

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO LIFE IN NEWPORT

By FRANCINE GAIL HELFNER

The story of the Jews of Newport was filled with the terror and persecution of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. After being ostracized from Brazil and New Amsterdam in 1658, and having heard of the religious freedom offered by Roger Williams, the Jews made their way to Newport, Rhode Island.

These settlers were educated, with a background in science, culture, economy, and politics and therefore were recognized and respected by all local groups. At this time Jews, not allowed to engage in commerce because of the British edicts, therefore undertook agrarian responsibilities.

As these acts caused much hardship for the Jews, many left Newport not long after their first arrival. In 1663, however, King Charles II of England proclaimed religious freedom as the basis of individual rights; and in 1677 there was once again evidence of a Jewish community when a plot of land was purchased for a cemetery (Fig. 1).

As the years progressed, the Jewish community strengthened, and many Jews became involved in trade—local, foreign, and intercolonial—which began to show indications of success. Other Jews were soap boilers, workers in brass, and merchants.

In the early part of the eighteenth century a large group of Jews arrived from Curaçao in the West Indies. Previously having lived in Holland and having skills in commercial endeavors, the Dutch government asked them to aid the settlement of Curaçao to improve the commerce and well-being of the island. The Jews found Newport to be a flourishing city with potential to become a bustling metropolis.

The local Jews were also active in manufacturing. In 1705 Jews introduced the manufacture of soap into the colonies, established iron and brass foundries, and engaged in tailoring and silvercrafting. The Rivera family built the first spermaceti factory in Rhode Island, which soon surpassed other industries. Moses Lopez engaged in the manufacture of potash, and James Lucena introduced the true method of making Castile soap. Aaron Lopez, the colonial "Merchant Prince", had many ships venturing to all corners of the earth for trade. All of these industries encouraged economic prosperity and more commercial activity.

Read at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Touro Synagogue, National Historic Shrine, Inc., August 27, 1972.

Thus, the Jews contributed to the prosperity of the Newport community, often working with non-Jews on projects of organization which proved to be successful. Jacob Isaacks, a local Jew, is reputed to have found a method of distilling fresh water from the ocean. He prepared a bottle and presented it to President Washington. It was submitted to the House of Representatives in 1791 and given to Thomas Jefferson for evaluation; however, this invention proved to be unsatisfactory.

The Jewish businessmen were precise and scrupulous in their dealings, which gave them respect and reverence from the Christian community.

The Jews of Newport were no different from the other local inhabitants in apparel and appearance. The wealthier men wore aristocratic dress with the white wig, but few grew beards. A German officer remarked that these Jews were "not like ours known by their beards and clothes but dressed like other men, and their women are in the same French style as the women of other religions."

In 1759 the Newport Jews undertook the responsibility of building a synagogue and a school for the religious instruction of their children. Although they lacked the necessary funds, various appeals were made to different congregations. The synagogue was completed and dedicated in 1763, designed by Peter Harrison, the noted colonial architect, who combined the Georgian style of architecture and the traditional synagogue of the Spanish-Portuguese Jews (Fig. 2).

These Jews also contributed to the development of colonial art and culture. Before the American Revolution, Gilbert Stuart was encouraged by the Newport Jews to continue his painting because they recognized his ability and genius.

When the Redwood Library was founded in 1747, many prominent Jews such as Moses Lopez, Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, and Abraham Hart were among its first members. Other Jews donated money for the purchase of books.

Upon arrival in 1658, the early Jewish settlers are said to have introduced the craft of Masonry on this continent and worked the degrees in private homes. About a hundred years later, King David's Lodge and St. John's Lodge were formed, with a large Jewish membership in both lodges. Moses Seixas, a prominent Jewish citizen, helped to establish the Grand Lodge of Masons in Rhode Island. He also organized the Bank of Rhode Island and carried on the business at his home. The position as cashier of the bank was held until his death in 1818.



Fig. 1. Jews' Cemetery (1972).



Fig. 2. Touro Synagogue (1972).



Fig. 3. Aaron Lopez House on Thames Street before demolition. (Old photograph in the Newport Historical Society.)



Fig. 4. Abraham Rodrigues Rivera House (1972).



Fig. 5. Pollock House (1972)



Fig. 6. Moses Levy—Moses Seixas House (1972).

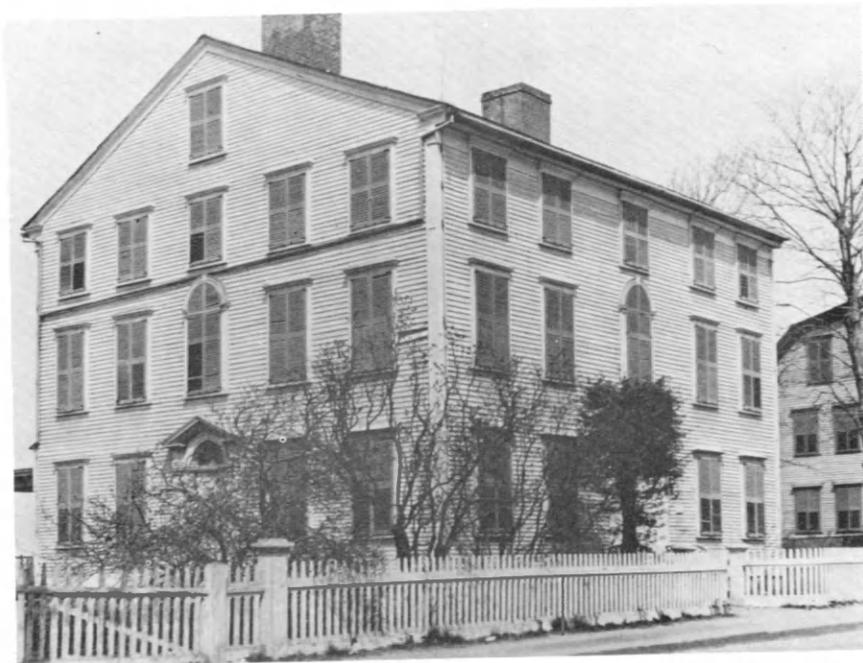


Fig. 7. Jacob Rodrigues Rivera House, before demolition. (Old photograph in the Newport Historical Society.)



Fig. 8. Samuel Lopez House, before demolition.



Fig. 9. Nathaniel Hart House, moved back from 53 Washington Street and turned end on. It was owned briefly by Abraham Rodrigues Rivera.



Fig. 10. Isaac Touro's House at 46 Division Street.

