Swan Street, also known in the late eighteenth century as Jew Street, because of the many Sephardic families who lived here. *(Photographs courtesy Karl Watson Collection)*

Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society
Vol. LVII

Houses, Inhabitants and Levies: Place for the Sephardic Jews of Bridgetown, Barbados 1679-1729

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Sir Clifford Darby, in his first lecture to incoming historical geography students at University College, London, emphasized that in European history before the publication of Michelet's *Tableau de la France* in the 1850s all the people floated around above the ground like the figures in Chinese paintings. Michelet planted the people of history down on terra firma and the discipline of historical geography, the science and art of the reconstruction of people in place, was born (Darby 1954, 1-11).

The larger objective of this study is to put Bridgetown's Jews in place as accurately as possible 1686-1729. Where did they own property, where did they work, where did they live, how did the place of their living change through time, and how and why did these patterns in place happen?

The major sources for answering these questions are the St. Michael Levy Books. The earliest extant today is that of 1686, although non-spatial data copied from earlier levy books (1679-80), now lost, are useful in listing the city's Jews (and supplementing the Census of 1680) and ranking them in wealth (tax burden). There are complete gaps in the Levy Books 1717-1721, 1730-1748, and 1766-1767, several years with summary group levies, 1726-1729, many years with serious water damage or with large sections more or less indecipherable. But the majority of the yearly records are invaluable for placing "Inhabitants" i.e., renters and owner-occupiers (although not the poorer ones), and shopkeepers and trades-persons accurately on the street where each lived.

Less valuable but important are the comprehensive, street-by-street listings of property owners in the "Houses" column of the

Levy Books for, in the case of the Jews 1679-1729 but not for non-Jews and for Jews from 1749 onwards, property ownership often meant owner-occupier. Sometimes, but not systematically, valuable information about the property beyond its taxable value, is also presented e.g., tenement, house, shop, store, large storehouse, stable, shed, yard.

Unfortunately, in the first thirty years of the Levy Books, 1686-1716, the Jews and their "personal head tax paid" are omitted from the "Inhabitants" column except for 1700 when some Jews are named and located by street but without record of personal head tax (the first detailed record of Jews, by street, in the "Inhabitants" column is for 1722-1725, and the next thereafter is 1749). This is the result of the St. Michael's Vestry policy of establishing an annual, always unfair, lump-sum tax on the Jews and having a head Assessor of the Levy and two other Jewish leaders perform the unenviable tasks of apportioning the "Hebrew Nation" tax to the other members of the Jewish community and then of collecting it.

The list of the leading families and their contributions generally appears as a separate and last item: the "Hebrew Nation Levy" at the end of the annual record. This, and the occasional Highway Levy upon the Jews, provide a ranking system, established from within the community, of status, recent commercial success, and wealth.

These useful levies have no counterpart among the majority non-Jews but are available for the Jews in the late 1680s, 1700-1716, 1722-25 (Hebrew Nation) and 1726-1729 (Highway Levy) and can be tied to Jewish property holders throughout the period and to renter/occupiers as well in the 1720s. The absence of the Jews from the "Inhabitants" column is fortunately not complete, for in 1700, seemingly as an oversight and a 'window', Jewish names appear in the street listings of renters and give us the first unambiguous map of the Jews and their residences. Another 'window' is made possible in 1715 by matching Jewish and non-Jewish names in itineraries of the 1715 Census with the corresponding non-Jewish names recorded lot-by-lot, street by street in the 1714, 1715, and 1716 Levy Books, thereby providing us with the only comprehensive street-by-street distribution map of Bridgetown's Jews in that it includes otherwise invisible poor families invariably omitted from the Inhabitants columns of all the Levy Books including those from 1749 to 1796.

The Jewish Population of Bridgetown 1679-1680

Much of what is taken to be the history of Bridgetown's Jews before 1679-1680 is more myth than reality: authors quote and cite each other, making much of laws passed (that may or may not have had any effect), draw on deeds and wills often badly transcribed, pick up chance references to individuals, usually prominent ones, and make much of fragments of data that give hints of history but form no pattern and tell nothing about place.

This situation changed with the publication of Wilfred S. Samuel's *"A Review of the Jewish Colonists in Barbados in the Year 1680,"* (1936) a scholarly work of high quality that presents a comprehensive list of Barbados's Jews based on (1) a levy of taxes on Jews in the Bridgetown District in 1679-1680, (2) another levy "laid on ye Nation of ye Jews" towards repairing the highways in 1680, (3) the Census of Barbados 1679-80, with a separate section enumerating the Jews (Samuel 1936, 68-69), and (4) Endenization papers, St. Michael's militia list, "epitaphs" (headstones) and wills of the period. Samuel claimed correctly that he secured "a full identification of many of our Barbadian Jewish worthies... (and) a certain degree of completeness" for his work. A fine scholar, Samuel modestly claimed that "at least the names are known of most, if not all, of the Jews then on the island, and in the cases of many individuals more than a mere name has been secured."(Samuel 1936, 4-5) In effect Samuel provides for Bridgetown's Jewry what my English mentor, Sir Clifford Darby, provided for English history in his multi-volume Domesday Geography of England: the first cross-section. It separates the period heavy with myth from the years 1679-1729 when more reliable data, primarily in the form of street-by-street information in the St. Michael Levy Books from 1685-1686 onwards, allow us to ground the Jews, first listed in 1679-1680, in houses on streets where they lived, worked and were taxed.

Many writers since Samuel seem not have realized that the data he presented prove that the 54 Jewish heads of household identified in the Census of 1680 omit 23 heads of household found in the Hebrew Nation and the Highway levies. Closer examination reveals that five of these were in both levies, another five were in the Highway Levy, and thirteen appeared in the Hebrew Nation Levy. Forty-one heads of household are named both in the Census and the Levy Books which means that thirteen heads of household in the Census are not found in the Levy lists: a first indication of the policies of the Jewish Assessors of the Levy who exempt three religious functionaries (haham, hazan, samas), nine judged to be very poor (mainly female), and one young recent arrival from Amsterdam.

Samuel divided the 34 families for which he had sufficient information into four groups based mainly on wealth but also on status, particularly in the cases of widows, spinsters, and young men of leading families: (1) Magnates (wealthy and influential in business); (2) Well-to-do; (3) In a moderate position, and (4) Poor. With far more information in hand than Samuel had in 1936, particularly in the Levy Books, I have divided all 77 heads of household into four groups, simply separating the 8 females of high status and low levies from the main body of the well-to-do (12), and distinguishing the 9 'invisible poor' discovered by the census-takers from the 14 poor families enumerated in the levies.

Continuity & Stability in the Jewish Population 1679-1688

The earliest extant levy books which include the Hebrew Nation levies at the end of each year are for 1685-1688. Combining the Hebrew Nation Levies for 1685-86 and 1688 yields a list of 63 Jews in Bridgetown in the late 1680s, almost matching the 64 Jews enumerated in the two levies of 1679-1680. Comparison of the two data-sets reveals a remarkable carryover and a general stability. Gone from the list of magnates is Anthony Rodriguez, replaced by Abraham Baruch Henriques, and David R. De Mercado's holdings pass to his able widow, Gracia. Six dropped from the ranks of the well-to-do, but significant figures of the future – David Nunes Castello, Abraham Bueno Musquita, Isaac Nunes, Abraham Gomez, Isaac Neto, and Jacob Senior (back from Nevis) more than replaced them. There were on balance several losses of those "in a moderate position", counterbalanced in part by gains in the ranks of the 'visible' poor.

The Jews of Bridgetown 1679-1680

"Magnates" (6)
Pagdiel Abudiente
Luis Dias
David Israel
Aaron Baruch Lousada
David R. De Mercado
Anthony Rodriguez

In a Moderate Position (12+8)
Isaac Aboab
Moses Arrobas
David Azuby
Abraham De Aaron Burgos
Rebecca Burgos
Isaac Israel
Jacob de Fonseca Meza
Jacob De Fonseca Valle
Cat. Navarro
Samuel Navarro
Abraham Pachecho
Jacob Preto

The Jews of Bridgetown 1679-1680 continued

Well-To-Do (28)
Abraham Abudiente
Moses D'Azevedo
Daniel Bueno
Solomon Cardozo
Abraham Costanho
Isaac Pereira Coutinho
Moses Henriques Coutinho
Abraham Baruch Henriques
Moses De Leon
Abraham Lopez
Haham Elias Lopez
Jacob Baruch Lousada
Leah Medina
Abraham de Sousa Mendes
David De Mercado
Moses De Mercado
Dr. Moses Hezekiah De Mercado
Isaac De Meza
David Namias
Aaron Navarro
Jacob Franco Nunes
Isaac Israel De Pisa
Isaac Pereira
Jacob Pachecho
Joseph Senior Saraiva
Abraham Valverde

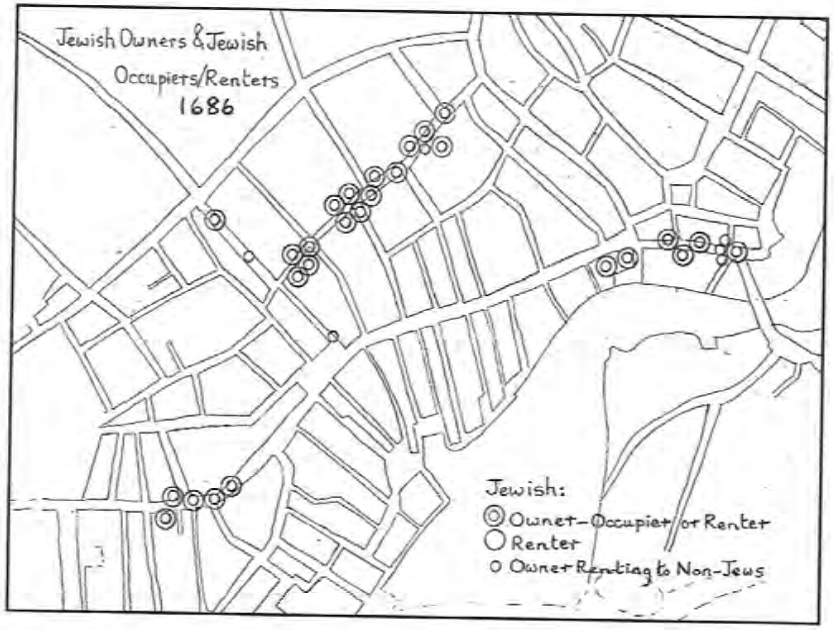
In a Moderate Position (12+8)
Judith Hamis
Rebecca Lousada
Esther Pachecho
Rebecca Pachecho
Judith Risson
Esther Rodriguez
Rebecca Rodriguez
Judith Torres

Poor (14+9)
Esther Antunes
Gabriel Antunes
Hester Bar Simon
Abraham Burgos
Eliahu Burgos
Moses Burgos
Samuel De Chaves
David Nunes De Fonseca
Judith Israel
Benjamin De Leon
Isaac Nahar
Mordechai Palache
Elias De Pisa
Jael Serrana

Sarah Atkins
Rachel Burgos
Mrs. Leah de Campos
Rachel Lopez
Judith Navarro
Ester Noy (Nahar)
Abraham Qay
Mordechai Sarah
David Soares

The 24 Jewish property owners circa 1686 owned 31 properties: 15 on Swan Street, 12 on Cheapside, 3 on Tudor Street and 1 on James Street/Synagogue Lane: the highest level of Jewish property ownership before 1749. Twenty of these property owners of 1686 were enumerated in the 1679-1680 levies, and most of them, in a stable and prosperous period, probably owned the same property as in 1686. The twenty accounted for 80 slaves and 80 Jews (39 on

Cheapside, 28 on Swan, 8 on Tudor and 5 on Synagogue Lane). The map of 1685-1686 makes it clear that there were four Jewish 'districts' in 1686: the Merchant Town (east Cheapside), the Old Jewish Center (west Cheapside), Swan Street, and Tudor Street.



The Disastrous Years of Change and Instability: 1689-1699

Beginning in 1689 the general prosperity gave way to increasingly hard times: hurricanes, a decade of war with France, and probably related, almost annual epidemics that "were especially severe about Bridgetown." "The number of white men decreased from 7,235 in 1683 to 2,330 in 1698" a loss of 68 per cent (Starkey 1939, 8-9, 81-85).

The particularly bad years which had a major impact on Jewish property owners were 1691 (during a second drought and a first major epidemic), 1695 (following two hurricanes in 1694 and five successive years of epidemics 1691-1695) and 1699 (following the sixth epidemic of 1698). In the three main Jewish districts the impact was disastrous on Swan Street which lost practically all its small landholders, severe in the Old Jewish Center which lost two of its five houses early, and immeasurable in the Merchant Town where the four surviving Jewish merchant magnates all died 1689-1701 and two merchant properties passed from Jewish ownership, soon to be followed by two more.

Golden Age of the Jewish Magnates: Merchants Town 1676-1689

The prosperous period of 1676-1689 is the Golden Age of the Jewish traders. Their properties formed a tight neighborhood around the town's early peak-land-value intersection at the junction of Cheapside, High Street and the Landing Place presented clearly in Samuel Copen's Prospect 1695. There was no numbering of the properties on the Bridgetown streets, but the next best thing is the rarely changing order of the entries, from east to west on Cheapside in the annual street listings in the "Houses" column in the Levy Books until the 1710s. The 8 Jewish-owned properties at the heart of the merchants district in 1685 were numbers 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23 east of the Landing Place on Cheapside, and numbers 32 and 33 immediately to the west on the section of Cheapside already being called Broad Street. The hurricanes of 1694 encouraged some changes and a loss or two in this impressive array, somewhat counterbalanced by a major property addition at the eastern end (#13) by David Castello.

The Leading Jewish Merchants in the Old Merchants Town

Aaron Baruch Lousada, merchant magnate ranked second in wealth only to Luis Dias in the Hebrew Nation levies of the 1680s, lived in a landmark house between the Custom House and the Publick Cage at the western end of the Jewish 'district' (#33). Strong family trading connections were with London where brother Anthony Lousada (alias Moses Barrow) became a successful broker and attorney and where his merchant brother David lived from 1678 (Samuel 1936, 22-23, 76). His other brother, Abraham, a Speightstown merchant and probable planter in St. Peter's parish left for London before 1696 (Merrill 1964, 45; Samuel 1936, 31).

