

LONGFELLOW AND THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT

By REV. J. K. PACKARD, S.J.

Critics have consistently maintained that the "Jewish Cemetery at Newport" is one of the more memorable of Longfellow's short lyrics. The most recent statement is that of Hyatt H. Waggoner, who feels that while Longfellow viewed Judaism as he did Christianity—that is, as a once grand and beautiful but now sad and meaningless way of life—he nevertheless managed to write a poem "notable for its restrained expression of sympathy for the sufferings of the people it concerns"¹

The poem itself is a familiar one and offers no real difficulty of interpretation. Certain facts involved in the composition of the poem are interesting, however, and one notable critic failed not only to read the available literature on the history of the cemetery, but failed also to read what Longfellow himself said about the cemetery in his *Journal*. This critic is Newton Arvin who says in his generally excellent critical biography of Longfellow that the poem resulted from the poet's visit in 1852, to an old burying ground of the Rhode Island Jews, adjoining a synagogue, and which had at that time fallen into disrepair.² Two things here conflict with the facts. First of all, the cemetery never adjoined the synagogue; it was, and is, located some four or five blocks from the Touro Synagogue. Secondly, the cemetery was not, at the time of Longfellow's visit, in a ruinous state.

The best historical sketch of the cemetery is that of Rabbi Abraham Mendes, written in 1885. In it he notes that the cemetery had indeed fallen into disrepair in the early part of the nineteenth century. By 1820, however, its restoration was begun by Abraham Touro of Boston and completed, in 1842, by his brother, Benjamin Touro of New Orleans, who commissioned Isaiah Rogers of Boston to restore the cemetery in the fashion that still exists today. Thus it would have been the restored cemetery that Longfellow visited in 1852.³

Longfellow himself corroborates these facts. His *Journal* entry for July 9, 1852, describes the cemetery as "a shady nook, with an iron fence and a granite gateway, erected at the expense of Mr. Touro of New Orleans."⁴ This description agrees substantially with that given by Rabbi Mendes. Longfellow's *Journal* entry also describes, accu-

rately, a few of the graves: "low tombstones of marble, with Hebrew inscriptions, and few words added in English or Portuguese. At the foot of each, the letters S.A.D.G."⁵ All these observations indicate that the cemetery was, at the time of Longfellow's visit, in excellent condition.

A sense of immediacy is created in the poem by the insertion of the family names of 'Alvares' and 'Rivera,' but it appears that Longfellow himself was ignorant of the history of the Jews in Newport. In the poem, for example, he speaks of these dead as former dwellers of countless European "Judenstrasse," which implies he did not know the historical distinction between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Furthermore, he implies that the Newport Jews were religious émigrés, driven to America by persecution. This, according to one Jewish historian, is not exactly true. The early Jews of Newport were interested primarily in economic opportunity.⁶

The fifth stanza is comprised of an inscription which the poet reads on one of the tombstones (whether it was an actual inscription or a poetic paraphrase is not certain). Part of this inscription can be read as the orthodox sentiments of any Biblically oriented people, but another part intrigues a student of religious acculturation in America. "Death" not only "is rest and peace," the inscription reads, it also "giveth Life that nevermore shall cease." The inscriptions as they actually exist today are frequently difficult to decipher, but according to Mendes there were many such sentiments inscribed on the tombstones as he deciphered them in 1885. Thus we read of Rachel Lopez (d. Aug. 26, 1789), that she "exchanged the imperfect and evanescent enjoyments of this vale of tears for a Life of Certain and Immortal bliss." Similar sentiments of immortality and the hope of bodily resurrection are: "May her blessed soul enjoy eternal happiness"; "liberated for Paradise."⁷

To the religious historian such sentiments have a decided Christian ring to them, and one wonders whether the Jewish community in Newport, Sephardim and *marranos*, many of them, by descent, and settled more or less amicably in a traditionally Protestant New England town, unconsciously imbibed some Christian phraseology, if not strictly theological concepts, about immortality and the resurrection of the body. The question requires more expert exegesis than is here

permitted, but on the basis of available writings on the subject I think the answer must be in the negative. Phrases like “vale of tears,” “liberated for Paradise,” may sound Christian, but they are not for that fact non-Jewish. According to Yehezke Kaufman the “Biblical religion/ of Israel/ knows nothing of a judgment of souls in an after-life . . . The realm of the dead in Israelite religion is godless.” At the same time, Kaufman states, “Later Judaism did, in fact, reintroduce God in the idea of a judgment in the afterlife.”⁸

