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Jewish Colonists in Melbourne's Early Land Sales.

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(*Read before the Society, February 7th, 1946, by
Miss Marisc L. Cohen, B.A.*)

"The starting point of Melbourne proper" has been ascribed, by at least one historian,¹ to June 1st, 1837, the day of the first land sale in the Port Phillip District. Until that day every one of the 500 odd souls who had settled by the banks of the Yarra was, in point of legal propriety, a trespasser, and a trespasser wilfully flouting the proclamation of the Governor of New South Wales, who had sternly warned off all such interlopers. But the Governor had decided to give John Batman and his Port Phillip Association, and the rest of those 500 Yarra-bank trespassers, the chance of acquiring a proper title to the land upon which they had squatted. The land was to be put up for sale by public auction, and the lucky purchasers could get a good and proper title deriving from William, King of England, rather than from Jagajaga, Bungarie, Yanyan and the other "Chiefs of a certain Native Tribe called Dutigallar," with whom Batman two years earlier had made his well-intentioned, but officially unacceptable, treaty.²

Accordingly, at the behest of the Governor in Sydney, the site of Melbourne had been planned and surveyed. In March, 1837, the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, had sailed round from Sydney to see Port Phillip for himself. He

¹ Henry Gyles Turner: *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, chapter ix. (Longmans, Green & Co., 1904).

² James Bonwick: *Port Phillip Settlement* (Sampson Low, London, 1883).

had been so won over by the welcome he received that he had even waxed eloquent on "this promising settlement," and had refrained from further mention of the ugly word "trespassers." But by the time he set sail again for Sydney arrangements were in hand for that first land sale of June, 1837.

During the fourteen years between June 1st, 1837, and July 1st, 1851, when Victoria (or "Port Phillip District," as it was until then called) became separated from New South Wales, there were to be twenty-one public auction sales of allotments of Melbourne Town. At many of these town sales allotments of suburban land were also to be offered and sold. In addition, there were to be, during the same Port Phillip District period, upwards of twenty-five separate auction sales of suburban lands.

Complete and detailed records of all these sales have been preserved in the archives of the Victorian Lands Department, and have been frequently (and, at times, inaccurately) quoted by historians and anecdotists of early Melbourne. A summary of all the official records has been compiled by officers of that Department and published by the Historical Society of Victoria.³

Of the earliest of such records,⁴ it has been remarked :

Owing to the circumstances surrounding its settlement the original sale of allotments in the City of Melbourne has an attractive interest for Victorian Colonists. Lists of the purchasers from the Crown have been preserved in the local archives and have acquired an importance somewhat akin to that with which the passenger roll of the *Mayflower* is regarded in Massachusetts.

Wits may say that, if the claims of some Bostonians are to be believed, the passenger roll of the *Mayflower* must have been many times that of the *Queen Mary*; but the roll of Port Phillip's purchasers from the Crown has been listed with a degree of reliability, for which future historians will surely be thankful.

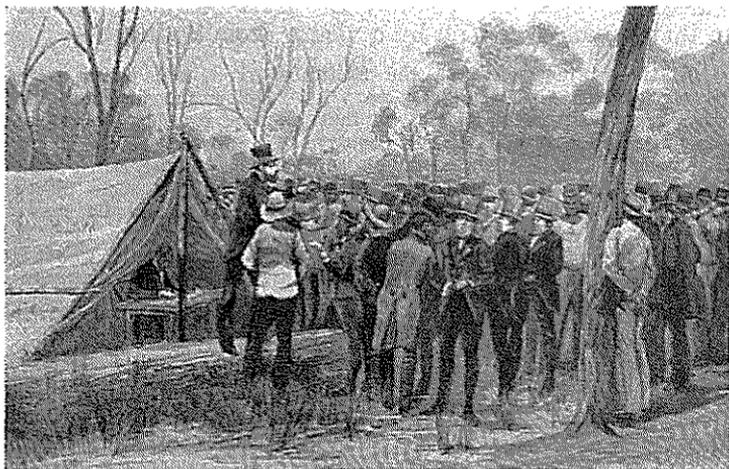
Australian Jews may find much of special interest in such records, for they contain the names of several note-

³ W. Mellroy, Secretary for Lands : "Melbourne's Land Sales" (Parts I. and II.)—*The Victorian Historical Magazine*, Vols. XVI., No. 4, and XVII., No. 4. Reference is made to these records throughout this paper.

