

# SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

## LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

### Context: Jewish History



*Prepared for:*

City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning  
Office of Historic Resources



DECEMBER 2016

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## **PREFACE**

This context is a component of Los Angeles' Citywide Historic Context Statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to Los Angeles' rich Jewish history. Refer to [www.HistoricPlacesLA.org](http://www.HistoricPlacesLA.org) for information on designated resources associated with this context (or themes) as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose and Scope**

The Jewish historic context was partially funded with a grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation. The history of the Jewish people of Los Angeles includes their religious practices, cultural traditions, and ethnic identities. This context provides a broad historical overview on settlement and development patterns of Los Angeles Jewry and then focuses on themes and geographic areas associated with extant resources. During the 1930s, the Jewish population of Los Angeles nearly doubled from 91,000 at the beginning of the decade to 130,000 by the end. After World War II, the city's Jewish population continued to rise and by the early 1960s only New York had larger numbers of Jewish

inhabitants. Many Jews moved to new housing tracts on the Westside and San Fernando Valley during the postwar period. As a result of their geographic dispersal, resources associated with Jewish history are found in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles, although they are largely concentrated in the Boyle Heights and Wilshire Community Plan Areas. Resources located in communities adjacent to the City of Los Angeles, such as East Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, are not included in the scope of this context because they are separate jurisdictions. However, they are occasionally mentioned because they are important to the history of Jews in Los Angeles, which did not begin or end at the city limits. While focusing on historical themes associated with religious, social, and cultural institutions, this context also identifies individuals and organizations that played significant roles in Jewish history in Los Angeles.

Judaism is a monotheistic religion with many branches, each observing the faith in its own way. Then



*Bennett Family celebrating Passover in West Los Angeles, 1965 (UCLA)*

again, there are people who identify as Jewish, probably because of their parentage, who do not adhere to any religious beliefs or practices. The three major branches of modern Judaism are Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. Smaller movements, such as Reconstructionist Judaism, formed in recent decades. Within each of these branches there is a great range of practices. Among Jewish people nationally who belonged to a synagogue in 2003, the distribution across these branches was roughly 45 percent Reform, 42 percent Conservative, 9 percent Orthodox, and 4 percent Reconstructionist.<sup>1</sup> The similarities and differences among the major branches are briefly discussed in the Glossary at the end of this context.

### **Evaluation Considerations**

The Jewish history context may overlap with other SurveyLA contexts and themes as follows:

- Properties significant for their architectural quality may also be eligible under themes within the Architecture and Engineering context.

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Lee Raphael, *Judaism in America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 3.

- The important role Jews played in the labor movement and various industries such as garment manufacturing is discussed in the Industrial Development context.
- The Entertainment Industry context discusses the pivotal role of Jews in this history as well as significant properties.
- The Neighborhood Commercial Development theme includes several sub-themes to which Jews contributed. Markets, Variety Stores, Department Stores, and Banks and Financial Institutions are among these.

## **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Since the city's American beginnings, Jews have shaped the social, economic, and cultural life of Los Angeles. They emerged as early leaders in commerce, civic life, and philanthropy, propelling the city's growth while enriching its multiethnic character. By the twentieth century, the Jewish population had diversified substantially, setting the stage for disparate community experiences and destinies. Jews occupied a place at both the center and margins of urban life. Not only did Jews shape Los Angeles in important ways, their own religious and ethnic identities in turn were shaped by the city's culture of self-reinvention.<sup>2</sup> They exerted an enduring and important influence on the city's development.



*Joseph Newmark, Jewish pioneer,  
no date (Jewish Museum of the  
American West)*

### **Pioneer Jewish Settlers, 1850s**

The first Jews settled in Los Angeles just before the territory came under American control. Still a frontier town inhabited primarily by Native Americans, Mexicans, and Californios, Los Angeles in 1850 was a budding, fluid multicultural milieu fairly welcoming to Jewish newcomers.<sup>3</sup> To a population long targeted by anti-Semitic prejudice, this openness was a compelling draw. As historian Karen Wilson writes, in Los Angeles these Jewish pioneer settlers “envisioned possibilities for economic mobility, communal stability, and social integration. . . . In the sudden chaotic democratization of California society, Jewish immigrants discovered they could be among the architects of social renovation rather than have to accept marginalization.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Karen S. Wilson, “Introduction: Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic” in *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic*, edited by Karen S. Wilson (Los Angeles, CA: Autry National Center of the American West, UC Press, 2013), 3-4, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Californios were the native-born people of California. The term is not intended to include Native Americans, who were obviously native-born. Californios were mainly people of Spanish or Mexican descent; however, they also included mestizos, the offspring of Spaniard and Mexican relationships with Native Americans.

<sup>4</sup> Karen S. Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos” in *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic*, 11, 15.





Solomon Lazard, Jewish pioneer, no date  
(Jewish Museum of the American West)

In 1850, the U.S. Census recorded eight Jewish residents of Los Angeles, living in four adjacent storefronts on Bell's Row, a robust commercial street downtown.<sup>5</sup> At first, they were mostly young single males working in commerce. More arrived in the 1850s, mostly unmarried males. Attracted by economic opportunity, the region's multiculturalism, and the embryonic state of local civic life, these settlers recognized wide-ranging possibilities in Los Angeles. The Jewish population grew as families reconnected in the city. One important family was the Newmarks, who arrived in the early 1850s via chain migration as siblings, aunts, and uncles followed each other to Los Angeles from Prussia and went on to establish dry goods, real estate, and grocery businesses in the region.<sup>6</sup> Other notable early Jewish settlers were Solomon Lazard, a banker, dry goods merchant, city council member, and co-founder of the Department of Water and Power, and his cousin Marc Eugene Meyer, also a banker and merchant. Both Lazard and Meyer

were French immigrants who married Newmark women. Many of these early settlers became merchants, a productive economic niche which – in the expanding urban economy – bore them both economic wealth and fruitful social networks.<sup>7</sup>

### Community Building in Multiethnic Los Angeles, 1860 - 1890

By the 1860s, the Jewish population was no longer a collection of bachelors. More families formed and settled in the region, and the population began the process of community building and social integration. Along with natural increase, the gradual growth of the Jewish population in Los Angeles occurred with continued in-migration from other parts of the United States as well as migration from Europe. From 1851 to 1900, the estimated number of Jews rose from 8 to 2,500, representing less than 1.5 percent of the total population (see Table I). Despite their small numbers, they soon became “overrepresented in the new elite and middle classes that redefined Los Angeles.”<sup>8</sup> This first generation of Jews in Los Angeles built a solid foundation for the Jewish community. Historians Vorspan and Gartner emphasize that Los Angeles Jewry in the nineteenth century “was very much a family affair.” It was a tightly knit group of families representing “not a huddling together against a hostile or indifferent

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<sup>5</sup> Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1970), 5-6; Karen S. Wilson, “On the Cosmopolitan Frontier: Jews and Social Networks in Nineteenth-Century Los Angeles,” (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 2011), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Chain migration occurs when immigrants from a particular town follow others from that town to a new city or neighborhood.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos,” 13-15.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos,” 17.

environment but the comradeship of men and women brought together by religion, similar European background, language, and business, and reinforced by marriage.”<sup>9</sup>

Year	Population
1851	8
1860	100
1870	20 families
1881	136
1900	2,500
1910	5,795
1920	28,000
1923	43,000
1927	65,000
1930	91,000
1941	130,000
1950	323,000
1959	391,000
1970	440,000
1980	500,000

Most of the Jews who settled in Los Angeles after 1850 were European immigrants. In 1870, the greatest number came from Prussia (44.3 percent), followed by Germany (15.5 percent), Poland (10.9 percent), France (8.6 percent), and Bavaria (8 percent). Because this resembled the origins of other European immigrants in Los Angeles, Jews forged ties with compatriots who shared native customs and language. A number of Jews were multilingual, some learning Spanish to integrate themselves into local cultural and economic life. By 1870, about two thirds of Jewish households were nuclear families with children and one third were single males living independently.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of occupations, Jews concentrated in commerce, which became a launching pad for upward mobility. In 1870, 49 percent of Jews were merchants/storekeepers and 18 percent were store clerks,

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<sup>9</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 104.

<sup>10</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, 287-89; Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York, NY: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994), 265; Bruce A. Phillips, “Not Quite White: The Emergence of Jewish ‘Ethnoburbs’ in Los Angeles, 1920-2010,” *American Jewish History* 100, 1 (January 2016), 79. This table does not distinguish between Los Angeles city and county, because the sources did not always make the distinction. At best, it is a rough estimate based on a range of non-Census sources, since the U.S. Census did not enumerate Jews as a distinct group. The data from 1920, 1930, and 1950 are from Phillips, and reflect LA County.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson, “On the Cosmopolitan Frontier,” 37-38, 63-64.



significantly higher rates than the general population. They opened shops that sold dry goods and clothing; others became wholesalers, bankers, clerks, or salesmen. Their shops and businesses – many in partnership with non-Jews – lined the city’s major commercial streets, such as Bell’s Row early on, and later Main, Los Angeles, and Commercial Streets.<sup>12</sup> Jewish immigrants also became landowners at notably higher rates than other immigrants in the city. Most Los Angeles Jews were members of an emerging middle class by the 1870s, situating them for further advancement. Karen Wilson estimates that one-fifth of the adult Jewish population during this period may have belonged to the Los Angeles elite, an indicator of their early economic and social success.<sup>13</sup>

Like most European immigrants, nearly all Jews (95 percent) lived in the city of Los Angeles, compared to 40 percent of all county residents. Yet within the city, they dispersed rather than clustered into ethnic enclaves. They lived among native-born Californians, Americans (black and white), and other immigrants. Prior to 1870, many Jews lived in upstairs or back quarters of business establishments. Most Jews lived in the downtown area, while a few had summer homes in Santa Monica or Wilmington.<sup>14</sup> This residential integration reflected the overall favorable societal conditions for Jews in early Los Angeles.



*S. Lazard & Co. was located on Main Street, north of Commercial Street, 1870  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The social networks cultivated by early Jewish merchants not only helped solidify the Jewish community, they also served as a springboard for robust social and civic involvement in the city as a whole. Through their vigorous participation, a number of Jews emerged as city leaders, not just Jewish leaders, who helped build the social, economic, and civic fabric of Los Angeles. As Wilson writes, “Jewish immigrants joined and established organizations disproportionate to their numbers in the population,” a pattern

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<sup>12</sup> Wilson, “On the Cosmopolitan Frontier,” 40-42, 48, 67, 132, 147, 151, 155-156; James P. Allen and Eugene Turner, *The Ethnic Quilt: Population Diversity in Southern California* (Northridge, CA: CSUN Center for Geographical Studies, 1997), 49.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos,” 17-18; Wilson, “On the Cosmopolitan Frontier,” 48-49, 156-161.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, “On the Cosmopolitan Frontier,” 39, 44-46, 147-150, 162-163; Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 49.

sustained from 1850 to 1890.<sup>15</sup> Their position as merchants – which gave them close, everyday contact with an array of people – encouraged this engagement and connection with the broader community.<sup>16</sup>



Maurice Kremer, Jewish pioneer, no date  
(Jewish Museum of the American West)

Jews launched a number of important early business and civic enterprises, key to building the city’s economic and physical infrastructure. Isaias Hellman, who arrived in Los Angeles in 1859, became a successful clothier and landowner. In 1871, he established Farmers and Merchants Bank with former California governor John Downey, and became known as the “father of banking” in Los Angeles. He co-founded the University of Southern California and owned part of the region’s first railroad, the Los Angeles and San Pedro line. Hellman also helped finance the enterprises of key local leaders such as *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis and oil industrialist Edward Doheny. Harris Newmark, owner of the region’s largest wholesale grocery, was instrumental in bringing the Southern Pacific Railroad to Los Angeles in 1876. The merchant Maurice Kremer, a French Jew, served on the board of education, city council, and as city/county tax collector.<sup>17</sup> Along with many others, these men created entrepreneurial networks of Jews

and non-Jews, connections that fostered robust participation in an array of civic, social, and benevolent endeavors.

In a similar way, Jews were actively involved in building up the city’s philanthropic and voluntary associations. Solomon Lazard, for example, was a founding member of three key civic organizations – the Los Angeles Guards (a local militia), the County Democratic Party, and the city’s first Odd Fellows fraternal lodge. Maurice Kremer helped establish the Teutonia Society and the French Benevolent Society, while Harris Newmark and Marc Eugene Meyer both joined the city’s first Masonic lodge. The wives of these men were likewise active in interfaith alliances and causes. For example, in 1865 Rosa Newmark helped raise funds for a Catholic secondary boys school, while in 1876 Matilda Newmark Kremer and Caroline Newmark Lazard became charter members of the secular Los Angeles Ladies’ Benevolent Society. They exemplified the vigorous participation among L.A.’s early Jews of all classes – from working class to wealthy.<sup>18</sup>

These early settlers also established distinctly Jewish institutions. In 1854, they founded a Los Angeles branch of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, which represented the first mutual aid group, ethnic society,

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<sup>15</sup> Wilson, “On the Cosmopolitan Frontier,” 51.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos,” 11 and *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos,” 17, 19-21. Also see Frances Dinkelspiel, *Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaias Hellman Created California* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, “Becoming Angelenos,” 21-23.

and charity of any kind in American-era Los Angeles.<sup>19</sup> Members helped the sick of all faiths, and conducted burial services for the dead and religious services on Jewish holidays. The Hebrew Benevolent Society also purchased land for a Jewish cemetery in Chavez Ravine.<sup>20</sup> In 1862, Joseph Newmark founded the Congregation B'nai B'rith, L.A.'s first permanent Jewish congregation later known as Wilshire Boulevard Temple. Although not a trained rabbi, Newmark was well educated in Judaic texts and was instrumental in forming at least two other synagogues in the U.S., fostering the "steady spread across the continent of German-Polish inflected Judaism as it became the dominant stream of American Jewish life."<sup>21</sup> Sarah Newmark – daughter of Rosa and Joseph – helped found the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1870, the first women's charity in Los Angeles, which drew nearly 60 percent of Jewish women into its ranks. This group ministered to the sick, the poor, and prepared the dead for burial, and their annual charity balls drew numerous non-Jews.<sup>22</sup> By the 1890s, Jews had established nine organizations – a much higher per capita number than other ethnic groups in early Los Angeles. Jews joined an array of groups at much higher rates as well.<sup>23</sup> Jews in early Los Angeles largely avoided discrimination and bigotry, due to the lack of entrenched anti-Semitic traditions in this urban frontier town. Instead, they claimed a central place in the business, civic, and residential life of the city.



Group of readers in the library of the Jewish Alliance, circa 1900  
(California Historical Society)

### Jewish Life in an Era of Discrimination, 1890 - 1933

In the wake of the 1880s boom spurred by the extension of major railway lines to Southern California, newcomers arrived *en masse*. The vast majority were white Protestant mid-westerners, an influx that transformed the city from ethnically and religiously heterogeneous to overwhelmingly Caucasian and Protestant.<sup>24</sup> The Jewish population also changed as new arrivals from disparate backgrounds formed new community hubs and institutions. These demographic

changes transformed the attitudes and social culture of Los Angeles. As Harris Newmark observed in his memoir of life in early Los Angeles, the city shifted from a fluid, diverse place of "sympathy, tolerance and good feeling" toward one of intolerance introduced by the White Anglo Saxon Protestant

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<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew Benevolent Society evolved into Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, "On the Cosmopolitan Frontier," 216-218.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, "Becoming Angelenos," 22.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson, "Becoming Angelenos," 22-23; Wilson, "On the Cosmopolitan Frontier," 52.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, "On the Cosmopolitan Frontier," 201-204.

<sup>24</sup> Usually characterized as "White Anglo Saxon Protestant" or WASP.

newcomers. As a result, Jews faced new forms of discrimination and exclusion, ousting them from the positions they formerly held and institutions they helped form in the city.<sup>25</sup>

The number of Jews in Los Angeles climbed from 2,500 to 70,000 between 1900 and 1929, and they rose from three to nearly six percent of the city's population (see Table I). Most arrivals from 1904-1920 were Eastern European Jews born in Russia and Poland, and Sephardic Jews from Algeria, Rhodes, and the Levant.<sup>26</sup> They first settled in eastern cities like New York and Chicago then made their way to Los Angeles. Some were health-seekers sent west to cure respiratory ailments like tuberculosis. The Eastern Europeans immigrants of the 1920s starkly contrasted with the American-born Jews from Los Angeles or second and third generation immigrants coming to Los Angeles from other parts of the United States. Compared to the first generation of Jews in Los Angeles, who arrived from Western Europe or the Eastern United States with sophisticated cosmopolitan culture and money to invest in new businesses or real estate, the new immigrants were less affluent, more religiously traditional, and more visibly Jewish – in their language (namely Yiddish), dress, and vocations.<sup>27</sup> This triggered anti-Semitism among Angelenos as well as embarrassment from the more established Jewish community.<sup>28</sup>



*First location of Sinai Temple, completed in 1909 at the northwest corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets in the Westlake neighborhood. The building pictured above is designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument #173.  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

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<sup>25</sup> Wilson, "On the Cosmopolitan Frontier," 33.

<sup>26</sup> The Levant is the region of the Middle East including the present day countries of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel.

<sup>27</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 115-117.

<sup>28</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 49-50; Wilson, "Introduction," 6.



In terms of jobs, Jews moved from being predominantly merchants and shopkeepers into a broader array of occupations. One study found that in 1920, the jobs profile was: 5 percent professionals, 22 percent manufacturers/proprietors/shopkeepers, 40 percent white-collar workers (clerks, managers, stenographers, bookkeepers, etc.), and 30 percent artisans and laborers. By 1929, the proportion of white-collar and blue-collar workers rose, while merchants declined. Jews were leaders in the film industry, founding some of the largest, most successful film studios during this period.<sup>29</sup>

After the early era of full integration and participation, Jews began facing discrimination. It began in the 1890s, intensified in the 1920s, and continued thereafter. Starting around 1900, for example, Jews moved from the center to the margins in local politics. They were shut out of elected municipal offices by the political parties, and relegated to appointive, advisory, or technical positions. Jews were also gradually excluded from elite social clubs in Los Angeles, prompting them to form their own.<sup>30</sup> In the 1920s, reflecting a national rise in anti-Semitism, Jews faced rampant job discrimination, and exclusion from colleges, medical schools, social clubs, and private schools. As the *B'nai B'rith Messenger* reported in 1920, "Little by little the various clubs of Southern California have been closing their doors to Jews."<sup>31</sup> Major downtown law firms and hospitals refused to employ Jews. Given their earlier position at the center of the city's social, economic, and civic life, as Karen Wilson notes, Jews experienced a profound "dislocation... from influential social networks."<sup>32</sup>

Residential exclusion was another facet of this trend. The Ku Klux Klan, active in various neighborhoods around Los Angeles, worked to exclude Jews from home ownership and social groups. As Vorspan and Gartner write, "Many areas were closed tight to Jews by means of restrictive covenants... and other devices."<sup>33</sup> Palos Verdes Estates, for example, limited local property ownership to "Caucasians and Gentiles."<sup>34</sup> Within this adverse context, Jews in Los Angeles built up their own communities and

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<sup>29</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 127-134.

<sup>30</sup> The most notable was the Concordia Club founded in 1891 by the first generation elite, which became the "inner sanctum of Jewish high society." Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 94.

<sup>31</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 94, 103-105, 136-137, 144-145, quote at 144. Notable Jews serving in advisory or appointed positions included Sid Grauman on the Municipal Art Department, William Barman who served as deputy city attorney from 1914-1922, and Harry Hollzer, who served on the superior court from 1924 to 1931, when he received a federal judicial appointment. Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 138.

<sup>32</sup> Wilson, "On the Cosmopolitan Frontier," 10.

<sup>33</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 205.

<sup>34</sup> Turner and Allen, *Ethnic Quilt*, 67.

Documents produced by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal New Deal agency formed to revive the housing industry, also revealed openly discriminatory language toward Jews. Its 1939 appraisal of the West Adams area, likely written by realtors reflecting local opinion, read:

Development of this area began over 25 years ago as a moderate priced area and has always been a popular residential district with the medial income class. Some five years ago an infiltration of Jewish families began and has been progressively increasing since and many foreign-born Jewish people have become residents of the district and have proven a subversive influence.

These appraisals reinforced housing discrimination in the city, by influencing the lending decisions of private banks, which typically avoided granting loans in such negatively designated areas.

institutions not only to strengthen ethno-religious identity, but also for group self-protection. Some Jews left the old downtown area settling just west near Temple Street, or two miles south around Central Avenue. In the 1910s, Temple Street was considered the Jewish “Main Street,” followed by Central Avenue in the 1920s. More affluent Jews moved further west to Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood, or West Adams. To the east, many Jews settled in Boyle Heights, which became L.A.’s first distinctly Jewish enclave. Two key nodes of Jewish life emerged – one in Boyle Heights, the other in the Westside and Hollywood – each exemplifying the growing diversity of Los Angeles Jews.



*Max Heller's Drug Store, Boyle Heights, 1928  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Boyle Heights was a multiethnic streetcar suburb that attracted working- and lower middle-class Eastern European Jews, who were the dominant ethnic group there by the 1920s. Known as “Los Angeles’ Lower East Side,” Boyle Heights was an enclave of immigrant Jews, many of them Orthodox Yiddish speakers from Russia. Jews began settling the area in 1900 and continued over the next two decades as a range of housing was constructed. The Jewish population there rose rapidly, from 3,000 to 24,000 between 1920 and 1930. Most lived in the northwestern section (north of 4<sup>th</sup>

Street and west of Evergreen Cemetery). A 1924 survey found that nearly 70 percent of local Jews worked as skilled laborers, professionals, or in “clerical and semi-intellectual” jobs, while over 75 percent could read and write English, a higher rate than other local immigrant groups. Jews in Boyle Heights lived among diverse neighbors – Mexicans, Japanese, Armenians, Italians, African Americans, and Russian Molokans (a Christian sect).<sup>35</sup> The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal New Deal agency formed to revive the housing industry described Boyle Heights as “a ‘melting pot’ area” that “is literally honeycombed with diverse and subversive racial elements”<sup>36</sup> By 1935, about one third of all Jews in Los Angeles lived in Boyle Heights. Geographers Allen and Turner note that by the late 1930s, a distinct Jewish social geography was apparent: “Boyle Heights remained the home of the more Yiddish,

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City Survey Files for Los Angeles, 1939, U.S. Home Owners Loan Corporation, Record Group 195, National Archives, Washington D.C., sheet C-117, March 13, 1939.

Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985), 195-218.

<sup>35</sup> Caroline Luce, “Reexamining Los Angeles’ ‘Lower East Side’: Jewish Bakers Union Local 453 and Yiddish Food Culture in 1920s Boyle Heights” in *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic*, 29-30; Bruce Phillips, “Not Quite White: The Emergence of Jewish ‘Ethnoburbs’ in Los Angeles, 1920-2010” in *American Jewish History* (January 2016), 80.

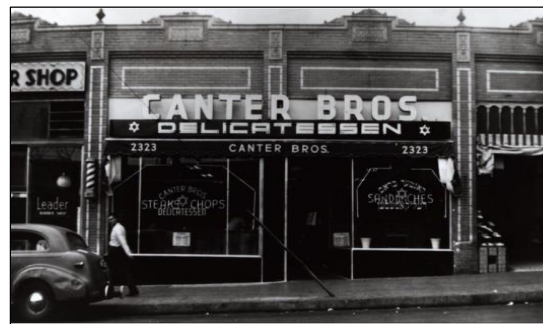
<sup>36</sup> City Survey Files, HOLC, sheet D-53, April 19, 1939.



Orthodox, and working-class Jews; the more acculturated Jews (particularly the Reform Jews) and the new professionals and managers lived in a completely separate area, to the west of downtown.”<sup>37</sup>

Within this neighborhood diversity, Jews worked to bolster their culture, ethnic identity, and institutions, turning Boyle Heights into a visibly Jewish enclave. Local rabbis and religious leaders established dozens of synagogues, such as the Congregation Talmud Torah, which originated in 1905 as a society to support a Jewish afternoon school, and eventually became known as the “Breed Street Shul.”<sup>38</sup> The Hebrew Benevolent Society financed the building of hospitals, childcare centers, settlement houses, old age homes, and hospices for Jews in Boyle Heights. Historian Caroline Luce also recounts the formation of *yidische kultur* – or Yiddish cultural life – in the neighborhood, through a rich array of businesses, self-help, mutual aid, and ethnic associations that together reinforced Jewish identity and values. Brooklyn Avenue (now Cesar Chavez Avenue) became a center of Jewish commerce, especially the kosher delis, bakeries, butchers, and markets that supported Jewish traditions around food consumption.<sup>39</sup>

Two key secular factions emerged in Boyle Heights: Bundists and Labor Zionists. Bundists embraced socialism and the idea of a global Jewish community, a movement that first emerged in Eastern Europe in reaction to the pogroms of the 1880s.<sup>40</sup> In Los



Canter Brothers Delicatessen, Boyle Heights, 1939  
([www.cantersdeli.com](http://www.cantersdeli.com))

Angeles, Bundists like Russian-born Peter Kahn and Julius Levitt, manager of the Los Angeles *Jewish Daily Forward*, fostered Yiddish-based culture intermingled with socialist ideals. Like the Bundists, Labor Zionists also supported Yiddish-based cultural nationalism and socialism, but they differed in advocating for a Jewish state in Palestine. Dr. Leo Blass and Aaron and Chaim Shapiro were key Labor Zionists in Los Angeles who played pivotal roles in Yiddish community organizing. The two factions collaborated in building *yidische kultur* in Boyle Heights, by establishing Yiddish-language newspapers, theater troupes, writers’ collectives, reading circles, fraternal organizations, political parties (including a Yiddish branch of the Socialist Party), and Yiddish-language branches of labor unions for garment workers, cigar makers, milliners, painters, and carpenters. The Cooperative Center served as headquarters of a leftist *folkshul* (a cultural and educational center) and a Yiddish branch of the Communist Party.<sup>41</sup> If these various factions clashed around ideology – at times, at the corner of Brooklyn and Soto which served as a center of open-air public debate – they united around the Jewish markets, bakeries, and delis that unified a

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<sup>37</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 49-50, quote at 67; Wilson, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>38</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 164.

<sup>39</sup> Luce, “Reexamining,” 29-30

<sup>40</sup> The pogroms were organized massacres of Jewish people in Russia and Eastern Europe. Two waves, the first between 1881 and 1884 and the second following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, motivated many Jewish people to emigrate.

<sup>41</sup> The Cooperative Center was located at 2708 Brooklyn Avenue.

neighborhood-based Jewish community in Los Angeles. As well, Boyle Heights Jews were not a wholly insular community. They interacted frequently with their multiethnic neighbors in local institutions, schools, businesses, and playgrounds.<sup>42</sup>



*Arbeter Ring/Workmen's Circle School, Boyle Heights, 1935 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Mid-Wilshire, West Adams, and Hollywood areas attracted the “more prosperous and acculturated Jews,” including businessmen, professionals, real estate developers, and the Jewish immigrants who built the film industry.<sup>43</sup> As part of the upper and middle classes in Los Angeles, they embraced more conservative, business-oriented values that stood in contrast to their leftists Boyle Heights counterparts. For example, in the 1890s, Jewish businessmen Jacob Waldeck, D.A. Hamburger, and M.H. Meyberg were board members of the Merchants Association (later the Merchants & Manufacturers Association), which became a rabidly anti-union force in the city.<sup>44</sup> Jews also owned most of the city’s garment factories, which were frequent targets of labor strikes and boycotts – including by Jewish workers – during this period.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Luce, “Reexamining,” 30-42; George J. Sanchez, “‘What’s Good for Boyle Heights is Good for the Jews’: Creating Multiracialism on the Eastside during the 1950s” in *American Quarterly* (September 2004), 635.

<sup>43</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 118; Wilson, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>44</sup> An irony is that Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times* and spearhead of the “open shop” movement, condoned open anti-Semitism in his newspaper. See Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 136, 152.

<sup>45</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 93, 120-124, 126.

A new Jewish elite emerged during these years, including film moguls like Samuel Goldwyn, Lewis Selznick, Carl Laemmle, Jesse Lasky, Louis Mayer, Adolph Zukor, and Irving Thalberg as well as commercial developers like A.W. Ross who built the “Miracle Mile” on Wilshire Boulevard. To this elite, shoring up their dignity and status in the face of rising discrimination became a priority in the 1920s. Some reacted by criticizing the Yiddish-speakers of Boyle Heights for making a poor impression on mainstream Angelenos.<sup>46</sup> Others countered by forming their own exclusive clubs and associations. The Concordia Club continued to serve this purpose, though by the 1920s it was eclipsed by the Hillcrest Country Club, built in the early 1920s. After initially being dominated by the old Jewish elite – the Newmarks, Hellmans, and others – Hillcrest eventually had the effect of uniting the old and new Jewish elite of Los Angeles.<sup>47</sup> Some scholars have shown that Jewish filmmakers had an ambivalent relationship with their Jewish identity – they made films that idealized white Americanness and ethnic assimilation at the same time they were challenging discrimination by L.A.’s Protestant elite.<sup>48</sup>



*The B'nai B'rith Los Angeles Lodge was located at 521 W. Pico Boulevard (demolished), but moved to this building at 846 S. Union Street designed by S. Tilden Norton in 1923 (you-are-here)*

Jews also continued to support associational life. They established and participated in charities, synagogues, hospitals, educational councils, and social clubs. One notable entity was the B'nai B'rith Los Angeles Lodge No. 487, which began as a mutual aid and social group but evolved into the city's leading social, charitable, and civil rights organization. From 1905 to 1924, its membership climbed from 172 to 2,000. It spoke out against anti-Semitic language published by the *Los Angeles Times*, and became a leading voice of Jewish self-defense.<sup>49</sup> Yet even despite these gains, by the 1940s some observers

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<sup>46</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 129-134, 144-145; Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 50.

<sup>47</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 94; Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 50; Phil Blazer and Shelley Portnoy, *Wresting with the Angels: A History of Jewish Los Angeles* (Sherman Oaks, CA: Blazer Communications, 2006), 151-153.

<sup>48</sup> Sanchez, ““What’s Good for Boyle Heights,”” 636; Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1988).

<sup>49</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 145-153, 154-183. The *B'nai B'rith Messenger* newspaper was established in 1897 (p. 102).

believed that L.A. Jewry suffered from weak organizational life, compared to their counterparts in eastern and mid-western cities. Jewish community centers lacked ample financial support and existed as “marginal institutions,” generally modest in size and scope compared to those in the East.<sup>50</sup>

### Depression, World War II and the Holocaust, 1933 - 1945

The Depression hit the Jewish community hard, as it did everyone in Los Angeles. Wage earners faced layoffs and businesses went bust. Hellman’s pioneer bank was wiped out. Jewish charities did their best to aid the growing number of destitute in the city. By the late 1930s, signs of recovery appeared. Occupationally, Jews showed marked gains among professionals, as the number of doctors, lawyers, accountants, social workers, and teachers rose, along with artists and writers working in the motion picture industry. The Jewish population in Los Angeles nearly doubled during the 1930s. And they increasingly settled in neighborhoods west of downtown, such as the West Adams and Fairfax neighborhoods, which saw rapid Jewish increases, while Hollywood held steady as a solidly Jewish area. By 1940, these neighborhoods west of downtown were more Jewish than Boyle Heights.<sup>51</sup>

An alarming facet of Jewish life in the 1930s was rising anti-Semitism, expressed most fervently in Nazi Germany and less blatantly in Los Angeles. Several fascist groups rose locally during the decade including the Silver Shirts, Friends of New Germany, and German American Bund, which ran an Aryan bookstore. They especially targeted Jews in Hollywood, while the anti-Semitic American Nationalist Party blamed Jews for manipulating the country’s economy and politics.<sup>52</sup>

Vorspan and Gartner contend that the initial Jewish response in the early 1930s – at the height of the Depression – was withdrawal and “communal paralysis.” Yet other sources suggest concerted anti-Nazi activism and Jewish ethnic fortification in the face of rising Nazism and fascism. In 1933, they formed the Jewish Community Committee (later the Community Relations Committee), which hired private investigators to expose local Nazi activity and monitor depictions of Jews in films. That same year, the United Jewish Community was founded, with Rabbi Edgar Magnin as chairman, to focus on fostering



Rabbi Edgar Magnin in his study, 1935 (UCLA)

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<sup>50</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 61-62.

<sup>51</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 199, 203-205; Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 49-50, 67; Wilson, “Introduction,” 6; Phillips, “Not Quite White,” 83-84.

<sup>52</sup> Caroline Luce, “Visions of a Jewish Future: The Jewish Bakers Union and Yiddish Culture in East Los Angeles, 1908-1942,” (PhD dissertation, UCLA, 2013), 196-197.



Jewish culture in the local community, through attention to kosher food practices, youth groups, and Jewish schools. In Boyle Heights, unionists, activists, writers, and residents worked to strengthen Jewish culture as a means of protecting the Jewish future and fighting rising fascism. The United Jewish Welfare Fund, founded in 1929, focused on both foreign and local philanthropy. Attorneys such as Lester Roth, Isaac Pacht, and Harry Hollzer dominated these groups, signifying their rise as civic leaders, and the declining status of Jewish merchants and manufacturers who were hit hard during the Depression. In 1937, two of these groups were consolidated as the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council (LAJCC). A federation of Jewish service groups, the LAJCC marked a milestone in the consolidation of resources and power among Los Angeles Jews. From 1937 to 1941, the number of affiliated groups in the LAJCC rose from 156 to 350, reflecting rising concern about the Jewish plight in war-torn Europe.<sup>53</sup>

The most vigorous anti-Nazi activism coalesced in Boyle Heights. In 1935, Yiddish socialists and unionists spearheaded the formation of two anti-Nazi groups, the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) and the United Anti-Nazi Conference (UANC). Bringing together Jewish and labor organizations, the JLC held rallies, distributed anti-Nazi pamphlets, and launched boycotts against German goods, and they joined forces with the Community Relations Committee. Its first leader was Julius Levitt.<sup>54</sup> In early 1937, they held an emergency campaign to aid Jews in Poland, who were under attack by the Nazis. The UANC collaborated with civil rights groups citywide and the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League to raise awareness about the Nazi threat. Allying with civil rights groups, they hosted public speeches, held protests, raised funds for Nazi victims, and broadcast radio programs emphasizing the fascist threat not only to Jews, but also to minorities. In November 1938, the JLC and UANC staged an interfaith march down Brooklyn Avenue (now Cesar Chavez Avenue) – drawing 10,000 to 15,000 people – to honor the victims of Kristallnacht.<sup>55</sup>

Jews served the Allied war effort in numerous ways. Nationally, about 550,000 Jewish men and women served in the armed forces.<sup>56</sup> For many, the war experience had the effect of strengthening Jewish identity: “Almost all came back from the war with a feeling of pride in their Jewishness, with an awakened interest in Jewish life.”<sup>57</sup> While some soldiers experienced anti-Semitism in the service, many felt the war experience reduced prejudice and heightened their commitment to civil rights for Jews and other ethnic and racial minorities. Moreover, Jewish soldiers who encountered the concentration camps first hand were transformed by the experience. As one recalled, after witnessing the camps, “I became ardently Jewish.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 208, 220-224, quote at 208; Luce, “Visions of a Jewish Future,” 213-222.

<sup>54</sup> Levitt was West Coast manager of the *Jewish Daily Forward*. The JLC opened an office downtown with the *Forward* in the Stack Building at 228 W. Fourth Street. Kenneth C. Burt, “The Jewish Labor Committee: Seventy Five Years of Activism and Historic Achievements,” accessed at <http://www.kennethburt.com/jlc2009.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Luce, “Visions of a Jewish Future,” 199, 213, 222-236; Burt, “The Jewish Labor Committee.”

<sup>56</sup> Eleven percent of the Jewish population and 50 percent of Jewish men aged 18-44 served in the military. This was roughly equal to the general population.

<sup>57</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 10-13, quote at 13.

<sup>58</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 13.



*Jewish movie stars Edward G. Robinson, Sylvia Sydney, and Paul Muni confer prior to opening performance of "We Will Never Die" (Wyman Institute)*

On the home front, Los Angeles Jews responded by buying war bonds, volunteering, and donating to Jewish charities that funneled money to war relief. One bond drive in Boyle Heights was so successful that the US Air Force named a B-12 bomber in the community's honor – "The Spirit of Boyle Heights."<sup>59</sup> Prominent Jewish movie stars and filmmakers participated in a 1943 pageant called "We Will Never Die," a memorial to Jewish victims of the Holocaust and a call to action

to President Roosevelt.<sup>60</sup> The war also catalyzed new support for Zionism, which called for the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine. The genocide suffered by Jews during the war justified this call, they believed: if the world's democracies could not protect Jews, then an independent Jewish state was the only answer.<sup>61</sup> In Los Angeles, the deep devastation of the Holocaust reverberated for years, and represented the basis of local efforts to memorialize the genocide and to fight the prejudice that drove it.

