THE PHILLIPS ACADEMY JEWISH EXPERIENCE

FROM NARROW DOCTRINE TO BROAD DIVERSITY

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To Nancy, for allowing me to walk my own unique path.

אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי

INTRODUCTION

When Samuel Phillips invested a good portion of his considerable family fortune into the founding of the aristocratic Phillips Academy Andover in 1778, he was motivated by a clear orthodox Calvinist Congregationalist mission of piety. The same goes for his uncle John Phillips when he founded Phillips Exeter Academy in 1781.

Though Andover and Exeter would walk theologically divergent paths over the course of the next century-and-a-quarter, it can be said of both schools that in order to maintain relevancy in the quickly changing world around them, there was an inherent appreciation for the ongoing imperative to adjust their approaches to piety when necessary. While both maintained unwavering institutional commitments to Christianity, the very definition of Christianity had to be fluid. So committed to relevancy were they, that Andover and Exeter eventually came to a point, intentionally or not, at which character development and the pursuit of goodness came to define religious mission even more than adherence to Christian doctrine. It has been argued that faith in the divinity of Christ itself had been relegated to voluntary status, so long as commitment to Christ-like living remained.

At the same time, with the arrival of 2,000,000 Jewish immigrants between 1880 and 1920, the landscape of America was changing at blistering speeds. Because colleges discovered the need to overhaul their own curricula and admissions policies in order to keep pace with the changing demands of America's industrial economy, Andover and Exeter had no choice but to follow suit. As a result, there developed a new value for the educational, societal, and spiritual benefits of meritocracy. As closed as the Phillips Academies had been to the idea of educating large numbers of Jews over the years, between the ongoing liberalization of religious mission, their newfound commitment to democratic objectivity, and the rapid explosion of economic and educational success amongst Jews, the time had finally come by the end of World War I for Jewish enrollment to take off at Andover and Exeter.

And, in fact, it did. By the middle of the 1930s, Andover had grown to 5 percent Jewish. Even more telling as it regards the shift in the Jewish community's relationship with aristocratic America is the fact that for roughly nine spots each year, Andover was receiving hundreds of applications. Andover had indeed become no less an ambition for the sons of America's Jewish elite as it had been for the sons of the Mayflower Society. Within a decade, Jewish enrollment at Andover and Exeter would grow to ten percent. Permission to fulfill Sunday chapel requirements by attending Friday night Shabbat services was granted in about 1950, constitutional prohibitions baring the hire of non-Protestant faculty were lifted a few years later, and, by the end of the 1960s, required religious worship of all kinds was abandoned altogether. From that moment on, once religion went from being *de facto* voluntary to being officially voluntary, Jewish life on campus has enjoyed the official support of the school ministries every bit as much as

Protestant life on campus. Certain challenges remain, but technically speaking, so far as the official religious missions of the Phillips Academies is concerned, no longer is there a difference between the level of spiritual support entitled by Jews and others.

The following study seeks to tell the story of how Phillips Academy Andover and Phillips Exeter Academy, arguably the two premier boarding schools in all of America, came to revise their founders' vision and endorse the religious missions of diversity that they do today. Specifically, it focuses on the Jewish portion of the story.

Because Jewish students were present in only very limited numbers for the first hundred-and-twenty-five years of the schools' existence, the first section of this study focuses on the steps of religious evolution that made it theologically possible for increased Jewish presence on campus by the end of World War I. To uncover this story, two types of sources were consulted: Works of historical analyses and primary documents from the time.

The most important work of historical analyses used for Chapter One was a 2004 doctoral dissertation by Andover graduate Fred Jordan, called Between Heaven and Harvard: Protestantism and the American Boarding School Experience, 1778-1940. It was Jordan who developed the original concept of religious "accommodations with modernity" that informs so much of my own understanding of the process that led Andover and Exeter to celebrate the idea of Jewish presence on campus.

Through Jordan, I was led to a number of other sources as they had to do with the evolving and liberalizing religious missions of Andover and Exeter. In addition to this dissertation, I read a number of other histories that were written over time. On the one

hand, the fact that most have been written by supporters of the schools means that certain biases are inevitable. At the same time, however, this can also be useful because it helps capture the "inside" perspective on matters of religion. Because of the constraints of practicality, I was unable to travel to either school to make use of extensive archival records, but the librarians were always generous with their time and resources as I set out to gather historical documents.

In addition to works that were specifically about Andover and Exeter, I conducted research also about the social history of American Jewry. The most useful of these works was Jenna Weissman Joselit's, The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture 1880-1950, which provides a first rate overview of Jewish integration into American society at the time. With such insight, it then becomes easier to understand not only how Jews wound up at Andover and Exeter, but which Jews they were.

The final Chapter of this study relies mostly on interviews with five alumni, one former school rabbi, and one current school minister (who is also an alumnus). It is through them that the story of Jews at Andover and Exeter becomes most alive.

One final note about my motivation for wanting to tell this story: After graduating from college with a major in religion in the spring of 1988, I arrived on the campus of St. Paul's School in Concord, NH that fall as a young intern, ready to begin what would become a twenty-year career in teaching and school administration. As a former college athlete, I was what is commonly referred to in the boarding school world as a "triple threat." I could teach class, coach sports, and "parent" in the dorm. While that may sound impressive, the truth is, it made me no different from every other member of the

St. Paul's faculty. Such "triple threat" capacity was nothing more than a prerequisite for hire at the time. There was, however, a different way in which I truly was a genuine "triple threat." I was the first teacher in the 132-year history of St. Paul's to teach religion, live on campus, and practice Judaism. In addition to me, there were two other Jewish teachers on faculty. One taught English and the other taught dance. Of the school's five hundred students, roughly twelve were Jewish. Together that year, we built the first Sukkah St. Paul's had ever seen.

In all my years of teaching, I have never felt as fully appreciated, supported, and encouraged to express my Jewish identity as I did at the proudly Episcopal St. Paul's School. Clearly I was in the extreme minority. But the time had come at St. Paul's for the expression of religious piety to broaden. Not that the school's Episcopal identity was about to change. Rather, just has had occurred at almost every other elite boarding schools across New England by 1988, St. Paul's stood ready to embrace a new religious mission of respect for all forms of faith, and I was in the right place at the right time to be part of the process. It was an honor.

The following year, I moved on to teach religion at Northfield Mount Hermon, a school twice the size of St. Paul's with almost ten times the Jews. From this experience I learned first-hand, contrary to what I had been led to believe, that yes, Jew do go to boarding school. As Advisor to Jewish Students, I was responsible for the religious guidance of ten percent of the student body. The same was true eleven years later when I returned to teach boarding school at Exeter, this time as Chaplain to Jewish Students (and married father). Once again, I was responsible for the religious guidance of ten percent of the student body. That came to over 100 boys and girls.

Northfield Mount Hermon and Exeter were hardly unique in having so many Jews on campus. Andover claimed to be ten percent Jewish. And so did Choate Rosemary Hall. Milton Academy, too. I'm sure there were others.

The following study grew out of my experience as a Jewish professional who embraces "Exonian" as part of my personal identity. From a personal point of view, I already had a pretty good understanding of how that felt. But I wanted to know on whose shoulders I stood. I wanted to discover and tell the story of how Jews came to study at Andover and Exeter and, in doing so, I wanted to claim my rightful historical claim. In the process, I learned not only that Jews have had a much longer and richer history than I had known, but that not all the shoulders on whom I was standing were actually Jewish.

CHAPTER 1

1778 ARISTOCRACY – 1880S JEWISH IMMIGRATION

There is a fiercely contested debate as to which boarding school is entitled to call itself the oldest in America. While the Dummer School in Byfield, MA, began educating students (1763), Phillips Academy Andover was the first to become incorporated (1778). Either way, one thing is clear: Having been so grateful for his student experience the Dummer School, Samuel Phillips, from one of the wealthiest and most respected Calvinist Congregationalist families in Massachusetts, took it upon himself to establish an academy of his own, the purpose of which would be to form boys into pious Protestant gentlemen.

With full appreciation for the sacred nature of the intellect, Phillips was committed to welcoming students, faculty, and board members, without constitutional restriction as to which form of Christianity they followed – so long as they were Protestant.[1] All the same, Phillips' intention that his school should function under a strict Calvinist approach was clear, as "all twelve [members of the founding board] had been born and educated in

[1] "Protestants only shall ever be concerned in the TRUST or Instruction of this Seminary." (The Constitution of Phillips Academy in Andover 1778 [p.12])

New England and in the Calvinistic faith."[2] Five years later, when Samuel's uncle, John Phillips, decided to establish a second Phillips Academy thirty miles to the northeast in Exeter, NH, he did so with very much the same approach.. In fact Exeter's constitution actually incorporated entire paragraphs verbatim from Andover's.

Protestant identification was a non-negotiable requisite for all teachers and trustees at both academies. So far as the student bodies were concerned, both constitutions state that any boy, regardless of economic background (or religious affiliation),who was intellectually capable and willing to live by the strict Congregationalist norms of the schools, including at least 8 required prayer services per week, was – technically speaking – eligible to attend. All intentions aside, however, not only were the overwhelming majority of boys were the sons of America's wealthiest families (George Washington's two nephews travelled all the way from Virginia to attend Andover) but with the expectations for religious worship being so entirely Protestant in nature, it's hard to imagine from a different faith perspective could possibly find success.

It's no wonder, then, that it wouldn't be until the Industrial Era before a noticeable presence of non-Protestant students could be felt at Andover or Exeter, nor that it would be the 1950s before they would revise their constitutions so as to permit the hire of non-Protestant faculty. The irony, however, is that when we look back to their earliest histories, we can see early indications of a trend that would, over time, lead Andover and Exeter in the direction of becoming what they are today: educational institutions of the

[2] (Fuess 1917) p. 74

highest academic degree in which “goodness” takes precedence over “Christian piety” and “religious diversity” trumps “orthodox Calvinist Congregationalism.”

As teachers of young people will no doubt attest, one of the most essential challenges to effective education is in finding ways to keep the curriculum “relevant.” Students crave (and deserve) to receive practical benefit from their studies. Students from Andover and Exeter are no exception, neither today nor ever. Because these schools were founded on platforms of theological piety, they have always been under steady obligation to prove relevancy of their religious missions, even as neither one maintains any specific religious affiliation today. In other words, it is because of Christian motivation, not in opposition to it, that Andover and Exeter felt it necessary to adjust their educational approaches over the course of time. Little did they anticipate just how consequential their willingness to adjust would be, even if their motivations were entirely for the sake of Christian harmony and principles. In the end, as the following study will show, while the insistence for “relevancy” at first served to safeguard the orthodox Calvinist Congregationalist foundations of the schools, as time marched on, the accumulated effect turned out to be just the opposite.

Because Andover and Exeter were founded on practically identical platforms of strict orthodox Calvinist Congregationalism, it would be reasonable to expect that their theological approaches should have developed similarly as well. In a way, they did, because it was in the service of God that intellectual training continued to direct the missions of both schools. All the same, even though both Phillips Academies would eventually replace their orthodox Calvinist Congregationalist roots with a widespread

celebratory embrace of religious diversity, their respective journeys would cut markedly different paths.

Any observer of Andover and Exeter today would readily see that these sister schools are quite similar. They are highly academic, eager to attract students who represent multiple kinds of diversity, and from a "religious" point of view, fully committed to nurturing goodness at every opportunity, both in and out of the classroom. While the written missions of both schools have indeed supported all three of these common ambitions from the start, the ways in which they defined "diversity," "religion," and "goodness" Were remarkably different for well over the first hundred years. Religiously conservative Andover was committed to orthodox Calvinist Congregationalism, while Exeter shifted decisively toward liberal theology with the appointment of (future Unitarian) Benjamin Abbot to become principal in 1788).

One of the more interesting aspects of the Phillips Academies' extended processes of liberalization is because of their incessant drives for relevancy, the leaders of Andover and Exeter made decisions along the way that, even if they were not faithful to the strict letter of their schools' constitutions, were so thoroughly guided by the Christian spirit that within short periods of time, even the most seemingly controversial changes were accepted and embraced.

With histories of more than two hundred years in which each succeeding generation has sought to tweak their school missions by applying them in one way or another to the ever-changing world around them, the Phillips Academies have morphed into the antithesis of the Calvinist institutions their founders had intended. Though it is assumed

by lovers of these academies today that "*Finis origine pendet* [The End Depends Upon the Beginning]. . . [was] chosen [as a school motto for both institutions] in order to stress the importance of getting off to a good start in life,"[3] in reality, Samuel and John Phillips where attracted to this motto because if its clearly Calvinist theology. Predestination was core to their theologies, and the pursuit of piety formed the base of their educational enterprises. Because the schools have maintained over two hundred years of commitment to relevancy, however, and since predestination is a theological concept that lost favor over time, changes had to be made. So seamless has been the process, however, that original intent can become a matter of inconvenience.

PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY: A UNITARIAN VANGUARD

While Andover would sustain its orthodox Calvinist Congregationalism for almost a century and a half, Exeter adopted a Unitarian approach almost from the beginning.

> Even as John Phillips remained a dedicated Congregationalist himself, it is clear from his choice of not just one but two Arminian headmasters that his Calvinist theology was more accommodating to other points of view than his nephew, Samuel's. As New Hampshire's (Baptist) Governor, William Plumer, described him in 1829, "He was a strict Calvinist, but being of a liberal spirit, he did not decline fellowship with Christians of a different creed. . . ."[4]

[3] https://www.andover.edu/About/PAHistory/Pages/SealandMotto.aspx

[4] (Williams 1957) p.8

In the grand scheme of things, Exeter's first headmaster, William Woodbridge, (1783-1788) does not stand out as a giant figure. He lacked the charisma such a position required, and had little success in growing the student body. In fact, enrollment began to dwindle towards the end of his short tenure. Eventually, "In June, 1788 . . . somewhat discouraged . . . he announced to the Trustees his intention of resigning his position in the ensuing October, because of his 'low state of health.'"[5] In this light, it might be said that Phillips Exeter Academy wasn't fully born until Benjamin Abbot's fifty-year tenure as principal that Exeter established who it was and, therefore, what it would become: A Unitarian institution of intellectual integrity – and relevance – which prepared boys for success in college and beyond by instilling in them a love of learning for the sake of God, as manifest in the capacity and eagerness to live lives of goodness.

To be sure, no matter how effective an educator Principal Abbot was, had John Phillips been overly disturbed by his liberal theology, that would have been sufficient means for dismissal. His longevity, therefore, says something about Exeter's founder:

> "The choice of [Benjamin Abbot] hints at one distinction between Andover and Exeter. Dr. John Phillips, like his brother and his nephew, was a firm adherent to the old school of New England orthodoxy . . . [But] He saw in Benjamin Abbot the qualities which constituted a wise teacher, and he chose him to the place although their theological preferences were at variance, Abbot belonging to the new school which in process of time became organized Unitarianism . . . Not only did Dr. Phillips make this appointment, but two of the Trustees originally chosen by himself and three others chosen during his lifetime had theological opinions opposite to his own. The interpretation of the constitution was therefore likely to be less rigid than was the case at Andover."[6]

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[5] (Bell 1883), pp.23-24

[6] Horace E. Scudder, Harpers Magazine, September 1877, as quoted in (Williams 1957), p.35

MEANWHILE, BACK AT PHILLIPS ACADEMY ANDOVER…

While Benjamin Abbot was busy transforming Exeter into a hotspot of liberal theology, the first three principals at Andover were doing everything they could to perpetuate the orthodoxy with which the younger Phillips had established his Academy.

