

Afro-European Jews, Afro-European Jewish Ancestry, and the Colonies.

By Dr. Douglas Schar

The topic of Afro-European Jews and the colonies is a fascinating one that gets virtually no attention. My research reveals a lot of people whose roots reach back to the colonies, in North and South America, have Afro-European Jewish ancestry. Some descendants identify as white Christians, some as African American Christians, and some as Jews. Based on historical records, there are so many people living in the former colonies with Afro-European Jewish ancestry, it is quite astonishing more work has not been done on the topic. Here you will find a mere introduction to a subject that warrants not just one book, but perhaps many books.

To begin with, this topic involves slavery in the colonies. It's a bizarre topic filled with ugly stories and profoundly strange stories. People owned African slaves. Ugly. People had children with African slaves. Sometimes ugly, sometimes not ugly. Mixed race children inherited and owned slaves which could include their mother. Weird beyond words. From the modern persons perspective, it's all beyond comprehension. But if this is where your family in the colonies started, this is where your family story starts.

My focus is on Hidden Jewish Ancestry and that takes me where it takes me. I had a lot of people contacting me from the American African American world who felt drawn to Judaism and didn't know why. Some genealogical research answered the question. They descended from Afro-European Jews. So many people contacted me that I thought I would research and write something for them. And here it is.

Introduction

When I was in the 5th grade, living in Virginia, in 1976, a classmate told me, very much speaking to me and about me, and I quote, *"The problem with Jews is they are blacks that look white"*. Except he did not use the word black. I will let you fill in the blank on that one. That was my first run with a white southern person who saw Jews as non-white. He would not be the last. I had moved south from the north where Jewish people are firmly considered white. I found this classmates' comment very odd. My mother found it more than odd and, on the retelling, it sent off a screaming tirade which ended with, "we will not be living here very long".

Little did I know what a tinder keg the topic of race and the Jews was at one time. While in the north, Jews had come to be accepted as white. In the south, that had not always been the case. My classmate and his family, no doubt, always saw Jews as black and he was just mirroring a belief dating back to the time when the first Jews landed in the American colonies.

In "The Colonial American Jew 1492-1776" by Jacob R. Marcus, we read that many early American Jews were not seen as white.

“In 1668 Boston reported the arrival of a mulatto Jew, Solomon, as he was called, was probably a white man, but Jews, especially those of Iberian stock, were referred to at that time as “tawney” or black men. If, however, Solomon was of Negro origin, he is likely to have come from the West Indies or Surinam where mulatto Jews were common. That same decade a mulatto was a client of the synagogue in London, and it could have been that these two mulattos were in fact one and the same.”

In the same book, we see another Jew, this time a Maryland immigrant, referred to as a mulatto.

“We know, for instance, that David Ferera of New Amsterdam was doing business in Maryland in 1657, while that same year or possibly a year earlier, Jacob Lumbrozo, another “black” or dark-skinned Jew, settled in the province. Lumbrozo, who was a native of Lisbon and openly professed Judaism, bore the name of well-known European Jewish family. A physician, Lumbrozo may well have been related to the like named rabbi-physician of early seventeenth century Venice. The Maryland Lumbrozo did run afoul of the act of 1649, but as we shall see, though indicted on a charge of blasphemy for having denied the divinity of Jesus, he was never brought to trial and was soon released”. Lumbrozzo was not considered a white man, he was considered mulatto or black by both the colonial administrators and the other colonists.



Moses Michael Hays (1739-1805): Colonial American Jew: He could be confused for a mixed race person.

Jews were seen as black in the early colonies and even later. In the book “Free Blacks and Mulattos in the South Carolina 1850 Census”, abstracted by Margaret Peckham Motes, one finds a long list of recent immigrants and residents of South Carolina, with known Sephardic and Ashkenazi last names, recorded by the census takers as free blacks and mulattos. Here are some families abstracted from the work of Motes.

Antonio, Adeline, 40, Avelhie, 40, Corado, 16, Edward, 14, Etiniere, 38, Maria, 14, Sophia, 19, born in Santa Domingo.

Barnwell, William, 35, born in Africa.

Baron, Thomas,17, Sarah,22, Timothy, 20, Zedakiah,17, Ann, 26, Anette,10, Cornelia,27, Daniel,4, Edward,26, Elizabeth,9, Esther,40, Jacob,38, James,57, James,12, John,14, Joseph,30, Julia,16. Julia,1, Martha,15, Mary,30, Philis,44, Relia, 11, Richard, 6, Sarah,16, Susan,13, William,7 born in South Carolina.

Barrow, Elijah,4, Paul,8, Rebecca,6, born in South Carolina.

Benson, Julia, 8, born in Cuba.

Benton, Louisa,34, Conrad,14, Emma,1, Georgiana,11, Louisa,9, Susan,3, born in Italy.

Berney, Sarah, 35 born in St. Domingo

Brown, Edward,7, Eliza,5, Sarah,35 born in Ireland.

Brown, Josphine, 5, daughter of Henry Rancken, born in Germany.

Burget, Peter, 62, born in St. Eustatia

Burke, James, 55, Mary, 35, William, 11, born in Barbados.

Burnester, Anna, 20, Barbadoes(house of Emmely LaFarge, born in Cuba

Cohen, Adaline, 10, Allison, 14, Arthur, 22, Bartley, 40, Elias, 21, Eliza, 6, Elizabeth, 40, John, 16, Laura, 5, Lavina, 7, Levinia, 45, Lewis, 12, Martin, 12, Mary, 10, Pearson, 8, Sheldon, 38, Sheldon, 18, Tamer, 35 born in South Carolina.

Cox, Sarah, 30, Susan, 20, born in Germany.

Crawford, Cuta, 3, Celisle, 30, John, 2, born in Cuba.

DaCosta, Henry, 10, James, 17, Joseph, 8, Louisa, 35, Louisa, 6, Thomas, 14, WP, 40, William, 12, born in Ireland.

David, Maria, 40, born in Germany.

Dickensen, Stephen, 35, house of Henry Rancken, born in Germany.

Dicken, Emma, 9, Henry, 21, John, 11, Juliet, 4, Louisa, 37, Louisa, 6, Philip, 2, Thomas 14, born in Germany.

Follin, Elizabeth, 27, born in Germany.

Frost, Henry, 26, Lydia, 25, born in Germany.

Gonzalus, Basellio, 6, Edward, 15, Hannah, 40, Isabell, 3, Jame, 12, Joseph, 14, Maria, 8, born in Spain.

Gorcian, Fanny, 18, born in Ireland.

Gorman, Jane, 25, born in Ireland.

Graham, Martha, 35, born in Poland, lived in house of Aaron Abraham.

Harris Family, James-William, born in South Carolina. (Clara, Fanny, George, Hannah, Isaac, Jacob, Morris, Rachel buried in Jewish cemetery, Charleston, SC.

Hendricks, Eliza, 14, Henry, 47, Maria, 45, Mary, 17, born in Scotland.

Izard, John, 23, Nancy, 40, born in Charleston.

Jacobs, Isaiah, 22, Israel, 12, J, 10, Peter, 45, born in Germany.

Jacobs, James, 27, born in South Carolina lived in house of James Burnett, 48, born in England. (*Barnett?*)

Jacobs, Susan, 40, born in Germany.

Labate, James 16, born in South Carolina.

Labate Mary, 56 lives in the house of Matilda Bonneau.

Labutat, Francois, 60, born in France .

Labutat, Henry 17, lived in house of Mary Labutat, 57 born in St. Domingo.

Labutat, Mary, 57, born in St. Domingo.

Lucas, George, 45, Jeremiah, 45, Ludia, 28, born in South Carolina.

Lyons, Ann, 20, Harriet, 1, James, 6, Thomas,) born in South Carolina.

Maxwell, James, 19, born in Germany, lives with James 40, born in Germany.

Maxwell, James, 40, born in Germany.

Maxwell, Leah, 16, born in Germany, lives with Hames, 40, born in Germany.

Mustapha, Abbey, 38, Beck, 37, Crawford, 37, David, 6, Elizabeth 15, Elizabeth, 5, Laura, 1, Maria, 7, Mary, 3, Pheobe, 7, Thomas, 44, William, 9, born in South Carolina.

Myers, Alice 2, born in South Carolina, house of Gersham Myers, 25.

Myers, Ellen, 22, born in South Carolina, married to John.G.Myers, 26, born in Bavaria.

Myers, Henry, 4, born in house of Gersham Myers, 25, born in South Carolina.

Myers, Janet, 33, born in Bavaria, house of John G. Myers,

Myers, John, 3, house of John G. Myers, 26, born in Bavaria.

Myers, Mary, 22, born in South Carolina, lived in house of Gersham Myers, 25 born in Bavaria.

Nathan, Elizabeth, 45, Elizabeth 22, born in South Carolina.

Pedron, Celeste, 40, Eutinesse, 14, Julias, 17, Louis, 47, Magdalin, 25, born in St. Domingo

Perrera, Francis, 55, born in South Carolina.

Perry, Isaac, 30, Libby, 25, Lora, 53, Mary, 51, Rachel, 10, Samuel, 12, Tobias, 11, born in South Carolina.

Perryette, Amelia, 18, Claude, 15, Francis, 51, Juliet, 11, Lewis, 22, born in St. Domingo.

Pino, Agnes, 12, Andrew, 38, Harriet, 25, Joseph, 8, born in South Carolina.

Pirvio, Alexander, 27, born in South Carolina.

Portea, Caroline, 12, Dora, 6, Eliza 17, Mary, 19, Rebecca, 30, Teresa, 4, born in South Carolina.

Rhodes, Charles, 20, Daniel, 24, Eliza, 53, Samuel, 65, Sarah, 22, born in South Carolina.

Rial, Catherine, 14, Emily, 18, Margaret, 1, Mary, 35, Willis, 12, born in South Carolina.

Rodregues, Henry, 5, Mary, 35, born in South Carolina.

Salmonds, Benjamin, 16, Bolden, 7, Bryant, 5, Caroline, 13, Elizabeth, 50, Elizabeth, 42, Elizabeth 12, Griffin, 25, Jacob, 12, James, 8, James, 2, John, 43, Keziah, 50, Keziah, 38, Rufus, 18, Sarah, 2, Syrena, 30, Thomas, 19, Urana, 21, Washington, 21, Wesley, 2, William, 31. Born in South Carolina.

Sasportas, Adeline, 22, Allan, 24, Cardoza, 29, Louisa, 50, Adalade, 90, Cecelia, 23, Charles, 0, Frederick, 35, Frederick, 8, Joseph, 47, Josephine, 30, Lambolt, 3, Margaret, 37, Margaret, 6, Mary, 5, Thadeus, 2, born in South Carolina.

Savage, Betsy, 50, born in Germany, Fabriel, 42, born in Germany, Margaret, 4, born in Germany.

Saxon, Eliza, 9, Ella, 5, Julia, 7, Juliet, 35, Born in Ireland.

Sebeck, Eliza, 77, Martha, 2, born in Germany, house of Helen Wilson, 45, born in Germany.

Sevener, Edward, 2, Elizabeth, 28, Joseph, 26, Lucy, 21, Maria, 5, Mary, 80, born in Germany.

Sheftal, Benjamin, 4, Delila, 35, Francis, 6, Frank, 40, Hetty, 10, John, 8, Rebecca, 1, William, 12, born in Beaumont, South Carolina.

Thomas, Nelly, 45, James, 50, born in Spain.

Thompson, Francis, 50, born in Manila.

Tunno, Fortemore, 15, Rachel, 70, William, 70, born Germany, lived in the house of E. Messner.

