

The Jews of Georgia: An Ever-Changing Experience

Immigration, integration, insulation. These themes can be seen again and again in the long history of Jewish immigration to the state of Georgia, dating from 1733 to the early 20th century. In each wave of immigration, the Jews arrived and attempted to reconcile their religion with their new environment, with some assimilating into American culture and others remaining steadfast in their commitment to Judaism. The three waves of Jewish immigration were quite distinct from one another, each varying in their approaches to religion, each facing different obstacles, and each interacting with the secular world in different ways. These periods are generally divided by historians into three categories: the Sephardic period of the 18th and early 19th century, the German period, which ranges from the 1820s through the 1870s, and the Eastern European period, which begins where the German period leaves off and ends shortly after the first World War. Of course, the boundaries of these periods are somewhat amorphous and simply represent general immigration trends. I hope to put the experiences of these different groups in conversation with each other, exploring their differences, and ultimately present reasons behind the variations. In the end, these different phenomena result from both changes in American society, and differences in the composition of the Jewish communities.

Over the decades, Georgian Jewry has remained a vibrant, yet protean community. Often, the experiences of the Georgian Jew reflect that of the entire Southern Jewish community. Many of the trends discussed in this paper will also apply to the rest of Southern Jewry, and I will

occasionally reference events or individuals outside of Georgia. That being said, Georgia's role as a hub of Southern Jewry should be emphasized. Georgia was not merely another Southern state with Jews. On the contrary, the Georgian Jewish community stands out as one of the oldest, largest, and most prominent in the South, and makes for a fascinating case study. By examining the lives of these pioneers, readers will gain a greater understanding and appreciation for Southern Jewish history. Perhaps it may even stimulate dialogue about the much neglected subject and foster further research.

The modern study of Southern Jewry can be traced back to Rabbi Bertram Korn, the first historian to produce works distinctly focused on Southern Jews. Following the Second World War, he published books such as *American Jewry and the Civil War*¹ and *Eventful Years and Experiences*,² which later proved influential in kickstarting interest in the field. Other early scholars of the post-war era include Jacob Rader Marcus, who compiled a book of important primary sources surrounding the Jewish-American experience. One generation later, historians in the 1970s expanded on Korn's ideas, publishing important books such as *Jews in the South*,³ *The Provincials*,⁴ and *Turn to the South*.⁵ These works helped expand upon the subject, transforming it into a thriving historical field. Although historians have done well to establish this field, explaining what happened to Southern Jews, few have explored why they happened. Even fewer compare various time periods of Southern Jewish life, analyzing changes and their causes over time. This style of analysis is sorely lacking from the current historiography, and scholarship

¹ Bertram Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951).

² Bertram Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati: The American Jewish Archives, 1954).

³ Abraham Goodman et al., *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Palsson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

⁴ Eli Evans, *The Provincials* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973).

⁵ Lawrence Fuchs et al., *Turn to the South*, ed. Nathan Kaganoff and Melvin Urofsky (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979).

tackling these questions could offer many important insights. Through this paper, I hope to provide this missing angle to the study of Southern Jewry.

July 11, 1733 marks the inception of the earliest Jewish community in Georgia. It is on this day that the *William and Sarah* arrived in the five-month-old settlement of Savannah from London, bringing with it forty-one Jewish passengers. They brought with them a Torah scroll and a circumcision box.⁶ These two items in particular hold great symbolic meaning for Jewish communities. The Torah scroll ensured the viability of a Jewish community while the circumcision box represented the hope of passing these traditions onto the next generation. Of these Jewish passengers, thirty-three were Sephardim, many belonging to the same family, while the remaining eight were Ashkenazi Jews from central Europe. Many of the passengers arrived in search of religious freedoms, escaping the persecution in Europe, but received a somewhat lukewarm reception upon their arrival. In January of the same year, the Georgian Trustees in London, who governed the colony, tried to barr Jews from settling in Georgia, stating “that no Jews should be sent, and the deputations given them to collect should be revoked...” as “the report of our sending Jews has prevented several from subscribing to us.”⁷ The Jews had arrived without permission, confusing the leaders of the community as to what to do next. They sought legal advice in Charleston, where lawyers reasoned that “because the Georgia charter guaranteed liberty of conscience and worship to all newcomers except ‘papists,’ Jews had to be admitted.”⁸ This whole event reflects that institutionalized anti-Semitism (along with anti-Catholicism) on the governmental level still presented a major barrier to Jews, even in 18th century America.

⁶ John Sheftall, “The Sheftalls of Savannah,” in *Jews of the South*, ed. Samuel Proctor and Louis Schmier (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 65- 68.

⁷ Mark Greenberg, “One Religion, Different Worlds,” in *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil*, ed. Marcie Ferris and Mark Greenberg (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2006), 28.

⁸ Ibid.

Much of this traditional Medieval anti-Jewish belief began to waver over the course of the 18th century, resulting in a loosening of restrictions to Jews across the Western World. This pervasive form of anti-Semitism would not affect the next generations of immigrants, but it still played a very present role in the experience of these very early settlers.

The Trustees in London were not happy and wrote to James Oglethorpe, now considered the founder of Georgia, pressuring him to restrict the Jews from settling in Savannah. Oglethorpe wrote back “praising the Jews’ good conduct, commending especially the skill of passenger Dr. Samuel Nunes Ribeiro, who had provided valuable medical attention to sick colonists during a yellow fever outbreak.”⁹ Here, we can see an important piece of information about life in a small settlement like Savannah. Because of its small size, the utility of the Jews to the survival of the settlement outweighed their initial grievances at the notion of living with Jews. It is only thanks to this, that they were allowed to settle down, founding the first Jewish community in Georgia.

