



Conquistadors,  
Knickerbockers,  
Pilgrims, and the  
Hope of Israel

# Jewes

## IN AMERICA

### Exhibition Guide

Part of New York's yearlong celebration of the 350th anniversary of the arrival, in the fall of 1654, of the first group of Jews in the city (and thus in the future United States), this exhibition traces the succession of Jewish interactions with four colonial powers in the Western Hemisphere—the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and English. *Jewes in America* centers on that moment of arrival, smack in the middle of the “Century of Revolution,” and on the big ideas and strongly-held beliefs that influenced—and were influenced by—the tiny, tenuous, partly accidental settlement of these first Jews in New York.

Between the first and second world wars, there were more than two million Jews in this city, close to one in three New Yorkers. This statistic, without parallel in either Jewish or New York history, was the result of the mass migration that began in the 1880s and ended just a generation later with the immigration acts of 1921 and 1924, which aimed at preventing the inundation of America by what the talk of the time termed dangerous and inferior races—especially Jews. In the Colonial and Federal periods explored in this exhibition, the actual number of Jews in New York and beyond was contrastingly minuscule. Nevertheless, the presence of Jews in America occupied a sizeable place in the American mind during these formative years. This is largely attributable to the multiple identity crises of early modernity. The upheavals of the time—theological, philosophical, political, and economic—forcefully posed such questions as: Who is a Christian? What does it mean to be Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, or American? A consistent by-product of such questions was to heighten preoccupation with the identity and status of Jews. If this is a story that today seems remote or even bizarre at times, it is also one that raises issues—civil rights, multiculturalism, secularism, capitalism, identification with Israel—that are familiar and even integral to both the liberal and the conservative lines along which contemporary American identities bifurcate.

Michael Terry, Dorot Chief Librarian  
Dorot Jewish Division, The New York Public Library

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#### Hours:

Tuesday-Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Closed Sundays and Mondays, and, for holiday observance, Thursday, November 11

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## Conquistadors

Half the world's Jews lived in Spain, subordinated but in key scientific and economic roles. But the crusade to annex the peninsula's last Moorish principalities left less and less room for a Jewish minority. In a century of coercion beginning 1391, most Spanish Jews converted, accepting their identity as "New Christians" with varying degrees of reservation. The Inquisition was introduced in 1381 to monitor the New Christians' lingering loyalties—and to give anxious Old Christians a means to limit their integration. With the fall of the last Moorish holdout, Granada, early in 1492, Jews got a choice: convert or depart by July 31. The majority submitted. Most who did not went overland to Portugal. At the same time, Columbus, believing himself chosen to lead the ultimate crusade, to recapture the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and usher in the messianic age, prepared to set sail. He left Spain on August 3, intent on converting China and India and accumulating the wealth to pay for Armageddon.

### 1

#### CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

*De Insula Inventis* [Regarding the Newfound Islands]  
Basel, 1493  
Rare Books Division

Orient-bound, Columbus sensibly recruited a Jew for his crew. Luis de Torres, still wet from the requisite baptism, knew Hebrew, Aramaic, a little Arabic, Renaissance Europe's "Oriental languages." Arriving in Cuba, Columbus's "China," de Torres was put ashore on a mission from Queen Isabella to the Great Khan. When he returned days later, he had not found Beijing, but he had discovered communitarianism, free love and tobacco. On "Hispaña" (Hispaniola, now Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but, according to Columbus, Japan), the "interpreter" again hit it off with the Arawaks, shown here unarmed, unclothed, and characteristically welcoming, in this first illustrated edition of Columbus's account. Returning on the Niña, de Torres obtained salaried government appointment as resident in China. Back in Cuba, he is recorded as rejoining his indigenous friends in Edenic embrace, and he can be considered the first European settler in the western hemisphere.

### 2

#### AGOSTINO GIUSTINIANI, BISHOP OF NEBBIO, EDITOR

*Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, & Chaldaicum*  
[Book of Psalms in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and Aramaic]  
Genoa: Pietro Porro, 1516  
Rare Books Division

A unique illuminated copy of one of the great monuments of typography: the first Polyglot, presenting the ancient versions of a biblical text "synoptically," i.e.,

side-by-side, in their various scripts. The compiler, a representative of the Late Renaissance ideal of accomplishment in the three "learned languages," Latin, Greek and Hebrew, was a Genoese patrician and professor of Hebrew in Paris at François I's fledgling Trilingual College (the Collège de France). But for all its rabbinic learning, his edition's great fame rests on a four-page aside, occasioned by Psalm 19's reference to "the ends of the earth," where Giustiniani publishes the first-ever biographical study of Columbus. Divulging the terrible secret of his mysterious compatriot's working class origins, he managed to prompt a furious feud with the Admiral's son, Ferdinand, Duke of Veragua, and to launch the still-thriving arcane mini-discipline of Columbian studies.

### 3

#### ABRAHAM ZACUTO

*Almanach Perpetuum Celestium Motuum* [Perpetual Almanach of Celestial Motions]  
Leiria: Abraham D'Ortas, 1496  
Rare Books Division, Gift of Louis Rabinowitz

Astronomy and astrology, fundamental to the medieval medical curriculum, was a Jewish specialty par excellence. Gersonides, papal physician at Avignon, designed a much-improved quadrant, known as "Jacob's Ladder," the basic tool of the Age of Discovery. His successors established a Provençal-Catalan-Balearic tradition of excellence that made a second "Jewish profession" of instrument making and cartography. Zacuto, astronomer-astrologer to the bishop of Salamanca, and, after 1492, to Portuguese kings John II and Manuel I, produced astronomical tables key to the success of da Gama and Columbus alike. The tables even saved Columbus on dry land: knowing that a lunar eclipse was imminent, he was able to subdue some quite hostile Jamaicans by pretending to make the moon disappear.

Zacuto's tables' primary purpose was not navigational, however, but astrological. Accordingly, this copy is supplemented with a contemporary manuscript prognosticon, in the style familiar from the best known of the New Christian physician-astrologers, Nostradamus. Some entries here are specific, others a safe bet, and still others a little vague: 1511: Kings will die in Spain, the Levant and Italy. There will be shock and awe in Babylon—in Baghdad in the East; 1512: Famine and plague. Venice and Turkey at war; 1513: Solar eclipse. Plague and great famine. Upheavals in the Netherlands and among the New Christians. Death of the Doge of Genoa; 1514: The people will betray their masters.

4

**CORNELIS DE JODE (OR, DE JUDEIS, I.E., JEW)**

*Americae Pars Borealis* [North America]

Antwerp, 1593

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection, Gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes

In the age of forced conversions, Jewish scientists transmuted easily into New Christian scientists. Their names changed, often to those of baptismal sponsors, they became, as they wished to be, less easily identifiable. Anomalous in this regard are Gerard and his traveler-geographer son Cornelis de Jode, important cartographers and engravers in Antwerp, printing center of the Spanish Netherlands. The de Jodes, though, had little to hide: the family's work, besides maps, is notable for devotional items, redolent of the flamboyant Catholicism with which the Church, remodeled at the Council Of Trent, chose to fight the Reformation. It was this confrontational stance that culminated in the 80-year revolt of the northern Netherlands, from 1568 until the recognition of the United Provinces as a Protestant republic by the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

On show in the Edna Barnes Salomon Room (third floor): the Library's *Hunt-Lenox Globe*. Anonymous, unlocalized and undated, the state of knowledge it reflects, with its detailed depiction of South America and failure to feature North America at all, makes it one of just two known globes that must be dated as early as 1511 at the latest.

5

**FRANS POST**

*Insula S. Thomas* [Island of São Tomé]

Engraved for Kaspar van Baerle's *Rerum per Octennium in Brasilia* [Eight Years in Brazil]

Amsterdam: Johannes Blaeu, 1647

Rare Books Division

The Portuguese crown decided to capitalize on the influx of Spanish Jews by imposing a huge special poll tax. To encourage participation, the king decided to settle São Tomé, an equatorial island off the west coast of Africa, with the male children aged 2-10 of non-paying Jews. 2,000 boys were enslaved and dispatched to be raised there as Catholics. Dumped on the beach, many were immediately eaten by crocodiles. Within a year, only 600 remained alive, but additional slaves were brought from the African mainland. Within a generation, the rainforest had been cleared, and this small island had become the biggest sugar exporter in the world. With Portuguese colonization of Brazil in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the children of São Tomé, now the world's experts on sugar cultivation, were brought in to replicate their experiment on an enormous scale.

6

**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**

Letter to Luis de Santangel, Chancellor of Aragon  
Barcelona, 1493

Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

Rebuffed in Portugal, Columbus visited Zacuto in Spain (1486), obtaining his commendation to Ferdinand and Isabella. A Spanish royal commission investigated and rejected the westward route, but Zacuto persisted and now a courtier took on Their Majesties. Santangel, grandson of forced converts—closely identified with other New Christians, whom he protected, and Jews, for whom he provided ships in 1492—had grown rich as government contractor and powerful as Ferdinand's preferred advisor. Eventually, he persuaded Isabella to drop opposition to Columbus's terms: the viceroyalty and 10% of the proceeds of all that he colonized. Obligated to finance the expedition, Santangel advanced 70% of his own to accompany 30% from a lender thought to be the philosopher of Judaism and financier of the siege of Granada, Isaac Abrabanel. Columbus's second voyage (1493), with a crew this time of 1,500 not 87, was funded by the state—from property abandoned by the Jews it expelled.

Columbus's first word of his discoveries was sent ahead from the Azores in two copies, one addressed to Santangel and a duplicate to Gabriel Sanchez, treasurer of Aragon and another New Christian activist. The "Letter to Santangel" was printed, in the original Spanish, days after Columbus's return. The Library's copy, the only survivor, is the bibliophile's ultimate Americanum. The "Letter to Sanchez" served as the basis for a Latin translation printed that year in Rome, Paris, Antwerp and Basel.

7

**GENEALOGIA OF CAPTAINS GASPAR AND PARDO CALDERON DE MENDOZA**

Oaxaca, circa 1615

Manuscripts and Archives Division, H.W. Poole Collection

New Christian migration to Spain's transatlantic colonies was prohibited as early as 1493, but freedom from arbitrary ruin by the Inquisition made the trip irresistible in the first years of empire and again after 1580, when Spain annexed Portugal. With enforcement sometimes lax and bribes always efficacious, Spaniards of Jewish descent relocated to the Caribbean, Peru (conquered 1533), and especially Mexico (conquered 1521)—in significant numbers. Regulations were tightened, and by the 17<sup>th</sup> century no one might leave for the colonies, or obtain a government job there, or feel at all secure from arrest by the Inquisition, without establishing *limpieza de sangre*—blood purity—for four generations, by listing parents,

grandparents and great-grandparents to show no known Jewish ancestry.

8

**MATHIAS DE BOCANEGRA, S.J.**

*Auto General de la Fee* [Public Demonstration of Faith]  
Mexico City: Antonio Calderon, 1649  
Rare Books Division, from the Astor Library, Gift of John Jacob Astor III

New World inquisitors did not concern themselves with vestigial Aztec or Inca practices. Technically looking also for covert Protestants and Muslims, their real interest remained all Jews all the time. This representative *auto* of 1649 tried and convicted 109 individuals—108 for Judaizing, the other, a Frenchman, for Calvinism, advocating freedom of conscience, and failure to report a friend for practicing Judaism. *Procesos* (proceedings) often took years, yielding hundreds of pages of confessions extracted under torture and evidence gathered from secret witnesses. With enough *procesos* complete, an *auto general* (show-trial) was held, after which Madrid (or Lisbon) required a short list of names and (largely improbable) charges. Thus: Ines Pereira, 23, born in Ixmiquilpan, who said she was destined to give birth to Messiah; Duarte de Leon, 55, born in Portugal, conventionally-circumcised rabbi, who circumcised his sons, daughters and wife—by excising flesh from the left shoulder of each.

9

**PHILIPP VAN LIMBORCH**

*Historia Inquisitionis* [History of the Inquisition]  
Amsterdam: H. Wetsteen, 1692  
Dorot Jewish Division

Even if founded to advance national cohesion, the Inquisition rapidly became the world's greatest organized crime syndicate. Frankenstein's monster, the inquisitors, answering neither to Crown nor Church, stole unimaginable sums in rigged sales of seized property. These friars' sybaritic lifestyle depended on sustaining a climate of terror, and spectacle—subterranean torture chambers and the histrionics of the *auto*—was key. Minimum sentence was the embarrassment and ostracism of wearing the *sambenito*, for a fixed period or life. First-time offenders who repented of Judaizing were, in addition, frequently whipped: men and women stripped to the waist, mounted on a donkey, and paraded around town while receiving 200-400 lashes. The addition of five years in the Veracruz-Spain or Acapulco-Philippines galleys was tantamount to a death sentence. Repeat offenders and the impenitent were liable to be "relaxed," i.e., handed over for public burning, dressed in a *sambenito* of more extravagant design.

10

***Relação das Pessoas*** [List of Names]

Coimbra, December 26, 1623  
Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Jews who moved to Portugal in 1492 found themselves trapped there just five years later, too valuable to be permitted to leave and converted by force at the insistence in Spain. The Portuguese Inquisition was established in 1536, but, relatively benign at first, it liked to send Judaizers out to populate Brazil. Spain annexed Portugal in 1580 and inquisitors set about rectifying a tradition of laxity with a vengeance, alleging Jewish observance everywhere—not least among their fellow clergy. A clique of New Christian priests, said to be promoting the cult of Queen Esther and intent on reviving animal sacrifices, was "exposed" in Coimbra. Among four men and three women burned in this *auto* is "Fernão Dias da Sylva, canon of Coimbra cathedral, heretic and liar. He feigned repentance, then retracted, before confessing he was a priest of the Law of Moses and kept the commandments." Such episodes provided strong impetus to clandestine migration—be it to Amsterdam or America.

11

**LOPE DE VEGA**

*El Brasil Restituido* [Brazil Restored]  
Holograph, signed and dated Madrid, October 28, 1625  
Manuscripts and Archives Division, from the Lenox Library

The "Spanish Shakespeare," Lope de Vega's plays are known for their unsympathetic, one-dimensional Jews. *Brazil Restored* was written in the months after Spain helped recover Bahia, capital of Portuguese Brazil, from a Dutch occupation that conventional wisdom blamed on a New Christian fifth column. Bernardo, the New Christian protagonist here, may not have such good lines as Shylock but, nevertheless, he is not without nuance. When he confides his treacherous plan, it sounds almost as if the Inquisition is the real guilty party: "Having very good reason to fear that the Holy Office planned to send out a particularly ferocious Inquisitorial Visitor, those of our nation living in Brazil who despise Christianity, so as to avoid arrest, ruin, trial, and humiliation, have written to Holland inviting them to make ready an armada. Things have already grown so bad for our families that people are beginning to wonder if maybe it's true God has abandoned us. Well, now we have our answer: the fleet is ready to sail."

12

**Lista das Pessoas** [List of Names]

Lisbon, 1747

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish Inquisition was running out of steam. Not so much murderous now as reactionary, it specialized in destroying dangerous books, such as *Robinson Crusoe*. For the late-blossoming Portuguese Inquisition, though, besides cultivating a minor preoccupation with sex, it was business as usual. This typical *auto da fé* features a bigamist, two sodomites, six fornicators, two witches, and 38 alleged Judaizers—22 women and 16 men—among them Miguel Nunes Sanches, soldier, sent back for trial in Lisbon from Arrayal do Paracatú, deep in the interior near modern Brasilia, where Brazil's great gold rush was in full swing.

**Knickerbockers**

13

**KASPAR VAN BAERLE**

*Brasilianische Geschichte* [Brazilian History]

Frontispiece drawn by Govaert Flink and engraved by Cornelis van Dalen

Kleve: Tobias Silberling, 1659

Rare Books Division

The Calvinist northern Netherlands revolted against Spanish sovereignty in 1568, declaring independence in 1581 but remaining at war until 1648. In 1621, the Dutch West India Company was formed, with a government monopoly on Atlantic trade encouraging investment in a corporation designed to establish new colonies around the Atlantic rim, or seize existing ones from Portugal, Spanish-controlled since 1580. The first venture, the capture of Bahia in 1624, ended in disaster eleven months later. Spain, fearing loss of all its American possessions, sent an armada, and the Dutch garrison of debauched mercenaries surrendered instantly. This fiasco was followed immediately by settlement of a new colony on the island of Manhattan. In 1630, the Company attempted another assault on Brazil, taking Olinda but not developing its foothold much until 1636, when it hired as governor Prince Maurits, 32 year-old cousin of the Stadholder, a successful soldier with marked humanistic leanings.

14

**JOHN IV, KING OF PORTUGAL**

*Declaratie van Sijn Koninghlyjcke Majesteyt van Portugael*

[The King of Portugal's Declaration]

[Amsterdam?], 1649

Rare Books Division

The 1640 revolution in Portugal ousted Spain and installed the legitimate heir, the Duke of Braganza, as John IV. Spain did not accept this outcome until 1668, and Portuguese survival became dependent on the Brazilian sugar trade, in which the New Christians

were crucial, and on international allies, including the Dutch, also still at war with their former ruler, Spain. Liberal, artistic, ally of New Christians at home and Protestants abroad, John was anathema to the pro-Spanish inquisitors. By 1649, the inquisitors' activities threatened to sever Portugal's lifeline, for Dutch ships arriving from Brazil and the Netherlands were being boarded by the Holy Office, which helped itself to any cargo it deemed potentially "Jewish." In this declaration, the king guarantees an immediate end to all this. But it was said of John IV that while he conquered a kingdom, he could never conquer the Estaos (the building in Lisbon that housed the Inquisition).

15

**JOHAN MAURITS, COUNT OF NASSAU-SIEGEN**

Letter to Kaspar van Baerle

Mauritstad, May 4, 1640

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, Brazil Papers

A glimpse of the *amor intellectualis* of "Maurits the Brazilian" for van Baerle, "the modern Virgil." Founder of the Athenaeum Illustre (the future University of Amsterdam), van Baerle, a proponent of *pietas universalis*, was identified with the Socinian (Unitarian) movement. He provoked furious controversy with his approbation for Amsterdam rabbi Manasseh ben Israel's book, *De Creatione* (1635), by expressing the view that "truth is not the monopoly of any one religion" and calling on Jews and Christians to "live as friends for God." Maurits, hardly flawless but, even so, somewhat the perfect prince—the visionary governor and skillful general whose passions, nonetheless, are art and architecture, flora and fauna—has wiped out an immense Spanish-Portuguese armada off Itamaracá, and van Baerle has written him a congratulatory poem. Responding in Latin from the magnificent if immodestly named capital he has built at Recife, Maurits concludes modestly enough, "Let us confess that it was no man who did this thing, but the most powerful and glorious hand of God."

