane University of Louisiana still awards the gold medals which he established in

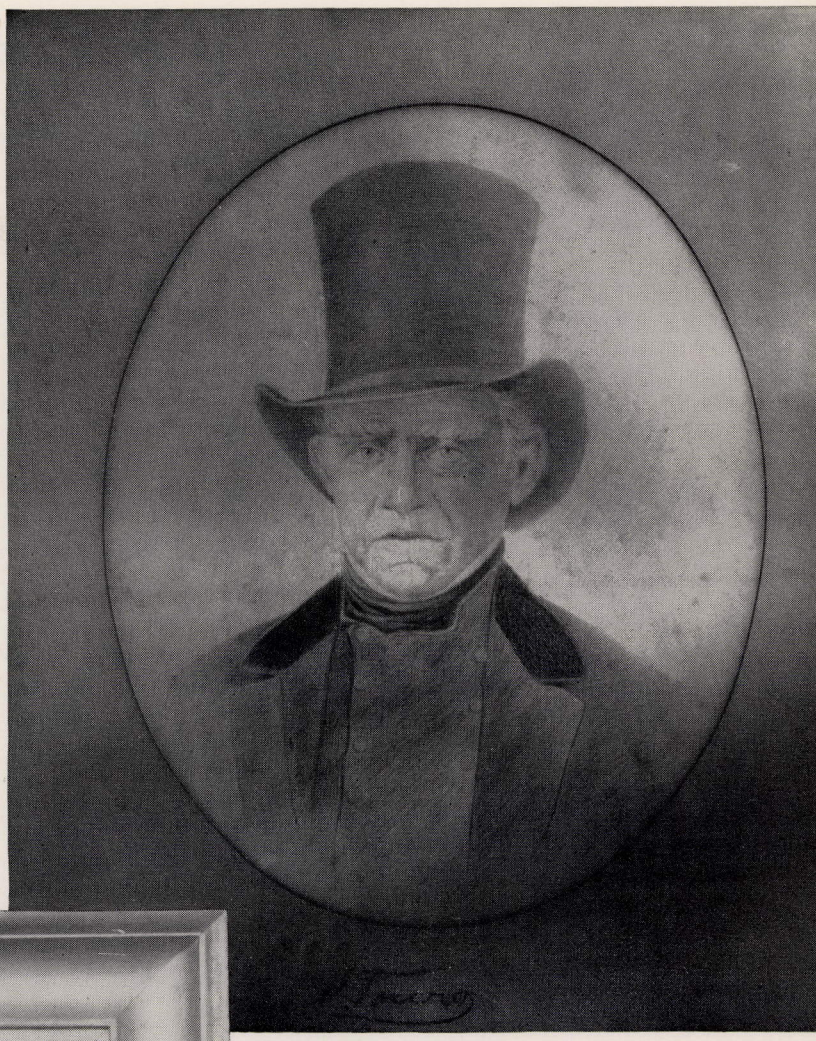


1848, while the Touro Synagogue at Newport is still benefited by a fund which he left, and which is administered by that city.

The outstanding feature of Touro's character, emphasized by those who knew him, was his extreme modesty, while the key to his commercial success lay in his fair dealing, and in the loyalty of his employees, who appreciated his uniform kindness.

Touro's charitable and public spirited acts were so numerous and varied that it is impossible to outline them within the confines of this brief sketch. The reader who wishes to obtain further information is referred to the writer's "Life of Judah Touro" which was published by the Jewish Publication Society in 1946.



