

Out of many, we became one or not?  
A curriculum guide on the  
waves of immigration to  
America

Leonie J. Weiss

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## Rationale

### Out of many, we became one or not?

In 1660 there were 50 Jews in the United States, by 1990 there were between 5.5 and 5.9 million Jews who made up between 2.25 and 2.4% of the total population<sup>1</sup>. This shows that almost every Jew that lives in America today can trace their roots back to someplace else. This curriculum guide is about the groups of immigrants that came to the United States at key points in American Jewish History, what were the circumstances that they left behind, and how they contributed to the shaping of the American Jewish Community as it is today. For example the Sephardic Jews who came in the 17th and 18th century showed it was possible to be both a Jew and an American. This curriculum will be divided into 4 sections based on the periodization by Jacob Rader Marcus. This curriculum is for students who are in 5th or 6th grade in a religious school.

There are many different curricula that could be written on the topic of Jews in America. One would be to focus on a certain area and to see how the Jewish community in that place changed. Another idea would be to focus on Jewish women in America and to see how their role changed from when the first Jews arrived until the present time. A final idea would be to focus on the important American Jews from 1654 to the present.

I feel that by teaching the different immigrant experiences in different times and places the student will have a better and more full understanding of the large American Jewish Community of which they are a part. The first reason that this content is important for 5th and 6th graders in a Religious School is that by learning how the identity of the Jewish community

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<sup>1</sup> The American Jewish Experience edited by Jonathan Sarna Holmes and Meyer NY 1997: 359.

that they live in was formed by the different groups of immigrants that came to America they will be able to see the diversity in the American Jewish Community. A second reason that this is important for this age is because the students will be able to understand and see how the identity of a community is formed and changed with each new wave of immigration. A third reason is that they are at a developmental level to understand history, not just as a story, but on a deeper level. At this age they have also had some American History in their public school, so they have a very basic framework to put this information into. The final reason that this curriculum is important for this age is that students are at a point when they are trying to find out about their own identities. Through the study of the identity of the groups that formed the American Jewish community they will find issues that affect their own individual identity as American Jews in the 21st century. An example of this is the compartmentalization by the Sephardic Jews which is still an issue today. This curriculum will pull apart the Jewish community as it is today and try to put it back together focusing on the influences of the different immigrants to the United States.



## Unit Outline

Unit 1: Introduction

Unit 2 1654-1830 Sephardic and then Askenazic

Unit 3: 1830-1880 German

Unit 4: 1880-1924 Eastern European

Unit 5 1900-present Sephardic

Unit 6 1933-1950 Europe

Unit 7 Conclusion

The first 3 waves of immigration are from Daniel Elazar in Community and Polity on page 53


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Essential Question for the curriculum

How did the experiences of each immigrant group have an effect on the American Jewish community?

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Overall goals

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1. To teach the students about the lasting effects that each group of immigrants made on the American Jewish community.
  2. To teach the learners about the diverse and multifaceted Jewish community that is in the United States.
  3. To assist the learners in forming their own individual Jewish identity.
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## Notes to Teacher:

This is a curriculum guide about the different waves of immigration and the effect that each of them had on the American Jewish Community. The textbook and teacher's guide **America the Jewish Experience** are very good, and a lot of the curriculum is based on them. I brought in different types of activities to be done after reading in the book to make the curriculum more interesting for the students. The other books that are good for students to use is the books by Kenneth Roseman. Two of his books I mentioned in the curriculum guide. These are Jewish Choose Your Own Adventure books. This will help the life and experiences that different immigrant groups had come to life for the students. I highly recommend using them when ever possible

There are several different books about the history of Jews in America. The best resource book is Howard Sachar's **A History of the Jews in America**. This is a very good resource book because it has so much information. The drawback of this book is that it is about 1000 pages long. It is a good book to look at for answers to questions, because it has a very through index. Another good book by Nathan Glazer is **American Judaism**. This book has a chapter about most of the major waves of immigration covered in this curriculum guide. Jacob Rader Marcus has two books that are very useful. One is called **The American Jew**. It is an overview of American Jewish history, but not quite as dense and long as the one by Sachar. The other is **The Jew in the American World**. This is a book of primary documents. The ones that are mentioned in the curriculum guide are in the back. Lastly, a good book about synagogues how they have changed in America is called **The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed** and it is edited by Jack Wertheimer.

In the back of the curriculum guide are the following documents for your use. First are the primary documents that are from **The Jew in the American World**. The second is something to help to take a part a primary document. It is too detailed to do all of the questions involved with 5 or 6th graders, but some of the questions are really good. Next is an article by Professor Jonathon Sarna from Brandeis University about the importance of incorporation Local Jewish History. Please try to do this when ever it is possible, it will make what the students are studying come alive for them. The final document is chronology of American Jewish History. This is very detailed and it is just a resource for you to have to help you get your bearings.

## Unit 1: Introduction

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### I. Essential Questions

What is a community?

How would you describe the Jewish Community that you live in.

How is the larger American Jewish Community similar or different from the community that you live in.

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### II. Objectives

The student will be able to identify important elements in the Jewish Community that they live in.


The student will be able to describe where, when, and why their family came to America.

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1. The teacher will write the word community on the board. The class will throw out words that have to do with community.

- What is a community?
- What is the purpose of a community?
- Describe your community.
- Do you live in only one community or not?(Is the synagogue seen as a separate community from the one that they normally live in)
- What is a Jewish Community?.
- Describe your Jewish Community?
- What is the American Jewish Community?

2. The students will get in pairs with big pieces of paper and have to draw an American Jew with their partner. (The teacher will put these up around the room, or keep them to see if the students ideas change by the end of the course.

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3. The students will present their American Jews to the rest of the class.
  4. Have a group discussion about the answers that different groups came up with.
  5. Memorable Moment: Have the students and their families come in together. Each of the students will make a short presentation about where their family came from, when they came, why they came, and anything else about their family coming to America. A funny story, a letter, or such.

## **Unit 2 1654-1830 Sephardic and then some Askenazic immigration**

### Objectives

The student will be able to tell reasons that Sephardic Jews left Spain.

The student will be able to explain the lasting effects that this immigration made on the American Jewish Community

The students will be able to analyze and understand a primary source.

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### Intended Outcome:

The students will have a personal connection to the people that lived in this time period and the experiences that they had.

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### **Content students should know: 1492 expulsion from Spain**

- The different options that Jews had in Spain about what they would do. Many of the Jews who lived in Spain became Christians either by choice, or by force. Some of the Jews continued to practice their Judaism in private. Some of the Jews who became Christians lived as Christians. Some Jews also remained as Jews.
- What were the consequences of the choices that the different groups of Jews made. If a Christian was seen doing something that might be Jewish like lighting candles for Shabbat or something like that they would be reported to the court and could be put to death.
- The inquisition and expulsion from Spain. The inquisition began in 1480. It made sure that Jews who had converted to Christianity were not being Jews in hiding. The inquisition could not do anything about the Jews in Spain. In 1492 it was declared by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella that by September of that year all of the Jews in Spain were to be baptized, and become a Christian, or get out. All of the Jews that were expelled from Spain were Sephardim.

### **Content for students to know: 1654 Jews arrive in New Amsterdam**

- 23 Jews came from Recife Brazil. After the Jews were expelled from Spain they went to many different places. One place where they were given freedom to live as Jews was in Amsterdam. In 1620 Holland conquered Brazil, and Jews went to live there. Beginning in 1630 Jews went to live in Recife Brazil. They were allowed to live openly as Jews. There were about 1500 of them. These Jews had many rights. In 1654 the Portuguese conquered Recife and there was an inquisition for the Jews again. Some of these Jews were the 23 Jews that came to new Amsterdam.
- Why these Jews came to New Amsterdam. They came because they wanted freedom to live openly as Jews.
- What was their welcome like. The Jews were helped by their families in Amsterdam, and some other Jews that were already in New Amsterdam.
- How they began to form their community. The first thing they did was to buy land so they could build a cemetery. Later they began to build a synagogue of their own.

### **Peter Stuyvesant**

- Who he was. He was the governor of New Amsterdam
- What was his reaction to the Jews that came. He did not want the Jews to stay. He wrote to Dutch West India Company saying that if he let them stay, then he would have to let other groups stay also. The Jews also wrote letters to this company. The company wrote back saying that the Jews could stay, worship, and trade in New Amsterdam, but they could not be a burden on the community.

### **Content for students to know: Synagogue Community**

- What is a synagogue community? It was the type of community that the Sephardic Jews formed. They began to form their community by purchasing land for a cemetery plot. They then built a synagogue when there were more people in the community. The synagogue was the center of the community and responsible for many things.
- Why was it so important in this time. It was important at this time because it brought the small Jewish communities together.
- The major synagogue Communities of the time period: New York, Charleston, Savannah, Newport, and Philadelphia

**Possible Activities:**

1 Have you ever had to move to a place that was new or different? How did you feel? Did you want to leave? We are now going to learn about some Jews that had to leave their homes. As we read think about what you would have done if you had been in their place.

2. Have the students read pages 2-4 in the text book.

What choices did the Jews in Spain have?

What were the consequences for these different choices?

If you had been in Spain in 1492 what would you have done and why?

How do you think that these Jews felt when they were told that they had to leave the place that they were living in?

3. Divide the students into groups and have them work on the following problem. Have each group present to the others what they have come up with. You are a Jew that is living in Spain and now you must leave. You have one suitcase of things to pack. What would you bring and why? What about Jewish religious objects? Why or why not?

4. You are a Jew Spain who has just found out about the inquisition. Write a diary entry about what is going on. How do you feel? What are you going to do and why?

5. Have a debate as a group of Jews in 1492. Some of the people think that the Jews should stay in Spain and live as Marranos, some of the people are Conversos, and some of the people want leave.

6 Read pages 6-8 in the students textbook of America the Jewish Experience and the ideas for this from the teachers guide. All of the Jews that arrived in New Amsterdam were Sephardim who had been forced to leave Spain in 1492.

Where did these Jews go after they left Spain? Recife Brazil

Why did they have to leave Recife?

Read the story of New Beginnings on pages 9-11.

Who are the important people in the story and tell one sentence about each of them?

Why do you think that the governor not want the Jews to stay? (This is dealt with on page 19 of the teachers guide)

How is it different to learn something from a story like this or from the text in the book?

Which can you understand better and why?

How is the value "All of Israel is responsible for each other shown in the story?"