The religious life of these early immigrants, as is the case with the later German and Eastern European immigrants, was shaped by their experiences in their country of origin. This concept is perhaps most dramatically represented with the thirty-three Sephardic immigrants of 1733. Their homelands had seemingly been devoid of Jews for over two centuries, as Spain expelled its Jews in 1492, followed in close suit by Portugal five years later. However, these Jews were not simply Jews of distant Spanish or Portuguese descent, as one might expect. Rather, many of them actually grew up in Iberia as crypto-Jews, outwardly professing their devotion for Christianity while adhering to their Jewish roots in secret. The life of a crypto-Jew was not an easy one, as they lived under the constant risk of exposure and persecution. In fact, the very same Dr. Samuel Nunes Ribeiro, who helped stop the epidemic in Savannah, underwent

⁹ Greenberg, “One Religion, Different Worlds,” 28.

a traumatic ordeal thirty years earlier, when he was arrested and charged with Judaising, or attempting to spread the Jewish faith. The inquisitors pressured him to reveal the identity of other crypto-Jews, torturing him when he refused to implicate his wife in the crimes. The doctor eventually gave in to their demands, repented for his sins, swore loyalty to Christianity and was released.¹⁰ Here, we can see the presence of anti-Semitism in the lives of the early Sephardic immigrants. The Spanish Inquisition, which is often associated with the late 15th century, lingered on for centuries, until its final abolition in 1834. Sephardic families, such as the Ribeiros, lived in hiding for nearly two and a half centuries, practicing their religion in secret. They were unable to practice many customs which would outwardly reveal their hidden religion.

After so many years of living under these conditions, the religious practice of crypto-Jews in Iberia was changed forever. When Dr. Riberio escaped to England with his family in the 1720s, they joined the Bevis Marks congregation, which consisted of other crypto-Jews fleeing Iberia.¹¹ This revealing fact demonstrates how years of observing Judaism in secrecy shaped the practice of their faith. Their customs now differed from traditional Orthodoxy, driving them to congregate amongst themselves. This distinction caused some conflict in early Savannah, as the Sephardi and Ashkenazi immigrants sought to establish a new community and struggled to reconcile their two distinct traditions.

In spite of these differences, the two groups came together and laid the groundwork of a Jewish community. Although they did not have much in common, their mutual desire for Jewish prayer, which requires at least ten men, drove them to consolidate. In 1735, just two years after they crossed the Atlantic and arrived in Georgia, the Jews of Savannah established the

¹⁰ Greenberg, "One Religion, Different Worlds," 30.

¹¹ Ibid., 33.

Congregation Mickve Israel, the first Jewish congregation in the South.¹² Congregations are assemblies of ten or more men for the purposes of prayer, and not, as the term is often used now, the synagogue building which houses the prayer. Following its founding, Mickve Israel was based in the houses of members, and had no permanent structure devoted to prayer.¹³ These early years were chronicled by the Sheftall family, one of the Ashkenazi families, who maintained a diary from those early years. In it, the Sheftalls record important dates of significance for the community, mostly birthdays and weddings of its congregants. The diary accounts for four weddings and twenty births between 1736 and 1741. In addition, it also records the dates of the arrival of dozens of immigrants, many of them complete family units. Amongst these recorded milestones, two entries stand out as unique: the arrival of an additional Torah, Jewish texts, and a *hanukiah*, and the dedication of the *mikvah* in 1738.¹⁴ The decision to record births, marriages, arrivals of new Jews, and the arrival of Judaica should not be taken for granted, as it reflects the events which the Sheftalls found to be worthy of commemoration. When looked at as a whole, all the entries share the common theme of the growth and preservation of the Jewish community of Savannah. The births and arrivals of new members to the community reflected the expansiveness of the community while the marriage of young Jews reflected the drive to pass on tradition. These three events also make sense to document for record-keeping purposes. The delivery of religious items, on the other hand, stands out amongst these entries as its recording serves no bookkeeping function. Rather, its merit lies in the great symbolic value it gave to the community, providing them the means to perform Jewish ritual. They recorded these events because each one played different and equally important roles to frontier Jewish communities,

¹² Sheftall, "The Sheftalls of Savannah," 68.

¹³ Greenberg, "One Religion, Different Worlds," 35.

¹⁴ Carolyn Cunningham, ed., *Sheftall Diaries (1733 - 1808): Georgia's First Jewish Colonists*, 2013, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=Te1KCAAQBAJ&pg=GBS.PP1>.

struggling to foster religious growth with what little they had. The religious life of the Sephardic period is characterized by attempts to establish a viable community with very limited resources and little access to the greater Jewish community due to their isolation.

Despite their remarkable growth and advancement, the Jews of Savannah still faced external problems which nearly resulted in the complete destruction of the community. In 1741, the Spanish Empire was engaged in the War of Jenkin's Ear against the British Empire. The Sephardic Jews of the community grew fearful of the Spanish threat from neighboring Florida, clearly motivated by their past traumatic experiences with Spanish persecution, and left Georgia.¹⁵ The congregation collapsed, as it could no longer sustain itself with so few members. Jewish life stalled in the region, and save for one time in September of 1774, when enough Jews were mustered together to form a congregation in the home of Mordecai Sheftall, there existed no real Jewish community in Savannah.¹⁶ Here, the institutionalized anti-Semitism once again threatened the community, forcing the Sephardic Jews to flee their homes to safer places.

The Sheftall and Minis families became involved in the secular community, where they thrived as both merchants and landowners, "involved in timbering, sawmilling, shipping, and retailing, manufactured goods..."¹⁷ It is important to note here that the small size of the Jewish population no doubt forced them to engage with the secular world. Similarly, the relatively small number of colonists during the first decades following Georgia's founding allowed them to see Jews as a necessary asset to the vitality of the developing colony. Many Sheftalls devoted themselves to local politics, becoming fervently devoted to the Revolutionary cause. When the British invaded Savannah in 1778, most of the Jewish families fled north. Although their flight

¹⁵ Sheftall, "The Sheftalls of Savannah," 69.

¹⁶ Cunningham, ed., *Sheftall Diaries*.

