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THE BARTER OF HUMAN FLESH:  
JEWISH SLAVE-TRADERS AND THE CIVIL WAR

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE PINES SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
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## Dedicated to

### The Love of My Life:

My dearest Dalton, the other half of my soul, without whom I would be lost.

### To My Parents:

Angela and Avery Miles

### To My Mentors:

Dr. Beth Glazier and Dr. Gary Zola

### To The Man Who Inspired My Research

Rabbi Dr. Bertram Wallace Korn

זיכרונו לברכה

### And To Those Who Toiled While Longing for Freedom:

The Victims of American Slavery

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## Author's Note

Throughout this thesis, sensitive language such as “negroes” will be used. Every instance of hate speech throughout comes from direct quotes and *does not* reflect the views of the author or HUC-JIR. The quotes have been pulled to emphasize how common and easily this speech came to people of the time.

## INTRODUCTION

The title “The Barter of Human Flesh” was chosen from Dr. Bertram Korn’s *Jews and Negro Slavery in The Old South*, where he describes the slave-trade as “the barter of human beings.”<sup>1</sup> I have chosen such language to emphasize the horrors of American slavery. Too often, Americans look over slavery as a chapter in their history book and do not take the time to reflect on how horrible the practice truly was. Slaves were humans--beaten, separated from families, sold as merchandise, and more. This work seeks to emphasize how people, regardless of gender, age, or religion, are capable of such acts. Jews, just as others, whipped slaves, bought warranties on them as if they were appliances, and even used the Bible to condone their actions.

The Civil War may have lasted four years, but American slavery lasted for 246 years, at least. From when the first *permanent* slaves stepped foot in America in 1619 in Jamestown to the last slave bills of sale from 1865, Black people toiled for freedom. Jews, who fought for a different version of freedom, were also involved in the Civil War. Jews wore many different faces during the war; They were soldiers, medics, colonels, doctors, abolitionists, slaveholders, and slave traders. Although there were not many, Jewish slave traders were commonly successful in their ventures, believing the slaves were mere merchandise to be sold. Though the business of slave-trading is looked at as

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<sup>1</sup> Bertram Wallace Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South: 1789-1865* (Elkins Park, PA: Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, 1961), 166.

something to be abhorred by modern-day citizens, it was a normal practice for any white person<sup>2</sup> who could afford to partake in the slave trade-- whether buying or selling.

Jews only made up a small percent of the population and an even smaller amount were involved in the slave trade. To be a part of the slave trade, one must have money along with a need for a servant, whether in the house or field. Dr. Bertram W Korn has written that there are three types of involvement within the slave trade, ranging from the most common to the least. The first type, and most common, is a slaveholder. The slaveholders bought their slaves, but also traded or sold them for goods. These slaveholders would also sell slaves in private or estate sales. The second type of involvement comes in the form of either merchants or slave-rearers. Merchants would occasionally sell slaves along with their other goods, usually only keeping slaves when the economy was good. The slave-rearers would purchase black people with the goal of teaching them how to be good slaves and fattening them up before they were taken to the auction houses. The third and most abhorred by modern-day standards were the full-time slave traders. These men sold and auctioned slaves. This is the least common kind of involvement with the slave trade, even less common after the importation of slaves was outlawed in 1808.<sup>3</sup>

The key point is that Jews did not treat their slaves better or worse than Gentiles. Some were kind to their slaves and allowed them to buy their freedom, as in the case of

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<sup>2</sup> Mostly men purchased slaves, but there were some rich single women who purchased slaves.

<sup>3</sup> The law was passed by Congress in 1800 but did not take effect until 1808. Despite the law, the last known slave ship docked in Mobile, AL in 1860.

Joseph Friedman and Peter Still.<sup>4</sup> Others were cruel and beat their slaves regularly. It is important to know that most people regarded slaves as things--not people. Many slaveholders and traders argued that since they were not people, they were technically not enslaved, but more of a pet. The reader must keep in mind, slavery was not necessarily seen as “good” or “bad” by many people in the 1860s, but a business opportunity. The ugliness of American slavery is a hard topic to study; not only were black adults treated worse than dogs, but the children borne into slavery were treated terribly from when they were in the womb. The details regarding enslaved infants and children have been omitted as they were much too painful to write.

As Dr. Korn stated in his notes, the topic of Jews and the slave system is a “murky troubled painful subject,” but it is one not greatly researched.<sup>5</sup> After poring through mountains of notes and books, I have come to the single conclusion that nothing (especially not religion) mattered when it came to slavery: Jew and Gentile both committed terrible acts as well as great deeds. Though the individuals mentioned in the following chapters are not to be held by modern-day standards, their actions toward the enslaved must not be forgotten.

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Friedman allowed Peter to perform tasks for others while keeping the money earned. For a more complete description of the Friedman/Still saga, see Spencer R. Crew, “The Saga of Peter Still” in *New Jersey History* Vol. 125 No.2 (2010):62-72.

<sup>5</sup> “Blacks: Jewish Relations (contemporary)”. Mss. coll. 99, box 3, folder 13, item 2. American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati, OH).



## 1: JEWISH LIFE IN EARLY AMERICA

The very first Jewish community in North America was established in 1654, when 23 Jewish refugees fleeing from Brazil arrived in the port city of New Amsterdam, with little but the clothes on their backs. They were not treated equally and neither were they considered full citizens of the colony until the Constitution was drawn up in 1787.<sup>6</sup> Always looked upon as ‘the other’, the American Jews sought to prove their allegiance to the country and show that they were the same as any other citizen. These surges of nationalism from Jews in American history always arise amidst conflict. Matters were no different when trouble started bubbling during the antebellum years. Jews sought to mix in with the rest of society, to not stand out. The goal of not standing out while proving to be a loyal American was interpreted differently by many. For some, they operated a store and sold goods people needed; for others, it meant owning slaves like their neighbors did, regardless of whether or not they condoned slavery.

