# Unwritten History

## *Reminiscences of N. Taylor Phillips*

My friends, I have not mounted the platform in order to be "high hatty" or anything of that sort, but merely because I think I may be able to make myself a little better heard, and those at the far end of the hall will have the opportunity of being forced to listen to me, whether they wish to or not.

It certainly is a very great pleasure to have the opportunity of speaking to "my little family," because that is the way I feel towards all of you tonight, and particularly in respect of those things which are very dear to all of us. What I have to say to you is not a general review of the history of the congregation—that would be impossible and tiresome on an occasion like this—but merely to give you a few of the traditions of the congregation as they have come to me, and perhaps a little intimate view in respect of congregational life when the congregation was not quite so large as it is now, although it probably considered itself of very much greater importance then.

As you all know how we began here in New York, I will only dwell on this a moment. We are practically coincident with life on Manhattan Island. It is true that the Dutch made their first real settlement here in 1626, but it was some few years after that before they really got under way, and they had not been under way very long when our people arrived. As you know, in 1654 a handful of twenty-seven [twenty-three?] embarked in the "Caterina" from Recife, Brazil. Brazil had formerly been a Dutch province and had been conquered by the Portuguese and, of course, that meant the Inquisition for our people in Brazil, and, naturally, they got away from there. And it was just as natural for them to have followed into another Dutch colony, which, of course, New Amsterdam was, because Holland had great enlightenment in respect of religious tolerance, and that was something which meant, of course, a great deal to our people.

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Captain N. Taylor Phillips is himself the very embodiment of American Jewish history. A New Yorker, a lawyer, and a distinguished public servant, he represents a family which goes back in this country to about the year 1700. His grandfather, who was born before the Revolution, survived to know the captain as an infant! Captain Phillips, now in his eighty-seventh year, is a treasury of family and congregational traditions. The reminiscences recounted here were delivered in the form of an address before Congregation Shearith Israel, New York, in 1927. This congregation is the mother synagogue of American Jewry.

And so they came here after having been captured by pirates and in turn recaptured by the "Saint Charles" in 1654. But they were not the first; there were some few who came here to trade, so we are told by the communications from the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church to the church in Amsterdam, in which he stated that the year before that some Jews had come here to "trade," as he expressed it. In fact, he went on to say that the Dutch Reformed Church had helped them because their own people—who had been there previously, before 1653—some of their own people had been unable or unwilling to assist them and had given them only very slight relief. Probably five or ten years before that there were at least some individual Jews who had come as traders to New Amsterdam. [Historians now do not believe Jews came to New Amsterdam before 1654.]

I am merely mentioning this to show you that the roots of our congregation penetrate practically to the very first life in the city of New York, which are also the very beginnings of this congregation. In fact, as early as 1671, when the Lutherans were projecting their first church in New York, it was one of our people, a member of the synagogue, Asser Levy, who contributed, or, rather, loaned the largest part of the fund that built that church. So you see, we were in it right away; we were bone of the city's bone, flesh of the city's flesh.

There has been a great deal of confusion in your minds as to how we came to have the first synagogue. Well, the first miller in New Amsterdam, Francois Molemacher, erected a mill on what is now South William Street—it was formerly Mill Street—a grist mill, and in that grist mill, curiously enough, the first Dutch Reform services—that is, the first Christian services in New York—were held in 1628. And that was only two years after the advent of the Dutch in the form of a colony here. The Dutch Reform services continued in that mill until the "Church in the Fort," as it was called, at the Battery, was substituted, and it was then—certainly no later than 1660 or 1664 at the very latest—that our people moved into that grist mill and had their services there, their *minyan* [religious quorum].

They continued holding their services there for a considerable number of years before they had the first frame building on the same site, at present Nos. 22 and 24 South William Street, Borough of Manhattan, New York City, which constituted the first regular synagogue of any kind in North America. It is a very curious incident that the stones from that mill are the stones which you see upstairs at the entrance to the synagogue on the 70th Street side. I will, perhaps, tell you a little bit about those stones, because I had something to do with their being taken from their site on South William Street to the synagogue on 19th Street, 100 feet west of Fifth Avenue, in the year 1894.

I remember, when I was a boy, hearing my father say—you are going to hear this expression, "hearing my father say," a great many times during the evening, so I am preparing you for it, because, after all, I think it was Macaulay who said that the firmest foundation of real history is good traditions, and if I can give you good traditions, I am, according to Macaulay, really giving you history—so I heard my father say that he remembered the first synagogue erected by the congregation in Mill Street in 1730 which was 100 feet from the frame building used in succession to the mill—that in the yard of that synagogue on Mill Street, when he was a boy, there were stacked up a great number of millstones which had belonged to the mill on whose site the synagogue was subsequently erected. I heard that and I never thought anything of it. Then in 1894 I met a man who was considerable of a writer, Mr. Albion M. Dyer. He had been on several New York newspapers and had written extensively for magazines. He came to my office one day, and we began discussing the synagogue and similar matters, and he asked me if I had ever seen the millstones which were in the yard in the rear of the old business buildings on the south side of Beaver Street, east of Broad. I told him that I had never seen them, so he took me around there and through the courtesy of the people who owned the building showed them to me. Those stones were then in the pavement, forming a part of the pavement of the yard, and I knew that they were the stones that had belonged to the mill. Unquestionably they were the stones that I had heard had been stacked up in the yard. Subsequently Mr. Dyer found a man who was ninety to a hundred years old, who had assisted in the laying of those stones in the yard in the year 1835, after the fire.

There had been a great fire in New York in the year 1835, which destroyed a great deal of the lower part of the city and also the building where the synagogue had been, although the synagogue had moved to Crosby Street, between Spring and Broome Streets, two years before that time. After the fire the present buildings, that are there now, were erected, and this man had physically participated in laying those millstones and making the pavement out of them instead of stacking them up, as they had previously been. I merely mention that to show the very direct contact. After all, I saw the man who had laid these stones that had stood in that yard and had been there since 1628, showing the contact, as I say, of this synagogue with this very, very, vast past.

The synagogue continued to worship in this mill, as I have told you, until about 1675, when they rented a house practically immediately adjoining it from a man named John Harpoding [Harpendingh], who was a shoemaker, and he had accumulated some money and had been granted some lands by the Dutch West India Company in Hol-

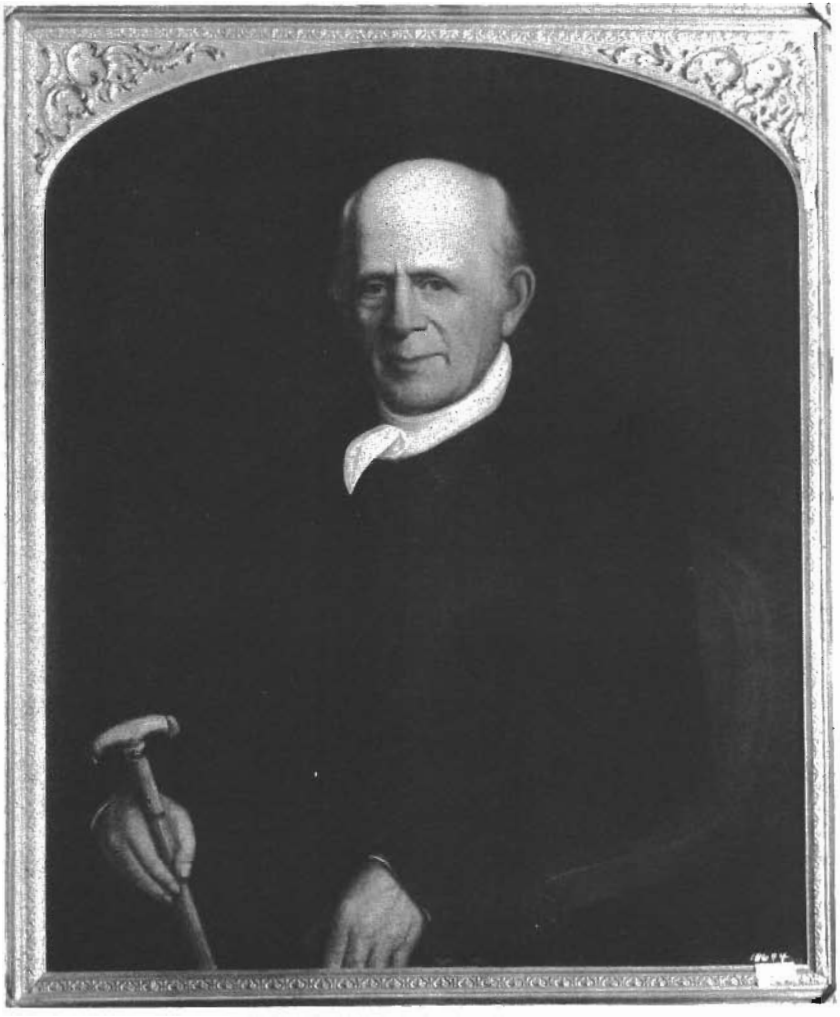
land. He had been granted some lands here in New York, of which this was a part. It was called the Shoemaker's Pasture, because he was a shoemaker. This man Harpoding in turn conveyed most of that land to the Dutch Reformed Church of New York, and, incidentally, it is that land, the result of that transfer from Harpoding to the Dutch Reformed Church, which is the basis of the entire great wealth of the Dutch Reformed Church today in New York.

