

# HAYM SALOMON

Polish, Jewish, American patriot - financier of the American Revolution....

## Jewish Conflict and Identity



### Haym Salomon

By Jerry Klinger

*Myths are part fact.*

*Myths are part fantasy.*

*A society creates what it needs out of both and claims that as truth.*

William Rabinowitz

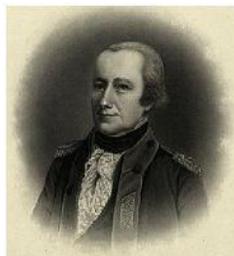
No one knows what Haym Salomon looked like. There was never a portrait, bust, sculpture or death mask made of him. Any representations of Haym Salomon are wishful, artistic expressions. Did he look Jewish? If he did, few portray him with Jewish stereotypical racial characteristics. What is known about Salomon is limited. There are few surviving primary historical documents. Most of what is known about him is gleaned from indirect sources, secondary materials and even rabid anti-Semitic canards perversely legitimized by the myth and reality of his life.

One central fact is incontrovertible. Salomon was an American Revolutionary Patriot who personally suffered and sacrificed much for the American cause.

Haym Salomon, (or Solomon) was born April 7, 1740 in Leszno, a small town in Western Poland. His family was Sephardic Jews, probably of Portuguese background. Some say his father was an orthodox Rabbi. Others claim his family was revolutionaries in the failed struggle for Polish independence and liberty.

Salomon left Leszno to travel in France and Germany as a young man. When Leszno was surrendered in the first Polish Partition (1772) to the Hapsburgs, Salomon was in England. The timeline of his life becomes murky. His associations in Europe were never clarified. Salomon moved from country to country developing an extraordinary skill in languages and understanding of finance.

Who financed his travels, who was he introduced to or trained by was never established. Sources speculate exactly when, 1772 or in 1775, Salomon arrived in New York, allegedly penniless. He quickly established himself as a factor, a financial broker, for merchants engaged in international trade. Where Salomon obtained his initial financial backing or how he obtained his introductions has never been explained. The assumption is he was a self-made man. He rose by his own ingenuity, ability, and financial acumen.



**Alexander McDougall**

Salomon, very astutely observed the changing economic and political conditions in New York. He established a strong mutual friendship with the wealthy and powerful Alexander McDougall. McDougall was a Scottish firebrand. A self-made man, McDougall made his fortune as a merchant seaman and a courageous able Captain of his own privateering ships in the French and Indian Wars. Flamboyantly dressed, loud with a thick Scottish accent, he had a distinct disdain for hereditary social ranking. McDougall respected individual initiative, motivation and ability.

By 1775, McDougall's reputation as a fighter against British arbitrary rule was well established. He was the street leader of the Sons of Liberty and willing to bash heads if needed. He organized repeated protests against British capriciousness. McDougall hated the British Stamp Act, organizing the New York equivalent of the Boston Tea Party. He was a member of the Revolutionary Committees of Correspondence and Safety. When New York established a Revolutionary Government in 1775, McDougall was elected to the New York Provincial Congress. McDougall would serve as a major General in the Continental Army under George Washington.

Perhaps it was beshert, perhaps it was deliberate, perhaps it was coincidental, Salomon linked his future with McDougall's. He joined the New York branch of the Sons of Liberty. A relatively recent immigrant,

perhaps because of his experiences in Poland, perhaps because of his experiences with the British in England, Salomon became a revolutionary.

September 1776, Salomon was arrested as spy by the British. A mysterious fire in New York City had destroyed almost a fourth of all the housing that could have been used by occupying British troops. General Washington wanted New York burned. Congress overruled Washington.

Every member of the Sons of Liberty that could be rounded up by the British was arrested. They all were assumed, probably correctly, involved in the fire. Salomon was sentenced to a long imprisonment for his association.

Political conditions in the Colonies continued deteriorating. The British began building military forces in New York. Hessian mercenaries were purchased by the British to fight the Americans. Poorly coordinated, the German troops arrived without anyone being able to act as a translator, or intermediary for them with the British. Salomon's remarkable linguistic ability, as a German/English translator, was discovered by the British. Salomon had served 18 months of his sentence. He convinced the British he was not a traitor or spy but could be useful to them. Salomon was retained as a trusted interpreter and liaison to the German troops by the Hessian under General Heister. Heister gave him an appointment in the commissariat department. It was an extraordinary accomplishment of interpersonal relations for a Jew to position himself, after arrest and imprisonment as a spy, and in spite of the traditional anti-Semitism of the British and the Germans.

