THE Immigration Trunk Program
Dear Madam:

Arrangements have been made for a hearing on your application for a certificate of derivative citizenship. Please call at Office, Room 261, Federal Bldg., Milwaukee, Wis. on the date and at the hour mentioned below.

your father

Please bring with you the person through whom you claim to have acquired citizenship. If the person through whom you acquired citizenship is deceased, bring with you one witness who is well acquainted with you and with the person through whom you claim citizenship. If the person named by you in your application does not meet this requirement, you may substitute a witness who is qualified. If any witness born abroad has been naturalized, such person should bring certificate of naturalization or other evidence of citizenship.

If for any reason you are unable to appear at the time and on the date named, kindly notify this office at once in order that other arrangements may be made to take testimony in your case.

When you call, kindly present this letter and ask for MR. RIDDIOUGH.

Very truly yours,

ABRAHAM CLEGG

Officer in Charge

DATE: MARCH 15, 1954

HOUR: 10:00 A.M.
The trunk on the cover belonged to Chana Gutman, pictured below with her husband, Charles Bence. Chana came to America to escape the extreme poverty and persecution in Poland. Charles found out about her through his mother, Chana’s step-aunt. Chana finally arrived in America in 1923 after waiting an entire year in Warsaw to secure her visa and then her ticket; she married Charles a year later. At first, neither of the newlyweds spoke the other’s language—Chana spoke no English, and Charles knew no Yiddish. They worked hard to learn the other’s language. After marriage, Chana changed her name to Annie.

Chana carried all of her possessions from Europe in this one trunk; the box only measures about 23 inches long (just about two feet!), 15 inches wide, and 10 inches tall.

What would you take with you?
Then, all of a sudden, we heard a big commotion and we came to America and everybody started yelling—they see the Statue of Liberty. We all ran upstairs and my mother got out of bed. We went upstairs and everybody started screaming and crying. We were kissing each other; people that didn’t even know each other before were kissing and crying. Everybody was so excited to see America and the lady with her hand up.  

Esther Gidiwicz, a Jewish immigrant from Romania, describes entering America for the first time at just five years old.

Esther Gidiwicz’s words lend voice to the saga of many immigrants, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, who journeyed to American shores during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Faced with the challenge of making a living in a strange land, these people relied on their own innate strength as well as one another in order to find their way. The Jewish Museum Milwaukee’s Immigration Trunk Program explores the path of the Jewish immigrants and their contributions to America’s diverse cultural tapestry.

The trunk offers a multi-media program that allows students to connect to the rich heritage of the Jewish people. Teachers can tailor the variety of content and material to individual classrooms.

- Students can relate historical events to personal experiences through oral histories.
- Information packets highlight Milwaukee’s contribution to the wider immigrant experience through the stories of Golda Meir and Lizzie Kander.
- Artifacts from the Jewish Museum Milwaukee’s Archives allow for hands-on history lessons, which breathe life into stories and documents.
- Web resources provide interactive learning opportunities for students, such as creating their own oral histories.
- Books, DVDs, photographs, and documents supply opportunities for students to explore history through primary sources and from multiple perspectives.

The story of Jewish immigration is grounded by the themes of tzedekah (doing justice through charity) and tikkun olam (“repairing the world”), highlighted in the exhibits of the Jewish Museum Milwaukee. A sense of giving and peoplehood anchored the creation of the Jewish community and their contributions to the development of Milwaukee.

For definition of words in “bold” see Vocabulary and Glossary page 11.

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INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, millions of immigrants in search of a better life poured into American harbors. Whether fleeing poverty and persecution in their native countries, or seeking the freedom and opportunity that America offered, immigrant groups drew on their strength, resilience, and hope to fulfill their dreams. The immigrants faced hardships from the moment they left their homelands, enduring long voyages across land and sea. It is a testament to their determination that they were able to overcome many challenges, transforming America in the process.

The Golden Land: Coming to America

Many immigrants started out from small, remote villages and traveled to major European seaports—such as Amsterdam, Netherlands, Hamburg, Germany, and Liverpool, England—where they could get passage to America. They journeyed by train, wagon, donkey, or even on foot. At the ports, they waited days, weeks, or months for their ships to arrive. Michael Spector, born on the west side of Milwaukee to Russian immigrants, said his father waited an entire year with his family before finding a ship to take them! Before boarding, immigrants went through health inspections; ship captains had to transport anyone who did not pass inspections in America back to Europe for free.

These boats were not like cruise ships. Most immigrants traveled in steerage, the lowest section of the ship. The conditions were dark, damp, crowded, and filthy; hundreds of travelers often had to share only one bathroom! The food could be a difficult issue for Jews in particular because they could not count on kosher options; many would take their own provisions. Louis Heller, born in Milwaukee to Bohemian immigrants, says that his parents took prunes, smoked fish, and smoked beef on their 90-day voyage from Hamburg to Milwaukee. Immigrants also took other items, including bread, tea, cookies, and cakes, so that they could honor their traditions during their long ocean voyage. But imagine what a three-week-old cake would taste like!

On arrival in New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty rose like a beacon of freedom and opportunity. For the immigrants, America was a Golden Land, a place of dreams and possibility. The famous inscription on the pedestal of the Statue—“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free”—were the words of Emma Lazarus, a Jewish poet. Her powerful verses, titled “The New Colossus,” won the honor of adorning the monument in a poetry contest.

TO IMMIGRATE OR TO EMIGRATE?

