RHODE ISLAND
JEWISH HISTORICAL NOTES
VOLUME 10 NOVEMBER, 1989 NUMBER 3, PART A
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**FRONT COVER**

Willard Avenue, between Hilton Street and Prairie Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island, as it looked in 1954, when it was part of a thriving area of Jewish stores in South Providence, a hub of Rhode Island Jewish history for almost fifty years. The inset photo shows a view of the same Willard Avenue location in 1989.
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130 Sessions Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906

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# Table of Contents

**The 35th Anniversary of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes**  
by Geraldine S. Foster  
Page 215

by Carol J. Frost  
Page 219

**Index to Bibliography**  
Page 271

**Funds and Bequests**  
Page 276

**Life Members of the Association**  
Page 276

**Photo Album**  
212-214, 218, Front and Back Covers
The Narragansett Hotel, about 1954, corner of Dorrance, Eddy, and Broad Streets, Providence, Rhode Island. The police officer on the right is Morris Stepak. Construction of the hotel began in 1874 and was completed in 1878 for a total cost of $1,000,000. The hotel offered kosher facilities and was the scene over the years of many Jewish weddings, community functions, and other events. See Notes, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 360-383. The inset photo shows the site of Narragansett Hotel, 1989. The hotel was closed in 1959 and the building torn down that year.
Thames Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 1954. Thames Street, before the age of shopping centers, was the mecca of downtown Newport and the home of many Jewish-owned retail stores of all kinds: clothing, food, shoes, furniture, and a department store. Klein's "Naval & Civilian Outfitter" was owned by Meyer Klein. The water shown in this photograph is a result of flooding from Hurricane Carol. Below is a view of the same scene in 1989, after urban renewal. Both photos © John Hopf.
THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL NOTES

By GERALDINE S. FOSTER

Thirty-five years ago, in the autumn of 1954, Jews and their neighbors in Rhode Island joined together to celebrate with due ceremony the American Jewish Tercentenary. The three-hundredth anniversary of the arrival in New Amsterdam of the first Jewish settlers inspired a series of public events that included programs at Touro Synagogue, at the State House, at Roger Williams Spring, and at Veterans Memorial Auditorium. The observances continued through the winter of 1954 and the spring of 1955 with a community service of worship, lectures on Jewish settlement in Rhode Island at meetings of various organizations, a pageant, a television production, a musicale, and exhibits. In addition, the Tercentenary committees in several Rhode Island cities and towns arranged local celebrations in honor of this historic occasion.

That year of 1954 was also the centennial of Providence’s first Jewish congregation, Congregation Sons of Israel, which later became Congregation Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El).

At the time of this confluence of historic events, the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association had been in existence for barely three years and had a total membership of forty-two.

However, the importance of the dual anniversary did not go unobserved by the organization. Under the leadership of David C. Adelman, the Association undertook a unique project; the decision was taken to commemorate the Tercentenary and to celebrate the history of the Jews in Rhode Island by publishing a journal, Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes.

In June of 1954 Volume 1, Number 1, of Notes was mailed to the membership of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association and to a large number of public and private libraries locally and throughout the United States. To underscore the historic significance of the publication, only commemorative stamps were used as postage. The issue consisted of 76 pages. The front cover bore the likeness and signature of Solomon Pareira, the first Jewish settler in Providence and a founder and first president of Congregation Sons of Israel. Contained within were a preface by Rabbi William G. Braude, a charter member of the Association; an introduction by Beryl Segal, vice-president and charter member; remarks by David C. Adelman, founder, president, and first editor of Notes; a review of Jews in the court records of Rhode Island; and other contributions.

Geraldine S. Foster, who was the eighth president of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, is the daughter of Beryl Segal, second president of the Association.

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, Vol. 10, No. 3, Part A, November, 1989
Providence from 1739 to 1860; naturalization lists in the United States District Court (1906) and Rhode Island Supreme Court (1905); names of Jews listed in the Providence and Pawtucket city directories in 1878; the Association financial report from January 22, 1952, to May 1, 1954; and a list of members. The review of court records and city directories prepared by David C. Adelman was a remarkable accomplishment that involved hours and hours of arduous and painstaking volunteer labor.

