

The **Forerunners** Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora

Robert P. Swierenga

1632 Morris Road
Kent Ohio 44240
330 ~~677-5740~~
678-5740



Wayne State University Press

Detroit

Michigan

GREAT NECK LIBRARY

AMERICAN JEWISH CIVILIZATION SERIES

Editors

Moses Rischin, San Francisco State University
Jonathan D. Sarna, Brandeis University

Books in this series

Jews of the American West, edited by Moses Rischin and John Livingston, 1991

An Ambiguous Partnership: Non-Zionists and Zionists in America, 1939-1948, Menahem Kaufman, 1991

Hebrew in America: Perspectives and Prospects, edited by Alan Mintz, 1992

A Credit to Their Community: Jewish Loan Societies in the United States, 1880-1945, Shelly Tenenbaum, 1993

Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai M. Kaplan, Mel Scult, 1993

The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora, Robert P. Swierenga, 1994

Copyright © 1994 by Wayne State University Press,
Detroit, Michigan 48202. All rights are reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced without formal permission.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

99 98 97 96 95 94 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Swierenga, Robert P.

The forerunners : Dutch Jewry in the North American diaspora /
Robert P. Swierenga.

p. cm. — (American Jewish civilization series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8143-2433-9 (alk. paper)

1. Jews, Dutch—United States—History. 2. Jews—Netherlands—History. 3. Immigrants—United States—History. 4. United States—Emigration and immigration. 5. United States—Ethnic relations. 6. Netherlands—Ethnic relations. I. Title. II. Series.

E184.J5S9 1994

973'.049240492—dc20

93-26128

Designer: Mary Primeau

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation for financial assistance in the publication of this volume.

Between 1800 and 1880 approximately 6,500 Dutch Jews immigrated to the United States to join the hundreds who had come during the colonial era. Although they numbered less than one-tenth of all Dutch immigrants and were a mere fraction of all Jews in America, the Dutch Jews helped build American Jewry and did so with a nationalistic flair. Like the other Dutch immigrant groups, the Jews demonstrated the salience of national identity and the strong forces of ethnic, religious, and cultural institutions. They immigrated in family migration chains, brought special job skills and religious traditions, and founded at least three ethnic synagogues led by Dutch lay rabbis.

The Forerunners offers the first detailed history of the immigration of Dutch Jews to the United States and to the whole American diaspora. Robert Swierenga describes the life of Jews in Holland during the Napoleonic era and examines the forces that caused them to emigrate, first to the major eastern seaboard cities of the United States, then to the frontier cities of the Midwest, and finally to San Francisco. He provides a detailed look at life among the Dutch Jews in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans.

To provide such a comprehensive work on the Dutch Jews in America from the early colonial years to the modern period, Swierenga gathered materials from published local community histories, Jewish archival records and periodicals, synagogue records, and particularly, the Federal Population Census manuscripts from 1820 through 1900. He details the contributions and the leadership provided by the Dutch Jews and relates how they lost their "Dutchness" and their Orthodoxy within several generations after their arrival here and were absorbed into broader American Judaism, especially German Reform Jewry.

The story of Dutch Jewry in America is a complex and compelling subject, and until now, one that has been largely unexplored. Their history is important within the history of American Jewry because the Dutch were the forerunners, the early leaders of the synagogues and benevolent societies. Here is a significant volume for readers interested in Jewish history, religious history, and comparative studies of religious declension. Immigrant and social historians likewise will be interested in this look at a religious minority group that was forced to change in the American environment.

Robert P. Swierenga is a professor of history at Kent State University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

Jacket design by Mary Primeau

 WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Detroit, Michigan 48202

(continued on back flap)

Religious Life

The Jewish community of New York, like that in North America generally, but unlike Europe, blended Sephardi and Ashkenazi in one synagogue under the Sephardic *minhag* (worship rites) until the early nineteenth century.⁸ As a religious minority in a new land, the Jews also had to live by the old adage, "The law of the land is the law to be observed." Thus, their religious life was affected by colonial and (later) state laws on marriage, burial, incorporation of religious societies, separation of church and state, poor relief, and even occupational restrictions. At first, the Dutch authorities in New Netherland did not permit Jews to establish a synagogue; as a result, they worshiped in private homes until about 1692 when they rented quarters for a synagogue. It was 1729 before they could afford their own synagogue, Shearith Israel. The first Jews also had to care for their own poor and promise not to proselytize. The most important impact in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the intrusion of democracy and freedom of religion into traditional Jewish practice. Although Shearith Israel held the line against lawbreakers, individual Jews could live outside the covenant community and ignore ritual requirements and dietary laws; they could even with impunity marry Christians.⁹

For more than 150 years New York Jews maintained relative unity within the pioneer synagogue of Shearith Israel. But in 1825 it suffered the first of many schisms when recent immigrants, who could not "accustom" themselves to the predominantly "Portuguese" liturgy, broke away and formed a second synagogue, Bnai Jeshurun, based on the Ashkenazic rite. Mainly English in background, the seceders also included German, Dutch, and Polish Jews.¹⁰ Soon each nationality group wanted its own synagogue and secession followed secession. The result was a state of near anarchy in the Jewish community. The traditional weapon of excommunication had lost its sting by the early nineteenth century. In 1828 a number of Dutch, Germans, and Poles left Bnai Jeshurun to form Congregation Anshe Chesed (People of Loving Kindness), which adopted Minhag Amsterdam. In 1845 Bnai Jeshurun suffered yet another schism when its charter members left and formed the Shaaray Tefila congregation. The mother synagogue, Shearith Israel, still retained its mixed character. More than half the membership at mid century was German, Dutch, and Polish. By 1847 there were ten synagogues, including one Portuguese, four "Polish" (eastern European), four German, and one "Nederdutch." These ten by 1860 had grown to 27 synagogues, one for every nationality group and reli-

THE FORERUNNERS

gious taste.¹¹ Not every new congregation was born in schism. Population growth required more synagogues, even without strife. Nationalism only made the growth process more painful and disjointed.

The pace of assimilation was retarded only by the steady arrival of immigrants from Europe who brought a commitment to Judaism and included ministers and teachers to serve the American community, which as yet had not generated an indigenous leadership. These steady contacts with European Jewry were strengthened by appeals for aid from Jews in Palestine and elsewhere in Europe to which New York Jews responded generously.¹²

Reverend Samuel Myer Isaacs

Dutch Jews served leadership roles in the New York synagogues and none carried greater weight than the Reverend Samuel Myer Isaacs (1804–1878), “rabbi” of Shaaray Tefila for thirty-three years (see Fig. 3.2). Isaacs was born on January 4, 1804, in Leeuwarden—the capital city of the province of Friesland in the far northern Netherlands—the son of a prominent merchant-banker, Meyer Samuel Isaacs (Isaks) and Rebecca Samuels, his wife. This devout family had five sons and four became ministers. The Leeuwarden synagogue seated six hundred and was one of the largest congregations outside the main Jewish centers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague.¹³

The Napoleonic wars, which pitted England against French expansionism, and especially the British Orders-in-Council of 1805 that effectively blockaded the European continent, severely hurt international merchants such as the Dutch Jews who traded largely with London. Meyer Isaacs fell into debt after 1805 and by 1810 he had borrowed 6,300 florins from family and friends.¹⁴ After Napoleon formally annexed the Netherlands in 1810 and sent in French occupation forces, Meyer Isaacs and other merchants, already financially strapped and increasingly fearful of the loss of their historic liberties and property, fled in 1814 to England, leaving behind their property and debts.

