The Canadian Jewish Museum: A Concept Planning Outline

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Abstract

Since the 1950s, dozens of new Jewish Museums have sprouted up across the North American landscape portraying various elements of Jewish history and culture. While some have broadly focused on the entire history of the Jewish people, others have narrowed their scope to memorializing the Holocaust or the experiences of Jewish immigrants to America. Despite this movement, no large educational-cultural institution exists to display the experiences of the Jewish people in Canada. This thesis proposes a concept plan for the first major Canadian Jewish heritage institution by applying to it the current trends and best practices of the greater museum field. Known as the Canadian Jewish Museum, this institution will be dedicated to educating a broad audience about the heritage of the Jewish people across Canada and the diversity of Canadian society.

This plan outlines the Canadian Jewish Museum’s core exhibition sections and the principle artifacts used to display the historical narrative. Each section is devoted to a distinct theme or turning point in the history of Canadian Jews, and is intended to be a story that public audiences may relate to on several intellectual and emotional levels. As well, it highlights several key issues concerning the translation of memory and history into a broadly accessible, meaningful, and educational exhibit. Issues discussed include the composition of a museum’s mission and vision; how the core exhibit and its artifacts engage the visitor and create an exciting, educational environment for people of all ages and backgrounds; and how additional functions of the Canadian Jewish Museum contribute to a meaningful visitor experience. Ultimately, the concept plan for the Canadian Jewish Museum will discuss and apply the most effective methods of museum planning by focusing on the social needs and educational desires of its audience.
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In the professional museum world, I am grateful to Carol Baum and Dorion Liebgott for their careful training in the museum field. Paul Radensky and David Marwell and the rest of the staff at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust were also instrumental in providing me with a deep understanding of museum education, operations, and management. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work closely with each of these fine individuals.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank Eleanore and Joey Lightstone, Moshe Lakser, and Avi Weinryb whose hospitality and friendship permitted me to visit and learn from museums in North America and Israel. Finally, I must give my sincerest love and appreciation to my parents, Bruce and Sari, who have supported me through my graduate studies, and who always made themselves available in those moments when I needed support. I could not have completed the concept plan for the Canadian Jewish Museum without them.
Introduction

My vision for the Canadian Jewish Museum began three years ago, in the Fall of 2007. As a new college graduate with a background in Jewish history, I was hired as an assistant at the Beth Tzedec Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum, a small, one-room Jewish museum located inside Toronto’s grand Beth Tzedec synagogue. Despite its size, the museum holds the fifth largest collection of Judaic artifacts in North America, and with over 1,800 objects it is the repository for Canada’s foremost collection of Judaica. The collection, much of which belonged to the preeminent Jewish historian, Dr. Cecil Roth (1899-1970), consists of Jewish ceremonial objects from around the world dating from ancient times to the present. As I worked each day with the beautiful, intricate, and sometimes peculiar artifacts, I acquired an appreciation for the breadth of Jewish material culture that had been passed down from across the centuries and across many continents. Yet what struck me was that Canada’s largest collection of Jewish artifacts had very few objects pertaining to the experiences of the Jewish people in Canada. This was particularly surprising since numbering at nearly 400,000 people, the Jewish community of Canada is currently one of the largest Jewish communities in the world, and one of the few whose population is increasing annually. Furthermore, there was no large educational-cultural institution in Canada dedicated to telling the history of Canadian Jewry, but rather several small, underutilized and underfunded Jewish archival institutions and Holocaust centers.

As a proud member of the Canadian Jewish community, I set out to learn as much as I

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could about Canadian Jewish history with the goal of creating a museum from which Jews and other Canadians could learn about the country’s Jewish people. This document, which represents the culmination of my studies, is a concept plan outlining my vision for the Canadian Jewish Museum. This plan incorporates real artifacts, locations, audiences, and learning strategies into a museum concept and narrative in order that it might become a reality.

In order to complete this concept plan, I have dedicated the majority of the last two years to understanding Canadian Jewish history and Museum Studies. In addition to reading over a dozen books and many articles on various topics in Canadian Jewish history by some of the most established names in the field, I have also participated in several graduate-level university courses that examined exhibition methods, museum education, and the use of new media technologies in museums. Due to the generosity of Brandeis University’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School Association, I was awarded two research grants, which allowed me to participate in two annual Council of American Jewish Museums conferences and provided me with the opportunity to visit several Jewish museums in New York and Los Angeles. At the conferences, I listened to lectures and panel discussions of key issues facing Jewish museums led by prominent Jewish museum professionals in North America, Europe, and Israel. In addition, I personally interviewed several curators, directors, and educators on their chosen exhibition methods and the programming their museums use to best tell the Jewish story.

