

A SELECTION OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY RESOURCES
Available at the Ratner Media and Technology Center of the
Jewish Education Center of Cleveland



Celebrate 350
Jewish Life in America
1654 ~ 2004

FOR TEACHERS

Brown, Cynthia Stokes. *Connecting with the Past: History Workshop in Middle and High Schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.

Edinger, Monica. *Seeking History: Teaching with Primary Sources in Grades 4-6*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.

Hurst, Carol Otis and Rebecca Otis. *Friends and Relations: Using Literature with Social Themes, K -2*. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, 1999.

Hurst, Carol Otis and Rebecca Otis. *Friends and Relations: Using Literature with Social Themes, Grades 3-5*. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, 2000.

Irvin, Judith L., et al. *Enhancing Social Studies Through Literacy Strategies*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 1995.

Jorgensen, Karen L. *History Workshop: Reconstructing the Past with Elementary Students*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993.

Kobrin, David. *Beyond the Textbook: Teaching History Using Documents and Primary Sources*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996.

Leibowitz, Nechama. *Active Learning in the Teaching of History in Elementary and Secondary Schools*. Torah Education Network, 1989.

Tunnell, Michael O. *The Story of Ourselves: Teaching History Through Children's Literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993.

Zemelman, Steven, et al. *History Comes Home: Family Stories Across the Curriculum*. York, ME: Stenhouse, 2000.

FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Non-Fiction

Bial, Raymond. *Tenement: Immigrant Life on the Lower East Side*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

An outstanding photoessay for grades 5 – 7.

Diner, Hasia. *Jews in America. Religion in American Life Series*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

How America shaped Jewish identity and how Jews shaped American identity. For grades 6 – 9.

Finkelstein, Norman H. *Forged in Freedom: Shaping the Jewish-American Experience*. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2002.

A readable history of the growth of the American Jewish community during the twentieth century. For grades 7 – 12.

Finkelstein, Norman H. *Heeding the Call: Jewish Voices in America's Civil Rights Struggle*. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1997.

Discusses Jewish involvement in African-Americans' struggle for civil rights, from the first settlers through the 1990's. For grades 6 – 10.

Finkelstein, Norman H. *The Other 1492: Jewish Settlement in the New World*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989.

Traces the path of Sephardic Jews after they were expelled from Spain. For grades 5 – 8.

Fisher, Leonard Everett. *To Bigotry No Sanction: The Story of America's Oldest Synagogue*. New York: Holiday House, 1998.

The history of Touro Synagogue in text and photographs. For grades 6 - 9.

Granfield, Linda. *97 Orchard Street, New York: Stories of Immigrant Life*. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2001.

Stories of five families from New York's Lower East Side Tenement Museum. For grades 4 – 7.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Shutting Out the Sky: Life in the Tenements of New York, 1880-1924*. New York: Orchard/Scholastic, 2003.

Photographs and text document the experiences of five young immigrants. For grades 6 – 8.

Joselit, Jenna Weissman. *Immigration and American Religion. Religion in American Life Series*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Explores the religious experiences of several immigrant groups. For grades 6 – 9.

Kale, Shelly. *A Suitcase of Dreams: Immigration Stories from the Skirball Cultural Center*. Los Angeles: Skirball Cultural Center, 2001.

Exhibits from the Skirball Cultural Center show why and how people immigrated to the United States. For grades 4 – 7.

Leder, Jane Mersky. *A Russian Jewish Family*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner, 1996.

A photoessay that describes a Russian Jewish family's struggle to leave the Soviet Union and shows how they have adjusted to life in the United States. For grades 4 – 6.

Maestro, Betsy. *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration*. Illus. by Susannah Ryan. New York: Scholastic, 1996.

An illustrated introduction to American immigration for children in grades 2 – 4.

Meltzer, Milton. *Remember the Days*. New York: Zenith Books, 1974.

A short history from 1654 to the present, emphasizing Jewish efforts to become integrated into American society. For grades 6 – 8.

Biography

Engel, Dean and Florence B. Freedman. *Ezra Jack Keats: A Biography with Illustrations*. New York: Silver Moon Press, 1995.

The life and career of the creator of many beloved picture books, including *The Snowy Day*, are enhanced by large color reproductions of his work. For grades 6 – adult.

Hirschfelder, Arlene B. *Photo Odyssey: Solomon Carvalho's Remarkable Western Adventure, 1853-54*. New York: Clarion, 2000.

Carvalho was a photographer who accompanied explorer John Fremont on his fifth and last expedition through the Rocky Mountains. Well-researched and illustrated. For grades 7 – 10.