Faber establishes that the Baruchs, including Abraham Baruch Henriques, set themselves apart from the other Jewish merchants in the 1680s by adding to their general trading portfolio the purchase of slaves "in quantities large enough that they were purchasing them for resale. They were, in other words, engaged in the business of buying and selling slaves."(Faber 1998, 54) The demand for slaves in the Jewish community was small. There were few Jewish planters and constraints on the number of slaves allowed to urban Jews, so the Baruchs needed to sell to non-Jewish planters and to do this they needed non-Jewish partners. All three formed such partnerships: the brothers did so with Captain John Stewart as John Stewart, Aaron Baruch Co., and John Stewart, Abraham Baruch Co. Peter Baxter & Abraham Baruch Henriquez formed a third

partnership, and John Millington & Abraham Baruch formed another in which it isn't clear which Abraham was involved (Faber 1998, 54, 283-284).

Aaron might well have begun his relationship with Stewart in the early 1680s, probably purchasing slaves when he owned a plantation on the Christchurch Ridge sold before 1685 to the Kingslands who retained Aaron's Jewish manager, Abraham Bueno, until the heir came-of-age (Will, RB6/40/122). By 1683-84 Stewart is consorting with "Gentlemen" in the hinterland of St. Michael's Town and with brother Abraham's planter friends in St. Peter and St. Lucy parishes where Stewart marries the daughter of a prominent planter by 1684 and as "John Stewart Esquire" gives up sailing and importing slaves before 1690 (RB 6/12/543, RB 6/10/320, RB 6/40/283, RB 6/40/162, RB 6/41/388, RB 6/11/148). During his partnerships Stewart owned several properties in the West End of Bridgetown, the most interesting, on which he paid very little tax, was a plot of land beyond the built-up area of west Cheapside (the occasional holding area for slaves consigned for resale?).

In 1685 Aaron, astutely, in anticipation of a westward shift in the center of commercial activity to mid-town Cheapside in Bridgetown, purchased property on the corner of Tudor and Broad streets almost adjoining a new Coffee House and the new Exchange and opposite a new market, a situation similar to that of his house in the Old Merchant Town. In the same year, according to his will of 1693 (he died in 1695), his three brothers sent him a signed balance sheet of what was due to each one. This he refused to sign "owing to my then serving my 26 (years) of slavery" and in 1693 he countered their balance sheet with his own: the large amount due him and his heirs of 1,937 pounds sterling. The phrasing suggests that he resented being shackled to Barbados while the others were in London or soon to be, and that since 1685 the commercial tables had turned. Interestingly he gave absolute power to his wife to "sell houses, lands, and give Bills & drafts & trade and make advances" (RB6/11/202; Samuel 1936, 76-78). She directed the first two of these in her will of 1703 (Samuel 1936, 80-81), but apparently brought in Aaron's sister, Gracia De Mercado, the remarkable business-woman who ran De Mercado Inc. after David Raphael De Mercado's death in 1685, to keep the commercial business running for three years while decisions were made about the future and arrangements were finalized in the sale of the house to the great merchant magnate of the next generation, Jacob Franco.

David Israel, one of the five Jewish merchant magnates of Bridgetown in the 1680s, owned and occupied the landmark "Stone House" at the corner of Cheapside and High Street and shown prominently on the Bridgetown waterfront in Copen's Prospect of 1695 immediately east of Aron Baruch Lousada's house and the Publick Cage. Expelled from Brazil in 1653, he landed in New York "in poor circumstances" and left for Barbados. His brothers and other prominent relatives lived in Amsterdam and were his major mercantile contacts (Samuel 1936, 21).

He bought property on Swan Street jointly with his other neighbor on Cheapside, Aaron Navarro, and in his will of 1689 ordered this sold with proceeds to his widow, Sarah. The Stone House that the family hitherto occupied he ordered to be rented with the incoming rent divided in one-thirds each for his widow, son, and daughter, a situation terminated 1694-1695 with the sale of an obviously damaged house, after the two hurricanes of 1694, to Abraham Valverde, a future merchant magnate whose low property taxes after the hurricane revealed the scale of the damage (Samuel 1936, 75-76).

Whereas the other five Jewish landholders in the Merchants Town had almost certainly held property there for a decade or more before the first detailed levy of 1685, Abraham Baruch Henriques was a latecomer who apparently purchased properties (#20 and #21) in the early 1680s and had sold the latter to Aaron Navarro before 1685. He arrived with his wife from Amsterdam ca. 1678, had strong trading connections there, and family connections with the Bueno Henriques's (planters) in Barbados (Samuel 1936, 32-33, 79-80).

He was ranked #7 in the joint levies of 1679-80. The meteoric rise continued to 1688-1689 by which time he was a recognized magnate and ranked third in the Hebrew Nation Levy with a tax that doubled the amount levied in 1679-1680 while all others of the merchant group experienced substantial drops in their taxes by 1685-1686. His property on Cheapside also continued to appreciate to 1694 and soon recovered to pass pre-hurricane levels by 1697. With no male heir and two daughters he began to acquire property: five tenements on lower Tudor Street in 1699 (that were supporting his widow and daughter until at least 1716) and four houses on Swan Street in 1700 which were sold in 1701, the year of his death. The Cheapside property was sold in 1704 and passed from Jewish ownership. Wife Sarah and spinster daughter Rachel survived him by 35 and 41 years respectively, living on lower Tudor Street.

The merchant Aaron Navarro also had property in the Merchants Town (#s 21 and 23) at the time of his death in 1685. He was in partnership with his brother Moses in Brazil before the expulsion,

and they had accounts with another brother, Jacob, in Amsterdam, where their father resided. He came to Barbados in the mid-1650s, lost his house and land in the fire of 1658 eventually re-establishing accounts with his brother Jacob in Amsterdam to whom he made remittances and from whom he received cargoes. He settled in Surinam for a time and traded there up to the alienation of the Jews, returning to Barbados in the 1670s and shifting his trading and banking connections to London (Snyder 2010, 602 finds interest in the content and structure of his long will). Taking a young wife, Ester, by whom he had three children not yet of age at the time of his death, he purchased at least three properties designated for the three children: two in the Merchant Town (in one of "which I recently lived") and one in the Old Jewish Center (west Cheapside) where he resided at the time of his death (Samuel 1936, 40-41, 72-74).

Ester Navarro's determination to fulfill his wishes for the houses, with no support from the Navarro family, was made difficult by the two hurricanes and the deaths of two of the children, and, as a consequence, both the east Cheapside houses passed from Jewish hands. But her quest, and success in the Old Jewish Center, is an impressive story of a determined Jewish business-woman and a survivor facing tough odds.

Luis Dias, holder of properties #17 and #18, is the alias of Joseph Jessurun Mendes, founder of the Synagogue, lay leader of the Jewish community, a prominent trader whom secondary sources claim was a plantation owner at one time. In the 1680s levies he was wealthiest of the merchant magnates in 1686-1688: the last of Hebrew Nation Levies of the seventeenth century (Samuel 1936, 15-17, 78-79).

His two contiguous properties in the Merchant Town were heavily taxed, particularly #18 which was later revealed to have three "tenements", the most heavily assessed Jewish lot in the city. Dias lived next door, which was both house and storehouse. He also had property on Swan Street on which no tax was assessed after 1691 to his death in 1699.

Paul Jansen De Vrede, of a Dutch Christian family, chose to be a Jew, was accepted in the Jewish community and called "Abraham" by fellow Jews. He was a prominent member of the Speightstown congregation, had properties in both towns, and like other traders in Speightstown had connections in London and Holland (Samuel 1936, 27-28). The 1680 Census entry suggests that he owned his Cheapside property (#19) in 1680 and until 1694 when his property levy halved and he sold to Abraham Bueno Musquita whom Stern (1971) claims as a plantation owner in Barbados in 1692 who was endenized there in 1695 (Samuel 1936, 95). He lived at #19 until at least 1700 whence it came by 1705 to Moses Mendes.

The only major property addition to the cluster of Jewish-owned houses at the eastern end of Cheapside occurred in the wake of the hurricanes of 1694. David Castello, recently arrived from Amsterdam and a part owner of property there (Samuel 1936, 82), acquired property at #13 Cheapside, three lots east of Luis Dias's house and four lots east of Luis Dias's three highly valued tenements. Castello's property – five tenements – rated at 350 lbs and obviously badly damaged by the hurricanes was almost triple that value in 1699: 1028 lbs of muscovado sugar – the highest taxed property of all Jewish landholders in 1699.

The Old Jewish Center

I maintain elsewhere that the early, perhaps earliest, cluster of Jewish-owned houses in Bridgetown had developed by the mid-1650s around a landmark "Jews Brick House" (proto-synagogue?) where Fort Lane (Alley) and Maiden Lane join Cheapside (Bowden 2003, 44). The five Jewish properties clustered in this area (numbers 79, 83, 87, 88, and 90 Cheapside) in the earliest comprehensive record of Jewish property ownership (the Levy Book of 1685-1686), adds weight to this thesis. Two branches of the Seniors and their close friends the Navarros, and the Hamis's and their friends the Namiases maintained a tight cluster of well-to-do, long-established families whose (mean and median) property taxes were about half those paid by the Jewish merchants in the Merchant Town, but appreciably higher than those paid by the Jews of Swan Street. The five-house cluster remained in tact to 1689-90, faltered in the 'disastrous' 1690s, and came back partially repaired in 1700.

Jacob Senior, known to have left Barbados for Nevis in 1679 on the eve of the Census and Levies of 1679-80, was back in the Old Jewish Center (#79) in 1686 paying a large property tax, lowered somewhat by 1689-1690. Apparently hoping to take advantage of the near collapse of Jewish property holding on Swan Street in the 1690s he tries two experiments with agent Thomas Davis, and a joint enterprise with Abraham Pacheco before returning to Nevis where he is said to have died in 1709 (Stern 1972, 21-22) and in 1710 (Samuel 1936, 33) both years in which a Jacob Senior is partnered by Hester Navarro in joint ownership of #84 Cheapside in the Old Jewish Center. Natalie Zacek (2010, 141) records him in November 10, 1712 taking an oath to resettle Nevis and in 1715 a "Jacob Senior" aged 17 is named in the 1715 Barbados Census. A

relative, Aron Senior, pays a nominal tax on this property in 1695 (after the hurricanes and the property disaster), and thereafter is named in the "Houses column" but with no tax, suggesting a new status as a Jewish renter paying no personal head tax, a status common in the 1700 Levy Book and then rejected.

Joseph Senior Saraiva (#83) has a family of 3 with 4 slaves and his property tax from 1685 to the year of change 1694-95 averages 110lbs annually. After his death in 1694 "Mrs Senior" (Rachel) inherits the property, and the steadily rising property tax suggests recovery from hurricane damage. But the property is sold to Isaac Aboab Furtado in 1699, and in 1700 Rachel Senior is reduced, like so many other property owners "in a moderate position" to being a renter (on Swan Street).

Ester and Aaron Navarro were living at #87 Cheapside in 1685, and soon after Aaron's death in that year Ester was forced to sell the first of their two houses in the Merchant Town and sold the other in 1695, after fulfilling her guardian's obligations by handing over #87 to her son Jacob Navarro in the hurricane year of 1694 and finding another property for her other son, Moses, who is recorded in 1695 as a landholder paying a low property tax and thereafter no tax, as in the case of Aron Senior (above). The Hamis property (#88) next door was the home of "the great trader" Moses Hamis Gago (Fortune 1984, 76) and passed at his death to Judith Hamis who died in 1688, and remained vacant after her death in 1689, but during the property chaos of 1694-1699 Ester Navarro appears to have made some sort of arrangement to have Moses Navarro move onto it 1695-1699 before it was sold in 1700 to the well-to-do Rebecca Valverde.

The long-term sheet anchor of the Old Jewish Center was the Namias family (#90), the epitome of a strong, stable family who maintained the value of their property and their status in the Jewish community over the thirty years from 1685. The patriarch, David Namias, had 9 family members and five slaves in the townhouse at the time of the Census 1679-80, and another 12 slaves working his 20-acre plantation on the St. Michael's/Christchurch parishes-border (Merrill, 1964, 44). Samuel (1936, 14) traces his connections to the Hamburg, Altona, Gluckstadt area. During the years 1685 to 1702 his rank/wealth in the Levies rises from 19th to 11th and he takes on the unenviable task of a Jewish Assessor of the Levy, protesting to the Vestry and the Governor the onerous burden of the Hebrew Nation and (Jewish) Highway Levies.

Gradual Expansion Followed by Setbacks on Swan Street

As the immigration of Jews accelerated in the late 1650s Jewish leaders looked around for potential burial grounds and found land for them on the unfashionable north side where roads and lanes were just being opened up near the dangerous Powder House/Public Magazine (which exploded in the late 1660s). In the late 1650s also Jews encountered prejudice and hostility on the west side as it became the fashionable residential area for the Anglican Christian majority, and the Jewish leaders (notably Luis Dias and David Raphael De Mercado) made the unusual decision, for Jews, of locating the new synagogue ("the Jews Houses" in the Levy Books) alongside the burial grounds, leaving behind "the Jews Brick House" on west Cheapside (Bowden 2003, 44-48). Sub-divisions were available on Swan Street in the 1660s and David R. De Mercado bought four lots on the western end on the south side, built four large houses, as judged by the relatively very high property taxes paid on them (between 38 and 53 per cent of the total property taxes paid by the Jewish owners on the street 1686-1700), and, as the wealthiest Jewish magnate and the only one not located in the Merchant Town, he moved the family into at least one, and probably more of the four houses, thereby encouraging other Jews, intentionally or otherwise to re-locate to Swan Street or purchase property for rentals (as did Cheapside-based magnates Luis Dias and David Israel).

By 1685-86 the steady growth of Jewish property owners on Swan Street more than matched the number of Jewish owners in the two long-established districts on Cheapside. There were undoubtedly more renters on Swan Street also, although this can only be proved indirectly by the numbers of renters recorded in the 1700 Levy Books which, uniquely, names Jewish renters in the "Inhabitants" column. However, compared to the other Jewish areas 1685-1700 Swan Street was far less stable in detail. The average value of the properties in the Merchant Town was 2.4 times that of Swan Street, and 2.9 times greater if the largest house in each group is removed and, unlike the Cheapside 'districts' which were peopled by magnates and the well-to-do, Swan Street's property owners were mainly "in a moderate position", with several from the lower end of the "well-to-do" group, at least one from the "poor" group, and a sizeable group of newcomers. They were particularly vulnerable to the conditions in the 1690s: a decade of war with France and related annual epidemics. Three years in particular were disastrous for the Jews on Swan Street: 1691 (during a second drought and the first major epidemic), 1695 (following the two

hurricanes of 1694 and five successive years of epidemics 1691-1695), and 1699 (following the sixth epidemic of the decade in 1698), all of which made for short-term volatile changes in the 1690s (Starkey, 1939, 8).

