

THE JEWISH POPULATION OF MARYLAND

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In a paper entitled "A Method of Determining the Jewish Population of Large Cities in the United States," read before the American Jewish Historical Society at its meeting in New York, in January, 1902, I discussed the possibility of estimating the Jewish population of the United States more exactly than has heretofore been done. The present paper is an attempt to apply to the State of Maryland the methods then suggested. The study naturally falls into two parts, (1) an estimate of the Jewish population of Baltimore City based on the number of Jewish deaths,¹ (2) a direct enumeration of the Jews living in Maryland outside the City.

1. *The Jewish Population of Baltimore.*—It is not possible without a very large expenditure of money to count the number of Jews living in large cities such as Baltimore. Such populations must be estimated by ascertaining a given fact and some relation between that fact and the number of the population. For reasons presented in some detail in the paper mentioned above the best criterion for an estimate of the number of Jews living in a large city is the number of deaths occurring within a given time.² This method

¹ The suggestion to apply the method of death rates to the large cities of the United States, here carried out by Dr. Barnett, was made by the Rev. J. L. Stern, Rabbi of the Congregation in Cumberland, Md., to whom the editor of the YEAR BOOK desires to express his indebtedness [Ed.].

² An interesting discussion concerning the proper method of estimating the number of Jews in London has recently been carried on in the *Jewish Chronicle*. See issues of Feb. 14, p. 11; Feb. 21, p. 6; Feb. 28, p. 6; March 7, p. 6.

was used in Baltimore. The books of the Baltimore Health Department containing a record of every person dying in the city were carefully gone through for the years 1899, 1900, and 1901 to ascertain the number of Jewish decedents.³ The chief test used for determining whether a decedent was Jewish was the burial ground in which he was interred. The enumerator was supplied with a complete list of Jewish cemeteries in Baltimore. No non-Jews are buried in Jewish cemeteries and very few Jews in non-Jewish cemeteries. In order to trace the latter, the Jews buried in non-Jewish cemeteries as well as Jewish decedents who, dying in Baltimore, were buried elsewhere, the names of all decedents were examined, and the Jews picked out by means of the enumerator's knowledge of the Jewish community of Baltimore.⁴

The number of Jews dying in Baltimore during the three years covered by the investigation was 979, divided as follows:

1899	323
1900	342
1901	314

The average number dying in each year was therefore 326. The death rate per thousand of white persons living

³ The enumeration of Jewish deaths and the tabulation of the results were in the hands of Miss Henrietta Szold. I wish to express my obligation to Miss Szold, who performed the work in a most painstaking and careful manner, and in addition was of constant service in making valuable suggestions.

⁴ The records of the Health Department contain many facts concerning decedents, chief among which are age, name, sex, occupation, nativity, cause of death, and place of interment. With the exception of "name" all of the facts were transcribed on specially prepared cards. These cards have been preserved, and, should the inquiry be extended several large cities, may be used for purposes of comparison.

in Baltimore for the same years was something over eighteen. If it is assumed that the Jewish mortality was the same as that of the remaining white persons, the number of Jews living in Baltimore would be estimated at 18,000.

There is reason to believe, however, that the Jewish death rate differs materially from the general death rate for white persons in the large cities of the United States. In the first place, it is quite certain that the Jewish race, other things being equal, has a lower death rate than the people among whom it lives. If the age grouping and economic conditions of Jews and their neighbors are similar, the Jewish mortality is lower on account of racial longevity.

The age configuration has a considerable influence on the death rate. If there is a relatively greater number of very young or very old people in a class, the death rate will be heightened, since the mortality of children and of old persons is much higher than that of persons of middle age. Among immigrants there are few infants and old people. The newcomers are of selected ages, the majority being between twenty and fifty years of age, and their favorable age grouping tends to give them a low death rate. On the other hand, the economic condition of the newly arrived settlers is usually of a character highly unfavorable to a low mortality. The new arrivals, especially if coming in large numbers and without industrial skill, find it difficult to secure a foothold in the labor market. They must live in crowded quarters, and work under unsanitary conditions. The influence of a favorable age grouping on the death rate may be partially or entirely offset by the effect of inferior economic position.