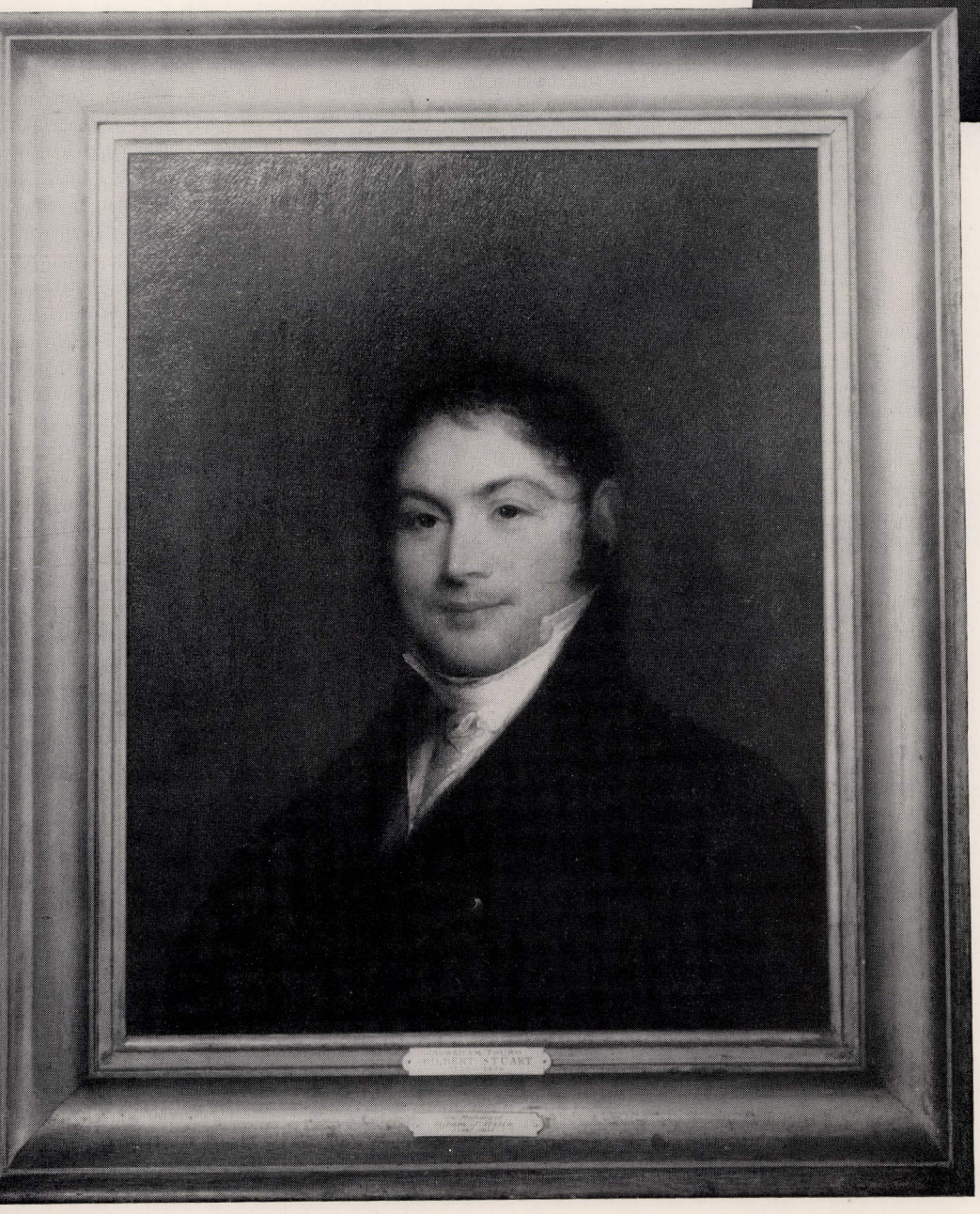


JUDAH TOURO

1775 — 1854

(ARTIST UNKNOWN)

This portrait is now on the North wall of the interior of the Redwood Library, Newport, R. I.



ABRAHAM TOURO

1774 — 1822

BY GILBERT STUART

Lent to the Congregation Jeshuat Israel through the efforts of E. J. Roussuch, in co-operation with the Trustees of the estate of the late Hiram J. Halle.

TEMPLE SHOLOM LIBRARY
815 WEST 7th ST.
PLAINFIELD, N. J.



The Inscription on the Touro Monument reads:

To the Memory of

JUDAH TOURO

Born, Newport, R. I., June 16, 1775

Died, New Orleans, La., Jan. 18, 1854

Interred here, June 8.

EULOGY AT THE GRAVE OF JUDAH TOURO

JUNE 6th, 1854

By REV. ISAAC LEESER

JUDAH TOURO departed this life at New Orleans on Tebeth 19th (January), 5614, and by his request, as expressed long before his decease, his body was conveyed to Newport, Rhode Island, and interred in the Jewish cemetery here, on Tuesday, June 6th (Sivan 10th), following. Sixteen congregations and societies were assembled, and eight ministers. The Rev. Mr. Gutheim, of New Orleans, delivered an affecting speech at the Synagogue, which had not been opened for many years, and was found in excellent preservation, and the Rev. Isaac Leeser, a personal friend of the deceased, had been selected by the executors to officiate at the funeral and to deliver a speech at the grave. The address will tell its own story, and requires no comment. It simply paints Mr. Touro as his friends knew him.

MY FRIENDS!

What is the motive which has brought us together from so many places, situated at a great distance from each other, to this spot, devoted to the repose of those who have departed this life? What is the cause that on this field of death the unusual assembly of so many Israelites is witnessed, in this city, where none of their brothers in faith have their dwelling? It is not, as you well know, to do homage to the remains of a brave warrior who has fallen gloriously in the defence of his country, nor to honour the memory of one who has won for himself an imperishable renown in the world of letters; but simply to commit to the bosom of the earth what is mortal of our friend, Judah Touro, — a plain man, an unassuming merchant, who breathed his last in the quiet of his chamber, far away in the metropolis of the sunny South, not surrounded by his own flesh and blood, but those who watched over him from motives of duty and affection — an affection enkindled in their hearts by his kindness and uniform charity with which he treated all who approached him. Eighty years have elapsed since the minister of the Jewish congregation which then flourished in this isle of the sea was greeted by the birth of a son; and, after four scores of summer and winter have chased each other over our globe, the wanderings of this son are brought to a close, and he is to be interred here where his kindred sleep, mourned for by many who knew him not when living, honoured by



those to whom his person was unknown. And ask we "Why?" The answer will present itself at once, if you regard those who surround his bier. He amassed wealth by honest frugality; treasures flowed into his coffers in the pursuit of his mercantile enterprizes; he had no one near him who was bound to him by the ties of blood and kindred; yet he squandred not his acquisitions in extravagance and intemperance, in boisterous wassail or secret debauchery; but he relieved distress when it presented itself to his benevolent eye; when he saw the naked, he clothed them, and those that needed food obtained it at his hands, whether they belonged to his faith and country, or whether they worshipped at other shrines, and had first seen the light of day in foreign lands. And if you had seen him in his daily walks, you would not have suspected him to be the man of wealth, and the honoured protector of the poor, as he was, the exterior of our brother betrayed not the man within. But when he gave you his hand, when he expressed in his simple manner that you were welcome, you could not doubt his sincerity; you felt convinced that he was emphatically a man of truth, of sincere benevolence. And thus he lived for many years, unknown to the masses, but felt within the circle where his character could display itself without ostentation and obtrusiveness, at a period when but few of his faith were residents of the same city with him. But when they began to multiply around him, his love for the people of his belief was awakened anew within him, and he looked about himself for the means of supplying a permanent home for his religion in the vicinity where he resided. And if you have ever been in New Orleans, where Mr. Touro lived for full half a century, you will have seen an elegant structure, with the necessary out-buildings attached, which he presented, somewhat more than four years ago, to the congregation, the "Dispersed of Judah," the Minister and President of which are now present to join with us in entombing the benefactor of their institutions. And if you have ever been present during the hours of worship in the house bestowed as a free gift, without solicitation, on his fellow-Israelites, you may have observed a plainly-dressed old man, seated in a corner in the upper portion of the synagogue, devoutly engaged in prayers, not throwing about his eyes to the right or to the left, but feeling, so far as a man might judge from the manner he exhibited, as an humble mortal in the presence of his Creator; and all the honour he ever received was the office of opening the ark where the testimony is deposited before the reading of the law. And if you have been privileged to witness the depositing of the stone commemorating his noble gift beneath the entrance of the synagogue, on the day it was dedicated with song and thanksgiving to the Eternal One, the God of Israel, you would have seen the picture of heartfelt pleasure illuminating his placid countenance, as he, with his own hand, applied the mortar to the tablet which witnesses that he voluntarily parted with a property which others would have regarded as securing them an independence for life.



