

# ISAAC MIRANDA / MERANDA

Isaac Miranda<sup>1</sup>  
b: unknown  
d: between July 3 and November 17, 1732  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

m: January 6, 1707/08  
St. Mary's the Virgin Aldermanbury  
London, England

Mary Raynolds  
b: unknown  
d: before August 21, 1730  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Isaac was not residing with his parents and his six siblings in 1695 when the census was taken in London.<sup>2</sup> His whereabouts are unknown, but presumably he was somewhere in England, busily attempting to establish himself socially as well as financially -- two predominate themes that continue through most of Isaac's activities.

The first definite reference to Isaac that I have been able to locate comes from The Registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London. This book contains the following entry which shows Isaac's marriage to Mary Raynolds.

January 6, 1708

Isaac Miranda of St. Hellins in ye Mineres London and Mary Raynolds of ye Liberty of ye Tower London, by Dr. Butler.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Some Meranda family histories use the initial S., in other words, Isaac S. Miranda. This may have started from the signature on Isaac's will -- Is. Miranda. Most likely, this was an abbreviation of Isaac and not meant to be initials I. S. Other official documents do not use an initial.

<sup>2</sup>"A List of Jews and Their Households in London", Extracted from the Census Lists of 1695 by Arthur, P. Arnold, M. A., The Jewish Historical Society of England, Miscellanies, Part VI, 1962, Page 73.

<sup>3</sup>The Registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London. Edited by W. Bruce Bannerman, F.S.A., Part II, London, 1932. Page 245.

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Mike Gallafent, a genealogical researcher from England reviewed baptism records for this parish (1662 - 1722) as well as parish burial records (1665 - 1722) and failed to find any Mirandas on either.<sup>4</sup>

We don't have any record of Isaac's birth year, but given the fact that he was not living with his parents in 1695 and that he married in 1708 we can do some "factual speculation" and can arrive at some general time frame. If we assume he was at least 17 when he married and most likely was younger than 30, his birth year would fall in the range of 1678 to 1691. And, if we further assume he was at least age 12 when he was not residing with his parents in 1695, his birth year would have been 1683. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that he was born in the 1678 - 1685 time frame. Incidentally, this would have made him 47 - 54 years old when he died in 1732.

From Isaac's will filed in Lancaster County Pennsylvania<sup>5</sup>, we know at least three children were born of this union, George, Samuel and Mary. Although not known for certain, it is probable all three, still living at Isaac's death, were born in England.

Our next definite knowledge of Isaac is in August 4th 1709 when he purchased stock in the Bank of England. This transaction was short lived (no long term capital gains tax for Isaac!) as the stock was closed out on November 16, 1709.<sup>6</sup> The entry shows Isaac was "of London, Merchant" owning between 500 and 1999 shares. This is the only bank stock entry for Isaac during the 1694 - 1725 time frame.

We next find Isaac on February 5, 1710 when he was living in "... the Parish of St. Dunstan's Stepney within the county of Middlesex ..." in London where he "....received the Sacraments of the Lords Supper in a protestant or Reformed Congregation in this kingdom of Great Britain ..."<sup>7</sup>as one of the requirements for becoming a naturalized citizen of Great Britain.

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<sup>4</sup>Email address mike.galafent@demon.co.uk. Personal correspondence July 1996.

<sup>5</sup>Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Will Book A, Volume 1, Page 6.

<sup>6</sup>"Early Jewish Holders of Bank of England Stock (1694-1725), The Jewish Historical Society of England, Miscellanies, Part VI, 1962, Page 158.

<sup>7</sup>Isaac Meranda Naturalization, Department of Community Affairs,  
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"The conditions required [for naturalization] were that they should be foreign Protestants; that they should take and subscribe the oaths [of allegiance and supremacy] and should make and subscribe the declaration [acknowledge supremacy, declare allegiance, etc.] set out in the Act of 6 Anne c. 78, 3. .... as a necessary preliminary the person concerned had to take the Sacrament within three months and had to produce his sacrament certificate at the time of making his oath and declaration in court and an entry of this certificate had to be there made of record."<sup>8</sup> A transcription of the naturalization document follows.

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Harrisburg Pennsylvania Land Office, Letters of Attorney, Book D-3, Volume 5, page 223.

<sup>8</sup>"Naturalization on the Oath Rolls", The Huguenot Society of London, Volume XXVII, 1923, Page 72.

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Isaac Meranda Naturalization  
courtesy of Margaret Meranda Burbage  
Bethel, Ohio  
transcribed by Craig Coberly

on file at Department of Community Affairs  
Harrisburg Pennsylvania Land Office  
Letters of Attorney  
Book D-3, Volume 5, page 223<sup>9</sup>

