

SAMUEL JUDAH, CLASS OF 1816: RUTGERS' FIRST JEWISH GRADUATE

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A JEWISH presence on the Rutgers campus began early in the nineteenth century, just a quarter century after Queen's College was established by the Dutch Reformed Church. The name of Samuel Judah appeared in the Trustees' Minutes Book as one of five graduates in the Class of 1816.¹ His diploma, in an antiquated vernacular, was dated "Kalends of October 1816." There was no indication at all that Judah was of the Jewish faith—only genealogical records confirm this. While little information can be found concerning his college years, it is known they were followed by a distinguished law career. It would be sixty-four years before another Jewish student matriculated at Rutgers.

Jews on any colonial college campus were rare indeed. There were approximately 1,800 Jews in all of America in 1790, and by the time Judah had arrived at Rutgers the figure had only risen to 3,000. There was neither time nor money available for a college education for most of the young men of the Jewish faith. For the few whose families could afford this luxury, acceptance at the early colonial colleges was not always assured, and many chose not to aspire to it. Throughout Europe Jews had seen most University doors closed to them. Oxford in England, for instance, did not grant a degree to a Jew until 1870.² And in 1819 Nathan Nathans of Philadelphia thought he might prepare for the University of Pennsylvania rather than at Cambridge, where "there might be some difficulty about my religion."³ Those Jewish students who succeeded in entering a university in America before 1816—the year Judah graduated from Rutgers—could be counted almost on one hand.

¹ Board of Trustees Minutes, Queen's College, Sept. 26, 1814-July 16, 1833, p. 30. Rutgers' Archives.

² Deborah Karp, *Heroes of American Jewish History* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972), p. 42.

³ Edwin Wolf & Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1956), p. 294.



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SAMUEL JUDAH AS A YOUNG MAN.

In 1720 Harvard, which had already been open for almost 100 years, granted a Master's degree to Judah Monis for his work in Hebrew grammar, and he went on to become an instructor in Hebrew at Harvard.⁴ In 1772 Moses Levy was the first Jew to graduate from the College of Philadelphia (later to become the University of Pennsylvania), and by 1805 he was appointed a trustee of the college.⁵ Another colonial school, Kings College, which opened in 1754 and later became Columbia University, admitted as its first Jewish student Isaac Abrahams, who graduated in 1774.⁶ It might also be noted that Kings College invited Gerson Mendes Seixas, rabbi of the first Jewish congregation in America, and one of the clergy who took part in George Washington's inauguration, to serve as a trustee. (Coincidentally, Seixas was related to Rutgers' Samuel Judah through his second wife.)⁷

Yale, which had opened in 1701, did not admit Jewish students until Ezra Stiles became President in 1779. Stiles had a great intellectual interest in Judaism, was fluent in Hebrew, had a number of Jewish friends, and attended synagogue services frequently, as he mentioned in his diaries. He even personally taught Hebrew, a required course, to freshmen, because Hebrew teachers were so scarce. While Stiles was in office, the three Pinto brothers, Abraham, Solomon and William, were the first Jews to enter the freshman class. The first two graduated, while William, who did not finish, received distinction for "his exquisite penmanship."⁸

These, then, were some of the pioneer Jews in colonial academia who preceded Samuel Judah. Because there was such a small number of Jewish students attending college, it seems curious at first that the interest in Hebraism in the colonial colleges was of such magnitude. Many of the educators, for instance, had excellent Hebrew libraries, and were interested in studying the culture, the language, and the Bible. Some of the colleges required Hebrew; others had Hebrew orations at graduation exercises. Historian Jacob Rader Marcus has said that Hebraism was so ingrained in the New England area that there would have been an interest in studying and teaching Hebrew

⁴ Karp, *ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ Wolf, *ibid.*, p. 42.

