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# The Jew in early American literature

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THE JEW IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE JEW IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

by

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THE JEW IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

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THE JEW IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

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## INTRODUCTION

Jews have been an active element in the New World since its discovery. Jewish money made Columbus' voyage possible. Jews prepared the navigation charts and instruments that Columbus used. And there were Jews among Columbus' crew: the first white man to set foot in America was the Jew, Luis de Torres, Columbus' interpreter. Jews were among the first settlers of the New World, and long before the North American settlements were conceived there were flourishing Jewish colonies at Para, Pernambuco, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro, until the bloody fingers of the Inquisition reached for them across the seas.

The early Jewish immigrants to North America and their descendants, despite their numerical insignificance, exercised considerable influence upon the upbuilding of

the colonies. They were in number only a few thousand, yet they were able to play ~~the~~ major role in the foundation of the international trade. Wrote Addison in his Spectator in 1712:

They [the Jews] are, indeed, so disseminated through all the trading parts of the world, that they are become the instruments by which the most distant nations converse with one another, and by which mankind are knit together in a general correspondence. They are like the pegs and nails in a great building, which, though they are but little valued in themselves, are absolutely necessary to keep the whole frame together.<sup>1</sup>

The Jew has been a subject of discussion in American literature since 1640. Every type of creative expression--novel, drama, poem, essay, and theological tract--has been used to characterize, explain, defend or criticize him. In fiction and in drama hundreds of Jews of various capacities and classes have been portrayed.

Almost every major personality in American letters has expressed his sentiments about the Jews. There exists consequently a rich literature pertaining to the Jews in America, a literature which for the first two centuries came almost entirely from the pens of non-Jewish writers. These writings offer a most illuminating insight into

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1. The Spectator. Complete in One Volume, Edinburgh, 1877, No. 495, September 27, 1712, p. 710.

the impressions made upon our foremost literary figures by the Jews of America.

The Puritans were deeply interested in the Old Testament. They liked to think of themselves in terms of the Children of Israel seeking the promised land. They gave their children Old Testament names, and they could think of no more satisfactory legal precedent for their first systems of law than the Hebrew Bible. It is little wonder, then, that with the publication in 1640 of the first book in the English American colonies we should find the first literary mention in America of the Jew.

This was The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre, commonly known as The Bay Psalm Book, the greater part of which was done by Richard Mather, to whom is attributed the preface, Thomas Welde, and John Eliot. It was translated directly from the Hebrew in the attempt to have as literal a translation as possible, and the preface may be considered the first dissertation on Hebrew language and poetry published in America. Much of it is given over to a defense of the translation of the Hebrew poetry into English rime on the grounds that it facilitates singing.

As for the scruple that some take at the translation of the book of psalmes into meeter, because Davids psalmes were sung in his own words without meeter:

attempts of New England Divines; that extreme reverence for the Bible blinded Christians to its literary excellences, so that they failed to see the contrast between this rendering and the sonorous grandeur of the King James version; and that the one test imposed on this work, as a matter of sacred principle, was that of literal exactness." Cairns, Selections from Early American Writers, p. 73.

we answer...The psalmes are penned in such verses as are sutable to the poetry of the hebrew language, and not in the common style of such other bookes of the old Testament as are not poeticall; now no protestant doubteth but that all the bookes of the scripture should by Gods ordinance be extant in the mother tongue of each nation, that they **may** be understood of all, hence the psalmes are to be translated into our english tongue: and if in our english tongue we are to sing them, **then** as all our english songs (according to the course of our english poetry) do run in metre, soe ought Davids psalmes to be translated into meeter, that soe wee may sing the Lords songs, as in our English tongue soe in such verses as are familiar to an english eare which are commonly metricall: and as it can be no just offense to any good conscience, to sing Davids hebrew songs in english words, soe neither to sing his poeticall verses in english poeticall metre....Neither let any think, that for the meetre sake wee have taken liberty or poeticall license to depart from the true and proper sence of Davids words in the hebrew verses, noe; but it hath beene one part of our religious care and faithfull in-deavour, to keepe close to the originall text.<sup>2</sup>

Two illustrations from The Bay Psalm Book presented together with translations from the Hebrew Bible issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America will demonstrate how the simple beauty of the psalms suffered because of the attempt at riming.<sup>3</sup>

2. The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre, quoted in Selections from Early American Writers 1607-1800, William B. Cairns, ed., New York, 1915, pp. 73-4.

3. "The modern reader finds it hard to understand how our forefathers could have endured so rough and barbarous a rendering of the Hebrew poems. It must be remembered that the sense of form in English verse was not high, as is shown by other poetic

5. In presence of my spiteful Foes,  
he does My Table spread;  
He crowns my Cup with chearful Wine,  
with Oil anoints my Head.
6. Since God doth thus his wond'rous Love  
through all my Life extend,  
That Life to Him I will devote,  
and in his Temple spend.

N. Brady and N. Tate, A New Version of the Psalms  
of David: Fitted to the Tunes Used in Churches,  
Boston, 1774, n. p.

## 23 A PSALME OF DAVID

- The Lord to mee a shepheard is,  
 want therefore shall not I.
- 2 Hee in the folds of tender-grasse,  
 doth cause mee downe to lie:  
 To waters calme me gently leads
- 3 Restore my soule doth hee:  
 he doth in paths of righteousnes:  
 for his names sake leade mee.
- 4 Yea though in valley of deaths shade  
 I walk, none ill I'le feare:  
 because thou are with mee, thy rod,  
 and staffe my comfort are.
- 5 For mee a table thou hast spread,  
 in presence of my foes:  
 thou dost annoynt my head with oyle,  
 my cup it over-flowes.
- 6 Goodnes & mercy surely shall  
 all my dayes follow mee:  
 and in the Lords house I shall dwell  
 so long as dayes shall bee.<sup>4</sup>

4. Bay Psalm Book, p. 79.

A later versification of the psalms is even worse--and one of the parties to the crime was Nahum Tate, the Poet-Laureate, himself.

## PSALM XXIII

- 1 The Lord himself, the mighty Lord,  
 vouchsafes to be my Guide;  
 The Shepherd, by whose constant Care  
 my Wants are all supply'd.
2. In tender Grass he makes me feed,  
 and gently there repose;  
 Then leads me to cool Shades, and where  
 refreshing Water flows.
3. He does my wandring Soul reclaim,  
 and, to his endless Praise,  
 Instruct with humble Zeal to walk  
 in his most righteous Ways.
4. I pass the gloomy Vale of Death,  
 from Fear and Danger free;  
 For there his aiding Rod and Staff  
 defend and comfort me.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD  
Psalm 23

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.<sup>5</sup>

The second illustration demonstrates the inaccuracy that the Puritan translators often unwittingly achieved.

PSALME 100

Make yee a joyfull sounding noyse  
unto Jehovah, all the earth:  
2 Serve yee Jehovah with gladnes:  
before his presence come with mirth.  
3 Know, that Jehovah he is God,  
who hath us formed it is hee,  
& not ourselves: his owne people  
& sheepe of his pasture are wee.  
4 Enter into his gates with prayse,  
into his Courts with thankfullnes:  
make yee confession unto him,  
& his name reverently blesse.  
5 Because Jehovah he is good,  
for evermore is his mercy:  
& unto generations all  
continue doth his verity.<sup>6</sup>

5. The Holy Scriptures, An Abridgment, Philadelphia, 1931, p. 612.

6. Bay Psalm Book, p. 80-1.

SHOUT UNTO THE LORD  
Psalm 100

SHOUT unto the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD He is God; it is He that hath made us, and we are His, His People, and the flock of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; give thanks unto Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy endureth for ever; and His faithfulness unto all generations.<sup>7</sup>

In 1652 William Pinchion of Springfield published a work, The Jewes Synagogue, with which he proposed to show the truths of Christianity as shown in the Jewish rituals. In his foreword which is addressed "To the Christian Readers of great BRITANY," he says:

Christian Reader, all the Authors that I have read about the discipline of the Jews Synagogue, have mixed many of the Jewes late superstitious practices among some of their ancient approved practices: and because they have not distinguished the one from the other, they have rather confounded the Reader than given him any distinct aime how to judge of their Synagogue-orders, and whether they were ever any particular Churches of Jesus Christ.... I conceive that Jesus Christ did originally ordain them as true particular visible Churches.

Therefore I thought it necessary to search out, as well as I could, their Synagogue-worship, together with some of their ancient Discipline-practices; and herein I have endeavoured to avoid their late superstitious observations which they have added from their own brains in the time of their Apostasie.

7. Holy Scriptures, p. 640.

This labour I thought necessary to communicate to the godly, for the better searching into the fundamental grounds of Church-Discipline.

Here then we find the same sentiment that Cotton Mather was to echo more strongly when he said, "Tho' you say, You are Jews, you are not so."<sup>8</sup>

The book is written as though it were a conversation between a student and a teacher, very much in the same manner in which the present-day newspapers present dialogue from examination of witnesses in court cases. Pinchion has the Scholar ask questions to which the Teacher replies.

Scholar, Whether were the Jewes Synagogues particular Churches of Jesus Christ or no?  
 Teacher, It is evident to me, that the Jewes-Synagogue-Assemblies were particular Churches of JESUS CHRIST: because it was the Angel of the Covenant, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, that did ordain and institute not only all the twelve Tribes into one Nationall-Church, but also that did divide and distribute the said Twelve Tribes into several particular Churches. I say, Jesus Christ did institute both these kind of Churches in Israel: he was the Angel-Jehovah, that first spake unto Moses out of the bush, Exod. 3.2. called also the God of Abraham, vers. 7. and he is also called the God of Glory, that first appeared to Abraham while he was an Idolater in his Fathers house in Mesopotamia, Acts 7.2. Jos. 24..

This God of glory did now appear unto Moses in the bush, and sent him to bring his People

8. Page 10 of this thesis.

out of Egypt, and out of the house of Bondage, Exod. 20. therefore Christ was that Jehovah, that said unto all Israel, Thou shalt have no other Gods but me: Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Images, thou shalt not bow down to worship them....

So then, Christ was that Jehovah that first promised the Land of Canaan, unto Abraham and his seed.<sup>9</sup>

Pinchion continues to identify every mention of Jehovah with Jesus, and to him this constitutes conclusive proof that the truths of Christianity can be found in the very history of the Jews themselves. But lest there be the slightest possibility of a doubt remaining, the Scholar conveniently asks for us:

What other proof have you to confirm this Tenent, that the Jewes Synagogues were particular Churches of Jesus Christ?

And the Teacher, patient as teachers always are, replies:

The truth of this Tenent doth further appear by the term Church, and the term Synagogue, which are used as terms convertible or synonima.

First the Apostle James calls a Christian Church a Synagogue....

Secondly, David calls the Jewes Synagogues by the name of Churches.<sup>10</sup>

9. William Pinchion, The Jewes Synagogue: or, a Treatise Concerning the Ancient Orders and Manner of Worship Used by the Jewes in Their Synagogue-Assemblies, London, 1652, pp. 1-2.

10. Ibid., p. 5.

Convinced, let us return Pinchion to his place on our forgotten bookshelf.

James Noyes, a minister of Newbury, published two essays in a volume which he called Moses and Aaron: or, the Rights of Church and State (1661). The book is dedicated to the King. The second portion is a treatise which argues against rebelling against monarchical authority. The basis of this argument is precedent established by the Hebrews in their relations with their kings and also the commandment to honor one's parents. The latter, according to Noyes, makes it even more important to honor the father of one's country--i. e., the King. Recourse was taken even to the Old Testament to prove a political point.

A deep interest in the Old Testament was the very mortar which the earliest European settlers to North America brought with them with which to cement the foundations of a new culture. It is only natural, then, that interest should turn to the Eighth Wonder of the World--the living Jew.

CHAPTER 1

AMERICAN EYES UPON JEWISH SOULS

And Israel too pass'd on--the trampled Jew!  
Israel!--who made Jerusalem a throne  
For the wide world--pass'd on as carelessly;  
Giving no look of interest to tell  
The shrouded dead was anything to her.  
Oh that they would be gather'd as a brood  
Is gathered by a parent's sheltering wings!<sup>1</sup>

For the most part early American writers on Jews were preoccupied with conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Certainly this was not peculiar to the New World. It had been one of the dilemmas of Christianity since its very inception. But in Europe the methods were passion, fire, and violence: the Holy Crusade, the Auto de Fe, the Papal

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1. Nathaniel Parker Willis, "On the Death of a Missionary," in The Poems, Sacred, Passionate, and Humorous, of Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, 1850, p. 80.

Decree, and the Royal Whim. Even the New World had been seared by these flames of violence in the form of the Inquisition. But in North America the spirit of tolerance was creeping into the minds of the colonists despite themselves. The intellectual approach was made toward a problem which brute force had failed to solve.

The first publication of Increase Mather was The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, Explained and Applied: or, a Discourse Concerning the General Conversion of the Israelitish Nation (1669), an attempt to prove that conversion was the only hope of the Jews.

That there shall be a General conversion of the Tribes of Israel, is a truth which in some measure hath been known, and believed in all ages of the Church of God, since the Apostles days.<sup>2</sup>

Mather takes a liberality in interpreting scriptural passages which is totally unjustifiable to the modern reader but which is typical of the Puritan mind in its search for evidence of the universal calling of the Jews.

See also Rev. 21.6. I will give (saith he, who is Alpha and Omega) to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. To him that is a thirst, for what? even to him that is athirst

2. Increase Mather, The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, Explained and Applied: or, a Discourse Concerning the General Conversion of the Israelitish Nation, London, 1669, p. c.

for the salvation of Israel, for the conversion of the Jews, for the creating of the new heaven and the new earth which is promised, to him that is thus athirst will the Lord give of the fountain of the water of life freely.<sup>3</sup>

Later, he wrote A Dissertation Concerning the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation (1709).

Ever on the alert for new conversions, Increase Mather wrote the preface to Judah Monis' conversational discourse, The Truth (1722).<sup>4</sup> It is clearly indicative of Mather's attitude toward Jews.

THE Conversion of Mr. Monis to Christianity, is an Effect of Divine Grace. The Truth and Reality of his Conversion appears in what is here Exhibited, in that he has notably confuted the Jews, from the Scriptures in the Old-Testament, which they pretend to believe. Here is also asserted and proved, the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that although he is a Man, yet more than a Man. And here also is asserted and proved the Glorious Mystery of the Trinity, that that GOD whose name is Jehovah is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These are the main Principles whereby Christianity is distinguished from Judaism & other false Religions. There will a time come when there shall be a General Conversion of the Jewish Nation. There have been some of that Nation brought home to Christ, who have proved Blessings to the World.

Here he gives names. "In special," he writes, "Emanuel Tremelius was such an one, whose dying Words were, Vivat Christus, et pereat Barrabas. Let Christ Live, and let

3. Ibid., p. 179.

4. Page 21 of this thesis.

Barrabas Die."

The Blessed Day is coming when all Israel shall be Saved, as I have Evinced in a Discourse on that Subject, written in the Year 1667, and also in my Answer to the Reverend Mr. Baxter, and Dr. Lightfoot, printed Anno 1695. And the Providence of GOD seems to intimate this. The Miraculous Manner of GOD's preserving the Jewish Nation is an invincible Proof hereof; for it is an unprecedented and incomprehensible thing, that GOD should for Two Thousand Years preserve this People, dispersed among other Nations, without being confounded with them in their Religions and Customs, as is usual among all dispersed People; this clearly Demonstrates that GOD has preserved them for some great Design, which what can it be but their Conversion?

IT is moreover True, that many particular Jews, who have been Converted or rather Perverted to Popery, have after Renounced their Christianity.

Here he gives a few names and then says, "MANY other Examples I might mention but I forbear."

There is no cause to fear that Mr. Monis will Renounce his Christianity, since he did embrace it Voluntarily and Gradually, and with much Consideration, and from Scriptures in the Old-Testament.

GOD Grant that he (who is the first Jew that ever I knew Converted in New-England) may prove a Blessing unto many, and especially to some of his own Nation: Which is the Prayer and hearty Desire of,

Increase Mather.<sup>5</sup>

As a Puritan clergyman, Cotton Mather was deeply

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5. Judah Monis, The Truth, Being a Discourse Which the Author Delivered at His Baptism, Boston, 1722, Preface.

concerned with the Jew. His interest in the Hebrews, their language, Old Testament, and history was insatiate and life-long. It is little wonder that he was the first American author to attempt the writing of post-biblical Jewish history.

Toward the latter End of the Summer now running, I began one of the greatest Works, that ever I undertook in my Life.<sup>6</sup>

This was his Biblia Americana. At first it was intended to be a two-volume series of scriptural illustrations which he expected to complete in a seven-year period. But it was not until 1706 that he wrote:

And on this Day I finished my BIBLIA AMERICANA.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after, certain that his Biblia was a great work, and just what the world needed, he sought divine aid for its publication.

One principal Request, which I had to present before the Lord, was, that the Lord would please to accept my Biblia Americana, and mercifully direct me how and when to send that Work over for England, and

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6. Cotton Mather, Diary of Cotton Mather 1681-1708, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Seventh Series, Boston, 1911-12, Entry of August, 1693, VII, 169.