With the publication of Notes, the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association did more than pay homage to the two anniversaries. The Association initiated a continuing response to the imperative of the Tercentenary: to increase awareness of the role played by Jews in the building of this country through their contributions to this state. Rabbi Braude wrote of this imperative in the Preface to the first issue: "In what way does the story of the Jew in America differ from the story of the Jew in other lands? In one important respect. In America, unlike other lands, the Jew was present at the very beginning of things.... The number involved is not important.... It is important that he must be counted as one of the melange of people who began the building of America."14

The synagogue centennial posed its own challenge: to write the history of the Jews in Rhode Island not as nostalgic reminiscence or anecdote or myth but as meticulous searches for truth. Beryl Segal observed in the Introduction: "The task is not an easy one. It is by no means a simple one.... People were not careful of preserving records. The material that is available must be examined and evaluated. Truth must be separated from fiction. Facts must be sifted out from mere rumor."15

In his remarks, David Adelman alluded to errors of fact in many histories of the Jews of Newport, errors "being perpetuated by repetition," and to the neglectful or defamatory treatment accorded the Jewish community of Providence by earlier historians. Furthermore, he said, "Students who seek to write papers upon the Jews of Providence in connection with their school courses are frustrated in their efforts when they find there is no material available."16 This situation needed to be corrected; it was vital to remedy these deficiencies.

Thirty-five years have passed, and the publication has attracted a wide variety of articles on diverse aspects of the Jewish experience in Rhode Island. Many changes have been made in the format and content of the Notes, but what has remained constant is its purpose: to discover the history of the Jews in Rhode Island, to present it with accuracy and with truth, and to make it accessible to all.

History is the memory of a people. It is the memory of moments, great and small, in individual lives, in the life of a community. The moments of the three-hundred-
year history of the Jews in Rhode Island, interwoven, have produced a tapestry of bright colors and rich textures. History is, however, more than a backdrop to the present; it lends significance and meaning to the present.

Since that first issue of the Notes, the years have brought major and swift changes in the patterns and images of the Jewish experience in this state. The photo album in this issue portrays once vibrant facets of the Rhode Island Jewish community in 1954, aspects of Jewish life since torn down or outgrown or passed over by time. Though they no longer exist in 1989, they represent history worth preserving, worth study, as a heritage for future generations.

This year we mark the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, and, in homage to the first number, the format of this year's issue reverts to an earlier format. Part A of the 1989 issue, this publication, is devoted to an updated bibliography of materials of interest to the Jews of Rhode Island in local repositories. Part B, to be mailed in the spring, 1990, will include articles on subjects of Rhode Island Jewish history.

The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association is the oldest local Jewish and oldest local ethnic historical society in continuous operation. Over the years, its publication, the Notes, has received many letters of commendation for its contribution to the history of Jewish settlement in this state and in this land. May it continue to flourish in its task.

NOTES

1 The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was chartered on September 11, 1951.
2 Ibid, p. 5
3 Ibid, p. 5
4 Opening remarks of David C. Adelman before the first formal meeting of the Association, held at the John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island, February 12, 1953.
5 Ibid, p. 3
6 Ibid, p. 100
7 Opening remarks of David C. Adelman before the first formal meeting of the Association, held at the John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island, February 12, 1953.
B'nai Zion Synagogue (Sons of Zion), Orms Street, Providence, about 1954, built in 1892. Until its demise B'nai Zion was the oldest Orthodox congregation in Providence. Below is a view of the former site of B'nai Zion Synagogue after urban renewal.
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MATERIALS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN RHODE ISLAND, LOCATED IN RHODE ISLAND DEPOSITORY (1967-1989)

COMPILED AND EDITED BY CAROL J. FROST

INTRODUCTION

Since 1966, when Freda Egnal's "Annotated Critical Bibliography" on Rhode Island Jewry was published in the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes (RIJHN 4 No. 4), a growing interest in American ethnic groups and social history has led to significant new research, publication, and preservation of materials pertaining to the Jewish experience in Rhode Island.

