

Fluid Religious Identities in the 16th and 18th Centuries in Europe and North American Colonies

Dr. Douglas Schar

5 May 2024



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Introduction

In the process of studying the Crypto-Jews of Switzerland, the Sephardic Jews in the Huguenot Diaspora and the English Crypto-Jews who disappeared in the American Colonies, something became clear. The period between the 16th to 18th centuries was filled with a tremendous amount of religious identity swapping in Europe and the colonies. Some people of Jewish ancestry changed their identity not once, but twice or sometimes even three times in this period.

If your ancestry DNA test revealed you have Jewish ancestry and you have no knowledge from whence it came, it may have come from this time in history. Jews were moving around Europe and around the colonies and some changed their identities as they move. Conversos from Spain became Walloon Reform Christians in Antwerp (16th century), then Italian Protestants in London (17th century), and then Anglican in the American Colonies (18th century). The times, the circumstances, the rules of this place or that place, resulted in people living fluid religious lives.

A Big Factor

On March 31, 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issued the Alhambra Decree, also known as the Edict of Expulsion. Jews were given four months to leave Spain or convert to Roman Catholicism. At that time, Spain was home to 300,000 Jews. In 1500, 300,000 would be the equivalent of 3,000,000 people. Thus, when the Alhambra Decree forced Jews to leave Spain or convert, we're talking about a massive number of people on the move or forced into Christianity.

According to Genie Milgrom, 100,000 left Spain as Jews and went east, deeper into the Mediterranean, 100,000 converted and assimilated into Spanish society, sincerely adopting Catholicism and 100,000 became Crypto-Jews (Jews that displayed an outward Catholic appearance while remaining true to the Jewish faith). The Spanish were on the lookout for Jews whose attachment to Catholicism was for show only. Ultimately, many of the 100,000 Crypto-Jews migrated west to the New World or north to Holland or England to avoid persecution as "bad Christians".

The Alhambra Decree resulted in widespread Jewish identity change. The Spanish Jews that left Spain as Jews became alien Spanish Jews in North Africa, Ottoman Empire and Italy. Some Jews became Spanish Catholics, and some became secretly Jewish/outwardly Catholic.

As a vast number of Spanish Jews were thrown into an identity crisis in the 16th century, Spanish Jews get most of the attention from Jewish historians. However, they were not the only Jews faced with forced or self-motivated identity change. There were others.

Between the 16th and 18th century, people of Jewish descent from Poland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy were also inclined or forced to change their identity.

Malcolm Stern's unparalleled documentation of early American Jews is currently titled "First American Jewish Families. 600 genealogies 1654-1988." However, when it was originally published it was titled, "Americans of Jewish Descent. A Compendium of Genealogy." The reason being that the Jewish families that arrived in America in 1654, were, for the most part, no longer Jewish families in 1988. They had changed their religious identity and become something else. They had become Americans of Jewish descent.

Jewish identity change, between the 16th-18th century, was a common phenomenon. This was true in Europe, and it was true in the American Colonies. This period is of great interest to persons looking to discover details of their hidden Jewish ancestry. Here are a few examples of Jewish identity changing between the 16th and the 17th century. A proviso. When discussing hidden Jewish ancestry, one must bear in mind we are discussing "secret" ancestry. When people hide things, they avoid leaving records.

Sometimes you get lucky and find a hard record, but often, you have to work with circumstantial evidence.

Bordeaux

After Bordeaux was returned to French ownership (1453), it was largely depopulated. The French King, Louis XI, issued edicts in both 1472 and 1474 inviting foreigners to come to Bordeaux. The crown and the local nobility were especially interested in businesspeople repopulating the region. These edicts, welcoming foreigners, remained in place for 250 years. In 1492, the Spanish gave Jews the option of leaving Spain or becoming Catholic. Spanish Jews fleeing to North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Italy get the most attention from historians. Bordeaux, so much closer to Spain, also became a new home to the expelled Spanish Jews. Considering it was the easiest place for Jews to get to, it's surprising that it is often overlooked by historians.

Later in history (1492-1530), when the Spanish began persecuting Conversos, once again Bordeaux opened its doors to refugees. Bordeaux became a magnet and a haven for this second wave of Spanish Jewish migration out of Spain. Unlike the earlier migration, this group had spent time living as Catholics and they had their own unique identity. Once safely planted in Bordeaux, some Conversos returned to Judaism, some remained Catholic, and some joined the French Reform Church (Huguenots). Here we see Spanish Jews (1) who became Spanish Catholics (2) becoming French Reform (3).

The Diamond Trade: The Portuguese Merchants

Portuguese Conversos had a trade network that spanned from Goa to Lisbon to Antwerp. They used this network to move many articles of trade, including diamonds. Conversos in Goa purchased raw Indian diamonds and sent them to relatives in Lisbon. From there the diamonds were sent to relatives in Antwerp to be cut and sold. It was a happy story for a while. That is until the very short-sighted Portuguese began persecuting Conversos, thereby disrupting the diamond trade route. The Portuguese launched the Inquisition in Lisbon in 1536 and in Goa (1560). Converso merchants in Lisbon were tried, as were Converso raw diamond buyers in Goa.

To make matters worse, the final leg of the diamond trade, Antwerp, was also subject to an inquisition of sorts. The Spanish King sent the Duke of Alba to the Spanish Netherlands, specifically to Antwerp to stamp out Converso and Protestant activity (1567). Alba set up the “Counsel of Troubles” or “The Counsel of Blood” as it was known. Lots of Conversos and Protestants ended up on the business end of a rope for being “less than Catholic”. Whoever was able to flee Antwerp did, heading to London, Amsterdam, and into Germany.

Ultimately, Portuguese Conversos moved from Goa to English-controlled India. Lisbon Converso merchants moved to London and Amsterdam. Converso diamond cutters and venders moved from Antwerp to London and Amsterdam. The Portuguese lost control of the diamond trade. This is an example of one industry that left Spanish and Portuguese-controlled lands due to Converso persecution. But all classes of merchants of Jewish descent, spice merchants, wine merchants, lumber merchants, and more had to get out of Catholic-controlled countries.

When “Portuguese merchants” or “Spanish merchants” moved onto a new place, they always chose a place under Protestant control. Some returned to Judaism or adopted the local reform religion. “Portuguese merchants” became French Reform, Dutch Reform, Flemish Reform, Italian Reform, and Church of England.

England

England became a magnet for refugees between the 16th and 18th centuries for a variety of reasons. In the 16th and 17th century, the English monarchy welcomed immigrants that had skills like weaving, glass making, metal working, music making, musical instrument making, etc. Later, England had colonies that needed colonists and refugees transited through England on their way to the English North American Colonies (17th -18th centuries). In both the earlier and the later period, there was lots of Jewish identity swapping in England.

Between 1292 and 1654, Jews were not permitted to reside in England. When Spanish and Portuguese Conversos merchants were fleeing Goa, Lisbon and Antwerp, and landed in England, returning to Judaism was not an option. As England had become a Protestant country, remaining Catholic was inadvisable. What was the work around for Portuguese Converso diamond merchants escaping the Inquisition in Lisbon or Antwerp? Or the Spanish Conversos fleeing the Inquisition in Madrid? When they got to London, they joined the French Church, the Dutch Church, the Italian Church, the Church of England, or NO CHURCH.

Between 1500 and 1654, Conversos, having made it to England, had a range of religious identities to choose from. The alien rolls, the tax records of aliens living in England between those years, reveal they did a lot of denomination hopping. In the 1540 tax rolls, a Converso might be listed as Dutch Reform, in the 1550 tax rolls the same Converso could be listed as French Reform, and in 1560, they might have belonged to the Church of England. For the most part, the early Converso arrivals to England did not display any serious attachment to any denomination.

One of the favorite options for Spanish and Portuguese Conversos, having arrived in London during the reign of Henry the VIII and Elizabeth I, was the Italian Church of London. The first pastors of the London Italian Church were Jews who had converted in Spain or Portugal to Catholicism and then adopted a Protestant identity in Antwerp or London. Services at the London Italian Church were, at times, conducted in Spanish. Many of the congregants were definitively of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Jewish ancestry. Spanish Jews (1) became Catholic in Spain (2) and Italian Reform in London (3).

Aranda is a uniquely Sephardic Jewish name. The Arandas in Spain were wealthy Jews and held high positions. When forced to convert, they became bishops and high court officials. When the Spanish began persecuting Conversos, many Arandas got out of Spain. Some of the family members made it to France and became French Reform (Huguenot) in Bordeaux. From there they moved around, changing their identities as they went. The Reverend Elie D'Arande (b. 1619 - d. 1683) pops up as a minister in the Walloon Church in Flanders. That would be the Reform church of southern Holland/Belgium. He was married to Elizabeth Bonhomme. The surnames indicate both were of Sephardic Jewish origin. When the Duke of Alba arrived in Antwerp to rid it of Conversos and Protestants (1567), the couple, being double winners, both Converso and Protestant, fled to London. Here we see Spanish Jewish (1), becomes Spanish Catholic (2), becomes Walloon Protestant (3).

Their son, Reverend Elie Paul D'Arande (b. 1625 - d. 1669), was born in London and would attend Oxford and become a minister in the French Reform church. So, his history would be Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), Walloon Protestant (3), French Reform (4).