Similarly, Mordecai Kaplan writes that belief in bodily resurrection is non-Jewish in origin, but it became “accepted by the Jews to meet a spiritual expectation which had arisen during the period of the Second Commonwealth.”⁹ Finally, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* records that belief in bodily resurrection was present in both Sephardic and Ashkenazic liturgies well into the nineteenth century, but was constantly a source of confusion. The article further states that “American Reform prayer books changed the formula from belief in resurrection to the hope of immortality of the soul.”¹⁰

All these comments tend to discourage any attempt to interpret the inscriptions as clear evidence that the Jews in Newport had, in any significant way, become imbued with Christian sentiments about immortality or the resurrection of the body. Rabbi Mendes was himself apparently unaware of the possibility of any such readings, for he concludes of the inscriptions that they are merely “indications of a faith which recognizes this world as a place of temporary abode to be succeeded by a reunion in another and higher sphere.”¹¹

All critics of Longfellow also agree that this poem is free from any taint of anti-Semitism; that, on the contrary, the poem is wholly sympathetic to the sufferings of the Jewish people in history. Edward Wagenknech thought this an important enough virtue in the New England of Longfellow’s time to pursue it further, asking whether Longfellow himself, not just the poem, was free from prejudice. Occasionally there appear in his writings the stereotyped image of the Jew. In “Hiawatha,” for example, he refers to the Jews as “the tribe accursed,” and in the *Tales of the Wayside Inn*, he depicts a Spanish Jew who is learned, romantic, exotic, but slightly luxurious.

Privately, also, Longfellow once described a painting he had seen in Mainz as portraying “a collection of disgusting, fat Jewish faces.”

His criticism was directed at the imagination of the artist, however, not at the Jews themselves. On the more positive side, it is recorded that on another tour of Europe, Longfellow, alone of his entourage, stoutly defended a Jewish admirer of his friend, Clara Crowninshield.

The most one can conclude from all this, Wagenknecht feels, is that Longfellow occasionally slipped into that literary anti-Semitism that was for so long a staple in Western literature.¹² Longfellow, himself, despite the rather intense nativism of the New England of his time, was singularly sympathetic to religious beliefs and communities other than his own. One has only to compare "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport" with Cotton Mather's acid remark about the same community—"the common receptacle of the convicts of Jerusalem and the outcasts of the land"—to see how remarkably free Longfellow was from the more unlovely aspects of the New England heritage.

While Longfellow's poem, therefore, is sympathetic to both the sufferings of the Jews and to the general tenets of this belief, still it concludes on a note critical of Judaism as a meaningful religion. Judaism, he says, is but another of "the great traditions of the Past . . ." The "patriarchs and . . . prophets" who in their time "rose sublime," have joined, as the dead do here, "The long, mysterious Exodus of Death." Here, in the cemetery, he reads "The mystic volume of the world" the Jews themselves once read, "Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book. . . ." Such grandeur, however, cannot be restored:

But ah! what once has been shall be no more!
The groaning earth in travail and in pain
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again.

Such an attitude, Waggoner remarks, "might offend the feelings of a Jew for whom Judaism is a living religion with meaning for the future."¹³ It should be noted, however, that Longfellow is not critical of Judaism itself, no more than his "In the Cemetery of Cambridge" is critical of Protestantism itself or that his "Bells of San Blas" is critical of Catholicism, though both appear to be so. Longfellow was infected, we know, with an incurable melancholy and genteel scepticism which tempted him to find certainty only in the fact of death. In the history of religion, culture, of life itself, he saw only the image of men walking backward to the grave. In Judaism and in the past splendors of the Jewish people Longfellow saw, as he did for all men,

only "The long-lost ventures of the heart, / That send no answers back again." But despite its melancholy, its slight note of despair, Longfellow managed to immortalize in this short poem a tiny corner of Newport.

