

Major Noah

American Patriot, American Zionist

By Jerry Klinger



Mordecai Manuel Noah

“And on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat”

Genesis 8-4

“We in this generation may be impelled to commence the good work, which succeeding generations will accomplish.”

Mordecai Manuel Noah on the Restoration of the Jews, 1844.

Mordecai Manuel Noah, lawyer, diplomat, journalist, playwright, politician, idealist, realist, pragmatist, Zionist, champion of Jewish rights and American ideals was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 19, 1785. His father was Manuel Noah, a Revolutionary war hero. His mother was Zipporah Phillips a descendent of Dr. Samuel Nunez, a Marrano¹, who escaped Portugal and the Inquisition to settle in Georgia in 1732. Manuel and Zipporah were both of Spanish-Portuguese Jewish heritage.

Mordecai was born nine years after Thomas Jefferson penned the words of the Declaration of Independence that would change the world and the world of the Jew:

¹ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Marranos.html>

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

It was a radical statement. It was part of a radical document. It was a radical, unheard of, anti-historical experience for the Jew living in exile from their own land for almost 1,800 years, that “all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” and the Jew was included in the ideals. The struggle to achieve that ideal has been part of the American Jewish experience for over two hundred and thirty four years. It has been achieved to an extent never dreamed of without the coming of the Messiah.

Noah was born at the close of the first great American Revolution. He died March 22, 1851 at the gates of the second great American Revolution – the War Between the States – the Civil War of 1861-1865.

During his life, Noah was accused of being a dualist, hot tempered, a land speculator, a cynical conspirator with Christians missionizing Jews, political hack and vicious political boss, huckster, megalomaniac, journalistic assassin, intolerant hypocrite and on.

When he died he was buried in the 21st street Cemetery of New York’s Shearith Israel² congregation. Shearith Israel congregation traces its origins to 1654 when the first Jewish refugees, desperate and destitute, landed in New Amsterdam (New York) seeking a safe haven.

“Hours before the time set for the funeral, Broadway was thronged on both sides of the thoroughfare between Houston and Bleeker streets. ... The very composition of the mourners, - the representation from so many different walks of life, - bore witness to the breadth of Noah’s interests and the versatility of his gifts.

“Doctors, authors, musicians, comedians, editors, mechanics, professionals and non-professionals,” reported the *Asmonean*, “all classes vying with each other in eager desire to offer tribute of respect to the mortal remains of Major Noah prior to their departure for their final resting place.”³



² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congregation_Shearith_Israel

³ Major Noah, American-Jewish Pioneer, by Isaac Goldberg, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1936, pg. 275-276

Noah's mother died when he still quite young. He moved to Charleston, South Carolina, at the time one of the major Jewish residential centers in America, to be raised by his maternal grandfather, Jonas Phillips. Phillips imbued the young man with Jewish identity, pride, a ferocious patriotism and respect for America.

It was in South Carolina under the code duello he fought a pistol duel of honor. It clearly established his courage as a Jew and his honor as a Southerner.

Noah entered into the worlds of trade and law in South Carolina, trades that ultimately never suited him. The written word was his passion. Writing in the Charleston Times in support of the War of 1812 he came to the attention of the President of the United States, James Madison. The South supported the war against England, the North, primarily the New England states were deeply against the struggle. At one point the New England states threatened and then attempted to secede from the Union, failing only in their convention of secession to do so.

Because of Noah's strong support for Madison⁴, at the age of 27, he was appointed by Madison as Consul to the Barbary pirates of Tunisia. (1813). His job was to negotiate for the release of imprisoned Americans. George Washington had established the precedent of using Jews as American representatives to negotiate with Arabs and Muslims. In 1786, Washington sent Colonel David Franks to Morocco as his personal representative. The biased inspired concept that Jews could better interact with Muslims than Christians was to be repeated many times in later American diplomatic history. There was a certain degree of legitimacy to the idea to use Jews to interact with Arabs. Jews, recognized by Muslims as a Dhimmi⁵ class of humanity, had not been accomplices or beneficiaries of Christians during the Crusades. Jews, unlike Christians, had not been involved in missionary work with Muslims. In Noah's time the Kingdom of Tunis had 60,000 Jews. The United States had about 10,000.

Noah was empowered by Madison, and his Secretary of State James Monroe⁶, to negotiate, *bribe*, the Tunisian pirate kingdom. He was authorized to pay \$3,000 per captured and enslaved American. Madison and Monroe were both naïve in believing that the fledgling, weak American government could redeem their captured citizens for such a small sum when the British and French had to redeem their own captured and enslaved citizens for much more. Perhaps it was because there was an American revulsion to paying tribute to the Barbary Pirates after the near complete defeat of the Tunisian pirates a few years earlier by the amazing American led victory of William Eaton in 1805. The Barbary States defeat was snatched from the mouth of victory when Tobias Lear⁷ negotiated a peace with Tripoli. A ransom of \$60,000 was paid and the

⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/jamesmadison>

⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhimmi>

⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/jamesmonroe>

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobias_Lear_V

American slaves were freed. William Eaton strongly protested to President Jefferson that Lear had betrayed the American effort. Nothing came of it. Lear's willingness to use money to advance his goals may be argued as negotiations as opposed to bloodshed. But Lear had his own controversial history of problems with money and its relationship to gaining him power and influence.



Tobias Lear



George Washington

Tobias Lear V was President George Washington's⁸ personal secretary. He served Washington from 1784 until Washington's death in 1799.

In the late 1790's Lear's finances became very difficult. Lear defrauded President Washington when he stole rents due Washington that he was sent to collect. Apologizing and asking forgiveness the President let the matter go.

Privately Lear collected settlement funds from a business partner's real estate transaction. Lear kept the escrowed money for himself but when found out confessed illness and returned the money.

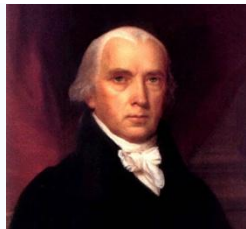
With Washington's sudden, unexpected death in 1799, Lear, as his personal secretary, handled the funeral arrangements and attempted to settle the President's matters. Personal documents of Washington's, especially private papers and politically sensitive material to Washington's rivals, mysteriously disappeared. The missing letters were particularly beneficial to Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson, while President appointed Lear to repeated lucrative diplomatic and commercial assignments. Finally in 1803, Jefferson appointed Lear Consul General to the North African coast. Lear was the primary negotiator for the 1805 Treaty of Tripoli that ended the First Barbary War. The treaty was poorly handled in America's favor. Lear remained in Algeria until he fell out of favor with the Dey in 1812. Mordecai Noah replaced Lear.

Returning to Washington, Lear was appointed by President Madison to the War Department, only to have the city fall to the British army a short while later. October 11, 1816, Lear shot himself. It was not known why he shot himself. Lear left no suicide note, or even a will, behind.