Both Reverend Elie D'Arande's son and grandson became Turkey Merchants in London. This was a company that traded with Turkey and other places in the "east". The Turkey Merchant company had a "No JEW" policy. This was laughable because the company traded with the Levant, through displaced Spanish Jews throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Both Elie Paul D'Arande's son and grandson "disappeared" their Jewish ancestry and assumed a Church of England identity. Here we see Spanish Jewish (1), becomes Spanish Catholic (2), becomes Walloon Protestant (3), becomes French Reform (4), becomes Church of England (5).

The Belloc family is another decidedly Spanish-Jewish family. This name is unusual and not easily confused with other names. The family name appears in Mallorca, Spain, when Daniel Belloc, a converted Jew, was tried by the Inquisition in 1488 and in 1491. In both cases, he was granted a reconciliation or Edict of Grace. He somehow managed to avoid being put to death. Though there is no record of it, having survived the inquisitors twice, he probably made his way out of Spain. The name Belloc is listed in the who's who of Spanish Jews, "Sangre Judia", and the "Diccionario Sefardi de Sobrenomes". Some Bellocs left at the time of the Edict of Expulsion (1492) as Jews, heading for Tunisia, Algeria and Italy and used the name Belhaiche. Later, others left Spain as Conversos for the north of Europe and the New World under the name Belicha, Bellicha, Belich, and Belloc.

As previously stated, many Spanish Conversos ended up in Bordeaux and that included members of the Belloc family. There, some members returned to Judaism. This is evidenced by the name appearing in the civil marriage documents of the Sephardic Jewish bride, Marie Bellocq (b. 1839) to Benjamin León (b. 1841 - d. 1881) on August 3, 1880. Benjamin's parents were Abraham Leon and Lea Peryre. Abraham Leon's parents were Jacob Leon and Rachel Lopes Dias. Practicing Spanish-Jewish Bellocs lived in France at least through the 19th century! Their trajectory would have been Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), French Jewish (3).

Other Converso Bellocs became French Protestants. One such family lived in Nantes and their genealogy reveals a list of Sephardic-Jewish names. The first recorded French Protestant member of this family is Moise Belloc (b. 1650 - d. 1719). Moise was Procurator Protestant de la Chambre et Edit or the Protestant Prosecutor of the Chamber. This means he oversaw a special court that heard cases or disputes that arose in the French Protestant community.

In short, Moise Belloc was a very important Huguenot in Bordeaux. He and his wife, Jeanne SeRe were both from Bordeaux merchants' families of Sephardic origin. SeRe was another Sephardic name (Cera, Cerez, Sera, Serez). Their trajectory was Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholics (2), French Reform (3).

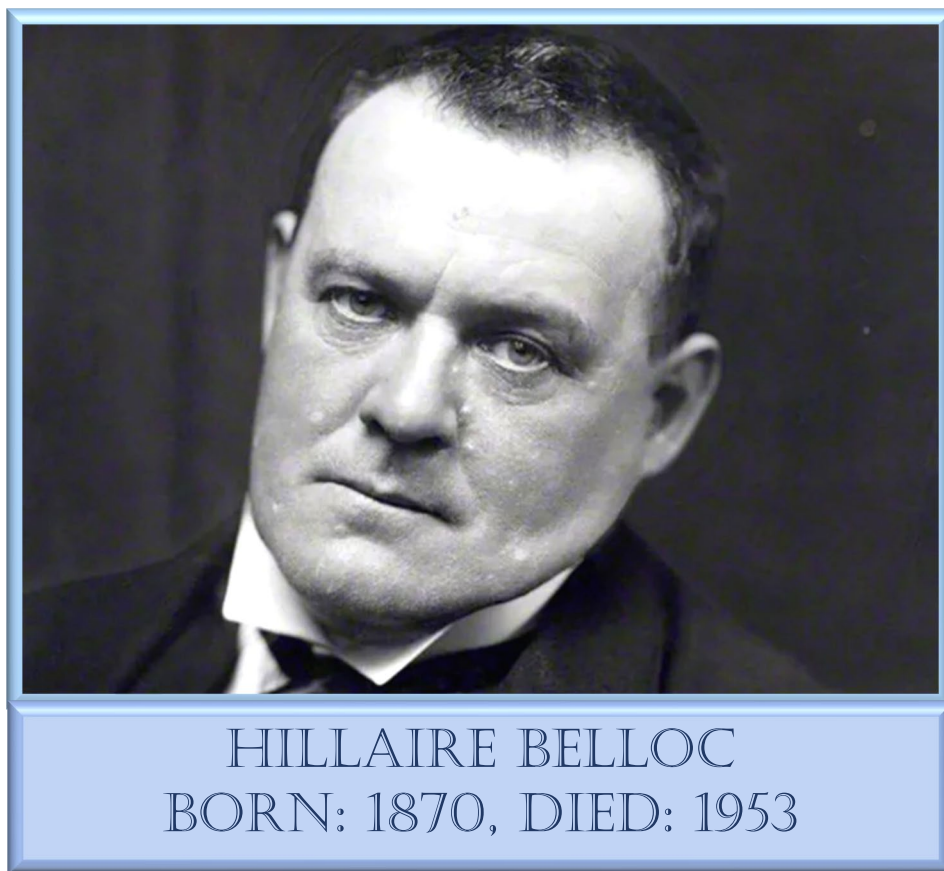


JEANNE HILLAIRE BELLOC, PAINTER
BORN: 1786, DIED 1866

This particular Huguenot family was made famous by Moise's great-great-great grandson, the painter Jeanne Hillaire Belloc (b. 1786 - d. 1866). Jeanne Hillaire married an English woman and relocated to London and became a member of the Church of England. Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), French Reform (3), Church of England (4).

Jeanne Hillaire's grandson, Hillaire Belloc (b. 1870 - d. 1953) would become a famous writer, and made a complete round trip. He became a devout Catholic and active anti-semite! His trajectory was Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), French Reform (3), Church of England (4), Roman Catholic (5)

Hillaire Belloc was an odd man. Firstly, he wrote both children's books and political essays. His children's books often involved bad children being eaten by wild animals as cautionary tales for children inclined to misbehave. As for his political writing, well, this is very odd considering his family origin story. He became a fervent antisemite. In his 1922 book, "The Jews", he wrote the following:



"...the continued presence of the Jewish nation intermixed with other nations alien to it presents a permanent problem of the gravest character..." and that, "The Catholic Church is the conservator of an age-long European tradition, and that tradition will never compromise with the fiction that a Jew can be other than a Jew. Wherever the Catholic Church has power, and in proportion to its power, the Jewish problem will be recognized to the full."

According to Belloc, a descendent of Spanish Jews himself, Jews could never be integrated into European society and that the Catholic Church had been and would be the organization that kept people aware that Jew could never be anything but a Jew?

In 20th-century France, we find French-Jewish Bellocs celebrating a Jewish marriage and in England we find an antisemitic-Catholic Belloc fanning the flames of Jewish hatred.

Germany

Following the end of the 30 Years' War (1648), much of Germany was depopulated. Regional nobility encouraged foreign immigration. Much like the aristocrats of Bordeaux, they needed bodies to inhabit the empty villages.

Conveniently, at about the same time, Louis the XVI evicted the Huguenots (1685). Germany needed people. French Huguenot refugees needed a new home. Thus, Huguenots went to Germany. And some of those Huguenots refugees came from Sephardic-Jewish ancestry.

The French Reform Church in Germany, became a magnet for German Jews. Some German Jews "became" French Reform (Huguenot) in Germany. In addition to this, some Spanish Conversos ended up in Germany and they, too, joined the French Reform Church. In certain locations, the "French Church" may have been as little as 50% French. The rest of the congregations were made up of people who "became" French Reform in Germany.

While Germany still needed immigrants, the Swiss undertook an ethnic and religious purge of religious "non-conformers" who resided in Switzerland (1720-1780). The much hated "non-conformers" were an ethnic group who had their own religion and their own ways. They became known as Anabaptists in the 18th century, but family trees and historical documents demonstrate they had existed in Switzerland long before they were called Anabaptists.

This group of people had never been Catholic, and later showed even less interest in the protestant movement. They only married amongst themselves, as a rule and mandate, maintaining distance from general society. They were prohibited from even eating with "outsiders." They had professions that made them neither peasants nor aristocrats.

Contemporary genetic research reveals this ethnic group was of Jewish origin. They were and are a mix of Indian Jews, Uzbeki Jews, Greek Jews, Iranian Jews, Italian Jews and German Jews. Their origin is a mystery and how their belief system came into being is also unknown. One theory is they descend from early Jewish-Christian merchants who lived in Switzerland, the highway between northern and southern Europe. Significantly, they refused to give up their "ways" to trade them in for Catholic or Protestant church

membership. This made them non-conformers. Make no mistake, this ethnic group was hated. In Eshleman's "Historic Background and Annals of the Swiss and German Pioneer Settlers of South-Eastern Pennsylvania," we read of inter-Canton communications dealing with this ethnic group:

"1527. Berne Asks Zurich How They Exterminate the Mennonites There.