7. Have the students work in groups with the Exercise 1 on page 15 about this value.

8. Have a role play with the Jews that were on the boat, Peter Stuyvesant, and other people in New Amsterdam about the Jews staying there.

9. Have the students read the primary document on page 12. This is a document that Jews living in New Amsterdam wrote to the leaders of New Amsterdam. Tell them to look for the answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of a document is it?
2. Who wrote the document?
3. Who was it written for?
4. Why was the document written?
5. What else did you learn from this document, that you might not have otherwise learned?

10. If you were going to a new place to start a Jewish community what do you think is the first thing that you would do and why? Have the students break into groups and talk about this and then present to the class. The interesting thing is that the synagogue is not the first thing that these Jews established when they first came here. Why do you think that? If you do not have a synagogue where could you pray? The first thing that they established was a cemetery. Why do you think that? After the Jews that we have been learning about had lived in New York for a while and there were more of them, they established a synagogue.

11. The book is a good starting place for the information about the synagogue community. Before the students begin remind them that at this time there were not many Jews living in New York(which is what New Amsterdam became when the British took over). Have the students read the section about synagogue life on page 17 in the text book.

When was the synagogue built?

Who was the leader of services in this synagogue?

According to what you read what did the synagogue do?

How many synagogues were there in New York?

12. Note to Teacher: **The American Synagogue** edited by Jack Wertheimer on pages 2-5 tells about the synagogue community.

At this point in history there were not many Jews living in the different cities so there was only one synagogue per city. The synagogue was the center of the Jewish community. It was responsible for:

prayer  
education  
getting Matzah  
getting kosher meat  
rites of passage(Brit Meliah, Bar Mitzvah, Wedding, Death)  
Tzdakah  
cemetery

Because there was only one for a large area it was what held the Jewish community together. The main Jewish communities with synagogues in this period were: New York, Charleston, Savannah, Newport, and Philadelphia. Because there were so few synagogues they had a lot of power over the people that were in them.

- What were the different things that the synagogue did?
- Does your synagogue now do any of these things?
- What does it do?
- What does it not do?
- Why do you think that some things are different between your synagogue and the synagogues of that time period?

13. Long lasting effects of this time:

How did what happened to the Jews in this time period have an affect on Judaism today? Divide the students into small groups and have them discuss this and then bring them together to share. Some ideas that are important are.

- One of the main long lasting effects of this time was that these were the Jews that laid the groundwork for the rest of the Jews that came, by being the first group of Jews that came to America. They were the ones that established the early synagogue communities, which were a way to unite all of the Jews in a community.

They were the ones that argued to stand guard like other Americans.

- Why do you think that this was so important to them?
- Does this show you a hint of something that we still see today? It is one example of how they could be both American and Jewish.
- Can you think of examples in your life when you are American and Jewish?

## Unit 3 1830-1880 German Immigration

### Objectives:

The student will be able to explain the reasons that German Jews left Germany.

The student will be able to relate the experiences that they had in Germany to the lasting effects that this immigration made on the American Jewish Community.

The student will be able to understand and analyze a primary document.

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### Intended Outcome:

The student will have a personal connection to the German Jews who came to America in this time period, and the experiences that they had.

The student will begin to see and appreciate the multifaceted Jewish community in the United States.

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### **Content students should know: Why left Germany**

- Mass immigration of German areas begins in 1830's. In 1840 there were 15,000 Jews in America and by 1880 there were 250,000 Jews in America.
- Most of these immigrants came from places where German culture was important like: Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, and Western Poland. All of these immigrants spoke German.
- The reasons that people left: The first reason were the wars that were going on where in these areas. A second reason is that the economy in Germany was changing and it was difficult to make money in Germany. There were also restrictions that were placed on Jews about who they could marry.
- Reasons people came to America. Had the image of America as 'the common man's utopia' (Sacher, 38). They read guide books and letters, and talked to others about how wonderful America was.

### **Content for students to know: Life in America**

- What they did and where they lived? They began as peddlers and then that grew. Later they would build a general store. They sold clothes. These new immigrants went into the mid-west where other Germans were, and where there was more land and space. Many times these Jews lived in places where there were not other Jews around them.
- Who came? Many times it was men that came first. They would start in America and make enough money to send for the rest of their families later.

### **Content Students should know about: Beginnings of Reform Judaism in America**

#### **Reform Judaism in Germany:**

- Before the French Revolution Jews were forced to live in a certain area called a ghetto. During this time people began to see the world in a different way. Jewish people like Moses Mendelssohn were taught both Jewish and not Jewish subjects. They also had both Jewish and not Jewish friends. They found a way to be Jewish and a part of the society they lived in.
- The French Revolution in 1789 believed that all people should be citizens in Europe. The people could now be Germans who were also Jewish.

- Some of these Jews wanted to change what their Judaism looked like, so they would not be seen as different from the other people that lived around them. Some of the others did not want to do this, they wanted to keep Judaism the way it had been for a long time.
- The prophets in the Tanach became very important to the early reform Jews because of the importance of Social Justice and ethical behavior to others.
- Many of the Rabbis who had been important in the reform movement in Germany came to America.

### **Reform Judaism in America**

- The new immigrants that came did not want to be a part of the synagogues that were here. They were also going to many places where there was not an established synagogue already.
- Some of the Reform Rabbis that came to America were: Isaac Meyer Wise (1846), David Einhorn (1855), and Samuel Adler (1857).

### **Isaac Meyer Wise was one of the important rabbis that came to America.**

- wanted a sense of unity with all of the Jews.
- 1854 became rabbi at B’Nai Yeshurun in Cincinnati.
- Wrote a prayer book called Minhag America. He wanted all American Jews to use it in their synagogues.
- 1873 he established a group of congregations that were reform. It was called the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and it is still around today.

1875 He founded the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. In the beginning it was a school to train rabbis, but now it has grown to train people how to be educators, cantors, and other important jobs in the Jewish community.

### **Possible Activities:**

1. Identify the countries on a map where this immigration took place from.
  - How is this different from where earlier immigrants to the United States came from?
  - Do you think that there will be a difference?
  - Did the Jews that left Spain leave because they wanted to? Why or why not?
  - Where were the main cities that we learned that Jews have lived in? Find them on a map. What do all of these cities have in common?

Think about all of these answers as we now begin to learn about another group of immigrants who came to America.

2. Read Links in History on pages 56 and 57.
  - What are some of the reasons that people living in Europe were unhappy?
  - Why do you think that the United States made posters about the free land and put them in Europe?
  - Where did the immigrants go when they got to America? Why?
  - Make a sign convincing people to come to America and buy land. What would you put on the sign and why?

3. Read the rest of the Jewish Experience on page 57.

Have the students work in groups on writing a letter about what it was like being an immigrant to America.

- Was it easy? Why?
- What was hard? Why?
- Where do they live?
- Are there a lot of other Jews around them? Is that difficult or not?

4. Discuss the Focus on Page 58 about the Jewish Peddler. Have a debate about what a new immigrant should do. One side says live in a big city in the east and work there. The other side says become a peddler and move around. What are the good things about each side? What are the not as good things. How would the Jewish life in the different places be different? How would it be the same? What are the consequences of the different choices that people make?

5. Primary Document:

Note to teacher: This document is on pages 192 and 193 of **The Jew in the American World** which is edited by Jacob Rader Marcus. It is a letter of a man named Jacob Felsenthal to his brother who is in Baltimore. Jacob is living in San Francisco and has heard that his brother is

now in America staying with a family they knew in Germany. Have the students read the letter in groups and then discuss it.

- What kind of a document is this?
- Who is it from and who is it for?
- When and where is it written?
- What has happened to the writer?
- What does he want his brother to do? and how can he do this?
- What does this document show you that you did not already know?

6. Read the Jewish Experience that is on the bottom of page 65.

What were some of the difficulties that the people on the frontier had about being Jewish? What might they have done to deal with this? What are some of the difficulties that the people in big cities had? What might they have done to deal with this.

7. Read “Winds of Change” on page 66.

Why did changes have to be made in all of the synagogues in America?

What are some of the reforms that were made in many synagogues?

What happened when someone was not happy with what the synagogue was doing? How is this like or different from what had happened before?

What might the change in a community be, when there was more than one synagogue in each community?

8. Read ‘Jewish Unity’ on page 66.

Write a newspaper article about what is happening in American Judaism and the importance of Jewish unity. Also write what you would do to increase Jewish Unity.

9. Read ‘European Origins of Reform’ and ‘Jews become Citizens’ on pages 66-67.

Describe what you think that life in a ghetto was like? What were the good things? What were the not so good things and why?

- Describe life like outside of the ghetto? What was good about it? What were the not so good things and why?

10. Read ‘The First Reforms’ and ‘Opposition’

What are the reasons that each group felt the way they did. Come up with 2 for each group.

- Have a debate about which is the best way for Jews to live. What are the consequences of both of the choices? (Think both have both good and not as good parts of them)



11. Now we are going to learn about one of several Reform Rabbis that came to America. This is one that did a lot of important things for Reform Judaism in America. Many of the things are still around today. Have the students read the story on pages 70-72 about Isaac Meyer Wise.

- Why do you think that the people got so upset? What else could they have done?
- What did Rabbi Wise do? Why does he think that the people were so upset? Do you agree or not?
- What did he want to do?
- What was the ultimate dream of Isaac Meyer Wise?
- What did he do at the end of the story?
- What else could have been done by the people in the story?

12. Read on page 69 about Isaac Meyer Wise.

- How was it different to read the story and then read about what he did?
- What did you get from the story?
- What did you get from the article but not the story?

Make a chart on the board about what happened when from the article.

Lasting Effects of this immigration

13. How do you think it would have been different to be a Jewish immigrant to the United States in 1750 and in 1850? What would have been the same? What would have been different?

14. What of all of the things that we read about the German Immigration is still in American Judaism today? Reform Judaism. The German Jews had a very important effect on the American Jewish Community today, because they were the ones that brought the ideas of Reform Judaism to America and then they began to establish reform synagogues. Why do you think this is important?

## **Unit 4: Eastern European Immigration 1880-1924.**

### **Objectives:**

The student will be able to explain what was going on in Eastern Europe to make Jews want to leave, and why they wanted to come to America.

The student will be able to relate the experiences that these Jews had in Eastern Europe, to the lasting effects that they had on the American Jewish Community.

The student will be able to analyze a primary document from the time period.

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### **Intended Outcomes:**

The student will have a personal connection to the Eastern European Jews who came to America in this time period.

The student will continue to see and understand the multifaceted nature of the American Jewish Community.