Salomon fulfilled his duties as a translator with secure access to British military facilities. He did much more. Using his position, Salomon worked to undermine German support for the British. He promoted anti-British sentiment with the Hessians. He encouraged and abetted desertions of German troops. He aided the escape of British prisoners.

1778, the British arrested Salomon again. He was sentenced to death. Salomon bribed a guard with gold sovereigns sewn into his clothing and escaped. Salomon fled sending for his wife, Rachel Franks and infant son, later. Franks was the poor family member of a prominent, wealthy Jewish colonial family. The Franks family, like many families in Revolutionary America, was split between Loyalists and Revolutionaries. David Franks, for example, served on the staff of George Washington; other members of the Franks family served the British cause.

The Salomons moved to Philadelphia. They arrived, again for Salomon, virtually penniless. Without hesitation, Salomon plunged back into the financial world of mercantile exchange and brokerage. Financially, he did very well, but was far from rich.

Salomon reestablished himself with American Revolutionary interests, even providing personal financial support, primarily loans at no interest that were never repaid, to James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Wilson and Don Francesco Rendon, the Spanish Court's secret ambassador.<sup>1</sup>

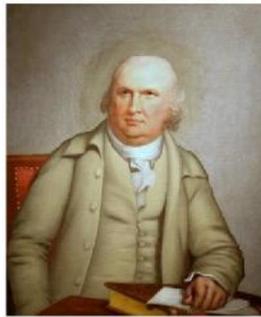
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/519595/Haym-Salomon>

Three years after having arrived in Philadelphia, 1781, Salomon's extraordinary abilities and multi-lingualism, positioned him near the center of the American Revolutionary financial heart. He became the agent of the French consul and the paymaster to the newly allied French military forces in North America. The French, Dutch (through St. Eustatius) and the Spanish governments used Salomon to broker their loans helping finance the American Revolution.

Enormous loans passing through his brokerage business was converted into desperately needed specie for the American Revolutionary government and military. Paper money was almost never worth hard gold and silver. Salomon's fees for his brokerage services to the struggling American government were extremely modest, if there were any at all. Perversely, partly because he was a Jew, the French, Dutch, Spanish and Americans alike viewed Jews in anti-Semitic stereotypical roles. They saw Jews as Shylocks from Shakespearian imagery. They saw Jews as medieval money lenders. Ironically their bigotry greased the way for Salomon's success.

Salomon's brokerage business became so big that he was the largest depositor in Robert Morris' Bank of North America.



**Robert Morris**

Three days after Salomon had taken out large advertisements in the Philadelphia papers, announcing his burgeoning brokerage business; Robert Morris was appointed Superintendent of Finance of the Revolutionary government. Morris was responsible for managing the economy. He was considered, though a civilian, second in power only to George Washington.

Robert Morris, Jr. was an American merchant and signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the United States Constitution. His administration of the American Revolutionary economy earned him the title of "Financier of the American Revolution." Morris kept a detailed diary, as was quite common, of his life. In Morris's diary, Haym Salomon is mentioned more than 75 times.

Morris turned to Salomon repeatedly for help as one financial crisis after another arose. Morris knew and trusted Salomon beyond few others.

The military crisis that would end in victory for the American cause hung in desperate balance during the summer and early fall of 1781. British General Cornwallis had retreated from the Southern Colonies after a series of major military defeats. He secured his army near Yorktown, Va., on the James River, to

await reinforcements and resupply by the British Navy. American forces opposite him were too small and too weak to engage Cornwallis. They could only delay him. George Washington saw his chance. The French fleet positioned itself outside of the Chesapeake Bay. They had defeated the British Fleet in a quick naval battle.

The British Battle Fleet was weakened earlier. Admiral Rodney had attacked the arsenal of the Revolutionary forces on the Dutch Island of St. Eustatius. Ammunition, weapons, supplies and much war material was being funneled through the "neutral" Dutch Island to the American cause. Jewish merchants were major factors in the arms trade on St. Eustatius.

Rodney attacked and destroyed the vast stores of weaponry and supplies warehoused on St. Eustatius. He looted and robbed the enormous wealth he found there paying particular attention to the Jews, whom he detested with particular anti-Semitic venom.



***"They (the Jews of St. Eustatius, Caribbean Antilles) cannot too soon be taken care of - they are notorious in the cause of America and France."***

**Admiral Sir George Rodney commander of the British Fleet, February, 1781**

Rodney was not a rich man. He divided and diverted a large part of his fleet to send back to England the wealth he stole. Instead of following orders to support the British army fighting in the Colonies, Rodney lined his own pocket on Jewish and non-Jewish wealth. His personal greed and hate delayed the British Fleet enough to lock General Cornwallis at Yorktown. However, Cornwallis was not totally trapped. He still had the potential to move on land. Cornwallis chose to wait for help from British forces in New York. It was a fateful decision.