The Isaacs family settled in the Spitalfields section of East London, which became a Dutch Jewish center. Here Meyer Isaacs entered the rabbinate and gave early training to his sons, including Samuel, who was 10 years old when the family moved to London. This age was young enough for Samuel to learn to speak English



Fig. 3.2. Reverend Samuel M. Isaacs (1804-1878) of Congregation Shaaray Tefila, New York, NY. Reprinted from Simon Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila: A History of Its Hundred Years: 1845-1945* (New York, 1945).

without a Dutch accent. This ability later earned him many speaking engagements in America, where sermons and public addresses in English were much preferred to the customary Yiddish or German tongue.

Samuel attended public school, but as an orthodox Jewish teenager he also studied Hebrew, the Talmud, and Jewish history in the

synagogue school and under the tutelage of his father. After completing his education Samuel taught Hebrew for a time at the Jewish Orphanage of London and then in the 1830s he became principal of a Jewish day school. This position enabled the young man to become well connected in the wider Jewish community. He developed a lifelong friendship with the famed Anglo-Jewish banker Sir Moses Montefiore, who shared his devotion to Palestine. He also became acquainted with Solomon Hirschel (Herschel, Herschell), the chief rabbi of the Great Synagogue of London and the leading rabbi in the entire British Empire.

The year 1839 marked the major turning point for the 35-year-old Hebrew educator. He was married in the Great Synagogue by Rabbi Hirschel himself; but shortly before this he had decided to emigrate to America with his bride in response to a call from the newly founded Ashkenazi congregation *Bnai Jeshurun* (Sons of Israel) of New York to be its first preacher and cantor. The congregation, an offshoot of *Shearith Israel*, was located in the midtown area on Elm Street at this time. The synagogue trustees had offered Isaacs the position without an interview but only after a "scrutinizing vigilance" of his credentials and on the recommendation of Solomon Cohen, a trusted intermediary in London. Undoubtedly, Isaacs's unique ability to preach in perfect English was a major factor in his appointment. A few days after his wedding, Isaacs and his new wife, Jane Symmons (1824-1884) of London, took their "honeymoon" trip to New York aboard the *Brig Emery*, arriving on September 10, 1839, after a lengthy two-month voyage on stormy seas.¹⁵

At his installation at *Bnai Jeshurun* on the last Saturday in September, Isaacs preached the first English sermon by a regular minister in any New York synagogue. His title was *hazan*, which signified the chief religious leader who acted as reader (cantor) at the services and conducted weddings and funerals. The *hazan* was recognized by the Gentile community as the "minister" of the congregation. Isaacs also preached on special holidays and every Sabbath service before the new moon. Regular preaching in the vernacular, following the model of Protestant ministers, was just entering the synagogue at this time. Isaacs had likely learned the innovative practice of weekly vernacular preaching (as compared with the traditional formal preaching on only two Sabbaths per year) from the London synagogue, which began English-language preaching in 1817.¹⁶

Bnai Jeshurun grew rapidly under Isaacs's leadership despite several secessions rooted in nationality sentiments. New immigrants more than made up for the defections. By 1839 Polish and German

Jews had withdrawn to form a new congregation, and in 1843 another German group seceded. But the major schism occurred in 1844 when a dissenting faction of young, antiestablishment German members, who disputed the outcome of elections for synagogue trustees controlled by the reigning leadership oligarchy, seized control of the Elm Street synagogue by force. Rather than fight, the leaders chose to withdraw quietly, along with *Hazan* Isaacs, the sexton (*shammash*) Benjamin M. Davis, also a Hollander, and at least ten other Holland families.¹⁷

The new congregation, organized formally in 1845, primarily by English and Dutch Jews, chose the name Shaaray Tefila (Gates of Prayer). Immediately before the split, Isaacs had declined a "flattering call" with a liberal salary from the growing Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.¹⁸ His decision to remain perhaps led the unhappy faction to take direct action. Old World differences were too strong for harmony. Each nationality group and even people from particular localities demanded their own forms of worship among their own brethren. By 1860 the Portuguese, English, German, Polish, Dutch, and even regional subgroups worshiped separately, and the city counted twenty-seven synagogues.¹⁹

Isaacs's long tenure at Shaaray Tefila marked the high point of Orthodoxy in New York Judaism. In 1847 when the congregation dedicated its new Wooster Street synagogue (at 110-112 Wooster Street, between Spring and Prince streets), Isaacs's friend Rabbi Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia gave the major address. Leeser was the acknowledged leader of American Orthodox Judaism, and Isaacs was his associate and collaborator.²⁰ Isaacs devoted his pulpit to the defense of pure religion undefiled, calling the faithful to observe the full Mosaic law, the Levitical dietary rules and purification rites, and especially to keep the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath was difficult for Jewish retail merchants and clerks because Saturday was the major American shopping day, and state and local Sunday-closing laws often kept Jewish businesses closed on that day as well —until they won legal exemptions.²¹

Reverend Isaacs's second theme was to uphold Orthodoxy against the new Reform Judaism that German Jews were bringing to America in the 1840s. Among other worship practices, Reform introduced mixed choirs and instrumental music, integrated seating, prayers in English, abolition of head coverings and calling men up to the Torah, and confirmation for young women as well as young men. Reform congregations also were lax in enforcing religious discipline and Sabbath-keeping.

Isaacs challenged these new ideas "from the fertile fields of

Germany, where everything grows fast, although not always wholesome." What is at issue, he warned, is that Jews are "assimilating our system to that of Christianity. . . . Shame on those Rabbis who have A.D. in their thoughts." In 1840, within a year of his arrival, Isaacs led a movement to exclude nonobserving Jews from membership in Bnai Jeshurun. But the majority favored benign tolerance and Isaacs could only wield his pen. He lamented, "In the days of yore, violators were . . . publicly stoned to death, . . . but now . . . we court their society, give them the first honors in the Synagogue, [and] call them up to hear that law recited which anathematizes the Sabbath-violator. We behold the hands of sacrilege destroying the ten commandments." There is no place for a doctrine of "the *minimum* God, the *maximum* man," he thundered. Such strong sentiments led historian Hyman Grinstein to declare that Isaacs was "without doubt the most ardent exponent of Sabbath observance in New York City prior to the Civil War."²²

Isaacs also admonished the women of his congregation for not washing in the ritual pool (*mikveh*), which he had carefully constructed according to the guidelines of Rabbi Abraham Rice of Baltimore. He even attributed the recent deaths of several young married women in the congregation to God's anger at their direct disregard of the law of purity.²³

Isaacs's goal was to safeguard the rank and file of American Jewry from Reform: "My object is . . . to prove, from facts, that our system of worship, apart from its *temporalities*, is the best of all systems; and to adduce evidence that adding or diminishing, abrogating, or altering our form of prayers, handed down to us from the Men of the Great Synod, . . . at the will or caprice of men, who, however well-intentioned, are yet tinctured with the spirit of the age and are not capable of judging correctly or dispassionately—that reforms so instituted—will lead to inevitable ruin in our polity, and tend to unfetter the chain by which we have ever been riveted in union and in love."²⁴ Clarion calls such as this put Isaacs at the forefront of the defense of Orthodoxy in New York and throughout the country.

