

THE FOUNDING OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY
THE EARLY YEARS OF CONGREGATION
AHAVATH SHALOM OF WEST WARWICK,
RHODE ISLAND

by REBECCA TWERSKY

In the course of my research, I thought that my translation into English of the original Yiddish minutes of the Ahavath Shalom Congregation of West Warwick, Rhode Island should serve an historical and educational purpose. The story they record bears witness to the Jews' loyalty to our traditional roots and determination to pass on this heritage to their children, uniting them wherever they may live, even if their numbers are small. These minutes recorded from September 1, 1919 to July 25, 1923 were carefully preserved in a ledger by the late Mrs. Abraham (Minnie) Sternbach of Phenix, West Warwick, Rhode Island, the wife of the first vice president of the congregation and an officer of the Hebrew Ladies Auxiliary. Their son, Professor Harold Sternbach, brought the Yiddish minutes to my attention.

The original Yiddish minutes and the English translation will go into the Archives of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

On December 17, 1919 the Anshei Shalom (Men of Peace) Congregation, was incorporated under the name of Ahavath Shalom (Lovers of Peace) Congregation of West Warwick, Rhode Island by a charter granted by the Secretary of State.* The seven founding members were: Barney Hirshfield, Abraham Sternbach, Morris Shafrin, Joseph Dressler, Harry Fishtein, David Frank, and one Glantz.**

Abraham Sternbach, the only living founder of the Ahavath Shalom Congregation, relates that there was talk of even earlier settlers in West Warwick before 1919 (possibly late 1800s or early 1900s). He remembers a man by the name of (Myer) Shapiro, who had a clothing store; and his uncle David Frank, a businessman, was among the very early settlers, having arrived in 1904.

In 1912 Abraham Sternbach came to Arctic, Rhode Island, then a part of Warwick, Rhode Island and the eventual home of Ahavath Shalom Congregation. West Warwick was separated from Warwick and

*The charter was granted to "Congregation Harvas Sholam [sic] of Arctic, Rhode Island"—"To hold religious, educational, social, musical gatherings and meetings, fairs and bazaars." In the handbill reproduced here it is rendered "Avas Sholom". For more on Congregation Ahavath Shalom see RIJHN 5:178, Nov., 1968. Ed.

**Not listed among the incorporators.



Abraham Sternbach, the only surviving founder of the Synagogue and First Vice President of the Congregation. *Photo courtesy Max Margolis.*

chartered as a town in 1913. There were about ten to twelve Jewish families with about fourteen to sixteen Jewish children altogether. Some had small stores such as dry goods and shoe stores, but most were peddlers in the various neighboring communities such as Natick, Riverpoint, Clyde, Phenix, Arctic, Centerville, Crompton, and Anthony. The mills and the villages of Arctic and Phenix attracted the early settlers, immigrant European Jews, who came to West Warwick from New York's Lower East Side. All shopping for kosher meat and food was done once a week on Willard Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island by streetcar. As there was no *shul* (synagogue) in town, the daily minyan (ten adult males, the minimum for communal prayer) was held at the home of Abraham Sternbach, where they also gathered on *Shabbat* (the sabbath) and festivals for prayers until the year 1919. A *Sefer Torah** was loaned to them by the Robinson Street *Shul* of Providence.

The Jewish families of West Warwick longed for a *shul*, a religious and educational center. They organized themselves into the "Anshei Shalom, Anshei Arctic Association". Led by their president, Barney Hirshfield, and vice president, Abraham Sternbach, they decided to buy a building in the center of town and turn it into a *shul*. On October 20, 1919 Glantz, David Frank, and Max London were authorized to buy a house. The eighteen members made immediate payments of 10 per cent of the cost, a total of \$800 in cash. They agreed that in two weeks another half of the money would be paid. A first mortgage was obtained on the house, a two-story wooden structure. The first floor, a saloon, was converted into a prayer house, while the second floor became living quarters for the Hebrew teacher, who conducted services and taught the children of the members. Was he a rabbi? No, none of the men who lived over the *shul* were rabbis, just learned men. "They could not afford a 'real' rabbi", Sternbach told me.

The Anshei Shalom (Men of Peace) Association now, significantly, became "Congregation Ahavath Shalom" (Lovers of Peace) of West Warwick, Rhode Island. With peace among the members and differences forgotten, the president obtained a charter for the synagogue, and a seal was designed for the congregation. Each member paid one dollar a month in dues, and an initial two dollar fee for members from outside of Arctic, West Warwick. Following tradition, the *mitzvah* (pious deed) of *Bikkur-Holim* (visiting of the sick) was emphasized. As the minutes record, it was agreed "that when one of the brothers of

**Sefer Torah*, scroll containing the Five Books of Moses. (Hebrew)

the congregation gets sick, the secretary has to be notified, and he is to send out postcards to go and visit the sick brother”.

In 1915 Shlomo Shafrin had come to teach the children Hebrew and religious studies at their homes. He was now to begin teaching at the synagogue. The neighboring Jews of Warwick and East Greenwich were invited to send their children to study at their new school for a fee. Thus a Talmud Torah [Teaching-Learning of the Torah] (Hebrew Religious School) was founded. The Jews of Arctic understood their sacred and unlimited duty. “Thou Shalt Teach Them Diligently.”*

This small and dedicated group achieved their goal. The new Synagogue and Talmud Torah were completed. A Sefer Torah was donated by David Frank, and preparations were made for the *Siyum ha-Sefer* (the completion of any of the Five Books of the Torah) and the opening of the *Shul* on June 6, 1920. (See illustration on back cover.)

The Yiddish invitation printed by the Eagle Printing Company, 142 Willard Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island, epitomizes the feeling of pride and rejoicing of the community on this historic occasion: The Jewish community of Arctic and Phenix, Rhode Island realized that to keep up Judaism, with the children to be reared in a Jewish atmosphere, the Jewish sacred institution (the synagogue) must exist.

The Providence rabbis; Cantor Smith with his choir of the B'nai Zion *Shul*, Providence; Cantor Keller of the Robinson Street *Shul*, Providence; and a band of music from Boston were on hand for the opening festivities. “As we, the congregation of Arctic and Phenix, West Warwick, Rhode Island, have always taken part in all the Providence Jewish institutions, so we now request that the Providence Jews should take part in this great, holy festivity of the Arctic and Phenix Jewish Community. The following institutions have accepted our invitations: The Providence Hebrew Beneficial Association, and the Providence Beneficial Association. Whoever will come will enjoy and have the best and holiest pleasure.”

At one point in the procession, the men, women and children, rabbis and cantors, stopped at a hall in Phenix and the scribe Gabrilowitz inscribed in the parchment Scrolls of the Torah the names of those who wished to be remembered as the founders of Congregation Ahavath Shalom. With the Torah Scrolls borne at the head of the parade, they walked proudly with the marching band to the new *shul* in Arctic,

*Deuteronomy VI.7.

**דיא גרינדונג פון
איין אידישע געמיינדע**

זונטאג, דזשון דעם 6טען, וועט שטאטפירען אין ארטיק, ר. א.

א סיום הספר

אונד דער גרינדונג פון א שוהל אונד א תלמוד תורה

דיא אידישע געמיינדע אין ארטיק, ר. א. אונד פיניקס, ר. א. האט אין געזעהן אים צו אויף האלמען דעם יודענטהום און קונדער זאלען ויך ערצהען אין איין אידישע אסאספערע. מוז מען אונגענדעם האבען דיא אידישע הייליגע אינסטיטושען. דיא קליינע געמיינדע האט געשפענט געלד יעדער איבער זיין כח אים צו אוועקשטעלען דיא אידישקייט אויף איין געזונדען פינדאמענט. צום גרויסען יום טוב הארען זיך איין דיא פראוידענסער רבנים. אויך חזן סמיס מיט זיין כאהר פון בני ציון שוהל אונד חזן קעללער פון ראפינסאן סטריט שוהל, אונד א בענד מיוזיק פון באסטאן. זא זיך מיר דיא געמיינדע פון ארטיק אונד פיניקס האבען איבער גענומען איין אנטהיל אין אלע פראוידענסער אידישע אינסטיטושען. זא בעמען מיר יעצט אן דיא פראוידענסער ארען זאלען געמען איין אנטהיל אין דזער גרויסער הייליגער שפחה פון דיא ארטיק אונד פיניקס אידישע געמיינדע. פאנגענדיק אינסטיטושען וועלען אינטהיל געמען, דיא פראוידענס היפרו בענעפישעל אסאסיאישאן אונד דיא פראוידענס בענעפישעל אסאסיאישאן.