The Jewish population of large cities in the United States falls into two fairly well-defined classes. Between the Jews

of Portuguese and German descent, the longer-settled class, and the new immigrants of Russian and Polish origin there is a sharp differentiation both in economic condition and in age grouping. The more rapid and recent an immigration is the more abnormally large will be the proportion of middle-aged persons among the immigrants, and the more likely that they will live under economic conditions unfavorable to health. According to the census of 1880, there were in New York City 4000 persons whose fathers or mothers were born in Russia; in 1890, there were 67,000 and in 1900 the number had increased to over 237,000. Of these 237,000, over 155,000 were born in Russia. There is no need to say that this has been an unusually rapid migration. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for the age grouping to become normal by the natural increase of old people and children. The report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration for 1900 classifies the Hebrews arriving in the year ending June 30, 1900, as follows: under 14 years of age, 13,092; 14 to 45, 44,234; over 45, 3,435. While the immigration of German Jews has continued since 1880, compared with that of Russian and Polish Jews it has been insignificant. There is, as is well known, a sharp distinction in the economic conditions under which the two classes live. This is reflected in the occupations of decedents as given in the table on page 59.

Clearly, if a separation of the recorded deaths can be made so that the number of deaths belonging to each of the two classes composing the Jewish population can be known, and a death rate determined for each class, a much closer estimate may be made of the total population, and in addition the number of persons in each class may be ascertained.

In the Baltimore investigation the term "immigrant" was made to cover persons who had emigrated from Russia, Poland, Galicia, etc., and settled in this country since 1880, and also their children. The actual immigrants were determined by the nativity record in the books of the Health Department, supplemented by the record of the length of residence in Baltimore. The determination of the children of such immigrants was more elusive. Unfortunately, only for the year 1901 do the records of the Baltimore Health Department show the nativity of the parents of decedents. During the other two years a conclusion was reached as to the class to which a native decedent belonged by considering the cemetery in which the decedent was buried, for on inquiry it appeared that "immigrants" had a tendency to buy burial lots only in certain cemeteries in great part established by their own congregations and societies. But in all cases the enumerator brought to bear upon the determination her knowledge of the community aided by the record of the locality of death, name of the physician, and other facts contained in the books of the Health Department.

The Jewish decedents were accordingly divided into "immigrants" and "non-immigrants." It was impossible to classify with certainty all decedents, and such cases were put as "doubtful." The following table shows the number in each class by years:

	Immigrants	Non-Immigrants	Doubtful
1899	164	120	39
1900	175	132	35
1901	188	114	12
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	527	366	86

If the "doubtful" decedents are distributed proportionately in the other classes, we have 578 "immigrants" and 401 "non-immigrants" as the number of decedents for the three years, or an average number of deaths of "immigrants" each year of 193 and of "non-immigrants" of 133.

The number of deaths having been thus ascertained, the problem is presented of fixing the death rate for each class. There is reason to believe that this rate is about fourteen per thousand for the longer-settled class, the "non-immigrants." The United States Census of 1890 investigated the vital statistics of Jews living in this country.⁵ Statistics were collected for 10,618 families. Only about 600 of the heads of families had been resident in the United States for less than ten years. The results, therefore, apply only to Jews of the older immigration. For the Jews included in the investigation a death rate of ten per thousand was found for the year 1889. There are two reasons for thinking that this is too low a rate. The returns were from a very well-to-do class. Only one-third of the families kept no servants. While the economic condition of Jews of German descent is undoubtedly high, there is a strong probability that the returns were made by the more intelligent and prosperous families. This is nearly always the case in such investigations. Also the age grouping was somewhat abnormal. It is likely that if the same inquiry had been repeated in 1900, there would have been shown a larger percentage of children and of old people. Weighing these two considerations, we can assert with confidence that the death rate of the Jews longer resident in this country would

⁵ *Vital Statistics of the Jews of the United States.* Bulletin No. 19, Eleventh Census.

be somewhat higher than twelve and somewhat lower than sixteen *per mille*.