⁸ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/georgewashington>

“Noah embarked for the Middle East...in May 1813 and immediately made contact with the Algerian Dey. He secured pardons for six Americas, but at the exorbitant cost of \$25,910. Appalled by this expense, and afraid that the public would learn of it, Madison sought some excuse to recall the consul to Washington. ‘It might be well to rest the reason pretty much on the ascertained prejudice of the Turks against his Religion,’ the president ventured, ‘and it having become public that he was a Jew.’ Though no one in Tunis had ever expressed any such sentiment, Noah was forced to come home.”⁹

Consul Noah received the sealed order of his recall aboard an American war ship. He read the order quietly to himself without expression or acknowledgment as the ship’s commander, Stephen Decatur looked on. Noah needed Decatur to believe that he was still the representative of the American government to pay the promised monies to the Dey for the release of the American prisoners. Noah had borrowed the funds from another diplomat to free the American captives. If Decatur refused, Noah would have been imprisoned in the dungeons of Tunis.



James Madison



James Monroe

Reading the letter quietly, Noah was shocked. He was mortified as an American. He was insulted, defamed and angered as a Jewish American. He let on to nothing.

The letter read:

“Sir,

At the time of your appointment, as Consul at Tunis, it was not known that the RELIGION which you profess would form any obstacle to the exercise of your Consular functions. Recent information, however, on which entire reliance may be placed, proves that it would produce a very unfavorable effect. IN CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH, the President has deemed it expedient to revoke your commission. On the receipt of this letter, therefore, you will consider yourself no longer in the public service. There are some circumstances connected with your accounts,

⁹ Power, Faith and Fantasy, America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present, by Michael B. Oren, W.W. Norton, New York, pg. 72

which require a more particular explanation, which, with that already given, are not approved by the President.

I am, very respectfully, Sir,

Your obedient servant

JAMES MONROE “

Though Madison may have been prevailed upon to make Noah a scapegoat, a political cover for his policy of bribing the Barbary pirates, it was believed very strongly that Tobias Lear, bitter and angry, had played a significant part in Noah’s recall.

Noah was outraged. Clearing his business in Tunis and making an excusing pretense to the Dey Noah returned to Washington to clear his name and the vicious insult to American Jews and the new found freedom of the American constitution.

Returning to the United States Noah took pen in hand to write the memoirs of his experiences and to put his side of the story before the public. Noah wrote, *Travels in England, France, Spain and the Barbary States*. It was a spirited defense of his actions, his Jewish identity and the falsehood that was being represented that his religion and malfeasance in office had been the reason for his recall. Noah aggressively wrote about the inconsistencies and the falsehoods of the accusations.

“My religion an object of hostility? I thought I was a citizen of the United States, protected by the constitution in my religious as well as in my civil rights. My religion was known to the government at the time of my appointment, and it constituted one of the prominent causes why I was sent to Barbary; if then any ‘unfavorable’ events had been created by my religion, they should have been first ascertained, and not acting upon a supposition, upon imaginary consequences, have thus violated one of the most sacred and delicate rights of a citizen. Admitting, then, that my religion had produced an unfavorable effect, no *official* notice should have been taken of it; I could have been recalled without placing on file a letter thus hostile to the spirit and character of our institutions. But my religion was not known in Barbary; from the moment of my landing, I had been in the full possession of my Consular functions, respected and feared by the government, and enjoying the esteem and good will of every resident. – What injury could my religion create? I lived like other Consuls, the flag of the United States was displayed on Sundays and Christian holidays; the Catholic Priest, who came into my house to sprinkle holy water and pray, was received with deference, and freely allowed to perform his pious purpose; the bare-footed Franciscan, who came to beg, received alms in the name of Jesus Christ; the Greek Bishop, who sent to me a decorated branch of palm on Sunday, received, in return a customary donation; the poor Christian slaves, when they wanted a favor

came to me; the Jews alone asked nothing of me. Why then am I to be persecuted for my religion?"¹⁰

"After having braved the perils of the ocean, residing in a barbarous country, without family or relative, supporting the rights of the nation, and hazarding my life from poison or the stiletto, I find my own government, the only protector I can have, sacrificing my credit, violating my rights and insulting my feelings, and the religious feeling of a whole nation. O! Shame, shame!! The course which me of refined or delicate feelings should have pursued, had there been grounds for such a suspicion, was an obvious one. The President should have instructed the Secretary of State to have recalled me, and to have said, that the causes should be made known to me on my return; such a letter as I received should never have been written, and above all, should never have been put on file. But it is not true, that my religion either had, or would have produced injurious effects."¹¹

Jews, as Noah, recorded, had been serving with distinction in and for this very part of the world. Abraham Busnac had been Minister at the Court of France for the Dey of Algiers; Nathan Bacri, at the time of writing, was Algerine Consul at Marseilles, and his brother similarly in the service at Leghorn; the Treasurer, Interpreter and Commercial Agent of the Grand Seigneur at Constantinople were Jews; in 1811 the British Government had entrusted Aaron Cardoza of Gibraltar with the negotiation of a commercial arrangement in Algiers; the first Minister from Portugal to Morocco was a Jew, Abraham Sasportas, who was received with open arms and formed a treaty; Moses Massias had been sent, by Ali Bey of Tunis, as ambassador to London; Major Massias, the father of Moses, was at this very moment in the army of the United States.

"It was not necessary," argued Noah, "for a citizen of the United States to have his faith stamped on his forehead; the name of a freeman is a sufficient passport, and my government should have supported me... There was also something insufferably little, in adding the weight of the American government, in violation of the wishes and institutions of the people, to crush a nation, many of which had fought and bled for American Independence, and many had assisted to elevate those very men who had thus treated their rights with indelicate oppression. Unfortunate people, whose faith and constancy alone have been the cause of so much tyranny and oppression, who have given moral laws to the world, and who receive for reward opprobrium and insult. After this, what nation may not oppress them?"¹²

¹⁰ Major Noah, American-Jewish Pioneer, by Isaac Goldberg, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1936, pg. 113

¹¹ Ibid. pg. 115

¹² Ibid. pg. 116

Moving to New York, Noah began a major letter writing campaign to clear his name. Naphtali Phillips, Noah's uncle owned the National Advocate and it provided Noah with a readymade public outlet to clear the story of his time as an American representative to the Barbary States. In time Noah became the chief editor of the paper and discovered another niche in his life. Noah became a journalist and highly respected editor of many newspapers until his passing in 1851.