אום 11 אהר וועט ויך אנפאנגען דער סיום התורה אין פיניקס, ר. א. אין מר. ד. פרענקס הויז, אים 2 אהר וועט זיין דער כארעש מיט פאראד פון פיניקס ביז ארטיק צו דער שוהל, אים 7 אהר וועט מען פארבריינגען אין האלל מיט דיא בענעפישונג פון מיוזיק. ווער עס וועט קומען וועט האבען דעם בעסטען הייליגסטען פערנעניגען.

דיא קאמיטע

The Foundation Of A Jewish Community

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ARCTIC, R. I. and PHENIX, R. I.
takes deep pleasure in inviting ALL their Brethren to the opening of their New Synagogue "AVAS SHOLOM", and to their "SIYOIM-AA-SAIFOR", which will take place on SUNDAY, JUNE 6th, 1920.

This small community has worked hard and everyone of its members has spent beyond his means to make this Synagogue a Reality, and Now that we have succeeded we want our Providence Brethrens to Help us make Merry on our opening day.

To make this day a Real Festival, the Rabbis of Providence, Cantor SMITH with his Choir and Cantor KELLER have been invited and a Real Band of Music from Boston has been hired to furnish the music for the occasion.

The following institutions have accepted our invitations, we feel sure that many others will follow, shortly: Providence Hebrew Beneficial Association, and Providence Beneficial Association.

- THIS IS THE PROGRAM FOR THE DAY
- 11 A. M. "SIYOIM-AA-SAIFOR" will take place at the home of Mr. David Frank, Phenix, R. I.
 - 2 P. M. Street Parade from Phenix, R. I. to Our New Synagogue in Arctic, R. I.
 - 7 P. M. Reception at Denommes' Hall, Arctic, R. I.

EVERYBODY IS INVITED AND A REAL GOOD TIME IS PROMISED TO ALL.

THE COMMITTEE

EAGLE PRINTING COMPANY, 142 WILLARD AVE., PROVIDENCE.

This handbill was preserved in the ledger book containing the minutes of the Synagogue handwritten in Yiddish.

West Warwick, Rhode Island. The key, which had been carried on a velvet pillow by Abraham Sternbach's young son, unlocked the door of the synagogue.* Within the sanctuary the congregation stood as the *Parocheth* (veil) in front of the *Aron-Kodesh* (Holy Ark) was drawn back to allow the Torah Scrolls to be gently placed within the Ark.

The spirit and steadfast faith of these Jewish men and women can best be described in the words of Isaiah, 43, 10:

You are My witnesses, saith the Lord,
And My servant whom I have chosen.

Each Jew and Jewess is continually making his or her mark upon the unfinished history of the Jews, the history which Johann Gottfried, the great German philosopher, called the greatest poem of all time.

Today the Ahavath Shalom *Shul* still stands, its physical structure embellished and more beautiful. The building was remodeled in the middle 1930s, better to suit the times and the increased affluence of the members. The renovation was completed in 1938, and on June 7, 1939 Joseph Dressler donated a *Sefer Torah* on the occasion of its dedication.

The *Aron-Kodesh*, the Ark which contains the three Scrolls, occupies the entire wall directly in front of the *Bimah*.** It is recessed and constructed entirely of mahogany. Over the sliding doors housing the Torah Scrolls is carved the Decalogue. The doors are draped with satin embroideries. Above the enclosure of the Scrolls is an intricately carved Eternal Light.† The table for the reading of the Torah is covered by an embroidered velvet cloth, and the light of a beautiful crystal chandelier hanging over the *Bimah* illuminates the Sanctuary.

In the *shul*, on the wall of the meeting hall, hang pictures of three young men who died during World War II in the service of their country: Morris Miller, Marvin Sternbach,‡ and Harry Berman.

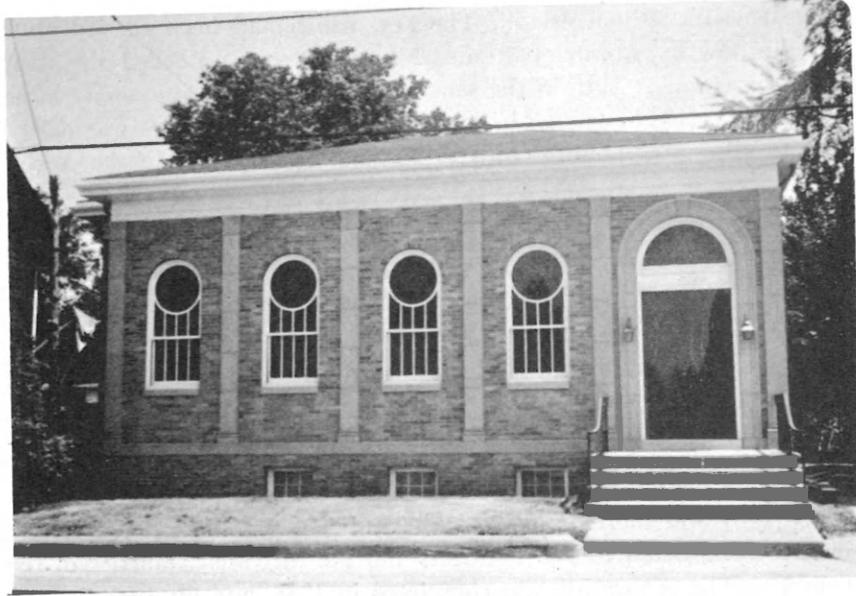
On May 13, 1945 a meeting was called by President William Deitch to advise the members present that he and Abraham Sternbach had purchased a cemetery plot consisting of forty graves in Lincoln Park Cemetery in Warwick, Rhode Island. All members were to pay their

*As told to me by Marvin Futtersak from the recollections of his grandfather, Abraham Sternbach.

***Bimah*, raised platform containing the reading desk.

†Designed and crafted by David Futtersak, son-in-law of Abraham Sternbach and the late Minnie Sternbach.

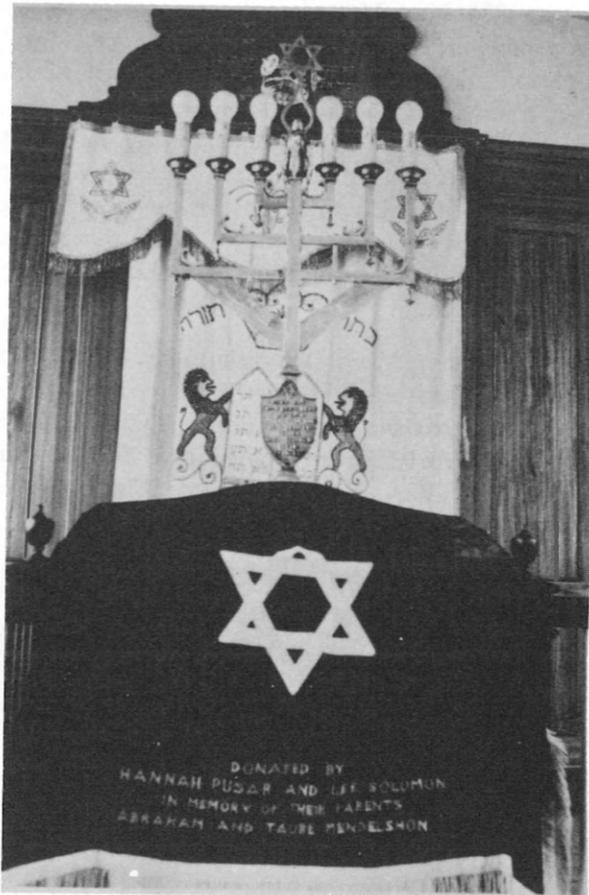
‡Son of Abraham Sternbach and the late Mrs. Minnie Sternbach.



Ahavath Shalom Synagogue in Arctic, Rhode Island as it appears today. *Photo courtesy Professor Harold Sternbach.*



Sanctuary of Synagogue. *Photo courtesy Max Margolis.*



Close-up view of reading desk and Ark curtain. *Photo courtesy Max Margolis.*

share of the cost, and each member and his family were entitled to use the cemetery as needed.