7. Ibid., Entry of May 28, 1706, VII, 563.

raise up Encouragement for the Publication of it.<sup>8</sup>

There being no Heavenly disposition for the publication of Mather's work, and no aid being extended from more worldly sources, he continued to add to the Biblia until it grew into a great unwieldy mass comprising six manuscript volumes which now contained

an Elaborate and Entertaining History of what has befallen the Israelitish Nation, in every place, from the Birth of the Glorious Redeemer to this very day: And the present condition of that Nation, the Reliques of the Ten as well as of the Two Tribes, and of their ancient sects, yet (several of them) Existing also, in the several parts of the world, where they are now dispersed, at this time, when their speedy Recovery from their sad and long Dispersion is hoped for.<sup>9</sup>

Even such an attractive addition as this failed to interest financial backing for the unhappy work. Finally, after every possible effort to obtain a publisher had failed, Mather was forced to admit:

I glorified the Lord this day, with the sweetest Acquiescence and Resignation, in the Case of the Biblia Americana, whereof I receive Advice this day, that the publication thereof, is to be despaired of.<sup>10</sup>

8. Ibid., Entry of August 26, 1706, VII, 567.

9. From an advertisement prepared by C. Mather and published in his Bonifacius, Boston, 1710, and quoted in Lee M. Friedman, Pilgrims in a New Land, New York, 1948, pp. 20-3.

10. C. Mather, Diary, Entry of Oct. 6, 1716, VIII, 376.

The Puritans believed the millenium to be near at hand--they accepted literally the prophecy that, as soon as the Jews had been dispersed throughout every land of the earth, there was to be a calling of the Jews, their conversion to Christianity, and then the millenium. Some believed that this conversion was to come en masse. Others felt that it required individual conversions by militant Christians. The ambition to be the means of converting a Jew to Christianity was such an obsession with Cotton Mather that he never ceased to pray for the opportunity to consummate this frustrated desire.

This Day, from the Dust, where I lay prostrate, before the Lord, I lifted up my Cries...For the Conversion of the Jewish Nation, and for my own having the Happiness, at some Time or other, to baptise a Jew, that should by my Ministry, bee brought home unto the Lord.<sup>11</sup>

Mather went out of his way to seek out Jews. "I hear of a Jew in this place," wrote he. "I would seek some Conversation with him."<sup>12</sup> At least one hapless individual knew no peace as a result of his acquaintance with Cotton Mather.

11. Ibid., Entry of July 18, 1696, VII, 200.

12. Ibid., Entry of August 10, 1717, VIII, 469.

And whereas, I have now for diverse Years, employ'd much Prayer for, and some Discourse with, an infidel Jew in this Town; thro' a Desire to glorify my Lord Jesus Christ in the Conversion of that Infidel, if Hee please to accept mee in that Service. I this day renew'd my Request unto Heaven for it. And writing a short Letter to the Jew, wherein I enclosed my, Faith of the Fathers, and, La Fe del Christiano, I sent it unto him.<sup>13</sup>

These solicitations accomplished little for Mather, for twelve years later the object of his prayer was still obviously firm in his "infidelity."

I cried unto the Lord, that I might yett see one [glory], and a very Rich one, in the Conversion of that poor Jew, for whose Conversion and Salvation we have been for six or seven Years more than ten, waiting on Him. And for this Purpose I now again did committ that Soul into the Hands of my Saviour, and His Holy Spirit, with a strong Faith of thy being, O Lord, able to enlighten him, and sanctify him, and conquer all his Obstinacy.<sup>14</sup>

Obstinacy won out.

I enjoy'd a Vigil, wherein I had some intimate Conversation with Heaven. My Visits thither, were...for the Conversion of the Jew, for whom I have been so long and so much concerned!<sup>15</sup>

Mather was so eager to be the means of converting a Jew that he did not hesitate to overstep the bounds of

13. Ibid., Entry of April 28, 1699, VII, 300.

14. Ibid., Entry of April 11/12, 1711, VIII, 62.

15. Ibid., Entry of August 29/30, 1713, VIII, 233.

propriety in order to further his ends. This culminated in an attempt, told to us by Samuel Sewall, to convert a Boston Jewish merchant to Christianity by fraudulent means.

I find him [Cotton Mather] in Spirituals as failable as in Politicks, or he would not have attempted a Pretended Vision, to have converted Mr Frasier a Jew, who had before conceiv'd some good Notions of Christianity: The Consequence was, that the Forgery was so plainly detected that Mr C. M. confest it; after which Mr Frasier would never be perswaded to hear any more of Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

According to Cotton Mather himself he was the author of religious tracts numbering somewhere in the vicinity of two hundred and fifty, a truly amazing output. Many of these were designed to speed the conversion of the Jews. In 1699 he published The Faith of the Fathers which was "Chiefly to Engage the Jewish National unto the Religion of their Patriarchs."

This Week, I attempted a further service to the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ. I considered, that when the Evangelical Elias, was to prepare the Jewish Nation, for the coming of the Messiah, hee was to do it, by, bringing down the Heart of the Fathers upon the Children. And I considered, that it would not only confirm us Christians in our Faith exceedingly to

16. Samuel Sewall, A Modest Enquiry into the Grounds and Occasions of a Late Pamphlet, Intituled, A Memorial of the Present Deplorable State of New-England, London, 1707, in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Fifth Series, Boston, 1879, VI, 80\*.

see every Article of it, asserted in the express Words of the Old Testament, but that it would mightily convince, and confound the Jewish Nation. Yea, who knowes, what Use the Lord may make of such an Essay? Wherefore, with much Contrivance, I drew up a Catechism of the whole Christian Religion, and contrived the Questions to fitt the Answers, whereof I brought every one out of the Old Testament. I prefaced the Catechism, with an Address unto the Jewish Nation, telling them in some lively Terms, That if they would but Return to the Faith of the Old Testament, and beleve with their own ancient and blessed Patriarchs, this was all that wee desired of them or for them. I gave this Book to the Printer, and it was immediately published. Its Title is, THE FAITH OF THE FATHERS.<sup>17</sup>

The volume was indeed dedicated to the Jewish Nation in "some lively Terms." A more tactless exhortation for a people to consider changing their ways probably can nowhere be found.

ONE thing that Satisfies Us Christians, in the Truth of Christianity, is Your Obstinate Aversion to that Holy Religion. Our Blessed JESUS, the Author of our Faith, foretold your continuance under the Circumstances now come upon you, until the Times of the Gentiles in the Four Monarchies, just now Expiring, are Expired. And your own Inspired Prophets, who are now more Ours, than Yours, foretold your being paenally given up to the Deafness, Blindness, and Hardness now upon you. But, behold, a Proclamation here sent you from Heaven, inviting you, to persist no longer in your Damnable Rebellion against the CHRIST of God! Here is now put into your Hands, an Irrestible Demonstration, That tho' you say, You are Jews, you are not so. If in this Essay, the Common Translation of any Text, is at all varied from, 'tis done with as Good Authority as any that there is for the Common Translation:

17. C. Mather, Diary, Entry of April 9, 1699, VII, 298-9.

and most Commonly with the Authority of your own Jewish Writers. Be amazed, O ye Rebellious & Rejected People of our Great Lord Messiah; We Christians, have by the Wonderful Work of God, been brought unto the Faith of the Fathers; but you are fallen from that Faith, & under Strong Delusions, you are Pining away in your Iniquities. Return, O backsliding Israel! All that we Christians desire of you, or for you, (and we all desire it!) is, That you would Return to the Faith of the Old Testament. Be it known unto you, That if you do not now Submit unto our Blessed JESUS, all the Glorious Oracles of the Old Testament, will come in, as Witnesses against you. In the Name of the Great God, I demand it of you, That you Seriously Consider the Things here laid before you; And be now at last Astonish'd, that you have all this while no more Consider'd  
'em.18

Perhaps a fairly successful sale of the tract led Mather to feel that he had mightily convinced and confounded the Jewish Nation, for little more than a month later he records

I had advice from Heaven...That I shall shortly see some Harvest of my Prayers and Pains, for the Jewish Nation also.<sup>19</sup>

Certainly the following September he thought that he was beginning to reap that harvest of souls when

This Day, I understand by Letters from Carolina,

18. Cotton Mather, The Faith of the Fathers. Or, the Articles of the True Religion, All of Them Exhibited in the Express Words of the Old Testament, Boston, 1699, pp. 3-4.

19. C. Mather, Diary, Entry of May 21, 1699, VII, 301-2.

a thing that exceedingly refreshes mee; a Jew there embracing the Christian Faith, and my little book, The Faith of the Fathers, therein a special Instrument of good unto Him.<sup>20</sup>

The following year Cotton Mather published his second tract intended to influence the Jews to submit to conversion, American Tears Upon the Ruins of the Greek Churches... Moreover, a Very Charming Relation of Conversion Made By a Jew...At His Joining Lately to a Congregational Church in London (1700).

A very charming Relation, of Conversion made by a Jew, one Shalome Ben Shalomoh, at his joining lately to a Congregational Church in London, falling into our Hands, I foresaw, many Advantages to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Reprinting of it. Wherefore composing a praeface to make the Transition agreeable, I procured this to be added, as an Appendix to the Book of the Greek Churches.<sup>21</sup>

In 1703 he finished a manuscript, Problema Theologicum, which deals in part with the conversion of the Jews, as does a second manuscript, Triparadisus, also probably of this period.

In 1713 he published Things to Be More Thought Upon. A Brief Treatise on the Injuries Offered unto the Glorious and Only Saviour of the World; in Many Instances Wherein

20. Ibid., Entry of September 2, 1699, VII, 315.

21. Ibid., Entry of October 28, 1700, VII, 370.

the Guilty Are Seldome Aware of Their Being So Injurious to the Eternal Son of God. With a More Particular Conviction of the Jewish and Arian Infidelity.

Faith Encouraged, published in 1717, retold a hearsay story of "a strange and miraculous motion from God upon the minds of the Jewish childfen in the City of Berlin" which allegedly caused three of them to embrace Christianity. This treatise apparently appealed to Samuel Sewall, who records in his Diary sending it to several of his friends.

Throughout his life, Cotton Mather made a sustained effort to bring the Jews to see error in their ways. But in this, as in his desire to publish what he thought was his greatest work, the Biblia Americana, he was destined to failure. For nowhere in his Diary does Cotton Mather record the personal triumph of "having the Happiness, at some Time or other, to baptise a Jew, that should by my Ministry, bee brought home unto the Lord."

Many others also wrote treatises urging Christian attempts to bring the Jews into the fold. Other works on the same subject are Samuel Willard's The Fountain Opened...Wherein...Is Proved That There Shall Be a National Calling of the Jews (1700); John Beach's Three Discourses, Showing the Reason and Propriety of Rejoining

at the Dissolution of the Jewish State; Robert Sandeman's Some Thoughts on Christianity (1764); and The Obligation of Christians to Attempt the Conversion of the Jews, by a Presbyterian of the Church of England (1821).

Samuel Sewall, who as we have seen revealed Cotton Mather's improper attempts to persuade the Jew Frasier to accept Christian concepts, also demonstrates interest in Jews by means of occasional entries in his Diary. His interest, however, was more of a passive than an active one. Besides many references to the Old Testament there are a number of references pertaining to living Jews. Like most of his contemporaries he gave thought to the conjecture that there would be a mass calling of the Jews to Christianity.

Mr. Moody preached from Isa. 12. 1. beginning upon that Scripture this day--In that day thou shalt say, &c. Shewing that 'twas chiefly a Directory of Thanksgiving for the Conversion of the Jews; and that should get our Praises ready before hand.<sup>22</sup>

Mr. Lee preaches the Lecture...Spake of the inverted Rainbow, God shooting at somebody. And that our Times better than the former, and expected better still, Turks going down, a sign

22. Samuel Sewall, Diary of Samuel Sewall, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Fifth Series, Boston, 1878-9, Entry of February 7, 1686, V, 121.

on't: Jews call'd, and to inhabit Judea and old Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup>

These entries demonstrate that the mass conversion was not only a speculation entered into by tract writers but was also a frequent subject of sermons at the Church services.

He also seemed to be fascinated by tales of Jewish apostasy, and he several times recorded sending Cotton Mather's Faith Encouraged to his friends. When word of the baptism of a Jew reached his ears he promptly recorded it.

Lords-day, Mr. Bradstreet baptiseth Simon, the Jew, at Charlestown, a young man whom he was Instrumental to convert.<sup>24</sup>

Of great interest is the fact that in none of his entries pertaining to Jews does he passionately exhort God to make them see the light as does Cotton Mather. All of his entries are impersonal, journalistic, matter-of-fact. When the Jews rejoiced at the coming of a Rabbi, Sewall mentioned the fact without seeming to fear the advent of a heathen influence.

23. Ibid., Entry of January 20, 1687, V, 165.

24. Ibid., Entry of September 13, 1702, VI, 65.

This 29th July the Jews have great joy by reason of a Priest come to Town in the Harwich Coach, they having not had one a long time.<sup>25</sup>

And he tells of the death of a Jew without expressing fear for the deceased's unenlightened soul.

Joseph Frazon,<sup>26</sup> the Jew, dyes at Mr. Major's, Mr. Joyliff's old house; Febr. 5th Satterday, is carried in Simson's coach to Bristow; from thence by Water to Newport, where there is a Jews-burying place.<sup>27</sup>

There is an interesting entry telling of a visit which he made to a Jewish cemetery.<sup>28</sup> Probably its apparent differences from a Christian cemetery impelled him to pen a description of its distinctive features.

Went and saw the Jews burying Place at Mile-End: Some Bodies were laid East and West; but now all are ordered to be laid North and South. Many Tombs. Engravings are Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, English, sometimes on the same stone. Part of the Ground is improv'd as a Garden, the dead are carried through the keepers house. First Tomb is about the year 1659. Brick wall built about part. Ont's two sides 5444, Christi 1684, Tamuz

25. Ibid., Entry of July 29, 1689, V, 268-9.

26. Possibly the Frasier whom Cotton Mather tried to convert.

27. Sewall, Diary, Entry of February 5, 1704, VI, 95.

28. Ezra Stiles mentions the Jewish cemetery at Newport, page 37 of this thesis. I believe the Newport cemetery was the only Jewish one in New England at the time, so this is probably the one to which Sewall refers.

21, June 23, as I remember.--I told the keeper afterwards wisht might meet in Heaven: He answerd, and drink a Glass of Beer together, which we were then doing.<sup>29</sup>

The desirability of drinking beer in a cemetery or the propriety of doing it in Heaven are beyond the scope of this present discussion. But it is at least apparent that Sewall allowed the possibility that a professing Jew might still reach Heaven.

However, it must not be assumed that Judge Sewall unlike his colleagues did not cast covetous eyes upon Jewish souls. The following stanza, written at the end of a small tract, Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies Humbly Offered by Samuel Sewall, M. A. (1713), was probably meant in all sincerity.

From hard'ned Jews the Vail remove;  
Let them their Martyr'd Jesus love;  
And Homage unto Him afford,  
Because He is their Rightfull Lord.<sup>30</sup>

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29. Sewall, Diary, Entry of March 18, 1689, V, 301.

30. Quoted in Sewall, Diary, VI, 393n.

CHAPTER 2

TWO APOSTATES: MONIS AND FREY

But, oh, when Israel's sons, at length,  
Grew false to faith by Heaven revealed,  
No Gideon's sword--no David's strength  
Brought victory on the blood-drenched field.<sup>1</sup>

It must not be assumed that the pleas of the would-be Christianizers of the Jews fell entirely upon deaf ears. Neither must their efforts be over-rated to the point of assuming that their arguments were so eloquent that those who heard them could scarcely keep from flinging themselves into the arms of the Messiah.

Apostates were few, indeed. But there were some. And two of them were prominent in the field of letters.

1. George Lunt, "Jezreel," in Poems, Boston, 1884, p. 100.

No sooner had their metamorphosis been complete than they joined their voices to the din created by those who would bring salvation to the Jews.

Judah Monis was the first Jew to receive a degree from Harvard College. Aspiring to a position on the faculty, Monis accepted baptism in 1722 and became Harvard's first instructor of Hebrew. His baptism was considered a triumph by local Christian ministers who claimed that not only had he been a Jew but that he had been no less than a Rabbi. This was probably an exuberant overstatement of fact, as there appears to be no evidence to support it. His conversional ceremony was public and well-attended. The conversion occurred at Harvard on March 27, 1722, at which time the Rev. Benjamin Colman delivered a discourse, Moses a Witness to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (1722).

Unlike Increase Mather in his enthusiastic preface<sup>2</sup> to Monis discourse, The Truth, there seems to be a tone of reserve in Colman's appraisal of Monis' apostasy.

As to Mr. Monis himself, it must be confessed that he seems a very Valuable Proselyte....GOD grant that (as our SAVIOUR said to Peter) being Converted

2. Pages 3-4 of this thesis.

himself, he may minister unto the Conversion of his Brethren.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps Colman wondered why a Jew should suddenly decide in favor of Christianity at the very time that a faculty post at Harvard presented itself, Christianity being prerequisite to holding such a position.

