

Trudy Gold | Jews Arrive in America

- Good morning, Trud. Good morning everybody, how are you today?

- Going to smile.

- Good. I just want to say over to you, Trud, Thank you very much, thank you.

- Thank you. And good morning and good afternoon everybody. And of course, today I am going back to the Dutch Republic and then to the flights to America. But there's a few things to say before we can actually take them on that journey to the Americas. And that's to talk a little more about the conversos. Now, if you recall, yesterday, I was talking about that terrible instrument, the Inquisition. That meant that the Jews, per se, had been expelled from Spain and Portugal, but hundreds of thousands had converted to remain behind to keep their positions in society. They were the ones who were at threat. And, of course, when the New World opened up, many of them felt that it would be easier for them to survive if they got involved in trade. And also because of these Sephardi merchants who had contacts with their Jewish co-religionists, for example, in the Turkish Empire, they created this very interesting network. But the Inquisition then follows the Jews to Portugal. And then in 1580, the Crowns of Portugal and Spain are united. And who is the monarch? The fanatical Philip II.

As I'm sure many of you know, he was the king who launched the Armada against England, against the Protestant heretic. So more and more Portuguese conversos are trying to get out, they are under threat from the Inquisition, and it was a terrible Inquisition because even if they were sincere Christians, it meant that they were often at the prey of any rival. All you had to do was you complain to the Inquisition and they would be interrogated, faith, the notion that to save the soul, you you torture and murder the body. So it's absolutely appalling. I'm going to read to you now from an, a wonderful explanation of the Inquisition, actually by Menasseh ben Israel. Menasseh ben Israel was a very important Sephardi Jew who was responsible for the Jews coming back to England. His dates are 1604 to 1657. His father is telling now the story of what happened to his people. The tyranny of the Inquisitor deals ruthlessly with thy people on O Israel, both by extortion, by fire, and by the sword. It is no use hiding. Security is not to be found on the banks of the same, nor by the Banks of the Tagus.

You've got to remember the Inquisition. Catholic France, Rome. So you have a situation where it's harder and harder for Jews to hide, for conversos to hide. This is very much the power of the Catholic church; however, the city on the Amster is more sensible. It recognises and publicly protects thy temples within its boundaries, and hearing Psalms of hallelujah in tone, the Daughters of Zion exclaim, here indeed the people have a city of God. Now, so that are, those are the words of the Father of Menasseh ben Israel. So as I told you yesterday, in 1581, the Dutch, they've broken away from Spain, the appalling Spanish Fury as it's called, when the Netherlands was absolutely ravaged, they managed to defeat. And now one-and-a-half million

people create the Dutch Republic. And of course it means at this stage that they can begin colonialism because one of the main problems with wanting colonies in the New World, and more than that, at first it wasn't colonies, it was the gold and silver of the New World, was the Pope had drawn a sort of line through a rather bad map of the New World and he'd given half to Spain and the other half to Portugal. Now what about the Dutch? What about the Protestant British? What about the Catholic French? Everybody wanted a slice of the New World.

Antwerp had once been the great centre, Antwerp, of course, part of the Habsburg Empire, and many converso families did their business in Antwerp, including the incredible Mendez family, which we've already mentioned. And of course it was the daughter-in-law of the Mendez family, Dona Gracia, who is married in the cathedral in Lisbon to her cousin Mendez. Later on when they move to Antwerp, she comes out as a practising Jew and finishes up in the Turkish empire where she becomes an incredible benefactor. And her story is extraordinary because it's her nephew who becomes the advisor to the Sultan, and he has created the Duke of Naxos and he's given land in Tiberius. So there's some extraordinary stories of this rather small rarefied group of international conversos. There's something else to say about the conversos.

They were very well educated. They didn't have enough Jewish knowledge because one of the problems with Judaism, of course, it is a religion of knowledge, but many of them had been to the great universities. So you have the conversos speaking many languages, having studied history, having studied philosophy. Just think of universities of the time. Yes, within the confines of Catholicism, because outwardly they're Catholics, but they are developing a wide education. And that's a very very interesting point that's going to come up time and time again. And I would say this to you, and it's something each one of you has to make your own mind up. What may a Jew study? There's an extraordinary passage in the Talmud where it says, never forget there is wisdom amongst the Gentiles, but there is no Torah. What subjects are allowable? And now you have these conversos who speak many languages, they are sophisticated, they carry the sword remember. They act as though they were Spanish and Portuguese grandees, but they are secret Jews.

And when they become, when they come to Port-- when they come from Portugal, they come to Amsterdam because Amsterdam takes over from Utrecht because under the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia, which finishes up that terrible 30 years wars of religion, the shelt is silted up and the trade moves to Amsterdam. Amsterdam, the centre of a republic, as I said, of 1.5 million. Now the origins of the Jewish community is founded in secrets by two interesting men, Jacob Tirado and Samuel Palache. Now, it's, let's talk a little bit about Jacob Tirado, because it appears that they are commemorating when they are turned over to the Dutch authorities. Are they papists? Now Tirado had Latin, and he managed to explain to the authorities that in fact they were Jewish. And he return, he has come back to Judaism, and we know that he was a very wealthy merchant. He went under the name as a converso of Lopez De Costa. And what happens to him is he eventually leaves Amsterdam.

