

Adam Mendelsohn | Jews and Slavery in Antebellum America

- Yes. All right, so it's two minutes past the hour, so I'm going to hand over to you. Thanks, Adam.

Visuals are displayed throughout the presentation.

- Good, good. Thank you. And good afternoon, good evening. Hello everyone. So let's go onto the first slide, and we're going to be talking today as the title slide shows about a very, very sensitive and difficult topic, which is Jews in America and their relationship with slavery. It's for obvious reasons a difficult topic to talk about. But to give you a sense of what Jews thought about this great issue, really the issue which divided America before the Civil War we'll begin with an infamous sermon delivered at the beginning of January in 1861. 1861 is obviously the year that the American Civil War will start this. The war starts in April of 1861. This is just a few months before. And the speaker is this man on the screen in front of you.

This is Rabbi Moses Raphael who spoke from the pulpit of B'nai Jeshurun in New York City. So really the most August congregation and synagogue in New York, in 1861 or Ashkenazi Synagogue in New York in 1861, Moses Raphael was an ordained orthodox Rabbi with impressive university credentials. He had a doctorate and dazzling skills as a speaker. He was famous for his speaking skills. He had an interesting background. He was born in Stockholm and had grown up in a family which was prosperous from the banking business. As I described he had a doctorate from the University of and had settled then after getting his doctorate in Birmingham in England, where he became a Rabbi. Though he was orthodox, a Raphael was no fundamentalist. In fact, he was a modernizer. He wanted to modernise the practise of Judaism while keeping tradition intact. In England Raphael had developed a reputation for his talents as a preacher. He had this commanding presence and this sonorous voice and ability to speak for very long period of time.

Something I'll talk about a little bit later, such was his reputation as a preacher, in particular that Benet Jeshrin the leading Ashkenazi congregation in New York City, and probably in North America at the time, lured him across the Atlantic in 1849 with an unheard of promise. He was promised lifetime tenure as the Rabbi of Benet Jeshrin and a salary higher than any other Rabbi in the city, and probably in the United States at the time as promised \$2,000 a year He did not disappoint his new congregation. His weekly sermons attracted large audiences, both of Jews and of Christians who came to here him preach. And his reputation earned them a singular honour. In February of 1860, he became the first Rabbi to deliver an invocation at the opening of a session of Congress. So this recognised game in this very public role as really America's first celebrity Rabbi. When Raphael gave the sermon at the beginning of 1861. So this is less than a year after he's given the invocation.

Before the opening of the session of Congress in January of 1861, the United States was on the brink of war. Just a two weeks before, on December the 20th of 1860 delegates in Charleston,

South Carolina had voted unanimously to take South Carolina out of the United States to secede from the union. The ineffectual American president James Buchanan, declared the secession illegal, but did not act to stop it. And there's a reason, and this is the reason why he's routinely ranked as the worst American president ever, tremendously ineffectual at this time, when literally the United States is coming apart. What the president did do was to call a National Fast Day on January 4th, 1861. That's his intervention. So synagogues and churches across the country held special services to mark this occasion, to mark this national fast day in January of 1861, really praying to keep the union together. And it was an event that invited rhetorical display. In other words, invited major sermons by preachers.

Everyone knew that there would be large audiences listening to them. So lots of preachers, including Raphael, planned major sermons for the day. His sermon was a long one. 41 pages in total when printed and stretched well over an hour. This is not quite as bad as it sounds, and this was an age when sermons were routinely very, very long. I've read many of these sermons as part of my work, and I can tell you that they're not only long, they are routinely very dull as well, but that's typical of the times. I don't think people were rushing away necessarily on a Saturday morning to do anything else. So they had time perhaps, or at least their preachers believed they had time to listen to them speak for very, very long periods of time. So, Raphael, our preacher, began by comparing the present, by comparing President Buchanan to the King of Nineveh from the Book of Jonah. You might recall that when the king of Nineveh heard of God's warning, of the imminent destruction of his kingdom, a warning delivered by Jonah, he, and to quote the Bible, arose from his throne, took off his robes and covered himself with sack cloth and sat in ashes.

This was not an ancient world spa treatment. The king called upon his people to join him, to cry unto God with all their strength and to turn away from their evil way. So this is an example of a king responding a head of state, responding to crisis by appealing to the divine appealing to God. The message was clear the people of the United States must repent or suffer the fate, which was destined for Nineveh before its sought absolution. So this is Raphaels message America and Americans need to repent. All of the citizens of the United States must turn towards God in Raphael's mind. And God alone had the power to determine what was sinful and what was permissible. To Raphael and to his audience the abiding question, the major question of the time, of the moment was whether slave holding was sinful, whether it was an act worthy of divine displeasure, of the destruction of the union in an age without prophets, it fell to those who occupied the pulpit like Raphael theologians in other words, to answer this question on God's behalf, by consulting the word of God in the Bible, I have, Raphael explained, been requested by prominent citizens of other denominations that I should this day examine the Bible view of slavery as the religious mind of the country requires to be enlightened on the subject. Is slave holding condemned as a sin in sacred scripture?

This was not an idle question in a nation on the brink of war over the issue of slavery, nor was there any accident that a Rabbi was asked to weigh in on this particular question. At the time, Jews regarded as the people of the book able to read scripture in its original language, was

seen by many to have special authority, to have privileged knowledge when it came to the Hebrew Bible. So Raphael's sermon, in other words, was therefore seemed to carry more than the weight of one man. He seemed to be and appeared to be supplying the Jewish and indeed biblically correct view on slavery. My friends Raphael intoned, I find, and I'm very sorry to find that I'm delivering a pro-slavery discourse. I am no friend to slavery in the abstract and still less friendly to the practical working of slavery. But I stand here as a teacher in Israel, not to place before you my own feelings and opinions, but to propound to you the word of God, the Bible view of slavery with a due sense of my responsibility. I must state to you the truth and nothing but the truth. However, unpalatable and unpopular that truth may be. The Bible view of slavery, according to Raphael was clear. Slave holding was frequently mentioned in the Bible. And even in the 10 Commandments, slavery was clearly sanctioned by God. And the biblical patriarchs owned slaves to claim otherwise that slavery was against the laws of God, was blasphemy. And he said so outright. Let me read another passage from that sermon to you.

When you remember that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job, the men with whom the almighty conversed with whose names he emphatically connects his own most holy name, and to whom he vowed safe to give the character of perfect, upright fearing God and issuing evil, that all these men were slave holders. Does it not strike you that you are guilty of something very little short of blasphemy? And if you answer me, oh, in their time, slave holding was lawful, but now it has become a sin. I in my turn ask you when and by what authority you draw the line. Tell us the precise time when slave holding ceased to be permitted and became sinful. Then we remember the mischief which this inventing and Newsome not known in the Bible is causing. Raphaels position was somewhat more complicated than a wholehearted endorsement of slavery as practised in the American South. Indeed, he was critical of the way that southern whites treated their slaves, which he regarded as straying from the more humane, biblical approach to slavery. But he ultimately endorsed the institution of slavery itself. And you can get a sense of his thinking in the sermonmation at the end of his lengthy seminar.