Court of Queens Bench West

These are to satisfy all persons whom it may concern that Isaac Miranda of the Parish of St. Dunstan's Stepney within the county of Middlesex born out of the allegiance of her Most Excellent Majesty Anne and by the Grace of God, Queen of Great Britain he did on Monday the Fifth day of February Anno Domini 1710 personally appear before the Justices of Her's Majesties Court of Queen Bench at Westminster and then & there in Testimony between the Hours of Nine and Twelve in the Forenoon of the same day produce and deliver in Open Court a Certificate in Writing of His receiving the Sacraments of the Lords Supper in a protestant or Reformed Congregation in this kingdom of Great Britain within three months past next before the Exhibiting such Certificate signed by the person administering such Sacrament and all (?word?) by two Credible Witnesses in pursuance of an Act of parliament made in the seventh year of Her Majesties reign entitled an Act for Naturalizing Foreign Protestants and then and there took and subscribed to the Oaths and made(?) repeated and subscribed the Declaration appointed by Act of Parliament made in the sixth year of her Majesties Reign entitled an Act (?word?) further provision for Electing and Sumoning sixteen years of Scotland (?word?) in the House of peers in the parliament of Great Britain and for trying peers for Offenses committed in Scotland & for the further Regulating of Voters in Elections of Members to serve in (?word?) (?word?)! Dated the Sixth day of February in the year of our Lord 1710 and in the ninth year of her Majesties Reign. (?word?) Harcourt Second Cort(?) Officer in Crg(?). (?phrase? possibly Latin) Entr'd Customhouse London 9 May 1711 Abraham(?) (?word?) Registered in the Customhouse Bristoll the 3rd Feby 1712 -- Wm J. Hariet --- Recorded the 7th day of May 1722.

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<sup>9</sup>The original is located in London. It's precise location is covered in "Naturalization on the Oath Rolls", The Huguenot Society of London, Volume XXVII, 1923, Page 72 - 101.

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Precisely when Isaac, Mary and family (?) immigrated to America from England is unknown.<sup>10</sup> In Great Britain departure records for the time period in question were not required and many, if they ever existed have been lost. And, at the time, the American Colonies did not require arrival records. The last known date they were in Great Britain was when Isaac's naturalization was "...registered in the Customhouse Bristoll the 3rd Febry 1712..."<sup>11</sup> Sometime after his arrival in America Isaac purchased land from Joseph Pidgeon.<sup>12, 13</sup> Records show that Joseph Pidgeon died in 1713.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, Isaac's arrival must fall within the 1712 - 1713 time period.

On a side note, I think a good case can be made that their departure from Great Britain was near or perhaps on the date Isaac's naturalization was recorded in Bristol, in other words, February 3, 1712. If this is the case, then it also leads to the interesting speculation that Isaac had left Great Britain previously when the naturalization was recorded in London's customhouse on May 9, 1711.

Where they arrived in America is also unknown with certainty, but based on subsequent events it was most likely the port of Philadelphia.

To set a mental image of the America and the Philadelphia into which Isaac immigrated, realize it was more than 50 years before the American Revolution; Benjamin Franklin was less than 10 years old; George Washington wouldn't be born for about another 17 years (1732); William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, leaving the administration of the Pennsylvania colony to his trusted assistant, James Logan, had returned to England and was near death (1718).

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<sup>10</sup>Some sources say Isaac immigrated from Italy (The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson, Edwin Wolfe and Maxwell Whiteman, 1957, page 19) or France as a French Huguenot (History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, 1883, page 16.) However, on balance, evidence supports the conclusion he immigrated from England.

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Meranda Naturalization, Department of Community Affairs, Harrisburg Pennsylvania Land Office, Letters of Attorney, Book D-3, Volume 5, page 223.

<sup>12</sup>from Isaac's will.

<sup>13</sup>In a letter from Meranda researcher Nancy Lammon to Margaret Burbage, March 11, 1981, Nancy said she had found the deed of this transaction.

<sup>14</sup>The *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 2, Volume 9, page 643.

James Logan, described as one of the most capable men in the province and as one of the most influential men in Pennsylvania during almost the whole first half of the eighteenth century was a man of great intellect and insatiable curiosity. Logan was William Penn's most faithful friend as well as his personal agent. From 1701 - 1717 Logan served as Secretary of the Province of Pennsylvania. Between 1736 and 1738 he served as chief executive of the Province; he was elected Mayor of Philadelphia and in 1731 was appointed chief-justice of the Supreme Court.

Logan "was an astronomer who bought an unfinished work of Halley and worked out the incomplete tables himself. He was a mathematician who ordered Newton's *Principia* when it was a novelty, and made his own notes and corrections."<sup>15</sup> And, he was a linguist. He could write in Latin and Greek with astonishing fluency. "French and Spanish he picked up from reading with the help of grammars and dictionaries."<sup>16</sup> And, he was an avid student of Judaism and Hebrew. "In fact, Logan gathered together in Philadelphia in the first half of the eighteenth century one of the largest collections of Herbraica which existed in frontier America."<sup>17</sup> It is through some personal notes of Logan's and the collection of Logan's Herbraica which, with the rest of Logan's personal library, is now in the Loganian Library, held in trust since 1792 by the Library Company of Philadelphia, that we know Isaac Miranda and James Logan were close acquaintances. Isaac Miranda was a close acquaintance of one of the most capable, influential and intellectual men in colonial Pennsylvania.

Isaac, as we learn from James Logan, was an apostate Jew (apostate meaning one who renounces a religious faith). In other words, Isaac had been raised and educated in the Jewish faith but had converted to Christianity.

It is easy to see why Isaac, an apostate Jew, who knew Hebrew, who knew Spanish, who had a collection of Jewish literature, would be of interest to James Logan, a man who was interested in Judaism, who was studying Hebrew, who knew Spanish, who had a collection of Jewish literature. "Logan was obviously more interested in the fact that he [Isaac] had a Jewish

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<sup>15</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, page 17.

education than that he had become a Christian. Christians he saw every day, but a Jew, a man who knew Hebrew, was, no matter his character or personality, (was) a man who could add fuel to Logan's mental fires."<sup>18</sup> Isaac must have been irresistible to Logan.

