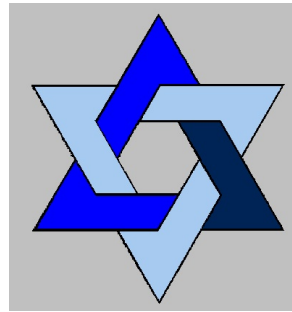


The Sunderland Samuels

The Dutch historical materials in this chapter are based on an internet article, 'Dutch Tzedakah.'



The Samuel Family first appears in Sunderland, Durham, England prior to 1768 when Abraham Samuel came from Amsterdam, *the new Protestant Republic of the United Netherlands*. Shortly after he arrived, his younger brother, Hart Samuel, also arrived from Amsterdam. Abraham Samuel died in 1794 at Sunderland.

By 1648 there was a growing influx of Ashkenazi Hebrews from Germany and Eastern Europe. They settled in the area around Vlooyenburg and the Jodenbreestraat (*Hebrew Wide Street*). The Ashkenazi, or so called High German community, soon outnumbered the comparatively few in the Sephardim community from Spain. The Ashkenazi community reached a population of nearly twenty thousand. They came to what they called "*the safe city*" or "*the New Jerusalem of the West*" – the "*Mokum*" or city of Amsterdam.

The Netherlands offered a safe and much-improved lifestyle for the Hebrew immigrants. The Dutch were becoming increasingly wealthy, and their purchasing power made the potential for selling by small Hebrew traders and hawkers greater than elsewhere in Europe.

Having considerably more freedom in the Netherlands, they could practice the Torah (*the law*) openly without fear. The only religious restriction was that they could not *“by spoken or written word, bring the Christian religion, to even the smallest degree, into contempt or scorn, nor attempt to convert or to circumcise any person of the Christian religion.”*

I have made an extensive search in the Amsterdam records for the births of these brothers, or their marriages without success, except for one record. There is a marriage of Abraham Samuel to Johanna Hartogh in 1742. It is my opinion that Hart and Abraham Samuel were sojourners in Holland, born and raised elsewhere.

I believe that a marriage record of an Abraham Samuel on June 15, 1742 of Amsterdam, and 25 years earlier of Uylenburg, Germany, the son of Samuel Jonas, to Johanna Hartogh, with her grandmother Vrontje de Vries, from Amsterdam is most likely the Abraham Samuel of Sunderland. This would mean that he was born in 1717 and 23 years older than his brother Hart. The marriage record for Hart Samuel, married about 1765 in the Amsterdam area, to Rachel has not been located. The marriage record for Abraham Samuel indicates that Uylenburg, Germany is possibly his birth-place as well as the possible birthplace for Hart Samuel.

According to his will which was probated in 1813, as well as his burial record, Hart Samuel was 73 years old at the time of his death. This would indicate that he was born about 1740. Also, since he arrived in Sunderland after 1768, he would have

been at least 28 and most likely would have already been married. My sources state that he was born in Germany and his wife was born in Amsterdam.

The signature of Hart Samuel, reproduced from his will does not match any that have been found in the Amsterdam marriage records. It is clear from his will that the name of his wife was Rachel.

In the will of Samuel Lyon Samuel, son of Hart Samuel, he mentions that his sister Elizabeth Samuel Engle, was then living in Wallenstein, Hessen-Nassau, Germany. Located between Frankfort Am Main and Kassel, in 1905 the population of Wallenstein was 223 – in the late 1700s it would have been smaller. It is curious what the attraction of a city this small would be to Elizabeth Samuel Engle, unless perhaps there was an ancestral connection to either her or her husband.

Since at least some, if not all, of Hart's children were born before Hart arrived in the Sunderland area after 1768, it might be very likely that he lived in Germany. At least a daughter – as mentioned in his son Samuel Lyon Samuel's will – living in Germany indicates a German heritage. I have not at this time looked in the Wallenstein, Hessen-Nassau, Germany area as a possible birthplace of Hart Samuel. The Jewish Encyclopedia states that the Jews were banished in 1499, most went to Neustadt in Brandenburg, or to Frankfurt am Main – Wallenstein is near Frankfurt.

In England the children of Hart Samuel began to seek wives. They started to marry outside of the Jewish faith – a Jewish community of potential

women was not available until later – and they were disowned – a practice of devout Jewish families.