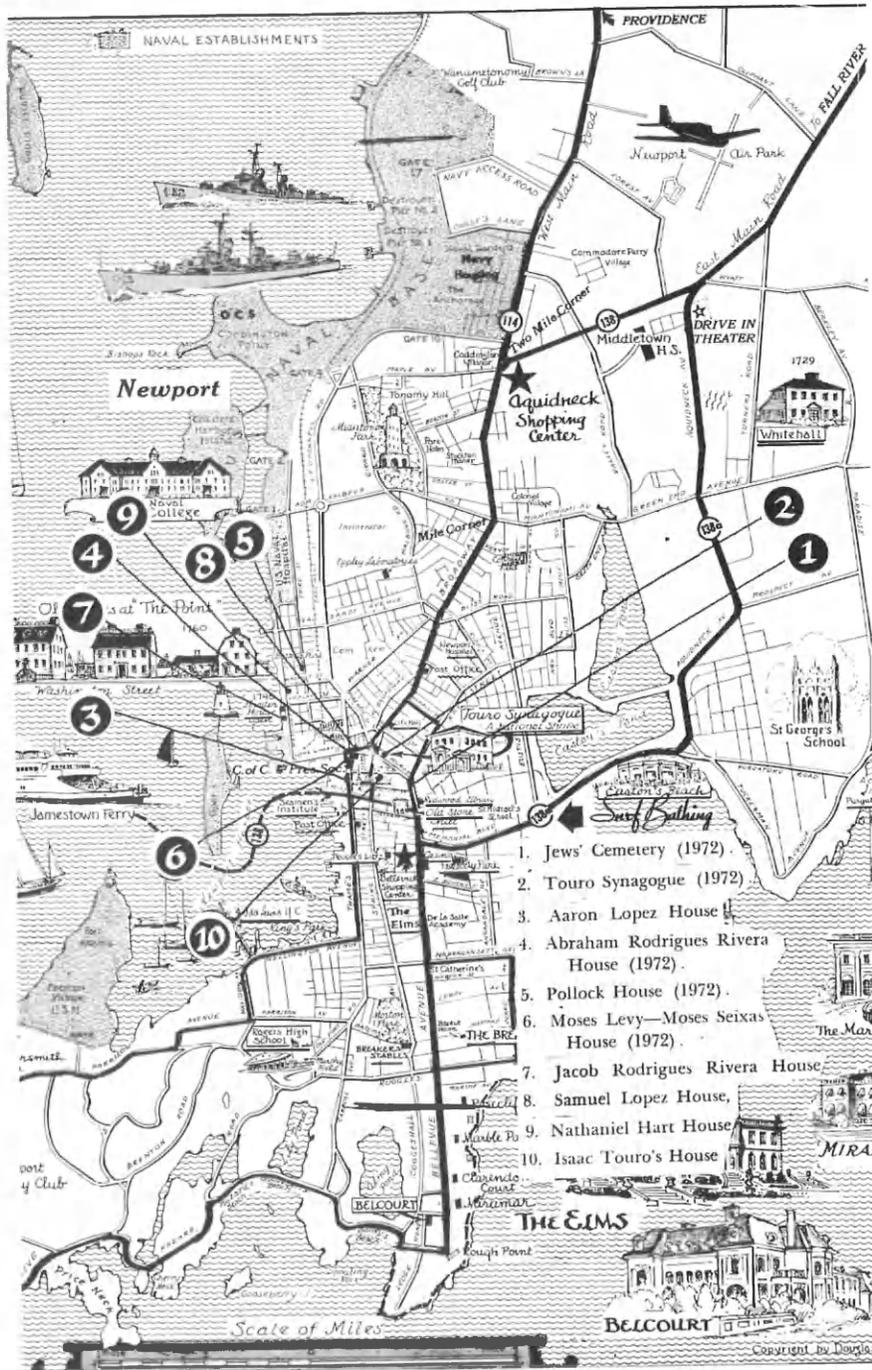


Fig. 11. Map of Newport showing the location of the sites identified in the photographs (Figs. 1-10).

In 1761 the prominent Newport Jews organized the first Jewish Men's Club in America. This organization was for social purposes only and had no connection with the synagogue. In fact, synagogue matters were forbidden to be discussed at these meetings.

The Revolutionary War interrupted the prosperity of Newport and with the occupation of the British forces, many Jews left town, settling in other colonies in search of peace and shelter or joining the army for the American cause. Newport's trade declined, but never again reached its previous grandeur. After the war several Jewish families returned to Newport; however, by 1822 many had died or moved away to New York.

Thus, the Jewish community of Newport, which had prospered and helped the colony to become a great commercial and cultural center, left only a few reminders of its presence that did not become erased with time.

From my research I have identified a number of the many Jewish residences in Newport. Several have been destroyed and some families were tenants, so that there is no evidence of their presence. Some records were kept during the French occupation, and the locations of several Jewish homes were mentioned. Reverend J. J. Lyons, during his stay in Newport, referred to some of the homes also. I have discovered that some of his information was incorrect.

The following are the results of my survey:

Aaron Lopez lived at 201 Thames Street.¹ A storeroom was downstairs while his family resided on the upper floors. This house was demolished during the redevelopment of downtown Newport (Fig. 3).

Abraham Rodrigues Rivera resided on Parade Street,² now known as Washington Square. It was the site of meetings at which Brown University was organized. It is now occupied by the Newport National Bank (Fig. 4).

The Pollock family lived at 3 Chestnut Street at the corner of Chestnut and Third Streets in the Point Section. Although the house is still standing,³ it has not been restored (Fig. 5).

The house at the lower end of Touro Street⁴ was originally occupied by Moses Levy, but upon his death it was acquired by Moses Seixas. Seixas, who founded the Bank of Rhode Island, carried on business on the lower floor, and lived with his family on the upper floors. Later it was the home of Commodore Oliver H. Perry. The Salvation Army is now located here (Fig. 6).

Hyman Levy lived on Touro Street⁵ on the present site of the Viking Hotel parking lot. This house burned down in the 1800's.

Jacob Rodrigues Rivera lived on Washington Street next to the Hunter House. During the French occupation, Brigadier de Choisy quartered his troops in this house. This house was later demolished when the Old Colony Railroad bought the land (Fig. 7).

The present site of the Savings Bank of Newport on Washington Square is where the house of Samuel Lopez⁶ stood (Fig. 8).

Nathaniel Hart lived at 53 Washington Street near Elm Street.⁷ This house is still standing (Fig. 9).

During the Revolution Reverend Isaac Touro rented a house from George Buckmaster at 46 Division Street. This house⁸ has not been restored but is standing (Fig. 10).

Jacob Hart resided at Washington and Willow Streets. This house has been moved to 30 Walnut Street.⁹ During the war he rented five rooms from Metcalfe Bowler on Jews' Street, now known as Bellevue Avenue.

The Judah family lived at the foot of Thames and Farewell Streets.¹⁰ Since they were tenants, the exact location of this house is unknown.

At the site of the yard, west of the North Baptist Church on Marlborough Street stood the residence of the Myers family.¹¹ Mordecai Myers, a distinguished officer in the War of 1812, was born here.

The Hays family lived on Broadway¹², but the exact location is unknown.

Jacob Isaacks lived on Thames Street¹³ next to Joseph Cozzen's Hatter's Shop and next to the home of Captain John Collins, but this site is also unidentified.

Abraham Sarzedas lived on Easton's Point,¹⁴ the Point section of Newport, in the former home of Thomas Pate, but this location is not known.

Several Jews owned houses although they did not live in them themselves.

Moses Levy owned a house on Elizabeth Street, formerly known as East Griffin Street, but since the homes on this street have not been identified, no positive statement can be made.

At the present site of St. Paul's Methodist Church stood a dwelling place and snuff mill. It was owned by a Lopez family, and then Jacob

Rodriguez Rivera bought the property. Rivera also owned a house on Franklin Street on the present site of the United States Post Office and a house on Washington Street known as the Benson House.

These men have left their mark on the history of Newport. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Emma Lazarus were so moved by the final resting place of some of these men that both expressed their feelings in poems about the Jewish cemetery in Newport.

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NOTES

¹Rf. 5 (Gutstein), pp. 136-137. (Gutstein gives the address as 131-133 Thames St. Antoinette Downing gives it as 201 Thames St. The latter number is clearly visible in Fig. 3, Ed.)

²Records of the Newport Historical Society.

³Rf. 5, p. 136.

⁴Rf. 5, p. 136, and records of the Newport Historical Society.

⁵Rf. 5, p. 136, and records of the Newport Historical Society.

⁶Records of the Newport Historical Society.

⁷Rf. 5, p. 136.

⁸Susan B. Franklin: *Division Street — A Memory and a Warning*.

⁹Rf. 5, p. 136, and *Newport Historical Magazine*, 1881.

¹⁰Rf. 5, p. 137.

¹¹Rf. 5, p. 137.

¹²Rf. 5, p. 137.

¹³*R.I.J.H. Notes* 5:367, Nov. 1970, and *Newport Mercury*, July 1795.

¹⁴*R.I.J.H. Notes* 5:365, Nov. 1970.

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THE TOURO JEWISH SYNAGOGUE FUND—A FISCAL REVIEW¹

BY BENTON H. ROSEN

Almost a century and a half ago the legislature of the State of Rhode Island took action which time has shown to be an example of great kindness. While the bequest by Abraham Touro in 1823 for the purpose of perpetual endowment for the maintenance and care of the physical structure of Congregation Jeshuat Israel in Newport was the fundamental reason for its preservation during that part of the nineteenth century when there were no Jews living in the city, of equal significance was the willingness of the Rhode Island General Assembly to accept responsibility for the fund. This trust most certainly was not undertaken with a view toward currying political favor. There were very few Jewish votes to be courted. It would seem that the legislature might have refused to accept trusteeship, using as an excuse the doctrine of separation of Church and State. At any rate the General Treasurer of Rhode Island has protected and nurtured the assets of this bequest for nearly one hundred and fifty years. During this period some very small fees and modest taxes have been assessed by individual agents and by the City of Newport, but there has never been a monetary charge imposed by the government of Rhode Island for services rendered. This could justifiably be considered among the "most unsordid"² acts in Rhode Island legislative history.