⁶ Karp, *ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Dan A. Oren, "The Jewish Student at Yale," in *Jews in New Haven* (New Haven: New Haven Jewish Historical Society, 1978), pp. 56-57.

even had there not been a single Jew living there,⁹ for the knowledge of Hebrew made it easier for those entering the Protestant ministry to understand the Biblical texts in their original form. And there was legal as well as philological interest: William Bradford, governor of the Plymouth Colony, studied Hebrew because he felt the new colonies should be founded on the basis of Biblical law.¹⁰

The college to which Samuel Judah was drawn, Queen's College, had been struggling to gain a financial footing since it had been created in 1766 as the eighth of the colonial colleges. It received its charter from New Jersey's Governor, William Franklin, responding to Rev. Jacob Rutson Hardenberg's appeal to permit a Dutch Reformed college to be founded here. The institution's main purpose would be to guarantee a steady flow of ministers into the Dutch Reformed Church in America.¹¹ From the day Queen's opened it encountered problems. Many of the students had to leave to join the military forces in the fight for independence. In addition, the trustees encountered difficulty finding a suitable president. There seemed to be no end to crises. Like most of the other colonial colleges, Queen's had a constant financial struggle under denominational leadership. Until late in the 19th century, there were problems recruiting students, primarily because a large majority of the young men were planning careers in agriculture or business, neither of which required a college degree. To counteract these problems a promotional campaign had to be launched to entice students to register at Queen's. Advertisements spoke of Queen's as an "excellent institution with a healthful location and low tuition rates. . . . Students may expect to be treated with becoming Candor, without any Discrimination with Respect to their religious sentiments."¹² Tuition at the college was six pounds a year, but reduced rates were given to those entering directly from the Grammar School sponsored by the college (now known as Rutgers Preparatory School). It should be noted that a large majority of the early students did come from this Grammar School.

⁹ Jacob R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953), pp. 466-467.

¹⁰ Salo W. Baron, Inaugural Convocation Address reprinted in *Rutgers Hebraic Studies*, Vol. 1, 1964, pp. 3-24.

¹¹ Richard P. McCormick, *Rutgers: A Bicentennial History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966), pp. 1-12.

¹² *Ibid.*

Until 1816 the student body at Queen's never exceeded thirty. The curriculum was limited by a small staff consisting mostly of theology students. Freshmen at the college had to pass entrance exams in Latin, Greek, Mathematics and natural philosophy. What is presently referred to as "Old Queen's" building had been completed by 1810 and was used primarily as living quarters for the faculty and as classrooms. By 1812 some space was devoted to a library. There was no dormitory space and students were encouraged to board in town. Between 1795 and 1816 fifty-two students attended Queen's; seventy-five percent of them from the Raritan Valley. Of these only forty-six graduated, among which were thirteen future ministers, ten lawyers, nine physicians, ten farmers or businessmen, and three bank presidents. The year 1816 was financially devastating for the administration, and, following the graduation of Samuel Judah and his four classmates, Queen's had to close for nine years, until sufficient funds could be found to pay off its debts and reopen. Only the Seminary and the Grammar School remained open.¹³

It is highly probable that Samuel Judah's family was the only Jewish family in New Brunswick at the dawn of the 19th century. All of the Jewish families known to be living in the area previously (the first having arrived in 1698) had either moved away, intermarried, or converted to Christianity by the year 1800. Samuel's parents, Bernard and Catherine Hart Judah, arrived in New Brunswick from New York in 1801 with their two-year-old child Samuel, born in 1799. They had eight more children, all born in New Brunswick, by the year 1818.¹⁴ The father, Bernard Judah, had been a doctor during his years in New York, having trained under Dr. Samuel Bard, George Washington's personal physician. During his stay in New Brunswick he was known as a druggist. Colonial terminology seemed to group together all those known as apothecaries, surgeons, or physicians, and referred to them as practitioners, bestowing on all of them the title of "doctor." Bernard Judah had an uncle in England who was also a prominent practitioner.¹⁵

Samuel's grandfather, another Samuel Judah, had immigrated to Canada from Germany in the mid-18th century. He was a merchant

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Central Jersey Jewish Archives, Samuel Judah folder.