Noah was well known in the American Jewish community. His efforts to protect and defend Jewish rights garnered him a prominent position as a voice of the American Jewish community. Yet his experience with Monroe and the apparent anti-Semitic motivations of his humiliating recall as Consul to Tunis by Madison supported by Tobias Lear left its mark. Noah began to develop a concept that was part of every Jew's daily prayer and hope for a return to Zion. Noah had encountered the Jews of the Barbary Coast. He met Jews on his travels in England and France. England and France had not emancipated their Jews – nor had any country in Europe. Other than America, there was no safe refuge, no home that the Jews could call their own. Perhaps it was a shocking sense of disillusionment but more likely it was a realization that no matter how good, how generous, how idealistic the American experiment was, it could also be a temporary one. Noah began to formulate his own solution to the "Jewish problem." He understood that America would, for many Jews, be but a temporary home. America was a shining *city on the hill* as the Pilgrims had characterized the New World. America was a refuge for Jews and for all refugees. The great Jewish American poetess Emma Lazarus, whose words would be inscribed on a plaque affixed to the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor eighty years later, wrote:

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me;
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Noah realized America was not going to be the permanent home for all Jews. America was imperfect for all Jewish yearnings. America was a temporary home for some and a permanent home for others. America was the Jewish refuge in the same way as Ireland, France, Italy, Greece or Syria, India or China was the homeland for many later immigrants.



Shearith Israel - 1860

At the dedication of Shearith Israel's new house of worship in New York, April 17, 1818, Noah was asked to be one of the speakers. Noah expressed the ancient longing of the Jewish people for Zion and the pragmatic realism that characterized his life.

"...they (the Jews) will march in triumphant numbers, and possess themselves once more of Syria, and take their rank among the governments of the earth. This is not fancy I have been too much among them in Europe and Africa – I am too well acquainted with their views and sentiments in Asia, to doubt their intentions.... Let us then hope that the day is not far distant when....we may look forward toward the country where our people have established a mild, just and honorable government, accredited by the world, and admired by all good men...."

"Until the Jews can recover their ancient rights and dominions, and take their ranks among the governments of the earth, this is their chosen country; here they can rest with the persecuted of every clime, secure in person and property, protected from tyranny and oppression, and participating of (sic) equal rights and immunities. Forty years of experience have tested the wisdom of our intuitions' and they only will be surrendered with the existence of the nation."¹³

Noah's actions and his period of representation of the United States in Tunis were thoroughly investigated, in a highly unusual action, by the Attorney General instead of the Department of State. Consul Noah was completely exonerated of any malfeasance in his official duties. However, his honor, and the assault on the freedoms explicitly promised to all Americans through the Constitution were not addressed.

Consul Noah presented his report to the State Department in late 1816. It was over a year later before there was a response. Noah wrote of the incident and the reasons he felt his rights as an American Jew had been attacked in his travel memoirs as the American Consul to Tunis, *Travels in England, France, Spain and the Barbary State*, 1819.

¹³ Ibid. pg. 139

“This letter I delivered open to Mr. Graham, then Chief Clerk of the Department of State; Mr. Monroe declining to see me, instructed Mr. Graham to inquire *what I wanted*. I had expressed but one desire, from which I never varied. It was to do me justice; settle my accounts, and if there is a dollar due me, let me know it officially; that was the first step in my situation, and after mortifying, perplexing, and expensive delays, after twelve months had elapsed, after three special journeys to Washington, the *Attorney General!* was instructed to *adjust my claims*, and at length I received the following letter;

Department of State, January 14, 1817, AY

Your account as Consul of the United States at Tunis, has been adjusted at this Department, in conformity with the opinion of the Attorney General of the 30th of December last, of which you have a copy; and a balance of Five thousand Two Hundred and Thirteen Dollars Fifty-seven Cents, Reported To Be Due You, Will Be Paid To Your Order, at any time after Congress shall have made the necessary appropriations. A Sum of One thousand Six Hundred and Sixty Four Dollars, besides a charge of thirty-five per cent, loss on the disbursement of Your Agent at Algiers, is Suspended, for reason mentioned in the account of which you have been apprised.

I am Sir, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

S. Pleasoxto”

Being paid for his services was a cause of concern to Noah. He was not a wealthy man. However the real cause of his protest, his concern for his recall was a flagrant disregard and violation of a sacred belief he had in the American Constitution and the promise of freedom and equality guaranteed.

Noah continued:

“Thus ended my connection with the government, and thus fell to the ground the charge “of going beyond orders;” nothing then remained of the official charge but my religion, a subject which I had reason to believe, the President would have reconciled in a suitable manner, but which, after three years delay, has not commanded his attention.

If I have occupied too much space in this work, with recapitulating my official concerns, the reader will bear in mind, that ***this is the first attempt since the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, to make the religion of a citizen an objection to the possession of office; a principle so foreign to the Constitution;*** to much at war with the genius and disposition of the people, and as dangerous to the liberties of the country, that citizens cannot be insensible to the new dreadful features which it exposes; none can hear with indifference this measure of

the government, and none will turn a deaf ear to the representations of an individual who has sustained an injury. ***Governments have a natural propensity to encroach upon the rights of citizens, and if those rights are worthy of being preserved, the utmost caution should be used, to guard them with a vigilance that never slumbers.*** If a letter such as I received in Barbary, had been written by the order of a sovereign, presuming that a king could such a wrong, I should have submitted to it without a murmur, knowing the tenure by which I held my office; but, my fellow-citizen, the President, to disfranchise me from holding the office of Consul at Tunis, when I am eligible to the station which he holds, cannot but be viewed as an assumption of power neither known or tolerated. Nothing is easier than to establish a principle in governments, and nothing is more difficult than to destroy this principle, when it is found to be dangerous. My letter of recall has become a document on file at the Department of State, which hereafter may, without the present explanations, go to disfranchise a whole nation¹⁴. (the Jewish Nation) I felt it my duty to clear up this affair, and as I caused my country to be respected abroad, it was not anticipating too much, when I claimed a reciprocal respect and protection from the government. I had heard it rumored, that Col. Lear was the prominent cause of that letter having been written to me; he is now dead, and I have only to express my astonishment at the extraordinary and mysterious influence which he exercised over the administration.Mr. Monroe regretted the steps which he had pursued towards me. There was an idea floating in his mind, that I had not been well treated, but he only regretted it, as it affected him; he had no consideration for my feelings, for my rights or character; he would have been pleased to have arranged the affair in a manner mutually agreeable, but I had not presented myself to him with that submissive tone, with that "bondsmen key and bated breath," that he probably expected: he said I threatened to appeal to Congress; he should have been proud to have seen a citizen thus anxious to support his rights and character, and he should have aided, not opposed me, not bent the power of government to crush an individual.

I have said thus much in proof to political opponents, that I am under no obligation to Mr. Monroe, that my support of the administration is grounded on principle, on nobler motives than personal favor; and as long as he is in the administration, and his Measures are calculated to promote the honor and prosperity of our country, so long will I support him.

The letter of recall, sent to him by Monroe in 1815, has mysteriously vanished from State Department archives.