The first principal, Eliphat Pearson (1778-1786), was the quintessential Christian gentleman scholar school-master:

> ". . . a stubborn, autocratic pedagogue of the old school, powerful in physique, domineering in manner, and exacting in his requirements from his pupils. But he was something more than a leader in the classroom. Washington once said of him, *'His eye shows him worthy, not only to lead boys, but to command men." His astounding energy and versatility made him seem to be a kind of "superman." He was an able musician, both in theory and practice: a good bass singer, a performer upon the violoncello, and the author of an authoritative treatise on psalmody. A skilled mechanic, he could take apart an engine or construct his own violin. As a farmer and trader he displayed shrewd business sense. His scholarship was impressive, for he knew not only Latin, Greek, and French, but also Hebrew, Syriac, and Coptic. His restless and eager intellect carried him into almost every field of research." [7]

In the parlance of today's boarding school world, Pearson was more than a "triple threat." He was everything the new school could hope for. He was powerful, athletic, determined, charismatic, industrious, musical, handy, shrewd, and a first rate intellect, especially in matters of religion.

By the time Ebenezar Pemberton took over 1786, the orthodoxy of Andover had become so firmly established that Benjamin Abbot, who coincidently became Exeter's principal

[7] (Fuess 1917), p.86

that same year, was never even considered for the Andover position, even though he himself was an Andover graduate.

Like Pearson, Pemberton was an ordained Congregationalist minister, having studied at conservative-leaning Princeton. Better yet, he had trained, even if for only a short time, with Samuel Hopkins, the leading voice for Calvinist Congregationalism of the day. All in all, Pemberton was a strong intellectual with an unwavering commitment to the orthodoxy of Andover.

By the time Ebenezer Pemberton became principal, Unitarian challenges to the orthodoxy of Trinitarianism had been brewing quietly for almost fifty years already. For Calvinist Congregationalists like Samuel Phillips this had never been too great a concern, because Unitarian numbers were quite small. Over time, however, the intellectualism of this theological movement began to gain more traction among the Boston elite. One of the most significant voices for Unitarianism, the Rev. Joseph Stevens Buckminster,, had actually taught at Exeter for two years under Benjamin Abbot . Moreover, Unitarian positions were finding increasing support at Harvard College, a point not lost on Samuel Phillips who occupied a seat on the Harvard Board of Trustees. Indeed, Phillips was paying close attention indeed.

By 1794, when the mild-mannered twenty-two year old Mark Newman assumed leadership of Andover (1794-1809), traditionalists like Samuel Phillips had every reason to start bracing for the oncoming theological battle. Unitarian theology and practice began to grow more popular amongst the aristocracy of New England, Phillips became increasingly aware that if he were to succeed in maintaining the orthodox Calvinist

Congregationalist mission of his school, action would have to be taken. So, with his own death imminent, Samuel Phillips formed a Select Committee, comprised entirely of orthodox Calvinist Congregationalists, and charged it "to meet once in a quarter, or oftener, enquire into the state of the Academy, the proficiency of the Scholars, and the conduct of the Instructors, *that the core of the Institution may be attended to*."[8] When the Committee met to correct and strengthen the Academy they did so with a strong hand. The process, however, came at great and unexpected cost. Andover and Exeter, sister schools born from the same family, were about to enter a century-long period of estrangement.

THE WARE AFFAIR

In August of 1803, Harvard College mourned the death of Dr. David Tappan, the moderate Calvinist Hollis Chair of Divinity. Among the top candidates for his replacement was Henry Ware, a Harvard educated Unitarian minister. Though Ware was eminently qualified, there were those at Harvard who were simply unwilling to approve the appointment of a Unitarian professor. After bitter debate that went on for well over a year, Henry Ware was finally appointed to the Harvard faculty on October 30, 1804. So divisive was decision that it lead to the resignation of a significant faction of strict Calvinist professors. Three years later, many of these same professors would join together to form the inaugural faculty of the strictly Calvinist Andover Theological

[8]Phillips Academy Trustees, Report of the doings of the Select Committee, Nov. 2, 1802 – Feb. 7, 1809, page 1. PAA Archives. Italics in original. As quoted in Jordan, 2004, p. 43.

Seminary, which was not only housed on the campus of Phillips Andover Academy, but overseen by the same board of trustees. The leadership had spoken. Orthodox Calvinist Congregationalism would continue forming boys into pious Christian gentlemen for years to come on the campus of Phillips Academy Andover. As to the issue of religious diversity, the Seminary's constitution could not have been more clear. Its mission was to teach "in opposition, not only to Atheists and Infidels, but to Jews, Mohammedans, Arians, Pelagians, Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, Unitarians, and Universalists, and to all other heresies and errors, ancient or modern, which may be opposed to the gospel of Christ."[9]

The Anti-Jewish feelings were so pronounced that even a lifetime later, when ninety-one year old Sarah Stuart Robbins sat to write about her experiences growing up as a faculty child on campus (Robbins' father, Moses Stuart had been the Theological Seminary's Professor of Sacred Literature) in her 1908 memoir, Old Andover Days, she included the following memory:

> "Most peculiar, as an Andover weekday meeting, was the "Jews' Meeting," held on Friday evening at the house of Professor Porter. That house was very different then from what it is to-day. If it had been hermetically sealed from foundation to roof, the sun and air would have found almost as ready admittance. Closed doors, closed outside shutters and inside window-blinds, and a general shut-down and shut-in air made it seem, to us children at least, like a great wooden tomb. Here every Friday evening a few young people were gathered together to pray for the conversion of the Jews. I do not know but that somewhere in this wide world meetings are held for this same object now, but similar to these they cannot be."[10]

[9] "Constitution of Andover Seminary," in (Taylor 1856), p.378

[10] (Robbins 1908), p 158

AND NOW, BACK TO EXETER…

As Andover was digging its heels into its Congregationalist identity and mission, Exeter's response was entirely different, as indicated by his 1811 hire of Hosea Hildreth, who had witnessed the Ware Controversy first hand as a member of Harvard's Class of 1805. Hildreth was an unabashed theological liberal. So, while Andover was busy circling the wagons around their traditionalist mission, Exeter was throwing orthodoxy to the wind. But it didn't stop with Hildreth. The most pronounced statement would come five years later, when Principal Abbot invited Henry Ware, Jr. to teach the Exeter boys. His position on campus was on a visiting basis only, but still, one can just imagine the gasp taken at Andover upon hearing the news. And then, perhaps expecting to hammer the final nail into the coffin of John Phillips' Calvinist dream, Benjamin Abbot appointed yet another Unitarian, Isaac Hurd, to teach theology.

In Isaac Hurd, a student of Henry Ware, Sr. at Harvard, Exeter knew they were getting a committed Unitarian. However, in yet another historical twist of fate, soon after accepting the position, Hurd changed heart and returned to his Congregationalist roots. To Abbot's credit, in a sign of support for religious diversity, Hurd remained on faculty for the remainder of Abbot's tenure. It was at this point, in 1838, that Exeter would separate itself from its orthodox Calvinist Congregationalist roots once and for all.

Unbeknownst to Hurd, Abbot, or even some of Exeter's board,[11] a subgroup of trustees had met in secret the day before Abbot's gala retirement dinner to plan Hurd's forced

[11] This meeting was held while Daniel Dana, the board's most conservatively outspoken Congregationalist, was ill.

dismissal. Ultimately, the trustees voted to sever ties with Isaac Hurd. Nine months later, when the long-time theology instructor was first informed of his dismissal, he did not take it lightly. A year of intense and ugly fighting ensued. Though it was clear to all that Hurd's conservative theology is what led to his board's decision, such an admission could never be made public at Phillips Exeter Academy, a school that professed commitment to theological diversity.

After a number of months, Gideon Soule, Exeter's new headmaster, had no choice but to defend the Academy via an eighty page attack on Hurd's work ethic and capabilities in 1839. After that, Hurd gave up and returned full-time to his position as Reverend at the town of Exeter' Congregationalist Second Church. In what was perhaps a nod to the Academy's embrace of theological diversity, Gideon Soul remained Hurd's parishioner until the former theology instructor retired in 1851.

In the end, the firing of Isaac Hurd marked the end of Congregationalism as Exeter's official denomination. What Abbot was unable to do with Hurd's hiring, the Board did with his firing. Congregationalism would continue to maintain a presence among the students and faculty for decades to come, but with Unitarianism as the new guiding force, Exeter was well on its way to blazing its trail to non-denominationalism

Gideon Soule's primary ambition as it regarded the teaching of religion at Exeter was to "modernize" the process by replacing denominational dogma and practice with universalistic Christian morality. To Soule, Christ-like action spoke louder than strict doctrine or orthodox liturgy. So ecumenical was his approach that Dr. Soule that he changed school policy so that worship at any church in town would be sufficient to

satisfy the school's Sunday chapel requirement.[12] Though Gideon Soule hardly intended that Jewish worship should be an acceptable option, but his policy shift was an important step in the liberalizing process that would eventually accord full status to Exonians of the Jewish faith.

In the meantime, while Soule was leading the way to liberal Unitarianism at Exeter, Samuel Taylor (principal 1837-1871) was doing the exact opposite at Andover. To Principal Taylor, no accomplishment was more cherished than a successful conversion:

> "During the winter term there was much more than the usual earnestness on the subject of religion; I have rarely witnessed a more happy state of feeling among the professors of religion, and it is with devout gratitude that we hope that eight or ten were savingly converted."[13]

ELITE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE POST-DARWIN INDUSTRIAL AGE

Even though it wouldn't be until the 1930s before a sizable Jewish presence would be felt at Andover or Exeter, 1859 stands out as a watershed year in the story of their eventual arrival. Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species changed everything. While the Creationism v. Evolutionism debate of today did not hold much resonance for theologians at Andover or Exeter at the time (they were quite willing to teach "science-based" biology in class)the significance of Darwin for the future of Jewish attendance was enormous all the same, because it enabled religious critics , for the first time, to challenge the foundation on which the schools were built in the first place. The fact that

[12] Andover would grant the same permission in 1876.

[13] (Fuess 1917), p.251

a seed of the possibility of doubt had been planted regarding the integrity of the Bible account of creation represented a crack in the wall of religious exclusion that, once opened, would never again fully close. In fact, it would only grow geometrically larger in 1885 when Julius Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis took American academics by storm with the English version debut of his *Prolegomena zur Geshichte Israels* in 1885.

Beyond the academic challenges to traditional Christianity, post-Civil War America was an interesting time to be engaged in projects of aristocratic Christian education for another reason entirely. On the one hand, wealth was poised to soar to unprecedented heights; wages for the average worker would increase 60%[14] between 1860-1890, On the other hand, welcome as that would be, the radical shift would also invite a deluge of poor European immigrants hoping to find better lives for themselves and their families. For too many of them, reality would disappoint. Even as the U.S. economy enjoyed a period of unparalleled success, so too did it invite overcrowding, social vice, and abject poverty to the cities of America, especially those in the northeast, from which Andover and Exeter attracted the bulk of their students. Eventually, the immigrants' wretched predicament would became so pronounced and dire that it could no longer be ignored, especially by the wealthy who professed a commitment to living by the values of Christian charity. The next half century, therefore, would turn out to be a period of great introspection and challenge for pietistic American Christianity, not only in the churches, but at Andover and Exeter, too.

[14] Timothy D. Tregarthen Libby Rittenberg (1999). Macroeconomics (2nd ed.). Worth Publishers. p. 177.

Upon Principal Taylor's death in 1871, Frederick Tilton became Andover's seventh, and shortest serving ever, principal (1871-1873).Though his tenure was brief, Tilton's legacy is important to the story of eventual Jewish enrollment, because it was under his watch that Sunday chapel requirements were first relaxed when he excused the boys from Andover Theological Seminary's afternoon service and provided a much shorter and more child-friendly vesper service.[15] Such an accommodation would have been impossible to imagine under Taylor's leadership, but Tilton felt the time had come to adjust to the realities of the situation.

When Tilton's successor, Cecil Bancroft became principal (1873-1901), he continued down the same path, marking the start of a whole new era of religious liberalism at Andover, so much so, that by the end of his tenure in 1901, Andover and Exeter would no longer sit on opposite ends of the theological spectrum. Some of Bancroft's policy changes would be reactions to external matters, some were entirely internal, and still others came about merely because Cecil Bancroft determined they were the "Christian" things to do. In any event, whatever the catalyst, each and every one could be seen in one way or another as an accommodation to Gilded Age concerns.[16] Moreover, each accommodation was understood by its enactor as being fully consistent with the fundamental principals embodied with his school's original sacred mission. The difficulty in maintaining such a perspective, however, is that since the overriding default when making Gilded Age accommodation was to prioritize character over piety, the faith of

[15] (Fuess 1917), p.327

[16] (Jordan 2004) This concept was originally developed by Frederick Jordan.

previous Christian generations began to lose relevancy.[17] New understandings had to be developed, justifications had to be created, and belief in God had to be recast in more liberal terms.

The chief influence of change to which these schools had to respond during the last years of the 19th century was, as it so often is, money. With such an explosion of new wealth, there was a sudden demand for admission. Much of this emerging need was satisfied by the building of new schools, but even Andover and Exeter found themselves having to reevaluate the current make-up of their student bodies. On the other hand, even as boarding schools were ever so slowly beginning to crack open their doors to new populations of student in the latter part of the 19th century, one thing went unchanged: Notwithstanding all the lofty rhetoric about reaching out to educate "youth from every quarter,[18]" these schools continued to be populated for the most part by the sons of America's wealthiest families. The challenge, now that America was experiencing an unprecedented accumulation of wealth, is that the old social structure felt under attack by new money. This was felt in at least two clear ways by the boys of Andover and Exeter that would lead to the eventual destruction of traditional barriers to non-Protestant populations. First, the schools were pressured to accept new kinds of students. While the clear majority of students towards the end of the 19th century were children of boarding school students themselves, pressure to accept the sons of America's new financial elite

[17] (Jordan 2004)

[18] This Seminary shall be ever equally open to Youth, of requisite qualifications, from every quarter… And, in order to prevent the smallest perversion of the true intent of this Foundation, it is again declared, that the first and principal object of this Institution is the promotion of PIETY and VIRTUE; the second instruction (The Constitution of Phillips Academy in Andover 1778 [p.12])

meant that fewer spots would be available for less qualified boys, regardless of how many generations had preceded them. As some "old money" families began to see their wealth surpassed by the new "interlopers," resistance began to build. In the face of all this new money, however, there was only so much the schools could do to stop it (even if they had wanted to). Not that Andover or Exeter were yet prepared to throw open the doors to the sons of Jewish families, but it the chipping away of boundaries was becoming more pronounced every day. Secondly, influential as the new Industrial Age money may have been to the changing composition of enrollment during the Gilded age, there was a second, even more pronounced challenge to the traditional understanding of mission within these schools emerging from the new reality.