In 1790 Hart Samuel sent his daughter to Amsterdam to find a suitable head for a Jewish community in Sunderland. That same year, when Hart was 50, this Jewish community began. Now perhaps his children would be true to his faith.

University of Durham, Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic

*Reference: Durham Probate Records – 1813
(The will of Hart Samuel, late of North Shields, Jeweller, deceased). A copy of the original will is in my possession. I have transcribed it to make it more readable. The spellings and punctuation are as shown.*

I Hart Samuel of North Shields in the County Northumberland Jeweler do make this my last Will and Testament in manner following (that is to say). I do hereby order and direct that all my just debts – funeral expenses and the expenses of proving and establishing this my will shall be paid by my executors hereinafter named out of my Estate and Effects. I give and bequeath unto my son Phillip Samuel the sum of fifty pounds to be paid to him by my said Executors by five yearly payments of ten pounds each the first yearly payment thereof to begin and be made at the expiration of three calendar months next after my decease: and also I give and Bequeath unto my dear wife Rachel

Samuel all and every my stock in trade, household furniture, plate, linen, china, ready money, securities for money and the money due thereon, debts, sum and sums of money and all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate and effects whatsoever and wheresoever and of what nature or kind soever the same may be or consist To Hold the same unto my said dear wife Rachel Samuel for and during the term of her natural life in case she shall so long continue my widow but not otherwise and from and immediately after the second marriage or decease of my said dear wife Rachel Samuel which shall first happen I give and bequeath all and every my said stock in trade, household furniture, plate, linen, china, ready money, securities for money with the money due thereon, debts, sum and sums of money and all the rest residue and remainder of my estate and effects whatsoever and wheresoever and of what nature or kind soever the same may be or consist unto my son Lyon Samuel alias Samuel Lyon Samuel be paying thereout to my said dear wife in case she shall happen to marry again the sum of fifty pounds. And my will and mind further is that in case my said son Lyon Samuel alias Samuel Lyon Samuel shall marry any woman who is not of the Jewish Religion then and in such case he my said son Lyon Samuel alias Samuel Lyon Samuel shall not have or be entitled to any benefit or advantage whatsoever under or by virtue of this my will, but the whole of my estate and effects whatsoever so given to my said son Lyon Samuel alias Samuel Lyon Samuel shall (on such event happening) go unto and I do hereby give and

bequeath the same unto my said son Phillip Samuel. And I do hereby nominate and appoint my said dear wife Rachel Samuel executrix and my said son Lyon Samuel alias Samuel Lyon Samuel executor of this my will and I do hereby revoke and make void all former and other will and wills by me at any time or times heretofore made. In witness whereof I the said Hart Samuel the testator have hereunto set my hand and seal the seventeenth day of September One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ten.

signed /Hart Samuel/

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hart Samuel".

(Electronically scanned from his will)

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the said Hart Samuel the Testator and as for his last will and testament in the presence of us who in his presence, at his request and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names as witnesses:

signed /R. Barker/

/Robert Thell/

On the twenty-third day of September, One thousand Eight hundred and thirteen, Rachel Samuel, wife, and Lyon Samuel otherwise Samuel Lyon Samuel, son of the testator and both of North Shields above mentioned, the executors named in the within written will now sworn as usual and

that the personal Estate of Hart Samuel, the deceased did not amount to Three Hundred Pounds and Richard Barker one of the subscribing witnesses to the written will was sworn. To the due Executor thereof – Before me:

signed
/ William Haswell/
Surrogate

The other children of Hart and Rachel Samuel are not mentioned in this will. They may have married outside of the Jewish faith and were disowned by their parents.

When I talk with my Jewish friends and describe my lineage through my mother back to Hart Samuel, they tell me that *“you’re Jewish.”* They say that I could go to Israel and claim land and citizenship. Jewish lineage goes through the mother and her matriarchal line. They say that you may never know who the father is, but you always know the child’s mother. My sisters and their children could also claim Jewish heritage using the same reasoning.

In this time-period the people of Jewish or Hebrew descent practiced patronymics. That is, they used their father’s given name as their surname. In the mid-1700s this practice in Europe was discontinued and the surname they had at the time continued for their posterity.

(Legend : the direct line of descent is the left column on this chart. The gender is shown by a □ for a male and a ○ for a female.)

Samuel Jonas to Eugenie Hales