16

**JAN VAN RAESVELT**

Letter to Constantijn Huygens the Elder

Recife, April 20, 1649

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, Brazil Papers

"Get my family out of here" letter from a judge in Mauritstad to the famous poet and Stadholder's secretary in the Hague: The Portuguese have scored a decisive victory in the interior and assault on the capital is expected momentarily. Jews are present in great numbers and, while they are the only people here who have invested in the colony, it is not as if they haven't profited handsomely. Yes, it is they who have bailed out the administration in this hour of need [an advance of 100,000 florins saved the colony from having

to surrender to the Portuguese insurgents as early as 1647], but is that enough reason to do as now proposed and protect them just like Protestants in the event of a collapse?

17

### **Account of the Capture of Recife**

Recife, 1654

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, Brazil Papers

Maurits left Brazil in 1643 and was replaced with a High and Secret Council—made up of Company functionaries and local nonentities. Jewish and Catholic subjects were excluded from local government and these colonial Portuguese Catholics now began an insurgency. Portugal, needing Dutch goodwill to survive against Spain, could not overtly support the guerillas. But neither did the Dutch—though just then the closest thing in the world to a superpower—have the requisite will to support their own settlers. For ten years, the Company, obsessed with short-term profit, and the government, disgusted with Company greed, neglected their fast-eroding colony. Finally, the local Portuguese commander, Francisco Barreto, ostensibly acting on his own initiative, laid siege to Recife with his ragtag army, and, in January, 1654, found the city's councilors happy to accept the generous terms dictated by Portugal's own precarious position. The manuscript shown is the exhaustive official report to the Company on the siege, capitulation, and arrangements for evacuation.

18

### **JOSEPH I, KING OF PORTUGAL**

*Dom José* [Proclamation of King Joseph]

Lisbon, 1774

Dorot Jewish Division, Gift of Jack and Helen Nash

By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the Inquisition, which now regarded one in three Portuguese as tainted with Jewishness, had destroyed the economic and social fabric of Brazil and of Portugal. But it took the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, which flattened the city and killed 100,000, to let King Joseph shift real power to his Anglophile prime minister, Sebastião de Melo (the future Marquês de Pombal). In the apex of his legislative reform program, he finally outlawed the “malicious and seditious” distinction between Old and New Christians. An act of 1774 turned the tables, making mere invocation of this distinction punishable by public whipping, loss of position, and deportation to Angola. Five years later, Joseph was succeeded by his ultra-conservative daughter, Maria I; Pombal was exiled, the clock turned back, and the Portuguese Inquisition not finally abolished until 1821, Maria Christina of Spain following suit in 1834.

19

### **KASPAR VAN BAERLE**

*Rerum per Octennium in Brasilia* [Eight Years in Brazil]

Amsterdam: Johannes Blaeu, 1647

Rare Books Division

Olinda, second city of Brazil, was demolished by the Dutch, with only churches and convents left standing—if largely empty. The Dutch preferred to settle across the Pernambuco estuary at Recife, i.e., reef, a lagoon location, reminiscent of Venice and Amsterdam. Maurits's administration saw construction here of Mauritsstad (“Mauritopolis”), a magnificent city of parks, fountains and bridges. At the same time, he expanded the colony deep into the interior, conducting overland expeditions as far as Chile and maritime excursions that resulted in capture from the Portuguese of São Tomé and the earliest West African slaving post, São Jorge da Mina.

20

### **Mauritopolis** [Mauritsstad]

Engraved for John Ogilby's *America: Being the Latest and Most Accurate Description of the New World*

London: [Printed (by Tho. Johnson?) for the author], 1671

Rare Books Division

Maurits was great news for the shareholders, but the directors saw no need for an ever bigger and better baroque utopia in the jungle. Unable to agree on terms, Maurits returned to the Hague, where his “Mauritshuis” became a temple of Brazilianiana. But his tenure left Mauritsstad—with up to 1,500 Jews, migrants from Holland and New Christian defectors from Portuguese Brazil, accounting for 50% of the city's European population—the most successful Jewish community in the world, larger and more affluent than even pulsating Amsterdam. The Company, eager to dispose of Maurits's extraordinary palace (the tallest building on the skyline, with twin cupolas, marked A), negotiated its sale as the city's main synagogue, but the idea proved too scandalous and the deal fell through. Evidently modest enough to escape censure, though, was the “Judaeorum excubiae,” the Jews' outhouse, the ritual bath, marked E, between the Carmelite convent (D) and the shore in the view of Olinda (item 19).

21

### **ALEXANDRE OLIVIER EXQUEMELIN**

*Piratas de la América* [Buccaneers of America]

Cologne: Lorenzo Struickman [i.e., Amsterdam: David de Castro Tartas], 1681

Rare Books Division

The lurid memoirs of a French privateer—ex-colleague of the notorious Henry “Juan” Morgan—first appeared in Dutch, then in a pirated translation, tactfully rewritten for the Spanish market and enhanced with a doggerel-epic tour of the Americas by

Captain Miguel (or Daniel Levi) de Barrios. Two names for two identities. For years, he commuted between contradictory careers: the Spanish army in Brussels and Jewish poet laureate in Amsterdam—this after near-death in the Caribbean. As Dutch Recife declined, Jews had begun migrating to the islands, especially English Barbados, bringing sugar cane cultivation with them. In time, Dutch Curaçao’s capital, Willemstad, became half-Jewish, but the infertile island was unsuited to sugar. Realizing too late its folly in Brazil, the West India Company determined to create a new sugar colony. Only the Wild Coast (Guyana) was unconquered, so they began recruiting Jews for the coastal island of Cayenne, chartering it as an all-Jewish self-governing colony to enhance its otherwise doubtful allure. Spanish-born de Barrios was among European enthusiasts, but his nightmare trip got him no further than Tobago, where Dutch-French fighting, and the death of his wife, propelled his return.

## 22

### JOSEPH PENSO DE LA VEGA

*Confusión de Confusiones* [Confusion of Confusions]  
Amsterdam, 1688  
Rare Books Division

De la Vega was another prolific member of the Spanish-language Amsterdam Jewish literary scene. His florid writing, erudite-jocular, thick with biblical and classical puns, might have been forgotten had he not written the undying classic of business literature. Its reputation unsurpassed, *Confusión* is the first book to theorize, describe, and define the operations of the stock market. The title alludes to the author’s contention that “the more one studies their mutations, the less one understands them.” The stock market was a new phenomenon, the invention of the Dutch East and West India companies, and not yet well-understood—witness the catastrophic tulipomania here described. The book is dedicated to Duarte Nunes da Costa. A leader of the ex-New Christian Jewish communities of Amsterdam and Hamburg, he was John IV of Portugal’s chief procurer of finance and armaments for the ongoing struggle against Spain. Nunes’s uncle, Francisco de Vittoria, was bishop of Tucumán (Argentina) and then archbishop of Mexico, before being returned to Madrid on charges of Judaizing.

## 23

### SAUL LEVI MORTERA

*Providencia de Dios con Ysrael, Verdad y Eternidad de la Ley de Moseh y Nulidad de las Demas Leies* [God’s Providential Care for Israel, the Truth and Permanence of the Law of Moses, and the Nullity of Other Religions]  
Translated from the Portuguese by Moses Raphael d’Aguilar (rabbi in Recife, 1642-8) and copied by Solomon the Salonikan, Amsterdam, 1689  
Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

The Jews had everything to fear from the siege of Recife. The Portuguese were, as Amsterdam’s chief rabbi Mortera observed, their worst enemy, “a people accustomed to take intense pleasure in making human sacrifices” of Jews. And yet, as Mortera continues in his magnum opus of 1659, a rebuttal of the then-standard Catholic contention that the Jews were doomed to unremitting misfortune (which proved their rejection by God): “God inspired Governor Barreto to have it proclaimed in the streets that nobody should so much as touch anyone of the Hebrew nation on pain of severe punishment. Not only that, but he allowed them to sell their possessions and provided passage to Holland for all 600 that remained. For want of Dutch ships, he managed to find them Portuguese ones, and so they boarded 16 vessels, many old and rickety—yet, by divine grace and providence, every one of them arrived safely. Such were the risks of the voyage and such the degree of providence, that when one of the ships was captured en route by Spaniards, who resolved to take the Jews to the Inquisition, before they could carry out their design, God provided a French vessel, which took them out of the Spaniards’ hands and brought them safely to Florida or New Netherland, whence they continued in peace to Holland.”

## The Hope of Israel

The visionary Manasseh, Mortera’s energetic and independent deputy in the Amsterdam rabbinate, did not know Latin. Still, his books typically debuted in that language, for Manasseh found admiration and affection as the authority on all things Jewish in an ever widening circle of Protestant scholars. First it was van Baerle and other rationalist academics. Next came a more radical elite, including numerous refugees, in exile in the Netherlands on account of their biblically-informed hopes of impending politico-theological global revolution. Dismayed by the fragmentation of Protestant Europe into antagonistic nations and, especially, sects, such progressive luminaries as Adam Boreel and the Scot John Dury sought instead not just the union of all Christian churches but the ultimate reconciliation with the Jews and their restoration to the re-established Kingdom of Israel, its capital in Jerusalem, a utopian superpower for the Book of Daniel’s “fifth monarchy,” interpreted as the last 1,000 years of history. 1648-9 was a tumultuous period, the Peace of Westphalia after 80 years of conflict in western Europe coming at the same time as the Cossack-Polish War devastated eastern Europe. The decapitation in England of King Charles I, and his replacement by a pro-millenarian republican regime, was enough to settle many people’s doubts that something cosmic was afoot. Manasseh, the one widely-known representative Jew of his age, now published his endorsement of these congenial views, which put an imminently glorious Jewish future front and center of world history.

**MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL**

*Mikveh Yisrael, Hoc est, Spes Israelis* [Mikveh Yisrael, That is, The Hope of Israel]  
Amsterdam: [Manasseh ben Israel], 1650  
Rare Books Division  
Signed presentation copy

While too reticent to confirm the 1655-6 date many Protestants expected, Manasseh assembled in *Hope of Israel* support for four indicators of salvation: i) if “that horrible monster the Spanish Inquisition” had not fulfilled every last pre-redemption biblical curse, what could? ii) the ascent through the 16th century of Hebrew and Jewish studies to a position of extraordinary prestige in the 17th century, strongly suggested the corner had been turned; iii) the evidence of travelers in the western hemisphere, to which he devotes most of his book, suggested that the new-found Indians were none other than the long lost ten tribes of Israel. In particular, he publicized for the first time testimony given him by a Jewish sea captain, Antonio Montezinos, who reported his encounter (near Medellín, Colombia) with an Indian woman and her three male companions. Asked who their ancestors were, they made a gesture with three fingers; to Montezinos and Manasseh, this signified, undoubtedly, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; iv) the final fulfillment of prophecy is the recent arrival in the western hemisphere of Jews like his own brother, a merchant in Recife: “The time of the fifth monarchy shall be hid, until the time when it shall begin. Yet this I can affirm, that it shall be about the end of this age ... The shortness of time when we believe our redemption shall appear is confirmed by this, that the Lord hath promised that he will gather the two tribes, *Judah* and *Benjamin*, out of the four corners of the world, from whence you may gather, that for the fulfilling of that they must be scattered through all the corners of the world; as Daniel saith, “And when the scattering of the holy people shall have an end, all those things shall be fulfilled.” And this appears now to be done, when as our Synagogues are found in *America*.”

## 25

**REMBRANDT VAN RIJN**

*Manasseh ben Israel*  
Etching, Amsterdam, 1636  
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

Manasseh’s tact, accessibility, enthusiasms and sympathies won him the esteem of thinkers and doers across Europe, and his unpretentious manner went down well with the Puritans. Rembrandt, by no means a Puritan, clearly had an especially soft spot for him too. While his subjects may include chief rabbi Mortera (as *Moses with the tablets*) and the poet Daniel de Barrios with his wife, Abigail (*The Jewish Bride*), only with Manasseh is there much evidence of close friendship. In 1655, the year Manasseh left for

London on his mission of a lifetime—to dissuade the less eagerly “Judeocentric” members of the clergy from opposing the return of the Jews to English soil—Rembrandt even broke his rule against book illustration and executed extraordinary artwork for Manasseh’s new messianic commentary on Daniel.

## 26

**REMBRANDT VAN RIJN**

*Jews in a Synagogue*  
Etching with drypoint, Amsterdam, 1648  
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

The title, in use since the first Rembrandt catalog (1731), is problematic. An earlier reference conjectured *Pharisees in the Temple*. Certainly, the architecture was not drawn from Amsterdam synagogue life, but the figures (apart from the seated gentleman in a turban) strongly suggest 17<sup>th</sup> century East European Jews. Unpersuasive is the scholarly opinion that the traditional title “cannot be correct because Rembrandt shows Polish and Portuguese Jews together in one interior, whereas the two different sects never met in the same synagogue.” It was not until 1697 that the outnumbered Sephardi community took such a separatist measure as decreeing the expulsion of members who married Ashkenazi women. True, German Jews had a synagogue in Amsterdam from 1640, Poles from 1660, but for 1648 all bets are off. That year, which the sacred text of Kabbalah, the *Zohar*, slated for the messianic redemption, brought only the apocalyptic holocaust of the Cossack-Polish War. Genocidal Cossacks destroyed what, with Spain eliminated, had become the main center of Jewish life. With countless thousands of Jews slaughtered and the communities of eastern Europe reduced to a wretchedness from which they never recovered, refugees started streaming into Amsterdam, the continent’s most unthreatening destination. Not all easily absorbed, there were those who now continued their westward migration by sea.

## 27

**Bill of Lading of the *Endracht***

New Amsterdam, July 16, 1625  
Manuscripts and Archives Division, Gift of Elsie O. and Philip D. Sang Foundation

The ship *Endracht* arrived about half past five in the afternoon with the following:

A pile of woolen blankets, value	60 f[lorins]
Two chests of clothing for the soldiers	80 f
A chest of snaphances [flintlocks]	180 f
Armor and assorted straps	40 f
Diverse goods to carry on trade	
with the Indians	<u>100 f</u>
	460f

Found among family papers by a New York woman of Dutch extraction in 1960, this scrap is older by three

years than any other document from New Amsterdam. But, as Richard Morris, then chair of history at Columbia, told the *Times*, it is also the “missing link” that confirms that the earliest colonists to settle on Manhattan arrived on this ship, the *Endracht*, and on this date, July 16, 1625. Morris admitted finding the possibility “intriguing” that the trade goods referred to were those used months later by Director Minuit in his 60 florin purchase of Manhattan from the Indians. While doubt is often expressed about the adequacy of the \$24 equivalence—first propounded in 1846—it is evident from this document that the “purchase price” was in any case the equivalent of a pile of woolen blankets.

28

***Novum Amsterodamum*** [New Amsterdam]

Wash drawing in sepia, 1642-3

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection, Gift of I.N. Phelps Stokes

The original colonists of New Netherland went out as employees, “engaged in the service of the West India Company” and bound by its order of 1624 that: “They shall within their territory practice no other form of divine worship than that of the Reformed religion as at present practiced here in this country and thus by their Christian life and conduct seek to draw the Indians and other blind people to the knowledge of God and of his word, without, however, persecuting anyone on account of his faith but leaving each one the use of his conscience.” New Amsterdam’s Reformed church and its tavern were both completed in 1643. The presence in this image of the church and the absence of the tavern suggests a date maybe early that year. In 1647, a new Director General of New Netherland arrived in New Amsterdam. A staunch supporter of the Reformed Dutch Church, Peter Stuyvesant found much that was not to his strict Calvinist liking. His first deed here that set the tone was to act against the tavern’s sale of liquor on Sunday.

29

**Coats of Arms of New Amsterdam and New Netherland**

Middelburg, December 28, 1630

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

One Sunday in Middelburg, capital of the Dutch province of Zeeland, an anonymous artist prepared this heraldic draft for the consideration of the Heeren XIX, the West India Company’s directors in Amsterdam. On the right is the device approved for New Netherland. Left and center were two options for New Amsterdam. The design on the left was rejected. It was too radical, letting beavers completely displace the two lions that, with the triple cross, made up old Amsterdam’s coat of arms. To have two beavers rampant by way of supporters went quite far enough. In

truth, though, the wild western frontier settlement of New Amsterdam was a habitat where beaver was king. Other pelts (otter, raccoon, bear, deer, elk) came a distant second, and local tobacco, which an Englishman conceded was “as good as is usually made in Maryland,” placed third.

30

**Promulgation of the City of New Amsterdam, 1653**

Copied by Jacob Kip, New Amsterdam, 1656  
Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

New Amsterdam became a city, a self-governing corporation, on February 2, 1653. We would not know this but for one indiscretion too many on the part of Cornelis van Tienhoven, *schout* (sheriff) of New Netherland, a thug on whom Stuyvestant was heavily reliant. Not enough that his thuggery provoked a dreadful war with the Indians after one of them stole a peach from the *ex-fiscal* (district attorney)’s garden; he was only discharged when found running down the street in pursuit of a prostitute (not with intent to arrest—he was naked). The city council now wrote the directors requesting a replacement and enclosing the city’s foundational text—copied from the now long-lost original by city clerk Jacob Kip (of Kip’s Bay).

A provision of this document was to list qualifications for membership of the corporation, which was to act as the city’s judiciary as much as its administration. It stipulated that: “qualified, honorable, reasonable, intelligent, and the most well-to-do persons be chosen, who are neither corrupt nor opponents of the Directors of the Company nor their government here established, but peace-loving and well-affected subjects, being native-born or real estate-owning inhabitants, who, according to the laudable custom of Amsterdam, have been for at least seven years burghers here in this city, or else were born and brought up within the provinces of the United Netherlands, promoters and professors of the Reformed religion, as in conformity to the word of God and the regulations of the Synod of Dordrecht it is at present taught in the churches of the United Netherlands and here in this country [the Synod (1619) being where the strict Calvinists triumphed over the tolerant, universalist, Remonstrant faction]. Which court of justice, for the present time, until it shall be otherwise ordained or enlarged by the aforesaid Honorable Directors or their agents, shall consist of two *burgomasters* [city managers] and five *schepens* [councilmen], to be chosen and sworn by the Director General and Council [his two aides], and it is to be served by a secretary or clerk.”

