

**THE TWO HUNDRED AND  
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
SETTLEMENT OF THE JEWS IN  
THE UNITED STATES, 1655-1905**

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The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the Jews in the United States,  
1655-1905 by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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**COMMEMORATORY MEDAL**


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The Two Hundred and  
Fiftieth Anniversary  
of the Settlement  
of the Jews in  
the United  
States

1655


1905



Addresses delivered at  
Carnegie Hall, New York,  
on Thanksgiving Day, 

MCMIV

Together with other select-  
ed addresses and proceedings.



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**THE NEW YORK CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY**

## PREFACE

The success of the celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of Jewish Settlement in America, and the valuable contributions to American Jewish history that it has occasioned, have induced the Executive Committee to preserve and reproduce in more permanent form a number of typical addresses, communications, and editorial writings, selected from the great mass of interesting and instructive material, remarkable for its excellence both as to matter and literary quality, called forth by the hundreds of public meetings held in the latter days of November, 1905, in conformity with the recommendations of the Committee. To publish all would require many volumes of huge bulk. It has, therefore, become necessary to resort to an arbitrary rule of selection. Obviously, the proceedings held at Carnegie Hall, in the City of New York, on Thanksgiving Day, being national in scope, constitute the nucleus of the compilation. Around these have been grouped a few of the many addresses delivered at such old or important centers of Jewish population as Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans, Albany, and San Francisco. That circumstances have rendered any omissions necessary is a source of sincere regret.

It may not be inappropriate to briefly sketch the history of the movement whose culmination has been



the source of universal gratification, and will, it is hoped, lead to a better understanding of the American Jew as an element in our population, not only by the public generally, but by the Jew himself.

On February 27th, 1905, the Board of Trustees of the Congregation Shearith Israel of New York, the oldest Jewish congregation in the United States, appointed a general committee of the congregation to consider the propriety of celebrating the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Jewish community in New York. This committee invited the officers of various Jewish congregations and charities to attend a public meeting at the vestry rooms of the synagogue on Sunday, April 9th, 1905. Concurrently, the American Jewish Historical Society at its thirteenth annual meeting held in Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 28th, 1905, had instructed its Executive Council to coöperate with other organizations in the proper commemoration of the event. At the public meeting in New York, Louis Marshall, Esq., presiding, and Hon. N. Taylor Phillips acting as secretary, it was unanimously resolved, upon motion of Rev. Dr. H. Pereira Mendes, "that a Committee of Fifteen be appointed by the chairman of this meeting to make arrangements for a celebration at some time during the present year of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the foundation of the Jewish community in the City of New York, and for the establishment of a permanent memorial of that important historic event, such Committee to have full power to carry such arrangements into effect, and to increase its number, if deemed advisable." The chairman and

secretary were added as members of this committee. It was the sense of the meeting that the celebration should be national in scope, as commemorating the first officially authorized settlement of Jews within the present limits of the United States, and that the particular event to be commemorated be the grant of official leave of settlement, dated April 26th, 1655, from the Dutch West India Company, though it would probably be most convenient to hold the celebration in the fall. The text of this grant reads as follows:

"26th of April, 1655.

"We would have liked to agree to your wishes and request that the new territories should not be further invaded by people of the Jewish race, for we foresee from such immigration the same difficulties which you fear, but after having further weighed and considered the matter, we observe that it would be unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by the Jews in the taking of Brazil, and also because of the large amount of capital which they have invested in shares of this company. After many consultations we have decided and resolved upon a certain petition made by said Portuguese Jews, that they shall have permission to sail to and trade in New Netherland and to live and remain there, provided the poor among 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."

The chairman of the meeting thereupon appointed the following Executive Committee: Jacob H. Schiff, chairman; Dr. Cyrus Adler, Hon. Samuel Greenbaum, Daniel Guggenheim, Prof. Jacob H. Hollander, Max

J. Kohler, Hon. Edward Lauterbach, Adolph Lewi-  
sohn, Louis Marshall, Rev. Dr. H. Pereira Mendes,  
Hon. N. Taylor Phillips, Hon. Simon W. Rosendale,  
William Salomon, Isaac N. Seligman, Louis Stern,  
Hon. Oscar S. Straus, and Hon. Mayer Sulzberger.  
The committee organized by the appointment of Mr.  
Schiff as chairman, Mr. Seligman as treasurer, and  
Mr. Kohler as honorary secretary. A General Com-  
mittee, composed of representative Jews residing in  
every State and Territory of the United States, was  
subsequently constituted, their names appearing *post*  
(p. 258).

Arrangements were in due time made to hold a  
public celebration at Carnegie Hall, New York City,  
on November 30th (Thanksgiving Day), 1905, and  
to recommend holding commemorative religious serv-  
ices on the Saturday and Sunday before Thanksgiv-  
ing Day in the various synagogues and Sabbath  
schools throughout the land. A special order of serv-  
ice was prepared under the auspices of the committee  
for use at the synagogues, including a special prayer  
for the occasion, which is to be found *post* (p. 253).

Such religious services were held, the various con-  
gregational Unions and Rabbinical Conferences join-  
ing in the Executive Committee's recommendation.  
Appropriate exercises were also held on or about  
Thanksgiving Day under the auspices of various  
Jewish lodges, Young Men's Hebrew Associations,  
sections of the Council of Jewish Women, Jewish  
Chautauqua circles, and orphan asylums, and in a  
number of instances, general local celebrations of an  
impressive character were also held.