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT

How strange it seems! These Hebrews in their graves,
Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
Silent beside the never-silent waves,
At rest in all this moving up and down!

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
Wave their broad curtains in the southwind's breath,
While underneath these leafy tents they keep
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

The very names recorded here are strange,
Of foreign accent, and of different climes;
Alvares and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

'Blessed by God, for He created Death!
The mourners said, 'and Death is rest and peace';
Then added, in the certainty of faith,
'And giveth Life that nevermore shall cease.'

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break,
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
And not neglected; for a hand unseen,
Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

How came they here? What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—
These Ishmaels and Hagars of mankind?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears.

Anathema marantha! was the cry
That rang from town to town, from street to street:
At every gate the accursed Mordecai
Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand
Walked with them through the world where'er they went;
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast
Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,
And all the great traditions of the Past
They saw reflected in the coming time.

And thus forever with reverted look
The mystic volume of the world they read,
Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book,
Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah! what once has been shall be no more!
The groaning earth in travail and in pain
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again.

NOTES

- 1) Hyatt H. Waggoner, *American Poets: From Puritans to the Present* (Boston, 1968), 52.
- 2) Newton Arvin, *Longfellow: His Life and Work* (Boston, 1962), 187-8.

- 3) Abraham B. Mendes, "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport," *RJHM* 2, 6 (October, 1885), 83.
- 4) See Samuel Longfellow, *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston, 1886), II, 224.
- 5) *Ibid.* Actually the initials were "S.A.G.D.G." Su Alma Goci Divina Gloria, or "May his soul enjoy divine glory." Most likely Longfellow read this on the tombstone of Abraham Rivera (d. July 7, 1765), whose grave was the most elaborate in the cemetery. See Mendes, 87.
- 6) Jacob Rader Marcus, "Background for the History of American Jewry," in *The American Jew*, Oscar Janowsky, ed., (Philadelphia, 1964), 2.
- 7) Mendes, 85, 90.
- 8) Yehezkec Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel* (London, 1961), 314-15.
- 9) Mordecai M. Kaplan, *The Greater Judaism in the Making* (New York, 1969), 13.
- 10) *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1905), X: 385.
- 11) Mendes, 104.
- 12) Edward Wagenknecht, *Longfellow* (New York, 1955), 200 ff.
- 13) Waggoner, 52.

In submitting this paper for publication, Father Packard made the following comments:

Here, at last, is an apple of sorts from the vineyard of research. I spent some time, especially in Newport, checking available records, etc.

As to the article, it is certainly not earth-shattering, but I hope it is not without some small merit. As I re-read it, it seems rather hesitant—the unconscious result of an unequipped *goy* venturing into unknown waters.

The acculturation problem I raise in the essay was actually not my own insight. I discussed the inscriptions with some Jewish friends of mine in Fall River and they exclaimed: "This is Christian, not Jewish." This forced me to do some extra reading in Jewish theology, the results of which are recorded in the essay.

Sincerely yours,

J. KEVIN PACKARD

TEMPLE BETH-EL SEEKS A RABBI

In the collections of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El) of Providence, R. I. is the following letter, written in Hebrew. Rabbi William G. Braude has furnished the English translation and also the explanatory footnotes:

August 2, 1915

Dear Mazure:

Last week I wrote you a short note in which I spoke of the post in Brooklyn. Today I learned that Rabbi Levinthal had written to an alumnus of the [Jewish Theological] Seminary that he call on him to counsel with regard to getting him that post. My advice is that you call on Rabbi Levinthal in Philadelphia and get his opinion with regard to the post in Brooklyn.

Now I hasten to write you concerning still another first rate post. No doubt you know that Dr. Nathan Stern resigned from his pulpit in Providence, Rhode Island and is going to New York to assist Dr. Frederick Mendes. Professor Isaacs of New York University told me that Harry Cutler had received a good many applications for the post. Among those who applied are two Rabbis who are alumni of the Seminary and that the Board of Temple Beth-El in Providence had decided not to consider before the High Holidays the letters which had been received, and that the Board will not invite the candidates for trial sermons and will instead choose the one who will provide them with letters of recommendation and similar documents of approbation. In a word, the man will be chosen on the basis of his general knowledge and character.