During the antebellum period, rabbis would sometimes deliver sermons that condemned slavery and argued why it was evil. Others, such as Rabbi Morris Raphall of New York wrote sermons on why slavery was condoned by the Torah. In Rabbi Raphall’s speech “The Bible View of Slavery” in 1861, the rabbi acknowledges the institution of slavery is unquestionably present in the Hebrew Bible. He then proceeds to point out that

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<sup>6</sup> Although written in 1787, the Constitution did not come into effect until 1789.

there are important differences between the slave system described in the Bible and American Slavery in the South—the largest difference being that black people were treated as objects. He concludes this sermon by appealing for a meeting of the minds between the North and South based on the fact that the Bible undeniably outlines a form of slavery but the South's approach to slavery differs from that which the Bible describes. The rabbi ends his address by expressing his hope that the two sides can find a middle ground.<sup>7</sup>

Before Raphall's speech, Jews were not seen as leaning towards northern or southern views of slavery. After the speech, more rabbis voiced their opinion on whether or not they agreed with Raphall. The speech, loved by many southerners, was not popular with numerous rabbis. David Einhorn of Baltimore Maryland published four articles in *Sinai*, his newspaper, arguing against Raphall.<sup>8</sup> On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1861, a riot between unionists and confederates broke out in Baltimore and Einhorn's printing presses were destroyed, and he was forced to leave town after receiving death threats. His congregation, Har Sinai<sup>9</sup> invited Einhorn to return to Baltimore on the condition that he not speak of "excitable issues of the time."<sup>10</sup> He refused and never returned to the city.

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<sup>7</sup> Raphall, Morris J. Bible View of Slavery. Bnai Jeshurun, NY, Jan 1861.

<sup>8</sup> *Sinai* (Baltimore, MD), ed. 6, no.1-4.

<sup>9</sup> Har Sinai and Oheb Shalom merged in 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Louis F. Cahn, *History of Oheb Shalom: 1853-1953*. Oheb Shalom Congregation (Baltimore, MD, 1953), 31.

Max Lilienthal of Cincinnati, Ohio believed slavery was an immoral institution, but that the South had the right to their own economic system. However, once the war broke out, Lilienthal sided fully with the Union. People who had previously known Lilienthal, such as Jacob A. Cohen, a slave trader mentioned in the following chapters, were not happy with this change of opinion. Lilienthal had previously sold lithographs of himself, and Cohen returned one with a message of betrayal etched across his face<sup>11</sup>. After the Emancipation Proclamation was announced, Cohen quickly changed his opinions, stating he was ashamed of his endorsement of slavery.<sup>12</sup>

Another rabbi of note is Isaac Leeser. Like many Jews, he was pressured into picking north or south. Leeser was even threatened because of his indecisiveness by a certain M.A. Dropsie who threatened to beat him if he did not leave town.<sup>13</sup> As seen from Leeser, the pressure for Jews to pick a side and prove their allegiance was very real. Some southern Jews who did not condone slavery felt pressured to prove their allegiance and purchased slaves themselves. As Dr. Korn states in one of his many books:

Even if they disliked the traffic in human flesh, therefore, they could not avoid it; they were expected by the public to deal in slaves as readily as in any other sort of merchandise.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 57.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>14</sup> Bertram Wallace Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South: 1789-1865* (1961), 168.

Owning slaves, for Jews and Gentiles, was not necessarily about owning a person, but wanting labor from someone whom they thought was more intelligent than a dog, but not as intelligent as a white person. Many in the slave trade saw black people as a commodity that was specifically bred to do people's dirty work. An anonymous flyer, posted in 1863, states that the Union was using white people for the work that slaves were meant to do for free. The flyer, signed, "A Democratic Workingman," seeks to show the Union the errors of its ways and to implement slavery, which would better their economy.<sup>15</sup>

Slaveholding primarily depended on the needs of the owners. Most slaves were purchased for field work, while others worked as servants, drivers, blacksmiths, etc. The men were most purchased for the fieldwork, while children and the elderly were chosen for other work. One could purchase a slave from a neighbor, a slave trader, an auction house, or even an ad in the paper; either seeking or selling. An ad in *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel* in 1862 states: "A Negro Woman. Good Cook, Ironer and Washer, For Sale or Exchange for A BOY."<sup>16</sup>

The farmers, with smaller land and fewer crops, owned few slaves. Naturally, what the records refer to as "planters", with large plantations and many crops, owned many slaves. Most slave-owning Jews were farmers. As of 1850, the largest number of

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<sup>15</sup> *White slaves. Signed A democratic workingman. New York, Sept. 28th.* New York, 1863. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2020771588/>.

<sup>16</sup> *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.* Library of Congress (Chattanooga, TN), August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

slaves a Jew held was 32, owned by Morris Goldsmith.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, Morris Goldsmith had been a member of the Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston (1825), the first organized attempt to reform Judaism in American history.

It is, however, possible that there was another Jew with a higher number of slaves, but we must remember that not all Jews were open about their religion and may have left it out of the census records. Slave-owning Jews were, at the lowest level, involved in the slave trade. Not only did they purchase humans, but they also traded them for goods and services, and gave them as gifts. Business partners Philip Sartorius and Sam Rothschild had a dispute over Rothschild gambling away all their money, along with their boat which they used for business, for a slave girl. Shortly after, he would trade her for tobacco.<sup>18</sup>

Occasionally, when people could not pay their fees for lawyers, they would either give the lawyer slaves as payment or lend them a slave until they could pay their fee. However, real slave trading usually began after the owner died. Upon death, several Jews set their slaves free in their wills or bestowed them upon family members. Benjamin Davis of South Carolina left in his will \$150 to a slave named Elsey who had been freed. David Perayra<sup>19</sup> stated that a former slave named Julien was his best friend.<sup>20</sup> Another

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<sup>17</sup> James William. Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston*. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 93.

<sup>18</sup> Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South*, 34.

<sup>19</sup> Generally spelled “Pereira.”

<sup>20</sup> Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South*, 29-30.

case of kindness was Judah Touro.<sup>21</sup> Touro bought slaves with the intent to free them or “set them up in business”, meaning he would have them work, but give them the money earned instead of keeping it for himself.<sup>22</sup> Touro’s largest act of kindness towards a slave was when he purchased a home for a freed slave named Ellen Wilson and also gifted her \$4000.