Turner, Alfred, 4, An, 55, Ana, 7, Betsy, 44, Elizabeth, 25, Evander, 2, Isabell, 10, John, 8, Julia, 12, Julia, 7, Mary, 16, Susan, 28, Theordore, 3, born in Germany.

Valentine, Alexander, 2, Ann, 45, Cato, 5, Charles, 35, Dick, 24, Jack, 39, James, 22, Jas., 25, Martha, 25, Mary, 5, Nancey, 32, Phill, 5, Sarah, 3, born in South Carolina.

Vanderhurst, A, 37, Martha, 8, Matilda, 4, Rebecca, 12, Samuel, 41, Uriana, 2, born in Germany.

Volantine(Valentine), Amanda, 2, Andrew, 38, Andrew, 5, Caroline, 25, Eliza, 30, George, 5, Hagan, 60, John, 12, Martha, 7, Sarah, 37, Sarah, 27, William, 30, Yancy, 2, born in South Carolina.

Volentine(Valentine), Amanda, 27, Canzady, 30, Eliza, 60, Henry, 21, Laura, 12, Lodoscia, 11, Mary, 12, Prince, 60, Priscilla, 72, Rachel, 40, Rachel, 10, Sarah, 30, Spencer, 11, Luke, 65 born in South Carolina.

Winslow, Eliza, 20, born in Germany, lived in house of Hohn B. Otten.

Zechiel, Ann, 22, Philip, 25, lived in the house of Sarah Houston, born in South Carolina.

It is possible, that people with Jewish surnames, who immigrated from countries with well documented Sephardic Jewish populations, and insubstantial African populations, like Ireland,

Germany, and Spain could have been mulatto in the mixed-race sense? Possible but not probable. More than likely, the mulattos from Germany, Ireland, and Spain, were Jews who the census taker deemed to be black and mulatto because of their “swarthy” complexion.

My maternal grandfather, Paul Winkler descends from a family immigrated from Switzerland and Germany. However, when you compare his DNA to men of known Sephardic ancestry, he is a direct match to many self-identified Sephardic Jews. His family immigrated from Switzerland, but they were not Swiss. They were Sephardic Jews. My grandfather was so dark complected he would have been seen as “mulatto” in the eyes of an 1850 census taker. Sephardic Jews could be dark skinned.

This list from the 1850 South Carolina census reveals as late as 1850, some Jews arrived from Germany, Ireland, and Spain and were still classed as black and mulatto.

In addition to this, the 1850 census introduces us to potential colonial Afro-European Jewish families.

The Baron, Cohen, Harris, Jacobs, Labats, Lucas, Lyons, Maxwell, Rhodes, Rodregues, Sasportas, Sheftal, and Valentine families listed here are likely Afro-European Jews. They had known Jewish surnames, were listed by the census taker as black and mulatto and were born in South Carolina.

As an example, The Sheftal's on the 1850 census descend from Benjamin Sheftal and a African descent woman remembered only as Maria. Their son, Benjamin Jackson Sheftal was the progenitor of the Afro-European Sheftal's in South Carolina and Georgia.

Afro-European Jews!

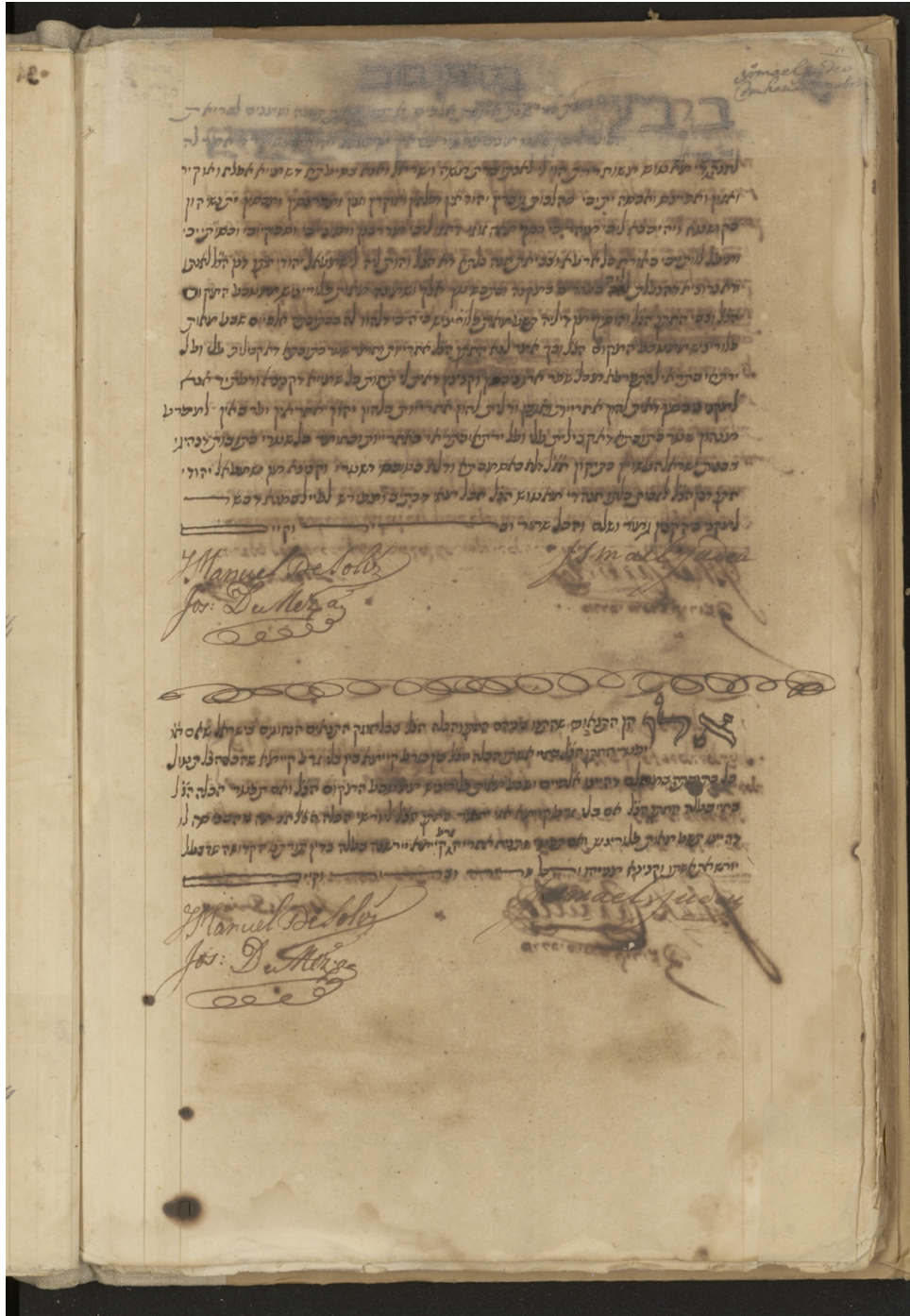
I was in the Dominican Republic for the 500th anniversary of Columbus landing in Hispaniola. 1992. It happened to fall on the high holidays so I found a synagogue I could attend for Rosh Hoshana and Yom Kippur. The congregation was really welcoming. What was interesting to me was the range of complications in the congregation. The people were every shade of the human rainbow, from lily white to deep mahogany. I was in a Caribbean synagogue worshipping with people whose families had been on the Island for 500 years. It appeared these people's ancestors had absorbed all sorts of people over the 5 centuries they had called the Island home. I met some people and made some friends. Within one family, the skin color ranged from what Americans would call black to what Americans would call white. The cool part was nobody cared. They were all Jews. Some light, some dark. Just Jews.

When you live in the North American Jewish world, it is very easy to presume most Jews are from northern Europe and white. Because most of the Jews you meet are from Northern Europe and white. However, this is just a matter of confusing what is familiar with what finds in the world. In the real world, Jews come in all shapes, sizes, and colors.

A little-known fact in much of the North American Jewish world is that in the colonies, people of African and Jewish descent married amongst themselves. Indeed, the mixing of Africans and Jews, in the colonial days, was quite common. Some say the European male to European female ratio, in the early colonies, was as 4/1. That was true for Jewish as well as Christian European colonists. Lots of European men came to the colonies and a few European women came. Inevitably Jews married non-Jews from a variety of backgrounds including Indigenous and African.

In the colonies, the children of these unions passed into either the white Christian, African American Christian, or the Jewish world and then spread far and wide as the colonies expanded. Some of them even moved back to Europe and disappeared into the Christian or Jewish population there. Many generations later, their descendants have no idea one or more of their ancestors was an Afro-European Jew. However, with the increased interest in genealogy and Ancestry DNA testing, many are finding surprises in both their family trees and DNA reports.

Examining a few colonial Afro-European Jewish families sheds some light on our conceptions or misconceptions about Jewish race and identity.



Jewish marriage contract between two Afro-European Jews, Ismael Jedau and Hannah de Matos, Suriname, 6 June 1729.

Racial Mixing in the Colonies

The first Jews to venture to New World were Sephardim. These Sephardic Jews were part of the interconnected network of Iberian Jews who had lived as forced converts in Spain, escaped Spain, and reclaimed their familial faith in Amsterdam, London, Bordeaux, Rhode Island, New York, South Carolina, and the English-speaking Caribbean. Members of this Sephardic network referred to themselves as The Nation.

London and Amsterdam were the capital cities for Iberian Conversos who had returned to the Jewish faith. Initially, Sephardic Jews came to the colonies from one or the other or both. The Jewish establishment of 18th century London and Amsterdam was dominated by these Sephardic Jews. But, in the late 18th century, German Jews, afflicted with great poverty in Germany, began seeking their fortune in London and Amsterdam. The elitist Sephardim did not like this wave of Jewish immigrants. They feared this impoverished, German speaking community of Jews would strain their newly founded comfortability and acceptance in both England and in Holland. The German Jews were poor and brought crime, prostitution, other forms of vice with them. When possible, the Sephardic Elite "assisted" them in "moving" to the colonies.

The Sephardic Elite in London and Amsterdam wanted nothing to do with the German Jewish immigrants. Sephardic Rabbi's in London and Amsterdam forbade Sephardic Jews from marrying a German Jew. Indeed, if a member of the Sephardic "Nation" married a German Jew, they were banned from the Sephardic world, socially and economically. To marry a German Jew meant the loss of home, community, and income. The Sephardic establishment did whatever they could to remain apart from the German Jews. Sending them on their merry way to the colonies was one way to deal with the problem. In the colonies, members of the Sephardic Nation were equally banned from marrying the German Jews.

Old thinking dies hard. I had a professor at NYU, in 1982, a beautiful German Jew from Curacao. Her fiancé was from an old Curacaoan Sephardic family. His family opposed the marriage due to her "unfortunate" heritage. 400 years later, Sephardic Jews were still discriminating against German Jews!

In any event, the earliest immigrants to the New World were Iberian Jews. Not too long after their arrival, German Jews began to arrive. They maintained separate synagogues and for a time kept apart. Despite their unwillingness to mix amongst themselves, Iberian and German Jewish men did have children with African women in the colonies. These relationships played out differently, and varied from individual to individual, family to family, and community to community. It would be hard to generalize because there was so much variation in the Jewish-African interaction. It would be better to look at some specific families and what became of their descendants.

David Isaac and Nancy West

Thomas West (1742-1796) a white landowner, had a relationship with an enslaved woman he may have owned, Priscilla Hammond (1740-1779). This relationship produced two children, James Henry West (1772-1815) and Nancy West (1782-1856). Thomas West willed the entirety of his estate to these two children. They were either born free or were made free by their father. James inherited his father's land, slaves, and money. Nancy, who was only 14 when her father died, was left forty pounds. She was entitled to the interest it produced, and, at the time of her 21st birthday, the principal.