Noah wrote to President Madison, May 6, 1818:

¹⁴ During the American Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant, also a later President of the United States, issued General Order # 11, an order of expulsion for all Jews within the area of his armies control. It was overturned by President Lincoln. The concept of the order, in its generalized inclusiveness, was similar to Monroe's to Noah, only President Madison, the author of the Constitution, did not see fit to overturn it as a gross injustice.

“I would wish, not only for the sake of my co-religionaires, but for that of your administration, that if my letter of recall, cannot be erased from the Books of the Department of State, that such explanation may be subjoined, and may prevent any evils arising from the precedent- for as my accounts are adjusted, & a balance struck in my favor, the objections in that letter, refers solely to my religion, as objection, that I am persuaded you cannot feel, nor authorize others to feel...”

Madison wrote back to Noah, May 15, 1818

“It cannot but be agreeable to me to learn that your accounts have been closed in a manner so favorable to you. And I know too well the justice and candor of the present executive to doubt that an official preservation will be readily allowed to explanations necessary to protect your character, against the effect of any impressions whenever ascertained to be erroneous. It was certain, that your religious profession was well known at the time you received your commission, and that in itself could not be a motive in your recall.”

Madison denied any anti-Semitic element in his and in his Secretary of State’s decision to recall Noah. His response left a bad taste for Noah and all Jewish Americans.

America was a land of expanding promise and possibility. American population, economic power and westward expansion was enormous. The highways of North America were its rivers. Explorers like Henry Hudson searched for the fabled Northwest Passage, a water route across North America linking Europe to China, between 1607-1611. He explored the waterway north from New York to the interior. The river was later renamed in his honor – the Hudson River. Hudson never found the Northwest Passage. It never existed. In 1611 during yet another mission of exploration and discovery, Hudson’s crew mutinied. He was cast adrift. His fate is unknown.

First proposed in 1808, the Erie Canal would connect the Hudson River at Albany, NY., across the land mass, to Buffalo and Lake Erie. From Lake Erie, the Mississippi, the Missouri and other interior rivers offered accessible access to the vastness of the continent. The Canal was highly political, and proved to be highly controversial because of the massive debt and scandals involved in its construction. Officially opening, October 26, 1825, the Canal became an economic boon to New York City. Buffalo, the Canal’s Western terminus, prospered mightily.

As a newspaper editor of a major American paper, Noah was very aware of the economic possibilities that the Canal could bring. He realized there was a possible link, a possible benefit for his developing idea for a temporary solution to the Jewish problem with Buffalo and the Erie Canal. Opposite Buffalo, in the Niagara River, was a large unpopulated land mass, an island,

17,381 acres about eight miles long six miles wide. Known locally as Grand Island¹⁵ its ownership had only recently been conceded to New York by the Canadians and the extinguishment of Iroquois land claims. Noah recognized the economic possibility of Grand Island and its strategic location in the Niagara River highway of commerce. He also recognized the possibility of populating the Island as a refuge city for the oppressed Jews. On the one hand it was a bold and innovative idea to solve the Jewish problem. On the other hand, if Noah could manage to gain control of the area, it could be very good for the country, for the Jews and for himself financially.



Grand Island, New York

Noah had never been well to do. He developed an earlier passion with some success, as a playwright and producer of theatrical events. His most successful play was produced in 1819, *She Would be a Soldier*. The play was a patriotic story of the American Revolution. It confirmed Noah as America's first important Jewish writer. Noah continued to struggle financially. Supporting his newspaper ventures and Jewish interests were a drain on him. Political astuteness never translated, for him, into financial success.

Monday, January 24, 1820, Noah applied to the State of New York to purchase Grand Island.

"Mr. Ulshoeffter from the select committee to whom was referred the memorial of Mordecai M. Noah, of the city of New York, relative to the purchase of Grand Island, reported:

That the petitioner applies to the State for a grant of the said island, for the purpose of attempting to have the same settled by emigrants of the Jewish religion from Europe; that he not only considers the situation of Grand Island as well adapted for the contemplated purpose, but that the obtaining of the tile from the State would be very advantageous in inducing the emigration of capitalists, as well as others. "

¹⁵http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Island,_New_York

Bill was reported out of the house favorably for sale to Noah but nothing came of it. Nearly a year later after the failure he began a promotion of bringing the Jews to Newport, for a settlement."¹⁶

His hopes for the Jewish people, his people, though defeated never remained down.

"There is nothing visionary or even difficult in promoting an extensive Jewish emigration to this country. Men everywhere consult their safety and happiness; and when once they are satisfied that their civil and religious liberty will be respected -their health and enterprise preserved and encouraged, they will venture upon an experiment which promises every advantage. I am tired seeing a nation of seven millions of people, rich and intelligent, wandering about the world, without a home, which they can claim as their own, and looking to the restoration to an ancient country, which one eight would not inhabit, if they recovered it tomorrow. Where the Jews can be protected by laws which they will have some agency in enacting and where a laudable ambition will lead to the possession of posts of honor and confidence., and where they can mingle their voice freely in the councils of the nation and have the privilege of taking their place in the field and in the cabinet, I do consider that they will possess every temporal blessing which has been promise them. " ¹⁷

He proposed a new project to create a Jewish refuge, this time in Newport, Rhode Island. It too came to naught.

A year later, in 1821 he ran for Sheriff in New York. The election was more than a simple election it was one filled with anti-Semitic implications. The struggle for Jewish rights as Americans was not an automatic or a given simply because the Constitution was written. The struggle for Jewish freedom and rights as Americas was and is a process. In Maryland, Thomas Kennedy, a Scotch Presbyterian fought a bitter seven year struggle (1819-1826) to give Jews equal rights as citizens in the State of Maryland. Maryland was one of the last states to maintain a vestige of colonial rule, a test oath to hold office. In Maryland, as it was in all of the colonial areas, an oath was required of every office holder that upon election and the assumption of office they as affirmed, as Christians, they would uphold the laws of the State. A Jew taking such an oath would be lying and would automatically be barred from office because of his faith. Kennedy, deeply offended by the direct violation of the spirit and letter of the American constitution, began a seven year struggle to change the Maryland constitution to do away with a religious test oath, to enable Jews to hold elected office. Kennedy's fight was very bitter and public. It was the most acrimonious in the development of American religious freedom and toleration, occurring almost fifty years after the Declaration of Independence.

¹⁶ Ibid pg. 149

¹⁷ Ibid pg. 151

Kennedy would be successful in 1826. The legislation that changed Maryland's history and the American experience was known as the *Jew Bill*.

Noah ran for the office of Sheriff in 1821. His disparagers complained that it was not right to elect a Jew sheriff. He might be called upon to hang a Christian. Noah responded sarcastically, "Pretty sort of Christian that should required hanging at anyone's hands." Noah won the election.

His concern for his people was never far from his mind. Noah returned to the Grand Island project in 1824-1825. His associations with Freemasonry convinced Noah of the possibility of a union of interests between Christians and Jews.