I'll spare you the hour at least, that intercedes between what I've read you and the end December. Let's go to the next slide and you can see what I'm taking this from. So right at the bottom of the page, on the left hand side to the next slide, you'll see that I'm going to start there and I'm going to read the next page. This is what he says. He says that the slave is a person in whom the dignity of human nature is to be respected. He has rights, the slave has rights. Whereas the heathen view of slavery, which prevailed at Rome, and which I'm sorry to say, is adopted in the South, reduces the slave to a thing and a thing can have no rights. The result to which the Bible view of slavery leads us is first that slavery has existed since the earliest time. Second, that slave holding is no sin, and that slave property is expressly placed under protection of the 10 commandments. Third, that the slave is a person and has rights not conflicting with the lawful exercise of the rights of his owner.

If our northern fellow citizens content with following the word of God would not insist on being righteous over much or denouncing sin, which the Bible knows not, which is plainly taught by the precepts of men, they would entertain more equity and less ill feeling towards their southern

brethren. And if our southern fellow citizens would adopt the Bible view of slavery and discard that heathen slave code, which permits a few bad men to indulge in an abuse of power that throws a stigma and disgrace on the whole body of slave holders, if both north and south would do what is right, then God would see their works and that they turn from the evil of their ways, and in their case, as in that the people of Nineveh would mercifully avert the impending evil. For with him alone is the power to do so. As you might imagine, Raphael sermon created quite a stir and hereafter all was an imminent Rabbi, the most famous Rabbi in America at this time, pronouncing that the Bible and that biblical tradition explicitly endorsed slave holding. In effect he was declaring that if slaveholders in the south had acted wrongly, slave holding as such was no sin. The institution of slavery could be reformed and should be preserved. He was as critical in his sermon of abolitionists as he was of slaveholders.

Elsewhere in the sermon he portrays those who claim that slavery was immoral as diluted and dangerous troublemakers. There was a need, in other words, for political compromise, one that would reform slave holding, but save the institution of slavery. As I've suggested too this was a politically loaded position to take in January of 1861, the claim that the Bible supported slavery had long been a cornerstone of slave holders political arguments and moral justifications for slavery. Southern ideologues relied heavily on the Bible to make their case. How could their actions be wrong if slavery was endorsed by divine right? A learned Rabbi was now endorsing the institution of slavery from a New York pulpit, adding his weight to their position. And in passages that I didn't read to you directly taking the fight to abolitionists the sermon has lots of language, which is very critical of particular abolitionists. It's very thinly coded criticism, given that the United States was literally coming apart over the slave question in the early months of 1861, Raphael's sermon attracted broad attention.

It was widely circulated in newspapers in North and South, and quickly reprinted as a booklet titled "The Bible View of Slavery". You'll see this in the next slide. You'll see the cover, and you'll also see the other sermons which are reprinted at great, at great haste as well. Again, on the right hand side, you can see the advertising page. This is at the back of the reprint, which which also contains other sermons given on the same occasion, on the same fast day, which were being printed in mass as well. So there was an immediate backlash within the north against the sermon, particularly of course, of from those who oppose slavery with Raphael angrily denounced by opponents of slavery, including by some Jews who argue that he got his interpretation of the Bible completely wrong. So there's quite an interesting backwards and forwards, which happens over the next few weeks. It creates quite a stir amongst Jews, but also more broadly in north and south at this moment in time, as I've said, because it's, these are seen as, it's not just the words of a Rabbi, but the words of a Rabbi who has special access to the biblical text and who can pronounce on matters of sin.

Yet Raphael's sermon was also a genuine indication of political opinion among Jews in the north on the brink of war. By 1861, the American Jewish population had grown dramatically from the population we spoke about yesterday. It grows from two and half thousand Jews in the year 1800 to approximately 150,000 by 1861. Some of them were, a very small minority of them were

Sephardi Jews with long roots in the United States, updating back to the colonial period. But most Jews living in the United States by 1861 were immigrants who had arrived in the 1840s and 1850s from Central Europe. So there's a transformation of the American Jewish population through newcomers, as I said, recent arrivals, people who have arrived within rarely, two decades for the most part before the Civil War, before 1861. The majority of these people arrive and are on near opinions, and they begin their careers as peddlers, as really hawkers in the countryside, selling goods to farmers, a very, very lonely and unpleasant occupation.

But really the starting point, the launchpad for many, many immigrant Jews, and something I'll talk about in fact next Tuesday, how Jews begin to, this population of Jews begin to make it in America during this moment in time. One of the effects of peddling, which I'll talk about more next week, but are relevant today as well, is that peddling deposited Jews across the countryside, that it takes Jews out of the city. So there have plenty of Jews stay in New York and Philadelphia and elsewhere, but takes many of them to the hinterland, to really across the Midwest, to the west and to the south as well. And to small towns where they often start as peddlers, but often they will settle and open small stalls as well. Relatively few of their number made their way to the south. In 1861, there were only about 25,000 Jews in the states that were to comprise the Confederacy, 25,000 out of a Jewish population in America of about 150,000. So the vast majority are in the north for reasons that we'll talk about in a moment. So what did these Jews in north and south make of slavery?

As I've just mentioned, most of them were immigrants, recent immigrants who'd come to America in search of economic opportunity. These are mostly economic migrants. They had just taken immense risk by crossing the Atlantic in pursuit of a dream, and therefore, because they had come again hoping to improve their position, they may have been particularly sensitive to the threat of political disruption. These are not people who again, want to wager their future on conflict in America. They, in fact, feared that conflict over slavery potentially would imperil their prospects, which would mean that this great risk they'd taken in coming to America would turn out to be a bad wager. They also worried that political instability might encourage antisemitism. In fact, they're not wrong about this. We'll talk about this next week as well. Hence, most of them, like Moses Raphael, like our Rabbi, were drawn towards compromise. That they preferred compromise over any sort of rush to war with some important exceptions. Really a handful of important exceptions. These people, these immigrants were turned off by abolitionism, and there are a variety of reasons for this.

All sorts of reasons why a Jews, with some exceptions, as said, aren't drawn to abolitionism. Abolitionism in other words, those who pushing for the ending of slavery. Abolitionism was anathema in the south and a minority position in the north. Something which we've now forgotten how much of a minority position it is. It's to be an abolitionist in the 1850s was to be seen as somewhat certainly be seen as very radical and often to be seen as somewhat crazy as well. That this is outside the norms of the political spectrum at the time. So most Jews, even those who were publicly opposed to slavery, considered abolitionists to be reckless agitators. This is a common view that these agitators that the abolitionists are going to drive America to

war. Many of them are seen as warmongering Christian zealots, and that emphasis on Christian is important here. Again, a common view at the time. These are religious fanatics. Several leading abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, who was in fact attacked almost by name by Raphael in his sermon, were also openly critical of Jews and Judaism. Again, this didn't help Jews feeling any affinity towards abolitionism. Many abolitionists drew motivation and inspiration from their evangelical protestant convictions. Again, there's a very important religious thrust behind abolitionism, which again is discomfiting for many Jews. And a number of these leading abolitionists, including Garrison, were involved in missionary movements that sought to convert Jews to Christianity. Again, something which you wouldn't be surprised to hear turns Jews off abolitionist. None of this won Jews over to the abolitionist court.

