

SAMUEL BELKIN AT BROWN

by RABBI WILLIAM G. BRAUDE†

My mentor, the late Professor Henry Englander of the Hebrew Union College, made sure that upon my arrival in Providence in the Fall of 1932 I would register at once in the Graduate School of Brown University. One of the courses which interested me was given by Professor Millar Burrows, head of the Department of Biblical Literature and History of Religions. But the hour scheduled for the course was inconvenient, conflicting as it did with an ongoing responsibility, with the time set—if I remember correctly—for the Confirmation Class. When I so informed Professor Burrows he reassured me: only one other person had registered, and that person's schedule was so flexible that the hour could easily be changed to suit my convenience. Even as Professor Burrows was giving this information, the other person walked in, and at once assented to the proposed change in the day of meeting. That other person had a woebegone look—his clothes frayed, his shoes literally down at the heel.

At that time, in the Fall of 1932, when I was called to Temple Beth-El in Providence, I had an overweening sense of my own importance. The country was then at the bottom of the Depression. Ninety names—so I was told—had been considered by the committee charged with finding a successor to Rabbi Samuel M. Gup, who, after thirteen years at Beth-El, left for Temple Israel in Columbus, Ohio. And I, a young man of twenty-six, one year out of the Hebrew Union College, was the one chosen. So I could not be altogether blamed for the somewhat solemn and humorless feeling of importance I had about myself. Still— and I thank the Lord for the way I resolved to act toward “that person”—I said to myself: “Don't be a *chazir* (a stuck-up pig). Be decent to this man.” I invited him to walk around the campus. Woebegone though he was, though his English was all but unintelligible, I felt then and there that “that person”—two or three years younger than I—was destined for greatness.

“That person” was Samuel Belkin, who by a strange fluke had come to Providence, specifically to Brown University, a year or so before I did. At the time of our meeting he had been in the United States only three or four years, having fled from his native Poland, where he had seen his father killed by Polish hooligans, and resolved thereupon to go to the United States. Already an ordained Rabbi, Samuel

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Belkin, after arriving in New York, pursued independent studies at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva. Such study for men at home in Talmud is characteristic of the world of Yeshivos.

At that time, it so happened, a resident of Conimicut, Rhode Island, a Mr. Botchkass,* who was both childless and prosperous—wanted, in keeping with old Jewish practice—to “adopt” so-to-speak, to become patron of a *yeshiva bochur*. So he went to New York, to Yeshiva College, where he called upon Doctor Bernard Revel, then president, to provide such a young man. Doctor Revel selected Samuel Belkin who, interested as he was in pursuing graduate work of a more general academic character, accepted the invitation. Botchkass promised to take care of all of Samuel Belkin’s needs, a promise which he kept, arranging among other things to have Samuel Belkin chauffeured daily in grand style into Providence to attend classes at Brown.

Now Samuel Belkin had no secondary schooling. Still the late Professor Roland Richardson, head of the Graduate School, and Professor Henry Thatcher Fowler, Millar Burrows’s predecessor as head of the Department of Biblical Literature and the History of Religions, were so impressed by Belkin that they gave him graduate standing. To this day I cannot understand how these two men managed to penetrate the barrier of Belkin’s “fractured” English to the real Belkin—the man greatly gifted in sensitivity and imagination. Thus it came about that the two of us—Samuel Belkin, the fugitive from Sislovitch in Poland, and I, fledgling Rabbi of Beth-El—were to meet and form a friendship which was to endure through the many years that followed.

By the time we met—in the Fall of 1932—the Depression was raging. Botchkass’s fortune vanished, and Belkin was on his own, living on less than a pittance with the Morris Marks family on Burrs Lane, one of the narrow streets above North Main Street.

As I came to know Belkin better, I realized that he was scrupulously observant in an incredibly unostentatious way. When he visited a home where there was any doubt about *Kashrut*, he would decline an invitation to eat by saying that he was not hungry or that he had just eaten, and when pressed would settle for fruit and tea, these being in effect the staples of his diet. From time to time he would walk—he had no carfare—from North Main Street to Whitmarsh Street where I lived (a matter of two or three miles) to borrow thirty-five cents with which he intended to buy several packages of cigarettes, these serving frequently as substitutes for food, which he could not afford to

*Not identifiable in the city directories of Warwick or Providence.

buy. But on his way back to North Main he would be approached by panhandlers to whom he gave a nickel or a dime, and if he was lucky would return with just enough money to buy one package of cigarettes.

Yet neither hunger nor want interfered with his resolution to study. He mastered Greek in order to read the works of Philo in the original. He guided me in Halachic aspects of my research in Jewish Proselyting in the first five centuries of the Common Era and saved me from egregious blunders. He went to Yale where he came to know the late Professor Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, a specialist in Philo, and to Harvard where he became both friend and disciple of the great Professor Harry A. Wolfson, recently deceased. While still in his middle twenties, Belkin began publishing in learned journals. His early essays, "The Alexandrian Halakah in Apologetic Literature of the First Century C.E.," "The Alexandrian Source for Contra Apionem II," and "The Problem of Paul's Background" received wide recognition, Professor Wolfson, among others, saying of Belkin that he had the making of a great scholar. Presently, when Belkin submitted his thesis on Philo and the Oral Law, Brown conferred upon him the doctoral degree, and the Brown chapter of Phi Beta Kappa elected him to membership. Doctor Belkin may thus be one of the few in Phi Beta Kappa who have neither High School diploma nor Bachelor of Arts certificate.

At the time Samuel Belkin received his degree, there were no opportunities for Jewish scholars at American universities, and so I took the liberty of making inquiries in his behalf at several Jewish—non-Orthodox—institutions of learning. Though Doctor Belkin permitted these inquiries, he told me to make it very clear that he was an observant Jew thoroughly committed to Torah as revelation. He put the matter in more simple and direct words which because of passage of years I can no longer remember precisely.

Then in 1935 a call came from Yeshiva College inviting him to teach Greek and Talmud. Presently* he was to become head of Yeshiva's Graduate School, and President of Yeshiva College, which in 1946 he transformed into a University, an institution he has been head of for thirty years, thus making him senior university president in the United States. During his years of service he has been friend and confidant of Nobel Prize winners—Albert Einstein among others—and of men in the highest echelons of government. Singlehanded he built the greatest Jewish institution in the United States, an institution which

*He became Dean of Rabbi Israel Elchanen Theological Seminary in 1940 and President of Yeshiva College in 1943.

includes Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Stern College for Women, and a host of other subsidiary schools.

Despite the extraordinary pressure of many responsibilities he managed to continue his research in Philo in order to demonstrate that Philo's writings contain a subterranean current of Rabbinic lore hitherto unknown and unexplored.

Yet to this day Samuel Belkin remains the unassuming "other person" whom I had come to know in the Fall of 1932. Never once through all the years that followed has he been condescending to his friend and admirer who stayed in Providence.

THE TOURO INFLUENCE—
WASHINGTON'S SPIRIT PREVAILS

by SISTER LUCILLE MCKILLOP†

On most speaking occasions environment is a secondary, or at best, an accidental consideration. This is not one of those occasions. It is with admiration and reverence that I stand in this holy place before the mystery of time and God, where the present vanishes, and the past flashes before the mind in beautiful pictures, making an everlasting imprint on one's memory.

A speaker other than myself is the author of these words, and yet they are mine by sentiment in the experience of this moment.

I thank you for the privilege of addressing you, the members of Touro Synagogue. You have done me a great honor, and I, in turn, hope that honor will have its reciprocal return for each of you. Symbolically, my presence here among you speaks of the great respect we share for our Judeo-Christian tradition. To capture the spirit and the heart of the meaningfulness of that heritage, I echo the words of Abraham Joshua Herschel. They deserve to be spoken in this hallowed place:

What divides us? What unites us? We dialogue in law and creed, we disagree in commitments that lie at the very heart of our religious existence. We say no to one another in some doctrines that are essential and sacred to us. What unites us? Our both being accountable to God, our both being objects of His concern, our both being precious in His eyes. Our conception of what ails us may be different, the anxiety is the same.

We may disagree about the ways of achieving fear and trembling, but the fear and trembling are the same. The demands may be different, the conscience is the same. The proclamation may be different, the callousness is the same.

Above all, God is the same. What unites us? A commitment to the Hebrew Bible as Holy Scripture, faith in the Creator, in the God of Abraham, a shared commitment to many of His commandments, to justice and mercy, a sense of contrition, sensitivity to the sanctity of life, and to the involvement of God in history,

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the conviction that without the holy the good may be defeated, a concern that history should not end before the end of days, and much more.

Rabbi Herschel expresses beautifully both sides of the Jewish-Christian relationship—the chasm and the connection.

I look upon this moment as a bridge, a span that not only links Jew with Christian, but past with present. Let me attempt to convey to you what the history of this synagogue and the occasion we commemorate mean to me. You are much more familiar with the origin, history, and personalities than I am, but perhaps that very familiarity may have dulled the grandeur of it all.

In 1763 Touro Synagogue was dedicated, but research indicates that it was actually in 1658 that the Jewish merchants of Newport came together for worship. This was five years before the Charter of Providence Plantations recognized the right of religious freedom. You have immortalized these words in bronze:

Dedicated to the principle that all and every person may from tyme to tyme and at all tymes hereafter frelye and fullye have and engage his and their owne judgments and consciences in matters of religious concern . . .

These words were written in 1663; the ideal is alive within us still, but still not realized. Carl Van Doren lamented this fact at your ceremonies in 1946. We note with him that there have been bitter changes in the relations between races and religions since the centuries of Roger Williams and George Washington. Unspeakable generations of hatred have led the nations through unutterable wars; and homeless men still wander over the face of the earth looking for refuge in a world full of anger and brutality.

Then what have we learned in this long struggle that established in principle the “inherent rights” of man? The burden of that answer is yours and mine. In answering we cannot deny the heritage that recognized that principle two centuries ago. Humanly speaking, we, Christian and Jew, have been fumbling our way to the light of reason and justice. In our own generation, as never before, there is an urge to self-examination, a desire to make sure that in our everyday relationship we give “to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.”

The Revolutionary War had its lasting effect on Newport and it affected also the history of your people in this seaport town, many of whom left the city, never to return. Judah Touro, who names your synagogue, was one such person, but even though New Orleans be-

came his post-revolutionary home, his love of Newport was never lost and his remains are buried here in America's oldest Jewish cemetery. This benevolent man remembered in his will Christians in need as well as the needy among his own. He gave to "bigotry no saction." Judah Touro personified that quality of life shared by so many of your people — that quality of life which could occasion Longfellow to write: "They had the grand Traditions of the Past; They had the Promise of the Coming Time."

American history has recorded that the Jews of Newport gave full support to the colonial cause. When the General Congress in Philadelphia ordered the Continental Fast Day through the United Colonies, the Newport Jewish Congregation gathered at the synagogue to join in prayers with the other colonists. In 1790, on the occasion of George Washington's visit to Newport, the President of the Newport Congregation presented greetings to the first President of the United States. In those greetings Moses Seixas made reference to Washington as another Daniel for whom the Congregation asked divine assistance "to discharge the arduous duties of chief magistrate of these states." These greetings deserve our reflective listening three centuries later:

Deprived as we have hitherto been of invaluable rights of free citizens, we now — with a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty, Disposer of all events — behold a government erected by the Majesty of the People, a government which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance — but generously affords to all, liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship — deeming everyone of whatever nation, tongue or language equal parts of the great governmental machine. This so ample and extensive Federal Union, whose basis is Philanthropy, Mutual Confidence and Public Virtue, we cannot but acknowledge to be the work of the Great God who rules in the Armies of Heaven and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, doing whatever seemeth to Him good.

Washington's reply is quoted in every history of American Judaism. After referring to "liberty of conscience", which the Jewish people had a right to expect from the new nation, Washington expressed the wish and prayer that

the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants. . . . May the Father of all Mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths and make us all in our sacred vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy.

The religious tone of Washington's letter shows how clearly he recognized the issue facing your people on the eve of the new republic as a test case of the freedom guaranteed not only to Christians by their co-religionists, but, beyond Christianity, to the Sons of Abraham.

In the part quoted most frequently, Washington repeated those words first phrased by Moses Seixas:

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent rights. For happily the government of the United States *which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance*, requires only that they who live under its protection, should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

Washington's letter reassured the Jewish residents of Newport of safety, a warm-hearted welcome to the American fold. To the Christian, Washington's letter is a reminder that religious liberty is a basic foundation of the new American nation.

The post-revolutionary history of Newport deeply affected Jewish history in this area. The population had so dwindled that Touro Synagogue did not have a sufficient quorum of men to comprise a congregation. The synagogue was closed for a period of sixty years; it reopened in 1850 and in 1946 took a rightful place in American history when the government declared it a National Historic Shrine.