Although the concept plan for the Canadian Jewish Museum is largely theoretical, my hope is that in the future some of the ideas discussed here will be incorporated into a major Jewish cultural institution. As such, all of the artifacts listed here are real and not conjured from my imagination. Many of them come from Jewish archives and museums all
over Canada, as well as catalogues from exhibits that have highlighted aspects of the Jewish experience in Canada. One such exhibit was “A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada.” The exhibit was displayed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa in the late 1980s and chose not to focus on a chronological exhibition of Canadian Jewish history. Rather, the exhibit highlighted personal stories of Jewish Canadians using artifacts that illustrated several themes in the Canadian Jewish narrative. A second exhibit dealing with Canadian Jewry was “Too Close to Home: Anti-Semitism & Fascism in Canada, 1930s & 1940s,” held at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre in 2003. This exhibit showed how antisemitism and Nazi influence pervaded Canadian society on social, political, and economic levels during the 1930s and 1940s.

While using many artifacts from these invaluable exhibits, my proposal for the Canadian Jewish Museum seeks to differentiate itself from them in a number of ways. First, it will be the first permanent institution to display a comprehensive overview of the history of Canadian Jewry from its earliest days until the present. Second, its core exhibit will be displayed using a thematic approach within a structured chronological framework to evoke a sense of understanding and empathy amongst visitors of all backgrounds. Third, much of this document seeks to discover methods for providing visitors with the best possible engaging and interactive museum experiences that enable them to benefit from the museum. Although many of the artifacts have been exhibited before, the institution and exhibit planned here is something completely new.

This concept plan for the Canadian Jewish Museum is divided into three major sections, each one highlighting a major component of establishing a large museum. Part I describes the methodology behind the creation of the Canadian Jewish Museum’s mission statement. The museum’s location, potential audiences, educational goals, and learning activities are
each detailed in the first chapter, “Constructing a Mission Statement,” to show the factors museums must understand in order to best serve their visitors and fulfill their mission. A chapter on “Learning and Experiencing in the Museum” takes a detailed look at the ways in which visitors use their leisure time in museums, what they expect to learn and how exhibits and objects can be used to reach out and touch the hearts and minds of the museum’s potential audiences. A third chapter in this section outlines the rationale in selecting a name for the core exhibit and the unique thematic organization of the galleries and artifacts.

Part II, the body of the concept plan, outlines the organization of the museum’s core exhibit, entitled, “Strong and Free.” It describes the history and themes addressed, and details the use of the artifacts and other interpretive devices on display in each gallery. A museum’s primary tool to create experiences is its collection, but being inanimate objects, artifacts have no ability to “speak.” However, within the context of an exhibit, artifacts can be used as tools to convey certain narratives, messages, and themes; trigger powerful memories; and bring forth the emotions of its visitors. The challenge of this concept plan is to seek ways to evoke meaning to which all people, Jewish and non-Jewish, Canadian and non-Canadian, can respond by using artifacts to present the history of the Jews in Canada. Thus, each artifact presented here has been carefully selected for its historical significance and ability to encourage meaningful experiences amongst museum visitors. This section outlines the galleries and artifacts by theme and provides a detailed rationale for each of the issues examined within the exhibit. It must be noted that this concept plan does not endeavor to be an essay on Canadian Jewish history, but on how the subject can use artifacts to be transformed create a broadly accessible educational exhibit that stimulates, engages, and creates meaning for people of all ages and backgrounds through conveying
key themes of the Canadian Jewish experience. Objects cannot speak for themselves, but the meanings that people attribute to and obtain from them are what often make them quite powerful.

