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OF SAN FRANCISCO, 1849-1870

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**Jews of the Metropolitan West:
A History of the Jews of San Francisco, 1849-1870**

Seth D. Hochberg-Miller

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination**

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

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Referee: Dr. Jacob R. Marcus

Dedication:

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who, more than all others, have made me what I am and have taught me what I know.

To my Great Grandfather, Benjamin Krevat, and my Grandparents, Murray and Sadie Miller, who lived their lives in Jewish time...

To my Grandparents, Jack and Ann Gelber, who lived together with total dedication, and to my Grandma Ann, who loves the world...

To my Grandma, Millie Miller, who lives with commitment and determination...

To my Parents, Arnie and Judy Miller, who gave me the security of love and who have taught me to live what I believe and to take responsibility...

To my Sister, Beverly Abrams, and my Brother, Roger Miller, who have shown me to challenge the difficult and to strive for excellence...

To my Wife, Lisa, who I love, respect and admire more than I can say...

And to my Daughter, Mara, who has taught me to give back what I have received...

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I would also like to thank my wife, Lisa, who (sometimes with a grumble) repeatedly stopped her work to help me with problems.

And finally, I would like to thank our newborn daughter, Mara, who not only is the cutest baby around, but who was also on her best behavior over these past few months and allowed me to finish this thesis on time.

Jews of the Metropolitan West:
A History of the Jews of San Francisco, 1849-1870

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DIGEST

Arriving in the city with the California Gold Rush, San Francisco's earliest Jews, as did all of the immigrants, had a strong desire for economic gain. As the gold was in the mountains in the interior, these city-dwelling Jews were not miners. Instead, they were primarily merchants, taking advantage of San Francisco's position as the major port, and thus the shipping and commercial center of the region. While active in virtually every field of business and the professions, Jews especially focused on the businesses of clothing and dry goods, tobacco, liquor and wine, and jewelry and watchmaking and repair. A few families succeeded to the degree that they later became benefactors of the city. Most Jews, however, owned their own businesses and were moderately successful.

As San Francisco was a new city made up of many nationalities, no particular group had overwhelming influence. This situation brought about a degree of inter-group tolerance unusual for the era. True coexistence prevailed; groups demonstrated mutual respect, while group boundaries were rarely breached. Jews and non-Jews, for example, did not mix socially with any regularity, but there was also little apparent anti-Jewish sentiment and very little outright discrimination. The Jews found themselves in a very welcoming environment.

San Francisco's Jewish community continually strived to

be organizationally complete. Before the end of 1849, the Jews had acquired a cemetery and had founded their first benevolent society, and, by the summer of 1850, two congregations, Emanu-El and Shearith Israel, had been established. Both congregations having had their rented temporary synagogues destroyed by fire several times, they built their own synagogues in 1854. The year 1854 also brought the arrival of California's first rabbi, Dr. Julius Eckman, who was appointed rabbi of Emanu-El. He also organized the city's first formal religious school which operated for many years. In 1857, Eckman began publishing the city's first successful Jewish periodical,¹ the Weekly Gleaner. At the end of 1863, this newspaper was joined by another, the Hebrew, published by Philo Jacoby.

Soon after the establishment of the International Order of B'nai Berith, its first lodge in San Francisco, Ophir Lodge No. 21, was founded. Similarly, when the Ancient Jewish Order of Keshet Shel Barzel arose, San Francisco's Jews quickly founded lodges of that organization, too. Many Jews were active in San Francisco's Jewish literary and debating societies, and in the various *chebras*, which functioned as mutual aid and burial societies. Some organizations thrived and some functioned sporadically, but San Francisco's Jews continually founded new ones. They

¹ The Voice of Israel, published by Herman M. Bien and Henry J. Labatt, pre-dated the Weekly Gleaner by a few months. It was, however, published irregularly for only a six-month period, October, 1856, to April, 1857.

strived for an organized Jewish community.

San Francisco's Jewish community was not without its tensions, however. One of the most significant tensions arose from the rivalry between the German and Polish Jews. Within one year of its establishment, the original benevolent society split into two societies, one German and one Polish. Similarly, the congregations were founded along national lines from the beginning. A few years later, when the women's benevolent society was organized, it, too, suffered a split of its German-speaking faction. Given their rivalry, it is not surprising that both congregations built and dedicated their first synagogues at the same time. Though the rivalry was strong, outright hostility was unlikely. Throughout these decades, the groups successfully joined together on many projects. Despite their rivalry, the Germans and the Polish were dedicated to Judaism as they saw it.

Introduction

Ceded to the United States by Mexico under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, California was distant from the bulk of American settlement. The expansive Plains, the imposing Rocky and Sierra Nevada Mountains, and many as yet independent Native American tribes stood in the way of the overland settler. The trip by sea was equally difficult. The only two routes available were either all the way around South America or to the Caribbean coast of Panama by sea, sixty miles overland, through malaria-filled swamps and bandit-filled territory, across the Isthmus to the Pacific coast, and then to California by sea.¹ When gold was discovered in the year 1848, however, thousands of people jumped at the chance to make the trip.

The first Pacific Mail steamer, the *California*, arrived in San Francisco on February 28, 1849, and the *California*

¹ To illustrate the difficulty of the passage to California by sea, the following is an account of the trip made by August Helbing, the future founder of the Eureka Benevolent Society (A.W. Voorsanger, ed., Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of the Jews and Judaism in California, (San Francisco: Emanu-El, 1916), p. 108; and, Irena Narell, Our City: The Jews of San Francisco, (San Diego: Howell North, 1981), p. 23-24): After Helbing had purchased a ticket for a cabin aboard a steamer from a scalper for \$450, another man boarded with a ticket for the same cabin. The captain promised dire consequences if he did not vacate, but Helbing pulled two pistols and threatened to shoot the first person to enter. He kept the cabin. Later in the evening he went out for a walk on deck and noticed a man and woman huddled with their child in the drizzle. He promptly offered them his cabin, grabbed his blankets, and went out to the deck to sleep in the rain.

Gold Rush was in full swing. San Francisco, being the most convenient port to the gold fields at the time, soon swelled with gold-seekers, merchants, and assorted others. In the words of one historian, "Within a twelve-month span this squalid village of several hundred, consisting of an abandoned mission, a decayed presidio, and a cluster of adobe huts, had grown into a tough and burgeoning devil-may-care city of 20,000. In another year it would have 50,000 inhabitants."² As might be expected of a frenzied migration such as this, many Jews joined the rush.

These early Jewish immigrants to San Francisco laid the foundations of a Jewish community which has swelled in numbers and thrived even unto this day. They established the first businesses, formed the first benevolent societies, purchased the first cemeteries, formed the first congregations, built the first synagogues, enacted the first congregational splits, participated in politics as candidates and voters, sent their children to the first Jewish schools, attended concerts, operas, balls and soirees, animal museums,³ organizational picnics and benefits, formed the first organizations for young people, and established the first inter-regional Jewish lodges. Their deeds were varied, both benign and dramatic, yet the mark they made on the history of San Francisco was, indeed, profound.

² Narell, Our City, p. 33.

³ Animal museums seem to be a mixture of a circus and a traveling zoo (The Weekly Gleaner, March 27, 1857, p. 85).

Chapter One:
Jews in the Economy of San Francisco

California was the golden land. Gold Rush immigrants came from all over the world and from all walks of life. Many were American-born, many came from Europe and Russia, either directly or by way of the East Coast or the South, and many came from such places as Australia, South Africa and Hawaii. They spoke many different languages. Wherever the news reached, some people were bound to come. Some had money and goods when they landed, ready to start in business. Others came without anything, barely able to scrape together the money for the journey, hoping to strike it rich at the mines. This jumbled mass of people, pouring into the state from overland routes and by sea from every direction, met in the mines and mining towns, on city streets and country roads, in the marketplaces, in the auction yards and in the shops of California, all searching for their piece of gold. We know that many found it and that more did not.

California Gold Rush immigrants, regardless of their pioneering and enterprising spirit, were not always looked upon in the most favorable terms by non-Californians. One visitor¹ described those in California as there only to get rich, not to settle the land and build communities. He continued by saying that they would not make a home for Judaism, with proper synagogues and ministers. A few years

¹ Occident, April, 1852.

later another visitor, Israel ben Joseph, more commonly known as Benjamin II, made the following observation of those in California:

...El Dorado was found...as if a new Jerusalem was to be besieged, its golden temple robbed, its golden sepulchre captured...With wild adoration for that which lay buried in the mines of California, an adoration in its strength nothing less than that of a religious enthusiasm...²

Another early visitor, Solomon Nunes Carvalho, a Sephardic Jew from Charleston and the daguerrotypist for John Fremont's fifth western expedition in the early 1850's, described the scene he witnessed upon entering a gambling hall in San Francisco.

I had the curiosity to enter one of the frequented "hells," to see the process of winning and losing money...at some [tables] might have been seen old gentlemen with white hair, to all appearances respectable, and whose proper place seemed to me, to be a magistrate's bench, or a judge's forum...men silently place their gold on a card, and before a second expires, it is swept away...the insatiate vice of selfishness, not satisfied with eight times what he originally staked, leaves his pile, building castles in the air with the imaginary proceeds of his winnings -- when in the twinkle of an eye, a gentle sweep from the smiling syren dissipates his dreams of fortune, and he retires from the hell penniless in reality...in an hour he has lost the labor of months.³

Though it is obvious that the migration to California was primarily for economic reasons, it is clear from these three descriptions that the immigrants' zeal for great profit was strong. Whether they came as miners, merchants,

² Quoted in Harold I. Sharfman, Jews on the Frontier, (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1977), p. 278.

³ Solomon N. Carvalho, Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1954), p. 310-311.

laborers, speculators, bankers, or artisans, they all came to make money. One place where thousands of these treasure-seeking immigrants came was San Francisco.

San Francisco, being the main port of the region, was the center of travel and shipping for the West. All immigrants who had traveled by sea arrived there, and thus, for interior-bound immigrants, the city served as their jumping-off point. Being the center of shipping, San Francisco almost immediately became the West's center of commerce.

Incoming ships would unload their cargoes of foodstuffs, manufactured goods, and materials, and the distributors, brokers and merchants would, in turn, sell them in the city or send them off to points inland. The recipient in the interior might be a usual business account or he might be a relative who ran a branch of the family business there. One gold country resident relates, "It is stated that on hearing of a rush to a new mining excitement in the interior, a Jewish merchant in San Francisco sent a relative to view the prospect and advise on the proposition of opening a store."⁴ An example of a Jewish family business centered in a large city with a branch in the interior is Goldstone, Friedlander & Company of New York and San Francisco, with the branch of

⁴ Charles Peters, The Autobiography of Charles Peters, (Sacramento: La Grave Co., 1915), p. 139, quoted in Robert E. Levinson, The Jews in the California Gold Rush, (New York: Ktav, 1978), p. 7.

Goldstone & Company of Shasta.⁵ This position of San Francisco as the center of the distribution of goods is clear.⁶ Sacramento and Stockton, too, grew as centers of commerce, being the supply centers for the northern and southern mines, but their spheres of influence were more limited to regions of California. San Francisco, however, was the main focal point. As early as 1852, there were reports in the American Jewish press⁷ of men traveling to San Francisco on business from places such as St. Louis and Cincinnati. One such businessman⁸ even tried to enlist subscribers to the Jewish periodical, the Occident. This businessman was not wrong to seek Jewish subscribers there; in its role as the commercial center of the West, San Francisco had already attracted many Jews in their search of gold.

Jews were in search of gold, but most of them sought it

⁵ Shasta Republican, September 20, 1856, p. 2, quoted in Jack Benjamin Goldmann, "A History of Pioneer Jews in California, 1849-1870," (Master's thesis, Department of History, University of California at Berkeley, 1940), p. 12. Samuel Goldstone of Shasta was also a subscriber to and correspondent for the American Israelite. Two of his letters appear on May 4, 1855, and September 14, 1855.

⁶ Two examples of merchants who sent merchandise from San Francisco to the interior and to Oregon are Morris Shloss in, Morris Shloss, "Autobiography and Reminiscences of Morris Shloss," in Memoirs of American Jews, 1775-1865, vol. II, ed. Jacob R. Marcus (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), p. 266, and Levi Strauss, in Narell, Our City, p. 40-42.

⁷ Occident, April, 1852; and American Israelite, September 22, 1854.

⁸ Occident, October, 1852.

as payment for the goods they, as merchants, were selling. All through the Gold Rush years, in fact, a very high percentage of Jews were merchants.⁹ Financing mercantile businesses, however, was very difficult. A combination of working capital and available credit was usually necessary; a shipment of goods could cost thousands of dollars. Many immigrants did not have either the capital or the credit to be successful, but many Jewish immigrants did. These Jewish businessmen in California frequently borrowed money from their families and associates in the East and in Europe,¹⁰ thus amassing greater working capital and a better credit line. According to one historian, the German Jews tended to immigrate to California in large family groups and to settle together.¹¹ In this way the whole family backed the business financially. It is possible that the higher degree of economic success of the German Jews over the Eastern European Jews was due to this immigration pattern. The Eastern European Jews generally came as individuals, and thus they had less financial backing. Interestingly, among even the

⁹ According to Levinson (The Jews of the California Gold Rush, p. 6-7), "most" Jews of this period were merchants. Not having made a tally myself, I prefer the phrase "a very high percentage."

¹⁰ Peter R. Decker, "Jewish Merchants in San Francisco: Social Mobility on the Urban Frontier," in The Jews of the West: The Metropolitan Years, ed. Moses Rischin, (Waltham: American Jewish Historical Society, 1979), p. 15-16.

¹¹ Rudolf Glanz, The Jews of California: From the Discovery of Gold until 1880, (New York: Waldon Press, 1960), p. 144.

small Jewish shopkeepers, it was very common to loan out capital for interest earnings.¹² B. Ashim ran an advertisement¹³ for a \$2,000 loan he was offering in 1857.

In San Francisco, Jews were especially involved in wholesale and retail clothing and dry goods.¹⁴ The columns of the Jewish weekly newspapers of the 1850's and 1860's, the Weekly Gleaner, published by Julius Eckman, and the Hebrew, published by Philo Jacoby, support this; they are filled with advertisements for these businesses.¹⁵ J. Seligman & Company, for example, was so successful in this field that it was able to leave the business entirely and establish a banking house with its accumulated wealth.¹⁶ It might be said that Jews clothed the West during the Gold Rush, and, in this, the Jews of San Francisco had a particularly prominent role.

However involved in clothing and dry goods San

¹² Decker, "Jewish Merchants in San Francisco," p. 18.

¹³ Weekly Gleaner, July 17, 1857, p. 215.

¹⁴ Decker, "Jewish merchants in San Francisco," p. 19. "Clothing and dry goods" includes both domestic and imported products, men's, women's, and children's apparel of all types, hats and caps, shoes and boots, furs, silks, scarves, trimmings, and other "fancy" goods. Perfume and other cosmetics were also frequently sold at these stores.

¹⁵ For examples of the advertisements see: Weekly Gleaner, January 16, 1857, p. 7; January 23, 1857, p. 15; and January 30, 1857, p. 22; and Hebrew, August 5, 1864, p. 8; and January, 21, 1865, p. 6. A look at the advertisement pages in any issue of these newspapers would illustrate similar involvement in clothing and dry goods.

¹⁶ Hebrew, January 17, 1868, p. 3.

Franciscan Jewish merchants were, they were also involved in many other lines of goods and products. To name a few, they were prominent in the retail businesses of jewelry, watch-making and repair - H. Zacharias, and Henry Neuman;¹⁷ tobacco and cigars - J. Vogelsdorff & Company¹⁸ and Morris Mayblum;¹⁹ crockery - A. Livingston;²⁰ wholesale and retail wines and liquors - Newmark, Kremer & Company²¹ and Charles Kohler & Company;²² and, to a lesser extent, grain and flour brokering - Joshua Norton²³ and Isaac Friedlander;²⁴ toys - Feldbush & Company and Simon Cohen & Brother;²⁵ candies - Bernheim & Ehrenpfort;²⁶ stationery - A. Zellerbach;²⁷ and bedding and

17 Hebrew, December 20, 1867, p. 5 and p. 9.

18 Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 5.

19 Hebrew, April 29, 1864, p. 5.

20 Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 8. Even though Livingston's name is not decidedly Jewish, it is assumed that he is Jewish because his advertisement makes clear that his crockery is kosher for Passover, not being let out during the year.

21 Weekly Gleaner, March 20, 1857, p. 75.

22 Weekly Gleaner, April 17, 1857, p. 115.

23 Narell, Our City, p. 78.

24 Harriet and Fred Rochlin, Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), p. 72.

25 Hebrew, December 20, 1867, p. 5 and p. 8.

26 Hebrew, January 17, 1868, p. 3. H. Rothschild and F. Ehrenpfort were the proprietors.

27 Narell, Our City, p. 60.

furniture-Jacob Schreiber,²⁸. Generally, any type of retail business was likely to have its Jewish merchants. Jews were so prominent in the commercial life of San Francisco, in fact, that if "collection day"²⁹ fell on Yom Kippur, it was changed.³⁰

While Jews in San Francisco were primarily retail and wholesale merchants, they were also well-represented in other fields of commerce. Many owned restaurants³¹ and coffee houses,³² hotels³³ and boarding houses,³⁴ and some owned industrial and manufacturing companies. Eagle Brass Foundry,³⁵ owned by M. Greenberg and W. H. Moore, and Mt.

²⁸ Hebrew, February 28, 1868, p. 5.

²⁹ "Collection Day" was the day that outstanding business accounts would be settled.

³⁰ "San Francisco," Jewish Encyclopedia, 1904.

³¹ Jacob Weiss, The Opera Restaurant -- Hebrew, January 10, 1868, p. 7.

³² August Saulmann, Saulmann's Coffee Saloon -- Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 12.

³³ Goldsmith House (hotel) -- Weekly Gleaner, February 13, 1857, p. 40; Abraham Tandler (Temple Emanu-El) and Lang, The Continental Hotel -- Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 6; Mrs. Warschauer, The Warschauer House (hotel) -- Hebrew, April 5, 1866, p. 6; Jacob Levy, The Eureka Hotel -- Hebrew, January 10, 1868, p. 01 [10]; and Mrs. Stodole (she is probably Jewish because over the years she ran a kosher boarding house and this hotel had kosher board available), The Continental Hotel -- Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 8.

³⁴ Sarah Moise's boarding house, Weekly Gleaner, April 3, 1857, p. 97; Joseph Steen's boarding house (with kosher board available), Hebrew, August 18, 1865, p. 5; and Jacob Steinbrink's boarding house, Hebrew, January 5, 1866, p. 5.

³⁵ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 2.

Diablo Coal,³⁶ owned by ___ Greenhood and W. H. Neubauer, were among these. There was a window and mirror glass company, owned by Fr. H. Rosenbaum,³⁷ and a Jewish rifle-maker, Charles Meyer.³⁸ One can never forget Levi Strauss and Company,³⁹ the maker of denim workpants. Surprisingly, for an industry thought to be significantly Jewish in later history, insurance, of all the insurance companies listed in the Weekly Gleaner and the Hebrew, only Occidental Insurance Company seems to be.⁴⁰ The professions, too, have gained the reputation in contemporary American society as having many Jews involved, and the very beginnings of this can be seen in the Jewish newspapers.

³⁶ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 3. The Mt. Diablo Coal partnership later broke up and advertisements for two Jewish-owned coal companies, W. H. Neubauer Coal and S. Klein Coal (listed as formerly of Greenhood, Neubauer & Klein), are found (Hebrew, November 29, 1867, p. 12).

³⁷ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 3.

³⁸ Hebrew, November 24, 1865, p. 7. It is unclear if this is the Charles Meyer who was president of the First Hebrew Benevolent Society and officer of Congregation Shearith Israel for some years during the 1860's.

³⁹ Michael M. Zarchin, Glimpses of Jewish Life in San Francisco, (Oakland: Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1964), p. 62.

⁴⁰ Hebrew, March 10, 1865, p. 5. J. Greenebaum, the vice-president, and B. Rothschild, the actuary, are Jewish. In addition, dozens of the listed directors are Jews, primarily associated with Temple Emanu-El, including Louis Sloss, Lewis Gerstle, Louis Sachs, Levi Strauss, and many others. Whether or not B. Platt, president (probably of Platt's Music Hall of the late 1850's and early 1860's), and R. N. Van Brunt, secretary, are Jewish is doubtful, as they do not appear on any Jewish organizational list that I found for these two decades.

Benjamin II reports⁴¹ that in the year 1859 there were 296 lawyers, 173 doctors, thirty-seven dentists, and five opticians in San Francisco. Though probably only a tiny fraction of these professionals were Jewish, a few of them did advertise or were mentioned in the newspapers. The first doctor mentioned⁴² was Dr. Israel Moses, who was thanked by C. K. Garrison & Company Steamship Lines for "heroically" treating the ill during the *Uncle Sam* steamship cholera epidemic, of 1855, during which 225 people died. In 1862, Dr. Sharlach was mentioned⁴³ in the First Hebrew Benevolent Society annual report as having waived his fee for services to indigent Jewish sick under their care, and is subsequently presented a certificate and a resolution of commendation.⁴⁴ Several lawyers ran advertisements, Joseph Simpson,⁴⁵ I. N. Choynski,⁴⁶ ___ Rosenbaum, of the Smith & Rosenbaum

⁴¹ Benjamin II (a.k.a. Israel ben Joseph), Three Years in America, 1859-1862, vol. I, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), p. 182-185.

⁴² American Israelite, November 9, 1855.

⁴³ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, unpaginated.

⁴⁴ Hebrew, March 3, 1865, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Weekly Gleaner, April 17, 1857, p. 115. This is probably the same J. Simpson who was one of the directors of the Jewish communal cemetery (Occident, November, 1854), and who, with Henry J. Labatt, helped clear legal questions regarding the title for the cemetery (Occident, July, 1855).

⁴⁶ Weekly Gleaner, February 15, 1861, p. 5. I. N. Choynski was a correspondent to the American Israelite who signed his articles "Maftir," the one with the last word.

partnership,⁴⁷ and John Landesman, who was also endorsed by the Hebrew as a "co-religionist."⁴⁸ Interestingly, after Landesman's initial advertisement, in which he alone was named, he was listed in three subsequent partnerships, Dann & Landesman,⁴⁹ Heed & Landesman,⁵⁰ and Drake, Hent & Landesman⁵¹. Henry J. Labatt, too, was a lawyer. He was mentioned as having worked with J. Simpson in clearing legal questions regarding the Jewish communal cemetery,⁵² and as being in the process of compiling a compendium of law with the aim of reconciling the often conflicting judicial decisions regarding "Sunday trading laws."⁵³ G. Frankel ran an advertisement as an optician.⁵⁴

Women were also business-people in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, and Jewish women were no exception. While Jewish men could be found in virtually every economic field,

⁴⁷ Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Hebrew, July 15, 1864, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Hebrew, January 5, 1866, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Hebrew, September 1, 1866, p. 2 (incorrect pagination).

⁵¹ Hebrew, December 20, 1867, p. 12.

⁵² Occident, July, 1855.

⁵³ Occident, June, 1856, cited from the Alta California, March 13, 1856. H. J. Labatt is also identified as a lawyer in, Morris U. Schappes, A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875, (New York: Citadel Press, 1950), p. 441 and 690.

⁵⁴ Hebrew, December 20, 1867, p. 01 (incorrect pagination).

due to the gender-role expectations of the day, the fields in which women participated were greatly restricted. Their fields of business fell, almost exclusively, into the realms of what was acceptable for women to do -- namely taking care of the home and the household. Almost all of the women who advertised their businesses in the Jewish newspapers were proprietors of either boarding houses, hotels, or millinery stores. This fits the expectation of women feeding the family, keeping the house, and arranging for the clothing for those in the household. Sarah Moise owned a boarding house,⁵⁵ Mrs. Levy owned a boarding house and later added a main hall in which to host weddings and parties,⁵⁶ Mrs. Warschauer owned the Warschauer House hotel,⁵⁷ Mrs. Stodole, the New York Hotel and the Continental Hotel,⁵⁸ Mrs. Isaacs owned the Identical Saloon, where hot lunches and liquor were available,⁵⁹ and Rebecca Martin boarded children to be brought up strictly in the Jewish faith.⁶⁰

A second group of Jewish women owned millinery stores, favoring the field of business also favored by Jewish men.

⁵⁵ Weekly Gleaner, April 3, 1857, p. 97.

⁵⁶ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 12; and November 29, 1867, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Hebrew, April 5, 1866, p. 6; and May 3, 1867.

⁵⁸ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 13; and March 27, 1868, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Hebrew, October 19, 1866, p. 4; and November 9, 1866, p. 2.