It is easy to confuse “immigrate” and “emigrate.” How do you know when to use each one? Use “immigrate” to indicate coming to a new country, and “emigrate” to mean leaving from one’s native country. An example sentence or two always helps:

- He immigrated to America in order to lead a better life.
- She emigrated from Poland in 1910.

WHAT DOES KOSHER MEAN?

Kosher refers to foods that are permissible under the Jewish dietary laws as written in the Torah.
Before entering America, immigrants had to be processed and undergo tests. The most famous processing station was Ellis Island in New York Harbor, open from 1892 until 1954; 12 million immigrants passed through its gates. After docking, it could take up to a day or more to pass through the long lines. Once inside, the immigrants strode up the long steps to the Registry Room, where they were given tags and put through a series of physical, mental, and legal inspections. The room was noisy and crowded, ringing with the sounds of foreign languages new to the immigrants’ ears. People dressed differently and came from such diverse places as Ireland, Scandinavia, Greece, Italy, and Russia. For many of the people at Ellis Island, this was their first contact with other cultures. The hubbub, language barriers, and strange customs made for a confusing experience, both for the immigrants and Ellis Island employees alike:

*I remember Ellis Island. Coming to a strange, strange country, everybody’s strange to you…I remember standing downstairs and looking up to the balcony. There were a lot of people standing and chewing. I was thinking to myself, “What is that? Is that a sickness here? They all keep chewing.” Until I talked to my family later, they explained to me that this was chewing gum. Nobody’s sick.*

Rita Seitzer, a Lithuanian Jewish immigrant, entered America at 19.

*Then I remember getting off that boat like herds of cattle. Everybody pushing out onto the ferry that took us to Ellis Island…I remember hordes of people. There were quite a few children and mothers, walking up those wide steps into the main building. I remember the darkness, the wooden benches, the poorly lit hall, the babies screaming, the children crying, adults crying. It was awful…There was so much commotion, so much sadness…But we were all right.*

Lara Bisset, born in France to a Russian Jewish family, entered America at age 10.

Those who did not pass inspections might spend months in detainee dormitories while awaiting the decisions of Ellis Island officials. Women and children were not allowed to enter America on their own and needed a male relative to claim them. Others were sent to the Ellis Island Hospital before they could continue their journey. For some, Ellis Island inspections ended in heartbreak; failing the tests meant deportation to the traveler’s native country, sometimes separating families. Most passed the inspections, however, and were allowed to make a new life in America.

Once in America, many migrating Jews moved to a city or a town where they knew someone; this was called “chain migration.” The majority settled close to their entry point in New York, but Milwaukee was the site of a vibrant Jewish presence from the city’s start. Its German population fostered a strong and thriving community. Louis Heller’s parents took a common route from New York to Milwaukee. Louis writes:

*They disembarked at New York and engaged passage for Milwaukee, routed up the Hudson, through Albany and from there on through the Erie Canal, work having been finished on that in 1835, which journey took them three weeks on the canal boat, that was hauled by horses, and landing in Erie, Pennsylvania. From Erie they came by sail boat across the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, landing at the foot of Huron Street at a pier built of piles driven into the water that had planks lain across. Can you imagine a husband and father landing in a strange country destitute and hungry with five children and twenty-five cents in his pocket?*

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The German Wave of Immigration, 1840–1880

Milwaukee’s immigrant population in the mid-1800s was overwhelmingly German. The city was known as “The German Athens”; German Jews felt at home with the culture and language. Milwaukee’s first Jewish immigrants, the Shoyer brothers, arrived in 1844–45; their story is a familiar German-Jewish pattern. They left their homeland to find new opportunities. They founded a wholesale clothing business, E.M. Shoyer & Co., on Water Street. The 1850s saw the continuing influx of German Jews who were seeking opportunity.

Some immigrants, like the Adlers and Friends, became successful dealers in clothing, tobacco, dry goods, or liquors. Others, however, took up diverse occupations and became shopkeepers, retailers, tailors, shoemakers, tinsmiths, soapmakers, butchers, blacksmiths, and jewelers. Kosher butcher shops sprang up so that the Jews could buy meat in accordance with religious law. The Milwaukee Jewish population showed a preference for family-run businesses. This allowed them to be self-reliant and to take advantage of their close family ties.

Milwaukee’s German Jews turned their attention to questions of faith. Three years after using a grocery store for High Holiday services, Milwaukee formed its first Jewish congregation in 1850. This first synagogue is now known as Congregation Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun.

The Jewish community banded together when it came to taking care of one another. The Hebrew Relief Society, headed by the philanthropist David Adler, was the largest of the many charitable organizations that served Milwaukee’s Jewish poor and sick. Taking care of the community united Jews from throughout the city, even though they had different backgrounds and traditions.

Milwaukee’s German Jews felt at home with the language and mainstream German culture. They did not need to choose between being Jews, Germans, or Americans, and they found a way to prosper in their new home.

The Eastern European Wave of Immigration, 1880–1920

While most of the German Jews were seeking opportunity, Russian Jews were fleeing harsh persecution, including pogroms (violent riots and physical attacks against Jews), limits on education and employment, and forced conscription in the Tsar’s army. In the summer of 1882, a trainload of 350 Russian Jews came to Milwaukee. These people began a massive wave of Eastern European immigration. In time, the Eastern European Jews would greatly outnumber the original German Jews.

There was some tension between the German and Eastern European Jews. The impoverished newcomers wore traditional dress and spoke Yiddish. In the old country, the German Jews were accustomed to living in cities and tended to practice Reform Judaism, while the Eastern European Jews mostly made their homes in shtetls (small villages) and were more religiously observant. These differences, however, did not stop the Jewish community from providing food, shelter, and clothing for the refugees.