James Henry West and Nancy West were not only free, but they were rich. James Henry inherited what would amount to about one fifth of the land in the town of Charlottesville, Virginia. On August 8, 1797, he married Susan Harlow (1778-1822) who appears to have been a white Christian woman. Many of his descendant's would live as free white people.

David Isaacs (1760-1837), an immigrant German Jew, met Nancy West in Charlottesville. They lived as husband and wife, owning and operating various businesses around Charlottesville. She came into the marriage with an inheritance, and he was an able businessman. The two were a bit of a power couple, how owned stores, she had a bakery, and started the first African American newspaper in America. At one time they were charged and dragged before the court for cohabitating illicitly. Nothing came of it. As Nancy was a person of color, they could not legally marry in the state of Virginia. They had 7 children, including:

Thomas Isaacs (1798-1874)

Jane (1796-1869)

Hays (1807-1828)

Tucker (1809-1874)

Frederick (1812)

Julia Ann (1814-1889)

Agnes (1817)

They stayed together until the end of their lives. David Isaacs remained active in the Hebrew Congregation in Richmond throughout his relationship with Nancy and was buried in the Hebrew Cemetery in Richmond. What became of their children?

Jane Isaacs married her cousin, Nathaniel West.

Tucker Isaacs married Elizabeth Fossett (1812-1902); a slave owned by Thomas Jefferson. Before he could marry her, Tucker had to buy her freedom. Due to the 1806 Virginia law that mandated freed slaves leave the state within 12 months, Tucker and Elizabeth could not stay in the state. They joined Elizabeth's parents, Joseph and Edith Fossett, Thomas Jefferson's former blacksmith and head cook, in Ross Ohio. However, Tucker owned quite a bit of real estate in

Charlottesville and travelled back and forth. Eventually he sold his Virginia holdings and moved to Ohio permanently. This family lived in the African American Christian world.

Eston Hemmings (1808-1856), the son of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings (1814-1889) married Julia Ann Isaacs. They had four children including:

George Jefferson (1829)

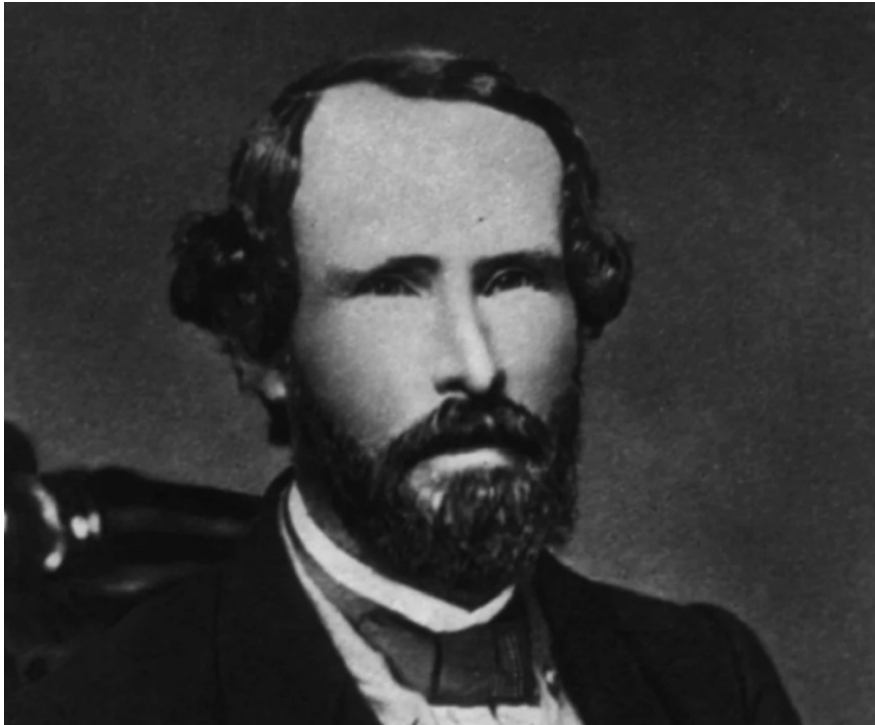
Col. John Wayles Jefferson (1835-1892)

Anna Wayles Jefferson (1837-1866)

Beverly Frederick Jefferson (1839-1908)

Eston was born a slave. He was made free at the time of his father's death. Ultimately, he and his wife and children moved to Wisconsin and lived as white Christians. They changed their name from Hemings to Jefferson. They may have had to leave Virginia for the same reason Tucker and Elizabeth had to leave. Freed slaves could not stay in Virginia and Eston was recently freed.

Eston Hemmings





John Wayles Jefferson (1835-1892). The son of Eston Hemmings and Julie Ann Isaacs. Black in Virginia, white in Wisconsin.



Beverly Frederick Jefferson (1839-1908), the son of Eston Hemmings and Julie Ann Isaacs, and his children.

David Isaacs was known to Thomas Jefferson as correspondence between the two survives until today. Thomas Jefferson and David Isaacs children were married; Tucker Isaacs wife was a slave at Monticello; Tucker moved to Ross, Ohio to be near his in-laws; when Madison Hemmings was freed, he moved to Ross, Ohio. The Jefferson and the Isaacs family were intertwined.

David Isaacs returns Mr. Jefferson many thanks for the kindness he has just bestowed on him and in return, he will accept I hope of the perusal of a sermon which is just come to hand from a friend in Baltimore - Preached to the congregation in Philadelphia on the same subject by the reverend Mr. Carvalho, with his best wishes for Mr. Jefferson's long life and a happy one -
Sept 5th 1816

Note from David Isaacs to Thomas Jefferson, September 5th, 1816.

“David Isaacs returns Mr. Jefferson’s many thanks for the kindness he has just bestowed on him and in return he will accept a hope of the perusal of a sermon which is just come to hand from a friend in Baltimore preacher to the congregation in Philadelphia on the same subject by the receiver Mr. Carvalho with his best wishes for Mr. Jefferson long life and a happy one.”

The Clerk of Albemarle County Court is hereby authorized to issue a license for the marriage of my son Germyn Evans to Agnes Isaacs Given under my hand & seal this 20th October 1836.
Witness Rob^t Scott
Katherine Evans
Eston Hemmings

Agnes Isaacs married Germyn Evans, and their marriage license witnessed and signed by Eston Hemmings.

It would appear the David Isaacs-Nancy West children moved in the African American Christian and the white Christian world.

Baron Judah

Hillel Judah (1732-1819) and Abigail Seixas (1742-1819) were both from two of the earliest known Jewish families in America. The carried both Sephardic and German Jewish ancestry.

Married in Rhode Island, they had 9 children between 1760 and 1782. Some were born in Rhode Island, some in New York, some in Charleston, and some in Richmond, their final resting spot. One of these nine children was Baron Judah (1763-1830)

Baron grew up in Charleston, South Carolina and was reported to be a very handsome man. In his early twenties, Judah had a relationship with a freed slave, Dido Badaraka.

Dido had an unusual story. A Moroccan girl, kidnapped at age 12 in Morocco, sold as a slave in Charleston, and freed by the woman who purchased her at age 19. One wonders if she was herself a North African Jew. Either way, Baron and Dido had at least two children, Harriet (1791-1869) and Daniel while they were together(?).

Harriet Judah was born free. At some point around the turn of the century she met the much older and very wealthy William Purvis (1757-1826). William Purvis was an immigrant from Northumberland, England who arrived in Charleston with two brothers. The three brothers set up a trading company which traded with Europe. All three would grow rich sending products to and from Europe. William fell in love with Harriet and according to one of their sons, they married. While living together in Charleston, they had three children together.

William (1806-1828)

Robert Purvis, Jr. (1810-1898)

Joseph (1812-1857)

William Purvis the senior did not like how things were going in Charleston and made plans to move the family to England. He felt his sons would have a better chance in life there. In preparation for the move, the family relocated to Philadelphia. Before they could move, William Purvis senior died. However, he left an estate of more than \$250,000 to his wife and sons.

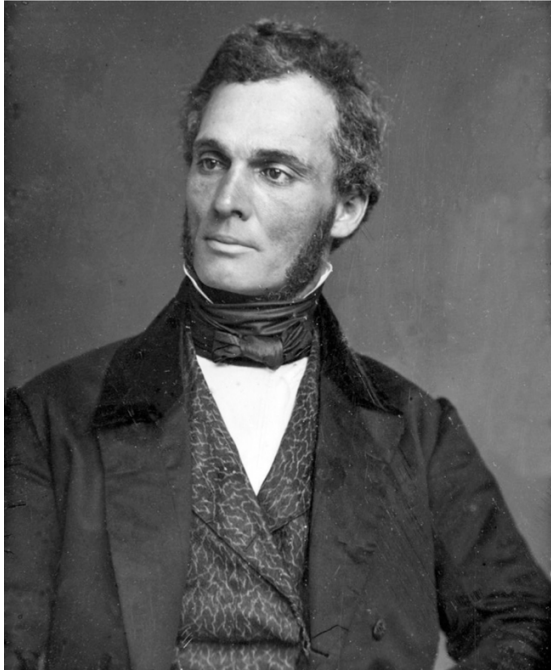
Before moving on to what became of the children of Harriet Judah and William Purvis, it would pay to take a backward step and look at the the life of Baron Judah. At a point, he and his family moved from Charleston to Richmond, Virginia. He left Dido and his children in Charleston. His parents were on the move their whole life and their stay in Charleston was temporary. At the time, Richmond was a bustling city with a growing Jewish population.

Later, Judah appears in Richmond with three additional children, Reinah(1797-1811), Abigail (1798-1866), and Manuel (1799). The name of mother of these children is not to be found anywhere. Were they the children of Dido or another woman of color? It's hard to know. The fact their mother is not to be found is telling. She may not have been recorded for a reason.

What is known is that his possibly mixed-race daughter Abigail Judah (1798-1866) married his brother, her uncle, Moses H Judah (1779-1838). This marriage produced a daughter, Rachel Judah (1819-1860) who would migrate to New York to marry her cousin, Isaac Gomez Seixas(1817-1876). Rachel and Isaac had 8 "Sephardic" children, Solomon Pesoa, Norman, Leslie

Pesoa, Isaac N. Cardozo, Martha Washington, George Washington, Estelle, and Lewis Daniel. All destined to become part of the New York elite Sephardic Jewish community.

Getting back to the story of the Purvis family. Once in Philadelphia, they did not move forward with the plan to move to Europe. They established themselves as a wealthy African American family. Though all three children could have passed for white, they did not. The eldest son, William, died of tuberculosis. The older two boys, Robert and Joseph, were sent to Amherst, Massachusetts for schooling and returned to Philadelphia, educated and wealthy. The two highly eligible mixed-race brothers married highly eligible mixed-race sisters, Robert married Harriet Davy Forten and Joseph married Sarah Forten.