George Washington saw his opportunity. If he could slip away from the North and trap Cornwallis in by land with the French Fleet to their back, the war might be won. It was a risky opportunity and might not have happened at all except for Haym Salomon. Washington's army, an army of unpaid, underfed, undersupplied soldiers lacked the funds to move. It was one thing to say you are going to move your army to a new position but it was another thing to feed them: that took money. Washington did not have the \$20,000 he needed. The Revolutionary treasury was empty.

Legend crosses with fact, Robert Morris sent a desperate call for help to Haym Salomon. It was Yom Kippur, the holiest, the most solemn day of the Jewish religious year. Dealing in anything other than repentance before God, especially dealing with money on Yom Kippur, is considered a major sacrilege. Salomon was at prayer with his synagogue community, Mikveh Israel, when the message arrived. Salomon, an observant Jew and a pillar of the Jewish community, considered the situation. He left the Yom Kippur service and hurried out to aid Morris. Salomon felt that God had placed him in a particular position to aid the struggle for Liberty.

Robert Morris might have appealed to others to raise the money for Washington. Morris turned to Salomon. The Yom Kippur story, though a good story, is considered Jewish fiction.

Within a day, Salomon had brokered the loans and paper necessary. Morris reported to Washington that the general had his \$20,000. The American and French army slipped away and marched to Yorktown. A siege began. Cornwallis completely trapped by overwhelming forces, unable to obtain reinforcements or supplies, bitterly surrendered. The war was over. The American Revolution was won.



**British surrender at Yorktown**

The next day, Washington accepted the surrender of Cornwallis' army. Cornwallis, mortified at whom he had to present himself to, refused to attend. The British band played a tune during the surrender. The tune was "The World Turned Upside Down." The world had been in fact turned upside down and for no people more than for the Jew and the American Jewish story.

The crisis of the future American Republic did not end with Cornwallis' surrender. A year later, August 1782, the treasury, completely empty, the American government faced a very real, existential financial disaster. The financial need was so critical it threatened to destroy the victories won on the battlefields. The American government had no credit left. There was no money to exist.

Morris again turned to Salomon. Morris wrote in diary:

"I sent for Salomon and desired him to try every way he could devise to raise money, and then went in quest of it myself. 'Two days later he wrote:' 'Salomon the broker came and I urged him to leave no stone unturned to find out money and means by which I can obtain it.'"

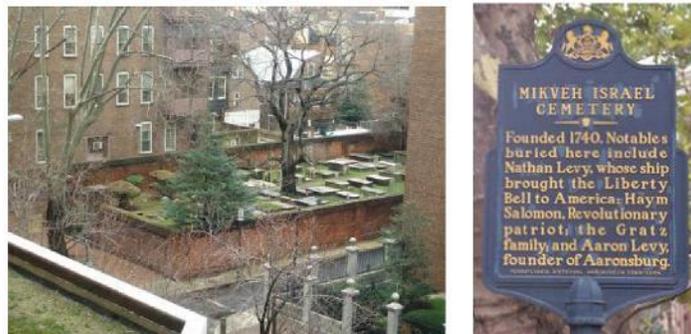
Salomon came through again. The crisis was averted.

Salomon's generosity and financial support, to the best of his abilities, was acknowledged by many.

"James Madison (a later U.S. President) wrote in a letter (August 27, 1782) urging the forwarding of remittances from his state, which he represented at Philadelphia, wrote: "I have for some time past been a pensioner on the favor of Haym Salomon, a Jew broker." On Sept. 30 of the same year, when again appealing for remittances to relieve his embarrassments, he wrote: "The kindness of our little friend in Front street, near the coffee-house, is a fund which will preserve me from extremities, but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he obstinately rejects all recompense. The price of money is so usurious that he thinks it ought to be extorted from none but those who aim at profitable speculations. To a necessitous delegate he gratuitously spares a supply out of his private stock."<sup>2</sup>

Salomon turned his energies back to business after the war. His family grew. His health got worse. It was believed he contracted tuberculosis while imprisoned by the British. Financial reverses hit and Salomon died bankrupted. No loan, advanced from much of his own fortune to the United States government or numerous Revolutionary figures, was ever repaid.

Salomon died in Philadelphia, January 6, 1785. His obituary appeared in the *Brotherly City's* Independent Gazetteer. "Thursday, last, expired, after a lingering illness, Mr. Haym Salomon, an eminent broker of this city, was a native of Poland, and of the Hebrew nation. He was remarkable for his skill and integrity in his profession, and for his generous and humane deportment. His remains were yesterday deposited in the burial ground of the synagogue of this city."