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### **Content Students should know: Why Left Eastern Europe.**

#### **Why they left Eastern Europe:**

- By 1924 about 2 million Jewish immigrants came from Eastern Europe.
- New wave of pogrom's and Anti-Jewish Violence.
- New Anti-Jewish decrees in Russia, because of new Tzar, or Russia leader.
- In 1881 the Tzar was assassinated and there were many pogrom's against the Jews.
- There were also many laws made by the government against the Jews
- The Jews could only live in a specific area in Russia called the Pale of Settlement.
- The Jews were very poor.

#### **Why they came to America:**

- Letters from people in America saying how good life was here.
- Saw America as a Golden Medina (a golden land where the streets were paved with Gold)
- The immigration to America stopped from 1914-1918 because of World War I.
- In 1917 a Literacy Test was made by the American Government to keep the number of immigrants coming into America at a lower number
- In 1924 Immigration stopped because of a quota that was set up by the American Government. This limited the number of Jews and other people that could come into America because they were worried that there would not be enough jobs for Americans.

## **What Students should know about: Life in America**

### **Where they Lived:**

- Many of the Jews settled in the Lower East side of New York and in other big cities. There was not as much open land as there had been when the German Jews came to America.
- Many of the people also came into America through Ellis Island in New York. They saw the statue of Liberty when they arrived.
- They lived in apartment buildings called Tenements with many other families who were also immigrants.
- Many of the Jews worked in the clothing industry.
- The children went to the public school during the day. Here the children learned to speak English.

### **Content Students should know: Life in Eastern Europe**

- Jews lived in areas with other Jews called a The Pale of settlement.
- In this area they lived in small towns or villages called shetels.
- In these towns Judaism was all around them and a part of their lives.
- Zionism, and Socialism were the ways that many of the Eastern European Jews dealt with the enlightenment, whereas the German Jews had Reform Judaism.

### **What Students should know about: Zionism**

- Begun by Theodore Hertzl. It was something that was important to many Jews that were living in Eastern Europe.
- Zionism was one way that the enlightenment had an effect on the Jews that were in Eastern Europe, whereas Reform Judaism had been an expression of the enlightenment on the Jews from Germany.
- The first Zionist Congress occurred in 1897 in Basle Switzerland
- Some of the people that left Eastern Europe went to Palestine, later to become Israel to begin working the land. These people were called Chalutzim.
- Zionism is about making a Jewish State in Palestine.

### Possible Activities:

1. Now we are going to learn about a new wave or groups of Jews that came to America from a similar area. They began to come in 1881 and they stopped coming in 1924. These people came from the area of Eastern Europe. Can we find that on a map? By the end of the time period about 2 million more Jews had come to America from this area.

2. We are now going to watch a movie that is a description of what life was like in the area of Eastern Europe. Before we watch the movie we need to remember that this movie is like historical fiction, and the stories that we have been reading in the text book.

- How is that different from other parts of our history book?
- How is it the same?

We are going to watch a movie called **Fiddler on the Roof**. This is a movie that shows what life in Eastern Europe was like.

- Describe the life that the people in the movie had?
- How did the Jewish people in the movie relate to the non-Jewish people around them?
- What are some Jewish holidays or events that the people in the movie celebrated?
- Did the family live near other Jews or not? Describe the community.
- What choices did each of the girls make about marriage, was this what normally happened? Why or why not?
- At the end of the movie what do the people have to do?
- What choices do they make?

3. Read page 92 in the textbook.

- Why did people want to leave where they were living?
- What made people want to come to America?
- Why did immigration stop from 1914-1918?
- What changed in America after the war?
- What were the consequences of these changes in America?

Have a debate about should America have let anyone who wanted to come to America come here.

5. Read on page 94 "Immigration of Ashkenazic Jews".

- What that we read about in this section is something that we saw in **Fiddler on the Roof**? What is different? Why do you think so?
- What was the name of the area in Russia where Jews had to live?
- What were the Jewish small towns they lived in called?

- What would be the good things about living in an area where there were mainly Jewish people around you? What would be not so good?
- What happened in 1881 that made life in Russia different?
- How did this have an effect on the Jews in Russia?
- What did many of the Jews decide to do?

6. Divide the class into 3 groups. One group says they are going to go to America. Another group is going to stay where they are, and keep living in Russia. The third group is going to go to Israel. Have a debate between the three groups about which is going to happen. What are the good and bad sides of each of the options.

7. Have the students read "The Journey to America" on pages 94 and 95.

- How did people get to America?
- Why do you think that eating their own food was so important to some of the immigrants that were coming to America?
- Where did most of the boats go?
- Why do you think that many people went to New York City?
- Why did immigration officials have to talk to the people when they got to America?
- What is the name of the place where many Eastern European Jews arrived in America?

8. Read pages 95-97 in the book.

Write a letter to a friend about what it is like to be the following different people living in America:

- A man who just immigrated from Russia with his family.
- A 15 year old boy who just came to America.
- A seven year old immigrant to America
- A woman who came to America with her husband and 4 children.

Think about the different experiences that each person would have. What would be different? What would be the same?

9. Using the book **The Melting Pot: An Adventure in New York** by Kenneth Roseman. This is a type of a choose your own adventure book, but is based on the immigrant experience in New York. Have the students read the first part and then make their choices about what they will do next. Have them go to a different place depending on the choice that they make. When this is over have a class discussion about the different experiences that they had.

- What kind of experiences happened to you?
- How were the different experiences a result of the choices that you made?

- What were some of the consequences of your choices?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- How was this different from just reading about the experience of immigrants in America?

10. Primary document: This is a document that was written by Beryl B. Gordon about his grandfather Moses Menahem Zieve. It tells about his life in America. It is on page 341-342 of **The Jew in the American World** by Jacob Rader Marcus.

- What kind of a document is this?
- When and by whom was it written?
- Who is the person who arrived in this country?
- Where and when did he come to America?
- What had his job been?
- What happened after 6 years?
- Why do you think that this happened?
- What did he decide to do after he visited other cities and why?
- Why did he carry his own utensils?
- Where would he spend Shabbat?
- Do you think that he was only staying with Jewish families for Shabbat? Why or why not?
- What did he do on Sunday mornings? Why?
- What is one new idea that you learned from this document?

11. Think back to the movie that we saw.

- In pairs describe the town that the Jewish people lived in?
- Did any thing that you saw in the movie look like the German Reform Judaism that we learned about in the last unit?
- Describe the Judaism that you saw in the movie.
- What other movements seemed to be important to the people in the movie?

12. We learned last unit about the enlightenment or haskalah in Germany. What was one of the things that this movement lead to? It lead to the beginning of the Reform Movement. In Eastern Europe it was different. In Eastern Europe the Judaism was what tied communities together and it was very strong. The Reform Movement was not strong at all in that area. The enlightenment in Eastern Europe lead to a major movement called Zionism. The students will read the section called "Next Year In Jerusalem" on pages 123 and 124 in the textbook. You are a reporter for a newspaper who is in Palestine. Write an article about what is happening make sure that you include the following important items:

- Palestine

- Zionism
- Turkey
- chalutzim
- Theodore Herzl
- First Zionist Congress
- Basle

13. Read the section on page 124 about American Zionism. Have a debate if you can be an American and support Israel, or if you can be loyal Americans and Zionists.

14. Read the section about Traditional Judaism on pages 124 and 125.

- What were some of the challenges for Jews when they arrived in America?
- Why do you think that parents were so busy in America?
- Why did the young people want to become Americanized as quickly as possible?
- Why did many of these new immigrants not feel comfortable in the Reform Synagogues?
- What did the Eastern European Jews want in their synagogue service?

15. Read the section about Conservative Judaism on pages 125 and 126.

- What was the purpose of the Jewish Theological Seminary?
- Who were the people that founded the school?
- Why might this school and movement appealed to Eastern European Jews?
- What is the name of the group that represents Conservative Synagogues today?

16. Read the section about The Orthodox Movement on pages 126 and 127.

- What was the problem that some of the new immigrants had with the Conservative Movement?
- What did the people in the Orthodox Movement believe about the laws of Judaism?
- What was the job of the Chief Rabbi in Europe?
- Why did Jews want one in New York?
- What happened when Rabbi Jacob Joseph came to New York?
- What was the group of Orthodox Synagogues in America called?
- Where do Orthodox Jewish children receive their education and why?

## **Lasting Effects of this Immigration**

How do you think that being a Jewish Immigrant to America was different in 1900 from 1850 and from 1700? What was the same?

What do you think that we have learned about in this unit about the Eastern European Immigration is still an important part of the American Jewish Community today?

- Conservative Judaism
- Orthodox Judaism
- Zionism

This wave of immigration had a effect on the American Jewish community because it brought many people who became important in Conservative Judaism, Orthodox Judaism, and in Zionism. Zionism began in Europe, but came to America with this group of Jews.



## Unit 5: Sephardic Immigration

### Objectives:

The student will be able to where the Sephardic Jews came from.

The student will be able to relate the experiences that they had in the countries that the Sephardic Jews came from to the lasting effects that this immigration made on the American Jewish Community.

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### Intended Outcome:

The student will begin to see and appreciate the multifaceted Jewish community in the United States.

The students will have a personal connection to the Sephardic immigration.

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### Content Students should know about: Where they came from and why they left?

#### Where they came from:

- These Jews were descendants of the Jews who had been expelled from Spain in 1492.
- They had been living in the Ottoman Empire under Turkish rule.
- They came from Syria, the Balkans, North Africa, and Turkey.
- From about 1890 until 1930 about 30,000 Sephardic Jews came to America
- After World War II they came from Iraq, Egypt, Iran, and Israel.

There are about 150,000 Sephardim in America today.

#### Why they left

- poverty
- to avoid fighting in wars
- to get away from World War I
- After the Holocaust

#### Life in America

- They went to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York
- They worked hard to send money for the rest of their families to come and join them in America.
- There was a Judeo-Spanish Paper called *La America* was established by Moses Gadol in 1910. This told the Sephardic Jews to unite together and to become American Citizens.
- Very close knit families.
- Families often settle together in communities.
- Settle in communities with other people who came from their same town.
- Formed their own groups to help the community like: American Sephardic Federation, Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood, and Union of Sephardic Congregations.

#### Sephardic Customs

- Ladino which some of the Sephardic Jews speak is a combination of Hebrew and Spanish.
- Name children after living relatives.
- On Passover Sephardic Jews eat rice, beans, and peas.