As colleges began to reform their curricula to make room for the teaching of material (such as science and technology) that was becoming increasingly necessary for the new industrial economy, it became apparent that their traditional feeder schools (Andover, Exeter, etc.,) had not been preparing their students with the tools that would be necessary to achieve collegiate success in the new world order. Responding to this challenge, Presidents Charles William Elliot of Harvard and Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia rallied ten of their colleagues from similar institutions to form the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) in 1900. In June of 1901, 978 high school seniors sat for the first test ever prepared by this new organization.

According to the College Board's official website today, the "College Board was created [in 1900] to expand access to higher education,"[19] but an equally plausible story is that

[19] https://www.collegeboard.org/about

with a paucity of qualified graduates emerging from their traditional feeder schools, colleges needed to force wide-spread curricular change at the high school level. If prep schools were going to maintain relevancy in the 20th century, they had no choice but to reform curricula to meet the new requirements. As a result, education at America's elite boarding schools became remarkably similar in academic approach. This, in turn, demanded new perspectives on the place and purpose of religion.

CECIL BANCROFT REDIRECTION OF RELIGION AT ANDOVER

Having seen the writing on the wall, Cecil Bancroft had already begun to make way for the colleges' new demands a decade earlier. After reviewing Andover's curricular offerings Principal Bancroft came to the unprecedented conclusion in 1891 that in order for the Academy to fulfill its mission of preparing students for college life, radical changes would have to be made, none of which had greater historical significance – or potential for disaster – than the elimination of classes in "Moral Philosophy" (i.e., "Religion"). Remarkably, though, not only did Cecil Bancroft not lose his job as a result of having excised all classroom instruction in religion (except for the weekly Monday morning Bible sessions with the principal), but, in fact, , the decision didn't even seem to engender much protest. Modern life required new skills. Most of his constituents accepted the new reality.

Inconceivable as this shift likely would have been to Samuel Phillips, even more astounding is the fact that Bancroft claimed to be dropping the formal teaching of religion not in opposition to but rather in fulfillment of Samuel Phillips' original intent for the

school. Citing a series of headmasters whom he felt had distorted Phillips' large tent Christianity, Bancroft argued that in order to fulfill Phillips' stated mission, Andover needed to both educate its boys for success in the modern world and also do so in a manner consistent with "a thoughtful, Christian piety." His point was that it is Not what we study, but how: this is the main thing".35

Perhaps no single phrase better sums up the transition from Taylor to Bancroft, and the broader shift that was underway in all the elite boarding schools of the time. Piety, which Taylor had measured by adherence to creed, , was no longer the primary goal. In Bancroft's new view, means trumped content. In fact, as character increased in importance, explicit religious content was relegated to the margin. If achieving goodness was the only real goal, church became just one optional way to get there.

To bring it a step further still, Bancroft even went so far as to adopt Exeter's forty year old ecumenical policy of accepting worship at any town church (including Baptist, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, and even Roman Catholic) in fulfillment of Sunday chapel requirements. Once again, Cecil Bancroft went through this process relatively unscathed.

By means of explanation, we benefit by remembering two related points. An ordained minister himself, Cecil Bancroft's commitment to religion was never in question. Every liberalizing change was, in his mind, for the glory of Christ. From his point of view, and also keeping with late 19th century sensibilities, the only real piety was that which came voluntarily. Coerced religion was no religion at all. As such, he believed with complete conviction that in order to mature into pious Christian gentlemen, his Andover boys had

to begin not with doctrine, but with training in questions of moral decision making. In effect, Cecil Bancroft turned orthodox Calvinist Congregationalism on its head by teaching that to be a good Christian one must be a good person, rather than to be a good person one must be a good Christian. In other words, "Cecil Bancroft deemed the orthodox Congregationalism of Samuel Phillips, so carefully preserved by John Adams and Samuel Taylor, insufficient to meet the needs of the modern age."[20]

On the other hand, had it not been for Bancroft's curricular realignment, Andover boys would have been left behind when colleges changed their own educational programs. So, not only did Bancroft succeed in keeping religion relevant, but he also succeeded in maintaining Andover as a top feeder school to America's best colleges.

In retrospect, it appears that had Bancroft not taken upon himself to redefine the school's mission as he did, Andover may well have fallen to irrelevancy against the backdrop of modernity. In order to keep up with the changing demands of the Industrial Era, Andover had no choice but to adapt to new college curricula that was rapidly adjusting their curricula to reflect the new reality. As intellectual excellence was beginning to define the standard for admission mission for American colleges, Andover and Exeter had no choice but to adjust along with it. Not that religion and piety were playing any less of a role in the schools' stated missions, but the definition of what religion and piety meant was changing. Exeter, of course, was the first to move in the direction of de-emphasizing doctrine, but eventually, even Andover, under Principal Bancroft, saw fit to recast the Academy's mission in less doctrinal terms.

[20] (Jordan 2004), p.335

All the same, we imagine there must have been at least some within the Andover leadership who remained skeptical, as evidenced by the fact that Principal Bancroft found himself having to answer to the trustees about the religious make-up of Andover's student body:

> "As compared with the patronage at Exeter, it appears that we have a much larger proportion from Presbyterian and Congregationalist families than they, and our quota from Episcopal, Catholic, and other denominations is much less. We have almost no patronage from Methodist, Unitarian, and Universalist families. For the first time in twelve years we have had a Jew."[21]

The fact is, however, that even while Bancroft was forced to defend his leadership with assurance that Andover was far more Congregationalist and Presbyterian than Exeter, this did not slow his efforts to reframe Andover's mission. Though still an undeniably Christian school, especially in terms of its social milieu, no longer would the Andover of Bancroft's day focus on doctrine the way Samuel Phillips had. In its place, Bancroft would emphasize and celebrate the school's sacred obligation to produce graduates who would go on to live lives of moral goodness.

So radical was Bancroft's liberalizing approach (intentional or not) to the reduction of emphasis on doctrinal training that it would not be long before Andover's religious mission would once again, after a 100-year-hiatus, come to mirror Exeter's.[22] Only this time, the religious mission had shifted to the opposite end of the Christian spectrum from

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[21] (Frederick S. Allis 1979), p.288

[22] From this point all the way until Ted Sizer's 1972 arrival at Andover, which will be discussed below, the two Phillips Academies approached the issue of Jewish students on campus with such similar policies and attitudes that, for all intents and purposes, it can be said that what was true at one was equally true at the other.

where the Phillips family had begun. No longer would doctrine hold a monopoly over salvation. And even if it did, salvation, so long as it continued to be narrowly understood by 18th century Congregationalist standards, would no longer be the primary goal of a Phillips Academy education anyway. In the process, as had already happened at Exeter decades prior, the spiritual mission of Andover came to be one in which moral goodness, regardless of doctrinal piety, could result from effective intellectual training. In the end, "Whatever else Bancroft had done at Andover, his tenure as headmaster marked the disestablishment of Congregationalism as the driving force at Andover."[23]

[23] (Jordan 2004), p.348

CHAPTER 2

1880S JEWISH IMMIGRATION - – 1940S POST-WAR AMERICA

AMERICA'S NEW JEWS: RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME, RIGHT SKILLS

The rapid explosion of American wealth was astounding across the board, but for no population was this more pronounced than for the Jews. Though certainly not universal, it was quick and it was widespread.

While credit for the extraordinary speed with which Jews found success has been attributed to any number of factors (unusual willingness to work hard, superior levels of intelligence, close knit kindred support, Jewish exceptionalism, etc.,), the reality is that:

> "Jewish success in America was a matter of historical timing… [T]here was a fortuitous match between the experience and skills of Jewish immigrants, on the one hand, and the manpower needs and opportunity structures on the other. (Steinberg, 1989: 103) Jews were the only ones among the southern and eastern European immigrants who came from urban, commercial, craft, and manufacturing backgrounds, not the least of which was garment manufacturing."[24]

[24] (Sacks 1994), 58-59

That is, Jews in the Old World had already developed the skills they would need to succeed in the New World, which is why they could hit the ground running. Even though it would take time before Jews could match the "old money" of Andover and Exeter, even still, by the turn of the 20th century, America had become home to enough wealthy Jews that businesses had already taken notice.

One can only imagine how a boatful of Jewish immigrants must have felt in the spring of 1900 when they arrived in New York, only to read the printed Bloomingdales advertisement, "We supply everything for the Passover season."[25] What must they have thought about the fact that New York had enough wealth that party planners could actually make a legitimate business by catering Jewish funerals, or that the typical thirteen-year-old boy could grab the suit his mother had chosen from the "Bar Mitzvah Collections" at "Joe & Paul's, 'the aristocrats of clothing' on New York's Lower East side, [or] the Stanton Street Clothiers Association,"[26] in order to arrive appropriately dressed for the occasion? Only in America!

Such fantastic potential for economic advancement, however, did not come without a price. America may have been the "Great Melting Pot," but for those who had been holding the keys to the pantry all these years, there was a limit to the amount of new spice they would add. To be included, Jews would have to find the most effective and efficient ways to blend in with what was already in the pot.

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[25] (Joselit 1994) p.221

[26] (Joselit 1994) p.93

As it turns out, such blending was hardly a challenge to vast swaths of American Jewry. By the 1880s, American Jews had so willingly traded in the religious and cultural heritage of their parents that Jewish literacy had already fallen off to the point where funeral homes had to provide transliterated Kaddish sheets for their clients.[27] By the turn of the century, families were regularly treating Bar Mitzvah celebrations as the one day on which to prove their Jewishness).[28] By 1911, the "Yom Kippur Jew" had become so familiar a concept that Jewish leadership was already excoriating the crowds to reverse the tide.[29] Though it is true that some pockets of the Jewish population were beginning to feel and express concern over new patterns of ostentatious snobbery among the newly rich,[30] these critics hardly arrested the assimilation. In 1916 the majority of American Jews were exchanging Christmas presents,[31] in 1919 Jews were celebrating secular holiday of Mother's Day in greater numbers than any Jewish holiday,[32] and in the early 1920s fewer than twenty percent of American Jews were attending synagogue on the Sabbath (that number would drop to two% a generation later).[33] It makes sense, then, how fashionable it became for Rosh Hashanah cards to be decorated with American flags, the Statue of Liberty, or a bald eagle rather than a shofar, a picture of Jerusalem, or even apples and honey. By the 1920s, it had become commonplace for rabbis to advocate for

[27] (Joselit 1994) p.247

[28] (Joselit 1994) p.133

[29] (Joselit 1994) pp.251-52

[30] (Joselit 1994) p.113

[31] (Joselit 1994) p.230

[32] (Joselit 1994) p.73

[33] (Joselit 1994) p.253

ongoing post-bar mitzvah Jewish connection in ways they had never had to before,[34] and by 1922 "Judaized Protestant rite" of confirmation had become de rigueur.[35] In short, the period of 1880-1920 was one of remarkable financial ascendency for Jews in America. It was also a period of adaptation, identity recreation, and increased opportunity to leave Jewish identity behind.

2,000,000 NEW JEWS

2,000,000 Jewish immigrants (out of 20,000,000 in total) arrived to the shores of America between 1880-1920. This, combined with natural growth from those already here, meant that American Jewry swelled from roughly 250,000 (just over .05% of the total population) in 1880 to about 3,500,000 (3.2% of the total population) in 1920. As described above, their success (financial, academic, social, etc) was astounding.

By the 1890s, the Jewish families who had worked so hard just to survive in Eastern Europe had developed into the immigrant group with the lowest mortality rate in all of America. One result, we imagine, was that with mere survival no longer a priority, Jews in America were finally free to pursue real success, which they defined in financial and educational terms. All the same, Jewish success in the Modern World would require certain accommodations. Living in a religiously diverse setting was not easy. With the majority of Americans taking off from work to observe the Sunday Sabbath, Jews found

[34] (Joselit 1994) p.87

[35] (Joselit 1994) p.118

themselves in the position of having to choose between Shabbat and the American Dream of material and intellectual success. Most chose the latter. And rather than Jewish *cheder* or *yeshiva*, parents enrolled their children (boys and girls) in the secular public school system, which provided a first rate educational experience, but no Jewish learning. Equally important, as Andover had served the function of forming young people in to "pious Christian gentlemen," public school formed young immigrant Jews into genuine Americans. While their children were off assimilating, Jewish parents were busy claiming their stake in America's ever-expanding labor force.

During this period, even as social norms continued to bar Jews from entering the highest ranks of American aristocracy, Jewish wealth was increasing at blazing speeds. It would still be another fifty years before Jews would study at Andover and Exeter in numbers that better reflected their proportion of American society, but this accumulation of wealth was the necessary first step. All the education in the world wouldn't have opened the gates had there not been Jewish families able to pay the price of admission.

To be clear, the notion of Jewish boys living, learning, eating, sleeping, socializing, and praying alongside card carrying members of the Mayflower Society was so absurd it would be ridiculous to suggest it had even entered the collective Jewish consciousness[36] as these first generations set about to climb the economic ladder.

On the other hand, it didn't take long for immigrant parents, no matter how financially successful, to realize that their ascendancy had limits, because the type of employment

[36] As will be shown, there were individual Jews here and there who broke the barrier far earlier, but so far as Jewish entry as a collective process, that would take many more years.

available to workers without higher education could bring them only so far. As such, first generation Jewish parents adopted a collective resolve to work as hard as possible so their children would be able to attend college and therefore find success in America.

Jewish children were expected to apply themselves and earn high marks in public school. And, in large numbers, they did. Within just a few years, Jewish high school graduates started attending college at astounding rates, especially in New York City, where the clear majority of American Jews were living at the time.

At first they filled the seats of New York's two most prominent publicly financed colleges: City College and Hunter College. As more and more Jews came to live in America, and as more and more Jewish children capitalized on the benefits of a free public school education, they began to flood the elite universities as well, especially Columbia College, which, until then, had been the aristocratic domain of America's wealthiest families, the same Mayflower Society alumni of Andover and Exeter whose existence couldn't even have been imagined by previous Jewish generations.

By 1920, "Jews made up 80 percent of the students at New York's City College, 90 percent of Hunter College, and before World War I, 40 percent of private Columbia University."[37] Once there, not only did they gain the academic training that would continue to support their economic and social ascendency, but, for the first time, came to learn about the elite boarding schools many of their classmates had attended. It was at this point, finally, that aspiring Jewish Americans would first begin to think about sending their children to boarding school. Thus was born, sometime around the 1920s,

[37] (Sacks 1994), p.58

America's first generation of highly educated Jews from financially thriving families for whom Andover and Exeter were no longer beyond the pale. In fact, so realistic was it, that it would take less than ten years for Jewish rates of enrollment to surpass Jewish proportionality in America .