From the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island pertinent sections of the title "Abraham Touro Fund" (1823) read:

"Whereas, it has been made to appear to this General Assembly, upon the representation of Titus Weeks, Esq., executor of the last will and testament of Abraham Touro, Esq. of the city of Boston, in the state of Massachusetts, that the said Abraham by his last will bequeathed a legacy in the following words, viz.: . . . 'I give ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to the legislature of the state of Rhode Island for the purpose of supporting the Jewish synagogue in that state, in special trust to be appropriated to that object in such manner as the said legislature, together with the municipal authority of the town of Newport, may from time to time direct.'"

¹This account is of especial current interest, as the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue National Historic Shrine, Inc. is planning a major fund-raising campaign to finance repairs to the iron and granite fences bordering both the Synagogue and cemetery properties in accordance with detailed specifications and recommendations of the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, based on its meticulous studies.—Ed.

“Therefor, be enacted by the general assembly . . . that said legacy and trust be accepted.”

The act provided that the income from the fund be used for the maintenance of the synagogue building and the burial ground. It decreed that expenditures were to be approved by a board of the congregation and presented through the Town Council of Newport. Further it was stated: “. . . and whenever there shall be no person of the Jewish persuasion residing in Newport and qualified and authorized to have the care and superintendence of said synagogue, said council shall appoint some suitable person. . . .”

With few exceptions the net worth of the Touro Jewish Synagogue Fund has grown consistently in terms of dollars since 1823. Large expenditures have been necessary on occasion; but, on the whole, growth in total value has persisted. In view of the inflationary pressures on the economy over the years, it would seem that the custodians have acted with prescience throughout. There is some irony in the fact that, while the original ten thousand dollar bequest has grown to a balance in 1971 of approximately \$138,069, the perpetual erosion of the buying power of the dollar has hardly more than preserved in rough terms the original purchasing power of the annual income (Fig. 1).

The oldest official comment about the Fund discovered by the writer appeared in the Rhode Island Colony Records, dated May 1825. It stated in part: “Resolved that the Town Council of Newport be authorized to draw on the General Treasurer for the interest of the Touro Jewish Synagogue Fund, or so much thereof as shall be necessary to put said synagogue and the fence around it in complete repair.”*

Another item of special interest included in the General Treasurer's Report to the General Assembly dated May 1835 was his review in part of a report from the Newport Town Council: “. . . and for repairing four manuscript copies of the Pentateuch in New York, provided said manuscripts, when repaired, shall be deposited in said synagogue where they belong. For the purpose of repairing said manuscripts they wrote to the person in New York in whose possession they are, and informed them of the condition on which same would be repaired, but

*Extensive repairs were carried out during the period 1827-29 with funds drawn on income from the bequest by the Town Council of Newport. The expenditures amounted to \$3,482.58. Of this sum \$1,174 was obtained by loan pending accrual of further income by the fund. See Restoration of the Touro Synagogue, *R.I.J.H. Notes* 3:106-131 (No. 2, Oct. 1959), by Esther I. Schwartz.—Ed.

have never received any answer from them, and said manuscripts have never been repaired."⁸

Among special items taken from Reports of the General Treasurer to the General Assembly for the period from 1838 to 1856 are the following:

(1838)	Town Tax	\$39.20 ⁴	
(1842)	Cash balances:		
	Bank of Rhode Island	\$14,677.52	
	Newport Bank	3,353.23	
			18,030.75
(1843)	Total expenditure for fence		\$7,114.41 ⁵
(1847)	Town Tax	\$37.20 ⁶	
(1851)	Investments in Bank Stocks:		
	30 shares	Manufacturers Bank, Providence	
	32	Merchants Bank, Providence	
	3	Weybosset Bank, Providence	
	10	Roger Williams Bank, Providence	
	24	Commercial Bank, Providence	
	200	Blackstone Canal Bank	
	21	Newport Bank, Newport	
	18	Lime Rock Bank, Smithfield	
		and uninvested balance of	\$295.23
(1853)	Paid to Phillip Stevens, agent		\$74.99 ⁷
	Town Tax		43.50
	"Repairs and painting of synagogue and for reservoir for water"		1,575.38
(1856)	City Tax		\$120.00

The investment policy for the greater part of the life of the fund has been conservative. In keeping with sound fiduciary tradition the portfolio included bank stocks, municipal bonds, and savings accounts. In recent years, however, some of the methods used would have seemed heretical to our forefathers. Rhode Island statute in 1961 allowed common stocks to be included in state-controlled permanent funds. Of late high-interest-bearing commercial paper has been included in the Fund. America's wars have had their impact. From 1919 to 1931 government Victory Bonds, the financing instruments of World War I, were included. War Bonds of World War II made their appearance in the portfolio in 1943. Increase in United States Bond holdings is evident during both the Korean conflict and the involvement in Vietnam.

Three schedules summarizing the financial data are published with this paper. Table A gives a random accounting of the net worth in the early years as shown by reports of the General Treasurer that are available. In Table B are shown totals by year (1859-1907) without a breakdown into components, while Table C renders a comprehensive analysis of the fund assets by category of investment from 1908 to 1971.

NOTES

¹This should not be confused with the Judah Touro Ministerial and Cemetery Fund which was placed in the trust of the City of Newport in 1879. Original amount of the bequest was \$10,000. The Newport Financial Report of June 30, 1971 shows that the principal amount of that fund was \$68,025 as of that date. During the fiscal period ending on the aforementioned date \$2,894 was expended.

²Reference is made here to statement by Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Minister, in 1947 to the announcement of the Marshall Plan for European economic recovery. He hailed the establishment of the program as "the most unsordid act in history."

³Pertaining to this matter we quote from a letter to the writer by Bernard Kusnitz, currently Historian of Touro Synagogue: "At present there are six Torahs in the Ark in the Synagogue, one of which is over four hundred years old and is kept separate from the others. It is impossible to differentiate between the others in reference to their source of origin and date of arrival. There are no written records here to clarify the situation. Moreover, although there are indeed signs of repair on some of the scrolls, there is no way of knowing if they are the ones referred to in the 1835 report of the Town Council to the General Assembly."

⁴This was probably a local tax on intangibles.

⁵From the *Newport Mercury*, June 25, 1842: "Mr. Cranston (the Mayor) asked authority to expend interest on the erection of a fence around the Synagogue similar to that erected around the cemetery." In the same publication on July 9, 1842 it was reported: "Town Council, under the authority given them by the General Assembly have contacted Isaiah Rogers of Boston to enclose the Synagogue lot with a substantial stone wall and iron fence. The contract is for the sum of \$6,835 and work is to be completed by the last of October."

This appurtenance still stands. Actual expenditure of \$7,114 was slightly higher than amount of contract indicated above.

⁶Refer to footnote⁴.

⁷On this and some other occasions during the latter half of the nineteenth century a modest fee was paid to private persons for financial services to the fund. Maximum amount ever charged in a single year was \$100.