That house which had been his residence—the congregation, about 1675, rented, and they held their services in it regularly. This house was fixed up, as it were, so as to be a synagogue in the regular way. The congregation then remained there under this rented arrangement until 1728, when they bought the land immediately adjoining for themselves, on which they placed their holy place of worship about 100 feet from the frame building they had been using, the first one that was built by the congregation.

I want to point out this fact to you, that this frame building, which was used by the congregation, was still in existence when the land was bought in 1728 for the new synagogue, and at that time the president of the congregation was the ancestor in the eighth generation of our present president, Mr. Henry S. Hendricks, whom we have greeted tonight, so that is quite a long stretch. And the congregation continued there, in that building which was erected and consecrated on the seventh day of Passover, 1730, until 1818, when they rebuilt another synagogue upon the same site. In 1833 they moved to Crosby Street, between Spring and Broome Streets, and in 1860 to 19th Street, one hundred feet west of Fifth Avenue. That is briefly a résumé of the congregation in respect of the synagogues, in a sort of hurried form.

I suppose, of course, the most interesting thing is to know something about congregational life in those times. The congregation was very early interested in the affairs of the city, as of course many of you have read. They contributed to the reconstruction of Trinity Church in 1711, especially the steeple of it, and some people went so far as to say that the Jewish merchants wanted the steeple and were very much interested in having a steeple on Trinity Church because their ships would be guided by it when they entered the harbor, but they were the scoffers, as there always have been in every generation. But, be that as it may, several of them were substantial contributors to the erection of the church of which it is a part. The church was first built in 1697.

The people who were then interested in the congregation were those who had come mostly, mediately or immediately, from Portugal, and they were Marranos or secret Jews. Nearly all of them were Marranos. In fact, when they came to New York, the early records of the town spoke of them as the "Portuguese nation" whenever they wanted



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NAPHTALI PHILLIPS

Pillar of Congregation Shearith Israel

to talk about the Jews. They spoke about the "Portuguese nation" because all the Jews, practically, were Portuguese. As I said a moment ago, most of them were Marranos. There were a few Spanish among them, the Gomez family and a few others, but the majority of them were Portuguese Marranos.

Many of them, curiously enough, changed their names after they came here. They came here, of course, with Portuguese and Spanish names, but when they came after the Dutch rule, of course, they were coming into an equal colony, and they either chopped off parts of their Portuguese or Spanish names or abbreviated or altered them, anglicized them, or changed them altogether. Many of them took arbitrary names, arbitrary English names in place of their last names. Among those who abbreviated their names was one who bought a portion of the cemetery in Chatham Square, New Bowery, in 1682. His name was Joseph Bueno de Mesquita, the same name and an ancestor of our dear friend, Mr. Julius Bueno de Mesquita, whom I saw here in the early part of the evening. On coming to America, and to New York, he took off the "Mesquita" part and was known generally in the community as "Joseph Bueno," but, of course, in the synagogue everybody knew him as Joseph Bueno de Mesquita, which is a very ancient and distinguished Portuguese name. So this changing-of-name business, which we hear so much about today and which is so considerably discussed, is not quite so new as we think it is. Our ancestors were a little sensitive to that thing as well.

The Gomez family came here about the year 1700 or a little later. One was certainly here in 1710. They were a very important and prominent family—not only wealthy, but people of culture. They had been, so I have heard, grandees in Spain. I don't think they came directly from Spain, but from Holland. I think they had gone to Holland, as most of our ancestors did. After they were discovered by the Inquisition, frequently they would try to get to Holland. That was the first place. Some of them would make it and some would not. If they didn't make it, they were out of luck. That meant they had to go to New Amsterdam or some other colony.

But the Gomez family from the very first time they came here were people of prominence and influence, and they had commissions [papers of denization] related to England, very important commissions, and they enjoyed a great many rights as freemen and all sorts of things. They were the real thing—there is no doubt about that. They also were ancestors of our present president, who had a lot of fine ancestors, I can tell you.

And the Gomez family was the mainstay of the congregation at that time, before the building of the first synagogue in Mill Street in

1728 and 1729, consecrated in 1730. They were very influential in the congregation; what they said went in every way. And, in fact, I have heard it said that they were surrounded with all sorts of affluence and wealth, and when they came to the synagogue—these are the personal touches that I am giving you—when they came to the synagogue on the Sabbath or on a Holy Day, they had their slaves walking behind them through the streets carrying their prayer books and talethim [prayer shawls]. They would walk into the synagogue auditorium with this retinue behind them, and the slaves would deposit their books and talethim on the seats and bow themselves out. That was a regular ceremony every Saturday morning.

The whole Gomez family was very important. Mr. Luis Moses Gomez was president at the time the synagogue was consecrated in 1730, and during the time of his presidency and for many years afterwards, when the Gomezes were present in the synagogue, the lady, the wife of the parnas, had a separated seat in the gallery for herself, a sort of a lady's *banca*. The seat which the parnas sits on is called *banca*, the Spanish word for bench, and the wife had the *banca* upstairs in the gallery the same way. That was pretty early on the women's rights' stuff. The ladies of the congregation then had a good deal to say about it, if they were strong enough to have a presidential seat up there. Then quite a controversy arose because, when one of the Gomezes ceased to be parnas, the lady parnas wanted to sit on the *banca* anyhow. She was not as easy as he was; he gave up the seat and retired, but she could not see it. She still wanted to hold on to the lady's *banca*, but whether the trustees could not see it or whether she was persuaded out of it, she finally gave it up. They did not take it away for many years afterward; it remained there, but she did not occupy it. I merely mention all this to show you how important this family was in the life of the congregation.

Speaking of the Marranos who came here about 1733, there is a very picturesque story in respect of the manner in which Dr. Samuel Nunez, my grandfather's great-grandfather, came here about 1735. He was a Marrano from Portugal, and came to America at the time that Oglethorpe settled Georgia in 1733. Nunez was one of the court physicians in Lisbon, Portugal, and he and his family lived there as Marranos, secret Jews, for many years, two or three hundred years. They finally were discovered by the inquisitors, and they were, in the parlance of New York, "tipped off" by somebody that the inquisitors were "on to them." Dr. Nunez gave a great banquet on his estate, which was on the banks of the Tagus. He had previously arranged with the captain of an English brig to stand out in the bay, and at the proper time to take them away. So he invited all the highbrows to come there

and enjoy themselves, and in the midst of the fiesta, the drinking and eating and merrymaking, the family slipped out, gathering up as much silver and jewelry and other things as they could easily carry, and went on the brig. The brig shot out of the Tagus, and they were carried up to London. That was in 1733.

They remained in London about three weeks, when Oglethorpe and his expedition were ready to come over here, and they came over with him. [Actually they came a few months later.] Dr. Nunez' daughter was then married to the Rev. David Mendez Machado, who subsequently, in 1736 [1737, new style], became the minister of this congregation. After they came to Georgia and settled there, and the Machados, after a very short time the daughter and her husband, the minister, came to New York. In fact the Rev. Mr. Machado had been in New York at the time the synagogue was consecrated in 1730. They were in Georgia only a couple of years—less than that, I guess—and they came up to New York, and her husband became minister of the synagogue. And I have heard it said—and in fact, this was vouched for by Major Mordecai M. Noah as well as tradition—that when they came to New York and for many years after that, the women, especially, had been so used to saying their Hebrew prayers with a Catholic rosary that they could not break themselves of the habit, and that at noontime they crossed themselves when the clock struck twelve, and other things of that kind. I think Major Noah also wrote of one of the male members of that family who had the marks of the Inquisition upon him. [It was Noah's grandaunt.] He had been suspected as a Jew and had been put to some torture, but they called it off and forgot it and let it go at that. At all events, he had those marks upon him for a great many years after he came to New York. That shows you the direct contact between the Portuguese Marranos and our congregation.