But when his hour came to be summoned away to the place destined for all the living, was witnessed the greatest triumph of his abode on earth. While permitted to look forward to additional years of life, in comparative good health, his natural timidity prevented him from consummating various benevolent endowments which he had contemplated. But when he saw that his time approached to die, he dictated, with an unclouded mind, the manner in which his wealth was to be appropriated after his decease. And let me call your attention, my friends, to the noble manner in which our deceased brother-Israelite distributed what still was his, and over which both his religion and the law of the land permitted him to exercise an unchecked control. He thought of the widow and orphan in his own city and where he had dwelt in his youth, and devoted a portion of his means to their relief; and those to whom he has confided this trust are not of his own faith and kindred, and probably no Israelite will ever claim any benefit from these funds. He thought of the poor in his own city, and endowed a home of refuge to receive them in the day of their distress. He thought of those of his own persuasion who suffer from the heavy hand of disease, and supplied the means to afford them relief, in several cities. He thought of the new and weak congregations in various towns, and afforded them the means to carry on their holy mission in dispensing the blessings which our faith is so well calculated to bestow. He thought of the necessity of diffusing religious education to the children of Israel; and with wise discrimination selected those institutions best calculated to further this end, to make Jewish religion and Jewish literature accessible to the greatest numbers. He thought of those heavenly societies whose mission it is to glide gently into the abodes of the poor, to leave there the traces of benevolence, to cheer spirits which, without this, would droop in despair and gloom. He thought of the afflicted in the land of Israel, to provide for them assistance in their distress, and protection against the arm of violence; he, the merchant in the far West, who had lived for years separated from his people, almost a solitary worshipper of the One God, amidst those who acknowledged Him not alone, forgot not those who still linger on the soil consecrated by so many wonderful events which marked our early history, to cheer them on in the deprivations to which they are subjected. And at last he forgot not cherished friendships, some of which were formed late in life, and left them tokens of remembrance, in terms of affection and endearment. But more than all, he clung, with an attachment which nothing could sever, to the man who had stood by him in the hour of trial, on the field where the demon of war made sad havoc among the assailants and the assailed of the place of his residence, and bore him away to a place of safety beyond the reach of deadly missiles; and he felt a pleasure in bestowing on him the residue of his earthly possessions, after satisfying the demands of benevolence — not because he needed this gift, but to show that the friendship which had endured so many years, which had been cemented amidst peace and war, security and danger, deserved to be proved in a manner



which few have the means to do. And let me say here, in praise of the living, that the gift has been well bestowed, if for no other cause, for the beautiful manner in which the residuary legatee has discharged all the trusts confided to him by his deceased friend; no delay which the law permits has been suffered to intervene in the bestowal of the benefactions; and what Mr. Touro had willed, his friend discharged to the extent he was able to do it.

This, therefore, is the cause of so many being here who knew Mr. Touro only by name; they come as delegates from various congregations and institutions to see the grave close over the mortal tenement of so pure and benevolent a spirit; this is the motive which brings Israelites and Christians, the sons of Jacob and the gentile, to mingle their regrets, that one who was so kind, so gentle, so benevolent, is not any more among us to witness the fruits of his benevolence which he has planted, let us trust, in a not barren soil. And well is this a fitting moment to dwell on the beautiful spectacle which could be exhibited scarcely in any other land. We Israelites, strangers in this city, come hither with the body of a beloved brother, and leave him here to be watched over by those who are strangers to our creed; we ask of the citizens of Newport to guard inviolate the grave of our friend; not to suffer the rude arm of bigotry nor the grasping hand of an avaricious march of improvement to invade the repose of the dead: and we are sure that our wishes will be gratified, and our request sacredly fulfilled. But after all, Jews and Christians are alike interested in the deposit we make here; and the city of Newport may well be proud that so rare a philanthropist, who practically exhibited to all the most beautiful traits of a heartfelt religion, was a native of their city; — especially as it is by his own request, expressed several years past already, that he has been carried to the place of his nativity, to sleep in the soil where his mother gave him birth. It is, therefore, to you, citizens of this beautiful gem of the ocean, that we confide the custody; and when Israelites and strangers come hither in after-years, they will thank you for having guarded the dust made sacred by the blessings of so many helpless, whom his well-earned wealth was made to relieve.

But it is time that we hasten to a close. We come not hither to praise a mortal, but to consign him to the earth, the final home to which we all must return; for "dust we are," and "our days are only a shadow on the earth." Yet, ere we fill up the cavity which is called the grave, let us institute a few reflections which the occasion so aptly calls forth. We are met here, at this solemn moment, from many parts of this vast republic, and never after to-day can we all meet again; every one of us will quit this scene to return to his avocations, his business, and pleasures, and what has been witnessed to-day will barely survive as a dream in the memory. Therefore, let us utter some words of advice — peradventure they may have an influence on our thoughts and actions, and induce us to be more faithful to our trust, and true to our duty to God and man. Well says Job, "Man, born of woman, is short of days and full of vexation. Like a blossom he cometh forth, and is cut off; he flieth



away like the shadow, and remaineth not." We realize this indeed in the residue of mankind, except ourselves; we wonder at the vanity of all earthly striving displayed by others, yet are ourselves as frivolous and vain as all of them. Every man has his foible which he cherishes,—his idol to which he pays adoration. Yet, there are moments in the life of the most careless and worldly, when they realize their mortality, when they are sick and weary of the burden which their vanity has imposed on them. Only one thing we cannot tire of — and this is, the pursuit of what is truly good and beautiful, which is, in other words, the exercise of virtue as expounded in the revealed will of God and its concomitant charity. When our heart overflows with love to our Maker, when we have sacrificed to Him what we cherish of earth and its wealth, we feel that we have done something which dignifies our better self, which ennobles our spirit. When we have parted with our worldly means, to establish some good institution, or to deprive poverty and sorrow of their sting, a glow of holy peace pervades our heart, and we tell to ourselves "This is well done;" for the spirit of God sanctifies our deeds and throws a foretaste of felicity over our soul. Length of years, however, the greatest power, the utmost pleasure, the largest wealth, the highest wisdom cannot afford this; they are all the means of happiness, not happiness itself. Therefore, let us feel that we are mortal, that our path is beset with thorns and briers, but that death itself leads on to everlasting life; and that trials, overcome successfully, confer immortal bliss. Let us be true to our trust, faithful to our God, and we shall obtain, even in a worldly view, more surely the fruits of a laudable ambition, than by following the bent of avarice, hatred, and selfishness, which sooner or later lead to our downfall. But if we love justice, exercise benevolence, and walk humbly with God, we shall secure the good-will of man here, and be children of salvation hereafter.

