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THE ALMANACS OF MICHAEL GRATZ:  
TIME, COMMUNITY, AND JEWISH IDENTITY  
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PHILADELPHIA

by

Judith Marla Guston

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in Early American Culture

Spring 1999

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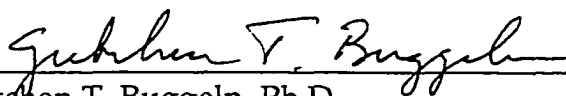
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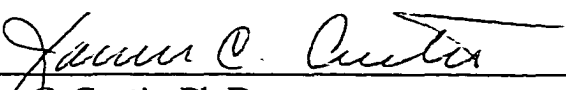
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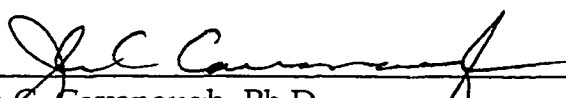
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by

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## GLOSSARY

**Adar (I, II):** Hebrew calendar month coinciding with February/March of the Gregorian year; a second *Adar* is added in leap years; see *Rishon* and *Sheni*.

**Ahatimah Tov:** "Happy Holiday" (Hebrew/Yiddish).

**Aron HaKodesh:** The "Holy Ark" which houses the *Torah* scrolls.

**Av:** Hebrew calendar month coinciding with July/ August of the Gregorian year.

**Bar Kochba Rebellion:** Second-century C.E. nationalistic revolt against the government of Roman Palestine; led by Simon Bar Kochba.

**Chamishah Osar:** "The fifteenth;" holiday celebrated in the Hebrew month of *Av*, commemorating the ancient Temple offerings of wood.

**Diaspora:** Term for the scattering of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Temple; Diaspora communities are those located outside of the ancient nation of Israel.

**Elul:** Hebrew calendar month coinciding with August/September of the Gregorian year.

**Erev:** "Evening;" the night that begins Jewish holidays (which run sunset-to-sunset).

**Chazzan:** "Reader;" a religious leader in early American congregations, which had no formally trained rabbis. This leader was responsible for leading the worship service.

**Intercalation:** The process of adding a month to the lunar calendar to synchronize with the solar seasons.

**Iyar:** Hebrew calendar month coinciding with April/May of the Gregorian year.

**Katan:** "Little;" applied to the *Purim* holiday that falls in the first *Adar* of a leap year, indicating that the holiday is not celebrated; the *Purim* in the second *Adar* is celebrated in leap years.

**Kosher:** Prepared in accordance with Jewish dietary laws (*kashrut*); includes ritual killing and butchering by a trained slaughterer (*shochet*).

**Matzoh:** Unleavened bread eaten during Passover.

**Mikveh Israel:** "The Hope of Israel;" name given to the first Jewish congregations of both Savannah and Philadelphia.

**Minyan:** "Number;" a quorum of ten adult (age thirteen or older) men (and/or women in some modern congregations) that is required for communal worship.

**Mohel:** Ritual circumciser.

**Omer:** "Grain;" measured to count the seven weeks between *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, or harvest to harvest in ancient times.

**Pesach:** Also called "Passover," the holiday commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

**Purim:** "Lots;" holiday commemorating the escape of the Jews of Persia from annihilation (fifth century B.C.E.).

**Rimmonim:** "Pomegranates;" the twin crowns that adorn the *Torah* scrolls, the design of which typically includes a sphere reminiscent of the fruit after which they are named.

**Rishon:** "First;" applied to the first *Adar* in a leap year.

**Rosh Hashanah:** "Head of the Year;" the beginning of the Jewish year, in the month of *Tishri*, that begins the ten-day period of repentance that ends with *Yom Kippur*. This holiday does not appear in Michael Gratz's 1777 almanac for reasons discussed in the text.

**Rosh Chodesh:** "Head of the Month;" the holiday celebrating the sighting of the new moon, which is the beginning of the new month of the Hebrew calendar.

**Sephardic:** From "Sepharad," or "Spain;" the term for Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 (and their descendants); usually contrasted with Ashkenazim, from "Ashkenaz," meaning "Germany," the term describing those whose families emigrated from central and eastern European communities.

**Shabbat:** "Sabbath;" celebrated by Jews from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday; the day of rest commemorating God's resting on the seventh day after the Creation.

**Shavuot:** "Weeks;" holiday celebrated seven weeks after Passover; originally a celebration of the spring harvest during which offerings were brought to the Temple; after the Temple's destruction, the holiday was associated with the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai.

**Shearith Israel:** "Remnant of Israel;" the name given to America's first Jewish congregation in New York City.

**Sheni:** "Second;" applied to the second *Adar* in a leap year.

**Shochet:** See *Kosher*; a trained slaughterer.

**Succot:** "Booths" or "huts;" originally the fall harvest celebration; a celebration of bounty not included in Michael Gratz's 1777 almanac for reasons discussed in the text.

**Talmud:** Jewish rabbinic texts (one from Jerusalem and one from Babylonia) containing the Mishnah (oral law) and its interpretation; compiled over the period of approximately 200 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.

**Tammuz:** Hebrew calendar month coinciding with June/July of the Gregorian year.

**Tisha B'Av:** "The Ninth of Av;" fast (mourning) day on the ninth day of the month of *Av*, commemorating the prelude to the destruction of the Temple, which led to exile and the Diaspora.

**Tishri:** Hebrew calendar month coinciding with September/October of the Gregorian year.

**Torah:** Also known as the "Five Books of Moses," the first part of the Hebrew Bible; written by a scribe on a parchment scroll and read by "portion" over the course of the year (taking from one to three years to complete, depending on the tradition of the congregation).

**Tzom B'Av:** "Fast of Av;" see *Tisha B'Av*.

**Tzom Ester:** "Fast of Esther;" precedes *Purim*, commemorating the fast undertaken by the Jews of Persia prior to Queen Esther's plea to the King to spare the Jews from a plot to destroy them.

**Tzom Tammuz:** "Fast of Tammuz;" see *Tisha B'Av*; commemoration of the destruction of the two Temples, which led to exile and the Diaspora.

**Yiddish:** Language spoken by eastern European Jews, combining elements of Hebrew, German, and other languages.

**Yom Kippur:** "Day of Atonement;" see *Rosh Hashanah*; the final day of the period of reflection and repentance following the New Year. This holiday does not appear in Michael Gratz's 1777 almanac for reasons discussed in the text.

## ABSTRACT

There is a paucity of scholarship addressing the material life of eighteenth-century American Jews, in part because there is little extant material from this period that can be identified as specifically Jewish. Many of the objects that do survive appear to be similar to those owned and used within the broader culture. Some scholars have described Jewish identity in the period as either wholly assimilative or as divided into privately expressed and publicly hidden Jewishness.

This thesis examines two pocket almanacs, one for the year 1777 and the other for 1779, that contain the annotations of Michael Gratz (1740 - 1811), a Jewish merchant in Philadelphia. Prominent among the inscriptions in the 1777 almanac is a Hebrew calendar. The 1779 almanac, absent a Hebrew calendar, invokes the question of assimilation.

The thesis finds that the almanacs provide a means of interpreting identity through material culture. The discussion traces the nexus of relationships, both material and historic, implied by the almanacs and their annotations to address the relationship of the calendar to Gratz's expression of Jewish identity. The almanacs and their calendars can also be contextualized in the broader culture of the period. Based on such an examination, the thesis describes Gratz's expression of identity as one that is porous, or simultaneously

expressive of two cultures. It also finds that this porosity was not a construct unique to Jews in the eighteenth century, but, as other American calendars of the period suggest, was a temporal and cultural experience familiar to nearly all Americans. The expression of Jewish identity through a temporal construct manifest materially in the calendar was, therefore, a declaration of identity that could be understood by Jews and non-Jews alike.

## INTRODUCTION

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst  
thereof.  
For there they that carried us away captive required of us a  
song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth,  
saying,  
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.  
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?  
Psalm 137: 1-4<sup>1</sup>

The psalmist's verse, referring to the Babylonian exile following the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem (586 B.C.E.), presents an historic dilemma: Is the expression of identity possible for Jews when they are separated from the place deemed integral to their religion?<sup>2</sup>

The Jews who came to early America were not part of a single, mass, forced exile, as were those described by the psalm. Some, like those who formed the earliest Jewish community in New York, fled the Portuguese Inquisition; others sought economic and personal freedom from restrictive European states.<sup>3</sup> Yet, like many immigrants to America, all found themselves in a strange land, without sizable communities and established institutions. Identity, for Jews the combined expression of both ethnicity and religious faith, needed to be



shaped anew in this new land.<sup>4</sup> If the expression of Jewish identity in ancient times was described by the psalmist as “sing[ing] the Lord’s song,” what form did this expression take in eighteenth-century America?

The limited scholarship that addresses the material life of Jews in the eighteenth century has focused less on describing than on gauging identity by the extent of assimilation or acculturation to presumed normative cultural behaviors. Interpretations that use this model assume both a static and monolithic majority and a standard Jewishness, overlooking the fluidity and diversity of eighteenth-century American culture and the individuality of Jewish experience. Such interpretations also suggest a broad and calculated divestiture of Jewishness, but based on the analysis of objects and behaviors that, historically, have not been essential to Jewish culture.<sup>5</sup>

Some recent work has focused on objects, which are useful as interpretive tools because they suggest multiple cultural references.<sup>6</sup> By their nature, objects imply a nexus of contexts and relationships that are both material and historic, and that connect individual experience to larger social trends.<sup>7</sup> Social scientists label as “boundary objects,” those which are “both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites.”<sup>8</sup> Boundary objects, therefore, can be contextualized in both their relationship to Jewishness and their connection to the broader culture of the period, and enable us to describe more clearly how Jewish identity is expressed.

Through such objects, we are able to discern more nuanced signs of the strengthening and perpetuating of cultural and religious identity in the course of changing circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis analyses the connections implied by two pocket almanacs dated 1777 and 1779, and annotated by Michael Gratz (1740 - 1811), a Jewish merchant living in eighteenth-century Philadelphia. A nexus of implied relationships forms according to criteria that make the almanacs appropriate boundary objects. First, Gratz's annotations include an extensive Hebrew calendar, which, in its form and content, allows us to interpret his relationship to Jewish history and belief. Second, the fact that he has entered his annotations in American almanacs expands the discussion to address the meaning of Jewish identity in its concurrent American context. The analysis of the almanacs as boundary objects remedies some of the limitations encountered by previous scholars, as they permit a discussion of eighteenth-century Jewish identity within the contexts of individual experience, Jewish culture, and American pluralism.

American almanacs, as documents of organizational systems, like calendars, monetary exchange, travel routes, and court schedules, enable material culture scholars to track the evolution and growing standardization of these components of America's social infrastructure. By linking time as it is marked by astronomical phenomena with commemorations of spiritual events, calendars also highlight the evolving relationship of Anglo-American science and religion.<sup>10</sup> Beyond simply organizing civic and commercial time, calendars act as

man's spiritual clock. The shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe is emblematic of the connection of religion and time when, after only a few days on the island, he reports, "[I]t came into my thoughts that I should lose my reckoning of time . . . and should even forget the sabbath days from the working days: but, to prevent this, I cut it with my knife upon a large post . . . and thus I kept my calendar, or weekly, monthly, and yearly reckoning of time."<sup>11</sup> Alone on the island, Crusoe still needs to synchronize his time with that of a community from which he is physically removed. His organization of time is quantitative, divided by days that are observable in nature; yet his calendar is also qualitative, distinguishing the sabbath from other days of the same natural length, and, thus, reflects spiritual time.<sup>12</sup> Spiritual time is not observable from nature, but it must be "reckoned" by man. Spiritual time, therefore, is culturally constructed.

Jews, too, construct their own spiritual time, as demonstrated by the nature of the Hebrew calendar and its holidays. This construction of time was essential to maintaining Jewish identity during periods of exile, just as a calendar was critical to the deserted Robinson Crusoe. The Jewish calendar has been called "the most important book of the people of Israel," based not on its religious value, but on its ability to preserve the Jewish people across time and geography.<sup>13</sup> It has historically facilitated community-building, both for Jews living apart from their coreligionists, and for those banding together to create local congregations. For scholars, the appearance of the Hebrew calendar in print also serves as a gauge of the relationship between local Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

For Jews living in early America, both the Hebrew calendar and the American almanac had simultaneous value for organizing daily life and for maintaining and forging identity. Michael Gratz's almanacs suggest a Jewish experience in early America that was one of porosity, in which Jewishness and Americanness operated simultaneously.<sup>14</sup> Yet, in eighteenth-century America, such porosity was not unique to Jews. The context of pluralism in which almanacs were used in the period makes it clear that Americans confronted daily life in a world of multiple systems, including multiple calendars that were used simultaneously by a broad spectrum of Americans, and which required multiple competence.<sup>15</sup> The simultaneous use of the Hebrew calendar and the American almanac, therefore, represented an expression of Jewish identity in a language of competence that was, at this moment in history, easily comprehended by other Americans.

As the multiple systems of colonial America became standardized in the process of nation-building, the need for multiple competence in respect to the American calendar diminished.<sup>16</sup> Jews, however, maintained this competence as a matter of historical practice. As this analysis suggests, porosity is inherent in a distinctively Jewish construction of time that is manifest in the Hebrew calendar through holidays that represent the atemporal superimposition of one event upon another for spiritual effect. Whereas Jews had historically incorporated multiple competence into their cultural identity as a matter of faith and as a means of preserving nationhood in exile, American culture required this competence only until a new national identity was formed.

As boundary objects that imply multiple cultural references, the almanacs of Michael Gratz help us envision both the immediate circumstances of their use and their relationship to broader cultural patterns. They reveal the individual's relationship to spiritual time, suggest the role of the calendar in the formation and maintenance of Jewish community, and permit a comparison with the role of the calendar in the forging of American national identity. In doing so, they illustrate the interconnectedness of time, community, and Jewish identity in eighteenth-century Philadelphia.

THE ALMANACS OF MICHAEL GRATZ:  
TIME, COMMUNITY, AND JEWISH IDENTITY  
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PHILADELPHIA

*The Gratz Family and its Almanacs*

"I have an allmanock for you to put all the Hebrew feasts and fasts in it which shall send you by first safe oppt'y."<sup>17</sup> With these words, Barnard Gratz (1738 - 1801) introduced his son-in-law, Solomon Etting (1764 - 1847), to a powerful instrument of Jewish spiritual survival. Etting, formerly a resident of Lancaster and Philadelphia, both with established Jewish communities, had moved to Baltimore in 1791, taking with him his second wife, Gratz's only daughter.<sup>18</sup> Baltimore's population and economic importance had increased after the Revolution, but it did not yet have an organized Jewish community.<sup>19</sup> Given the absence of a local congregation, Etting could rely on the almanac, sent to him by his father-in-law and transformed into a Hebrew calendar, to connect his family with the Jewish community in the United States, around the world, and through time.

Adapting a published almanac for use as a Hebrew calendar proves to have had a history in the Gratz family. *Poor Will's Pocket Almanack For the Year 1777*, annotated with the Hebrew calendar, is one of two extant pocket almanacs containing the notations of Barnard Gratz's brother Michael.<sup>20</sup> Together, Michael Gratz's almanacs present

tools for understanding the Gratz family's sense of identity as Jews and their use of calendrical time as a means of expressing that identity. They also reflect the simultaneous relationships Jews maintained with their ancient culture and their new American community. In effect, they help us address the psalmist's question of how this family was able to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land."

### *Family History*

Barnard Gratz had been the first of his family to leave their home in Langendorff, Silesia, traveling to London where he studied the merchant trade under his cousin, Solomon Henry. In the course of business, he met David Franks and took employment with him in Philadelphia in 1754 (Figures 1 and 2).<sup>21</sup> Gratz's departure from London came shortly after popular protest forced the repeal of a recent act permitting the naturalization of foreign-born Jews.<sup>22</sup> Restrictions placed on Jews in England would continue to prove detrimental to financial advancement; a 1763 letter (in Yiddish) from one of Barnard Gratz's London associates reads, "here, unfortunately, to struggle for a livelihood among Jews is bad."<sup>23</sup>

In America, despite the denial of full political rights and manifestations of antipathy ranging from stereotyping to violence, economic advancement for Jews depended on their ability to form trade networks and to pool information and capital.<sup>24</sup> Their success also depended on their non-Jewish neighbors' patronage, as one scholar remarks, "Jews did not make a living by taking in each other's

washing."<sup>25</sup> The American frontier also offered economic opportunity unavailable in Europe's cities. Barnard Gratz's position as a clerk for the merchant firm of Levy and Franks introduced him to the small circle of Jewish merchants who risked their safety and livelihood in the lucrative but dangerous fur trade.

One of this circle's most prominent members was the devout and prosperous Joseph Simon (1712 - 1804), who was Lancaster's first Jewish resident.<sup>26</sup> Joseph Simon owned several *Torah* scrolls, which contain the text of the Hebrew Bible, and had an ark (*aron hakodesh* or Torah cabinet) made for his home; a miniature ark, most likely used for travel, is believed to have been owned by Simon as well (Figures 3 and 4).<sup>27</sup> The correspondence of Pennsylvania's Jewish merchants indicates that they traveled to Lancaster for worship at Simon's home. In one such letter, a leather-trading associate of Gratz's writes to "advise that I am going to Lancaster for Minyan for Yom Kippur, God willing."<sup>28</sup> A gathering of ten adult males (*minyan*), is required for the performance of certain religious rituals. Given their small numbers, it was necessary at times for Jewish men to travel to meet this requirement, as well as to have access to any of the small number of *Torah* scrolls in America during this period.<sup>29</sup> The Jewish residents of Lancaster and its surrounding towns, as well as Jewish traders traveling in the area, had depended on Simon since the 1740s for access to group worship; some also used the local burial ground he had purchased.<sup>30</sup>

Simon married one of his daughters to Solomon Etting, the son



of a Jewish merchant from York, Pennsylvania.<sup>31</sup> When Barnard Gratz married into another of the area's merchant families, his wife Richea was Simon's wife's cousin.<sup>32</sup> Having lost one daughter shortly after birth in 1761, Richea Myers-Cohen Gratz died shortly after giving birth to her second child in 1764, leaving Barnard a widower raising his infant daughter, Rachel Gratz (1764 - 1831). Solomon Etting's wife Reyna (Rachel) Simon Etting, died in 1790 after the birth of four children; Etting married Rachel Gratz in October 1791.