Machado had a good deal to do with the building up of the congregation because of his contacts with the Nunez family and the Oglethorpe colony in Georgia. There is much to be said in connection with the relations which the Jews had with Oglethorpe's colony. Of course, many of you know that the first white child born in Georgia . . . was a Jewish child, a member of the Minis family, which had been a part of that Oglethorpe expedition.

Machado died in Hanukah in 1747. I will refer to him again in speaking of the Revolution, during which the bulk of the congregation, be it said to their glory, were Patriots, including the minister, the Rev. Gershom Mendez Seixas. He left New York with almost a price on his head for his speeches and his pronunciamentos in respect of the colonies, and at the appearance of Lord Howe's fleet in New York Harbor in August, 1776, he closed the synagogue and took away the

*sefarim* ["scrolls"] and the other effects of the building. After he left there was a furrier on Broad Street, a man named Lyon Jonas, who was a Tory, and he opened the synagogue, he and another man, named Alexander Zuntz, who came over here with the Hessian troops. The Hessians were sent to re-inforce the British in the fight over here. Zuntz was quite a man—he was commissary to the general staff of the Hessian Army. Of course, he was deported from New York later—the Patriots threw him out—but he returned and became a prominent broker and was one of the founders of the New York Stock Exchange in 1792. There was another man named Baruch Hays—most of the Hays family, by the way, were Patriots, but this Baruch Hays was not. Other members of his family up in Pleasantville, New York, were not only Patriots, but very staunch Patriots, but Baruch Hays was in business, a merchant in New York, and was a Tory. These three men prevailed on the British not to do with the synagogue as they had with most of the other churches in the city. They had turned them into hospitals, riding academies, barracks, and things of that kind. Nearly all of the churches were used for these purposes.

But they intervened and "got away with it," and the synagogue was not used as a hospital, although it had been designated as a British hospital, and it is so recorded in the British correspondence relating to the occupation of the city of New York. As I said, the synagogue was spared that, but during the Revolution soldiers broke into it and destroyed some of the property that was there, and some of the *sefarim* were injured. By the way, one or two of them are upstairs now. The last time I saw them, a good many years ago, the marks of the desecration were still on these *sefarim* which they spoilt at that time. The soldiers who desecrated them were publicly whipped by the army officers. However, they are not the earliest *sefarim* of the congregation; there are others a great deal older than these. But these are the *sefarim,* owned by private members of the congregation, that were left behind by the Patriots when they took the *sefarim* that belonged to the congregation away with them.

So you see, we had quite a little session at that time. Most of the congregation, as I said, were devoted to the patriot cause. Jonas Phillips, my great-grandfather, was a merchant in New York during and before the Revolution, and had built up quite a large business, but he walked out and left the whole thing, as it was—all his goods on the shelves—everything just as it stood. After Washington was defeated in the Battle of Long Island, he came over to New York and Howe's fleet came in and took the city. And he [Jonas Phillips] and his family—he had about fifteen or sixteen children then; it was no laughing matter, at least to him—he took them away under the cover of the army. Wash-

ington, you will remember, made a stand at the Battle of Harlem, went on to Washington Heights, was defeated there, crossed the Hudson River and went on to Jersey and met successes at Morristown, Princeton, and so on. And under cover of that army Jonas Phillips went on, as did other members of the congregation, to Philadelphia, where he was welcomed by his relations there. And then he went into the army and was there a long time, pretty nearly until peace was declared. That shows you some of the sacrifices they made.

Isaac Moses was a member of our congregation who had a very exciting and picturesque session during that time. He was a very prominent man in town and was one of the founders of the New York Chamber of Commerce, in 1768, which is still in existence. During the war he was a strong Patriot, a violent Patriot, and he fitted out vessels for the Continental Congress. He was a man of considerable wealth, and he fitted out a great many ships, which he gave to the United States—all of record in Washington. He did all sorts of things for the nation and was really a very, very, ardent Patriot.

But at this very time I am telling you about, after Washington's defeat on Long Island, when the British were about to occupy New York, the news was brought to him—his family lived down in the lower part of the city, as almost everybody did—the news was brought to him, on the Sabbath, that the British Army was here and Washington's army was retreating, and if he wanted to save his life he had to go. He gathered up his family and they walked from—if I am not mistaken, they lived in Greenwich Street, the lower part of Greenwich Street—and they walked up to a farm at about the present 23rd Street, just carrying whatever they could carry with them, articles of value, and left business and everything else behind. They remained there—some farmer up there gave them shelter until the Sabbath was out—and then they got into wagons and followed the army in the same way as did the others.

I mention these things to show you how intimately the congregation was wrapped up in the life of the times. Just think, in 1730, when we consecrated the first synagogue which was built (actually the second synagogue) in Mill Street, there were only 8,500 people in New York! Think of it! And of those 8,500, 1,600 were slaves, so there was just a little handful of people, and the congregation hardly had a couple of hundred—something like 150 only! So you see how important they were. The bulk of them were men of affairs—very little poor in the congregation. They were all people that came here with money or else made their contacts very quickly after they arrived. They were all pretty well off. The congregation was of some influence generally in the community.

In 1737, when there was a contest for the election of a member of the Colonial Assembly, a great issue was raised in the matter of the election of one Philipse, on the right of the Jews to vote. They claimed that Philipse's election was void because it was the vote of the Jews that had elected him. That created riots and pretty nearly a revolution in New York, and the whole thing was taken to England and settled in Parliament with great difficulty and with great concern to the colony. And all that, as I say, indicates the great influence which the Jews had, even though their number was small.

Reverting to those Revolutionary days, I am reminded that during that time, when the British were in possession of the city, they fortified our cemetery in New Bowery at Chatham Square (which is there yet) as one of the defenses of the city. That fact is mentioned in correspondence between General Washington and General [Charles] Lee, and is, of course, very well authenticated; but after the war they found that the tombstone of the Rev. David Mendez Machado, who had been a minister of the synagogue, as I have told you, had been desecrated and that a large metal plate in his tombstone had been torn out and used by the British to make bullets. That tombstone is still there—you can see it with the plate taken out, just as it looked when the British took it out in 1776. When Washington evacuated the city, he gave orders that all the Patriots who followed him should take all the brass, metal, and the like with them, and they did, but they had no idea that the British would take the metal out of the tombstones in the cemetery.

In respect of family life in the congregation before the Revolution, the board of trustees had considerable power in the administration of the lives of men. They exercised a good deal of power—I almost said they exerted their power—very much in the same manner which the Portuguese congregation in Amsterdam, Holland, had done in its day. And, of course, our congregation took all its inspirations largely from the Amsterdam congregation, because New Amsterdam was a Dutch colony when it commenced and the people who came here, many of these Marranos, Portuguese Jews, had been in Amsterdam or Holland and knew the way things were conducted there. Of course, the spirit of the congregation, practically down to the time of the Revolution, was largely the inspirations of the congregation in Amsterdam, and in Amsterdam the authority of the *mahamad* was supreme. The *mahamad*, the trustees, as we call them now, were the absolute masters of the life and liberty and fortunes, I almost said of everybody who was a member of the community. In New York they very much endeavored to perpetuate that idea, but it did not always work. Always there was a great deal of friction in regard to those matters. It was never accepted. I almost said that there probably never was a time—as I gather

it from the best traditions—there never was a time, whether it was the spirit of the new country or not, when there was that implicit obedience from the congregation to these edicts that there had been in Amsterdam. The *mahamad* exercised their power; they declared a person outside the law if he did this, that, or the other thing. He could not be buried or married and all that sort of thing if he did not change the manner of keeping his house kasher, and so on, but in the last analysis, these things were rarely enforced. Sometimes when they were enforced, it was only after a great battle, and they would even go to the courts. The congregation was hostile to the spirit of the thing, and they frequently went into the courts of law of the colony, and they were resisted there, but many times the *mahamad* "let go" and would not enforce the thing after they had obtained a court order.

