

THE COHENS OF MARYLAND¹

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The Cohen family of Baltimore has long been prominent in the annals of Maryland. Its records, which are in an admirable condition, comprise much more than lists of dates of births, deaths, and marriages. They contain, on the one hand, much which is of interest for the past of American Jewry and, on the other hand, data of value to students of Maryland history. They offer Jacob I. Cohen's noble Memorial² to the session of 1823-24 of the General Assembly of Maryland and Col. Mendes I. Cohen's account of the bombardment of Fort McHenry.³ *The family records narrate more than the arrival in Baltimore during the first decade of the nineteenth century of a widowed Jewess and her seven young children and the usual family events connected with them. These records inform us that*

¹⁸⁹ On December 2, 1856, Jefferson Davis sent him Lecompte's address, as "Lecompton, Kansas Territory" and Pearce at once wrote him, receiving a reply promptly, which he sent Davis, who acknowledged it on January 1, before he had shown it to the President.

² Numerous members of the Cohen family have assisted in the preparation of this article. Miss Eleanor S. Cohen (57) furnished a great part of the materials utilized, and facilitated access to other sources. A large part of the information embodied in it was gathered by Professor David S. Blondheim, who made a preliminary draft of the family tree and assisted the writer in other respects as well. Professor Blondheim received valuable aid from the late Jacob I. Cohen (65), Miss Bertha Cohen (64), Mrs. Isaac Coale, Jr. (73), Mrs. Augusta MacMannus (26), Mr. Alan M. Cohen (74), Lieutenant Barney L. Meeden (52), Mr. Louis H. Dielman, Professors Alexander Marx and Jacob H. Hollander, Mrs. Julius Wolf, and Dr. Harry Friedenwald, among others.

³ See Jacob I. Cohen (6), p. 366.

³ See Mendes I. Cohen (10), p. 371.

these children and their descendants lived in accordance with the noblest traditions of their ancestors and that they became defenders of their city, financiers of large means and uncompromising integrity, leaders in the medical, legal and engineering professions, public servants of recognized importance, lovers of the arts, and leaders in Baltimore's society. Because the family records are becoming scattered—some have already been deposited in two distinct libraries⁴—the task of digesting their contents will become more and more difficult, and it is fitting, at a time when they are still well preserved and accessible, to present them to students of the history of Maryland.

1. MEYER COHEN.⁵

Born about 1700(?). Issue: Joshua Cohen (2).

The Cohen family is descended from Meyer Cohen, who lived in Oberdorf, near Nördlingen, in the district called the Riess, not far from Ansbach, Bavaria, in the early part of the eighteenth century. From the date of birth of his son, Joshua, we may assume that Meyer Cohen was born about 1700. He is known to family tradition as the Holy Rabbi. Benjamin I. Cohen (53) explained in a MS. note in the possession of Miss Eleanor S. Cohen (57), that he was given this title because of his great learning. According to family tradition, his Hebrew name with his Hebrew title was *Ha-Kadosh Rabbi Meir*. In English "the Holy" is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Ha-Kadosh*. If the traditional explanation of the reason for the title is correct, it represents an exceptional use of the term, which is generally applied to Jews who gave up their lives for their faith. Neither family tradition nor available information about Oberdorf illuminates this obscurity.⁶

⁴ The Cohen-Etting Papers are now in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. A number of the papers of Mendel Cohen (60) are in the possession of the Maryland Historical Society.

⁵ Each member of the family by birth has been given a number. The numbers precede the names in the genealogical table and in the subtitles, and follow the names in the body of the article.

⁶ Ludwig Müller, *Aus fünf Jahrhunderten, Beiträge z. Gesch. d. jüd. Gemeinden im Riess* (Augsburg, 1900) (*Sonderabdruck aus d. Zeitschrift d. hist. Ver. f. Schwaben u. Neuburg*, 1899 u. 1900), records, p. 139, that

(1) Meyer Cohen (Ha-Kadosh, R. Meir Cohen)

(2) Joshua Cohen

(3) Jacob I. Cohen

(4) Israel I. Cohen

(5) Joshua (6) Jacob I. Jr. (7) Solomon I. (8) Philip I. (9) Maria I. (10) Mendes I. (11) Benjamin I. (12) David I. (13) Dr. Joshua I. (14) Edward I.