In my opinion there is no likelihood for an alumnus of the Seminary to get this post since the president of the congregation is one of the officers of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Still with Dr. Cyrus Adler's help, Professor Schechter and his group are laboring to place the alumnus of their school in Providence.

No doubt you know that Dr. Adler and Mr. Harry Cutler are members of the Executive Board of the American Jewish Committee so that Dr. Adler may prevail upon the latter.

In a conversation that I had with Dr. Isaacs who is to preach in Providence during the coming High Holidays, I proposed your name as the proper man to take the post in which Dr. Englander and Dr. Stern had served. My advice is that you at

once see Dr. Philipson and get his advice concerning the post. Don't hesitate to tell him about the attempts of the men of the Seminary to capture Providence for themselves. Should Dr. Philipson wish to help you he can do much in your behalf.

You should know that the post in Providence is very important, being the only Reform pulpit in all of Rhode Island, and the Reform Rabbi of Providence is regarded as the Jewish representative of Rhode Island Jewry.

If I can help you in any way, rest assured that I shall do all you ask of me (The ink is gone from the pen, and so with your permission I shall end the letter with a pencil).

In short, take my advice and do all you can in order to get the post in Providence, and let me know at once what you decide to do.

With good wishes, believe me to be respectfully yours,

JOSHUA BLOCH

Rabbi Abraham J. Karp, Rabbi of Temple Beth-El in Rochester, N. Y., in a communication to Rabbi Braude commented as follows on the significance of the letter:

Many thanks for the Bloch letter. You are right in suggesting that there was a time when lines were not quite so rigid. Passions were often high but congregations had still not become rigidly set within national institutional patterns. It was still the days before Conservative congregations had organized themselves into the United Synagogue.

The only synagogal union was the U.A.H.C. Even within that there were those who remembered that initially the union was to serve all American Jewish congregations. By 1910 the Union was, of course, thoroughly Reform, but which American organization doesn't like to claim for itself universal appeal.

When the United Synagogue was first organized in 1913, there was quite a conflict between the Cyrus Adler forces who wanted the United Synagogue to be a union of all traditional (that is all non-Reform) congregations and the alumni of the Seminary and a leading graduate of the HUC, Dr. Judah Magnes, who then considered himself in the camp of Conservative Judaism, to have the United Synagogue considered an organization of Conservative congregations (see my history of the United Synagogue).

NOTES

Maurice Maxwell Mazure, a graduate of the Hebrew Union College in the Class of 1912, was Rabbi in Sioux City, Iowa in 1915. In 1931, succeeding Jacob Son-

derling, he became Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel in Providence where he served till 1933. He died in 1951 while serving as Rabbi in Greenville, S. C. (See CCAR Yearbook 1953, pp. 324-25.)

Joshua Bloch, served for many years as head of the Jewish section of the New York Public Library. He attended the Hebrew Union College but left before he was ordained. Because he served as a chaplain in the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, he was a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis until 1957, the year of his death. (See CCAR Yearbook, 1958, pp. 231-32.)

Nathan Stern (Hebrew Union College 1904) served at Temple Beth-El from 1910 to 1915. In 1916 he came to the West End Synagogue in New York which he served until his death in 1945. (See CCAR Yearbook 1945, pp. 210-11.)

Frederick de Sola Mendes, a native of Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies was Rabbi of Congregation Shaaray Tefila (West End Synagogue) until 1927. (See CCAR Yearbook 1928, pp. 241-43.)

Abram Samuel Isaacs, born New York City 1852, died Paterson, N. J. 1920. (See Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 5, 595.)

Rabbi Bernard Levinthal, dean of Orthodox American rabbis, was born in Vilna, Russia in 1865 and died in Atlantic City, N. J. in 1952.

THE STORY OF
AHAVATH SHALOM IN WEST WARWICK,
RHODE ISLAND*

By PAUL W. STREICKER

Ahavath Shalom is quiet Friday evening. The unimposing yellow brick building sits back from Main Street, West Warwick, bordered by grass that may be a little too high, unmarked by any sign.