But nevertheless they were at least nominally the controlling body. Quite as late as 1813 the Common Council of the City of New York passed an ordinance giving the board of trustees of the congregation the absolute power over the matter of *kashruth*—the killing of fowl, etc. They were the controlling body by law, by corporation ordinance, and they decided who could be shochetim, who should kill and who should not kill, what is kasher ["fit"] and what is *treifa* ["ritually unfit"], and so on. The whole thing was absolutely handed over, lock, stock, and barrel, by the Board of Aldermen to the trustees.

But that did not last a great while because at that time there was beginning to be quite an influx of Jews from England. Within less than ten years the Jewish population doubled and trebled, and I do not know whether these ordinances were ever repealed, but whether they were or not, they at least fell into disuse. They were not pursued any further. But the matter of declaring a house kasher or not kasher, that was something that the trustees felt they had the right to do, and they usually exercised it. I don't think the difficulty was very great. Most people kept in line; I suppose some of them got out of step, but taken by and large, they did not have so very much trouble with them.

In the homes the people gave a good deal of thought to their religion. Naturally, they lived the religious life; the things which were of their religion were absolutely part of their lives. For example, during the Passover period—immediately after Purim they started to get ready for Passover. It was a four weeks' job, carrying up the plates and cleaning and polishing and dragging and hauling and making life unbearable for the women. And by the way, at that time, practically for the first century and a half and more of the life of the congregation, the women of the congregation were real actors in this kitchen business. No matter how well off they were, how rich they were, whether they were Gomez or Machado, or who they were, the women either did

the cooking themselves or superintended it. It was not left to the slaves, or to the Negroes. If it was, it was a *treifa* house, that is, the house that permitted the servants exclusively to run the kitchen. People would not eat there, and, therefore, the woman of the house either had to do it herself or had to be on the job and see that it was properly done. If she had a lot of servants, she directed them or could give the final O. K. that everything was "according to Hoyle," but she had to be there personally.

And in that way the different families of the congregation got to be known for their specialties in the culinary art. One house would be celebrated for the pound cake that was made there, another for the "stickies," those masses of dough with sugar stuff over them—my descriptions of the mysteries of the cuisine are not very good, but I am doing the best I can. And still another woman would be famous for her *sopes peridoes*—which was a sort of French toast with a syrup of sugar, water, etc., poured over it, which they ate at Purim. Some women would be celebrated for the way they made them, and when Purim came everyone rushed to their houses to get the last word in *sopes peridoes.*

As I was relating the other day, one of my ancestors, the wife of Samuel Lopez, was vigorously engaged about a hundred years ago in supervising the *kashruth* of her home. She went up on a stepladder to see that there wasn't anything wrong with dishes, etc., or something of that sort—that was the way they went at it—when she fell off the stepladder and was killed. She lost her life in an effort to keep her house strictly according to Jewish law, but, as I say, this is only an illustration of the vigor with which they cleaned up.

I spoke of Alexander Zuntz, who came over here with the Hessian troops, as commissary to the general staff. After the Revolution he remained here and became president of this congregation. In fact, he acted as parnas during part of the time of the Revolution when the city was in the hands of the Tories, and they occasionally held some kind of services. But after the Revolution he became quite an important member of the congregation and amassed some money, before he died, as a result of his contact with the Hessians, because, as you know, they were hired by the British to fight the colonists here. They brought over all kinds of money—"Hessian gold" was a common expression. They brought shiploads of it over to buy and bribe the people to join the loyalists' cause. Alexander Zuntz was, at all events, pretty well off. He was one of the twenty-four merchants and brokers who organized the New York Stock Exchange under a buttonwood tree in front of No. 64 Wall Street, New York City, in 1792, and which is still in existence.

He had two or three sons—none of his descendants, as far as I know, are alive now—and one daughter, Ellen, who gave the trustees quite an exciting run for their money, and I say it advisedly. This is one of the few instances in which the trustees went into the life insurance game, and not with very great success. When she was about seventy years old, she had $400. She was in very wretched health, and she offered the trustees the $400, provided they would give her $10 a month —$120 a year—as long as she lived. From the way she looked they didn't think she could live the year out. I have heard it said she weighed about ninety pounds and you could almost see through her, she was so thin. So they thought that was a pretty safe bet, and they took the $400 and paid her the $120 a year. She lived to be ninety-five!

You would think that would cure the trustees of that kind of thing, but they had a similar experience subsequently with the wife of Mr. David Phillips, who was the *shamas* ["beadle"] of the congregation for thirty years, between 1835 and 1865. When her husband died, they wanted to be nice to her. She was an old woman, about seventy-five then, so when they suggested giving her compensation or a pension, one of the trustees said: "Don't give her what you are going to give her all in one lump sum. She is an old woman and will not live long, and we can afford to be liberal." So they made her an allowance, and she fooled them—she lived to be ninety-five or ninety-six years old. I remember her. She was a very vigorous old lady. In fact, I saw her dance when she was nearly ninety, eighty-eight, or eighty-nine. She used to go to picnics—in those days picnics were the thing—and it used to be an amusing thing for the young people—I was only a boy then; don't get that wrong. It used to amuse my grown-up brothers and sisters to induce the old lady to dance at these affairs. And she used to dance to "beat the band," and they would scream with delight to see her dance. But as I said, that was another actuarial experience which the trustees had, which was not very profitable.

Among the picturesque characters of the congregation was a *shamas* named David Henriques Valentine. He was a full-blooded Portuguese. He came direct from Lisbon in Portugal, and had been a Marrano up to about 1800. And that was going some, because his family lasted in Portugal as Marranos from 1492 to 1800. It was not such a bad proposition; but, however, they say that he had actual marks on his wrists. He had been seized by the Inquisition, and the marks were on his wrists where he had been confined in dungeons. I have forgotten, if I ever knew, the exact details of it, but he actually escaped and came direct to New York from Lisbon. He was the real goods—a genuine, full-blooded Portuguese Marrano. His daughter Rebecca married Jacob Berlin, and their daughter was Mrs. Hannah Krauth. I remem-

ber her—she was a very old woman when I was a child. I think that with her the family died out.

Valentine was quite a "card" in his way. I don't know whether it was the spirit of the *shamas* in him, but he was a very fine fellow, and he was ready to meet all comers at all times. The trustees very much resented it on one occasion in the Mill Street Synagogue, the first synagogue—I don't know whether any of you have ever seen the synagogue in Newport, but it was built in that way. The gallery was approached by a sort of separate building—an entrance on the side of the synagogue—and the women went in that and then up into the ladies' gallery so that they did not come in the same door with the men, as we do here. The men went in one side of the building, and the women went in the other side of the building and went upstairs into the gallery. That was the arrangement here for many years until after the Revolution. It was a little inaccessible to the *shamas* to go outside into the *schul* ["synagogue"] yard and into the separate entrance for the women and then up into the gallery, so they put a flight of steps at one end of the interior of the synagogue that went from the auditorium up to the gallery.

On one occasion, on the Day of Atonement, a dog got up some way or other through the other entrance into the ladies' gallery, and Mr. Valentine went up. Of course, the ladies were very frightened, and Mr. Valentine went up to take the dog out, but instead of picking up the dog in his arms and walking out with it, he picked it up by the ear and held it out at arm's length. As a result the dog was screaming and yelping, and in that way he carried it down the steps and through the *schul* out into the yard. The parnas did not like that performance, and thought it a little indecorous, and it upset the whole service. The whole place was in convulsions, and the parnas thought it would not be proper to wait until after the service to take action, so he called Valentine up to his seat and "bawled him out," as we say now, for his unseemly conduct. But, much to his amazement, Mr. Valentine turned around and "sassed him back," and gave him quite an argument, until someone stopped the debate and took Mr. Valentine out and ended the performance. But he was a fine, clever fellow and could read the service and do lots of other things, and was a very handy man to have around the place.