31

**Minutes of the Burgomasters and Schepens**

New Amsterdam, 1654

Municipal Archives of the City of New York

“September 7: Jacques de la Motte, skipper of the bark \_\_\_\_ [illegible] requests payment of passage and board for the Jews whom he brought here from Cape St. Anthony [Cuba]. Solomon Pietersen, a Jew, appears and says that there are 23 souls, big and little, who must pay equally.” It was off Cuba, then, that the French privateer attacked the Spanish ship that had attacked the Portuguese ship that was taking the Recife refugees to the Netherlands (per item 23) and now the boat came into New Amsterdam. But after an eventful trip, the Jewish passengers—perhaps half a dozen families, it is very unclear—lacked means, or friends ashore, to pay for the ride. “September 10: Skipper of the bark St. C. \_\_\_\_ [page torn; St. Charles? St. Catherine?] v. various Jews. Court orders Jews’ possessions sold at auction. September 16: Auction fails to cover obligation. Principal debtors to be confined until debt is paid. October 5: Sailors’ spokesman demands 106 florins outstanding. Jew, Assar Leeven [Asser Levy], says no funds remain. Representative debtors ordered to stay in jail.” By spring, though, there were signs of stability—and threat: “March 1, 1655: Abram de la Sina [i.e., de Lucena], a Jew, has kept his store open during the [Sunday] sermon and sold by retail and therefore shall be deprived of his trade and fined six hundred florins. Director General and [New Netherland] Council have resolved that the Jews, who came last year from the West Indies and now from the fatherland, must prepare to depart herewith.”

### 32

#### PETER STUYVESANT

Letter to West India Company Directors, October 30, 1655

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

Stuyvesant writes: “Jewish liberty here is very detrimental, because the Christians cannot compete against them; and if they receive liberty, the Lutherans and papists cannot be refused.” But his distrust of diversity is not exclusively religious, for fellow-Calvinists are also cause for concern in this letter: “The Scots itinerant merchants who only travel hither and thither spoil the trade. These same always bring with them gunpowder and firelocks, which they sell to the savages to our own damage.” Not that Stuyvesant’s suspicion stops at ethnic groups; in accompanying dispatches, he reports that his “First Councillor de Sille is no fit man for these parts” (October 28), while Second Councillor La Montaigne “is an evil instrument... a viper in our bosom” (November 7).

### 33

#### PETER STUYVESANT

Letter to West India Company Directors, June 10, 1656

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

His case against tolerating Jews rejected by the Company, Stuyvesant begins this letter in a tone that seems almost sarcastic: “Concerning the Jewish nation, as far as trade is concerned they are not hindered, but trade here with the same privileges and liberties as other inhabitants. They have many times petitioned us for the free and public exercise of their abominable religion. Time will show what they can obtain from Your Honors.” Earlier in the year, they had obtained a cemetery (still visible on St. James Place, just south of Chatham Square) but the old 1624 limitation of worship *in public* to that of the Reformed Dutch Church remained in place for the lifespan of New Amsterdam.

### 34

#### STATES-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

Resolution of the High Mighty Lords States-General Amsterdam, January 29, 1657

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

Much of the Library’s unique Dutch Brazil and New Netherland material comes from the papers of Hans Bontemantel, a *schepen* of Amsterdam and the main “policy wonk” on the board of the West India Company. A respected public figure, privately he was the amused observer, accumulating material for his diary of Dutch politics 1653-1672, a “*chronique scandalouse*” not published until 1893. As a director, he was much involved in cleaning up the financial mess left behind in the Company’s hasty withdrawal from Brazil, a complex situation typified by this private act of the federal legislature to enable Jacob Valverde, once one of Recife’s chief Jewish merchants, “to plead before the Court of Holland concerning the revision for annulment of the judgment pronounced by the [defunct] Council of Brazil.” With van Baerle and others, Bontemantel pressed the Amsterdam city council in 1654-6 to help out the now-struggling Company by providing free passage and a year’s stipend to anyone who would go out to New Netherland. A Dutch culture of tolerance, millenarian excitement, the influence of Dutch Jews, with their growing role in Amsterdam’s burgeoning stock market, may all have been factors in the Company’s refusal to endorse Stuyvesant’s planned expulsion of Jews; but the directors’ anxiety about New Netherland’s lackluster economy and its failure to attract immigrants was likely at least as significant.

### 35

#### NEW NETHERLAND COUNCIL

Report to West India Company Directors, 1657-8 July 23, 1658

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

The year’s news is delivered summary-style: “Clergy petition Burgomasters and Schepens against the

Lutheran preacher, who is ordered to depart. Some women banished from the territory on account of their evil life. The village of Vlissingen [Flushing] on Long Island gave the Director an insolent reply in refusing to obey the order to expel the Quakers, saying that they regard themselves as morally obliged and legally entitled to lodge them. The matter has been taken care of and punishment meted out.” That insolent letter—the Flushing Remonstrance—is long lost, but the content endures. Transcribed into the record of the New Netherland Council, it was finally transferred to Albany in time to be caught up in the Capitol fire of 1911. Singed but complete, it survives. Its pluck gives Flushing a special place as home of New York spirit and spirituality. A long letter, tautly argued, its key passage reads, “We desire not to judge lest we be judged, neither to condemn lest we be condemned, but rather let every man stand and fall to his own Master. The law of love, peace and liberty in the states extending to Jews, Turks, and Egyptians, as they are considered the sons of Adam, which is the glory of the outward state of Holland, so our desire is not to offend one of his little ones, in whatsoever form, name or title he appears in, whether Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist or Quaker, but shall be glad to see anything of God in any of them, desiring to do unto all men as we desire all men should do unto us, which is the true law both of Church and State.”

36

*Nieu Amsterdam* [New Amsterdam]

Copper engraving, drawn 1642-3

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection, Gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes

This pair of prints (items 36 and 37) shows the growth of the city through the second Dutch period. The English and Dutch were such close friends (first in spite of Dutch non-recognition of the Commonwealth, then, after the restoration of the monarchy, because of it) that when they went to war—three times, once under Cromwell (1652-4) and twice after the Restoration (1664-7 and 1672-8)—it was in a spirit of candid commercial rivalry, to settle the question of who ruled the waves (i.e., slave trade). In 1664, Richard Nicholls, groom of the Duke of York’s bedchamber, appeared in New Amsterdam with a very small fleet. Stuyvestant was stubborn to the last, but, with no means of defense, the city council negotiated a surrender and left him no choice but to sign.

37

*Nieu Amsterdam at[que] New York* [New Amsterdam/New York]

Drawn 1673 and engraved by Aldert Meijer for Carolus Allard’s *Orbis Habitabilis*, Amsterdam, ca. 1700  
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection, Gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes

By the terms of the capitulation, preserved in its original printing in two copies, one in the Netherlands and the other in The New York Public Library, the English got their chief wish, a monopoly on shipping New Netherland’s imports and exports. In return, the Dutch settlers, too, got to make a wish. Stuyvesant’s administration having made such an issue of protecting the Reformed Dutch way of life, the request, duly granted by the Anglican victors, was that “the Dutch here shall enjoy the liberty of their consciences in divine worship and church discipline.” Thus the champions of exclusivity while in power became the champions of toleration in defeat. However eager to embrace the principle of toleration, though, it took the Dutch old guard, still dominant on New York’s city council, until the 1690s to abandon objection to the opening of the city’s first synagogue.

38

*Minutes of the Burgomasters and Schepens*

New Amsterdam, 1656

Municipal Archives of the City of New York

Court records must give a limited picture of a place, but the New Amsterdam that emerges is such a rough-and-tumble and litigious town that, besides court appearances and the activities described therein, there cannot have been much time for anything else. Though never more than some fluctuating fraction of one percent of the population, Jews are well represented in these proceedings. One (more Jewish than typical) day, when the court heard 14 cases, opened with Jacob Barsimon v. Isaack Israel—plaintiff claimed that on Friday last defendant injured him, striking him in the face in Abram Lusina’s cellar—and closed with the case of Cohen’s canoe. Pieter Montfoort said it was his; a witness saw him give the Indians ten fathom of wampum for it. Cohen, though, had two witnesses, who borrowed his boat before that alleged transaction. It was definitely the same canoe, with the couple of holes, from being shot at, that Cohen had warned of. Between Barsimon and Cohen, the court also heard from “a Jew named Elias Silva” on the complaint of Jan Gerritsen, brewer, that “he detained his negress or slave and had carnal conversation with her.” And there was the regular David Frere appearance, this time on a charge of excise evasion.

39

*Minutes of the Burgomasters and Schepens*

New Amsterdam, 1656

Municipal Archives of the City of New York

Frere was one of New Amsterdam’s more assertive characters. In one day’s sitting of the court, he is plaintiff in one case and defendant in another: “David Frere, plaintiff, v. Claes Jansen Ruyter’s wife. Plaintiff demands payment of 400 florins in peltries according to obligation. Defendant acknowledges the debt, as she offered plaintiff payment, but that he will not

accept any other payment but elks' hides of 20-24 lb. each, which cannot be had. Says she gave him the deed of her lot, her furniture, etc., in pledge, and offers that, on the arrival of her husband's vessel, which will come in five or six days, she will pay him in wampum at ten florins a beaver. Claims damages for glasses and a tree broken by the plaintiff. Parties being heard, defendant is condemned to pay plaintiff within three weeks, barring any action that she may institute." The other case is similar, just that this time he wants cash, not skins. He ends up obstructing the bailiff and is prosecuted for contempt. The verdict, "that the said Jew shall be publicly whipped at the stake and banished forth from this Province of New Netherland," was commuted, after mediation by New Amsterdam's solitary cultivated Jew, Joseph da Costa, to a 120 florin fine.

For all Stuyvesant's misgivings, the "Jewish pilgrims" turn out to be just like the rest of his rollicking frontier townspeople. Only one, Frere, seems actively unattractive, and, besides the transient da Costa, only one, Asser Levy, proves exceptionally civic-minded. Time and again it is Levy who overcomes Stuyvesant's objections to according Jews civil rights: the right to participate in the defense of New Amsterdam by joining the militia or to acquire *Burgher* rights ("citizenship"). By 1660, Levy is an established town worthy, a founder of the butchers' guild, "granted special exemption from slaughtering hogs and allowed to take oath in Jews' manner." The proprietor of a butcher's shop on Wall Street and of a popular tavern, he supports religious diversity with a large loan for the construction of the first Lutheran church in 1672 and joins Jacob Kip as trusted executor of wills and guardian of orphans.

#### 40 NICASIVS DE SILLE, *SCHOUT* [SHERIFF] OF NEW AMSTERDAM

Census  
New Amsterdam, July 10, 1660  
Manuscripts and Archives Division, Bontemantel Collection, New Netherland Papers

This census counts the buildings in New Amsterdam—342—and shows their distribution over 28 streets, naming one prominent resident of each street for ease of identification. The city's Jewish homes were generally in the six buildings that abutted "Slick Steegie [Muddy Lane], where Evert Duijckingh lives"—probably not the best address in town. The city institutions listed are the Latin School; Red Lion Brewery; Fiscal's Garden; fort; church; cemetery; city hall; slaughterhouse; fish market; weighing house; hospital; West India Company warehouses; and the gallows.

#### 41 PETER STUYVESANT

Steel engraving by Charles Kennedy Burt  
New York, 19th century  
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection (Gift of Evert A. Duykinck)

This flattering portrait of the first great New York personality does little to soften the dyspeptic impression left by contemporary documents. Controlling, intolerant, and egotistical, in defeat Stuyvesant mellowed to become a symbol of change. Retirement in English New York transformed him into a convivial local hero to English and Dutch alike—bigot turned mascot.

#### Pilgrims

Nothing made the Puritans so distinct as the resonance, pleasure, and personal and social direction they discovered in the Hebrew Bible—a literature hitherto more-or-less marginalized through the whole history of Christianity as not just the Old but the more or less obsolete Testament. Many of the Puritans were influenced by exposure to Hebrew while undergraduates at Cambridge—hence the name of the Massachusetts site of the Puritans' own academic foundation, the first in the world where mandatory Hebrew study dominated the undergraduate syllabus. In England during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, pagan Greek and Latin would be far surpassed in stature by Hebrew, the pristine, primitive language of God. Accomplishment in Hebrew became the hallmark of scholarship, and the published sermons of the period are studded with quotations in Hebrew script. Under this influence, even English underwent radical change, absorbing more and more of the cadences, constructions, idioms and allusions of biblical Hebrew—to the point where English and Israelite identities began to verge on the interchangeable. The Judaizing of practice followed the Hebraizing of language; soon stricter Sabbath observance was widespread, and pioneers began experimenting with pork abstention and circumcision. And finally there was faith. A brand new interpretation came out of nowhere to be the centerpiece of doctrine. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul had said, "All Israel shall be saved." This was now construed to mean that first the Jews would be saved and only then the elect among the non-Jews. First, God would restore the Jews to favor as his chosen people. They would receive revelations that only they were equipped to comprehend. They would understand the truth as Christians had never understood it. In the great war that would take place, the Protestants would defeat the Catholics and the Jews would defeat the Muslims to usher in the messianic Millennium. Then the Jews would rule the world in Jerusalem, together with their allies and partners in faith, the elect, the Saints, who would imbibe purified, perfected religion, the best of Christian gospel and Jewish ordinances, from the

Jews, who had absorbed the truth and would now gladly “hold out the sweet breasts of gospel-ordinances.”

In all this, New England formed the avant-garde. As Puritans gained in numbers and came under much greater pressure from the Church of England establishment, the Pilgrims of Plymouth (1620), and the settlers of Massachusetts (from 1630) and New Haven (1637) brought their ideas to a place where they could grow luxuriantly. Their leading figures, William Bradford of Plymouth, John Cotton of Massachusetts, and John Davenport of New Haven, were all passionate Hebraists. All were committed, too, to the idea that the Law of Moses was as binding on Christians as on Jews, the only proper source of law, and they were determined to make it the law of the land. Not all Puritans in England or America were millenarians and not all millenarians envisioned a central role for Jews. Nevertheless, a belief in the coming Age of the Jews, what historian Richard Cogley has handily termed “Judeocentric” millenarianism, could reasonably be described as more important to more people than any other grand idea in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century New England.

42

**OLIVER CROMWELL, CAPTAIN-GENERAL AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND**

Letter to “My esteemed Friend, Mr. Cotton, Pastor of the Church at Boston in New England”

London, October 2, 1651

Manuscripts and Archives Division

“I received yours a few days since,” Cromwell begins. “It was welcome to me because signed by you, whom I love and honor in the Lord.” Then he tells John Cotton what has *just* happened. One minute, the Battle of Worcester is going against him; the next, he has won the eleven-year Civil War. If early on constrained by diplomacy, Cromwell now feels free to wax messianic: “Surely the Lord is greatly to be feared as to be praised. We need your prayers in this [i.e., in triumph] as much as ever. How shall we behave ourselves after such mercies? What is the Lord a-doing? What Prophecies are now fulfilling? Who is a God like ours?” The idea was even entertained that Cromwell was himself the Jews’ expected messiah, one authority reporting that a group of “Asiatick” Jews visiting England caused “great scandal amongst the Saints” by making indiscreet “enquirys into Oliver’s pedigree.” Regardless, Cromwell, millenarian and pragmatist, was working on the readmission of Jews to England as early as 1652 and was even involved in a briefly-floated proposal to back a Jewish invasion of Chile.

43

**THOMAS VIOLET**

*Petition Against the Jews, Presented to the Kings Majestie and the Parliament*

London, 1661

Dorot Jewish Division

With Cromwell dead and the English monarchy restored in 1660, many changes made under the Commonwealth were reversed. Violet, London goldsmith, sometime alderman, and belligerent pamphleteer with nativist and hard currency bees in his bonnet, was determined that Cromwell’s very recent readmission of the Jews should be high on the “to undo” list. For the new regime’s benefit, he refers back to Manasseh’s meetings in London in 1655-6: “Upon several days hearing, Cromwel and his Council did give a Toleration and Dispensation to a great number of Iewes to come and live here in London, and to this day they do keep publick Worship in the City of London, to the great dishonour of Christianity, and publick scandal of the true Protestant Religion, and to the great damage of the Kingdome, especially our Merchants, whose Trade they engross, and eat the childrens bread: and in the Barbadoes they do so swarm, that had not care bin taken to banish them, in twenty years they would eat out the English: but by the care of this blessed Parliament they are within a year to be banished thence.” Violet’s petition backfired. The King let it be known that he was more interested in measures to protect the Jews than expel them. The threatened Barbados community was reprieved, and, when New York soon became an English possession, these domestic and colonial precedents were applied there as well.

44

**GEORGE KEITH**

*Truth Advanced in the Correction of Many Gross & Hurtful Errors*

New York: William Bradford, 1694

Rare Books Division

Early Quakers were as obsessed with Jews as the majority of other radical English Protestants. The first important Quaker theologian to settle in America was George Keith, in New Jersey from 1685 and Philadelphia from 1689. After three years in the city of brotherly love, he found himself in the dock. The establishment there maintained that Quakerism allowed its members unfettered freedom in matters of belief. Keith disagreed and—a bit of a paradox—was tried for sedition. Also on trial was William Bradford, the first printer in Philadelphia, a follower of Keith and about to publish his book (he later published Keith’s account of the trial as *New-England’s Spirit of Persecution Transmitted to Pennsylvania*.) The outcome of this first American trial on issues of freedom of the press encouraged the governor of New York to invite Bradford to relocate to his colony. Two years later, Bradford produced the first book ever printed in New

York. Darkly apocalyptic and featuring quotations in Hebrew script, *Truth Advanced* is geared to “the Expectation of many People, both of Jews and Christians, that within a few Years, some great Alteration will come to pass in the World” and concludes that “measuring the Temple perhaps may begin about the year 1700.” Keith insists here that not four but seven “persecuting monarchies” must precede the millennium. The sixth (Rome) is “near expired” “and last of all cometh the seventh, who shall call himself the Christ and shall either really be or pretend to be a Jew, otherwise how could he deceive so many of the Jewish nation, who do expect the Messiah shall be a Jew?” This first book published in New York is chiefly concerned with “this outward & visible Anti-christ,” who “shall deceive...many of the Jewish nation especially; and though some petty false Christs have formerly arisen, and deceived some Jews, yet they were nothing considerable to this last false Christ, that shall arise and shall work false miracles and lying wonders.”

45

***Verwunderlicher Anfang und Schmählicher Ausgang des Unlangst Neuenstandenen Juden Propheten Nathan Levi und des Jüdischen Messiae Sabezae*** [Sensational Rise and Humiliating Fall of Nathan Levi, Newly Emerged Prophet of the Jews, and the Jewish Messiah, Shabbethai Tzevi] Augsburg, 1666

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Much the least petty of the “false Christs” was the charismatic Turkish Jew, Shabbethai Tzevi, who exhilarated, then disappointed, not just “some Jews” but most Jews. Made receptive first by the spread of messianic kabbalah, first brewed by Isaac Luria in 16th century Safed, and then by the trauma of the East European holocaust of 1648-55, Jews of all sorts and in all sorts of places were transformed by ecstasy at news of Shabbethai’s self-proclamation as messiah (Gaza, 1665). Shabbethai scheduled the restoration of Israel for the following year, when he would seize the crown from the Ottoman Sultan in a miraculous bloodless coup. This was all almost as big news for non-Jews as for Jews—and just what the Protestant millenarians expected for their Year of the Beast. Protestant enthusiasm reinforced Jewish receptivity to Shabbethai, and much of the Jews’ worldwide awareness came from “mainstream media” such as this graphic newsheet from Germany. Returning to Turkey at the beginning of 1666, Shabbethai was politely arrested by the sultan and offered him the choice of Islam or death. Shown here is the kabbalist Nathan of Gaza, the brains of the movement, performing miracles to demonstrate Shabbethai’s messiahship; Shabbethai’s coronation, presentation to the Sultan, and arrest; and Shabbethai, his throat cut; disemboweled; and hanged upside down to the dismay of Constantinople’s Jews. Like the reports a little earlier that the ten lost tribes had marched into Mecca, rumors of Shabbethai’s death proved greatly

exaggerated. Instead he chose Islam, the option with the pension, pretending to convert on September 15, 1666, and dying of natural causes ten years later, on September 17, 1676, the Day of Atonement.