Jews also stepped up their participation in interracial coalitions to advance civil rights and antidiscrimination. For example, Jews served as prominent members of the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee (SLDC), formed in 1942 to defend the Mexican American young men wrongly convicted of murder. Jews helped raise most of the Committee's funding. Harry Braverman served as the SLDC treasurer and spearheaded a number of civil rights collaborations between Jews and Mexican Americans.<sup>62</sup> These alliances would continue after the war.

### **Upward Mobility in Postwar Los Angeles, 1945 - 1980**

During the postwar years, the Jewish population in Los Angeles surged and diversified. As Karen Wilson summarizes, "Jews became both developers and residents of suburbia, innovators and patrons of high and low culture, and instigators of, and agitators, for social change."<sup>63</sup> The influence of these endeavors spanned from the local to the global.

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<sup>59</sup> The drive was led by Monte Salvin and businessman Meyer Pransky. Rudy Martinez, "The Travels and Travails of the Haym Salomon Statue, Part Two," (September 2, 2015), [http://boyleheightshistoryblog.blogspot.com/2015\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://boyleheightshistoryblog.blogspot.com/2015_09_01_archive.html).

<sup>60</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 15-17. This event took place at Madison Square Garden in New York.

<sup>61</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Other Jewish members included Ben Margolis, Abe Isserman, and Alice Greenfield (later McGrath). Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth Century Los Angeles* (New York, NY: Oxford, 2011), 88-89.

<sup>63</sup> Wilson, "Introduction," 6.



Jews were part of the postwar population boom that transformed Los Angeles, thrusting it to the forefront of major American cities. The city's Jewish population rose from 130,000 before the war to 315,000 in 1951. In the late 1940s, over 2,000 Jews were arriving each month, representing 13 percent of all immigrants. By the early 1960s, only New York and Tel Aviv housed more Jews than Los Angeles. Many postwar arrivals were former defense plant workers and discharged servicemen, moving from big cities of the East and Midwest. Most were American-born young adults, joined by a small stream of elderly Jews seeking good climate and an easier life in their retirement. After 1945, newcomers came to vastly outnumber the established prewar Jewish population. They were drawn by the casual, informal lifestyle, the sunny climate, booming economy, and possibilities for "new opportunity...not discrimination."<sup>64</sup>

Another notable group of Jewish immigrants were refugees from the war, the "survivors of unbelievable barbarities." Their arrival was aided by the Jewish community's Émigré Service Committee, which worked in concert with several Jewish agencies with funding by the United Jewish Welfare Fund. In the immediate postwar years, 567 families arrived in Los Angeles with help from these groups, while 10,000 Jewish refugees arrived in total by 1953. While the Jewish community strove to assist them in finding jobs and housing, some also faced unemployment.<sup>65</sup>

Occupationally, Jews as a group experienced upward mobility after 1945. The proportion of Jews employed as professionals and independent businessmen rose substantially, outpacing the general population. By 1959, for example, 25 percent of Jewish heads of household were professionals (such as doctors, attorneys, etc.), and roughly 30 percent were "proprietors, managers, and officials." The numbers of blue-collar workers, in turn, declined. As Vorspan and Gartner conclude, "In simplest terms, they ceased to work for an employer and went into business for themselves."<sup>66</sup> Some of this trend was the result of continued discrimination by large corporations, which excluded Jews from "organization men" positions, a hallmark of postwar American life. Still Jewish Angelenos prospered on their own terms, reflected in their relatively higher income levels than the general population.<sup>67</sup> Among Jewish women who worked outside the home, they concentrated in sales and clerical jobs.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 23, 26-30, 41, quote at 30; Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 225-227.

<sup>65</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 229-230, quote at 229.

<sup>66</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 232.

<sup>67</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 230-233, 237.

<sup>68</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 60. A minority of married women worked outside the home in the 1950s.

A number of Jewish businessmen emerged as leaders in their fields, helping to build and grow the city. Real estate development – an important driver of postwar growth – was one critical area. Several Jews became prominent real estate developers. S. Mark Taper built housing to alleviate the wartime shortage, then went into savings and loan banking; Louis H. Boyar, one of the largest home builders in the U.S., built over 50,000 homes by the mid-1960s; and Lawrence Weinberg built thousands of homes in the San Fernando Valley, and also became owner of an aircraft manufacturing plant. Other Jewish entrepreneurs owned building supply companies and home finance and mortgage enterprises. Isadore Familian dropped out of Roosevelt High School to work for the family business, the Familian Pipe and Supply Company. The family eventually bought the Price Pfister Brass Manufacturing Company, and under Isadore's leadership the company became one of the largest manufacturers of bath and kitchen hardware in the world. Kaspare Cohn and his son-in-law Ben Meyer ran Union Bank, which expanded quickly in the 1950s and engaged in home finance and mortgage. By the late 1950s, a number of builders began investing capital in banks and savings and loan associations. Jews also became leaders in other sectors, such as the garment industry, furniture, and wholesale foods. While Vorspan and Gartner claim that the Jewish builder eclipsed the Hollywood mogul as the “entrepreneur par excellence,” taking a leadership role in Jewish philanthropy, Hollywood Jews remained a powerful force in the city and beyond.<sup>69</sup>



*Ben R. Meyer, businessman, banker, and first president of the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations from 1913 to 1915 (USC)*

In the postwar years, Jews had a mixed record in terms of social acceptance and status. On the one hand, Jews were widely accepted as suburban residents – a crucial site for upward mobility in postwar America – and they achieved notable economic success. Race restrictions on Jewish residential settlement had mostly disappeared by the late 1940s, and most neighborhoods were open to them. As sociologist Bruce Phillips notes, “Jewish migrants to Los Angeles were making ongoing residential choices” and the city “consistently created more open housing choices, the vast majority of which were open to Jews.”<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, a few areas continued to exclude them, including Rolling Hills, San Marino, Rosemead, and parts of Long Beach, where Jews were steered away by realtors or encountered open hostility, such as property defacement. As a result, even as many Jews progressed and moved to the suburbs, they maintained an allegiance to civil rights and forged alliances with other aggrieved minority groups who were not so fortunate.<sup>71</sup>

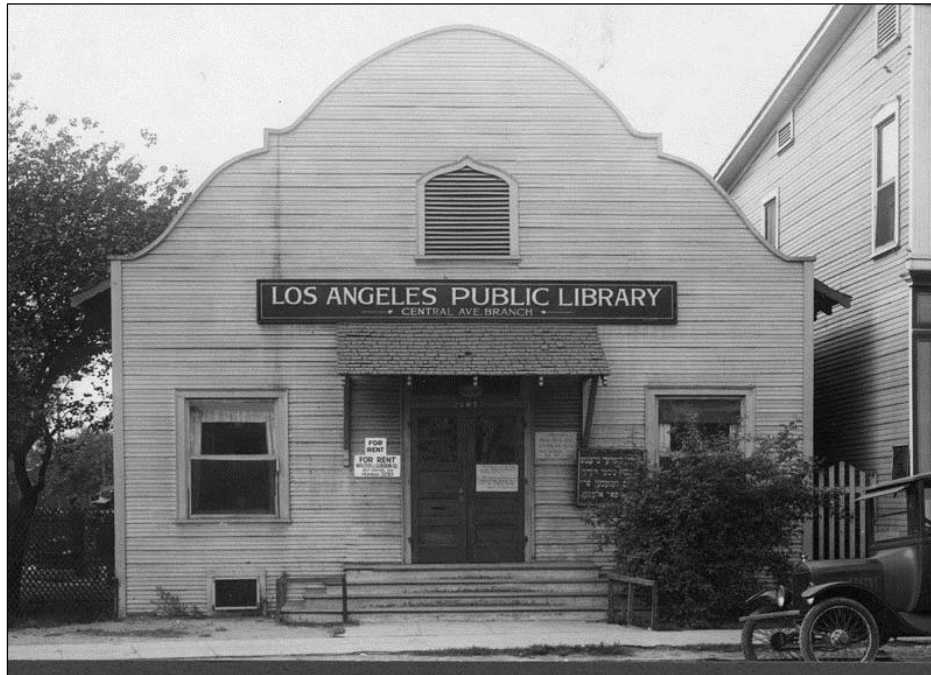
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<sup>69</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 233-237. See Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1988).

<sup>70</sup> Phillips, “Not Quite White,” 78.

<sup>71</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 48; Sanchez, ““What’s Good for Boyle Heights,”” 644-645.

Residential patterns came to reflect this experience. One was a departure from the old, working-class neighborhoods. In the 1940s, most Jewish residents of Boyle Heights left as large numbers of Mexican American residents moved in. A similar pattern of white flight occurred in the old Central Avenue district, as a growing African American population crowded into this area in the face of rampant exclusion from white suburban neighborhoods. Citywide, Jews were on the move, both away from racially changing neighborhoods and – for new arrivals – toward new housing and employment opportunities that were facilitated by the growing network of freeways.<sup>72</sup>



*Central Avenue Library, with signage in Hebrew to the right of the main entrance, 1925 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

While dispersal was a crucial aspect of postwar settlement patterns, there were several notable Jewish enclaves between Hollywood and the beach. One was the Fairfax district, between Wilshire and Melrose, settled by Jews in the 1940s and 1950s. The area became a “symbolic focus” of the Jewish community in the postwar period, anchored by Orthodox synagogues and schools and Jewish oriented shops along Fairfax Avenue. Numerous apartment buildings in the area drew elderly and less affluent Jews. They could walk to the kosher butcher shops, Canter’s Deli, the Diamond Bakery, religious book and music stores, newspaper stands selling Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew papers, and senior service centers. Another hub was two miles south, around the Pico-Robertson intersection. This attracted younger, more affluent families from the Beverlywood and Cheviot Hills neighborhoods. Its kosher meat markets, Jewish day schools, bookstores, and both Orthodox and Conservative synagogues made it another key center of Jewish life.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 67.

<sup>73</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 68.



*Ocean Park was sometimes referred to as "Sheeny Beach" because it was popular with Jews. Sheeny was a pejorative term.  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Hollywood was another area of clustered Jewish residence. In the postwar decades, the area attracted both Jews leaving Boyles Heights and Jewish newcomers to Los Angeles, who took up residence in the numerous rental units in the area. Many were elderly and widows. By the late 1970s, many of those settlers had moved on, to be replaced by a new, significant wave of Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union, who settled in West Hollywood and adjacent neighborhoods. Many were elderly, spoke Russian, and reconnected to their Judaic religion (forbidden under Soviet communist rule) at Fairfax area

synagogues. Russian shops and services in the area helped integrate them into the local neighborhood.<sup>74</sup> Further west, Venice and Ocean Park became a haven for older Jewish immigrants, drawn by affordable rents in prewar apartments and cottages and the pleasant coastal weather. By 1950, several synagogues, kosher bakeries, and butcher shops gave these beach neighborhoods a Jewish identity, a place where “collective life was and still is especially intense because there is no automobile traffic on the boardwalk.”<sup>75</sup>

By far the most common residential pattern for Jews after 1940 was dispersed settlement toward the Westside and the San Fernando Valley – a diffuse process of suburbanization. What was significant and unique about Los Angeles was the huge scale of this dispersal.<sup>76</sup> As geographers Allen and Turner write, “These two areas encompass the most important Jewish concentration in Southern California.”<sup>77</sup> In the Westside, these neighborhoods included Bel Air, Beverlywood, Cheviot Hills, Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, as well as the more modest Palms area. They were centers of new housing and high-status jobs, which attracted young, upwardly mobile Jewish families. They were also drawn by a feel of internal cohesiveness, proximity to Jewish synagogues and commerce in the Fairfax area, and the momentum of Jewish business and investments in the area. In later years, the Westside became a key center of Jewish institutions – such as the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles (formed in 1959 when the major Jewish organizations merged), which established headquarters on Wilshire, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Museum of Tolerance, both located on Pico Boulevard near the Hillcrest Country Club. One 1979 survey found that zip codes 90035, 90048, and 90211 were 61 to 68 percent Jewish.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 68; Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 41.

<sup>75</sup> Barbara Myerhoff, quoted in Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 41-42.

<sup>76</sup> Ava Kahn interview with Becky Nicolaidis, January 8, 2009.

<sup>77</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 68.

<sup>78</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 69.





A mother-daughter event in the San Fernando Valley for the United Jewish Welfare Fund, 1959 (Los Angeles Public Library)

Further north, the San Fernando Valley became another major Jewish residential area. While Jews first settled in North Hollywood, they eventually moved into Encino, Sherman Oaks, Tarzana, Northridge, Studio City, Granada Hills, and Woodland Hills. In 1965, 120,000 Jews lived in the Valley, exceeding all other areas of the city.<sup>79</sup> By 1979, about one-third of L.A.'s Jewish population lived in the Valley. A 1979 survey found one section of Sherman Oaks had the highest Jewish concentration (44 percent), while the other neighborhoods were about one-third Jewish. After the mid-1970s, Persian Jews from Iran immigrated to Los Angeles, many settling in established Jewish areas in West Los Angeles, Encino, Tarzana, and along the Ventura Boulevard "Jewish" corridor. By the early 1980s, one Encino and three Westside temples had mostly Iranian congregations.<sup>80</sup>

The influx of Jews into suburbia had profound implications for their racial, social, and ethno-religious identity. In the postwar years, suburbia had come to represent a bastion of mainstream white middle-class

America, a racially exclusionary space that privileged those allowed to enter in by granting access to good schools, safe neighborhoods, and rising home equity and wealth. Some scholars have posited that Jews finally gained access to this white privilege in the postwar period, reflecting their shifting racialization as white.<sup>81</sup> In the process, they became members of racially segregated neighborhoods that largely excluded Latinos, African Americans, and Asians.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the absorption of Jews into mainstream suburbia led some Jews to fear a trend of assimilation, a loss of Jewish religious and ethnic identity, which seemed especially alarming in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust. The trappings

<sup>79</sup> Beverly-Fairfax, Wilshire-Fairfax, and Hollywood had about 100,000 Jewish residents; Cheviot Hills and Beverlywood had nearly 79,000; Beverly Hills, Westwood, Brentwood, and neighborhoods stretching to the ocean had 53,000. Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 276-277.

<sup>80</sup> Allen and Turner, *Ethnic Quilt*, 69, 88n46, 75; Bruce Phillips, "Los Angeles Jewry: A Demographic Portrait" in *American Jewish Year Book* 86 (1986), 161, 163.

<sup>81</sup> Sanchez, "What's Good for Boyle Heights," 638-639; Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2005); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Lila Berman, *Metropolitan Jews: Politics, Race, and Religion in Postwar Detroit* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), complicates this linear narrative.

<sup>82</sup> George J. Sanchez, "Introduction: Beyond Alliances," in "Beyond Alliances: The Jewish Role in Reshaping the Racial Landscape of Southern California" in *The Jewish Role in American Life*, vol. 9 (USC Casdan Institute, 2012), xi-xii.

of suburban affluence and culture, they feared, might further devastate the preservation of Jewish identity.

### **Jewish Community Adaptations, 1950 - 1980**

These social patterns – dispersed suburbanization and the predominance of newcomers – promoted certain innovative adaptations among Los Angeles Jewry. As newcomers unencumbered by older, entrenched systems of leadership and tradition, they found the opportunity to experiment and create social systems adapted to their immediate needs. Los Angeles was a city of self-reinvention, open to modern, experimental ideas about community and identity. It represented a “blank slate” upon which Jewish newcomers from a range of backgrounds could shape their community and assume leadership positions in the process. “Jewishness ceased to be a matter of natural inheritance. It became, instead, a matter of choice,” write Deborah Dash Moore. “Their apparently casual abandonment of religious tradition left them more open to innovative personalism and eclecticism.”<sup>83</sup> Moore contends that innovative Jewish practices developed in Los Angeles – with an emphasis on individual affirmation and experiential spirituality – that ultimately came to shape American Jewry nationally.<sup>84</sup>

Some innovations were initiated by laypeople, others by a new generation of rabbis. In this period, no one Jewish institution came to dominate, but rather many existed simultaneously, including Jewish community centers, synagogues, and secular groups.<sup>85</sup> A number of these initiatives were meant to reinvigorate Judaism among suburban Jews experiencing the powerful forces of assimilation in postwar America.

Several grassroots efforts were significant. Some recent arrivals formed hometown associations – new *landsmanshaftn* – similar to their immigrant parents and non-Jewish counterparts. By 1950, several dozen such Jewish groups existed in Los Angeles, such as the Minneapolis and St. Paul Benevolent Social Club, the New Yorkers of California, the Chicago-Detroit Club of Los Angeles, and the Omaha Friendship Club. Most met monthly in Jewish restaurants, they held annual picnics, and through social activities aimed to ease the uprooted feelings of members. Most embraced a largely secular Jewish approach and did not sponsor religious activities, making these groups centers of secular sociability.<sup>86</sup>

Others began innovating new forms of communal life. For example, in 1950 one group of parents formed a summer day camp for their children in North Hollywood Park since as one parent put it, “No one belonged to synagogues.” The camp became a center of Jewish life in the area, extending into year-

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<sup>83</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 59, quotes at 92, 94; also Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 256, 267.

<sup>84</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 93, 270-271. Moore describes these innovations in both Los Angeles and Miami.

<sup>85</sup> Karen Wilson interview by Becky Nicolaides, January 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 67-70.



round clubs, theater, folk dancing, and holiday celebrations, and it ultimately became the Chaim Weizmann Jewish Community Center, later called the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center.<sup>87</sup>

In the context of suburban residential dispersal, Jewish institutions – rather than neighborhoods – took on magnified importance. This was a postwar phenomenon, rooted in the suburban social geography of L.A. Jewry. Synagogues, in turn, adapted to this new institutional emphasis. Deborah Dash Moore describes a new, energetic generation of rabbis in the postwar period who played a critical role in this process. Synagogues came to reflect the personality and vision of their founding rabbis, so that “the identity of rabbi and congregation gradually merged.” They devised fresh ways to draw in congregants, offering eager, youthful, charismatic leadership while attending to their religious, social, political, cultural, and moral needs. In so doing, they expanded and changed the traditional function of the synagogue in ways that resonated with the city’s many “rootless” Jewish newcomers.<sup>88</sup>

Three synagogues exemplified these tendencies. Wilshire Boulevard Temple was shaped profoundly by Edgar Magnin, who was perhaps “prototypical of the pioneer American rabbi” in Los Angeles. During his nearly 70 years as rabbi there, he forged strong social ties with his Westside congregants, socializing with them regularly to help build the base and importance of his synagogue.<sup>89</sup> He took a pragmatic approach in sermons that focused less on esoteric theological debates, and more on instilling Jewish pride and knowledge. He also did not shy away from embracing monetary success. In 1949, Magnin enlisted a young rabbi Alfred Wolf to start a summer camp, under the auspices of the temple. For a synagogue, this sponsorship represented a new postwar role for the institution; temple leaders saw it as an optimal way to cultivate Jewish identity and religiosity in young people. The camp began in Pacific Palisades then moved to a permanent site in Ventura County in 1952, as Camp Hess Kramer. It sponsored annual interracial and interfaith conferences, and “expanded the synagogue’s orbit as it taught youth how to be Jewish.”<sup>90</sup>

Another exemplary synagogue was the Valley Jewish Community Center (VJCC), known today as Adat Ari El. This was a Conservative congregation that grew to become the preeminent synagogue of the San Fernando Valley under the leadership of Rabbi Aaron Wise, who arrived in 1947. Under Wise’s guidance – and with key assistance from his wife Miriam – VJCC worked to expand women’s religious education by opening a book/gift shop run by the synagogue’s Sisterhood, instituting a bat mitzvah program for girls, and forming women’s study groups. These innovations responded to the reality that Valley women – many of them suburban housewives – were the most likely participants in synagogue life.<sup>91</sup> A third important synagogue was Stephen S. Wise Temple, founded in 1964 by Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, who developed it into one of the city’s major congregations. It launched a broad array of Jewish educational

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<sup>87</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 71. Its building was constructed on Burbank Boulevard, and it was eventually renamed the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center.

<sup>88</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, chapter 4 *passim*, quote at p. 96.

<sup>89</sup> Magnin became the temple’s rabbi in 1915 and remained its spiritual leader until his death in 1984.

<sup>90</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 116.

<sup>91</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 116. The VJCC was later renamed Adat Ari El (Moore, 270).

programs for all age groups. These included not only Jewish study, but also parenting classes, family-life classes for single, adoptive, and intermarried parents, and a Reform Jewish day school. The temple ran buses to bring in congregants from all over Los Angeles, including Fairfax, North Hollywood, Pacific Palisades, and Northridge. By the mid-1970s, the temple had over 1,200 members, and that jumped to 10,000 by 1985.<sup>92</sup>

Existing Jewish institutions also adapted to postwar social realities. The Los Angeles Jewish Community Council, the centralized, democratic coordinating council of Jewish organizations, proved to be a strong, flexible, experimental body that offered “a thrilling experience in Jewish communal democracy.” It gave voice to a broad range of Los Angeles Jewry, from Orthodox to Reform, Labor Zionists to the Hollywood elite. In contrast to comparable eastern organizations, often dominated by a rigid, Orthodox communal structure, the L.A. Council was an open, democratic body whose egalitarianism made it unique in the U.S. This inclusive approach was reflected in the Council’s approach to Jewish education, which “facilitated the cooperation of Orthodox and Yiddishist, Zionist and Reform under one communal roof.”<sup>93</sup> These adaptations represented strategies for keeping Judaism relevant to postwar Angelenos.

Even despite these efforts, many Jewish families were letting go of their religiosity in everyday life.<sup>94</sup> To stave off this alarming trend of assimilation and secularization, several institutions for adult Jewish education formed in Los Angeles in the postwar years. They strove to educate a “population illiterate in Jewish knowledge,” to train both lay people and synagogue teachers. The University of Judaism (now American Jewish University) began modestly in 1947, offering extension courses to adult students in two classrooms at Sinai Temple #2. In 1948, a New York donor purchased a house on Ardmore Street to serve as the permanent campus. Although controlled by eastern leaders, the demands of local Jews pushed the institution toward a more eclectic approach that partly reflected the Reconstructionist orientation of its early founders. Instead of the more traditional East Coast Jewish university model of advanced liberal learning and leadership training, “the marketplace milieu of Los Angeles transformed its intellectual agenda ... into an eclectic offering of introductory courses, teacher training, and creative arts geared mainly to women. Its publicity soon promoted it as a ‘people’s university.’”<sup>95</sup> The College of Jewish Studies also opened in 1947, offering adult education and teacher training classes. It first operated at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, and in 1956 moved to a building in the Hollywood Hills. Although it was constrained by denominational conflicts early on, it too contributed to adult Jewish education in Los Angeles. Together with the Brandeis Camp Institute established at this time in Simi Valley and supported financially by many Los Angeles Jews, these institutions pioneered innovative approaches to adult Jewish education, especially for women and youth.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 268-269.

<sup>93</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 74-75, 79-81, 190, quotes at 75, 80.

<sup>94</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 257-258. They note the trend in the 1950s away from weekly synagogue attendance or total abstention toward “a middle ground of High Holiday attendance.”

<sup>95</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 128-134, quote at 134. By the late 1960s, it occupied a site adjacent to the Stephen S. Wise Temple atop Mulholland Drive (139).

<sup>96</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, chapter 6.

A final impact of postwar suburbanization was a resurgence of Jewish identity among second-generation suburban kids as they came of age in the late 1960s. Feeling their Jewish identity was being neutralized by suburban life, they strove to revitalize their Jewish identity by moving into more clustered patterns of settlement and by embracing more intensive forms of Jewish life. This resurgence was influenced by organizations like Hillel, which offered college students the chance to participate in Jewish religious, cultural, and communal activities on campus, and more significantly the arrival of Chabad to the West Coast. Chabad is a Jewish movement dating from 1775, which first arrived in North America in 1940 when it established headquarters in Brooklyn. It is described as the largest Hasidic group and Jewish religious organization in the world.<sup>97</sup> Working especially to bring non-practicing Jews back to the faith, “Chabad institutions provide outreach to unaffiliated Jews and humanitarian aid, as well as religious, cultural and educational activities at Chabad-run community centers, synagogues, schools, camps, and soup kitchens.”<sup>98</sup> A crucial part of its approach is the formation of outreach centers across the nation and world. Chabad built its very first outreach center near UCLA in 1969, the first of many that followed.<sup>99</sup> The formation of the world’s first Chabad outreach center in Los Angeles marks a significant milestone in the history of this Jewish revitalization movement.

### **Jewish Politics and Activism, 1945 - 1980**

Historian David Myers identifies three major phases in the history of Jewish politics in Los Angeles: 1850-1900 when Jews were active political participants in multicultural Los Angeles; 1900-1950, the era of Jewish political marginalization and disempowerment; and 1950-present, the rise of a powerful Jewish liberal and progressive coalition, including assertive Westside and Valley Jews who “become leading representatives of a liberal politics that continues to characterize Jews in Los Angeles and elsewhere to this day. Among the alumni of this coalition are leading Jewish political figures of our time, such as Henry Waxman, Howard Berman, Ed Edelman, Zev Yaroslavsky, and Eric Garcetti – the first Jew elected mayor of Los Angeles – descended from this postwar history of political re-enfranchisement.”<sup>100</sup>

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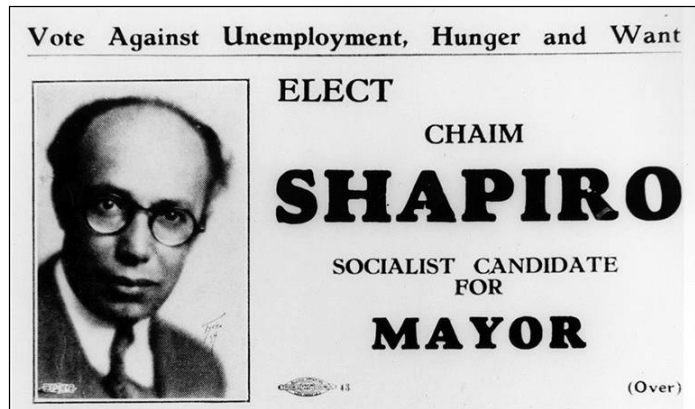
<sup>97</sup> “Chabad,” Wikipedia, accessed March 30, 2016, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chabad#cite\\_ref-90](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chabad#cite_ref-90).

<sup>98</sup> Karen Wilson interview by Becky Nicolaidis, January 2009 and March 30, 2016; Neil C. Sandberg, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles: A Window to Tomorrow* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 40. As of 2016, there were 39 Chabad-related institutions in Los Angeles. “Chabad-Lubavitch Centers in Los Angeles,” Chabad, accessed March 30, 2016, [http://www.chabad.org/centers/default\\_cdo/country/USA/state/California/city/Los%20Angeles/Start/26/jewish/Centers.htm](http://www.chabad.org/centers/default_cdo/country/USA/state/California/city/Los%20Angeles/Start/26/jewish/Centers.htm)

<sup>99</sup> Chabad House at UCLA was the first of 200 Chabad Houses established on university campuses and of 2,894 outreach centers in North America. “Chabad House at UCLA,” Chabad UCLA, accessed March 30, 2016, [http://www.chabaducla.com/templates/articlecco\\_cdo/aid/409315/jewish/History-of-Chabad-at-UCLA.htm](http://www.chabaducla.com/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/409315/jewish/History-of-Chabad-at-UCLA.htm)

<sup>100</sup> David Myers, “History Matters: Garcetti and the History of Jewish Politics,” *Jewish Journal*, May 29, 2013.

The postwar revival of Jewish political life had its ups and downs. From 1945 to 1947, Los Angeles Jewry experienced a period of political unity. There was great political diversity among the city's Jews in this period, including Hollywood leftists and conservatives, older-generation Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Communists, and Labor Zionists. After the war, they united around a shared political agenda of world peace, anti-fascism, Zionism (support for an independent Jewish commonwealth in the land of Israel), and anti-discrimination. Unified especially by alarm over the postwar Jewish refugee crisis and the struggle to create a new state of Israel, these shared concerns created a local cultural of political inclusion. This unity was illustrated in the inclusivity of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council (LAJCC), which admitted organizations spanning from conservative to communist, including the radical Jewish People's Fraternal Organization (JPFO). At the same time the LAJCC was rising in influence, power, and prestige in the city.<sup>101</sup>



*Campaign material for mayoral race of Labor Zionist Chaim Shapiro, 1933 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

By 1947, this unity splintered under pressure from anti-communist fervor and, to a lesser degree, the Zionist issue. In 1947, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, marking the birth of an independent Israel. While the vast majority of L.A. Jews supported this, the American Council for Judaism did not. More significant was the Cold War fight against domestic communism, which divided L.A. Jewry in significant ways. For Jews, the issue was fraught since anti-communism and anti-Semitism were often conflated. Positions varied. In Hollywood, a number of Jewish filmmakers stood up to the anti-communist hysteria stirred up by California State Senator Jack Tenney and his Committee on Un-American Activities. They were blacklisted for their purported ties to the Communist Party and/or their refusal to testify. At the same time, the LAJCC sided with the anti-communist forces, by refusing to take a stand on the Hollywood Blacklist, expelling the JPFO, and pressuring Jewish congregations to take loyalty oaths. Greater tolerance for progressive politics existed at the neighborhood level at individual Jewish Community Centers, such as the left-leaning Beverly Fairfax Center. Even this entity eventually collapsed under anti-communist pressure when it was forced to merge into the more conservative Westside Jewish Community Center.<sup>102</sup>

A more unified Jewish front emerged around racial liberalism and civil rights. In the postwar years, Jewish liberals emerged as a strong force, spearheading several key electoral breakthroughs and forging coalitions with other minority groups.

<sup>101</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 189-195.

<sup>102</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 199-214; Sanchez, "Introduction: Beyond Alliances," xiv-xv.



*Soto-Michigan Jewish Community Center, demolished, no date  
(J. Paul Getty Trust, Julius Shulman Photography Archive)*

The most robust example of progressive, multiracial politics centered in Boyle Heights during the 1940s and 1950s. At a time when most Jews were leaving for new housing closer to their jobs, a number of Jewish residents remained, committed to building an inclusive multiracial community on the Eastside. This was a period of shifting racial diversification in Boyle Heights: by 1955, ethnic Mexicans were nearly half the population, Jews 17 percent, and Japanese Americans and African Americans less than 5 percent. The Jews who remained – including some newcomers – hoped to create a model, democratic community

based on ideals of civil rights and interracialism, remarkable in the larger context of conservative, segregated postwar Los Angeles. The Soto-Michigan Jewish Community Center played a key role in these efforts. Mel Janapol spearheaded a number of intercultural activities that included: a model Seder for non-Jewish and Jewish youth, a Friendship Festival in 1949 at Fresno Playground to “bring together Mexican, Japanese, Negro and Jewish youth” which drew 12,000 people, and a dedicated week of intercultural programs. The center also held celebrations of Negro History Week and Mexican Independence Day. In 1952, one report found that nearly 15 percent of the center’s participants were non-Jews. Other Boyle Heights individuals and groups also helped foster multiculturalism. William Phillips, who owned Phillips Music Store on Brooklyn Avenue, helped connect young Latino musicians with the wider music scene in Los Angeles. Another important local group was the Los Angeles Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, formed in 1950 at the height of anti-communism. Led by Rose Chernin, the group worked to protect the rights of all immigrants, especially Mexicans targeted in “Operation Round-Up.” They linked the plight of Japanese Americans in WWII detention camps, Jews in Nazi-controlled Europe, and Mexicans targeted by the INS for their common suffering from oppressive detention. Finally, some Jews in this community supported – and became staffers of – Mexican American Ed Roybal who was elected to the city council in 1949.<sup>103</sup>

Jewish activists in Los Angeles also worked to advance civil rights, embracing an ethnic/racial liberalism that “combined Jewish particularism with liberal universalism.” They believed a unified attack on anti-Semitism and racism was the best approach to confronting discrimination and ensuring civil rights for all

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<sup>103</sup> Sanchez, “What’s Good for Boyle Heights,” *passim*; Anthony Macias, “Multicultural Music, Jews, and American Culture: The Life and Times of William Phillips,” *The Jewish Role in American Life*, 33-69. The LACPFB declined after 1958.



Americans.<sup>104</sup> In the 1950s, Jews supported fair employment legislation, and opposed housing discrimination and university quota systems – positions that set them apart from most white Angelenos. They joined Democratic clubs on the Westside and in the Valley. The LAJCC's Community Relations Committee worked with African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Japanese Americans to press for civil rights. Activists such as Max Mont, whose roots in labor organizing shaped his interracial activism, and attorney David Marcus battled housing discrimination.<sup>105</sup>



Ros Wyman and Ed Roybal served together on the Los Angeles City Council, 1953 (Los Angeles Public Library)

In the 1950s, Jews also began achieving critical electoral breakthroughs. In 1953, 23-year-old Rosalind Weiner (Wyman) was the first Jew elected to the L.A. City Council in the twentieth century, serving a 12-year term.<sup>106</sup> At the outset, she supported public housing, supported fair employment, and aligned with Edward Roybal on the city council. When Wyman later abandoned support for public housing in favor of the Dodgers' move to L.A., she exemplified a shift in white liberalism toward a pro-growth position at the expense of metropolitan equality.<sup>107</sup> Other Los Angeles Jews followed Wyman into political office, including Stanley Mosk, elected as state

Attorney General in 1958 and appointed to the California Supreme Court in 1964; Anthony Beilenson and Jack Fenton, elected to the State Assembly in 1962 and 1964; Ed Edelman and Marvin Braude, elected to the City Council in 1965, followed by Zev Yaroslavsky in 1975; and Burt Pines, elected as City Attorney in 1973 – all liberal Democrats. From 1968 to 1980, the number of Jews elected to office in the L.A. area increased over fourfold, prompting one scholar to dub this the period of “Jewish takeoff” in Los Angeles politics.<sup>108</sup> It also included a few conservatives such as Bobbi Fiedler, who spearheaded a grassroots campaign to stop busing in the San Fernando Valley, then won election to the L.A. school board in 1977 and the U.S. Congress in 1980 as a Reagan Republican. Fiedler, however, was an exception to the rule of Jewish politics in Los Angeles, which generally showed “nearly monolithic Democratic

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<sup>104</sup> Sanchez, “Introduction: Beyond Alliances,” xv.

<sup>105</sup> Genevieve Carpio, “Unexpected Allies: David C. Marcus and his Impact on the Advancement of Civil Rights in the Mexican-American Legal Landscape of Southern California,” and Max Felker-Kantor, “Fighting Many Battles: Max Mont, Labor and Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Los Angeles, 1950-1970,” both in *The Jewish Role in American Life*.

<sup>106</sup> Wyman was also the second women and youngest person elected to the Los Angeles City Council.

<sup>107</sup> Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 219-222; Barbara Solis, “Rosalind Weiner Wyman and the Transformation of Jewish Liberalism in Cold War Los Angeles” in *The Jewish Role in American Life*, 90-94.

<sup>108</sup> Solis, “Rosalind Weiner Wyman,” 94-94, 98-100; Amy Hill Shevitz, “At the Intersection of Gender, Ethnicity, and The City: Three Jewish Women in Los Angeles Politics,” in *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic*, 63.

partisanship and moderate progressivism.”<sup>109</sup> The liberal biracial coalitions Jews helped forge would propel Tom Bradley into the mayor’s office in 1973.<sup>110</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The contributions of Jews to Los Angeles history and culture were far ranging. As Karen Wilson writes, “From the invention of the Barbie doll to Nudie’s glamorous western wear, from the Dodgers’ Sandy Koufax to television’s *Bonanza*, from the core art collections that became museums and the donations that built the Los Angeles County Music Center, Jewish Angelenos changed Los Angeles into a center of diverse American culture.” These contributions expanded after 1980 to include the creation of the first Holocaust museum in the U.S., the first gay and lesbian synagogue in the world, and the building of world-renowned Disney Concert Hall, designed by the Canadian Jewish architect Frank Gehry. In 2010, Los Angeles had the fourth largest Jewish population in the world, with roughly the same proportion of the world’s Jews as Jerusalem (5 percent). While Jewish influence upon Los Angeles has been far-reaching and innovative, the city in turn also influenced new ways of being Jewish. As Deborah Dash Moore contends, the practices first pioneered in Los Angeles ultimately came to shape the nature of American Judaism nationally. Los Angeles Jews not only helped shape the city, but reshaped what it meant to be Jewish in America.<sup>111</sup>

## **Themes Related to Jewish History in Los Angeles**

The following themes relate to extant resources that have important associations with Jewish history in Los Angeles. These themes are consistent with the overall content and format developed for Los Angeles’ Citywide Historic Context Statement. The narratives here are intended to supplement and complement existing narratives for each theme.

Theme 1 – Religion and Spirituality, 1850 - 1980

Theme 2 - Social Clubs, 1880 - 1980

Theme 3 - Public and Private Health and Medicine, 1850 - 1980

Theme 4 - Commercial Identity, 1925 - 1980

Theme 5 - Entertainment Industry, 1908 - 1980

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<sup>110</sup> Shevitz, “At the Intersection,” 65; Rafael Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>111</sup> Wilson, “Introduction,” 3-4, 6-7; Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, chapter 9.