The mortality figures of Jews in Germany, from which the class under discussion is almost entirely derived, point to the same conclusion. The German-American Jews have been in this country as a whole for a number of years sufficient to make their age grouping almost normal, i. e. undisturbed by immigration. It is natural to believe that their death rate must bear a close resemblance to that of German Jews living in Germany. They are of the same stock and both branches are in good economic condition. The death rate of Jews in Germany has declined as follows:

1820-1866	20.40
1878-1882	17.53
1888-1892	15.71
1893-1897	14.73

The proportion of deaths of persons under fifteen years of age is about the same for the German Jews of Baltimore as it is for the Jews of Germany. In both cases, less than one-fourth of the total number of deaths is of children under fifteen. This is indicative of a very low death rate.⁶ Estimating the death rate of the longer-settled Jews, "non-immigrants," at fourteen *per mille*, we find that there were living in Baltimore about ten thousand Jews of this class on June 1, 1900.

There is available a still more accurate method of ascertaining the mortality among the more recent immigrants.

⁶The subject of the social relations of the Jews in Germany in its statistical aspects has recently been discussed by Arthur Rupp in an article in Conrad's "*Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*," March 1902, p. 380, *et seq.*

The greater part of the influx of Jews since 1880 has been of Russians. The census distributes the number of persons in each large city according to the nativity of parents. Unfortunately, the Baltimore Health Records did not classify decedents according to nativity of parents until 1901. The death rate of "immigrant" Jews of Baltimore can be estimated only by assuming that their mortality was the same in Baltimore as in New York, where the records of the Health Department give the requisite information. By joining these two facts—the number of persons of Russian parentage and the number of such persons dying—the death rate for persons of Russian parentage can be found. Before the assumption can be made that this represents the mortality of the newer immigration, three considerations must be examined. First, there seems no reason to believe that the other elements composing the influx since 1882 vary widely from the Russians in age grouping or in economic condition. The Russians are the largest and the typical class. Secondly, since the immigration is so recent, practically all Russians and their descendants are included in the rubric "white persons having fathers or mothers born in Russia." If a large class of the descendants of Russian Jews were the children of parents born in this country, the conclusions might be seriously modified, since such persons would be very young and have a high death rate. Thirdly, there does not seem any likelihood that a considerable number of non-Jews are included as Russians. This can be determined exactly by a study of the records, but it is improbable on *à priori* grounds that there are many persons of Russian nativity other than Jews in the large cities. According to the census of 1880, the greater part of the Christian

Russians living in this country were in agricultural states and presumably engaged in agricultural pursuits. If there has been any large migration of non-Jews from Russia since that time, they have probably followed their compatriots. The large immigration from Russian Poland is not a disturbing factor, since the Christian Poles do not class themselves as Russians but as Poles, and both the census and the health offices follow this classification. There is evidence also from the reports of the Commissioner of Immigration that the Russian emigration has consisted almost entirely of Jews. Thus, for the year ending June 30, 1900, there came from Russia 37,000 Hebrews, and only 1165 other Russians.

According to the census the number of persons of Russian nativity living in New York in June, 1900, was 237,873. The number of deaths of such persons amounted in 1899 to 2605, in 1900 to 2938, and in 1901 to 3162. The average number of deaths annually was, therefore, 2901. This gives a mortality of less than thirteen *per mille*. Using this rate for Baltimore we find a Jewish population of the "immigrant" class of about 15,000. The entire Jewish population of Baltimore may therefore be estimated as 25,000. Previous estimates have put the Jewish population of Maryland at 35,000.⁷ Since the number of Jews in the State outside of Baltimore is only 1500,⁸ the present estimate is lower than former ones by about 8500.