⁴ By Henry Gyles Turner : *A History of the Colony of Victoria* (Appendix I.).

worthy Jewish colonists. It is the purpose of this paper to give a brief account of the activities of these early Jewish colonists in the land sales of the Port Phillip District period, that is, until Separation in 1851.

A Census of 1841 numbered Port Phillip's Jewish community at 57 souls. By 1846 the total Jewish population in the Port Phillip settlement was set down at 117, of whom 92 lived in Melbourne and its environs. By the end of the period, in 1851, Melbourne Jewry would certainly have numbered well over 100.⁵ Yet in the lists of those who purchased land from the Crown during the



First Melbourne Land Sale, 1837.

entire period, the writer can find only eight or nine names which can be set down, with reasonable certainty, as having belonged to Jewish colonists. Why are so few Jewish purchasers listed, in comparison to the size of the Jewish community?

There were, no doubt, many Jewish colonists who did not purchase any land during the period. Doubtless there were others who did buy, but whose names do not appear

⁵ *One Hundred Years—The Story of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, 1841-1941* (Freeman Press, Melbourne). And see *Australian Jewish Historical Society's Journal*, Vol. I, p. 222.

in those lists, because they bought, not direct from the Crown at public auction, but from one or other of the original buyers, many of whom smartly subdivided and re-sold their purchases at much profit. The history of those other Jewish settlers invites further research; but this paper is confined to the story of those eight or nine Jews who did bid for and buy their lands from the Crown at the first public auctions.

One who visited Port Phillip on the day of the first land sale, June 1st, 1837, coming overland from Sydney, sets down in his diary the following description of the Yarra, the first, and possibly the most eloquent, tribute to that stream ever paid by a visitor from Sydney :—

Until its junction with the Saltwater river, the banks were densely covered with tea-trees, &c. . . . Below the junction, the banks are more openly wooded, so that we were enabled to observe some fine spots of open forest country, well grassed. The Yarra is a most valuable river, fresh above the falls of the Settlement. The banks are generally high on both sides, and in some places very high, but in most places the water might easily be made accessible to cattle, &c. On the immediate banks the land is generally of very fine quality. . . . It is rather over-thickly wooded, and with a great deal of underwood which gives a scrubby appearance, but it might be cleared at no great expense, and would form very capital homesteads, and afford many beautiful sites for building residences.⁶

From another account of the Melbourne of that day, it appears that only some half-dozen huts were to be seen, and the *Enterprise* lay at anchor in the stream; "while yonder," observes the narrator,

is a bushman tramping to the Settlement, staggering under a clumsily-made-up swag, and probably on his way to Fawcner's grog shanty further down, there to enjoy a little life, and dissolve the "order" for his three or six months' wages in the throat-scorching rum or execrable beer of the period.⁷

The township had been marked out by the surveyors, who had left only one house standing, Mr. John Pascoe Fawcner's public house. Every other house had to come down. The town was laid down in squares of ten acres, each of which was to be divided into twenty allotments of

⁶ Bonwick : *Port Phillip Settlement.*

⁷ "Garry Owen," "Chronicles of Early Melbourne," cited by Bonwick, *ibid.*

half an acre each.⁸ No one but Fawkner had taken the trouble to put up anything but the rudest dwelling. He, having been obliged to provide accommodation, and so to spend more on his house, was more than a little fearful that someone at the forthcoming auction might bid against him. Such was the background of the first sale.⁹

The first sale was conducted by Mr. Robert Hoddle, the surveyor whom Governor Bourke had recently brought over from Sydney, and who was to become Victoria's first Surveyor-General. The dignity of his office did not, however, deter him from acting as auctioneer on this auspicious day—nor indeed from using as his rostrum the trunk of a dead tree. A print of the period¹⁰ shows him standing up there, resplendent in top hat and swallow-tail coat, offering allotments to the assembled crowd, most of whom are similarly attired, with here and there a wild colonial in bushman's garb. Behind Hoddle is shown his auctioneer's clerk busily recording bids, as he sits at his table in a tent, while all around are the gum-trees of a barbarous bush!