This supplemental bibliography was undertaken at the suggestion of and supported by the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association and conducted under the supervision of Professor William G. McLoughlin, Department of History, Brown University. It is intended to update the earlier bibliography by including materials accessioned by Rhode Island archives or published since 1966. Significant new sources uncovered by an exhaustive search of the literature and visits to archives throughout Rhode Island are listed below, although in a slightly different format from that of the Egnal bibliography.

Encompassing a smaller number of sources than the original bibliography, this list is divided into three sections, based upon the accessibility and likely use of the materials.

First, all published materials are presented, including doctoral dissertations and all articles published in the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes (RIJHN) since 1966. Such materials are accessible to all library users through the inter-library loan system, if not readily available at a neighborhood library; they are either secondary works of historical description and analysis or primary material which was deemed to be of sufficient general interest to be published. Materials wholly devoted to Rhode Island Jewry are denoted by an asterisk, since many of the items listed consider broader topics of which Rhode Island Jewish life is only a part.

The second section comprises primary material located in Rhode Island archives and manuscript repositories, including the major holdings of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Library: rare or unique manuscripts, photographs, oral histories, and organizational records. Valuable to the scholar

Carol J. Frost is a doctoral candidate in the American Civilization Department of Brown University.

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, Vol. 10, No. 3, Part A, November, 1989
undertaking in-depth research, these materials are of less interest to the general reader and are more difficult of access, their use necessarily being restricted to on-site inspection.

A brief list of bibliographies on Rhode Island and American Jewry which include references not explicitly concerned with Rhode Island Jewry but helpful to the interested reader completes this supplement.

Many Rhode Island librarians and archivists assisted in the compilation of this bibliography, generously providing access to their holdings and sharing their knowledge about them. The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, which initiated and supported this project, must also be singled out for its central role in promoting and publishing research on Rhode Island Jewry, as well as for preserving primary research materials in its library. Similarly, many articles in RIJHN are the result of the hard work of many Rhode Islanders, including, most notably, Seebert Goldowsky, Eleanor Horvitz, Bernard Kusinitz, Benton Rosen, and Beryl Segal, past or present members of the RIJHA, who have ferreted out and studied their local history with singular dedication.

The Egnal bibliography necessarily remains the primary reference to material concerning Rhode Island Jewry, as this supplement does not attempt to duplicate that work, but to add to it. Researchers are urged to consult the two works in tandem for more complete coverage of the topic.

Abbreviations have been kept to a minimum in the following references. However, because of the frequency of their citation, Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes is denoted by RIJHN, and the Library of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association by "RIJHA Library."
An Annotated Bibliography

I. PUBLISHED SOURCES ON RHODE ISLAND JEWRY


10 Barron, Jerome A. "Liberty or Equality?" *RIJHN* 7 No. 1 (November 1975): 5-11. A lecture from the 1975 George Washington Letter Ceremonies at Touro Synagogue, discussing the *De Funis* Supreme Court decision.


14 * Bloom, Bessie Edith. "Jewish Life in Providence," *RIJHN* 5 No. 4 (November 1970): 386-408. The text of a paper written in 1910, when the author was a Brown undergraduate, describing the economic, social, and religious conditions of the Jewish community at the time.


16 * Bloom, Bessie Edith. "Jewish Life in Providence," *RIJHN* 5 No. 4 (November 1970): 386-408. The text of a paper written in 1910, when the author was a Brown undergraduate, describing the economic, social, and religious conditions of the Jewish community at the time.


20 Brandeis University, Rose Art Museum. Two Hundred Years of American Synagogue Architecture: Catalog of an Exhibition. Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1976. 63 pp., ill. Includes illustrations of the Touro Synagogue interior with a discussion of its design and construction, hypothesizing that the Great Sephardic Synagogue of Amsterdam may have served as the model.

21 Braude, William G. "Brief Account of the Life of My Father, Rabbi Yizhak Aisik Braude (1885-1932):" RIJHN 9 No. 3 (November 1985): 239-43. The author, late Rabbi of Temple Beth-El, Providence, recounts the life of his father, an Orthodox rabbi, who lived in Lithuania until 1916, when he immigrated to Denver, Colorado, moving in 1922 to Dayton, Ohio.


Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes


36 Bronkow, Robert I. "Love and Order in Roger Williams's Writings," Rhode Island History 35 No. 4 (November 1976): 115-26. Includes discussion of Williams's statement that toleration should be extended to the Jews.
An Annotated Bibliography


38 * Brown, Edwin C. "Workmen’s Circles and Jewish Labor Unions," *RIJHN* 10 No. 2 (November 1988): 157-162. Describes the activities of various mutual-aid societies founded in Rhode Island since the 1890s to benefit immigrants and the working-class.


40 * Buhle, Paul M. "Jews in Rhode Island Labor: An Introductory Investigation." *RIJHN* 10 No. 2 (November 1988): 146-56. A survey of the involvement of Rhode Island Jews in labor and labor-related social movements, both in Rhode Island organizations which were not primarily Jewish and in support of non-Rhode Island movements led by Jews.


48 * Chiel, Arthur A. "Ezra Stiles and the Jews: A Study in Ambivalence" in Bertram Wallace Korn, ed., A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus. Waltham: American Jewish Historical Society, 1976, pp. 63-76. Ezra Stiles, later President of Yale University, lived in Newport during the late 1700s and maintained close contacts with the Jewish community there. This article discusses Stiles's attitudes toward Aaron Lopez and other Newport Jews, which contained both positive and anti-Semitic elements rooted in Stiles's theology. Stiles believed the Jews were, ultimately, unassimilable.


60 Cohn, John M. "Demographic Studies of Jewish Communities in the U.S.: a Bibliographic Introduction and Survey," American Jewish Archives 32 No. 1 (April 1980). Reviews works on Rhode Island by authors Goldstein and Goldscheider in the context of Jewish community studies in general.


64 Coughtry, Jay. *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981. 361 pp., ill. Based on extensive archival research, a quantitative study of the proportion and significance of the Rhode Island slave trade, with mentions of Lopez and Rivera. The author concludes that Rhode Island was the only North American colony to engage significantly in slaving, but that even its involvement, in comparison with other nations, was “minute.”

65 Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, *National Jewish Population Study.* New York: The Council, [1972]. The Providence area was included in the national sample used in this survey, which compiled information on housing, intermarriage, educational levels, religious observance, and other demographic factors.


67 Crane, Elaine Forman. *A Dependent People: Newport, Rhode Island in the Revolutionary Era.* New York: Fordham, 1985. xiii, 196 pp., ill. A detailed, scholarly urban history of Newport during the 18th century, emphasizing economic policies and trade, with many references to the rights and status of Jews and to Jewish individuals.


69 ____, “Uneasy Coexistence: Religious Tensions in Eighteenth Century Newport,” *Newport History* 53 No. 3 (Summer 1980): 101-11. Discusses religious pluralism and the treatment of various groups, including Jews and Catholics, who were disfranchised by statute in 1663.


71 *Culbertson, Steven and Calvin Goldscheider. “United Brothers, Bowling and Bagels in Bristol: A Study of the Emergence, Decline and Re-Establishment of*
the Jewish Community of Bristol, Rhode Island," RIJHN 9 No. 4 (November 1986): 283-97. The study centers on the Chevra Agudas Achim and Bristol Jewish Community Center.


86 * ______. "Harry," *RIJHN* 9 No. 4 (November 1986): 356-64. The life of Providence resident Harry H. Fink (d. 1968), the author's grandfather, is recounted, with excerpts from a journal, photographs, and illustrations.

87 * ______. "The Holocaust Memorial of Rhode Island and Some Holocaust Memories." *RIJHN* 10 No. 1 (November 1987): 61-73. Briefly presents the background of the memorial, dedicated in 1987, and includes excerpts from the journals of Rhode Island Holocaust survivors.


90 * Foster, Geraldine, ed. Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David: One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, A Pictorial Memoir. Providence: The Congregation, 1979. 64 pp. A well-illustrated history of the Providence congregation’s people, involvement in community affairs, and synagogue design and decoration.


Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes


100 _____, Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. 380 pp., maps, ill. Largely a consideration of membership in clubs, fraternal orders, and benevolent societies. Mentions restrictions on Jewish membership in some clubs and discusses part or wholly Jewish clubs, including the Oxford Club, the Masons, Pythians, and B'nai B'rith.