On the 14th of September, of this year, the Berne authorities wrote to Zurich and informed them that they had published a decree against the Anabaptists or Mennonites to the effect that they must stop practicing the faith or leave the country, and warning them that if they went into any other part of Switzerland and keep on their doctrine, they would be punished wherever they are.

*About the same time Berne asked information from Zurich how they managed to reduce the Baptists to such a small number so early, stating that they wished to follow the same method. Zurich said the best method they found was to **kill them.**"*

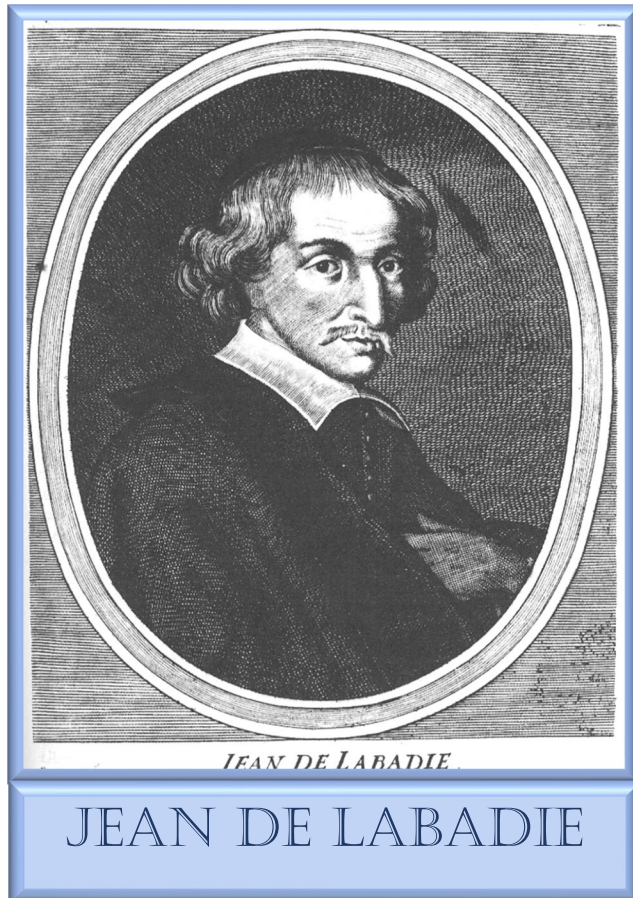
As time progressed, and it became clear that this ethnic group, the Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonites as they would come to be known, were not going to join the Protestant church, persecution worsened. Between 1720-1780 the bulk of them got out of Switzerland. Some ran to America, some to Alsace Lorraine, and some to Germany. Germany still wanted "immigrants," and they welcomed the Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite refugees, though most of the Swiss refugees only stayed in Germany or Alsace long enough to earn their passage to America to rejoin their families. This group maintained their religious identity in Switzerland and in America, but in the colonies, they were joined by other people in the process of identity change.

Concurrently, Jacob Joseph Frank, or Jacob Lejbowicz (b. 1726 - d. 1790), a Polish Jew, led 30,000 or more Polish Jews to Christianity and to a life in Germany. Lejbowicz came from a Jewish family that were followers of the Jewish "messiah" Tsabatai Tsvi. Jacob was a gem dealer and had the opportunity to travel to the home territory of Tsabatai Tsvi in Salonica, Greece. Jacob became known as "The Frank" because in the eastern countries he was perceived as being from Germany. Ultimately, he took Frank as his last name. In a very strange twist, Jacob Frank decided he was the re-incarnation of the now dead "messiah," Tsabatai Tsvi. He went back to Poland, announced the good news, and attracted many followers from within the Polish-Jewish community. His followers became known as Frankists.

The Polish rabbinate had a problem with Frank and his messianic aspirations, and declared Frank and all his followers Herem, or cast out (1756). As a result, Frank began

negotiations with the Catholic church for he and all his followers to convert to the Roman Catholicism (1759). He converted and at least 30,000 Polish Jews became Catholic. Some, perhaps as many as 5000, Polish Jews became Moravian Christians. As former Jews, and the adherents of a messiah, many Frankists found life in Poland less than comfortable and moved to Germany. So here we see Polish Jews (1), Polish Catholics (2), German Catholics (3) or Polish Jews (1), Moravian Christians (2).

And then there was Jean Labadie and the Labadists. Jean Labadie is a man of mystery.



Born on February 13, 1610, in Lasserre, France, he led quite an amazing life and became quite famous. Indeed, it is so famous that you would think details of his family or origin would be known. But, in fact, very little is known about his past. His father was said to be Jean Charles Labadie, a soldier of fortune, who may or may not have been elevated from commoner due to his military service. Jean was born just north of the Spanish border.

However, his last name tells us something about his origins. Abadia was a common Spanish-Jewish name and a common Spanish-Converso name. It had many forms (Abbadia, Abadi, Abaddya, L'Abadie, etc.) Spanish Jewish Abadias fled to southern France, Bordeaux to Narbonne, after the Edict of Expulsion as did Converso Abdias 100 years later. Some returned to Judaism. Some

remained Catholic and some became French Reform. There is little doubt Jean Labadie (L'Abadia) came from Spanish-Jewish origins.

Jean started life by entering the Jesuit Order, the preferred order of the converted Jews. The Jesuits were, after all, started by a bunch of converted Jews in Spain. He worked as a parish priest in Paris, Bordeaux and Amiens. He was posted to Amiens in 1639.

Jean Labadie was a very unattractive man, but apparently, he could shake the barn beams down when he preached. What he was missing in the looks department, he made up for in the charisma department. In particular, the upper-class ladies in Amiens, wanted him

as their confessor - as in, a lot of ladies. And this did not make him popular with their husbands or the Church authorities.

Apart from being an unlikely lady's man, he was an active student. He was drawn to the writings of Calvin, Jansen, and a host of other reform Christian heretics. These reform ideas took hold in his mind and heart. And then there is this: While in Amiens, playing around with the fancy ladies, he declared himself a "second John the Baptist", sent to announce the coming of the messiah. He admitted he had some divinity within himself. He was, in his opinion, a partial messiah.

Asserting himself as a new messiah did not go down well with the French Catholic Church for whom he worked. His cardinal, Cardinal Mazarin had him declared a disturber of the peace. He was kicked out of the Roman Catholic church. He left the Catholic church and joined the French Reform church in Montauban in 1650 and became a pastor.

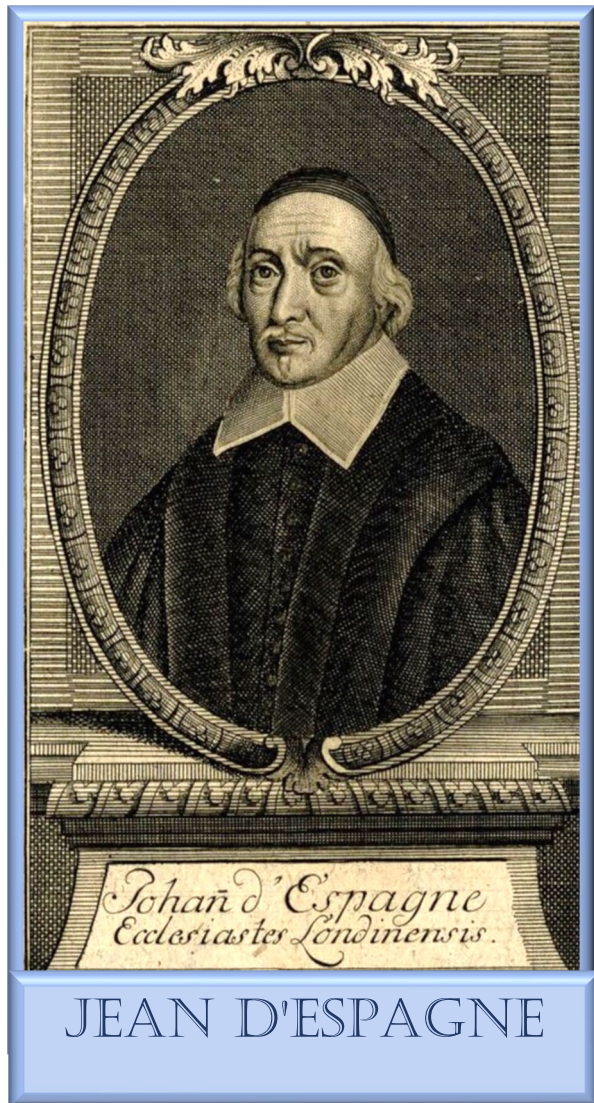
Jean was an excellent orator. People would sit for four hours to hear his sermons. And apparently, he was inclined to preach for hours. However, the French Protestant Church in Montauban thought he was too popular and too far out in his ideas, and again, he was asked to leave the French Church.

At the time that the local French Reform Church kicked him out, things were not good for French Reform in France. He had more than one reason to take his show on the road and leave France. Indeed, his career was marked by migration. When he needed to move, he just migrated to a better spot.

Despite being kicked out of the Catholic Church, and then booted from French Protestant Church, Jean was still in demand. Indeed, he had two great job offers. The first was to go to Geneva and take over the French Reform church there. Geneva was a great posting for a "French protestant" on the run.