America was engrossed in the Second Great Awakening; a grass roots Evangelical movement that sprang up in America's interior and spread across the country, 1790-1840. Christians began calling for a restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine. In a later time it would be called Christian Zionism. Christians supported Noah's idea, to create a safe refuge, a homeland under American protection for the Jews near Buffalo. Western New York was the center of many Evangelical, utopian, and idealistic sect movements. It was also in Western New York that the greatest American born faith found its origins, Mormonism.

Noah, as did many of the contemporary editors of his time, disparaged the young, dynamic and rapidly growing Mormon faith. Some have argued that Joseph Smith, Mormonism's founder, may have been influenced by Noah and his efforts to establish a New Zion in Western New York. Mormons are a valued mainstay of American political support for Israel (2010).

The universality of Freemasonry idealism and commonality, its regard for all humanity, linked with the Evangelical support of Christians for Jewish restoration, especially in the "burned over district"¹⁸ of Western New York, brought Noah back to focus on his Grand Island project. Working with friends among the Freemasons, land was purchased on Grand Island. Noah's project evolved from conjecture, to speculation, from theory to practice.

Using his best theatrical skills, his finest efforts at publicity and showmanship, the pulpit of his newspaper, Noah proclaimed himself "Governor and Judge of Israel". He called for the creation of a Jewish refuge he named Ararat. His principal Jewish supporter was, A.B. Siexas of New York City, his Secretary Pro-Temp.

September 15, 1825, thousands of Christians and a smattering of Jews came together just outside of Buffalo, to inaugurate the Ararat refuge for the Jews.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burned-over_district

Speaking before the enormous crowd, some came for millenarist reasons, some for justice, others for economic reasons and some for the simple entertainment of the event, Noah proclaimed:

“Brothers, Countrymen, and Friends:

Having made known by proclamation the re-establishment of the Hebrew government, having laid the foundations of a city of refuge, an asylum for the oppressed in this free and happy republic, I avail myself of that portion of my beloved brethren here assembled, together with this concourse of my fellow citizens, to unfold the principles, explain the views, and detail the objects contemplated in the great work of regeneration and independence to which it has pleased the Almighty God to direct my attention.

....Looking forward to a period of regeneration and to the fulfillment of prophecies, the Jews have preserved within themselves the elements of government in having carefully preserved the oracles of God assigned to their safe keeping, and the time has arrived when their rights as a nation can be recognized, when, in the enjoyment of independence the light of learning and civilization, and the obligation of industry and morality, they can cultivate a friendly and affectionate understand with the whole family of mankind and have no longer enemies on earth.

In calling the Jews together under the protection of the American Constitution and laws, and governed by our happy and salutary institutions, it is proper for me to state that this asylum is temporary and provisionary. The Jews never should and never will relinquish the just hope of regaining possession of their ancient heritage, and events in the neighborhood of Palestine indicate an extraordinary change of affairs.”

Noah continued expounding on the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of Christian influence and the need for the Jews to return to Palestine as a buffer state. The restoration of the Jews would restore prosperity and hope to that part of the world.

He continued in his address:

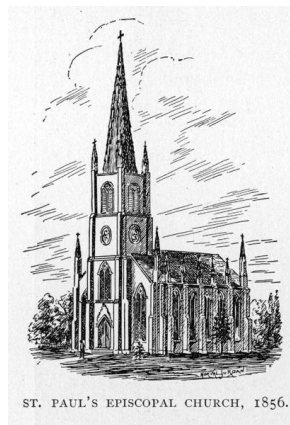
“Called together to the Holy Land by the slow, but unerring finger of Providence, the Jews, coming from every quarter of the globe, would bring with them the language, habits and prejudices of each country.”

Culturally divergent and needing to learn how to govern as one people, Noah recognized that Ararat would be a learning center of self government for the Jews, preparing them for the return to Palestine.

Assimilating only in religious doctrines, and divided on temporal affairs, they would present innumerable difficulties in organizing under any form of government, and the diversity of opinions and views would create factions as dangerous and difficult to allay as those fatal ones which existed in the time of the first and second Temples. It is in this country that the government of the Jews must be organized. Here, under the influence of perfect freedom, they may study laws – cultivate their minds, acquire liberal principles as to men and measures, and qualify themselves to direct the energies of a just and honorable government in the land of the Patriarchs.

“Why should the parent of nations, the oldest of people, the founders of religion, wander among the governments of the earth, entreating succor and protection when we are capable of protection ourselves? The time has emphatically arrived to do something calculated to benefit our own condition and excite the admiration of the world: and we must commence the work in a country free from ignoble prejudices and legal disqualifications – a country in which liberty can be insured to the Jews without the loss of one drop of blood....”

The day of the planned dedication of the Ararat project began with so vast a number of people who wished to be present and participate in the momentous events that there were not enough boats to ferry people to Grand Island. Noah had to improvise and arrange for the temporary laying of the cornerstone on the Buffalo side of the river. Fortunately for Noah, a good friend of his, from his time as a Barbary Consul, Isaac W. Smith was a resident of Buffalo and knew the Minister of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Buffalo, Reverend Addison Searle . Searle offered the use of his Church for the commencement of the first Jewish Colony in nearly 1,800 years and the dedication of the cornerstone that Noah had commissioned for the event.



The 400 pound Ararat foundation stone Noah commissioned read:

Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one

(Inscribed in Hebrew)

Ararat

A City of Refuge for the Jews

Founded by MORDECAI MANUEL NOAH

In the month of Tzri, Sept. 1825 &

In the Fiftieth Year of American Independence



An eyewitness to the momentous day, Lewis Falley Allen, recorded:

“Sept. 15, 1825, 10: AM Military and Masonic companies had lined up before the Masonic Lodge. Grand Marshal Colonel Potter, military, state and municipal officers marched to where the cornerstone was being laid.

“By ten o’clock the military and Masonic companies had lined up before the Masonic Lodge. Within an hour the procession, led by Grand Marshal Colonel Potter on a prancing steed, was moving. The tramp of soldiery, of national state and municipal officers, advanced to the spot where the corner stone of a New Canaan was to be laid. Behind the band and the vanguard filed stewards, apprentices and representatives of their associated crafts, master masons, senior and junior deacons, senior and junior wardens, asters and past-masters of Lodges, members of the reverend clergy, more stewards bearing the symbolic corn, wine and oil, and a principal architect, with square, level and plub, flanked on either side by a Globe, and backed by a Bible. There must have been, too, in this paradoxical pageantry, a sprinkling of the Chosen People for whom this new Promised Land, this Ararat, had been chosen....