¹⁷ Sheftall, "The Sheftalls of Savannah," 65.

could be attributed to their patriotic allegiances, another likely factor was fear of anti-Semitism under the occupying British forces. This can be seen in a 1781 issue of *The Royal Gazette*, a Savannah-based newspaper, published under British rule. The issue describes an act passed to prosecute suspected rebels, and claims that “mo[st], if not all, of which Jews, were very active in promoting and carrying on the late rebellion in this province.” It goes on to proclaim that if “any person whomsoever professing the Jewish religion... or who appears by his conduct to be one of the people called the Jews, and not a Christian... shall be found within any part of this province” he shall be deemed an enemy of the King’s government, facing possible expulsion, imprisonment, confiscation of his possessions.¹⁸ Once again, the Jews of Savannah were forced to flee from war and the anti-Semitism it stirred. In the later years of the war, the Sheftalls recorded when the British left Georgia and wrote, “the British Evacuated Georgia the 11th of July 1782, and as thus was no Jews at that time in the State.”¹⁹ Here, we can see an important trend, one which we have already seen earlier with the War of Jenkin’s Ear: the devastating effect that the threat of anti-Semitism and war had on the Jewish community. This theme will arise later with the Civil War, but its effects there will be much more far-reaching and nuanced.

Those who had fled Georgia during the war slowly made their way back to the state. Many Sephardic Jews, some the descendants of the original settlers, returned to Savannah following the Revolutionary War as well. This bolstered the community and on July 7, 1786, the Congregation Mickve Israel was officially rededicated.²⁰ This renewed congregation was built on compromise, adhering to “the Sephardic mode of worship,”²¹ while also practicing Ashkenazi

¹⁸ “An Act for Securing His Majesty’s Government,” *The Royal Georgia Gazette (Savannah)*, March 15, 1781.

¹⁹ Cunningham, ed., *Sheftall Diaries*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Greenberg, “One Religion, Different Worlds,” 38.

tradition. Over the decades, the few Ashkenazi families had intermarried with the much more numerous Sephardim, blurring the once clear ethnic divide between the two groups. Also, these new American-born Sephardim, now a generation or two removed from Catholic Iberia, had become more accustomed to religious stringency, and differences in religious practices between the two groups also melted away. As such, the congregation of 1786 appears to be much more cohesive and unified than its predecessor, and its antecedents. This cooperation and integration between differing groups of Jews should not be taken for granted. It reflects the importance of religious adherence to the immigrants of this period, who were willing to set aside their differences in order to establish a practicing and cohesive community. The inter-Jewish cooperation of this era will later be contrasted by division and infighting of later periods.

Highlighting this point, the community set into place strict guidelines for itself, restricting its members from working on the Sabbath or marrying Gentiles, and demanding that they eat kosher meat.²² These rules offer great insight into the growth of the Jewish community in the five decades since their arrival. The laws involving *kashrut* seem to indicate that the Jews of Savannah had access to kosher food and a Jewish butcher knowledgeable in the intricacies of ritual slaughter. A decade earlier, even before the rejuvenation of the Jewish community, Mordecai Sheftall established a walled-off Jewish cemetery, which can still be found in western Savannah.²³ The Jewish community of Savannah was no longer a tiny group struggling to make do with the few religious customs it could hold by, but it now had established a strong religious foundation.

The infrastructure for a successful Jewish community was now set in place, and the congregation could thrive. By the end of the 18th century, they had steadily grown into a

²² Cunningham, ed., *Sheftall Diaries*.

²³ Sheftall, "The Sheftalls of Savannah," 70.

community of eighty members. This growth culminated in the construction of Savannah's first synagogue building, completed in June of 1820, on the eve of the German period, on a plot of land granted to the congregation by the city.²⁴ Savannah had come a long way after nearly denying Jews access to the state altogether. This reflects an important change over the first century of Jewish Georgian life. At first, the government threatened to banish them from the state, purely based on anti-Jewish sentiment. Now, a little under a century later, the city of Savannah had reformed, granting the Jews the land needed to construct their first synagogue. The cause behind this change can be seen in a letter sent to the congregation in Savannah by founding father Thomas Jefferson, congratulating them on the construction of the synagogue. He writes that the establishment of the synagogue "proves to the world two truths... that man can govern himself, and that religious freedom is the most effectual anodyne against religious dissention."²⁵ Through this text, Jefferson conveys that the founding of the synagogue reflects the actualization of ideals set forth in the Revolution. The United States, unlike Great Britain, had no official church, instead supporting free practice of religion. This important change created increased governmental cooperation with Jews, leading to the German period, where the Jews would face new obstacles.

The Sephardic period saw the establishment and growth of the Jewish community in Georgia and the South. They arrived as some of the first settlers to what are now major cities, driven out of their homeland by state-sanctioned persecution. They sought to plant their roots in the New World, proudly practicing their religion after years of secrecy, persecution, and intolerance. Despite this hope, their struggle with institutional anti-Semitism did not end there, as they faced expulsion upon their arrival and were forced to abandon their homes within the

²⁴ Greenberg, "One Religion, Different Worlds," 39.

²⁵ "The Jews in Savannah," *The Occident (Philadelphia)*, January 1, 1844.

decade. They preserved through the hardships, accepted into society by the important roles they played in the survival the colony. There, they cemented their religious beliefs and created thriving Jewish communities through cooperation. Motivated by an adherence to tradition, they established important institutions such as *mikvot*, a cemetery, a synagogue and access to kosher food. The Sephardic period created the base for the next generations of immigrants, establishing the communities which would develop and change with time.

Shifting our lens across the Atlantic to the advent of the German period, Central Europe of the early-mid 19th century was in a state of turmoil and transition. Following the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire earlier in the century, the Germanic peoples struggled with competing national identities. This culminated in the doomed Revolutions of 1848, where intellectual revolutionaries led the fight to implement liberal reform.²⁶ This movement, widely supported by Jews, has historically been seen as the impetus for the great German immigration to the United States. In truth, the vast majority of these immigrants were not desperately fleeing Europe as political refugees, as they are often portrayed. Rather, “hundreds of thousands of persons who had taken no active role in the fighting were completely disillusioned with life in Europe after the return of the reactionaries to power,”²⁷ motivating them to emigrate. Additionally, the turmoil both before, during and after these conflicts caused economic slumps which threatened the livelihood of Jews, and outbreaks of anti-Semitism, which threatened their very lives.²⁸

Now that the major cities of the South boasted thriving Jewish communities, many of these new German Jewish immigrants dispersed, moving inland to small-towns and new

²⁶ Bertram Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences*, 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 2-3.