So very few Jews openly side with abolitionist, certainly in the 1850s. On the other hand, only a handful of Jews became vocal supporters of the institution of slavery. One of the best known examples is the man pictured in the next slide, this is Judah P Benjamin, who we discuss in much more detail next week in this next slide, you'll see that Benjamin, that's Benjamin on the left, as a relatively young man, Benjamin was elected as a United States Senator in 1852 and served in the Senate until secession, until Louisiana, which he represented seceded from the Union when he took up a series of positions in the Confederate cabinet. In fact, this is the picture on the right of your screen is an illustration of the first Confederate cabinet, and the far left of that image is Benjamin of Judi Benjamin. Judi Benjamin, at this point in time at when this illustration is made is the attorney general he'll soon after become the Secretary of War, and then for the longest period during the war, he'd become Secretary of State.

Very, very important role in the Confederacy. If you think about it the confederacy's, great hope was to be able to persuade Britain and France to recognise it as an independent state and therefore ensure that it survived. Likewise, the Secretary of State was also involved in running the intelligence operations of the Confederacy as well. So it's, again, it's a very important and responsible, highly responsible position. Benjamin occupies his position for a long time and he has this very important relationship, close relationship with the Confederate president at Jefferson Davis. So again that's his wartime career, which we'll talk about next week. But he's very much associated with slavery and the defence of slavery as well. When he's sitting in the United States Senate, Benjamin is described by one by a arrival senator at the tractor, obviously as a Jew with Egyptian principles. In other words, a Jew who supports slavery. And again, it's much mockery of Benjamin for exactly this idea that he's a Jew with who's betrayed the Jewish principle and is instead cites with the Egyptians along with numerous other senatorial colleagues. He defended slavery and denounced abolitionism.

Again, he's like Raphael Benjamin has this reputation as being one of the finest speakers of his age of the time that he's, again his ability to speak on in the Senate and out of the Senate is remarked on. I mean, this is an age of oratory, and this is a man who's seen as particularly well spoken. He was not the only prominent Jew to support slavery. I mean, I can give you other examples as well. For example, a Jewish congressman from Maryland who was primarily obsessed with Irish immigration, deeply hostile as were other, many other Americans at the

time, to Irish immigrants coming to America particularly, and the nativist movement in Maryland is very, powerful and important. And this particular congressman is obsessed with Irish immigration. But what he does is he forms a political coalition with suddenness. So basically they bring, their obsession is with slavery. His obsession is with nativism, is with immigration. And they form a unholy alliance between them. Again, he supports them on slavery. They support him on trying to keep Catholic immigrants out of America. So again, there are others of this kind of relatively rare that Jews are outspoken supporters of slavery. The reality for most Jews in the United States, however, was that slavery was a question a purely, it was really purely a political question, one which didn't directly impede on their lives and their livelihoods. Most Jews remember are living in the north, not in the south.

That, in other words, slavery is a theoretical question. It's a political question, but not something which directly and immediately impedes on their lives and their livelihoods. This wasn't true, of course, for Jews who lived in the South, and we talked now ready for the rest of our time about Jews in the South and their everyday experiences with slavery. In Charleston, for example, we'll talk about Charleston a fair amount. We know that three quarters, 75% of all Jewish households in the city own slaves. Three quarters of households own slaves with an average of five slaves per household. So Charleston is at the one end of the spectrum, really the extreme end of the spectrum where Jews own, where almost no three quarters of Jewish households own slaves and they own you for an urban population, quite a significant numbers of slaves as well, five slaves per household. In another city in Savannah, for example, the percentage is lower that there, we know that 36%, 36% of Jewish households own slaves.

Why was the rate so much higher in Charleston than anywhere else in the south? Well, for one thing, it's equivalent to the broader white population in the city. Again, it's Charleston is is a wealthy city. It's a prosperous city and a city where, which is intimately connected with slave holding and slavery for a variety of reasons as well. To give you a sense of how integral slaves and slave holding words, the economy and livelihoods of its white citizens. We'll need to talk a little bit about slaves in the American economy. Slaves were a major asset and a major investment. You can actually see this from the slide, which is up at the moment, and this is a slide which shows the average price of a slave by year. You can see that it goes up and down. It really is a barometer of economic conditions. It goes up when economic times are good, it falls when economic at times are bad. There's a economic crash after 1837. You can see the price slaves goes down then, but it goes up steadily in the 1850s, ready for reasons we'll talk about, which is significant for Jews. This is, you can see that in the late 1850s, a slave might set you back more than \$700. It's a lot of money on average for a slave.

These are very large sums. Recall that Moses Raphael, our celebrity Rabbi, was paid what is then the exorbitant salary of \$2,000 a year. So, in other words a slave which you buy, and on an average price for slave \$700 is a very significant portion of a well-paid professional's income, given their value, the value of slaves, there was a sophisticated system of mortgages to allow the purchase of slaves because again, people didn't have, 500, 600, \$700 to spend or more to spend on a slave. So there's a banking system which develops around the purchase of

slaveries, the slaves and likewise there's an insurance system to protect the value of this human asset. Again, it's a big outlay of money. It's a risk that you take in buying slaves potentially. So there's an insurance industry around, so you can protect your assets as well. Obviously you get to payout, the slave certainly gets nothing if the slave is injured or, dies, given the scale of slave holding. Remember, there are 4 million enslaved men, women and children in America by 1860, and its geographical concentration slaves who integral to the southern economy. You'll see this get a sense of this in the next slide. The next slide shows the geographical concentration of slaves in the United States. You can see that the darker shaded territory on the map is where the percentage of slaves as part of the total population in some cases exceeds 50%.

So as you can see that they're up. And we'll talk about why this particular geographical pattern in more detail in a moment, but I just for the moment want to give you a sense of, almost all of those 4 million people are living in the states, which are shown, which are on this map. Over here. The states which have the orange and yellow marking on it. So obviously slaves supplied much of the manual labour in southern society. They were farm labourers, they were household servants, they were construction workers and artisans of all kinds. They were butchers and hairdressers and you name it. They are performing these roles both in the urban south and in the rural south as well. And this is becomes a self-perpetuating system. The presence of all these slaves made it uneconomical for employers to hire free labour. So if you are an immigrant seeking a manual labour job in large parts of the south, it doesn't make sense to hire you because you can hire a slave much more easily. Or if you own slaves, you just use your own slaves as slave instead of hiring someone. This obviously made the region made the south that much more, less attractive, much less attractive to poor immigrants.

This is one of the reasons why relatively few Jews make their way to the south before the Civil War. Those who did move south, those Jews who did move south towards, tended to bypass the areas where Jews lived in the colonial period. So remember that in the colonial period, Jews mostly lived along the coast and particularly in places like Charleston and Savannah, those are the largest Jewish centres in the south, in the colonial period that the pattern shifts in the 19th century. Those Jews who do make their way to the south more often sought opportunity really further westwards. In other words, in Louisiana, some in Texas, in Mississippi and in Alabama. And there's again, an important background to the story as well, because this expansion westwards followed the Louisiana purchase and also the brutal resettlement of Native Americans. This opens up territory for cultivation, for particularly cultivation of cotton in primarily Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. So farmers flocked to this cotton ritual, this this area, which with rich soil exon for growing cotton. And what happens is that cotton prices and cotton planting took off in all these states. In fact, let's go to the next slide and you'll see that clearly. So what you see in the top left-hand corner is a slide which shows you the area where cotton is planted, where it's grown most densely.

