# Curriculum Resource GUIDE

## CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM


# CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Jewish Life in the Bay Area
from the Gold Rush to the Present

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CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM

# California Dreaming:
# Jewish Life in the Bay Area from the Gold Rush to the Present

## Curriculum Resource Guide

**CONTENTS**

## CURRICULUM GOALS

- To provide a streamlined overview of Bay Area Jewish history for teachers

Students will:

- Understand how the Bay Area Jewish community is unique and what events and situations led to the development and continuation of the community's pioneering character
- Learn to analyze primary sources to uncover historical information
- Connect the exhibition content (and the Bay Area Jewish experience) to themselves and their own communities

## ABOUT THIS CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDE

This curriculum guide presents several lessons that may be used independently or as part of a unit on Bay Area history. The lessons may also be used in conjunction with a guided class visit to the *California Dreaming* exhibition, with Lessons 1 and 2 serving as introductory or pre-visit lessons and Lesson 3 serving as a follow-up or post-visit lesson. You may also choose to start the entire unit with an introduction using the "Moses at Half Dome: Looking at the Windows of Congregation Sherith Israel" lesson to help set the tone for the exploration.

If you choose to use this curriculum guide to enhance your visit to the CJM, students will encounter many of the classroom visual aids in the gallery among many other pictures and objects. Although recommended for grades four through eight, the lessons are also adaptable for older and younger students.

Guided tours, customized to meet your teaching goals, are available six days a week. To book a tour, please email tours@thecjm.org or call (415) 655-7856. For more information about school and teacher programs at the CJM, please email schools@thecjm.org or call (415) 655-7855.

## INTRODUCTION TO *CALIFORNIA DREAMING*

*California Dreaming: Jewish Life in the Bay Area from the Gold Rush to the Present* highlights the origins of the spirit of innovation and adventure that characterizes the Jewish community in the San Francisco Bay Area today. From the creation of new kinds of synagogues and Jewish ritual to innovative social, cultural, and ecological institutions and technological tools to improve both business and the health of communities, local Jewish life provides a new approach to an ancient tradition, and a model of collaboration with other ethnic and religious groups.

Despite the enormous technological and cultural changes between the Gold Rush and today, one can imagine that the founders of San Francisco would appreciate the spirit of contemporary Jewish culture. *California Dreaming* reveals how the quality of "pioneering" was and still is the driving force of Bay Area Jewish life. Through photographs, documents, videos, and ephemera, the exhibition shows how the Bay Area Jewish community, despite its stunning diversity and significant historical changes, still operates according to its unwritten founding principles: a pioneering spirit that gave Jews the confidence to create their own destiny; a complex balance between tradition and reinvention in Jewish institutions and rituals; a lack of physical, social, and economic ghettoization; and a yearning for greater justice for Jews and others, inspired by the California experience and reflecting a sense of optimism that a newer and fairer society could be built.

Just as the founders of San Francisco Jewish life questioned the rules of community and tradition as they created their own robust community life, *California Dreaming* is structured around five questions that investigate key aspects of the community's character: What does it mean to be first? If I am only for myself, what am I? Is there a there there? What is a Jewish leader? What is a promised land? These questions are designed to draw visitors into the discussion of what constitutes a Jewish community in the twenty-first century.

*California Dreaming* also features several elements that introduce the voice of the contemporary Jewish community, including:

### Documentary Film

The CJM has commissioned award-winning filmmaker Pam Rorke Levy to create a portrait of the local Jewish community as told through personal narratives from a variety of perspectives. From well-known community members like Frances Dinkelspiel and Josh Kornbluth to lesser-known figures, the participants offer equally powerful voices that represent the many facets of the community, including Holocaust survivors, Russian émigrés, a transplanted New York rabbi, teenagers, and cultural Jews.

### Artist Commission

Commissioned by the CJM, artist and cultural historian Rachel Schreiber has created a new body of work that responds to the spirit of *California Dreaming*: a series of visually compelling photographs with accompanying texts that illuminate the "remarkable stories in the footnotes of Bay Area Jewish

history." Schreiber is director of humanities and sciences at California College of the Arts (CCA); her writings have been widely published, and her work in video, digital media, and photography has been exhibited internationally.

**Interactive Mapping Project**

To demonstrate the incredible diversity of Jewish life today, the exhibition features an interactive map that documents the growth and movement of the institutions and organizations that support Jewish life in the Bay Area. Included are synagogues, JCCs, social service agencies, educational institutions, and more.

**Community Photo Wall**

Members of the Bay Area Jewish community are invited to submit their own photographs that illustrate what it means to be Jewish in all its diversity and complexity. All photos submitted will be on display in the gallery as well as online through the museum's website and dedicated Flickr page. Visitors are invited to participate by uploading their images to flickr.com/groups/californiadreaming.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The texts below highlight key events and topics in the history of the Bay Area Jewish community. Organized by subject, rather than chronologically, these notes touch on the development of the Jewish community from the Gold Rush to the present.

For additional historical resources, including a timeline and a list of suggested reading, see the Appendix of this Curriculum Resource Guide.

## The Bay Area Jewish Community: Highlights in History

Jews came to San Francisco during the Gold Rush that began in 1848, and they never stopped coming. For over 160 years, whether attracted by open land, business opportunities, technical innovation, political freedom, or a different ethos, those who have braved the journey to settle here have been bold, confident, and eager to create their own destiny. The city of San Francisco and the local Jewish community emerged simultaneously, and the combination of freedom and possibility continues to encourage Bay Area Jews to experiment. Long before Silicon Valley, Jews saw San Francisco as a "start-up city."

### Arrivals

When word traveled throughout the world that gold had been discovered in California in 1848, it prompted vast numbers of people to leave their homelands in search of fortune and new beginnings. During the late 1840s and 1850s, over 250,000 emigrants traveled to the gold fields and new cities; it was the greatest mass migration in American history. The options for travel were limited and tenuous; one couldn't be sure of safe passage to the West Coast. To embark on such a journey required a true pioneer spirit—perseverance, a sense of adventure, and an ability to handle the unexpected.

If you traveled to the Bay Area by sea from the east coast of North America, you had two options. You could board a ship that sailed around South America's Cape Horn, taking approximately four months. Or you could take a boat to the east coast of Central America—either the Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua—and then travel overland with all of your belongings to the west coast, finally boarding another ship to bring you to San Francisco. This route took between five and eight weeks. One in ten travelers died of disease during this arduous journey. In 1855, the Panama Railroad was completed, which made the overland portion of the journey easier and quicker. By the time the Panama Canal was completed in 1915, making the journey more direct, most people had abandoned the sea routes in favor of traveling across the United States by train. For those traveling from Asia, meanwhile, the ocean voyage to San Francisco could take up to eight weeks.

At first, the only ways to travel to San Francisco by land were in a wagon train or on horseback. The main cross-country routes began in Missouri and included the Oregon Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Pony Express Trail, and the California Trail, which branched off from the other routes in Salt Lake City. The challenges of overland travel included crossing mountain ranges, winter weather, robbery, and illness. With the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, the wagon train was replaced by the train car, which allowed for more comfortable, direct, and safe travel.

## The First Jews

The first Jewish citizens of San Francisco traveled in the late 1840s from Bavaria and Buffalo, Prussia and Pittsburgh, in search of the treasure they heard was washing down the Sierra foothills. Political upheavals throughout Europe in the mid-nineteenth century resulted in a rollback of many of the social and economic liberties Jews had once enjoyed; many young Jewish men and sometimes whole families—particularly members of the middle and lower classes in the German states and Poland—left the continent with the hope of achieving independence and wealth elsewhere. They joined tens of thousands of others who descended on the town newly dubbed San Francisco, a minor fort under the protection of Saint Francis.

Eager to make their fortune and to create a new society free from state sanctions or religious orthodoxy, the first generation established the foundation for a Jewish community. Differing religious practices (or total religious indifference) among Jews from various parts of Europe, combined with the wide-open atmosphere of the Gold Rush city, brought about a peculiar combination of orthodoxy in the synagogue and nonobservance on the street. Local Jewish newspapers advertised Hebrew religious texts alongside the latest shellfish restaurant.

## Gold Rush Days and Community Growth

By the 1860s, the Bay Area had its own Jewish cemetery, synagogues, and social service agencies, and five thousand Jews called San Francisco home, making up a far greater percentage of the overall population than in most American cities. While few Jewish families actually panned or dug for gold in the nearby foothills, many were able to put down roots by establishing businesses that supported the gold economy—creating everything from the tough denim pants that became Levi's jeans to the engineering firms that designed the mine shafts. Their commercial ventures, large and small, swiftly brought them respectability, and many Jews became key participants in civic life. On the eve of the Civil War, Jews were striding confidently into San Francisco's mainstream.

## Early Synagogue Life

In 1849 a newspaper ad announced the very first Rosh Hashanah service in San Francisco. Thirty people gathered in a storefront on Montgomery Street, in the neighborhood now known for the Transamerica Pyramid. Ten days later, almost twice as many people appeared for Yom Kippur services. The following year, twenty-nine-year-old Lewis Franklin stood in for a rabbi and gave a farsighted sermon challenging congregants to create a synagogue and invest in their community. Shortly thereafter, Franklin left San Francisco for opportunities in San Diego, later returning to England, but his plea immediately gave rise to plans for the region's first synagogue.

The old joke about a tiny village with two synagogues—this is my synagogue; that's the one I would never set foot in—took on a West Coast flavor in 1851, when the San Francisco Jewish community formally came into being with not one but two synagogues: Sherith Israel, whose founders were primarily Eastern European, and Emanu-El, whose worshipers were mainly from German-speaking countries or German-French Alsace. There was great rivalry between the two synagogues when they were first founded, yet they have survived not only religious change but also fires and earthquakes, enduring as the oldest synagogues west of the Mississippi. In their reverence for history and eagerness to innovate they embody the Bay Area's unique balance of stability and radicalism.

The denominational complexity that characterizes most Jewish communities was accelerated in the Bay Area, as it intersected with the region's spirit of experimentation. Between 1851 and 1875, as the region's Jewish community grew from a backwater to the third largest American Jewish population, at least six synagogues came into being—four in San Francisco, one in Oakland, and one in Sacramento.

**New Spiritual Models**

The Bay Area, arguably the most welcoming community the Jews ever experienced in the Diaspora, presented both an opportunity and a test: could Jews here invent the new rituals and community structures they needed to transform and adapt, but not disappear? The result is a thriving Jewish community that has existed in an exquisite balance of tradition and counterculture. The success of this dynamic is best represented in the ritual innovations that have taken place here over the past half-century. For example, the impact of two small local experiments in the 1960s and 1970s—San Francisco's House of Love and Prayer and Berkeley's Aquarian Minyan—was immense, leading directly to a more musical, experiential, spiritual, and democratic mode of worship in synagogues around the country. Today, San Francisco Jews continue to experiment with prayer, ritual, and community with innovations including a LGBT prayer book created by Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, non-denominational minyanim, and a taco truck on site at Congregation Emanu-El.

***Tzedakah***

When Jews first disembarked in San Francisco everybody was new in town, and there was no community to welcome them as they arrived after a half-year of travel, carrying little but their dreams. The earliest pioneers put into action Rabbi Hillel's dictum, "If I am not for myself, who shall be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"—first establishing themselves in business, then immediately setting out to help those struggling with poor health, poverty, and a strange new language.

The population of the Bay Area increased dramatically between 1848 and the early twentieth century, and so did the Jewish population. Not all members of the Jewish community prospered; a significant number depended on benevolent societies and agencies for financial assistance, education, and other essential social services. In 1850, a group of successful merchants created the Eureka Benevolent Association, the oldest nonprofit west of the Mississippi.

Dozens more social service agencies emerged in the early years to support the growing Jewish communities around the Bay Area. In each case, they had to define the scope of their efforts: to serve the Jewish community, or the broader community? A hallmark of these agencies has been how they evolved to serve all residents, often expanding their reach to serve Jewish communities nationally and internationally. In 1910, when San Francisco had rebuilt after the earthquake, the leaders of the Jewish community came together to think afresh about how to maximize resources. In response, they created the Federation of Jewish Charities, an umbrella organization connecting and supporting thirteen major Jewish organizations in San Francisco, ranging from an orphanage and home for the aged to an educational society.

While San Francisco has always been a hub, distinct agencies were established in different geographical areas, whether due to physical distance or, as in the East Bay, out of a desire to exist outside San Francisco's shadow. Since their founding, all of these Jewish agencies have remained

connected through their shared emphasis on *tzedakah* (righteous giving), *chesed* (loving kindness), and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), manifested in their support of the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of people of all faiths and backgrounds in the Bay Area. Jewish philanthropy today continues its vibrant engagement with important civic initiatives in areas like art, education, health, and the environment.

**An Enduring Tradition**

For the second generation of San Francisco Jews, more settled and prosperous than the first, it was possible to take care of the Jewish community and also to move beyond it, helping create many of the civic institutions that still dominate the cultural landscape. Starting with Mayor Adolph Sutro's establishment of public baths and donation of land to the city in the late nineteenth century, Jewish leaders articulated in words and actions a desire to make a difference as Americans, as San Franciscans, and as Jews, who had learned the lessons of bigotry and were now gratefully free.