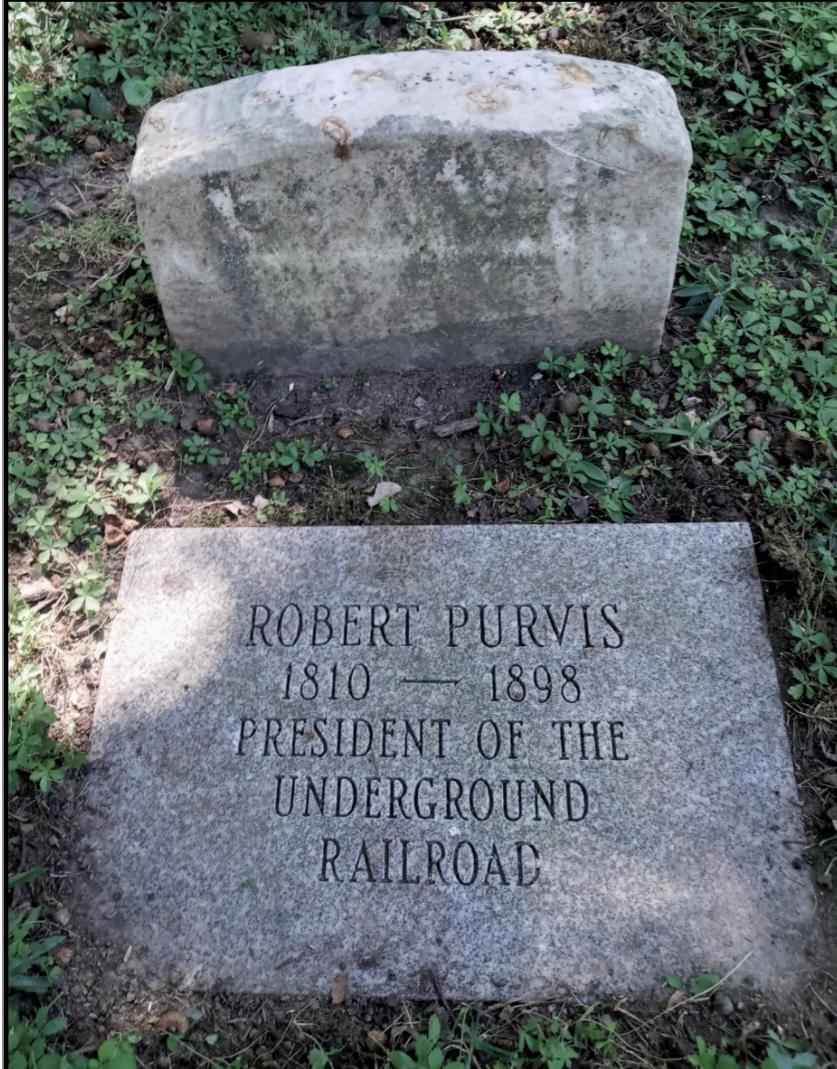


Robert Purvis as a young man.



Robert Purvis and his wife Harriet Forten.

Robert Purvis and Harriet Forten were extremely active in the abolitionist movement and worked towards the improvement of the condition of African Americans. Indeed, Robert Purvis was called The President of the underground railroad. They hosted runaway slaves in their grand house and assisted in their passage to safety.



Robert Purvis: President of the Underground Railroad!

Robert Purvis and Harriet Fortune had 7 children including:

- William P (1832-1857)
- Robert Bridges (1834-1862)
- Joseph Parish (1836-1851)
- Harriet Davy (1839-1905)
- Charles Burleigh (1842-1929)
- Henry William (1843-1907)
- Granville Sharp (1846-1907)

One of their children, Charles Burleigh Purvis (1842-1929) became a world renowned physician and was one of the first teachers at the Howard University medical school. He married a white woman, Anna Maria Hathaway, with whom he had two children, the physician Alice Hathaway

Purvis (1872-1934) and the dentist Robert Hathaway Purvis (1873-1937). Both Alice and Robert are listed on the 1910 census as white.

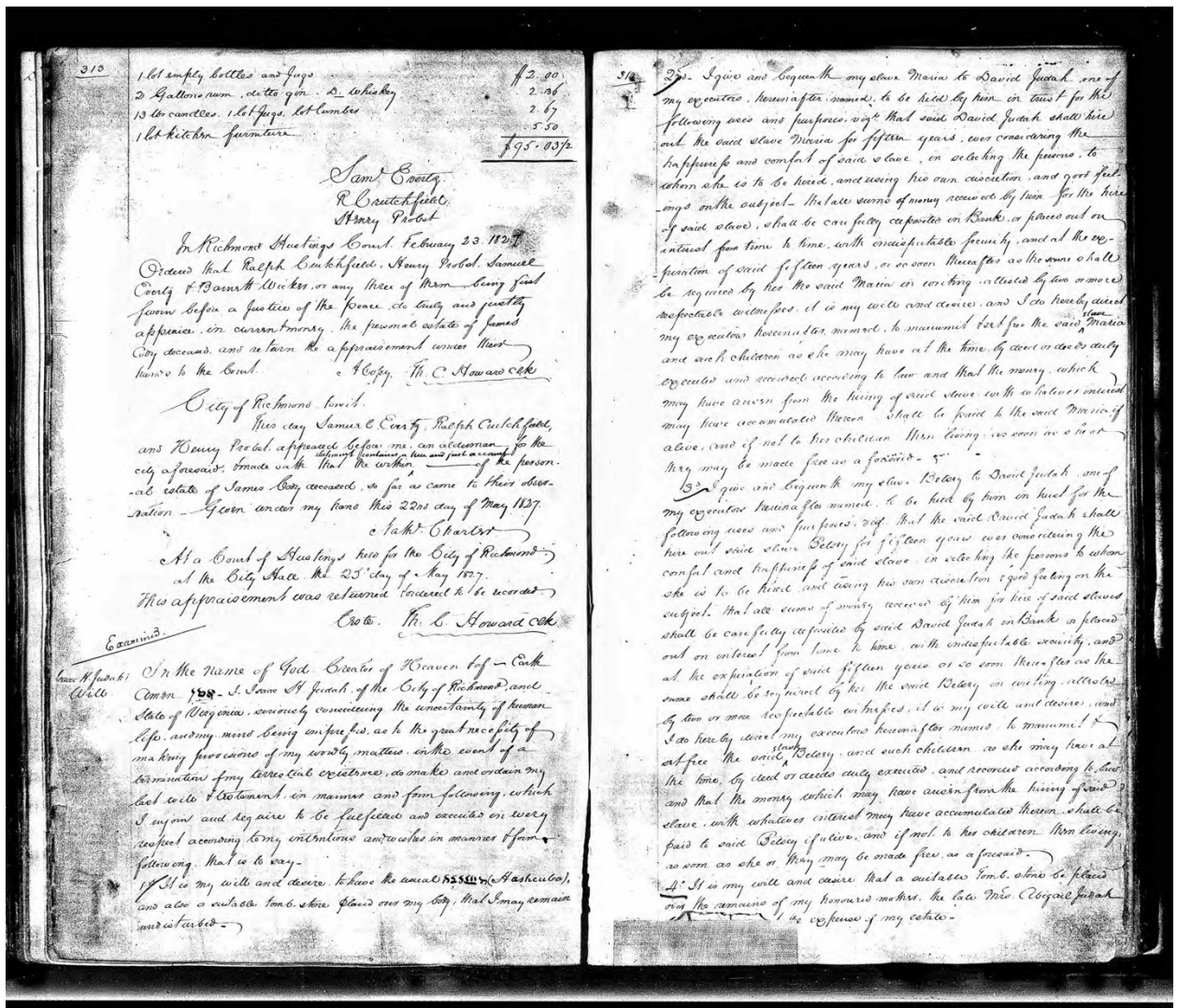
Thus, Baron Judah's descendants ended up living in the white Christian, African American Christian, and Jewish world.

Isaac Judah

Isaac Judah(1761-1827) was the second son of Hillel Judah and Abigail Seixas, and the brother of Baron Judah. He is sometimes referred to as the Reverend Hillel Judah as he was a man of religion. He served as a religious leader at the Shearith Israel synagogue in New York. Later he served at Beth Ahaba in Richmond and was the first minister of Beth Shalom in Richmond. When his parents and other siblings moved to Richmond, he moved there as well. He was forever an "unmarried" man. Or was he?

He may not have been married but, he was in a relationship. Once in Richmond, Isaac met a mixed-race woman named Letticia Wythe. That is all we know of her. The relationship produced at least two children, Philip Norborne Judah (1803-1827) and Benjamin Judah (1806-1864).

Isaac's last will and testament survives, and its contents tell us quite a lot about some Jewish-African families. Here are the contents of his will.



First Page of the Will of Isaac Judah

1. "It my will to have the usual haskavah (Jewish burial) and also a suitable tombstone placed over my body that I may remain undisturbed."
2. "I will and bequeath my slave Maria to David Judah one of my executors hereafter to be held by him in trust for the following uses and purposes with that said David Judah shall hire out the said slave for 15 years ever considering the happiness and comfort of said slave in selecting persons to whom she is to be hired and using his own discretion and good feeling on the subject that all sums of money received by him for the hire of said slave shall be carefully deposited in bank or placed out on interest from time to time with inscrutable security and at the end of said 15 years or soon thereafter as the sum shall be required by her. The said Maria in writing attested by two or more respectable witnesses. It is my will and desire and I do hereby direct my executor herein named to manumit and set free the said slave Maria and such children as she may have at that time by deed or deeds duly executed and recorded accordingly to law and that the money which may have accrued from the hiring of said slaves with whatever interest may

have accumulated thereon shall be paid to the said maria if alive, and if not to her children. This leaving as soon as she or they may be made free as a forward."

3. To the slave Betsy, the same provisions made for Maria.

4. "It is my will that a suitable tombstone be placed on the remains of my mother, the late Mrs. Abigail Judah at the expense of my estate."

5. "I give and bequeath to Philip Norbone Wythe and Benjamin Wythe, free mulatto boys and brothers who I brought up on consideration of the attachment and affinity my natural regard for them"... Large tracts of land and \$500 each.

6. Niece Abigail de Pap is left large tracts of land.

7. Friend Captain John Goddin is left the house he lives in.

8. Niece Rachel Judah, daughter of brother Moses H, is left land.

9. Brother Moses H. Judah is left land.

10. Nephew Gershom Judah, son of brother Manuel, is left land.

11. Niece Abigail Judah, daughter of brother Manuel, is left land.

12. Niece Abigail de Pap is left a garden plot.

13. Niece Abigail de Pap is left more land.

14. Faithful slave Toby is to be maintained by the estate for the rest of his life.

15. Aunts in New York, Miss Grace Nathans and Miss Zipporah Seixas, are to receive \$50 each.

16. Any property and the slaves Henry and Daphney to be sold to pay an outstanding debt.

17. All other monies to be divided between brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews.

Wills are an excellent way to learn about how a family operated. They tell a story. In wills, people number things. The first thing mentioned in a will, is the most important thing to person writing the will, and things further down the list, are well, further down the list of importance. Item number one is item number one! Item number 17 is item number 17!

Let's look at Isaac's will.

1. He wanted to be buried according to Jewish rite and ritual.
 2. He wanted his slaves Maria and Betsy watched over for 15 years and then freed. Any money they had earned in that time was to be theirs. And if they had children, they too were to be freed. If either woman did not survive, her children were to inherit their mothers the money.
 3. He wanted his mother's grave marked.
 4. He left his sons money and land.
- 5-17 He left whatever was left to his brothers, sisters, and nieces and nephews.

Interpreting the will and its content, will reveal several points that might not be obvious to the casual observer. Firstly, he was a religious man and wanted a religious burial.

Secondly, based on their position in his will, Maria and Betsy were his daughters. They come up as item two on his will. They were likely young, and he wanted them to be watched over by his brother David Judah (1789-1866). Any money earned by the daughters was to be invested on their behalf. He wanted them to be set free and to have the money that had been invested for them. The fact they had to be freed, suggests their mother was an enslaved woman and therefore they inherited her enslaved status.