And the bottom left hand slide shows you cotton exports from the United States, which shows you, in other words, how rich that soil is and how much cotton is produced, and how much wealth is generated from that cotton. And then the large image on the right hand side, the map

on the right hand side shows you the result of exactly this. This shows you slaves being moved from the upper south to Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama during exactly these decades. That really much of this takes place in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. That is a mass movement of slaves, of an inter-regional movement of slaves. To the what becomes the cotton belt becomes those places where slaves demand the highest price, where in other words, you can sell slaves, which are where the market is weaker in Virginia, you can sell them instead at a tremendous profit in Louisiana. So there's a mass movement of people during these decades. It's not just a movement of unfree people, people being forced to move and being carried, often separated from their families and moved to plantations, these very, very harsh conditions and plantations in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, and some in Texas, but also free labour as well, that they're people who are settling as farmers and plantation owners in these areas, but also those who come to service them like Jews, who again, some peddlers, some shopkeepers will land up in exactly these areas, particularly along the Mississippi River, because that's where the profits are. That's where the plantations are.

That's where the wealth is being generated. So Jews, in other words, flocked to this new frontier. We see a change in the geography of the Jewish South, whereas by 1860, there are more Jews many more Jews living in Louisiana than there are in South Carolina. So for example, South Carolina had been in the colonial period, the largest Jewish population. In fact, in 1820, there are more Jews still living in South Carolina and in Charleston in particular than live in New York City. And Charleston's great claims to fame that it's for a moment in time, it has the largest Jewish population in the United States. But this has shifted dramatically by 1860, by 1860, Louisiana has taken over. There are 8,000 Jews living in Louisiana. There are 3000 Jews living in South Carolina, and there are only 2000 Jews living in Virginia. So you can see this reorientation Jewish, the movement of a Jewish population as well to where opportunity is. So these Jewish newcomers, as I've described to you, already typically started as peddlers and as rural storekeepers, they arrive with not very much money. And peddling, as will discuss next week, is an easy means to get started in the American economy.

But unlike the well-established and wealthier Jewish community in Charleston, these newcomers struggled to afford slaves. Remember, they're arriving in the 1840s and 1850s, and think back to that earlier slide that I showed you, that's precisely the moment in time when the price of slaves go up as well. So in other words, even if they wanted to buy slaves, it becomes that much more difficult to do so. But nonetheless, despite the fact that the price of slaves has increased and continues to go up almost till the beginning of the war, approximately a quarter of all Jewish households own slaves by 1860. This is in the South. So in other words, across the south we see a quarter of households, Jewish households with slaves. Obviously that's skewed somewhat by places like Charleston, where the rate of slave ownership is high. But likewise, even in Louisiana, we begin to see a Jews buying, often speculating in slaves. It's like buying any other asset. It's a particularly a means of making a lot of money if you can buy and sell slaves. So this is in line this ownership rate of slaves, 25% a quarter of Jews owning slaves, Jews, households owning slaves.

This is pretty much the same as the slave ownership rates for the broader southern white population. So roughly a quarter of households in the south own slaves. Yet the slave ownership rates amongst Jews is actually slightly different from that of other white southerners. So for example, Jews are more likely to own female slaves than the average white Southerner. That and this again reflects geography, that Jews, because of the fact that they're storekeepers and peddlers, they more typically gravitate towards small towns or to cities. And again, in a city you're more likely on average to buy a female slave and a male slave. And likewise Jews are less likely to live in the countryside really on farmland, live on plantations. So those are places where male slaves are predominated. So Jews also typically owned relatively few slaves, again, reflecting the fact that most of them couldn't yet afford to buy lots of slaves. And also because very few Jews owned or lived on plantations. And the exceptions to this, for example, Judi P Benjamin, if you go to the next slide, I'll show you a picture of Judi P Benjamin's, a plantation. It's a model plantation known as Bell Chase outside of New Orleans. It was destroyed in the 1960s, so no longer there, but it's a grand plantation.

It's really a status symbol. It's a sugar plantation. He owns it for a period in, I think in the 1840s perhaps into the early 1850s. And as I said, it's a means of him making a statement about having made it in Louisiana society. And also he's interested supposedly in using as a means to improve sugar production in Louisiana as well. Everywhere, unfortunately, there's ample sign that Jews bought into the idea that slavery was a fixture in southern society. In other words, even if Jews, those who don't own slaves, there's no sign that they resist slave ownership. This is, as I said, slave holding is a fixture of the society in which Jews live, and Jews and others regard the ownership of slaves as an investment and as a status symbol. It's what you do in southern society. It should not be surprising that Jews did so that they thought in these ways, as I said, slaves were an accepted feature of the society. And almost everyone who could afford to do so own slaves, board slaves. The allure of prophets and of power transcended any distinctions of race, ethnicity, and religions. In other words, we see this across the southern white population, these patterns of slave ownership. So Jews, again, are not atypical in any way in and buying into the system literally. Slavery had no shortage of defenders in polite society. This, again it's taken for granted.

The opposite position abolitionism in the south is is anathema or more than anathema. It's a dangerous position to hold in the south. But even recall that as late as 1861, Moses Raphael was preaching in defence of slavery from a pulpit in New York City. So again, that's not so unusual that to our eyes, slavery is something which is barbaric, which is brutal, which is unimaginable. But in this society, this is, part of the furniture literally, that this is this way of thinking about fellow humans. Moreover, Jews who had immigrated from Europe came from societies where bonded servitude where various forms of contractual labour, whether or indentured servitude or lengthy apprenticeship were again, common. And again, they weren't necessarily familiar with slavery as it was practised in America, but they had a different way of thinking of such things than from us. Again we don't live as a society, in a society where indentured servitude or apprenticeships or served them are practised more thankfully. But to them, again, slave holding was on that spectrum.

It was something which was less familiar, which was more familiar to them than is to us. To us it's a very foreign idea, perhaps to them it was less foreign. It's something which made sense in a variety of ways. They came from societies where such ideas were and again, on the spectrum of the imaginable, only a small minority of Jews made their careers from the slave trade itself that is dealing in slaves, moving slaves from state to state or speculating in slaves always working as overseers on slave plantations. That's really the exception. In Richmond, for example, with the city, which will become the capital, the Confederacy Jews made up a quarter of all the retail merchants in the city. Again note this concentration in the retail trades, something we'll talk about next week. So they make up a quarter of all the retail merchants in the entire city, even though they're a very small minority in Richmond, but only five of the 70 slave traders in Richmond were Jew. So in other words they aren't by any means clustered or focused in the slave trade. It's really unusual, and I'll give you some unusual examples in a moment that Jews usually become slave traders.