Sometimes the interests and opinions of the more affluent German-Jewish establishment conflicted with the newer immigrants. Members of the Reform community considered the rituals of the Eastern Europeans outdated. These rites came to be called “Orthodox” to differentiate them from Reform practices. The Eastern European Jews established small congregations of people from the same villages and regions. However, whether Reform, Orthodox, or later Conservative, forming congregations and setting up synagogues was one way for immigrants to find their way as Jews in the new country. Rabbi Solomon Isaac Scheinfeld emerged as a leading figure in Milwaukee Orthodox Judaism, guiding the Jews on the west side.
Over the next three decades, many Eastern European Jews made Milwaukee their home, joining relatives who had come before them. Some found work through organizations like the Industrial Removal Office. Many became peddlers. Peddlers would buy goods from producers, such as farmers or shopkeepers, and sell them in the city or in outlying villages and towns. They sold whatever they had available, like fruits and vegetables, household items, fabric, and other necessities. They traveled by wagon, push-cart, or even on foot to sell their wares.

Jews also found a place in Milwaukee arts and entertainment. Joey Sangor, born Julius Singer in Russia in 1903, was Milwaukee’s best prizefighter in boxing during the 1920s. Edna Ferber, born in Michigan to a Jewish immigrant, published her first novel in 1911 while working for the Milwaukee Journal. She later became the first Jew to win the Pulitzer Prize.

Eastern European Jews settled on the west side of the Milwaukee River on Fifth and Vliet, near a large hay depot that served the city’s horses. The surrounding blocks, known as the “Haymarket,” were the heart of the Jewish immigrant community. Jewish shops and synagogues sprang up along its streets. The community was brimming with warmth, but conditions were far from ideal. The tenements where the immigrants made their homes were crowded and dirty. An entire family sometimes had to live in just one room. Louis Heller’s parents’ first “house” consisted of “one room with boxes for furniture” for seven people!

Despite divisions in social class, geography, and religious practice, the Jewish immigrants banded together when it came to charity and community. It was clear that something had to be done to improve the housing and health conditions in the Haymarket neighborhood. Lizzie Black Kander, a member of the German-Jewish elite, rose to the task. Her organization, based in a facility called The Settlement House, offered craft lessons, cooking classes, and games for immigrant children as well as literary clubs, debating societies, and libraries with Yiddish newspapers for adults. As a fundraising effort, Lizzie compiled recipes from her cooking classes into a book entitled The Settlement Cook Book, which became a national bestseller. These projects were the seedlings of today’s Jewish Community Center.

The Eastern European Jews adjusted to Milwaukee and its Jewish community. Differences in residence, economic station, and ideas about religious practices may have divided them from the German establishment, but the community found multiple ways to express Jewish identity. Both communities had one thing in common—finding their way as Jews in America.
INDUSTRIAL REMOVAL OFFICE
As soon as Milwaukee’s Eastern European Jewish immigrants found shelter, they got to work finding a job. The Industrial Removal Office (IRO), established in 1901, helped newcomers integrate into society. Overcrowding in eastern cities prompted the IRO to work with “frontier” communities to resettle immigrants across the country. The IRO was run by American Jews and supported by the German-Jewish Baron de Hirsch Fund. Adolph W. Rich, a Jewish peddler turned philanthropist, headed Milwaukee’s office in 1904. An immigrant himself—he left Hungary for America in 1853—Rich was personally involved in securing work for hundreds of newcomers. Among these was a young Romanian man who appealed to Rich to help bring his younger brother from Romania to the United States. (see letter to the right)

PEDDLING
Many immigrants, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, took up peddling when they arrived in America. Peddling was a hard life. It was especially difficult for Jewish peddlers to keep their traditions. They were forced to work on the Sabbath. Others accepted lodgings for the night on their long journeys where kosher meals might not be an option. Despite these hardships, many peddlers earned enough money to open stores. If they were lucky, their store might make enough money for them to quit peddling. Some of these stores became very successful and morphed into huge department store chains. Abraham Goldmann, a former peddler, founded Goldmann’s Department Store in 1896.
Building a Community and the World War II Refugees: The 1920s–1960s

The German and Eastern European Jewish communities found common ground in Milwaukee. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, designed to "limit the immigration of aliens into the United States," established "quotas" for each nationality so that only a fraction of the population could migrate: "the annual quota of any nationality shall be 2 per centum [2 %] of the number of foreign-born individuals of such nationality resident in continental United States as determined by the United States census of 1890." This policy meant that the last thirty years of immigration statistics were meaningless and recent arrivals like Eastern European Jews, Italians, Poles and Slavs had a harder time getting in under the new system. With these connections to the old country cut short, Milwaukee’s Jews worked to build their lives in America. The Haymarket neighborhood emptied out, and Milwaukee’s Eastern European Jews settled down in Sherman Park. Eventually, both German and Eastern European communities would head out to the suburbs, reaching neighborhoods in the North Shore.

Milwaukee’s Jews also participated in events on an international stage. The horrifying murders of millions of Jews perpetrated by Adolph Hitler’s Nazi Regime during World War II (1933–1945) drove refugees to seek freedom from violence and persecution. Milwaukee absorbed about 500 people between 1945 and 1950. Jewish Vocational Services helped these immigrants secure work. The community also extended itself internationally to aid displaced Jews after the war, contributing to the five million pounds of Passover items—including matzos, Haggadahs, and tallit (prayer Shawls)—sent overseas as part of a national campaign.