In the decades that followed Sutro's gifts, Jewish families were proud to support the creation of other institutions that were civic minded but not Jewish in focus, like Steinhardt Aquarium, Stern Grove, the de Young Museum, and the Fleishhacker Zoo. They went further to establish agencies of change such as the San Francisco Foundation. And today, Jewish leaders continue on the path laid by the generations before them to invest in museums, schools, universities, environmental programs, medical facilities, and cultural institutions that make the Bay Area a leader in innovation, creativity, and finance.

**Jews and Agriculture**

Although gold was the precious commodity that fueled the early growth of San Francisco, in the generation after the Gold Rush Northern California blossomed as a result of its golden fields. Jews were actively involved in the development of agriculture, turning the state into a farming wonderland. Jewish leaders in agriculture included grocery store entrepreneur Abraham Haas, "Grain King of San Francisco" Isaac Friedlander, and David Lubin, who advocated for subsidies and the rights of farmers.

When Golda Meir, the future prime minister of Israel, first visited the Bay Area in the 1930s, one of the first places she went was the rural town of Petaluma, forty miles north of San Francisco, where a few hundred Jews had created a community of ideologically motivated, predominantly socialist poultry farmers. Paralleling the kibbutz movement in pre-state Israel, the Petaluma community impressed Meir with the energy and commitment of those finally able to own and work their own land.

While many of these farmers planned to use their chicken-ranching expertise when they eventually moved to Israel, others saw their island of collective agriculture as its own promised land, encouraged perhaps by the 1925 building of a community center and synagogue. Unfortunately, ideological differences and changes in the business of farming reduced the strength and numbers of this unique Jewish community, and today only a handful of Jewish families remain. Nevertheless, the success of this community helped inspire a number of other Jewish farmers to create food-producing communities consistent with their religious, political, and environmental concerns.

**Jewish Neighborhoods?**

Despite the existence of a robust Jewish neighborhood in the Fillmore in the first half of the twentieth century, Bay Area Jewish life has historically thrived without the dense population centers, institutions of higher Jewish learning, and collection of kosher stores and ritual baths that typically give a Jewish community its center and texture.

With a relative lack of anti-Semitism, and with assimilation the norm since the early Gold Rush days, the Bay Area created a new kind of Jewish life that remains vital despite the community's high rate of interfaith marriage and low levels of synagogue membership. For instance, Northern California has produced no rabbinical schools like those in New York, Los Angeles, Baltimore, or Cincinnati. Yet it is home to many distinguished scholars and Jewish educational programs. This suggests that other experiences—like culture, camps, and cuisine—are important factors in creating a functioning community here, one that is not defined geographically as it is in so many other major cities.

Over the past few decades, local Jewish life has increasingly dispersed geographically, with growing Jewish populations in Marin, the East Bay, and the Peninsula. With these dramatic demographic shifts and with a digital revolution quickly rewiring our sense of community and connection, the question of what constitutes a "Jewish center" has become even more complex.

**The Fillmore District**

After the earthquake of 1906 destroyed much of downtown, the center of San Francisco moved west into what was called the Western Addition, or the Fillmore District. This "Little United Nations" was soon home to most of the city's African American and Japanese American residents, as well as the new center of Jewish life. Jews lived mostly in the southern part of the district, in an area bounded by Haight, Geary, Steiner, and Laguna streets.

For two generations—as the city rebuilt itself and then survived the Great Depression, the internment of its Japanese American citizens, and World War II—the neighborhood sported a density of kosher butchers, restaurants, synagogues, and Yiddish cultural centers that recalled the traditional neighborhoods of Europe or the East Coast. At Langendorf's Bakery, customers looked forward to the jumbo-sized challah bread. At Diller's Strictly Kosher Restaurant, seventy-five cents would buy you the best food in town (if you could get a table). Students at the Central Hebrew School founded the Louis Brandeis Club, where they argued and played ball, while Zionists, socialists, and rabbis of all stripes discussed the future of the Jewish people in the district's many cafes. The neighborhood was also the city's entertainment center, with venues for vaudeville, jazz, and Yiddish theater.

Eventually many families sought out more comfortable neighborhoods and left the Fillmore in the 1930s and 1940s. By the 1960s, the city had lost half of its Jewish residents to the suburbs and other urban centers throughout the region.

**Israel and Zionism**

No issue in the local Jewish community inspires and sparks debate the way Israel does, and it has been this way for almost a century. But it is important to understand that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the widely used phrase "anti-Zionist" did not carry the same meaning as it

does today. It originally signified a pro-American stance among those who chose to make their home in America, rather than in the Promised Land, as immigrants established a new homeland in the Bay Area. While political Zionism gathered strength worldwide after the anti-Semitic pogroms in Europe beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Bay Area Jewish community responded more modestly than communities elsewhere: San Francisco was their Garden of Eden, and in America they were safe.

The San Francisco chapter of the American Council for Judaism (ACJ), a Jewish anti-Zionist movement, was the strongest in the nation, reflecting both local comfort and the ideology of the Reform denomination, which stressed Jewish religion over ethnicity and nationhood. By 1945, the ACJ's San Francisco section made up about a third of the national membership, led by influential lay and religious figures including Rabbi Voorsanger of Temple Emanu-El and Julius Kahn, the German-born Jewish Republican congressman from San Francisco. The Jewish elite of San Francisco, who experienced very little anti-Semitism and held many public offices, found it difficult to imagine the dangers encountered by Jews in Europe or even in American cities that were less welcoming toward Jews. There were, of course, also active Zionist leaders in San Francisco throughout this period.

With news of the Holocaust, the tenor of the local conversation changed. By the time the state of Israel was established in 1948, many ACJ leaders had come to regret their earlier positions, recognizing that the situation in the Bay Area was like no other community and that there was an urgent need for a Jewish state, especially for the Jewish refugees of Europe.

Today, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has continued and the politics of US–Middle East relations has grown more complex, the local Jewish community has fanned out across the spectrum—from strong support of the US-Israel relationship among the overwhelming majority of Jewish organizations to sharp criticism of Israeli policies. Many communal organizations have developed innovative programs to foster a positive engagement with Israel, and the demographics of the Bay Area Jewish community have evolved to include sizable Russian-speaking and Israeli-American communities that are actively engaged with Israel through family connections there. Unlike the earlier ACJ supporters, today's anti-Zionist movement in the Bay Area is often part of the left-wing political movement, criticizing not only the policies of the Israeli government but also the US government's support of it.

There is no discounting the immense emotional connection between the majority of Bay Area Jews and Israel, or the community's commitment to Israel as a refuge for Jews and as a symbol—still evolving—of a just and democratic society.

**The Holocaust and the Bay Area Community's Response**

The Holocaust, the systematic destruction of European Jewry during World War II, was the signal catastrophe of modern Jewish life. The American Jewish response during the late 1930s and 1940s was varied, ranging from urgent political activity to a more passive strategy hobbled by disbelief, an increase in domestic anti-Semitism, and a fear of appearing more loyal to Jews abroad than to American interests.

The Jewish community in San Francisco was committed to resettling Jewish refugees from Europe through its agencies and institutions. Job creation programs and mental health services were

established to provide for the newly arrived refugees. Meanwhile, Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews who had made a peaceful home in Shanghai throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were eventually forced to flee when the Japanese took over Shanghai. Many of the Shanghai Jews found their way to San Francisco, even establishing their own synagogue.

In 1977, a Nazi bookstore opened in a San Francisco neighborhood where a large population of Holocaust survivors lived. Enraged, two survivors broke in and set fire to the inventory. In response, the Jewish community initiated three important projects to raise awareness of the Holocaust and to memorialize those lost in the atrocity: community commemoration of the annual day of remembrance for Holocaust victims (Yom HaShoah) in April; a Holocaust research library and archive; and a public memorial, *Holocaust*, by sculptor George Segal, dedicated in 1984 in Lincoln Park.

**Soviet Jewry**

In 1900 there were more than five million Jews in the Russian Empire, but political, religious, cultural, and economic challenges prompted a mass exodus throughout the twentieth century, with many arriving in the Bay Area in various waves. From the late 1960s onward, more than 1.25 million Jews emigrated from what was then the Soviet Union. Israel absorbed the majority, but many fled to cities around the United States; some forty thousand came to the Bay Area, one of the major centers of Soviet Jewish settlement in North America.

In the early 1970s, San Francisco was a hub of social and political protest, and thus the city served as the stage for rallies, vigils, street theater, and demonstrations in support of Soviet Jewry. Locally, the movement took off with the founding of the Bay Area Council of Soviet Jewry, many of whose leaders visited Russia to meet refuseniks (Jews who were denied exit visas by the Soviet government) and learn firsthand about their struggles. The Council's opening party in 1969 drew thousands to Stern Grove Park, raising awareness and bringing media attention to the struggle of Soviet Jews. The Council continued its activist efforts through the decades, raising money and leading protests (even local rabbis got arrested) and also humanizing the struggle with phone campaigns in which they placed calls to refuseniks in Russia.

The last great wave of Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants came to the Bay Area during perestroika (1987–1991) and after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, when 178,000 Jews left. The robustness of the movement in support of Soviet Jewry had a tremendous impact on all levels of the Bay Area Jewish community, reinforcing the ethos of helping those in need and making the Bay Area a welcoming place for refugees from all over the world.

**Looking to the Future**

For generations the story of Jewish life in America was the story of Jews in New York, their movement west and south an afterthought or a curiosity. However, in recent years a number of historians have argued that not only is Jewish life in the West central to the American story, but the American Jewish future starts here, influencing the nation and international Jewish conversation as it moves eastward. The Bay Area Jewish community continues to grow, and to be as diverse, innovative, and pioneering as it was during its birth. The geography and demographics of the population have shifted as well. The dot-com boom of the 1990s brought creative minds from around the world to San Francisco and Silicon Valley, leading to a huge increase in the Jewish and

Israeli population in the South Peninsula. (In 2004, 32 percent of the region's Jewish population lived in the South Peninsula.) Currently, Israelis make up 4 percent of the Bay Area Jewish population.

Despite low synagogue membership and high rates of intermarriage, the Jewish community thrives, supporting a Jewish Film Festival, two Jewish museums, several JCCs, and creative new organizations like Hazon, Urban Adamah, and G-dcast.com. The story of the Bay Area Jewish community is still being told, and we are all a part of shaping the narrative.

## LESSON 1: WHAT IS A COMMUNITY? WHAT IS A JEWISH COMMUNITY? WHERE AND WHAT IS THE BAY AREA JEWISH COMMUNITY?

**Objectives**
Students define community, identify their communal affiliations, and begin to identify elements of the local Jewish community.

**Warm-up: Four Corners Community Game**
Label four corners (or four tables) in the classroom with four different colors, each representing a different community. Put a stack of corresponding colored cards or stickers in each area. Do not reveal the communities to the students until the end of the exercise.

Red=Jewish
Yellow=American
Green=Bay Area
Blue=Family/Friends/School

Ask students the following questions, mixing up the categories, instructing them to collect a sticker or card each time they visit one of the corners.

Collect a GREEN sticker if you:
Own a Giants or A's jersey
Crossed a bridge in the last 48 hours
Can name the mayor of your city
Have ridden on BART, Muni, CalTrain, or AC transit in the last month
Own a Clipper card
Have visited Alcatraz
Eat organic vegetables
Know what year the Gold Rush began
Have seen the Pacific Ocean in the past month

Collect a YELLOW sticker if you:
Celebrated Independence Day (Fourth of July)
Can name your congressional representative
Have been to Washington, DC
Know how many stars are on the American flag (and why)
Can sing the Star Spangled Banner
Have an American flag at home
Can name five states and their capitals
Know what year the Declaration of Independence was signed
Can name the second president of the United States

Collect a BLUE sticker if you:
Regularly visit relatives outside the Bay Area
Sat down to a family dinner in the last week
Wear an article of clothing from your school
Have been to a family reunion
Have been to a friend's birthday party in the last month

Have participated in an after-school activity
Visit relatives regularly
Invited friends to your house in the last month
Visited a friend's house in the last month

Collect a RED sticker if you:
Visited a synagogue in the past month
Own a *Magen David* (Star of David) necklace
Light Shabbat candles at home
Can have a conversation in Hebrew
Can name the five books of the Torah
Have been to Jewish summer camp
Have been to Israel
Have eaten lox and bagels in the past month
Know the words to the *Shema*
Have visited the Contemporary Jewish Museum

After the series of questions, ask students to tally the number of stickers or cards in each color they collected. Then, color by color, ask students to stand up if they collected more than five cards in each color. During this process, reveal the community represented by each color. Ask one of the standing students to volunteer to share a bit about how they are a part of that community. Finally, ask students who collected more than five cards in more than one color to stand up. Hopefully, this will be the case for many of the students and will be an opportunity to note that the students are a part of multiple communities.

As a class, reflect on the following:

- What communities are you a part of?
- How are they unique?
- How many of you identified as part of more than one community?
- What might this tell us about you?

**Discussion: Where and What Is the Bay Area Jewish Community?**
Review and expand upon the discussion that followed the warm-up activity. Discuss the following questions:

- What is a community?
- What is a Jewish community?
- Where and what is the Bay Area Jewish community?
- What are the symbols of a community? What indicates your membership in a community? (Make sure to include the ephemeral elements of community membership—good feelings, belonging, friendship, etc.)