(15) Maj. David M. (16) Dr. Henry M. (17) Eliza M. (18) Virginia (19) Arthur M. (20) Charles (21) Alfred M. (22) Adelino M. (23) Lillie m. Frederick Lewis

m. David Stern

(24) Jacob Edgar (25) Philip Alfred (26) Augusta Myers m. Edward Davenport MacManus (27) Maud Elise m. William Webber

(28) Israel (29) Solomon Etting (30) John Jacob (31) Benjamin (32) Rachel Etting (33) Judith I. (34) Maria (35) Kate Frances (36) Georgiana (37) Edward (38) Eliza-Emory m. John H. Lopez

(39) Solomon Etting (40) Benjamin D. (41) George (42) Anna Maria (43) Herbert m. (1) Reub. Luther Joland m. (2) John A. Hall m. (3) Claus Van Meeden

(44) Israel (45) Kate (46) David (47) John H. Jr. (48) Edward

(52) Lieut. Barney Leland Meeden

(53) Benjamin I. (54) Maria (55) Kitty (56) Georgie (57) Eleanor S. (58) Joshua I. Jr. (59) Anna Maria m. Abram Ming

(60) Mendes (61) Catherine m. Charles D. Myers (62) Miriam (63) Margaret (64) Bertha (65) Jacob I. (66) Rebecca m. Eugene Jackson

(68) Miriam Cohen

(69) David I. (70) Alan M. (71) Corinne m. Arnold B. Johnson (72) May m. Isaac Coats, Jr. (73) Harriett Cohen

(74) Alan M. (75) Alan M. Jr. (76) Eugene Jackson (77) Hugh Blair

2. JOSHUA COHEN.

Born 1720. Died February 7, 1771. Son of Meyer Cohen. Married Peslah, the daughter of Jacob, who was born in 1723, and died August 26, 1797. Lived and lies buried at Oberdorf. Issue: Jacob I. Cohen (3) and Israel I. Cohen (4).

3. JACOB I. COHEN.⁷

Born January 2, 1744, at Oberdorf. Died October 9, 1823, at Philadelphia, Pa. Son of Joshua and Peslah Cohen. Married (1) in 1782 Elizabeth [Esther or Hester] Whitlock Mordecai (see *infra*, p. 361), who was born in 1744, and died August 22, 1804, at Richmond, Va., and (2) Rachel Jacobs, who died November 1, 1821, at Philadelphia, Pa. No issue.

Jacob I. Cohen immigrated to this country from his native land in 1773. For a short time he resided in Lancaster, Pa. From that city he removed to Charleston, S. C.⁸ Shortly after his arrival in Charleston, Jacob I. Cohen enlisted in Captain Lushington's Company, which was part of the Charleston Regiment of Militia. He participated in the defense of Charleston, and was a member of the expedition to Beaufort in February 1779. That he was a member of Lushington's Company,⁹ and

about 1723 there was a "Rabbinats-Substitut" in Oberdorf and, p. 180, that there were twenty-six Jewish families in Oberdorf in the same year. Was Meyer Cohen this "Rabbinats-Substitut" or vice-rabbi?

⁷ According to family tradition, the *I.* which appears in the names of many members of the Cohen family, *e. g.*, Jacob I. Cohen (3) and Benjamin I. Cohen (53), was not an initial letter of a name. The letter *I.* was perhaps used to distinguish these Cohens from the many other descendants of Aaron with similar given names.

⁸ Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond* (Richmond, 1917), p. 17. Undated excerpts from *Jewish Record*, Richmond, in possession of Mrs. Augusta MacMannus (26).

⁹ Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1905), pp. 83-107, who apparently did not know of the existence of Captain Lushington's letters (see note 10), wrote, p. 84, that "we have no record of Jacob I. Cohen as a member of Lushington's Company." Now that Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, is available, Mr. Elzas should have no difficulty in identifying Isaiah Isaacs, the partner of Jacob I. Cohen in war as well as business.

was on the Beaufort expedition is determined beyond doubt by two letters from Lushington¹⁰ in the possession of Miss Bertha Cohen (64) as well as by a statement¹¹ by Jacob I. Cohen committed to writing by his nephew, Dr. Joshua I. Cohen (13).¹²

Prior to the end of the Revolution,¹³ Jacob I. Cohen re-

¹⁰ Leon Hühner, "Some Additional Notes of the History of the Jews of South Carolina," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. XIX (1910), p. 155:

"So. Carolina

April 6, 1779

"This certifies that Jacob I. Cohen enrol'd himself in my Company on his arrival from the Northward here, and has been with me a volunteer on ye Expedition to Beaufort and has in every respect conducted himself as a good soldier and man of courage.

Sig. R. LUSHINGTON,
Captain of ye Chas Town Regt."

Ibid., p. 156:

"3d Compy.

Charlestown, South Carolina—January 11, 1779

"This certifies that Mr. Jacob I. Cohen is enrolled in the Company of the Charleston Regiment of Militia (called the *Free Citizens*) under my command.

Sig. R. LUSHINGTON.
No. 1"

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 155, *et seq.* The first sheet of the statement bears the inscription: "This account given me by my uncle Mr. Jacob I. Cohen (above) from memory in his 87th year. June 7, 1822. Balto." Reference to Jacob I. Cohen's membership in Lushington's company is also made in Leon Hühner, "Jews of South Carolina from the Earliest Settlement to the End of the American Revolution," *Pub. Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XII (1904), p. 50; Max J. Kohler, "Incidents Illustrative of American Jewish Patriotism," *Pub. Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. IV (1896), p. 96, quoting Dr. Isaac Leiser's article, *Occident*, Philadelphia, Vol. XVI (1858), p. 142; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 343 (note 23), quoting *Richmond Inquirer*, October 17, 1823, which, in turn, had copied from a recent issue of the *Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*.

