

# The Breakaways

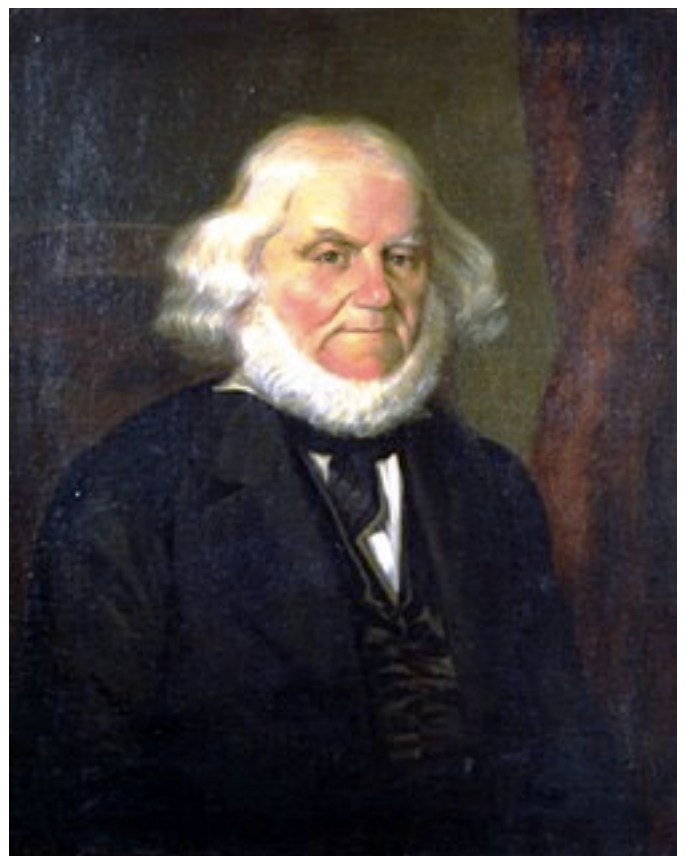
Division and Debate in 19th Century Western Jewry

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#2: New York's Bnai Jeshurun



JOHN L. HART  
(From photograph taken 1845)



Oct 6, 1825

Parnass and Trustees of Shearith  
TO THE PARNASS and TRUSTEES of the K. K. SHEARITH  
ISRAEL:

Respected Brethren and Friends:

We are deputed a committee from a meeting of Israelites held at Washington Hall to announce to you their intention to erect a new Synagogue in this city.

It is our duty, and we must cheerfully comply with it, to acquaint you with the motives which has induced us to take this step. We have a large portion of our brethren who have been educated in the German and Polish minhag, who find it difficult to accustom themselves to what is familiarly called the Portuguese minhag, in consequence of their early impressions and habits. It is also proper to state that the increase of our brethren is so great and in all probability will be much greater in a few years that accommodations, particularly on holidays, cannot be afforded to all. Again, the great increase of New York and the distant situation of the Shul render it necessary to have a new place of worship in a more convenient situation for those residing uptown. These reasons we respectfully trust will be satisfactory to your honorable Board, and will at once show our intention is not capriciously to withdraw ourselves from the ancient and respectable Congregation of Shearith Israel which God may prosper, but is urged by motives of necessity.

Conforming therefore to our duty as Jews and the obligations of our Holy Faith, we first make known our intentions to your Board

and solicit such aid in the furtherance of this laudable object as liberality, justice and the situation of the Congregation warrant.