He stays in Amsterdam until 1608. He becomes very very wealthy. He founds a synagogue in

Amsterdam, but sometime before 1616, he travels to the land of Israel. He was obviously very pious because he settles in Jerusalem where he dies. And the other chap who's involved is a man I think is absolutely fascinating, and that's a man called Samuel Palache. Now he is going to have many many different lives. They are practising their service, small service, in the private home of Jacob Tirado. And we know in 1608, his grandfather was the rabbi of Morocco. The family were also very very wealthy because they were friendly with the Moroccan Sultan. And in 1608, the Moroccan Sultan appoints him ambassador to the Netherlands. And what he does is he successfully negotiates the first treaty of an alliance between a Christian state and a Muslim state. So here you have the ex-converso who's come out as a Jew, and he is the one they turn to to negotiate. He also had his own merchant fleet and he, he, his little fleet, working for the Moroccans, seized ships belonging to the King of Spain.

The Mediterranean was awash with piracy at this stage. You've got to remember all the ships coming back from the New World. You've got to think about the commodities that were being traded by pirates and also the ongoing war between Islam and Christianity. And he has a small merchant fleet for the king of Morocco. And he seizes all these ships belonging to the King of Spain. We then find him in London because many of these conversos had branches of trade in London. Look, we're in the 1590s, we're in Elizabethan England. Elizabeth is no friend of the Spanish, and she herself has her pirates, people like Francis Drake and Water Riley. Anyway, the Spanish ambassador put such pressure on that he is arrested and he's tried. He's tried for piracy. He is acquitted by an English court, and he returns to Holland. When he dies in the Hague, there's a huge funeral, which is attended by the majority of the Dutch dignitaries. He had two sons, they were also diplomats.

And the former, his eldest son, was entrusted with Dutch interests by the Sultan. And the other son represented the Sultan of Morocco in Copenhagen. The Danes, this is also interesting, the Christian Danes, who were adopting a very very liberal kind of policy were also encouraging Jewish settlement from Holland. So these Marranos, that's the pejorative term, conversos, they've come from Spain and now more and more from Portugal because of the union with Spain and Portugal and the tightening up of the Inquisition, they are coming to Amsterdam as traders, Amsterdam is well on the way to becoming the most cosmopolitan city in Europe. Ironically, this family, descendants of this family, are going to live in Amsterdam right up until the modern period. An ancestor called Isaac Palache becomes the chief rabbi in 1900. Tragically his son, Juda Lion Palache, He was the professor of Semitic languages at the University of Amsterdam, and he met his end tragically at the hand of the Nazis.

So you know, the kind of ebb and flow of Jewish history. Now the Dutch create the largest fleet in the world. The fleet is actually bigger than the combined fleets of Spain, Portugal, France, and England. It's a great seagoing power, and what they also create is two very important companies. The Dutch East India Company and the Dutch West India Company. It's the first transnational operation in history. They issue stocks and bonds and shares to the general public. It's the first publicly traded company in the world, and it's going to have quasi governmental powers. So you have the Dutch now. They are great traders, great seagoers, and

they are now going to be looking for colonies mainly for trade. It's at this stage, it's trade. What can we bring back from the east? What can we bring back from the west? The Dutch East India Company established the Port of Batavia, which of course is in Indonesia. And the Dutch West India Company is going to be created in 1621. The Dutch, the Dutch West India Company is going to be given by the Dutch authorities a trade monopoly in the West Indies and the Caribbean. They're going to have jurisdiction over the Atlantic slave trade. And of course, today, this is one of the great horrific issues of colonialism, which, which William talked about the other day, that certain events that happened in history to today's eyes are so horrific that people were treated as a commodity, and slavery is going to become one of the most important of the trades. That's a terrible tragedy, but that is actually what happened.

So it's trade, but what else do they trade in? They trade in salt, they trade in sugar. Sugar's going to be very very important. One of the reasons Rembrandt loved living in the Jewish quarter, you know, in the basement, you know those Dutch houses, much of the wares of the ships were actually stored. And the smell of the molasses, the smell of the sugar, it's something that is often talked about. They trade of course in tobacco and they bring back the potato from North America. So basically you are looking at a situation where everything's changing in the West. You think about the goods of the New World. You think about how diet is going to change because you the British are also going to have an East India Company and a West India Company, which is going to have the same quasi governmental power. How do you think India, how do you think India in the end became a possession of the British crown?