Be that as it may, the audience was there to hear about Jews and Christianity, and Colman--as eager to see the Jews accept Christ as any of his contemporaries--presented evidence to show that Moses himself was a Christian.

Had the Jews but heeded and rightly understood what Moses had wrote, they would have believed in and received our LORD JESUS.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, God used Abraham to present the lesson of Christianity.

The Wood for the fire was laid on Isaac to bear as a figure of Christ's bearing His Cross.<sup>5</sup>

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3. Benjamin Colman, Moses a Witness to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A Discourse Had in the College Hall at Cambridge, March 27, 1722. Before the Baptism of R. Judah Monis, Boston, 1722, p. i.

4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 13.

But this was obviously one lesson which the Jews had failed to learn. Why they did so was an unanswerable puzzle to Colman.

We look for the happy day of the Conversion of the Jews and of Israels Salvation; we daily and earnestly pray for it with great desire; we wait for it with a holy Impatience; It will be life from the dead to the Christian World:--What hinders it?<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the best answer to this question--"What hinders it?"--in the minds of all would-be savers of Jewish souls is Rabbi Haim Isaac Carigal's<sup>7</sup> idea of the best way to achieve salvation.

Let us then be wise enough to consider and acknowledge that the best antidote for sin is the frequency of the divine study; not intended as a curiosity and ostentation, but applying ourselves to it with the view of learning and keeping of, comprehending & observing the precepts.<sup>8</sup>

As for Judah Monis himself, what did he have to say at his baptism? He delivered a discourse, The Truth (1722). Possibly his two other essays, The Whole Truth

6. Ibid., p. 26.

7. Pages 39-43 of this thesis.

8. Haijm Isaac Karigal, A Sermon Preached at the Synagogue, in Newport, Rhode-Island, Called "The Salvation of Israel:" on the Day of Pentecost, Newport, 1773, p. 16.

(1722), and Nothing But the Truth (1722) were presented at the same time, but if not, they certainly were written almost immediately afterwards.

Anticipating Colman's question--"What hinders it?"-- Monis replied with the "true reason" why the Jews have not as yet been converted. The answer, according to Monis, can be found in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 11.25.

"Blindness in Part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in."...THESE Words In Part of the Apostle to the Romans, make me think. <sup>It</sup> intimates the Blindness which some Part of the Nation have, i. e. their Rabbies or Teachers, which do keep the rest of the Common People in the same Way with them, i. e. in Blindness, not able to see that the Messiah is already come.<sup>9</sup>

Because the Jews are blind, we find Monis at the point of tears for the plight of

the Jews, who are my Brethren according to the Flesh, and for whom my Heart is ready to burst, when I seriously think of them, to see them still in their Spiritual Darkness; and my Eyes do run, when I consider the forlorn State and Condition that they are in; namely in denying the Doctrines of the most Blessed and sacred Trinity, so often

9. Judah Monis, The Whole Truth: Being a Short Essay, Wherein the Author Discovers What May Be the True Reason Why the Jewish Nation Are Not As Yet Converted to Christianity, Boston, 1722, p. 6.

repeated by the Prophets of the old Testament, and the chief Rabbins among them.<sup>10</sup>

But although Monis' discourses were directed toward the Jews--saying nothing that a Christian did not already know--he hardly expected Jews to read his papers. Certainly he himself had been a Jew long enough to realize, as other Christian convert-seekers did not, that their conversionary pleadings fell on indifferent ears. After presenting one of his arguments to show the fallacy of the Jewish disbelief in Christianity, Monis says:

Here I expect the Jews will argue (if ever they come to read this Discourse) thus.<sup>11</sup>

Monis, then, unlike Frey whom we shall later see, held no illusions whatsoever about the influence his position as an apostate would give him with his former co-religionists. Furthermore, Monis never did fulfill Colman's wish that "he may minister unto the Conversion of his Brethren." Save for these three essays, Monis never again orally or in writing sought to induce other Jews

10. Judah Monis, Nothing But the Truth: Being a Short Essay, Wherein the Author Proves the Doctrine of the Ever Blessed and Adorable Trinity, Both of the Old Testament, and with the Authority of the Cabalistic Rabbies, Ancient and Modern, Boston, 1722, p. 4.

11. Ibid., p. 16.

to follow him into his apostasy.<sup>12</sup> Possibly, justifying Colman's direst fears, he never had any intention of so doing, for at the end of his discourses we find appended the following postscript:

Gentle Reader, The Author hoping you are endowed with the Spirit of Forgiveness, desires you would not only forgive the Errors of the Press, but even his appearing in Publick, feeling both were unavoidable.<sup>13</sup>

I have no desire to read too much into Monis' lines, but I think the last statement indicates that Monis produced the discourses only because they were expected of him as a condition of his baptism. I do not think that he, unlike Frey who devoted his entire life to missionary work among the Jews, was sincere in his acceptance of baptism. Rather I think he, like Heine, being little concerned with religion, converted to enjoy the worldly conveniences which identity as a Christian allowed and as a Jew did not.

\* \* \*

Joseph S. C. F. Frey was an apostate German Jew

12. His principle subsequent work was the writing of the first Hebrew Grammar to be produced in America, his Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue, Boston, 1734.

13. Appended to Monis, Nothing But the Truth.

who studied and engaged in missionary work in England and then came to New York in 1816 to form The American Society for Evangelizing the Jews.

About Frey there can be little doubt that he was thoroughly sincere in his embracement of Christianity. His entire life he devoted to the attempt to convince his stubborn ex-brethren that they should follow him along the course he had chosen.

As often as I saw a Jew, one of my own brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, my whole heart was stirred up within me: and my prayer to God was, O that this poor lost sheep might find the right way to the good Shepherd, who gave his life a ransom for our souls. Whenever I found an opportunity to speak to one of the descendants of Abraham, I told him that the promised Messiah had already come, not only as the Son of David, but also as the Son of God; that he was made a curse for us when he suffered and died on the cross, to deliver us from the curse of the law, but that the same person rose again from the dead on the third day, according to Scripture prophecy; that he ascended on high; and that in believing this I enjoyed happiness that could not be expressed.<sup>14</sup>

The first year that Frey--born Levi--began his work in New York, a bitter anonymous attack by a non-Jew was published under the title Tobit's Letters to Levi (1816).

14. Joseph S. C. F. Frey, Judah and Israel; or, the Restoration and Conversion of the Jews and the Ten Tribes. Prefixed by the Author's Narrative and H's Portrait, New York, 1840, pp. 52-3.

Apparently there were those even of his own faith who felt that organizing on a business-like basis for the conversion of Jews was stretching the limits of religion too far. Certainly the Jews, who had always accepted as an unavoidable evil the leers of Christians who coveted their souls, felt so too--particularly when such an organized effort was the idea and charge of one of their former number. This caused the appearance in 1820 of Israel Vindicated by "An Israelite."

In 1820 The American Society for Evangelizing the Jews was reorganized as the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews. The first report, published in 1823, showed that although the Society was well under way it could not commence operations for want of Jews.

By 1824 the Society was in a flourishing condition. Much earlier<sup>15</sup> Frey had written:

Although I have not yet seen any fruit of those labours, yet I know and believe that the doctrine of the cross will produce its effects in due season.<sup>16</sup>

In 1824 Frey probably felt that the fruit was about to be plucked. The Society's income was over \$17,000;

15. 1801.

16. Quoted in Frey, Judah and Israel, p. 53.

it had more than 200 auxiliary branches all over the nation. And everywhere that Frey went, people flocked to hear him, or to get their first glimpse of a real live "Jew."

In looking over my Journal, I find that since my arrival in America, in 1816 to 1837, I have been enabled to travel more than 50,000 miles, and preached five thousand one hundred and forty-seven times, and I have abundant reason to believe that my labours, however imperfect, have not been in vain.<sup>17</sup>

The monthly publication of the Society, Israel's Advocate, had reached a circulation of 20,000. The Jew was a monthly issued to counteract the Advocate's effect in spreading false ideas about the Jews. S. H. Jackson, The Jew's editor, even went so far as to claim that there were no conversions by the Society, and neither Frey nor the Society made any assertions to the contrary.

During my twenty years' residence in this country, I had but little opportunity of preaching to my Jewish brethren, there being but, comparatively, few of them here; still I never lost sight of their precious and never-dying souls.<sup>18</sup>

Frey had a very active pen. Among the works

17. Ibid., p. 80.

18. Ibid., p. 93.

published by him in America were Joseph and Benjamin;  
or a Series of Letters on the Controversy Between Jews  
and Christians; Essays on Christian Baptism (1829);  
Essays on the Passover (1834); Lecture on the Scripture  
Types (1841); and A Report of His Late Agency in Europe.  
...The Present State of the Jews (1840).

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## CHAPTER 3

## THE JEWS FIND A FRIEND

Side by side  
In the low sunshine by the turban stove  
They knelt; each made his brother's woe his own  
Forgetting, in the agony and stress  
Of pitying love, his claim of selfishness;  
Peace, for his friend besought, his own became;  
His prayers were answered in another's name;  
And when at last they rose up to embrace,  
Each saw God's pardon in his brother's face!<sup>1</sup>

Ezra Stiles, a president of Yale during the second part of the Eighteenth Century, left in his Diary and papers what is undoubtedly the most complete record of Jews in Colonial America. His interest in the Jews was sincere, and his friendship to the Jewish community was

1. John Greenleaf Whittier, "The Two Rabbins," in The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier, Boston, 1894, p. 92.

never in the least doubted by its members.

Why a learned Christian should bear so strong an attachment for Jews in a day when they could still count their non-Jewish friends on their fingers certainly merits consideration. Stiles' motives were not entirely humanitarian. He sought intercourse with Jews because he desired to find in their intellectual and cultural heritage, in fact in their very being, the truths of Christianity. Of this Stiles himself leaves no doubt when he minutely describes his portrait painted in 1790-1 by Samuel King. On his left are bookshelves in which he takes infinite pride. One of these contain, together with Livy and Eusebius, the Babylonian Talmud, "Aben Ezra, Rabbi Selomoh Jarchi"<sup>2</sup> and "R. Moses Ben Maimon Moreh Nevochim."<sup>3</sup> He describes his collection as representing the

Rabbinical Learning partly in the two most eminent Periods of it; the first before & at the Time of Christ containing the Decisions of the house of R. Eleazar at Babylon, and those of the Houses of

2. Stiles translates this name erroneously. Correctly, it is Rabbi Solomon bar Isaac, more commonly referred to as Rashi from the initials of his name. He is one of the greatest of Jewish Commentators on the Bible and the Talmud.
3. More commonly referred to as Maimonides, he was the most important Jewish philosopher and codifier of the Middle Ages, the greatest Rabbinic authority of his time, and a physician of note.

Hillel & Shammai at Jerusalem; the second period was at the **Revival** of the Hebrew Learning in the XIth & Twelfth Centuries, when arose those Lights of the Captivity, Jarchi, Maimonides &c. I prize this Learning only for the scattered Remains of the antient Doctrine of the Trinity, & a suffering Messiah, preserved in the Opinions of some of the Rabbins before Christ--the very Labors of the modern Rabbins to obviate or interpret them into another sense & Application evincing their Genuineness & Reality. The Moreh Nevochim which was originally written in Arabic, is curious for many Reasons; it was a capital Work, & became an Occasion of the greatest literary Dispute among the Jews since the days of Hillel--it contains great Concessions, which have recommended it to Xtian Divines.<sup>4</sup>

The foregoing passage leaves no doubt whatsoever as to Stiles' position. It must be kept clearly in mind when we come to consider Stiles' relations with the Jews. But if there is still any doubt as to Stiles' motivations in befriending the Jews, an earlier entry written immediately following a visit to the Newport synagogue should thoroughly establish the point.

How melancholy to behold an Assembly of Worshippers of Jehovah, Open & professed Enemies to a crucified Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Ezra Stiles, Ezra Stiles and the Jews: Selected Passages from His Literary Diary Concerning Jews and Judaism, George Alexander Kohut, ed., New York, 1902, Entry of August 1, 1771, p. 51.
  5. Ibid., Entry of September 1, 1770, p. 53.

But for Stiles there certainly was some strange fascination in beholding this "melancholy" assembly, for his attendance at the synagogue was almost as regular as that of the Jews themselves.

This Evening I went to the Synagogue, it being the Eve of Purim.<sup>6</sup>

This day is Passover with the Jews. I went to the Synagogue.<sup>7</sup>

Went to the Synagogue....<sup>8</sup>

At Synagogue Evening prayers.<sup>9</sup>

Went to Synagogue....<sup>10</sup>

Pentecost. Went to the Synagogue at ix h. A. M.<sup>11</sup>

His description of the synagogue service demonstrates familiarity with the ritual and he even goes so far as to profess superiority in a dispute over a point of ritual.

6. Ibid., Entry of March 8, 1773, p. 114.
7. Ibid., Entry of April 8, 1773, p. 115.
8. Ibid., Entry of April 17, 1773, p. 117.
9. Ibid., Entry of April 22/23, 1773, p. 117.
10. Ibid., Entry of May 15, 1773, p. 119.
11. Ibid., Entry of May 28, 1773, p. 120.

A. M. I went to the Synagogue, it being *הַסַּבָּת*, Sabbath of the Passover. They read in the Law the passages which give an Account of the Exodus and Institution of the passover; and also a passage about Vth of Joshua concerning Circumcision and rolling away the Reproach of Egypt. Several mentioned over the Names of their dead friends, for whom Prayers were immediately made. Large offerings of Alms were made to probably fourty dollars as one of the Jews estimated, and I believe true; for sundry offered Chai Livre i. e. £16 or two Dollars-- and I judge Mr. Aaron Lopez offered ten or a dozen of these Chai. I asked one when they should have Killed the Pascal Lambs if they had been at Jerusalem; he replied, too day. But I doubt it; he was ignorant.<sup>12</sup>

Because Stiles was an Hebraist, he sought out tales of other Hebraists and was greatly pleased to find an interest in Hebrew in his friends. He boasted of his young son's proficiency in reading Hebrew texts in the original. The story of a woman who was proficient in the language particularly pleased him.

There was one Woman in New England who was an Hebrician, perfectly understanding the Hebrew Bible, which she used to carry with her to Meeting; and also would frequently have Recourse to it in Conversation with Ministers. She was taken off a wreckt Vessel, as I understand near Plymouth in New England. After this she returned to England while a Girl, and there lived in a Jew Family and was taught Hebrew. After this she returned to New England and settled and died here. She married Mr. Parker,

12. Ibid., Entry of April 18, 1772, pp. 72-3.  
It is Stiles who was **ignorant**. See Exodus, XII.

by whom she had a Daughter Paltah Parker, whom she named Paltah or the Deliverance of God in memory of her being saved from the Wreck.... She died about 1722....I suspect there is some defect in the story--but I conclude so much is true, that she had an Ancestor brought up in a Jew Family and able to read the Hebrew Bible.<sup>13</sup>

Frequently Stiles entertained Jews at his home. From the implicit informality of the visit described in the account which follows, we can judge for ourselves the high regard which the Jews obviously felt for their Christian friend and the ease with which they accepted him as such.

In the Evening, though Saturday Evening which I keep as holy Time, Mr. Enoc Lyon a Jew came to visit me desiring some religious Conversation. He spent four hours with me conversing upon the Things of God. We freely conversed on Things respecting Judaism and Christianity. I shewed him from the Rabbins, that by Quotations from the Talmud, some of them allowed the first appearance of Messiah was to be in Humiliation and particularly that they applied 53rd Chapter of Isaiah to Messiah, Also that by the Jewish Writings the Messiah was Jehovah; As he allowed original sin and the infinite Evil of sin, I labored to shew the necessity of punishment in the persons of the sinner, or of him that should bare the Iniquities &c. He allowed Jesus to be a holy and good Man giving a holy Law. But did not see the necessity of Satisfaction or a Messiah's Atonement, God being infinitely merciful.<sup>14</sup>

13. Ibid., Entry of April 3, 1772, pp. 70-1.

14. Ibid., Entry of February 29, 1772, pp. 66-7.

Here then we see Stiles discussing the differences between Jew and Christian unimpassionedly. Not like Cotton Mather does he fling himself violently on the floor to beg for Jewish souls. Not like Mather does he hurl invectives because of their "damnable" conduct. Like Sewall, who wished that he and the cemetery keeper might meet in Heaven, he does not rule out the possibility that even Jews might reach the Eternal City.

As Stiles played host to Jews, so was he frequently a guest in their homes. He tells about "the only Time" he "ever happened at Meal with a Jew," when a guest at the table of Isaac Touro, the Cantor of the Synagogue.