The three men were not the only Jews who cared for their slaves. The Monsantoos of Louisiana participated in the Atlantic slave trade before it was banned, but Manuel Monsanto *may* have had a soft spot for his slaves. Before he died in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Monsanto paid his slaves a small sum: 50 pesos to a quadroon<sup>23</sup> named Sofia; 50 pesos to Sofia’s mother, Mamy; 50 pesos to Rozeta.<sup>24</sup> Sofia was not only Mamy’s daughter, but the daughter of her master’s brother, Jacob Monsanto. Her father, along with her light skin, led to Sofia receiving better treatment and her marriage to her master, Manuel Monsanto.<sup>25</sup>

Even if the owner freed the slave(s) in his will, sometimes the slave would still not be freed on grounds that the paperwork was not signed beforehand, or simply because the family did not want to grant the owner’s wish. It was common that the owner was the

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<sup>21</sup> The word ‘kind’ is generally inappropriate for use regarding slavery. However, Touro was performing genuinely kind acts.

<sup>22</sup> Bertram W. Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans* (Waltham, MA: American Jewish Historical Society 1969), 88.

<sup>23</sup> One who is a quarter black.

<sup>24</sup> Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans*, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

only breadwinner in the family and after his death, the family needed to secure their finances. Other times, the remaining family members were not prepared to sustain a plantation with many slaves as the owner had. These circumstances led to estate sales. Estate sales in the 1860s were like modern-day estate sales, the only difference being that slaves were also for sale. There are advertisements for as many as a hundred slaves, which was a draw for larger slave traders.

## 2: THE BORDER STATES, VIRGINIA, AND ARKANSAS

Another draw for slave traders were slave rearers. The border states were home to slave rearing because it helped the economy, but the lands in Maryland, Missouri, Delaware, Kentucky, and West Virginia<sup>26</sup> were not as fertile as those in more southerly states. Although there were plenty of slave dealers in these states, there was, if any, little Jewish involvement. Although not a border state, Virginia was the biggest contributor to slave rearing. Slave rearing begins with the purchase of slaves, then the owner keeps the slaves, works them, and treats them better in comparison to how they would be treated after purchase.

Part of ensuring the sale of the slaves was making sure they looked presentable at auction. One Jew named Levy even had a store that explicitly sold slave clothing.<sup>27</sup> Virginian slaves were known to be the best to buy. One slave dealer, Levy Jacobs,<sup>28</sup> had been accused of false advertising. He had advertised Virginia-raised slaves but sold inferior Kentucky slaves.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Did not become a state until 1863.

<sup>27</sup> Fred Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959), 106.

<sup>28</sup> Separate from the aforementioned Levy.

<sup>29</sup> Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans*, 164.



Summer was the season for auctioning. Auctioneers and traders would come to the border states and buy slaves for the best price they could find. Then, they would either sell them privately or auction them off for a profit. It was common courtesy not to ask the purchaser what their need for slaves was. The traders would commonly keep some slaves for their own plantations but would not keep them long until they were sold again. Traders and auctioneers such as these were the Davis family. In the late 1830s, the Davis brothers Ansley, Benjamin, George, and Solomon were prominent not only among the Jewish slave traders, but in general.<sup>30</sup> Although not active during the Civil War, I would be remiss if they were not mentioned.

### *Virginia*

The Davises were English immigrants who opened a store selling dry goods in Virginia.<sup>31</sup> Although not full-time traders, they were mentioned in a letter from Dr. Gamliel Bailey in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* as being:

The Davises, in Petersburg, are the great slave-dealers. They are Jews, who came to that place many years ago as poor peddlers... These men are always in the market, giving the highest price for slaves. During the

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<sup>30</sup> Saul S. Friedman. *Jews and the American Slave Trade* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998)

<sup>31</sup> Lee M. Friedman, *Early American Jews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 133.

summer and fall they buy them up at low prices, trim, shave, wash them, fatten them so that they may look sleek, and sell them to a great profit.<sup>32</sup>

Profit was of the utmost concern to the rearing states and was a topic of great debate in Virginia. Since there were no more slaves being imported, the prices of slaves were raised and even more so on account of the growing tensions preluding the war. Before the prices were raised, the average price for a male slave was \$700; By the late 1850's and early 60's, the average price would raise to around \$1200. The usual annual income from the slave trade was \$64,000,000 but during this time of inflation, the average annual sum from the slave trade was possibly as high as \$150,000,000; equal to around \$6,000,000,000 in 2024.<sup>33</sup>

Inflation made it difficult on those who reared slaves since they were also responsible for feeding, clothing, and making the slaves healthy for sale. Moreover, the cotton industry was in a recession. The slaves were being reared the same, but the profit was not high. The people of Virginia had to come up with other ways to keep the slave trade profitable. Thomas R. Dew declared that Virginia was shipping away its money and they should find a way to keep the slaves in Virginia. However, it was Moncure D. Conway who stated that breeding slaves would create a larger profit<sup>34</sup>. It made perfect sense to the traders of the time: they did not have a great need to buy slaves, but they

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<sup>32</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin Or, Life Among the Lowly and A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, Vol.2*. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1896), 393.

<sup>33</sup> Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South*, 406.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

were increasing the number of slaves and selling them for profit. Before the war, states such as Massachusetts saw children born of slaves as burdens. Once the slave had a child, the owner was responsible for a slave he did not purchase and could not work until they were about 7 or 8 years old. These children were often given away for free “like puppies.”<sup>35</sup>

Not only were Virginians and residents of other states breeding, rearing, selling, and trading slaves; they were even insuring them. Popular banks such as Wells Fargo, The Baltimore Life Insurance Company, The Virginia Life Insurance Company, and many more all insured slaves. An advertisement for The Virginia Life Insurance Company assures us that their rates for slaves are the lowest.<sup>36</sup>