Hoddle opened the proceedings by expatiating on the consideration shown by Governor Sir Richard Bourke in bringing this golden opportunity into the very camp of the Port Phillip settlers, despite the fact that Sydney's bigger population and greater abundance of capital would have ensured higher prices had the sale been held there, as many of the crowd had feared it would be held. Then Hoddle went on to read the conditions of sale. There was to be a cash deposit on the fall of the hammer, and a condition was to be inserted in the contract binding the purchaser to erect within two years on each allotment "a substantial building" costing not less than £20.¹¹

The crowd numbered about 150, and competition was not keen. Most of the purchasers seem to have been anxious merely to get a lawful title to some land on which

⁸ *Cornwall Chronicle* (Van Diemen's Land) of March, 1837, cited by Bonwick, *ibid.*

⁹ Bonwick, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Reproduced in Isaac Selby's *Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne* (McCarron Bird, Melbourne), p. 98.

¹¹ Turner: *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, chapter ix. Bonwick, *ibid.*

to build a home for themselves. The 100 allotments offered were distributed amongst 66 buyers, 51 of whom bought only a single allotment. Although there were some Sydney buyers, who bid for and secured some dozen or so allotments, speculation does not seem to have been rife on this occasion, for the highest price paid for any allotment was £95; some sold for £18, and the average price was £35, although each allotment was little less than half an acre in extent.¹²

Perhaps amongst the crowd at this first sale was Joseph Solomon, formerly of London and Launceston, and member of the Port Phillip Association, who had arrived at Port Phillip in 1835 and squatted on the land allotted to him by his friend, John Batman, some ten miles out from the township. But, if Solomon had ridden in to mingle in the throng at the sale, he did not on this occasion succumb to the blandishments of the auctioneer and buy land. Nevertheless, it is known for certain that he figured in the second sale held just three months later, on November 1st, 1837 (and, like the first, held on the actual ground sold). For Joseph Solomon, just as he seems to have been the first Jewish colonist in Victoria, seems also to have been the first to buy land there.

This first allotment bought by Joseph Solomon was in Bourke Street, just a few yards west of what is now the Bourke Street Post Office. Its position can be seen here on the accompanying plan of Melbourne (which, incidentally, conforms exactly to Hoddle's original plan, as approved by Governor Sir Richard Bourke in 1837—an example of foresight in town planning the like of which few cities can boast).

Solomon paid £39 for his allotment. The average price for the 83 allotments sold at this second sale was £43, a slight increase on the average at the first sale, but not enough of an increase to indicate any considerable speculation. John Batman bought the most of all the 53 purchasers. He took five allotments. One allotment in Bourke Street was purchased for £10 by one John Hodgson, but he failed to complete the sale and forfeited his deposit. This allotment was afterwards granted by the Crown for

¹² Turner: *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, chapter ix. Bonwick, *ibid.*

the purposes of a Synagogue, and became the site of the old Melbourne Synagogue. The allotment is marked on the early plans, "Jews Synagogue Grant."

Some Sydney newspapers of the day professed to believe that the prices paid at these first two sales were exorbitant for allotments in the wilderness. But the Government in Sydney evidently did not share this view, because it was decided to hold subsequent sales in Sydney, and to impose an upset price per acre. Consequently the next three sales—Melbourne's third, fourth and fifth sales—were held in Sydney in September, 1838, and February and April, 1839. The upset price per acre at the first Sydney sale was £5, and for the next two sales £150. The results must have been eminently gratifying to the Treasury, for at the first Sydney sale the average price per allotment rose to £118 (as compared with £42 at the second Melbourne sale, although the allotments offered were by no means as central); and at the next sale in Sydney the average climbed to £125. But however gratifying fiscally, these sales were politically and economically disastrous to the early Melbournians. For in Sydney speculators were eagerly buying up allotments, while in Melbourne settlers looking for sites for home could not get them, and much local indignation was aroused.

The third and last sale to be held in Sydney was that of April 11th, 1839, and at this two Jewish colonists were buyers. Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses together bought two corner allotments, one at the corner of Flinders and Spring Streets, the other at the corresponding corner of Collins and Spring Streets. They paid £80 for the former and £75 for the latter allotment, just about the average price for the sale, which had dropped to £77. The peak of Melbourne's "Sydney land boom" had evidently been passed, and the Government was soon to return to the policy of selling Melbourne lands in Melbourne. All the sixteen subsequent sales of Melbourne town lands in this period were to be held in auction rooms in Melbourne.

Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses did not migrate to Melbourne. These two merchant partners, who had arrived in Sydney from London on the same boat in 1835,

were well established in business, with stores there and at Goulburn,¹³ and they remained in New South Wales. But their purchases made in Sydney may well have been made with an eye to something beyond mere speculation in the far-off settlement of Melbourne¹⁴; for not long afterwards two younger brothers of Samuel Benjamin settled in Melbourne and began buying land there for themselves. These two, David and Solomon Benjamin, had followed their brother Samuel to Australia. Solomon Benjamin was married in Sydney on August 11th, 1841. Later a fourth brother, Moses Benjamin, was to figure in the Melbourne sales.

David and Solomon Benjamin made the first of their substantial purchases of Melbourne lands on September 10th, 1840, buying an allotment at Williams' Town, which is now a bayside suburb of the city of Melbourne, but was then a nearby port, and a township rivalling Melbourne Town in importance. The brothers paid £325 for their allotment of almost half an acre. Two years later they were listed in Kerr's *Melbourne Almanac and Port Phillip Directory for 1842* as "Benjamin, D. & S., General Dealers, Collins Street, and William's Town." As far back as 1840, residents of Melbourne had met for public worship at "Cheapside House," the Collins Street store of D. & S. Benjamin. It was at services held at this store that the Melbourne Jewish community first obtained Minyan, at

¹³ Numerous references to Samuel Benjamin and his three brothers, and to Elias Moses, appear in the *Journal* of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. Amongst them are: Sydney B. Glass, "Jews of Goulburn" (Vol. I., Part VIII.); Rabbi Dr. Porush, "From Bridge Street to York Street" (Vol. II., Part II.); Ernest S. Marks, "An Early Census" (Vol. II., Part I.). A photograph of Samuel Benjamin is reproduced on p. 271, and of Elias Moses on p. 325, of Vol. I.

¹⁴ The writer is indebted to Mr. Sydney B. Glass for the following comment: "The buying of land in new town areas that might develop into business localities was a policy of the firm. For New South Wales they bought land in several country towns, e.g., Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Windsor and Kiandra, where they had business premises; also in Marulan, Hartley and Bungonia, where they did not go into business, because no town developed. This same policy was followed by other Jewish firms in Sydney, notably Isaac Levey, who had several parcels in Goulburn, where he had large business premises, also in Bungonia, Raymond Terrace, Newcastle, Scone and Yass."

the New Year and Day of Atonement services in 1840.¹⁵ So David and Solomon Benjamin have associations with the earliest days of Melbourne Jewry.

At the same sale of William's Town lots in 1840, another distinguished Jew makes his appearance—Joseph Barrow Montefiore, who also bought one allotment. A few weeks previously, on August 13th, 1840, he had bought two allotments in Melbourne Town, one of them adjoining the allotment purchased eighteen months previously in Sydney by Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses, at the corner of Flinders and Spring Streets.¹⁶ It is worth noting that whereas the Sydney purchasers paid only £80 for their allotment of about half an acre, Montefiore had now to pay £440 for his allotment of the same size. The average price per allotment at this sale was £449. The sharp rise in price indicates that land values were booming in Melbourne, aided no doubt by the Government's latest increase in upset prices to £300 per acre for town lands.

Montefiore's other purchases was in Lonsdale Street, not far from the corner of Spring Street. Montefiore was a merchant. Kerr's *Almanac and Directory of 1842* lists one "J. Barrow Montefiore Esq." as on the "London Committee" of the Separation Association (Established 1840). The "London Committee," together with a "Permanent Colonial Committee" and "Committee of Ways and Means," are described as having been "appointed at a public meeting of the colonists held in the Scots School on the 13th of June, 1840."

