

43. *American Hebrew*, December 19, 1879, p. 56.
44. *Association Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 3 (August/Elul 1881/5641), p. 36.
45. Jacob Voorsanger, "A Trio of Characters," *Association Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 3 (August/Elul 1881/5641), pp. 51–56.
46. Jacob Voorsanger, "A Trio of Characters," *Association Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 3 (August/Elul 1881/5641), p. 53. Emphasis in the original.
47. Charles Wyszowski, *Community in Conflict*, p. 44.
48. The New York YMHA established its downtown branch in 1883.
49. Langfeld notes that in the Philadelphia association a new "Associate group" emerged in approximately 1888. He notes that this new group was much more focused on athletics than Jewish intellectualism. Langfeld, *YMHA of Philadelphia*, pp. 25–27.
50. *Monthly Journal of the Young Men's Hebrew Association of N.Y.C.*, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1887), p. 6.

3 A Renaissance of Jewish Readers in Victorian Philadelphia

How does one write a cultural history of Jewish reading activities?¹ In the following discussion, circumscribed by a particular location (Philadelphia) and time period (ca. 1840s–1890s),² I will ask in a preliminary way several questions related to such an undertaking: namely, what did Jews read; what reading materials did Jews lack that they tried to acquire or produce themselves; where did Jews read; and what functions did their reading activities serve? Scattered through this discussion of sources, sites, and reading activities, I also hope to point to some of the deeper challenges and at times counterintuitive questions scholars of the history of reading have posed about this subject.³ Roger Chartier, the most distinguished contemporary historian of reading practices, has formulated the task as follows: first, to recognize that "reading is not always inscribed in the text; that it is not true that there is no imaginable gap between the meaning assigned to it [the text] (by the author of the text or its editor, by criticism, tradition, etc.) and the use or interpretation that readers may make of it" and second, to understand that "a text exists only because a reader gives it meaning."⁴ In shifting the interpretive focus from traditional conceptions of authorship to material texts and historically contextualized audiences, Chartier follows the arguments of Michel Foucault, who redirected cultural historians' attention to the processes governing the reception of texts.⁵ At the same time, Chartier, building on the work of Donald McKenzie, has demonstrated how the forms in which messages are delivered and the manner in which texts are performed shape, constrain, and otherwise affect the meanings conveyed.⁶ Consequently, the physicality of reading materials and the historicity of reading activities are critical for understanding not only the ways that individuals read but also for analyzing how audiences generate meaning.

Such an approach, if it is to be comprehensive, requires us to treat not only the words on the page as symbolic carriers of meaning and to know

something about the life stories of the readers themselves. It also demands that we explore the complex processes by which words, sounds, and images as texts are received and read. Recognizing the historicity of texts and the contexts in which texts and readers are located helps us to appreciate the distinctive communities to which readers belonged, the skill levels and competencies of these readers, and the manner and environment in which they read or were read to. Unfortunately, owing to insufficient empirical research, the important and underlying question of literacy levels attained by readers who can be identified as Jewish in mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia will not be addressed.⁷ Instead, I will focus here on a limited group of producers and consumers of reading materials who were highly literate, multilingual, and instrumental in building the institutional and cultural foundations for new kinds of sociability through reading. Even as they resemble in some respects their non-Jewish counterparts, these Victorian Jewish writers, editors, compilers, and readers also show distinctive characteristics that set them apart. These differences are especially evident when contrasted with models of secularization often advanced to characterize non-Jewish reading patterns during this time period.

For the sake of studying cultural histories of Victorian Jewish reading activities, it first may be useful to recall that while there is some definitional overlap between the analytical categories “Jewish” (e.g., readers) and “Judaic” (e.g., what was read), they are not identical. The fact that someone was born Jewish does not necessarily make that person a Jewish reader, and the fact that someone of Jewish parentage authored a particular work does not mean the work counts as a work of Judaica. Indeed, part of what is fascinating about this Victorian moment in vernacular cultural exchanges between Jews and non-Jews is precisely this new and rapidly expanding availability of and accessibility to a wide variety of works in multiple languages. In this context, the English vernacular helped to produce a new kind of Jewish reader, indeed, one might even argue, a new kind of non-Jewish Judaic reader.

All people who identified themselves as Jews obviously did not exclusively read “Jewish” books and serialized publications. The bibliographic concept of “Judaica,” notably, can refer to publications issued by Jews *or* non-Jews, but whose content is preponderantly concerned with Jews and Judaism. As Robert Singerman put it in the introduction to his authoritative bibliography of pre-twentieth-century “Judaica Americana”: “Judaic subject matter, and not the author’s ancestry, is the determining factor in judging the appropriateness of a work for inclusion.”⁸ He includes, for example, mission-

ary tracts as works of Judaica that target a Jewish audience even as the stated purpose of these publications is to advance the cause of Jewish conversion to Christianity.

Similarly, works printed in Hebrew may be “Judaic,” if not exactly Jewish: Thomas Dobson, a Scottish-born Christian printer, published in Philadelphia in 1814 the first complete non-Masoretic Hebrew Bible in the United States (which is to say, an “Old Testament” Bible whose type font was Hebrew but lacked the Masoretic vocalization and accentuation marks). In so doing, it would seem he anticipated primarily a non-Jewish market for his Holy Scriptures. One recent bibliography reports not having found evidence of any Jews having actually owned a copy. Notably, there are two gift copies of the Dobson Bible held at the University of Pennsylvania previously owned by two of Philadelphia’s Victorian Jewish leaders, David Sulzberger and Cyrus Adler. The latter copy formerly belonged to a non-Jew named Robert Dearden and may have been purchased by Adler specifically for donation, not for personal use. Interestingly, the first few pages of this unique copy have been vocalized by hand underneath the printed letters. Such notations suggest a possible Jewish owner (Adler?), but it also may have been inscribed by a Christian practicing his Hebrew grammar (Dearden?)! In any case, Penn’s copies must be regarded as exceptions that prove the rule that something Judaic need not be Jewish.⁹

Background

Philadelphia’s Jews, or at least those families and individuals demographers have been able to identify as Jewish, numbered fewer than 2,000 in 1840, approximately 10,000 on the eve of the American Civil War, and no more than 15,000 in 1880.¹⁰ During that time, the total Jewish population never amounted to more than 0.5 percent of the city’s general population.¹¹ Despite their relatively small numbers, those Jews who were active in communal affairs gave birth to a remarkable set of pioneering educational institutions.¹² Philadelphia, America’s “First City,” was also a city of Jewish “firsts.” Philadelphia was home to the first Hebrew Sunday School,¹³ established in 1838, the first American Jewish monthly journal, the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*,¹⁴ started in 1843, the first American Jewish Publication Society,¹⁵ founded in 1845, the first Hebrew Education Society,¹⁶ a kind of Jewish “high school,” instituted in 1849, and the “first Jewish Theological Seminary,” Maimonides College,¹⁷ which began holding classes in 1867.¹⁸ Forty years later,

in 1907, the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, the first academic institution of higher Jewish learning in the world accredited to confer PhDs in Judaic studies, was chartered in Philadelphia.¹⁹ Jewish Philadelphians also established multiple Jewish benevolent and relief associations during this era, and in particular created some of the first Jewish literary societies, which will be discussed in detail below.²⁰ One scholar of this pre-mass migration era, Lance Sussman, has described an antebellum “Philadelphia Pattern” of Jewish communal life with national repercussions. As new Jewish communities grew roots, for example, in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis, we find parallel literary, social, relief, and other extra-synagogal institutions sprouting up there as well.²¹

Philadelphia’s Jewish cultural organizations were led by a close-knit group of people who are sometimes referred to as the “Philadelphia Group.” The moniker was coined by Solomon Solis-Cohen in his “Founder’s Day Address” delivered at Dropsie College on March 9, 1924. His idea was to link together a historical chain of Jewish educators and educational institutions dating from the beginnings of the Hebrew Sunday School movement in the 1830s to Dropsie College in his own time.²² Solis-Cohen, a prominent physician, lay scholar, and translator of medieval Hebrew poetry, argued that “these men and women of vision and various phases of their activity must be studied as an organic whole. They founded synagogues as a matter of course . . . and maintained charitable associations. But their chief endeavors were directed in two lines—school and publications.”²³ In so doing, Solis-Cohen lumped into one, not entirely consistent pot a multigenerational mix of rabbis, educators, teachers, scholars, legal professionals, administrators, and businessmen: Isaac Leiser, Sabato Morais, Mayer Sulzberger, Cyrus Adler, as well as Rebecca Gratz, Hyman Gratz, Solomon Solis, Moses Aaron Dropsie, Marcus Jastrow, and one non-Philadelphian—Solomon Schechter, who came to New York from Cambridge University in 1902 to head the reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary of America. With the exception of Jastrow and Schechter, all these leaders had for some period of time been affiliated with the city’s historic first synagogue, the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation Mikveh Israel, and Sephardic history and culture informed their sense of history and manner of worship.

Not mentioned by Solis-Cohen but closely associated with the same Sephardic congregation was the Cohen family.²⁴ Henry Cohen, a prosperous merchant, originally from London, and his American-born son Charles J. Cohen, who owned a stationery company, served as presidents of Mikveh

Israel during the second half of the nineteenth century. Henry and his wife Matilda, from Liverpool, had five children, all born and raised in Philadelphia. One of them, Mary M. Cohen, became a prominent literary figure and contributor to a number of Jewish newspapers including the short-lived (Philadelphia) *Jewish Index*,²⁵ the (Philadelphia) *Jewish Record*, and the (Philadelphia) *Jewish Exponent*. She served as the superintendent of Philadelphia’s Hebrew Sunday School and notably was among the founders of the Browning Literary Society in the 1880s. Cohen, whose career is the subject of a recent study by Dianne Ashton,²⁶ also served as president of the Mikveh Israel Association, a kind of congregational literary society, during the 1890s. She shared a close friendship with Nina Morais, another literary figure of note, translator, and champion of women’s suffrage. Nina was the daughter of the Sephardic hazan (prayer service leader) of Mikveh Israel, Sabato Morais, and his wife Esther Clara Weil, who died tragically in 1872 when Nina was seventeen.²⁷

The concept of a “Philadelphia Group” was enlarged in 1983 in a collection of essays titled *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830–1840*, edited by Murray Friedman.²⁸ The leadership pattern was taken beyond the framework of Philadelphia Jewish educators and publishers to encompass relief workers and other communal services associated with the period of mass migration (especially from Eastern Europe to the Atlantic shores during the 1880s and 1890s through 1924, after which time the U.S. government severely restricted the arrival of new immigrants). Two such members added to this expanded conception of the Philadelphia group were Louis Edward Levy, the cofounder in 1884 of the Association for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants,²⁹ and Charles Spivak, a physician and community leader. In 1993, following a conference in Philadelphia on the Philadelphia group, Friedman penned a “Collective Portrait” of them to introduce *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*. This was the second in a multivolume series he edited on Philadelphia Jewish history.²⁹

Despite the coherence and heuristic value the concept of a “Philadelphia Group” of Jews offers, it is important to understand that this conceptualization of these individual Jewish leaders as a collective is something that post-dates their communal activities and conceals more than it reveals. This Philadelphia “group” of Jews active and visible in communal affairs spanned several generations. Its different “members” did not always see eye to eye politically, had different life experiences in terms of gender, family origins, and levels of wealth, and did not always share the same religious orientation.

