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Nameless Graves:
The Touro Infirmary Cemetery in New Orleans,
1888–1908

by

Florence M. Jumonville*

On November 27, 1888, Isaac Weis entered a New Orleans hospital. The thirty-four-year-old peddler, a native of Austria, had been in the city for just two days. His diagnosis: typhoid fever. Exacerbated by poor sanitation and inadequate hygiene, cases of the dreaded bacterial disease arose most frequently among impoverished, malnourished immigrants. Except during the epidemic years of 1847 through 1852, just a handful of cases occurred annually in the Crescent City. In 1888 Touro Infirmary admitted three typhoid sufferers. Two died, one being Isaac Weis, who succumbed on December 20. The next day, the Touro lost another patient, Mrs. B. Levi, who fell victim to chronic albuminuria (albumin in the urine, symptomatic of kidney disease) after two days in the hospital. The forty-seven-year-old housewife had moved to New Orleans from Bavaria at the age of nineteen. Hers was one of two deaths from albuminuria at the Touro that year.¹

During the nineteenth century, hospitals functioned on the periphery of health care. Sick people obtained assistance from relatives or neighbors, consulting a physician only if illness persisted. They viewed hospitals as a last resort, a refuge that privileged Americans provided for the less fortunate— young men such as Isaac Weis, distant from the ministrations of their families and friends, and people who, like Mrs. Levi, fell victim to incapacitating disorders. By midcentury, however, confidence in the beneficial effects of contemporary medicine had begun to build. The Civil War transformed medical treatment and dramatically

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advanced the design and administration of hospitals, demonstrating, for example, the therapeutic properties of cleanliness, orderliness, and ventilation. The war also introduced hospital care to a large proportion of the nation's young men, who fell ill or sustained injuries while in military service. Although destitution, desperation, and agony still impelled the urban poor to accept the charity and the trauma of inpatient treatment, they no longer constituted virtually the entire hospital population.²

In addition to their European nativity, poverty, and avoidance of medical care until their conditions became dire, Isaac Weis and Mrs. Levi shared the coincidence that they passed away at the same hospital within hours of each other. That and their Jewish faith led further to the happenstance that theirs were the first burials in the newly established Touro Infirmary Cemetery on Joseph Street, where their remains were laid to rest in neighboring plots respectively labeled only 1 and 2. Over the next twenty years, additional charitable interments followed in another 153 graves. The occupants of 117 of them are identified in the death records of Touro Infirmary, which are housed at its archives.³

What does information in those records tell us about the nineteenth-century Jewish community in New Orleans and how it addressed the burial of its poor? How did their interments compare with those of indigent gentiles and of Touro Infirmary patients with means? Where did the Touro Infirmary Cemetery fit in the larger mosaic of Jewish philanthropy in New Orleans, and who spearheaded that philanthropy? An investigation of charitable interments between 1888 and 1908 suggests that New Orleanians of all faiths shared a desire to bury the indigent respectfully on ground higher than the city's water table.

The New Orleans Way of Death

Sometime after 1725, the first formal cemetery in New Orleans was established on St. Peter Street, slightly beyond the city limits of that time. Situated in the square bounded also by Rampart, Burgundy, and Toulouse Streets, it stood just across Rampart Street from one of the several hospitals that existed in the early years. In other parts of what became the United States, settlers built hospitals as swiftly as possible. It is likely that they repeated the procedure in Louisiana as well, for this colony presented an "unhealthy, swampy environment [where they] were

obliged to struggle against more fierce epidemics than those which beset any other American colony, and where medical care was essential if the colonists were to survive the scourges of disease."⁴ Prominent colonials who succumbed to these rigors had been entombed in the parish church of St. Louis or the adjacent churchyard until 1774, when these spaces approached capacity. In 1788 an outbreak of a now-forgotten disease took many lives and filled the St. Peter Street Cemetery, thus necessitating its closure and opening the way for eventual development of the site. In 1800 much of the ground was raised and covered over, and a plan was drawn for its division into twelve building lots. From time to time, well into the twentieth century, excavation on the site unearthed the debris of death—coffins, intact or broken, along with bone fragments and full skeletons.⁵

In 1789 the first St. Louis Cemetery supplanted the St. Peter Street Cemetery. It encompassed a ninety-thousand-square-foot site about forty yards beyond Charity Hospital's garden at the edge of town. Although administered by the wardens of the St. Louis Church, it included a section at the rear for non-Catholics and, behind that, an even larger area for African Americans, whether Catholics or Protestants. The footprint of St. Louis Cemetery I shrank to about a quarter of its original size after the opening of the Girod Street Cemetery for Protestants in 1822 rendered its non-Catholic section superfluous.⁶

Upon entering this graveyard during travels in 1830, writer Joseph Holt Ingraham declared that he was "struck with surprise and admiration" for its "innumerable isolated tombs, of all sizes, shapes, and descriptions, built above ground . . . [like] a Lilliputian city."⁷ Straying from the main avenues, he found himself at the outskirts of the cemetery, where indigents, prisoners, and outsiders were buried. "I came suddenly upon a desolate area," Ingraham wrote,

without a tomb to relieve its dank and muddy surface, dotted with countless mounds, where the bones of the moneyless, friendless stranger lay buried. There was no stone to record their names or country. Fragments of coffins were scattered around, and new-made graves, half filled with water, yawned on every side awaiting their unknown occupants.⁸

Because much of New Orleans lies below sea level, it was not uncommon for a pool of water to collect in a newly dug grave before the

*“Like a Lilliputian city.” The St. Louis I Cemetery, New Orleans.
(Wikimedia Commons.)*

coffin could be lowered. “Such is the nature of the soil here,” Ingraham explained,

that it is impossible to dig two feet below the surface without coming to water. The whole land seems to be only a thin crust of earth, of not more than three feet in thickness, floating upon the surface of the water. Consequently, every grave will have two feet or more of water in it, and when a coffin is placed therein, some of the assistants have to stand upon it, and keep it down till the grave is re-filled with the mud which was originally thrown from it, or it would float. The citizens, therefore, having a very natural repugnance to being drowned, after having died a natural death upon their beds, choose to have their last resting-place a dry one; and hence the great number of tombs, and the peculiar features of this burial-place.⁹

This recurrent spectacle, so shocking to Ingraham and other visitors, stimulated above-ground entombment but did not account entirely for its popularity. Tomb burials were commonplace in Europe, especially in France and Spain, and Louisiana colonists from those nations, intimately

familiar with and loyal to their customs, found it a utilitarian and architecturally superior alternative to burial in the swampy earth of New Orleans.¹⁰

The Jewish Way of Life in New Orleans

Little antisemitism existed in New Orleans, and Jews found themselves accepted into all aspects of the city's life. Death, however, was another matter. The first congregation, Gates of Mercy, followed the customary steps in building a Jewish community, beginning with acquiring land for a burial ground. Previously, Jews had rested together with Protestants, either at the edge of the St. Peter Street or St. Louis Cemeteries or later in the Girod Street Cemetery.¹¹ Until congregations formed and established their own graveyards, relegation to the fringes of cemeteries and the distress of being buried among Christians in watery graves made the Crescent City an inhospitable place for Jews to die.

"The Jewish community of New Orleans," according to historian Harriet K. Stern, "is unique, with a history that is different than [that of] any other Jewish community in America." Its singularity stemmed from the atypical manner of its formation, for Louisiana developed not from English settlement but from French and Spanish occupation. During the colonial period (1717–1803), restrictions imposed successively by those governments kept the Jewish presence small. The Louisiana Purchase brought the territory into the United States in 1803, and the concomitant demise of colonial constraints kindled the prospect of economic opportunity, luring enterprising men of all faiths, Ashkenazim and Sephardim among them. No congregation existed as yet in New Orleans. The ambitious newcomers – mostly single and young – prioritized prosperity over religion and did not miss it. With few women of their conviction residing in the vicinity and probably none within hundreds of miles who were marriageable, many chose Christian – mostly Roman Catholic – wives and reared children in the faith of their mothers. "The free, open atmosphere of New Orleans," Stern concluded, "fostered religious indifference and delayed the development of a separate Jewish communal life."¹²

Eventually a Jew bent on practicing his religion came to town. Jacob Solis, a London-born merchant from New York whose business in New Orleans in 1827 coincided with Passover, was appalled to find no

matzo for sale and had to bake his own. He resolved to organize a congregation, founding Shangarai Chasset (Gates of Mercy) on December 20, 1827. Recognizing the reality of the assimilative lifestyle and the necessity to accommodate it, the congregation distorted Jewish laws to provide in its constitution for burial of the "strange" (gentile) wives of members and their children, and they accepted the latter as members. Although two-thirds of the thirty-three charter members came from the German states or Alsace and followed the Ashkenazic *minhag*, Solis declared that the congregation would adhere to the Sephardic ritual that he observed. (It was changed in 1842 to the Ashkenazic style in response to the growing membership of Germans and Alsatians.) Before the congregation did anything else, it established its cemetery, the first Jewish cemetery in New Orleans, on Jackson Avenue at Saratoga Street. This was the first congregation in New Orleans and one of the first in the United States beyond the thirteen original states.¹³

In 1843 Gates of Mercy moved into an existing building on Rampart Street and established it as the first permanent Jewish house of worship in Louisiana. The structure was so dilapidated, however, that a drive began immediately to raise money to demolish it and erect a replacement. That these fundraising efforts included appeals to New York Jews for a loan suggests that congregation leaders considered it futile to seek financing from the wealthiest and most successful New Orleans Jews, since they took slight interest in Jewish life or charities.¹⁴

The arrival of the devout Gershom Kursheedt around 1839 effected the next step in the evolution of New Orleans Judaism. A native of Richmond, Virginia, and the grandson and son of rabbis, Kursheedt came to New Orleans to work in an uncle's brokerage business and, from 1845 to 1849, also published and coedited a newspaper, the *New Orleans Commercial Times*. Immediately becoming active in the Jewish community, he found that conditions at Gates of Mercy had deteriorated under the dubious guidance of an all-too-assimilated, part-time minister whose primary career was comedic acting. Kursheedt helped organize a new Sephardic congregation in 1845 and became its first president.¹⁵

