

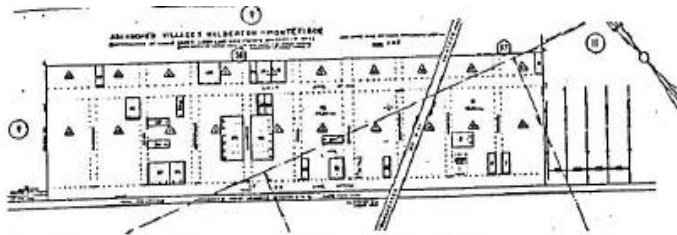
Southern New Jersey  
**SYNAGOGUES**

A SOCIAL HISTORY

HIGHLIGHTED  
BY  
STORIES  
OF JEWISH LIFE  
FROM THE  
1880'S - 1980'S

Written By  
ALLEN MEYERS

**HISTORIAN**  
of the  
Jewish Community  
Greater Delaware Valley  
Philadelphia, PA.



Halberton - Montiefore

MAP NO. 1  
OF  
**CAPE MAY**  
**LAND & BUILDING**  
**COMPANY**  
AT  
**HALBERTON, N. J.**

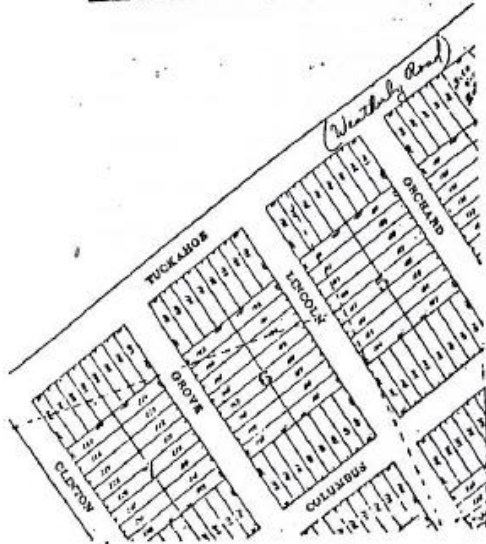
**Smith & Conover's** for Henlock and White Pine Traps  
Inc. Pickers, Pans, etc.  
BRIDGETON, N. J.

114 HALBERTON—COUNTY DIRECTORY—MILLSVILLE.

**HALBERTON.**

- ATKINSON NATHANIEL H.**, livery, &c., stable,  
Bridgeton  
**Bayard M. L.**, plumber  
**Cohen & Rosenfeld**, shirt makers  
**COWEN T. H.**, employment office, 336 Race st, Philadelphia  
**Cumberland Land and Improvement Co**  
**EDWARDS JAMES**, lumber, doors, sash, blinds, &c.,  
Bridgeton  
**Halbert Moritz**, postmaster  
**Horsfield B.**, butcher  
**Jacobson William**, contractor and builder  
**KIMBALL, PRINCE & CO**, lime, lumber, cement, &c.,  
Vineland and Millville  
**Levin Abram**, storekeeper  
**Lerin S.**, mason  
**Yachelsoo M.**, foreman in shirt factory

COURTESY VINELAND  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



These two Jewish settlements were founded side by side across the Dorchester - Hunter Mill Road in Maurice River Township. These settlements were located eight miles south of Millville along the West Jersey Seashore Railroad lines that ran from Camden south to the shore.

The Montiefore settlement was founded by a ticket agent. Adolph Cohen and his nephew Leon Lait were the founders. They formed the Cumberland Land and Improvement Company. They purchased land along the Railroad in Maurice River Township for the immigrant Jews to come and settle. Plans called for many factory workers to be employed in the industries of making buttons and carpets. This idea of industrialization in the wilderness was a dream. Factories were sprawling all over the Philadelphia area after the Civil War. This idea was a good one.

Transforming Jewish immigrants into factory workers seemed viable at the time. The name of the community in 1891 stems from Sir Moses Montiefore of Britain. He wanted see his Jewish brethren succeed in getting acquainted with the soil in America. Sir Moses Montiefore would finance settlements to achieve his goal. Whether this colony received monies for this purpose is not known. The fact that the people who started this Jewish Settlement were set on bringing industry to the area did not upset the idea to call the community Montiefore.

Across the Dorchester Road and up the Railroad from the Montiefore station lay the ground for the Jewish settlement of Halberton. Mr. Moritz Halberton had the land surveyed by S.T. Stackhouse of Oaklane near Philadelphia on June 14th 1893.

Wide streets was a major component of his plan for this Jewish settlement. A school house was planned for this community in his outline of the town. Mr. Halberton began the Cape May Land and Building Company.

