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EARLY JEWISH RESIDENTS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY LEE M. FRIEDMAN, A. B., LL. B.

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In his able paper presented at the annual meeting of 1910, Rev. Dr. D. de Sola Pool called attention to a letter written in 1684 by Increase Mather to Joseph Dudley, in which Mather asserted that

I knew not that there was any Jew in Boston the last winter.¹

From this Dr. Pool drew the conclusion that Jews were not settled in Boston at so early a date as 1684. On the other hand, we venture to say that almost from the beginning of its history there was hardly a time when the Jews were not living in Boston. Very curiously, the history of the Jews in Massachusetts begins with dates earlier even than those of New York or any of the other colonies.

Within eighteen years of the founding of Boston, in 1648, Isaac Abrahams appeared before the well-known Boston Notary Aspinwall to have him witness a Bill of Sale of his vessel *The Bride of Enchusen* which was sold to Robert Scott and John Cooke.² In the following year, 1649, one Solomon Franco came over with a cargo consigned to Major-General Edward Gibbons, as agent of Immanuel Perada. The venture proved unsuccessful and Solomon Franco threatened to settle in Boston for want of means to leave. In their anxiety to rid themselves of a Jew, the government after calm deliberation voted to

allow the said Solomon Franco six shillings p weeke out of the treasury for tenn weekes for his substinance till he cann gett his passage into Holland, so as he doe it with that time.³

¹ *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, No. 20, pp. 57, 58; Mass Hist. Soc., "Collections," series iv, vol. viii, p. 102.

² Aspinwall's Notarial Records. Report of Record Commissioners, Boston, vol. xxxii, p. 172.

³ "Records of Massachusetts" (Shurtleff), vol. ii, p. 273; vol. iii, pp. 159, 160; Felt's "Ecclesiastical History," vol. ii, p. 11.

In the first Boston Tax List, 1674, appears the name of Rowland Gideon "ye Jew" rated at 18 s.⁴ He was one of the Jews to whom letters of denization had been granted by the British Government in 1679 giving him permission to reside in the English colonies.⁵ In 1675, he appeared in association with one Barruch in a law suit before the court in Boston.⁶ August 4, 1677, Robert Levy was apprehended in Boston and whipped for attending a Quaker meeting.⁷ In the "list of inhabitants in Boston 1695" there are the names of two Jews, Raephaell Abandana and Samuel the Jew.⁸

Attention has already been called in the *Publications* of this Society to Simon, the Jew, who was baptised by Mr. Bradstreet, at Charlestown in 1702, and assumed the name of Barns⁹ and to Frazier or Frazon who refused to hear more of Christianity after he discovered the forgery by which Cotton Mather sought to convert him.¹⁰ There seem to have been two Frazons in Boston at this time—Joseph and Samuel¹¹—who were merchants of considerable activity.

⁴ Report Record Commissioners, vol. 1, p. 29.

⁵ *Publications*, No. 20, p. 112.

⁶ Records of the Court of Assistants, vol. i, p. 49; Supreme Judicial Court, Suffolk Files, No. 1401. In answering the reasons of appeal, Gideon naively ends his pleading "and as to his *supplement* to enforce my books, they are ready as well for this as the last Court although new evidence is as needless as unusual for the practice of this Court where God commands our Fathers that the same law should be for the Stranger and Sojourners as for the Israelite. I am thus committing my case to the Honorable Court and Gentlemen of the Jure praying for the prosperity of your Government and that you may be further fathers of this scatered nation, and so remain Yer Honble. Humble Servant, Rowland Gidyon."

⁷ Drake's "History of Boston," p. 429.

⁸ Report Record Commissioners, vol. i, pp. 158, 164.

⁹ No. 11, p. 79.

¹⁰ No. 20, p. 55.

¹¹ Supreme Judicial Court, Suffolk Files, No. 5162, No. 5604, No. 4822, No. 6210, No. 4541.