As mentioned above, the core exhibit outlined here displays its artifacts using a thematic approach within a chronological framework. Using themes to address historical issues is a simple way for audiences to understand the message the exhibit is conveying. For example, if the display case is titled, “Antisemitism,” there’s a strong chance that it will contain artifacts showing hostility or prejudice against Jews. People may understand what antisemitism is, and what its effects are, but this thematic approach does not address the question of time. When was there antisemitism? Does it still exist? Does it manifest itself the same way in each generation? There is a definite need to discuss themes within a framework of chronology to show that time and context can alter the experience of each theme. In this exhibit, as the galleries proceed chronologically, one or more key experiential themes of Canadian Jewish history are emphasized in each one. Thus, the Canadian Jewish Museum’s core exhibit seeks to display objects in a thematic display within a structured chronology.

The first gallery, “Between Two Origins,” describes Jewish involvement in the colony of New France. Under colonial French Canada in the early 1700s, Jews were officially barred from entry into the colony until 1763, when the French ceded their North American colony to the British in the Treaty of Paris, 1763, following the Seven Years’ War. Yet, despite a prohibition on their presence, Jews were involved and influential in Canada during French rule. How and why this was accomplished, and at what personal and financial cost to Jewish individuals, is the theme of this gallery.

The second gallery, “Equality and Adaptation,” outlines the first small Jewish
communities of Western European and American origin that trickled into Canada from the mid-1700s to 1880. This gallery’s key themes are the Jewish struggle for equal civil rights, the ways in which Jews sought new economic opportunity, and the strategies they developed to preserve their Judaism, all while adapting to a new home in Canada.

The next gallery, “East Comes West,” discusses the period around the turn of the twentieth century when thousands of Eastern European Jews fled from violent attacks, known as pogroms, in their native countries and sought safety on Canadian soil. It describes the various efforts of these Jews between 1880 and 1930 to create communities and survive in urban and rural settlements throughout Canada. The key themes here are similar to those in the previous gallery, which are adapting to a new home and preserving Jewish traditions, but this gallery also delves into the differences between the experiences of Jews living in the Prairies and Jews living in major Canadian cities.

The following gallery is called, “Canadian Judaism,” and describes the practice of Jewish religion throughout Jewish history in Canada. The key theme of this gallery is to highlight those cultural aspects that make Jews a unique community within Canada. This includes the synagogue as the Jewish place of worship, milestones in the Jewish life cycle, Jewish holidays, and kosher dietary restrictions as key elements of Judaism in Canada.

From there we turn to, “Facing Challenges,” a gallery that describes how the early twentieth century greeted the Jewish community with subtle and sometimes overt antisemitism, exacerbated by the rise of Nazism in Germany. By the 1930s, quotas were placed on the number of Jews in Canadian schools, and Jews were often discriminated against in politics and employment. Furthermore, Canada’s gates were shut tight against Jewish immigration, and Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s government turned a blind eye to the suffering of millions of Jews trapped in Europe and a deaf ear to the lobbying efforts of
Canadian Jewish Congress to admit even a few Jews in one of Canada’s darkest hours. Still, the gallery shows how Canadian Jews, proudly fought and contributed to the war effort for their country.

In the sixth gallery, “Heart in the Homeland,” visitors will learn about the special connection between Canadian Jews and the State of Israel. The fervent tradition of Canadian Jewish support for the Zionist state is outlined as it was before and after 1948, when the State of Israel was established. This gallery examines the themes of Diaspora communities and how they may relate to their homeland of origin.

The museum’s final gallery, “Canadian Jews and Multiculturalism,” describes the development of the post-war Canadian Jewish Community. After the Second World War, Jews were instrumental in creating human rights legislation in Canada and breaking down barriers that once prevented minorities from equal treatment under Canadian law. As well the Jews of Canada absorbed thousands of refugees from the Holocaust. The gallery describes how survivors adapted to Canada and led the fight throughout the 1960s against Holocaust deniers and neo-Nazis. The gallery then discusses the efforts of Canadian Jews to protest in support of Jewish emigration from the Former Soviet Union throughout the 1970s. The gallery also discusses the immigration and adaptation of Sephardic Jews from North Africa and the Middle East during the post-war period.

The gallery will also describe the current state of Canadian Jewry. Now in 2010, Canadian Jews are a successful community in terms of comfort in Canada, social and financial status, and are one of the most educated communities in the country. Yet visitors will bare witness to a new set of issues concerning the Canadian Jewish community. Rising rates of antisemitism fueled by French-Canadian nationalism and the community’s traditional affiliation with Anglo-Canada have caused Jews to worry about their future in the
province of Quebec. As well, with the breakdown of barriers and the acceptance of Jews in secular settings, issues of rising intermarriage levels have caused many observers to wonder if the next generation will continue to be Jewish. Can Judaism survive in the twenty-first century Canadian cultural mosaic? For that matter, can any minority survive and thrive in an open society? These issues and others will be discussed through various outlets allowing visitors of all backgrounds to voice their opinions and share their stories of their own personal histories in Canada.