I want to give you an idea of the manner in which the synagogue was built. The first synagogue did not face on the street—when I say the first, I mean the second, I mean the first synagogue, that was built in 1730. It was inside a yard. All the old synagogues in Europe were built that way. Of course, in Europe they built them in that manner to give them protection from attacks of anti-Semites, and I suppose in

New York they carried out the same idea. South William Street, where the synagogue was, was originally in Dutch times called "Slyck Steege" or "Muddy Lane." Broad Street had a canal in it—Broad Street, you know, runs north and south—and the whole region around there was pretty boggy, and this side street, this "Muddy Lane," was just a rough, unpaved, muddy road. You went into it from Broad Street, and it was like a blind alley. You got up as far as what is now a little street, "Mill Lane"—those of you who are familiar with the section known as Mill Lane—you got up quite a little way past where the synagogue was, and then you turned around and went back again. There was no outlet from it. That condition of affairs existed until the middle of the eighteenth century, when they cut through a little street that is now Mill Lane, as I have just told you, and connected it with Stone Street, which was then one of the important streets of the city. The present Mill Lane was then commonly known as "Jews Alley."

The synagogue was on the left hand side of South William Street, or Mill Street, entering it from Broad Street, and the back or ark faced the east. It was set in a court, and by subsequent additions to the property in after years it finally went through to Beaver Street, the street on the north. In after years they closed the Mill Street entrance altogether and the entrance to the whole thing was through Beaver Street, through an alleyway into a wide court. In that court was the synagogue, a house for the minister, one for the sexton, a ritual bath, and one or two other houses rented to members of the congregation.

I heard my father say that when he was a boy—I mention this to show you what a short span it is, after all, between the past and the present—when he was a boy—now I don't want the boys, if there are any here, or girls to imitate this—on Saturday mornings he and other boys would go to the synagogue early before the congregation would get there, because that was the only time they could get in [and] . . . evade the watchfulness of the *shamas*. The houses on Broad Street were fine residences—that is, no doubt, of interest to Mr. Albert J. Elias, our trustee, whose office is in that section. It is rather difficult to imagine that all those houses there were then the best residences of the city, and that they mostly had gardens around them, and certainly all had gardens in the back. In those gardens were fruit trees—pear trees, peach trees, etc.—and the branches used to hang over into the yard of the synagogue, and the boys used to go there and climb up the fences and steal the fruit on the trees in the gardens of the residences on Broad Street. That just gives you an idea how the town has developed and what marvelous changes there have been.

Boys were boys then just the same as they are today, full of fun or mischief, whichever you like to call it. I remember hearing a story

about the synagogue in Mill Street, that is, the one consecrated in 1730, which story concerns my father's brother, Aaron N. Phillips, and some other boys who, about the year 1810, entered into a conspiracy to tease a member of the congregation whom we would call today a "nitwit," a nice man but without much brain. You will remember that the benches in that synagogue were built with the boxes for the talethim and books under the seats as one sat on them. It was necessary to lift up a portion of the seat to take the things out and then sit down upon it. Some of these benches are still in the small synagogue upstairs. These wicked boys put a black cat in the seat of this respectable but dumb member, and when he went on Sabbath morning to take his books and taleth out of the box, the cat jumped out and raced all around the synagogue, to the utter confusion of the services and the mortification of the congregants. The parents of the boys were subsequently called before the board of trustees to explain the boys' conduct, and their apparent lack of proper control of them, but after a great deal of fuss about the matter, the incident was smoothed over and forgotten.

I have also heard this, reverting to the Passover: no one in the congregation thought of using butter, but they did use milk. However, the only way they used it was if it came to them without the contact with anything else. Before the Revolution, considerably before it, the cow would be brought around to the house and milked into the can of the house owner, and then later on, after the Revolution, when that was no longer possible, the children would be sent up to the farms, up around what is now Greenwich Village, where you now dance at night —there were all farms up there. In fact, before that there were farms beyond the "Fresh Water," Collect Pond, where the Tombs, the City Prison, is now, and also beyond that and up around the Bowery. But in later years I have heard my father say that in his boyhood, at Passover time, he would walk up Greenwich Street, carrying a can. My grandfather lived on Greenwich Street, on the west side just above Rector Street. The house is still there, 96 Greenwich Street; that was a fine, fashionable street, and he would carry the can up Greenwich Street to a farm at what is now Thirteenth Street. After he had left Canal Street, which, as you know, is quite downtown, there was only post and rail fence—just a regular unpaved country road all the way up to that farm—and then the woman who kept the farm milked the cow into the can and he went back through Greenwich Street. As I have stated, the reason was that they would not allow anybody's cans but their own to be used, because the others were not *pesachdech* [fit for Passover food]. These little things just give you an idea of how they lived.

Speaking of the house of my grandfather, Naphtali Phillips, on Greenwich Street, suggests a few thoughts about him. He was born on Whitehall Street near Stone on the site of the present United States Custom House, in 1773, a short distance from where his mother, Mrs. Jonas Phillips, daughter of the Rev. David Mendez Machado, was born on Stone Street in 1747. He was one of those who was with the cavalcade which accompanied General Washington from Philadelphia to New York City for his inauguration as first President in 1789. I was named for him. It is perhaps an interesting fact that I saw him. He was in his ninety-eighth year when he died, and I was a couple years old—rather a short link since the foundation of our country, covering but two lives. He took the first copy of Washington's Farewell Address from the press in 1797, working in the office of Claypole's *Advertiser,* a daily newspaper in Philadelphia. This copy was subsequently, in the year 1846, deposited in the cornerstone of a Washington monument which was projected in Hamilton Square, now a part of Central Park at about 64th Street and Fifth Avenue. This monument was never completed for the reason that Congress proposed a Washington monument in the city of Washington, which was dedicated on July 4th, 1848. The proposal for a New York monument having been abandoned, its cornerstone was taken to Washington and deposited in the cornerstone of the Washington monument where it still remains.

He [Naphtali Phillips] was married in 1797 in Newport, Rhode Island, to Rachel Hannah, daughter of Moses Mendez Seixas of that city, in Mr. Seixas' house facing the park of the State House. This house was subsequently owned and occupied by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of Lake Erie in the War of 1812 and whose statue still stands in the aforesaid park. August Belmont, a New York banker in later years, was married to Commodore Perry's daughter in the same house. The house is still as it was originally and is now occupied by the Salvation Army. [It was Commodore Matthew C. Perry's daughter Caroline who married August Belmont. This was the Perry who opened Japan to United States commerce in 1854. The statue is that of Matthew C. Perry, and it is in Touro Park.]

My grandfather was for many years, subsequent to 1800, editor of the *National Advocate,* leading New York City daily newspaper. He was identified as president, trustee, and clerk of this congregation for more than fifty years. He was an extremely pious and observant Israelite, notwithstanding his prominence in the community. After the services on the eve of the Day of Atonement, he always remained in the synagogue, dressed in full evening dress, as most of the congregation did in those days and which custom to some extent is still preserved, and read the *zemiroth* (early morning service) the next day. His at-

tendance at the synagogue was so regular that when the congregation moved from the Crosby Street Synagogue to 19th Street and Fifth Avenue in 1860, the flooring of his seat was so worn away that it was suggested that it be cut out and preserved, but, before this could be accomplished, the purchasers of the building had made alterations which prevented it. When he traveled, which was with considerable frequency, he always carried his own utensils for cooking food, according to the Jewish law, and never found any difficulty in the different communities in having the Christians arrange everything accordingly.

An amusing story is told of him that on one occasion he was traveling to Philadelphia by boat, water travel being almost universal in the days before railroads. As it was very stuffy in the cabin, he laid his tefilin ["phylacteries"] . . . on the deck. One of my uncles, his son, remonstrated with him and suggested that he go below. Whereupon he turned to him and said: "Young man, if you are ashamed of your religion, I am not," and continued to finish his prayers. This incident, however, is merely an indication of how broadminded the Christians were at that time in respecting the observance of religious practices, as no objection would come from them.

And then the matter of decorum in the synagogue: that ran a good deal in spots, if I may say so. It was not long after the erection of the synagogue in 1730 that the *mahamad* was very insistent about the decorum. As I always understood it, previously there had been excellent decorum at all times, even in that frame building. I don't know just where they got it from, except that the elders of the congregation were wealthy people, merchants, who came into contact with the Christians, and they saw how the Christian services were conducted in the churches. They went to the churches very frequently, and in fact, the minister of our synagogue, the Rev. Gershom Mendez Seixas, preached in St. Paul's Church and in Trinity Church. [Historians now question whether Seixas ever preached in Christian churches.] In my father's youth they did that! And their ministers would come to our synagogue and sit on the altar *(teba)* in their canonicals during services. Imagine such a thing now! But then that was an ordinary thing. Our minister would sit on the platform in Columbia College with these very men—he was an incorporator of and a trustee of Columbia College—and that went all right. No one considered it out of the way.