Let me give you an example. One example from Richmond is two brothers who became major interregional slave traders. Those people moving slaves from the apple south, from places like Virginia moving them to the place places along the new frontier in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama. The two brothers in Richmond became major players in that market. But the risk, the other three Jews who are involved in Richmond are minor players. Again, people who are not significant players in the slave trade in Richmond. You can see an example of how they these two brothers did their business in the next slide. Next slide is a very unusual document. It's a newspaper ad from 1859 that advertises that JF Moses, a slave trader, had arrived in Lumpkin, Georgia from Virginia again, an inter-regional slave trader with what, in his words, a likely lot of Negros. And I'll read a little bit from the ad to you, he boasts in the ad, he says he has to quote him seamstresses, chambermaids, field of hands and doubts, not that he's able to fill the bull of any who want to buy.

He has sold over 200 Negros in this section, mostly in this county. And then he offers a set of fascinating assurances to his customers, which are necessary in what is a highly disreputable business that slave trading was again seen for all sorts of reasons I'll talk about in a second as not a business which those who were any claim to respectability were involved themselves. And not because there's any great sympathy towards slaves, but just because it's seen as an unscrupulous business. Slave traders were notorious for defrauding buyers by misrepresenting the slaves that they were selling. They would pass off the sick as healthy. They would knock years of the stated age of those that they sold and would engage in all manner of tricks and subterfuge to sell their slaves. So this example JF Moses is as I said, read to be rare, a case of a Jew who's actively involved in slave trading. Many more Jews participated peripherally in the slave trade as auctioneers, for example, who sold slaves along with other goods that auctioneering was a major means of disposing, of assets during this time, much more so than it's today. And we, if you look at the auction ads of Jewish auctioneers, as you see a slave rotini being listed again, no different from other auctioneers at the time.

We also see Jewish shopkeepers who used slave labour to run their stores or occasionally supplemented their regular business by buying or selling slaves. We see, likewise in a handful of cases, Charleston, again, Jewish jailers and policemen who work for the city who caught an imprisoned runaway slaves. And of course, Jews bought slaves and sold slaves occasionally, much like anyone else. The most common interaction, however, between Jews and slaves was between Jewish peddlers and slave customers. Something I'll talk about in some detail, as I've already described to you, peddlers and storekeepers sold goods to slaves. This is part of their market. They would sell, peddlers in particular would sell on plantations. Their plantations were on their peddling roots. Now, at first, often on the plantation, sell to the slave overseers and the owners of the plantation and then move on to the slave quarters to sell to directly to the slaves themselves and their stock in trade, the goods that they sold most often to slaves with a kind of cheaper garments that were favoured by slaves, that often colourful garments, which slaves wanted to wear as an alternative to their drab work clothing.

That on Sundays in particular, they could dress freely, dress in colourful clothing. And this was something which was remarked on a lot of the time that Jews are selling all this, we're seen as inappropriate bright clothing to slaves that the mannered white, middle, and upper class believe that you should wear white or pale clothing. And instead these slaves are wearing what's seen as a sporty clothing and Jews are seen as responsible for corrupting the morals of these slaves or cheating slaves, as well as a common idea about these Jewish peddlers as well. And this is actually a big market. There's not much competition. So it's a lucrative market for Jews. Let's go into the next slide, which gives you a sense of how this market works. So the next slide is a quote from Frederick Law Olmsted who's much more famous as a landscape architect today, at least than his prior career, which is as a travel writer as someone who travels extensively in the south before the war writes about it. And in fact, it becomes famous for writing about his experiences giving an insight to particularly northern readers about what slave society is like. And and this is an account which I'll read to you of a German immigrant, I suspect a peddler I suspect is a Jew who he meets.

It's a peddler from the German city of Dusseldorf. And this peddler describes to us how the system works. This is the transcribed word supposedly of this peddler. He almost tries to capture his accents. So you're going to have to excuse my pronunciation as I read it. So let me read to you from this. These are the peddler's words. He said, all poor folks, his customers, he's talking about all poor folks, damn poor got no money. But I say 'dat too bad, I don't like to bulk you my friend. Maybe you got some egg, some feta, some cheeken, some rag, some sass or some skin, vot you kill. I take dem dings, vot dey have. And ven I get my load, I cums to Natchez back and sells dem always do, or dree times as much as dey coss me. And den I buys some all goods. Not bad beesnes, no. Oh, dese poor people, dey deenk me is von fool when I buy some dime deir rag, vat dey bin veer. Dey calls me 'de ole Dutch cuss, but dey don't know nottin' vot it is vorth. I deenk dey never see no money. Maybe dey geev all de cheeken vot dey been got for a leetle breast pin, vot cost me not so much as von beet. Sometime dey all be damn crazy fool. Dey know not how to make the count at all.

Yes, I make some money a heap. These are his words, obviously filtered through Frederick Law Olmsted. As you can tell from these words, when selling to slaves and to poor farmers peddlers were often forced to haggle and to barter. That's actually what's being described here is bartering with slaves. Many poor rural customers in the south had very little access to money, but plenty of items that a peddler like this one could resell for profit in a market where such goods were scarce. See, it describes, as he said, when I get to Natchez back, that's the city that he's using as a base, and he's carrying the chickens and the eggs and the skins and the feathers and everything else he's picking up and he's bartering for and he brings them back to Natchez and sells them at a profit. So rather than obviously returning to his depot for resupply with an empty pack, what he's doing is he's carrying all these things with them and making a profit in the process.

And as you can tell from this account, the popular items that slaves were buying were clothing, which is not spoken about here, but certainly for trinkets and enduring, presumably again, to offer some colour and some individuality to a life otherwise constrained by this inhuman system. Something to gain, add some life in colour to life as a slave. The reality however, was that outside of a handful of towns, most slaves had very little meaningful interaction with Jews at all. Certainly they might occasionally buy from a slave or barter with a slave. But these are, again, occasional and rather superficial interactions. And yet there are some interesting cases which I'll talk about of slaves taking on Judaism or slaves actually converting to or at least becoming Jews or seeing themselves as Jews, identifying as Jews. Certainly there were enough cases of this to persuade the Charleston congregation to include an ordinance in its constitution, which explicitly excluded black converts from membership. And this ordinance is not atypical.

We see other ordinance of this kind in constitutions, synagogue constitutions elsewhere, which explicitly exclude black converts from membership. And despite that example, the Charleston example, an example from elsewhere, which prohibits slaves and others from membership of the Charleston congregation. We actually know of a slave who willingly adopted Judaism and then attended the Charleston synagogue regularly. We actually, we know relatively little about him for reasons I'll talk about in a moment. His name was Billy Simons. There's uncertainty about where he was born. He claimed to be born in Rocka Mor in South Carolina, but he had a face with ritual scars on it, which led some people to speculate that he'd actually been born in Africa. There was an illegal slave trade, which continued after the slave trade and the illegal slave trade to America ended. And so it's possible that he had African origins because, we just don't know. What we do know again, is he spent the latter part of his life working for a Charleston newspaper.