And now, departed brother, rest in peace! It was not thine to have sons and daughters to weep over thy inanimate clay; but more was given thee — thou wilt have in the house of God an imperishable name which shall not be soon forgotten. And when after-generations drink in the knowledge of the faith which was thine, they will rise up and bless thy memory; inasmuch as thou wast made the chosen instrument to endow with thy labour the schools of learning where they are instructed. And the widow and the orphan and the suffering stranger will breathe thy name, and ask of God to give thee heavenly rest in the abode of the blessed. And may He who is all-merciful forgive thee thy sins and iniquities which thou has committed; for thou, too, like all of us, wast sinful and defective in his eyes; and may He, in reward of what thou has accomplished, accept thy death as an atonement for thy transgressions, and receive thee in his presence as one whose sins are pardoned, whose iniquity is atoned for; and let thee there enjoy the happiness which is in store for the righteous who have done his will. Amen.



THE JEWISH CEMETERY

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW DANA

OF HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW'S poem entitled "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport", no less than four different manuscript versions are preserved in the Longfellow House at Cambridge. The wide divergence between these four drafts — the various stanzas that have been altered or omitted or added — serve to throw no little light on the origin and the development of the poem. The stanzas in the original manuscript which were omitted from the published poem, some of them very powerful, are here printed for the first time.

In the first draft, Longfellow originally began with a stanza about grave-stones in general wherever they are to be found:

> In pastures green, in valley, wood and wold,
> Shine the white grave-stones underneath all skies,
> The dragon-teeth of Death, from which the untold
> And countless army of the dead shall rise.

This was an idea that Longfellow had already touched on ten years earlier in a poem where he referred to the burial-ground as "God's-Acre". The stanza, however, had nothing to do with the special question of the Jewish Cemetery at Newport, and in all the three later manuscript versions, as well as in the printed text, this stanza was omitted.

As he tells us in his Journal, Mr. Longfellow and his family had arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, on the evening of Friday, July 2, 1852, and stayed "on the Cliff, at Hazard's house, near the beach, with the glorious sea unrolling in changing billows before us". On July 6, he wrote: "How beautifully the soft sea spreads its broad feathery fans upon the shore." Three days later, with the sound of the sea still singing in his ears, mingled with the noises of the streets in this sea-port town, he came upon the old





HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

July 1852

Friday 9. Went this morning into the Jewish Burying Ground, with Mr. Edward H. Bailey, a polite old gentleman, who keeps the key. There are but few graves; nearly all are low tombstones of marble; with Hebrew inscriptions and a few words added in English or Portuguese.

Among the names, are Isaac Mendes Seixas; Moses Lopez; Jacob Lopez; Abraham Rodrigues Rivera, (in handsome raised letters); Moses Alvarez; and at the foot of each the letters S. A. G. I. D. G. It is a shady nook at the corner of two dusty, frequented streets, with an iron fence, and a granite gateway erected at the expense of Mr. Touro of New Orleans; the tombs of whose ancestors rise rankly ostentatiously in the inclosure.

Over one of the graves grows a weeping willow, from a slip taken from the tree over Napoleon's grave at St. Helena; at two removes;- the grand-child of that willow.

Facsimile of the page from the diary of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on the occasion of his visit to Newport in 1852.

Jewish Cemetery and was immediately impressed by the quiet and silence of the grave-yard in contrast to the surrounding noises of the city and the sea. Accordingly he wrote in his second draft:

> How strange it seems! These Hebrews in their graves!
> The noisy street — the moving up and down —
> The low, perpetual murmur of the waves,
> The tumult and the traffic of the town!

The first line of this stanza he kept unchanged throughout all four manuscript versions; but the last three lines of this stanza were variously changed about so as better to bring out the contrast between the silence and the sound, between the stillness and the motion.

Next Mr. Longfellow noticed the thick foliage of the hemlocks and the willows, which were then covered with mid-summer dust blown from the town, but which seemed to shelter the Jews who lay in dark mystery below. In the first draft the stanza ran:

> The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
> Float like a cloud upon the south wind's breath;
> These are the leafy tents, in which they keep
> The Exodus and Passover of Death.

Seeking out Mr. Nathan H. Gould, the custodian of the Cemetery, Mr. Longfellow was then admitted to the sacred enclosure of the House of the Dead, which the Jews called the "House of the Living." There Mr. Gould pointed out to him the more important tombs. In his Journal for that day, Friday, July 9, 1852, Mr. Longfellow wrote:

> Went this morning into the Jewish Burying Ground, with Mr. Gould the Tailor, a polite old gentleman, who keeps the key. There are but a few graves; nearly all are low tomb-stones of marble; with Hebrew inscriptions and a few words added in English or Portuguese.
>
> Among the names, are Isaac Mendes Seixas; Moses Lopez; Jacob Lopez; Abraham Rodriguez Rivera, (in handsome raised letters); Moses Alvarez; and at the foot of each the letters



S.A.G.D.G. It is a shady nook at the corner of two dusty, frequented streets, with an iron fence, and a granite gateway erected at the expense of Mr. Touro of New Orleans; the tombs of whose ancestors rise rather ostentatiously in the inclosure.