They, of course, were great for decorum. In fact, in my father's youth the sexton of Trinity Church would go out before the sermon was preached every Sunday and would stretch a rope across Broadway, and no traffic could get by. He was the first traffic cop, I guess, that we had in New York. As I said, no traffic could go up or down Broadway during the time the sermon was preached in the church. Of course, in

those days it was not like now. They did not have twenty-minute sermons, like [our rabbi, the] Rev. Dr. [David de Sola] Pool's; they took two hours. Thank God, we did not live in those days, with all respect to Dr. Pool.

But that gives you an idea of what the Christian churches thought in the matter of decorum, and, as I say, we became affected, or infected, with their notion of decorum, and that continued down until about the year 1750. In 1750 or 1760 we got quite a large addition of Ashkenazim. We had them before, but there was quite an influx of them, and they did affect the decorum in the synagogue. Of course, in Europe, they had been used to a little more liberty during services, and this brought on a great many clashes. Frequently, members of the congregation would defy the parnas in the exercise of his power of maintaining decorum during the service, and that was very annoying to him, but, nevertheless, the congregation were going to have order and decorum even if they had to fight for it. And they did fight very hard for it, too, but it went along all right.

Then, again, in my father's boyhood over a century ago [in the early 1800's] we had another large immigration. Jews from London came over, and they had been used to pretty noisy services over there, and the thing broke out again. I have heard him say that he remembered on Saturday mornings, as soon as they commenced *Enkelohenu* [a closing hymn], or during *haftarah* [the prophetical portion read at the close of services], everybody got up and started to walk out, and they put away the talethim, books, and all that, and the parnas would go up on the *teba* and bang on it and make them keep quiet. They fought hard for the maintenance of decorum, and finally won out.

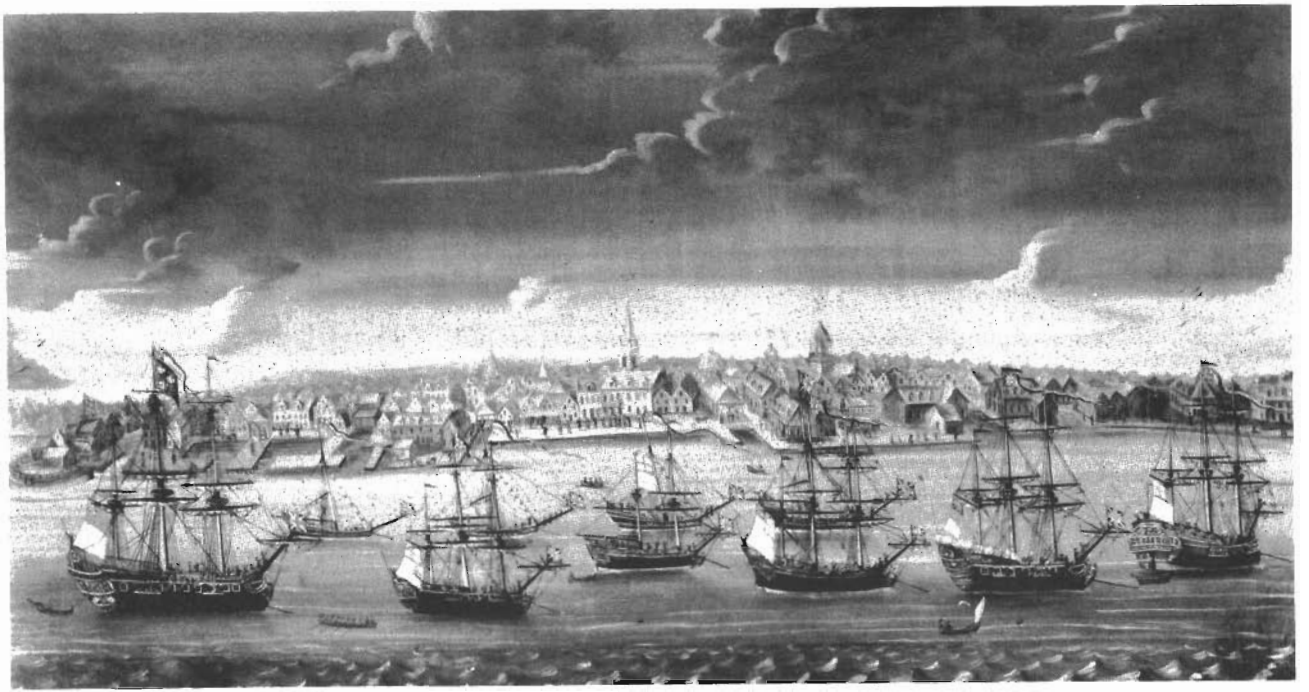
There is a story told about Mr. Solomon I. Isaacs, son of Joshua Isaacs, who was president of the congregation around the year 1830—he was a big, powerful man, a good deal of a fighter—he was parnas and he made up his mind to have order. And he had it, too! When it came to that part of the service which had become disturbing, he would walk up and down the synagogue, like a policeman, and say: "All right, come ahead." And if anyone wanted to start something, he was right there to see it started, and took them outside and started it on the sidewalk. He was a "really to-goodness" parnas, no doubt about that.

And then even in after years things broke out a little now and then. In my father's [Isaac Phillips'] time, when he was president—about 1855, I guess it was—he and Judge Albert Cardozo—not the chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals, Benjamin N. Cardozo, but his father—had quite a run-in. On Kippur [Atonement] night, after the concluding service, then just as now—I won't say "just as now," because

of late years, I must congratulate ourselves that under the influence of the Rev. Dr. Pool and the president we manage to have our services terminate very quietly and nicely—but immediately after the blowing of the shofar everybody, of course, would make a rush for the door, and on this occasion my father gave orders to the *shamas* to lock the door and not let anyone out. Judge Cardozo contested that and demanded that the *shamas* open it, and my father thought that the *shamas* knew better, and the *shamas* thought so, too, and so he did not open it. And the service was conducted and finished according to the proper and decorous way. Afterwards Judge Cardozo was very bitter and wrote officially to my father and demanded that he state whether the *shamas* had acted on his own initiative or under his orders, because if the latter, it was his intention to bring an action against him for damages, and a lot of other things, to which my father replied, I guess, in language not so dignified or elegant either. But Judge Cardozo did not press the matter or did not take it to the courts at all events, and he and my father got together on it and for many years they were the very closest and dearest friends.

This incident is only an indication of how we have really fought to get our services decorous and quiet and dignified, as you see them now. Those who come to the services now and see them all going along so nicely, smoothly, beautifully and with such dignity, of which we are all so very proud, do not realize that we owe our thanks to those who strove in former years to bring them down to us as we have them now. So the matter of order, as I say, was one which gave us great trouble at various times, but we got away with it all right.

I suppose you would like to know something about how the people got married, buried, and so on. All the ceremonies, of course, really entered into the life of the congregation. I don't have to tell you that; you have all heard of it. Such things as anniversaries, weddings, berith milah ["circumcision"] and bar mitzva [confirmation], particularly the last two, were generally a two-day proposition. They ran all Saturday and all Sunday. I suppose people now think that very extraordinary, to have these receptions on Saturdays, but they used to celebrate on Saturdays. The minute after synagogue was out, anybody that was anybody that had a berith or bar mitzva started right in to "blow their heads off." They had open house—there was eating and drinking the limit, no prohibition in those days. And they ran that all off on Saturday for the rest of the day. When night came, they danced, and then they continued the party all day Sunday. Anybody that amounted to anything ran it off over the two days. Before the Revolution the ceremonies of naming both boys as well as girls as we do now, were held in the synagogue itself, if the berith occurred on a Saturday.