developing cities. These Germans who “ventured away from the core Jewish communities were usually single men who traveled conducting business.”²⁹ With this trend came the stereotype of the mobile Jewish peddler, traveling through the countryside to make his living. Here, we can see our first defining feature of the German era. Unlike the immigrants of the period before, who often immigrated in family units and stayed together as a community, many Germans immigrants were single men. The families that immigrated were also not as embedded in Jewish community, and the men often traveled to the countryside for work. They ventured out into rural areas without established Jewish communities, which resulted in their greater integration into secular society. Take, for instance, George Ehrlich, a Jewish immigrant from Germany in the 1830s.³⁰ He settled in Savannah where he raised his family, but would travel through the surrounding countryside for work, peddling goods as he traveled. Through this line of work, he became familiarized with residents of small towns such as Valdosta, Georgia, where he and his family eventually moved after the Civil War. The people of Valdosta welcomed the Ehrlich family with open arms, impacted by both their years of close interaction with the Ehrlichs and by their hope that the arrival of merchants would help revive the town’s devastated economy.³¹ Here, we can once again see Jews being embraced because of the utility they could provide to the survival of the secular community. This resembles the experience of the Jewish immigrants of Savannah. The young, rural towns of the 19th century and the newly-founded colony of the 18th were in similar stages of development, so they both could not afford to turn away skilled migrants who could potentially help their survival.

²⁹ Mark Bauman “Small-Town Life: Introduction,” in *Dixie Diaspora*, ed. Mark Bauman (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 105.

³⁰ Louis Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” in *Jews of the South*, ed. Samuel Proctor and Louis Schmier (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

A similar story can be found in the life of Charles Wessolowsky, who immigrated to Sandersville, Georgia from Prussia as a teenager.³² He followed in the footsteps of his brother, who had immigrated in years prior, and joined him in peddling the countryside. He too formed close bonds with the residents, discovering to his surprise that “the rural farmers were of a different breed of Gentile from those of his family’s bigoted neighbors in the old country.”³³ He became beloved by the Gentile community in Sandersville, and those around him accommodated him by preparing kosher meals when he ate over and helping him learn English.³⁴ Wessolowsky eagerly accepted their offer to teach him English, devoting himself to the endeavour with vigor in an effort to “eliminate his accent and speak like the natives.”³⁵ His great commitment to learning the native language reflected a common drive amongst the German immigrants to “be accepted as neighbors, businessmen and loyal citizens of the South.”³⁶ We can see that the lack of Jewish community led to interaction and friendship with Gentiles. Here, however, it takes on a very different meaning than in the Sephardic period. With the Germans, interaction not only led to acceptance, but often went even further and led to assimilation.

The religious practices of many German Jewish immigrants reflected their longing for acceptance and integration into secular society. When the first Jews of the German wave settled in the South, they arrived in a Jewish world dominated by the Sephardim of the previous generations. Through the entirety of the 18th century, every synagogue in the United States followed the Sephardic tradition. In fact, it was not until 1802 that Rodeph Shalom was

³² Louis Schmier, “The Life of Charles Wessolowsky,” in *Reflections of Southern Jewry*, ed. Louis Schmier (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1982), 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁴ Schmier, “The Life of Charles Wessolowsky,” 8-9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁶ Marcie Ferris and Mark Greenberg, “Introduction: Jewish Roots in Southern Soil,” in *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil*, ed. Marcie Ferris and Mark Greenberg (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2006), 8.

established in Philadelphia, America's first Ashkenazi Synagogue.³⁷ As German Jews began immigrating, they transported their own theologies, namely the Reform movement, across the Atlantic and into the congregations they formed. The Reform movement originated in Central Europe with the Haskalah movement in the late 18th century and held a much looser emphasis on the importance of ritual than in more traditional groups. The founding rabbis of the Reform movement in America, including Rabbi Isaac Meyer Wise and Rabbi David Einhorn, were all immigrants from Germany. Before long, Reform Judaism became the dominating Jewish sect in the South. It was especially prominent in small towns, where rural Jews embraced the movement.³⁸ For Jews living in these small towns, Reform Judaism must have appealed to them much more than traditional Orthodoxy, as strict practice of Jewish ritual was difficult to maintain without a core community. While the desire to adhere to Jewish law pushed Jews to congregate in the previous period, this lack of necessity with Reform Judaism allowed Jews to live comfortably in areas dominated almost entirely by Gentiles.

On a deeper level, the Reform movement reflected the German Jewish embrace of Southern values and conformity at the expense of religious tradition. Some Reform rabbis "abolished skull caps, initiated Sunday morning services, minimized Hebrew in the liturgy, and stressed close relations with their Christian counterparts."³⁹ In a mission to make the Jewish faith more acceptable for their Christian neighbors, "Jewish services became more Christianized." One interesting manifestation of this phenomenon is Rabbi Morris Raphall's "Bible View on

³⁷ Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 430.

³⁸ Lee Weissbach, "Eastern European Immigrants and the Image of Jews in the Small-Town South," in *Dixie Diaspora*, ed. Mark Bauman (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 109.

³⁹ Howard Rabinowitz, "Nativism, Bigotry and Anti-Semitism in the South," in *Dixie Diaspora*, ed. Mark Bauman (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 280.

Slavery,”⁴⁰ which presented a pro-Southern view on slavery utilizing arguments found in the Bible. It should be noted that this view was not held by all Reform rabbis, and was criticized by Rabbi Einhorn, a devout abolitionist. The relationship between Georgian Jews and the German Jewish immigrants is encapsulated in a quote by an Atlanta-born granddaughter of German immigrants who grew up in the early 20th century. In an interview, she commented on the attitude of the fellow members of her Reform synagogue, saying that “You always proudly said that you were Jewish, but not too Jewish.”⁴¹ From these examples, we can see how the religion of the Jews of the German period interacted and was shaped by their Southern experience.