¹⁵ Marcus, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 282-283.

in Montreal, at times quite a successful fur trader who travelled often to Detroit to make deals with the Indians, but at other times close to bankruptcy. He actively supported the first synagogue in Canada, Shearith Israel of Montreal. Grandfather Samuel later lived in Three Rivers, Canada where he married a sister of Aaron Hart, the town's leading businessman. There were a number of Hart/Judah marriages throughout four generations of genealogical records. Grandfather Samuel must also have been something of a scholar. Among his papers is an inventory of his exceptional library, which in 1785 contained over eighty books, in addition to a fifteen volume *History of England* and twenty-one volumes of *British Theater*. There were no books on Jewish subjects included, so we have no clues as to his knowledge of Hebrew culture.¹⁶

We know very little about Rutgers' alumnus Samuel Judah's mother, but we do know a great deal about her father Aaron Hart, Samuel's maternal grandfather. Hart was born in Germany in 1724, and immigrated first to the island of Jamaica. In 1759 he came to New York as a sutler or a quartermaster with the British Army. He participated in the British conquest of Canada and settled in Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence, engaging in the fur trade, acquiring large tracts of land, operating a general store, and doing some minor merchant shipping. At his death in 1800 he was said to be the wealthiest Jew in Canada, and probably the most important merchant in the city. Despite the fact that there were very few Jews in Three Rivers, which was essentially a French-speaking Catholic village, he remained faithful to his religious traditions and managed to keep watch over his large family to see that they did likewise. Many letters to his children or his relatives are available revealing his frequent reminders to his family of approaching holidays, and instructions as to how they must make provisions to celebrate them properly, or else enclosing money in the letters to cover their transportation home for the holidays. He often sent them Hebrew books, so they could keep up with their lessons. He sent his younger children to Philadelphia for their Jewish and general education, having trusted friends there to keep an eye on them. We know he had ambitions for a number of them to become professionals.¹⁷ He must

¹⁶ Jacob R. Marcus, *American Jewry, Documents: Eighteenth Century* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1958), pp. 8-10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-51.

have been pleased with his daughter Catherine's marriage to the young practitioner, Bernard Judah.

New Brunswick was home to the young Judahs, Bernard and Catherine, until at least 1818. Their son Samuel prepared for his college years in the "schools of New York City." It might be assumed that he lived with one of his relatives while attending these preparatory schools. He entered Queen's in 1812 for "four years in the liberal arts." Nothing remains in the college records regarding Judah's undergraduate days, except for an allusion to an "oration" he delivered, possibly at his commencement. Following his graduation he studied law from October 1, 1816, until October 1, 1818, in the office of George Wood, a leading lawyer of New Brunswick. He passed his bar exam that autumn. There is a letter in the Judah family papers dated New Brunswick, April 5, 1841, from D. C. Martin to Samuel Judah referring to their earlier association as students in the office of George Wood.¹⁸ Upon passing the bar Judah moved for a brief period to Merom, Indiana and then permanently to Vincennes where he began his law career.¹⁹

Indiana had only recently achieved Statehood several years before in 1816. We can only speculate on Judah's decision to move west, but probably it had to do with professional opportunity. Only a small segment of the population in Indiana was native-born; most had migrated there from other territories. Ever since the conclusion of the War of 1812, the entire country was expending its energies and intellect in developing its interior resources, and Indiana was part of the frontier. Politically, party lines had all but disappeared, and personal politics controlled the State. Local issues were at the heart of elections. Candidates for office simply announced their intentions through the newspapers or handbills. Candidates' party affiliations changed often. Before Statehood most of the leaders had been Federalists, but after 1812 there was great distrust of them and some suspicion about their allegiance. Other parties such as the Whigs, the Jacksonian Democrats, the Republicans were all factions at various times claiming to represent the liberty-loving, patriotic American spirit, and many office-seekers moved from one party to

¹⁸ Rutgers Alumni Archives, Judah folder.

