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Noah's Dream: A Refuge for World Jewry

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



In 1824, well before the birth of Theodor Herzl and the modern Zionist movement, Utopian dreamer Mordecai Manuel Noah worried about the oppression of world Jewry.

His concern was based on personal experience. A Sephardic Jew of Portuguese ancestry, Noah was the first American-born Jew to reach national prominence. A true Renaissance man, he was a journalist, editor, lawyer, judge, playwright, politician, and diplomat.

During his appointment as Consul to Tunis, Noah organized the rescue of American citizens who had been kidnapped and forced

into slavery by Moroccan masters, and also managed to secure the release of hostages in Algiers.

Despite these impressive achievements, Secretary of State and future President James Monroe removed him from the position, citing Noah's religion as "an obstacle to the exercise of Consular function." While causing outrage among Jews and non-Jews alike, Noah could not, despite many attempts, get a credible rationale for his dismissal.

Noah's experience caused him great worry that the United States would become yet another country to limit opportunities for Jews. Thus

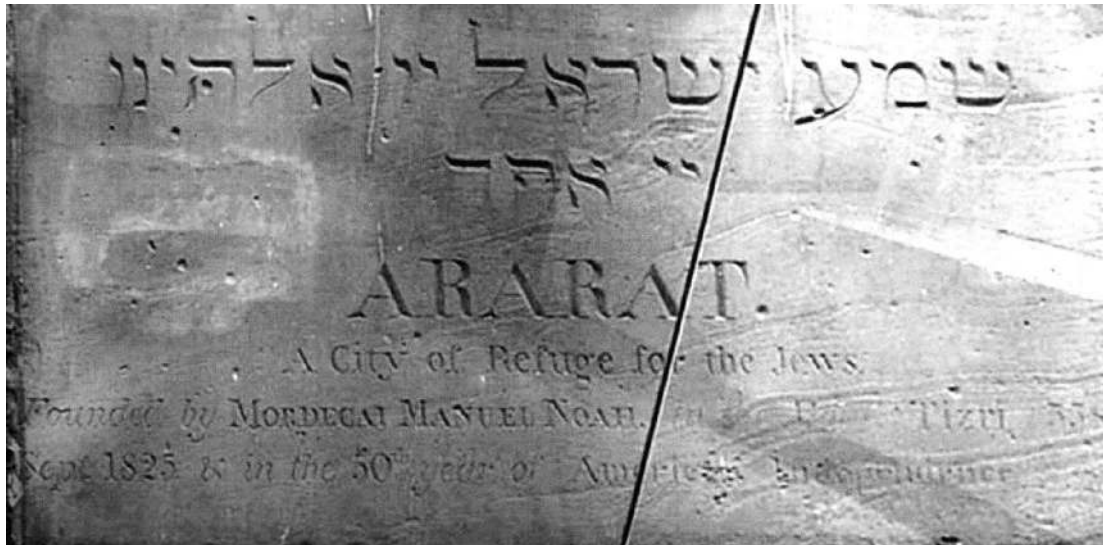


Mordecai Manuel Noah, a dreamer

he proposed the establishment of a refuge city to be called Ararat, named for the resting place of the Biblical Noah's Ark.

To promote his dream of building a sanctuary, he purchased from the State of New York 2,555 acres on Grand Island, the largest island in the Niagara River, paying \$10,000 for the property.

On September 2, 1825 a parade led by military, civic, and Masonic leaders marched through the streets of Buffalo prior to a grand ceremony at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The ceremony included the singing of psalms and Noah's reading of a dramatic proclamation. Noah even brought a granite cornerstone, engraved in both Hebrew and



A cornerstone never set

English with the legend, "Ararat, a City of Refuge for the Jews, founded by Mordecai M. Noah in the Month of Tishri, 5586 (September, 1825) and in the Fiftieth Year of American Independence."

Unfortunately, despite hordes of people lining the streets and the riverbanks for the parade and ceremony, only a smattering of Jews attended the event, and Noah found he had little support for his dream. Totally disheartened, and despite all the preparation and expense, he never actually set foot on Grand Island. He left for New York City the next day.

The cornerstone was removed from the church and left in the back of the building only to gather moss. Over the course of more than a century and a half, it was first neglected, and then moved from place to place.

Since 1994, the cornerstone has been on display at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society at 25 Nottingham Court in Buffalo. A historical marker on Grand Island indicates the parcel of land on which Ararat, a City of Refuge, was to have been built.

British author Israel Zangwill wrote of the venture in his story, *Noah's Ark* and cartoonist Ben Katchor fictionalized Noah's project in his graphic novel, *The Jew of New York*.