Perhaps the deepest social fissure that divided the first “generation” of these communal leaders active during the antebellum period can be traced to the dismissal of the Westphalia-born Isaac Leaser as the hazan of Mikveh Israel in 1850. Leaser had aroused the wrath of his congregation by demanding more autonomy, more money, and more respect. In response, the congregation that had hired him dismissed him for insolence.³⁰ The furor that erupted also created the job opening that brought Sabato Morais, an Italian Sephardic Jew, to Philadelphia from London. Ultimately, Morais was elected the congregation’s next minister under these difficult circumstances (many of Leaser’s supporters left Mikveh Israel and started a new congregation, Beth El Emeth).³¹

Leaser and Morais did not get along, differed as much in their temperaments as in their politics (the former was combative and voted Democrat, the latter self-abnegating and voted Republican), and about critical issues such as the slavery question (Leaser argued that it was not appropriate to speak out about political issues like this one, and at one point was suspected of being a Southern sympathizer; by contrast Morais adamantly opposed the institution of slavery and in 1864 was given a three-month “gag” order against preaching by his congregational board). In later years Solis-Cohen, and his teacher Morais, fiercely opposed political Zionism, while other figures such as Bernard Levinthal, an early-twentieth-century leader of modern Orthodox Judaism and a kind of “chief rabbi” of immigrant Jewish Philadelphia, became ardent advocates of the cause.³² Marcus Jastrow, who served as rabbi of Rodelph Shalom from 1866 to 1892, today is associated with the beginnings of the Conservative movement of Judaism.³³ During his ministry in Philadelphia, he instituted several controversial reforms in the content and character of the prayer service, including mixed seating and organ music.³⁴ Joseph Krauskopf, among the first graduates of Hebrew Union College, the Reform rabbinical seminary started in 1875 in Cincinnati, became the leader of Philadelphia’s Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in 1887.³⁵ Taken together, they reflect a wide diversity of viewpoints about religion and politics that existed within the framework of Philadelphia’s intergenerational Jewish leadership patterns.³⁶

What these generations of individuals did share was a commitment to Jewish communal service and a noblesse oblige sense of responsibility for their brethren in Philadelphia and abroad. All were committed to some form of a ritually observant Jewish religious culture, albeit some in highly modified and voluntary forms. All learned to read in the original languages and also to

translate into the English vernacular classical works of Jewish culture. To take just one example, Solomon Solis-Cohen, under Morais’ tutelage, rendered into highly stylized Victorian English the medieval Hebrew poetry of Moses Ibn Ezra and Yehudah ha-Levi. He was not alone in this kind of literary activity. On the day that Morais suffered a fatal stroke in November of 1897, he and two of his students, Isaac Husik and Gershon Levi, had been reading and translating the Hebrew poetry of Yehuda ha-Levi.³⁷

Figures like Morais and many of the young people he nurtured as a spiritual leader and teacher sought to rediscover and/or translate into English classics of Jewish learning. These included some of the most dazzling and difficult texts of medieval Sephardic philosophy and poetry, such as the works of Sabbatai Donnolo, Moses Maimonides, Hasdai Crescas, Immanuel of Rome, Joseph Albo, and Isaac Abravanel. Through study in the original and through translation these works were made newly accessible as part of a Judaized classical curriculum. As will be discussed below, the educational and literary associations these Jewish Philadelphians created were self-consciously intended to serve the purpose of cultivating a new kind of Jewish reader—one trained to read traditional Jewish sources, to worship in Hebrew, to speak, read, and write proper English—and to ensure that these new readers’ Jewish reading activities were isomorphic with the Victorian culture in which they lived.³⁸

The Production of Reading Materials

Perhaps one of the most striking features of Jewish reading activities in Victorian Philadelphia was the labor-intensive effort to print, publish, or acquire Jewish reading materials. Thanks to Robert Singerman and his bibliographical labors we learn that between 1840 and 1900 there were at least 170 monograph titles and 70 distinct periodicals of a Judaic nature published in Philadelphia.³⁹ The types of printed works included a variety of religious works such as prayer books and catechisms. The multiplication and diversity of these versions of Jewish liturgy offer bibliographical evidence as well as visual and textual illustrations of communal fractures in the manner of worship and character of religious reading.⁴⁰ We also find distinctively Americanized forms of Jewish publications, all reflecting a diversity of purposes and forms of reading materials: constitutions, by-laws, and minutes of synagogues, fraternal orders, and relief organizations; communal histories; books of poetry, travel books, and dramas; apologetic literature; philo-Semitic and antisemitic works; conversionist, millenarian, and internal Jewish polemical tracts.⁴¹

Printing and publishing not only were cultural activities but also, notably, generated business opportunities. Newspapers, books, pamphlets as well as commercial advertising and want ads were critical sources of revenue, especially for Leeser, who supplemented his ministerial salary with sales of the various publications he authored or edited.⁴² Advertising also provided a practical means of communication by which distant communities were able to circulate news about job opportunities and hopeful candidates might learn about and apply to fill them. Similarly, the business of printing broadsides, circulars, invitations, and occasional works such as birthday, bar mitzvah, anniversary, and funeral addresses formed a significant part of this growing public sphere of commercial reading materials.⁴³

The Jewish periodical press and printed books themselves were ready outlets for advertisements promoting the latest Judaica publications.⁴⁴ The most important antebellum Jewish newspaper, the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, was published in Philadelphia and edited by Isaac Leeser.⁴⁵ The *Occident* circulated news about Jews from all over the world to the scattered Jewish communities of the Western Hemisphere and beyond. At the same time, it frequently was quoted overseas, particularly in the Anglo-Jewish press, as a reliable source of information about happenings in North America and the Caribbean. The first issue of the *Occident* came out in April of 1843, and it subsequently appeared every month (not including a brief stint as a weekly from 1859 to 1861) until 1869. In the *Occident*, its founder and editor editorialized on the burning issues of the day such as Saturday closing laws, the role of religion in the public schools, the need to build up Jewish education, establish a rabbinical seminary, support charities, and otherwise strengthen Jewish communal ties.

Subscription lists demonstrate that the *Occident* circulated to the farthest reaches of the pioneer West, from Canada to the Caribbean islands, and across the Atlantic to England and Western Europe.⁴⁶ Both Jews and non-Jews subscribed to and read the *Occident*. Letters from Christian ministers, for example, posing questions about Jewish doctrines and practices can be found among Leeser's personal correspondence and in print on the pages of the *Occident*. As a news source, the *Occident* also found its way into the non-Jewish press through reprinting of its content. In short, the *Occident* provided a (semi-) neutral meeting place for Jews and non-Jewish readers as well as for Jews themselves.⁴⁷

Philadelphia was among the most important publishing centers in the United States in the Victorian era, and this also held true for Jewish publishing.

The city's Jewish leaders maintained an almost unbroken chain of Jewish journalism, dating from Leeser's *Occident* in 1843 and continuing into the twenty-first century:

1843–1869: *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, edited by Isaac Leeser (Mayer Sulzberger served as editor for the final year of publication [1868–1869] after Leeser's death in fulfillment of a pledge to his mentor.)

1872–1873: *The Jewish Index*, edited by Samuel Mendelsohn and Maurice Lam under the supervision of Sabato Morais, who ultimately wound up writing most of the content

1875–1886: *The Philadelphia Jewish Record*, edited by Alfred T. Jones

1887–present: *The Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*, edited by Charles Hoffman and Henry S. Morais, inter alia

As a publisher of Victorian Jewish religious works in antebellum America, Leeser was peerless. Between 1837 and 1838, he produced an English translation, in six volumes, of the Sephardic prayer book *Sifte tsadikim* (Lips of the Righteous) bound in tooled, gold-embossed leather. Leeser's text, in turn, relied upon the first English translation, produced by David Levi, one of the leading figures of enlightened Jewish London, in the late eighteenth century.⁴⁸ In 1839, Leeser published the first American Jewish catechism,⁴⁹ and in 1848, he published an English translation of the Ashkenazic prayer book *Divre tsadikim* (Words of the Righteous), bound in red Moroccan leather and also embossed in gold.⁵⁰ Both his Sephardic and Ashkenazic liturgies moved in their pagination from right to left like a traditional Jewish text, yet were accompanied by a vernacular translation on the facing page. His Jewish Bible translations, first of the Pentateuch in 1845 and later of the entire Hebrew Bible, the famous "Leeser Bible," published in Philadelphia in 1853, became the standard Bible editions in English read by Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵¹

The first American Jewish Publication Society (AJPS) was established in Philadelphia by Leeser in 1845. In the AJPS's constitution, Leeser declared the purpose of this enterprise as twofold: "to obtain a knowledge of the faith and proper weapons to defend it [Judaism] against the assaults of proselyt-makers on the one side and of infidels [Reformers] on the other."⁵² To launch the society, Leeser introduced a serialized publication that he titled the *Jew-*

ish *Miscellany*, of which seven numbers appeared between 1845 and 1848. In this series, Leeser selected for publication and/or reprinting works by notable Anglo-Jewish authors including Grace Aguilar, Charlotte Elizabeth, Marion Moss Hartog, Hyman Hurwitz, and Moses Samuels.⁵³

Thus, among the key ingredients supporting the reading activities of Jews living in Victorian Philadelphia were their own entrepreneurial efforts. They printed religious and educational materials, published newspapers and monographs, purchased additional books from abroad, and established schools, libraries, and literary associations as sites for meeting, reading, and discussing what was being read.⁵⁴

A Renaissance of Jewish Reading

Beginning with Rebecca Gratz⁵⁵ and Isaac Leeser in the 1830s, the first generation of this Philadelphia group created the educational institutional infrastructures of Philadelphia's organized Jewish community. Sabato Morais, Leeser's successor at Mikveh Israel, later infused these forms with his own Sephardic rabbinic humanist content and played a critical role in the shaping of Jewish reading activities in the second half of the nineteenth century. Where Gratz and Leeser built institutions, Morais raised disciples. To do so, Morais drew upon his own background and training in classical rabbinic, Sephardic, and Italian religious humanist sources to implement a new program of Jewish cultural regeneration.

Morais was born in the port city of Livorno on the western coast of Tuscany in 1823. After receiving his rabbinical certification, he found work in London as a teacher at the Sephardic congregation's Orphan Home from 1846 to 1851. Over the course of his six years there he became fluent in English and began delivering well-received public addresses in his adopted language. In March of 1851, he came to Philadelphia to apply for what had been Leeser's position at Mikveh Israel. Morais remained employed there, despite some periods of controversy (during the Civil War, for example, he was silenced for preaching in support of Lincoln and the Union cause), until his death in 1897 at the age of seventy-four. Morais' near half-century tenure, as Pamela Nadell has observed, was the longest continuous ministry sustained by any American rabbi during that time.⁵⁶

Over time, Morais emerged as the mentor, teacher, guiding force, and religious leader of a group of young activists who took up the call to produce what he called a "regenerated" version of observant Judaism planted in

American soil. From the first year of his arrival in 1851 until his death in November of 1897, Morais programmatically advanced his Italian Sephardic heritage as a basis for this version of Jewish religious Americanization. In particular, he turned to literary associations to cultivate this new generation of young people and instruct them how to be ritually observant and culturally refined, how to be pious and enlightened, in essence how to be a modern citizen and preserve Jewish tradition.

But why would young Jews trying to be modern and American want to imitate a medieval European model? And what did this group mean by the seemingly oxymoronic phrase "enlightened orthodoxy" eventually adopted to characterize its outlook? Superficially, one might think anyone living under the sway of the Enlightenment by definition would always reject revealed religion as irrational, as superstitious, and as a threat to freethinking, and would regard oneself as unbound by the traditions of the past. By contrast, is not a religiously observant Jew committed to a belief in divine revelation and historically obligated to practice *mitsvot* (that is, God's commandments, as transmitted to Moses on Sinai and as interpreted by Jewish sages across the millennia) and not to freely choose his or her own lifestyle?