46

***Crescentius Mather aetatis suae 85, 1724*** [Increase Mather aged 85, 1724]

Copper engraving by I. Sturt, after Thomas Emmes Boston, ca. 1724

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

The most prominent Shabbatean in America was Increase Mather, son-in-law and successor of John Cotton as “high priest” of the Massachusetts theocracy and future president of Harvard. In his introduction to Mather’s collection of sermons delivered in Boston in 1665-6, *The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation* (item 59), John Davenport, founder of New England’s ultimate theocracy, the Colony of New Haven, explained that the sermons were “preached in a time when constant reports from sundry places and hands gave out to the world that the Israelites were upon their journey towards Jerusalem, from sundry foreign parts in great multitudes, and that they were carryd on with great signs and wonders by a high and mighty hand of extraordinary providence to the admiration and astonishment of all that heard it, and that they had written to others of the Nation, in Europe and America, to encourage and invite them to hasten to them. This seemed to many godly and judicious to be a beginning of the accomplishment of that Prophecie concerning the noise and shaking, and coming together of those dry bones spoken of in Ezekiel 37:7.” Mather’s belief in the imminent Restoration of Israel survived the Shabbatean debacle unscathed. Finding encouragement instead in the rumor of an individual Jew’s conversion here or a Turkish military setback there, it remained the obsession of a lifetime until his death, aged 84 in 1723—notwithstanding the caption to this image (which actually shows him aged 63).

47

***Samuel Sewall ae[tate] 77, 1728*** [Samuel Sewall, aged 77, 1728]

Drawn by H. Emmons; steel engraving by Oliver Pelton

Boston, 19th century

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

The kindly-faced chief justice was an English-born Harvard graduate when appointed in 1692 to Massachusetts’ new Court of Oyer and Terminer. During that year, this inexperienced tribunal achieved celebrity status with the 19 death sentences of the witches of Salem. In 1697, Sewall made news on his own, with an act of public contrition for those hysterical convictions. Three years later, his book, *The*

*Selling of Joseph*, was the first attack ever published on the American slave trade, based in Boston. The Puritan blueprint for society, the Hebrew Bible, compelled his conclusion that “all men, as they are the sons of Adam, are co-heirs, and have equal right unto liberty, and all other outward comforts of life.” But it was neither witchcraft nor slavery that dominated his mind, but the restoration of Israel. For 12 years, he labored on *Phaenomena Quaedam Apocalyptica* [Aspects of the Apocalypse]. Published in 1697, the year of his witchcraft trial recantation, his researches determined that the messiah would come to the Jews not in Jerusalem but in the Heart of America (i.e., Mexico), it being “manifest to all that very considerable numbers of Jews are seated in the New World.” Descriptions follow of communities in Barbados, Jamaica, Surinam, and Curaçao. “There are several families of them at New York and New England is seldom wholly without them. Now there are two at Boston, viz., Mr. Joseph Frazon and Samuel Frazon, his brother, to whom I am beholden for a sight of the Spanish Bible.” To show more impressive numbers of American heirs to the biblical promises, he must turn to the indigenous population. Anticipating the imminent reign in the American New Jerusalem of the Jews (to include the ten lost tribes) and the Saints, their allies among Protestant Christians, Sewall argues against the enslavement of Indians, for “the English nation, in shewing kindness to the aboriginal natives of America, may possibly shew kindness to Israelites unawares.”

48

**GEORGE CARLETON**

*A Thankfull Remembrance of Gods Mercie*

London: Printed by Aug. Math[ewes] for Robert Mylbourne and Humphrey Robinson, 1630  
Rare Books Division

The “Elizabethan Settlement” was a precarious compromise between Catholic and Reformed elements. Dissent, in either direction, was obsessively monitored. This popular volume by an Anglican bishop is a compendium of thwarted Catholic conspiracies against Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James I (1603-1625). Until eclipsed by Guy Fawkes’s plot to blow up the King in Parliament in 1605, the most famous of these alleged regicidal endeavors tried “not only to do away with King Antonio [the Portuguese pretender, in exile in England] but also to take away Queen Elizabeth’s life by poison, and that, by the means of Doctor Lopez, a Jew, the Queen’s physician, for fifty thousand crowns promised him.” Roderigo Lopez, Portuguese New Christian refugee, had been trying to use his influence with the Queen to have his friend Francis Drake permitted to capture Brazil for Don Antonio (compare item 11). The engraving of “Lopez compounding to poyson the Queene” has him asking “How much will you give?” of a double agent for Spain and the Earl of Essex, in the sting operation that produced Lopez’s hanging and the wave of anti-Jewish patriotism to which Shake-

speare catered with *The Merchant of Venice*, the “Christian comedy” he proceeded to write. Still, how far the new biblical basis of English religion had replaced Catholic-identified Christian imagery with symbols identifying instead with the people of Israel may be gauged from this book’s title page, where full-length portraits of the monarchs are labeled not Elizabeth and James but Deborah and Solomon, between whom a female personification of the true church crushes a disheveled pope beneath her feet, the scene crowned with the Hebrew inscription, Maccabee.

49

**JOHN UDALL**

*Mafteah Lesbon Ha-kodesh, That is, The Key of the Holy Tongue*

Leiden: Frans van Ravelingen, 1593  
Rare Books Division

When James VI of Scotland became James I of England, he is said to have asked on arrival in London to meet the author of this especially treasured book. Learning that he was no longer alive, the King replied, “By my soul, then, the greatest scholar of Europe is dead.” Udall’s modest publication was basically a translation of Petrus Martinius’s *Grammaticae Hebraeae*, “all Englished for the benefit of those that (being ignorant in Latin) are desirous to learn the holy tongue.” Udall may not have been “the greatest scholar of Europe”—subsequent editions of his book were “carefully corrected, and many faults emended . . . by a Jew rabine”—but he did produce the first Hebrew grammar in English. Udall, an early Puritan, was known for his humanitarianism and his humor. He was not joking, though, when he ended his book—in Hebrew—with the words, “Written by Yohanan Udall in jail.” Elizabeth’s Archbishop of Canterbury had sent him to the White Lion prison for “wicked, scandalous and seditious libel” [i.e., Puritanism], and there he died, giving the Puritan cause its first martyr. This copy bears the ownership signatures of Increase Mather and William Stoughton, instigator and chief judge of the Salem witchcraft trials and subsequently commander-in-chief and acting governor of Massachusetts.

50

***New Testament (“Geneva Bible”)***

Laurence Tomson, translator, from the Latin of Theodore Beza

London: Imprinted by Robert Barker, 1610  
Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

If any Englishman of the time really was “the greatest scholar in Europe,” it was Hugh Broughton. His selected writings were published posthumously as “the works of the great Albionean [i.e., English] divine, renown’d in many nations for rare skill in Salem’s [i.e., Jerusalem’s] & Athens’ tongues and familiar acquaintance with all rabbinical learning.” To avoid Elizabethan persecution, Broughton moved to Europe,

where he traveled around engaging rabbis in fluent biblical Hebrew as he went. Back in England on the ascent of King James, he was the chief proponent of a new English translation of the Bible, free of the distortions that riddled even the *Geneva Bible*. When his idea was adopted but he was excluded from the translation team in favor of lesser (but less opinionated) colleagues, he went back into exile in the Netherlands and ministered to the Puritan expatriate community of Middelburg.

The notes in this volume were copied by Edward Holyoke, a young English admirer of Broughton's, from the master's own *Geneva Bible*. The margins are full of annotations in Greek and, most importantly, in Hebrew, pointing out the shortcomings that arose from the translator's failure to understand the Hebrew subtext of the Greek New Testament. The last page includes a list of Greek and Hebrew words used by Broughton that Holyoke found hard to understand and the following inscription: "This correction of the N.T. is from Mr. Broughton's own hand: whose correction is in a large quarto of an English letter [i.e., in Gothic type] printed by the deputies of Christopher Barker, 1596. Englished from Mr. Beza by L. Tom. The originall correction is in the custody of Mr. John Turner, host of the English house in Midleburgh; who sent it us over in Novem. 1615. This N.T. was corrected for Mrs. Baynard in May 1617." Signed in Hebrew: "Edward Holyoke" and followed by a postscript: "We thinke the whole correction is not as he would have done it, but infinite matter is amended for great knowledg & comfort." The ancestor of one of the great Massachusetts families, Holyoke emigrated to the colony around 1637, became a judge in Salem in 1639, and published his contribution to millenarian literature, *The doctrine of life, or of mans redemption by the seed of Eve, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David*, in 1658.

51

***The Whole Booke of Psalmes, Faithfully Translated into English Metre***

Richard Mather, John Eliot and Thomas Weld, translators Cambridge MA: Imprinted by Stephen Day, 1640  
Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

The first book printed in the future United States, the so-called *Bay Psalm Book* is an example of the determination of the settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to create a lifestyle based on the Hebrew Bible. The metrical versions of the Psalms used for worship by Puritans in England and by the Pilgrims in neighboring Plymouth were found unacceptable because they failed to convey *without fail* an *exact* sense of the Hebrew. Determined to do better, Richard Mather, founder-minister of Dorchester, Massachusetts, and John Cotton's closest colleague, assigned different psalms to thirty New England ministers, for translation from the Hebrew into English rhyme as

well as possible without deviating in any way from the original. With Weld and Eliot, two of the ministers of Roxbury, he edited the uneven results into a volume that was used as the colony's liturgy for over a hundred years. Prefixed to the translation is a discourse, by Mather or Cotton, "declaring not only the lawfulness, but also the necessity of the heavenly ordinance of singing Scripture Psalmes in the Churches of God." In it, the author asks whether anything besides the Psalms may be sung in church and answers no. Ministers may compose prayers and sermons but the gift of spiritual poetry is something else: the Book of Psalms is an inspired "system," so complete that "let our condition be what it will, the Lord himself hath supplied us with farre better." Can soloists be tolerated? No; at the Red Sea, "all Israel sang that song ... all as well as Moses, the women as well as the men." Since Hebrew poetry does not use rhyme, is it permissible to do so in translation? Yes, we might just as well have a problem "singing the Hebrew psalms in our English tunes (and not in the Hebrew tunes) as singing them in the English meeter (which are our verses [i.e., the English way in poetry])." Since "the Lord hath hid from us the Hebrew tunes," and likewise the rules of Hebrew prosody, both of which, otherwise, "wee should think ourselves bound to imitate," every nation may "without scruple" follow "the graver sort" of their own country's tunes and poetry. Finally the author apologizes that, for all the translators' diligence, readers will not always find word for word equivalence, a problem inherent in the superiority of Hebrew, for "some Hebrew words have a more full and emphaticall signification than any one English word can or doth sometime express."

52

***Psalterium Americanum*** [American Book of Psalms]

Cotton Mather, translator  
Boston, ca. 1717  
Manuscripts and Archives Division, from the Brinley Library

A team effort, the *Bay Psalm Book* was mocked as much for its inconsistencies as its infelicities. But its ambition—to render the Psalms into memorable English verse while sacrificing none of the Hebrew meaning—laid down the ultimate challenge to the Puritan poet. The blind Milton, who rose daily at 4:00 a.m. to listen to Job in its impossibly hard Hebrew, tried and failed. But Cotton Mather, the leading intellectual of colonial New England and author of around 400 books (he aimed for one a month), was not one to be deterred. Grandson of John Cotton and Richard Mather, son of Increase Mather and his successor in the pastorate of Boston's North Church, he also inherited the spiritual leadership of the little that was left of Puritan New England by the beginning of the 18th century, and this gave the task practical as well as artistic purpose. This manuscript is the result of his attempt at "a translation exactly conformed

unto the original; but all in blank verse, fitted unto the tunes commonly used in our churches.” Published in 1718, together with a brief commentary, made up in large part of what he liked to call “treasures,” or “golden treasures,” from the “learned rabbins,” Mather’s attempt seems to have been roundly ignored, and no evidence remains of any congregation ever attempting to use it, not even his own. But such was his fate. Non-Puritan immigrants now vastly outnumbered the Saints. The new royal charter of 1691 allowed the colony to keep its autonomy but destroyed the theocracy by forbidding limitation of the franchise to members of its churches. The liberals took over Massachusetts, and Mather was left as the apologist, more isolated than revered, for preoccupations that most people no longer cared about. Jews, for example. Mather, a proud Hebraist who preferred to be addressed as “rabbi,” remained a Judeocentrist in a non-millenarian age. Accordingly, he lowered his expectations and chose to find encouragement anywhere he could, publishing a report that a couple of Jewish children in Berlin had converted to Christianity despite the opposition of their parents as if it were a matter of apocalyptic moment. And “from the dust,” he wrote, “where I lay prostrate before the Lord, I lifted up my cries...for my own having the happiness, at some time or other, to baptize a Jew that should by my ministry be brought home unto the Lord.” By 1724, however, the year after his father’s death, after an enervating century of Puritan expectation of the imminent restoration of Israel, he concluded that the prospect was in a “dead sleep.” Before his death in 1728, he was ready to go even further; in a piece entitled “A national conversion of the Jews: whether to be hoped for,” he finally answered in the negative, and this founding hope of America was indeed, at last, allowed to sleep—in Boston, if not in New Haven.

53

**JOHN COTTON**

*Abstract of the Lawes of New England As They are Now Established*

London: Printed for F. Coules and W. Ley, 1641  
Rare Books Division

In 1636, Cotton and others were invited to contribute their thinking on the codification of Massachusetts law. Cotton’s goal was to recreate a pure Israelite theocracy, purged of any trace of English common law. To that end, he submitted a code titled *Moses, his Judicials* (i.e., his judicial, as opposed to ritual, laws). Finally, in 1641, the eclectic *Body of Liberties* was adopted, drafted by another Hebraist, Nathaniel Ward, and drawing on common and Mosaic law alike. In Plymouth, Mosaic law was accorded the status of principal authority, and in the Colony of New Haven, Judeocentrist central, a majority of all statutes ever enacted derived from biblical authority. The most ambitious formulation of this vision for America, however, was Cotton’s. Published in London with an

over-optimistic title in the year it was rejected, it calls for the death penalty in cases of: “blasphemy; idolatry; witchcraft; perjury; seducing others to heresy; profaning the Lord’s day; betraying the country; reviling governor and council; sedition; rebellious children, whether they continue in riot or drunkenness after due correction from their parents; murder; adultery; incest; unnaturall filthinesse, man with man or woman with woman; buggery; pollution of a woman known to be in her flowers; whoredom of a maiden in her father’s house; man stealing; and false witness bearing.” Personal injury law features, of course, the principle of “member for member,” while in international law, “women, especially such as have not lyen by man, little children and cattel, are to be spared and reserved for spoyle.”

54

**ROGER WILLIAMS**

*The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience*  
London, 1644

Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

The first direct attack on New England theocracy came from Roger Williams, the minister of Salem, who came to the view that the judges of the Massachusetts courts should not be in the business of enforcing conformity of belief on behalf of John Cotton and the colony’s religious establishment. Introducing the concept of separation of church and state to American discourse, he coined the formulation “wall of separation.” For his “new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates,” the Massachusetts General Court expelled Williams in 1635. The following year, he began settlement of Providence as an experimental colony without coercion. Subsequent refugees from Massachusetts would join him in developing Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport (notably Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer in 1638), or would seek refuge under Stuyvesant: Quakers unsuccessfully in Flushing, Baptists successfully, under Deborah, Lady Moody, in Gravesend (Brooklyn). Williams, in London in 1644 to obtain a charter for the Providence Plantations, presented to Parliament his manifesto against the bloody tene(n)t of persecution. His proposition was that “to molest any person, Jew or Gentile, for either professing doctrine, or practicing worship merely religious or spiritual, it is to persecute him, and such a person (whatever his doctrine or practice be, true or false) suffereth persecution for conscience.” His twelve-point platform culminates in the idea that “true civility and Christianity may both flourish in a state or kingdom notwithstanding the permission of divers or contrary consciences, either Jew or Gentile.” Note proposition nine: “in holding [against] an enforced uniformity of religion in a civil state, we must necessarily disclaim our desires and hopes of the Jewes conversion to Christ” and proposition seven: “the state of the land of Israel, the kings and people thereof in peace and war, is proved figurative and ceremonial,

and no pattern nor precedent for any kingdom or civil state in the world to follow,” the latter a rebuttal of the prevailing New England view that the only legitimate model for a state was the theocratic state of Israel envisioned in the Torah.

## Jewes in America

Thomas Thorowgood, millenarian rector of Grimston, was a country gentleman in the English county of Norfolk. Ahead even of leading “revivalist” Richard Baxter, he was the most enthusiastic advocate of the evangelization of Native Americans, organizing support for the missionary efforts of John Eliot (see item 51) and his colleagues. As early as the 1630s, he had been taken with the possibility of the “Jewish-Indian theory” and had written to Roger Williams, “the first of our new nation in New England that learned the language and so prepared towards the conversion of the natives,” to ask if “he found anything Judaicall among them.” Williams replied that there was indeed reason to “suspect that the poore natives...are Jewes.” In particular, “they constantly and strictly separate their women in a little wigwam by themselves in their feminine season...and some taste of affinity with the Hebrew I have found.” In 1650, John Dury sent over to Thorowgood from the Netherlands a copy of *The Hope of Israel* (item 24), the contents of which he promptly shared in English summary, together with evidence on the subject that he had been gathering on his own. The Jewish-Indian theory as propounded by Thorowgood was widely accepted in its time and popular into the 19th century, when it inspired the Mexican archaeological research of Viscount Kingsborough and provided the mythological underpinnings of Mormonism.