¹⁹ *The John Tipton Papers*, Vol. II. *Indiana Historical Collections*. Vol. 24-26. Indiana Historical Publications Bureau 1942, p. 172.

another. It was into this political milieu that Samuel Judah arrived.²⁰

Although Judah was still underage, he was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Indiana. According to a judge and colleague, he rose to distinction in his profession with his name connected to most of Indiana's important lawsuits.²¹ It was not an easy road to success he followed, however, for it was fraught with political machinations and personal indictments. It cannot be said with certainty that these indictments were the result of anti-semitism, but an unnamed admirer wrote that he had heard Judah tell of incidents connected with his "early struggle for a foothold in the western world" where he encountered bitter scorn and contempt from those who had already reached a high measure of success. But with perseverance and skill Judah overcame all his detractors, according to the same source.²²

He was interested in public affairs, and took an active part in the politics of the day. Since 1824 he had been an outspoken Jacksonian, and was a delegate to the first convention of the party. He was the primary author of the Party's platform, despite the fact that he was still "an unknown young lawyer from Vincennes."²³ These Jacksonians were said to have the spirit "of the common people" and to be the adherents of "unsophisticated democracy." One of the major issues of their campaign was a tariff which would help pay off the national debt, rather than retain the present import supports which favored England.²⁴ By 1827 Judah was already serving as a member of the House of Representatives in Indiana, remaining there for another session in 1828. Among the projects Judah helped to develop were the building of canals and turnpikes, and the improvement of the navigation of the rivers. He and Noah Noble—who was shortly to be elected governor of the State for two terms—were the leaders of the party which controlled the State by an overwhelming majority.²⁵

Judah left his legislative position in 1829 when he was appointed

²⁰ Adam A. Leonard, *Personal Politics in Indiana, 1816-1840 Indiana Magazine of History*, XIX, 1923, pp. 1-25.

²¹ Rutgers Alumni Archives, *ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Logan Esarey, "Pioneer Politics in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII (1917), p. 115.

²⁴ Leonard, *ibid.*

²⁵ Rutgers Alumni Archives, *ibid.*

United States District Attorney for Indiana by President Andrew Jackson, a position he kept until 1833. He was by now beginning to be feared as a political force when he backed certain candidates.²⁶ In 1831, while still the District Attorney, he tried to run for a Senatorial election, and although he led all eight candidates for seven ballots, he was persuaded to withdraw in favor of General John Tipton. It was said that he “magnanimously gave up his claim to a further conflict,” and a large majority of his friends blended their strength with those of General Tipton to strengthen Indiana’s Jackson party in Washington.²⁷ Despite this sacrifice by Judah, General Washington Johnston used the occasion to write a distasteful letter to Tipton saying, “A number of our citizens in this part of the country are highly gratified that you have succeeded over the Jew—in you they confide, but not in him. He now says he did not care about the two years, but the next six; for which he intends being a candidate! May the Lord in his goodness prevent this.”²⁸

A year later Judah wrote to Tipton asking him not to oppose his candidacy for the U.S. Senate, suggesting that he was not only well qualified but deserving as well, because of the sacrifices he had made for the party the year before.²⁹ It was at this time that another apparently anti-semitic letter was written. On November 21, 1832, Thomas Fitzgerald of Michigan wrote to Tipton referring to a number of rivals he had for his reelection to the Senate, “among them Samuel the Jew. Wonder if he will cry again,” he asked, “if he is not elected? Though I must say he bore his defeat very well last winter. But it won’t do. ‘Sammy’ can’t be elected, he can’t get so many votes as he had last winter.”³⁰ A month later Calvin Fletcher wrote a letter to Tipton accusing Judah of procuring information under a fictitious name in litigating one of his cases. Fletcher wrote, “This has effectively killed Judah—as no gentleman here will scarcely speak to him.” The accusations apparently interrupted his political life for the moment, and he was forced to resign (presumably from his appointment as U.S. District Attorney).³¹

By 1834 Judah had come out as a Whig, and by 1838 he was

²⁶ Tipton, *ibid.*, p. 271.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 450-461.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 495-496.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 716-717.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 724-741.