Isaac was a Sephardi Jew, which means his forefathers originated in Spain.<sup>19</sup> Supportive of this conclusion is the fact that Miranda is a Spanish surname which comes from "conceyu de Miranda (Austuries)", which roughly translated means "council in Austuries which is called Miranda". Also, in present day Spain there is a village called Miranda located about 150 Kilometers east of Oviedo.<sup>20</sup>

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expelled Spanish Jews in 1492. As a result, the Spanish Jews migrated to Portugal, the rest of Europe and Northern Africa taking with them their Medieval Spanish dialect, Sephardi. The expelled Spanish Jews are called Sephardi because they called Spain, Sepharad.<sup>21</sup> Those migrating to Portugal were expelled from there about four years later.

Logan secured from Isaac "several books, one a *Sepher haGilgulim*, a mystic work on the *Zohar*, and the other a Spanish manuscript to which were added Portuguese poems in memory of Jewish martyrs of the Inquisition. On a fly-leaf of the latter Logan wrote:

This is a Dialogue between a Jewish Doctr or Rabbi and a Christian about the Christian Religion composed (I think in Morocco) in Spanish by the Jew from whence we may certainly conclude how ye dispute is made to issue. It has divers Singularities in it and especially of the Jewish nations wch render it a Curiosity worth preserving. It belonged to Isaac Miranda a Jew by Education, who tore out the first pages or first twelve leaves of it. I read it over in 1735.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 20.

<sup>19</sup> *The Colonial American Jew*, Jacob Marcus, page 321.

<sup>20</sup> Personal email correspondence with Rubén Rodríguez Abril, joserm@lander.es, July 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 20.

Isaac had other books that James Logan added to his collection. "...one of the earliest known Jewish settlers in Pennsylvania, the apostate Isaac Miranda, owned a copy of Hayyim Vital's *Sefer Ha-gilgulim*, a mystical work dealing with the transmigration of souls. The copy, given to James Logan which is today held in trust at the Loganian Library by the Library Company of Philadelphia has ownership inscriptions of Miranda in Spanish on the front and back fly-leaves."<sup>23</sup>

Miranda's copy had been published at Frankfort on the Main in 1683-1684, and if the Pennsylvanian could understand Vital's cabalistic work, he must have been a man of considerable learning. Miranda also owned a manuscript containing several works in Spanish and Portuguese, two of them polemics concerning the differences between Judaism and Christianity and a third dealing in prose and poetry with Isaac de Castro Tartas' martyrdom at Lisbon in 1647."<sup>24</sup>

Books on early colonial American Jewish history contain numerous references to Isaac. In fact, "...more records have survived [of Isaac Miranda] than any other Jew who lived in Philadelphia in the first quarter of the eighteenth century."<sup>25</sup> Isaac Miranda is credited as being "...the first Jew known to settle in Pennsylvania."<sup>26</sup> According to Marcus, "Isaac Miranda was already in Pennsylvania about the year 1715."<sup>27</sup> And, from a later reference, "...Pennsylvania's first permanent Jewish settler ... Isaac Miranda, a Sephardi who by 1720 was an established businessman in the colony. Miranda, ... carved out a career as a successful Indian trader, farmer, merchant, and politician".<sup>28</sup>

Isaac was the first Jew to hold political office in Pennsylvania. Presumably, because of Isaac's association with James Logan, he was appointed to political positions. In 1727, "he was an 'Agent to Receive and Collect the Perquisites and Rights of Admiralty,' and on July 19 of that

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Page 386.

<sup>24</sup>*The Colonial American Jew, 1492 - 1776*, Jacob R. Marcus, page 1075.

<sup>25</sup>*The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 18.

<sup>26</sup>*The Colonial American Jew, 1492 - 1776*, Jacob R. Marcus, page 259.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., page 321.



year he was named deputy judge of the Court of Vice-Admiralty of the Province of Pennsylvania.”<sup>29</sup>

As pointed out by Marcus, Jews could not become lawyers in the full sense of the term. “Such disabilities, however, did not affect the Jewish convert to Christianity, and therefore Isaac Miranda, an immigrant of Jewish birth, was able to serve as an admiralty officer or judge in Pennsylvania during the 1720’s. Miranda is unlikely to have had any legal training, but was appointed to his judicial post despite the fact the he was a layman in the law.”<sup>30</sup>

Isaac’s “...tenure of office was short, for before the end of the year he was dismissed because he refused to carry out the order of his superior, the Vice Admiralty judge, Joseph Brown(e), in a case which seems to have involved corruption.”<sup>31</sup> Apparently, the corruption was not on Isaac’s part.

The American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati has in its collection, copies of court documents dealing with this dispute as well as other papers pertaining to Isaac. The Archive catalogue describes the collection of court papers as follows.

“[a collection of 109 pages of affidavits, letters, which] deals with a dispute between Governor Patrick Gordon of Pennsylvania and Vice Admiralty Judge Joseph Browne. Isaac Miranda, a merchant and a former Jew, was appointed Deputy of Substitute Vice Admiralty Judge by Browne (Browne borrowed money of Miranda in 1726) but when the case of the Schooner “Sarah” was before Miranda, Browne apparently, at the request of the reclainer, Mr. Peter Baynton, revoked Miranda’s commission (1727). Browne revoked Miranda’s commission because of the latter’s “ill conduct and irregular procedure.” However, Browne and Baynton seemed to have been in collusion. Browne writes Miranda on behalf of Baynton, but Miranda made it clear that he would not give Baynton the decision that he sought. Miranda believed that Browne was corrupt. Miranda is referred to as a Christian and takes the oath on the Holy Evangelists. In general, Miranda’s reputation, as reflected in this material seems to have been

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<sup>29</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 19 - 20 and *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 2, Volume 9, page 650.