Just think of the gold, the silver, the jewels, all the great spices of the East, and think how that changed the way the west thought and how the west was. This is really the beginnings of mercantilism, and it's at this stage that the Dutch were best at it. And the other great trade was diamonds. And this is where in the main, the Jewish traders with the Dutch East India Company come into it, they are very involved in the diamond trade. It's almost entirely a Jewish trade. And the other point to make. These wealthy Sephardi who are so at home in non-Jewish society, their problem is they don't know enough of their Judaism. They gradually acquire a lot of stocks and shares in both the Dutch West India Company and the Dutch East India Company. They are very important on the Dutch Stock Exchange, which is created in 1609, and they basically organise and develop it. So even though many of their rights are curtailed in Holland, nevertheless, there's a lot of things that they can do in Holland that they can't do anywhere else. Now Jews, they were not allowed to practise law.

They're not allowed into the trade guilds. But because the Dutch government, as it developed, was very pragmatic, they were allowed into some trade such as printing. And it's actually the family of Menasseh ben Israel, Menasseh ben Israel sets up the first Hebrew printing press in Holland. And that's going to be very very important for the spread of knowledge. You see, Jewish status is quite unclarified. Once they realise that the Jews are not Catholics, they're not going to ban them, but the civic authorities are okay because basically they're trying to create this very stable strong wealthy empire, but the church is very against it. So they don't have formal recognition as citizens, but they do allow, they are allowed religious freedom of life and

property, especially in relation to foreign powers because this is where the co-religionists come in very usefully. Because think about it, these people, they've now come out as Jews, they can trade with the Turkish empire. And even though the Jews aren't officially allowed back into England until 1656, because of Menasseh ben Israel, there's already quite a few wealthy conversos living in England, living in London.

They are outwardly Catholic Portuguese, but they are secret Jews and they are involved very much in trade. So you have this network of a small group of very wealthy Sephardi. Now the community. Holland is a very interesting place. I hope you've listened to Patrick's lectures on Vermeer and on Rembrandt because it gives, if you just look at the subject matter of the paintings, there's a brilliant book by Simon Sharma called *The Embarrassment of Riches*. Just look at the, just look at the kind of clothes they're wearing. Look at the scenes. It's very much based on the goods that are brought in from the New world, but more important, and from the East Indies. But more important than that, the printing press develops and because of the pragmatism, it becomes a great centre of humanistic thought, ideas. And because these conversos are well used to mixing in non-Jewish society, that is how, in the end, characters like Baruch Spinoza, who is also of a converso family, that is how he begins to meet other humanists and begins to, if you like, slip away from Judaism.

Because the thing that happens to a community that is not very sure of its own identity is it's going to become quite intolerant. By the 1620s, it's a city of 185,000 inhabitants and it's the greatest trading port in the world. They build a magnificent town hall, and this is a description. The magistrates of Amsterdam took possession of their new town hall on the 23rd of April 1654. It is one of the wonders of Europe. Truly worthy of a city which may be regarded as the principal warehouse of riches of the Old World and the New World. And the bank of, as I said, the Bank of Holland was founded in 1609. Now in 1615, the state's general of the United Provinces allow officially the Jews to practise their religion publicly on condition that they do not attack Christianity or marry Christians. Now, without even waiting for this decision, they'd already bought land for a cemetery. That's always the sign of a community settling. You buy the cemetery. If you look at Eastern Europe, one of the first evidences of Jewish settlements in Eastern Europe is they petition the Polish crown in 12, 1209 I think it was for a cemetery.

And it's in 1619, the town council officially allows the Jews to live in the city according to their law. Now for the next 20 years, the community is divided. And I'm going to give you a sort of sociological breakdown. You have the great merchants. These are the mainly the interrelated families of huge wealth with their trading empires. You also have a great number of doctors. Medicine was a traditional Jewish occupation. If you think Maimonides, Nachmanides, they were both doctors. It was in mediaeval times, and in the early modern period, rabbis weren't paid. They always had another profession. They were manufacturers because a lot of the raw goods of the New World and from the Indies is being bought back to Holland and being manufactured. And I've already mentioned diplomats. Because of their international connections and because they can cross the world of Islam and Christianity, it's a very very important place for them to be. There were three communities. Portuguese, by the way, was the language.

And you know, when they come back to England and they petition the very smart synagogue, the minutes of the synagogue were in Portuguese right up until 1816. Now in the beginning there were three separate synagogues. You know, what can I tell you about the Jews? There aren't that many of them yet, but they still have three synagogues. There are bitter negotiations, but in the end, the three of them come together, and they create the Talmud Torah. The crowning achievement though is the building of that wonderful synagogue, the Great Synagogue, and it was governed by the council. And in 1650, we know that there were 400 families living in Amsterdam, 2,000 people, and the majority of them were, had been born in Portugal. And now you have to come to another issue. The coming of the Ashkenazi. 1648, 1648 is a disastrous year in Jewish history. At the end of the 30 years war, again, I've mentioned the Treaty of Westphalia. It was ostensibly the wars between Protestantism and Catholicism, but it was also about power and trade. And what happens is Poland is weakened by the war, and at the end of the war, the Cossacks, the Ukrainian Cossacks, under Bohdan Khmelntsky, go on the rampage. They are Russian Orthodox.