And now all eyes were fixed upon a portly gentleman of forty, proudly erect of carriage, florid of face, keen of eye, sandy-haired over fleshy cheeks and an eagle's beak, who strode just ahead of the rear guard of Royal Arch Masons and Knights Templar. Over his black costume, majestically austere, were thrown rich judicial robes of crimson silk, trimmed with the purity of ermine. From his thickish neck depended a medal of gold glistening from high embossments. "

.....They marched to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. And where should the corner stone of the nascent Utopia be reposing if not – in four-square defiance of all anathema – upon the very communion table of St. Paul's?"

.....To the doors of the church – the columns split in two, band played Judas Maccabeus outside, from inside came Jubilate on the organ, the choir intoned Before Jehovah's Awful Throne to the tune of Old Hundredth, readings from Jeremiah, Zephaniah , psalms, and the religious service ended. The Reverend Addison Searle, whom Noah knew as a chaplain on a government ship cruising the Mediterranean. Searle had made the church available to Noah and was reprimanded by the Episcopal Church later.

Noah spoke, reaffirmed the Chosen-ness of the Jewish people, the reestablishment of the Hebrew government.

.....Magniloquently he reaffirmed the Chosen-ness of his People, and the reestablishment of the Hebrew government. The nations of the old and new world, he said "including the children of Africa, have had their rights acknowledged and their governments recognized. The oldest of nations, powerful in numbers and great in resources, remains isolated, without a home, country, or government... In calling the Jews together under the protection of the American Constitution and laws and governed by our happy and salutary institutions, it is proper for me to state that this asylum is temporary and provisionary. The Jews never should and never will relinquish the just hope of regaining possession of their ancient heritage, and events in the neighborhood of Palestine indicate an extraordinary change of affairs."

He continues his oration offering himself as the head of the new Jewish refuge, and talks glowingly of the project and the economic potential – it is theatrical and borders on marketing of Grand Isle.) He issued order to the Jews of the world as its head, calling for a census, ordering neutrality of the Jews between Greeks and Turks, appointed ministers and directors, named days of thanksgiving to God,

Proclamation – day ended with music, cannonade and libation. 24 guns, recessional, masons retired to the Eagle Tavern, all with no one ever having set foot on Grand Isle. "¹⁹

¹⁹ Goldberg, *ibid* pg. 194

Noah had sent announcements and invitations to American and world Jewry. His response was as was to be Theodor Herzl's when he called for the First Zionist Congress. Herzl planned for his First Zionist Congress to be held in Munich. Herzl the subject of derision, scorn and threats from established Jewish leaders was forced to relocate his Congress to Basel.



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Rabbi De Cologne

Noah wrote to Abraham de Cologne, Chief Rabbi of Paris. Cologne was at one time a member of Napoleon's Sanhedrin. Cologne and other Jewish leaders rejected Noah's invitation in terms that Herzl would hear years later.

"To speak seriously, it is right at once to inform Mr. Noah, that the venerable Messrs. Herschell and Mendola, chief Rabbis at London, and myself, thank him but positively refuse the appointments he has been pleased to confer upon us. We declare that according to our dogmas, God alone knows the epoch of the Israelitish restoration, that he alone will make it known to the whole universe by signs entirely unequivocal, and that every attempt on our part to reassemble with any politico-national design is forbidden, as an act of high treason against the Divine Majesty. Mr. Noah has doubtless forgotten that the Israelites, faithful to the principles of their belief, are too much attached to the countries where they dwell and devoted to the Governments under which they enjoy liberty and protection, not to treat as a mere jest the chimerical consulate of a pseudo-restorer.

As however justice requires some consideration to the absent, we should be sorry to refuse him the title of a visionary of good intentions.

Accept, Mr. Editor, the assurance of the distinguished and respectful sentiments with which I remain your most humble servant,

The Grand Rabbi DE COLOGNA²⁰

"Except for the enthusiasm of a band of Jewish reformers in Berlin, the European Jewish establishment mocked his proposal. Judah Jeteles, editor of a Hebrew journal in Austria, (leader of the Jewish Haskala) called Noah "a crazy man." Abraham Andrade, rabbi of Bordeaux in

²⁰ Ibid pg. 209

France, declared he was a “simple charlatan.” The Chief Rabbi of Paris, Abraham de Cologna, representing the Chief Rabbi of England as well, (went even further) lampooned Noah as “a mere jest” and “the chimerical consulate of a pseudo-restorer.” The Parisian rabbi warned Noah in print that his endeavor was “an act of high treason against the Divine Majesty.”²¹

“The police in Vienna believed the Grand Island scheme a disguised revolutionary plot aiming at the overthrow of the Hapsburg monarchy. Noah’s proclamation was withheld in Russia for similar reasons.

The Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung wrote that the news of the restoration of the Jewish nation was not printed in New York for fear that the stock exchange would panic due to the loss of capital and people.”²²

Other than the Christians, the Jews generally ignored Noah’s dream of Ararat, a city of Jewish refuge.

Noah returned to his means of livelihood. He continued editing newspapers, reinserting himself into New York politics and running Tammany Hall from 1827-1828.²³

“In 1829 Noah merged his New York Enquirer with the New York Morning Courier, a anti-abolitionist Jacksonian paper, managed by James Watson Webb. Falling out with Webb in 1833, Noah joined the Whigs and founded the Evening Star, but that paper foundered in 1842.”²⁴

Noah never abandoned his dream of Jewish restoration. In contemporary terms his discussion about the nature of the American Indian, and if he was a descendent of the ten lost tribes of Israel, seems eccentric. From Columbus’s time and the age of discovery on into the early 20th century serious respected claims, studies, research and book written that the American Indian were and are part of the tribes of Israel. Noah’s views were very much mainstream thought in 1837. It was no accident that Noah had Seneca Chief Red Jacket participated in the dedication program of Ararat.

Noah delivered his research talk before the Mercantile Library Association in New York’s Clinton Hall. It was entitled, *Discourse on Evidences of the American Indians being descendents on the*

²¹ http://www.sdjewishjournal.com/stories/sept04_1.html Dr. Deborah Hertz is the Herman Wouk Chair in Modern Jewish Studies at the University of California at San Diego

²² Ibid Goldberg pg. 210

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tammany_Hall

²⁴ http://www.zionism-israel.com/bio/Mordecai_Manuel_Noah.htm

lost tribes of Israel. The ethnological study may be discounted as an artifact of obscure American social history but for the summation and interpretation that Noah concluded his discourse. The talk was understood in Noah's time and by his audience as a strong affirmation of the truth of scripture. Arguing that American Indians are the lost tribes of Israel is alien and absurd to modern ears.

Noah's talk was a clear affirmation of modern American *Christian Zionism*. To Noah, there was little Christian about his presentation. His was a very Jewish affirmation of the truth of prophecy and of the ultimate redemption and restoration to Zion of the Jewish people.

Lewis Falley Allen, a friend of Noah's, who was present at the Ararat dedication, described Noah.