Kursheedt named this congregation Nefutshoh Yehudah (Dispersed of Judah), in honor of Judah Touro in hopes of motivating him to contribute financial support. Touro was a native of Newport, Rhode Island, and the son of Isaac Touro, Dutch-born hazan of Newport's

LEFT: Gershom Kursheedt, founder of Congregation Dispersed of Judah and advocate of Jewish charitable causes. RIGHT: Judah Touro, founder and benefactor of the infirmary established in his name. Touro portrait by Solomon Nunes Carvalho. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

Congregation Yeshuat Israel. He had resided in New Orleans at least since 1802 and had amassed a fortune as a commission merchant and real estate speculator; he owned much of today's downtown area. Although he participated avidly in the business, civic, and political activity of his adopted city and had served with distinction in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, he took no part in Jewish life, did not join the first congregation, and donated to it minimally. For many years, however, Touro had generously supported nonsectarian and Christian causes including two Protestant churches in his adopted city. In 1824 he contributed three hundred dollars to build a Philadelphia synagogue. Otherwise, at the point when Congregation Dispersed of Judah was formed, his deep purse had largely remained closed to Jewish appeals. Kursheedt somehow persuaded him to open it.¹⁶

It wasn't easy. To his friend Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, one of the foremost Jewish leaders of the day, Kursheedt confided the extreme difficulty of what the historian Bertram W. Korn called his "self-imposed task of attempting to extract Touro's money for the [proposed new] syn-

agogue and its appurtenances and other causes.”¹⁷ On December 18, 1847, for example, Kursheedt complained,

Mr. Touro is the very impersonation of a snail, not to say of a crab whose progress (to use a paradox) is usually backward. My patience is well nigh exhausted with him and I am interrogated by so many concerning his intentions that it is not unusual for me to dodge a corner in order to avoid meeting certain parties who seem to think that I am making a mystery of the matter [of when the synagogue will be completed]. . . . The only answer I get [from Touro] is “well we will see” “there is time enough etc. etc.”¹⁸

With Kursheedt’s persistent spiritual guidance and financial advice, Touro returned to Judaism and began to support its charities. Among other benevolences, he financed Congregation Dispersed of Judah’s rabbi, cemetery, and house of worship. After the synagogue dedication in 1850, Touro embraced the faith of his father with heightened fervor, regularly attending services and rigorously observing the Sabbath. His newfound zeal probably made it easier for Kursheedt to influence Touro to bequeath the substantial part of his wealth to Jewish groups. His bequests focused largely on assistance for the needy and aid for struggling congregations. Although he omitted some of the causes for which Kursheedt had advocated, Korn stated that, prior to Touro’s death in 1854, “we do not know of any previous American will, written by Christian let alone by Jew, which ever before had spread such largesse among so many institutions” —nearly every Jewish organization then existing in the United States, as well as an almshouse in Jerusalem.¹⁹

While Touro dallied despite Kursheedt’s prodding, cajoling, and humoring, in 1850 Congregation Shaarei Tefilah (Gates of Prayer) formed in Lafayette (today’s Garden District), an uptown suburb absorbed by New Orleans two years later. Lafayette City’s convenience to the riverfront gave rise to landings for steamboats and flatboats and to such industries as meatpacking and tanning, all of which generated jobs for working-class immigrants. Among them came, during the 1840s, an influx of Jews from the German states. Less educated and of more modest means than their predecessors who had settled further downriver, they found work on the riverfront and made their homes nearby. What they lacked, however, was proximity to the existing synagogues two

miles away, a manageable distance via the New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad but too far to walk on the Sabbath when vehicular transportation was forbidden.²⁰ Many of the members of Gates of Prayer sought treatment at nearby Touro Infirmary when they fell ill.

Charity for the Poor

In 1852 Judah Touro founded the New Orleans infirmary that bears his name. At the time, establishing a hospital differed little from opening an efficient boardinghouse in that it required neither a large financial investment nor sophisticated equipment. For forty thousand dollars, Touro acquired a square block of land facing the Mississippi River on Levee Street (now South Peters) and the structures that occupied it: an imposing mansion, formerly the residence of investor Cornelius Paulding; an adjacent building heated by fifteen fireplaces; and a service wing enhanced by a deep garden. On August 26, 1852, Touro Infirmary opened with a capacity of twenty-four beds, as many as half of which might be occupied at any given time. It operated under the direction of house physician Dr. Joseph Bensadon, who leased the hospital for seventy-five dollars per year until late 1861, when his contract expired, and he accepted appointment as surgeon general of the Confederate army. To negate the possibility that federal troops occupying New Orleans—as they did on May 1, 1862—would conscript the facility as a hospital for Union soldiers, the infirmary closed during the Civil War, and the building functioned as an almshouse for Jews from 1862 until the end of the war. The hospital reopened on January 3, 1869, almost four years after peace resumed.²¹

The hospital, by intention, stood conveniently near the wharf, and consequently most of the early patients were immigrants, slaves, or seamen from ships docked in the port city. Charges ranged from one dollar to five dollars per day, with extra for surgical operations; treating slaves cost one dollar per day. This fee schedule paralleled, and probably was based on, that of another local hospital, the Circus Street Infirmary.²² In the 1852 New Orleans city directory, that facility advertised first- and second-class private rooms at five dollars and three dollars per day, respectively, and “wards for white persons” at two dollars. “A separate part of the [Circus Street] Hospital is appropriated for Slaves,” the advertisement asserted, “and is furnished in the most comfortable manner . . .

*Advertisement for the Touro Infirmary, 1852.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)*

Owners will find it very much to their advantages to place their slaves in the Hospital as they will receive every attention. The entire expense will be covered by one dollar per day."²³ While the Touro emphasized its adjacency to shipping and steamboat landings and the efficacy of its ventilation, its competitor specialized in surgery, with particular attention "to the treatment of club-foot and deformities of a like character, as well as to the diseases of the eye."²⁴ Approximately six additional hospitals including the Charity functioned in New Orleans during the 1850s, besides the United States Marine Hospital across the river.

According to Touro Infirmary's earliest admission book (1855–1861), the Hebrew Benevolent Association offset medical expenses for some of the immigrants. This relief organization, founded in 1845, covered the charges for 37 of the 1,580 patients registered between 1855 and 1861. At least thirty-five of the former had emigrated from six different countries: twenty-five from the German states, six from Poland, and one each from Austria, England, France, and Hungary. One came

Admission Book of the Touro Infirmary, March–April 1858.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

from New York, and the nativity of another was not recorded. Twenty-two had been in New Orleans for less than one year, six of those for no more than a day. Among them were clerks, peddlers, tailors, a deck hand, and an artist. Nineteen suffered from yellow fever, one from phthisis pulmonaris (tuberculosis), and another from “indisposition”; the others’ ailments were not recorded. Four of the fever victims, the phthisis patient, and one other died. For their care, the Hebrew Benevolent Association would have paid the minimum rate. In 1874 that group merged with the Touro Infirmary Association to become the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, an umbrella organization comprised of a number of smaller charities. Like its predecessors, it focused its welfare programs on the hospital to assist the sick, poor, aged, and the widows and orphans who were so numerous in fever-prone New Orleans.²⁵

In 1854, Judah Touro mentioned the hospital in his will, stipulating that it “be organized according to law as a Charitable Institute for the

relief of the Indigent Sick," and its board of managers strove to follow that directive.²⁶ Because Touro bequeathed to the hospital the land it occupied but provided no support for its operation, during the same period before the benevolent groups merged, the Hebrew Benevolent Association financed thirty-seven patients, while board members sponsored thirty more including twenty-eight immigrants from six countries (German states, seventeen; Poland, three; France, Holland, and Hungary, two each; Russia, one) and Americans from two states (Maryland and North Carolina). Twenty-three aid recipients had been in New Orleans for less than a year. One died from cancer, another of phthisis, and a third from pneumonia.²⁷

For Touro Infirmary, the first not-for-profit private hospital in Louisiana, practicing philanthropy was routine. Attorney Benjamin Franklin Jonas, a founder of the New Orleans Home for Jewish Widows and Orphans and later a member of the Louisiana legislature and the United States Senate, observed at the ceremony dedicating the home in 1856, "It has ever been the boast of the Jewish people, that they support their own poor Their reasons are partly founded in religious necessity, and partly in that pride of race and character which has supported them through so many ages of trial and vicissitude," forming what historian Caroline E. Light calls "the core of a uniquely Jewish charitable tradition." Indeed, the infirmary's earliest advertisements announced the daily hours during which "those who may require it" could obtain "gratuitous advice." The hospital admitted the sick and frail regardless of religion or status.²⁸ Providing its own cemetery for indigent burials, however, added another dimension to the hospital's beneficence.

From the postbellum reopening of the infirmary in 1869 until Isaac Weis's interment became the first in the Touro Cemetery twenty years later, 340 patients died at the infirmary. Frequently the deceased were laid to rest in the burial ground of a congregation united not only by its Jewish faith but also by its ethnic origins: German Congregation Shanarai Chasset (Gates of Mercy) provided seventy interments, Polish Congregation Tememe Derech thirty, and Portuguese Congregation Ne-fuzoth Yehudah (Dispersed of Judah) fifteen. An additional fourteen Jewish burials occurred under the auspices of several smaller congregations or in an unspecified Hebrew cemetery. Over the course of twenty years, 129 Jewish burials took place, an average of one almost every two

months—a number that hardly seems great enough to impel the board of managers to institute an independent cemetery. Yet that's what it did in 1888, although thirty cemeteries already existed in New Orleans, including five that were Jewish and two that were charitable.²⁹

Seventy-two persons of other faiths who died at Touro Infirmary between 1869 and 1888 were interred locally in Roman Catholic, Protestant, or nonsectarian cemeteries, and nine were transported out of New Orleans. One of the active nonsectarian cemeteries was that of the Charity Hospital of Louisiana. Many similarities existed between it and Touro Infirmary, the most obvious being their provision of health care to indigent patients, where, as the Charity's annual report for 1877 put it, "to be sick is to be admitted."³⁰ Both maintained cemeteries in which to inter deceased patients who lacked financial means. Friends and relatives sometimes stepped up, but many bodies remained unclaimed.³¹