The events of World War II raised consciousness of Jewish identity in America, and Zionism, the political movement advocating the return of Jews to their national homeland in Israel, gained ground in Milwaukee’s Jewish community. The Zionist Movement had been an active force in Milwaukee prior to the Holocaust, but the events of the Holocaust made the push for a Jewish State more urgent. Milwaukee’s Jews raised funds to make the dream a reality. The community celebrated the creation of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948. Milwaukee’s own Golda Meir went on to become the fourth Prime Minister of Israel in 1969. “Our Golda” immigrated to Milwaukee from the Ukraine when she was eight years old. She was tough, strong, and courageous. Several Milwaukee landmarks are named for her: the library at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and her elementary school on 4th Street and Cherry.

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5 Ibid., Immigration Act of 1924 sec. 11 (a).
### The Soviet Immigrations of the 1970s–1990s

Between 1973 and 1993, Milwaukee welcomed between 3,000 and 4,000 Soviet Jews. The Soviet Union suppressed the expression of Judaism, and Jews were excluded from certain occupations. Any attempt to leave the Soviet Union meant that you lost your job and could be jailed. During the 1980s, Milwaukee’s own Marty Stein led the United Jewish Appeal, a national organization that sponsored Operation Exodus. This national campaign raised $420 million for resettling Soviet refugees. Jewish Family Services, a descendant of the organization that helped the first wave of nineteenth century Eastern European immigrants, provided newcomers with housing, food, job counseling, school information for their children, and instruction in English.

In the Soviet Union, Jews were persecuted for their beliefs. Milwaukee’s Jewish community tried to reacquaint the Russian newcomers with Judaism and Jewish identity. The Jewish Community Center created programming on holidays, rituals, and kosher cooking. This latest set of immigrants contributed to the diverse character of the Milwaukee community and its traditions.

### Milwaukee’s Jews: Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam

Tzedakah means doing justice through charity, and the ways that the Jewish community took care of newcomers highlights this idea. The Milwaukee Jewish Federation, which includes the entire Jewish community, traces its roots to the charitable societies that helped poor Jews and the city’s immigrants. The Jewish Community Center shares a similar history, finding its beginnings with Lizzie Kander’s efforts to help immigrants become Americanized.