⁸During the period 1859 through 1875 assets were represented by these bank stocks:

30 shares	Manufacturers Bank	\$ 3,277.25
32	Merchants Bank	1,738.27
20	Weybosset Bank	1,095.14
10	Roger Williams Bank	841.50
24	Commercial Bank	1,301.00
200	Blackstone Canal Bank	5,160.97
18	Lime Rock Bank	926.40
34	Arcade Bank	1,806.53
	(All the above were located in Providence)	
21	Newport Bank, Newport	1,291.85
	Total	\$17,488.91

⁹It could not be determined from available records why there was a rise of nearly twenty per cent in the net worth of fund at this point. In the reports of 1906 and 1907 mention was made of the fact that the following banks were in process of liquidation, suggesting that a profit may have been realized:

Weybosset National Bank (20 shares)
Lime Rock National Bank (18 shares)

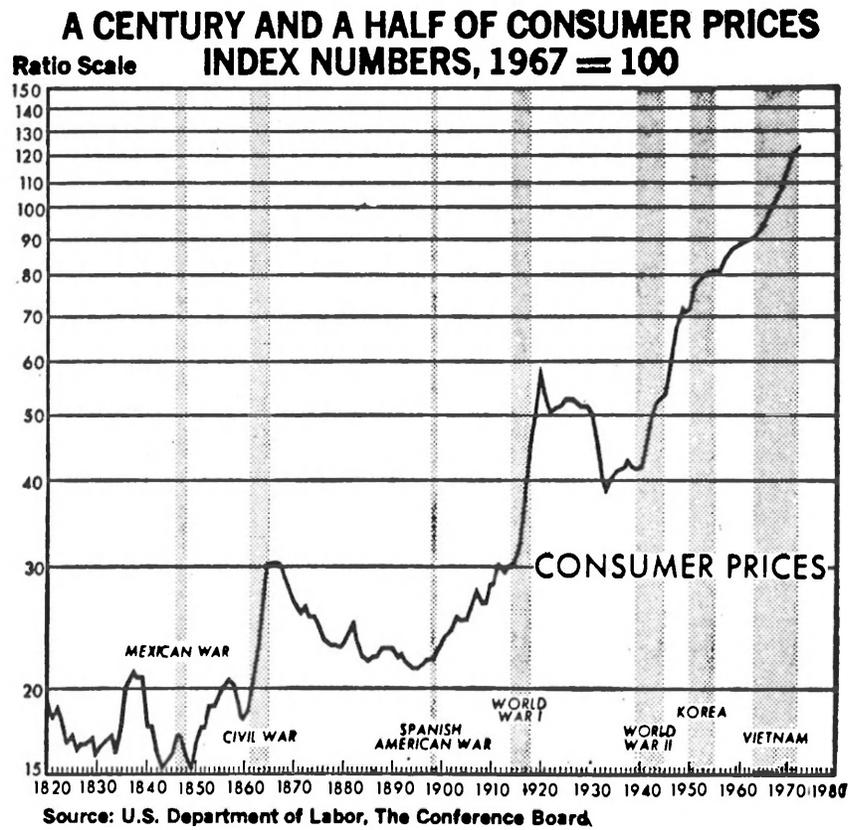


Fig. 1. The increase in value of the funds since the original Touro bequest in 1823 closely parallels the rise in consumer prices over the same period.

TABLE A

Reports to the General Assembly (state legislature) by the Town Council of Newport.

	Net Worth		Net Worth
1834	\$13,908.67	1847	\$12,530.69
1837	14,677.52	1848	13,100.54
1842	18,030.75	1849	14,117.42
1844	12,122.65	1853	15,682.38
1845	12,264.61	1854	15,859.63
1846	12,427.09	1856	18,197.13

TABLE B

Reports of General Treasurer.

	Net Worth		Net Worth
1859	\$17,488	1891	\$33,866
thru See note 8.		1892	35,926
1875	17,488	1893	37,583
1876	17,434	1894	39,236
1877	17,434	1895	38,616
1878	17,434	1896	39,784
1879	17,434	1897	39,027
1880	18,143	1898	40,122
1881	19,942	1899	42,186
1882	21,029	1900	43,238
1883	22,497	1901	45,449
1884	24,179	1902	48,986
1885	24,653	1903	48,945
1886	25,965	1904	51,782
1887	27,670	1905	50,448
1888	29,106	1906	51,201
1889	31,031	1907 See note 9	60,085
1890	32,415		

TABLE C

Year	Municipal Bonds	Public Utility Bonds	USA-Bonds	State of RI-Bonds	Bank Stocks	Corporate Stock	Commercial Paper	Cash	Total Net Worth
1908	\$8,000				\$9,360			\$43,414	\$60,774
1909	8,000				9,360			46,263	63,623
1910	8,000				9,360			46,694	64,054
1911	8,000				9,360			47,080	64,440
1912	8,000				9,360			46,785	64,145
1913	8,000				9,360			46,603	63,963
1914	8,000				9,360			47,113	64,473
1915	7,000				9,360			52,724	68,360
1916	7,000				8,860			56,839	72,699
1917	7,000				8,860			57,211	73,071
1918	2,000			\$5,000	7,860			57,651	72,511
1919	2,000		\$21,000	5,000	7,860			38,864	74,724
1920	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			16,386	76,246
1921	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			16,923	76,783
1922	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			17,469	77,329
1923	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			18,069	77,929
1924	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			27,937	80,797
1925	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			27,650	80,510
1926	2,000		45,000	5,000	7,860			29,814	82,674
1927	2,000		45,000	5,000	8,180			30,192	83,372
1928	16,000		34,500	5,000	6,920			22,779	85,199
1929	24,000		34,500		6,920			21,665	87,085

TABLE C—Continued

Year	Municipal Bonds	Public Utility Bonds	USA-Bonds	State of RI-Bonds	Bank Stocks	Corporate Stock	Commercial Paper	Cash	Total Net Worth
1930	\$24,000		\$34,500		\$6,920			\$22,628	\$88,048
1931	24,000		34,500		6,920			22,373	87,793
1932	60,000				6,920			23,856	90,776
1933	60,000				6,920			24,733	91,653
1934	61,000				6,920			24,631	92,551
1935	61,000				6,920			24,995	92,915
1936	61,000				6,920			24,159	92,079
1937	61,000				6,920			25,148	93,068
1938	61,000				6,920			25,938	93,859
1939	31,000				36,685			25,538	93,223
1940	32,000				36,685			24,901	93,586
1941	32,000				36,685			24,901	93,586
1942	27,000				36,685			29,902	93,587
1943	27,000		25,000		36,685			4,926	93,611
1944	27,000		25,000		36,365			5,346	93,711
1945	27,000		25,000		36,365			6,450	94,815
1946	27,000		25,000		36,365			5,970	94,335
1947	27,000		25,000		36,365			6,100	94,465
1948	27,000		25,000		36,365			6,295	94,660
1949	27,000		25,000		36,365			6,338	94,703
1950	23,000		26,000		36,365			8,880	94,245

TABLE C—Continued

Year	Municipal Bonds	Public Utility Bonds	USA-Bonds	State of RI-Bonds	Bank Stocks	Corporate Stock	Commercial Paper	Cash	Total Net Worth
1951	\$23,000		\$29,000		\$38,436			\$4,682	\$95,118
1952	23,000		29,000		38,436			5,722	96,158
1953	23,000		29,000		38,411			6,554	96,965
1954	26,000		29,000		38,411			5,298	98,709
1955	48,000		4,000	\$1,000	42,194			3,792	98,986
1956	49,000		4,000	1,000	41,411			6,445	101,886
1957	48,000		4,000	1,000	42,704			6,960	102,664
1958	47,000		4,000	1,000	45,726			4,197	101,923
1959	47,000	\$4,000	4,000	1,000	45,726			4,160	105,886
1960	46,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	45,726			5,425	106,182
1961	45,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	45,892	\$4,854		1,881	106,357
1962	45,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	45,892	4,854		2,352	107,098
1963	45,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	46,037	4,854		4,065	108,956
1964	39,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	46,037	4,892		11,001	109,930
1965	39,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	46,037	4,893		12,171	111,100
1966	39,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	46,037	4,893		12,974	111,903
1967	22,000	29,000	13,500	1,000	46,036	4,893		2,583	119,012
1968	2,000	29,000	13,000	1,000	46,036	4,893		26,503	122,432
1969	2,000	29,000	13,000	1,000	46,036	4,893	\$25,523	1,075	122,527
1970	2,000	29,000	13,000	1,000	46,036	4,893	24,639	8,953	129,521
1971	2,000	29,000	13,000	1,000	46,036	4,893	29,265	12,875	138,069

THE FUNERAL OF JUDAH TOURO
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, JUNE 6, 1854*

The following votes in relation to the Funeral of the late Judah Touro, having been passed by the late Council, June 5th, 1854, the invitation was extended by Mayor Cozzens, to the Delegation and Executors on their arrival, and they were conducted to the Touro House, where arrangements had been made for their reception.