The Simon family connections extended further still. In 1769, Barnard's younger brother, Michael married Miriam Simon (1749 - 1808), another of Joseph Simon's daughters (Figures 5 and 6). Michael had followed Barnard to London and had also entered the merchant trade with his Silesian relatives, making his initial voyage to India in 1755.<sup>33</sup> Michael was criticized by family members, who called him an "English nabob," for spending his profits on sartorial finery. Barnard, too, warned Michael that he exhibited a work ethic that was easy-going by colonial standards, stating that America "requires honesty, industry and good nature, and no pride."<sup>34</sup> Barnard nevertheless paved the way for Michael's arrival and employment in America. Michael, knowing his family would be displeased by his refusal to return to Silesia, wrote, "I am again going beyond the ocean--to Philadelphia . . . for the good of our family, even if it is not pleasant for me. I must learn the ways of the world."<sup>35</sup>

By 1759, Barnard had opened a store on Water Street, leaving his former job as a clerk with Levy and Franks available for his newly-

arrived younger brother.<sup>36</sup> Michael arrived in late June or early July 1759, in New York, where he received directions, written in Yiddish by Barnard, to come to Philadelphia on the Bordentown stage.<sup>37</sup> Michael quickly achieved a measure of success through independent speculative trading encouraged by his employer.<sup>38</sup> Encouragement also came from other established merchants, like Moses Michael Hays of Newport and New York, who wrote, "If you Behave well, & Do things well I will make your Fortune for you."<sup>39</sup> Although the unpredictability of trade caused Hays to complain to Michael, for example, "Where is my Butter dam you I am oblidge to Eat dry Bread. I will soo you," mutual support within the Jewish merchant community seems to have survived most incidents and misunderstandings.<sup>40</sup> Within a few months of his anger over his undelivered butter, Hays wrote to Michael, "What are you going to Be married, pray tell me. I will go to the wedding by all means."<sup>41</sup>

When Michael left the firm of Levy and Franks, the brothers began their own business, and diversified their endeavors, as B. & M. Gratz, Merchants, by 1768.<sup>42</sup> The Gratzes' business in Philadelphia grew to include coastal and sea trade when Michael purchased his first ship, *The Rising Sun*, from Newport Jewish traders in about 1769. Business and familial links among Jewish merchants facilitated the shipping of luxury goods from Europe to America and a network of information that served all involved. The Gratzes engaged in business partnerships in the Caribbean, where the oldest Jewish communities in the New World were located, shipping, among other goods, meat that had been

kosher-slaughtered in America. Michael appears to have been shipwrecked on one of these voyages, as a letter from his Curaçaoan partners remarks on "the disagreeable news of you being cast away. But thanks to the Almighty for escaping,--your person and your interest."<sup>43</sup>

By the time of his marriage in 1769, at age twenty-nine, Michael Gratz was late to settle down, and Joseph Simon, now a business associate and partner of the Gratzes in some of their concerns, advised, "my Wife & I are not Satisfied it Should be put off any Longer, then 20th Inst[ant], People will make a talk of it."<sup>44</sup> Just as the lack of a synagogue had made worship in private homes standard, the lack of formally trained religious leaders compelled those who could serve to travel.<sup>45</sup> Michael Gratz sent his request to New York's Congregation Shearith Israel, the first established congregation in America, on June 13, 1769.<sup>46</sup> The response, which gave "Concent to Mr. Seixas to go & join you in the Lawfull State of wedlock to a good & Virtuous Girl that I hope will Crown you with filicity," was brought to Philadelphia by Gershom Mendes Seixas, the New York congregation's newly appointed reader (*chazzan*).<sup>47</sup> Isaac Seixas, Gershom's father, sent another note with his son addressed to Joseph Simon, congratulating him on the marriage of his daughter, and referring to the young Gershom, who "has never been so far from home, & if you find anything amiss in his behaviour, impute it favourably to his want of Experience & Kindly admonish him for it."<sup>48</sup> There were no formally ordained rabbis in America at this time, and the elder Seixas had

provided his son with an informal religious education, the only training available outside of Europe.

Michael's marriage to Miriam Simon reaffirmed their families' connection (initially established through Barnard's marriage to the now-deceased cousin of Simon's wife), solidified an ongoing business partnership, and introduced the Gratz brothers to the opportunities and risks of westward expansion. Simon and his circle had been active in the fur trade, which had been affected with disastrous results by the French and Indian War in the 1750s. The peace treaty that ended the war encouraged the traders' return to the western frontier, while the evolving political environment, most prominently Benjamin Franklin's support of movement westward, promised great reward to enterprising land speculators.<sup>49</sup> The brothers' financial involvement in territorial expansion would tie them inextricably to the growing vision of American independence.

As entrepreneurs, the Gratz brothers had economic interests in political matters that concerned trade; as Jews, they joined their coreligionists in the belief that they had the best opportunity for freedom and financial success in an independent America. Following the Stamp Act in 1765, both brothers joined many Philadelphians, Jews and non-Jews alike, in signing the Non-Importation Agreement. As discontent in the colonies moved toward revolution, the Gratzes threw their lot into the bid for independence, supplying Washington's army, using their ships to run blockades in the Chesapeake and arming them for use in privateering.<sup>50</sup>

Participation in such activities served both their self-preservation and their patriotism. Continued trade enabled the Gratz family to maintain an income during the hostilities, despite the interruption of normal commerce. Barnard, returning to a Philadelphia in commercial disarray after the end of the British occupation, wrote to Michael:

[A] Great many of the Druggists Dose [sic] not know where to Gett [medicines] therefore if you have Not allready Dissposed of the Large Inv[entory] of Medicines, pray Send them up. . . . allso all kind of Dry Goods will Sell Well here & hardware, Since the English Left this which is abt. a week, the shops have been Shut up by order of our General Arnold.<sup>51</sup>

More important to their future, however, were the credentials earned through their allegiance. Barnard Gratz was a member of a committee of Philadelphia Jews who petitioned the state of Pennsylvania in 1783 for full citizenship rights, stating:

The Jews of Pennsylvania in proportion to the number of their members, can count with any religious society whatsoever, the whigs among either of them; they have served . . . in the continental army; some went out in the militia . . . ; all of them have chearfully contributed to the support of the militia, and of the government of this state; . . . and . . . they stand unimpeached of any matter whatsoever, against the safety and happiness of the people.<sup>52</sup>

The allegiance of Jews had surely gained notice among America's elite, like Benjamin Rush who stated in his Commonplace Book, "many of the children of Tory parents were Whigs, so were the Jews in all the States."<sup>53</sup> Full rights of citizenship were not granted to the Jews of

America until after the ratification of the Constitution and Bill of Rights (under which individual states were not bound until the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment; all states finally complied by 1877).<sup>54</sup> Although America herself recognized them as Jews only, by the time of the Revolution, Barnard and Michael Gratz, as businessmen, landowners, and supporters of independence, saw themselves as both Jews and Americans.

### *Almanacs, Nationalism, and Religion*

Benedict Anderson traces the emergence of modern nationalism to the shift from religious or monarchic hierarchies to social structures that were “boundary-oriented and horizontal.” This shift, which he places in the eighteenth century, coincides with the inception of newspaper printing. The quality of “simultaneity” that developed out of the widespread distribution of newspapers was a completely modern notion. In Anderson’s view, the newspaper’s “reader can voyeuristically view simultaneous events enacted by his co-nationalists despite knowing none of them and none of them knowing each other.”<sup>55</sup> The bond between these co-nationalists that Anderson terms the “imagined community” emanated from the privately held belief of each reader/citizen that other reader/citizens were having the same experience at the same time; for Anderson, this belief provided a modern “substitute for morning prayers, performed in private, or internally in the mind, yet experienced simultaneously by others unknown but of whom the reader is certain.”<sup>56</sup>

If newspapers functioned as tools that merged individuals into a national community through widespread and simultaneous use, surely almanacs served the same purpose.<sup>57</sup> David Waldstreicher views almanacs, which were produced for specific geographic locales, as instrumental because “they linked the rhythms of local life and people’s plans for the future to official acts of national commemoration” and “promoted . . . the practice of national time.”<sup>58</sup> Almanacs enabled diverse local communities both to imagine a unified nation and to participate in new, national behaviors that served to create familiarity and cohesion.

Yet, almanacs provided another dimension beyond national identity. For Anderson, newspapers served as substitutes for the pre-modern ritual of prayer, but connected individuals through purely secular content. Almanacs connected individuals, and, as Waldstreicher points out, local communities, but on two levels, the secular and the sacred.

The almanac was second only to the Bible, both in its appearance in print in early America, and in the quantity of its early distribution. It preceded the newspaper by over fifty years. Its evolution as a genre represents an ongoing mediation between culturally constructed and empirically tested expressions of time, as it merged the forms of the early calendar, originally a list of religious festivals, and the early almanac, a collection of tables of astronomical events predicted for the coming year. As the modern almanac evolved from wooden and manuscript calendars to its first printing by Gutenberg in the mid-

fifteenth century, the dual traditions of religion and science fueled its genesis. The gradual addition of political, commercial, and medical information made the almanac highly practical. The insertion of blank leaves in the mid-seventeenth century enabled the owner to use the almanac as a diary. Portable even in its earliest forms, the almanac became more convenient with the introduction of the diminutive pocket almanac in the eighteenth century.<sup>59</sup>

### *The 1777 Almanac*

Michael Gratz probably purchased a copy of *Poor Will's Pocket Almanack For the Year 1777* during the last three months of the preceding year, when publishers issued almanacs newly calculated for the following year.<sup>60</sup> Gratz's 1777 almanac, now in the collection of the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia, retains its original cover, a heavy, embossed Dutch paper, with a floral pattern in orange, red, and brown, colors that have faded with time and use. Due to their intended portability, pocket almanacs, unlike other almanacs which were usually hung by a string on the wall, were bound in protective covers.<sup>61</sup>

According to its subtitle, the almanac is "Fitted to the Use of Pennsylvania, and the neighbouring Provinces." In addition to its calendar, the almanac contains: predictions of the year's eclipses; a list of Quaker meeting times; the dates of area fairs; a tide table; a table of the value of dollars in shillings and pence; tables of interest figured at six and seven percent; distances by road from Philadelphia to places



northeastward, southeastward, northwestward, and southwestward; and distances between other towns. The almanac is, as Waldstreicher notes, fixed to a geographic location.

Originally, the Gratz almanac contained twenty-six leaves (fifty-two pages). Each printed page was faced by a blank page, and there were originally two blank leaves (four pages) at its center, confirmed by another extant example, as the Gratz almanac, in its current condition, is missing the four blank center pages.<sup>62</sup> Its construction, with a single stitch through the fold, would have allowed for the easy removal, intended or not, of the center leaves; Michael Gratz used paper with great economy throughout his life, and may well have removed blank pages for notes written to others, as one of his correspondents notes, "Don't be so Damn'd Sparing of Paper & Tear your Letters all to pieces. I will Send you a Ream of Paper if it is Scarce with you."<sup>63</sup> The scarcity of paper did become a problem during the war, and *Poor Will's* was one of only four pocket almanacs published in Philadelphia for 1777.<sup>64</sup>

Sometime before January 1777, Gratz inscribed the Hebrew calendar in his best Hebrew script on the blank leaves of his almanac, opposite each of the Gregorian months. The consistency of style of the inscribed calendar from month to month suggests that Gratz calculated his calendar and entered it into the almanac in a single sitting.<sup>65</sup> Although the almanac contains brief, discrete business notations on six of its pages, the Hebrew calendar appears in the almanac as a consistent, unified system. The page opposite the month of August shows both the calendar and business notes; while these notes appear

to have been written in haste, the calendar has been entered with care (Figure 7). The Hebrew calendar, therefore, coexisted with the business annotations, but, along with the material printed in the almanac, it became a formal framework within which Gratz led business life. For comparison to Gratz's almanac, Figure 8 shows August 1777 in another extant copy of *Poor Will's Pocket Almanack*, annotated by Buckridge Sims, a non-Jewish resident of Philadelphia whose business was located opposite Barnard Gratz's first store.<sup>66</sup> Annotation of financial calculations and business transactions, like those listed by Sims and Gratz in their pocket almanacs, is typical for the period.

Seen solely as a schedule of Jewish events inscribed in a yearly diary, the calendar Gratz entered in his almanac might merely confirm his status as an observant Jew: he has listed holidays and Sabbaths. Yet, if we consider the implications of his entering the Hebrew calendar in an American almanac, the metaphoric potential of this object becomes clear. Given the range of conformity to the non-Jewish environment that was possible, and the models of assimilation that have been advanced in scholarship, Gratz's choices in creating this calendar render the almanac not only a changed object, but also a document of Jewish identity expressed within the framework of American culture.

The transformation of the almanac also confers on Gratz an agency comparable to that of its original maker. In the analysis of any object, the maker's choices can elucidate the relationship of this individual to his social and historical context. The entries that

transform the almanac into a Hebrew calendar reveal Michael Gratz's conscious conformity to the Jewish construction of time, but they also demonstrate his use of the almanac for its original purpose. Although the presence of several eighteenth-century European Jewish calendars in modern American archives suggests that such calendars may have been available to early American Jews, Gratz chose to enter the Hebrew calendar in an American almanac.<sup>67</sup> American almanacs provided practical information, such as local monetary values, roads linking towns and cities, and tide tables, that were necessary to Gratz's business activities; likewise, the American calendar was required for Gratz's participation in American life. Similarly, certain calendar entries convey how Gratz may have used the astronomical predictions of the American almanac to assist his calculations of the Hebrew calendar.

The relationship of Gratz's entries to objects, documents, and behaviors implies the existence of community, not only as it was "imagined" by individuals who shared the same calendar, but also as it describes the actual collective functions practiced by Jews during the period. Some of the entries surely would have reminded Gratz of the calendar's historic role in establishing and maintaining Jewish identity, and other entries, of the sense of loss and longing associated with the Diaspora, which Gratz recognized even as he was establishing himself as a successful and patriotic American.<sup>68</sup> The expression of Jewish identity within a context of American experience that is implied by the almanac indicates that Gratz transformed this tool of a single "imagined community" into an object that enabled him to imagine two communities simultaneously.

Note: A transcription of the annotations in the 1777 almanac follows as Appendix B. Although the Hebrew months straddle the divisions of the Gregorian months, the transcription and analysis follow the physical structure of the almanac, just as Gratz's annotations do. The almanac's structure allowed Gratz to view only one page at a time; this analysis will view the object just as Gratz himself did. Italicized words that appear in the context of Gratz's inscriptions and correspondence between Gratz and his family and associates represent words written in the Hebrew language.

Historical accounts of Jewish religious observance during the colonial period emphasize adherence to the traditional celebration of the Sabbath, citing correspondence that breaks off suddenly at sundown on Friday, and gentile business associates who report delays in transactions until after sunset on Saturday.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, Gratz's calendar denotes each weekly Sabbath (*Shabbat*), but also includes the name of its corresponding *Torah* reading, or "portion," indicating his awareness, and, presumably, his observance, of the annual scriptural cycle. Although his access to Joseph Simon's *Torah* is evident from his relationship with Simon, the details of his weekly observance are not known. Yet, Gratz's observance, and the indications that render his calendar an expression of Jewish identity, extend well beyond this weekly religious ritual.

The traditional form of the almanac, like the Jewish calendar, had its origin in astronomical observations, and, therefore, may have aided Gratz's calculations. The monthly divisions of the Hebrew calendar follow the lunar cycle, with each month beginning upon the observation of the New Moon (*Rosh Chodesh*). Almanacs recorded the "moon's age and changes" (as it is termed in the almanac's

“Explanation,” or key), based on annual mathematical predictions. If Gratz used the almanac’s prediction for the new moon, represented by a blackened circle in the fifth column of each month’s calendar, to place the monthly *Rosh Chodesh*, the two events should be expected to coincide. In August, however, the symbol appears in the almanac on the third, while Gratz indicates the *Rosh Chodesh* of *Av* on August fourth (Figure 7). It is in this discrepancy that we can see the tension between the two calendrical systems at work.

According to the notes above August’s calendar, the new moon occurred on the third of August at six o’clock in the morning, a time of day when the moon itself may not have been visible. The Jewish celebration of the commencement of each month had historically depended on observation rather than calculation; the month of *Av*, therefore, began the evening of August third, upon the moon’s first sighting, and extended, as all Jewish holidays, into the following day, August fourth, the date on which the event appears in Gratz’s calendar. It seems possible, therefore, that Gratz employed the almanac’s calculations for the date and time of the new moon, but ultimately adhered to Jewish tradition in assigning the date of its religious observance.<sup>70</sup> The difference between the two calendrical systems had practical effects in Gratz’s interactions with his community, as the celebration of holidays entailed the cessation of work, a behavior that affected even the non-Jews in his business and social environments. Gratz’s resolution of the discrepancy in dates, therefore, was, inherently, a statement of identity.

The expression of identity that occurred through differentiating the Hebrew calendar from the Anglo-American calendar is evident not only in the placement of the date of the New Moon, but in the manner in which Gratz referred to the event itself. The evening that begins every Jewish holiday is termed *Erev*, and Gratz's use of this designation for the night before the New Moon may signal his observance of the *Rosh Chodesh* as a holiday, implying his performance of special prayers that mark the beginning of the new month.<sup>71</sup> The ritual celebration of astronomical events would have been an anomalous behavior in a non-Jewish environment. New moons are fixed neither to days of the week nor to specific calendar dates, nor are they annually celebrated seasonal events, but, instead, they are regularly observed without correspondence or analogy to the Anglo-American calendar. Such an anomaly, in fact, could only have emphasized the conflict between astronomy and Christianity that defined the evolution of the modern almanac.<sup>72</sup> Although the astronomical event of the new moon can be observed in nature, a fact noted by both Jewish and non-Jewish cultures in the period, as is evident from its notation in the almanac, the attachment of religious meaning to that event derives from an alternate, Jewish construction of time that privileges a lunar orientation.

A calendar that follows only the lunar cycle would assign each month the equivalent of twenty-nine and one-half solar days. Although the Hebrew calendar privileges the lunar month, its daily unit remains the twenty-four-hour solar day (albeit evening-to-

evening). Because a twelve-hour (or one-half) solar day does not occur in nature, some lunar months consist of twenty-nine solar days and some of thirty. The Hebrew calendar addresses the theoretical problem of the next month's New Moon appearing half-way through the thirtieth solar day of the preceding month (i.e., at the point that would have been twenty-nine and one-half days) by assigning a *Rosh Chodesh* that incorporates the final day of each thirty-day month with the first day of the month that follows it. Some New Moons, therefore, are shared by two months and celebrated for two days. Gratz's calendar acknowledges this phenomenon, as well, indicating two-day New Moons in February (*Adar I*), March (*Adar II*), May (*Iyar*), July (*Tammuz*), and September (*Elul*).<sup>73</sup> Although he may have depended on the American almanac's objective designation of the new moon as a single event, Gratz again followed the Jewish interpretation of that event relative to the construct of the Hebrew calendar.

The structure of the Jewish year, as Gratz has entered it, reveals a tension between the almanac itself and the almanac as a transformed object. The designation of the beginning of each month in the transformed almanac correlates to the astronomical calculations of the original, but deviates from these calculations to accommodate Jewish tradition. The sighting of the new moon in the night sky is privileged over the scientific knowledge of its diurnal occurrence, and its celebration over two days to maintain the calendar's lunar orientation takes precedence even over its observable, solitary, monthly appearance. The assignment of religious meaning to dates that have

no spiritual import in the original almanac, and which are even contrary to the religious values that shaped the almanac, signifies a contrast between the transformed and original objects, as well as between the behaviors they imply. As Gratz inscribed this system into the original almanac, he surely observed the relationship of the two calendars as they intersected and diverged, a pattern that continues throughout the almanac.