On July 21, 1976 Max Margolis, the present president, graciously consented to show me the synagogue. On entering I remarked how bright and clean and beautiful it was. My host enthusiastically agreed: "Now I don't know how it's possible for an interior of a building to remain as nice as this has been without having redone it. There are no cracks anywhere around, from the settling and everything else, from the beginning. Nobody did a thing to the inside since we started [its remodelling in 1938]. There is no other way but that G-d is taking care of it because we don't have the time to do it. Look at this, it looks like it was put up last week."

Only a few remain in West Warwick today. The original members have passed away, and their children have moved on. But the small remnant together with their old patriarch, Abraham Sternbach, and a few of those who have left still come back to form a minyan for the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayers. Then, the sound of the



Max Margolis, present President of the Congregation, and Abraham Sternbach. *Photo courtesy Max Margolis.*

shofar (ram's horn) and voices chanting the traditional sad but beautiful age-old *nigunim* (melodies) are heard echoing through the stained glass windows of the historic Ahavath Shalom *Shul*.

The following excerpt from Ps. 90, which Moses composed on the occasion of the completion of the Tabernacle, serves to emphasize the importance of the task achieved by this small group of Jews in the beginning of the 20th century:

Establish Thou also upon us the work of our hands;
yea the work of our hands establish Thou.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to my daughter Rickel for her editorial suggestions. My sincere appreciation and thanks to Professor Harold Sternbach, who showed me the minutes preserved by his family, and for his encouragement; also to Max Margolis, the present president of the synagogue, who kindly gave me of his time and understanding. To Robert Schectman, whose facts helped answer certain puzzling questions. To Mrs. Sylvia G. Lisnoff, secretary of the Hebrew Ladies Auxiliary (Ahavath Shalom Congregation), for her help and information regarding the synagogue building. (Her brother, Marvin Geller, was the first Bar Mitzvah in the remodeled *shul*). Also for her permission to read the Hebrew Ladies Auxiliary Book, which will go into the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association archives. And last but not least, to my talented student, Marvin Futtersak, who spent time and effort in furnishing interesting details (not in the original Yiddish minutes) which he heard directly from the recollections of his grandfather, Abraham Sternbach, and to others.

A NOTE ON
RABBI MOSES ZISKIND FINESILVER, 1847-1922

by MARTHA B. KATZ-HYMAN

In his article on the Congregation Sons of Zion of Providence, Beryl Segal noted that the Congregation's first *hazzan* and *shohet** was Eliezer Lipshitz, who began his service to the Sons of Zion in 1883.¹ However, a document recently catalogued at the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, indicates that Moses Ziskind Finesilver, and not Lipshitz, was the first to perform these services for the congregation.

This document is a letter of recommendation from the congregation, written on August 22, 1880 and signed by Raphael Marcus, president; Selig Lipsky, vice-president; and Joseph Epstein, recording secretary. It indicates that Finesilver had served as their *hazzan*, *shohet*, and *mohel** for two years, and that he was leaving because the congregation could no longer support him and his family.

According to a letter from Finesilver's grandson which accompanies the document,² Finesilver was born in Augustow, Poland in 1847, married Deborah Leah Berman, and was granted a *kabbalah* to practice *shehitah*** in 1870 by Rabbi Eliezer Simcha Rabinowitz. Two years later in 1872, he arrived in the United States and became the religious leader of the Russian congregation in Elmira, New York.

He came to Providence in 1878 as the first *shohet*, *hazzan*, and *mohel* of Congregation Sons of Zion.³ Following his service in Providence, Finesilver went to New York City, where he held various positions from 1880 to 1922, among them butcher, *shohet*, and *matzah* baker. The surviving records of Congregation Adat Jeshurun em Anshe Lubtz, also known as the Eldridge Street Synagogue, in the collections of the American Jewish Historical Society, record his service to the congregation as *shammash* (sexton) from 1885 to 1892, and his membership in the congregation until at least 1910. Finesilver died in New York in 1922.

**Hazzan*, cantor. (Hebrew) *Shohet*, ritual slaughterer. (Hebrew) *Mohel*, person authorized to perform circumcision. (Hebrew)

***Kabbalah*, in this context authorization to perform ritual slaughter. (Hebrew) *Shehitah*, ritual slaughter. (Hebrew)

NOTES

¹Beryl Segal, "Congregation Sons of Zion—The Orms Street Synagogue," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, vol. 4, no. 3 (November, 1965), pp. 239-277.

²Letter to Rabbi Isidore Meyer, August 25, 1943. Collections of the American Jewish Historical Society.

³Finesilver's name does not appear in David C. Adelman, "Naturalization Lists," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, vol. 1, no. 1 (June, 1954), pp. 12-71, nor in "Population of the Jewish Community of Providence 1877 . . .," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, vol. 1, no. 1 (June, 1954), pp. 72-74, nor in "Jewish Family Names — Providence, 1880," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, vol. 2, no. 1 (June, 1956), pp. 86-89.

EZRA—A JOURNAL OF OPINION^F

by RABBI WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

The masthead of the publication reads "*Ezra*, a monthly journal issued by the Order of Ezra,* Providence, Rhode Island, January 1911, Vol. II, No. 1."

The first article or leader is captioned "Our Purpose" with a quotation from Scripture as its subhead: *For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching statute and ordinance in Israel* (Ezra 7:10).

Sixty-seven years after the event the purpose of this Yiddish publication and of the order which sponsored it has both urgency and freshness, as may be seen from the excerpts which follow.

"The journal is the organ of our Order, more accurately, of our spiritual Order of Ezra," the leader begins. The text continues:

"Not everyone may know that such an Order exists, so we now have the opportunity to say that for nine months such an Order made up of the best element has existed. To it belong men who, aside from preoccupation with the world of business, are concerned with still another world, with Judaism, a world of spirit as important as one's personal interests and ambition.

"To be sure, everybody talks about Judaism, but not all who hawk it, know what it means. Frequently people do not know how to answer when asked what Judaism means in depth. So we will approach the problem by stating negative manifestations [of so-called Judaism].

"In our community we have, it would seem, everything—synagogues, societies, lodges, philanthropic institutions. Yet the root, the essence, which we intend to deal with, is lacking.

"Lodges, by way of example, and philanthropic institutions are concerned with physical ends—with Jews, not with Judaism. Synagogues and Talmud Torahs** are only apparently founded for the sake of *Yiddishkeit*. When examined more closely, however, one finds Judaism's rich content missing. Because the younger generation is neither with nor of the synagogue, it is incapable of influencing Jews in matters of morality.

*The organization appears never to have received a state charter.

**Hebrew schools.

“As for Talmud Torahs, only a small number of children attend. There they study Hebrew as a science much as elementary science is studied in the [public] school. Thus in the Talmud Torah the child is not taught to feel as a Jew. Not his heart but his head is engaged.

“Our local community lost its Jewish radiance. People seek to ape Christians—not their good traits but their bad ones. Among us there have already occurred shootings, suicides, debaucheries. Instead of spending time in higher matters, matters which tend to ennoble one’s heart and give beauty to one’s being, time is spent at cards and other forms of gambling, the like of which had never been heard of among Jews. The old-time modesty of our daughters—modesty which distinguished us—is no more. All is permitted—up for grabs. The Jewish milieu which had ever been so rich in spirit is no more. Everything is coarse and cynical. Our young people are steeped in all manner of wild sports, in the sport of fighting for example—but in nothing Jewish.

“After the destruction of the First Temple in the period described as the Babylonian exile, the great scribe Ezra found the Jewish world in Persia in a comparable state. Thereupon, by means of his genius, Ezra, whom the Talmud ranks as second only to Moses our teacher, redirected his people shattered in both spirit and body—redirected them to Judaism. The Order of Ezra intends to do for the Providence Jewish community what Ezra had done for the entire Jewish people. Since the existing journals whose goal is ‘business’ write not what the public needs, but what it wants, what pleases it, and what stimulates vulgar sensations, we shall write what is good and useful, in order to waken the feeling of nobility, and revive the divine spark in Jewish hearts.”

The signer of this call to moral rearmament is Raziël, no doubt a pseudonym.