They hate the Polish clergy, because, remember, Poland had annexed the Ukraine and who had divided up the Ukraine for the Poles and the Jews, and there was shtetl all over the Ukraine. It's a wild land. I mean I used to visit it up until 10 years ago. I used to go there a lot to teach. And outside of the cities, it's still a wild land. I've been to Zaporizhzhia, the home of the Cossacks. And they go on the rampage. And 1648 was such a disastrous year because upwards of a hundred thousand Jews were murdered. It took the Crown eight years to sort this out. But I want you just to kind of imagine the horror of it and what is going to happen. And it led to three really extraordinary events in Jewish history. The first event was that Jews wanted to get out and some of them made their way to Amsterdam. The majority of them were very very poor. So you have a community that is Sephardi, that is aristocratic, that looks like any other. And now you have these poor Yiddish-speaking Jews coming to the city. They were allowed in because this is the, this is the other side of the Jewish world, mutual cooperation. So despite all the quarrels and because the Sephardi did not want to be associated with them, what they did is they guaranteed the council, the state council that they would look after them.

So you have this big influx of Ashkenazi Jews. Now they build their own synagogue with Sephardi money, but for a long time they are actually focused on Eastern Europe. Now to other events, as a result of the Khmelnytsky massacres, one of which is going to be very important as far as Holland is concerned, it's, I suppose, I think the most important one that I want to dwell on today. There is a belief in Judaism that when we come to a terrible time in our history, the Almighty will send a Messiah. Now, let me say very very very carefully. The Christian Messiah is divine. In Judaism, the awaited Messiah is a man, a human, who would deliver the Jews. Bar Kochba was proclaimed Messiah by great rabbis, but he failed, he didn't deliver. Jews would say that Joshua of Nazareth, Jesus of Nazareth, was a failed Messiah. But the expectation at the end of days, and the story goes around that now is the time for the coming of the Messiah. And there was messianic fever in the air, A sort of going back to religiosity.

And if you think about, if you think about the Sephardi of Amsterdam, the majority of them are not that well versed Jewishly yet. One of the reasons Menasseh ben Israel sends up his printing press, all these esoteric ideas. Menasseh ben Israel was a bit of a philosopher himself and he was in correspondence with a lot of Puritans, the Puritans in England, who are later going to be behind allowing the Jews back into England. Not because they loved them, but because they wanted to convert them. But in this mix of humanistic thought, also there was a belief in the Christian world of 1666, a thousand plus the sign of the beast in Revelation. So the Christian world was waiting for the second coming of the Messiah. So there's a great deal of messianic fervour. It led, actually, to one of the most famous false messiahs in history and more important in Jewish history, it led to the development of the Hasidic movement. But another time, another place. I'm concentrating on Amsterdam. So basically you have a situation where Messianism is in the air and ironically that is going to help the Jews go back to England.

But the other point, there's a lot of Jews wanting to get out of Eastern Europe and the Sephardi don't want too many of them because they realise it's going to cause trouble. Every Jewish community that settles itself, you know, when another lot come along, they don't like it very much. Now they are enjoined to help their brethren. But on the other hand, can we find someone else somewhere else for them to go? Already in 1642, about 600 Jews have left Amsterdam for Brazil. They were accompanied by two very distinguished scholars. And where did they go to? They went to a place that is called Pernambuco which we know as Recife. It's in Brazil. It's the most Eastern point in South America. The Dutch had taken it from the Portuguese in 1630. It's going to be retaken in 1654. But what you have now is a Jewish community in Recife in Brazil. And they've come in quite large numbers. According to their own records, the record book of Recife, in 1645, there were 1,450 Jews living there. And they founded a community. It was the first in the New World. There was a synagogue. There were two schools.

And in 1641, Isaac Aboab da Fonesca became their rabbi, and he came with his deputy Moses Aguilar. And they were trying very hard to be scholarly. Aboab wrote a Hebrew hymn, and a volume of theology. Now he's an interesting man, another place, another time, because he'd been previously a teacher in the Yeshiva in Amsterdam where Baruch Spinoza was one of his students. And when he later returns to Amsterdam after Recife was taken by the Portuguese, he was one of the rabbis who pronounced Herem because what happens to Spinoza, who's a humanistic thinker, he goes too far in his thought for the rabbis. So they actually pronounce excommunication on him. The Herem is a terrible document. No one could have anything to do with him. It's a terrible document. You see, one of the issues, when Jews don't... It's very easy to talk about rectitudinous, bad word, when there's no power. But quite often the rabbis themselves insecure, remember they are former conversos. Consequently, when you don't know enough, you tend to become tighter. It's fascinating, the, I think Jeremy was talking about this last night, and it goes back to the question I asked you, what may a Jew study.