This history should vibrate within each one of us. As I stand in Touro Synagogue and re-live that past which has contributed so much to American's sense of freedom, I am struck once more with separate but significant details of this architectural site. I look up at the balconies which I understand have been reserved for women worshippers. I have an impish desire to call on all to witness another freedom which this Synagogue finds tolerable — a woman removed now from the balcony, a Christian woman calling forth this congregation to mark its history well so that we can continue to "sanction no bigotry" of race, creed, color, or sex.

What occurred here in 1790, the exchange of letters between Moses Seixas and George Washington, which on the one hand called for the recognition of freedom of conscience for all, and on the other an affirmative response to that call by the leader of what was then a new nation, speaks only to a beginning. We have not yet reached the ideal, and we have been proclaiming it for an interval of almost two hundred years. We could become discouraged by man's slow progress. How-

ever, in the long history of the Jewish people, two hundred years is but a moment, and we can instead be encouraged by this commemoration to continue to dream and try to live the freedoms dreamed of in 1790. God is timeless, and, as I absorb the spirit of this commemoration, I think of the distance we have traveled in His timelessness and the solace that Touro Synagogue has meant for many, Jew and Gentile.

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

Freedom is built into our national conscience. It is symbolized in the Declaration of Independence, legalized in the First Amendment, and so typical of what we profess as our way of life that nothing better describes our nation than to call it "the land of liberty." Yet liberty is ambiguous. Rich in connotation, it can mean almost anything a person wants it to mean. On the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor is the inscription written by the Jewish poetess, Emma Lazarus:

Give me your tired, your poor
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me
 I light my lamp beside the golden door.

In the history subsequent to the event that brings us together today, there is a paradox between the rhetoric and reality of the United States socio-political system. Emma Lazarus's words express the rhetoric. In the year 1974 there are in America too many people who still do not enjoy the basic freedoms that our constitution assures us we have a right to, and, while you and I do enjoy the freedom of our religious beliefs, we still recognize the prejudice that is at times attached to Catholic or Jew. It is well that we remember this, because it helps us to be more understanding of the deprivation another suffers. Our religion is a precious right to us, a right we exercise as God intended only when we couple it with good towards our fellow man.

Reinhold Niebuhr has sharply reminded us that "too often we ask that religion not only ease our fears, but that it relieve us of social responsibility. We have been known to use (rather mis-use) spirituality as an escape from reality; we link it with God and leave it at that. It then serves as an escape from moral decisions in the social realm."

Many religious people, and you and I claim that adjective, look upon the spiritual as the opposite of the material, when in truth they

are inseparable polarities (words of Sidney Harris). There is no break between the two; both must be held in a creative tension at the same time. This is the way the Old Testament enjoined piety and the prophets rallied against social injustice. In the words of Herschel,

The fundamental experience of the prophets is a fellowship with the feeling of God, a sympathy with the divine pathos, a communion with the divine consciousness which comes about through the prophet's reflections of, or participation in, the divine pathos. . . . The prophet is a man who is able to hold God and man in one thought.

And this harmony of understanding, this sympathy with God's pathos means specifically that what I do to man I do to God. When I hurt a human being, I injure God.

The Book of Prophets is a powerful corrective to the false understanding of spiritual life that prevails among many Americans today, both Jewish and Christian. In a recent television broadcast after Herschel's death Carl Stern recalled that at the Berrigan trial jurors one after another said to the judge that they thought it wrong for ministers to involve themselves in politics, for their job is to minister to spiritual needs. Herschel quickly responded that, if the prophets were alive today, those jurors would surely send them to jail. "And frankly," he added with a touch of humor, "I would say that God seems to be a non-religious person, for He always mixes in politics and social issues."

Man is uniquely a creature who cannot realize his spiritual nature unless and until he translates it into his social nature. There is no way to be genuinely spiritual except through one's intentions and acts toward others, no way to "love God" without loving each of His children. Our religious freedom is a privilege that bears within it much responsibility for our fellow man. To speak of freedom for ourselves is to allow immediately that same freedom in others. The religious freedom which is reinforced in today's commemorative event is a reminder that even in our lifetime too many have paid a price for that right.

Two events in our century that touch very deeply within each of us are capsuled in the words "Holocaust" and "Homeland." In the memory and the reality of both, I identify very closely with you. That identification unites us. For many reasons the wish for freedom among my people and yours has resulted in the indignities of man's inhumanity towards man. The experiences of your people in middle Europe

and mine in Northern Ireland have driven us to the sharing of this moment in history.

In America we are spared such experiences, but this freedom should make us aware of others who people this earth and who suffer because of their attempts to exercise their inherent rights. I would hope that these thoughts today, which for the most part concern themselves with religious freedom, would enable each of us to broaden and strengthen our understanding of all basic freedoms. With every generation of Americans there has been the awareness that the right to a good education, decent housing, a fair livelihood, and an equal chance to better one's lot in life is the right of all of us — the color of our skin, our ethnic background, our sex, notwithstanding. Indeed, it is painfully recognized by compassionate men that, as long as these rights are lacking anywhere in the world, peace remains insecure, and we have little right to happiness which we deny to others. This conviction spurs the great crusade of our generation — the drive within good people to assure the basic human rights of men and women everywhere.

It is for us to strengthen our conviction in the belief in President Washington's words, followed later by Thomas Jefferson in his correspondence to the congregation in New York. Both of these men assured the Jewish people that, no matter what had been their experience in other countries, America was different. Jefferson was especially incisive in saying,

Your sect, by its sufferings, has furnished a remarkable proof of the spirit of all religious intolerance inherent in every sect, disclaimed by all while feeble and practiced by all when in power. The spirit of religious intolerance is inherent in every sect. Such intolerance is disclaimed by all when feeble and practiced by all when in power. American laws, he promised, were designed as the only antidote to this vice.

In another communication, this time to the synagogue in Savannah, Jefferson rejoiced over the presence of Jews in this country because they could assure religious diversity which, in his judgment, was the best protector of liberty.

Madison also echoed this maxim that a multiplicity of religious bodies created the demand for independence and then became the best security for religious liberty in any society.

Then what unites us? Our desire for peace unites us. It is a value sought by the Jewish people — a value sought by all people. Peace,

to make deserts bloom again. Peace, to permit the young to live without fear. Peace, to turn the energies of man and the resources of a nation to building life anew for all men. We seek together, Christian and Jew, the values of righteousness and justice and peace and brotherhood. Within our hearts we pledge to God and to one another that we shall give no sanction to bigotry and no assistance to persecution based on race, religion, color or sex.

According to Jewish tradition the ancient Hebrews, on their way to Palestine after generations of slavery in Egypt, cut cedar trees in order to obtain the lumber they needed to build a sanctuary in the wilderness. Where did they find full grown trees in the desert? You know the answer. It is this. When Jacob traversed the wilderness on his way to Egypt many generations before, he had planted little saplings, so that his descendants on their return to their own land would find full grown trees with which to build the Sanctuary.

This is the enduring task of all of us — continuously to plant the seeds for the Sanctuary of the spirit of freedom that Moses Seixas and George Washington articulated here in Touro Synagogue in 1790. It is the heritage we received; it must be the lived expression of our lives; it is the legacy that we, Jew and Gentile, must give to others.

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LOCAL JEWISH HISTORY—THE RHODE ISLAND EXPERIENCE

by SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

I have been asked to describe the activities of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. While local and regional history has been an active concern of interested groups since the earliest days of the Republic, local ethnic history has had a small constituency. Pursuit of local Jewish history has always been an incidental interest of the American Jewish Historical Society and its members. But until recent years there has been no organized effort to develop it as a finite discipline. Some Jews have felt that there was no place for this seemingly parochial type of activity, while others were in fact openly hostile. Encouragement in Rhode Island, however, was forthcoming from the local professional historians such as Clifford P. Monahan, formerly Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, and Albert T. Klyberg, the present Director. They have supported the concept enthusiastically, feeling that local ethnic historical groups, such as the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, could develop significant aspects of local history. Thus a dimension and depth could be added to the total picture of local history which the resources of the state historical society did not permit it to explore.

The Association was chartered on September 11, 1951 in order "To procure, collect and preserve books, pamphlets, letters, manuscripts, prints, photographs, paintings and any other historical material relating to the history of the Jews of Rhode Island; to encourage and promote the study of such history by lectures and otherwise; and to publish and diffuse information as to such history." Of the seven original incorporators three still survive. One, Beryl Segal, a Yiddish and Hebrew scholar, is still an active member of our executive committee and a regular contributor to our publication. Another, Rabbi William G. Braude, an Hebraic scholar known to many of you, is an honorary member of the governing board.

The three basic functions specified in the articles of incorporation are collecting, study, and publication. Our current goals are in full harmony with the original objectives.

The founding father was the late David C. Adelman, who conceived and agitated for the establishment of the organization. To him must

Presented at the conference on *New Approaches to American Jewish Local History*, sponsored by the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society in cooperation with the Jewish Studies Program of Ohio State University, the Ohio Historical Society, and the Columbus Jewish Federation, at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, October 13-14, 1974.

go the lion's share of credit for his insight in perceiving the importance of local ethnic history and for bringing to realization the formation of a group for that purpose. There is little doubt that this organization, although still only twenty-three years old, was the first in the country devoted to the scientific study of local Jewish history, and was possibly the first seriously to pursue local ethnic history of any category. The idea is now spreading — there are a dozen or so active local Jewish history groups in the United States — and two colleges in our own area, Rhode Island College and Providence College, are actively encouraging other ethnic groups to follow the same path. There are organizations in Rhode Island sponsored by the Italians, the Portuguese, the Irish, and the French Canadians, among others, all important ethnic enclaves in the population of southeastern New England.

David C. Adelman was an astute and prominent attorney and a talented amateur historian. He was incisive, scholarly, and articulate. He wrote well and recorded the results of his researches in a lucid, graceful prose, sometimes acerbic, but more often softened by touches of irony or humor.

The first meeting of the incorporators was held on November 20, 1951 in the historic John Brown House in Providence, the headquarters of the Rhode Island Historical Society. The original seven incorporators became the first officers and Executive Committee and David C. Adelman the first president. An arrangement was made with the Rhode Island Historical Society to use its quarters as a meeting place and mailing address. The first formal meeting, at which David C. Adelman presided, was held at the Historical Society quarters on February 12, 1953. The timing was felicitous, although not entirely without forethought, since it enabled the Association to play a significant role in the celebration in 1954 of a dual anniversary, the centennial of the first Jewish congregation in Providence and the Tercentenary of the arrival of Jews in what was destined to become the United States. Four years after their arrival in North America a small group had in 1658 found their way to Newport, Rhode Island.

Adelman, in his opening remarks, described the genesis of his interest in Rhode Island Jewish history:

“This occasion is for me the fruition of a seed casually planted in my youth when I began to collect books. Eager but inexperienced, I had no goal and proceeded like a grasshopper. Trial and error proved to be painful financially and compelled me to concentrate. I chose to collect Rhode Island Americana and at first, subconsciously, but later

deliberately, searched for Jewish historical items. This search extended over many years and disclosed that the history of the Jews of Newport had been minutely examined by many Jewish historians who contributed to the publications of the American Jewish Historical Society. Errors had been made and were being perpetuated by repetition, such as the exaggeration of the Jewish population of Colonial Newport, the statement that Abraham Campanall had been made a freeman, and the Jew, James Lucena, had been made a citizen while Aaron Lopez had been denied naturalization a year later. The incontrovertible facts show that the Jewish population of Colonial Newport never exceeded, if it ever reached two hundred, that Abraham Campanall was not made a freeman but was given a license to conduct a tavern and that James Lucena represented himself as a Portuguese and took the oath 'upon the true faith of a Christian'."

This is a fair example of his vigorous prose, his legal orientation, and his frequent recourse to court records and public documents. He soon came to realize that the great Jewish migrations of the nineteenth century had been largely ignored in relation to Rhode Island history. Three years earlier, at the suggestion of Rabbi Braude, he had undertaken the writing of a history of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David in anticipation of its 100th anniversary. He was frustrated by the difficulty of locating documents and in fact by the loss of twenty-five years of records in a fire. This considerable hiatus led of necessity to a search of public records. "While such a search is soul satisfying", he wrote, "it imposes a great tax upon the time and resources of the individual. . . . I resolved that the time had come to repair the damage of the past and to lay a solid foundation for the future." Discussions with a small group of knowledgeable and sympathetic persons led to the incorporation of the Association. He kept a weather eye on the accuracy of accounts of the Newport Era and continued to write brief essays about that period, but his major effort was now directed to research on the Providence period which began about 1838. In this connection he was to make fundamental and substantial contributions.

The first issue of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, which he edited, appeared in, or at least was dated June 1954, midway in the Tercentenary year. This maiden effort consisted of 76 pages on slick paper and displayed the excellence of format, careful editing, and professional ambience which were to be its hallmarks through the years. Its contents consisted of the proceedings and remarks of the first formal meeting, a history of Jews in the court records of Provi-

dence from 1739 to 1860, naturalization lists from the United States Court for Rhode Island to 1906 and from the State Court to 1905, Jewish names from the Providence and Pawtucket directories of 1878, and a list of names of subscribers to a mass meeting held in 1877. There was a brief financial report and a list of the members. The list contained the names of 44 individuals, two of whom had recently deceased, for a net of 42.