His second offer was a bit odd. John Milton, famed English author, as in "Paradise Lost," invited Jean to London to take over the French Church there. His note to Labadie survived, because, well, all of Milton's notes survived. This story is strange on so many levels. First, why would John Milton, an Englishman, be on the recruitment committee for the French Church of London?

Jean was offered the job because the previous minister of the French Church in London, Jean D'Espagne (b. 1591 - d. 1659), had died. Jean D'Espagne, is another suspected Spanish-Crypto Jew with an interesting life. He was born in Mizoën, France, in the alps, in



a town known to be Waldensian. His father was a pastor. Jean became a French Reform pastor and preached in The Hague until he got kicked out for being too popular. Then he moved to London where he became a celebrity pastor. His wife was named Sara. When he died, he left all his money to his niece, Anne Deloie Coye (Cohen), and we had a working knowledge of famous Rabbis. In his 1662 publication, "The Examination of Seventeen Jewish Principles", D'Espagne makes his working knowledge of the Talmudic Rabbis clear. Whatever he was, he died, and Jean Labadie was offered his job.

Jean Labadie decided to take the desired position in Geneva and skip London. In 1659, he started pastoring in the Geneva at the French Protestant Church. Once in Switzerland, he continued his education as a man of religion. He met Anabaptists and learned of their belief system. He adopted their idea of adult baptism, wherein people chose to be baptized at an age they could make an informed decision. He adopted the Anabaptist concept of communal living.

He was acquainted with the work of Tsabatai Tsvi, a Jewish Rabbi and "messiah" from Turkey. He admired Tsabatai Tsvi and his thinking. This was radical because no clergy in Europe, neither Jewish nor Christian, had any patience for Tsabatai Tsvi. One of Jean Labadie's peculiarities was his openness to other groups and theologians concept of God and worship.

People in Geneva really liked him. He was hailed as the second Calvin. His church was packed. So popular, the local authorities got annoyed. Jean was once again invited to move on. Next, he took a job preaching at a Walloon Church in Middleburg in the Netherlands in 1666. His trajectory would be Converso (1), Roman Catholic (2), French Reform (3), Anabaptist (4), Walloon Reform (5), follower of Tsabatai Tsvi (6).

The Middleburg hitch was good for a while. Once again, he was dismissed for being too popular and having some unusual theological views. In 1669, he was on the road again. This time he decided to create his own religion, based on all the elements he had picked up along the way. His religion involved not celebrating the Sunday sabbath, adult baptism, communal living, and disavowing material goods. One of the most Jewish components of his “religion” was that everyone had to be able to read the bible on his or her own. Jews believed everyone had the responsibility to read the Torah; Christians believed reading the Bible was the right and role of the priest. He started his religion in Amsterdam, picked up followers, and then got in trouble with the local church authorities. He packed up his followers and moved the commune to Hereford, Germany.

Members of the community were mostly craftsmen and brought income into the commune through their work in weaving, tailoring, gold smithing, black smithing, and such like professions. These were Jewish professions. Labadie preached about welcoming Jews into his religion, and it appears that it may have worked.

One cannot leave the subject of Jean Labadie without looking at his run in with William Penn, founder of the state of Pennsylvania. Labadie and his followers attracted significant attention throughout Europe for many reasons. He was a charismatic leader, and he attracted celebrity members. William Penn, living in London, set his eyes on getting the Labadists to join the Quaker Church. To such an extent, Penn made a trip to Hereford, Germany in 1671 to meet with Labadie and get him and his followers to become Quakers.

Penn said this of the Labadists:



"For I clearly perceived, that though they had received some divine touches, there was danger they would run out with them, and spend them like prodigals: not knowing then where to stay their minds for daily bread. Yea, though they were something angelical and like to the celestial bodies, yet if they kept not their station, they would prove fallen stars. They moved not in the motion of HIM who visited them, but were filled with gross mixtures, and thereby brought forth mixed births, that is to say, things no natural but monstrous. In fine, they were shy of us, they knew us not; yet I believed well of some of the people, for a good thing was stirring in them."

While Jean Labadie lived, his followers remained in Germany. However, after his death they set up colonies in Holland, Maryland and Surinam.

When William Penn opened up Pennsylvania to German-speaking immigrants, the whole range of “Germans” took him up on the opportunity and moved. This included French Huguenots who lived in Germany, Sephardic and German Jews turned French Reform who lived in Germany, Swiss Anabaptists of Jewish origin who lived in Switzerland and Germany, the Frankists (Catholic and Moravian Polish Jews), and the Labadists.

The American Colonies

In the 17th century, the North American Colonies were hungry for colonists. The English crown granted land for 13 colonies which included Massachusetts (1607), New Hampshire (1629), Virginia (1624), Maryland (1632), Connecticut (1635), Rhode Island (1636), Delaware (1664), New York (1664), New Jersey (1674), Pennsylvania (1681), South Carolina (1712), North Carolina (1729), and Georgia (1732).

The colonies were essentially corporations managed by London. Once a corporation was granted land, the corporation had to populate the colony with people. They had to induce people to move from Europe to the new colony. Indeed, the managers of the colonies sent recruitment agents to places with people willing or likely to make a move.

Many Jewish people who had undergone an identity change, perhaps from Spanish Jew to Spanish Converso to French Reform, or Polish Jew to Frankist Moravian Christaen, were available for a fresh start in the colonies. They were WANTED in the colonies. Whereas, they might not have been so popular in their home countries, in the colonies they were welcome. And with the move across the Atlantic, more identity switching occurred.

The English Caribbean

In the article, *“Review of The Jewish Colonists in Barbados in the Year 1680”*, written by Wilfred Samuels (b. 1932 - d. 1935), Jewish Historical Society of England, another story of Jewish people taking on different identities appears. The article catalogues the Jews living in Barbados. This particular quote discusses Speightstown, in the St. Peters Parish:

“A very interesting character, too, was Mijnheer Paul Jansen de Vreda who had moved from St. Michaels Parish at the commencement of 1680. In that very year, 1678, which saw the godly Christian de Breda appointed Deacon of the Dutch Church in Austin Friars, London, this other scion of that well known Flemish family was to be found living in Barbados amongst the Jews and as a Jew! In the congregation he was naturally known as Abraham DeVreda. It is not difficult to picture the angry

mutterings and the looks of shocked surprise with which Mijnheer Francis Vanderwarfe and the other Hollanders of St. Peter's must have greeted "Mr. Paul Dawrade's" daily passages through the streets of Speights. On the 27th of September 1662, he had become an English subject-jointly with David Namias and one of the Gideon-Abudientes, and doubtless Gideon Dovrede who flourished on the island of Nevis about 1753 was his son. Paul Devreda kept four negros and one white servant at Speights. He also owned a horse, a convenient possession for any resident of St. Peters Parish who desired to keep in touch with Bridgetown."

Let's unpack this quote. In 1678, one member of the Flemish Converso De Vreda family, Christaen, moved from Antwerp to London and became a deacon in the Dutch Church. Another member of the De Vreda family, Paul, moved from Antwerp to Barbados where he became a practicing Jew. Within the same family we find two members ending up living in different places with different religious identities. Christaen's trajectory was Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), Antwerp Walloon Reform (3), London Dutch Reform (4). Abraham's trajectory was Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), Antwerp Walloon Reform (3), Caribbean Jew (4).

New York

Peter Stuyvesant, governor of New Amsterdam, was a real antisemite. (Though his portrait suggests he might have had some Semitic ancestry). He really did not like Jews and did not want them coming to the New Amsterdam Colony. He said this of Jews, *"the deceitful race, such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ, be not allowed to further infect and trouble this new colony."* Suffice it to say, he had a "no Jew" policy. However, the directors of the Dutch West India Company, for whom he worked, did not agree and reversed his position. He was told to correct himself and allow Jews to enter New Amsterdam. However, his preference was for all new immigrants to join the Dutch Reform Church. That included Jews, Catholics, Lutherans and Quakers. Some Jews did live and worship as Jews in New Amsterdam. Some Jews, already being a few steps away from Jewish observance, opted to become Dutch Reform.



The following story of two immigrants from Europe to New Amsterdam is conjectural, but no more conjectural than any other history provided for them:

Pietro Cesare Alberti (b. 1608 - d. 1655) was born in Venice, on the Island of Lido in Malamocco. He left his home to seek his fortune in New Amsterdam, departing from Holland, on the de Coninck David (the King David), and arrived in New Amsterdam in 1635. It is possible his origins were Jewish.

American historians suggest Pietro was from the Venice branch of the rich Florentine Alberti family. This historical faction ascribes Pietro's origins as aristocratic, the son of the Alberti family and a Venetian lady.

There are scholars who suspect the Albertis and other rich Florentine families may have had a Jewish origins, the Medicis included. Medici indicates the first of the name was a doctor, a Jewish profession, and the family made their wealth trading wool, a Jewish profession. Similarly, the Alberti family were a rich trading family, with branches in Bologna, Genoa, Venice, Barcelona, Paris, Ghent, Bruges, London, Syria and Greece. This kind of trade network would have been difficult without Jewish connections. If he came from this aristocratic family this may, in and of itself, suggest a Jewish origin.