Only the sun streaming through the stained glass windows, making the Stars of David shine, identifies it as a synagogue.

"I no see anybody for quite some time—since last fall, I think," an old man across the street says. "Used to be quite a few there, some time ago."

Ahavath Shalom is a small Orthodox synagogue founded by a Jewish community of perhaps 30 families almost a half century ago. Today the practicing Jewish population of West Warwick has dwindled to six or seven families, and the future of the house of worship is unclear. It is open only on the High Holy Days in the fall, occasionally on the other Jewish holidays, and sometimes for a memorial service or, rarely, a wedding.

It would be open regularly for Sabbath services, children's holidays, and other holy or festive events, but the membership usually cannot raise a minyan, the 10 men needed to hold a religious service. Boys over 13, who have gone through the barmitzvah ritual, are eligible to be part of a minyan.

"Most of the Jewish population was in the retail industry in West Warwick, but there is no future there for the children," said Frederick Kafritsen, who took his family to Cranston about 15 years ago. "The small town was just too small."

Irving Lisnoff, proprietor of Jerry's Spa on Washington Street, still lives in West Warwick, and counts the congregation on his fingers. Three died last year; besides himself there is Max Margolis, owner of

*Reprinted from the *Providence Sunday Journal* of June 2, 1968 with the permission of the publisher. It appeared under the heading "Synagogue Termed at 'Low Ebb'" with the following comment "Today is the first day of Shabuoth, the Jewish holiday commemorating Moses' return from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments".

Maxine's, his two brothers, an insurance man, a grocer, a retired manufacturer, a retired gas station proprietor and his son.

But one is away, another too old to walk to the synagogue (Orthodox Jews do not drive or ride on the Sabbath), another too sick to come. "Some business people attend to help out, but so many moved to Cranston and Warwick. They work in the cities, there is more activity there, land, housing, roads. There's nothing to keep them," Mr. Lisnoff said.

Abraham Sternbach, the 81-year-old patriarch of the synagogue, said succinctly, "The young people moved out and the old people died out, so there is nobody left.

"For the last few years they go to Providence. Here the synagogue is left alone. What is going to be . . .?" He leaves the question in the air.

Max Margolis, who is president of the synagogue, is more optimistic. "People have been fatalistic about West Warwick, too. I never look at it this way. Wherever there is a church or synagogue, you will find people will patronize them. Nice people never go out of style."

He calls this a "low ebb" in the synagogue's history. It serves a purpose, he said, noting that in addition to the local community, strangers and newcomers find a welcome at Ahavath Shalom on the High Holy Days, when the larger temples in the cities are full. Some families in the cities return on these special days, and the building is packed with 100 or 125 worshippers.

Mr. Sternbach recalls the better and harder times in the synagogue's history. In 1912, as a men's suit presser, he brought his wife, Minnie, and their infant son from New York, looking for a better living. He bought a horse and wagon and peddled junk for seven years, trading in anything from cows to sacks.

There were 13 Jewish junk peddlers in West Warwick then, each with roughly the same background: immigration from Eastern Europe and poverty. West Warwick was not far from Providence, and the relatively large milltown population offered a possible source of livelihood. Some came on the recommendation of a relative who lived in the town. Others were transient, boarding in different places, trying to earn enough money to bring their families from Europe.

There were about 30 Jewish families in West Warwick then. Having no synagogue, they rented a hall for holidays and borrowed a torah or scroll with the five books of Moses, from Providence. The Sternbach's held regular Sabbath services at their home for six years.

When prohibition came into effect in 1920, the Jewish community raised \$6,000 and bought a saloon at 1118 Main St. The members converted it into a schul, the Yiddish word for synagogue, held services downstairs, and hired an old Russian teacher to give Hebrew lessons to the children upstairs.

The number of Jewish families in the area remained about the same. Jews from East Greenwich and Warwick added to the congregation.

In 1938, the building was reconstructed in the traditional style, with an altar in the center of the little room so the reader could face the ark holding the sacred readings and still be heard by the worshippers. Pews lined the walls and a crystal chandelier filled the room with light. The cellar was provided with kitchen utilities for receptions.