<sup>30</sup> *The Colonial American Jew, 1492 - 1776*, Jacob R. Marcus, page 545.

<sup>31</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 20.

bad, although he seems to have acted honorably with respect to the schooner "Sarah" in refusing to do the bidding of the corrupt Browne."<sup>32</sup>

In a sworn deposition Isaac confirms that he did loan Brown money to pay his debts but both Isaac and Brown contend that Isaac's appointment was independent and not in any way in repayment for the loans.

After Brown revoked Isaac's commission as Deputy of Substitute Vice Admiralty Judge it is quite obvious there were hard feelings. One particularly telling moment was recounted by a question put to Isaac as part of his sworn deposition.

Question 12: Was you invited by other people and by whom or only your own resentments to insult Brown in the streets upon which he thought it prudent to bind you over to the peace?

Isaac's Answer: Brown having reflected on me before the judges of the common pleas during the sitting of the court calling me an abandoned wretch I took the first opportunity to expostulate with him and finding him in the street I made up to him to explain myself, but he seeing me run away and the Honorable Patrick Gordon, Esquire, our governor coming down the street the contrary way seeing Brown a running with a long sword by his side which was not his ordinary self (the same as I believe he having borrowed from James Gray) the governor laughed and the respect due to the governor made me stop to salute him which hindered me from finishing the affair. William Brown thereupon swore the peace against me and that he went in danger of his life. I gave security of 100 pounds and was bound up and I do solemnly declare that nobody put me upon expostulating with William Brown (which I suppose he calls insulting) the nature of his scurrilous language in the face of his majesty's court defended no less. I never intended nor did I insult Mr. William Brown or any of his majesty's officers in the discharge of their duties nor at any other time at all specially in this case (for he would not let me catch up with him at all). Brown needed not to be afraid of me for I only intended him a moderate correction for his misdemeanor as aforesaid contrary to truth or appearance of truth but purely to give a look (?) in revenge.

Signed 19 June 1731

Isaac Miranda<sup>33</sup>

What a scene of chaos!! Isaac, offended at being called an "abandoned wretch" by Brown comes to confront Brown. Brown, fearful of Isaac to the point of being afraid for his life, is

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<sup>32</sup>Manuscript Catalog of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Volume 2, 1971, page 622.

<sup>33</sup>Deposition of Isaac Miranda in Miranda, Isaac, Papers, Box 1403, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

running away brandishing a long sword with Isaac in hot pursuit. But Isaac, ever mindful of prestige and authority, interrupts his chase to salute the Governor -- which "hinders him from finishing the affair" with Brown. To add insult to injury, Isaac is arrested and has to post a bond of 100 pounds! Not content to let matters rest, Isaac had to take one last verbal swipe at Brown, pointing out his cowardice in that "he would not let me catch up with him at all".

Probably resulting also from his friendship with James Logan, sometime prior to 1723 Isaac went west of the Susquehanna's to transact some government business in relation to some mining interest. The result, for whatever reason, was not entirely satisfactory as evidenced by a portion of a letter written from Secretary Logan to Henry Goldney dated March 7, 1723.

In some of my Letters by Cap Annis I took notice that one Isaac Miranda, an apostate Jew or fashionable Christian Proselyte [convert], was gone over to transact some affairs in which our Gov is concerned, and particularly in relation to ye mine beyond Sasquehannah. I have since rec'vd a very pressing application from some Inhabitants of the Lands on this side of the River, over against the mine, who have not yet obtained Titles to their settlements, are apprehensive that he has some design or Instruction to procure a right and turn them out of their possessions & Improvemen, which would be very unjust. I can only say, at present, that the man ought in general, to be guarded against, for all his motions in relation to you, if I mistake not, will be found Insidious.<sup>34</sup>

"Exactly what he had done, or what resulted, the records do not show."<sup>35</sup>

When, or where, Isaac's conversion to Christianity took place is unknown. Clearly, he came to America an apostate Jew. And, his conversion had taken place by the time he became a naturalized citizen of Great Britain in 1710 by receiving "... the Sacraments of the Lords Supper in a protestant or Reformed Congregation".<sup>36</sup> Most likely it took place before he and Mary were married in 1708 because "The St. Mary's, the Virgin Aldermanbury" is not a Jewish synagogue.

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<sup>34</sup> *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 2, Volume 7, page 82.

<sup>35</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 19.

<sup>36</sup> Isaac Meranda Naturalization, Department of Community Affairs, Harrisburg Pennsylvania Land Office, Letters of Attorney, Book D-3, Volume 5, page 223.

Marcus speculates that "The Pennsylvania pioneer Isaac Miranda may already have embraced the Christian faith in Tuscany where he had family"<sup>37</sup> -- if he came from Tuscany.

