

About Jews in Colonial New Brunswick Area

By Robert Zassler

(This article appeared in the Jewish Journal on September 17, 1976)

There appear to be conflicting historical inaccuracies in Encyclopedia Judaica under those entries for "New Brunswick" and "Middlesex County". These statements, it is hoped, can be cleared up in this story on the early Jewish settlers in this Raritan Valley area.

The statement in question under the "New Brunswick" entry is:

"New Brunswick's earliest Jewish settler seems to have been Daniel Nunez, who was a justice of the peace in 1722, about 40 years after the founding of the town (1679-80). Nunez was in business in Piscataway, a small village just outside the New Brunswick city limits. Hanna Lonzoda, a widow lived in New Brunswick from 1750 on."

The questionable statement under the "Middlesex County" entry reads:

"... Aaron and Jacob Louzada owned a grocery and hardware store in Bound Brook, on the border between Middlesex County and Somerset County, as early as 1718, and helped form a synagogue ten years earlier."

Daniel Nunez was, indeed, a justice of the peace for Middlesex County in 1722, but extant records show that he sat as a justice of the peace in the Quarter Sessions Court only once -- on August 21, 1722. Moreover, there is no available evidence to suggest that Nunez was ever a permanent resident of Piscataway. He could have been living in Newark or in New York. There was, in fact, a Daniel Nunez da Costa in New York in 1728.

The New Brunswick area's earliest Jewish settler, however, was not Daniel Nunez, but rather Aaron Louzada, who, according to Dr. David de Sola Pool, "after retiring from business in New York, in 1698 settled in what is now Bound Brook, N.J."

In 1700, Aaron Louzada purchased 877 acres of land from one Thomas Codrington. The Codrington homestead was then known as "Rockowackhand", and was ultimately to become the basis for much of modern Bound Brook. The estate was inherited by Aaron's son Moses, and then Moses' son David, after which it passed out of the family. Aaron's home was dubbed "Jew House" by his neighbors, and was inherited by his daughter, Catherine, who lived there until her death in 1762. Catherine's husband, John Myers, died there in 1765 at the age of 92.

Cornwallis' Headquarters

"Jew House" then passed on to their widowed daughter. She sided with the British during the Revolutionary War, and lent her home to Cornwallis as his headquarters in Bound Brook in 1777. One of Cornwallis' aides fell in love with Aaron Louzada's granddaughter, and the pair fled New Jersey following the British evacuation of the colony. "Jew House" was confiscated in 1785 and demolished in 1826 to make way for the town's railroad station.

Contrary to the "Middlesex County" entry in the Encyclopedia Judaica, records do not indicate that Aaron Louzada was ever a business partner of a Jacob Louzada, or ever "owned a grocer and hardware store in Bound Brook," or that he "helped form a synagogue" about 1708.

A Jacob Louzada, who died on June 12, 1729, was interred at the Chatham Square Cemetery of Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City. His remains were transferred to the synagogue's 21st Street Cemetery in June of 1856. Dr. Pool believed that Jacob Louzada was the father of another Aaron Louzada, and his brother, Moses. Jacob Louzada may also have been an uncle to the other Aaron, though this cannot be definitely established.

Moses Louzada, who died in 1750, and his wife, Hanna, were residents of New Brunswick. Their children included Jacob -- a Tory who fled to Nova Scotia during the Revolution, and died in New York on January 2, 1791. There is a record of a "Jacob Luzada" marrying a Mary Griffin on January 28, 1770 in the New Providence Presbyterian Church. They may be one and the same; Elkaley Esther (1722-1789), wife of Abraham Abrahams of New York.

In 1762, Abraham Abrahams declared in papers filed with the colonial governor of New Jersey that his brother-in-law, Jacob Louzada, was "a lunatic and unsound in his memory and understanding;" Rachel (died 1790), who is said in some records to have been married to a "Mr. Nunes," and in other records to a "Mr. Myers;" and Benjamin, who inherited 50 pounds from Aaron Louzada upon the death of his uncle on December 27, 1764.

A Slave Owner

"An inventory of the Effects of Moses Louzada" was made following his death. It reveals that he was a slave owner -- holding "1 Negro wench name Jenny ... 1 Negro man ... Tom." Moses Louzada may have traded in spices and liquor, since the inventory mentioned "12 pts. Brown Sugar ... 13 lb. Black Pepper ... 7 lbs. Gingham ... 56 Galls. Rum ... 14 Galls. Wine ..." The inventory was signed in Hebrew by Moses Louzada's widow, Hannah.

By 1756, Hannah Louzada was accepting charity from Shearith Israel, New York. On November 9, 1761, she wrote from New Brunswick to the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, asking for her "wenters (sic) provisions, likewise a little money to bay (sic) for the wenter." She remained a ward of Shearith Israel until 1774.