107 * _____, "Reform Judaism Comes to Rhode Island: An Eventful Weekend," RIJHN 8 No. 4 (November 1982): 448-51. The events of July 22-23, 1877,
when delegates of the Moderate Reform convention organized 73 members into the newly Reformed Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, Providence, and Benjamin Peixotte and Rabbi Dr. Sonneschein spoke against anti-Semitism at a memorial service for Judah Touro in Newport.


study of residence and mobility patterns in the post-World War II era. Includes statistical tables.


An Annotated Bibliography


An Annotated Bibliography

142 * ____. "Jews and the Boy Scout Movement in Rhode Island," RIJHN 7 No. 3 (November 1977): 341-44. Details the involvement of Jews in the establishment and activities of Boy Scout troops in Rhode Island since 1910.


144 * ____. "The Jews of Pawtucket and Central Falls, Part II." RIJHN 9 No. 3 (November 1985): 244-58. Continues a survey of Jewish community leaders and organizations.


147 * ____. "Judah Touro's Jerusalem Legacy," RIJHN 9 No. 4 (November 1986): 315-17. Relates the use of Touro's bequest to "Jerusalem, Palestine."


151 * ____. "Old Bottles, Rags, Junk! The Story of the Jews of South Providence," RIJHN 7 No. 2 (November 1976): 189-257. Based on oral history interviews, recounts anecdotes of the lives of the immigrant population employed in small businesses and jewelry factories at the turn of the twentieth century. Illustrated.

152 * ____. "The Olneyville Hebrew Club — Order of Hebraic Comradeship," RIJHN 10 No. 2 (November 1988): 177-94. Traces the history of the club, formed in 1920 "to promote Judaic culture and to promote comradeship."
153 * ____. "The Origins of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association." Local Jewish Historical Society News 1 No. 1 (Fall 1987). A history of the formation of the RIJHA under the leadership of David Adelman during the 1950s.


156 * _____. "Photo Essay: The Jewish Community Center, 65 Benefit Street," RIJHN 8 No. 4 (November 1982): 442-6. Photographs of activities at the JCC during the 1940s.


160 * _____. "The Years of the Jewish Woman," RIJHN 7 No. 1 (November 1975): 152-70. Documents the activities of various Jewish women's benevolent organizations in Rhode Island since the late nineteenth century.


An Annotated Bibliography

163 * Ingall, Carol K. “The Day the Anarchist Came to Town.” RIIHN 8 No. 1 (November 1979): 94-98. Recounts the events surrounding a 1905 Providence lecture by Benjamin Feigenbaum, editor of the socialist literary journal Zukunft.


166 James, Sydney. Colonial Rhode Island: A History. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975. 423 pp. A scholarly general history which includes references to colonial Newport Jews, Ezra Stiles’s relationship with them, the community’s activities, and notable Jewish merchants.


178 * Katz-Hyman, Martha B. "A Note on Rabbi Moses Ziskind Finesilver, 1847-1922," *RIJHN* 7 No. 3 (November 1977): 430-1. A brief biographical essay on the first *hazzan* (cantor), *shohet* (ritual slaughterer), and *mohel* (ritual circumcisor) of the Congregation Sons of Zion of Providence.


184 Korn, Bertram Wallace. *The Early Jews of New Orleans*. Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1969. 382 pp. Passing mentions of the Newport and Providence Jewish communities are included in this study, with details on the lives of Isaac and Judah Touro after the Revolutionary War, during which the former espoused Tory views.


189 * _____. *"How Touro Synagogue Got Its Name," RIJHN 9 No. 1 (November 1983): 83-93*. Concludes that the synagogue was not named after its first rabbi, Isaac Touro, but after its street, named for Abraham Touro, whose bequest allowed for the maintenance of both building and street.


191 * _____. *"The 1902 Sit-In at Touro Synagogue," RIJHN 7 No. 1 (November 1975): 42-72*. Details the background and events of the 1899-1902 split in the Newport congregation and the battle for physical possession of Touro Synagogue.

192 * _____. *"An Update on the Colonial Jewish Cemetery in Newport, Rhode Island," RIJHN 9 No. 4 (November 1986): 218-324*. Includes the results of new research and reports on restoration work completed during the summer of 1986.