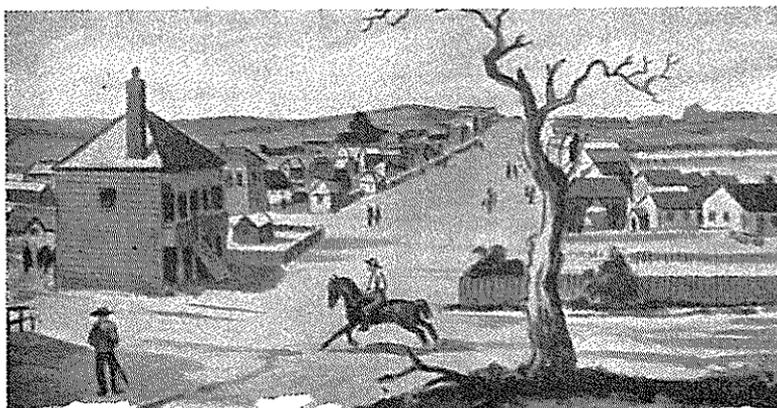
The dates of James Barrow Montefiore's purchases of land at Melbourne and William's Town were in August and September of 1840, so it seems likely that he was identical with the "J. Barrow Montefiore" of the Separation Association, and was in Melbourne in June, 1840, when elected to the London Committee. He was probably re-

¹⁵ *One Hundred Years* (The Story of The Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, 1841-1941), in which an old print of the store is reproduced.

¹⁶ Selby is in error (at p. 73 of his *Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne*) in stating that J. B. Montefiore was among the purchasers at the second land sale. He bought two lots which had evidently been offered, and passed in, at the second land sale, but it was not until the seventh Melbourne Town Sale that he bought them.

lated to Jacob L. Montefiore, a local director in Sydney of the Bank of Australasia, and to Jacob Montefiore, J.P., of Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, a prominent merchant and agent of the early 'fifties. Selby records the grave of one Montefiore in the Jewish section of the old Melbourne Cemetery.¹⁷

The next known purchases of Crown land by Jews occurred on November 11th, 1846, when some small allotments, each of two roods, were offered at the Township of Warrigal (now known as Heidelberg). Solomon Benjamin bought two, and Samuel Benjamin and his partner, Elias



Collins Street, Melbourne, 1838.

Moses, two more. Probably Solomon, in addition to buying for himself, acted on this occasion as buying agent for his brother Samuel and partner, who remained in Sydney and Goulburn.

No further Jewish purchases of Crown land appear to have occurred until June 27th, 1849, when a number of large allotments were offered in a locality which rejoiced in the native name of Cut Paw Paw, in the general area of what is now known as Braybrook, about ten miles from Melbourne. At this sale, and at a further sale in May, 1850, Joseph Solomon bought five allotments all in the

¹⁷ See *Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne.*

locality, totalling nearly 600 acres, and paid about £1,100 for the lot.

The position of these purchases fits in generally with an earlier reference (quoted by Bonwick) to "Solomon's station . . . within a distance of ten miles from Melbourne." It is likely that what Solomon did at these auctions of 1849 and 1850 was to buy in some or all of the land "granted" to him originally in 1835 by John Batman, who had claimed to have had it granted to him, along with five or six hundred thousand acres, by Jagga-jagga, Bungarie, Yanyan and the other chiefs of the Dutigallars, in consideration of a yearly rent of certain blankets, knives, tomahawks, suits of clothing, looking-glasses, etc. John Batman got this "grant," John Helder Wedge had surveyed it, and John Batman had parcelled it out amongst his associates. Wedge's notebook and map of 1835 refer to Solomon's selection of a block. Soon afterwards Solomon obtained a pastoral license from the Crown in the same general area, and probably over the same selection. At all events this Solomon is listed as a Crown licensee in the Cut Paw Paw district from 1836 to 1849.¹⁸ As 1849 was the date of his first purchase of land in the same district, it seems likely that he decided to buy in his original selection when his pastoral license over it ran out and the land was put up for public auction.

Joseph Solomon is not named in the earliest lists of members of the Port Phillip Association; but there is in existence a list of members of the Association, signed by Charles Swanston, whose name is first on the list, and containing the name of Joseph Solomon as number 12. This document is in the possession of the Melbourne Public Library. There is a great deal more about Joseph Solomon to be found in A. S. Kenyon's *The Port Phillip Association*¹⁹ and in the "Port Phillip Association Papers," originals of which are in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, with copies at the Melbourne Public Library. According to Kenyon, Joseph Solomon came to Hobart in 1820 and joined his brother Judah in business in a firm which

¹⁸ V. Billis and A. S. Kenyon: *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., Melbourne, 1932), p. 123.