WHEREAS, The late Judah Touro, of New Orleans, by his munificent donations and bequest to this city and various institutions within its corporate limits, has warmly and particularly manifested his attachment to the place of his nativity, and whereas the mortal remains of the said Judah Touro will arrive here to-morrow morning for their final sepulchre,—therefore,

Resolved, That the Executors of the said Judah Touro, and such of the members of the Jewish faith as may accompany his remains to the city, be and they are hereby invited to become the guests of the city during their stay here.

Resolved, That His Honor the Mayor, be and is hereby requested to extend this invitation, as above provided for.

At 10 o'clock, A.M., on the 6th June, the Executors with a delegation of Jews called upon the Mayor,—Aldermen Hunter and Birckhead, and Councilmen Taylor, Sherman, Tisdale, and Slocum, being present. The Rev. Dr. Raphall, in behalf of the Jews, said:—

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT:

We are deputed to wait on you by the delegations of various Jewish Congregations and Institutions now assembled in your city, to join you in the last marks of respect to the mortal remains of a man who was at once, a native of your city, a member of our faith and a friend to the whole human race. As the act of God can do no wrong, it does not become us to repine at the loss both you and we have sustained; but since it is our sad duty to attend to the grave the remains of Judah Touro, it is no small source of consolation to us that this duty has to be performed here, for the friendly feelings that subsist between the Jews and the city of Newport, the State of Rhode Island, are not of recent date. We bear it in greatful [sic] memory that even in this great Republic, the glorious home of Freedom, Rhode Island was the first State that proclaimed religious equality, and thus gave the fullest recog-

*From Cty Document No. 3, 1854. Published by the City of Newport, R. I.

dition to the rights of conscience and opinion in every man. During the more than a century and a quarter, that Jews resided in this city, the connexion between them and your fathers was one of peace and good will. They ranked as citizens, as merchants, as members of society, among your foremost men; and when the vicissitudes and changes attendant on the war of Independence induced them to remove from here, they left behind them a reputation for integrity and benevolence that you have recorded in the history of your city; while on their part they expressed their high opinion of your integrity and liberality by entrusting to your care the consecrated building in which they worshipped God, and the hallowed spot where rests the ashes of those who were nearest and dearest to them. And the manner in which you have discharged that trust, shows how worthily that confidence was bestowed. The good feeling between you and us is thus to both a precious inheritance; and while it must be to you a source of sincere gratification that your fellow townsman, absent upwards of half a century, should, dying so far away, still have afforded you such strong proofs of affection, it is to us an equal source of gratification that you enter so fully into our feelings on this occasion. Mr. Mayor, we beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, to thank you for the excellent measures you and the council have adopted, and to assure you of our readiness to co-operate with you in doing justice to the memory of a good man, who even in his latest moments retained that love for his neighbor of every creed and heritage that can only be felt by the whole-souled Republican.

When Dr. Raphall concluded, Mayor Cozzens replied as follows:

REV. SIR AND GENTLEMEN:—

On behalf of the authorities and citizens of Newport, I receive with pleasure, the delegation and the Executors of the last will of the late Judah Touro, and his sympathizing brethren of the Jewish Faith, who have now visited our city in charge of the last mortal remains of this eminent and beloved philanthropist, for the purpose of their being entombed among his ancestors.

It is an impressive though melancholy duty which consigns to its last resting place all that remains of a once numerous and happy family, who for a long series of years were closely identified with this city, and whose interest and affection has been so long continued by him whose death we now lament. Our city and State, the home and birth-place of religious toleration has opened wide her doors to Jew

or Gentile. The ceremonies of this deeply interesting occasion will long be remembered by our citizens, as we have so many instances of his generous character so permanently and prominently before us; the Jewish Synagogue and Cemetery have, by the liberality of himself and his brother Abraham, been endowed with ample means for their preservation; and I assure you, sir, that the city authorities of Newport will hold in respect and veneration the sacred trusts which have been and are now being committed to their charge.

FUNERAL OF MR. TOURO.

The funeral of the late Judah Touro was solemnized same afternoon; the procession was the longest which has been seen here for many years. The streets were crowded with people, the stores all closed, and the bells tolled. About one hundred and fifty Jews were present from various parts of the country.

The City Council assembled at the City Hall, and marched in procession to the Synagogue, the gallery of which was already densely crowded with ladies, and there were thousands on the street who could not gain admission. The coffin stood in front of the reading-desk.

Soon after the arrival of the city government, the Rabbins and other Jews came in procession, the former taking seats in the desk. As soon as the Synagogue was filled, the doors were closed, and thousands remained outside until the ceremonies were concluded.

The services were conducted by the Rev. J. K. Gutheim, of New Orleans, in Hebrew and English. In this address, which was excellent, he paid a glowing and eloquent tribute to the memory of the departed.

The following clergymen were present:—Rev. Dr. Raphall, Rev. S. M. Isaacs, Rev. Ansel Leo, Rev. J. J. Lyons of New York, Rev. J. K. Gutheim of New Orleans, Rev. Joseph Sachs of Boston, Rev. Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, and Rev. H. A. Henry of Buffalo, nearly all of whom were in their robes. Delegations of Jews were present from Boston, Hartford, New Haven, New York, Buffalo, and Philadelphia, to all of which places Mr. Touro made bequests.

At the conclusion of the services at the Synagogue, the procession was formed in the following order:—Rabbins and Jews from abroad; City Marshal; Mayor; City Clerk; City Treasurer; Board of Aldermen; City Sargeant; President of Common Council; Clerk of Common Council; Common Council; Redwood Library Corporation, preceded by the

President and Directors; Protection Company, No. 5; Citizens and Strangers.

It moved through the streets, as previously announced, to the Cemetery, where the remains were consigned to their native dust. The Rev. Mr. Leeser delivered a very appropriate and eloquent address. After the coffin was deposited in the grave, the Rev. Mr. Isaacs deposited upon it a quantity of earth which was brought from Jerusalem for the purpose, at the same time uttering a few appropriate remarks. Prayers were then offered at the graves of the members of the family.

Thus closed these interesting and mournful ceremonies; and thus was laid in the grave the last, we believe, of the Touro family.

JEWS AND THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY
RHODE ISLAND AND FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

By ERWIN STRASMICH

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the old cliché Jews always have major economic power, but, certainly, such was frequently not the case in the history of the Rhode Island textile industry. In fact, the Jews who figured importantly in the history of local textiles began as men with little or no financial resources—with nothing but thrift, tenacity, and courage. They entered a declining, even dying, business which non-Jews had originally founded and then abandoned only long after it had lost its easy profitability. With little but courage the Rhode Island Jews made a success where others encountered only failure.

Textile mills, once flourishing and prosperous in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, are now mainly historical remnants. The booming and bustling factories of the 1930s have become deserted and decrepit buildings. This paper is an attempt to recreate the fascinating life of early mills in this area and to present an informative discussion of their owners, many of whom were ambitious and successful Jewish entrepreneurs.

The bold and aggressive merchant Moses Brown of Providence, who was identified with the East India trade, began cotton manufacturing in Rhode Island in 1788. Brown financed Samuel Slater, who then built a mill in Pawtucket with new machines. This simple beginning created an industry which grew uninterruptedly for 135 years. The introduction of English machinery and the invention in 1793 of the cotton gin (through which a thousand pounds of cotton were cleaned in the time formerly taken to clean five or six pounds) gave an immediate impetus to the cotton industry. Local men, guided by Samuel Slater, began their own plants.

Early workers were mostly Irish immigrants, but by 1929 (according to the "New England Cotton Textile Industry" by J. Hubert Burgy) nationalities represented in various Blackstone Valley Mills were: French 28.8 per cent; Portuguese 2.5 per cent; Polish 5.2 per cent; English 22.4 per cent; Hebrew .15 per cent, and Russian .04 per cent.

The textile industry (woolen and cotton) spread with an uninterrupted growth throughout New England, New York, and Pennsylvania during the nineteenth century. It expanded rapidly until World War I.

Strength and growth were encouraged by the federal and state governments, which provided capital and legislation to protect the infant industry against foreign competition. In 1805 the total consumption of cotton in the U. S. was approximately 1,000 bales. By 1816, 90,000 bales of cotton were used.