But Pietro Alberti was born on the Lido, a thin strip of land in the ocean adjacent to Venice, most famous for its Jewish Ghetto, terrible smells from the sewage floating away from Venice and disease-ridden air. It is questionable whether a member of a rich family would have lived in or near the Jewish Ghetto. A rich son of a rich family was even less likely to leave Italy for the colonies.

A more likely scenario is he was an Italian Jew who lived in the Lido ghetto and decided to risk his life to change his fortune. What is certain is he followed the same path of many Italian Jews of that period, travelling first to Holland or England, and then onto Colonial America.



CESAR PIETRO ALBERTI

Pietro arrived in New Amsterdam and married a Flemish woman, also of suspected Jewish origin, Judith Manje. Judith Manje's family fled the Duke of Alba's inquisition in the Spanish Netherlands, either because they protestants (Walloon Reform) or Conversos, or both. They made their way to New Amsterdam and became Dutch Reform. Pietro and Judith married in the Dutch Reform Church and had seven children before they were both killed in an Indian raid. Here we see Pietro, a possible Italian Jew (1) becoming Dutch Reform (2), and Judith, his wife, a possible Spanish Crypto-Jew from Antwerp (1), member of the Walloon Church in Antwerp (2), becoming Dutch Reform (3), in New Amsterdam. Their children were christened in the Dutch Reform Church.

Virginia

When Cromwell took control of the court of Henry VIII, one of his first jobs was to fill the court with musicians. Henry wanted every room of the palace to have music in advance of his marriage to Anne of Cleves. Cromwell is considered by some to have been a converted Jew. He was an occupant and or custodian of the Domus Conversorum, the house of converts. Converts often became clerks in either the royal household or the church. Cromwell was a clerk to the royal household.

Whatever his origins, Cromwell and his ambassadors abroad recruited "Italian" musicians to provide the court with music. In fact, most of the recruited "Italian" musicians were Spanish Jews, or Spanish Jewish converts, who had moved to Italy after the expulsion from Spain. As it was illegal to be Jewish in England at that time, these Jewish musicians were hired as "Italian" musicians. And they kept their origins under wraps, forming a significant Crypto-Jewish community in 16th century London.

The list of Italian/Spanish Jewish families providing musical entertainment to the court included the Bassanos, the Lupos, the Violets, the Comes, the D'Ammanos, and many others. The "Italian" musicians mostly attended the London Italian Church. They married amongst themselves, were buried in the same locations, and generally kept to themselves.

Ambrose Lupo, one of the viol-playing London Crypto-Jews had quite a list of aliases. He began as Ambrose of Milan but by 1559 he became Ambrose Lupo. As the executor of another court musician's will, Anthony Moyses, the clerk recorded him as Ambrosius Deomaleyex, or de Almaliach. Almaliach is a version of Elmaleh, the name of a well-known Spanish-Jewish family found around the Mediterranean after the 1492 Expulsion (Elmaliah, Elmalih, Elmalech, Almaliach). We can add Ambrose Almaliach to his list of aliases. Between 1567 and 1576, he went by Ambrose Luck, Lucki, Lux, and Lucksor. The Spanish origin of the family can still be seen a generation later when his son, Peter Lupo, also a court musician, named his children Albiano, Elizabeth, Fardinando, and Maria.

The court musician Ludovico Bassano (b. 1542 - d. 1593) married Elizabeth Damano (b. 1572). Ludovico was the eldest son of Alvise Bassano. Elizabeth Damano was the daughter of Guigiello Damano (alias William Daman, De Man, De Ammano, Amman, Man, Della Man), another Crypto-Jewish musician with a lot of aliases. The union produced a daughter, Elizabeth Bassano (b. 1593 - d. 1630). Peter Lupo (b. 1534 - d. 1608) married Charlotte Wickers (b. 1555 - d. 1575), and they had a son, Albiono Lupo (b. 1574 - d. 1626). Elizabeth Bassano married Albiano Lupo in 1616. Albiano Lupo and Elizabeth Bassano were both the grandchildren of Ambrose Lupo (aka Ambrose Alimaliach, Lux, etc.)! They were cousins. London life could not have been all strawberries and cream for the music-playing Crypto-Jews. This couple traded their life in the English court for the hell that was the Virginia colony in the early 1600's.



NICHOLAS BASSANO LANIER
COUSIN OF ELIZABETH BASSANO

Records indicate Albiano arrived in Virginia on a ship called the Swann in 1610. Elizabeth followed him six years later. Albiano was granted 350 acres by the crown and Elizabeth was granted 50 acres. The crown gave immigrants 50 acres for every indentured person they brought with them and Albiano brought five indentured servants. All the indentured servants' surnames appear as London Registered Aliens. Albiano and Elizabeth may or may not have had the children, Elinor, Temperance, John, Robert, William, and Elizabeth. The trajectory of both husband and wife would have been Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Conversos (2), Italian Jews(?) (3), London Italian Reform (4), and finally Church of England (5).

In the blue book of Virginia families, "Genealogies of Virginia Families", one finds the Bassano-Lupos mentioned. "Lieutenant Albino (Albiano) Lupo, born in 1584, came to Virginia in 1610: his wife Elizabeth born in 1597, came over in 1616. For their own adventure and transporting out of England five servants, John Hayden, John Hayes, Hester Wheeler, David Palmer, and Elizabeth Hayden, they received patents for 450 acres of land east of the John Bush tract. Only 59 acres of the Celeys seem to have come out of the Lupo grant. This front included Riverview, where in recent years there still lived Negroes name Luper". (6)

Albiano died in 1626, and the Widow Lupo married John Chandler (b. 1599 - d. 1658) shortly thereafter. Records indicate she had a "civil" marriage to John Chandler in 1627. This was a win for Chandler who inherited Elizabeth's 400 acres of land. Elizabeth bore Chandler at least three children, Robert William Chandler II, John Chandler II, and Mary Chandler. Elizabeth Bassano Lupo Chandler, the descendent of Spanish Jews, was buried at St. John's Church Cemetery, Hampton, Virginia in 1635. She produced children who would become colonial members of the Church of England.

Elizabeth Bassano's son, Robert William Chandler, Sr. (b. 1627 - d. 1669) was born in Elizabeth City, Hampton, Virginia, and married Elizabeth Davis (b. 1629 - d. 1661). Davis itself is an English Crypto-Jewish surname. The couple had upwards of eight children who populated the Virginia colony with Chandlers who belonged to the Church of England. Some of their children included Mary, Francis, William, John, Robert, and Joseph.

Crypto-Jews do have the habit of marrying other Crypto-Jews. Elizabeth Bassano and John Chandler's great grandson, Robert Chandler (b. 1700 - d. 1764) married Sarah Billeboe (b. 1700 - d. 1766). Sarah Billeboe was the daughter of a Crypto-Jewish "Huguenot" settler of Manakin Town, Virginia, Jean-Jacques Billbeau (b. 1675 - d. 1735). Sarah Billeboe's familial trajectory would have been Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Converso (2), French Reform (3), Church of England (4). Sarah went from French Reform to Church of England when she married Robert Chandler. Her surname was spelled Billeboe, Bilbeau, Bilibo and was derived from Bilboa, Spain This marriage produced seven children: Joseph, Nancy Ann, John, Willian, Joel, James and Elisha, all members of the Church of England.

There is more. Philip Lupo (b. 1582-1668), the goldsmith brother of Albiano, arrived in Virginia in 1621 aboard the George. However, he came alone. He left behind his wife, Mary Comes, and his children. The Comes were also Crypto-Jewish court musicians (Comey, Comes, Coomes, Combe, Coimbra). George and Innocent de Combe, two string players in the Kings employ, could be traced back to Jewish Coimbra in Portugal. Thus, Mary Comes' trajectory was Portuguese Jewish (1), Portuguese Conversos (2), London Italian Reform (3). The fact Phillip did not bring his family to Virginia suggests he did not plan to stay, and he did not. He went back to London in and around 1624.

However, Phillip Lupo and Mary Comes son Phillip Lupo II (b. 1605 - d. 1670) did return to Virginia and established a family. His daughter, Marie Lupo (b. 1625 - d. 1689) married Thomas Royal (b. 1611 - d. 1709). Thomas's parents were Thomas Ryall (de Real) (b. 1595 - d. 1645) and Eleanor Falcon (b. 1606). Thomas Royals parents both bore Sephardic-Jewish names, names that can found on the London Alien list as Spanish Aliens! The couple would raise their children in the Church of England.

Maryland

Cecelius Calvert, 2nd Baron of Baltimore, was granted a charter for the state of Maryland in 1632. His father had started the process but was discredited when it was revealed he was a Catholic. When the colony was in its infancy, some Puritans from Virginia moved to the state and attempted to enforce the practice of Protestant Christianity. The Baron of Baltimore put down their effort and enacted the "Maryland Toleration Act," 1649, which specified all forms of Christianity were welcome in the state. Not all states permitted Catholics to enter, and this made Maryland a Catholic magnet for would be immigrants. Because so many Spanish and Portuguese Jews had become "Catholic" in Spain and Portugal, Maryland was a significant destination for former Spanish Jews.

In addition to this, Maryland was a favorite destination for English and Scottish convicts, sentenced to transport to the colonies, by the English courts. Between 1607 and 1776, tens of thousands of convicts were shipped to Maryland to be sold off as indentured servants. One of the major crimes resulting in conviction and transport was being a Gypsy. Thousands of Gypsies were rounded up in England and Scotland and shipped to Maryland. This could lead to people with roots in colonial Maryland discovering "Romani" on their ancestry DNA report. Or....