MEANWHILE, AT ANDOVER, THE STAGE IS SET FOR JEWISH PHILLIPIANS

So far is the expansion of religious liberalism is concerned, Andover's sixty years under Cecil Bancroft (principal, 1873-1901) and then his successor nephew, Al Stearns (teacher, 1897-1903; principal,1903-1933[38]) might be summed up best as the period during which the Academy "decisively transformed its commitment to orthodox Congregationalism, jettisoned its past, and entered the twentieth century an entirely different school." In a way, this may seem an odd claim, given that even while Bancroft had removed the study of religion from Andover's curriculum, Stearns had made an early point of restoring it. Closer examination reveals the seamless nature of these two periods of leadership on matters of religion. Both principals were fully consistent with their school's well-established pattern of adjustments to religious expression as having always been forwarded on the basis of Christian conviction. While Bancroft had replaced Andover's narrow and increasingly irrelevant doctrinal orthodoxy with a more modern mission of character development through Christian living, so too was Stearns' intention

[38] Andover used the title, "Principal" to refer to the head of school until 1928, at which point it was changed to "Headmaster." With the appointment of Barbara Landis Chase in 1994, it was changed once again to "Head of School," which is what the title remains remains today.

for reviving required Bible study at Andover born from a calling to develop the moral character of students under his charge. The spirit of Christ continued to inform Stearns' curricular vision, just as it had with Bancroft, but with his obligation to maintain relevancy, Stearns' pedagogic vision for Bible study had changed with the times. Gone was the drive to effect conversion. Salvation through correct doctrine was replaced with the fulfillment of human potential through effective character education. While Stearns himself was a fully committed and devout Protestant,[39] his approach to the teaching of Bible at Andover seems to have been only loosely tied, at best, to doctrinal concerns. Under his leadership, students at the increasingly diverse school studied the book as a "Western Classic." It was sacred to some, but societally and intellectually necessary for all moderns striving to live lives of excellence and moral integrity. To Stearns and the Andover that he led, biblical literature enjoyed an intrinsic value of its own, regardless of doctrinal perspective or cultural bias.

Like Bancroft before him, Stearns was at theological odds with Andover Theological Seminary. In fact, since Principal Taylor's tenure, tensions had been growing so increasingly strong that eventually, , on March 12, 1908, a year after Stearns' arrival, it was announced that the Theological Seminary would move to Cambridge and merge (ironically) with Harvard.

[39] Had the graduate seminary not been housed on the Andover campus, Stearns may well have remained teaching at the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where he had been for the three years since graduating from Amherst College. The chance to study at Andover Theological Seminary was one of the principle attractions leading him to return to his beloved alma mater, Phillips Academy Andover.[39] (An Old New England School: A History of Phillips Academy Andover p.505)

Already anticipating the Seminary's departure by the time he became principal, Stearns' appointment of the Rev. Markham W. Stackpole to become Andover's first ever "school minister" in the spring of 1907 could be seen as a calculated step in the process of lead his school still farther down the path of modernity, which, by definition, necessitated a greater degree of theological diversity. While the principal remained under constitutional obligation to confess Protestant Christianity, no longer would he be the school's chief theological voice. The separation of responsibilities would free him to focus on other responsibilities inherent to school leadership in the 20th century. For the next quarter century, Stearns would concentrate his efforts on two priorities especially: (1) reshaping curricular priorities so as to prepare his boys in the most effective way possible for success in the rapidly changing world of college; and, (2) raising the necessary funds to offer Andover students the best facilities and teachers money could provide.

This is not to say that Stearns removed himself entirely from the subject of religious mission once having delegated theological responsibility to the new school chaplain. To the contrary, it was only with sacred partnership between principal and school minister that Stearns' 1913 signature contribution to the ongoing redefinition of Andover's religious mission for the 20th century was able to reach fruition in the first place.

Five years after uncontested control over theological mission had finally reverted back to Academy leadership (following Andover Theological Seminary's departure for Cambridge), Al Stearns and Markham Stackpole instituted revolutionary change to Christian worship on campus when they rechristened the school's traditionally

Congregationalist Phillips Church as an "undenominational Academy Church".[40] Even more remarkable is the fact that it was the collaborative effort of two Andover-Theological-Seminary-trained ministers that finally managed to expunge Phillips Academy Andover of the "Samuel Phillips" brand of puritanical orthodoxy on which the school had stood since 1778.

To be clear, while excising denominationalism from Phillips Church was indeed radical, neither Stearns nor Stackpole ever, not even for a moment, envisioned the official religion at Andover as being anything other than Christian, and Protestant.

All the same, so far as the story of Jewish Andover is concerned, it was under Stearns' watch that Andover first had "a certain number of Jewish boys in it."[41] There had, of course, been the Jewish students from time to time for decades already, but it wasn't until the 1920s or so that that Jews at school had grown numerous enough to be recognized as a distinct population. All the same, it does seem fair to conclude that such increase in Jewish presence came about not ***because*** of Sterns, but rather, ***despite*** him:

> "[Even] though there is no evidence that there was ever a formal quota for their admission, the Admissions Office [under Stearns] appears to have acted informally to keep their numbers down. Few Jewish students ever were admitted to the school fraternities. When a lady in Cambridge wrote Al asking him to list the members of the Andover delegation going to Harvard who would make good ushers for her Brattle Hall Dances, he reported to her on the WASP types and simple wrote, 'Hebrew' by the names of the Jewish boys.[42] Yet the discrimination that existed was almost entirely social. In the classroom and in the

[40] (Fuess 1917), p.520

[41] (Frederick S. Allis 1979),pp.344-45

[42] Emily A.Nicols to Stearns, Cambridge, 18 September 1930; Stearns to Nichols, Andover, 29 September 1930, as quoted on (Frederick S. Allis 1979), p.344-45

> extracurricular activities Jewish boys had as much opportunity as the other undergraduates."[43]

In other words, so long as Jewish boys were academically suitable, and willing to accept the school's social norms (including required Protestant worship attendance), Stearns was, though not enthusiastic, at least willing consider his admission.

The problem, however, was that Stearns doubted how willing his Jewish boys actually were to accept the school's social norms. When large numbers of Phillipians had grown weary of mandatory chapel worship by the mid-1920s, Stearns had no difficulty identifying the root cause for this degeneration:

> "I have a strong conviction that the feeling against compulsory chapel is not nearly so deep as we are sometimes led to believe. The religion element has played a small part in [required weekday chapel services], as we all know. In many institutions the services have been nothing short of a travesty on religion, and the boys have naturally rebelled. Where the services have been kept on a truly spiritual level, I have never been able to find any vigorous opposition on the part of the student body as a whole." He continued with bitterness: "Not only would there be a loss on the religious side, but there would (335) be a distinct loss to the morale and spirit of the college. The thing that has troubled me most . . . is that the pronounced and pugnacious agitation against compulsory religious exercises has come almost wholly from a conviction [sic] of clever and noisy Hebrews, plus a group composed of the type . . . who have practically no religious background themselves and are like iconoclasts."[44] (336)

[43] (Frederick S. Allis 1979), pp.344-45

[44] Stearns to Olds, Andover, 26 march 1926. (Frederick S. Allis 1979), p.336

Apparently, Stearns was either unaware of the longstanding history of student dissatisfaction with religion at Andover, or he chose intentionally to revise the course of events:

> "During the Bancroft years the undergraduates also began to question various aspects of the religious program. There had doubtless been earlier complaints, but they had tended to be muted; now they became more outspoken. One of the major undergraduate dissatisfactions was with the two long Sunday services conducted by professors from the Theological Seminary, and they were greatly heartened when a member of the Phillips academy faculty said he thought the time would come when only one service would be required.[45] . . . Dr. Bancroft was continually distressed at the number of students who were lukewarm toward religion, but he was never able to modify the existing program enough to make it truly attractive to students."

Stearns' unease with Jewish students notwithstanding, it would be reasonable to suggest that the Bancroft-Stearns-Stackpole recasting of Andover's Christian mission created an institutional readiness to adjust to the imminent explosion of Jewish enrollment. With the litmus test of doctrine erased, no longer would students even have to profess Christianity to satisfy Christian requirements, because "The 'cornerstone of Christianity' was [no longer] the death and resurrection of Christ but 'the character of Jesus Christ, the life of Jesus Christ.'[46] Stackpole's Jesus was more ethical than divine." Since behavior trumped belief, Jewish boys were as capable as any other of fulfilling the school's new religious mission.

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[45] (Frederick S. Allis 1979), p.296

[46] M.W. Stackpole, "The Uniqueness of Christ," sermon #220, 28 March 1909, PAA Archives (as quoted by (Jordan 2004), p.381)

After having pursued markedly divergent theological paths over the course of the previous century, it had become apparent to both Phillips Academies by the mid-1920s that modernity called for a liberal theology of unprecedented acceptance.

THE COALESCING OF ELITE BOARDING SCHOOL MISSION

Modernity demanded reformulation of religious mission not only from Andover and Exeter, but from all the elite boarding schools of the day. In fact, an atmosphere of collaboration was beginning to spread across the Northeast as had never been seen – or perhaps even contemplated – before. This manifested itself most readily in the way school chapel programs were inviting speakers and preachers from other schools to address their boys. The resultant cross-fertilization manifested in rapidly coalescing religious perspectives and missions.

Because different schools had historically different approaches to religion, the presenters on the boarding school circuit tended to highlight commonalities over differences. This, in turn, brought the different schools more and more in line with a common ecumenical emphasis on good works and strong character over specific denominational doctrine.

Though an increasingly open religious mission was an obvious prerequisite for the subsequent arrival of Jewish students at Andover and Exeter, it hardly explains the full shift. Sincere as the leadership at Andover and Exeter had been about the Christian call to reframe the definition of piety, this first wave of Jewish enrollment resulted most likely from outside factors even more than internal epiphanies. Between the College

Board's call for new kinds of students, the unprecedented influx of Jewish immigrants to America, and the spike in Jewish wealth and academic achievement, neither Andover nor Exeter had all that much of a choice in the matter.

Social difficulties may have existed for the Jewish students who, by nature of their religious lineage, fell outside the traditional profile of elite boarding school boys, but even then, it was neither institutionally encouraged nor particularly prevalent. It certainly didn't halt the increase of Jewish numbers over the next few decades.

GETTING THEIR DUCKS IN A ROW

It was during the years between World War 1 & World War II that Andover and Exeter first experienced a noticeable swell in their Jewish student populations. At the turn of the 20th century, with modernity paving the way to greater and greater advances for more and more people, an unmistakable aura of confidence in the human potential for perfection began to descend on America, especially amongst the wealthy. This had major effects on Andover and Exeter, because even though top leadership continued to express their schools' missions in decidedly Christian terms, increasing numbers of students and faculty were simultaneously beginning to question the legitimacy of traditional parochial faith in the new world order, which placed Andover and Exeter under obligation to engage in a theological process of self-redefinition. In the process, faith itself became, in effect, optional. Implications for the composition of future student bodies were monumental Even though chapel attendance would remain obligatory for another half-century, the moment students' willingness to accept moral instruction in character

development came to be an acceptable way to satisfy religious requirements, the single most important institutional barrier to Jewish enrollment was gone. Social realities would persist, but so far as officially pronounced school policy was concerned, it finally became possible for qualified sons of Jewish immigrants to fulfill religious requirements without having to live as Christians. This, along with steadily improving financial and educational conditions, paved the way for a remarkable and imminent increase in Jewish presence at Andover and Exeter. Within a generation, Jewish enrollment would climb to roughly 5 percent. Within two generations (by the late-1940s [space] at the latest) it would be 10 percent, which is where it has been ever since.

ANDOVER'S GROWING COMMITMENT TO ECUMENISM

Andover's 1933 transition from Markham Stackpole to the newly appointed school minister, A. Graham ("Gary") Baldwin, was in many ways seamless and natural. Like the minister he replaced, Baldwin collaborated well with his headmaster (though appointed by Stearns, Baldwin spent the overwhelming majority of his Andover career working under Claude Feuss [1933-48] and John Kemper [1948-1971]) and approached the religious mission at Andover as a theological liberal who valued the principle of religious pluralism. Also like Stackpole, Baldwin received the support of his administration and enjoyed rousing success in his efforts to bring Andover still further into the modern era. Not that his Andover ever reached the point where full religious diversity and support could be claimed, but it can be said, without hesitation, that by the time of his retirement in 1966, ecumenism had become the official school line, not only

in the classroom, but in school-sponsored religious worship, too. This was due partly because of his determination, ability, and character, but it never would have happened had he not enjoyed the blessing and active support of top leadership:

> "One great difficulties in establishing religious services for a nonsectarian School was the necessity for compromising on the form of service. The strength of an established and traditional ritual in church schools could make their services more meaningful to the students. Gray Baldwin dealt with this problem very effectively. He started with the framework of the Congregational service but included material from other denominations as well – from the Book of Common Prayer, for example. And he tried very hard to get speakers who would interest the boys – men who would often speak on important social issues of the day. . . . The Religious program of the School received strong support from Bishop Henry W. Hobson, President of the Board of Trustees, and from Headmaster John Kemper, both of whom believed strongly that it was an integral part of a boy's education."[47]

THE SAME OLD SOLUTION TO A NEW PROBLEM

When Charles Elliot began his forty year tenure as president of Harvard University in 1869, American colleges were still functioning primarily under missions of gentlemanly piety. By the time he retired in 1909, Harvard had been transformed into a modern university whose mission was to provide students with the tools necessary for success in the increasingly rational industrialized world of the 20th century. One of the byproducts of Elliot's jettisoning of parochial religious priorities was unprecedented diversity among the student body, including large numbers of Jews. While some elite colleges, such as Princeton for example,[48] made clear and early institutional choices to limit diversity,

[47] (Frederick S. Allis 1979) p.658.

[48] "At Princeton, whose country club image probably discouraged non-WASPs from bothering to apply, Jewish students made up only 2.6 percent of the undergraduates in

Charles Elliot championed opportunity for all. To him, decisions of college admission were to be made on the basis of academic merit, nothing else.

By the time Abbot Lowell became president in 1909, the Jewish population of America had grown to just under 2 percent, but the student body of Harvard had grown to 7 percent Jewish.[49] At first, this seemed not to be too great a concern for Lowell, as evidenced by the fact that he made it a clear priority from the beginning to reform admissions policies so as to create greater opportunity for "nontraditional" public school graduates to gain entry to Harvard. Surely he recognized that practically every Jewish freshman at Harvard was coming by way of public school rather than the customary elite feeder schools. On the other hand, it seems equally true that Lowell must not have anticipated just how rapidly the Jewish population at Harvard would grow, because in 1922, when it had grown to 22 percent, Lowell declared war on the trend. And, as one of the vice presidents of the Immigration Restriction League, he had surrounded himself with plenty of colleagues and associates eager to support his efforts. In the end, despite all the good he did for Harvard, Elliot will forever be remembered by Jews (and other minorities) as the president who successfully forced back the doors back towards a closed position when he and his colleagues decided diversity had run its course of usefulness.:

> "Eliot . . . had campaigned on behalf of Jews throughout his tenure at Harvard; nearing the end of his presidency Eliot even asserted, "It would please me to be followed by a Jew"[50]). Lowell's administration, however, after just a few years in

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1918. This figure rose to about 6 percent in the mid-1920s, when a quota was applied limiting Jews to 3 percent of enrollment." ((Lewis n.d.), p.92)

[49] (Karabel 2005), p.96

[50] Pollak, Oliver B. "Anti-Semitism, the Harvard Plan, and the Roots of Reverse Discrimination." Jewish Social Studies. Vol. 45 No. 2 (1983): 113-122. Print. (as quoted on p. 2 of (Moscona-Skolnik 2013)

> office, sensed that Jewish students were becoming an unseemly large percentage of Harvard matriculants. Lowell not only proposed a quota system for Jewish applicants, but also initiated a policy to bar black students from freshman dormitories and dining halls. In the early 1920s, new admissions procedures were devised and, in 1923, executed for the first time."[51]

As a result of Lowell's "New Plan," even though Jewish enrollment did continue to climb over the short-run (27 percent of Harvard's incoming freshman class in 1925 was Jewish), by the time of his retirement in 1933, Jews had fallen back to just 10 percent of the student body.