Is there anything wrong with Spinoza studying philosophy? Is there anything wrong with him going along a different line of thought? What may a Jew study? So I want you to debate that. The ultra-Orthodox, remember, they do not want their children exposed to the world of the West,

it's tainted. So anyway, so you have this, you have this community, and in effect it's a little Amsterdam. Tragically, it falls to the, it falls to the Portuguese, and the community has to scatter. It had been mainly a sugar port, sugar imported from South America back to Europe. Now the majority of Jews, when they realised the Portuguese were coming, because they'd been previously conversos, they were under threats from the Inquisition. You know, the Inquisition followed the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors. The last heretic to be burnt at the stake was in Mexico. I mean, William talked about this in his presentation. The idea that you destroy the body to save the soul. Even if you think of the missionary movement. Pious people who went out to save the natives, even a child an unborn child, in the body of a pagan or a heretic was damned. So it's your duty to proselytise. It's another way of looking at the world. Now, there were a few wealthy plantation owners who decided they were going to stick it just as they had in Portugal. And they of course they had to revert back to Christianity.

Some of them remained crypto-Jews, but eventually they disappeared into Spanish, into Catholic society. But there were 23 refugees who were going to come to New Amsterdam. They decided not to give in. They lost all their money. There were 23 of them. They take a ship. And where do they go? They go to New Amsterdam, which is a trading post of the Dutch West India Company. And it's governed by a man called Peter Stuyvesant. Those of you who used to smoke, remember the days of the Stuyvesant cigarettes? That's obvious for you to know what was the main commodity of the trading post? Well, it was tobacco and it was furs, and they were trading with the Indians for whatever they could get. Peter Stuyvesant, he'd been born in the Netherlands. He was university educated. He joined the West India Company. He became a commercial agent in Brazil. He moved to Curacao, which was the main Dutch base in the West Indies. All these places have wonderful synagogues and thank you to one of the group who sent me some wonderful photographs of the synagogue in Curacao.

By 30, he was acting governor of Aruba until 1644. He was in a battle in 1644. He lost his leg on an island that the Spanish had managed to take from the Dutch. And, in 1645, he is appointed governor of New Amsterdam. Now, he didn't like Jews. He called them Christ killers. He also had a reason for not liking him. The company had needed farmers, and this is when he was back in Aruba. And grain had to be sent from Holland because the buccaneer types had absolutely no patience for clearing the land and farming. What they really wanted was the gold of the New World. So they're really not putting themselves out. Now the Amsterdam authorities had been persuaded by a converso called , who, he'd emerged as a Jew and he persuaded the Dutch West India Company to give him a grant to establish a colony of 60 families in Curacao. Now he preferred, but basically, he didn't keep his promise. He raised horses. He smuggled them even into Spanish possessions. He traded with the English, and Peter Stuyvesant was absolutely furious. The company didn't censor this chap because he had so many friends amongst the stockholders in New Amsterdam.

And in the summer of 1654, Solomon Peterson and Jacob Bassermann arrived in New Amsterdam. This is before the 23 who arrive on the ship. They come with capital and passes from the company, which has given them the power to trade and land. And it's at this stage. So

there are two wealthy Sephardi already there, with letters, which Peter Stuyvesant is really cross about. And then the ship, the Sainte Catherine, lands. And there is a letter. This is the letter, Peter Stuyvesant has a letter. He's got to send it to the Dutch in Amsterdam, his stockholders. The Jews who have arrived would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians who are very repugnant to the inferior magistrates as also to the people having the most affection for you.

The deaconry also fearing that owing to their present indigence, they were poor, they might become a charge in the coming winter. We have for the benefit of this weak and newly-developed place, and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them, in a friendly way, to depart, praying also most seriously in this connection for ourselves as also for the general community of your that the deceitful race, such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ, be not allowed to further infect and trouble this new colony to the attraction of your and the dissatisfaction of your affectionate subjects. Anyway, this letter goes to the company and how is the company going to react? Well, I've just told you. A quarter of the stockholders are Jewish, and they are a new kind of Jew. These are the Sephardi merchants. They have little empires of their own and they basically say, let our co-religionists in. And this is the reply. The letter was actually sent on September the 22nd, 1654. The reply is received on April the 26th, 1655. I wonder if the world was any better when there was less communication? We would've liked to effectuate and fulfil your wishes and request that the new territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish nation.

It's interesting they use the word nation when you think about Jewish identity. When Menasseh ben Israel petitioned for Jews to come back to England, he used the word the Jewish nation. Think about what the word Jew means, for we foresee therefore the same difficulties which you fear. But after having further weighed and considered the matter we observed that this will be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation with others in the taking of Brazil. You see what had happened when the Portuguese have taken back Recife, many of the Jews have lost all their money. That's why they've got nothing and also here you come to the crux as also because of the large amount of capital, which they still have invested in the shares of this company. They're honest. Therefore, after many deliberations, we have finally decided and resolved to a upon a certain position, presented by said Portuguese Jews, that these people may travel in to the new Netherland and live and remain there, provided the poor amongst them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation.