In 1861, tensions between the North and South reached a boiling point, and the nation erupted into civil war. The war represents an important moment in the history of the German period, as it reflects their great commitment to their Southern identities, yet also marks the most widespread explosion of anti-Semitism they faced. Regarding the second issue, the war served as “the key, the secret combination, which unleashed heretofore dormant prejudices”⁴² In all parts of the nation, a notion spread that Jews “shirked military and naval service,” revealing their disloyalty to their “national ‘hosts.’”⁴³ The frequently used term of “hosts” conveys the notion of Jews as outsiders and foreigners. Rabbi Isaac Leeser wrote that “a reading of Southern papers gave one the impression that Jews and disaffected citizens were synonymous, (and) that all smuggling was done by Jews...”⁴⁴ The charge of smuggling, seen as a traitorous act during

⁴⁰ Morris Raphall, *Bible View of Slavery: A Discourse, Delivered At the Jewish Synagogue, "Bnai Jeshurun," New York, On the Day of the National Fast, Jan.* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1861).

⁴¹ Alene Uhry, interviewed by Ruth Zuckerman, The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, November 22, 1985, March 24, 1986 and September 8, 1989, accessed May 9, 2018, <https://www.thebreman.org/Portals/0/Oral%20History%20Transcripts/Uhry,%20Alene%20Fox%20Final%20Transcript%2001728%20Ready%20for%20Web%20R4252016.pdf>.

⁴² Bertram Korn, “American Judaeophobia,” in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Palsson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 154.

⁴³ Lawrence Ginsburg, *Israelites in Blue and Gray* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), ix.

⁴⁴ Bertram Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 294.

wartime, was often pinned on Jews. This led to the most infamous anti-Jewish incident of the era: Grant's expulsion of the Jews. On December 17, 1862, Major General Ulysses Grant, issued General Order 11, accusing the Jews of "violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department."⁴⁵ In light of these charges, Grant expelled the Jews from the areas under his military jurisdiction, which included parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, and the entirety of Mississippi.⁴⁶

This strain of anti-Semitism was not limited to the North, as a similar incident occurred in Georgia, around the same time as Grant's expulsion. In August of the same year, Thomasville, Georgia expelled its Jews, accusing them, like Grant, of undermining Gentile society through manipulation of trade.⁴⁷ North of Thomasville, in Talbotton, the "grand jury issued a presentment against 'evil and unpatriotic conduct of the representatives of Jewish houses.'"⁴⁸ Similar outbursts of anti-Jewish action could be seen across the South. In Alabama, German-Jewish Captain Adolph Proskauer's superiors unsuccessfully attempted to prevent his promotion on the basis of his faith, while a Jewish officer was forced to leave a Texas regiment after one of his own subordinates cut off his horse's tail. The officer's unfortunate leave was not met with remorse, but with "a regimental celebration."⁴⁹ Anti-Jewishness reared its ugly head in all areas of Southern society. It was present in the Southern government, where Congressman Robert Hilton referred to Jews as devouring the country like "locusts, eating up its resources and

⁴⁵ General. Order. No. 11, 13th Army Corps (December 17, 1862) Jacob Marcus, ed., *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

⁴⁶ Jonathan Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York: Schocken Books, 2012), 11.

⁴⁷ Robert Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 267.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁴⁹ Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 176-177.

monopolizing its trade.”⁵⁰ It thrived, too, with the laypeople, as there were documented “raids on Jewish stores in Georgia by wives of soldiers away with the army”⁵¹

Jews reacted to this rise in anti-Semitism in a variety of ways. Some Jews became disenchanted by this hatred, finding that the South was no different than the countries from which they had fled. Lazarus Straus, the only Jew residing in Talbotton, Georgia, decided to leave after the presentment against the Jews, resettling in Columbus, Georgia.⁵² Other Jews, and even many Gentiles, took a different approach, raising their voices in opposition against the injustices. In a Savannah newspaper, a Missionary Chaplain expressed he was “saddened by the ‘many unfair, and, to my mind, very unjust, as well as injudicious flings at this part, no unimportant part, of our fellow citizens.’”⁵³ This letter is not alone, as many other examples of Southerners defending the loyalty and righteousness of Southern Jews can be found in Georgian newspapers.⁵⁴ Charles Wessolowsky, now a private in the Confederate army, made a great impact on his fellow Jewish soldiers when he delivered a moving speech motivating them to sign a resolution condemning the citizens of Thomasville for expelling their Jews. In his argument, he demanded the “gentlemen of Thomasville” to “see how many Jews and foreigners... are in each [Georgia regiment]; ask them to peruse the lists of donations, and see how liberal and free-hearted the german Jews and foreigners are in behalf of aiding their adopted country.”⁵⁵

Wessolowsky’s attempt to vindicate his coreligionists reveals an important note about the role of German Jews in the Civil War: many served in order to demonstrate their commitment to their new country. This phenomenon is perhaps most clearly illustrated in a letter written by

⁵⁰ Ibid., 178.

⁵¹ Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates*, 274.

⁵² Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates*, 270.

⁵³ Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 180.

⁵⁴ Ginsburg, *Israelites in Blue and Gray*, 48.

⁵⁵ Schmier, “The Life of Charles Wessolowsky,” 4.

Emmanuel Isaacs, a Macon Jew, to his coreligionists. In the letter, he rallies the Jews to war “as you love the country of your adoption, and are willing to hurl back into the teeth of those who make them, the ungenerous aspersions upon the citizens of the South of our race and lineage...”⁵⁶ In this letter, Isaacs clearly and directly argues serving in order to fight back against the anti-Semitic attacks against the Jews of the South. The message resonated with the people of Macon, and they formed a Jewish company. This was one of two assembled in the Confederate military over the course of the war; the second was also from Georgia, organized in West Point early in the war.⁵⁷

The German period of immigration was characterized by their relationship with their Gentile neighbors. They immigrated seeking refuge from religious oppression and sought integration into American society, which they found. This goal was aided by their religious flexibility as well as their demographic composition. Instead of forming Jewish communities in America, America helped form their community and their religious practice. The Civil War might have seen a backlash against the integration of Jews into society, regurgitating old stereotypes and hate, but also served as a way for Jews to prove their loyalty to the South. “Southern Jewish participation in the Civil War is perhaps the best example of Jews’ accepting southern values and contributing to the prevailing society in order to be accepted.”⁵⁸

With the last quarter of the 19th century came the arrival of the Eastern Europeans, motivated partially by hopes of economic stability in the United States, but primarily by fear of the terrible pogroms that plagued Jews of the region. These pogroms took place in the Russian Empire, a vast dominion which included the modern countries of Lithuania, Ukraine, and

⁵⁶ Ginsburg, *Israelites in Blue and Gray*, 47.