We find Mrs. Marks Millinery,⁶¹ Mrs. Mish's Fancy Millinery,⁶² Mrs. Dannenberg's Infants', Children's and Ladies' Wear,⁶³ Mrs. E. Rosenberg's French Millinery,⁶⁴ and Mathilda Newmark's Fancy Store.⁶⁵ Another woman, Madame Jaffa, advertised as piano teacher.⁶⁶ Finally, the only woman who was in a field of business not immediately associated with women during the period of the Gold Rush was Mrs. R. Jacobson's Hebrew books and Judaica.⁶⁷ Though these women did not break out of the accepted role of women-as-caretakers, they did break the notion that women could not participate in economic life. We know that at least several

⁶¹ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 6. It is possible that Mrs. Marks was the widow of Samuel Marks, an early settler and a founder and occasional officer of Temple Emanu-El and the Eureka Benevolent Society. His obituary appeared in the Hebrew (March 3, 1865, p. 4). Marks left a \$10,000 life insurance policy to his wife and his friends raised an additional \$25,000 for the support of his wife and eight children (Hebrew, March 31, 1865). It is likely that she used some of the money to start the millinery business.

⁶² Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 11. We know she is Jewish because we find the last name "Mish" on some of the rosters of the Jewish organizational leaders.

⁶³ Hebrew, December 20, 1867, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Hebrew, January 10, 1868, p. 9.

⁶⁵ Leo Newmark, California Family Newmark: An Intimate History, (Santa Monica: Norton B. Stern, 1970), p. 26-27.

⁶⁶ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 8.

⁶⁷ Hebrew, March 3, 1865, p. 11; and May 3, 1867, p. 11. Mrs. Jacobson's first advertisement was written in Hebrew. This business had been advertised under her husband's, R. Jacobson's, name previously (Weekly Gleaner, December 6, 1861), so it is possible that he died and she took over the business.

of these women were successful because their long-running advertisements in the newspapers tell of long-running businesses.

Jews being a fairly small percentage of the people in San Francisco, most Jewish merchants did not expect to make most of their profits from other Jews. Yet, some Jews were definitely involved in Jewish-oriented businesses.⁶⁸ Most of these businesses involved kosher meats, kosher and kosher for Passover groceries, wine, and matzoth, kosher meals at boarding houses and hotels, and ritual circumcision. The existence of these fields of business, well-advertised as they were in the Jewish press, indicates that many of the Jews of San Francisco were significantly involved in Jewish culture and practices.

From looking at the advertisements in the Jewish press, it is easy to conclude that the various food requirements of *kashrut* were the biggest Jewish-related business, with ritual circumcision also being significant. As early as 1852⁶⁹ there are reports of the availability of kosher meat in San Francisco, which means someone was slaughtering, butchering, and selling it for profit, and, by 1853,⁷⁰ there are reports of matzoth. As early as the second issue of the Weekly

⁶⁸ Some of this section will overlap with Chapter Three, in that some religious needs are served by various businesses.

⁶⁹ Occident, April, 1852.

⁷⁰ Occident, July, 1853.

Gleaner, January 23, 1857, there was an advertisement for kosher meat, B. Adler's kosher meat with Isaac Goldsmith identified as the *shochet*, in this case. With the market for kosher meat being profitable, we find quite a few kosher meat sellers in virtually every issue of the newspapers. In most issues there are four or five sellers with advertisements, and, in a few, as many as nine.⁷¹ There was at least one advertisement for kosher meat written in German,⁷² indicating that at least some of the German Jews, less known for rigorous adherence to law, also wanted kosher meat.

Matzoth also proved to be a significant business, and, though at times it was expensive, it was readily available.⁷³ In late January or early February until the time of Passover every year, several congregations⁷⁴ would take out advertisements stating from which merchants matzoth could be ordered, and boarding houses⁷⁵ and hotels⁷⁶ would advertise

⁷¹ Weekly Gleaner, April 17, 1857, p. 110; July 3, 1857, p. 203; October 9, 1857, p. 321; January 7, 1859, p. 4; February 15 1861, (unpaginated); and the Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 6; November 9, 1866, p. 2.

⁷² Hebrew, February 3, 1865, p. 12.

⁷³ Occident, July, 1853; and Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 33.

⁷⁴ Weekly Gleaner, January 30, 1857, p. 22; February 20, 1857, p. 46; and March 6, 1857, p. 62.

⁷⁵ Weekly Gleaner, January 16, 1857, p. 7; April 3, 1857, p. 97; Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 6; and March 24, 1865, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Weekly Gleaner, February 14, 1862, unpaginated; Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 6; and March 24, 1865, p. 5.

kosher for Passover meals. Besides the congregationally-sponsored merchants who sold matzoth, many other merchants⁷⁷ and several bakeries⁷⁸ also advertised for orders. Advertisements for kosher for Passover wine and groceries⁷⁹ were also plentiful. Passover was a good business for some merchants.

Ritual circumcision was probably not a big business, but it surely did help some men earn their living. All through the pages of the Jewish newspapers,⁸⁰ advertisements are found of men offering their services as *mohalim*. As every Jewish baby boy is supposed to be circumcised, the numerous Jewish community of San Francisco would have a fairly large number of circumcisions.⁸¹ Regarding other Jewish life-cycle events for which one might earn money, one interesting advertisement appears. One man advertised⁸² to be a *shomer*, a watcher, for the dead.

Overall, Jews sought out the general public for their

⁷⁷ Weekly Gleaner, February 20, 1857, p. 46; and February 15, 1861, p. 5.

⁷⁸ Weekly Gleaner, February 7, 1862, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Weekly Gleaner, March 20, 1857, p. 75; and March 27, 1857, p. 88.

⁸⁰ Weekly Gleaner, June 5, 1857, p. 172; September 11, 1857, p. 281; November 20, 1857, p. 355; February 15, 1861, p. 5; Hebrew, January 27, 1865, p. 5; and March 27, 1868, p. 8.

⁸¹ Since we do not find an outcry in the newspapers that circumcisions were not being done, we can assume the practice was generally observed.

⁸² Weekly Gleaner, February 15, 1861, p. 8.

profits, not only other Jews, and so did non-Jews seek out Jews for some of their profits. In 1857, in the early issues of the Weekly Gleaner, there was a majority of Jews who advertised, but as time progresses, more and more advertisements of non-Jews appeared. By 1864, when the Hebrew was first published, advertisements of non-Jews outnumbered those of Jews, and by the late 1860's, they outnumbered those of Jews by a great deal. This trend probably indicates two things: 1) when the Weekly Gleaner was first published, non-Jews had little knowledge of it; as time passed, non-Jews became more aware of them; and 2) as time passed, the numbers of Jews in San Francisco and their overall affluence increased, so they became a more sought-after group economically. Regarding the economic position of Jews, all of a sudden, in early 1862, a number of advertisements for service-worker agencies appeared.⁸³ Suddenly, Jews were deemed likely to hire maids, cooks and servants. The number of advertisements of non-Jews in the Jewish newspapers indicates that all merchants seek business where they will most likely find it. Good business is not a cultural province.

Much has been said over the years of the negative perceptions many non-Jews express about Jews in business, and we, too, will give this topic some attention in a later chapter. Yet, remarkably little reporting has been done

⁸³ Weekly Gleaner, January 10, 1862, p. 5; and January 31, 1862, p. 3.

about the positive perceptions many non-Jews have expressed on the same subject. As a conclusion to this chapter on the economic life of Jews in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, some attention to this is given.

As early as 1850, Jews had made a positive impression on at least some non-Jews. From the Daily Alta California⁸⁴ we read of the Jews that "there are many enterprising and useful citizens of the Jewish persuasion in our community." The San Francisco Herald⁸⁵ praised the "industry and steady habits" of the Jews. Assemblyman Buffum,⁸⁶ in a response to the Speaker of the Assembly's, Mr. Stowe's, attack on the Jews, credited them with building some of the finest buildings in the cities and aiding the state's economic growth to a considerable degree. The San Francisco Sun⁸⁷ reported that Jews were involved in commerce and city-building, that they were law-abiding and supportive of the arts, and were loyal to the United States. The economic success of many of the Jews did not bother these writers. In fact, they recognized that their economic success was good for the city, state, and region. Jews were deemed valuable because they succeeded.

⁸⁴ Cited in the Occident, September, 1850.

⁸⁵ San Francisco Herald, July 24, 1854, cited in Occident, October, 1854.

⁸⁶ Occident, June, 1855.

⁸⁷ Cited in American Israelite, November, 16, 1855.

Chapter Two:
The Benevolence and Philanthropy of San Francisco's Jews

It has been said of San Francisco's Jews that "benevolence and charity are very well observed."¹ This characterization appears to be accurate. From the earliest times of the Gold Rush, they were organizing communal institutions to meet the needs of the entire Jewish population of the city. Their benevolence also extended to such places as Palestine, Germany, Morocco, Prussia, and Russia. As to their benevolence toward the non-Jews of San Francisco, the Daily Alta California wrote, "Their charity and liberality is proverbial -- giving of their means with a hand which the eye does not watch, and to all deserving cases, irrespective of nationality or creed. Contributing freely to all public movements..."² As soon as a need was perceived, they organized to meet it. They never waited long. Though strife between the Jews in San Francisco was not unknown, this did not long hinder their efforts. It is rightly said that benevolence and charity were very well observed by the Jews of San Francisco.

It is thought that Henry D. Johnson, of a prominent family from Cincinnati, was the first Jew to have died in San

¹ American Israelite, October 10, 1856. The quote was in a letter from then-Congregation Emanu-El minister Herman Bien, dated September 1, 1856.

² Daily Alta California, April 14, 1862, p. 2, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 148-149.

Francisco during the Gold Rush era.³ Though he died on the day after the December 25, 1849, fire, the city's first major fire, Johnson is thought to have died from eating a poisonous mushroom,⁴ not from any fire-related accident. With one of their co-religionists dead, the need for a Jewish cemetery came to the forefront. A meeting of January, 1850, concerning the acquisition of the cemetery, brought about the formation of the Hebrew Benevolent Society.⁵ Though reports of its acquisition conflict,⁶ in early 1850, a cemetery,

³ Jacob Voorsanger, The Chronicles of Emanu-El: Being an Account of the Rise and Progress of the Congregation Emanu-El Which was Founded in July 1850, (San Francisco: George Spaulding & Co., 1900), p. 138; Martin A. Meyer, "The Jews in California," p. 17; and Rochlin, Pioneer Jews, p. 195.

⁴ Rochlin, Pioneer Jews, p. 195.

⁵ Occident, April, 1852. In its listings of Jewish organizations in San Francisco, the Hebrew (January 8, 1864, p. 8, and all subsequent issues which include the organizational lists), indicates that the First Hebrew Benevolent Society, then called the Hebrew Benevolent Society, was founded in 1849. If this is so, then it was probably at the very end of the year.

⁶ The Occident, May, 1850, and February, 1851, report that a cemetery was purchased, the latter including the month of its purchase to be April, 1850. The Occident, April, 1852, cites a report in the California Courier (undated) about the publishing of the California Hebrew and English Almanac, 1851-1852, by Alexander Iser. (Iser was at one point a *shochet* employed by Congregation Shearith Israel (Shearith Israel, Minutes, June __, 1851, and August 11, 1851).) An excerpt from the Almanac, quoted in the Courier, states that the cemetery was purchased for \$4,000 in January, 1850, due to the efforts of several men, including H. Hart. So, according to these sources, the cemetery was definitely purchased, H. Hart was probably involved, and the month of its acquisition was either January or April, 1850.

The problem lies with the secondary sources. Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 138), Meyer ("The Jews in California," p. 17), and Narell (Our City, p. 47) indicate that Emanuel

"free for all Israelites in California,"⁷ was acquired. By September or October of that year, however, tension between the members of the Society mounted and there was a split. The German and French Jews formed a new society, the Eureka Benevolent Society, and the remaining Polish, Russian, and English Jews renamed their society the First Hebrew Benevolent Society.⁸ The two societies did, however, jointly manage the cemetery.⁹

The causes of the tension between the two groups which formed the two societies are not entirely clear, but they appear to have been related to country of origin. One historian¹⁰ writes that the Bavarians broke off the original Hebrew Benevolent Society to form the Eureka Benevolent Society amidst claims that the Poles were turning away needy

Hart, a native of Holland, donated the land for the cemetery "early in the year 1850." (The span of these few months is agreed to by all.) Rochlin (Pioneer Jews, p. 195), on the other hand, states that a committee of six, headed by Henry Hart, collected \$4,000 and purchased the cemetery. Rochlin's information, though uncited, probably comes from Occident (April, 1852) listed above, as all of the information is the same. If Henry Hart and Emanuel Hart are the same person, then part of the problem is solved; this is unknown. Like Rochlin, Voorsanger does not cite any sources (Meyer and Narell probably follow Voorsanger), yet he must have had some source for the name, Emanuel Hart, which included his country of origin, and for his assertion that he donated the land. What this source is, if any, is unknown.

⁷ Occident, April, 1852.

⁸ Occident, February, 1851.

⁹ Occident, November, 1854; and July, 1855. The names of the managers of the cemetery are some of leaders of both societies.

¹⁰ Rochlin, Pioneer Jews, p. 196.

Bavarians, favoring Poles instead; the Poles made countering claims about the Germans. Another historian¹¹ reports that the president of the Eureka Benevolent Society, August Helbing, favored German Jews in the disbursement of aid, and a third¹² reports that only German was permitted at Eureka meetings, unless Helbing granted dispensation to speak English. Whether or not ethnic favoritism, or perceived ethnic favoritism, was the reason for the establishment of the two societies is not certain, however, due to the composition of the societies being, for the most part, along national lines, some tension was surely present.

Neither were the Jewish women of San Francisco free from national prejudice. The extent of their division, however, appears to have been less dramatic. On July 27, 1855,¹³ the women met to form the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, and elected Fanny Tandler,¹⁴ a German, and Doris Rich,¹⁵ a Pole, as officers. By November, however, a German-speaking Jewish women's benevolent society was established, Der Israelitische

¹¹ Narell, Our City, p. 47.

¹² Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 34.

¹³ American Israelite, August 31, 1855.

¹⁴ Fanny Tandler's husband, Abraham Tandler, was elected to be treasurer of Temple Emanuel on September 30, 1855 (Occident, December, 1855), and frequently shows up as an officer at other times.

¹⁵ Doris Rich's husband, Jacob Rich, was elected president of Shearith Israel on September 30, 1855 (Occident, December, 1855), and served for several years in this capacity and others.

Frauenverein.¹⁶ This society was charged with having as its purpose the disbursement of aid to German women only.¹⁷ The charge was rebutted¹⁸ with the claim that the society was German-speaking only because many of its members did not speak English at all or spoke it poorly, having recently arrived from Germany. In response to the split, the original society, consisting of both German and Polish women, renamed itself the United Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society, indicating that the other society had caused disunity. By 1856 there were five Jewish charitable societies,¹⁹ First Hebrew, Eureka, United Hebrew Ladies', Der Israelitische Frauenverein, and a fifth whose identity is unclear.²⁰

Benevolent societies had several objectives. From

¹⁶ American Israelite, November 2, 1855. Almost all of the husbands of the officers of this society are frequent officers of Temple Emanuel (Occident, December, 1855; and American Israelite, December 5, 1856).

¹⁷ American Israelite, November 2, 1855; and February 8, 1856.

¹⁸ American Israelite, February 8, 1856.

¹⁹ Occident, March, 1856.

²⁰ The fifth benevolent society is probably the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, whose list of officers appeared in the American Israelite (March 27, 1857). As this is the only place in which I found the name of this society, however, I am unsure if the report is accurate. Another association, the Hebrew Young Men's Mutual Beneficial and Literary Association, with 60 members (Occident, April, 1856), is mentioned in a variety of sources from its inception in 1855 through the early 1860's. The names of the officers for these two organizations are entirely different, so even accounting for the reports being one year apart, it is unlikely that their identities were confused.

Benjamin II,²¹ who included the constitution and by-laws of the Eureka Benevolent Society, we know that "The object of the society is: 'Aid for the needy, care for the sick and burial for the dead.'" Distinctions were made in the distribution of money to members and non-members. Members, not surprisingly, were entitled to larger sums. Eureka's Widows and Orphans Fund was established in September, 1858, to help provide for the survivors of the deceased. Overall, the aim of the benevolent societies was to aid members, and, to a lesser extent, non-members, in times of economic need.

Though a certain amount of tension was surely present among the Jews of San Francisco, causing divisions, this did not much hinder their benevolent works. The Jewish newspapers of the time, those of San Francisco, the Philadelphia-based Occident and the Cincinnati-based American Israelite, frequently carried lists of officers of the societies, their membership numbers, and news of their fund-raisers and charitable distributions.

Within four weeks after the split between First Hebrew and Eureka in October, 1850, their memberships were at 120 and sixty, respectively.²² By the end of 1861, First Hebrew had 257 members,²³ including forty-four new ones, and by the

²¹ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 215, p. 221 and p. 224.

²² Occident, February, 1851.

²³ Weekly Gleaner, January 10, 1862, p. 4.

end of 1867, it had grown to 341.²⁴ In 1863, First Hebrew attracted an impressive seventy new members.²⁵ Benjamin II reported²⁶ that Eureka had more than 300 members by the early 1860's. United Hebrew Ladies', at the time of its inception in 1855, had between seventy and 100 members,²⁷ and ten years later, by mid-1865, it had 184.²⁸ By the end of 1861, Der Israelitische Frauenverein had eighty-six members,²⁹ and by March 1865, it had grown to 160.³⁰

To raise funds for their charitable distributions, the benevolent societies charged dues to their members, accepted donations, and organized benefits. Dues ranged from \$1 to \$1.25 per month.³¹ First Hebrew and Eureka employed anniversary balls as their big fund-raisers, First Hebrew's always on Purim eve, but they were also known to throw balls and benefits at other times of the year. While balls were apparently the most common of the fund-raisers, they were far from the only type.

²⁴ Hebrew, January 17, 1868, p. 4.

²⁵ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 4.

²⁶ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 210.

²⁷ The Occident (December, 1855) indicates that United Hebrew Ladies' had 100 members at its inception, and the Hebrew (September 8, 1865, p. 4) claims seventy.

²⁸ Hebrew, September 8, 1865, p. 4.

²⁹ Weekly Gleaner, December 20, 1861, p. 5.

³⁰ Hebrew, March 24, 1865, p. 4.

³¹ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 211 and p. 227.

In June, 1853, First Hebrew gave a benefit³² at "the Theatre"³³ which netted \$3,456, the largest amount to date in California.³⁴ In March, 1854, First Hebrew threw its Purim eve anniversary ball³⁵ which raised \$1600 and attracted 500 people, including 200 women.³⁶ Both Jews and non-Jews attended, indicating that, at least in the realm of philanthropic social functions, Jews and non-Jews mixed. In October of that year, San Francisco's mayor, C. K. Garrison, donated³⁷ one month's salary, \$333.33, to the Society, indicating that its works were recognized outside of the Jewish community. The Society organized a benefit³⁸ at the Metropolitan Theatre in January, 1856, which netted \$930. Occasionally entertainers also volunteered their services;

³² Occident, September, 1853.

³³ The identity of "the Theatre" is unclear, but due to its usage, there would be the expectation that the Jews of the city would know its identity. One possibility is the Metropolitan Theatre, which was repeatedly used as a location for benefits.

³⁴ As a token of thanks for arranging the benefit, First Hebrew presented the manager with a silver tea set, valued at \$400 (Occident, October, 1853).

³⁵ Occident, May, 1854.

³⁶ In the earliest years of the Gold Rush, there were few women in San Francisco. By 1854, there was probably a growing number, yet, as we find the number of women mentioned in a tone of commendation, we can interpret it to mean that women were still in the vast minority.

³⁷ American Israelite, November 3, 1854; and Occident, January, 1855.

³⁸ Occident, April, 1856.

Miss Provost³⁹ contributed a performance to First Hebrew in January, 1857. Other locations of anniversary balls were Musical Hall in 1857,⁴⁰ Platt's Music Hall in 1862,⁴¹ and Union Hall in 1866.⁴² The last of these balls netted \$2,355. At its anniversary ball of 1864,⁴³ an American flag and First Hebrew's banner were displayed, a full orchestra, dancing, and excerpts from operas were provided as entertainment, and 688 tickets were sold, raising \$2,815.⁴⁴

Like First Hebrew, Eureka also received acknowledgement of its work in the form of a gift from a politician; California's United States Senator, John Conness, sent Eureka a sixteen-volume set of books, containing all of the public documents and acts of Congress for the past session.⁴⁵ Its anniversary ball of November, 1854,⁴⁶ netted \$1,000, and the one of October, 1856,⁴⁷ netted \$900. Eureka gave a benefit

³⁹ Weekly Gleaner, January 16, 1857, p. 6; and American Israelite, February 27, 1857. Apparently Miss Provost was a known entertainer of some sort.

⁴⁰ Weekly Gleaner, March 6, 1857, p. 61.

⁴¹ Weekly Gleaner, February 21, 1862, p. 4.

⁴² Hebrew, April 13, 1866, p. 4.

⁴³ Hebrew, March 25, 1864, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Hebrew, April 20, 1864, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Hebrew, July 22, 1864, p. 5. The editor of the Hebrew, Philo Jacoby, recommended to Eureka that it donate the set to one of the Jewish literary societies of the city, as they would undoubtedly get more use there.

⁴⁶ Occident, January, 1855.

⁴⁷ Occident, January, 1857.

for its Widows and Orphans Fund at the Opera House in January, 1866; the attraction, this time, was "Hamlet."⁴⁸ Though some of its benefits netted less money than many of First Hebrew's, Eureka was probably more influential.⁴⁹ The German and French Jews who made up the organization were, as a whole, wealthier than the Poles of First Hebrew. Given this, and given Eureka's great capital assets, its ability to afford a great degree of charitable distribution, and other large cash outlays and investments, it is possible that individual contributions were of greater amounts than those of First Hebrew.

United Hebrew Ladies' chose a different type of benefit in May, 1857, and hosted it at Lee & Bennett's North American Circus.⁵⁰ A few years later, in January, 1864, it hosted a benefit at the Metropolitan Theatre; tickets sold for \$1.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Hebrew, January 5, 1866, p. 4.

⁴⁹. Around 1860, when he was writing, Benjamin II lists Eureka's deposited capital at \$22,941, and its charitable disbursements for the past year at \$5,002. In contrast, he lists First Hebrew's deposited capital at \$4,000 and its charitable disbursements for the past year at about \$2,000 (Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 210, p. 211 and p. 227). If his numbers are correct, and we have every reason to believe they are at least close, then the picture painted by the newspaper reports, indicating that First Hebrew was the more active and influential of the two, were misleading.

By the turn of the twentieth century Eureka was definitely the most influential of the benevolent societies in San Francisco (Zarchin, Glimpses of..., p. 193).

⁵⁰ Weekly Gleaner, May 22, 1857, p. 152.

⁵¹ Hebrew, January 22, 1864, p. 4.

In January, 1856,⁵² Der Israelitische Frauenverein gave a charity ball which netted \$750, and it had \$1,200 in its treasury by mid-year.⁵³ In September, 1866, the Verein hosted the opera, "Lucia di Lammermoor," at the Metropolitan Theatre.⁵⁴

San Francisco's Jewish benevolent societies were involved in charitable works inside the city and outside, for the benefit of Jews and for the benefit of others. The following examples, however, are only the highlights, as they appeared in the newspapers. The more common charitable distributions mostly went unrecorded.

When a cholera epidemic broke out in the city shortly after the split between First Hebrew and Eureka, members of both societies joined together to form the Humane Society. This society had as its object lending assistance to the sick and burying the dead.⁵⁵ The Hebrew Benevolent Society of

⁵² Occident, March, 1856.

⁵³ Occident, May, 1856.

⁵⁴ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Occident, February, 1851. A list of the officers of the First Hebrew Benevolent Society (primarily Polish) is also included in this article. A. Wassers (Watters) is listed as the president of First Hebrew in 1850 and vice-president of Temple Emanu-El (primarily German) in 1851 (Occident, April, 1852), indicating that neither the benevolent societies nor the congregations were exclusively either German or Polish. Also, two of the trustees, H. Hart and J. J. Joseph, served as officers first for Temple Emanu-El and then for Shearith Israel during 1850 and 1851 (Occident, February, 1852). From a comparison of the lists of officers, the benevolent societies seem to be somewhat less rigidly defined by nation of origin than the congregations, though both have a strong tendency in that

Stockton, because several recent deaths and burials had depleted its resources, found it necessary to solicit contributions from sources outside the city. To this solicitation, First Hebrew pledged⁵⁶ some support. In San Francisco, in April, 1857, a fire in a poor neighborhood destroyed many homes, including six Jewish ones. Both First Hebrew and Eureka pledged⁵⁷ an equal amount of money to each family to assist them; it was also reported that United Hebrew Ladies' and the Verein intended to help. In 1861, First Hebrew aided victims of a flood in Sacramento and victims of a fire on Commercial St., in San Francisco.⁵⁸ Of the fire on Commercial St., the Weekly Gleaner reported⁵⁹ that "Der Deutsche Frauen Verein,"⁶⁰ in addition to many individuals, lent assistance to the family of Joel Mintz, one of the families whose home was destroyed. Benjamin II⁶¹

direction.