A chapter of B'nai B'rith, a Jewish service organization, was established.

With the outbreak of World War II some of the young men went away, and the decline began. No rabbi has given the children Hebrew lessons for 15 or 20 years.

"What's going to happen? We don't know. That's the point," Mr. Sternbach said. "In Newport they closed for 60 years. Maybe someday this West Warwick—you never know—could grow like Newport."

"Take every day as it comes, and try to do your best," Mr. Margolis said. "Those brought up in the Jewish tradition have a background they never lose." Does he think the synagogue might someday be empty? "I certainly don't."

But now the little yellow brick building is sure to be full only on the High Holy Days, and may be open today, the anniversary of Moses handing down the Ten Commandments, only if 10 men can be found to conduct the service.

OPPOSITE PAGE—Elders of Ahavath Shalom Synagogue: Abraham Sternbach, 81, Patriarch (at left) and Max Margolis, President of the Synagogue.—*Photo, Courtesy of Journal-Bulletin.*



JOTTINGS FOR FUTURE HISTORIANS

BIBLICAL GARDEN

In the October 1968 issue of Yankee magazine is an illustrated story titled "Rhode Island's Biblical Garden", describing the symbolic horticultural retreat designed and created at Temple Beth-El in Providence by Mrs. David C. Adelman, widow of the founder of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. It quotes Mrs. Adelman as humbly hoping "to make the Bible a living thing, and of God's wonders and His power and glory something brought out beyond the doors of the synagogue and church."

* * * * *

ROUND TOP

The May 1968 issue (Vol. 22, No. 1) of Round Topics, the news organ of Beneficent (Congregational) Church of Providence, R. I. (familarly known as Round Top Church), carried the story of the installation on April 28 of its new minister, Rev. E. King Hempel, in which Rabbi William G. Braude of Temple Beth-El of Providence participated. "With the charisma which is uniquely Bill Braude", the account went on, "he reminded us that Israel's history was focused to a significant extent on mountain tops For we too, symbolized in the very dome of our Meeting House, have a mountain top. Our vistas in these days are endless."

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By GERTRUDE NISSON GOLDOWSKY

A Recent Acquisition in the Library of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association with a Listing of References to Rhode Island.

The Lee Max Friedman Collection of American Jewish Colonial Correspondence, Letters of the Franks Family (1733-1748). Studies in American Jewish History, Number 5. Leo Hershkowitz and Isidore S. Meyer (eds.). Published by the American Jewish Historical Society. Waltham, Massachusetts, 1968. 171pp.

Hart, Solomon. 67n.

Levy, Moses. 94n.

Newport, R. I. 41n.

Pachelbel, Charles Theodore (1690-1750). 41n.

Rhode Island. 67n., 69n.

There may be other Rhode Island references, but because of the close relationship between the New York and Newport communities in the eighteenth century, they are not readily identifiable from the text.

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was held on Sunday, May 26, 1968 at the John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence. The meeting, unlike in past years, was held in the afternoon and was called to order at 2:25 by the President, Mr. Bernard Segal. Mr. Segal recognized the death of Mr. David C. Adelman, founder of the Association, by reading from the latter's works. He asked for a moment of silence after reading Mr. Adelman's necrology as published in the first issue of Volume 5 of the *Notes*, dedicated to the memory of Mr. Adelman.

The Annual Reports of the Secretary, Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, and Treasurer, Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, were read. Mr. Sweet, in his Finance Report, announced a deficit of \$615.00 in the budget for the ensuing year.

Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Editor, stated that his purpose was to publish no less than one issue a year of the *Notes*, and to this end he was hopeful of catching up this year by issuing November, 1968 (Volume 5, Number 2) before the end of the calendar year.

A letter (see following page) from Mrs. David C. Adelman, brought by her son, Morris, was read by Secretary. Lauding the work in the Association of the successors of her late husband, she expressed her gratitude individually to those who were carrying forward the work, so arduously and with such devotion begun by Mr. Adelman.

Mr. John Kirk, new Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, welcomed warmly the membership to John Brown House.