**Activity: Mapping Your Community**

A Traditional Map
As a class, see if you can plot out your local Jewish community (as described by your class in the previous conversation) on a map. You can try this with a large map of your area on a bulletin board, or have students try to draw their own map of the city or neighborhood.

Note to teachers: You may discover that it is difficult to define physical markers or boundaries of the community; make note of this and discuss with your students. Students should recognize the challenge of physically representing a community.

Then compare your class map to the map from *California Dreaming* (accessible online at http://www.thecjm.org/CADreamingMap/). How are the maps similar? Different? What surprises you about the map created by the CJM? (Make note of the lack of physical features, the fact that the community is spread out over a large geographic region [as opposed to "ghettoized"], etc.). Read the "Jewish Neighborhoods?" text in the "Background Information for Teachers" section to reinforce this point.

A Word Map
Now, see if a "word map" might better represent your local Jewish community. Starting with the words "Our Jewish Community" in the middle of a large piece of paper, brainstorm a list of words to define and describe the community. Use "spokes" and "hubs" to link these words, creating a map (sometimes called a "mind map") using the words students brainstorm.

Encourage students to define the Jewish community in the broadest sense (families, parks, homes, etc.).

Be sure to make note of differing descriptions, reflecting students' multiple perspectives and experiences.

Reflect on the following questions:

- What were the challenges of this activity?
- What are other ways you might represent your community?

**Extension**
Experiment with adding to your traditional map or word map, using drawings, photographs, newspaper clippings, or other materials that might help reflect the local community. Display your giant collaged map in the classroom and invite students to add to it throughout the course of the school year.

**Object Used in This Lesson**
Interactive Map from *California Dreaming*
http://www.thecjm.org/CADreamingMap/

## LESSON 2: THE PIONEERING SPIRIT AND THE GOLD RUSH

**Objectives**
Students learn the role Jews played in the Gold Rush, and connect the pioneering spirit of the 1800s to the characteristics of the Bay Area Jewish community over the past century and a half through today. Students also learn to analyze primary sources.

**Warm-up**
Discuss the following questions:

- Where is your family from?
- When and how did they arrive in Bay Area?

Make a list of family arrivals on the board. Share with students that the first Jews arrived in San Francisco during the time of the Gold Rush (and that there have been many waves of immigration and migration since then.)

**Background: Birth of the Bay Area Jewish Community**
Share information about the history of the birth of the local Jewish community through one of the following:

- Read aloud, summarize, or have students read the historical notes in the "Background Information for Teachers" section of this Curriculum Resource Guide.
- Show part or all of the documentary *Birth of a Community: Jews and the Gold Rush* (1994, directed by Bill Chayes, 42 min.).

Additional resources for teaching the Gold Rush include:

- The timeline in the Appendix of this Curriculum Resource Guide
- "Birth of a Community: Jews and the Gold Rush" curriculum by Leslie Brenner. Contains a comprehensive timeline of Jewish life during the Gold Rush as well as in-depth Gold Rush-related lessons. Available through the Bureau of Jewish Education's Battat Resource Center: http://www.bjesf.org/ed_curriculumres.htm
- "Myth and Reality: The California Gold Rush and Its Legacy," created by the Oakland Museum of California for grade four. Sample lessons and purchase information available at http://museumca.org/goldrush/curriculum/curr-over.html
- "The Speck of the Future," Episode Three of the Ken Burns documentary *The West* (1996, directed by Stephen Ives, section approximately 90 min.)

**pi·o·neer** (from Dictionary.com)

noun

1. a person who is among those who first enter or settle a region, thus opening it for occupation and development by others.
2. one who is first or among the earliest in any field of inquiry, enterprise, or progress: pioneers in cancer research.
3. one of a group of foot soldiers detailed to make roads, dig intrenchments, etc., in advance of the main body.
4. Ecology. an organism that successfully establishes itself in a barren area, thus starting an ecological cycle of life.

verb (used with object)

8. to be the first to open or prepare (a way, settlement, etc.).
9. to take part in the beginnings of; initiate: to pioneer an aid program.
10. to lead the way for (a group); guide.

adjective

11. being the earliest, original, first of a particular kind, etc.: a pioneer method of adult education.
12. of, pertaining to, or characteristic of pioneers: pioneer justice.
13.being a pioneer: a pioneer fur trader.

**Activity: Learning from Primary Sources about the Bay Area Jewish Community's Gold Rush Roots**

Students will delve further into what life was like for Jews in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, and establish the idea of a pioneering spirit.

Define the word "pioneer" (see sidebar).

Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Pass out one primary source document (see list on next page) to each group. Ask students to:

- Read or look carefully at the document.
- Use the Department of Education's worksheet for analyzing primary sources (in Appendix) to observe and interpret this document.
- Additionally, answer the following questions:
    - What do we learn about migrants or immigrants to San Francisco from this document?
    - How would you describe these early immigrants?
    - How does this primary source show a pioneering spirit?

Have groups share out to the class.

Discuss the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a pioneer?
- What qualities did early Jewish immigrants to the Bay Area appear to have?

Primary Source Materials to Distribute to Students (see Appendix)

כשר

**BOARDING HOUSE,**

By E. Alexander, Battery street, near Washington street, at Mr. Prag's building.

כשר

**BOARDING HOUSE.**

By Rubenstein, Montgomery street, between Pine and Bush streets. Meals at all hours, and at moderate charges.

כשר

**BEEF, VEAL, AND MUTTON,**

Of the best quality, killed by a competent and qualified שוחט, always obtainable, at the corner of Sacramento and Dupont streets, by B. Adler.

מצות

Cakes for next פסח will be baked by Marx Isaacs, Bartol street, Broadway. A competent משגיח will be in attendance. Board over פסח at moderate charges.

- Advertisements from the *California Hebrew and English Almanac for the Year 5612*, 1851

- Goldberg, Bowen and Co. store, c. 1899

- Mining Camp, c. 1848–52

- "We Have Kosher Meat, a Burial Ground, and a Synagogue," Samuel H. Cohen, 1851

- "America . . . Where No Kind of Work Is Ever Shameful," Abraham Abrahamsohn, 1856

- "Rapid and Glorious Results" (two excerpts), Daniel Levy, 1855–58

- "I Had the Intention to Emigrate," Henry Cohn, c. 1855

**Assignment: Getting to Know Pioneers from the Gold Rush and Beyond**

Have students work individually or in small groups to research one of the historical figures listed on the following page (feel free to add or subtract to meet your classroom needs).

For each figure, ask students to answer the following questions:

- When did this person arrive in the Bay Area?
- Why did this person come to the Bay Area?
- What is he/she best known for?
- Why might he/she be considered a pioneer?
- Do you think this person should be considered a pioneer? Why or why not?

Have students share back with the class, and revisit the following ideas:

- Early settlers to San Francisco had to travel long distances under difficult conditions in order to get to California.
- Early settlers had to be able to survive challenging living conditions in a "Wild West" atmosphere once they arrived in the Bay Area.
- The early generations of Jewish settlers in the Bay Area experienced a relatively open and unstructured society, which allowed access to political, cultural, economic, and religious opportunities.
- The region's first Jews arrived in the Bay Area during the "birth" of San Francisco when everyone was considered a "newcomer."
- There was relatively little anti-Semitism in this new community, which was made up of a mixture of settlers from around the globe.
- Jews lived in close proximity to residents of other backgrounds, rather than in separate Jewish neighborhoods, and assimilated rapidly into the larger society.

Jewish Pioneers for Student Research (see Appendix for images and biographical information)

**Washington Bartlett:** First Jewish mayor of San Francisco

**Albert Bender:** Leading patron of the arts in San Francisco in the 1920s and 1930s

**Bassya Bibel:** Brought Yiddish arts and culture to San Francisco

**Rachel ("Ray") Frank:** First woman to act as a Jewish religious leader in the United States; known as "The Girl Rabbi of the Golden West"

**Isaac Friedlander:** Wheat merchant responsible for exporting California wheat to Asia and Europe

**Abraham Haas:** Established grocery store industry on West Coast

**August Helbing:** Founder of the Eureka Benevolent Society, the first Jewish charitable organization in the region

**Isaias Hellman:** Banker and key nineteenth-century California financier

**Solomon Heydenfeldt:** First Jewish justice of the Supreme Court of California; fought for religious freedoms

**Florence Prag Kahn:** First Jewish woman to serve in US Congress

**David Lubin:** Helped establish the California Fruit Growers' Union

**Hannah Marks Solomons:** Sought to improve the lives of working women

**Selina Solomons:** Fought for women's right to vote

**Isaac Stern:** Violinist; international leader and ambassador for music

**Joseph B. Strauss:** Engineer instrumental in the design of the Golden Gate Bridge

**Levi Strauss:** Created the world's first blue jeans; founder of Levi Strauss and Co.

**Adolph Sutro:** Second Jewish mayor of San Francisco

**Discussion: Pioneers Beyond the Gold Rush**
People often comment that the "pioneer spirit" still exists among Jews in the Bay Area. What might this look like today? Who would you consider the pioneers of today?

**Wrap-up**
Compare and contrast: How are the pioneers who immigrated during the Gold Rush similar to or different from the pioneers of today?

**Objects Used in This Lesson**

- Primary Sources (in Appendix)
- Jewish Pioneers: Images and Biographical Information (in Appendix)

## LESSON 3: LOCAL JEWISH HISTORY AND MY COMMUNITY

**Objectives**
Students learn about important figures and moments in Bay Area Jewish History and make connections to people, events, and places in their own lives. They explore unique elements of their communities and contribute to the Contemporary Jewish Museum's exhibition.

**Activity: Getting to Know Unsung Heroes and Ordinary People in the Bay Area Jewish Community**

Part 1: Rachel Schreiber's *Site Reading*
As a class, look at one or more of Rachel Schreiber's photographs from her series entitled *Site Reading*. (See the information on Schreiber's project in the Appendix. Hard copies of the photographs are in the Appendix and high-resolution digital images are on the enclosed CD-ROM.)

Before sharing the text with students, analyze the image using the following questions:

- What do you notice about this photo?
- How would you describe this place?
- Is this a place you recognize? If so, where or what is it?

Explain that artist Rachel Schreiber took these photographs and incorporated writing to represent key figures in Bay Area Jewish history.

Read the companion text aloud.

- What is the connection between image and text?
- Why do you think Schreiber selected this image to represent this person? What alternative image might you choose?

After looking at several photographs, ask the following questions:

- What do the figures Schreiber depicts have in common?
- Why do you think she might have selected them?
- How have they contributed to Jewish life (or secular life) in the Bay Area?

Part Two: Documentary Film: *Becoming Home*
Watch a few segments of the documentary film *Becoming Home*, commissioned for *California Dreaming* (found on the enclosed CD-ROM or on YouTube through the links below). Suggested clips:

- "Shabbat Shalom": Renna Khuner-Haber (Hazon) http://youtu.be/6QGoBmT-dB4
- "To Everything There Is a Season": Leo Mark Horowitz (Kindertransport, Wilderness Torah) http://youtu.be/bTGuzcKk2ms
- "Just Like Family": Paula Pretlow (African American, convert) http://youtu.be/qNUUfCocGTo
- "Still Seeking": Lili Sirota (Russian émigré) http://youtu.be/oABpdeCwnXY

Discuss the documentary using the following questions:

- What did you notice about the stories of the people featured in the documentary?
- What do we learn about our community by hearing the stories of these "ordinary" people?
- Do you think these individuals' stories are unique to the Bay Area Jewish community? Why or why not? If so, how?
- How are these people similar to or different from the early Jewish pioneers of the Bay Area?

Using Schreiber's photographs and the documentary as a starting point, brainstorm and discuss:

- What is unique about your local Jewish community?
- Who are some ordinary people who have interesting stories that should be told?

**Assignment: Create Your Own Symbolic Portraits**

Rachel Schreiber selected figures who were not well known or prominently featured in textbooks, but made significant contributions to their community (review some of these contributions, if necessary). The film *Becoming Home* features Bay Area residents with unique personal stories, experiences, and accomplishments.

Discuss:

- Who are some people in our community whom we would like to celebrate? What have they accomplished?

Select an individual from the community to represent in a symbolic portrait. In thinking about possible people to depict, you may want to encourage students to focus on particular themes in local history that are not typically covered in the curriculum, such as Soviet Jewry and émigrés, the environmental movement, counterculture, or political activism. The subject could be a fellow student, teacher at your school, community activist, etc.

Brainstorm ways to represent the person selected using the questions below.

- What are this person's contributions?
- How might we represent these contributions visually? With objects? Images? Colors? Places? Words or phrases?
- What art techniques might we use to represent the images, words, colors, etc. brainstormed above? Photography? Collage? Painting? Drawing? Digital art?
- What information about this person would we want to provide to viewers? How would we integrate the text and image? (Rachel Schreiber gives us a very traditional separation of text and image, but students should feel free to be creative with this.)

Have students create their own symbolic portrait of the figure of their choosing. Students may opt to take photographs, create drawings, paintings, or collages. You may even want to collaborate with your school's art teacher to create these portraits.

Create an in-class exhibition of these portraits, inviting other classes to view them and learn about these community figures.

**Extension**
Ask students to grab a digital camera or camera phone and see if they can capture the events, places, and people that make our community unique. Upload student photos to the CJM's interactive photo exhibit at http://www.flickr.com/groups/californiadreaming/.