One such divergence occurred in respect to the length of the year itself. Jewish holidays, other than New Moons and Sabbaths, are fixed to specific, annual dates. A twelve-month, lunar year is shorter than a solar year, allowing these fixed holidays, which were originally connected with the solar-oriented harvest cycle, to drift from their appropriate seasons. The calendar was therefore designed as “luni-solar” (or “soli-lunar”), with its months oriented to the moon, but with corrections calculated to align the holidays with the seasons. These corrections are effected by leap years, occurring every third, sixth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth year in each nineteen-year cycle.

The Hebrew year of 5537 (1776 - 1777) was a leap year. While other years are composed of twelve months, leap years gain a thirteenth month by repeating the month of *Adar*. Gratz accounted for this additional month opposite February's calendar, where he indicated on February seventh the New Moon of the “First” *Adar* (*Rosh Chodesh Adar Rishon*). On February twentieth, he noted “Little” *Purim* (*Purim Katan*), indicating the fixed date of the *Purim* holiday,



but labeling it “little” because it is not celebrated in the First *Adar* of a leap year. The celebrated *Purim* appears in the Second *Adar* (*Adar Sheni*), with its observance in that month preceded by the Fast of Esther (*Tzom Ester*) on March twentieth. Gratz’s annotations thus show that he inserted, or “intercalated,” the thirteenth month of the leap year in accordance with the historic method used to maintain the holidays’ relationship to the harvest seasons.

It is perhaps the holidays’ seasonal associations that contributed to their use as temporal points of reference. Gratz marked the holiday of Passover (*Pesach*) opposite April. Family correspondence mentioning this holiday suggests that it was both an event unto itself and a way of marking the passage of time. In a postscript to a letter, Barnard, writing to Michael in Lancaster, said, “You Never Mention if you have Rec’d. the bag Sug[a]r Loaf Sug[a]r I Sent you before *Pesach*.”<sup>74</sup> The holiday thus served as a point of reference that was solely Jewish, but that was employed for a purpose connected with the Gratzes’ commercial endeavors. The holiday was, however, in this and other family correspondence of the period, referred to in Hebrew, with its name embedded in correspondence composed in English, as though the essence of the holiday could be expressed only in the language of the culture that gave it meaning.<sup>75</sup> Again, observance of the holidays was both interwoven in the Gratzes’ American experience and concurrently expressed as a uniquely Jewish idea.

It is not certain how the Jewish population of Philadelphia celebrated Passover in the 1770s. It was not until 1786 that Michael

Gratz ordered “small planed boards, on which to make cakes for the Passover for [the] Jewish congregation” from David Evans, a local cabinet maker, signaling that the production of *matzoh*, the unleavened bread eaten during the holiday, had, by that time, become a communal function.<sup>76</sup>

Other communal behaviors that may have been expressive of identity are linked to additional holidays Gratz entered in the almanac. The biblical commandment that seven weeks be counted from the second day of Passover by measuring a certain volume of grain (*omer*) enabled the ancient Hebrews to determine the proper time between the early barley harvest and the later spring harvest of wheat.<sup>77</sup> With the exception of the thirty-third day of the *omer*-counting (*Lag B’Omer*), which appears on May twenty-fifth of Gratz’s calendar, festive activities, like weddings, are suspended during this period.<sup>78</sup> Michael and Miriam Gratz’s June wedding date, and Joseph Simon’s concern over a delay that might have generated gossip, may indicate that the marriage had been postponed until the resumption of festivities was permissible, after the counting of the *omer*.<sup>79</sup>

Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia, which the Gratzes helped found, has in its collections two “*omer* counters,” scrolls, believed to date from the eighteenth century, that are turned to mark the days, substituting for the grain measure of ancient times. One of the scrolls combines Spanish and Hebrew (Figure 9), and the text of the other is written in Hebrew alone. There is no documentation indicating whether these counters were used by the congregation in the

eighteenth century.<sup>80</sup> If, in fact, *omer* counters were used by congregations in the period, their use would suggest that, at least for this forty-nine-day period, calendar-keeping was a communal function.

Just as the keeping of the calendar may have been a community function, the calendar itself could be used to strengthen a sense of community. The two days of *Shavuot* appear opposite the month of June in the Gratz almanac. This holiday, which marks the end of the counting of the *omer*, reflects an important historic development of the Jewish construct of time subsequent to a change in circumstance that threatened not only Jewish identity, but Jewish culture as well. An agricultural celebration in biblical times, *Shavuot* signaled the end of the late spring harvest. Jews made one of three annual pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem, bearing offerings of fruits and grains. The destruction of the Second Temple ended the tradition of offerings, nullifying the holiday's original purpose. The harvest holiday, however, evolved into a celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments, which, according to priestly calculation, occurred as many days after the date of the Exodus from Egypt as there are between Passover and *Shavuot*.

This historically proactive use of the calendar superimposed one event onto another, which historian Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi terms "historical conjunctions" that are typical of Jewish rituals of remembrance.<sup>81</sup> The ritualized remembrance of the giving of the Ten Commandments enabled a people faced with dispersion, and its inherent threat to the continuity of culture, to reaffirm the basis of

their faith and their identity as a nation, even when they lacked geographical nationhood.

The Jewish calendar and its holidays, as spiritual constructions of memory, served to create an “imagined community” that merged past and present, faith and history. The holiday of Passover is quintessential in this respect, creating a cultural memory of an historical event through the ritual reenactment of the event itself (i.e., the *Seder* as a recreation of the Exodus). This ritual creates another form of historical conjunction, a temporal rupture or conduit through which all Jews simultaneously participate in the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>82</sup>

The transcendence of time and place that is implicit in the history and observance of holidays like *Shavuot* and Passover is central to the Jewish spiritual outlook.<sup>83</sup> For Jews, who lack a premodern historiography other than the Bible itself, ritualized memory was the only expressed cultural record.<sup>84</sup> The Hebrew calendar, like the one Gratz inscribed in his almanac, is the instrument that links individual Jews and Jewish communities across the boundaries of time and geography, maintaining an atemporal and boundary-less “imagined community.” As the repository for, and guide to, rituals of memory, such calendars are essential to the continuity of Jewish culture.

Just as the calendar fosters a sense of Jewish community and history, it also memorializes the Diaspora, or exile, which defined another facet of Gratz’s Jewish identity. Gratz indicated in his calendar two days of mourning, the Fast of the Seventeenth of *Tammuz* (*Tzom*

*Tammuz*, July twenty-second in the almanac) and the Fast of *Av* (*Tzom B'Av*, August twelfth). The fast noted in July commemorates the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.E.), and that in August commemorates several events, the ensuing destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians (586 B.C.E.), the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans (70 C.E.), and the final defeat in the Bar Kochba Rebellion (135 C.E.), all of which Jewish tradition assigns to the same calendar date.<sup>85</sup> The earlier fast represents the initial cause of the Diaspora, and the second, a synchronous mourning, or temporal conjunction, of three distinct events that symbolize the Jews' loss of both their land and autonomy to other nations. Michael Gratz's inclusion of the two dates in his almanac indicates that he may have observed the fasts, but the nature of the fast days themselves, as memorials of the causes of the Diaspora, also emphasizes his recognition of his status as an exiled Jew.

Despite their commitment to America, colonial American Jews maintained their identity as exiles and their identification with the spiritual nation of Israel. Evidence for such identification is found, for example, in the names chosen for the early congregations: *Shearith Israel* ("Remnant of Israel," in New York) and *Mikveh Israel* ("Hope of Israel," in Savannah and Philadelphia). Inherent in these names is the acknowledgment of the historical and current status of Jews as exiles, and the aspiration of redemption and return that is embedded in Jewish culture.<sup>86</sup>

The connection to the ancient nation of Israel is also manifest in a holiday whose observation would have had no other purpose for Gratz. The Fast of *Av* (*Tzom B'Av*), discussed above, is also known as the Ninth of *Av* (*Tisha B'Av*) reflecting its fixed calendar date. During this same month, Gratz notes the Sabbaths and their *Torah* portions (August second, ninth, sixteenth, twenty-third, and thirtieth), but also enters a holiday of obscure ancient origin and known by its date alone, the Fifteenth (*Chamishah Osar*). The fifteenth day of *Av* is a minor festival, marking the date when offerings of wood were brought to the Temple. This wood was used at the altar, possibly for burning sacrificial offerings. Also associated with this date, a midsummer day when large numbers of people came to Jerusalem bearing wood offerings, was the performance of dances by eligible young women, the intention of which was to attract potential husbands. After the destruction of the Temple, the wood offering and the ancient form of the holiday became obsolete. Although there were occasional revivals of the dances, by Gratz's time the only vestige of the holiday would have been an alteration in daily prayers to mark the memory of ancient rituals, and, possibly, to express hope for their return.<sup>57</sup>

The holidays entered by Gratz that have been discussed are linked to specific historical, seasonal, or astronomical events. The autumn holidays whose value is purely spiritual in nature and which signal the change to a new year that is asynchronous with that of the Anglo-American calendar would be of interpretive interest if they appeared in Gratz's almanac. The final month of the Hebrew calendar

year, *Elul*, appears opposite September in the almanac and ended the year 5537 for Michael Gratz. Gratz's intercalation of the leap-year month advanced the autumn holidays to later dates on the Gregorian calendar. The beginning of the Jewish year (*Rosh Hashanah*) and the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) would, therefore, have occurred in October 1777. Gratz's almanac, as discussed above, is now missing the leaves originally sewn-in between October and November; consequently, his annotations for these holidays are missing.<sup>88</sup>

It is clear from family correspondence that the Gratzes celebrated these holidays. In 1768, Barnard, writing from Philadelphia to Michael, who appears to have been in New York (as Barnard sends his regards to the Hays and Myers families of that city), abruptly ended a business letter to begin his observance, saying, "being *Erev Y[om] K[ippur]* Must Conclude with wishing you *Achatimah Tov*," meaning "happy holiday." Michael, early in November 1769 (following *Rosh Hashana*, *Yom Kippur*, and *Succot*), seems to have overlooked the fact that non-Jews continued their business activity during the Jewish holidays when he apologized to Moses Seixas, saying, "I should have acknowledged yours by return of Capt. Anthony, but did not Expect he should have sailed in the Holidays." Levy Andrew Levy, a Lancaster trader, wrote an awkward hybrid greeting composed of a translated Hebrew greeting and a misstated English phrase (perhaps intended as "many returns") at the end of a business letter in 1771, saying to Michael, "I wish you healthy & Hapy New Year & Many Hollydays." Barnard Gratz, delayed on the road in 1779, tried to plan his holiday logistics, writing to Michael:

Got so farr on my Road homewards as this place and shall  
Please God if I keep so well as I am now leave this place on  
Monday Next for Baltimore to keep Rosh Hashana there  
as it is Impossible for me to leave this place before then,  
and Immediately after R[osh] H[ashana] please God shall  
leave Baltimore for home."

In 1793, after Barnard's only daughter had moved to Baltimore, he wrote Michael from the Etting home that, because Rachel's children were ill, he might not make it to Philadelphia for *Rosh Hashana* "which will be very troublesome for me to be from home."<sup>89</sup>

The importance of the autumn holidays to the Gratz family suggests that their dates should have appeared on the pages now missing from Michael's almanac. Although the pages opposite October and November are missing, the almanac does maintain its original blank page opposite December, where the calendar should resume. The only annotation on that page, however, is a reminder of an upcoming court appearance. Gratz did not enter the corresponding Hebrew dates, as he did for the earlier months, the possible reason for which becomes apparent when we consider how the Hebrew calendar is oriented in comparison to the Gregorian year.

The Hebrew year begins at *Rosh Hashanah*, on the first day of the month of *Tishri*. As the blank leaf that would have contained this date is missing from the 1777 almanac, it is not certain that Gratz ever began to enter the calendar for the Hebrew year of 5538. If Gratz had entered the first three months of 5538 around the time of *Rosh Hashanah*, December 1777 should have been annotated with Hebrew dates. Gratz's almanacs for 1776 and 1778, which might have provided



evidence for such a cycle of annotation, appear not to be extant. Within the context of the 1777 almanac, therefore, it seems that his Hebrew calendar stopped at the end of 5537.

### *The 1779 Almanac*

*Poor Will's Pocket Almanack For the Year 1779*, owned and annotated by Michael Gratz, is in the collections of the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia.<sup>90</sup> It has been rebound in a new cover and all of its leaves appear to be intact. There are annotations on fourteen pages, twelve of which are the pages that face the twelve Gregorian calendar months. All of the annotations concern business and financial matters.<sup>91</sup> All are inscribed in English. None concerns the Hebrew calendar or its holidays. A transcription of the annotations follows as Appendix C.

The annotations in this almanac provide a view into a critical time in Michael Gratz's business life, as well as into the life of the newly independent nation, now at war with Britain. The annotations provide momentary glimpses into the two interrelated tracks of Gratz's business life in this period: matters in the course of ordinary business as it was affected by the war, and issues related to his now-threatened land speculation concerns.<sup>92</sup>

Business activities include purchases of goods for resale, like the textiles and clothing noted opposite March, and loans made, like those opposite May and June. An intriguing note opposite July indicates that Gratz was holding money for a captain about to depart on a

privateering "croose." A note opposite August places Michael in Williamsburg, trading in June of 1779. Opposite November is an event from August, lending a horse to "pasture," or possibly "porter," with travel directions, "after you turn out of the Lancaster Road 4 miles From Phila." Michael's maritime business is represented by a note on the center leaf (which does remain in this almanac, unlike its counterpart in the 1777 almanac) stating the sum of money received "on acct. of Sailors Shears" (meaning "shares," or compensation for a voyage). December had Michael back in Williamsburg.

Land speculation activities are represented by notations of loans to Joseph Simon and Major Trent opposite January, and expenses paid for the land concerns, as noted opposite February for the United Companies of Illinois & Wabash. October's notes include his transactions in Lancaster for July 1779, in which receipts are converted into a loan to George Croghan, pocket money for himself, and money given to Miriam Gratz for their household expenses. William Trent and George Croghan were partners in early Indian trade and land speculation in the West. They were later involved with Joseph Simon and other Lancaster area traders in land concerns, including the Illinois Company in which the Gratz brothers were also involved.<sup>93</sup>

Most relevant to the central business of Gratz's life at this time, however, is the page opposite September, annotated with the list of the "Virginia Delegates in Congress" whom Michael petitioned to settle the land claims to his and his concerns' favor (Figure 10). These claims involved concerns called the Vandalia Company and the Indiana

Company and are the subjects of pamphlets published by Samuel Wharton ("Plain Facts") and Thomas Paine ("Public Good"), both of whom supported the claims of the land companies against Virginia. Although the claims to these lands finally failed, other claims in the area that became the state of Kentucky were pursued by Michael's children and grandchildren.<sup>94</sup>

Like the 1777 almanac, this object has been altered, but the changes to the 1779 almanac do not fall outside the standard parameters for the use of pocket almanacs. Gratz has not transformed the almanac's character or intended purpose. The directions to the house where he will deposit his horse parallel the tables of roads and distances between cities that are regularly appended to almanacs. The financial notations relate to the tables of monetary values and interest. His maritime trade is dependent on the tide tables, as well as astronomical and weather predictions contained in the almanac, and his mention of privateering reflects current wartime activity. Meeting times, legal affairs, and the names of government officials are also within the subjects addressed by this and other period American almanacs. The activities that Gratz has chosen to enter in this almanac are, therefore, unified with the contents and functions of the almanac itself and are comparable to the annotations made by non-Jews of the period.

Does Gratz's omission of a Hebrew calendar in the 1779 almanac, and perhaps beginning as early as October of the 1777 almanac, signal a change in his attachment to or his expression of his Jewish identity?

Does the adherence of his annotations solely to the intended purpose of the almanac suggest that he has begun to assimilate the calendrical rhythm, or even the implied religious behaviors of the Gregorian year? In order to address these questions, it is necessary to consider the historical context of this critical period in American history and the effects of the period's events on the Jews of Philadelphia.

#### *The Historical Context, 1776 - 1780*

As the hostilities of the Revolution progressed, British troops occupied several of America's major urban centers. These cities were home to the largest of America's Jewish populations, and, in the case of Newport, New York, and Savannah, supported established congregations by the time of the Revolution. Many Jews, whose majority supported independence (as noted above by Benjamin Rush), fled these cities, their homes, and their synagogues. When New York was occupied in September 1776, Gershom Seixas, who had presided at Michael Gratz's wedding in 1769 and was now the religious leader of New York's Jewish congregation, gathered up the *Torah* scrolls belonging to Congregation Shearith Israel and fled along with some of his congregants, including silversmith Myer Myers, to southern Connecticut. Other New Yorkers left for Philadelphia. Newport was occupied in late 1776, and its Jews fled to Massachusetts and Connecticut; Savannah fell in 1778, and the majority of the Jews who fled added their numbers to the the swiftly increasing Jewish population of Philadelphia. Charleston's Jews, and the group of New

Yorkers who had settled in Connecticut, joined them there in 1780.<sup>95</sup>

Philadelphia itself was occupied between November 1777 and May 1778, during which time Congress relocated from Philadelphia to Lancaster and, for a short time, to York, Pennsylvania. Many of Philadelphia's Jews and her recent refugees also moved to Lancaster during the occupation. Dislocated and with trade and family life affected by the ongoing war, the Gratzes persevered. Barnard, writing from Lancaster in January 1778, directed Michael's business movements and advised him of any political developments that affected trade:

[We now] Have an act Regulaiting the Diffrent articles and Include all Merchdz. as you will see by the Inclosed News paper tho it Mentions for the Consideration of the Publick but its putt in Execution Directly. Captn. Lang is apointed as a Comissn. who goes abt. & takes what Goods he wants and allows the People 20 pts. Proffitt on the first Cost of there Goods tho they Do not Meddle with the Importers by sea. . . . We have heard this Day a Report of . . . Very Good News which is that the Canadians have Revolted and Seized the Brittish troops & propirty in Canada & Have prisoners of them (say the Troops).<sup>96</sup>

In a postscript to the same letter, Joseph Simon instructed Michael to have tobacco shipped from St. Eustatia (also a site of early Jewish settlement), warning him to be certain to insure the shipment, probably against interception by the British fleet. In another postscript, Miriam Gratz combined intimate family details with local news; she informed Michael both that she had decided to wean their son Hyman and that she had received a letter from S. M., a Philadelphian who had

stayed behind, who "says he was obliged to give up the House to the soldiery . . . [and] he wants to come out very much." Their daily lives, like those of other Americans, were subject to the ebb and flow of the ongoing hostilities.

For the Gratzes, conducting business during the war meant seizing opportunities whenever they presented themselves, and taking more difficult and precarious routes than they had previously.