When selling slaves, the auctioneers and dealers would typically hold off separating the children from their mother until they were 8-12 years old. If younger, the children were sold with their mother, tacking on an additional \$100-200.<sup>37</sup> The father was often sold separately from his family, unless chosen for breeding purposes. All the men could do was hope the same master bought him and his family. For slave-breeders, women were the ticket to profit. The woman, if advertised in a paper, was commonly listed next to her age along with how many children she already had. The more children, the higher the woman would sell for, as she had proven her fertility. During auctions, the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>36</sup> Slave Insurance. *Virginia Life Insurance Company Advertisement, 1860*. Encyclopedia Virginia, 2020. [encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-insurance/](https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-insurance/)

<sup>37</sup> Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South*, 78-9.

women's breasts were also inspected. If a woman had large breasts, buyers associated them with fecundity. Frequent terms used for these women include "childbearing women," "breeding period," and "too old to breed."<sup>38</sup>

When taken to auction, whether in Richmond or Charleston, there were certain procedures. First, the slaves would be held in a pen, cell, or large empty room--usually chained. Then, the slaves were brought out. General facts about the slaves were stated: sex, age, number of children, if they were a runaway, and sometimes a statement on what jobs they would excel at. The potential buyers then were invited to come up and inspect them. They would look at their backs for lash marks, their breasts for fecundity, their general health, and sometimes ask them to run a little to ensure health. There were even instances when a slave was offended at a low bid, stating they had previously been sold for more. This kind of speaking during auctions was not discouraged, as it was a way to persuade the buyers to increase their bids.

No two auctions were alike. They all varied from venue, auctioneer, the mood of the auction, etc. Yet, Fred Bancroft's *"Slave-Trading in The Old South"* has provided us with an accurate representation of what a common auction in the Richmond market would look like. The representation is as follows:

"Gentleman, I'm goin' to sell yo' this mornin' some ez likely niggers ez evah yo' seen put up. They ah sol' fo' no fault, an'ever' one of 'em is wahanted. But look at 'em fo' yo'se'f. *You*-all know good niggers. Yo'll see theah ain't a lot theah what yo' won't wan't t' own. Now gentlemen, ain't yo' foun' 'em ez I tol' yo'? Ah yo' radey t' begin? Come heah, boy. Gentlemen, I'm goin' t' give yo' a bahgin. Did *you*-all evah see a finer lot'n this heah boy? No, yo' nevah. He's only twelve yeah

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 68.

ol', an' I wahant him ez soun' ez a dollah. Ain't he a likely nigger ever' ways? In fo' yeah mo' he'll be biggah'n me, an' wo'th mo' an' a thousand dollahs on yoah *plan-ta-tion* er in any mahket, ef he's wo'th a cent. He kin hoe co'n er cott'n drive, wait, er run errunds, er learn any trade. *Now*, what do I heah fo' im?... "He'll soon make a good gentleman's sahvant er a gyahdnah- how much do yo' bid? See them han's!....." *Seven- hunded- an' - five dollahs* to Mr. Jenks."<sup>39</sup>

### *Arkansas*

Much like the border states and some southern states, Arkansas was not home to many Jewish slave traders.<sup>40</sup> However, there is one Jewish slave trader of note that has been found in records. Aaron Hirsch (1829-1911), a French immigrant, settled in Arkansas in the late 1850s and opened a successful general store. Hirsch began his involvement in the slave trade when he exchanged his Confederate vouchers for six slaves.<sup>41</sup> From there, Hirsch began to exchange more goods for slaves and vice versa. He once traded a portion of his slaves for a farm and claimed they were happy to be sold since the farm they had been sent to was their home. It is unclear what Hirsch meant by "home." After the war, Hirsch began to sell off his lands and settle down. He gave his business to his son and moved to Missouri in the 1890s, where he would die.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 109-11.

<sup>40</sup> Although areas such as Alabama and Mississippi had no lack of slave trading, there were no significant Jewish traders.

<sup>41</sup> Jacob Rader Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews 1775- 1865*, vol. 2. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), 141-2.

### 3: GEORGIA AND LOUISIANA

The further south we move, the larger and more extravagant plantations exist. Georgia was a large slave state and prone to buying slaves more often than selling, since the owners sought to buy more slaves to maintain these large areas of land and take care of the household chores. Savannah was the heart of Georgia's slave trade: Slaves would arrive on foot or in freight cars and be put into temporary holding places for several days. The wait was for two main reasons: There might be other groups of slaves that were up for auction earlier; and the slaves were permitted to be inspected before purchase. A group of 440 slaves had once been brought and kept at the racetrack for several days. Before purchase, one could go to where the slaves were kept and inspect them from 10am to 2pm.<sup>42</sup> Potential buyers would also find a list of the slaves' names, ages, defects, what work they were good at, if they came with children, and an assigned number for the traders to keep track of sales.

Georgian slaves were primarily used for work in the cotton and rice fields, and servants for the large mansions of the deep south.<sup>43</sup> Yet, along with the increased number of slaves came more lenient rules (for the masters). Like South Carolina, Georgia adopted laws such as one which lowered the fine against the master if he lost control and killed his slave.

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<sup>42</sup> Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South*, 226-7.

<sup>43</sup> Housework was usually reserved for slaves of lighter complexions.

Although there were not many slave-dealing Jews in Georgia, there was one famous dealer based in Atlanta and Augusta. Solomon Cohen Jr. (1802-1875) was a planter, lawyer, slave owner, and dealer. Cohen assisted in establishing the Georgia Historical Society and served as a treasurer- and a vice president of the organization. Not only was Cohen a prominent member of Georgian society, but a slave dealer of sufficient volume to have personalized bills of sale that only needed to be filled out.

There are two bills of sale from Cohen that are well preserved. One is from February 1864, noting that a slave named Warren sold for \$3,500.<sup>44</sup> The other is a bill of sale for \$3000 on July 3, 1863, for two slaves named Nancy and Jerry, warranted sound, who were sold by Cohen. Both documents are raw pieces of American and Jewish history that are best seen rather than transcribed. I have chosen the document from 1863 to include, since it is best preserved.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Slaves also sold for higher prices if well-known and trusted. This sale also took place during the Civil War, which caused prices to rise.

<sup>45</sup> Bill of Sale. July 3, 1863. SC 2306. American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati, OH).