**Objects Used in This Lesson**

- Rachel Schreiber's *Site Reading* (in Appendix and on CD-ROM)
- Documentary Film: *Becoming Home* (on CD-ROM)
- Flickr photostream (at http://www.flickr.com/groups/californiadreaming/)

**MOSES AT HALF DOME:**
**LOOKING AT THE WINDOWS OF CONGREGATION SHERITH ISRAEL**
**A Lesson in Bay Area Jewish History and Visual Literacy**

Congregation Sherith Israel, founded in 1851, was one of the first congregations established in San Francisco (Congregation Emanu-El was founded the same year). In 1905, the current synagogue building at California and Webster streets was completed. The sanctuary features a unique stained glass window, designed by artist Emile Pissis, brother of Sherith Israel's architect Albert Pissis, that reveals much about the nature of the Bay Area Jewish community. Using the image in the Appendix or on the enclosed CD-ROM, observe the image carefully with your class, asking the following questions:

- What do you notice about this window?
- What people do you see?
- What objects do you see?
- What is familiar about this image?
- What is unfamiliar?
- What questions do you have about this window?
- What do you notice about the setting?
- What might be going on here?

Explain that this window is called *Moses Presenting the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel at Yosemite*.

- How is this scene similar to or different from the traditional story of the revelation of the Ten Commandments?

As we observed, there are the many unusual aspects of this window:

- Flags
- People (human figures are not ususally depicted in synagogue art due to the Jewish prohibition against graven images)
- Setting (this scene is set in Yosemite, rather than on Mt. Sinai, where the Ten Commandments were given to Moses, according to the Torah)

Discuss these questions with the class:

- Why might Sherith Israel have chosen to relocate Revelation (the giving of the Law, or Ten Commandments), a key event in Jewish history, to Yosemite?
- What might this say about the congregation or the San Francisco Jewish community?
- How do you think someone from outside the Bay Area might react to this window?

**Congregation Sherith Israel: Background Information**

The sanctuary of Congregation Sherith Israel is adorned with what some call the key image of Bay Area Jewish life: a set of stained glass windows portraying Moses carrying the Ten Commandments down from Half Dome in Yosemite. Sherith Israel was founded in 1851, almost simultaneously with Congregation Emanu-El, and initially represented the more Orthodox traditions of Polish Prussian Jews. It eventually followed the trend toward the more liberal Reform denomination. Its second building, which was built on Post Street in 1870 under the leadership of Rabbi Henry Vidaver, reflected its reformed approach, with the sanctuary explicitly designed for mixed seating. Wearing a yarmulke became optional; Friday evening services were initiated, a choir introduced, and a new prayer book chosen.

While Sherith Israel's current home on California Street is an architectural landmark, there were many challenges on the way to creating this synagogue. Within five years of the congregation's founding, two of its temporary homes were destroyed by fires. With an increase in membership, the congregation erected successively larger synagogues, culminating in 1905 with the opening of the current building, designed by Albert Pissis, a prominent San Francisco architect who trained at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The synagogue withstood the earthquake a year later and fortunately, the ensuing fires never reached this neighborhood.

The centrality of Sherith Israel in the civic consciousness was made clear after the 1906 earthquake, when the synagogue's grand sanctuary temporarily housed the City of San Francisco's courts. Ironically, one of the best-known Jewish figures in San Francisco, criminal boss Abe Reuff, was tried and convicted in the synagogue itself, and defended by his own rabbi.

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM

# California Dreaming:
# Jewish Life in the Bay Area from the Gold Rush to the Present

## Curriculum Resource Guide

## APPENDIX

## CONTENTS

# TIMELINE

## From 1,000 to 7,150,739 Residents
## A Brief History of the Pioneer Spirit in the Bay Area

This timeline illuminates key events that helped shape the Bay Area as we know it today. It also provides a context for understanding how the development of Jewish life in the Bay Area informs and is informed by the general history of the region.

4000 BCE
Indigenous Ohlone and Miwok peoples thrive in what is now known as the Bay Area of California.

1579
British navigator Sir Francis Drake lands north of San Francisco Bay and claims the territory for England.

1652
The first Jewish colony in the New World is founded in Recife, Brazil.

1654
The first Jewish settlers in North America arrive in New Amsterdam, now known as New York City.

1769
Spanish navigators José Ortega and Gaspar de Portola spot the entrance to the San Francisco Bay and the area is claimed for Spain.

1776
The United States declares independence from England; the Revolutionary War continues until 1783.

Spanish evangelists found Mission San Francisco de Asís (now Mission Dolores). The original adobe church remains the oldest intact building in San Francisco.

1777
El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe is established as a farming community to provide for the region's Spanish military posts (called presidios).

1812
Russian fur traders establish Fort Ross north of San Francisco. Russian Hill is named for these early settlers.

1821
Alta California, including Yerba Buena (now San Francisco) and the rest of the Bay Area, becomes a Mexican territory when Mexico gains independence from Spain.

1846
The Mexican-American War begins.

1847
Yerba Buena is renamed San Francisco.

1848
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is signed, ending the Mexican-American War and ceding California to the United States.

Gold is discovered in Coloma, California, marking the start of the gold rush.

The first wave of Chinese immigrants arrives in San Francisco.

Revolutions arise throughout Europe, with citizens demanding participatory democracy and better living conditions.

1849
The first Jewish religious services are held in San Francisco.

1850
California is admitted to the United States as the thirty-first state. San Francisco and San Jose are both incorporated as cities.

The Act for the Government Protection of Indians is passed in California, allowing settlers to enslave native peoples as laborers, a practice perpetuated by individuals capitalizing on the Gold Rush.

1851
The Great Fire destroys three-quarters of San Francisco. Citizens rebuild a quarter of the city in mere weeks.

1852
Oakland is incorporated as a city.

1854
The San Francisco Mint opens. Within a year, the Mint turns four billion dollars of raw gold into currency.

1855
The Panama Railway is completed, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans as well as the continents of North and South America.

1861
The Civil War begins. During the war, which lasts until 1865, Bay Area residents send gold east, recruit volunteer soldiers, and maintain protective forts along the coast.

1865
President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated in Washington, DC.

An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 devastates the Bay Area.

1867
Lake Merritt in Oakland is created from the headwaters of the San Francisco Bay.

1868
The University of California is founded in Berkeley.

1869
On May 10, Leland Stanford ceremoniously drives in the last spike of the Transcontinental Railroad.

1870
Golden Gate Park is founded.

1873
San Francisco's first cable car railway opens on the Clay Street hill north of Market Street.

1878
The city of Berkeley is incorporated.

1879
San Francisco's California Electric Company (now Pacific Gas and Electric) supplies customers with electricity to light their homes.

1880
Mining engineer and entrepreneur George Hearst purchases the San Francisco Examiner, a small daily newspaper.

1882
The Chinese Exclusion Act is passed to prevent Chinese immigration. The only American law overtly forbidding immigration on the basis of race, it affects immigration policy for decades.

1891
Leland Stanford Junior University is founded.

1906
An earthquake centered in San Francisco, with a magnitude of 7.8, destroys buildings and infrastructure in the city. The resulting fires lead to even more devastation.

1907
San Francisco streetcar workers go on a major strike, one of several examples of strong organized labor that mark Bay Area history.

1908
President Theodore Roosevelt declares Muir Woods the tenth national monument.

1909
The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an African American civil-rights organization, is founded.

1910
The Angel Island immigration station opens, serving as the "Ellis Island of the West" until 1940, when fires destroy the administration buildings.

The Mexican Revolution begins. The struggle continues into the 1920s, even after the Mexican Constitution is established in 1917.

1911
California women win the right to vote. Nine years later, the 19th Amendment is ratified, granting women across the United States the right to vote.

1913
The Raker Bill grants San Francisco the right to dam the Tuolomne River in the Hetch Hetchy Valley to supply water to the city, despite John Muir's movement to preserve the valley.

1914

World War I begins, continuing until 1919.

1915
The first transcontinental telephone conversation takes place between Alexander Graham Bell in New York and Thomas Watson in San Francisco.

The Panama Pacific International Exposition is held in San Francisco to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal.

1917
The Russian Revolution deposes the czar and results in the formation of the Soviet Union.

1920
Prohibition is established, remaining in effect nationally until 1933.

1927
The Mills Field Municipal Airport opens in South San Francisco. It is renamed San Francisco Municipal Airport in 1931.

1929
The New York Stock Exchange crashes and the Great Depression follows.

1931
The unemployment rate in San Francisco is 12.5 percent. The average rate of unemployment nationally was 3 percent before the market crashed in 1929. (The rate of unemployment in California in 2011 was just over 12 percent.)

1934
Longshoremen go on strike all along the West Coast, culminating in the unionization of all Pacific ports.

1935
Amelia Earhart makes her first pan-Pacific flight from Honolulu to Oakland.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) is established to employ millions of workers in creating public works throughout the country.

1936
The Bay Bridge opens to traffic, connecting San Francisco to the East Bay via Yerba Buena Island.

1937
The Golden Gate Bridge opens with the longest suspension main span in the world.

1939
The Golden Gate International Exposition opens on Treasure Island.

World War II begins.

1941
With the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States enters World War II.

1942

The evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans begins in San Francisco with the opening of Tanforan "Assembly Center." The center's peak population reaches 10,046, two-thirds of whom are American citizens.

The bracero program is initiated to bring temporary workers from Mexico to work in California (and eventually throughout the United States).

1945
The United Nations charter is signed in San Francisco.

1947
The Community Service Organization (CSO), a California Latino civil rights organization, is founded.

1948
The state of Israel is established.

1957
A trial in San Francisco clears City Lights bookstore owner Lawrence Ferlinghetti of obscenity charges brought against him for publishing Allan Ginsberg's poem *Howl*.

1962
The National Farm Workers Association labor union (now known as United Farm Workers) is established by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

1963
President John F. Kennedy is assassinated.

1965
US combat units are deployed in Vietnam; the US involvement in the war will last for ten years.

The Grateful Dead rock band is formed.

1966
Bobby Seale and Huey Newton organize the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense at Oakland City College.

1967
The Summer of Love takes over San Francisco's Haight Ashbury neighborhood.

The Six Day War is fought between Israel and the United Arab Republic.

1968
Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act.

A student strike at San Francisco State University leads to the creation of the first ethnic studies program in the nation.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund is established, the outgrowth of a longstanding Chicano movement.

Philip Noyce, Gordon Moore, and Andy Grove found Intel in Mountain View.

The first Whole Earth Catalog is published; the catalog's 1972 edition wins the National Book Award.

1969
American Indians occupy Alcatraz Island. The occupation has a lasting influence on national Native American policy and activism.

1974
The Transbay Tube opens, connecting the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system under the bay.

1978
Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone are assassinated.

1981
The AIDS epidemic begins.

1989
The Loma Prieta earthquake hits on October 17, while the San Francisco Giants and Oakland A's play in the World Series. The magnitude 6.9 quake is centered in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

1991
A fire in Oakland and Berkeley razes thousands of homes in the East Bay.

The Soviet Union is dissolved and many republics establish their independence.

1999
The Domestic Partnership Act passes, making California the first state to grant legal recognition to same-sex relationships.

2001
September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon take place.

The first annual Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festival is held in Golden Gate Park.

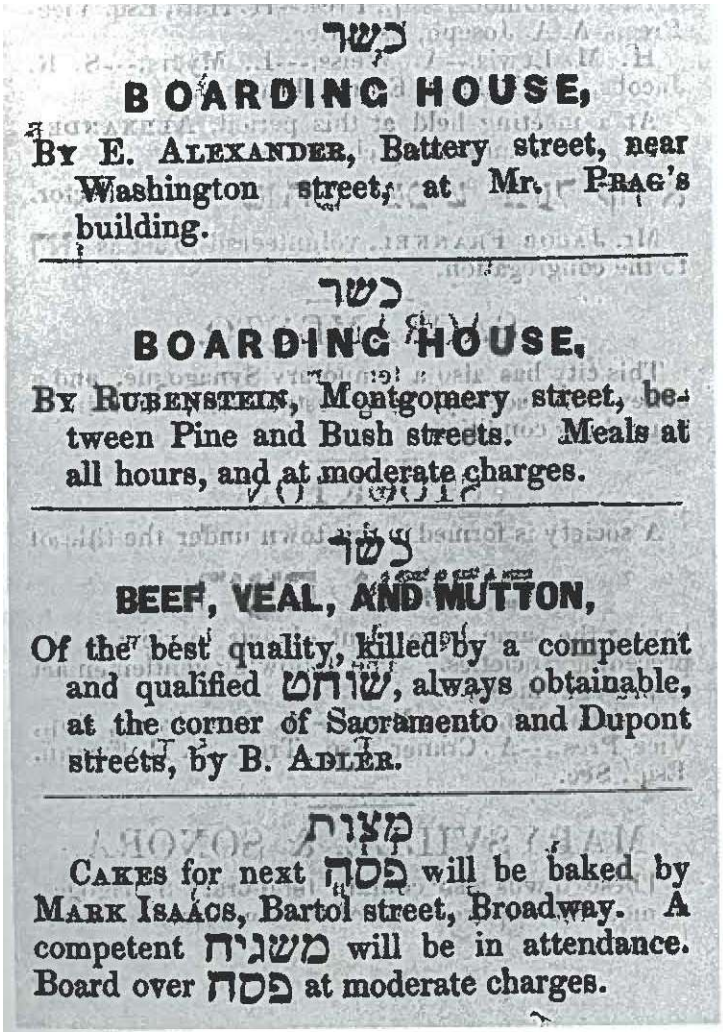
2004
Google goes public, offering shares of the company to investors and reinvigorating Silicon Valley as a locus of technology.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples; the California Supreme Court later declares the marriages invalid.