In the absence of Mr. Melvin L. Zurier, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, the Secretary read the Report of the Committee. The slate as follows was accepted, and Rabbi William G. Braude inducted the new officers in a very brief installation: President, Mr. Bernard Segal; Vice President, Jerome B. Spunt, Esq.; Secretary, Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky; Treasurer, Mrs. Louis I. Sweet. Rabbi Braude introduced the speaker of the afternoon, Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, Genealogist for the American Jewish Archives and Director of Placement of the Rabbinical Placement Commission. After commending the Association for the excellence of its *Notes* by quoting Dr. Bertram Korn's statement that it is the best publication of any of the local Jewish historical societies, Dr. Stern gave a highly informative and scholarly talk on "Myer Benjamin, Newport Interpreter, and his Children—A Study in Biographical Method."

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 and was followed by a collation under the direction of Mesdames Goldowsky, Segal and Sweet as hostesses.

* * * * *

MRS. DAVID C. ADELMAN

41 Lorraine Avenue

Providence, R. I. 02906

May 25, 1968

To the officers and members of the R. I. Jewish Historical Ass'n.:

I deeply regret my absence from this particular meeting. Only the fact that I am just out of hospital would keep me from it.

Our son, Morris David Adelman, is present, representing both his father and me in spirit, and interest and concern.

We are deeply grateful to Dr. Seebert Goldowsky for his devoted and meticulous care and contributions to the Historical Notes publications. He not only kept them alive but with no gap in their continuation during my husband's last illness.

Having lived with the founding editor, I know this is no small achievement. The standard has never deviated from its first award winning heights. Transitions are difficult.

To Mrs. Goldowsky as a most efficient Secretary of the Ass'n., right hand to her husband during these last transient years of David's illness, and capable co-hostess at the meetings, we say a big "Thank you!"

To your President, Mr. Beryl Segal, we are very proud of him, and his editorial memory of David and other works. He is a good friend and humanitarian and he stands at the top in our estimation, as does his warm and friendly wife, Irene. She too co-hostessed on many occasions.

To Mr. Louis I. Sweet, who has given generously of his time, efforts, and concern, and his wife, Jean, who also co-hostessed many meetings and worked many years for the Ass'n., go our heartfelt thanks.

Last, but by no means least, we thank heartily, Mr. Jerome B. Spunt, Esq., for his accurate and well written obituary page in the current issue memorializing my husband, David C. Adelman, Founder, first President, and original Editor of the R. I. Historical Notes.

For all these wonderful people who worked with my husband, but took up where he was compelled to leave off, and have kept this Ass'n. alive, and one to be counted amongst the top, I ask God's blessing for their good health, wisdom, and ability to keep alive this important mission of history.

Sincerely,

LOUISE Z. ADELMAN
(Mrs. David C. Adelman)

NECROLOGY

HAROLD RATUSH, born in New York December 28, 1922, the son of Morris and Fannie (Weisbard) Ratush. A graduate of Classical High School, Providence, in 1939 and Brown University in 1943, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He served as a First Lieutenant in the Army during World War II.

His occupation was financial consultant and Treasurer of Factron, Inc. of Providence, a finance company. He was Treasurer of Temple Beth Torah; a past member of the Board of Directors of that temple and of the Hebrew Free Loan Association; and was also, at one time, a member of the Board of Directors of the General Jewish Committee of Providence and of the Jewish Home for the Aged.

Died in Providence, August 22, 1968.

LEO COHEN, born February 27, 1889 in Russia, the son of Israel and Ida (Silverman) Cohen, and a resident of Providence from early childhood. Attended Brown University with the Class of 1912, and graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1917.

He was a practicing physician in general practice in Providence for fifty years. He was a member of the staff of The Miriam Hospital and the Roger Williams General Hospital, and a member of the Rhode Island Medical Society and the New England Pediatric Society. He was also a member of the Roosevelt Lodge, A.F.&A.M. and of the Touro Fraternal Association.

Died in East Providence, April 1, 1968.

JACOB E. GREENSTEIN, born in Providence May 4, 1902, the son of Bernard and Dora (Greenberg) Greenstein. A graduate of Classical High School in 1919, Brown University in 1922, and the Cornell University Medical School in 1926.