Shaaray Tefila prospered under Reverend Isaacs. The liturgy, ritual, and physical arrangement of seating all conformed to the requirements of Orthodoxy. But the worship services were tempered by such "Protestantizing" practices as regular vernacular preaching from English-language Jewish Bibles. Also, Isaacs's expanded role as minister of the congregation was more akin to an Episcopal priest than a traditional cantor. The appreciative congregation increased their rabbi's salary regularly from \$1,200 in 1845 to \$3,500 by the end of his tenure in the 1870s. The congregation also showed their

NEW YORK CITY

high regard for his services by buying a \$5,000 insurance policy on the life of their leader. In 1851 when Shaaray Tefila gave their "worthy minister" permission to return to England for a three-month visit, his student, Aaron S. Solomon, also a Hollander, served as Reader for the congregation. On the Isaacs's silver wedding anniversary in 1864 the grateful congregation celebrated at a Sabbath service and presented them with a cash gift of \$2,900! Nine years later, in 1873, at the gala celebration of Isaacs's seventieth birthday, the congregation's gift was an amazing \$4,250.²⁵

In the 1860s, the Uptown movement of Jews directly affected the synagogue. Orthodox Jews who lived Uptown would not ride on the Sabbath, so they transferred to nearby synagogues. In the face of declining membership and a growing indebtedness, Shaaray Tefila was forced to relocate Uptown. More than two-thirds of its contributing members lived above Fourteenth Street in 1863. In 1863 and 1864 the congregation discussed a proposed merger with the mother synagogue, Bnai Jeshurun, that also planned to move Uptown, but in the end Shaaray Tefila decided to build on their own. The spirit of rivalry was too great to overcome.²⁶ Shaaray Tefila sold its Wooster Street synagogue in 1864, and after worshiping for five years in a rented building on Broadway at Thirty-sixth Street, in 1869 they dedicated a newly built \$150,000 synagogue on Forty-fourth Street at Sixth Avenue, about two miles to the north, where they worshiped until 1894.²⁷ Barnett L. Solomon, another Hollander, was president of Shaaray Tefila during this relocation, and the longtime sextons, also Dutch, were Benjamin M. Davis, Isaac Bildersee, and Isaac's son Barnett. Davis held the post from 1847 until his death in 1858; Isaac Bildersee then served until his death in 1872. Both funerals were "largely attended." Isaacs's sons Myer and then Isaac served as clerk of the congregation for many years. Because of the "flourishing condition" of the congregation, their minister's workload was so heavy that the trustees in 1865 hired an assistant "to conduct the service according to the ancient liturgy with the accepted tunes, leaving the duties of Preacher more especially to the veteran of the New York pulpit."²⁸

In 1857 Samuel Isaacs carried the fight against Reform to the wider Jewish community by launching a periodical, the *Jewish Messenger*, which he made an effective organ for Orthodoxy (see Fig. 3.3). He set the tone and established his themes in the initial ringing editorials, "Mammon Worship," which condemned materialism; "Our Divine Law," which commended true religion as the "boon and boast of Israel throughout the dispersion"; and "The Want of Union," which advocated a super board to safeguard Judaism in

THE JEWISH MESSENGER.

תַּיִתְבָּשׁ כָּלִיל מִשְׁמָרָת
"A MESSENGER OF GOOD TIDINGS, PUBLISHING SALVATION."

Vol. 1.

No. 1.

NEW YORK, TEBETH 6, 5G17, JANUARY 2, 1857.

The Jewish Messenger.

Editor & Co., Proprietors.
Henry Isaacs, George Isaacs,
David & Abram Isaacs, Editors.

Terms Two Dollars per annum, payable in advance.

ADVERTISING.

Eight lines of under, one insertion
100
One line, one insertion
100
Revolving Letters, one insertion
100
Special Numbers, per issue
100

All communications must be addressed to the Editors of The Jewish Messenger, 500 Broadway, New York.

ILLUSTRATION.

A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100A large illustration, one insertion
100A small illustration, one insertion
100

It was nine o'clock, and the city seemed deserted (for the storm obliged the citizens to remain in their houses), when two men might have been seen advancing towards a small public house, bearing for its sign, "Abraham Abing 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1140, 1141, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1150, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1160, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1160, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1173, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1173, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189,

NEW YORK CITY

all should have proudly worn is that of "American Jews;" . . . signifying that the circumstances which had given origin to marked differences in ritual had ceased to exist, and that the necessity for reconstructing another, perfectly uniform, and more conformable to our changed condition, had arrived.³⁰

Isaacs in 1875 published the revolutionary proposal and warmly endorsed it in his *Jewish Messenger*, but the plan was stillborn, even though it stimulated widespread debate. It pleased neither the ardent Orthodox nor the Reform wings who were rallying behind Isaac M. Wise's successful prayer book *Minhag America*. And Isaacs's declining health and approaching retirement made it impossible for him to carry the crusade. Apart from a universal worship rite, he opposed any change in law or custom that deviated from the traditional ritual of worship, and he especially opposed any plans to remove Hebrew from the prayer book. Judaism, he insisted, was a religion based on traditional law that could only change slowly with the authority of generations and it must keep its link to the ancient land of Israel.³¹

In addition to his ministerial and journalistic work, Isaacs promoted the customary Jewish tenets of charity, Palestinian relief, and religious education. His motto was, "Not to touch the worship, but to improve the worshippers." Morais aptly characterized him as a "humble Jew to whom the needy turned with confiding looks; with affection." His early editorials in the *Jewish Messenger* advocated the founding of an orphanage in New York by harping on the disgraceful case of a Jewish orphan placed in a Christian institution and converted there, all because no Jewish asylum existed. With the famous Mortara affair (the supposed child stealing and baptism of a Jewish child by Italian Catholics) fresh in the minds of world Jewry in 1858-1859, this appeal brought immediate action. The Hebrew Benevolent Society established the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York in 1859. Subsequently, Isaacs worked assiduously to combine all Jewish charities in the city by organizing the United Hebrew Charities in 1873. He also helped establish Mount Sinai Hospital (1852) and served as its first vice president.³²