¹² Our Jacob I. Cohen is not to be confused with one Jacob Cohen who raised a company of cavalry in Cumberland County, Virginia, during the Revolutionary War, and with another Jacob Cohen who appears as a prisoner on the prison ship *Torbay* in the Charleston harbor. Cf. Leon Hühner, "Jews of Virginia from the Earliest Times to the Close of the Eighteenth Century," *Pub. Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XX (1911), p. 96, *et seq.*; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Elzas, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-107.

¹³ From Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 15, we may infer that he arrived in Richmond between May, 1780, and December 10, 1781.

moved to Richmond, Va., where he became associated in business with Isaiah Isaacs, who also had been a member of Lushington's company. Their partnership was very successful. Reference to them is found in a number of old records.¹⁴ The dissolution agreement entered into by Cohen and Isaacs "was written in Hebrew script, and deposited with the other records."¹⁵

In 1782 Jacob I. Cohen married Elizabeth Whitlock Mordecai, widow of Moses Mordecai, who died in 1781. Elizabeth Whitlock had been born a Christian in England, and had embraced Judaism prior to her marriage to Moses Mordecai, by whom she had three sons. Upon her conversion to Judaism she adopted the Jewish name of Esther, sometimes written Hester. Because of her many good deeds she was beloved by the entire community.¹⁶ She died August 22, 1804, and was buried at Richmond.¹⁷

During his residence in Richmond, Jacob I. Cohen was prominent in civic as well as in financial affairs. He is mentioned in official records as having served as a grandjurymen on November 11, 1793.¹⁸ In 1794, he, John Marshall, and others were trustees of the Masonic Hall.¹⁹ In January, 1795, he was elected a member of the Common Hall (City Council) to succeed Col. Bushrod Washington.²⁰ He was foreman of the grandjury in May, 1804.²¹ By a provision in his will, the

¹⁴ Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15 and 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18. Caroline Myers Cohen (37), *Records of the Myers, Hays and Mordecai Families*, printed privately (Washington, about 1913), pp. 25 and 26.

¹⁷ Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 18, quote tomb-stone inscription.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64, with the following quotation from the Hall record: "'It appearing that Mr. (Colonel) Bushrod Washington has moved out of the city . . . the Hall proceeded to supply the vacancy . . . a majority of votes was found in favor of Mr. Jacob I. Cohen, who appeared and qualified to his seat. . . .' Col. Washington was a nephew of General George Washington, who was then president."

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

City of Richmond was to receive the proceeds from the sale of certain of his negroes who, after his death, might not want their freedom, and to distribute yearly in bread among the poor on the Fourth of July the income from the proceeds.²² He was one of the trustees to whom Isaiah Isaacs deeded the Franklin Street (Richmond) Cemetery.²³

Jacob I. Cohen lived in Philadelphia from about 1806 to the time of his death.²⁴ Presumably during this period, he married Rachel Jacobs, a daughter of Israel Jacobs, of Philadelphia. The esteem in which he was held by his fellow-Jews of Philadelphia is well attested by their election of him as *parnass* (president) of the Mickvéh Israel Congregation for the year 1810-1811 and their desire to have him serve as *parnass* in 1820-1821. He declined the last election.²⁵ He died October 9, 1823, in Philadelphia.²⁶

4. ISRAEL I. COHEN.

Born April 8, 1751, at Oberdorf. Died July 29, 1803, at Richmond. Son of Joshua and Peslah Cohen. Married on December 21, 1787, Judith Solomon, who was born in 1766, and died April 5, 1837, at Baltimore. Issue: Joshua Cohen [the elder] (5), Jacob I. Cohen, Jr. (6), Solomon I. Cohen (7), Philip I. Cohen (8), Maria I. Cohen (9), Mendes I. Cohen (10), Benjamin I. Cohen (11), David I. Cohen (12), Joshua I. Cohen [the younger] (13), and Edward I. Cohen (14).

The exact date of Israel I. Cohen's immigration to this country is not known. It is certain that he was living in Virginia as early as 1784, for a court record shows that he and Joseph Darmstadt were naturalized on the 6th of December, 1784, at a court held for Henrico County.²⁷

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 331 and 332.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19 and p. 343.

²⁵ Henry Samuel Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1894), pp. 45 and 61.