Over one of the graves grows a weeping willow, from a slip taken from the tree over Napoleon's grave at St. Helena; at two removes; — the grand-child of that willow.

Of this famous philanthropist, Judah Touro, who had moved from Newport to New Orleans, Longfellow had heard from his sister, Mrs. Mary Longfellow Greenleaf, who was living at that time in New Orleans. Some ten years before this visit of Longfellow to Newport, Mr. Touro had surrounded the old Jewish Cemetery with a wall and a massive granite entrance, carved with a winged globe on the entablature and inverted torches on the two side posts. Two years after Longfellow's visit, Judah Touro died and his memorial was placed with those of the other members of that distinguished family inside the Touro enclosure. He left a bequest to the city of Newport for the purchase and preservation of the Old Round Tower, about which Longfellow had written his poem, "The Skeleton in Armor"; and the Park around the Tower came to be called Touro Park.

Some of the Portuguese Jews, whose tombs Longfellow mentions, had fled early in the eighteenth century from the Inquisition in Portgual. Others had left after the terrible earthquake at Lisbon in 1755. All had sought shelter in Newport and had become distinguished citizens there, some of them helping to found the famous Redwood Library in 1747.

Someone has described these Jews from Spain and Portugal, buried there in Newport, as "dignified hidalgos bearing such sun-warmed names". Longfellow as a Professor of Romance Literature was familiar with these Spanish and Portuguese last names and was struck by finding them conjoined with the Hebrew first names familiar to him from the Bible. He summed this up in his poem with a stanza which in the first draft read:



The names upon their monuments are strange,
Of foreign accent and of different climes,
Alvares and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

Professor Longfellow could of course readily read the inscriptions in Spanish and Portuguese and noticed that at the foot of many of the tomb-stones were inscribed the initials "S.A.G.D.G." standing for "Su Alma Goze Divina Gloria", which may be translated as "May His Soul Enjoy Divine Glory."

Not as familiar with Hebrew as he was with Spanish and Portuguese, Mr. Longfellow at first took the Hebrew word which he saw on the top of so many of the stones to be the Tetragrammaton, the mysterious four-lettered ineffable name of God. Accordingly in his first draft he included the following stanza:

And with them mingles the forgotten name
That Moses bore engraven on his rod,
The four great letters now no longer heard,
The sacred sound, the shuddering name of God.

This stanza was repeated with a somewhat different wording in his second draft. Later, however, he came to realize that these four letters were merely the Hebrew word for monument — matsevah. Accordingly he omitted this stanza from the two later manuscript versions and from the printed text. In his Journal for July 28, 1852, he speaks of meeting a "Dr. Dunn who told me all the old lore of Newport"; and no doubt he and many others gave Longfellow further information.

Descending Touro Street, which he describes in his Journal as "a very pretty street, with over-shadowing trees", he came upon the beautiful old Synagogue which had been designed by the English architect, Peter Harrison, nearly a century earlier. At the time of Longfellow's visit it had been closed for several years and was now itself as silent as the Cemetery. To this he now devoted the following stanza of his poem which read, in the first draft:



And near them stands the vacant Synagogue;
But prayers and psalms no more its silence break,
Nor Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect that Moses spake.

Behind the associations of both Cemetery and Synagogue, Longfellow seemed to see looming the great misty figures of ancient Israel. In his first draft he wrote:

But in the background, figures vague and vast
Of Patriarchs and Prophets rose sublime;
They had the grand Traditions of the Past,
They had the Promise of the Coming Time.

In the second and third versions of his manuscript Longfellow added a stanza which he later omitted, depicting the Jews as glimpsing the Promised Land, like Moses, only in the hour of death:

Ah, long they wandered over land and wave,
The world around them but a waste of sand;
And only from the hillock of the grave,
With dying eyes beheld the Promised Land.

At this point, Longfellow's original poem probably ended; but in his first two drafts of the poem he planned at first to continue by describing himself as leaving the old Cemetery behind him and wandering forth into the sunset:

Thus musing on the graves beneath my feet
I saw the sun set over roof and tree,
And wandering forth along the busy street
Beheld the distant glimmer of the sea.

Some nineteen days after his first visit to the Cemetery, in his Journal for July 22, 1852, Longfellow had written: "Splendid sunsets have we here in Newport. A few days ago I saw a fine effect; a windmill in motion right against the glowing West, with the round, red sun sinking slowly."

In the second draft of his poem, Longfellow attempted to add this impression of the windmill swinging its arms against the sunset:



And opposite, athwart the evening glare,
A windmill, whirling its broad wings of white;
An emblem of the Angel of Despair
Whose sword turns every way its whirls of light.

In some way Longfellow seemed to see here a menace to the Jewish people and in his first draft he wrote:

A sword still bars the gate of rest and peace;
A foot still breaks and grinds them like the grain!
A voice still speaks the doom, that ne'er shall cease;
A hand still points to the deep mark of Cain!

In his second draft, Longfellow then made his protest against so bitter and so unjust a fate for so great a people as the Jews:

Is there no hope? no end of all their wrongs?
No rest — no Truce of God to intervene,
For those who gave the world its noblest songs,
The only perfect man this world hath seen?

Here in Rhode Island, Roger Williams had established religious liberty for all mankind, saying: "I desire not that liberty for myself, which I would not freely and impartially weigh out to all the consciences of the world beside." Here, then, in Newport, the Jews, who had been driven from other countries, had found a haven of refuge. Remembering this Longfellow had added the following stanza:

But here at length the Truce of God prevailed;
The oppression and the contumely ceased,
No more were they molested, nor assailed
By royal tax or malison of priest!

All these later stanzas, however, which Longfellow had added in his second draft, were omitted from the third and fourth versions and from the final text.