In 1705-6, the New York merchant, Luis Gomez, was engaged before the Courts in Boston in litigation against John Adams.¹²

In March, 1715, Barshaba Hart, a widow, came to Boston from Surinam on the ship *Neptune* and in the following July married William Foster of "Gt. Brittainne."¹³ In June, 1716, Isaac Lopez and Abraham Gotatus described as merchants landed in Boston from the ship *Restoration* from London.¹⁴ Lopez quickly attained a position of some importance amongst the merchants of Boston. In 1720, at the annual town meeting, he was elected one of the constables.¹⁵ He declined office and paid a fine to be excused from service. In 1722 he was granted liberty to erect a timber building on land he had purchased from John Stanford near the Wind Mill.¹⁶ He had considerable connections in London through his brother Gabriel Lopez and also in New York. It has been stated that later he moved to New York from Boston.¹⁷ In 1728, Samuel Brasilla acted in his absence from Boston as his trustee and agent.¹⁸

Judah Monis, instructor in Hebrew at Harvard College, was made the subject of a separate paper before this Society¹⁹ so we pass his interesting career with the mere mention of his name.

¹² *Ibid.*, No. 6813, No. 7065, No. 6692.

¹³ Report Record Commissioners, vol. xxix, p. 234; *ibid.*, vol. xxviii, p. 94, July 18, 1715, where she is described as "of Rhode Island now residing in Boston."

¹⁴ *Supra.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 151-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. xiv, p. 108.

¹⁷ Suffolk Registry of Deeds, Book 43, p. 314.

¹⁸ Supreme Judicial Court, Suffolk Files, No. 23374, No. 15548. In this latter citation appears the name of Isaac De Medina described as "now resident in Boston, merchant." August 8, 1721, the sheriff being unable to find him, made a return of "non est inventus."

¹⁹ No. 22, p. 1 *et seq.*

The name of Michael Asher is first met with in 1716, when he appeared as a witness to a deed.²⁰ He lived in the South End on Newberry Street, now a portion of Washington Street²¹ and was engaged in operating a snuff mill. He was associated with Isaac Solomon.²² February 22, 1733, Michael Asher and Isaac Solomon purchased from Joseph Bradford a plot of land that is now Chambers Street (15 and 17). Here they erected a shop and set apart a part of the lot as a burying ground for "the Jewish Nation."²³ In 1735, Isaac Solomon and his wife Elizabeth²⁴ sold out all their interest in this land to Asher. Asher appeared to have fallen upon evil days and lost this property the following year.²⁵ This burying ground of the

²⁰ December 18, 1716, he witnessed a deed of John Wakefield; September, 1719, he was a witness in transactions between Hubbard and Henshard, merchants of Boston. In 1729 he acted under a power of attorney for Isaac Lopez.

²¹ See Suffolk Registry of Deeds, Book 59, p. 51.

²² Isaac Solomon, May 7, 1731, appears as a witness to a deed (*ibid.*, Book 46, p. 45) and resided in Boston as late as June 2, 1742, as per deed (*ibid.*, Book 63, p. 127) where James Bowdoin for £430 conveyed to John Fairweather, Esq., the house and land in "Cold Lane," a section of the present Portland Street, "now in possession of Isaac Solomon." Isaac Solomon, September 8, 1735, wrote a letter to Mordecai Gomez of New York concerning his relations with Mr. (Michael) Asher and promised other writings after "the holydays." He said, "I have had my art many years ago in making snuff." Mr. Michael Asher, June 15, 1735, wrote to Mordecai Gomez and sent it by the hand of Moses Gomez, a son. Again, under date of October 27, 1735, that "he will continue to take 1500 weight of snuff a year at 25s 6 d per pound." Under date of September 19, 1735, Isaac Solomon wrote in a business letter, "I wish you and your family a Happy New Year." Isaac Solomon appears as a "merchant" in Boston as late as January, 1742. Supreme Judicial Court, Suffolk Files, No. 37859, No. 40461, No. 40409, No. 40681, No. 54868.

