

## American Minute with Bill Federer

"Jews of the United States ... were free ... In a comparatively short time, prospered ... in a degree unexampled in Europe"-*London Jewish Chronicle*, 1862

After seven centuries of **Islamic occupation**, which included episodes of forced conversions and massacres, **Ferdinand and Isabella** drove the last of the Muslims out of **Spain** in 1492.



The same year they sent **Columbus** on his voyage to find a sea route to **India** and **China**, as **Muslims** had cut off the **land route**.

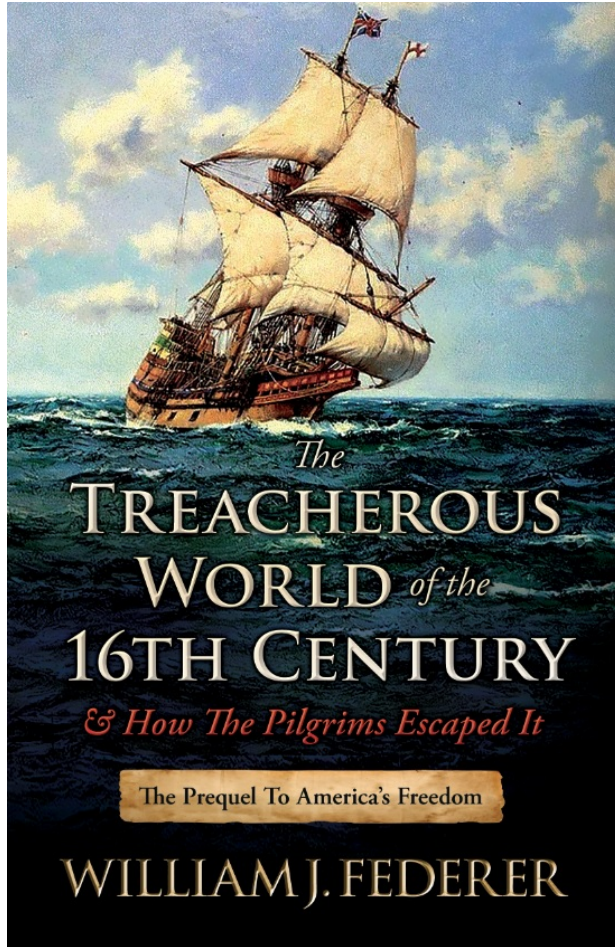
Under the pretense that some **Muslims** might be staying in **Spain** posing as **Jews**, possibly to attempt an **assassination** or **coup**, **King Ferdinand** decided to order all **Jews** to **convert** or **leave**, thus **ending one of the largest and most prosperous Sephardic Jewish communities in the world**.

This was similar to **Jews** being expelled from **England** by **Edward I** in 1290.

**Jews** that converted and stayed in Spain were called **Marrano** or **Converso**, some of whom risked arrest by

continuing to practice their Jewish traditions in secret.

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[The Treacherous World of the 16th Century and How the Pilgrims Escaped It: The Prequel to America's Freedom](#)

In regret of this, on December 13, 2016, **King Felipe VI of Spain** addressed the **Conference of European Rabbis:**

"Our European identity cannot be understood nor complete without taking into account the decisive contribution of the **Jews**, who have lived in the continent since the dawn of history ...

Now -- as it did then -- Europe needs the invaluable contribution of its **Jewish communities**, because we need to be honest and respectful to both our common **Judeo-Christian values and origins ...**

Esteemed rabbis, I welcome you to **Spain**, an open and tolerant country in which respect for diversity is a defining characteristic.



We are also filled with pride by **Spain's** active and flourishing **Jewish community ...** (whose) rites, liturgy, renowned surnames, ballads, proverbs and seasonings ... should never have allowed to be lost ... "

**King Felipe VI**  
continued:

"(In) 1992 ... after entering the **Ben Yaacob Synagogue in Madrid**, the official welcome was marked by the words of my father **King Juan**



**Carlos: 'Spanish Jews are in their homeland' ...**

**Spain's** efforts in recent years to return the country's

**Jewish culture** to its rightful state are simply a duty in the name of justice.

The **Sephardim's** unyielding love and loyalty towards **Spain** represents a powerful example ... who, for **five centuries, stayed true to their heritage."**

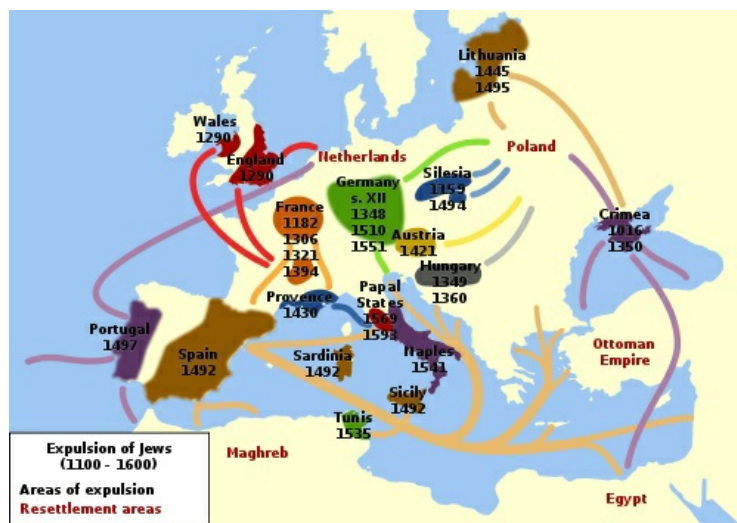


In 1492, some of the exiled **Jews** went to the **Ottoman Empire**, or **Morocco**, **Tangier**, **Fez**, and **areas of North Africa**, though they later suffered much persecution

and bloodshed.

Some went to **Portugal**, but when **King Manuel I of Portugal** married the **daughter of the King of Spain**, he instituted the same policy in 1497, of convert or leave.

Some **Jews** fled to the **Madeira Islands**.



Other Jews went to the **Netherlands**, which was **Europe's center of religious**



toleration.

**Jews** migrated to the **Netherlands'** largest city, **Amsterdam**, which went on to become **the wealthiest city in the world in the 1600s**.

Some **Jews** settled in the city of **Leiden, Holland**.

From 1575, the **University of Leiden** became known as a center of the study of **Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac**, even having a **Jewish rabbi** as a professor.