The second issue, published in December 1954, was the Tercentenary issue and contained the program of the Tercentenary observance at Touro Synagogue in Newport on August 22, which featured the reading of the famed George Washington letter ("to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance"); the program on September 14 at Roger Williams Spring (recently as of this writing designated a National Park site); and the Rhode Island State program that same evening held in the State Veterans Auditorium. It also contained among a number of historical papers an important essay titled "Strangers" by David C. Adelman, concerned with the civil rights of Jews in the Colony of Rhode Island; another by Beryl Segal and Adelman on an early successful Jewish merchant of Providence after 1850; and the early records in Yiddish of the Hebrew Free Loan Association of Providence, which appeared in a more recent issue in English translation.

The issues initially appeared on a fairly regular semi-annual basis; but as illness supervened, the schedule lagged, although at least one issue per year was published through 1960. In addition to a number of papers on various subjects, individuals, and organizations by Adelman and other authors, there were lists of Jewish family names from the directories of Providence and other cities and towns, a listing of chartered organizations relating to Jews covering a period of one hundred years, and names from Jewish cemeteries. The lists of the Jewish families were generally extracted at five year intervals from 1855 through 1900. These exercises were in general consonant with Adelman's express objective of making the publication not only a vehicle for essays on historical subjects, but more important a repository of basic data on the Jewish community of Rhode Island. It has continued to feature both types of contributions.

After the issue of 1960 Adelman, who had been suffering from a lingering illness, was totally disabled, and the weakness of the organizational structure became evident. Despite his persistent efforts to build a viable organization, it remained essentially a one-man operation.

Although he had many friends and acquaintances, he found it difficult to delegate authority. When he was no longer able to carry on, there was no momentum and no self-generating initiative to fill the vacuum. A calendar year went by without the appearance of an issue of our publication. A national library serials register listed the publication as suspended. When we learned of this we realized that action was urgent. I was at that time a member of the Executive Committee. Another member of this Committee, Mr. Louis I. Sweet, and I decided that we would take the initiative in resuscitating the organization before disaster became inevitable. We met with Adelman several times to canvas the situation and came to realize that we must develop an independent posture if we were to survive. I sensed that in our organization the *sine qua non* was publication. I was a practicing general surgeon; Sweet was a business man.

I had a year or two earlier become editor of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal*. My writing experience was limited, my publications consisting of a number of scientific medical papers, essays on Rhode Island medical history, and some contributions to the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*. I volunteered to attempt to revive the publication and keep it viable, if Sweet and others would rebuild the association on a sound and business-like basis. This division of labor, the dichotomy of publication and management, has been maintained and strengthened. Our goal, which we believe has now been attained, has been to build a self-sustaining organization, the fate of which does not depend upon the patency of one set of coronary arteries. Beryl Segal, then vice president, became acting president, and upon the death of Adelman in 1967 succeeded to the presidency.

By May 1962 the revived organization was able to release its first issue of the *Notes* containing edited versions of two of Adelman's important contributions not previously published in formal journals. Since then the Association has not failed to publish at least one issue each year. The following issue, appearing in 1963, contained substantial new contributions. We had recruited the voluntary assistance as adviser of Professor William G. McLoughlin, an able member of the faculty at Brown University, specializing in American religious history. Through his counsel the Association engaged its first research scholar, Miss Freda Egnal, who was then a graduate student in American history at the University. This move had the dual purpose of supporting research, one leg of the tripodal objectives of the Association, and ultimately of providing copy for its publication, a second of its three basic goals. She produced several papers over the ensuing

years, but her exhaustive *magnum opus* was "An Annotated Critical Bibliography of Materials Relating to the History of the Jews in Rhode Island Located in Rhode Island Depositories (1678-1966)." This and several satellite papers constitute, I believe, our most significant contribution to Rhode Island Jewish history in particular and a very professional and important contribution to American Jewish history.

Since then the Association has had on a scholarship retainer almost continuously one or another graduate student, and has thus been able both to support research and reap as a by-product a series of valuable papers for publication. Doctor Sidney Goldstein, Professor of Sociology at Brown, is currently a member of our Board and has guided several of our scholars in the preparation of papers with a demographic orientation, a specialty in which he has gained considerable eminence. While on the subject of academic resources, I should mention that Doctor Marvin Pitterman, Professor of Finance at the University of Rhode Island, is also a member of the Executive Committee and a contributor to the *Notes*. A conscious effort has been made to provide a well-rounded variety of papers with sociological, historiographic, and demographic orientation.

While officially the *Notes* are published at random, the primary objective of publishing at least one issue each year has been regularly attained. Twenty-three numbers have been published to date, and the twenty-fourth is now in preparation. We are confident that, considering the size of the issues varying in recent years from 140 to 170 pages, our subscribers and interested scholars have been provided with a substantial feast.

In the early years Adelman was able to obtain modest subsidies from the State Legislature and the General Jewish Committee of Providence (now the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island). The State subvention was discontinued several years ago. During the past fifteen years the Federation has given financial support for one project, publication of the Egnal bibliography in 1966, which issue ran to 215 pages. The organization has made no other requests and has otherwise been self-supporting.

For several years the Association has rented modest quarters in an old Victorian house, which had been converted to doctors' offices, and has continued to hold its annual meetings at the Rhode Island Historical Society quarters. As a result of successful membership campaigns the membership has reached a current high point of 322. Free copies of the publication go to 63 libraries and organizations having either

Rhode Island or Jewish orientation. An additional nineteen copies go as subscriptions to libraries around the world. The *Notes* travel east as far as Jerusalem and west as far as Sydney, Australia. The Executive Committee has made a commitment that publication will never be permitted to lapse again.

The incumbent president, Erwin Strasmich, is the fourth. The Executive Committee is comprised of competent individuals, among them lawyers, professors, business men, housewives, and a physician. Two rabbis are honorary members, both having previously served actively. The Association has no full-time staff, but retains a part-time professional librarian and supports a part-time research fellow, as already described.

Activities for members are limited. There is only one meeting annually, a combination business meeting and historical exercise. It is open to the public. The feature is the Annual David Charak Adelman Lecture, delivered by a prominent scholar in American Jewish history or other relevant subjects and supported by an honorarium. We have not as yet been able because of our limited staff to circulate a formal newsletter, but an informational letter is sent out from time to time.

The Association's growing reputation in the community has produced a dividend of considerable importance. A new and spacious Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island was dedicated in June of 1971. An attached annex, to be the headquarters of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, is currently rapidly nearing completion. A suite of rooms has been set aside in this new building to be the headquarters of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. We expect to move into these new modern air-conditioned quarters this fall or winter.

Thus, despite many exigencies, we believe that the vision perceived by David Adelman more than two decades ago is now a reality — a healthy organization, a successful publication, and spanking new quarters.

THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was held in the Library of the Rhode Island Historical Society, 121 Hope Street, Providence on Sunday afternoon, May 19, 1974. Following the call to order of the meeting at 2:40 P.M. by the President, Erwin E. Strasmich, greetings were extended by Mr. Albert Klyberg, Director of the Historical Society. Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Secretary, read the Annual Report. The Treasurer, Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, reported a balance of \$1,548.70 in the treasury. Mr. Louis I. Sweet, Finance Chairman, projected a balanced budget for the ensuing year of \$4,780.00.

Mr. Melvin L. Zurier, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of officers for re-election: Erwin E. Strasmich, President; Benton L. Rosen, Vice President; Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Secretary; and Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, Treasurer. With no counter-nominations from the floor, Mr. Zurier made the motion that the secretary cast one ballot for the entire slate, and it was so voted.

Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Editor of the *Notes*, reported briefly on the contents of the next issue, Volume 6, Number 4.

Mr. Strasmich introduced Mr. Bernard Wax, Director of the American Jewish Historical Society, who delivered the Fourth Annual David Charak Adelman Lecture. In his address titled "Rhode Island Material in the American Jewish Historical Society", Mr. Wax presented anecdotes and accounts relating to the early history of the Jews in Rhode Island gleaned from material in their Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 P.M. Hostesses for the coffee hour which followed were Mrs. Benton H. Rosen, Mrs. Bernard Segal, Mrs. Erwin E. Strasmich, and Mrs. Melvin L. Zurier.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

Recent acquisitions in the Library of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association containing items of Rhode Island interest and a listing of these items:

1. *The Future of the Jewish Community in America*. Edited by David Sidorsky. Published in collaboration with the Institute of Human Relations Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1973. Essays prepared for a task force on The Future of the Jewish Community in America of The American Jewish Committee.

Chapter 4, titled "American Jewry: A Demographic Analysis," was written by Prof. Sidney Goldstein, Professor of Sociology at Brown University. The chapter (pp. 65-126) has sections on Population Growth, Mortality, Fertility, Marriage and the Family, Intermarriage, Population Distribution, Urban-Rural Residence, Suburbanization, Migration, Generational Change, Age Composition, Occupation, Income, and Overview of Future Demographic Trends.

There are several allusions to population studies of the Providence Jewish community. The citations of Goldstein references are useful.

2. *Ezra Stiles and Rabbi Karigal*. By Rabbi Arthur A. Chiel. *Yale Alumni Magazine* 37: 16-19, March (No. 6) 1974. Rabbi Chiel explores further Ezra Stiles' interest in Hebrew, his dialogues with Karigal (Carigal: see pp. 99-113, this issue of the *Notes*), his later correspondence with him, and his institution of the study of Hebrew at Yale. There are excerpts from the reminiscences of a 1788 Yale graduate concerning his doubtful efforts to conform to this Stiles innovation.

The paper is illustrated by pictures of Carigal, the interior of Touro Synagogue, and a portion of a letter written in Hebrew by Stiles to Carigal.

3. *Ideas Magazine*. A journal of contemporary Jewish Thought. Vol. 4, No. 2, 1974. Pub. by Ideas, Long Island City, New York. It contains papers by Thomas W. Pearlman of Providence ("An Appeal for Fairness," pp. 26-28) and Rabbi Baruch Korff of Rehoboth, Massachusetts ("What is Freedom of the Press," pp. 29-31). Published in behalf of the National Citizen's Committee for the Presidency, prior to former President Richard M. Nixon's resignation.
4. *The Grand Families of America 1776-1976*. By Avery E. Kolb, Gateway Press, Inc., Baltimore 1974. Mentions the Sephardic Jewish families in Rhode Island who used the Welsh names Lewis and Phillips (p. 31). Mentions Rhode Island family names of unusual occurrence in original families, mainly non-Jewish (p. 85).
5. *Emma Faegeson Adelman, An Appreciation*. By One Who Knew Her and Loved Her (David C. Adelman). Eight page memoir with paper covers. Contains a halftone portrait.
6. *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 2, December 1973. Devoted to the centennial of Reform Judaism in America.
Contains a Bibliography on Reform Judaism by Malcolm H. Stern. Under "Congregational Histories" are the following:
Congregation Sons of Israel and David (Providence, R. I.). *Journal of the Ninetieth Anniversary. 1844-1934*. 1934. *Temple Beth El Congregation. Dedication of Temple Beth El Congregation Sons of Israel and David*. 1954.
7. *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4, June 1974. Devoted to *Contemporary Jewish Civilization on the American Campus: Research and Teaching*.

"Departments of Religious Studies and Contemporary Jewish Studies" by Jacob Neusner, Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University. Discusses the place of contemporary Jewish studies in departments of Religious Studies. (pp. 356-360).

Prof. Sidney Goldstein of Brown University is listed as a corresponding member of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the academic year 1973-1974 on the subject *Jewish Demography and Statistics*. p. 321.

8. *Who's Who in World Jewry*. Edited by I. J. Carmin Karpman, Chief Editor. Pub. by Who's Who in World Jewry, Incorporated, and Pitman Publishing Corporation, Inc., New York, London, Toronto, Melbourne, Johannesburg, Tel Aviv, 1972.

This is the third edition, succeeding those of 1955 and 1965. Collation of material began in 1968. The work contains some 10,000 names of a reported world population of Jews in 1972 of 14 million. "The bulk of the subjects come from the two major free centers of Jewish life today: Israel and the United States. There are also persons included from almost every country where Jews live, with two notable exceptions: the Soviet Union (estimated 3 million Jews) and the Arab countries".