²³ Suffolk Registry of Deeds, Book 52, p. 33.

²⁴ *Publications*, No. 11, p. 81.

²⁵ Suffolk Registry of Deeds, Book 54, pp. 43, 44.

Jewish nation was known to be in existence as late as 1750²⁶ but all traces of it after that date is lost.²⁷

In early New England, the right of inhabitancy in a town was a privilege only to be obtained by consent of the authorities. It included the right of support by the town if the inhabitant became unable to care for himself. At first, it was not the practice to admit persons as inhabitants unless the town was able to allot land to the new comer. Later, it became the practice to admit settlers provided they were able to acquire land from others.²⁸ Thus, the right to sojourn in any town was a privilege jealously guarded and all undesirable strangers were promptly "warned out,"—commanded to depart, or permitted to remain temporarily only upon furnishing heavy bonds that they would not become public charges. In 1680, John Foster goes £40 security that Joseph Bueno would not become chargeable on the town of Boston.²⁹ April 24, 1756, Philip Samuel, a Jew from New York, was warned by the Selectmen of Boston to depart the town,³⁰ and having paid no attention to this, the following September the process was repeated.³¹ David Campenell, "a Jew from Rhode Island,"

²⁶ In April 1750, Stephen Deblois conveyed this property to David Symonds, "a potter." "Excepting only about ten foot square of said land lying at the upper corner thereof, bounding South East on land of Hugh Hall, Esq., and Mr. Ellis." See *ibid.*

²⁷ In 1762, David Symonds, "the potter," conveyed the property to Samuel Parkman. The property was in the possession of the Parkman family until about 1800, when heirs conveyed it to William Eaton but no mention is made in any of the conveyances that there was a semblance of a burying ground at its southwestern corner. See *ibid.*

²⁸ J. H. Benton, "Warning Out in New England," Boston, 1911.

²⁹ Report Record Commissioners, vol. x, p. 66, April 29, 1680. The bond is signed Joseph Bueno, Jun^r. Possibly this is the Joseph Bueno who later lived in New York and died there in 1708. See *infra*, p. 149.

³⁰ Report Record Commissioners, *ibid.*, p. 154.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

was warned out of Boston, June 15, 1726.³² Similarly in 1762, Isaac Moses, the well-known Revolutionary patriot and later a leading member of the New York Chamber of Commerce was warned to leave Boston within fourteen days or give security.³³ This was the same Isaac Moses upon whom was drawn the bill of exchange to pay for the cargo of corn that came from Virginia to John Hancock and Samuel Adams to relieve the suffering caused by the siege of Boston.³⁴

In 1737, Solomon Isaacs appeared before the Selectmen of Boston and procured the release of the sloop *Sarah* from Philadelphia from quarantine.³⁵ He was for years a resident in Boston and was a brother of Joshua Isaacs, the merchant, who named him in his will as executor in 1744.³⁶

Aaron Lopez, the great Newport merchant, carried on a considerable trade with Boston. He had a resident agent there for many years in the person of Henry Lloyd. There was almost a daily exchange of letters between them, and many of his young Jewish clerks were sent from Newport to Mr. Lloyd in Boston. In one of the manuscript letters, which I have seen, Lopez speaks of sending Joseph De Lucena to Boston. It was no uncommon thing to find young Jews tempo-

³² *Ibid.*, p. 154.

³³ At a meeting of the Selectmen, May 18, 1762, they were informed that one Isaac Moses, a Jew, had lately come into this town and lived at the house of Palatine Troop in Fog Lane. *Ibid.*, vol. xix, p. 195. Warrant to Abijah Adams, June 1, 1762, to warn Isaac Moses to depart this town in fourteen days or give security. Officer's return June 21, "Isaac Moses, single man, came from New York by land, been in town three months." Supreme Judicial Court, Suffolk Files, No. 83000.

³⁴ Mass. Hist. Soc., "Collections," *supra*. vol. iv, pp. 84, 190, 191.