2008
Proposition 8 is passed, amending the California Constitution to ban same-sex marriage and sparking an ongoing legal battle.

2010
The San Francisco Giants win the World Series.

**PRIMARY SOURCES**



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Advertisements from the *California Hebrew and English Almanac for the Year 5612* (San Francisco: Albion Press, 1851), compiled by Alexander Iser, courtesy of the American Jewish Historical Society, reproduced in Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 71.


Goldberg, Bowen & Co. Grocers [2800 California St. at Divisadero, San Francisco], c. 1899, albumen print, Courtesy of California Historical Society

Hodges Mining Camp, California Gold Country, c. 1848–52, silver gelatin print, Courtesy of California Historical Society

**"We Have Kosher Meat, a Burial Ground, and a Synagogue"**

*This is an excerpt from a letter from Samuel H. Cohen to his sister. Cohen, a young immigrant from England, was a leader of Congregation Sherith Israel. The letter was originally published in the Jewish Chronicle of London in 1851.*

We have Kosher meat, a burial-ground, and a synagogue [Sherith Israel] which was formed, three days before Passover, by twelve single young men and one married man. We have now forty-two members, principally English, and we have some old married men to lead us the correct way. Our form of prayers is that of the Great Synagogue [of London]. We voted in our officers, who are all married men except two. I was elected honorary secretary, and had thirty-eight out of forty-two votes. There was a congregation formed last year but they could not agree; they have, however, again formed themselves into a congregation [Emanu-El], and number sixty members, Germans, Portuguese and Americans, but it is not supposed it will last long. Ours is considered the correct congregation, as we have a Shochet [written in Hebrew], but for which office they have no competent person. Our president is Mr. Joseph, an American, our treasurer, Mr. Hart, a Pole. Mr. Isaacs, of Brown's Lane, baked the matzos for Passover, with whom twelve of us youngsters passed the festival. I do not think that the Jews in any part of the world could have kept the Passover more strictly than we did, and I am happy to say he intends to keep a kosher house all the year round, so that we shall be enabled to eat lawful meats.[1]

[1] Samuel H. Cohen, *Jewish Chronicle* (London), July 18, 1851, quoted in Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 70–72.

**"America . . . Where No Kind of Work Is Ever Shameful"**

*This is an 1856 account of America by traveler and adventurer Abraham Abrahamsohn, dictated to a German friend. He arrived in California in 1851, working as a miner, a merchant, a tailor, and a mohel, among other things.*

With a golden hope in my breast I came to the country and the city [San Francisco] and took lodgings in a guesthouse on the dock, a big wooden stall, until I should have the opportunity to find a store to rent. So I had time to look around the city. There was no trace of houses such as we see in Europe except for a few stone public buildings. Frames of narrow boards and lath, covered with many-colored thin cotton cloth on the sides and over the top, generally a mounteback firm with giant letters over the entrance make up the dwellings of the people; the unpaved streets must be bottomless when it rains; mostly the shacks had steps like ladders made out of old barrel staves, and the floors likewise. On the floors lay, even at night, great heaps of goods of all kinds, and it was said that robbery was uncommon since punishment for stealing was the gallows and for even petty theft there were lashings and ears cut off. Such severity was necessary with the enormous hordes of rabble, and up in the gold region lynch law provided quick justice as we shall see later. The shacks were expensive to build because of the high price of wood brought from afar by ships.

On all the faces of the people I met, and as well from their bearing and their business, one distinctly saw the desire to get rich in this Eldorado as soon as possible and to leave still sooner.[2]

[2] Abraham Abrahamsohn, *An Interesting Account of the Travels of Abraham Abrahamsohn to America, Especially to the Goldmines of California and Australia* (Ilmenau, Germany: Carl Friedrich Trommsdorff, 1856), translator unknown, quoted in Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 74.

**"Rapid and Glorious Results," Excerpt 1**

*Daniel Levy was a French language teacher who moved to San Francisco in 1855 and became involved in Temple Emanu-El. The letter below was originally published in the* Archives Israelites *in Paris.*

As soon as the first mad excitement of the gold fever had passed, the Jews of San Francisco bethought themselves of the duties that their religious origins imposed on them and as a result, they opened places of prayer to observe their religion. But their spirit of brotherhood showed itself first by the establishment, as early as December 1849, of the First Hebrew Benevolent Society, the earliest of all the welfare organizations which abound on these newly discovered shores. Another one, called the Eureka Benevolent Society, followed in short order. In time, as the number of families increased, the ladies joined together and founded a society to help the poor and mutual aid society, which is destined to have a great development and success which is highly desirable, since it is a case of welfare and intellectual and moral culture at the same time.[3]

[3] Daniel Levy, *Archives Israelites* (Paris), 1855–58, "Letters about the Jews of California: 1855–1858," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 3:2 (1971), quoted in Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 83.

**"Rapid and Glorious Results," Excerpt 2**

*Daniel Levy was a French language teacher who moved to San Francisco in 1855 and became involved in Temple Emanu-El. The letter below was originally published in the* Archives Israelites *in Paris.*

Anyone leaving California in those days [early 1850s], not so long ago in time, but far removed by events, and returning today, would certainly not recognize it. Instead of the social chaos he had left, he would be pleased and delighted to find about a thousand Jewish families with pure morals and with homes that contained all the conditions necessary for comfort and even luxury. In place of the old and miserable hovels, ravaged by vermin and constantly exposed to total destruction by fire, he would see the elegant brick homes or dainty and graceful cottages, hidden among trees and flowers; charming nests for people, where Americans have learned so well to shelter their domestic bliss.

These families are linked by bonds of neighborliness and friendship. The ladies, almost all of them young, well brought up, more or less musical (there is a piano in every parlor), get together either for Saturday or Sunday visits, at the Temple, at dances or at the theater, or for their charitable meetings. All this created a charming and serene social life. I do not think that many European communities can boast of as large a number of young and happy households living in affluence. The influence of family feeling has restrained the former passionate fervor and led men back to the true path in which human society should move.

In an earlier letter I spoke of the various welfare and other societies that were formed almost by magic. I shall only mention that marriages have become very frequent, and this explained by the great number of young people who, realizing the impossibility of returning home quickly with a readymade fortune, prefer to settle down here and enjoy family life. Another more remarkable and less easily explained fact is the enormous imbalance between the boys and girls that are born. In the eight months that he has been in office, the president of Congregation Emanu-El has registered twenty-seven children, twenty-four of whom were boys [. . .][4]

[4] Daniel Levy, *Archives Israelites* (Paris), 1855–58, "Letters about the Jews of California: 1855–1858," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 3:2 (1971), quoted in Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 91.

**"I Had the Intention to Emigrate"**

*Born in a small town on the border of Poland and Prussia, Henry Cohn traveled to California from the East Coast before returning to Germany. He wrote an account of his travels for his family on the occasion of his fiftieth wedding anniversary. This excerpt tells of his journey to the West Coast.*

The Pacific Railroad was not yet in existence in those days, and steamboats to California left only every two weeks. So bought a steamboat ticket for San Francisco over the Panama Isthmus and left New York on May 5th on a beautiful day. The boat trip to Aspinwall called Colon today took about eight days and it was an excellent and most interesting trip. All berths on the boat were taken and the passengers were, thanks to the good weather, in a good mood and very good-natured. Aspinwall was a very lively town because of the many immigrants, and also on account of the Isthmus R.R., was being built, which at this time and expedited to the terminal station [end of the line]. Some of the passengers got on donkeys[,] I and the others walked a stretch until evening. We spent the night together in the open and we posted watch against any possible attackers, because in those days the road across the Isthmus, about 47 English miles in length was supposed to be very dangerous, although less so for those arriving than for those returning from California. The night however went by without incident.

We started the next morning very early, so that we arrived very tired at about four in the afternoon in Panama. My luggage which I and some friends had entrusted to an almost naked Mexican kid with a donkey was found again in Panama. To our great disappointment we learned that the Steamer "Golden Gate" which was supposed to have picked us up, had been pirated. Consequently, we were forced to spend fourteen days in this very unhealthy and uncomfortable Panama City, while we waited for the next steamer to pick us up. I did not see much of interest, apart from a great many worthwhile large Catholic churches, very dirty streets, and beggars in rags.

I used this time, to sell as much of the wares I had brought along. With this I was so successful that I practically paid my expenses for the trip in this manner. We were finally rescued at the expected time by the arrival of the beautiful steamer "Sacramento." This trip on the Pacific Ocean, with the exception of the stretch of the Gulf of California, mostly on the coast of the southern states, was exceptionally hot but glorious. The time passed quickly and agreeably, and so we arrived in about twelve days, around the 10th of June in San Francisco, where I right away met several relatives and quickly got used to life there. [. . .]

San Francisco situated in the hills was even then a really beautiful city. It had lots of beautiful stores and lots of traffic. The climate with summer and winter almost equally mild is glorious. Never once did I experience rain in California from April till September. Like in the East, I started immediately to peddle my goods, especially in the surrounding country.[5]

[5] Henry Cohn, "Memories from Yesteryear on the Occasion of My Golden Anniversary Dedicated to My Descendants," Stettin, Germany, May 24, 1914, trans. Lisette Georges, quoted in Ava F. Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 131–32.

# Photo Analysis Worksheet

**Step 1. Observation**

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

| People | Objects | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
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**Step 2. Inference**

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from the photograph.

**Step 3. Questions**

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find answers to them?

Designed and developed by the
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration,
Washington, DC 20408

# Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ○ Newspaper | ○ Map | ○ Advertisement |
| ○ Letter | ○ Telegram | ○ Congressional Record |
| ○ Patent | ○ Press Release | ○ Census Report |
| ○ Memorandum | ○ Report | ○ Other |

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Interesting Letterhead | ☐ Notations |
| ☐ Handwritten | ☐ "RECEIVED" stamp |
| ☐ Typed | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Seals | |

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:

   POSITION (TITLE):

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E)

   A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

   B. Why do you think this document was written?

   C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

   D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

   E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

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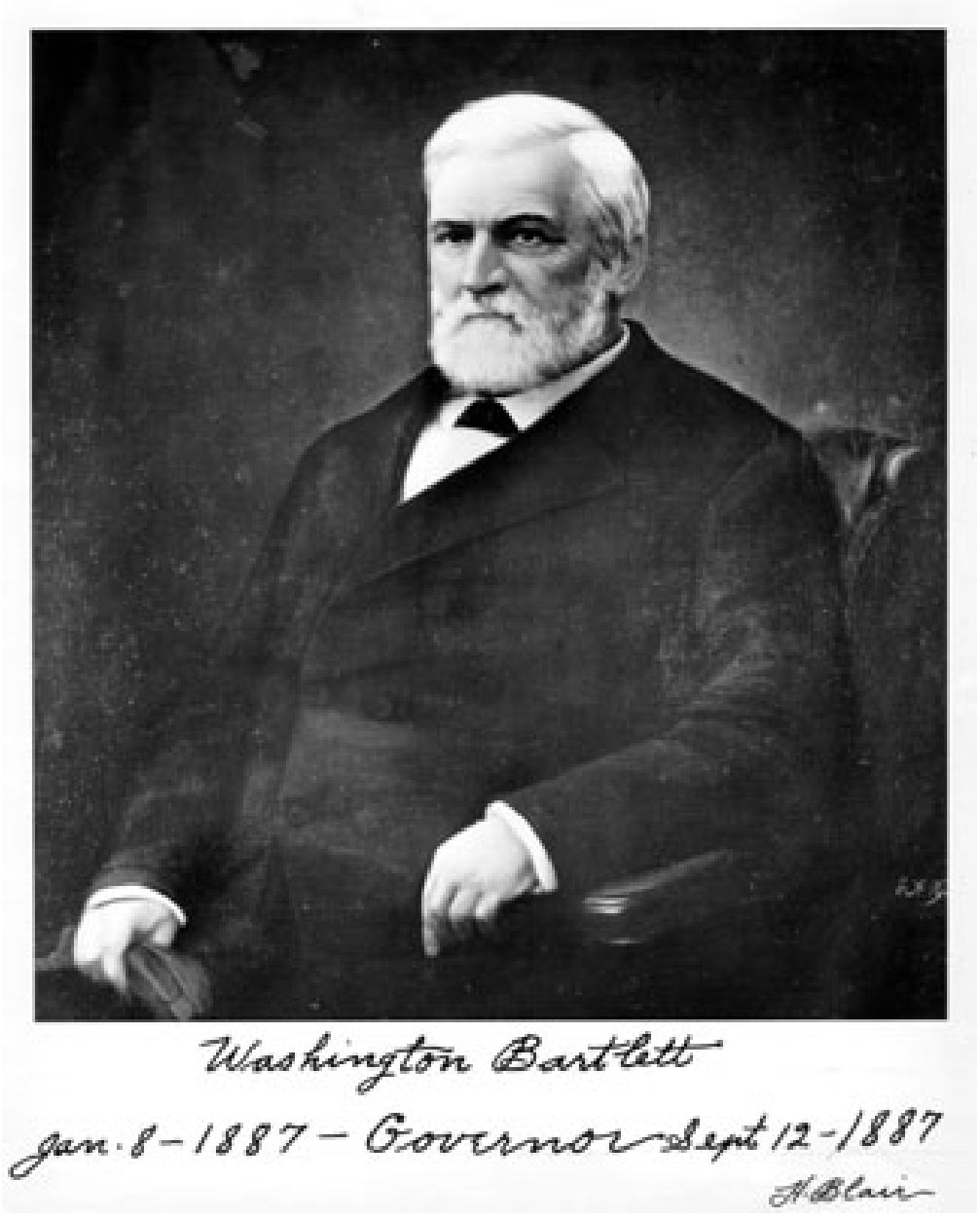
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration,
Washington, DC 20408**

# JEWISH PIONEERS:
# IMAGES AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION




**Washington Bartlett** (1824–1887)
Washington Bartlett was a man of firsts: the first Jewish mayor of San Francisco and the first Jewish governor of California, Bartlett began an extraordinary legacy of Jewish leaders who have served as elected officials in the Bay Area. Very little is documented about this twentieth mayor of the city, who originally hailed from Savannah, Georgia. When Bartlett first arrived in San Francisco, he published the first daily newspaper on the West Coast. He also published the first English-language book ever printed in California, entitled *California as It Is and as It May Be or a Guide to the Gold Region*. He was a member of the California Senate before serving as mayor of San Francisco from 1882 to 1886, when he was elected governor of California. He died from complications from a stroke after having served for only nine months.