"To understand this matter thoroughly, it is necessary to go somewhat into particulars. I knew Major Noah well. Physically, he was a man of large muscular frame, rotund person, a benignant face, and most portly bearing....He was a Jew, thorough and accomplished. His manners were genial, his heart kind, and his generous sympathies embraced all Israel, even to the end of the earth. He was learned, too, not only in Jewish and civil law, but in the ways of the world at large....Although a visionary, - as some would call him- and an enthusiast in his enterprises, he had won many friends among the Gentiles, who had adopted him into their political associations..... He was a pundit in Hebrew law, traditions and customs.

My friend and neighbor, William A. Bird, Esq., had related to me the following anecdote: Many years ago, when his mother, the later Mrs. Eunice Porter Bird Pawling, resided at Troy, New York, a Society was formed,...for the purpose of Christianizing the Jews in all parts of the world.She wrote a letter to Major Noah, asking his views on so important a subject. He replied in a letter, elaborately setting forth the principles, the faith, and the policy of the Jewish people, their ancient hereditary traditions, and their venerable history, their hope of a coming Messiah; and concluded by expressing the probability that the modern Gentiles would sooner be converted to the Jewish faith, than that the Jews would be converted to theirs." ²⁵

When Noah presented his *Discourse on Evidences of the American Indians being descendents on the lost tribes of Israel* on Jewish, he was speaking about the parallels of the American Indian experience and culture with the Jewish. The thrust of Noah's *Discourse* was about Jewish life and restoration.

The *Discourse*, If read differently and in a different time without expanding on the Indian theme, could have been delivered by Theodor Herzl, Max Nordeau or other late 19th century and early 20th century Zionists.

From Noah's *Discourse*:

²⁵ "Founding the city of Ararat on Grand Island-By Mordecai M. Noah, read before the Society, March 5, 1866, Lewis Falley Allen, republished by the Cornell University Library Digital collections. 1993.

"Our prophet Isaiah has a noble reference to the dispersed tribes and their redemption, which may be here appropriately quoted. I use his language, the Hebrew, which from its peculiar associations should be always interesting to you.

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסִיף אֲדֹנָי שְׁנִיטָה יְדוֹ לְקִנּוּת אֶת־שְׂאֵר
 עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׂאָר מֵאַשּׁוּר וּמִצִּירִים וּמִפַּתְרוֹס וּמִכּוּשׁ
 וּמִעִילָם וּמִשִּׁנְעָר וּמִחַמַּת וּמֵאֵי הַיָּם : וְנָשָׂא נֶם לְגוֹיִם
 וְאָסַף גְּדֻחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּנְפֻצוֹת יְהוּדָה יִקְלֹץ מֵאַרְבַּע
 בְּנִפְוֹר הָאָרֶץ : וְהִתְהַר מִסְלָה לְשָׂאֵר עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־
 יִשְׂאָר מֵאַשּׁוּר כְּאֲשֶׁר הִתְהַר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיּוֹם עָלְתוּ
 מֵאֶרֶץ צִירִים :

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand the *second* time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea."

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth.

"And there shall be a highway, for the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel, in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

May I not with propriety refer, among other evidences, to the cruel persecutions which have uniformly been practiced towards the Indians of this continent, not unlike those which the chosen people have suffered for the last eighteen centuries *was the gift of the Great Spirit to them, and their children.*

.....Possibly, the restoration may be near enough to include even a portion of these interesting people. Our learned Rabbis have always deemed it sinful to compute the period of the restoration; they believe that when the sins of the nation were atoned for, the miracle of their redemption would be manifested. My faith does not rest wholly in miracles -- Providence disposes of events, human agency must carry them out.

.....**The Jewish people must now do something for themselves; they must move onward to the accomplishment of that great event long foretold -- long promised -- long expected; and when they DO that mighty power which has for thousands of years rebuked the proscription and intolerance shown to the Jews, by a benign protection of the *whole* nation, will still cover them with his invincible standard.**

My belief is, that Syria will revert to the Jewish nation by *purchase*, and that the facility

exhibited in the accumulation of wealth, has been a providential and peculiar gift to enable them, at a proper time, to re-occupy their ancient possessions by the purse string instead of the sword.

We live in a remarkable age, and political events are producing extraordinary changes among the nations of the earth.

Russia with its gigantic power continues to press hard on Turkey. The Pacha of Egypt, taking advantage of the improvements and inventions of men of genius, is extending his territory and influence to the straits of Babelmandel on the Red sea, and to the borders of the Russian empire; and the combined force of Russia, Turkey, Persia and Egypt, seriously threaten the safety of British possessions in the East Indies. An intermediate and balancing power is required to check this thirst of conquest and territorial possession, and to keep in check the advances of Russia in Turkey and Persia, and the ambition and love of conquest of Egypt. This can be done by restoring Syria to its rightful owners, not by revolution or blood, but as I have said, by the purchase of that territory from the Pacha of Egypt, for a sum of money too tempting in its amount for him to refuse, in the present reduced state of his coffers. Twelve or thirteen millions of dollars have been spoken of in reference to the cession of that interesting territory, a sum of no consideration to the Jews, for the good will and peaceable possession of a land, which to them is above all price. Under the cooperation and protection of England and France, this re-occupation of Syria within its old territorial limits, is at once reasonable and practicable.

...Once again unfurl the standard of Judah on Mount Zion, the four corners of the earth will give up the chosen people.... Placed in possession of their ancient heritage by and with the consent and co-operation of their Christian brethren establishing a government of peace and good will on earth, it may then be said, behold the fulfillment of prediction and prophecy: behold the chosen and favored people of Almighty God, who, in defense of his unity and omnipotence, have been the outcast and proscribed of all nations, and who for thousands of years have patiently endured the severest of human sufferings, in the hope of that great advent of which they never have despaired: -- and then when taking their rank once more among the nations of the earth, with the good wishes and affectionate regards of the great family of mankind, they may by their tolerance, their good faith, their charity and enlarged liberal views, merit what has been said in their behalf by inspired writers,

Blessed are they who bless Israel."²⁶

Noah had expressed his and the Jewish people's age old faith and trust in God's ultimate redemption and restoration of Zion.

Noah's faith was unshakeable. October 28, 1844, Noah spoke before a crowd of thousands of Jews and Christians at the dedication of the Tabernacle in New York.

²⁶ Ibid *Discourses*

“I confidently believe in the restoration of the Jews, and in the coming of the Messiah; and believing that political events are daily assuming a shape which may finally lead to that great event, I consider it a duty to call upon the free people of this country to aid us in any efforts which, in our present position, it may be deemed prudent to adopt...”