Just before they sat down to supper Water was bro't by the Maid, in a white earthen Bottle which stood in a Vase or Bason: they two washed their hands, taking up the bottle and pouring the Water on the hand. I asked if this was  $\int P G$  (because the Baptists say this word denotes total not partial Immersions) they said yes-- & quoted a passage of the Talmud that none can eat till they had thus washed themselves in which I recollect the word  $\int P G$  was twice repeated. I did not wash, but sat down and eat with them. After sitting each in a whispering voice said Grace for himself. The Rabbi<sup>15</sup> said, that in the days of Messiah, it would be allowed to the Jews to eat Swines Flesh-- I said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when they come with Messiah, would not eat Food as formerly; he said they would.....I asked him the Value of a couple of Pearls I had & of the dimensions I described;

15. Rabbi Tobiah ben Jehudah.

he said if good, 500 Ducats which is about £11 sterling....He is a great Cabbalist and Philosopher; which two Branches of knowledge are far more to his Tast than the Talmud. He has a son of about 13 years age--when aet. 12 he had read thro' the Talmud. This Rabbi was educated and spent 26 years in Amsterdam, whither he was sent aet. 8. He told me was of the Family and ninth Descendant of R. Selomoh Ishaaci<sup>16</sup> the celebrated Commentator who died A. D. 1180.<sup>17</sup>

We can observe that the table conversation was lively and unrestrained, further evidence of the lack of uneasiness caused the Jews by this particular Christian in their midst.

There is no doubt that he closely observed everything that the Jews did, noting every peculiarity in their behavior.

It is customary with the Jews for Parents to lay their hands on the Heads of their Children and give them their Blessing. If it be a son, the father laying his hand upon him says....'The Lord make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh.' Gen xlvi, 20. If a Daughter 'The Lord make thee as Sarah, Rachel and Leah.' This is frequently done at Meals and Friday Evening after Supper, when the Children come to the parent for the Blessing. I have seen old Mr. Moses Lopez do it to his Boys in the Synagogue, after Service.<sup>18</sup>

But though his main purpose was to reconcile the

16. Rashi.

17. Stiles, Diary, Entry of November 23, 1773, p. 94.

18. Ibid., Entry of July 27, 1772, p. 77.

differences between Jew and Christian, he held a sincere regard for individual Jews as men.

Attended the Funeral of Mr. David Lopez who died yesterday morning aet. 61, and was this day at Noon buried in the Jews Burying Ground.<sup>19</sup> He came from Portugal a few years ago, & with his two sons was circumcised, having been obliged to live secreted in Portugal. No Mourning tho' the Family wealthy.<sup>20</sup>

If there seems to be nothing unusual about this obituary, it must be remembered that he took the trouble to record it in his Diary; and if superlatives are lacking, perhaps a later note on a deceased Jew will make up for this want.

On 28th May died that amiable, benevolent, most hospitable & very respectable Gentleman Mr. Aaron Lopez Merchant, who retiring from Newport Rhd. Isld in these Times resided from 1775 to his Death at Leicester in Massachusetts. He was a Jew by Nation, came from Spain or Portugal about 1754 & settled at Rh. Isld. He was a Merchant of the first Eminence; for Honor & Extent of Commerce probably surpassed by no Merchant in America. He did Business with the greatest Ease & Clearness--always carried about a Sweetness of Behaviour a calm Urbanity an agreeable & unaffected Politeness of manners. Without a single Enemy & the most universally beloved by an extensive Acquaintance of any man I ever Knew. His Beneficence to his Family Connexions, to his Nation, and to all the

19. See Longfellow's poem on pp.100-2 of this thesis.

20. Stiles, Diary, Entry of March 27, 1775, p. 138.

World is almost without a Parallel. He was my intimate Friend & Acquaintance! Oh! how often have I wished that sincere & pious & candid mind could have perceived the Evidences of Xianity, perceived the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ, known that JESUS was the MESSIAH predicted by Moses & the Prophets! The amiable & excellent Characters of a Lopez, of a Manasseh Ben Israel, of a Socrates, & a Gangenelli, would almost persuade us to hope that their Excellency was infused by Heaven, and that the virtuous & good of all Nations & religions, notwithstanding their Delusions, may be bro't together in Paradise on the Xtian System, finding Grace with the all benevolent & adorable Emanuel who with his expiring breath & in his deepest agonies, prayed for those who knew not what they did.<sup>21</sup>

Were this written for publication, one might doubt its sincerity because of the overabundance of adjectives. But keeping in mind its status as an entry in Stiles' private papers, we can be certain that his sorrow at the death of his friend is complete and unadorned.

Naturally, being so genuinely interested in the spiritual philosophy of the Jews, Stiles was greatly interested in their religious leaders. So with these he sought intimacy.

Upon Recollection I find I have been acquainted with six Rabbis<sup>22</sup>

R. Moses Malki in 1759.

R. Moses Bar David [Ashkenazi], aet 52, 1772, Nov.

R. Haijm I. Karigal, aet 40, 1773, June.

21. Ibid., Entry of June 8, 1782, pp. 138-9.

22. Brackets not mine.

- R. Tobiah Ben Jehudah, aet. 48, 1773, Nov.  
 R. Bosquila 1773 or 1774 [aet. 61, June 15, 1774].  
 R. Samuel Cohen [aet. 34, June 29, 1775].<sup>23</sup>

Of these men, Stiles was thoroughly captivated by one in particular, Haim Isaac Carigal. Such genuine respect, such open admiration did Stiles hold for Carigal, that his Diary was virtually filled with entries describing his every movement. Wrote Abiel Holmes, his son-in-law and biographer:

He now [1773] commenced an acquaintance with Haijm Isaac Carigal, a Jew rabbi, who had lately come to Newport. Having travelled very extensively in the eastern world, and being a man of observation, learning, and intelligence; his conversation was highly entertaining and instructive. He was born at Hebron, and educated there and at Jerusalem. He had travelled all over the Holy Land, and had visited Damascus, Aleppo, Grand Cairo, Bagdat, Ispahan, Smyrna, Constantinople, Salonica, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Vienna, Prague, Paris, London. The Doctor was greatly delighted with his society, and had frequent interviews with him, for the purpose of acquiring the pronunciation of Hebrew; of ascertaining the meaning of ambiguous expressions, in the original of the Old Testament; of learning the usages of the modern Jews; of conversing on past events relating to this extraordinary nation, as recorded in sacred history; and of tracing its future destiny, by the light of prophecy. They cultivated a mutual friendship while together, and corresponded in Hebrew when apart. One of the Doctor's Hebrew letters on the divinity of the Messiah, and the glory of his kingdom, consisted of twenty-two quarto pages.

23. Stiles, Diary, Entry of July 5, 1783, pp. 79-80.

The rabbi, not long, after his arrival, attended his worship, by agreement, and heard him discourse, in an affectionate manner, on the past dispensations of God's providence toward his chosen people; on his promised design of rendering them an exalted nation, in the latter day glory of the Messiah's kingdom; and on the duty of Christians, and of all nations, to desire a participation in their future glorious state. The rabbi had never heard a Christian preach a sermon before. Though he had attended church at St. Peter's, in Rome; at St. Paul's, in London; at Venice, and various other places; and had been at the Christian churches in Jerusalem, he had never heard any service, excepting prayers.

So catholic was the intercourse between this learned Jew, and learned Christian! They often spent hours together in conversation and the information, which the extensive travels of the Jew enabled him to give, especially concerning the Holy Land, was a rich entertainment to his Christian friend. The civilities of the rabbi were more than repaid. The Doctor very frequently attended the worship of the synagogue, at Newport, not only while Rabbi Carigal officiated, but at the ordinary service, before his arrival, and after his departure.<sup>24</sup>

Everything about the Rabbi, then, fascinated and delighted Stiles. Always he was interested in the Jews, trying to fathom the secret of their continued existence. But here was not only a Jew, but a Jew from the source. Here was a Jew from the Holy Land itself, one probably more closely like the People of the Book than he had ever before seen. His Oriental dress probably seemed to Stiles much like that of the Biblical Hebrews, and he minutely scrutinized every article of clothing which the Rabbi wore,

24. Abiel Holmes, The Life of Ezra Stiles, D. D., Boston, 1798, p. 168 ff.; quoted in Stiles, Diary, pp. 83-6.

To the modern reader the Rabbi's vivid apparel must seem very startling. But it must be recalled that Western European dress of the same period was scarcely less colorful. Consider, for example, the costumes which were fashionable in the highest London circles, but a generation or so later.

D'Israeli was asked to luncheon, and came in green velvet trousers, with a canary waistcoat, buckle shoes, and lace cuffs.

--André Maurois, Disraeli: a Picture of the Victorian Age, The Modern Library, n. p., n. d., p. 46.

He went to Caroline Norton's in a coat of black velvet, poppy-coloured trousers brodered with gold, a scarlet waistcoat, sparkling rings worn on top of white kid gloves.

--Ibid., pp. 71-2.

26. Stiles, Diary, Entry of April 8, 1773, p. 116.

recording his observations meticulously in his Diary.

The Rabbi's Dress or Apparel: Common English Shoes, black Leather, **Silver** flowered Buckles, White Stockings. His general Habit was Turkish. A green Silk Vest or long under Garment reaching down more than half way the Legs or within 3 Inches of the Ankles, the ends of the Sleeves of this Vest appeared on the Wrists in a foliage Turn-up of 3 inches, & the Opening little larger than that the hand might pass freely. A Girdle or Sash of different Colors red and green girt the Vest around his Body. It appeared not to be open at the bottom but to come down like a petticoat; and no Breeches could be discovered. This Vest however had an opening above the Girdle--and he put in his Handkerchief, and Snuff-box, and Watch. Under this was an inner Vest of Calico, besides other Jewish Talismans. Upon the vest **first** mentioned was a scarlet outer Garment of Cloth, one side of it was Blue, the outside scarlet; it reached down about an Inch lower than the Vest, or near the Ankles. It was open before, no range of Buttons &c. along the Edge, but like a Scholars Gown in the Body but plain and without many gatherings at the Neck, the sleeves strait or narrow and slit open 4 or 5 Inches to the End, and turned up with a blue silk Quarter Cuff, higher up than at the End of the sleeve of the Vest. When he came into the Synagogue he put over all, the usual Alb or white Surplice, which was like that of other Jews, except that its Edge was striped with Blue strais, and had more Fringe. He had a White Cravat round his Neck. He had a long **black** Beard, the upper Lip partly shaven--his Head shaved all over.<sup>25</sup> On his Head a high Fur Cap, exactly like a Woman's Muff, and about 9 or 10 Inches high, the Aperture atop was closed with green cloth.<sup>26</sup>

25. This is probably an erratic observation on the part of Stiles in view of the Rabbi's orthodoxy which would forbid him to shave. From the Rabbi's portrait reproduced in Stiles, Diary, p. 90, it appears that he had but sparse growth on his upper lip and probably his head was bald.

In addition to such a close perusal of the Rabbi's unquestionably colorful appearance, Stiles clung to his every word. He felt that at last he was hearing Hebrew pronounced as it ought to be spoken and desired to emulate Carigal's eloquence.

Speaking of the Circumcision of the Copti christians, I observed R. Is. Karigal pronounced it not Copt but Kipt. I suppose this is a relict of the old Name in Homer's Day. Egypt which the English pronounce Ejipt, the Germans nearly Ecipt or Ekipt--the English accent the E, the Germans the y and almost suppress the E. If we consider y as Y or ui; and accenting i assume the power of vi in Guipt as wi in wit, at the same time using u as a vowel and not as V, we shall come nearly to the original sound of Eguipt or 'Gupt or 'Kupt or 'Gipt or 'Cypt or 'Gypt--Thus Eguipt armed. Homer wrote it *αλυπτος* --The Hebrews called that country Mitzraim, but if we write Egypt in Hebrew Letters and point the Vav with hirak it will show not Egopt nor Egupt but Eguipt or Egipt not Ejipt but Ekipt or Kipt, as the Rabbi called it.<sup>27</sup>

Poor Stiles seems to have become more involved with Egypt than the ancient Hebrews did. But fortunately there were other things that the learned Rabbi said that at least impressed Stiles without causing him such frustration in attempting to comprehend them. The Rabbi would say:

27. Ibid., Entry of June 11, 1773, pp. 123-4.

We must always have this present before us, that the perfection of virtue and singularity of wisdom consists in following the medium in all things. Let us not pretend to be angels while we are only men.<sup>28</sup>

Or he would advise:

Let us always endeavour to keep among us peace, harmony and good order, submitting ourselves to an equitable and well regulated **subordination**, being ready and disposed to accept the reproof of those, who make use of their benignity to exhort and correct us.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly it was such a philosophy which caused Stiles to have such a liking for Rabbi Carigal. Stiles was present in the Synagogue when Carigal delivered the sermon which contained these gems of thought, and probably like everyone else present Stiles considered this sermon a masterpiece. It was printed and widely distributed.

At any rate, such rare and unexpected attentions on the part of a Christian toward Jews in a day when even in America the rights of a Jew were few is an amazing and pleasant chapter in our history. It was men such as Stiles, men who thought as he did, who are the true foundations upon which our American democracy rests.

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28. Karigal, Sermon, pp. 16-17.

29. Ibid., p. 18.

Though his motives were still conversionary, his methods were thoroughly admirable and beyond reproach. For he preached and practiced the ideal of better understanding between peoples of **different** philosophies.

The study of the Hebrew language hath been too much laid aside, and we have by that means, been less able to convince the Jews. It is certain that this study hath not only been neglected, but ridiculed; whereas nothing could be of greater use to us than a great skill, not only in the Biblical Hebrew, but the Rabbinical and Talmudical also, to enable us to convince the Jews. By such a skill we might be **enabled** to use their own weapons against them; and to dispute against them from the avowed principles of their ancient wise men, for whom they are prone to profess a profound regard.<sup>30</sup>

"Such," says Holmes, "was the use which the Doctor made of his Hebrew learning."<sup>31</sup>

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30. Quoted in Holmes, Life of Stiles, p. 168 ff.; requoted in Stiles, Diary, pp. 83-6.

31. Loc. cit.

## CHAPTER 4

## AMERICA'S JEWISH BRAVES

Thus Jacobs Sons in Exile must remain,  
And pleasant Canaan never saw again:  
Where now those ten Tribes are, can no man tell,  
Or how they fare, rich, poor, or ill, or well;  
Whether the Indians of the East, or West,  
Or wild Tartarians, as yet ne're blest,  
Or else those Chinoes rare, whose wealth & arts  
Hath bred more wonder than belief in hearts:  
But what, or where they are; yet know we this,  
They shall return, and Zion see with bliss.<sup>1</sup>

Because many scriptural prophecies point to the return of Israel to the Holy Land, believers in the literal interpretation of the Bible have always been

1. Anne Bradstreet, "The Four Monarchies," in The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse, John Harvard Ellis, ed., New York, 1932, p. 196.

greatly concerned with the problem of the continued existence of the lost tribes of Israel. If the Lost Ten Tribes have become extinct the literal fulfillment of the prophecies would be an impossibility; if they have not disappeared then it is obvious that they are necessarily existant under another name. The repeated and numerous attempts at identification that have been made constitute some of the most remarkable curiosities of world literature.

At various times there have been attempts by zealous Christians to uncover the elusive Ten Tribes among the Beni-Israel of India; the Falashas of Abyssinia; the Nestorians of Mesopotamia; the Yezidis, or Devil-worshippers, of Mesopotamia; the Karaites of Russia; the Daghestan Jews of Caucasus; the Kareens of Burma; the Shindai, or Holy Class, of Japan; the Masai of British East Africa; the Australians; the Yemenites; the Afghans; the Kashmiris; the Tajiks of Badakshan; the English people and the whole Teutonic race. They have been "discovered" in China, in India, in the Sahara. There has been an attempt to prove that the high-class Hindus, including all Buddhists, are descendants of the Scythians who in turn were the Lost Ten Tribes.

Most of these people have such traditions. In fact

it almost seems that everybody despises the Jew but that everybody wants to be one. Even the Puritans liked to think of themselves in biblical allegory.

When the Tatars invaded Central Europe in the Thirteenth Century the West became alarmed. Rumors were cast into currency that the wild horsemen were in reality the "hidden" Ten Tribes and that the Jews were in league with them, secretly furnishing them with arms and information.

Maps of the Fifteenth Century place the Ten Tribes in the far Northeast, next to Gog and Magog and the Amazons.

No sooner had the New World been discovered than pious European explorers began to see Jewish faces among the aboriginal inhabitants. When the flood of literature which resulted later subsided, George Alexander Kohut was to write:

Many have written learned books and monographs on Indian and Hebrew analogies. Indeed, the literature on the subject is so vast that it eludes the investigator.<sup>2</sup>

Columbus himself was convinced that in Hispaniola<sup>3</sup> he had discovered the mines of Ophir whence Solomon

2. Foreword to Walter Hart Blumenthal, In Old America-- Random Chapters on the Early Aborigines, New York, 1931.

3. Haiti.

had obtained gold for the building of the Temple. The Spaniard Gomara was one of the earliest to expound the Hebrew-Indian theme, while De Lery, a French Calvinist, wrote upon it in 1556-7. Gilbert Genebrard, professor of Hebrew at the Collège Royal of Paris and later a Benedictine archivist, in his Chronologie Sacré (Paris, 1580) considered the possibility of the Ten Tribes having gone to America where, in line with Columbus, he believed Solomon's fleet to have sailed.

Father Durán of Tezcuco, Mexico, in his History of New Spain (1585) perceived in the resemblance of Indian religious rites to those of the Hebrews conclusive proof that

my opinion and supposition is confirmed that these natives are of the ten tribes of Israel that Salmanassar king of the Assyrians made prisoners and carried to Assyria in the time of Hoshea, king of Israel.<sup>4</sup>

Then he sees

reason to suppose that these people are found in all the islands and lands of the ocean constituting the occident.