*Courtesy, New York Historical Society*

NEW YORK CITY, 1756-57

As to funerals, the cemetery was up in Chatham Square, and interments were made there until forbidden by the city, in 1822, after which only at a penalty of $250. They used to carry the body to the grave from wherever the person lived. Before the Revolution, and in fact after the Revolution until about the year 1800, the body was carried through the streets on the shoulders of the members of the congregation. And by the way, no one was allowed to touch it unless he was a Jew—I mean, in any way. The *tahara,* the preparation of washing and dressing the body, was performed by the members of the congregation. It was considered a great mitzvah [meritorious act]. The members of the congregation did that, and would not allow anyone else to have any part in it at all. Even during the plagues, people would risk their lives—there were actual cases where they did risk their lives in order to perform these ceremonies.

In 1800 the congregation bought a hearse, had it sent from England. That was the first hearse in the city of New York. No denomination had a hearse; everybody was carried to the grave, just as we did it. But we had opened a cemetery "away up on Eleventh Street" (at Sixth Avenue), so we bought a hearse, and it was the first one in town.

Speaking of plagues reminds me that in the cemetery in Chatham Square there is a tombstone of Walter J. Judah, son of Samuel Judah, a prominent member of the congregation, who died in the plague in 1798 of yellow fever. His people had been here since 1690, and that young man was a student in the New York Hospital, which was then at the end of Chambers Street near the North River. Although he was only twenty years old when the yellow fever broke out, he saved I can't tell you how many lives. Finally he was all "worn down," as it says on his tombstone, by his exertions in risking his life saving people, and he succumbed to the disease himself, and was buried there. On his tombstone is an elaborate carving—of course, entirely contrary to our laws [which do not encourage representations of the human form], I don't know how they got it there—they would not stand for it now, but this was 130 years ago. The whole thing is pictured on his tombstone: the New York Hospital right on the river, showing the river carved on the stone, and a flaming sword over the city, showing that part of the city where the hospital was, where he worked—the flaming sword over the city, denoting the plague by which he had fallen in fighting.

My own grandmother, my father's mother, Rachel, daughter of Moses Mendez Seixas, wife of Naphtali Phillips, succumbed to the yellow fever in 1822, it then prevailing as a plague. When they discovered she had it, they lived, as I said before, on Greenwich Street, close by Rector Street. In order to save her, they moved up to a house on the north side of Chambers Street, seventy-five feet east of Broadway,

where the Stewart Building is now, which was outside the infected district. However, she fell a victim to it a few days after they moved there. She is buried in the cemetery on Eleventh Street.

At that time a great many people ran away from the city and settled in Greenwich Village and left behind, in their distress, even their "slaves," as they were called then—they were colored servants—but many faithful women of the congregation remained with the stricken. Mrs. Aaron Desoria and one or two others, whose names I have forgotten now, members of the congregation, notwithstanding that my grandmother was stricken with this most violent plague, stood by her—they were brave women—and did everything for her, and even performed all the last rites.

That gives you an idea of what they thought was required in relation to the last hours of their neighbors and friends, their brothers and sisters. That, as I say, gives you a notion of the general way in which they lived and the manner in which they passed out.

An interesting minister of our congregation was the Reverend Moses Levi Maduro Peixotto, who came to New York City from the island of Curacao, a very distinguished Dutch Portuguese community, about the year 1800. He had been a merchant there of promise and wealth, but was very learned in the Jewish law. After his arrival in New York, he continued to be a prosperous merchant and resided in a fine house on Cedar Street. When the Reverend Gershom Mendez Seixas died in 1816, after a pastorate of about a half century, the congregation was left with no minister in sight. Mr. Peixotto, who was thoroughly conversant with the ritual of the congregation, offered to perform the services without compensation, and agreed that any salary which the congregation would give him might be turned over to the widow of the late minister. Mr. Peixotto subsequently gave up his business and continued to act solely as the hazan of the congregation. While he was proficient in the prayers, he was entirely without any singing voice, but he managed to get through them alright. When it came to the place in the service where the melodies were sung, he would wait and some one in the congregation, frequently the president, would start the melody, and the congregation would sing it. A member of the congregation raised the point that the unmusical rendition of reading the sefer torah ["Scroll of the Law"] was rather unpleasant. Mr. Peixotto, upon hearing of this, said: "You must remember that it says in the Torah that the Lord 'spoke' unto Moses and that he did not sing unto him."

Mr. Peixotto dressed in knee breeches and three-cornered hat long after that style had gone out of fashion, and continued to do so until his death, and officiated in that manner, of course, with a minister's

robe. He used to say that this was the custom in Amsterdam, where he came from originally, and also in the island of Curacao. If I am not mistaken, this custom still prevails in the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam, or certainly did until comparatively recently.

When the Reverend Mr. Peixotto died in 1828, he left a wish that he be buried in the old cemetery of the congregation in Chatham Square, which had been forbidden by the city authorities, except upon a payment of $250 for each interment. The trustees of the congregation rather demurred at making this expenditure, but Mr. Harmon Hendricks, who I think was president of the congregation at that time, offered to make this contribution, and the Reverend Mr. Peixotto was interred there. Curiously enough, in 1856, when the city of New York opened New Bowery through that cemetery, his grave lay within the portion of the cemetery taken and his remains were removed to the cemetery of the congregation on 21st Street, west of Sixth Avenue, where they still repose. It seemed rather fated that the Reverend Mr. Peixotto should not have his wish.

I have not touched on many of the prominent people of the congregation, the men who were really famous on the battlefield and who made history, such as Major David Salisbury Franks, who as one of the staff of George Washington was present at his inauguration in New York and participated in that ceremony as one of the three marshals of the day, or of Rev. Gershom Mendez Seixas, who was one of the thirteen ministers taking part. [It is doubtful if Franks was actually on the staff of General Washington. There is no evidence that Seixas took part in the inauguration of Washington.] I have not attempted to discuss people of that kind, whom you can read about in the American Jewish Historical Society Publications, but rather, those silent, quiet people who made up the congregational life at that time.

One of these men, Mr. Harmon Hendricks, was another ancestor of our present parnas. He was probably one of the most devoted men to our synagogue that ever lived; his whole life was centered in it. He knew a good deal about the service and ritual, and I have heard my father say that when he was a boy he used to see Mr. Hendricks following the reading of the sefer torah (the parasha [the lesson from the Pentateuch]) from a book without points—and he could read the sefer [the unvocalized Hebrew scroll]! He was very well-versed in everything and was familiar with the ritual and the holy things of the synagogue, and took a very great interest in it. He was always ready to assist it financially and every other way. He was a very rich man and in a position to do it. A good many were in a position to do it and did not do it, but he did. He was a very helpful man, but he was a very just man, and whatever he did, he did with an eye to justice. If he gave

something to you, he gave it to you; if he loaned something to you, he loaned it to you.

I am reminded of an amusing incident. On one occasion the trustees of the congregation wanted to borrow $1,000 and they asked Mr. Hendricks for it, and he said, "All right, certainly," and gave them the $1,000. They wanted him to lend it to them for a year, and they said they would pay him interest. He said "No," and loaned it to them without interest. About a month later Mr. Abraham Touro, formerly of Newport, R. I., died [1822] and left the congregation $10,000. Of course, that was a windfall, and they said: "Well, we have this money now," and the first thing they wanted to do was to pay it back to Mr. Hendricks. They probably had it in mind for a future occasion, too. So they decided to return the $1,000 to Mr. Hendricks, but in giving back the money they discounted it for the eleven months, since they had kept it but one month out of the twelve, and gave him back the balance. But Mr. Hendricks could not see it, and he returned the money and said that he had offered to lend them $1,000—without interest, to be sure—for one year, and he wanted the thousand dollars, and they answered: "When you gave us the thousand dollars, you in effect intended to give us a present of one year's interest on $1,000, and inasmuch as we are repaying it beforehand we ought to take off eleven months' interest." Well, he could not see it, and said that was not the proposition. He was helping them out of a hole. They had been in a hole for the thousand dollars, and he had helped them out, but he was not going to lose money by it. They said: "You can put your money out to make up the interest." He said: "Must I be put to all that inconvenience to put my money out? Must I go to all that trouble simply because I was decent enough to save you and give you a hand and help you out?" They wrangled about it, but he was firm. He said: "No; you must pay back the thousand dollars just as I gave it to you." And they did.