Internationally, Isaacs crusaded for Palestinian relief and as early as 1849 began long-term fund-raising efforts. In 1853 he became treasurer of the North American Relief Society for Indigent Jews in Palestine, a position he held for many years. When news came of a massive famine in Palestine in 1853-1854, Isaacs was the "first to take action; the other ministers followed his lead." He mounted the first national campaign in the United States for the relief of Jews

overseas. Reverend Isaacs's exceptional efforts earned him the accolade "champion of charitable institutions."³³

In Palestinian relief, the Dutch Jews in New York also responded to appeals from the Amsterdam Relief Committee, Pekidim and Amarkalim, headed by the Dutch merchant banker and religious leader Zevi Hirsh Lehren (1784-1853), to help Holy Land famine victims. Funds raised among the more prosperous New Yorkers were channeled through a newly formed New York branch Hebrah (1832) to the committee in Amsterdam. This cooperative effort shows the continuing links between Dutch American Jews and their homeland.³⁴

These ties were of long standing. Already in the seventeenth century, the Amsterdam Synagogue mothered North American Jews by sending prayer books, bibles, and sacred scrolls. The worship services of Shearith Israel from the earliest days followed the Sephardic ritual of Amsterdam; but later in the eighteenth century London rites were introduced and blended with those of Amsterdam. By the nineteenth century Bnai Jeshurun and other Ashkenazic synagogues in New York recognized the primary authority of the Great Synagogue in London and its chief rabbi, but they also maintained close relations with Amsterdam. Thus, London gained the ascendancy and Amsterdam had a secondary role.³⁵

Isaacs also promoted Jewish education, decrying the fact that Jewish children sat under Gentile teachers in the public schools. "We betray a culpable negligence in the proper religious training of our children," he charged. In 1842 Isaacs converted his congregation's afternoon school into an all-day English and Hebrew school, the New York Talmud Torah and Hebrew Institute, with the Dutch-born Henry Goldsmith as teacher of Hebrew. Although the school began strongly with 80 boys and was one of only three in the entire country, it failed within five years because of financial difficulties. Isaacs was not easily discouraged. In 1852 his congregation again founded a day school, the Bnai Jeshurun Educational Institute, which boasted an enrollment of 177 pupils within a year; but it too had to close after three years (1855) because of insufficient students.³⁶

The Hebrew free school movement struggled because the New York State legislature had secularized all public schools by eliminating Protestant textbooks and by allowing local school boards, whether in Catholic or Jewish hands, to choose daily Scripture readings. In Jewish neighborhoods only Old Testament passages were read. Jewish children began flooding to the public schools thereafter and all Jewish synagogue schools had closed by 1860. Isaacs consid-

ered this an unmitigated tragedy, since the 30,000 Jews in the city surely provided the potential pupils for many religious schools. The rabbi did succeed, however, in 1857 in establishing the Hebrew High school, and he acted as principal and Hebrew teacher for many years. The school thrived as a boarding institution and offered a college preparatory curriculum.³⁷

Isaacs finally in 1864 gained support to establish the all-day Hebrew Free School No. 1, which was soon followed by three evening schools that taught only Hebrew. Isaacs's fellow Hollanders, *Hazan* M. R. de Leeuw and associates of the Dutch congregation Bnai Israel, spearheaded the effort. The schools enrolled five hundred students by 1869 and provided a "sound religious education" for many decades. Nevertheless, Isaacs described the battle for religious education as "uphill work"; advocates faced a constant battle against the "hostility and indifference of the community."³⁸

The Dutch rabbi particularly decried the lack of Hebrew seminaries and colleges to provide educated leaders, "Synagogues are crying aloud for ministers," he said, "and there are none to respond to the call. Jewish children are hungering for religious food . . . and there is none to supply the desideratum; and this in free and happy America! Where are our collegiate establishments? Where our theologian institutes?" In 1867 Isaacs achieved his goal by helping establish Maimonides College of Philadelphia, the first theological seminary for Jews in the United States. Unfortunately, the college failed after a few years through no fault of Isaacs. In 1872 the *Jewish Messenger* sadly lamented the fact that "there is not a single Jewish pulpit in America occupied by a minister instructed on our soil."³⁹ This had to await the founding of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1875.

Besides his religious activities, Isaacs also involved himself in political issues, especially in efforts to defend Jews worldwide against antisemitic outbursts and to unify Judaism in America. Only a year after his own immigration, the famous Damascus Affair of 1840 provided the first opportunity. This international crusade, which aimed to rescue a number of Jews imprisoned in Syria, is sometimes considered the beginning of modern Jewish history because it aroused a latent national consciousness and identity. Isaacs and Henry I. Hart, another Hollander at Bnai Jeshurun, served on a seven-member committee of correspondence to coordinate a petition drive calling on the American government to intervene. Out of this effort, Isaacs joined with Rabbi Isaac Leeser, the conservative leader of Philadelphia, to help unify all American Jews. In 1849 and 1850 Isaacs sent out numerous appeals for an all-Jewish convention or

THE FORERUNNERS

synod to promote the "welfare of Israel" by developing a uniform synagogue government and by establishing Hebrew seminaries and colleges to provide educated leaders for the future. Reform leaders refused to cooperate and the unity movement failed.

At the outset of the Civil War Isaacs made yet another attempt to restore law and order to the disjointed and religiously confused Jewish community. He proposed through the pages of the *Jewish Messenger* that the learned and esteemed Orthodox Rabbi Abraham Rice of Baltimore be elected chief rabbi of the United States since American Judaism was a body without a head to guide it. The proposal met with a storm of criticism from independent-minded Jewish leaders and Isaacs was forced to abandon his plan.⁴⁰

Isaacs also joined the Jewish protest chorus in the Mortara affair through the columns of the *Jewish Messenger* and by chairing a combined committee of all twelve synagogues in New York City.⁴¹ The committee sponsored a mass meeting of two thousand persons, both Jews and Protestants, to petition the American president to intervene with the Vatican. When this effort proved unsuccessful, because American Jewry was too disorganized, Isaacs in 1859 led in the founding of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites in New York. Again he used his paper to generate enthusiasm and overcome resistance from independent-minded rabbis. This board, under the leadership of Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, expanded into a national organization of all Orthodox congregations with the goal of becoming a type of national synod or general governing board. But the Reform Jews, taking their cue from Rabbis David Einhorn and Isaac M. Wise, refused to affiliate. The board worked to secure and maintain Jewish civil and religious rights at home and abroad. Samuel Isaacs's son, Myer Samuel Isaacs, served as secretary of the board until 1876 when he became president. He was one of the key men on the board during its history. A fellow Hollander Henry Hart, also of Shaaray Tefila, served as the first president until his death in 1863.⁴²

Reverend Isaacs's public activities and unusual facility in the English language gave him a high visibility. Jews and nonJews alike greatly esteemed him, and Protestant intellectuals and clerics particularly respected him. In 1845 several professors at Yale College and the mayor of New Haven, CT, invited him to lecture on the topic, "On the Present Condition and Future Spiritual and Temporal Hopes of Jews." When Shaaray Tefila dedicated their new Wooster Street synagogue in 1847 many Protestant clergymen attended and several spoke to the congregation. When a steam engine exploded at a large factory in New York City in 1849, killing several Gentile hus-