Many Spaniards concurred. García, in his Origen de los

4. Quoted in Allen H. Godbey, The Lost Tribes a Myth, Durham, N. C., 1930, pp. 2-4.

Medianos (1607), declared that the Tribes passed over the Strait of Animar<sup>5</sup> and therefrom to Mexico and South America. He arrived at their identity because of what he considered the common cowardice and malevolence of both the Indians and the Jews.

The French scholar Lescarbot, in 1609, saw in the parallelism of religious practices evidence that America was peopled by the Canaanites, a view<sup>in</sup> which Ezra Stiles of Yale later concurred.

Writers the world over showed a deep interest in the discovery of the practice of circumcision in the New World. As Ethan Smith was to inquire, daring a reply:

What savage nation could ever have conceived of such a rite, had they not descended from Israel?<sup>6</sup>

Diego Garcia de Palacio in 1576 reported natives circumcised in Honduras; Davilla Padilla told of the practice in his Histoire de Santiago de Mexico (Brussels, 1625); Diego Rocha in his Origen de los Indios occidentales (Lima, 1681) presented circumcision among the natives as evidence of Judaic descent; Captain E. Cooke in his Voyage to the

5. Bering Strait.

6. Ethan Smith, View of the Hebrews; or, the Tribes of Israel in America, Poultney, Vt., 1825, p. 98.

South Sea (London, 1712) spoke of it in Tierra del Fuego; F. Coreal in Voiages aux Indes occidentales (Amsterdam, 1722) told of observing the practice in Nicaragua and Yucatan, whereas Picart in his Ceremonies and Religious Usages (London, 1732) also told of circumcision in Yucatan; Mackenzie in his Voyages (London, 1801) reported it among the Dog-ribs and Hares of the far Northwest.

The Abbé Cornelius de Pauw in his Récherches philosophiques sur l'Amérique et les Américains (Berlin, 1769) devoted several pages to the question of circumcision in the New World, pointing out that Martyr, Gumilla and others had testified to the prevalence of the practice in Yucatan, Florida, the island of Cozumella, and elsewhere. But the gentle Abbé rejected the Ten Tribes theory on the basis that

the Jews, enemies of agriculture and all honest labor, never sent a colony ten leagues from Judea; and wherever they spread, it was with the object of enriching themselves, not of forming a body politic. They have always preferred to their sterile country an abode in the cities of strangers where luxury and misery encouraged usurers.<sup>7</sup>

The idea of the Lost Tribes in America was given real impetus in Europe and consequently in the North

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Blumenthal, In Old America, pp. 71-2.

American colonies when a Jewish traveller, Antonio de Montezinos, brought the story from America to the authorities of the Amsterdam synagogue. According to Manasseh ben Israel, the renowned Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam, Montezinos testified in 1644 before the Bet Din of Amsterdam that while travelling in Peru he had met with a number of Indians who recited the Shema,<sup>8</sup> in Hebrew and who informed him through an interpreter that they were Israelites descended from Reuben and that the tribe of Joseph dwelt in the midst of the sea. He supported their statements by tracing Jewish customs among other inhabitants of Central and South America. Manasseh ben Israel therefore concluded that the aboriginal inhabitants of America were indeed the Lost Ten Tribes; and as he was of the opinion that the **Messiah** would come when the entire world was inhabited by the descendants of Israel, he directed his efforts to obtaining admission for the Jews to the British Isles from where they were at that time legally excluded. Armed with his book discussing this theory, The Hope of Israel (Amsterdam, 1650) dedicated to the English Parliament, he visited England and attempted to persuade Cromwell that it was essential that

8. The Jewish avowal of One God.

Jews not be denied residence anywhere in order to bring about this coming of the Messiah. Although he was unsuccessful in obtaining legal action and returned home to Holland a broken man, the way was paved for Jews to settle unmolested in England, and consequently in America.

Manasseh ben Israel's views were taken up by Thomas Thorowgood, the first English author to support this thesis, who saw in it an opportunity to get the public interested in providing funds for the support of John Eliot's missionary labors in Roxbury.

The manuscript of Thorowgood, a member of the Assembly of Divines, attracted the attention of John Drury, who urged its publication, and communicated two remarkable stories that he had heard in Holland; these were published in Thorowgood's book, Jews in America, or Probabilities that the Americans Are of That Race (London, 1650). The first was that a messenger from the Ten Tribes had appeared in Holland to ask after the welfare of those who were not carried away. The second was the tale of Montezinos.

Harmon L'Estrange replied in 1652 to Thorowgood with Americans No Jewes, but he instead announced Shem as the progenitor of the American peoples.

The views of Thorowgood made a strong impression in America where they were now accepted as referring to the

North American Indians rather than the M~~o~~xicans or Peruvians.

Mayhew, John Eliot, Roger Williams, were impressed with these views. The Mathers, Samuel Sewall, and even William Penn were convinced. Wrote Penn:

I found them [the Indians] with like countenance with the Jewish race; and their children of so lively a resemblance to them, that a man would think himself in Duke's-place or Berry-street, in London, when he seeth them.<sup>9</sup>

Charles Beatty, in his Journal of a Two-Month's Tour (London; 1678) declared that he had found among the Delaware Indians traces of Jewish origins. James Adair, in his History of the American Indians (London, 1775) devoted a considerable amount of attention to the same view which he accepted.

A writer (Adair) who has had the best opportunities to know the true idiom of their language, by a residence among them [the Indians] for forty years, has taken great pains to shew the similarity of the Hebrew, with the Indian languages, both in their roots and general construction; and insists that many of the Indian words, to this day, are purely Hebrew, notwithstanding their exposure to the loss of it to such a degree, as to make the preservation of it so far, little less than miraculous.<sup>10</sup>

9. Penn's Works, Year 1682, II, 704; quoted in Elias Boudinot, A Star in the West; or, a Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, Preparatory to Their Return to Their Beloved City, Jerusalem, Trenton, N. J., 1816, pp. 85-6.

10. Boudinot, Star in the West, p. 96.

Adair was followed by Jonathan Edwards who hoped to prove that the Indians were of Jewish origin with his Language of the Muhhekaneew<sup>11</sup> Indians (1788) in which he cited analogues between the Indian dialect and Hebrew.<sup>12</sup>

Probably one of the most persuasive works on this subject was that of Elias Boudinot, A Star in the West; or, a Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Ten Tribes of Israel (Trenton, 1816). He quotes extensively from many of the leading writers on the theory.

There is a remarkable analogy, says Dr. Edwards... between some words of the Mohegan language, and the correspondent words in Hebrew. In the Mohegan niah is I. In Hebrew it is ani, which is the two syllables of niah transposed. Keah, thou or thee. The Hebrews use Ka the suffix. Uwoh, is this man, or this thing; very analogous to the Hebrew Hu, or Huah, ipse. Necaunuh is we: in Hebrew it is nachnu or anachnu. In Hebrew ni is the suffix for me, or the first person. In the Mohegan, n, or ne, is prefixed to denote the first person....In Hebrew k or ka is the suffix for the second person....K or ka, has the same use in the Mohegan language....In Hebrew the vau, and the letter u and hu, are the suffixes for he or them. In the Indian the same is expressed by u, or uw, and by oo....In Hebrew the suffix to express our, or us, is nu. In Mohegan, it is nuh....To elucidate this subject still farther, a list of a few words in the different Indian dialects shall be added, with the same words in Hebrew and Chaldaick.<sup>13</sup>

11. Mahican.

12. See discussion of Elias Boudinot below.

13. Boudinot, Star in the West, p. 101.

The list of Indian words which he appended together with their Hebrew counterparts is indeed remarkably convincing. Probably, just as many words, if not more, can be found which have no semblance of similarity whatsoever. But those of us who are incapable of making such a counter-comparison for ourselves because of lack of knowledge of the Indian and Hebrew languages cannot avoid amazement. A sampling from Boudinot's list is worth including here:

<u>English</u>	<u>Charibbee</u> <sup>14</sup>	<u>Creeks</u>	<u>Hebrew</u>
The heavens	Chemin		Shemim
Jehovah	Jocanna	Y.He.Ho.wah	Jehovah
Woman	Ishto		Ishto
Man or chief	Ish	Ishte	Ish
The nose	Nichiri		Neheri
Praise the first cause		Halleluwah	Hallelujah
Father		Abba	Abba
To pray		Phale	Phalac
The hind parts		Kesh	Kish
Wife		Awah	Eve or eweh
Winter		Kora	Cora
I am sick	Nane guaete		Nanceheti
Good be to you	Halea tibou		Ye hali ettuboa
Give me nourishment	Natoui boman		Natoui bamen <sup>15</sup>

The close language resemblance, then, is obviously there. And resemblances are too many and too similar to be

14. Cariban?

15. Boudinot, Star in the West, pp. 102-3.

passed off with a mere "coincidence." Furthermore, said Boudinot:

The Mohawks...were considered as the lawgivers, or the interpreters of duty, to the other tribes.... And that all the nations around them, have for many years, entirely submitted to their advice, and pay them a yearly tribute of wampum. The tributary nations dare not make war or peace, without the consent of the Mohawks....Now it seems very remarkable, that the Hebrew word Mhhokek, spelled so much like the Indian word, means a law-giver, (or leges interpres) or a superior.<sup>16</sup>

Boudinot did not confine himself to these remarkable resemblances in speech but went on to compare a wide variety of Indian and Hebrew customs. He told of Indians of various tribes declaring that circumcision had been formerly practiced among them, but it had fallen from use, the practitioners being unable to assign any reason for so strange a practice. And he told of many other notably Hebrew-like customs. For one, there is a closeness in the Hebrew and Indian calendars.

They [the Indians]...count the year by lunar months, or moons, like the Israelites.<sup>17</sup>

In their religious ceremonies, according to Boudinot, they follow Judaism more closely than any pagan type of

16. Ibid., p. 103.

17. Ibid., p. 164.

ritual. Very notable is that like the Jews the Indians used a form of sacred Ark which they held in great reverence. Said Boudinot:

The Indian ark...may properly be called the Hebrew ark imitated.<sup>18</sup>

The Indians also were monotheists, believing in one Great Spirit who was surrounded by many lesser spirits comparable to the Hebrews' angels.

The Indians also, agreeably to the theocracy of Israel, think the great spirit to be the immediate head of their state, and that God chose them out of all the rest of mankind, as his peculiar and beloved people.<sup>19</sup>

Boudinot cited the customary Indian holy days, seeing in them a Hebraic derivation.

The Indians, in general, keep the following religious feasts and festivals--

1. Their Feast of First Fruits, and after it, on the evening of the same day, one something like the Passover.
2. The Hunter's Feast, like that of Pentecost.
3. The Feast of Harvest and day of expiation of sin.
4. A daily sacrifice.
5. A Feast of Love.<sup>20</sup>

18. Ibid., p. 176.

19. Ibid., p. 192.

20. Ibid., p. 205.

Boudinot has many more of these religious similarities with which to impress us. But one stands out above all others. One impresses us more than all. That is to learn that the Indians were after a fashion kosher in diet.

The Indians would not eat either the Mexican hog, or of the sea-cow, or the turtle...but they held them in the greatest abhorrence. Neither would they eat the eel; nor of many animals and birds they deemed impure.<sup>21</sup>

Another champion of the Jewish Indian theory was Ethan Smith in his View of the Hebrews; or the Tribes of Israel in America (Poultney, Vt., 1825). In giving a list of Hebrew and Indian words similar to the list of Boudinot, Smith asked:

Can a rational doubt be entertained whether the above Indian words, and parts of sentences, were derived from their corresponding words and parts of sentences in Hebrew?<sup>22</sup>

Forerunners of Smith may have entertained the language resemblances as a possible key to a link between Jew and Indian, but Smith boldly strode forth, snapped the lock with his fingers, and flung open the door.

21. Ibid., p. 236.

22. Smith, View of the Hebrews, p. 98.

He declared conclusively that the Indians have never had more than one God and have never attempted to form an image of God--the Great Y-O-He-wah--making them the only savage people in the world not to practice idolatry.

For the most part, however, Smith's book, like that of Boudinot, is just a rehash of what had been said before on the subject. But it was instrumental in bringing even greater interest to the search for Judaizing Indians and brought the venture to its peak. For Smith brought forth the story of Capt. Joseph Merrick of Pittsfield, Mass., turning up a phylactery while plowing his field in the summer of 1815. But no one in Pittsfield had any knowledge of a Jew ever having resided there. Who then, but an Indian?

In 1830, a very significant book was published which "proved" forever the Israelitish origin of the Indians, though not from the Ten Tribes. This was the Book of Mormon, avowedly written by Joseph Smith through divine inspiration and alleged to be the English translation of an ancient record, embodying the history and the religious beliefs and practices of the aborigines of the American continents. The period covered by the main history is about 1000 years, beginning with 600 B. C. E., at which time a small number of Israelites left Jerusalem by

Divine direction, under the leadership of the prophet Lehi. These people constructed a vessel which carried them to the Western continent. There the colony developed into two opposing nations, Nephites and Lamanites, named for their respective chieftains, Nephi and Laman. The Nephites cultivated the arts of civilization and kept a written history which was engraved by a succession of scribes on thin plates of gold. The Lamanites, on the other hand, were indolent and led a nomadic existence, depending for subsistence mainly upon war and hunting, and in time degenerated into the dark-skinned race of which the American Indians are the descendants. The Nephites were completely exterminated by their Lamanite foes about 400 B. E. Those who accepted this spectacular theory followed Joe Smith into his newly-founded Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Another writer, who wrote on the Ten Tribes theory from an adverse point of view, was John McIntosh. In The Origin of the North American Indians (New York, 1849) he wrote an intelligent appraisal of those who earnestly sought Jewishness among the native Americans.

The speculative opinions of several historians who wrote concerning the religion of the Indian tribes of America, and the question, whence America might have been peopled, led to many misrepresentations of the religious rites, language,

and customs of its original inhabitants. They discovered affinities which existed no where, but in the fanciful invention of the discoverers.... The idea of tracing to America the long lost tribes of Israel rose before the imagination of many with captivating splendour. In the establishment however of this theory, the judgments of those who endeavoured to make researches this way were so much perverted, that resemblances were imagined which had no existence in reality.<sup>23</sup>

At last we have an investigator who is to use scientific method, who is not to let his imagination be seduced by "captivating splendour." Let us proceed to his rational method of studying Indian ethnology.

We shall now proceed to view, as briefly as possible, the Creation, the site of Paradise, the Antediluvians, the Deluge, and the foundation of Nations by the posterity of Noah, in order to descend gradually to the dispersion of mankind and the settlement of countries, so that we may thus discover which of the three sons of Noah, the American Indians should claim as the founder of their Nation.<sup>24</sup>

Using this logical, scientific approach, we find that Magog, the second son of Japhet, is the progenitor of the North American Indians and that

23. John McIntosh, The Origin of the North American Indians; with a Faithful Description of Their Manners and Customs, both Civil and Military, Their Religions, Languages, Dress, and Ornaments, New York, 1849, pp. 75-6.

24. Ibid., p. xvii.

it is quite reasonable to suppose, that the earliest colonies that settled in [South] America were of the line of Shem.<sup>25</sup>

Thus enlightened let us return to the Ten Tribes theory. Judge Haywood in his Aboriginal History of Tennessee (Nashville, 1823) set forth the Hebraic origin of the American Indians, as did Israel Worsley, who in his View of the American Indians, Showing Them to Be Descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel (London, 1828) attempted to prove that the Indians were descended from from the Lost Tribes. The Rev. J. B. Finlay, Methodist pioneer in harvesting souls of the Wyandotte Indians, wrote in 1840 of his conviction that these were the Lost Ten Tribes.

Devoting his life and fortune to the attempt to prove that the Mexicans were descended from the Lost Ten Tribes, Edward King, Viscount Kingsborough, published a magnificent and costly nine volume work on the subject, Antiquities of Mexico (London, 1821-48). Included among Kingsborough's chief arguments were that Mexicans and Israelites believed in both devils and angels, as well as miracles, and used the blood of the sacrifice in the same way, namely by pouring it on the ground; also that the

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25. Ibid., pp. xxxiv-v.

High Priest of Peru was the only one allowed to enter the inner, most holy part of the temple, and that the Peruvians anointed the ark, as did the Hebrews. He also found many similarities in the myths and legends; for example, certain Mexican heroes are said to have wrestled with Quetzalcoatl, like Jacob with the angel.

Whipple in his Report on the Indian Tribes (Washington, 1855) said that the Cherokees have many customs and traditions strangely similar to those of the Jews, even their cosmogony being a paraphrase of that of Genesis.

About 1860 a discovery similar to that of Pittsfield was made in Newark, Ohio, causing the flame of the Ten Tribe theory to burn hotly once again. Inscribed stones, bearing corrupt Hebrew and a patriarchal likeness intended for Moses, were discovered in a great stone mound near the town. This was regarded by many as proof that the primitive Mound Builders once resident in that vicinity were indeed the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. This gave fresh vigor to the theory, and volumes expounding it were being turned out right to the end of the century.