In keeping with the highminded goals set forth in the leader, there follow two articles, one concerning décolletés at a ball sponsored by the Hebrew Orphan Asylum and the other containing a bold proposal to provide separate schooling for Jewish children.

The ball referred to apparently took place on November 17, 1910.² In the opinion of Ben Yosef, another pseudonym, no doubt, the décolletés of many women present exceeded all norms of decency. Were these women, the writer asks, counterparts of those daughters of Zion whose “wanton glances” and “mincing gait” Isaiah denounced (Isa. 3:16), “counterparts perhaps of Roman women of Nero’s day, or are they, as they should be, daughters of two thousand years of exile, Jewish women

of Russia, Poland, and Rumania long distinguished for morality, chastity, decency, purity, and integrity? Where did these virtues vanish?" The writer "cannot comprehend why a ball organized by our German Jews^a could in no time at all blow away all those virtues which for so many years set our women apart?

"Whose is the blame? Is it altogether the blame of our German Jews? No. Our own women are to blame. (nsofar as German Jews are concerned they are not Jews, they are Germans of the Mosaic faith." The writer has no concern with them. But he does appeal "to the Russian and the Polish women, the Yachnes, Soshes, and Grunes, daughters of Shprintzes, Maryashes, and Yentes."* These women he asks: "Where did you learn such goings on? Surely not at your mothers'. Your mothers would have been ashamed to put on such garments even in the presence of their own husbands. Your mothers covered not only their bosoms but even their hair."

A disquisition follows on standards of true society. Such standards depend not on jewelry or clothing. A spiritually mature man or woman will never behave or clothe himself indecently.

The second article signed by "Ariel," another pseudonym, deals with education. Uncle Sam, the writer declares, understands that the best means of assimilating the many peoples which make up America and having them forget their country, language, and national traditions is the free public school—a most effective melting pot:

"Some nationalities who have come to the United States have therefore founded schools where children are brought up in their native tradition. But the Jew who has come from lands of persecution eagerly breathes in America's free air, and the very freedom which he enjoys robs him of former loyalties so that he throws off his faith, his mores, and the obligations to his people and to his children's upbringing. 'Let the local school committee take care of my children,' he says. And the school committee brings up his children in the ways of America, *sans* Torah, *sans* Yiddishkeit, totally alienated from their own people, indeed, often from their own parents.

"Our children (Ariel goes on) have no Jewish education at home, on the street, or at school. Even Orthodox Jews send their children to a Talmud Torah for no more than two hours a day.

"To our regret our Talmud Torahs are not proper institutions for bringing up a generation of Jews.

*Girls' names. (Yiddish)

“To begin with, the Talmud Torahs of Providence can accommodate no more than 250 children. Then, too, our Talmud Torahs are not independent institutions with fixed income, proper installations, the right kind of administration, and adequate program. Our Talmud Torahs are attached to synagogues, which means that a synagogue with a spare room or two opens up a Talmud Torah, so-called. Nickels are collected to maintain it; and thus, God help us, is Torah taught.

“Whenever money runs out in such a Talmud Torah the synagogue *mashgichim* (“overseers”) close the ‘school’ for a while until additional money is gathered.”

Therefore, Ariel concludes: “We must tax ourselves to provide sufficient means for one Jewish educational institution—a single institution in which our children will receive both Jewish and secular training. Such an institution should not be shackled to the different congregations. It must belong to the people, must be maintained by the people, and the sole authority is to be the people who, one may be certain, will find the right personnel to supervise so important a venture.”

Thus, as long ago as 1911, the unknown Ariel called for the establishment of a Jewish Day School.

Other items in the issue speak of young women banded together as “Irresistibles” who meet at 61 Benefit Street where Mrs. Gomberg helps them “to improve their manners and moral behavior, something which the public schools fail to do.”

The journal, *Ezra*, it is said, is available at Bakst’s Drug Stores, at North Main Street corner of Smith, and at 230 Plain Street.⁴

The next issue promises to make people weep and laugh by means of a theatrical drama which *Ezra* will provide.

We do not know whether subsequent issues appeared. But the one issue we have ranks *Ezra*, alongside *The Organ* (1895-1898) edited by David Blaustein (1866-1912) and the *Passover Journal* (1929-65) edited by Alter Boyman (1884-1966), as a significant journal of opinion published in Providence.

NOTES

¹In his *Gazetteer of Hebrew Books*, Aaron Freimann mentions *Ezra* and the *Rhode Island Israelite* (ca.1896) as being in the possession of the New York Public Library (see *New York Public Library Bulletin* 49 (1945), 355, s.v. "Providence"). Regrettably, the Library's searchers could not locate the *Rhode Island Israelite*, but they did locate *Ezra* and provided a photocopy of it for the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

²See Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D. "The Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island," *RIJHN* 3: 91, Oct. 1959.

³The leadership of the Orphans' Home started by Russian Jews was taken over by the so-called German Jews, that is, members of Temple Beth-El (see Goldowsky, *ibid.*), who in fact were a mixed bag—"Germans" and "Russians".

⁴The owner was Adolph Bakst, father of Miriam (Mrs. Selig) Greenberg.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—TOURO SYNAGOGUE
1977 ANNUAL GEORGE WASHINGTON
LETTER CEREMONIES*

by LOUIS R. LISS, Presiding

The Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue is most pleased to welcome you all to this historic and hallowed place for the annual George Washington Letter Ceremonies.

The letter from the first President of the United States was addressed to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport in 1790 in response to a letter from Moses Seixas, warden of the Congregation, congratulating George Washington upon his election to the Presidency. This letter is noteworthy because in clear and concise language it expresses the philosophy of the freedom upon which our nation has been founded.

The ceremony today marks the fact that 187 years have passed since this letter was dispatched to the Congregation in Newport. Yet its sentiments are timeless, and these sentiments are as valid today as the day on which they were written. Americans of all races, creeds, colors, and political persuasions should give daily thanks to the Almighty that after 200 years these very principles are still the basic tenets of our Democracy and that our America is still "the Land of the Free".

I do not know how it is with each of you, but for me coming into Touro Synagogue is a very special experience. Every time I step through its doors I feel the rush of history and I see before me the drama of the many historic events that took place. An intense emotion of patriotism wells up within me, and I find myself sharing the patriotic feelings and the deep love of this country that possessed our Newport brethren of Colonial times.

Strange indeed it is to me that this deep sense of personal and individual patriotism is not as valued today and that there are even those who scoff at the simple faith and staunch loyalty that can inspire such feelings. As much as we would like it to be, our Democracy cannot be perfect. Man himself is not perfect, so that the most that can be expected of our democratic society is a mirror of man and a reflection of the consensus of opinions derived from the people.

Yet daily we hear carping voices belittling our purposes and the accomplishments of our nation. In the 200 year life span of our Republic,

*October 16, 1977.

we have had our good and glorious years. We have had our bad and difficult times. We have had our years of doubt. In our good and glorious years, and so too in our bad and difficult times, we have always been a united people with a singleness of purpose which in our good years carried us to the highest level of national fulfillment, and in our bad years gave us the strength of prevail and overcome.

It is in our Years of Doubt, such as we are going through now, that we find ourselves a divided people. Some of our citizens have permitted themselves to succumb to a multitude of doubts:

- Some doubt themselves.
- They distrust the leaders whom they themselves have elected.
- They look with suspicion upon their government and its functions.
- They belittle the principles upon which this nation was established.
- They deny the very existence of many of the blessings which are part of every American's daily life.

Such doubts are a very corrosive force, and if permitted to continue and grow can actually destroy the very foundations of our American way of life.

For those who have lost faith in America there is a lesson to be learned from today's exercises. On this day and in this place it is most appropriate to speak out to these "doubters" in our midst. During the most trying days of the Revolutionary War, George Washington was surrounded by many doubters and detractors. Yet here we are 200 years later, and see what our nation has built! Just try to imagine where we might be had we then listened to the carping voices of the doubters. What better place is there to speak out from than this 214 year old house of worship, the oldest synagogue in the United States—a living example of the greatness and divine purpose of our nation. What better advice can we give to those who doubt the virtues of our system of government than the advice contained in the George Washington Letter:

If we have the wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we can not fail, under the just administration of a good government, to become (and to be) a great and a happy people.