⁵⁷ Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 119.

⁵⁸ Mark Bauman “Interaction: Introduction,” in *Dixie Diaspora*, ed. Mark Bauman (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 266.

Poland, areas then heavily populated with Jews. In 1881 and 1882, a series of pogroms swept across the southwestern portion of the Empire, destroying “millions of rubles worth of Jewish property,” and killing dozens of Jews.⁵⁹ These pogroms coincided with the first years of Eastern European immigration to the United States, as they helped drive these Jews to look for a better and safer life. They arrived in the United States in vast numbers, settling in areas already inhabited by Jews. Despite their great size, this group of immigrants has received significantly less attention from historians than its predecessors, especially the Jews of the German period. This disregard parallels the Eastern European experience in the South, as they were separated from Southern society, while their German coreligionists were embraced. While the immigrants of the previous generation gained integration and assimilation into American society, the Eastern European experience was characterized by isolation and a return to traditionalism. This was caused by the past experiences of the immigrant group as well as changes to American society.

The Eastern European immigrant experience in the South is well characterized by the stories of the Jews of Valdosta, Georgia. Before exploring their story, it is illuminating to look at the previous generation of immigrants and see how the German Jews fared in the very same city. The German Jews of the region were fully accepted into Gentile society, partly due to their service in the Civil War. When Abraham Ehrlich died in 1870 from complications from his wounds from the War, a nearby newspaper wrote, “That he was true and brave and patriotic we need no better proof than his death, which was caused by his wounds while defending the rights and liberties of his struggling country.”⁶⁰ As stated previously, the Civil War reflected an important milestone for the German Jew, as they were able to prove their loyalty to the South

⁵⁹ John Klier, “Pogroms,” 2010, YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, accessed May 12, 2018, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Pogroms>.

⁶⁰ Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” 5.

and its people through their participation. Clearly, this also rang true in Valdosta, and German Jews became important members of the community. They “attended social events, ran for political office, and assumed positions of leadership in local organizations... Any movement or activity of the Jews was increasingly considered newsworthy, not because they were Jews, but because of their status to the community.”⁶¹ They accomplished this at the expense of traditionalism, naming their children American names, loosening their adherence to religious practice, and in at least one documented case, marrying non-Jews.⁶²

The Eastern European Jews, who arrived in the city in 1891, did not synthesize with the Southern world as the immigrants of Central Europe did. While the Gentiles lived on the more affluent Hill Avenue, the Eastern European Jews lived amongst themselves, congregating their stores and their homes on two poorer streets. The Gentiles derogatorily referred to these two streets as “Jew Street” and “Nigger Street,” revealing their view of Jews and African-Americans as inherently separate from their white world. This separation is highlighted by one Jewish Valdostan, who recollected that, “...when I came to Valdosta [in the early 1900s] I was asked, ‘Are you a Jew or an American,’ as if I had to make a choice.”⁶³ This starkly contrasts the sentiment of the newspaper obituary of Abraham Ehrlich, which raved of his loyalty and patriotism. Where Abraham Ehrlich was praised for the defense of “his” country, the Eastern European Jew was seen as separate from American society. Similarly, while the German Jews of Valdosta reached the highest positions of Southern life, Eastern Europeans Jews were not involved with the secular social life of Valdosta. Instead, they turned inward, and the Eastern European families, many of whom were related, made “the family- not Valdosta... the center of

⁶¹ Ibid., 6-7.

⁶² Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” 6.

⁶³ Ibid., 9-12.

their life and activity.”⁶⁴ They formed a community for themselves, founding the Orthodox Valdosta Hebrew Congregation in 1908, obtaining a Torah and hiring a traditional slaughterer, or *shochet*, for access to kosher meat.⁶⁵ With the establishment of their own community, the Eastern Europeans created a social center with a plethora of groups and activities, such as the Sisterhood, Sunday school, and holiday dances and plays. Through these groups, Jews were able to “display their moral responsibility and reinforce their cultural identity,”⁶⁶ separate from the Gentile community organizations to which the German Jews had belonged.

After exploring the vastly different experience of the Eastern European immigrants of the South, the causes of such a drastic change should be examined. First, Eastern European Jews lived for centuries in “formalized *shtetl* culture.”⁶⁷ *Shtetls* were majority Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, usually based around a marketplace. This differed from the rest of Europe whose “Jews had lived scattered among the general population... Rarely did they form a majority. This was not true of the *shtetl*, where Jews sometimes comprised 80 percent or more of the population.”⁶⁸ This difference is important, as the centralization of the Jewish population allowed the Jewish culture and religion to flourish. When Jews from these *shtetls* moved to the United States, they possessed a deep understanding and connection to Judaism, unlike the Sephardim, and were accustomed to living in tight-knit Jewish communities separate from the Gentiles, unlike the Germans. Both of these factors contributed to the separation of Jews in the South, as they were used to living amongst themselves. This helps explain their view that

⁶⁴ Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” 9.

⁶⁵ “Valdosta, Georgia,” 2017, Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, <http://www.isjl.org/georgia-valdosta-encyclopedia.html>

⁶⁶ Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁸ Samuel Kassow, “Shtetl,” 2010, YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, accessed May 12, 2018, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Shtetl>.

German Jews were “deceiving themselves with the illusion that they were accepted and that the process of assimilation was good and desirable.”⁶⁹ Their experience with pogroms no doubt contributed to this sentiment, making the Jews of Eastern Europe cautious of Gentiles and skeptical about the possibility of integrating into Southern society. Because of these components, they founded their own communities, grounded in Orthodoxy and tradition, separate from the secular world.