**Mikveh Israel Cemetery - Philadelphia**

Haym Salomon was buried in the Mikveh Israel synagogue cemetery on Spruce Street. His grave was unmarked. His family had no funds for a tombstone. Neither the Mikveh Israel community nor his Revolutionary War friends ever marked his gravesite. It is lost today, the exact location unknown. He was 44 years old.

Salomon's estate listed assets of \$353,000 consisting of Government bonds and Continental currency. How the enormous Government debt had been accumulated and at what price was never determined. The bonds were illiquid and of questionable value. When matched up against his debts of about

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13035-salomon-haym>

\$35,000 in real money, he was broke. The bonds were turned over to Robert Morris' bank of North America to help satisfy the estate.

At face value, the loans would have made Haym Salomon one of the wealthiest men in North America. If true, it was an incredible achievement for an immigrant of about ten years.

Years later, Salomon's son, Haym M. Salomon, and later his family, repeatedly petitioned the U.S. government for repayment of the loans. Haym M. Salomon was seeking, with interest, in excess of \$600,000, an immense amount of money. Documentation Salomon turned over to the U.S. government supporting the claims, *disappeared*. In future years, various United States House and Senate Committees reviewed the Salomon financial claims. They agreed with the appropriateness to pay back the family. The recommendations for compensation never got much further. Something always came up to deny any payment. The family offered to settle for \$100,000 in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The offer was never accepted. In 1893, a Congressional recommendation that a gold medal be struck in honor of Hyam Salomon also came to nothing.

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the age of memorializations. It was the age to acknowledge history with monuments about the American Civil War. It was the period that the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution organizations were founded. A concerted effort was made to bring Haym Salomon, the Jew, forward as a part of the Revolutionary narrative. In 1893, there was a Congressional recommendation that a gold medal be struck in honor of Haym Salomon. The recommendation made it past the House Committee on the Library. It failed in the House of Representatives.

Haym Salomon was pushed aside, possibly because of the family's search for financial compensation without satisfactory documentation. A suggested reason the family was denied compensation was because of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism has never been shown or demonstrated as a cause for non-payment or honored recognition of Haym Salomon.

The American Jewish landscape radically changed between the years, 1880-1920. Millions of Jews, mostly East-Europeans (Polish-Russian) immigrated, rushed would be a better term, to the *Goldene Medina* – the United States. The old line Jewish leadership, German Jewry, was hard pressed to aid the *unwashed masses* that were coming in. Many German American Jews viewed the new immigrants with disdain. German Jews were "uptown". The other Jews were "Lower East Side types." The new Jewish immigration threatened the integrated social standings of the old line Jews in Christian America. Efforts were made to send the new Jewish overflow far into the American interior or the Southwest. The famed, or infamous, Galveston resettlement project moved tens of thousands of fresh Jewish immigrants away from the East and into the raw West.

Jewish immigrants, if given a choice, remained in the East, New York in particular. Their voices were the timid voices of the unassimilated. The timidity would change as their children moved into society as Americans.

America was a land of immigrants. It was a land of many legitimate histories from many different lands by many different peoples and cultures. America was a land where diverse histories merged into a

sense of commonality, even if one's parents were not on the Mayflower. Everyone wanted to be an American and everyone wanted to have their historical identity recognized from the Old Country and in the New.

A 1910 edition of the *American Hebrew*, a widely read Jewish newspaper, announced that an organization called the Haym Salomon National Monument Committee wanted to erect a statue honoring him in Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup> At first the group achieved some notable success. President Taft endorsed the idea.

Taft addressing a Washington, D.C. synagogue community said "to second the motion that a memorial be raised to the Jew who stood by Robert Morris and financed the American Revolution." The popular cultural image of Salmon had reached to and was accepted by President Taft. Nothing came of the effort.

Haym Salomon's story became the struggle for Jewish American identity. A major proponent for Salomon came not from Jews but from a Christian minister.

Pastor Madison Peters, a philo-semite, a Christian Minister of God, wrote a short biography of Haym Salomon that was published in 1911, *Haym Salomon, The Financier of the Revolution*. The biography was a glowing recounting of the many stories, some documented, some not, but assembled into a flowing tale of the debt, moral, historical and even economic, owed to Haym Salomon by America. It was followed a year later by a general history of the Jews in America, published by the Jewish Publication Society. Peter Wiernik's, *History of the Jews in America*, 1912. Wiernik also recounted the significant, but unrecognized and certainly not honored, contribution of Haym Salomon to the American cause.