With your indulgence before we begin the program, I should like to say a few words of a personal nature. The privilege of presiding at the George Washington Letter Ceremonies is an honor that I never anticipated. I

wish to thank the Friends for honoring me by inviting me to do so. In fact I am so touched and so thankful that I am moved to utter the Hebrew blessing which seems to me to be the most fitting for this occasion.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. שְׁחַחֵנוּ וְקַיְמֵנוּ
וְהַנִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast kept us in life, and hast preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

“OUR TOURO SYNAGOGUE”

by BERNARD WAX*

The story of Touro Synagogue mirrors the experience of the American Jewish community since its early founding. It is not only reflective of that experience, but also demonstrates the vitality of that community and its adaption to different conditions, situations, and periods of time.

The Congregation had very little right to succeed, prosper, and ultimately have the oldest surviving synagogue building in the United States, a building renowned throughout the world for its simple beauty and character and one of the few structures of Jewish origin listed as a National Historic Site by the National Park Service.

A similar situation befell the American Jewish community which took root on American soil in the mid-seventeenth century. It, too, had no right to survive. For over two centuries this small group struggled and somehow managed to stay alive. Its numbers were always quite small—from 23 in 1654, when the first group arrived in New Amsterdam, to 1790, 130 years later when the total amounted, at the most, to 2500 of the recorded population of 2,500,000, or 1/10 of 1 per cent of the population.

If that group had been concentrated in one or two areas, it might have accounted for some continuity, but that was not the case either. Besides Newport and New York, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, and Philadelphia were the only cities having any measurable numbers with, believe it or not, Charleston, South Carolina, having the largest community.

Then, as now, the temptations for assimilation were great, if not greater than they are today. The ease with which one was able to be absorbed into the general population is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that there are so few surviving direct descendants of early American Jews who still admit to being Jews.

At the beginning of the 19th century the future of the Jewish community in the United States was so clouded that no trained European rabbi would ever dream of coming here and assuming a pulpit; nor were there formally trained rabbis occupying positions in the few congregations which existed.

*Director of the American Jewish Historical Society. Address at the 1977 Annual Washington Letter Ceremonies of the Friends of Touro Synagogue National Historic Shrine, Inc., October 16, 1977.

We thus had a small, scattered, diminishing population with incidentally a low birthrate and a high degree of assimilation. The future was indeed bleak.

So was the situation with Touro Synagogue—the tides of war, the changes in trade and shipping, and the commodities being handled led to a decline in the numbers and prestige of the entire community, but particularly the Jewish community. Attracted elsewhere, Jews sought opportunities in the newly developed cities of the East and Midwest and, by mid-century, were among the early permanent settlers of California. Still their numbers were small, managing at that time to comprise less than 1 per cent of the total population before the Civil War.

Then, just as a quirk of fate, or God's will, ordained it, major external events took place which changed the face of the American Jewish community as well as Touro Synagogue. For the Synagogue the major event was being named a beneficiary of the estate of Judah Touro, thereby providing financial stability. For the general American community it was the influx of both German and Russian Jews, which ultimately led to the revival. Both interacted with one another to bring us to the present day. Yet, all of these events were unforeseen, unexpected, and beyond our control. The actions of both individuals and governments appeared to have been directed by some guiding hand which changed the nature of the Jewish history of one small community and of one great nation.

So, it has been both the material wealth of Judah Touro and the numbers and teeming influx of the new immigration of the 19th and 20th centuries which have led not only to a reawakening of the American Jewish community, but also to its forging ahead to a position unparalleled in accomplishment, position, and prestige. Only in America were such achievements possible; only in America could a modest building and Congregation achieve international prominence and acclaim; and only in America could the son of two very humble immigrant parents have the privilege and honor of speaking in the Congregation where "presidents and poets" have sat.

In this respect Touro Synagogue serves as a symbol for all Americans—it truly is ours as a symbol of both freedom and opportunity.

THE PLIGHT OF ISAAC TOURO

by RABBI THEODORE LEWIS

We have recently come across a most interesting document from the Carleton Papers — British Military Headquarters Papers, Vol. 56, No.6394(2). It details the unhappy economic plight to which Rev. Isaac Touro was reduced following the Revolution, and at the same time it indicates with whom his sentiments were during the Revolution. He had to appeal for assistance from the British Commander-in-Chief to enable him to go with his family to Jamaica. It is ironic that the father of two of America's most notable philanthropists should have been reduced to such straits. Of course, Abraham was only eight years old and Judah, seven, when their father made his application for charitable support. The text follows:

To His Excellency Sir Guy Carleton, KB, General and Commander-in-Chief, etc., etc., etc.

The Petition of Isaac Touro, late Rector of the Jewish Synagogue at Rhode Island.

Humbly Sheweth,

That from the distresses which your Petitioner suffered from Persecution for his attachment to Government and coming with His Majesty's Troops from Rhode Island to this city, he was so reduced in his Circumstances that had it not been for the humane interference of General Tryon, General Marsh, and other respectable Persons, he must have sunk under the weight of his afflictions and Distress.

That from their kind patronage, the Bounty of Government has been extended to him and he has made shift to support himself and family.

That Your Petitioner is now anxious and desirous of removing himself and family to the Island of Jamaica but is incompetent to defray the expense of his passage, etc.

That the only resources he has left him is Your Excellency's Humanity and Benevolence in the hope that you will grant him an advance of One Twelve Months allowance which would effectually enable him to accomplish his wishes.

Reprinted from the *Touro Monthly*, publication of the Congregation Jeshuat Israel (Touro Synagogue) of Newport, Rhode Island, Vol. XIII, No. 5, January 1977, with the kind permission of the author and the publication.

See also front cover and caption on inside front cover.

Your Petitioner therefore Humbly Prays that Your Excellency will be favorably pleased to order a twelve month's allowance to be paid to him to enable him to remove with his family to the Island of Jamaica.

And as in Duty bound, he will ever pray, etc., etc.
New York, 12 Dec. 1782

Isaac Touro

RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

The Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, attended by a record number exceeding one hundred and ten members and guests, was held on Sunday afternoon, May 15, 1977 in the Jewish Community Center, 401 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence and was called to order at 2:40 P.M. by the President, Benton H. Rosen. Following greetings by the President, the Secretary's Annual Report read by Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky was accepted. Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, Treasurer, reported a total of \$1,672.74 to date, with \$698.84 of this in the checking account and \$973.90 in the savings account. Louis I. Sweet, Finance Chairman, projected a balanced budget of \$6,000.00 for the ensuing year with a like amount of income.

Mrs. Abraham Horvitz, Librarian, gave a colorful summation of how the library activities have expanded, with examples of the kinds of inquiries made and services given.

In the absence of Melvin L. Zurier, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Professor Marvin Pitterman, Vice President, read the report of the Nominating Committee. He presented the following slate of officers for re-election: Benton H. Rosen, President; Dr. Marvin Pitterman, Vice President; Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Secretary; and Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, Treasurer. Since there were no counter-nominations from the floor, the secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for the slate.

Jerome B. Spunt, Chairman of a committee (whose members were Professor Pitterman and Mr. Zurier) to re-evaluate the Association's Constitution, made the following recommendations for change, as approved by the Executive Committee. The Constitution has been extensively revised. Major amendments have to do with the size and composition of the Executive Committee. It has been enlarged by two members-at-large, thus now numbering twelve, plus the officers. The Librarian and Editor will be appointed by the Executive Committee instead of being elected constitutional officers, thus making them members of the Staff.

Mr. Rosen showed examples of memorabilia given to the Library and appealed for such gifts, as well as for memberships among the guests present. He urged people not to throw away their back issues of the *Notes*, but to give them to the Association.

He introduced Dr. Patrick T. Conley, Chairman of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission and Professor of History at Providence Col-

lege, who gave the Seventh Annual David Charak Adelman Lecture titled "Rhode Island Immigrants, 1824 to 1924." These dates signify the mass immigration of the Irish in 1824 and the discriminatory immigration act of 1924.

The 1790 Rhode Island census saw a very homogeneous population of 69,000; by 1865 three out of eight Rhode Islanders were Irish. In 1815 the first Franco-Americans came from Canada to Woonsocket. These people now number 180,000. The Germans and Swedish were also important immigrants during this period (1860-1890), with the Germans numbering 20,000 today. The British continued to come throughout this whole period. The later immigration included the Italians (currently 175,000 to 180,000) and the Polish (50,000).

