

Preface

Joseph Fels' widow twice issued memorials to her husband—*Joseph Fels: His Life-Work* (1916) and *The Life of Joseph Fels* (1940)—but these are posthumous eulogies rather than biographies, two slightly different versions of more or less the same strangely organized and partly ghostwritten material. They are indispensable guides and sources, but they are as noteworthy for their omissions and superficialities as for their contents. Only scattered facts survive from Joseph Fels' early years and for the history of his family, mostly records of vital statistics. Long, undocumented intervals stretch from one event to another, from births to emigrations, from land purchases to military service, from deaths to death notices, (Ironically death notices and obituaries are sometimes the best available sources for information about lives.) Moreover, the materials for reconstructing the significant portion of Joseph Fels' career vary greatly in quantity and quality, as the citations for each chapter of this book testify. Certain chapters rely on records of government hearings and proceedings, other chapters upon Mr. Fels' correspon-

dence, and others draw to some degree upon contemporary periodicals and newspapers. Together the chapters give a life of Joseph Fels and, I hope, an idea of his importance.

The Joseph Fels Papers, which were brought together by the author, are deposited at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Original letters and other manuscripts and papers (now included in the Papers) were generously made available by Mr. Morris Green, Mr. Joseph Barnes, and Mrs. Walter Coates. Included also in my research materials (and also now in the Papers) are copies of letters to and from Joseph Fels and other relevant materials taken from the collections in the George Lansbury Papers in The British Library of Political and Economic Science, the Fairhope (Alabama) Colony Archives, the Zionist Central Archives in Jerusalem, the Meyer Lissner Papers at Stanford University, the archives of the London County Council, and the Dan Bjørner Papers in the Erhvervsarkiv of Denmark. Directors and staffs of these institutions were gracious and generous beyond measure.

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I hope this book will be a token of my gratitude for the help of all.