

Isaac Moses

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Isaac Moses, a Jew, lies here silent, deceased,
He once was a merchant and Justice of the Peace.
He and wife Hannah from South Caroline,
Traveled often to Branford in the warm summertime.
They stayed with a family of Christians named Beach,
With orchards of apples, and the shore within reach.
There'd been many a greeting and parting before,
But the last one took place in 1834.

On September the 3rd, they headed for home,
Isaac and Hannah, in the buggy they owned.
When a mishap killed Isaac, that fact sealed his fate:
The first practicing Jew laid to rest in this state.
I wonder, now Isaac, if they ever knew
What must be done when you bury a Jew?
Were you buried by sunset of the following day?
Did your prayer shawl get trimmed 'fore they laid you away?

Did a Chevra Kaddisha wash you and dress you?
Was there a Rabbi attending to bless you?
Was the 23rd Psalm read, or some other verse?
Was there a procession, walking after the hearse?
Did any tear clothes or wear a black ribbon?
And did anyone pray the *Ei Meleh Rachamim*?
Did they stop seven times to read Psalm 91?
Did handfuls of soil cover your coffin?

Did mirrors get covered while folks paid their respects?
Did any sit *Shiva*, or know what to do next?
I wonder, now Isaac, if they ever knew
What must be done when you bury a Jew?
A hundred and seventy years have since passed
Since the late-Isaac Moses vacationed his last.
A new stone and marker will proudly declare
The first practicing Jew is interred under there.