



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

June 20, 2018



Candle lighting 8:36 pm

Shabbat Services 9:20 am

## ...Home of the Brave

America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. A land where our Declaration of Independence proclaims that, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Yes, there have been times in our history where we have not treated one another as though we are all created equally and the struggle to assure equal rights for everyone continues even to this day.

But for us, as Jews, acceptance as equals in our society carries with it some risks as well as rewards. As we become increasingly accepted into our pluralistic society, our identity as Jews is not as strong as it once was, and many studies show that as we become more accepted the incidence of intermarriage increases, and sadly, many of the children of the intermarried are not being raised as Jews or continue to identify as Jews.

Our people have a long and glorious history. We have often suffered from discrimination and persecution. Let us pray that acceptance does not turn out to be more of a threat to our survival than was discrimination.

## Land of the Free...

This coming Wednesday, July 4, is Independence Day in the United States.

We all know that our country was initially settled by immigrants coming to America to seek freedom from religious persecution in Europe. The pilgrims, who came over on the Mayflower and landed at Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts are probably the most well known group of early settlers. William Penn and his Quakers arrived in Pennsylvania 1682. But when did the first Jewish settlers arrive?

Elias Legarde was a Sephardic Jew who arrived in Jamestown, Virginia on the *HMS Abigail* in 1621.

Solomon Franco, a Sephardic Jew from Holland is believed to have settled in Boston in 1649.

Solomon Pietersen, a merchant from Amsterdam arrived in 1654. In 1656, Pietersen became the first known American Jew to intermarry with a Christian; though there are no records showing Pietersen formally converted, his daughter Anna was baptized in childhood.

Asser Levy (Van Swellem) is first mentioned in public records in New Amsterdam in 1654 in connection with the group of 23 Jews who arrived as refugees from Brazil. It is likely he preceded their arrival. Levy was the kosher butcher for the small Jewish community. He fought for Jewish rights in the Dutch colony and is famous for having secured the right of Jews to be admitted as Burghers and to serve guard duty for the colony.

Here is an article from myjewishlearning.com about early Jewish settlement in the United States:

## Jewish Immigration to America: Three Waves

*Sephardic, German, and Eastern European immigrants each contributed to the formation of American Jewry.*

By Joellyn Zollman

Today, America's Jewish community is largely Ashkenazic, meaning it is made up of Jews who trace their ancestry to Germany and Eastern Europe. However, the first Jews to arrive in what would become the United States were Sephardic — tracing their ancestry to Spain and Portugal. The following article looks at the three major waves of Sephardic and Ashkenazic immigration to America.

Historians have traditionally divided American Jewish immigration into three periods: Sephardic, German, and Eastern European. While the case can be made that during each period, immigrants were not solely of any one origin (Some Germans came during the “Sephardic” period and some Eastern Europeans arrived during the “German” era, for example), the fact remains that the dominant immigrant group at the time influenced the character of the American Jewish community.

### Sephardic Jews

The first group of Sephardic settlers arrived in New Amsterdam in 1654 from Brazil. For several decades afterward, adventurous Sephardic and Ashkenazic merchants established homes in American colonial ports, including Newport, R.I., New Amsterdam (later New York), Philadelphia, Charleston, S.C., and Savannah, Ga.

While the Ashkenazi Jews outnumbered the Sephardic ones by 1730, the character of the American Jewish community remained Sephardic through the American Revolution. Colonial American synagogues adhered to Sephardic ritual customs and administered all aspects of Jewish religious life. The synagogue did not, however, attempt to govern the economic activities of its (mostly mercantile) members. This was



a departure from the Old World, where synagogues in places like Amsterdam, London, and Recife, taxed commercial transactions, regulated Jewish publications, and punished members for lapses in individual or commercial morality. In this manner, colonial synagogues set a precedent of compartmentalization — a division between Jewish and worldly domains — in American Jewish life.

Colonial American Sephardic synagogues also sought to combine modern notions of aesthetics with traditional Judaism, creating congregations that were rational and refined. Synagogues established rules of order so that services and meetings proceeded with the proper amount of deference and decorum. For example, colonial synagogues assigned seats for male and female members so that everyone knew their place in the congregation. This not only eliminated shuffling and bickering over seating each week, but also established a sort of congregational hierarchy in which the best seats went to the most prestigious congregational families (who, in turn, paid the highest dues). (In Europe, so few women attended services that there was no need to designate seats; American women, in contrast, regularly attended religious services.)