Washington Bartlett, 16th Governor of California, n.d.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

**August Helbing** (1823–1896)
A recent immigrant from Munich, dry-goods dealer August Helbing was only twenty-six years old when he came forward to establish the Eureka Benevolent Society, a charitable organization that would set the stage for the development and growth of future Jewish social service agencies. He later wrote:

> [Members] went out to the incoming ships in boats and brought [the Jewish passengers] to shore, the sick were taken to little chambers of the members who gave them a portion of their plain accommodations and plain fare. It was a God-sent blessing to the sick Israelite to be taken from the overcrowded ship and be met by his brothers in the faith and cared for.

The Eureka Benevolent Society remained the largest of the region's Jewish social service organizations. In 1977, it merged with Homewood Terrace and became Jewish Family and Children Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties (JFCS), as it is still known today.

*We had no suitable way of spending our evenings. Gambling resorts, theatres, the only refuge then existing in 'Frisco to spend an evening, had no attraction for us. We passed the time back of our stores . . . disgusted and sick from the loneliness. . . . Besides, our services were in active demand; every steamer brought a number of our co-religionists, and they did not always come provided with means. In fact some came penniless, having invested their all in a passage to the Coast. Some came sick and sore, and it needed often times a respectable portion of our earnings to satisfy all the demands made upon us.*

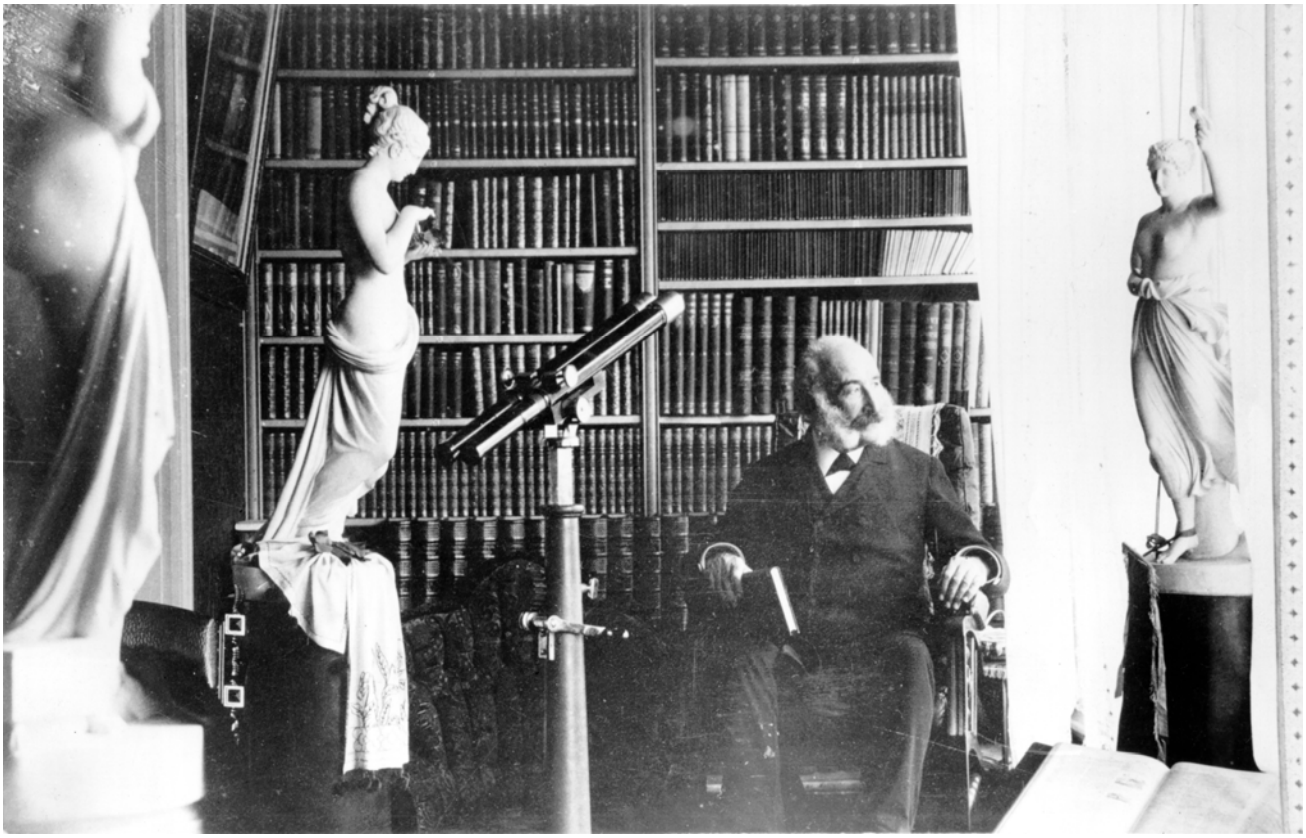
—August Helbing, 1850

August Helbing, n.d.
Jewish Family and Children's Services Archive

**Solomon Heydenfeldt** (1816–1890)
Louis D. Brandeis, the first Jewish Supreme Court justice, was lauded as "the People's Lawyer" because of his incorruptible advocacy for those without a voice. The Bay Area had its own Brandeis in Solomon Heydenfeldt, the first Jewish justice of the Supreme Court of California. Elected by direct vote of the people in 1852, he argued for justice in water rights and religious freedom and served until 1857, when he returned to private practice. Heydenfeldt may be best remembered for his 1858 defense of a Jewish merchant who had been arrested in Sacramento for selling clothes on a Sunday. Heydenfeldt successfully argued the case, defending Jewish people's right to work on Sundays and creating a major shift toward a more open and tolerant society in which religions were equally respected. When requirements changed for attorneys, he refused to take a test oath for lawyers, and retired early from the bar.

While Heydenfeldt had a luminous career, it is often shadowed by his conflicted relationship to immigrants. In Alabama, Heydenfeldt was vocal about his firm anti-slavery beliefs, while in San Francisco, he ruled that Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants had no right to testify against white citizens, thus deepening discrimination toward this population.

Solomon Heydenfeldt, n.d.
California Historical Society



**Adolph Sutro** (1830–1898)
Although Washington Bartlett was technically the first Jewish mayor of San Francisco, the city's first identifiably Jewish chief with an enduring legacy was Adolph Sutro, who earned his fortune by building a tunnel through the region's biggest mine, the Comstock Lode. San Francisco is famous for its robustly secular Jewish population and outward-looking Jewish leadership, and the tradition got its start with Sutro, who is often referred to as the first Jewish mayor of a major American city.

To the general public, Sutro represented the innovation and generosity of a newly wealthy region. As one of the largest landowners in San Francisco, Sutro was eager to beautify the city and reach out to the middle and working classes, providing new opportunities for education and leisure. Sutro recognized that education was an instrumental factor in combating poverty, and he was a leader in establishing kindergartens throughout the city, which became a national model. He also planted millions of trees; opened an aquarium; donated the land to create UCSF; and welcomed people to his garden, eventually transforming it into the public Sutro Baths, located by the Pacific Ocean near the Cliff House. In the 1920s, thousands of people made the journey on an electric train, also built by Sutro, to enjoy the seawater in a unique setting. What remains today are ruins from a fire in 1966.

This deeply populist mayor remained steadfastly secular in his personal observance. Sutro traveled throughout the world and collected over 250,000 publications, constituting the largest private book collection in America, with an impressive focus on Judaica. The collection is now housed at San Francisco State University.

Sutro's combination of philanthropy, real estate development, and a strong cultural connection to Jewish life and history became a model for generations of Jewish community leaders.

Adolph Sutro, n.d.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

**Levi Strauss** (1829–1902)
Blue jeans, a creation of Levi Strauss & Co., are a symbol of early San Francisco life—improvised, practical, flexible. Patented by Bavarian immigrant and dry-goods seller Levi Strauss, along with Latvian immigrant and tailor Jacob Davis, these denim pants reinforced with copper rivets became the uniform of the American West.

Over the generations Levi's® jeans, with their combination of style and ruggedness, evolved into an icon of American individualism and can-do spirit. By the late 1950s, when the pants began to be called "jeans" instead of "overalls," their casual style served as a symbol of youth culture and even revolution. In 2000 *Time* magazine called Levi's classic 501® jeans the fashion item of the twentieth century.

Levi Strauss—the man and the company—also became iconic, representing the best values of San Francisco and its Jewish community. Just as Strauss asked his employees to call him "Levi," and gave generously to Jewish and general charities, the company has distinguished itself as an international model of business success and moral responsibility. When the company went public in 1971, for instance, it took the unusual step of including a statement on corporate responsibility, and in 1992 they became the first Fortune 500 company to offer health care to the unmarried partners of its employees. Both the Levi Strauss Foundation, and the Haas family foundations have continued Levi Strauss's legacy with their commitment to Bay Area community-building.

When Levi Strauss died in 1902, the San Francisco Board of Trade saw fit to say that his "numberless unostentatious acts of charity in which neither race nor creed were recognized, exemplified his broad and generous love for and sympathy with humanity."

Manufacturer Levi Strauss, n.d.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

**Hannah Marks Solomons** (1835–1909) and **Selina Solomons** (1862–1942)
While many early immigrants to San Francisco dreamed of gold, others dreamed of freedom. The latter was certainly true of the extraordinary mother-daughter duo of Hannah Marks Solomons and Selina Solomons, pioneers of women's rights and civic engagement. German-born Hannah Marks came to San Francisco in 1853 for an arranged marriage, but refused to enter a loveless union and instead pursued an education career. She eventually married businessman Gershom Mendes Seixas Solomons and split her time between Jewish pursuits like the Ladies Fair Association of Temple Emanu-El, where she was president, and the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union of San Francisco, which she founded to help improve the lives of working women. While committed to Judaism, she and her American-born daughter Selina were very involved with theosophy.

Selina Solomons became one of the most important suffragettes in the country. In the effort to bring the vote to California women, she opened the Votes-for-Women Club in downtown San Francisco, where she cooked and served lunch to working women and educated them about women's suffrage. In 1911, through her leadership and organization, California became the sixth state to grant women the right to vote. It would be nine years before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment extended voting rights to women throughout the country.

*Left*
Selina Solomons, n.d.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

*Right*
Hannah Marks, n.d.
The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

**Albert Bender** (1866–1941)
San Francisco's penchant for idiosyncrasy and its democratic impulses toward both art and philanthropy came together in the person of Albert "Micky" Bender, an Irish-born rabbi's son who came to these shores at age fifteen and became the city's unofficial symbol in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Barely five feet tall, and with a small speech impediment, this modestly prosperous insurance broker was confident enough in himself, his Jewish community, and the tolerance of his city to dress as a cardinal on St. Patrick's Day, invite the radical painter Diego Rivera to decorate the Stock Exchange Lunch Club, and support Chinese and Japanese artists, creating a local market for Asian art and publicly acknowledging the contributions of a still marginal community. Honoring Bender's legacy, both Stanford and Mills College named their rare book libraries for him.

Bender was an early enthusiast of modern art and urged the local community to support new artistic trends, demonstrating a particular interest in photography, which was under recognized as an art form at the time. A close friend was Ansel Adams, who, when he met Bender in 1926, was an unknown photographer trying to make his way as a pianist. Bender encouraged Adams to pursue photography full-time and enabled him to do so by putting together a group of investors for his first portfolio, examples of which are on view here.