⁵⁶ American Israelite, March 27, 1857.

⁵⁷ Weekly Gleaner, May 1, 1857, p. 128.

⁵⁸ Weekly Gleaner, January 10, 1862, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Weekly Gleaner, May 31, 1861, p. 4.

⁶⁰ It is very likely that the name, Der Deutsche Frauen Verein, is meant to indicate Der Israelitische Frauenverein, and not a non-Jewish German women's society, because it appears in the Weekly Gleaner. No other non-Jewish organizations are ever mentioned in this manner in any of the issues available to me for research.

⁶¹ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 211-212.

reported the name of the man to have been Moses Minz,⁶² and indicated that, after an initial refusal, the Eureka Benevolent Society also lent assistance.⁶³ Later in 1861, Eureka took charge⁶⁴ of the care of two children of a murdered Jew, Louis Vogel, from Dutch Flat; any "good Jewish family" interested in adopting the children were instructed to apply to August Wasserman, the newly-elected president of Eureka.⁶⁵ A few months later, a young Jewish peddler, named Nathan, was found robbed and murdered eighteen miles outside of Oakland; First Hebrew buried him⁶⁶ in Giboth Olam cemetery. By mid-1862, First Hebrew was subsidizing⁶⁷ Julius Eckman's Hephtsi-bah School, and, to reciprocate, the Weekly

⁶² Undoubtedly, Joel Mintz and Moses Minz, both known as a victim of this fire, are the same person.

⁶³ As mentioned before, Eureka was made up of German and French Jews; according to Benjamin II, only one Polish Jew was a member. Benjamin further reported that the Jews of the city "supposed" that Minz was refused by Eureka's president, August Helbing, because he was a Pole. After the refusal, Minz told "an American Christian" the story, who, in turn, called upon Helbing to offer assistance. Helbing then gave Minz \$40, as he could not appear to discriminate against Polish Jews in the face of Christian scrutiny. Helbing was the founder of Eureka in 1850 and had been its president since its inception. It is possible that this incident lead to the termination of Helbing's tenure as August Wasserman was elected president on December 1 of that year. Helbing was no longer even among its officers.

⁶⁴ Weekly Gleaner, November 22, 1861, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Weekly Gleaner, December 13, 1861, p. 4-5.

⁶⁶ Weekly Gleaner, February 14, 1862, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Weekly Gleaner, May 2, 1862, p. 4.

Gleaner, Eckman's newspaper, allowed the Society⁶⁸ to advertise its anniversary ball gratis. In 1863, First Hebrew paid for the care of five patients in the German Hospital, at \$15 per month. Three of the patients died and were buried by the Society at Giboth Olam cemetery.⁶⁹

Some of the more common charitable distributions can be seen in the annual reports of the societies. Sometime around 1860, Eureka paid out \$5,002 in charitable disbursements.⁷⁰ In 1862, First Hebrew's expenses were \$2,481, and in 1863 they had risen to \$3,650.⁷¹ In 1864, they were up to \$9,503, including \$4,503 of which were charitable.⁷² During this year First Hebrew paid special attention to increasing its Widows and Orphans Fund, as most of its members were family men. In 1865, United Hebrew Ladies' had an income of \$11,485, and paid out an impressive \$9,598 in disbursements.⁷³ By 1867, First Hebrew was expending \$6,742 for charity.⁷⁴

Another institution of benevolence, the *chebra*, is similar to the benevolent society, but it seems to have had a

⁶⁸ Weekly Gleaner, May 16, 1862, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 4. The doctor, Dr. Sharlach, waived his fees.

⁷⁰ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 211.

⁷¹ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 4.

⁷² Hebrew, January 13, 1865, p. 1.

⁷³ Hebrew, September 8, 1865, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Hebrew, January 17, 1868, p. 4.

more narrow focus. The *chebra*, too, aimed to provide sick and needy members with care, medicine, and sometimes survivor benefits, but proper burial was its primary objective. As no *chebra* is ever mentioned in the newspapers as assisting disaster victims or contributing philanthropically to the population at large, it seems that they primarily served their memberships. If a Jewish non-member were in need of burial, however, it is likely that the burial would be provided for. Interestingly, some names appear as officers of both a *chebra* and a benevolent society,⁷⁵ even though the benevolent societies provided for burial.

The first organization of this kind in San Francisco, Chebra Bickur Cholim Ukadisha (CBCU), was founded in 1857,⁷⁶ with the aim of assisting Jews in time of need, visiting the sick, and burying the dead. Evidently, CBCU's membership sought out other ways to lend the Jewish community support, as its *Minyan* Committees of 1858 and 1859 presented a Torah, silk cover, and silver shield to Shearith Israel in May,

⁷⁵ J. P. Davis, L. King and Morris B. Ashim all appear as officers of First Hebrew in 1857 (American Israelite, February 27, 1857), and as organizers of Chebra Bickur Cholim Ukadisha (CBCU) in 1857 (Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 228). Also, upon his death in 1864, both First Hebrew and CBCU published resolutions of commendation to Morris B. Ashim (Hebrew, July 15, 1864, p. 4; and July 22, 1864, p. 5). All three of these men were also officers of Shearith Israel (American Israelite, December 5, 1856).

⁷⁶ Weekly Gleaner, February 20, 1857, p. 46; also cited, from the Weekly Gleaner, in American Israelite, April 3, 1857.

1861.⁷⁷ By the early 1860's, it had approximately 200 members and \$6,000 in funds.⁷⁸

Chebra Berith Shalome, organized in July, 1860,⁷⁹ with similar aims as CBCU's, arranged⁸⁰ that the money raised during the High Holy Days of 1861 would be deposited in its Widows and Orphans Fund. Likewise, Chebra Achim Rachmonim,⁸¹ organized in October, 1862, was founded to benefit⁸² sick and infirm members. The Hebrew Self-Protecting Association was established in 1863,⁸³ to benefit members "in sickness and misfortune." Another organization, the First Hebrew Ladies' Mutual Benefit Association⁸⁴ was formed in early 1864,⁸⁵ and

⁷⁷ Weekly Gleaner, May 24, 1861, p. 5.

⁷⁸ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 228.

⁷⁹ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 8.

⁸⁰ Weekly Gleaner, November 8, 1861, p. 5.

⁸¹ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 8.

⁸² Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 35.

⁸³ Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 35. It is possible that the Hebrew Self-Protecting Association is "H.S.P.S." cited in the list of Jewish organizations in the Hebrew (January 8, 1864, p. 8).

⁸⁴ According to Glanz (The Jews of California, p. 35) mutual benefit associations were for people of less means, while benevolent societies were for people of greater means.

⁸⁵ Hebrew, February 5, 1864, p. 4. Interestingly, the First Hebrew Ladies' Mutual Benefit Association is listed in the Hebrew's list of Jewish organizations of the city, beginning February 12, 1864, however, United Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society and Der Israelitische Frauenverein are never mentioned.

was still functioning in 1866.⁸⁶ And finally, Chebra Beth Abraham, was formed in April, 1865.⁸⁷

The rise of this type of organization indicates that many Jews sought out other Jews for comfort. In addition, they served as a type of combination medical and life insurance policy; the member would know that, if the case arose, his or her friends and associates would take care of the medical necessities and the surviving family. As all of these organizations had the aim of providing the necessities of care, medicine, and frequently burial and survivor's benefits, the Jews, as well as others of the time, must have felt threatened to a fair degree by the uncertainty of health. Evidently, these organizations helped alleviate their fear.

Other, not specifically philanthropic, groups also joined in the effort of raising funds for other Jewish organizations. The young men of the "Chinese Museum"⁸⁸ performed and collected some money on Purim eve, 1865; they divided the money equally between the United Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society and Der Israelitische Frauenverein.⁸⁹ Also during the mid-1860's, organizations called "social clubs" began to spring up. The Eureka Social Club was one of

⁸⁶ Hebrew, January 5, 1866, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Hebrew, April 14, 1865, p. 5.

⁸⁸ The "Chinese Museum," from context, appears to be either a local musical group or dramatic group.

⁸⁹ Hebrew, March 24, 1865, p. 4.

these. This club occasionally threw benefits for other Jewish organizations. It gave a Calico Ball⁹⁰ at Platt's Music Hall, to benefit the Hebrew Free School, in March, 1865;⁹¹ it was deemed successful as the time of the last dance was 4:00 AM.⁹² The Eureka Social Club also gave benefits for the United Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society at Turnverein Hall, in November, 1865, of "dramatic and social entertainment,"⁹³ and one at Platt's Music Hall in April, 1868.⁹⁴

The Jews of San Francisco did not only focus on their own needs and the needs of those in their region, but they also recognized the need to care for their brethren in distant countries. Both the Weekly Gleaner and the Hebrew carried international news, each donating a regular column to it. This should not be surprising as many of the Jews of the city were foreign-born. From the news in the columns, it is clear that they were keeping track of their international brethren. This was especially true in the case of Palestine.

90 A "Calico Ball" was a fund-raising ball to which all of the women would wear dresses made of calico, an inexpensive fabric. Toward the end of the ball, the women would change into another outfit and donate their calico dresses to the charitable organization which hosted the ball. The organization would then distribute the dresses to the poor of the city.

91 Hebrew, March 10, 1865, p. 4.

92 Hebrew, March 31, 1865, p. 4.

93 Hebrew, November 19, 1865, p. 5.

94 Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 5.

In 1853, Joseph Shannon, Emanu-El's president, donated \$144 to needy Jews of Palestine, in care of Rev. S. M. Isaacs of New York.⁹⁵ In 1861, Rabbi Nissan, an emissary from Jerusalem, lectured at Shearith Israel on the state of the Jews in Palestine.⁹⁶ Out of his visit, a Palestine relief group was formed, called Ohabai Zion. Its officers were the rabbinic and lay leadership of the city.⁹⁷ In 1863, Ohabai Zion sent \$500⁹⁸ to Sir Moses Montefiore for the needy Jews of Palestine, and, in 1865, the amount was \$250.⁹⁹ Ohabai Zion was still functioning in 1867, as former members and current subscribers were called to meet at Ohabai Shalom synagogue.¹⁰⁰

But the Jews of Palestine were not the only Jews who attracted the attention of their San Franciscan brethren. A fire in the town of Boyanowe,¹⁰¹ in August, 1857, burned the synagogue and all the Torah scrolls, and five Jews, of the twenty-five total, were killed. S. Cramer, secretary of

⁹⁵ Occident, January, 1853.

⁹⁶ Weekly Gleaner, November 22, 1861, p. 5.

⁹⁷ Weekly Gleaner, November 29, 1861, p. 4.

⁹⁸ Hebrew, January 15, 1864, p. 4.

⁹⁹ Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Hebrew, December 20, 1867, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ I am unable to locate this town. From its spelling, which is probably phonetic, it is probably in Poland, Prussia or Russia. It is also possible that it was misspelled in the newspaper, as misspellings were very common.

CBCU,¹⁰² L. King, and Pincus Berwin collected donations to be sent for relief.¹⁰³ Around 1860, congregants from Temple Emanu-El collected \$3,668 "for the suffering Jews of Morocco."¹⁰⁴ In 1868, under Eckman's leadership, an organization was founded with the purpose of aiding poor Jews and children of Russia and eastern Prussia. Eckman was entrusted with \$10,000 from the organization.¹⁰⁵ In 1869, a society with the aim of helping poor Jews to immigrate from Eastern Europe to the United States was formed.¹⁰⁶

Benevolent societies and other organizations were not the only ones to lend a hand to others in time of need. Sometimes individuals carried out the work themselves. First Hebrew, Eureka, and Der Israelitische Frauenverein, were not the only ones to aid the Jewish families of the Commercial St. fire in May, 1861; many individuals did also.¹⁰⁷ Mrs. Regensburger offered the Mintz family a room in her hotel, Mr. Dahlman gave the children some clothes, Joseph Rich

102 Weekly Gleaner, March 27, 1857, p. 85.

103 Weekly Gleaner, October 9, 1857, p. 316.

104 Zarchin, Glimpses of..., p. 94.

105 Hebrew, May 1, 1868, p. 4, cited from Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 40. Newmark (California Family Newmark, p. 35) also mentions this meeting, citing the Hebrew's article. He writes that his father, J. P. Newmark, and Pincus Berwin, the Newmark's next-door-neighbor, both frequent First Hebrew board members, were elected to the Executive Council of the society.

106 Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 40.

107 Weekly Gleaner, May 31, 1861, p. 4.

offered to pay a few months rent, Rev. Henry A. Henry, of Shearith Israel, promised to find some furniture for the family and a business for Mr. Mintz, B. Ashim sought individual donations, and "L.S.,"¹⁰⁸ upon seeing Mintz in the street, gave him \$10.

A few years later, in 1864, the wife of Mr. Klein died aboard a steamship, one day after giving birth. The child survived, but Mr. Klein was without funds: Women were asked to help with the child, and Mr. Toplitz took charge of receiving charity funds.¹⁰⁹ In the following issue, Mr. Klein thanked the "charitable ladies" who had hired a nurse for his infant and who visited almost daily. Charity funds from individuals, however, were scarce; \$10 was received from Visalia and \$2 from San Francisco.¹¹⁰

In the same year, an unnamed woman was reported to have disbursed \$200 to the city's most needy Jews in honor of the High Holy Days; the Hebrew encouraged further generosity of this type, as it would aid the benevolent societies in their work.¹¹¹ In another instance, the friends of the late Samuel

¹⁰⁸ As it is considered a greater *mitzvah* if an act of *tzedakah* is not publicized, the Weekly Gleaner probably wrote "L.S." to walk the line between publicizing and not publicizing. Because "L.S." was meant to hint at the person's identity, it is likely that the person was well-known. Three possibilities of the giver's identity are Louis Sachs, president of Temple Emanu-El, Louis Sloss, an owner of the Alaska Commercial Company, and Levi Strauss.

¹⁰⁹ Hebrew, February 5, 1864, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Hebrew, February 12, 1864, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Hebrew, September 16, 1864, p. 4.

Marks donated \$25,000 to his surviving wife and eight children.¹¹² And finally, a group of women informally organized to do fancy work and knitting to be raffled off to benefit the poor.¹¹³

In all of these instances individuals either acted alone or organized together to carry out good works. Sometimes they involved great amounts of money and sometimes not. The important thing about them, though, is that they were done. The people saw a need and they sought to meet it.

So far, we have neglected to mention one of San Francisco's benevolent societies. It is a society that received little or no mention in the newspapers as a benevolent society, but one which developed into another institution which survives even until today. Its history of development illustrates the usual organizational growth of San Francisco's Jewish institutions during this period very well. The society was called Benevolent Society and Congregation Beth Israel.

Beth Israel was organized sometime in the early 1860's by Orthodox Polish Jews.¹¹⁴ From the little information available, it appears that it did function as a benevolent society for its members, but that within a few years there were strong moves emphasizing the congregational aspect. By

¹¹² Hebrew, March 31, 1865, p. 4. This was discussed at greater length in Chapter One, footnote #61.

¹¹³ Hebrew, September 20, 1865, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Meyer, "The Jews in California," p. 53.

1864, Rev. Henry, of Shearith Israel, had dedicated a Torah¹¹⁵ for the congregation. In the same year, the Hebrew reported¹¹⁶ that Tisha b'Av¹¹⁷ would be observed there, and, a few months later, Beth Israel arranged a fund-raising ball¹¹⁸ for their building fund. By 1865, at the latest, Beth Israel was conducting its own High Holy Day services,¹¹⁹ and, in 1866, Rev. Max Wolf was their reader.¹²⁰ In May, 1867, Beth Israel was actively seeking members, as it published its schedule for daily and Sabbath services in the Hebrew's advertising columns.¹²¹ In 1868, Rev. W. Weinstein, self-identified as Beth Israel's *chazan*, advertised his services as a *mohel*.¹²²

At the beginning of the Gold Rush period, both Shearith Israel and Temple Emanu-El developed out of the two benevolent societies, First Hebrew and Eureka. Though the

¹¹⁵ Hebrew, March 4, 1865, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ Hebrew, August 12, 1864, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ Tisha b'Av is a day of fasting and mourning, commemorating, primarily, the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

¹¹⁸ Hebrew, October 21, 1864, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Hebrew, August 11, 1865, p. 5; and September 15, 1865, p. 7.

¹²⁰ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 4.

¹²¹ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 11.

¹²² Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 8.

memberships of the organizations were never identical,¹²³ they were strongly associated with one another. They were so strongly associated, in fact, that, in the early 1860's, when the Jews purchased two cemeteries, Temple Emanu-El and Eureka bought Nevai Shalom, and Shearith Israel and First Hebrew bought Giboth Olam.¹²⁴ Benevolent Society and Congregation Beth Israel left out the first step; it formed both organizations simultaneously. Though after a few years the congregational aspect gained ascendancy, it was not an accident that benevolent society was listed first in its name. The Jews of San Francisco cared about making life better.

¹²³ J. P. Newmark, for example, was an officer of First Hebrew and a member of Temple Emanu-El (Newmark, California Family Newmark, p. 53).

¹²⁴ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 138.

Chapter Three:
The Religious Life of San Francisco's Jews

Jews were among the first immigrants to San Francisco during the Gold Rush, and with them they brought their Judaism. They arrived from all over the world, Poland, Russia, Germany, France, England, Australia, various regions of the United States, and other places. The Judaism which the various groups brought with them, however, differed.

The Polish, Russian, and Australian Jews,¹ for the most part, followed the Orthodox practices of their parents and grandparents. The Germans, the French, and the Americans,² on the other hand, were accustomed to a more liberalized approach. Even among those Jews oriented toward Orthodox practice, some differences existed between the Poles and the Germans.³ We also know that there were differences between the Ashkenazic practices of Central and Eastern Europe and the Sephardic practices of Spain, Portugal, the Mediterranean countries, Holland, and parts of England. It was these Sephardic Jews who came to North America first, so the first American Jewish rite was theirs. The Germans who arrived in the first few decades of the nineteenth century adopted the existing Sephardic ritual. As many of the American-born Jews

¹ As a convenience, we will call this group Polish.

² As a convenience, we will call this group German.

³ The Orthodox Polish ritual was called *minhag Polen*, and the Orthodox German was called *mihag Ashkenaz*.

practiced the Sephardic ritual, and most of the immigrants were Ashkenazic, the heterogeneity of Jewish practice in San Francisco was further emphasized. Disunity in the founding of religious institutions became manifest. Heterogeneity in practice, however, was not the only cause of disunity. The causes for this disunity most likely ran much deeper.

The Germans, as a people, viewed their country to be the center of the intellectual and cultural development of the Western world. The numbers of German philosophers and musical composers, for example, were, indeed, great. Germany's Jews, being from this cultural milieu, likewise, viewed Germany in this way. Other countries, especially those to the east, were inferior, and, therefore, people from other countries were, too. They lacked sophistication, culture and refinement.

Polish Jews had an entirely different perspective. While Germany could boast of being the center of the Western world, Poland was the center of the Jewish world. In Poland dwelled the world's largest Jewish community and many of the greatest sages of Ashkenazic Judaism. The Polish, thus, saw themselves as being at the height of Jewish culture. The Germans, they thought, may have known philosophy and music, but they did not know Judaism; they were too easily influenced by their Christian neighbors. If this background is applicable to the Jews of San Francisco, and most likely it is, then it is easy to see why religious disunity reigned.

To compound the problem, the economic statuses of the

two groups were disparate. As mentioned earlier,⁴ the Germans, who generally immigrated in family groups and had some financial backing, tended to be more successful, while the Poles, who generally immigrated as individuals with few financial resources, succeeded economically to a lesser degree. Thus, a background of unequal economic status, disparate national cultures and different expectations in religious observance, in addition to speaking various languages and an assortment of other things, lead to a perceivable disunity among Jews.

This assertion of the existence of a perceivable disunity should not imply that the various Jewish groups never attained unity on a particular issue or that belligerent animosity reigned. Instead, it is a description, as has been seen in the preceding and will be further demonstrated in the following, that Jews functioned within their own national groups to a great degree. As the split between the First Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Eureka Benevolent Society manifested an underlying disunity among the Jews in the realm of philanthropy, they also lacked unity in the realm of religious observance. The Jews of San Francisco did not form one religious community.

Yom Kippur of 1849 brought about the first religious gatherings in the city. Though accounts conflict, there were

⁴ Chapter One, p. 5.

probably two services, one Polish and one German.⁵ The

⁵ The Occident, December, 1849, excerpts a letter from Morris Samuel to his brother in Philadelphia, dated September 22, 1849: "About forty or fifty Israelites have engaged a room to celebrate the ensuing Fast Day, and have invited me to attend." This source indicates that a room was rented for Yom Kippur, 1849, in which several dozen Jews observed the holiday.

"A Brief Sketch of our Religious Affairs from 1849 to August 1854," written by Seixas Solomons and deposited in Emanu-El's cornerstone in 1854, reads, "The first religious meeting of our people in this city was held on Yom Kippur 5609 (1849) in a tent room occupied by Mr. Louis [alternate spelling] Franklin, situated on Jackson...there were about ten persons present" (Occident, October, 1854). (Voorsanger includes this source in Chronicles..., Appendix B, but neither dated it nor included the identity of the writer.) This source clearly indicates that a service for Yom Kippur, 1849, with about ten people present, was held in the tent of one of the participants.

Unfortunately, several authors either did not have both sources available, or had both sources and tried to blend them into one. Narell (Our City, p. 48), gives the account of the Jackson St. tent; Don Wilson ("Pioneer Jews in California and Arizona, 1849-1875," in Journal of the West, vol. 6, April 1967, p. 227-236) blends the two and asserts that forty to fifty Jews held the service in the tent; and Rochlin (Pioneer Jews, p. 195) blends the two and asserts that thirty Jews observed Rosh Hashana in the tent and that fifty Jews gathered for Yom Kippur. It seems safe to conclude that both services occurred.

As early as 1900, Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 15-16), citing both of the above sources, suggests the actuality of both services, and M. A. Meyer ("The Jews in California," p. 16) concurs. Kenneth Libo and Irving Howe (We Lived There Too, (New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1984), p. 225) also concur. Meyer writes that one developed into the Polish Shearith Israel and the other into the German Emanu-El.

Levinson (The Jews in the California Gold Rush, p. 171) cites a letter, dated January 25, 1904, from Lewis Lewis to Alexander Badt, in which Lewis attests to his attendance at the service in "the building" on Yom Kippur, 1849, and also one from Morris Schloss to Shearith Israel's Board of Trustees, dated August 3, 1904, which attests to his attendance at the service in the tent. Schloss writes that Shearith Israel arose out of this group of Jews.

Polish service took place in Lewis Franklin's tent⁶ on Jackson St., with about ten people in attendance, and the German service took place on Montgomery St., with about fifty people present, in a room where gold dust was weighed.⁷ From the very beginning, the Germans and the Polish were religiously divided.

In June 1850, a group of Jews observed an unspecified religious ceremony at the Albion House, "in the family of Mr. Kelsey," with Dr. Zechariah officiating.⁸ During the summer of 1850, both the Poles and the Germans met in preparation for the upcoming High Holy Days.⁹ On September 1, 1850, Emanuel M. Berg, identified as president of Congregation

⁶ Occident, October, 1854; from Seixas Solomons' "A Brief Sketch of the Israelites in California, from 1849 until this Day," which was deposited in Temple Emanu-El's cornerstone in September, 1854, and copied in the Occident. Though the title is somewhat different, this is the same source included in Voorsanger (Chronicles..., Appendix B), cited in note #5.

⁷ "San Francisco," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905. Harold I. Sharfman, in Nothing Left to Commemorate: The Story of the Pioneer Jews of Jackson, Amador County, California, (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1969), p. 158-159, wrote that seventeen men and one woman were present at the Jackson St. service in the tent, and that forty men and one woman were present at the service in the gold-weighting room on Montgomery St. His information corresponds fairly well to what appears to have occurred, however, he fails to substantiate his claims.

⁸ Alta California, June 14, 1851, cited in the Occident (September, 1850), and Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 18). Voorsanger says that he is unable to ascertain its nature, but that it was sometime after "the Pentecost holidays." He supposes that it was either a circumcision or a wedding.

⁹ California Hebrew and English Almanac, 1851-1852, cited in the Occident (April, 1852).

Emanu-El, rented a room in a building on Bush St. for the German Jews, to be used as a synagogue in which to celebrate the holidays.¹⁰ By the end of 1850, however, Congregation Emanu-El was meeting on Kearney St. and Leon Dyer was its leader.¹¹

In March, 1851, several meetings of the Jews of San Francisco were held.¹² The purpose of the March 16th

¹⁰ A copy of the lease is found in Voorsanger (Chronicles..., Appendix A).

¹¹ Occident, December, 1850. We do not know why Emanu-El no longer met at the Bush St. building which Emanuel M. Berg rented, nor why Leon Dyer had gained Berg's position. We do know, however, that Berg remained a leader of Emanu-El and later regained the presidency.