NEW YORK CITY

bands and fathers, Isaacs's congregation raised \$230 for the families. Although many Christian churches joined in the collection, Wooster Street was the only Jewish synagogue to participate and the act of charity did not go unnoticed.⁴³ In 1850 Isaacs raised \$150 for Saint Vincent's Hospital of Detroit in response to a personal appeal from the Sisters of Charity who had provided care to several indigent Jews because there was as yet no Jewish congregation in the city. This may be the first public Jewish contribution to a Christian charity. Three years earlier Isaacs had convened a special meeting that raised \$80 for Irish famine relief.⁴⁴

Isaacs believed that Jews as Jews "have no politics" and he steadfastly refused to comment on political questions, even when readers during the developing crisis demanded to know his views. "We have no wish or inclination to meddle in politics," he declared in October of 1860. "Religion and politics have little in common; American Israelites, most decidedly, object to hold identical political opinions, as they do doctrinal matters." For Isaacs, theological unity was as right as political unity was wrong. But when his beloved Union began to break apart after Abraham Lincoln's election, he could hold back no longer. "Stand by the Flag!" he cried after the shelling of Fort Sumter brought on the Civil War. Thereafter, Isaacs endeared himself to the northern public by using the pages of the *Jewish Messenger* ardently to defend the Union and the war effort, even at the expense of losing his Southern readership. "We want subscribers," he editorialized, "for without them we cannot publish a paper, and Judaism needs an organ; but we want much more truth and loyalty." By June 1861 the *Jewish Messenger* had lost so many Southern subscribers that Isaacs had to revert to a bi-weekly publication schedule to stem the red ink.⁴⁵

Isaacs ranked the survival of the Union far above the abolition of slavery. He was well acquainted with prominent antislavery leaders such as Professor Calvin E. Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe and a prominent philosemitic, and in 1856 Isaacs campaigned for the antislavery candidate, John Charles Frémont. But Isaacs refrained from preaching antislavery sermons by claiming that he did not want to "broach Biblical arguments for or against slavery [that are] calculated to enflame the violence of either section." Like Lincoln at first, he strongly defended the Union cause "with or without slavery." But as the president and Congress moved toward emancipation, Isaacs began bitterly to denounce slavery. After President Lincoln's assassination he was one of two ministers selected to give prayers at the public memorial services in Union Square.⁴⁶

The *Jewish Messenger* was the only Jewish periodical that whole-

heartedly supported the Union and thereby gained the approbation of the abolitionist weekly the *Independent*, which noted that Isaacs's stance "might well be imitated by certain professedly Christian Editors, who . . . by continually discoursing the evils of war, passively sympathize with those who would overthrow the Union." The Hebrew congregation of Shreveport, Louisiana, adopted a stinging resolution denouncing the *Jewish Messenger* as "a black Republican paper" that had abandoned religion for politics. Isaacs replied that it was not a political issue to be "loyal citizens of that great republic, which has even extended a welcome to the oppressed, and has ever protected Israel."⁴⁷

Although never formally ordained, Isaacs was one of the leading Jewish ministers in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. One of his colleagues called him the "father of the American Jewish clergy." His funeral service at Temple Shaaray Tefila in 1878 was the largest Jewish funeral of the century. Every synagogue and Jewish organization in the country sent representatives. Isaacs was a religious leader of major influence, a renowned journalist, and a mover and shaker in Jewish affairs. He was the first Jewish cleric to preach regularly in English in Ashkenazic synagogues, and he was much in demand as a guest speaker because of this ability.⁴⁸ Throughout his long career he was the featured speaker at some 47 synagogue dedication ceremonies across the country. He officiated at 812 weddings and not one was a mixed marriage, or "as far as my knowledge extends," ended in divorce. Isaacs was also the first to reach his seventieth year while in office.⁴⁹

But he was most honored for his defense of Orthodoxy. Colleagues eulogized him as "a faithful proponent" of Judaism who "lamented the increasing defection amidst our ranks; the prevailing disloyalty to the sinaitic covenant." An eminent Christian clergyman in a glowing tribute sent to Isaacs's sons described their father as "a bulwark of strength against the infidelity and godlessness that are growing upon us in this great city. His firm devotion to God's holy word brought him into direct and cordial sympathy with us Christians. . . . May his mantle rest on his children. Your father's death is a public calamity. Who shall fill his place? Our city could better spare millions of its money than one such resolute watchman and soldier in its moral defense."⁵⁰

Ironically, within two years of Isaacs's death, Congregation Shaaray Tefila began going over to Reform led by the new minister, Rabbi Dr. Frederic de Sola Mendes, Isaacs's assistant since 1874, who ungraciously described his predecessor as "rigidly, obstinantly orthodox." The conservative Dutch contingent along with their

NEW YORK CITY

English and Polish compatriots resigned in the face of this revolution. Most of the German Jews, who tended toward Reform, remained. Thus the end of Dutch leadership marked a crucial turning point in the history of the Shaaray Tefila Congregation.⁵¹ More broadly it signaled the waning influence in American Jewish life of the traditional British-Dutch-Polish amalgam, which had succumbed to the overwhelming numbers of German immigrants.

Reverend Isaacs, like his Dutch Calvinist counterparts in the Midwest, was a fiery champion of the old ways in religion. He was largely responsible for shaping unorganized New York Jewry into a coherent, articulate and respectable community. As the first English preacher in Ashkenazic congregations, Isaacs used the pulpit to preserve historic Judaism through strict religious observance, Hebrew education, and community self-help organizations. In the early years he was second only to Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia as the most influential Orthodox rabbi in America. This son of Friesland, whose family fled the oppression of Napoleon, cut a wide swath within American Judaism. He placed pulpit, pen, and podium in the service of Orthodoxy and valiantly fought against the forces of secularism and liberalism that were rotting the roots of the Jewish faith in the rising age of unbelief.

