

From: Rabbi Yossi's son

Date: Sun, Feb 21, 2021 at 7:31 AM

Subject: Amazing discovery on Lewiston Jewish life at the turn of the Century

To: Nancy Davidson, Maine Jewish Museum>

Hi

I just received your email regarding the exhibition delayed due to the coronavirus crisis, and thanked Hashem for this piece of information, because I have recently discovered a startling document, probably the earliest Jewish document of the Lewiston-Auburn area, which sheds much light on the Jewish Community life in the years 1900-1901, and could add much colour to your exhibition.

Whilst researching this document, the great Maine Jewish Digital Database came to hand in a very useful way, as many of the people mentioned in the document are actually important people whose presence is well-documented there. Notwithstanding, many members of the community mentioned in the document, are unknown to the Database and this is, therefore, the first time the existence of these Community members have been reported. Owing to the fact that the Lewiston community was founded at the turn of the century we can safely presume that we have discovered a comprehensive list of the founding community members in Lewiston.

Since community life at this very unsettled time was precarious and disorganised, it is no wonder that documentation of these years is lacking, and writing up a history of the Jewish founding community of those years can definitely be a challenge. Well, this document which was lying unnoticed in the archive of the Jerusalem-based Knesset Israel charity organisation better known as the Vaad HaKlali (Central Committee) gathering dust and waiting for someone to take care enough to look it over, can surely provide many missing historic details.

As this document came on my desk, I began with transcription of the words (written in Hebrew) to ease up the research aspect, and as I progressed through the document I became more convinced of its historic relevance which should really make its way to a local Jewish Museum in order to provide the Public with a glimpse into their Community's history.

The background story behind this rare discovery, lies in the Jerusalem Community of the 19th Century which subsisted on donations being sent in from Jews of foreign countries, where there was a special collection made on a regular basis to benefit the Yishuv as the Jewish community in the Holy Land was called. The individuals who organised the collections in each community were for the most part community leaders, with the legendary Chief Rabbi of New York, Rav Yaacov Yisef, being the figurehead of the American Contingency of the organisation,

The collection was picked up a couple of times annually with the fundraisers who travelled from village to village on behalf of their brethren in Jerusalem, and the Community Leader / Rabbi would give the money accompanied with a letter detailing the names of each donor and their donation, whereafter the fundraiser would send the entire amount with the accompanying letter to Jerusalem. The office in Jerusalem would then write up a receipt for each donation separately, and these would serve as proof of their safe delivery, without which the fundraiser would not be able to return in the future. Many community heads utilised this as an opportunity to correspond with the Rabbinical head of Jerusalem Community, Rav Shmuel Salant, and request on behalf of their community etc.

In his letter to Jerusalem, in the pen of Rabbi Chaim Gutkovsky, he writes about the community's stance in favour of the General Charity Organisation of Knesset Israel, even to the point of ostracizing the new Committee of Kolel America, and he makes a point of mentioning the 3 institutions which were authorised to partake in the donations, and finally writes a beautiful Shana Tova letter to Rav Shmuel Salant the Rabbi of Jerusalem.

I am including the transcript of his letter, and I would be most obliged to sell you this exceptional document for the purpose of your exhibition. (All names which appear on the Database of Discoring [Documenting] Jewish Maine, are in bold):

Sincerely,

Rabbi Yossi's son

Recorded Tevet 166 Lewistan

Inc.

The names of the volunteers are squashed at the regular checkouts in their home today –

Three registers, Rambah - 2888 and 1888 - and the orphanage - and now I've gathered

From these registers the total written below

28 and 1988		Rambah				Orphanage
13		13		Guest R. Elie Mordechai in R. Moshe of Miak Silvaer	Gift	
13		13		Guest R. Eli B.R. From Miak Ratak		
13	1	12	1	R. Yosef B.R. Yitzhak Greenberg	Lewistan (1990)	35
12		12		R. Avraham B.R. Moshe Be'erstein	"	
42	"	40	"	R. Abrahan Yehuda B.R. David Ma'adalsahan	"	
25		25		Rabbi Moshe Bhar Shmuel 'Avin	"	7
25		25	"	R. Naftali Hirsch B.R. Yehuda Moshe Gardan	"	25
25	"	25	"	Rabbi Haim Yitzhak in R. Isaiah in 'Arman	"	25
15	"	15	"	R. Aharon Berlin	"	20
68	"	68		R. Avraham B.R. Haim HaCohen Gottkowsky	"	
36	"	41	"	R. Mordechai B.R. Aharon Karlinstein	"	36
41		75		Rabbi Mordechai Dov in R. Shmuel HaCohen Zimamman	"	31
				ר' שמרי'ב"ר מאיר סיג"ל	"	60
30		30		R. Haim B.R. Shevach Simansky	"	27
67	"	68	"	R. Yitzhak B.R. Mordechai Greenberg	"	02 1
50	"	50	"	R. Yaakov Shimri B.R. Binyamin Klatsky	"	50
10	"	10	"	ר' משה ב"ר מיכל בעקער	"	10
28		22		ר' נתן נטע בהר"ר משה צבי מארקסאהן	"	30
32		34		ר' מרדכי ב"ר יצחק הכהן	"	32
24	"	24	"	R. Shraga Fayo'al Silvaerman	"	26
39		25		R. Menashe in R. Moshe Shostak	"	32
19	"	19		Rabbi Moshe B.R. Arie Machkawski	"	31
49		58		R. Zalman Yitzhak B.R. Meir S.A.	"	
44		45		Rabbi Hillel B.R. Shlomo Mordechai Rass	"	10
10		10		ר' מרדכי ב"ר בנימין קלאצקי	"	
34		33		ר' אברהם ב"ר דוד האריסבערג	"	38
				ר' יהושע יעקב ב"ר אברהם זוסמאן גאלדבערג	"	17
				ר' יוסף ב"ר חיים הכהן גוטקאווסקי	"	40
25	"	25		R. Haim Ari Savitz	Auburn	25