Given that the 1930s produced the single most anti-Semitic decade of American history, it is no surprise that Jewish enrollment fell off not only at Harvard but at all the other elite college, too (University of Pennsylvania being the sole exception, where undergraduate Jewish enrollment grew from 14.5 percent in 1918-19 to 35 percent in 1934-35[52]).

"During the1920s agitation over the "Jewish problem" reached fever pitch . . . [even at Columbia University, where] selective admissions policies . . . were put in place to reduce the Jewish population to 22 percent in the college."[53] It seems that Columbia University President Nicholas Murray Butler was neither oblivious nor unconcerned with the fact that between 1880 and 1930, the number of New York social registrants graduating from Columbia College had shrunk from 2.5 per year to 1 every 2.5years.[54] "In 1879, 81% of Columbia College students were Protestant, while 5% were Jewish. 24

[51] (Moscona-Skolnik 2013)

[52] (Farnum 1990), p.89

[53] (Farnum 1990), p.83

[54] "In 1879, 81% of Columbia College students were Protestant, while 5% were Jewish. 24 years later, in 1903, the Protestant percentage had fallen 17 points to 64% while the Jewish percentage had risen 17 points to 22%." (Farnum 1990) p.83

years later, in 1903, the Protestant percentage had fallen 17 points to 64% while the Jewish percentage had risen 17 points to 22%." In 1933, the same year President Lowell could boast upon his retirement that Harvard Harvard's Jewish enrollment had been reduced to 10 percent, Butler commented to Columbia College Dean, Herbert Hawkes: "I don't know whether it is at all practicable, but it would be highly judicious if . . . some way could be found to see to it that individuals of the undesirable type [I.e., "Jews"] did not get into Columbia College, no matter what their record in the very important matter of As and Bs."[55]

What may be surprising, however, is that while the percentages of Jews in the Ivy League were suffering, the opposite was happening at Andover and Exeter. To be fair, even after Lowell's massive campaign of dejudification, one out of every ten students at Harvard was still Jewish. The concurrent number at Andover and Exeter was roughly one out of every twenty. The difference was that while Andover and Exeter was on the incline, Harvard was in retreat, as were most other elite colleges at the time. So, even though Jews were still trying to gain access during the 1930s, at least they were spared from having to deal with the emotional challenge of being whittled down after having already gained access.

On the other hand, while academic merit was becoming increasingly valued in the admissions process, financial status continued to be of paramount importance to the administrators charged with ensuring institutional longevity. With financial aid being more accessible at the college level, it is not surprising that even after the reductions,

[55] (Wechsler, 1977: 166). " High Status Track: Studies of Elite Schools and Stratification edited by Paul W. Kingston, Lionel S. Lewis pages 83-84

Jewish representation would be higher there than in boarding schools. Andover and Exeter in the 1930s were still educational luxuries that, with few exceptions, only the wealthiest could afford. As successful as their climb towards financial success had been, it would take another generation before significant Jewish wealth would be in the hands of enough families so that the Aristocracy would agree to stand down and permit the campus gates to be opened.

MERITOCRACY DID HAVE ITS LIMITS, EVEN AT ANDOVER

The fact that Andover went from sporadic Jewish enrollment prior to Al Stearns' tenure to a consistent 5 percent by the time he retired in 1933 is both significant and encouraging within the context of our evolving story. At the same time, it would be a misrepresentation to suggest Andover was free from the same kind of anti-Semitic concerns that had descended upon the collegiate world.

Notwithstanding his decidedly liberal approach to matters of religion and meritocracy, it can hardly be said that Stearns was an active cheerleader for the growing presence of Jewish Phillipians. Nor, for that matter, could it be said of his successor, Claude ("Jack") Feuss who, in a 1935 correspondence with the headmistress of North Shore Country Day School in Beverly, MA, wrote:

> "'It is just too bad about the little Jewish boy, but I can't very well blame Dean Lynde for trying to keep our school as predominantly Aryan as possible. If we once start to open our doors freely to members of that race, we shall be overwhelmed by applications. As a matter of fact, we have hundreds each year as

> it is.'[56] On another occasion, writing to the headmaster of a British School, Feuss reported that at Phillips Academy there were thirty-five Jewish students out of a school of 690. 'We shall never,' he said, 'have a larger percentage, and I am trying to reduce it just a little. On the other hand some of them make first class students and real leaders, although very few of them are permitted to hold important social positions.'[57] In another letter to the same man, he added, 'The pressure to get Jews in to Andover is tremendously strong, especially from bankers among our alumni body, but so far we have been able tactfully to resist it.'[58],[59]

Notwithstanding the rising Jewish presence at Andover, it's not as if these applicants enjoyed the likelihood for acceptance as those coming from more traditional pools. Andover's 2013 boast that its acceptance rate of just 13 percent represented the stiffest competition in 236 years[60] is hardly impressive when put next to the achievement of the approximately ten Jews per class in 1930s ("thirty-five Jewish students out of a school of 690") who gained acceptance out of the "hundreds [who applied] each year."

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[56] "C.M. Feuss to Miss Grace Sweet, Headmistress of North Shore Country Day School, Beverly, Massachusetts, Andover, 25 April 1935. Miss Sweet had written him on 22 April that Dean Lynde was not accepting any more "Hebrew" Applications." (This is the text of Note #30 on p.616 of (Frederick S. Allis 1979)

[57] "C.M. Feuss to Frederic B. Malim, Headmaster of Wellington (England), Andover, 8 April 1936." (as quoted on p.616 of (Frederick S. Allis 1979)

[58] 1 May 1936 (Note #32 on p.616 of (Frederick S. Allis 1979))

[59] (Frederick S. Allis 1979) p.6

[60] "Overall, 402 students, or 13 percent of the 3,029 who applied to Andover this year, were accepted, marking the lowest admission rate in Andover's history. (The Academy calculates its admission rate based on the number of completed applications.) The 319 students who enrolled made for a robust yield of 79 percent." (Historic admission rate yields exceptional 236th incoming class 2013)

Still though, lest we permit the ongoing presence of genuine barriers to obscure the revolutionary change that was indeed taking place at Andover, the fact is, for the first time in history, hundreds of Jewish families were actually submitting applications each year. The Jewish community of America had produced enough wealthy and connected families by then that even as the likelihood of acceptance remained minimal, Andover and Exeter were becoming increasingly familiar aspirations for wealthy Jews.

Given the clear affinity shared by Al Stearns and Claude Feuss for maintaining quotas on the number of Jews admitted, one might expect Jewish students at the time to have faced significant ostracization or anti-Semitism. To be sure, Andover was not immune, but even during America's anti-Semitic 1930s, Jewish students were by and large accepted as Phillipians by their peers and teachers. Frederick Allis, an Andover history teacher/department chair from 1936-1979, who was also a member of the graduating class in 1931, wrote:

> "Occasionally Jewish students who had managed to jump the admissions barrier met with anti-Semitism within the School. An alumnus writes in his first years at Williams Hall, where there were a few Jewish students enrolled. It was decided to give them the so-called "silent treatment," and as a result none of the other students in the dormitory would speak to them. The alumnus went along with this vicious performance, at the same time hating himself for doing so, but he did not feel strong enough to defy the herd. Generally speaking, however, most of the Jewish students were well accepted, and some of them made distinguished records during this period."[61]

In retrospect, it seems that Andover managed to avoid the current anti-Semitism not only because of the ecumenical atmosphere that had been fostered (mostly by Bancroft,

[61] (Frederick S. Allis 1979), p.616

Stearns, and Stackpole), but at least as much, if not more, by the already formed proclivities of those Jewish boys who chose to attend in the first place.

THE JEWISH CLIMB INTO AMERICAN ARISTOCRACY

As described above, the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw unprecedented numbers of Jewish immigrants – mostly from Eastern Europe – coming to the United States. When it began in 1880, Jews represented 0.51 percent of the American population.[62] Having grown slightly to 0.64 percent by 1890, Jewish numbers began to skyrocket over the next 30 years, to 1.39 percent in 1900, 1.93 percent in 1910, and then a whopping 3.20 percent by 1920. Clearly this trend did not sit well with top policy makers in the federal government, as evidenced by the 1921 Emergency Quota Act, which restricted immigration from any single region to 3 percent of that region's 1890 population in America. Three years later the Immigration Act of 1924 cut immigration still further, from three percent of 1890 numbers to two.

By the time Claude Feuss became headmaster a decade later, Jewish professionals had been dedicating enormous time and energy sounding the alarm over the dangers of assimilation for more than thirty years already. American Jews were pursuing a new path, one that diverged significantly from the norms of tradition. They had gotten the message: America had enough Jews and didn't need (or want) any more. For Jews to "make it," they would have to adopt new Yankee identities, which is what most Jews chose to do. Thus, while the new restrictions did produce a certain amount of social

[62] (Vital Statistics: Jewish Population in the United States, Nationally (1654-Present) n.d.)

anxiety, it only strengthened Jewish resolve to assimilate.. Those at the top of the economic spectrum, of course, entered the 1930s with enormous advantage over the Jewish masses, but so far as general approach is concerned, it can be said that regardless of social or economic status, the path of assimilation that Jews had been walking since their arrival in America was not only continuing at full strength, but intensifying. For those Jews who had already risen to extreme financial success, the logical next step was to pursue assimilation into the world of WASP aristocracy. And, for the first time in American history, it actually seemed possible. The planets for Jewish entry had finally come into alignment: Cecil Bancroft, Al Stearns, and Myron Stackpole had recreated the religious mission of Andover into one that celebrated liberal ecumenism, an identifiable population of Jewish families had joined the ranks of the "ultra-wealthy, and enough Jews had studied alongside aristocratic boarding school alumni at America's elite colleges that Andover and Exeter were now reasonable aspirations for their own families, too. And, with twenty-four percent of America's law students being Jewish in 1934 (fifty-six percent in New York City),[63] this trend was sure to continue.

To be sure, the 1930s hardly marked the first time Jews had enrolled at Andover and Exeter, but in contrast to their histories of educating the occasional Jewish boy, as they had done for generations, the occasional Jewish student was being replaced with a steady enrollment of Jews each and every year. to the point where the percentage of Phillips Academy students from Jewish families in the 1930s finally came to exceed the percentage of all American high school students from Jewish families. And, unlike Abbot Lowell's Harvard, once opened, the doors would never again close.

[63] How Jews Became White, Sacks 59

A Growing Crack in the Door

Having risen by the mid-1930s to the point where roughly five percent of the boys in each new class came from Jewish ancestry, the next ten years were a time of stability for the religious diversity of Andover and Exeter. The fact that Jewish students tended to outperform their Christian peers contributed greatly to the increasing acceptance of their presence, especially since leadership had been making a clear effort to depict their schools in terms of meritocracy rather than the traditional plutocracy. To be sure, financial clout and family relations continued to matter, but official school values were moving in a new direction, and it was one that accommodated Jews. Besides, even if financial clout did continue to sway decisions on admission, enough wealth had been generated that a growing number of Jewish families were beginning to merit legitimate consideration on this front, too.

As effective as the Jews had been in recognizing and capitalizing on the emergence of new opportunities, had the previous sixty years not been colored by Cecil Bancroft's and Al Stearns' leadership, Myron Stackpole's "undenominationalism," or Gary Baldwin's subsequent efforts to liberalize religion even further, such Jewish inclusion would not have been possible by the eve of World War II. But they had. There was room for continued growth, but it can be said unequivocally that the time for Jewish Phillipians and Exonians had finally arrived.

That said, not every academically capable Jewish boy (whose family fit the desired financial profile) would have met with equal success at the Phillips Academies. There were, after all, limitations to just how sweeping or speedy such social change could be.

Official school rhetoric aside, it still took a specific kind of Jew to succeed. Yes, academic capacity mattered. And yes, it helped to be among the ultra-rich. But it is no accident that until the 1960s (at least), the overwhelming majority of Jewish students came from families for whom maintaining overt Jewish identities was not a particularly high priority.

AMERICA'S FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM: GOOD FOR THE JEWS

In the most tragically ironic way, it might be that Pearl Harbor and Adolph Hitler created the single most effective weapon in the struggle against anti-Semitism in America.

Having dedicated the previous twenty years waging battle against a perceived domestic threat in the form of excessive immigration, America was forced to shift its national focus when an actual genuine threat arrived at Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941. In the wake of such aggression, (white) America wound up coming together in a profoundly new way, with a shared commitment to national solidarity across the social spectrum. Even President Roosevelt himself weighed in:

> I am deeply concerned over the increasing number of reports of employers discharging workers who happen to be aliens or even foreign-born citizens. This is a very serious matter. It is one thing to safeguard American industry, and particularly defense industry, against sabotage; but it is very much another to throw out of work honest and loyal people who, except for the accident of birth, are sincerely patriotic.
>
> Such a policy is as stupid as it is unjust, and on both counts it plays into the hands of the enemies of American democracy . . .
>
> Remember the Nazi technique: "Pit race against race, religion against religion, prejudice against prejudice. Divide and conquer!"
>
> We must not let that happen here. We must not forget what we are defending: liberty, decency, justice. We cannot afford the economic waste of services of all

> loyal and patriotic citizens and non-citizens in defending our land and our liberties."

The rhetoric was powerful. Its message resonated not only with the soldiers abroad, but civilians at home, too. Everyone mattered, regardless of national or religious origin. So long as they served the country as best they could, America was their home.

Notably, this call was heard no less on the squash courts of Andover and Exeter than in the bowling alleys of Anytown, U.S.A. By the end of the war, America had changed. Social stratification endured, racial segregation continued, and anti-Semitism persisted, but at least after having seen the evils of fascism face to face, America no longer considered these prejudiced ways acceptable to be spoken aloud in polite company. This was especially true in the Northeast, where all the most elite boarding schools happened to be located. In this way, America's fight against fascism in World War II turned out to be a pivotal moment in the unfolding story of burgeoning Jewish access to the world of Andover and Exeter.

Faced with the dilemma of trying to figure out how to continue with their mission of preparing their boys for success in college and beyond while at the same time honoring their patriotic obligation to support the war effort, the Phillips Academy faculties voted to stay the course and do nothing radical, but to do it in a radical way. That is, the essentials of an Andover or Exeter education would remain unchanged, but it would, out of necessity, be sped up.:

> "The greatest major change . . . was the adaptation of a summer session to meet the needs of Upper Middlers who would reach their eighteenth birthday some

> weeks before Commencement, and would be subject to the draft before graduation . . . [In response, the trustees of both schools] authorized the institution of a regular school term during the summer of 1943" so as to enable draft-eligible seniors the opportunity to graduate in February," before having to enlist for military service.