³⁵ Report Record Commissioners, vol. xv, p. 49.

³⁶ See *infra*, p. 152. He also was witness to a deed of Joshua Henshaw to John Solomon of Roxbury in 1742, Suffolk Registry of Deeds, Book 63, p. 234. This may suggest that John Solomon may have been a Jew. The Solomon family in Roxbury is known as an old New England family.

rarily in Boston attending to business for their employers. Thus in 1735, Isaac Levy of Philadelphia and Abraham Judah of Newport, were residing in Boston.³⁷

In 1766, Moses Alvares and Jacob Mindis, merchants from Jamaica, landed in Boston³⁸ but there is no evidence of their remaining there for any time.

After the capture of Newport by the British in 1777, some of the most prominent Jewish patriots with their families fled to Leicester, Mass., where they resided for some six years. Washburn says that there were some seventy in all, mostly of the Lopez, Rivera and Mendez families.³⁹ Aaron Lopez lived in great state in a large mansion he erected which was later the Leicester Academy. He was known far and wide for his hospitality and the magnificence of his entertainments. Evidently he was often in Boston during this period and a considerable factor in trade.⁴⁰ He died in 1782 leaving an estate

³⁷ Isaac Levy, formerly of Philadelphia, had a brother Nathan Levy, lately residing in Philadelphia, now residing in Boston (August 13, 1739), who wrote to Judah Israel of Philadelphia although perhaps he was absent at the time from Philadelphia. Judah Israel, Newport, R. I., wrote under date of December 8, 1738, to Joseph Sherburn in Boston. He also wrote December 14, 1738, to Abraham Judah. Supreme Judicial Court, Suffolk Files, No. 52157, No. 52618.

³⁸ Report Record Commissioners, vol. xxix, p. 281.

³⁹ Washburn, "History of Leicester," pp. 120-124.

⁴⁰ WORCESTER 22nd Decem^r 1781

Sir. I was induced to call at your house in Lester last Tuesday, in consequence of advice from M^r Whitney who improves your Interist in Newport that you wanted to sell the same (perhaps you may have seen him since & he has spoke to you on the subject) I have since perform^d a tour to the N^oward, and now on my return at this place, & hear you have not yet return^d from Boston: I left my name & place of Abode with your son— If you incline to sell that Interist, & will take a Farm of One hundred acres, with good Building & under the best improvement, in the center of the town of Plainfield, or new lands in different parts of America, or Continental Certificates of an early date, or Bonds for money lent

of considerable size but much involved.⁴¹ The other members of this community remained in Massachusetts only temporarily and, after the peace of 1783, they returned to Newport without leaving any particular influence on the community in the midst of which they had been living.

By 1790, the list of inhabitants of Boston shows several Jews. Besides the well-known Moses Michael Hays⁴² and his son Judah Hays,⁴³ there are the names of Abraham Solis,⁴⁴ Isaac Solomon,⁴⁵ and Mrs. Cohon,⁴⁶ Moses Abraham Wallach⁴⁷

before the War & the best security in towns almost Adjoining to Lester: you may write me word. & the price of the Interist understood & appoint the time & place where I shall see you, or should be glad to see you at my House in Plainfield in Connecticut Excuse my hast, fatigue & the most barbarous paper, pen & Ink, from S^r

your most humb^l Serv^t

JOHN CADY

M^r A Lopez

⁴¹ Worcester County Probate Records.