Piyutim, or religious prayers, are in all prayer books.

### **Possible Activities:**

1. We are now going to learn about a different wave of immigration. This began in about 1890 and has lasted until the present time. In the beginning of the year we learned about Sephardim. Where did they come from? Why did the first group of them come to America? After the Spanish Inquisition in 1492 some of the Sephardim went to the Ottoman Empire. Find the countries that these Jews came from on a big map.

2. Read “Links in History” on pages 109 and 110.

- Why did this immigration to America begin?
- When did it begin?
- From where did this group come?
- What happened in 1908?
- What about 1913?
- Why did the Ottoman Empire lose power in 1918?

3. Read “The Twentieth Century” on page 110.

- What had the ancestors of these Jews done when they were expelled from Spain in 1492?
- What were some of the cities that they came to America from?
- What were some of the early jobs of the Sephardim?
- Why did more Sephardim come throughout the 20th century?
- How many are in America today?

Write a letter to a person who is a Sephardic Jew whose family came in the 1700's. Tell this person about where you are from, what your family had done after the Inquisition, and why you came to America.

4. Read the section on the 20th Century on pages 110 and 111.

- What did many Sephardic Jews do with the money that they earned when they first arrived in America?
- What was a problem that Sephardic Jews faced that Jews from other places did not?
- What were the main Judeo-Spanish newspapers and what was their purpose?
- How did the new immigrants help each other.
- What are some of the groups they formed to help the community?
- The Sephardic Jews mainly went to New York, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and New York. Why do you think that this happened?

5. Read the Jewish Fisherman on pages 114-116.

- Who are the Sephardim that are involved in this story?
- Where are they going to?
- Where had they come from?
- Did the main characters in the story know each other? How?
- Why did they decide to go to Seattle?
- What happened when Jacob and Solomon meet the other Jews in the market?
- What language are the other people speaking?
- What language are Solomon and Jacob speaking?
- What does Solomon do to convince the people that he is Jewish?
- When are the other people finally convinced?
- What does this story teach you about this period of immigration?

6. Read the focus on pages 117 and 118.

- Describe the man that the girl brings home?
- Why do the parents ask if he is Jewish?
- What is different to the girl when she goes to his house for Rosh Hashanah dinner?
- What kind of food do they eat?
- What kind of food do they not eat?
- What does the word minhag mean?
- What language do the Sephardic Jews speak?
- Describe the Sephardic families and communities?
- Who are children named after?
- What kinds of foods do Sephardic Jews eat on Passover?
- Do Ashkenazic Jews eat the same foods?
- What are some things that began with Sephardim, and are now part of a lot of Judaism in the United States?

### **Lasting Effects**

What that we learned about in this unit is still an important part of Judaism in America today? Some lasting effects of this Sephardic period of immigration is the diverse Jewish community that emerged. Before this immigration there had not been very many Sephardic Jews living in America. When the Sephardic Jews came to America they brought with them their very special customs, language, food, and culture.

## Unit 6: 1933-1950 Europe

Intended Outcome:

The student will have a connection to this period of immigration from Europe, and the different options that people had and the consequences of the actions.

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Note to teacher:

This unit is different from the ones that came before it. This unit is about the people that left Europe before the Holocaust and just after. The purpose of this unit is to help the students to understand the very difficult decisions that Jews in Europe faced. The basis of this unit is a book by Kenneth Roseman **Escape from the Holocaust**. This is going to be set up similar to the other time that a book of his was used in the unit about Eastern European Immigration. The difference is that the purpose of the book in the earlier unit was to give the students a feel of what it was like to be an Eastern European immigrant. This is a more extended use of the book. The whole unit is based on this book which is a type of a choose your own adventure book. As the class is going along ask questions about why the students made the choices that they made, and what might be the good and bad parts of their choices. With this book, try to move through it as a group, and not as individuals as was done in the previous unit. When a decision about something needs to be made, talk it over together before the decision is made.

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This unit we are ready to do now is different from the ones that have come before it. Why did most of the Eastern European Immigration to the America stop in 1924? We are now going to be dealing with immigration from Europe to America from 1933 to 1950. Can anyone tell me what was happening in Europe and America during that time? The way that we are going to do this unit is through using a choose your own adventure book like we did in the unit about Eastern European Immigration. The difference is that we are going to be working on this as a group, and not as individuals like we did last time. When we come to a point to make a decision we are going to have a discussion as a class about what to do. When we make a decision we are going to try to think about what are going to be the consequences of our decision.

## Unit 7 Conclusion

Objectives:

The student will be able to demonstrate understanding of the lasting effects of a wave of immigration.

The student will be able to explain why all American Jews are not the same.

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1. Give the students back the pictures that they drew in Unit One about what an American Jew looks like.

- Do they still agree that this is a picture of what an American Jew looks like?
- Why or why not?
- If they had to do this over again what would they do?
- Would they be able to draw a picture of an American Jew? Why or why not?

2. Have a day when the students come in dressed as people who came to America in different periods of immigration. The people can be real or made up. Each student will make a short presentation about:

- where they are from
- when they came to America
- why they came to America
- what they did in America
- What they did to contribute to the lasting effect of their wave of immigration.

After these are done have a discussion about what it was like for each of them to be Jewish in America? How is it different for all of the people? What is the same?

## Resources

Glazer, Nathan **American Judaism** Universtiy of Chicago Press Chicago, 1989.

Leiman, Sondra consulting editor Jonathon Sarna **America The Jewish Experience** UAHC Press New York, 1994.(Textbook and teacher guide)

Marcus, Jacob Rader **The American Jew**

edited by Jacob Rader Marcus **The Jew in the American World: A Source Book** Wayne State Universtiy Press, Detroit, 1996.

Roseman Kenneth **The Melting Pot: An Adventure in New York**. New York: UAHC Press, 1984.

Roseman Kenneth **Escape from the Holocaust**. New York: UAHC Press, 1985.

Sachar, Howard M. **A History of the Jews in America**. Vintage Books, New York, 1993.

Edited by Jack Wertheimer **The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed**. Brandeis Universtiy Press, Hanover, 1995.

I hope you will ansure this, and belive me to be a true Jew and a frend to our cous [cause],  
Isaac Jalonick Address Isaac Jalonick . . .  
Belton, Bell Co. Texas

## II. A California Immigrant, January 13, 1854

San Francisco, Calif., Jan. 13, 1854

Dear Brother,

It was a wonderful surprise to learn from a fellow named Liwey [Levy?] that you are in America! And also that you are living in Baltimore with a family named Herzog. I could not remember who the Herzogs are but it finally dawned on me that it must be Jacob Herz and his wife from Limburg!

How are you getting along and how's business? It's not great here since as you can imagine things don't just fall in your lap. Here I have learned what business means, and I have put up with a lot, especially in Panama. I was sick there for several months and had no money, not even enough to eat. As I got a little better I got various jobs to pay for board and room, which cost a dollar-and-a-half a day. I was too weak even to play my guitar.

But with God's help I got well, and after 4-5 months in Panama in that awful heat I was able to put away 120 dollars in gold which I earned in just 5 weeks. Then I was able to go to California! Luckily, through a doctor I know, I got a place on a steamer as a cook so I didn't have to pay any fare. Also I made a deal with Carl Reis and made some money in potatoes, which cost 1 schilling a pound. I don't have to tell you how expensive everything is.

I have now been in California seven months, in San Francisco, and am married! I have a fine wife and thank God things are going quite well. I have already taken in several hundred dollars. If you would want to come here then you and I and my wife would start up a nice cafe with music and singing every evening. Here a cigar costs 1 or 2 schillings each, and drinks the same, so there is money to be made. Also I am as well known in San Francisco as I was in Cologne. . . .

Write immediately if you are coming or not. If you don't have 50 dollars then let me know and I will send you the money. It would be better if you have the money and then I can put more into the business. In any case, answer by return mail so I can start arranging things. Don't buy a through ticket because it will cost 25 dollars more from Panama to San Francisco by steamer. Take a sailing vessel. As I said, write me by return mail. I won't leave you in the lurch. The sooner you come the better for you and me. An ordinary worker gets 4-5 dollars a day, so you can see how you'll do.

I imagine you already speak good English. So do I since my wife is American and doesn't speak a word of German. She was born in Boston and speaks a little Spanish. But here every language in the world is spoken. If you get to Panama, then go to the doctor whose name I have forgotten. He is a German. When you arrive in Panama go to the pharmacist—take your right, then left—he is also a German. They both know me; tell them you are my brother and ask their help to get you a job on the steamer so you won't have to pay passage. Don't stay in Panama long; it is very unhealthy. And don't eat too much meat. The sooner you leave the better. Do what is best for you.

Regards from my wife who is looking forward to meeting you.

Your brother,  
J. Felsenthal

Best wishes from me to Jacob Herzog and his wife and son and wish them luck.

Jacob

### III. America: A Land of Milk and Honey, 1860

How wonderfully, how very beneficially conditions have changed since 1837! In those days, when a Europe-weary Jewish journeyman used to tie up his valise and say: "I am emigrating to America," it meant that he, too, was a black sheep good for nothing at home and no loss. If a stout-hearted youth, tired of dealing in second-hand goods and snail-paced commerce, came to his parents and said "I feel within me the power for something more substantial; let me go across the sea," the parents wept and resisted, as if their son were going to the other world, from which they could hope for neither reunion nor return. If an educated Jew, because of discriminatory laws had no prospect of either a good position or a good future, expressed his determination to go live in the land of freedom, the father used to bewail the money he had spent in vain on his education, and the aristocracy could not comprehend at all how an educated man could so lower himself that he could prefer the distant America, the land of the uneducated, the land of the blacks and Indians, to beautiful Europe.

How conditions have changed! These unnoticed artisans, these youthful adventurers have since then become the supporters of their kinfolk in the old fatherland, the founders of unhoped-for happiness of their people, have become men of consequence and influence in the commercial Old and New World!

Many, very many of these beggarly-poor emigrants are nowadays at the head of business concerns that own enormous property, command unlimited credit and amass every single year an independent fortune in pure profit. And these gigantic fortunes have been honestly and uprightly acquired, no stain, no shadow, no blame clings to them.



constitution appear in selection II. Please take note of the democratic provisions in this organic instrument. In 1894, one of Jewry's eminent socialists made his home in the United States. This Russian had several names. He seems to have been born with the name Benzion Novakhovich, but is best known by one of his pseudonyms: Morris W[or V]inchevsky (1856-1932). As a socialist, a philosophic materialist, he was opposed to supernaturalism and religion. Winchevsky employed his talents as a poet and essayist to caricature sacred Hebrew religious documents; he wanted to emancipate Jewry from Judaism that he deemed to be an oppressive cult without humanitarian goals. That is why he parodied the Mosaic Ten Commandments. The parody was published at Boston in 1895 in a Yiddish paper called *The Truth* (selection III).