The chief difference between the hospitals was one of quantity, for admissions, deaths, and burials under the Charity's auspices far exceeded those of the Touro's. In 1888, for example, the year in which Touro Infirmary initiated its cemetery, the Charity admitted 5,794 patients, of whom 920 died—a mortality rate of nearly 16 percent. House surgeons consistently argued that the numerous patients who were "moribund when admitted" and died within twenty-four hours, as did 197, unfairly inflated their mortality rates. Omitting those patients from the statistics lowered the mortality rate to 11 percent, considerably higher than the Touro's 7.5 percent, based on 335 patients and 25 deaths. Six of the latter expired within three days of admission, and most of the others succumbed to diseases then considered incurable.³²

Charity for the Deceased

Burials in the earth—a requisite of Jewish tradition as noted above—prevailed in Hebrew cemeteries, usually in raised plots demarcated by frame-like copings of marble or granite. The copings afforded ongoing protection from shallow levels of rising floodwater and circumvented the predicament of waterborne coffins while preserving the practice of burial in the earth. But graveyards for the poor, who lacked the means for even the least expensive vaults or copings, required elevated, in-ground locations. Relatively high sites sometimes proved to be insufficiently raised. A spring flood in 1847, caused by a crevasse in the

*A row of graves with copings in the Joseph Street Cemetery, New Orleans.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

Mississippi River levee, submerged the Charity Hospital Cemetery and rendered it unusable. The hospital purchased a tract on the higher ground of Metairie Ridge specifically for use as a graveyard, finalizing the transaction in 1849.³³

In earlier times, churches nationwide had borne the responsibility of interring the impoverished, but as the nineteenth century progressed, burial became increasingly privatized and costly. The government assumed a larger role, providing publicly owned burial grounds. In New Orleans, Charity Hospital Cemetery fulfilled that need, functioning as the designated potter's field for people of all religions, races, and homelands, and initially accepting all unclaimed corpses in the city. Other unknowns and indigents, including non-Jewish Touro Infirmary deceased, lay in Locust Grove Cemetery I and II and, after 1879, in Holt Cemetery. During various periods, these also served as potter's fields.³⁴

Like those buried in Touro Infirmary Cemetery, these indigent dead lay in numbered plots, a common practice of the era in pauper graveyards and in those maintained by prisons, schools for the developmentally disabled, public health hospitals, and especially mental institutions. The Central Islip State Hospital Cemetery in New York, for example, coincidentally located adjacent to the Touro Law Center, handled over five thousand burials between 1889 and 1996. More than ten thousand nameless graves exist across Massachusetts at former mental hospitals and other institutions, as well as some two thousand in Ohio. Most of the plots lack names, which may be to protect the identities of the patients and their families, presumably because of the stigma often associated with mental illness; in the case of prisons, it may have implied that the deceased were unworthy of respect. Numbering the graves differentiated among them and facilitated record keeping. Another theory is that the numbered markers could be obtained quickly, expediently, and inexpensively. Historically, however, unmarked graves usually meant that survivors could not afford a headstone.³⁵

During the twenty years before Touro Infirmary established its graveyard, city charity buried six Touro patients, most if not all of them gentiles. The first of these burials was that of Mrs. Mein Grunewald, also

*Grave No. 85 at the Touro
Infirmary Cemetery, New Orleans.
The numbered stone marks the burial
place of an indigent infirmary patient.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

known as Annie or Anna Stein. Her death late on the night of December 17, 1869, "was occasioned by [arsenic] poison administered by her own hands." A native of Hungary who claimed New York as her permanent residence, the forty-year-old Grunewald and her husband, Renzo Grunewald, had performed at the French Opera House in 1865 in Lachner's operetta *Last Rendezvous*, and a national tour brought her back to the city. The *New Orleans Times* described her as a "celebrated prima donna" and the *Daily Picayune* as "a German actress of some repute." During the 1865 engagement she may have shared "intimate relations with a gentleman in this city, and returned . . . with the intention of renewing the intimacy." Rebuffed by her erstwhile lover, she considered suicide her only recourse. This circumstance presented Touro Infirmary with a problem beyond mere poverty when she died there six hours after being admitted. Although public attitudes were softening toward those who had taken their own lives, traditionally they had been barred from sanctified graveyards of all faiths, their remains relegated to potter's fields. Mein Grunewald received burial in either Locust Grove Cemetery I or in the Charity Hospital Cemetery.³⁶

The others' stories exemplify more typical circumstances of those who died in Touro and required city charity. Eight-year-old Corinne York, a New Orleans schoolgirl, succumbed to cancer of the jawbone. Neither her place of burial nor that of H. W. Boehm, a fifty-year-old widowed watchmaker from Germany who died of diarrhea, was noted, but they would have been interred in Charity or Locust Grove. Three other deceased came from Ireland, two of them sailors claimed by yellow fever and the third a fireman named John O'Brien who suffered a concussion. The British Consul arranged for the Irishmen to be laid to rest in Locust Grove Cemetery. O'Brien's burial in 1875 was the first of twelve during the period from 1869 to 1888 that occurred under consular auspices, ten of them British and two German; the other nine consular burials did not require charity.³⁷ Dr. Frederick Loeber, who took charge of Touro Infirmary in 1869 shortly after it reopened, recalled that as the years passed, the Touro "obtained something of a [favorable] reputation, and its first benefit therefrom was, that the English Consul entrusted us with the sick sailors of all English vessels coming into the harbor. The German and other Consuls followed; our receipts from all these contracts swelled our treasury, somewhat relieving us from a great [financial] anxiety."³⁸

When Loeber first visited Touro Infirmary, he had found “an old plantation house surrounded by factories and boiler shops on one of the noisiest streets in the city.” He soon recognized that the hospital should rebuild at a greater distance from the commotion of the waterfront, but persuading the board of managers to expand the struggling facility proved to be as challenging as Kursheedt’s task of extracting funds from Judah Touro’s pocket. Then came the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, during which Touro Infirmary assisted more than eleven hundred victims and families, and board members became convinced of the wisdom of relocating to more tranquil environs. Board president Julius Weis spearheaded fundraising efforts, and in 1882 the Touro moved into a new, larger hospital building on Prytania between Aline and Foucher Streets, where it remains today. Purchased at a cost of five thousand dollars, the land then stood in the middle of a cow pasture. The additional space enabled the Touro to serve a broader community of patients, notably by expanding its outpatient clinics.³⁹

The Jewish Way of Death in New Orleans

Joseph Magner, a founder and acting secretary of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association and a founder of the Jewish Widows and Orphans’ Home, explained in 1889:

Owing to the difficulties we experienced for many years in the burying of our dead at the several cemeteries, the Board thought it expedient to procure a proper place for that purpose, and through the efforts of our president we obtained a large space of ground in the cemetery of the Gates of Prayer Congregation, which has been properly laid out at an expense of \$652.96 to the society, and the evil under which we have been suffering on that score is now remedied.⁴⁰

Magner gave no hint as to the nature of those “difficulties.” Discussing past financial problems two years later, Loeber stated, “The greatest obstacle, however, we encountered was the apathy of your constituents [other Jewish institutions] towards the Touro Infirmary; it was, to use the expression, the step-child in the family of Hebrew institutions.”⁴¹

The decision to establish the cemetery rested with the five officers and twenty managers of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, seven of the latter representing the association and the remaining thirteen serving on behalf of B’nai B’rith.⁴² Michael Frank, who

LEFT: Dr. Frederick Loeber, director of the Touro Infirmary from 1869 to 1901.

RIGHT: Joseph Magner, a founder and acting secretary of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

served as president of the group in 1888, was a native of France who arrived in Louisiana at the age of seventeen in about 1842. He started out as a clerk in a mercantile store and, through "high character and lofty zeal," established his own business in New Orleans and founded the Metropolitan Bank. In addition to his business enterprises, Frank served as president of Temple Sinai and took an active interest in the Jewish Orphans' Home and other charities.⁴³ His descendants have remained involved with Touro Infirmary down to the present day.

Other officers instrumental in founding the cemetery also were immigrants who exemplified philanthropy at its highest level. Aside from Rabbi Isaac Leucht of Touro Synagogue, a German native who served as first vice-president, they all operated businesses. Second vice-president Charles Simon, for example, arrived in Louisiana from Bavaria in 1839 when he was nineteen and, like Michael Frank, saved enough

money to start a modest mercantile venture that soon prospered into a substantial business. Simon became acquainted with Judah Touro and assisted with the founding of Touro Infirmary, even superintending the contractors who outfitted the building. During the severe epidemic of yellow fever in 1853, Simon organized and participated in relief efforts, personally nursing the sick without regard to their religion. He served as a vice-president of the Touro for twenty years and worked tirelessly as a fundraiser for charitable causes. Henry Stern, treasurer of the association for a quarter century, also came from Bavaria as a nineteen-year-old. He worked first in the lumber business and later became proprietor of a wholesale shoe firm while participating ardently in numerous Jewish causes and personally assisting needy supplicants whom organized charities had denied. Only Simon Cohn, the association's secretary, was born in the United States. He, too, was a merchant, selling clothing for men and boys, and he actively supported Jewish charities.⁴⁴ With backgrounds not unlike the patients of Touro Infirmary and the decedents who would be buried in its cemetery, these philanthropists must have recognized the need to extend Jewish charity not only to the grave but into it.