¹² The Occident (May, 1851) reported from San Francisco's Evening Picayune (March 14, 1851) that the Israelites were to meet on March 16, 1851, to organize the construction of a synagogue. The committee members were identified as J. J. Joseph, H. (Henry) Hart, J. (Israel) Solomon, A. (Abraham) Watters, Samuel Marx (Marks), and Louis Cohen. Israel Solomon was a founder of Shearith Israel and is exclusively associated with it, and Samuel Marks and Abraham Watters seem to be exclusively associated with Emanu-El, while, at this time, J. J. Joseph and H. Hart are variously associated with both. So, it appears that this meeting was neither Polish nor German, but a combination of both, which indicates the likelihood of its purpose being the construction of a synagogue, as reported by the Picayune.

On March 20, 1851, a group met at Abraham Watters' house. This group included Watters, Henry Hart, J. J. Joseph, Abraham C. Labatt, Barnett Keesing, Charles C. Lyon, G. S. Goodman, Samuel Marx (Marks), Louis Cohn (probably Louis Cohen, from above), Leon Dyer, Jacob Rosenbaum, and Mr. Woolf (from the meeting minutes which were framed in Emanu-El's foyer in 1955, cited in Edgar M. Kahn, "Early San Francisco Jewry," unpublished manuscript, American Jewish Archives, circa 1955). Labatt, Dyer, Jacob Watters, and Marks are always associated with Emanu-El, while Joseph and Hart are associated with Emanu-El until the following month. These identifications, in addition to the fact that none of the participants are associated with Shearith Israel at this time, lead to the conclusion that this meeting concerned the official foundation of Emanu-El.

meeting, as San Francisco's Evening Picayune reported, was to organize the construction of a synagogue. Representatives of both the German and Polish parties were listed as committee members, indicating that the parties may have tried to overcome their differences and unite for this purpose. The synagogues, however, would not be built until 1854. By March 20, 1851, members of Emanu-El met separately, and, by early April, both Emanu-El and Shearith Israel incorporated, on April 11¹³ and April 13,¹⁴ respectively.¹⁵ Emanu-El, being

¹³ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 19.

¹⁴ Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 168.

¹⁵ The California Hebrew and English Almanac, 1851-1852 (cited in the Occident, April, 1852), reported that both Emanu-El and Shearith Israel incorporated in April, 1851, Emanu-El slightly preceding Shearith Israel. Emanu-El's officers were: Abraham C. Labatt, president; Abraham Watters, vice-president; M. Schwartz, secretary; N. S. Neustadt, treasurer; and trustees: J. J. Joseph, P. Runkel, L. A. Levy, R. Wyman, and I. (probably Henry) Seligman. Also included in the Almanac is a list of the officers who were elected during the summer of 1850, in preparation for the High Holy Days. They were: Leon Dyer, president; J. J. Joseph, vice-president; and trustees: Henry Hart, Jacob Rosenbaum, P. Runkel, Samuel Marks, and L. A. Levy. (Why Leon Dyer is identified as president during the summer of 1850 and again in the Occident (December, 1850), while Emanuel Berg signed the room rental agreement as president in September, 1850, is unclear.) Thus, Emanu-El was formed during the summer of 1850, and incorporated in April, 1851. Note: Both Joseph and Hart appear as officers of Emanu-El.

The front page of Shearith Israel's minutes reads, "Held worship in April 1850, founded in August 1850" (cited from Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 168), and the minutes for April 13, 1851, read, "Record of previous meetings held August [1850] to date lost," so it seems clear that Shearith Israel was formed in August, 1850. It also may have been composed as a loose congregation as early as April, 1850. The congregation's constitution and by-laws, however, were drafted on April 13, 1851. Its elected officers were: J. (probably J. J.) Joseph, president; Henry Hart, vice-president; S. H. Cohen, secretary; and trustees: A. Meiss

the first of the congregations to officially incorporate, claimed and received a Torah scroll donated by Sir Moses Montefiore, delivered through Benjamin Davidson, the Rothschild agent in San Francisco.¹⁶

The rapid unfolding of events, from the joint meeting of March 16, to Emanu-El's separate meeting of March 20, and the incorporation of the congregations on April 11 and April 13, in addition to the desertion of two of Emanu-El's leaders to Shearith Israel,¹⁷ suggests a high degree of tension. The congregations had, at least, a significant rivalry with one another.

Until Emanu-El and Shearith Israel had permanent buildings of their own, the congregations rented rooms and outfitted them for their needs. The frequent fires in the city, however, destroyed these synagogues time and again.¹⁸

(probably Weiss), Meyer Hart, I. Nathan, Israel Solomon, and M. Blankenstein.

Thus, Joseph and Hart appear as officers of both congregations, and were associated with Emanu-El as recently as the March 20th preceding their April 13th election as officers of Shearith Israel. This leads to the conclusion that there was great tension during this time period. Given that both congregations incorporated within two days of each other, indicating a rush of rivalry, this is not too surprising.

¹⁶ California Hebrew and English Almanac, 1851-1852, cited in the Occident (April, 1852).

¹⁷ See note #15.

¹⁸ "Brief Sketch of the Progress of the Israelites in California, from 1849 until August 1854," was written by two people, indicated by a change in hand-writing. Seixas Solomons wrote the first section and an unknown writer, but probably an officer of Emanu-El, wrote the second. The second section mentions the destruction of the temporary

Frustrated by the situation, Shearith Israel purchased a lot¹⁹ on Stockton St. in July, 1852, though it could not afford to begin building for almost two more years. Similarly, in 1853, Emanu-El raised \$20,000, from both Jews and Christians, with which to build a synagogue,²⁰ and on July 23, 1854, the cornerstone was laid.²¹ Dr. Julius Eckman, recently arrived from Mobile, Alabama, conducted the ceremony. At about the same time, Emanu-El also initiated a search for a "minister," with promises of a liberal salary, who would be about thirty-five years old, "not behind the demands of the time," and English-speaking. The search committee probably assumed he would speak German. On August 13, 1854, just three weeks after Emanu-El laid its cornerstone, Shearith laid the cornerstone for its building. Eckman officiated at this ceremony, too. Not to be outdone again, Shearith Israel dedicated its building on September 8; Emanu-El dedicated its building on September 14.²² Eckman also conducted both of the dedications. On September 17,

synagogues by the fires (Voorsanger, Chronicles..., Appendix B).

The Occident, October, 1854, includes a letter from Henry J. Labatt which relates some of Shearith Israel's history leading up to the dedication of its building. He mentions several of Shearith Israel's temporary synagogues which were destroyed in various fires.

19 Zarchin, Glimpses of..., p. 83.

20 Voorsanger, Chronicles..., Appendix B; and the Occident, May, 1854.

21 Occident, October, 1854.

22 Occident, November, 1854; and December, 1854.

Emanu-El put its seats up for sale to the highest bidder and raised \$3,500.²³ Sometime in the months following, Emanu-El hired Eckman as its minister.²⁴ San Francisco now had two synagogues and a rabbi; the religious institutions were established.

Julius Eckman, a native of Posen, a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Berlin, and an ordained Rabbi who studied under Leopold Zunz, was the first rabbi in California. Due to a three-year stay in London, where he was to acquire a knowledge of business at the establishment of a relative, Eckman spoke a flawless English. Neither a radical reformer nor a strict traditionalist, he continually found himself embroiled in controversy from both sides. It has been written of him, "...a fire-brand immigrant who had traveled the length and breadth of America, occupying pulpits in Richmond, Charleston and Mobile before reaching the Pacific Coast. He created trouble (personal and ideological) wherever he appeared."²⁵

In early 1850, Eckman took a position as the rabbi of the contentious Beth Elohim Congregation of Charleston.²⁶ Unable to retain his position due to a power struggle between

²³ Occident, December, 1854.

²⁴ American Israelite, April 13, 1855.

²⁵ Bertram W. Korn, Eventful Years and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century American Jewish History, (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1954), p. 80.

²⁶ Occident, July, 1850.

reformers and traditionalists, Eckman left Charleston and took a pulpit in Mobile in late 1852.²⁷ By the Fall of 1853, however, apparently relating to a yellow-fever epidemic there in August, Eckman was, once again, embroiled in controversy,²⁸ and had left by the Spring of 1854.²⁹ On July 1, 1854, Eckman arrived in San Francisco with a letter of introduction from Rev. James K. Gutheim of New Orleans, and, several weeks later, was busy officiating at the cornerstone-laying and dedication ceremonies of San Francisco's two synagogues. Though he found himself embroiled in controversy in San Francisco, too, and retained his rabbinical post for only a short time, Eckman was intricately involved with the development of Judaism and the Jewish community of San Francisco.

Though other congregations arose in San Francisco during the 1850's and 1860's, some of which became permanent, to a large degree the history of San Francisco's Jewish community is the history of Temple Emanu-El and Congregation Shearith Israel. Both congregations incorporated in April, 1851, and dedicated their first buildings in September, 1854, and they both remain San Francisco's principal synagogues today.

As mentioned earlier, Emanu-El's German Jews were

²⁷ Occident, January, 1853.

²⁸ Occident, October, 1853; November, 1853; and January, 1854.

²⁹ A notice appears in the Occident (May, 1854) that the ministerial position in Mobile was vacant.

wealthier than Shearith Israel's Polish, so Emanu-El had more money available. With a membership of approximately 100 families, a number of young men, and fifty children, Emanu-El decided to build a synagogue. In October, 1853, at a meeting with the purpose of organizing the fund-raising for and construction of the synagogue, a campaign which netted over \$20,000 was initiated.³⁰ In July, 1854, the congregation laid the cornerstone for its synagogue on Broadway St., the cost of which came close to \$30,000 for the building and lot.³¹ The synagogue was large and impressive, brick construction with a gothic front. By early 1855, Emanu-El had grown to 140 members,³² and by the turn of 1860, it had reached 250.³³ By this time it was beginning to outgrow the Broadway St. building, and, in 1861, plans were initiated to build a new one.³⁴ In 1862, a lot on Sutter St. was purchased for \$15,000,³⁵ and in October, 1864, the cornerstone of the Sutter St. synagogue was laid. The cost of the building, including the lot, was to be \$150,000,³⁶ but its total cost, when completed in 1866, came to over

³⁰ Occident, January, 1854; and May, 1854.

³¹ Occident, November, 1854.

³² American Israelite, April 13, 1855.

³³ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 59; and Weekly Gleaner, October 4, 1861, p. 4.

³⁴ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 97.

³⁵ *ibid*, p. 100.

³⁶ *ibid*, p. 106; and Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 4.

\$169,000.³⁷ The long time which it took to complete the building was due to the secession of many members³⁸ in 1864-1865. The seating capacity of the new synagogue was to be 1,200.³⁹ Even during the time of the secession in 1864-1865, however, Emanu-El's membership remained relatively stable. In 1865, membership was at 270,⁴⁰ and, by 1866, it was at 290.⁴¹ The new synagogue was finally dedicated in March, 1866.⁴²

During these years, Emanu-El also sought a permanent minister. The congregation made the first offer to Rev. James K. Gutheim⁴³ at the end of 1853, but as he had just accepted another position in New Orleans, he was unable to accept. Gutheim's refusal initiated a six-year period during which Emanu-El searched in vain for a minister. Next, Emanu-El offered the position to Rev. Dr. David Steinberg,⁴⁴ of Muenster, Westphalia, in mid-1854, but, he too, did not

³⁷ Hebrew, October 5, 1866, p. 4.

³⁸ The members who seceded at this time founded Congregation Ohabai Shalom, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

³⁹ Hebrew, September 8, 1865, p. 4.

⁴⁰ Hebrew, September 8, 1865, p. 4.

⁴¹ Hebrew, October 5, 1866, p. 4.

⁴² Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 112.

⁴³ *ibid*, p. 40-41.

⁴⁴ Occident, September, 1854.

accept. Two ministers, Eckman and Rev. Herman Bien,⁴⁵ were hired and fired in fairly rapid succession during 1854-1856, neither retaining his post for as long as one year. In 1857, Emanu-El attempted to appoint Rev. Dr. Levyson,⁴⁶ of Worms, but was again rejected. In late 1857, Emanu-El attempted to appoint Rev. Dr. Elias Greenebaum,⁴⁷ of Landau, Bavaria, but this appointment, too, fell through. Finally, in 1860, Dr. Elkan Cohn was successfully appointed. He held this position for twenty-nine years until his death in 1889.

Religiously, even early on, Emanu-El was Reform-oriented. In 1856, it announced that it would use Isaac M. Wise's Minhag America prayerbook when it would be published,⁴⁸ and, in 1864, it terminated its use of this prayerbook in favor of Merzbacher's prayerbook from Temple Emanu-El of New York.⁴⁹

Shearith Israel, on the other hand, had more modest growth and expansion. In July, 1852, \$8,050 was subscribed

⁴⁵ We will discuss Eckman and Bien in greater detail later in this chapter.

⁴⁶ American Israelite, April 17, 1857.

⁴⁷ Occident, November, 1857; and December 1857; and American Israelite, December 25, 1857; and April 2, 1858.

⁴⁸ American Israelite, December 5, 1856.

⁴⁹ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 106 and 108. The abolition of *minhag Ashkenaz* with the introduction of Merzbacher's prayerbook was one of the chief reasons for the secession from Emanu-El and the establishment of Ohabei Shalom.

and a lot on Stockton St. was purchased.⁵⁰ An additional \$10,000, subscribed at a meeting in November, 1853,⁵¹ paid for the building. On August 13, 1854, Shearith Israel laid its cornerstone. Shortly following the building dedication, the congregation had seventy members,⁵² and, by 1860, it had grown to 110.⁵³ By 1866, Shearith Israel, too, found itself in need of a new synagogue, and plans were begun.⁵⁴ Its new synagogue was built on Taylor St. in the latter part of the decade.⁵⁵

It is possible that following Eckman's release from Emanu-El in 1855, he went to Shearith Israel and served there until 1856.⁵⁶ This is, however, very difficult to determine

⁵⁰ Occident, October, 1854. Among those solicited for contributions to the building fund were Jews in Stockton, Sonora, and Marysville (from Shearith Israel's Minutes, beginning April [13,] 1851 [to October 19, 1856], p. 39).

⁵¹ American Israelite, September 22, 1854.

⁵² American Israelite, April 13, 1855.

⁵³ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 199.

⁵⁴ Hebrew, November 9, 1866, p. 5.

⁵⁵ "San Francisco," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905.

⁵⁶ Information on this subject is very limited. The American Israelite (December 7, 1855; and January 11, 1856) reports that Eckman became the rabbi of the congregation which broke off of Emanu-El at the time of Emanu-El's release of Eckman in 1855 (this will be discussed in greater detail later).

The American Israelite later (November 21, 1856) included an error-filled article on the subject. This article reported that Jacob Rich was re-elected president of the Broadway St. synagogue (Emanu-El); this is incorrect. Rich was re-elected president of the Stockton St. synagogue (Shearith Israel). The article then continued, saying that Eckman was appointed rabbi of "the same" congregation.

with certainty. We do know, though, that on September 26, 1857, Rev. Henry A. Henry was appointed minister of Shearith Israel, at \$100 per month for one year.⁵⁷ He served there until 1869.

The original Jewish cemetery, obtained in 1850 and jointly managed by Emanu-El and Shearith Israel since then, was rapidly becoming filled by 1860. Due to this situation, Emanu-El and Eureka Benevolent Society joined together to purchase a new one.⁵⁸ This cemetery was called Nefesh Shalom, Home of Peace. A few months later, Shearith Israel and First Hebrew Benevolent Society purchased their own cemetery, Gibboth Olam, Hills of Eternity.⁵⁹

Emanu-El and Shearith Israel were the primary congregations, but they were also, to a certain extent, the progenitor congregations of San Francisco. From any ideology or set of practices a subset may form and crystalize; in time, the new crystal may break-off and form its own colony, with its own ideology and set of practices. This process of

As we know Eckman was definitely not appointed at this time by Emanu-El, the report seems to indicate that he was appointed by Shearith Israel. Eckman's appointment to Shearith Israel between the time of his release by Emanu-El in 1855 and Rev. H. A. Henry's appointment at Shearith Israel in 1857 is attested to by The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia ("San Francisco"). As these are the only two sources which indicate Eckman's appointment to Shearith Israel, it is difficult to determine their validity. Rev. Henry is commonly attributed with being Shearith Israel's first rabbi.

⁵⁷ Weekly Gleaner, October 2, 1857, p. 365.

⁵⁸ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 96.

⁵⁹ Weekly Gleaner, May 3, 1861, p. 5.

congregational break-off occurred with both of these congregations.

Shearith Israel was founded as a Polish Orthodox congregation. As late as the early 1860's, we know that it had retained its "strictly Orthodox" character.⁶⁰ In 1855, however, a group of twenty-five Polish Jews broke off of Shearith Israel because of its members' laxity of observance. This break-off congregation called itself Shomrei Shabbes.⁶¹

Rules for membership in Shomrei Shabbes included the full observance of the Sabbath and the laws of *kashrut*; only Yiddish was to be spoken, and Hebrew prayers recited. The congregational meetings were held on the Sabbath in the afternoon, but the minutes were to be written down after the Sabbath ended. Sunday was rejected as the day for congregational meetings because of its association with Christianity. Though the *shochet* for Shearith Israel was religiously qualified, Shomrei Shabbes sought one who had received his certification from the "Beth Hamidrash" in New York. The congregation is mentioned again in the American Israelite in 1856,⁶² and it advertised as baking and selling matzoth⁶³ and as approving of a *mikvah*⁶⁴ at Dr. Brun's

⁶⁰ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 199. Though it must have changed to some extent during its early decades, Shearith Israel retained its Orthodox affiliation until the 1890's. It then changed its affiliation to Reform.

⁶¹ American Israelite, August 10, 1855.

⁶² American Israelite, November 21, 1856.

⁶³ Weekly Gleaner, February 20, 1857, p. 46.

Bathing Establishment in 1857. As late as the early 1860's, Benjamin II wrote⁶⁵ that the congregation had thirty members, that it met in a spacious hall for services on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays,⁶⁶ in addition to the days of the fasts and festivals, and that they observed the Sabbath meticulously. Though the congregation had little growth, we know from these sources that it survived a minimum of six years, and that at the time of our last information about it, it was as strong as ever. Shomrei Shabbes may have been sectarian to a degree, but it certainly seems to have served a purpose.

Another congregational break-off was related to Emanu-El's release of Dr. Eckman from his ministerial post in 1855, before his term was due to end.⁶⁷ The matter of contention between Emanu-El and Eckman concerned the granting of licenses to *shochetim*.

Eckman was Emanu-El's first rabbi, so for its first few

⁶⁴ Weekly Gleaner, April 10, 1857, p. 108.

⁶⁵ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 210.

⁶⁶ Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays are the days on which the Torah is read.

⁶⁷ The details of the congregational break-off appear in no secondary sources to my knowledge, so what I have included is pieced together from newspaper accounts. It must be remembered, however, that the newspaper accounts are based on letters received from San Francisco, most often from parties involved in the issue. In addition, the letters probably were not entirely accurate and did not fully relate all of the details of the situation. Voorsanger does give some details of the rift between Emanu-El and Eckman, but he does not mention the break-off from Emanu-El that occurred in its wake.

years of existence the congregation had done without. Even in its infancy, Emanu-El had taken a Reform-oriented position, yet, it did follow the custom of arranging for the kosher slaughtering of meat for its members. Lacking a rabbi, the congregation organized a committee to grant licenses. The *shochetim* were required to apply annually to the committee for license renewal. Upon Eckman's arrival in the city, however, all of the *shochetim* in the city,⁶⁸ five in number, presented themselves before him for examination. Eckman granted licenses to only two,⁶⁹ one of which had a license from Emanu-El. Following this, Emanu-El's committee summoned the two *shochetim* to whom it had granted licenses for renewal. The one to whom Eckman had granted a license refused, admitting only a rabbi's authority when possible, and the committee revoked his license, while the second, whom Eckman had rejected, agreed, receiving a renewal. When this occurred, outraged, Eckman published a notice in San Francisco's Daily Herald⁷⁰ denying the congregation's right to either grant or rescind licenses for *shochetim*, and

⁶⁸ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 147.

⁶⁹ American Israelite, May 30, 1856 (a letter from Eckman).

⁷⁰ Daily Herald, December 20, 1854, cited in Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 147). This notice and much of this information about the situation is also included in various letters published in the American Israelite (February 8, 1856 is from Emanu-El's officers: Jacob Bloomingdale, president - M. Frank, secretary - and L. Tichner, vice-president; May 23, 1856, May 30, 1856, and June 6, 1856 are from Eckman; and October 10, 1856 is from Emanu-El's new minister, H. Bien).

identified the one whose license was renewed as unfit to be a *shochet*.⁷¹ Angered by Eckman's public action, Emanu-El's Board of Trustees voted to censure him on December 24, 1854, for "exceeding his authority as the Minister of the Congregation,"⁷² and to reduce his salary,⁷³ from \$2,000 to \$600 per year, to be "commensurate" with his qualifications.

In the wake of the conflict Emanu-El was thrown into turmoil. Some reports indicate that finances were in poor shape⁷⁴ due to its outlay of \$30,000 for its new lot and

⁷¹ In his letter to the American Israelite (May 30, 1856), Eckman outlined his reasons for refusing to grant a license to the man for whom Emanu-El granted a renewal. Eckman wrote that he knew the man (only identified as a German) ate *treifah*, that he boarded at a *treifah* boarding house, that his butcher shop was opened on the Sabbath and that he worked in the shop on that day. Furthermore, he was an *am ha-aretz* in every sense of the word. He continued that the other man, whose license Emanu-El revoked, Isaac Goldsmith, was a Russian of high moral and religious character, who was qualified to be a *shochet*.

Eckman also charged that after he refused the German a license, Emanu-El's president, "Mr. B" (probably Emanuel M. Berg, who was the president during Eckman's conflict there), told him that since the "Polish Cahal" (Shearith Israel) had a Pole as its *shochet*, "[we] must have a German," and that "We are Reformers and do not take matters so strictly." Eckman claimed that he responded that his authority as a rabbi came from rabbinic law, and that rabbinic law is the only measure of the acceptability of a *shochet*. Also, since there is no Reformer code for *shochetim*, why do you ask me as a rabbi to grant licenses.

⁷² Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 148.

⁷³ American Israelite, February 8, 1856.

⁷⁴ American Israelite, November 16, 1855. Later reports (American Israelite, January 11, 1856; and February 8, 1856), however, indicate that finances were again secure after financial restructuring.

building and its hiring of Eckman shortly thereafter.⁷⁵ On September 30, 1855, the congregation's annual election was held and its new officers⁷⁶ were elected, including Sigismund Meyer⁷⁷ as president, and Henry J. Labatt as secretary. The election, however, was rife with the conflict over Eckman. Due to the congregation's treatment of Eckman, president-elect Meyer, of the "English party," and secretary-elect Labatt refused their offices,⁷⁸ and, along with the outgoing *sekan*,⁷⁹ left the congregation.⁸⁰ Moses Sporborg, the American Israelite's agent in San Francisco, reported to the newspaper that fifty American and English members had left

⁷⁵ American Israelite, November 16, 1855.

⁷⁶ Occident, December, 1855. The president during Eckman's conflict, Emanuel M. Berg, died in late 1855. His obituary appeared in the American Israelite (December 7, 1855). Also, Emanu-El, Shearith Israel and the Eureka Benevolent Society all published resolutions of commendation.

⁷⁷ Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 50) names this man Sigmund Meyer instead of the newspaper's Sigismund.

⁷⁸ American Israelite, November 16, 1855.

⁷⁹ In Hebrew *sekan* means deputy, assistant, or second-in-command. Abraham C. Labatt, one of Emanu-El's founders and early presidents, was the vice-president for the year 1854-1855. It is, thus, likely that the reference in the letter is to him. In addition, as his name no longer appears on Emanu-El's lists of officers in the following years, and because his son, Henry J., is known to have resigned at this time, his identification is even more likely. Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 26) reports that the Labatt family returned to New Orleans to live in the early 1860's. The last reference to any of the Labatt's I found in my research was that Henry J. and his wife had a son on September 23, 1861 (Weekly Gleaner, October 11, 1861, p. 7).

⁸⁰ At a special congregational meeting, on October 21, 1855, about the problem, Meyer and Labatt persisted in their refusal to serve (Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 51).

Emanu-El to form a fourth congregation in the city; it will be "progressive" and Eckman will be its minister.⁸¹ One month following, the Occident⁸² reported Meyer's and Labatt's resignations and the establishment of a Portuguese congregation,⁸³ with some changes to accommodate the Germans, and the American Israelite⁸⁴ reported that Eckman had introduced English prayers into his congregation's service, was attempting to organize a choir, and was seeking to hire a teacher. It is likely, due to their timing, that all of these reports were about Emanu-El's break-off congregation. Unfortunately, no name is given for the congregation so it is difficult to track in the sources. The strongest identification we have is that it was possibly a Portuguese congregation.