You will govern yourself accordingly. Now already, Jacob Bassermann, a very interesting man. He had been sent out by the community in Amsterdam just to see what Jewish immigration could there be in New Amsterdam. And of course with the fall of Recife and with the horror story of the Jews of Eastern Europe, we need more places for Jews to go to. One of the reasons that the Dutch Jews wanted Britain to open up is they needed a place of Jewish settlement. They were worried that Eastern Europe was no longer safe. Now he's a very interesting man, this Jacob Bassermann, because he, in 1868, he he was involved in a court case in Amsterdam and

he was summoned to court on the Shabbat. So he didn't go and no fault was entered against him because, quoting from the minutes, he was summoned on the Sabbath. And he and another interesting settler who I'm going to talk about, Aston Levy, joined in a petition to the Council of New Netherland to be, they're there and they say, we want to be able to stand guard like the other. These are Jews demanding their rights because they had to defend the wall against the Indians. Jews were not allowed to have weapons. And they're saying, we are giving taxes everybody else, so please will you allow us to actually guard the wall, and either you do that or we won't pay special taxes. And he actually managed to persuade the Dutch West India Company to condemn what was called unjustified and illiberal decisions.

Another chap who already settled, there was a man called Solomon Peterson. He was a merchant from Amsterdam and he was the first Jew in the New World. He intermarried with a Christian. There's no records that he ever converted, but he was baptised. Now, Asser Levy, I think, is probably the most interesting of the settlers. He probably preceded the arrival of the 23. And he becomes a butcher. He becomes the kosher butcher for the small community. And he, as I said, had been one of those very self-assured men to secure the right of the Jews to be and to serve guard duty. And by the way, the 23 Jews were made up of four couples, two widows and 13 children. Now what he does is he develops a huge fortune. He develops as a trader. He trades with Albany, and he opens up his abattoir. It's the first shop on the wall. So if you want to put it this way, a abattoir for kosher meat was the first real shop on Wall Street. And you can meet with that information, whatever you will. Now, along with the poor, five wealthy merchants also arrived in New Amsterdam. David Ferrara, Salvador Dandrada.

And they demanded the right to own houses in New Amsterdam. They were given the right, but they never exercised it. What they wanted, they wanted a base for their large commercial activities. They were not allowed to employ Christian servants. But apart from that, they could do what they liked. There was quarrels over trade because what they wanted to do was to get really involved in the fur and tobacco trade. And Jews were very much now competing with the Christian traders of New Amsterdam. And it's then that in September 1655, the Dutch moved south and captured Swedish colonies on the Delaware River. You've got to remember everybody's trying to have a slice of the Americas. Three of the Jewish merchants, Asser Levy and the other two, shipped food there. And Stuyvesant, they are prepared to trade with English colonies, with any other colonies. Stuyvesant tries to stop them, but he's not allowed, he doesn't get away with it. And others arrive. There's a compromise. The Jewish shippers were allowed to send one or two persons to make sure the goods were shipped properly.

And then they're given the right to trade on the Delaware River. They extend their areas of trade, cloth and liquor for fur and tobacco. They are actually trading face-to-face with the Indians. And this is a tragedy because what do they give the Indians? They give them alcohol, which the Indians were not used to. And alcohol and beads in return for furs and tobacco that could make them very very rich. And also we know that David Ferrara, another interesting merchant, he traded with the English colony as far down as Maryland. So by April 1657, the Jews, very small settlements, they're enrolled as. They have a right to engage in retail trade.

They argued that they were allowed to pay taxes, so therefore they're allowed to do everything else. They should have the same freedom as other inhabitants. Stuyvesant didn't actually protest because by this time the small Jewish community were the largest taxpayers. They made up about 1% of the community, but they paid nearly 10% of the taxes. And also their colony is becoming less and less. And that spring, English settlers on the Long Island, on the Long Island rebelled against the Dutch and they protested about the persecution of Quakers. So Peter Stuyvesant has got other things to worry about. Now the wealthy Jews like Dandrada and Ferrara, they came to get rich quick, the profits, and then they realise they're going to get much more money if they move to the Caribbean.

So they begin to move. And some of the wealthier merchants actually go back to Holland. And by the time the English fleet arrives, there are very few Jews left. We know that Solomon Peterson, the one who'd married a Christian, had become a notary, a position that he could only have acquired by taking the oath as a Christian. We don't know what happened to Jacob Bassermann. It appears he had married, but there's no record of his death. The only Jew was Asser Levy. He's the one who becomes prominent. And remember he is not a Sephardi. He comes from the Yiddish-speaking communities of Central and Eastern Europe, which were regarded by the Sephardi of a completely lower class. The Sephardims saw themselves really as the lords of the earth. They were this international community of traders, intellectuals. And don't forget later on there's a fascinating man called Benjamin Israeli, later prime minister of England who talked about the great Sephardi heritage that he came from.

But anyway, Asser Levy really does stick it out. And in 1661 he has a lovely house in New Amsterdam and in seven years he really builds up an empire. He sells finished goods from Amsterdam, he's trading with the Jews of Amsterdam, and he's even going as far as Albany. He sold supplies, food supplies, to the fur traders. And when the British were on the attack, he actually helped pay for the fortifications. He became the representative of the Dutch merchants in New Amsterdam and a money lender. And it was after the Dutch left that he actually opened up his slaughterhouse. But of course then in 1676, as you all know, the British conquered New Amsterdam, and it becomes New York and the story changes again. So you know, remember what I say too often. The story of the Jews is such a fascinating story, but it relies on other people's history. How do we ebb and flow within the realms of other people's history? And that's why I would also say, I think one of the reasons for the great Jewish success story in the modern world is because we were used to living on the edge. We had to think on our feet. We had to think for ourselves, we had to be versatile.