That same year, 1912, the *American Hebrew* reported on a better organized effort to honor Salomon. The effort was "supposedly initiated by the Federation of Jewish Organizations, a lobbying group that represented a small contingent within the East European immigrant community. The newspaper carried an article announcing that the Federation had endorsed a campaign to collect on the financial claims of Salmon's heirs and use the funds to build a Haym Salomon National University in Washington, D.C."<sup>4</sup>

The project instantly set off controversy, both inside and outside the Jewish community. Inside the Jewish world it was a point of pride for some and anxiety for others. Outside the Jewish world it was a question of legitimization. Non-Jewish historians joined the fray denigrating and supporting honoring Haym Salomon for his efforts during the American Revolution.

One distinguished non-Jewish historian, a former chief of the manuscripts division of the Library of Congress, published an article in the "*The Nation*" magazine. He argued that Salomon did not deserve recognition nor did his family deserve any compensation. He was countered by Harvard historian Albert Bushnell who argued the complete opposite position. Bushnell demanded that Salomon deserved the honor of his nation for his Patriotic service.

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<sup>3</sup> History Lesson, The Creation of American Jewish Heritage, Beth S. Wenger, Princeton University Press 2010, pg. 186

<sup>4</sup> Op cit pg. 186

“For their part, leaders of the Federation of Jewish Organizations quickly denounced the project and denied that they had ever endorsed it. Louis Marshall, the prominent leader of the American Jewish Committee who had been listed in the newspaper as a supporter of the project, vehemently condemned the plan and sharply denied his own involvement in the affair. *“It seems to me utterly ridiculous and absurd,”* ....While almost all parties agreed that Salomon had played a role in the Revolution, individuals both inside and outside of the Jewish community remained wary of elevating his public status, for fear that the claims might be disproved and ultimately reflect poorly on America’s Jews.”<sup>5</sup>

The fears of establishment Jewry reflected their insecurity about their American Jewish identity and security. They feared pushing Jewish interests in America. It was the same fears that a bit over twenty five years later, as Hitler pushed Jews into the gas chambers and ovens, that prevented American Jewish leadership from publically demanding that Roosevelt do something to stop Holocaust. They feared if the war did not turn out well, Jews would be accused of draining American blood and resources for a purely foreign Jewish concern.

American organized Jewish leadership attacked those who did demand that Roosevelt act to save Europe’s Jews. People like the Bergson Group screamed loudly and publicly about the murder of Jews in the Holocaust. American Jewry, neutered, meekly acquiesced to Roosevelt’s demand they must first win the war to save Jews. They knew of the slaughter but feared American anti-Semitism more. Today, Hillel Kook and the Bergson group, if remembered at all, are still viewed with disdain by establishment Jewry. Over 500,000 American Jews served in the armed forces during WWII. By far, the vast majority were of Eastern European Jewish immigrant backgrounds.

For decades German Jewry, having arrived mostly in the pre-Civil War period, was the face and fact of organized Jewish life. They had supplanted Sephardic Jewry for preeminence in the young Republic. The arriving waves of East European Jews were assimilating rapidly into American society. The children of the new immigrants did not identify as Europeans, but Americans. The political and economic Jewish American landscape was changing again. The old German American elite being challenged by the new Eastern –Jewish Americans, did not want to let go or make room at the top.

The new Jewish Americans wanted legitimization as Americans. They wanted legitimization not just as Americans who got off the boat yesterday but as Americans with a tie to the foundation of America. Haym Salomon was a Polish Jew. He arrived in America over a century earlier. He had been an intimate part of the Revolution.

America was turned in to itself after WWI. Unrelenting forces were unleashed pushing to close off open immigration to America. The primary target of the restrictive immigration policies were Eastern and Southern European immigrants in the East. In the West restrictive immigration policies were focused on Asians.

For Eastern European Jews it was a clear threat. Conditions for Jews in Russia and in Poland were sharply worsening, even worse than the mini-Holocaust of WWI. By 1920 it looked like open American

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<sup>5</sup> Op cit. pg. 187

immigration would be ending. Eastern European Jews needed legitimization. They needed to be part of the narrative of America but not as recent immigrants. They needed legitimization as long time Americans. Haym Salomon, mythologized, became the symbol of legitimization for Eastern European Jews as Americans.

In 1925, a new effort to memorialize and honor Haym Salomon began in New York. The project was led by the Federation of Polish Jews. Their campaign focused on Salomon's Polish birth and creatively amplified even further the mythologizing of Salomon. The Federation of Polish Jews was engaged in a second fight much more significant within the Jewish community. They were directly challenging the old guard of German Jewish leadership that had ruled for 50 years.