Barnard wrote to Michael in May 1778, telling him of reports of a treaty that would protect French trade with America by convoying vessels with "men of warrs."<sup>97</sup> The Gratzes had difficulty both obtaining and transporting goods at this time, and, as Barnard suggested in the same letter, the news of the French treaty might be incentive for another Jewish merchant, Solomon Myers (perhaps the "S.M." of Miriam's postscript), to travel to Virginia, where they were still able to receive shipped goods, if the incoming ships managed to evade the British fleet.<sup>98</sup> The inability to use Philadelphia's port presented still more difficulties, apparent in Barnard's postscript instruction to Michael for an intricate plan to coordinate overland portage of goods from Virginia to Lancaster.

The challenges that the war presented to commerce were countered by the benefits this situation provided to Philadelphia's Jewish community. The details of the Jewish refugees' lives and work during this period are not mentioned in the Gratzes' correspondence. The tangible results of this boom in the local Jewish population, however, are clear. Marriages and business associations between Jews

from distant cities created stronger trade and familial connections.<sup>99</sup> The critical mass of Jewish families present in the Philadelphia-Lancaster area also provided the incentive and the financial support to establish a formal congregation within a permanent synagogue.

A small group of Philadelphia's Jewish residents had begun to make moves toward the establishment of a synagogue years earlier. In 1761 correspondence indicates that the idea had been rumored, but the only action taken appears to have been the borrowing of a *Torah* scroll from New York's congregation. Space was rented for worship on Cherry Alley in 1771, and Barnard Gratz inquired with friends in London about the purchase of a *Torah*. Michael Gratz received *rimmonim*, silver crowns for a *Torah*, from Myer Myers, the New York silversmith, in 1772. The congregation was named in 1773, and the Gratzes set about raising funds to "establish [the congregation] on a more solid foundation."<sup>100</sup> Such a foundation was not established until the arrival of the Jewish refugees, who had grown accustomed to the now-longstanding organization of their own communities.

The arrival in 1780 of New York's Jews who had fled to Connecticut, including Gershom Mendes Seixas, now the acknowledged religious leader of the American Jewish community, has been regarded by historians as the final catalyst that enabled Philadelphia to build its synagogue, which was finally accomplished in 1782.<sup>101</sup> Congregation Mikveh Israel was firmly established, although it was weakened financially by the departure of the Jews whose presence in Philadelphia had prompted its establishment. When the

occupations of the other cities ended, many of the Jewish refugees began to return to their own homes and congregations having created both a new synagogue in Philadelphia, and new bonds with other Jewish communities.

### *The Calendar, Jewish Community, and Jewish Identity*

Many Jewish refugees who came to Philadelphia during the Revolution had already seen Hebrew calendars published in their home cities. The earliest printed Hebrew calendars seem to have appeared in cities where Jewish populations were established and formalized earliest. New York was home to the earliest Jewish community in America with its first Jews arriving from Brazil in 1654 and beginning regular Jewish worship in 1655. Savannah's Jewish community arrived from London in 1733, fully organized and outfitted with ritual objects. Both of these cities had witnessed some form of locally printed Hebrew calendar prior to the Revolution. Although Jews first arrived in Newport in 1658 and established a congregation as early as 1695, the existence of a printed Hebrew calendar prior to the nineteenth century is not certain.<sup>102</sup>

Hebrew calendars appeared in two almanacs published in New York in 1774 for the year 1775 by James Rivington. One, advertised as *The Family Almanack and Ephemeris in Rivington's New-York Gazetteer* for October 27, 1774 and November 10, 1774, was printed under the name *Rivington's New Almanack and Ephemeris*.<sup>103</sup> The



Hebrew calendar occupied a single page in this full-size almanac (versus the smaller pocket almanac), and was described in the newspaper advertisements and at the head of the single-page calendar in the almanac as:

The NEW HEBREW CALENDAR, for the Year 5535, from the Creation of the World, which corresponds with the Years 1774 and 1775; shewing the Heads or Beginning of every Month, or New Moon, in the Year celebrated by the Israelites, since the Creation of the World: also shewing the particular Fasts, and Holy or Feast Days of the Year: Likewise a Memorial of the wonderful Day of the Deliverance of the Children of Israel, from the Hands of Haman, kept two Days, which are called PURIM. Also a Memorial of the Time when the great Wonder was wrought for the Children of Israel in the Reign of ANTIOCHUS, King of Grecia, kept eight Days, and called HANUCA.<sup>104</sup>

The second almanac was advertised in *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer* of January 19, 1775. Among the contents of *The Gentleman and Ladies Pocket Almanack* listed in the advertisement is "The New Hebrew Calendar, or Jews Almanack for 1775."<sup>105</sup> Within the pocket almanac itself is a two-page Hebrew calendar. The text at the head of its first page duplicates the lengthy and dramatic description (seen above) that appeared in the full-size almanac.


Despite having the same publisher and introductory text, the pocket almanac's Hebrew calendar begins with the Jewish holidays that correspond to the month of January, while the other begins at the inception of the Jewish year, with the month of *Tishri*. There are other discrepancies between the two calendars in the following

categories: the omission or inclusion of holidays; the celebration of certain holidays for either two days or one; and variations in the traditional names of the holidays (e.g., Passover versus *Pesach*). Both calendars are printed in the Roman alphabet. Neither calendar agrees in full with the calendar as it would be constructed by Michael Gratz two years later; these discrepancies fall into the same three categories listed above.

A third early calendar was printed in Savannah in 1761. This *Calendario*, published by two Sephardic Jews, was a multi-year calculation made to be appended to the congregation's prayer books.<sup>106</sup> Although the Savannah community had arrived in 1733, its growth was interrupted by numerous conflicts in that area from the 1750s through the Revolution.<sup>107</sup> When its Jewish population increased after independence, printed Hebrew calendars would reappear in the *South-Carolina & Georgia Almanac*.

These early printed calendars may aid in the analysis of Michael Gratz's almanacs by revealing the nature of the social pressures that led to the production of printed Hebrew calendars. Jacob R. Marcus, a scholar of American Jewish history, states, "By the onset of the Revolution there were enough Jews in New York City to justify inclusion of the Jewish calendar in the almanacs published by James Rivington, the New York journalist. Thus every Jew, no matter where he happened to travel, could always prepare himself to keep the holy days."<sup>108</sup> Marcus's sense that the calendars appeared due to a sizable Jewish population may be correct, but it seems less likely that a

calendar was included to aid Jewish observance than it was to assist non-Jews in their trade activities with Jewish merchants and craftsmen. *Rivington's* omission of the Sabbath and its scriptural portions, his dramatic introduction of the calendar as a novelty item with correspondence to the Christian year(s), his instruction as to the length and meaning of selected Jewish holidays, and the choice to highlight as significant two holidays of lesser import to Jews, may signal that the calendar was not intended solely for a Jewish audience. Because work is forbidden on certain Jewish holidays that are not, like the Sabbath, fixed predictably to days of the week, it was necessary for the non-Jewish community to be aware of the dates on which business could not be transacted.

Later calendars confirm this possibility. The 1799 and 1800 calendars in the *South-Carolina & Georgia Almanac* insert the symbol of a pointing finger next to some of the holidays and note, "All Saturdays through the year, as well as the holidays marked  are days when no business is transacted." Both Hebrew calendars are also introduced as "Corresponding to the Christian Year" of 1799 and 1800, respectively, just as the introductions to *Rivington's* New York almanacs did (Figure 11).<sup>109</sup>

The first Hebrew calendar printed by Jews and intended for wide circulation among Jews was published in Newport in 1806. The approval of Gershom Mendes Seixas appended to the calendar reads:

HAVING seen your proposals for publishing a Calendar, containing our Festivals and Fasts, &c. &c. together with the rules observed for reading the Law, &c. &c. on such

public occasions--shewing the day of the solar and lunar months, with the day of the week, throughout the year--am well convinced it will be of the utmost utility--and sincerely hope you may experience as much benefit in its productions, as it will be found useful and necessary by all of our Brethren, the House of Israel.

The language in this description, "our Festivals," "reading the Law," and "useful and necessary by all our Brethren," contrasted with the descriptions in the earlier *Rivington's* and *South-Carolina & Georgia* almanacs, highlights the difference between their intended audiences. As part of the complex commercial world of the eighteenth century, local, non-Jewish communities used many different cultural calendars in the course of their growing international trade, a phenomenon that will be addressed below in greater detail. The appearance of printed Hebrew calendars for the broader community, therefore, demonstrates the growing importance and visibility of Jewish communities in the cities in which they had resided for the longest time.<sup>110</sup>

The discrepancies between the two New York calendars for 1775, and those between these calendars and the one Michael Gratz inscribed in 1776 for 1777, may indicate differences in the traditions that produced the calendars published in the *Rivington's* almanacs. Such differences may reflect the variety of European (or other) backgrounds of Jewish immigrants to America, or between the constituencies of the New York and Philadelphia Jewish communities. They may also reflect variations among the available printed European calendars that may have served as models. The phenomenon of distinct, local, Hebrew calendars parallels the regional nature of American almanacs,

which reflected not only variation in content based on geographical location, but also calendar preferences based on the geographic and ethnic origins of local populations.<sup>111</sup>

In the context of Jewish culture, local differences might be explained by preferences linked to geographical residence in America or residence prior to immigration, but the issue is complicated by the nature of the Jewish Diaspora. The scattering of Jews over centuries entailed the formation of separate enclaves that affected the transmission of many aspects of culture, possibly including the Hebrew calendar. American Jewish populations, despite comprising an ethnic and religious subgroup that was distinct from surrounding cultures, still maintained internal cultural variations as a result of the Diaspora.

Calendar calculation was a function of community in antiquity.<sup>112</sup> When the Temple in Jerusalem stood, it was the center of all Jewish ritual activity. Prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, only members of the priestly class could calculate the luni-solar calendar of fasts, feasts, Sabbaths, and Temple sacrifices that bound Jews to their God, their culture, and their community. The priests' secret calendar was, therefore, key to the identity of the Jewish people. After the destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.), the centralized authority remaining in Roman Palestine regulated the calendar so that the dispersed Jewish communities could maintain an identical temporal cycle.

The calendar, as Durkheim states, "expresses the rhythm of . . . collective activities, while at the same time its function is to assure

their regularity.”<sup>113</sup> The Hebrew calendar, therefore, not only expressed Jewish identity, but served to reinforce it. Although the science of astronomical calculation was available since antiquity, the tradition of observation prevailed, strengthening the position of a centralized authority in determining “the rhythm of collective activities.”

As power shifted over time in the Mediterranean world, centralized Jewish authority diminished as well. In the fourth century C.E., the remaining authority made the calendar calculations available in order to assure cultural continuity across the dispersed Jewish population. Rather than remaining solely within a centralized priesthood, religious power shifted to individual scholarly academies, each with a rabbi, or teacher, as the localized authority who asserted ultimate responsibility for religious activity. Although it is not certain whether the calendar was included within this authority, it appears, by the Gratzes’ time, that calendar calculation was an ability that resided only among those with advanced religious training.<sup>114</sup>

If, indeed, the Hebrew calendar was tied to centralized authority, we might expect that, as new Jewish communities formed in America, the calendar would have reverted to this historical trend, obviating the need for both individually maintained and disparate, localized calendars. With all members synchronized to the same temporal rhythm, such communities would have formed internal cohesion and defined themselves as distinct from the surrounding culture(s). But did such a movement actually happen?

The survival of the 1761 Savannah *Calendario*, if it was indeed a community-produced calendar, appears to be singular.<sup>115</sup> Despite the later suggestion of unity and centralized authority in the 1806 Newport calendar's approval by New York's religious leader, the differences between the earlier *Rivington's* calendars suggests that calendars may actually have diverged during the 1770s. Historian Jonathan D. Sarna points to the Revolution as the end of single-synagogue communities and the beginning of inter-synagogue competition. He traces this change to the influence of the language of the Constitution and Bill of Rights on the Jewish perception of communal authority. The American vision of individual freedom implied Jewish freedom of choice. Philadelphia, among the last of America's largest colonial cities (with substantial Jewish populations) to establish its congregation, in fact, became the first city with two synagogues as early as 1795.<sup>116</sup> Yet, as Sarna specifies, synagogue "constitutions," complete with "bills of rights," did not appear until after the American documents they emulated had been adopted. Thus, the immediate impact of the Revolution on the Jews of Philadelphia was, in fact, the cohesion that formed its first synagogue in 1782, despite inherent differences among its Jewish residents and refugees, and despite whatever seeds of separatism may have been present thirteen years before the founding of Philadelphia's second synagogue.

The almanac that Barnard Gratz sent to Solomon Etting when he moved from Philadelphia to Baltimore in 1795, the same year this second synagogue emerged, was intended to link Etting to the Jewish

community even as that community was beginning to fracture. Against this backdrop, Etting's calendar can be understood as the material manifestation of a temporal construct that was at once emotional, intellectual, and religious. Like Crusoe's notched post, Etting's calendar, calculated according to both quantitative science and qualitative, religious tradition, would connect him to a sense of Jewish community, rather than to that community's strict reality. Like Anderson's co-nationalists forming an imagined community, Jews depended only on the belief of simultaneous experience, not the knowledge of it.

Gratz's 1779 almanac, in its omission of a Hebrew calendar, does not point affirmatively to assimilation. Like portraits, furniture, and many other objects of material culture, the 1779 almanac falls only within the context of the broader American culture. The 1777 almanac, conversely, as a boundary object, points to both Jewish and American cultures, allowing an analysis that highlights the differentiation of one from the other. This differentiation allows us a view into Gratz's sense of Jewish identity as he expressed it within an American context.

Michael Gratz's 1777 almanac was, therefore, an object through which he expressed his identity and which he transformed for that purpose. Pocket almanacs were carried by their owners and consulted regularly. Gratz's recurring reference to this object would have served as reaffirmation of his Jewish identity through the calendar's function as a repository of memory, history, faith, and tradition. Like Etting's almanac of nearly twenty years later, Gratz's almanac connected him to



the Jewish community, real and imagined. The intersection and divergence of the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars reflects Gratz's simultaneous experience as both Jew and American, and, therefore, as a member of an ancient imagined community and a new imagined nation.

This new nation, however, was not monolithic, but was a mosaic of ethnic cultures and religious faiths. The simultaneity of Michael Gratz's calendar reminds us that eighteenth-century America's temporal experience was also multiple in nature.

#### *Porous Calendars in the Anglo-American World*

In 1752, two years prior to Barnard Gratz's departure from England, Great Britain undertook the reform of its calendar from the Julian to the Gregorian style. The Julian calendar, begun in Rome in 45 B.C.E., consisted of a solar year of three hundred sixty-five and one quarter days. The Gregorian calendar, instituted in 1582, was three hundred sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and twenty seconds in length. The difference between the two calendars was experienced through a drift that gradually separated natural seasons from measured seasons.<sup>117</sup> Religious differences influenced the calculation of these styles and their subsequent adoption or rejection. Pope Gregory XIII, in calculating the length of the year and righting the then-misaligned Julian calendar, attempted to establish the correct date for the Easter holiday while making certain that it would not coincide with the Jewish holiday of Passover; Great Britain's adherence to the

Julian calendar, despite its flawed annual measurement, was based in that nation's divergence from the Catholic faith.<sup>118</sup>

The eighteenth century's commercial expansion coincided with its Enlightenment interest in accurate timekeeping, and the religious motivation to make the best use of time; a calendar that drifted by slightly over eleven minutes per year was, therefore, reason for change. Paul Alkon argues that the practical aspects of daily life were of greater concern in the British decision to adopt the Gregorian calendar than were the differences between Protestantism and Catholicism, stating that "In England religion reinforced the quest for greater scientific precision within a traditional framework of time represented alike by the Julian and Gregorian calendars."<sup>119</sup>

Mark Smith agrees that adoption of a unified calendar allowed for both religious pluralism and local diversity in British America, while it assisted in building the potential for future national identity. The traditional framework allowed for variety within, while providing the simultaneous experience necessary for forging an imagined community. For example, March was the first month of the Julian calendar, but January 1, the Catholic Feast of the Circumcision, began the Gregorian year. A common framework allowed for a hybrid calendar, beginning with January, but labelling it as the eleventh month.<sup>120</sup>

Ethnic pluralism in the American colonies, to a greater extent than England's less diverse population, had necessitated the use of multiple calendars prior to the official change in 1752. Multiple

calendar use was especially common among merchants, for whom successful participation in the commercial economy depended on the timely exchange of goods and the accurate administration of debt and credit relationships. The ability displayed by eighteenth-century Americans to function commercially and socially within a system of multiple temporal constructs leads Smith to describe these calendars as “functionally porous.” Not only did Americans concurrently employ both the Julian and Gregorian calendars, but also those of Quakers, individual Indian tribes, and, possibly, of African peoples as well.<sup>121</sup>

Smith and Alkon both point to a broad competence in British America for figuring and understanding the language of calendation. The Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, as it was published after 1752, instructed the worshipper to recalculate the new-style calendar to keep the Anglican holy days aligned with the old Julian calendar.<sup>122</sup> The identity of this religious group resided in its own spiritual construction of time. By maintaining the holy days as they had appeared on the Julian calendar, that was, itself, a statement of religious separatism, Anglican congregations both expressed their own spiritual rhythm and reinforced their religious distinction. Despite this expression of difference, congregants still participated in a secular world attuned to the Gregorian calendar and used that calendar as the basis of their own calculations, behaviors that are strikingly similar to those Gratz would display later in the century.

American diversity in the middle of the eighteenth century presented the need for a cultural competence in multiple systems of

time, money, and language. The social pressure for standardization would eventually overpower some expressions of diversity, but through most of the eighteenth century, this multiple-system pluralism was still strongly pronounced. As independence led to federalism, there was little desire to unify the calendrical system in a manner that would quash local or regional identity.<sup>123</sup> Instead, unity was achieved through the evolution of a common framework.

The period's almanacs express this pluralistic outlook: they were local in character, reflecting local traditions and choices, but also had as their basis the Christian calendar. It was Gregorian in style, but, in some locales, maintained Julian-style holidays through the 1770s. When the Hebrew calendar, which is addressed by neither Alkon's nor Smith's discussion, was added to the American almanac, it was inserted as a separate entity, its holidays excluded from the monthly calendar. As we saw in the tension between calendrical systems in Gratz's 1777 almanac, the Jewish construction of time, both as a quantitative measure and as reflection of culture, could not be unified with the common, Christian framework.<sup>124</sup>

While forming this common framework, non-Jewish, eighteenth-century Americans experienced the calendar in a way similar to the historical experience of Jews; their environment was one of simultaneous or porous temporal constructs. The use of alternative calendars as expressions of identity was a language of competence easily understood by all Americans, who, through the end of that century, lived with the consequences of the British calendar reform of

1752. Yet, the vestiges of porosity would lessen and disappear for most Americans, even while Jews maintained their multiple-calendar competence.

*Conclusions: Calendrical Porosity and Jewish Experience in America*

The description that Mark Smith suggests for eighteenth-century calendars, namely, "functionally porous," is aptly applied to the experience of Jews in early America. It is a way of understanding their simultaneous use of two distinct calendrical systems, but also a means of interpreting the simultaneous belonging to two cultures and two nations, one ancient and hopeful for redemption, and the other nascent and waiting to be defined. Jews, as an historically cohesive nation, albeit internally diverse and non-geographical, could remain both Jewish and American within this porous time construct, while America required further standardization to achieve nationhood. The eighteenth century seems to have been the period within which the two cultural time constructs intersected and then diverged. Eighteenth-century calendars enable us to see this phenomenon as it was manifest in objects.