He worked for the Charleston Courier. He's actually bought by the owner of the Charleston Courier when Billy Simons is in his late fifties, and he's a newspaper carrier. In other words, he's delivering newspapers and he's also a fireman for the presses. Remember the printing presses when notorious super combustible. So that's his other role that he makes sure the press doesn't catch a light and he delivers the newspapers once they are printed. So he was a visible

presence in Charleston delivering newspapers a barefoot and in a distinctive dress. This is why he was, his presence was familiar in the streets of Charleston, those of you who know Charleston, that is an account exactly where he was. He was in George Street and elsewhere. So barefoot but also with this battered high crown hat. Again, something which would make him stand out in Charleston. On Sundays, he delivered newspapers in a shining black hat, a special hat for Sunday in a full black suit with a large white frill at his collar. We know little about his family life beyond that he has one, we know that he has a family. And we also know he never retired from his job. He died when he was close to 80 from walking home from work he dies on George Street again.

Those who know Charleston, we know about him for an interesting reason. We know about him because his death was reported in the press and because of his request to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. That's why his death is really reported. And this request is almost certainly denied. He wants to be buried in a Jewish cemetery and there's no evidence that he was. The other reason that we know about him again, from these obituaries that appeared is that the Rabbi of the Charleston congregation used the example of Billy Simon, Simon, the slave to chastise his congregation, to rebuke his congregation. Basically he made it known as Rabbi that he disapproved of his congregation. He said that why should Billy Simon appear in his congregation regularly? I'd be a regular attendee, a faithful attendee of congregation and no one else. So in other words, he made this contrast. The slave comes to listen to my sermons where is everyone else in the pews? Why is he the only one?

So again something as something which is picked up on by Jewish, the Jewish press thereafter we see in fact this obituary being picked up in German Jewish newspapers who are fascinated by this rather obscure detail. Unfortunately, this is all we have to go on with Billy Simon, all these obituaries about his life. We know this, that his story is very unusual, but we also know that there are others like him. It was the custom in a number of places for slaves to adopt the religion of their masters. And this is not a case of formal conversion to Judaism, but instead probably a certain amount of instruction in matters. Jewish, in other words, both from observing Jews closeup, but also from sort of kitchen Judaism, from observing kashrut laws and Jewish practises in the home. So seeing Jews in their daily lives. And we know that there are some, slaves who regard themselves as Jewish for exactly this reason. And again, there are examples. We know of this for a strange reason because they are later after the war, they actually are baptised and they say on their baptismal forms that they were Jewish and that they've converted to Christianity.

Again, these records serves a record that they were Jews and that they had served Jewish families. But it almost certainly, again, they had slippery notions of what it meant to be a Jew that almost certainly engaged in some Christian practises. Again, they saw no contradiction in proclaiming this Jewish identity and also belting out Christian spirituals. So again, these are not formal converts. These are people who are living amongst Jews, who are observing Jews and are picking up elements of Judaism as well. And in some cases identifying as Jews too. And maybe also they feel an affinity to Judaism. Maybe they're identified with the biblical children of

Israel and with the exodus from Egypt. I mean that's purely speculative, but it's possible. That it's the case. How did Jews treat the slaves that they owned? Unfortunately, there's very little evidence that Jews treated their slaves any differently from what was typical in the South. And again, I can talk to this during the question, answer time a little bit later. Remember that slavery was a brutal system, and one that was normalised over generations. So we see all kinds of variation amongst Jews when it comes to slaves and how they treat their slaves that we find amongst other slave owners.

You see good behaviour, bad behaviour in different behaviour the whole mix. We occasionally, for example, see evidence in a variety of sources about sexual relationships between Jewish men and female slaves. Non-consensual relationships. Almost certainly we see evidence on the other hand of kindnesses, some small and sometimes large that suggests bonds between Jewish slave owners and their slaves. But we also see, as I said, a whole mix of behaviours, indifference, casual cruelty. The risk. This is, remember that the system is a one where injustice and cruelty is baked into it. It's just part of how slavery operates as so even those who are kind, who are more considerate, are still operating in the system, which inherently is a terrible injustice. So let me end with a larger question. What were the social and political implications for Jews of living in a slave society? What are the implications for Jews as a group of living in slave society? What is implication for Jews in the south? Whatever their attitudes towards slavery, the presence of slaves in southern society had crucial implications for Jews.

One of the reasons that Jews were so accepted in the South, again, something we'll talk about next week, that Jews really are embraced in southern society, in southern white society. One of the reasons they had so well accepted was because of the presence of large numbers of slaves in a society where there was a constant worry about slaves, particularly this constant worry about rebellion by slaves. There was a need for solidarity within white society. So in other words, white southerners could not afford to exclude Jews. That again, they needed to be a united front, a lagger perhaps against what was seen as a major threat from the slaves themselves. It's a constant source of anxiety. And you see this particularly in the approach of the civil war and during the war as well. The sense that slaves are an eminent peril that they will stab their masters in the back, and that they are, and I need to be carefully policed and worried about. Slaves moreover served other purposes for Jews.

Again, this is accidental. This is coincidental. This is not anything, this is not, Jews aren't responsible for these things, but Jews do benefit from these things. For example, slaves were a lightning rod within southern society. So much of the anxiety and fear that elsewhere may have been displaced upon onto Jews was instead directed at African Americans. And this is one of the arguments by some historians that there's relatively little antisemitism in the South prior to the Civil War. And the argument is that much of the anxiety, the fears in the society are not directed at Jews, but are directed at slaves, or also by the way, they're directed at the Irish. So and Catholics. So again, that's somewhat protective of Jews, this lightning rod theory that other groups act as a lightning rod protecting Jews. Again, not because Jews have sought this out, but this is just an excellent of the structure of the society.

This, again, ensured a relatively positive experience for Jews in the South. Likewise, the logic of slavery worked in the favour of Jews, the slave system, venerated community traditions. The idea behind slave holding was this was an ancient custom. The idea of ancestry and pedigree that we have as white southernnes is superior lineage, likewise, the authority of family and of bloodlines. These are all ideas which are central to the slave system. And Jews were seen as a group with a historical pedigree, as a group that respected community and tradition, and as a people that sanctified bloodlines, in other words, an idea that they fit within this way of thinking in southern society that can be placed in southern society as a group which befits these ideas. And finally, as we heard at the beginning, slavery was justified by resorting to the Hebrew Bible.

Again, elevating Jews to particular status within southern society. As the people of the book, all of us ensured that Jews were seen as insiders in the south, much more so than the experience of Jews elsewhere in the United States. That Jews in the South are much more of insiders than our Jews in the North, for example, as we were here next week, all of this was to change with the Civil War. And we're going to pick up next week, I'll end off now, but we'll pick up next week with the profound changes that that conflict worked. Thank you. I'll be happy to answer your questions.