A woodsman, Jean L'Heureaux, writing in 1886, Notes on the Blackfeet, by Jean L'Heureaux, Interpreter, said:

About the first and last days of the occultation of the Pleiades there is a sacred feast amongst the

Blackfeet....It is the opening of the agricultural season. The rites celebrated remind one of the Hebrew Passover.<sup>26</sup>

Garrick Mallery in his Israelite and Indian: A Parallel in Planes of Culture (Salem, 1889) noted the parallel of the existence among both American Indians and Hebrews of places of refuge wherein an offender was immune from retribution.

Haines in his American Indian (Chicago, 1888) wrote:

Among the established customs of the aborigines, that of dancing appears to be firmly fixed in their social usages. There is a singular coincidence in the purposes of dancing among the ancient Jews and the aborigines of America.<sup>27</sup>

In Les Phéniciens a l'ile d'Haiti et sur le continent Américain (Louvain, 1889), Onffroy de Thoron endorsed the theory of Ophir in the New World, claiming that the Phoenicians reached the Amazon and the gold mines of Haiti. He discussed resemblances between Hebrew and the language of the Caribs.

Herbert Spencer stated in his Principles of Sociology (New York, 1893) that fasts and penances like those of the Hebrews have ~~A~~ existed in many places, particularly Mexico, Central America and Peru.

26. Quoted in Blumenthal, In Old America, p. 48.

27. Ibid., p. 12.

In the Publications of the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society for 1904, R. E. Chambers, M. D., who still considered authentic the corrupt Hebrew inscriptions on the Newark stone tablets and still held that the Mound Builders were the Lost Ten Tribes, offered an account of the Black Hand Rock, a cliff above the Licking River on which an enormous black hand is hewn. His thesis was that the hand pointed to the place of burial of the last Rabbi of the Jewish Mound Builders.

When now we look back at the identification of Indians as Jews, we wonder how the idea really started; if perhaps the early travellers to South America fabricated the story for some unknown designs of their own or if there was any possible basis for their sincerity. From a modern aspect, the whole thing seems pretty much of a hoax. But the great volume of material written on the subject, the number of men of sterling character who supported the identification make a hoax seem implausible.

What then is the answer? Permit me to venture a conjecture of my own. The early travellers probably did actually see Jewish Indians and their reports caused later investigators to see Jewishness in all Indians because they desired to see it there. The fact is that there are Jewish Indians living in South America this very day,

and therefore it is entirely possible that there were also some in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.

In Mexico, for example, there exists a group of some 3000 Indian Jews who claim Spanish Jewish ancestry. They have their own synagogue in Mexico City.

The Jewish population of Seventeenth Century Peru was known to be of considerable proportions. Due, however, to the Peruvian Inquisition (1569-1820), the early Jewish community was unable to maintain its identity and became absorbed by the Indian and Catholic elements.

Surinam<sup>28</sup> had the oldest permanent Jewish settlement in the Western Hemisphere, and long before the North American continent saw a white settlement there were flourishing Jewish colonies almost everywhere in South America.

Marranos<sup>29</sup> are believed to have come to Chile during the earliest years of the Spanish rule, at the end of the Sixteenth Century.

Centuries of persecution and opposition to the settlement by Jews were believed to have annihilated all traces of the original Chilean Jews, but one long-forgotten Marrano community was rediscovered as late as the present

28. Dutch Guiana.

29. Secret Jews.

century. In the province of Cautín live the Sabbatarias, descendants of early Marranos who retreated from the coastal cities where the Inquisition was most active and apparently intermarried with both Spaniards and the Araucanian Indians. Numbering sixty-five or seventy families, they inhabit the towns of Cura-Cautín, Lastarria, Cunco, and Villarica in the Chilean hinterland. They observe the Sabbath and the festivals, meeting in private homes and praying in Spanish. This group was unknown until 1919 when officials at a South American Zionist Congress at Buenos Aires were surprised by a letter from Cura-Cautín requesting admission to the Zionist organization.

With the advent of anthropology the strange theory of the American Indians being the Ten Tribes passed into disrepute, but not so did the search for the Lost Ten Tribes. For with the Indians tucked neatly out of the way, the sedate English leaped into the fore, declared that they were the Long Lost Tribes, and untiringly set about to prove it.

Tons of paper later, when they realized the foolhardiness of their claims, the British turned to Afghanistan and as late as 1928 were trying to see the Lost Tribes there.

But that is not the end of our strange story. For in America in 1931 appeared a heavily documented work dealing with the American Indian. This book is Walter Hart Blumenthal's In Old America: Random Chapters on the Early Aborigines. What Mr. Blumenthal has to say can best be told in his own words:

Although the obsolete theory of the ancient Israelites having had direct contact through migration or culture with the New World is regarded as a figment by competent Americanists, nevertheless there are collateral credences which are expounded....The entire subject of American Indian origins is still in controversy, and if many of the earlier conjectures were rash, present-day inquiries, while more scientific, would seem to be still far from finality.... Moreover, it is not beyond the bounds of probability that indications will be discovered of ancient cultural affiliations which had their roots in the primitive Semitic area, almost certainly among the racial strains centered of old on the Mediterranean and the Nile,--if not within the historic vista, at least among their precursors.<sup>30</sup>

That there was sporadic prehistoric intercourse between the Old World and the New is a supposition verging on certainty. That before the peoples of the world were differentiated in their present-day demarcations there were allophyllian root masses and movements, now shrouded in oblivion, is more than mere conjecture.<sup>31</sup>

In other words, there are ramifications of the outworn and crude Ten Tribe theory still within the purview of scholarship, and it is in this province that these chapters are offered.<sup>32</sup>

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30. Blumenthal, In Old America, p. ix.

31. Ibid., p. 50.

32. Ibid., p. ix.

## CHAPTER 5

## JEWISH HEROES AND JEWISH VILLAINS

The portrayal of the Jew in drama and fiction before the middle of the eighteenth century was by tradition unfavorable. Shakespeare's Shylock and Marlowe's Barabas were but two of an army of evil Jews. On the American stage from 1752-1821 when twenty-eight plays with Jewish characters were presented, most of them portrayed the Jews as villains.<sup>1</sup>

With the appearance of Lessing's Nathan der Weise (1779) the idea of the Jew considered in a favorable light forced itself upon the consciousness of the Christian world. It was followed shortly by Richard Cumberland's

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1. Joseph Mersand, Traditions in American Literature; a Study of Jewish Characters and Authors, New York, 1939, p. 165.

play, The Jew (1794), which set a fashion in Jewish heroes. With the rise of the romantic movement in English literature, the mysterious Jew and beautiful, sable-tressed, almond-eyed Jewesses made sure-fire appeal to readers.

Her loose hair  
Was resting on her shoulders, like a cloud  
Floating around a statue, and the wind,  
Just swaying her light robe, reveal'd a shape  
Praxiteles might worship. She had clasp'd  
Her hands upon her bosom, and had raised  
Her beautiful, dark, Jewish eyes to heaven,  
Till the long lashes lay upon her brow.  
Her lip was slightly parted, like the cleft  
Of a pomegranate blossom; and her neck,  
Just where the cheek was melting to its curve  
With the unearthly beauty sometimes there,  
Was shaded, as if light had fallen off,  
Its surface was so polish'd. She was stilling  
Her light, quick breath, to hear; and the white rose  
Scarce moved upon her bosom, as it swell'd,  
Like nothing but a lovely wave of light,  
To meet the arching of her queenly neck.  
Her countenance was radiant with love.  
She looked like one to die for it--a being  
Whose whole existence was the pouring out  
Of rich and deep affections.

\* \* \*

Oh how beautiful!--  
Her proud eye flashing like a sun-lit gem--  
And her luxuriant hair!--'twas like the sweep  
Of a dark wing in visions.

\* \* \*

Her face  
Was pale, but very beautiful--her lip  
Had a more delicate outline, and the tint  
Was deeper; but her countenance was like  
The majesty of angels.<sup>2</sup>

2. Willis, "Jephtha's Daughter," in Poems, pp. 24-8.

Byron, Scott, Dickens, Aguilar, Bulwer, Bristow, Disraeli, Edgeworth, Trollope, and many others contributed their share to make the Jew a stock figure of romance--either impossibly benevolent or unnaturally wicked.

The United States at this period largely imported its literature and literary ideals from England. The English writers and their Jewish characters were as popular in America as in England, usually in pirated editions.

Susanna Haswell Rowson, authoress of the all-time best-selling novel of sentiment, Charlotte Temple (1790), which has gone into at least one hundred and four editions, also wrote the first play by an American to portray a Jew.

This was her first play and the only one to survive, Slaves in Algiers, or a Struggle for Freedom, first performed in 1794. The play is concerned with the rescue of American prisoners in Algiers, and one of the characters is Ben Hassan, a Jewish usurer, who is as would be expected a thorough scoundrel.

In 1803 William Dunlap produced a farce, suggested by a newspaper, called Bonaparte in England, whose motive was the mistaken consideration given to an Italian Jew, Shadrach, who was taken for Jerome Bonaparte.

Royall Tyler wrote three plays of Jewish interest, which have come down to us: Joseph and His Brethren,

The Judgment of Solomon, and The Origin of the Feast of Purim, written in blank verse of flexible and at times distinguished quality.<sup>3</sup> The first and third are fair dramatizations of the familiar biblical stories, while the second is a dramatic version of Solomon's decision in the case of the two women who claimed the same child.

The Jewish characters are not unkindly portrayed, but neither does there seem to be any great cause to attribute to Tyler great sympathy for them. In The Origin of the Feast of Purim, for example, the hero Mordecai is spoken of by his enemies so frequently in disparaging terms and the word "vile" is so often linked with "Jew," that even when Mordecai triumphs in the end we are still not quite convinced of his good character.

More interesting than the plays themselves are the morals which Tyler wished to impart in his plays, for he wrote in a day when literature was considered of value only if it presented a lesson to be learned. In Joseph and His Brethren there is a "Chorus of Israelitish Women" which sings the Epilogue:

O ye who read aright the sacred page  
And daily learn from thence to honor God

3. Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War, New York, 1923, p. 72.

And for yourselves the knowledge of his ways  
 Discern, neglect not now, wisdom to win  
 From these our scenes, and let our drama teach  
 The lessons better taught in Holy Writ--  
 That God for his own glory governs still  
 Human events, and turns the crimes of men  
 To the best good of all mankind, and when  
 Thy lot is hard, and thou to human sight  
 And to thyself seem plung'd in woe remediless,  
 Then look to him, who from the dreary pit  
 In Dothan, Joseph raised, thro' prison bonds,  
 Slavery and false report to be the Lord  
 Of Egypt, and thence resolve in trouble,  
 Pain and sickness, poverty and death  
 To trust in Israel's God.<sup>4</sup>

In the Epilogue to The Judgment of Solomon Tyler further  
 qualifies this advice to trust in "Israel's God":

O seek

Ye humbly then the precious gift divine,  
 And when thy mind is darken'd and no ray  
 Of light and life beams on thy troubled soul,  
 Then copy Israel's King, and ask of God  
 Like Solomon, that He would on thee bestow  
 The gift of wisdom. If thou ask aright  
 On thy benighted soul, the gospel light  
 Will shine with full effulgence, brighter far  
 Than that which shone on Solomon, the wise,  
 On Gibeah's mount, while wisdom loud  
 Proclaims, attend ye simple ones and see  
 How blest are they who rightly seek the Lord  
 And gain the honor of the Christian name.  
 With light ineffable they shall be clothed,  
 And unto you I say that Solomon  
 In all his glory was not so array'd.<sup>5</sup>

So we see that not only should we trust in "Israel's

4. Royall Tyler, Four Plays, Princeton, 1941, pp. 95-6.

5. Ibid., p. 121.

God," but we should do it in the Christian manner.

But for better or for worse the Jewish character seized the imagination of the American theatre-goer, and the early dramatists worked furiously to supply the demand. By the time of the Civil War an almost inexhaustible number of plays about Jews had seen the stage, many of them enjoying long and successful runs. Only a few of the titles<sup>6</sup> will demonstrate the amazing interest of Americans in Jews. There were all sorts of Jews: The Jew, The Hebrew, The Jewess, The Wandering Jew, La Juive, Der Jude, and Die Jüden. There were the members of the Jew's family: The Maid of Judah, The Hebrew Son, The Hebrew's Son, and Leah the Jew's Daughter. There were even The Jew and the Doctor and The Hebrew's Curse. There were Jews from everywhere: The Jew of Lubeck, The Jew of Malta, The Jew of Notre Dame, The Jew of Southwark, The Jewess of Frankfort, The Jewess of Madrid, and Die Juden von Worms. Even Shylock was reincarnated in America: Shylock, or the Merchant of Venice Preserved, Shylock, the Merchant of Chatham Street, and Shylock, or the Jew of Chatham Street. And nearly every character from the

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6. George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, New York, 1928, I-VIII, see page indexes.

Hebrew Scriptures made his appearance on the American Stage: Sarah the Jewess, David and Goliah, Judas Macca-  
baeus, Moses, Deborah, Leah the Forsaken, and Judith.

In the field of prose fiction the Jewish character also found his place quickly, and he was portraged by some of the most outstanding men in this field. Royall Tyler, who was tolerant in his handling of Jews of the past, was very much less so when it came to the Jew of the present. In 1797 appeared his novel, The Algerine Captive, which contained the first Jewish character in American prose fiction.

The story is supposed to be a record of the experiences of Tyler's uncle, called Updike Underhill in the novel, who was captured by pirates and never returned to this country despite the offer of ransom.

Captured by the crew of an Algerine vessel bearing a Jolly Roger, Underhill is carried to Algiers where he is sold into slavery by the Dey of Algiers. Difficulties with an overseer make life unbearable for Underhill, but escape is impossible and the only other way out is to accept conversion to Mohammedanism, which course is unacceptable to him. Therefore he is a thoroughly beaten man. His one ray of hope is to raise money for a possible ransom, but in the effort to achieve this he is betrayed

by a greedy Jew.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most prolific writers of the nineteenth century was the Rev. Joseph Holt Ingraham who turned out the best-sellers of his day with exuberant rapidity. Beautiful Jewish maidens, noble Jewish youths, and wicked Jewish villains were stock in trade, ready to his pen. Some of his books were The Prince of the House of David (1855) which went through twenty-three editions; The Pillar of Fire (1859) which went through nine editions; and The Throne of David (1860) which saw twelve editions. Publishers outbid one another to pay Ingraham the previously unheard of sum of \$10,000 plus royalties for a book.

There is little difficulty in seeing what recommended Ingraham to his readers. He employed language with the greatest of ease and was an efficient workman in the construction of plot. He swept grandly through panoramic description and capably endowed his heroes with all the romantic attributes. His action is swift-moving and varied. There are many invocations of the Virgin and many scriptural references which create about him an aura of true piety and high literary skill. His style is fluent and often graceful; but its boldness eventually

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7. Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel, American Book Co., New York, 1948, pp. 61-3.

reveals itself as a veneer through~~h~~ which can be observed a shallowness or lack of depth.

His most famous novel was The Prince of the House of David. It is a series of letters of Adina, a Jewess of Alexandria, who is sojourning in Jerusalem in the time of Herod, to her father, a wealthy Egyptian Jew.

At times Ingraham even gets foolish. The letters are frequently signed with such expressions as "Adieu," and they are supposed to have been written before French existed. Moreover, Ingraham is thoroughly erratic in his knowledge of Jewish religious articles. In one of Adina's letters he has her say:

I have spoken to Rabbi Amos of these things, but he only smiles, and bids me think about my embroidery; for cousin Mary and I are working a rich gold border in the phylactery of his next New Year's garment.<sup>8</sup>

Little wonder that the Rabbi smiled! For certainly he knew as Ingraham apparently did not that the phylacteries are rawhide boxes on which it would be impossible to embroider, that they are not a garment, and that they would not be used on the New Year.

8. J. H. Ingraham, The Prince of the House of David; or, Three Years in the Holy City, New York, 1855, p. 11.

Again he says:

After the blast of the silver trumpets of the Levites had ceased...<sup>9</sup>

The trumpets were not silver, for the ceremonial horn of the Jews is the shofar, the ram's horn. But inadequacies such as these probably disturbed Ingraham's avid readers very little. For when all was done he told them just what they wanted to hear, and this certainly accounts at least in part for his success.

Believing, my dearest father, that all I have written you touching Jesus has not been in vain, and that you are with me and thousands in Israel, ready to believe him that he is the Christ, the Deliverer of Jacob,

I remain your affectionate daughter,  
ADINA.<sup>10</sup>

For if there was anything for which the people of the nineteenth century would pay to read, it was the triumph of Christianity over Judaism.

In 1860 appeared Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Marble Faun. For this novel Hawthorne chose as his heroine the alluring and passionate Miriam, in whose very appearance there seemed a mystery.

9. Ibid., p. 12.

10. Ibid., p. 166.

She went to her easel, on which was placed a picture with its back turned toward the spectator. Reversing the position, there appeared the portrait of a beautiful woman, such as one sees only two or three, if even so many times, in all a lifetime: so beautiful, that she seemed to get into your consciousness and memory, and could never afterwards be shut out, but haunted your dreams, for pleasure or for pain; holding your inner realm as a conquered territory, though without deigning to make herself at home there.