By the seventeenth century, European Jews had begun to publish Yiddish devotional works, primarily for women who seldom understood Hebrew. By 1852 a prominent American rabbi, Morris J. Raphall, had already published in English a volume of translations of German petitionary prayers for women. Many European immigrant women in the United States, especially those of the older school, were constant readers of their *tehinnot*—supplications—in the home and the synagogue. In one year alone, in 1916, the Hebrew Publishing Company of New York City published at least three different volumes of *tehinnot*. Most of these works seemed to have been prepared over the decades and centuries by men for the edification of humble, unpretentious, docile Jewish wives. In all these writings the woman is self-effacing—even self-abasing—always conscious of her subordination to men—and this at a time when the American Congress was about to adopt the Nineteenth Amendment granting suffrage to women.

The supplication translated from the Yiddish in selection IV reflects the misery of an *agunah*, an abandoned wife whose husband has disappeared without granting her a divorce. According to Jewish law, she can never remarry as long as he is alive. Desertions were common in the New York City Jewish community; in a period of about seven years, the Jewish National Desertion Bureau handled 10,000 cases. The beautiful, sacrosanct, traditional Jewish home? Poverty destroys!

### I. Holy Moses, a Peddler, Brings the Jewish Gospel to the Gentiles, By Beryl B. Gordon, ca. 1890

My grandfather, Moses Menahem Zieve, came to this country in the early 1880s from Lithuania where he had been a shochet, a ritual slaughterer. He left behind, to follow him some six years later, his wife and four children: three boys and one girl, my mother.

After living in America for six years, he decided against pursuing his profession of shechitah. His visits to slaughtering establishments in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles led him to the conclusion that his American coreligionists—he considered them “goyim,” non-Jews by comparison with what he had known in Europe—would not or could not appreciate his meticulousness nor accept his high standards. He settled in Minneapolis and, for a livelihood, turned to peddling.

Grandfather’s “territory” was the area out of Northfield, Minnesota, forty miles south of Minneapolis. When he set out on his trips he carried with him on his wagon, in addition to his goods for sale, his own utensils for preparing meals in accordance with the requirements of kashruth, ritual purity [the dietary laws]. Many week-ends he could not return to Minneapolis and spent the Sabbath in the home of a friendly farmer in Northfield. He would arrive at the farmer’s house on Friday—or possibly Thursday night—in time to slaughter a chicken, do his Sabbath cooking, and make his personal preparations for the Sabbath. In the farmer’s home, from sundown on Friday until dark on Saturday evening, he observed the Sabbath in the traditional manner. At twilight on Saturday a child in the family would go outside to watch for three stars and then come in to advise him: “You can smoke now, Moses.”

The German immigrants who settled the area around Northfield worshipped together in a community church. For lack of funds, they had no regular preacher. On Sunday mornings, then, in this community church, my grandfather occupied the pulpit and preached to this German-speaking congregation. His language? A carefully selected non-Hebraic Yiddish. His subjects? The Torah portion of the week. And in serving this Christian community over many months, he won their gratitude—and an affectionate but reverent title. They called him “Holy Moses.”

## II. A Camden, New Jersey Combination Synagog and Burial Society, 1894

### INTRODUCTION

My Friend! Before you are accepted as a member of our *hevrah* [confraternity] I, as president, have the duty to acquaint you with the principles of our organization. The *hevrah* was organized for the purpose of maintaining Orthodox Judaism: to uphold the spiritual and moral values of our Jewish name, to visit the sick, to help and protect widows and orphans. A member should be helpful morally and financially to his fellow member in a friendly and brotherly way. The *hevrah* expects every member to cooperate to the best of his ability. We don’t have any secret signs. We consider our words and our promises as a sign of brotherly love. Whatever takes place here must be kept secret. And, with this, I accept

<b>STEP ONE:</b>	<b>Describe the primary source in as much detail as possible</b>
CONTEXT	Where was it found? Or Who donated it? When?
	Where was it written or created?
	Who wrote or created the document?
	How do you know?
	If you are not sure, how might we identify the author?
	What materials were used? (Consider types and sizes of paper, parchment, inks, printing, copy machine, mimeo, typewriter, computer, etc.)
	What production methods were used? Were mass quantities made? Why? Who was the intended audience?
	Is this the only one extant or are there others you know of?
<b>STEP TWO</b>	<b>Discover links to its time and place</b>
	Are there any dates on the document?
	If there are no dates, what clues in the text are there that might give you hints about the period of its creation? Look for hints in comments about other events, people mentioned who can be dated by looking up their dates of birth and/or death.
	Are there any unusual spellings of places or words? Pittsburgh was, at one time, spelled Pittsburg. The time of that change can be dated.
	Are there any illustrations or photographs on the document? Consider looking for clues in clothing and hair styles, head coverings, clerical collars and clerical dress, in general; skylines, architectural features, rituals and ritual objects.
	Note the style of the writing. Consider the level of formality of address and salutations.
	What personal titles are mentioned in the text: Miss or Ms. Reverend, Dr. or Rabbi? Are women rabbis mentioned?
<b>STEP THREE:</b>	<b>Analyzing the document and reading between the lines</b>
	What issues or questions was the author addressing?
	Are these issues relevant to contemporary American Jews? Why or why not?

	<p>From your reading of this text, try to consider the audience or readership of this document:</p> <p>Were they Jews? Was it a mixed audience?</p> <p>Were the Jews knowledgeable Judaically? Secularly?</p> <p>Were the Jews intermarried? Assimilated? Actively committed to the community?</p>
	<p>If this document was written today, would it change significantly? How?</p>
	<p>Does the author represent a point of view that was or is mainstream or radical in some way for his/her time? How? What elements in the text or document lead you to this conclusion. Be as specific as you can.</p>
	<p>Was this a final document or a draft? Are there any later editions or versions that you know of? Are there any handwritten changes or corrections in the margins? Who may have written them?</p>
	<p>Is it part of a series targeted to the same audience? Does the piece stand firmly on its own or does it appear to need explanation from some other source not immediately at hand? Is it missing some critical elements/ What might you look for if you wanted to find them?</p>
	<p>Who published or produced the documents? Self? Congregation? Movement? Conventional publisher? Scholarly journal?</p>
	<p>Who paid for the publication? What conclusions can be drawn when considering the topic and the organization or individual who provided the funds to produce the document? Consider other aspects of the publication from the political perspective.</p>
	<p>Consider the publisher's history of publications. Does this fit their usual type of publication pattern or is it a departure from what they have generally published? Were there/ are there similar types of documents being published by others at this time in history? What implications can be drawn from this information?</p>
	<p>To what degree is the document unique to its period?</p>
	<p>What geographical connections might give you clues to the meaning of this text? For example, was it locally, regionally, or nationally presented or distributed?</p>
<b>STEP FOUR:</b>	<b>Looking for more information</b>
	<p>Who could you talk to find out more about the document? Is the author, a relative, co-worker, congregant, or student still alive? Will they talk to you by telephone or computer?</p>

	What archival and research resources and people are available to assist you? Are there any websites or special collections available to support your research?
	What meta-themes suggest themselves as having influence upon or being influenced by this document?
	What milestone events or moments in American Jewish History are linked to this document?
	What people and places can you research who may have some connection to the document time or location?

## WHAT'S THE USE OF LOCAL JEWISH HISTORY?

BY JONATHAN D. SARNA

Richard Lederer, in a delightful volume entitled *Anguished English*, offers readers a glimpse at history as students understand it, based upon written work turned in to their teachers. Among the "remarkable occurrences" that he preserves for us are the following:

Socrates was a famous Greek Teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was president, he wore only a tall silk hat.

And finally, my favorite:

The nineteenth century was a time of a great many thoughts and inventions. People stopped reproducing by hand and started reproducing by machine. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Samuel Morse invented a code of telepathy. Louis Pasteur invented a cure for rabbis.<sup>1</sup>

For all of the humor in these embarrassing errors, we should also read them with a great deal of sadness. For these errors, and a host of less humorous ones, point to a problem of quite considerable dimensions in our day: widespread public ignorance of the facts of history. Such ignorance characterizes the general American population and is, unfortunately, no less true in Jewish circles. Even otherwise well-educated Jews know little about the span of Jewish history, the great names in Jewish history, and the great themes of Jewish history. American Jewish history, our field, has been particularly neglected. Many American Jews have very little sense of how the American Jewish community developed, how different immigrant waves impacted upon it, and how our community is like and unlike other great diaspora centers in the history of our people.

The truth is that we have not been very successful in the past in explaining why American Jewish history is important for students to learn, why local Jewish history is important, and why our history should be preserved. For this reason, I want to suggest here five uses of history, really five broad principles, that all of us engaged in the practice and teaching of history, especially those of us engaged in history at the community level, and even more especially those of us who are Jewish and may,

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Jonathan D. Sarna is the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University. He has written, edited, or coedited thirteen books including, most recently, *The Jews of Boston* (Northeastern University Press), with Ellen Smith.

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therefore, have a special relationship with history, should keep in mind as we go about our work.

To begin with, we study local Jewish history because it teaches us that we have a history. As human beings, we seek roots, we are interested in where we came from, and we crave the legitimacy that the past bestows. We Jews particularly respect *yichus* (family pedigree, Yiddish), not because we are determinists, but because we have learned to respect the power of tradition. We know that we have been shaped by those who came before us. The colonial Jews of Newport illustrate this principle. They were deeply shaped by their Sephardic heritage and by their own or their family's experience, in Catholic countries, of living as secret Jews. The enormous significance among them of family ties and their close personal and business associations with Jews up and down the Sephardic trade network, spanning three continents, reflected this heritage — as Stanley Chyet's biography of the colonial Newport Jewish merchant Aaron Lopez amply demonstrates. Lopez and other Jews in colonial Newport not only had a history; they also knew that it was one that greatly impacted upon them.<sup>2</sup>

Precisely because the past has this shaping power, there have always been those who have sought to write Jews out of history. To this day, some schoolbooks present Jewish history as something that ended with the destruction of the Temple and the rise of Christianity. Others, including some so-called multicultural texts, bury Jews among dead white males, as if there is nothing distinctive about Jewish history at all.<sup>3</sup> One of the tasks of every Jewish historian and every Jewish historical society is to demonstrate that this is utterly false, and that we actually have a continuous history dating back some 3500 years, and dating back in America — and in Rhode Island — to the mid-17th century.