The gallery will conclude by providing interactive opportunities for all museum visitors to share their own personal experiences of life in Canadian society.

Part III of the concept plan briefly discusses the additional functions of the Canadian Jewish Museum which contribute to the overall visitor experience. These functions include, but are by no means limited to, temporary exhibits, a children’s exhibit, educational programming, special events, a museum library and archives centre, a theatre, the museum shop, and the museum restaurant.

Ultimately, this concept plan provides the foundation for a future museum of the Canadian Jewish experience. Yet, it does have shortcomings and limitations. I understand that planning a museum takes much more into account than just its mission, core exhibition, and other functions, which are the focus of this thesis. A full discussion of specific architectural plans, a strategic plan for fundraising, a comprehensive budget, a staffing plan, or any tasks carried out by marketing, communications, and fundraising departments is beyond the scope of this plan. That being said, where necessary in the following pages, I have recommended specific exhibition techniques or designs as they pertain to the telling of a story, the description of an event, or instructions on how to create a positive visitor experience.
The Canadian Jewish Museum will be a vibrant educational-cultural center attracting diverse audiences and providing them with a broad range of exhibits that encourage learning and stimulate thinking about the experiences of the Jews and other immigrant cultures in Canada. Throughout this concept plan, stories of Canadian Jewish history will be described using engaging exhibition techniques that enable physical interaction, emotional investment, and mental stimulation. It is my hope that one day the Canadian Jewish Museum will bring as much joy and illumination to its visitors as planning it has brought to me.
Part I

Creating a Mission and a Learning Environment
Constructing a Mission Statement

This chapter describes the process through which I developed the Canadian Jewish Museum’s mission statement. It begins with an overview of the purpose of mission statements in defining the role of nonprofit organizations and the purpose of museums in North American society. Next comes an examination of the audiences the Canadian Jewish Museum will serve, followed by a discussion of the purposes for which the museum will come into being. Then we turn to a discussion of the activities the museum wishes to carry out and the atmosphere the museum intends to create through its exhibits and programming. This section concludes by considering all of these factors and uses them to thoughtfully construct the mission statement of the Canadian Jewish Museum.

Nonprofit Organizations and their Missions

Nonprofit organizations, including museums, are created with the intention of improving various aspects of the world. Many of them carry out noble functions, such as reducing poverty levels, aiding the mentally challenged, or providing care for the aged. While each nonprofit has its own mandate, they all share one common organizational factor. All nonprofit organizations are guided by specific missions of service to the public. A mission statement is therefore the single most important document for the successful operation and effectiveness of a nonprofit organization. The purpose of a mission statement is to describe the role that an organization plays in society and thus, the reason
for its existence. At a very basic level, a mission statement helps a nonprofit organization’s trustees, staff, volunteers, and the public understand the purpose of the organization, their roles within the organization, and issues within society that the organization is responding to through its activities. In the words of management expert Peter F. Drucker, “Non-profit institutions exist for the sake of their mission. They exist to make a difference in society and in the life of the individual. They exist for the sake of their mission, and this must never be forgotten.”

As part of the nonprofit sphere, museums play an important role in enhancing the lives of individuals and society. For decades, many museums had seen themselves as collectors and preservers of objects of great beauty or historical value. Their aim was to be the keepers of the objects and display them to the public on occasion. Museums were inwardly focused and found their purposes in their collections. Their mission statements often revolved around the activities necessary to maintain a collection of artifacts. Many museum mission statements appeared in the following format: The _____ Museum exists to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit the _____ of the _____ area. There are several problems with these basic missions. Not only are missions like these formulaic, uninspiring, and vague, they simply define the actions associated with collections management and strategies for museum operation. They do not constitute an actual mission appropriate for a twenty-first century museum or audience. Furthermore, by citing these museum functions as a mission, a museum prevents the qualitative evaluation of its operations. After all, as long as a museum carries out these tasks, it will appear to be fulfilling its mission.