The success of the congregation, if it was ever successfully established, is difficult to judge. We know that Eckman, its reputed rabbi, began publishing the Weekly

⁸¹ American Israelite, December 7, 1855. Though he does not mention the establishment of another congregation, nor mention what Meyer and the Labatt's did after their resignations, Voorsanger does confirm that a significant portion of the membership resigned over the affair (Chronicles..., p. 51-54).

⁸² Occident, January, 1856.

⁸³ A Portuguese congregation forming from an Emanu-El split is not an impossibility. The reports mention that those who left were primarily English and Americans. As some English and American Jews either were of Sephardic descent or practiced Sephardic ritual, their desire to form a Portuguese congregation is a possibility.

⁸⁴ American Israelite, January 11, 1856.

Gleaner one year later, in January, 1857. Also, Henry J. Labatt, a reputed founder of this congregation, was busy with several other major projects. In March, 1856, he was reported⁸⁵ to have been compiling a compendium of law, with the object of reconciling conflicting "Sunday trading law"⁸⁶ decisions, and in October, 1856, he began publishing, with Eckman's successor at Emanu-El, Herman Bien, the short-lived weekly, the Voice of Israel.⁸⁷ The name of the congregation's other reputed leader, Sigismund Meyer, no longer appears on any organization's list of officers.⁸⁸

Emanu-El's period of turbulence was not yet over, and, a few years later, it suffered another congregational split.

⁸⁵ Occident, June, 1856, cited from the Alta California, March 13, 1856.

⁸⁶ "Sunday trading laws" were laws which forbade businesses from opening on Sunday. These laws are a great disadvantage to Jews and other religions which observe their Sabbaths on a day other than Sunday and were vigorously opposed by Jews throughout American history.

⁸⁷ Henry J. Labatt is still found among the officers of the First Hebrew Benevolent Society in the years following his resignation from Emanu-El (American Israelite, February 27, 1857).

⁸⁸ The name Siegmund T. Meyer appears as one of the charter members of the Eureka Benevolent Society and on its first list of officers (Zarchin, Glimpses of..., p. 146-147) in 1850. Almost certainly this is the same man. Following his resignation from Emanu-El's presidency in 1855, it does not appear on any list of names from San Francisco which I found. Interestingly, I did find Meyer's name, with the above spelling, in Isaac Markens, The Hebrews in America: A Series of Historical and Biographical Sketches, (New York: Isaac Markens, 1888), p. 158, on a list of the most prominent Jewish real estate holders in New York.

Voorsanger reported⁸⁹ that those of Eckman's supporters who did not leave the congregation at the time of his release agitated the congregation and gave neither the officers nor Rev. Bien any rest. Bien, failing to bring peace between the factions, lasted seven months. As changes toward a decidedly Reform style of worship were instituted in 1856⁹⁰ and following, the more "conservative" members resisted. Also, during the late 1850's, the unsuccessful search for a minister was conducted. Around every applicant a group of supporters formed. Desires conflicted and tempers flared. No match was found. Finally, in 1860, however, Dr. Elkan Cohn, a noted scholar and a strong proponent of Reform, became the rabbi of Emanu-El. As he instituted further changes toward Reform worship and education, a group of about seventy members, approximately one-third of the congregation,⁹¹ initiated a major agitation. By 1864, this group united itself and seceded from Emanu-El, forming Congregation Ohabai Shalom.⁹²

As the members of Ohabai Shalom were able to build a

⁸⁹ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 54-55.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, p. 54.

⁹¹ Meyer, "The Jews in California," p. 50; and Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 105.

⁹² Ohabai Shalom means Lovers of Peace. As this congregation was a break-off of Emanu-El, the name is ironic. The intent of the founders, however, was probably that Judaism should be left intact, in peace, and that the Reform of Dr. Cohn and Emanu-El was disruptive.

synagogue of their own by the Fall of 1865,⁹³ which could seat almost one thousand people, they were probably fairly wealthy. Dr. Eckman officiated at the dedication of the synagogue on September 15, 1865, and the leaders of all the major Jewish organizations had seats of honor. The congregation raised an impressive \$8,000 with its first annual sale of seats.⁹⁴ Though it broke from Emanu-El because the traditional tendencies of its members resisted the Reform which Cohn had introduced, Ohabai Shalom used an organ and choir, and the men and women were seated together. Aside from this "[they] worship in Orthodox style."⁹⁵ Ohabai Shalom's secession from Emanu-El was not smooth or painless. The Hebrew reported⁹⁶ that congregational matters "which agitated in our midst...seemed to be forgiven." According to Voorsanger,⁹⁷ several decades later, in his old age, Cohn recalled the men who led the secession with impatience.⁹⁸

⁹³ Hebrew, September 20, 1865, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Hebrew, September 8, 1865, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Hebrew, September 29, 1865, p. 4.

⁹⁶ Hebrew, September 29, 1865, p. 4.

⁹⁷ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 160.

⁹⁸ A list of Ohabai Shalom's officers appears in the Hebrew (October 5, 1866, p. 4): B. Hamburger, president (re-elected); A. H. C. Dias, vice-president; H. Greenberg, treasurer (re-elected); M. Waterman, secretary (re-elected); trustees: A. Klein, S. Wangerheim, S. Koshland, Joseph Hirsh, and A. Newman; and collector, Charles Greenberg. Interesting to note are the vice-president, Dias, whose name leads to the conclusion that he was of Sephardic ancestry, and S. Koshland, whose family became one of San Francisco's wealthy elite. As these men were among the early leadership of

Life went on and the immediacy subsided, but all was not forgotten.

Several years before Emanu-El's 1855 conflict with Eckman, the resignations from the congregation and the possible establishment of a Portuguese congregation, another Portuguese congregation was founded. In September, 1853, a group of Sephardic Jews met at the house of Jacob Dessau, elected temporary officers, and founded Congregation Sha'ar Hashamayim.⁹⁹ One historian has claimed that the congregation's burial society pre-dated its foundation as a congregation.¹⁰⁰ Sha'ar Hashamayim conducted its first service on September 29, 1853, in a rented room. On November 5, 1853, the congregation elected its permanent officers for the year.¹⁰¹ The long-term success of the congregation,

Ohabai Shalom, they were probably among the leaders of the secession.

⁹⁹ Occident, November, 1853; and January, 1854. J. Joseph was elected temporary president. If this is the J. J. Joseph of Emanu-El and Shearith Israel from 1851, then this man was the president of three different congregations, German, Polish and Portuguese. Glanz (The Jews of California, p. 30) wrote that Sha'ar Hashamayim was mentioned in A Jewish Calendar for Fifty Years, by Jacques J. Lyons and Abraham De Sola, as the third of San Francisco's congregations.

¹⁰⁰ Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 30.

¹⁰¹ Among these officers were Joseph Shannon, president, and Joseph Simpson, trustee. Shannon was the president of Emanu-El in 1852 (Occident, April, 1852) and Treasurer for San Francisco County in 1853 (Occident, April, 1853). Simpson was one of the managers of the original Jewish cemetery (Occident, November, 1854; and July, 1855) and was nominated for the position of Clerk of the Superior Court, by the People's Reform Party, in 1856 (American Israelite, December 26, 1856, cited from the Voice of

however, is doubtful.¹⁰²

Some of San Francisco's congregations were not intended to be fully functioning congregations. Instead, they had the specific purpose of serving people for the High Holy Days. Every year, several of these congregations would form, most often under the direction of an independent leader in the Jewish community or one of the *chebras*.

One of these High Holy Day congregations was organized by Eckman. At the time of his election as minister of Emanu-El, Eckman began a religious school for the congregation. When he left the congregation, he took the school with him. The school's name was Hephtsi-bah.¹⁰³ Eckman was devoted to the religious training and upbringing of children. In every city he had worked he started a religious school, and his newspaper, the Weekly Gleaner, had a "Juvenile Section,"

Israel).

¹⁰² I make this claim for two reasons: 1) Aside from the citations I listed, it is never mentioned in either the primary or the secondary sources I researched; and, 2) A man named I. Dessau is associated with Emanu-El's choir at about the time of Eckman's arrival in July, 1854 (Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 46), just nine months after Sha'ar Hashamayim's election of permanent officers. As Voorsanger uses the initial "I." for Emanu-El's president, Jacob Bloomingdale (Chronicles..., p. 51), it is likely that I. Dessau is Jacob Dessau, at whose house the Portuguese congregation was formed.

At this point it is also important to mention Congregation Beth Israel, organized under the name Benevolent Society and Congregation Beth Israel in September, 1861. Information about its early history is included at the end of Chapter Two.

¹⁰³ We will further discuss Hephtsi-bah in Chapter Five.

intended specifically for children. It is not surprising, then, that Eckman organized High Holy Day services especially for the Jewish children of San Francisco.¹⁰⁴

Children were not the only ones for whom High Holy Day services were arranged. Adults were sought after, too. In addition to his Hephtsi-bah services, Eckman also organized adult services.¹⁰⁵ Elias Woolf, a *mohel*, regularly organized High Holy Day services,¹⁰⁶ as did several of the *chebras*. Chebra Achim Rachmonim hired Rev. Z. Newstadt, of Sacramento, to lead its services in Platt's Lower Hall in 1864,¹⁰⁷ the proceeds of which were to benefit its Widows and Orphans Fund, and, in 1865, Mr. Erlich led the services, again at Platt's Lower Hall.¹⁰⁸ In 1866, Erlich and M. L. Lyons led the Chebra's services.¹⁰⁹ Chebra Berith Shalome also regularly organized services.¹¹⁰ Chebra Beth Abraham, whose existence we know of only from its advertisement for this High Holy Day season, conducted services at Minerva Hall,

¹⁰⁴ Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Weekly Gleaner, September 18, 1857, p. 292; and August 23, 1861, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Hebrew, August 19, 1864, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Hebrew, September 15, 1865, p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 5; and Hebrew, September 15, 1865, p. 7.

with S. Silverstone officiating, in 1865.¹¹¹ Interestingly, though its service was advertised in the paper, Beth Abraham was not included in the Hebrew's list of locations for services.¹¹² Rev. Max Wolf, later of Congregation Beth Israel and Emanu-El, led services in 1861 at the Metropolitan Hall.¹¹³ Though there were only a few established congregations in San Francisco during the 1850's and 1860's offering services regularly throughout the year, there were many to choose from during the High Holy Days.

According to one report during the early years, Emanu-El and Shearith Israel were over-filled on the holidays, but that attendance at daily and weekly services was not great.¹¹⁴ Another early report cites "tolerably good attendance at public worship."¹¹⁵ This depiction does not give the impression of great crowds. In his communications with the American Israelite following his appointment as

¹¹¹ Hebrew, August 18, 1865, p. 5.

¹¹² Hebrew, September 15, 1865, p. 4.

¹¹³ Weekly Gleaner, August 30 1861, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Occident, February, 1853. We know that there were daily services at Beth Israel from its advertisement in the Hebrew (May 3, 1867, p. 11). We know that Shearith Israel had them, too, even as late as the 1890's, around the time it became Reform-affiliated, from Harriet Lane Levy, 920 O'Farrell Street, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1947). The book is a memoir of Levy's childhood. Levy depicts her father, Benish Levy, as attending these services.

¹¹⁵ Occident, May, 1854. In this case, "public worship" means daily and weekly worship, not holiday or High Holy Day observances.

minister of Emanu-El, Rev. Bien reports that Judaism is "neglected" in San Francisco and that participation and attendance is very low except on the holidays.¹¹⁶ All of these sources give a very clear picture of high attendance during the High Holy Days and other holidays, while routine participation was much less.

As we saw previously, non-synagogue religious observance was prevalent.¹¹⁷ Kosher meat, groceries and wine were available and plentiful, as was kosher boarding. During Passover, when food restrictions are even greater, all of the necessary foods, including matzoth and Passover wine, were available, as was kosher for Passover boarding. *Mikvahs* were available for those who needed them, as were Jewish burial societies. Circumcisions, as demonstrated by the plethora of *mohalim*, were regularly conducted. One circumcision of special note took place at Ohabai Shalom in 1867.¹¹⁸ Triplets were born to Henry Danziger and his wife, and, taking note of tradition, they asked Dr. Cohn, Dr. Henry, and Ohabai Shalom's Rev. Frankel, the three ministers of San Francisco's congregations, to name them Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, respectively.

San Francisco was different than the cities and towns of

¹¹⁶ American Israelite, July 25, 1856; and October 10, 1856.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter One.

¹¹⁸ Harold I. Sharfman, Nothing Left to Commemorate, p. 75.

Europe. Due to the city's youth, strong anti-Jewish feeling was not yet present.¹¹⁹ Though the Jews tended to function socially within their own ethnic groupings, this was the general practice among all of the city's ethnicities and inspired little animosity. Jews and Judaism were accepted. While being free to fully participate in Jewish life, they were active in every aspect of public life. On the holidays and occasional Sabbaths they were found in their synagogues, but in their businesses and community work they were among others. They truly participated in American society.

¹¹⁹ Anti-Jewish feelings became more pronounced in the 1870's and 1880's, as social conventions had time to become entrenched, but, for the time period we are discussing, they were remarkably minimal. We will spend more time on this subject in Chapter Six.

Chapter Four:
Jews in San Francisco's Political Life

One 1870's chronicler of early San Francisco history wrote,

Few of them [the Jews] have any political aspirations, and it is a rare occurrence [sic] to find them occupying any official position, either municipal or State. Yet they take a lively interest in politics, and seem to hold as decided opinions regarding political issues as the ordinary American born citizen.¹

Whether or not there was a low number of Jews who sought political office is a matter for statisticians, but we do know that some Jews sought, and sometimes secured, political office. Also, as Robert Levinson has demonstrated a high degree of political involvement² for the Jews of the mining regions in California, a similar tendency is likely for the Jews of San Francisco. Much of this involvement can be seen in the sources.

The subject which was most likely to inspire Jewish political involvement, at least as seen in the Jewish press, was agitation for the passage of a "Sunday law." "Sunday laws," often referred to as "blue laws," had as their object the closing of all commercial business on Sunday, the

¹ Benjamin E. Lloyd, Lights and Shades in San Francisco, (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1876), p. 402, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 123.

² Levinson, The Jews in the California Gold Rush, p. 63. Levinson demonstrates that a high proportion of Jews secured American naturalization and voter registration as soon as eligible.

Christian Sabbath. As a great many merchants would be closed on Sunday to attend church, those merchants who opened their businesses would be able to attract additional customers. Supporters of these laws claimed that this was an unfair business advantage. Jews and Seventh Day Baptists (Adventists), however, consistently and strenuously objected to these laws as their Sabbath was on Saturday, a "normal" day of business.

As early as December, 1852, a petition was submitted to the California Legislature demanding the passage of a "Sunday law." Included in the petition was an attack on "Mexicans, French, and Jews," who, among others, were harming Christian Sabbath observance.³ Echoing the sentiment of this petition, one woman wrote to the Alta California⁴ demanding legislative action to protect "the day of rest," attacking "heathens, Mohammedans, and Infidels," among whom she ranked Jews, as having a mischievous influence. On the following day, a rebuttal, signed Justice, catalogued the good works of the Jews in San Francisco. On the day after that, one, signed Israelite, attacked the framers of the petition as attempting to inspire bigotry in California.⁵ This movement, while failing, did alert the Jews of California to a lurking

³ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 33.

⁴ Alta California, December 24, 1852, cited in Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 32.

⁵ The Occident (April, 1853), without mentioning the specifics of what transpired, did mention that an attempt to pass a "Sunday law" was made in California.

danger.

The first and most well-known of the attempts to pass a "Sunday law" was that of the Speaker of the California State Assembly, William Stowe, in 1855. The incident inspired attacks upon Stowe in the press, Jewish and non-Jewish.⁶ The Occident carried the following report:

The Speaker was in favor of the bill, and had no sympathy with the Jews, who ought to respect the laws and opinions of the majority. They were a class of people who only came here to make money, and leave as soon as they had effected their object. They did not invest their money in the country or cities. They all intended or hoped to settle in the "New Jerusalem." He was in favor of inflicting such a tax upon them as would act as a prohibition to their residence amongst us. The Bible lay at the foundation of our institutions, and its ordinances ought to be covered and adhered to in legislating for the State. Mr. Buffum countered that the proposed law had nothing to do with the Bible, but was for protection of certain merchants in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. He was astonished to hear Stowe, who he had regarded as an exponent of liberal principles, speak such against the Jews. He argued that Jews had built some of the finest buildings in San Francisco and their wealth, enterprise, and influence were conspicuous.⁷

The Occident also included the response of Henry J. Labatt, an officer of San Francisco's Temple Emanu-El and First Hebrew Benevolent Society. Labatt began by commending E. Gould Buffum, one of the city's assemblymen and the editor of San Francisco's Alta California, for his opposition to Stowe. He charged that Stowe either had "profound ignorance" or had

⁶ Levinson, The Jews in the California Gold Rush, p. 72.

⁷ Occident, June, 1855, cited from the Sacramento Democratic State Journal. The American Israelite (May 11, 1855) also carried this report.

"recreant regard of truth," and that Stowe, had "disgraced [the] Legislature and State by flagrant and malicious falsehood." Labatt argued that permanent synagogues proved permanent Jewish residence, and challenged Stowe to check the tax-books to see if Jews have "fine stores." He wrote that he could produce the names of twenty Jews who had more than two million dollars in property, the taxes upon which go to support the State, county, and city. In addition, the Jewish benevolent societies relieved these governments of some of the care of the poor. In conclusion, Labatt reminded Stowe that Sunday is not the Sabbath of the Bible and thanked him for waking Jews to the danger of intolerance. After Stowe, there were no further vilification of the Jews by any politician in California.⁸ Though this attempt to pass a "Sunday law" did fail, it was not the last one. The attempt of the California Legislature's Mr. Fiske to pass a "Sunday law" in 1856, demonstrates the negative reaction to Stowe's attempt. Fiske's bill specifically exempted Jews from the restriction against Sunday commerce.⁹ The State Assembly did pass this bill but the State Senate did not; the bill did not take effect.¹⁰ In April, 1858, a "Sunday law" was passed by the Legislature,¹¹ but it was declared unconstitutional by

⁸ Korn, Eventful Years and Experiences, p. 59.

⁹ American Israelite, May 9, 1856.

¹⁰ American Israelite, June 20, 1856.

¹¹ Levinson, The Jews in the California Gold Rush, p. 74.

the California Supreme Court.¹²

Another attempt was made to pass a "Sunday law" in 1861. The Weekly Gleaner argued that the law would prove "impractical,"¹³ and outlined the poor affect the laws would have upon the "respectable majority of miners."¹⁴ It appears that this attempt to pass the law succeeded; in February, 1862, "Mr. Worthington presented a petition from a number of Israelites of this city [San Francisco], desiring a repeal [sic] of the Sunday Law, on the ground of their observing the Biblical Sabbath, and their inability to observe two days in the week."¹⁵ The petition had no effect and the law remained in force. In 1868, a petition was, once again, circulated in San Francisco to repeal the law.¹⁶

"Sunday laws" were not the only actions which inspired Jewish political response. When General Ulysses S. Grant ran for the Presidency in 1868, the Jewish community remembered his General Orders No. XI, which banished Jewish traders from his area of operation during the Civil War. Many Jews rallied around Grant's Democratic opposition; the Hebrew explained, "The Jewish press of the North, of course, is

¹² Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 42.

¹³ Weekly Gleaner, May 31, 1861, p. 5.

¹⁴ Weekly Gleaner, August 30, 1861, p. 1.

¹⁵ Weekly Gleaner, February 14, 1862, p. 4.

¹⁶ Hebrew, January 10, 1868, p. 4.

intensely Democratic."¹⁷

All Jews were not satisfied with talking about politics, voting, and exerting influence, however. Some Jews sought, and gained, political office. San Francisco's Jews sought state, county, and municipal offices. Not surprisingly, a significant portion of these men were also among the leadership of San Francisco's Jewish organizations.

In 1853, Joseph Shannon, an English Jew, was the Treasurer of San Francisco County.¹⁸ Interestingly, he was also president of two of the city's congregations in the early 1850's, the German Emanu-El¹⁹ in 1852, and the Portuguese Sha'ar Hashamayim in 1853.²⁰ We know that while Emanu-El was primarily German and French, there were some English who belonged. Some English Jews, however, were of Sephardic descent, so Shannon's presidency of the Portuguese congregation might be explained in this way.²¹

Abraham C. Labatt, of New Orleans by way of Charleston,²² was elected to San Francisco's first Board of Alderman in 1851.²³ He was also the president of Temple

¹⁷ Hebrew, September 11, 1868.

¹⁸ Occident, April, 1853.

¹⁹ Occident, April, 1852; and January, 1853.

²⁰ Occident, January, 1854.

²¹ Rochlin (Pioneer Jews, p. 144) attests to Shannon's Sephardic ancestry.

²² Harold I. Sharfman, Jews on the Frontier, p. 254.

²³ "San Francisco," Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905.

Emanu-El in 1851.²⁴ In 1854, when Labatt was vice-president,²⁵ he laid the cornerstone for Emanu-El's first synagogue on Broadway St.

Emanu-El's leadership had further representation in San Francisco's political life. Joseph Naphtaly, a trustee of Emanu-El and vice-president of the First Hebrew Benevolent Society,²⁶ served in the California State Assembly in the late 1860's. Morris Mayblum, an officer of both Emanu-El²⁷ and the Eureka Benevolent Society,²⁸ was named to the People's Nominating Committee for 1864.²⁹ And finally, Samuel Marks, one of the founders and occasional officers of Emanu-El³⁰ and the Eureka Benevolent Society,³¹ was the United States Appraiser for the port of San Francisco.³²

Leaders of other Jewish organizations, too, contributed political leaders. In 1894, decades after the Gold Rush, another early San Francisco resident and officer of the

²⁴ Occident, April, 1852.

²⁵ Occident, October, 1854.

²⁶ A. W. Voorsanger, Western Jewry, p. 129.

²⁷ Weekly Gleaner, September 25, 1861, p. 7.

²⁸ Weekly Gleaner, December 11, 1857, p. 377.

²⁹ Hebrew, April 29, 1864, p. 5.

³⁰ American Israelite, December 5, 1856.

³¹ Hebrew, March 3, 1865, p. 4.

³² "San Francisco," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1942.

Eureka Benevolent Society,³³ Adolph Sutro, became the mayor of the city.³⁴ Joseph Simpson, a lawyer and one of the managers of the original Jewish cemetery,³⁵ was nominated for the position of Clerk of the Superior Court by the People's Reform Party, and E. Miro was elected to the State Legislature in 1856.³⁶ In addition, Dr. J. Regensburger, a member of the Eureka Benevolent Society,³⁷ was a candidate for the coroner's office in 1861,³⁸ and, in 1866, Jacob Schreiber was a candidate for Supervisor of San Francisco County's Eighth Ward. In his campaign advertisement in the Hebrew, Schreiber produced an impressive list of many of Temple-Emanu-El's leaders as his supporters.³⁹

Neither were Jews ignored as important sponsors of

³³ Occident, March, 1854.

³⁴ Narell, Our City, p. 260.

³⁵ Occident, November, 1854.

³⁶ American Israelite, December 26, 1856, cited from the Voice of Israel.

³⁷ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. 1, p. 226. Dr. Regensburger was also among the directors of the Society's Seventh Annual Ball (Weekly Gleaner, September 18, 1857, p. 292). His brother, Henry Regensburger, was a frequent officer of Emanu-El (Occident, December, 1857) and the Eureka Benevolent Society (Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 8).

³⁸ Weekly Gleaner, May 17, 1861, p. 5.

³⁹ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 5. Among the Jews who were listed as supporters of Schreiber were August Wasserman, Levi Strauss, Abraham Tandler, S. Dinkelspiel, S. Koshland, and many others. All of these men are associated with Emanu-El or Emanu-El's break-off, Ohabai Shalom.

political action. The list of the sponsors of the People's Party Nominating Committee, 1860-1861, published in the Weekly Gleaner, included the names of at least 240 Jewish individuals and partnerships.⁴⁰ This long list of Jewish sponsors can only mean that Jewish votes were sought after, indicating that Jews voted and represented a significant political force.

Several other of San Francisco's Jews served in political office during this time period. Henry A. Lyons, of New Orleans, was one of the three judges appointed to the first California Supreme Court in 1851.⁴¹ Isaac N. Cardozo⁴² was a member of the State Assembly in the early 1850's, as was Elkan Heydenfeldt.⁴³ Elkan's brother, Solomon, was involved in California politics as early as 1852.

Solomon Heydenfeldt, a native of Charleston, after

⁴⁰ Weekly Gleaner, April 25, 1862, p. 5. At the end of the list is a note which indicated that the above signatories were among 5,000 additional sponsors.

⁴¹ "San Francisco," Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905.