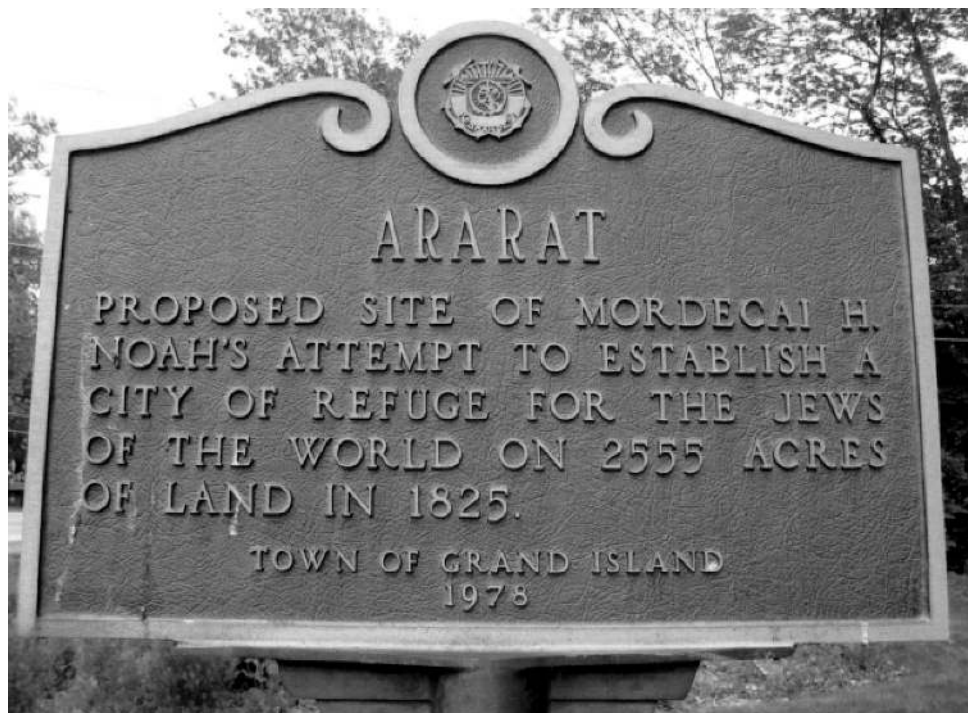
Coincidentally, in the northernmost region of New York State, on yet a second island, there rose the subject of another dream.

In 1945, a proposal was floated to establish a new "world peace capital," reached by two bridges, on Navy Island on the Niagara River, right between Canada and the United States.

At the Niagara Falls Public Library, on the Ontario side of the border, you can see an artist's rendering of the proposed, United Nations Building!

Carol Goodman Kaufman is a psychologist and author with a passion for travel and food. She recently launched the blog "Food for Thought," on her website at carolgoodmankaufman.com. She invites visits and comments.

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A sign of what might have been

Buffalo Wings Kosher-Style

Buffalo wings, the popular football-watching barfly's treat, were first served at the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, New York in 1964, so Mordecai Emanuel Noah would not have had the opportunity to sample them.

Although many versions of this dish exist, the original recipe features unbreaded chicken wings with a sauce containing only five ingredients. The recipe below has been adapted for the kosher, and a bit healthier, kitchen.

Serve with celery sticks and the cooling dip (these babies are hot). Also, make sure to provide plenty of napkins (even an apron), as eating wings is a sloppy enterprise.

Ingredients:

- 36 chicken wing segments
- 4 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 4 teaspoons cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder

- 4 to 8 tablespoons of hot sauce
- Celery sticks

Soy Cream Dip, recipe:

- 1 cup non-dairy 'sour cream,'
- 2 tablespoons minced parsley;
- 1 large clove of garlic, minced;
- 1/2 fresh lemon, juiced

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 425°F.
- In a large bowl, toss wings with the 4 tablespoons of vegetable oil and salt.
- Sprinkle flour and toss until wings are evenly covered.
- Spread out on baking pans lined with aluminum foil.
- Bake for 20 minutes.
- Turn wings and bake 20 minutes more or until golden brown.
- Meanwhile, in a saucepan, combine the 1/2 cup oil, vinegar, cayenne pepper, garlic powder, and hot sauce.
- Bring to simmer over medium. Remove from heat.
- When wings are done, transfer them to a large serving bowl and pour hot sauce mixture over them. Toss to coat thoroughly.

Serves 6

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a program of the Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County

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Available for Jewish residents 65 years of Age or Older.

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