Here we find a set of tensions that goes to the heart of the meaning of "renaissance" in this Victorian Jewish context of reading. For our purposes, I would like to suggest that the term "renaissance" refers to a specific kind of appeal to the past and a specific set of activities—teaching, reading, translating, printing, publishing, preaching, and otherwise publicly communicating classic works of Judaism and Jewish thought. In Philadelphia, beginning in the 1850s, we find Morais programmatically transmitting traditional forms of Jewish religious learning in a new setting outside the synagogue and *beit midrash* (house of study): the literary association. It would be a mistake to characterize the literary association as a secularized form of the *beit midrash*. Sephardic culture did not require such a dichotomy between the synagogue and the world outside it, and such a harmonization had deep roots, both historically and intellectually, in Morais' thinking. Indeed, there is clear and consistent evidence that Sephardic history, religion, and culture occupied a paradigmatic place in Morais' neoreligious humanist curriculum as a basis for religious Americanization. And significantly, some of the most important non-Jewish sources informing Morais' thinking hark back to the intellectual heritage of the Italian renaissance in which he was raised—a legacy marked by the attempt to synthesize religious and humanist currents. Above all, this renaissance heritage, Jewish and non-Jewish, was intensely preoccupied with

activities of reading, including the recovery of classical literary sources for study and publication and the critical preparation of manuscripts for printing. In speaking about the early Hebrew printers in Venice, for example, Morais once referred to the “critical minds” that revised the Masoretic Bible and its traditional commentaries, “freed them from the blunders of copyists,” and “disclosed in the Jews of Italy abilities of the highest order.”⁵⁷ In these sentiments we find the pride he felt for his native Italian Jewish heritage as well as evidence of his early education in Livorno, where he was infused with this religious-humanist sensibility. The educational program Morais advanced in Philadelphia reflected his Sephardic-Italian upbringing. In his teachings, he rejected the more radical philosophies of secular Enlightenment otherwise pervasive in Continental Europe and America, which preached the autonomy of reason unbound by the demands of traditional religious authority. At the same time, he affirmed the critical role reason and historical criticism should play in shaping Jewish religious culture in America.

Common to the early Jewish leaders of the “Philadelphia Group” and their young pupils was precisely this embrace of classical learning—Jewish and non-Jewish—undergirded by a belief in reason in harmony with God’s revelation. They shared a belief in a forward-looking, progressive, messianic view of history but also believed in the binding character of the distinctive historical practices of Judaism and the obligation to preserve a separate Jewish national identity, charged with a special divine mission. Taken together, their programmatic efforts sought to give rebirth to observant Judaism in the open, democratic, voluntary environment of the United States. The term Morais introduced in 1851 to capture the spirit of this proposed rebirth was “regeneration.”⁵⁸ He spoke of the “virgin soil” of America “in which the ritual system governing Judaism would be regenerated.” And he turned to the voluntary, social form of literary associations to help achieve this ambitious goal.

Historically, the concept of “regeneration” had already become widespread by the late eighteenth century.⁵⁹ In relation to Jews, it referred especially to calls for their occupational diversification and social rehabilitation as a precondition or at minimum a preliminary step toward their political integration into European society. The term itself can be found in writings of a variety of different Enlightenment writers, including religious philosophes such as the Abbe Gregoire, who championed Jewish political emancipation.⁶⁰ In Philadelphia, beyond the walls of the synagogue, literary societies would become a new site for promoting regeneration as a cultural and religious undertaking. Reading, it must be emphasized, was an extension of their

religious identities, not a rejection or a secularization of them. Reading activities would be one of the most important means envisioned to help attain this fusion of the sacred and the putatively secular. In short, reading, as well as the production and/or importation of suitable reading materials, was crucial to the Philadelphia group’s pedagogic efforts to realize this internal harmonization of the classical and the contemporary, the particular and the universal, the revealed and the rational, the Jewish and the American.

Victorian Jewish Readers and Their Literary Associations

One distinctive feature of Victorian culture in general was a particular style of reading. Mary Kelley, in her study of reading habits among antebellum American women, has examined some of the characteristic features of their experiences.⁶¹ Kelley discovered, through a close study of diaries, letters, autograph albums, and journals, the hidden world of what she calls “reading women.” She has shown how women made the activity of reading into “a vehicle for what the Renaissance scholar Stephen Greenblatt has called ‘self-fashioning,’ namely the achievement of a distinctive personality, a particular address to the world, a way of acting and thinking.” Reading, Kelley explains, could be serious or playful, inward or political, private or public. In particular, Kelley writes, “sometimes books confirmed an already familiar identity. Sometimes, [books] became catalysts in the fashioning of alternative selves.”⁶² To get a sense of what was read, Kelley surveyed the variety of reading materials women reported selecting (in their diaries, letters, and other sources) and argued for discontinuity between the revolutionary and Victorian reading eras: “in contrast to their seventeenth- and early-eighteenth century counterparts who devoted themselves primarily to religious literature, women readers active after the revolution began to immerse themselves in secular literature. The traditional ‘steady sellers,’ the Bibles, psalm books, and devotional works to which colonial Americans had devoted themselves still constituted an important share of their reading. Simultaneously, however, they read widely in history, biography, and travel literature.”⁶³

In a master’s thesis titled “‘Better and Wiser Daughters in Israel’: The Diaries of Fannie and Amelia J. Allen,” completed at the University of Pennsylvania in 1997, Idana Goldberg studied the phenomenon of reading as “self-fashioning” in the diaries of two Jewish sisters, Fannie and Amelia Allen.⁶⁴ These sisters, living in mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia, were committed to observing Jewish traditions and maintaining a distinctive Jew-

ish identity even as they acculturated into the American middle classes. According to Goldberg, we find the Allen sisters reading precisely in order to fashion their own identities as Jews, as women, and as Americans. In contrast to the processes of secularization and individualization implied by Kelley's interpretation, the Allen sisters used reading to advance their social commitments, both to their religious/ethnic particularism and to the project of acculturation and refinement.

In Dianne Ashton's pioneering study of Mary M. Cohen, based in part on a scrapbook Cohen kept, we find another example of a highly educated Victorian Jewish woman engaged in performative reading activities. The act of scrapbooking, like diary keeping, both of which were so much in vogue during the Victorian period, preserved material traces that document aspects of her reading practices.⁶⁵ Unlike diaries, which contain handwritten, intensely personal reflections, scrapbooking was a visual medium, a compilation of acquired sources such as newspaper clippings, keepsakes, calling cards, holiday memorabilia, broadsides, invitations, as well as more intimate, handwritten letters. In scrapbooks, in other words, we find not only excerpts and references to the bound, commercially available forms of what people read (i.e., books and serialized publications) but also the ephemeral contents of everyday life. These acts of reading, clipping, annotating, reordering through compilation and arrangement, pasting, and patterning generated new meanings as well as entirely unforeseen associations. By illustration, consider what can be gleaned from a handful of pages from Mary M. Cohen's scrapbooks: on one sheet we find pasted a handwritten letter, dated June 1877, to her from Cyrus L. Sulzberger praising her for her "excellent article on 'Jane Austen and her works.'" In a second scrapbook volume she kept, we learn that Mary published this piece about Austen under the pseudonym "Coralie" in the [North American] "Review." On the reverse side of the first scrapbook page where she pasted Cyrus Sulzberger's letter, we find a program for the "Sixth Entertainment" of the Young Men's Hebrew Association in Philadelphia held two months earlier on March 20, 1877, publicizing a duo performance by "Miss Mary M. Cohen and Mr. William Stoll, Jr. on piano and violin, performing Osborne and De Beriot's 'I Puritani.'"⁶⁶ And on another page, we find "Coralie" publishing her own rendering of Psalm 65 into English.⁶⁷ In just a few juxtaposed pages we learn that "Miss Mary Cohen," who was single, received flattering letters from her male admirers, that she played the piano (or violin), and that she did so well enough to perform contemporary "high culture" non-Jewish musical compositions at public entertainments

for like-minded Jews. We learn that she was capable of reading and translating biblical verse from the original Hebrew, and that she not only read Jane Austen but published essays about her novels in nationally circulating non-Jewish newspapers. Perhaps most significant for our purposes is the discovery that, as an author, Cohen frequently published under a pseudonym.

Mary Cohen's teacher, Sabato Morais, also acquired the Victorian habit of clipping and pasting. Thanks to his scrapbook, we now know of hundreds of articles he anonymously published in a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers and which he carefully annotated by hand and commented on in a ledger-size volume he kept. We also know, exclusively from marginal annotations he inscribed in his scrapbook, of the episode during the Civil War when he was forced to stop preaching and of the details of his plan for a uniform Jewish liturgy that he propounded in the 1870s.⁶⁸ Common to both writers was the habit of publishing pseudonymously or anonymously.⁶⁹ Though intensely public in their activities, they concealed their literary authorship. This self-abnegating habit, ironically, argues against the individualist notion that reading and writing activities were private and self-fashioning and suggests rather that the outward-directed selfless act of educating, rather than fame, was regarded as the most important virtue.

Recognizing the social dimensions and functions of Victorian Jewish reading activities is crucial to understanding the lived experiences of Jews in Philadelphia during this time. Though not quantifiable, it seems reasonable to assume that many American Jews, as an aspect of their acculturation, were engaged in practices similar to those of the Allen sisters, Mary M. Cohen, and Sabato Morais. At the immigrant level, reading offered an entrée into the unfamiliar world into which newcomers arrived as they adjusted to a new language and new surroundings. For native-born, English-speaking American Jews, the habit of reading (and the flood of discussions and debates that reading provoked) furthered the absorption of the mores, the morals and manners, and the expectations of the surrounding society. It also deepened the connections between these Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors. Through books and broadsides, through newspapers and literature, through translations and catechisms, and by clipping and pasting Jewish readers learned about themselves, tried to figure out who they wanted to be collectively and how they wanted to be seen. In short, reading provided Jews with a mode of "self-fashioning" both as individuals and as a community. Reading activities could be instructive or adaptive, purposeful or entertaining, silent or out loud, private or social. Reading activities ultimately served as social glue that

bound together the Jewish community, with all its internal fractures and differences, as each individual groped to make sense of his or her local environment and, consequently, what it meant to be Jewish collectively in America.

To do so, people of all kinds, both Jews and non-Jews, regularly sought out new forms of literary association outside traditional, especially religious, settings. Perhaps it should be recalled that the Victorian period in American history predates Andrew Carnegie and the building of the great system of public libraries at the end of the nineteenth century. Before then, it is not self-evident when and where people met to talk and read outside the marketplace, churches, and synagogues. And yet, as Alexis de Tocqueville was famous for observing in his *Democracy in America*, whose first edition appeared in 1835,⁷⁰ Americans exhibited an unbelievable passion for associating and creating voluntary organizations of all kinds. Tocqueville defined the American penchant to “join” and to form voluntary associations of all kinds—“political, industrial, commercial, or even literary or scientific”—as one of the unique features of American democracy. “Americans,” he wrote, “of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of dispositions,” “are forever forming associations. . . . In every case, at the head of any undertaking, where in France you would find the government or in England some territorial magnate, in the United States you are sure to find an association.”⁷¹ In Tocqueville’s liberal understanding of American democracy, Jurgen Habermas explains, these “educated and powerful citizens were supposed to form an elite public (in view of the lack of aristocracy by birth) whose critical debate determined public opinion.”⁷²

The cultural life of Jews outside the American synagogue emerged in this public sphere under unprecedented conditions: Constitutional guarantees separating church from state; mass migration; opportunities for social mobility and voluntary affiliation; pluralism and lay-driven leadership patterns.⁷³ Precisely because Jews in the United States historically enjoyed legal protections to associate voluntarily without interference from the state, new kinds of questions arose about the imperative to join Jewish organizations. As the level of affiliation with the chosen people in America became a matter of individual choice for Jews, a rationale was needed to explain and otherwise justify the meaning of that choice. The greater the openness of the American milieu to individual Jews (in terms of opportunities for social integration and material betterment), the greater became the perception by Jewish leaders of a threat to Jewish communal cohesion and survival. A new kind of question began to haunt Jews in America: “why be Jewish?” The answer was no lon-

ger a simple matter of birth and belief nor a consequence of being excluded from the majority culture. Even while many Jews believed in America as a land of freedom, in fact, America’s freedoms threatened the cohesion and the very existence of these Jews as an organized community.