Zigmunt Tygel, secretary and chief spokesperson of the Polish Jews wrote an "information biography" about Salomon. The biography pushed mythologizing to new levels, complete with fictionalized accounts. Tygel created a new version of the Morris story seeking funds for Washington's army prior to the battle of Yorktown. Only in Tygel's account, it was Washington himself who wrote to Salomon that fateful Yom Kippur day.

The Federation of Polish Jews created the Haym Salomon Monument Committee. It was directed to raise \$100,000 for a magnificent monument to Polish Jewry's greatest American patriot. A monument was commissioned and submitted to the New York Municipal Art Commission for review and possible placement near Madison Square Park. The Commission rejected the project because they were unconvinced of the merit of recognizing Salomon. The Commission relied on the historical research of Worthington Ford and his article in the Nation, 14 years earlier.

The Federation of Polish Jews regrouped. Bitter feelings bubbled in the new effort. Many felt they had been sabotaged by the old establishment Jews who were against honoring Haym Salomon. The new committee submitted a new monument to the Commission. Toned down was the historical symbolism. They just referenced Salomon's name and dates on the statue. The new monument, to be located near Lincoln Square, was preliminarily approved by the Commission in 1928.

The German Jewish leadership in New York protested the decision vehemently. Again, they feared that Salomon's Revolutionary accomplishments were much more modest than were those being represented by the Polish Jewish community. They feared, if future scholarship bore them out, the entire Jewish community would suffer from ridicule and disgrace.

Max Kohler, the secretary of the American Jewish Historical Society, researched and reviewed the history of Haym Salomon with an eye to verifying or refuting the Polish Jewish claims. He was backed by powerful men from the German Jewish community. Kohler presented his report privately to the Polish Jews. It was a negative evaluation of Haym Salomon as the financier of the American Revolution.

Kohler verified that Salomon had been a patriot, risked his life as a member of the Sons of Liberty, and suffered severely financially. Salomon had been an intimate with Robert Morris but as an extremely competent broker. Salomon did not finance the American Revolution. He was quite poor himself and

could not even send money back to his own needy family in Poland until very late in the War. He did not have the resources. The mythologized stories of Salomon and Washington never happened.

Salomon had in fact provided financial support to a number of American Revolutionary fathers. His aid to them was never repaid. Salomon did provide vital aid to Morris, converting the foreign loans to the American government into usable specie at little or no commission to him. But Kohler asserted Salomon had acted in his capacity as a patriotic merchant and citizen not as the principle player in the financing of the American Revolution. Salomon's efforts were extremely important but not rising to the level of the Founding Fathers, in Kohler's opinion.

Establishment German Jewry labeled the effort for Salomon, in the vitriolic words of Louis Marshal, a monument for "only a money-lender."

The Polish Jews were outraged. They publically labeled Kohler and the American Jewish Historical Society as anti-Semites, *using tactics worthy of the KKK*, some of them said. Kohler went public with his information. Controversy raged in every American Jewish community across the United States. The New York monument to Haym Salomon was effectively dead by 1931.

Seven hundred miles to the West of the Hudson River, in the mid 1930's, in Chicago, Ill., against the backdrop of rising Nazism, a new Polish Jewish led effort emerged to honor Haym Salomon. The project began in 1936 was led by Barnett Hodes, a lawyer and local politician of Polish Jewish background.

Mass public acceptance of the Hyam Salomon narrative was furthered by the movie industry. In 1939, Warner Brothers put out a patriotic two reeler about Haym Salomon starring Claude Rains. Warner Brothers Pictures was owned by four Jewish brothers, Harry (Hirsz), Albert (Aaron), Sam (Szmul) and Jack (Itzhak) Wonkolaser. The brothers changed their name to Warner for assimilationist and business reasons. They and their parents had immigrated to the United States from Poland.

The Patriotic Foundation of Chicago under Hodes took a different tack to the previous Salomon monument issues. The monument would not be to Salomon alone but to the great triumvirate of the Revolution, George Washington, Robert Morris and Haym Salomon. The monument would be a statement about the American Democratic experiment. Haym Salomon was a part of it, not the focus.



**Haym Salomon, George Washington, Robert Morris**

The Great Triumvirate of Patriots Monument, designed by Lorado Taft, stands, prominently sited today on Wacker Drive in Chicago. Haym Salomon stands on the right of Washington, Morris on his left.

Inscribed on the front of the monument is Washington's address to the Jewish congregation in Newport, R.I.