⁴² Report Record Commissioners Boston, vol. xxii, p. 445.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 469; *Publications*, No. 11, p. 85 *et seq.*

⁴⁵ Report Record Commissioners, *supra*, p. 479.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 495. Wallach died in 1836 leaving a wife Mary, and ten children surviving, Richard, Robert, Olivia, Mary, Frances, Catherine Emons, Charlotte Templeman, Harriet, Eleanor and William. He married a Christian and evidently cut himself off from the Jewish community. At a meeting of the Selectmen, December 11, 1816, "The chairman reported that he had lately received a letter by the way of London from M. L. D. Levinson of Königsberg, in Prussia, making inquiries concerning M. Moses Abraham Wallach. In consequence of this letter, he had handed Mr. Wallach a duplicate of the same and that R. G. Amory, Esq., counsel to Mr. Wallach had prepared a certificate that Moses Abraham Wallach was a citizen, resident in this town, that he had married a woman of respectable family in Boston and had a number of children. This certificate and a duplicate thereof had been signed by the Chairman." *Ibid.*, vol. xxxviii, p. 207; Suffolk Probate Records, vol. mcccxlil, p. 27.

and Bristol Mirranda.⁴⁷ There also appear to be several names of persons who although not unlikely Jews have not yet been positively identified. Thus there are William Abrahams,⁴⁸ Ralph Abrahams,⁴⁹ Ezek Decoster,⁵¹ Mrs. Abrahams⁵² and Mrs. Decoster.⁵³

So much has already been written in the *Publications* of this Society⁵⁴ about Moses Michael Hays that his useful career as a beloved citizen of Boston is now familiar to the public. He well merited the following eulogy printed in the newspapers at the time of his decease.

On Thursday evening [May 9, 1805], M. M. Hays, Esq., aged 64.—In the character of the deceased, there is much worthy of our admiration—much of our imitation. In his death, society will mourn the loss of a most valuable citizen, his family the kindest of husbands, the most indulgent of fathers. But what consolation shall we offer to assuage the violence of their grief? Why, this is all—the recollection of his virtues; and that as he lived, so he died; that to the last moment the cheerfulness and benevolence of his whole life, wasted not on his failing brow.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Report Record Commissioners, vol. xxii, p. 502.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 446; vol. xxxviii, p. 242. In the Directory of 1796 W. Abrams appears as a "Tayler, Hanover Street."

⁵⁰ Report Record Commissioners, *supra*, pp. 216, 449. In the Directory of 1796 Ralph Abrahams appears as "Retailer Middle Street."

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 450.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 459.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁴ *Publications*, No. 12, p. 104 *et seq.*; No. 11, p. 83.

⁵⁵ *Independent Chronicle*. Boston, May 13, 1805. May 5, 1789—Hays had been elected an honorary member of the Boston Marine Society, an organization of the merchant mariners of Boston, maintaining light houses, buoys and experimenting in lamps. "Records Boston Marine Society." He became also a member in 1800 of the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society.

David Lopez, a brother of Aaron Lopez and Abraham Lopez, died in Boston in 1797⁵⁶ where he had been living for some years. He left an estate of upwards of £1300 which he distributed amongst his nephews and nieces.⁵⁷

No paper on the Jews of Massachusetts would be complete without the mention of the Franks and Touro families. Both Prof. Jastrow and Mr. Hühner have already written of the military career of Colonel Isaac Franks⁵⁸ who served as ensign in the Seventh Massachusetts Regiment in 1781.

The Touro family history in Massachusetts belongs to the nineteenth century rather than to the earlier colonial times. Judah and Abraham Touro, nephews of Moses Michael Hays, were both educated in Boston. Judah Touro⁵⁹ early transferred the field of his activity to New Orleans in 1803, there to become an interesting and important figure in that community. Abraham Touro died in the prime of life in Boston, a much respected merchant.⁶⁰

APPENDIX "A."

In the name of God, Amen, I, David Lopez of Boston in the County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, being sick and weak in body, but of sound mind, memory and understanding, Praised be God for it, and considering the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time thereof, and to the end I

⁵⁶ "In this town on Sunday, the 19th ult., [December 19, 1797] David Lopez, Esq. His remains were respectfully entombed at Newport, R. I., the residence of his more immediate friends. While we mingle the tears of sympathy and affection in those of his friends and acquaintances, his social virtues will forever embalm his memory." *Independent Chronicle*, December 28, 1797; January 1, 1798.

⁵⁷ See Appendix "A."