As has been said above, at the same time that the Jewish decedents of Baltimore were counted and classified, certain facts relating to them on record in the Health Department

⁷ See Sulzberger, "*Publications American Jewish Historical Society*," 1897, No. 6, p. 149; also *Jewish Year Book*, 1899-1900, p. 284; 1900-1901, p. 624.

⁸ See below.

were collected. The chief facts of social importance thus gathered were (a) age, (b) cause of death, (c) occupation. It was hoped that the tabulation of these data for a large number of Jewish decedents would throw light on the social structure of the Jewish population. The small number of Jews included in the investigation made it impossible to draw any except tentative inferences from the material thus secured. Should the inquiry be hereafter extended to several other large cities and a wider statistical basis thus obtained, more certain conclusions would be reached.

Age.—A tabulation of the ages of decedents shows a decided difference between “immigrant” and “non-immigrant” Jews with respect to age at the time of death. The following table shows the number of decedents with distinction of age and class.

	0-20 years	20-50 years	50 years and over
Immigrants	313	113	101
Non-immigrants	75	90	201
Doubtful	82	4	

In order to make the meaning of these figures clearer, the following table has been prepared. In it, the “doubtful” decedents in each age group have been distributed proportionately between the other two classes, and the number of deaths in each group expressed as a percentage of the whole number of deaths in the class. For purposes of comparison, the deaths for the entire population of Baltimore have been divided according to age and similarly expressed.

	0-20 years	20-50 years	50 years and over
Immigrants64	.19	.17
Non-Immigrants24	.24	.52
Population of Baltimore...	.43	.26	.31

It will be noted that marked differences appear in the first and last age groups more especially. The large percentage of deaths among immigrants of persons under twenty years of age is caused by the high rate of infant mortality due to unfavorable conditions of life. Of the nearly 400 deaths of persons under twenty assigned to the "immigrant" class, over 250 were of children under one year of age. The small percentage of "immigrants" dying at 50 years of age and over is due to the deficiency in the number of old people in that class. The longevity of the "non-immigrant" Jews shows clearly in the small percentage dying under twenty years of age, and in the remarkable fact that fifty-two per cent of the total number of deaths in this class occur at or after the fiftieth year of age.

Cause of Death.—The differences between the Jewish and other races in the nature of the causes of death have been much discussed.⁹ There are great difficulties in reaching safe conclusions in the matter on account of the many complicating circumstances. Race is only one of several factors to be considered in such an investigation. It is, for example, a well-established fact that Jews have a lower mortality from tuberculosis than other races. It is difficult to decide whether this is due to the racial characteristics of Jews or to the nature of their occupations.

⁹ By far the most exhaustive treatment of the subject is to be found in Körösy's monograph, "*Einfluss der Confession, des Wohlstandes und der Beschäftigung auf die Todesursachen*," Berlin, 1898. The lack of statistical data has prevented any thorough study of the question in its relation to American Jews, but some contributions have been made by Fishberg, "*The Comparative Pathology of the Jews*," *New York Medical Journal*, March 30, and April 6, 1901, and "*The Relative Frequency of Tuberculosis among Jews*," *American Medicine*, November 2, 1901. See also Census Bulletin No. 19 (1890).

Even simply to establish the fact that American Jews have a higher or lower mortality from a certain disease than their neighbors is almost impossible for the reason that the age grouping of the Jews in the United States is not known. Some diseases affect only persons of a particular age, and if a race has an abnormal proportion of young or of old people, it will have a larger percentage of deaths from diseases to which persons of that age are specially liable.