In his 1845 circular announcing the American Jewish Publication Society, Leeser sought to remedy the problem through the medium of publishing as a form of association: “as associationalism has been found to produce a remarkable degree of success where individual efforts have failed, it was deemed highly probable that if Israelites were to unite for the encouragement of their own literature, they might speedily witness many beneficial effects of their union.”⁷⁴ In contrast to Leeser’s relatively impersonal publishing efforts, Morais’ preferred solution—literary associations themselves—provided intimate, direct physical sites of sociability and orality beyond the printed page and unburdened by the demands of congregational affiliation to think about these questions.

The first (non-Jewish) reading society in Philadelphia, the “Junto,” was organized by Benjamin Franklin in 1727. In the colonial period leading up to the American Revolution (declared of course in Philadelphia in 1776), reading societies served a subversive, political function. In the case of the Junto, the names of its members and the subject matter discussed were often kept secret or just secret enough to attract the attention of potential members. As Scharf and Westcott record in their three-volume encyclopedic *History of Philadelphia*, published in 1884: “The artful founders knew the value of secrecy, and this was made on its elements, yet only to appear to stimulate interest among those who were admitted and lead outsiders to conjecture that it was of much importance. It existed until the war of the Revolution. . . . Morals, politics and natural philosophy were its themes.”⁷⁵ There was more to it than that, as we now know. The Junto’s members played substantial roles in the rebellion against British rule. After the Revolution, the Junto was transformed into a more open institution, the subscription library.⁷⁶

While Jews had joined non-Jewish associations such as the Freemasons and learned institutions such as the American Philosophical Society in the eighteenth century, Jewish-identified voluntary associations beyond the walls of the synagogue only began to flourish later, in the setting of Victorian Philadelphia under the impact of population growth and cultural change. There were three generations of Victorian Jewish literary gathering, with some overlap in their orientations: antebellum literary associations for mutual improvement; postbellum literary associations for educational uplift and social enter-

tainment; and thirdly, in the 1880s amidst the rising tide of mass migration, elite literary societies (as they then began calling themselves, shedding the earlier, more egalitarian language of association) named after cultural icons, as well as congregational literary societies, and the beginnings of immigrant literary societies.

The first generation appeared during the 1840s, and we have very little information about these societies, except to observe that they were coterminous with the rise of other, non-Jewish literary societies during the same time. In the antebellum period, reading societies ceased to function as subversive instruments of revolution. In fact, a strange inversion and inward turn occurred as the stated aims of reading societies were domesticated to serve the social needs of individuals and their self-improvement. Nonetheless, reading itself at times could function as a vehicle for social protest, if not revolution. Sam Warner, in his *Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth*, shows how books and newspapers sensitized people to social inequities and injustices afflicting the working poor (e.g., working conditions in the needle trades) by “shaping the sentimental consciences of readers” and spurring them to take action (e.g., the growth of unions during this time, ca. 1830s–1850).⁷⁷

The earliest Jewish literary societies in Philadelphia were less political and more internally focused than the kinds of societies that existed in the eighteenth century. According to Henry Morais in his history of the Jews of Philadelphia, published in 1894, the city’s first Jewish literary association, a “Young Men’s [Literary] Society[,] was started in 1841 . . . [and another] society, bearing the Hebrew name of Ohabe Lemudah [Lovers of Religious learning], whose object was the ‘mutual improvement of its members’ was formed in May [of] 1844.” Morais also mentions a “Hebrew Literature Association,” started in 1850, and another called the Young Men’s Hebrew Literary Association, organized in 1855.⁷⁸ As noted earlier, it was Henry Morais’ father who first turned to this generation of literary societies to cultivate a vanguard of young Jewish leaders.

What then did this teacher and regular speaker at literary societies read and impart? Part of the answer is easily traced from secondary works he drew upon in his published and unpublished writings, as well as from his correspondence, in which he cites or otherwise alludes to a wide-ranging variety of works of a Jewish and general nature. Another source is Morais’ personal library, albeit keeping in mind that not every book in one’s library has been read, and not everything one reads is found in one’s library.⁷⁹ One of the few

extant sources documenting the actual contents of Morais’ library collection, at least as it stood in the 1860s, is a pocket notebook he kept listing book purchases.⁸⁰ Though limited to a few pages of brief entries, his notes reveal a thorough awareness of the most important works and currents that circulated in English-speaking Jewish intellectual circles. The notebook is inscribed “Catalogue of Religious Works (more particularly in the Jewish Religion),” but the fragmentary information shows that Morais possessed a large variety of volumes of a Jewish and a general nature. According to the list (which does not identify the specific editions),⁸¹ Morais purchased, inter alia, the seventeenth-century Dutch Sephardic printer Menasseh ben Israel’s famous biblical commentary *Conciliador*;⁸² the English translation of the *Phaedon*, a dialogue on the immortality of the soul by Moses Mendelssohn, the eighteenth-century icon of Jewish enlightenment; the English translation of “Letters of [Certain Jews to Monseieur] Voltaire” (an apologetic response to Voltaire’s attack on the Jews); David Levi’s “Dissertations” and “Letter to Joseph Priestly,” on the limits of deism and in defense of religious liberty; Robert Lowth’s “Isaiah” and “Hebrew Poetry”; Johann Herder’s “Spirit of Hebrew Poetry” (in English translation), treating the aesthetic dimensions of sacred scripture; Bernard Picart’s “Religious Ceremonies of All Nations” (in English translation); the “Political and Literary History of the Jews in Spain,” by Don Joseph Amador de Los Rios (in English translation); Georges-Bernard Depping’s “History of the Jews in the Middle Ages” (in English or French translation), with his notable sections on the economic history of the Jews; and various types of belles lettres, such as the Victorian Jewish poet and novelist Grace Aguilar’s “Women of Israel,” as well as a work by the famous American orator Edward Everett. Morais subscribed to various Jewish periodicals published in England and America (the *Voice of Jacob*, the *Hebrew Review*, the *Occident*, and the *Asmonean*). According to the notebook, he sought and may have acquired a copy of Julius Fuerst’s *Bibliographica*,⁸³ one of the most important bibliographies of Hebrew printed books available in the nineteenth century. His notebook shows that he purchased many of these works from booksellers abroad in London, Paris, and Italy, as well as in the United States.⁸⁴

There also appear entries for works concerning biblical philology, archaeology, and geology, including a clipping of an advertisement for “An Answer to Hugh Miller and Theoretic Geologists,” by Thomas Davies, and other works, mostly on the Bible, such as Sir Edward Strachey’s “Hebrew Politics in the Times of Sargon” and Isidore Kalisch’s “Historical Critical Commem-

tary on the Old Testament Hebrew and English.” Intriguing is a purchase note for “One Thousand and One Arabian Nights” in the original Arabic published in four volumes, along with an Arabic grammar by Faris El Shidac, which suggests that Morais had some facility with Arabic. Morais also kept abreast of Christian missionary and polemical tracts, such as Joseph Frey’s “Letters and Articles on Judaism.” Frey was a Jewish-born convert to Christianity and founder in April 1820 of the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, a Christian missionary group.⁸⁵ These kinds of reading materials formed the core of his personal library; he also made them available to visitors to his home, which served as a kind of informal literary salon where he tutored students.⁸⁶ His daughter Nina continued this practice after moving to Minneapolis, where she hosted a weekly Sabbath study group at her home.⁸⁷

A leather-bound notebook containing the loan entries made for the Hebrew Education Society “Maimonides College Library” during the 1880s discloses additional information about what Morais was reading and teaching.⁸⁸ In August of 1880, for example, Morais borrowed a copy of “Mishnah Nezikin” (which contains, notably, the beloved ethical tractate called “Pirke Abot”), presumably for study and teaching. The latter purpose appears to be confirmed by his student Solomon Solis-Cohen’s renewing the same title in November of 1880. Additional entries show Morais having in his possession French and Hebrew editions of the travels of Benjamin of Tudela as well as the French translation of volume one of Maimonides’ *Moreh Nebukhim* (Guide of the Perplexed), with Salomon Munk’s notes. More surprising, perhaps, are notations during 1883 showing Morais borrowing a copy of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, providing evidence that he knew his work firsthand.⁸⁹ To the right of the entry appears the number “546,” which was Morais’ home address on Fifth Street, suggesting he took the book home with him and did not merely consult it as a day loan in the Hebrew Education Society building. On August 28, 1884, we find on loan to Miss Gertrude Hahn, a member of Congregation Mikveh Israel, an unspecified work about the Inquisition, and in June of 1885, Cyrus Adler, a Morais disciple, borrowed the poetry of Dryden, and the works of Locke and Milton on education. This highly abbreviated list of reading materials speaks not only to what presumably was being read but also what was being discussed through direct instruction, public address, publications, and indirectly by allusion to the various sources and via informal conversation.

In the years following the Civil War a second generation of Jewish literary

associations formed in Philadelphia, and with them came a broader mission. In this period, the emphasis shifted from small-scale mutual improvement to strengthening Jewish community ties in general, both through opportunities for young, single Jews to meet and socialize with their coreligionists and through the acquisition of a more advanced, sophisticated understanding of Jewish history, culture, and learning. The establishment and development of these youth-oriented cultural and educational institutions, however, remained central to Morais’ implementation of his programmatic Sephardic vision of Jewish regeneration. There is clear historical evidence for his continuous efforts in this regard after the Civil War.

The first postbellum Jewish literary society in Philadelphia, named the “Hebrew Association,” appeared in 1873 and received Morais’ approbation and “active assistance.” Reportedly, Morais served as its president “for a while”⁹⁰ and addressed the association’s members at all its meetings.⁹¹ On the broadside promoting the Hebrew Association, printed in Philadelphia in a variety of bold and italicized fonts of different sizes and dated December 15, 1873, we learn that its stated purpose was to “gain an insight into the Jewish learning of the past” through the study of all subjects that “may expand the range of human thought and impart a knowledge of what is good and useful.”⁹² The rallying cry at the end of the broadside summed up the spirit, if not the reality, of the association: “Fellow Israelites: Let us endeavor to rekindle the love of letters among those who have inherited a rich and varied literature.”⁹³

The social composition of the membership, which “gradually increased until it numbered about fifty or more,” is not exactly known, but from the association’s published list of officers, we know that women did not hold leadership positions. Membership was not based exclusively on class, though clearly the association appealed to the wealthier members of Philadelphia Jewish society. Most telling perhaps was the relatively high subscription fee charged to help maintain the Hebrew Association’s library of “Standard works and Journals”: an “initiation fee of ONE DOLLAR [caps in original] and a yearly subscription of three dollars payable by instalments [sic!] the first week of every month.”⁹⁴

Nathan Weissenstein, the association’s founder, first president, and a student of Morais from the city’s Jewish Foster Home, was an exception to the social profile. The majority of the officers included the sons of prominent Jewish leaders. These young men, such as Lewis W. Steinbach, Hyman P. Binswanger, Harry B. Sommer, and David Solis-Cohen, also happened to be

Morais' students from Congregation Mikveh Israel. Another officer, Jacob Voorsanger, would later become a prominent rabbi in San Francisco. Marcus E. Lam, a student of Morais from Maimonides College, served as secretary.⁹⁵

Members met at different locations every two weeks, where they regularly heard lectures with a "Jewish tinge" and attended a variety of musical performances and recitals. Formal debates and informal, sometimes fiery arguments were also part of the social experience: "On a certain occasion, a Mr. Pearsall delivered a lecture,⁹⁶ in which he gave a clever expose—by means of stories—of Spiritualism. The address was exceedingly entertaining but it aroused the wrath of a certain Professor Rehn [Isaac Rehn was the president of the "Harmonial Society of Philadelphia"],⁹⁷ a Spiritualist, who was at that time giving a series of séances at Handel and Haydn Hall. He [Rehn] argued against the speaker, and said that he had long been convinced of the truth of Spiritualism. This led to his engagement to speak at a subsequent meeting of the Association."⁹⁸

A more famous and direct outgrowth of the Hebrew Association was the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), established two years later in May of 1875. Many of the YMHA programs, according to its founders, were patterned on the activities of the Hebrew Association.⁹⁹ The YMHA also drew its inspiration from the establishment of a YMHA in New York the previous year. In Philadelphia, most though not all (some Hebrew Association members did not embrace the new institution)¹⁰⁰ of its founders previously belonged to the Hebrew Association. In the "Preamble to the Constitution and By-Laws" of the YMHA we learn that membership was by subscription and that the purpose of the society was "to promote a higher culture among the young men and to unite them in a liberal organization which shall tend to their moral, intellectual, and social improvement, hereby agree to form the Young Men's Hebrew Association." Women were not offered formal membership as "Active members," a category reserved for "male Israelites" over the age of twenty. Still, women were quite active in its programming, both as planners and as speakers. Morais' daughter Nina Morais, for example, received a prize for an essay she wrote and publicly delivered.¹⁰¹ Other women known to have been involved include the aforementioned Mary M. Cohen, her sister Katherine Cohen, Ida Casseres, Bessie Davidson, Freda Jonas, Clara Kaufman, Esther Solis, Ida Sternstein, and Julia Weiler. The YMHA regularly presented lectures "on Jewish and current topics," held "entertainments of a social, musical, dramatic, and literary character," and had an "Associate Organization or branch, composed of junior members between the

ages of 16 and 21 years"—a group that included young women. The YMHA, thus, was a meeting place outside the synagogue where Jewish teenagers and young men and women in their twenties could socialize, read, perform, debate, and promote their distinctive cultural and religious identities.