“...Remember, therefore, my countrymen, you whose aid is invoked to assist in the restoration that we are to return as we went forth; to bring back to Zion the faith we carried away with us. The temple under Solomon, which we built as Jews, we must again erect as the chosen people. You believe that the Messiah has come; you are right in believing so; you have the evidences of the power and dominion, the wealth, the happiness, the glory that surrounds you. He has come for you, but how for us? We are still the peeled, the banished, scattered, and oppressed people: the oil on the surface of the ocean, which mingles not with the heaving billow. For us he is yet to come, and will come. For two thousand years we have been pursued and persecuted, and we are yet here; assemblages of men have formed communities, built cities, established government, rose prospered, decayed, and fell, and yet we are here. Rome conquered, and there are but few traces now of the once mistress of the world; yet we are still here, like the fabled Phoenix, ever springing from its ashes, or, more beautifully typical, like the bush of Moses, which ever burns, yet never consumes. You believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and you are Christians; were we to believe the same, we should still be Jews.

“With this difference only, what is it that separates the Jew and Gentile? Our law is your law, our profits are your profits, our hope is your hope, our salvation is your salvation, our God is your God. Why should we change? Why surrender that staff of Jacob which has guided our steps through so many difficulties? We can never be separated from our Shepherd; we believe in all that He has promised, and patiently await their fulfillment. Come, therefore, to our aid, and take the lead in this great work of restoration. Let the first movement for the emancipation of the Jewish nation come from the free and liberal nation.”

“.....I endeavor in that discourse to convince Christians that in attempting to evangelize the Jews they violate an affirmative precept of their own faith. I endeavor to show its utter failure; I prove by quotations from our prophets, that the Jews are to be restored in their unconverted state; I maintain steadfastly their perpetual belief in the unity and omnipotence of God; I show how peculiarly they are his people; I vindicate the morality of the Jewish character, and appeal to Christians to do them justice, and to temper that justice with mercy.

“.....I have studied Christianity from the New Testament, and therefore profess to know more of that religion and am better able to explain its doctrines than Jews who do not read that book at all, and my own opinions have been made up from study and reflection, and I feel satisfied that Christians have not comprehended the position in which they stand towards the Jews, nor

the obligations imposed upon them by their own laws, to treat the chosen people with kindness and consideration, and to extend towards them the hand of succor and of brotherly love.”

“.....The restoration is to be brought about by human agency, and can only be accomplished by and with the consent of the Christian powers, ... We can only be peaceably restored by and with their consent, and if so restored, we shall beyond doubt, be secure and protected in all our national rights.”

“.....A great change has come over Christians; the Almighty is at work on them, efficiently, practically – the scales are falling from their eyes – truth begins to dissipate the clouds of darkness which for ages have surrounded them. Not many years ago, a few ministers of the gospel ascended the pulpit without preaching against the Jews; prejudice was kept alive and fed flames of persecution; but now all is changed; all is love, confidence and regard. The Jews are recognized as God’s chosen people, and all his promises of mercy towards them are to be redeemed; the ‘lost sheep of Israel’ they have now discovered have never been lost, and they look at us with eyes overflowing with tears of affection, as the greatest living miracle that exists – the true and faithful witnesses of unity of God and the truth of Scripture. Shall we not profit by this returning kindness and good-will? They have mistaken the very principles of their own faith in relation to the treatment of the Jews; shall we drive them back again within the pale of ancient intolerance? Our own prayers teach us a different course; the great family of mankind is recognized without distinction of sect or creed as participating equally in all the rights, privileges and immunities of Divine favor and protection.”

“.....But there is a danger I admit – danger, not from Christians, but from ourselves. Danger from apathy, from indifference –danger from a want of nationality. The Jew who keeps his store open on the Sabbath is still a Jew: he commits a great sin, but pleads necessity. It is his indifference - he has no desire to embrace another religion or to surrender his own faith; but he cares too little for his own religion to induce him to make a sacrifice for it. There are many reasons for this which I have not time at present to notice. The Jews want *nationality*; you cannot rally them on any given point; you cannot inspire them either with faith or enthusiasm. We pray fervently and constantly to be restored to Zion; we believe in the coming of the Redeemer, and pray earnestly for his coming; and yet talk to the mass of our people on the Restoration – on their return to Jerusalem – and they express no confidence in it; few would be willing to go; and the coming of our Redeemer – the advent of our Messiah – seems to give them no trouble, no solicitude at all. They pray for him from habit, and have no faith in what they pray for. What is the cause of all this discrepancy between assertion and belief? The want of nationality, I again repeat: we are a sect, not a nation. The Greeks remained two thousand years in slavery, and yet they arose and redeemed their country. Why should not the Jews do the same? Christians would honor us even if we failed. Nothing therefore in my opinion will

save the nation from sinking into oblivion but *agitating this subject of the Restoration*. We should pass the word around the world - "Restoration of the Jews' – 'Justice to Israel' - 'the Rights and Independence of the Hebrews' – 'Restore them to their country' - 'Redeem them from captivity."

"....The Bible is the rock of our salvation. The great secret of consolidating and keeping the Jews together as a nation consists in their intermarriages; break down that barrier and allow Jews and Christians to marry, and in two or three generations we shall be no longer heard of."

"... God is at this moment working upon their minds to favor the Jews, while in many parts of the world He is inclining the Jews to entertain more tolerant views towards the Christians. We in this generation may be impelled to commence the good work, which succeeding generations will accomplish."



Rabbi Isaac Leeser

Noah completed his presentation and was promptly attacked by the Jews. Rabbi Isaac Leeser²⁷, as editor of the *Occident* wrote:

"The address of Judge Noah has excited a good deal of attention among our Christian fellow citizens, more so at least than among ourselves...."

Leeser had no faith in the goodwill of the European nations or Christians to support restoration or the best interests of Jews. He spent his career in Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel helping transform American Judaism from the European model into a more liberal inclusive American model, easing the transition to American Reform Judaism.

Leeser rejected Noah's call for restoration. Acidly criticizing Noah, Leeser wrote:

"An independence so feeble as to be prey to the designing powers of modern Europe... we do not desire nor wish our people to establish; they had better remain as they are now, scattered

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Leeser

over all the earth, rather than expose themselves to an extermination by some modern Haman.”

Noah responded to Leeser’s criticism by reaffirming that the aid and support of the Christian world was necessary in order for the Jews to return to Zion and to succeed, to survive until the Messiah should come.

Noah wrote with the wisdom of prophecy:

“We in this generation may be impelled to commence the good work, which succeeding generations will accomplish.”

The irony of Noah’s response to Leeser came fifty years later when Theodor Herzl wrote Der Judenstaat. The Jewish State came about fifty years after Herzl. Many Jews today like to believe that Israel exists because of Israel’s might alone. Israel came to be and continues to be because of the strong support and influence of Christian superpowers such as the United States.

Mordecai Manuel Noah died of a series of heart attacks in the spring of 1851. He sleeps, largely forgotten by the American Jewish community, in the Shearith Israel cemetery on 21st street in New York. He is awaiting the coming of the Messiah and the restoration to Zion.

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