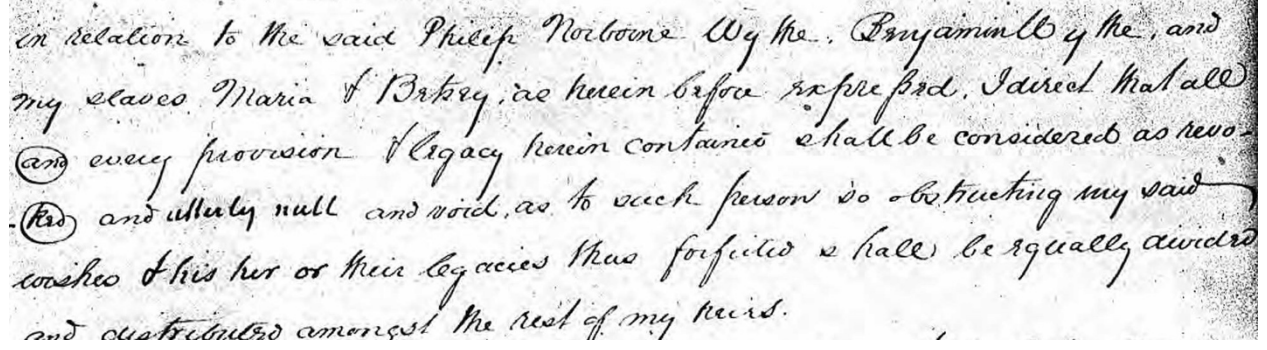
An obvious question comes to mind. Why did he not free these daughters right away? Due to the Virginia laws, once these girls were freed, they would have to leave the state within one year. Likely, they were too young to leave the state on their own at the time Isaac was writing his will.

Next, he leaves his two sons a large amount of land and money. He saw them as his sons and treated them as you would your sons. His sons were free and did not need to be manumitted. This suggests they were born to a free woman of color. The fact he left his worldly goods to his sons and provided for the well-being of his daughters, was common practice in that day.

Isaac finishes his will with some strong words for his family.

18. "It is my further will and desire that if any of my heirs or legacies shall in any way whatsoever seek to obstruct my wishes on or in relation to the said Philip Norbone Wythe, Benjamin Wythe, and my slaves Maria and Betsy are herein reproached. I direct that all and every provision and legacy herein contained shall be considered revoked and utterly null and void as to such persons so obstructing my said wishes and his her or their legacies thus forfeited and shall be equally divided and distributed amongst the rest of my heirs."

In other words, if any family member attempted to touch the money or property of Philip, Benjamin, Maria, or Betsy, or interfere with their manumission, they lost everything. In no uncertain terms, his children came first, and if anyone contested his desire, they got nothing.



in relation to the said Philip Norbone by the said Benjamin & the, and my slaves Maria & Betsy, as herein before expressed, I direct that all (and) every provision & legacy herein contained shall be considered as revoked and utterly null and void, as to such persons so obstructing my said wishes & his her or their legacies thus forfeited shall be equally divided and distributed amongst the rest of my heirs.

Isaac Makes It Clear: Follow My Instructions or Else!

The contents and directions of this will can be found in the wills of many other Jewish-African families. According to Aviva Ben-Ur, *"Out of a sense of decency, progeny are never explicitly referred to as their masters offspring. But their status as "mulattos" and their inheritance of the bulk of the testator's wealthy loudly announce their filial connection"*.

If you want to learn about Afro-European Jews and their lives, look at the wills. They reveal details on the lives of the people in question. There is a reason Isaac took great pains to make certain his children were protected from his relatives. He had cause for concern they would not take care of these children. And, in his will, he makes certain his children are protected. And he selected a brother, David, he could trust to administrate his desires.

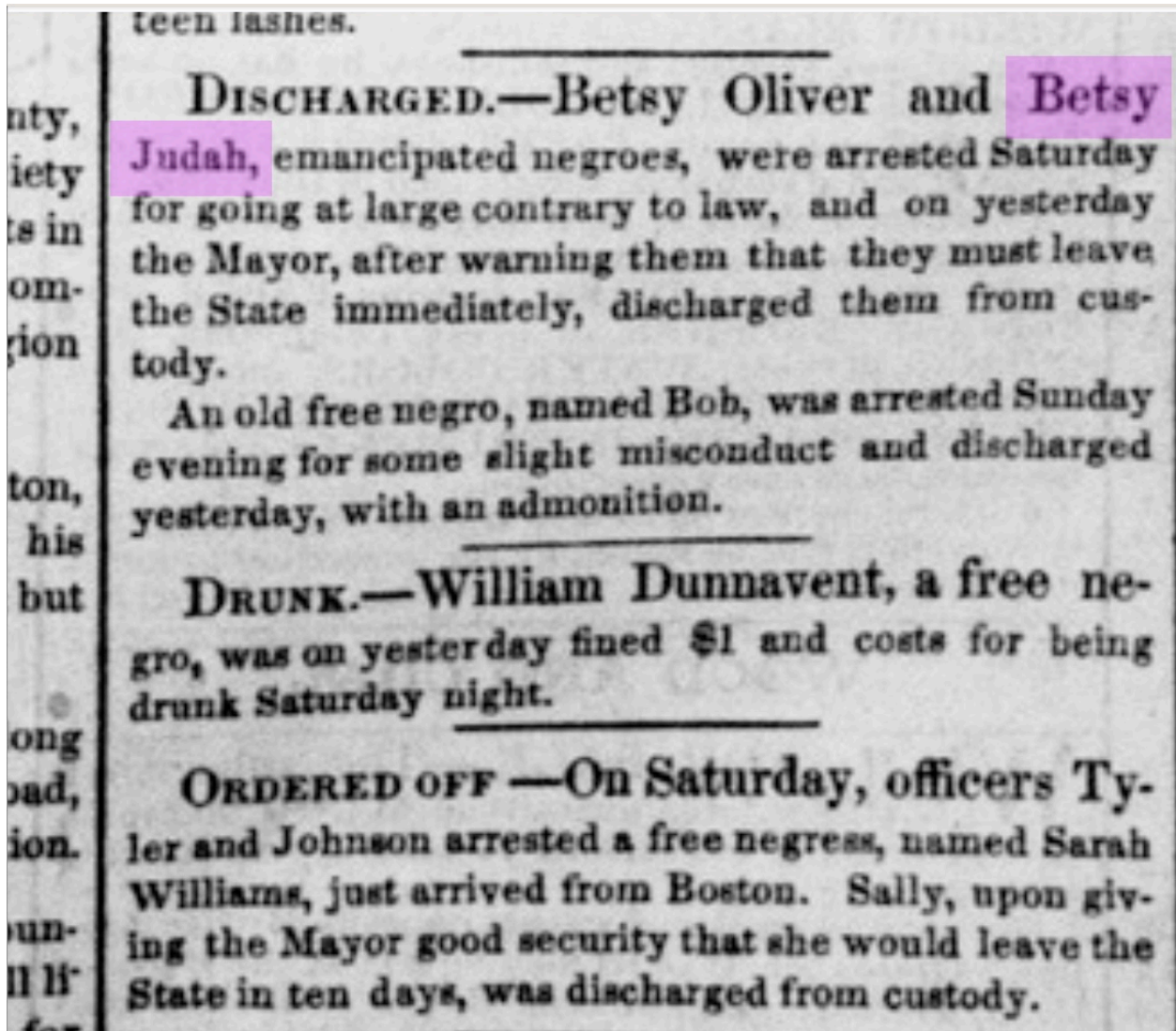
There is what is written and then there is what is not written. Curiously absent in Isaac's will is the mention of any wife. Historic records reveal he had no legal wife. And yet he has four children for whom he provided for before all others. As he was a religious man, and restrained in all things, he likely had a common law wife of African descent. A woman lost to historical record. Apart from the four children he gave Isaac Judah.

Philip Norbone Judah and Benjamin Judah both became barbers. Philip does not appear to have lived long enough to form a family. Benjamin married Judith Hope (1803-1873), a free mixed-race woman from a similar background. They had 9 children who lived between Richmond and Washington, DC before fanning out as far as the west coast. Based on various censuses, these descendants continued living as African Americans.

Maria Judah, 35, is found in the 1840 census living in Richmond, Henrico County, Virginia. She is listed as a free person of color and the head of house. All residents were free persons of color and included 2 boys under the age of 10, 4 girls under the age of 10, and two girls between 10-24. Maria had quite a family.

Now, Betsy appears in the 1850 census as being 44 and living in Richmond, Henrico County, Virginia. But Betsy got herself in trouble for staying in the state after she was made free. A story that was reported in the newspaper. She was arrested, released, and told to leave the state

immediately. For one reason or the other, her sister Maria went under the radar screen and was not forced to leave the state. Betsy was not so lucky. Where she went next is unknown.



The Hays-Touro family

Two of the more famous Sephardic families in the English colonies would be the Touro and Hays families. Indeed, the first synagogue in America, the Touro Synagogue, was named after its first rabbi, Isaac Touro (1738-1783). An Amsterdam born Sephardic Jew; Isaac married Reyna (Malka) Hays (1743-1768) in 1773. The couple were married in an elaborate Jewish ceremony at the New Port synagogue and officiated by Rabbi Isaac Karigal, the first rabbi to visit the American colonies. So, in a sense, their marriage might have been the first legit Jewish marriage in America! This colonial couple had four children, Abraham, Rebecca, Judah and Nathan.



Isaac Touro



Isaac Touro's son, Judah Touro.

Meanwhile in New York, Moses Michael Hays (1739-1805), Reyna's brother, married Rachel Myers (1738-1810) and had six children, Judah, Judith, Sarah (Sally), Rebecca, Catherine, and Slowey. And this is where things get complicated. Their daughter Judith Hays (1767-1844) married her first cousin, Samuel Myers (1755-1836). At the same time, there other daughter

Sarah Hays (1772-1832) married Samuel's brother, Moses Mears Myers (1771-1860). So, two sisters married two brothers. All cousins.



Moses Michael Hays

Then four of the New York Hays children, Judith, Sarah, Catherine, and Slowey move from New York to Richmond, Virginia. The unmarried sisters (Catherine and Slowey) and the two married sisters (Judith and Sarah) maintained homes near one another other. That's three Richmond households filled with Hays children.



Gustavus Adolphus Myers(1801-1869)

Gustavus Adolphus Myers (1801-1869), son of Judith Hays and Samuel Myers, met a free woman of color who was working in the house of his aunt, Sarah Hays. The woman was named Nellie Forrester (1800-1873). The two had a romantic liaison and on February 1, 1823, their son was born. Richard Gustavus Forrester. He was given his father's first name as a middle name, and his mother's surname. Sometimes Jewish men gave their children their last name, and sometimes they gave them the name of their African mother.

The extended Sephardic family raised Richard as their own child. Eventually, Gustavus sent Nellie and Richard to Canada so his son might receive the education denied mixed race children in the slave south.

Catherine Hays maintained a close friendship with her cousin Judah Touro (1775-1854). Judah had moved from New Port to New Orleans to expand the families import export business. And expand it he did. He became a very wealthy man.

Though he lived in a slave state, Judah Touro had a reputation for being exceptionally kind to the enslaved. He was known to purchase slaves with the sole intent of setting them free. He opened a hospital that specifically tended to BOTH white and black patients, the Touro Infirmary. And, he had a common law marriage with a free woman of color, Ellen Wilson (1800). The union produced a daughter, Narcissa (1822-1883) Touro. In 1830, Judah sent Narcissa to be raised by his good friend and maiden cousin Catherine Hays in Richmond. Judah wanted

Narcissa to be closer to a larger Jewish community than what existed in New Orleans. When Judah died, he left Ellen Wilson a house and a substantial amount of money so that she might live comfortably.