## Theme 1: Religion and Spirituality, 1850 - 1980

### Introduction

This theme discusses the practice of Judaism, the religious and spiritual aspects of Jewish identity, and the associated places in Los Angeles.<sup>112</sup> From the 1850s frontier to the 1970s suburbs, Jewish religious practice in Los Angeles has focused on establishing and maintaining Jewish community identity through traditional cultural and spiritual values. Religious practices vary greatly within the Jewish community. These variations are based on different geographic origins and interpretations of scripture. In the Jewish community, the three property types primarily associated with religion and spirituality are the cemetery, synagogue, and school. Responsibility for the community, including proper burial, is considered a sacred requirement, or commandment, of Jewish religious practice.<sup>113</sup> Burial grounds were the first concern of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. Synagogues were constructed later to serve as centers of community, not only places where religious aspects of ethnic identity are realized, and generally comprise a sanctuary and ancillary rooms or buildings for social and educational uses. These buildings are interchangeably called synagogues, shuls, and temples depending on the religious orientation, size, and geographic origin of the congregation.<sup>114</sup> Some congregations own a synagogue, school, and burial ground. Others may worship in a private home or borrowed space. Most congregations are led by a rabbi and are affiliated with one of the major branches of the Jewish faith: Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and Orthodox.

### Beginnings

The first collective religious and spiritual effort of the Jewish community in early Los Angeles was the establishment of a cemetery. Worship services could be conducted in any home or rented hall, but sanctified burial space was an immediate priority.<sup>115</sup> The city's Jewish men, encouraged by Solomon Nunes Carvalho, and brothers Samuel K. Labatt and Joseph I. Labatt, formed the Hebrew Benevolent Society on June 2, 1854 with two purposes: to buy land for a Jewish burial ground and to promote the

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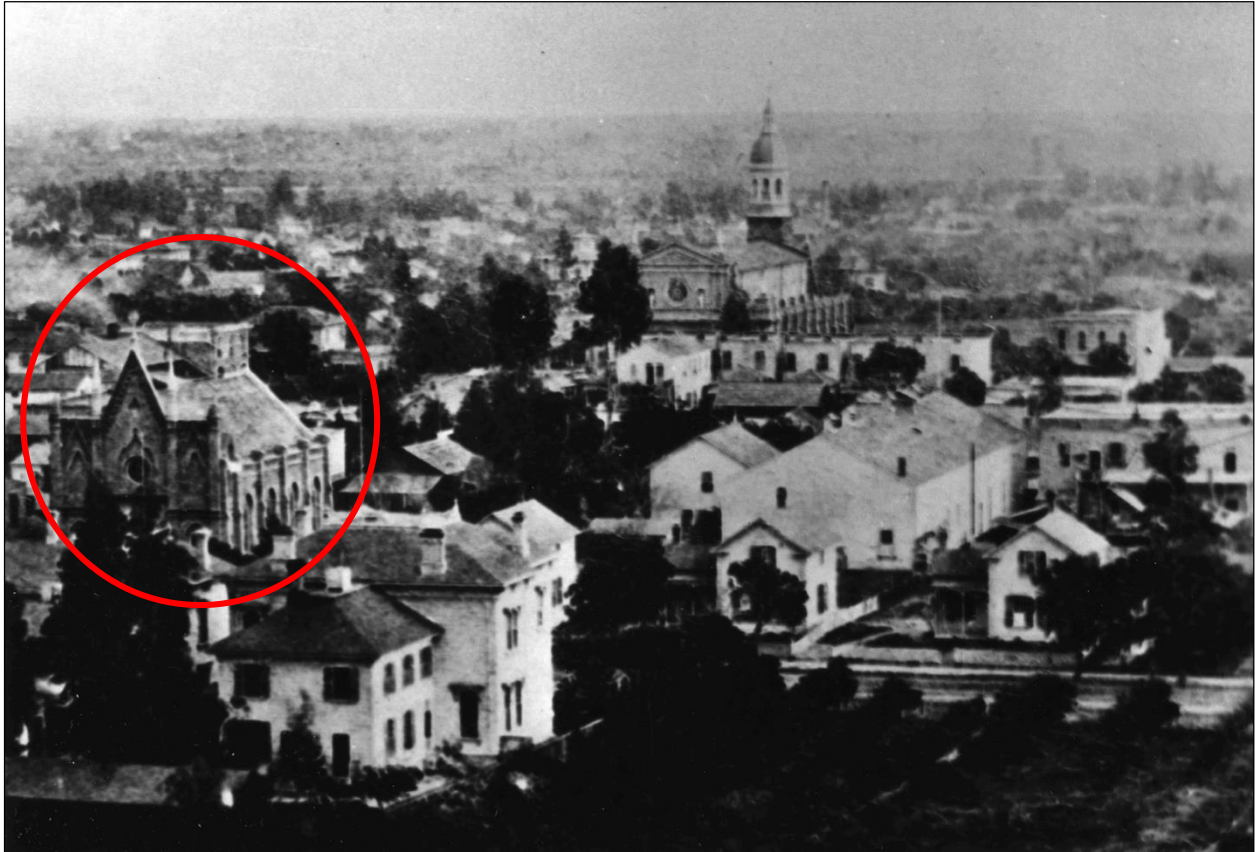
<sup>112</sup> There are many scholarly and popular sources providing information on the belief systems and branches of Judaism as a religion. The purpose of this theme is not to explain and clarify the religion, but to present ways the religion and spiritual practices of Judaism have uniquely contributed to the built environment of Los Angeles.

<sup>113</sup> Community responsibility is embodied in the concepts of *tzedakah* and *g'milut chasadim* (also transliterated as *g'milat chesed*). As interpreted, these commandments require a Jewish person to support other people through giving and acts of loving kindness. These obligations are different from charity, as charity is voluntary. Community responsibility is an obligation and those who do not give are sinful. Rabbi Benjamin Blech, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Judaism* (New York: Alpha Books, 2003), 39-41.

<sup>114</sup> Shul is the colloquial Yiddish language term used interchangeably for school and/or synagogue. The term comes from Middle High German *schuol*, from Old High German *scuola*, from Latin *scola*. William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).

<sup>115</sup> William Kramer, "Solomon Nunes Carvalho: Founder of the Los Angeles Jewish Community" in *Wrestling with the Angels: A History of Jewish Los Angeles*, edited by Phil Blazer and Shelley Portnoy, 51-56 (Sherman Oaks: Blazer Communications, 2006), 55.

cause of benevolence (*tzedakah*).<sup>116</sup> They modeled their organization on similar groups in East Coast cities that the men had been part of before moving west. The burial ground site (California Historical Landmark #822) was in the Chavez Ravine area north of downtown.<sup>117</sup> Over the next few decades, small Jewish congregations would form around the purposes of creating a community for spiritual practice and establishing burial grounds.



*View of Congregation B'nai B'rith (circled in red) with St. Vibiana's Cathedral in the background, 1885  
(Western States Jewish History Archives)*

As the city grew and the Jewish population increased, the need for dedicated houses of worship and community gathering spaces grew in importance. Early religious observance occurred in private homes.<sup>118</sup> The Rosh Hashanah holiday celebrated on September 26, 1851 is believed to be the first Jewish religious holiday observed in Los Angeles.<sup>119</sup> In 1861, the Polish Jewish community organized as congregation Beth El to celebrate the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.<sup>120</sup> Across the United States in the nineteenth century, small Jewish communities relied on spiritual leaders who were

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<sup>116</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 42.

<sup>117</sup> The burial ground was closed in 1903 and the remains reinterred between 1902 and 1910 at B'nai B'rith's new burial ground, the Home Of Peace, outside the city boundary at 4334 Whittier Boulevard.

<sup>118</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 41.

<sup>119</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 87.

<sup>120</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 54.



not formally trained or ordained as rabbis. In Los Angeles, Joseph Newmark filled this role from 1854 until the arrival of Rabbi Abraham W. Edelman in 1862.<sup>121</sup> Rabbi Edelman established Congregation B'nai B'rith, which absorbed members of Beth El, and conducted services in various venues, including the Arcadia Block, Leck's Hall, and Temple Courthouse.<sup>122</sup>



Rabbi Abraham W. Edelman, first professional rabbi in Los Angeles, no date (Los Angeles Public Library)

Judaism places a heavy emphasis on Torah study. One of the basic duties of Jewish parents is to provide for the instruction of their children. This meant that they were expected to study the Torah and teach the traditions to their children. In 1868, Rabbi Edelman started an after-school program for Jewish students, but by 1880 it switched to a Sunday school format, following the Reform trend, which in turn was modeling itself after the Christian practice of religious school on Sunday. This marked the first organized effort to provide a Jewish education to the city's Jewish children.

In 1872, Congregation B'nai B'rith broke ground on its first synagogue, a Gothic Revival style building (demolished) located at 218 South Fort Street (later South Broadway).<sup>123</sup> In contrast to many parts of Europe, where synagogues were hidden behind high walls or nondescript facades, American Jews built synagogues on the main streets of towns and within the sight of churches. Congregation B'nai B'rith followed this pattern; it was located on a major street only a few blocks from the Catholic St. Vibiana's Cathedral. And the two buildings were designed by the same architect, Ezra Kysor.<sup>124</sup>

## Community Growth

The Jewish community expanded from eight bachelor merchants in 1851 to 2,500 people by 1900.<sup>125</sup> New synagogue buildings were constructed in the center of Jewish enclaves. Cemeteries were usually

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<sup>121</sup> *Wrestling with the Angeles*, 41-42.

<sup>122</sup> *Wrestling with the Angeles*, 41, 88.

<sup>123</sup> David Kaufman, "Early Synagogue Architecture" in *California Jews*, edited by Ava F. Kahn and Marc Dollinger, 40-56 (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 50-51.

<sup>124</sup> Marc Lee Raphael, *Judaism in America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003) 126-128.

<sup>125</sup> Norton B. Stern, "The Location of Angeles Jewry at the Beginning of 1851" in *Pioneer Jews of Los Angeles in the Nineteenth Century* edited by David W. Epstein and Gladys Sturman (Woodland Hills, CA: Isaac Nathan Publishing Company, 2006), 7. Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010), 65.



connected to one or more congregations, but were most often located along the easternmost boundary of the city. In 1895, B'nai B'rith sold their building and moved to a new building at Hope and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets (demolished). The congregation also opened a new burial ground called Home of Peace outside the eastern boundary of the city in 1902, because, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "the encroachment of the city upon their old burial ground has long been a source of annoyance to people whose beloved dead rest there..."<sup>126</sup> A few small Orthodox congregations constructed new buildings and purchased new land for cemeteries. The first Orthodox congregation, Beth Israel, was founded in 1892 and constructed its second synagogue in 1902 and purchased land for a cemetery in 1906.<sup>127</sup> Religious observance in the Los Angeles Jewish community began to diversify as congregations grew and multiplied. B'nai B'rith transitioned from an Orthodox synagogue to affiliation with the Reform movement in the 1880s.<sup>128</sup>



In 1895, Congregation B'nai B'rith constructed a new synagogue at 9<sup>th</sup> and Hope Streets, 1902 (USC)

Synagogue construction expanded in the 1890s as many new congregations organized around the expanding population of Jewish immigrants.<sup>129</sup> Though burial grounds were located mostly on the outskirts of the city, synagogues were constructed in the center of growing residential neighborhoods. The Jewish congregations of Los Angeles "sought to win the respect and admiration of their non-Jewish neighbors by integrating the best architectural forms of the day, emulating the classic designs of courthouses, city halls, and churches."<sup>130</sup> Judaism became part of the region's multicultural melting pot.

Synagogues were designed in Gothic Revival, American Colonial Revival, and Neoclassical architectural styles commonly used for religious and secular institutional buildings across the United States. Reflecting on this period in synagogue construction, Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath noted, "Though even the most assimilationist Jews have insisted it is by our religion that we are primarily distinguished from our fellow Americans, our religious edifices, our Houses of God, were for a long time virtually the least distinctive embodiment of our Jewish faith."<sup>131</sup> During the turn of the twentieth century, Jewish houses of worship began to show a tendency for designs with Beaux Arts, Byzantine, and Romanesque influences.

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<sup>126</sup> "New Jewish Cemetery," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1902, 6.

<sup>127</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 64.

<sup>128</sup> [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0013\\_0\\_12766.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0013_0_12766.html)

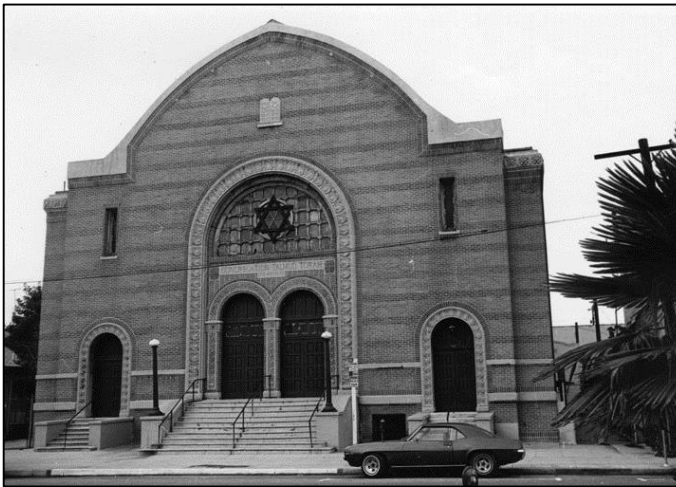
<sup>129</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 164

<sup>130</sup> Daniel Hillel Freelander, "Why Temples Look the Way They Do," Reform Judaism, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://www.reformjudaism.org/why-temples-look-way-they-do>.

<sup>131</sup> Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, "Introduction" in *An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Peter Blake (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1954), xiii.

### The First Boom: from World War I to World War II

The increasing Jewish population of Los Angeles mirrored demographic patterns in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. The population of Jewish people in the United States multiplied dramatically, from a quarter million in 1880 to two million in 1914. Between 1917 and 1923, the Jewish population of Los Angeles grew from 10,000 to 43,000 people. Advances in travel, such as the steamboat and transcontinental railroad, aided immigration. Hostility towards Jewish people in Europe also motivated many to immigrate to the United States.<sup>132</sup> The growing and evolving Jewish population constructed new synagogues and schools to meet its spiritual needs.



*Congregation Talmud Torah, also known as the Breed Street Shul, dedicated in 1923 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

The influx of Jewish immigrants to Los Angeles from the eastern United States, Europe, and the Ottoman Empire in the 1910s and 1920s affected the geographic distribution and number of synagogues in Los Angeles. New synagogues became neighborhood fixtures as the Jewish population moved away from downtown, which was increasingly a non-residential district. Orthodox and Conservative synagogues relocated or formed near growing residential neighborhoods so members of the congregation could follow the religious guideline requiring transportation by foot on the Sabbath

and holy days. Reform Judaism does not follow this guideline, thus congregations had more flexibility on the location of their synagogues. Upper and middle class Jewish people from all religious branches moved west to South Los Angeles, West Adams, Mid-Wilshire, and Hollywood.<sup>133</sup> Congregation B'nai B'rith dedicated its third and current home on Wilshire Boulevard in 1929, and was afterwards known as Wilshire Boulevard Temple (LAHCM #116). Boyle Heights became the home of one third of Los Angeles' Jewish population, mostly less affluent people following the stricter Orthodox traditions. Congregation Talmud Torah constructed a house of study and worship on Breed Street in 1915. The congregation was established "partly due to a need in the community for a Hebrew School close to the growing population east of downtown."<sup>134</sup> The congregation expanded to include a main synagogue, colloquially known as

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<sup>132</sup> Raphael, *Judaism in America*, 51-2.

<sup>133</sup> People also settled outside of the City of Los Angeles. Many Orthodox homeowners moved to the City Terrace neighborhood in East Los Angeles. Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010), 65.

<sup>134</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 164.

the Breed Street Shul (LAHCM #359), in 1923.<sup>135</sup> By 1920, there were ten full-fledged synagogues with their own buildings in Los Angeles. This number increased to thirty by the end of the decade.



*Sephardic Hebrew Center, located at 5500 Hoover Street in South Los Angeles. The synagogue and community center was designed by Edith Northman and built in 1935. The building is still extant and serves a predominantly African American Christian congregation as the Second African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church of Los Angeles (Los Angeles Public Library)*

In the 1920s and 1930s, synagogues were designed in historicist architectural styles referencing ancient Jewish communities and houses of worship. Archeological discoveries in the 1920s and the popularity of Exotic Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival architecture during the period greatly influenced the design of synagogues in Los Angeles. Ancient synagogue ruins discovered in the Middle East established a historical precedent for the use of the Byzantine Revival style in synagogue design.<sup>136</sup> In Los Angeles, the Wilshire Boulevard Temple is a prime example. Moorish Revival architecture was also popular with the Jewish community and was not restricted to Sephardic congregations with roots in Spain, Portugal, North Africa, and the Middle East where the style originated. The domes, elaborate archways, courtyards, and decorative tile work of Byzantine and Moorish Revival styles lent themselves to distinguished religious, secular, and residential buildings across Los Angeles. Applying these styles to synagogues at the height of the styles' popularity served as a "bridge" between Jewish heritage and

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<sup>135</sup> "About Us," Breed Street Shul Project, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://www.breedstreetshul.org/about.htm>.

<sup>136</sup> Henry Stolzman and Daniel Stolzman, *Synagogue Architecture in America: Faith, Spirit +& Identity* (Victoria, Australia: Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd., 2004), 45.



mainstream American society.<sup>137</sup> Concentrations of synagogues in these Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial, and Exotic Revival styles are located in the South Los Angeles, West Adams, and Mid-Wilshire neighborhoods where Jewish people settled from the 1920s through World War II.



*The second home of Sinai Temple opened in 1926  
(American Jewish University)*

When commissioning the design of a new synagogue, congregations often looked for an architect within the Jewish community. The preeminent synagogue architects of Los Angeles were Abram M. Edelman and Samuel Tilden Norton. Edelman was born in Los Angeles just a year after his father, Abram W. Edelman, became the rabbi for Congregation B'nai B'rith. Edelman's education came from having worked as an apprentice for various architects in San Francisco before returning to Los Angeles to establish his own practice in the 1880s. He designed synagogues for

Congregation B'nai B'rith (1896), Congregation Beth Israel (1902, demolished), and Congregation Talmud Torah (1923).<sup>138</sup> Also a Los Angeles native, Norton trained as an architect in New York. He returned to Los Angeles in 1902 and founded his own architecture firm. Some of his most prominent works were for Jewish congregations and groups, including Sinai Temple #1 (1909), Concordia Club (1909, demolished), B'nai B'rith Lodge (1923), Jewish Orphans Home of Southern California (1925, demolished), Sinai Temple #2 (1926), Young Men's Hebrew Association (1925, demolished), Temple Israel (1927, demolished), and clubhouse for the Council of Jewish Women (1928, demolished). Along with Edelman, he was also one of three architects responsible for the design of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple (1929).

During the 1920s, many synagogues had schools for educating children, but as Max Vorspan and Lloyd Gartner explain "they were quite uncoordinated, lacking pedagogic or curricular standards... [with] no support...from Jewish communal sources, where Jewish education was still regarded as a solely parental and synagogal interest, or as the child of ideological groups."<sup>139</sup> This would change with the creation of the Bureau of Jewish Education in 1936, now the Builders of Jewish Education. The Bureau's founding "was intrinsically and financially important, for it demonstrated the recognition of education as a

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<sup>137</sup> Stolzman and Stolzman, 45-46.

<sup>138</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 91.

<sup>139</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 170.

responsibility of the entire Jewish community.”<sup>140</sup> The organization is still active and is now housed within the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles building at 6505 Wilshire Boulevard.

### Postwar Development and Expansion

Across the United States, the late 1940s and 1950s witnessed the greatest religious building boom in history. American families moved to the suburbs and constructed religious buildings in their new communities. The Jewish population of Los Angeles followed citywide trends: the population grew and spread out geographically. Jewish families increasingly settled outside of South Los Angeles, West Adams, Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood, and Boyle Heights, creating new enclaves in the San Fernando Valley.<sup>141</sup> By 1950, there were dozens of Jewish congregations in Los Angeles.<sup>142</sup>

In the neighborhoods of West Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley, new and relocating congregations purchased large parcels of land to build institutional campuses. Synagogues remained important community gathering places, helping to maintain Jewish identity through religious worship, education, and social functions. However, membership in a congregation was not necessarily a reflection of adherence to Jewish traditions during this period. Historian Raymond P. Scheindlin observed:

Affiliation with a synagogue did not imply a high degree of religious observance; most congregation members were motivated more by group loyalty and ethnic cohesion than by religion. For most Jews, being Jewish meant associating mostly with Jews, observing some of the rites of the Jewish New Year and Passover holidays, and life-cycle events such as circumcisions, weddings, bar mitzvahs (which were increasingly extended to girls and, in that case, called bat mitzvahs), funerals, and *yahrzeit* (the annual commemoration of parents’ death).<sup>143</sup>

Reform and Conservative synagogues constructed during the postwar era demonstrated progressive modernity by rejecting historical revival styles.<sup>144</sup> Hillside Memorial Park, founded by Temple Israel of Hollywood in 1941, had a distinctively modern aesthetic.<sup>145</sup> Working with renowned architects Percival Goodman and Peter Blake, the national organization of the Reform movement issued guidelines stating

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<sup>140</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 213.

<sup>141</sup> Many of the 1920s and 1930s synagogues and religious institutional buildings in Los Angeles are now being used as churches. This is especially true for synagogues in Boyle Heights, which boasted a thriving Jewish community in the 1920s and 1930s that moved westward after World War II. Latino immigrants and African Americans took over existing Jewish religious buildings.

<sup>142</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 92

<sup>143</sup> Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 251.

<sup>144</sup> Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, “introduction,” in *An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Peter Blake (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1954), xiii.

<sup>145</sup> Sonia Hoffman, “Jewish Cemeteries in Los Angeles,” *Jewish Cemeteries in Los Angeles*, accessed February 12, 2016, [http://home.earthlink.net/~nholdeneditor/jewish\\_cemeteries\\_in\\_los\\_angeles.htm](http://home.earthlink.net/~nholdeneditor/jewish_cemeteries_in_los_angeles.htm).



that "In design and structure, [the synagogue]...must be of our time."<sup>146</sup> Goodman was a master of postwar synagogue design. His designs integrated light, sculpture, painting, and stained glass into thoroughly modern buildings. Goodman also popularized the concept of a multi-use foyer and social hall that could be used for overflow space during increased attendance for High Holiday services. Though based in New York City, Goodman designed a new sanctuary and classroom building for the Valley Jewish Community Center and Temple (Adat Ari El) along these principles.<sup>147</sup> In Los Angeles, Sidney Eisenshtat was a prominent postwar architect who followed the maxim to design modern synagogue buildings. His first major synagogue was for Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills in 1951. Nine years later he designed Sinai Temple #3 in Westwood.<sup>148</sup> Eisenshtat said that his concept of synagogue design was based on his perception that, unlike some religions, "in Judaism there is no intermediary. Therefore, I see the structure for synagogues not as pyramidal but as horizontal."<sup>149</sup>



*Sinai Temple #3, dedicated in 1960 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

In Los Angeles, the establishment of many educational institutions shaped Jewish community life in the postwar period. In some areas of Los Angeles, the Jewish community opted out of the public school system. The result was a boon to Jewish day school education. For many non-Orthodox Jews, the debate was not between public education and private education but between a Jewish school and a secular school. Nine synagogues – five Reform: Temple Emanuel, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Stephen Wise

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<sup>146</sup> Michael Z. Wise, "America's Most Prolific Synagogue Architect," Michael Z. Wise – Author, March 1, 2001, accessed February 12, 2016, [http://www.michaelzwise.com/articleDisplay.php?article\\_id=17](http://www.michaelzwise.com/articleDisplay.php?article_id=17).

<sup>147</sup> "Ground Breaking for Valley School, Synagogue Set," *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 1962. The classroom building was completed in 1963 and the sanctuary in 1968.

<sup>148</sup> Other buildings for the Jewish community designed by Eisenshtat include the Westside Jewish Community Center on Olympic Boulevard in Los Angeles, the Hillel Hebrew Academy in Beverly Hills, and the House of Book at Brandeis Bardin Campus of AJU in the Simi Valley.

<sup>149</sup> Evelyn De Wolfe, "AIA Honors Five Southland Architects," *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 1986.

Temple, Temple Israel of Hollywood, and Temple Beth Hillel; and four Conservative: Valley Beth Shalom, Adat Ari El, Sinai Temple, and Temple Beth Am – have day schools that are affiliated with the congregations and such an affiliation is central to the future of the congregation. There are even more Orthodox day schools in Los Angeles, the largest of which is Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn Torath Emeth. Commonly known as Toras Emes, the school serves the ultra-Orthodox community centered along La Brea Avenue. When it was founded in 1953, it was one of only a few synagogues and fewer schools that served this segment of the Jewish community in Los Angeles.<sup>150</sup>

A significant institution for higher Jewish education in Los Angeles is the American Jewish University, formerly called the University of Judaism. The University of Judaism was the brainchild of Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism, which emphasized Judaism as a civilization. Founded in 1947, the University of Judaism was initially located in Sinai Temple #2, but the facilities there were “uncomfortable and inadequate.”<sup>151</sup> The first building of its own was an adaptation of a house on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Ardmore Avenue (demolished).<sup>152</sup> A successful businessman named Louis Rabinowitz purchased it to serve as the new home of the university in 1948. The university’s second home – a building on Sunset Boulevard that was formerly the Hollywood Athletic Club – was purchased in 1956. In 1966 land was purchased on Mulholland Drive that would become the third and current location of the university. Construction began on the first building of the university’s new location in 1976, after delays caused by the Yom Kippur War in Israel in 1973, which shifted community funds from supporting construction on the building to supporting Israel.<sup>153</sup> The university has grown over the years on that campus as well as another campus in the Simi Valley.

Founded in Cincinnati in 1875, Hebrew Union College was the first institution of higher Jewish education of Reform Judaism in North America. In 1950, the rabbinical college merged with the Jewish Institute of Religion, which was founded in New York in 1922. A third center of the Hebrew Union College called the College of Jewish Studies opened in Los Angeles in 1954 to serve the growing Jewish community on the West Coast. The institution shared space with Wilshire Boulevard Temple, before moving next to the University of Southern California in 1971.

In all branches of the faith, Judaism in postwar Los Angeles was distinguished by international and interfaith perspective. Activist rabbis were instrumental in creating this environment. According to Max Vorspan, “Judaism in Los Angeles was decisively shaped by a number of rabbis of varying denominations who were drawn westward by personal visions of what they might accomplish in a city largely un beholden to Eastern power structures and patterns of organization.”<sup>154</sup> Congregations of all branches

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<sup>150</sup> Gaby Wenig, “The Whole Kingdom: Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn Torath Emeth gets ready to celebrate 50 years of Jewish Learning,” *Jewish Journal*, February 27, 2003.

<sup>151</sup> Arthur Hoffnung, *The University of Judaism at Forty - A Historical Memoir* (Los Angeles: University of Judaism, 1991), 25.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Hoffnung, 56.

<sup>154</sup> Max Vorspan and Sheldon Teitelbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, “Los Angeles” (Detroit: Gale Group, 2008).

grew around the leadership of rabbis who became institution builders, communal leaders, social activists, educators, and visionaries. Rabbi Edgar Magnin of Wilshire Boulevard Temple was well known as "the rabbi to the stars" of the Hollywood film community, consulting on films that influenced the world's perception of Jewish people. Reform and Conservative congregations encouraged interfaith organizations to address contemporary issues affecting all faiths. In response to the escalating Cold War, Leo Baeck Temple of West Los Angeles, led by Rabbi Leonard Beerman, and All Saints Episcopal Church of Pasadena joined together to form the Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race. In 1969, Rabbi Alfred Wolf of Wilshire Boulevard Temple joined with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles to form the Interreligious Council of Southern California. This interfaith committee created the Los Angeles Roman Catholic/Jewish Respect Life Committee. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a global human rights organization, was Los Angeles community's first national and international Jewish organization, and was founded by Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Orthodox community.<sup>155</sup> These prominent rabbis were responsible for guiding the Jewish faith into the modern world and leading the Jewish community of Los Angeles through the postwar and post-Holocaust era.



*Valley Beth Shalom, dedicated in 1964 (SurveyLA)*

## **Later Developments**

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of change and evolution for the Jewish community. The Reconstructionist movement grew, first as a sect of Conservative Judaism, and later as an independent movement with its own rabbinical school. The Reconstructionist movement established a presence in Los Angeles in the late 1950s. By 1968, the movement had two congregations: one in the Pacific Palisades and one in Studio City.<sup>156</sup> In the 1970s, the Reconstructionist and Reform rabbis began studying and discussing Judaism and homosexuality. In 1972, the LGBT community established Beth Chayim Chadashim, the world's first LGBT-organized synagogue recognized by the Reform movement and the first LGBT congregation of any faith to be recognized by a religious body.<sup>157</sup> Many of the

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<sup>155</sup> Max Vorspan and Sheldon Teitelbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, "Los Angeles" (Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2008)

<sup>156</sup> Larry Pett, "Congregation Beth Ohr Attracts Liberal Jews: Studio City Group Is One of Only 12 Unites of Reconstructionist Movement in U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1968, SF A8.

<sup>157</sup> Raphael, *Judaism in America*, 122-123.

religious and spiritual debates of the late 1960s and 1970s would continue into the 1980s, with topics ranging from homosexuality to growing traditionalism in the Orthodox community.

In the 1970s, Reform and Conservative congregations in Los Angeles were at the forefront of the movement to form *havurot* (*singular: havurah*), fellowships that practiced Judaism in smaller, domestic settings. The *havurah* movement emerged from Rabbi Harold Schulweis' 1970 Rosh Hashanah sermon at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino.<sup>158</sup> Groups of ten to fifteen members ate, celebrated, studied, and worshipped together independent of the congregation to which the members belonged and outside the sanctuary of the synagogue. This appealed to younger Reform and Conservative Jewish people, who "...denounced the Jewish establishment institutions, especially the large, impersonal suburban synagogues."<sup>159</sup> This provided younger people with a more intense, but non-Orthodox Jewish community life and a more experimental spiritual practice.<sup>160</sup> The *havurah* movement expanded beyond Los Angeles in following decades.

Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, between 60,000 and 80,000 Iranian Jews left Iran and came to the United States, settling primarily in the greater Los Angeles area and Great Neck, New York.<sup>161</sup> Iranian Jews are also known as Persian Jews and Mizrahi (easterners). Their members and institutions can be found mostly in Westwood, West Los Angeles, Woodland Hills, Encino, and Tarzana. The Iranian Jewish community has had a huge impact on Los Angeles in the last thirty years, but their growth occurred after 1979, the year that the Shah of Iran was overthrown.

## **Conclusion**

Today, Los Angeles has one of the largest Jewish communities in the world. While not all members of the community are religiously observant, the community supports 76 synagogues in the four major branches of the faith.<sup>162</sup> Many of the older synagogues have been converted to churches as congregations moved and the city expanded. The pattern of Jewish religious buildings in the city reflects shifting demographics as well as the legacy of a religious community committed to fostering a sense of identity and coherence across the city.

The following tables describe designated and potential resources associated with the religious and spiritual and educational life of Jews in Los Angeles. Eligibility Standards address institutional property types including synagogues, schools, and cemeteries.

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<sup>158</sup> Raphael, *Judaism in America*, 69.

<sup>159</sup> Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People*, 252.

<sup>160</sup> Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People*, 253.

<sup>161</sup> Saba Soomekh, "Iranian Jewish Life in Los Angeles: Past and Present: Introduction," *Iranian Jewish Life in Los Angeles: Past and Present*, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/iranian-jews-in-los-angeles/index>.

<sup>162</sup> "Synagogues," *LA Jewish Guide*, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://lajewishguide.com/synagogues/>.

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Context: Jewish History

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### Designated Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Congregation Talmud Torah (aka Breed Street Shul)	247 N. Breed Street	Listed in the National Register and designated LACHM #359.
David Familian Chapel of Temple Adat Ari El	5540 Laurel Canyon Boulevard	Designated LAHCM #199.
First Jewish Site in Los Angeles, former site of cemetery	Chavez Ravine, behind US Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center, 800 W. Lilac Drive, near Lookout Drive	Designated California Historical Landmark #822.
Sinai Temple #1	1153 S. Valencia Street	Designated LAHCM #173.
Sinai Temple #2	401 S. New Hampshire Avenue	Designated LAHCM #91.
Talmud Torah Tifereth Jacob	5892 S. Brentwood Street	Designated LAHCM #1007.
Temple Mishkon Tephilo	206 S. Main Street	Designated LAHCM #767.
Wilshire Boulevard Temple	3663 Wilshire Boulevard	Listed in the National Register and designated LAHCM #116.

### Potential Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Agudath Achim Congregation	2521 West View Street	Founded in 1908 at 21 <sup>st</sup> and Central. Constructed synagogue on West View Street in 1936. Served African Methodist Episcopal congregation since the 1960s.
Beth Chayim Chadashim	6000 W. Pico Boulevard	Founded in 1972, the first LGBT synagogue in the world. Originally based out of the Metropolitan Community Church. At this location from 1978 to 2011.
Beth Olam Cemetery	900 N. Gower Street	Formerly owned by Groman Mortuary, first burials appear to be in 1927, most date from the 1930s. Jewish section of Hollywood Memorial Park organized in 1899.



## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Context: Jewish History

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Congregation Beis Hamidrosh ( aka Srere Shul)	2501 E. 2nd Street	Synagogue constructed in 1922. Now Iglesia Cristiana Roca de Salvacion
Congregation B'nai Israel (aka Houston Street Shul)	2446 Houston Street	Congregation B'nai Israel constructed this synagogue in 1931 and addition in 1960.
Congregation B'nai Jacob (aka Fairmount Street Shul)	2833 Fairmont Street	Synagogue dedicated in 1927, now used as church.
Congregation Mogen David	1518 Gramercy Place	Founded in 1925, used private homes until the women's auxiliary raised the funds to purchase this property and build this synagogue, which opened in 1933. Now the Church of Divine Guidance. The congregation moved to 9717 W. Pico Boulevard in 1954.
Congregation Sephardic Beth Shalom	4911 W. 59 <sup>th</sup> Street	Name changed from Sephardic Hebrew Center representing the merger of two congregations and constructed this synagogue in 1966. Merged with Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel in 1993. Now Calvary Baptist Church.
Congregation Shaarei Tefila	7269 W. Beverly Boulevard	Formed in 1934 and moved to this location in 1955, incorporating building that belong to Temple Israel of Hollywood and moved to this site. The property has been in continuous use by the temple since its construction between 1955 and 1960.
Eden Memorial Park	11500 Sepulveda Boulevard	Opened in 1954.
Etz Jacob Congregation	7659 Beverly Boulevard	Established at this location in 1932 under the name Congregation Share Torah. In 1946, joined with Beth Israel, which sold the Olive Street Shul to help build this new synagogue and educational center.

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**

Context: Jewish History

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Fairfax Temple	525 S. Fairfax Avenue	Synagogue housing a Reform congregation from 1933 to the 1960s, and the Ohev Shalom Orthodox congregation from 1965 to the present.
Hillside Memorial Park	6001 W. Centinela Avenue	Opened in 1941, owned by Temple Israel of Hollywood.
Hollywood Temple Beth El	1508 N. Wilton Place	Founded in 1920, held services in a bungalow. Constructed synagogue on N. Wilton Place in 1922. Now Iglesia Bautista Hispania de Hollywood. In 1952, moved to 1305 Crescent Heights Boulevard, West Hollywood.
Institute of Jewish Education	8339 W. 3rd Street	The property has been in continuous use as a Labor Zionist and Yiddish preschool and cultural center since 1950.
Leo Baeck Temple	1300 N. Sepulveda Boulevard	Founded in 1947 as Temple Beth Aaron. Originally located in Canadian Legion Hall at 434 S. San Vicente Boulevard. Ground breaking at existing location in 1961 and dedication in 1963. Victor Gruen, Architect.
Los Angeles Jewish Academy	233 N. Breed Street	Founded by Rabbi Zilberstein in 1940 as the first Jewish day school in Los Angeles. Now the Early Learning Center.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park	5950 Forest Lawn Drive	Opened in 1953, owned by Sinai Temple, formerly Jewish section of Forest Lawn.
Rodef Shalom Congregation	2003 W. Jefferson Boulevard	Dedicated in 1928. Now Redeemer Baptist Church.

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**

Context: Jewish History

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel #1	1561 W. Martin Luther King Boulevard	Congregation founded in 1920. Constructed this synagogue in 1932. Rudolph Falkenrath, Architect. Building sold in 1959. Now the Greater New Vision Missionary Baptist Church.
Shaarey Zedek Congregation	12800 Chandler Boulevard	The largest Orthodox congregation in the San Fernando Valley. Synagogue dedicated in 1966.
Sinai Temple #3	10416 Wilshire Boulevard	At this location since 1961. Sidney Eisenshtat, Architect.
Sholom Memorial Park	13017 Lopez Canyon Road	Opened in 1951.
Stephen S. Wise Temple	15500 Stephen S. Wise Drive	One of the largest reform synagogues in the country. Founded in 1964, by former members of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills. Existing buildings constructed between 1968 and 1980.
Temple Beth Israel of Highland Park and Eagle Rock	5711 Monte Vista Street	Founded in 1923 and moved into existing building in 1929. Remodeled in 1948. Second oldest existing congregation located in original premises.
Temple Beth Am	1039 S. La Cienega Boulevard	Founded in 1934, property purchased in 1936, sanctuary dedicated in 1957, school dedicated in 1966.
Temple Beth El	1437 W. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street	Adopted the name in 1938, but incorporated as San Pedro Jewish Community Association. Social hall constructed in 1956, and sanctuary in 1966.
Temple Beth Hillel	12326 Riverside Drive	Founded in 1946, purchased property in 1948 and built synagogue. Classroom, now nursery school built in 1950. Sanctuary constructed in 1955 and school wing added in 1963.