²⁶ Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 330-335, with his will in *extenso*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Although information about Israel I. Cohen's communal life is not very abundant, there is ample evidence that he was a public-spirited citizen. He was one of eight citizens of Richmond who, on March 26, 1795, volunteered to serve as constables for three months and without remuneration for the purpose of preserving peace and order.²⁸ Moreover, his name appears several times in the records of the Court of Hustings. On March 14, 1796,²⁹ he was a jurymen. The record for April 10, 1798, shows that one Solomon Raphael was ordered to deliver up a detained apprentice girl "to her master and Judith Cohen, wife of the said Israel I. Cohen."³⁰ He was a signer of a petition to the President and the Directors of the Bank of the United States for the establishment of a branch in Richmond, and was a subscriber for shares in the Academy of Arts and Sciences of the United States of America, established in Richmond in 1786.³¹ He was also a trustee of the Franklin Street Cemetery.

While in Europe in 1787, Israel I. Cohen married in Bristol, England, on December 21, Judith Solomon, of that city. He returned with her to Richmond on September 21 (or 27), 1787.³² He died intestate³³ July 29, 1803, in Richmond, and was buried there in the Franklin Street Cemetery.³⁴

Israel I. Cohen was also known as Asher Abraham (Cohen). To explain this situation, Benjamin I. Cohen (53) wrote:

"The reason why my Father is called Asher and my Great-grandfather Asher Abraham when they were really named Israel is this: My Great-grandfather fell sick unto death and in accordance with the custom in such cases a meeting of the con-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

³¹ Samuel Oppenheim, "Jews and Masonry in the United States before 1810," *Pub. Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XIX (1910), p. 66.

³² The dates of marriage and return to Richmond are given here as they are found in family records.

³³ Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29, with copy of tomb-stone inscription.

gregation (*minyón*) was called in the *schule* [synagogue] and his name was changed to Asher Abraham. The family still knew him as Israel and my father was named after him. It was however thought advisable to call him as it is written in making the Hebrew record."

In 1808 Judith Cohen, Israel I. Cohen's widow, moved to Baltimore with seven children: Jacob I., Jr. (6), Philip I. (8), Maria I. (9), Mendes I. (10), Benjamin I. (11), David I. (12), and Joshua I. (13). "In this city the children received such educational advantages as the town afforded."³⁵ Judith Cohen died in Baltimore on April 5, 1837, and was buried in the family cemetery on West Saratoga Street, Baltimore.

5. JOSHUA COHEN.

Born June 28, 1788. Died September 12, 1788. Eldest son and child of Israel I. and Judith Cohen.

6. JACOB I. COHEN, JR.

Born September 30, 1789, at Richmond. Died April 6, 1869, at Baltimore. Second son and child of Israel I. and Judith Cohen. Unmarried.

After their arrival in Baltimore, Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., and his brothers engaged in business. At first they were agents in the lottery and exchange system.³⁶ Their widely-known banking business was conducted under the name of Jacob I. Cohen, Jr. and Brothers. Their operations were extensive, and their reputation for successful and upright dealings gave their firm high standing. In 1831 they opened a banking house on Baltimore street East of Calvert street. In 1836 they erected a banking house on the Northeast corner of Baltimore and Calvert streets. It was of their firm that *The Sun* wrote:³⁷

³⁵ "Mr. Mendes Cohen on 'the Cohen Collection of Egyptian Antiquities' and Its Collector, Colonel Mendes I. Cohen," *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, Vol. IV, no. 35 (Dec., 1884), p. 22.

³⁶ *Baltimore American*, April 9, 1869, p. 4.

³⁷ *The Sun*, Baltimore, May 17, 1837.

"The Messrs Cohen's of this city have not suspended specie payments. They say that they are abundantly able to redeem all their bills, and will do so. It must be a matter of felicitation to all good men, to find one Banking House avowing its ability to meet its obligations, and at the same time proving the truth of its avowal by its practice: The Banks of the North unite in swearing that they are safe and sound, possess abundance of means to pay with, but will not pay? Who will not either doubt their ability, or the truth of their avowals? One or the other must be doubted, there is no escaping it."

Jacob I. Cohen's name is frequently mentioned in connection with progressive enterprises of his time. He was actively interested in the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad Co. in its early days, and was a vice-president and director of that company for many years. He was a director of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co. and president of the Baltimore Fire Insurance Co.³⁸

It was largely due to the untiring energy of Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., that the Maryland Legislature finally confirmed the constitutional amendment whereby it became possible for Jews to hold office in Maryland. The Legislature had declined for many years to remove the disability, although they were urged without interruption by the more liberal-minded citizens of the state and the country to do so. Maryland was at that time the only state in the Union to debar Jews from holding state and municipal offices. From 1816 to 1826 Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., led the movement to relieve his fellow-Jews of their disqualification. He prepared the petitions and amendments which were presented at every session, and he maintained the fight until 1826, when his and his co-workers' efforts finally met with success.³⁹

The plane on which he conducted these political activities

³⁸ *Baltimore American*, April 9, 1869, p. 4; *Jewish Encyclopedia*, IV, p. 144, s. v. Cohen; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

³⁹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VIII, p. 360-361, art. *Maryland*. Isidor Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore: A Historical Sketch in Jews of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1910), p. 7.

may be judged from a memorial which he prepared for presentation to the session of 1823-24 of the General Assembly of Maryland. This document, aptly characterized by Professor Hollander as "marked by singular loftiness of sentiment and dignity of tone,"⁴⁰ is preserved among papers relating to the "Jew Bill" presented to the Maryland Historical Society by the late Mendes Cohen (60). It is as follows:

"To the Honorable the GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND.