On leaving Newport in the autumn of 1852 and returning to Cambridge, the thought of those old Jewish tombs still haunted the poet. The first part of his manuscript bears the date "November 6, 1852"; and in his journal for the next day, November 7,



1852, he wrote: "In the evening finished some lines on 'The Jewish Burying Ground in Newport.' "

Longfellow's sympathy for the suffering of the Jews was mingled with his sympathy for the sufferings of the Negro slaves. He had already written his *Poems on Slavery* and at this very time was deeply stirred by the struggle to free the Negroes that culminated a few years later in the Civil War. In a poem, published in 1853, dealing with another cemetery and called "In the Churchyard at Cambridge", he spoke of the Negro slaves said to have been buried at the head and foot of a Tory lady of Colonial days, and added: "Their dust is white as hers." The last part of Longfellow's manuscript on "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport" bears the date "May 30, 1854." In his Journal for that same day, referring to the injustices against the Negroes, he wrote: "We will submit to this no longer, come what may."

Shortly after this the poem was published in Putnam's Monthly Magazine for July 1854. Longfellow did not print it in book form until 1858, when he included it in "Birds of Passage· Flight the First." It was one of the poems over which Longfellow had labored longest in revision. During the century since it was written it has held its own, and in an anthology published in 1948 and entitled *One Hundred American Poems,* the only Longfellow selection included is "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport."



THE GOOD FUTURE

Three men make a visit to a building that has meaning for all of us.

The fellowship of religion is our national pride.

BY CARL VAN DOREN

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THE COLONEL, the Judge, the Minister, and I went with the Rabbi to see the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island. The Colonel, on the staff of the British Commandos, had served as much with the American Rangers as with his own force, and he thought of himself, he said, as an Allied soldier who happened to wear a British uniform. The Judge was a Rhode Islander of Irish descent, who knows more than guidebooks about the past and present of Newport. The Minister, whom the rest of us had not met before, was from a town in Pennsylvania, a chance companion on that June day. The Colonel is a Jew, the Judge a Catholic, the Minister a Protestant.

Such a fellowship of religions could have no more natural meeting place than Rhode Island, the province of the New World that was first to welcome men of all faiths on terms of human equality. Here the Quakers found refuge in the seventeenth century. And other Christian sects came here without threat or question. Nearly three hundred years ago Jews began to arrive, after wanderings and persecutions as hard as if they lived in the cruel twentieth century. Some of them were Jews who had been driven from Spain, with its Inquisition, to liberal Holland; then they followed the Dutch conquerors of Brazil to that far-off country; afterward, when the Dutch gave up their conquest, they fled the restored Portuguese rule to Dutch or English islands in the Caribbean; and finally they came to a lasting haven in Newport, where the authorities promised them "as good protection as any strangers residing among



us," so long as they were obedient to the laws men there lived under. The Newport Jews obeyed the laws, and prospered. The Jews of other colonies in North America looked to Newport as the mother community of their faith. When the Congregation Jeshuat Israel, after a hundred years, built a synagogue in Newport, they were aided with funds from congregations in both North and South America and in England. They were particularly aided by the services, without pay, of Peter Harrison, the most distinguished of Colonial architects. Neither a Jew nor a professional architect, he already had designed a library and a market for the town and Anglican churches for Boston and Cambridge; and he crowned his work with the Newport Synagogue. All these buildings are still famous, but the Synagogue has been singled out by the Federal government for perpetuation as a national historic site.

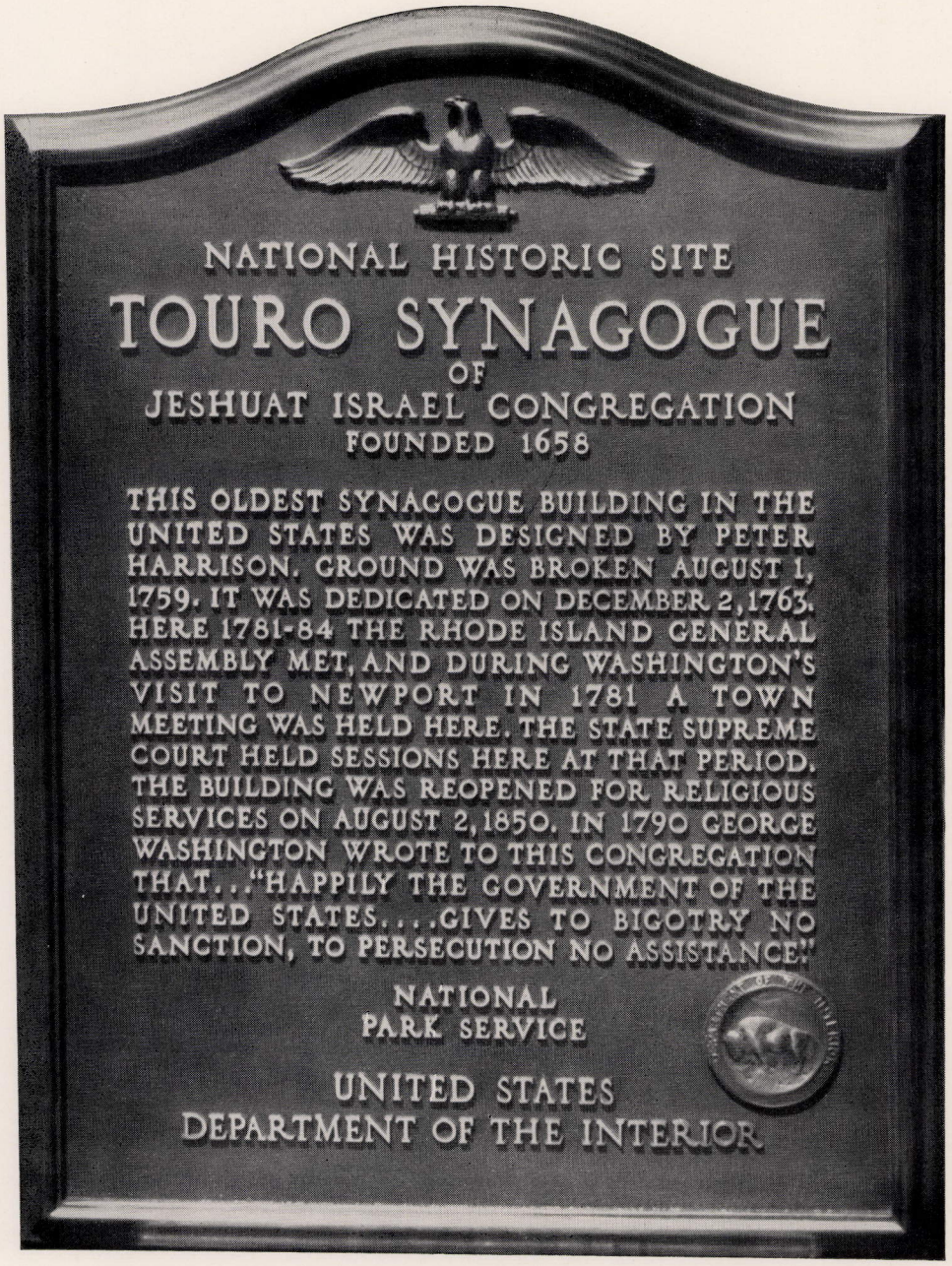
Each of us who now came from a distance to the venerated shrine had an interest stronger than tourist curiosity. The Colonel's Jewish ancestors had gone from Spain to England instead of to Holland and America; but they, too, had been exiles. The Minister, a Baptist, knew that the earliest settlers in Rhode Island had been of that denomination and had been refugees. The Catholic Judge was our escort to the Synagogue, proud of Newport's record of fellowship of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew.