The 13 properties of 1686-1690 dropped to 8 in 1691, experienced many changes but rose to 10 after the hurricane year of 1694, rose to 11 in 1699 and dropped to 6 in 1700. In more detail only 4 of the 13 landholders of 1690-91 held on to their land (the Mercados, Arrobas I, Samuel Navarro, Rebecca Burgos); 2 were replaced (Israel by newcomer Naphthaly; Costanho 1 by Joseph Senior). The other 7 lost their properties, five of them outright (I.I. De Peiza, H. Costanho II, Isaac Meza, Judith Risson, L. Dias, Arrobas II) and Solomon Cardozo drops out but returns briefly in 1692. Rebecca Burgos buys a second property: the one gain. This remarkable change sees the number of Jewish owners on Swan Street in 1692 at 9, all but 2 of them now assigned agents (Thomas Davis and Luis Dias) presumably by the Vestry to ensure the collection of property taxes after problems of collection in 1690-91.

In 1695 5 held on to land, 3 were replaced (Cardozo by Nunes, Senior by Letub, Naphthaly by Rachel Navarro), and 3 were new (DeVrede, Hezekiah Pacheco, Netto). The change 1699-1700 was even more dramatic with 9 property owners lost: Jacob Francis, Jacob Nunes, De Vrede, Letub, Arrobas, R. Navarro, S. Navarro, Netto, and Rebecca Burgos I (with Agt. T Davis), 4 new (Isaac Dias 2 separate properties, Abraham Baruch Henriques, and Abraham & Elias Burgos) and 2 retained (Mercados and Rebecca Baruch). Throughout the decade the majority of the property owners (7 in 1699) had Thomas Davis or Luis Dias as agents. The practice ended in 1699 and, for whatever reasons the experiment was made, it seems to have helped Thomas Davis to become an even larger landholder on Swan Street and to have forced small Jewish landholders on Swan Street to quit property ownership and become renters. Increasingly heavy levies on the Jews in the 1690s, culminating in the hefty double levies (Hebrew Nation and Highway) in 1700 also probably proved too much for most of the lower-ranked landholders, thereby presenting an opportunity for several of the wealthiest Jewish families, Abraham Baruch Henriques, Isaac Dias & Co., and Rebecca Baruch, to pick up nine bargain properties as investments.

Tudor Street 1685-1700

The only other noteworthy grouping of Jewish property owners was that on Tudor Street, an increasingly important commercial focus

with the Exchange and new Market near Tudor Street's intersection with Midtown Cheapside. Property near the intersection with Swan Street promised access to the developing west end of Swan Street and lower costs of property and of rentals.

As the head of the second wealthiest Jewish family in Bridgetown and the leading merchant, Aaron Baruch Lousada needed a property off overvalued Broad Street but close to it and near the emerging financial, communications, and mercantile center epitomized in the Merchants Exchange (built before 1681). Before 1685 he found it at #2 Tudor next door to the Merchants Exchange and the new peak land value intersection (plvi) where Broad and Tudor streets intersect, the center of the new merchants town, an area where no other Jewish land holders bought prior to 1685. He held the house as a rentier until his death in 1695, and his wife Rachel kept it until 1699/1700, about the time when Abraham Baruch Henriques, merchant magnate, bought from the Bulkeleys five tenements as a rental investment and future home of his wife and children on #7 Tudor Street, a little to the north of Aron's rental.

Further north near the Swan Street crossing (#13) Anthony Rodriguez had a modest property (townhouse?) valued at 50 lbs p.a that he used when in town from his property in St. Michael's parish recorded in the Census of 1679-1680. In that year 3 are recorded as family members with 10 slaves, a large number for urban Bridgetown shared only with Aaron Navarro, David R. De Mercado, and Daniel Bueno. There are pages illegible and missing from the Tudor records in the levies, but legible entries show that Rodriguez held the "house" on Tudor to at least 1690. Rodriguez was not ranked in any of the Hebrew Nation Levies which suggests that property outside Bridgetown provided his main livelihood and this seems confirmed in (1) a will of 1685 mentioning "land in St. Michael's Parish joining the land of Anthony Roderiguez and Col. William Bate," and in (2) the relatively large number of slaves and a 3 to 1 ratio of slaves to family members in the 1680 Census.

Farther north on #16 Tudor Street was the far higher valued establishment of Jacob Fonseca Valle, assessed at between 100 and 320 lbs p.a 1685-1702. He was appointed the "Mohel" (circumciser) of the Nidhe Israel Congregation and called a "chirurgion." His yard and house were quite close to the Synagogue and he cared for graves. He was a rare person in the Jewish community in being very poor but a property owner paying a substantial property tax 1685-1700 (Samuel 1936, 29, 71; Marcus 1970, 129). Ranked 45th out of 48 and assessed for 17lbs in the Levy of 1685 and unranked in 1688, he achieved some success in

the1690s, for in the 1700 Levy he was ranked 20th and paying 600lbs, and the sale of his house may well have funded daughter Sarah's "respectable marriage portion" ("a house and land in St. Michael's town") when she married Isaac Melhado (Samuel 1936, 34).

The Disastrous Decade Measured in the 1688 and 1700 Levy Books

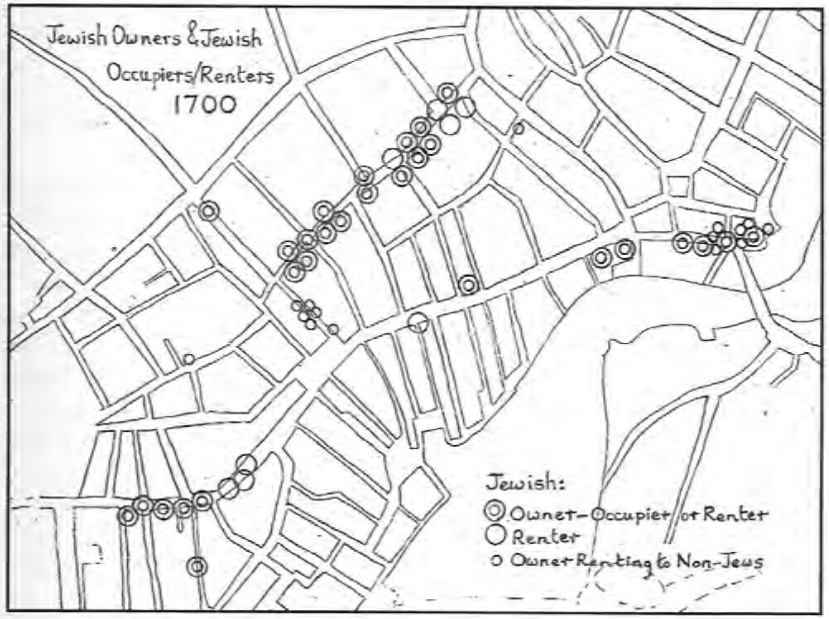
Of the 63 heads of household listed in the dual levies of 1686-1688, 43 were gone by 1700, a drop of 68 per cent. Assuming that the 9 "invisible poor" of the 1680s are still invisible in the dual levies of 1700, the change in the visible Jewish population reveals a drop from 63 families to 44 between 1688 and 1700, a decline of 30 per cent. The 24 new arrivals since 1686-1688 constituted in 1700 55 per cent of the Jewish population in the Levies.

Major Losses of Men, Major Increases of Women

All six magnates were lost by the end of 1700. Moses and David De Mercado created a crisis when they left the aging but able Gracia De Mercado to manage De Mercado Inc. alone, and in 1700 the Jewish Assessors of the Levy, as was their prerogative, chose not to include her in the Levy. The only other survivors from the top-ranked 11 of the 1680s levies were Jacob Franco, a new magnate, and Jacob Baruch Lousada who spent most of the decade in London. Of the next 14 of the 1688 Levy, 8 were no longer listed (two at least of whom took the safer course of action of wealthy families, in the epidemics decade, of going to London). Five of the six survivors – Moses Coutinho, David Namias, Abraham Valverde, David Castello, and Isaac Nunes moved into the top 12 of 1700 (and the sixth became a property holder). A further breakdown of the losses shows 18 "well-to-do" families, 11 "in a moderate position", and 14 of the 'visible poor' of the 1686-1688 levies to be gone from the 1700 levies.

The major change was the large number of women listed in the 1700 levies, and their increased proportion and high rank compared to 1686-1688. Gracia De Mercado took over the business of her magnate husband David Raphael De Mercado after his death in 1685. Ranked fourth in the combined levies of 1686-88, she was the only woman ranked in the top 25 (4%); there were six in the top 38 (16%). In the 1700 levies there were 12 in the top 38 (32%), a doubling, and 5 in the top 25 (20%), (with Gracia De Mercado clearly exempted from the 1700 levies by the Jewish Assessors).

The main difference lies in the deaths of the male magnates and



of the well-to-do in the wake of six epidemics in the 1690s. Some, like Gracia, took over the businesses, interests and properties. Others were the beneficiaries of a new pattern among the wealthy merchants, in particular, of retaining or buying homes for the women being left behind, buying rental properties, either to be sold at intervals as needed, or to yield a steady income from rent-yielding properties, or both. Well provided for, this made the beneficiaries (widows, mothers, spinsters, daughters needing dowries) fair game for the Jewish Assessors of the Levy, during two decades of Jewish population decline and increasing difficulty for males of the middling and poor groups. They brought into the Levy women previously exempted and increased the levies of those who previously paid nominal sums.

The result was that seven of the women levied in the #14 to #26 group in 1700, including the company David Letub & Mother, were each paying between 500 to 900 lbs of muscovado sugar per annum, and there were five more, #29 to #36, paying appreciably higher amounts (170-340 lbs) than the 12 women in 1688 (ranked #5 to #59), who were assessed trifling amounts (17 to 150 lbs). Furthermore, in 1688 there was only one family name, Navarro, listed twice; whereas in 1700 there were three Baruchs, two Valverdes, two Seniors, and two Pachecos, all nine of them from wealthy property-holding families, as were Rachel De Mercado,

Ester Navarro, and Hester Bueno Henriques (of a two-plantation family).

Location of Jewish Renters & Property Owners by Street: The 1700 Levy

The 1700 Levy Book is unique in several respects, notably because it is the only year in the first 35 years of Levy Books in which the Jewish occupiers of houses are named and approximately located on streets. Jews were, for once, included in the "Inhabitants" column, although none, unlike the non-Jews, had their personal head tax (pht) recorded because this was supposedly subsumed in the all-inclusive Hebrew Nation Levy (and supplemental Jewish Highway Levy) in 1700. The rare occurrence of two levies in one year is also an asset because the two general levies when amalgamated enumerate at least 42 heads of household in Bridgetown (for the next 15 years the total number of names yielded by the annual Hebrew Nation Levy is in the 20s and never more than 36). As a consequence we can locate the poor, middling, and upper classes, pinpoint the absentees, tentatively fill in some of the locational gaps, and locate a large majority of the Bridgetown Jews by street and 'number'.

It is possible to locate with some precision 40 houses, owner-occupied or rented by Jews: 9 in the Merchant Town, 20 on Swan Street, 8 in the Old Jewish Center and one each on central Church Street, middle Tudor Street, and middle Reeds Rents. In addition Jewish owners, beyond their own houses, offered 8 properties for rent in the Merchant Town, 5 on lower Tudor, one on Middle Street, mainly for rent by non-Jews. On Swan Street 8 such properties were offered by three owners and all occupied by Jews in 1700.

Data in the double levies and in the property taxes point to a clear stratification of the Jews, by district. In the Merchant Town the median and mean taxes per Jewish property are 292 lbs and 302 lbs of muscovado sugar; in Swan Street they were 200 lbs and 174 lbs, and in the Old Jewish Center they were even lower: 175 and 139 lbs, less than half of the Merchant Town mean. The median and mean ranks of Jews paying the levies in the three districts is 7th and 11th in the Merchant Town, 21st and 20th in the Old Jewish Center and 24th for both median and mean in Swan Street, unsurprising when it is noted that 14 of the 17 ranked on Swan Street were renters compared to the other two districts where property owner-occupiers outnumbered renters.

Rank, Location & Property in the Levy Books of 1700

East & Mid Cheapside (9)

Rank		Lot
#1	Jacob Franco	#33PR
#3	David Castello	#13PR
#7=	Abr. Valverde	#32PR
#7=	Jacob De Medina	#33R
#10	Isaac Delapena	#36R
#17	Rachel Baruch L.	#55PR
#20	Abr. Baruch H.	#20PR
#27	David Baruch L.	#59R
NR	Paul DeVrede	#17PR

Tudor Street (1)

#20	Jac. Fonseca Val.	PR

Church Street(1)

NR	Abr. De Peiza	P

Reeds Rent (1)

NR	Widow Arobas	R

Swan Street (20)

Rank		Lot
#2	Isaac Dias and Co.	#21PR
#5	Moses Coutinho	#44R
#11	Jacob Nunes	#10R
#14	Rebecca Baruch	#65PR
#15	Rachel De Mercado	#7R
#18	Jacob Lewis	#42R
#23	Isaac Naphthaly	#49R
#23	David Letub & Mother	#43R
#26	Rachel Senior	#64R
#28	Abraham Pereira	#53R
#30	Abr. & Elias Burgos	#40PF
#34	Hezekiah Pacheco	#22R
#35	Hannah Pacheco	#41R
#36	Hester Senior	#23R
#37	Abraham Burgos	#35R
#40	David De Mercado	#6R?
#41	Isaac Senior	#29R
NRWill	Gracia De Mercado	#8PR
NR	Bienvenida Gomez	#9R
NR	Jacob Gomez	#30R

Old Jewish Centre (8)

Rank		Lot
#9	Isaac Nunes	#81R
#12	David Namias	#90PR
#16	Isaac Aboab	#88PR
#19	Phin. Abarbanel	#74R
#22	Rachel Baruch	#79PR
#23=	Reb. Valverde	#86PR
#33	Hester Nav. & Son	#87PR
#29	Rachel Valverde	BHA?

Companies (no HQ known)

Rank		Lot
#4	Isaac Mendes & Co.	
#13	Moses Espinosa & Co.	