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without having any interest in providing a service to the public. Upon examining the
museum strategies common in their mission statements, such as “collecting, preserving,
interpreting, and exhibiting,” certain critical questions arise to determine the purpose of
these activities and the role of a museum. Museum professionals must ask why do they do
these things, for whom do they do them, and how will they benefit the communities they
serve. Museum mission statements must provide thoughtful answers to these questions in
order for museums to remain valuable public service providers and to avoid becoming
alienated from the public.

In 1992, the American Association of Museums (AAM) published a landmark report
reassessing the place of the museum in American society. The report was entitled,
“Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums,” and reflected
the work of an AAM task force comprised of twenty-five leading museum professionals
who worked together between 1989 and 1991. The report concluded that museums exist
for the sake of the public, and as such, they have a responsibility to serve the public by
becoming broadly accessible educational institutions. The report asserted, “that museums
place education – in the broadest sense of the word – at the center of their public service
role. [Museums must] assure that the commitment to serve the public is clearly stated in
every museum’s mission and central to every museum’s activities.” Since then, museums
have been urged to rethink their roles within their communities by rewriting their mission
statements with an outward focus toward public education.

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5 American Association of Museums, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums
Prospective Audiences

As institutions of public education, museums must first understand their intended publics in order to construct a mission statement that recognizes the specific needs of their potential audiences. Located in the downtown core of the city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the Canadian Jewish Museum will appeal to the three different populations within the Greater Toronto Area as well as a broader national and international audience.

Toronto is the logical location for the Canadian Jewish Museum for three reasons. First, it is home to the largest Jewish community in Canada. According to the 2001 Census Analysis of the Jewish Community of Toronto, about half (48.3%) of Canada’s nearly 400,000 Jews are residents of the Greater Toronto Area, and this number has been growing by approximately 3% each decade since 1971. In addition, the downtown area of Kensington Market, which is envisioned as the general location for the Canadian Jewish Museum, is the historic neighborhood of the Toronto Jewish community of the early twentieth century, and thus has much value and programming potential for today’s Toronto Jewish community. Furthermore, very few Canadian Jews are aware of their people’s history in Canada. The history of the Jews in Canada is not taught in Jewish elementary schools or high schools. Formal education of Canadian Jewish history is only accessible at the university level and only at a handful of institutions. From this perspective, the museum would benefit the Jewish community, its natural audience, by providing them with a public center dedicated to displaying the history of their people in the Jewish population center of Canada.

The second reason that the museum should be located in Toronto is due to tourism. Of all Canadian cities, Toronto is the most visited by Canadians and non-Canadians alike. Many tourists often mistake Toronto for the nation’s capital city, which is actually Ottawa. Toronto is well known to tourists for the Toronto International Film Festival, the CN Tower, and major sports franchises including the Blue Jays, the Raptors, and the Maple Leafs. The city is less than two hours drive from the American border and three hours from beautiful provincial parks and cottage country. In addition, the easily accessible location of the museum in Toronto’s Kensington Market would allow these tourists to make their way to the Canadian Jewish Museum by using the two most utilized of Toronto’s subway lines. The Canadian Jewish Museum would also find itself located on Toronto’s “Museum Row,” within a short walking distance from other major attractions such as the Royal Ontario Museum, the Bata Shoe Museum, the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, Chinatown, the trendy Yorkville shopping area, the Ontario Provincial Legislature, Allen Gardens, the University of Toronto, and many grand hotels. Toronto and its downtown core are thus natural locations for the Canadian Jewish Museum from the perspective of a tourist.

The third reason for choosing Toronto as the location for the Canadian Jewish Museum is due to the city’s reputation as one of the world’s most multicultural cities. While Toronto has approximately 8% of Canada’s population, it is home to 37% of its immigrants. The City of Toronto official website reports that just over 30% of Toronto’s residents speak a language other than English at home. Between 2001 and 2006, Canada received 1,109,980 international immigrants, and Toronto absorbed over a quarter of them. Approximately half of Toronto’s 2.48 million people were born outside of Canada. In 2006, forty-seven percent of Toronto’s population reported themselves as being members
of a visible minority, which is a higher percentage than 42.8% in 2001. This percentage continues to grow annually. The top five visible minority groups in Toronto in 2006 were South Asian (12%), Chinese (11.4%), Black, (8.4%), Filipino (4.1%), and Latin American (2.6%). The top five mother languages other than English in 2006 were Chinese, Italian, Punjabi, Tagalog/Pilipino, and Portuguese. Other major languages heard in the city are Tamil and Spanish. Because Toronto is such a diverse cultural mosaic, a museum dedicated to the experiences of a minority immigrant population in Canada and its struggles to adapt and succeed in a new home should appeal to them on an emotional level, thus making Toronto a naturally suited place for the Canadian Jewish Museum.