In 1607, the **Pilgrims** fled from **King James I of England**, crossed the English Channel, and settled in **Leiden, Holland**, where they became acquainted with the **Jews**.

The **Pilgrims** identified with the **Jews**, whose **ancestors covenanted together with God**, fled from the



persecution of Pharaoh, crossed the Red Sea, and entered into the Promised Land.

In 1620, the **Pilgrims**, having fled from the King of England, sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to settle **Plymouth, Massachusetts**, - their new **Promised Land**.



## Hebraists, Christian

**HEBRAISTS, CHRISTIAN** (1100–1890). Factors governing gentile en latest phase of more widespread secular attitudes may be distingui and (3) occasion; appreciation and assessment of these ought to Hebraists in the context of the cultural background, including e history relevant in each case. Such considerations ought to preci

**Scholars** of the era were called "**Christian Hebraists**," as they were fascinated with the ancient **Hebrew Republic** and **Israel's concept of a people in "covenant" with each other under God**.

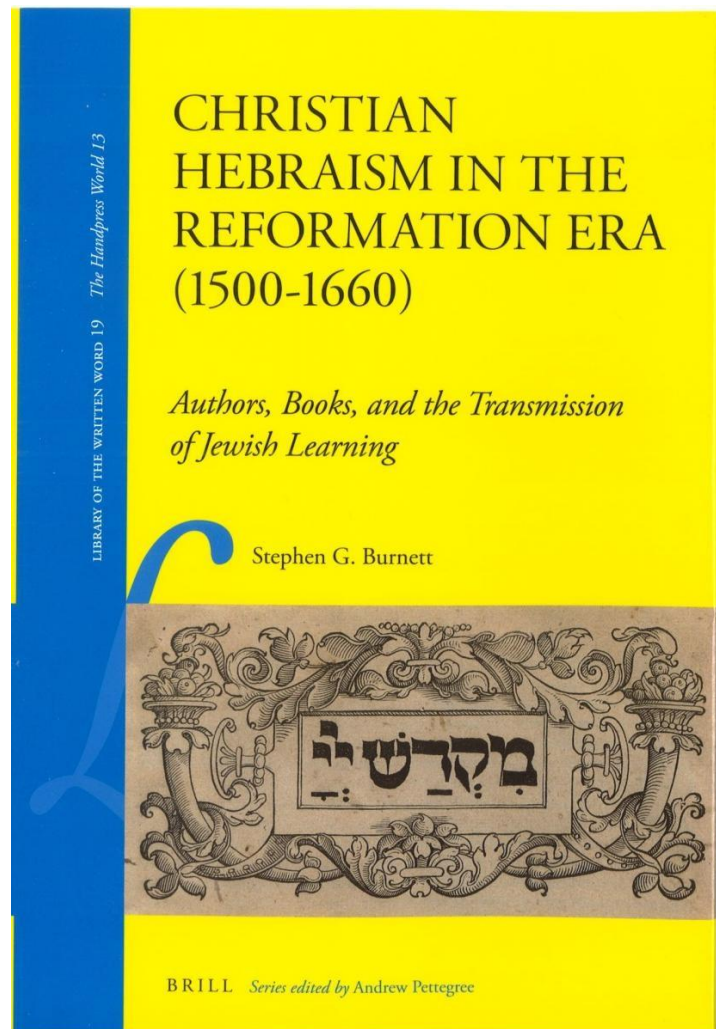
Notable "**Christian Hebraists**" were:

- **Thomas Erastus** (1524–1583);
- **Bonaventure Vulcanius** (1535–1614);
- **Joseph Scaliger** (1540–1609);
- **Johannes van den Driesche** (1550–1616);

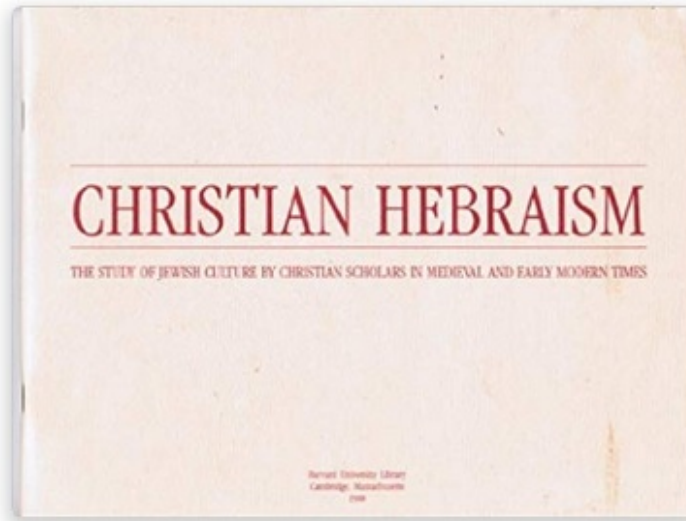
- Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614);
- Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629);
- Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655);
- Hugo Grotius (1583–1645);
- John Selden (1584–1654);
- Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679);
- James Harrington (1611–1677);
- Petrus Cunaeus (1586–1638), who published *The Hebrew Republic* in 1617; and
- John Sadler (1615-1674), whose sister, Ann, married John Harvard, namesake of Harvard University.

**Christian Hebraists** were Protestant and Catholic scholars, who, in the century between the Reformation and the Age of Enlightenment, studied:

- the ancient Hebrew republic;
- the Hebrew language;
- Jewish historian Josephus (37–100);
- the Jerusalem Talmud (2nd century AD);
- the Babylonian Talmud (4th century AD);



- Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1135–1204); and
- Rabbinic literature.



Just as **Oxford** and **Cambridge** in England taught **Hebrew**, in America, **Harvard students** were required to study **Hebrew**.