55

### THOMAS THOROWGOOD

*Jewes in America, or, Probabilities That the Americans are of That Race*

London: Printed by W.H. for Tho. Slater, 1650  
Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

Thorowgood’s case comprises several distinct elements. Most of the book is devoted to identifying customs common to various American Indian tribes and rabbinic or, especially, biblical Jews. The privileging of biblical evidence made sense, since the theory presumed that these ten northern tribes of Israel had been lost, in this unknown landmass at the end of the world, all through the rabbinic period. Accordingly, their Judaism might be expected to reflect arrested development. Thus: They delight exceedingly in dancing, men and women, yea and women apart by themselves. And so they did in Israel (Exodus 13: 20); virginity is not a state praiseworthy among the Americanes and it was a bewaileable condition in Iury [Jewry] (Judges 11:37); the Indian women are easily delivered of their children without midwives, as those in Exodus 1:19; the Indians are

much given to weeping, their women especially, and at burials; this was in fashion among the Jews (Jeremiah 19:17); the Indians have their posts and messengers that were swift of foot whom they dispatch upon their affaires and they ran with speed and such were among the Jewes (2 Samuel 18:24). Thorowgood is a proficient Hebraist and does his best with language similarities. Thus: “the name of that great city Mexico is observed in sound and writing to come very neare unto that name of our deare lord, (Psalm 2:2), Meschico [“his anointed,” or “his messiah.”]” When he argues from the “man-devouring” practiced in Brazil, Guyana and the Lesser Antilles, he realizes it may sound like a stretch and that his readers may be tempted to ask: “There be Carybes, cannibals, and maneaters among them, therefore they be Jewish?” But let it be considered, among the curses threatned to Israel upon their disobedience, wee read Levit. 26:29 ‘Yee shall eat the flesh of your sonnes and of your daughters.’”

56

### HAMON L’ESTRANGE, LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF THE WASH

*Americans No Iewes, or Improbabilities That the Americans are of That Race*

London: Printed by W.W. for Henry Seile, 1652  
Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

Sir Hamon was a great English landowner of ancient lineage, but any suspicion of a P.G. Wodehouse or Gilbert and Sullivan character of limited acumen suggested by the exotic name or hereditary title can be dismissed. Antiquary and naturalist, he is best known for his description of the dodo. A Royalist, he was not favorably impressed with what had become of English intellectual and spiritual life since the Revolution. But it was with special interest that he picked up the book sent him by his neighbor, Parson Thorowgood. In response, he published a wide-ranging review essay, in the course of which he objects to Thorowgood’s coinage in referring to the people of New England as Novangles—he says it could all too easily be confused with Newfangles—and takes a swipe at “Mr. Cotten, a man and minister of prime note, and smooth and venerable carriage and esteem, but...a great factor and fosterer of strange opinions.” One by one, he works through Thorowgood’s proofs—suggesting that dancing is a fundamental human impulse, not something the American Indians could only have brought with them from the land of Israel, and arguing that the cruelty the Indians had suffered from the Spaniards did not necessarily suggest they were Jews, whose acute suffering in exile the Bible prophesied, otherwise the Dutch, who also suffered so much in their struggle for independence from Spain, should be Jews as well. Having finished with Thorowgood, L’Estrange “was ready to fold up this frolique” when “there came unto mine hands a small book entitled *The hope of Israel*, showing the place of the ten tribes” in the Andes. Well, Sir Hamon knew the Andes firsthand, and

“though I have often travailed over those parts on dry foot, yet I could never find the least track or trace of any matter that might invite my sense or opinion to concur with him.” He concludes that the author is a perfect talmudist, but he does not intend this as a compliment. Rather, he describes how Manasseh “proceeds to tell a number of strange stories, till he comes to the greatest wonder of all, which is the Sabbaticall River, where he drowns himself in dividing it...I confesse I finde him a man of so sharpe an appetite and strong and easie an ostrich concoction [constitution], as I cannot sit at table any longer with him and therefore I now rise and offer others every one to feed according to his own phancie.”

57

**WILLIAM PYNCHON**

*Holy Time: or, The True Limits of the Lords Day*  
London: Printed by R.I. and are to be sold by  
T.N[jewbery], 1654  
Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

The independent-minded Pynchon was one of the original (1630) Massachusetts Bay colonists and it was entirely on his determined initiative that colonization was extended west of the Bay area. The founder of Springfield, he made a fortune in the beaver trade, then turned his hand to theology. His first book, *The Meritorious Price* (London, 1650), was enough to put him on the wrong side of the theocracy. It has the distinction of being the first book banned (in fact, burned) in Boston; the Library has one of the eight surviving copies. Pynchon was a Judeocentrist of a kind—he gave pride of place to the Hebrew Bible and Jewish studies—but he was not a Judaizer nor a millenarian. Rather than reinventing Christianity in the image of the Hebrew Bible, as did the Cotton club, Pynchon reinvented the Hebrew Bible in the image of Christianity. Reading Christianity into ancient Israelite worship is the function of his next book (1652), *The Jewes synagogue: or, A treatise concerning the ancient orders and manner of worship used by the Jewes in their synagogue-assemblies. Gathered out of the Sacred Scriptures, the Jewish rabines, and such modern authors, which have been most conversant in the study of Jewish customes*. Finally, there is *Holy Time*, written after the first pioneer of America’s westward expansion had retreated to England to escape the reach of his nemesis, John Cotton. The book is an attack on the Sabbath schedule—from sundown on Saturday through sundown on Sunday—that had become common in New England in imitation of Cotton’s personal practice. With an epigraph boldly drawn from Maimonides’ *Laws of Sacrifices*, Pynchon claims to prove “that the Lord’s Day doth begin with the natural morning, and that the morning of the natural day doth begin at midnight; that the Jews’ beginning of the day at the sunset evening was only in relation to the date of the person purified from his Levitical uncleanness; that the Jews themselves did hold that the natural day did continue after sunset till midnight.”

58

**WILLIAM ASPINWALL, N[EW] E[NGLAND]**

*A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy or Kingdome That Shortly is to Come into the World*  
London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1653  
Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library

Aspinwall, a notary in Charlestown, was another Massachusetts colonist who returned to England, in his case more to attack than retreat. In the messianic year 1655, he prepared a second edition of Cotton’s *Laws*, in the hope that they might be implemented now that they needed so urgently to be in place. To those who argue that Moses’s “judicials” are too terse to provide the colony’s exclusive legal authority, he answers in his *Brief Description* of two years earlier, “that though the Laws be few and brief, yet they are perfect and sufficient, and so large as the wisdom of God judged needful for regulating judgment in all ages and nations. For no action or case doth, or possibly can, fall out in this or other nations, by sea or land, but the like did, or possibly might fall out in the land of Israel (Ecclesiastes 1:9), and yet they had no other laws or rules of judgment, but what now remains to all posterity. Nevertheless that people were counted even by the Nations to be the only free and wise people in respect of their Statutes and Judicials (Deuteronomy 4:5-8).” Aspinwall was one of the leaders of the Fifth Monarchy Men, a Massachusetts-based political movement that believed in immediate implementation of the conditions of the millennium by whatever means necessary, rather than waiting around for “salvation history” to unfold. In this book, he concludes “that the uttermost durance of Antichrist’s dominion will be in the year 1673, as I have proved from Scripture... ere which time, it will be necessary that the ten horns, or kings, which are the strength of the Beast, be broken off, which work is already begun in the beheading of Charles, late king of three kingdoms... Verily there hath been a great shaking already, and more yet remaines, for the work will not be wholly finished until the Jewes be called.” With the restoration of Charles II in 1660, the Fifth Monarchists’ millennial plans suffered a devastating setback. On January 1, 1661, a few dozen of them, led by the Boston cooper Thomas Venner, attempted a coup in London. Venner’s Rising lasted through January 4, when the leaders were apprehended (and later hanged), 4,000 Quaker followers were arrested, and the counter-counter-revolution was over.

59

**INCREASE MATHER**

*The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation*  
London, 1669  
Rare Books Division

Mather’s survey of opinions on the restoration of the Jews acknowledges that there are Protestant millenarians who grant “the Jewish nation shall be called, but not come into their own land.” For his part,

though, he considers this limited or individual salvation not nearly good enough to be in God's plan for the Jews—for the Gentiles, who have their own lands, “were never made partakers of so much grace nor of so great privileges as the Jews.” With citations from such classical Jewish sources as Targum, Talmud, and Midrash, and the medieval commentators Rashi, ibn Ezra, Nahmanides, and Abrabanel, Mather, an uncompromising “Christian Zionist,” proceeds to expound his own view that “their salvation be national.” Nevertheless, “before this salvation of Israel be accomplished, the Pope and Turk shall be overthrown and destroyed. . . . Of the destruction of these enemies, doth Moses seem to prophesie (Deuteronomy 32:43). The Pope (Anti-Christ) shall be destroyed before all Israel be saved. . . . The Turk must likewise be destroyed before all Israel be saved. For that Eastern Anti-Christ (as some are wont to call him) having the land of Israel in his possession, we may be sure they may never peaceably enjoy the Land of the Fathers again, as long as he hath any power to hinder it. . . . Before this salvation is over, the great battle of Armageddon must be fought which will be the most terrible day of battle that ever was: Turk and Pope, and the house of Austria, etc., the great dragon of the bottomless pit acting and breathing in them all. All Europe, Asia and Africa will be in a flame when this day is come. Asia is like to be in a flame of war between Israelites and Turks, Europe between the followers of the Lamb and the followers of the beast, the worshippers of Christ and Anti-Christ. . . . At the return of Israel, the land of their fathers will be too little for them, such will the multitude of their number be, and . . . therefore they must have other countries adjoining for their possession. The salvation of Israel will be glorious in respect of the continuance of their happiness when once this great work is brought unto perfection.”

60

**RICHARD BAXTER**

*The Glorious Kingdom of Christ, Described and Clearly Vindicated Against the Bold Asserters of a Future Calling and Reign of the Jews*

London: Printed by T. Snowden for Thomas Parkhurst, 1691

Rare Books Division

The New Testament is not without mixed messages. Some of its statements might be understood as vaguely philosemitic, others vaguely antisemitic. The latter, however, are easier to spot, and it was from these that Richard Baxter, Thorowgood's collaborator in supporting missionary work among the American Indians, took his cue. Perhaps the greatest “New Testamentarian” evangelical preacher of his day in England, he seems to have found no resonance at all in the glory that was Israel. By Judeocentric millenarianism he was doubly bemused, for reasons he explained in this volume, which he dedicated “to Mr. Increase Mather, the Learned and Pious Rector of the New-England Colledge (now in London.)” The

president of Harvard was in England on his famously successful mission to negotiate a renewal of Massachusetts' charter that preserved the colony's threatened autonomy. Mather was honored with this book's dedication because he “had long and laboriously studied the Controversie, and were confident of much of that which I write against. I have read no man that hath handled it with so much Learning and Moderation as you have done, and, therefore, I knew no man fitter, if I err, to detect my Errours.” Moderation? Mather? Yes, his manner was very civil, whereas the prominent London preacher Thomas Beverley, who expected the millennium in 1697, had recently characterized those, like Baxter, who disagreed with him as “Semi-Sadducees of the Apostasie.” But, rather than hoping for “this pretended Priviledge and Monarchy” of the Jews, Baxter thought that the desire for a kingdom or commonwealth of Jews “as should continue them in a Jewish Line and Peculiarity, distinct from the Catholick [i.e., universal] mixed Church, is a wickedness, and contrary to the very nature of Christianity, and the Kingdom and Design of Christ. For Christ came to take down the Partition Wall, Middle Wall, and make of two, one new man (no longer two).” And, anyway, “the Jews are so far from being of any better nature or desert than other men, that the[y] have] been found in all nations to be the most covetous, treacherous, and sottish sort of people—much unprepared for so great a change”!

## The Rise of Modernity

In which reverberations of these 16th–17th century debates are followed from Spinoza to the Civil War.

61

*The Case of Many Hundreds of Poor English-Captives in Algier: Together with Some Remedies to Prevent Their Increase, Humbly Represented to Both Houses of Parliament*

London, 1680

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

The Barbary States (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya), regarded as the “rogue states” of early modernity, provided a major headache for America into the 19th century, resulting in the United States' first foreign conflict, the Tripolitan War of 1801-15. The sultans, beys, and deys had been in the rewarding business of condoning piracy and the enslavement and ransoming of passengers and crew as early as the 16th century. This petition to Parliament concerns attacks by Algerian corsairs on English shipping, especially traveling from America. The preamble offers a graphic description of the physical abuse of “upwards of 1,500” English slaves currently held in Algiers, but the rest of the document is devoted to identifying the source of the problem (Jews) and proposing a solution for it (collective punishment). The allegations are comprehensive: there is “hardly any one vessel of

those cruel pyrates but the owners thereof are for a great part Jews.” Jews are also alleged to be the main buyers of captured goods and humans, “there being few slaves in Algier but a Jew is their patroon.” While the English allow the Jews “full exercise of their false and pernicious religion,” their malice toward Christians is such that it is they who incite the Muslims to compel their captives’ conversion to Islam and they who stir up the Muslims “so to beat and abuse poor captives, they not daring to do it themselves.” The reason Tripoli and Tunis are less of a threat than Algiers is because of the “paucity and poverty of the Jews of those places.” Most pertinently, however, “it is much to be feared that the Jews in Algier have too great correspondency with and countenance from the Jews here in England, and that by their means it is that they in Algier have always lists of all our English ships, especially of the Fleets coming from any of His Majesties Plantations.” The simple remedy outlined here is that “whatever damage or loss the English shall sustain by means or procurement of the Jews in Algier or elsewhere, it shall be required and made good to the losers out of the estates of the Jews here in England.” This “is but *jus gentium*...for on this principle only is grounded all letters of mart [licenses to privateers to attack the mercantile shipping of enemy powers] and reprisal granted by kings and states. Moreover, it is verily believed that the Jews in all places are in a combination and society whereby they have influence on the proceedings of all Jews in what place soever and shares in their profit and loss.” This proposal should put a stop to “the great joy and Laughter of the Jews,” who “are projecting to destroy us all abroad, and eating up the Trade of our English Merchants at home.” However imaginative, this humble representation had no more success than Violet’s earlier attempt (item 43) to stall the integration of a Jewish population under the English crown.

62

***Benedictus de Spinoza, Iudeus et Atheista***

[Benedict de Spinoza, Jew and Atheist]

Etching, ca. 1700

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

The periodization of history is arbitrary enough and no periodization is more fraught than the start of modernity, but one classic date that seems as good as any is July 27, 1656. On this date, Isaac Aboab, rabbi in Recife until two years earlier, conducted the excommunication of the 23-year old Baruch Espinoza, the outstanding student of chief rabbi Mortera (see item 23). The power of excommunication or expulsion from the Jewish community was traditionally the prerogative of the rabbinate, but in Amsterdam it was a power that the community’s board had arrogated to itself. Manasseh ben Israel had opposed this innovation and had thereupon himself been excommunicated—though just for a day, to make a point. The

board had mixed feelings about Manasseh anyway, fearing his high-profile friendships with progressive Christians would attract adverse attention from the Calvinist hardcore, and undoubtedly the overriding determination to be inoffensive weighed as heavily as concern about internal heterogeneity in the unique fury with which the Amsterdam Jewish community’s leadership condemned its prized young intellectual. The proclamation, which finds space for line after line of cursing and damnation, refers only in the vaguest terms to the enormity of his “evil opinions” and “horrendous heresies,” and it is clear that such things were thought better not spoken of. Still, from the reports of others and Spinoza’s own subsequent writings, it is clear enough what had happened. Tentatively no doubt, for such was his nature, the young Spinoza had broken the Straussian rule of not spelling out what the medieval Jewish elite only hinted at: that religious discourse was figurative, that its truths were abstract, that the Bible was a body of sublime literature whose authors were mortal. These views are worked out most fully in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, the critical review of the Hebrew Bible and the institutions of ancient Israel from which he reaches his signature conclusion that “in a free commonwealth, every man may think as he pleases and say what he thinks.”

63

***Spinoza in Mortal Danger***

Drawn by Jacob Buys; copper engraving by Noach van der Meer, Jr.

Amsterdam: Jan van Gulik, 1784

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

As prototype of a new ethics of tolerance, liberalism, and relativity, Spinoza became the stuff of legend. Spinoza died in 1677, and just 20 years later as reputable a source as Pierre Bayle records the most famous of all Spinoza stories in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. Spinoza’s alienation from the synagogue might never have happened, or not so fast, Bayle suggests, had matters not been exacerbated by the attack of “a Jew who knifed him as he was leaving the theater. The wound was minor, but he believed that the assailant’s intention was to kill him.” Here, the artist has posited two assassins, one of them a dangerously oriental-looking Jew, and Spinoza has, even more implausibly, become quite the dandy. In the background stands not a theater exactly, but Amsterdam’s famous synagogue, built almost twenty years after the alleged incident took place. But the earlier print (item 62) gives a well-attested impression of what Spinoza actually looked like, with his gentle, reticent demeanor and dark, Sephardic features. Many Spinoza stories concern his modesty. It is reported that, before resorting to excommunication, the community’s board tried offering him an annual pension of 1,000 florins for life to modify his views. Certainly it is well documented that he spent his adult life, as an

optician, refusing pensions and legacies as far beyond his needs. The quasi-heraldic symbol here (in item 62) of the snake sucking its tail reflects an image Spinoza once invoked of the simplicity he aspired to and his distaste for waste. As for the caption (“Jew and Atheist”), that is more controversial. It might be reasonable to regard Spinoza as the climax of the “Jewish contribution to civilization,” the rationalist, reductionist Mosaic-Maimonidean trajectory, but whether, after excommunication, he remained a Jew—Mortera would have said no; and whether he was an atheist, Spinoza, the “God-intoxicated man,” would have said no, only that God was Nature, or in the nature of an abstraction.

64

***Figures Explanatory of the Conformation of the Head***

Engraving

London, 18th century

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

This diagram from the dawn of phrenology—the view that the mental (including moral) faculties conform to the shape of the skull—advances the basic (erroneous) contention that the steeper the head, the deeper the mind. The case is made with contrasting profiles of the “Favorite of Fortune,” a representative of the idle rich, and John Locke, supreme example of intellectual attainment. “Life, liberty,” etc.—that’s Locke; “absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty,” Locke’s *Letter on Toleration* (1690). He did not argue *for* the toleration of Jews because by the 1680s in England it was an established fact. Rather, he argues *from* their toleration for their more absolute toleration: “If we allow the Jews to have private houses and dwellings amongst us, why should we not allow them to have synagogues? Is their doctrine more false, their worship more abominable, or is the civil peace more endangered, by their meeting in public than in their private houses?”