A listing of Rhode Island or Rhode Island-related personages (possibly with some oversights) reveals a number of significant omissions. The names were selected by "contacting people and organizations to recommend nominees". Omissions are explained as follows: "Many people who should have been included have not been, simply because in many cases we received no data from them". This reviewer would suggest that the method of selecting names may also be inherently faulty. Rhode Island or Rhode Island-related names:

Adler, Walter, attorney
 Bakst, Dr. Henry (of Boston, b. in Providence), physician, educator
 [Deceased]
 Bohnen, Eli Aaron, rabbi
 Braude, William G., rabbi
 Chaset, Dr. Nathan, urological surgeon
 Dorenbaum, Jennie Shaine, business executive
 Efron, Benjamin (formerly of Providence), Hebrew educator
 Feinberg, Dr. Banice, pediatrician
 Feldman, Walter S., artist, educator
 Finkle, Joseph M., advertising executive
 Gershman, Dr. Isadore, pediatrician
 Goldberger, Edward (of New York, b. in Providence), business executive
 Goldman, Israel (of Baltimore, formerly of Providence), rabbi
 Goldowsky, Dr. Seebert Jay, surgeon
 Hassenfeld, Merrill L., business executive
 Laufer, Dr. Maurice, psychiatrist
 Licht, Frank, jurist [governorship not mentioned]
 Mayer, Kurt Bernd (of Bern, Switzerland, formerly of Providence),
 sociologist, educator
 White, Allen Jordan, stockbroker (formerly of Rhode Island)

NECROLOGY

HENRY COLSON, born in Boston, Massachusetts, September 17, 1907, the son of Morris and Julia (Baker) Cohen. A graduate of Northeastern University in 1930, he was also awarded a degree in naval architecture by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1941.

Treasurer of the Leavitt-Colson Company, an electrical supply company in Providence, he was a member of Temple Beth-El, of Providence, Roosevelt Lodge F & AM, the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, and the Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Massachusetts of which he had formerly been a director.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, November 25, 1974.

MAX L. GRANT, born in Providence, Rhode Island, April 28, 1889, was the son of the late Louis M. and Mary D. Grant. A well known industrialist and philanthropist, he was prominent in the founding of The Miriam Hospital of Providence. He graduated from Classical High School and attended Brown University. Upon graduation from high school he became interested in the activities of the Crompton Company and soon was associated with its booming production of velvet and related materials.

In later years he invented the fare collection meter used by transit companies around the world and eventually assumed control of the Grant Money Meters Company, which became universally known. He had extensive real estate holdings throughout the country. While he was a member of virtually every Jewish organization in the state, his philanthropic activities also cut across religious and ethnic lines. In 1972 Grant was awarded the Joseph Dressler Memorial Award as Jewish Man of the Year. In that same year he announced gifts of \$2.5 million to several organizations including the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, the Catholic Charities, and the United Way of Southeastern New England. He was president of a variety of businesses, including Grant Supply Co., Central Real Estate Corporation, and Elastic Knitted Wire Co. For twenty years he was president of The Miriam Hospital, was the first president of the Jewish Community Center and, national vice president of the Joint Defense Appeal, and was a former director of the Providence Community Fund,

the Legal Aid Society, the Council of Social Agencies, Rhode Island Blue Cross and the Osteopathic Hospital, which is on the site of Grant's former Cranston home, which he had donated to the hospital. He was a director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service, the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, B'nai B'rith, and the Ledgemont Country Club. He was an early supporter of the State of Israel and helped organize the Zionist movement in Rhode Island. He was active in the affairs of Temple Beth-El (Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David), of which he had long been a member.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, October 11, 1974.

JESSIE (SHORE) KRAMER, widow of Dr. Louis I. Kramer, daughter of Fred and Anna Shore, was a lifelong resident of Providence, Rhode Island.

She was a member of Temple Beth-El, a past president of the Brandeis University National Women's Committee, a fellow of Brandeis University, and a life member of The Miriam Hospital corporation.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, March 9, 1974.

AGNES LEVITT, wife of Jack Levitt, was the daughter of the late Thomas and Ann (Brooks) Parkinson. She was born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island and for the last twenty-five years had been a resident of Warwick, Rhode Island.

Died April 20, 1974.

LOUIS SANDLER, born in Providence, R. I., August 12, 1913, the son of Max and Celia (Stoloff) Sandler. He was the founder and operator of Louis' Kosher Catering Service on North Main Street in Providence for twenty-eight years. He had lived in Providence for over fifty years. He was a member of Temple Emanu-El and its Men's Club, the Touro Fraternal Association, B'nai B'rith organization, Jewish War Veterans, Providence Hebrew Day School, Overseas Lodge No. 40, F & AM, and the Palestine Temple of Shriners.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, November 27, 1973.

ERRATUM

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes 6:479, (No. 3) Nov. 1973.
NECROLOGY, MANUEL HORWITZ, "Died in Providence, October
1, 1973" should read, "Died in Providence, September 30, 1973."

INDEX TO VOLUME VI

by MRS. SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY

- | | | |
|-------|----------------|-------------|
| No. 1 | November, 1971 | pp. 1-140 |
| No. 2 | November, 1972 | pp. 141-308 |
| No. 3 | November, 1973 | pp. 309-484 |
| No. 4 | November, 1974 | pp. 485-649 |
-
- Abbott, Dorothy M. 2, 142, 310, 486
 Abbott, Norris G., Jr. 578, 580, 586n
 "Abraham Touro Fund" 236-244, 538
 Abrams, Saul 157, 166, 168
 Abrich, Abraham 136
 Abrich, John 136
 Adelman, David C. 81, 203, 205n. 387, 464, 538-540, 540-541, 622-628, 629, 630
 Adelman, Eleanor Goldowsky (Mrs. Maurice) 92
 Adelman, Emma Faegeson (Mrs. David C.) 630
 Adelman, Maurice, M.D. 83, 93, 95, 519, 521-522, 531n
 Adler, Walter 631
 Ahavath Shalom, Congregation 454f
 Albert, Dr. Heinrich 120-123
 Aldrich, Senator Nelson W. 498
 Alfandari, Aaron 587
 Allocations Committee, General Jewish Committee 7, 31-32
 American Association of Jewish Education 26, 28
 American Jewish Committee, The 217
 Ann & Hope 194, 195, 199-202, 281-282
 Ann & Hope Factory Outlet 201-202
 Ann & Hope Textile Mill 191, 193-195, 201, 281
 Anniversary Report, Twenty-fifth, General Jewish Committee 33-35
 Annual Meetings, Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association (1971) 138, (1972) 303, (1973) 476-477, (1974) 629
 Applebaum, Joseph 385-386, 389n
 Arbeiter Ring 69
 Armstrong, James 368
 Aronson, Stanley M., M.D. 477
 Automatic Gold Chain Company 96
 Azulai, David 591, 600n, 601n
- Babin, Nehama Ella, 390
 Baby Health Clinic, Jewish Community Center 158
 Bachrach, Rabbi Hayim David 454
 Baghdadi, Mania Kleinburd, 56
 Bank of Rhode Island 227, 233
 Baran, Abram 205-206, 208n
 Barbosa, Dimas 366, 369, 372, 380, 384n
- Bardach, Peter 177, 188n, 190n, 516
 Bar David, Moses 600n
 Barnard, Harry 475
 Baugh, Mrs. Samuel 525
 Baynard, Samuel Harrison, Jr. 578, 586n
 Beach Pond Camp, Jewish Community Center 162, 167
 Bearman, Jennie 145
 Bearman, Lillian 145
 Beccman, Governor R. Livingston 523
 Begleiter, Ralph J. 515-516, 528, 531n
 Belkin, Samuel 610-613
 Benefit Street Building, Jewish Community Center 146-176, 188n
 Beranbaum, Morris 198
 Berger, Ilie, D.M.D. 16, 23, 24
 Berger, Jacob 205, 208n
 Berger, Rose (Mrs. Samuel) 387, 389n
 Berman, Abe, & Sons 388, 389n
 Berman, Annie 206, 208n
 Bernhardt, Bertram L. 180, 182, 184, 189n
 Bernhardt, Helene Donig (Mrs. Bertram L.) 519, 531n
 Bernheimer, Charles S. 29, 35n, 51
 Bernstein, John L. 213
 Bernstein, Perry, M.D. 155
 Bibliographical Notes; references to Rhode Island Jews 137, 300-301; 475, 630-631
 Bicknell, Theodore Williams 81
 Bigelow, Bruce 313
 Billingkopf, Maurice 154
 Blackstone Distributing Company, 199, 200-202
 Blaustein, Rabbi David 5
 Blumental, Doctor J. N. 147
 B'nai B'rith 17, 50
 B'nai B'rith, Independent Order of, Haggai Lodge 50
 Bohnen, Rabbi Eli A. 2, 142, 310, 465, 486, 631
 Bolhouse, Gladys E. 235, 586n
 Bolotow, Louis 205, 208n
 Borod, Robert 179
 Boslowitz, Bertha 511, 531n
 Boslowitz, Bessie 511, 531n
 Bosquilla, Rabbi 600n
Boston Israelite, The 209
 Botchkass, Mr. 611

- Botvin, Barney 385, 389n
 Boyman, Alter 7, 10, 16, 23, 24
 Boy Scouts 155, 169
 Bradner, Dr. Lester 50, 78-79
 Braude, Rabbi William G. 2, 142, 310, 486, 524, 528, 531n, 610-613, 622, 624, 631
Break In, The 532-541
 Brier, Benjamin 10
 Briscoe, Robert 22
 Brody, Solomon 388, 389n
 Bromson, Sol S. 147
 Brown, Bertram M., Mr. and Mrs. 145
 Brown, Charles 365, 366, 367, 377, 378, 514
 Brown, Charles C. 378
 Brown Realty Inc. 366
 Brown, Rebecca 145
 Brown, Sarah (Sally), (Mrs. Charles) 366
 Brown University 233, 610-613
 Christian Association 155
 B. R. Realty Corp. 365
 Budgeting Conference, Large City 32-33
 Budgeting, General Jewish Committee 7, 31-33
 Burbank, Mortimer L. 506, 510, 511, 514, 520, 531n
 Bureau of Jewish Education 28-29, 30, 182
 Burke, Judge John C. 532-541
 Burlingame, Lillian 384n
 Byrnes, Garrett D. 365, 374
- Campaign, Building, Chairmen, Jewish Community Center 189n-190n
 Campaign, Jewish Community Center, 1939, 161, 162
 Campanall, Abraham 624
 Campbell, Bertha ("Babe") Carol Samuels Sinclair 491, 521, 525
 Camp Centerland 167, 178
 Camp Fire Girls 155
 Capaldi, Gilda 369, 374, 384n
 Carigal, Raphael Haim Isaac (also Carrigal and Karigal) front cover No. 1, 475, 587-603, 630
 Carp, Dr. Bernard 178-185, 186n, 189n
 Carrigal, Rabbi Hayim (also Raphael Haijm Karigal and Hayim Carigal) front cover No. 1, 475, 587-603, 630
 Cemetery, Jewish, of Newport 228, 245-248
 Central Information Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in the Far East 213
 Central Information Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in Siberia and the Urals 214
 Century Club 180, 181
 Chafee, John H. 525
- Channing, George G. 235n
 Chapel, Jewish, at Rhode Island Medical Center 465
 (see Jewish Chapel, Rhode Island Medical Center)
 Charter, General Jewish Committee 11-15
 Chase Clothes, Inc. 199
 Chase, Helen (Mrs. Martin) 201, 202
 Chase, Irwin 195, 196, 199-202, 282
 Chase, Jill Forman 199
 Chase, Martin 191-202, 281-282, 305
 Chase, Morris 191
 Chase, Samuel 196, 200-202, 282
 Chaset, Nathan, M.D. 631
 Chiel, Rabbi Arthur A. 137, 138, 300, 475, 599n, 630
 Children's Theatre, Jewish Community Center 167
 Chyet, Stanley F. 300, 313, 602n, 603n
 Circumcision invitation, 1906, 137
 Circumcisions, 1906, 136
City, A Modern 51, 76-80
 Civil Rights, Jewish Community Center 180
Clapboard, The 137
 Clarke, Jeremiah 579
 Clarke, Peleg 579
 Cohen, Caroline Myers (Mrs. Edward) 220-222, 224n, 225n
 Cohen, Earle F., M.D. 524, 531n
 Cohen, Esther 386, 389n
 Cohen, Jacob I. 149, 154-158, 160, 165, 166, 167, 168, 186n
 Cohen, Jacob N. 386, 389n
 Cohen, Leo, M.D. 524
 Cohen, Michael R. 147
 Cohen, Samuel 148
 Cohn, Dorothy 465
 Committee on Foreign Operations 211
"Community" and the Providence Jew in the Early 20th Century 56-75
 Community Fund, Providence 160, 168, 177
 Community Planning Committee 22, 29-30
 Conference of Jewish Organizations 10
 Congregation Ahavath Shalom 454
 Congregation Beth Ahabah 220
 Congregation Jeshuat Israel 236, 532-541
 (see Touro Synagogue)
 Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth El) 5, 57, 81, 98-99, 630
 Congregation Shearith Israel 532-541
 Congregation Sons of Israel 81
 Congregation Sons of Zion 454f

- Conyngton, Mary 79
 Cornerstone Laying, 1939, Jewish Community Center 163
 Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds 29
 Cummings, Matthew J. 6
 Cutler, Colonel Harry 7, 50-51, 99, 130-135, 147, 300
 Czech-American Patriots, World War I 117-123