In 1685, **Harvard's commencement**

**address** was delivered in the **Hebrew** language.

Other early American colleges, such as **Yale, Dartmouth, and Columbia**, had **Hebrew** taught at **Harvard, Yale, Columbia,** and other universities. also had **requirements for students to learn Hebrew.**

### **JewishEncyclopedia** .com

*The unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia*

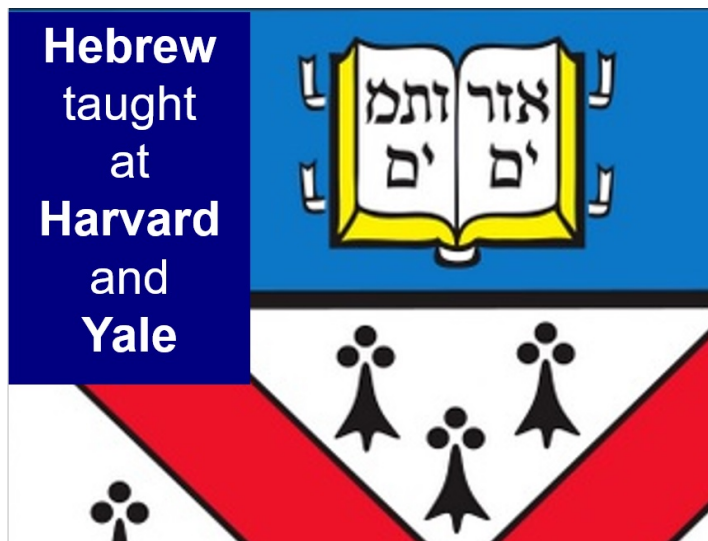
#### **HEBRAISTS, CHRISTIAN:**

**By:** Richard Gottheil

The work of Christian scholars in the field of Hebrew literature demands special treatment, not only as part of the history of Jewish literature itself, but also as an indication of the relation which existed between Jews and Christians at various epochs. The neglect by Christians of this study has given rise to many of the false ideas in regard to the Jews and their history which have been current down to the present day. The early fathers of the Christian Church recognized the necessity of understanding the ideas of the mother Synagogue, and got their knowledge of Hebrew traditions (*i.e.*, the Haggadah) from their Jewish teachers. This is seen especially in the exegesis of Justin Martyr, Aphraates, Ephraem Syrus, and Origen. Jerome's teachers are even mentioned by name—*e.g.*, Bar Hanina (Hananiah). This knowledge, however, gradually grew less and less as the separation between Church and Synagogue

In the Renaissance.

What was known of Jewish literature came to the scholastics entirely through translations: works of Albertus Magnus. That The Venerable Bede (673-735) knew anything of Hebrew



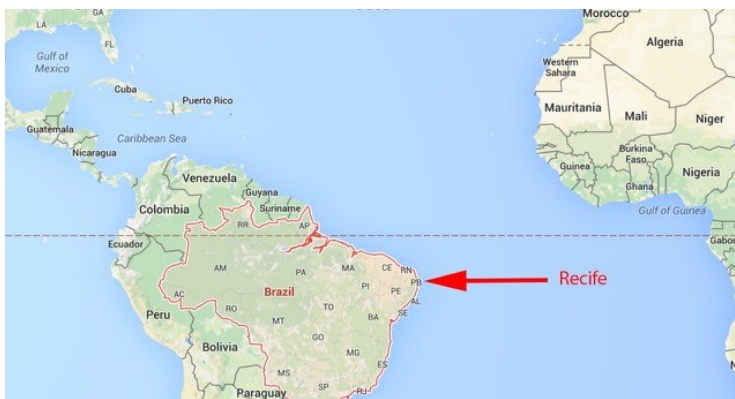
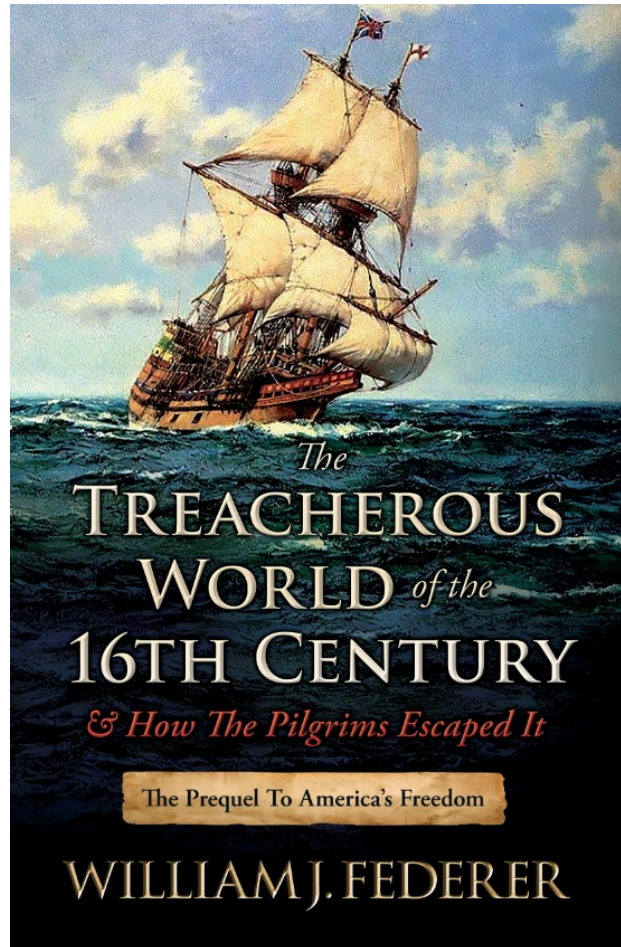
In 1722, **Harvard** hired **Judah Monis**, its **first full-time Hebrew instructor**, who published *A Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue* (1735) - the **first Hebrew textbook** published in **North America**.



**Columnist Don Feder** gave an address to the Friends of Israel, titled "America & Israel—Two Nations Joined At the Heart" (Grand Rapids, MI, May 15, 2014):

"More than Athens ... more than Roman Law, and English Common Law – **Israel shaped America.**"

[The Treacherous World of the 16th Century and How the Pilgrims Escaped It: The Prequel to America's Freedom](#)



Many **Jews** that had been expelled from Spain sailed with **Dutch** merchants to settlements around the world, including the

**South American city of Recife.**

There, **Jews** built the first **synagogue** in the

**Western Hemisphere,**  
Kahal Zur Israel  
Synagogue in  
1636.

When **Spain and Portugal**  
recaptured **Recife**  
from the **Dutch**,  
the **Jews** were  
pressured to flee again.