In 1812 there were thirty-three factories in Rhode Island with approximately thirty thousand spindles and twenty factories in Massachusetts with over seventeen thousand spindles. The cotton base was firmly established, and the woolen industry also entered the area. At the time of Slater's death in 1835 the textile industry was solidly established. By 1909 Providence, Rhode Island produced thirty-seven million dollars worth of textile materials; Woonsocket, Rhode Island twenty million dollars; Fall River, Massachusetts fifty-six million dollars. These figures were enormous when one considers that no industry existed until Slater established his mill in 1788.

Early bold investors had choice locations for water power and selected sites at the junction of rivers and at falls. Physical descriptions of most mills were similar: granite, quarried from ledges within a few hundred yards of the building sites, was used to construct four or five story high factories.

As an example of the growth of the industry and its impact on the communities involved, the leading city of Lowell in 1911 had over seventy-one thousand spindles, twenty thousand looms, and \$12,900,000 capital invested. Leading producers were located in Philadelphia, Lawrence, Fall River, New Bedford, Lowell, New York City, Paterson, Manchester, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. The convenient location of water power sites in these cities provided a logical setting for the textile industry.

At this time the woolen and hosiery goods industries were centered in Philadelphia; New York City claimed the garment trade; Fall River was the leading cotton producing center; and New Bedford the greatest producer of fine cotton goods. Lawrence manufactured worsted material; and Paterson, New Jersey was the silk center. Bristol County, Massachusetts, which is comprised of Fall River, New Bedford, and other small towns, had forty-three per cent of the total spindles in all of New England by 1928. The combined value of production in Lawrence, Fall River, Lowell, and New Bedford was over two hundred and eleven million dollars in 1935. This clearly indicates the concentration of the cotton textile industry in this area.

Textile manufacturing, as described above, encompasses broad woven cloth (woolens, cottons, rayons, sateens, nylons), carpets, cordage, twine, sewing thread, jute linens, commercial fishing nets and seines, curtains, cotton smallwares, dyeing and finishing, hosiery, knit goods, suit manufacturers, woolen and worsted manufacturing, wool felt goods, and hats. Also, many other facets of textiles, with which the layman is unfamiliar, include allied and auxiliary items such as braiding (elastic, candle wicking, oval rugs, sleeving wire, hose, cables, tapes); rope, twine, and cordage; webbings, shoe lacing and embroidery; and vinyl coated and plastic fabrics backed with textile items (cloth, rugs and carpeting, weaving, and braiding).

In the 1930s the territory within a thirty mile radius of Providence was the greatest textile center in America. One realizes the enormous concentration of the textile industry as one travels on Interstate Route 95 through Pawtucket and Providence, Rhode Island; Interstate Route 195 through Fall River, Massachusetts; and Interstate Route 93 through Manchester, New Hampshire. The mills, resembling bee-hives, once employed thousands of people, housed millions of spindles and thousands of looms, and produced millions of yards of material. The textile industry, in value of output, was second only to the food industry.

With the numerous Jewish names today connected with the textile industry, one might think that they had always been a part of the great industrial surge in this area. This assumption, however, is erroneous. Most Jews in the late 1800s and early 1900s had minimal influence in the economic and financial spheres. Rather than invade the factory, they shrewdly chose, at first, to work independently. As one writer described it: "The Russian Jews, steadily increasing in number, avoided the factory, as much as possible and became small retail dealers, or preferred the smaller industries where there was some hope of individual enterprise in the near future. Thus we find among them many hucksters and peddlers, tailors and tailoresses, boot and shoe makers and repairers. . . ."* The reason for this was that foreigners entering the job market in this country had many economic and social disadvantages. Well-established men controlled business interests long before the immigrants arrived, preventing their facile upward mobility. Only unskilled positions were available to them at first. Yet, amazingly, by the 1950s a large segment of the cotton and woolen industries was controlled by Jews, a newly arrived immigrant group. They accomplished this remarkable

*"A Modern City," Chicago, U. of Chicago Press, 1909, William Kirk, ed., page 101.

feat through first buying and selling items manufactured by the concerns they later controlled, and by purchasing used equipment from mills and revitalizing it for their own use. These early efforts were incredibly strenuous, but determination and fortitude prevailed. It is remarkable that in just thirty years the control in each of the afore-mentioned industries in this area had been acquired by Jews, either by direct control of assets or by the purchase of mill properties.

Unfortunately, following their initial spectacular success, mills in the Southeastern area of New England began to decline after World War I. They continued to leave the area during the thirties, and, in spite of a surge of prosperity during World War II, the pattern of movement of textile mills from New England to the South increased in the fifties. By 1960 there were few cotton mills left in the entire area. This exodus was the result of competition from the South, where labor was much cheaper, cheap foreign imports from Japan and Hong Kong, and uneconomical operational methods on the part of the mills themselves. The remaining manufacturers, now chiefly Jewish, made specialized items which, while competitive, were also unique.

During the 1920s and 1930s, while mills closed and ceased operations, the abundance of available floor space and willing laborers was exploited by the garment industry. Shops from New York, besieged by labor problems, and desiring to acquire low-priced manufacturing space and an available supply of relatively low-priced unskilled labor, moved to this area. Today there are over fifteen thousand persons employed in the garment industry in Fall River. Jewish entrepreneurs purchased the granite and brick mills and leased, sub-divided, or sold them to apparel or needle trades industries.

It is pertinent to examine more closely the needle industry in this area, because it was such an important factor in Fall River's industrial life. From a small beginning in the 1930s, the sewing industry has steadily grown and has provided jobs for hundreds of women. Lack of additional workers alone prevented it from overtaking the textile industry in importance. Payrolls show the needle shops as close behind textiles in volume for these years. Without the sewing industry Fall River would have suffered a complete financial collapse (thousands of women were employed in sewing shops during a period when there was limited male employment because of mill closings). During the late 1920s and the national depression in the 1930s, the city had defaulted on its bonds and actually went bankrupt. A commissioner, appointed by the governor of Massachusetts, ran the city.

These shops produced house-dresses, cloth hats, better dresses, sweaters, pajamas, underwear, trousers, curtains, dress sportswear, rain coats, and a myriad of other products processed from textiles. The curtain factories alone can illustrate the success of the sewing industry. "Fall River's curtain plants turn out some of the finest products made in the country, supplying many of the largest retailers"*. Other industries now utilizing mills in the area are braiding, dyeing and finishing, automobile tires, battery cases, retail outlets, abrasive wheels, yarn spinning, candy, boxes, lamps, plastics, luggage, plating, file folders, potato chips, rubber thread, disposal cans, webbing, and electronics. The industrial diversity filling the empty mills enormously helped the economy of the area, since it no longer depended on one or two industries with low wages and limited economic power. Various municipalities raised their low tax base.

Jews continue to contribute to and operate the textile industry. Curiously, Jews usurped most gentile oriented companies in the last fifty years. Such men as the venerable and outstanding Albert A. List, now of New York City, formerly of Fall River, controlled the goliath of the woolen and worsted industry, William Whitman Company of Lawrence.

ALBERT A. LIST

Albert A. List and his brothers, William and Joseph, began their business careers in the grocery business. Born in 1901, List established his business with his two older brothers in 1917. They became involved with used textile machines and were associated with and acquired financial interest in a number of companies: National Refining Company, Cleveland, Ohio (through List's direct association with international financier Cyrus Eaton); List Finance Corporation; Albert Realty Company, Albert Warehouse and Realty Company Incorporated, and Otis Crescent Corporation.

In the mid 1930s List established an industrial real estate business which specialized in finding uses for vacant mills idled by the Depression. He then purchased several of the larger textile entities in New England which had been the original foundation of the American woolen and worsted industry. For a number of years he ran Arlington Mills, Nashuena Cotton Mills, Monomac Mills, Nonquit Mills, and William Plastics. In addition, List became involved in financial operations similar to today's conglomerates. For example, under his guidance U. S. Finish-

*Fall River Sesquicentennial Paper, Sept. 19, 1953, Sec. C, p. 23.

ing and Aspinook Corporation merged in 1953 with the Gera Corporation.