A factory was planned to manufacture shirts. Twelve to fifteen houses were built. Seventy five settlers came here to work and live. The Halberton Railroad station was built up the Railroad line from the Montiefore station in 1893. There were enough Jews to ensure religious services could be conducted. This was the hallmark of the independent Jewish settlement.

The fact that a synagogue building was not part of the initial layout of the town did not deter Jews from following their religious traditions. A sense of community was all that was needed to bring Jews together in the wilderness. A large boarding house was built to accommodate the newly arriving immigrants to the community until they could get settled.

By 1893, a full community was established. This included a listing of the established businesses published by Boyd's Cumberland Directory for 1893-1894. The established business people in Halberton at the time were listed as B.L. Bayard, a plumber; Cohen and Rosenfeld a shirt manufacturer; Moritz Halberton shirt manufacturer; B. Hershfeld, Kosher Butcher; William Jacobson, contractor and builder; Abraham Levin, storekeeper; M. Yachelson, mason and foreman in the shirt factory.

The weather turned unbearably cold in the winter of 1893. The Depression of 1893 in America during this time would combine to test this new Jewish settlement's ability to survive. These communities were built of strong Jewish individuals and the communities would endure. The non-Jews in the surrounding countryside would lend a hand to assist the Jews in their new beginnings in America.

The Hand family was one such family in the area that was once part of Cape May County but now part of Cumberland County.

Jewish competition in light of a community's ability to survive was a built-in factor that carried over from the Old World. The Jew's ability to be a survivor in the worst of odds was a century's old tradition. Outbidding one another for the right and privilege to convey the prayers to the entire congregation was inherent in Jewish tradition. This sense of accomplishment and achievement for the betterment of the entire community was put into practice in America during this Jewish Colony era.

Down the West Jersey Seashore Railroad lines lay Woodbine. It was during this time period that the first act of the newly reorganized Baron De Hirsch Fund was to establish a competent and viable Jewish Colony which combined both agricultural and industrial opportunities for the newly arriving Jewish immigrant. There were many Jewish settlements in Southern New Jersey at this time of Jewish Colonization.

Woodbine's benefactors wanted to attract the most healthy and energetic immigrants it could find. Thus the lure of the "free factory incentives" for businesses in Woodbine helped to make Montiefore a Jewish ghost town in almost no time at all. Halberton remained steadfast.

Mr. 1898, Mr. Arthur Reichow initiative of industrializing Woodbine won out over another Trustee of the Baron De Hirsch Fund. Mr. Goldman's agricultural views were determined to be lacking the vision of the future if Woodbine were to grow and prosper in the 20th century. Free lighting and energy to run the new factories in Woodbine put Halberton's town fathers at a loss in searching for incentives to stay as competitive and attractive for more industrial expansion to occur.

In the early 1890's, Mr. Halbert's idea of a reward for settlement in his town was a nice house facing a wide street! This was a luxury according to the villages and towns that the Russian Jews left. Even the large mansions in Philadelphia in the booming Spring Garden section were situated on large avenues.

The late 1890's affected all of the Jewish settlements in a variety of ways. The most damaging one was economic competition. Mr. Halbert could sell his shirts to people in Camden for a profit but the owners of factories in Woodbine had more capital to invest in expansion of their industries and thus could attract more Jewish immigrants to support a bigger town. This economic reward system would have long lasting effects on the ability of the various Jewish settlements to survive the 1890's. The Jewish settlement of Mizpah would be undermined as a result of this Woodbine plan of action, too. For three years Mizpah was on the road to communal viability but it would fall victim to Woodbine's grand plan. Even though a synagogue was built in Mizpah, the town was no match to the superior Woodbine Jewish community.

By 1899, Halberton went bankrupt. Economics won out over religion and efforts to create a place in the wilderness. As the passengers rode the trains on the West Jersey Seashore lines they would look out in amazement of their windows to see abandoned homes and factories after traveling along miles of green pine forests from Camden to Woodbine.

By 1902, Halberton was completely abandoned. Mr. Halbert left for Camden for a short time. This was a natural choice since he was too proud to go and work in Woodbine. But his heart was set on the countryside and the soil. Being a religious Jew meant that he would retire to Alliance to become a shochet and a melamed. He would attend the Bayuk Synagogue on the hill and teach the children their Bar Mitzvah lessons. Mr. Halbert and his wife Sarah died in the community and were buried in the Alliance Hebrew Cemetery.

#### Reference Source Credit

Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society

Article in the Atlantic City Press 4/3/ 88 by Dr. Harry Gersonowitz about the abandonment of Halberton

Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant  
by John Foster Carr Published in association with  
American daughter of the Revolution New York 1912

Tax maps of Maurice River Township at the Cumberland County Clerk's office in Bridgeton's Court House

Taped interview with I. Harry Levin # 265 8/4/1986