elected to state office again in the House of Representatives, and in two later sessions in 1840 and 1841 he was returned to the same office and elected to serve as Speaker of the House. In 1840 he had been elected to chair the first Whig convention, whose goal was to elect William Henry Harrison to the Presidency. The Party slogan was "a government for the people and not a government for office holders." The Whigs called for national issues to take precedence over local ones.³² (Historian Logan Esarey has noted that the State of Indiana developed during this period into a very political state, with its citizens voting almost always for the successful candidates for President. "Hoosiers" tended to support those speaking for what they called the common man, rather than those supporting the elitist view. Esarey has also pointed out that Indiana sent more troops to the Civil War than she had voters.)³³

Judah was a supporter of Governor Samuel Bigger, as he had been of Governor Noble. He also was active in electing William Henry Harrison as President of the United States. While in the State legislature he concentrated on restructuring the tax system.³⁴ In 1842 Judah was defeated in his bid for reelection. It is not certain whether his defeat was due to the sudden death of President Harrison, or the high taxes he called for, or his failure to accomplish any noteworthy legislation.³⁵ When the Whig Party in Indiana was dissolved in 1854 Judah became a Republican, but did not run for public office again.

His son Samuel Brandon Judah listed his father's major legal accomplishments on a Rutgers alumni questionnaire in 1928: He had major cases in Vincennes, in the Wabash Valley, and elsewhere in Indiana. He was involved in suits in other States as well, and before the Supreme Court of the United States. In 1844 and 1846 he was the associate counsel with the distinguished Henry Clay of Kentucky in an important lawsuit concerning the title to real estate in New Orleans, Louisiana.³⁶ Son Samuel referred to a book by Judge Leander

³² Leonard, *ibid.*, pp. 250-279.

³³ Esarey, *ibid.*, pp. 99-127.

³⁴ *Memories and Papers of General Samuel Bigger: Indiana Historical Collections*, Vol. 44, 1964, pp. 32, 223.

³⁵ Judith E. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 6-7.

³⁶ Rutgers Alumni Archives, *ibid.*

J. Monks entitled *Courts and Lawyers of Indiana* which cited his father as possibly the best advocate to appear before the early courts of Indiana. "In his practice," Monks said, "he combined the learning of a Judge, the skill of an attorney, and the originality of a genius." His reputation was said to have been national, as Judah "was no stranger" to the United States Supreme Court.³⁷

An important milestone in Judah's life was the successful litigation he carried on on behalf of Vincennes University. The university, situated in the State capital, had been founded in 1806 by Congress, according to Judah's son. The State had unlawfully taken possession of the lands given to this university by the United States Government, and sold them, forcing the university to prepare to close its doors. The litigation carried on by Judah in the Circuit and Supreme courts of Indiana, and in the Supreme Court of the United States, took a number of years, but he finally won his case and the State of Indiana had to pay the university for the lands taken. Judah was said to have defeated six of the most noted lawyers in the State as he prosecuted the case, and he emerged from the proceedings "with the highest honors." The university once more became a viable, "useful educational institution."³⁸

Another unusual case of Judah's pitted him against the noted lawyer Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana, later to be a member of the cabinet of the Confederate States of America. In the case *Ogilvie versus the Board of Commissioners of Knox County*, Judah, representing the bond holders, secured a judgement against the County for the payment of the bonds, once again taking the case all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States.³⁹ Another celebrated case was *Knox County versus The Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company*, which also was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court for final adjudication.⁴⁰

Hugh McCullough, who was at one time Secretary of the United States Treasury, said of Samuel Judah that he was "the best read man in the State and one of her ablest lawyers." Judge Monks, previously mentioned as an associate of Judah's, also lauded his intellectual curiosity: "To his collegiate education," he said, "he added the fruits

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

of a long life of study.”⁴¹ Perhaps the most unusual of the tributes heaped upon Judah was that of the same unknown admirer referred to earlier: “By industry, increasing toil, indomitable perseverance and true talent, Mr. Judah at last won his way until he walked in an open plain, where none could come to jostle him.” Continuing, he said, “with a deep insight into the secret springs of human nature, with a heart whose natural fires were dampened out by the cold waves of a sordid world, an intellect strong, vigorous and untiring, he mastered all things that he undertook, and possessed every domain of science and literature upon which he entered.”⁴²