S. COHEN,  
DEALER IN SLAVES,  
WHITE HALL STREET,  
ATLANTA, GA.

\$3000 or      August 2nd      1863  
Atlanta, Ga. July 27

Received of General Phillips  
Ten Thousand Dollars, being in full for the purchase  
of ~~the~~ Negro Slave named ~~Charles~~ *Henry & Jerry*  
the wife and wife of said Slave *of* warrant and defend  
against the claims of all persons whatsoever, and likewise warrant  
them sound and healthy. Its witness my hand and seal.

*Samuel Allen*



The fact that bills of sale say “warranted sound” is a different matter than purchasing a warranty on a slave. A warranty offers the return of money, or some other sort of settlement should that slave become ill or die. A slave that has been warranted sound is one that has been inspected and deemed healthy for purchase. In 1837, Cohen, while living in Charleston, had an issue with one of his slaves after purchase. A while after Cohen bought Bella and her son James, Bella seemed to have begun evincing strange behavior. This behavior was only described as Bella throwing “pieces of fire about her room.”<sup>46</sup> The mayor committed Bella to the mental ward of the poorhouse and demanded Cohen pay for her stay. He attempted to rescind the deal, but since she had been warranted sound in the bill of sale, the jury ruled that he must pay for Bella’s stay at the mental ward.

Although not as prominent as Cohen, there were two more Georgian Jews in the trade. After searching through piles of records, nothing of this man’s full name can be found other than how he signed it. He is only known as J.F. Moses of Lumpkin, Georgia in records.<sup>47</sup> Though, what we can gather is that he was a familiar face to the Georgia markets during the 1850s and 60s. The most we can learn about Moses, sadly, is through the advertisement he posted on November 14, 1859, titled “Negroes, Negroes”. The advertisement states that Moses had sold over 200 slaves to Georgians of every shade and

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<sup>46</sup> Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 95-6.

<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 102-3.

occupation. Moses was “a regular trader to this market” and was willing to ensure that every slave sold was healthy and satisfactory to the buyer.<sup>48</sup>

The other prominent dealer was Lawrence Ludlow Cohen Jr., usually written as Ludlow or L.L. Cohen. Ludlow (1842-70) was not a large slave dealer but made occasional purchases for servants and fieldhands of his own. Ludlow, along with Solomon Cohen, is one of the few Jewish dealers who continued purchasing slaves throughout the war, according to the available records. On September 29, 1862, Cohen bought 24-year-old Mary and her 7-month-old for \$1300; On July 1, 1863, Cohen purchased 13-year-old Milla for \$1750; On October 3, 1864 he purchased a 22-year-old named Alfred for \$3200. No matter how much prices on slaves were going up, it seemed Cohen wanted to purchase them while he still could.

Although not much was known about Ludlow, especially his role in the slave trade, there is a detailed account surrounding his death. Cohen and his friend Aiken challenged each other to a ‘friendly’ boat race, both men taking great pride in their vessels. After the wind stopped, so did the boats and the race was deemed inconclusive. After Aiken inquired with Cohen about a rematch, Cohen said that Aiken would cheat in the next race because he saw that his own vessel was a threat. Aiken took the accusation that he would even think of cheating to heart. Aiken was inconsolable and said Cohen could either apologize or they would duel. Cohen, who was not known as a shooter, accepted the duel. With only twelve paces between the two, it took four rounds of missed

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<sup>48</sup> *Negroes, Negroes*. Advertisement for slave auction, 1859. Collection of Duke University Library (Durham, NC). The Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920. Collection F-159.

shots until Aiken finally killed Cohen. The duel would go on to be known as one of the last duels in Savannah, Georgia.<sup>49</sup>

### *Louisiana*

Louisiana slave markets, especially those in New Orleans, had a certain flare and were almost like social events. While most auctions were held outside, numerous slave markets in Louisiana were held indoors. The auctions would be held in ballrooms and people dressed up in gowns and suits for the events, taking their time to socialize before buying their merchandise. The markets were commonly held at the St. Louis Hotel in the French Exchange, as seen below:<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Mark I. Greenberg, “Becoming Southern: The Jews of Savannah, Georgia, 1830-70,” *American Jewish History* 86, no. 1 (1998): 59-60.

<sup>50</sup> “Sale of Estates, Pictures and Slaves in the Rotunda, New Orleans”; by William Henry Brooke, engraver; engraving from *The Slave States of America*, vol. 1; London: Fisher and Son, 1842.



The New Orleans market was open to selling all types of slaves: slaves as white as southern Europeans, darker than coal, octaroons, quadroons, mulattos, etc. Slaves from every state could be found in New Orleans along with slaves who could do specific jobs such as making pastry, slaves who spoke multiple languages, engineers, cooks, and even slaves who could preach to other slaves.

Those reared in other states were frequently sold here and in the Charleston markets. Levy Jacobs, mentioned in Chapter Two, was a successful, though sometimes dishonest, dealer. Jacobs brought reared slaves to New Orleans to sell for profit. He once

sold a group of slaves that were accused of coming from Kentucky rather than from Virginia as advertised, which would have made them much cheaper.<sup>51</sup> No matter what business a person was in, if it had to do with slavery, that person was almost guaranteed to make money. Two Jews, Betsey Levy Kokernot and her youngest son Louis, were aware of this. Upon arriving in America in 1820, the two sought to do business together and the slave trade in New Orleans was the way to do it.<sup>52</sup>

Like many, Kokernot and Louis were seeking money, and the slave trade had plenty to give. While not wanting to participate in full-time trading, many sought ways they could benefit as middlemen of sorts. These middlemen came in many forms: people selling slave bills of sale (personalized in some cases) to make the sales quicker; “child-snatchers” who would travel to free states and capture free black children and adults to sell in the south; and those capturing runaways for reward money. Kokernot and Louis were in the last group. They went into business together catching runaways and policing the streets to see if they could catch slaves without proper paperwork whom they would bring back and charge the owner a fee.<sup>53</sup>

After the war, the grand and beautiful French Exchange where most auctions were held became a ghost of the past. No one rented or purchased the venue after the slaves were kept in its dungeon and sold like livestock. The St. Louis Hotel, once a place for the

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<sup>51</sup> Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans*, 164.