The Touro Synagogue is a square brick building, which stands at an angle to Touro Street, so that the Ark can face directly east. Inside the massive fence of stone and iron is a monument with a bronze tablet on which are words taken in part from the Rhode Island Charter of 1663: "Dedicated to the principle that all and everye person and persons may from tyme to tyme and at all tymes hereafter frellye and fullye have and enjoye his and theire owne judgments and consciences in matters of Religious Concernments."

Inside the door of the synagogue are memorable words of George Washington, who, when he was President came here in August, 1790, was welcomed by the warden of the congregation, and in his reply nobly confirmed the fundamental rights of men, not merely to toleration but to fellowship.

"The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of





Tablet affixed to the south wall of Touro Synagogue, unveiled August 31, 1947 during dedicatory exercises.

an enlarged and liberal policy, a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, and to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support."

On the other side of the entrance is a memorial tablet to Isaac Touro, "Rabbi of this Synagogue from its dedication 5523-1763 until the American Revolution," the dates symbolically commemorating a Jewish year, a Christian year, an American year."

Somehow all these elements seem to meet in the interior of the Synagogue, which at first sight looks like many a fine New England church. It is white except for the domed ceiling, which is blue with silver stars. The twelve pillars, six on a side, that support the gallery represent the tribes of Israel; but they are cut from the trunks of New England trees, and the capitals are Ionic. Above them Corinthian columns rise to the beams on which the ceiling rests. The Ark is in form a superb Georgian cupboard against the east wall, beautifully carved and painted white. The lamp before the Ark, with its perpetual flame, the bronze candelabra hanging from the dome, and the clock on the gallery are the work of eighteenth-century craftsmen in the strong yet graceful style of their period. And against another wall is the seat of the presiding warden, not a mimic throne, but a high pew with a solid rail in front of it.

To my mind's eyes, Washington now seemed visibly present, listening to the welcome of the congregation and rising to respond in words I imagined I could hear as he reached his grave conclusion: "May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants, while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the Father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due



time and way everlastingly happy."

I suppose the rabbi and the warden on that occasion opened the Ark and revealed to Washington the magnificent scroll of the Law, which the Newport Jews are said to have brought from Spain through all their wanderings. Perhaps they showed him, beneath the central reading desk, the secret underground passage, never needed in Rhode Island, but like the hidden shelters used by their forefathers in the dread days of the Inquisition. These things, and the different tenets of Jew and Christian, did not divide the hosts from their honored guest. They were all Americans together, valuing justice and equality, and desiring to live in peace. For that matter, this exchange of courtesies between the Jews of Newport and Washington was only one of the notable events of that August day. For he had come on his first visit to Rhode Island since the state had belatedly ratified the Constitution of the United States and thereby entered the Federal Union. If the Jews welcomed him, so did the clergy and the Masons and the freemen of Newport. Let the union of states bring with it a union of minds and hearts.

The Colonel and I talked as we went out into the bright sun of the bitter change in the relations between races and religions since the centuries of Roger Williams and George Washington. An unspeakable generation of hatreds has led the nations through an unutterable war, and once more homeless men wander over the face of the violent earth looking for refuge in a world full of anger and brutality. Did mankind learn nothing in the long struggle that established, in principle at least, the "inherent natural rights" of men? Must we, without faith in those principles, go through the whole struggle again, fumbling our way to the light of reason and justice? If we must, then we must. It is the price we have to pay if we are to survive at all in a life worth living. But there have been some gains, the Colonel and I believed, which promise not to be lost. Whole nations are resolved that their governments shall "give to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." Millions of men and women in their daily lives instinctively practise fellowship in religion and fraternity in race. These are the seeds of the only good future mankind can have. No pilgrim who visits the



Touro Synagogue will forget that here the American government has put its approval on a shrine that may be cherished for ages by the people.



TOURO SYNAGOGUE AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

By THOMAS J. ALLEN

Regional Director, National Park Service,
United States Department of the Interior

TOURO SYNAGOGUE is the fourth church edifice to be designated as a national historic site, not federally owned. Those which preceded it, in their order of establishment, are as follows: San Jose Mission, near San Antonio, Texas, June 1941; Gloria Dei (Old Swedes' Church), in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 1942; and Saint Paul's Church, Eastchester, New York, July 1943. San Jose is Roman Catholic, Gloria Dei was originally Lutheran but is now Protestant Episcopal, and Saint Paul's is Protestant Episcopal. The present Gloria Dei church dates from 1700; the Saint Paul's church dates from 1774; and San Jose Mission was established in 1720. Thus Touro Synagogue becomes the fourth national historic site of a religious character to possess a structure dating from the eighteenth century. It should be mentioned also that the ruins of the old church tower at Jamestown Island, now owned by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, is on that part of Jamestown Island not owned by the Federal government, which was declared a national historic site in December 1940.

