

Jews in America at a Time of Growth and Change: Forging New Frontiers
A Cincinnati Museum Center and Online Exhibit

Prepared by Ari Poster

Exhibit Panel Correlation: "Quest for Success;" Computer Kiosk

Ohio Social Studies Standards Correlation:

History	Grade 10	Point 1
Geography	Grade 10	Point 2

Introduction:

The turn of the century in America toward the 1900s was a time of growth in population, industry and invention. The following is just a sample of some of the profound changes in America at the turn of the 20th century. The Jewish story fits into this wider context of growth and development.

<http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/millennium/century/html/1d.htm>

<http://campus.northpark.edu/history/WebChron/WestEurope/IndRev.html>

- 1876- Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
- 1879- Thomas Edison invents the incandescent light bulb.
- Immigrants landed at Ellis Island around 1900, near the start of an unprecedented wave of immigration to the United States. During the peak years, from about 1900 to 1914, as many as 5,000 people a day were processed through Ellis Island. Today more than 40 percent of all living Americans can trace their roots to an ancestor who came through this way station at the port of New York.
- The original Wright brothers' "aeroplane" gets off the ground for the first time on Dec. 17, 1903, with Orville Wright lying prone at the controls of the Flyer. Wilbur Wright watched the first piloted, powered and controlled flight from the ground near Kitty Hawk, N.C. It lasted 12 seconds.
- Suffragettes protested at the White House for women's right to be heard at the ballot box. American women won the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.
- Power house mechanics worked on steam pumps. During the 1920s and early 1930s, photographer Lewis Hine created a series of "work portraits" that emphasized the human contribution to modern industry.

Jewish Life in America at This Time:

- Almost two and a half million Jews came to the United States between 1881 and 1924.
- By the 1880s, the American Jewish community (largely a German community) consisted mostly of second generation Americans who were native English speakers. However, German was still used in homes and synagogues.
- The German Jewish migration to America had initially consisted of poor, uneducated Jews, but in the 1840s and 1850s, more educated Jews from Germany began to come to America, including a number of rabbis.
- Reform Judaism was the predominate Jewish movement in America in the late 1800s. In 1880 most of the approximately 250,000 Jews in America identified with the Reform Movement. It was characterized as a movement of Jews of high social status who wished to dignify Jewish religious services and make them proper American religious experiences with families sitting together, shorter worship services, choirs of men and women, the use of the organ, and sermons in the vernacular.
- By the end of the 19th century, Jewish congressman, judges, and college professors were not uncommon. German Jews had begun to “make it in America.”
- Between 1881 and 1900, 675,000 Jews entered the United States from Eastern Europe. They had very different Jewish religious and cultural habits than the German Jews already here.
- For those who came after 1892, the port of entry was Ellis Island in New York. Many Jews at this time settled in Manhattan’s Lower East Side. This area at one point was the most densely populated neighborhood in the country.
- East European Jewish culture in the Lower East Side took the form of Yiddish Theatre, Yiddish newspapers, etc. (Yiddish language is a combination of mostly German as well as Russian, Polish and English written with Hebrew letters).
- The East European Jews were generally very poor, and most became physical laborers, particularly in tailoring. The garment industry became associated with Jews in New York.

- East European Jewish families lived in crowded, small apartment buildings. Before the rise of garment unions, it was not uncommon for family members to do “piecework” at home.
- By the 1900s, German Jews had become owners and operators of the clothing industry that employed, among others, Russian Jews. The industry flourished at this time thanks to the advent of the sewing machine in 1846 and the enormous popularity of ready-to-wear clothing.
- The sweatshop environment was exposed in 1911 when a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in Manhattan. One hundred and forty-six workers, most of them Jewish women, died because of inadequate exit paths.
- There was much animosity between German and Russian Jews in America. German Jews wanted to turn them into “true Americans.”
- Jews were influenced by and also helped shape many of the changes in America that were taking place at the turn of the century in the fields of industry, science, business, and culture. The Industrial Revolution was in full force, and inventions and discoveries were happening yearly.
- Louis Brandeis became the first Jew appointed to the United States Supreme Court in 1917. Albert Einstein, who lived from 1879-1955, is primarily renowned for his theory of relativity. Jewish authors, such as Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth and Chaim Potok, had a huge impact on American literature. In Music, Jews hit a high note, including such famous early Jewish musicians as Al Jolson, George Gershwin, and Benny Goodman.
- Jews made their mark on American society in interesting and creative ways by weaving Jewish culture into the fabric of American culture.