While not meant to diminish fundamental and religious reasons Isaac may have had for his conversion, there were probably practical considerations as well. Despite the fact that the Pennsylvania colony had been founded on the principle of freedom of religion, "... it must be remembered that liberalism in Stuart days was something less than liberalism a century later and much less than today. Although liberty of conscience was written into the law, which recognized the right of free worship, freemen -- the only ones who could vote and hold office -- had to own property and profess faith in Jesus Christ."<sup>38</sup>

"Isaac Miranda of Pennsylvania is another illustration of the assimilative process. Though intermarried and baptized, he still had Jewish interests, if one may judge from the fact that when he came to this country, he had a Spanish and Portuguese manuscript attacking Christianity and extolling the Sephardic martyrs of the Inquisition. Miranda may very well have been a North American Marrano of Jewish origin who felt himself Jewish and had no allegiance to Christianity, but preferred for reasons of his own to live as a Christian."<sup>39</sup>

"Marrano" is a Spanish word which literally translated means "pig" a, descriptive and telling word for Jews who chose to live as Christians.

Regardless of the reasons Isaac converted to Christianity, he chose to die a Christian because his will specified that "he be buried in a Christian like and decent manner."<sup>40</sup>

Whether it was because of the limitations and restrictions placed on Jews or whether it was for other reasons, Isaac wanted to make his conversion perfectly clear and place in the public record, the fact that he had professed allegiance to the British monarchy and that he had

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<sup>37</sup> *The Colonial American Jew, 1492 - 1776*, Jacob R. Marcus, page 1236.

<sup>38</sup> *The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 12.

<sup>39</sup> *The Colonial American Jew, 1492 - 1776*", Jacob R. Marcus, page 1228.

<sup>40</sup> Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Will Book A, Volume 1, Page 6 or Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia, Will No. 401, Book E, page 325.

received "... the Sacraments of the Lords Supper in a protestant or Reformed Congregation in this kingdom of Great Britain". To this end, he had his naturalization recorded in Philadelphia on May 7, 1722.<sup>41</sup>

Despite his conversion to Christianity and his naturalization being recorded in Philadelphia, his contemporaries still continued to think of and refer to Isaac as a Jew. "Even John<sup>42</sup>Logan, a cultured highly-educated man and a fine student of the Hebrew bible, could not forgive the Christian Isaac Miranda his Jewish origin."<sup>43</sup>

Isaac's occupation shortly after arriving in America was that of a merchant and an Indian trader -- the most profitable occupation in the colonies. At the time of his death in 1732, his major assets included 2250 acres on the Rahway River in eastern New Jersey (18 miles from Newark), two houses in Philadelphia and 3250 acres in Lancaster County Pennsylvania. Other assets were the property on which he lived, a collection of horses (probably, pack horses for use in Indian trading) and 152 pounds he had on loan to various individuals.<sup>44</sup>

That he became successful is evidenced by an entry in the account book to Thomas Chalkley, one of the great early Quaker merchants of Philadelphia, which shows that in 1720 Miranda bought himself a pair of silver candlesticks with a pair of snuffers and a stand for them. It is amusing to read the record of one of his [Isaac's] ventures to gain that wealth. When Chalkley shipped a cargo "on board ye Trine Hope for Antigua May 24, 1720," among many others who had part shares in the venture, Miranda is listed as owning "5 barrells of pork."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Isaac Meranda Naturalization, Department of Community Affairs, Harrisburg Pennsylvania Land Office, Letters of Attorney, Book D-3, Volume 5, page 223.

<sup>42</sup>Evidently an error by Marcus (see next footnote). The reference is to James Logan, not John Logan.

<sup>43</sup>*The Colonial American Jew, 1492 - 1776*, Jacob R. Marcus, page 1238.

<sup>44</sup>Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Will Book A, Volume 1, Page 6 or Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia, Will No. 401, Book E, page 325.

<sup>45</sup>*The history of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial times to the Age of Jackson*, Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, page 19.

It was during his career as a merchant in Philadelphia that Isaac placed a notice in *The American Weekly Mercury*, the first newspaper published in Pennsylvania. The notice, placed February 20, 1722 was for a runaway indentured servant.<sup>46</sup>

Flemming, John, Irish servant, age c. 18, belonging to Mr. Miranda, of Phila., merchant.

Just when Isaac arrived in Lancaster County is uncertain although he is said to have "... settled on Conoy Creek, in what is now Lancaster County, about 1715."<sup>47</sup> Isaac "was one of the Chester County, Pennsylvania, group [of Indian traders], and ... was licensed by the Colonial authorities in 1716."<sup>48</sup>

More precise information on the location of Isaac's cabin is provided by a note of Egle's. In this note, Egle is discussing the Indian trader, John Galbraith.

"I first find a record of him [John Galbraith] in November, 1732, as a witness to the will of Isaac Miranda, an Indian trader, who had a trading post at Conoy Creek, about a mile northwest of Conoy Indian Town." At this time Mr. Galbraith seems to have been engaged in the Indian trade, and was surrounded by Indian traders who resided close to him, one of whom was Jonas Davenport, who resided at the ferry where Bainbridge now is, as early as 1718,.... Isaac Miranda, above mentioned, resided a few hundred yards away..."<sup>49</sup>

That Isaac, Jonas(h) Davenport and John Galbraith lived in close proximity to each other is borne out by the fact that Davenport and Galbraith were witnesses to a codicil Isaac made to his will.

One can imagine that Indian traders on the frontier in the 1700's were an "interesting" bunch. Rough, tough and shrewd are three of the more flattering adjectives that come to mind. The following remarks by historian Howard L. Leckey give a characterization of Indian Traders. His remarks were specifically about Indian Traders in the southwestern

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<sup>46</sup>*Genealogical Abstracts from the American Weekly Mercury, 1719-1746*, Kenneth Scott, page 7.

<sup>47</sup>*The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Wilderness Trail*, Charles A. Hannah, Vol. 1, page 175.