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**

Context: Jewish History

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Temple Emanuel #1	635 S. Manhattan Place	Founded in 1919 as the city's second Reform congregation. Constructed this synagogue in 1924, but closed. Norman W. Alpaugh and Clarence H. Russell, Architects. Now Christ Church. Re-established in 1938, and new congregation constructed new building in Beverly Hills.
Temple Israel of Hollywood	7300 Hollywood Boulevard	Founded in 1926 in a house rented from the Japanese movie star, Sessue Hayakawa. The third Reform congregation in the city. In 1929, they moved to 1740 Ivar Avenue. Acquired this property in 1945 and constructed synagogue in 1948. S. Charles Lee, Architect.
Temple Isaiah	10345 W. Pico Boulevard	Founded in 1947. Buildings constructed between 1953 and 1972.
Temple Ohel Abraham/Sephardic Hebrew Center	5500 S. Hoover Street	Organized in 1917. Constructed this synagogue in 1935 and changed name to Sephardic Hebrew Center. Edith Northman, Architect. Building sold in 1958. Now the Second African Methodist Episcopal Church.
University Religious Conference of UCLA	900 Hilgard Avenue	The oldest continuing interfaith organization in Los Angeles, dating from 1928. Originally at Vermont Avenue campus, moved to Westwood campus in 1930. Current building dedicated in 1951.

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**Context: Jewish History

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Resource Name	Location	Comments
Valley Beth Israel	13060 Roscoe Boulevard	Began in 1948 as the Sun Valley Jewish Community Center. Originally conducted religious services and Sunday school in the local Salvation Army Hall. Existing building dedicated in 1952.
Valley Beth Shalom	15739 W. Ventura Boulevard	Formed in 1950 as the union of three small Conservative congregations. Originally operated out of former motel on the site. Buildings constructed between 1959 and 1989.
Yeshiva Rav Isacsohn/Torath Emeth	540 N. La Brea Avenue	Founded in 1953. Buildings constructed between 1976 and 1980. Presently the largest Jewish day school in Los Angeles, also known as Toras Emes.



**Theme: Religion and Spirituality and Ethnic/Cultural Associations**

From the 1850s frontier to the 1970s suburb, Jewish religious practice in Los Angeles has focused on establishing and maintaining Jewish community identity through traditional cultural and spiritual values. Worship in Judaism is generally not confined to religious property types. A quorum of faithful may gather and worship anywhere, though some branches of the faith (Orthodox and Conservative) traditionally require a *minyan* of ten adult men. Women are counted toward a *minyan* in the Reconstructionist and Reform traditions. The *havurah* movement of the 1970s, a significant development in the religious practice of Judaism that originated in Los Angeles, was explicitly focused on finding ways to practice faith outside of synagogues and traditional places of worship. Additionally, community responsibility is an aspect of the Jewish faith and many charitable and educational organizations in Los Angeles that do not act as places of worship embody this religious commandment. Also included under this theme are cemeteries, which were usually founded or affiliated with specific congregations.

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:**

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of religion or ethnic heritage for its association with the Jewish community. Religious buildings and campuses often served as the spiritual, social, and cultural center of the community. These buildings are associated with the contributions of community leaders and groups tied to Jewish religious, spiritual, and ethnic/cultural associations.

**Period of Significance:**

1854 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:**

The period of significance begins in 1854 with the establishment of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the first known Jewish community organization in Los Angeles. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:**

Citywide, but with the highest concentrations in Boyle Heights, Mid-Wilshire, West Adams, and parts of the San Fernando Valley

**Area(s) of Significance:**

Religion, Ethnic Heritage

**Criteria:**

NR: A                      CR: 1                      Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:**

Institutional – Religious Building and Religious Campus  
Institutional - Educational  
Landscape - Cemetery

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Context: Jewish History

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**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme include individual synagogue buildings as well as campuses with synagogue buildings, religious schools, and cemeteries.

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme played an important role in the religious, spiritual, and social life of the Jewish community of Los Angeles.

### Eligibility Standards:

- Represents an important association with the Jewish community in Los Angeles

### Character-Defining/Associative Features:

- For National Register, properties must meet Criteria Consideration A
- For National Register, properties associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- As a whole, retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance (for campuses)
- May be important for its association with numerous historic personages for the cumulative importance of those individuals to the community
- May reflect the changing demographics of a Los Angeles neighborhood
- May represent a significant event or movement in the social history of Los Angeles

### Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced

**Theme: Important Persons in Religious History**

Countless significant individuals who identify as Jewish have contributed to the history of Los Angeles. Many of these figures were instrumental in the creation of Los Angeles, making significant contributions to commercial, banking, real estate, garment manufacturing, and entertainment industries, as well as charitable institutions. This theme, however, is limited to those individuals who have made a significant contribution to Judaism in Los Angeles by innovations in religious practice. Within the period of significance, religious practice in Los Angeles was differentiated from other places beginning in the post-World War II period. During this time, Los Angeles grew to become one of the largest Jewish communities in the world. The practice of Judaism in Los Angeles during the postwar period was noteworthy for its international perspective and focus on interfaith dialogue and understanding. Leaders during this period emphasized Judaism as a faith with a mandate to address worldwide issues, from genocide to hunger to nuclear war.

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:** A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas ethnic heritage or social history for its association with important people in the Jewish community. Religious buildings and campuses often served as the spiritual, social, and cultural center of the community led by individuals who were religious leaders, community builders, educators, and social activists.

**Period of Significance:** 1854-1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in 1854 with the establishment of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the first known Jewish community organization in Los Angeles. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:** Citywide, but with the highest concentrations in Boyle Heights, Mid-Wilshire, West Adams, and parts of the San Fernando Valley

**Area(s) of Significance:** Social History, Ethnic Heritage

**Criteria:** NR: B                      CR: 2                      Local: 2

**Associated Property Types:** Institutional – Religious Building and Religious Campus

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme include individual synagogue buildings as well as campuses with synagogues and schools.

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Context: Jewish History

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**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with Jewish people who made significant contributions to the religious, spiritual, and social life of Los Angeles.

### Eligibility Standards:

- Individual must be proven to have played an important role in religious/spiritual history
- Is directly associated with the productive life of the person who played an important role in the history of religion/spirituality

### Character-Defining/Associative Features:

- For National Register, properties must meet Criteria Consideration A
- For National Register, properties associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- As a whole, retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance (for campuses)
- Individual may have formed or significantly influenced an important religious institution or movement
- May also be significant under a theme within the Architecture context

### Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Setting may have changed
- Original use may have changed

**Theme: Religious Property Types**

In the Jewish community, the property type primarily associated with religion and spirituality is the synagogue. Synagogues, also called temples and *shuls*, may be single buildings or a campus comprising a hall of worship and ancillary rooms or buildings for community and educational uses. Synagogue designs vary among religious branches of Judaism and the era of development.

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:** A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage or social history for its association with the Jewish community. Religious buildings and campuses often served as the spiritual, social, and cultural center of the community. A resource may also be significant for distinctive architecture and high quality of design.

**Period of Significance:** 1909 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in 1909 with the construction of Sinai Temple #1 on Valencia Street. Although it is now occupied by the Pico Union Project, it is the oldest extant synagogue building in Los Angeles. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:** Citywide, but with the highest concentrations in Boyle Heights, Mid-Wilshire, West Adams, Hollywood and parts of the San Fernando Valley

**Area(s) of Significance:** Social History, Ethnic Heritage, Architecture

**Criteria:** NR: C            CR: 3            Local: 3

**Associated Property Types:** Institutional – Religious Building and Religious Campus

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme include individual synagogue buildings as well as campuses with synagogues buildings, schools, and community centers.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Designs for synagogues also vary across branches of Judaism, particularly with the arrangement of interior spaces for worship. Differences in worship practices between branches of the faith dictated the internal arrangement of space that continues to the present. In Reconstructionist, Reform, and Conservative congregations, the *bimah*, containing the pulpit and ark where the Torah scrolls are kept, is elevated at the front of the sanctuary to delineate the rabbi as the authority and the worshippers as watchers and listeners. In Orthodox congregations, the pulpit is usually in the center of the sanctuary and the ark is separated at the front



**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme played an important role in the religious, spiritual, and social life of the Jewish community of Los Angeles.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Is an important or rare example of a religious/spiritual building type or types

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- For National Register, properties must meet Criteria Consideration A
- For National Register, properties associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- As a whole, retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance (for campuses)
- May also be significant under a theme within the Architecture context

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, Design, Materials, and Association from the period of significance
- If it is a rare surviving example of its type, or is a rare example in the community in which it is located, a greater degree of alteration or fewer character-defining features may be acceptable
- Setting may have changed
- Original use may have changed

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of the ground floor of the hall where the men worship. Orthodox sanctuaries also have a separate section or balcony for women and young children.

## **Theme 2: Social Clubs, 1880 - 1980**

### **Introduction**

The Jewish people of Los Angeles created many organizations that united the community for charitable, cultural, political, and social purposes. The first Jewish clubs were founded in the 1850s primarily as charitable and public service organizations that reflected the Jewish value of taking responsibility for each other's welfare by supporting places that served the poor, elderly, sick, and orphaned. These nineteenth century benevolent societies raised funds for health and welfare institutions that are still active in Southern California. The creation of social clubs and fraternal orders for Jewish people began in the 1880s when Jewish people were increasingly excluded from existing clubs and social organizations in the city. At the same time, the first large waves of Jewish immigrants from the eastern United States and Europe began arriving in Los Angeles.<sup>164</sup> As the Jewish population of Los Angeles grew from the end of the nineteenth century through the twentieth century, new organizations were created to help residents and newcomers assimilate and maintain a Jewish identity in the city. Though each club and organization was unique and often transcended a narrow classification, they have been generally grouped into the following categories: benevolent societies and social welfare organizations; foreign aid and Zionists groups; immigrant and refugee societies; social and fraternal organizations; *folkshuln* and community centers; and unions. One group that truly defies classification is the Arbeter Ring|Workmen's Circle, an organization that functioned in all of the categories listed above. The Arbeter Ring originated in New York in 1897 and opened its first branch in Los Angeles in 1908.<sup>165</sup> Many of the clubs discussed below are mentioned in other themes of this context, reflecting their involvement in the many aspects of Jewish life in Los Angeles. For more information about Jewish unions, refer to the labor theme in the Industrial Development context.

### **Benevolent Societies and Social Welfare Organizations**

The first Jewish communal groups in Los Angeles were benevolent societies, philanthropic public service and social welfare groups organized to provide and raise money for charitable causes. The Hebrew Benevolent Society, founded in 1854, was the first charitable organization in Los Angeles and sponsored the establishment of the Jewish cemetery in the Chavez Ravine. In 1870, the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society was created. Over the next few decades, as the population of the city grew, the number of public service and social welfare organizations multiplied. Most of these late nineteenth century clubs focused on fundraising for local charitable causes and held social events to support their missions. At the turn of the century charitable organizations focused on specific causes. Several organizations became a

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<sup>164</sup> Immigrants from Russian and the Pale of Settlement arrived in three waves: fleeing pogroms (1880s and 1890s), fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution (after 1917), and escaping Soviet religious persecution (1970s and 1980s). Grace Kirschenbaum, "L.A. Club Clicks With Soviet Jews: Ex-U.S.S.R. Film Figure Runs a Haven for Professionals," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1984.

<sup>165</sup> The Arbeter Ring's first headquarters were located at 126 N. St. Louis Street in Boyle Heights. The group later moved to Robertson Boulevard.

resource for Jewish tuberculosis sufferers who migrated to Los Angeles seeking shelter and relief.<sup>166</sup> Specialized Jewish consumptive relief agencies laid the foundations for some of the region's leading hospitals (see Health and Medicine theme).

Branches of international fraternal organizations with social and charitable objectives were established in Los Angeles during the late nineteenth century. Early fraternal organizations such as B'nai B'rith and the Masons combined charitable and social functions. Though not exclusively Jewish, the Order of Masons established Masonic Lodge No. 42 in 1853. The Masons are a fraternal organization that does not exclude Jews, and many prominent Jewish civic leaders were members of the first Los Angeles lodge. The Masons provided financial aid to various charitable causes and to members and their families. The International Order of B'nai B'rith, a Jewish organization dedicated to philanthropy and fighting anti-Semitism, organized Lodge No. 487 in Los Angeles in 1874. B'nai B'rith sponsored the creation of many charitable institutions, including the Jewish Orphan's Home (later called Vista del Mar) in 1910.<sup>167</sup> B'nai B'rith was also the first organization in Los Angeles to provide aid for immigrants.<sup>168</sup> As more immigrants arrived from Europe in the 1890s and early 1900s, small societies were organized to raise money to provide aid for new arrivals. The Jewish Women's Foreign Relief Association raised money for the transportation of persecuted Jews in foreign countries and provided tuition fees for immigrants after they arrived. In 1908, the American Jewish Yearbook listed seven Jewish charitable societies in Los Angeles, three of which were explicitly for women.<sup>169</sup> By 1912, there were so many Jewish charitable organizations in Los Angeles that several groups decided to unite under an umbrella organization. They created the Federation of Jewish Charities (later the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations). Organizations united under the Federation of Jewish Charities raised money for local services such as the Hebrew Sheltering Home (later the Jewish Home for the Aged), Jewish Orphan's Home, Hamburger Home for Jewish Working Girls (later Aviva Center), and immigrant aid societies. Other charitable organizations became more engaged in providing social services and care locally. The Hebrew Benevolent Society and Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society merged in 1915 and became the Jewish Social Services Bureau. The group hired professional social workers to fulfill its mission.

During World War I, overseas causes from immigrant transportation to Zionism (discussed below), assumed a larger role in the philanthropy of the Jewish community. Between World Wars I and II, the federal government began to play a larger role in providing aid to the poor, and the various social welfare programs were created as a result of the New Deal. Thus there was less need for Jewish organizations to provide for the day-to-day needs of the poor. The worldwide political circumstances of the 1930s also forced the Jewish community of Los Angeles to think beyond its local needs. Jewish public

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<sup>166</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 171- 172.

<sup>167</sup> "The International Order of B'nai B'rith in Early Los Angeles – 1874," JMAW Jewish Museum of the American West, December 10, 2012, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://www.jmaw.org/the-international-order-of-bnai-brith-in-early-los-angeles-1874/>.

<sup>168</sup> "Ahavas Achim: Roumanian Hebrew Aid Society Raising Funds For Exiles Coming To Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1904.

<sup>169</sup> These included the Ladies' Auxiliary Society, Jewish Sisterhood, and Jewish Women's Foreign Relief Association.

service groups responded by broadening their scope to focus on international issues, such as fighting anti-Semitism in the United States and abroad. In 1937, three organizations focused on fighting anti-Semitism united as the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council.<sup>170</sup> The leaders of this group were mostly lawyers.

Through the 1920s, most public service and social welfare organizations operated from small, single room offices usually in existing commercial blocks in downtown Los Angeles near what is now Little Tokyo. The Hebrew Benevolent Society and The Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society were located in an office in the Ducommun Block, at the corner of Main and Commercial Streets (demolished) in the 1870s. In the 1910s, they met at the Hellman Building (400 S. Main Street), then moved to 142 S. Broadway in the 1920s (demolished). Some clubs had social components and constructed places for members to gather and socialize. B'nai B'rith constructed a Lodge Hall in 1903 for members at 521 W. Pico Boulevard (demolished).<sup>171</sup> In the 1920s, several organizations were located in downtown offices at 242 N. Bunker Hill Avenue (demolished) and the fourth floor of 333 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (demolished).<sup>172</sup> In the 1930s, several Jewish charitable organizations were located at 610 Temple Street (demolished) and 742 S. Hill Street (demolished). Fundraising activities often took place in private homes or larger ballrooms throughout the city.



*610 Temple Street, location of the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations and several other Jewish charities during the 1930s (Los Angeles Public Library)*

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<sup>170</sup> The three groups were established in 1934. They included the United Jewish Community, United Jewish Welfare Fund, and the United Community Committee.

<sup>171</sup> "B'nai B'rith's New Home," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1903. Although this building is gone, their second building still stands at 846 S. Union Avenue.

<sup>172</sup> 1926 Los Angeles City Directory, Benevolent and Social Bodies, 111.

After World War II, the Jewish public service, social welfare, and charitable organizations of Los Angeles united into fewer organizations and focused on international issues as much as domestic, local concerns. The Los Angeles Jewish Community Council created the Jewish Community Building at 590 N. Vermont Avenue that provided offices for forty community agencies.<sup>173</sup> In 1959, the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations, founded in 1912 and locally minded, merged with the Jewish Community Council, an internationally focused Zionist organization that was incorporated in 1936, to form the Jewish Federation-Council.<sup>174</sup> This group became the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles with headquarters at the Goldsmith Center, 6505 Wilshire Boulevard.<sup>175</sup> Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, the successor of the Hebrew Benevolent Societies, continued to provide social services, such as food delivery and counseling, in the post-World War II era.<sup>176</sup> As these charitable groups have evolved, they function less as fundraising societies and more as agencies of social services supported by the Jewish community for Jews and other people in need.

### Foreign Aid and Zionist Groups



*Young Zionists meeting at the folkshul on Soto Street, circa 1939  
(Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles)*

Zionist groups believed in Jewish nationalism and the creation of a Jewish state.<sup>177</sup> Zionist clubs in Los Angeles focused on supporting Jewish nationalism and providing aid for Jewish settlements and institutions in Palestine and, later, Israel. The first Zionist clubs in Los Angeles were the Young Zionist Society and Ahavath Zion (Lovers of Zion), both organized in 1902. Los Angeles' first Hadassah chapter, a women's Zionist group, was founded in 1916. Los Angeles also had a chapter of the national organization Nathan Straus Palestine Advancement Society, an aid

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<sup>173</sup> *A Jewish Tourist's Guide*, 41.

<sup>174</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 274.

<sup>175</sup> ZIMAS indicates that the building was constructed in 1956.

<sup>176</sup> "Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles Began as The Hebrew Benevolent Society – 1854," JMAW Jewish Museum of the American West, November 29, 2012, accessed April 05, 2016. <<http://www.jmaw.org/jewish-benevolent-los-angeles/>>.

<sup>177</sup> Caroline Luce, "Socialism, Radicalism, and the Jewish Labor Movement in Los Angeles: History and Historiography," *Perush: An Online Journal of Jewish Scholarship and Interpretation*, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://perush.cjs.ucla.edu/index.php/volume-2/jewish-urban-history-in-comparative-perspective-jewish-buenos-aires-and-jewish-los-angeles/4-caroline-luce-socialism-radicalism-and-the-jewish-labor-movement-in-los-angeles-history-and-historiography>.



group whose members were mostly men.<sup>178</sup> Hadassah and the Nathan Straus Palestine Advancement Society focused on providing medical and child welfare programs in the rudimentary settlements of Palestine. These groups met in various club quarters and did not have their own buildings. They sponsored lectures and fundraisers throughout the city.<sup>179</sup>

In addition to financial and humanitarian aid, the Zionist movement in Los Angeles focused on fostering nationalism and cultural identity for Jewish people living outside of Palestine and Israel. The Young Maccabees Social Club was a Zionist social group for young people. The Zionists established *folkshuln*, places where education centered on Jewish culture, history, traditions, and languages, but not religious practice (discussed below). The Zionist movement was multifaceted, often overlapping with other political and social ideologies of the twentieth century. Many groups shared political beliefs with socialist political movements. The Labor Zionist Folkshul (420 N. Soto Street) in Boyle Heights followed Labor Zionism, an amalgam of the Zionism of Theodor Herzl, who believed in the creation of a Jewish state, and the socialism of Marx and Engels, whose philosophy inspired Bolshevik and communist regimes. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionist clubs and youth camps continued to foster community connections between Jewish people living in Southern California and the state of Israel. Most of these camps were located outside of the City of Los Angeles, but Zionist groups gathered at community centers throughout the city.<sup>180</sup>

### **Immigrant and Refugee Societies**

Since the first large wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Los Angeles in the 1880s, clubs and agencies were created to help new comers transition to life in their new city. While assistance for transportation and settlement was provided through the benevolent societies and social welfare organizations (discussed above), many immigrant groups created their own clubs for companionship with people who shared their cultural and linguistic background. These clubs ranged from purely social to political. The dominant form of Jewish social organization in the late 1880s were societies called *landsmanshaftn* (city clubs), formed by immigrants from the same town of origin in Central and Eastern Europe. This trend continued through the middle of the twentieth century. In the 1930s, Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany formed the Jewish Club of 1933. Their clubhouse was located in a rented home in the Westlake area at 1126 S. Grand View Street (demolished). The German-born members of the Jewish Club of 1933 gathered as a social organization, but were also supporters of the Allied war effort on the home front. The Jewish Club of 1933 became The Benefactors of The Jewish Club of 1933 and now functions as a philanthropic organization that supports the Jewish Home for the Aged. Another example of a *landsmanshaftn* was the United Nashelsker Relief Society of Los Angeles, organized in 1945 by

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<sup>178</sup> The group changed its name to The Los Angeles Palestine Agricultural Loan Fund in 1928.

“Straus Society Changes Name,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1928; “Federation of American Zionists,” *The Maccabean: A Magazine of Jewish Life and Letters* 30 (April 1917): 213.

<sup>179</sup> In the 1920s, the Straus Society met at various locations, including the Matheson store at 741 S. Broadway and the Commercial Club at 1151 S. Broadway.

<sup>180</sup> One of these camps was the Habonim Labor Zionist Youth camp near Big Bear Lake outside of Los Angeles.

immigrants from Nasielsk, Poland. Their main objective was the re-settlement of Holocaust survivors from the town to Israel. An article in the *Valley Jewish News* on April 21, 1950 estimated that there were over one hundred *landsmanshaftn* at that time in Los Angeles. Left-leaning Yiddish language and cultural centers for Jewish immigrants were located throughout Los Angeles until the 1960s. Yiddish language clubs were often political and tied to labor organizing.<sup>181</sup> The anti-communist McCarthyism of the 1940s and 1950s forced many of the Yiddish clubs to abandon their political activities, but they continued as social organizations.



*Morris Kopiloff Banquet of the Yiddish Culture Club, 1951  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Many of these organizations were short lived as the children of immigrants assimilated into the greater community of Jewish Los Angeles. In recent decades, new immigrant groups have revived social clubs. Soviet Jews formed the New Times Club (also known as the Russian Professional Club) in 1979 (location unknown) to socialize and assist each other with assimilation into American society.<sup>182</sup> Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles started Café Europa, a social group for Holocaust survivors, in 2001. The group meets at Jewish community centers around the city.

### Social and Athletic Clubs

By the late nineteenth century, Jews were increasingly excluded from some of the city's oldest and most prestigious social clubs, many of which they helped found. Jews were among the founding members of the California Club in 1888 and the Jonathan Club in 1894, but as the original Jewish members began to die off, these clubs became off limits to Jews. In response to the disturbing trend, Jewish members of Los Angeles' business elite created the Concordia Club in May 1891 for the "social and mental culture" of its members.<sup>183</sup> In the late nineteenth century, Concordia Clubs and other clubs with deliberately non-Jewish names were formed throughout the United States by Jews of German decent.<sup>184</sup> The Concordia

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<sup>181</sup> The Yiddish-speaking community had several newspapers. A Yiddish-language newspaper, *Pacific People News*, was strongly supportive of labor and published weekly from 259 Winston Street.

<sup>182</sup> Grace Kirschenbaum, "L.A. Club Clicks With Soviet Jews: Ex-U.S.S.R. Film Figure Runs a Haven for Professionals," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1984.

<sup>183</sup> *Wrestling with the Angels*, 115.

<sup>184</sup> The Concordia Clubs in San Francisco and Portland founded earlier. William Toll, "The Origins of an Ethnic Middle Class: The Jews of Portland in the Nineteenth Century," in *European Immigrants in the American West*:

Club of Los Angeles was a typical social club of a time when private social clubs played an important role in business and social relationships in most major cities around the nation. Its few hundred members were the pinnacles of Los Angeles Jewish society at the time.<sup>185</sup> Members were a new kind of American Jewish male “...whose Jewishness was unobtrusive and discreet at best.”<sup>186</sup>



*Clubhouse at Hillcrest Country Club, 1949 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Concordia Club met at several locations throughout the city, following the changing settlement patterns of the city’s Jewish population. The first location was an Elks Lodge followed by Burbank Hall (542 S. Main Street, demolished) from 1894 until 1902. In 1902, the Concordia Club moved to a specially constructed clubhouse at Figueroa and 16<sup>th</sup> Street with a ballroom, card room, reading room, and banquet hall (demolished). The club moved west to 360 S. Westlake Avenue in 1918. The new clubhouse had facilities for athletic as well as social activities. A successor organization, the Los Angeles Concordia Athletic Club took over the building in 1924, but the group declined in prestige when suburban country clubs overtook urban social clubs as social and athletic gathering space for wealthy people in Los Angeles in the 1920s.

Two country clubs on the Westside became the center of affluent Jewish community life in Los Angeles in the twentieth century. The Hillcrest Country Club was founded in 1920 at 10000 Pico Boulevard (original clubhouse demolished). Whereas the Concordia Club had been a lounge venue in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, Hillcrest Country Club offered its initially all-Jewish membership golf and

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*Community Histories*, edited by Frederick C. Luebke, 75-90. (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 87.

<sup>185</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 153.

<sup>186</sup> Jenna Weissman Joselit, “Fun and Games: The American Jewish Social Club,” in *The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America*, edited by Marc Lee Raphael, 246-262 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 247.

outdoor recreation. The Brentwood Country Club was originally established as the Sunset Fields Golf Club in 1915. Two Jewish cousins purchased the property in 1947, making it the second country club that permitted Jewish members. Among the members of both clubs were Hollywood movie stars and studio moguls. Groucho Marx was a member of Hillcrest, even though he once famously proclaimed that he would not want to be a member of any club willing to have him as a member.

Jewish country clubs were not immune from the legal challenges to discriminatory membership policies of all types of social clubs during the 1960s through the 1980s. Hillcrest admitted its first non-Jewish member several decades after it was founded, Lebanese-American television star and philanthropist Danny Thomas. Jack Benny quipped that if they wanted to get credit for not discriminating, they should have picked somebody who looked less Levantine. Thomas also became part of the so-called "Round Table" of famous comedians who were members of Hillcrest. In 1987, the country club changed its by-laws and began to admit women as regular members.

Private clubs were primarily for upwardly mobile members of the Jewish community. There were several clubs for Jewish people in Los Angeles to affiliate with each other based on professional, gender, or common interests. These clubs were generally short lived. The Jewish Men's Professional Club of Los Angeles was one such group; members included architect Samuel Tilden Norton. By the early twentieth century, Los Angeles had many Jewish women's clubs ranging from the Temple Sewing Circle to the Southern California branch of the National Council of Jewish Women. Many of these and other smaller social gathering clubs were superseded in the 1920s by labor organizations and Ladies Auxiliary groups affiliated with synagogues.

Other social organizations were aimed at younger members of the Jewish community and often combined activities such as athletics, politics, charitable fundraising, and religious services. . Max and Emil Harris created the Los Angeles Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), forerunner of the Jewish community centers movement, based on a club model that began in Baltimore and was based on the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) athletic clubs. The original YMHA was open for only two years between 1887 and 1889.<sup>187</sup> The tradition of athletic clubs came from the German immigrants of the nineteenth century. The German community, Jewish and non-Jewish, created nationalistic, left leaning athletic and social clubs called Turnverein or Turners. Anti-German sentiment following World War I led to the closure of many of these clubs. From the 1910s to 1930s, the Young Men's Hebrew Association was revived with social and athletic activities for young Jewish people (various locations).<sup>188</sup> The Maccabees was a Rhodelis-Sephardic organization that served as a school and a social club for

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<sup>187</sup> Steven Sass, "Remember the Roots of the JCCs," *Jewish Journal*. April 18, 2002. Accessed June 13, 2016. [http://www.jewishjournal.com/community\\_briefs/article/remember\\_the\\_roots\\_of\\_the\\_jccs\\_20020419](http://www.jewishjournal.com/community_briefs/article/remember_the_roots_of_the_jccs_20020419).

<sup>188</sup> The club moved frequently. Los Angeles City Directories list it at the following locations:  
1921: Young Men's Hebrew Association, 608 Temple Street, demolished (1921 Los Angeles City Directory, 2709)  
1925: Young Men's Hebrew Association, 203 N. Soto Street, demolished (1925 Los Angeles City Directory, 2056)  
1934: Young People's Hebrew Association, 617 Venice Boulevard, a lodge building used by many organizations (1934 Los Angeles City Directory, 1838)

young people. After World War II, social groups for young people were usually affiliated with larger organizations and included religious or Zionist components. Large, suburban synagogues fostered chapters of national youth groups, such as the National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY, Reform congregations) and B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO, Conservative congregations). The Hillel foundation created chapters at area universities that encouraged religious worship and charitable work as part of their mission. The University of California at Los Angeles University Religious Conference building at 900 Hilgard Avenue was the home of UCLA Hillel starting in the 1950s and the longtime center of inter-faith activities at UCLA.

### **Folkshuln and Jewish Community Centers**

Outside of the synagogue, the true center of Jewish social life for the majority of Jewish Los Angeles, newcomer and longtime resident alike, during the twentieth century was the *folkshul* and Jewish community center. Most were affiliated with a political, cultural, or social cause. The Labor Zionists, strongly advocating for a Jewish homeland, and the Arbeter Ring | Workmen's Circle, strongly advocating for Yiddish culture and socialist causes, operated *folkshuln* in Boyle Heights. *Folkshuln* were cultural centers, "more Jewish by identification than by content."<sup>189</sup> The *folkshul* functioned as "a general community institution serving the surrounding neighborhood," offering afterschool care and workers' education classes.<sup>190</sup> Every neighborhood with a concentration of Jewish residents had one of these nonsectarian community centers. The Jewish community centers established throughout Los Angeles in the twentieth century provided services to segments of the community not quite established financially or sufficiently rooted in Jewish life to join a synagogue.

The first Yiddish *folkshul* was established on Temple Street in 1913 by members of the National-Radical Club (later called Po-ale Tsiyon), a socialist-Zionist fraternal organization. The *folkshul* closed soon afterwards, was revived in 1920 at Third and Spring Street in the Dogal Building (demolished), and relocated to a house in Boyle Heights in 1922. The decision to build a *folkshul* and new community center in Boyle Heights in the early 1920s signified the Jewish community's self-awareness that it was leaving Temple and Central Streets, the former residential enclaves of the community, and establishing a new residential center in Boyle Heights.<sup>191</sup> The community center model was a successful gathering place for neighborhood social activities and many community centers with schools and social centers opened throughout the Boyle Heights area. These included the Labor Zionist Folkshul, also on Soto Street, and the Jewish People's Fraternal Order Folkshul at 3045 Wabash Avenue (demolished).

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<sup>189</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 253.

<sup>190</sup> Caroline Luce, "Socialism, Radicalism, and the Jewish Labor Movement in Los Angeles: History and Historiography," *Perush: An Online Journal of Jewish Scholarship and Interpretation*, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://perush.cjs.ucla.edu/index.php/volume-2/jewish-urban-history-in-comparative-perspective-jewish-buenos-aires-and-jewish-los-angeles/4-caroline-luce-socialism-radicalism-and-the-jewish-labor-movement-in-los-angeles-history-and-historiography>.

<sup>191</sup> Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 147 and 169.



The first Jewish community center was the Modern Hebrew School and Social Center, later renamed Soto-Michigan Jewish Community Center, which opened in 1924. Its primary purpose was to house Jewish youth clubs in Boyle Heights.<sup>192</sup> In the 1930s, it merged with the Yiddusha Folkshul and moved to a new building at Soto and Michigan. The Menorah Jewish Youth Center opened in 1931 at 3218 Wabash Avenue. The Menorah Center was more religious than other centers, and it featured a large Hebrew school (*Talmud Torah*). It had “15,000 users each month during the 1940s.”<sup>193</sup> The Menorah Center, with its strong Zionist-based, religious-cultural approach, was closed by the Jewish Centers Association (JCA) in 1952 over the opposition of local residents, and consolidated with the Soto-Michigan Center, which was more intercultural in its programming.<sup>194</sup> The Menorah Center building is now the Salesian Boys and Girls Club.<sup>195</sup> The Jewish community centers were slightly behind the population shifts and were often disorganized. In 1943, the Jewish Centers Association (JCA) was organized to manage the Jewish community centers, leading to a period of expansion and growth. The JCCs became cultural and recreational centers for the suburban Los Angeles Jewish community in the mid-twentieth century, offering an egalitarian Jewish community space with Sunday school instruction, nursery schools, swimming pools, athletic programs, music recital programs, senior citizen programs, and annual Purim carnivals. New Jewish community centers opened in Hollywood-Los Feliz in 1951, West Los Angeles in 1954, and the San Fernando Valley in 1955 as the population migrated outside of Boyle Heights. Some centers, such as San Pedro, were closely associated with synagogues in the area, but all centers were open to all residents regardless of race or religion. The JCC network struggled in the late twentieth century era as population changes, political shifts in the JCA leadership, and different programming needs strained resources.<sup>196</sup>

## **Labor Unions**

Though most unions or guilds did not have separate Jewish branches, young Jewish radicals played powerful roles in multi-ethnic unions and politics movements in the West.<sup>197</sup> Arbeter Ring|Workmen’s Circle was founded in New York in 1897 by Yiddish-speaking immigrant Jews who lived in overcrowded

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<sup>192</sup> The Modern Hebrew School and Social Center was later renamed Soto-Michigan when it moved to a building at the intersection of these streets in 1930. The center closed in 1957.

<sup>193</sup> “The 1930s: Timeline of Jewish History in Los Angeles,” The Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles, November 2002, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://jgsla.org/reference/timeline-of-jewish-history-in-los-angeles/the-1930s>.

<sup>194</sup> Steven Sass, “Remember the Roots of the JCCs,” *Jewish Journal*. April 18, 2002. Accessed June 13, 2016. [http://www.jewishjournal.com/community\\_briefs/article/remember\\_the\\_roots\\_of\\_the\\_jccs\\_20020419](http://www.jewishjournal.com/community_briefs/article/remember_the_roots_of_the_jccs_20020419).

<sup>195</sup> “The 1930s: Timeline of Jewish History in Los Angeles,” The Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles, November 2002, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://jgsla.org/reference/timeline-of-jewish-history-in-los-angeles/the-1930s>.

<sup>196</sup> In 1952, the JCA flouted local opposition by closing the more ardently Zionist and overtly Menorah Center and merging it with the more intercultural Soto-Michigan Center. The declining Jewish population of the city's Eastside, and political pressure against Soto-Michigan's ostensibly radical leadership, resulted in its closure soon after, and that of the West Adams center as well. The parent organization, the Jewish Community Center of Los Angeles, finally collapsed, ostensibly due to mismanagement, in 2001.

<sup>197</sup>Luce, “Socialism, Radicalism, and the Jewish Labor Movement in Los Angeles.”

tenements and worked in hazardous sweatshops. The Karl Liebknecht Branch was the first in Los Angeles, established on January 21, 1908. The Arbeter Ring|Workmen's Circle in New York was involved in the establishment of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) in 1900 and its membership remained predominantly Jewish until the early 1920s. The ILGWU branch in Los Angeles, Local 52, was founded by Jewish tailors in 1910. Working class Jewish people belonged to other professional or trade unions, many of which functioned as mutual benefit associations, providing pensions, funds, and funeral costs to the families of members who died. A number of influential unions opened offices on Brooklyn Avenue in the heart of Boyle Heights, in close proximity to their working-class Jewish members.



*A banquet at the Vladeck Center, Boyle Heights, circa 1950  
(Arbeter Ring|Workmen's Circle)*

The IWO came into being as the left wing faction of the Arbeter Ring|Workmen's Circle during a contentious political rift in 1922. This rift gave rise to an official break and the IWO was established in 1930, promoting leftist, progressive values and operating as a fraternal mutual aid organization and insurance provider. The Jewish Section of the IWO was the largest and, in Los Angeles, was one of the most important Jewish organizations in the first half of the twentieth century. The name was changed to Jewish People's Fraternal

Order (JPFO-IWO) in 1944 to appear less subversive. They enrolled more children in their *folkshul* than any other Jewish organization in the city.<sup>198</sup> The IWO headquarters were located at the Cooperative Center, where many labor organizations met (2706-08 E. Cesar E. Chavez Avenue). Though most unions did not have separate Jewish branches, young Jewish radicals played powerful roles in multi-ethnic unions and politics movements in the West.<sup>199</sup>

## Conclusion

The Jewish community of Los Angeles created many types of social clubs to foster camaraderie, maintain cultural identity, and support common charitable causes. Over time, most of these groups combined their charitable efforts and evolved into community centers and social service organizations that continue to serve the Jewish community. However, as early as the 1920s, many younger Jews were

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<sup>198</sup> Yiddishkayt, "Los Angeles Jewish People's Fraternal Order," Yiddishkayt, accessed April 4, 2016.  
<http://yiddishkayt.org/jpfo/>

<sup>199</sup> Luce, "Socialism, Radicalism, and the Jewish Labor Movement in Los Angeles."