No Street Record (5)

#31	Hester Bueno Henr.
#32	Abr. de Aaron Burgos
#38	Jac. Delyon Giddis
#39	Adam Risson
#41	Sarah Dias

Jewish Owned Rentals

East & Mid Cheapside

David Castello	5
Paul DeVrede	3

Swan Street

Abr. Baruch Henriques	4
Isaac Dias & Co.	3
Gracia DeMercado	1

Rank, Location & Property in the Levy Books of 1700 continued

Jewish-owned Rentals

Tudor Street		Middle Street	
Abr. Baruch Henriques	5	David Castello	1

P = Property Owner; Rank = Ranking in the Hebrew Nation & Highway Levies 1700; R = Renter/Owner-Occupier; NR = Unranked in the Double Levies; BHA = Bullhead Alley

The result is that the locations of 85 per cent of the heads of household listed in the joint levies are known. The two companies included in the joint-levy rankings are not included in the property-tax rankings because the addresses of the two businesses are not known in 1700. The breakdown by district shows that half the Bridgetown Jewish families lived on Swan Street, most of the others in the two districts on Cheapside and three elsewhere.

The five with no apparent street record are all in the lowest one-third of the Levy rankings (#31 to #41=): two males probably based in Speightstown who did just enough business in Bridgetown to catch the attention of the Jewish Assessors of the Levy, but not enough to pay either the personal head tax (as traders/renters) or the property tax. Another male is the apparent heir of Judica Risson, owner of a Swan Street Company that dropped out in the disaster of 1690-1691. He makes no progress from the ranks of the poorest in the bottom three when he appears in the Hebrew Nation Levies up to 1707.

Of the two women, Hester Bueno Henriques carries the name of a plantation owner (Merrill 1964, 44-45) and appears among the bottom six in all the levies up to 1707, but with no property record. The aged Sarah Dias, sister of the late Luis Dias, was the lowest ranked in the 1700 Levy along with Isaac Senior, formerly an emigrant to Nevis 1678 (Arbell, 2002, 219), described in the Levy entry as "very poor." She is characterized by Samuel as a "prim maiden lady." She would not have surfaced without having just received ten pounds sterling "In Remembrance" for Luis Dias in his will of 1698-1699 (the knowledge of which must have encouraged the Jewish Assessors of the Levy to tax her 20 lbs of muscovado sugar). Otherwise obviously poor, she did not have to pay tax for a modest room in the Luis/Isaac Dias properties in mid-Swan Street which also housed another sister of Luis Dias, Ester Antunes, who

inherited in 1699 an income of 20 pounds sterling a year from Luis Dias in his will. Both sisters were heads of households living on Swan Street as members of the 'invisible poor'. Ester dies in 1703, aged 84. She is not included as a head of household in 1700. Rachel Valverde (#29 in the rankings) should also perhaps be in the no-street-record group but it seemed likely that Abraham Valverde, given the family's history in taking care of their own, purchased for the aged Rachel a house on Bullhead Alley, close to the house of Mrs. Rebecca Valverde.

Hard Times Again 1700-1712 and a Short Spell of Prosperity 1713-1718

A good sugar crop in 1699-1700 was followed by a sharp decline in exports and the return of epidemics twice in four years. Sugar prices rose in London but Barbados could not take advantage of them because of continued "tremendous shipping losses" during the war, which drove up prices because of scarcity (Starkey 1939, 84-88). The depression deepened, there was a currency crisis, and things did not improve until the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 which ushered in a short period of prosperity 1713-1718. The difficulties of this period confirmed the end of Bridgetown's dominance in the British Caribbean just as they ended Boston's dominance in the British Mainland Colonies, for much the same reasons.

The raw figures of the annual Hebrew Nation levies encapsulate the effects of the depression on Bridgetown's Jewish community. The number of heads of household who were taxed annually fell 14 per cent (42 to 36) from 1700 to 1702 and another 17 per cent (36 to 30) from 1702 to 1715. Things stabilized somewhat thereafter, but between 1707 and 1715 the number of Jews called upon to pay the levy fell from 30 to an all-time low of 24: another 20 per cent drop. One major cause for the disastrous drop in numbers 1700-1705 is the return of epidemics in 1700 and 1703, but the steady decline throughout the period is more the result of a faltering economy and the high costs of transportation.

The decline in numbers also reflects the policies of the Jewish Assessors of the Levy, the successful and wealthy leaders of the Jewish community who increasingly weighed the value of their productive time wasted in the trials and tribulations of collecting minuscule amounts of muscovado sugar (or a shilling or two) from the growing numbers of the increasingly penurious and invisible poor and the marginal members of the middling group. The assessors and the top 10 payers simply assumed more and more of

the tax burden and complained bitterly to the Vestry and the Governor about the inequities of the Hebrew Nation Levy.

Other direct causes of the drop in numbers are the departure of women to London (e.g, widow Dias, 1703-1704) and the losses of mothers, maiden aunts, relatives, and widows who outlived their wealthy merchant husbands and were enabled, or set up by them, to live in their own homes. Of the 13 women listed in 1702, 8 did not appear in the Levy of 1705 (4 Baruchs, Letub, Pacheco, Senior, Dias) a loss of 62 per cent (the loss for men was 17 per cent). In the following two years the loss of Hester Senior and the gain of Hester Navarro was the only change in the female ranks, but between 1707 and 1710 the changeover to the new type of women of the Levy, saw five losses and a new majority of working business women: Rachel Costanio, Jael Valverde & Co. and Hester Navarro. These three were joined in 1712 by Rebekah Castello: all the four women of the Levy were running businesses. This represented (1) a loss of 69 per cent of women in the Levy over ten years, (2) a whole new criterion for women paying the Levy, and (3) the end of the fashionable practice of the 1690s of endowing properties for the women of wealthy families and (with the will of Rachel Baruch Lousada 1703) the beginning of investments being made for relatives in the Royal Exchange, London, by expatriate family brokers (in this case Isaac Gomes), in the stock of the Bank of England, the East India Company, and the South Seas Company, among others (the classic case is the will of Jacob Franco 1726).

Rank of the Top 15 Payers: Hebrew Nation Levy 1700-1716

Name	1700	1702	1705	1707	1710	1712	1715	1716
Jacob Franco	1	1	4	4	2	4	1=	1
David Castello	3	3	3	1	6	R8	–	–
Moses Costanio	5	4	2	3	R3=	2=	–	–
Jacob Baruch Lousada	6	5	5	5	–	–	–	–
Isaac Gomes	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	6
Isaac Mendes & Co.	4	6	1	2	1	1	–	
Abraham Valverde	7=	7	8	8	J8=	10	8=	7
Isaac Nunes	9	8	10	9	8=	5	3=	2=
Jacob De Medina	7=	9	6	6	10	7	6	2=
Abraham Valverde	7=	7	8	8	J8=	10	8=	7
Aaron Pereira	(28)	–	12	11	7	7	3=	2=
Isaac Delapena	10	10	7	7	5	2=	1=	5
David Namias	12	11=	E14	13	12	12	S8=	(22)
Jacob Nunes	11	11=	13	12	–	–	–	–
Moses Espinosa & Co	13	11=	9	16=	13=	13=	–	–

Rank of the Top 15 Payers: Hebrew Nation Levy 1700-1716 continued

Name	1700	1702	1705	1707	1710	1712	1715	1716
Jacob Francis Snr	–	14=	11	10	11	9	8=	14
Moses Peixotto	–	–	–	–	15	11	7	8
David Valverde	–	–	–	–	–	–	8=	10=
Jacob Valverde	–	–	–	–	13=	13=	14=	15=
Isaac Franco	–	–	–	–	–	13=	8=	–
David Aboab & Mother	–	–	–	–	(16)	(18)	8=	10=

R for David Castello and his wife Rebekah after his death, as it is for Moses Costanio's wife Rachel; J for Abraham Valverde is Jael Valverde after his death, and for David Namias E is for Emmanuel after his death, and S is for Emmanuel's wife Sarah after his death.

For those ranked in the top 15 of the annual Hebrew Nation levies between 1700 and 1710 there was change only in the internal detail of slight changes in rank, after which time several members of a new generation began to appear in the lists. Jacob Franco, the septuagenarian and accepted leader, Abraham Valverde (& Jael Valverde & Co.), Jacob De Medina, and Isaac Delapena went some way to restore the old glory of the Jewish Merchant Town 'district'. They were well supported by the Joseph Mendes family and Estate and by Paul De Vrede, both of them exempted from the Bridgetown Levy because of their Speightstown bases but heavily taxed by the Vestry for their property holdings. David (and Emmanuel) Namias and Isaac Nunes thrived in a contracted Old Jewish Center, and Moses Costanio, Jacob Francis Senior, and Aaron Pereira were the leaders in the Swan Street 'district'. The company headquarters of Isaac Mendes & Co. eventually showed up in Midtown Cheapside, but Moses Espinosa & Co.'s headquarters are never revealed in the Levy Books. Of the new generation Moses Peixotto began in the Old Jewish Center but moved to Swan Street, the chosen base of Jacob Valverde and David Aboab who purchased the 4-house De Mercado complex from Gracia De Mercado. David Valverde trained with his mother in the Merchant Town, and Isaac Franco branched off to High Street.

Merchant Town and Mid-Town: 1701-1716

With the seeming loss of four Jewish properties at the center of the Jewish merchant district (#s 19, 20, 21, and 23) by the end of 1700, there was a chance that it would fragment and disappear, as it

eventually did at mid-century. But with help from David Castello, the Speightstown-based De Vredes held on, and the Joseph Mendes family and estate revivified the eastern end of the district. On the west end, Abraham Valverde thrived with his large family in David Israel's Stone House (#32) and passed it on in 1709 to his hard-working widow who was incorporated in 1710 as Jael Valverde & Co. She passed it on to her sons David (30) and Elias (24) in 1715.

Jacob Franco, the perennially most-heavily taxed and first-ranked Jew in Bridgetown, bought the great Aaron Baruch Lousada house (#33), after a ten-year hiatus of indecision. During this period in the early 1700s the names of Jacob Franco and Moses Franco are mentioned as great traders involved in smuggling for the South Sea Company in which Jacob made many investments eventually distributed among his grandchildren in his will of 1726. He could have been handling "an average trade of at least 25,000 pounds sterling annually" (Fortune 1984, 184) in these years of his seeming absence from Bridgetown. His much younger, near-neighbour to the west (#36), Isaac Delapena, ranked 10th in the Levy in 1702, progressed to first equal (with Jacob Franco) in 1715 and extended the merchant district to the west with the purchase of #36 Cheapside. So did Jacob De Medina who did not own property but rented in Mid-town Cheapside, in the same general area of the Midtown Jewish properties of Joseph Mendes and Isaac Mendes & Co.

A Bi-Polar District and Western Extension

Following the death of Aaron Baruch Lousada in 1695, no quick decision was made about the great house, primarily, one suspects, because of conflicting objectives of the extended merchant family which saw #33 Cheapside as a critical cog in a multi-based business, on one hand, and, on the other, those of the widow speaking for four children and with the right to do anything she wishes with the property/business by the will of a patriarch who had real difficulties with his brothers whom he felt had exploited him: ("my twenty-six years of slavery"). One brother, David comes back from London in 1696 with his son, and rents a house (#54) next door to Aaron's wife's new house in Midtown Cheapside (#55), and David and his son appear soon after listed in the 1700 Levy Books. Aaron's business-woman sister, Gracia De Mercado, moves into #33 and pays the property tax on it for 1696 to 1698, which suggests a decision made to manage the business until one of Aaron's sons comes of age and learns the business.

Things go wrong, however, at De Mercado Inc. and Gracia has to

resume her former business and training role at the Swan Street headquarters. In the Levy Book the house (#33) passes to one, Tyldesley, a non-Jew, and appears to be occupied first by 34-year old Jacob De Medina in 1699 and then in 1700 by 27-year old Isaac Delapena, to 1702-1703 at which point Isaac purchases #36 Cheapside three doors to the west which he occupies until his death (after 1716). Not coincidentally, Rachel Baruch Lousada dies in 1703 (an epidemic year) and in her will orders her sons to sell "all the houses" and everything else, and send the money to Isaac Gomes, her broker brother then in London, to invest in stocks for the dowry of her daughter Hannah, and if Isaac dies before this can be done, to have Isaac Dias, newly in London in 1702, follow the same instructions.

The sons sell the landmark house almost immediately to Jacob Franco, for his name appears in a deed of 1704 permitting major modifications by Magnis Popple in and around the Publick Cage, his new nearest neighbour to the east. In the Levy Books he is listed as the property owner paying tax in 1706. He also purchases Widow Baruch's house on Cheapside (#55), holding it until at least 1709. As the wealthiest and most prestigious of Bridgetown's Jews, his very presence, anchoring the western end of the Jewish merchant district until his death in 1726, holds the district together, as does his son, Moses, until his death in 1730.

At the other end of the old Jewish merchant district was David Castello at #13 Cheapside. When the general Jewish levies reappeared in the Levy Books after a ten-year hiatus in 1700 he was third-ranked in the joint Hebrew Nation and Highway levies and obviously one of the new magnates, with trading connections in Amsterdam (RB6/7/29). Thereafter he ranked second or third annually except in 1707 when he was first. In the 1700 Levy Book he is shown in 1700 to be an owner-occupier of one of his five "houses" at #13 Cheapside, and in the same year he acquired a rental property on Middle Street at the High Street end.

In the early 1700s he acquired a sixth "house", as they were now called, apparently from the Isaac Dias properties when Dias left for London in 1702. For the six houses he paid 2,000lbs in property tax for two years, hitherto the highest ever paid by a Jew. After this the tax dropped sharply to 1,000 lbs from 1708 onwards. He died in 1711. His wife Rebeka continued the business for three years selling two of the houses to non-Jews in 1713, presumably of necessity to pay off outstanding bills, before dividing the remaining four houses between her three children and Jacob Francis Jnr. in 1715.

Paul De Vrede, in his third foray into Bridgetown property

ownership and management from his base in Speightstown in 1700, took over the two major properties (#17, the house and storehouse, and #18, three tenements/houses at least) of the deceased Luis Dias, his long-time friend and neighbour and sometime agent, when it became clear that Isaac Dias, the son and heir, and his mother, were leaving for London. He may also have picked up his old property at #19 Cheapside after Abraham Bueno Musquita returned ca. 1700 to the house and plantation he owned on Nevis to 1692 (Zacek 2010) where he died in 1715 (Stern 1971). De Vrede probably began by managing Luis Dias's old trading business and both properties (for Isaac Dias & Co) and until Isaac Dias left for London in 1702. Thereafter, as an agent for the Company he probably sold #18 to the Joseph Mendes Estate, arranged the sale of his old property, Wildey's House (#19), to Moses de Joseph Mendes and managed, and probably later owned, the business at #17, eventually passing that to son Gideon De Vrede 1710 to 1716.