¹⁹ Paper read before The Victorian Historical Society, November 30th, 1930, and published in the *Magazine* of the Society.

became of considerable importance in Hobart and Launceston. How and when brother Judah came to Van Diemen's Land is not known. However, a letter from John Pascoe Fawkner dated 1839 (now included in the "Port Phillip Association Papers") contains a long, scathing diatribe against all the associates of Batman, and, in particular, inveighs against Judah Solomon, alleging that he was "at that time" (when the Port Phillip Association was formed in 1835) "a convict and therefore his name was withheld." This letter of Fawkner's is bitterly partisan, and written with the avowed aim of blackening the reputation of the Batmanites, so the allegation against Judah Solomon must be regarded with suspicion; nor does there appear to be any other evidence that Judah Solomon was ever connected, indirectly or directly, with Batman's association. On the contrary, there is the evidence of an old legal document (referred to by Kenyon) which recites a declaration of trust by John Batman, in favour of Joseph Solomon, of one share in the Port Phillip Association. This declaration of trust was dated July 18th, 1835, only two months after the formation of the Association. So Joseph Solomon, though not an original, seems to have been a very early member.²⁰

Personalalia of Joseph Solomon given in *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip* comprise:—

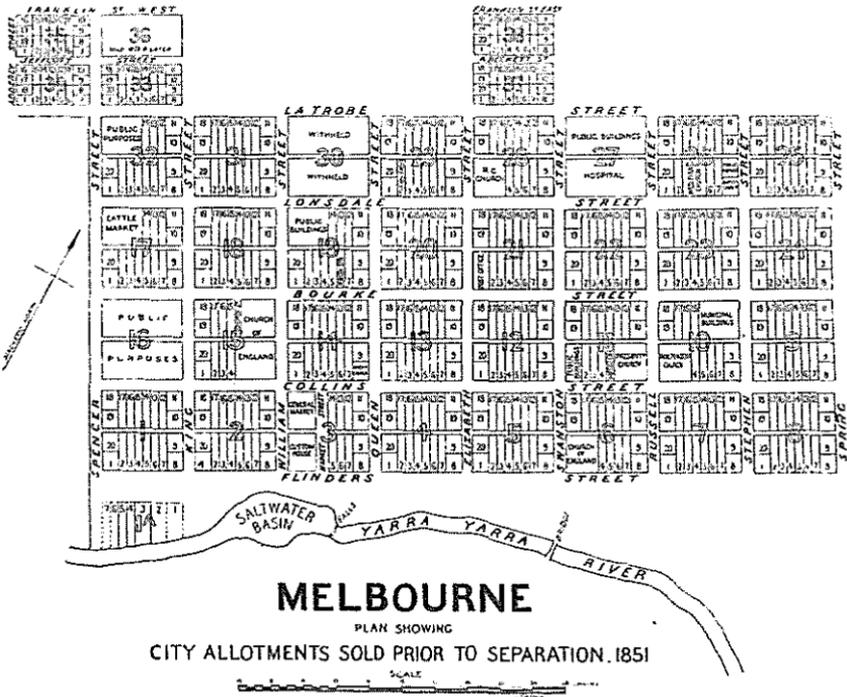
Born : London, 1819. (This date is perhaps wrong, as it would make him only sixteen years old when he arrived at Port Phillip.)
 Married : (Mrs.) Elizabeth Backaus (nee Graves).
 Arrived : December, 1835.
 Died : April, 1890.

Kenyon also comments that "Joseph, Jr., J.P., had a run on the Saltwater River where his name is preserved in Solomons Ford.²¹ His wife Sarah died at Melbourne

²⁰ One "J. Solomon" was amongst the signatories of the Petition of Hobart Jews in 1852 (*Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. I., pp. 108 and 110).

²¹ Robert Douglass Boys, in his *First Years at Port Phillip* (Robertson & Mullens, Melbourne, 1935), at p. 91 makes the following comment on Captain Lonsdale's report of March 22nd, 1838, that he placed a small punt of his own on the Salt Water River a little above its junction with the Yarra in order to shorten by ten miles the distances to William's Town and Geelong: "(N.—Prior to the installation of the punt, the Salt Water River had been crossed at Solomon's ford, about 8 or 9 miles higher up the river.)"

in 1881." This Joseph Jr. may be identical with Michael Solomon, who is listed in the *Pastoral Pioneers* as having held pastoral licenses from the Crown at Keilor (1835-1841.) and Carrum Swamp (1837-1842).