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

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disinterested in separate Jewish organizations, having grown up in multiethnic neighborhoods like Boyle Heights that encouraged their involvement in social groups, clubs, and organizations beyond those offered by the Jewish community.<sup>200</sup> With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionist organizations continued their charitable missions to support Jewish nationalism. Generally, Jewish social clubs decreased in membership and importance during the postwar era. Many labor organizations and *folkshuln* merged into the Jewish Community Centers as the anti-communist fervor of the Cold War era stigmatized the leftist groups. The need for separate, culturally Jewish organizations dissipated as synagogues and religious organizations assumed a larger role in organized social life and the continuation of Jewish identity during the postwar era.

The following tables describe designated and known resources associated with the various social organizations related to the Jewish community of Los Angeles. Eligibility Standards address a range of private institutional property types.

### Designated Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Masonic Temple	416 N. Main Street	Listed in the National Register and designated LAHCM #64.

### Potential Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Arbeter Ring   Workmen's Circle	814 S. Main Street	Meeting place for the Workmen's Circle before the construction of Vladeck Center.
Arbeter Ring   Workmen's Circle	1525 S. Robertson Boulevard	Home of the Workmen's Circle since 1958.
Bakers Union Local 453 Headquarters	1956 E. 1st Street	Demolished. Research indicates that this building was the Hollenbeck Masonic Temple. Thus, the union must have met here, but did not necessarily own or occupy the entire building.
B'nai B'rith Lodge	846 S. Union Avenue	Independent Order of B'nai B'rith Lodge organized in 1899, building constructed in 1923, S. Tilden Norton, Architect.

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<sup>200</sup> Luce, "Socialism, Radicalism, and the Jewish Labor Movement in Los Angeles."

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<b>Resource Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
B'nai B'rith Jewish Center Association	1065 S. La Cienega Boulevard	Now Temple Beth Am.
Brentwood Country Club	590 S Burlingame Avenue	Originally established as the Sunset Fields Golf Club in 1915. Two Jewish cousins purchased the property in 1947, making it the second country club that permitted Jewish members.
Cooperative Center	2706-08 E. Cesar E. Chavez Avenue	This building has played host to numerous groups including the CPLA, Jewish branch, Cooperative Café and Bakery, school, later IWO, JPFO.
Eastside Jewish Community Center	2317 Michigan Avenue	Constructed in 1934 by the Federation of Jewish Charities. Demolished in 2006 by Social Security Administration.
Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations	6505 Wilshire Boulevard	Known today as the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, it is the city's largest Jewish nonprofit organization. First location at 425 N. Beaudry Avenue. The building was constructed in 1956, but not by Federation and remodeled in 1989.
Hamburger Home for Jewish Working Girls #2	1225 S. Union Avenue	Founded in 1915, the original building was destroyed by fire. New building on Union Avenue was dedicated in 1928. Now Catholic Kolping House.
Hamburger Home for Jewish Working Girls #3	7357 Hollywood Boulevard	Moved to existing mansion on Hollywood Boulevard in 1955. Name changed to Aviva Center in 1984.

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**

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<b>Resource Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Hebrew Sheltering Home	131 S. Boyle Avenue	Founded in 1905 on Rose Street in downtown and moved to this house in 1913. Shelter for homeless and transient Jews. Name changed to Jewish Home for the Aged at this site and moved to former Gless Estate.
Hillcrest Country Club	10000 Pico Boulevard	Founded in 1920 to offer golf and outdoor recreational facilities. First two clubhouses have been demolished.
Hollenbeck Masonic Lodge	2124 E. 1st Street	Founded in 1894, but the building was constructed in 1922 and served as a meeting place for other groups as well. Now Boyle Heights City Hall.
Hollywood-Los Feliz Jewish Community Center	1110 Bates Avenue	Constructed in 1951, representing the westward movement of the Jewish community after World War II.
International Workers' Order (IWO) Headquarters/Cooperative Center	2706-08 E. Cesar E. Chavez Avenue	Headquarters of Jewish branch of IWO.
Jewish Community Building	590 N. Vermont Avenue	Constructed by the Jewish Community Council in 1951 and at this location until 1976. The home to virtually every local Jewish organization and the local branches of national Jewish groups. Now the West Coast University.
Jewish Day Nursery (renamed the Julia Ann Singer Day Nursery)	244 N. Breed Street	Founded by the Jewish Mother's Alliance in 1916 to care for the children of working mothers. Building in Boyle Heights erected in 1935 by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Singer in memory of their daughter. Demolished.



**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**

Context: Jewish History

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Jewish Home for the Aged #1	325 S. Boyle Avenue	Founded in 1912 and constructed the first building on Boyle Avenue in 1916. Mary Pickford Building was dedicated in 1952. Moved to Reseda. Boyle Heights property purchased by Keiro Senior Care in 1974.
Jewish Orphan's Home #2	2033 E. 4th Street	Founded in 1908, the original building was destroyed by fire. Moved to a property in Huntington Park in 1912. This property was constructed as a sanatorium and opened as the Jewish Orphans' Home circa 1910. The orphanage remained in operation at this location until approximately 1915.
Jewish Orphan's Home of Southern California #3	3200 Motor Avenue	Jewish Orphan's Home moved to Motor Avenue in 1925, but the oldest existing building was constructed in 1947. Herman Light, Architect. Name changed Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services in 1952. Original buildings demolished in 1962 by I-10. Julia Ann Singer Center merged in 1982.
Jewish People's Fraternal Order Folkshul	3045 Wabash Avenue	This appears to be a parking lot. There is a building at 3051.
Labor Zionist Folkshul	420 N. Soto Street	The first attempt at forming a Jewish secular school in Los Angeles was by the Labor Zionists. In 1914 they acquired and renovated this house (at the back of the lot). At some point in the early 1920s, they shared or relinquished the building to the Arbeter Ring/Workmen's Circle.

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

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Resource Name	Location	Comments
Los Angeles Concordia Club	360 S. Westlake Avenue	Third location of the Concordia Club. Moved here in 1918 after selling clubhouse at 16 <sup>th</sup> and Figueroa.
Los Angeles Yiddish Cultural Club #1	1348 Douglas Street	Founded in 1926 in a house in Echo Park.
Los Angeles Yiddish Cultural Club #2	4213 Monroe Street	The club moved to East Hollywood 1938 hosting lectures and events. Now Victory Presbyterian Church.
Menorah Jewish Youth Center	3218 Wabash Avenue	The Menorah Center was used by over 150 different groups, had a large Hebrew school, a baby clinic, and 15,000 users each month during the 1940s. Closed in 1952. Now the Salesian Boys and Girls Clubs of Los Angeles.
San Pedro Jewish Community Center	1903 S. Cabrillo Avenue	Dedicated in 1935, but traces its roots to San Pedro Jewish Sisterhood. Sisterhood sold the property in 1955 to build Temple Beth El. Now the Italian American Club, previously the Yugoslavian Women's Club.
The Cooperative Press	259 Winston Street	The Cooperative Press was a Yiddish publishing house. This is a rather large building with ground floor retail and upper floor offices.
Vladeck Center	126 N. St. Louis Street	Named for Baruch Charney Vladeck, a prominent Jewish labor leader, politician, and journalist, the Vladeck Center served as a meeting venue for local Jewish labor organizations. Considered the secular heart of Jewish life in Boyle Heights between 1941 and 1960.
Valley Cities Jewish Community Center	13164 Burbank Boulevard	Constructed between 1955 and 1999. Closed in 2009. Now a private school.

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Context: Jewish History

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Resource Name	Location	Comments
West Adams Jewish Community Center	5180 W. Adams Boulevard	Demolished
Westside Jewish Community Center	5870 W. Olympic Boulevard	Constructed in 1954, representing the westward movement of the Jewish community after World War II.

### Theme: Social Clubs and Ethnic/Cultural Associations

#### Summary Statement of

##### Significance:

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage for its association with the Jewish community. Social clubs served as cultural centers of the community. The social clubs of the Jewish community reflecting values of charity and helped foster a sense of identity.

##### Period of Significance:

1880 - 1980

##### Period of Significance

##### Justification:

The period of significance begins in 1880, corresponding to the period when large waves of Jewish immigrants began arriving in the City of Los Angeles. The Jewish community established cultural and charitable institutions to serve its needs. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

##### Geographic Locations:

Throughout Los Angeles, but particularly in areas historically associated with the Jewish community such as Mid-Wilshire, Boyle Heights, West Los Angeles, and parts of the San Fernando Valley.

##### Area(s) of Significance:

Ethnic Heritage

##### Criteria:

NR: A                      CR: 1                      Local: 1

##### Associated Property Types:

Institutional – Social Clubs

##### Property Type Description:

Property types under this theme include institutional buildings constructed to house one or more Jewish community organizations.

##### Property Type Significance:

Properties significant under this theme played an important role in the institutional development of the Jewish community in Los Angeles.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Is associated with a Jewish club or organization that played a pivotal role in the social history of Los Angeles.

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- As a whole, retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- Is important for its association with numerous historic personages who lived in the neighborhood for the cumulative importance of those individuals to the community
- May also be significant under a theme within the Architecture context
- May also include properties significant for individual contribution to Jewish history and evaluated under criterion B/2/2
- May be modest in their workmanship and materials due to the limited resources of many organizations
- May be the first or long-time location of a social club
- May include individual buildings that are resources which strongly represent the contributions of Jewish people over time such as schools, religious institutions, social halls, commercial and retail businesses, and landscape features
- May represent a significant event or movement in the social history of Los Angeles
- May represent issues relating to deed restriction and segregation
- Primary interior spaces associated with club buildings such as large meeting rooms and halls should remain readable from the period of significance
- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Setting may have changed

### **Theme 3: Public and Private Health and Medicine, 1850 - 1980**

#### **Introduction**

By the turn of the twentieth century, Southern California had become a haven for those in search of better health. The area's warm, dry climate was seen as ideal for those suffering from respiratory illnesses and chronic diseases such as tuberculosis. Among those moving to the region were Jewish health seekers. This influx highlighted the need for community institutions since members of the Jewish community were often not admitted to non-Jewish medical facilities. In response, the Jewish community rallied to create its own organizations to provide for those in need. This included public service organizations which provided social services for the poor and the elderly (see Social Clubs theme) and public and private health institutions, such as hospitals and clinics.

The first Jewish hospitals in America were established in the middle of the nineteenth century. The primary reason for the creation of separate Jewish hospitals was that they could tailor their care towards the particular needs of the Jewish community. They provided an on-site synagogue, a staff rabbi, and kosher food, among other amenities. They were also established out of necessity in response to anti-Semitism in the medical field. For the first half of the twentieth century, medical schools and hospitals had quota systems that restricted the number of Jewish medical students in graduate programs and hospital residencies.<sup>201</sup> By the 1920s, Jews were often excluded from hospitals, some medical schools, and residency programs except for those sponsored by the Jewish people. It was therefore necessary to create hospitals where Jewish students could train and gain experience.

This theme focuses largely on the establishment of the major Jewish medical institutions in Los Angeles, most of which began as modest organizations. They were founded to provide treatment for both Jewish and non-Jewish patients, and provided much-needed services to those who would not have been able to afford it otherwise. They grew over the course of the twentieth century as both demand and resources increased, and they have become among the foremost medical institutions in Los Angeles and the region in general.

#### **The Health Crisis in Los Angeles**

At the end of the nineteenth century, Southern California became a haven for health seekers, many of whom suffered from tuberculosis. Understanding of the causes of tuberculosis shifted during this time. The disease was seen as a by-product of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in urban centers. The urban poor, many of whom were immigrants, were disproportionately affected. The new view of the

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<sup>201</sup> Edward C. Halperin, "The Rise and Fall of the American Jewish Hospital," *American Medicine* 87, 5 (May 2012), accessed February 12, 2016, [http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Fulltext/2012/05000/The\\_Rise\\_and\\_Fall\\_of\\_the\\_American\\_Jewish\\_Hospital.21.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Fulltext/2012/05000/The_Rise_and_Fall_of_the_American_Jewish_Hospital.21.aspx).



disease fed into the Progressive-era assessment of immigrants as a population that must be Americanized and therefore improved. The result was a widespread public health campaign, often focused on large cities. There were two facets to this public health campaign – one that sought to isolate the sick in public hospitals, and one that attempted to cure patients through varying treatments, often at specialized sanatoriums outside of city centers.

After the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1871, making Southern California more accessible to the rest of the country, real estate boosters began promoting the region as a modern-day Garden of Eden – a place with year-round beautiful weather, extensive green space, and abundant fresh air that was an ideal antidote to the disease. The promotion of the area proved successful, and soon health seekers from the East Coast and Midwest were moving to Southern California. Despite the number of people seeking treatment in Southern California, however, the greater Los Angeles area had few hospitals that specialized in treating tuberculosis at the beginning of the twentieth century. Several hospitals were founded in the Los Angeles area to aid these patients, including the Barlow Sanatorium, Los Angeles Sanatorium (today the City of Hope), Olive View Sanatorium (today Olive View-UCLA Medical Center), and Kaspere Cohn Hospital (today Cedars-Sinai Medical Center). By the 1930s, at least forty tuberculosis sanatoriums or hospital wards had been established in Southern California.<sup>202</sup>

### **Early Responses in the Jewish Community**

Among those seeking better health in Southern California were an increasing number of Jewish tuberculars. Local officials began speaking out against the number of tuberculars moving to the city, and the Los Angeles City Council even attempted to bar their entry, first in the 1890s and again in 1900. Both attempts failed, but they highlighted the increasing opposition on the part of local government officials. Members of Los Angeles' upper class Jewish community expressed similar concerns about the number of lower class health seekers pouring into the city. Many of the upper class were established businessmen or politicians who were largely integrated into Los Angeles society. They viewed the new Jewish immigrants to Los Angeles with disdain and worried that the newcomers would threaten the Jewish community's status among the local Anglo elite. Their views were also partly driven by prejudice against Jewish people from Eastern Europe; many of the city's Jewish elite hailed from Western Europe.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> David Sloae, "Landscapes of Health and Rejuvenation," in *A Companion to Los Angeles*, ed. William Devereil and Greg Hise (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 444.

<sup>203</sup> Caroline Luce, "Kaspere Cohn Hospital," *The White Plague in the City of Angels*, accessed October 14, 2015, <http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/tuberculosis-exhibit/kasperecohnhospital>.



Portrait of Kaspare Cohn, no date (Jewish Museum of the American West)

Despite the number of people seeking treatment in Southern California, however, the greater Los Angeles area had few hospitals that specialized in treating tuberculosis at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Jewish community organizations established in the nineteenth century, such as the Hebrew Benevolent Society, could not meet the needs of the growing numbers of people seeking treatment. It became clear that the establishment of medical institutions was necessary.<sup>204</sup> Jacob Schlesinger, president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, proposed the creation of a Jewish hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis. Though many members of the Benevolent Society opposed the idea, believing that the opening of a tuberculosis hospital would only attract more tuberculars to the city, businessman and banker Kaspare Cohn supported the idea.<sup>205</sup> In 1902, he donated his home for use as the first Jewish hospital in the city. The residence (LAHCM #191), located in the upscale neighborhood of Angelino Heights,<sup>206</sup> was named the Kaspare

Cohn Hospital and housed the facility until 1910, when the municipal code made it illegal to provide care for tuberculars within the city limits.

The Kaspare Cohn Hospital was forced to transition to surgical cases and maternity care under the direction of Dr. Sarah Vasen. Sarah Vasen was born in Quincy, Illinois. She attended school at what would later become the University of Iowa Medical School in Keokuk, specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, and later attended postgraduate school in Philadelphia.<sup>207</sup> She went on to become the resident physician and superintendent of the Jewish Maternity Home in Philadelphia before returning home to start private practice in Quincy. She moved to Northern California in 1904 and then to Los Angeles in 1905, where she began working at Kaspare Cohn Hospital as the first paid superintendent and resident physician.<sup>208</sup> By the time Dr. Vasen worked there, the hospital focused solely on surgical cases and maternity care. She remained there until 1910, after which she opened a private practice in the city, first at 935 West Temple Street and later at 1110 West Pico Boulevard, south of downtown (both demolished). Specializing in maternity care, Dr. Vasen offered her services free of charge to those in

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<sup>204</sup> The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Los Angeles," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed February 11, 2016, [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0013\\_0\\_12766.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0013_0_12766.html).

<sup>205</sup> The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Los Angeles," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed February 11, 2016, [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0013\\_0\\_12766.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0013_0_12766.html).

<sup>206</sup> Angelino Heights is a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

<sup>207</sup> "Dr. Sarah Vasen: Pioneer Female Obstetrician," Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://hsqac.org/dr-sarah-vasen-pioneer-female-obstetrician/>.

<sup>208</sup> Reva Clar, "First Jewish Woman Physician of Los Angeles," in *Wrestling with the Angels: A History of Jewish Los Angeles*, Phil Blazer and Shelley Portnoy (Sherman Oaks, CA: Blazer Communications, 2006), 161-162; Edmon J. Rodman, "Three pioneering Jewish women doctors," *Jewish Journal*, November 12, 2014.

need and recommended to her by the Hebrew Benevolent Society.<sup>209</sup> In 1912, she married Saul Frank and retired from professional life.<sup>210</sup>

After the shift in care, Kaspare Cohn was not satisfied with the direction that his namesake hospital had been forced to take. He arranged for the institution to move outside the city limits so that it could continue to provide tuberculosis treatment to those who needed it in addition to more general medical services. Cohn and other supporters moved the hospital to a site at 3942 Stephenson Avenue (later 3942 Whittier Boulevard) in East Los Angeles (the building has been demolished).<sup>211</sup> A number of the Jewish community's prominent physicians volunteered their time at the new hospital.<sup>212</sup> One of these physicians was Leo Blass. Blass was born in Russia and moved to Los Angeles in 1908. He saw numerous patients in his private practice who suffered from tuberculosis, and he became a vocal supporter of the local sanatorium movement as well as becoming involved in other social service organizations like the Home for the Aged and the Arbeter Ring | Workmen's Circle.<sup>213</sup>



*Kaspare Cohn Hospital in East Los Angeles, circa 1910 (Jewish Museum of the American West)*

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<sup>209</sup> Clar, 163.

<sup>210</sup> Clar, 165; Julie Beardsley, "Dr. Sarah Vasen: First Jewish Woman Doctor in Los Angeles, First Superintendent of Cedars-Sinai Hospital," accessed February 11, 2016, <http://home.earthlink.net/~nholdeneditor/Sarah%20Vasen.htm>.

<sup>211</sup> Caroline Luce, "Kaspare Cohn Hospital Path," *The White Plague in the City of Angels*, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/tuberculosis-exhibit/movetoboyleheights?path=cedars-of-lebanon-path>.

<sup>212</sup> Caroline Luce, "Kaspare Cohn Hospital Moves to Boyle Heights, 1910," *The White Plague in the City of Angels*, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/tuberculosis-exhibit/movetoboyleheights?path=cedars-of-lebanon-path>; George H. Kress, *A History of the Medical Profession of Southern California*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing and Binding House, 1910), 196, accessed February 12, 2016, <https://books.google.com/books>.

<sup>213</sup> Caroline Luce, "Key People – Jewish Consumptive Relief Association and the City of Hope," *The White Plague in the City of Angels*, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/tuberculosis-exhibit/key-people-jewish-consumptive-relief-association-and-the-city-of-hope>.

Although the founding of Kaspere Cohn Hospital and the Barlow Sanatorium in Chavez Ravine helped to provide care for tuberculars arriving in Los Angeles, it was not enough. In the 1910s, a new wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Los Angeles seeking economic opportunity and for many, better health. Many settled in downtown Los Angeles near the headquarters of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, which could not keep up with the rapidly increasing need for assistance. A group of concerned members of the Jewish community formed the Jewish Consumptive Relief Association (JCRA) with the goal of providing free medical care for those suffering from tuberculosis.<sup>214</sup> One of the foremost goals of the JCRA was to build a sanatorium where the ill could get medical treatment regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or financial situation. After raising funds, much of which came from donations from both local and nationwide unions and Jewish organizations, the JCRA purchased ten acres of land in the community of Duarte in order to construct a sanatorium.

Many local officials and members of the city’s Jewish community were vehemently opposed to the JCRA’s goal of building a sanatorium. They feared that the construction of another tuberculosis hospital – especially one that would provide free care – would cause Los Angeles and its surrounding areas to become overrun with new tuberculars and that those who did not go to the JCRA’s sanatorium would seek treatment in nearby institutions. In the face of his opposition, Dr. Kate Levy, the second Jewish female physician in Los Angeles and on the board of directors of what would later become the Los Angeles Sanatorium, penned an appeal in the B’nai B’rith *Messenger*, asking for the support and “cooperation of the whole Jewish public regardless of case or creed” as they worked to realize the facility the community so badly needed.<sup>215</sup> Her work helped the JCRA succeed in establishing the sanatorium and gaining its first physician, Dr. Clara Stone.

Despite the work of Dr. Levy and others, the JCRA faced continued opposition. When a proposed County ordinance threatened to prevent the opening of the sanatorium in 1914, the JCRA hastily erected its first two cottages with funds from the Arbeter Ring | Workmen’s Circle before the bill could pass.



*The Los Angeles Sanatorium in Duarte in 1928 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

These two buildings were washed away by a flood but were quickly followed by other cottages and

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<sup>214</sup> Caroline Luce, “The Jewish Consumptive Relief Association, 1912,” *The White Plague in the City of Angels*, accessed October 14, 2015, <http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/tuberculosis-exhibit/thejewishconsumptivereliefassociation?path=the-jcra-path>.

small-scale buildings. Predominately Jewish labor unions including the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union raised the money, while the Jewish Painters' and Carpenters' Unions donated the labor. The JCRA founded auxiliaries in cities all over the country, which raised funds to construct new buildings on the hospital's campus.

At first, the hospital was simply called the Los Angeles Sanatorium. However, patients of the facility described it as feeling like a small town rather than a fledgling hospital campus, earning it the nickname "the City of Hope."<sup>216</sup> The sanatorium expanded in response to the increasing numbers of patients seeking treatment, and by the 1920s, the hospital employed three doctors and could house more than 120 patients. Its facilities consisted of more than thirty buildings, including "cure cottages," a large hospital building, and a recreation hall. The JCRA also constructed an Ex-Patients' Home in Boyle Heights, which provided housing until discharged patients could find jobs and housing elsewhere.

The need for medical institutions for the Jewish community was not limited to the treatment of tuberculosis. The Bikur Cholim Society was organized in Boyle Heights in 1920 in response to the influenza epidemic of 1918. The society, whose name means "visiting the sick," opened the Bikur Cholim Hospital in a small residence and then moved to a larger facility in 1925. The new hospital, located in the City Terrace neighborhood of East Los Angeles, was renamed the Mount Sinai Home for Incurables (also seen as the Mount Sinai Home for Chronic Individuals) (the building has since been demolished).<sup>217</sup> Dr. Clara Stone (1884-1944), who had served as the first resident physician at the Los Angeles Sanatorium, went on to become the institution's resident physician and superintendent by 1929.

### **Growth and Development**

During the same period that the JCRA established the Los Angeles Sanatorium, Kaspere Cohn Hospital was experiencing growth and changes of its own. Though begun as a charity hospital, it began accepting payment from those who could afford it. Lemuel Goldwater, a leading Jewish businessman, became the institution's new president and developed a plan for its expansion and relocation. Though a sizable Jewish population remained in Boyle Heights, the city's Jewish community was beginning to shift westward by this time. In the late 1920s, Goldwater and other local community leaders launched a campaign to build, among other projects, a state-of-the-art medical facility. The new hospital, renamed Cedars of Lebanon and located at 4833 Fountain Avenue, opened in 1930. Designed by architect Claude Beelman and built by general contractor H.M. Baruch Corporation, the building was erected at a cost of more than \$1,500,000 and had a capacity of 250 beds.<sup>218</sup> A nurses' home was also constructed at the same time. Dr. David W. Edelman served as the first chief of staff.<sup>219</sup> Edelman (1869-1933) was the son

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<sup>217</sup> The address was 831 N. Bonnie Beach Place.

<sup>218</sup> "Hospital Will Be Completed Soon: Large Institutions Erected by Jewish People," *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 1930, D6.

<sup>219</sup> "Dr. David W. Edelman Dies Suddenly in Los Angeles," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, August 8, 1933, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.jta.org/1933/08/08/archive/dr-david-w-edelman-dies-suddenly-in-los-angeles>;



of Rabbi Abraham W. Edelman and grew up in Los Angeles. He received his medical degree from Columbia University and returned to Los Angeles to open a private practice in 1892. He worked as a doctor at Kaspere Cohn Hospital and was the head physician of the Jewish Orphans' Home. He served on the first board of the Federation of Jewish Charities, founded in 1911, and was president of Congregation B'nai B'rith from 1910 until at least 1916.<sup>220</sup>



*Cedars of Lebanon soon after its opening, 1930 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

With the opening of the new facility, Cedars of Lebanon shifted its focus from the treatment of tuberculosis to more general care. The hospital's tuberculosis patients were integrated into a new ward for diseases of the lungs and chest, which included patients with bronchitis, asthma, and emphysema. Dr. Jacob Singer, hired as the hospital's senior attending physician in 1937, oversaw this shift in treatment. Singer (ca.1880-1954), who was born in England to Russian Jewish parents and grew up in St. Louis, was a

pioneer in the treatment of tuberculosis. Singer and his mentor, Dr. Evarts Graham, experimented with new treatments and surgeries, including the first pneumonectomy (the removal of a patient's entire lung). Singer moved to Los Angeles in 1937 and became the city's leading lung specialist. He went on to become the medical director at the City of Hope.<sup>221</sup>

The Los Angeles Sanatorium in the City of Duarte continued to grow as word of free treatment spread. In the early 1940s, Executive Director Samuel Golter announced a plan to replace the smaller cottages and medical buildings with a large, state of the art hospital facility and to establish a medical school on campus. Though the medical school was never realized, Golter's plan ushering in a new era for the hospital. By the end of the decade, new discoveries in the treatment of tuberculosis, including a vaccine and antibiotics, had drastically reduced the rate of the disease. Spearheaded by Golter's efforts, the hospital shifted its focus to the treatment of other major long-term diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and later diabetes. In 1949, it officially changed its name to The City of Hope: A National Jewish Medical Center.

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Martin A. Meyer, *Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of the Jews and Judaism in California* (San Francisco: Emanu-El, 1916), 178.

## The Postwar Period and Consolidation

In the postwar period, the Jewish population in Boyle Heights declined sharply. The center of the Jewish population in Los Angeles shifted to the neighborhoods of West Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley. In 1955, Mount Sinai Hospital moved to a larger facility at 8700 Beverly Boulevard. The new hospital, designed by the architectural firm of Welton Becket and Associates, had a capacity of more than 250 beds, with immediate plans to expand to a capacity of 450 beds. Half of its beds were devoted to free or reduced cost service.<sup>222</sup> The hospital also had an education and residency program. Its large psychiatric department, which treated in-patients and outpatients and conducted research, was the first of its kind in the western United States.<sup>223</sup> The facility continued to expand into the early 1960s.

Cedars of Lebanon also saw continued growth and expansion during the postwar period. The city suffered from a shortage of hospital beds. In response, the hospital was greatly expanded in the mid-1950s to early 1960s. New facilities such as a maternity and pediatrics building were constructed, followed shortly thereafter by the opening of a radiology wing and rehabilitation center.<sup>224</sup>

The creation of medical institutions continued into the second half of the twentieth century with the founding of Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center. Gateways opened its first twelve-bed facility in 1953. In 1961, it opened a new campus at 1891 Effie Street, in a park-like setting near Dodger Stadium.<sup>225</sup> The center was an outgrowth of the Jewish Committee for Personal Service (JCPS), founded in 1921 to provide social services to members of the Jewish community in mental hospitals and prisons. The construction of the center was made possible by the donation of a former client. JCPS continues as a component of Gateways Hospital and serves prisoners throughout Southern California.<sup>226</sup>

In 1961, Mt. Sinai and Cedars of Lebanon Hospitals merged. The hospitals, which provided many of the same services to the community, merged so that they could pool their resources, provide improved care at a reduced cost, and decrease their operational deficits. The merger created the largest private nonprofit hospital in the western United States. A new 1,000-bed facility was planned on an expanded

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<sup>222</sup> "Steps Taken to Finish New Mt. Sinai Hospital," *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1953, 16; "New Children's Clinic at Mt. Sinai Readied," *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1959, F19.

<sup>223</sup> "New Mt. Sinai Hospital to Have Psychiatric Unit," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1955, A30.

<sup>224</sup> "Big Hospital Unit Readied," *Los Angeles Times*, November 2, 1952, E1; "New Unit Start Slated at Cedars of Lebanon," *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1958, F10; "New Wing Being Built at Cedars of Lebanon," *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1962, N6.

<sup>225</sup> "Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center," Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.gatewayshospital.org/>.

<sup>226</sup> A related organization, Beit T'Shuvah has provided drug rehabilitation in the late 1980s. Carol Felixson, "Alcoholism and Addiction, The History of Beit T'Shuvah and Related Agencies: Response, Recovery, and Prevention Efforts in the Los Angeles Jewish Community," *Bet T'Shuvah* (Fall 2004) 37, 1, accessed February 12, 2016, [http://www.wsjhistory.com/bet\\_t'shuvah.htm](http://www.wsjhistory.com/bet_t'shuvah.htm); The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Los Angeles," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed February 12, 2016, [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0013\\_0\\_12766.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/judaica/ejud_0002_0013_0_12766.html).

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site at the location of Mt. Sinai Hospital on Beverly Boulevard.<sup>227</sup> In 1971, Cedars-Sinai began work on a twenty-four-acre complex that included the construction of new facilities and the renovation of the site's existing buildings.<sup>228</sup>

### Conclusion

The early twentieth century saw the creation of some of the foremost private and public medical institutions in Southern California. A response to the Jewish community's need for access to quality healthcare, these hospitals began as modest institutions that grew in response to increasing need. Some, like Cedars of Lebanon, became known for their state of the art facilities and instruments as well as their pioneering treatments. They provided care of people of all races and religions, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Today, they are among the foremost medical institutions in the region.

The following tables describe designated and potential resources associated with the health and medicine in Los Angeles. Eligibility Standards address institutional property types.

### Designated Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Kaspere Cohn Hospital	1443 W. Carroll Avenue	Also called the James S. Luckenbach Residence. This property is listed as LAHCM #191 and is a contributing building in the Angelino Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

### Potential Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Cedars of Lebanon Hospital	4833 Fountain Avenue	A 453-bed medical center that grew out of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, which was founded in 1854. Name changed to Cedars of Lebanon when the first building on the present site was completed in 1930.

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<sup>227</sup> "Cedars-Sinai Site Selected," *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1963, P15.

<sup>228</sup> Dick Turpin, "Cedars-Sinai Growth to Get Under Way," *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1971, K1.

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Resource Name	Location	Comments
Cedars-Sinai Hospital	8700 Beverly Boulevard	Bikur Cholim Society organized in 1921. Opened Mount Sinai Hospital in 1926 and expanded to a newer facility in 1955 (both demolished). This hospital merged with Cedars of Lebanon in 1961 to become Cedars-Sinai Hospital. Groundbreaking for new hospital building at this location was in 1972.
Gateways Hospital and Community Mental Health Center	1891 Effie Street	Gateways Hospital was a pioneer in the provision of community-based services to the mentally ill, opening its first 12-bed facility in 1953. A new campus, nestled in park-like surroundings not far from Dodger Stadium, was opened in 1961 and dedicated by Eleanor Roosevelt.
Mount Sinai Hospital Clinic	211 Breed Street	Operated by Mount Sinai Hospital, predecessor to the present-day Cedars-Sinai Hospital, the clinic played a significant role in Boyle Heights' institutional history by providing free outpatient services to the area's working-class population between 1940 and 1962.

**Theme: Public Healthcare/Social Medicine**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:**

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of community planning and development, ethnic heritage, health/medicine, or science for its association with the Jewish community. Publicly-owned healthcare institutions were created to meet the needs of the Jewish people of Los Angeles reflect community growth and development over the course of the twentieth century and the community's response to that growth.

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**Period of Significance:** 1900 - 1980

### Period of Significance

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in 1900, as the earliest extant examples of medical institutions date from the first decade of the twentieth century. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:** Throughout Los Angeles, but particularly in areas historically associated with the Jewish community such as Mid-Wilshire and Boyle Heights.

**Area(s) of Significance:** Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage, Health/Medicine, Science

**Criteria:** NR: A            CR: 1            Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:** Institutional – Health/Medicine - Hospital, Sanatorium

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme include purpose-built institutional buildings, such as hospitals and smaller clinics

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme played an important role in the institutional development of the Jewish community in Los Angeles.

### Eligibility Standards:

- Represents an important association with public healthcare and/or social medicine in Los Angeles
- Was constructed during the period of significance

### Character-Defining/Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- Retains association with local, state, or national governmental agency or a private nonprofit organization

### Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Setting, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Some materials may have been removed or altered



**Theme: Important Persons in L.A.'s Medical History**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:** A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant for its association with people who made significant contributions in the areas of community planning and development as it relates to institutional development, health/medicine, and science within the Jewish community.

**Period of Significance:** 1850 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in 1850 with the arrival of the first Jewish settlers. It has been left open to 1850 to capture properties associated with individuals who may have worked in the health and medicine fields in the nineteenth century and who have not yet been identified. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:** Throughout Los Angeles, but most likely to be found in areas such as Boyle Heights and Mid-Wilshire

**Area(s) of Significance:** Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage, Health/Medicine, Science

**Criteria:** NR: B            CR: 2            Local: 2

**Associated Property Types:** Institutional – Health/Medicine - Hospital, Medical Building, Sanatorium  
Residential - Single-Family Residence

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme include residences and institutional buildings such as hospitals and medical clinics

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme are those associated with people that played an important role in the history of medicine or healthcare or the institutional development of Los Angeles as it relates to health and medicine.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the history of medicine/healthcare
- Is directly associated with the productive life of person who made important individual contributions to the history of medicine/healthcare at the local, state, and national levels
- Was constructed during the period of significance

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- For National Register, properties associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Some materials may have been removed or altered

## Theme 4: Commercial Identity 1925 – 1980

### Introduction

The success of many commercial enterprises founded by Jewish immigrants to Los Angeles, from department stores to film studios, reflects the business acumen that often characterized the Jewish community in the United States. The contributions of Jewish people to the success of commerce, business, and industry in Los Angeles reveal a culture that adapted to traditional limitations and restrictions faced by Jewish people in the European, North African, and Asian countries from which many immigrated to the United States. Barred from many commercial activities and isolated in ethnic ghettos, Jewish people were often marginalized outsiders who were professionally restricted to pursuits such as record keeping, entertaining, and banking.<sup>229</sup> Vocations were often based on skills and goods that could be easily transported. In the mid-nineteenth century, as increasingly large numbers of Jewish immigrants came to the United States, the skills from these traditional trades allowed Jewish people to influence newly developing cities in the West by fostering commercial, entertainment, and financial institutions. High-profile Jewish businesspeople created many of the industries that defined not just Los Angeles as it grew from a pueblo to sprawling metropolis, but the growth of the United States in the twentieth century.<sup>230</sup> These prolific figures, however, do not necessarily represent the commercial



*Jewish businesses at Brooklyn Avenue and St. Louis Street, no date (Los Angeles Public Library)*

identity of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. Commercial identity is found in the businesses that made important contributions to the development of the Jewish community and often became beloved neighborhood landmarks, fostering the distinctively Jewish social and cultural history of the city. The businesses examined under this theme are not just those owned by Jewish proprietors, but those with commercial activity that is a direct reflection of Jewish ethnic identity as the culture remained distinctly and separately Jewish in the melting pot of multicultural Los Angeles.

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<sup>229</sup> Bruce Phillips, "The Challenge of Family, Identity, and Affiliations," in *California Jews*, eds. Ava F. Kahn and Marc Dollinger (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2003), 19.

<sup>230</sup> These figures include Louis B. Mayer, a film pioneer who created film studio that would go on to become MGM Studios; Max Factor, who transformed the cosmetics and beauty industry with his revolutionary products and techniques; Ruth Handler, co-founder of Mattel and inventor of the Barbie doll; and Isaias Hellman, a prolific and successful financier and philanthropist throughout California and the Southwest.