Benefit to Society

Now that we have fully identified the market in which the Canadian Jewish Museum will be built, we must examine the reason for which it will exist, the purpose it will serve amongst the populations listed above. As mentioned above, a museum mission statement must convey how the organization intends to make a difference in society. It is necessary to envision how the museum might transform people and how the future has to potential to be different as a result. The Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California clearly states how it intends to benefit American society. It cites in its mission a goal, “to promote understanding and appreciation of America’s ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Japanese American national experience.” In this regard, the museum is no

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longer simply the product of a inwardly-focused community dedicated to showing off its history and culture. Instead, it is dedicated to educating general audiences about a particular ethnic and cultural experience within America’s diverse population, specifically by focusing on the Japanese American community. Although this mission is short, it’s wording is inspirational and broad. Also, it does not limit itself by citing in the mission the methods through which it will fulfill its goal.

Also located in Los Angeles is the Museum of Tolerance, a museum that uses the Holocaust to educate audiences about the debilitating evils of racism and prejudice. It makes it clear through its mission that the purpose of its installation is to create an atmosphere where “the visitor is taken back in time to witness the attempted annihilation of an entire people.” Following this, the mission proclaims that, “Having experienced the story of the past and the challenge of the present, the visitor must assume responsibility for the future.” This is a lofty goal, but the museum succeeds in recreating tragic elements of the Holocaust, such as the sorting of victims who perished in death camps in their Auschwitz gallery. Visitors are certainly alerted to the consequences of racism and prejudice and leave the museum with an understanding that these traits must be removed from all societies. From this mission statement we understand the notion that museums can contribute to public awareness and dialogue about issues of importance to society.

So what is the goal of the Canadian Jewish Museum? What higher end should the museum achieve? How will the museum benefit its constituents of Jews, tourists, and various ethnic minorities in the city of Toronto? My vision for the Canadian Jewish Museum is that by displaying the history of the Jewish people in Canada visitors will come to

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understand (a) the experiences of Jews in Canada from the arrival of the first Jews in the mid-1700s to the present, (b) the ways in which immigrant groups not belonging to the country’s French and British heritage have adapted and struggled to succeed in Canada, and to a lesser extent (c) other topics of the Canadian Jewish experience broadly relevant to contemporary Canadian discussions of its multiculturalism. Through adherence to these higher goals, the museum’s audiences will gain valuable insight and understanding into the lives of immigrants in Canada’s most multicultural city, and specifically of its Jewish citizens. By establishing this common understanding, the Canadian Jewish Museum is intended to encourage goodwill, appreciation, sympathy, and understanding among different ethnicities of Canada’s multicultural heritage.

Museum Activities and Visitor Experience

Now that the purpose of the Canadian Jewish Museum has been established, it is necessary to place within the mission statement the methods by which these goals will be achieved. First and foremost, the Canadian Jewish Museum will use artifacts to exhibit and interpret the experiences of the Jewish people throughout their history in Canada. Each of the artifacts contained in the later sections of this concept plan are real. They have been gathered together from exhibition catalogues and databases of both Jewish and secular museums and archives all over Canada and the world. Second, since the museum intends to use many authentic artifacts, it must be able to preserve them for use by future generations. Collecting additional artifacts of significance to Canadian Jewish history will also be a primary goal of the Canadian Jewish Museum. While these tasks are important, it has been noted above that collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting are merely
strategies for a museum’s operation. In recognition of this fact, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum avoids using the traditional language of “exhibits, interprets, and collects” in its mission statement in favor of “stimulates creative thinking and promotes openness to new ideas” and “inspires others to value human achievements in design.”

This mission statement realigns the museum toward thinking about what its specific goals are for each visitor to come away with. As well, rephrasing it into a proactive statement creates the image of a passionate and forward-thinking institution. Conversely, a dry and static mission statement may present the image of an institution that is old, dusty, and full of lifeless object. Museums must work to dispel this static image, and the first place to do this is in the mission statement.