Chapter 3

1. Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1977), vii, 94; Ira Rosenwaike, *Population History of New York City* (Syracuse, 1972), 54, 87.
2. David De Sola Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone: Early Jewish Settlers, 1682-1831* (New York, 1952), 272-74; Malcolm H. Stern, comp., *First American Jewish Families, 600 Genealogies, 1654-1977* (Cincinnati, 1978), 110.
3. Jeanette W. Rosenbaum, *Myer Myers, Goldsmith, 1723-1795* (Philadelphia, 1954), 23-49.
4. Jonathan Israel, "Sephardic Immigration into the Dutch Republic, 1595-1672," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (Fall 1989): 53; Stern, *First American Jewish Families*, 251; Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, 340-43, 248; David De Sola Pool and Tamar De Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World: Portrait of Shearith Israel, 1654-1954* (New York, 1955), 222, 310, 356, 359.
5. "Peixotto Family," *Jewish Encyclopedia* 9:582-84; "Dr. Daniel Levy Maduro Peixotto" typescript, in Abraham Lincoln Nebel (1891-1973) Collection, Cleveland Jewish Miscellany, 1831-1971, WRHS, Cleveland; Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone*, 428-32; Pool and Pool, *An Old Faith*, 503, 216, 244, 267, 355.
6. The data in this and the next two paragraphs are from Robert P. Swierenga, comp., *Dutch Households in U.S. Population Censuses, 1850, 1860, 1870: An Alphabetical Listing by Family Heads*, 3 vols. (Wilmington, DE, 1987).
7. In 1850 sixteen Dutch had English spouses, eleven German, and one each Polish and French. In 1860 twenty-one Dutch had German spouses, sixteen English, and one each from France, Belgium, Poland, Ireland, Brazil, and "Africa." In 1870 forty-eight Dutch had German spouses, thirty-three English, four French, and one each Spanish, Polish, and Curaçao. Of the German spouses in 1870, 15 were Prussian and the rest were widely scattered: Baden, Bavaria, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Hesse-Darmstadt, Saxony, and Würtemberg.
8. Jacob R. Marcus, "The American Colonial Jew: A Study in Acculturation" in Jonathan D. Sarna, *The American Jewish Experience* (New York, 1986), 6-17; Jacob R. Marcus, "The Periodization of American Jewish History," in Jacob R. Marcus, *Studies in American Jewish History: Studies and Addresses* (Cincinnati, 1969), 3-9; Israel Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism in New York, B'nai Jeshurun 1825-1925: New York's Oldest Ashkenazic Congregation* (New York, 1930), 63; Ronald Sanders, "A History of the Jews in America," in Werner Keller, *Diaspora: The Post-biblical History of the Jews* (New York, 1966), 455-93. Kenneth David Roseman asserts that the ethnic balance shifted from Sephardic to Ashkenazic as early as the 1720s. See his "The Jewish Population of America, 1850-1860: A Demographic

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

Analysis of Four Cities" (Ph.D. diss., HUC, Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1971), 9.

9. Pool and Pool, *An Old Faith*, 35, 39; Hyman G. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860* (Philadelphia, 1946, repr., 1976), 4-5.
10. Among the fifteen Bnai Jeshurun petitioners in 1825, who comprised the Committee of Israelites meeting at Washington Hall, were at least four Hollanders: Joseph Davies and his son John M. Davies, David Cromelien, and Elias L. Philips. Joseph Davies immigrated to New York in 1798 with his wife and son Rowland. Rowland and his brother John Myer married daughters of Ansel Cohen Cromelien, Betsy and Mary, in 1822 and 1824, respectively, at Synagogue Shearith Israel. Minutes of Shearith Israel Congregation, Oct. 25, 1825, and Shearith Israel Vital Records, abstracted in Rowland Davies File, Abraham Lincoln Nebel (1891-1973) Collection, Cleveland Jewish Miscellany, 1831-1971, WRHS.
11. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 5-6, 11-13, 40-41, 49; Adolph H. Fink, "The History of the Jews in New York City: 1654 to 1850" (Rabbinic thesis, HUC, Jewish Institute of Religion, 1930), 130, 132; Rabbi I. Harold Sharfman, *The First Rabbi: Origins of the Conflict Between Orthodox & Reform: Jewish Polemic Warfare in Pre-Civil War America, a Biographical History* (Malibu, CA, 1988), 408-12.
12. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 51, 17-20, 414-65.
13. E. Yechiel Simon, "Samuel Myer Isaacs: A Nineteenth Century Jewish Minister in New York City" (Ph.D. diss., Yeshiva University, 1974), 1. This section relies heavily on Simon's work. See also the obituary of Samuel's brother David Myer Isaacs (1810-1879), rabbi of the Liverpool and Manchester synagogues, in the *Jewish Messenger*, May 10, 1878; Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in Nineteenth Century America* (Philadelphia, 1963), 340-42; H. Beem, *De Joden van Leeuwarden* (Assen, Neth., 1974), chaps. 14, 17, 18.
14. Mortgage Documents in Germeentearchief, Leeuwarden: Aug. 31 and Nov. 12, 1807; July 25 and Aug. 11, 1810 (Hypotheek 173/83 and 173/91). Rabbi David Myer Isaacs (1810-1879), in 1841 was the first to preach in English at London's Great Synagogue at a special service honoring Sir Moses Montefiore's return from his Damascus mission. See Cecil Roth, *The Great Synagogue of London, 1690-1940* (London, 1950), 259.
15. Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism*, 76, 80-81, 92-93. An incomplete, but useful, genealogical tree of Samuel M. and Jane Isaacs is in M. H. Stern, *First American Jewish Families*, 110.
16. Lance J. Sussman, "Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism," *American Jewish Archives* 38 (Apr. 1986): 8-10; "Preaching," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 13:1002-7. This extensive article does not mention Samuel Isaacs or Isaac Leeser. Only an occasional

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

prayer had been recited in English before Isaacs' sermon. On the fiftieth anniversary of the event in 1889, Rabbi De Sola Mendes of Shaaray Tefila recalled the fact in his sermon (*the Jewish Messenger*, Oct. 4, 1889).

17. This sorry affair is fully documented in the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, including an exchange of letters containing charges and countercharges, Rabbi Isaacs's statement, and the full text of the New York court's decision. Despite the documentation of the power struggle for control of the congregation, there is no mention of underlying causes, which may have been a case of oldtimers against newcomers, natives versus immigrants, or even nationalistic rivalries (see the *Occident*, 3 (1845): 255-60, 300-5, 357, 408-15, 478-80). Sharfman describes the schism as an English versus German conflict (*First Rabbi*, 169-70). Goldstein (*A Century of Judaism*, 92-94) refers to "two opposing parties in the Congregation" before 1844, but does not explain the reason for the decision. On this point see Jonathan Sarna, "The Debate over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (New York, 1987), 376.
18. The Baltimore Congregation called Rabbi Isaacs within days of his stirring address in English at the consecration of their new Lloyd Street synagogue. Isaacs declined, said Isaac Leeser, who was also a participant in the dedication, because of "his attachment for his present flock." See Leeser's report in the *Occident* 3 (1845): 361-67, quote on 367; Sharfman, *First Rabbi*, 176.
19. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 49-50; Simon, "Samuel Myer Isaacs," 13; Simon Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila: A History of Its Hundred Years 1845-1945* (New York, 1945), 6-7. Known Dutch Jewish seatholders and members in 1845 were Simon Content, Andrew M. Davis, John M. Davis, Benjamin M. Davis, Isaac de Young, Levi Hamburger, Benjamin I. Hart, Philip Pike, S. Rode, and J. L. Simmons.
20. Sussman, "Isaac Leeser," 1-21.
21. M. Davis, *Emergence*, 134-38, 340; the *Occident* 5 (1847): 382-94. For the plaintive cry of a pious young clerk who wrote a "letter to the editor" explaining that he had to violate his conscience and work on the Sabbath in order to keep his job, see the *Jewish Messenger*, Dec. 21, 1860.
22. The *Occident* 3 (1845): 87-93, quote on 89; 4 (1847): 542, 239; S. Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila*, 9; Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 340, 342.
23. Sharfman, *First Rabbi*, 145-46.
24. The *Occident* 2 (1844): 284.
25. The *Jewish Messenger*, July 1, 1864; Jan. 24, 1873. Isaacs returned from Liverpool on the ship *Africa*, arriving in New York April 10, 1851. Robert P. Swierenga, comp., *Dutch Immigrants in U.S. Ship Passenger Manifests, 1820-1880: An Alphabetical Listing by Household Heads and Independent Persons*, 2 vols. (Wilmington, DE, 1983), 1:448.