Tikkun olam means “repairing the world” and also characterizes the spirit of the Milwaukee Jewish community. Organizations founded by Jews, like Mount Sinai Hospital and the Children’s Outing Association, expanded their missions to serve the entire community. Differences in country of origin, religious practice, or geographic residence may have divided the Jews of Milwaukee; but their sense of giving back contributed to the growth, development, and unique tapestry of the Jewish community in Milwaukee as well as the larger Milwaukee community itself.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1565</td>
<td>First permanent European Settlement is established in St. Augustine, FL by the Spanish</td>
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<td>1619</td>
<td>First shipment of African slaves land in Virginia</td>
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<td>1654</td>
<td>First Jews come to the United States from Recife, Brazil</td>
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<td>1776</td>
<td>The Declaration of Independence signed; beginning of the American Revolution</td>
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<td>1787</td>
<td>US Constitution is completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Bill of Rights is ratified, which provides unprecedented freedoms of religion, press and speech</td>
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<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Louisiana Purchase</td>
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<td>1818</td>
<td>Solomon Juneau purchases Jacques Vieau’s trading post at Milwaukee</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820-1830</td>
<td>The first great wave of immigration to the United States; over ten million immigrants arrive with northern and western Europeans (mostly British, Irish, and German) predominating; many settle in the rural Midwest</td>
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<td>1827</td>
<td>Conscription laws in Russia mandate that Jews must serve in the military for 31 years starting at age 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Town of Milwaukee is incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>First Jewish settlers come to Milwaukee—this group comes primarily from Germany and Central Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Wisconsin becomes the 30th State Admitted to the Union</td>
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<td>1848-1849</td>
<td>Failed revolutions in Europe spur migration to the United States from what will be Germany and what was the Austro-Hungarian Empire</td>
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<td>1849</td>
<td>Significant Chinese migration to the United States begins after the California gold rush</td>
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<td>1850</td>
<td>Seventy Jewish families organize Imanu-Al, the first congregation in Milwaukee; it is a Reform Congregation</td>
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<td>1851-1860</td>
<td>The peak decade for Irish migration to the United States; the total for the decade was 914,199</td>
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<td>1856-65</td>
<td>American Civil War</td>
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<td>1865</td>
<td>Assassination of Abraham Lincoln</td>
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<td>1867</td>
<td>Hebrew Relief Society is organized; this is the forebear of Jewish Family Services—this organization helps assist new immigrants as they settle in Milwaukee</td>
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<td>1869</td>
<td>Japanese people begin to immigrate to this country, mainly to California</td>
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<td>1870</td>
<td>The Naturalization Act is passed, limiting American citizenship to “white persons and persons of African descent,” discriminating against Asians</td>
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<td>1876</td>
<td>Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone</td>
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<td>1880-1890</td>
<td>Peak decade for immigration from Germany (1,452,972 people) and Scandinavia (656,494 people)</td>
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<td>1881</td>
<td>Pogroms sweep Southern Russia, mass immigration begins; first Russian refugees reach Milwaukee</td>
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<td>1882</td>
<td>The Chinese Exclusion Act is passed which bans Chinese migration to the United States for ten years, the first serious ban on immigration in American history; it was renewed in 1892 and 1902 when Congress moved to make the ban permanent</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td>Statue of Liberty is dedicated; “The New Colossus” by Jewish American poet Emma Lazarus was engraved on the pedestal in 1903</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>Wisconsin passes the Bennett Law, which becomes a model for other states, requiring public school instruction in English for at least sixteen weeks a year</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>The federal government opens immigration reception center on Ellis Island</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>The “Keep Clean Mission” is formed to address the needs of immigrants; this later becomes “The Settlement”</td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>The first edition of The Settlement Cook Book: The Way to a Man’s Heart is published as a fundraiser for the Settlement</td>
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<td>1902</td>
<td>Federated Jewish Charities is organized from a coalition of benevolent organizations; this is the precursor to the Milwaukee Jewish Federation</td>
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<td>1903</td>
<td>Kishinev Pogroms—this is the largest set of pogroms during this time period; over 50 people are killed and it is the first time that a pogrom is front page news in the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Mount Sinai Hospital is dedicated; this is the only hospital in Milwaukee that does not have quotas on the number of Jewish doctors who can work</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>Golda Meir (Mabowezh) arrives in Milwaukee from Kiev</td>
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<td>1907-1908</td>
<td>President Theodore Roosevelt negotiates the Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan ending the migration of Japanese laborers to the US by having the Japanese government refuse to issue passports to them</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>Triangle Shirtwaist Fire kills 145 young immigrant women workers in New York City, leads to regulations that ensure safer working conditions</td>
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<td>1911-1920</td>
<td>2 million Italians arrive in the peak of Italian immigration</td>
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<td>1914-1918</td>
<td>World War I</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td>A literacy test for incoming immigrants becomes law</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td>The Balfour Declaration, a formal statement of policy by the British government, was issued supporting a Jewish national home in Palestine</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>Johnson-Reed Immigration Act enacted limiting immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe and China to small percentage of the 1890 Census</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Stock Market Crash (October 24 is referred to as Black Thursday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Adolph Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>Germany adopts the Nuremberg Laws, which deprive Jews of civil rights</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Kristallnacht in Germany (November 9)</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>World War II begins with the German Invasion of Poland (September 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Japanese attack Pearl Harbor (December 7); US enters WWII</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>D-Day (June 6), Allied Invasion of Normandy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>End of World War II; liberation of Concentration Camps: the world realizes that the Nazis have murdered 6 Million Jews and 13 Million people in total during the Holocaust</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>UN decides in favor of the partition of Palestine leading to the creation of the state of Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>The State of Israel is established; six Arab States invade Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964-1975</td>
<td>Vietnam War</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>The Immigration Act of 1965 removes the national origins quota system and establishes a ceiling of 270,000 immigrants per year with no more than 20,000 from one country; it creates a system of preferences, with highest priority given to family reunification</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968-2001</td>
<td>Almost 3,000 Jews from the Soviet Union and the Former Soviet Union were resettled in Milwaukee</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Golda Meir is sworn in as the 4th prime minister of Israel</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>15,000+ Moscow Jews congregate to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, in response to Soviet attempts to eliminate Jewish practice from daily life</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>9 Jews are imprisoned for anti-Soviet activities</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>Jackson-Vanik Amendment passes, which ties trade to emigration from the Soviet Union</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Golda Meir dies</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Massive march on Washington to protest Soviet Immigration policies for Jews</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Fall of Communism; Berlin Wall torn down; break-up of the Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The Immigration Act of 1990 sets an annual ceiling of 700,000 immigrants per year to enter the U.S. for the next three years and an annual ceiling of 675,000 per year for every year after</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Sesquicentennial celebration of Jewish settlement in Milwaukee begins in October and continues through 1994 with concerts, lectures, and an exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The Jewish Museum Milwaukee opens and explores immigration through its permanent collection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**VOCABULARY AND GLOSSARY**

• Included in trunk.

Adorn (verb): to decorate or make more beautiful; enhance.

Affluent (adjective): wealthy; upper class.

Anti-Semitism: discrimination against Jews and Judaism.

Beacon (noun): a guiding signal; can be used figuratively, as in “beacon of hope.”

Chain migration: the phenomenon where immigrants move to a certain place to join friends and family.

Conscription (noun): mandatory enrollment for military service.

Conservative Judaism: Conservative Jews uphold that the Torah (the five books of Moses and central text of the Jewish people) came from God but was transmitted by people. Conservative Jews uphold Jewish law but contend that it can be adapted to fit modern culture.

Deportation (noun): the lawful driving out of a foreigner from a country.

Destitute (adjective): impoverished, penniless; lacking basic means of subsistence.

Ellis Island: an immigration processing station in New York Harbor, open from 1892 to 1954; over 12 million immigrants passed through its gates. Immigrants were required to go through physical, mental, and legal examinations before being allowed to enter the United States. These were trying experiences for the immigrants that sometimes resulted in heartbreak and deportation, but the majority of immigrants passed the inspections and started new lives in America. From 1855 to 1892, immigrants passed through Castle Garden instead, which closed to make way for the larger processing station at Ellis Island.

Emigrate (verb): to go from one’s native country to settle in another.

• Haggadah: the prayer book that guides the Passover Seder (a ritual feast at the beginning of the holiday).

Holocaust: the systematic killing of millions of Jews and other targeted groups by the Nazi Government of Germany during World War II (1933-1945).

Hubbub (noun): a noisy, disordered situation; confusion.

Immigrate (verb): to come to a country of which one is not a native, usually with the intent to settle permanently.

Industrial Removal Office: a Jewish organization that worked with local communities across America to resettle and find work for immigrants arriving in New York City.

Innate (adjective): inborn, natural.