The question now becomes how the Canadian Jewish Museum will encourage visitors to learn about its subject matter. While this topic will be addressed in detail in the later sections, it is nonetheless important to discuss what potential audiences wish to see in the museum, and why they go or avoid museums. Keeping in mind that people make conscious decisions about how they spend their leisure time, we must offer visitors what they expect or want out of a museum visit and give them more as well. A review of sixty years of literature in museum studies, leisure science, sociology, psychology, and consumer behavior has identified six major attributes underlying adults’ choices in their use of leisure time. These are: (1) social interaction, (2) doing something worthwhile, (3) feeling comfortable in one’s surroundings, (4) having challenging new experiences, (5) having an opportunity to learn, and (6) participating actively.

While each visitor is unique and may prefer some of these attributes as opposed to others, museums must strive to put the

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10 Ibid. 15.
satisfying visitor experiences at the forefront of their missions. The Canadian Jewish Museum will be a centre where individuals and groups of all ages can learn and be challenged together, comfortably, in a variety of traditional and interactive ways.

**Conclusion and Mission Statement**

Until now we have fully identified and detailed several features that must be taken into account when constructing the mission statement of the Canadian Jewish Museum. These include:

- The role of the museum in society
- The purpose of the functions and services
- Inspirational word choice emphasizing a higher goal
- The atmosphere of the museum

Considering the diverse audiences of the city of Toronto, the multicultural composition of its inhabitants and visitors, the higher goals of educating for a real purpose, and the programming and exhibits that will make up the visitor experience, the mission statement for the Canadian Jewish Museums is:

**The Canadian Jewish Museum is dedicated to making known the heritage and experiences of the Jewish people in Canada as one of Canada’s historic minority groups. By presenting common themes from the Canadian Jewish experiences and those of other Canadian minorities, the museum encourages an understanding and appreciation of Canada’s diverse peoples and multicultural heritage.**
Learning and Experiencing in the Museum

In the latter decades of the twentieth century much of the museum community shifted its focus from existing for the sake of its collections to existing for the benefit of society. As Stephen Weil, the Scholar Emeritus for the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for Education and Museum Studies, has put it, museums changed “from being about something to being for somebody.” Mission statements gradually began to omit the traditional collections management phraseology of collecting, preserving, interpreting, and displaying art and artifacts in favor of a mission that was geared toward educating, involving, and serving their audiences. Following this, many museums adopted the recommendation of the American Association of Museums that “museums place education – in the broadest sense of the word – at the center of their public service role.” Museum professionals understood that it was their greatest responsibility as a public service organization geared toward improving the quality of society to utilize their special competencies in dealing with objects to impart knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the living world. The only question was how to carry out such a task.

In designing the core exhibit of the Canadian Jewish Museum, we are faced with the task of transforming more than two centuries of history into a broadly accessible educational cultural centre. As we saw when discussing the formulation of the museum’s mission statement earlier, the most logical place to begin discussing how to create an exhibit is by examining its audience and their needs. Only upon understanding what

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visitors expect from their museum visit can we create an exhibit that the public will
embrace and continue to visit and revisit.

Museums in North America are part of a multitude of institutions competing for the
leisure time of the general public. On any given day, families can choose to go to the
amusement park, the movies, the beach, or participate in any number of activities, and with
only two days on the weekend, you can bet that people will carefully decide how they
spend their free time and their money. It was noted earlier that studies of leisure time
have shown that there are six major attributes underlying adults’ choices in their use of free
time. First is the ability to socialize with others such as friends and family. Second, some
people have a distinct need to do something they consider worthwhile in their free time.
Third, most people prefer to feel comfortable and at ease in their surroundings. Fourth,
some people enjoy experiencing new things and being challenged by them. Fifth, certain
individuals enjoy having the opportunity to learn. Finally, people want to participate actively
in their choice of leisure activity. While most people do not value each one of these
attributes or value them equally, every person evaluates how to spend their free time by
applying these criteria to potential leisure activities. It is noteworthy that museums
traditionally have the unfortunate reputations as dusty, archaic, and pretentious institutions.
The most successful exhibits have overcome this reputation by considering the social needs
of their visitors and have thus reinvented themselves into viable options for public
participation.