The Hebrew calendar is itself dual; it both reflects and reinforces Jewish spiritual time, and is both the instrument and the product of multiple calendar competence. It is a cultural construct that enables internal cohesion and differentiation of the Jewish community from surrounding cultures. Although the 1777 almanac was but a fleeting

material expression of this construct, it was the construct itself that enabled Michael Gratz to see himself as simultaneously part of two cultures.

Porosity is not only descriptive of the Hebrew calendar's coincident use with the Gregorian calendar, but it is an inherent quality of Jewish spiritual time itself. Historical conjunctions that, through the creation of cultural memories, characterize Jewish ritual are themselves a phenomenon of porosity, as history, memory, and faith are simultaneously engaged. Past and present merge in the calendar and in the mind, and religion and nationhood are inseparable. When Michael Gratz entered the Hebrew calendar in his pocket almanac, he expressed his Jewishness not only through the implied celebration of his holidays, but, in essence, by creating an object that was a metaphor for himself.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Scriptures* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1939), 981.

<sup>2</sup> B.C.E., "Before the Common Era," is used in Jewish scholarship in place of B.C., "Before Christ," to locate dates on the common calendar without implicit acceptance of the religious foundation of that calendar. For an analysis of the psalm, see Joseph Telushkin, *Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1997), 340-342.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the arrivals of Jews in America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654 - 1820* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 4-26.

<sup>4</sup> See Jonathan D. Sarna, "Introduction," in Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., *The American Jewish Experience* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), xvi. Sarna suggests that the tension between assimilation and Jewish identity has been compounded by the dual nature of Judaism as both ethnicity and religion.

<sup>5</sup> Material culture scholarship on this subject has been extremely limited. Discussion of Jewish material life has, for the most part, been confined to museum exhibitions and their catalogue essays. The scant survival of eighteenth-century objects, compounded by the paucity of documented ritual objects, has left scholars without a well defined, specifically Jewish, material record for this period, as noted by Ellen Smith ("Portraits of a Community: The Image and Experience of Early American Jews," in *Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America* [New York: The Jewish Museum, New York under the auspices of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1997], 14) and Norman L. Kleeblatt and Gerard C. Wertkin ("Jewish Folk Art in America: Traditional Forms and Cultural Adaptation" in *The Jewish Heritage in American Folk Art* [New York: Universe Books; The Jewish Museum/New York under the auspices of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1984], 24). Given the paucity of objects and scholarship on the subject, the "assimilation model" of interpretation is, admittedly, also limited to a few works. For examples of this approach, see Kleeblatt and Wertkin, who describe early Jewish settlers as too small a population to maintain an ethnic identity and, thus, assimilating the majority culture ("Jewish Folk Art," in *The Jewish Heritage in American Folk Art*, 23). Richard Brilliant updates and expands the earlier point of view, describing portraiture as evidence of Jewish assimilation: the "absence of ethnic particularity" in the portraits suggests to Brilliant that Jews experienced a dichotomy that was at once a public emulation of the dominant culture, and a private religious life. The portraits, then, constituted a deliberate, representational strategy for aspiring Jews in a world "indifferent or hostile to attempts to proclaim ethnic distinction." ("Portraits as Silent Claimants: Jewish Class Aspirations and Representational Strategies in Colonial and Federal America" in *Facing the New World*, 4). This thesis questions the above conclusions, and encourages both the selection of objects (as discussed below) that are more likely to be expressive of the essence of Jewish identity, and the closer examination of the daily lives of individual Jews in the period for evidence of cultural affinity.



<sup>6</sup> Ellen Smith, in "Portraits of a Community," shows that, while portraits mirror broader Anglo-American artistic conventions of the period, they embody only a small part of the total representation of Jewish identity. Smith uses objects and related behaviors to show that Jewish identity and religious expression were hardly hidden within the private sphere, but were, instead, complex adaptations of dominant cultural forms to Jewish life, and of Jewish practice and belief to the new environment. Naming patterns, ritual objects made from ordinary objects, and declarations of Judaism in public documents and oaths, can be classified as boundary objects, discussed below and in n. 8.

<sup>7</sup> For implied relationships and objects as an interpretive framework, see Robert Blair St. George, *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2-13.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, Translations and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," *Social Studies of Science*, 19, no. 3 (August 1989): 387-420, particularly 393.

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Ellen Smith for both this observation and the eloquent wording of this sentence.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Alkon discusses the calendar as a measure of the effect of eighteenth-century science on cultural values in "Changing the Calendar," *Eighteenth Century Life*, n.s., 7, no. 2 (January 1982): 1-18.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), 46. Defoe's fiction and political writing provide insight into the English world on the brink of the Enlightenment. The tensions between religion and social order, and faith and reason in his work make it particularly applicable to discussions of the cultural milieu of the eighteenth century. The use of *Robinson Crusoe* to illustrate a discussion of spiritual calendars also appears in Eviatar Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 17-18. Also, Paul Alkon discusses Crusoe as an example of the eighteenth-century anxiety of squaring oneself with time ("Changing the Calendar," 5).

<sup>12</sup> Zerubavel, 101, 180 nn. 1, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Zerubavel, 73, 176 n. 13. Clearly, Jews view the *Torah*, the basis of their laws and history, as most important. The claim represented here is that the calendar's perpetuation of Jewish religious life has made possible the continued study and celebration of the *Torah*.

<sup>14</sup> For *porosity*, see Mark M. Smith, "Culture, Commerce, and Calendar Reform in Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 55, no. 4 (October 1998). Smith applies the term "functionally porous" to the Julian and Gregorian calendars that were both in use in the American colonies at the time of the official change to the Gregorian calendar in 1752. His discussion of temporal plurality does not address the Jewish calendar. My thanks to Lisa Porter for bringing this important article to my attention. For *simultaneity*, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 24-26. The discussion in this thesis uses *simultaneity* to describe the participation of one group in two behaviors at the same time. Anderson uses *medieval simultaneity* as distinguished from his *modern simultaneity* to differentiate the archaic, simultaneous engagement in past and present by a single group from the modern, simultaneous enactment of a sole behavior by two disparate groups. For an anthropological approach to simultaneous calendars and cultural identity, see Clifford Geertz, "Person, Time, and Conduct in Bali," Chapter 14 in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1973), 360-411.

<sup>15</sup> Some material culture scholars assign to the term *competence* a specific, theoretical meaning as the ability to create within sets of known rules; it is often paired with *performance*, or the observable product of competence. The discussion in this thesis depends, instead, on the standard, dictionary definition of *competence*, the quality of being capable, or skill. The competence I suggest is one of consumption or the ability to comprehend or use an object, and is not necessarily linked to the production implied by the theoretical definition, although clearly the two are allied, particularly in the case of Gratz, who does *perform* in the annotation of his almanac. Objects like almanacs, for the sake of this discussion, are artifacts of the mental process necessary for their appropriate use. For a discussion of performance in material culture scholarship, see John P. McCarthy, "Material Culture and the Performance of Sociocultural Identity: Community, Ethnicity, and Agency in the Burial Practices at the First African Baptist Church Cemeteries, Philadelphia, 1810 -41," in *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*, edited by Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison (Knoxville: Distributed by the University of Tennessee Press for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997), 359-381.

<sup>16</sup> Benedict Anderson sees in the period of "print-capitalism" a standardization of language and "unified fields of exchange" that are the "blueprint for nationalism" (*Imagined Communities*, 44-45).

<sup>17</sup> Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Solomon Etting, Baltimore, 4 February 1795, American Jewish Historical Society, P-8, Gratz Family, Box 1 (hereafter cited as AJHS).

<sup>18</sup> By Colonial standards, these populations were sizeable and stable. Philadelphia's Jewish population may have numbered about three hundred at the time of the Revolution, although the population was fluid. The total population of Philadelphia at the time can only be estimated; it is estimated to have grown from about 14,500 in 1750 to about 43,500 by the time of the first census in 1790 [see Mary McKinney Schweitzer, "The Economy of Philadelphia and Its Hinterland," in Catherine E. Hutchins, ed., *Shaping a National Culture: The Philadelphia Experience, 1750 - 1800* (Winterthur, Del.: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Inc., 1994), 106]. Estimates of the total American Jewish population in 1775 vary from about 1000 to about 2500. For the lower estimate, see Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585 - 1984* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990). Lancaster's population varied, with several resident families, anchored by the Simon family, and part-time residents from surrounding areas including Philadelphia, particularly during the British occupation of Philadelphia from November 1777 to May 1778. For information on Lancaster's Jews and the higher population estimate above, see David Brener, *The Jews of Lancaster, Pennsylvania: A Story with Two Beginnings* (Lancaster: Congregation Shaari Shomayim, Lancaster, Pa., in association with The Lancaster County Historical Society, 1979). For the arrival of Solomon and Rachel Gratz Etting in Baltimore, see Solomon Etting, Baltimore, to Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, 9 November 1791, American Philosophical Society Library, Gratz Family Papers, Box 22.II (hereafter cited as APSL).

<sup>19</sup> Eric L. Goldstein, *Traders and Transports: The Jews of Colonial Maryland* (Baltimore: The Jewish Historical Society of Maryland, 1993), 49-57.

<sup>20</sup> The two almanacs are in the collections of the Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia. *Poor Will's Pocket Almanack*, calculated by William Andrews, was published by Joseph Crukshank between 1770 and 1786, according to *Early American Almanacs: The Phelps Collection 1679-1900*, introduction by Marion Barber Stowell, David L. O'Neal Antiquarian Booksellers, Sale Catalogue #25, 1979.

<sup>21</sup> Barnard Gratz began working in Philadelphia on 1 February 1754. For a compilation of documentary evidence on the Gratzes' business lives, see William Vincent Byars, *B. and M. Gratz: Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754 - 1798* (Jefferson City, Mo.: The Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1916).

<sup>22</sup> For praise of the 1753 repeal in a contemporary English almanac, see Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology & the Popular Press* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 260.

<sup>23</sup> Zebi Hirsch bar Moses, London, to Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, 4 March 1763, AJHS, P-8, Gratz Family, Box 1 (in Yiddish with translation; translator unknown).

<sup>24</sup> Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492-1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 2:768 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 3:1336.

<sup>26</sup> Simon arrived in Lancaster by about 1740; for a history of the Lancaster Jewish community, see Brener, *The Jews of Lancaster*.

<sup>27</sup> Two of Simon's Torah scrolls are in the collection of Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia, as is the miniature Ark. The lintel of the Ark from Simon's home is in the collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass., and New York, N.Y. See Figures 3 and 4 for descriptions of the Arks.

<sup>28</sup> Meir ben Joseph to Michael Gratz, *Erev Rosh Hashana*, 5524 (1763), AJHS, P-8, Gratz Family, Box 1 (in Hebrew and Yiddish, with translation; translator unknown).

<sup>29</sup> Edwin Wolf 2nd, "Torah, Trade, and Kinship," in Catherine E. Hutchins, ed., *Shaping a National Culture: The Philadelphia Experience, 1750 - 1800* (Winterthur, Del.: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Inc., 1994), 171.

<sup>30</sup> Early American Jewish communities tended to follow a pattern in the development of their congregations beginning with the purchase of land for Jewish burials. Joseph Simon constituted his own community for some time and seems to have followed the standard pattern despite the lack of other local congregants.

<sup>31</sup> For Lancaster's satellite communities and their early Jewish inhabitants, see Brener, 1-6.

<sup>32</sup> Simon's wife, Rosa Bunn, was a native of New York City. New York silversmith Myer Myers married one of Simon's daughters, making him Barnard Gratz's brother-in-law; a cousin of Barnard Gratz's wife Richea married Gershom Seixas of New York. Both Myers and Seixas would play important roles in the formation of the Philadelphia Jewish community. On the ties of kinship that secured the success of business and the continuity of faith among eighteenth-century Jewish families, see Edwin Wolf 2nd, "Torah, Trade, and Kinship," 176; also, for extensive genealogical information, see Malcolm H. Stern, *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1988* (Baltimore: Ottenheimer Publishers, 1978. Third edition, updated and revised, 1991).

<sup>33</sup> Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Hayim Gratz, Silesia, 28 Iyar 5515 (9 May 1755), summarized in M. Arthur Oles, "Yiddish Letters and Documents in the Henry Joseph Collection," (American Jewish Archives, #SC-4234, photocopied paper), 42 (hereafter cited as AJA); Gratz says he has heard that Michael had left for the East Indies. Also, William Vincent Byars states that the exact dates of the voyage are unknown, but correspondence places his return to London no later than November 1758 (Byars, 12). It is unclear from this evidence whether there were two trips to the East during this period or only one.

<sup>34</sup> Hayim Gratz, Tworog, to Michael Gratz, London, 21 Shevat 5519 (18 February 1759), AJHS, Gratz Family, P-8, Box #1 (in Yiddish, with translation; translator unknown); Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Solomon Henry, London, 20 November 1758, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Etting Collection (hereafter cited as HSP), also quoted in Byars, 37.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Gratz to Hyman and Jonathan Gratz, 1759, AJHS, P-8, Gratz Family, Box 1 (translated from Yiddish; translator unknown).

<sup>36</sup> Advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 2 August 1759, quoted in Byars, 44.

<sup>37</sup> Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Michael Gratz, New York, 28 June 1759, AJA, Henry Joseph Collection of Gratz Papers (in Yiddish, no translation), summarized in Oles, 31.

<sup>38</sup> For the development and implementation of speculative trade (called "privilege" for cargo space granted to seamen with status, and "venture" or "adventure" for space rented to average seamen) in eighteenth-century shipping, see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 130-133.

<sup>39</sup> M.M. Hays, New York, to Michael Gratz, 20 April 1768, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>40</sup> M.M. Hays, New York, to Michael Gratz, 12 January 1769, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>41</sup> M.M. Hays, New York, to Michael Gratz, 19 April 1769, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>42</sup> Byars, 14.

<sup>43</sup> For family connections and trade, see Wolf, "Torah, Trade, and Kinship." The Jewish presence in the Caribbean dated to the first half of the seventeenth century in Recife (Brazil), Dutch Guiana/Surinam, and Curaçao; and in Jamaica and the British West Indies by mid-century. For an account of the peopling of the New World by Jewish settlers, see Faber, 4-26. Elias and Isaac Rodriguez Miranda, Curaçao, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 9 January 1766 (Library Company, McAllister Collection), quoted in Byars, 78-79. The Gratzes' Caribbean trade appears to have predated the beginning of the brothers' partnership, which began two years after this letter. See Byars, 76-77 for business concerns in Caribbean.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Simon, Lancaster, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 6 June 1769, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers, Box 22.II.

<sup>45</sup> Those who traveled in this period included men trained in ritual slaughter (*shochet*), circumcision (*mohel*), and religious ritual (often called by the Protestant term "Reverend," as the title "Rabbi" meaning teacher, was reserved for a religious scholar with European training, none of whom resided in America at this time).

<sup>46</sup> Shearith Israel dedicated its synagogue in 1730, but was established as a community as early as 1654. The early American Jewish communities have several foundation dates, including the purchase of a cemetery, building of a *mikvah* (ritual bath), formal establishment of the community, and building of a synagogue, not always in that order.

<sup>47</sup> Manuel Myers, New York, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 19 June 1769, AJHS, P-8, Gratz Family, Box 1.

<sup>48</sup> Isaac Mendes Seixas, New York, to Joseph Symons [sic], Lancaster, 20 June 1769, AJHS, Gratz Family Papers, quoted in *Proceedings of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 27 (1920), 170-171. Isaac Seixas's letter, if written in New York on the date indicated, brings the standard wedding date for Michael and Miriam Gratz into question, unless the wedding date itself was used on the letter as a formality of congratulation. The note of permission from Manuel Myers, however (see preceding note), is dated only one day earlier and was also sent with the younger Seixas, whose journey must have taken more than a single day.

<sup>49</sup> *Works of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by Jared Sparks (Boston, 1844), 3:69-77, quoted in Byars, Appendix II, 335-339.

<sup>50</sup> Edwin Wolf 2d and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975), 83; Byars, 22 et passim.

<sup>51</sup> Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Michael Gratz, 7 July 1778, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers, Box 22.II.

<sup>52</sup> *Journal of the Council of Censors* (Philadelphia, 1783), 20, quoted in Wolf and Whiteman, 148. After the Revolution, Jews campaigned for changes to state regulations that Christian oaths be taken as a prerequisite for public service.

<sup>53</sup> Benjamin Rush, *Commonplace Book*, MS 77, Library Company of Philadelphia, quoted in Wolf and Whiteman, 97, 408 n. 117.



<sup>54</sup> Jonathan Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution on American Jews," in Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., *The American Jewish Experience* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 24. New Hampshire was the last state to eliminate the requirement of Protestant oaths for public service. Although the First Amendment protects the exercise of religious freedom on the federal level, it was not until the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment that individual states were restricted from abridging citizenship rights.

<sup>55</sup> Anderson, 24-26.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, 35.

<sup>57</sup> For a discussion of early American literacy, publishing, and religious faith, see David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 21-70. Although his discussion addresses New England in the seventeenth century, Hall illuminates issues of printing and authority, class, and faith.

<sup>58</sup> David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," *The Journal of American History*, 82 (June 1995), 57.

<sup>59</sup> For the early history of the almanac, see Capp, 25ff; for the history of the American almanac, including the introduction of the pocket almanac, see Marion Barber Stowell, *Early American Almanacs: The Colonial Weekday Bible* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., Inc., 1977).

<sup>60</sup> For the date of the release of the next year's almanacs, see Capp, 59.

<sup>61</sup> Stowell, *Early American Almanacs*, 14.

<sup>62</sup> Another example of *Poor Will's Pocket Almanack for the Year 1777* is in the rare books collection of The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, RBR AY53 P54p 1777. It was owned and annotated by Buckridge Sims (see n. 66 below).

<sup>63</sup> Moses Michael Hays, New York, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 15 July 1768, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>64</sup> For the scarcity of paper, see Stowell, *Early American Almanacs*, 65. Although the issue of survival of pocket almanacs may render this information inconclusive, the number of pocket almanacs known to have been produced in Philadelphia in the 1770s dropped from eight (1770) to a low of three (1774) and four (1775-1778), and rose again to six (1779, 1780), according to Milton Drake, *Almanacs of the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1962). Stowell's discussion confirms a shortage of paper, but it is not certain that this shortage was the sole cause of the drop in production of almanacs.

<sup>65</sup> It is possible that Gratz copied the calendar from another source, like a European calendar, but the discussion that follows suggests that the calculations were made for (or changed to accommodate) the local geographic area. Additionally, the letter Barnard Gratz sent to Solomon Etting and the discussion of the Gratzes' education (below) suggest that members of this family were able to calculate the calendar. Together, these circumstances suggest that Gratz may well have calculated his own calendar. Even if this assumption proves to be incorrect, Gratz has, at the very least, made choices in the material he has entered in the almanac that reflect his relationship to the Hebrew calendar and, thereby, to his sense of Jewish identity.