Reading in these public settings was often out loud or performed, especially in the form of public addresses and musical entertainments, in which sheet music reading played a critical role.¹⁰² In Mary M. Cohen's scrapbook, we find a program for the "Young Men's Hebrew Association. Season 1877-78," whose opening entertainment on "Tuesday Evn'g, October 2d, 1877 at Musical Fund Hall" featured Franz von Suppe's comic opera *Fantinitza* arranged by H. Hahn, with accompanying orchestra; an address by Mayer Sulzberger, followed by Miss C. Long singing "Bliss Forever Past"; then a performance of the French composer Daniel Francois Espirit Auber's overture *Le Cheval de Bronze* (The Bronze Horse); A. Roggenburger performed a violin solo composed by the Belgian composer Charles August De Beriot, and Julius Kaufman gave a recitation of "The Ghost" by Gaetano Donizetti, another famous composer, from Bergamo, near Milan. Between Auber's overture and De Beriot's "6th Air" violin solo, Emanuel Cohen, the future husband of Nina Morais, read his first-prize essay, "The Philosophy of Carlyle," to the audience. By 1877, two years after its founding, the association already was hosting such extravagant programs and publishing its own monthly literary review. Beginning in 1881, the YMHA began publishing a bi-monthly called the *Association Bulletin*, but it only survived two years.¹⁰³

As the title of the "Young" Men's Hebrew Association explicitly states, and as its constitution and by-laws confirm, these Jewish literary societies clearly represented a youth-driven push for new forms of sociability. Note, however, that the early officer and membership lists of the YMHA demonstrate that the preponderance of the young men and women active in the Philadelphia YMHA were affiliated with Congregation Mikveh Israel, or otherwise knew Morais from his involvement with them at the Hebrew Association, as a teacher at the Hebrew Sunday School, at the Hebrew Education Society, at the Jewish Foster Home, and/or at Maimonides College.¹⁰⁴ The YMHA librarians, for example—first Jacob Voorsanger, followed by Lewis Steinbach, on the recommendation of Ellen Philips, the superintendent of the Hebrew Sunday School Society—were both former Hebrew Association members. The leading spirit of this generation's keeper of the books was Nathan Weissenstein, "an alumnus of the Jewish Foster Home, intensely religious, full of Hebraic zeal, but of frail physique." (He died three years later in 1878.) Weis-

enstein also had served as the first librarian of the Hebrew Sunday School Society when it launched its library.¹⁰⁵

Weissenstein, Morais' Foster Home pupil, reportedly was credited by the majority of his peers as being the chief founder of the YMHA. Nonetheless, Mayer Sulzberger, the first president of the YMHA, a disciple of Isaac Leeser, and witness to the controversies of the 1850s that divided Leeser and Morais loyalists, is generally recognized to have been the most important intellectual and administrative figure in the growth of the Philadelphia YMHA. At the same time, Morais remained a behind-the-scenes mentor and supporter of the YMHA and also delivered innumerable public lectures before its members.

By the end of the 1870s, the literary associations had taken on a new role as the locus for planning public events. During this time, organized missionary activities and anti-Jewish discrimination was growing. The evangelical preaching of Moody and Sankey, for example, at mass outdoor events that attracted thousands, was the most visible face of these Protestant revival movements.¹⁰⁶ These revivals did not leave Philadelphia's Jewish community unaffected, and the young people involved with the YMHA launched a counteroffensive for what they called a "revived Judaism."¹⁰⁷ Speaking out from their literary societies, they pledged to defend Jews and Judaism against the newly intensifying threats of conversion and other forms of anti-Jewish hostility.¹⁰⁸

According to documents discovered by Jonathan Sarna, a select group of members of the YMHAs of Philadelphia and New York joined together in October of 1879 to form a secret society called *Keyam Dishmaya* (from the Aramaic, meaning roughly "rise up for the sake of Heaven")¹⁰⁹ with the aim of promoting Sabbath observance, reviving Jewish ritual observances, and resisting these new threats to Jewish life. These young activists called for a "Grand Revival of the Jewish National Holiday of Chanucka" to be held at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia on December 16, 1879.¹¹⁰ In subsequent years, Sarna points out, Cyrus Adler (a Morais disciple) would refer to their "revival of Jewish learning" as an American Jewish "renaissance" that pointed back to the events of 1879.¹¹¹

This revival of Jewish learning, I would like to suggest, did not stem only from resistance to imminent threats and forces. In Philadelphia, at least, it also harked back to and reflected the decades of religious and cultural education Morais self-consciously nurtured in the young activists. The program Morais launched in the 1850s to cultivate a new generation of young Jewish leaders, to inculcate in them a sense of duty toward Jewish traditions, and to regenerate through them ritual observances in America preceded and condi-

tioned the forms of resistance we find at the end of the 1870s. This is not to argue for a "great man" version of Victorian Jewish acculturation in Philadelphia, however charismatic and beloved Morais may have been; rather, it reinforces the argument for the isomorphic appeal of his teachings with the cultural situation of the time.

During the 1880s, a third generation of Jewish literary societies came to the fore in Philadelphia. These societies often were named after famous literary and political figures that were becoming canonical during the last two decades of the century. Acculturated Victorian Jews exhibited a clear desire to identify themselves with these non-Jewish icons. Among the names of this generation's Jewish literary societies were the "Irving," named after the author Washington Irving, whose presidents, David Solis-Cohen and Harry B. Sommers, formerly served as officers at the original Hebrew Association; the "Whittier Society," after the poet James Greenleaf Whittier; the "Longfellow," after Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; the "Tennyson," after Lord Alfred Tennyson; and the "Robert Browning Society." There were also Jewish literary societies and social clubs named explicitly after Jews, suggesting that already in the 1880s the formation of a kind of parallel Jewish cultural canon was under way. These included a "Leeser Society" (it would seem that Leeser was already becoming a canonical figure for American Jews within twenty years of his death); and nearby, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, we find a Moses Mendelssohn literary society. Among the Jewish social clubs that existed in Philadelphia during the 1880s, we find the "Montefiore Social" and the "D'Israeli Society," named, respectively, after nineteenth-century England's most famous Jew and Jewish convert (who nonetheless was claimed as "Jewish" for the political successes and heights he attained). In addition to these extra-synagogal literary associations, there were also a number of associations connected with Philadelphia's synagogues. Among them were the Auxiliary Association of Rodeph Shalom, which then became the Jewish Culture Association; the Mikveh Israel Association; Adath Jeshurun's "Our Students of Jewish History"; and the "Knowledge Seekers," attached to the Reform congregation Keneset Israel (under the leadership of Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, the first American-born ordained Reform rabbi) and which later was called the Lyceum.¹¹² Perhaps the most innovative change within the Victorian Jewish cultural model was the founding of an immigrant "Hebrew Literature Society" in 1888, which itself was an outgrowth of a library established by garment workers and cigar makers in 1887.¹¹³

As part of their stated mission, all these literary societies began building

libraries to supply their reading rooms. Perhaps the single most important private collection of books and pamphlets of Judaica Americana assembled in the nineteenth century belonged to the aforementioned editor of the *Occident*, Isaac Leeser. His personal collection grew over the years as he became a well-known personality to whom various works were sent for publication or review. After Leeser's death in February of 1868, the lifetime bachelor bequeathed his collection to Maimonides College, one of his most cherished achievements as an institution builder.¹¹⁴ For Leeser, the building up of the college's library was of prime importance. Leeser's personal library came to form the core collection of the college's holdings, supplemented by new acquisitions. When Maimonides College closed in 1873, five years after Leeser's death, the Maimonides College Library, also known as the "Leeser library," was transferred to the Hebrew Education Society, another of Leeser's pioneer institutions. The Hebrew Education Society/Leeser Library continued to grow until 1912, when, in a public ceremony, it was formally transferred to the newly established Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, with Cyrus Adler, the college's first operating president, presiding. The Leeser Library/HES Library today forms the core of the Dropsie collection of Judaica Americana, which now belongs to the library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.¹¹⁵

Today, the two most important private collections of nineteenth-century Judaica Americana—those of Leeser and Joshua I. Cohen—are held under one roof at the Library at the Katz Center at the University of Pennsylvania. Together with the collections at Gratz College, the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center at Temple University, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Library Company, the Rosenbach Museum and Library, the American Philosophical Society, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and in conjunction with many of the historic synagogue archives in the city, Philadelphia is home to the incunabula of Victorian Jewish cultural production. In short, what was read and what was printed in Philadelphia forms the basis for any serious inquiry into the history of reading and Jewish readers in the Victorian world.

Postscript

The Leeser Library and personal papers collection are how I came to know Leah Levitz Fishbane. Early on in her graduate career Leah came to Philadelphia to research the Philadelphia group and the renaissance and revival of Jewish learning associated with them. In 2006, the Penn Libraries hired her

to work on our newly formed "American Genizah Project," whose pilot archival collection for cataloging, transcription, and digitization was that of Isaac Leeser. Leah made significant contributions to the development of our cataloging template and was the first to provide transcriptions in Hebrew font of original material. Her participation in our project will not be forgotten, and her memory will remain for a blessing.

NOTES

1. I would like to express my deep appreciation to Eitan Fishbane, Adam Mendelsohn, and Jonathan Sarna for their insightful criticisms and great encouragement in helping me to complete this essay.