The sheer number of Eastern European Jews should be stressed, as it played a key role in shaping the Jewish Eastern European experience. It is estimated that 70,000 Jews left Eastern Europe from 1870 to 1880. That number ballooned to 760,000 from 1881 to 1900 and finally 1,600,000 from 1901 until the start of World War I.⁷⁰ Many of these Jews came to America, some of whom made their way to the South, where the Jewish population exploded. An example of this can be seen with Atlanta, which was home to 525 Jews at the start of the wave of Eastern European immigration in 1878. By 1927, at the end of the era, Atlanta boasted 11,000 Jews, one of the most Jewish cities in the South. This same growth could also be seen in older cities, such as Savannah, whose Jewish population grew sixfold over the same period.⁷¹ As demonstrated in the story of the Jews of Valdosta, the Jews of Eastern Europe often moved as families, or at the very least, settled in areas with an already existing Jewish presence. This was aided by organizations such as the Industrial Removal Office, which relocated immigrants from overpopulated cities, such as New York, to Jewish communities across the country, including in

⁶⁹ Mark Bauman, “Role Theory and History,” in *Dixie Diaspora*, ed. Mark Bauman (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 240.

⁷⁰ Mark Kupovetsky, “Population and Migration: Population and Migration before World War I,” YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, accessed May 12, 2018, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Population_and_Migration/Population_and_Migration_before_World_War_I.

⁷¹ Weissbach, “Eastern European Immigrants and the Image of Jews in the Small-Town South,” 111.

Georgia.⁷² In the years immediately following their immigration, the Eastern Europeans reintroduced Orthodoxy to the South, motivated by their disillusionment with the established German Jewish communities, and enabled by their size. This can be seen in the establishment of Orthodox congregations and synagogues across Georgia. Savannahian Jews founded Agudath Achim in 1903 while Atlantans founded Ahavath Achim Congregation in 1887 and Congregation Shearith Israel in 1902.⁷³

Herbert Taylor, the son of a founding member of Ahavath Achim in Atlanta, explored the establishment of the congregation in an interview, exposing the causes behind it. When asked why the members of Ahavath Achim did not join the German synagogue, referred to as the “Temple”, he replied that “they would not dare go to the Temple. These were all Orthodox Jews [who] had nothing to do with the Temple people. During the regime of Dr. Marx at the Temple, the Russian and German Jews never mixed.”⁷⁴ An interview with Doris Goldstein, the Atlanta-born daughter of Eastern European immigrants, cements this notion, as she described the relationship between the Germans and Eastern Europeans as “very sharply divided.”⁷⁵ The two groups, divided by differences in religious practice and attitude towards the secular world, split off into separate communities. This division between different Jewish sects contrasts greatly with the cooperation characterized by the synthesis of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim of Savannah decades earlier.

⁷² Ibid., 117.

⁷³ Ferris and Greenberg, “Introduction: Jewish Roots in Southern Soil,” 10.

⁷⁴ Herbert Taylor, interviewed by Mark Bauman, The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, March 3, 5, 17, 1987, accessed May 9, 2018, <https://www.thebreman.org/Portals/0/Oral%20History%20Transcripts/Taylor,%20Herbert%2010717%20Transcript%20MASTER%20X.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Bessie Jones, interviewed by Doris Goldstein, The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, August 15, 1990, accessed May 9, 2018, <http://www.thebreman.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=LCwypKxPo1I%3d&portalid=0>.

Although the Eastern Europeans shaped their own lives, changes in Southern society also played a major role in forming their Jewish experience. Importantly, Georgia had fully developed by the time of the arrival of the Eastern Europeans. While the Sephardim and Germans were accepted for the utility they provided to small towns early in their development, those very same towns later had the luxury to reject the Eastern Europeans. This can be seen in Valdosta, where the German Ehrlichs were “greeted as significant contributors to the revival of the town,”⁷⁶ following the devastation of the Civil War. Once the town was thriving, there was now no longer any pressing need to integrate immigrant Jews into Gentile society. As the area healed from the post-war economic slump, “peddling was not an acceptable trade in... non-Jewish circles,”⁷⁷ and they began to look down on the Jewish traders and peddlers, who were now mostly Eastern European.

The Eastern European period of immigration corresponded with increased nativism and racism across the South. The era began with at the end of Reconstruction, when groups such as the Red Shirts fought to reestablish their authority over the South through violence. It coincided with the implementation and practice of the Jim Crow laws, which segregated the South under the manipulated pretense of “separate but equal.” In Mississippi, the Jews of the early 1890s were plagued by Whitecapping, a movement linked to Populism, which “espoused an anti-Semitic and anti-Negro ideology, and drove black laborers off lands owned by merchants and lumber companies.”⁷⁸ A letter written by a Whitecapper illustrates how they felt threatened by increased Jewish presence and prominence, as he wrote of “families being thrown out of their

⁷⁶ Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” 11.

⁷⁷ Schmier, “Jews and Gentiles in a South Georgia Town,” 12.

⁷⁸ William Holmes, “Whitecapping: Anti-Semitism in the Populist Era,” *Whitecapping: Anti-Semitism in the Populist Era*, in *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 245.

homes, and the proceeds of their honest labor being sucked into the voracious jaws of the leeches, commonly known as the Jew.”⁷⁹

The most prolific incident of anti-Semitism in the South during this period occurred in Georgia, when Atlantan Jew Leo Frank was lynched in light of the 1913 murder of Mary Phagan, a 13-year old Christian worker in his factory. During the trial, Frank’s lawyer said, “if Frank hadn’t been a Jew, there would never have been any prosecution against him,” but despite logical flaws in the argument of the prosecution and a lack of forensic evidence, he was sentenced to death.⁸⁰ The Governor John Slaton of Georgia, then commuted the sentence, saying of his decision: “it may mean my death or worse...”⁸¹ This decision inflamed the wrath of many Georgians, who were thirsty for vengeance. They kidnapped Frank and lynched him in Phagan’s hometown outside of Atlanta. The incident terrified Georgian Jews, and many fled Atlanta in fear for their lives.⁸² The Leo Frank trial and subsequent lynching represented an important milestone in the experience of Georgian Jews. Leo Frank had seemingly attained integration into American society; he was American born and educated, and was the manager of a large, bustling factory. The status which he attained in Gentile society did not secure his safety, but conversely resulted in his murder, as he was scapegoated, being a Jew of prominence. Although the lynching of Leo Frank may just be one single incident of anti-Semitism, it nonetheless reflects the disdain of Jews in Georgia that had been slowly intensifying. In light of the growing hatred and the revelation that synthesis with the secular world could not provide protection, Eastern European immigrants’ choice to live in much more isolated communities than those who came before them was further justified. For the assimilated German Jews of Atlanta, Frank’s murder came as a

⁷⁹ Holmes, “Whitecapping: Anti-Semitism in the Populist Era,” 259.