<sup>48</sup>*The Ten Mile Country*, Howard L. Leckey, Volume 1, page 3.

<sup>49</sup>*Notes and Queries*, William Egle, Fourth Series, Vol. II, page 93.

part of Pennsylvania (where our ancestors moved), but no doubt were typical of Indian traders in general.

The Indian Traders who covered this section have been typed, and all agree that they were a profligate lot. Usually raised on the frontier, they had picked up an Indian dialect or two, with smatterings of others, sufficient to carry on trade. Their stock of goods consisted in the main of rum, guns, powder and lead; knives, axes, awls, strouds, linen and other cloth; ribbons and stockings which they carried on pack horses -- and in this part of the country -- exchanged for deer skins. The profits included a fair margin on the cost, plus a percentage for packing the goods over the mountains, usually from Philadelphia or Baltimore. Each trader seems to have had his own favorite stopping places and routes of travel. Frequently, the stopping place was nothing more than a large fallen tree that gave some promise of shelter from the weather, or a sylvan spring that supplied water for his pack animals. These stopping places were respected by other traders, and names were given to them associating the places with the trader. Rum was used freely to strike an advantageous bargain or violate a comely Indian Maiden, when peaceful persuasion failed. There were very few of these traders who did not have one or more Indian Women, whom they sometimes gave the status of wife, especially, if she were a daughter of a Chief or influential tribesman. Indian morals were such that there seems to have been no resentment of this condition and history records few instances of violence caused by it. Foreign travelers of that time, have reported that they frequently met unaccompanied Indian Women on the trails, with whom they camped at night, sharing the same blankets, for the sake of warmth, and other conveniences, and often traveled with them for days at a time.”<sup>50</sup>

It is not difficult to imagine that in this trading environment one of the parties to trades and agreements (usually, the Indians) sometimes felt like they had been treated unfairly. Isaac was not immune to these charges.<sup>51</sup>

#### INDIAN COMPLAINT AG'T I. MIRANDA, 1730

To the Justices of the County of Lancaster

Gentlemen:

I have received a Petition of Cachuscunt & Memocollen two Indians setting forth a great abuse & Imposition, they have suffered from Isaac Miranda, which being committed within your Jurisdiction properly comes under your Cognizance & therefore I have herewith transmitted to you the Said Petition, that you may make a full & particular Enquiry into the Truth of the facts sett forth thereof, And if you find the Allegations therein contained to be true, I

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<sup>50</sup> *The Ten Mile Country*, Howard L. Leckey, Volume 1, page 2 - 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 1, Pages 266 - 267.

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desire you will order Mr. Miranda to make Restitution of the Goods which he has taken away & likewise to enter into Recognizance for his good Behaviour & Appearance at your ensuing Court. I am,  
Aug. 21, 1720<sup>52</sup>

In Isaac's defense, there is no record of the legitimacy of the complaint nor of any action taken.

In addition to his occupation as an Indian Trader, Isaac, at least in his later years, was a tavern owner possibly in conjunction with his trading post. On May 5, 1730, Lancaster County Quarter Session records show Isaac had paid 20 shillings for a license "to sell rum by the small".<sup>53</sup> Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1730 must have been an interesting place; full of Indian traders and 36 licensed taverns plus, I suspect, one or two which remained unlicensed. Apparently tavern licenses had to be renewed on an annual basis because on May 4th, 1731 Isaac again petitioned to be able to "... retail Rum &c [and such] by the quart."<sup>54</sup>

Other than the census taken in London in 1695, the only reference I have ever seen about siblings of Isaac's is in his will where he indicated he expected to inherit some property from "... my Brother Joseph Meranda Steward to the Duke of Tuscany..."<sup>55</sup> From the wording in the will, it is apparent that Isaac was not sure whether his brother was alive when he made his will on June 20, 1732.

"Steward" refers to a person in charge of a household's domestic affairs. Tuscany, by the way, is now part of Italy but, as near as I can determine was under French control in 1732. This reference in Isaac's will may account for several researchers concluding that Isaac immigrated to America from Italy.

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<sup>52</sup>The 1720 date is obviously a misprint. The articles printed in the Pennsylvania Archives were in chronological order. The preceding and following articles carried 1730 dates. It's also interesting to note that this complaint was filed the same day that Isaac's wife, Mary was buried at Christ Church in Philadelphia.

<sup>53</sup>*History of Lancaster County*, Daniel Rupp, page 254 - 255.

<sup>54</sup>Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Quarter Session Abstracts, 1729-1749, Book 1, Gary T. Hawbaker, page 11.

<sup>55</sup>Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Will Book A, Volume 1, Page 6 or Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia, Will No. 401, Book E, page 325.



We know very little about Isaac's wife, Mary. From parish records we know her maiden name was Raynolds and that she and Isaac were married on January 8, 1708 at St. Mary's, the Virgin, Aldermanbury in London.<sup>56</sup> She died before Isaac, for according to his will, her clothes were in storage at the home of Thomas Leech in Philadelphia. The Christ Church (Philadelphia) burial records show a Mary Mirrander was buried at that church on August 21, 1730.<sup>57</sup>

Isaac and Mary are known to have had three children since they were mentioned in his will; sons Samuel and George and a daughter Mary. Since the birth dates of these individuals are unknown, the birth order of these children is not known with certainty. However, in Isaac's will he referred to his "young son George"<sup>58</sup> Also, in the will, he implies his daughter, Mary may need to be provided for by Thomas Leech. Given these facts, a reasonable birth order is Samuel, Mary, George.