⁴² Though I could not locate this Isaac N. Cardozo on the Cardozo family tree ("Cardozo," Encyclopedia Judaica, 1972), he is undoubtedly a member of the Sephardic Cardozo family, primarily from Charleston. There was an Aaron Nunez Cardozo, who died circa 1800, and his son, Isaac Nunez, 1751-1832. Isaac Nunez had five daughters, unnamed and untraced on the family tree. It is likely that one of these daughters, or a relative, named the Isaac N. Cardozo of San Francisco after the Isaac Nunez recorded here. Rochlin (Pioneer Jews, p. 144) reports that Isaac N. Cardozo was from Richmond and that he was the uncle of United States Supreme Court Justice, Benjamin N. Cardozo. As Benjamin N. is included on the family tree, Isaac N.'s position is established.

⁴³ Occident, April, 1853.

failing to secure the Democratic Party's 1852 nomination for one of California's United States Senatorial seats,⁴⁴ was elected to the California Supreme Court in that year.⁴⁵ In the following year, he was elected Chief Justice, and served as such until his resignation in 1857. The first issue of the Weekly Gleaner reported⁴⁶ about the dinner the Sacramento Bar Association gave for Heydenfeldt in honor of his resignation. From 1857 until 1862, Heydenfeldt kept a private legal practice, and, in 1862, upon refusing to submit to a loyalty oath to the Union, was forbidden further public practice. Almost certainly, he continued to practice as a legal consultant. He did, however, remain in San Francisco until his death in 1890.

Interestingly, in the year before his election to the Supreme Court, Heydenfeldt argued his only case in California.⁴⁷ The defendant's name was Samuel Gallagher; the victim was a Jewish gambler from Philadelphia, Lewis Pollock. Gallagher discovered Pollock with Jane Hurley, a woman with whom he had previously had relations, in Mary St. Clair's house of prostitution on Merchant St., and promptly shot him to death.⁴⁸ After two trials, a guilty verdict of

⁴⁴ "Heydenfeldt, Solomon," Encyclopedia Judaica, 1972.

⁴⁵ Occident, April, 1853.

⁴⁶ Weekly Gleaner, January 16, 1857, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Rochlin, Pioneer Jews, p. 142-144.

⁴⁸ Alta California, June 23, 1851, reprinted in Rochlin (Pioneer Jews, p. 20-21).

manslaughter, with the sentence of three years and a \$500 fine, was delivered.

Of the Jews involved in politics in San Francisco, a large percentage were American-born. Labatt and the Heydenfeldts were from Charleston, while Cardozo was either from Charleston or Richmond. Lyons, another Southerner, was from New Orleans. It is also extremely likely that Joseph Simpson was American-born. Joseph Shannon was not American-born, but he was a native English-speaker, coming from England. We know that Regensburger, Mayblum, and Naphtaly were born in Europe, the first two in Germany and Naphtaly in Prussia, but the birth-places of Marks, Miro and Schreiber are unclear. What is clear, however, is that Jews who were native English speakers had a disproportionately high representation among these political figures. This fact, while not indicative of strong prejudice against foreigners in San Francisco, does indicate a general preference for native English speakers engaging in politics.

The biggest political issue of the time period under consideration was, of course, the Civil War of the early 1860's. California, distant from the war, felt its repercussions. A subject as emotional as this, with its added moral issues of racial bigotry, slavery and self-determination, made for extensive debate and regular news coverage.

As early as 1857, anticipating the moral issues of racial bigotry and slavery which would soon be played out,

the Weekly Gleaner's Eckman published⁴⁹ a quasi-scientific article explaining the adaptive "naturalness" of black-skin for people of African descent. Despising racial bigotry, slavery, and all forms of oppression, Eckman sought to use any means available, science or otherwise, to dissuade people from supporting an institution he knew to be fundamentally immoral and oppressive. He would do what he could to keep the Jews from supporting the South.

Being an immigrant state, many people from both the North and the South had recently settled in California. Both sides had strong support. The Jews, too, were divided. As one San Francisco Morning Call article⁵⁰ related, religious affiliation or dogma had little bearing on Union or Confederate sentiments. For the most part, it continued, region of origin determined sentiments. The article cited various leaders of several religious denominations who had taken opposing positions in regard to the North and South, indicating that religion did not determine one's position. Similarly, a Weekly Gleaner article proclaimed that Jews could not be grouped as either Unionists or Secessionists anymore than Christians could. The article continued that most Jews seemed to have sided with the North because of business concerns, but that some Jews had sided with the

⁴⁹ Weekly Gleaner, February 13, 1857, p. 38.

⁵⁰ San Francisco Morning Call, June 3, 1864, reprinted in the Hebrew (June 9, 1864, p. 1).

By early 1861, more and more political news was included in the columns of the Weekly Gleaner, which were once filled exclusively with matter of Jewish religious and literary significance. In February, 1861, the Weekly Gleaner published⁵² a speech by Daniel Webster relating to secession and Jefferson's⁵³ theory of presidential duties in the case of secession. By March, 1861, news of political maneuvering and the reinforcement of frontier and key positions found its way into the newspaper,⁵⁴ and from this time on, a section was always devoted to the war.

Attempting to dissuade allegiance to the South by demonstrating dwindling support, Eckman wrote an article in which he claimed that the Germans of Charleston had been initially drawn to the secessionists' side, but since then had realized their error. "They, being liberated from more or less grievous oppression [in Europe in the 1840's], ought not to help forging chains for an oppressed race" [African-

⁵¹ Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 1. Examples of Jews who sided with the South were the Southerners Judge Solomon Heydenfeldt and the Labatt family (who returned to New Orleans in 1862), and J. P. Newmark, an officer of First Hebrew Benevolent Society and Temple Emanu-El, who "grew to dislike Blacks" while a peddler in Kentucky (Newmark, California Family Newmark, p. 22-23).

⁵² Weekly Gleaner, February 15, 1861, p. 5.

⁵³ I assume this is Thomas Jefferson, and that it dates to an earlier time period.

⁵⁴ Weekly Gleaner, March 1, 1861, p. 4.

American slaves in the South].⁵⁵ Whether or not the report was accurate, Eckman's intention was clear to see; slavery and the Southern position were morally wrong.

In early 1861, Dr. Morris Jacob Raphall, a rabbi in New York, responded to a query that the legitimacy of slavery could be argued from a biblical point of view. Incensed, Eckman wrote⁵⁶ a scathing attack on Raphall.⁵⁷ A short while later, the Weekly Gleaner included a report that New York's rabbis, Rev. A. L. Green and Rev. Dr. Gottheil, had given sermons decrying Dr. Raphall's response. Of Gottheil, the newspaper wrote, "He showed that the delivery of pro-slavery sentiments on the part of a Jew was not only anti-Scriptural, but even a most injudicious proceeding."⁵⁸

By mid-year, Eckman was troubled by the fighting and published an article⁵⁹ calling upon both sides to "calm their passions." The South will soon see that if given the choice between abolition by legislation and abolition by slave insurrection, the former is certainly preferable. By September, 1861, Eckman claimed⁶⁰ that "the extraordinary

⁵⁵ Weekly Gleaner, March 8, 1861, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Weekly Gleaner, March 22, 1861, p. 4.

⁵⁷ In his attack, Eckman mentioned that David Einhorn, in his newspaper, Sinai, and Horace Greely had also refuted the sermon.

⁵⁸ Weekly Gleaner, May 17, 1861, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Weekly Gleaner, July 5, 1861, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Weekly Gleaner, September 4, 1861, p. 4.

violence of the warfare had alienated many a heart from the Union who otherwise look with profound displeasure at the institution of slavery." About the South's unexpected military prowess, he explained, "...the North fights for a name [the Union], while the South fights for its independence."

In response to Eckman's qualified support of the war, the Alta California⁶¹ claimed that Eckman had been "preaching peace" of late. It charged that Eckman did not represent Jewish opinion, and, as he had misrepresented Jewish opinion, should cease publication of the newspaper and devote himself solely to his Hephtsi-bah School.⁶² A Jewish subscriber to the Weekly Gleaner, W. T. Schloss & Co., called the newspaper⁶³ a "secessionist sheet" and demanded that the paper no longer be sent; he threatened a suit for damages if its delivery continued. In an adjoining editorial, the newspaper accused the man of having no comprehension of the its articles on the subject. The newspaper criticized both sides of the conflict, but was loyal to the Federal Government and wished peace. Possibly under increasing accusation, the Weekly Gleaner again found it necessary to assert that it was not secessionist, and that secession would

⁶¹ Quoted in the Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 4.

⁶² Eckman editorialized that there was a contradiction between representing only himself and misrepresenting Jewish opinion.

⁶³ Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 4-5.

be detrimental to California.⁶⁴

The Hebrew's editor, Philo Jacoby, on the other hand, was clear about his allegiance. In his articles he called the people of the Confederacy "rebels" and "guerrillas."⁶⁵ In his mind, they did not even warrant the name "soldier." Dr. Elkan Cohn, too, was clear about his position and publicly advocated the Union's side during the war.⁶⁶

Though we do not know if the proportion of Jews actively involved in politics was commensurate with their population, we do know that Jews followed politics intensely and participated in its functioning. They were taken notice of and politically courted. Having many representatives among the wealthiest of San Francisco certainly had its affect in attracting attention from political organizations. Some Jews, Solomon Heydenfeldt for example, rose to the heights of his lofty profession, while other interested Jews failed to secure their desired positions. What is most clear from the material, however, is that Jews were not only enfranchised in San Francisco, but that they took advantage of that enfranchisement. They were not willing to sit back in their own community and watch from afar. These Jews, regardless of the fact that their closest friends and associates were other Jews, identified the general community of San Francisco as

⁶⁴ Weekly Gleaner, October 4, 1861, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Hebrew, January 15, 1864, p. 2.

⁶⁶ "San Francisco," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1942.

their own. It was theirs to participate in.

Chapter Five:
Education among the Jews of San Francisco

As many of the early immigrants to San Francisco at the beginning of the Gold Rush were young unmarried men, or married men who had arrived alone, waiting to send for their families until they were established in business, few women and children were among its earliest inhabitants. As the years passed, however, many of the single men traveled to the East or to Europe to find wives and many of the married men sent for their families, so the number of women and children grew. With more children, the need for schools grew. Among the Jews, the need was not only for secular schools,¹ in which to learn the usual subjects, but also for religious schools, in which to learn the tenets of and the skills necessary for the practice of Judaism.

According to Voorsanger,² when Temple Emanu-El was founded, there were approximately twelve Jewish children in San Francisco. Louis Cohn, one of the congregation's founders, informally taught the first group of children. In 1851, with a somewhat greater number of children, Meyer Welhof, the reader for Emanu-El's services, took over the informal instruction and continued it until 1854. In mid-1854, Dr. Julius Eckman arrived in the city, was appointed

¹ I use the term "secular school" to indicate schools not affiliated with a religious denomination. They may be either public or private.

² Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 132.

rabbi of Emanu-El, and was placed in charge of the first religious school.³

The school, founded in July, 1854, on the morning of Emanu-El's cornerstone-laying, was subsidized by⁴ and served both Emanu-El and Shearith Israel. The school had two components: its component of children's worship and instruction about Judaism met on Saturdays, and its component of Hebrew instruction met three afternoons per week,⁵ after regular school hours.⁶ A supervisorial board was organized and a group of volunteers offered to teach. Abraham C. Labatt was appointed Superintendent, Eckman was placed in

³ The school was later named Hephtsi-bah.

⁴ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 133.

⁵ Occident, January, 1855; and American Israelite, April 13, 1855.

⁶ Mary Goldsmith, the daughter of the *shochet*, Isaac Goldsmith, arrived in San Francisco in 1852. She attended Eckman's school from its beginning and stayed there throughout her religious education. Upon her completion of the school, Mary became an assistant teacher at the school. She soon married Conrad Prag, a forty-niner who had attended the 1849 Yom Kippur service in the tent on Jackson St. The Prag's began to raise a family and left the city for a time. By October, 1871, however, Mary was back in San Francisco and was hired as a teacher by Emanu-El's religious school; she worked in the school for an uninterrupted twenty-eight years. She was also a teacher and vice-principal of San Francisco's Girls' High School, where she worked for fifty years, until her retirement at the age of eighty-two. Upon her retirement, she was appointed to the city's Board of Education.

Mary and Conrad Prag were also the parents of Florence Prag Kahn, the wife of San Francisco's Congressman Julius Kahn. Upon Julius' death in 1924, Florence was elected to fill his seat and served in Congress until 1936. (The above information is compiled from Narell, Our City, p. 390; and Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 132-137.)

charge of instruction, and among the seven volunteer teachers was Leon L. Dennery, the future Chairman of Emanu-El's School Board.

Until the synagogue was dedicated in September of 1854, the school met in a private house on Green St., at the corner of Stockton St. Once the building was dedicated, however, the school moved to the basement of the synagogue and met there as long as Emanu-El retained Eckman.⁷ The school thrived with thirty to forty students.⁸ When Emanu-El released Eckman, however, he moved the school to the decaying Portsmouth House.⁹ Though many of the students' fathers were among the leaders of the congregation, most of the students went with Eckman to the new school. Mary Prag recalled the loving feelings the children had for Eckman, and claimed that this was the reason the children stayed with him when he left Emanu-El.¹⁰ The school did not remain in the Portsmouth House long, however. From there it moved to the editorial offices of Eckman's newspaper, the Weekly Gleaner, and once those rooms were also too small, the school moved to a "little German church," which had become vacant, on Sutter St., near Stockton St. Here, finally, the school, Hephtsi-bah, had a permanent home. Though Eckman was long-since

⁷ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 133-134.

⁸ Occident, January, 1855; American Israelite, April 13, 1855; and Occident, August, 1855.

⁹ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 134.

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 133-134.

disassociated from Emanu-El, some of the congregation's prominent men assisted with the rental of the building.

Eckman was committed to Judaism and to the education of children. To effect his end, he included both worship and teaching into his curriculum. The day at Hephtsi-bah began with a morning service, during which Eckman delivered a sermonette geared to the children.¹¹ After the service, they went on to their classroom studies. By 1856, Eckman introduced English into the services so the children would understand the content.¹² By the Fall of that year, the school had too many students to accommodate at once, so the older and younger ones had to attend on different days.¹³

As Shearith Israel lacked its own school at this time, it is likely that the children of the congregation attended Hephtsi-bah. In any case, Eckman apparently had good relations with Shearith Israel as he published, in the American Israelite, his thanks to the congregation for some unspecified aid.¹⁴ Most likely the aid Eckman received from the congregation was monetary; he did not make much. During the fourteen months from the time of his release by Emanu-El, in mid-1855, to November, 1856, Eckman had only \$500 in income from the school. Out of this money he had bought

¹¹ *ibid*, p. 149.

¹² American Israelite, May 9, 1856.

¹³ American Israelite, September 5, 1856.

¹⁴ American Israelite, September 5, 1856.

furniture and books for the school and had paid the rent.¹⁵ With the initiation of Eckman's publication of the Weekly Gleaner in January, 1857, Hephtsi-bah's development was significantly altered.

It is not surprising that Eckman used the newspaper to advertise Hephtsi-bah. Starting with the first issue, the school was given a prominent place.¹⁶ Its large advertisement proclaimed the school's four-day per week schedule, its monthly rates, and its free tuition for those who could not afford to pay.

By May of that year, however, Hephtsi-bah had suffered a significant decrease in enrollment. Eckman elaborated the reasons:¹⁷ 1) as prices in California were high and because some of the newspaper's former employees were dishonest, he had only been able to attend to the school on Saturdays and Sundays; 2) for the first six weeks of publication of the newspaper, there was no proper location for the school to meet; and 3) time prohibited him from making personal invitations and home-visits to recruit new students and to contact the parents of existing ones. He reported, however, that things had improved recently. The school had seventy-four regular students and several occasional ones; some young children had also started attending. Because of the

¹⁵ Weekly Gleaner, May 1, 1857, p. 128.

¹⁶ Weekly Gleaner, January 16, 1857, p. 7.

¹⁷ Weekly Gleaner, May 1, 1857, p. 128.

financial troubles and Eckman's time-commitment to the newspaper, however, Hephtsi-bah's schedule was reduced to only Saturdays and Sundays.¹⁸ One week after this report, Eckman made a public appeal to former students to return their books.¹⁹ With the school in financial trouble, he was trying to call in all of his resources.

The school survived, however. Reaching 140 students by late 1860, Hephtsi-bah declined by about thirty when Emanuel, under Dr. Cohn, reorganized its school.²⁰ C. Davidson and Henrietta Ashim were Eckman's assistants at this time. Eckman continued to use the Weekly Gleaner for publicity, and regularly included a section on Hephtsi-bah. The times of its Sabbath services and its school hours were listed, as was an invitation to "all the Hebrew children in this city...regardless of their nationality" to attend either or both.²¹ Eckman reported that he had added Sabbath evening and High Holy Day services to Hephtsi-bah's schedule because the students had "begged" for them.²² The newspaper published an "Invitation" to these new services:

¹⁸ Weekly Gleaner, May 1, 1857, p. 128.

¹⁹ Weekly Gleaner, May 8, 1857, p. 140.

²⁰ Weekly Gleaner, March 22, 1861, p. 5. Regarding Hephtsi-bah's supplementary religious school, which met on Saturdays and Sundays, Benjamin II (Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 230) estimated the number of students to be between one hundred and two hundred.

²¹ Weekly Gleaner, December 6, 1861, unpaginated.

²² Weekly Gleaner, April 5, 1861, p. 6.

Convinced of the benefit of our own mode of training youth, we sincerely solicit parents to the Religious Service at our school. Let them remember that, if the advantage of our worship in a language that is understood is thought to be required for the aged, how much more profitable must such be for youth.

We consider our worship for children quite independent of our religious instruction; so that children who attend other schools for religious instruction may nevertheless attend worship; for the present the only one prepared for the Hebrew children.²³

Eckman was not prepared, however, to institute the High Holy Day services alone, and called for cooperation from other institutions.²⁴

By Spring of 1862, Hephtsi-bah's financial troubles were remedied.²⁵ By May of that year, Hephtsi-bah's enrollment was stable at 110 students and it received a monthly subsidy from the First Hebrew Benevolent Society.²⁶ Eckman was not, however, entirely satisfied with the state of his schools. He published complaints about the lack of worthwhile Jewish school books for children; he used "Hecht," which he called "worthless."²⁷

²³ Weekly Gleaner, April 12, 1861, p. 4.

²⁴ Weekly Gleaner, August 9, 1861, p. 5.

²⁵ Eckman thanked Philo Jacoby for managing the business aspects of the Weekly Gleaner and of his two schools, Hephtsi-bah and Harmonia (Harmonia School will be described in the immediately following section), for the past three months, and for extricating them from business trouble (Weekly Gleaner, April 11, 1862, p. 4). In December, 1863, Jacoby would begin publishing the Weekly Gleaner's rival newspaper, the Hebrew.

²⁶ Weekly Gleaner, May 2, 1862, p. 4.

²⁷ Weekly Gleaner, May 30, 1862, p. 2 and p. 4.

Sometime between 1858 and 1861,²⁸ Eckman organized a day school, the Harmonia School, and, by August, 1861, had added a kindergarten.²⁹ The school was modeled after the style of the "Prussian schools."³⁰ In 1862, the tuition for the Harmonia School was \$3 per month for primary school students, and \$3-\$5 per month for the grammar school.³¹ Again, as with the case of Hephtsi-bah, students unable to pay tuition were not required.³²

Julius Eckman, as a rabbi, as a newspaper editor, and as an educator, was a man who spoke his mind emphatically. He was a champion of Jewish education and criticized the amount of support San Francisco's Jewish community gave to it. He proclaimed, "Among these [Jewish] duties, Torah [religious instruction] stands paramount. 'It is not the Study, but the

²⁸ I cannot attest to a specific year as the year Harmonia School was founded because I found no extant issues of the Weekly Gleaner between the dates December 11, 1857, and February 15, 1861. The Harmonia School was mentioned in the newspaper as soon as the issues reappear in 1861. From Benjamin II (Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 230), we know that the day school had been in existence for some time prior to his writing in the early 1860's, but the kindergarten was only recently established. Neither Benjamin II nor any of the secondary sources mention the Harmonia School. They all incorrectly call Eckman's schools "Hephtsi-bah," not distinguishing between the original Hephtsi-bah supplementary religious school and the Harmonia day school and kindergarten.

²⁹ Weekly Gleaner, August 30, 1861, p. 7.

³⁰ Weekly Gleaner, December 6, 1861, unpaginated.

³¹ From context, it appears that "primary school" refers to the kindergarten and "grammar school" refers to the regular day school.

³² Weekly Gleaner, April 11, 1862, p. 8.

Practice that is the main object.' This truism of the ancient teachers, obvious as it is, seems to be much disregarded among us..."³³ He was also not afraid to comment on education in general. He tackled the issues of the number of beneficial school hours for children,³⁴ attempts to teach several languages to children at the same time,³⁵ and the system of "examinations" conducted in the schools.³⁶ He was concerned about education at every level. He was not a man

³³ Weekly Gleaner, April 25, 1862, p. 4.

³⁴ Eckman emphatically argued that too many hours in school was "injurious" to children (Weekly Gleaner, February 15, 1861, p. 5). In a subsequent editorial he asserted that, "One cause of feeble constitution and early death is the too long confinement and too great mental exertions of our children," and that "...[for the good of the children,] they would have at most four hour sessions, five times a day [sic -- week]." He continued, saying that intelligent parents knew this and did not press for the extension of school hours and the reduction of vacations (Weekly Gleaner, May 10, 1861, p. 4). Whether these editorials were written in response to pressures at his own schools or to events regarding education in San Francisco, generally, is unclear.

³⁵ He criticized the practice of teaching many languages to children at the same time, terming it "excessively broad education." He insisted that schools could not be effective if they tried to be exhaustive. Schools must teach the basics first, and then teach the higher academics, he argued (Weekly Gleaner, January 23, 1857, p. 13).

³⁶ He criticized the "examinations" conducted in the schools as mere "exhibitions," with little educational value. He recommended that instead of the infrequent and announced examinations which the school directors conducted at the time, they should conduct unannounced examinations more frequently, so the classes would not be able to prepare especially for the examination. He continued that "bold," but "dull," students improperly overshadowed the ones who are "bright," but "meek" (Weekly Gleaner, March 20, 1857, p. 75).

about whose opinions one needed to make conjecture; Eckman made his positions clear.

Following Eckman's departure, the religious education for children at Emanu-El remained sporadic until the hiring of Dr. Cohn in 1860. In March, 1856, several months after its release of Eckman, Emanu-El hired Herman M. Bien as "Lecturer and Teacher."³⁷ Subordinate to Bien, Daniel Levy was elected "Teacher" of the congregation's Hebrew and religious school a few weeks later.³⁸ Rose Levison was also one of the first teachers in the religious school.³⁹ Bien served in his post until February, 1857. When Emanu-El released Bien, Levy was placed in charge of the school.⁴⁰ By 1858, because of the increasing number of students, the congregation appointed a School Board made up of nine members; it was later reduced to five.⁴¹ In these early years, Henry J. Labatt, Seixas Solomons, Emanuel Wertheimer, Leopold Tichener, Lazard M.

³⁷ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 51.

³⁸ *ibid*, p. 55.

³⁹ *ibid*, p. 135.

⁴⁰ Occident, July, 1857. When Rev. Henry A. Henry, recently-arrived in the city and soon to be hired by Shearith Israel, he examined Emanu-El's religious school, which was under Levy's direction, and was satisfied (Occident, November, 1857). An article in the American Israelite, in 1858, however, gave Emanu-El's religious school, under Levy, very poor reviews (American Israelite, vol. V, p. 78, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 36). As we do not know the source of the information for the article, we cannot attest to the validity of the assertion.

⁴¹ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 135.

Cahn, and Leon L. Dennery were Emanu-El's leaders who were the most involved with the religious school.⁴²

The advent of Dr. Cohn, in 1860, brought some stability to the school. He consulted with the congregation's School Board, and, in a short time, effected its reorganization.⁴³ The reorganization included regular examinations of the students by Cohn,⁴⁴ and the institution of Confirmation for teen-agers.⁴⁵ At this time, Emanu-El also began making a more serious financial commitment to the school. The congregation's President's Report of September, 1861, concluded that either an additional twenty-five cents per month dues was necessary for the support of the school, or some voluntary donations were required.⁴⁶ As much as \$3,000 was appropriated for the religious school in October, 1866.⁴⁷

Daniel Levy and Miss Marks were the teachers in the

⁴² *ibid*, p. 136.

⁴³ *ibid*, p. 96.

⁴⁴ One of Cohn's examinations took place on September 1, 1861 (Weekly Gleaner, August 30, 1861, p. 4).