26. The *Jewish Messenger*, Nov. 7, 1862; Sept. 18, 1863. The spirit of rivalry between the Greene Street and Wooster Street congregations is clearly evident in the very frank personal diary entries of 1863 by the young Myer S. Isaacs, eldest son of Rabbi Isaacs, who accuses the "Greene Street people" of "mischief," "contemptible conduct," and playing a "trick" in their plans to relocate to the same vicinity on Thirty-fourth Street where Shaaray Tefila planned to move, and for supposedly blocking attempts by Shaaray Tefila to purchase lots on that street. See "Myer S. Isaacs Diary, 1863 and 1868, New York, N.Y.," 2 vols., typescript, AJA, Cincinnati, 1:59-61, 66, 68, 76. Nevertheless, the Dutch shared in Bnai Jeshurun's Cypress Hills Cemetery on Long Island.

27. The Forty-fourth Street synagogue occupied four building lots covering over 10,000 square feet, with an alley on each side. The architectural style was Byzantine, and the building had seating for 400 on the main floor and 320 in the galleries (the *Occident* 26 [1868]: 93).

28. S. Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila*, 18-26. Rowland Davies was a trustee in 1861-1863 (the *Jewish Messenger*, Nov. 15, 1861). Isaac Bildersee's obituary is in *ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1872. In 1850 Samuel Myer Isaacs and his wife Jane lived with their four children at 669 Houston Street between De Paw Place (Thompson Street) and Laurens Street in Ward 15. By 1857 the family, then with five children, had moved their eight children into a bigger house at 649 Houston, and in 1865 they moved their eight children to the fashionable Uptown district, living at 145 West Forty-sixth Street near Broadway. In 1869 the Shaaray Tefila Congregation had moved Uptown also to their Forty-fourth Street synagogue at Sixth Avenue (Ward 22). In the 1870 census, Samuel reported the value of his home at \$30,000. Simon, "Samuel Myer Isaacs," 7-9; Swierenga, *Dutch Households*, 1:484-85; S. Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila*, 22-25; Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism*, 63-96; Simon, "Samuel Myer Isaacs," 43; the *Jewish Messenger*, Apr. 28, 1865. For evidence that Rabbi Isaacs's eldest son, Myer, shared his father's fervent concern for Orthodoxy, see "Myer S. Isaacs Diary, 1863 and 1868," esp. the 1868 volume. —

29. The *Jewish Messenger* began publication on Jan. 2, 1857, as a vehicle for young writers, but Rev. Isaacs always wrote the editorials from the journal's office in his home. His son Abram S. joined the editorial team in July, 1857. Titles of editorials readily convey the tenor of the sheet: "Orthodoxy," "The Synagogue," "Religious Education," "What is to be Done for our Poor?" "Judaism," "The Sabbath," "A Hebrew College," "A Jewish Foster Home." See also Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 216-17, 366-67.

30. M. Davis, *Emergence*, 162-65.

31. *Ibid.*, 165-67, 431-32, 298, 308.

32. The *Jewish Messenger*, Mar. 25, Apr. 1, 8, 29, May 13, 1859; Nov. 20, 1857; Feb. 26, 1858; May 31, 1878; Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 160-61, 436; M. Davis, *Emergence*, 60-64, 70, 78, 129-30.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

33. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 446–47; the *Occident* 10 (1852): 170, 263; 11 (1854): 503–4; 18 (1860): 202–3.

34. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 440–47, describes the history of this relief agency. See also Sharfman, *First Rabbi*, 121, 484–507. For the Lehren family see Mordechai Elian, “R. Akiva Lehren: The Man and His Work,” in Jozeph Michman, ed., *Dutch Jewish History: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands, 7–10 December, Tel-Aviv—Jerusalem, 1986* (Assen/Maastricht, Neth., 1989), 2:207–17; and Mozes Heiman Gans, *Memorbook: History of Dutch Jewry from the Renaissance to 1940* (Baarn, Neth., 1971), 348–49.

35. The minutes of Bnai Jeshurun refer to a “Rabbi Aaron” in Amsterdam who purchased scrolls and prayer books for the congregation. This was likely Aaron Mendes Chumaceiro, a member after 1838 of the rabbinic court of the Portuguese synagogue (Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 414, 417, 270–71). Rabbi Aaron Chumaceiro became chief rabbi in Curaçao in 1860 (“Amsterdam,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1:542). Isaacs was “intimately acquainted” with Dr. Nathan Adler, the chief rabbi of London (1845–1890); Adler pushed Jewish education, founded the Jews’ College in London, and defended “unflinching orthodoxy.” See Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 498, 446; “Nathan Marcus Adler,” *Jewish Encyclopedia* 1:198–99; Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism*, 75.

36. The *Occident* 1 (1843): 470–73; Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila*, 2; Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 231–34, 244–45; “Samuel Myer Isaacs,” *Jewish Encyclopedia* 6:635; M. Davis, *Emergence*, 38.

37. The *Jewish Messenger*, July 31, Aug. 14, 1857; Jan. 21, 1859. The classic article on Jews in public schools is Lloyd P. Gartner, “Temples of Liberty Unpolluted: American Jews and Public Schools, 1840–1875,” in Bertram Wallace Korn, ed., *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Radler Marcus* (New York, 1976), 157–89. Cf. Isaac Leeser, “The Jews of the United States—1848,” *American Jewish Archives*, 7 (Jan. 1955): 82–84; Alvin Irwin Schiff, *The Jewish Day School in America* (New York, 1966), 22–23.

38. Myer S. Cohen and M. R. de Leeuw were the first principals and Isaac C. Noot and Louisa R. Bildersee were teachers. The *Occident*, 23 (1865): 190, 238; the *Jewish Messenger*, Feb. 3, Mar. 24, 31, June 23, 1865; May 11, June 1, Sept. 21, 1866; Mar. 15, 1867; May 8, 1868; Apr. 9, 1869.

39. The *Occident* 7 (1849): 137–39; Simon, “Samuel Myer Isaacs,” 107, 131–32; Morris U. Schappes, ed., *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654–1875* (New York, 1950), 555, citing the *Jewish Messenger* editorial of July 19, 1872.