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

On the back of the monument is an image of the Goddess of Liberty holding her torch with arms extended over the multi-ethnic, peoples of America.

Poignantly, the monument originally intended for Haym Salomon, became the metaphor for the United States. The monument was dedicated December 15, 1941, one week after the Japanese attack on the American naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii that brought America into World War II.

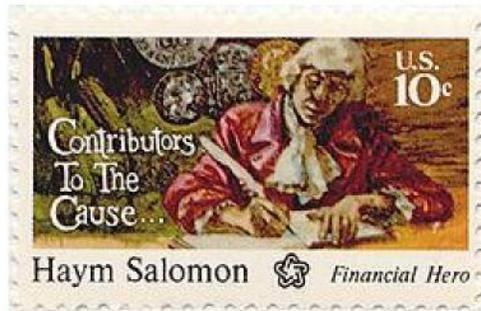
The Chicago monument, that included Salomon, was not to be the only monument in his honor. January 7, 1944, a monument to Haym Salomon alone was dedicated in Los Angeles. Sculpted by Robert Paine in 1943, the memorial is 8' in height. It depicts a stoic Salomon seated George Washington like on a large chair atop a high platform. The front of the monument is simply inscribed – Haym Salomon 1740-1785, American Patriot. On the rear of the monument is inscribed two sections. The upper text; *"The human spirit has flowered only in freedom, the dynamic reality of our world culture flowed from its first democracy."* The lower inscription is emphatic about Salmon's importance to the American cause. *"Let all American acclaim Haym Salomon, a Patriot, a Benefactor of his Country, an inciter to Patriotism, to members of his race, to his countrymen and to later generations. It looks as though his credit was better than that of the whole thirteen United States of America – Albert Bushnell Hart, Professor Emeritus of History, Harvard University."*

The inscriptions are misaligned, poorly designed and are engraved as if by freehand.

The memorial traveled about Los Angeles, a veritable wandering Jew, looking for a home. A bronze plaque at the base of the current location documents its history and the changing character of Los Angeles and the Jewish experience. *“Rededication of the Haym Salomon Statue, June 12, 2008”* next to the city seal of Los Angeles. *“From Hollenbeck Park to MacArthur Park to West Wilshire Park to Pan Pacific Park, this Statue Stands as a Reminder of a Jewish American Patriot’s Invaluable Service to his Country in a Time of a Great Struggle. Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Councilmember Tom LaBonge Fourth District.”*

By 1944 and today, dedication of a monument to honor Salomon hardly raised a ripple of opposition. During WWII a liberty ship was named the *Haym Salomon*.

Numerous books were written about Salomon since the 1930’s, some popular culture, few of deep scholarship, almost all reflecting the mythologized Salomon. Many were geared to Jewish youth to give them pride and roots in the American story.



During the Bi-centennial of the United States, 1975, the United States Postal Service issued a stamp in honor of Haym Salomon. It is an unusual stamp. On the glue side of the stamp is printed in pale green letters, “Financial Hero – Businessman and broker, Haym Solomon was responsible for raising most of the money needed to finance the American Revolution and later to save the new nation from collapse.”

Coincidental, to the issuance of the Haym Salomon stamp, the state of Israel issued a stamp in 1975 honoring Harry Truman, the first President to recognize the state of Israel.

March 29, 1975, from the United States Congressional Record:

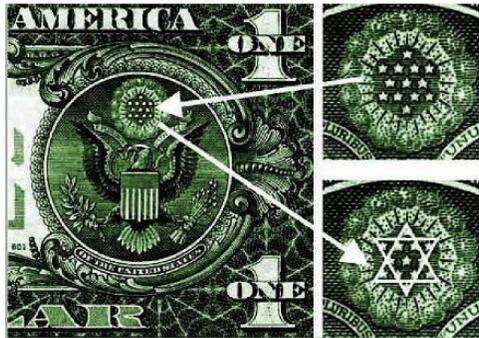
“When Morris was appointed Superintendent of Finance, he turned to Solomon for help in raising money needed to carry on the war and later to save the emerging nation from financial collapse. Solomon advanced direct loans to the government and also gave generously of his resources to pay the salaries of government officials and army officers. With frequent entries of “I sent for Haym Solomon”, Morris’ diary for the years 1781-1784 records some 75 transactions between the two men.”

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The internet is laced with half-truths both for and against Salomon. Most of the articles are shallow reflections of much deeper biases.