Now there is a great danger in our learning to appreciate the power of the past, and that is, since power corrupts, that we may fall prey to the temptation to rewrite the past to conform to what we wish had happened, rather than what actually did. Samuel Butler once cynically observed that "though God cannot alter the past, historians can," and he speculated that because of this God "tolerates their existence."<sup>4</sup> I hope he was wrong, but we all know that some have rewritten the past to make themselves or their ancestors more significant and saintly than they could possibly have been.

Synagogue histories are particularly prone to this malady, and I was therefore particularly pleased to read Seebert Goldowsky's recent history of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El) in Providence, where this pitfall is carefully avoided. Dr. Goldowsky relates, at one point, that Rev. Jacob Voorsanger lost his job with the congregation in 1878 because of a controversy over whether a student who had done no work in religious school should be graduated.

Voorsanger scrupulously refused to graduate the student, but as she happened to be the daughter of the richest man in the congregation her father's response — "either the Rabbi goes, or I go" — ultimately carried the day. The synagogue's minutes, like most such documents, attempted to prettify the story by relating that Rev. Voorsanger "accepted a call" from a congregation in the South. Happily Dr. Goldowsky, building upon an oral history preserved by Rabbi William G. Braude, restores the truth, teaching us, in the process, much that we would not otherwise know about the balance of power in the congregation at that time.<sup>5</sup>

The more common practice, however, is illustrated in the classic (and one hopes apocryphal) story about one Mrs. Depew, scion of an old pioneer family. Mrs. Depew, it seems, decided to commission a history of her illustrious ancestors. She approached the local historical society, of which she was a member, and it agreed to do the job. The only stipulation was that "due sensitivity" be shown concerning Mrs. Depew's late Uncle Charlie, the black sheep of the family, whose life ended, alas, on the electric chair at Sing Sing prison. The historical society promised to be very sensitive, and in time it produced a beautifully illustrated volume — *The Depews: A Family History* — that it proudly delivered to the family mansion. Naturally, Mrs. Depew opened at once to the chapter on Uncle Charlie, and there she read as follows: "In his last years, Charles Depew occupied the chair of applied electricity in one of the government's great institutions. He died in harness and his death came as an extreme shock."

At the time, it is always easy to justify these rewritings of history on the basis of "what others might think" or in order to protect somebody's reputation. This temptation is particularly great when one is writing about one's own kinsmen. Nevertheless, the temptation must at all costs be resisted. For once we begin rewriting the past for personal or political reasons, we lose all credibility. If we historians cannot be relied upon to preserve the past accurately, nobody can.

Besides reminding us that we have a history, the past shows us, and this is our second point, that we have a usable history, that is to say a history that can teach us something about the present. Since the present has deep roots in the past and can only be understood in terms of that past, to the extent that the past is forgotten we lose the ability to comprehend contemporary events. Without history, the present lacks both context and perspective.

Take, for example, the case of Ezra Stiles and the Jews. Rev. Stiles, one of the most learned New Englanders of his day, became pastor of the Second Church of Newport in 1755 and evinced a great deal of interest in local Jews, several of whom he befriended. His philosemitism is reflected in his diary, his visits to the Newport synagogue, his study of Hebrew and Hebrew sources, and in his close relationship with Rabbi Raphael Haim Isaac Carigal, an emissary from the Holy Land, who spent



five months in Newport, from March through July 1673, as the local Jewish community's guest. Yet for all that he knew and genuinely liked Jews, Stiles continued to view them as unassimilable and worthy of divine punishment, and he always sought to convert them to Christianity. In the tense period preceding the American Revolution he went so far as to question their loyalty, reporting to his diary, on one occasion, that they were involved in a clandestine international intelligence-gathering conspiracy centered in London. "Perhaps Stiles's attitude toward the Jews," Arthur Chiel concluded, after surveying all of the relevant material, "might be best characterized as one of ambivalence."<sup>6</sup>

It is precisely this ambivalence that makes the relationship between Stiles and the Jews of enduring significance. History, in this case, sheds helpful light on a wide range of Jewish-Christian relationships in America, extending down to our own day.

The ability to place a contemporary problem into a broader and sometimes quite different perspective is one of the most important functions of history. Local Jewish history, in the same way, can shed light on local problems and how they developed. We should be encouraging much more research of this kind, for we have not yet even begun to recognize its potential. Jewish history and especially local Jewish history is also significant because — this is our third principle — it teaches us that we have a variegated history, a history that is rich and and diverse. Too often, young people assume that what exists today has always existed and that our city and state is a microcosm of the whole country, if not the whole world. History, properly studied, counters this ethnocentrism. It introduces us, for example, to the aristocratic lives of Newport Jews more than two hundred years ago and to the impoverished lives of immigrant Jews in Providence some one hundred years later. It teaches us that the history of men may be different from the history of women, and that "the world of our fathers" in New York was different from the world of our fathers (and mothers) in Providence.

One of the great tasks facing local and regional Jewish community historical societies is to broaden our perspective on American Jewish history: to make it, frankly, less New York centered. We need to highlight and explain what made American Jewish history here in Rhode Island and in myriad locations throughout the United States both different and unique.

This leads us straight into our fourth principle, which is that local Jewish history shows us that we have an organic history: that differences and distances notwithstanding we are nevertheless integrally related to one another: we form one world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fascinating and largely unexplored ties linked Dutch Jews to the Newport and Providence communities. Isaac Touro, Moses Michael Hays, Jacob Rodriguez Pareira, Myer Noot, Jacob Voorsanger —

all were Dutch Jews. Some of these men continued, even in America, to maintain connections to the great Sephardic center of Jewish life back in Amsterdam. Within the United States, one can discern similar kinds of intercommunal relationships. Providence Jews, for example, were at one time closely tied to the Jews of New York.

Congregation Sons of Israel, originally a Sephardic congregation, felt a special kinship to New York's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Shearith Israel. Later, as the Boston Jewish community strengthened, Providence Jews fell more naturally into its orbit. One indication of this is the fact that Reform Judaism came to Providence and to Boston at about the same time, a whole generation after it arrived in other sections of the country.

In addition, by the late 19th century Providence Jewry was also involved in world Jewish affairs. The persecution of Jews in Rumania, the Dreyfus Affair, and the pogroms against Jews in Russia all met with local responses, spurred on by the traditional injunction that "all Israel is responsible for one another."<sup>7</sup>

Much more could be said about these subjects, but the larger point is clear. History generally, and Rhode Island Jewish history in particular, can teach us important lessons about the ties that bind: those that bind us as human beings to one another, those that bind us as Jews to one another, and those that bind Rhode Island Jews to other Jewish communities in the United States and beyond.

The fifth and final reason why local Jewish history merits our attention carries this previous theme further and brings us back to where we began: local Jewish history reminds us that we have a history that binds us across time. We are, in other words, not only bound to one another, we are also part of an ongoing process of history: links in an endless chain stretching from past to present to future. History — all history — fights the dangerous presentmindedness that contemporaries are particularly prone to: the idea that all issues are new and there is nothing to be learned from what happened in the past. In the Jewish community this misguided attitude is manifested today in the absurd idea that Jewish continuity and intermarriage are new challenges that arose in 1991 with the publication of the National Jewish Population Study. In fact, of course, these themes are as old as the history of Jewish life on this continent. Excessive focus on the present at the expense of the past blinds us to the historical forces that have promoted and continue to promote change over time. When George Santayana famously observed that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,"<sup>8</sup> he had, I think, precisely this danger in mind. An historical association like this one can fight presentmindedness among Jews, and help all to appreciate how much past and present are interconnected, forming part of an historical continuum stretching across time.

Notwithstanding these five principles, some may nevertheless wonder as to how

we keep historical memory alive — especially in the absence of direct personal experience? This, in fact, is the central challenge that all of us involved in historical societies, archives and museums are attempting to confront. Remember that in only fifty years' time there will be nobody alive who will be able to speak at first hand — from memory — about three pivotal events in contemporary Jewish life: the great immigration of East European Jews to America, the death and destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust, and the creation of the State of Israel. Even today, the vast majority of world Jewry have no conscious memories of these events; we only know other people who experienced them. In fifty years those other people won't still be with us.

We already have some inkling of the dangers that lie in store when survivors are no longer alive to bear witness. I don't just mean the funny errors that stem from student confusion. I am far more concerned about the unspeakable obscenities of those who deny that the Holocaust ever happened, or those who distort the State of Israel's early history in an effort to destroy it, or even those who now rewrite the history of Black-Jewish relations in this country forgetting all the good that the alliance once accomplished. As memories fade, these already strident voices will undoubtedly grow louder and more shrill. Demagogues always thrive on historical ignorance. What can we do? Our obligation is to do all we can to preserve the past while it still is directly accessible to us. Where written records survive, let them be placed in the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association's archives. Where artifacts survive, let them be displayed in one of our Jewish museums. Where individuals survive who participated in history-making events, let them record their memories for posterity, so that their voices may be heard long after they themselves have passed from the scene. Remember that history, to a very great extent, belongs to those who preserve their records. Letters, tapes and artifacts may not fully compensate for the absence of living survivors, but future generations will cherish them, both as sacred links to the past, and as the best possible answer to those who would rewrite our past without reference to facts at all.

Now I do not mean to imply that we preserve our past solely for defensive reasons, to prevent mean-spirited distortions. Clearly, history has a positive function as well. The great Norwegian-American novelist, Ole Edvart Rolvaag, who did much to ensure that the Norwegian heritage in America has been preserved, put forth a thesis that I think applies to Jews as well. "When a people becomes interested in its past life [and] seeks to acquire knowledge in order to better understand itself," he wrote, "it always experiences an awakening of new life." Since in order to move forward we need to learn from our past, the study of history, Rolvaag reminds us, is actually a creative act, itself a means of inspiring individuals and communities to forge ahead.