### Early Jewish Businesses and Commercial Districts

During the late nineteenth century there were a handful of Jewish businesses on Central Avenue and Temple Street, but Boyle Heights, a few miles east of downtown Los Angeles, emerged as the Jewish commercial epicenter in the early twentieth century.<sup>231</sup> Between the 1920s and 1930s, the number of Jewish families living in Boyle Heights quadrupled. As a budding working class community, its residents busied themselves with various blue and white-collar jobs, such as laborers, tailors, shop proprietors, and clerks.<sup>232</sup> The infrastructure to support the community, such as businesses and synagogues, would follow. Dozens of Jewish food stores, including bakeries, delis, butchers, and fishmongers concentrated along and between Brooklyn Avenue (now Cesar Chavez Avenue) and E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street to cater to the surrounding Jewish community.<sup>233</sup>

As the Jewish population shifted further west, a new Jewish commercial center started to develop along Fairfax Avenue, near its intersection with Beverly Boulevard. The residential areas surrounding Fairfax Avenue were associated with the Jewish community as early as the 1920s and 1930s. However, commercial development in this area did not take place until the 1930s—parts of Fairfax Avenue were not even paved until 1919—and the Jewish businesses became most established after World War II. Some of the long-time businesses in this area include Canter’s Deli, Schwartz Bakery, and Diamond Bakery. Fairfax Avenue, between Beverly Boulevard and Rosewood Avenue, was identified as a Planning District in SurveyLA for its association with the Jewish community and its cohesive low-scale commercial properties; however, the area does not retain sufficient integrity to meet the eligibility requirements for a historic district.<sup>234</sup> At 445 N. Fairfax Avenue, Solomon’s Bookstore—a family-owned business selling Jewish books and gifts—has been open since 1948. A few doors down at 436 N. Fairfax Avenue, Hatikvah Music, originally called Norty’s Music Center, opened in 1954 and would go on to specialize solely in Jewish music.<sup>235</sup> City directories listed dozens of businesses along Fairfax Avenue that catered to Jewish customers, including kosher butchers, delis, bakeries and markets, book stores, and clothing stores.<sup>236</sup>

Los Angeles’ Jewish community continued to spread westward to what is known as the Pico-Robertson neighborhood. The community here, established after World War II, continues to thrive. Taking root primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, Jewish businesses, including a familiar assortment of bakeries, butchers, markets, restaurants, delis, and Judaica shops concentrated along this area’s main thoroughfare, Pico Boulevard. Pico Boulevard, roughly between Robertson Boulevard and Holt Avenue,

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<sup>231</sup> Caroline Elizabeth Luce, “Visions of a Jewish Future: the Jewish Bakers Union and Yiddish Culture in East Los Angeles, 1908-1942” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2003), 108.

<sup>232</sup> 1940 United States Federal Census, accessed February 2016, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

<sup>233</sup> Luce, “Visions,” 108.

<sup>234</sup> Architectural Resources Group, “SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report, Wilshire Community Plan Area.” 2013.

<sup>235</sup> Bob Pool, “Fairfax Area Losing Its Kosher Flavor,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 2003.

<sup>236</sup> 1956 Los Angeles City Directory.

was identified as a Planning District in SurveyLA for its association with the Jewish community and its cohesive low-scale commercial properties; however, the area does not retain sufficient integrity to meet the eligibility requirements for a historic district.<sup>237</sup>

### Food in Jewish Religious Practices and Cultural Traditions

Many of the resources related to Jewish commercial identity have to do with food. Within the Jewish religion, food is deeply symbolic and often ritualistic. The *kashrut*, a set of rules establishing Jewish dietary restrictions, originated in the Torah and defines what is “kosher,” or, fit for consumption. The *kashrut* provides guidance on the consumption and preparation of foods, the slaughter of animals for meat, utensils, cookware, keeping certain foods separate, and prohibiting the consumption of some foods entirely.<sup>238</sup> In the nineteenth century, the production and processing of crops such as wheat and rye tripled in Eastern Europe, lowering prices and increasing access to grains and grain products. Dark, hearty breads made with thick-ground flour became an essential source of filling calories as other food sources such as dairy, sugar, and meat grew scarcer. Breads like rye and bagels became dietary staples to supplement vegetable and root-based meals, while breads like matzo and challah were part of religious rituals.<sup>239</sup>

Millions of Jewish people immigrated to America in the nineteenth and twentieth century to escape increasingly oppressive conditions in their home countries, and brought their traditional cuisine with them. Some of the earliest Jewish immigrants had difficulty following the *kashrut* due to the lack of kosher resources in developing areas, such as Los Angeles in the 1800s. These settlers had to make do, entreating the available bakers and butchers to prepare food such as meat and matzo as close to kosher as possible for important holidays like Passover, but they were generally unable to keep strictly kosher all the time.<sup>240</sup> In light of these difficulties, vendors like kosher delis, bakeries, markets, and butchers became a pivotal part of Jewish communities in America, and served as the primary food supply for a rapidly urbanizing Jewish population.<sup>241</sup> The diets that were formed out of necessity and poverty in their home countries were adapted and expanded in America, where food was less expensive and more plentiful. Meat was added to traditional Ashkenazi dishes and soups, breads were sweetened and baked with lighter rye and softer wheat-based grains, fish was readily available, and sweet bakery treats like *rugalach* and *hamantaschen* were regularly enjoyed.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Architectural Resources Group. “SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report, Wilshire Community Plan Area.” 2013.

<sup>238</sup> “Kashrut: Connecting the Physical to the Spiritual,” United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, accessed February 2016, <http://uscj.org/JewishLivingandLearning/Kashrut/default.aspx>.

<sup>239</sup> Luce, “Visions,” 106-107.

<sup>240</sup> Larry B. Stammer, “Celebrating Passover Was More Complex in L.A. of the 1800s,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 2003.

<sup>241</sup> David Sax, *Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye, and the Heart of Jewish Delicatessen* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2009), 23.

<sup>242</sup> Luce, “Visions,” 108.



## Jewish Bakeries

Bakeries were especially crucial to these growing Jewish populations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Challah is special braided bread eaten on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. According to Jewish tradition, the three Sabbath meals (Friday night, Saturday lunch, and Saturday late afternoon) and two holiday meals (one at night and lunch the following day) each begin with two complete loaves of bread. While the rules of the *kashrut* were not as strict for bakeries as they were for, say, butchers, they played an important part in food production due to the abundance of bread in the traditional Ashkenazi Jewish diet. A Yiddish proverb, “*besser dem beker vie dem doktor*”—“better to give to the baker than the doctor”—reflects the importance of a baker in a Jewish community.<sup>243</sup> A number of social and economic pressures began to transform Jewish eating habits once they arrived in America, including Progressive-era “Americanization” efforts, seeking to fit in with neighbors, and the enticingly low prices of the mass-produced and processed foods that were becoming more commonplace.<sup>244</sup> As the Jewish population continued to assimilate into American culture, Jewish consumers became less dependent on Jewish and kosher merchants for food and subsequently the demand for these artisans decreased. Despite this shift in food supply and eating habits, several Jewish bakeries have been in operation for the better part of fifty years. These include Beverlywood Bakery and Schwartz Bakery. Beverlywood Bakery, a non-kosher Jewish bakery, has been in business on Pico Boulevard since 1946.<sup>245</sup> Schwartz Bakery, a kosher bakery, has been in business since 1954. Today, they have four separate locations in Los Angeles.<sup>246</sup> While the independent kosher bakery business may have stagnated over time, the demand for one traditional Jewish food, the bagel, has skyrocketed. One of the earliest known records of the bagel dates to fifteenth century Poland in a set of regulations issued by the Jewish council of Krakow. Although there are several linguistic interpretations of this record, it is understood that bagels were consumed around the birth of a child (a son), either as a customary gift or simply a special food eaten in celebration. As author and journalist Maria Balinska points out, whatever the reason for mentioning it, it was important enough in the lives of Jewish people at the time for it to be included in a regulatory document and to be regularly associated with the milestone of birth.<sup>247</sup> By the nineteenth century, bagels were a dietary fixture in Eastern European Jewish life. Naturally, they became a part of American Jewish life, as well.

Bagel bakeries were established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries throughout Yiddish neighborhoods in cities like New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. It was labor-intensive work that required a team of four men: two to knead and shape the dough, one to boil the bagels, and one to tend the oven to ensure even baking. In response to the harsh working conditions and the growing labor movement, Yiddish bagel bakers in New York formed a union in 1907 called Local 338 of the

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 106-107.

<sup>244</sup> Luce, “Visions,” 113-115.

<sup>245</sup> “About Us,” Beverlywood Bakery, accessed February 2016, <http://www.beverlywoodbakery.net/about-us.html>.

<sup>246</sup> “About Us,” Schwartz Bakery, accessed February 2016, <http://www.schwartzbakeryla.com/about.html>.

<sup>247</sup> Maria Balinska, *The Bagel: A Surprising History of a Modest Bread* (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 2008), 46-47.

International Beigel Bakers Union of Greater New York and New Jersey. The union never had more than 300 members at once, and maintained a monopoly on the bagel trade for several decades; however, after World War II, families began moving to the suburbs. It became increasingly common to buy groceries at the supermarket once a week than to make a daily visit to a market or individual shops. It was during this period a man named Murray Lender would ultimately be responsible for introducing bagels to the general American diet.<sup>248</sup> In 1955 he joined the family business, Lender's Bagels in New Haven, Connecticut. He began increasing production and selling large batches of bagels to supermarkets, where shoppers of all ethnicities could purchase them.

In 1962, Daniel Thompson and his father Meyer Thompson introduced the first bagel-making machine after years of perfecting the invention.<sup>249</sup> Meyer Thompson came up with the idea during his time as a baker in Boyle Heights; he owned a bakery at 2222 Brooklyn Avenue (now Cesar Chavez Avenue) in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>250</sup> The Thompsons' machine could produce hundreds of dozens of bagels in an hour and needed just one man to operate it.<sup>251</sup> Following this innovation, bagels exploded onto the mainstream American market, and have remained popular ever since. New baking methods to ease mass production have been introduced over time, including the use of dough conditioners and steam ovens in place of time-honored boiling, which some bagel fans would call a travesty: traditional, Jewish bagels are not like the light, bready rolls that are commonly associated with the term today. They are much smaller and have a larger hole in the center. The inside is quite dense and chewy with a distinctive "wheaty" flavor, while the outside has a crackling—even crunchy—crust.<sup>252</sup>

One of the longest-operating bagel bakeries in Los Angeles is The Brooklyn Bagel Bakery. The Brooklyn Bagel Bakery was established by Seymour Friedman in 1953. Friedman initially rented space in the Weitz Bakery on 4658 W. Adams Boulevard before taking over the bakery and establishing the Brooklyn Bagel Bakery. The bakery moved to its current location at 2217 W. Beverly Boulevard in 1965. The bakery prides itself on traditional bagels that are boiled before baking, rather than steamed, and is still owned and operated by the Friedman family.<sup>253</sup>

Despite the Freidmans' efforts, the Los Angeles culinary scene is not known for its bagels, especially when compared to the upper echelons of bagel making in New York; however, Los Angeles is certainly able to hold its own when it comes to pastrami and the prevailing culture of the Jewish deli. Arguably, no Jewish business is as influential to the surrounding community as the deli. Synonymous today with a particular type of comfort food, an early form of the deli emerged in late 1800s New York. The delis

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<sup>248</sup> Stanley Ginsberg and Norman Berg, *Inside the Jewish Bakery: Recipes and Memories from the Golden Age of Jewish Baking* (Philadelphia, PA: Camino Books, 2011), 93.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> 1930 Los Angeles City Directory.

<sup>251</sup> Ginsberg and Berg, *Inside the Jewish Bakery*, 93.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 92-94.

<sup>253</sup> "About Us," Brooklyn Bagel Bakery, accessed February 2016, <http://brooklynbagella.com/about-us/about-our-company>.

were a perfect marriage between centuries-old Ashkenazi cuisine and the newest portable food craze: the sandwich.<sup>254</sup> They were a replacement for the food carts and peddlers that sold cold, Yiddish food lunches to garment and factory workers. Deemed unsanitary by the growing middle-class, the mayor of New York imposed strict new regulations on the carts and peddlers in 1906 that required food vendors to be specially licensed. The number of licenses was limited, and they soon included a mandate that vendors had to remain stationary. These early delis quickly evolved from take-out food counters, to sit-down restaurants, to cultural institutions.<sup>255</sup>

## Delicatessen

The most common type of deli today, the kosher-style deli, started to develop as Jewish movements began observing the *kashrut* in different ways. Some movements, such as Hasidic Judaism, became much more stringent over time. The Hasadim chose to observe *glatt* kosher, believing other movements were too lax in their observance, while others were content to be “modern kosher.” The kosher-style deli generally followed the kosher rules—no shellfish, no pork, no mixing of meat and dairy—but was unlikely to serve true kosher meats or have any kind of rabbinical supervision. This new kind of deli appealed to those who were not, or were no longer, keeping strictly kosher, as well as non-Jewish people.<sup>256</sup> Kosher-style delis and restaurants appealed more to a cultural connection with Jewish food, rather than a religious connection.<sup>257</sup>



Canter Brothers Delicatessen, 1939  
([www.cantersdeli.com](http://www.cantersdeli.com))

Though their origins are firmly rooted in New York, delis were especially important to the Jewish people of Los Angeles. Not only did they provide familiar (sometimes kosher) cuisine, but Los Angeles is much more spread out than New York. As a result, the Jewish families in Los Angeles did not live in such close quarters and tightly knit groups as their New York counterparts, making the feeling of a “Jewish atmosphere” and sense of community more difficult to come by. Delis became meaningful places in their respective neighborhoods where a

Jewish person could relax amongst his peers.<sup>258</sup> Sociologists coined the term “third place” to describe these intermediate, casual gathering places that are neither home nor work, and emphasize their importance in anchoring and unifying communities.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Sax, *Save the Deli*, 24.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid*, 24-25.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, 29-30.

<sup>257</sup> Jonathan Deutsch and Rachel D. Saks, *Jewish American Food Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 63-64.

<sup>258</sup> Ted Merwin, *Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2015), 102.

Being so popular with the Jewish community, delis naturally became a hotspot for the film industry. Director Orson Welles even went so far as to say, “There could be no picture making without pastrami.”<sup>260</sup> Powerful Hollywood executives, movie makers, and A-list stars frequented the delis in Los Angeles on an almost daily basis, promoting their work, meeting people, and making deals. To this day, delis like Art’s Deli in Studio City credit the nearby studios for their thriving businesses. Art’s even caters the private jets for production companies like Miramax and DreamWorks.<sup>261</sup>

One of the mainstays, the Canter Brothers Delicatessen (“Canter’s”), had its origins on the East Coast. The Canter brothers opened a deli in Jersey City in 1924; following the stock market crash in 1929, they lost their business and decided to head west for California. They found a new location in the Boyle Heights neighborhood, opening a deli on Brooklyn Avenue (now Cesar Chavez Avenue) in 1931.<sup>262</sup> Although their original location stayed open until the 1970s,<sup>263</sup> Canter’s Deli followed the shift in the Jewish community to the Fairfax area. Here, they opened a second, larger location at 439 N. Fairfax Avenue. The popularity of the deli prompted another expansion in 1953. The Canters and their business partners purchased and converted the Esquire Theater at 419 N. Fairfax Avenue, where the deli remains open over fifty years later. It is still owned and operated by members of the Canter family, and is a popular destination for tourists, locals, and the Hollywood elite.<sup>264</sup>

Langer’s Deli, at the corner of 7th and Alvarado in Westlake, was founded by Al Langer. Langer was born in New Jersey in 1913. His deli career began at the young age of 11 when he took a job to earn money for his bar mitzvah. He later moved with his parents to Los Angeles, where he found another job in a deli before attempting to open his own. This business venture failed at several locations, including one in Palm Springs and one in a bowling alley, before he finally opened Langer’s in 1947. Langer’s was in continuous operation until it nearly had to close its doors in the late 1980s. The economic downturn and rise in crime that had taken place in the surrounding area at that time, raised concerns about safety for both employees and clientele, and business was not good. Al and his son Norm—who still runs the business today—considered closing the deli altogether when, in 1993, the Metro Red Line was completed. The Westlake-MacArthur Park station was built just outside Langer’s, attracting downtown lunch crowds that were now just one quick stop away and helped to revitalize the business.<sup>265</sup> Factor’s Famous Deli was established in 1947 at 9420 Pico Boulevard by Abe and Esther Factor. Located near several film and television studios, Factor’s has enjoyed a steady stream of customers in its decades of operation. In 1969, Lili and Herman Markowitz purchased the deli.<sup>266</sup> Lili Markowitz was a

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>261</sup> Sax, *Save the Deli*, 133.

<sup>262</sup> Merwin, *Pastrami on Rye*, 102.

<sup>263</sup> Pool.

<sup>264</sup> Sheryll Bellman, *America’s Great Delis: Recipes and Traditions Coast to Coast* (South Portland, ME: Sellers Publishing, 2010), 146.

<sup>265</sup> Sax, *Save the Deli*, 141-142.

<sup>266</sup> Bellman, *America’s Great Delis*, 154.

Holocaust survivor who met her husband, Herman, after World War II. They came to America in 1949 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio before heading west for Los Angeles in 1963. Herman found a job at Nate n’ Al’s Deli in Beverly Hills as the “head deli man” before taking a position at Factor’s and later purchasing the business. The deli is still owned by the Markowitz family, and is run by two of Herman and Lily’s children.<sup>267</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In recent years, traditional Jewish foods, delis, and bakeries have enjoyed a sort of renaissance after languishing during the postwar era. Considered by some to be unhealthy and even embarrassing, many Jewish people rejected these foods as they assimilated into American culture. Today, younger Jewish chefs are embracing the food of their culture and giving it a modern twist with contemporary trends and flavors. Not only are these chefs revitalizing interest in the foods themselves, but also the methods of preparation. Part of a larger trend of local, sustainable, and handmade foods, younger generations are learning to smoke fish, brine pickles, cure meats, and make bona fide bagels from scratch.<sup>268</sup>

There are no currently designated resources associated with this theme. The following table describes the potential resources associated with the commercial development of the Jewish people of Los Angeles. As previously stated, these are resources that are a direct reflection of Jewish identity. Other types of businesses founded and operated by Jews such as grocery stores, department stores, or banks may be eligible under other themes within the Commercial Development context. Eligibility Standards address a range of property types, but are mostly restaurants and bakeries.

### **Potential Resources**

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Art's Delicatessen	12224 W. Ventura Boulevard	In continuous operation at this location since its founding in 1957.
Beverlywood Bakery	9128 W. Pico Boulevard	In continuous operation at this location since the 1940s.
Brent's Delicatessen and Restaurant	19565 Parthenia Street	Established in 1967, but acquired by Ron and Patricia Peskin in 1969. Still operated by the family at this location.

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<sup>267</sup> Laura Coleman, “Beverly Hills Elder: Lili Markowitz, Factor’s Famous Deli Matriarch,” *Beverly Hills Courier*, February 12, 2016, 1.

<sup>268</sup> Julia Moskin, “Everything New is Old Again: The New Golden Age of Jewish-American Deli Food,” *New York Times*, May 27, 2014.

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**

Context: Jewish History

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Brooklyn Bagel Bakery	2217 W. Beverly Boulevard	Established in 1953, but in continuous operation at this location since 1965.
Canter's Delicatessen #1	2323 E. Cesar E. Chavez Avenue	The Canter family opened a delicatessen in Jersey City in 1924. They moved west in 1931 and opened another deli in Boyle Heights.
Canter's Delicatessen #2	419 N. Fairfax Avenue	Moved to Fairfax in 1948, and to this location in 1953. Expanded into the building at 421-425 N. Fairfax in 1961, creating the Kibitz Room bar and additional restaurant seating.
Diamond Bakery	337 N. Fairfax Avenue	In continuous operation at this location since 1957.
Greenblatt's Deli and Fine Wine Shop	8017 W. Sunset Boulevard	Originally opened in 1926 by Herman Greenblatt, the place was purchased by the Kavin Family in 1940 and has been under their ownership ever since. Began to sell fine wine after the end of Prohibition in 1933.
Factor's Famous Deli	9420 W. Pico Boulevard	In continuous operation at this location since 1947. Purchased by Herma and Lili Markowitz in 1969.
Jerry's Famous Deli	12655 W. Ventura Boulevard	Known for serving the television and film industry
Junior's Restaurant Delicatessen (now Lenny's)	2379 W. Westwood Boulevard	In continuous operation at this location since 1959.
Langer's	704 S. Alvarado Street	Opened at this location in 1947 and expanded in 1968 to present configuration.
Pico Kosher Deli	8828 W. Pico Boulevard	In continuous operation at this location since 1968.
Schwartz Bakery	441 N. Fairfax Avenue	In continuous operation at this location since 1968.



**Theme: Commercial Identity**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:**

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of commerce, ethnic heritage, or social history for its association with Los Angeles Jewry. Jewish-owned businesses document the settlement patterns of different segments of the population and were often popular meeting places.

**Period of Significance:**

1925 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:**

Although Jews played a critical role in the history of commerce in Los Angeles since the nineteenth century, the period of significance begins in 1925 with the oldest extant examples of Jewish-owned businesses with strong ethnic identities. The end date for SurveyLA is 1980 and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:**

Throughout Los Angeles, but particularly in areas historically associated with Jewish business districts including Boyle Heights, Fairfax, and Pico-Robertson neighborhoods.

**Area(s) of Significance:**

Commerce, Ethnic Heritage, Social History

**Criteria:**

NR: A                      CR: 1                      Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:**

Commercial – Retail Building, Restaurant, and Market

**Property Type Description:**

Property types under this theme include a variety of commercial businesses, such as restaurants, markets, and retail stores.

**Property Type Significance:**

Properties significant under this theme played an important role in the commercial development of the Jewish community in Los Angeles.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Is associated with a business that made important contributions to commercial growth and development
- Was the founding location of, or the long-term location of, a business significant in commercial history

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- For National Register, properties associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- Was the founding location of a business significant in Jewish commercial history
- Was the long-term location of a business significant in Jewish commercial history
- May have particular significance for its association with a Jewish neighborhood or community in Los Angeles
- May be associated with a business/corporation that has gained regional or national importance

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, Materials, and Association from the period of significance
- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant business occupied the property
- Setting may have changed

### Theme 5: Entertainment Industry, 1908 – 1980

Over the past century, Los Angeles has become the center of many facets of the entertainment industry, starting with motion pictures, then moving on to music, radio, and television. The origins of these industries lay principally with several waves of first and second-generation Jewish immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. Their traditions, brought first to New York and then to Los Angeles, along with the unique circumstances of their role as immigrants, have largely formed today's entertainment industry and in the process transformed Los Angeles.

#### Motion Pictures

Though there was a smattering of film production before their arrival, it was the appearance of a small group of Jewish men, each arriving separately, starting in the early 1910s, that marked the true beginning of Southern California's motion picture industry. Adolph Zukor, a New York furrier born in Hungary, and vaudevillian Jesse Lasky, whose parents had emigrated from Poland, founded Paramount Pictures. Louis B. Mayer, the Russian-born owner of a Massachusetts theater, would head Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. Albert, Harry, Sam, and Jack Warner, the eldest three born in Poland, would start Warner Brothers Studios, while Hungarian-born nickelodeon owner William Fox's Fox Film Corporation would eventually become 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. Along with RKO, whose creation by the merger of RCA, FBO, and the Keith Albee Orpheum Circuit (overseen by Russian Jewish immigrant David Sarnoff) did not happen until 1928, these made up the so-called "Big Five" studios.<sup>269</sup>



*Jesse Lasky, Adolph Zukor, Samuel Goldwyn, and Al Kaufman, 1916 (Wikipedia)*

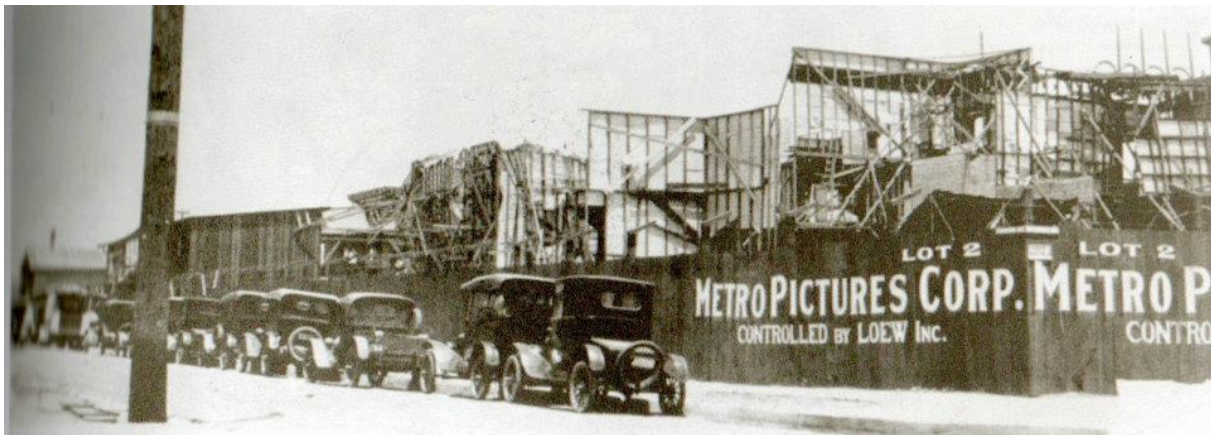
With considerably less income and without their own theater chains, there were also the "Little Three" studios. Universal was founded by Carl Laemmle, a German immigrant who had previously failed at many business ventures. Harry Cohn, the product of a rough New York childhood, whose parents had come from Russia and Germany, ran Columbia Studios with an iron fist. And United Artists, founded by superstars Charles Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith, was the only major studio to be run by Gentiles, though even there, they eventually chose Russian Jewish immigrant

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<sup>269</sup> "The Studio Era," University of Missouri, St. Louis, accessed June 11, 2016, <http://www.umsl.edu/~gradyf/film/STUDIOS.htm>.

Joseph Schenck as the company's chairman.<sup>270</sup>

Though between 1930 and 1948, the eight major studios controlled 95% of the films shown in the U.S.,<sup>271</sup> there were also many smaller studios mostly making B movies, which were collectively known as "Poverty Row." Many of these were centered in Hollywood, especially around the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Gower Avenue -- also referred to as "Poverty Row." These studios tended to change hands quite often. For example, at 846 N. Cahuenga Boulevard, Metro Studios was constructed in 1915 and was run by Louis B. Mayer. After the departure of Metro, the property was known as Equity Studios, Motion Picture Center Studios, Desilu-Cahuenga Studios, Cinema General Studio, Television Center Studios, Ren-Mar Studios, and finally today's RED Studios Hollywood.<sup>272</sup>



*Metro Studios, Cahuenga Boulevard, 1919 (Martin Turnbull)*

From the earliest days, studios could also be found in a wide swath from the eastside of Los Angeles, like William Selig's Selig Polyscope Company in Edendale (present day Echo Park), to the westside, like Thomas Ince's Inceville in Pacific Palisades. Studios could also be found among the orange groves of the San Fernando Valley, such as Nat Levine's Mascot Studios in Studio City at 4024 Radford Avenue, which was originally built by Mack Sennett.<sup>273</sup> Though not entirely Jewish, these smaller independent studios also had a Jewish presence.

These Jewish pioneers were not the first to produce and exhibit films. So why did they, none of whom had any experience in the arts, succeed while their Gentile peers and predecessors failed? In other words, what exactly was the Jewish influence on the film industry? The first reason for their success was that they were, with few exceptions, part of the working class, which was the target audience for this new form of popular entertainment. Carl Laemmle recalls the moment he first saw a moving picture in Chicago and found himself roaring with laughter along with the rest of the working class crowd. He saw

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<sup>270</sup> "Joseph M. Schenck Biography," Internet Movie Database, accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0770852/bio>.

<sup>271</sup> "The Studio Era."

<sup>272</sup> "History," Red Studios Hollywood, accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.redstudio.com/history/>.

<sup>273</sup> "History," CBS Studio Center, accessed June 15, 2016, <http://www.cbssc.com/history.htm>.

that films could be a socializing force for immigrants – an enjoyable way to acclimate them to American customs.<sup>274</sup>

When the Jewish film pioneers were starting out, the men making up the existing production and distribution companies were anything but working class. In 1908 Thomas Edison gathered them together and formed the Motion Picture Patents Company, known simply as “The Trust.” This conglomerate licensed the cameras and projectors and controlled the film stock, thereby controlling who was able to make and exhibit films. With the exception of Jewish immigrant Siegmund Lubin, they were “primarily older white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who had entered the film industry in its infancy by inventing, bankrolling, or tinkering with movie hardware: cameras and projectors.”<sup>275</sup> They viewed films as novelties. But the Jews knew they were much more. According to Adolph Zukor, “What they were making belonged entirely to technicians... What I was talking about – that was show business.”<sup>276</sup>

Another factor that set these working class Jews apart from the rest of the working class was that culture had always been part of Jewish life, no matter the position in society. So it is no surprise that Adolph Zukor immediately realized, unlike the Anglos in the Trust, that if the quality of the films improved, the middle class, who currently looked down on moving pictures, would be drawn to them as well. So like the other Jewish independents, he knew what the middle class wanted, in addition to what the working class wanted. And like the others, he started acquiring and then producing longer, more sophisticated films.

The other factor that put the Jews in a prime position for creating films that would appeal to the mainstream was the fact that they themselves so wanted to be in the mainstream. Outsiders for centuries in Europe, they were finally in a country that permitted them to assimilate, and in motion pictures they found a way to accelerate that process. Their studios manufactured the American Dream that they themselves desired. In *An Empire of Their Own*, Neal Gabler writes that Louis B. Mayer fashioned, “...a vast, compelling national fantasy out of his dreams...a belief in virtue, in the bulwark of family, in the merits of loyalty, in the soundness of tradition, in America itself... it is unlikely that any of them [Native born, white Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Americans] could have...invented it. To do so, one would have needed the same desperate longing for security that Mayer and so many of the other Hollywood Jews felt.”<sup>277</sup>

This was, for all the moguls, the polar opposite of their own family experience, and in fact, Mayer went so far to escape his heritage and embrace his adopted country as to legally change his birthday to the Fourth of July.<sup>278</sup> Meanwhile over at Columbia, Harry Cohn, whose CBC Film Sales Corporation was

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<sup>274</sup> Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 56.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 80.

disparagingly referred to as “corned beef and cabbage,”<sup>279</sup> the films’ stars inhabited a “homogenized stratum where houses were spacious, money plentiful, style abundant, values reasonably clear, and Jews absent.”<sup>280</sup>

It is well documented that the filmmakers came to Southern California both for the production benefits of year-round sunshine and to escape the reach of Edison’s Trust. But these Jewish outsiders also found that Los Angeles was the perfect place to reinvent themselves. The social ladder on the East Coast was entrenched and equipped to keep Jews and other outsiders in their place. But no such ladder existed in Los Angeles. As Gabler puts it, “One could even have said that California was the social equivalent of the movies themselves, new and unformed, which really made the producers’ emigration there a matter of an industry finding its appropriate spot.”<sup>281</sup>



Theda Bara, the original “Vamp,” 1917  
(Wikimedia Commons)

Jewish actors and actresses were also reinvented. For example, who would have guessed that the sultry siren Theda Bara, the original vamp, who, according to Fox Studios, “...was born of an Italian artist and an Arabian princess ... her first name was an anagram spelling “death” and her last name spelled backwards was Arab... born in the Sahara desert in the shadow of a sphinx...sent to Europe to be trained for the stage where she became a popular Parisian stage actress who played the most renowned theatres of the time...” was actually a nice Jewish girl from Cincinnati, Ohio named Theodosia Goodman, the daughter of a tailor?<sup>282</sup>

Even with the output of the studios reflecting the moguls’ desire to assimilate, there was another opposite tendency to include Jewish values in the films. For example, Harry Warner strictly adhered to his Judaism. While other studios avoided the topic, Warner Brothers released movies like *Private Izzy Murphy*, *Sailor Izzy Murphy* and *Ginsberg the Great*.<sup>283</sup> And

what did the Warners choose for their groundbreaking foray into sound pictures? *The Jazz Singer*, the tale of cantor with a rabbi for a father, which was released on the eve of Yom Kippur, 1927.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> “Harry Cohn (1891-1958),” *Hollywood’s Golden Age*, accessed June 10, 2016, [http://www.hollywoodsgoldenage.com/moguls/harry\\_cohn.html](http://www.hollywoodsgoldenage.com/moguls/harry_cohn.html).

<sup>280</sup> Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 201.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*, 105.

<sup>282</sup> “Theda Bara,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed June 7, 2016, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Bara.html>.

<sup>283</sup> Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 140.

<sup>284</sup> “Remembering the Jazz Singer,” *The New Jersey Jewish Standard*, posted September 16, 2011, accessed June 7, 2016, <http://jewishstandard.timesofisrael.com/remembering-the-jazz-singer/>.



Also running counter to the Hollywood version of sanitized America, the studios sometimes utilized the Jewish tradition of social justice in such films as Warner Brothers' *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* in 1932 and the anti-lynching film, *They Won't Forget* in 1934. 1947 saw the release of both 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox's *Gentlemen's Agreement* and RKO's *Crossfire*, exposing anti-Semitism both subtle and overt. Warner Brothers had dealt with the same subject the previous decade with *Disraeli* (1929), *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937), a film about the Dreyfus Affair, featuring Yiddish theater veteran Paul Muni, and *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* (1940), featuring another Yiddish theater alum, Edward G. Robinson. That there was a limit to how far even the Warner brothers was willing to go in battling anti-Semitism can be seen in the fact that nowhere in *The Life of Emile Zola* was it mentioned that Dreyfus was even Jewish.

Another place that the Hollywood studios were able to make Jewish tradition appeal to mainstream America was in the field of comedy. It makes sense that a people who spent centuries persecuted and marginalized with no way to fight back against authority would turn to humor. According to the *Big Book of Jewish Humor*, "Jewish humor tends to be anti-authoritarian. It ridicules grandiosity... exposes hypocrisy, and kicks pomposity in the pants. It is strongly democratic, stressing the dignity and worth of common folk... Often its thrust is political—aimed at leaders and other authorities who cannot be criticized more directly...Jewish humor mocks everyone."<sup>285</sup>

What could be more of a kick in the pants to pomposity than the Marx Brothers invading a high society dinner? Or the Three Stooges? Though the Marx brothers, who started at Paramount in 1929 and moved to MGM in 1935, hit the vaudeville circuit as children, Stooges Moe, Shemp and Curly Howard were the sons of a Brooklyn garment cutter,<sup>286</sup> and Larry Fine's father owned a jewelry store in South Philadelphia.<sup>287</sup> In addition to taking the upper classes down a peg, the Three Stooges, who worked for Columbia, also presented an even straighter line to their Jewish roots. Out of 190 shorts made throughout their career, 40% used either Hebrew or Yiddish.<sup>288</sup>

Meanwhile, at Warner Brothers, the Jewish underdog was actually a rabbit. Or to be more precise, a bunny. Making his first appearance as a fully formed character in 1940's animated short, *A Wild Hare*, Bugs Bunny possessed many of the same attributes as Jewish comedians, including a quick wit, an irreverence for authority and even a Brooklyn accent, supplied by that Jewish "Man of a Thousand Voices," Mel Blanc. Though created by several members of the Looney Tunes creative team, both Jew and Gentile, it was Jewish Leon Schlesinger who ran the show from his studio at 1351 N. Van Ness

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<sup>285</sup> William Novack, "Defining Jewish Humor," MyJewishLearning, accessed June 5, 2016, <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/defining-jewish-humor/#>.

<sup>286</sup> Paul Buhle, *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture* (London: Verso, 2004), 79.

<sup>287</sup> Harry Kyriakodis, "Larry, Fine, and Joe," Hidden City Philadelphia, posted February 28, 2012, accessed June 7, 2016, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2012/02/larry-fine-and-berg/>.

<sup>288</sup> Robert Gluck, "The Jewish Side of the Three Stooges," Jewish New Service, posted December 3, 2012, accessed June 7, 2016, [http://www.jns.org/latest-articles/2012/12/3/the-jewish-side-of-the-three-stooges.html#.V0c0\\_rgrJD8](http://www.jns.org/latest-articles/2012/12/3/the-jewish-side-of-the-three-stooges.html#.V0c0_rgrJD8).

Avenue. As a result, “The spirit of Jewish vaudeville inhabits Bugs’s slight frame, down to the lightning puns, double-meanings and gloriously underhanded tricks that he’s lifted from folks like Groucho and Chico Marx, as well as the manic physical mayhem that typified acts like the Ritz Brothers. ...Nor should we forget the dead-on parodies of high art in... “*The Rabbit of Seville*” and “*What’s Opera, Doc,*” which made mincemeat of postwar German productions of Wagner. They all seem happy to indulge in that gleeful Yiddish sport of cutting pretension down to size.”<sup>289</sup>



Warner Brothers Studios at 5842 W. Sunset Boulevard  
(Wikimapia)



Eugenie Besserer, Al Jolson, and Warner Oland in the  
Warner Brothers' *The Jazz Singer*, 1927  
(*The Red List*)

It was also the heightened outsider status of the Warner brothers themselves that led to the most significant change in motion pictures since the beginning of the medium: Sound. The Warner brothers came to Hollywood later than the other Jewish pioneers, and, according to Gabler, “All their lives the Warners had been acutely aware of their status as outsiders, even within the relatively déclassé encampment of Hollywood.”<sup>290</sup> While the more established studios, and their more socially established heads, had no reason to stick their necks out, the Warners, “... the Hollywood Jews who were most sensitive to their status as outsiders, had fewer qualms about sound, seeing it more as an opportunity to break into the front ranks.”<sup>291</sup>

That the Warner brothers chose a Jewish theme for such an important landmark was no accident. The movie, about Jakie Rabinowitz, the son of a rabbi who must choose between his old identity as a Jew and his new identity as an American, was the story of Albert, Harry, Sam, and Jack Warner. “Like Jakie, the Warner brothers left home to enter show business, and like so many of the other Jewish studio moguls, they assimilated themselves into secular American culture. it provided an extraordinary revealing window on the dilemmas of the Hollywood Jews generally, and the Warners specifically.”<sup>292</sup> Al

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<sup>289</sup> David Kaufmann, “Carrot and Shtick,” *Forward*, August 7, 2007, accessed June 10, 2016, <http://forward.com/culture/11337/carrot-and-shtick-00265/>.