**Twenty-three Jews** sailed from **Recife** to **Port Royal, Jamaica**.

Then they boarded the French ship *Sainte Catherine* and headed north,

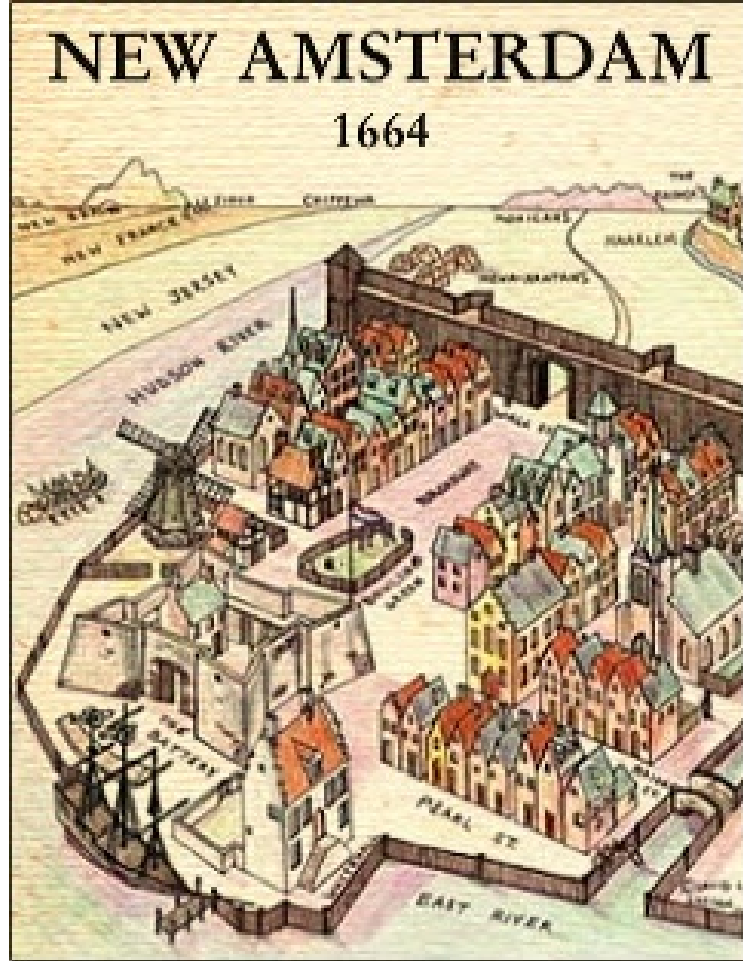
but were soon **robbed by a Spanish privateer** and stripped of their valuables.

Arriving in the **Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam** on August 22, 1654, they were considered the **first Jews to settle in North America**.

Being totally destitute after their voyage, members of the **Dutch Reformed**

**Church** took care of the **Jews** that first winter.

**New Amsterdam** would eventually become **the richest city in the world** in the early 20th century.



**New Amsterdam Director-General Peter Stuyvesant** attempted to expel the Jews, as he had previously tried to expel **Lutherans**.

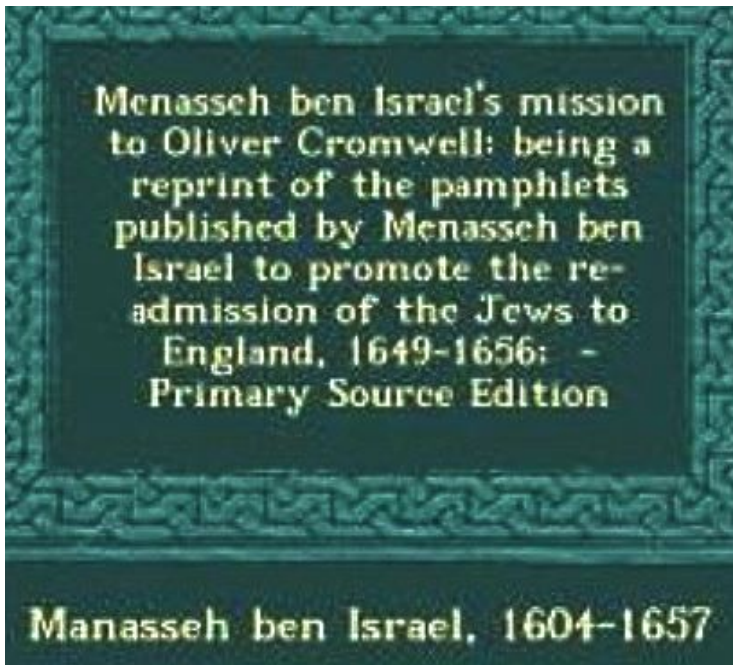
The **Jewish** arrivals were allowed to stay, though, because the **directors of Dutch West India Company** shared a common sympathy with them, as both

experienced **suffering under Spanish tyranny**.

The **Dutch** were in a global contest with **Spain, Portugal, and England** over possessions in **Indonesia, India,**



**Africa and South America**, and as a result, they wanted to **quickly populate the colony of New Netherlands** for its defense and profitability.



In 1657, **Oliver Cromwell** allowed **Jews** back into **England**, reversing the expulsion of Jews dating back to **King Edward I** in 1290.

In 1657, the **first Quakers** arrived in **New Amsterdam**, but **Director-General Stuyvesant** banished them.



In their defense, 31 residents signed a petition, the **Flushing Remonstrance**, but the signers, too, were **arrested**.

In 1663, the directors of the **Dutch West India Company**, after reading a lengthy protest letter written by **Quaker**



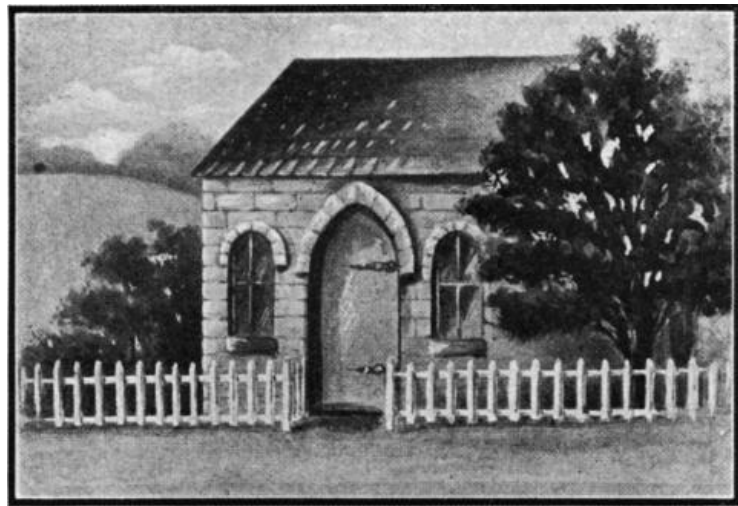
**John Browne,**  
sent instructions to  
**Stuyvesant:**

"Immigration ...  
must be favored at  
**so tender a stage**  
**of the country's**  
**existence,** you  
may therefore shut

your eyes, **at least not force people's consciences,**

but allow everyone to have his own belief, as long as **he**  
**behaves quietly and legally,** gives no offense to his  
neighbors and **does not oppose the government."**

**Jews** were  
allowed to stay in  
**New Amsterdam,**  
but were initially  
not allowed to own  
a home, or  
worship outside  
their residences,  
or join the city's  
militia.