- Thank you for that very very interesting presentation Adam. I just want to just quickly add that a that a couple of years ago, my son David asked me if his friend could come for Kol Nidre just to start, just before Kol Nidre, to start the fast with us and then to go to Shul. And he asked me a few weeks prior to the high holiday. And I said, sure. That evening I went to the door, the doorbell rang, I went to the door and there was this really handsome young black guy. And he said to me I've come for dinner. And I said, okay, come in. We'll, you very welcome. And it actually didn't occur to me that he was Jewish. And then my son arrived and we started the fast and then we got ready to go to Shul and Michael got up to be with us. And I looked at David and I said how come Michael's coming with us to, and he said, mom, but I asked you if my friend could come with us to Synagogue. And I said to him, but is he Jewish? He said, of course he's Jewish. And actually the story was, and I was like, oh okay, of course I do remember, but I sort of jogged my memory. And then I asked them, and he said that his great, I think it was his great grandparents were slaves in the South, and they love their slave owners and they adopted Judaism. And he and I sister went down. It went through the generations. And he and his sister are both Jewish.

- Well, firstly that's a very unusual case. I'm in fact I'm happy. So now that, because the examples I have of this, as I said mostly are of conversion. That's the records we have of those who adopt Judaism, that we know that they are Jewish books. They say so and on on their conversion records and or their baptismal records and they cease to be. So it's wonderful to hear that there's a positive case as well.

- Yes, yes. I thought I just had to share that listening to that so, thank you over now for questions and answers.

Q&A and Comments:

- Sure, sure. There are lots and lots of questions. I should apologise in advance if I don't get to answer them all.

Q: So there's a question about which of the 10 commandments condone slavery, the commandment not to cover to your neighbor's property includes slavery implicitly in that as well.

A: Again it's worth reading if you interested that Raphaels very, very long-winded sermon is available and goes through all these examples. He actually does this quite carefully. And looking at how the Bible thinks about slavery, it's dispute as I said by others later. But he's quite careful to find examples of all kinds.

Q: There's a question about why his title was Reverend and not Rabbi -

A: That it's common at the time that that's again partly in his case, probably because he'd served in Birmingham in England before he came to America. And there it was again, he had Rabbinic ordination, but not uncommon that the chief Rabbi was the only one who was called Rabbi. Everyone else was regarded at the time. This is in the 1840s, 1850s was went by the title Reverend and likewise in the American society, Rev, once he came to America, a reverend carried with it a certain status. You look likewise at that picture of what he's dressed. And, he is modelling his dress to some extent on what a good protestant, a upperclass Protestant theologian would look like as well. And that's again not uncommon there are lots of examples. It's kind an adopting reverend is part of that as well.

Q: A number of about the question, I'll go through them, were used prominent in the slave trade.

A: Again, if you're interested in this question, there is a large literature on exactly this and literature for unfortunate reasons rather than fortunate reasons. Because one of the reasons why there's a large literature is that the nation of Islam the rather antisemitic and unpleasant group made an accusation, I think in 19 early 1990s, published a pamphlet which accused Jews of being responsible for the slave trade. It's a ridiculous claim. You sometimes still hear Farrakhan and others making this claim. It, as I said, it's a baseless scarlet's claim, but in response to that, a literature actually emerges. There hadn't been much writing about about Jews and the dynamics of the slave trade prior to that point in time. And there's a lot of good literature comes out of that. Again, thinking about the slave trade more broadly, particularly the Atlantic slave trade.

And the conclusion is that Jews are marginal to the slave trade. There's been less writing about Jews and slavery in the United States that there is a very good article on the subject, but it's an article which was published I think in the 1950s. Happy to refer, it's very good. Still remains a very readable article, but deals with, slavery, it's a topic which is overdue for additional writing and research. I'm doing a little bit of it, but my interest is the moment at least is on the Civil War.

And but, so those of you looking for a good topic, there's good reading already, good things to read, but likewise there are, it has plenty of room for someone to make this their career or second career or third career.

Q: This wonderful question here about how did Jews who supported slavery deal with the Passover Seder?

A: When we talk about once having been slaves, but now of three people, it's a question I've often asked myself. And in fact, there is an image of uncertain dates. That's an important point to make. Uncertain date, which from Charleston, which shows a family holding a Seder with what may have been slaves in the background. Again people are able to differentiate and do rationalise, justify all sorts of things. It's easy to do perhaps if someone like a Moses Raphael, this imminent Rabbi is saying to you that in the Bible sanctioned slavery. And also he's saying, and other people are saying that biblical slavery is different in a variety of ways from modern day slavery. So again, it's perhaps it should be shocking perhaps, but is in reality less shocking than if you think about it. That people live with all sorts of contradictions and dissonances of various kinds that they aren't seeing their slaves as biblical slave and are thinking themselves. These are many cases, as I said, immigrants from Europe who've come to America are thinking themselves as people who are having made a great crossing. Much like Moses taking the children of Israel out of Egypt. They've made the great cross into America. They're thinking themselves as the people who found freedom, et cetera, et cetera. So again, but it's a lovely question and an intriguing one the psychology of Jewish slave holders.

Q: How many Jews owned slaves at the time, as I've described to you, depended.

A: It depends on the place that it's some cities high, much higher rates of slave ownership than in others. But overall, by the time of the Civil War, our estimate is a quarter of Jewish households own slaves. But again, that's across the region as opposed to sort of to any particular place that's lighter in some places, heavy in others, the Jewish slaveholders free their slaves after seven years. I have no evidence of anyone who does this, remember and what's important here though to know, is that it becomes extremely difficult in much of the South, if not illegal in much of the South, to free your slaves. Again, the slave system becomes much more restrictive in the middle decades of the 19th century.

Again, both because of the fact that slavery and cotton becomes that much more profitable, but also because of fears of abolitionism is a reaction against what's seen as efforts from elsewhere in America to erode the slave system. And there's a really a doubling down in a variety of ways. You see all sorts of restrictive laws passed for example, preventing, making illegal to teach slaves, to read, making a restricting slave worship, you name it. And in many places, most places it becomes illegal to free your slaves by again the 1840s, 1850s, even if you wanted to, you couldn't. But in the earlier period, there are examples. So in, again, in the colonial period and even in the early national period we have, if you look at wolves and there's a good study of Jewish wolves, which looks at this question of slavery and what they do, what Jews do with

their slaves. And there we see examples, again, a very, very mixed bag of examples that some people free their slaves, outright some would do it, some say they'll do it sometime in the future, et cetera, et cetera. So not most, in fact again, like their neighbours treat their slaves as very valuable property and again, they give instructions to their children that their slave should be dealt with in particular ways that this son or daughter gets, these slaves you should dispose of the slaves, all sorts of things of that kind.

Q: So let me answer some more questions. Were Jewish bankers involved in the financing of slave purchase in the South?

A: No, not as far as I know. Maybe there are examples, but remember timing here is important that Jews, for the most part only become involved in banking in a significant way in America after the Civil War. And I'll talk about that next week. I'll talk about it next Tuesday. That it's a post-civil war phenomenon. Once slavery doesn't exist, though the same bankers are very involved in providing loans to Jews in the south and to supporting Jews are involved in the cotton business and other such things. Again, we'll talk about that next week. I have a colleague, Michael Con, has written a book about this, those who are interested called "Cotton Capitalism", which is about cotton capitalists, which is about Jews and banking. And after, primarily after the war again is worth reading. So, but so again, it's not true that Jews are involved in financing slave purchases because it's for the most part impossible. The Jews aren't really in the banking business in a significant way.

Q: Here a question about when people talk about slavery, do they mean only Africans?

