

Guide to the Jewish history of Newport's Historic Washington Square

Park at the Gateway Center garage, 23 America's Cup Avenue, then cross America's Cup at the stop light by Panera Bread (past the Marriott Hotel). Enjoy these sights on your way to Touro Synagogue.

1. Long Wharf Mall (between America's Cup and Thames Street). When Touro Synagogue was built, the harbor side of this mall was the land end of Long Wharf, colonial Newport's public wharf. Merchants' private docks lined the waterfront north and south of Long Wharf. The wharf owned by Aaron Lopez, a wealthy Jewish merchant and founding member of the congregation that built Touro Synagogue, sat just to the south where the Newport Harbor Hotel and Marina is now.

2. Brick Market (Thames Street end of Long Wharf Mall). This 3-story brick building at the Washington Square end of Long Wharf Mall was built around the same time as Touro Synagogue and was designed by the same man, America's first great architect Peter Harrison.

3. Horse Trough. This replica of a 19th-century watering trough in the triangle just opposite the Brick Market was made by metal artists Howard and Mary Newman, members of Newport's current Jewish community who also restored artifacts in Touro Synagogue. Learn more about the Synagogue artifact restoration at <http://finemetalrestoration.com/touro-synagogue/>.

4. Washington Square. The area across Thames Street from the Brick Market is Newport's original town common. Jewish families lived among families of other faiths in this and other Newport neighborhoods rather than living in separated areas.

5. Citizens Bank (8 Washington Square). Before becoming a bank, this was a private home owned in the 1790s by a member of the Rodriguez Rivera family. This important Jewish family helped build Touro Synagogue.

6. Buliod-Perry House (29 Touro Street). By the 1760s, Moses Levy owned this building, which served as both his home (2nd floor) and the bank he founded, the Bank of Rhode Island (1st floor). After Levy died, he willed the house to a relative, Moses Seixas, who was the warden of the Synagogue and whose letter of welcome to President George Washington generated Washington's famous 1790 letter on religious liberty. Later, this was home to the hero of the Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, whose statue sits across Touro Street from the house.

7. Touro Street (south side of Washington Square). Though known by various names over the years, this street is now named for the family of the Synagogue's first spiritual leader. The Synagogue is further up Touro Street. For synagogue tours, enter through the Loeb Visitors Center on Spring Street (# 9).

8. Colony House (top of the Square, next to the Murray Court House). This 1739 building was the center of Rhode Island's government from colonial days through the 19th century. There, in 1776 Jewish merchant Moses Michael Hays stood up for his rights as a citizen, protesting that it was unjust for the now-independent State to require him to sign an oath of loyalty to the new government while denying him the right to vote. Only protestant Christians could vote in Rhode Island elections at that time.

Continue past the Courthouse and Colony House to Spring Street; enter the **Loeb Visitors Center (9)** on Spring to begin your visit to Touro Synagogue.