More Detailed Background from Encyclopedia Judaica about Jewish Life in America at This Time:

“In the second quarter of the 19th century German Jews, escaping discrimination at home and attracted by the economic opportunities that beckoned ahead, began to immigrate [to America]. Mainly merchants and itinerant traders, they spread quickly from the coast inland, founding new communities and synagogues in every new urban center, and playing an important part in opening up the Middle West. The Gold Rush of 1849 brought them to California and the Pacific. In the new land they felt free from the trammels of tradition, and Reform Judaism [reforming and changing stricter Jewish traditions to bring them in line with modernity] became deeply rooted among them—largely through the influence of Isaac Mayer Wise of Cincinnati, one of the great creative and organizing forces in American Jewish life. In 1843 the Independent Order B'nai

B'rith was founded as a fraternal organization and expanded steadily. By the time of the Civil War there were about 150,000 Jews in the United States and many of them fought with their fellow citizens in both the Federal and Confederate forces. The economic expansion in the North during the war, which occurred particularly in those branches of trade and manufacture in which Jews were active, brought them increased prosperity.

Eastern European Jewish immigrants also became relatively numerous and set up their own religious and social organizations. But the intensification of persecution in Russia in the 1880s, coupled with the economic opportunities in America, resulted in a migration on an enormous scale, which within a few years completely changed the face of Jewish life in the United States. The rapid expansion of the garment industries, with which the Jews had long been associated, especially contributed to the radical changes. Between 1881 and 1929 over 2,300,000 Jews from Eastern Europe landed in American ports. At the same time the Sephardim (Jews from Spain or the Arab world) of the Mediterranean area also founded a number of new Sephardi communities throughout the country. By the middle of the 20th century the Jewish population of the United States alone, excluding other American countries exceeded 5,000,000. Well before, New York, with more than 2,000,000 Jews, had become by far the greatest urban Jewish center that the world had ever known.

This large immigration changed the outlook as well as the composition of the United States Jewry: it stemmed the once triumphant advance of Reform Judaism, strengthened orthodoxy as well as the new Conservative Judaism, temporarily expanded Yiddish [Yiddish is a language still used today by Jews throughout the world which consists of a combination of mostly German as well as Russian, Polish and English written with Hebrew letters. Yiddish also refers to a culture made up of theatre, literature and music, as well as other aspects which draws on European Jewish life of old.] culture and journalism, and provided mass support for the Zionist movement [the belief that the Jews have a right to a national homeland in Israel.] Also as a result of this mass immigration, the role of United States Jewry in world Jewish affairs became significant. The full strength of American Jewry was manifested for the first time during World War I, when the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee took the lead in relief work in Eastern Europe, when American support for Zionism contributed toward securing the Balfour Declaration, and when American Jewish organizations made their voice heard at the Peace Conference in Paris.

World War II made a very considerable difference in the position of American Jewry, due more perhaps to the change in the world's circumstances than to developments within Jewry. By then well-established, the 5,000,000 Jews of the United States played their part on the field of battle and elsewhere to a greater extent than ever before in history. Being affluent, they alone were able to shoulder the main burden of relief both during the war and in the years of reconstruction, so that the partial rehabilitation of the Jewish communities in many countries of the Old World would have been impossible without them. Being influential, they were largely responsible for swaying public opinion and the United Nations in favor of the establishment of the State of Israel, which they supported decisively, in the critical period and after. But by this point, the relative position of American Jewry in the Jewish world had changed beyond recognition. With the annihilation of most of Central and a great part of Eastern European Jewry and the

enforced isolation of the Jews of Russia, the United States Jewish community was left by far the largest Jewish community outside of Israel. The change of balance was emphasized even further after the war, when restrictions on immigration were to some extent relaxed. The majority of those refugees from the concentration camps and the hopeless conditions in Europe who did not desire to settle in Israel found their new homes beyond the Atlantic, the Canadian Jewish community in particular receiving a powerful impetus. The number of newcomers was further swelled after 1948 by fresh immigrants from Egypt, Iraq, and other Arab states, providing a fresh element in the kaleidoscope of American Jewry” (Encyclopedia Judaica, CD-Rom).