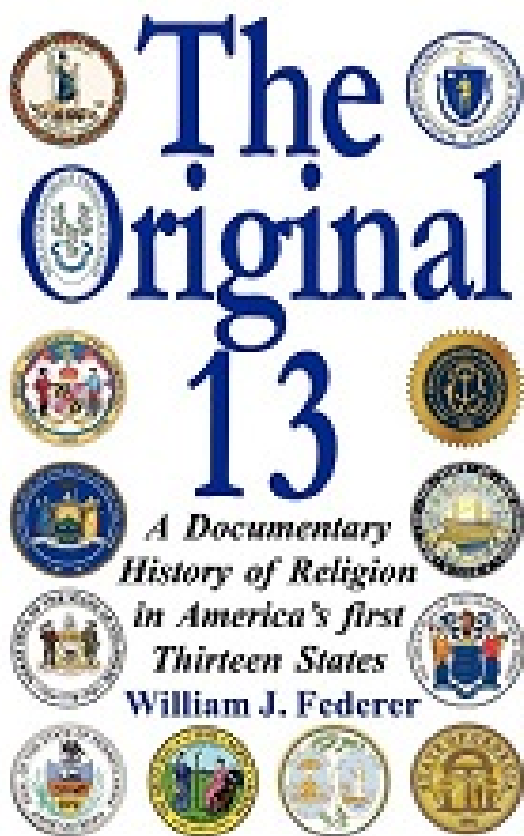


In 1664, near the  
beginning of the  
**Second Anglo-**  
**Dutch War** - a war  
in which **British**  
**Admiral William**  
**Penn, Sr.,** fought -  
**English forces**

took control of **New Amsterdam** and renamed it **New**  
**York.**

This resulted in **Jews** having more freedom.

In 1730, **Jewish citizens in New York** bought land and built the small "**Mill Street Synagogue,**" the first Jewish house of worship in North America.



[THE ORIGINAL 13 - A Documentary History of Religion in America's First Thirteen States](#)

During the colonial era, **America's population** grew to **3 million**, which was approximately:

- **98 percent Protestant**
- **around 1**

- percent  
Catholic; and
- less than one tenth of 1 percent Jewish.

Denomination	Number	Percent
Congregational	668	20.7
Presbyterian*	588	18.2
Baptist**	497	15.4
Episcopal	495	15.3
Quakers	310	9.6
German Reformed	159	4.9
Lutheran***	150	4.6
Dutch Reformed	120	3.7
Methodist	65	2.0
Roman Catholic	56	1.7
Moravian	31	1.0
Separatist and Independent	31	1.0
Dunker	24	0.7
Mennonite	16	0.5
Huguenot	7	0.2
Sandemanian	6	0.2
Jewish	5	0.2

By the time of the Revolution, **America's Jewish population** was estimated to be somewhere between **1,000 to 2,500**, located in **seven Sephadic congregations**:



- **Shearith Israel**, New York City, begun 1655;
- **Yeshuat Israel**, Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island, begun 1658;
- **Mickve Israel**, Savannah, Georgia, begun 1733;
- **Mikveh Israel**, Philadelphia, begun 1740;
- **Shaarai Shomayim**, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, begun 1747;
- **Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim**, Charleston, South Carolina, begun 1749; and
- **Kahal Kadosh Beth Shalom**, Richmond, Virginia, begun 1789.

From the 3rd century on, **Jews** scattered



around the world followed the teaching of **Rabbi Samuel of Nehardea in Babylonia**, namely, that **"the law of the land is the law."**

This resulted in **Jews refraining from trying to change the politics of the host countries they lived in**, similar to the practice of **early Christians** during their **first three centuries**.

This teaching is **diametrically opposed to fundamental wahhabi Islamic teaching**, which attempts to **overthrow governments of host countries to establish sharia law**.

During the **Middle Ages**, the **Jew's** insistence on non-involvement in city politics **unfortunately caused them to be held suspect** by all political parties.

The **American Revolutionary War** was the **first time since being exiled from Jerusalem** that **Jews fought alongside of their Christian neighbors as equals in the fight for freedom**.







**Jewish** merchants, such as **Aaron Lopez of Newport** and **Isaac Moses of Philadelphia**, sailed their ships **past British blockades** to provide **clothing, guns, powder**

**and food** to the needy **Revolutionary soldiers**.

Some merchants lost everything.

An estimated 160 **Jews** fought in the **Continental American Army** during the **Revolutionary War**, such as:

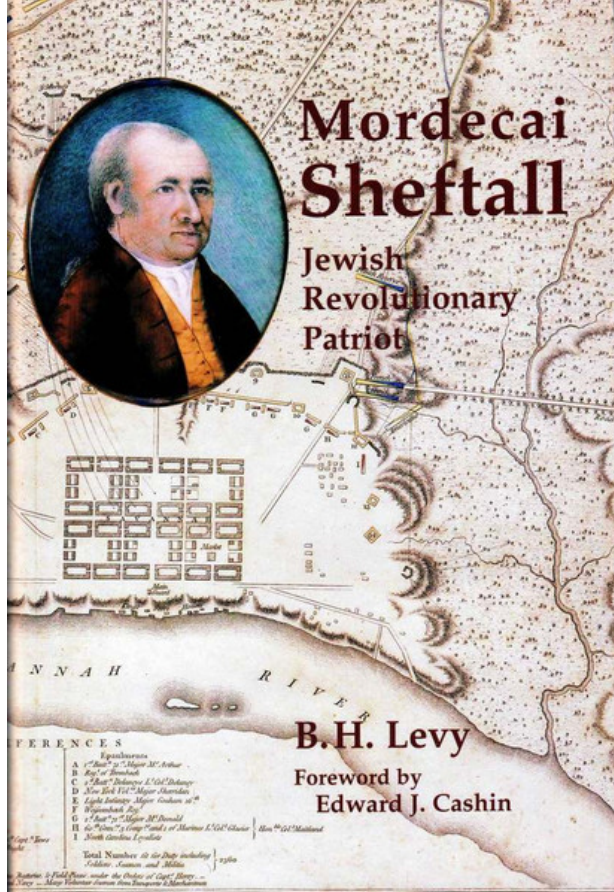
- **Lieut. Col. Solomon Bush** fought in the Battle of Long Island and the Battle of Brandywine, where he was wounded and his brother, Capt. Lewis Bush, was killed;
- **Francis Salvador** of South Carolina, the first Jewish State Legislator, who was killed in the Revolutionary War;
- **Col. Mordecai Sheftall** of Savannah was Deputy Commissary



General for American troops, 1778;

- **Abigail Minis** supplied provisions to American soldiers in 1779; and
- **Capt. Reuben Etting** fought in the Revolution, being captured at Charleston. He was later appointed U.S. Marshall for Maryland by Thomas Jefferson, 1801.