In 1836, Nellie and Richard Gustavus Forrester returned to Richmond and lived with his great aunts, Slowey and Catherine Hays. In 1840, a marriage was arranged between the cousins Richard Gustavus Forrester (Hays) and Narcissa Wilson (Touro). It is unclear where they were married. As they were Jewish, Christian, and interracial, it's anyone's guess.



Narcissa Touro



Richard Adolphus Forrester

In 1806, when it became illegal for free persons of color or freed slaves to remain in Virginia for more than a year, life for free persons of color became risky. So that the Richard and Narcissa might remain in Richmond with their Jewish family, Catherine and Slowey reported them as household servants to the census taker.

This clan of Sephardic Jews did not condone slavery and gamed the system in every manner known to keep Richard and Narcissa and their subsequent children safe. A double house was built by Richard's grandfather, Samuel Myers, to accommodate the spinsters and the Forrester family. The house was located on the very fashionable Broad Street, one block away from Monument Avenue. And what a family it was! Narcisse and Richard Forrester were parents to 23 children:

Lucretia Wells (1843-1873)
Richard Henry (1844-1930)
Richard Gil (1844-1909)
Ruhan (1843-)
William Manning Taylor (1847-1910)
James Stephen (1848-1906)
Amelia(1849- ?)
Mary Ann Adams (1850- ?)
Alexander(1852-1890)
Charles N(1854- ?)
Exey(1855-?)
John P (1858-1921)
Sarah C (1859- ?)
Katherine Walton (1860-1943)
Robert S (1864-1907)
Melissa E (1866-1927)
Eleazar S (1867-1920)
Lee S (1868-1930)
Ella Coleman (1872-?)
Arthur Gratton (1873-1909)
George T(1873-1951)
Leona (1875-?)
Julia F (1879-?)

Richard and Narcissa had a house to live in and ample money. When their elderly aunts, Catherine and Slowey, died, they left their fortunes to Richard and Narcissa. What became of these 23 mixed race Sephardic children? Based on available records, Lucretia, Richard Henry, Richard Gil, William Manning Taylor, Katherine, and Arthur Gratton, lived as Christian people of color, were classified as Mulatto on the census, and married persons of color. Thus, some members of the African American community can trace their ancestry back to these two notable colonial American Sephardic families.

What happened to the remaining 16 children? Unknown. After the civil war, Richmond became an even more difficult place for people of color to live and many left. While some of Richard and Narcissa's children chose to live in the African American world, some may have chosen to live in the white Christian world, or the Jewish world.

There is a wonderful website, www.eyesofglory.com that traces the African American Hays-Touros from 1760 to present through Narcissa and Richards third son, Richard Gil Forrester.

Brandon

In the incredible book, “Once We Were Slaves”, written by Laura Arnold Leibman, we see how a Jewish-African relationship played out in another mixed-race Sephardic family. In this case, we find an example of descendants of enslaved people and Sephardic Jews, becoming members of the early American Sephardic elite. The book is worth buying and reading. I cannot do the story justice in a few paragraphs.

The brother and sister, Sarah Rodrigues-Brandon (1799-1828) and Isaac Lopes-Brandon (1792-1855) were born into slavery to a Sephardic father, Abraham Rodrigues Brandon (1780-1831) and an enslaved Afro-Caribbean mother, Sarah Esther Lopes-Gil (1780) in Barbados. Their mother, Sarah Esther, was owned by a Jewish woman, Hannah Esther Lopez, who lived near Abraham’s home on “Jew Street” in Barbados. Abraham bought his children from Hannah Esther Lopez and undertook the legal maneuvers necessary to make them free. As young adults, Abraham sent the siblings to Suriname to officially convert and become members of the Sephardic “Nation”. The siblings would then leave their African ancestry and slave status behind, moving into the Elite Sephardic world in London, Philadelphia, and New York.



Abraham Rodrigues Brandon

Herein lies the formula used by some Jewish men. First, they secured the legal freedom of their children from the government in whatever location they lived. Then they had them religiously converted so they were fully Jewish.

Sarah Rodrigues-Brandon married another Sephardic Jew, Joshua Moses (1780-1837) at the Bevis Marks Synagogue in London. They had nine children that lived as Jews. Sarah's children and grandchildren would join the ranks of the New York Sephardic Grandees, the Brandon, Gill, Lopes, Moses and Seixas families included. (10)



Sarah Rodrigues Brandon

In 1824, her brother, Isaac Rodrigues-Brandon married Joshua's sister, Lavinia Moses (1786-1828) in New York at the Portuguese Synagogue, Congregation Shearith Israel. Rabbi Moses Peixotto officiated. They had one child, Abraham Rodrigues Brandon IV(1826-1860). Abraham married a Christian woman, Miriam Smith (1827) in a Christian service at the home of her father, recorded in the Episcopal diocese of New York. His daughters, Lavinia Ryna(Leah), Edith, and Constance Evelyn, were baptized in New York and appear to have passed into the white Christian world.



Isaac Rodriguez Brandon

Interestingly, at a point, the Richmond Hays-Touro family intersect with the Barbados Rodrigues-Brandon family. Isaac Lopes Brandon and his mother, Sarah Esther Lopes-Gil, moved from Barbados to Philadelphia in 1820, and joined the Mikveh Israel Synagogue. The Mahamad, who decided who could and could not become members of the synagogue, was made up of Benjamin J Phillips, Levy Phillips, Samuel Hays, Simon Gratz, and Benjamin Nones. (We will meet him again later.) Samuel Hays and the Richmond Hays family were all direct descendants of the American progenitor of the Hays family, Michael (Jechial) Hays. The mixed-race mother and her mixed-race son were accepted by the synagogue. Indeed, Sarah and Isaac's mother, Sarah Esther Lopes Gil, appears in the synagogue records as Mrs. Abraham R. Brandon. There was little doubt about their African ancestry and yet they were both made welcome at the Philadelphia synagogue.

One cannot leave the Brandon family without mentioning what became of the patriarch, Abraham Rodriguez Brandon after he had secured the future of his mixed-race children Sarah and Isaac. Abraham went on to have a relationship with a white Barbadian Christian woman, Sarah Wood Simpson (1802-1892). The children the union produced were recorded in the Barbados synagogue record, Julia (1823-1824), Esther (1825), Lavinia (1826), Abraham (1826), Joseph (1828), and Alfred (1830) included. These children were raised as Jews, left Barbados as Jews, and at least some married into notable Jewish families. Esther (1823-1899) married Aaron Abecassis (1822-1903) in London and lived her life there amongst the Sephardic elite. Joseph (1828-1916) married Sarah Cecilia Florance (1835-1870). He and his children became the Sephardic elite in California. Lavinia (1826-1903) married Judah Samuel Abecassis (1828-1899) in New York and then moved to London.

This is a revealing family history. Abraham Rodriguez Brandon decided his children would be Jewish and would marry Jewish and he would have Jewish grandchildren. His first family was formed with a slave woman, his second with an Anglican white Caribbean woman. He made sure his children, of Jewish and African or European descent, were accepted as Jews and that they lived as Jews.



Abraham Rodriguez Brandon Moses: Sarah Rodriguez Brandon's son.

Manuel (Moses)Nunez

Manuel Nunez(1700-1787) was the son of Diego Nunes Ribeiro(1668-1744) and Gracia Caetana de Vega(1678-1750). Born in Portugal, he and his parents made a daring escape and made passage to London. Diego Nunes Ribeiro or Dr. Samuel Nunez as he would become known, pulled some palace intrigue to get his family from Portugal to London. Literally.

He and his family spent some time in the Inquisitors jail for suspicion of being practicing Jews. The grand inquisitor developed a urinary blockage and Samuel was retrieved from prison to aid the ailing torturer. The inquisitor was cured, and Samuel managed to secure the release he and his family. After their release from jail (and near certain burning), Dr. Nunez organized a party at his home and invited a load of guests. At the same time, he recruited a British shipping vessel to be parked near his home. He lived on the river Tagus. The British captain invited all the guests to visit his ship and once the entire family and guests were on board, it pulled away from the dock and set sail. The dinner guests must have been none too thrilled. But this was the way the good doctor got his family out of Portugal and onto London.

From there, the family immigrated to Georgia, on the first ship of Jews making their way to Oglethorpe's new colony. It's just an unimaginable story, escaping Portugal via a dinner party, then making their way on the first ship of Jews from London to Georgia. Suffice it to say, Manuel came from a very famous family with a very well-known story.

Once out of Portugal, he exchanged Manuel for the more Jewish Moses. This was not uncommon amongst Conversos who got out of Spain and Portugal. They traded a Spanish or Portuguese first name for a more Hebrew name. Diego became Samuel, and Manuel became Moses.

Moses traded with the Indians. Jews arriving in the colonies were especially suited to trading with the Indigenous people. In the first instance, they knew how to trade. In the second instance, they tended to speak different languages and were thus able to pick up new languages, including those of the indigenous people. But, the colonies were profit making centers for the people that owned the colonies. Moses had to ask permission to trade with the Indigenous people.

Nunes, Moses

Mr. Moses Nunes presents his Respects to his Honor
Governor Martin, and begs the favor of his Recommendation
to the Honorable Council to obtain the place of
Commissary & Interpreter to the Indians, and also the
Appointment of Clerk of the Market in Savannah,
in consideration of the Losses he has sustained in
these Times. which will greatly oblige
Sir

Savannah 15th July 1782

Your Honor's most Humble
& obedient Servant
Moses Nunes

Moses Nunez requests permission to open a company trading with the Indians.

Moses had children with two women. The first was his wife, Rebecca Abrahams (1733-1788) with whom he had one son, Samuel Moses Nunez (1745-1815).

His next group of children were born to a woman known as Mullato Rose (1744-1820). This included James (1771-1809), Robert (1773), Frances (1775-1817), and Alexander (1779).

Mulatto Rose has an interesting story of her own. She was the daughter of the famous Indian trader, George Galphin and one of his two Indian wives. Or she may have been the daughter of Galphin and his African mistress. Or she may have been Galpin's daughter with his Afro-Indian mistress. Galphin also had a family with a French woman. We can only assume Rose was not the product of that union because she was called, "Mulatto Rose". Her mother was not European. George Galphin had a lot of children with a lot of women, Native, African, and European included!

The fact Moses married into an Indian trading family makes sense. He was an Indian trader and marrying the daughter of one of the biggest Indian traders in the game was a smart move. At a minimum, because he was a trader, he would have come to know Galpin's daughter.

Getting back to "Mulatto Rose". Mulatto referred to mixed and not necessarily European and African exclusively. It could apply to Indian and European mixed, or European and Afro-Indian mixed, or European and African mixed. It just meant mixed. So, we know Rose was the daughter of George Galphin and a woman who was not a white European. Some say she was Creek, but she was born enslaved so this would point more towards her being the daughter of an enslaved African. How do we know this?

Moses's last will and testament survives. We know she was enslaved because Moses grants Mulatto Rose and her children their unconditional freedom. Legal status followed the mother, as Mulatto Rose was a slave, her children were born slaves, and had to be made free.