Hurwitz, Johanna. *Leonard Bernstein: A Passion for Music*. Illus. by Sonia. O. Lisker. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1993.

Composer, conductor, pianist and teacher, Leonard Bernstein had a profound influence on American music of the twentieth century. For grades 5 – 8.

Levinson, Nancy Smiler. *I Lift My Lamp: Emma Lazarus and the Statue of Liberty*. Penguin/Putnam, 1986.

An account of the life of Emma Lazarus is combined with information about how the Statue of Liberty was built. For grades 4 – 7.

Milgrim, Shirley. *Haym Salomon: Liberty's Son*. Illus. by Richard Fish. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1979. Winner of a National Jewish Book Award. For grades 5 – 8.

The story of the selfless Jewish merchant who helped finance the American Revolution.

Rose, Or N. *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Man of Spirit, Man of Action*. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2003.

An account of the life of a modern Jewish sage and activist.

Severance, John. *Einstein: Visionary Scientist*. New York: Clarion, 1999.

Detailed, well balanced and illustrated with photographs. Grades 7 – 10.

Stanley, Jerry. *Frontier Merchants: Lionel and Barron Jacobs and the Jewish Pioneers Who Settled the West*. New York: Crown, 1998.

Stories

Bierman, Carol. *Journey to Ellis Island*. New York: Hyperion/Madison, 1998.

A brave woman and her two children flee war-torn Europe only to be refused entry at Ellis Island because of the little boy's injured arm. How Yehuda proved to the doctors that he really was fit to be an American is the core of this engaging story based on the experiences of the author's father. Grades 3 – 5.

Blanc, Esther Silverstein. *Berchick*. Illus. by Tennessee Dixon. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1989.

A moving story about a Jewish pioneer woman's rescue of an orphan colt. Besides being a wonderful story, it offers a look at Jewish life in a rural setting. Winner of a 1989 Sydney Taylor Book Award. For grades 3 – 5.

Blanc, Esther Silverstein and Godeane Eagle. *Long Johns for a Small Chicken*. Illus. by Tennessee Dixon. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 2003.

When a fierce Nebraska hail storm batters a chick, Mama makes him his own pair of long johns to keep him warm. This warm hearted story about kindness to animals portrays a Jewish farming family around the turn of the twentieth century. An AJL Notable Children's Book of 2003. Grades 2 – 5.

Ducharme, Dede Fox. *The Treasure in the Tiny Blue Box*. Austin, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1998.

In the early 1900's in Texas, a Jewish immigrant boy embarks on an adventure-filled search for his missing father. His companion is the local bully, who hates Jews! History and values of tolerance and diversity are interwoven into this engrossing historical novel for grades 5 – 8.

Greene, Jacqueline Dembar. *Out of Many Waters*. New York: Walker, 1988.

Two Jewish sisters kidnapped by the Portuguese Inquisition and sent as slaves to Brazil escape, joining the group of twenty three Jews who settled in the new land of America. The sequel is *One Foot Ashore*. For grades 6 – 9.

Krantz, Hazel. *Look to the Hills*. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1995.

Local color fills this novel set in Denver in the late 1800's. A thriving Reform Jewish community is depicted and the teenage heroine interacts with both fictional characters and real people. For grades 6- 8.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Dave at Night*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

An orphan boy sneaks out at night to escape the harsh conditions of the Hebrew Home for Boys. He meets an array of colorful characters and discovers the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's. For grades 6 – 9.

Matas, Carol. *Rosie in New York: Gotcha!* New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2003

Matas, Carol. *Rosie in Chicago: Play Ball!* New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2003

Matas, Carol. *Rosie in Los Angeles: Action!* New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2004.

A paperback series featuring a lively Jewish heroine who moves with her immigrant family across the United States. Each story presents a picture of Jewish life in a different setting as well as a moral dilemma for the heroine. For grades 4 – 6.

Matas, Carol. *The War Within: A Novel of the Civil War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001.

When General Grant expells Jews from the Southern territory under his control, Hannah Green's family must flee their home. Based on a real incident. For grades 6 – 8.

Roseman, Kenneth. *The Melting Pot: An Adventure in New York*. New York: UAHC Press, 1984. Grades 5 – 8.

An interactive "Do-It-Yourself Adventure" story set on New York's Lower East Side at the turn of the twentieth century.

Rosen, Sybil. *Speed of Light*. New York: Atheneum, 1999.

An eventful and very thought-provoking novel about Southern Jews taking a stand on behalf of Civil Rights and the repercussions of that stand on families and community. For grades 6 – 8.

Taylor, Sydney. *All of a Kind Family*. New York: GRM Associates, 2000.