 David, Fischel 532-538
 Dayton, Henry 579
 D-Day Committee 31
 Dedication, Jewish Community Center, 1971, 183
 de Fleury, Marquis (Mons. Fliory) 581, 586n
 Demography, Jewish, Rhode Island 22, 29, 49-55, 55n, 300, 630
 DeSola Pool, Rabbi David 162, 600n, 602n
 Discount Operations 191-202
Distribution of Jewish Households in Rhode Island, 1963 and 1970, 36-48, 50
 Donig, Daniel 519, 520, 526
 Dorenbaum, Jennie Shaine (Mrs. Philip) 190n, 631
 Dorenbaum, Philip, D.M.D. 155
 Downing, Antoinette Forrester 235n
 Dreyfus, Edward 367

 Eastern European Jewry, Providence 56-75
 Edelstein, Jacob E. 378, 511, 519, 520
 Education, Jewish, in Providence, Rhode Island 28
 Efron, Benjamin 631
 Egnal, Freda 626-627
 Eidelberg, Morris and Clara Whitehill 525
 Eisner, Theodore R. 520
 Elizer, Isaac 300, 314, 603n
 Elkus, Abram J. 215
 Elmgrove Avenue Building, Jewish Community Center 181, 189n
 Empire Theatre, back cover and inside back cover No. 4
 Engel, Julius 539
 Englander, Rabbi Henry 300, 614
 Engleman, Uriah C. 28, 35n
 Epstein, Max 206-207, 208n
 Errata, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 137, 477, 634
 Espo, Harlan J., 184, 188n, 190n
 Etheridge, Thomas ("Timmy") 369, 380, 384n

 Fain, William, M.D. 214n
 Fay, Edward M. 502, 515, 526
 Feinberg, Banice, M.D. 155, 158, 631
 Feinberg, Saul 188n
 Feldman, Ada (Mrs. Louis) 361-362, 384n
 Feldman, Louis 362
 Feldman, Walter S. 631
 Fershtman, Max, M.D. 465
 Finberg, Joseph 152, 154, 155
 Fink brothers 388, 389n
 Finkle, Joseph M 631
 Finklestein, A. A. 148, 185n
 Fintex 191
 First Odessa Independent Association 59
 Fisher, Harry 385, 389n
 Flink, Abe V. 157
 Forstner, Walter and Wilhelm 96
 Forstner, W., Company 96
 Foss, Karl 190n
 Foster, Theodore, and Brother 92
 Fox, Charles J. 179, 188n
 Frank, Gertrude, Mildred, and Rebecca 520
 Franklin, Susan B. 235n
 Franks, Raymond 188n
 Freemasonry in Rhode Island 227, 578-586
 Friedman, Edward I. 160
 Friedman, Lee M. 588, 599n, 600n, 603n
 Funds, allocation of, General Jewish Committee 31-33

 Gainer, Mayor Joseph 516, 526, 527
 Galkin, Herman 150
 Galkin, Joseph 10, 19, 31, 167
 Galkin, Samuel 148
 Gemilath Chesed 136
 General Jewish Committee 5-35, 52, 55n, 67, 73, 167, 168, 177, 179, 182, 189n
 George Washington Letter Exercises 218-225, 614-621
 German Jewry, Providence 56-75
 Gershman, Isadore, M.D. 631
 Gertz, Samuel 385, 389n
 Gettler, Joseph 508, 513, 517
 Giblin, Thomas P. 515-516
 Ginsburg, Adolph 148
 Glantz, Max 386, 389n
 Glass, William B. 189n
 Goldberg, Esther 206, 208n
 Goldberg, Lawrence Y. 25
 Goldberg, Norman L. 465
 Goldberger, Edward 631
 Golden Agers, Jewish Community Center 181
 Goldenberg, Samuel 387, 389n
 Goldman, Rabbi Israel 631

- Goldman, James 23
- Goldowsky, Antoinette Lotary (Mrs. Bernard Manuel) 88, 93, 100
- Goldowsky, Beatrice 83, 92
- Goldowsky, Bernard Manuel 83-128, 153; Bendix Family 90; "Brown, Mr." 95, 117-123; Broadside, United Jewish Appeal, 1928, 124-128; Chapin and Hollister 92; Chapin, William P. 92, 99; Czech-American patriots, World War I 117-123; Detective Agency, The National 92, 93, back cover No. 1; Detective, Private, Reminiscences of a 102-116; Gaunt, Captain Guy 117-119, 123; "Get That Crook!" 102-116; Goldberg, Isaac 89; Goldowsky Detective Agency, The 92; Howick, Tom 95-96; Intelligence work, World War I 95, 117-123; Irwin, Will 117; Jewelers' Protective Association 92; Jewelry industry, Providence 92, 94, 96-97, 98, 99, 100; Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island 99; Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island 99; Keren Hayesed Committee, Providence 99; Knight, B. B. and R., Company 97; Langer, Rabbi Samuel 89; Loeb, William, and Company 99; Lotary, Alfred 94; Lotary, Eduard (Edward) 84, 91; Lotary, Emma Bendix 84, 89, 90-91; "Mr. Brown" 95, 117-123; National Detective Agency, The 92, 93, back cover No. 1; Parker, Patrick ("Patsy") 91-92; Pinkerton Detective Agency 89, 91, 92; *Providence Evening Bulletin*, The 102-116; *Providence Journal-Bulletin* papers 95, 102-116, 128; Rathom, John Revelstoke 95, 117-123; Samuels brothers 99, 488-531; Silverman Brothers 99; Speidel, Albert and Edwin 96; Speidel Corporation 96; Speidel, F., Company 96; Temple Beth El 98-99; United Jewish Appeal 124-128; United Jewish Appeal Broadside, 1928, 124-128; Viereck, George Sylvester 95, 120; Voska, Emmanuel V. 95, 117-123; Voska, Villa 120; Zionism 99
- Goldowsky, Elenor 83, 84
- Goldowsky, Gertrude (Bonnie), (Mrs. Seibert J.) 2, 142, 310, 486, 629, 635
- Goldowsky, Moses 87
- Goldowsky, Samuel 83, 84
- Goldowsky, Seebert J., M.D. 2, 81, 83, 102, 117, 137, 142, 300, 310, 313, 475, 486, 604, 622, 626, 631
- Goldsmith, Hyman Goodman 128-129
- Goldsmith, Lena (Mrs. Hyman G.) 129
- Goldsmith, Milton J. 129
- Goldstein, Charles 136, 137
- Goldstein, Charles, Mr. and Mrs. 137
- Goldstein, Joseph 386, 389n
- Goldstein, Jules P. 152, 154-155, 156, 166, 378
- Goldstein, Leopold 204, 208n
- Goldstein, Sidney 2, 29, 35n, 36, 52-54, 55n, 61, 74n, 142, 300, 310, 392-395, 397, 400-403, 406, 429, 449-450, 486, 627, 630, 631
- Goldstein, Sidney S., M.D. 465-474
- Goldstein, Sydney 136, 137
- Goldstein, Terry (Mrs. Sidney S.) 465
- Gordon, Leon 136
- Gordon, Samuel H. 136
- Goren, Arthur A. 74n
- Gorin, Jeremiah J. 190n
- Gould, Dr. Morton 180
- Grabel, Marvin 190n
- "Grandaddy, The, of all Discounting" 281-282
- "Grandfather of Discounting" 191-202, 281-282
- Grand Lodge of Masons 227
- Grand Lodge of Rhode Island 579
- Grant, Max L. 148, 152, 155, 158, 166, 182, 189n, 378, 380, 526, 632
- Green, Senator Theodore Francis 523, 524, 531n
- Greene, Nathan 385, 389n
- Greenstein, Mathilda 387, 389n
- Gribinsky, Leonora 145
- Grinnell, Edson F. 365
- Griswold, Harry C. 367
- Grossman, Morris 147
- Ground-breaking ceremonies, Jewish Community Center, 1969, 183
- Group Work and Leisure-Time Needs in the Jewish Community of Providence* 36, 52, 55n
- Guedalia, Reverend Moses 539
- Gunther, J. H. 148
- Gup, Rabbi Samuel M. 152, 524, 526, 610
- Gutheim, Reverend J. K. 247
- Gutstein, Morris A. 224n, 235n, 601n, 602n
- Ha-Cohen, Rabbi Samuel 589, 600n, 601n, 602n
- Hadassah Youth Aliyah 17

- Haggai Lodge, Independent Order of B'nai B'rith 50
- Hahn, Isaac 204, 208n, 254, 308, advertisements inside back cover No. 2
- Hahn, Judge J. Jerome, 99, 204, 254, 308
- Halpert, Murray, 180, 188n
- Hamburger, Jacob M. 520
- Handwerker, Louis 180, 188n, 190n
- Harrison, George 578
- Harrison, Peter 137, 475
- Hart, Abraham 227
- Hart, Isaac 587, 589
- Hart, Jacob 234
- Hart, Nathaniel 231, 234
- Hassenfeld Leadership Award 22
- Hassenfeld, Marion (Mrs. Henry J.) 21
- Hassenfeld, Merrill L. 631
- Hassenfeld, Sylvia (Mrs. Merrill L.) 21
- Hays family 220, 221, 224n, 225n, 234, 603n
- Hays, Moses Michael 221, 578, 579
- Hebrew American Club 146
- Hebrew Day School 27-28
- Hebrew Educational Alliance 146
- Hebrew Educational Institute 146-152, 157, 172, 180
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society 17, 211-217
- Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society 211-217
- Hebrew Sheltering House Association 211
- Hebrew Sheltering Society, The 9
- Helfner, Francine Gail 226
- Hellinger, Miriam 148
- Hellman, Sigmund J. 185, 186n
- Henry, Edward P. 465
- Henry, Reverend H. A. 247
- Herberg, Will 56, 59, 74n
- Herschel, Rabbi Abraham Joshua 614-615, 619
- Herscovitz, Esther 205, 208n
- Herzl, Theodore, letter 209
- HIAS 17, 211-217
- Higgins, Edward J. 369, 373, 378, 379, 384n, 502, 523-524, 531n
- Higgins, Governor James 515, 516
- Hilfer, Nathan, 148
- Histadruth (Israel Federation of Labor) 17
- Hoffman, Harry Adolph 327-359
- Holocaust, the European 9
- Horn, Werner 118-119
- Horvitz, Elcanor (Mrs. Abraham) 142, 145, 310, 361, 486, 488
- Horwitz, Manuel, M.D. 479, 634
- Hotel Corporation, The 365
- Howard Clothes 191
- Hurvitz, Harry 387, 389n
- Hurvitz, Ida (Mrs. Harry) 387, 389n
- Independent Order of Free Sons of Israel 50
- Industrial Statistics, Commissioner of, of the State of Rhode Island, Annual Report (1910) 80
- Isaacks, Jacob 227, 234
- Isaac Leeser Lodge, Free Sons of Benjamin 50
- Isaacs, Reverend S. M. 247, 248
- Israel, Rabbi Joseph 600n
- Jacobs, Abraham 148
- Jacobson, Jacob Mark 313
- Jaffe, J. 136
- Jagolinzer, Carl 150
- Jampolsky, David 136
- Jampolsky, Israel 136
- Jefferson, Thomas, and the Jews 620
- Jennings, Edward 513-514, 531n
- Jeshuat Israel, Congregation 236, 532-541, 607, 614-621 (see Touro Synagogue)
- Jessurun, Jacob Samuel 316, 323-326
- Jewelry, Jewish manufacturers (1897) 301
- Jewish Cemetery of Newport 228, 245-248
- Jewish Chapel, Rhode Island Medical Center 465
dedication of 465-466; participants in dedication of 465-466
- Jewish Choral Society 155
- Jewish Community Center 9, 17, 27, 30, 52, 55n, 65, front cover No. 2, 145-190, 209, 376, 628
- Jewish Community Relations Council 25
- Jewish Community Services in Greater Providence, A Study of 29*
- Jewish Education, American Association of 26, 28
- Jewish Education in Providence, Rhode Island* 28
- Jewish Family and Children's Service, The 9, 10-11, 65, 162, 477
- Jewish Federation of Rhode Island 5, 26, 33, 429
- Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, The 9, 29, 30, 64-65, 99, 181
- Jewish Households in Rhode Island, 1963 and 1970 36-48, 50, 52-53
(see *Jews in Rhode Island, A Study of Residential Mobility of, 1963-1972*)
- Jewish manufacturers and businessmen of Rhode Island (1901) 300