Within the national park system of areas owned and administered by the Federal government there are several that derive importance primarily from their religious character and the part they played in our nation's history. Tumacacori National Monument in Arizona is associated with the early days of the Spanish mission frontier in the Southwest. It contains surviving mission structures built about 1820 to replace earlier buildings of the mission which was established by Kino in 1691. Whitman Na-



tional Monument near Walla Walla, Washington, when developed will tell the story of medical missionary work in the western wilderness among the American Indians.

Touro Synagogue, San Jose, Gloria Dei, and Saint Paul's national historic sites were established under authority of the Historic Sites Act of August 12, 1935. This broad and basic law declares "that it is a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States," and specifically authorizes the Federal government to enter into cooperative agreements with various bodies including "religious institutions" to accomplish desired historical conservation. It was under the terms of this Act that Touro Synagogue was established as a national historic site, and dedicated as such August 13, 1947.

In accordance with the cooperative agreement entered into with the United States, the Shearith Israel Trustees and the Congregation Jeshuat Israel agreed:

> "That they will preserve, protect, maintain, and when necessary, restore, so far as lies within their power, the Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island, and the grounds immediately about the Synagogue building."

The Secretary of the Interior agreed, on behalf of the United States of America:

> "To cooperate with the Shearith Israel Trustees and Congregation Jeshuat Israel in the preservation, protection, restoration, and the use of the property designated as a national historic site, and to provide technical assistance in planning and executing measures for such preservation, protection and restoration, within the limits of available funds."

In the development and interpretation of historical areas, the National Park Service emphasizes preservation rather than restoration or reconstruction. This is in keeping with the precept that it is "Better to preserve than repair, better to repair than restore, and better to restore than to reconstruct."



MAN DOTH NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE

AUGUST 31, 1947 was a lovely summer day. The city of Newport was bustling with preparation for the annual parade of Gay Nineties floats. Some of the displays were even to recall Rhode Island's earliest days, when Newport was a great commercial and fishing port. But that same morning, by train and plane and car, visitors from distant cities were arriving for a ceremony that was to commemorate not only the beginnings of the city itself, but the growth of religious freedom as a basic principle in the development of American life as a whole.

These visitors, many of them known to the whole nation, came to see and take part in the dedication of the Touro Synagogue in Newport as a national historic site. The beautiful eighteenth-century structure had been designated as such by the United States Department of the Interior on March 5, 1946, and the formal dedication of this first Jewish house of worship to be so honored was to take place early this Sunday afternoon.

The services began at one o'clock. Carl Van Doren, the noted American historian, acted as master of the formal ceremonies. The Honorable Joseph W. Martin, Jr., Speaker of the House of Representatives, delivered the main address. Dr. David de Sola Pool, rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue in New York City, gave the benediction. (Many members of the Congregation Shearith Israel are direct descendants of the Jewish families who first settled in Newport in 1658.) Miss Patrice Munsel, youngest star of the Metropolitan Opera, enriched the occasion with her fine soprano voice. Dr. Francis S. Ronalds of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, unveiled the tablet on the outer wall of the Synagogue, concluding the ceremonies.

Many other dignitaries of church and state participated,



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 19, 1947

Dear Dr. Friedman:

I am happy to congratulate Congregation Jeshuat Israel and the community of Newport, Rhode Island on the setting apart of the Touro Synagogue as a national shrine. It is fortunate that the venerable fabric of the Synagogue opened on December 2, 1763, a century after the founding of the Congregation, is still in use and admired by all lovers of good architecture.

The setting apart of this historic shrine as a national monument is symbolic of our tradition of freedom which has inspired men and women of every creed, race and ancestry to contribute their highest gifts to the development of our national culture. I trust through long centuries to come that the spirit of good will and tolerance will ever dominate the hearts and minds of the American people.

Very sincerely yours,

Harry S. Truman

Dr. Bernard C. Friedman,
President,
Congregation Jeshuat Israel,
2 Ayrault Street,
Newport, Rhode Island.

Facsimile of letter from President Harry S. Truman to Dr. Bernard C. Friedman, President of Congregation Jeshuat Israel, on the dedication of the Touro Synagogue as a national historic site.

including Governor John O. Pastore of Rhode Island, and the Honorable Edward G. Gladding, Mayor of the City of Newport. The White House was represented by a presidential aide. Many other notables, including Senator Theodore Francis Greene, Admiral Thomas Ross Cooley, Colonel Earl Metzger, were present.

President Harry S. Truman sent the following message to Dr. Bernard C. Friedman, President of Congregation Jeshuat Israel of Touro Synagogue:

> "I am happy to congratulate the Congregation Jeshuat Israel and the community of Newport, Rhode Island, on the setting apart of the Touro Synagogue as a national shrine. It is fortunate that the venerable fabric of the Synagogue, opened on December 2, 1763, a century after the founding of the Congregation, is still in use and admired by all lovers of good architecture.
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> "The setting apart of this historic shrine as a national monument is symbolic of our tradition of freedom, which has inspired men and women of every creed, race and ancestry to contribute their highest gifts to the development of our national culture.
>
> "I trust that through long centuries to come the spirit of good-will and tolerance will ever dominate the hearts and minds of the American people."

The audience filled the little synagogue, overflowed the lawns outside, and crowded the porch and windows of the Jewish Community Center on the other side of the street. A public address system broadcast the proceedings to the hundreds of people gathered outdoors. Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, they had come to witness a physical ceremony of truly spiritual significance. By their presence they demonstrated, as Mr. Van Doren said, that "there can be no great nations without faithful memories of great deeds and great thoughts. When, as this afternoon, a generation honors a shrine consecrated to justice and holiness, that generation does honor to the best in itself as well as to the shrine. Those who here



pay tribute to history now make further history, and become themselves a part of it."

Through the facilities of radio, press and screen, Americans throughout the country participated in the event. In the widespread interest aroused by this historic occasion, there was manifest the feeling that in the United States, people of many creeds, of many backgrounds and ancestries, live together in peace, because here people and government share the faith that freedom is the birthright of all men.

The Editors