She was very youthful, and had what was usually thought to be a Jewish aspect; a complexion in which there was no roseate bloom, yet neither was it pale; dark eyes, into which you might look as deeply as your glance would go, and still be conscious of a depth that you had not sounded, though it lay open to the day. She had black, abundant hair, with none of the vulgar glossiness of other women's sable locks; if she were really of Jewish blood, then this was Jewish hair, ~~and~~ and a dark glory such as crowns no Christian maiden's head. Gazing at this portrait, you saw what Rachel might have been, when Jacob deemed her worth the wooing seven years, and seven more; or perchance she might ripen to be what Judith was, when she vanquished Holofernes with her beauty, and slew him for too much adoring it.<sup>11</sup>

Hawthorne, too, then catered to the American taste for voluptuous Jewesses. He makes his heroine the more enigmatic by merely hinting at Miriam's Jewishness and not disclosing her true identity until the very end.

Then Miriam spoke of her own life, and told facts that threw a gleam of light over many things which had perplexed the sculptor in all his previous

11. Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun or the Romance of Monte Beni, Boston, 1895, p. 65.

knowledge of her. She described herself as springing from English parentage, on the mother's side, but with a vein, likewise, of Jewish blood; yet connected, through her father, with one of those few princely families of Southern Italy, which still retain great wealth and influence.<sup>12</sup>

But Hawthorne was not interested in Jews merely as a device to gain readers. Just as the mysterious Jewess is to create intrigue, so is Hawthorne himself intrigued by a Jewish mystery which exists in Rome.

They turned their faces city-ward, and, treading over the broad flagstones of the old Roman pavement, passed through the Arch of Titus. The moon shone brightly enough within it, to show the seven-branched Jewish candlestick, cut in the marble of the interior. The original of that awful trophy lies buried, at this moment, in the yellow mud of the Tiber; and, could its gold of Ophir again be brought to light, it would be the most precious relic of past ages, in the estimation of both Jew and Gentile.<sup>13</sup>

This is the Menorah, the seven-branched candlestick which the Romans carried off at the destruction of the Temple, and replicas of ~~which~~ which have been carved upon Jewish tombstones ever since. Of all the characters carved in the magnificent friezes of the arch, what was there about this one article seized in conquest that so fascinated Hawthorne?

12. Ibid., p. 486.

13. Ibid., p. 189.

They stopped on the bridge to look into the swift eddying flow of the yellow Tiber, a mud-puddle in strenuous motion; and Hilda wondered whether the seven-branched golden candlestick,--the holy candlestick of the Jews,--which was lost at the Ponte Molle, in Constantine's time, had yet been swept as far down the river as this.

"It probably stuck where it fell," said the sculptor; "and, by this time, is imbedded thirty feet deep in the mud of the Tiber. Nothing will ever bring it to light again."

"I fancy you are mistaken," replied Hilda, smiling. "There was a meaning and purpose in each of its seven branches, and such a candlestick cannot be lost forever. When it is found again, and seven lights are kindled and burning in it, the whole world will gain the illumination which it needs. Would not ~~this be an~~ admirable idea for a mystic story or parable, or seven-branched allegory, full of poetry, art, philosophy, and religion? It shall be called 'The Recovery of the Sacred Candlestick.' As each branch is lighted, it shall have a differently colored lustre from the other six; and when all the seven are kindled, their radiance shall combine into the intense white light of truth."

"Positively, Hilda, this is a magnificent conception," cried Kenyon. "The more I look at it, the brighter it burns."

"I think so too," said Hilda, enjoying a childlike pleasure in her own idea. "The theme is better suited for verse than prose; and when I go home to America, I will suggest it to one of our poets. Or, seven poets might write the poem together, each lighting a separate branch of the Sacred Candle-stick."<sup>14</sup>

Here, then, perhaps is the reason for the nineteenth-century popularity of Jewish heroes and heroines. What, thought the nineteenth-century mind, is the secret of the Jew? This was the attraction which he held for the

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 421-2.

reader of books and the writer of books. This is what Hawthorne sought in the Menorah. For like most of the people of Christendom, Hawthorne apparently cared little for the Jews themselves.

Hilda's present expedition led her into what was--physically, at least--the foulest and ugliest part of Rome. In that vicinity lies the Ghetto, where thousands of Jews are crowded within a narrow compass, and lead a close, unclean, and multitudinous life, resembling that of maggots when they over-populate a decaying cheese.

Hilda passed on the borders of this region, but had no occasion to step within it. Its neighborhood, however, naturally partook of characteristics like its own. There was a confusion of black and hideous houses, piled massively out of the ruins of former ages; rude and destitute of plan, as a pauper would build his hovel, and yet displaying here and there an arched gateway, a cornice, a pillar, or a broken arcade, that might have adorned a palace. Many of the houses, indeed, as they stood, might once have been palaces, and possessed still a squalid kind of grandeur. Dirt was everywhere, strewing the narrow streets, and incrusting the tall shabbiness of the edifices, from the foundations to the roofs; it lay upon the thresholds, and looked out of the windows, and assumed the guise of human life in the children that seemed to be engendered out of it. Their father was the sun, and their mother--a heap of Roman mud.<sup>15</sup>

Hawthorne seemed to have little understanding of the causes of the Ghetto or the reasons for Jewish existence in such misery. Whereas he sought the answer to a riddle

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15. Ibid., pp. 441-2.

from the mud which held an irretrievable Jewish past, he observed no mystery at all in the filth which contained the Ghetto.

Among Edgar Allan Poe's more obscure tales, we find one in which he portrays Jewish unhappiness with sadistic humor. The story is A Tale of Jerusalem and its setting is the Holy City in the time ~~of~~ of the Roman occupation. The surprise ending, or twist, leaves a situation which proves a sad dilemma to the Jews, but was certainly intended by Poe to produce laughter at their plight. The story seems neither very humorous nor very good, but it is interesting in that the only time Poe treats of Jews he makes an attempt to make them laughable.

The Roman conqueror is to allow the Jews lambs for the altar of the Lord, receiving for the privilege thirty silver shekels per head.

The Gizbarim, or sub-collectors of the offering in the Holy City of Jerusalem, hasten to the wall of the city at a point which is on the edge of a perpendicular cliff two hundred and fifty cubits in height.

The money is lowered in a basket down the cliff "and from the giddy pinnacle, the Romans were seen gathering confusedly around it; but, owing to the vast height and the prevalence of a fog no distinct view of their

operations could be obtained." Why it was necessary for the transaction to take place over the edge of a cliff Poe does not feel that he has to explain. It is foolish, but it is **essential** for the twist, if that is a possible justification for such a ridiculous setting.

"Raca!" swore Ben-Levi, "Raca! do they mean to defraud us of the purchase money? or, Holy Moses! are they weighing the shekels of the tabernacle?"

"They have given the signal at last!" cried the Pharisee, "they have given the signal at last! Pull away, Abel-Phittim! and thou, Buzi-Ben-Levi, pull away! for verily the Philistines have either still hold upon the basket or the Lord hath softened their hearts to place therein a beast of good weight!" And the Gizbarim pulled away, while their burthen swung heavily upward through the still increasing mist.

\* \* \*

"Booshoh he!"--as, at the conclusion of an hour, some object at the extremity of the rope became indistinctly visible; "Booshoh he!" was the exclamation which burst from the lips of Ben-Levi.

"Booshoh he! for shame! it is a ram from the thickets of Engedi and as rugged as the valley of Jehosaphat!"

"It is the firstling of the flock," said Abel-Phittim; "I know him by the bleating of his lips and the innocent folding of his limbs. His eyes are more beautiful than the jewels of the Pectoral, and his flesh is like the honey of Hebron."

"It is a fatted calf from the pastures of Bashan," said the Pharisee; "the heathen have dealt wonderfully with us! let us raise up our voices in a psalm! let us give thanks on the shawm and on the psaltery, on the harp, and on the huggab, on the cythern and on the sackbut!"

It was not until the basket had arrived within a few feet of the Gizbarim that a low grunt betrayed to their perception a HOG of no common size.

"Now El Emanu!" slowly, and with upturned eyes ejaculated the trio, as, letting go their hold, the emancipated porker tumbled headlong among the Philistines, "El Emanu! God be with us! IT IS THE UNUTTERABLE FLESH!"<sup>16</sup>

In 1858 appeared The Diamond Lens, a long short-story by Fitz-James O'Brien. The Diamond Lens, like most of O'Brien's stories, deals with the mysterious. And what more suitable character for a mystery than a Jew?

In Chapter II, writing in the first person, O'Brien introduces "a young Frenchman, who lived on the floor above me, and who was in the habit of occasionally visiting me."

I think that Jules Simon was a Jew. He had many traits of the Hebrew character: a love of jewelry, of dress, and of good living. There was something mysterious about him. He always had something to sell, and yet went into excellent society. When I say sell, I should perhaps have said peddle; for his operations were generally confined to the disposal of single articles,--a picture, for instance, or a rare carving in ivory, or a pair of duelling-pistols, or the dress of a Mexican caballero.... Why Simon should pursue this petty trade I never could imagine. He apparently had plenty

16. Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, New York, 1908, I, 268-73.

of money, and had the entrée of the best houses in the city,--taking care, however, I suppose, to drive no bargains within the enchanted circle of the Upper Ten. I came at length to the conclusion that this peddling was but a mask to cover some greater object, and even went so far as to believe my young acquaintance to be implicated in the slave-trade. That, however, was none of my affair.<sup>17</sup>

Later, however, he makes it his affair when he learns that Simon's secret is the possession of a one hundred and forty carat diamond--by a coincidence the exact size that the narrator needs to make a lens with which to bring the microscope to perfection.

There was but one step to be taken,--to kill Simon. After all, what was the life of a little peddling Jew, in comparison with the interests of science?<sup>18</sup>

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17. Fitz-James O'Brien, "The Diamond Lens," in The Atlantic Monthly. A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics, Boston, January, 1858, Vol. I, No. III, p. 357.

18. Ibid., p. 362.

CHAPTER 6  
THE JEWISH MUSE

In the essay interest in the Jew had been scholarly rather than humanitarian. In fiction and on the stage the Jew was a blackguard as often as not. But it was in the field of poetry that the Jew received his most sympathetic treatment at the hands of early American writers. The Jew of the poem was thoroughly heroic. All the most respectable attributes were his. He was wise, and handsome--and of course pleasantly mysterious. If there were a touch of Shylock in his make-up, the poets, at least, did not see it.

The earliest poetess of America, one who like her contemporaries was deeply interested in the ancient Hebrews, was Anne Bradstreet.

Her long poem, "The Four Monarchies," contained many passages pertaining to the Jews. She expressed curiosity regarding the Lost Ten Tribes<sup>1</sup> and confidently asserted that they would yet return to the Holy Land. And she seemed to delight in summarizing Old Testament stories.

What Esther was and did, the story read,  
 And how her Country-men from spoyle she freed,  
 Of Hamans fall, and Mordicaes great Rise,  
 The might of th' prince, the tribute of the Isles.  
 Good Ezra in the seventh year of his reign,  
 Did for the Jews commission large obtain,  
 With gold and silver, and what ere they need:  
 His bounty did Darius far exceed.  
 And Nehemiah in his twentieth year,  
 Went to Jerusalem his city dear,  
 Rebuilt those walls which long in rubbish lay,  
 And o're his opposites still got the day.<sup>2</sup>

In another poem, "Davids Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan," she addressed Jewish women with a plea for tears and expressions of their beauty which foreshadow the idealized romantic portraits of Jewesses later to come.

O Israels Dames, o'reflow your beauteous eyes  
 For valiant Saul who on Mount Gilbo lyes,  
 Who cloathed you in Cloath of richest Dye,  
 And choice delights, full of variety,

1. See beginning of Chapter 4, p. 45 of this thesis.
2. Bradstreet, Works in Prose and Verse, pp. 233-4.

On your array put ornaments of gold,  
Which made you yet more beauteous to behold.<sup>3</sup>

The poet of the American Revolution, Philip Freneau, also showed interest in the Jews of the Old Testament and chose to portray one of them in "The History of the Prophet Jonah" (1768).

"A Hebrew I, from neighbouring regions came,  
"A Jewish prophet, of no vulgar fame:  
"That God I fear who spread this raging sea,  
"Who fixt the shores by his supreme decree,  
"And reigns throughout immeasurable space,  
"His footstool earth, the heaven his dwelling place."<sup>4</sup>

He manages to convey most admirably the almost arrogant pride which the Jew has in his concept of God.

Freneau, like most others of his age, apparently conceived the Millenium to be near at hand. He entertained the happy thought that when it did come to pass, its center would be the New World.

And when a train of rolling years are past,  
(So sung the exiled seer in Patmos isle)  
A new Jerusalem, sent down from heaven,  
Shall grace our happy earth,--perhaps this land,  
Whose ample bosom shall receive, though late,  
Myriads of saints, with their immortal king,  
To live and reign on earth a thousand years,  
Thence called Millennium.<sup>5</sup>

3. Ibid., p. 364.

4. Philip Freneau, The Poems of Philip Freneau, Princeton, 1902, I, 5.

5. Ibid., "The Rising Glory of America," I, 82.

In "The Jewish Lamentation at Euphrates" (1779), Freneau attempted to capture the attitude of the Jew who was persecuted. He does not quite succeed, for although he achieves enough of a tragic aura for his tormented Jew, he makes him too resentful.<sup>6</sup>

By Babel's streams we sate and wept,  
 When Sion bade our sorrows flow;  
 Our happs on lofty willows slept  
 That near those distant waters grow:  
 The willows high, the waters clear,  
 Beheld our toils and sorrows there.

\* \* \*

Thou, Babel's offspring, hated race,  
 May some avenging monster seize,  
 And dash your venom in your face  
 For crimes and cruelties like these:  
 And, deaf to pity's melting moan,  
 With infant blood stain every stone.<sup>7</sup>

6. Compare this with the cries of a Jewish poetess. Emma Lazarus later observing the Russian atrocities was to express a desire for violence if necessary, but not a vengeful violence as is Freneau's.

Oh, for Jerusalem's trumpet now,  
 To blow a blast of shattering power  
 To wake the sleepers high and low  
 And rouse them to the urgent hour.  
 No hand for vengeance--but to save,  
 A million naked swords should wave.  
 --Emma Lazarus, Songs of a Semite: The  
 Dance to Death, and Other Poems, New  
 York, 1882, p. 56.

7. Freneau, Poems, I, 5.

But what is most interesting is that he seemed to feel that the Jews were justified in entertaining such violent thoughts against those who were responsible for their miserable state.

George Lunt, a nineteenth century American poet whose memory time has unkindly and perhaps unjustly obscured, had an exceedingly strong Hebraic interest. Though his poetry is never brilliant, his ability to create melancholic moods is masterful. He too foresees the eventual return of the Jews to the Holy Land.

AH, once, on Judah's parching plains,  
How flowed in light those living rills!  
And early dews and later rains  
Renewed and cheered the sacred hills.

Then Sharon's rose her matchless flower  
Gave, sweet and glorious, to the wild,  
And o'er those wastes, in beauty's hour,  
The lily of the valley smiled.

By pastures green and waters still  
Then led the Lord his chosen race,  
And Judah's children loved his will,  
And Israel sought his father's face.

Then swelled the harp, whose chords alone  
To him, the minstrel-king, were given,  
And Heaven, descending, lent the tone  
That wings the spirit's way to Heaven.

But shrunk the fount! the faded rose  
Ungathered hangs its drooping head,  
And David's harp immortal glows,  
The soul of Judah's glories fled.

And dried the dew on Jacob's bough!  
 His tribes but houseless pilgrims roam,  
 The heathen sits on Zion's brow,--  
 While they nor country have, nor home.

Sin brought the curse that spreads the gloom  
 Above those fruitful fields of old,  
 Till God shall bid the desert bloom,  
 And home restore his wandering fold.<sup>8</sup>

But lest it be thought that Lunt was not capable of the exuberance with which other poets foresaw the return of Israel, let us turn to a passage from his "The Ark of the Tabernacle."

Ho, Israel--ho, Judah!--  
 Rejoice, oh, rejoice!  
 For the Mightiest returns,--  
 Still is Jacob his choice!  
 Our tribes in the shadow  
 Shall dwell of His wing--  
 Rest,--rest doth he give us  
 With David, the King!<sup>9</sup>

In "Jezreel" Lunt sympathetically portrayed the downfall of the Hebrew people when their faith waned.

What tribes these rocky passes trod,  
 Ere, looking down from Horeb's height,  
 God's prophet, at the Mount of God,  
 Drove back the fierce Amalekite!

But, oh, when Israel's sons, at length,  
 Grew false to faith by Heaven revealed,

8. Lunt, "The Land of Judah," in Poems, pp. 98-9.

9. Ibid., p. 189.

No Gideon's sword--no David's strength  
Brought victory on the blood-drenched field.