Johnson-Reed Act, 1924: the Johnson-Reed Act (also known as the Immigration Act) established immigration quotas. Only 2% of each nationality’s 1890 U.S. population was allowed to enter America. This especially limited immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, the Act’s targeted populations, because the majority of immigrants from those areas came after 1890. The law also set the total number of people entering the United States at 150,000 per year. The Act severely cut off the great tide of immigrants that had poured into American shores over the previous three decades.

Kosher: fit, proper, as in foods that fulfill the Jewish dietary laws as written in the Torah.

Matzo/Matzah: a flatbread eaten by Jews at Passover.

Orthodox Judaism: Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah (the five books of Moses and central text of the Jewish people) is the direct word of God. Jews of the Orthodox movement may dress more traditionally and be strict in their observance of the Sabbath, although some have modernized their practices.

Passover: an eight-day Jewish holiday that commemorates the escape from slavery in Egypt.

Persecution (noun): the harassment of people because of their religion, race, or beliefs.

Peddler: a “middleman” who purchases goods from a producer (such as a farmer or shopkeeper) and sells them to outlying areas. They would often sell fruits and vegetables and dry goods and could travel by wagon, push-cart, or on foot.

Philanthropist (noun): a person committed to human welfare who donates money or resources to charities, institutions or other such venues for the public benefit.

Refugee (noun): a person fleeing for safety, especially to a foreign country, to escape intolerable conditions in his or her homeland.

Resilience (noun): the ability to bounce back or recover from hardship.

Sabbath (Shabbat): the day of rest in Judaism.

Shtetl: a small town—typically with a large Jewish population—characteristic of nineteenth and early twentieth century Eastern Europe.

Soviet Union: a group of countries that came together under a communist government after the Russian ruling family was overthrown in 1917. The Soviet Union suppressed religious expression. It existed until 1991.

Synagogue: “house of gathering”; a place where Jews meet to worship.

• Tallit: a prayer shawl.

Tenement: a cramped apartment for immigrants or the very poor; often a whole family would live in a couple of rooms with additional people boarding.

Tikkun Olam: “repairing the world,” a concept fundamental to Judaism, highlights how acts great and small can contribute to making the world a better place.

Torah: the five books of Moses and central text of the Jewish people.

Tsar: a Russian king.

Tzedakah: the feminine form of the word for “justice” (“tzedek”) in Hebrew. The concept refers to the Jewish idea that justice is created through charity.

Yiddish: a language that evolved from biblical Hebrew mixed with German and other dialects, spoken in Eastern Europe.

Zionism: a political movement begun in the 1880s advocating the return of the Jews to the national homeland of Israel.
ACTIVITIES

In-Class Activities

Student Oral History Project:
Someday, students will be sitting in a classroom reading personal stories about what life is like right now. Emphasize to students that their stories are important and are part of the greater American experience. You can borrow examples from the JMM Archives. Jeff Katz, born in Milwaukee to immigrant parents, describes his own oral interview for the Jewish Museum Milwaukee:

“I don’t think it’s going to make me a hero; I don’t think it’s going to make me the next greatest movie star in the world; I’m not even sure anyone will ever see or hear this. But we all like to feel that we’re important, at least as an individual, that we contribute in some way, not only as a Jew but just as an American, as an individual; whatever role you are…we matter.

Have students interview each other about their family’s immigration and migration experiences. Have them share their stories in class. They can ask the following questions:

- When did you come to America? Wisconsin? Milwaukee? Were you born here or did you move?
- If you moved, why did you move?
- Does your extended family also live in Wisconsin, Milwaukee, or your current community?
- What traditions do you and your family practice, like holidays, customs, or annual vacations?
- What do you plan to be when you grow up? Do you think you’ll stay in Wisconsin? Milwaukee? Where do you think you’ll go?

Write up an article about your family’s experience. What made their voyage challenging? Describe your family members’ impressions of their new home and draw conclusions about their experience. Share them on the websites listed below.
(CCSS Literacy in All Subjects Writing/History standards 1, 2, 7 & 9)

Have students present a short monologue that describes his or her family’s experience. While listening to these reports, ask that students consider what experiences were similar to their own families and what was different from their family’s experience.
(CCSS Speaking & Listening standards 1, 2, 3)

You can have students visit the following websites to further share their own stories:

  A chance to be a part of the museum by sharing your family’s story online. Can upload images. You can also read (“Read Other Stories,” http://www.nmajh.org/sharestorymain.aspx) and watch (“It’s Your Story,” http://iys.nmajh.org/) other peoples’ stories.

- Constitutional Rights Foundation.
  Read stories about immigrating to the U.S. or share your parents’, grandparents’, or your own experience. Can upload videos and photos. (Note: registration required to submit story.)

  An opportunity to share your family’s immigration story. 500 word limit.
ACTIVITIES

(In-Class Activities continued)

Letters Home:

Have your students imagine that they are immigrants journeying to America to start a new life. Have them write a letter to friends or family members left behind describing their journey and new life in the United States. Let students share their work in class. Possible things to have them consider are:

• Any aspect of the immigrant experience, from traveling to the nearest port city, to the ocean crossing, to the immigration processing station, to building a life in America once they arrive.
• To whom are they writing? A friend? A relative who was left behind? Will the relative be joining them soon?
• What would they need to pack for the journey? How would they choose what belongings to take? What could they fit into just one or two small suitcases?
• What is life like in America? What would the immigrant experience be like as a child or young adult?
• What do they do day-to-day? How might the sights, sounds and smells be different from their home country?
• How has their heritage, Jewish or non-Jewish, affected their journey? Have they made new friends? What is the community like? School? The food?
• How are they practicing their traditions now that they are in America?
• What jobs did their parents get when they came over? What are their siblings doing?