- Jewish Men's Club, first, in America 233
 Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island 99, 526
 Jewish policeman, first 128-129
 Jewish studies in higher education 630
 Jewish War Veterans 17
 Jewish Welfare Board, National 27, 29, 51, 52, 55n, 131, 133, 134-135, 146, 148, 153, 157, 159, 165, 183, 188n
Jewish World 209
Jewry, American, 1970: A Demographic Profile 300
Jewry, World, Who's Who in, 1972 edition 631
Jews and the Textile Industry, Rhode Island and Fall River, Massachusetts 249-299, 308
 (See *Textile Industry, Jews and the, Rhode Island and Fall River, Massachusetts*)
 Jews' Cemetery 228, 245-248
Jews in Rhode Island, A Study of Residential Mobility of, 1963-1972 390-453
 analysis of findings 406-425, 450-451; conclusions 427-429; literature in the study of: Gans, Herbert 391, 426, 449rf.; Goldstein, Sidney 392-395, 397, 400-403, 406, 449rf.; Hansen, Marcus 427, 449rf.; Herberg, Will 426, 427, 449rf.; Lee, Everett S. 398-399, 428, 449rf.; Lenski, Gerhard 391, 426, 449rf.; Litwak, Eugene 404, 449rf.; Osterreich, Helgi 404, 425; Piddington, Ralph 404, 449rf.; Rossi, Peter II. 397, 399-400, 405, 408, 449rf.; Sklare, Marshall 426, 449rf.; Speare, Alden 405, 449rf.; methodology 392-398; tables 431-448, 451-453
 Jews in Rhode Island. residential mobility of the 36-48, 49-55, 390-453
 (see *Jews in Rhode Island, A Study of Residential Mobility of, 1963-1972*)
 Jews of Newport 218-225n, 226-235, 236-244, 245-248, 300, 313-326, 475, 578-586, 587-603, 614-621, 623, 624, 625
 Joint Distribution Committee 9
 Josephson, Bella 145
 Josephson, Israel J. 539
 Joslin (Jostkovitch), Harold 136
 Joslin (Jostkovitch), Joseph 136
 Joslin, Judge Philip C. 147, 148, 152, 208n, 365, 378, 381
 Judah family 234
 Judah Touro Ministerial and Cemetery Fund 239n
 Junior Hadassah 155
 Kaminsky, Nettie 145
 Kane, Benjamin N., Library 166
 Kaplan, Robert 179
 Kapland (Copeland), Mitchell A. 136
 Kapland (Copeland), Sidney 136
 Karigal, Rabbi Raphael Haijm (also Carigal and Carrigal) front cover No. 1, 475, 587-603, 630
 Kastor, William 81
 Katz, Hyman 492
Kehillah 57-58, 66-67, 68, 73
 Keren Hayesed Committee, Providence 99
 Kessler, Sam 386, 389n
 Kiev, I. Edward 475
 King David's Lodge of Newport 227, 578-586
 King, Moses 50, 55n
 Kinsley, Simeon 166-167, 168, 186n
 Kirk, William 76, 79
 K. K. Beth Shalome 219
 Klemmer, Oscar 386-387, 389n
 Klyberg, Albert T. 622
 Kominsky, Harry 147
 Korff, Rabbi Baruch 630
 Korn, David 386, 389n
 Kraft, Louis J. 35n, 51, 157, 185, 187n
 Krakow, Simon 29, 35n
 Kramer, Louis I. 26
 Kramer, Louis I., M.D. 155
 Krasnoff, James C., D.M.D. 155
 Kritzman, Morris 167, 177-178, 186n
 Kublin, Shirley 214n
 Kusnitz, Bernard 239n
 Kwasha, Barnett 206-207
 Kwasha, Bernard 492
 Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association 6
landsmanshaft 58, 68
 Lansing, Robert 216
 Large City Budgeting Conference 32-33
 Laufer, Maurice, M.D. 631
 Lazarus, Emma 618
 Leach, Max 180
 Lederer, Benedict B. 204-205, 208n
 Lederer, Henry, and Brother 99
 Lederer Realty Corporation 205, 208n
 Lederer, S. and B. 99
 Leeser, Reverend Isaac 247, 248
 Leo, Reverend Ansel 247
 Levine, Barbara (Mrs. George A.) 310
 Levine, Bessie 387, 389n
 Levine, Solomon 387, 389n

- Levy, Arthur J. 20, 22, 155, 305-306, 477, 517-518
- Levy, Arthur J., Annual Oration, the First 477
- Levy, Hyman 234
- Levy, J. M. 517-518
- Levy, L. Napoleon, et al vs. David, Fischel 205, 208n, 534-537
- Levy, Max 535
- Levy, Moses 229, 233, 234
- Lewis family 630
- Licht, Frank 10, 19, 24, 190n, 631
- Licht, Harry 182, 190n, 306
- Lipschitz, Jacob 136
- Lipschitz, Solomon 136
- Local History, New Approaches to American Jewish* 622n
- Lodge, King David's, in account with Topham, John, 1781-1784, 581-584
- Loebenberg, Nannie R. (Mrs. Theodore) 518-519, 531n
- Loebenberg, Theodore 518-519, 520, 526
- Loehmann, Charles 199
- Loehmann's 199
- Loftin, Professor Colin 429
- Logowitz, Kenneth 510, 517-518, 530, 531n
- Lopes, Lela 525
- Lopez, Aaron 226, 228, 233, 300, 313-326, 475, 598, 599n, 603n, 607, 624
- Bennet, Joseph, letters from 314; Brigg, Nathaniel 317; Brown, Nicholas 319; Condet & Company 320; Crugar, Henry Jr. 314; Davis & Benson 316; Hart, Joshua 315-316; Hewes, Josiah 318-320; Jessurun, Jacob Samuel 316, 323-326; Levy, Hiram 320; Lloyd, Henry 314; Lopez, Abraham 315, 316; Lopez, David 315; Lopez, Joseph 317-318; Marcus, Samson & Co. 320; McNab, Gregory 323; naturalization of 475; Rapalje, Stephen 320; Rotch, Joseph and William 314; Sigourney, Ingraham & Bromfield 318; triangular slave trade 317; West Indies trade 316-320
- Lopez, Abraham M. 315, 316, 593
- Lopez, David 315, 578, 579
- Lopez family 234
- Lopez, Joseph 317-318
- Lopez, Moses 226, 227, 607
- Lopez, Samuel 230, 234
- Lovett, Raul 190n
- Lubliner Sick Beneficial Association 59
- Lucena, James 226, 314, 624
- Lynch, James H., Jr. 371, 372
- Lyon, Harry 148
- MacDonald, William 76
- Magid, Samuel M. 152, 378
- Malki, Rabbi Moses 589, 600n, 601n, 602n
- Mandell, Claire Katz 492
- Manucenter 199
- manufacturers and businessmen, Jewish, of Rhode Island (1901) 300
- Manufacturers' Outlet 491, 526
- Marcus, Jacob R. 300, 591, 600n, 603n
- Marcus, Philip V. 148
- Markowitz, Benjamin 519
- Marks, Morris 611
- Marshall, Louis 131, 217
- Marty's Clothing Mart 193, 199
- Marx, Joseph 222
- Mason, George Champlin 235n
- Mason, Mark 214n
- Mason, Samuel 209-217
- Masonry, Jews in 227
- Mass Retailing Institute 197-198
- Mayer, Kurt Bernd 397-398, 631
- McGrath, J. Howard 366, 370, 373, 378, 380, 384n
- McKillop, Sister Lucille 614-621
- McKinley, President William, Memorializing Death of, September 14, 1901 front cover No. 4
- McLoughlin, Professor William G. 609n, 626
- M-Day 23
- Memorial Fund, Sidney S. Goldstein 474
- Mendes, Reverend Abraham Pereira 223, 539
- Meyer, Reverend E. M. 539
- Meyer, Sidney 182, 188n, 189n
- Meyers, David 190n
- Michaelson, Julius 188n
- Mikveh*, Providence 456, 456f
- Millman, Lester 182
- Millman, Rose 154
- Minikowsky, Certie 385-386, 389n
- Minyan, the (1840-1860) 81
- Miriam Hospital, The 9, 30, 64-65, 67, 376, 526
- Mistowsky, Samuel 341
- Mobility, residential, of Jews in Rhode Island 36-48, 49-55, 390-453 (see *Jews in Rhode Island, A Study of Residential Mobility of, 1963-1972*)
- Mobility, residential, of Jews in Rhode Island, 1963-1972, 390-453 (see *Jews in Rhode Island, A Study of Residential Mobility of, 1963-1972*)
- Modern City, A* 51, 76-80

- Monahan, Clifford P. 622
 Monis, Judah 597
 Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association 6
 Mordecai, Moses 220
 Mordecai, Rebecca Myers (Mrs. Moses) 221
Morning Journal 209
 Morris' Clothes Shop (Shoppe) 198
 Moses, Isaac 578
 Moskol, Julius 136
 Moskol, Milton 136
 Musler, Sarah Leichter 510-511, 531n
 Myers, Harry 519
Myers, Hays, and Mordecai Families, Records of the, from 1707-1913, 220-222, 224n, 234
 Myers, Moses Mears 221
 Myers, Myer 220-221, 578
 Myers, Samuel 221, 319
 Myers, Solo. A. 579
- Narragansett Hotel 361-384
 art and the 373-374, 376; Democratic Party and the 370; funeral of Max Zinn 381; gambling and the 367; hurricane, the 1932, 372; lobby, picture of 382; mezzanine parlor, picture of 381; Narragansett Round Table 376, 378; ownership of 364-366; prohibition and the 366; social affairs and the 376-379; Tercentenary, the, and the 370-372; Union, the, and the 368-369; World War II and the 373; picture of the, back cover No. 3
- Nass, Julius 387, 389n
 Nathan, Sophie Samuels 525
 Nathans, Philip 520
 Nathanson, Max 204, 208n
 National Council of Jewish Women 162
 National Federation of Welfare Funds 23
 National Jewish Population Study 36, 37
 National Refugee Service 9
 Necrology 139-140, 305-307, 479-483, 632-633
 Berry, Melvin T. 1919-1971, 139
 Bromberg, Sylvia I. d. 1972, 305
 Chase, Martin 1906-1971, 305
 Colson, Henry 1907-1974, 632
 Grant, Max L. 1889-1974, 632-633
 Horwitz, Manuel, M.D. 1910-1973, 479, 634
 Joslin, Dorothy 1894-1971, 139
 Kramer, Jessie d. 1974, 633
 Levitt, Agnes d. 1974, 633
 Levy, Arthur J. 1897-1972, 305-306, 477
 Licht, Harry J. 1910-1972, 306
 Nathans, Samuel H., M.D. 1906-1972, 306-307
 Oelbaum, Henry 1901-1973, 479
 Potter, Charles, M.D. 1908-1970, 140
 Richter, Max J. 1886-1973, 479-480
 Sandler, Louis 1913-1973, 633
 Sholovitz, Phyllis 1923-1973, 480
 Silverman, Ida Marcia 1882-1973, 480-482
 Tenenbaum, Helen 1906-1973, 482
 Winnerman, Harriet J. 1905-1972, 482-483
- Neusner, Rabbi Jacob 630
 Newburger, Samuel [incorrectly given as Newberger in text] 191
 Newman, John L. 465
 Newport 218-225n, 226-235, 236-244, 245-248, 300, 313-326, 475, 578-586, 587-603, 604-609, 614-621, 623, 624, 625
Newport As Ararat 604-609
Arkansas Gazette, reprint in the, 1821, 609; *Daily National Intelligencer*, article in the, 1820, 605-606, editorial in the 606-607; foundation stone for Grand Island 605; Grand Island 604-608; *National Advocate, The*, editorial in, 1820, 607-609; Rhode Island 606-607, 608
 Noah, Mordecai Manuel 604-609
- Oken, Evelyn (Mrs. Isidor J.) 387, 389n
 Open House Tours, Jewish Community Center, 1971, 183
 Opera House, The 364-365, 366, 383
Organ, The 50, 55n
Orinin, My Shtetl in the Ukraine 542-577 (see *Shtetl*)
 Orson, Barbara 180
Outlet Bulletin 498-499
 Outlet Company 198-199, 382, 488-531
 automobile race in 1906, picture of 522; Buyers' and Managers' Club 518, 520; City Hall property 492; 496; communications 504, 515-517; Donley, Dr. John E., Rehabilitation Centre 526; *Dry Goods Economist*, article in by Joseph Samuels 529; employee relations 509-515; flower raising by Joseph Samuels 528; funeral of Joseph Samuels 527-529; "Happyland" at Christmas 507; Hodges Building, acquisition of 492;