65

***New-York Journal; or, The General Advertiser***

New York: Printed by John Holt, September 17, 1772

Rare Books Division

The Enlightenment enjoyed few devices as much as mock-biblical or oriental style. From Voltaire to Benjamin Franklin, any number of 18th century writers tried their hand. If the initial impulse was to evade censorship by appearing to talk about long ago (or at least far away), soon the form became an entertainment for its own sake, even if the effect today seems unbearably arch and effete. One contributor to this genre was an anonymous passenger on a ship from New York to London—calling himself Isaac the Scribe, he has been conjecturally identified with Isaac Pinto, translator of the prayer book (item 75)—who amused himself composing biblical-style character

sketches of celebrity fellow travelers: the Duchess of Gordon; Lady Moore, the governor’s wife; and his favorite, the meek, charitable, tender, and well-named spinster heiress, Miss Richa—or Ritchie (Rachel)—Franks. Her father, Jacob, shipping magnate and president of the New York Jewish community, had just died, and she was moving to England, where she finally married. No American suitor had ever passed muster with her forceful and accomplished mother, Abigail, born in New York in 1695. David Gomez, for example, scion of the city’s leading Sephardi family, was a “stupid wretch.” Others, if sufficiently cultivated, were not Jewish. Richa’s sister, Phila, cut/tied the knot by eloping with family friend and future Loyalist general Oliver DeLancey. Her mother was devastated, and perhaps with reason. On one egregious occasion, the now long-married Oliver was arrested after bringing a gang to break into the home of a Jewish woman, newly arrived from the Netherlands, whom he proposed to rape. His purported defense was the woman’s resemblance to Governor Clinton’s wife: “if he could not have her, he would have her likeness.”

66

**AARON LOPEZ**

Invoice to Samuel and William Vernon

Newport, March 21, 1768

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Invoice for 25 boxes of spermaceti candles “bo[ugh]t of Aaron Lopez,” the leading figure in the American sperm whale trade, by the Vernon brothers, the leading figures in the American slave trade. A presence in Newport since Roger Williams’ governorship in the 1650s, Jews enjoyed a brief golden age there beginning in the 1740s, when as New Christians they began arriving from Portugal and participating substantially in Newport’s own golden age of Atlantic trade. Lopez arrived from Portugal in 1752, underwent circumcision, and in time became the leading force in the Newport Jewish community. With his father-in-law, Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, who came to Newport from Portugal in 1745 and began the American sperm whale oil candle industry, Lopez created the United Company of Spermaceti Chandlers, an association of manufacturers to negotiate prices with the Nantucket whalers and deter new competitors from entering the business. Known as the “Spermaceti Trust,” it was the model in the next century for the cartels of industrialized America’s gilded age. By the Revolution, Lopez owned 27 ships besides his manufacturing interests and topped the town’s tax roll. As a patriot, the arrival of the British prompted his departure from Newport and the loss of his fleet and fortune. He settled in Leicester, Massachusetts, and died in 1782. All this commercial activity would seem a far cry from the serenity of Longfellow’s “sublime” image of Newport’s Jews in his *Jewish Cemetery at Newport* (“forever with reverted look/The mystic volume of the world they read,” etc.). Illuminating, however, is

the diary entry made by Ezra Stiles, president of Yale and Revolutionary America's foremost academic, on the death of "the amiable, benevolent, most hospitable" Aaron Lopez: "A merchant of the first eminence, from honor and extent of commerce probably surpassed by no merchant in America. He did business with the greatest ease and clearness—always carried about with him a sweetness of behavior, a calm urbanity, an agreeable and unaffected politeness of manners. Without a single enemy and the most universally beloved by an extensive acquaintance of any man I ever knew." Stiles adds that his beneficence "to all the world is almost without parallel. He was my intimate friend."

67

**EZRA STILES**

Redwood Library Receipt  
Newport, 1761  
Manuscripts and Archives Division

The son of a pastor, Stiles grew up in New Haven, Puritan America's capital in the 18th century, Boston, and Harvard with it, having gone to the dogs before the end of the 17th. As a science-oriented Yale student and tutor, though, Stiles's mind took what he called a "deistical turn." The Bible seemed to him too full of problems, and to embattled old-school President Clap's insistence on mandatory Hebrew study he acquiesced with a minimum of zeal. In this crisis of faith, he felt that if he could not demonstrate everything, then he could not accept anything. Yet he wanted to believe, and one day, like Pascal and other intellectual precursors, he hit on a pretext for doing so that could satisfy his need to be rational. In the spirit of the time that emphasized the unity of reality, he thought that if he could find one proposition of the religion that was incontrovertible, then everything else could also be true: "Newton tho[ugh]t, whether the power by which a stone falls to the ground might not retain the moon her orbit...In like manner, some *one principle* may be the basis upon which the whole system of Revelation may be firmly supported. *Such* is the fulfillment of Prophecy respecting the Jews." Stiles concluded that the ongoing historical misfortunes of the Jews since the time of Jesus was the single most persuasive argument in favor of Christianity. It was sufficient to allow him to pursue the career in the ministry for which he had been prepared, and he accepted a call to the Second Congregational Church of Newport. The resident intellectual in this uniquely flourishing city of businessmen, Stiles also served as librarian of the Redwood Library. Housed in America's first library building and its first classical building, designed by Peter Harrison, the first American professional architect, this was the first lending library in the colonies, its board presided over by a member of his congregation, William Vernon (see item 66). Energized by Aaron Lopez (see item 66), the Newport Jews soon commissioned Harrison to design its exquisite synagogue, which opened in 1759, bringing Isaac

Touro from Jamaica to serve as its minister. Ever intellectually and ecumenically curious, Stiles attended services at the synagogue and was drawn, he recorded, to Touro's "grandeur of utterance." Before long, the two clergymen had become a regular sight strolling along the Parade, Stiles slowly reading aloud psalms in Hebrew while Touro corrected his pronunciation. Within two years, Stiles had completed the Hebrew Bible and moved on to Aramaic, in order to understand Talmud and especially Zohar. Touro's tutorials were supplemented by extended visits of rabbis of a certain eminence from the land of Israel, in prosperous Newport to raise funds. With them, Stiles conversed and subsequently corresponded in increasingly fluent Hebrew on literature and philology, and on topics in theology—especially that fundamental conviction of his own belief system about the fate of the Jews. Without formally abandoning this position that meant so much to him, the misfortune of the Jews did become in his mind only a temporary condition, for he acquired a strong belief in the national salvation of the Jews and their recovery of sovereignty in the land of Israel in the tradition of Increase Mather. Stiles became president of Yale in 1778. In his inaugural address, which he drafted in Hebrew but read in English, he told the Yale community: "I have been taught personally at the mouth of the Masters of Wisdom, at mouths of five Rabbis, Hochams of name and Eminence." At the university, he taught Hebrew himself, finally yielding to pressure to make it an elective and then discovering to his delight that 22 of a freshman class of 39 chose it anyway.

68

**SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*IV Dollars*  
Charleston: Printed by P[eter] Timothy, 1777  
Rare Books Division

According to Benjamin Franklin, the true cause of the American Revolution was the retraction by Britain of the colonies' right to print their own money. With the outbreak of war, that became all the more necessary. This Revolutionary bill, issued by the South Carolina General Assembly, features the Hebrew letters *keof* and *mun*. Other denominations feature other letters. If the 17th century was the Century of Hebrew, with remarkable efforts to include Hebrew type in the first productions of the American printing press, the 18th century was a century of relative indifference in most of America, with Hebrew script little seen outside academic settings. This enterprising printer, though, manages to find a use for his exotic fonts—even in time of war. Hebrew and Greek characters were hard enough to find or fake for them to work as primitive anti-forgery features, in case the printed warning, "Death to counterfeit," failed to impress. If Revolutionary Charleston was not otherwise a center of Hebrew printing, it is by no means a town without honor: it became the largest American Jewish community of the Federal era, and the South Carolina

General Assembly itself was the first legislative body in America in which a Jew held elected office (Francis Salvador, an energetic member of the Provincial Congress and its successor, the General Assembly, until his death and scalping, in combat with Tories and Indians, in 1776).

69

**JOHN DURY**

*A Case of Conscience, Whether it be Lawful to Admit Jews into a Christian Common-wealth?*

London: Printed for Richard Wodenothe, 1656  
Rare Books Division, Jacob Schiff Fund

Henry Jessey, strict observer of Jewish law and founder of the Baptist church in England, and the non-sectarian Scot John Dury were to Protestant Europe what their close friend Manasseh was to Jewry: the key diplomats, publicists and activists in the ecumenical-millenarian movement that is the immediate precursor, the parent, of the modern concept of toleration. It was through their lobbying efforts in 1656, the year of this manifesto, that Jews were again tolerated in England—informally but openly, after a 366-year hiatus. Dury bases “Civill Liberty” on I Corinthians 10:32: “Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles.” His answer to the question posed by his book’s title is yes: “It is not only lawful but, if matters be rightly ordered towards them, expedient to admit of them—nay, to invite and encourage them to live in Reformed Christian commonwealths.” He even suggests “how it may be a sin to refuse them admittance,” and goes on to discuss how their admission may be “circumstantiated.” They are: “i) Not to blaspheme the person of Jesus Christ or if any doth, he shall be liable to the law which Moses hath given in case of blaspheming the name of God; ii) Not to seduce any, or go about to make proselytes, or if any doth, he shall ipso facto forfeit his liberty; iii) Not to profane the Christian Sabbath but to rest upon it as well as upon their own Sabbath.” They are to be “made to understand that the intention of the state in admitting of them is not to have profit or temporal advantages by them...but rather out of Christian love...in witness of our thankfulness to God for the goodness which hath been derived from them to us, and for the hope which we have that all his goodness shall be fulfilled both in them and us.” Finally, “To avoid offences between them and us...it will be expedient that they live by themselves and that their worship be performed in their own tongue, that the insolencies which the common sort of both sides may use one towards another be prevented.”

70

**JOHANNES BUXTORF**

*Synagoga Judaica*

Frankfurt and Leipzig: J. P. Kraussen, 1738  
Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Dury opens his *Case of Conscience* (item 69) by suggesting how *not* to tolerate Jews: “I find it the Practice of most of the Protestant Common-wealths here in Germany, to admit of the Jews, but they do it with a huge marke of distinction between them and others; By which meanes they are made vile and contemptible.” One of the many limitations and humiliations in force all over Europe was the buffoonish oath “*more Judaico*” that Jews were compelled to take when appearing in a lawsuit with a Christian. Subject to regional variations, shown here is a form popular in Germany, where the Jew places his right hand on the Hebrew Bible, opened to the Ten Commandments, while standing bare-chested on a whole skinned pig. At the relatively late point at which this illustration was made, the Jew no longer had to swear wearing only loincloth and hair shirt, his hand on the synagogue’s Torah scroll while standing barefoot on the teats of a freshly-slaughtered sow that had given birth within the past two weeks. While slowly diluted, even so medieval a “huge marke of distinction” as this persisted in many places long into the 19th century.

71

**SAMUEL HAYNE**

*An Abstract of All the Statutes Made Concerning Aliens Trading in England*

London: Printed by N.T. for the author, 1685  
Rare Books Division

By the late 17th century, it was clear that Jews could count on toleration as resident aliens in England, or in colonies such as New York. They could not, however, become citizens. Among the disadvantages (or “disabilities”) entailed in this status, they were required, like other aliens, to pay a much higher rate of import duty. The author of this furious “exposé” introduces himself as a former customs official, who lost his job after going awol for six months. His explanation: after refusing the bribes offered him by “Levi the Jew,” he had been “cast into prison” through the machinations of Sir Peter Killigrew, a business associate, said Hayne, of leading Jewish transatlantic merchants Anthony Gomasera and Anthony Losado. The Navigation acts of 1651 and 1660 required all goods coming from the English plantations in the western hemisphere to clear customs in England, paying duty there even if their final destination was to be elsewhere. At the top of his long list of charges, Hayne accuses the Jews of making a specialty of offloading in England only a portion of their cargoes while hiding the rest and then carrying them to the continent. His downfall was the result of his discovery, he said, of a largely concealed cargo of sugar, ginger, tobacco, molasses and cotton wool brought in from Barbados by Gomasera and Losado. Customs officials at Falmouth were expected to conduct only a cursory inspection, out of deference to Sir Peter, but he was not going to stand by while the Jews and their friends removed the staple of trade from England to Holland, whatever the personal cost.

Moreover, he claimed, Jews were exploiting a loophole by arranging for much of what they imported to be assessed at the rate payable by non-Jewish partners whom they recruited purely for this purpose. Furthermore, Jews had established a network of partners or “correspondents,” a Jew in every port (or, alternatively, a New Christian, or a gentile), so that they were always able to pay duty at the least unfavorable rate. Again (as in item 61) the alleged problem is the Jewish tendency to “joyn in a lump together”: “You shall have a set of Jews at Amsterdam, sharers with the Jews at London, Barbados, New-York, Jamaica, &c., who pass everywhere paying no more dutie than the natives of that place where the goods at any time are.”

72

**NEW YORK COURT OF CHANCERY**

*The Decree in the Case of Solomon De Medina, Mosesson and Company, Merchants in London, and Roderigo Pacheco, Jacob De Lara and Manuel de Costa, Bearers of Their Orders, Complainants against Rene Het and the Executors of Andrew Fresneau, Deceased, Defendants*

New York: Printed and sold by William Bradford, 1728

Rare Books Division

This case, heard in New York, bears a striking resemblance to scenarios described by Hayne except that the plaintiff, the party injured by concealment of the extent of the cargo, is Sir Solomon de Medina—a Jew, in fact the most prominent Jew in England, the first to be knighted. The leading member of the synagogue in London, Sir Solomon had been involved in financing the Glorious Revolution, which ensured the Protestant succession in England by deposing James II, the former Duke of York, who had become a Catholic. Less gloriously, as an army contractor, he had been involved in a kickback scandal with the Duke of Marlborough, but he remained a preeminent figure in international finance. The story here was this: an English privateer “took, and brought into the port of New-York, the Ship Victory, belonging to the India Company of France...having on board 2,217 bags of tobacco in snuff and sundry quantities of tobacco ...loaded at Havana for the King of Spain, then an enemy, to be delivered at Cadiz in Spain on payment of 13,000 pieces of eight.” The captain claimed the cargo as prize in the Court of Admiralty of New-York. It turned out that the King of Spain had sold the cargo to Medina while it was at sea—before the capture. Accordingly, the claim was disallowed. While the case was appealed to London, the court ordered the tobacco to be stored in the warehouse of Rene Het and Andrew Fresneau. The lower court was upheld and Medina dispatched to New York two Medina & Co. staff, Jacob de Lara and Manuel Vaz da Costa, to take delivery of the tobacco together with Sir Solomon’s “correspondent” there. This was the leading New York Jewish merchant, Rodrigo Pacheco, who funded construction of the city’s first synagogue

and was the only colonial New York Jew ever appointed to conduct important public business, representing the colony twice on missions to the government in London. The owners of the warehouse presented Pacheco with a bill for £1,400, an extraordinary amount for which they refused to show any account. At last, they produced an obviously fraudulent accounting that featured items with such illuminating descriptions as “extraordinary expences” and “gratifications to sundry gentlemen,” but they were paid anyway. Thereupon they demanded another £1,500, “or they should have no snuff.” That, too, was paid to conclude the matter. Medina was expecting 379,845 lbs of snuff, 14,309 lbs of rolls of tobacco and 9,628 lbs of leaf. The amount returned weighed in at 315,400 lbs of snuff, 10,412 lbs of rolls, and no leaf. The discrepancy could not all be due to evaporation. Pacheco engaged James Alexander, the leading lawyer in the colony, and, finally, a witness cracked and provided directions to a secret cellar where the balance was recovered. Why the proceedings were published in book form is not clear, but this is the only copy to survive complete with all the printed supporting documentation of this early tale of shakedown on the New York waterfront.

73

**JOHN LOCKE**

*The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*

London, 1682

1669 edition reprinted in 1682, with manuscript revisions in Locke’s hand for the revised constitution promulgated that year

Rare Books Division

The deep involvement of the champion of absolute liberty, the Founding Fathers’ intellectual hero, in the Royal Africa Company and other transatlantic slaving concerns, such as the Bahama Adventurers, is well-known. In 1669, Locke was invited by another colonial corporation, the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, to collaborate in formulating language, particularly on religious toleration, for the *Fundamental Constitutions* it was drafting (Carolina was one of several proprietary—privately- or shareholder-owned—colonies, like Pennsylvania and New Jersey). Locke’s contribution enacts that “no person whatsoever shall disturb, violate or persecute another for his speculative opinions in religion or his way of worship.” Locke’s wording calls for toleration in the colony, so “that Jews, heathens and other dissenters from the purity of the Christian religion may not be scared and kept at a distance from it, but by having an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the truth and reasonableness of its doctrines ...may be won over to embrace and unfeignedly receive the truth.” This is not Locke sugarcoating toleration to commend it to the Lords proprietors. Although ranked second only to Spinoza among the founding philosophers of modernity, there is extraordinary difference between the two. Locke is a particularist; it does not seem to

require examination for him that whiteness and Christianity, say, are better than blackness and Judaism. In his *Second Letter on Toleration* (1690) he encourages further extension of Jewish civil rights, for “only full naturalization could direct the Jews of England towards Christ.” Not that he expects Jews to stay in England, or Carolina, on a permanent basis; in his *Paraphrase and Notes on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (1707) he writes that “the Jews shall be a flourishing nation again, professing Christianity in the land of promise, for that is to be reinstated again in the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... For however they are now scattered and under subjection to strangers, God is able to collect them again into one body, make them his people, and set them in a flourishing condition in their own land.” In some respects, Locke is as close to the Mathers as he is to Spinoza.

74

**WILLIAM PENN**

*The Frame of the Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America*

London: [William Bradford], 1682

First impression of the first edition

Rare Books Division, from the library of E. Dwight Church, Brooklyn

Penn, who considered the Jewish-Indian theory proved to his satisfaction by the identical appearance of the native Americans and the Jews he saw outside the synagogue in London, was part of the neoplatonist “salon” of Anne, Lady Conway, the niece of Sir Henry Finch, Member of Parliament and first and foremost of the Puritan Zionists. Included in her ecumenical set were the Cambridge Anglican philosopher of religion and self-styled kabbalist, Henry More, the European philosopher-scientist-mystics Francis Mercury and Gottfried Leibniz, and the Scottish Quaker theologian George Keith (see item 44). Penn’s first exercise in attempting to put into practice the utopian spirit of this circle came in the charter he drafted for the Quaker original colonists of New Jersey, a place where no one would have “power or authority to rule over men’s consciences in religious matters.” In 1681, he obtained payment of a debt owed his father by King Charles II in the form of a massive land grant across the Delaware River from New Jersey and set about writing a constitution for his own “holy experiment” in planting “the seed of a nation.” According to Article 35, “all persons living in this province who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder and ruler of the world and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in *civil society*, shall in no ways be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion or practice in matters of faith and worship; nor shall they be compelled at any time to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.” Whereas the Carolina constitution explicitly aims to protect against democracy, Penn’s *Frame of Government*

provides for an elective legislature, the franchise limited by a very modest property qualification. However, Article 35’s repudiation of religious prejudice notwithstanding, Article 34 requires that “all who have the right [through property ownership] to elect such members shall be such as profess faith in Jesus Christ and that are not convicted of ill fame.”