<sup>52</sup> On the Kokernot family: <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~jbarber/genealogy/kokernot.html>

<sup>53</sup> Korn, *ibid.*, 170-1.

rich slave traders to socialize and make purchases, was now haunted with “ten thousand curses on it” from the souls of slaves that had been sold.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South*, 336.

#### 4: CHARLESTON, SC

The only market besides New Orleans that operated on a grand scale was that of Charleston, South Carolina. Little more than half of Charleston's population was white, making the slave trade virtually unavoidable.<sup>55</sup> At the first anniversary meeting of South Carolina's Historical Society, Judah Barrett Cohen stood and gave a speech. The speech thanked Sir John Yeamans, who is thought to have introduced slaves to the area and thus brought the citizens a "benefit to our soil and necessity to our climate."<sup>56</sup>

In this city, the slave markets were mostly condensed into one area, creating an almost one-stop-shop for slaves. Up until 1855, auctions were held in front or just past the Old Exchange. Once the areas around the Old Exchange became too crowded to wade through, sales at the venue were prohibited. This led to people starting their own auction houses, many of which were small empty rooms or backyards. By 1860, there were numerous places to purchase and sell slaves. The most popular three were Ryan's Mart which included "Ryan's nigger-jail" (where the slaves were held), the Auction Mart on Chalmers St., and The Slave Mart.<sup>57</sup>

As stated, it was virtually impossible to avoid the slave trade in Charleston, even for some of the most well-known and respected Jews of the city. Most of the men I will

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>56</sup> Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston*, 104.

<sup>57</sup> Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South*, 172.

mention served as officers or were dedicated members of their synagogues, specifically of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (hereafter KKBE). This congregation, established in 1749, is the oldest synagogue in continuous use and the location where the first effort to reform Judaism in the United States took place. In 1824, a large group of Charleston Jews -- some of whom were members of KKBE and others who rarely attended worship services -- petitioned the leadership of KKBE to consider a number of reforms that would, they believed, improve Jewish worship, and bring many in the younger generation back to the synagogue. They called their organized movement the 'Reformed Society of Israelites'. Although KKBE's leadership rejected these changes, many of the reforms eventually found their way into KKBE's ritual fifteen years later (1840) when the Jewish community erected the current synagogue building.<sup>58</sup>

After the temple burned down in 1838, the Reformed Society of Israelites joined together with the KKBE members to erect the community's new building on the very same site. David Lopez was the one who led the rebuilding of KKBE in 1840, but he did not work alone. Some of the bricks used in rebuilding were taken from the congregation's first building and had been made by slaves. Lopez also used his own slaves, and most likely other members' slaves, to rebuild the house of worship. The only record of the slaves who constructed the building reveals two of Lopez's slaves named Kit and George.<sup>59</sup> A portrait of Lopez still hangs in the synagogue to this day.

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<sup>58</sup> Gary Phillip Zola, *Isaac Harby of Charleston* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1994).

<sup>59</sup> Rickey Ciapha Dennis, *SC Synagogue Remembers Enslaved Black People Who Built It*. South Carolina Public Radio. SC, September 2021, 3



Among the notable members of KKBE was Abraham Mendes Seixas. Although he died in 1799, Seixas is an important figure in the Jewish- American slave trade. Serving as a captain in the American Revolution, Seixas carried a sense of nationalism with him throughout his life. After the Revolution, Seixas opened a store selling a variety of things, and became what some called a ‘vendue master’, which meant auctioneer. Seixas is primarily remembered in history for his one-of-a-kind advertisement in the *South Carolina State Gazette*. On September 6, 1794, Seixas advertised the following:

ABRAHAM SEIXAS,	The young ones true,
All so gracious,	If that will do,
Once again does he offer	May some be had of him
His service pure	To learn your trade
For to secure	They may be made
Money in the coffer.	Or bring them to your trim.

He has for sale	The boatmen great,
Some negroes, male,	Will you elate
Will suit full well grooms,	They are so brisk and free;
He has likewise	What e'er you say,
Some of their wives	They will obey,
Can make clean, dirty rooms.	If you buy them of me.

For planting, too	He also can
He has a few	Suit any man
To sell, all for the cash,	With land all o'er the State;
Of various price,	A bargain, sure,
To work the rice	They may procure
Or bring them to the lash.	If they don't stay too late. <sup>60</sup>

Seixas was not the first, nor last KKBE member to deal in slaves. The very first president (1750-64) was Spanish immigrant Joseph Tobias, a slave dealer and owner.

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<sup>60</sup> Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina, from the earliest times to the present day*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1905), 129.

Although a prominent merchant and Jew in Charleston, his participation in the slave trade is of little note since he died in 1761, before the height of the trade. Tobias' great-grandson, Abraham was also a president of KKBE as well as his son, Tobias Joseph Lopez. Abraham did not seem to have a large record of slave-dealing, but enough bills of sale have been found for researchers to identify that he was a regular buyer in Charleston for at least twenty years<sup>61</sup>.

Abraham's bills of sale vary widely. One bill of sale is a large sheet of paper recording that he bought a slave named Lucy and her three children, one is a barely legible receipt from a bill of sale (no bill of sale found), and another is simply a notecard with writing on it for a slave named Cetar.<sup>62</sup> Abraham's son, Joseph, was much like his father: not a large dealer in slaves but known to have been a regular buyer. There is no doubt Joseph would have continued in his purchases, but he was called to the army to fight for the Confederacy. The Tobiases--Joseph Sr., Abraham, and Joseph Jr.— are all laid to rest in the KKBE cemetery on Coming Street.