The Jewish people came in large numbers to Providence in the 1880s and 90s, as well as to other communities. There are now between 25,000 and 27,000. The Armenians emigrated fleeing from persecution. They are an upwardly mobile people like the Jews. Also settling in Rhode Island were the Greeks, the Syrian-Lebanese, the Lithuanians, and the Ukrainians, the latter coming to Woonsocket. In addition, there are now 30,000 to 35,000 blacks in the state. Altogether sixteen groups came to Rhode Island between 1824 and 1924.

After the President again appealed for the giving of records, papers, and other memorabilia, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 P.M. With Mrs. Benton H. Rosen in charge and Mrs. Bernard Segal and Mrs. Erwin E. Strasmich assisting, a collation was served following the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky
Secretary

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 Colonial American Jew 1492-1776*. By Jacob R. Marcus. Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1970. Three volumes, 1650 pages.
Many Rhode Island items, too numerous to mention.
2. *Americans of Jewish Descent. A Compendium of Genealogy*. Compiled by Malcolm H. Stern. Ktav Publishing House, New York 1971. 307 pages.
This classical work contains many Rhode Island items, too numerous to mention.
3. *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, Ed. by Louis Edward Levy. The Levytype Company, Publishers, Philadelphia, and Brentano's, New York, Chicago, Washington 1895.
Pages 33 and 34. Lopez and Hart of Newport.
Page 51. Abraham R. Rivera was a member of the Artillery Corps of Newport in 1790.
Pages 55-57. Letter of Moses Seixas of Newport to G. Washington and reply.
Page 372. The names of four Jews from Rhode Island are listed as having served in the Union Army in the Civil War.
4. *Unrecognized Patriots. The Jews in the American Revolution*. By Samuel Rezneck. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut; London, England, 1975.
Pages 3, 16-18, 64, 73-76, 136-137, 164. Items relating to the Jews of Newport.
5. *The Crimson*. Yearbook of the East Greenwich Academy, 1932.
There were several Jewish students in the graduating class and student body.
6. *American Jewish Year Book 1977*, vol. 77. Prepared by the American Jewish Committee, New York and the Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia. 676 pages.
Page 112. In article on "UN Resolution on Zionism" mentions a paid advertisement in the *Providence Journal* of January 6, 1976, signed by a group of persons of Arab descent and others, which denied that anti-Zionists were antisemites and repeated "the litany of Arab charges against Israel".
Pages 231 and 237. Gives the estimated Jewish population of Rhode Island.
Page 589. Lists *RIJHN*.
7. *Life-Long Learning Among Jews*. By Israel M. Goldman. Subtitle: Adult Education in Judaism from Biblical Times to the Twentieth Century. Ktav Publishing House, Inc. New York, 1975. 364 pages.
While there are no references of Rhode Island interest, it is mentioned on the dust jacket that Doctor Goldman was founding rabbi of Temple Emanuel in Providence.

8. *American Jewish Landmarks. A Travel Guide and History.* By Bernard Postal and Lionel Koppman. Vol. I: The Northeast. Fleet Press Corporation, 1977. Revised Edition. Paperback. 670 pages.

Pages 612 to 630. Contains an excellent history of the Jews of Rhode Island (pages 612-620) and sections on 12 cities and towns (pages 620-630) listed alphabetically from Barrington to Woonsocket.

9. *Temples of Illusion. The Golden Age of Theaters in an American City.* By Roger Brett. Pub. by Brett Theatrical. Printed by E. A. Johnson Co., East Providence, R. I., 1976. Paperback. 309 pages.

A history of the theater and cinema in Providence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Page 113 et seq. Abraham A. Spitz and Max Nathanson in 1897 started in the theater business in Providence.

Pages 208, 248 et seq. Jacob J. ("Jake") Conn engaged in theater business from 1916.

Page 212. Ottenberg and Kanan build and operate the Gaiety Theater.

Page 218 et seq. Isaac Rose and the Silverman Brothers, Charles and Archibald, build and operate the Strand Theater.

Page 303. Harry's (Kosher) Delicatessen on Clemence Street.

10. *The Houses of Providence, A Study of Present Conditions and Tendencies.* By John Ihlder, and Madge Headley and Udetta D. Brown, associated. With notes on the surrounding communities and some mill villages. A report to the Committee on Housing Survey of the General Committee on Improved Housing in Providence under the auspices of the Providence Chamber of Commerce. Snow & Farnham Co., Printers, Providence, R. I., 1916. 103 pages, paperback.

Pages 4 and 5. Among the committee members are Morris J. Wessel of the Immigration Education Bureau and Mrs. William Loeb of the Providence Section, Council of Jewish Women.

Opp. page 19. Photo of a Jewish neighborhood.

Page 19. Mention of the Russian and Polish Jewish immigration.

Opp. page 23. Photo of Goddard Street, a Jewish neighborhood.

Page 23. Jewish and Italian predilection for building three-deckers and tenements.

Page 24. Jews spreading along North Main Street.

Page 25. Overcrowding in Jewish districts.

Page 47. Toilet facilities in Jewish houses.

Pages 66 and 67. Rents on Chalkstone Ave., Goddard St., Charles St., and Branch Ave.

Opp. page 990. Houses on North Main Street.

11. *The Immigrant Woman.* Anne Phillips, Editor. Special Edition of the *Mirror*, containing several articles which are edited transcripts of interviews conducted by graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Rhode Island Extension Division, trained in Oral History Methodology. *Mirror*, Vol. III, No. 1, University of Rhode Island Extension Division, Spring 1977.

Pages 6-11. Interview by Ruth Page of Mrs. Arthur (Essie) Einstein, immigrant from Russia in the 1920s. Photo on page 6 of Molly Katz, Ruth Page's grandmother, immigrant from Austria, circa 1910.

Pages 18-20. Interview by Laura Love Rose of her mother-in-law, Anne Kaufman Rose, who emigrated from Antwerp, Belgium in 1939.

12. *We Bear Witness. A Tribute by Americans to the Contributions of the Jew in America.* Domesday Press, New York, 1945. Special Edition distributed at the Annual Quota Dinner of the Roger Williams Chapter No. 181, B'nai B'rith Women, Hotel Narragansett, Providence, R. I., April 8, 1946. Contains a message from the President, Mrs. Sophie R. Cort and lists of contributions. Unpaged.
The President's message contains a listing of B'nai B'rith activities during World War II, including those in the Rhode Island and New England areas.
Among the tributes is the letter of George Washington to the Hebrew congregation of Newport, R. I.
13. *America: History and Life.* Vol. 13, Part D, Annual Index, 1976. Pub. by American Bibliographical Center—Clio Press, Santa Barbara, California 93103. 387 pages, paperback.
Contains listings of *RIJHN*, authors of papers on R. I. Jewish historical subjects, and a number of papers by subject matter on R. I. Jewish Historical subjects.
14. *American Jewish Historical Quarterly.* Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society. Vol. 66, No. 1, September, 1976. Special Bicentennial Issue on American Jewish Business Enterprise.
Pages 4, 22, 25, 26, 38, 67, and 160. Newport colonial merchants and business community mentioned.
15. *Ibid.* Vol. 66, No. 3, March, 1977.
Pages 375-400 "Colonial Jewry: Religious, Domestic and Social Relations". This paper is largely devoted to New Amsterdam and New York. On page 380 Newport is mentioned, and on pages 397-398 Aaron Lopez and his family are mentioned.
16. *Ibid.* Vol. 66, No. 4, June, 1977.
Page 519. Beryl Segal's "Know Your Community: The Story of the Jewish Institutions and Agencies of Greater Providence", pub. 1976, is listed.
Page 319. *RIJHA* is listed.
17. *Rhode Island History.* Vol. 35, No. 4, Nov., 1976. Pub. by Rhode Island Historical Society.
This issue is devoted to three papers on the philosophy and writings of Roger Williams.
Pages 115 to 126 contain an essay on "Love and Order in Roger Williams' writings" by Robert I. Bronkow. On page 122 is a statement on his contention that toleration should be extended to the Jews.
Pages 127 to 129 contain a paper on "Roger Williams' Most Persistent Metaphor," by Bradford F. Swan. On page 128 is a quotation in which Williams likens his treatment of Jews to that of a ship's captain, who should let them worship as they please.
18. *The American Jewish Experience.* Excerpts from the celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution and the Jubilee Anniversary of the Synagogue Council of America. Pub. by the Synagogue Council of America, New York, 1977. Paperback, 40 pages.
A number of prominent persons were present at exercises, which took place in Newport, Rhode Island on May 23, 1976. (The booklet does not give this date.) The day's activities took place at Rosecliff, a Newport mansion, and at Touro Synagogue.
19. *The West Broadway Neighborhood, Newport, Rhode Island.* Pub. by Rhode Island Preservation Commission, March, 1977. 59 pages. Paperback.
Page 11. Illustrations of the Newport National-Old Colony Bank (Abraham R. Rivera House) and the Peter Buliud House (Moses Seixas House).