<sup>66</sup> Barnard Gratz advertised the opening of his business "at his store in Water Street, opposite Mr. Buckridge Sims's, near the Queen's Head," in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 2 August 1759, quoted in Byars, 44.

<sup>67</sup> For examples of European Jewish calendars, see the Collections of the Jewish Theological Seminary: David Nieto, *Repertorio delos Ros-hodes, fiestas, y ayunos que se celebraran annualmente en Ysrael, desde el ano 5478 hasta el 5560, que corresponden a la epoca vulgar desde el 1718 hasta el 1800* (Londres, 5478 [1718]); ... *Shenat 1769 ... 1702 le-horban bayit sheni ... Italy, 1769* (microfilm reel 3:237); *Shenat hameshet alafim 540 li-veri'at `olam. 11 le-mahzor katan ... Venice : Stamparia Bragadina Con licenza de Superiori, 540* [i.e. 1779 or 1780] (microfilm reel 3:289); "Calendario facil y curioso : de las tablas lunare calculadas con las tablas solares, industria nueva de Selomoh de Olivera" in *Seder parashiyot ve-haftarot kol ha-shanah Quinque libri Mosis, ha-magihah, Shemu'el Rodrigez Mendez, Amsterdam, 5486* [1725 or 1726].

<sup>68</sup> "Diaspora," as I use it in this thesis, refers to the literal scattering of the Jewish people, which had been the state of their existence since antiquity. It is not intended to connote a post-Holocaust or Zionist sense of the desire to recreate a Jewish homeland. The longing associated with the Diaspora condition is embedded in Jewish liturgy and in the Jewish calendar. For Gratz, the act of entering certain holidays in his almanac would have entailed a *de facto* recognition of that state of longing, even while he took no definitive action to resolve it.

<sup>69</sup> For example, Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 2:956.

<sup>70</sup> Evidence for the creation and maintenance of the Hebrew calendar is more plentiful for antiquity than for the time since. For a discussion of the calendar in ancient culture, see Shemaryahu Talmon, *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel: Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1986).

<sup>71</sup> Gratz does not mark the *Erev Rosh Chodesh* when the New Moon is shared by two months (see next paragraph in the text for explanation of shared New Moon). August is the only month without a shared New Moon that does not also list an *Erev Rosh Chodesh*. The first entry for August has been corrected by Gratz from "Augt. 1st" to "Augt. 2d," a change that may indicate some confusion on these dates which may then have led to the omission.

<sup>72</sup> Capp, 132-134. For a discussion of the tension between the "occult religious" use of astronomy in early almanacs and its eighteenth-century vestiges, see Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 80ff. David D. Hall also discusses this tension in *Worlds of Wonder* (throughout), but with specific attention to the printed word.

<sup>73</sup> The italicized words are the names of the Hebrew months. *Adar I* and *Adar II* are explained in the following paragraph addressing leap years. There should be similar notations in the months of *Cheshvan* and *Tevet*, but the blank pages on which they would have appeared are missing or are without calendar annotations, as discussed later in the text.

<sup>74</sup> Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Michael Gratz, Lancaster, 19 April 1780, APSL #72, Gratz Family Papers. The italics of *Pesach* are mine. The original sentence reads, "You Never Mention if you have Rec'd. the bag Sug[a]r Loaf Sug[a]r I Sent you before נֶסֶח." See below and n. 75 for a discussion of Hebrew holiday names embedded in English text.

<sup>75</sup> For example: Barnard Gratz, Baltimore, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 9 April 1779 and Barnard Gratz, Baltimore, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 9 April 1794, APSL #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>76</sup> 8 April 1786 entry in "Excerpts from the Day-Books of David Evans," *Pennsylvania Magazine* 27 (1903): 49-55. Evans's day-books cover 1774-1811. His shop was located on Cherry Alley until 1791, the same street where the Jews of Philadelphia had rented rooms as a temporary place of prayer in 1771 (see page 40). An entry dated 29 November 1776, stating, "Making Benches for the Jew Synagogue," probably refers to the same rented Cherry Alley facility, as plans for a permanent location had not yet been made. Matzoh boards were flat surfaces on which dough for the unleavened bread, required for the Passover seder and consumed throughout the holiday, could be rolled and cut for baking. A surviving, eighteenth-century example, belonging to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, R. I., was exhibited in "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic," at the Library of Congress in 1998. As of the date of this thesis, an image may be viewed at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/vc007013.jpg>.

<sup>77</sup> Leviticus 23:15-17.

<sup>78</sup> The period of the counting of the *omer*, in its suspension of festive activities, is similar to a period of mourning; *Lag B'Omer*, or the thirty-third day of the *omer*-counting, is a one-day break from mourning. Neither behavior is clearly linked to a specific origin. For discussion, see Wayne Dosick, *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition, and Practice* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 174-175, and Abraham P. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1978), 177-178.

<sup>79</sup> For the Gratzes' wedding date see Byars, 14. For wedding date selection, see, for example, Robert Cohen, *Jewish Demography in the Eighteenth Century: A Study of London, the West Indies, and Early America* (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1976). Cohen finds that American Jews marrying during the years prior to the formal institution of synagogues were more likely to marry within the forbidden period of the counting of the *omer* than those who married under the auspices of an established religious institution, yet most still adhered to the traditional restriction. The Gratz wedding date, like that of the majority of other Jews of the period, falls within an approved period in the calendar.

<sup>80</sup> New York City's Shearith Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in America (established in 1654), also owns an eighteenth-century omer-counter, and also lacks documentation indicating its provenance and date of acquisition.

<sup>81</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zachor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 40.

<sup>82</sup> The biblical injunction to remember when you, yourself, came out of Egypt (Deut. 16:3) creates the past in the present for the observant Jew.

<sup>83</sup> The notion of temporal disruption as a defining element of religious experience is addressed in Zerbavel, 110 ff. His discussion includes reference to other theorists including Mircea Eliade, Emile Durkheim, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, all of whom address the relationship between the organization of time and the sacred.

<sup>84</sup> See Yerushalmi, *Zachor*; the concept of memory, or *zachor*, as Jewish historiography is the thesis of his work.

<sup>85</sup> For the rabbinic dating of the end of the Bar Kochba Rebellion against Rome, see Block, 173-174.

<sup>86</sup> The interpretive value of the names of the early congregations has been recognized previously. For example, see Faber, 58. Faber, however, suggests that Shearith Israel, "the remnant of Israel," was an indication of precariousness rather than a simple identification with the status of exile.

<sup>87</sup> I thank Rabbi Albert E. Gabbai of Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia, for discussing this holiday with me. Also, see Bloch, 215-219; and Hayyim Schauss, *The Jewish Festivals from their Beginnings to our Own Day*, trans. Samuel Jaffe (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), 277-278.

<sup>88</sup> Also missing is the entry for *Sukkot*, the fall harvest holiday that commemorates the sustenance received during the forty years of wandering in the desert after the Exodus.

<sup>89</sup> Barnard Gratz, Philadelphia, to Michael Gratz, New York, 20 September 1768, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers; Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, to Moses Seixas, 3 November 1769, AJA #365, Michael Gratz Copy Book; Levy Andrew Levy, Lancaster, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 8 September 1771, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers; Barnard Gratz, Fredricksberg, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 7 September 1784, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers; Barnard Gratz, Baltimore, to Michael Gratz, Philadelphia, 29 August 1793, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>90</sup> Collections of the Rosenbach Museum & Library, A778po.

<sup>91</sup> For further discussion of the Gratzes' complex land matters, see the Etting and Gratz-Croghan Manuscripts in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, as well as individual documents located in other archives (over twenty in number, many of which are listed in the bibliography of this thesis) in Gratz family papers. For details on the Gratzes' business matters, see William Vincent Byars, *B. and M. Gratz: Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798* (Jefferson City, MO: The Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1916), particularly 24-25, and the Byars notebooks (containing some unpublished research) at the Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia; Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1957), particularly Chapter 4; Sidney M. Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz: Their Lives and Times*, foreword by Jacob R. Marcus (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1994); and David Brener, *The Jews of Lancaster, Pennsylvania: A Story with Two Beginnings* (Lancaster: Congregation Shaari Shomayim, Lancaster, PA, in association with The Lancaster County Historical Society, 1979), 14-16.

<sup>92</sup> Attacks on pack trains during the French and Indian War in the 1750s had ruined many fur traders, but the ensuing peace treaty signaled opportunity for Joseph Simon and his circle to push westward in search of land investments and tradable goods. Continued Indian attacks after the peace, however, created staggering losses for these merchants as well. Groups of traders who suffered losses before and after the French and Indian War banded into "concerns," sending representatives to London to petition the King for compensation. The British then negotiated with the Indians of the Six Nations, who ceded 2,500,000 acres to the Crown, in trust for the traders, in 1768. The traders pressed to have these lands granted directly to them, but, still pending by the outbreak of the Revolution, the matter was nullified by American independence. In several separate ventures in the early 1770s, the Gratz brothers and their concerns, consisting of both Jews and non-Jews (many of whom would also lose the lands discussed above), purchased large tracts of land along the Mississippi, Ohio, and Illinois Rivers (the southern portions of modern Illinois and Indiana). The ownership of these lands became ambiguous after independence, due to boundary disputes among the now-sovereign states of Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Virginia; the disagreement between the states and the traders over the validity of earlier land conveyances from the Crown and from Indians; and pressures on the states to cede their own western land claims in the process of ratification of the Articles of Confederation. The Gratzes, Joseph Simon, and others with investments in the balance, vigorously petitioned the state legislatures and Congress while the states themselves fought over jurisdiction and land claims. The delays caused by these debates pushed the dispute into the late 1780s. The matters themselves were resolved in the states' favor by findings that the conveyances by the Crown and by Indians were now void. Further attempts at some form of compensation for these lands were hindered by, and would prove to be among the catalysts for, the ratification of the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution. As principals in the original concerns, the Gratzes remained heavily involved in these matters throughout their lives; legal battles over the land would occupy the Gratz family for several generations.

<sup>93</sup> Land-speculating partnerships with Trent and Croghan, as well as executing Croghan's estate, were long-term involvements for the Gratzes. See Byars, 34 et passim.

<sup>94</sup> Byars, 25-27.

<sup>95</sup> Faber, 104.

<sup>96</sup> Barnard Gratz, Lancaster, 8 January 1778, to Michael Gratz, Fredericksburg, forwarded to New Castle, APSL, #72 Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>97</sup> Barnard Gratz, Lancaster, 3 May 1778, to Michael Gratz, APSL, #72, Gratz Family Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Byars, 19.

<sup>99</sup> Wolf and Whiteman, 100.

<sup>100</sup> Wolf and Whiteman, 41- 60.

<sup>101</sup> Wolf and Whiteman, 114.

<sup>102</sup> As with all ephemera, it is possible that earlier calendars existed and that none are extant. It is also possible that extant calendars have not been located for this study; the indices available for almanacs list only by name, rather than by subject matter contained therein. The sole available subject index does not include all extant almanacs.

<sup>103</sup> *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer*, 27 October 1774, p. 3 c. 3; and 10 November 1774, suppl. p. 1 c. 2. The November advertisement is referenced in Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 3:1544 n. 21.

<sup>104</sup> *Rivington's New Almanack and Ephemeris* for 1775, Evans # 13230, Drake 5854. See *Early American Imprints*, edited by Clifford Shipton (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society; on microfiche through Readex Microprint Corp., Chester, Vt.).

<sup>105</sup> *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer*, 19 January 1775, p. 2 c. 3. *Rivington's Gentleman and Lady's Pocket Almanack, For the Year 1775*, Evans #13229, Drake 5846. See *Early American Imprints*, edited by Clifford Shipton (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society; on microfiche through Readex Microprint Corp., Chester, Vt.). The January advertisement is referenced in Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 3:1544 n. 21.



<sup>106</sup> The *Calendario*, published in 1761 by Abraham Pretto Henriques and Mosseh de Aguilar (Sheftall Papers, University of Georgia Library, Athens) is referred to in Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 3:1544 n. 21, but could not be located by the Library's staff at this time; for *Sephardic*, see Glossary, p. vii.

<sup>107</sup> B.H. Levy and Rabbi Arnold Mark Belzer, "A History of Congregation Mickve Israel" (Savannah: Arthur B. Levy Memorial Fund and Friends of Mickve Israel, 1994, pamphlet). My appreciation to Rabbi Belzer for discussing this topic and viewing the Congregation's artifacts with me, and for providing me with reference materials.

<sup>108</sup> Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 2:978.

<sup>109</sup> *South-Carolina & Georgia Almanac*, Charleston: Freneau & Paine, printers, 1799 and 1800, Evans #36339 and #36340, respectively. (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society; on microfiche through Readex Microprint Corp., Chester, Vt.).

<sup>110</sup> The earlier Savannah *Calendario* may indicate the formal production, well before the 1806 calendar, of a Hebrew calendar associated with the Jewish community itself, but as the calendar was not available for examination, this discussion will focus solely on the early New York calendars.

<sup>111</sup> Stowell, *Early American Almanacs*, 114-121, 273-276; Capp, 152; M. Smith, 566-567.

<sup>112</sup> The history of the Jewish calendar can be found in many works; this explanation has been culled from Salo Wittmayer Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), 3:143 ff. Also, see n. 70 above.

<sup>113</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1965), 23, quoted in Zerubavel, 31.

<sup>114</sup> Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 3:1196. Jewish communities and their officials not only maintained oversight of religious life, but also administered bureaucracies that paralleled governmental functions. The Silesian Jewish community of the Gratzes' childhood is reported even to have run its own post office (Baron, 1:115). Michael and Barnard's brothers who remained in Silesia had formal religious training, and both Michael and Barnard had studied Jewish history, Bible, and *Talmud*. Their familiarity with the calculation of the calendar, was highly probable. See Hayim Gratz, Tworog, to Michael Gratz, London, 21 Shevat 5519 (18 February 1759), AJHS,, Gratz Family, P-8, Box #1 (in Yiddish, with translation; translator unknown); Gratz's brothers are given the title "Rabbi," signalling formal religious schooling. Barnard's and Michael's schooling is discussed by M. Arthur Oles, "The Hebrew and Yiddish Portions of the Gratz Letters: An Inquiry into their Purpose" (AJA, Gratz Family Papers, SC 4247, photocopied term paper), 2, 6-8.

<sup>115</sup> See nn. 103, 107 above.

<sup>116</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution on American Jews," in Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., *The American Jewish Experience* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 26-27.

<sup>117</sup> David Ewing Duncan, *Calendar: Humanity's Epic Struggle to Determine a True and Accurate Year* (New York: Avon Books, Inc., 1998), v-vi.

<sup>118</sup> Alkon, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Alkon, 15.

<sup>120</sup> Stowell, *Early American Almanacs*, 17, 59; M. Smith, 567, 571.

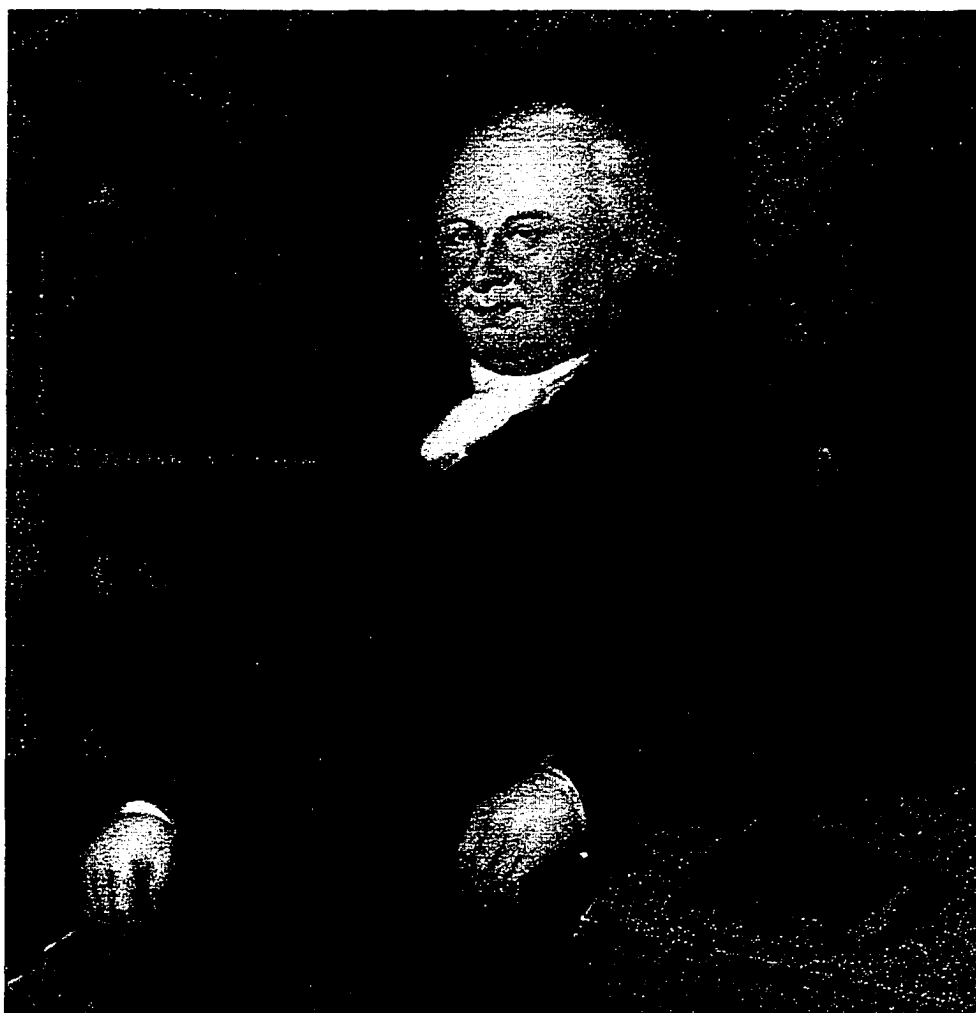
<sup>121</sup> M. Smith, 567-568, 581, 573-574.

<sup>122</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* (Cambridge: printed by Joseph Bentham, 1756), rare books collection, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, RBR BX5145 C56 S.

<sup>123</sup> M. Smith, 568.

<sup>124</sup> The balance between Protestantism and Catholicism in this framework is addressed in part by Paul Alkon (see n. 116 above). Although outside of the scope of this thesis, it surely merits future inquiry.