The first in a classic series of stories first published in the 1950's about an immigrant family growing up on the Lower East Side of New York. Grades 4 – 7.

Wells, Rosemary. *Streets of Gold*. Illus. by Dan Andreasen. New York: Dial, 1999.

An illustrated abridgement of Mary Antin's classic memoir, *The Promised Land*. For grades 4 – 7.

Videos

American Cultures for Children: Jewish-American Heritage. Schlessinger Video Production, 1997, 25 minutes, color.

Part of a twelve volume multicultural series for children K-4th grade. Children are introduced to the history of Jewish Americans, their journey to America and the traditions they observe. The program also covers the geography of Israel, as well as some counting in Hebrew and the making and decorating of a sukkah. Very general.

The Biggest Jewish City in the World. The Media Guild, 1987, 60 minutes, color.

A documentary about Jewish life in New York from the turn of the last century to the present. Part One depicts the challenges Eastern European Immigrants faced when settling in New York City: poverty, sweat shops, child labor, conflict between religious observance and the pressure to work on Shabbat, and conflict between German and East European Jews. Part Two focuses on problems of assimilating into American society. Recommended for ages 15 and up but segments may be selected for younger audience.

Dear America: Dreams in the Golden Country. Scholastic, 1999, 30 minutes, B&W.

Old traditions clash with modern ideas and family tensions escalate as twelve year-old Zipporah Feldman and her older sister, Russian Jewish immigrants living with their family in a crowded NY tenement, try to follow their dreams of a better future. Adapted from a novel by Kathryn Lasky in the “Dear America” series for grades 5 – 8.

Ellis Island. The History Channel, 1997, 3 part series, 50 minutes each.

A well crafted, moving examination of the immigrant experience, using Ellis Island as the focal point for this adventure. Drawing on poignant and insightful interview vignettes from the Ellis Island Oral History Project, along with rare photographs, newsreels and a few dramatic recreations, the three part program provides an understanding of how the experience engendered great sadness for some and exhilaration for others. The particular Jewish dimension of this experience is amply covered, but not singled out. For grades 7 – 12.

Island of Hope-Island of Tears. Guggenheim Productions, 1990, 30 min., color.

A moving video telling the story of Ellis Island and the immigrants who were processed there. Ellis Island symbolized the gateway to freedom or the place where immigrants, fleeing persecution and poverty, could be rejected and turned back. For grades 7 – 12.

Birth of a Community: Jews and the Gold Rush. Judah Magnes Museum, 1994
42 minutes, color and b/w.

The story of how entrepreneurial Jews came by land and sea to seek their fortunes in California of the 1850's. Told in archival photographs, paintings, still recreations and snippets of old Hollywood movies, *Jew and the Gold Rush* is a fascinating account of why Jews came to California, what style of community they formed, and how they integrated into the free-wheeling life of the general community. Kids will perk up to the story of Levi Strauss. For grades 5 – 9.

Hester Street. Social Studies School Service. 89 minutes, B&W.

Set in the Lower East Side in 1896, this endearing comedy traces the Americanization of Gitl, a pious Russian-Jewish woman who comes from Europe to join her husband, only to find he has turned his back on tradition. Seen against a backdrop of sweatshops, streets filled with pushcarts, and crowded tenements, her struggle demonstrates the difficulties and triumphs of assimilation. For high school and adult.

The Keeping Quilt. Spoken Arts, 1999, color drawings, suitable for grades K-3.

A handmade quilt, crafted by the author's Russian immigrant grandmother, serves as a Sabbath tablecloth, chuppah, and baby blanket for four generations of her family. It also helps trace the family history from Europe to America. Adapted from the book of the same title by Patricia Polacco for grades 2 – 5.

A Laugh, A Tear, A Mitzvah. WLIW Public Television, 1996, 90 minutes.

A chronicle of the assimilation that began on New York's Lower East Side as immigrant families tried to find for themselves what being Jewish means in a new society. Filled with archival film footage, family photos, and personal recollections that show how traditions and observances of rituals change as Jewish identity evolved. For grades 8 through adult.

We All Came to America. Republic Pictures Home Video, 1986, 52 minutes, B&W.

The fascinating story of those who risked all to emigrate to the United States. Narrated by Theodore Bikel, this award-winning saga features original interviews, photographs, prints, engravings, and drawings that tell the stirring story of the millions of men and women who pulled up stakes and left their homelands to travel to an unknown future. For grades 8 – adult.

The Ellis Island Experience. Social Studies School Service, 2000, CD-Rom for Windows 95.

Primary sources with documentary video footage from the History Channel explore the history of immigration in America through Ellis Island. For grades 7 – 12.



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