The only considerable collection of statistical material heretofore made concerning the causes of death among American Jews is that of Census Bulletin (1890) No. 19. The data there enumerated and analyzed were gathered from the heads of families and a considerable time after the occurrence of the deaths. The inquiry in Baltimore was based on contemporaneous records made by physicians. The table here inserted shows in parallel columns the death rates from the more important diseases in 1000 total deaths for all the Jews of Baltimore; for the "immigrant" Jews of Baltimore; for the "non-immigrant" Jews of Baltimore; for the whole population of Baltimore; and for the Jews of the United States in 1890 (Census Bulletin No. 19):

	Jews of Baltimore	"Immigrants"	"Non- Immigrants"	Baltimore, 1900	Jews of U. S. (Census 1890, Bulletin No. 19)
Diphtheria	20	25	13	22	70
Tuberculosis	83	58	110	125	35
Cancer	47	46	47	31	17
Diabetes	19	10	33	3.2	19
Meningitis	21	30	8	21	25
Apoplexy and Paralysis.	43	17	82	58	32
Organic Heart Disease..	35	20	58	57	..
Pneumonia.....	73	87	60	109	60
Digestive System.....	160	192	110	154	60
Urinary System.....	70	55	90	71	30
Senile Debility	46	22	90	33	54
Violence	45	57	25	54	38

It will be noted that Jews suffered a relatively greater loss than their neighbors in Baltimore from cancer, diabetes, and senile debility, while their mortality was relatively less from tuberculosis, pneumonia, and organic heart disease. There are differences of a less amount in the mortality from other causes of death. The sharp contrasts in the mortality from specified causes between "immigrant" and "non-immigrant" Jews are traceable in nearly all instances to differences in age grouping and economic condition. The small proportion of deaths among "immigrants" from apoplexy and paralysis is owing largely, if not entirely, to the fact that apoplexy and paralysis are infrequent diseases among people under middle age. The high death rates from meningitis and diseases of the digestive system among "immigrants" are due to the heavy mortality among children to which that class is subject on account of unsanitary conditions. It is to be noted that the results of the Baltimore investigation show in most cases less marked peculiarities in the mortality of Jews than were shown by the census inquiry of 1890.

Occupations.—The occupations of the decedents are not an exact indication of the nature of the employment of the living, since some occupations have higher death rates than others, but, in the absence of any other information on the subject, the following table showing the occupations of the decedents in Baltimore is not without interest.

There is a marked difference between the occupations of "immigrant" and those of "non-immigrant" Jews. Nearly three-fourths of the latter class were engaged in mercantile or commercial pursuits, while over 60 per cent of the "immigrant" Jews were artisans. The large percentage of immigrants engaged in the clothing trade is an effect of

their recent immigration. The massing in this trade does not appear, however, to be as great as is commonly supposed.

NUMBER OF DECEDENTS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

	"Immigrants"	"Non-Immigrants"
Teachers.....	1	2
Rabbis.....	1	1
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 2	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 3
Merchants and Manufacturers.....	21	62
Bankers and Brokers.....		3
Collectors and Agents.....	1	5
Book-keepers.....		4
Salesmen and Saleswomen.....	6	22
Hucksters and Peddlers.....	11	
Hotel and Saloonkeepers.....	1	2
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 40	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 98
Tailors and Tailoresses.....	46	6
Cigar Makers.....	5	1
Milliners.....	1	3
Butchers.....	1	2
Shoemakers.....	7	1
Other laborers.....	7	4
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 67	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 17
Total.....	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 109	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 118

2. *The Jewish Population of Maryland outside of Baltimore.*

—To ascertain the number of Jews living in the towns of Maryland outside of Baltimore, a request was addressed to as many individuals as could be reached, to aid in the enumeration of Jews in their town or village, and in their county. Accompanying the request was a blank with the following headings:

Name of Town,
Name of County,

Number of Jewish souls (men, women, and children)
in your town.

In what other towns in your county are there Jewish
residents?