20. *Finding Our Fathers*. A guidebook to Jewish Genealogy. By Dan Rottenberg. Random House, N.Y., 1977. 401 pages.
Contains many names both of historical and contemporary relevance to Rhode Island.
Page 400. A bibliography of United States references.
21. *My Life*. By Bezalel Nathan Resnick. Autobiography of a long-time resident of Rhode Island. Typescript. 62 pages. Xerox copy of original in the American Jewish Archives.
Story of his life from his birth in Vilna, Lithuania in Czarist Russia. Contains a rather complete genealogical sketch, including paternal and maternal grandparents.

NECROLOGY

ADELMAN, LOUISE H., born in Brookline, Massachusetts, June 26, 1904, the daughter of the late Morris and Genevieve (Neuhoff) Zielmann. She was the widow of the late David Charak Adelman, founder of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

She was a horticulturist who specialized in herbs and plants of the Bible and had served as a consultant to the American Bible Society. She was awarded the Mary Duff Walters Award for church gardens for the garden at Temple Beth-El on Orchard Avenue in Providence (Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David), and the Sears Roebuck Civil Beautification Award for the garden at the John Howland School in Providence. She was the founder and first president of the Eden Garden Club of the Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El.

Died November 7, 1977 in Providence, Rhode Island.

BLACKMAN, DOCTOR ALDEN, born in Providence, Rhode Island, December 29, 1935, the son of Rose (Leve) and the late Charles Blackman. A 1953 graduate of Classical High School, he was a 1957 graduate of Dartmouth College and a 1961 graduate of the University of Vermont Medical School.

Doctor Blackman was active in the Boy Scout movement and was appointed chairman of the Jewish Committee on Scouting. He interned at George Washington University Hospital, Washington, D.C., and was assistant resident in medicine at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. He was chief resident in medicine at the George Washington University Division of the District of Columbia General Hospital, Washington, D.C. In 1967 he served as a fellow in gastroenterology at the Rhode Island and Veterans Administration Hospitals in Providence, Rhode Island, and later became a fellow in gastroenterology at Tufts University School of Medicine and a fellow in medicine at the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts. He entered the private practice of internal medicine specializing in gastroenterology in 1969. He was a clinical assistant professor in the Brown University Program in

Medicine and chief of the section of gastroenterology at Roger Williams General Hospital.

He was a diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine and a fellow of the American College of Physicians, a Physician on the active staffs of The Miriam and Roger Williams General Hospitals and an Associate Physician at the Rhode Island Hospital.

Doctor Blackman was an active and dedicated community leader. He had recently been appointed to the National UJA Campaign Cabinet in recognition of his leadership in his own community. He was a member of the Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America, the Board of Trustees of Temple Emanuel, the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, and the American Cancer Society, and chairman of the Jewish Committee on Scouting.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, June 6, 1977.

FIERSTEIN, LESTER I., born in Providence, Rhode Island on September 14, 1904, the son of the late Charles and Lena (Shushansky) Fierstein. He attended public schools in Providence and was a 1922 graduate of Hope Street High School. For over thirty years he was a manager of Kays-Newport Shoe Store in Providence. Mr. Fierstein was a member of Temple Emanuel, the Touro Fraternal Association, and Redwood Lodge, F. & A.M., a past president of the Trowel Club and the Royal Arch Chapter, and a member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, July 11, 1977.

PEARLMAN, ISRAEL, born in Poland, December 2, 1898, the son of the late Abraham and Anna Pearlman. He was co-founder and operator with his wife of the Sterling Shoe Company. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan.

He was a member of Temple Emanuel and its Men's Club, the Providence Hebrew Day School Corporation, the school's scholarship

committee, and the board of directors of the New England Academy of Torah. Other affiliations included the Rhode Island Masonic Lodge, the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, the Jewish Community Center, and the Providence Hebrew Loan Association. He was a former member of the Businessman's Association. He was a former member of the Businessman's Club of the YMCA for many years. He was a Navy veteran of World War I and a business and religious leader in Providence for 56 years.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, December 6, 1976.

PRANIKOFF, DOCTOR M. LEO, born in Beverly, Massachusetts, November 17, 1924, the son of Jenney (Rosenthal) and the late Joseph Pranicoff. He was Chief of the Department of Ophthalmology at The Miriam Hospital and Associate Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at Brown University Medical School, and was also on the staff of the Rhode Island Hospital. A member of the American Medical Association and the Rhode Island Medical Society, Doctor Pranicoff was certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology in 1957. He began his practice in Providence that year. He was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology in 1963, and was appointed by then Governor John Chafee to the state Medical Center's advisory council.

He was graduated from Tufts College in 1947 and from Tufts Medical School in 1951. He served his internship at Rhode Island Hospital from 1951 to 1952, and was a junior assistant rotating resident there from 1952 to 1953. He attended the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Medicine from 1953 to 1954 and served a three-year residency there under the late Doctor Edmund Spaeth. During World War II he served as a medical corpsman in France with the 14th Armored Infantry Division.

He was a member of the Bristol Yacht Club, the University Club, and Temple Emanuel.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, July 31, 1977.

LILLIAN RUBINSTEIN, born in Brooklyn, New York, February 3, 1909, the daughter of the late Doctor Ilie and Annie (Berger) Berger. A 1926 graduate of Classical High School and a 1930 graduate of Pembroke College, Mrs. Rubinstein lived most of her life in Providence. She was a member of Temple Emanuel, its Sisterhood, the Providence Hadassah, the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, and the Brandeis University National Women's Committee. She was also active in the Jewish National Fund. She was an accomplished musician.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, December 3, 1976.

SILVERMAN, HERMAN N., born in Troy, New York, October 10, 1883, the son of the late Joseph and Lena (Bielinski) Silverman. He was educated in his home town public schools and attended night school at Cooper Union in New York City. He was for almost 70 years a resident of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, where he conducted his clothing store business on Main Street and was very active in civic affairs. He brought energy to the growth of the town and is remembered as a man with the business sense to build a firm that three times grew too large for its quarters, and the civic sense to extend generous credits to his neighbors during the dark days of the Depression. According to members of his family, he fathered many ideas thought to be outlandish, which later proved to be prophetic. He earned the sobriquet of "Mr. East Greenwich."

Before opening his business in East Greenwich, he had been a traveling salesman. In 1927 Mr. Silverman served as chairman of the town's 250th Anniversary celebration, which drew 50,000 visitors, and 50 years later was appointed honorary chairman of the 300th Anniversary celebration which he did not live to witness. He was active in the Chamber of Commerce, of which he was president for several terms. He was an original trustee of Kent County Memorial Hospital and was a director of the town's Visiting Nurses Association. During the 1938 hurricane he headed the town's disaster group and during World War II was a member of the Oil Ration Board. He was among the founders of the East Greenwich Savings and Loan Association, and for 30 years served on the advisory board of the Industrial National Bank.

Mr. Silverman was a member of the King Solomon and Redwood Lodge, F. & A.M., the East Greenwich Lions Club, the Odd Fellows, the Temple Beth-El Men's Club of Providence, and the Varnum Continentals. In 1971 he won a Rotary Club award. He was a lifetime honorary East Greenwich fireman.

Died in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, January 13, 1977 in his ninety-fourth year.