Solomon Benjamin figured again in town and suburban sales in November, 1849, buying three allotments towards the north end of the town (Section 38) for a total of over £700, and a small suburban holding of two acres. In May, 1851, in the last of the suburban sales before Separation, he bought on his own account three additional allotments at Warringal (Heidelberg), while he and his partner and brother David together bought still a further lot there.²² They also contracted to buy three small allotments at Footscray, but evidently did not consider these

²² A. S. Kenyon : *Heidleberg, The City of Streams* (Centenary Publication, 1834-1934). Map at p. 82 shows purchases.

worth having and forfeited their deposits. One Nathan Cohen is also recorded as having forfeited his deposit for another Footscray allotment at the same sale.

In connection with the Melbourne Town sale on May 28th, 1850, the name of Jacob Marks occurs for the first time as the purchaser of two allotments towards the northern end of the town. Isaac Selby²³ states that, amongst early Melbournian Jews, one Marks kept a hotel; but Kerr's 1842 *Directory* lists only a single Marks—'Marks, Jacob, Draper, Collins Street, Melbourne'; and the same man, or a namesake, is recorded as the holder of a pastoral license in 'The Portland Bay District from 1849 to 1851.' Perhaps there were two or three namesakes, Marks, although even at that time many Melbourne merchants had pastoral interests, and many pastoralists speculated in Melbourne allotments.

The following year, 1851, saw the last sale of town allotments prior to Separation, and at that last sale Moses Benjamin, the fourth of the Benjamin brothers, features for the first time. With his brother, David, he bought up a large portion of Section 35, again towards the northern end of the town. Between them the two brothers bought eight out of a total of eighteen allotments offered for sale in the section. Their purchasers were not notably prescient, for that part of the town improved much less rapidly than almost any other.

It has been suggested that one David Lyons, who bought two allotments in Section 35, was also Jewish, but the writer can find no evidence to support the suggestion. Kerr lists a 'David Lyons, Innkeeper, Travellers' Rest, Collingwood.' There is, however, one other Port Phillip publican whose Jewish origin would seem more probable. He is Benjamin Goldsmidt Levien, who became another pastoral licensee, but not a purchaser, of land. Levien is given the following personalia in *Pastoral Pioneers* :—

Born : London 1806.

Married : Eliza Lindo 1833.

Victoria Hotel Footscray 1840-1843. Pastoral Licensee, Bourke County 1843-1846.

Puntman Saltwater River 1845; Marabool (*sic.*) River 1846.

Why he watered down his way of life from publican to puntman history does not relate.

²³ *Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne.*

The only other Jewish purchases of land before Separation were made by Moses and David Benjamin, each of whom bought some twenty acres of suburban land at Moorabbin in May, 1851. Moses Benjamin also bought two acres at South Melbourne.

It was Moses Benjamin who was the father of Benjamin, afterwards Sir Benjamin Benjamin, a Mayor of Melbourne.²⁴ It is written concerning the four brothers, Moses, Solomon, David and Samuel Benjamin, the sons of Lyon Benjamin, merchant, of Hyde Park, London: "There are now many descendants of Lyon Benjamin in the Australian States."²⁵ Of those descendants of Lyon Benjamin, it should perhaps be stated in fairness to them, and in conclusion, the writer is not one.

Western Australian Jewry, 1829-1897.

PART I.—FREMANTLE.

By DAVID J. BENJAMIN, LL.B.

(Read before the Society, February 7th, 1946.)

Livy, the greatest of the Roman historians, said in the Preface to his *History of Rome* that the object of his work was to assist in recalling the memory of the past, both to his readers and himself. In preparing this paper on the history of Western Australian Jewry, I have had the same idea in mind, as so far no attempt has been made, beyond an occasional newspaper article, to collect the information that exists on this subject or to present it as a connected story.

Perhaps some explanation is necessary as to why the apparently arbitrary dates of 1829 and 1897 have been chosen as the limits for this paper. Although there was considerable exploratory work done around the coasts of Western Australia before 1829 by English, French and Dutch seamen, there is nothing in the surviving data to associate with it the name of any Jew. No doubt some members of the numerous crews who touched or saw the barren coast were Jews, for there have always been Jewish

²⁴ Before the First Citizen of Melbourne was dignified with the title of Lord Mayor.

²⁵ Sydney B. Glass: "Jews of Goulburn."