I would like to think that the remarkable growth and development, in our own day,

of local and regional Jewish historical societies in America — the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association being among the most active and successful of these — also adumbrates within the American Jewish community an awakening of new life. It would seem to me that the act of recovering the forgotten histories of Jews in the many regions and municipalities of the United States, the effort to understand why Jews settled where they did, how they transformed themselves over time, how they struggled to overcome problems and challenges posed by American society, and how they emerged to become part of one of the greatest Jewish communities in all of Jewish history — this engagement with the past, it would seem to me, might very well stimulate new ideas, new approaches and new directions for American Jewish life in the decades ahead. Historical experience suggests that Jews who are actively concerned with preserving our past tend to be the same Jews who are actively concerned with securing our future. I suspect that this will prove no less true in our generation than before. Certainly it seems to be true here in Providence.

Nor is this surprising, for, as we have seen, past and future form part of a single continuum stretching across time. When we neglect or distort our past we endanger that future. When, by contrast, we preserve and engage our past — collecting it, recalling it, researching it, teasing out its lessons — then we possess the tools to shape our future confidently and creatively.



#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Lederer, *Anguished English* (New York: Bantam, 1987), pp.12, 18, 20-21.
- <sup>2</sup> Stanley F. Chyet, *Lopez of Newport: Colonial American Merchant Prince* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).
- <sup>3</sup> See, for example, the American Jewish Committee's report of a preliminary study on *The Treatment of Jews in History and Social Studies Textbooks in Use in American High Schools* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1970), and its more recent study of *The Treatment of Jewish History in World Civilization Textbooks: A Report to the Dallas Independent School District* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1981).
- <sup>4</sup> Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited* (New York: Dutton, 1925), p.132.
- <sup>5</sup> Seebert J. Goldowsky, *A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El) Providence, Rhode Island* (Providence, R.I.: The Congregation, 1989), pp.51-52.
- <sup>6</sup> Arthur A. Chiel, "Ezra Stiles and the Jews: A Study in Ambivalence," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram W. Korn (New York: Ktav, 1976), p.64.
- <sup>7</sup> Goldowsky, pp.36-52, 152, 185. On the development of Reform Judaism in Boston, see Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith (eds.) *The Jews of Boston* (Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies, 1995), esp. pp. 5-6. For the rabbinic statement, see Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shavuot, p.39a.
- <sup>8</sup> George Santanyana, *The Life of Reason* (New York: Scribner, 1905), vol. I, p.284.
- <sup>9</sup> Quoted in Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America* (New York: Haskell House, 1969 [1940]), vol. II, p.596.

# A CHRONOLOGY OF AMERICAN JEWRY 1585-1995

prepared by  
**Jacob Rader Marcus**  
and adapted by  
**Gary P. Zola** in Dec. 1998

- 1585 Joachim Gaunse (Ganz) lands on Roanoke Island.
- 1649 Solomon Franco remains in Boston for a brief period until "warned out."
- 1654 Twenty-three refugees land in New Amsterdam in August or September. They probably came from Brazil.
- 1664 New Amsterdam has had an organized Jewish community for a decade
- 1664 The English conquer New Amsterdam and rename it New York.
- 1678 Newport Jews buy a cemetery but there is no permanent community.
- 1730 New York Jews build their first synagogue, Shearith Israel.
- 1733 Savannah has an organized Jewish community. It does not become a permanent community until the 1790s.
- 1740 The British Plantation Act offers Jews a limited form of citizenship.
- 1740s Philadelphia Jewry has a cemetery and conducts services.
- 1745 The last time Portuguese is used in the official records of Shearith Israel, New York.
- 1750s Newport has an organized Jewish community.
- 1750 Charleston, South Carolina, has an organized Jewish community.
- 1755 New York Jewry has an all-day school.

- 1760s Philadelphia Jewry has an organized Jewish community. Montreal has an, organized Jewish community.
- 1763 Newport builds its first synagogue.
- 1776 The British colonies in North America emerge as the United States of America.
- 1777 New York State emancipates its Jews.
- 1780s Richmond has an organized Jewish community.
- 1783 Philadelphia Jews establishes the first immigrant aid society in the United States.
- 1784 Charleston, South Carolina, Jewry establishes its first social welfare organization.
- 1787 The Northwest Territory Act offers Jews equality in all future territories and states.
- 1788 The United States Constitution is adopted by a majority of the states. Under the new federal laws — though not state laws — Jews are given full rights.
- 1791 The Bill of Rights becomes part of the Constitution. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion.
- 1796 Dr. Levi Myers of Georgetown, South Carolina, is the first Jew to serve in a state legislature.
- 1801 Charleston, South Carolina, establishes the First American Jewish orphan care society.
- 1802 The first United States Ashkenazic synagogue, Rodeph Shalom, is established in Philadelphia.
- 1819 Rebecca Gratz helps organize the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society.

1824 Charleston, South Carolina, Isaac Harby, Abraham Moïse and David Carvalho organize the first organized attempt to reform Jewish religious practice in the United States: the Reformed Society of Israelites.

1825 Mordecai Manuel Noah proposes the founding of a Jewish colony on Grand Island, New York.

1829 Isaac Leeser, the father of American modern Orthodoxy, becomes the hazzan-minister-rabbi of Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia.

1830s Substantial numbers of German Jews begin immigrating to the United States.

1837 The first Passover Haggadah is printed in America and published by S. H. Jackson.

\*1838 Rebecca Gratz establishes the first Jewish Sunday school in the United States in Philadelphia. It is Orthodox.

1840 Abraham Rice, the first ordained rabbi to officiate in America, serves in Baltimore.

*Damascus Affair*

American Jews protest the persecution of Jews in Damascus.

1840s Leo Merzbacher, Max Lilienthal, Isaac Mayer Wise, Bernhard Felsenthal, David Einhom, Samuel Adler, and other German rabbis come to America to serve the new German congregations and are active in promoting reforms in Judaism.

1841 Charleston's Beth Elohim becomes the first permanent Reform Jewish synagogue in the United States.

David Levy Yulee is the first Jew to serve in Congress and also to become a United States senator.

1843 Isaac Leeser, hazzan of the Sephardic synagogue of Philadelphia, publishes the *Occident*, a strong advocate of Orthodoxy.

B'nai B'rith, a mutual aid and fraternal order, is established.

*why?  
help @ other  
• no insurance  
• social work*

Matara Affair

-3-

*Jewish child who was  
taken from home to be raised as a  
Mischling*

1846 Isaac Mayer Wise, the organizer of the American Jewish Reform movement, comes to the United States from Bohemia.

1852 The first East European congregation in New York City is organized.

\* 1853 Isaac Leeser publishes an English translation of the Bible.

1854 Isaac Mayer Wise becomes rabbi of Congregation B'nai Yeshurun in Cincinnati, where he remains until his death. He begins to publish the *Israelite*, later the *American Israelite*.

1855 David Einhorn, a theological liberal, arrives in the United States.

Rabbi Isaac M. Wise calls a meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, to organize American Jewry religiously on a national scale.

1859 In November the Board of Delegates of American Israelites is organized, the first attempt by American Jews to create an overall national Jewish organization.

The Jews of the United States meet in several towns, protesting the action of the papal authorities who seized Edgar Mortara, a Jewish child, and reared him as a Catholic.

1860 Morris Raphall becomes the first rabbi to open a session of the United States Congress with prayer.

1865 During the course of the Civil War, at least three Union officers of Jewish origin are breveted generals during the Civil War.

1862 The United States government appoints army chaplains to serve Jews.

Judah P. Benjamin, formerly a United States senator, is appointed secretary of state of the Confederacy.

On December 17, General U. S. Grant expels some Jews from the area occupied by the Army of the Tennessee on the charge that they engaged in commercial traffic with the South. The expulsion decree, General Orders Number 11, is speedily revoked by President Abraham Lincoln.



- 1863 Samuel Gompers, the founder of the American Federation of Labor, lands in New York.
- 1865 Jacob H. Schiff, later a national Jewish leader, arrives in New York from Germany.
- 1867 Isaac Leeser establishes Maimonides College, a short-lived rabbinical school.
- 1869 A group of Reform rabbis under the leadership of Samuel Hirsch and David Einhorn meets in Philadelphia to publish the first statement on the Jewish Reform position in America.
- 1871 *Hazofeh B'erez Hahadashah*, the first Hebrew weekly in America, is published by Zvi Hirsch Bernstein.
- 1873 The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is established in Cincinnati. Its founders hope it will embrace all American synagogues.
- 1875 The Hebrew Union College is established in Cincinnati, Ohio, to prepare rabbis for all rabbis of American Jewish synagogues.
- 1876 Felix Adler creates the Ethical Culture movement.
- 1877 New Hampshire is the last state to offer Jews political equality.
- Joseph Seligman is refused admission to the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York.
- 1880 The Union of American Hebrew Congregations publishes the first census of American Jewry. Estimate: 250,000.
- 1881 The pogroms in Russia impel East European Jews to immigrate to the United States in large numbers.
- 1882 A Yiddish play is performed in New York City.

- 1885 The Pittsburgh Platform is adopted by a number of left-wing Reform rabbis.  
Kasriel H. Sarasohn launches the *Tageblatt*, the first Yiddish daily paper, in New York City.
- 1886 The Jewish Theological Seminary Association is formed. The Conservative movement is established in New York City.
- 1887 The Jewish Theological Seminary, the nursery of Conservative Judaism, opens in New York City.
- 1888 The Jewish Publication Society of America is founded.  
Several anti-Semitic works are published in New York City.  
Socialists establish the United Hebrew Trades in New York City.  
Rabbi Jacob Joseph is elected chief rabbi of New York's Orthodox.
- 1889 The Central Conference of American Rabbis—basically a Reform Institution—is established by Isaac M. Wise.
- 1891 Baron Maurice de Hirsch, European philanthropist, establishes the Baron de Hirsch Fund to further American Jewry, especially the East European émigrés.
- 1892 The American Jewish Historical Society starts its work.
- 1893 The Education Alliance, a settlement house, opens on New York City's Lower East Side.  
The National Council of Jewish Women is founded.  
The Jewish Chautauqua Society is organized.
- 1895 The Central Conference of American Rabbis rejects the authority of halakah, Jewish traditional oral law.

1897 The first American yeshiva of a European type (Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary) is founded in New York City.

At a meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Isaac M. Wise denounces the new Zionism of Theodor Herzl.

The socialist *Jewish Daily Forward* publishes its first issue in New York City.

1898 The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America is established. The Federation of American Zionists is established in New York City.

1899 The National Conference of Jewish Charities is organized.

*American Jewish Yearbook* begins publication.

1900 The Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle), dedicated to educational, social, and recreational purposes, commences its activities.

The Rabbinical Assembly, the organization of five rabbis, is established.

East European labor groups organize the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union.