Albert Bender, n.d.
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

**Rachel ("Ray") Frank** (1861–1948)
Known as "the girl rabbi of the Golden West," Rachel Frank was the closest America got to a women rabbi until a formal ordination occurred in 1972. The daughter of Polish immigrants and a descendant of an important eighteenth-century rabbi, Frank got her start as a teacher at Oakland's First Hebrew Congregation (known today as Temple Sinai) in the mid-1880s. Some of her famous pupils included Gertrude Stein and Judah L. Magnes.

As her confidence as a thinker and speaker increased, Frank became more fearless in castigating a Jewish community focused on materialism at the expense of traditional Jewish spirituality. Her scathing 1890 Jewish New Year sermon in Spokane, Washington, catapulted her into the national consciousness; years of traveling, journalism, and lecturing around the country followed. True to the complexities of political and religious ideas at the time, Rachel Frank refused to work outside the home after her marriage, and by 1901 the "girl rabbi of the Golden West" had disappeared from view.

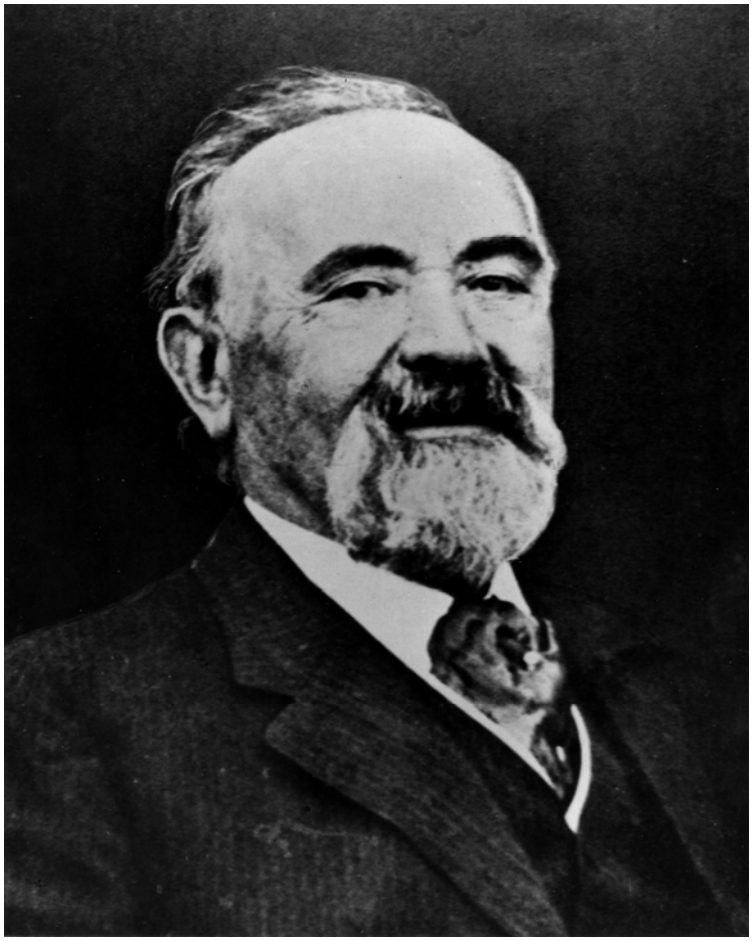
Ray Frank, n.d.
American Jewish Historical Society


**Isaac Friedlander** (1823–1878)
One of the early "giants" in California agriculture was Isaac Friedlander, a seven-foot-tall immigrant from Hanover, Germany, and one of the earliest fortune-seekers of the Gold Rush. After arriving in San Francisco in 1849, he quickly cornered the wheat market by purchasing land in the San Joaquin and Livermore valleys. With a network of irrigation canals and a flotilla that allowed him to ship wheat as far as Australia, this "Grain King of San Francisco" was responsible for exporting 75 percent of California's wheat to Asia and Europe.

Isaac Friedlander, n.d.
California Historical Society

**Abraham Haas** (1847–1921)
Bavarian-born Abraham Haas helped usher in the grocery store business on the West Coast in the 1890s, becoming the largest grocer in Los Angeles before moving to San Francisco to continue his innovations in food wholesaling and distribution. He was also involved with other business ventures, including the development of hydroelectric and gas power. At age thirty-nine, the successful businessman met twenty-one-year-old San Franciscan Fannie Koshland, and they married soon after. The pair relocated to San Francisco, where Haas became very involved with the philanthropic, social, and religious affairs of the Jewish community.

Abraham Hass, n.d.
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley



**Isaias Hellman** (1842–1920)
Isaias Hellman's story captures a pivotal moment in American history: the rise of California from a frontier economy driven by the barter of hides and the exchange of gold to an economic steam engine leading the nation. Starting in the days when Los Angeles was more Mexican pueblo than American city, continuing through the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and World War I, the life story of this Jewish banker is a classic American rags-to-riches tale; many consider Hellman the greatest Pacific Coast financier of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Hellman came to Los Angeles from Germany in 1859 with almost nothing, and went on to build up three of the West's most important banks—the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Los Angeles, the Nevada Bank in San Francisco, and Wells Fargo Bank. At the height of his power in the early twentieth century, he controlled more than $100 million in capital and served as president or director of fourteen other banks.

Hellman was also instrumental in developing at least seven other industries that shaped California: transportation, oil, electricity, land development, water, wine, and education. He controlled the California wine industry for almost twenty years, and helped develop the famous Pacific Electric "Red Car" rail system that crisscrossed the Los Angeles region. Hellman led the building of Los Angeles's first synagogue, now the Wilshire Boulevard Temple; donated the land for the University of Southern California; and served as regent of the University of California for thirty-eight years. His summer home at Sugar Pine Point in Lake Tahoe is now a state park.

Isaias Hellman, n.d.

**David Lubin** (1849–1919)

Polish-born David Lubin, a Sacramento businessman, saw in California's agricultural potential a chance to change the world. After making a bundle in the department store business, Lubin took a trip to Palestine in 1884 that changed his life. It was there that Lubin decided to commit himself to agricultural reform. He helped settle Eastern European Jewish refugee farmers and, in 1891, became the director of the International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews. He then began to campaign for subsidies and protection for farmers, initially in California but eventually on an international scale. In 1904, Lubin was invited to Rome to create the International Institute of Agriculture, which eventually became part of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization. Many also trace the creation of the US Federal Farm Act of 1916 to Lubin's work.

David Lubin, n.d.
The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

**Joseph B. Strauss** (1870–1938)
The Golden Gate Bridge, now celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary, was the product of the vision and tenacity of Joseph B. Strauss, a Jewish engineer of German origin who lived in Chicago. A poet and utopian as much as an engineer, Strauss wanted to create a symbol of ingenuity and promise that was as resonant and recognizable as the Statue of Liberty. His vision came to pass, and for immigrants entering the United States, passing through the Golden Gate meant coming under the protection of a golden land.

Born in Cincinnati, Strauss felt himself an outsider until he came to the Bay Area—his promised land. He began to speak and write in religious or mystical terms about both the redwoods and the Bay, noting that "Perhaps . . . the Master Artist who stretched the canvas for that vast picture . . . intended that, in time to come, presumptuous man might trace upon it his greatest etching in steel."

Although the technical and design ingenuity that made the bridge possible came primarily from two other engineers, Charles Ellis and Leon Solomon Moisseiff, Strauss insisted on certain safety features that saved the lives of workers, and was the prime mover of the project for almost fifteen years. The stress of the job deeply affected Strauss, and less than a year after the bridge was completed he died of a heart attack. A memorial statue of him was created for the base of the bridge, where it still stands today.

Joseph B. Strauss, Golden Gate Bridge engineer (left), with Jack Frye, president of Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc, 1937
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

**Bassya Bibel** (1908–1980)
The Muse of the Fillmore was Bassya Bibel, a Ukrainian immigrant who—along with her Polish husband Philip—ran the Yiddish Cultural Center on Steiner Street during its heyday in the 1930s. Bibel's performances in sold-out productions of plays like *The Dybbuk*, and her role in bringing the greatest living Yiddish writers to San Francisco, helped sustain a growing community of immigrants making the transition from foreigner to citizen through the comfort of their culture. It was after the Bibels invited playwright Peretz Hirshbein to present *Green Fields* in San Francisco that the giant of Yiddish drama decided to move to nearby Carmel, from where he participated actively in the cultural life of the Fillmore.

Bassya Bibel, n.d.
The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

**Florence Prag Kahn** (1866–1948)
As the story goes, when Congressman Julius Kahn of San Francisco and his wife Florence were invited to the Executive Mansion to have dinner with President McKinley, they walked there, as a carriage cost a dollar to hire. "In what country," asked Julius Kahn, "could two poor Jews be on their way to dine with the head of state?" In 1925, Julius Kahn died in office after having just been re-elected for a thirteenth term. Florence Prag Kahn was encouraged to fill the seat through a special election. She not only won that election, but was elected a total of five times, serving from 1925 to 1937 and becoming the first Jewish woman—and the fifth woman of any background—to serve in the United States Congress. A devoted Republican, she failed to win re-election in 1936, when Democratic President Franklin Delano Roosevelt won by a landslide. A graduate of UC Berkeley, known for her keen sense of humor, Florence dedicated her later life to volunteering with Hadassah and the National Council of Jewish Women, and traveled throughout California encouraging women to get involved in politics. Thanks to Florence's leadership and determination, there are now many more Jewish women in politics, including two US Senators from the Bay Area: Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, who also served as a San Francisco supervisor and mayor.

Miss Julius Kahn and Mrs. John Rogers, 1925
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

**Isaac Stern** (1920–2001)
The Ukrainian-born Isaac Stern was discovered by Cantor Reuben Rinder of Congregation Emanu-El, who had also revealed the talents of another San Franciscan violinist, Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin and Stern became two of the twentieth century's greatest violinists. Stern had a stellar international career, initiated at age fifteen with his debut with the San Francisco Symphony, and he in turn discovered many other young musicians, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma and violists Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. He was an international leader and ambassador for music, and Carnegie Hall in New York renamed its main auditorium after him. He also served as chairman of the board of the American-Israel Cultural Foundation. He once quipped about cultural relations between the United States and the former Soviet Union: "They send us their Jews from Odessa, and we send them our Jews from Odessa."

Isaac Stern at the Symphony, n.d.
San Francisco Symphony Archives

# RACHEL SCHREIBER'S *SITE READING*

The Contemporary Jewish Museum commissioned Bay Area artist and historian Rachel Schreiber to create a new work in conversation with the various stories told in *California Dreaming*. The result is *Site Reading*, which builds on Schreiber's longstanding commitment to labor history and activism. In this project, Schreiber retells the stories of individuals whose lives exist on the periphery of history, pairing each narrative with a contemporary photograph marking the location where the story occurred. Schreiber offers these interventions as a way to celebrate the accomplishments of those who have shaped the Bay Area as a place of progressive attitudes and social change.

**Artist Statement**

*Site Reading* examines varied landscapes around the Bay Area for lesser-told Jewish stories. The eight works in this series connect biographical narratives to specific places, highlighting people whose contributions attest to the long, unique history of Jewish social and political engagement in the region. In reading these contemporary sites with fresh eyes, we can see the past of artists, labor activists, and Yiddish speakers—countercultural types in whom we see the roots of the geographically specific, Jewish-inflected Bay Area progressive climate.

Their histories surrounds us: a typical San Francisco business district street corner formerly housed a Communist-affiliated labor school where a Jewish poet taught; a ranch amidst the golden hills of Petaluma was the site where Eastern European Jews taught themselves to raise chickens; a San Francisco convention center showcasing cutting-edge Silicon Valley technology was the location of a nineteenth-century union hall at which a Jewish labor activist argued against anti-Chinese discrimination; east of the Sierras, in a remote desert valley, a memorial stands to a Japanese internment camp at which a Jewish woman cared for her son. As varied in topography as are the spaces that comprise the "Bay Area," they are all sites in which such histories can be revealed.

—Rachel Schreiber, 2011


The Bercovich family of Oakland was instrumental in the history of Temple Beth Abraham. Initially an Orthodox congregation of Hungarian Jews, the congregation was located in West Oakland, an immigrant neighborhood that was home to many Eastern European, Yiddish-speaking Jews. Bertha Bercovich provided the funds for the first location in memory of her late husband. By the 1920s, the Bercoviches, who had begun as scrap iron dealers, had become successful furniture dealers in the East Bay. When the congregation wanted to move to the more affluent Grand Lake District, the family endowed this building on MacArthur Boulevard, consecrated in 1929.

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Bercovich Family*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum

On October 31, 1885, San Francisco unionists gathered en masse and marched down Howard Street to a union hall between Third and Fourth Streets, where they met to demand the removal, by force if necessary, of Chinese laborers from the trades. Sigismund Danielewicz, a Jewish immigrant from Poland and one of the founders of the Coast Seamen's Union of the Pacific, stood up to deliver a speech arguing against anti-Chinese discrimination. He stated that, as a Jew, he knew what it meant to be part of a persecuted race, and he implored other immigrants in the audience to acknowledge similar histories. The audience booed him and forced him off stage.

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Sigismund Danielewicz*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum

Nine-year-old Anna Strunsky's family left Russia in 1886 to escape persecution, eventually settling in San Francisco, where her father opened a liquor store. In 1896 Anna, a member of the Socialist Labor Party and aspiring writer and journalist, enrolled at Stanford University. She was suspended in 1898 due to poor grades. Her lover Jack London consoled her, writing, "The one who captures the prizes for scholarship. . .rarely does anything in his or her after-life." Captivated by the 1905 Russian Revolution, Anna returned to St. Petersburg to report on the events. When news reached her of a pogrom in a shtetl about five hundred miles south, she insisted on traveling there alone to write about it. Her knowledge of Yiddish enabled her to conduct interviews with the survivors.