<sup>290</sup> Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 194.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>292</sup> Pat Sierchio, “Think you know ‘The Jazz Singer’? You ain’t heard nothin’ yet!” *Jewish Journal*, September 20, 2007, accessed June 13, 2016,

Jolson pursued the part because, as the Americanized son of a cantor himself, he also identified with it. As with so much of what the studios were creating, this Jewish theme of generational change struck a chord with mainstream America as well, as the movie was a colossal success.

Though the bulk of the filmmaking process occurred in the sound stages, back lots, and offices of the studios, some tasks took place outside their walls as well. For example, the 1937 Studio Blu-Book lists twenty-nine film distributors grouped together on the 1800 and 1900 blocks of Vermont Avenue and the intersecting Cordova Street, including Warner Brothers, Universal, Vitagraph, Monogram, and Republic, along with MGM Distributing Corporation, which is still extant at 1620 Cordova Street.

There were also the many crafts outside the studios that contributed to filmmaking, like make-up. In that arena, the biggest name was Max Factor. Born in Russia, Factor fled that country's anti-Semitism, heading first to Saint Louis and then to Los Angeles, where he arrived in 1909 to revolutionize the art of motion picture make-up. Eventually his empire would be centered in the heart of Hollywood in building designed by architect S. Charles Lee at 1660 N. Highland Avenue. Lee was another Jew who moved to Los Angeles to reinvent himself. He was born Simeon Charles Levi to German Jewish parents in Chicago. He is best known as the designer of movie palaces, especially for the Fox West Coast Theatres chain.

The next stage of substantial Jewish migration into Hollywood came from artists fleeing the rise of the Nazis in Europe. Though there had been a trickle of European writers, directors, actors, musicians and cameramen as early as the 1920s, the numbers increased throughout the 1930s, the floodgates being forced open by Hollywood Jews themselves just as the war was beginning. Fifteen hundred film industry exiles, most of them Jewish, arrived in Southern California from Germany alone,<sup>293</sup> along with others from Austria, Russia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. The composer Franz Waxman left



Karl Freund brings the shadows of Weimar Cinema to Hollywood in *The Mummy*, 1932 (Rudy Rucker)

Germany in 1934 after receiving a severe beating from Nazi sympathizers in Berlin.<sup>294</sup>

These new arrivals had a great deal of influence on the motion picture industry. For example, much of the creative force behind the German Expressionist Weimar cinema came from Germans and Austrians of Jewish descent. Though Robert Wiene, the director of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, fled to France and then England, many others came to Hollywood. As cinematographer for *Dracula* (1931) and director of *The Mummy* (1932), Karl Freund, who emigrated from Germany in 1929,

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[http://www.jewishjournal.com/arts/article/think\\_you\\_know\\_the\\_jazz\\_singer\\_you\\_aint\\_heard\\_nothin\\_yet\\_20070921](http://www.jewishjournal.com/arts/article/think_you_know_the_jazz_singer_you_aint_heard_nothin_yet_20070921).

<sup>293</sup> Aljean Harmetz, *Round up the Usual Suspects* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 1992), 220.

<sup>294</sup> Tony Thomas, *The Art & Craft of Movie Music* (Burbank, CA: Riverwood Press, 1991), 35.

used the same dramatic lighting and camera angles of his previous work on German Expressionist films like *Metropolis* (1925). In the process, he set the tone for Universal's horror genre, which was being developed by Carl Laemmle, Jr. Other directors who made the journey from Weimar to Hollywood included Joe May (*The House of the Seven Gables*), Josef von Sternberg (*The Blue Angel*), Edgar G. Ulmer (*Detour*), Max Reinhardt (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Robert Siodmak (*The Killers*) and Billy Wilder (*Sunset Boulevard*).<sup>295</sup>

Of course, finding themselves in a foreign land and forced to speak a foreign tongue, not all refugees found such success. Aljean Harmetz writes in *Round up the Usual Suspects*, "It was the émigré writers and actors who struggled the hardest... Directors spoke with their eyes. With the aid of dialogue directors to coach the actors, Fritz Lang, Henry Koster, Robert Siodmak, and Douglas Sirck slipped easily into the industry. Producers had assistants to translate their thoughts. And the musicians, including Franz Waxman, Hanns Eisler, and Miklos Rozsa, didn't need words at all."<sup>296</sup>

Though working émigrés tended not to socialize with those less successful, they did keep them afloat financially by forming the European Film Fund in 1938, donating one percent of their salaries in order to provide them with homes and clothing.<sup>297</sup> From the 1942 movie *Casablanca*, in which dozens of actual refugees filled Rick's Café as extras or one-line walk-ons, director Michael Curtiz and actors Peter Lorre and S. Z. Sakall, all Jews from Hungary (as well as Gentile Austrian refugee Paul Henreid) contributed money to the fund.<sup>298</sup> American-born Jewish *Casablanca* writers Julius and Philip Epstein sponsored refugee writers as well.

After the war began in 1939, Bohemian-born Jewish talent agent Paul Kohner, who had spent three years in Berlin as head of Universal's European operations, was receiving frantic letters from writers trapped in Europe and North Africa. He and German-born Jewish director Ernst Lubitsch called a meeting of the European film colony to strategize their escape, proposing that they convince the studio heads to sponsor the stranded writers and hire them at minimum salary. Kohner approached Jack Warner first. "He told Warner that most of the stranded writers were Jews, and Warner agreed to hire four of them at \$100 a week each. Kohner was not a successful agent for nothing. Since Warner had bought four, L. B. Mayer took six, and Harry Cohn at Columbia took ten."<sup>299</sup>

After the war ended, work got scarcer for the refugees, and many returned to Europe. On the other hand, writer-director Billy Wilder, who arrived from Vienna in 1933 and whose mother, grandmother,

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<sup>295</sup> Christian Rogowski, *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 6.

<sup>296</sup> Harmetz, *Usual Suspects*, 216.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid*, 220.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*, 221.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid*, 220.

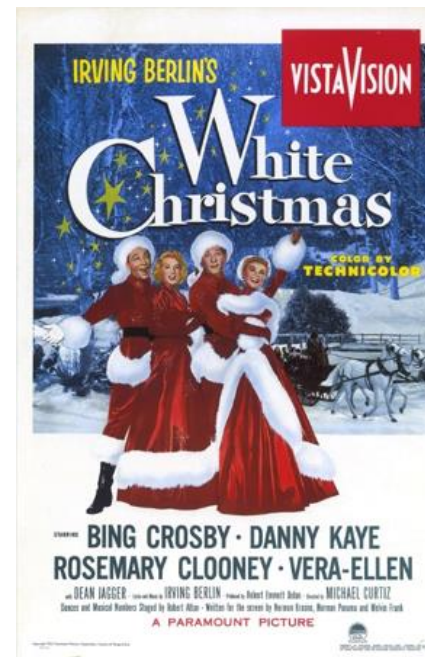
and stepfather died in the Holocaust<sup>300</sup> said, “This was home. I had a clear-cut vision: ‘This is where I am going to die.’”<sup>301</sup>

## Music

As 1927’s *The Jazz Singer* featured nine songs -- several by Russian Jewish immigrant composers like L. Wolfe Gilbert and Irving Berlin -- the arrival of music in the movies was literally simultaneous with the arrival of sound. The next decade would see the mass migration of the field’s biggest talents from the East Coast to the West. They filled the demand for music both in and outside of the movies, until Hollywood rivaled New York’s Tin Pan Alley and Broadway for supremacy of the music industry. The majority of these musicians were Jewish. As with their counterparts in the motion picture industry, their Jewish heritage would shape their music and the industry itself.

The path taken by lyricist Gus Kahn is representative of many Jewish musicians. Born in Koblenz, Germany in 1886, Kahn emigrated to the U.S. in 1890, wrote material for vaudeville (“Aint We Got Fun?” and “Carolina in the Morning”), then Broadway (“It Had to Be You” and “Makin’ Whoopee”), becoming a full-time motion picture songwriter by 1933 (“Carioca” and “You Stepped Out of a Dream”).

As for the percentage of Jewish song writers, Jack Gottlieb writes in *Funny, It Doesn’t Sound Jewish*, “Seventy-five percent of the lyricists appear to have been Jewish, as do fifty percent of the composers of the melodies of the good songs. The sixty percent of the good songwriters who were Jewish wrote about seventy percent of the songs, since almost all the most prolific among them were Jewish.”<sup>302</sup> So again, why such a high percentage? Like their motion picture counterparts, one reason was motivation. Many were first or second generation working class immigrants trying to escape the poverty of their ethnic enclaves, the largest being New York’s Lower East Side. According to Jewish lyricist and one-time Lower East Side resident Sammy Cahn, “The struggle to



*White Christmas*, 1954. Directed by Hungarian Jewish immigrant Michael Curtiz, starring second generation Ukrainian Jewish Danny Kaye, based on a song by Russian Jewish immigrant Irving Berlin (Wikipedia)

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<sup>300</sup> Ruth Schuster, “This Day in Jewish History Filmmaker Extraordinaire Billy Wilder is Born,” *Haaretz*, posted June 22, 2014, accessed June 13, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/this-day-in-jewish-history/1.600270>

<sup>301</sup> Harnetz, *Usual Suspects*, 215.

<sup>302</sup> Jack Gottlieb, *Funny, It Doesn’t Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 2004, 1.



get out [of the ghetto] comes in waves with immigration . . . Irish, Jews, Italians, Blacks.”<sup>303</sup>

But it was also the particular music they were creating. As the Jewish studio heads were constructing the American Dream through their movies, Jewish composers were creating the Great American Songbook in Tin Pan Alley and Broadway in New York City. In what might be considered the musical version of the studios’ All-American vision, Irving Berlin was writing patriotic songs like “Over There” and “God Bless America” and secularized songs for Christian holidays, like “White Christmas” and “Easter Parade.” The result? As Jerome Kern wrote, “Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He is American music.”<sup>304</sup> Johnnie Marks followed suit with “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer” and “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree,” as did Mel Tormé with “The Christmas Song.”

However new and inventive this American music was, it also had ancient roots in Eastern Europe. These Jewish songwriters came from long traditions of music and culture that influenced their work. An example of Jewish musical elements appearing in these American songs include the opening clarinet solo of Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue,” which has been characterized as a “typical Yiddish-Romanian soliloquy in the style of a doyna.”<sup>305</sup>

More structural samples include a melody by Ukrainian-born Dmitri Tiomkin for John Wayne’s *The Alamo* in 1960, which “begins with a variant of the Kol nidrei formula.”<sup>306</sup> Gottlieb also points to a seminal moment in the transition of Jewish to American music, writing of Jerome Kern, “It was an American-born Jew of German-Bohemian parentage who broke the European bonds... In *Show Boat* (1927), Kern wrote an historic score, alternating central European airs with quasi-black strains. The two streams come together in the River, which “just keeps rolling along.” With one foot in Europe, the other on American soil, *Show Boat* was the touchstone work that turned an adjective into a noun. Thereafter, “musical comedies” became “musicals.”<sup>307</sup>

The Jewish influence was not limited to Jewish composers. Richard Rodgers pointed to Cole Porter’s constant shifting from minor to major keys in such hallmark songs as “Night and Day,” “Begin the Beguine,” and “Love for Sale,” claiming that Gentile Porter was consciously writing Jewish melodies.<sup>308</sup> And Italian Catholic Harry Warren, who had worked at Brooklyn’s Liberty Theater when Jacob P. Adler

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<sup>303</sup> Max Wilk, *They’re Playing Our Song: Conversations with American’s Classic Songwriters* (Westport, CT: Easton Studio Press, 1973), 187.

<sup>304</sup> Stephen Holden, “Pop View; Irving Berlin’s American Landscape,” *New York Times*, May 10, 1987, accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/05/10/arts/pop-view-irving-berlin-s-american-landscape.html?scp=1&sq=Irving%20Berlin%27s%20American%20landscape&st=cse>.

<sup>305</sup> Lazare Saminsky, *Music of the Ghetto and the Bible* (New York, NY: Bloch Publishing Co., 1934), 121.

<sup>306</sup> Gottlieb, *Doesn’t Sound Jewish*, 190.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid*, 192.



ran the Yiddish stock company there, ended up writing two songs years later (“At Last” and the title song for *Forty-Second Street*) that sound a lot like the Jewish song, “Shalom Chaverim.”<sup>309</sup>



Yiddish song “Bei Mir Bistu Shein  
“Americanized” with English lyrics by  
Sammy Cahn and Saul Chaplin  
(songbook1)

The Jewish immigrants’ other possession that prepared them to excel in American show business was Yiddish. As Paul Buhle writes in *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood*, “...the Yiddish language was... centuries in preparation...for the moment when a mass, commercial, popular culture could be created.”<sup>310</sup> Buhle explains that, as a people always on the outside and on the move, Yiddish speakers, “...borrowed freely from the...familiar stories of surrounding peoples. The klezmer bands that grew up rapidly through large stretches of Eastern Europe in the later decades of the century required a repertoire large enough to entertain paying audiences of all kinds.”<sup>311</sup> So Yiddish speakers had to both borrow from the cultures with which they came in contact, and translate their culture to them as well. Their fellow immigrants, whether Italian, Irish, or German, had no such history. Thus you have Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern incorporating elements of African American music in their work on “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” and *Showboat*, and Sammy Cahn writing English lyrics for the Yiddish “Bei Mir Bistu Shein,” all of which were enormously successful.

This ability to interact creatively with other cultures also led Jewish entrepreneurs to form an industry based wholly on the music of another culture in the 1940s and 1950s; rhythm and blues records. Unlike motion pictures, this was not just a Los Angeles phenomenon. In fact, it was the recording of Muddy Waters’ “I Can’t Be Satisfied” in 1948 in Chicago by Leonard and Phil Chess, Jewish immigrants from Poland, that started it all. Jews had entered the record business to record African American artists in the late 1930s when the major record labels created an opportunity by ending the production of “race music.” The Jews themselves found

drawn to the industry because, “...even bright Jews could not easily find a place in the WASP world of communications... The music business, however, was wide open for Jews as it was for blacks.”<sup>312</sup> So in Cincinnati, Syd Nathan started King Records.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>310</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 1.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>312</sup> Andrew Muchin, “Blacks & Jews: How a Bunch of Upstart Jewish Independent Record Producers Helped Turn African American Music into a National Treasure,” *Moment Magazine*, August 2004, 53.

In Newark, Herman Lubinsky started Savoy Records, and in New York, Milt Gabler founded Commodore Records, and Norman Granz owned Verve Records and Pablo Records. But the Jewish-owned independent record labels in Los Angeles would end up contributing considerably more than its fair share to the genre. Art Rupe's Specialty Records was the most prolific, recording Lloyd Price's "Lawdy, Miss Clawdy," now considered one of the first crossovers of black music to white teenagers. Specialty went on to produce Little Richard's first recordings, including "Tutti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," and "Good Golly, Miss Molly," not to mention Sam Cooke's first non-Gospel hit, "You Send Me," all at Rupe's downtown studio at 311 Venice Boulevard (demolished). Lou Chudd recorded Fats Domino's first hits at his Imperial Records, while Jules, Saul and Joe Bihari's Modern Records recorded Etta James, John Lee Hooker, and Ike & Tina Turner. Aptly named Black & White Records, belonging to Hungarian Jewish immigrant Paul Reiner and his wife Lillian, recorded "Call It Stormy Monday" by T-Bone Walker, which the Blues Hall of Fame called, "...one of the most influential records not only in blues history, but in guitar history."<sup>313</sup>



Joe Bihar (left) and B. B. King (center), of Modern Records, with D. J. Hunter Hancock (right), 1954 (*New York Times*)

As Andrew Muchin writes in *Moment Magazine*, "Jews weren't the only whites involved in black music. But the independent record business was dominated by young Jewish men who started out with nothing, men in short-sleeved white shirts and skinny black ties who were equally fluent in black slang and Yiddish."<sup>314</sup> Their studios spread from downtown Los Angeles (Specialty Records), to West Hollywood (Modern Records). Black & White Records was located in East Hollywood at 4910 Santa Monica Boulevard.

This tradition of collaboration between cultures continued with the next generation of Jewish Los Angeles-based music

composers and producers, including Fairfax High School graduates Herb Alpert, whose Tijuana Brass blended pop music with Mexican mariachi music, and Phil Spector, whose work in the 1960s at Gold Star Studios, run by David S. Gold and Stan Ross, continued to bring African American music into mainstream pop.

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<sup>313</sup> "Stormy Monday Blues," World Public Library, accessed June 13, 20016, [http://www.worldlibrary.org/articles/stormy\\_monday\\_blues\\_\(t-bone\\_walker\\_song\)](http://www.worldlibrary.org/articles/stormy_monday_blues_(t-bone_walker_song)).

<sup>314</sup> Muchin, *Blacks & Jews*, 53.

## Radio

As with motion pictures, most of the pioneering work in radio technology was done outside California by non-Jews, in this case Italian Guglielmo Marconi and Nebraskan Lee De Forest. The next step of making radio entertainment a viable business by creating content and connecting it to an audience fell to Russian-born Jew David Sarnoff, who grew up in New York City, and Philadelphian William S. Paley, whose parents were Jewish immigrants from Ukraine. Sarnoff's influence on the industry came as President of RCA and its new radio network, NBC (the first in the country), which would later spawn ABC, while Paley's achievements were performed at the newly formed CBS. Their work was principally done in New York, not Los Angeles.

Their innovation helped usher in the Golden Age of radio, which lasted from the late 1920s to the early 1950s, when millions of listeners across the country tuned in to dramas, comedies, game shows, variety shows and popular music shows. As radio was making its rapid ascent in the early 1930s, driven, for one thing, by the falling price of the radios themselves, the movie studios were facing Depression-related bankruptcies and other financial problems.<sup>315</sup>



ABC Radio Studio, 1940s. Only the façade remains.  
(Peggy Lee Discography)



CBS Columbia Square (extant) NBC Radio City (demolished),  
(Terapeak)

Attracted by the deep well of movie talent, the radio networks established studios in Hollywood, ultimately radiating out from the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street. In 1936, CBS moved their Lux Radio Theatre show from New York to the Studio Theater at 1615 Vine Street (today the Ricardo Montalban Theater). In 1938, CBS increased their Hollywood presence by building CBS Columbia Square at 6121 Sunset Boulevard, and NBC moved from their studio at 5515 Melrose Avenue to the newly-built NBC Radio City at the corner of Sunset and Vine that same year. Then in 1943, ABC took over the Hollywood Recreation Bowling Alley one block north at 1555 Vine Street.<sup>316</sup>

<sup>315</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 69.

<sup>316</sup> "Hollywood's Broadcast Beginnings," *Discover Hollywood Magazine*, Summer 2003, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.discoverhollywood.com/Publications/Discover-Hollywood/2003/Issue-Summer-2003/Hollywood-s-Broadcast-Beginnings.aspx>.

The Jewish influence on radio lay mostly in the content of the entertainment itself, both at the microphone and in the writers' room. Starting in 1932, long-time entertainer Jack Benny brought his vaudevillian routine into living rooms coast to coast with his CBS show that was eventually broadcast from CBS Columbia Square. Families could now experience Benny's skinflint "tight-fisted Jack" character, along with his sidekick Eddie Anderson, his wife Mary Livingstone, and the stereotypical Jew, Mr. Kitzel, voiced by Mel Blanc.<sup>317</sup> George Burns and Gracie Allen also pulled from their long stage career on their own CBS radio show. Meanwhile on NBC, vaudevillian Eddie Cantor had several radio shows, starting with *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* in 1931, continuing to *The Eddie Cantor Show* in 1935, and then *Time to Smile* in 1940. In addition to being the highest paid radio star, Cantor exhibited the same combination of Jewish and "American" themed material as was discussed in the motion picture industry. For example, he would go from doing Jewish humor with a Yiddish accent to debuting the new song, "Santa Claus is Coming to Town."<sup>318</sup>

Cantor's success in the early part of his radio career was also due to writer David Freedman, a Romanian-born Jew nicknamed the King of the gag-writers, who worked with him until his early death in 1936. In fact, writers played a major part in the new medium. According to Buhle, "...a few hundred of almost homogeneously Jewish practitioners, many of them originally from New York, by the middle 1940s effectively represented the creative minds in the entertainment end of radio....they ground out scripts week after week, using familiar formulae but occasionally striking out in dramatic directions."<sup>319</sup> One "dramatic direction" was CBS's experimental Columbia Workshop, which started in 1936. Spearheaded by Jewish CBS playwright, engineer and director Irving Reis, the Workshop produced cutting edge experimental drama. Its hiring of composer Bernard Hermann complimented the dramas with innovative music. Even though Reis was based in New York, many of the productions involved the CBS crew in Hollywood as well.<sup>320</sup>

## Television

Unlike the movie moguls who were mostly Jewish, those starting the first television stations in Los Angeles were mainly Gentile. This included Don Lee, whose Los Angeles station, W6XAO-TV, went on the air on December 23, 1931, and Earl C. Anthony, the exclusive dealer for the Packard Automobile Company in Los Angeles, who founded KFI-TV.<sup>321</sup> As in radio, the Jewish presence in television lay more on the creative side. Originally much of the programming was produced and broadcast locally, while many of the shows broadcast nationally were continuations of shows previously on the radio, such as

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<sup>317</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 75.

<sup>318</sup> "The Eddie Cantor Show," *Radio Echoes*, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://www.radioechoes.com/the-eddie-cantor-show>.

<sup>319</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 75.

<sup>320</sup> "The Columbia Workshop Radio Program," *The Digital Deli 2*, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.digitaldelift.com/DigitalDeliToo/dd2jb-Columbia-Workshop.html>.

<sup>321</sup> Teresa Grimes, "Historic Context: History of Television in Los Angeles," Christopher Joseph and Associates, 2006.



## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

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Jack Benny and Burns and Allen, whose TV shows were produced after 1952 at CBS Television City. Even Milton Berle, dubbed “Mr. Television” for his innovation and popularity on TV, spent years on a variety of radio shows. In New York, a group of Jewish writers working under Sid Caesar, which included Carl Reiner, Neil Simon, Danny Simon, Mel Brooks, and Mel Tolkin, were breaking new creative ground with material infused with Jewish humor on *Your Show of Shows* (1950-1954). All of these writers would end up coming to Los Angeles to work in television or the movies.

Carl Reiner’s work in Los Angeles led to the *Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966), shot at the Desilu Studios at 846 N. Cahuenga Boulevard, which related Reiner’s experience as a writer for the fictional Alan Brady Show, or rather, the “...upward-mobile Jew uncertain of himself in new conditions.”<sup>322</sup> In fact, the



*CBS Television City, circa 1958 (CBS Photo Archive)*

original pilot episode of the show, *Head of the Family* featured Reiner himself as a more Jewish version of Rob Petrie. But when it didn’t test well, producer Sheldon Leonard decided to switch to Midwestern Gentile Van Dyke, relegating the character with more overtly Jewish traits to the supporting role of Buddy Sorrell, played by Morey Amsterdam, as well as adding something that generally was not seen at the time; a single, professional working woman, played by Rose Marie. The formula could not have worked better, and the *Dick Van Dyke Show* enjoyed huge success during its run while setting the bar high for all sitcoms to come.

But it wasn’t until ten years later that two Jewish writers would create shows that would elevate television to the realm of social activism, realizing the ambitions of generations of socially conscious Jewish movie writers; Norman Lear on *All in the Family*, and Larry Gelbart on *M\*A\*S\*H*. Lear and Gelbart had similar professional backgrounds. Both wrote for TV in the 1950s; Lear on the *Martha Raye Show*, Gelbart on Sid Caesar’s *Caesar’s Hour*, and both of them together on *Honestly Celeste!* with Celeste Holm. Then in the 1960s, each took a hiatus from Hollywood television; Lear to produce movies and Gelbart to leave the country altogether to write in the United Kingdom.

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<sup>322</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 224.

In 1970, Lear returned to TV with the ground-breaking *All in the Family*, which ushered in, “a new era of television programs that tackled controversial and socially relevant subject matter. The show...examined the issues of race, sexuality, and social inequality through the lens of comedy, breaking longstanding television taboos.”<sup>323</sup>

Calling Lear the “Zola of the small screen,” Buhle states that the show’s liberal message came right out of the Popular Front tradition.<sup>324</sup> It also came via the same inter-generational communication gap found in the work of Sholem Aleichem: “...young people’s angst and eagerness for change goes up against the backwardness of parents.

Tevye, the milkman, is a thousand times more sympathetic than Archie... But he, also, advances through puzzlements and frustrations to loving descendants who depart from past ways once assumed to be eternal.”<sup>325</sup> Lear also abandoned the laugh track in favor of a live audience, returning to the days of theater.<sup>326</sup>



*Norman Lear with the cast of All in the Family, on stage of CBS Television City, Studio 41, 1970s. (Wall Street Journal)*

*All in the Family* cleared the way for Gelbart’s return to American TV with *M\*A\*S\*H* in 1972. Never before had a television show mocked a war in which the U.S. was actively engaged. Though the show was purportedly about the Korean War, it was understood that it was also Vietnam and war in general being skewered. Instead of Tevye, the character doing the skewering this time around was wisecracking Dr. Hawkeye Pierce, channeling equal parts Groucho Marx and Bugs Bunny.

## Labor Unions

Social awareness was not just present in the work of many Jewish writers and directors. It was also present outside of it. A long Jewish tradition of fighting for social justice would see many playing a role in the formation of unions for these creative occupations. Involvement, real or rumored, with the socialist and communist groups through which this fight was sometimes conducted would cost many their careers after the arrival of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the notorious blacklist of the 1940s and 1950s

An example of the Jewish role in the labor movement in the arts can be seen in the history of the Screen Actors Guild. Started in Hollywood in 1933, it was preceded by Actors Equity, started in New York in 1913. The predecessor to Actors Equity was the Hebrew Actors’ Union, founded in 1899 by Jewish labor leader Joseph Barondess, who had been sent to help striking actors at the People’s Theatre by the

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<sup>323</sup> “Norman Lear Biography,” Biography, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://www.biography.com/people/norman-lear-9376137>.

<sup>324</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 226.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 227.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, 226.



United Hebrew Trades. The new union was closely associated with the American Federation of Labor and the Jewish labor movement.<sup>327</sup>

But the roots of Jews in labor organizations go back even further. In many parts of nineteenth century Europe, Jews were an educated yet marginalized group, resulting in their involvement in political movements to gain rights from their governments. “Oppression by poverty and pogroms made many Jews look for a solution...In 1897, Jews founded the “Bund”, the Federation of Jewish Workers from Lithuania, Russia and Poland. This organization acted as a trade union and became part of the Russian Socialist Party.”<sup>328</sup> Another solution was to leave, and millions came to the U.S., many landing in New York City. According to Gabler, “The Jews in New York were socialists. They were old-country Socialists...and unions and left-wing thinking of that simple sort that was so Jewish in those days was translated to their children..”<sup>329</sup> Many of these children would become writers, actors, and directors and would move to Hollywood.

Once in Hollywood, these socially conscious young artists discovered that the studios did not want to address controversial subjects, so they were not able to express their social consciousness in their work. This was felt especially by the writers, whose brethren they left behind could write about whatever they wanted in plays and books. They also found their work was not respected and was often altered in the production process. For example, radio and animation writers were often not even given screen credit for their work.<sup>330</sup>

The final straw came in 1933, when the studios, reeling from the Depression, announced at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel that creative salaries would be cut by 50%.<sup>331</sup> This led to the creation of the Screen Writers Guild in April 1933 and the Screen Actors Guild two months later, with the Screen Directors Guild joining them in late 1935. All three groups established their offices close together in Hollywood, with the Screen Writers Guild and Screen Actors Guild at the Hollywood Center Building at 1655 N. Cherokee Avenue. By 1939, the Screen Actors Guild had moved several blocks to the Hollywood Professional Building at 7046 Hollywood Boulevard,<sup>332</sup> while the Screen Directors Guild chose an office at Crossroads of the World on nearby Sunset Boulevard for their office.

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<sup>327</sup> “SAG History,” Screen Actors Guild, accessed June 10, 2016,

[http://web.archive.org/web/20071014013056/http://www.sag.org/history/chronos\\_pages/pre\\_guild.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20071014013056/http://www.sag.org/history/chronos_pages/pre_guild.html).

<sup>328</sup> “The History of the Jews in Europe During the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Program, accessed June 23, 2016,

[http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/pdf/Volume%20I/The\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/pdf/Volume%20I/The_History_of_the_Jews_in_Europe.pdf).

<sup>329</sup> Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 322.

<sup>330</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 75.

<sup>331</sup> “A Guild is Born,” *Directors Guild of America*, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/0604-Winter2006-07/Features-A-Guild-is-Born.aspx>.

<sup>332</sup> “Guild Headquarters,” *SAG-AFTRA*, accessed June 22, 2016, <https://www.sagaftra.org/guild-headquarters>.



Screen Writers Guild/Hollywood Center Building ([sagaftra.org](http://sagaftra.org))



Screen Actors Guild/Hollywood Professional Building (Martin Turnbull)



Screen Directors Building/Crossroads of the World (*Only In Hollywood*)

The 1930s and 1940s saw strikes at several studios, including Paramount, MGM, and Max Fleischer's Animation Studios, all in 1937, and one at Disney Studios in 1941. These would leave some of the studio heads with feelings of animosity towards the instigators of the strikes and the leaders of the unions. Then in October 1947, as part of an investigation into whether communists were using movies to spread propaganda, the HUAC subpoenaed a group of 79 people in the film industry. Though there were actors, directors, producers, and others in the group, most were screenwriters.<sup>333</sup> Those attending the hearings were asked about present or past affiliation with the Communist Party and were told to name others who were affiliated. Those who refused to answer were held in contempt, fined and sentenced to prison. They would come to be known as the Hollywood Ten.

Following the Hollywood Ten's citations for contempt, a group of studio executives, including Louis B. Mayer, Harry Cohn, Albert Warner, and Nicholas Schenck, issued the Waldorf Statement, firing the ten and promising not to hire communists. This was the beginning of the Hollywood Blacklist, which ended or stalled the careers of around 500 film artists.<sup>334</sup> The publication in 1950 of *Red Channels*, an anti-communist tract published by a right wing group, added 151 names to the Blacklist of writers, directors, actors, musicians, and broadcast journalists suspected of being communists.

Though not all the blacklisted were Jewish, it is clear that the HUAC investigation had an anti-Semitic element to it. A high percentage of those singled out were Jewish, including six of the Hollywood Ten (John Howard Lawson, Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Albert Maltz, and Samuel Ornitz).<sup>335</sup> When called before the Committee, Ornitz said, "I wish to address this Committee as a Jew, because one of its leading members is the outstanding anti-Semite in the Congress... I refer to John E. Rankin... When constitutional guarantees are overridden, the Jew is the first one to suffer..."<sup>336</sup> Ornitz was correct in his

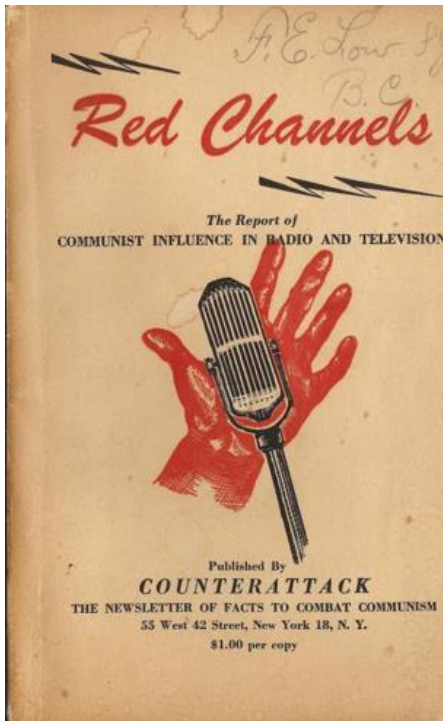
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<sup>333</sup> Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930–1960* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 281–82.

<sup>334</sup> "Hollywood Blacklist," United States History, accessed June 23, 2016, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1850.html>.

<sup>335</sup> Michael Freedland, "Hunting Communists? They were really After the Jews," The Jewish Chronicle Online, accessed, <http://www.thejc.com/arts/arts-features/17299/hunting-communists-they-were-really-after-jews>

<sup>336</sup> Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 370.



*Red Channels, 1950 (Abe Books)*

assessment of Committee member Rankin, who once said of the Jewish people, "...if they keep stirring race trouble in this country and trying to force their communistic program on the Christian people of America, there is no telling what will happen to them here."<sup>337</sup>

To alienate Jewish celebrities defending the Hollywood Ten, Rankin divulged in the hearing that, "One of the names is June Havoc. We found out from the motion-picture almanac that her real name is June Hovick. Another one was Danny Kaye, and we found out that his real name was David Daniel Kaminsky...Another one is Eddie Cantor, whose real name is Edward Iskowitz. There is one who calls himself Edward Robinson. His real name is Emmanuel Goldenberg."<sup>338</sup> The studio heads themselves were afraid that if they did not support HUAC, they themselves would come under attack and lose their studios.<sup>339</sup>

For the next ten to fifteen years, the only way for blacklisted writers to work was under a false name. The Blacklist finally started to lift when television producer Sheldon Leonard gave blacklisted writer Frank Tarloff credit under his own name for working on *Make Room for Daddy*<sup>340</sup> and blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo received credit under his own name for *Spartacus*.

The following tables describe designated and potential resources associated with the history of Jews in the entertainment industry. Eligibility Standards primarily address residential property types such as single-family and multi-family residences, but also include offices, studios, and production facilities. The tables are not intended to be an exhaustive list of Jewish people in the entertainment industry. The research focused on the identification of extant resources associated with Jewish people who played critical roles in the formation of the industry, and creative people who expressed their Jewish identity in their work. In some cases, multiple extant resources were identified and all are included below if they were associated with the productive life of the individual.

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<sup>337</sup>Congressional Record, April 23, 1952, p. 4320.

<sup>338</sup> Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 371.

<sup>339</sup> Freedland, *Hunting Communists?*

<sup>340</sup> Buhle, *Lower East Side*, 223.