Pre-Exhibit Activities:

The following are wonderful websites with a plethora of information of American Jewish history.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/heritage/timeline6.html>

<http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/jewishexp.htm>

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/xcommon/Hot_Topics/AmericanJudaism.htm

<http://www.350th.org/>

Many of the museum artifacts in this section focus on the crossroads of Judaism and Americanism in popular culture. Issues such as the consumerism of Judaism arise. Notions of gender within American life and Jewish religious and cultural life change at the turn of the century in interesting ways as well.

Part I: Making Commercials

It would thus be apropos for the students to make commercials advertising the various innovations in the exhibit! Tenth graders could present commercials to the class before they go to the museum and then complete the post-exhibit activities below. *Eighth graders could research their products, visit the museum, and then design commercials as their post-exhibit activity.* In either case, students should imagine that their commercials are geared for the people and time in which their products were invented.

To complete the exercise, divide the class into ten groups to work on marketing the following products. Give each group the short description provided below and the relevant websites to utilize when designing their commercial.

The commercials should include:

1. The name of the product, the inventor, and why it was made.
2. How its invention shows the melding of Judaism and Americanism.
3. How its invention was part of the frontier of innovations in American society in industry, science, business, and culture.
4. The commercials should include a model of the product and a catchy jingle.

5. The commercials can be done as if for a radio or television spot or in print advertising for a newspaper.

1. **Manischewitz and the Americanization of Matzah:**

<http://www.manischewitz.com/docs/history.shtml>

In the early 1900s in America, a major impetus to keeping kosher (the Jewish dietary laws) was the newfound availability of mass-produced kosher-foods. Modernity in America enhanced the possibilities of a religious life. “As the makers of Crisco vegetable shortening exuberantly proclaimed upon its debut as a rabbinically certified product, ‘The Hebrew Race has been waiting 4,000 years for Crisco.’”¹

Commercial manufacturers had targeted Jewish consumers as early as 1900. Matzah, the unleavened bread eaten on Passover, had traditionally been baked in matzah ovens in synagogues. But in the late 1800s, Dov Behr Manischewitz opened his own matzah factory in Cincinnati, Ohio.

2. **Hot Sauce and Peanut Butter: The Frank Tea & Spice Company**

<http://www.franksredhot.com/article.asp?articleid=15>

“An expanding consumer market provided numerous opportunities for entrepreneurs to find a niche for their products. In 1896, Jacob Frank ended his career as a traveling salesman and founded the Frank Tea and Spice Co....One of their most famous inventions was ‘Frank’s RedHot,’ a cayenne pepper sauce used as a secret ingredient for the first ever Buffalo Wing.”²

3. **Maxwell House Haggadah and the Americanization of Passover**

<http://www.forward.com/issues/2003/03.04.11/fast2.html>

<http://www.josephjacobs.org/history.htm>

“...The Maxwell House Haggadah (prayerbook read on the holiday of Passover), which debuted in the mid-1930s, epitomized the ‘unique relationship between a product and a people.’”³ More than twenty million copies have been distributed free of charge [in

¹ Joselit, Weissman, Jenna, *The Wonders of America*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1994, pg. 187.

