

Episode 7: The Golden Land

VII-1: The Statue of Liberty - Timeline 1886

This feature brings up the interesting point of a difference between the French gift of the statue and its ultimate symbolism. For the French, it embodied the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. But for generations of immigrants, it became a symbol of refuge from Europe. Three panel buttons provide more good material: "The New Colossus," an audio of Emma Lazarus' poem which graces the Statue; "Protesting Immigration Restriction," 1920s, which discusses quotas and includes an explorable cartoon; and an "Interview with Arriving Refugees," which includes a radio recording of a shipboard interview with an immigrant family. One moving historical document describes an immigrant's first sighting of America.

VII-2: Early Settlers (1654-1776) - Timeline 1654

This multimedia presentation emphasizes the diversity in the colonies, and describes the arrival of 23 Jews in New Amsterdam. A segment explores the later arrival of other immigrants in the Colonial period, and then an explorable map allows users to highlight the different nationalities to learn more about their passage to America (including Africans and the fate of the indigenous Indian nations). Then, six historical documents address the Jews of Recife, the Dutch West India Company and Peter Stuyvesant's correspondence about the newcomer Jews.

VII-3: Communal Life/New York, NY/Newport, RI - Timeline 1682

An opening panel talks about the centrality of the synagogue in Jewish communal life. Then, a segment on New York discusses some of the landmark moments of the Colonial period for the Jewish community. The Newport button takes users to an explorable graphic of the interior and exterior of the Touro Synagogue, with fascinating informational displays. Then, seven historical documents present information on the Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Savannah, a fundraising letter, a letter back home to London, and an interesting contract stipulating the duties of the shamash (beadle) at New York's Shearith Israel Congregation.

VII-4: Gaining Civil Rights/The Gratz-Etzing Family - Timeline 1776

The opening panel stresses the gradual progress in Jewish rights. Then a segment expands on this point, showing where Jews gained citizenship and office-holding rights, state by state. It makes the interesting point that only with the 14th amendment (1868) was Federal supremacy in these matters firmly established. Another button takes users to a portrait gallery and notes on an important Jewish-American family. Finally, seven historical documents show glimpses of a Jewish wedding, a Sunday school, some laws about Jewish rights in different states, and a loopy effort to establish a Jewish homeland near Buffalo, NY.

VII-5: Pioneers from Europe - Timeline 1820

This multimedia presentation investigates how the turmoil in Central and Eastern Europe in the middle of the 19th century gave rise to massive migrations to America. The turmoil was, of

course, supplemented by numerous draconian decrees against Jews, particularly in the Pale of Settlement. The three historical documents discuss the internal debate about risking the trip to the “unknown” land of America.

VII-6: New Communities - Timeline 1820

This feature presents interesting demographic data on American Jewry as it joined the westward migration. Five panels provide more information on the emergence of communal institutions like synagogues, fraternal orders, YMHAs, charities and Jewish newspapers. Finally, four historical documents include an 1843 founding document of Bnai Brith, information about itinerant peddlers, and a memoir written by a local bishop about San Francisco’s first rabbi.

VII-7: Civil War/Jewish Civil War Images - Timeline 1861

This presentation explores the debate between abolishing or limiting slavery, and also the economic issues that divided the north and south. An image gallery presents Jews on both sides of the question of slavery. Five historical documents expose more of the Jewish debate on the topic, poignantly describe Jewish soldiers’ observances, and present General Grant’s attempt to expel the Jews in 1862 and the heated correspondence that followed.

VII-8: Industrial America/The Garment Industry - Timeline 1810

This feature discusses Jewish involvement in the garment trades, accelerated with the invention of the sewing machine in 1846. The three historical documents in this section include one describing the founding of the precursor organization of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893.

VII-9: Reshaping Judaism/American Judaism (1860-1880) - Timeline 1861

The narration describes American Jewry’s wrestling with the question of what Jewishness means. From this engagement, Reform and Conservative Judaism were born, although orthodoxy was still dominant at the end of the 19th century. A picture gallery provides interesting examples of the diversity in the Jewish religious experience, showing and discussing a kosher butcher shop, reform and traditional synagogues, and the landmark 1880 Reform prayer book by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise. Then, four historical documents detail Reform beliefs and the constitution of the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary from 1886.

VII-10: Coming to America - Timeline 1881

This presentation opens with a panel stating that unlike other immigrants of the time, late-19th century Jewish immigrants tended to come to America as families, with all intention of staying (rather than making money and returning to Europe). 80% of Jews fleeing Eastern Europe came to America in this period, lured by both the reality and the fantasy of America. Three audio panels expand on this theme, including *The Unkosher Land* (a warning about America), *Pictures of Prosperity* (about photos sent to the old country that made new immigrants look prosperous!), and American folk culture (including a Sholom Aleichem poem

set to music). Three historical documents give voluminous statistics on immigrations, provide Castle Garden memoirs, and show a HIAS immigrants' pamphlet distributed at Ellis Island in 1912.