When it came to the issue of Phillips Academy boys heeding the call to military service, since every soldier was equally vital to the war effort, therefore, every Academy student was equally vital to the war effort. And since military service was a universally appreciated way of proving one's patriotism, so long as one served with honor, distinctions between Christian and Jew were rendered entirely irrelevant. Since 4.23 percent of the American Armed Forces was Jewish, at a time when only 3.3 percent of the general public was Jewish,[64] fascism actually served the unintended purpose of finally making indisputable Americans of out Jews across America, including at Andover and Exeter:

> "[By the time] Jewish veterans returned home . . . important things had changed in their lives . . . Collectively they had become agents of a shift in the legitimization of American Jewish identity, one that would deepen the sense that Americans were at home in America. Belief in American exceptionalism was apparently being rewarded . . . Military policy had made possible the emergence of a civil religion for American democracy, soon to be widely known as the "Judeo-Christian tradition . . . [which] was largely a creation of the American military in World War II, and it gave Jews a measure of freedom to be just that, American Jews."[65]

The Phillips Academies were willing participants in the process. To the contrary, their response to World War II ,which was entirely consistent with the firmly established

[64] (Brody 2006)

[65] (Moore 2009) p.13

tradition of adjusting to current reality so as to maintain effectiveness and relevancy, was intentional and in keeping with the highest ideals of their evolving school missions.

After the war, recognizing the sacrifices their own students had made to the war effort, Andover and Exeter proceeded to honor the 142 fallen Phillipians[66] and 154 fallen Exonians[67] by lowering barriers and moving even further towards fulfilling their stated commitment to creating a true meritocracy in matters of admission. Whether or not the recognition was conscious and intentional is not clear, but what is clear, is that from that moment on, Jewish enrollment would never again dip under 10 percent.

THE POST-WAR YEARS

As anti-Semitism became less and less acceptable in the post-War years, American Judaism experienced a remarkable surge. To wit, after decades of declining interest, Jews started to demand (and receive) an increasing variety of certified kosher items in their grocery stores.[68] As Jews moved to the suburbs in the 1950s, new temples and synagogues were being built in communities across the country. Families that previously had put Jewish education on hold were now pioneering a new movement of supplemental Hebrew schools to complement their children's secular education.[69] Even as American

[66] (James, Phillips Academy in WWII: The School in the War Years n.d.)

[67] (Phillips Exeter Academy n.d.)

[68] (Joselit 1994) p.188

[69] (Joselit 1994), p.84

Jewry continued to distance itself from Old World orthodoxy, the willingness and eagerness to be publicly identified was growing at warp speed. And what better time of the year to do it than Christmas?

Even though 40% of Chicago Jews had Christmas trees in the 1950s,[70] or perhaps ***because*** 40% of Chicago Jews had Christmas trees in the 1950s , it was also during this decade that Chanukah became the first Jewish holiday to increase, rather than decrease, in importance. Celebrating Chanukah as the "Jewish Christmas" may have disturbed Jewish leadership, but so far as the American public (Jewish and gentile) was concerned, this marked the first time that being Jewish and also American simultaneously lost its inherent contradiction. When Andover and Exeter reached five percent Jewish in the 1930s, that marked the first time leadership felt the need to review policies on required chapel attendance. In a time when religious fervor was growing across America, a general malaise on matters of devotion could be sensed at Andover and Exeter

Not that maintaining a requirement was itself up for discussion, but how best to do it in an increasingly diverse setting became a topic of great importance and urgency. When just one out of every twenty students was non-Christian, the issue could still be kicked down the road. Now that one out of every ten was non-Christian, decisions had to be made.

Though Al Stearns had created Andover's position of school minister in 1907, Exeter hadn't felt the need. Committed to ecumenism already, Exeter was satisfied with the status quo. By the winter of 1945, however:

[70] (Joselit 1994), p.240

> "The faculty [of Exeter], by questionnaire, favor[ed] the appointment at the earliest possible moment of a director of religious education. The problem [was] recognized as meriting attention, and its solution await[ed] the end of the war, when a suitably trained and well adapted man c[ould] be found to strengthen this work."[71] Clearly something had changed. Expressed in this description was a clear sense of concern over the status of religion that had never before been put forward by the faculty as a whole.

In retrospect, one can't help but wonder just how urgent the issue actually was, because it would be another seven years until Principal William Saltonstall (1946-63) would decide upon a suitable candidate, and then yet another year after that before the Rev. George Beilby would arrive to join the Exeter faculty in 1953.

In the liberal tradition of Exeter's approach to religion, Beilby came with an innate appreciation of his sacred obligation to support the religious lives of all students, not just Protestant Christians. All the same, after reading his 1954 Exeter Bulletin article, "Religion and the School Community," in which he outlined his anticipated ministerial priorities, one might be left asking just how capable he really was in wearing the shoes of non-Protestants. Even as he touted the school's willingness for boys to fulfill their Sunday chapel requirements at a town church of their choice, so too did he write that the overwhelming majority (500 v. 200) attended Phillips Church where he, as school minister, led an inter-denominational Protestant service. That is, boys could go elsewhere, but unless they stayed on campus, they would not have opportunity to hear the official Protestant religious voice of Exeter.

As the piece continues in the spirit of great ecumenical pride, Beilby writes about innovations that were being implemented to serve the religious needs of Jewish students.

[71] (Religious Instruction at Exeter 1945), p.13

Unbeknownst to the school minister, however, in some ways his description of Jewish services served to reinforce rather than alleviate potential marginalization:

> "Sabbath Services: An innovation in the life of worship in the past year has been the introduction of a weekly Friday evening Sabbath Service for Jewish students. Jewish students at the Academy may choose to attend this service in place of the Sunday morning service. Jewish prayer books have been purchased, a student-run congregation, with a president in charge, make arrangements for one weekly service. Rabbis and pre-rabbinical students from Harvard University are invited to lead these services. Recently the Jewish congregation voted to assess each of its members a small sum to help with the expenses of the services. The response to the Sabbath Service from students, rabbis, and parents of the boys has been very gratifying.[72]

Students who chose to worship at a church in town enjoyed the benefits of well-trained clergy, communal embrace, and well funded buildings. Students who chose to worship in Phillips Church enjoyed the benefits of worshipping with the school principal under the leadership of the school minister in a magnificent school-sponsored church building. Students who chose to worship on Friday nights were obliged to organize it themselves, pay a portion of the expenses out of pocket, and try to form community around visiting prayer leaders, only some of whom were professionally trained. The playing field was far from equal. All the same, there is no question that this was a clear turning point in the story of Jews at Exeter. The fact that the school bearing John Phillips' name had implemented a policy of allowing Jewish worship to satisfy Sunday chapel requirements was nothing short of revolutionary. How odd then, that the boys of Exeter didn't necessarily see it as such a big deal.

[72] (George E. Beilby 1954), p.7

CHAPTER 3

THE ACADEMIES SINCE 1951: A RAPIDLY CHANGING REALITY

THE RISE OF MERITOCRACY

When Peter Wolf "got off the train at the dingy, bleak station in Exeter, New Hampshire, [for the first time as a new 11th Grader from New Orleans during the Fall of 1951,] . . . [he] felt inadequately prepared for the trials ahead; next to those guys in tweed jackets and with their ties askew over button-down oxford shirts, [he] felt out of place in [his] wrinkled khakis and striped polo shirt. [He was] worried. [He] didn't know anyone in the school except for Charles Marks, who was also a new student [from the South.]"[73] In most respects, such apprehension would have been expected from any teenage boy thrust into such unfamiliar waters. But Peter wasn't just "any" boy at Exeter. Peter Wolf, the nervous teenager, was a sixth-generation Exonian.[74] As awkward as he felt about

[73] (Wolf 2013)

[74] (Wolf 2013)

wearing the "wrong" clothes, it certainly was not a lack of purchasing power that made him nervous. Peter came from extraordinary privilege. By the time his great great grandfather, Leon Godchaux died in 1899, the Jewish immigrant boy from Alsace-Lorraine had become the single wealthiest man in all of Louisiana.

There was one difference, though, between Peter and the two boys he had encountered at the train station. Rare as it was for there to be sixth generation boys at Exeter, Peter was downright unique, because he was both sixth generation and Jewish. Peter's family had learned very early on the social and economic benefits of, as his grandmother used to say, being "Jewish, but not in an obvious way."[75] Never denying their religious heritage, Peter's extended family had founded the first temple in New Orleans. They sat on the board of the Young Mens' Hebrew Association and even taught Bible out of their homes. But when it came to worshipping in the temple they had created, Pater's family had shown little interest. Being Jewish mattered, but no need to go overboard!

So, that was it. Even after five generations of Exonians had come before him, Peter Wolf arrived at Exeter in the fall of 1951 keenly aware that he was different from the others on account of his being Jewish. Deep pockets could buy him only so much acceptance in the WASP haven.

as the problem with this theory,, as compelling and seemingly rational as it may seem, is that it is entirely false! Peter Wolf was not concerned because he was Jewish. Peter Wolf was concerned because he was a teenage boy thrust into a new situation.:

[75] (Wolf 2013)

> At Exeter . . . [he] was sequestered in a class of 230 bright guys from across America, and two-thirds of them had been together since being members of the junior class – ninth grade, also called the prep class. Cliques had formed. Sports had been mastered. Extracurricular club memberships were full. [Peter] had gone from being president of my class to being a nobody.

The thing is, because being Jewish was only a minor part of who he was back home, so too was being Jewish only a minor part of who he was at Exeter. It never occurred to him that that being Jewish was even worth thinking about. It was, for all intents and purposes, irrelevant. Though plagued with the same kinds of social challenges any other resident community of teenage boys would be expected to have, Wolf remembers that the Exeter he joined in the fall of 1951 was first and foremost, a meritocracy. Every boy, whether sixth generation or first, wealthy or poor, Protestant or Jewish, lived under the same microscope of judgment. Hard work and good grades are what earned respect from teachers and friends alike. Other forms achievement mattered, too, such as on the athletic field, art studio, or stage, but the notion that Jews would have a more difficult time than Protestants held little sway for him.

When asked in the year 2014 how Jews (other than from his family) wound up at Exeter in the early 1950s, or whether they were happy, Wolf has difficulty responding, because it is a question that he has never before thought to ask. "I have no sense of why there were Jews at Exeter," he says, "or whether or not they were happy. My family had gone to Exeter for generations, so I just naturally went there, too."[76]

[76] This and all Wolf quotations are from a private conversation between Peter M. Wolf (Exeter, '53) and Andy Dubin, February 28, 2014.

The only place at Exeter where Peter Wolf seems to have felt out of place was in required chapel. But even then, his discomfort was only occasional:

> "At Exeter, the whole school was required to go to chapel, which was held in the academy building Monday through Friday morning. Little about it was ecclesiastical, except a hymn after morning announcements. Church attendance on Sunday morning in the school's chapel building was mandatory, unless an excuse was obtained. An excuse usually consisted of validation of weekly attendance at another church in town, or a synagogue . . . Exeter's own private Anglican-looking stone chapel sat squarely facing Front Street at the edge of the campus. Each Sunday the school chaplain conducted a proper service, with the sermon often delivered by a visiting cleric or scholar. As a Jewish student, I had the option of going to a synagogue in town. Since I didn't do that in New Orleans and had no particular interest in the ecclesiastical tenets of my religion, I went to chapel, usually with my close friend Stephen Friedlaender, also a non-observant Jew from the South. I felt a bit strange walking into that sacred space, but NOT nearly as odd as when we started to sing about Christ. In those parts of the hymn, I'd go silent. Steve did, too. After chapel, I'd go downstairs to the basement of the nearby Academy Building, where there was a little snack bar called the Buttery. I'd treat myself to a vanilla milkshake. The smell and the taste of it reminded me of Claren's drugstore and of home. New Orleans: how I missed it!"

So far as Wolf can recall, it was pretty much only when he heard the name of Jesus in chapel that ever felt self-conscious for being a Jew. And even then, he had the reassurance of knowing that so long as he could get his hands on a vanilla milkshake afterwards, he would never be without the necessary antidote.

All in all, Wolf remembers that while the Jewish boys at Exeter were fully prepared to self-identify when asked, few, if any, were inclined to volunteer the information until asked. This, however, was not because they were ashamed or concerned about being "discovered," but simply because it never occurred to them that being Jewish particularly mattered. They had been raised to feel that religious heritage was but one component of their overall self. The boys, therefore, tended to slide, intentionally or not, under the

radar, opting instead to appreciate the opportunity, study diligently, and perform as well as possible. And it was a strategy that worked, evidenced not only by the fact that Jewish students were represented disproportionately on the Dean's List, but (perhaps even more importantly) by the fact that, years later, they would look back with gratitude and joy for their high school experience.

In the spring of 1953, Peter Wolf became the sixth generation of his family to graduate from Phillips Exeter Academy. In the fall of that same year, Leo Ullman (Andover '57), a first generation immigrant from Holland joined the ninth grade of Phillips Academy Andover. Leo had been born into a family of means in Amsterdam, but he hardly enjoyed the same advantages as a child that Peter did in New Orleans. When Leo was just three years old, his parents decided that the only way to keep their Jewish boy safe from the Nazis would be to send him to live under an assumed identity with a Dutch Reformed Protestant family with whom they had been connected. By the time he and his parents reunited in 1945, Leo no longer remembered them, and certainly had no sense of Jewish identity. With time the family grew back together, and in 1947 the Ullmans immigrated to America, settling in Long Island, NY. By the time Leo was in the eighth grade , it was evident that he required more academic challenge than his local public high school was providing. Through the recommendation of a friend, they discovered Andover. As it had been with Peter at Exeter, Leo discovered quickly at Andover that no matter how well he had done at home, this was different. To succeed, he would have to work harder than ever. Andover demanded the very best of its students, and, so far as he could tell, the vast majority of his classmates were satisfied with nothing less than their own very best. He may have been new to the school, he may have had parents who spoke

with strange accents, he may have been Jewish (whatever that meant…), and his family may not have been the wealthiest one there (though they were comfortable enough to enroll Leo without the benefit of financial aid), but none of this really mattered, because achievement was what truly mattered at Andover. As a first generation Jewish Holocaust survivor from Amsterdam, Leo had no more advantage or disadvantage than any other boy.

Looking back, Ullman concludes that as meritocratic as his Andover days had been, it became even more so a few months after he had graduated, with the 1957 launching of Sputnik. He points out that while the Ivy League had been moving towards meritocratic-based admissions standards, American feelings of vulnerability brought it to a whole new level. As William S. Dietrich, II writes:

> "The noted Russian Chemist, George Kistiakowsky, a key member of Robert Oppenheimer's inner circle at Los Alamos, led the charge. He called for rigorous screening of the top 1 percent of high school seniors by means of SAT scores – no manly Christian character, no athletes, no interviews – just raw brain power . . . [This] spurred the young dean of the Harvard faculty, Boston Brahmin McGeorge Bundy (Groton and Yale) into action. Mac Bundy appointed a Special Committee on College Admissions Policies [to study the issue.] . . . [W]hen the committee issued its landmark final report on April 11, 1960, the balance between manly character and academic excellence had shifted decisively in favor of academic excellence."[77]

Once that happened, Andover and Exeter, which had already made clear moves towards meritocracy, had no choice but to push it even further. As a result, Ullman suggests, doors were open for the best public school students in America, many of whom were

[77] (William S. Deitrich 2010) pp.133 & 146

Jewish, to enroll. On this note, when asked to reflect specifically on how it felt to be Jewish at Andover in the mid-1950s, Ullman thinks about it, pauses, and responds:

> "That's a hard question, because I'm not sure I even knew I was Jewish when I got there. It wasn't something my parents ever discussed. After the Holocaust, that's the last thing they wanted to think about. It wasn't until I was a teenager at Andover that I realized I was Jewish. It just didn't mean anything to me. I didn't think about it, my friends didn't think about it, and my teachers didn't think about it. It was basically irrelevant."[78]

Ullman recalls that there were "about four or five other Jewish boys" in his class. This in and of itself offers some insight to just how irrelevant the matter was to him at the time, because by all other accounts, there were closer to twenty-five.