Specifically, Touro Infirmary carved out a section of an existing graveyard, in the southeast quadrant of the burial ground established by the Congregation Gates of Prayer in 1853. Known as Gates of Prayer Cemetery II or, more commonly, the Joseph Street Cemetery and occasionally the Arabella Street Cemetery, it is located at 1428 Joseph Street, occupying the square bounded also by Pitt, Arabella, and Garfield Streets. Edging the city of Lafayette, the land had once been part of Pierre Foucher's sugar plantation. After the plantation had been subdivided and sold several times, Cornelius Hurst acquired a little less than seven arpents, nearly six acres, from which he created a faubourg (suburb) known as Hurstville.⁴⁵ He named Arabella Street and Joseph Street for his daughter and son. Slightly more than a mile and a half from the hospital and just a two-block walk from the streetcar on St. Charles Avenue, the graveyard occupied high ground. When a record-setting fourteen-inch downpour drenched New Orleans in 1927, "the Jewish cemetery at Joseph and Pitt streets stood out like an island."⁴⁶

Today a predominantly residential neighborhood surrounds the Joseph Street Cemetery. Touro Infirmary's section, a strip of the quadrant

Entrance to the Joseph Street Cemetery, formally known as Gates of Prayer II. The Touro Infirmary Cemetery comprises a portion of this facility. (Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)

now known as Section C, along Pitt Street at the corner of Arabella, stands in the rear, at the side most distant from the streetcar line. According to a sketchy map in the files of Congregation Gates of Prayer, victims of yellow fever had been buried previously in Section C, perhaps as recently as the devastating epidemic that befell New Orleans in 1878. Presumably the fever victims' graves were covered over prior to the Touro burials.⁴⁷

Mention of charitable interments under the Touro's auspices appeared for the first time in its annual report in the wake of the 1878 epidemic, a decade before the infirmary acquired its cemetery (see Table 1). In that year, the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association expended \$1,679.10 for burials, \$50 for carriages, and \$44.25 for shrouds, for a sum of \$1,773.35—about 4.5 percent of its total benevolent disbursements of \$39,732.49. The report failed to identify the deceased or to specify whether yellow jack or some other malady ended their lives. That the epidemic may have been a factor is suggested by the absence of a parallel expenditure the following year, when the only interment-related action—"funeral to three children"—cost \$55.⁴⁸

TABLE 1. Charitable expenditures for burials by the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, 1878-1914.⁴⁹

Fiscal year	Costs
1878-1879	\$1,828.35
1879-1880	no data provided
1880-1881	no data provided
1881-1882	\$6.00
1882-1883	\$211.00
1883-1884	\$553.00 (includes treatment of insane)
1884-1885	\$696.65 (includes treatment of insane and smallpox)
1885-1886	\$280.00
1886-1887	\$206.50
1887-1888	\$155.00
1888-1889	\$152.00
1889-1890	\$71.50
1890-1891	\$71.75
1891-1892	\$109.50
1892-1893	\$254.10 (includes \$186.60 for "Cemetery")
1893-1894	\$85.00
1894-1895	\$156.80
1895-1896	\$53.50
1896-1897	\$39.50
1897-1898	\$58.50
1898-1899	\$140.50
1899-1900	\$74.00
1900-1901	\$72.00
1901-1902	\$72.00
1902-1903	\$144.75
1903-1904	\$95.50
1904-1905	\$153.50
1905-1906	\$89.50
1906-1907	\$78.00
1907-1908	\$65.00
1908-1909	\$112.50
1909-1910	\$75.50
1910-1911	\$214.25 (includes \$176.25 for ambulance service)

TABLE 1, continued.

Fiscal year	Costs
1911-1912	\$214.30
1912-1913	\$306.50 (includes \$189.50 for ambulance service)
1913-1914	\$158.50 (includes \$40.50 for ambulance service)

NOTE: Dates in bold are the active dates of the Touro Infirmary Cemetery.

Expenditures for funerals continued through the 1880s and 1890s. Inconsistencies in recording data make the comparison of annual figures problematic. In some years, associated costs such as digging graves were itemized; in other years, unrelated expenses—"treatment of insane and small-pox" and, later, ambulance service for the poor—were combined with those of funerals. The only practicable means of comparison is to total all related figures in each year, noting atypical expenditures. Data from 1878-1879 through 1913-1914, the fiscal years of their first and last occurrence, disclose that during five of the seven years prior to the establishment of the Touro Infirmary Cemetery in 1888 (omitting periods in which death expenses were combined with the costs of treating victims of insanity and smallpox), the average death-related expenditure added up to \$410.48. Annual expenses during the twenty years that burials in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery occurred actively (from 1888 through 1908) averaged \$103.88. Thus the hospital saved an average of \$306.60 per year, and the cemetery paid for itself in a little over two years. Financial benefits to the infirmary continued. Data from four of the next five years reveal typical costs of \$96.20, chiefly for the cemetery sexton's fees.

The identified deceased—eighty-nine males, twenty-five females, and one adult and two infants whose gender was not noted—ranged in age from one day to eighty-six years, with an average of fifty-one and a median of sixty. Fifty-two different causes of death are noted among 109 patients for whom it was stated. Phthisis, which occurred most frequently, ended nineteen lives. Bright's disease (nephritis) took twelve more. Other ailments that remain all too familiar today included apoplexy (cerebrovascular accident, or stroke), diabetes, cirrhosis of the liver, influenza, aneurysms, and cancer (two cases, both involving the stomach). Although many of the deceased claimed New Orleans as their home at the time they entered the hospital, few of them—just ten, includ-

ing six babies and schoolchildren—were born in Louisiana. Ten more hailed from other parts of the United States, but the large majority—83 percent—came from eleven foreign countries. Represented most prominently were Germany, with thirty-six, and Russia with twenty-five. Three had resided in New Orleans for fifty years or more, but several had arrived within hours of their demise, perhaps in a final, desperate effort to receive medical help.⁵⁰

During the years when the Touro Infirmary Cemetery was active, the largest segments of the hospital's patient population came, in varying proportion, from Germany, Russia, and the United States. In its first five years (1888–1893), Russians comprised 13 percent of the patient population; Germans 21 percent; and Americans 44 percent. Meanwhile, the cemetery accepted twelve decedents from Russia (24 percent) and nine each from Germany and the United States (18 percent). From 1894 through 1898, German immigrants accounted for 19 percent of admissions but 29 percent of burials. Thirty-five percent of in-patients and 9 percent of those buried were Russians. Conversely, Americans comprised 58 percent of admissions but less than 13 percent of interments. During the next five-year period (1899–1903), Germans accounted for 12 percent of inpatients but a whopping 51 percent of decedents, while admissions and deaths of Russians dropped dramatically to 7 percent and 8 percent respectively. Admission of Americans soared to 70 percent, while their burials fell to 10 percent. In the last five years of the cemetery's active life (1904–1908), Germans and Russians each accounted for about 7 percent of admissions, while 50 percent of burials were of Germans and 29 percent Russians. Although the percentage of American patients climbed further to 77, none were interred in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Other nationalities seldom accounted for more than 10 percent in any five-year period.⁵¹

The disproportionately large number of Germans and Russians who required charitable Jewish burials can be explained by the high proportion of them who were Jews and by their immigrant condition. Among Americans, increasingly well-represented among Touro admissions, Jews remained fewer when compared with the total population. No longer new to the United States, they probably grew less likely to need charity because their families had more time to establish themselves and to prosper.⁵²

Records of these deaths often, but not always, reveal who shouldered responsibility for the burials. Twenty-two times, “a friend” or “friends” of the deceased fulfilled this sad duty, and in fifteen instances, “his [or her] family,” “relatives,” or a specific member of the family (usually male) did so. For eighty-two burials, Touro Infirmary took responsibility, as it had for ten or eleven in 1887 and 1888 prior to its establishment of the Joseph Street cemetery. On three occasions, beneficent men apparently unrelated to the departed stepped forward, and one victim was interred at his employer’s expense. Four seamen were buried by their shipmates or captain, one by the Italian consul, two by the German consul, and eight by the British consul, who handled arrangements not only for mariners and other immigrants from his country but also those from Norway and perhaps additional nations that did not maintain consulates in New Orleans.⁵³

Death records and other sources hint at the sort of burial the Touro’s deceased received. Lace-trimmed burial shrouds donated by the Ladies’ Aid and Sewing Society, an auxiliary organization established in 1876, dressed their bodies. Their funerals likely would have taken place from the infirmary, in almost all instances, without the expense of printed notices posted around the neighborhood or published in the newspaper. In 1896 Rabbi Morris Sessler of Gates of Prayer officiated at four services, and Rabbi Isaac Leucht of Touro Synagogue at another.⁵⁴ Although death records fail to name any other clergy, annual reports later expressed “sincere thanks to Rev. Moïse Bergman [who succeeded Leucht at Gates of Prayer] for his willingness to respond to every demand on his time in case of death among our patients,” including their interments.⁵⁵ All of the burials were likely religious, for the point of the cemetery was to ensure that poverty did not impede Jews who died at the Touro from being buried as Jews. A laudable wish to spare them—and their survivors—from the disagreeable conditions in the city’s potter’s fields may have strengthened the impetus to ensure respectful interments that would remain undisturbed.

Undertaking and Associated Services

As early as 1880, the *Daily Picayune* commented on what it called “the Undertakers’ boom.” Quoting a passage from the pages of a competing paper, the *New Orleans Times*, the *Picayune* described local

undertakers as “a respectable and worthy class of tradesmen. Their hearses are beautiful, also their horses; and they bury a corpse with such dignity and solemnity as makes one almost fall in love with a brick oven [vault].”⁵⁶ Undertakers furnished more than half of the burials at the Touro Cemetery, beginning with that of seventy-seven-year-old Marx Morrison, a merchant who died on June 3, 1890, from a carbuncle (an infected inflammation under the skin) on the right side of his face. Born in Russia, he had arrived in New Orleans from San Antonio, Texas, four years earlier. Morrison had never married, and, considering his apparent mobility, it is not surprising that he had no local relatives to attend to his remains. He was interred out of chronological sequence in grave no. 62 (the date of Morrison’s death should have given him grave no. 11), under the authority of undertaker Isaac Sontheimer.⁵⁷

From June 1890 through June 1895, funeral directors attended to few of Touro Infirmary’s fatalities—just 10 of 182 (5.5 percent). Beginning in July 1895, they arranged almost every interment—890 of 925 (96 percent). That nearly all burials from mid-1895 on occurred under the auspices of undertakers suggests that this may have become required by law, but no relevant legislation could be located either in acts of the Louisiana legislature or in newspapers. Not until 1914 did Louisiana regulate the business through the State Board of Embalming and Undertaking.⁵⁸

Prior to the emergence of undertaking as a profession in the mid-nineteenth century, the family, friends, and neighbors of the deceased—the same supporters who cared for the sick and dying before the rise of hospital care—took responsibility for burial. Often they engaged carpenters to construct coffins and liverymen to transport casketed bodies to the cemetery. For many who fulfilled these needs, a lucrative sideline in undertaking developed.⁵⁹ The earliest advertisement of a New Orleans undertaker found to date is that of Michael C. Quirk, who proclaimed himself a “cabinet maker and undertaker” as early as 1842. Two years later, William Schmidt offered those services, plus “carriages to hire.” Thus he provided the convenience of picking up the body in a wagon, selling a coffin, and renting horses, carriages for mourners, and a hearse for the trip to the cemetery, all from one location; the three occupations complemented one another perfectly. In 1849, James J. Cload became the first to advertise exclusively as an undertaker, “inform[ing] the people of

