

fully recognized his services in a letter wherein he states that "David Gradis & Son had by their devotion called forth the praise not only of all the ministers, whose confidence they enjoyed at all times, but also that of the administrators of the French colonies; that in time of peace, as well as in time of war, they furnished large sums of money and provisions to marine officials to enable them to carry out the missions with which they were entrusted by the Government, etc."

Despite the immense services rendered by French Jews to their country, and to its colonies, the ban against them had not been lifted. For this reason, while a number of Jews had set their foot on Canadian soil long before, we find no trace of any of them having settled permanently here, until after the Britishers became the acknowledged rulers of the colony.



AARON HART

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the Jews who had drifted into Canada prior to or during the contest between the English and the French, should show a marked preference for the English and throw their lot in with them.

CHAPTER II.

UNDER THE BRITISH RULE, 1760-1831. THE FIRST JEWISH SETTLER.

Jews come under martial strains. Render conspicuous patriotic services. Bar against their settlement removed, but military offices refused.

Those Jews who came here during the British rule, arrived also to the sound of martial tunes and the glamor of military exploits. It was as soldiers and sailors they found their place in the ranks of those heroes who came to open up the country for the millions that were to follow.

Outstanding among these were Sir Alexander Schomberg of London—a member of General Wolfe's war staff, commander of the frigate "Diana", who took part in the siege of Louisburg and Quebec (July to September, 1759).

Sir Alexander assisted the British naval forces in the conquest of Canada. Other Jews participated in the military land operations. General Monkton, General Amherst, General Gage and Colonel Bou-

quet, mention in their official papers, various members of the Frank's family, and praise them for their conduct and efficient services. Later, many more Jews were to render conspicuous military service to the British Loyalists in their struggle with the rebellious factions within and the invading enemies without.

THE FIRST JEWISH SETTLER

If other Jews deserve a place of honor in the annals of Canada,—the one who will retain the foremost place in Canadian-Jewish history is Aaron (Philip) Hart, as the first Jew to permanently settle in Canada.

Born in London, England, in 1724, Aaron Hart joined the army at an early age, for when he was barely 21 years old he had already reached the rank of lieutenant, and came over to America with Sir Frederick Haldimand and Col. Bouquet. Later, he enlisted with the British forces and was appointed commissary officer to the army of Sir Jeffrey Amherst, and when Amherst triumphantly rode through the old city gates of Montreal (Sept. 8, 1760), Commissary Hart was among the officers who rode alongside him.

Another Jew who with Aaron Hart enrolled in the British army that fought for the conquest of Canada, was Samuel Judah, a kinsman, who had come across the Atlantic together with Hart. Also Isaac Miranda, Emmanuel de Cordova, and Hananiel Garcia, who held military offices—and participated in many of the operations against the French. These and others who followed, remained in Canada, and at the invitation of General Amherst, who was quick to appreciate their ability as merchants and their familiarity with local conditions and needs, permanently settled here, most of them in or around Montreal.

Aaron Hart settled in Three Rivers. He retained his military commission, and at the same time, being shrewd, far-sighted and industrious, he began laying the foundations for the fortune and fame of the House of Hart, which was to play such an important and dramatic role in the development of Canada and the fate of the Jews.

Once the ban and bars against Jews were removed, with the advent of the Britishers, the number of Jews who made Canada their home, increased rapidly. Amongst the earliest settlers we find the names of Lazarus David, Uriel Moresco, Abraham Franks, Levy Solomons, Ezekiel Solomons, Manuel Gomez, Simon Levy and Fernandez da Fonseca. Later Samuel Jacobs, on the invitation of General Amherst, settled outside of Montreal, at Saint Denis.

Some of these succeeded in a very short time to achieve prominence in the mercantile field, by the establishment of large and rapidly growing export and import trading posts. How large these enterprises were, can be judged from the statement contained in a letter of the period wherein it is stated that one of the London friends of Samuel Judah had as much as 30,000 pounds invested in his fur business—a considerable capital for those days. If Samuel Judah's business was so large, one can imagine what must have been the capital of Aaron Hart, who was considered one of the wealthiest men in the country at the time—and at any rate one of the largest individual owners of land. Three Rivers, where he resided, became an important business centre, through his enterprise. It was there that the second Post Office in the country was opened—and it was located in the house of Hart, who had become Seigneur de Becancour.