Recent research done by the author has revealed that many Anglo-Romani families are primarily of Jewish decent. Genetically they carry Indian Jewish, Central Asian Jewish (Uzbek), Caucasian Jewish (Azerbaijani, Georgian), Greek Jewish, Italian Jewish, Ashkenazi Jewish, and Sephardic-Jewish heritage. They have strong genetic ties with the Spanish-Jewish Gypsies. Thus, the many English and Scottish Gypsies transported to Maryland, were of Jewish origin.

Common Anglo-Romani surnames, like Boswell, Gray, Heron, Lee, Scamp, Shaw, Smith and Young are found in the London convict records, early Maryland transport records and indenture records. If one examines the family trees of well-known English Gypsy families, there are great holes in the trees left by family members who were convicted and transported. In one family tree alone, the English Gypsy Heron family tree, we see that Richard Heron (b. 1752 - d. 1842) and Devit Boswell (b. 1750 - d. 1841) had three sons, Solvaino, Lusha, and William "the Handsome Man", and one son in law, Suki Boswell,

convicted and transported to the colonies. Once the Anglo-Romani convicts served their indenture, they became members of the Church of England. Thus, their trajectory would be Jewish (1), Anglo-Romani (2), Colonial Church of England (3).

Pennsylvania

As we have seen, William Penn, a Quaker, was scouting Europe for immigrants to his colony. He went as far afield as Hereford, Germany to get the Labadists to move to “Pennsylvania.” His efforts worked and all manner of immigrants made their way to Pennsylvania.

Daniel Israel Rupp made a catalogue of 30,000 immigrants to Pennsylvania. His book, *“A Collection of Upwards of Thirty Thousand Names of German, Swiss, Dutch, French and Other Immigrants in Pennsylvania from 1727-1776”*, is the authoritative guide to immigrants to Pennsylvania. It’s based on the ship manifests that ferried the immigrants from Europe to Philadelphia. It only lists the men and boys that made the journey; women were not listed. Analyzing the list of 30,000 immigrants to Pennsylvania it becomes clear many of the immigrants in the process of identity change. The list reveals German Jews, Germany Gypsies, Spanish Jews who had become French Huguenots in Germany, Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite, etc. Many of these people who would leave Europe something, arrive and become something else.

Laurent Massa, a Spanish Converso, probably born in Antwerp, became a “French Protestant” or Huguenot in Otterberg, Germany. The French Church Book of Otterberg offers evidence of his “becoming” Christian. Thus his trajectory was probably Spanish Jew (1), Spanish Catholic (2), Antwerp Converso (3), French Reform (4).

1669

A la cene de Pentecoste, le 30 May, Lorent Massa a fait profession de la religion et promis d’y vivre chrestienement, a renonce et abjure les abus ausquels il a este esleve en l’Eglise Romaine.

At the Pentecostal Last Supper, on May 30, Lorent Massa made a profession of religion and promised to live in Christianity, renounced and abjured the abuses to which he was raised in the Roman Church.

In Otterberg, Lorent Massa married Esther Baugeo (Baugez). It appears Esther was also Huguenot with roots in Jewish Spain. They and their children remained in Otterberg living as French Protestants for two generations. Their granddaughter, Christina Marguerite Massa (b. 1710 - d. 1783) married Johan Nickel Gebhardt (b. 1713 - d. 1792) in the French Church. This is an interesting marriage. Just like some Spanish Conversos became French Reform in Germany, some German Jews became French Reform in Germany. Gebhardt is

recorded German Jewish surname. So, it is possible this Sephardic-Jewish girl turned Huguenot married a German Jewish boy turned Huguenot. The couple then immigrated to Pennsylvania and once there, became Lutheran!

Marguerite's probable trajectory would be Spanish Jewish (1), Spanish Converso (2), French Reform (3), Lutheran (4). Her husband Johan would be German Jewish (1), French Reform (2), Lutheran (3).

Christina and Johann's daughter, Anna Gebhardt (b. 1740 - d. 1825) married Johannes Stein (b. 1731 - d. 1810), and they baptized their children at the Altalaha Lutheran Church, in Bethel, Pennsylvania. Anna's choice of husband is interesting. Johannes Stein bore another traditionally German Jewish surname. Their children and grandchildren disappeared into various low key protestant denominations, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran included. Their Jewish ancestry disappeared. They moved into white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American life.

As has been established, Sephardic Jews and German Jews joined the French Protestant Church in Germany and then spread through the Huguenot diaspora. In my paper, *Swiss Crypto-Jews*, I established that many Swiss Anabaptist immigrants who came to America as religious refugees had Jewish ancestry.

In a collision of Hidden Jewish Ancestry worlds, and a demonstration of the fluid religious world in the 7th century, Huguenots (of Jewish descent), having made their way to Pennsylvania, married Swiss Mennonites and Amish (of Jewish descent). Some of these blended families ended up living in the Mennonite and Amish communities and others disappeared into low key protestant denominations.

One group of "Huguenots," that ended up in Pennsylvania Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite families were a group of intermarried "Huguenot" families from Frankenthal, Germany. These Frankenthal Huguenots include French Reform families that fled France and found refuge in Frankenthal and people who became French Reform in Frankenthal. This intermarried family group included the Keims, the De la Planches, the Bertollets, the Levans, and the DeTurks. They spent some years in Germany, but, ultimately, this group made their way to the Oley Township, Berks County, in Pennsylvania.

The first Huguenot on this list, Johannes Keim, came to Pennsylvania to scout out a new home for his family and his community back in Germany. On his 1698 tour, he identified what would become Oley Township as good option. He then went back to Germany and retrieved his family and the other interrelated families. While he was back in Germany, Johannes took a wife. There is some question as to whether the wife was Bertha Katerina DeTurk or Maria Bollerin. It seems he was married to both at some point in time. The best

evidence suggests Bertha De Turk was his first wife, he married her in Germany, and she made the passage to America from Germany with him.

Keim made it to America, specifically Oley Township, somewhere around 1706 with his wife, and the Bertolet, DeTurk, De La Planche, and Levan families.

Keim was associated with the French Reform Church in Germany and was considered a French Huguenot immigrant. But, once in Pennsylvania, he became a Quaker. As is obvious, Keim is not a French name. The other Keims living in Germany at that time (1700) were German Jews (Keim = chaim or life in Hebrew). Johannes Keim may be one of the German Jews that became French Reform in Germany. Either way, once in Pennsylvania he became a Quaker and had six children with his first wife and 10 children with his second wife. He populated Oley Township with lots of little Quaker Keims. His trajectory would be German Jewish (1), French Reform (2), Quaker (3).

His daughter Anna Maria Keim (b. 1734 - d. 1803) married Jacob Yoder (b. 1735 - d. 1803). Jacob Yoder was from an established Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite family. They and their children moved into the Swiss Anabaptist world, both Mennonite and Amish.

This marriage was not unique. Many Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonites married into the DeTurk, Bertolet, De la Planche (Plank), and Levan families in and around Oley Township, Pennsylvania. Some of the children of those marriages remained in the Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite community. Some of them passed into other protestant denominations.

Here are a few more examples of Huguenot families joining the Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite community in the Oley Township:

Esther De Turk (b. 1713 - d. 1798) was the daughter of Isaac De Turk and Maria De Harcourt. Her parents immigrated from Frankenthal, Germany to New York City. She was born in New York and was baptized in the French Church there. Her baptism records still exist.

Bateme, anjourd'hui dimanche 29 D'Avril 1712, Monseieur Rou, Ministere batise Esthe le Turque, nee le 30 d'Aoust dernier, fille de Isaac le Turque et Maria sa feme, presente au Bateme par Francois Lucas et la mere du cette enfant Parietin et Matienne.

Esther de Turk married Abraham Bertolet in 1735. Abraham was a Huguenot born in Minfield, Germany and immigrated to Oley Township when he was 14 years of age. Esther and Abraham were first cousins. He was the son of Jean Bertolet and Susanna de Harcourt. Susana de Harcourt was Maria de Harcourt's sister. They made their home in

the Oley Valley of Pennsylvania, on a piece of land deeded to Esther by her father when she was quite young.

Their son, Daniel De Turk Bertolet (b. 1741 - d. 1797) married the Swiss Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish Maria Yoder (b. 1749 - d. 1827) and thus the Huguenot families De Turk, Bertolet, and de Harcourts made their way into the Swiss Anabaptist/Mennonite community with one marriage.

However, Daniel and Maria's wedding certificate is interesting. It indicates they were neither married in an Anabaptist church nor the French Church. This may be as a result of it being a "mixed" marriage or because the two had changed up their religious identity. They were married in the Church of England.

"These presents certify that Daniel Bertolet and Maria Yoder, of Oley Township, in the County of Berks, and province of Pennsylvania, in North America, were joined together in Holy Bonds of Matrimony, and pronounced man and wife, according to the form established by law, in the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, this sixth day of December, in the year of our lord, one thousand seven hundred and sixty eight, by me, Alex Murray, Minister"

The marriage produced quite a few children; some would end up in the Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite community. At least one took a rather interesting path which would be hard to describe. That would include Daniel Yoder Bertolet (b. 1781 - d. 1868). Daniel was quite an interesting character and demonstrated the phenomenon of fluid religious identity.