⁴⁵ In June, 1862, in conjunction with the Shavuoth services, the first class of eleven was Confirmed. The Confirmands were: Pauline and Bertha Greenwood, Melinda and Sarah Hess, Fredericka and Caroline Regensburger, Caroline Klein, Caroline May, Anna Steppacher, Daniel Ullman, and Leman Blum (Weekly Gleaner, June 6, 1862, p. 4-5).

⁴⁶ Weekly Gleaner, October 4, 1861, p. 4. At this time, music was also added to the school's curriculum.

⁴⁷ Hebrew, October 5, 1866, p. 4.

religious school in 1861,⁴⁸ and J. M. De Sola became a teacher for Emanu-El's school in 1866.⁴⁹

Emanu-El's religious school did not escape criticism, however. Leo Newmark, the son of Emanu-El trustee, J. P. Newmark, received his Jewish education at the school. Of his experience there, he cynically remarked that it was "the typical Jewish Sunday School education of the 1860's."⁵⁰ He had special criticism for his teacher, Henry S. Jaffa. When he became Bar Mitzvah in the early 1870's, Newmark could not read a single letter of Hebrew and only recited, very poorly, by rote.⁵¹ The school had better success regarding Newmark's perception of right and wrong. From the combined efforts of the religious school and training from his mother and grandmother, he developed a profound dread of sin, especially of lying.⁵²

While Emanu-El's religious school experienced repeated change until the arrival of Dr. Cohn in 1860, the congregation always had a religious school. This was not the case for Shearith Israel. As mentioned before, Shearith

⁴⁸ Weekly Gleaner, October 4, 1861, p. 4. Emanu-El's religious school gave a picnic in honor of Daniel Levy's long service in June, 1864. He was presented with a heavy gold-headed cane and a silver goblet, both of which were inscribed (Hebrew, June 9, 1864, p. 4).

⁴⁹ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Newmark, California Family Newmark, p. 12.

⁵¹ *ibid*, p. 45-46.

⁵² *ibid*, p. 72.

Israel joined Emanu-El in subsidizing the first formal religious school under Eckman, in 1854. It did not have another, however, until Rev. Henry A. Henry was appointed as its rabbi and established one in 1857.⁵³ This religious school probably did not last long, as a report, from 1861, mentioned that Henry planned to re-open the school.⁵⁴ This school was to meet twice per week in the synagogue's basement, Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons.⁵⁵ This time the religious school succeeded for a few years. Shearith Israel advertised for two Hebrew teachers in 1865,⁵⁶ but, by 1867, due to a population movement from the area near the synagogue to distant areas of the city, the Sabbath school was, once again, closed.⁵⁷ Shortly after Shearith Israel built its new synagogue on Taylor St. at the end of the 1860's, the congregation reorganized the school under the superintendence of George Aronson.⁵⁸

53 Occident, December, 1857.

54 Weekly Gleaner, November 22, 1861, p. 5.

55 Weekly Gleaner, December 6, 1861, unpaginated.

56 Hebrew, February 17, 1865, p. 9.

57 Meyer, "The Jews in California," p. 47.

58 ibid, p. 48.

Congregation Ohabai Shalom also had a religious school during the 1860's, but we have little information about it. The congregation advertised its February 4, 1865, opening of the school, for children five years and older, to meet on Saturdays and Sundays. The instruction was to include Hebrew reading and translation, and religion (Hebrew, February 3, 1865, p. 5).

The International Order of B'nai Berith also attempted to organize a religious school, though whether or not it

Several of the men who were associated with Emanu-El and ran religious schools for the congregation also opened day schools. Bien opened one, the New Institute, shortly after his appointment to Emanu-El in 1856,⁵⁹ and Levy opened his "Levy's Institute," in Emanu-El's newly finished basement, with a staff of American teachers, in 1857.⁶⁰ When Cohn

succeeded is unclear. Ophir Lodge No. 21 initiated the plan, and three other lodges, Pacific Lodge No. 48, Montefiore Lodge No. 51, and Modin Lodge No. 42, agreed, forming committees to assist. Only one lodge in the city refused to help (Hebrew, November 24, 1865, p. 4).

⁵⁹ American Israelite, July 4, 1856. In a letter to the American Israelite (July 25, 1856), Bien listed the courses which he taught: religion, elementary and higher branches of Hebrew, English and German languages, history, geography, arithmetic, other branches of mathematics, composition, elocution, writing, drawing and singing. French, Spanish, and music would be taught if required. He also taught "formal education" for young ladies.

Another letter to the American Israelite (October 10, 1856) called Bien's New Institute "a humbug," claiming that he had thirty students to whom he taught the *aleph-bet*.

⁶⁰ Voorsanger, Chronicles..., p. 55-56. Levy's Institute was advertised in the Weekly Gleaner (April 3, 1857, p. 91). Aside from the usual school subjects, French, German, and Hebrew were also taught. M. W. C. Crook assisted Levy with the teaching.

In some of the sources, it is difficult to distinguish between Levy's day school and the congregation's religious school. The Weekly Gleaner (September 18, 1857, p. 288) reported that Eckman examined sixty to seventy Levy Institute students. His review of the students was favorable and he cited Levy and Levison as good teachers.

As it is more likely that Eckman would have examined the religious school than the day school, and because it is unlikely that Emanu-El's religious school would have born the name Levy's Institute, in addition to the fact that Voorsanger (Chronicles..., p. 135) placed Levison in the religious school, it is almost certain that the Weekly Gleaner incorrectly called the religious school by the name of the day school. In addition, Crook was more likely to have been one of the American teachers Voorsanger placed in the day school in the above citation.

By November, 1857, the advertisement in the Weekly

arrived in San Francisco, he, too, opened a day school, the Academic Seminary, which had ninety students who were divided into four grades.⁶¹

Other Jews also ran independent schools in the city. E. Blochman advertised for his day and evening school.⁶² Though the advertisement did not indicate that the school was of a religious nature, as it did profess this man's "religious character" and "pious conduct," known to his "co-religionists," it is likely that at least Hebrew was to be taught at the school. Since the advertisement read as it did, in addition to appearing in the Hebrew, Blochman was definitely appealing for Jewish students. Like Blochman, J. L. Stone, with the assistance of John C. Pelton, also ran an independent school. This school, however, relinquished its independence, and Stone and Pelton became teachers at the new Hebrew Free School in January, 1865.⁶³ A. Solomon also advertised for his Hebrew, German and French School in

Gleaner (November 13, 1857, p. 347) for Levy's Institute disappeared. Whether or not this is an indication of the school's disappearance is unclear.

⁶¹ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 231. The Academic Seminary was a day school for Jewish children as Hebrew and religion, in addition to English, German, French, and the usual school subjects, were taught. Dr. Cohn taught Hebrew and religion and supervised the school, while Levy taught the other three languages. Tuition was \$4-\$8 per month. Of the ninety students, ten students who could not afford tuition were accepted without charge.

⁶² Hebrew, July 8, 1864, p. 4.

⁶³ Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 4; and February 10, 1865, p. 3. We will discuss the Hebrew Free School shortly.

The Hebrew Free School, which opened January 2, 1865,⁶⁵ appears to have filled a great need in the city. By mid-February, the school already had 115 students. Tuition was \$1-\$1.50 per month, but, as many of the students were unable to pay, the benevolent societies were asked to contribute.⁶⁶ The school's financial report of early March indicated that its membership included both people with children in the school and people without children in the school, but, at least as of that time, no Jewish organizations had contributed assistance.⁶⁷ As the school already had a \$221 deficit by the time of the March financial report, the Eureka Social Club organized a Calico Ball⁶⁸ at Platt's Music Hall for its benefit.⁶⁹ Though the Hebrew did not report the amount the benefit raised, it was deemed a success as the last dance took place at 4:00 A.M.⁷⁰

64 Hebrew, January, 21, 1865, p. 7.

65 Hebrew, February 10, 1865, p. 3. In addition to Hebrew, English and German were also taught at the school.

66 Hebrew, February 17, 1865, p. 4.

67 Hebrew, March 10, 1865, p. 4. The financial report also included a contribution cited in an earlier issue of the Hebrew. At the Eureka Social Club's masquerade ball given in February, a young man and a young woman, dressed as an organ-grinder and as a tambourine-girl, solicited donations for the school, raising about \$40 (Hebrew, February 17, 1865, p. 4).

68 Calico Ball benefits are described in Chapter Two.

69 Hebrew, March 10, 1865, p. 4.

70 Hebrew, March 31, 1865, p. 4.

In addition to the day schools and supplementary schools, at least two people sought to establish Jewish boarding schools. In 1866, J. M. De Sola, a teacher at Emanu-El's religious school, advertised the establishment of a Jewish boarding school for boys. Aware of the possible charges of split loyalty between Emanu-El's school and his own, De Sola's advertisement indicated that he had the approval of Emanu-El's rabbi, Dr. Cohn, its president, Louis Sachs, and its School Board president, E. Wertheimer.⁷¹ A few months later, Mrs. Rebecca Martin published an advertisement for her boarding school for Jewish children, with the strong assurance that the children would be brought up with Judaism.⁷²

The institution of private families hiring tutors for their children is one which has a long history among Jews. This being the case, it is not surprising that advertisements from both the families and from the tutors are found in San Francisco's Jewish press. One family sought a Hebrew tutor for its two boys, with the offer of board and lodging in exchange.⁷³ S. Hochheimer advertised himself as a tutor in Hebrew and German,⁷⁴ and another man offered his services as a tutor in Hebrew and English, desiring board with the family

⁷¹ Hebrew, August 31, 1866, p. 3.

⁷² Hebrew, November 9, 1866, p. 2.

⁷³ Hebrew, November 10, 1865, p. 8.

⁷⁴ Hebrew, March 24, 1865, p. 8.

in exchange.⁷⁵ It is not surprising that these advertisements appear; it is more surprising that more advertisements are not found.⁷⁶

Children were not the only ones who sought an education among San Francisco's Jews. Literary societies were the most prevalent of the attempts at education for those older than school-aged. Initially, the literary societies were organized by young men, but by the mid-1860's, all were not so identified. The societies variously flourished and declined, but the tendency to try again or to establish new ones is observable. The desire of some in the Jewish community to hone their mental abilities was strong.

The first Jewish literary society formed in San Francisco was the Young Men's Debating Society, founded in 1854, with thirty to forty members. Its president and vice-president, Henry J. Labatt and Henry Seligman, were also officers of Temple Emanu-El at the time. An editorial in the Occident regarding the foundation of this society reads,

⁷⁵ Hebrew, September 8, 1865, p. 5.

⁷⁶ I had the intention of describing public education as demonstrated in the Jewish press, but as I found little material, public education does not warrant a section.

The Weekly Gleaner (May 3, 1861, p. 4) reported on an examination at a San Francisco public high school. Two of the thirteen graduates were Jewish. Henrietta Ashim delivered an original essay, entitled "Light," and Rebecca Tandler delivered an original essay, entitled "Friendship." Both girls were commended.

The Hebrew (March 27, 1868, p. 4) reported that the public schools were to be closed from April 30 until July 1 because they lacked sufficient funds for operation. Evidently, Jewish schools were not the only ones with financial trouble.

"[The founding of such a society shows healthy improvement] where not long since, all energies of all the inhabitants were devoted only to the acquisition of wealth."⁷⁷

The Hebrew Young Men's Mutual Benefit and Literary Association was founded in October, 1855, with sixty members. By 1858, it had seventy-five, and, by the end of 1859, 130.⁷⁸ Many nationalities were represented in the membership. As with the Young Men's Debating Society, cited above, its list of officers included some names associated with Temple Emanu-El's leadership.⁷⁹ According to one report, the object of this association was to render assistance to members in financial need and to debate important topics.⁸⁰ To its intellectual end, the Association's library had a good collection of English, Hebrew, French, and German books,⁸¹ and some international newspapers.⁸² By 1857, the organization had changed its name to the Hebrew Young Men's

⁷⁷ Occident, July, 1854; and September, 1854.

⁷⁸ Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 36

⁷⁹ Occident, February, 1856. The officers known to be associated with Temple Emanu-El are Leon Dennery, president, 1855, and J. Godshaux, trustee, 1855 and 1856, and financial secretary, April, 1857. It is important to note that there are no names which recur on the societies' lists of officers, indicating that the second society probably did not replace a defunct first society, but was composed of different people.

⁸⁰ Occident, April, 1856.

⁸¹ Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 36

⁸² Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 229.

Literary Association,⁸³ and, evidently, it did much more than conduct debates.

A Programme of Exercises of the Association, published in the Weekly Gleaner, listed the weekly schedule of activities and topics for November, 1857 through January, 1858. The Programme included debates, recitations, lectures, essay-readings, and speeches, on various political, economic, moral, and religious topics; it also included the names of the members who would participate in each activity.⁸⁴ A few months later, Shearith Israel's Rev. Henry delivered a lecture to the Association, entitled "The Influence of Literature on Life and Mankind in General."⁸⁵

In the early 1860's, Benjamin II, citing financial trouble, reported⁸⁶ that the Association was not making "the progress it should have." This poor situation was further demonstrated by a Weekly Gleaner report of February, 1861, announcing the Association's reconstitution.⁸⁷ This reconstitution must not have succeeded, as a notice of December, 1861, once again, announced the recommencement of

⁸³ This assertion of the Association's name-change is supported by the evidence that most of the names listed as officers of the organizations are the same.

⁸⁴ Weekly Gleaner, November 13, 1857, p. 347.

⁸⁵ American Israelite, April 25, 1858.

⁸⁶ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 228-229.

⁸⁷ Weekly Gleaner, February 22, 1861, p. 4.

the Association.⁸⁸

Despite the trouble the Hebrew Young Men's Literary Association experienced during 1861, that year also saw the foundation of another literary association for young men.⁸⁹ The Union Debating Society, founded in March, 1861, was made up of American-born young men. It, too, had as its objective intellectual development through previously-prepared weekly debates.⁹⁰ One month after its establishment, the Association, seeking badly needed public support, elected honorary members. These men, all leaders in the community, included Dr. Cohn, Rev. Henry, Rev. Bien, S. N. E. Straus, Daniel Levy, William J. Mack, I. N. Choynski, A. Levy, A. Goldsmith, and Dr. Julius Eckman.⁹¹

A few years later, in 1864, a letter appeared in the Hebrew which focused on the intellectual pursuits of young men. The letter, signed Truth, objected to young men spending their time without structure; the writer feared that they would be lead to a life of illicitness. It argued that the Jewish community should arrange an organization for these young men to teach intellectuality and morality.⁹² A quick response came from the Hebrew Youth's Library and Debating

⁸⁸ Weekly Gleaner, December 6, 1861, unpaginated.

⁸⁹ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 229.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, p. 229.

⁹¹ Weekly Gleaner, April 5, 1861, p. 6.

⁹² Hebrew, January 22, 1864, p. 4.

Association (HYLDA). This letter mentioned that an organization like the one which "Truth" recommended already existed, and that it had thirty-five members, a good library, and sufficient funds. The letter did complain, however, that the learned men in the community had not offered their educational services to the HYLDA.⁹³

The Hebrew continued to give the issue notice. A few months after the exchange of letters, California's United States Senator, John Conness, sent the Eureka Benevolent Society a set of books, containing all the public documents and acts of Congress for the past session. Reporting on the receipt of the gift, the Hebrew recommended to the Society that it donate the books to one of the Jewish literary associations.⁹⁴ Shortly after this, the newspaper recommended to the HYLDA to give public literary entertainments, like the one from 1857 mentioned above, which would benefit both the organization and would encourage public support.⁹⁵

Young men were not the only Jews in San Francisco to organize literary societies, however. We know of the B'nai Berith Literary and Social Circle, for example, which organized a Railroad Excursion and Picnic at Belmont Park to

⁹³ Hebrew, February 5, 1864, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Hebrew, July 22, 1864, p. 5.

⁹⁵ Hebrew, September 16, 1864, p. 4.

benefit its library, in May, 1867.⁹⁶ Similarly, we know of the Nucleus Literary Club, which, in March, 1868, gave a benefit for the Widows and Orphans Fund of the Ancient Jewish Order of Keshet Shel Barzel's⁹⁷ Zion Lodge No. 4.⁹⁸ Though we know nothing of the literary programs these organizations conducted, their existence attests to the commitment to literary and intellectual pursuits that was present among the Jews of San Francisco.

Some intellectual pursuits did not exclusively focus around the literary societies, however. Lectures were a common activity in San Francisco's Jewish community. Rev. H. Bien, for example, gave a lecture, entitled "Europe and Europeans," at Tucker's Academy of Music, in June, 1861.⁹⁹ Similarly, the emissary from Jerusalem, Rabbi Nissan, who came to the city to raise money, lectured at Shearith Israel in November, 1861, on the state of the Jews of Palestine.¹⁰⁰

Education has long been a Jewish concern, so it is not surprising that the Jews of San Francisco opened schools for their children and established literary societies for those

⁹⁶ Hebrew, May 3, 1867, p. 5.

⁹⁷ The Ancient Jewish Order of Keshet Shel Barzel (AJOKSB) will be briefly described in Chapter Six.

⁹⁸ Hebrew, March 27, 1868, p. 4. The benefit took place at the Turn-Verein Hall, and featured the drama, "Minerali," and the burlesque, "Bombastes."

⁹⁹ Weekly Gleaner, June 7, 1861, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Weekly Gleaner, November 22, 1861, p. 5. In response to Rabbi Nissan's visit, Ohabei Zion, a relief organization for Jews of Palestine, was established.

who were older. Many of the schools, however, were beset with difficulties. Some were accused of being academically inadequate,¹⁰¹ while others lacked funding. In 1861, Eckman published an editorial in the Weekly Gleaner attacking the community's support of Jewish education. He charged that the community did not give it sufficient financial support and that the parents did not reinforce Judaism at home. He singled out Temple Emanu-El's and Shearith Israel's purchase of their cemeteries as instances when great amounts of money were spent for the dead, while the children, who were living, were deprived of a good education. Though they were opened, school after school disappeared. Only the persistent Eckman and, later, Cohn were able to keep their schools open for more than a few years. Cohn finally acquired financial support from his congregation. Without the money, education proved impossible. The literary societies, too, which were entirely voluntaristic, suffered from erratic support and fluctuating membership. Though the experience of San Francisco's Jewish schools and literary societies was inconsistent, the regularity of the attempts at their foundation attests to a strong tendency to include them in the community. Though San Francisco's Jews did not wholly succeed, their attempts to foster education were commendable.

101 American Israelite, October 10, 1856.

Chapter Six:
The Social Background of the Jews of San Francisco

San Francisco's numerous inhabitants had arrived from all over the world, from various regions of the United States, Ireland, Germany, England, France, Italy, Poland, Hawaii, Australia, and so on. No group held the reigns of power in the city, though some evidence indicates that native English-speakers were somewhat preferred.¹ With such disparate backgrounds, few social conventions were firmly established in the city's early history. The 1850's and 1860's were a time of the development of those conventions. With few local social conventions in place, people tended to operate within the conventions of their own ethnic background. Furthermore, as no group had social hegemony, a fairly high degree of inter-group tolerance, unusual for the era, appears to have developed. As Rudolf Glanz has reported,

The meeting of so many nationalities [in California] with the variety of traditions and customs of social intercourse caused much restraint in inter-group relations. Social life was carried on rather in circles one was accustomed too [sic] more than in new far-reaching groupings.²

It has further been suggested that the Jews of San Francisco were one of the groups which benefitted from this social environment. As Robert Levinson has written,

¹ Rochlin, Pioneer Jews, p. 144.

² Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 116.

They [the Jews] also enjoyed almost complete freedom from anti-Semitic prejudice. While attitudes of xenophobia did exist in the West against certain groups (notably Indians, Mexicans, and Asians), Jews -- white northern Europeans -- experienced very few forms of discrimination from the earliest years of white settlement in the West.³

Supporting Levinson's argument, in 1862, San Francisco's Daily Alta California reported,

As citizens they [the Jews] pay devout respect to the laws...Their charity and liberality is proverbial--giving of their means with a hand which the eye does not watch, and to all deserving cases, irrespective of nationality or creed. Contributing freely to all public movements...and staunch supporters of the Federal Government and the Union, which has given them liberty. Recognized and respected by all worthy men, they are an element in our midst which will contribute essentially to our future rise and progress.⁴

The level of tolerance does seem to have been great.

Some reports indicate that while Jews were not the objects of great amounts of discrimination, they were socially separate from non-Jews. This separation was not looked upon as negative, however. One memoir from the era, associated with Levi Strauss & Co., reported,⁵ "The seclusion of the Gentiles across the street was not distorted into intentional distinction or racial prejudice. No one desired to break through the natural barriers established by

³ Robert E. Levinson, "American Jews in the West," in The Western Historical Quarterly, July, 1974, p. 289-294.

⁴ Daily Alta California, April 14, 1862, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 148-149.

⁵ Ed Cray, Levi's, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), p. 8. The book does not indicate from whose memoir the quote comes, but we know it to be one of the leaders of Levi Strauss & Co.

differences of race or background." Two early chroniclers of San Francisco's history, likewise, indicated this social separation. Benjamin E. Lloyd wrote, "Though they mingle with other races more than was their custom in 'ancient days,' the prophecy that 'Israel shall dwell alone,' is yet in fulfillment. They are His peculiar people."⁶ Agreeing, Hubert Howe Bancroft, elaborated, "Hotels and watering places were filled with his [the Jew's] presence, secret societies felt his influence; but, otherwise, save in his trafficking, he held aloof from gentile associations."⁷ One recent historical publication has summed up the social position of the Jews of the era: "Unlike other minorities,⁸ Jewish San Franciscans gained almost total acceptance. They identified deeply with the fate of their city, leaving an indelible imprint on its history."⁹ The Jews made great contributions and apparently experienced little discrimination, but their lives, barring commercial affairs, were, for the most part, separate from the lives of their non-Jewish neighbors.

⁶ Benjamin E. Lloyd, Lights and Shades in San Francisco, p. 404, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 150.

⁷ Hubert Howe Bancroft, California inter pocula, (San Francisco, 1888, p. 372), cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 149.

⁸ "Other minorities" very likely indicates "Indians, Mexicans and Asiatics," who Levinson described as discriminated against (footnote #3).

⁹ San Francisco Jews: Old Traditions on a New Frontier, (Berkeley: Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1976), unpaginated (second page of text).

The Jews of San Francisco may have been accepted to a great degree by non-Jews, but, on occasion, insensitivity toward the Jews was demonstrated in the press. In 1853, when speaking of a Mr. Jacobs, a local newspaper wrote, "Mr. Jacobs, the Jew." To this, the Jews loudly protested that, in this matter, it was no concern whether Mr. Jacobs was a Jew or not.¹⁰ In 1865, a similar statement appeared in the Contra Costa Gazette. This article identified the breaker of a minor law as Jewish. The Hebrew led the protest this time, claiming that only one out of 350 law-breakers in California were Jewish.¹¹ One month later, the Hebrew criticized San Francisco's Evening Bulletin for identifying Mr. Schmidt, a suicide, as "a German Jew." The Hebrew argued that the label "German" would have been sufficient, and continued that the newspaper would not have labeled him "Catholic, Lutheran, Unitarian, Presbyterian" and so on. To this protest, the Evening Bulletin grudgingly apologized, but added that some Jews were "unnecessarily sensitive."¹²

At times, anti-Jewish sentiments were expressed during political controversies and campaigns. Within the first few months of the Civil War, the Weekly Gleaner wrote an editorial which argued that Jews could not be grouped as

¹⁰ Occident, November, 1853.

¹¹ Hebrew, January 13, 1865, p. 4.

¹² Hebrew, February 3, 1865, p. 4.

either Unionists or Secessionists.¹³ Some Jews supported both sides, it argued, though the majority supported the Union. It is very likely that this editorial was published because of some factional public discussion which labeled the Jews one way or the other. Eckman was clear in his resistance to categorizations of Jews.

The presidential campaign of 1865, too, brought out anti-Jewish sentiment. To this, the Hebrew editorialized:

During the late Presidential campaign it was constantly iterated and reiterated by those who designedly endeavored to array the Hebrews as antagonistic to the administration and even to the Union, and stated, that the Jews only confined themselves to mere money changing and certain branches of commercial business, the principal line of which was ready-made clothes. Our people were stigmatized as usurers, and non-producers.¹⁴

To this invective, the Hebrew listed the many fields in which Jews worked, agriculture, mechanics, science, the professions, academics, and mercantile business. Concluding its defense, the newspaper proclaimed, "Take Hebrew energy and capital from California and the State would be bankrupt." To smear a political stance, it was deemed beneficial, in this case, to dredge up the old stereotypes of the Jews.

The insensitivities which occasionally made their way into the press and the more direct anti-Jewish sentiment which seems connected to politics were not, however, the only anti-Jewish incidents which San Francisco's Jews experienced. Some of the incidents were unabashed examples of bigotry.

¹³ Weekly Gleaner, September 19, 1861, p. 1.

¹⁴ Hebrew, January 27, 1865, p. 4.