The New Element: the Feuding Mendes Families

The Baruchs and their partners dominated the purchasing and resale of slaves and general trading until the early 1690s at least. But the departure of Abraham to London in 1696 opened up the St. Peter's parish market for slaves in Speightstown and the same proved true of the Bridgetown hinterland after the deaths of Aaron Baruch Lousada (1695) and Abraham Baruch Henriques in 1700. Into this vacuum stepped the Mendes families, hitherto mainly based in Speightstown.

The undoubted magnate of Speightstown's Jews was Joseph Mendes, founder and owner of one-third part of the Speightstown Synagogue, a landed proprietor, and trading partner with his brother Manasseh, and his two sons to whom Joseph married his two daughters, and married his son to Manasseh's daughter. With very strong connections with "some of the most considerable landowners in St. Peter's and St. Lucy's Parishes", he never needed a non-Jewish partner as the Baruchs did (Samuel 1936, 24-25; Faber 1998, 54, 284). Joseph seized the opportunity to move his trading and factoring into Bridgetown and selected a prime location at #64 Cheapside (Mid-town) near the new peak-land-value-intersection (plvi) at Tudor and Broad streets, close by the Exchange and the new Market. In 1705, for his son Moses Mendes he also bought #19 Cheapside known as 'Wildey's House' in the Merchant Town (owned earlier by Paul De Vrede).

Another Mendes brother, Solomon, also had a successful factoring (and trading) operation in Speightstown and the north

parishes which may have involved the fourth brother Simon (Samuel 1936, 25; Faber 1998, 54, 284) and, like his brother Manasseh before him, he went to London with sons (Samuel 1936, 24-25), two of whom, Isaac and Moses de Solomon, returned to Bridgetown and established a company, Isaac Mendes & Co. that was already ranked fourth in the joint levies of 1700, and in all but one year from 1702 to 1712 ranked first in the annual Hebrew Nation Levy apportioned by fellow Jewish assessors. One of the more successful (and notorious) parts of the business was the factoring operation 1698-1707 when they are known to be the consignees of 522 slaves, making them the ninth largest slave factors in those years (Faber 1998, 94). The slaves at delivery cost 11,243 pounds sterling and were sold at a profit for 28 to 35 pounds each. According to Fortune (1984, 161) large numbers of the slaves were "intended for the French islands, as well as for the Spanish colonies where the profits were even greater."

There was a bitter, ongoing, and long-standing feud between the two pairs of brothers as we learn from the will of Joseph Mendes written in 1700. I "desire my said wife and all my children that for my blessing or displeasure they should not have any accounts or dealings with any of their Brothers and Cozens" (Samuel 1936, 56; Snyder 2010, 602, sees his "financial commitments made in trade" as "spiritual obligations"). The occupation of the house and business office(?) of Isaac Mendes & Co. in 1707 at #63 Cheapside next door to Joseph Mendes's base of operations established 4 years earlier can only have inflamed the feud further, as the old man died in the fall of 1707.

This undoubted insult led the heirs and the Estate to sell the property at #64 by 1709 and purchase the former Luis Dias property which included three tenements (in Barbados usage of the time this meant apartments or houses) in the Merchant Town at #18 Cheapside alongside the house of Moses de Joseph at #19, thereby revivifying the seemingly lost eastern end of the Jewish merchant district. This property remained in the name of "Joseph Mendes deceased' until sold in 1716. It was always assessed by the Vestry with a heavy property tax in the Luis Dias era, and it was more than doubled for the Joseph Mendes Estate to an enormous 2,300 lbs in 1713 and in 1714 (10,900 lbs 1711-1715) probably because Joseph was exempted from the Bridgetown Hebrew Nation Levy by the Jewish Assessors because of his major contributions to the Speightstown Synagogue and his leadership of the Jewish community in his main base of operations and of his taxation. His exemption obviously did not sit well with the Christian

St. Michael's Vestry which controlled the Bridgetown property taxes and decided to gouge the Joseph Mendes Estate. (Interestingly the Jewish Assessors of the Levy followed suit in the 1714 Hebrew Nation Levy, assessing Joseph's son "Moses Mendes deceased" 1,500 lbs, in one instance only).

To his early Cheapside purchase of 1703, Joseph Mendes added in 1705 two "houses" (later "tenements") on Palmetto Street, and like the Cheapside property purchased in 1709-1710 it remained in the name of "Joseph Mendes deceased" until at least 1716, and was apparently occupied by his widow Rachel who chose not to go to London as Joseph intended her to do. This was the first property owned by a Jew on the east side of town and it was followed by the second property of Isaac Mendes & Co., #9 & #10 High Street (close to the Jewish merchant district).

It is the street addresses of the two Isaac Mendes & Co. "houses" that eventually tied the three Mendes brothers to ownership of the Company, and it is the absence of a street address that leaves Moses Espinosa & Co. a locational mystery. Assessed in the Hebrew Nation Levies 1700-1712 and ranked between 8th and 16th, with a substantial tax, of 4 to 6 pounds sterling p.a. this company left no footprint that I can find in Bridgetown, but Espinosa does surface in the wills of Bridgetown expatriates in London well after 1712, as a lawyer in 1724 and 1742 (Samuel 1936, 84, 90). Was the Company a front for the Joseph Mendes family business in Bridgetown with Moses Espinosa as the lawyer, later succeeded in that role in Bridgetown by Simeon Massiah?

The Old Jewish Center: Saved by the Valverdes?

The purchase of property for widows and aged relatives by wealthy Jewish families in the later 1690s promised a regeneration of the Old Jewish Center in particular where half of the houses were occupied by aged women in 1700. The early 1700s to 1705 proved to be a bad time throughout Bridgetown for property-owning Jewish women and by 1705, in the Old Jewish Center, none remained. Jacob and Abraham Valverde were, by 1705, the named owners of #83 Cheapside and the Bullhead Alley property, formerly the homes of Rebecca and Rachel Valverde. In the case of the Rachel Baruch property(#79) there is reason to believe that Isaac Nunes, ranked 10th in the Hebrew National Levy in 1705, had already rented it for some time before he purchased it in 1708.

The three other properties viable in 1700 survived at least to 1708. The Valverdes were involved in a third property in the district (#87) when Abraham became the agent and adviser for Jacob

Navarro up to 1704, but Jacob's mother Ester Navarro is recorded as the property owner once again in 1705, and with some help from old friend Jacob Senior in 1709 and 1710 carried the property through to 1715. The fourth property came to Abraham Valverde in 1703 from Isaac Aboab who bought it in 1699. It was described in 1704 as 3 houses and apparently sold in 1708 to Hazan Moses D'Azevedo who sold it, described as two houses, to Moses Peixotto in 1709, but I find no further reference to it.

The most stable property in the district, and certainly long-lived, is that owned by David Namias whose rank in the Hebrew Nation levies rose steadily from 23rd to 12th, 1680 to 1700. The townhouse complemented his plantation on the Christchurch Ridge. At David's death in 1712 his son Emmanuel took over and the assessments of the property in the Old Jewish Center increased substantially in the hands of widow Namias and of Emmanuel's young wife Sarah. Emmanuel had from a young age and before David's death been in full-time control of the plantation, so much so that Samuel (1936, 14) faults David for keeping Emmanuel on the plantation, blaming him for Emmanuel's poor education, illiteracy, and unpreparedness for the townhouse life. Emmanuel dies in 1714 and his widow Sarah (aged 30) can do little more than oversee the sales of the townhouse and of the plantation.

Swan Street: Further Decline of Property Ownership 1701-1715

The turmoil of property turnover among generally aspiring landowners, often struggling along with the help of agents, culminated in the demise of the small landowner on Swan Street, 1698-1699. Some wealthier landowners sniffed an opportunity but backed out by 1700, e.g., Jacob Francis Senior. Another, Rebecca Baruch, recently arrived from Amsterdam with financial backing and traveling with her relatives, David and Jacob Baruch, bought property near the east end of Swan Street in 1699 and sold it to Jacob Francis Senior in 1704 who held on to it until at least 1716, eventually deeding it to his widow Rebecca Francis.

In a flurry of buying property when he knew the end of his life was near, Abraham Baruch Henriques, a merchant magnate bought at least four houses on Swan Street to contribute to the support for his wife Sarah and his children for which he was taxed 800 lbs of muscovado sugar in 1700. The properties were sold soon after to non-Jews, presumably to generate cash flow to deal with debts and the inevitable costs of winding down an extensive and complex business of a successful merchant.

The other owners knew the Swan Street neighbourhood well.

When David De Mercado quit after 15 years in harness with De Mercado Inc. he controlled three of the David Raphael De Mercado houses near the west end of Swan Street and "Widow Mercado" (Gracia) owned the other. In 1700 Gracia, for Mercado Inc. held all four houses and was assessed 800 lbs for them. Thereafter the assessments dropped to between 400 and 600 lbs p.a. The "De Mercado Inc." appendage disappeared after three years, and she owned the houses as "Widow Mercado" to 1709, intriguingly "Widow Mercado now Barrow" in 1708 and in 1709 as "Widow Mercado now Barruch", variants of her maiden name. Was this taking of her maiden name a necessary and final ritual in the selling to David Aboab and the leaving of a home that her husband had enjoined in his will of 1685 that she "enjoy ....in my name...freely enjoying it for her life"? (Samuel 1936, 75) David and the later Aboabs enjoyed the four houses well into the middle 1720s, paying out ca. 800lbs property taxes annually.

The Luis Dias family owned a modest property on Swan Street up to the disastrous year of 1691, possibly selling it because of Luis's long sickness to death (1699), or possibly being exempted from property taxes for the same reason. Luis's heir, Isaac Dias & Co., the second wealthiest Jew in Bridgetown in the Hebrew Nation Levy of 1700 saw an opportunity and bought properties in two different locations on Swan Street: the first two homes for the extended family to be left behind when he left for London in 1702; the other, 2 or 3 houses, bought as speculation when property was at its cheapest. Both came to Widow Dias who sold early in 1704 the properties bought for speculation, left for London, and set in motion the sale of the final two houses, sold in 1705, all sales to non-Jews.

By total contrast, the modest Abraham and Elias Burgos owner-occupied property, the last survivor of the small landholder period assessed at 75 lbs annually by the Vestry, would carry through unobtrusively to 1715 in 67-year old Elias's hands without the owners ever paying more than 100 lbs, and usually a lot less, from 1685 when the remarkable Rebecca Burgos was the owner-occupier, to the 1720s when David Burgos was. In 1704 the Burgoses found themselves to be one of four property holdings on Swan Street, and in 1705, after Widow Dias's final sale, the same was true because David Letub, a middling landholder on Swan Street 1695 to 1699 with agent Thomas Davis and forced to rent the property from 1700 onwards, took it back as an owner in 1705 and held it to 1715. For ten years 1705 to 1714 there would be only 4 Jewish property-owning families on Swan Street: De Mercado/ Aboab, Francis, Letub, Burgos.

The Census of 1715 & the Location of the Jews in Bridgetown

In a period still without comprehensive locational information on Jewish "inhabitants"/renters in the Levy Books (with the partial exception of 1700, the Census of 1715 gives the chance to compare the Jewish population with that of 1679-1680 and, after much tedious effort, relate the locational data (street listings) in the annual Levy Books of 1714, 1715, and 1716 to the names of non-Jews in the itineraries that can generally be traced in the Census. These data are then paired with the names of Jews in the Census to establish location and to yield a new map of Bridgetown's Jews in 1715, comparable to, but more detailed than, the map of 1700.

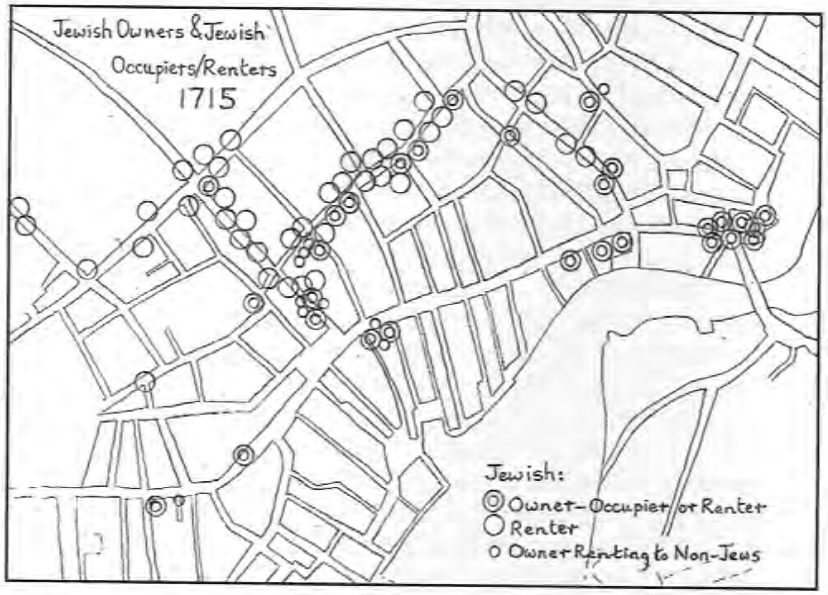
The Census figures on families in Bridgetown (heads of households) in 1715 show a small drop from the 1680 Census: 54 to 51. (This last figure is the result of two cases of double counting which I have corrected: 2 x 20-year old Moses Castello and 2 x 28-year old Isaac Lopes, each with identical families). The number of Jewish families appearing in the Census and in the levies of 1714-1716, a number supplemented by property owners, is 35 or 69 per cent compared to 76% in 1680, the drop undoubtedly resulting from the policy of the Jewish Assessors of the Levy increasingly to omit the poorer families from the Levy as not worth collecting. Consequently the Census recorded more families not found in the levy books and property records, 16 as against 13.

The large number of heads of household found in the levies but not in the Census in 1680 was not matched in 1715 (23 of 77 or 30 per cent compared to 6 of 57 or 18 per cent). At the end of a quarter-century of epidemics, war, poor crops, and island-wide major drop in the white male population, the number of Jewish families in Bridgetown had fallen 26 per cent. The Jewish families identified in the levies in the same period dropped from 64 to 41 (36 per cent) and in the Hebrew Nation levies alone from 1700 to 1715 from 37 to 24 (35 per cent).

Comparison of the maps of the Bridgetown Jews 1700 and 1715 reveals substantial changes. The gradual thinning out of numbers continued on Cheapside, particularly in the Old Jewish Center. On Swan Street, no gains are made, there were 18 Jewish households renting or owner-occupying in 1700 and 1715. The big change is in the north-west. Tudor Street experienced an explosion from 2 to 10 householders, 5 of them not detected by the levies or the property records. The same is true for Backchurch, Church, and James streets with 10 new Jewish families, 5 of them neither listed in the General levies nor in the annual property records. On the East Side, High Street with no Jewish families in 1700 had 5 by 1715, 4 of them

appearing for the first time in the Hebrew Nation levies after 1711, and the fifth surfacing in 1715. Palmetto Street gained its first Jewish property holder and likely householder in 1705.