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Anna Strunsky*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum

Shimon and Basha Singerman immigrated to Petaluma in 1915 and were two of the first Jews to raise chickens in what was then known as the Bay Area's "egg basket." Originally from Russia, the Singermans came to Petaluma to learn farming skills that they hoped one day to bring to Palestine. The couple was part of a sizable community of Yiddish-speaking, mostly secular Zionist Jews who took up chicken ranching in Petaluma, finding in this livelihood a productive and healthy way of life that supported their socialist ideals. They enjoyed a vibrant cultural scene, establishing a Jewish Community Center that hosted lectures by such visitors as Golda Meir and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (second president of Israel), readings by Yiddish poets, and Yiddish theater productions.

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Shimon and Basha Singerman*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum


While working with needy families in San Francisco during the Great Depression, Mrs. Sol Lesser took note of women's skills in food preparation and sewing. She proposed that the National Council for Jewish Women open an "Opportunity Shop," where these women's goods could be sold and the profits returned to them. The shop opened in 1932 at 1209 Sutter Street in San Francisco. Staffed by members of the National Council for Jewish Women, the shop also conducted sewing and cooking classes. The local Jewish paper *Emanu-El* noted the Opportunity Shop and Mrs. Lesser's work as "worthy of emulation."

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Mrs. Sol Lesser*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum


Elaine Black Yoneda (born Rose Elaine Buchman) joined the Communist Party after moving from New York City to Los Angeles in 1931. There she met her future husband, Japanese American and fellow Communist Karl Yoneda. The couple moved to San Francisco, where Elaine was arrested for distributing a pamphlet titled "What to Do When Under Arrest" to strikers. In 1942, Karl and their two-year-old son Tommy were forced to live in the Japanese internment camp at Manzanar, California. Elaine insisted on joining them to care for Tommy in their bunker at Block 4, Building 2, Apartment 2. They lived in the camp until Karl joined the US Army in October, and Elaine received permission to move back to San Francisco with Tommy due to his ill health.

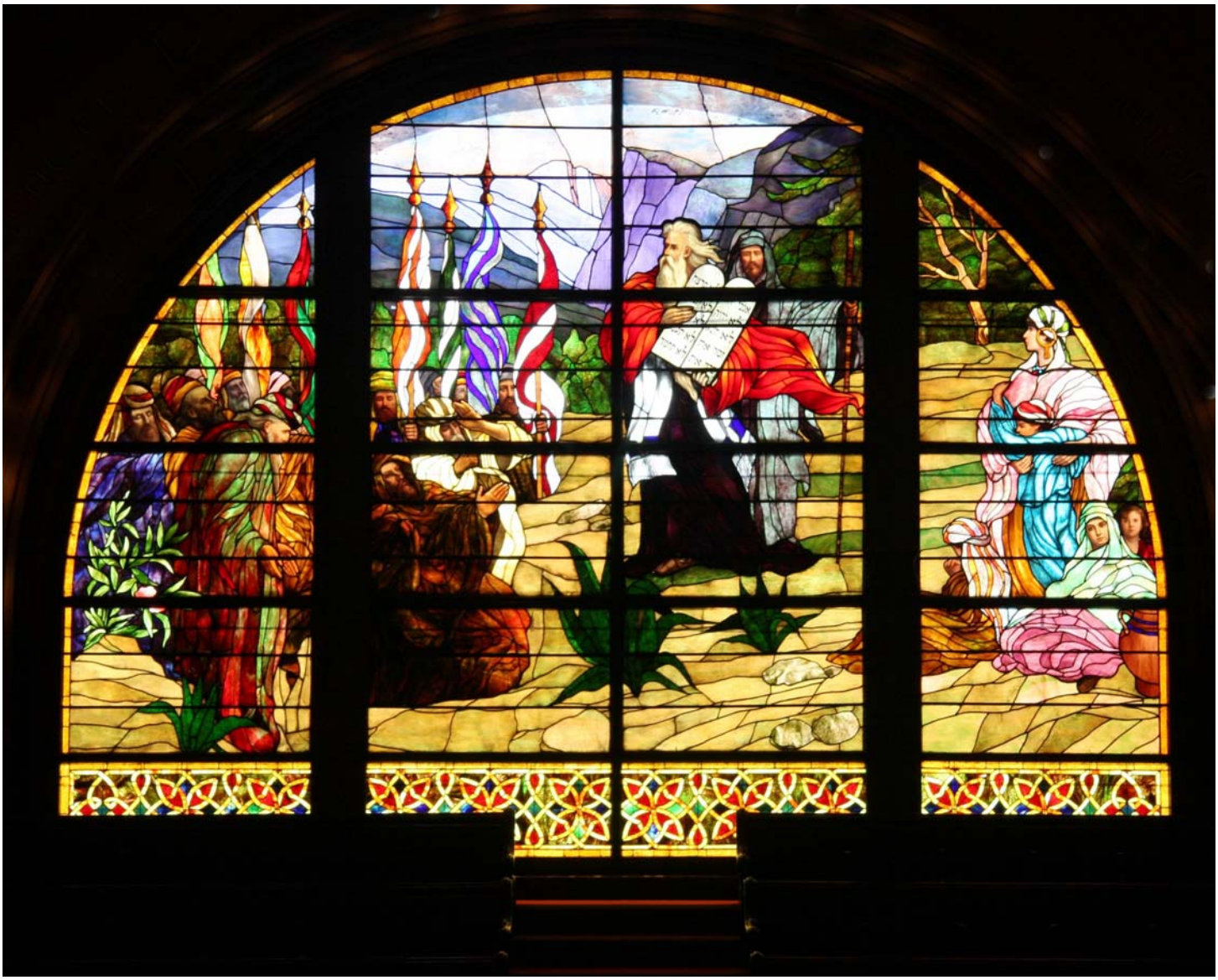
Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Elaine Black Yoneda*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum

Bernard Zakheim was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1898. He spent six months studying under painter and muralist Diego Rivera in Mexico City before moving to San Francisco, where he taught art and exhibited at the left-leaning Folkschule of the Steiner Street Yiddish Cultural Center. Zakheim was one of twenty-six artists who were commissioned to conceptualize and execute the mural cycle at Coit Tower, for which Zakheim painted the "Library" section. One of the patrons of the project delayed the opening of the murals in light of labor controversies surrounding the General Strike of 1934. Zakheim, along with other members of the Artists' and Writers' Union, picketed against the delay as an impingement upon free speech.

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Bernard Zakheim*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum

Muriel Rukeyser, a poet, journalist, and social activist, moved to the Bay Area in 1943. In 1945 she began teaching at the California Labor School, then located at 216 Market Street, near the corner of Pine. Though she rebelled against her own Jewish upbringing, she was also critical, especially during World War II, of Jews who were too timid to acknowledge their identity and fight persecution. Reflecting on this in her poem "To Be a Jew," she wrote: "To be a Jew in the twentieth century / Is to be offered a gift. If you refuse, / Wishing to be invisible, you choose / Death to the spirit, the stone insanity." She expressed astonishment when the poem was incorporated into the Reform and Reconstructionist prayer books.

Rachel Schreiber (American, born 1965)
*Muriel Rukeyser*, from *Site Reading*, 2011
Digital C-Print
Commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Muse



Emile Pissis (1854–1934)
*Moses Presenting the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel at Yosemite*, 1905
Stained glass
Courtesy of Congregation Sherith Israel, San Francisco. Photo: Larry Rosenberg

## RELATED CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS

**Grade 3: Continuity and Change**
Students in grade three learn more about our connections to the past and the ways in which particularly local, but also regional and national, government and traditions have developed and left their marks on current society, providing common memories. Emphasis is on the physical and cultural landscape of California, including the study of American Indians, the subsequent arrival of immigrants, and the impact they have had in forming the character of our contemporary society

**3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land.**

1. Research the explorers who visited here, the newcomers who settled here, and the people who continue to come to the region, including their cultural and religious traditions and contributions.
2. Describe the economies established by settlers and their influence on the present-day economy, with emphasis on the importance of private property and entrepreneurship.
3. Trace why their community was established, how individuals and families contributed to its founding and development, and how the community has changed over time, drawing on maps, photographs, oral histories, letters, newspapers, and other primary sources.

**Grade 4: California: A Changing State**
Students learn the story of their home state, unique in American history in terms of its vast and varied geography, its many waves of immigration beginning with pre- Columbian societies, its continuous diversity, economic energy, and rapid growth. In addition to the specific treatment of milestones in California history, students examine the state in the context of the rest of the nation, with an emphasis on the U.S. Constitution and the relationship between state and federal government.

**4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.**

2. Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled (e.g., James Beckwourth, John Bidwell, John C. Fremont, Pio Pico).
3. Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment (e.g., using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).
4. Study the lives of women who helped build early California (e.g., Biddy Mason).

**4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s.**

2. Explain how the Gold Rush transformed the economy of California, including the types of products produced and consumed, changes in towns (e.g., Sacramento, San Francisco), and economic conflicts between diverse groups of people.
3. Discuss immigration and migration to California between 1850 and 1900, including the diverse composition of those who came; the countries of origin and their relative locations; and conflicts and accords among the diverse groups (e.g., the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act).
4. Describe rapid American immigration, internal migration, settlement, and the growth of towns and cities (e.g., Los Angeles).
9. Analyze the impact of twentieth-century Californians on the nation's artistic and cultural development, including the rise of the entertainment industry (e.g., Louis B. Meyer, Walt Disney, John Steinbeck, Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, John Wayne).

**Grade 5: History and Geography: Making a New Nation**
Students in grade five study the development of the nation up to 1850, with an emphasis on the people who were already here, when and from where others arrived, and why they came. Students learn about the colonial government founded on Judeo-Christian principles, the ideals of the Enlightenment, and the English traditions of self-government. They recognize that ours is a nation that has a constitution that derives its power from the people, that has gone through a revolution, that once sanctioned slavery, that experienced conflict over land with the original inhabitants, and that experienced a westward movement that took its people across the continent. Studying the cause, course, and consequences of the early explorations through the War for Independence and western expansion is central to students' fundamental understanding of how the principles of the American republic form the basis of a pluralistic society in which individual rights are secured.

**5.8 Students trace the colonization, immigration, and settlement patterns of the American people from 1789 to the mid-1800s, with emphasis on the role of economic incentives, effects of the physical and political geography, and transportation systems.**

4. Discuss the experiences of settlers on the overland trails to the West (e.g., location of the routes; purpose of the journeys; the influence of the terrain, rivers, vegetation, and climate; life in the territories at the end of these trails).

**Grades 6-8: Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills**

**Chronological and Spatial Thinking**
1. Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.
2. Students construct various time lines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era they are studying.
3. Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.

**Research, Evidence, and Point of View**

4. Students assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources and draw sound conclusions from them.
5. Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).

**8.8 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.**

3. Describe the role of pioneer women and the new status that western women achieved (e.g., Laura Ingalls Wilder, Annie Bidwell; slave women gaining freedom in the West; Wyoming granting suffrage to women in 1869).

7. Identify the new sources of large-scale immigration and the contributions of immigrants to the building of cities and the economy; explain the ways in which new social and economic patterns encouraged assimilation of newcomers into the mainstream amidst growing cultural diversity; and discuss the new wave of nativism.

## SUGGESTED READING

**California Jews**

*Jews of the West: The Metropolitan Years*, Moses Rischin

*Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush*, Ava Kahn

*Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaias Hellman Created California*, Frances Dinkelspiel

*Jews of the Pacific Coast: Reinventing Community on America's Edge*, Ellen Eisenberg, Ava F. Kahn, and William Toll

*Cosmopolitans: A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area*, Fred Rosenbaum

*California Jews*, Ava Kahn and Marc Dollinger

*Our City: The Jews of San Francisco*, Irena Narell

*Holy Beggars: A Journey from Haight to Jerusalem,* Aryae Coopersmith

*920 O'Farrell Street: A Jewish Girlhood in Old San Francisco*, Harriet Lane Levy

*JFCS: Centuries of Pioneering,* Jewish Family and Children's Services

*A Traveler's Guide to Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries of the California Gold Rush,* Susan Morris

*Jewish Life in the American West,* Ava F. Kahn, editor

*Worlds Lost and Gained: A Polish-American Journey,* Tad Taube

*Jewish San Francisco*, Edward Zerin, Ph.D., and Dr. Marc Dollinger

*Jews of Oakland and Berkeley*, Frederick Isaac

*Visions of Reform,* Fred Rosenbaum

"Jewish Community" article in Encyclopedia of San Francisco, Steven Mark Dobbs, http://sfhistoryencyclopedia.com/articles/j/jews.html

**Miscellaneous**

*Jeans: A Cultural History of an American Icon,* James Sullivan

*Levi Strauss & Co.,* Lynn Downey

*Howl and Other Poems,* Allen Ginsberg

*Feeding the World: A Biography of David Lubin,* Azriel Eisenberg

*Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era,* Kevin Starr

*Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco, 1848–2010,* Michael R. Corbett