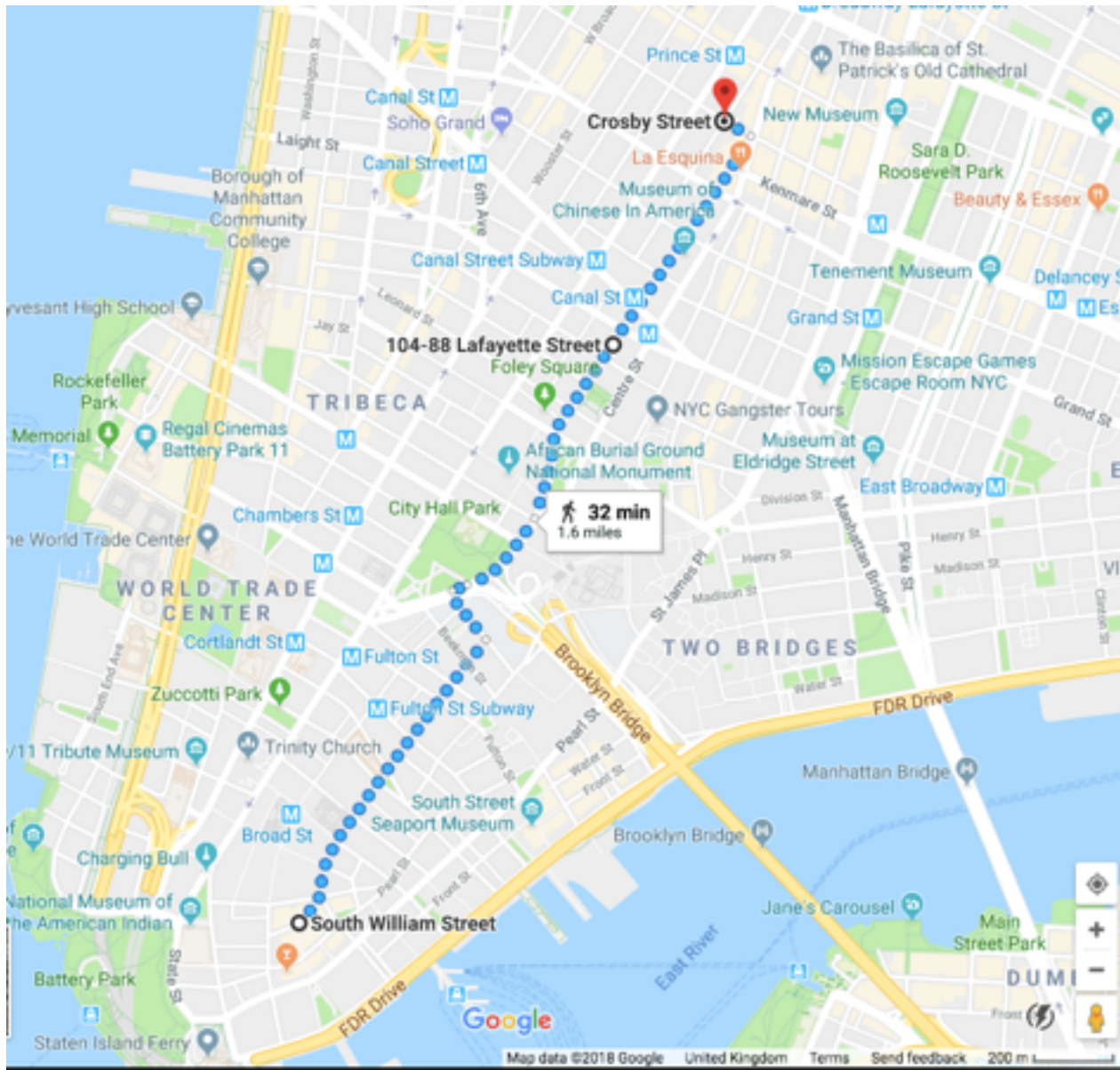
We have the pleasure to state that with loans and subscriptions we have about \$4,000, a sum which your honorable Board will at once perceive is insufficient to build a place of worship.

The religious and the equitable claim which we have as brethren of one great family of the Congregation of Shearith Israel will, we have hope, be recognized and every aid, countenance and protection afforded us calculated to ensure success and give respectability and character to our project.

Wishing peace to Israel and prosperity and life to you gentlemen, we are respectfully your friends,

ROWLAND DAVIES  
JOHN I. HART  
DANIEL JACKSON







### **Mordecai Manuel Noah 1818 Address**

‘Who is he that can amend them? Once encroach upon their connections, once impair or affect their essence, once innovate upon their principles, and who can say where it will end: what dangers may not arise, what destruction may not be anticipated.’

### **in 1841 New York’s parnas, Moses L. Moses wrote to London’s leaders Moses Montefiore, Judah Guedalla, and J. Jalfon**

“To this time we have in our congregation steered clear of the rock of innovation, the most trifling, or immaterial has not been permitted in our public worship, fearful that it might afford argument for farther, and more important alteration...no sooner shall their authors have passed from this transitory life, than, a new set coming into power and fancying themselves wiser than their predecessors, must of course substitute their plan of Public Worship...let any of us arriving from almost any part of the world, meet, we feel ourselves at home, and join in the service of the synagogue, on any day, at any time, even to the different tunes.”