1902 The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada is founded. Solomon Schechter is elected head of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He furthers Conservatism as a separate Jewish denomination.

1903 Reacting to the murder of Jews in Kishinev, Russia, American Jewry moves to become a more tightly knit community.

Kaufmann Kohler is elected president of the Hebrew Union College.

1906 The twelve-volume *Jewish Encyclopedia* is completed.

The American Jewish Committee, a secular defense organization, is established by the American Jewish elite.

American Jewish Committee

Jewish students at Harvard establish the Menorah Society, a cultural organization.

During this year 153,748 Jewish immigrants arrive in the United States; most are East European.

1907 Rabbi Stephen S. Wise establishes the Free Synagogue.

Sidney Hillman arrives in the United States. Later he becomes a famous labor leader and a prominent New Deal politician.

Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning is chartered in Philadelphia as a graduate school awarding the Ph.D. degree.

1909 Gifts from Jacob H. Schiff lead to the establishment of Jewish teachers' training programs at the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Hebrew Union College. The Kehillah (Jewish community) of New York City is established. This is an (unsuccessful) attempt to organize New York City's East European Jews. Judah L. Magnes is its head.

The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) is formed.

1910 The first Yiddish secular school system is established by the Zionists, Poale Zion.

1911 American Jewry succeeds in inducing Congress to abrogate the 1832 treaty with Russia because the czarist regime would not honor an American passport carried by an American Jew.

A fire in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory costs the lives of some 140 women. Most were Jews.

1912 Louis Marshall, one of America's most distinguished Jewish laymen, becomes president of the American Jewish Committee.

Young is organized on the Lower East Side in New York.

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is established by Henrietta Szold.

1913 The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League sets out to limit anti-Jewish agitation in the United States.

Labor Zionist Alliance (formerly Farband Labor Zionist Order) is established.

The Intercollegiate Menorah Association is organized.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is organized.

*The Promised Land* by Mary Antin is published. It is an immigrant's evaluation of the United States.

1915 Over the course of the year 1914-15, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee unites various American Jewish ethnic groups to salvage East European Jewry.

Leo Frank is lynched in Marietta, Georgia.

Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and Yeshiva Etz Chaim (an Orthodox elementary school) are united under Bernard Revel.

Moses Alexander, a German Jewish immigrant, is elected Governor of Idaho.

Henry Hurwitz edits the *Menorah Journal*.

1916 Louis D. Brandeis is appointed to the United States Supreme Court.

1917 An English translation of the Hebrew Bible is published by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

United States enters World War I. About 200,000 Jews served in the armed forces.

The National Jewish War Board is created to serve the religious needs of American Jews in the army and navy.

The British government issues the Balfour Declaration favoring the establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine.

On November 7 the Bolsheviks gain control of Russia.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, serving the Jewish and general press, is established.

1918 The first American Jewish Congress meets in Philadelphia and sets out to induce the great powers meeting in Paris to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine and to protect East European Jewry through the granting of minority rights.

Yiddish Art Theater is initiated by Maurice Schwartz.

The Women's League for Conservative Judaism is formed.

1920s These years are a time of much anti-Jewish sentiment in the United States. Most notable is the anti-Jewish activity of Henry Ford, 1920-27.

1920 Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent* begins publishing anti-Semitic propaganda, including the *Protocol of the Elders of Zion*.

1921 *Hadoar* (Hebrew periodical of Histadruth Ivrit) begins publication. It emphasizes the primacy of Hebrew in Jewish culture.

1921 & 1924

The Immigrant Acts of 1921 and 1924 close America to East European Jews and others. This legislation is motivated, in part, by pseudo-scientific racial concepts.

1922 Reconstructionism, created by Mordecai M. Kaplan, has its first organized manifestation: the Society for the Advancement of Judaism.

Agudath Israel of America, an Orthodox organization, is established.

A permanent American Jewish Congress representing the Zionist-minded East European element is founded. Hebrew Theological College opens in Chicago.

Stephen S. Wise founds the Jewish Institute of Religion, training rabbis (mostly for the Reform group) with a more national orientation than that given by Hebrew Union College.

1923 The first B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation is established at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

1925 The Synagogue Council of America is organized.

1926 The World Union for Progressive Judaism is founded.

1927 A survey shows that there are Jews in 9,712 towns and rural districts. There are 4,228,000 Jews, 17,500 Jewish organizations, and 3,118 congregations in the United States.

1928 The National Conference of Christians and Jews is established to further interfaith activities in the United States.

The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva grows into Yeshiva College, the first general institution of higher education under Jewish auspices.

1929 The Union of Sephardic Congregations is organized.

The American Academy for Jewish Research is established.

The Jewish Agency is enlarged to embrace Zionists and non-Zionists to further the Jewish community in Palestine.

1930s In the late 1930s German Jewish refugees start arriving in the United States.

1932 The Council of Jewish Federations is established. It advises two hundred Jewish federations in the United States and Canada.

1933 Nazis gain strength in Germany and anti-Semitic groups, appear in this country.

1934 The Jewish Labor Committee is established.

*Judaism as a Civilization* by Mordecai Kaplan is published, and the Reconstructionist magazine appears.

1935 The Central Conference of American Rabbis is taken over by Zionists in a political coup, one of the first steps toward the founding of neo-Reform.

The Rabbinical Council of America, an organization of the English-Orthodox rabbis, is formed.

1937 A survey shows 4,771,000 Jews in the United States and 3,728 congregations.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis adopts a somewhat pro-Zionist program.

1938 Father Charles E. Coughlin, a Catholic priest, denounces the Jews on the radio. His audience numbers in the millions.

In July an international conference meets at Evian to help refugee Jews. Very little is accomplished.

1939 The British White Paper on Palestine is issued and immigration to that country is reduced to a trickle. World War II begins in Europe and the first news of the slaughter of the Polish Jews reaches America.

Felix Frankfurter becomes an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.

The United Jewish Appeal is founded to support Jewish humanitarian programs in the United States and abroad.

1940 The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research moves from Vilna, Lithuania, to New York City.

The Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation is formed by Mordecai Kaplan.



1942 American Zionists adopt the Biltmore Program, demanding the creation of a Jewish Palestine.

Jews in the United States become aware of the massacre of Jews in Eastern Europe by the invading Germans.

Some anti-Zionist Reform rabbis and anti-Zionist laymen organize the American Council for Judaism, the one organization in American life that upholds the position that the Jews are only a religious group and in no way a nationalist group.

1943 The American Jewish Conference recommends that Palestine become a Jewish commonwealth.

Jews become aware of the Holocaust. The American authorities, includes high-ranking Jewish leaders, do little to induce Roosevelt to admit European Jewish refugees in substantial numbers to the United States. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. is an exception.

The Conference of American Rabbis adopts a resolution agreeing that both the Zionist and anti-Zionist positions are compatible with Reform Judaism.

Samuel Belkin becomes president of Yeshiva College.

Maurice N. Eisendrath becomes president of the Union of America Hebrew Congregations.

1944 President Roosevelt establishes the War Refugee Board.

The National Society for Hebrew Day Schools (Torah Umesorah) is founded.

1945 Yeshiva College becomes Yeshiva University.

The United States unleashes the atom bomb on the Japanese. Jews are among the nuclear scientists who perfect the atom, hydrogen, and neutron bombs.

Under directives of President Truman, hundreds of thousands of displaced persons are admitted to the United States during the years 1945-1952; many are Jews.

During World War II, over five thousand Jews serve in the American armed forces. There are numerous Jewish generals and several Jewish admirals.

1947 The Jewish Museum of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America moves into the former Warburg mansion in New York City.

On November 29 the United Nations General Assembly votes to divide Palestine into two sovereign states, one Jewish and one Arab.

The American Jewish Archives is established by Jacob Rader Marcus on the campus of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

1948 Brandeis University is established in Waltham, Massachusetts, as the first secular university in the United States under Jewish auspices.

On May 14, Israel declares its independence. The United States government immediately recognizes the new state.

On May 15 the British leave Palestine; the Arab armies soon attack Israel.

1950 The Hebrew Union College and Jewish Institute of Religion merge.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn succeeds his father-in-law as rebbe of the Lubavitch Hassidim.

1951 The major Reform organization, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, moves from Cincinnati to New York City.

1952 The Federal Republic of Germany signs an agreement to pay Holocaust survivors and Jewish institutions outside Israel \$822 million as reparations for the Holocaust.

1954 Stern College for Women, first liberal arts women's college under Jewish auspices, is opened.

- 1955 The Leo Baeck Institute is established in New York City.  
The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, one of American Jewry's most powerful organizations, is formed.
- 1956 Statistics in the *American Jewish Year Book* show a great increase in Jewish synagogue membership in the previous fifteen years, particularly in the Reform and Conservative groups, and a great increase in Jewish religious school attendance.
- Israel, provoked by Arab marauders, invades Egyptian territory and is joined by England and France, but all withdraw their forces under United States and Soviet pressure.
- 1964 Congress passes the Civil Rights Act that, on paper at least, fully guarantees all rights to blacks and Jews.
- 1965 An Immigration and Nationality Act is passed. The quota system is revised, but the admission of immigrants is still rigorously limited.
- 1967 Israel emerges victorious in the Six-Day War against Arab enemies.
- 1968 The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College is established.
- 1969 The Association for Jewish Studies is formed.
- 1971 Touro College is founded in New York City.
- 1972 The Hebrew Union College ordains the first woman rabbi. Sally ~~Prisland~~  
Prisland
- 1973 The Yom Kippur War begins when Egypt and Syria attack victorious.
- 1975 The United Nations General Assembly declares Zionism "a form of racism and racial discrimination." This resolution is repealed years later.
- 1979 Israel and Egypt sign a peace treaty.
- 1980 HUC-JIR ordains the first rabbi to complete its Israeli Rabbinic Program.  
Mordechai Rotum

- 1983 The Jewish Theological Seminary faculty votes to ordain women as rabbis.
- 1984 The Central Conference of American Rabbis adopts a resolution accepting the principle of patrilineal Jewish identity.
- 1990 Beginning in 1985, the U.S.S.R. began to fall apart. Numerous Russian Jews immigrate to the United States.
- 1992 the HUC-JIR ordains the first woman rabbi from its Israeli Rabbinic Program. *Nama Kelman*
- 1993 The Israelis and Palestine Arabs seek to reconcile political differences.
- 1995 Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by an Israeli citizen. The President of the United States attends his funeral and refers to the fallen leader as his "*haver*," his friend.