He was a practicing physician in Providence from 1927 until the year of his death. During World War II he was an examining physician for the Selective Service System. From 1948 to 1956, he was Chief of Medicine at Memorial Hospital in Pawtucket; and he was also on the consulting staff at The Miriam Hospital, and Medical Consultant at Charles V. Chapin Hospital.

He was a member of the American College of Physicians and the American Society of Internal Medicine, and he contributed articles to the Rhode Island Medical Journal.

Died in Pawtucket, July 24, 1968.

The souvenir programs illustrated on the inside and outside back cover were a gift to the Association by Professor William G. McLoughlin of Brown University. The information on an additional program in the collection and a typical example or order of dances follows:

 Programme 	
1. _____ QUADRILLE	6. _____ WALTZ
2. _____ POLKA	7. _____ QUADRILLE
3. _____ WALTZ	8. _____ MINUET
4. _____ WALTZ	9. _____ POLKA
5. _____ MINUET	10. _____ WALTZ
INTERMISSION	

Committee of Arrangements.
 JOHN H. SPITZ,
 D. FRANK,
 L. HARTMAN,
 N. PINCUS.

Floor Director.
 ISAAC LAHN.

ASSISTANTS.
 A. STRAUSS,
 H. SOLOMON,
 M. M. SPERN,
 F. HARTMAN, A. GOMPERTS.

Music.
 G. L. HERRICK'S BAND.

E. K. Aldrich, Painter, 217 Westchester St

Floor Director :
 MAJ. A. STRAUSS.

PLAYS:
 N. PINCUS, SOL. COHEN,
 A. L. JACKSON, HARRY GREEN,
 A. L. HARTMAN, A. L. DIMOND,
 J. ROSENFELD.

Music by
 WHITE'S ORCHESTRA,
 F. Von Olker, Leader.

"Merry Parim" 5647
 1887

Committee of Arrangements
 J. H. SPITZ, H. SOLOMON,
 A. STRAUSS, S. LEVY, L. FRANK.

MUSIC, HERRICK'S BAND.

Floor Managers.
 N. Pincus, W. J. Newman, L. Frank.

Committee Arrangements.
 Joseph Schwarz,
 Louis Rosenfield,
 Leopold Hartman,
 David Frank,
 Louis Greene.

Floor Director,
 N. Pincus.

ASSISTANTS.
 J. H. Spitz, H. Solomon,
 D. Rosenfield, A. Gomperts

MUSIC BY
 Herrick's Quadrille Band,
 Nickerson & Sibley, Dues.

PURIM BALL

Under the Auspices of

Haggai Lodge,

No. 132, I. O. B. B.

TUESDAY, FEB. 27, 1877.

AT

Storum Light Guards' Armory.

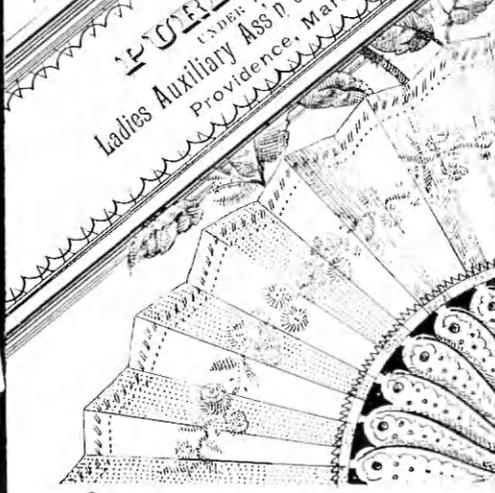


EVERETT SOCIAL

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE

Ladies Auxiliary Ass'n. of the Gorg'n Sons of Isra

Providence, March 10, 1887




Haggai Lodge,

No. 132, I. O. B. B.

Simchas Torah Ball

NORTH AMERICAN HALL,

Monday Eve'g, Oct. 9, 1871.

Nickerson & Shiley, Printers, Pawtucket, R. I.



Third Annual

Purim Ball



NORTH AMERICAN HALL,

Monday Evening, March 25, 1872.

Supper from 12:30 till 1 o'clock.

I. O. of B. B.

Haggai Lodge,

No. 132.