As was true for every single boarding school alumnus and teacher consulted for this study, Ullman was basically untouched by anti-Semitism at Andover. While there were the rare cases of obnoxious students saying obnoxious things, Ullman's recollection of Andover is entirely consistent with Claude Feuss' claim that "If there was any discrimination on the basis of race or color, I was not aware of it"[79]

The fact that Leo Ullman didn't give Judaism much thought said less about Judaism on campus and more about overall religious malaise of 1950s Andover. Reflecting on the religious lives of boarding school graduates in college:

> ". . . the deeply religious Dean of admissions at Amherst College, Eugene S. Wilson, scathingly attacked private school claims to develop faith and character. . . Religion, Wilson concluded, was for most prep students an empty school ritual .

[78]This and all Ullman quotations are from a private conversation between Leo Ullman (Andover '57) and Andy Dubin, January 7, 2014.

[79] (Feuss 1952), p.188

> . . Students had no idea why they said it except that the headmaster liked it. They attended chapel because the head liked chapel, because of tradition, and because it was supposed to be good for them. It was easy for them to regurgitate the Lord's Prayer on command because they didn't think about the words they were saying."[80]

Ullman concurs:

> "We had chapel every day," he says, "but there really were no religious kids of any kind, Jews or Christians. It just wasn't what we were thinking about. We were too busy studying and playing sports. Regarding chapel, we went, we sat down, we behaved, we got through it, and then we went on with our day. We didn't ask questions. We just accepted it because that's the way it was. I can't say it bothered me as a Jew, because I didn't care enough to be bothered. I just wanted to get good grades and play sports."

Nowhere at Exeter was this general indifference felt more sharply than in the Academy's , Religion Department, whose chair, Frederick Beuchner, felt compelled to help students reframe their understanding of the role of religion on campus in 1963. In his opinion, the purpose of teaching religion at Exeter was "… to try to convince a generation which tends to look upon religion as a cumbersome, antiquated, and implausible irrelevance (which much of the time it is) that it is not any religion in itself that really matters, not even Christianity, but only the Reality to which religion points."[81]

Ultimately, this is where Andover stood by the end of the 1950s. Notwithstanding the school's ongoing public commitment to its evolving religious mission, so far as the

[80] (Powell 1996) pp.22-23

[81] (Department 1963)

students (and many faculty) were concerned, religion had become pretty much irrelevant to their lives.

The general sense of malaise towards religion could be felt by teenagers of privilege across America. They continued on with tradition because that was what was expected, but they didn't much care. Neither, for that matter, did it occur to them that not caring might perhaps be something they should have cared about.

1964: THE TIMES AT EXETER THEY WERE A CHANGING…

By the summer of 1963, with racial tensions on the rise and Vietnam threatening to explode in importance, America felt itself beginning to brace for the radical '60s. On August 28, 1963, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. marched on Washington, where he gave voice to a dream that resonated across America, especially among the youth. It was a rallying cry for ordinary citizens to stand up and demand justice through equality of opportunity.

September 28, 1963, exactly one month later, was Yom Kippur. On this particular year the Day of Atonement happened to fall on a Saturday, which also happened to be a regular class day at Exeter. When Jewish students asked to miss class in observance of the holiday, much to their surprise, permission was denied. Perhaps had this happened during the placid '50s, that might have been the end of it. But it didn't, and it wasn't. With increasing levels of empowerment being fostered in traditionally marginalized communities, the Jewish students of Exeter were already inclined to take a stand. The

fact that Exeter's policy of hypocrisy had excused the football team from class in order to play an away game pushed them to the point where they had no choice.

It's hard to imagine that the administrations of elite boarding schools had any idea what would transpire on campus over the next decade. But as the 1960s picked up steam, especially after resistance to the Vietnam War became widespread, America was changing in previously unimagined ways. Social barriers were falling by the day. When the Jews of Exeter (inspired, perhaps, by the fact that so many of the day's top civil rights activists were also Jews of privilege) stood up to demand justice, this was just a sign of things to come. With organized effort, these high school students forced change to an institutional policy that had stood uncontested for almost two hundred years. Work would still have to be made up, but never again would Jewish Exonians be forced to choose between Yom Kippur and an unblemished school record.

All the same, a quick read of Christopher M. Brookfield's 1966 Exeter Bulletin piece, "Irreverent Relevancies," highlights the fact that even for all their proclamations about the nobility of ecumenism, Exeter's religion department nonetheless did continue to prioritize Christianity:

> "I would suggest that since the culture of the Western world in which we live in inextricably bound up with the Judeo-Christian tradition, an understanding of that tradition ought to be a necessary part of our educational experience, and should precede any investigation of comparative religion. The problem of religious pluralism might better be handled, it seems to me, by offering a course in the beliefs and worship of the three major religious traditions of our country: Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism. If such a course could be taught by a part-time rabbi, priest, and protestant minister (or by informed layman of these religious persuasions among the faculty), it would have the advantage of a variety of teachers and points of view. By far the most immediate problem of a

> Religion curriculum, to me, is how to communicate the depth and breadth and vitality of the Christian faith as it relates to the student right now, today."[82]

It's no wonder, then, that after having so successfully and forcefully stood up for their rights as Jewish Exonians on Yom Kippur, the tenor of Jewish expression on campus remained pretty much the same during the radical '60s as it had been during the placid '50s, which can be described as one of marginalization, at best. There were, of course exceptions.

The same fall of '63 during which Exeter's Jewish students rose together in protest, Ira Helfand and Robert Nussbaum arrived to campus as eager first generation Exonian ninth graders. Eventually they would come to lead the Exeter Jewish Congregation, which was fitting because unlike the overwhelming number of their Jewish counterparts in boarding school of the day, both came with a solid base of Jewish knowledge. Helfand, from Milford, MA, belonged to an Orthodox congregation until he was eleven years old, after which his family switched to Reform, where he became a *bar mitzvah*.. Nussbaum, from Passaic, NJ, had been raised in an immigrant Jewish family from Poland. His maternal grandparents, with whom he was extremely close, lived by strict orthodoxy, but he and his parents attended the Conservative synagogue where he had led the entire service in Hebrew on the occasion of his becoming a *bar mitzvah*, having put in 4-6 hours of Hebrew school per week. In addition, having worshipped in the orthodox shul often with his grandfather as a child Bob was familiar with the orthodox service, too.

[82] (Brookfield 1966)

Regarding their experiences as Jews at Exeter, it is astounding how similar their recollections are, almost half a century later. Helfand says, "It may have been odd at first to some of the kids from the south, but it wasn't a big deal. I was just another one of the kids."[83] Nussbaum says, "Most of the [Jewish] kids saw the Jewish part as being an accident, and most of the Christian kids didn't care, at least not at first. As I got older and began to take on a leadership role in the Exeter Jewish Congregation, my dorm mates started calling me the BJOC, the Big Jew on Campus. It was a term of endearment. I liked it."[84] As had been the experience of Leo Ullman a decade earlier at Andover, Nussbaum says that "Even though early on I did run into a small bit of anti-Semitism, the kids responsible were bullies who wound up being expelled for other things anyway. Not once did I see even a glimmer of anti-Semitism from the faculty or administration." Helfand goes a step further, suggesting the possibility that Jews on campus may even have enjoyed an advantage as a result of the fact that so many had done well, not only academically but in other arenas of school leadership tool. He remembers that when he arrived as a freshmen, not only was the senior class president Jewish, but so too were four of the five highest ranked students. When comparing the recollections of Helfand and Nussbaum, perhaps the single most telling point is that both use the same word. : meritocracy. When asked whether it was a hindrance to his success that he was a first generation Exonian, Helfand responds quite readily, "Not being a legacy kid became irrelevant very quickly. That's not what mattered. Meritocracy mattered . . . Exeter was

[83] This and all Helfand quotations are from a private conversation between Ira Helfand (Exeter '67) and Andy Dubin, February 17, 2014.

[84] This and all Nussbam quotations are from a private conversation between Robert Nussbam (Exeter '67) and Andy Dubin, February 24, 2014.

quite ahead of the curve when it came to meritocracy." Nussbaum says, "What struck me most about Exeter was that it was a meritocracy. Excellence is what mattered."The only time Nussbaum can remember when being from an immigrant background brought feelings of inadequacy was when his senior year roommate invited him home to Palm Beach, FL for spring break: "It was a very unusual experience. I had no idea just how rich Peter's family was. We went to a debutante party. Very alien to me. This was the only time in my four years at Exeter when I felt out of place and embarrassed and ashamed by my background. Peter, meanwhile, was perfectly understanding and welcoming." Of note, of course, was that this happened not at Exeter, but fifteen hundred miles to the south.

As mentioned above, by the time Helfand and Nussbaum came to Exeter, students could satisfy their Sunday chapel requirements by going to the Friday evening student run Shabbat Service. When the two friends were leading services during their senior year, the "Usual turnout was 30-40." For a school of about 800 students, ten percent of whom were Jewish, this seemed like reasonable turnout. But then, "all of a sudden, 'Jew Cong' became wildly popular, with as much as a third of the school cramming in. Apparently, they figured out that coming on Friday would entitle them to sleep on Sunday, which mattered when we had Saturday classes. We didn't mind. The kids who came just sat in the back bored, kind of like what we all did in Phillips Church. This overflow continued for a few weeks, until Fred Beuchner, the school minister showed up one evening to see what was going on. When he was there, he made a point of locking the door at 7:00 sharp, so that any latecomers would have to go to Sunday chapel. So we stood up and said that wasn't fair. We believed that as the leaders of the Jewish Congregation of

Exeter, we should be the ones to make the decision. Not that it mattered, because after the door was locked, kids just started climbing n through the window anyway. Over time, this grew into something bigger, which was the need for Exeter to address student disdain over required chapel to begin with. Eventually the school, which was committed to religious diversity, instituted a new policy, which was that students could choose any religious service they wanted, but parental permission would have to be given for any alternative to Phillips Church, which I guess I was ok with, so long as chapel continued to be required. It was the requirement that was the problem, not religion itself. We believed that requirements were counter-productive to the goals of religion. So, as a leader of the Jewish Congregation and President of the Student Council, I got involved in trying to overturn it. I was an official student representative in discussions with faculty. I think that was the first grass roots campaign I ever got myself into." Nussbaum believes that Helfand was perhaps the student singly most responsible for getting the school to abolish required chapel. In May of 1968, when Helfand and Nussbaum were freshmen together at Harvard (as sophomores, they would room together), the trustees of Phillips Exeter Academy voted " to drop required attendance at Sunday church service:

- "Resolved: That, mindful of their mandate under the charter to further the effective teaching of religion, and believing that required attention to religion is less conducive to the development of enduring religious attitudes than a program of voluntary participation, the trustees hereby discontinue the requirement of attendance at weekly religious services." – May 31, 1968

MEANWHILE, DOWN AT ANDOVER…

As the 1960s spirit of protest was becoming increasingly pronounced at Exeter, so too were students at Andover demanding change from their administration "that would make their education more "relevant"[85] and consistent with the spiritual values of equality, choice, and respect. Some of the of the most pressing students demands were calls for the democratization of school life, the celebration of personal autonomy, and the abolition of required chapel.

Under pressure in June of 1965, John Kemper (Andover headmaster, 1948-1971) created a special Steering Committee "to consider the current effectiveness of the policies and practices of the Academy and to make recommendations for its development in the future . . . American culture was changing rapidly, it behooved Phillips Academy to adapt itself to that change."[86] After a year of meetings, and with the antiquated language of "salvation" entirely missing, the Steering Committee concluded that "If the [Andover] student were to learn values while at School . . . he must be offered three things: an active religious program that would present values; a Faculty that would, in their lives, represent those values[87]; and the creation of situations that would require the students to make value judgments for themselves."[88] To this end, the Committee recommended that Andover enroll boys "from diverse social, economic, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to draw upon the diverse strengths of the nation's population and to

[85] (Frederick S. Allis 1979) p.638

[86] (Frederick S. Allis 1979) p.638

[87] Keep in mind, the Constitutional had recently been amended to strike the requirement that all faculty be Protestant.

[88](Frederick S. Allis 1979) 638-640

maintain a school community which represents and contributes to the openness of our democratic society."[89]

On the question of required chapel, however, the Committee stood firm. Arguing that benefits of religious life outweighed the potential detriments of required prayer, the Committee recommended that Wednesday and Sunday chapel remain obligatory. John Kemper supported the recommendation without hesitation. The students, on the other hand, were not about to give up.

Over the next few years, student distaste for required chapel continued to grow. And in Rev. James Rae Whyte, the man tapped to be school minister upon Gray Baldwin's retirement in 1966, the students found a surprising advocate. Having concluded that student upset was not going to diminish, Whyte, the official voice of piety at Phillips Academy Andover, wrote in a January 15, 1969 school newspaper piece:

> "I know the arguments for compulsory chapel and have used them in a defensive holding action against adult and youthful opponents. As a minister I have always felt somewhat guilty about my own personal position because I have defended compulsory worship on practical and educational grounds while my antagonists spoke from a devotional, idealistic and spiritual position. I envied them their stand because where worship is concerned they were right . . . perhaps more the most sacred area of worship in the Christian tradition is the Service of Holy Communion. The service in the Protestant tradition could never be a compulsory service. The question? If one cannot justify compulsion at the most sacred level, then how can one with a clear conscience justify compulsion at any level of worship?"[90]

[89] (Frederick S. Allis 1979) pp.640-41

[90] *The Phillipian*, 15 January 1969.

By the following year, the requirement for chapel attendance had been struck at Phillips Academy Andover. In the irony of all ironies, when religious activity switched from mandatory to voluntary, "Attendance at the Sunday services in the Cochran Chapel dropped off to twenty-five or thirty Protestants, while attendance at the Catholic and Jewish services ran at about seventy-five each. These last two groups became the leading religious forces of the School."[91]

ANDOVER'S TRIPARTITE CHAPLAINCY…

When Samuel Phillips founded Andover, he could not have been more clear about his puritanical intentions. By the time James Ray Whyte succeeded in converting religious worship to a voluntary commitment, the Jewish community had become so indispensable a part of Phillips Academy Andover that hardly an eyebrow was raised as Jewish worship came to attract twice the participation as Protestant worship.