⁸⁰ Leonard Dinnerstein. “The Fate of Leo Frank,” *American Heritage*, October 1996.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

great shock, and they began to question their acceptance and safety in American society. This caused something of a backlash against integration, and they “took a step back from the political sphere. It would be another two decades before an Atlanta Jew would run for office again.”⁸³

The Eastern European period is distinguished by their separation from secular society, a split that was driven by both the Gentiles and by the Jews themselves. The Jewish immigrants, after fleeing the pogroms that devastated their lives in Europe, were suspicious of Gentiles, and focused on their own communities. This insular attitude mirrored the Eastern European’s origins in Jewish-majority *shtetls*, and was reflected in their adherence to tradition and Orthodoxy. In the same period, Georgia emerged from the devastation of the Civil War and the embarrassment of Reconstruction with a zealous desire to reassert their authority and values. This led to increased racism, characterized by the Red Shirts, segregation, Whitecapping, and lynchings. The utilization of Jews as merchants and peddlers, which once led to acceptance, ceased to be a point of connection between Jews and Gentiles as Georgia grew and developed. The notion of assimilation and integration as a means of achieving tolerance also dissipated with the rise of anti-Semitic acts, driving the Eastern European Jews to withdraw further away from Georgian Gentile society. Their sheer size, which could be seen as threatening to the outside world, aided the Eastern European Jews to revitalize traditional Jewish practice and reinvigorate a strong core Jewish community in Georgia.

In each of these three eras, the balance between integration and insulation plays an important role in shaping the experience of Jewish immigrants to Georgia. The immigrants of the Sephardic period balanced these two effectively, becoming important members to secular society while growing a strong Jewish community. Perhaps they were able to achieve this equilibrium

⁸³ “Atlanta, Georgia,” 2017, Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, <http://www.isjl.org/georgia-atlanta-encyclopedia.html>.

due to their small size, or the small size of the Gentile community. Most likely, it was a combination of both. The German period saw the widespread rejection of traditionalism for the sake of a strong Southern identity and acceptance into the ranks of secular society. It should be noted that although Jewish communities certainly existed in Germany, they interacted a good deal with Gentiles, contrasting the closed nature of the *shtetls* of Eastern Europe. Perhaps this prior exposure to secularism, as well as their lack of orthodox tradition, opened the German immigrants to the notion of seeking integration or acceptance into the Gentile world. In contrast, the immigrants of the Eastern European period, who grew up in the *shtetls* of Europe, established similarly insulated communities in the United States.

Building off of this, while the Sephardim and the Eastern Europeans sought to escape anti-Semitic persecution, the Germans came seeking opportunity. And although there certainly were instances of anti-Semitism in Germany, especially following the failed revolutions of the mid 19th century, the region was relatively tolerant and persecution should not be seen as the primary motive for immigration, especially when compared to the magnitude of the Inquisition or pogroms of the other two periods. Because their impetus was this desire for opportunity and not religious freedom, the Germans had fewer qualms over sacrificing stringent religious practice for acceptance. Expanding on the role of religion in the experiences of the three groups, it is enlightening to note similarities between the Sephardic and Eastern European groups' relationship to Judaism. Both carried with them the recent memory of terrible oppression, which drove them to flee to the United States. In Georgia, they established strong Jewish communities which played a central part of the lives of their congregants. The practice of their religion was a priority to them. The immigrants of the two periods also adhered to Orthodox Judaism, contrasting the Reform faith of the Germans, who faced the least discrimination. Although it is

out of the range of study for this report, it would be interesting to explore the relationship between the level of religious observance and the degree of anti-Semitism experienced. This also ties into assimilation, as the Reformed Germans chose to integrate with the outside world more than the immigrants of the other two periods, opening the door to interesting questions: is it the case that discrimination served to bolster the communities of the Sephardim of the Eastern Europeans, driving them to become more insular and self-focused? Conversely, was it their insularity that provoked their rejection from Georgian society? The Germans certainly believed this, as they pushed their Eastern European coreligionists to Americanize in return for acceptance. That is why the Leo Frank lynching terrified the German Jews, as it uprooted this idea, showing that even the most integrated Jews could be killed on the basis of their religion.

Through the analysis of these three periods of immigration, we have also seen changes in the United States, as they reacted to the different groups in varying ways. As Georgia was settled, new towns and cities in their early stages of development tolerated Jews due to their need for newcomers to support their growth. This played a key role in the experiences of both the Sephardic and German immigrants, but did not apply to the Eastern European group. By that time, Georgia had sufficiently developed to allow them the luxury to keep the immigrant group at bay, leading them to live amongst themselves. Also, as Georgia plunged again and again into war, the lives of Jews in the region were greatly affected, as it often served as the impetus for anti-Semitic sentiment. In the War of Jenkin's Ear, the American Revolution, and the Civil War, we have seen war lead to an explosion of hate, with far reaching consequences. In the case of the American Revolution and the Civil War, we have specifically observed Jews being used as scapegoats, being blamed as sources for treason and smuggling, respectively. But in these two wars we have also seen Jews utilize the conflict in order to prove their loyalty and attempt to

secure better lives for themselves. In the American Revolution, they fought side by side with the Patriots, battling for the implementation of American values such as freedom of religion. In the Civil War, they showed their commitment to their Southern homes through service, a sacrifice which many Gentiles recognized. The wars provided an opportunity for Jews to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States, helping to support their integration into American society.

The various paths the different immigrants took all eventually led to acceptance in the United States. It was not without its trials, as the groups struggled to find a balance between integration and insulation. Over the countless differences in all the eras, religious denominations, and ethnic groups we have discussed, one common thread links them all. All these groups utilized Georgia as a canvas in which they projected their beliefs, choosing to construct their own communities, or to find acceptance in others.

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