A: Hey, it's a good question again. Yes. They read those passages. They read the story of the stories of Noah and of these children and the curse of ham to refer to Africans. Again, there's a long lineage behind this is a long set of readings of that text to justify slavery that they believe that that ham is an African and this is used as justification. And there's a whole theological background to this. And again, it's a very interesting question, and these are arguments not necessarily being made by Jews. These are being arguments being made in southern society by theologians and others.

Q: And again, in justifying slave ownership, why are Jews today so apologetic that some Jews were involved in the slave parade prior to the 1860s?

A: It's a good question. I think that it's partly because Jews are accused by the nation Islam and sometimes by others, by white supremacists of actually, probably not by white supremacists, ironically, but certainly by a nation of Islam accused of having played this disproportionate role in the slave trade, as I said to you, not true. And also I suppose there is great shame attached, rightfully attached to a slavery as well. So it's not something that anyone should willingly associate themselves with. So it is obviously a sore subject. And that's probably another reason why there isn't a very large literature, as I described to you on slavery in the United States.

Q: Can I talk about the genesis of Neiman Marcus and other southern owned Jewish companies?

A: I'll talk about that next Tuesday. But again, what it's important to know here is that the Layman brothers who are referred to as the literal Layman brothers begin in Alabama or they are again immigrants from central Europe. They own a variety of stores. They start as peddlers and they open stores in Alabama and ultimately make their way to New York and become the Layman Brothers Bank. That's not an uncommon story that a number of future Jewish bankers and department store owners and et cetera, et cetera, will begin as peddlers in as storekeepers in the South. And again, as I said, we'll talk about that next week. Again, there are all sorts of very good points here being made. I won't read all of them. Alas we don't have time. But about, again, interesting comparisons with South Africa things of this kind.

So the question about children of mixed race. So those who are born of, as I said, most often Jewish fathers and enslaved mothers, it's a phenomenon we see in the Caribbean, it's a phenomenon that we see in North America too. We don't know a vast amount about it because it's a source of, at the time, at least, of Shonda, of shame, not something you want to necessarily talk about. And I have now, years ago, used the synagogue record books in Jamaica, in Kingston. And there's an interesting discussion there, language, which those books refer to this question.

Now, do you circumcise your slave the male offspring of these relationships and they use this interesting discussion, they talk about a baby's born on the body of ex, in other words, of born in the body of slave. And the person who really knows a lot about this topic, and in fact it's just about a publisher book about this is the person who preceded me talking about Jews in Colonial America, Laura Leman, she has a book coming out later this year, tracking a family where exactly this happened, what happens to that the children and I think the grandchildren. So it's worth, I suspect it's a book to make quite a splash. It'll be out later this year. But so she's really the first person to really think about this question properly. But there are examples in Charleston elsewhere we know about where people sometimes they leave the south and these mixed raised children, sometimes they are enslaved. It's really a seemingly a complicated set of stories.

Q: How could Jews have money to buy slaves considering their trade in the price of slaves?

A: That's exactly right. That many of the newcomers can't afford slaves or they can only afford to speculate in slaves. They're taking risks in buying slaves. And they are going to take loans to buy slaves. So that probably explains, as I said, why the rate of slave ownership is amongst the newcomers is lower than it otherwise would be, because they haven't yet established themselves as much as they, will in later decades.

- Adam?

- Yeah, sure.

- Adam. Hi, I just want to, are you okay for time because you've been going a long time, so I don't want to take up any more of your time 'cause I see that 111 questions.

- Absolutely. So I can maybe another five minutes or so. I'm sorry that I cut lots of questions.

- Brilliant.

- Happy I can certainly continue.

- Okay. Thanks Adam. You know what, let's set a time, that works for you.

- Sure, sure, sure. So, it's called five more minutes and I apologise as I said to those whose questions can't answer, but you can cut me off when I hit that time.

- [Wendy] No, no, no, not at all. Thank you.

- Sure. So, at ciso, again, lots of, I think Bev price's point here, the language of slavery, so quotidian and disturbing, absolutely. This is a system which is normalised. It's a system which is a multi-generational and becomes habitual. That it's a useful lesson to us. It's not that these people are evil again, there are certainly people who exploit their slaves and are cruel and all men and such things. The system itself is intrinsically brutal and becomes a completely normalised system, A system which is part and parcel of the society. And one which is, there are some people who question it but otherwise, it's something which a, there is no financial motive to question. And also the destruction of slavery or the disappearance of slavery is unimaginable to people.

That the slaves, as I described to you, are so central to the southern economy as assets, as labourers in otherwise that just the idea of the system disappearing is something that people can't wrap their heads around. Or if they do wrap their heads around, they see it as a disaster in the making. There's a lot of talking in America in the 1840s and 1850s. They look to Jamaica, which where there's a process of emancipation of slaves, which is driven by the British Empire, and they see Jamaica as this disaster, as something where the economy is sugar and economy of Jamaica collapses in their minds. And they see this as a warning to North America, to the United States. So again, that context also remember that they, it's not as if this is the only slave society at the time, either that there's an enormous slave economy in Brazil, which will outlast American slavery. There's an slavery in other parts of the Americas. So again, this is how they see the world is that to us it's this anomaly to them it's an ancient system, a publicly sanctioned system. It's something which is part and parcel of the world around them.

Q: So a question about how did slaves pay for those goods that were not being paid for by their owners?

A: Good question. So it depends where, again, that some slaves in urban settings in particular are hired out by their owners and sometimes are able to do a little bit of work on their own, on the side to earn a little bit of money or in some cases in rural areas. As slaves will have a day of the week off on Sunday where they are not obliged to work and will grow, have a little, a garden to grow food will raise chickens or pigs or otherwise. And again are trying to trade in some cases with peddlers.

Q: Again, there's a question about, because peddlers were mobile, did they ever help any slaves to escape to the north?

A: We actually have an example of this, the Friedman brothers. And the only reason we know about the Friedman brothers who I think are in Alabama, is that there is a wonderful slave narrative written by an escaped slave, which writes about it, who writes about his experience. And he says in that these two Jewish brothers, the Friedman brothers are the ones who who got 'em out, who say them. And again, we have no reason to doubt that this is true. Again, it's an extremely risky business to try and help slaves. And that peddlers already are viewed with suspicion in southern society there for a variety of reasons we can talk about next week, but also they're already seen as corrupting slaves. So it'll be a particularly risky thing for Jews to do if they were inclined to do it. And I don't think we can take it for granted that they would be.

- Adam, I'm sorry, my team have just been texting me to say that we have another presentation in half an hour and that we going to have to wrap up. So thank you very, very much.

- A pleasure.

- Fascinating. Really fascinating presentation.

- A great pleasure. And--

- Oh my goodness.

- Yeah, absolutely. We'll talk next week about civil war and then about the economic footprint of Jews in America during this time.

- And very distressing, actually.

- Not a pleasant topic.

- No.

- No, not at all. Not at all. So yeah, a couple of surprises for me, but thank you very much. We live in--

- A great pleasure.

- Thank you very much. Thank you all our listeners. Thank you very much.

- Good night everyone.

- See you soon, thanks, bye.

- Bye.