\* \* \*

Across this plain the vengeful Tartar swept;  
God's people fell before that alien band;  
Till David's sons amid their ruins wept,  
And rage and rapine scourged the guilty land.<sup>10</sup>

In "Psalm XLVI" Lunt conclusively demonstrates his strong belief in the God of the Old Testament:

The Lord of hosts is our abode,  
And Jacob's God our refuge still!<sup>11</sup>

And in a poem which is not primarily of Jewish interest, "Philosophy," Lunt more fully expounds his religio-philosophical view of this belief in the Old Testament God:

Yet were our hearts more pure, the worship held  
More than the temple, and our spirits strong  
Ourselves to master; then we still might hear  
His voice, as Adam heard; like Jacob strive  
With His own angel, walk as Enoch, when  
God took him; or be like Elijah rapt  
By Israel's fiery chariot to the skies!<sup>12</sup>

James Russell Lowell's poetic interest in Jews was apparently small, but he did take a moment or two to tell us "What Rabbi Jehosha Said":

10. Ibid., pp. 100-2.

11. Ibid., p. 252.

12. Ibid., p. 248.

RABBI JEHOSHA used to say  
 That God made angels every day,  
 Perfect as Michael and the rest  
 First brooded in creation's nest,  
 Whose only office was to cry  
Hosanna! once, and then to die;  
 Or rather, with Life's essence blent,  
 To be led home from banishment.<sup>13</sup>

Lowell used to claim that there was a Jew among his ancestors, and that this Jewish strain was the cause of his genius.

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a number of poems of Jewish interest. In them he revealed a good background of rabbinic lore.

His first of these was "Judith at the Tent of Holofernes" (1829), a poem of biblical interest. In 1844 he wrote "Ezekiel." This poem, supposedly from the mouth of Ezekiel, could well be the cry of the Jew in the Diaspora.

On Israel's bleeding bosom yet,  
 The heathen heel is crushing yet;  
 The towers upon our holy hill  
 Echo Chaldean footsteps still.  
 Our wasted shrines,--who weeps for them?  
 Who mourneth for Jerusalem?  
 Who turneth from his gains away?  
 Whose knee with mine is bowed to pray?  
 Who, leaving feast and purpling cup,  
 Takes Zion's lamentation up?<sup>14</sup>

13. James Russell Lowell, The Complete Poetical Works of James Russell Lowell, Boston, 1896, p. 319.

14. Whittier, Poetical Works, p. 423.

In 1847 appeared "The Wife of Manoah to Her Husband," in which Samson's mother has a vision of her son's future. Following this came "The Two Rabbins" (1868) which tells the story of Rabbi Ben Isaac and Rabbi Nathan. Both of these men have sinned, so each seeks out the other to help pray for him.<sup>15</sup>

"King Solomon and the Ants" (1877) is a mediocre poem which tells of Solomon's turning his horse aside so as to heed the plea for mercy of some ants; for, says Solomon:

"The wise and strong should seek  
The welfare of the weak,"  
And turned his horse aside.<sup>16</sup>

The last of Whittier's Jewish poems was "Rabbi Ishmael" (1881) which is based on an incident related in the Talmud.

Radiant as Moses from the Mount, he stood  
And cried aloud unto the multitude:  
"O Israel, hear! The Lord our God is good!"<sup>17</sup>

Many others of Whittier's poems can be found which, though not primarily of Jewish interest, are full of Old

15. See beginning of Chapter 3, p. 29 of this thesis.

16. Ibid., p. 120.

17. Ibid., p. 126.

Testament references.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was fond of thinking of America, as did the Puritans before him, in terms of the Holy Land. This can be discerned from his poem, "The Pilgrim's Vision" (1848).

O trembling Faith! though dark the morn,  
 A heavenly torch is thine;  
 While feebler races melt away,  
 And paler orbs decline,  
 Still shall the fiery pillar's ray  
 Along thy pathway shine,  
 To light the chosen tribe that sought  
 This Western Palestine!<sup>18</sup>

Holmes, with an obvious touch of the rabble-rouser in him, pictured the Union Army in terms of the Israelites going forth to do battle with the heathen in the name of their God.

WHERE are you going, soldiers,  
 With banner, gun, and sword?  
 We're marching South to Canaan  
 To battle for the Lord!  
 What Captain leads your armies  
 Along the rebel coasts?  
 The Mighty One of Israel,  
 His name is Lord of Hosts!  
 To Canaan, to Canaan  
 The Lord has led us forth,  
 To blow before the heathen walls  
 The trumpets of the North!

\* \* \*

18. Oliver Wendell Holmes, The Complete Poetical Works of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Boston, 1895, p. 27.

What song is this you're singing?  
 The same that Israel sung  
 When Moses led the mighty choir,  
 And Miriam's timbrel rung!  
 To Canaan! To Canaan!  
 The priests and maidens cried:  
 To Canaan! To Canaan!  
 The people's voice replied.  
 To Canaan, to Canaan  
 The Lord has led us forth,  
 To thunder through its adder dens  
 The anthems of the North!<sup>19</sup>

Nathaniel Parker Willis was a noted journalist and literary man of his day. Although his poetry, with the exception of his humorous verse, is for the most part scarcely deserving of immortality, he too showed a strong interest in the Old Testament and displayed it in his works. He succeeded in creating some of the most idealized portraits of Jewish maidens<sup>20</sup> and Jewish youths in literature.

What bird of heaven  
 Or creature of the wild--what flower of earth--  
 Was like this fairest of the sons of Saul!  
 The violet's cup was harsh to his blue eye.  
 Less agile was the fierce barb's fiery step.  
 His voice drew hearts to him. His smile was like  
 The incarnation of some blessed dream--  
 It's joyousness so sunn'd the gazer's eye!  
 Fair were his locks. His snowy teeth divided  
 A bow of Love, drawn with a scarlet thread.  
 His cheek was like the moist heart of the rose;  
 And, but for nostrils of that breathing fire

19. Ibid., "To Canaan," pp. 191-192.

20. See selection from "Jephtha's Daughter," p. 70 of this thesis.

That turns the lion back, and limbs as lithe  
As is the velvet muscle of the pard,  
Mephibosheth had been too fair for man.<sup>21</sup>

The themes of his poems were usually of the type of "David's Grief for his Child" in which David suppresses the expression of grief at the death of his son because of his belief in the righteousness of God's ways.

And David came,  
Robed and anointed, forth, and to the house  
Of God went up to pray. And he return'd,  
And they set bread before him, and he ate--  
And when they marvell'd, he said, "Wherefore mourn?  
The child is dead, and I shall go to him--  
But he will not return to me."<sup>22</sup>

Other Hebraic poems of Willis, much in the same vein as the above and ~~xxx~~ <sup>worth</sup> little more than casual mention, are "The Sacrifice of Abraham," "Absalom," "Hagar in the Wilderness," and "On the Death of A Missionary," the latter which bemoans that a Christian missionary is carried to his grave through the streets of Jerusalem without the passing Jews casting upon him so much as an appreciative glance.<sup>23</sup>

Henry Timrod, the "Poet Laureate of the Confederacy,"

21. Willis, "Rizpah With Her Sons," in Poems, pp. 48-9.

22. Ibid., p. 16.

23. See selection at beginning of Chapter 1, p. 1 of this thesis.

took time out from his poems expounding the cause of the South to write of a mysterious and voluptuous Jewish maiden, "La Belle Juive."

Is it because your sable hair  
Is folded over brows that wear  
At times a too imperial air;

Or is it that the thoughts which rise  
In those dark orbs do seek disguise  
Beneath the lids of Eastern eyes;

That choose whatever pose or place  
May chance to please, in you I trace  
The noblest woman of your race?

The crowd is sauntering at its ease,  
And humming like a hive of bees--  
You take your seat and touch the keys:

I do not hear the giddy throng;  
The sea avenges Israel's wrong,  
And on the wind floats Miriam's song!

You join me with a stately grace;  
Music to Poesy gives place;  
Some grand emotion lights your face:

At once I stand by Mizpeh's walls:  
With smiles the martyred daughter falls,  
And desolate are Mizpeh's halls!

Intrusive babblers come between;  
With calm, pale brow and lofty mien,  
You thread the circle like a queen!

Then sweeps the royal Esther by;  
The deep devotion in her eye  
Is looking "If I die, I die!"

You stroll the garden's flowery walks;  
The plants to me are grainless stalks,  
And Ruth to old Naomi talks.

Adopted child of Judah's creed,  
Like Judah's daughters, true at need,  
I see you mid the alien seed.

I watch afar the gleaner sweet;  
I wake like Boaz in the wheat,  
And find you lying at my feet!

My feet! Oh! if the spell that lures  
My heart through all these dreams endures,  
How soon shall I be stretched at yours!<sup>24</sup>

Probably the best friend of the Jews among the poets of the Nineteenth century was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. More than a mere sympathetic attitude toward them, he indicated even admiration for their qualities.

Certainly one of his best poems dealing with Jews is "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport" (1852). Here lie buried the Jews whom Ezra Stiles knew and wrote about and whose funerals he attended.

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

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

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,  
That pave with level flags their burial-place,

24. Henry Timrod, Poems of Henry Timrod, Richmond, 1901, pp. 57-9.

Seen like the tablets of the Law, thrown down  
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

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

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

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,<sup>25</sup>  
No Psalms of David now the silence break,  
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue  
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

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

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

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

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

25. During the Revolution, the Jews of Newport were forced to flee the city because of their loyalty to the Patriot cause. Thus was ended the thriving Jewish community, and the first synagogue of North America fell into disuse. Subsequent to Longfellow's poem its doors have been reopened.

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

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

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

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

But ah! what once has been shall be no more!  
 The groaning earth in travail and in pain  
 Brings forth its races, but does not restore,  
 And the dead nations never rise again.<sup>26</sup>

Despite his ability to observe the sufferings of the Jews, Longfellow was apparently unable to grasp the optimism which was theirs, in which they foresaw themselves again raised to their former state and in which they have subsequently proved Longfellow's last line wrong. Perhaps this is the sublime mystery which Longfellow infers but cannot quite perceive in his later Jewish poems.

Have you read in the Talmud of old,  
 In the Legends the Rabbins have told  
 Of the limitless realms of the air,

26. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, The Complete Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Boston, 1893, pp. 191-2.

Have you read it,--the marvellous story  
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,  
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

\* \* \*

It is but a legend, I know,--  
A fable, a phantom, a show,  
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;  
Yet the old medieval tradition,  
The beautiful, strange superstition,  
But haunts me and holds me the more.

\* \* \*

And the legend, I feel, is a part  
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,  
The frenzy and fire of the brain,  
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,  
The golden pomegranates of Eden,  
To quiet its fever and pain.<sup>27</sup>

In his "Tales of a Wayside Inn" (1862) Longfellow  
portrays a noble, mysterious Jew: "The Spanish Jew,  
Israel Edrehi, whom I have seen as I have painted him."

A Spanish Jew from Alicant  
With aspect **grand** and grave was there;  
Vender of silks and fabrics rare,  
And attar of rose from the Levant.  
Like an old Patriarch he appeared,  
Abraham or Isaac, or at least  
Some later Prophet or High-Priest;  
With lustrous eyes, and olive skin,  
And, wildly tossed from cheeks and chin,  
The tumbling cataract of his beard.  
His garments breathed a spicy scent  
Of cinnamon and sandal blent,  
Like the soft aromatic gales  
That meet the mariner, who sails  
Through the Moluccas, and the seas

27. Ibid., "Sandalphon," pp. 200-1.

That wash the shores of Celebes.  
All stories that recorded are  
By Pierre Alphonse he knew by heart,  
And it was rumored he could say  
The Parables of Sandabar,  
And all the Fables of Pilpay,  
Or if not all, the greater part!  
Well versed was he in Hebrew books,  
Talmud and Targum, and the lore  
Of Kabala; and evermore  
There was a mystery in his looks;  
His eyes seemed gazing far away,  
As if in vision or in trance  
He heard the solemn sackbut play,  
And saw the Jewish maidens dance.<sup>28</sup>

There is much about Longfellow's Spanish Jew which reminds us of Stiles' friend, Rabbi Carigal.

Three of the Wayside Inn tales are of Jewish interest: "Torquemada" (1862), "The Legend of Rabbi Ben Levi" (1862), and "Azrael" (1872).

In 1871 appeared Longfellow's "Judas Maccabaeus." In 1850 he had entered it in his notebook as a subject for a poem. On December 10, 1871, he recorded: "Began the tragedy of Judas Maccabaeus. The subject is a very striking one--the collision of Judaism and Hellenism."

The part of the Jew, then, as a literary subject in early America has been large--large to the extent of being overwhelmingly out of proportion to his numbers.

28. Ibid., p. 206.

His presence as the only contrary force to Christianity in a primarily Christian civilization is certainly the reason for this. Hardly a foreigner in a wild land which was being settled by a multitude of foreigners, the early Jew encountered little difficulty in acclimating himself to the New World just as well as his Christian neighbors. Because his presence did not present economic conflicts as it had done in Europe, he found--if not total equality--at least a toleration such as he had not known for many centuries.

For the first time Christians were in a position where they could observe the Jew rationally instead of emotionally. Why, they wondered, is this creature so much like themselves, yet so different? They were intelligent enough to realize that past attempts on the part of Christians to convert the Jews by force had been ineffectual. So they decided that where violence had failed, appeal to reason might triumph. Resultingly, a disproportionate amount of the early literary output of the North Americans was concerned with the conversion of the Jews.

In the more artistic forms of literature, the Jewish character had traditionally been treated unsympathetically. But with the breath of Democratic feeling that rustled through the musty institutions of Europe, the idea that

all Jews were not evil came into a few of the leading minds, and the portrayal of Jews in literature became more sympathetic. With the coming of the romantic movement from Europe to America, the Jew as a heroic figure became a literary type, and many an American writer came to the realization that an idealized Jewish character helped sell his manuscript.

#

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## ABSTRACT

The Jew has been a subject of discussion in American literature since 1640. Every type of creative expression has been used to characterize, explain, defend or criticize him.

Almost every major personality in American letters has expressed his sentiments about the Jews. There exists consequently a rich literature pertaining to the Jews in America, a literature which for the first two centuries came almost entirely from the pens of non-Jewish writers.

For the most part, early American writers on Jews were preoccupied with conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Because of the rising spirit of tolerance, the intellectual approach was being made toward a problem which had always been handled with brute force. The

Mathers--Increase and Cotton--were two of the most prolific writers on the conversion of Jews. Samuel Sewall was also interested in the Jews, but his interest was more passive than active.

It must not be assumed that the pleas of the would-be Christianizers of the Jews fell entirely upon deaf ears. Apostates were few, indeed. But there were some. And two of them were prominent in the field of letters. No sooner had their metamorphosis been complete than they joined their voices to the din created by those who would bring salvation to the Jews. The first of these was Judah Monis, whose sincerity is suspect in ~~that~~ his conversion was the result of his desire to accept a faculty position at Harvard College.

The other was Joseph S. C. F. Frey, an apostate German Jew who came to America to form the American Society for Evangelizing the Jews. He devoted his life and his writings to this purpose.

Ezra Stiles, a president of Yale during the second part of the Eighteenth century, left in his Diary and papers what is undoubtedly the most complete record of Jews in Colonial America. Stiles' motives in consorting with Jews were not entirely humanitarian. He sought intercourse with Jews because he desired to find in their

very existence the truths of Christianity.

Because many scriptural prophecies point to the return of Israel to the Holy Land, believers in the literal interpretation of the Bible have always been greatly concerned with the problem of the continued existence of the lost tribes of Israel. No sooner had the New World been discovered than pious European explorers began to see Jewish faces among the aboriginal inhabitants. Most of the early writers were convinced that this theory was fact. Hundreds of books were produced in America and abroad to "prove" it. And there are still those who see a semblance of truth in it to this very day.

The portrayal of the Jew in drama and fiction before the middle of the Eighteenth century was by tradition unsympathetic. On the American stage from 1752-1821, when twenty-eight plays with Jewish characters were presented, most of them portrayed the Jews as villains.

With the appearance of Lessing's Nathan der Weise (1779) the idea of the Jew considered in a sympathetic light forced itself upon the consciousness of the Christian world. With the rise of the romantic movement in English literature, the mysterious Jew and beautiful, sable-tressed, almond-eyed Jewesses made sure-fire appeal to readers.

The United States at this period largely imported its literature and literary ideals from England. The Jewish character seized the imagination of the American Theatre-goer and the early dramatists worked furiously to supply the demand. By the time of the Civil War, a prodigious number of plays about Jews had seen the stage, many of them enjoying long and successful runs.

In the field of prose fiction the Jewish character also found his place quickly, and he was portrayed by some of the most outstanding men in this field. Among those to portray the Jew were Hawthorne, Poe, and Fitz-James O'Brien.

In the essay interest in the Jew had been scholarly rather than humanitarian. In fiction and on the stage the Jew was a blackguard as often as not. But it was in the field of poetry that the Jew received his most sympathetic treatment at the hands of early American writers. The Jew of the poem was thoroughly heroic. If there were a touch of Shylock in his make-up, the poets, at least, did not see it.

Among those who wrote verse about Jews were Bradstreet, Freneau, Whittier, Holmes, Timrod and Longfellow.