40. Sharfman, *First Rabbi*, 687–88.

41. The *Jewish Messenger*, Oct. 8, 13, Dec. 3, 10, 24, 1858.

42. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 217, 430–35, 594 n.16; the *Occident* 17 (1859): 83, 86–87, 193–94, 218–20; the *Jewish Messenger*, Jan. 20, Feb.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

13, 1857; Feb. 4, 11, 25, May 6, 13, June 17, 24, July 1, 22, Oct. 28, Dec. 2, 16, 1859; Feb. 16, 24, Mar. 2, May 11, 1860; Apr. 14, 1861. These numerous citations show the importance of the Board of Delegates to Isaacs. The best history is that of Allan Tarshish "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites (1859-1878)," *PAJHS* 49 (Sept. 1959): 16-32, which rests on the author's rabbinical thesis at HUC. Cf. Sharfman, *First Rabbi*, 603-4; and M. Davis, *Emergence*, 99-108.

43. The *Occident* 3 (1845): 526; 4 (1847): 224; 7 (1849): 614; Bertram Wallace Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century American Jewish History* (Cincinnati, 1954), 50-51, 57.

44. Bertram Wallace Korn, "American Jewish Life in 1849," in Korn, *Eventful Years*, 50-51, 57; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 637.

45. The *Jewish Messenger*, Jan. 25, 1861; Oct. 26, 1860; May 17, June 25, 1861. Other Isaacs's editorials on the sectional conflict were published on Sept. 21, Nov. 16, Dec. 7, 28, 1860; June 14, 1861. Isaacs's editorial, "Stand by the Flag," (Apr. 26, 1861) is reprinted in Schappes, *Documentary History*, 436-39. See also Max J. Kohler, "Jews and the American Anti-Slavery Movement," *PAJHS* 9 (1901): 51.

46. The *Jewish Messenger*, Jan. 25, 1861; Apr. 28, 1865; M. Davis, *Emergence*, 110-11; Kohler, "Jews," 51-52.

47. The *Occident* 3 (1845): 526; 4 (1847): 224. The Shreveport resolution is reprinted in Schappes, *Documentary History*, 439-41.

48. For an obituary, tributes by his sons and Rev. Isaac Noot, congregational resolutions of sympathy, and an account of the funeral and address by Rev. S. Morais, see the *Jewish Messenger*, May 24, 31, June 6, 21, 1878. The key to Isaacs's claim is the word *Ashkenazic*. Prior to Isaacs, Sephardic clerics in America preached in English: Gershom Mendes Seixas of Shearith Israel beginning in 1768, Jacob de la Motta in Charleston and Savannah from 1785, and Isaac Leeser of Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia beginning in 1830. Leeser was actually the first Jewish minister to preach regular Sabbath sermons in English. See Leon A. Jick, *The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870* (Hanover, NH, 1976), 10-11, 60-61; Sharfman, *First Rabbi*, 169, 175-76; Sussman, "Isaac Leeser," 8-10. Sharfman erroneously described Isaacs as "the Englishman" (169) and a "native of England" (170; cf. 622, 624, 654). He likely followed M. Davis, *Emergence*, who made the same error (78, 82, 101).

49. Simon, "Samuel Myer Isaacs," 1; M. Davis, *Emergence*, 2. See the *Occident* 3 (1845): 361-67; 5 (1847): 225; 6 (1848): 142, 371; 8 (1850): 198, 312, 619; 19 (1861): 190; 21 (1863): 479-80, for reports of some of these appearances at Baltimore, Albany, Elmira, Rochester, New York City, Buffalo, and Chicago. A synopsis of the address at Newark's new synagogue in 1857 is in the *Jewish Messenger*, Sept. 25, 1857.

50. Isaacs's obituary, *New York World*, May 21, 1878; the *Jewish Messenger*, May 31, 1878.

51. S. Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila*, 28-35; the *Jewish Messenger*, May 31, 1878;

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

Apr. 9, Sept. 10, 1880. Isaacs hired de Sola Mendes upon the strong recommendation of the Rev. Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler (1803–1890), Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. Isaacs found the preaching of the young assistant very satisfactory.

52. The *Jewish Messenger*, June 21, 1872, provides the only brief history of the congregation, a speech by Myer S. Cohen, son of a charter member and president of the body at its twenty-fifth anniversary. Gosling died in New York in 1887 at the age of ninety-five. De Young's obituary is in *ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1894.

53. "Amsterdam," *Jewish Encyclopedia* 1:540–42; Jacques Goldberg, "Amsterdam," *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* 1:284–88.

54. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 49, 170; Fink, "Jews in New York City," 138–39; the *Occident* 5 (1847): 206–9, 370; 8 (1850): 575.

55. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 597. No synagogue souvenir booklet is listed in Alexandra Shecket Korros and Jonathan D. Sarna, eds., *American Synagogue History: A Bibliography and State-of-the-Field Survey* (New York, 1988). The only sources are occasional news items in the *Jewish Messenger*, 1857–1903, cited below; and in the *Occident* 5 (1847): 206–9, 317, 370, 400–407, 560; 6 (1848): 155; 7 (1849): 614; 8 (1850): 575; 9 (1851): 117; 10 (1852): 265; and the *Asmonean* 3 (1851): 188; 4 (1852): 165.

56. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 570 n.49, 585 n.2; the *Occident* 5 (1847): 370.

57. Fink, "Jews in New York City," 139; Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 322, 491–92; the *Jewish Messenger*, June 21, 1872, July 24, 1885.

58. Fink, "Jews in New York City," 138–39, wrongly implies that Bnai Israel constructed their own synagogue on Williams Street. Fink cites Myer Stern, *The Rise and Progress of Reform Judaism: Embracing a History Made from the Official Records of Temple Emanu-el of New York* (New York, 1895), 25; and the *Occident* 5 (1847): 370; 8 (1850): 575. The Chrystie Street dedication on the second day of Passover is reported in the *Occident* 9 (1851): 117; and in the *Asmonean* 3 (1851): 188.

59. Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, App. 5, 486–87; the *Occident* 5 (1847): 207, 560; 8 (1850): 575; 10 (1852): 265; 11 (1853): 464; 12 (1854): 116; 17 (1859): 83, 218–20; 22 (1864): 93; 23 (1865): 190; Grinstein, *Jewish Community*, 107, 553 n.27.

60. The *Jewish Messenger*, Dec. 7, 1860; Oct. 9, 1863; Jan. 29, May 6, Oct. 28, 1864; Feb. 2, May 11, Oct. 12, 1866; Nov. 8, 1867. Emanuel de Young, Morris I. Leon, Solomon Gerrits, Louis Phillips, Solomon Rose, and A. van Kamerik were trustees; Isaac de Brave was secretary.

61. Report of the National Council of Jewish Communities, 1842, Library no. O-1339, Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, states that Simon Noot had a middle teaching certificate; Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia: Their History from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Philadelphia, 1894), 84–85; the *Occident* 1 (1843): 60; 5 (1847): 206; 7