That he was well regarded in the higher circles and popular in his own community, can be seen from the fact that the first Papal Envoy to Canada had been his guest, and when the Duke of Kent (father of Queen Victoria), came over to Canada in 1791, he went to visit with Hart, who received him with all suitable dignity. This visit may be regarded more than a personal compliment to Hart; it indicates also the esteem that the Jews enjoyed. For despite his high position, Hart remained attached to the Jewish faith and tradition—a fact which was later to affect the destiny of his son—and inscribe a none too savory chapter in the political life of Canada.

Nor was this flattering attention given by a high British official to a representative Jew, misplaced and unrewarded. It only served to strengthen—as such little acts of courtesy and display of considerate good-will, always do—the devotion and loyalty of the Jews to the Mother Country. This loyalty was soon to be put to test.

Though so few in number, the Jews took an active part not only in the commercial, but also in the social and political life of the slowly emerging self-governing country. A movement was on foot

at the time (1775) to obtain a more or less representative governing body—or an assembly—and the Jews, always on the side of liberal movements, joined this movement.

At about that time, too, the American Revolution broke out, and Canada was soon drawn into the conflict. The Jews of Canada—few as they were, played a not inconspicuous part in this struggle on the side of the Loyalists. Aaron Hart and other Jews unhesitatingly responded to the call of Sir Guy Carlton for volunteers—to drive back the invading American army. The provisioning of the Loyalist army was also largely, if not exclusively, carried on by Jews,—not alone in Canada, but in America as well.

The same loyalty was displayed by the Jews during the war between England and the United States in 1812. Most of the Jews of military age enlisted for active service—in the Canadian army. Some, as for instance, Ezekiel Hart, Myer Michaels, Joseph Hesse, were officers; captains, lieutenants. Samuel David was promoted to the rank of Major and placed at the head of the 2nd Montreal Battalion, composed of French Canadians, while David David headed a regiment of English Canadians; others, like Henry Joseph, Jacob Franks, Alexander Hart, Isaac Phineas, were soldiers. Most, or all of them took part in the great battle of Chateauguay, which ended in the complete defeat of the Americans.

Of course, there were also Jews who, true to their character, labored in the interests of peace rather than war—as for instance, Levy Solomons, who strove to bring about a friendly settlement between the Canadians and the Americans (in 1775). Solomons had formerly resided in New York, and when the American General Montgomery invaded Canada, he ordered Solomons (who was a Canadian citizen, long in Montreal), to establish hospitals for the American wounded. This led to trouble—and eventually he and his family were expelled by the British General and forced to endure severe hardships—until peace was restored and he was permitted to return to Montreal.

A few years later, in 1837, a rebellion broke out in Canada. The small group of Jews, though still suffering from political disability (despite the much heralded Act of Emancipation of 1832) rallied again on the side of the Loyalists, and "insofar as their number permitted, they were to be found wherever means were rapidly organized to defend the cause of adherence to Britain. They displayed an unflinching patriotism and a remarkable devotion. They were to be found in many of the battalions which the loyal citizens had formed." Fortunately, the records of those stirring events have been preserved, and they show in minute detail the splendid initiative, courage, resourcefulness, patriotism, and prestige enjoyed by the Jews of those days.

"On the 7th of November, 1837," our historian tells us, "Captain Eleazar David was ordered to patrol the streets of Montreal in charge of cavalry. On the 10th of November, Lieut. Moses was despatched to St. John with cavalry to arrest the leaders of the rebellion there. Dr. Aaron H. David was attached to the Montreal Rifle Corps, serving on the medical unit. At the battle of St. Charles, which took place on the 25th of November, Capt. Eleazar had his horse shot under him while in command of the cavalry. Fortunately, he escaped injury. He distinguished himself so much that Sir John Colborne thought fit to duly reward him by raising him, a few days later, to the rank of Major. Aaron Philip Hart personally organized a company of militia and at one time carried despatches from Sir John Colborne to the British Ambassador at New York. Aaron E. Hart's and Abraham Joseph's names were mentioned some time previously as being among the committee of a few prominent citizens at Quebec who were planning to form a British Rifle Corps there. Jacob Henry Joseph—served with the troops at Chambray and the Richelieu, and was entrusted with the duty of conveying despatches between Sir John Colborne and General Wetherall, at night."