In 1865, the Argus, from the nearby city of Petaluma, published a virulent anti-Jewish editorial which the Hebrew reprinted and rebutted.¹⁵

Wanderers and outcasts upon the face of the earth, the Jews, in every country and clime, are only useful as an illustration of the rigid fulfillment of prophecy. With no permanent abiding place, their interests never go beyond their own pockets, and the country that extends to them the greatest degree of tolerance and protection, receive [sic] from them in return a degree of friendly feeling equal to that extended by besieging soldiery toward the city they are about to sack and pillage. This has been their predominant characteristic in all countries...[While clamoring for and receiving] all the rights and immunities of permanent citizens, their regard for law and morality is gauged entirely by filthy lucre...[giving only a semblance of obedience to the laws of the land] when so doing they can add to their gains. With that selfishness characteristic of their natures, when any considerable number of them congregate together in a community, as they have done in this city [Petaluma], they make a united and systematic effort to sap and destroy the business of all Christian merchants and traders.

The editorial concluded, asserting that, in their synagogue, the Jews had conspired to cause the failure of the Argus, unless the newspaper "catered to Israel." The Argus declared that the Jews would be "pack peddlers" again before it would be out of business. In rebuttal, the Hebrew reiterated its opposition to the tendency of labeling Jews by religion--different than what was done for other people, and asked that the Argus address only the individuals with whom it had its complaint. The Hebrew recalled that Christianity owed its existence and the origin of its ways to Judaism, and stated that "The law of the Christian and the law of the Jew are

¹⁵ Hebrew, February 24, 1865, p. 4.

alike." In response to the charge of selfishness, the Hebrew reminded the Argus that it was also in business to earn a livelihood for its owner, not strictly for altruistic reasons. Finally, the Hebrew asserted that Jews had contributed greatly to the expansion of California and the United States, reminding the Argus that a Jew had helped finance the American Revolution and that New York's Sheriff, Mordechai M. Noah, had freed imprisoned debtors during a period of pestilence to help their families.¹⁶ Neither deed was ever repaid, nor was repayment sought.

The Argus had not yet completed its anti-Jewish attacks, however. The newspaper was again quoted in the Hebrew: "The very fact that the Jews are wanderers and outcasts upon the face of the earth -- a despised race -- is about the only effectual clog upon the wheels of infidelity and skepticism."¹⁷ Again, rising to the defense of the Jews, the Hebrew retorted that while it was true that Jews had no land under their domination, Jews had "one belief, one language, one sentiment, one faith," and that "Christianity cannot say as much." The Hebrew condemned those, like the Argus, who attempted to instigate bigotry.

¹⁶ The Hebrew related an account which was popularly believed but was not true. The story was told that Sheriff Noah paid off all the debts of imprisoned debtors, totalling \$80,000. In actuality, as there was a yellow-fever epidemic, he freed the prisoners because crowded areas were more susceptible to the disease. Angered by his action, the people to whom the debtors owed money called upon Noah to pay the debts. I do not know if Noah paid them.

¹⁷ Hebrew, March 10, 1865, p. 4.

The Argus was not, however, the only source of virulent anti-Jewish attacks. A New York writer, Fitz-Hugh Ludlow, published an article in the Golden Era, a literary newspaper from San Francisco, likening Mormons and Jews.¹⁸ Stating that he "might run the parallel interminably," Ludlow wrote that in both religions, "polygamy [is] its [marriage's] highest form," and that the people are "grossly sensuous and physical in all their ideas of religion and a future state," "will compass heaven and earth to make a proselyte," "[see themselves as] doing God's service by assassinating such as have made defection from their creed," "extort involuntary contributions," and "murder the enemies of their faith." The Hebrew refuted all of these assertions and charged Ludlow with bigotry, reminding the reader that the Catholic Church, not the Jews, had excelled in religious persecution. The Hebrew reported that the Golden Era had reprinted its refutation of Ludlow, and praised it as a "liberal and high-toned sheet."¹⁹

Though acts of discrimination directed toward the Jews during these decades were minimal, some did occur. An article from 1861, which the Weekly Gleaner admitted was based on hearsay, reported that "an officer in the employ of the Government" led an "assault" upon the home of a Jewish family. It mentioned that Captain Burke was investigating

¹⁸ Hebrew, April 1, 1864, p. 4.

¹⁹ Hebrew, April 20, 1864, p. 4. The Hebrew's refutation was reprinted in the Golden Era (April 17, 1864).

the affair, and it cautioned the Jews against thinking that all sectarian hatred had disappeared.²⁰ This unfounded report, however, was not the only report of anti-Jewish discrimination.

In 1864, a controversy erupted regarding the Olympic Club, a young men's athletic club. By the time the controversy was reported in the Jewish press, agitation at the club had already been going on for six months. At the center of the controversy was an amendment, which passed, barring future Jewish members.²¹ The Hebrew published an editorial attacking the Olympic Club's "illiberal and intolerant action," citing that there were eleven Jewish members and that some steps had been taken to reverse the action. Interestingly, the Hebrew hoped it would not be reversed because it would rather publicly know its enemies than have them hidden. The newspaper asserted that the "Jews as a body are powerful enough to care for themselves, and protect their own interests."²² A letter of response, signed Israelite Member of the O. C. [Olympic Club], outlined the background of the controversy and the resolution. The letter claimed that a group aligned itself to black-ball Jews, so, in response, some Jews aligned themselves to black-ball non-Jews. The letter proclaimed,

²⁰ Weekly Gleaner, April 26, 1861, p. 4.

²¹ Hebrew, June 9, 1864, p. 1. The amendment passed at a meeting attended by forty of the 400 club members.

²² Hebrew, June 9, 1864, p. 4.

Why to black-ball an innocent Israelite is nothing out of the way at all, but to black-ball an innocent Christian is an offense, a gratification of personal spite. A few Israelites dared to take cognizance of the treatment they received, and dared to resent it! The little mischievous band! When they were kicked, they didn't hold themselves in readiness to be kicked again, but had the audacity to kick back.²³

Though much has been made of the minimal anti-Jewish discrimination in San Francisco, it is clear that some did occur. The newspaper articles, one from neighboring Petaluma and one by the writer from New York, were clear manifestations of anti-Jewish feeling, but they were neither indigenous to the city nor actual acts of discrimination. Yet, the alleged "attack" on the Jewish home, if instigated because the family was Jewish, and the incident at the Olympic Club were incidents when anti-Jewish acts of discrimination took place. It is possible that San Francisco saw fewer of this type of incident than other cities and regions of the country at the time, but it was certainly not entirely free of them. San Francisco saw an improved situation, not a perfected one.

Probably due to the relatively tolerant atmosphere in which San Francisco's Jews found themselves, some Jews were very self-assured and willing to make bold statements of Jewish pride. Henry J. Labatt, for example, proclaimed the high economic position of the Jews, citing a list of the heavy tax-payers from the city, which included fifty-seven Jewish firms which paid over \$10,000 in annual taxes, twenty-

²³ Hebrew, June 9, 1864, p. 4.

nine of which paid over \$30,000. He further claimed that, because of the moral character, enterprise and stable habits of the Jews, anti-Jewish prejudice had been beaten back in the city.²⁴ It is clear from this article that Labatt, as a Jew, felt safe and secure in San Francisco.

Not only were Jews self-assured enough to proclaim their great economic achievements, they also felt comfortable enough to proclaim their Jewishness. An editorial from the Hebrew, from 1865, entitled "Jewish Nationality" reads:

...(it would be advantageous for) the Israelites to coalesce and unite, -- for the preservation of his nationality...Be the Jew born under what flag he may, his religious nationality is the same. As a man, as a citizen, it is his duty to aid all in his power in the sustenance of that government which affords him, his family, and his worldly goods, protection. His duties, however, do not end here. He owes it to himself, to his people at large, that the love and constancy with which his faith has been cherished, shall be so vitalized as to become the germ for the future national existence of the Jewish people.²⁵

More bold than either proclamations of their economic achievement or of pride in their Jewishness, the Hebrew also encouraged the election of Jews to political office. The editorial reads:

We hope to see at the coming State election a worthy Israelite placed in nomination for the suffrages of his fellow-citizens. The choice of a co-religionist at this time will do much in aid of the great course of progressive liberty and civilization. We have talent of the highest order in our midst, and although some may consider the position of a member of a State Legislature no great honor, we certainly would look upon the

²⁴ Morris U. Schappes, A Documentary History of the Jews..., p. 441 and p. 690.

²⁵ Hebrew, January 15, 1864, p. 4.

election of a Hebrew by the people of San Francisco as a compliment to the integrity, worth, and high standing of the Jewish community in her midst, and such commendation would exert a beneficial influence abroad...The Israelite exercises the elective franchise solely in his position as an American citizen. We do not suggest the nomination of an Israelite to "catch" votes, but as in compliment to the large amount of wealth, talent and worth our co-religionists represent in the commercial emporium of the Pacific.²⁶

If the Jews felt safe enough to make such bold proclamations as being deserving of political election, the threat they perceived from those with anti-Jewish sentiment must have, indeed, been minimal. Though a certain amount of anti-Jewish sentiment did exist, and an occasional act of outright discrimination did occur, it does seem that the Jews of San Francisco experienced a generally tolerant and non-discriminatory society. This was definitely an improvement over the past experience of many of San Francisco's Jews.

San Francisco's Jewish community, itself, however, was not free from prejudice. Polemics against Christianity and bigotry against the Chinese are documented. A letter, signed J. R. B., entitled "Christianity and Judaism," virulently attacked Christianity, stating,

Christianity is a mixture of Paganism with the truth of Judaism...First was Protestantism - next Unitarianism - and so will the refining process continue, until the dross of Paganism is purged away, and the plain, simple truths of Judaism remain.²⁷

Though reasonably well-treated by his non-Jewish neighbors, this man, at least, found no reason to be tolerant.

²⁶ Hebrew, August 11, 1865, p. 4.

²⁷ Weekly Gleaner, December 6, 1861, unpaginated.

Similarly, as with many groups in California, there was anti-Chinese feeling among the Jews of San Francisco. A statement by Adolph Sutro, reads:

I can say one thing, that among all the thousands that I have employed during my life in California, I have never employed a Chinaman, and I am one of the few in this State that have not. I will bet that you can't name another man that has employed as many men as I have-- (some thirteen or fourteen thousand) at a time -- that has not employed a Chinaman. I am opposed to the Chinese on the political grounds of the future...The very worst emigrants from Europe are a hundred times more desirable than these Asiatics."²⁸

These examples make clear that ethnic prejudice was not limited by ethnic identification.

As San Francisco's Jews had their origins in many countries, it is not surprising that they were very cognizant of international news. Both of San Francisco's Jewish newspapers, the Weekly Gleaner and the Hebrew, had permanent columns of international news, listed by the country's, province's, or city's name. The entries, almost exclusively, were items which related to Jews specifically; the few that did not were about major national events, such as wars and economic peril. Though they were dedicated to their new home, as many were from abroad and still had family and associates there, the Jews did not forget that there was a larger world outside the city and the United States.

Many of the city's Jews had come from Germany and the surrounding regions, so German was a common language in San

²⁸ Statement by Adolph Sutro (in Bancroft Library), p. 12, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 125.

Francisco's Jewish community during these decades.²⁹ Because he claimed the use of German hindered assimilation and sounded "off-putting," Eckman published an editorial in the Weekly Gleaner which discouraged its use.³⁰ The Weekly Gleaner did run a few advertisements in German, but the Hebrew intentionally catered to those Jews in the city who used the language. The Hebrew included an entire section of German-language advertisements, in addition to its one page of news and a section of cultural and entertainment events which were written in German. While the Hebrew was an English-language newspaper, it must have attracted many speakers of German also. German was so common among the Jews of the city, in fact, that a German-language print shop, owned by A. J. Lafontain, advertised its large Hebrew printing stock.³¹

The Jews were not only concerned with foreign news, however; they were also intensely involved in the events of their city. In 1851 and again in 1856, Vigilance Committees were formed to combat rampant crime. Jews were among the members of these committees. In 1851, thirty of the 700

²⁹ In Chapter Two, we saw that the Israelitische Frauen Verein was exclusively German-speaking, and one report indicated that the Eureka Benevolent Society's president, August Helbing, permitted only German at the Society's meetings, unless he otherwise granted dispensation.

³⁰ Weekly Gleaner, March 8, 1861, p. 2.

³¹ Abend Post, January 13, 1862, p. 3, cited in Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 117.

committee members were Jews, including³² A. Ottenheimer (#63),³³ Jesse Seligman (#79), and Samuel Marx (#83). Others included Samuel Fleishhacker, Michael Hellman, S. K. Labatt, and S. Lazard. Members of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 included Seixas Solomons, who received a commission as First Lieutenant of the Nineteenth Division, Morris Schloss, Jesse Seligman,³⁴ and J. P. Newmark.³⁵

Two of the most prominent Jewish organizations in San Francisco were the International Order of B'nai Berith (IOBB) and the Ancient Jewish Order of Keshar Shel Barzel (AJOKSB), which were Jewish fraternal societies founded during these decades.³⁶ Upon their establishment, groups of San Francisco's Jews quickly founded lodges. As early as the Spring of 1855, one group, made up of some of the leaders of San Francisco's Jewish community, petitioned the IOBB to establish a lodge. Coming from the "land of gold," they called this lodge Ophir Lodge No. 21.³⁷

As with many of the societies we have already discussed, the IOBB had a Widows and Orphans Fund which benefitted the widows and orphans of deceased members with a stated annual

³² Glanz, The Jews of California, p. 41.

³³ The number listed indicates the order of enrollment as a member.

³⁴ Narell, Our City, p. 44.

³⁵ Newmark, California Family Newmark, p. 31.

³⁶ The AJOKSB was made up of Orthodox Jews.

³⁷ American Israelite, July 20, 1855.

disbursement.³⁸ The benefit for widows ran until they remarried and that for orphans ran until they were thirteen years old. The organization also sought to build homes for orphans and for the aged. In addition, the \$7 annual dues also went toward paying the medical costs of sick members, though many of the wealthy members re-donated their benefits. Members of the "Sick Committees" visited the sick lodge members and filed weekly reports on their progress. Furthermore, important for an organization which had as part of its object the financial care of its members and their dependents, the Order taught that it was as honorable to receive benefits as it was for the Order to give them.

Though IOBB's Ophir Lodge No. 21 was the first lodge founded, it was not long until other lodges followed. By the early 1860's, the Ophir Lodge had grown to ninety members, and it was joined by the Modin Lodge No. 42, which had forty-five.³⁹ By the time Philo Jacoby began publishing the Hebrew in December, 1863, however, the Order had added the Pacific Lodge No. 48,⁴⁰ and three months later, it added a fourth, the Montefiore Lodge No. __.⁴¹

³⁸ Hebrew, August 5, 1864, p. 1. All of the information about the IOBB's benefits and charitable objectives comes from this article, entitled "The Charities of the IOBB."

³⁹ Benjamin II, Three Years in America, vol. I, p. 227-228.

⁴⁰ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 8.

⁴¹ Hebrew, March 25, 1864, p. 4.

The Order did not only spend its energy on founding lodges, however. By January, 1864, the IOBB had initiated plans for building a library,⁴² and within one month had raised \$1,500.⁴³ In September of that year, the IOBB inaugurated its new hall.⁴⁴

Sometime previous to the establishment of the Hebrew at the end of 1863, the AJOKSB had founded three lodges, Har Hamoriah Lodge No. 3, Zion Lodge No. 4, and Rehoboth Lodge No. 6.⁴⁵ By September, 1864, it had established a new one, Mt. Horeb Lodge No. 7,⁴⁶ and by 1868, AJOKSB had as many as 300 members.⁴⁷ The object of the organization appears to have been similar to that of the IOBB,⁴⁸ but it never achieved the same national position.

The Jews of San Francisco lived in a city which was noted for its tolerance of and lack of discrimination against Jews. Bigotry and discrimination did exist, especially that directed toward Native Americans, Mexicans, and Asians, but the Jews were, for the most part, tolerated. While fully

⁴² Hebrew, January 15, 1864, p. 4.

⁴³ Hebrew, February 12, 1864, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Hebrew, September 16, 1864, p. 4. It is unclear from the newspaper reports if "the new hall" was the planned "library," or if the building of the hall, with a different purpose, replaced the building of the library.

⁴⁵ Hebrew, January 8, 1864, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Hebrew, September 16, 1864, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Hebrew, February 28, 1868, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Hebrew, January 21, 1865, p. 4.

integrated with their non-Jewish neighbors into the commercial life of the city, and even solicited by non-Jewish German-speaking businesses, they stayed among their own socially. Though San Francisco was tolerant of diversity, that diversity encouraged co-existence; the groups' boundaries remained strong, so they resisted merging. The Jews were active on the municipal scene, not only participating in politics, as noted previously, but also joining the Vigilance Committees of 1851 and 1856. In fact, in every aspect of society the Jews were active; with rare exception, they were not shut out. San Francisco's rich mixture of ethnic groups lent itself to tolerance. In this tolerance the Jews thrived.

Summary

Spurred to prominence by the discovery of gold in California's northern interior, San Francisco, northern California's principal port city, and thus its shipping and commercial center, saw its population quickly swell. The city's inhabitants arrived with the primary aim of establishing businesses with which to acquire their share of the gold.

The Jews, too, came to set up businesses. Though they were represented in virtually all fields of economic endeavor, they focused especially in the fields of clothing and dry goods, tobacco, liquor and wine, and jewelry and watchmaking and repair. Some achieved great success, such as J. Seligman & Co. in dry goods, and, later, in banking, the Dinkelspiel's, Louis and Martin Sachs, and the Scholle's also in dry goods, the Lazard family in banking, Levi Strauss & Co. in clothing manufacturing, Michael Reese in real estate, S. Koshland & Co. in wool, Raphael Weill and the Davis family, who helped pioneer the concept of the department store, M. J. Brandenstein, later named MJB, in food provisions and coffee, and the Sloss, Gerstle, Greenwald, Wasserman, and Greenebaum families, all associated with the Alaska Commercial Company. The bulk of the Jewish population, however, achieved moderate success, owning and operating their own mercantile businesses. Some Jews achieved little success at all. These Jews, and others who

experienced a variety of catastrophes such as fires, sickness and floods, became the recipients of the charities of the various Jewish charitable organizations.

With the death of the first Jew in the city in late 1849, San Francisco's Jews acquired a cemetery and organized their first benevolent society, the Hebrew Benevolent Society. By the Fall of 1850, however, due to tensions between the German and Polish factions, tensions which would remain in force all through the 1850's and 1860's, a second benevolent society was formed, the Eureka Benevolent Society; the remaining members from the original society renamed their society the First Hebrew Benevolent Society. Though tensions existed, the two benevolent societies did work on many projects together, including the formation of the joint Humane Society, to care for the sick and to bury the dead during a cholera epidemic in the Fall of 1850, the management of the original cemetery, and the organization of a mass protest concerning the Mortrara abduction and forced baptism in Italy, in 1859. In 1855, however, tensions again arose, and the months following the establishment of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society saw the split of its German-speaking faction. The faction formed the Israelitische Frauen Verein, and the remaining members from the original group renamed their society the United Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society. Mutual beneficial associations were also established, consisting of a membership which was less financially secure than the membership of the benevolent

societies. A number of *chebras* were also formed, focusing especially on the burial of the dead. The benevolent societies assisted both Jews and non-Jews in San Francisco and in the interior, while the mutual beneficial associations could only afford to care for their own members. The *chebras*, while organized primarily for the burial of their own members, would, if necessary, arrange the Jewish burial of a non-member if he or she was otherwise neglected. From the earliest times, San Francisco's Jews established the organizations necessary for their permanent settlement.

Another indication of their desire for permanent settlement was the establishment of congregations. By the end of the summer of 1850, two congregations were founded, Emanu-El, made up of German, French, and American Jews, and Shearith Israel, made up of Polish, Russian, and English Jews, and, by April, 1851, both formally incorporated. An unsuccessful attempt to establish a Portuguese congregation took place in 1853, and 1855 brought the city's first congregational split -- Shomrei Shabbes, a twenty-five member faction which was more observant -- from Shearith Israel. In 1854, both Emanu-El and Shearith Israel built the city's first synagogues, and Dr. Julius Eckman arrived in the city and was appointed Emanu-El's first rabbi.

Eckman's release in 1855 brought controversy to the congregation and a split occurred. What happened to this break-off congregation is unknown. Following his release from Emanu-El, some reports place Eckman with Emanu-El's

break-off congregation and some with Shearith Israel, but if either of these possibilities did take place, he did not stay long. By January, 1857, Eckman began publishing the Weekly Gleaner. In 1860, Benevolent Society and Congregation Beth Israel, which later became Congregation Beth Israel, was founded, and, in 1864, Emanu-El suffered a split consisting of one-third of its membership, bringing Congregation Ohabai Shalom into being. San Francisco's Jewish population was too big for homogeneity of either background, sentiment, or opinion. While blatant hostility between the factions was unlikely, unity was unknown.

Several months after its release of Eckman, Emanu-El hired Herman M. Bien as "Lecturer and Teacher." His tenure, too, lasted less than one year, and though it repeatedly tried to appoint a permanent rabbi during the next few years, Emanu-El did not succeed until it appointed Dr. Elkan Cohn in 1860. In 1857, Shearith Israel appointed Henry A. Henry as its first rabbi.¹ Both of these men served their congregations for many years.

Jews were also active in San Francisco's political life. A few Jews, such as Joseph Shannon, Isaac N. Cardozo, Solomon and Elkan Heydenfeldt, and Joseph Naphtaly, sought and achieved political election, but the vast majority contented themselves with an intense passion for politics. They

¹ Though Eckman may have served Shearith Israel for a short time, Henry is commonly thought of as the congregation's first rabbi.

followed it closely. Many Jews were affluent and most Jews were dedicated voters, so Jewish support was solicited by the various political parties and many would-be candidates. Jews did not pass up the freedoms of the democratic process.

Established in their businesses and settled with their families, Jews also sought to give their children a Jewish education. From the earliest times, even with few Jewish children present in the city, religious education was not neglected. Louis Cohn and Meyer Welhof conducted informal classes for the children between 1850 and 1854, and when Julius Eckman arrived in 1854, he established a formal religious school. Eckman's school, later named Hephtsi-bah, remained open into the 1860's. Emanu-El's religious school operated sporadically under Herman Bien and Daniel Levy. When Elkan Cohn was appointed rabbi in 1860, he successfully reorganized it. Shearith Israel's school, too, was sporadic in the early 1850's. This school, however, remained sporadic even after Rev. Henry's appointment as rabbi in 1857. Day schools were also opened with varying success. Bien's New Institute and Levy's Institute were among the short-lived failures, while Eckman's Harmonia School remained open for a few years. The success of Cohn's Academic Seminary is unclear, though one report indicated its viability. Other schools, usually featuring instruction in English, Hebrew, German, and French, opened for varying periods of time. Though the schools experienced varying success, the number of schools which were established indicates a significant desire

among San Francisco's Jews to educate their children.

Infused with a continuing desire to learn, many Jewish adults sought out additional education. Their education usually came in the form of literary and debating societies and public lectures. Occasionally the literary societies presented public programs of pre-assigned debates, speeches, readings of original essays, and presentations of excerpts from various sources on political, moral and religious topics, while the public lectures included an equally wide range of topics.

As San Francisco was a city of recently-arrived immigrants from many parts of the world, few social conventions were established in these early decades. This situation brought about a degree of tolerance unusual for the era. Anti-Jewish sentiment appears to have been minimal, and outright discrimination was very rare. True coexistence was established; groups demonstrated mutual respect, while group boundaries were rarely breached. Arriving from lands where governmental repression and public anti-Jewish sentiment had centuries of history, the tolerance the Jews found in San Francisco was a welcomed relief. San Francisco was a great improvement.

On the public scene, Jews joined the Vigilance Committees of 1851 and 1856, and in the Jewish world they established early lodges of their fraternal organizations, the International Order of B'nai Berith and the Ancient Jewish Order of Kesher Shel Barzel. They attended plays,

operas and concerts, and were active organizers of benefits of all varieties. They were present in virtually every municipal endeavor.

San Francisco's Jews of the 1850's and 1860's laid the foundations of a Jewish community which would later rise in prominence, eventually becoming one of the great centers of Jewish settlement. Some of the most successful of these Jews also turned their resources toward public improvements. Many public facilities in San Francisco and the Greater Bay Area bear the names of these pioneer Jewish families. Stern Hall and the Haas International Award at the University of California's Berkeley campus, the Dinkelspiel Auditorium and the Marcus C. Sloss Law Library and Faculty Lounge at Stanford University, Gerstle Park in San Rafael, and the Daniel E. Koshland Park, the Fleishhacker Pool, Playground and Zoo, the Sutro Forest and the Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco are a few of the many. The Jews found a tolerant and welcoming home in San Francisco, and San Francisco received a dedicated and giving Jewish population. The Jews adopted the city as their own and have been devoted citizens ever since.

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