One of New York's leading philanthropists, List has contributed most notably to artistic, educational, and religious institutions—\$1,000,000 to the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, another million to the New School for Social Research, and \$600,000 to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and its Jewish museum. The Albert A. List foundation has aided in the rapid development of many cultural activities. Through his contributions he sought to enrich adult life by encouraging institutions to undertake imaginative and far-reaching artistic and educational programs. He also contributed funds to the Mount Sinai Hospital for hematology research and to the Massachusetts General Hospital for a research fellowship program. He also contributed largely to the new Albert and Vera List Art Building at Brown University.

II. NARROW FABRICS

Because of our personal interest in narrow fabrics, we have assembled the story of this specialized branch of the textile industry as a separate section of this history of the Jews in the textile industry in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. This story had its beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century with the establishment of the National Tubing Company in Providence. The more general account of Jewish involvement in the textile industry of this area will then be developed chronologically.

NATIONAL TUBING COMPANY

Isaac Hahn established the National Tubing Company, located on Sabin Street, prior to 1885. It engaged in the manufacture of flexible tubing for illuminating gas appliances. The business was an outgrowth of an earlier enterprise which fabricated silk, worsted, and mohair braids for the general trade and for his own retail establishment, which dealt in laces and gloves. Hahn, the father of Superior Court Justice J. Jerome Hahn, died in 1909. (See *R.I.J.H. Notes* 4:517, No. 4, Nov. 1966 and also back cover.)

I. MILLER & SONS

Another pioneer in the field is I. Miller & Sons, formerly the Pawtucket Vienna Braid Company located at 18 Broadway, Pawtucket, and established in 1908. In 1920 it had twenty braiders and sold direct to the trade. Now operated at 99 South Bend Street, Pawtucket by Charles

H. and Alan J. Miller, sons of founder Isaac Miller, it manufactures elastic braids for the apparel industry.

GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY

The narrow fabrics industry required less capital than weaving wide goods. An investment of fifty thousand dollars would sustain a mill of fifty to one hundred employees.

Narrow fabrics are classified as cotton small wares. They comprised only seven per cent of the total value of New England cotton manufactures in 1925, but total output of the region represented over sixty per cent of the national output. Small wares are considered narrow, woven, or braided fabrics, such as webbing, tapes and cords, elastic and nonelastic, and mill banding, ruffling, edging, figure labels, flat and round braids, cords, and shoe and corset laces.

This industry was concentrated in southern New England. Rhode Island with sixty-six establishments contributed forty per cent of the New England output in 1925. The greatest production occurred in the Providence-Pawtucket district, where an abundance of skilled labor, proximity to finishing plants and markets, and availability of raw materials from local mills favored greater output.

Braided rugs were an important factor in the narrow fabrics industry. Abraham Percelay and his brothers Jacob and Joseph began the manufacturing of braided rugs in 1918. The rugs were braided from odd lots of yarns and sewing threads, and made very handy small rugs. This item sold heavily during the depression and reached a high mark during the 1950s in conjunction with the Old Homestead and Americana look. Percelay is credited with creating a tufted type rug. Abraham Percelay conducted his business under the title Grand Mars Rug Company in Pawtucket, assisted by Joseph Percelay. Later he operated Associated Textiles with plants in Central Falls and Woonsocket. Jacob Percelay founded Troy Yarn & Textiles in Pawtucket in 1943, operating at 603 Mineral Spring Avenue with his sons Morris, vice president, and Merrill, secretary. They produced oval braided and chenille novelty rugs. They also established Fairlawn Spinning Co., which commissioned spinning of woolen and worsted yarns. The center for machinery for the braided rug industry is currently in the Pawtucket-Valley Falls-Central Falls area.

Another contemporary braiding company is Adler Brothers, operated by Berhard and Morris Adler of New York, and Arthur M. Radlauer,

who also established Atlas Braiding Co., Inc. of Valley Falls. This company, founded in 1927, manufactured shoe laces until World War II. It remains a dominant concern in this field supplying elastic braids for underwear and foundation garments throughout the United States. Other officers of the firm are Oscar Adler and Edwin I. Adler.

Also operative in this field is the Ross Matthews Corporation, established in 1922 in Providence and currently located in Fall River. Founded by Max Strasmich, who was formerly associated with Heywood Narrow Fabric Co. of Fall River, it is now operated by his sons, Fred and Erwin Strasmich. The Narragansett Braid Mills, Inc., established by the Silver Brothers of Boston, is currently in operation at 161 Rand Street in Central Falls, producing elastic braids.

The International Stretch Company, formerly Commercial Braid Co. established by Max Cohen and his sons Lester, Arthur, and Martin, has had a remarkable development. Currently listed on the New York Stock Exchange, it is a conglomerate of several allied companies in various locations. It produces elastic braids, tapes, webs, broad woven fabrics, and extruded rubber thread. Martin Cohen is acting president.

The braiding field includes many shoelace manufacturers. A prominent one is Lincoln Lace & Braid Co. of Providence, located at 61 Ponaganset Avenue. It is managed by Benjamin Gittleman and his son Robert M., in association with his brother, Sidney Gittleman, and Julius Freedman.

Automatic packaging was a unique innovation in the shoelace industry. Packaging of laces had previously been effected manually. Nathan Berk, of Berk Lace & Braid Manufacturing Company, conducted his business in Providence and then Pawtucket for forty years until he sold it in 1962. He received credit for inventing the first automatic shoelace paring machine in the industry. Another shoelace and drawcord manufacturer was the Biltmore Textile Co., now named William M. Jette & Sons, Inc., of Providence. This oldtime concern was originally founded by Hyman G. Goldsmith and was purchased by his son, the late Milton J. Goldsmith. It is currently operated by Milton's son, Sidney J. Goldsmith, and Robert Yetra.

Pawtucket Braid and Line, Inc., 28 Bailey Street, established 1882, was incorporated in 1920, with J. Solomon as secretary.

CONCORD WEBBING COMPANY

The Concord Webbing Company, Inc., 120 Main Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, is a manufacturer of narrow fabrics. Eugene L. Aaronson

is president and treasurer, Adrienne (Mrs. E. L.) Aaronson, vice president and secretary.

This fine narrow fabric company, moved from New York to Pawtucket in the 1940s, was ably managed by the Aaronsons. Their chief products were venetian blind webbing. The company was discontinued in 1963. Irving and Ada Rosen were the former principals.

AMERICAN INSULATED WIRE CORP.

The American Insulated Wire Corporation, Providence, a giant in the wire and cable field, had its origin in shoelace manufacturing. Wire and cable are technically affiliated with textiles, as they utilize cotton and rayon yarns in braiding, serving, and winding.

This company, founded in 1919, was incorporated in 1921 by Jacob Kenner, president, and Barney Kenner, secretary and treasurer. It expanded into the production of silk, cotton, insulated wire, cable, radio, and phone cords. Financial assistance by Samuel Littman of New York City in the late 1920s enabled the conversion to wire production. It was subsequently sold to the Leviton Interests of Brooklyn, New York in 1937. It now operates as a subsidiary of the Leviton Manufacturing Co. and occupies the former General Cable buildings at 36 Freeman Street in Pawtucket. This outstanding company manufactures rubber covered flexible lamp and heater cords, rubber and plastic building wire, and weather-proof wire and cable, as well as telephone and communication cables. In the late 1960s sales were \$45,000,000. Employment is 1100. Ira S. Galkin, president and chief executive officer, is assisted by his sons, Herbert and Arnold, and by Hyman Galkin. With additional plants at Pawtucket and Hillsgrove, the concern engages heavily in government work.

OTHER ENTERPRISES

Narragansett Thread Co. of Fall River was an early producer of cotton and silk yarns. Simon Shatkin was secretary and buyer. The company was incorporated in 1920 with capital of \$55,000.

Providence Fabric at 107 Stewart Street, Providence was another early narrow fabric company. Managed by A. A. Levy, it produced shoelaces and cotton and silk braids on 400 braiders.

Taunton Manufacturing Company, a good-sized entity, wove tire fabrics. Incorporated in 1920 in Pawtucket, it was located at East River and Waterman Streets, Providence. Victor E. Meyer was president; Emanuel Berstein, secretary; and Paul Sussman of New York, treasurer.