An example of courage and unflinching devotion to duty is to be found in the account of Benjamin Hart's service during these troublesome and perilous days.

He held the office of Magistrate. On the 6th of November, 1837, the rebels made their first attack on the dwelling of the Loyalists. Hart followed them and found that there were several hundreds of them. As Magistrate, he read the Riot Act, and making his way into the centre of them, arrested their leader and sent a requisition to the commandant of the garrison to call out the troops. He remained on duty with the military, as magistrate in charge, for four nights in succession. He did it because the Loyalists would not trust the city and the militia in the hands of a French Canadian

Magistrate, and apparently no other British Magistrate would serve, for fear that they might be held personally responsible in the event of suits being brought for false arrest. Other instances are cited showing that Benjamin Hart was not only a loyal soldier and conscientious public servant, but a man of resourcefulness and daring, risking often his own life in the discharge of duty. And what a beautiful lesson the life and conduct of this Jew furnishes. What a rebuke to those blinded by selfish narrow-mindedness, and blind prejudice!

For this was the same Benjamin Hart who, earlier in his life (in 1811), had to appeal to the Governor for redress, when on the ground that he was a Jew he was refused a military commission. Of how many brave, faithful and highly intelligent officers the Loyalists would have been deprived, if Jews had been denied the elementary right of a citizen to defend his country?

And is it not still more remarkable that so many Jews had rendered such conspicuous service, when all told there were at the time no more than 107 Jewish Souls in the whole of Canada? (Census of 1831).

CHAPTER III.

REMARKABLE JEWISH ACHIEVEMENTS

Though few in number, Jews originate many enterprises and participate in the founding of public utilities: railways, telegraphs, water power, steamship transportation and banking. Enter professions.

Nor was it on the battlefield alone that the Jews, insignificant in number though they were, made their presence felt. Protection and security may be the first, but it is not the only requisite for the preservation of life. Supplying the means of livelihood is equally important. In this latter field the Jews, because they were better qualified, exerted a much greater influence. A mere listing of the more important enterprises they engaged in, and more especially of those industries they originated or helped to introduce in Canada, is sufficient to demonstrate their remarkable resourcefulness and ability; and above all, their vision and faith in the future of their adopted country.

Henry Joseph, for instance, had established before 1800, what may be regarded as Canada's first Merchant Marine. He had his own ships plying the waters of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. In addition, he was the first Canadian to establish a direct steamship service exclusively with England (1801).

Jacob Franks was the first to introduce (1805) a saw mill, as well as a grist mill, in Canada. Furthermore, he is said to have been the first white man to have penetrated in the remote wilderness of the North Western regions. (He had established a chain of trading posts in and around Green Bay (Wisconsin).

David David (as well as Moses J. Hays and others), was among the founders and first directors of the Bank of Montreal (1818). He was also a charter member of the Board of Trade (1822) and one of the first life-Governors of the General Hospital of Montreal.

Moses J. Hays was the first to establish waterworks in Canada (in 1803).

Moses Hart established and operated a bank between 1835 and 1852, and issued his own bank notes. He also operated the S.S. "Toronto", "Montreal" and "Hart" between Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec.

Jacob Henry Joseph was among those who first introduced the telegraph and built railways in Canada (1836).

Jesse Joseph was the founder of Canada's trade with Belgium, and for many years the Belgian Consul-General in Canada. He was the president and the largest shareholder in the Montreal Elevator Company. He also built and operated the leading theatre (The Royal) of Montreal. He was one of the founders and president of the Montreal Gas Company, as well as the Montreal Street Railway Company.

Sigmund Mohr, an enterprising electrical engineer, was the first to develop water power; indeed, he may be regarded as the father of hydro-electricity in Canada; just as he was first to install a telephone in Quebec.

Henry Jacob and Michael Michaelis established the first cigar factory in Canada (1858).

Henry Judah founded, and was the first president of, the Montreal City and District Savings Bank.