Letters Home Standards (CCSS Literacy Writing/History standards 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 & 9)

Out-of-Class Activity

Oral History Interview:

The Jewish Museum Milwaukee strives to connect the larger Jewish experience to individual stories. The Museum is committed to preserving the oral histories and memories of its community members. Nothing can connect students to history like a personal story that breathes life into textbook descriptions of dates and general trends. Have students interview a relative about their family history. They can tape record their interview, take notes, or both. They can think about things like:

• When did we come to America? To Wisconsin? Milwaukee? Did we pass through Ellis Island?
• What were some of the reasons that we decided to leave our home country? Do we still have relatives abroad?
• How did our family earn a living once we got here?
• How have we contributed to America? Our local community?

You can visit the following websites for help preparing you and your students for conducting an interview and preserving and writing about oral memories.

Scholastic. “Writing Workshop: Immigration.”

In this workshop, students learn how to interview family and community members or classmates and record oral histories. Aspects of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing) are addressed. Guidelines, lesson plans, assessment forms, and national standards correlations are available for teachers. Students can also submit their stories to Scholastic. Recommended ages: Grades 3–5.

Scholastic. “Learning to Interview.”

This lesson plan provides students with guidelines for interviewing relatives or classmates. Includes sample questions and interview forms. Recommended ages: Grades 1–2.
CLASS DISCUSSION

Use these questions on immigration, building a life in America, American Jewish identity, and Jewish Milwaukee to engage your students in discussion. Several of these questions can be connected to place-based education centered on Milwaukee and its history.

1. Why did immigrants choose to leave their home countries for America?
2. What would it have been like to journey to the United States? What ordeals did immigrants of any nationality undergo?
3. Why did the Jewish people decide to come to America? Were the reasons different for the German and Eastern European Jewish communities? Why might this be?
4. What kind of work did the Jews do when they got to Milwaukee? How might this be similar to or different from other immigrant groups?
5. How did the Jews keep and transform their traditions in America? What traditions do you and your family have?
6. How did the Jewish people nurture a sense of giving and sharing with each other in America and Milwaukee? What role do you think this played in the development of the Milwaukee Jewish community?
7. How did the Jews in Milwaukee navigate their way as both Jews and Americans? Do you feel a connection to your heritage? How do you express it?
8. How did the Milwaukee Jewish community fit into the larger national or global picture of Jewish and immigrant experience? What is your own family’s immigration story?
9. Do you recognize any of the Milwaukee places or institutions mentioned in this guide? Which ones? What are your connections to them?
10. Had you heard of any of the people or companies mentioned in this guide before? Which ones? What did you know about them? How has learning about their contribution to Milwaukee’s Jewish history changed or enhanced your view of them?

MPS LEARNING TARGETS/ WISCONSIN STATE STANDARDS

The Jewish Museum Milwaukee Immigration Trunk Program can be tailored to meet the needs of grades 4–12. This information packet can be used as a Teacher’s Guide or Student resource. The materials covered in the Trunk Program are designed to allow students to:

- Discuss the historical context of immigration to America.
- Describe why the Jewish people left their homelands for America.
- Discuss what the Jewish people did after arriving in America: Where did they make their homes? What jobs did they take? How did they practice their religion and traditions?
- Discuss how the Jewish people built a sense of community amid the diverse experiences in America.
- Understand how notions of charity and giving contributed to the immigrant Jewish community.
- Experience history through personal stories.
- Relate the personal experience of the Jews in Milwaukee to the immigrant experience of the wider Jewish and American communities in general.
- Use artifacts, primary source documents, and multiple perspectives to understand and draw conclusions about history.
- Write about and connect with the immigration experience through conducting interviews of their own.
RESOURCES

SUGGESTED READINGS


A compendium of first-person accounts of Ellis Island, representing both immigrants and employees. Presents the oral histories of men and women from Italy, the British Isles, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Western Europe, and the Middle East. Includes over 60 photographs.


A textbook that chronicles Jewish life in America from the seventeenth century to modern times. Covers the German and Eastern European waves of immigration to America. Considers Jewish and American identities and ways of forging community through religion, social and charitable organizations, Zionism, and involvement in entertainment, politics, and American mainstream culture. Includes a glossary of Jewish terms, a Jewish-American timeline, and suggestions for further reading. Recommended for elementary and middle school students.


A readable and thorough account of the Jewish community in Milwaukee from its beginnings in the mid-1800s to the present day. The book covers the German and Eastern European waves of immigration, the World War II refugees, and the Soviet immigrations during the 1970s and 1990s. Provides a social history of religion, Jewish charitable societies and organizations, as well as a complete history of the Jewish communities in all its facets. Emphasizes the unity and diversity of the Milwaukee Jewish community as well as the creation of the city itself. Relates the experiences of Milwaukee Jews to the national and global Jewish community. Recommended as a teacher resource or for middle school and high school students. Should be available in most Wisconsin school libraries.


Traces Milwaukee history from its beginnings as a Native American settlement to modern times. Includes information on the German and Eastern European waves of immigration.


A book aimed at a juvenile audience, includes colorful images and first-person accounts. Details the German and Russian waves of Jewish immigration to America, the reasons for migration, the journey over, settling in America, and keeping tradition. Included are hands-on activities such as baking poppyseed cookies, making a dreidel, and constructing a family tree. A timeline, glossary, and resources for further learning are included. Recommended for elementary and middle school students.