² Taken from the museum exhibit notes

³ Joselit, Weissman, Jenna, *The Wonders of America*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1994, pg. 198.

supermarkets] since the 1950s. “American Jewish homes might have lacked a lot of things, but the Maxwell House Haggadah was not one of them.”⁴

“In the 1920s, a New York advertising genius named Joseph Jacobs pursued a program to have big companies market more aggressively in the Jewish community...After consulting several rabbinic authorities, who informed him that coffee beans were...kosher for Passover, Jacobs began marketing the coffee aggressively during the Passover season...So successful were the sales that the Maxwell House company began printing and distributing their Haggadot (prayer books for Passover) in 1931- a sign of the significance of the Jewish consumer. Thus a mainstay of American Jewish culture was born out of a fusion of two vital instincts: Jewish observance and desire to succeed financially in the competitive world of American commerce.”⁵

4. Hugo Gernsback and Inventing the Future

http://web.mit.edu/m-i-t/science_fiction/jenkins/jenkins_3.html

<http://www.twd.net/ird/forecast/life.html>

“Hugo Gernsback (1884-1967), a German-Jewish immigrant from Luxemburg, was fascinated by electrical technology. His firm, the Electro Importing Company, played a pivotal role in manufacturing radio equipment that was affordable, and he popularized this new technology...”⁶

5. Isidore Goldberg at the Controls of Pilot Radio

“Isidore Goldberg (1893-1961) started life as an impoverished immigrant on the lower east side of Manhattan...and graduated from the Hebrew Technical Institute in Mechanical Arts in 1908...After selling aeronautical supplies and model airplanes he was granted a U.S. patent for his invention of an emergency lamp in 1915. In 1919, he founded the Pilot Electric Manufacturing Co., which manufactured kits for home radios...”⁷

6. Ruth and Elliot Handler: The Barbie Doll

<http://www.ideafinder.com/history/inventors/handler.htm>

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Taken from the museum exhibit notes

⁶ Taken from the museum exhibit notes

⁷ Taken from the museum exhibit notes

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/theymadeamerica/whomade/handler_hi.html

<http://www.jewishaz.com/jewishnews/981106/barbie.shtml>

<http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue04/features/barbie3.htm>

“Ruth Moskowicz was born into a family of Russian Jewish immigrants in Denver, Colorado in 1916. She married her high school boyfriend, an artistic young man named Elliot Handler, and they moved to Los Angeles in 1938. After her husband decided to make their furniture out of two new plastics, Lucite and Plexiglas, Ruth ambitiously suggested that he turn furniture making into a business. Her antennae up for opportunities, she acted as his sales force, closing a big deal with Douglas Aircraft, among others.

During World War II, the Handlers started a company, Mattel, combining Elliot's name with the last name of their partner, Harold Matson. On weekends home from wartime duties at Camp Robert, California, Elliot made toy furniture for Ruth to sell. By the mid-1940s, the young company would be taking in revenues of \$2 million (\$21.6 million in 2003 dollars). Borrowing money from A. P. Giannini's Bank of America, Mattel presided over a plastic ukelele fad, sold toy pianos, and launched a music box that sold 20 million units by 1952.

The Handlers took their two teenagers -- Barbara and Ken -- on a trip to Europe in 1956. There, they saw a doll that looked like an adult woman, vastly different from the baby dolls most little girls owned. Ruth was inspired. Three years later, Mattel's version, Barbie, would debut, with a wardrobe of outfits that could be purchased separately. In 1960, the Handlers took Mattel public, with a valuation of \$10 million (\$60.3 million in 2003 dollars). It was on its way to the Fortune 500, and Barbie quickly became an icon, with ever-changing wardrobe and career options that mirrored women's changing aspirations.”

(http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/theymadeamerica/whomade/handler_hi.html).

“At a Toy Fair in 1959, [Ruth Handler's] adult doll with breasts was a shock. Industry buyers resisted, but not for long as Barbie swept the young baby boom generation with enchanting dreams of careers and grown-up glamour.”⁸

7. Kenner Toys: Toy Versions of Adult Products

<http://www.kennertoys.com/history.html>

⁸ Handler, Ruth, Dream Doll: The Dream Doll: The Ruth Handler Story, Longmeadow Press, Stamford, CT, 1994.