**Designated Resources**

Resource Name	Location	Comments
B.P. Schulberg Residence	525 Lorraine Boulevard	Movie pioneer Schulberg (1892-1957) managed Paramount Pictures along with Jesse Lasky. This property is contributing to the Windsor Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.
Ben Hecht Residence	2074 Watsonia Terrace	Hecht (1894-1964) was a journalist, novelist, and playwright who came to Hollywood to write many screenplays including <i>The Front Page</i> and <i>Scarface</i> . He was also an active Zionist and Jewish activist. This property is contributing to the Whitley Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.
CBS Columbia Square	6121 Sunset Boulevard	Home to CBS's radio and TV operations after its construction in 1938, CBS Columbia Square was where some of radio's most important shows were broadcast. Jack Benny, George Burns and Gracie Allen were among the comedies, along with dramas by the Columbia Workshop and musical programs by Bernard Hermann and Eddie Cantor. This property is designated LAHCM #947.
Dmitri Tiomkin Residence	333 S. Windsor Boulevard	Born in Russia, composer Tiomkin (1894-1979) left following the revolution, working first in Berlin, then Paris, then New York, and finally Hollywood. There he wrote the scores for <i>High Noon</i> , <i>Giant</i> and many movies directed by Frank Capra. This property is contributing to the Windsor

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		Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.
Harry Warner Residence	501 S. Rossmore Avenue	The eldest of the Warner Brothers, Harry (1881-1958) was also more religious and socially conscious than younger brother Jack, which played a part in the socially conscious, working class films in which the studio specialized. This property is contributing to the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.
Hillview Apartments	6531 Hollywood Boulevard	In 1914, Lasky (1880-1958), along with Samuel Goldwyn and Cecil B. DeMille, shot <i>The Squaw Man</i> , Hollywood's first feature film. Two years later, Lasky merged his company with Adolph Zukor's Famous Players to form a partnership that would lead to Paramount Pictures. Lasky built this apartment building in 1917 and lived here briefly in the 1920s. It is listed in the National Register as part of the Hollywood Boulevard Commercial and Entertainment District.
Irving Thalberg Residence	689 S. Bronson Avenue	In charge of production for MGM in his twenties, Thalberg (1899-1936) was known as the "Boy Wonder." With the team of Louis B. Mayer running the operations and Thalberg running production, MGM became the biggest studio in town, before Thalberg's untimely death at the age of 37. This property is contributing to the Wilshire Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

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<p>Jerome “Curly” Howard Residence</p>	<p>529 N. Highland Avenue</p>	<p>Howard (1902-1953), along with his brothers Moe and Samuel, and Larry Fine, was one of the Three Stooges, who made many comedy shorts at Columbia Pictures featuring a combination of slapstick, disruption of upper class society, and Jewish references. This was his home in the early 1930s, close to his brother Moe. It is contributing to the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.</p>
<p>Lay Leyenda Apartments</p>	<p>1737 Whitley Avenue</p>	<p>Paul Muni lived here in the 1940s. Born Meshilem Meier Weisenfreund (1895-1967), he transitioned from New York’s Yiddish Theater to Hollywood, where he became one of the most sought-after actors for historic bio-pics (<i>The Life of Louis Pasteur</i> and <i>The Life of Emile Zola</i>) and gritty fare like <i>Scarface</i> and <i>I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang</i>. This property is designated LAHCM #817.</p>
<p>Lee Strasberg Residence</p>	<p>605 S. Irving Boulevard</p>	<p>Eastern-European-born Strasberg (1901-1982) is known as the “Father of Method Acting.” After seeing a Stanislavski’s Moscow Art Theatre in New York in 1923, this minor Yiddish actor started the Group Theater in 1931, the Actors Studio in 1947, and Actors Studio West in Los Angeles in 1966. This property is contributing to the Windsor Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.</p>
<p>Max Factor Make -Up Salon</p>	<p>1660 N. Highland Avenue</p>	<p>Factor (1872-1938) was a cosmetician of Polish descent who developed the popular and widely</p>



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		recognized Max Factor line of cosmetics. This property is listed in the National Register as part of the Hollywood Boulevard Commercial and Entertainment District and designated LAHCM #593.
Milton Berle Residence	343 N. McCadden Place	Known as “Mr. Television” and “Uncle Miltie,” Berle (1908-2002) started in show business at the age of five. Beginning with vaudeville in 1920, moving to film in 1933 and to radio in 1934, Berle ended up helping to shape television in 1948, the medium for which he would be best remembered. This property is contributing to the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.
Moses “Moe” Howard Residence	430 N. Highland Avenue	Howard (1902-1953), along with his brothers Jerome and Samuel, and Larry Fine, was one of the Three Stooges, who made many comedy shorts at Columbia Pictures featuring a combination of slapstick, disruption of upper class society, and Jewish references. This was his home in 1940. It is contributing to the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.
Screen Actors Guild	7046 Hollywood Boulevard	The Screen Actors Guild, formed in 1933, was previously located in 1655 N. Cherokee Avenue, along with the Screen Writers Guild. By 1942, it had relocated here and was still at this location in the late 1940s when HUAC launched its investigation of communists in Hollywood. This property is listed

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		in the National Register as part of the Hollywood Boulevard Commercial and Entertainment District.
Screen Directors Guild	1508 Crossroads of the World	The Screen Directors Guild was the predecessor of today's Directors Guild of America. After initially meeting in the Beverly Hills home of director Rouben Mamoulian, the Guild was founded in 1936, meeting here in the late 1930s and 1940s. This property is designated LAHCM #134.
Shane Building Screen Writers Guild Radio Actors Guild Screen Actors Guild	1655 N. Cherokee Avenue aka 6652 Hollywood Boulevard	The Screen Writers Guild was the predecessor of today's Writers Guild of America. Formed in 1933, by 1938, their office was located here, along with the office of the Screen Actors Guild. The Screen Actors Guild had left by 1942, and by that time the new Radio Writers Guild was located here as well. These guilds had many Jewish members. This property is listed in the National Register as part of the Hollywood Boulevard Commercial and Entertainment District.
Theda Bara Residence Joseph Schenck Residence	649 W. Adams Boulevard Home at different times to Theda Bara, Fatty Arbuckle, and Joseph Schenck and his wife Norma Talmadge.	Though born Theodosia Goodman, a Cincinnati Jewish tailor's daughter, Bara (1885-1955) found fame as Hollywood's first femme fatale. Her exotic looks, makeup, and wardrobe won her the nickname, the Vamp. This property is listed in the California Register, but under the name of another owner, Randolph Huntington Miner.
Warner Brothers Pictures	5842 Sunset Boulevard	The Executive Office Building is

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Hollywood		listed in the National Register and the studio property as a whole is designated LAHCM #180 for its association with early motion picture history, in particular the production of <i>The Jazz Singer</i> in 1927. Warner Brothers' famous animation department also began here in 1933, produced by Leon Schlesinger Studios. The studio produced Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies.
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**Potential Resources**

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Al Jolson Residence	569 N. Rossmore Avenue - He lived here in the Hermoyne Apartments in the 1930s. 4326 Forman Avenue - He purchased this house from Bing Crosby in 1935. 4875 Louise Avenue - He built this Encino house in 1935.	Beyond a career on stage, screen, and radio that made him the "World's Greatest Entertainer," Jolson (1886-1950) also brought Jewish culture to the forefront through his work, especially in his landmark role as a cantor torn between two worlds in 1927's <i>The Jazz Singer</i> .
Arthur Freed Residence	634 Stone Canyon Road	Lyricist of songs like "Singin in the Rain" and "Good Morning," Freed (1894-1973) also served as head of MGM's musical department, importing lots of talent to the studio from Broadway and making MGM the leader in movie musicals.
Bernard Hermann Residence	10810 Rochester Avenue	Born in New York to Russian parents, Hermann (1911-1975) showed amazing versatility in writing such iconic movie scores as <i>Citizen Kane</i> , <i>Psycho</i> , <i>Cape Fear</i> , and <i>Taxi Driver</i> . He was also worked in radio (the cutting-edge Columbia Workshop) and

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Context: Jewish History

		television ( <i>The Twilight Zone</i> ).
Billy Wilder Residence	10375 Wilshire Boulevard - Wilder lived on N. Beverly Drive in Beverly Hills from 1944 until he moved to the penthouse of this building in 1958.	Wilder (1906-2002) was a prolific writer ( <i>Ninotchka</i> ) and director ( <i>Sunset Boulevard</i> and <i>The Apartment</i> ) who came to Hollywood to escape Nazi persecution in Germany in 1933.
Black & White Records	4910 Santa Monica Boulevard	Site of seminal proto rock n roll recordings, “Call it Stormy Monday” by T-Bone Walker in 1946 and “Open the Door Richard” by Jack McVea in 1947. Owned by Paul and Lillian Reiner. Perhaps only extant location of Los Angeles’s once-thriving Jewish-owned R&B music industry.
Budd Schulberg Residence	8484 Grand View Drive	Son of movie pioneer B.P. Schulberg, Budd Schulberg (1914-2009) was one of the second generation of Hollywood writers and producers. He wrote the Oscar-winning screenplay for <i>On the Waterfront</i> , as well as <i>What Makes Sammy Run</i> , the portrait of a fictional Jewish movie mogul.
CBS Radford Studios	4024 Radford Avenue	Built in 1926 by Mack Sennett, the studio was purchased in 1933 by Mascot Pictures owner Nat Levine, a Jewish producer who had been personal secretary to pioneer movie chain owner Marcus Loew. In 1935, Mascot merged with several other independent studios to form Republic Pictures.
CBS Television City	7800 Beverly Boulevard	Built in 1952, CBS Television City’s eight studios have produced many television shows over the years. These include <i>The Jack Benny Program</i> and Norman Lear’s <i>All in the Family</i> , <i>The Jeffersons</i> , <i>Maude</i> ,

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		and <i>Good Times</i> .
Columbia Studios	1438 N. Gower Street	Columbia was the only Poverty Row studio to break the barrier and become one of the “Big Eight” studios, thanks to the business acumen of boss Harry Cohn and the big box office receipts of its leading director, Frank Capra.
David O. Selznick	1515 N. Amalfi Drive	Selznick (1902-1965) was a motion picture producer and studio executive. His parents were Lithuanian Jews and his father was a silent movie producer. He worked for MGM, Paramount Pictures, and RKO, but achieved his greatest success as an independent producer of films including <i>Gone with the Wind</i> and <i>Rebecca</i> . Both films won an Oscar for Best Picture.
Erich Korngold Residence	9936 Toluca Lake Avenue	Korngold (1897-1957) came to Hollywood from Vienna in the 1930s. Having been invited by Warner Brothers to compose the score for <i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> , for which he won an Oscar, he later said that the movie had saved his life.
Ernst Lubitsch Residence	268 Bel Air Road	Lubitsch (1892-1947) was one of the early émigrés, arriving from Germany in 1922. One of the most prolific Hollywood directors of the 1930s, he would also take an active role in helping European writers escape from Hitler in the late 1930s.
Fox Film Corporation 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox Studio	10201 W. Pico Boulevard	In 1926, Fox (1879-1952) built a movie studio for his Fox Film Corporation on a 175-acre parcel of land that had served as cowboy star Tom Mix’s ranch. The

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		company became 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Fox in 1935 following a merger with Joseph Schenck’s 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Studio. In addition to many movies, the television show M*A*S*H was filmed here.
Franz Waxman Residence	8201 Mulholland Terrace	Waxman (1906-1937) was a composer who fled Germany in 1934 after a severe beating by Nazi sympathizers. He went on to compose acclaimed scores for many movies, including <i>The Bride of Frankenstein</i> , <i>Rebecca</i> , and <i>Sunset Boulevard</i> .
George Cukor Residence	9166 Cordell Drive	Cukor (1899-1983) was a motion picture director who mainly concentrated on comedies and literary adaptation including <i>The Philadelphia Story</i> and <i>Little Women</i> . It was an open secret that he was gay.
Harry Cohn Residence	135 Fremont Place	As president of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Cohn (1891-1958) saw his company rise from a “Poverty Row” studio specializing in low-budget features, to one of the “Big Eight.”
Jack Benny Residence	1745 N. Gramercy Place	Benny (1894-1974) brought his years of experience in vaudeville first to radio and then to television, his show enjoying a combined run of 1932-1965. The extensive cast of characters included Eddie “Rochester” Anderson, Mel “Man of a Thousand Voices” Blanc, and his wife, Mary Livingstone.
Jack Warner Residence	240 S. Gramercy Place	The youngest of the four Warner brothers, Jack (1892-1978) was the only one born in the U.S. and was much more secularized and



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		<p>“Americanized” than his older brother Harry, with whom he shared the duties of running the studio. Staunchly anti-Communist, Warner was a friendly witness at the HUAC hearings.</p>
<p>Jerome “Curly” Howard Residence</p>	<p>131 S. Vista Street</p>	<p>Howard (1902-1953), along with his brothers Moe and Samuel, and Larry Fine, was one of the Three Stooges, who made many comedy shorts at Columbia Pictures featuring a combination of slapstick, disruption of upper class society, and Jewish references. This was his home in the 1950s.</p>
<p>Jerry Lewis Residence</p>	<p>1048 Amalfi Drive</p>	<p>Born Joseph Levitch in 1926 to Russian parents, Lewis honed his comedy in the Jewish resorts in the Catskill Mountains known as the Borscht Belt. After a successful career doing clubs, radio, and films with partner Dean Martin, Lewis embarked on a solo career, bringing his humor to movies and making his muscular dystrophy telethon a fundraising institution.</p>
<p>Jesse Lasky Residence</p>	<p>143 S. Mapleton Drive - Lasky lived here in the 1930s. 181 N. Saltair Avenue - He lived here from the 1930s to the 1950s.</p>	<p>In 1914, Lasky (1880-1958), along with Samuel Goldwyn and Cecil B. DeMille, shot <i>The Squaw Man</i>, Hollywood’s first feature film. Two years later, Lasky merged his company with Adolph Zukor’s Famous Players to form a partnership that would lead to Paramount Pictures.</p>
<p>Joseph Schenck Residence</p>	<p>141 S. Carolwood Drive - Schenck lived here in the 1940s. 1060 Brooklawn Drive - Another home of his during the 1940s.</p>	<p>Born in Russia and raised in New York, Schenck (1878-1961) ran a chain of movie theaters for Marcus Loew, produced movies for Buster Keaton, served as the second president of United Artists,</p>

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		and nurtured the career of Marilyn Monroe while working at Fox.
Julius Epstein Residence	11232 Homedale Street - Epstein lived in this house in the 1930s. 6626 Lindenhurst Avenue - He lived in this house in the early 1940s. 739 Holmby Avenue - He shared this house with his brother in the early 1940s.	Epstein (1909-2000) won an Oscar, along with his twin brother Philip and Howard Koch for 1942's <i>Casablanca</i> . He and his brother also sponsored European writers living in Los Angeles who had fled the rise of the Nazis.
Larry Fine Residence	747 S. Carondelet Street - He lived here in the 1930s. 2555 Aberdeen Avenue - Fine lived here in the 1940s and 1950s.	Fine (1902-1953), along with brothers Moe, Curly, and Shemp Howard, was one of the Three Stooges, who made many comedy shorts at Columbia Pictures featuring a combination of slapstick, disruption of upper class society, and Jewish references.
Leon Schlesinger Residence	426 S. Catalina Street	Schlesinger (1884-1949) became a major contributor to the Golden Age of Animation by founding Leon Schlesinger Studios, the home of Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies that eventually became Warner Brothers Cartoon Studio.
Louis B. Mayer Beach House	144 N. Ocean Way	Born in Canada to Russian immigrant parents, Mayer (1884-1957) started Metro Film Corporation in 1916 and worked with Marcus Loew to merge Metro with Goldwyn Pictures Corporation in 1924. The resulting MGM would become the biggest studio in Hollywood, famous for wholesome patriotic movies and lavish, colorful musicals. His estate in Bel Air was demolished, so this beach house may be the only surviving residence from his

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		productive life.
MGM Distributing Association	1620 Cordova Street	In the 1930s, there were 29 film distributors grouped together on the 1800 and 1900 blocks of Vermont Avenue and the intersecting Cordova Street, including Warner Brothers, Universal, Vitagraph, Monogram and Republic. This building, built in 1929, is one of the few left.
Maurice Rapf Residence	620 Warner Avenue	Rapf (1914-2003) was a screenwriter of films such as Walt Disney's <i>Song of the South</i> who was blacklisted by the HUAC for his involvement in the Communist Party. Travelling to Moscow and Berlin in 1934, Rapf was convinced that communism was the only way to defeat fascism.
Max Factor Residence	432 S. Boyle Avenue	Factor (1872-1938) was a cosmetician of Polish descent who developed the popular and widely recognized Max Factor line of cosmetics. Factor live here between 1923 and 1929.
Metro Studios	846 N. Cahuenga Boulevard	Originally home to Marcus Loew's Metro Studios, where Louis B. Mayer was secretary, it later became part of MGM. Still later it became part of Desilu and is now RED Studios.
Moses "Moe" Howard Residence	10500 Kling Street	Howard (1902-1953), along with his brothers Jerome and Samuel, and Larry Fine, was one of the Three Stooges, who made many comedy shorts at Columbia Pictures featuring a combination of slapstick, disruption of upper class society, and Jewish references. He lived here in the 1940s and 1950s.

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NBC Radio Studio	5515 Melrose Avenue	As NBC’s radio studio before the 1938 construction of NBC Radio City at Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street (demolished), this was where Eddie Cantor starred in the <i>Chase and Sanborn Hour</i> .
Paramount Studios	5555 Melrose Avenue and 5451 Marathon Avenue	The last major film studio located in Hollywood, Paramount was also the first to shoot a full-length feature in Hollywood. In 1926, the company purchased the 26-acre Robert Brunton Studio at 5451 Marathon Street (the current location of the studio’s main gate), which had been built in 1917. Since then Paramount has seen the production of hundreds of movies and TV shows, including Billy Wilder’s <i>Sunset Boulevard</i> and the early movies of the Marx Brothers.
Paul Kohner Residence	901 Stone Canyon Road	Kohner (1902-1988) was an Austrian-born talent agent who managed talent including fellow immigrants Billy Wilder and Marlene Dietrich. In 1938, he co-founded the European Film Fund to help support film artists escaping Nazi-occupied Europe.
Paul Muni Residence	5250 Louise Avenue	Born Meshilem Meier Weisenfreund, Muni transitioned from New York’s Yiddish Theater to Hollywood, where he became one of the most sought-after actors for historic bio-pics ( <i>The Life of Louis Pasteur</i> and <i>The Life of Emile Zola</i> ) and gritty fare like <i>Scarface</i> and <i>I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang</i> . Muni lived here in the 1940s and 1950s.

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Phillip Epstein Residence	260 Bronwood Avenue - Epstein lived here in the 1930s. 739 Holmby Avenue - He shared this this house with his brother in the early 1940s.	Epstein (1909-1952) won an Oscar, along with his twin brother Julius and Howard Koch for 1942's <i>Casablanca</i> . He and his brother also sponsored European writers living in Los Angeles who had fled the rise of the Nazis.
RKO Pictures	780 N. Gower Street	Though now part of Paramount Studio, the Robertson-Cole Studio was built as a separate entity in 1919. By 1928, it was Joseph Kennedy's FBO film company, so it became the home of RKO Pictures when RCA Chairman of the Board David Sarnoff merged his company with FBO and the Keith Albee Orpheum Circuit. In 1931, David O. Selznick became production chief, bringing in personnel like director George Cukor and producer Pandro Berman.
Sammy Cahn Residence	1919 Argyle Avenue - Cahn lived here in the 1930s. 175 S. Mapleton Drive - He lived here in the 1950s.	Born in New York's Lower East Side, Cahn wrote the lyrics for American classics like "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow" and Oscar-winning songs like "All the Way." He also wrote the English lyrics for the Yiddish song, "Bei Mir Bistu Schoen," made popular by the Andrews Sisters.
Samuel Goldwyn Residence	1800 Camino Palmero Street	Goldwyn (1879-1974), born Szmuel Gelbfisz in Warsaw, was one of Hollywood's founding fathers several times over. He participated in production of Hollywood's first feature film, <i>The Squaw Man</i> and the founding of what would become Paramount Pictures, and in 1924 his Goldwyn Pictures became part of new

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		MGM studio.
Samuel “Shemp” Howard Residence	4604 Placidia Avenue	Howard (1902-1953), along with his brothers Jerome and Moses, and Larry Fine, was one of the Three Stooges, who made many comedy shorts at Columbia Pictures featuring a combination of slapstick, disruption of upper class society, and Jewish references.
Talmadge Apartments	3278 Wilshire Boulevard	Joseph Scheck and his wife, Norma Talmadge lived in the penthouse of this apartment building he built for her as an anniversary present. Al Jolson also lived here in the late 1920s and early 1930s.
Vicki Baum	1461 Amalfi Drive	Baum (1888-1960) was an Austrian Jewish writer best known for her book <i>Grand Hotel</i> . She immigrated to the United States with her family after being invited to write the screenplay for the film. Her literary works were banned in the Third Reich.
Universal Studios	1000 Universal Center Drive	Universal was founded in 1912 by Carl Laemmle, a German Jewish immigrant. He opened his 230-acre Universal City ranch on March 15, 1915, offering visitors the chance to walk around his outdoor movie studio and to watch the filming.
Warner East Hollywood Annex	4151 Prospect Avenue	Currently the Prospect Studios. Opened in 1915 as the Vitagraph Studio, the lot was bought by Warner Brothers in 1925. Portions of <i>The Jazz Singer</i> were filmed here on Stage 5, using the Vitaphone process in 1927. The lot has been home to ABC since 1948,



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		producing such shows as <i>Barney Miller</i> and <i>Welcome Back Kotter</i> .
William Dieterle	3151 N. Knoll Drive - Dieterle lived here from 1931 to 1946 22368 Fair View - He moved to Canoga Park in 1946	Dieterle ((1893-1972) was a German Jewish actor and director who moved to Hollywood in the 1930s to escape Nazi persecution. He is best known for his 1937 film <i>The Life of Emile Zola</i> , which won the Oscar for Best Picture.

**Theme: Industrial Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry**

**Sub Theme: Origins of the Motion Picture Industry**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:**

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage or industry for its association with the Jewish community. Jews played a dominant role in the formation of the motion picture industry. Jewish filmmakers moved to Hollywood from the East Coast in the teens and twenties because of the abundant sunlight, cheap non-union labor, and distance from the enforcers of Edison's Trust. Mostly of Eastern European birth or ancestry, they wanted to be regarded as Americans, not Jews. Thus in the early days of American cinema, Jewish studio moguls shied away from on-screen representations.

**Period of Significance:**

1908 - 1919

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:**

The period of significance begins in 1908 when budding filmmakers began moving to Los Angeles. In 1909, the Selig Polyscope Company established the first permanent studio in the Los Angeles area. The period ends in 1919, just after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the Motion Picture Patents Company and its General Film subsidiary were an illegal monopoly and Southern California became the center of film production.

**Geographic Locations:**

Concentrated in Hollywood, Silver Lake and Echo Park

**Area(s) of Significance:**

Ethnic Heritage, Industry

**Criteria:**

NR: A                      CR: 1                      Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:**

Industrial - Early motion picture studio

**Property Type Description:**

Property types under this theme are early motion picture studios

**Property Type Significance:**

Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with companies owned and/or operated by Jews, whose cultural heritage would help shape the new motion picture industry.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Began operation as a motion picture studio between 1908 and 1919
- Operated historically as a motion picture studio

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- May be composed of a single building or multiple buildings on a single lot
- These facilities are substantially smaller than studio facilities from the subsequent major studio era
- Was originally constructed as a motion picture studio or was converted from another use
- Typically located in previously established residential and commercial areas

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Original use may have changed
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Because of the rarity of the type there may be a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features

**Theme: Industrial Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry**

**Sub Theme: Motion Picture Industry - Major Studio Era - "The Big Eight"**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:**

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage or industry for its association with the Jewish community. Seven of "The Big Eight" studios (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Columbia Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Paramount Pictures, RKO, Universal Studios, and Warner Brothers Studios) were founded by Jews, while only United Artists was not; thus demonstrating the influence of Jews in the industry during the major studio era.

**Period of Significance:**

1919 - 1949

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:**

The period of significance begins in 1919 when motion picture production and distribution is dominated by a relatively small number of major studios, but for all intents and purposes starts with the introduction of sound technology in 1927. The period ends in 1949 with the demise of the studio system as a result of the 1948 anti-trust case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that studios must separate production from distribution.

**Geographic Locations:**

Concentrated in Hollywood and West Los Angeles

**Area(s) of Significance:**

Ethnic Heritage, Industry

**Criteria:**

NR: A            CR: 1            Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:**

Industrial - Major motion picture studio

**Property Type Description:**

Property types under this theme are major motion picture studios

**Property Type Significance:**

Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with companies owned and/or operated by Jews, whose cultural heritage helped shape the motion picture industry.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Began operation as a motion picture studio between 1919 and 1949
- 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Columbia Pictures, MGM, Paramount Pictures, Universal Studios, and Warner Brothers Studios (United Artists was not founded by Jews and the studio is located in West Hollywood)

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- Composed of multiple structures on a large super block
- Contains a variety of building types, including offices, sound stages, construction facilities, prop storage
- May contain a "back lot" used for large sets and exterior filming
- Perimeter defined by high walls, fences, and gates, with restricted access at secure entry points

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Original use may have changed
- Because of the rarity of the type there may be a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features
- The original facility may have been expanded and altered over time, particularly in the 1920s to accommodate new sound technologies for talking pictures
- These properties may be difficult to observe from the public right-of-way, due to perimeter walls, fences, and gates

**Theme: Industrial Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry**

**Sub Theme: Radio Broadcasting Industry**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:** A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage, communications, or industry for its association with the Jewish community. Though the radio broadcasting industry's origins lay primarily outside of California, Jews in Los Angeles played a prominent role in its creative side starting in the early 1930s. Many radio performers and writers brought their Jewish humor from the vaudeville stage to the Los Angeles airwaves, and most dramatic radio writers were also Jewish.

**Period of Significance:** 1931 - 1949

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in the early 1930s with the appearance of popular long-running radio programs featuring performers like Eddie Cantor and Jack Benny. It ends in 1949 with the transition to television as the major home entertainment medium.

**Geographic Locations:** Citywide, but with the highest concentration in Hollywood

**Area(s) of Significance:** Ethnic Heritage, Communications, Industry

**Criteria:** NR: A            CR: 1            Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:** Industrial - Radio station and broadcasting facility

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme may include radio stations and broadcasting facilities.

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with the production of shows by Jewish artists whose talent shaped the radio broadcasting industry.



**Eligibility Standards:**

- Dates from the period of significance
- Originally constructed to house radio production
- In use as a radio broadcast and production facility for an extended period of time

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- May be composed of one large building or multiple smaller buildings designed to house office space and production facilities
- May be located near major motion picture studios
- Often design in architectural style of the period
- Some facilities may include accommodations for a live studio audience; those will be distinguishable by their size, and may also have associations with the television or motion picture industries

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Original use may have changed
- May have been altered or expanded over time to accommodate changing technology and/or television production

**Theme: Industrial Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry**

**Sub Theme: Television Broadcasting Industry**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:** A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage, communications, or industry for its association with the Jewish community. Though most of the pioneers of the Los Angeles television broadcasting industry were not Jewish, many of the artists on both sides of the camera were. Jewish humor was a large component of television comedy, while the Jewish tradition of espousing social issues was a component of television drama.

**Period of Significance:** 1949 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in 1949 with the transition of Jack Benny's popular radio show to television, which would be followed the next year by Burns and Allen. 1980 is the end date for SurveyLA and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:** Citywide, but with the highest concentration in Hollywood

**Area(s) of Significance:** Ethnic Heritage, Communications, Industry

**Criteria:** NR: A            CR: 1            Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:** Industrial - Television production studio and broadcasting facility

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme may include television stations, broadcast facilities, and production studios.

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with the production of shows by Jewish artists whose talent substantially shaped the television broadcasting industry.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Dates from the period of significance
- Used primarily as a television broadcast or production facility for an extended period of time
- Owned and operated by Jews

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- For National Register, a property associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- May be composed of one large building or multiple smaller buildings designed to house office space and production facilities
- May be located near major motion picture studios
- Some facilities may include accommodations for a live studio audience; those will be distinguishable by their size, and may also have associations with the television or motion picture industries
- Most significant facilities were constructed during the 1940s and 1950s

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Original use may have changed
- The original facility may have been altered or expanded over time to accommodate changing technology

**Theme: Industrial Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry**

**Sub Theme: Recording Studio**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:** A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage, communications, or industry for its association with the Jewish community. Starting with 1927's *The Jazz Singer*, Los Angeles became the center of production for both motion picture and popular music, a great deal of it created by Jewish composers and lyricists, much of the music influenced by their cultural heritage. African American music was also recorded almost entirely by Jewish-owned record labels.

**Period of Significance:** 1927 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:** The period of significance begins in 1927, the year sound pictures ushered in the age of the movie musical, beginning the migration of Jewish composers, lyricists, and musicians from around the world. 1980 is the end date for SurveyLA and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:** Citywide but mostly in Hollywood, San Fernando Valley, South Los Angeles, and West Los Angeles

**Area(s) of Significance:** Ethnic Heritage, Communications, Industry

**Criteria:** NR: A            CR: 1            Local: 1

**Associated Property Types:** Industrial - Recording studio

**Property Type Description:** Property types under this theme include recording studios.

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with companies owned and/or operated by Jews, whose cultural and musical traditions influenced the songs they produced and recorded.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Dates from the period of significance
- Used primarily as a recording studio for an extended period of time
- Must be proven to have played a significant role in the recording industry

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- For National Register, a property associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- Buildings are utilitarian in design with minimal fenestration to protect the sound quality produced within
- Examples from the 1950s and later may be smaller in size due to new technology allowing for more flexibility in recording spaces
- Many are still in use as recording facilities, although some may have been converted to other uses
- Exteriors are often unassuming to maintain the privacy of the artists

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, and Association from the period of significance
- Original use may have changed
- Recording studios may be located in buildings originally constructed for another use
- The original facility may have been altered or expanded over time to accommodate changing technology

**Theme: Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry**

**Summary Statement of**

**Significance:**

A resource evaluated under this theme may be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage or entertainment for its association with the Jewish community. In front of and behind the camera, Jews made significant contributions to all aspects of the entertainment industry including motion pictures, radio, music, and television. Despite their prominence in the industry, clearly identifiable Jewish characters, themes, and issues were avoided during the early decades of motion pictures and radio. With a few notable exceptions including *Intolerance* (1916) and *The Jazz Singer* (1927) the on-screen representation of Jews was rare, and many Jews in the industry changed their names out of fear of anti-Semitism. During the Cold War, communism was often discussed as a Jewish conspiracy, and many Jews in the entertainment industry with liberal political views were blacklisted. Attitudes began to change during the postwar years with Holocaust testimony and the creation of Israel. By the 1960s, the Civil Rights and Counterculture movements further broken down the ethnic barriers that had once kept Jewish identity covert in Hollywood.

**Period of Significance:**

1915 - 1980

**Period of Significance**

**Justification:**

The period of significance begins in 1915 with the construction of residences for Jewish people working during the silent film era. 1980 is the end date for SurveyLA and may be extended as part of future survey work.

**Geographic Locations:**

Throughout Los Angeles, but with concentrations in Hollywood, Bel Air, Pacific Palisades, Encino, Toluca Lake, and Mid-Wilshire including Hancock Park and Fremont Place

**Area(s) of Significance:**

Ethnic Heritage and Entertainment

**Criteria:**

NR: B                      CR: 2                      Local: 2

**Associated Property Types:**

Residential - Single-Family Residence and Multi-Family Residence

**Property Type Description:**

Property types under this theme include single-family and multi-family residential buildings that were the homes of Jews who played



prominent roles in the entertainment industry.

**Property Type Significance:** Properties significant under this theme are directly associated with Jews who made significant contributions to the entertainment industry.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- A residence designed specifically for a significant Jewish person in the entertainment industry, or the long-term residence of a significant Jewish person in the entertainment industry
- Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the entertainment industry
- Is directly associated with the productive life of the person within the entertainment industry

**Character-Defining/Associative Features:**

- For National Register, properties associated with individuals whose significant accomplishments date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional importance
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- The individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant person occupied the residence
- Properties may be difficult to observe from the public right-of-way due to privacy walls and landscaping

## **GLOSSARY**

The following is a glossary of terms relating to Jewish religious practices, cultural traditions, and ethnic identities.

Ashkenazi - Ashkenazi Jews or simply Ashkenazim are a Jewish diaspora population who coalesced as a distinct community in the Holy Roman Empire around the end of the first millennium. The Ashkenazim settled and established communities throughout Central and Eastern Europe from the Middle Ages until recent times. Many of the Jews who arrived in Los Angeles during the first decades of the twentieth century were born in Russia or Poland.

Bimah - A podium or platform in a synagogue where the leader of the service stands.

B'nai B'rith - The oldest Jewish service organization in the world. B'nai B'rith, meaning "Sons of the Covenant", organized its first lodge in 1843 in New York City.

Conservative Judaism - The Conservative movement of Judaism emerged in the early twentieth century in part as a reaction to assimilation within the Reform community. Its leaders distinguish the Conservative movement from Reform and Orthodox as the middle ground that insists on modern, scientific biblical criticism.<sup>341</sup> Aspects of religious practice vary for Conservative Jews. Rabbis and scholars within the Conservative movement focus on an evolving interpretation of Jewish law, or halacha while upholding a belief in four core standards addressing marriage, divorce, conversion, and matrilineal descent.

Folkshuln - Schools that used Yiddish as the language of instruction in Jewish history, literature, customs, ceremonies, music, and sometimes Hebrew. Folkshuln were often affiliated with socialist's causes and labor unions, and functioned as secular cultural centers.

Halacha - The body of Jewish law supplementing the scriptural law and forming especially the legal part of the Talmud.

Hasidic Judaism - Hasidism, sometimes referred to as Hasidic Judaism, is a sub-group within Ultra-Orthodox Judaism noted for its religious conservatism and social seclusion. It arose as a spiritual movement in contemporary Western Ukraine during the eighteenth century and spread rapidly through Eastern Europe.

Havurah - Havurah, from the Hebrew word haver, meaning "friend", is a small group of temple members who gather together on a regular basis for social activities and celebration of Judaism. Each Havurah plans their own events and develops their own personality.

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<sup>341</sup> Raphael, *Judaism in America*, 63.

**Kosher** - Kosher foods are those that conform to the regulations of kashrut. Food that may be consumed according to halakha is termed kosher in English, from the Ashkenazi pronunciation of the Hebrew word kashér, meaning "fit".

**Mizrahi** - Mizrahi Jews or simply Mizrahim descended from local Jewish communities of the Middle East from biblical times into modern era. The term Mizrahim is sometimes applied to the descendants of Sephardic Jews who lived in North Africa, Turkey, and the Levantine communities of Lebanon, Israel, and Syria. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, Mizrahi Jews did not identify themselves as a separate Jewish subgroup.

**Ladino** - The dialect Ladino began in the Jewish communities of the Iberian Peninsula and spread through the Ottoman Empire and other areas where Jews settled after their expulsion from Spain and Portugal in the late fifteenth century. The dialect mixes Medieval Spanish with elements of Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, and other Romance languages.

**Landsmanshaftn** - Landsmanshaftn are societies formed by Jewish immigrants from the same villages, towns, and cities in Central and Eastern Europe. The landsmanshaft became a dominant form of Jewish social organization in the late 1800s.

**Modern Orthodox Judaism** - Modern Orthodox Judaism is a movement within Orthodox Judaism that attempts to synthesize Jewish values and the observance of Jewish law with the secular modern world. Modern Orthodoxy draws on several teachings and philosophies, and thus assumes various forms.

**Orthodox Judaism** - Orthodox Judaism, the most traditional branch, adapts practices that originated in times and places where Jewish people were geographically isolated in ghettos and distinguished from non-Jewish people through aspects of daily life such as clothing. The Orthodox interpret the Torah as literally as possible, believing its content to be the timeless, universally applicable commandments written by God. There is great variety of observance in daily life outside of the synagogue and congregation. In the Orthodox tradition, the differences between the Hasidic and Modern Orthodox sects illustrate the range of religious and spiritual observance.

**Reconstructionist Judaism** - Reconstructionist Judaism is a modern American-based Jewish movement based on the concepts developed by Mordecai Kaplan. The movement views Judaism as a progressively evolving civilization. It originated as a semi-organized stream within Conservative Judaism before it seceded. The movement developed from the late 1920s to 1940s, and it established a rabbinical college in 1968.

**Reform Judaism** - Reform Judaism in America dates to the late nineteenth century, and the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, Ohio was established as the first rabbinical seminary of the branch in 1875. Reform Judaism places more emphasis on sermons and interpretation than literal adherence to the

Torah. Because members often attend secular schools, the Reform movement stresses religious education and often integrates congregational schools into its buildings and campuses.<sup>342</sup>

Rosh Hashanah - Rosh Hashanah, meaning "first of the year", is commonly known as the Jewish New Year. The name is somewhat deceptive, because it is one of the holiest days of the year. It is a time to begin introspection, looking back at the mistakes of the past year and planning the changes to make in the new year.

Sephardic - Sephardic Jews or simply Sephardim are a Jewish diaspora population who coalesced in the Iberian Peninsula around the start of the second millennium. They established communities throughout Spain and Portugal where they developed their own customs and style of liturgy, but royal decrees in the late fifteenth century forced them to flee. So Sephardim also encompasses the Jews of Iberia who then settled in the Balkans, North Africa, West Asia, and beyond.

Shul - Shul is the colloquial Yiddish language term used interchangeably for school and/or synagogue. The term comes from Middle High German *schuol*, from Old High German *scuola*, from Latin *scola*.

Synagogue - The primary place of collective worship and the building most associated with religious cultural identity. The modern synagogue, like the traditional synagogue, serves three functions as a place for worshipping, learning, and social gathering.<sup>343</sup> In the Jewish tradition, education is considered one of the fundamental commandments and "the acquisition of knowledge...equals prayers in its importance."<sup>344</sup> Providing space for the education of children and adults is a component of religious buildings associated with all branches of Judaism.

Talmud - The authoritative body of Jewish tradition comprising the Mishnah and Gemara.

Tanakh - For all branches of Judaism, religious and spiritual practice is guided by the Tanakh, a written and oral tradition that includes the stories, laws, and history of the Torah.

Torah - The five books of Moses constituting the Pentateuch. Sometimes referred to as the Hebrew Bible or the first part of the Christian Bible known as the Old Testament.

Tzedakah - Tzedakah is a Hebrew word literally meaning "justice" or "righteousness but commonly used to signify charity, although tzedakah is an obligation whereas charity is typically understood as a voluntary act of goodwill.

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<sup>342</sup> Freehof, "The Three Jewish Groups in the Western World," 47.

<sup>343</sup> Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, "The Three Jewish Groups in the Western World," in *An American Synagogue for today and tomorrow: a guide book to synagogue design and construction*, edited by Peter Blake (New York, NY: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1954), 51.

<sup>344</sup> Freehof, "The Three Jewish Groups in the Western World," 57.

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Yiddish - The traditional language of Ashkenazi Jews is Yiddish, originally a German dialect with words from Hebrew and several modern languages. Today it is mainly spoken in the U.S., Israel, and Russia.

Yom Kippur - Yom Kippur, meaning "Day of Atonement", is a day set aside to atone for the sins of the past year. It is probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year.

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