"14 October 1785

In the name of God, Amen, I, Moses Nunez in the County of Chatham and the State of Georgia, Gentlemen, being through the abundant mercy and goodness of God, tho weak in body, yet of a sound and perfect understanding and memory, do constitute my last will and testament, and desire it may be received by all as such; as for my burial, I desire it may be without pomp or state, at the discretion of my executors hereafter named, the persons to attend the same shall by my family, children and slaves, and the funeral service to be performed by my friend David Montaignut, Esquire.

As to my worldly estate, I will and positively order: That all my debts be paid as soon as possible and convenient, if I don't live to pay them myself.

Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my son, Samuel Nunez, and to my son Robert Nunez, the son of Mulatto Rose, a tract of six hundred acres of land in Burke County to be equally divided between them; Item 1 I give and bequeath into my two other sons, James and Alexander Nunez, also the sons of Mulatto Rose, a trace of five hundred acres of land on the south side of the Great Ogeeche River; Item I further order and confirm and do give unto the above mentioned Mulatto Rose and her three sons James, Robert, and Alexander Nunez and her daughter Frances Galphin being all my issue a full and perfect freedom from all slavery and servitude in reward as an acknowledgement of the faithful conduct and behaviour of the said Mulatto Rose towards me and my children.

Item I give and bequeath unto my son Samuel Nunez, three negroes named Flemming, Joe, Cacarico.

Item I give and bequeath all my house furniture and wearing apparel to Mulatto Rose, and my three sons James, Robert, and Alexander, the remainder of my estate after my legacies are discharged and paid -shall be equally divided between my four sons, Samuel, James, Robert, and

Alexander Nunez. And lastly, I do hereby nominate and appoint Samuel Nunez, James Nunez, my sons, and George Galphin, Executors of this my last Will and Testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Savannah aforesaid the 14th of October one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five and in the tenth year of American Independence.

*Sealed Published and Declared by the above named Moses Nunez
Nunez for his last will and testament in the presence of us
David Montaigut
Joseph Abrahams*

What became Manuel Nunez's sons?

Samuel Nunes, his first son, born to a Jewish woman, married Mary Sharpe, a Christian and had a son, Daniel Sharpe Nunez who would live in the Christian world.

James, his first son with Mulatto Rose, married a white Christian, Lucy Anderson, and had a son, Joseph and a daughter Sarah. Joseph had a family with a woman of color and his descendant's lived in the African American world. Sarah married a white Christian and her descendants moved into the white Christian world.

Robert, his second son, had a son, Robert Nunez II(1802) in Burke, Georgia. Robert II went on to have a son William (1843) that went by the name Norris, Newman, and Nunis. The children of Robert entered the white Christian world.

Frances, his daughter with Mulatto Rose, married her cousin, George Galphin II, the son of George Galpin and a Creek princess Metawney (1725-1810). Their daughter, Frances Galphin(1815-1871) married a mixed race man, James Bing(1818) and they would have a family that was identified by the census taker as mulatto.

SCHEDULE 1.—Free Inhabitants in _____ in the County of Blaine State of SC enumerated by me, on the 24th day of Sept 1860. J. B. Armstrong Ass't Marshal. Post Office Timber Creek.

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11	12	13	14
			Age	Sex	Color		Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate					
1	935	935	William Bing	50	M	W	Farmer		500	SC			
2			Francis "	50	F	W							
3			Marshall "	21	M	W							
4			Nancy "	16	F	W							
5			Hampton "	12	M	W							
6			Columbus "	8	M	W							
7			Isaac "	4	M	W							
8			John "	3	M	W							
9			Sally "	2	F	W							

Francis Nunez Galphin can be seen listed here with her husband, William Bing, and children.

Alexander, his third son with Mulatto Rose, had the children Genet Nunis, Louisa Sellers, and Miranda Beasley. Louisa married Thomas Sellers who is recorded as being Mulatto on his cemetery record and their children appear on the census as being mulatto. It appears the other siblings, Genet and Miranda, entered the white Christian world.

John M. H. Parker	2	M											
Steven P. Hooker	14	M											
Henry Parker	19	M	Student										
J. R. Nunes	22	M	Laborer						Georgia				
Sarah Ann Summerall	60	F											
Paul O. Nunes	12	M											

This selection of the 1850 census is interesting. Sarah Ann Nunez Summerall was the daughter of James Nunez and his wife Lucy Anderson. She married a Summerall. She is listed as White. Her nephew, JR Nunes, listed above her, the son of her brother Joseph, is listed as Mulatto.

In searching the Ancestry.com databases, I came onto family narrative of a man who was raised in the African American community in Georgia. The post was fascinating. Despite his Christian upbringing, he felt attracted to Judaism. He pursued a Jewish education for himself and his sons. Upon doing family research, realized he was the descendent of Moses Nunez! Indeed, the 8th great grandson of this Moses Nunez, and the 9th great-grandson of the truly remarkable man, Dr. Samuel Nunez. 8 generations later, one Afro-European Jewish family returned to Judaism.

Mozes Meyer de Hart

Mozes Meyer de Hart (1793-1844) was born in Amsterdam to Meijer de Hart and Anaatje Michiel de Metz. From his parents' names, it appears his father was a German Jew, and his mother was French. He had 3 siblings who lived with their parents in Holland. Mozes left Amsterdam for Suriname in 1820.



Mozes Meyer de Hart

He may have been avoiding being drafted by Napoleon. Between 1800-1813 Napoleon drafted 2.4 million French men, and that does not include those drafted from the Rhineland, the Piedmont, Tuscany, and the Netherlands. This period saw an increase in immigration of single Jewish men from Napoleon held lands to the colonies. My ancestor Francoise Hertig also made the move from Holland along with many other young Jewish men for the same reason.

Suriname was an up-and-coming Dutch colony and Mozes Meyer de Hart arrived there sometime after 1821. There were two distinct Jewish communities in Suriname, the Sephardic and the German. As has been established, the two did not mix. Not in the early days. Mozes became very active in German Jewish religious life in Suriname and ultimately was the president of Neve Shalom, the Ashkenazi Synagogue in Paramaribo.

While living in Suriname, Mozes met Carolina Petronella Van der Hart (1800-1876), a former slave of mixed-race born in Paramaribo. They had 13 children. Despite Mozes's active Jewish

religious life, his children were baptized in the Dutch Church in Paramaribo. The children include:

Anna Sophia Benz (1824)
Elizabeth Charlotte (1826)
Maria Louise (1826)
Marius Johannes (1828)
Sophie Henriette (1828)
Jean Jacques (1830)
Louis Edward (1832)
Henriette C (1834-1888)
Johanna Charlotte (1835)
William Frederick (1837-1888)
Helena Eliza (1840-1858)
Charles Christiaan (1843-1884)
Charlotte C (1843-1888)

As happens with these big colonial families, a lot of children disappear in the historical record. For some there is a paper trail, and their descendants can be tracked down. Here is what we know about Mozes and Carolina's children.

Marius Johannes de Hart (1824) had a relationship with Venus Jacqueline Baldewijn(1850) and had a son, Jean Jacque Boldewijn(1873-1925) in Leaseowes, Coronie, Suriname. The fact his son does not have his last name suggests Venus was of African descent and they were not married. It is likely she was born a slave and the son was born out of wedlock. Jean Jacque married Adelaide Constanca Robin (1850) and had 5 children that appear to have lived in the mixed-race population of Suriname.

Maria Sophia (1824) married two men, Il Benz and N. Nielsen.

Maria Louise de Hart (1826) married Johannes Ellis (1812). Johannes was the son of a Dutch Major General of Guinea, Abraham de Veer (1767-1837) and Fanny Ellis, a Ghanian woman. It would seem Maria Louise and Johannes were both mixed race and of Jewish descent. They had the child Abraham George Ellis (1846-1916). Maria and Johannes died in the Hague, Holland. Their son, Abraham George Ellis, was born in Paramaribo and he died in the Hague. He married Elizabeth Maria Anna Lemke Binkes(1861-1943). Her surnames appear in the Dictionary of German Jewish surnames, Binkes derived from Binneck or Benjamin and Lemke from Lembke, a given name. So, it appears Abraham Ellis married into the Jewish world in Holland.



Abraham De Veer, Father of Johannes Ellis



Maria Louise de Hart and her husband Johannes Ellis.

Jean Jacques de Hart (1830) became a lieutenant in the Dutch guard, moved to the Brabant in the Netherlands. In 1855, he married Anna Maria Henrietta Oldenbarnvelt (1835) at Sint.Oedenrode Church. The couple had four children "Dutch" Christian children; Jan Jacques de Hart, Charles de Hart, Adolph Elise de Hart, and William Leopold de Hart

Willem Frederik de Hart (1837) went an entirely different route. He appears to have moved to Curacao as a Jew and married into a Jewish family. He married Martha Helena van Gelderen Rozendal. They lived in Willemstad, the capital of Curacao and they had the children Isaac Jozef de Hart (1890), Wilelmina Adelaida de Hart(1898-1898), and Judith Adelaida de Hart(1901).

Judith Adelaida married into a Sephardic family. She married Cesar Antonio Garcia on February 15, 1928. His parents were Cesar Bernadino Garcia and Maria Jacoba Bergen.

Isaac Jozef de Hart married Prisca Emilia Bergen. The couple, like many Curacaoan Jews, moved to Barranquilla, Columbia where they had five children, Cesar Frederico Joffre de Hart Garcia, Carlos Henrique de Hart, Gustavo Adolpho de Hart Garcia, Helena Margarita de Hart Garcia, and Gladys Maria de Hart Garcia.

Helena Eliza de Hart(1840) married Johannes Matheus Jansen Eyken Sluitjers. Helena Eliza died in Bruxelles in 1900 and it appears she immigrated there and raised her family there. Eliza as she was known, had several children. One was Alfred Marie Theodore Janssen Eiken Sluitjers(1874). He was born in Gravenhage, Holland. In an article I found in Chai Vekayam, the Neve Shalom Chai Member Newsletter (Suriname Synagogue) I discovered how the things ended for one of Eliza's descendants. The newsletter tells the story of how one of Eliza's great great granddaughters, raised as a white Christian, found her way back to Judaism.

Charles Chistiaan de Hart (1843) married Paulina Petronella Flu (1847-1922) in Paramaribo. They had one son, Paul August Walther de Hart(1883-1936). Charles died in Paramaribo. However, his son, Paul August lived in Holland and married Nellie Lapierre Armande(1907-1995) and raised a Christian family in the Netherlands.

Discussion

In the colonial times, relations between Jews and African people occurred and this resulted in children. What became of these children varied from family to family and place to place. Indeed, it varied between siblings born into the same family. Some entered the White Christian world, some entered the African American Christian world, and some entered the Jewish world. 200 years later, most of the descendants of these colonial Afro-European Jews no nothing about their colonial ancestors.

One can clearly divide what became of these blended families by geography. How things played out in what would become the United States of America and how things played out in the Caribbean and South America bear little resemblance to one another.

In the Colonies that would become the United States

In the colonies that would become the United States, most of the Afro-European Jewish children were free persons of color. In some instances, they were born free because they were born to a free mother of African descent. Or they were born slaves (as they were born to an enslaved African mother) and made free by their fathers. There are instances where Jewish men fathered children who remained in slavery, but available records indicate most Afro-European Jews were free people. However, being free did not necessarily make your life good or safe in the slave states.

The slave holding colonies were obsessed with race. In time, they adopted the truly bizarre one drop rule. The one drop rule meant if you had one drop of African blood you were 100% “black”. Thus, if you had any African ancestry, you were categorized by law as black. This resulted in many Afro-European Jews living in the African American Christian world as it was the only place they could live. Race laws prevented anything else. This remained the law until the 1967 case of Loving vs. Virginia in which the Supreme Court outlawed it.