“Kenner toys was founded in 1947 by three brothers- Albert, Philip and Joseph Steiner- in Cincinnati, Ohio...Much of their success was based on their ability to develop toy versions of adult products, such as the Easy Bake Oven...”⁹

8. Super-Heroes and Super Villains: American Comic Books

<http://www.suntimes.com/output/books/cst-ctr-comics24.html>

<http://reformjudaismmag.org/04spring/comics.shtml>

<http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=8776>

“The very concept of comic books came from a Jewish man named Max Gaines in 1933. Superman’s creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, Batman’s co-creator Bill Finger and Spider Man’s Stan Lee- Jewish, every one...Lee...the co-creator of Spider Man and the Fantastic Four, said most artists in the emerging form tried to appeal to the widest possible audience. ‘We wanted them to be read and enjoyed by everyone,’ he said. Though comic-book superheroes were first to battle the Nazis, Less said that was less about the industry being Jewish and more that the writers were better in tune with public opinion than the government was. ‘Most Americans, whether they were Jew or Gentile, didn’t like Hitler and couldn’t understand why the U.S. government was allowing him to run roughshod,’ Lee said. “Even with the Holocaust going on, there was never an attempt to make a statement or any overt attempt to bring in any Jewish agenda,’ Kubert said. That isn’t to say that the Golden Age of comic books was free of Jewish references. Kal-El, the Krypton name of Superman, is loosely translated from Hebrew as ‘all that is God.’ Brian Bendis, a writer currently working for Marvel Comics, said the Superman legend is equal parts the stories of Moses and Golem, a creature of Jewish folklore created by a rabbi to defend and protect the community. ‘Whether they were conscious of it or not, I can't say, but on some level, [religion] does find a way in,’ Bendis said. Even Lee's Spider-Man, who debuted in 1962, has a strong sense of morality, Bendis said. ‘Spider-Man's line 'with great power comes great responsibility' -- that's a morality any rabbi would tell you to live by’ (<http://www.suntimes.com/output/books/cst-ctr-comics24.html>).

9. American Jewish Medical Inventors

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Yalow.html>

<http://nobelprize.org/medicine/laureates/1977/yalow-autobio.html>

“Rosalyn S. Yalow became the second woman to ever win the Nobel Prize in medicine, in 1977. Her achievement was the development of RIA, an application of nuclear physics in clinical medicine that makes it possible for scientists to use radiotropic tracers to measure the concentration of hundreds of pharmacologic and biologic substances in the

⁹ Taken from museum exhibit notes

blood and other fluids of the human body and in animals and plants. She invented this technique in 1959 to measure the amount of insulin in the blood of adult diabetics.

She was born on July 19, 1921, in New York City, of Jewish parents, Clara and Simon Sussman. She attended the New York City public school system and in Walton High School she was encouraged by her chemistry teacher to pursue a career in science. She graduated Hunter College and accepted a teaching fellowship in physics at the University of Illinois. In 1945, she became the second woman to receive a Ph.D. degree in physics from Illinois.” (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Yalow.html>)

10. A Day of Beauty: Helena Rubenstein

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/hrubinstein.html>

“Aladdin had his lamp; Helena Rubinstein had her twelve pots of face cream to help her become a multimillionaire and a moving force in the cosmetic industry.

She was born in Cracow, Poland, on December 25, 1870, the oldest of eight children of Augusta and Horace Rubinstein. She briefly studied medicine in Switzerland and immigrated to Australia in 1902. She noticed that the Australian women had rough reddish faces that required cosmetic attention. Rubinstein opened a modest shop in Melbourne where she dispensed her "Creme Valaze" and instructed women individually on how to care for their skin.

She worked long hours and her shop prospered. In 1908, her sister Ceska joined her and took over the management of the shop as she went to London with a \$100,000 to start what would become an international organization.

She met Edward Titus, an American journalist in London, and they were married in 1908. They had two sons, Roy, in 1908, and Horace in 1912. They lived in Paris and when World War I started, they moved back to the United States. She opened beauty salons throughout the country where her skin care and her creams were in demand. The department stores were clamoring to sell her products.