2. This time period is often designated by the adjective "Victorian," roughly corresponding to the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901). Scholars such as Carl Degler and Michel Foucault have enlarged the term's scope to encompass social life in America and France during the same time period. See Carl Degler, "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review*, vol. 79, no. 5 (December 1974), pp. 146–90; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977; 2nd edition, Vintage Books, 1995); idem, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978; 2nd edition, Vintage Books, 1990). In a broad sense, the term has come to refer to a geographical and cultural space, what has been called an "Atlantic community, a transatlantic culture that tells us more about Victorian attitudes and institutions than we could learn from a single nation." See the introduction to *Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France and the United States*, ed. Eran Olafson Hellerstein, Leslie Parker Hume, and Karen M. Offen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1981). In speaking about a Victorian period in American history during the mid-nineteenth century, scholars like Daniel Ward Howe point to the emergence of American middle-class occupational patterns, such as entrance into the liberal professions (law, medicine, ministry and teaching); cultural phenomena such as fraternalism, voluntary and literary associations; and a variety of reform movements aimed at moral improvement and social control (e.g., the creation of asylums for the insane and the orphaned; penitentiaries and penal reform; the abolition of slavery, corporal punishment, and the death penalty; and the temperance movement). See the special issue on "Victorian Culture in America" edited by Daniel Walker Howe, *American Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 5 (December 1975), and especially Howe's essay, "American Victorianism as a Culture," pp. 507–32, reprinted with some modifications and additions as *Victorian America*, edited with an introductory essay by Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

3. On the history of reading, see especially Roger Chartier, "Texts, Printings, Readings," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 154–75; *Reading in America: Literature and Social*

History, ed. Cathy N. Davidson (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Robert Darnton, "History of Reading," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992; 2nd ed. 2001), pp. 140–67; *Readers in History: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Contexts of Response*, ed. James L. Machor (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Richard H. Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Viking Press, 1996); Anthony Grafton, "Is History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise?" *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 91 (1997), pp. 139–57; *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

4. Chartier, introduction to *A History of Reading in the West*, pp. 3–5.

5. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structural Criticism*, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 141–60, as cited and discussed by Chartier in Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 29–32. The essay has been reprinted several times, including perhaps most conveniently in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 101–20.

6. Chartier, *Forms and Meanings*, pp. 2–5, 89, and p. 28, and p. 99, n. 8, citing Donald F. McKenzie, "The Book as an Expressive Form," *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts: The Panizzi Lectures 1985* (London: The British Library, 1986), pp. 1–21.

7. I refer here to literacy levels for Hebrew and/or English, both of which were assigned the status of literary languages during this time, unlike Yiddish, for example, which was treated by many in the acculturating classes as an unrefined "jargon."

8. Introduction to *Judaica Americana: A Bibliography of Publications to 1900*, comp. Robert Singerman, 2 vols. (New York; Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. xxviii.

9. On the Dobson Bible, see most recently Yosef Goldman, *Hebrew Printing in America, 1735–1926: A History and Annotated Bibliography*, research and editing by Ari Kinsberg, 2 vols. (Brooklyn, NY: Yosef Goldman, 2006), vol. 1, p. 1, and entry four, p. 6. Goldman writes in his introduction to his first subject section (on Bibles), "We have not seen any copies of Dobson's Bibles that contain evidence of Jewish ownership" (Goldman, *Hebrew Printing*, vol. 1, p. 1). For the copies at the University of Pennsylvania previously owned by Jews (call number: BS715 1814), see the Penn Libraries Catalog (www.franklin.library.upenn.edu):

TITLE: Biblia Hebraica Torah, nevi'im ketivim; secundum ultimam editionem Jos. Athiae, a Johanne Leusden denuo recognitam, recensita variisque notis latinis illustrata ab Everardo van der Hooght, V. D. M.

PUBLISHER: Philadelphiae: cura et impensis Thomae Dobson edita ex Aedibus lapideis. Typis Gulielmi Fry. MDCCCXIV.

DESCRIPTION: Book 2 v. 22 cm.

NOTES: First Hebrew Bible printed in America. v. 1–2 are from the collection of David Sulzberger, v. 1–2, c. 2 are From the collection of Robert Dearden. c. 2 is a gift of Cyrus Adler.

LOCAL NOTE(S): v. 1–2 (c. 1–2) is a gift of Cyrus Adler.

Similarly, among Judaica bibliographers, a distinction is sometimes made between Judaica and Hebraica. A modern Israeli publication written in Hebrew that is not preponderantly concerned with Jews or Judaism, therefore, would not fall into the category of "Judaica."

10. For the population statistics cited here, see Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham, NY; London: University Press of America, 1990):

Jewish Population of Philadelphia and the United States, 1830–1900

YEAR	PHILADELPHIA	UNITED STATES	PERCENTAGE OF U.S. POPULATION
1830	750	5–6,000	0.05
1860	10,000	150,000	0.47
1880	15,000	250,000	0.50
1900	40,000	1,058,000	1.39

11. For Jewish population figures for Philadelphia, and in comparison with other Jewish and general American population figures, see the figures collected in Marcus, *To Count a People*, pp. 193–194 and pp. 237–241; Edwin Wolf 2nd, "The German-Jewish Influence in Philadelphia's Jewish Charities," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830–1940*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: Ishi Publications/Institute for Human Issues, 1983), p. 325, n. 4; Harry S. Linfield, *Statistics of Jews and Jewish Organizations: Historical Review of Ten Censuses, 1850–1937* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1939); and *Statistics of the Jews of the United States, Compiled under the authority of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations* (Philadelphia: [BDAI and UAHC], 1880), p. 5. See Julius L. Greifer, "Neighborhood Centre—a Study of the Adjustment of a Cultural Group in America" (PhD diss., New York University, 1948), pp. 104–10, for a discussion and figures for general population trends in Philadelphia and the United States, compiled from the U.S. Census, between 1790 and 1940.

12. For a discussion of some of these institutions, see *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830–1940*, ed. Friedman. On the history of the Jewish Publication Society, including its forerunner, the American Jewish Publication Society, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1989).

13. On the founding of the Hebrew Sunday School, see Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), pp. 121–69, and more generally Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

14. There have been a number of studies of Leeser and the contents of the *Occident*. See Lance J. Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), passim, for the most authoritative study, and see further below.

15. On the American Jewish Publication Society, see *Constitution and By-Laws of the American Jewish Publication Society, (founded on the 9th of Heshvan). Adopted at Philadelphia on Sunday, November 30, 1845, Kislev 1, 5605* (Philadelphia, 5606 [1845]), copy at the Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania (henceforth CAJSL); Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia: Their History from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: The Levy-type Company, 5654/1894), pp. 175–76; Solomon Grayzel, “The First American Jewish Publication Society,” *Jewish Book Annual* (1944), pp. 42–44, which provides a list of the projected series of publications and the statement of purpose; and especially the authoritative study by Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 1–4, as well as Sussman, *Isaac Leeser*, pp. 152–54.

16. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia. Adopted at a Town Meeting of Israelites on Sunday, Sivan 3, 5608, June 4, 1848* (Philadelphia, 5608 [1848]), copy at the CAJSL. Morais anonymously wrote the first history of the Hebrew Education Society (HES), in Hebrew, sometime between 1889 and 1893, and signed it in the name of Moses Aaron Dropsie, at that time “Chief Director” of the institution. See Menahem M. Glenn, *Rabbi Sabato Morais’ Report on the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia* (Cincinnati, 1958), reprinted from *Essays in American Jewish History, to Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Jewish Archives under the Direction of Jacob Rader Marcus* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1958), pp. 407–24, for the Hebrew text and English translation. See also *Fifty Years of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, 1848–1898* (Philadelphia, 1899), p. 20, for a reprinting of the act of incorporation, and also see H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 154–60, for an early sketch of the history of the HES.

17. Bertram Wallace Korn, “The First American Jewish Theological Seminary: Maimonides College, 1867–1873,” in *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati: The American Jewish Archives, 1954), pp. 151–213.

18. On Philadelphia’s Jewish “firsts,” see Bertram Wallace Korn, “1655–1901,” in *Seventy-Five Years of Continuity and Change: Our Philadelphia Jewish Community in Perspective*, reprint of the seventy-fifth anniversary supplement published by the (Philadelphia) *Jewish Exponent*, March 12, 1976, pp. 3–16. Korn credits Isaac Leeser as the leading force behind what he calls a “program of Jewish revival: introducing changes into the pattern of the congregation’s life, publishing original works and translations as well, and stimulating the organization of agencies for the strengthening of American Judaism.”

19. On Dropsie College, see Arthur Kiron, “The Professionalization of Wisdom: The Legacy of Dropsie College and Its Library,” in *The Penn Library Collections at 250: From Franklin to the Web* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Library, 2000), pp. 182–201, and additional sources cited there. Also available online at <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/at250/dropsie/ak.pdf>.

20. For general information about Philadelphia’s Jewish literary associations, see

H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 162–72; also see J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1884), 2:1099–1224, for a detailed history of the (non-Jewish and Jewish) literary culture and associations in Philadelphia up to 1884.

21. See Lance J. Sussman, “Isaac Leeser and the ‘Philadelphia Pattern,’” in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute Press; Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993), pp. 24–26.

22. Solomon Solis-Cohen, “The Philadelphia Group,” *Judaism and Science with Other Addresses and Papers from the Writings of Solomon Solis-Cohen* (Philadelphia: Privately printed, 1940), pp. 246–52. On Solis-Cohen, see also Philip Rosen, “Dr. Solomon Solis-Cohen and the Philadelphia Group,” in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Friedman, pp. 106–25.

23. Solis-Cohen, “The Philadelphia Group,” pp. 246–47.

24. For information about the Cohen family, see H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 64–69, and the Charles J. and Mary M. Cohen Collection at the CAJSL, MS 3, and the finding aid to the collection, Box 1, FF 1.

25. Letter from Samuel Mendelsohn (coeditor of the *Jewish Index*) to Mary M. Cohen, Philadelphia, November 22, 1872, written on the letterhead of the “Office of the Jewish Index, 413 Chestnut Street.” See Mary M. Cohen scrapbook, Charles and Mary M. Cohen Collection, CAJSL, Box 4.

26. Dianne Ashton, “Crossing Boundaries: The Career of Mary M. Cohen,” *American Jewish History*, vol. 83, no. 2 (1995), pp. 153–76.

27. On Nina Morais Cohen, see the entry by Judith E. Endelman in *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Paula E. Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore, 2 vols. (New York; London: Routledge, 1999), 1:248–49 and additional bibliography provided there, and note H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 319–20, who recounts how the burden of domestic responsibilities shifted to Nina, the oldest of seven children, upon the loss of their mother.

28. *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830–1940*, ed. Friedman (see n. 11).

29. *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Friedman, pp. 9–21. In conjunction with these ongoing efforts to study the “Philadelphia Group,” Dianne Ashton produced an invaluable research bibliography of primary and secondary sources: *The Philadelphia Group: A Guide to Archival and Bibliographic Collections* (Philadelphia: The Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University, 1993).

30. On Leeser and his break with Mikveh Israel, see *A Review of the Late Controversy Between the Rev. Isaac Leeser and the Congregation Mikveh Israel* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1850) and *A Review of “The Review” of the Late Controversy Between the Rev. Isaac Leeser and the Philadelphia Congregation “Mikve Israel” by an Israelite* (Philadelphia: Published at the Office of the Asmonean, 1850) (*Judaica Americana*, comp. Singerman, 1:227, nos. 1158 and 1159), copies held in the Leeser Library at the CAJSL. See Sussman, *Isaac Leeser*, pp. 155–78; Maxine Sellers, “Isaac Leeser, Architect of the American Jewish Community” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1965), pp. 19–20.

31. Sellers, “Isaac Leeser,” pp. 19–20.

32. Philip Rosen, "Orthodox Institution Builder: Rabbi Bernard Lewis [sic] Levinthal," in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, pp. 126-44.

33. See Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in Nineteenth Century America* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1963), passim and esp. pp. 342-44 for a biographical sketch.

34. For additional background about Marcus Jastrow and his tenure at Rodeph Shalom, see H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 76-78, and Edward Davis, *The History of Rodeph Shalom Congregation Philadelphia, 1802-1926*, with an Introduction by Rabbi Louis Wolsey (Philadelphia: Press of Edward Stern & Co., 1926), pp. 81-98.

35. Martin P. Beifield Jr., "The Americanization of Reform Judaism: Joseph Krauskopf—a Case Study," in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, pp. 156-72.

36. For other examples of conflicts, such as between Sulzberger and Krauskopf, see Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 53-54. My thanks to Jonathan Sarna for pointing out this example to me.

37. For the account of Morais' last moments of reading, see Charles Hoffman, "Memorial Tribute," (Philadelphia) *Jewish Exponent*, November 19, 1897, p. 2.