"The Memorial of the subscribers, Citizens thereof,

"RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS:

"Your Memorialists are of that class of the Citizens of Maryland, long subjected to the pressure of political disqualifications, by the operation of a religious test in the Constitution of the State; and they approach your Honorable Body with this their prayer, that an Act passed the 29th of January 1823 'to extend to all the citizens of Maryland the same civil rights and religious privileges that are enjoyed under the Constitution of the United States,' may be confirmed at the present session, becoming thereby part of the Constitution.

"Your Memorialists, feeling it incumbent on them at this stage of the proceeding, address themselves on the subject, to your Honorable body, in the honest confidence, which the American is educated to entertain in his fellow citizens, and in the legislative guardians of his rights. It is not their wish, to obtain from your honorable body, a grant of exclusive privilege; because such a privilege would be hostile, not only to the principles of our institutions, but to the express provisions of that charter which we have all alike, sworn to support: but it is equal rights which they petition; their voice is not raised in favor, but in opposition, to exclusive privilege; they ask an equality of rights with their fellow citizens. If the disqualifications under which they labor, were imposed as the penalty of law for civil delinquencies, for habits of social intemperance, or a disregard of the obligations of religion, they would blush to murmur; but it is, as they humbly apprehend, the

⁴⁰ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VIII, p. 361b.

retribution for a too honest perseverance in conscientious faith, unmindful of political disqualifications, of social inconvenience, and of individual contumely: and this same manly and virtuous constancy, which, exerted in the cause of their Country, would entitle them to be honored as patriots, exposes them to proscription, when exercised in the service of the acknowledged God. They firmly *flatter themselves*, and have at length some reason to believe, that your enlightened Councils will suffer no longer, those strange anomalies to endure—that the period has arrived at last, when conscience and reason, the peculiar gifts of an Omnipotent benevolence, will be respected, and persecutions be abandoned to the Inquisitor and the Bigot. Are their doctrines immoral? They are the foundation of the general faith. Are they dangerous? It is no part of them to work conversions. Are they new? Ancient as the revelation of the Almighty truth. Your memorialists, with all humility, are at a loss to understand what there is so peculiarly exceptionable in these their tenets, as to have induced a solitary, but persevering departure, from the sublime system of our American political jurisprudence: why even at this moment, when the whole American pulse throbs with indignation, at the civil and religious proscriptions, renewed and asserted in the old world, the good people of Maryland alone, should find it necessary or expedient, to continue for a moment, the disqualification of any class of their fellow Citizens. Your Memorialists beg leave to remind your Honorable Body, that the honors of office in our happy Republic, are not assumed, but conferred; not usurped by guilty ambition, but bestowed directly or indirectly, by popular confidence; that to disqualify any class of your citizens, is for the people to disqualify themselves: can it be necessary, can it be wise or politic at this day, for the people to *disqualify themselves* on the score of opinion only, from consulting merit in the selection of their public servants?

“Your Memorialists do not here propose, a voluminous discussion of the great principles involved in the question, which they desire to bring before you; because it is one, as they apprehend, at this day, almost universally understood. It is the

same which has agitated like a tempest, the human family from its earliest existence; has armed the hands of men in wide and desolating wars; has stained nations and families with intestine crime; trampled the charities of life; and driven societies from their natural homes, to seek an asylum more hospitable, on the billows of the deep or amid the recesses of the desert: a question which, as it mainly contributed to populate this our common Country, was here first and fully understood: and one, the liberal and happy results of whose true nature, our own Maryland, though too long misled upon the subject, evinced at the last session of her Legislature, and as your Memorialists trust, will again prove to the world on the present occasion, are deeply felt and thoroughly appreciated.

“America, instructed in the school of adversity and oppression, and warned by the calamities of nations, has attained the haven of political happiness, by the guide of political wisdom. Moderate in her might, she has never sought to find in power, the foundation of new rights, but metes out to the weak the same measure with the strong. It was reserved for her to discover, that true policy consists in Justice, which, whilst it secures the confidence and devotion of her own Sons, entitles her to the reciprocity of the stranger. Above all, America has been the first to respect opinion and the human mind, that mysterious and sacred relation of sublunary Man to Celestial Wisdom; nor has thought to controul the measureless elasticity of that principle, which created for exclusive allegiance to the Omnipotent alone, is beyond the reach of temporal restraints. America has wisely relinquished it to the insidious policy of regal governments, to make an instrument of religion: she has forever sundered the spiritual from the temporal concerns of men, and convinced mankind that disqualifications and persecution are only fruitful of disunion and hate;—toleration and equal rights, of good will and peace on earth.