Rubinstein was a brilliant innovator in developing her business so that it required routines and women. She trained sales people to teach women skin care and devised a diet plan for beauty. She inaugurated a "Day of Beauty" in her salons which became an instant success. She understood and appreciated the value of advertising and she made full use of it in developing her business. She divorced her husband in 1937 after a shaky marriage for the past ten years. She married Prince Artchil Gourielli-Tchkonina, a Georgian prince twenty years her junior, in 1938. She developed a line of male cosmetics which bore his name. He died in 1956 and her son, Horace, died two years later.

Rubinstein was very much concerned and interested in the welfare of Israel. She was very generous with monetary contributions. She founded the Helena Rubinstein Pavilion of Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv where her collection of miniature rooms is housed. The

Helena Rubinstein Foundation, created in 1953, provided the necessary funds to organizations concerned with health, medical research and rehabilitation. The Foundation also supported the American Israel Cultural Foundation and awarded scholarships to Israelis.” (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/hrubinstein.html>)

Part II: Questions to Consider and Discuss

1. Why was the period from the late 1800s through the turn of the century such a period of change and innovation in America?
2. What were some of the most important inventions at this time, and why?
3. What words and images come to your mind when you think about the words: produce and adapt?
4. How did the mass producing of matzah for Passover or Frank’s hot sauce show the American spirit of production and adaptation?
5. Why is the Maxwell House Haggadah so famous?
6. What made Joseph Jacobs such an advertising genius?
7. How does the Maxwell House Haggadah show the effort among so many to combine being Jewish and American? Why do you think this was a difficult pursuit at times and still is?
8. How did the invention and popularity of the radio change American culture and society? Why do you think Americans were especially fascinated by science fiction stories in the 1950s? What was going on in the world of space exploration at this time? Are Americans still as fascinated by science fiction today? Think about Harry Potter. How has our version of fantasy changed? How do you account for these changes? How does our knowledge of science and space help or hinder the science fiction and fantasy worlds of film, television and literature today?
9. Why was the Barbie Doll so revolutionary? Do you think that Ruth Handler’s Jewish identity figured into her creation of Barbie in any way? If so, how? Do you think that Barbie helped or hindered a young girl’s notions of body image and femininity? Is Barbie an icon with which we can still feel comfortable today? Why or why not? Barbie was seen as a working woman and a mother- how were these ideas of womanhood thought of in the 1950s and 1960s in America?
10. Kenner Toys created some of the most popular toys in America, period. Did you play with any of the toys this company created? Again, did the fact that the company’s founders were Jewish influence the creation of their toys in any ways? How? What was so smart about the kinds of toys they produced? Are there any adult products that today are being made into toys (toy cell phones, etc?)
11. How did the superheroes reflect current trends in America at the times they were created? Do you read comic-books today? Why do you think they were so popular in the 1940s to 1960s and maybe less so today? Has anything taken their place in popular culture?
12. What major contribution did Rosalyn Yalow make to science? What are some of the most exciting discoveries being made today in science and medicine? What do you expect to hear about in the future? (cures for diseases, cloning, etc.)

13. What contributions did Helena Rubinstein make to American culture and society? Do you think makeup is an important and positive element of fashion and beauty or something that is harmful in some way? How did Helena Rubinstein show her commitment to being Jewish throughout her life?
14. Which invention do you think was the most interesting/important/creative? Why? If you put yourself for a moment back to the turn of the century, what words and images do you think would characterize that time period in America? Do you think of today as being a period of massive growth and change as well? In which areas?

Exhibit Activity

General Question for all students: How do the artifacts in the “Quest for Success” panel show the blending of Judaism and “Americanism”? How would you describe what “Americanism” means?

Eighth graders can examine the “Quest for Success” panel objects and take notes with the objective of planning their commercials for their post-exhibit activity.