New Orleans that he is prepared to offer . . . coffins and hearses, and all funeral requisites."⁶⁰

Just as the Civil War separated sick or wounded servicemen from their customary caregivers and boosted their need for hospitalization, so did the war spark opportunity in the undertaking business—not only because numerous young men met untimely ends but because they did so far from home. Families of Union casualties who wanted to reinter their loved ones nearby and could afford the cost (usually seventy-five dollars) frequently engaged a local undertaker to locate the grave and exhume the body, embalm it, and ship it north in a hermetically sealed coffin. Thus many Americans became familiar with undertakers' services, and after the war, the business evolved into a profession.⁶¹

Approximately sixty undertakers are named in the Record of Deaths with up to twenty-eight active in any given year. The precise number is difficult to determine because of variations in how the data were recorded. Isaac Sontheimer, who entered the business in 1881, provided 391 of the 890 burials of Touro patients (44 percent). In every year, he took charge of significantly more of them than any of the other funeral parlors that operated in New Orleans for all or part of the period, often supplying more than all of them combined. His chief competitors were F. Johnson & Sons, who oversaw 123 (14 percent), and P. J. McMahon, 83 (9 percent). No other firm contributed as many as forty. Among Touro Cemetery burials, Sontheimer held almost a monopoly, and he likely contracted with the hospital to provide this service. In 1891 and 1892, McMahon handled the next seven funerals after Marx Morrison's. Of the remaining sixty-six mortician-attended burials among all interments in the Touro Cemetery from March 1896 through 1908, Sontheimer delivered sixty-four (97 percent); Thomas E. Lynch in 1901 and A. F. Bultman in 1902 each saw to one.⁶²

For the many Touro families who were Jewish, Sontheimer may have been the mortician of choice because he shared their faith and was familiar with its burial practices.⁶³ Another factor may have been his location, convenient to the hospital and to the uptown cemeteries. The interments by Lynch and Bultman suggest that engaging Sontheimer as funeral director was not required if the deceased's family or friends requested another, but he undoubtedly received all of the commissions issued by Touro Infirmary. His conformance to Jewish ritual was enough

*Burial place of Isaac Sontheimer
at the Joseph Street Cemetery.
Sontheimer was the Jewish mortician
responsible for most of the Touro
Infirmery Cemetery interments.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

to make his the funeral parlor of choice, and he may have benevolently offered a discount.⁶⁴

A study of newspaper obituaries and death notices reveals the probable religions of twenty-four of the undertakers who handled Touro patients' funerals, based on the houses of worship from which each was buried, the affiliation of the officiant, interment in a sectarian cemetery, and/or membership in a faith-based organization (*see* Table 2). Only Sontheimer could be confirmed as Jewish, but Louis Levand, who buried three Touro patients, also may have been. In 1900 he advertised as a "funeral director and embalmer" who offered funerals at half the price of his competitors. Nine years later, Levand opened a taxi service, and he closed his undertaking business in 1912. When he died, a mortuary descended from that of former competitor Isaac Sontheimer handled his funeral.⁶⁵ Of the other undertakers who buried the Touro's deceased, eighteen received Catholic services. Among the Protestants, two were Lutheran; one was probably Methodist; and the specific membership of another could not be identified. Death notices of more than a dozen

others stated that the deceased would be buried from his or her home, giving no hint of religious affiliation.

TABLE 2. Death notices for New Orleans funeral directors, 1890–1954.⁶⁶

Name	Date of published death notice
JEWISH UNDERTAKERS	
Isaac Sontheimer	November 13, 1923
Louis Levand	January 30, 1934
CATHOLIC UNDERTAKERS	
John Bonnot	September 12, 1890
Jacob Schoen	November 18, 1903
Edward Duffy	February 20, 1905
Jacob Leitz, Sr.	January 3, 1910
Peter Lamana	March 25, 1910
Raoul Bonnot	October 30, 1912
Mary Bernius Leitz (Mrs. Ambrose, Jr.)	November 23, 1912
John F. Markey	August 4, 1915
Peter Betz, Sr.	August 16, 1924
Joseph Laughlin	April 22, 1925
Salvadore Valenti	October 12, 1929
Patrick J. Donegan	February 5, 1930
Fernand L. Laudumiey	May 21, 1934
Edward J. Ranson	August 28, 1935
D. W. Rhodes	July 7, 1938
Bertrand Ader	January 26, 1941
Peter J. McMahon, Sr.	October 2, 1941
James Bonnot	July 24, 1954
PROTESTANT UNDERTAKERS	
L. A. Muhleisen (probably Methodist)	September 30, 1909
George A. Schopp	January 20, 1911
Henry L. Frantz (Lutheran)	December 17, 1924
Anthony F. Bultman (Lutheran)	September 17, 1934
Henry Tharp (Episcopalian)	October 2, 1934

NOTE: Notices prior to 1914 are from the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*; those after 1914 are from the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

Aside from the strong connection between Touro Infirmary Cemetery burials and Isaac Sontheimer, no evidence suggests that survivors based their selection of undertakers entirely on religion. Regardless of their own affiliations, the active undertakers—those who handled more than twenty burials—interred decedents of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths. Because of differences in Jewish rituals and the propensity within the Jewish community for supporting its own, Jews overwhelmingly selected Sontheimer, but some few chose the Methodist L. A. Muhleisen, the Lutheran A. F. Bultman, or one of the Catholic morticians, among whom were Francis Johnson, Joseph McMahon, P. J. McMahon, John G. Roche, and Jacob Schoen. Conversely, Sontheimer provided burials in Catholic and nonsectarian cemeteries, the latter accommodating many of the Protestants. These nondenominational graveyards, including city-owned cemeteries and large private cemeteries at the west end of Canal Street, housed the remains of Protestants as well as Catholics and, in designated sections, Jews.⁶⁷

Proximity to the decedent's (and his family's) home and to the cemetery of their choice appears to have been often as important as religious affiliation in terms of choice of undertaker. A. F. Bultman, for example, entered the business in 1883 in a building at 809 Magazine Street that had housed an earlier funeral home. In 1920, Bultman moved to 3338 St. Charles Avenue. The two establishments were known for having "served the territory above Canal Street since long before the War Between the States."⁶⁸ The St. Charles Avenue address stood little more than three blocks from Touro Infirmary and 1.7 miles from the Joseph Street Cemetery. Isaac Sontheimer's business was almost as convenient—six blocks from the hospital and 2.2 miles from the graveyard. The other undertakers who conducted at least thirty funerals for Touro Infirmary decedents—Francis Johnson, Joseph McMahon, and P. J. McMahon—all operated within several miles of the hospital.⁶⁹

Among the less active undertakers, three members of the Betz family—Peter, Charles, and William—maintained separate funeral homes in the suburb of Carrollton, about three miles from the hospital. Taken together, they handled fifteen Touro Infirmary burials, nine of which were in the nearby Carrollton Cemetery. Five of the other undertakers oversaw a total of six interments there. That the Betzes provided half again as

many Carrollton Cemetery burials as all the other mortuaries combined again suggests an affinity for undertakers based in the neighborhood.⁷⁰

Although undertaking was largely a family business that supported multiple branches and generations, some of its practitioners joined in partnership. Some of the partners also shared a religion, as did the Catholics Bertrand Ader and George J. Mothe, but others evidenced the ecumenical spirit of New Orleans by crossing religious lines to combine businesses. The Catholic Jacob Schoen and the Lutheran Henry L. Frantz, for example, remained partners for twenty years. In a tripartite merger, Lutheran A. F. Bultman's firm joined first with the Episcopalian Henry Tharp, who had managed the Catholic Francis Johnson's establishment for many years, and then added the Jewish Isaac Sontheimer's business in 1913.⁷¹ Bultman's heirs eventually left the group, but the firm continues today as Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp under the leadership of Isaac's great-grandson, Stephen Sontheimer, who also serves as secretary-treasurer of Touro Infirmary's governing board. Thus the Sontheimer family's relationship with the Touro carries into the fourth generation.

Surviving records of these funeral homes are not quite early enough to provide details of the Touro Cemetery burials. Nevertheless, case files of paupers' funerals arranged by F. Laudumiey & Co. that exist from as early as 1897 suggest that the Touro's expenditures matched the rates of the day. Death certificates cost fifty cents, seven or eight dollars bought a plain coffin, and for four dollars, a carriage drove mourners to the cemetery. Two interments that occurred in March 1898 exemplify charitable burials at Holt Cemetery, the city-owned burial ground for the indigent. The costs of laying to rest sixty-five-year-old Louise Finley and nine-year-old Jessy Johnson totaled, respectively, fifteen dollars and twenty-two dollars. A "transfer wagon" for \$4.50 transported Finley's body, and a ten-dollar "funeral car" carried little Jessy Johnson's. By contrast, a funeral the same month for an affluent and prominent citizen, forty-six-year-old Edward Soniat du Fossat, featured washing and dressing his body at a cost of five dollars, a seventy-five-dollar casket, a "1st class" funeral car at fifteen dollars, two dollars' worth of embellishments such as black crepe and ten candles, and three hundred funeral notices, printed in French and posted around the neighborhood, at an additional \$7.50. Opening the Soniat du Fossat tomb in St. Louis Cemetery I cost

An 1899 invoice from F. Laudumiey & Co. for the funeral of Didier Digues. Expenses for Digues, a poor laborer, were to be paid by the coroner's office, and he was to be buried at Holt Cemetery, where the city interred indigent dead. (Courtesy of the Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans.)

five dollars, more than triple the \$1.50 required to prepare Louise Finley's grave in Holt Cemetery. Digging Jessy Johnson's smaller grave cost just fifty cents.⁷²

Identifying the Deceased and the Demise of Touro Infirmary Cemetery

Purchased in three batches in 1893–1894, 1897–1898, and 1903–1904 at a total cost of eighty-three dollars, markers designated the pauper graves in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Most of them disappeared under a long-established carpet of grass, but two small marble stones, labeled only 84 and 85, remain visible although easily overlooked. Two large, vertical headstones, very different from the small markers, read “No. 102” and “No. 103,” above lengthy inscriptions in Hebrew. Hospital death records place Fannie Stern, an eighty-one-year-

old widow who died of Bright's disease, in grave no. 103. No name is associated with grave no. 102.⁷³