Several of his sons spoke of Judah in various letters as an unusual human being, a public-spirited citizen and a strong advocate of public improvements. Son Samuel called him a man of many aesthetic tastes, and one who took a great interest in the cultivation of flowers, roses and shrubbery, and agriculture. Son John reminisced that his father liked to read Latin in his old age, and was an avid buyer of books, just as his grandfather had been. John lamented that when his father’s health was failing, he could least afford to buy all the books he would have wanted.⁴³

In 1825 Judah had married a gentile, Harriet Brandon, daughter of Armstrong Brandon from Croyden, Indiana—then the capital of Indiana. Six children survived, all raised as Christians; four others died in infancy. One of Judah’s daughters—Catherine—married General Lazarus Noble in Vincennes. One of his great granddaughters—Mary—John’s granddaughter—married playwright Robert E. Sherwood. One of his grandsons—Noble Brandon, Jr.—was Consul to Cuba in 1928. Judah managed to maintain a close relationship with the rest of his family throughout his life, despite his distance from them. His children, and later his grandchildren exchanged visits many times with his relatives in Canada.⁴⁴

A detailed account of a visit by Judah’s father to Indiana in 1827 was found reproduced in the *Indiana Magazine of History*. In his daily journal Dr. Judah describes his two-month long trip from New York to Vincennes and back from October 13 to December 15, 1827. The trip west took a full month of travel by steamboat and

⁴¹ Ibid. Referring to Hugh McCullough, *Men and Measures of a Half Century*.

⁴² J. P. Hodge, *Vincennes in Picture and Story* (1902), p. 169.

⁴³ Rutgers Alumni Archives, *ibid*.

⁴⁴ Ruth M. Patt, “The Jewish Scene in New Jersey’s Raritan Valley,” Supplement 1980. Jewish Historical Society of Central Jersey, New Brunswick, 1980, pp. 10-17.

horse and wagon. The diary is an historical gem, describing the countryside, the travelling conditions, and the people he encountered along the way. He stopped many times to visit with relatives, to deliver mail and packages he had apparently carried from New York, to visit with other doctors and to listen to lectures at a medical school, and to survey the industrial development of the towns. His journal gives a detailed description of economic and cultural conditions in Vincennes, Indiana, in Samuel Judah's day:

NOV. 14—Today at 4 P.M. Samuel returned—I have spent my time very pleasantly the last two days—Had a view of the prairies on fire at night from Samuel's piazza. I am now 1,260 miles from New York. Vincennes is a melancholy-looking place. Good brick Court House—brick seminary—a few good brick houses, Genl Harrison's the most attractive. Samuel lives in a 2 story frame, 26 ft front 20 deep, 3 rooms below, also. Kitchen & Smoke house, poorly built—Indeed all the houses in the west are so. There are 1600 inhabitants—7 stores well stocked—trade for 40 miles around—profits large. \$10,000 worth of goods is a full stock for the largest merchant for a year. The principal inhabitants get their groceries from New Orleans. There is a cotton factory on a small scale operated by an Ox-mill, and a good public Library of 1800 vols. Very few of the houses are painted. Town lots are \$35 to \$50 the acre. Soil is sandy loam. Horticulture not much attended to. Samuel has the best garden here, tho only 1 year old. He has asparagus & celery, which are not common. His lot is 2½ acres, fine well—sheep; 2 horses, 2 cows, bee hives.

Emigrants pass daily, the poor to Illinois, the richer to Missouri, the middle class of emigrants go to Indiana and Michigan. Illinois has a bad name, bad roads and bad public houses.

Indiana now has a population of 270,000; and this County (Knox) has 5,000. Laborers wages are 37½c a day and found.

Was present at Samuel's office at an examination of some witnesses, sworn without book. Their words were written down by Saml and repeated by a Judge Moon. They were Canadian French. These people resemble the Canadians of Upper Canada & have all their ways & customs, and are the descendants of those employed here by the fur traders 60 or 70 years ago.

The County Clerk is Homer Johnson. He is also Major-General of Militia, tavern keeper, schoolmaster, surveyor, doctor, and singing master.

