



CORNERSTONE FOR ARARAT: "A CITY OF REFUGE FOR THE JEWS"

Sandstone, Seth Chapin, Buffalo, New York, 1825

20 1/2" x 52 1/2" x 2 1/2"

FROM ARARAT TO ISRAEL

*"Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God,
the Lord is One!" (Deut 6:4)*

What better way for the Benjamin and Dr. Edgar R. Cofeld Judaic Museum of Temple Beth Zion to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the State of Israel than to recall the vision of Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785-1851), an American and a Jew.

Noah, born in Philadelphia, editor of the NEW YORK ENQUIRER and other newspapers, consul to the Kingdom of Tunis, sheriff of the City of New York, surveyor of the port of New York, and judge in the Court of General Sessions, was the chief spokesman of the American Jewish community. As

the accepted interpreter of Judaism to the general populace of New York, he addressed his audience through newspaper articles and from the lecture platform. He spoke on aspects of Jewish religion, Jewish history, and Jewish concerns and aspirations.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, one of America's greatest needs was for strong immigrants to expand the frontier and to build a great nation. Noah knew that oppressed Jews of the Old World desperately needed a haven to establish a secure home for generations to come. Noah dreamed the dream of "Zion rebuilt" in 1825, almost eighty years before Theodor Herzl raised the Zionist banner, and more than a century before the State of Israel was established in 1948. He constantly strove to

blend American and Jewish interests for the mutual benefit of America and the Diaspora. To this end, he proposed to build a refuge on American soil: Ararat, "A City of Refuge for the Jews," situated on 2555 acres on Grand Island in the Niagara River in Erie County.

On September 15, 1825, in Buffalo, New York, Noah dedicated "Ararat" as a city of refuge for Jews throughout the world. The community that Noah envisioned never did materialize. Noah left Buffalo shortly after the dedication ceremony, but he never abandoned hope for a Jewish homeland. He subsequently advocated a homeland in the Holy Land. That dream found fruition a century later, and we now celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Jewish

homeland — the State of Israel.

The 163-year-old cornerstone for the proposed city of Ararat is pictured on the cover of this pamphlet. The actual stone is on display (through September 30, 1988) at the Benjamin & Dr. Edgar R. Cofeld Judaic Museum of Temple Beth Zion. This cornerstone stands as a monument to Mordecai Manuel Noah's dream. The vision of 1825 ultimately became the ideal of 1948 and is today the State of Israel at "40 and forever." ✨



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DR. EDGAR R. COFELD
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"ESTABLISHED TO DOCUMENT, CELEBRATE,
EXPLAIN AND INTERPRET ALL ASPECTS OF
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GENERATIONS."

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NEW YORK ENQUIRER, published by M.M. Noah, January 4, 1828. Note particularly the mast-head of this newspaper. Its trademark features the biblical Noah's ark with an American flag (on the left) and a dove with an olive branch (on the right). Its slogan: "A FREE PRESS, THE ARK OF PUBLIC SAFETY". Actual newspaper is in the Cofeld Museum's "American Jews" section that was funded by The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation.

Consultant: Abraham J. Karp, Professor of History and Religious Studies at the University of Rochester.
Ararat Cornerstone lent by Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.
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