This fictional diary account tells the story of twelve-year-old Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish immigrant from Russia, as she and her family adjust to life in America in New York City’s Lower East Side from 1903–1904. Includes pictures, music, recipes, and notes on historical context. Recommended for elementary and junior high school students.


An introduction to the immigrant experience at Ellis Island aimed at a juvenile audience. Includes many pictures and first-hand accounts of the journey from immigrants’ home countries to Ellis Island, the ordeals of being inspected and processed at the Island, and how the immigrants contributed to the building of America once they got there. Recommended for elementary and junior high school students. (Note: not specific to Jewish immigration, but the Jewish experience is presented among others).


The monumental work on Jewish Milwaukee. Discusses the Milwaukee Jewish community in all of its aspects, including the German and Eastern European waves of immigration, immigrant life, religion, education, charity, and organizations. Recommended as a teacher resource or as a research resource for high school students.

(Unless otherwise indicated, personal history accounts were obtained from the Jewish Museum Milwaukee archives.)

AUDIOVISUAL

All items are available through the Coalition for Jewish Learning’s Media Library (CJL) at: http://www.cjlmilwaukee.org/page_id=86. (Note: check the catalogue for the available editions.)


A documentary about the immigrant experience at Ellis Island. Traces the journey from Europe to New York. Includes historic footage and photographs as well as numerous first-hand accounts. The film is not specifically about Jewish immigration but does include the Jewish experience as part of the larger American immigration story. 30 minutes. Recommended ages: 10–adult.


A comprehensive history of Milwaukee from its beginnings to modern times. Chapters 4, 5, and 7 detail immigration to the city. Also includes information about Milwaukee’s Native American history, the founding of Milwaukee, and such topics as industry, politics, the Civil War, World War I, the Depression, World War II, urban “renewal,” and the present day.


The second half of a two-part series examines the German and Eastern European waves of Jewish immigrants to the United States. Describes how the Jews made a living in the United States through peddling, small retail businesses, and manufacturing. Also describes Jewish participation in the American Civil War and the development of the Reform and Conservative movements. 60 minutes. Recommended ages: 12–adult.


The Jewish history of Milwaukee as told by a grandfather to his grandson. 15 minutes. Recommended ages: 9–adult.

THE IMMIGRATION TRUNK PROGRAM

JEWISH MUSEUM MILWAUKEE ■ TEACHER’S GUIDE

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RESOURCES CONTINUED

WEBSITES

http://www.themakingofmilwaukee.com/

A companion website to the DVD Series The Making of Milwaukee. Includes a timeline of Milwaukee’s history, information on important historical figures and the experiences of various ethnic groups, then and now photos, a transcript of the entire series, and classroom materials for Grades 1–12. The curricula provide interactive lessons and an image library.


The activities in this module offer interactive learning experiences for students to engage with the history of immigration to America. Highlights include an interactive timeline and a tour of Ellis Island. Students can also relive the story of Seymour Rechzeit, a Jewish boy who emigrated from Poland. Immigration charts and graphs allow students to practice quantitative data analysis. (Note: not specific to Jewish immigration.) Recommended ages: includes material suitable for PreK–Grade 8.

Scholastic. “Research Starters: Immigration.”
http://teacher.scholastic.com/researchtools/researchstarters/immigration/

Teachers and students can discover and pursue research topics through these short articles and accompanying bibliographic references. The articles cover such topics as immigration, Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, and Emma Lazarus. (Note: not specific to Jewish immigration). Recommended ages: Grades 6–12.

The History Channel. “Ellis Island.”
http://www.history.com/topics/ellis-island/

A comprehensive overview of the Ellis Island experience, including a timeline, 23 short video clips, and an interactive photograph depicting the past and present of the processing station. (Note: not specific to Jewish immigration.)

Jews in America: Portal to American Jewish History.
http://www.jewsinaamericaw.com/

This interactive website documents the history of Jews in America from colonial times to the present. Includes a timeline, photographs, documents, artifacts, essays, and video clips.


This online exhibit tells the story of the Jewish experience in America, including the 1820–1924 immigrations. Includes images of pivotal primary source documents.

The Institute for Curriculum Services. “Jewish American History.”

The Institute for Curriculum Services has gathered background documents and lesson plans to teach students about American Jewish History, including the immigrant experience.

JEWISH MUSEUM MILWAUKEE

The Jewish Museum Milwaukee is dedicated to preserving and presenting the history of the Jewish people in southeastern Wisconsin and celebrating the continuum of Jewish heritage and culture. The history of American Jews is rooted in thousands of years of searching for freedom and equality. We are committed to sharing this story and the life lessons it brings with it, so that we may enhance the public’s awareness and appreciation of Jewish life and culture.

The Museum opened in April 2008.

Plan a Visit to the Jewish Museum Milwaukee:
The Jewish Museum Milwaukee works to build understanding through tours and programs. The Immigration Trunk highlights pieces and stories from the archives of the Museum, and a tour of the Museum can help your students appreciate these stories even more. Our hours are listed below, but the Museum can open early or late for group requests.

Jewish Museum Milwaukee • 1360 N Prospect Avenue • Milwaukee, WI 53202 • 414-390-5730

Museum Hours
Monday through Thursday: 10 am – 4 pm
Friday: 10 am – 2 pm
Sunday: Noon – 4 pm
Closed Saturdays • Closed for Jewish Holidays

Group Rates:
There is a $15.00 Registration Fee to hold your date.
The admission charge is $2 per student, $3 per senior (60+) and $4 per adult.

Parking is available for cars or our loading zone can be used by buses.