SMITH, ARCHIE, born in Providence, Rhode Island, June 3, 1908, the son of the late Harry and Mary (Moverman) Smith. Former state public utilities administrator. He was chief counsel to the state Supreme Court's disciplinary board and had served for 18 years as an assistant attorney general. Mr. Smith was nationally known in the cable television field and lectured throughout the country at various television conferences. Before retiring from the Public Utilities Commission, he told federal officials that Rhode Island needed a nuclear power plant, but he stopped short of endorsing the New England Electric System's proposed nuclear facility at Charlestown, Rhode Island. In 1975 Mr. Smith was awarded the John O. Stitely Distinguished Public Service Award for "outstanding, distinguished and dedicated service" in the field of public administration.

He was a founder and past president of the Providence Hebrew Day School. The Providence Hebrew Day School awarded him its Amudim Award and he also received the Amudin Award of the National Association of Hebrew Day Schools. He was educated in the Providence public schools, and was graduated from Brown University, Harvard Law School, and the University of Chicago, where he received a doctor of laws degree. He was a past president of the Roger Williams Lodge, B'nai B'rith, and of the former Ahavath Sholom Synagogue on Howell Street in Providence. He was a member of Congregation Sons of Zion, the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, and the Providence Chevra Kadisha.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island, January 11, 1977.

ERRATA, ADDENDA, AND CORRIGENDA

The following items all refer to RIJHN Vol. 7, No. 2, November, 1976:

Front cover. The caption for the cover picture reads "Scene Lower Chalkstone Avenue—circa 1903." According to Miss Ruby Winnerman the store shown in the illustration was a variety store located opposite Shawmut Street. This would correspond to 163 Chalkstone Avenue. In 1903 a variety store was operated at that address by William Sugarman. In 1911 the operator was Benny Make. Doctor Maurice Adelman also recalls a store at that location.

The editors would welcome any information which would further identify the store and its operator or the mother and infant in the picture.

Page 187. The title, "Jewtown, a Picture Essay", pp. 300 and 301, was omitted from the Table of Contents.

Page 205. Identification of persons in picture at top of page. Standing on far running board with jacket and wearing hat, Mr. Goldenberg. Front seat, left to right, passenger not identified; driver, Abe Mayberg. Rear seat, left to right, Mr. Lerner, Frank Scoliard, and Jacob Kaufman. Person on near running board, wearing jacket and holding cap, not identified.

Page 219. The synagogue in the photograph at the bottom of the page was incorrectly identified as the South Providence Hebrew Congregation (the Russian Shul). It should have been identified as the Synagogue of Congregation Bais Israel Anshoy Hestreich (as rendered in its charter) or the "Robinson Street Shul" (also the "Galizianer Shul"). A better transliteration of the Hebrew would be *Beth* (or *Bet*) *Israel* (*Yisrael*) *Anshey Oestreich* (Austria).

Page 220. The caption under the photograph should have read "Machzekas Hadas." This again is the rendering in its charter. It would have been more properly transliterated as *Machazike Hadas* ("Upholders of the Faith").

Page 231. Identification of persons in picture. Louis Berman at left, not an owner of Berman's Spa. He owned a store across the street and happened to be visiting the store when the picture was taken. Behind the counters are Jack L. and Ruth Berman.

Page 234. Upper photograph. The following photograph showing charter members of The Miriam Hospital Association is reproduced because the child standing at the doorway to the right, identified as Ruth Woolf (later Mrs. Joseph Adelson), was obscured by shadow.

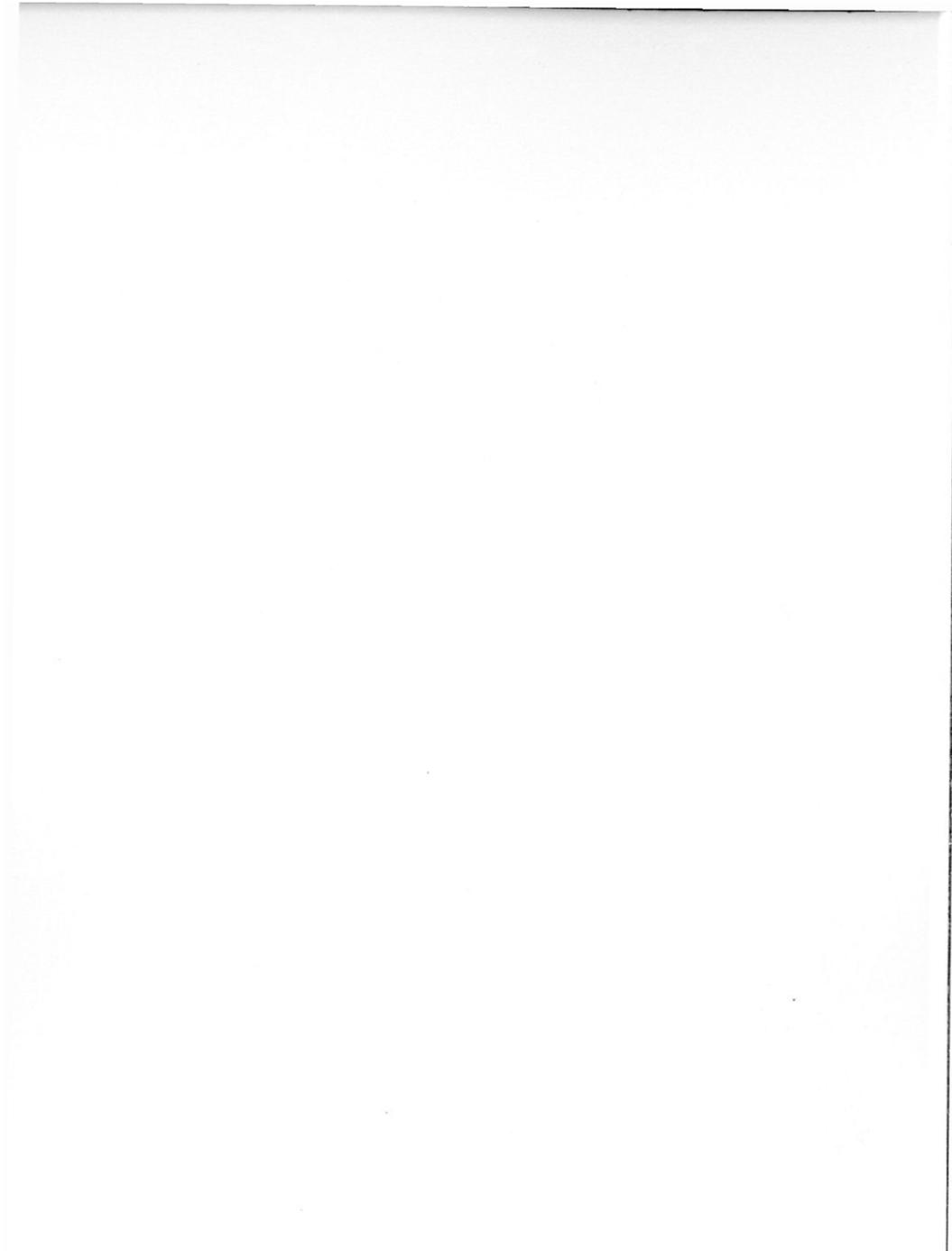


Page 234. Lower photograph. Second row should read, left to right "Mrs. Louis Shanbrum" and "Louis Shanbrum."

Pages 300 and 301. Attribution "Courtesy of the *Rhode Island Historical Society* and the *American Jewish Archives*" was omitted.

Page 327. The following paragraph was omitted from the minutes of the "Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Twenty-second Annual Meeting." It should have been the fourth paragraph:

Mrs. Abraham Horvitz, Librarian, reported a great increase in telephone inquiries, as well as requests by letter from all parts of the country. In reporting the variety of services provided by the library, she cited the example of the use of the Association's archives by Professor George H. Kellner and a graduate student from Rhode Island College in their Ethnic Heritage Studies project. This was for the purpose of setting up ethnic studies curricula for use in various Rhode Island school systems. The project was funded by a federal grant, and as one of the assisting organizations the Association received \$200.00. Mrs. Horvitz credited the *Community Voice*, official organ of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, for its excellent coverage of the Association in its monthly issues in a column called "Remember When?"



Crown (*Keter* in Hebrew) for the Torah Scroll of Congregation Ahavath Shalom, West Warwick, Rhode Island. (Donated in memory of the late Mrs. David Frank by her family). *Photo courtesy Professor Harold Sternbach.* For more on Congregation Ahavath Shalom see page 420 et seq.