## **APPENDIX A: FIGURES**

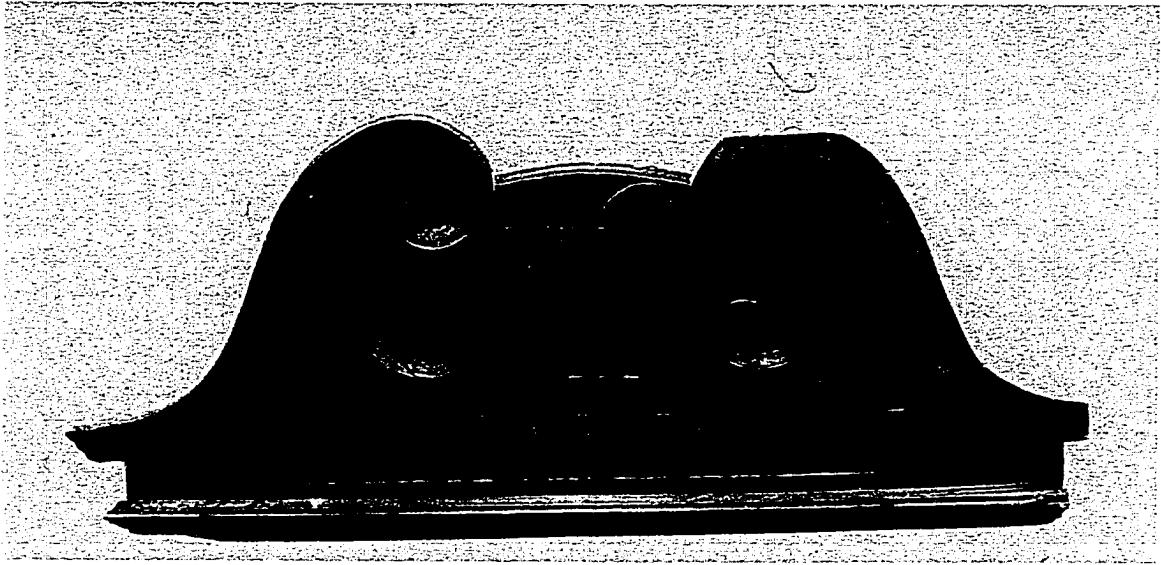


**Figure 1.** *Barnard Gratz*, by Charles Peale Polk, c. 1792. Oil on canvas, 40 x 35 in. Collection of E. Norman Flayderman.



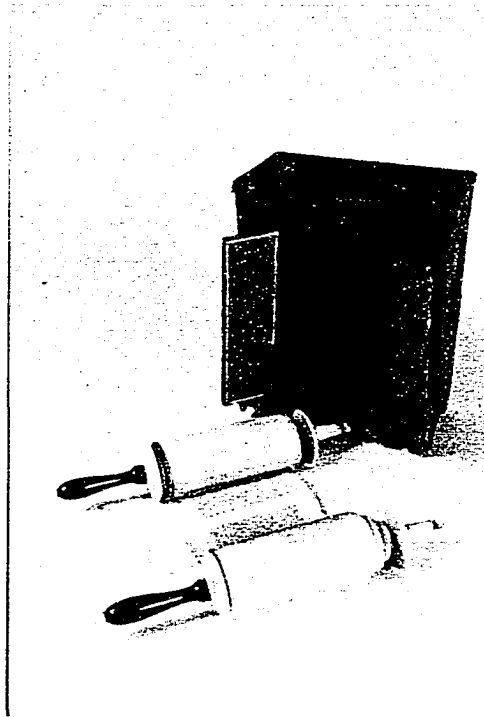
**Figure 2.** Map, engraved by Thomas Jefferys. From *A New Geographical and Historical Grammar* by Thomas Salmon (London, 1766). Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Del.

The Duchy of Silesia is located along the Oder River, northeast of the Kingdom of Bohemia and southwest of the Kingdom of Poland. Editions of Salmon's *Grammar* were widely used by London and Philadelphia merchants during the period the Gratz brothers worked in these locations (Byars, 8).



**Figure 3.** Ark (*Aron HaKodesh*) Lintel belonging to Joseph Simon, Lancaster, Pa. Mid-eighteenth century. Wood with wood inlay, 16  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 40 in. American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass., and New York, NY.

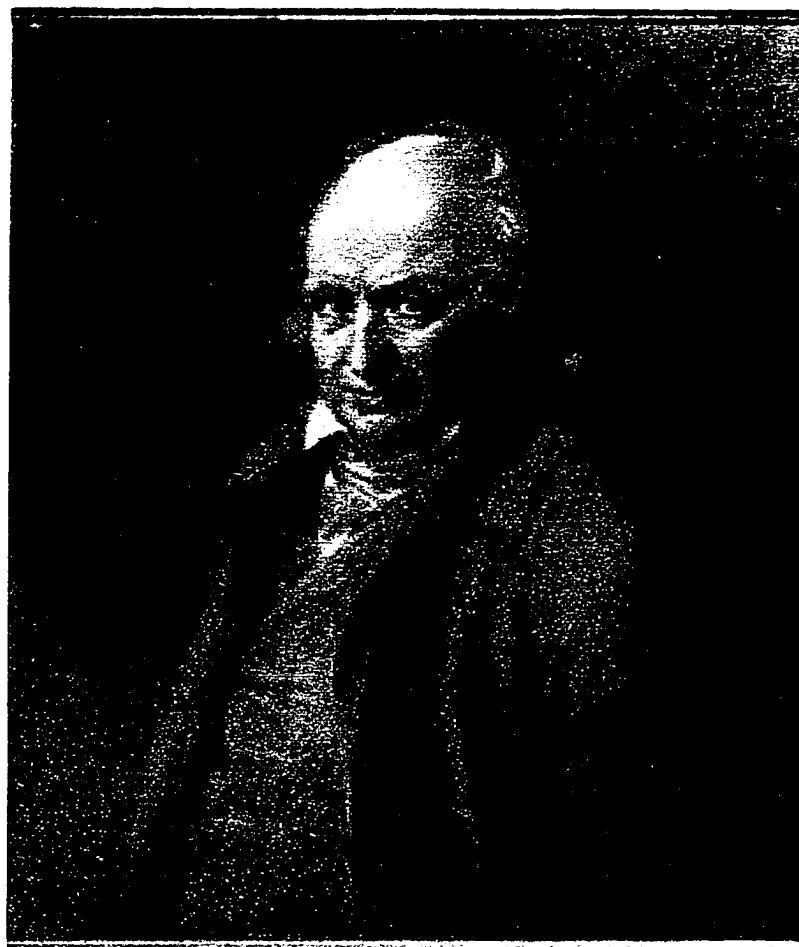
The lintel is the only remaining part of a complete Ark. A cabinet below this lintel would have held the *Torah* scroll(s). The moldings and the form of the tablets of the Ten Commandments are applied; the Hebrew lettering is inlaid in contrasting wood. The Hebrew verse running horizontally across the lintel translates, "Know before whom thou art standing."



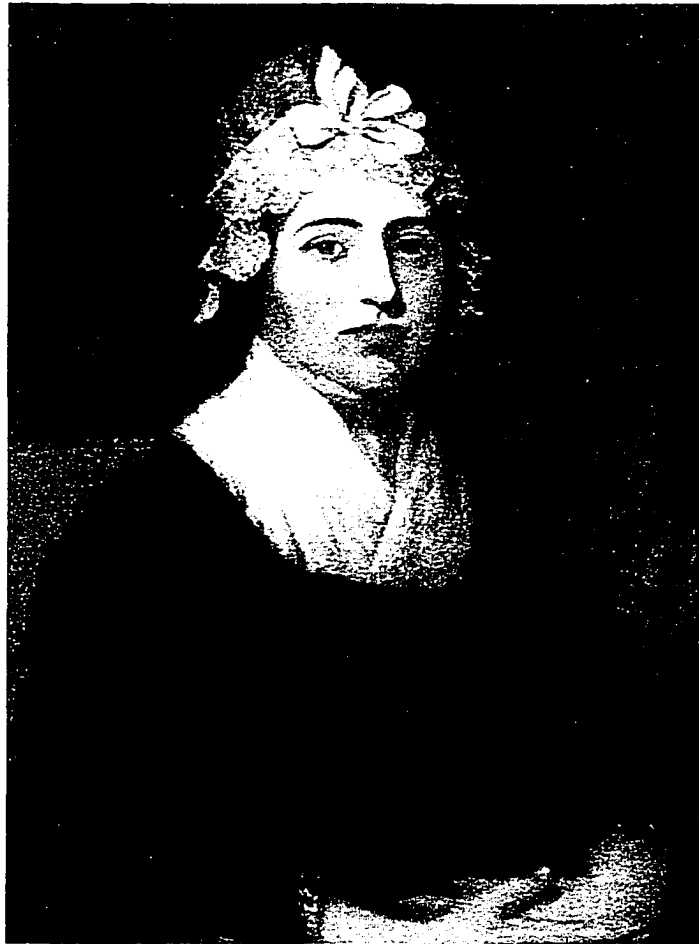
**Figure 4.** Miniature or Traveling Ark, probably belonging to Joseph Simon, Lancaster, Pa. Mid-eighteenth century. Papier mâché, 11 x 8 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, x 4 in. Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Hebrew lettering on the inside of the doors of the Ark contains the text of Deut. 6:4, the central creed of Judaism, which translates, "Listen, Israel, God is our Lord, God is one." The loss to the lintel may indicate the original presence of a model of the Ten Commandments (cf. Figure 3). The metal wire below the lintel would have held a curtain, the traditional cover for the Ark's doors. The *Torah* scroll shown belonged to Simon, but is too large for this Ark. The location of the original scroll is unknown.





**Figure 5.** *Michael Gratz*, attributed to Thomas Sully, c. 1805. Pastel on paper, 28  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 24  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass., and New York, NY.



**Figure 6.** *Miriam Gratz*, by Isaac L. Williams, 1893. National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, Pa. Gift of Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.

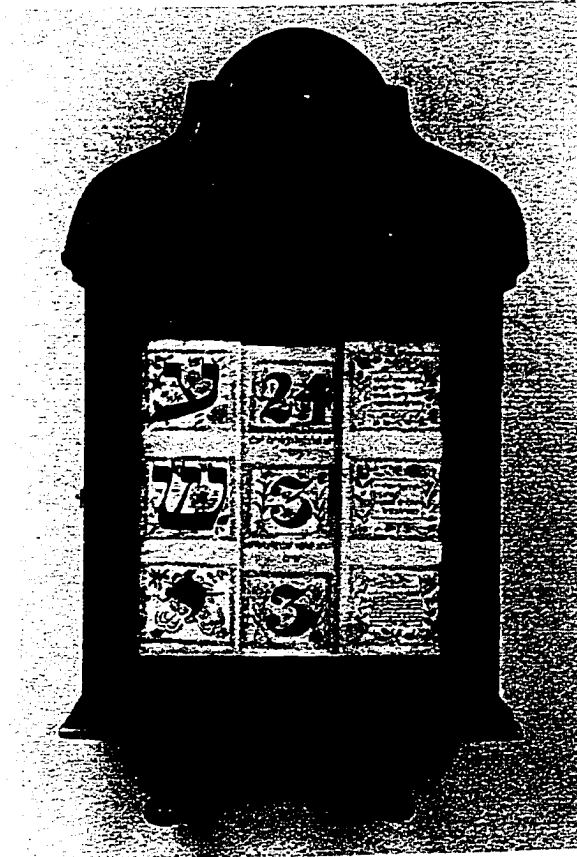
AUGUST. EIGHTH MONTH.			
New Moon 3 6 morn.	Full Moon 18 6 aftern.	First Day 11 5 morn.	Last Day 25 11 morn.
1 6 Lammas Day.	28 28 2 48 57 8		
2 7	29 3 45 58 8		
3 8 10 past Trinity.	30 4 58 58 8		
4 9 11 close July.	1 5 59 58 8		
5 10 Days 14 hours.	2 6 39 5 7		
6 11 Bull's eye 12 15	3 7 55 1 2		
7 12 weather ;	4 8 29 5 2 7		
8 13 Spica m sets 9 24	5 9 57 5 3 7		
9 14 like for rain ;	6 10 26 5 4 7		
10 15 11 past Trinity.	7 11 55 5 5 7		
11 16 clouds and	8 12 24 5 6 7		
12 17 Arcturus sets 11 45	9 13 58 5 7		
13 18 12 rises 10 30	10 14 39 5 7		
14 19 Days 13h 40 m.	11 15 27 5 7		
15 20 13 rises 9 30	12 16 22 5 7		
16 21 Sirius rises 3 48	1 17 2 25 12 7		
17 22 12 past Trinity.	2 18 3 25 12 7		
18 23 like for rain ;	3 19 4 25 12 7		
19 24 pleasant and cool	4 20 5 25 12 7		
20 25 Bull's eye 11 30	5 21 6 25 12 7		
21 26 sun soon changes to	6 22 7 25 12 7		
22 27 13 past Trinity.	7 23 8 25 12 7		
23 28 14 past Trinity.	8 24 9 25 12 7		
24 29 rain and	9 25 10 25 12 7		
25 30 15 past Trinity.	10 26 11 25 12 7		
26 31 16 past Trinity.	11 27 12 25 12 7		
27 1 17 past Trinity.	12 28 1 25 12 7		
28 2 18 past Trinity.	1 29 2 25 12 7		
29 3 19 past Trinity.	2 30 3 25 12 7		
30 4 20 past Trinity.	3 31 4 25 12 7		
31 5 21 past Trinity.	4 32 5 25 12 7		

Aug. 2 - ...  
 4 - ...  
 9 - ...  
 12 - ...  
 16 - ...  
 18 - ...  
 23 - ...  
 30 - ...  
 30?  
 Norton M. Call...  
 to Cash for them  
 Corp. ...  
 as per his order on them  
 John ... May 1777

Figure 7. Poor Will's Pocket Almanack for the Year 1777  
 (Philadelphia: John Cruikshank, 1776). August, annotated by  
 Michael Gratz. Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, Pa.

AUGUST. EIGHTH MONTH.				
New ☉	3 6 morn.	First ☽	11 5 morn.	
Full ☾	18 6 aftern.	Last ☾	25 11 morn.	
1	6 Lammas Day.	☾	18 2 48 4 57 8	
2	7	☾	19 3 45 4 58 8	
3	8 10 past Trinity.	☾	20 4 42 5 58 8	
4	9 11 8 close full.	☾	21 5 39 5 59 8	
5	10 Days 12 hours.	☾	22 6 36 5 07	
6	11 Bull's eye r. 12 28	☾	23 7 33 5 15	
7	12 weather ;	☾	24 8 30 5 23	
8	13 Spica m. sets 9 24	☾	25 9 27 5 31	
9	14 like for rain ;	☾	26 10 24 5 47	
10	15 11 past Trinity.	☾	27 11 21 5 57	
11	16 clouds and	☾	28 12 18 6 07	
12	17 Arcturus sets 11 48	☾	29 1 15 6 17	
13	18 7's rises 10 30	☾	30 2 12 6 27	
14	19 Dayset 11 40 m.	☾	31 3 9 6 37	
15	20 Δ ♀ & θ under ;	☾	1 4 6 27 5 11 7	
16	21 Sirius rises 1 48	☾	2 5 5 23 5 13 7	
17	22 12 past Trinity.	☾	3 6 4 29 5 14 7	
18	23 like for rain ;	☾	4 7 3 35 5 15 7	
19	24 pleasant and cool	☾	5 8 30 5 16 7	
20	25 Bull's eye r. 11 30	☾	6 9 25 5 17 7	
21	26 but soon changes to	☾	7 10 20 5 18 7	
22	27 ☉ enters m. betw	☾	8 11 15 5 19 7	
23	28 jolly weather ;	☾	9 12 10 5 20 7	
24	29 13 past Trinity.	☾	10 1 5 21 5 21 7	
25	30 rain and	☾	11 2 0 22 5 22 7	
26	31 Δ & θ thunder ;	☾	12 3 0 23 5 23 7	
27	1 7's rise 9 36	☾	13 4 0 24 5 24 7	
28	2 John Bap. behead.	☾	14 5 0 25 5 25 7	
29	3 Arcturus set 10 42	☾	15 6 0 26 5 26 7	
30	4 14 past Trinity.	☾	16 7 0 27 5 27 7	
31	5	☾	17 8 0 28 5 28 7	

Figure 8. Poor Will's Pocket Almanac for the Year 1777 (Philadelphia: John Cruikshank, 1776). August, annotated by Buckridge Sims. Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, De.



**Figure 9.** Omer Counter. Possibly eighteenth century. Parchment scroll with Hebrew and Spanish lettering; wooden case. Congregation Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.

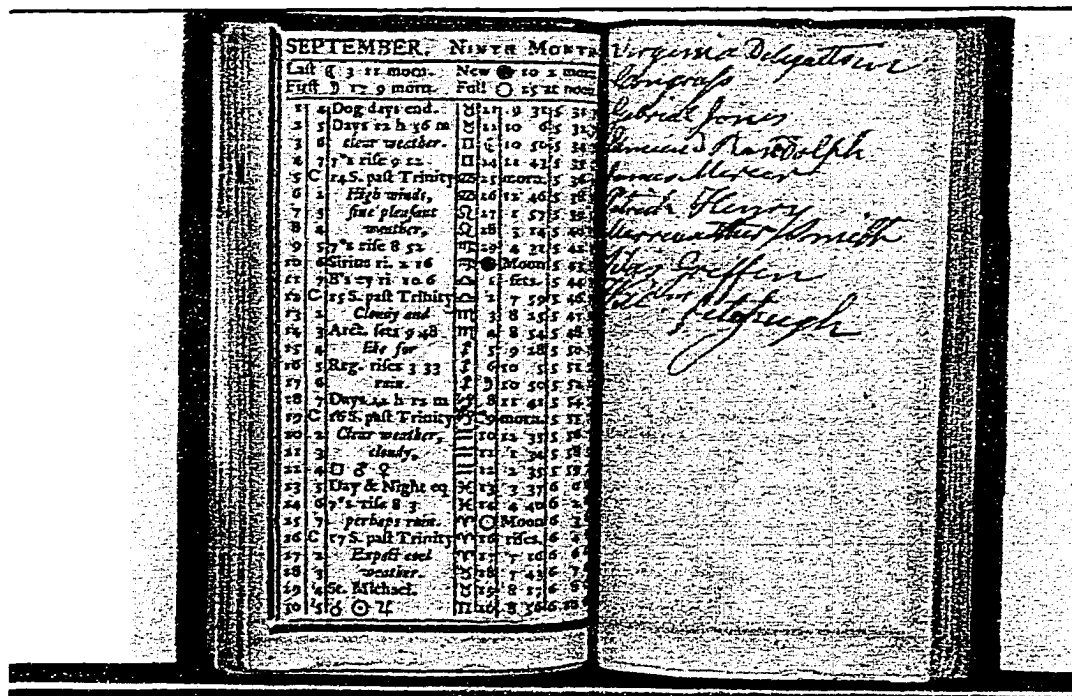


Figure 10. *Poor Will's Pocket Almanac for the Year 1779* (Philadelphia: John Cruikshank, 1778). September, annotated by Michael Gratz. Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, Pa.