The last references to interments in the cemetery were entered in the death records in 1908, concluding with a burial in grave no. 155. During the preceding two decades, 1,129 patients died at the Touro Infirmary. At least 116 of the deceased—10 percent—are known to repose in its cemetery. An additional thirty-nine unidentified persons may rest among them, likely individuals listed in the death records as having been buried by the infirmary during the relevant period of time but with no cemetery named. Touro Cemetery graves were assigned to the deceased mostly in chronological order with intermittent gaps. For example, no burials are noted in that cemetery between November 3, 1896, and October 22, 1897. No names are associated with graves numbered 84 through 87, which would have been assigned during that period. It seems logical that interments occurring under the Touro's auspices could be balanced with unassigned grave numbers during the corresponding period, but efforts to identify these unknowns have succeeded only with Martha Oppenheimer Stabinsky, who died on May 7, 1900. One of the few headstones and copings in the Touro Infirmary section surrounds her resting place. When she passed away, the most recent burial had placed Rebecca Rosenberg, who succumbed the previous February 21, in grave no. 113. The next one, on August 18, laid Louis H. Shaenfield to rest in grave no. 115. Stabinsky's date of death, falling as it did between these two others, makes her a likely candidate for no. 114. Some plots may have been allotted to needy Jews for whom the Touro provided charitable burials even though they did not die there, thus eluding entry in the hospital's register of deaths, or the graves may simply lie vacant.⁷⁴

Marble headstones that survive today mark the resting places of ten more persons who were buried in Touro Infirmary Cemetery and whose grave numbers appear in the death records (*see* Table 3). These stones bear the names of the deceased and, in most instances, dates of birth and death, places of birth, and brief inscriptions in Hebrew. Of various design, they range from Louis Shaenfield's simple marker to a multipart memorial to "Mother," Julia Goodman. Why were these ten persons singled out from among more than one hundred? It seems improbable that so many others had substantial headstones that have vanished. More

likely, these ten had relatives or friends with the means to provide markers, if not entire funerals, either at the time of interment or after family fortunes improved.

TABLE 3. Marked graves at Touro Infirmary Cemetery.⁷⁵

Grave #	Name	Date of death
4	Levy (or Levi) Hirsch	April 27, 1889
21	Rebecca Levy Franklin	March 27, 1891
23	Meyer Erenstein	May 5, 1891
38	Julia Goodman	September 26, 1892
81	Levi Ehrenfeld	October 10, 1896
93	Fanny Mertz Marx	February 2, 1898
99	Lena Mane	February 10, 1899
114	Martha Oppenheimer Stabinsky*	May 7, 1900
116	Louis H. Shaenfield	October 8, 1900
117	Caroline Frank	December 2, 1900
142	Benjamin Aaron Jessel	December 12, 1905

* Believed to lie in grave number 114 but not listed in Touro death records.

This apparently was the circumstance of Caroline Frank. Among those interred in marked graves, she was one of five “inmates” – persons who did not need medical attention but stayed in the hospital, sometimes for years, because they were too elderly or frail to care for themselves; after the Julius Weis Home for the Aged and Infirm opened in 1898, the elderly resided there instead. A newspaper tribute to Frank the day after her death on December 2, 1900, reported that she was

at one time a mother in Israel whose goodness was proverbial. Husband and children departed one by one, and nine years ago, at the age of 75 years, she found herself alone. She was not friendless, however, for there were a number of hearths where she could have sought welcome shelter. But she preferred the abode which Jewish charity provided for such as she, and her wish was gratified. There she remained until the call to join her loved ones gone before, and many are left to pay tribute to her gentleness and noble worth.⁷⁶

Those referred to may have paid tribute financially and figuratively by providing the headstone.

Active burials ceased at the Touro Infirmary Cemetery in 1908, twenty years after they began, with Benjamin Henry's interment in grave no. 155. Henry, seventy-seven years old, died from cancer of the stomach on October 1, 1908. At that point, did the graveyard fill up? Were arrangements made with another congregation? The cemetery, listed in New Orleans city directories beginning in 1896, vanished from their pages after 1929. Interments ended abruptly, with no explanation or comment in the hospital's annual reports. Also in 1908, Congregation Gates of Prayer embarked upon efforts to improve the Joseph Street Cemetery, which had been neglected by some of the surviving families and by an inattentive, part-time sexton. To raise funds to employ a full-time sexton, the congregation levied an annual charge on each grave. The new fee probably did not apply to the Touro Infirmary section, because the Touro employed its own sexton. In the absence of another explanation, the changes at the cemetery likely influenced the cessation of burials.⁷⁷

Interments stopped, but deaths, of course, did not. During approximately nine months between Benjamin Henry's burial and the last consecutive entry in the death records (June 24, 1909), eighty-five patients succumbed. The remains of thirty-five of these were shipped out of New Orleans for burial, mostly to small towns in Louisiana and Mississippi, although a few traveled as far as Illinois and New York. Forty-three were scattered among seventeen local cemeteries: Greenwood Cemetery, with eight interments, was the most popular, followed by Valence Street and Metairie with five each. Four Jewish cemeteries accommodated seven burials, and seven resting-places remain unknown. Few of these deceased received charity, except that the Austrian consul saw to a sailor's interment in Holt Cemetery on January 2, 1909, and Karitch Herman, who died on May 19, was interred in an unnamed city cemetery, probably Holt.⁷⁸

One last burial transpired in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery, in 1948. At the time of her death on June 18 of that year, Rosa Jacob, widow of James J. McDonald, resided at the Touro Shakspeare Home, a New Orleans almshouse established in 1855 with a bequest of eighty thousand dollars from Judah Touro. According to the death notice that the *Times-Picayune* published the next day, she was a native of Natchitoches who

had lived in New Orleans for many years. Her funeral, from the parlors of Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp, had occurred the day she died, and already she lay in Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Records from the mortuary reveal that the sixty-seven-year-old died of arteriosclerotic heart disease. Her modest funeral cost one hundred dollars, paid by a nephew named Lawrence Mack. Initial plans apparently called for interment in Hebrew Rest Cemetery at a charge of seven hundred dollars, far exceeding Mrs. McDonald's means and presumably those of her nephew. Someone—perhaps from the funeral home, which had a long relationship with the Touro—may have interceded to ensure a charitable Jewish burial.⁷⁹

*The free ward for male patients at Touro Infirmary, 1910.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)*

A Case Study of Touro Infirmary Philanthropy: The Stabinsky Family

Assistance to one family, the Stabinskys, illustrates the panoply of aid given by Touro Infirmary. Jacob Stabinsky, a native of Poland, and his Russian-born wife, Julia, arrived in New Orleans about 1871, emigrating probably from Russia (although Germany appears in some records), with their ten-year-old son, also named Jacob. A daughter, Annie, was born in Louisiana around 1873, according to the 1880 U.S. Census, or 1876, based on information in the Touro records. From 1873 to 1875, New Orleans city directories listed Jacob, the father, as a peddler

who resided at 151 Toulouse Street. In 1875, the year in which directory canvassers finally registered his first name accurately, he died on September 12 and was buried in Gates of Prayer Cemetery. That Touro Infirmary death records omit him suggests that he died elsewhere, probably at home. Jacob, the son, had joined his father in the peddling trade by the time he was fourteen. Annie, either twelve or fifteen in 1888, already held a job as a "housegirl."⁸⁰

When the Stabinskys needed medical assistance, they turned to the Touro. Son Jacob's first hospitalization occurred in February 1876 for bronchitis. Two bouts of "dementia" totaling thirty days in the hospital, "malingering," and an unspecified illness resulting in an eighteen-day stay required attention in 1887 and 1888. On May 17, 1888, the infirmary admitted forty-seven-year-old "Mrs. Stabinsky," who was afflicted with cancer of the inguinal glands. This was most likely Julia, since from July 24 until November 7, Annie received "shelter"—a term applied to admissions dictated not by medical necessity but by compassion—at the Touro as a caregiver. Mrs. Stabinsky's condition presumably deteriorated until she died on November 6. Touro Infirmary provided for her burial, among the last prior to the establishment of the cemetery about six weeks later.⁸¹

Discharged on November 7, the day after Mrs. Stabinsky died, Annie returned five days later with her brother, and both of them found shelter at the hospital. The siblings accounted for three of the six such stays that year. They remained for less than two weeks, presumably long enough to arrange their lives after the loss of their mother, but in December, another attack of bronchitis sent Jacob back. In 1890, he battled an abscess of the ear and his first recorded bout of phthisis, the disease that caused his death on August 31, 1891. Meanwhile, Annie entered the Touro twice in 1890 to obtain medical services, once for malaria and the second, for two days, for "nihil" (nothing was wrong). The admissions book ends in 1891, and what became of Annie is unknown. Jacob lies in grave no. 27 in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery.⁸²

Members of the extended Stabinsky family also received aid. How Martha Oppenheimer Stabinsky fit in is uncertain, but probably Abraham Stabinsky, whom she married early in 1884 at the age of sixteen, was Jacob père's younger brother or nephew, who arrived in New Orleans after the 1880 census was taken. No other Stabinsky family fre-

quented the Touro, and no other explanation for Martha's relationship is extant. Her parents, William and Henrietta Steinburg Oppenheimer, came to New Orleans from Germany in about 1874 with six- or seven-year-old Martha. On September 17, 1878, Henrietta died of yellow fever at the age of fifty-seven. The Oppenheimers' first appearance in Touro Infirmary records dates from May 29, 1899, when William, then a seventy-six-year-old widower who had been employed as a laborer, entered the hospital suffering from chronic nephritis and hypertrophy of the prostate. He died on June 16 and was "buried by his daughter, Mrs. M. Stabinsky," in grave no. 104 in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Less than a year later on May 7, 1900, Martha, a few days shy of her thirty-third birthday, also was laid to rest there, in what is probably grave no. 114, although she did not die at the Touro.⁸³