Outlet Company—Continued

- honorary degree awarded to Joseph Samuels 529-530; Industrial National Bank and the 525; Ledgermont Country Club 513, 518-519, 528; Manufacturers' Outlet 491, 526; Metacomet Country Club 513, 528; Old Home Week and Arch, picture of 502; outings 511-515; *Outlet Bulletin* 498-499; pallbearers, Leon Samuels' funeral 526; philanthropy and the 498-502, 510, 526; pictures of, in 1894, 488; in 1903 and 1909, 493; in 1914, 495; Radio Station WJAR 504, 515-517; Samuels, Joseph, Dental Clinic for Children 500-501; Samuels, Joseph, picture of, at wheel of Stevens-Duryca, circa 1910, 522; Samuels Land Company 496; Samuels, Leon and Colonel Joseph, pictures of 490; showmanship in advertising, front cover No. 4, 501-509; transcontinental telephone call, picture of 505
- Paley, Lawrence A. 190n
 Pastore, John O. 378, 380
 Patten, David 374, 376, 382
 Pearlman, Sarah 145
 Pearlman, Thomas W. 630
 Pell, Claiborne, speech by 197n
 Pelosi, John J., Jr., M.D. 473
 Pereira, Solomon 81
 Perry, Mary 509-510, 531n
 Pershing, General John J. 131, 134-135
 Philanthropy and the Outlet Company 498-502
 Phillips family 630
 Phillips, Naphthali 607, 630
 Pioneer Women's Organization 17
 Pitterman, Marvin 142, 191, 310, 486, 587, 627
Pocket Book of Providence (1882) 50, 55n
 Podrat, William 205, 208n
 Pogroms, Russian 6
 Pollak, Professor Fred 26
 Pollock House 229, 233
 Population, Jewish, of Providence 22, 29, 49-55, 55n, 300, 630
 Population Studies, Jewish, Providence and Rhode Island 22, 29, 36-48, 49-55, 55n, 630
Population Study of the Jewish Community of Greater Providence 22, 29, 52-53, 55n, 630
Population Survey of the Greater Providence Jewish Community (1964) 22, 29, 52-53, 55n, 630
 Port, Edward 362, 367, 368, 376, 380, 384n
 Port, Eli 362
 Port, Lena (Mrs. Max Zinn) 362, 381-382, 384n
 Post, Louis F. 216
 Potter, Lillian (Mrs. Charles) 2, 142, 310, 486
 Premack, Benjamin 154, 173
 Pritzker, Samuel, M.D. 190n
 Providence Jewish community, a study of the (early 20th century) 56-75
 Providence Jewish community, members of (1840-1860) 81
Providence Jewish Community, Some Observations on the (circa 1909) 76-81
 Providence Opera House 364-365, 366, 383
 Rabbinical Council 182, 183
 Radding, Edward 152, 365-366
 Raleigh Clothes, Inc. 199
 Rao, Frank 370
 Rapaportc, Samuel, Jr. 190n
 Raphall, Reverend Dr. 245, 247
 Resnick, Abraham 153
 Ress, Joseph W. 10, 18, 22-23, 189n
 Restoration of the Touro Synagogue 237-239n
 Revel, Dr. Bernard 611
 Rhode Island General Assembly 236
 Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association 29, 182, 429, 622-628
 annual meetings (1971) 138, (1972) 303, (1973) 476-477, (1974) 629; history of 622-628
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes 624-627
 Rhode Island Medical Center 465-474
Rhode Island Register, The 209
 Rhode Island Supreme Court cases involving Jews 1870-1912, 203-208; 1913-1924, 385-389
 Rivera, Abraham Rodrigues 229, 231, 233, 300
 Rivera family 226, 233
 Rivera, Jacob Rodrigues 227, 230, 234-235, 315, 475, 597, 598
 Robin, William L. 2, 142, 310, 486
 Rogers Brothers [incorrectly given as "Roger's" in text] 191
 Rose, Helen 510, 531n
 Rose, Manuel 385, 389n

- Rosen, Benton H. 2, 76, 136, 142, 236, 310, 528, 486, 578, 629, inside back cover No. 4
- Rosen, Beverly (Mrs. Benton H.) 629
- Rosen, Sigmund 205, 208n
- Rosenfeld, Gussie 388, 389n
- Rosenfeld, Leon 387-388, 389n
- Rosenstein, Morris 387, 389n
- Rosenthal, Herman 148
- Ross, Joe 180
- Rubel, Rabbi Charles M. 465
- Rubin, David 386, 389n
- Rubin, Florence 386-387, 389n
- Rubinstein, Rabbi Israel S. (also Y. Z.) 147, 152, 454, 454f
- Rubinstein, Lillian Berger 507, 516, 531n
- Rumpler, Alex 190n
- Ryding, Cyril 512-513, 515, 520, 531n
- Sachs, Reverend Joseph 247
- St. John's Lodge of Newport 227, 578, 579, 580, 586n
- Samuels, Alice March Murr (Mrs. Joseph) 491, 519, 521
- Samuels brothers 99, 198, 488-531
- Samuels, Claire (Mrs. E. B. Quinn) 492, 525
- Samuels, J., & Bro. 198, 488-531
- Samuels, Joseph 198, 378, 489-530
- Samuels, Joseph and Brother, Inc. 198, 488-531
- Samuels, Joseph, Dental Clinic for Children 500-501, 521
- Samuels, Leon 198, 489-527
- Samuels, Mildred Eidelberg (Mrs. Leon) 492, 525
- Samuels Realty Company 528
- San Souci, Governor Emery J. 516
- Sapinsley, Milton C. 10, 157, 162, 166, 189n, 258
- Sarzedas, Abraham 234
- Schaffer, Julius 540
- Schatz, Harry A. 35n
- Schiavo, Bartholomew 587
- Schiff, Jacob H. 214-215
- Schlesinger & Blumenthal 204, 208n
- Schless, Nancy Halverson 137, 475
- Schlossberg, Joseph 372
- Schreier, Eugene 539
- Schuman, Eleanor Saunders 517, 531n
- Schusheim Rabbi Morris 152
- Schwartz, Harry A. 465
- Scully, Vincent J. 235n
- Seefer, Joseph J. ("Jake") 366, 368, 369, 371, 380, 384n
- Seefer, Minnie (Mrs. Joseph J.) 369, 371, 379-380, 384n
- Segal, Bernard (also Beryl Segal) 2, 5, 142, 208n, 209, 310, 454, 465, 486, 542-577, 622, 625
- Segal, Mrs. Bernard 629
- Seixas, Gershom Mendes 597, 600n
- Seixas, Moses 219, 227, 229, 233, 300, 578, 579, 616-618, 621
- Sermon, first Jewish, in America 593, 599, 601n
- Sessions Street building, Jewish Community Center 167, 172, 177-178, 181, 188n
- Shearith Israel, Congregation 532-541, 600n, 602n, 607
- Sherwood, Herbert M. 365
- Shipton, Nathaniel 313
- Sholovitz, Hyman 386, 389n
- Shuteil* 542-577
charity 571-573; children's games and recreation 558-561; a day in the 575-577; Hebrew Schools, modern, 557-558; *heder*, school for boys 553-556; houses of worship 561-563; market day 567-569; matchmaking 569-571; occupations 549-552; *rov*, the 563-566; Sabbath, the 573-575; *shreiber*, school for girls 556-557; spiritual needs in the 547-549
- Siegel, Herman 147
- Silverman, Archibald 7, 10, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 99, 524, 526
- Silverman, Charles 157, 378
- Silverman, Ida (Mrs. Archibald) 8, 480-482
- Silverman, Jacob 148
- Silverman, John, 50th birthday celebration for 375
- Silverman, Louis 205, 208n
- Silverman, Max 205-206
- Silverstein, Aaron 204, 208n
- Sinclair-Campbell, Bertha Carol ("Babe") 491, 521, 525
- Sinclair, James 525
- Sinclair, Joseph S. ("Dody") 510, 523, 525, 530, 531n
- Slefskin, Hyman 386, 389n
- Sobiloff brothers 388, 389n
- Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue 236n
- Soforenko, Edwin S. 189n
- Sollosy, Sheldon S. 25
- Solomon, John A. 8
- Sons of Zion Shul 454f
- Sopkin, Alvin A. 10, 17, 18, 21, 276, 524

- South Providence Branch, Jewish Community Center 159, 175, 177, 178-179, 182
- South Side facility, Jewish Community Center 159, 175, 177, 178-179, 182
- Spears, Donald E. 580
- Spunt, Jerome B. 2, 142, 310, 486, 629
- Stanzler, Harold 188n
- Stanzler, Milton 188n
- Stein, Samuel 152
- Steiner, Samuel 520
- Steiner, William 520
- Stern, Rabbi Malcolm H. 630
- Stiles, Ezra front cover No. 1, 137, 138, 300, 475, 587-590, 593, 596-599, 599n, 600n, 601n, 602n, 603n, 630
- Stover, Lillian 381-382
- Strasmich, Erwin E. 2, 142, 249, 256, 310, 468, 628, 629
- Strasmich, Pauline E. (Mrs. Erwin E.) 629
- Sundlun, Bruce G. 525
- Sweet, Jennie (Mrs. Louis I.) 2, 142, 310, 486, 629
- Sweet, Louis I. 2, 142, 267, 310, 486, 626
- Taber, Barney 148
- Taber, Sadie 154
- Tageblatt* 209
- Talmud Torah 146, 147, 148-153
- Tanenbaum, Meyer 180
- Tarnapol, Gertrude 154, 168
- Temkin, Jacob S. 10
- Temkin, Nathan 147
- Temple Beth El 5, 57, 81, 98-99, 630
- Temple Emanu-El 177
- Tercentenary, Jewish, observance of 29
- Tew, James, letter from 585
- Textile Industry, Jews and the, Rhode Island and Fall River, Massachusetts* 249-299, 308
- A & C Woolen Mills Inc. 286;
- Aaronson, Adrienne (Mrs. Eugene L.) 257; Aaronson, Eugene L. 256-257; Abdon Mills Corporation (Elgin Silk Mills) 268; Abramson, Fisher 283; Abrash, George 268; Abrash, Reuben 267-268; Abrash, Samuel 268; Ace Dyeing & Finishing Company 285; additional textile firms 291-294; Adler, Bernhard 255; Adler Brothers 255-256; Adler, Edwin I. 256; Adler, Morris 255; Adler, Oscar 256; Africk, Morton J. 286; Airedale Worsted Mills, Inc. 283; Albert, David 264; Albert, Eugene 264; Albert, Jack 264; Allentown Mills Inc. 285; Alperin, Max 19, 25-26, 190n, 259; Alperin, Melvin 25; Alpert, Sol 282; American Insulated Wire Corporation 257; American Print Works 280; American Silk Spinning Company 264; American Textile Company 288; American Tourister Co. 275; Andrews Worsted Mills Inc. 284-285; Ann & Hope 281-282; Ann & Hope Textile Mill 281; Ansin, David 287-288; Ansin, Evelyn R., Joseph L., and Lawrence J. 288; Ansin, Harold 287-288; Ansin, Jacob and Lila 285; Arch Narrow Fabric Co. 258; Associated Textiles 255; Atlantic Knitting Corporation 271; Atlantic Tubing & Rubber Company 258; Atlas Braiding Co., Inc. 255-256; Attleboro Braiding Company 258; Avnet Inc. 258; Axelrod, James 283; Axelrod, Joseph 283; Bakst, Leon 280; Ball, Harry, Jerome, Marvin, and Robert M. 288; Barr, Samuel 308, inside back cover No. 2; Barrish, Sol and Frieda 285-286; Berk Lace & Braid Manufacturing Company 256; Berk, Nathan 256; Berkowitz, Abram 281; Berlin, Nathan 259; Berry Spring Mineral Water Company 261; Berstein, Emanuel 257; Bertch, Donald P. 264; Biltmore Textile Co. 256; Black, Arthur 268; Blackman, Morris 287; Blue Ribbon Textile Corporation 260; Blumenthal, Sidney, and Co., Inc. 283; Brown, Moses 249; Burrows, Murray 267; Cadillac Textiles Corporation 268-269; Carol Cable Co. 258; Castleman, Samuel 267; Casty, David and Frank 260; Charlton, Earle P. 267; Charlton Mills Inc. (Maplewood Yarns) 267; Charmis, Benjamin 272; Chase, Herbert S. 282; Chase, Martin, 281-282; Cohen, Alex 264; Cohen, Arthur 256; Cohen, Jack 288; Cohen, Lester 256; Cohen, Martin 256; Cohen, Max 256; Cohen, Sanford H. 258; Colonial Braid Company 258; Concord Webbing Company, Inc. 256-257; Crescent Co. (Rhode Island) 258; Crescent Corporation (Fall River) 279, 280;