⁵⁸ *Publications* No. 5, p. 7; No. 10, pp. 168-170.

⁵⁹ *Publications*, No. 3, pp. 98, 99; No. 13, p. 93 *et seq.*; see *Evening Transcript*, Boston, February 1, 1854.

⁶⁰ See Appendix "B."

may be better prepared to leave this world, whenever it shall please God to call me hence, do therefore make and declare this my last will and testament, hereby revoking and making void all former wills by me at any time heretofore made; and first and principally I give my soul into the hands of my Creator, who gave it, and my body to the earth, to be interred at the discretion of my Executors hereinafter named, and as to such worldly estate, wherewith it hath pleased God to entrust me, I dispose of the same as followeth;—

Imprimis, I order all my debts and funeral charges to be paid by my Executors hereinafter named as soon as may be after my decease; I give and bequeath unto Esther Gomez, wife of Moses Mordecai Gomez, Rebecca Hendricks, wife of Uriah Hendricks, Hannah Rivera, wife of Abraham Rodrigues Rivera, Abigail Gomez, wife of Isaac Moses Gomez, Merriam Lopez, Deborah Lopez, Judith Lopez, Grace Lopez, Joshua Lopez, Samuel Lopez, my beloved nephews and nieces, all Children of my late beloved brother Aaron Lopez, One Hundred Dollars each, for their own use and disposal. I also give and bequeath unto Moses Lopez and Jacob Lopez, two other of my beloved nephews, Children of my brother Abraham Lopez, One Hundred Dollars each. I also give and bequeath unto Sarah Deming, widow, for her faithful attention and kind services to me during my sickness, One Hundred Dollars, over and above all her charges for my board and living. I also bequeath unto Bethia Bass, widow, fifty dollars. I also give and bequeath unto Rebecca Isaacs wife of Jacob Isaacs of Newport in the state of Rhode Island, One Hundred Dollars. I also give and bequeath unto Grace Levi widow of the late Hyman Levi, also of Newport, One Hundred Dollars. All which Legacies aforementioned, I do order my Executors herein after named to pay to the several legatees aforesaid within three months after my decease. I do also give and bequeath unto my friend Moses Michael Hays, Esquire, my Silver hilted sword, in token of my respect for him. I also give and bequeath unto Sarah Lopez, widow of my late beloved brother Aaron Lopez, my silver sugar pot and pepper box. And lastly as to the residue and remainder of my estate, goods, and chattels, of what kind and nature so ever, I give and bequeath the same unto my beloved Nephew, Joseph Lopez, son of my late brother Aaron Lopez. And I do hereby appoint my worthy friend Moses Michael Hays, Esquire, and my Nephew Joseph Lopez aforementioned to be the joint Executors of this my last will and testament. In testimony whereof I have

hereunto set my hand and seal this eighth day of December in the year of the Christian Era, One thousand seven hundred and ninety seven.

DAVID LOPEZ. (Seal)

Signed Sealed, published and declared by the above named David Lopez to be his last will and testament, in presence of us, who have hereunto subscribed our names, as witnesses in the presence of the testator and each other.

Charles Paine,
Abraham Touro,
Faith Butler.

Suffolk County Probate Office, vol. xcvi, p. 2. Moses Michael Hays declined to serve as an executor, and the trust was placed upon Joseph Lopez, Newport, merchant, with Moses Michael Hays and Joseph May as sureties for five thousand dollars.

APPENDIX "B."

Died on Friday afternoon [October 18, 1822] Abraham Touro, Esq., merchant, aged about 46. While viewing the military parade on the 3rd., inst., in a chaise, his horses were frightened by the fire of the artillery and became unmanageable, and Mr. Touro leaping from the chaise, fractured his leg so severely that notwithstanding the best surgical assistance, a mortification ensued, which terminated his life. We learn that among other legacies, he has bequeathed \$10,000 to the General Hospital and \$15,000 to the Synagogue in Newport, at which place his body will be interred.

Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot, October 23, 1822.

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