Being in poor health, Isaac made his will on June 20, 1732 and signed a Codicil on July 3, 1732.<sup>59</sup> He was dead by November 17, 1732 when "Then Personally Appeared Jonah Davenport & John Galbreath..." to attest to the validity of a codicil Isaac had made to his will and Thomas Leech, of Philadelphia, was "... sworn well and Truly to administer the said Deceds Estate and bring an Inventory thereof into the Registers Office in Lancaster County before the Seventeenth Day of December next and also render an Account when thereunto Lawfully Required Given under the Seal of the Office".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>The Registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London. Edited by W. Bruce Bannerman, F.S.A., Part II, London, 1932. Page 245.

<sup>57</sup>Baptisms and Burials from the records of Christ Church, Philadelphia, compiled by Charles R. Hilderburn, 1982, page 185.

<sup>58</sup>This reference is not in the official transcription provided by Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. However, it is very legible in the copy of the handwritten will at the American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, Folder Number SC-8263.

<sup>59</sup>Abstracts of Philadelphia Wills, Vol. IV., Part II, 1726-1747, The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 1893, page 647. Also, the copy of the handwritten will at the American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, Folder Number SC-8263.

<sup>60</sup>Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Will Book A, Volume 1, Page 6 or Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia, Will No. 401, Book E, page 325.

Isaac's will, transcribed below, is a revealing document. It shows that Isaac desperately wanted his daughter to marry into, and be accepted by, the social and political power structure of Pennsylvania and it shows he was thoroughly disgusted and disappointed in his son Samuel, to whom he left "...one English Shilling". In the codicil to the will, this provision was revised, taking 500 acres out of the land originally left to Mary and giving it to Samuel. Still, a very small disproportionate share of Isaac's total holdings.

The settlement of Isaac's estate did not come quickly. Isaac died between July 3 and November 17, 1732. Yet, in August of 1734, his son Samuel, imprisoned in the Chester County, Pennsylvania jail as an insolvent debtor, filed a petition with the court in which he lamented that his "...Releasement [was being] objected against upon (?) of a Legacy bequeathed to him by his Deceased father whose Executor Detains the said Legacy on Pretense of Debts which ye Petitioner's father may have contracted in England..."<sup>61</sup>

Further evidence that the estate settlement was difficult is the fact that, even though Isaac died in Lancaster County in 1732 and his will filed there, his will was also filed in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, but not until 1735.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the filing in Philadelphia County was necessary because of Isaac's houses and other property in Philadelphia.

In any event, it was not until seven years after Isaac's death, on October 11, 1739 that his son George, as instructed by the will, listed the New Jersey property for sale.

TO BE SOLD. Tract of 1250 acres in Hunterdon Co., on both sides of Rockaway River, about 18 miles from Newark, for sale; to see it, apply to Gasha Mott, of Whippany; a buyer may agree with George Miranda, shopkeeper, over against the Sign of the George, in Second St., Phila.<sup>63</sup>

And finally, there is the tantalizing letter from researcher Nancy Lammon to a Lancaster County Pennsylvania Historical librarian in which Nancy says she had found that there were "...law suits

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<sup>61</sup>Petition filed by Samuel Miranda with Chester County, Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas, August 1734.

<sup>62</sup>Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia, Will No. 401, Book E, page 325.

<sup>63</sup>Abstracts from Ben Franklin's Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728 - 1748, Kenneth Scott, 1975, page 242.

after Isaac died 1732, and a Supreme Court case in N. J.”<sup>64</sup> It is Nancy’s belief that the deeds for houses in Philadelphia, land in Lancaster County and in New Jersey were taken by the court(s) for the trial and never returned. Unfortunately, Nancy’s records have been lost.

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<sup>64</sup>Letter from Nancy Lammon to Ms. Lalinda M. Matt, Librarian, Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania dated December 5, 1979. Furnished by Mrs. Betty Shawn, Alexandria, Virginia.

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Will of Isaac Miranda<sup>65</sup>  
Book 1, Page 6  
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania  
or Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia,  
Will No. 401, Book E, page 325.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN, The Twentieth Day of June in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Two I Isaac Miranda of the County of Lancaster and Province of Pensylvania Gent. being very sick and weak in Body but of Perfect Mind and Memory Thanks be given unto God therefore Calling unto mind the Mortality of my Body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to dye Do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament, that is to say, Principally and first of all I give and Recomend my Soul into the hands of God that gave it, And for my Body I Recommend it to the Earth to be buried in a Christian like and decent manner at the discretion of my Executor, nothing doubting but at the general Resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty Power of God and as touching such Worldly Estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me in this Life I give Devise and Dipose of the same in the following manner and form

IMPRIMIS It is my will and I do order That in the first place all my just Debts and Funeral Charges be paid and Satisfied.

ITEM It is my Will that my Plantation in Dunegall in the County aforesaid and all Effects thereunto belonging amounting very near the sum of Two Hundred Pounds be sold at a Public Vendue by my Executor hereunder mentioned and that all my just Debts be paid & answered out of the same, and that the Remainder be paid to Thomas Leech.

ITEM I give & bequeath unto Mary Miranda my Daughter my two Houses in the City of Philadelphia now rented to one Mr. Biles together with all my household goods, Books & other Moveables.