The majority of the heads of household in these new frontiers are in their 20s and 30s and generally too poor to warrant the attention of the wardens of the Levy, to purchase a property, or to afford the rents demanded by non-Jewish owners of property on Swan Street. The solution proved to be "rent from non-Jews in non-Jewish areas" where rents are lower than on Swan Street. Having lost its property holders in the 1690s, Swan Street lost many prospective renters 1700-1715. Whereas the invisible poor were predominantly on Swan Street in 1700, by 1715 the 16 found by the census-takers and ignored by the Jewish Assessors of the Levy and the Vestry property-tax collectors were located in streets hitherto without recorded Jewish residents. None would ever be major or even minor players, but they do give us the last insight in the eighteenth century into the locales of the poorest Jews, for there would be no more censuses in the century (and there would only be a few more Hebrew Nation levies in the 1720s). Together they provide a remarkable ranking of families by their wealth and estimated annual profits---something never assembled by non-Jews for the non-Jewish Bridgetown population.



Hard Times Again 1719-1723 Followed by a Qualified Prosperity

After the brief boom of 1713-1718 hard times returned 1719-1723, for the first three years of which there are no Levy Books, and their impact is clearly shown in the Hebrew Nation Levy Books of 1722-1723 which reveal major losses of the port's Jewish leaders. But the four levies did enumerate far more of the wealthier families than at any time since 1688, particularly in the levies of the prosperity years 1724 and 1725: the latter covering 43 families, two-thirds of the town's Jewish families.

The four invaluable Hebrew Nation levies 1722-1725 coincided with the first-ever 4-year sequence of the St. Michael Vestry records of Jewish "Inhabitants" by street (still, however, without the amounts of personal head tax assessed). The Levy Books continued to record Jewish property owners and their property tax assessments. The conjunction of the Hebrew Nation levies and comprehensive lists of "Inhabitants" and property holders makes it possible for the first time to locate the homes of 85/90 per cent of the Jewish families of Bridgetown in the 1720s: all except the invisible poor.

A further invaluable aid is another apparently unique data source, tacked on to the ends of the Levy Books of 1722-1725: four years of Highway Assessments (1726-1729) in which Jewish Inhabitants were required to provide for two days each year a number of slaves/laborers to work on highway improvements (the corvee) ranging from 14 slaves from the wealthiest to 1 for the poorest (further differentiated by whether the poor were assessed for 1, 2, 3, or 4 years). With these lists the poor and many of the invisible poor can be identified, and rank can be determined and related to the street/district where the resident lived. Combining the four lists with the 1729 list of Bridgetown's Jewish slaveholders (Faber 1998, 224-225) provides a final listing of the town's Jewish heads of household on the eve of a 19-year hiatus in the St. Michael Levy Books.

Hard Times: A Comparison of Jewish Leaders 1716 & 1722-1723

Declining prices following expansion of the world sugar supply particularly in neighbouring islands led to "exports to England in 1719... (being)... half the average of the preceding five years, and 1721 and 1722 established new lows... so that many hundreds of families have gone from Barbados." All this culminated in the epidemic of 1723 that affected people and animals (Starkey 1939,

88-91). The levy books of 1722/1723 allow us to assess the impact of these hard times on the Jewish community.

In 1724 Barbadian trade again revived, and the Levy Books of 1724 and 1725 document the beginning of a "brief period of good to indifferent years" before the onset of even harder times – a depression 1730-1739 (with a hurricane, two droughts and epidemics).

In the Hebrew Nation levies the Jacob Franco and Aaron Pereira families remained first and second in the top 5 in 1722-23 as they were 1715-1716. But in a pattern similar to that of the late 1690s it was former wives as new Swan-Street widows who took over the three businesses of deceased husbands, two of them Deborah Nunes (Isaac) and Luna Delapena (Isaac) holding things together well, to 1729. The De Medinas had less success and dropped to the lowest rank by 1729.

In the next group of 12 (1716), the deaths of 5 males gave their widows similar burdens. One, the future centagenarian Rebecca De Campos moved the business up to heights never achieved by her husband, and held it there to 1729. Both Jacob Francis Senior and Junior died before 1722, and their wives, both Rebeccas, held the businesses together and retained property ownership 1722-1725: Rebecca (Broad Street) had two houses on Cheapside and two on Middle Street and experienced a downturn in 1725, and Rebecca (Swan Street) with two houses on Swan fared a little better as measured by taxes paid. Both were assessed the minimum in the Highway levies, probably by the Levy Assessors who gave exemptions to widows.

The new widows, Rachels Brandon and Peixotto took over from Swan-Street husbands, both Moseses who died before 1722. They simply held things together at the lowest level, hoping for minors to come-of-age and prosper, as they eventually did. The remarkable Jael Valverde had given training and increased responsibility to her sons after Abraham died in 1707 such that three of them were in the middle rankings of the 1716 Hebrew National Levy. After Jael's death in 1721, all moved up in 1722 from their 1716 positions, and by 1723 David and Elias Valverde, now the merchant owners of the Stone House (#32 Cheapside) were in the top 5 where they remained to 1729. Jacob Valverde's progress up the ladder as a shopkeeper on Swan Street was slower, but he did make it to the top 10 in 1726-1729 (the last being the last year of his life).

Of the other three males in the group Isaac Gomes was a mystery man. An Assessor of the Levy in 1679-80 and one of the wealthy Barbados merchants who finally withdrew to London, he acted as a broker who made investments in London for sister Rachel Baruch Lousada's daughter's dowry in 1703 (Samuel 1936, 39, 81). But he returned suddenly to Barbados (Swan Street), was caught by the Census living on High Street in 1715 and paid substantial Hebrew Nation tax assessments there in 1716 and in 1722 while renting on Swan Street, after which he disappeared presumably back to London. Why did he come back? That he initially lived on High Street may mean he lived in the Isaac Mendes & Co. houses while putting in order the business of the three absentee owners soon to be one, or he may have been doing the same for the Joseph Mendes Estate and for Joseph's widow Rachel who lived on Palmetto Street.

Hezekiah Pacheco, with ownership of two sea-going vessels, and properties on Swan Street (where he resided) and Cheapside, was in the process of over-extending himself financially and was aging. Ninth-ranked in 1716, he was 17th in 1722, and 39th, the lowest ranking, in 1727-1729. David Aboab, ranked 10th in 1716 owned the four former De Mercado houses on Swan Street, but as a merchant in hard times he dropped to 24th in 1722 before re-establishing and holding his earlier rank in 1723.

Of the bottom 10 of 1716, only one, Jacob Frois would improve his position. Ranked 23rd in 1716, and 17th in 1722 he would rise steadily through the ranks to 10th 1726-1729, and be an important player on Swan Street for decades. Two young men, Isaac Lopes and David Torres, disappeared. The Castellos, Jacob, Moses, and Ephraim, hung on at the lowest levels 1726-1729 as did Isaac Rodrigues and Moses Lopes. Sadly 1716 proved to be the end for the admirable, 19th-ranked Hester Navarro who stayed the course spelled out in her husband's will of 1685 and outlived the children for whom she worked so hard. Sarah Namias, by marriage the last of the long-standing plantation-owning family with a house in the Old Jewish Center, dropped from 8th (1715) to 22nd (1716) and was left with little help but to sell townhouse and plantation. Rachel Burgos, ranked #21 in 1716 and the successor of many Burgoses who aimed for decades to own a home and stay just above the level of the poor, did what Rebecca, Abraham and Elias did for 35 years before her: hold on at the lowest level in 1722 (#24=), falter for two years, but come back in 1725 ranked 37= and move up to 23rd by 1729.

The Merchant Town 1722-1725

The Jewish merchant presence on Cheapside survived the hard times but changed in detail and character. The six David Castello houses which marked the eastern end of Jewish holdings on

Cheapside for almost two decades became four by 1715. In 1716 Moses Castello held one house, and the other two Castellos sold theirs to Rebecca Francis, the widow of Joseph Francis Jnr., whose holding passed to Moses Francis. The completion of the protracted sales of #18 and #19 Cheapside held by the Mendes Estate in 1716, and the departure between 1716 and 1722 of Gideon De Vrede (#17) to Nevis, where he was noticed by the London Magazine in 1753 (Samuel 1936, 28) spelled the end of the seven properties that were once the heart of the Jewish merchant district.

However, the two landmarks of Jewish merchant history (#s 32 and 33 Cheapside) were now in the possession of the magnate Jacob Franco (with his son Moses) and the grande dame of the Valverdes, Jael (and her two sons David and Elias) in the Stone House. At Jacob's death in 1726, all of the 15 plus Valverde and Franco children and grandchildren would receive major bequests of stocks in companies and annuities held in London totalling more than 19,000 pounds sterling and even more when Jacob's son and heir died at 36 in 1730. It is not clear which of the brothers lived in the stone house after Jael's death in 1721 but it seems likely that the large families of David and Elias lived in Swan Street houses shown as rented in 1716 and 1722-1725.

This western outpost of the Jewish merchant town was strengthened by the addition of Isaac Delapena's property close by at #36 Cheapside 1707-1716. He died before 1722 and his wife Luna maintained his ranking thereafter but moved the business to Swan Street where she rented. A short distance further west was the Rachel Baruch Lousada property (#55) that passed for several years to Jacob Franco. It appears to be bought by Jacob Massiah & Co. by 1722, as part of a three-family movement of key members of the Massiah clan from Speightstown to Bridgetown after 1718.

A little further west on midtown Cheapside, Hezekiah Pacheco purchased a heavily-taxed base of operations and at the far western end of Cheapside he bought a low-taxed yard and sheds. Both soon proved to be purchased at an inopportune time and certainly contributed to the plummeting of his ranking in the levies from 9th in 1716 to 39th in 1726-1729.

The scale of the Isaac Mendes & Co. holding on midtown Cheapside was not known until 1715 when it was described as "four shops and stores" and in 1725 when it was shown to be 5 individually assessed units. Who owned the Company gradually became clear between 1713 and 1716, and who may have managed the business and properties in the last decade or so was confirmed in 1722.

Proof that Isaac Mendes & Co. was the company of the two sons of Solomon Mendes and the London merchant Isaac Mendes is afforded first when in the Hebrew Nation Levy of 1712 "Isaac Mendes & Co." is by the large margin of 800 lbs muscovado sugar the highest assessed, and in the following year the Company is no longer listed and in its former top position are the names "Isaac & Moses Mendes" assessed 900 lbs above the second-highest assessment. Secondly, in the Levy Book of 1716 the "Isaac Mendes & Co." High-Street property of 1715 is recorded as owned by "Abraham and Isaac Mendes", while the #63 Cheapside property of the former company, is in 1716 owned by "Isaac and Moses Mendes" and thirdly in a codicil of December 1712 to a London will of 1711 (RB6/37/396), on the eve of the disappearance of Isaac Mendes & Co. from the Hebrew Nation Levy, we learn that "Abraham Mendez merchant in London (was) on account of his bros Isaac Mendez and Moses Mendez in Bdos for my half of law fees".

After the death of Moses de Solomon Mendes in London in 1717, his will assigns as executors and guardians of his son "my loving brother Abraham Mendez senior & Isaac Mendez of London merchant in whom I have an Intire confidence having by a long course of trade experienced their integrity & friendship" (RB6/4/333). The two former properties of Isaac Mendes & Co. are shown in the next levy book (1722) to be owned by "Isaac Mendes" only, which suggests that Abraham died in London between 1717 and 1722.

The one mystery remaining, given that the brothers were resident in London is who was the manager of Bridgetown's biggest Jewish company? This question would have been easily answered if Jews had been recorded in the "Inhabitants" column of the Levy Books before 1722 which they were not 1701-1721. The pairing of Jacob De Medina, as a renter amid his Midtown Cheapside neighbours places him as a potential occupier in the vicinity of Isaac Mendes & Co. in the Census of 1715, but this is not conclusive. He was one of the most-heavily taxed individuals, consistently recorded in the top 10 in the Hebrew Nation levies for more than 20 years, but never a property owner 1701-1723. The first pairing of owners and Jewish renter/occupiers since 1700 is conclusive. "Isaac Mendes" as owner is paired with Jacob De Medina as "Inhabitant", (renter-occupier) of the Cheapside property in 1722, the year before his death in 1723. Jacob De Medina was the company's field agent and manager and his family lived in one of the Isaac Mendes & Co. properties in Mid-Town Cheapside from 1701 to 1724 and had no need to own

property.

Farther west on Cheapside in the Old Jewish Center the three families of 1716, down from 5 in 1708 dropped to 2 in 1722. The Hester Navarro property died with her and the Namias townhouse property was sold by widow Sarah in 1722 (as two adjoining properties) to the late Joseph Mendes's "trusty steward" and business manager, the attorney Simeon Massiah, who was "given ample powers to deal" with the Mendes Estate's affairs and "to look to the welfare of" Joseph's widow, Rachel, now living in the Mendes tenements on Palmetto Street (Samuel 1936, 28). Isaac Nunes, the last top-10 owner in the district in 1722, died in 1723. His widow managed the business well enough to warrant Hebrew Nation levies that kept it in the top 10 until at least 1729, but the house is not listed in 1725.

The brief prosperity after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713-1718 enlivened Bridgetown and saw both the number of Jewish leaders recorded in the Hebrew Nation Levy rise from 24 to 27, 1715 to1716 and an opening up of the property market in the northwest and Swan Street. From 1722 to 1725 the names of leaders in the Hebrew Nation Levies increased 34 per cent from 32 to 43, and the number of Jewish families in Bridgetown rose from 57 in 1715 to 64 in 1726-1729, an increase of 11 per cent. Fortunately the Levy Books of the 1720s for the first time since the one exception in 1700, listed the Jewish "inhabitants"/renters within the lists of non-Jews. As a direct result of this the map of 1722 shows substantial increases in the number of Jewish families on Swan Street at the expense of losses on Cheapside.

Between 1715 and 1722 the main change on the map is the 50 per cent increase of renters from 20 to 30 on Swan Street. Of the 30 renters, the 12 who carried over from 1715 to 1722 had a mean Hebrew Nation Levy rank of 12th in a bi-modal distribution with 4 ranked 10th and 4 ranked 17th. Two were ranked in the top 10 – Aaron Pereira and David Valverde – and one was unranked (outside the top 33).