Information furnished by

In this way 87 places were reached. Replies were received from 65. Of these, 8 reported no Jewish residents. The remaining 57 reported 960 Jewish residents, to which may be added 165 for Cumberland, as reported a year ago, and 20 for Elkton, as reported by a Jewish resident of a neighboring town in the same county, making a total of 1145 Jews reported as living in Maryland outside of Baltimore.

These 1145 Jewish residents are distributed as follows in the 23 counties of the State:

ALLEGHENY	289	CARROLL ¹¹	40
Cumberland (1901)	165	Westminster.....	35
Frostburg	94	Union Bridge.....	5
Lonaconing	30	CECIL.....	38
ANNE ARUNDEL.....	65	Elkton.....	20 (?)
Annapolis.....	52	Port Deposit.....	18
Churchton	1	CHARLES ¹²	13
Curtis Bay.....	5	Bel Alton.....	7
Galloway	6	La Plata.....	6
Odenton	1	DORCHESTER	40
BALTIMORE ¹⁰	11	Cambridge.....	34
Bradshaw.....	11	East Newmarket..	5
CALVERT	27	Hurlock	1
Chesapeake Beach.	5	FREDERICK.....	45
Frazier's.....	3	Brunswick.....	11
Prince Frederick..	14	Frederick.....	34
St. Leonard's	4	HARFORD ¹³	70
Solomon's.....	1	Belair... ..	22
		Havre de Grace...	48

¹⁰ No returns were received from Catonsville, Cockeysville, Lauraville, Texas, and Towson, where Jews are known to reside.

¹¹ No returns were received from Caroline County, where Jews are known to reside in Greensboro and Ridgely.

¹² No returns were received from Hill Top, where Jews are known to reside.

¹³ No returns were received from Garrett County, where Jews are thought to reside at Mineral Springs.

HOWARD.....	48	ST. MARY'S ¹⁸	28
Alberton.....	12	Scotland (Wynne).....	16
Ellicott City.....	25	Leonardtowntown.....	7
Guilford.....	3	Chaptico.....	5
Savage.....	1		
Simpsonville.....	7	SOMERSET.....	19
KENT ¹⁴	31	Crisfield.....	19
Chestertown.....	11		
Millington.....	2	TALBOT ¹⁹	21
Rock Hall.....	18	Cordova.....	3
MONTGOMERY ¹⁵	7	Oxford.....	4
Halpine Station..	7	St. Michael's.....	14
PRINCE GEORGE ¹⁶ ..	68		
Bladensburg.....	12	WASHINGTON.....	232
Bowie.....	13	Hagerstown.....	209
Brandywine.....	4	Hancock.....	10
Laurel.....	9	Millstone.....	9
Mitchellville.....	15	Sharpsburg.....	4
Rosaryville.....	6		
Upper Marlboro..	9	WICOMICO.....	28
QUEEN ANNE'S ¹⁷	20	Salisbury.....	28
Centerville.....	5		
Ford's Store.....	1	WORCESTER ²⁰	5
Norman's (Kent		Snow Hill.....	5
Island).....	14		

Accordingly, returns were received from about 70 per cent of the places addressed. It would, therefore, be a moderate estimate to assume that 1500 Jews reside in the State of Maryland outside of Baltimore.

If the above methods of estimating population are correct, and have been accurately and cautiously applied, it is safe

¹⁴ No returns were received from Fairlee, where Jews are known to reside.

¹⁵ No returns were received from Bealsville, where Jews are known to reside.

¹⁶ No returns were received from Hardesty, Hyattsville, and Nottingham, where Jews are known to reside.

¹⁷ No returns were received from Chester and Queenstown, where Jews are known to reside.

¹⁸ No returns were received from Great Mills, where Jews are known to reside.

¹⁹ No returns were received from Easton, where Jews are known to reside.

²⁰ No returns were received from Pocomoke City, where Jews are known to reside.

to put the Jewish population of Baltimore at 25,000 souls, and the Jewish population of the State outside of Baltimore, at 1500 souls.

The Jewish population of the State of Maryland, therefore, is estimated to be 26,500.