Martha Stabinsky's grave, among the cemetery's few that are marked, is incised "Mother" — appropriately, for in addition to her husband, Abraham, she left behind five children: Henrietta ("Hattie," born in 1885 or 1886), Jeannette (born in 1887 or 1888), Julius (born May 30, 1889), Myer (born October 31, 1895), and Uriah (born July 13, 1898). Aside from the death notices of his sons and daughters in the mid-twentieth century, the only mentions of Abraham are found in the pages of city directories, wherein his occupation as a peddler initially appeared in 1888 and intermittently thereafter. In 1900 and for several more years, he represented the Life Insurance Company of Virginia as an agent. He had returned to peddling by 1906, the year of his last directory entry. At that time, at least the two youngest children resided at the New Orleans Jewish Orphans' Home. That Myer played cornet in the home's band in 1905 indicates that the children may have been enrolled in the orphanage while their father was still alive. He probably found it impossible to eke out a living while caring for two children under five years old when their mother died.⁸⁴

The Stabinskys, apparently a hard-working but impoverished family, availed themselves of most of Touro Infirmary's beneficences. First, several members of the family obtained recurring medical care, sometimes for several months at a time. Second, following their mother Julia's demise, Annie and Jacob were "sheltered" at the hospital. Third, Jacob, presumed in-law William Oppenheimer, and possibly Martha received charitable Jewish burials in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Fourth, after

*Grave of Martha Oppenheimer
Stabinsky, Touro Infirmary Cemetery.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

their mother Martha's death, two or more third-generation Stabinskys resided at the Jewish Orphans' Home. At least one member of this extended family received each of the services offered by Touro Infirmary except one, residence in the Julius Weis Home for the Aged and Infirm—they did not live long enough.

Conclusion

For twenty years, the Touro Infirmary Cemetery constituted what Caroline E. Light describes as "an active and ongoing investment in charity [that] has long constituted a vital component of Jewish citizenship" and, in a small way, exemplifies how charity contributed to maintaining Jewish culture in New Orleans, as it did for the beleaguered Stabinskys.⁸⁵ Many questions remain, especially regarding the unassigned grave numbers and the reason for the cemetery's retirement from active use. From scant available evidence, however, a picture emerges of needy persons in failing health, many of them elderly by the standards of their day, some far from home in a city of strangers, and of their interments in accordance with Jewish tradition.

 NOTES

Thanks to the following friends and colleagues (listed alphabetically) who read versions of this manuscript and made valuable suggestions: Shon Baker, director of development, Touro Infirmary; Mary Louise Christovich, editor of *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 3: The Cemeteries*; Catherine C. Kahn, founding archivist, Touro Infirmary; and Jessica Travis, volunteer, Touro Infirmary.

¹ Touro Infirmary, Record of Deaths, 1869–1916, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans (hereafter cited as Record of Deaths); Touro Infirmary, Admission Book of Touro Infirmary, 1869–1891, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1889), 60, 61, 65; E. Harold Hinman, “History of Typhus Fever in Louisiana,” *American Journal of Public Health* 26 (November 1936): 1117–21.

² Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System* (Baltimore, 1987), 18–20, 25, 97–98, 122.

³ Record of Deaths. Some data, such as gender and cause of death, are missing from some entries, therefore some statistics discussed herein total less than 117.

⁴ Stella O’Connor, “The Charity Hospital of Louisiana at New Orleans: An Administrative and Financial History, 1736–1941,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 31 (January 1948): 7.

⁵ For an excellent overview of New Orleans cemeteries, see Mary Louise Christovich, ed., *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 3: The Cemeteries* (New Orleans, 1974), especially Leonard V. Huber, “New Orleans Cemeteries: A Brief History,” 3–6. Some authors, including Sally Asher, attribute the spate of deaths in 1788 to the Good Friday fire on March 21 caused by unattended votive candles that ignited the home of a devout Catholic. An authoritative account of colonial New Orleans, however, states that despite enormous loss of property, just one person died in the conflagration. Sally Asher, *Stories from the St. Louis Cemeteries of New Orleans* (Charleston, SC, 2015), 30; Lawrence N. Powell, *The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 198–99.

⁶ Nationally, such disruption mainly affected the corpses of those whom society regarded as insignificant, such as African Americans and paupers. In this aberrant instance, the displaced also included non-Catholics of Euro-American descent. Ironically, from 1897 to 1917 a legalized red-light district known as Storyville occupied part of the site, accommodating another class generally considered undesirable: prostitutes. Huber, “New Orleans Cemeteries,” 4; Sherene Baugher and Richard F. Veit, *The Archaeology of American Cemeteries and Gravemarkers* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014), 60. For a layman’s discussion of relevant Louisiana cemetery legislation, see Ryan M. Seidemann, “Do Not Disturb: A Practical Guide for What Not to Do Around Cemeteries and Human Remains for the Louisiana Energy and Land Use Practitioner,” *LSU Journal of Energy Law and Resources* 2 (Spring 2014): 246–55.

⁷ [Joseph Holt Ingraham], *The South-West, by a Yankee* (New York, 1835), 1:154.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 156-57.

¹⁰ Emily Anne Ford, "The Stonecutters and Tomb Builders of Lafayette Cemetery No. 1, New Orleans, Louisiana" (master's thesis, Clemson University, 2013), 22-23.

¹¹ Bobbie Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants: The Community of Congregation Gates of Prayer, 1850-1860," *Louisiana History* 32 (Summer 1991): 244; Bertram Wallace Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans* (Waltham, MA, 1969), 136, 162, 196, 216. Korn provides examples of burials in the Girod Street Cemetery.

¹² Harriet K. Stern, *A Brief History of the New Orleans Jewish Community* (pamphlet, c. 2009), 3; Irwin Lachoff and Catherine C. Kahn, *The Jewish Community of New Orleans* (Charleston, SC, 2005), 7; Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants," 242; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 192-95.

¹³ Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 200, 214; Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 7; Huber, "New Orleans Cemeteries," 21; Touro Synagogue, "Our History," accessed April 6, 2016, <https://tourosynagogue.com/about-us/ourhistory/>; International Jewish Cemetery Project, "New Orleans: (Orleans Parish)," accessed April 8, 2016, <http://www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/louisiana-la/new-orleans-orleans-parish.html>.

¹⁴ Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 209; Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 17.

¹⁵ Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 7; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 240-44, 247-49; Bertram W. Korn, "A Reappraisal of Judah Touro," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45 (April 1955): 575.

¹⁶ Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 74-75; Korn, "Reappraisal of Judah Touro," 570-72, 574-75.

¹⁷ Korn, "Reappraisal of Judah Touro," 576.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 577 (brackets in original).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 579; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 251-53, 256; Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 11. A photocopy of Touro's holograph will is on file at the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.

²⁰ Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants," 243-45.

²¹ Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 25; Rosenberg, *Care of Strangers*, 119; Mary Louise Mossy Christovich and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano, *Garden Legacy* (New Orleans, 2016), 201; Jennifer Matz, "Past as Prologue," *Tourovues* 14 (Spring 1979): 3.

²² Circus Street is now South Rampart Street. The Circus Street Infirmary, which opened in 1841 and operated at least until 1878, stood near Carondelet Street about two miles from Touro Infirmary. "Circus Street Infirmary," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 21, 1841; "Dr. F. Formento," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 2, 1878.

²³ *Cohen's New Orleans and Lafayette Directory* (New Orleans, 1852-1853).

²⁴ *Gardner's New Orleans Directory, for the Year 1859* (New Orleans, 1858): 332.

²⁵ Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Fifth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1879), 14-15;

Touro Infirmary, Admission Book of Touro Infirmary, 1855–1861, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans (hereafter cited as Admission Book, 1855–1861).

²⁶ James A. Renshaw, "Judah Touro and His Will," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 11 (January 1928): 79–80.

²⁷ Admission Book, 1855–1861.

²⁸ Caroline E. Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South* (New York, 2014), 8 (first and second quotations); "Touro Infirmary," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 21, 1852 (subsequent quotations); Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 333–34.

²⁹ John Duffy, ed., *The Rudolph Matas History of Medicine in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1962), 1:232–33; Record of Deaths; Huber, "New Orleans Cemeteries," 21–24. The figures total less than 340 because data are absent from some entries. Mary LaCoste lists the Jewish cemeteries in New Orleans as Gates of Mercy (Shanarai Chasset), founded 1827, demolished 1957 and its remains relocated to Hebrew Rest I, also cited in the Record of Deaths as Rampart Street Synagogue; Dispersed of Judah (Nefutshoh Yehudah, 1847); Gates of Prayer (Shaare Tefillah, 1853), also known as the Joseph Street Cemetery, including burials in the cemetery of Rabbi Joshua, which was a section of Gates of Prayer, and Mikvah Israel; Tememe Derech, also cited as Carondelet Synagogue and Canal Street Cemetery (1858); and Hebrew Rest I (1860), which included a strip of pauper graves. In addition, Metairie Cemetery established a section for Jewish burials in 1885. Mary LaCoste, *Death Embraced: New Orleans Tombs and Burial Customs* (Raleigh, NC, 2015), 91–103. When variant spellings of Hebrew names have been found, preference has been given to that used by Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*.

³⁰ Charity Hospital of Louisiana, *Report of the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, to the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana, 1877* (New Orleans, 1878), 8.

³¹ An example of a decedent who escaped a pauper's grave is Louis Dreyfus, whose body "was found in potters' field, and will be given a proper burial in the Jewish cemetery to-day [August 16, 1887]." Musician Charles Patterson, who died in 1898, narrowly avoided a charitable burial when the Segoula Social Club paid his funeral bill of \$59.50 to the undertaker, Widow A. P. Boyer. "Found," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 16, 1887; "Charles Patterson Buried by Friends," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 20, 1898.

³² Charity Hospital of Louisiana, *Report of the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, to the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana, 1888* (New Orleans, 1889), 27; Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 21.

³³ Marilyn Yalom, *The American Resting Place: Four Hundred Years of History Through Our Cemeteries and Burial Grounds* (Boston, 2008), 140; Robert Florence, *New Orleans Cemeteries: Life in the Cities of the Dead* (New Orleans, 1997), 96; Charity Hospital of Louisiana, *Report of the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, for the Years 1848 and 1849* (New Orleans, [1850]), 1; Richard C. Beavers, Teresia R. Lamb, and John R. Greene, *Burial Archaeology and Osteology of Charity Hospital/Cypress Grove II Cemetery, New Orleans, Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1993), 1:4, 76, 78. The modern address of the Charity Hospital Cemetery is 5050 Canal Street.