Anti-Semites have moved Salomon to the pantheon of conspiracy hatred. They point to the symbolism of the U.S. dollar bill. Anti-Semites and Black Helicopter anti-Masonic conspiracy theorists argue that Washington came to Salomon and asked him what he wished for his great services to America. Salomon asked to Washington to incorporate Judaic-Masonic imagery into the Great Seal of America and any future currency. The conspiracy theorists assert that Salomon was a servant of the secret Rothschild – Jewish –Masonic cabal to create a one world government under Jewish control.

Though there are many images to be pointed to that need explanation. One symbol is pointed out among all the others. On the back of the dollar, on the right side above the American eagle is a circle with 13 stars arranged into a pattern. The pattern, if you connect the stars, forms a Star of David.



The anti-Semites and conspiracy theorists say this proves that the Jews are secretly involved in controlling American finance for world domination. Salomon was a man of money. He controlled Washington through money and the evidence in on the U.S. Dollar Bill.

There are thirteen stars on the Dollar Bill because there were thirteen Colonies in the Revolutionary period. It has nothing to do with any Jewish mystical numerology.

The second problem with the conspiracist argument is that the U.S. Dollar Bill did not have its design until it was first printed in 1937. George Washington and Haym Salomon had long passed away. The stories of conspiracy and collusion between Salomon and Rothschild for control of America are entirely fictions that has passed into urban myth.<sup>6</sup> A major concern is that even some Jews repeat with pride some of the falsehoods. They think they are honoring American freedom and universal Jewish toleration. Jews too are guilty of advancing myth over fact.



<sup>6</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/business/money/solomon.asp>

### Haym Salomon ground marker

About 1980, a marker was finally placed in the ground of the Mikveh Israel congregational cemetery honoring Haym Salomon. It was placed with great fanfare. 63 years earlier, a small wall plaque was placed inside on the cemetery wall by Haym Salomon's great grandson William Salomon, in 1917. The text reads *"To the memory of Haym Salomon, interred in this cemetery, the location being of now unknown?"*

Salomon's bones rest somewhere in the grounds, no one knows where. Perhaps he lies quietly, undisturbed. Or perhaps, he lies under a walkway.

Aspects of Salomon's life and contributions to the American cause have been mythologized. Other important parts of his life and service were grossly under-recognized.

Haym Salomon was never rich. He never was wealthy enough to finance the American Revolution. His early history is vague. Much documentation about him has long been lost by the U.S. Government. Many records of Salomon's financial affairs were burned by the British in the war of 1812.

Haym Salomon was an American patriot and an observant, proud, practicing Jew. He offered all he had for the American cause. He was imprisoned and even risked his life for Revolutionary activities. Robert Morris understood and trusted Salomon beyond anyone else. He drew upon Salomon's financial ability, skill, personal credit reputation and even personal guarantees when no one was willing to accept American debt. Salomon did not raise most of the money needed for the American Revolution. Salomon was able to broker the loans making money available for the Revolutionary Government and young Republic when no one else could or would.

Salomon's crucial contribution to the American cause was his ability to provide liquidity. Enormous sums of money for the Revolutionary cause, passed through Salomon's brokerage house. He accepted little if any financial compensation.

To understand Salomon's contribution it is easiest to understand his actions in personal, modern, financial terms.

The American government issued checks drawn on its treasury. No one would cash the checks. No one wanted the checks. No one trusted the American government. Imagine going to the grocery store with a payroll check and the grocer refuses your check because he suspects the check will bounce. The grocer believes the check is bad. You go home with no food, hungry. You can't feed your family.

Imagine you are given a loan from a foreign bank but you have no way to cash the loan. You cannot convert the loan papers into useable money to pay your electric bill, your cell phone bill, your mortgage. Your financial system would collapse. You would be homeless as well as hungry.

Salomon, not only was he able to cash the checks for the American government and give them the liquidity and hard currency, not paper money, to buy the groceries to feed the army, provide for

supplies and give Washington the ability of carrying on the war, but he personally put himself at risk to make money good.

When Salomon died, his estate held a vast amount of government debt of questionable value. How the money was held, was it pledged, was it collateral, was it Salomon's accumulated at face value or discount, is unknown. The central fact remains, Salomon was the key keeping the Revolutionary Government and economy viable at the pivotal point of survival.

Haym Salomon personally provided financial support to a whole range of Revolutionary leaders, members of the military, and political figures, keeping them "in the game" when they had no alternative funding. He funded, from his own pocket, the unofficial, secret Spanish Ambassador to the Revolutionary Government. The Ambassador ultimately brought in Spanish support and loans for the war.

Salomon did what he did for Patriotic reasons. He did what he did because he believed that the American cause and ideals were different, unique and idealistic. He did it not just because it would be good for the Jews. He did what he did because he believed, if the American cause would be triumphant, there would be a better tomorrow for everyone.

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