ITEM I give and bequeath to James Hamilton if he marrys my Daughter all my land which I bought of Joseph Pidgeon lying and being upon Rareington River which is Three Thousand and Three Hundred and Fourteen Acres of Land, But tis

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<sup>65</sup>Lancaster County, Pennsylvania furnishes an official typewritten transcription of the handwritten will when a copy is requested. A copy of the handwritten will is in the American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, Folder Number SC-8263. The handwritten copy shows that the official transcription contains some errors and omissions. The transcription below is a combination of Lancaster County's Official Transcription and the copy of the handwritten will. Spelling and capitalization have been retained from the original.

Important differences between the handwritten will and the official transcription include "young son George" (handwritten) not "loving son George" (official transcription), date of Codicil (3 July 1732) omitted from official transcription, official transcription shows Jos. Miranda as witness to Codicil, this IS NOT on the handwritten.

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here my will that the aforesaid Tract of Land be sold at a Public Vendue by my Executor and the money I give to the aforesaid.

ITEM I will that One Thousand Two hundred and Fifty acres of Land which I bought of William Betle lying and being upon Roughaway in the Jersey be likewise sold at a Public Vendue and the money given to my young Son George Miranda.

ITEM I give and Bequeath to my well beloved Daughter Mary Miranda aforesaid my Gold Watch and Chain and Diamond Rings together with all my Plate Locked up in a Trunk now lying at the House of Thomas Leech in Philadelphia and my late wifes Clothes.

ITEM I give in Trust to Thomas Leech aforesaid whom I likewise Constitute make and ordain my only and sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament all the money due to me from William Rawle in Order to pay what is due from me, and the Remainder I give to my aforesaid Executor he taking care of my Daughter Mary. And whereas there is Ninety five Pounds coming from England by Perequin and Sitwell in Iron ware, I desire and it is my Will that my aforesaid Executors do sell the same and the Money I give to James Hamilton if he marry my Daughter, otherwise to my Daughter Mary Miranda.

ITEM I do hereby Desire that my Executor may order to be taken up Eight Breeding Mares, one Black Horse Two white Horses and a Sorrel Horse now running in the Woods and the said Creatures be sold and the Money I give to George Miranda.

ITEM I do hereby further desire my aforesaid Executor to Collect and Receive of these Persons hereafter named these several Sums of Money particularly here mentioned. viz of William Bell the Sum of Twenty Pounds, Charles Empson the Sum of Twenty Pounds, Hanah Growden the Sum of Thirty three Pounds, Widow Allison of Burlington the Sum of Fifty Pounds Samuel James of New Castle the Sum of Ten Pounds, Patrick Martin the Sum of Twelve Pounds and John Mc Cain the Sum of Seven Pounds 10 S. which said Sums of Money I do give and bequeath to my Daughter Mary Miranda.

And Further whereas it is my Will that what my Brother Joseph Miranda Steward to the Duke of Tuscany has left me by will or will leave me I do hereby give to James Hamilton if he marrys my Daughter, otherwise wholly to herself

and I do hereby utterly disanull revoke and disallow all and Every other former Testaments Will Legacies & Executor by me in any wise before this time named willed and bequeathed Ratified & Confirming this & no other to be my last Will and Testament & only this mentions before Sealing & Delivery that I give to my Son Samuel Miranda One English Shilling. IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto Set my hand and Seal the Day and Year first above written.

SIGNED Sealed Published pronounced and declared by the said Isaac Miranda as his last Will & Testament in the presence of the Subscribers viz Samuel Bethel, Edmond Cartlidge, Jos. Richard Marsden.

Is. Miranda

My Deeds is in Simon Edgell hands in the High Street in Philadelphia to whom I owe not a penny.

Ja. Mitchell.

I Miranda

Codicil to Last Will and Testament  
Dated July 3, 1732

I give 500 a. of Land for my Son Samuel out of my Daughters tract and the same power that I gave to James Mitchell & John Catherwood by virtue of a Power of Attorney I will and I bequeath to my Son George to receive and pay as he see meet and to have my Plantation at Donegall and the Wampon at Sam Bethels and the 2 white Horses, Therefore I now make the aforesaid Power of Attorney Void & of no Effect as Witness my hand this 3rd of July 1732.

Is. Miranda

Tetis Jonah Davenport John Galbreath.

Proving of Codicil to Isaac Miranda's Will

LANCASTER, COUNTY, the Seventeenth Day of November Anno Dom:1732  
Then Personally Came Jonah Davenport & John Galbreath the Witnesses to  
above written Codicil and on their Oaths did declare that they were present  
when Isaac Miranda the Testator desired the above written Will to be brought  
to him which was accordingly done and after looking on some time Said he  
would have Something added to it And accordingly sent for Richard Marsden  
and ordered the above Codicil to be wrote, and when it was written the said  
Isaac the Testator looked over it & approved of it and then signed his name  
thereunto and that at the Doing thereof he was of sound Mind Memory and  
Understanding to the best of their knowledge.

Before(?) me Sa. Blunston. Dep. Regr.

Proving of Isaac Miranda's Last Will and Testament<sup>66</sup>

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 17th Day of November Anno Domm 1732  
The Last Will and Testament of Isaac Meranda Deceased was proved in due  
form of Lay and Probate and Letters Testamentary were granted to Thomas  
Leech having first sworn well and Truly to administer the said Deceds [sic]  
Estate and bring an Inventory thereof into the Registers Office in Lancaster  
County before the Seventeenth Day of December next and also render an  
Account when thereunto Lawfully Required Given under the Seal of the Office.  
Sa. Blunston. Dep. Regr.

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<sup>66</sup>From Lancaster County Official Transcription only -- handwritten document has not been reviewed.

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