Had the story of Jewish integration at Andover ended here, there would have been every reason to label it a successful transition in the name of religious diversity. But the story continues, because as America continued to change, so too did Andover. Only the next revolutionary change would be different, because it would come entirely from within. The first two hundred years of incremental religious change at Andover could be described as having been instituted only when current policies had ceased being effective. While sister school Exeter had enjoyed a rich long history of proactive religious

[91] (Frederick S. Allis 1979) p.660

adjustment in the name of theological liberalism, Andover's move in this direction had been from the position of catch-up.

The 1972 arrival of Theodore R. Sizer, Andover's twelfth headmaster (1972-81), changed everything. True as it may be that Sam Phillip's call to include "youth from every quarter" had been repeated from generation to generation, Sizer was not satisfied with the received understanding of what that meant. Providing scholarship assistance for a limited number of qualified boys was nice, and offering alternative to Protestant worship on campus was helpful, but it did not take long for Sizer to conclude that these moves would hardly suffice if he were going to succeed in creating the premier academy of learning he knew Andover could be. For that to happen, he would have to introduce a level of diversity in life experience to the classrooms of Andover as had never before been contemplated.

While Sizer's tenure is probably remembered best for the successful transition to coeducation, or possibly for his masterful achievements in enrolling a whole new generation of highly capable but economically disadvantaged minority students, the subcategory of diversity for which he will always be remembered so far as it relates to the integration of Jews on campus came in 1976.

A couple years into his tenure:

> "Ted formed a committee to look at the composition of campus and tried to visualize what religious support would be most appropriate and effective in light of the actualities of campus at that time. Ted was very much into getting things

> up to date. It was clear to him that to have simply a protestant minister as the designated school chaplain did not reflect the reality of the time."[92]

When the committee returned with similar findings, Sizer spared no time putting their recommendations into effect and began the process of transitioning to a tripartite school chaplaincy -- to be led by ordained clergy from the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish traditions.

> "[The Sizer administration] realized the school was no longer a Protestant community," says the Rev. Philip Zaeder, former Protestant chaplain. Vincent Avery, a former priest who is currently dean of studies, was named the first Roman Catholic chaplain in 1976. In winter 1977, Everett Gendler, then rabbi of Temple Emanuel in Lowell, became PA's first Jewish chaplain. In fall 1977, the Rev. Thomas Hennigan, an Augustinian friar and Roman Catholic priest, replaced Avery as Catholic chaplain, and that same year Zaeder came as Protestant chaplain."[93]

By the time Everett Gendler became rabbi of Temple Emanuel of the Merrimack Valley (less than fifteen miles from the Andover campus) in 1971, he had already shown himself to be one of the most remarkably progressive rabbinic trailblazers America had to offer. A more perfect candidate to kick off the tripartite chaplaincy is difficult to imagine.

A man of keen intellect and first rate academic training (University of Chicago, Jewish Theological Seminary), Gendler enjoyed an innate appreciation for the intellectual culture of the school. Having been one of the preeminent activists in the civil rights movement (and a personal friend of Martin Luther King), Gendler was passionate about equal opportunity for all, founded on the belief that everyone has an equal share of God

[92] This and all Gendler quotations are from a private conversation between Rabbi Everett Gendler and Andy Dubin, February 19, 2014.

[93] (Sherman 2004)

within. Having been a student of eastern religious traditions, and also Islam, Gendler was able to satisfy the rising student demand for opportunities to learn about people and ideas that had until then not been represented in the curriculum of Andover. And, having grown up a committed Jew in Iowa, Gendler came to Andover with at least two characteristics that would serve him and the Jewish community well: (1) The students knew he understood what it felt like to be in the religious minority; and (2) Having never before even heard of Andover, he came with no preconception of "life as it has always been." Therefore, Gendler was completely free to keep focus entirely on the present and future. Yet, for all the qualities that made Gendler perfect, it almost didn't happen.

When Andover first set out to find the rabbi who would become the pioneer, they had underestimated how difficult it would be to find an appropriate candidate willing to take the job. Jews may have already been going to Andover in large numbers for decades, but, for the most part, these were not the Jews with whom rabbis came into contact on a regular basis. A boarding school rabbinate was hardly what seminary students had in mind upon ordination. And then, as if that weren't challenge enough, there was added challenge of compensation. Put in simple terms, "Andover had no luck enticing someone to come at embarrassing prep school salaries of those days." Eventually, having run out of time, the Academy reached out to Everett Gendler, for no reason other than he was the closest rabbi to campus, and begged him to accept a six-month part-time appointment.

In 1976, after having served Jewish communities throughout the Spanish speaking world for five years, the Jewish Center of Princeton, New Jersey for another five, and various interfaith and civil rights causes for another few, Gendler was happily enjoying his comfortable life as a congregational rabbi, loving husband, and devoted father to two

young daughters. The idea of taking on this new challenge was not something he had envisioned, and he wasn't sure what he thought. After thinking it over with his wife, Gendler eventually accepted the appointment, on two conditions: (1) they would continue searching for a permanent replacement; and (2) he would not have to live on campus. Andover agreed to his conditions.

By the end of the six months, when Andover was no closer to finding his replacement, Gendler had enjoyed the experience well enough and agreed to a one-year extension. It was during this year that he began teaching in the classroom. "One day towards the beginning of my teaching there," Gendler recalls, "I was approached by the Dean of Faculty who said to me, 'I hear good things from your students, so we won't worry too much about enrollment this term. But I do hope your enrollment increases next term because we practice life-boat ethics here,' by which he meant only the teachers who could fill their own boats were guaranteed a continuing contract."

Fortunately for Gendler, one of his areas of expertise (and chief passions) was the field of Eastern religions, which the campus rabbi then introduced to the curriculum of Phillips Academy Andover. Keeping in mind the cultural context of the 1970s, his timing couldn't have been more perfect, because young people across America were thirsting for anything and everything they could learn about Eastern religions. Within a short period of time, Gendler felt his teaching position was secure. As a result, he felt free to focus more on the chaplaincy that brought him to Andover in the first place. His one-year-extension then turned into a three-year extension. After nineteen years, he retired.

Looking back on his years as Andover's rabbi, Everett Gendler has every reason to claim his rightful place as having been one of the few fundamentally indispensable agents of change in the in the 236-year history of religion at Phillips Academy Andover. When confronted with such a suggestion, Gendler eventually and with full humility accedes to the suggestion, but so too is he clear to emphasize that it took all three chaplains working together to create "Andover's Golden Age of Ecumenical Chaplaincy." As he describes the situation, every success enjoyed by the tripartite chaplaincy came as the direct result of clear partnership, love, and respect between the three clergy. Whenever there was occasion for clergy presence at school functions, all three would arrive together. They would rotate the honor of benediction, but all three would typically offer the closing benediction together, which more often than not would come in the form of the rabbi offering the priestly blessing in Hebrew and the other two translating into English. But it went further than that. Every opportunity the chaplains could find to work together in a publicly ecumenical fashion, they took. Whether it was through sponsoring an Oxfam fast, introducing Native American traditions to school-wide gatherings,, creating special campus-wide MLK Day observance programming, or any number of other ways, the Andover clergy took their responsibilities as interfaith chaplains seriously. In the process, Gendler says, they never failed to take their own parochial responsibilities seriously. Gendler believes that it was the chaplains' ability to attend to both ecumenical and parochial responsibilities simultaneously that enabled them to have such success.

When asked what kind of influence he believes his presence on campus had on the Jewish community, Gendler is clear:

> The reality is, Jewish students didn't start coming to Andover when I got there. They had already been coming to Andover for years. But things changed in a fundamental way, not only for the Jews of Andover but for all of Andover, during the nineteen years I was there. I had a role in it, but it wasn't all me. One of most important things we did right from the start was to build a sukkah right in the middle of campus. That had never been done before in the entire history of the school. Some of the Jewish kids weren't so sure about it at first, but it was a rousing success! By the time we hit Hanukah, it seemed perfectly natural to do a public menorah lighting. Students and faculty loved what we were doing. That gave the Jewish kids a nice boost.
>
> Given how focused Ted [Sizer] was on the issue of diversity, it was only natural for the ecumenical chaplaincy to develop a certain cache, which we did. In a way, some of the most important accomplishments I achieved for the Jews of Andover came as the result of my work with the non-Jews of Andover, because even the non-religious appreciated what we were doing. The religious climate that we cultivated was genuinely esteemed and credited with contributing to the cultural and intellectual level of campus. What we offered religiously was of genuine interest to others. This was critically important for the Jewish students, even if they didn't realize it at the time, because one of the results was that Jews went from being tolerated at Andover to being valued at Andover."

PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY: A RABBI IS BORN

As Rabbi Everett Gendler was in his early days on the Andover campus, incoming ninth grader and (future) Rabbi Judd Levingston arrived at Exeter in the fall of 1978. When asked about his experience as a Jew at Exeter, Levingston begins by saying, "The number we kicked around was that one in every ten students was Jewish,"[94] thus corroborating the figure of ten percent. At the same time, his response reveals how amorphous Jewish record-keeping has been over the years. One of Levingston's fondest memories of Exeter are the Friday night dinners for which the Jewish students would gather:

[94] This and all Levingston quotations are from a private conversation between Rabbi Judd Levingston (Exeter '82) and Andy Dubin, February 11, 2014.

> "We had Friday night dinners in the dining hall. We had a small Jewish congregation of 20 kids. On any given Friday night we had maybe 10 or 12 from the total pool of 20. We would get together for dinner and the school minister (David Mcllhiney) could not have been more supportive. He sat with us. He got wine for us. He got the local bakery to make challah for us. We called him Mr. Mac, not Reverend Mcllhiney. In addition to being supportive of us in campus, he arranged for transportation and drove us to Concord or Manchester for one or another High Holiday service. He hosted a Passover seder in his home for us."

As much as Levingston recalls the minister with obvious love and respect, he becomes a bit wistful over the fact that there were no Jewish faculty at the time who were willing to be fully identified with their Judaism. The only real adult mentor the Jewish students had was the school minister. Perhaps this is why he says, "

I felt responsible to continue supporting the JSU. Even if I wasn't in the mood, I still pretty much always showed up, because I was the most literate one there. I could always lead if I needed to. But at home no one was ever asking me to lead if I didn't want to. There was no obligation. I kind of felt the burden of continuity. For it to continue, I needed to be there."

Like the other boarding school alumni interviewed for this study, Levingston shares that "It's probably true that on the whole, no one on campus really cared much about my being Jewish." At the same time, as religiously committed as he was, it's also in keeping with the experience of others that Levingston felt "more comfortable 'in the closet,' as it were," when it came to being publicly identified as "the campus Jew." Though he says anti-Semitism was never a problem on campus, he does recount that a lack of awareness did make him uncomfortable from time to time. "When we read Merchant of Venice, there wasn't really much of an effort to point out that this really isn't how Jews are. That was pretty uncomfortable. At the same time, no one ever said, "Hey Judd, why don't you

tell us the Jewish point of view?" like they did with the black kids. The Jewish kids could get away with just sitting in the background when they wanted to."

All the same, Levingston believes that were it not for his time at Exeter, especially a new Testament class he took with former nun Mary DeVault, he may never had decided to become a rabbi: "I was interested in becoming a teacher for a long time. When I was studying with Mrs. DeVault, she really encouraged and pushed me to develop my theology. All of a sudden it just kind of occurred to me that maybe it would be cool to become a rabbi and teach Judaism. The idea of my becoming a rabbi really was formed very much out of the academic setting of studying religion at Exeter."

PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY: A REVEREND RETURNS

Four years after Levingtston graduated from Exeter, Rev. Robert Thompson '72 returned home o his alma mater, having been appointed as Exeter's new school minister. Exeter's rich history of theological liberalism had led the school to conclude with full confidence that even while Andover had gone the way of a rabbi, Exeter's school minister would be able have the religious needs of all students met. Thompson says that when he began his position, he believed that too. In a way, he still does, but only because he believes it is the school minister's sacred obligation not to rest until every student's spiritual needs are being met.

Thompson describes his "approach to religious life at Exeter over the years as having been one of tireless advocacy."[95] Thompson says that wherever there is need, he does all he can to get it filled. If he's the best person for the job, he does it. If he thinks someone else, such as a rabbi should be called in, that's what he does. A quick look at Thompson's record shows that the Jews of Exeter have had a good friend in the current school minister. He brings to his position two approaches that cannot be underestimated in value: (1) The unwavering belief that "every human being has the God given right to relate with God in whatever fashion is genuine to that person"; and (2) A personal theology which holds that his own relationship with God grows every time he learns something new about how other people believe. For Thompson, the support he gives to Jewish life on campus (and ALL religious life on campus) is deeply personal. "The better I am at it," he claims, "the better person I become. That's why I make it a point to learn from every individual to come through my door – especially the students."

As the school minister, it is, ultimately, Thompson's responsibility to ensure that the spiritual needs of Exeter's Jews are met. In this capacity, two of his proudest accomplishments have been the hiring of a part-time rabbi[96] and the construction of a permanent ark to house the Academy's two torah scrolls. It took over two centuries to come about, but at this point,the Jews of Exeter truly do stand on equal footing with all other students when it comes to their capacity to be both fully Jewish and fully Exonian. As at Andover, they do not have to choose one or the other. Living by strict halakhic

[95] This and all Thompson quotations are from a private conversation between Rev Robert Thompson (Exeter '72) and Andy Dubin, February 21, 2014

[96] Since the arrival of Rabbi Jennifer Marx Asch, there have been three different students called to the Torah as b'nei mitzvah in the Jewish chapel of Phillips Church.

standards would be a significant challenge, but even there, from an institutional perspective, Phillips Exeter Academy has revised its religious mission so entirely over the past two centuries that the school minister would likely stop at nothing to help such a student find the best possible solution.

Just as Andover and Exeter began on the same theological footing in the late 18th century, so it seems have they wound up today once again on the same theological footing. What was once a theological landscape of strict doctrinal orthodoxy, however, has morphed into an abundantly liberal world in which religious diversity becomes more and more celebrated each passing day. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the journey is that each step along the way has been taken in fulfillment of the same founders' (Samuel at Andover; John at Exeter) abundantly clear intentions. Each new generation of Academy leadership is entirely invested in its received history, and faithfulness to the school mission of promoting "goodness through knowledge." For all the emphasis on matters of the intellect, school leadership remains quick to point out that their school mission is fulfilled only when the intellect is put to the use of goodness. As such, the ultimate mission of the Phillips Academies is to nurture their students towards becoming decent moral agents of good in this world. Everything that is taught in school, ultimately, is but a tool in that process.

There's only one problem. As beautiful and thoroughly sacred as this mission may sound to the modern ear, it also is nothing less than Samuel Phillips worst nightmare come true. Fearing this very possibility, he himself wrote in his Last Will and Testament in the days leading to his death:

> "Above all, it is ardently hoped and expected, . . . [that] . . . all possible care will be taken by the Trustees [of Phillips Academy Andover not] . . . to reduce the Christian religion to a system of mere morality; without which guard there will be great reason to fear that the object of this donation will be totally frustrated "[97]

The notion that the Phillips Academy founding principles hold that Jews have the same right as Protestants to claim their identities as Phillipians or Exonians is patently false. What is patently true, however, is that Jews ***do*** have the same right as Protestants claim their identities as Phillipians or Exonians. For this turn of events, we have roughly two centuries of revisionist history to thank.

[97] The Last Will and Testament of Samuel Phillips, 1801

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