So in a way you could say it's Jewish history that shaped the Jew. But there's some interesting questions that all this throws up. What may a Jew study, and please don't forget that when we come to the New World, what is going to emerge as the majority religion of the New World. Of course it's going to be conservative Judaism because particularly as the Americas are going to open up, just think of the Gold rush and all the little peddlers who followed the gold rush. Many of the wild west towns. Who do you think owned the general store, the Jew? It starts out where you've got a house and cart and you service the homesteads. Do you know when Shabbat is?

Can you get kosher food? So it's fascinating. Again, this is about adaptability. So I am going to finish here. I know we've got quite a few questions and next week of course is Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th and I will be giving a presentation on that and we have some special events around that event. And then we will be continuing with the Americas up to 1880 and then we will be looking at the show. This is something that Wendy and I have been devising. So we are trying very hard to create a concerted syllabus for you. And let me just see what the questions are. Oh, this is people being nice to me.

Q&A and Comments:

What is my view of the link between Zoroastrian and Judaism? I can't answer that with enough authority. Zoroastrianism, it's got more to do with Christianity I think. People are liking.

Q: Was the Inquisition aimed exclusively at conversos or Christian?

A: Interesting question, Morris. It's aimed at Heretics, it's not aimed at Jews. The Inquisition only could attack people who were outwardly Catholic. Now the Albigensian Crusade was against Christian heresy. Those of you who know English history, Elizabeth was branded a heretic by Philip II. That's why he tried to conquer England. I mean of course he wanted the wealth, but don't forget it's the religious reason also. So it's only conversos. That's why the Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal because there were, whilst you've got Jews there, conversos will always backslide.

Oh this is lovely from Linda. In this tiny shore in Dubrovnik, there's a letter from the governor of that city giving Dona Gracia permission to travel through Dubrovnik on her way to Turkey. Now she is an extraordinary character. The correct name is Samuel Palache. Yes, I would say Germans are not Nazis. I don't know what that was about darling. Then plaque next to the gravestone in Ouderkerk of Menasseh ben Israel states alias Manuol Dias.

Q: When did he revert to his Hebrew name or was he always recognised by his Iberian name?

A: When he came, when the family came out as Jewish in Amsterdam, they were all converso families. You've got to remember when the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492 and expelled from Portugal in 1497, an awful lot of people converted. They converted because they wanted to maintain their positions in society and they were the ones who were subjected to the Inquisition. And it's when it's the Jews were expelled, mainly because of the backsliding of the conversos.

I'm getting lots of nice compliments today. Thank you very much. Potato comes from South America, not North. Yes, I beg your pardon on that. And it was brought to England by Walter Raleigh. Yvonne is asking me to talk a little slower, yes. It's the Ottoman Empire, not the Turkish Empire. Interesting one, I'm going to, I want to, I want to check that out actually. It's fascinating. Yes, let's go with Ottoman. There is a Portuguese Sephardi synagogue in the Hague.

What is the name of the person you mentioned who settled in the Hague? Samuel Palache. He was the ambassador to Morocco. Yes, the Wall Street is erected from. Yes, it's erected by Dutch settlers on the southern tip of Manhattan. A defence wall, yes. And isn't it fascinating that the first shop or abattoir on the wall is a kosher one? Yes, this is from Lee, recommending a book about piracy slavery and the Ottoman Christians in the 17th century. It's a fascinating period of history, a tragic period, but fascinating. Ah, you said that the Dutch had a huge fleet in order to trade with different countries. I got the impression from William that the Spanish went to South America to plunder, not trade.

Was there a true difference in the motives of these nations? Trade can be honourable, but plunder not. Look, the Conquistadors went for plunder, but gradually many many people went to create a home there and to trade. You've got to remember the pur-- I think William's next lecture is going to be on the Puritans who settled in America and a lot of people escaping persecution, William Penn In Pennsylvania, you had Catholics escaping Protestant persecution, Protestants escaping Catholic persecution. So it was a haven for people in Europe. And of course one of the interesting aspects of American history, if you want to chart Exodus from Europe, all you have to do is to look at horror stories In Europe. For example, the Irish potato famine led to a huge influx of Irish.

The French Huguenots who came in 1588 after St. Bartholomew's Massacre. So it's one thing after another. It's interesting. This is from Robert. I was married to the of Mendoza of Panama. They'd come from Curacao in the 19th or early century. Her aunts were Rachael and Sarah and the family would light candles at Friday dinner, all practising Catholics. This is fascinating, Robert, yes. This is a story that is often told. You know, a colleague of mine, when I sat on the International Task Force, Portugal, which was for Holocaust education, Portugal wanted to go, join it. So a colleague of mine was sent with ambassadors and went to the University of Lisbon to give a lecture where the rector told him that something like 60% of the population of Portugal believed that they have Jewish ancestors. Look, it's a huge number that converted.