For sure some free Afro-European Jews passed into the white Christian community in the south. However, their Jewish ancestry, connected to their African ancestry, made both a liability. To discuss one would mean to discuss the other, and here we see why some Afro-European Jewish ancestry became Hidden Jewish Ancestry in the south.

Before the census, local people kept track of who had African ancestry. After the census came into existence, the census keeper kept track of who had African ancestry. At a point, the only way to escape your race classification in the south was to leave the place where you were known to be “Black” or mulatto. After leaving the slave states, some Afro-European Jews adopted an identity that did not include their African heritage. Some joined the African American community. Sometimes in one family, one sibling remained “black” and others became “white”.

In Virginia, as of May 1806, in Virginia, all freed slaves had to leave the state within 12 months or face re-enslavement. This law had the effect that the freeing children meant breaking up families. If you freed your children, you had to send them north or to Europe. You had to send them to an unknown place where you might not have any family connections. Travel in those days was not easy. Eston Hemmings, soon after he was made free, moved his family to Wisconsin. No doubt the illegality of a freed slave living in Virginia spurred he and all his siblings to leave the state upon emancipation.

In addition to this, some states made manumitting slaves, or freeing slaves difficult or impossible. South Carolina only allowed you to free slaves if you could prove they could take care of themselves. Thus, if a Jewish man wanted to free children born of an enslaved woman, they could not do so as children. Because children could not take care of themselves.

If you were born free, you were more likely to stay in the south. If you were made free, you had no choice but to leave and head to a free state. Most usually, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Race laws, in the southern United States, led to all kinds of strange arrangements for Afro-European Jews. In the case of the Hays-Touro family in Richmond, two spinster aunts listed their Afro-European niece and nephew, Richard Forrester and Narcissa Touro, and their subsequent children, as domestic servants, to keep the family together. To do otherwise, would have meant dispersal of the family. And the family had money and property and a lot of reasons to stay.

After the Civil war, things became even more difficult for free people of color, and they too began to migrate north and west. Some to Pennsylvania, some to Ohio, and some north and west to Illinois and Wisconsin. They ended up in places with little Jewish presence, and often no organized Jewish community. It's a well-established fact that in communities with no organized Jewish community or institutions, assimilation is more likely to occur. The fact that so many Afro-European Jews ended up in frontier locations may have contributed to their disconnection from the Jewish world.

The obscene race laws adopted by the United States, before and after the Civil War, made life difficult for all persons with African ancestry, and this included Afro-European Jews. It is my opinion that these race laws resulted in most Afro-European Jews ending up in either the African American Christian or the white Christian world, in the north and south. In most cases, over the centuries, their colonial Jewish ancestors have been forgotten.

The Caribbean and Latin America

In the absence of the one drop rule, life for Afro-European Jews in the Caribbean and Latin America was very different.

Aviva Ben-Ur, in her book, "Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Society" makes an interesting point. Acceptance of Afro-European Jews, into the Jewish community, was not only accepted, but necessary for the survival of the Jewish communities in the Caribbean and Latin America. If it were not for Afro-European Jews, the Jewish communities would have gone extinct very rapidly.

Thus, in the Caribbean, there are many instances in which Afro-European Jewish children remained in the Jewish community. The story of Rachel and Isaac Brandon being just one example. There are many more. While race did not present a barrier to Afro-European Jews staying in the Jewish community in the Latin and Caribbean world, the social peculiarities of the Jewish communities in those places sometimes did. However, the hallmark of the Caribbean and Latin America was its uneven enforcement of whatever social norms were in place. There were rules, but making exceptions to the rules was as common as enforcement of the rules. In fact, the real rule was exceptions to rules would be made.

That said, in the Caribbean Sephardic world, the position of Afro-European Jews was ever evolving.

In the beginning, all slaves were converted to Judaism, males were circumcised, and women were taken to the ritual bath (mikvah). They were officially converted therefore fully Jewish. They were free to marry any other Jew they felt like marrying. And their children were undeniably Jewish.

Later, converting slaves was frowned upon by colonial administrations. After that, newly minted Afro-European Jews were the products of relationships between Jewish men and African or mixed-race women. These children could be converted and admitted into the Jewish community or could enter the Christian world.

Over time, a two-tiered system developed within the synagogue community in the Caribbean and South America. The synagogues community was made up of full members (Yahidim) and Congregantes. Yahidim were born to Jewish mothers or were rich enough to have the fact they were not born to Jewish mothers overlooked. Congregantes, in theory, were Jews not born to Jewish mothers. Congregantes were part of the Jewish community but were second class citizens. They had some rights in the Jewish community and did not have others. As an example, Congregantes could attend synagogue functions but could not read from the Torah before the congregation.

Not having a Jewish mother was not the only way to become a Congregante. Congregantes included an interesting collection of people. First, they children of Jewish men and unconverted African or mixed-race women. They were also fully Jewish men who had married African or mixed-race women and were therefore demoted from full membership to Congregante. Or they were fully Jewish men who had behaved in a manner that warranted demotion like public drunkenness or moral impropriety. Lastly, if a Sephardic Jewish men married German Jewish women it could result in them being demoted to Congregante. To make the system even more confusing, if you were designated a Congregante, you could be re-instated as a Yahadim or achieve Yahadim status through an appeals process.

In the book "Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Society. Suriname in the Atlantic World, 1651-1825" written by Aviva Ben-Ur. chapter four is entitled "The Emergence of Eurafican Jews." The chapter starts as follows,

"In the 1720's, four Portuguese Jewish couples in Suriname wed according to rabbinical law. Jahacob bar Abraham, Jahacob Mess Pelengrino, Joseph Rodrigues del Prado, and Ismael Judeu were joined in matrimonial union, respectively to Miriam Mashiah Pelegrino, Ribca de Mattos, Yael Israel da Costa, and Hana, daughter of Gabriel de Mattos. Their Jewish marriage contracts are all drafted in accordance with the traditional Hebrew/Aramaic text and are bound in a column of two hundred similar ketubot drawn up over the course of the century's first half. The dowries of the four brides collectively included thousands of Surinamese guilders, dwelling houses, jewelry, cattle, a wagon, and several slaves. None of these possessions were unusual

among affluent Jews living along the Suriname River in the eighteenth century. What does stand out is the fact that seven of the eight partners had themselves been born in bondage".

Books such as this and others indicate there was significant intermarriage between Jewish individuals and members of the African community in the Caribbean and South America. This resulted in an Afro-European Jewish population throughout the region. There are wills and marriage contracts that exist to this date that indicate Afro-European Jews were part of everyday Jewish life. Some remained in the Jewish community, and some did not. Stories of the Afro-European Jewish families in the Islands indicate within one family, you will find some members attending synagogue and others the Catholic church. Some families passed into White or Afro-Caribbean Christianity long ago and are not aware of the Afro-European heritage.

When you study Sephardic genealogy, one thing becomes clear. Marriages either produced a lot of children, 10 or more, or no children. Having no heirs was a problem, and, in Aviva Ben-Ur book, "Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Society", we read of a novel solution crafted in the Caribbean and Latin America.

"The two earliest known descriptions of slave conversions to Judaism further help us to understand the social context of Eurafrikan Jewish ethnogenesis in Suriname. In his 1723 will, Ishac da Costa identified himself as the legitimate son of Moses and Ribca da costa and husband to his first cousin, also name Ribca. His own marriage was unfruitful, a problem often noted in Portuguese Jewish records and possibly exacerbated by the coupling of successive generations of first cousins. Avunculate and first cousin unions, out lawed by the States of Holland in 1580, were one of the privileges early on accorded Surinamese Jews. Costa himself was not infertile. Implicitly, he procreated six young Eurafrikan with two or more of his slaves beginning in 1703. If not earlier: Rosa(21), Ismael(19), Simha(10), David (7), Hana(5), and a muleca(enslaved valet) name Aquariba, daughter of his late "Negress" Assiba. Costa affirmeded that they all merited manumission by virtue of being born in my house and from my females slaves,(by virtue of) the inclination of said mulattoes to be observant of our Holy Law and having received it willingly and with love. Costa had these children formerly converted to Judaism during their enslavement, the boys being circumcised, the girls ritually bathed(banadas)..... For affluent Jewish men like Costa, conversion followed my manumission was the obligatory prerequisite to the creation of direct legal heirs."

*avunculate marriage = marriage to your uncle.

It would be fair to say the Jewish community in the Caribbean and Latin America accommodated Afro-European Jews. At times, a new Rabbi would blow in from Europe and take a dim view on how the community handled conversion, however, those rabbis did not last. And the community went back to adding to their numbers rather than restricting them by admitting mixed race persons to the community.

That said, the Caribbean region, with its constant hurricanes and earthquakes has been a good place to leave for a long time. It was just not a great place to live and if people had an option, they took it. It was no fun to have your store, your house, and your synagogue episodically destroyed by hurricane or earthquake. As a result of the volatile region, Afro-European and European Jews made their way to Columbia, Venezuela, and North America. Some went back to Europe. Suriname and Curacao, once Jewish hubs of the colonies lost people to Coro, Venezuela and Barranquilla Columbia.

According to Ben-Ur, some surnames indicated Jews of Afro-European origin. Peregrino was meant to indicate a convert or a foreigner, in the communities on both sides of the Atlantic. It could be spelled Pelengrino, Pellengrino, Pelegrino, or Pellegino. The name Judeu, Judio, Judia, was also used to indicate a convert, as it was not a traditionally Iberian Jewish surname.

For environmental and economic reasons, the early colonial Afro-European and European Jewish community dispersed to the locations previously mentioned. Outside the Caribbean region, some remained Jewish and some assimilated and became Christian.

Conclusion

The colonies produced a lot of Afro-European Jews. They were mixed race, mixed cultured, and mixed religioned, and as a result, they went in different directions. It appears that one of Mozes Meyer de Hart's children remained Jewish and had Jewish grandchildren and great-grandchildren. All of Abraham Brandon's children, mixed race and European, ended up living in the Jewish world. Some of the descendants of Isaac Touro and Moses Michael Hays's grandchildren lived as white Christians, some lived as African American Christians, and what happened to 16 of them is unknown!

There is so much more to know about the Afro-European Jews of the colonies. Much more research to be done.

In two instances that I know of, an African American man from the Nunez family and a European woman from the de Hart family, found their way back to Judaism. I am increasingly contacted by people from the African American community wondering why they are so attracted to Judaism.

The key in several instances has been Hidden Jewish Ancestry, of the Afro-European variety!

If you are interested in Afro-European Jews, I would recommend the following books.

But One Race. The Life of Robert Purvis. Margaret Hope Bacon.

Creole Jews. Negotiating community in colonial Suriname. Wieke Vink.

Freedom's Price. The life of an Irish trader among the Creek Indians. Isabell Vandervelde

Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Economy. Suriname in the Atlantic World, 1651-1825. Aviva Ben-Ur

Once Jews. Stories of Caribbean Sephardim. Josette Capriles Goldish.

Once We Were Slaves. The Extra-ordinary Journey of a Multiracial Jewish Family. Laura Arnold Leibman.

The Island of One People. An Account of the History of the Jews of Jamaica. Marilyn Delevante and Anthony Alberga.

The Jews in the Caribbean. Edited by Laura S. Gerber

The Jews of Eighteenth Century Jamaica. A testamentary history of a Diaspora in Transition. Stanley Mirvis.

The Jewish Nation of the Caribbean. The Spanish Portuguese Settlements in the Caribbean and Guianas. Mordecai Arbell.