75

**ISAAC PINTO**

*Prayers for Shabbath, Rosh-Hashanah, and Kippur*

New York: Printed by John Holt, 1766

Rare Books Division, from the Lenox Library, R.L. Stuart Collection

Not until the 1760s did any cultural product of the Jewish community in the Americas appear in print. First there was an English translation of a Hebrew prayer composed to celebrate “the Reducing of Canada to His Majesty’s Dominions;” then another pamphlet appeared, the evening prayers for the high holidays, again anonymous and again in New York. Finally, in this first real American Jewish book, containing the prayers for the daytime high holiday services, the translator identified himself as Isaac Pinto. A member of the New York Jewish community with scholarly tastes, Pinto was a friend of Stiles and someone whose interest in Jewish studies ran to consulting Stiles’s chief native-speaking Hebrew informant, Rabbi Isaac Carigal of Hebron, on the medieval exegete Abraham ibn Ezra’s use of Arabic for Hebrew philology.

The first appearance anywhere of the Jewish prayer book in English called for some explanation, especially since the communal authorities in London had forbidden any such thing, and the translator, in his preface, does his best to make a persuasive case: “A veneration for the language, sacred by being that in which it pleased Almighty God to reveal himself to our ancestors, and a desire to preserve it, in firm persuasion that it will again be re-established in Israel, are probably leading reasons for our performing divine service in Hebrew. But that being imperfectly understood by many, by some not at all, it has been necessary to translate our prayers in the language of the country wherein it hath pleased the divine providence to appoint our lot. In Europe, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews have a translation in Spanish, which, as they generally understand, may be sufficient; but that not being the case in the British dominions in America, has induced me to attempt a translation in English, not without hope that it will tend to the improvement of many of my brethren in their devotion.”

In New York, the prayer for the government (shown) was not recited in Hebrew. How effectively it functioned, though, as a universally understood pledge of allegiance may be wondered, since it continued to be recited in Portuguese until the Revolution. By the 1720s, a majority of the Jews in New York were

Ashkenazim, to most of whom Portuguese would have been as unfamiliar as it was to other New Yorkers. The footnote to this prayer: “In the Colonies...the Governor and Magistrates are added” demonstrates that Pinto intended his translation to be used in London and not only in North America and the Caribbean.

Of the dozen or so copies known to survive, several only fragments, this one stands out for its flawless condition. The same cannot be said of the Library’s second copy, discovered on the shelves of the Muhlenberg Branch on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Now happily retired from circulation and relocated to the Jewish Division, the text is no longer what it was, but the period binding survives, tattered but still testifying to its original owner through the *ex libris* of Rebecca Levy.

76

*Beschryving van de Plechtigheden...op het Eerste Jubelfeest...in de Colonie Suriname* [Form of the Celebration of the First Jubilee in the Colony of Suriname]  
Amsterdam, 1786  
Dorot Jewish Division

If the Jews of late 18th century New York had little or no command of Spanish and Portuguese or of Hebrew, the problem was the opposite in Surinam—in the Dutch colony’s tiny capital, Paramaribo, and ten miles upriver at the Joden Savanne (the savannah, or tropical grassland, of the Jews), a rural community of Jewish sugar planters. A prospectus published in the capital in 1796 presented a detailed plan for establishing a subsidized boarding school in the Joden Savanne. The choice of the remoter location was deliberately calculated to eliminate distraction, the authors said, citing as examples of educational success in similarly obscure surroundings the establishments at Princeton and Cambridge, Massachusetts. The commitment to European education of their Portuguese ancestors, the founders of the community, is contrasted with the state of affairs among Surinam’s Jews a century and a half later, where all that the children learn is Hebrew Bible and the liturgy of the synagogue. The new institution will offer a thorough curriculum of arts and sciences, and will promote “complete freedom from religious and national prejudice, of which there is already far too much for the good of society.” These Portuguese-speaking, Hebrew-reading Jews of Surinam, though, were in a sense New York Jewry’s country cousins, for this too was a daughter community of Recife, its founders refugees from the short-lived Jewish colony at Cayenne (see item 21), captured by the French in 1666, and from New Zealand, another failed Dutch colony in Guyana, on the Essequibo river. In 1685, the Jews of the Joden Savanne built a handsome synagogue, which became the symbol of their communal survival on this ultimate frontier. Beating

off a French attack in 1712, in the course of which a pig was slaughtered in the center of the sanctuary, the community endured against the odds and celebrated its longevity on October 12, 1785, the centennial of the synagogue’s consecration, with fireworks, festivities, and a service of thanksgiving featuring a Hebrew cantata for soloists, chorus, and orchestra, shown here in this commemorative volume issued in Amsterdam the following year. For all the strictures of the educational prospectus writers, the community was able to sustain not just a rococo extravaganza like this on one special day, but also the world’s first Jewish theaters—two of them flourishing simultaneously in 18th century Paramaribo.

77

*The Constitution of the State of New-York*  
Fishkill, NY: Printed by Samuel Loudon, 1777  
First impression of the first edition  
Rare Books Division

When the Declaration of Independence held it self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, it portended an equality that no nation had ever accorded the Jews. Implementation, though, was another matter. Ten of the states proceeded rapidly to adopt constitutions that denied civil rights to non-Christians. Two others simply retained the laws of their colonial past that excluded non-Christians from political participation. Only New York was different. The New York State Constitution, drafted in the summer of 1776 by the 30 year-old John Jay, who wielded, Jefferson said, “the finest pen in America,” was adopted on April 20, 1777 by the Constitutional Convention at Kingston. Article thirty-eight:

“And whereas we are required by the benevolent principles of rational liberty, not only to expel civil tyranny, but also to guard against that spiritual oppression and intolerance, wherewith the bigotry and ambition of weak and wicked priests and princes have scourged mankind: This Convention doth further, in the name and by the authority of the good people of this State, Ordain, Determine and Declare, that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall for ever hereafter be allowed within this State to all mankind. Provided that the liberty of conscience hereby granted, shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness or justify practices inconsistent with the peace or safety of this State.”

The revised constitution of 1822 toned down the Enlightenment exuberance, beginning the religion clause half way through, with the words “The free exercise and enjoyment...”—losing the sublimity but retaining the substance. Virginia enacted religious equality in 1785 and others followed suit, the process expedited, of course, in 1787 by article six of the United States Constitution, which provided that “no

religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States,” and in 1791 by the first provision of the Bill of Rights: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” After the epic voyage of the Maryland Jew Bill, finally enacted in 1826, the only holdouts were Rhode Island of all places (1843), North Carolina (1868), and New Hampshire, last to succumb in 1877.

78

**FRANCOIS JEAN DE BEAUVOIR, MARQUIS DE CHASTELLUX**

*Voyages de M. le marquis de Chastellux dans l'Amérique septentrionale* [Travels of the Marquis de Chastellux in North America]

Paris: Prault, Imprimeur du Roi, 1786

Rare Books Division, from the Astor Library

One of the French generals who helped the American rebels humiliate France's traditional enemy, the marquis was also a philosopher, a naturalist, and, most pertinently, a linguist, a member of the Académie française. Discussing the problem of the language of the United States being the language of the oppressors, he records how much people resented the fact, taking pains to avoid saying “You speak good English” but telling him, rather, “You speak good American,” or “American is not hard to understand.” “Not long ago, “ he writes, “it was seriously proposed to introduce a new language and a number of people desired that, in the public interest, Hebrew should take the place of English. It was to be taught in the schools and used in all aspects of public life. It will be evident that this project did not materialize; nevertheless, the Americans' aversion to the English could hardly have expressed itself in more visceral form.”

H.L. Mencken called this idea “a furious onslaught upon the whole American scheme of things.” In reality, though, the primacy of Hebrew was a core value of the founders of Plymouth, Boston, Cambridge, New Haven, and other places not unrelated to the American scheme of things. More than that, the gradual or eventual replacement of English by Hebrew was indeed anticipated in Puritan circles. As Josiah Flint, a recent graduate of Harvard's Hebrew-centered undergraduate curriculum, wrote in his Almanack for the year 1666, printed in Cambridge (MA), which made the modest proposal that Hebrew names be used for the months: “It hath been the zealous desire of many famous men that heathenish language might be laid aside, forgotten and unnam'd ... as may be seen in the endeavours of Mr. Henry Jessey in his Scripture Kalendar to perswade to which he adds many Scripture prohibitions, as Exod. 23:13 ... In imitation of which I have ventured to make a beginning, and shall leave the progress to the wise disposal of Divine Providence, and the discretion of those that shall succeed.” Similarly Aspinwall (item 58): “As for the names of Parliaments and Dyets, etc.,

though there be no evil in the names, yet I suppose they will be laid aside in the time of this fifth Monarchy, when men begin to affect more the language of Canaan than the imitation of idolatrous nations.”

79

**UNITED STATES CONGRESS (30TH, FIRST SESSION, 1847-1848)**

*H.M. Salomon*

Washington, D.C., 1848

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

In 1848, the year of revolutions in Poland and across Europe, the Congressional Committee on Revolutionary Claims issued a report on its examination of the “mass of documentary evidence” submitted by Haym M. Salomon, to demonstrate that his father, Haym Salomon, had loaned the Revolutionary government from his own resources over \$300,000, “in addition to various sums gratuitously bestowed upon sundry individuals connected with the administration of public affairs. From the evidence in possession of the committee, the patriotic devotion of Haym Salomon to the cause of American independence cannot, in their judgment, be questioned... He was a countryman and intimate associate of Pulaski and Kosciusko, and... in the depth and sincerity of his devotion to the cause of human liberty, he was not surpassed by either of these illustrious men. As early as the year 1775, he became obnoxious to the government of Great Britain, and was incarcerated in the city of New York, sharing the privations and horrors of the sufferers confined in that loathsome British prison called the Prevot.” The report goes on to describe how Salomon next became the “negotiator of all the war subsidies on France and Holland, which he sold in bills to the merchants in America... on his own personal security without the loss of a cent to the country and receiving only a quarter per centum.” He also organized the “secret support of Charles III of Spain,” the “absolute importance” of which is “well known.” Between 1782 and his death in 1784, Haym Salomon deposited nearly \$200,000 in cash in the Bank of North America. “The only cash deposits made by Robert Morris to his own credit were received from Mr. Salomon” and “it is established beyond doubt that Mr. Madison and his compatriots Jefferson, Randolph, Jones and others were, for a considerable period, dependent for the means of existence upon Mr. Salomon.” At time of death, says the report, he was the possessor of \$353,744 in revolutionary paper, “in which he had invested his entire mercantile earnings in the patriotic manner already described... Not one cent was ever received by the widow or children.” The conclusion of the Committee was that “Mr. Salomon rendered the most essential aid to the cause of the Revolution. The discharge of this obligation on the part of the United States should no longer be delayed.” H.M. Salomon had brought the matter to the Congress to request repayment of the debt in federal land. But, despite the recommendation, no

action was taken on this occasion, nor after similar findings when the matter was brought before Congress again in the 1860s. Still, a moral victory was achieved, and Salomon was firmly established in the American consciousness, especially the American Jewish consciousness of the age of immigration, as “the Financier of the Revolution,” the proud symbol of Jewish-American patriotism. When Congress attempted to put an end to Jewish immigration from eastern Europe with the Immigration Act of 1924, the Federation of Polish Jews in America decided it was time to make an idol of this icon—or at least to erect in New York a monument to this Polish Jew to underscore what Polish Jews had contributed to America and what they might yet contribute, contemporary prejudices notwithstanding. To prepare a case to go before the Municipal Art Commission, the Federation asked a group of experts, led by lawyer Max Kohler, the leading civil and immigration rights activist in the American Jewish community of the time, to assemble a dossier of supporting documentation. What they established was that Salomon had indeed been a patriot and the broker in the sale of \$200,000 of Revolutionary paper in 1781 (when the fighting was almost over), but that was the extent of it. This amount was not a large fraction of the cost of the Revolution; therefore, he could not be touted as the Financier of the Revolution. Salomon had no money of his own during the fighting, not even enough to send a pittance to his parents in Poland, let alone to lend vast sums to the fledgling nation. When and how the family mythologizing began was unclear. What was clear was that the documents presented to Congress were forgeries. Kohler felt that the monument should be quietly dropped. There was no need to publicize these findings at this delicate moment of anti-immigrant feeling, but, equally, it was also obviously impossible to proceed. The promoters felt differently. The Art Commission had turned down their proposed Madison Square location so they had an opportunity to let the campaign die, but they refused to do so. Reluctantly, Kohler concluded he had no choice but to publish his findings, which he did in a pamphlet tactfully and appropriately titled *Haym Salomon, the patriot broker of the Revolution: his real achievements and their exaggeration. An open letter to Congressman Celler*. Less appropriately, the proponents denounced Kohler as an antisemite and German-Jewish enemy of Polish Jews, but still, there was no monument erected in New York. Chicago, however, was another matter. In the greatest Polish city in America, this slight was not to be taken lightly. Through the urging of West Side political boss Barnet Hodes, that perpetrator of super-sized heroic sculptures, Lorado Taft, began work in 1936. Posthumously, his creation was unveiled in 1941; and there, by the Chicago River, in the very center of the city, Haym Salomon and George Washington, with Robert Morris thrown in for balance, all hold hands to this day.

80

**CHARLES P. DALY, CHIEF JUSTICE, COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF NEW YORK**

Letter to Bernhard Felsenthal, Rabbi, Zion

Congregation, Chicago

New York, November 30, 1883

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Daly Papers

Not just the most popular but maybe the most intellectually curious judge in 19th century New York had almost no formal education. The son of impoverished Irish immigrants, he had lost his father as a child, run away to sea, apprenticed as a carpenter, done a stint in night school, been elected to the State Assembly, declined Tammany Hall nomination for Congress, and been appointed to the bench all by the time he was 28. A prodigious legal researcher with a special interest in civil rights, Daly's chief national influence was, as a friend of Lincoln, in counseling irreproachable correctness in the treatment of Southern prisoners. Such was his zest for history that his addresses at the 50th anniversary of the Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1872 and at the cornerstone laying of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in 1883 turned into monographs on *The Settlement of the Jews in North America* and *The Jews of New York* respectively—the first real treatments of these subjects. When Rabbi Felsenthal read the latter, he dropped the judge a line asking gently if he was not ignoring unjustly what was “probably the very first legislative enactment in all Christendom in favor of Jewish emancipation, in favor of granting perfect equality [which] left nothing to be desired by the Jews in the American colonies in regard to their juridical and political status.” Daly wrote back a twelve-page account of “the intolerant spirit of the English people towards the Jews up to the end of the first quarter of the present century,” which he hoped would be “a sufficient reply to your enquiry respecting the effect of the Act of 1740.” Daly's presentation is so unequivocally harsh that it may be wondered how much its perspective is determined by the limited sources at his disposal and how much by the predisposition of a proud and empathetic Irish American. In the passage shown, Daly discusses the wrangling that accompanied a disputed election in New York in 1737, where it appeared that “several Jews had voted for one of the candidates.” The Legislature decided unanimously that since they could not vote in England neither could they in New York. After surveying many statutes and cases and noting that “even so great a judge as Lord Hardwicke held in 1744 that...the Jewish religion was not tolerated in England but only connived at by the legislation,” he concludes with the observation that the Jews “were the very last to raise any questions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries about their civil rights. All they wanted was to be left undisturbed.” Rabbi Felsenthal not only considered Judge Daly's letter a “sufficient reply” but submitted it for publication in the New York *Jewish Messenger*. There it appeared under the title “Notes on the History of the Jews in England

and the American Colonies,” and, indeed, Jewish civil rights in Britain and British (and ex-British) North America form not so much parallel histories as a web of inextricable influences crisscrossing back and forth across the Atlantic—America, from the time of Roger Williams on, influencing England as much as the imperial power influenced its colonies.

81

***An Act to Permit Persons Professing the Jewish Religion, to be Naturalized by Parliament***

Edinburgh: John Basket, 1753

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

The representative hero of a famous English folk song of our period found that, determined to keep his job, it was necessary that he “almost every day abjur'd the Pope and the Pretender.” After Guy Fawkes’ 1605 “Gunpowder Plot” to blow up the King in Parliament, loyalty became as much of an issue under James as it had been under Elizabeth. By an act of 1609, applicants for naturalization were required to receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper within one month before submitting their petition. For purposes such as voting, holding elected office, or obtaining any kind of government job, oaths were required, swearing allegiance to the ruling dynasty and abjuring (repudiating) the doctrine of transubstantiation and the veneration of saints. These (increasingly rambling and comprehensive) abjurations of Catholic doctrine were not a problem for Jews in themselves—only in the form in which the oaths had to be taken: New Testament in hand, with the concluding formula “and I do make this recognition and acknowledgment heartily, willingly and truly, upon the true faith of a Christian.” With the Duke of York’s conversion to Catholicism and the coup attempts of his son and grandson in 1715 and 1745, the Oath of Abjuration was in no imminent danger of being regarded as archaic. The effect of these measures was to prevent both the naturalization of Jews and their participation in the political process, both in England and in the American colonies. And it was in the American colonies, where the government was eager to encourage settlement, particularly of entrepreneurs, that it attempted to address the problem first. The Colonial Naturalization Act of 1740 allowed the colonial authorities to dispense with the Sacramental Test for “persons professing the Jewish religion who have inhabited or resided, or shall inhabit or reside for the space of seven years or more in any of His Majesty’s colonies in America.” In 1753, the American experiment was deemed successful and, through enactment of the so-called “Jew Bill,” it was extended to the mother country.