- Jewish physician, **Dr. Philip Moses Russell** was **George Washington** doctor, who even suffered with him at **Valley Forge**.



**President Calvin Coolidge** recounted, May 3, 1925:

**"Haym Solomon, Polish Jew**



**financier** of the Revolution. Born in Poland, he was made prisoner by the British forces in New York, and when he escaped set up in business in Philadelphia.

He negotiated for **Robert Morris** all the loans raised in France and

Holland, pledged his personal faith and fortune for enormous amounts,

and personally **advanced large sums to such men as James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Baron Steuben, General St. Clair,** and many other patriot leaders who testified that **without his aid they could not have carried on in the cause."**



In 1975, a U.S. postage stamp honored **Haym Solomon**, with printing on the back:

"Financial hero-businessman and broker **Haym**

**Solomon** was responsible for **raising most of the money needed to finance the American Revolution** and later **saved the new nation from collapse."**

**Yale President Ezra Styles** identified the

country as  
"American  
Israel."

Harvard  
President Rev.  
Samuel Langdon  
gave an address  
at the New  
Hampshire  
ratifying  
Convention, titled  
"The Republic of  
the Israelites an example to the American States,"  
June 5, 1788:

"The Israelites may be considered as a pattern to the world in all ages ... (of) government ... on republican principles ...

How unexampled was this quick progress of the Israelites, from abject slavery, ignorance, and almost total want of order, to a national establishment perfected in all its parts far beyond all other kingdoms and States!

From a mere mob, to a well regulated nation, under a government and laws far superior to what any other nation could boast!"

After Rev.  
Langdon's  
address, New  
Hampshire's  
delegates voted to  
ratify the U.S.

Constitution, and being the 9th State to do so, put the Constitution into effect, June 21, 1788.



On June 19, 1790,



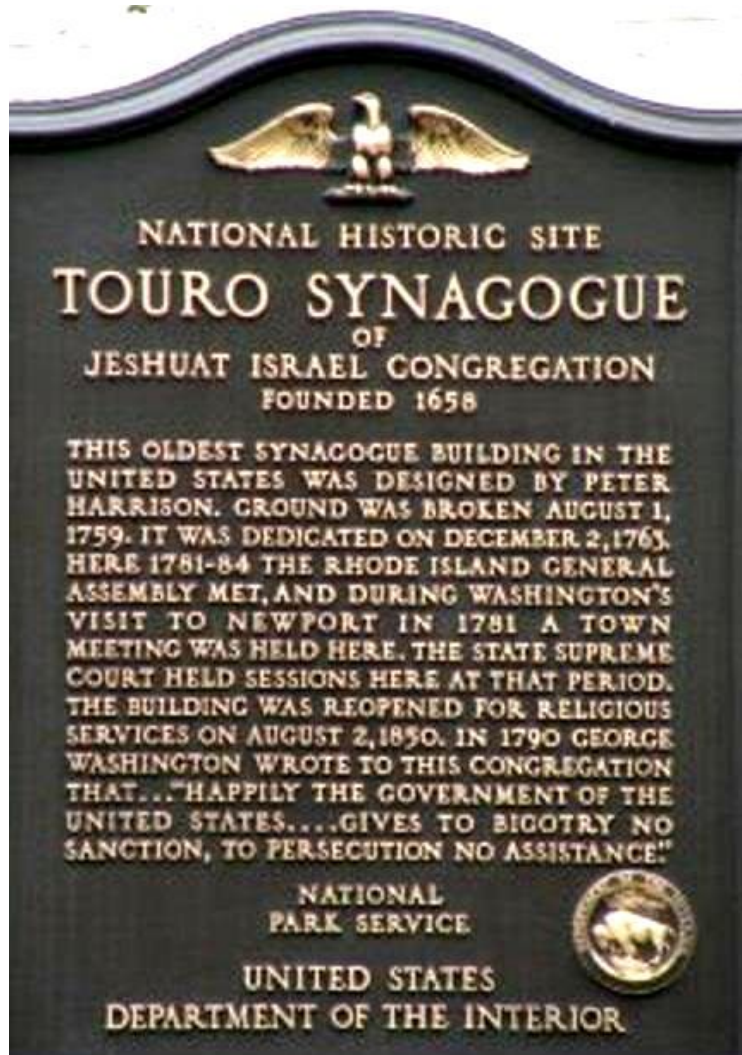
**George Washington** sent a letter to the Levi Sheftal and the Jewish Congregation in Savannah, Georgia:

"May the same wonder-working Deity, who long since delivered

the **Hebrews** from their **Egyptian oppressors**, planted them in a promised land, whose providential agency has lately been conspicuous in establishing these **United States** as an **independent nation**, still continue to water them with the **dews of heaven.**"

On August 21, 1790, **President Washington** responded to a letter from Moses Seixas and the **Hebrew congregation of Newport, Rhode Island**:

"The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy ... All



possess alike **liberty of conscience** and immunities of citizenship.

It is now no more that **toleration** is spoken of, as if it was by the **indulgence of one class of people**, that another enjoyed the **exercise of their inherent natural rights**.

For happily the Government of the United States, which **gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance** requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support ...