By sharp contrast the ranks of the 18 new renters had a mode and median of 24=, the lowest rank recorded in 1722, and a mean of 16 that was biased upward by the 4 householders ranked in the top 10 – Mordechai Burgos (#2), Luna Delapena (5) whose home and store were in Cheapside in 1716, Isaac Gomez (5) and Moses Pacheco (9). The newcomers (7 of them) were unranked (i.e., beyond the 32 on the Hebrew Nation list of 1722). This establishes two changes from the previous period: an increase in the number of top 10 – persons (renting) on the street (and an increase in the second 10) and a far bigger increase in the people of lowest rank and outside the Hebrew Nation ranking (13 out of 18), several of them the invisible poor discovered in the northwest and the eastside by the 1715 census-takers.

A measure of the decline of the Cheapside Jewish merchant community relative to the expanding community on Swan Street is the number and location of the top 10 families paying the Hebrew Nation Levy 1700 to 1725. The Cheapside to Swan ratio in 1700 was 9:1; in 1705 and 1710 8:2. Thereafter the decline of Cheapside sets in (there were several families ranked at 9= or 10=, so later numbers add up to more than 10). In 1715 it was 7:4+2 (High Street); and by 1722 4:7:+1 (Church Street), and in 1725 3:6:+1 (Church Street). In addition to the 7 in the top 12 in 1722, there were on Swan Street 9 of the next 13 (ranked 10= to 17=) filling the second tier of the Hebrew Nation Levy of 1722 (and 6 of the 10 in the second tier in 1725).

The new Swan Street people in the top 10 in the 1720s were Mordechai Burgos who appeared to come from nowhere after 1716 to #2 in the top 10 in 1722; Isaac Gomes who came in from London in 1715 at #5 kept that rank in 1722 and disappeared in 1723; Luna Delapena, resident on Cheapside in 1716 who took the business to Swan Street in 1722 after Isaac's death; and Moses Pinheiro, only surviving son of Esther, the legendary owner of a small fleet of vessels in which she sailed all over the Atlantic from Nevis, whence came Moses who married Lunah in Bridgetown (Zacek 2010, 143-147) and quickly established his family as a major mercantile force on the island, immediately ranked 9th in the 1723 and 1724 levies, and 4th in 1725.

Another measure of the comeback of Swan Street is the percentage of total Jewish property tax paid to the Vestry (which also reflects the setbacks of Swan Street). In 1686 the percentages were Cheapside 54 to 37 Swan; in 1700 Cheapside 57 to 30 Swan; in 1715 Cheapside 64 to 15 Swan (Tudor & High 16); and in 1722 Cheapside 52 to 25 Swan (Tudor & High 15). Bearing in mind that renters greatly outnumbered owners of property by choice on Swan Street after the debacle of the 1690s and that none of the top 10 from Swan Street were property owners, the Swan Street percentage seems more significant.

Percentage of Jewish Property Ownership (Taxes Paid) by Streets

	Cheapside	Swan	Tudor	East Side	Northwest	Center
1686	54	37	9	0	0	0
1700	59	30	8	0	1	2
1715	64	15	10	9	0	2
1722	52	25	7	11	0	5
1749	14	53	10	7	9	7
1764	22	44	5	7	14	8
1796	4	62	15	4	8	7

East Side is High, Palmetto and Marlhill; Northwest is Reeds, Backchurch, Church, and George Streets; Center is Middle, White and James Streets

There was little interest in purchasing property among Swan-Street Jews after the experiences of property holders in 1688-1700, and there was even less when it became clear that payment of the discriminatory Hebrew Nation Levy, a lump sum, was being progressively assumed by an ever-smaller group of the wealthy Jewish families from 1700 to 1715 who concluded that it was an unproductive waste of their time and effort and an odious task to collect pittances for an odious tax, and they simply chose to bear the extra burden themselves. By 1715 two-thirds of the Jewish families weren't paying the Hebrew Nation levy which was supposedly the Jewish version of the personal head tax paid by non-Jewish "Inhabitants"/renters. In other words the 24 wealthiest Jews were exempting the other 48 from the personal head tax, and if they did not own property, they did not pay the Vestry any tax at all. Small wonder that the number of renters on Swan Street grew rapidly and that the number of property owners on the street was small.

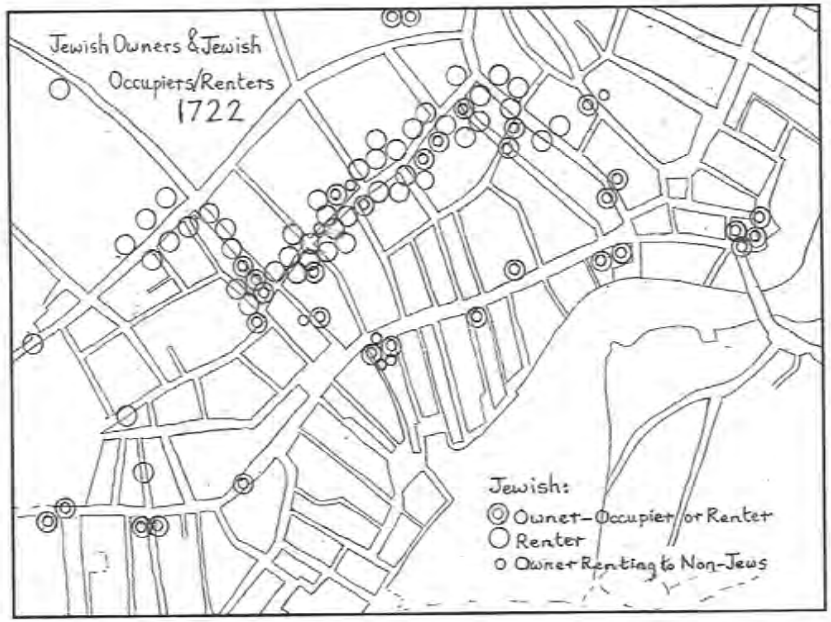
The most surprising renter on Swan Street is Mordechai Burgos who appears during the hardest times, moves immediately in 1722 to a top 2 rank in the Levy and displaces the great magnate Jacob Franco as #1 1725-1729. His will of 1736 (he seems to have died in good health on a sea voyage – a shipwreck?) suggests strong connections with Amsterdam, probably his previous port. Faber (1998, 92-96; 302) provides evidence that in the period between January 1713 and September 16, 1726 Mordechai was the only Jewish consignee of slaves to Barbados (239 of them) in 2 shipments 151 to "Burges & Co." and 88 to "Mordica Burgess." Faber's primary research is used to support his thesis that the Jews who engaged in the slave trade made a very small proportion of the factors re-selling consigned slaves in Barbados, and he goes further

in arguing that very few Jews owned vessels that could have engaged in that trade. He proves this by naming the only Jew bringing in slaves 1713-1726, and by naming the known Jewish owners and partners with vessels engaged in the same years in the carrying trade. While granting his points I will use the data he provides to a different purpose.

Not many Jews owned sea-going vessels during this period, but all of those mentioned were Mordechai Burgos's neighbours living close by him (#16) on Swan Street. (The lot #s are listed west to east in a total of 70 lots and are approximate). Hezekiah Pacheco (#10 & #12) who may just be Mordechai's landlord and, if not, his near neighbour, owns two vessels, the *Godspeed* and *Dolphin*, the second of which is co-partnered with Moses Pacheco (#48), whose landlord and his mother's best friend on Swan Street is Hezekiah Pacheco (who owns 4 properties on the street). Mordechai's other near neighbour is Ephraim Castello (#21) who owns two vessels, the New Rebecca which enters and clears Bridgetown on 5 occasions and New Bob which enters at least once. The third owner is Jacob Valverde (#6), 5 or 6 houses away on Swan Street, partnered with Moses Franco and a non-Jew, Mark Waters, with the appropriately-named vessel, Friends Adventure. These 5 vessels entered and cleared the port of Bridgetown at least 10 times in March 1718 – September 1719 and June 1720 – June 1721 during the hardest of times (Faber 1998, 92-93; 302).

In 1722 the hitherto unlisted Mordechai finds himself at #2 in the Hebrew Nation Levy; Ephraim Castello never before ranked in the Levy ranks 24, 17 and 13 in 1722-1724; Moses Pacheco comes for the first and only time in the top 10 and then drops like a stone, as does Hezekiah Pacheco from 17th to 39th after he splurges on 2 new properties on Swan Street, on another large property on Midtown Cheapside, and on a yard with sheds beyond the western edge of the Cheapside built-up area. Jacob Valverde achieves his highest rank to date in the levy, 13th in 1722.

The synchronicity of known Jewish-owned deep-sea-going vessels involved in the carrying trade and the arrival of 239 slaves in Barbados does not prove that any of the vessels brought in slaves, but it is very suggestive. At the very least Mordechai Burgos seems to have inspired and perhaps helped to finance his neighbors in very hard times to do two things very rarely done by Bridgetown's Jews (the exceptions being the Baruchs in the 1680s and the Mendes families in the early 1700s) – import slaves for sale and own sea-going vessels engaged in the carrying trade (which might mean slave trade).



The Place of the Sephardic Jews in Bridgetown in 1722

The map of 1722, drawing on the first records of Jewish "Inhabitants" (renters) in the Levy Books since 1700 is substantially the same as the one that could be drawn for 1725. Compared to the map of 1715, which relied heavily on the Census of that year, the former gaps in the pattern of Jewish renting on the western third of Swan Street were closed, and much of the eastern third, a former bastion of non-Jews, accepted several of the 10 new renters. There are increases also on High Street, following the lead of Isaac Mendes & Co., and on Tudor and Backchurch streets, the result in part of a shift of Jewish renters north of the Tudor-Swan streets intersection as demand for space on lower Tudor Street near the new Market and Exchange near the PLVI forced up property values and taxes there.

There was a revivification of sorts in the Old Jewish Center, with a more dispersed pattern now anchored by Isaac Nunes, conveniently located on Cheapside between two markets. The new center was now the two houses of Simeon Massiah, presumably a home and a law office. In the old Merchant Town, the departures of the Joseph Mendes Estate and the De Vredes left a big gap between the two ends (#13 and #32) and the loss of the young Isaac Delapena in the hard times before 1722 saw the number of Jewish properties drop from 11 to 7: a harbinger of the imminent demise of

the magnate merchants of the Jewish merchant district on eastern Cheapside, following the deaths of the very wealthy magnate Jacob Franco in 1726 and of his son and heir Moses in 1730, not to mention the shift in focus of Jael Valverde's boys, David and Elias away from the Stone House to their homes on Swan Street. By 1749 the 52 per cent of Jewish property ownership invested in Cheapside would drop to 14 per cent, and that in Swan Street would rise from 25 per cent to 53 per cent. The glory years of Jewish Atlantic trading based in the Old Merchant Town would soon be over.

A summary of Jewish Owner Occupiers (J-O-O), Jewish Owners Renting to Fellow Jews (J-O-R) Jewish Owners Renting to Non-Jews (JR to NJ) and of Jews Renting from Non-Jews (JR from NJ)

		Old Mcht Town	Midtown Chps	Old Jewish Center	Swan St	Tudor St	Others	Total
1686	J-O-O	6	0	5	12	2	0	25
	J-O-R	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
1700	J-O-O	5	1	6	4	2	0	18
	J-O-R	0	0	0	11	0	0	11
1715	J-O-O	11	1	3	4	2	3	24
	J-O-R	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
1722	J-O-O	7	2	5	2	4	3	23
	J-O-R	0	1	0	4	0	1	6
		Jewish Owners Renting to Non-Jews						
1686	JRtoNJ	3	0	1	0	0	0	4
1700	JRtoNJ	7	1	0	0	4	0	12
1715	JR toNJ	0	2	0	3	2	2	9
1722	JR toNJ	4	3	0	5	1	3	16
		14	6	1	8	7	5	41

A summary of Jewish Owner Occupiers (J-O-O), Jewish Owners Renting to Fellow Jews (J-O-R) Jewish Owners Renting to Non-Jews (JR to NJ) and of Jews Renting from Non-Jews (JR from NJ) continued

	Old Mcht Town	Midtown Chps	Old Jewish Center	Swan St	Tudor St	Others	Total
			Jews Renting from Non-Jews				
1700 JR fromNJ	0	1	3	4	0	0	8
1715 JR fromNJ	0	0	0	14	11	10	35
1722 JR from NJ	0	0	2	24	7	12	45
	0	1	5	42	18	22	88

The comparative statistics in Table 5 reveal much about place for the Sephardic Jews of Bridgetown. Properties owned by Jews remained surprisingly stable in number throughout the half-century (27-29), but changed in detail. With half of the Jewish property ownership localized on Swan Street in the first two cross-sections, the decline thereafter to 22 and 21 per cent in 1715 and 1722 was dramatic. Property ownership rose in all the other districts, particularly on Tudor Street, the northwest and east side but also in the Old Merchant Town.

Bridgetown's Jewish property owners bought property to occupy in this era, not to rent to fellow Jews, except on Swan Street after the disastrous 1690s when several wealthy merchants bought property to make money as rentiers in the window of opportunity that opened in 1698-1699 and closed in 1701-1702, after which the property bought in haste was off-loaded, primarily to non-Jews.

The disastrous nineties also set in motion the remarkable surge in renting by Jews from non-Jews. We have no rental data for the first cross-section (1686), but in 1700 the number of Jews renting from fellow Jews was a little more than those renting from non-Jews, and thereafter the number of Jews renting from non-Jews was 10 times greater in 1715 and more than 7 times greater in 1722. This major increase took place primarily on Swan Street, on the northwestern streets and on those of the near eastside. The number from the latter two areas outnumbered the many from Swan Street by 50 per cent in 1715. During the depression of 1719-1723 the trend continued particularly on Swan Street by which time two-thirds of the port's

Jews lived in rentals, 58 per cent of them owned by non-Jews. By contrast this movement barely touched the southside (Cheapside).

By 1700 Jewish owners were renting to non-Jews more than to fellow Jews and the margin of preference more than doubled in 1715 and 1722. For wealthy Jews during two decades of hard times fewer and fewer took on more and more of the Hebrew Nation assessments thereby subsidizing the poorer two-thirds of the Jewish population. If they were going to make profits from being rentiers, they must needs do it from non-Jews. Jews rarely rented on Cheapside but non-Jews did and so Jewish merchants in the Old Merchant Town, David Castello, Luis Dias, and Paul De Vrede bought property for rent, adding the dimension of rentier, to their mercantile activities. Aaron Baruch Lousada, first, and Abraham Baruch Henriques later, merchant magnates both, bought rentier property on lower Tudor Street before 1700 knowing that it would soon be the port's financial center. And after 1700 the Mendes families bought rentier property in Midtown Cheapside, the Old Merchant Town and the Eastside, none of it aimed at fellow Jews.