23		28		ר' שלום ב"ר מרדכי קאנטער	"	28	
"		19		R. Ari in 'Aka'amak		"	
912		964					737

56

28 and 1988	Rambah				Orphanage	
22	25		R. Shmuel Ari B.R. Haim Razanbarg	Auburn	27	
50	50		Rabbi Moshe Faywil B.R. Israel Halevy Milal'ar	"	50	
27	23		R. Zalman in R. Gershon Halevy	"		
	25		ר' דוב ב"ר ארי' בעקעלייעמק	"		
			Rabbi Mordechai Yehoshua in R. Shimon Ha'ayig Gabay	"	25	
50			ר' בנימין ב"ר אברהם סילווערמאן	Lewistan (1990)		
21	21		R. Avraham B.R. Yosef Shelit	"	24	
22	25		R. Avraham B.R. Yehuda Singer	"	54	
			R. Shmuel Dov Epstein	"	09	1
10	10		R. Ze'ev B.R. Yehuda Leib Klass	"		
50	50	1	R. Meir B.R. Yisrael Razanblum	"		
11	15		R. Meir B.R. Yehuda Shapira	Auburn	20	
55	61		Rabbi David B.R. Yehuda Shapira	"	15	1
31	53		Rabbi Ezekiel David B.R. Avraham Halevy Siegel	"	16	
40	50		R. Yosef B.R. Aharon Yitzhak Shova	"	35	
22	22		R. Avraham B.R. Zsman Windernitz	"		
			R. Eliezer B. Yitzhak Yosef Abramshan	"	31	
44	25		R. Moshe Mandal B.R. Avraham Abba Shupawitz	"	25	
			R. Shimon B.R. Meir Yehuda Garpinkl	"	25	
24	44		R. Yaakov R. Haim Kabatnik	"	34	
5	9		ר' מרדכי ב"ר ארי' באקעלייעמק	"	11	
25	25		R. Zvi B.R. Yaakov Izaksahhan	"	28	
33	33		Rabbi Moshe B. Ezekiel Leiansky	"	34	
20	15		Rabbi Haim Michael B.R. Zvi Yehuda HaCohen	"	20	
48	49		R. Yehoshua B.R. Izak Izakshan	"	39	

50		50		R. Avraham Alt'ater B.R. Ma'adalsan	"	50	
11	1			Rabbi Yaakov Yakil with his brother R. Moshe B.R. Yosef Shapira	"	51	
		71		The wife of R. Yaakov Yakil, the aforementioned Anna	"		
30		40		See Shabbai B.R. Ezekiel Shapira	"	40	
37		37		R. Man'adal B.R. Man'adalshan	"	55	
50		50		R. Yosef B.R. Aharon 'Avin	"		
88	9	78	9			21	9
12	9	64	9	Transpart ma'abelad		37	7
00	19	42	19			38	16

And now the blessing will stand, according to those named Mata, who sit in the village of Branschweig, and these are

28 and 1988	Rambah				Orphanage
	25			R. Shmuel Zalman in R. Yitzhak	
36	1	66	1	R. Meir B.R. Israel Abalon	14 2
				R. Meir B.R. Zvi Aldeberg	60 1
10		10		R. Reuven B.R. Avraham Rabart	- 1
				R. Haim Ari B.R. Ezekiel Leiansky	25
46	1	1	2		99 4
00	19	42	19	Transfart from the 2014-2016 world	58 16
46	20	43	21		57 21

And at the threshold, they paid the general account 63.40 R.T. Amrican

And here we are now sending a draft of twelve phanta and twelve shillings and 10 pearces, this is how our merchant rises in an English dish, and with the cherish of his teachings the righteous genius, etc. for their part in Jacob and give them a man as his domain is given from our city in favor of the three aforementioned funds,

And we will receive our blessing to the righteous genius R. Shmuel Salant, who we bless him and G.G. in all of Israel in writing and signing as good as he pleases and as an object of his lovers from afar.

Haim Be'er Yitzhak HaCohen Gutkawski Gabay of Lewistan

Mordechai Yehoshua B.R. Israel Shimon Ha'ag Gabay of Auburn

The sediness of an orphanage was cleared and I sent them their list.