Q: Were Jews involved in the slave trade?

A: Yes, I'm afraid they were. They were not the major slavers, but they were involved in the slave trade. And in the Civil War, the Jews of the North were against the slave trade, and the Jews of the South were in favour of it. And you have on both sides using Jewish sources to back whichever ends. We have a dark side to our history too.

Oh, this is interesting. This is from Saul. Although Jews became directors of both the Dutch East India Company and the Dutch West India Company, they were encouraged to only settle in the West Indies. They were not permitted to settle in the territories of the Dutch East India Company, exemplified by the four Jews who were with van Riebeeck in the first European settlement in the Cape of Good Hope. They were converted to Christianity on Christmas Day. Their record is the first register of Dutch reform church in South Africa. Thank you very much for that. You know I love this class. You're not a class, We're a group, we're a family.

Yes, this is from Sarah. From Recife, they went to Loreto in Peru. I was born in Lima. Pernambuco is a state in Brazil, the capital of Recife. There's still the Jewish quarter and a major road called Rua Sao Judas. Thank you for that Leah. The Jews who went to Recife were Sephardi, Betty. I hear that converso means pig in Spanish, is that true? No, it isn't Wilma. The word is Marrano. That means swine, and it's pejorative. We don't use it anymore. Some say Jews were central in the translated. No they were not the problems.

This is from Lydia. Your comment about the sign of new Jewish communities acquiring land for a cemetery reminded me of Abraham in Genesis 23 who says to the Hittites about the death of his wife Sarah. I'm a resident alien amongst you. Sell me a burial sight amongst you that I may move my dead for burial. Yes, that's beautiful, thank you for that. Oh, this is from Robert again. When I lived as an ex-patriot in Peru in the 1960s, Jews were often referred to as Portuguese. Even the Ashkenazi from Russia. That's from Lilly. I am from Lima, Peru, and was never aware... My goodness, we are so international, I love it. And this is another one from Jonathan. There's a very interesting museum of the Inquisition in Cartagena.

The Inquisition operated till 1830 in Colombia, long after it ceased in Europe. Thank you for that. This is from Gabe Sarah. In 1850, the first group of German Jews arrived in Lima. Where this day where there's there's still a fully functional synagogue. This is from Alan. My maternal family's roots were in Holland. My grandmother immigrated to Cape Town as a young girl and had a family. Fruit farmers in a little hamlet called in the western Cape. After the death of her husband, she returned to Holland a few years prior to the war. She was in hiding throughout the war in Hague. She was discovered by a German soldier who turned a blind eye and she was spared. Her family moved to Holland in the 1700s. Not sure if from Portugal. A very well-known Dutch Jewish named de Winter was there was ... Yeah, Alan, probably her family is Portuguese. Where did the Dr. Lopez who was in London in the late 1500s come from? He was also a converso. He would've come from, he came from the Iberian Peninsula, Glenda.

This is from Francis Taylor. On a visit to Santos in Brazil, we noticed that the coffee exchange had a Star of David in the tile floors. Interesting. This is from Michael. Thank you, Sephardi history is largely unknown to me. Rooftops, some of us are uncomfortable with Indians, Native Americans, indigenous or First Nations people. This is a real issue, isn't it? You know, Karl Popper, the great Viennese philosopher who had to get out, he said, we are going to be about the meaning of words. I have a friend who has been an educator in the black community all his life. And he said to me the other week, of course now we can only speak on the phone. And he said to me, I can't call him black anymore. I have to say he is a man of colour. Isn't it fascinating? Is the word Indian pejorative? I don't know. I will certainly use the term if you prefer it. Indigenous population I think is probably a nicer one.

- Trudy?

- Yes darling.

- I was told by a black friend of mine that he much prefers to be called black rather than of colour. So I think that's the next debate.

- I think it is a big debate. And I have that, I have that debate with people who are black and of colour.

- You know, it's a problem. And some Jews don't like to be referred to as Jews now. I mean, I don't think Jew is a pejorative term. Do you, Wendy? You have to say Jewish.

- [Wendy] No, no, no.

- It's fascinating how words change meaning as well and what's acceptable in certain societies. And it's acceptable in, you know. But I think Karl Popper is right. It's a great debate. How, how involved should we be in the use of words? And what words are hurtful? Words can kill, words can cause great pain. What is a hurtful word and what isn't? It's a fascinating debate. Okay, Wendy, shall I stop there?

- [Wendy] Thanks Trudy, yes, thank you.

- We've got, we've got another, we've got another lecture, we have Lisa in an hour.

- [Wendy] We do. So thank, thank you very much. Thank you for another outstanding presentation. Good luck for your, for your job.

- My Covid, yes, thank you, God bless, darling.

- [Wendy] Very good, take care. Bye-bye everybody, thanks for joining us.