Swan Street in the 1720s: Not Yet "Jew Street" & Hardly a Ghetto

Reliant on influential secondary sources I assumed that a ghetto in the modern North American sense of the word, applied most commonly to African-American inner-city districts, applied to the Bridgetown Jews, almost all of whom, I assumed, were densely clustered on Swan Street (Bowden 2003, 44-45). After all, Marcus (1970, 103) writing mainly about the 17th and early 18th centuries writes of Swan Street as a "principal thoroughfare" and discovers there "a Jews Street" as in Speightstown; Fortune (1984, 159-160), writing of the later decades of the 17th century contends that

> "Shopkeeping was the primary occupation of Jewish businessmen in Barbados, most of whom *segregated* themselves in a particular area to meet both their economic and social needs ...By 1675 in Barbados, they *confined their activities* to 'Swan Street'." (my italics)

Arbell (2002, 210), writing of the late decades of the 17th century, finds "Jewish everyday life... centered in Swan (Jew) Street in Bridgetown" and quotes from the Lucas manuscripts:

> "The business section where the Jews lived and had their shops, Swan Street, was formerly Jew Street, because the Jews

gradually acquired nearly all the houses there and absorbed the entire business section."

He apparently did not realize that the quotation applied to the late eighteenth century not to the late seventeenth century. All three lack a sense of the geography of Swan Street, far too narrow to be "a principal thoroughfare". Fortune writes that "both their shops and their synagogue were on this avenue" (Swan Street) and Arbell writes of "the synagogue, in Swan (Jew) Street," both of them seemingly unaware that the synagogue is off Synagogue Lane between James and Magazine streets.

The Changing Character Of Jewish and Gentile Ownership and Renting on Swan Street

	Percentage of Lots owned		Percentage of Gentiles Renting to the two Groups and of Jews Renting to Jews and Gentiles					
	Jews	Gentiles	Gentile to Gentile	Jew to Gentile	Total	Gentile to Jew	Jew to Jew	Total
1686	31	69	60	10	71	8	21	29
1700	23	77	69	9	78	8	14	22
1715	15	85	62	4	67	23	10	33
1722	16	84	45	6	52	39	10	48
1749	49	51	16	4	20	35	45	80
1764	66	34	17	28	45	17	38	55
1796	77	23	21	26	47	2	51	53

Several tables and much commentary are presented here to prove that Swan Street was far from being a ghetto before 1729 and that the Jew Street alias for Swan Street could hardly be justified at least until the Jews were in a sizeable majority. If majority occupying of space (buildings) on the street by Jews is the criterion for 'ghetto' and 'Jew Street' then that threshold is crossed early in the second half of the eighteenth century, a full century after the arrival of the De Mercado family and other Jews in the mid to late 1650s. If majority property-holding by Jews is the criterion then the Jew-Street alias and the term ghetto can be accepted in the last third of the century, precisely when the J. Gibson map of 1766 ("A Plan of Bridgetown in the Island of Barbadoes") was published in the Gentleman's Magazine in London, "facing an appeal on behalf of the unfortunate inhabitants of Bridgetown" (Campbell, 1965: 20, & Plate XVI). The name "Swan Street" extends along the street; "or Jew Street" is below the line of the street in the unshaded/unburnt area. West Indian maps in this widely-available magazine became "enormously popular" and J. Gibson, a London cartographer, produced several maps and charts for it. According to Robert Mayo, (quoted in Sacks 2010, 39-40): "It was a magazine for gentlemen in the enlarged eighteenth-century sense – that is, a magazine for the commercial classes, for professional people, both great and small, and for alert readers no matter what social connection, possessing an interest in government, history, antiquity, literature, and geography." Sacks (2010, 40) adds that "Whitehall and Parliament followed the articles and maps of the Gentleman's Magazine with great interest, and merchants and traders closely monitored the fiscal reports of the trading firms in the West Indies." No wonder the name Jew Street stuck.

Register of Jewish Heads of Households in Bridgetown 1729 (ranked)

Sarah Abarbanel	54=	Jacob Frois	11=	Sarah Namias	
David Aboab	13=	E & J Hern. Dias	39=	Abigail Nunes	23=
Abr. D'Azevedo		Deborah Letub		Abr.Nunes	9
Aaron Baruch	52=	Leah Letub	23=	Abr. Israel Nunes	22
Abr. Baruch Lous.	48=	Rebecca Letub		Benjamin Nunes	20=
David Baruch	48=	David Lindo	18=	David Nunes	11=
Rachel Baruch	23=	Jacob Lindo	23=	Deborah Nunes	10
Solomon Baruch	23=	David De Lion	54=	Moses Nunes	48=
Abr. Brandon	20=	Abraham Lopez		Hezekiah Pacheco	39=
Rachel Brandon	23=	Abr. Lopez Risson	39=	Moses Pacheco	39=
David Burgos	23=	Hester Lopez		Joshua Peixotto	39=
Mordechai Burgos	1	Moses Lopez Henr.	23=	Aaron Pereira	2
Rachel Burgos	23=	Hester Marquez	23=	Isaac DeC. Pereira	48=
Reb. De Campos	8	Rachel Marquez		Moses Pereira	18=
Jacob D. Carvalho	54=	Daniel Massiah	15=	Moses Pinheiro	6=
Ephraim Castello	23=	Jacob Massiah & Co.	23=	David De Piza	
Jacob Castello	23=	Jeremiah Massiah		Hester De Piza	
Judith Castello	29=	Simeon Massiah	23=	Sarah De Piza	
David Da Costa		Joyce De Medina	39=	Isaac Rodriguez	23=
Luna Delapena	13=	Abr. Mendes (dec.)		Rachel Rodriguez	54=
David Dias	52=	Lebanna Mendes		Judah Soares	39=
Moses Francis	39=	Moses Mendes		Hester Ulloa	
Rebecca Francis (S)	23=	Rachel Mendes		David Valverde	4=
Rebecca Francis (B)	23=	Jac. Nunes Monsanto	17	Elias Valverde	4=
Isaac Franco	6=	Aaron Moreno	54=	Jacob Valverde	15=
Moses Franco	3	Abraham Motta(?)			

Rank based on the number of slaves/laborers provided for the Highway Assessments of 1726-1729, particularly for the last year, found in the St. Michael Levy Books. This is supplemented by the list of Jewish slaveholders recorded in Bridgetown 1729 (Faber 1998, 224-225) and in a few cases by information from contemporary wills.

A Final Accounting of the Sephardic Jews of Bridgetown in 1729

The relatively data-rich Levy Book years of 1722 to 1729 stand in the sharpest contrast to the dearth of data for the next 19 years without Levy Books, 1730-1748, and they provide an opportunity to list Bridgetown's Jewish residents ca. 1729 that is very different from the list of heads of Jewish households that can be derived from the comprehensive and remarkable Levy Book of 1749.

The Highway Assessments of 1728-1729 for the Bridgetown Jews yield 60 names of heads of household, most of them mentioned in the 1720s in other sources. I added two names of people similarly present in the records of the 1720s whose names appeared 1726-1728 but not in 1729. I can find no record of the demise of either before 1730. Faber (1998, 224-225) provides a list of Bridgetown slaveholders in 1729, two of whom he could not identify as Jewish – Rachel Barrow is Baruch (1682-1742), doncella and daughter of Abraham and Sarah Baruch Henriques, longtime property holder on Tudor Street, and "Roldon", is a mis-reading of "Ritson" as in Abraham Lopez Ritson, present on several occasions in the Hebrew Nation Levies. I included both of them and compared Faber's list of 68 with my list of 60 and found 15 new names to add to my list of 62. Most of the 15 are known to me and not prime candidates for the Highway Assessments: ten are widows, doncellas, mothers usually exempted from Highway and other levies particularly in this case of having to provide male slaves/laborers they do not have for the corvee. Four of the males are easily explained: David da Costa would be expected to be recorded outside the Bridgetown Region, another died in 1729, and Abraham Motta cannot be identified by Faber or by me. The other two, Moses Mendes and David De Piza are old and probably exempted by the Assessors of the Levy. What is more both the Mendes and De Piza families seem to be missed by the Highway Levy.

There are 9 in my list surprisingly not found in Faber's list (dates of presence in the Highway Levy appended): Abraham Baruch Lousada (1729); Jacob Castello (1723-1729); Luna Delapena (1723-1729); Rebecca Francis, Broad Street (1722-1729), Esther & Joyce Hernandez Dias (1726 & 1728), Joyce De Medina (1725-1729), Aaron Moreno (1729), Judah Soares (1726-1728) and Moses Pacheco (1722-1728). I have resisted the temptation to include others, present as "Inhabitants" in the Levy Books 1722-1725, but I mention here the names of 4 for whom I have no record of demise in the late 1720s: Rebecca Monsanto, Moses D'Azevedo II, Jacob Baruch Lousada, and Jacob D'Azevedo. The same applies to two others present in the 1725 Levy Book "Inhabitants" list and in the Highway Assessment of 1726: Benjamin Soares and Isaac Mendes Gutierrez.

Uncannily, in turning back to discover how many Jewish heads of household I counted in 1679-1680, a half century before 1729, I found it to be exactly the same as in 1729: 77.

Acknowledgements

During my eight years wedded to the Levy Books I have benefited greatly from others who have found the source of Bridgetown's history and who search for meaning in the St. Michael's Levy Books. Sharing with Marisa Fuentes, Kristen Block and Karl Watson helped me immeasurably in my search, and Marisa's swapping of data with me proved a major timesaver. Karl Watson knew how to rally my spirits and my resolve when the tedium of deciphering and copying got me down and, as our knowledge of the good, bad, and indifferent Levy Books widened, I was able to focus on the great years for my cross-sections which will be the basis of part 2 of this study. Practically, Karl and his students helped also in copying many of the wills of Bridgetown's Jews and allowing me to recopy them. As they mostly cover the century after 1729, they will also be very useful in part 2.

Mary Hartman and her co-workers in the Inter-Library Loan Department at the Goddard Library, Clark University, proved indefatigable in performing the usual miracles in keeping me abreast of the secondary sources I would never otherwise have encountered and encouraged me with their genuine and informed interest in the topic, and Maris Corbin, before she left the island, did the same, and helped me through the maze of the Barbados Museum Library. The staff at the Barbados Department of Archives at Black Rock were helpful also and, in addition, had to manhandle the big and heavy Levy Books.

In Barbados my wife Margaret has borne with fortitude my daily disappearances to the Archives and Libraries, and, in Massachusetts, has needed to do the same as I struggle less agilely with word-mongering and ideas in my various improvised offices. My thanks to Jonathan and Ana Bowden for working computer

wonders on tables and transfering data from my old Mac OS 9.2 to a state of the art computer of 2011.

Primary Sources

The St. Michael Levy Books in the Barbados Department of Archives, differ greatly in quality, primarily because of water damage but also because of the idiosyncracies of the scriveners' hands There are unfortunate omissions in an otherwise complete and legible year, and there are, of course, long spans without the full levy books, notably 1726 to 1748. Internal differences in format and inconsistencies can also be a problem. In the early years the names of the Jews are not included in the "Inhabitants" i.e., the renters' column of entries, but they are in 1700, and the names of the Jews, as property holders, are sometimes grouped at the end of the entries for a given street, but mostly intercalated with non-Jews.

On occasion the "Houses" column on the left, showing the owner of a property, is perfectly matched with the renter recorded in the "Inhabitants" column throughout. Such instances are rare and priceless. In most cases the two columns are paired in format but only loosely related. This is better than in the cases where all the "Houses" data are presented, two columns a page in the first half, and all the "Inhabitants" columns are presented two at a time on one page in the second half. This presents real problems for the researcher who must copy the records of one street, and then compare them to the levy list to find matches. The researcher's problem is that photocopying of any type is not permitted, and this means copying long-hand in pencil or on a laptop or a small word-processor.

An advantage is that the listing of property owners by street in the "Houses" column remains the same for very long periods, and this allowed me to establish a street numbering system, after previously establishing the direction (east-west on Cheapside, west-east on Swan Street) from deeds of land transactions of individuals listed on the street. (During the first 40 years of the Levy Books the street numbering system works well for most of the streets, but on Cheapside it changes after 25 years because owners with multiple holdings at one address have to spell out the several properties for individual taxation purposes. As a result the street numbering system works well still in the eastern third but cumulatively it begins to change very rapidly such that in Midtown Cheapside the numbers are more than double and at the end of west Cheapside they are almost three times what they were. This demands careful and regular correcting of numbers, a tedious year-by-year job.

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All the Levy Books available are used in this study 1685-1686 to 1716, and 1722-1725 (with Highway Assessments paid in slaves/laborers for the corvee appended to the 1725 Levy). In the long-term comparisons I draw on earlier work done on the 1749, 1764/1765, and 1796 Levy Books. The early Levy Books are bound in the Barbados Department of Archives as 1686-1712; 1713-1716 and 1722-1729.

Wills of the Jews of the study period are very helpful. This study uses and often compares the summaries of the contents of them published in several different sources, but mainly three of them: (1) those published in the three relevant volumes compiled by Joanne McRee Sanders as Barbados Records, Wills and Administrations, Volume 1 1639-1680 published in 1979; Volume 2 1681-1700 published in 1680, and Volume 3 1701-1725 published in 1981; (2) Wills, published in Samuel, 1936, 53-63, 71-90 spanning 1676-1739 in Speightstown and Bridgetown, and (3) Wills of Jews, copied in the Dept. of Archives, by the students of Dr. Karl Watson spanning the period 1685 to 1847 but mainly covering the years after 1729.

To aid in establishing the direction of the property-owner and renter listings on Bridgetown's streets, and in some cases, of the side of the street and the size and nature of holdings it was necessary to consult Deeds in the Barbados Archives (Counter Deed Index RB 3/35, RB 3/37, RB 3/38 and RB 3/51).

The two Censuses of early Bridgetown fall in the study period. The Census of 1679-1680 is of no value in studying location as the Jews were not intercalated with non-Jews along the street by street itineraries of the census-takers. They were intercalated in the second Census of 1715 and so it was a matter of relating the itineraries of census-takers via the non-Jews to their street addresses/listings in the Inhabitants column in the Levy Books and then locating their Jewish neighbours alongside them on the street.

Note: After the completion of Part 2 of this study of the Levy Books, I intend to place some of my reconstructions of houses and inhabitants by street 'address', particularly Swan Street in one of the Barbados libraries for use by other scholars.

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