Moses Louzada's brother Aaron was buried in the Chatham Square Cemetery. On November 29, 1855, his remains were re-interred in the 21st Street Cemetery, three graves away from Jacob Louzada. This Aaron Louzada also resided in Bound Brook. His name often appeared with his brother's in pre-revolutionary court records.

George J. Miller, in the 1934 edition of the "Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society," states that:

"From 1719 to 1762 Aaron Louzada and Moses Louzada were prolific litigants in the Middlesex, Somerset and Hunterdon County Courts, having a case at almost every term. In the New Jersey Supreme Court, the Louzadas appeared mostly as plaintiffs and only twice as defendants.

"There are 25 cases reported in Middlesex County, 12 in Hunterdon and 65 in Somerset. Eight cases are

recorded in the Supreme Court Minute Book. the business they conducted was large for those times."

A Death in Curacao

Aaron Louzada, brother of Moses, was the husband of the former Bloeme Michael, the daughter of Moses Michael of Harzfeld, Germany, and his wife Catherine Hachar Michael. Moses Michael died in Curacao on January 25, 1740 at the age of 63.

Aaron and Bloeme Louzada had a daughter named Kitty who was married to Isaac A. Abrahams of New York. Isaac Abrahams died in 1813; Kitty died impoverished in 1821; their blind son Abraham Abrahams, died on January 15, 1819 at the age of 21. All three Abrahams lie buried in the Chatham Square Cemetery.

Another daughter of Aaron and Bloeme Louzada was born in Peapack in 1739. Her name was Sarah. Their son, David, was born c. 1760, and died in 1800. A document filed on December 6, 1800 with "his Excellency Richard Howell Esq. Ordinary or Surrogate General" of New Jersey, declared that David's widow Abigail, was "Administratrix of all and singular the Goods, Chattels, and Credits of David Louzada -- late of the County of Middlesex deceased ..."

Another David Louzada lies buried in St. Peter's Episcopal Churchyard in Spotswood. His tombstone reveals that he died on September 27, 1849 at the age of 54. His wife, Philby, died on September 1, 1868 at the age of 69. Both were members of St. Peter's Church. It is quite likely that this David Louzada was Aaron and Bloeme Louzada's great-grandson. A Sephardic father will name his son after his father -- the son's grandfather -- even if the grandfather is living. The two David Louzadas, therefore, were most probably grandfather and grandson.

Fought with Patriots

A number of members of the Louzada family fought with the patriots in the American War for Independence. Benjamin Louzadder served in the Somerset County Militia. Perhaps Benjamin Louzadder was Benjamin, the son of Moses and Hannah Louzada. David Louzado was a private in Captain John Sebring's Company, 1st Regiment, Somerset County Militia. He was stationed at Elizabeth (then called Elizabethtown) from September 26, 1777 to October 16, 1777, and from November 19th to December 3rd of that year. If this David Louzado is Aaron and Bloeme Luzada's son David, then he was 17 years old when he joined the colonial cause.

Finally, there was Aaron Luzader, a private in the Eastern Regiment of the Morris County Militia, serving monthly tours up to November 1777, and Edward Luzader, who served with the 1st Regiment Light Dragoons. Because of the similarity in spelling, Edward and Aaron may have been close relatives.

Aaron Luzader, born in 1731, was a resident of Somerset County upon enlistment. It is logical to assume that he was the grandson of the original Aaron Louzada, who came to Bound Brook in 1698. This, however, cannot be corroborated by any documentary material.

Aaron Luzader converted to Christianity and married Mary Bradley, a member of the Scotch Plains Baptist Church. In the 1790 federal census, Aaron Luzader was recorded as a resident of Washington County, Pennsylvania. At the time of his death -- at the age of 103 -- he was living in Grafton, Virginia (now in West Virginia).

One of Aaron Luzader's sons, Abraham, served with George Rogers Clark in the Northwest Territory. Another, Moses, contributed money towards the construction of a new sanctuary for the St. Andrew Methodist Congregation in Grafton in 1856. Yet another son donated land in Jackson County, Ill., to another church.

Today, there are Protestant Luzaders and Catholic Luzaders, but no Jewish Luzaders. Some of the tombstones in New York remain legible. Others no longer remain.

About the Author

Robert Zassler is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, and at the time this article was written, was studying for his Master's degree in American History at Fordham University, New York. Born in New Brunswick, he was, at the time this article was written, Youth Director of Congregation Etz Ahaim in Highland Park. He currently resides in Israel.

[Back to the Etz Ahaim Home Page](#)

[Back to History of Jews in New Jersey](#)