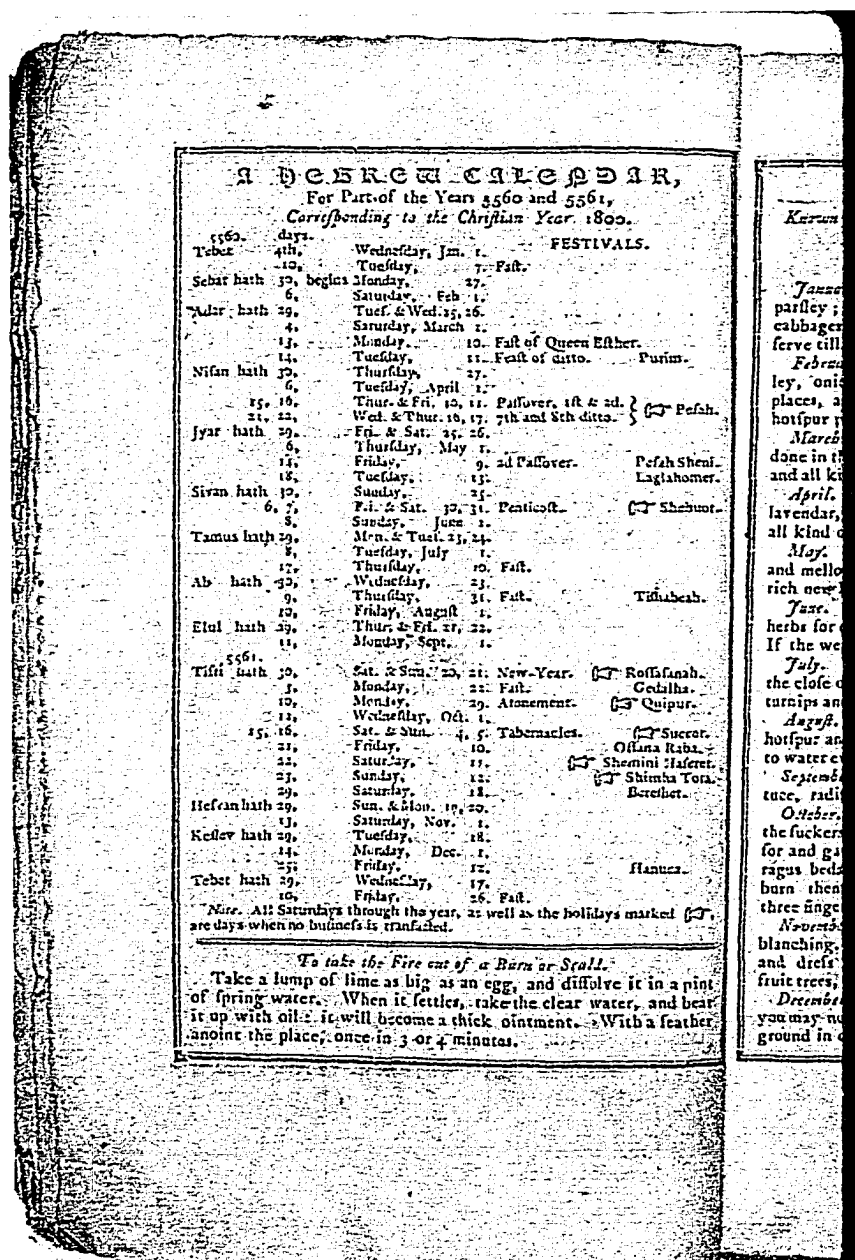


Figure 11. "A Hebrew Calendar," *South-Carolina & Georgia Almanac for the Year 1800*. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

## **APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPTION, 1777 ALMANAC**



Following is a transcription of the annotations made by Michael Gratz in his 1777 almanac. Underlined section headings refer to the title of the printed page opposite Gratz's interleaved, hand-written notations. Questionable or illegible words and/or characters appear in brackets. The arrangement of the transcription approximates that on the pages of the almanac.

The Hebrew language is shown as Gratz used it; the Hebrew font indicates Gratz's cursive script (versus printed characters). Transliterated equivalents appear beside the Hebrew in parentheses. Conventions of Gratz's Hebrew notations are footnoted upon their initial appearance. Transliterations that are explained fully in the text and which are defined in the Glossary (vii) appear in italics.

#### EXPLANATION

1778 Jan'y 13th		
Capt. Wm. Green Dr. to		
Cash gave him	£	30.00.0
Feb'y 6 Do. of I. Isaacs		27.10.0
12th Do. of me		3.0.0
13 Do. of Galb		15.0.0
Do. 100 Dols.		30.0.0
24th Do. of me		39.0.0
22 Do. Do.		30.0.0
25th Do. Do. 60 [Dol.]		18.0.0
March 11th Do. of [??]		15.0.0
12th Do. ---		30.0.0
16 Do. ---		1.16.0
18th Do. 180 [Dol.]		33.0.0

## IANUARY

Jany. 8th	----- ערשטע	(E. R. C. <i>Shevat</i> ) <sup>1</sup>
9	----- רחשטע	(R. C. <i>Shevat</i> ) <sup>2</sup>
11	----- פ' ארא	(P. <i>Vaera</i> ) <sup>3</sup>
Jany. 18	שבת פ' בא	( <i>Shabbat P. Bo</i> )
25	שבת בשלה	( <i>Shabbat Beshalah</i> )

## FEBRUARY

Feby. 1st	שבת פ' יתרו	( <i>Shabbat P. Yitro</i> )
6	----- ערשטע	(E. R. C.)
7&8	רח אדר ראשון	(R. C. <i>Adar Rishon</i> )
15th	שבת פ' תרומה	( <i>Shabbat P. Terumah</i> )
20	פ' ארס קטן	( <i>Purim Katan</i> )
22	שבת פ' תצא	( <i>Shabbat P. Tetzaveh</i> )

<sup>1</sup> *Erev Rosh Chodesh* is abbreviated by the initial letters of each Hebrew word.

<sup>2</sup> *Rosh Chodesh* is abbreviated by the initial letters of each Hebrew word.

<sup>3</sup> "Parashah," or "portion" of the *Torah* read on each Sabbath. This word is also abbreviated by its first letter. Names of portions remain as transliterations (versus translations) in this transcription.

## MARCH

March 1st	שבת פ' תשא	(Shabbat P. Ki Tissa)
8	ויקהל פ' שקלים	(Vayakel P. Shekalim) <sup>4</sup>
9&10	רח אדר שני	(R. C. Adar Sheni)
15 -----	שבת פ'פקודי	(Shabbat P. Pekude)
20 -----	צום אסתר	(Tzom Esther)
22 -----	ויקרא פ'זכור	(Vayikra P. Zachor)
23 -----	פורים	(Purim)
29 -----	צו פ'פאה	(Tzav P. Parah)

## APRIL

April 5th -----	שמנין פ' החודש	(Shemini P. Hachodesh)
7 -----	ערב	(E. R. C.)
8 -----	רח ניסן	(R. C. Nisan)
12 -----	שבת פ'תזריע	(Shabbat P. Tazria)
19 -----	שבת פ'מצורע	(Shabbat P. Metzora)
21 -----	ערב פסח	(Erev Pesach)
22&23 -----	א ו ב פסח	(1st and 2nd of Pesach) <sup>5</sup>
24..25 }		
שבת חג 26..27	חול המועד פסח (Shabbat C. H.)	(Chol Hamoed Pesach) <sup>6</sup>
28. 29	ז ו ח פסח	(7th and 8th of Pesach)

<sup>4</sup> Certain Sabbaths have names as well as portions. In entries where there is an indication of a portion ("P."), Gratz has put the name of the portion before and the name of the Sabbath after the "P."

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew uses the letters of the alphabet to indicate numbers. This entry and the one labeled "28. 29" below, use this system of numbering. The "and" and "of" are translated here for clarity.

<sup>6</sup> Gratz has used "C. H." and "Chol Hamoed" to indicate the Sabbath that occurs during the "celebration" of Passover and the duration of the "celebration" itself, respectively.

## MAY

May 3d	שבת פ אחרי מות	(Shabbat P. Ahare Mot)
7&8	רח אייר	(R. C. Iyar)
10	שבת פ קדוש'ק	(Shabbat P. Kedoshim)
17	שבת פ אמור	(Shabbat P. Emor)
24	שבת פ בהר	(Shabbat P. Behar)
25	ל'ג[?] עומר	(Lag B'Omer)
31	שבת פ בחקות'י	(Shabbat P. Bechukotai)

## JUNE

June 5	ערב ראש חודש	(Erev Rosh Chodesh) <sup>7</sup>
6	רח סיון	(R. C. Sivan)
7	שבת פ במדבר	(Shabbat P. Bemidbar)
10	ערב שבועות	(Erev Shavuot)
12&13	ב'א'ם בשבועות	(B'yomim B'Shavuot) <sup>8</sup>
14	שבת פ נשא	(Shabbat P. Naso)
21	שבת פ בהלות'ך	(Shabbat P. Behaalotecha)
28	שבת פ שלח לך	(Shabbat P. Shelach Lecha)

## JULY

July 5	שבת פ קרח אברה תמוז	(Shabbat P. Korach 1st of R.C. Tammuz)
6	ה ברח	(2nd of R.C.) <sup>9</sup>
12	שבת פ חקת	(Shabbat P. Chukkat)
19	שבת פ בלק	(Shabbat P. Balak)
22	יום תמוז	(Tzom Tammuz)
26	שבת פ פינחס	(Shabbat P. Pinchas)

<sup>7</sup> Gratz has spelled out the name of the holiday (versus abbreviating it).

<sup>8</sup> Literally, "the two days of *Shavuot*."

<sup>9</sup> 1st and 2nd days of a *two-day Rosh Chodesh* are indicated; "of" is translated for clarity.

## AUGUST

Augt. [1st]2nd	שבת מטות ומסעי	( <i>Shabbat Mattot V'Masei</i> ) <sup>10</sup>
4	ראש חודש אב	( <i>Rosh Chodesh Av</i> )
9	שבת פ' דברים	( <i>Shabbat P. Devarim</i> )
12	צום באב	( <i>Tzom B'Av</i> )
16	שבת פ' ואתחנן	( <i>Shabbat P. Vaetchanan</i> )
18	חמשה עשר	( <i>Chamishah Osar</i> )
23	שבת פ' עקב	( <i>Shabbat P. Ekev</i> )
30	שבת פ' רע"ה	( <i>Shabbat P. Re'eh</i> )

[??]

Norton OBeall Dr  
to Cash gave them  
Capt. I [?] [Read?] £25.—  
as pr his order on them  
Peters—[Petersburg?] 20th May 177[8?]

## SEPTEMBER

Sept. 2&3	רח אלול	( <i>R.C. Elul</i> )
6	שבת פ' שופטים	( <i>Shabbat P. Shofetim</i> )
13	שבת פ' כי תצא	( <i>Shabbat P. Ki Tetze</i> )
20	שבת פ' כי תבוא	( <i>Shabbat P. Ki Tavo</i> )
27	שבת ניצבים ויגאל	( <i>Shabbat Nitzavim Vayelech</i> )

[OCTOBER and NOVEMBER]<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Gratz corrected the first date in August by writing the "2nd" on top of the "1st." Both are visible.

<sup>11</sup> As discussed in the text, these months are missing from the almanac.

DECEMBER

To appear at Baltimr  
Court in March  
[Ninth?] 1778 o[r/n] [???]  
[Bill?]

There will be FIVE ECLIPSES

Jany 1st 1778  
Robt. Johnston  
Dr. for 1 £. 0. Bill [N515?]  
1000 Dollars £300.0.0

FAIRS are kept.

Frid Burg April 8th  
1778  
Philips [???] Dr.  
for 12 pr. R. Sail  
D[???] to be Deliverd  
him by Wm. Frazer  
on M[????] at  
£40 pr. Is £480.0.0

ROADS SOUTHWESTWARD

Capt. Martin Mc[?]ey<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> This note appears inverted on the page.

## APPENDIX C: TRANSCRIPTION, 1779 ALMANAC

Following is a transcription of the annotations made by Michael Gratz in his 1779 almanac. Underlined section headings refer to the title of the printed page opposite Gratz's interleaved, hand-written notations. Questionable or illegible words and/or characters appear in brackets. The arrangement of the transcription approximates that on the pages of the almanac.

### JANUARY

Borrowed of Maj. Trent	
721 Dolles	
<u>160</u>	
881	Dls
[?] for Mr. LAL	310
Jos. Simons	482
Phillip Boyle	<u>78</u>
560	870

### FEBRUARY

April 17. 1779 paid at  
the City Taveron for all  
of the United Comps. of  
Illinois & Wabash  
Expenses --- ---- £6.15.[?]



## MARCH

April 29, 1779

Sent to Lancaster to  
Michael Gratz by

at

1 ps. Nuns Holld. N 439. 25%

3 ps. Nankeen for family

1 ps. Holid. Linin N 660. 25

for Coll. Croghan

[asagaty?] Coat Nankeen

Jackett & Briches awhite

Jackett

## APRIL

April 29, 1779

Exchanged Michael G Mo[ney?]

2213 Dls of Mr. P. [L?]

513 Do of Mrs [?]

3479 of W. Steizer

1135 Do

800Do of S.M.C.

8140

1590 of Michael hart

695 of Stock

## MAY

May 25 . 1779 Sent

1 Loan office Certificate

Dolls.

N1336 for 1000

payable to my Hand

Signed fran<sup>cis</sup> Hopkins

Dated 12th Jany. 1777

[?] Th L. Smith

## JUNE

Loan office Certif  
N 2341 - 500 Dlls.  
2353 - 500 Dlls.  
paybl to [a given?] Col  
Cu[stiss?]  
Dated [31?] March  
1779 [??]  
[??]  
Jos. Borden

## JULY

30 lb Sugr.....	£30.....
20 Galls s[?]+ 240.....	
@£12	
Tea.....	<u>12.....</u>
	282.....
S[?]ts.....	<u>30.....</u>
	312..

---

July 30th . 1779 Rec'd of  
Alexander More 3960  
Continental paper Dolls.  
to keep for him untill  
he Returns from a  
Croose in the privateer  
Mars Captn. Tailer  
for Which sum I have  
given him my bond  
of this Date payable on

## AUGUST

Rec'd. of Michael at  
Wm.sberg June 27.

1 [Bundle?] 1309 1/3....£491.. ---  
1 Do. 1114 -- 417..15

---

payable on Demand  
in Continentle Money  
without Interest  
3960 Dlls is Equal to £1405.  
Pennsyla. Curry.

## SEPTEMBER

Virginia Delegation  
Congress  
Gabriel Jones  
Edmund Randolph  
James Mercer  
Patrick Henry  
Merriweather Smith  
Silas Griffin  
Willm. fitzhugh

## OCTOBER

Lancaster July 19th 1779  
Rec'd. of Jacob Tomb  
for his notes to M.G.) £816.[?]

---

George Croghan D. to Cash  
Lent him this Day out of  
Dls.  
the above money 120 £45..

---

allso Taken out of the above  
money in my Pocket 126

---

Left with Miriam Gratz  
for house Expenses  
300 Dolls is } £112.10

## NOVEMBER

Mattathias Landam  
on Harford Road --  
the First House  
after you turn out  
of the Lancaster Road  
4 miles From Phila.  
Sent to Him the 1st  
Roane  
Augt. 1779. My ^ Horse  
to [Paster/Porter?] Markd. on  
the Left Shoulder SM

[blank center leaves]

Sept. 23d Rec'd. of [?] Moses  
4591.12- on accot. of  
Sailers Shears

## DECEMBER

Octo.- 15 pd. Mr. De coas[?]  
for my Expenses from  
Philada. to fridricktown  
125 1/5 Dolls. - is - £47. --

There will be Six ECLIPSES

Decemr. 27. 1779 at Wmsbrg  
Rec'd. at Devenports  
for Expenses £94..2.. -  
Beef for MPC. 60..8 -  
£154.10.515 [?]

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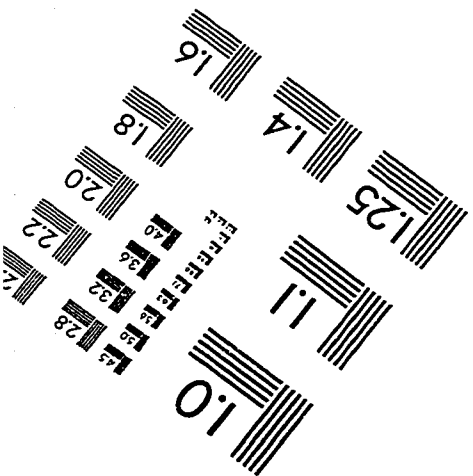
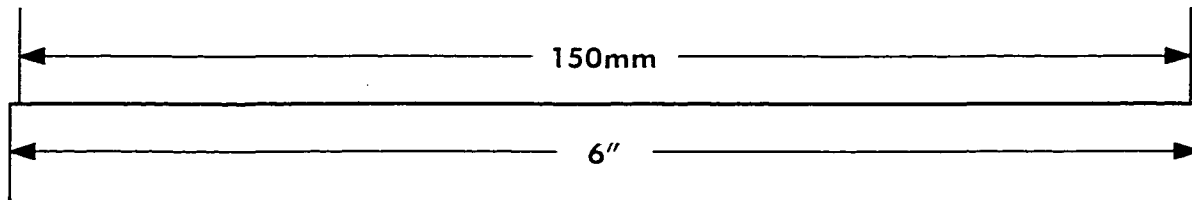
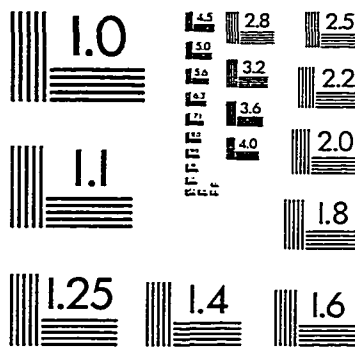
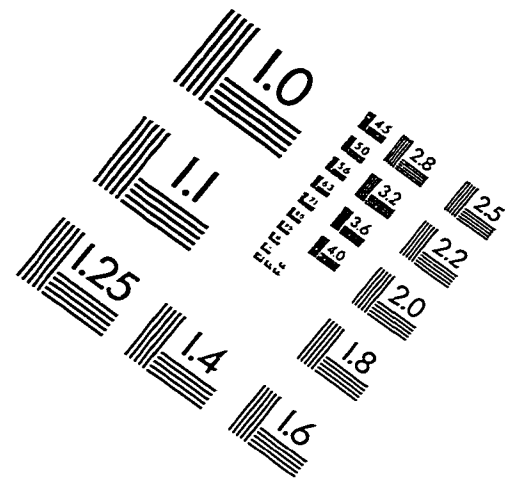
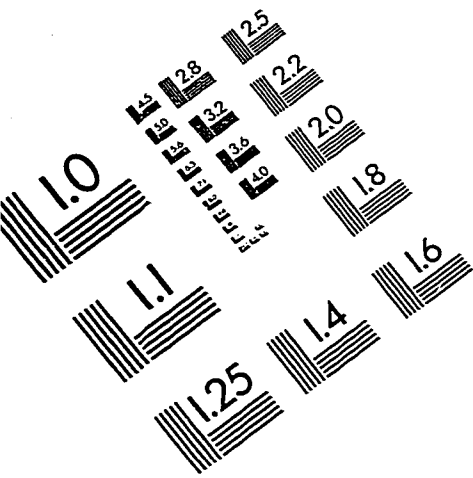
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