There are two other Jews of note who were involved more than the Tobiases but still operated on a smaller scale. Lipman Theodore Levin, known as LT in most records, was temporarily the minister for the Congregation of Jews of Colombia and Grand Master of his local masonic council. LT had been listed as an auctioneer and merchant

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<sup>61</sup> "Tobias, Abraham", MS-565, box 1, folder 11. Thomas J. Tobias Collection. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

<sup>62</sup> Bill of Sale. January 13, 1854. SC 11613. American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati, OH).

who sold “real estate, stocks and bonds, negroes, cotton, flour, and corn.”<sup>63</sup> LT’s business partner, Israel Jones, was one of the few Jews in Alabama mentioned in slave trading. Jones had been the president of Congregation Sha’arai Shomayim in Alabama in 1843-73.<sup>64</sup>

Another small trader was Jacob Barrett Sr. It is easy to get lost in the records when many names are similar, especially with Barrett. When researching Barrett, it is easy to confuse him with his son, also named Jacob Barrett. Records do not always distinguish the junior from senior and it is more difficult because the two Barretts not only shared names, but similar death dates, and their burial sites are close to one another. Barrett Sr. (1792-1871) owned a variety of goods in his store which he co-owned with his brother Isaac. They sold slaves, hogs,<sup>65</sup> horses, and real estate. Barrett was lucky to have such a close relationship with his brother; without Isaac, the store would have failed. This was because Barrett could barely read or write and was known to be “shrewd, stingy, and unscrupulous...”<sup>66</sup>

Moving on to more prominent KKBE members, Abraham Ottolengui, who served as president in 1842-50, was a successful auctioneer.<sup>67</sup> When Ottolengui was younger he

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<sup>63</sup> Goldring/ Woldenberg Institute. *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities- Columbia, South Carolina*. 2024.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Zietz. *The Gates of Heaven: Congregation Sha’arai Shomayim, the First 150 years, Mobile, Alabama, 1844-1994*. (Mobile, AL: Congregation Sha’arai Shomayim) 1994.

<sup>65</sup> Keeping kosher commonly took on a different form in the early south.

<sup>66</sup> Edwin J. Scott, ed., *Random Recollections of a Long Life: 1806-1876*. (Columbia, SC), 1884. Archived by Library of Congress December 2008.p.82.

<sup>67</sup> *The Occident* falsely reports the dates of his presidency.

had studied abroad for some time and when he returned, he sought for a place of honor in the Jewish community of Charleston. He attempted his best to procure a position at KKBE, but one member declared he was not mature enough. Seeing his hopes dashed, Ottolengui entered another profession at which he would excel: auctioning off slaves. Still wanting a position at KKBE, Ottolengui would send his auctioneering profits to KKBE. This seemed to have helped tremendously since he was finally elected president. Although most of his career was spent supervising the sale of slaves, Ottolengui is remembered in his obituary as a nice man whose “zeal for religion was unadulterated with bigotry, as his piety had no taint of intolerance.”<sup>68</sup>

While Abraham Ottolengui frequently dealt in slaves, his son Jacob seemed to prefer owning rather than auctioning. Ottolengui Jr. (1819-1900) mostly dealt in real estate and the maintenance of his own plantation, once boasting that his Georgian rice plantation had 1000 negroes, which is most likely an exaggeration.<sup>69</sup> If one wished to purchase real estate, slaves, and other items, Jacob’s office could be found on 20 Broad St. Also located on Broad St. was the Jacob Cohen & Sons Co. Cohen was a soldier of the American Revolution, as well as a president of KKBE (1796-1800). KKBE has stated that the fire of 1838 destroyed many documents including those from the time of Cohen. One of the only surviving documents detailing Cohen’s time as president is an instance where Cohen refused a donation to the synagogue.

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<sup>68</sup> The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, Vol. VIII, No. 11 Shebat 5611, February 1851.

<sup>69</sup> Scott, *Random Recollections of a Long Life: 1806-1876*, 83.

The donation was made by a man named Christopher Knight who had run for office in Charleston. Many Jews had voted for him, so he attributed his victory to the Jewish people. To thank them, Knight offered KKBE \$250 in 1800 which is the equivalent of \$6197 in 2024.<sup>70</sup> Cohen, in his last year of presidency at the synagogue, refused the donation saying, “it may be suggested at some future period that the members of our community were to be brought[sic].”<sup>71</sup> Cohen was not only a leader of the Jewish community, but a leader in the Charleston slave trade. At his peak, Cohen was the 10<sup>th</sup> largest slave salesman in all of Charleston, most likely the only Jew, which would make him the biggest *Jewish* slave trader.<sup>72</sup>

Cohen’s slave business peaked before the war, but the case was different for Moses Cohen Mordecai. Mordecai (1804-88) never signed his full name on documents, appearing as MC Mordecai on all items such as bills of sale and the records for KKBE. His full name is only found through obituaries and cemetery records. Although it may be difficult for researchers, it was common during the 1800s to sign one’s first and/or middle initial followed by the full last name. After poring through cemetery records and any documents in which “MC Mordecai” appears, we can finally piece together this man’s life.

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<sup>70</sup> CPI Inflation Calculator. U.S. <https://www.officialdata.org>

<sup>71</sup> Allan Tarshish, *A Bi-Centennial Anniversary in Charleston: The Story of Congregation Beth Elohim*. (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1950), 7.

<sup>72</sup> Bancroft, *Slave Trading in The Old South*, 190.

Mordecai was already a prominent figure and slave owner in Charleston before the war. Not many records survive detailing his interactions with slaves, but it is known that his was a common name in the market. He owned steamships to transport sugar, fruit, and tobacco. He was not only a wealthy merchant, but a state representative, a senator, vice president of Charleston's artillery society, and president of KKBE (1857-61).<sup>73</sup> Fourteen days before the state of South Carolina seceded, Mordecai had been quoted as saying "After the state is withdrawn, she should never be reunited with any of the non-slaveholding states of this union in any form of government whatever."<sup>74</sup> During the war, Mordecai used his wealth to support the Confederate cause, allowing the troops to utilize his ships. After the war, Mordecai moved his business to Maryland, but did not forget about his brethren from Charleston and shipped the bodies of South Carolinian soldiers back to their families at no cost.<sup>75</sup>

The biggest Jewish slave trader during the Civil War by far was Benjamin Mordecai. Mordecai (1809-93) owned more slaves than most of his fellow Jewish citizens in Charleston. He was more of a private seller, rather than auctioneer. People came to him when they wanted to buy and sell slaves on a small scale. This means that Mordecai did not keep large numbers of slaves to sell and that those making the purchase were usually not looking to resell immediately. Located on 5 State St., Mordecai filled

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<sup>73</sup> Mapping Jewish Charleston: Mordecai Cohen. College of Charleston Libraries, Special Collections <https://mappingjewishcharleston.cofc.edu/1833/mordecai-cohen/>

<sup>74</sup> *The National Republican*. Washington D.C. December 6, 1860. p.2.