82

***An Earnest and Serious Address to the Freeholders and Electors of Great-Britain, on the Occasion of the Clamor Raised Against the Bill to Permit Persons to Apply for Naturalization, Professing the Jewish Religion***

London: Printed for R. Baldwin, 1753

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

“The Jew Bill,” Daly writes (in item 80), “continued for only a few months, for it was received by the nation, the historians tell us, ‘with horror and execration.’ Those who had voted for it were denounced by the people. The Bishop of Norwich was insulted at the communion and in the public streets; petitions poured in from the cities for its repeal, and on the first day of the next session, a bill to repeal it was introduced and hurriedly passed with the assent of both parties.” Daly is almost understating what amounted to a moment of national hysteria. This act, which in itself made no Jew English, was simply a mechanism to allow “persons of considerable substance” to petition as individuals for a personalized act of Parliament to become naturalized for business reasons (paying import duties as citizens not aliens). Removal of the Sacramental Test would not open up access to political participation because the oath still stood in the way. And yet it seemed like the start of the slippery slope. It would not be long, it was suggested, before there was a new Sacramental Test: to be accepted in society would soon require reception not of communion but circumcision. What started all this delirium was a carefully calculated incitement campaign, waged through a host of pamphlets. The author of the counter-propaganda pamphlet shown, which circulated in its time among the lawyers congregating in Tom’s Coffee House in Devereux Court, London, expresses shame, as a Christian: “So low, as well as unchristian, is the present resentment that a poor industrious Jew, who can receive no benefit from this law and whose diligence is very often an example to many idle Christian vagrants, cannot travel without insult to his person [as if they] aimed at the circumcision of everyone they should deal with or buy a pencil of them.” Who, he wonders, is behind this campaign? Is it, as these anonymous pamphlets variously claim, some very “special Christians” or figures from the financial sector with serious economic concerns? The author is convinced it is neither, but rather the work of Tory party operatives, who have decided: “Let us inflame men with the fear of their religion, of being overrun with Judaism...and if we succeed in this clamor [the] elections will be ours.” Whatever the case, the near-rioting in England, the Jew-burning in effigy, produced a negative effect on the process in the colonies. As Ezra Stiles records: “Tho’ the Naturalization Act passed by Parliament a few years ago, yet it produced such a natural disgust towards the Hebrews that the Jews themselves joined in petition to Parliament to repeal the Act, and it was thereupon repealed for Britain. And tho’ it was continued by way of permission in the Plantations upon seven years residence,

yet the tumult in New York in procuring the taking place of their naturalization there, and the opposition it has met with in Rhode Island, forbodes that the Jews will never become incorporated with the people of America any more than Europe, Asia, or Africa.” Even Aaron Lopez’s petition was rejected three times in Rhode Island, and he ended up forced to file his petition in Massachusetts instead in order to obtain naturalization.

83

***Repulsed but not Discouraged***

London: Tho. McLean, May 24, 1830

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

The Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, passed with the reluctant support of a government that believed the alternative to be civil war in Ireland, created an anomalous situation. Catholics, on account of whose suspect loyalty religious tests had been introduced in the first place, could now vote, hold government jobs, even enter Parliament. Yet other minorities, whose disabilities were in the nature of collateral damage, remained—to varying degrees—disenfranchised. This was especially true of the Jews. Accordingly, the Jews Civil Disabilities Bill was introduced in the House of Commons by the devout and progressive Robert Grant, strongly supported by Thomas Macaulay and Daniel O’Connell. The bill was defeated, but in 1833, after unprecedented reform of the Commons, it was reintroduced by Grant and passed—only to be thrown out by the House of Lords. Seen in this cartoon from the day after Grant’s first defeat, a peddler type in “hasidic” attire is seen at the door of the House of Commons—seeking admission as a Member of Parliament: “Pray let me in! I am sure I shall behave myself as well as some whom you have admitted.” By “some” is intended the Irish Catholic Daniel O’Connell, who had taken his seat three months earlier after a monumental struggle. He is seen at left, urging: “Agitate, friend Moses, Agitate! That’s the way I got in.” Grant: “You exclude the Jew and Quaker, while the Atheist, who laughs at your oaths, obtains Admission.” The Conservative Leader of the House, Robert Peel: “I cannot let you pass. If I admit you, the respectable gentleman in the broad brim [think Quaker Oats] and all the rest [Moravians, Separatists] will expect to get in.”

84

**PARLIAMENT OF LOWER CANADA**

*Report...Relating to...an Act to Declare Persons Professing the Jewish Religion Entitled to All the Rights and Privileges of the Other Subjects of His Majesty in This Province*

Quebec City, 1834

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Introduced into the Quebec legislature by the dynamic Speaker of the House and French-Canadian nationalist leader, Louis-Joseph Papineau, the act of 1832 was hailed on its centennial as “the Magna Carta of

Canadian Jewry.” At the time of its passage, though, not everyone was so impressed with the drafting skills of this sonorous emancipation proclamation. Three Canadian Jewish worthies, Benjamin Hart, a Quebec City lawyer, Samuel Hart, merchant of Trois Rivières, and Moses Hayes, a proprietor of the Montreal water works, were invited under the new legislation to become justices of the peace. Only then did Quebec Attorney General Ogden point out, with what seemed to some like almost malicious pleasure, that while the act had *declared* Jews entitled to all the rights of other subjects, it had not actually bothered to remove the one obstacle that obstructed their access to these rights—that clause in the oath, “on the true faith of a Christian.” A committee of lawmakers investigated the matter, accepting the reluctant conclusion of the prospective magistrates’ own lawyer, Aaron Hart, that not even the 1740 Colonial Naturalization Act could be invoked, since that contemplated omission of the problem phrase “only in cases of naturalization.” The committee reported on February 28, 1834, their findings somewhat overshadowed by Papineau’s delivery in the House of Assembly on the very same day of his 92 Resolutions on Canadian rights, igniting the fire that, with London’s leisurely negative response three years later, erupted into the “Patriotes” Rebellion.

85

***A Bill to Remove Doubts as to Quakers’ and Jews’ Marriages***

London, 1847

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

From the 17th century, Quaker and Jewish marriages were not recognized in English law. Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753 gave them that recognition for the first time. His act was designed to protect women from (a plot line in so many novels of the period) seducers or abductors, eager to rush them to some unscrupulous minister to be made their property for life. To regulate the situation, the act required marriages to be performed by a clergyman of the Church of England in good standing. As part of this reform, the two communities whose members could not reasonably be expected to be married by a Christian clergyman were given what they never had before: the right to conduct valid marriages of their own. The new Marriage Act of 1836, which became effective in 1837, allowed civil marriage for the first time in England and specifically permitted Dissenters (except Quakers and Jews) to conduct marriage ceremonies of their own, provided there was also a civil ceremony. With all the confusion created by the shifting picture of civil rights, it soon began to be said that the new act had revoked or denied the validity of Jewish and Quaker marriage. After ten years of rumor, it was deemed “expedient to put an end to such doubts.” This proclamation of Queen Victoria seeks to make it clear that the only reason Quakers and Jews were excluded from the permission conferred by the 1836

Marriage Act was because they were already covered by the act of 1753. That act, however, applied only to England, not to the American colonies; Jewish marriages in Upper Canada (Ontario), for example, did not become valid until 1857.

86

**LEICESTER STANHOPE, EARL OF HARRINGTON**

*Jews Bill as Amended on Report*

London, 1858

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

A modest measure to allow Jews elected to municipal office to omit “on the true faith &c.” was defeated in 1837, again in 1841, and finally passed in 1845 through the agitation of the banker Sir David Salomons, repeatedly elected to local office in the City of London (the financial district) and repeatedly prohibited from taking his seat. In 1846, the most ardent parliamentary reformer of 19th century Britain, Lord John Russell, became prime minister and the scene seemed set for a happy ending. In 1847, Baron Lionel de Rothschild was elected Member of Parliament by the City of London. Unable to take the oath, he did not attempt to take his seat. In 1848, Russell introduced his Jewish Disabilities Bill, which passed in the Commons but was defeated in the Lords. Russell reintroduced similar legislation in 1849, 1851, 1853, 1854, and 1857. Meanwhile, Baron Rothschild had resigned his seat and been re-elected and resigned his seat again and been re-elected again. His “mandate” was undeniable. In 1858, after endless to-ing and fro-ing in conference committee, the Lords abandoned their resistance and yielded to the Commons’ arguments: that the words “on the true faith of a Christian” were “not intended for the purpose of excluding persons of Jewish religion”; that “no charge of disloyalty or unfitness ... can be alleged against the Jewish community”; that “infliction of disabilities upon any class...on the ground of their conscientious adherence to their faith, savours of persecution”; that it counted for something that the Commons had already “on ten previous occasions” passed such a measure; and that “the rights of the electors ...have been peculiarly affected.” Shown here is the amendment offered by leading liberal Lord Harrington to address residual objections in the Lords and get the wretched thing passed. A devotee of the ethics of Jeremy Bentham, Harrington established himself early as a supporter of minority rights when, aided (sort of) by Lord Byron, he helped establish an independent Greek state for the Christians of the Ottoman Empire.

87

**JAMES MONROE**

Notes on a Constitution for France

Paris, 1795

Manuscripts and Archives Division, Monroe Papers

James Monroe was ambassador to revolutionary France during the worst excesses of the “Terror.” His

main contribution there was in assisting Robespierre’s successors in the Directorate in the attempt to draft a constitution. In this passage from a draft memorandum on nation-building American-style, he stresses the crucial importance of a Bill of Rights, noting that among “the most important objects of such an instrument...it should more especially comprise a doctrine in favor of the equality of human rights; of liberty of conscience in matters of religious faith, of speech and of the press.” Twenty years later, however, as President Madison’s Secretary of State, Monroe wrote the following letter, delivered to Mordecai Noah, U.S. Consul in Tunis, by Stephen Decatur, naval commander in the conflict with neighboring Tripoli: “At the time of your appointment as Consul at Tunis, it was not known that the religion which you profess would form any obstacle to the exercise of your Consular functions. Recent information, however, on which entire reliance may be placed, proves that it would produce a very unfavourable effect. In consequence of which, the President has deemed it expedient to revoke your commission. On receipt of this letter, therefore, you will consider yourself no longer in the public service.”

88

**M.M. Noah**

Drawn by J.R. Smith and engraved by Thomas

Gimbredé for Noah’s *Travels*

New York: Kirk and Mercein, 1819

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Monroe’s letter leaves it ambiguous whether Noah’s religion produced “a very unfavourable effect” in certain Muslim circles in North Africa or certain Christian circles in North America. The source of the Secretary of State’s entirely reliable information never became clear either. Was it driven by personal animosity? Or was it displeasure with the whole tenor of the government’s Barbary policy, manifest in the appeasing appointment of a non-Christian as consul? As if the language of the Treaty of Tripoli, concluded by the Adams administration in 1797, was not bad enough: “As the government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has, in itself, no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Musselmen; and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.” Faced with Noah’s strenuous objections, the government switched its story, making the issue instead Noah’s going over budget on a mission to redeem American slaves in Algiers. Demanding satisfaction, Noah was in the end fully exonerated, but by that time he was a prominent man of letters—the author of the very well-received *Travels*, which gave his account of his Mediterranean experiences, and of some of the

most popular staples of the New York stage, and the influential editor of a succession of newspapers.

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*The Salem Gazette*

Salem, February 8, 1820

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

Noah, much the most articulate and ethnically-identified young Jewish politico in Federal-era America, had lobbied for his consular appointment on two grounds. First, it would send a message of American nonsectarian openness to the Muslims of North Africa, which would be good for diplomacy; second, it would send the same message to the Jews of Europe, which would be good for immigration. The Tunis fiasco behind him, Noah returned to the promotion of Jewish immigration:

“Mr. Noah, Editor of the New-York National Advocate, has addressed a memorial to the legislature, praying that the State would authorize the sale of Grand Island, in the Niagara River, to him, for the purpose of building a city thereon, and inviting a community of Jewish emigrants to that place. The memorial cannot fail to excite interest, because it embraces an object which appears to us very feasible; and if Mr. Noah does not deceive himself as to the disposition of the Jews to emigrate to this country, his project may be considered as a very splendid one. Indeed we have often wondered why the Jews do not emigrate more frequently to the U. States; why they should suffer from the intolerance of other governments, when an asylum so desirable can be found in this country. It must arise from their total unacquaintance with our laws and institutions, and this memorial will no doubt lead to some enquiry. There is no small discernment evinced in this location. Grand Island is bounded on the north by Lake Ontario; on the south by Lake Erie; on the west by Upper Canada; and on the east by the State of New York, and lies near the centre in the Niagara river. The current, however, is somewhat rapid. It may contain 40,000 acres. From the vicinity of those great bodies of water, the air in winter derives a degree of warmth; and the same cause also tempers and refreshes the heat of summer. Melons, peaches, nectarines and other delicate fruits grow in the neighbourhood, and its position is excellent for a city. We know not whether the state would sell that island. It is of no use, and is the asylum of gypsies and wanderers, who are destroying the timber. If, however, they should deem it expedient to sell, it then will be no objection to sell it to Mr. Noah for the object which he contemplates; because, in the possession of any individual and for other purposes, the State cannot realize those benefits which a settlement of Jews would produce. The property of foreign Jews principally consists of money and merchandize, which can be easily removed to any country; and if a few of their great bankers would emigrate to this State, and circulate a few millions, they would secure a good

profit and give a spur to internal commerce. Besides, after all said or wrote on this subject, this is the most preferable country for the Jews. Here they can have their Jerusalem...” Funding was forthcoming, an initial 2,000 acres of the island were purchased, and a dedication ceremony was held in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Buffalo in September, 1825. Adverse weather prevented a cornerstone-laying procession from proceeding across the Niagara to the island. Rabbis in Europe scoffed at the American upstart’s hubris, even though his *Proclamation to the Jews* made clear that this was an interim solution only, pending “that great and final restoration to their ancient heritage which the times so powerfully indicate.” No Jew ever showed up at Noah’s American sanctuary. Nor did any Native Americans, whom he invited as well, in virtue of their notorious descent from the lost tribes. Perhaps if he had not irritated the rabbis so by his grandiose tone, styling himself “Governor and Judge of Israel,” things might have been altogether different.

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**GEORGE BUSH**

*The Valley of Vision, or, The Dry Bones of Israel Revived*  
New York: Saxton & Miles, 1844

Dorot Jewish Division

When New York University was founded in 1830 as a nonsectarian, democratic alternative to elitist, Episcopalian Columbia, it hired much the ablest Hebraist in America, Isaac Nordheimer, a former student in Slovakia of Rabbi Moses Schreiber—as its inaugural professor of Arabic. It is a paradox that the city’s first secular institution of higher learning should have considered it impossible to permit a Jew to teach the Holy Tongue, when Christians as early as St. Jerome had been willing to travel the world to drink, as they saw it, from the living source. But somewhat paradoxical, too, was their choice, as professor of Hebrew, of George Bush. Competent Christian Hebraist as he was, he was known at the time only as the author of the first American book on Islam—a biography of Muhammad, whom he insisted on referring to throughout as “the Impostor.” His tenure was punctuated by a succession of well-received publications, the first of which was his *Treatise on the Millennium* (1832), in which he described the “millennium or New Jerusalem” as “one of the most baseless of all the extravaganzas of prophetic hallucination.” Not that he rejected the idea of the restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel. On the contrary; but he believed, and in his *Valley of Vision* he offered “an attempted proof,” that the biblical promises did not call for fulfillment under apocalyptic circumstances but might equally well be accomplished in the normal course of world events. Providence might even achieve its object by appealing, he wrote, to “the worldly and selfish principles of the Jewish mind. It is by no means improbable the affairs of the nations or the progress of civilization may take such a turn as to offer to the Jews



conduct the war to force his resignation in March, 1862. New Orleans fell in April, and meanwhile Davis appointed his confidant Secretary of State. Here he continued to develop the Confederacy's vital links with Europe until the surrender, when, escaping to London, he reestablished himself in a rather less controversial role as the leading expert on probate at the English bar.

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**ARNOLD FISCHEL**

Letter to Joshua Cohen

New York, October 29, 1860

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Fund

The first attempt to describe the history of the Jews in America may be credited to Arnold Fischel, lecturer of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in New York, in a talk delivered to the New-York Historical Society in December, 1859. Here he writes to Dr. Joshua Cohen, a leading veteran of the campaign for Jewish emancipation in Maryland, offering to reprise his epoch-making presentation in Baltimore: "The proposed lecture on the history of the Israelites in America commences with the discovery of America, in which Portuguese Israelites take an active part, and then proceeds to give an outline of their heroic deeds as well as sufferings in Brazil anno 1548, Mexico 1554, Peru 1639, their first emigration to the West Indies, N. York, Newport, their share in the Revolution, and, as the lecture is to be delivered in Baltimore, the leading facts of their emancipation in Maryland, with allusions to the efforts of Senator Kennedy and Governor Worthington, together with such facts as you may consider important. The lecture contains many new facts and is equally fitted for a literary as for a mixed audience. It is written in a popular style and contains many thrilling incidents, which render it, to a popular audience, interesting as well instructive...With best regards to Col. Cohen [Joshua's brother, the explorer Mendes Cohen] and family, I remain your obedient servant, A. Fischel." Within a couple of years, Fischel had contributed a further chapter to the history that he described, successfully accomplishing what is regarded as the first attempt by the organized Jewish community in the U.S. to act for the advancement of Jewish rights, certainly at the federal level. An act of the U.S. Congress, passed in July 1861, authorized the officers of any Union regiment to elect its own chaplain, with the proviso only that the candidate be "a regularly ordained minister of some Christian denomination." The objection of the controversial Ohio congressman Clement Vallandigham to the constitutionality of the measure, besides its discrimination against Jews, who were "as true patriots as any in this country," had been fruitless, but, meanwhile, the officers of the largely Jewish 5th Pennsylvania Cavalry, "Cameron's Dragoons," commanded by Colonel Max Friedman, had elected a Jewish chaplain. The alarm was raised by a YMCA official, and the Secretary of War (the eponymous

Cameron) called for the resignation of the chaplain, who was not merely a non-Christian but not even an ordained minister (on the contrary, he operated a Philadelphia liquor store). To minimize grounds for objection, Cameron's Dragoons now elected the presumably credentialed Fischel, and the Board of Delegates of American Israelites sent him to the capital, the first manifestation of the "Jewish lobby" in Washington. The consistently philosemitic Lincoln was readily persuaded and, with his support and Fischel's exertions, in July, 1862, Congress amended the language of the act to read "some religious denomination" instead of "some Christian denomination." What may seem like an inconsequential side show at the height of the Civil War proved of enduring and even increasing consequence, establishing as it did that the U.S. Army was not a Christian army.

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**SOLON ELIASOPH**

Letter to George Alexander Kohut

Montreal, April 27, 1927

Dorot Jewish Division, Jack and Helen Nash Fund

To leave matters with unfinished business: the lawyer for Isaac de la Penha responds to pioneer American Jewish historian George Kohut's statement of interest in "the Labrador matter." The "matter" is summarized in a report filed by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in 1931: "Montreal, Oct. 25—The presence of Newfoundland cabinet ministers in Montreal who have been trying to interest both the Federal and the Quebec Provincial governments in either the purchase or lease of Labrador, has again brought to the fore the claim of Rev. de la Penha to the peninsula, about which the following new facts have come to light: King William III of England, and also Prince of Orange, gave a present, from the 54th to the 60th degrees of latitude, of territory in Labrador, Estotiland, etc., to the family of de la Penha, then living in England and Holland and to their descendants with all rights. By partage among the descendants, this gift fell to a section of the family, the head of which is Rabbi de la Penha of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, who has the original deeds of gift signed by the King and dated November 1, 1697, which has the great seal of England and also that of Holland attached. The original of the documents were shown to the Minister of Finance of Newfoundland while he was on a visit to Montreal and it is expected that the claim may some day reach the Privy Council, which had no knowledge of the gift and ownership when they gave a judgment and the territory of Labrador to Newfoundland." The family's claim was reasserted as recently as 1983 by Daniel de la Penha, a physician in suburban Savannah.