This being Sunday I went with Mrs. Brandon to the Methodist Meeting. 25 women, 18 men—considering all things it was pretty good. A raw young countryman exhorted—bad singing. Mr. Perrin, the Presbyterian preacher, said to be good. The people here are

generally more on the moral order than given to priest craft; ministers are not much encouraged.

NOV. 20th—Winter has commenced very early here. Indian Summer is ended.

NOV. 21st—Fine morning—bright sun, but very cold. Flour \$2.00 cwt, corn 10¢ bushel—cows \$6—Beech & Sugar wood 75¢ cord. The plain people live on cornbread & hominy. Children are fed on mush & milk, economy is the custom. People are generally poorly clad—many blacks, poor miserable race. So much can be raised that the people in general labor but little. They have a great deal of pride.

Was introduced to a lawyer, General Johnson—not a military man—looked like anything but his name—poorly clad—summer pantaloons, shabby clothes & a cloak to hide all.

Though Whiskey is drunk like water, considering the large population of Ohio and Indiana, I have seen fewer drunkards than I expected. Men drink it by the quart & even the wealthy prefer it to any of the foreign liquors. Orchards and fruits are abundant. The apples about Louisville were fine.

I have been making up my accounts. I spent 13½ days on the way when not traveling—delayed by storms & alterations of stage-days, viewing different places and a stop of 3 days in Cincinnati. Including washings and postage, the total is \$75.85. Generally I have ridden until 10 or 11 o'clock at night—often up by 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning—but had only 2 whole night's rides, and only slept 2 nights in log Cabins.

NOV. 24th—It seems that the prevailing desire in the Western States is to have land, rather than money, tho land is very cheap. Yet I do not think a man of family can live cheaper in Vincennes than in New Brunswick, N.J. Fine farms near Vincennes can be bought at \$2 or \$3 the acre. A hard working man can buy the best of land from the U.S. at \$1.25 the acre & in a very few years by industry can become an independent farmer and be what is called a good liver—that is, eat plenty of cornbread—and pork into the bargain—but no molasses. Deliver me from their cookery.

I have been perfectly well since I have been in Vincennes—look & feel better. I can not drink whiskey. Saml has some which is old, though it smells somewhat like bedbugs. I must say that I have eaten more than I did during the time I was coming from Buffalo here. The food at Samuel's is very good, tho, they have too much of everything—because it's plenty & cheap.

NOV. 26th—I have now been 15 days in Vincennes and have concluded to start home tomorrow morning—have taken my passage in the stage for Louisville. I shall sleep at Clark's Tavern to be in readiness for starting at 4 a.m.

* * * *

Samuel Judah's professional, personal and religious life can only be understood in its historical context. Few Jews were living in the Hoosier State in the early 1820s. The Federal census lists only four, including John Jacob Hays who was an Indian agent appointed by President James Madison. It is therefore not surprising that Samuel Judah married a Gentile, and brought his children up as Christians. There is no suggestion in the records, however, that Judah himself converted. It is interesting to note that in 1858 his son John rented a room in *Judah's Block*—a building on East Washington Street, opposite the courthouse—to a Jewish congregation for its first permanent home. Although John had been raised as a Christian, he was said to be proud of his Jewish heritage, and as a demonstration of his pride, he rented the room to the congregation at a discount.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, John Judah must have recognized Jewishness as a barrier to success, for he wrote to a friend, J. B. Cleaver of New York, asking if his sons should change their name. Cleaver, after extolling the virtues of “the name of the mighty tribe of Judah,” concluded: “There is but one thing stronger, more relentless, fuller of purpose than your kingly blood, and that is, *Christian* Prejudice. Who would contend with that, enters life's race too heavily handicapped, ever to pass the wire a winner. . . . Much as I despise and hate this Christian prejudice, I confess its power. . . .” He concluded by suggesting that the children use their mother's maiden name, which apparently they did.⁴⁶ Samuel Judah himself died in 1869 at the age of seventy, and was buried in the American Cemetery in Vincennes.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Endelman, *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁷ Rutgers Alumni Archives, *ibid.*