At a point, Daniel became a Quaker as he believed in their practice of listening. He had the Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish influence of his mother and disavowed infant baptism, the swearing of oaths, and war. So, while he was a Quaker, he practiced Swiss Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish teachings.

Later in life, he left the Quaker religion for the Evangelical Association. The Evangelical Association was a non-denomination religious group that drew from Huguenot, Mennonite, Amish, Brethren, Hutterite, and other denominations. They generally met in homes in an informal manner. Daniel decided to build a spiritual meeting house and a cemetery for his Evangelical Association community, at his own expense, at his home.

However, the central organization of the "Evangelical Association," demanded he deed the meeting house and the cemetery to the central organization. To say that did not work for him would be an understatement.

In the “Genealogical History of the Bertolett Family,” compiled by Daniel H. Bertolet, we read the following:

“The idea of control over a house of worship intended for his friends and neighbors, vesting in a distant body of comparative strangers, was exceedingly repugnant to the donor. In the dispute which followed the disposition of this property Daniel Bertolet became so offended that he withdrew his offer, left the church, and never rejoined it, remaining until the end of his life independent of all church ties.”

As a result of his “dispute” with the central organizers of the Evangelical Association, Daniel built a fully independent, non-sectarian house of worship in 1842. He also established a cemetery for those that attended his non-sectarian house of worship. The Mennonite Heritage Center cemetery record lists over 75 Bartelots and Bertolets buried at the “Bertolet Meeting House”. Indeed, the same source indicates it became a burial ground for members of the DeTurk family. It became known as the Bertolet Union Meeting House cemetery. The meeting house still stands.

Daniel was French Huguenot (1), Swiss Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish (2), Quaker (3), Evangelical Association (4), Non-sectarian Spiritual (5).

Daniel Yoder Bertolet’s children and grandchildren married back into the four Oley-Huguenot families. Some belonged to the Swiss Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish community and others belonged to other Protestant churches.

His son, Abraham Bertolet (b. 1803 - d. 1835) married Catharine Levan DeTurk (b. 1812 - d. 1874), and they had three children. Abraham and Catharine’s only son, Horace DeTurk Bertolet (b. 1831 - d. 1865) married Adeline B. Miller (b. 1832 - d. 1925) and had five children. Their daughter Ida Eugenie (b. 1855 - d. 1913) married Dr. D. Heber Plank. (de la Planche).

While it might appear these Huguenot and Swiss Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish families had little in common, this may not be the case. Maria Yoder (b. 1749 - d. 1827), who married Daniel de Turk Bertolet, is a direct descendant of the Nicolas Yoder and Anna Trachsel. The Trachsel family is thought to be of Sephardic-Jewish origin, having made their way from Spain to Turkey, and from Turkey to Switzerland.

Daniel’s father’s family’s name, DE TURK, is not only not a French name. It literally means, “from Turkey”. This means the French Huguenot De Turk family were not French but rather from Turkey. And more specifically, probably Jews from Spain who migrated to Turkey. De Turk or some variation of the name Turk; De Turk, deTourge, La Turk, and De la Turkie. Turk, Turkie, and Turquie included were common European Jewish names. All

variations are recorded as Sephardic-Jewish names and Sephardic-Jewish surnames found in Turkey. Thus, it is possible the De Turk family followed a similar path to that of the Trachsel/Yoder family, from Jewish Spain to Turkey to France, Switzerland and Germany, and onto Oley Township, Pennsylvania.

In the late 19th century, many American people wrote books about their family history and that includes the De Turks, the Bertolets, the Faris family, and so on. These books offer meticulously crafted genealogies for the families, from the first American immigrant to subsequent American generations. They all also offer a family origin story. The people who wrote these books were doing so in Pennsylvania or Ohio and did not have access to the best libraries in the world let alone the amount of information we have access to today. As a result, their “imagined” family origin stories often contain part fact and part fiction. In the “History and Genealogy of the DeTurk, DeTurck Family,” compiled by Eugene Peter DeTurk, we see this:

“The DeTurk family is of Oriental origin. The progenitor of the family was brought to France by Count Kaimund of Toulouse from Palestine, where he was taken prisoner in the year 1105 A.D. He was a Turkish Emir, that is a prince, and his name was Hayraddin Silodin. In France, however, he assumed the name of Arnulph Le Turk, that is Arnulph the Turk. He was knighted and admitted into the nobility.”

Maybe. Maybe the original De Turk was a Turkish Emir brought to France from Palestine (Israel) as a prisoner and then welcomed into the French nobility. In general, Americans’ family origin stories that include association with aristocracy and royalty, are suspect. When Victorian Americans were writing these tomes on their family’s genealogy, it was popular to trace their family back to a king, a prince or a countess. The number of people in America that think their family descends from Charlemagne is astonishing. That the family came from Palestine is possible. Palestine was controlled by the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) for quite some time. But, the Prince part, probably wishful thinking.

Practically speaking, the greatest number of De Turks in Europe were Jews. Many of them came from Turkey. As such, it is more than likely the De Turk family descended from a Turkish Jewish merchant than a Turkish Emir.

It’s interesting that two people, with remote ties to Spanish-Jewish-Turkey, would meet up in Olney Township, Pennsylvania! And produce a son.... who opened his own house of worship with NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION.

Dr. Jacques de la Planche, was born 1684 in Voussac, Allier, Avergne, France to a French Protestant family. When trouble broke out for the Huguenots in France, his family escaped to Basel, Switzerland through the Alps. He studied medicine in Basel. The

famous Pastor Kocherthal organized a flotilla of 11 ships of Swiss and Palatines bound for the colonies. Jacques and his father took a ride to the Americas. The ships landed in New York and after a short stay in New York, the De la Planche's family moved to Olney Township, Pennsylvania, in 1720, along with the Bertolet, DeTurk, and Levan/Levin/Levant families. Not only did these families arrive in Olney Township together, but they would also intermarry repeatedly.

Dr. Jacques de la Planch married Catherine Houghton (b. 1691 - d. 1773). The couple had 8 children Sarah, Frederick, Jacob, Mary Catherine Eymann (Amish), Mary Marguerite Magdalena Shaffer (Mennonite), Anna Marie **Keim** (Quaker), Johanna Maria Sophia, and Susana Rothermal. Please note one of their children, Anna Marie, married into the Keim family.

Their son Frederick de las Planches (b. 1728 - d. 1786) married a woman named Elizabeth, no last name available (b. 1729 - d. 1788), and they had a son, Peter (b. 1748 - d. 1831). Peter changed his name from de la Planche to Plank and became a Mennonite. He married a Mennonite girl, Veronica Francis Kauffman (b. 1762 - d. 1837). Whether he converted and then married a Mennonite or married a Mennonite and then converted is not clear. What is clear is he embraced being Mennonite: he became a Bishop in the Mennonite Church. His journey was French Reform (1), Mennonite (2), Amish (3), Quaker (4), Mennonite (5).

Another example of the Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite Huguenot mixing involves the Levan/Levant family.

When the Huguenots arrived in Oley Township, this included the Levan brothers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The name is spelled in various ways, all point to an "eastern" origin. Levan and LeVan could have originally been Levin, a common European-Jewish surname. But it could also have been derived from Le Vin, the wine. Wine making was a Jewish occupation in Europe. Or the name could have been derived from Levant. The Levant is the area of the eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia, basically Syria, Israel, and Jordan. Levant, and all its variations (Levante, Levantino, etc.) were Jewish surnames. The one thing Levan/Levant was not, was a French last name. So here again, we see another family of not French, living as Huguenots, who ended up in the same village in Pennsylvania.

Here is a family tree (following page) showing how the Oley "Huguenots" ended up in Swiss Anabaptist/Amish/Mennonite family trees.