May the **children of the Stock of Abraham**, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while **every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree**, and there shall be **none to make him afraid**. (Micah 4:4)

May the **Father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths** and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and **in his own due time and way everlastingly happy**." (Job 36:30; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 42:16)



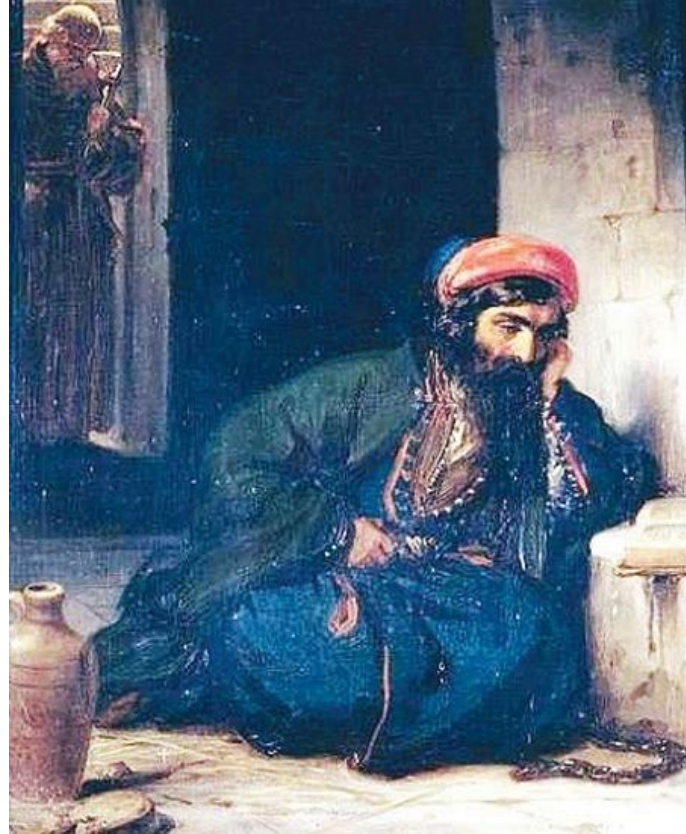
**Ashkenazic Jews** were few in America until a persecution in **Bavaria** in the 1830s resulted in many thousands immigrating.

The **Jewish population** in America grew from a **tenth of one percent** to nearly **2 percent**.

**President Martin Van Buren** sent a

letter to the **Muslim Ottoman Turks** requesting that they stop killing Jews in **Syria** during the **Damascus Affair**:

"on behalf of an **oppressed and persecuted race**, among whose kindred are found **some of the most worthy and patriotic of American citizens.**"



**David Yulee**, "Father of Florida Railroads," was the **first Jew** elected to the **U.S Senate** in 1845.

He was joined in 1853 by **Senator Judah P. Benjamin** from Louisiana.

**Governor David Emanuel** of

**Georgia** was the **first Jewish Governor** of any **U.S. State**.

In 1818, **Solomon Jacobs** was the "acting" **Mayor of Richmond, Virginia**.

In 1832, Pittsburgh's 7th mayor was **Samuel Pettigrew**,

the **first full-time Jewish Mayor in America.**

**Uriah P. Levy** was the **first Jewish Commodore** in the U.S. Navy, fighting in the War of 1812 and commanding the Mediterranean squadron.

He was responsible for **ending the practice of flogging** in the Navy. A chapel at Annapolis and a WWII destroyer were named after him.

When **Jefferson's Monticello** home was decaying, **Levy** bought it in 1836, repaired it and opened it to the public. **He commissioned the statute of Jefferson** which is in the **U.S. Capitol rotunda.**



Photo # NH 48113 Commo. Uriah P. Levy, USN

**Samuel Mayer Isaacs**, editor of the *Jewish Messenger*, wrote of the United States, December 28, 1860:

**"This Republic was the first to recognize our claims to absolute equality, with men of whatever religious**



denomination.

Here we can sit each under his vine and fig tree, with none to make him afraid." (Micah 4:4)

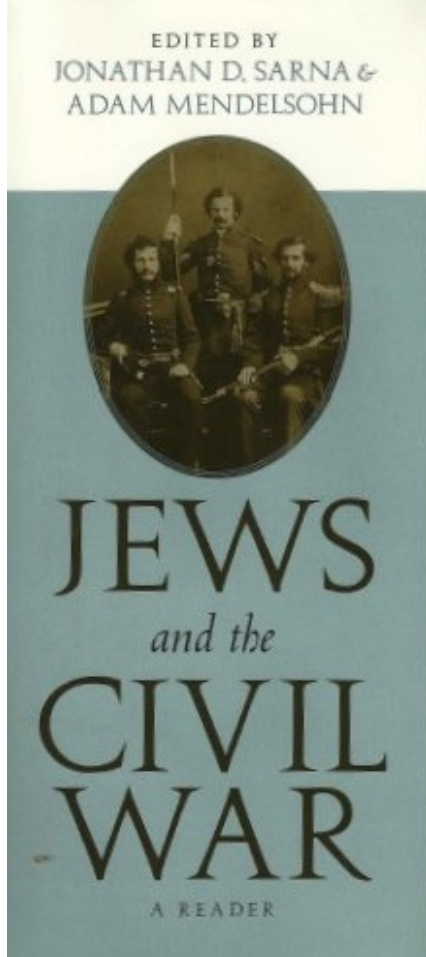


In 1862, the *London Jewish Chronicle* reported:

"We now have a few words of the **Jews of the United States** in general ... **The Constitution** having established perfect religious liberty, **Jews were free in America** ... They ... in a comparatively short time, **prospered** and throve there in a degree **unexampled in Europe.**"



At the time of the **Civil War**, the population of the United States was 31 million, including around **150,000 to 200,000 Jews.**



An estimated 7,000 **Jews** fought for the **Union** and 3,000 fought for the **Confederacy**, with around 600 **Jewish** soldiers dying in battle.

**Jewish Union Generals** were: **Leopold Blumenberg**; **Frederick Knefler**; **Edward S. Salomon**; and **Frederick C. Salomon**.

**Jewish Confederate** officers included:

- **Judah P. Benjamin**, Secretary of War;
- **Colonel Abraham Charles Myers**, Quartermaster General;
- **Dr. David Camden DeLeon**, Surgeon General;
- **Surgeon Dr. Simon Baruch** served on General Robert E. Lee's personal staff.