“Your Memorialists humbly apprehend that a peculiar and most important crisis hath occurred in the political world, and in the history of man; and if in the eastern hemisphere, his struggles for civil and religious liberty, hitherto ineffectual,

have been smothered in their birth, it is now particularly important that, successful throughout the west, no speck should endure upon the purity of that code, sublime in its nature, as in its origin, it is confessedly divine.

"As fellow citizens of Maryland, as Brethren of the same human family; for the honor of the State, for the great interests of humanity; your Memorialists humbly pray at your hands, that the Bill before you may be confirmed."

That there was no unwillingness to elect Jews to office was seen soon after the adoption of the amendment. In October, 1826, Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., and Solomon Etting were elected to membership in the First Branch of the City Council. Cohen represented the sixth ward. He was re-elected a number of times, and for some years (1845-51) he was president of his branch of the Council. He was elected to the First Branch from the eleventh ward in 1849 without distinction of party.⁴¹ His work in the City Council was distinguished for his insistence upon economy and for his practice of holding public officers to strict accountability.

He participated actively in many undertakings. He was one of the founders of Baltimore's public school system. For the first nine years of its existence (1830-38) he was secretary and secretary-treasurer of the Board of Public School Commissioners.⁴² He was one of the Commissioners of Finance of the City of Baltimore⁴³ and a member of the Ancient and Honorable Mechanical Company of Baltimore.⁴⁴ He called to order the immense "war meeting" in Monument Square, May 23, 1846, held for the purpose of passing, in the name of the citizens of Baltimore, resolutions referring to the Mexican War.⁴⁵

Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., died April 6, 1869, and was buried in the family cemetery on West Saratoga street.

⁴¹ *Baltimore American*, April 9, 1869, p. 4; *Jewish Encyclopedia*, iv, p. 44, s. v. *Cohen*; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁴² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, iv, p. 144, s. v. *Cohen*; Blum, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴³ Blum, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, iv, p. 144, s. v. *Cohen*.

⁴⁵ J. Thomas Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1874), p. 516.

7. SOLOMON I. COHEN

Born 1791. Third son and child of Israel I. and Judith Cohen. He did not move to Baltimore. It seems that he continued to live in Richmond.⁴⁶

8. PHILIP I. COHEN.

Born April 17, 1793,⁴⁷ at Richmond. Died September 30, 1852, at Norfolk. Fourth son and child of Israel I. and Judith Cohen. Married January 25, 1826, Augusta Myers, who was born December 28, 1797, at Norfolk, Va., and died April 26, 1876, at New York. Issue: David M. Cohen (15), Henry M. Cohen (16), Eliza M. Cohen (17), Virginia Cohen (18), Arthur M. Cohen (19), Charles Cohen (20), Alfred M. Cohen (21) and Adeline M. Stern (22).

When Philip I. Cohen was about eighteen years of age, the War of 1812 broke out. In 1814, he became a private in Captain Nicholson's Company of Baltimore Fencibles, and participated in the defense of Fort McHenry.⁴⁸ Later he moved to Norfolk, Va., where, on January 25, 1826, he married Augusta Myers, daughter of Moses Myers. At the time of his death in 1852, he was postmaster of Norfolk.⁴⁹ He is buried in the family cemetery in Baltimore. His wife, who survived him by twenty-five years, is also buried there.

9. MARIA I. COHEN.

Born September 30, 1794, at Richmond. Died January 23, 1834, at Baltimore. Only daughter and fifth child of Israel I. and Judith Cohen. Unmarried. Buried in family cemetery at Baltimore. Also known as Miriam.

⁴⁶ Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 87, note that on May 27, 1817, Solomon I. Cohen and Moses N. Cardoza were made administrators of the estate of Abraham N. Cardoza. Was this Solomon I. Cohen our No. 7?

⁴⁷ This date of birth is that found on Philip I. Cohen's tomb-stone. Family records give the Hebrew date of birth as Nisan, 26, 5553, which corresponds to April 8, 1793.

⁴⁸ William H. Marine, *British Invasion of Maryland, 1812-1815* (Baltimore, 1913), p. 249.

⁴⁹ Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

10. COL. MENDES I. COHEN.

Born May 25, 1796, at Richmond. Died May 7, 1879, at Baltimore. Fifth son and sixth child of Israel I. and Judith Cohen. Unmarried.