38. This discussion of the social history of reading builds on previous research that I published: Arthur Kiron, "Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais' Program of Sephardic Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America," in *Renewing the Past, Reconfiguring Jewish Culture: From al-Andalus to the Haskalah*, ed. Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 121-45, and especially pp. 133-37 regarding translation and the Sephardic cultural paradigm.

39. *Judaica Americana*, comp. Singerman, see esp. index, 2:1263-64, from where these statistics have been compiled.

40. Sharona Wachs, *American Jewish Liturgies: A Bibliography of American Jewish Liturgy from the Establishment of the Press in the Colonies through 1925*, historical introduction by Karla Goldman, liturgical introduction by Eric L. Friedland (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997).

41. *Judaica Americana*, comp. Singerman, index, s.v. "Philadelphia."

42. See the rare advertisers to the *Occident*, a bound volume of which is held at the CAJSL.

43. *Ibid.*

44. On American Jewish journalism and publishing during this time, see the comprehensive bibliography of nineteenth-century serials (in English, German, Hebrew, Yiddish) in *Judaica Americana*, comp. Singerman, 2:931-1070. On the American Jewish press in Philadelphia in the nineteenth century, see H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 356-59; on the Jewish press in the United States in the nineteenth century, see Mayer Sulzberger, "Jewish Journalism," *Occident*, vol. 26, no. 6 (September 1868), pp. 241-49; Albert M. Freidenberg, "American Jewish Journalism to the Close of the Civil War," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 26 (1918), pp. 270-73; Robert Singerman, "The American Jewish Press, 1823-1983: A Bibliographic Survey of Research and Studies," *American Jewish History*, vol. 73, no. 4 (June 1984), pp. 422-44; Arthur A. Goren, "The Jewish Press," *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, ed. Sally M. Miller (New York; Westport, CT; and London:

Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 203-28; and for additional comparative perspective, see most recently *Outsiders in Nineteenth Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives*, ed. Frankie Hutton and Barbara Strauss Reed (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996).

45. On Leeser, see Sussman, *Isaac Leeser*.

46. On the subscribers to the *Occident* and subscription lists to other antebellum American Jewish periodicals, see Rudolf Glanz, "Where the Jewish Press Was Distributed in Pre-Civil War America," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*, vol. 5 (1972-73), pp. 1-14. According to Glanz, "254 settlement points in thirty-three states and territories were reached by the *Occident* during the eighteen years of its antebellum existence." I am grateful to Arthur Aryeh Goren for calling to my attention and sending me a copy of this article.

47. On Leeser and the *Occident*, as well as his other publishing ventures, see Sussman, *Isaac Leeser*, pp. 136-48, and Arthur Kiron, "An Atlantic Jewish Republic of Letters?" *Jewish History*, vol. 20 (2006), pp. 171-211, esp. pp. 178-81; for examples of non-Jewish readers of the *Occident*, see, e.g., C. D. Oliver (Pastor of M. E. Church, Montgomery, Mass.) to Isaac Leeser, 20 October 1852, found in the Isaac Leeser Collection, CAJSL, Box 9, FF 14; Henry W. Ducachet (Rector of St. Stephen's Church) to [Isaac Leeser?], August 21, 1840; John Bilton O'Neill to Isaac Leeser, August 8, 1848. The last two letters are held in the private collection of Arnold Kaplan and are cited with his permission.

48. *Sidur Sifte tsadikim. kolel seder ha-tefilot mi-kol ha-shanah ke-minhag kehilat ha-kodesh sefaradim. . . . The Form of Prayers According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews. Edited and with the Former Translations Carefully Compared and Corrected by Isaac Leeser*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia, 5597-98 [1837-38]). Cf. Kiron, "An Atlantic Jewish Republic of Letters?" p. 181. Interestingly, Leeser refers to himself in Hebrew on the title page as the "shaliah tsibur" (public emissary [to the divine], i.e., the reader of prayers) of Congregation Mikveh Israel, not as the hazan. On the early history of English translations of the Jewish liturgy, see S. Singer, "Early Translations and Translators of the Jewish Liturgy in England," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, vol. 3 (1896-98), pp. 36-71, and pp. 56-71 on David Levi. See also Sussman, *Isaac Leeser*, pp. 55, 159. On David Levi in particular and the Anglo-Jewish turn to vernacular translation in the eighteenth century in general, see Richard H. Popkin, "David Levi, Anglo-Jewish Theologian," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 87, nos. 1-2 (1996), pp. 79-101, and especially David Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 57-88 and 215-268.

49. [Isaac Leeser], *Catechism for younger children: designed as a familiar exposition of the Jewish religion* [1st ed.] (Philadelphia: Printed for the author by Adam Waldie, 5599 [1839]).

50. *Sefer Divre tsadikim. . . . The Book of Daily Prayers for Every Day in the Year. According to the Custom of the German and Polish Jews*, ed. Isaac Leeser (Philadelphia, 5608 [1848]). In both editions (i.e., *Sidur Sifte tsadikim* and *Sefer Divre tsadikim*), whose pagination went from right to left, the English translation faced the Hebrew text on the

opposite page, almost as if Leeser meant to imitate Jews in America proudly facing their heritage. See also Sussman, *Isaac Leeser*, pp. 13, 157–59, and 283, n. 3.

51. On the “Leeser Bible” see Lance J. Sussman, “Another Look at Isaac Leeser and the First Jewish Translation of the Bible in the United States,” *Modern Judaism*, vol. 5 (1985), pp. 159–90.

52. *Constitution and By-Laws of the American Jewish Publication Society, (founded on 9th of Heshvan). Adopted at Philadelphia on Sunday, November 30, 1845, Kislev 5605* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 5606 [1845]).

53. [Isaac Leeser]. “Address of the Jewish Publication Committee to the Israelites of America,” preface to the *Jewish Miscellany* [no. 1 Caleb Asher] (Philadelphia, 5605 [1845]), p. 2. See Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 461–63, for an annotated reprinting of this address. On this early moment in Anglo-Jewish literary production, in particular the works of Aguilar and Elizabeth, see Nadia Valman, *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Literary Culture* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, pp. 261–68, regarding Hurwitz’ *Hebrew Tales*, a rabbinic anthology in English, which first appeared in London in 1826. Unfortunately, Leeser’s early venture to institutionalize Jewish publishing in America suffered a disastrous fate when a fire in December of 1851 destroyed his inventory. See especially Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 3–4, and his evaluation of the logistical and commercial difficulties Leeser’s failed efforts also faced.

54. The relationship between the reading activities under discussion here, private library collecting, and the growth of Jewish libraries is a critical topic still in need of investigation. In the American context, the pioneering study of what Robert Singerman calls “Jewish library culture” is that of his article “Books Weeping for Someone to Visit and Admire Them: Jewish Library Culture in the United States, 1850–1910,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. 20 (1998), pp. 99–144.

55. For the authoritative study of Rebecca Gratz, see Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*.

56. On Morais, see Arthur Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands: The Victorian Rabbinic Humanism of Sabato Morais” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1999). Original documents from the Sabato Morais Papers, held at the Library of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, will be cited below as SM-CJS, Box, and File Folder (FF). Regarding Morais’ tenure, see Pamela S. Nadell, *Conservative Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), p. 192.

57. See Sabato Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*, ed. Julius H. Greenstone, with a foreword by Henry S. Morais (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1926), pp. 68–69.

58. Sabato Morais, “A Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day, November 27th, 1851 by the Rev. S. Morais, Minister of Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia,” printed in the *Asmonean* (New York), December 12, 1851, p. 181; a clipping of this printed sermon is pasted into Morais’ personal scrapbook, p. 2. For further discussion, see Kiron, “Varieties

of Haskalah,” p. 124. For a different view, attributing this to Leeser, see Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 76ff. Leeser, as well as the rhetoric of regeneration, clearly preceded Morais’ arrival in America; however, the argument being made here is that while Leeser is to be credited for pioneering the institutional forms discussed here that were meant to regenerate Jewish life in America, Morais came to fill those forms with his own intellectual presence and Sephardic rabbinic humanist learning, which he programmatically transmitted to the young people who came under his care.

59. On the various ideas regarding regeneration, amelioration, rehabilitation, occupational diversification, and productivization of the Jews in European social, political, and economic thought during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Jonathan Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe, 1638–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 94–134, 145–47, 150, 160–62, 202–7. For the French example, see Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *Regenerating the World: The Abbe Gregoire and the French Revolution: The Making of Modern Universalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

60. On the Abbe Gregoire and regeneration, see Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, “Strategic Friendships: Jewish Intellectuals, the Abbe Gregoire, and the French Revolution,” in *Renewing the Past, Reconfiguring Jewish Culture*, pp. 189–212, and her book-length monograph, *Regenerating the World*.

61. Mary Kelley, “Reading Women/Women Reading: The Making of Learned Women in Antebellum America,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 83, no. 2 (September 1996), p. 403.

62. *Ibid.*

63. Kelly, “Reading Women,” pp. 404 and 406–9; notable authors and works included Hannah Adams, Cervantes, Shakespeare, David Hume, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, sermons of Theodore Parker, antislavery newspapers, Thomas Macaulay’s *History of England*, John Greenleaf Whittier’s poetry, and of course the Bible. Reading was sometimes done aloud at home, sometimes at female academies, and sometimes alone.

64. Idana Goldberg, “‘Better and Wiser Daughters in Israel’: The Diaries of Fannie and Amelia J. Allen” (MA thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1997); see also Idana Goldberg, “Gender, Religion and the Jewish Public Sphere in Mid-nineteenth Century America” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2004).

65. Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler, eds., *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006). See also Ellen Gruber Garvey, “Imitation Is the Sincerest Form of Appropriation: Scrapbooks and Extra-Illustration,” *Common-Place*, vol. 7, no. 3 (April 2007), pp. 1–13. See online at www.common-place.org; and most recently, Jessica Helfand, *Scrapbooks: An American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

66. Mary M. Cohen Scrapbook, Charles and Mary M. Cohen Collection, CAJSL, Box 4.

67. *Ibid.*

68. For the Civil War incident, see the Sabato Morais Ledger, p. 23; for Morais’ ex-

panded views on liturgical reform, see Ledger, p. 80, CAJSL. Viewable online at <http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/morais/>.

69. Cohen and Morais both published under their own names, but the interesting question here—why and when they chose to publish under their own names, rather than pseudonymously or anonymously—requires further investigation.

70. Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, 1st ed. (French), 2 vols., 1835. Translated from the French by Henry Reeve, 4 vols. in 2 pts. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1835–40). Newly translated by George Lawrence as Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer (New York, 1969), p. 513.

71. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Lawrence, ed. Mayer, pp. 513, 644–645.

72. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 137. Habermas' understanding of what he calls "the public sphere," thus, is that area of social existence not centered in the operation of either government or private commercial activity nor in the intimacy of the home where public opinion is shaped. See also Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," trans. Peter Hohendahl in *New German Critique*, vol. 3 (Fall 1974), pp. 45–55; and David Sorkin, "The Ideology and the Public Sphere," in *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 79–104.

73. See Abraham J. Karp, "What's American about American Jewish History: The Religious Scene," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, vol. 52 (1962–63), pp. 283–94; Salo W. Baron, "The Emancipation Movement and American Jewry," in *Steeled by Adversity: Essays and Addresses on American Jewish Life* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), pp. 80–105, for an overview of some of these fundamental features of the American Jewish experience.

74. [Isaac Leeser], *Circular, of the American Jewish Publication Society to the Friends of Jewish Literature, Philadelphia, December 10, 1845*, copy at CAJSL.

75. Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 2:1114.

76. On Ben Franklin and the Junto, and the emergence of (non-Jewish) literary societies in Philadelphia, see Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 2:1190–1214. It may be worth noting here that the term "junto" also was used by Sephardic Jews to name their board of synagogue officials, the "adjunta," e.g., at Philadelphia's Congregation Mikveh Israel.

77. Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. 76, n. 28.

78. H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 163.

79. See Darnton, "History of Reading," p. 145.

80. Sabato Morais Papers, AJHS, *P-55, Box 1, FF 5.

81. The following information is based on a fragmentary list. It is not clear if Morais actually acquired all the books listed. I have not listed every work but only some of the most important titles relevant to understanding the concerns and reading materials circulating at that time. Because in some cases it is unclear which particular edition Morais

acquired (or wanted to acquire), I have not tried to supply precise bibliographic description. I have supplied some probable information about the language of a given work (i.e., in French or English translation), based on the fact that Morais did not read German and that he listed these entries with English titles. So, for example, though he read French, he apparently owned the English translation of the De Pinto exchange with Voltaire called "Letters to Voltaire." For the first English edition, see *Letters of Certain Jews to Monseigneur Voltaire containing an apology for their own people and for the Old Testament with Critical Reflections and A short Commentary Extracted From a Greater. In Two Volumes. Translated by the Rev. Philip Lefanu* (Philadelphia, 1777). A 1795 edition, from the library of the nineteenth-century Baltimore Jewish doctor and bibliophile Joshua I. Cohen, is found in the CAJSL collection.

82. *Conciliador de la convencia da los Lugares de la S. Escripura, que repugantes entre si parecen*, pt. 1 (Frankfort or Amsterdam? 1632); pt. 2 (Amsterdam, 1641); pt. 3 (Amsterdam, 1650); pt. 4 (Amsterdam, 1651). See Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1934), pp. 87–89, 299, for the bibliographical information. In this biblical commentary, Ben Israel tried to reconcile contradictory biblical passages that had become a matter of controversy among skeptical ex-conversos. Morais' friend from London, E. H. Lindo, translated the work into English in 1842. See Roth, *A Life*, pp. 87, 89.

83. Cf. Julius Fuerst, *Bibliographica Judaica*, 2 vols. (1st ed., 1849–51; 2nd ed., 1863).

84. Regarding Morais' means of acquiring reading materials, see also SM-CJS, Box 1, FF 8, letter from Abraham Hart to SM, August 20, 1851, offering to lend him his copies of Grace Aguilar's works, and SM-CJS, Box 1, FF 10, for a letter from Solomon Sebag to SM, April 11, 1853, telling Morais that he would "send some of my books at the earliest opportunity" to him from London.

85. On Joseph S.C.F. Frey, see George L. Berlin, *Defending the Faith: Nineteenth Century American Jewish Writings on Christianity and Jesus* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 7–10, 17–18, 81–92, and 177, n. 1, for additional information.

86. The extent of his knowledge of the contents of these works, whether he actually read them, is a separate matter, which cannot be treated here. Morais eventually donated some 1,200 volumes of his own library to The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in 1894. For news of Morais' donation of his books to the JTS, see (Philadelphia) *Jewish Exponent*, April 6, 1894, and June 22, 1894, and chapter 6 of Arthur Kiron, "Golden Ages, Promised Lands: The Victorian Rabbinic Humanism of Sabato Morais" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1999). In his will Morais bequeathed to "the Jewish Theological Seminary, wherever it is located, if conducted according to the principles expressed in its constitution, all my Hebrew books, and books connected with Hebrew literature." He willed his "liturgical works" to his children or grandchildren or to be lent to his Philadelphia congregation for the use of its "attendants." Morais singled out his daughter Nina in his will to receive his books in French and Italian, and to his son Henry he left other books in English (perhaps allowing for the language ability of each). To my knowledge no catalog exists of Morais' library, which came to form part of the nucleus of the seminary's original collections. Librarians at The Jewish Theological Seminary adopted the practice of stamping books from the original collection, which comprised Mo-

rais' volumes as well as the David Cassell collection of Berlin (purchased in 1894), with a special identifying mark, such as that found on the seminary's copies of issues of the Italian Jewish journal *Vessillo Israelitico* stamped "Morais Library." On the Morais Library now held at the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, see Hasia R. Diner, "Like the Antelope and the Badger: The Founding and Early Years of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1886-1902," *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997), pp. 3-42 and especially pp. 18-19.

87. Judith E. Endelman, "Cohen, Nina Morais," in *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, 1:248-49.

88. "Maimonides College Library," circulation record book, Miscellaneous Manuscript 35, CAJSL.

89. Additional confirmation of this can be found in two letters from Morais to the editor of the *American Hebrew*, published on February 23, 1883, and March 9, 1883, in which Morais places his criticisms of Spinoza in relation to the views of the Italian Jewish biblical exegete Samuel David Luzzatto. According to Morais, these letters to the editor were prompted by an unidentified address he heard at the Philadelphia YMHA. He chose to submit his response to the *American Hebrew*, a nationally circulating Jewish weekly, edited and published in New York City.

90. "Maimonides College Library," circulation record book, p. 7, CAJSL.

91. Broadside, titled "Hebrew Association," dated "Philadelphia Dec. 15th, 1873." A copy is found in the Sabato Morais Collection, CAJSL, Box 16, FF 4. Printed at the bottom of the broadside is the following approbation from Morais: "I approve of the efforts made to give origin to this Association, and solicit in its behalf the cooperation of my Philadelphia co-religionists." Another copy of this broadside can be found pasted into a scrapbook kept by Mary M. Cohen in the Charles and Mary M. Cohen Collection, CAJSL, Box 4.

92. Ibid.

93. See "Hebrew Association" broadside, *ibid.*; *Jewish Messenger*, December 11, 1874; May 21, 1875; *American Israelite*, May 21, 1875; H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 163-67; William R. Langfeld, *The Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia: A Fifty-Year Chronicle* (Philadelphia: The Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, 1928), p. 7; Benjamin Rabinowitz, "YMHA, 1854-1913," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 37 (1947), p. 230.

94. "Hebrew Association" broadside, December, 15, 1873, SM-CJS, Box 16, FF 4.

95. Ibid.

96. Jonathan Sarna has kindly suggested to me the possible identification of "Mr. Pearsall" with the highly regarded writer Logan Pearsall Smith, who indeed grew up in the Philadelphia area prior to 1894, when Henry Morais' book was published, and may very well have been the subject of Morais' recountal.

97. See Frank Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism: A History and Criticism*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen & Co.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 1:243, regarding Isaac Rehn, "President of the Harmonial Society of Philadelphia."

98. H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 163.

99. See the extended analysis of this phenomenon in Leah Levitz Fishbane, "On the Road to Renaissance," chapter 2 of the present volume.

100. H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 164.

101. Langfeld, *Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia*, p. 15.

102. Ibid.

103. H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 165.

104. Korn, "The First American Jewish Theological Seminary," pp. 151-213.

105. See H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 151 and 162-71, esp. p. 163; Langfeld, *Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia*, p. 6; Rabinowitz, "YMHA, 1854-1913," pp. 221-326 (reprinted as *idem*, *Young Men's Hebrew Association, 1854-1913* [New York, 1948]); and see Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 2:1099-1224, for a detailed history of the literary culture and associations in Philadelphia up to 1884.

106. For the local Jewish reaction in Philadelphia to the Moody and Sankey revivals, see (Philadelphia) *Jewish Record*, January 14, 1876; Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 1:840. For background, see Marion L. Bell, *Crusade in the City: Revivalism in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1977), pp. 200-53 and p. 282 for a bibliography of sources; Naomi W. Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States, 1830-1914* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), p. 256. For background on the intensification of hostility in America toward Jews during this time, see John Higham, *Send These to Me* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975; revised ed. 1984), pp. 95-152; and Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation*, pp. 249-65.

107. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Making of an American Jewish Culture," in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Friedman, p. 148; *idem*, "The Late Nineteenth-Century American Jewish Awakening," in *Religious Diversity and American Religious History: Studies in Traditions and Cultures*, ed. Walter H. Conser Jr. and Sumner B. Twiss (Athens, GA; London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), pp. 1-25; *idem*, *A Great Awakening: The Transformation That Shaped Twentieth Century American Judaism and Its Implications for Today* (New York: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, 1995), pp. 12-15; *idem*, *American Judaism*, pp. 135-38.

108. Sarna, *American Judaism*, pp. 135-38.

109. The exact source of this Aramaic phrase, *keyam dishmaya*, is obscure. Eitan Fishbane has pointed out to me several sources in the Zohar, though none with the exact formulation transliterated by the group. Jonathan Sarna suspects that a section of the commentary on the Zohar by Moshe Hayim Luzzatto (RaMHaL), an eighteenth-century Italian kabbalist, may have been the source. See <http://www.ramhal.net/doc/ketoret.html>. Eitan Fishbane has made the point that the phrase is better translated as "in support of heaven" (rather than "for the sake of heaven," as I have rendered it here), especially in the context of this secret society. Despite his good advice, I hesitatingly but deliberately retain the term "for the sake of heaven" even though it is inexact, because my sense is that the group was working within a kind of "martyrological" cultural framework that Morais imparted to them. In other words, the translation "for the sake of" first references the

actors (those young men bound in secret covenant), *not* the object of their actions (i.e., the heavens). If that is so, the translation “for the sake of heaven” is not intended here to mean *lishmah* or *le-shem shamayim* (“for its own sake” or literally “in the name of heaven”) but is closer to the idea of *kidush ha-shem/le-shem shamayim*—in this case being more of a metaphor of willingness to sacrifice one’s self-interests for the sake of heaven. I briefly discuss this “Sephardic” martyrological sensibility of duty that Morais popularized in (Arthur Kiron), “Livornese Traces in American Jewish History: Sabato Morais and Elijah Benamozegh,” in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi nel Centenario della morte di Elia Benamozegh* (Milan: De Pas Editrice, 2002), pp. 56ff. I also talk about it in idem, “Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais’ Program of Sephardic Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America,” in *Reconfiguring Jewish Culture*, ed. Sutcliffe and Brann, pp. 130–31.

110. Sarna, *American Judaism*, pp. 135–39, and p. 137 for the reproduction of the broadside.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

112. H. S. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 164.

113. Greifer, “Neighborhood Centre,” p. 149.

114. See Korn, “Maimonides College,” pp. 151–213.

115. On the fate of the Leaser Library and Maimonides College, see *ibid.*, pp. 182–85.

4 Preserving the Past to Fashion the Future

The Editorial Board of the Jewish Encyclopedia

American Jews in the twenty-first century take for granted the richness of Jewish cultural life. Institutions dedicated to Jewish life abound: those dedicated to Judaism, to Israel, to promoting justice, to defending Jewish interests, to Jewish learning, and to the arts. Some organizations promote specific religious denominations while others focus on serving the needs of subcommunities of Jews—Syrians, Russians, Israelis, intermarrieds, elderly, singles, gays and lesbians. In the early twenty-first century, this evolution continues with Jewish groups that coalesce around organic farming, meditation, and alternative music, to name just a few of the organizing venues for contemporary Jewish culture. The proliferation of Jewish film and arts festivals and the expansion of gourmet kosher food products are other ways in which contemporary Jews experience the breadth of Jewish cultural life.

As “People of the Book,” Jews have always been especially attuned to the literary riches of Jewish culture and to the power of the written word to disseminate it. Not surprisingly, the explosion of resources at the turn of the twenty-first century in this arena is astounding. The translation of sacred texts into English¹ has rendered accessible so much of Jewish learning, and the publication of analytical works in Jewish history, thought, Bible studies, mysticism, literature, rabbinics, and more has made it possible for readers of all backgrounds and levels to gain access to Jewish knowledge. Scholarly works consider popular as well as high culture, with books on Jewish food, film, humor, comics, and theater found in bookstores alongside those on biblical wisdom literature or medieval liturgical poetry. Novels and short stories also abound, and Jewish children’s literature has come into its own. Whereas eighty years ago parents were hard-pressed to find picture books or English-language Jewish stories to tell their children, nowadays one can choose from hundreds of es-