That is an index to the man: he was so thoroughly just. When the sexton collected the bills [for membership dues], he had to go around and fight the members of the congregation to get them to give up the money. It was not like now; they had to wrestle over each bill. On one occasion the *shamas* went to Mr. Hendricks and asked him to pay his bill. He, of course, had the money to pay promptly, so he gave him cash. They had generally no checks in those days, as they have now. When it came to pay, he was two cents short, and the *shamas* said—Mr. David Phillips was the *shamas*—he said: "That's all right, Mr. Hendricks. Don't bother about the two cents. I'll fix it up." And Mr. Hendricks said: "It isn't the two cents. When you are sent out by the congregation to collect, if you let two cents go, you will let two dollars go,

and if you let two dollars go, you will let two hundred dollars go. It is entirely the principle of the thing. I have a good mind to report you to the trustees." So Mr. Phillips' proposition fell quite flat, and Mr. Hendricks said: "There is a great, important lesson to this thing. Just wait," and he went to the safe, opened it and gave him the two cents, and said: "Don't ever do that again."

This is all an index to the man. It was the way with everything. He was absolutely straight, absolutely on the level to the last cent. Everything he did was done in just that way, and he did all kinds of things for the congregation—took mortgages for them, and in fact at one time saved them property, which they had in Chatham Square, from a foreclosure suit. He was kind, generous, and just. He lived at No. 62 Greenwich Street a great many years, and there is a story told about him, too, that at the time the synagogue was going to move from Mill Street to Crosby Street—that was quite a distance uptown—Mr. Hendricks was a little disturbed about it. In fact, he opposed it for a long time, and, of course, held it back a good deal, but between 1818, when the synagogue had been rebuilt in Mill Street, and 1833, the population of the entire city had doubled—something, probably, that it had never done before and certainly not since. But the influx was enormous and the population of the town absolutely doubled between these years, and, of course, new territory had been opened further up in the city, and it was impossible to continue the synagogue down on Mill Street.

So when they were going to move, of course, Mr. Hendricks saw that it was going to be very difficult for him to walk all the way up to Crosby and Broome Streets. He lived near the Battery—62 Greenwich Street is down by Morris Street and Edgar Street—the shortest street in New York. So he wrote to the Portuguese congregation, London, and asked the *beth din* ["rabbinical court"] whether he would be justified under the circumstances—he was a man getting on in years—in riding to the synagogue just for that purpose, not in his own carriage, on account of the great distance. They wrote back and asked him if he was a man of means, and he thought that was strange, but he answered "Yes," and they replied: "Move near to the synagogue," which was truly a talmudical manner of answering a question. He did not have to move, because he died about a year after the synagogue was consecrated, so that settled that.

My friends, I have given you just a slight idea of, I might say, the unwritten history of the congregation, some of the things that you do not read in books, and just a little notion of how the congregation lived and breathed and had its being, and what the people were like and the way they did things in those times before the Revolution when

you could rent the best house in the city for $100. Think of that! Wouldn't you like to be able to do that now? And up to 1840 or 1850, even, you could rent one of the best houses in town for five or six hundred dollars. Think of it! New, fine, twenty-five-foot, three-or four-story—three-story, anyhow—houses! Those were the times that I have been trying to describe.

My friends, the whole point of the thing is to do what? Why do I stand up here tonight and tell you all these personal anecdotes, all these little stories, amusing and otherwise, about this institution of ours? Why? It is just to stimulate your affection for it, to let you have some general idea of, after all, what a great, historic structure this is, entirely apart from its religious or holy significance. I want you, if possible, to gather something from that.

I was very much touched last summer when I went to Newport, Rhode Island, and attended the dedication of the Community House there of the Congregation Jeshuat Israel, that so many of you contributed so generously to make possible. It is a wonderful house; I wish we had it! It has everything in it, almost, that you could imagine —Talmud Torah [Hebrew School] and classes and clubs and swimming pools and gymnasium, in a fine old estate, reconstructed and made beautiful. It is a great credit to those people. The bulk of them up there are poor people. A marvelous thing has been done. And I was very much touched at the ceremonies at the consecration of that building, and for this reason: the mayor, congressmen, and judges of the supreme court and a whole lot of other dignitaries were present. The president of the congregation and the trustees and the other officers, all of those men kept constantly referring to the ancient Jews of Newport, all of them gone by the year 1800 or, certainly, by the year 1818—for many years more than sixty—no Jews there at all, not one. The Jews who had been in Newport before the Revolution, who had been the great power of the place, were men of wealth and education and distinction and power, and made great names for themselves, not only in Newport but in New England, and were pioneers not [only] of the Jews, but of everybody. These new Jewish people last summer kept constantly talking of those ancient Jews as "*their* ancestors," "*their* ancestors." Why, they never saw them; they never even heard about them until recent years, until they came to Newport to live, by accident, just tumbled into the place from Russia, Roumania, and other parts of Europe. They had not known that there was such a place as Newport, probably, and they certainly never knew that there were any Jews there.

And yet they kept constantly, affectionately referring to these men and women as "*their* ancestors," and the loving affection in which they

expressed it was perfectly beautiful. It was stirring! These immigrants from Europe coming here into this place had taken it on themselves, that inheritance, had made it a part of their lives, their inspiration. They felt that those old Portuguese Jews were really their flesh and blood—they did not belong [only] to me, although they were physically my great-grandfather, my great-great-grandfather—but they belonged just as much to them. They were *theirs;* they were their ancestors in every sense of the word. They were guided, inspired, and fired by them. They knew just as much about them as I did. They knew everything about them! And they dwelt on it lovingly and devotedly, and in the spirit of religion! Those men in their graves, in the little cemetery up there, on that hilly street—this cemetery which was immortalized by Longfellow in his poem "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport"—those men and women there were the inspiration to them to go forward, to put up their Community House, to keep the synagogue sacred. Why, those Jews in Newport, when an attempt was made a year or two ago to change a flagstone in the street, a mere stone in the sidewalk in front of the cemetery, they resisted it and fought it, and they made the city officials bring back the old flagstone and put it in front of the cemetery in the place where it had been when the ancient Jews had put it there, made sacred to the present Jews by their feet having trod upon it.

That is the spirit the Jews of Newport have—their, their ancestors; their, their people, their flesh; their blood; their inspiration; their guide to God—that is what the ancient Jews of Newport mean to them!

And that is what I want these ancient Jews of our synagogue to mean to you. That is what I am here tonight for, not to get up here and make a speech or to tell you some fascinating tales, some folklore of the synagogue, or something of that kind. No! I don't want that! I want to tell you the things that are going to inspire you and fire you with a zeal for this ancient synagogue of ours, that are going to make you love every stone in the structure, every piece of silver, everything that goes with it, the prayers, the service, the devotion, the decorum, everything that is attached to it as being one great, historic whole! You can't trifle with it; you can't fool with it; you can't alter it; you can't destroy it, except you touch it, and if you lay your finger upon it in any particular, you have wronged it, you have torn down the structure which these men and women I talked to you about tonight erected for you just as well as for me, for every one of you, I don't care whether you came from Russia, Roumania, Poland, or any other place!

You are a part of this thing—it is yours! You come here as of right—that is the thing! It is your possession, and it is your heritage! It is, like the Torah, the heritage of every one of us! As our sages say, the man who does not teach his child the Torah is a robber, because he has

taken from him his inheritance, robbed him of his inheritance, which is the Torah.

This is your inheritance! It comes to you from your ancestors, be they of your blood or be they not! They are *your* ancestors—they are a part of you!

And so I say to you tonight, to every single man and woman here—and I wish I could say it to every single man and woman in the congregation who is not here: see to it that this is no trifling, idle thing that you have in your midst. It is no ordinary congregation for religious purposes which you join and to which you pay your fees and come and go. You have assumed something more than that! You have assumed the carrying on of one of the finest traditions that our people has ever had, and I say it advisedly. For two hundred seventy and odd years we have stood like a rock in this town—stood up against all the waves of delusion, persuasion, corruption in religious views—stood strong and staunch. You can hear the same words today that these men heard two hundred seventy and more years ago! You can hear the same truths preached from the pulpit that were preached then! You can see the same objects, you can hear the same melodies—you have a true faith when you are a member of this synagogue!

And I say to you who are here tonight that my purpose in coming here was to put the chains of love around you, so that every one of you will adore this ancient structure!

Copies of family genealogies, genealogical charts, family history materials taken from the pages of family Bibles and other sources are sought by the Archives. All such records sent to the Archives for copying will be handled carefully and promptly returned. The copy of such materials in the Archives is the best assurance to a family that the family record will be preserved and made available to competent historians.