Mendes I. Cohen was eighteen years of age when, in 1814, he joined the Twenty-Seventh Regiment because he was under the impression that that regiment would be sent to defend Washington. Discovering that he was mistaken, he left the regiment, and joined Captain Nicholson's Fencibles, and was in Fort McHenry during the bombardment.⁵⁰ Many years later he narrated to Benjamin I. Cohen (53) his experiences in connection with the battle. Benjamin I. Cohen's record of them reads:

"REMINISCENCES OF THE BOMBARDMENT OF FORT McHENRY
'THE STAR FORT' IN SEPT., 1814. NARRATED BY COL.
M. I. COHEN.

"Capt. Nicholson being a Judge of the Balto. Co. Ct. could not accept a command under the U. S. Govt. he was not therefore made a Captain without a commission & his Company, known as Nicholson's Artillery Fencibles, consisted entirely of volunteers. They never enlisted individually but offered their services to the Govt. in a body. They were accepted & stationed in the Star Fort, (now Ft. McHenry). On account of the peculiar nature of their service they drew no rations, but were paid in money by the Govt. each man furnishing his own provisions. In this Co. were Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., Mendes I. Cohen, Philip I. Cohen, George Williams, Cumberland Williams & Nathaniel Williams. Every morning at about 6 o'clock, a small covered cart left the N. W. cor. of Howard & Market Sts. for the fort with food sent by the families for the members of this Co. The Cohens had a large stone jug around which was tightly sewn a cover of carpet, this was filled with coffee each morning & sent by the cart, always arriving there

⁵⁰ *The Baltimorean*, May 20, 1876; *Marine*, *op. cit.*, p. 249; *The Sun*, Baltimore, May 8, 1879.

good & hot. In the Fort were several Houses, in one of which were quartered two Companies of militia, in another Major Armistead, in another Nicholson's Artillery & there were also a small number of regular troops in the Fort. Some time previous to the Bombardment J. I. Cohen, Jr. procured special permission to visit Philadelphia for the purpose of nursing a dying relative, he had been a member of the Co. from its inception; but this circumstance prevented his participation in the defense at the time of the attack of the Star Ft.

"The Bombardment was on Tuesday. A few days previously the British had evacuated Washington, the Americans had posted videttes [bidettes] along the shores of the Bay & they reported that on coming out of the mouth of the Potomac, the British Fleet had gone down the bay & it was supposed has [sic] passed out at the Capes. This movement turned out to be a feint & after proceeding a short distance down, the Fleet turned & came up to Baltimore. On the Saturday afternoon before the attack the fake Information was rec'd [sic], that the British Fleet had gone down the Bay & the Artillery Co. & the two Co.'s of militia determined to march [sic] up to the City. They were however unable to agree who should command the entire body on the march up & therefore Capt. Nicholson's Artillery came up alone and the two Militia Co's. remained at the Fort. During Saturday night information was received that the British were nearing the City & the non-commissioned officers went around to the houses of the different members of the Co. *telling them to meet at once at the Cor. of Howard & Market Sts. & to proceed to the Fort with all possible speed.* Col. Cohen then a youth of 18 shared a room with his Brother Philip in the House now No. 142 W. Balto. St. Worn out by the events of the day he slept soundly & his Brother was awakened & went to the Fort leaving him still asleep.

"At daylight he awoke & missing Philip enquired where he was. On being told he dressed as quickly as possible & snatching a hasty breakfast he walked walked [sic] down to the Fort. On reaching Federal Hill where there were then no Houses he saw the whole British Fleet off North Point.

"This was Sunday morning the attack took place of [*sic*] Tuesday. During the firing of Bombs &c. at the Flag in the center of the Fort which afforded a fair mark for the enemy's gunners, in order to protect our men they were ordered to march outside of the Star Fort & stand under the walls where they were safe from shot & shell. While there a shell struck the powder magazine where there were many barrels of this explosive. It was Col. Cohen's duty to go there & get out the cartridges.

"When the shell struck it was deemed necessary to roll out the barrels of powder as the magazine was not bomb-proof. They were rolled under the walls among the men & Col. Cohen recollects sitting on one which had no head [*sic*]; but was merely covered by a piece of woolen stuff. While in this interesting position Mr. Williams [*sic*] serving man brought down a large basket of provisions which were divided among the members of the Command & eagerly eaten by them.

"Philip I. Cohen was standing by the side of Lieutenant Clagett when the latter was killed & Col. Cohen was next to Sergeant Clemm when he was struck down & assisted to place him upon a litter.

"During the firing Col. Cohen could see the ship upon which was Francis S. Key distinguishable by its flag of truce. After the British retired Mr. Key landed at the Fort & produced a copy of the 'Star Spangled Banner' which was copied first by one of the men then by another, and they all amused themselves trying to find a tune for it.

"Col. Cohen's recollections of the night attack & many other incidents of that eventful period are quite vivid & afford a refreshing example of patriotism to the descendants of those who so gallantly defended the old 'Star Fort.'

"Balto. 10/2 1878.

BENJN. I. COHEN."