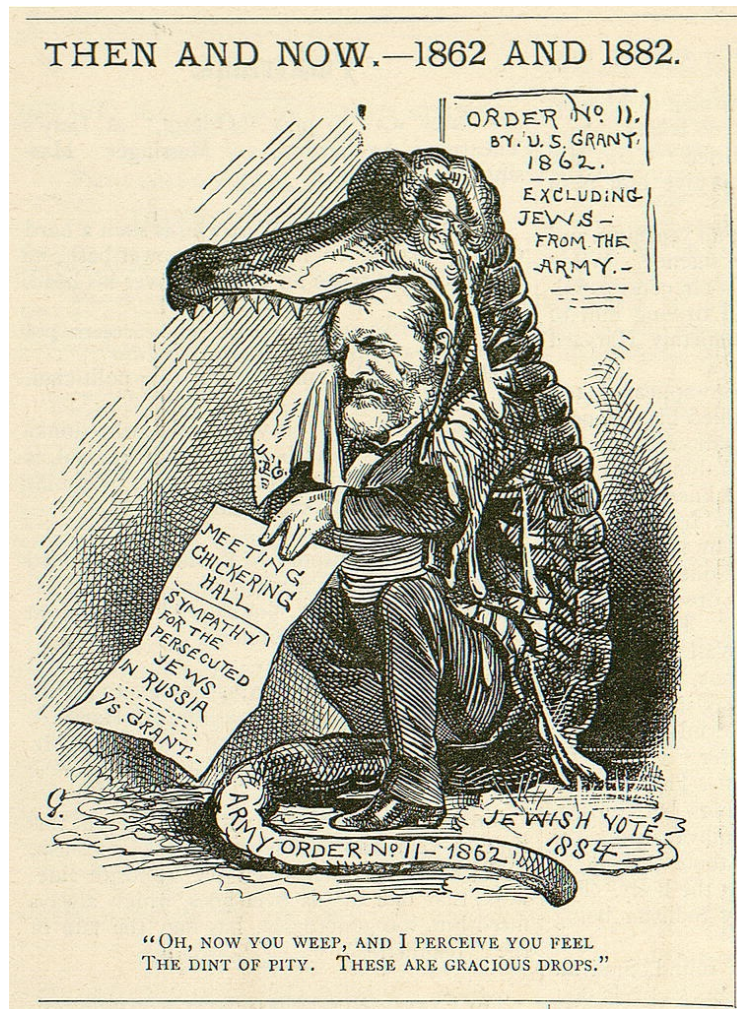
- **Major Raphael J. Moses** was Commissary Officer of Georgia, and after the war began Georgia's peach industry.

During the Siege of Vicksburg, **General Grant** issued his notorious **General Order 11** expelling Jews from the military, which **Lincoln** immediately cancelled.

Later as President, **Grant** appointed more Jews to high offices than any of his predecessors, including **Governor of the Washington Territory, Edward S. Solomon.**

**Grant** openly condemn the persecution of **Jews**, specifically the **anti-Jewish pogroms in Romania.**

He even sent a **Jewish consul-general from America** to Bucharest to "work for the benefit of the people who are laboring under severe oppression."



Just as the **first Catholic U.S. Army chaplain** was appointed during the **Mexican-**



**American War, the first Jewish chaplain was appointed by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.**

His name was **Rev. Jacob Frankel** of Philadelphia's Congregation Rodeph Shalom.

On March 1, 1881, **Tsar Alexander II of Russia** was assassinated and a pogrom began against **Jews**, leading to over 2 million fleeing to America.



This was memorialized in the play ***Fiddler on the Roof***.

By 1916, the United States population was 100 million, of which **3 million**

were Jewish.



During World War I, President **Woodrow Wilson** wrote:

"Whereas in countries engaged in war there are **9 million Jews**, the majority of whom

are **destitute of food, shelter, and clothing; driven from their homes** without warning ... causing starvation, disease and untold suffering ..."

**Wilson** added:

"The people of the U.S. have learned with sorrow of this **terrible plight** ... I proclaim **JANUARY 27, 1916**, a day to

make contributions for the aid of the stricken Jewish people to the American Red Cross."

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["Jews of the United States were free ... & prospered ... in a degree unexampled in Europe"-London Jewish Chronicle, 1862](#)



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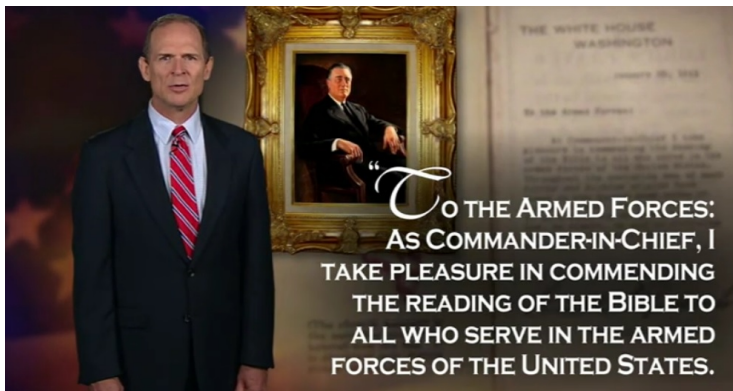
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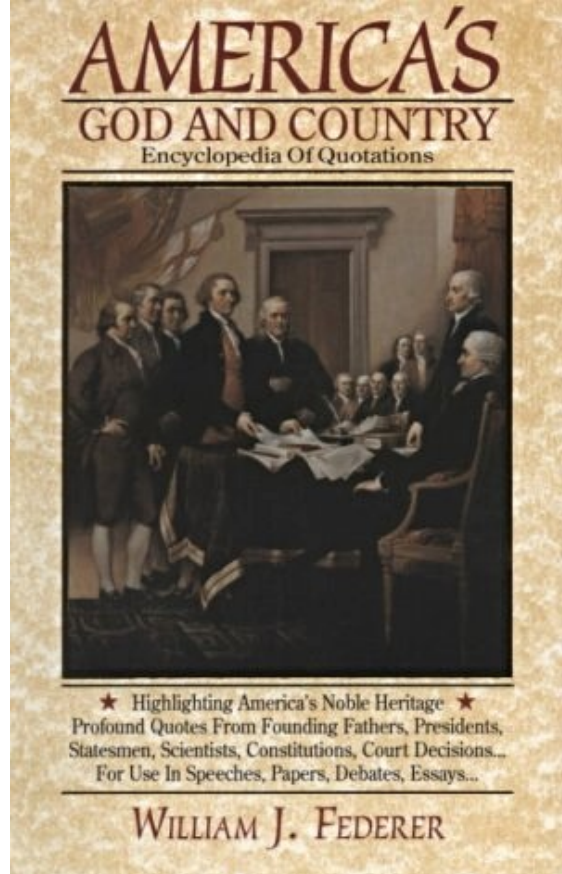
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