Waldman Mfg. Co., 127 Blackstone Street, Providence, established by Samuel Waldman, was one of the larger braiding companies of the early nineteen-twenties, manufacturing shoelaces, braids, and tapes on 500 braiding machines. Waldman had originally dealt in wastes, rags, and yarn. At present, Waldman's son, Edmund, runs Walco Electric Co. at 803 Allens Avenue, Providence, which is an outgrowth of this business. Waldman's son-in-law, Abel S. Gurwitz, specializes in selling braiding equipment for the Halsey Company. He is one of the few dealers offering this type of equipment in the United States.

Alvin T. Sapinsley was secretary, treasurer, and buyer for the Arch Narrow Fabric Co., 444 Wellington Avenue, Cranston, which, with A. E. Levine as president, was incorporated in 1920 with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars. This company, manufacturer of braids, corset laces, darning cotton, and balling, was a successor to AAA Spool & Winding Company, an earlier braid manufacturer. Sapinsley, now an attorney in New York City, left the firm in the early 1930s. His nephew, John M. Sapinsley, was head of the company then called the Crescent Co., until it was renamed the Carol Cable Co. in 1967. It is now a division of Avnet Inc., located at 249 Roosevelt Avenue, Pawtucket. Crescent, which supplied automotive wire cable, had been founded by the able Milton C. Sapinsley.

Another shoelace and drawcord manufacturer was the Colonial Braid Company, 467 Mill Street, Pawtucket, incorporated in 1916. Sanford H. Cohen was president, treasurer, buyer, and superintendent. Its products included trimming, braid, and shoelaces, produced on 300 braiders. It was affiliated with the Attleboro Braiding Company of South Attleboro, Massachusetts.

ATLANTIC TUBING & RUBBER CO.

Atlantic Tubing & Rubber Company, Inc., Mill Street, Cranston, Rhode Island, an old established firm, was originally acquired by Philip P. Weinstein, who died in 1941. It has since been controlled and operated by his sons William P. Weinstein, Sidney Weinstein, and Harold A. Winstead. William P. Weinstein served as president until his death in 1964. Winstead is chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

The company occupies 35 acres of land with over 500,000 square feet of floor space and employs over 400. It utilizes some 500 braiding machines. The chief products are rubber and plastics, including all types of hose, plastic film, sheeting, vinyl asbestos, and floor coverings.

Certainly one of the leaders in the vinyl products field, it has operated on a profitable basis for many years and in 1967 fabricated products having a value in excess of twenty million dollars.

ROYAL ELECTRIC COMPANY

This company which employs over 1,000 workers, manufactures wire and cable for the electrical industries, coaxial cable for television, extension cords for industrial and household uses, power supply cords for original equipment, and other wiring devices.

In the late 1950s Royal became affiliated with the giant International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, the largest American owned international enterprise. It engaged in the development of manufacturing, installation, and operation, as well as maintenance of, electrical and telecommunications systems and equipment. At one time it was the sole wire and cable manufacturing associate of ITT in the United States.

Max Alperin and Robert Riesman, board chairman and president respectively, head the management team of this very outstanding company. The company was founded by Joseph and Myer Riesman in 1921 in Chelsea, Massachusetts with six employees.

In 1933 the Davis-Jones Wire Company plant in East Providence, located at the present site of Fram Corp.'s world headquarters, became available as a going concern. Purchased by Royal it began production of wire for its own needs and the building of a line of wire and cable for the electrical industry. It has since branched into a large production of Christmas tree lights and wire for the holiday season. Besides additions subsequently made to the East Providence building, it occupies over 415,000 square feet of space in Pawtucket. There are also subsidiary plants in Lonsdale and Woonsocket and in nearby Massachusetts.

The company employs a large battery of braiding machines, plyers, and twisters, utilized in the manufacturing of wire and cable—thus its relevance to the textile industry. (*Prov. Sun. Journal*, June 22, 1958, Business Section, pp. 14-15).

HAMILTON WEB CO., INC.

This company is located in Hamilton, North Kingstown. Martin Nelson is president and treasurer and Nathan Berlin, vice president. They acquired the business in July 1951 from the Greene family who controlled this old company for four generations. Hamilton manufac-

tures woven narrow fabrics, including tapes, webs, and belting with jacquard patterns utilizing cotton, rayon, silk, and synthetic fibers. It employs 85 persons with 3000 spinning spindles and 1250 twistlers, occupying 95,000 square feet of space. It is one of few plants equipped with electrical generators to supply its own power.

HOPE WEBBING

Hope Webbing Division of Chelsea Industries, Inc., 1005 Main Street, Pawtucket manufactures cotton and synthetic braids. There is also a branch located at 120 Webster Street. This well established company was purchased by David and Frank Casty in the 1950s and merged into Chelsea Industries in 1964, with several affiliated companies. The stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Diverse braids are produced for shoes, electrical insulation sleeving, and military and industrial uses. Norman S. Dunn of Woonsocket is executive vice president and treasurer and a director of Chelsea Industries. Hope employs approximately 350 at both plants.

ELIZABETH WEBBING COMPANY

Elizabeth Webbing Mills Inc., is located at 521 Roosevelt Avenue in Pawtucket. Martin Lifland is president and chief executive officer; Irwin Sparr, vice president and secretary; and J. William Pinkos, vice president. They are narrow fabrics manufacturers, producing woven tapes, sleeving, and webbing. Sales volume is approximately \$5,000,000.

Lifland purchased the present plant in March of 1959 and subsequently moved the business from Central Falls to the larger quarters in Pawtucket. Several associated companies are affiliated with Elizabeth including the Blue Ribbon Textile Corporation (1937), managed by J. William Pinkos.

This company sells to over 1,000 accounts in the United States. In the late 1960s they enjoyed a sizeable government contract, supplying webbing for troops in Viet Nam.

III. PRE-WORLD WAR I

1900 - 1919

SAMUEL PRIEST

An extraordinary man, Samuel Priest, unlike many others in the field, did not reach success by taking advantage of low-priced corporate stock or idle mill space. He had first engaged in the waste and rag

business at 357 Canal Street in Providence as early as 1888. He founded the Imperial Printing and Finishing Company in the Belfont section of Cranston in 1912. This business continued until 1937.

Priest was a prominent member of the Jewish community in Rhode Island. Born in Vilna, Lithuania, he lived in the Providence area for forty-five years, residing part of this time in Cranston. He attended the public schools in Providence. As a result of his involvement in the mill remnant business, he built up a considerable trade with headquarters on Canal Street, Providence.

His association with mill owners and the remnant trade brought him into contact with executives of the booming textile industry in the Rhode Island-Massachusetts area. Through these connections he was encouraged to found the printing company which developed very rapidly.* Substantial employment is indicated by a sensational payroll holdup of \$12,000 on April 15, 1932. He was also owner of the Berry Spring Mineral Water Company of Pawtucket, and the Providence Pipe and Sprinkler Company.

His wife, Pearl Raphael Priest, continued his various manufacturing enterprises after his death in 1926. Pearl Priest acted as president and treasurer until the sale of the business in 1937, when it was no longer possible to continue operation of the plant on a profitable basis. Mrs. Priest continued to manage Berry Spring Mineral Water Company and the Providence Pipe and Sprinkler Company.

Both husband and wife were prominent philanthropists to various charities in Providence and Cranston. An outstanding woman, Pearl Priest was one of few females in full command of a large enterprise in the United States. Born in Detroit on August 13, 1872, the daughter of Robert and Anna Raphael, she graduated from Randall College, Wetherford, Texas. She generously donated a recreation house to Cranston High School and a chapel at Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick, in memory of her husband.

Archie Joslin, son-in-law of Priest, became President of M. Lowenstein and Sons and headed the largest finishing plant in the world at Rock Hill, South Carolina. His early experience at Imperial Print Works undeniably contributed to his later success.

*Priest finished fabrics on a commission basis. It appears that the textiles were stretched in the processing. There is an apocryphal story that he would have the fabrics carefully measured before and after finishing. He would remove the overage and sell it on his own account — a convenient method of increasing profits. The custom is not unknown at the present time. Ed.