Jean Antoine Levent (Huguenot)

Born: 1650 in Picardie, France
Died: 1694 in Amsterdam, Holland
married

Sara de Semery (Huguenot)

Born: 1655 in Picardie, France
Died: 1697 in Amsterdam, Holland

Daniel Levan/Levant (Huguenot)

Son of Jean Levent & Sara de Semery
Born: 1672 in Picardie, France
Died: 1768 in Amsterdam, Holland
married

Marie Le Beau (Huguenot)

Born: 1676 in Picardie, France
Died: 1735 in Amsterdam, Holland
(La Beau = LeBon = Sephardic-Jewish surname)

Jacob Le Beau Levan (Huguenot)

Son of Daniel Levan & Sara de Semery
Born: 1702 in Amsterdam, Holland
Died: 1766 in Oley Township, Pennsylvania
married

Anna Maria Graff (Huguenot)

Born: 1705 in Germany
Died: 1766 in Berks, Pennsylvania
(Graf is a German-Jewish surname that became a Swiss Anabaptist/ Amish/ Mennonite name)

Children of Eva Graff Levan & Peter Yoder

Jacob Yoder (1765-1810)

Susannah Yoder (1769-1800) married cousin
Daniel Bertolet Hoch (1768-1829)

Catherine Yoder (1775-1814) married cousin
Joseph Levan (1779-1817)

Johannes Yoder (1778-1820) married cousin
Catherina Levan (1782-1802)

Hannah Yoder (1787-1893)

Johanns Keim

(German-Jewish Huguenot)

Born: 1675 in Germany
Died: 1753 in Oley, Pennsylvania
(Keim is a German-Jewish Surname)
married

Katherine de Turk (Huguenot)

Born: 1706 in Germany
Died: 1731 in Oley, Pennsylvania
(De Turk is a German-Jewish and Sephardic-Jewish surname)

Elizabeth Keim (Huguenot)

Daughter of Johanns Keim & Katherine De Turk
Born: 1706 in Germany
Died: 1779 in Oley, Pennsylvania
married

Hans Yoder

(Anabaptist/ Amish/ Mennonite)
Born: 1701 in Steffisburg, Switzerland
Died: 1779 in Oley, Pennsylvania
(Yoder is a Swiss Crypto-Jewish surname)

Peter Yoder (Swiss Anabaptist/ Amish/ Mennonite/ Huguenot)

Son of Hans Yoder & Elizabeth Keim
Born: 1740 in Oleys, Pennsylvania
Died: 1809 in Oley, Pennsylvania
married

Eva Graff Levan (Swiss Anabaptist/ Amish/ Mennonite/ Huguenot)

Daughter of Jacob Levan & Anna Graff
Born: 1742 in Berks, Pennsylvania
Died: 1819 in Oley, Pennsylvania
Married at the First Reformed Church of Pennsylvania, the first German Reform church in America by Pastor George Michael Weiss. (Weiss was a common German-Jewish surname)

Just 17 miles to the south of Oley, in New Goshenhoppen, Pennsylvania, we find David Levi (b. 1728 - d. 1784) arriving from Germany. He arrived in 1758 and was baptized in 1759, at the age of 31. He went from German-Jewish to German Reform. In 1761, he married Margaretha Eschbach at the Goshenhoppen Reform Church, Pastor George Michael Weiss officiating. Pastor Weiss had moved from Philadelphia to the interior. David and Margaretha's daughter, Sarah (b. 1775 - d. 1858) married German born Heinrich Troxell (b. 1769 - d. 1829) (Trachsell). Another member of the Trachsell family, originating in Spain, making their way to Turkey, then Switzerland, and Germany, found his way to Pennsylvania, just 17 miles from where his relatives lived! This couple and their six children became Lutherans.

In Pennsylvania, like all the colonies, we find people changing their identity, in some cases, repeatedly. It happened all over Pennsylvania and indeed, in every colony.

Georgia

The Georgia colony, the last colony, was set up to give down and out English people a place to improve themselves. Being the last colony, it had the hardest time recruiting people. The other colonies had already grabbed the people who were willing to make the transatlantic move. This resulted in very few restrictions on who could immigrate to Georgia. However, Georgia did have two restrictions. Odd as they may be the exclusions included rum makers and lawyers. The "no lawyer thing" was never relaxed by the early trustees of the state. The rum was another story. James Edward Ogelthorpe, the founder of the state, did allow Jews to immigrate to Georgia. (As long as they were not lawyers or rum makers.)

In 1733, 40 Sephardic "Israelites" arrived from Europe. In 1734, 12 German-Jewish families arrived in Georgia. A German-Christian pastor, Reverend Bolzius, commented that the German Jews attended his church. Some German Jews became German Lutherans in Georgia. Others remained Jewish and are credited with founding synagogues throughout the state.

The young colony was dominated by Iberian Jews who came directly from Spain or Portugal, or indirectly through Amsterdam, London, or the Caribbean. However, there are some notable exceptions, The Italian Jews.

One of the most colorful was Joseph Solomon Ottelengi (b. 1711-?). Born in Italy to a rabbi father, he trained to be a ritual slaughterer. When his mother's brother invited him to London to marry his daughter, he jumped at the chance. Unfortunately, by the time he got there, his cousin had married someone else. Despite he and his uncle's best effort to get her to divorce her husband, which included trying to buy him off, she refused to quit

her husband. Simultaneously, Joseph's uncle, a widow, married a second time and the new wife had no use for this Italian nephew.

To make matters worse, Joseph became attracted to Christianity and converted. The uncle demanded the nephew repay all the costs associated with his importation to England, and when Joseph would not pay, his uncle had him put in debtor's prison. Eventually, Joseph Solomon Ottelengi got out of jail and married a Jewish woman who also converted to Christianity.

The records are a bit unclear. Some say Joseph and his wife got a patent to go to Georgia as missionaries to the African slaves. Others state they got a patent to help create a silk industry. In either event, Joseph Ottelengi and his wife, moved from England to Georgia. Whether or not they had children is unknown. He became a prominent Georgia citizen and was elected to public office several times. He was always identified as a converted Jew. His journey was Italian Jewish (1), Church of England (2).

Simultaneously, a large number of London Italian Jewish Ottelengis appeared in nearby Charleston, South Carolina. They were, of course, Solomon's relatives, and despite his converted status, there was a friendly report between the Georgia Ottelengis and the South Carolina clan. His South Carolina relatives included Mordecai Ottolenghi, born in Italy, and his wife, Rinah, born in Gibraltar. They immigrated to Charleston, South Carolina and had two children, Esther Sarah, born in 1787 and Abraham, born in 1790. These children were raised Jewish and married into Jewish families, Esther Sarah into the Solomons' family and Abraham into the Jacobs' family. Italian Jewish (1), Colonial American Jewish (2).

These are persons who were to be of documented Jewish ancestry. Then there are persons of suspected Jewish ancestry that made their way to Georgia. In Armstrong's "Notable Southern Families" we read of Ferdinand Phinzy (b. 1760 - d. 1818). Armstrong says,

"Ferdinand Phinzy, first of the name, first at least in America, was an Italian gentleman who emigrated to America in the 18th century. It is believed that he first went to from Italy to France, where he spent some time before embarking for America. He married Margaret Condow and raised a family of fine sons and daughters. He established a home in Georgia and acquired great wealth and made a reputation for honesty and integrity of character which was also a legacy to his family, one of the most powerful in Georgia."

An Italian gentleman? Perhaps he had good manners. Phinzy is an Italian-Jewish surname. Finzi, Finezi, Fenzi, Phinzy, Finizi, Finessy, Phenecie are all the same name and

are known to be Jewish names in Italy. The name is thought to have been derived from Pinehas which became Fineas in Latin and Phinesy/Finzi in Italian. There is even a book and an adapted movie "In the Garden of the Finzi-Continis" which details the life of an Italian-Jewish family. Not only are the "Phinizy's" Italian Jews, but they are Italkim, Jews whose residence in Italy goes all the way back to the Roman days. Our immigrant Ferdinand's biography suggests he was from Parma, Italy, which had a stable Jewish population at that time he immigrated to Georgia.

Other Italian-Jewish Finzi/Phinizy's can be found in London, at the very same time Ferdinand lived. Ferdinand's likely cousin Judah Finzi, born in 1763 in Italy, married Simha Nunes-Carvalho at Bevis Marks Spanish synagogue in London in 1808. They had four sons, Abraham (b. 1808), Samuel (b. 1811), Daniel (b. 1813), and Salomon Hiam (b. 1815). Daniel Finzi-Nunes moved to Jamaica where he married Leah Nunes-Carvalho. They had 10 children, some remained Jewish, some joined the Church of England (Anglican).

The fact this immigrants name is an Italian-Jewish surname, and other Italian Jews went from Italy to London to Georgia, strengthens the argument he was an Italian Jew. Ferdinand Phinizy and his wife had six children, Sarah (b. 1788), Jacob (b. 1790 - d. 1853), Elizabeth (b. 1791 - d. 1884), John P. (b. 1793), and Marco (b. 1794). The children went on to marry into the leading Anglican families in Georgia. Ferdinand Phinizy was buried at the St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery in Augusta, Georgia. So, whatever he was in Italy, in Georgia, he became a member of the Church of England. His journey was likely Italian Jewish (1), Church of England (2).

Conclusion

Many people are getting their ancestry DNA test back and are surprised to discover they have Jewish ancestry, because there is no knowledge of their family having ever been Jewish. This may happen because their Jewish ancestry is so, so far back in the family tree that all knowledge of it has been lost.

The object of this paper was to demonstrate that much Jewish ancestry got "lost" between the 16th and 18th centuries.

There can be no greater evidence of this than Malcolm Stern's guide to early Jewish immigration to America, "Americans of Jewish Descent. A textbook of 600 American Jewish genealogies, from 1654 to present." Stern's meticulous genealogies reveal that many families that were Jewish in 1654 were no longer Jewish in the 20th century. They had changed their religious identity one, two, or three times in their 375 years of residence in North America.

If a Jewish family adopted a Protestant identity in 1800, it is no surprise that knowledge of this ancestry is unknown to their descendants living in 2024. If they adopted a Christian identity in 1654, this would be even more the case.

But DNA does not lie! A lot of people from non-descript ‘Anglo’ Protestant families get a surprise when their Ancestry DNA report comes back. Sephardic Jewish? Ashkenazi Jewish? There is a great likelihood this Jewish ancestry was hidden or “erased” in this period of fluid religious identity between 1500 and 1800.