<sup>75</sup> Mapping Jewish Charleston: Moses Cohen Mordecai. College of Charleston Libraries, Special Collections. <https://mappingjewishcharleston.cofc.edu.>, 2023.

out many bills of sale which survive today. Mordecai was more interested in selling slaves than he was in buying and commonly appeared in the newspaper advertising his wares. During one larger sale, Mordecai advertised “prime field negroes and house servants,” which included 37 slaves (along with 3 children who were to be sold with their mother) ranging from infants to 40-year-olds.<sup>76</sup>

Another sale of note was of three young boys sold to Henry Clark. Mordecai sold Irvine, age 12, for \$587.50; Paul, age 16, for \$750.5; and Scipio, age 24, for \$950 on January 3, 1855. What is interesting about this sale is the 24-year-old, Scipio. In 1852, auctioneers J.T. and Levin that were located down the street from Mordecai, sold a 2-year-old named Scipio. It seems convenient that a male slave of the same name was sold a few doors down, three years before a different Scipio was sold. It could be that they are the same person, but that would mean that one of the slave dealers made an error since Scipio was two in 1852 and 24 in 1855. However, it is more probable that these two slaves were separate people considering Scipio was a common name as southerners were apt to bestow biblical or literary names on their slaves.<sup>77</sup>

Mordecai is not only a notable figure because of his involvement in the slave trade, but also because of his role in the Confederacy. Weeks after South Carolina seceded from the Union and three months before the war broke out, Mordecai took action

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<sup>76</sup> Advertisement from B. Mordecai. *Charleston Courier* January 1, 1857.

<sup>77</sup> Susan Wegner. “Classical Names and Concepts Used In The Service of Slavery.” *Antiquity and America*, Bowdoin College Museum of Art. <https://bcma.bowdoin.edu/antiquity/classical-names-and-concepts-used-in-the-service-of-slavery/>.



and was the first *person*, not merely Jew, to donate money to the Confederate cause.<sup>78</sup>

Mordecai presented his state with \$10,000, equivalent to \$354,922 in 2024. Mordecai's generosity did not end there, and he continued donating money and purchasing bonds.

Mordecai spent most of his money on the war and was left penniless after. He moved to New York with his wife, Clara—where he would soon die in 1893.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Fremont Journal*. Ohio, Jan. 11, 1861.p.1

<sup>79</sup> Goldring/Woldenberg Institute. "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities- Charleston, South Carolina," 2024. <https://www.isjl.org/south-carolina-charleston-encyclopedia.html>

## CONCLUSION

On April 9, 1865, the war was finally over and the world would never be the same again. Since the time of slavery, white Americans have slowly been learning to treat black people as equals and learning to live with the guilt of their ancestors' actions. The change did not come quickly, and we are still shamefully struggling today with issues such as justice and equality for black people. When the slaves were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves still remained on plantations, working for little money to begin to build lives for themselves. Some Jews were elated that black people were finally free and no longer had to hide their feelings to the extent they had before. Keep in mind that black people were still not seen as equals or treated well and some southerners may have been angered if one was too friendly with a former slave.

Other Jews, like Eleanor Cohen, were not happy with the freedom of slaves.

Cohen writes in her diary on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1865:

I, who believe in the institution of slavery, regret deeply its being abolished. I am accustomed to have them wait on me, and I dislike white servants very much.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> "This Happy Land: A Portion of The People. Diary of Eleanor H. Cohen. Columbia, Richmond, Charleston, 1865-66."

Since the abolition of slavery, most of the states involved in the slave trade have issued apologies. The states which held the three biggest slave markets--Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana--were among the last to issue apologies. Virginia made its apology in 2007 and South Carolina's was in 2018. One may ponder how a state such as South Carolina, with a large history of slavery, waited until 2018 to issue an apology. However, there is one state that has yet to apologize: Louisiana. The lack of an apology is not necessarily a reflection on the citizens of Louisiana, but of its representatives.

In 1996, the Louisiana House Committee attempted to pass a resolution to apologize for the state's involvement in the slave trade. House Representative Yvonne Dorsey reminded the other representatives that past laws in Louisiana "enshrined slavery, tearing families apart and making it legal and respectable to be slave owners."<sup>81</sup> However, two other representatives present did not feel the same way. Reps. David Vitter and Steven Scalise argued that they personally had nothing to do with slavery; it was their ancestor's actions, not theirs. They refused to apologize. Scalise and Vitter claimed an apology would be admitting that they were guilty, which they believed they were not.

After much tension, the resolution was changed to express the regret Louisiana had for the actions that had occurred. Although it was not an apology, Rep. Scalise was still not happy, and voted against the revised resolution as well. It was during his time as

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<sup>81</sup> Scott Wong, "Minutes Highlight Scalise Efforts to Kill Resolution Apologizing for Slavery". *The Hill*. January 15, 2015.

a Louisiana lawmaker that he also spoke at a white supremacist gathering, though he claims he was not aware of the nature of the event.<sup>82</sup>

As seen above, slavery and the treatment of black people in general is still an issue today. The first permanent slave settled in Jamestown in 1619 and in 2024 there are still issues such as police brutality, false imprisonment, beatings, etc. that black people face. We like to think of American slavery as a thing of the past: there are no more chains, free labor, or auctions. Yet there are still beatings, humiliation, lower pay, and lesser treatment of black people in America. In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous speech, “I Have a Dream.” When one reads that speech, the only part of MLK’s dream that has come true is the black person’s ability to vote. To this day, those who favor justice have the same dream as Dr. King, the dream that the day will come:

...when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Steve Benen, “Scalise Opposed Resolution Apologizing for Slavery”. MSNBC. January 13,2015.

<sup>83</sup> “Read Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘I Have a Dream’ Speech in its Entirety”. NPR. January 16,2023.

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