³⁴ David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore, MD, 1991), 200; John Salvaggio, *New Orleans' Charity Hospital: A Story of Physicians, Politics, and Poverty* (Baton Rouge, 1992), 50.

³⁵ Community Alliance for Jewish-Affiliated Cemeteries, "Jewish Cemetery of Central Islip," accessed May 27, 2016, <http://www.cajac.us/jewish-cemetery-of-central-islip/>; Kirsten Anderberg, "American 'Insane Asylum' History: Giving Names to Numbered Graves," accessed May 27, 2016, <http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2004/08/294697.shtml>.

³⁶ Record of Deaths; "The City," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 19, 1869 (first and third quotations); *New Orleans Times*, March 27, 1865 (second quotation); "Suicide of a German Actress in New Orleans," *Flake's Bulletin* (Galveston, TX), December 25, 1869; Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 27. Renzo Grunewald's given name, which appears only in the *New Orleans Times* article, is uncertain because unclear printing makes it difficult to read.

³⁷ Record of Deaths.

³⁸ Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1891), 50.

³⁹ Matz, "Past as Prologue," 3 (quotation), 4.

⁴⁰ Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 18. When Magner died, the *Daily Picayune* eulogized him as a "venerable and esteemed citizen whom the whole community regarded as an exemplar of philanthropy and goodness. . . . [He was] the friend of the young and of the poor and afflicted, a man in whom shone all the excellent qualities of the truly kind citizen." "Joseph Magner, One of the Founders of Magnificent Jewish Charities Here, and Knightly in War and Peace, Dies as Result of Recent Accident," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 22, 1908.

⁴¹ Touro Infirmary, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, 50.

⁴² Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 45. For a list of officers and managers, see Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 3.

⁴³ "Michael Frank, Death of a Leading Citizen and Prominent Capitalist," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 5, 1896.

⁴⁴ "Rabbi Leucht Passes to Death; Mourned by Many," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 5, 1914; "Charles Simon, One of the Heroes of the City's Stirring Story," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 17, 1909; "Patriarch of City, Henry Stern Dies Greatly Beloved," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, December 26, 1916; "Simon Cohn, Well-Known Citizen, Called to His Last Reward," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 5, 1910; Simon Cohn to his mother, August 1, 1888, Cohn Family Papers, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.

⁴⁵ An arpent is a unit of French measure equal to about 192 feet (58.5 meters) that remained in common use in Louisiana during the nineteenth century. A square arpent (also called an arpent) measured 0.84 acres.

⁴⁶ Huber, "New Orleans Cemeteries," 23; Samuel Wilson, Jr., "The Uptown Faubourgs," in *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 8: The University Section*, ed. Robert J. Cangelosi, Jr., and Dorothy G. Schlesinger (New Orleans, 1997), 11; "Water Still Deep in Many Sections Long After Rain," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, April 17, 1927.

⁴⁷ Cemetery records, Congregation Gates of Prayer, Metairie, LA (hereafter cited as Gates of Prayer Records). The records do not include the names of persons interred in the Touro Infirmary section. Thanks to Rabbi Robert Loewy of Congregation Gates of Prayer for permission to examine the records and to congregation administrator Suzanne Stone for her gracious welcome and splendid assistance.

⁴⁸ Touro Infirmary, *Fifth Annual Report*, 18; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Sixth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1880), 8.

⁴⁹ Data for the table are compiled from Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1879–1915.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Other native lands were Austria, eight people; Poland, six; France, five; Hungary, four; Alsace, three; England and Rumania, two each; and Holland and Prussia, one each.

⁵¹ Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1879–1915; Record of Deaths.

⁵² Record of Deaths; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1888–1909.

⁵³ Record of Deaths; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1888–1909. Ten people are identified as being buried “by Touro” or “by Infirmary.” An eleventh person, seventy-six-year-old Clarissa Samuel, was an “inmate” of the hospital, which meant that it was her home, but no details of her burial were noted. An immigrant from Jamaica who had never married, likely had no family in New Orleans, and suffered from “senility,” Samuel had resided for nearly two years at the Touro, which probably extended to her this last charity.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans, La.* (New Orleans, 1908), 49; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans, La.* (New Orleans, 1909), 41. The death notice of Caroline Frank in the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* of December 3, 1900, exemplifies a funeral “from the Touro.” No additional death notices involving Touro Cemetery burials could be found.

⁵⁵ Touro Infirmary, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 39.

⁵⁶ “Another Boom,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 7, 1880.

⁵⁷ Record of Deaths.

⁵⁸ Record of Deaths; Michael L. Taylor, “The Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker,” *Louisiana History* 55 (Summer 2014): 277.

⁵⁹ Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883* (New Haven, 1996), 9, 45; Taylor, “Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker,” 264.

⁶⁰ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 16, 1842 (first quotation); *New Orleans Jeffersonian Republican*, December 30, 1844 (second quotation); *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 30, 1849 (third quotation).

⁶¹ Taylor, "Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker," 265–68; Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 9, 157. The federal government did not affirm the policy of returning soldiers' remains to their survivors until the Korean War.

⁶² Record of Deaths. Executing a contract between a health-care institution and a funeral director was an accepted practice, as in the example of the Soldiers' Home contracting with Fernand Laudumiey in 1915 to bury deceased residents. Ledgers from the funeral home confirm that Laudumiey had held this commission before. "Bids Are Opened for Supplying Soldiers' Home," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 7, 1915; see, for example, day books, April 2, 1895, Laudumiey Funeral Home Collection (Mss 413), Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans.

⁶³ Although one may have existed, the author was unable to locate evidence of a Jewish burial society in New Orleans that had dealings with the Touro Infirmary Cemetery.

⁶⁴ Record of Deaths.

⁶⁵ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 19, 1900; "New Taxicab Service," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 12, 1909; Louis Levand death notice, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, January 30, 1934.

⁶⁶ Locating these notices and obituaries was facilitated by the *Louisiana Biography and Obituary Index*, compiled by the New Orleans Public Library and made available online by The Historic New Orleans Collection, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.nutrias.org/~nopl/obits/obits.htm>.

⁶⁷ Record of Deaths.

⁶⁸ "Dean of Funeral Directors Dead," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, September 17, 1934.

⁶⁹ Taylor, "Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker," 278; Record of Deaths.

⁷⁰ Record of Deaths. The Betzes also provided one burial each in Greenwood, Metairie, St. Joseph, and Valance Street Cemeteries and shipped one body to Zachary, Louisiana, for interment. Records do not specify the resting place of a stillborn infant, but the baby's mother eventually was entombed in the Carrollton Cemetery. The other undertakers who provided Carrollton Cemetery burials were Bultman (two) and Lynch, Mothe, and Sontheimer (one each). Clearly residents of Carrollton patronized their neighbors, the Betzes.

⁷¹ "Undertakers' Big Business Deal," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 24, 1913.

⁷² F. Laudumiey & Co., "Price List for Funeral of [Louis Finley, died February 28, 1898; Jessy Johnson, died February 26, 1898; Edward J. Soniat du Fossat, died March 21, 1898]," Sharp-Sontheimer-Laudumiey Collection, Addendum 1 (Mss 448), Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans; see, for example, Soldiers' Home burial, April 2, 1895. Grave digging fees may have been below the prevailing rate in the city-owned cemeteries, which were \$1.75 for charity adults and a dollar less for charity children in 1901. "One Saloon License Fails of Favor," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 11, 1901.

⁷³ These headstones have been removed from their original locations and, along with others, line the cemetery's Arabella Street fence. According to the website "Find a Grave," "With approval of the Rabbinic Council, grave sites recently were scanned and tombstones removed from those that were determined to be empty." Therefore, it is uncertain whether

these headstones came from the Touro Infirmary section, but the presence of the numbers makes this likely. Cemetery visits, February 12 and February 18, 2016; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Twentieth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1894), 27; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1903), 26; Record of Deaths; "Find a Grave: Gates of Prayer Cemetery #2," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=67898>.

⁷⁴ Record of Deaths.

⁷⁵ "Find a Grave," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com>.

⁷⁶ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 3, 1900.

⁷⁷ Record of Deaths; *Soards' New Orleans City Directory* (New Orleans, 1874–1935); Congregation Gates of Prayer, *Centennial Volume, Congregation Gates of Prayer, January 13–15, 1950* (New Orleans, 1950). Thanks to Suzanne Stone at Congregation Gates of Prayer for the discovery that charges were instituted in 1908.

⁷⁸ Record of Deaths.

⁷⁹ "Deaths," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 19, 1948 (containing an incorrect date of death); Rosa McDonald case file, June 18, 1948, Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Collection, Addendum 1 (Mss 447), Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans.

⁸⁰ Admission Book, 1855–1861; Record of Deaths; *Soards' New Orleans City Directory*; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Orleans Parish, Louisiana; "Find a Grave," accessed May 2, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Stabinsky&GSfn=Jacob&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=20&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=64700134&df=all&>. Contradictory data occur frequently and have been reconciled on the basis of logic and what versions appear most consistently. Credit for discovering the Stabinsky family in the death records goes to Linda Epstein, former assistant archivist at the Touro Infirmary Archives.

⁸¹ Julia Stabinsky vanishes after a city directory entry in 1884. Nonetheless, in that era of casual chronology, this person's birth in about 1841 is reasonably close to Julia's, around 1845. Oddly, other details of the entry appear to describe a man rather than a woman: a widower whose occupation was "labour." Admission Book, 1855–1861; Record of Deaths; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

⁸² Admission Book, 1855–1861; Record of Deaths; Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 65.

⁸³ Record of Deaths; My Heritage, "Martha Oppenheimer," accessed May 4, 2016, https://www.myheritage.com/names/martha_oppenheimer; New Orleans Board of Health, *Official Report of the Deaths from Yellow Fever* (New Orleans, [1878]), 62.

⁸⁴ "Find a Grave," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com>; "Jewish Home Band," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 1, 1905; "Confirmants at Jewish Altars," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 12, 1913.

⁸⁵ Light, *That Pride of Race and Character*, 5.