"This period of peril and excitements seems to have put an end to attendance in school, and shortly thereafter he [Mendes I. Cohen] became engaged in business. Somewhat later he

joined his brothers of the banking firm of J. I. Cohen, Jr., & Brothers, and conducted at New York the branch of the house in that city."⁵¹ He retired from business in 1829, and made an extensive foreign tour. While in London he was frequently the guest of N. M. Rothschild, and accompanied the latter on a trip to Paris. He was in Rome during the pontificate of Gregory XVI., to whom he was presented. He studied the art treasures and antiquities of Rome while in that city, and visited all the points of historic interest in Italy, Sicily and Greece. While in Constantinople he was the guest of the captain of the United States sloop of war *John Adams*. Later a vessel in which he was travelling was wrecked off the coast of Asia Minor, and he almost lost his life and his trunks and papers. With horses and Mohammedan escort he travelled along the coast of Asia Minor and over its mountains. While sailing for Cyprus, he was almost wrecked again. He went to Syria, where he was a guest in the camp of Ibrahim Pasha when the latter attacked St. Jean D'Acre, and it was Mendes I. Cohen who gave to the English consul at Alexandria the first information which he received about the attack. Mendes I. Cohen was the first person to bear the American flag up the Nile after the ratification of the treaty with Turkey. This flag, which was made out of the shirts and the handkerchiefs of the sailors on the boat, is still preserved by Miss Bertha Cohen(64). He went to Damascus and Aleppo, and visited Palestine. Then he proceeded to Russia. These travels occupied about six years.⁵² He made other visits to Europe, on one of which he attended the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837.

The above-mentioned trip on the Nile lasted four and a half months. Travelling in his own boat, he ascended as far as the Second Cataract. While making this trip, he "lost no opportunity to acquire objects of antiquarian value, when such were

⁵¹ "Mr. Mendes Cohen on 'the Cohen Collection,'" *J. H. U. Cir.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 22.

⁵² *The Baltimoran. op. cit.* Another and somewhat different account of this tour is given in "Mr. Mendes Cohen on 'the Cohen Collection,'" *J. H. U. Cir.*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

obtainable from first hands, or from sources which left no doubt as to their authenticity."⁵³ These articles, which formed the basis of the "Cohen Collection of Egyptian Antiquities," were procured at Thebes, Memphis and other points. To these he added objects which he purchased at the sale of Consul-General Salt's great collection in London in 1835.⁵³ The entire collection, which consisted of 689 objects, has been described as the first of its kind brought to this country.⁵⁴ It was sold in 1884 by Mendes I. Cohen's nephews, at a nominal price, to the Johns Hopkins University, where it is known as the "Cohen Collection of Egyptian Antiquities."⁵⁵

Mendes I. Cohen's collection of coins and medals is said to have been the second finest in the world. The catalogue⁵⁶ issued for the sale of this collection lists 2329 different items representing coins and medals of many countries and periods. It is said to have been worth twenty thousand dollars.⁵⁷

In 1836 Governor Veazey appointed Mendes I. Cohen one of his aides. A letter announcing the appointment stated that it was made in recognition of his services during the War of 1812, and conferred upon him the commission of Colonel.⁵⁸ Thereafter he was known, and all records likewise refer to him, as Colonel Mendes I. Cohen.

⁵³ "Mr. Mendes Cohen on 'the Cohen Collection,'" *J. H. U. Cir., op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁵⁴ *Pub. Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc.*, xxviii (1922), p. 251, referring to Caroline R. Williams, "The Place of the New York Historical Society in the Growth of American Interest in Egyptology," *New York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin*, April, 1920, pp. 5 and 6.

⁵⁵ "Mr. Mendes Cohen on 'the Cohen Collection,'" *J. H. U. Cir., op. cit.*, p. 22, gives a partial catalogue of the collection.

⁵⁶ Catalogue of a very Celebrated and Valuable Collection of Gold, Silver and Copper Coins and Medals, The Property of Col. M. I. Cohen, of Baltimore, to be Sold at Auction by Messrs. Bangs, Merwin and Co., 656 Broadway, New York, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, the 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th October, 1875, Commencing at 3 o'clock P. M., Catalogued by Edward Cogan (New York, 1875).

⁵⁷ *The Baltimorean*, *op. cit.* The unusually fine collection of stamps which is supposed to have belonged to a member of the Cohen family may have been collected by Mendes I. Cohen. Neither the collection nor data concerning it have been found.

⁵⁸ *The Sun*, Baltimore, May 8, 1879.

Col. Cohen was a member of the Maryland Historical Society; vice-president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society; director of the Fireman's Insurance Co., and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co. At a meeting held October 6, 1858, at which Col. Cohen presided, plans for the Hebrew Hospital of Baltimore were made.⁵⁹ He was a member of the Maryland Legislature in 1847-48.

Col. Cohen died May 7, 1879, and was buried in the family cemetery in Baltimore.