VII-11: Tenement Life - Timeline 1881

An opening panel contrasts the consumerism in America with the sweatshop life of the typical immigrant. The multimedia segment describes how the immigrants' kids got better educations, but their parents were concerned about assimilation. Then, an explorable graphic with five pictures offers catchy presentations about inter-generational aspects and conflicts of immigrant life, including wisdom, names, baseball, food, and happiness. The five historical documents discuss Jewish women going wig-less, a description of tenement life, the challenge of Jewish education, and an interesting bit about piecework in the "schmatteh" trade in Chicago.

VII-12: Building Community - Timeline 1881

The opening panel describes how Jews adapted their institutions for life in America. Click Play to see a multimedia piece discussing how Jews organized around their European communities of origin through *landsmanschafften*, held benefit balls to support charitable and community work, and developed afternoon Hebrew schools to supplement public education. Then, a terrific explorable graphic offers an advertising page from the Yiddish daily *Der Tog*, where users can click on the ads for English translation and get a real feel for the texture of early 20th century Jewish sociology. Finally, two historical documents include a description of the Yiddish press, and a humor piece from *The Jewish Daily Forward*.

VII-13: Yiddish Culture/American Yiddish Poetry - Timeline 1881

At the start of this presentation, a panel states that by 1920, New York had 1.6 million Jews, providing a vibrant audience for Yiddish culture. The multimedia feature explains that the Czar's banning of Yiddish theater in 1883 meant an exodus of thespians and writers to America, resulting in 20 Yiddish theaters by 1914, and 150 Yiddish periodicals. Most of the papers and journals also carried literary material, providing outlets for outstanding Yiddish authors like Sholem Asch. Then, a button takes users to three panels of genres of Yiddish poetry: sweatshop poets ("the rhyme department of the labor movement"), the young generation of romantics, and the introspectivists with their free verse and experimental forms. Finally, three historical documents depict a daughter's rebellion against her "old-world" father, and memoirs by theater-goers.

VII-14: Who Is an American? - Timeline 1881

This presentation describes the American debate about immigration and immigrants. The segment traces the evolution of America from a rural to urban society, and the supplanting of northern European immigrants by immigrants from eastern and southern Europe (i.e., lots of Italians and Jews). The outrageous conditions of slum life gave rise to social activists and government housing laws. In the Jewish community, settlement houses helped new immigrants integrate with education, English instruction, and help in achieving citizenship. In addition to transforming the immigrants, the grass-roots nature of these efforts also gave rise

to social crusades. The historical documents include social workers' views on their charges, and a Guide for Immigrants, which tells them "Above all, learn English."

VII-15: Trade Unions - Timeline 1881

This presentation looks at the European Bund roots of the trade union movement in America, in which Jews were leaders. The segment describes the rampant socialism among many young Jewish activists, and how the unions provided entire social environments for members. Five text panels provide more information about Socialism at the Ballot Box, the famous Workmen's Circle, founded in 1892, the European Roots of the Labor Movement (especially the immigration from the failed 1905 Russian Revolution), A Better World (setting the context for Marxist utopianism; note that the Yiddish anti-capitalist cartoon here is an explorable graphic), and the Yiddish Press and the Labor Movement, illustrating the moderate socialism of the *Forward* versus the more radical Communist position of the *Freiheit*.

VII-16: Communal Activism - Timeline 1918

An opening panel describes how American Jewish organizations were increasingly involved in world Jewish affairs and Zionism, both during and after World War I. In many ways, this illustrates the degree to which the Jewish community felt at home in America. Then, three panel buttons describe the roles of Hadassah, the American Jewish Congress, and the Joint Distribution Committee. Two historical documents present the founding of the first Hillel chapter in 1923, and a 1916 fundraising letter to help get relief aid to the 9 million European Jews whose lives were convulsed by the Great War.

VII-17: Hollywood - Timeline 1908

The presentation describes the proliferation of 5-cent nickelodeon theaters around the turn of the century. It points out that immigrants were wildly enthusiastic about the medium: Because you don't need to know English to attend a silent movie! Jews then became heavily involved in filmmaking; the Warner Brothers, for example, started out as theater owners and then opened their famous studio. These early movies reflect the middle-class aspirations of the new immigrants. In a historical document, Abe Burrows weighs in on the famous Jewish filmmaker, Samuel Goldwyn.

VII-18: Into the Mainstream/Timeline of American Judaism - Timeline 1918

The opening panel notes that by the 1930s, most Jews were native-born. The multimedia segment describes how New York held 40% of the country's Jews, who spread out to new neighborhoods in the Bronx, Brooklyn and the Upper West Side. Many were college educated, but the Depression crushed many dreams, and many young Jews turned to Communism. Three panel buttons describe Jewish Home Life, Challenges for Synagogue Judaism, and College. Then a button takes users to a wonderful timeline of key events in the development of Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist Judaism. The four historical documents include a WPA case record, a 1927 essay on Conservative Judaism, and Mordechai Kaplan setting forth his Reconstructionist notion of Judaism as a "social organism" in his seminal work on his interpretation of the crisis of American Judaism.