This theme — the reconciliation of modern manners with Jewish tradition — would also occupy subsequent waves of Jewish immigrants as Germans and Eastern Europeans struggled to build the Reform and Conservative movements in America.

## The Germans

German Jews began to come to America in significant numbers in the 1840s. Jews left Germany because of persecution, restrictive laws, economic hardship, and the failure of movements — widely supported by German Jews — advocating revolution and reform there. They looked to America as an antidote to these ills — a place of economic and social opportunity.

Some 250,000 German-speaking Jews came to America by the outbreak of [World War I](#). This sizable immigrant community expanded American Jewish geography by establishing themselves in smaller cities and towns in the Midwest, West, and the South. German Jewish immigrants often started out as peddlers and settled in one of the towns on their route, starting a small store there. This dispersion helped to establish American Judaism as a national faith.



If German Jews had one city of their own invention, it was Cincinnati. German immigrants flocked to this area, which was considered a gateway to trade in the Midwest and West. Cincinnati became the seat of American Reform Judaism, home to the movement's first American leader, Isaac Mayer Wise (an immigrant from Bohemia), and its newspaper and seminary.

In addition to promoting Reform Judaism in America, German Jewish immigrants created institutions as significant and longstanding as B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

## The Eastern Europeans

Eastern European Jews began to immigrate to the United States in large numbers after 1880. Pushed out of Europe by overpopulation, oppressive legislation and poverty, they were pulled toward America by the prospect of financial and social advancement. Between 1880 and the onset of restrictive immigration quotas in 1924, over 2 million Jews from Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Romania came to America. Once again, the character of American Jewry was transformed, as the Eastern Europeans became the majority.

The immigrants tended to settle in the poorer neighborhoods of major cities. New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Chicago, for example, all featured Jewish sections by the turn of the 20th century. Living conditions in these neighborhoods were often cramped and squalid. The immigrants found work in factories, especially in the garment industry, but also in cigar manufacturing, food production, and construction. Jewish workers supported the labor movement's struggle for better working conditions. Yiddish culture, in the form of drama, journalism, and prose, flourished in American Jewish immigrant neighborhoods, and the plight of the immigrant worker was a common cultural theme.

The Eastern European Jews also brought with them certain ideological principles that would influence American Jewry. Many of the workers supported socialism or communism as a means of securing economic and social equality. In this manner, the Eastern Europeans established a strong link between American Jews and liberal politics.

In addition, Eastern Europeans brought with them unprecedented support for Jewish nationalism. They educated the American Jewish community on this topic, even if they did not appear among its early leaders. (Henrietta Szold, the founder of the women's group Hadassah, credited her immigrant night school students for her introduction to the fundamentals of Zionism.)



*Detail from a 1917 Yiddish-language poster encouraging Jews to help with the war effort.*



*A 19th-century Jewish school on the Lower East Side.*

Finally, Eastern European Jews ensured a more religiously diverse American Jewish population. The Eastern Europeans did not, for the most part, feel comfortable with Reform Judaism. Their insistence on maintaining tradition, albeit in a modern context, contributed to the establishment of Conservative Judaism and infused Orthodox Judaism with new energy and purpose.

Large-scale Jewish immigration to the United States ended in 1924. Still, the contemporary American Jewish community remains very much a product of these founding groups.

## Carnegie Shul Annual Meeting



The Congregation Ahavath Achim Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 1 at 2 pm in the Shul's social hall. Our guest speaker will be Rob Goodman, Director of South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh, who will share insights on Jewish community developments in the South Hills.

We'd love to see you at the Annual Meeting!

Refreshments will be served.

## Yahrzeit Plaques

Commemorate a loved one by dedicating a yahrzeit plaque in his or her memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, mounted on the sanctuary walls, are lit on the loved one's yahrzeit, Yom Kippur, and days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur. To purchase a plaque, for only \$175, please email Mike Roteman at [mrmike7777@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmike7777@yahoo.com).



Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush in honor or in memory of a loved one, for only \$36. Your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter. To sponsor a Kiddush, email [mrmike7777@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmike7777@yahoo.com).