Tenth graders can examine the “Quest for Success” panel objects and answer some or all of the following questions depending upon time and the particular interests of the class:

1. **Dov Behr Manischewitz-** What about their outfits and accessories show the blending of Judaism and Americanism?
2. **Manischewitz Matzah-** There are so many interesting things about this photograph. What is different about how we write an address today than how it was written here? Do you know where the street is that is on the box in Cincinnati? It is spelled “matzos” which was more of a Yiddish pronunciation of the word “matzah.” Where is the return address from?
3. **“Frankly Speaking”-** How does the phrase “50 years of progress” tie into the notion of the industrial revolution? Would you guess that this was celebrating a tea and spice company?
4. **Frank’s Foods-** Do you think these foods look like they have modern packaging? Why or why not? Can you tell that these were created by a Jewish entrepreneur? Why or why not?
5. **Maxwell House Haggadah-** What about this is an advertisement for Maxwell House? What tells us that it is a Jewish book? Can you think of another food product that would be appropriate for another holiday in which the two could join forces like this? What about Cadbury chocolate eggs for Easter!
6. **Maxwell House Haggadah-** Why is the word “original” in italics? What is funny about this? How is the way Maxwell House coffee is described here different from how you think it is described today in commercials? What is the message that is trying to be conveyed in this advertisement?
7. ***The Electrical Experimenter-*** Can you believe there is a whole magazine about electrical things? How much did it cost? How much does a magazine cost today?

- What was so exciting about electrical things in the early to mid 1900s? What does the cover make you think of?
8. ***Amazing Stories Magazine***- How much does this cost? How much do comic books or magazines cost today? What is happening in the picture? Why do you think science fiction was so popular in the early to mid 1900s? Is it as popular today? Think about Harry Potter. How has the emphasis changed?
 9. **Hebrew Technical Institute Certificate**- Why do you think Jewish people organized a Hebrew Technical Mechanical school? Why do you think the name “Hebrew” was part of it, and not “Jewish”?
 10. **“For Dependability”**- What does the writing style make you think of? Why was this phrase so important for this product?
 11. **“New Pilot Plant”**- Can you believe that an impoverished immigrant on the lower east side of New York was eventually able to create this? What does this tell us about the “American Dream”?
 12. **Jewish National Fund Certificate**- There is a lot going on in this certificate. What does Isidore Goldberg’s support for planting trees in Israel show you about his Jewishness even after he was in America and became a financial success? What do the pictures in the certificate of the people planting make you think of?
 13. **Action Comics, The Fantastic Four Cover, Pages From the Comic Book**- How much did this cost? Have you ever bought a comic book? How much do they cost today? How do the writing and the graphics make you know it is not a modern comic book? Why do you think that comics about the amazing feats of superheroes resonated in the early to mid 1900s? Are we still hooked on Superman and Batman? In what venues are people today experiencing these stories? Can you read the page? What is the story about?
 14. **Helena Rubinstein**- She revolutionized women’s beauty products. What about her picture makes you think she cared about fashion and beauty?

Post Exhibit Activities:

Eighth graders should plan and execute their commercials as their post-exhibit activity.

Tenth graders can answer the following questions at home:

1. Based on what you have learned and seen at the museum, how was Judaism commercialized at the turn of the century? (Manischewitz matzah, Maxwell House Haggadah, even super-heroes with Jewish connotations). How do you see religion being commercialized in America today? Think about Christmas, Easter, Hanukkah, etc. Is this a positive or a negative part of American popular culture? Why? If you could take one religious item and combine it with a sense of American culture how would it look? Think about Christmas tree ornaments that look like the American flag, etc. Why do companies design items like this, and why do Americans like to buy and use them? What message does it send about being religious and American?

Or, if you are against the combining of religion and Americanism in any way, explain your reasons for feeling this way.

2. The Industrial Revolution: Some have called land exploration “searching out the frontier.” How was an inventive and entrepreneurial spirit also a quest for the frontier? Why was the turn of the century so ripe for change and invention? What segments of society today do you see as having the largest openings for new inventions and why (technology, medicine, food preparation, film, literature, etc.)?

Extension Activity: Make a comic strip that shows one or more characters forging the frontier of *invention* at the turn of the century. It can involve one of the figures you learned about or another famous inventor from this time period. It should demonstrate how the person made use of his or her individual background, whether it be his or her ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, etc. and how he or she combines those aspects of themselves with Americanism and opportunities in America to forge new ground.