Textile Industry—Continued

Crown Manufacturing Company 283; Damar Wool Combing Company Inc. 274-275; Darlington Textile Company 265; Darman, Arthur I. 264, 265; Darman, Arthur I., Co. 265-266; Darman, Morton H. 264, 265; Davis-Jones Wire Company 259; Diamond, Fred 272; dry goods, rag, and yarn dealers 290, 291, 308; Dunn, Norman S. 260; Dwares, David 274-275; Dwares, Donald 274; Dwares, Louis, Nathan and Samuel 275; Dwares, S., & Sons 275; Elizabeth Webbing Mills, Inc. 260; Empire Woolen Mills 277-278; Fairlawn Spinning Co. 255; Fall River industry 250, 251, 252-253; Fall River Iron Works 280; Fall River mills 295, 296-299; Fall River mills, 1930, 295; Feldman, H. B. and J. J. 267; Fine, Abe C. and Harry L. 269-270; Finegold, Martha Dwares (Mrs. Ephraim) 274-275; Finkelstein, A. Archie 271; Finkelstein, Joseph 271; Firmtex Company 265; "Flexces" 284; Forman, William 275; Franks, Raymond G. 273; Freedman, Julius 256; Furman, Max H. and Fannie M. 285; Galkin, Arnold 257; Galkin, Herbert 257; Galkin, Hyman 257; Galkin, Ira S. 257; Garment industry, Fall River 252; Genesco Corporation 270-271; Gittleman, Benjamin 256; Gittleman, Robert M. 256; Gittleman, Sidney 256; Glasgow, Robert A. 287; Glass, Leo 268; Goldberg, Barney 286; Goldberg, Leo, Philip, and Thomas 286; Goldberger, Edward 278; Goldfarb, Charles C. 282; Goldfarb, Jack A. 287; Goldsmith, Hyman G. 256; Goldsmith, Milton J. 256; Goldsmith, Sidney J. 256; Goodman, Jacob 275; Goodman, Martin 190n, 266-267; Gordon, Irving 284; Gottlieb, Ilona and Maximillian 278; Gould, Leo 274; Grand Mars Rug Company 255; Granoff, G. Sidney 282-283; Granoff, Samuel 282-283; Granoff, S., Manufacturing Company 282-283; Greenberger, Ann 285; Grossman, Albert, Clinton, Edward, Max, and Stanley 270; Grossman, Leo 270; Gurwitz, Abel S. 258; Haber, Hyman 287; Hamilton Web Co., Inc. 259-260; Hanora Looms Inc. 287; Harrisville Company 262; Harrisville, Rhode Island 263; Hasbro Toys and Hasbro Industries 269; Hassenfeld Brothers 269; Hassenfeld, Harold 269; Hassenfeld, Henry J. 18, 21-22, 23, 269; Hassenfeld, Hillel 269; Hassenfeld, Merrill L. 19, 23-24, 25, 189n, 269; Health Tex 274; Heller, Ben 285; Heller, William, Inc. 285; Highland Textile Printers Company, Inc. 288; Hillelson, Irving H. 284-285; Hillelson, Upton 284-285; Hirsch, David and Harold E. 286; Hirsch, Harry 286; Hope Webbing Division of Chelsea Industries, Inc. 260; Horvitz, Abraham 264; Horvitz, David 264; Horvitz, Samuel 265; Horvitz, S., & Sons Inc. (Firmtex Company) 264-265; Howard-Arthur Mills (Seaconnet Mills) 272; Hurvitz, Arthur 274; Hurvitz, M. 274; Imperial Printing and Finishing Company 261; International Stretch Company 256; Jette, William M., & Sons, Inc. 256; Jewish textile manufacturers, first 308; Joan Fabrics Corporation 287-288; Joslin, Archie 261; June Rockwell Levy Foundation, Inc. 263, 264; Kahn, Mack 284; Katz, Irving, 287; Kenner, Barney 257; Kenner, Jacob 257; Koffler, Sol 275; Kourland, Alexander 274; Lebanon Knitting Mill, Inc. (Hope Knitting Mills) 270-271; Levine, A. E. 258; Leviton Manufacturing Co. 257; Levy, A. A. 257; Levy, Austin T. 262-264; Levy, June Rockwell (Mrs. Austin) 263; Levy, June Rockwell, Foundation, Inc. 263, 264; Lifland, Martin 260; Lincoln Lace & Braid Co. 256; Lincoln Park Cemetery, chapel at 261; List, Albert A. 253-254; Littman, Samuel 257; Lowenstein, Edgar J. (Lownes) 264; Lowenstein, M., and Sons 261, 278, 283; Lownes, Albert E. 264; Lownes, Edgar J. 264; Lownes, Edgar J., Jr. 264; Malina, Arthur 272-273; Mann, Albert J. 274; Maplewood Yarns

Textile Industry—Continued

267; Marks, John 268; Marks, John, Company 268; Marks, Leo, Michael and Richard 268; Marshall, Walter, Spinning Corp. of R. I. 285; Mayer, Claus and Helen 286; Medoff, I., Co. 266; Medoff, Israel 266; Medoff, Samuel J. 266; Menschik, A. C. 265; Merrimac Mfg. Co. 278; Meyer, Victor E. 257; Miller, Alan J. 254-255; Miller, Charles H. 254-255; Miller, I. 254-255; Miller, I., & Sons 254-255; Mirman, Louis 272; Narragansett Thread Co. 257; narrow fabrics industry 254-260; National Tubing Company 254, 308; Nedra Mills 267; Nelson, Martin 259; Newman, Jerome A. 272, 273; Odessa, Benton A. 288; Pansey, Alvin W. 277; Pansey, Herbert 277; Pansey, Neil 277; Pansey, Roy 277; Pansy Weaving Mills 277; Parflex Rubber Thread Corporation 286; Pawtucket Braid and Line, Inc. 256; Peckless Weaving Co. 269-270; Percelay, Abraham 255; Percelay, Jacob 255; Percelay, Joseph 255; Percelay, Merrill 255; Percelay, Morris 255; Pinkos, J. William 260; Pontiac Printing Works 287; Priest, Pearl Raphael (Mrs. Samuel) 261; Priest, Samuel 148, 260; Providence Fabric 257; Providence Pile Fabric Corporation 282; Providence Pipe and Sprinkler Company 261; Radlauer, Arthur M. 255-256; Rains, Saul E. 274; Rains, S. E., Co. 274; Rantenberg, L. 265; Reiss, Elias 271-272, 273; Reiss, Elias, & Company (St. John-Reiss Co.) 271-272; Reiss Factors Corporation 272; Riesman, Joseph and Myer 259; Riesman, Robert A. 25, 190n, 259; Robison Rayon Company, Inc., Atlantic Yarns Division 272-273; Rosen, Ada and Irving 257; Ross Matthews Corporation 256; Royal Electric Company 259; Royal Textile Co. 288; Royal Weaving Company 279; Royal Yarn Company 275; Rumford Rubber Co. 265; Russek, Louis 273; Safety Flag Co. of America 269; Sapinsley, Alvin T. 152, 258; Sapinsley, John M. 258; Sapinsley, Milton C. 258;

Scher, Meyer 285; Schloss, F. H. and N. F. 265; Schneider, Dr. A. D. 265; Schneirson, I., & Sons 271; Schwartz, David 268; Schwartz, Eugene 269; Schwartz, Harry A. and Samuel 268; Schwartz, Thomas H. 269; Seaconnet Mills 271, 272; Shatkin, Simon 257; Siegel, Art and Edward 285; Siegle, Joseph 265; Silver Brothers 256; Silverman, Sam 287; Sinclair Industries 266; Slater Dye Works 274-275; Slater, Samuel 249, 250; Sobiloff, Hyman 276-277; Sobiloff, Meyer 277; Solomon, J. 256; Sopkin, Alvin A. 276; Sopkin, Henry 276; Sources, General: Jews and the Textile Industry 289; Sparr, Irwin 260; Standard Romper Company 273-274; Standish Mills Inc. 286; Sterling Pile Fabrics Corp. 285; Sterling Wale 285; Stern, J. Jerome 282; Stillwater Worsted Mills, Inc. 262; Stone, Gerland 287; Strasmich, Erwin 249, 256; Strasmich, Fred 256; Strasmich, Max 256; Sussman, Paul 257; Swartz, Charles 287; Symonds, Alan E. 282; Symonds, Bernard K. 282; Symonds, Louis J. I. 282; Taunton Manufacturing Company 257; Tectra Industries 288; Textile Industry, Jews and the 249-299, 308; Textile Investment Co. 275; Top Fibres Company 264; Vengerow, Harry 282; Zura, Allie 270; Vogue Textiles, Inc. 269; Waldman, Edmund 259; Waldman Mfg. Co. 258; Waldman, Samuel 258; Wamsutta Manufacturing Company 283; Wanskuck Mills, Inc. 284; Warren Handkerchief Company 274; Wasserman, Bernard 275; Waste dealers 289-290; Weiner, Jacob 267; Weinstein, Philip P. 258; Weinstein, Sidney 258; Weinstein, William P. 258; Weiss, Abraham A. 269; Weissman, Hyman 286; Weltman, Larry 280; Weltman, Mrs. Sol 280; Wentworth Mfg. Co. 276; Werner, Hyman and Jacob 267; Winstead, Harold A. 258; Woonsocket Sponging, Inc. 287; Yarn Dealers 291; Yetra, Robert 256; Young Bros. Mattress Company, Inc. 266; Young, James 266; Young, John, Morris,

- Textile Industry—*Continued*
 and Samuel 266; Ziskind, Abraham and Edward J. 280; Ziskind, Jacob 271, 278-281; Ziskind, The Jacob, Trust for Charitable Purposes 280
- Tilles, Norman 179
- Tobiah, Rabbi, of Poland (Tobiah Ben Jehudah Loew) 475, 596, 600n, 602n
- Touro, Abraham 236, 247
- Touro, Abraham, Fund 236-244, 538
- Touro Cadets 209
- Touro, Isaac 221, 223, 231, 234, 316, 595
- Touro Jewish Synagogue Fund 236-244, 538
- Touro, Judah 219, 615
 Fund, 538, 539; funeral of 245-248; will 300
- Touro Synagogue 137, 218-225, 228, 475, 532-541, 607, 630
Brzak In, The 532-541; Brown, Mr. Justice 537; Burdick, Charles 535; David, Fischel 532-538; Douglas, Mr. Justice 535-538; Jewish Synagogue Fund 236-244, 538; McKillop, Sister Lucille 614-621; medal, front cover and inside front cover No. 3; nun, a, speaks at 614-621; restorations 237-239n; Richards, Benjamin 525; Stearns, Charles H. 523-524; Tercentenary observance of 625; *Touro Monthly* 532f, 540, 541
- triangular slave trade 317
- Triedman, George, Memorial Health Center 177
- Trinkle, Benjamin 518, 519, 526
- Trinkle, Murray 518
- Trowbridge, Madeline 514-515, 531n
- Twentieth Anniversary Meeting, Jewish Community Center 166, 187n, 188n
- Twenty-fifth Anniversary Report, General Jewish Committee 33-35
- United Fund 179
- United Hebrew Charities 5, 6
- United Jewish Appeal 9, 52, 124-128
- United Jewish Relief Committee 7
- United Palestine Appeal 9
- Vaad Hakashruth of Providence 25, 454-464
 Constitution and By-Laws of 455-464; Officers and Committee on Constitution 464
- Viener, Saul 218
- Walden, Warren 502, 531n
- Wallick, Haskell 190n
- War diary, Harry A. Hoffman (1918-1919) 327-359
 Armistice 353; Austria, peace with 349, 350, 352; Collyer, Professor Theodore F. 357; Fort Wetherill, Jamestown 328-338; France, duty in 339-358; German counteroffensive 341-343; Germany, peace with 350, 353; Mistowsky, Samuel 341; Overseas duty 339-358
- Ward, Stanley 235
- Washington, Charles 219
- Washington, George 218-225, 475, 579, 586n, 614, 616-618, 620, 621, 625
- Washington, George, letter 218-225, 475, 625
- Washington, Samuel 219
- Wax, Bernard 629
- Webber, Joseph B., M.D. 155
- Wendelschaefer, Colonel Felix 364
- West Indies, early Jewish community of the 591-594, 601n, 603n
- West Indies trade 316-320
- West, Joseph V. 371
- Weyler, Henry L. C., M.D. 155
- White, Allen Jordan 631
- White, Sol 190n
- Who's Who in World Jewry*, 1972 edition 631
- Williams, Roger 475
- Winkler, George 367, 380, 384n
- Wolfson, Professor Harry A. 612
- Women's Committee, Jewish Community Center 157, 166
- Women's Division, General Jewish Committee 23, 31
- Wolf, Henry, Mr. and Mrs. 137
- Wolf, Isaac 152, 166
- Workman, Samuel 162, 166
- Workman's Circle 70, 155
- World Jewry, Who's Who in*, 1972 edition 631
- World War II Honor Roll 164
- Yashar, Mrs. John 190n
- Yelisabethgrad Progressive Benevolent Association 59
- Yeshiva College 611, 612
- Yiddish theatre in Rhode Island, back cover and inside back cover No. 4
- Young Adult Division, General Jewish Committee 22, 25
- Young Executives Training Program, General Jewish Committee 25

- Young, Judea 155
Young Ladies Hebrew Aid Society 6
Young Men's Hebrew Association 145-146,
147-154, 165, 169, 180, 209, baseball
trophy (1912) back cover No. 2
"Young Montreal" 154
Young Women's Division, General Jewish
Committee 31
Young Women's Hebrew Association 145-
146, 148, 151-154, 180

Zaiman, Rabbi Joel M. 465
Zarrinsky, Abraham 206-207
Zawatsky, Philip 147

Zevi, Isaac 587
Zinn, Lena Port (Mrs. Max) 362, 381-382,
384n
Zinn, Max 360-384
*Zinn, Max, and the Narragansett Hotel:
the End of an Era* 361-384
Zinn, Wolf 361
Zionism 17, 69, 71, 72, 73, 99
Zionist District of Rhode Island 99
Zionist Organization of America 17
Zisman, v. Harry Fisher 385, 389n
Zurier, Janet (Mrs. Melvin L.) 629
Zurier, Melvin L. 2, 25, 26, 142, 203, 385,
486, 629

Memorializing the Death of President William McKinley by assassination, September 14, 1901. (*Courtesy of The Outlet Co.*)



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