In Staying Away: Why People Choose Not to Visit Museums, Marilyn Hood describes
three distinctly different audience segments: Frequent visitors, nonparticipants, and
occasional visitors. Frequent visitors are defined as those who go to museums at least
three times a year. There is little doubt that many of them perceive museums to have all
six leisure attributes present. While these visitors account for nearly 50% of museum annual visitation rates, they make up only 14% of the museum’s potential audiences. They understand the relationship between objects and museums and continuously search for new challenges and experiences while visiting museums in their leisure time. Hood thus recommends that it is crucial for museums to present this loyal audience with a variety of new experiences that will make museums dynamic and changing rather than static and still.\textsuperscript{14}

On the other end of the museum-going spectrum are the nonparticipants. They represent the largest segment of potential museum audiences at 46% and appear to value social interaction, active participation, and feeling comfortable and at ease in their surroundings over being challenged and learning new things. Naturally, this segment believes that museums place restrictions on group social behavior and are unable to offer engaging experiences where they can be with others and enjoy themselves. Thus, they are perceived to offer few benefits as leisure activities by this group. Sports and shopping malls better suit their leisure agendas. Museums professionals must be aware of this when designing exhibits. Those whom we have labeled as nonparticipants are still potential audiences that can benefit from what museums offer. Exhibits must reach out to them by creating comfortable atmospheres that incorporate opportunities for socializing and experiencing.\textsuperscript{15}

Occasional participants account for 40% of potential audiences for museums. They are similar to nonparticipants in valuing active participation, entertainment, and social

\textsuperscript{14} Marylin G. Hood, “Staying Away: Why People Choose Not to Visit Museums” in Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift, ed. Gail Anderson (Walnut Creek, CA, AltaMira Press, 2004), 153.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. 154.
interaction, but appear to value family-centered activities on a much higher level than frequent participants and nonparticipants. Parks, zoos, and festivals meet their standards for attractive leisure activities. When visiting museums occasional participants are looking for ones that do not just provide opportunities to socialize and physical comfort, but a feeling of belonging and ability to make sense of the messages conveyed by the institution and its exhibits. Since these participants do not always feel totally comfortable in museums, visiting them with friends and family provides them with social approval and validation. In order to reach out to occasional participants, museums must offer more than family days or major events. Compelling exhibits with interactive options for all ages would make the museum a more comfortable and enjoyable experience for this segment of the audience.

Hood’s findings provide significant insight into the desires of each segment of the museum audience and implications for exhibition design. While frequent visitors are getting exactly what they want from museum visits, museums have little to lose by also catering to the other 86% of their potential audiences – occasional participants and nonparticipants. Museums must appeal to these underserved audiences by creating exhibits that satisfy their criteria for a desirable leisure activity. Exhibits created for occasional and nonparticipants must have comfortable opportunities for socialization and active participation if they are to make museums places where people believe they will have a pleasurable experience. Museums would benefit from redefining themselves as places for exploration and discovery, and as enjoyable locations for outings with family and friends. When these audiences find that their museum visits contain their desired attributes for leisure activity, they will value the institution and choose to return.

16 Ibid. 155.
Museum exhibits must not only be engaging and interactive, they must also take the visitors’ comfort level into account. The Toledo Museum of Art found that new graphics greatly improved visitor orientation. Comfortable seating was added to the new entrance lobby, and a friendly information desk was located just inside the entrance to address visitor questions and concerns. It is advisable that label text must not be difficult to read by being overly academic, or containing technical terms, yet they must not be written too simply as if addressing children. Labels should be written for general audiences with the assumption that most North American adult museum visitors have experiences some form of post-secondary education and can understand basic terms and concepts. If museums are to be intellectually and experientially accessible to a broad audience, the needs of the visitor must be cared for.

Improving the experience of visitors in museums is no simple task. There is no single formula that a museum can employ for shaping visitors’ museum experiences. In an effort to attract greater audiences of less-than-frequent participants, museums must endeavor to go beyond emphasizing traditional educational elements and focus on providing experiential education through creative exhibitions. After all, it is arguable that experience is the best kind of teacher. Generating experiences in exhibits can take on a number of forms, but they generally involve activities in which visitors can directly participate using all five senses. The First Division Museum in Wheaton, Illinois honors the fighting men of both World Wars. Inside the museum, visitors can walk through a World War I battlefield trench, listen to the sounds of war, and experience the travail and suffering of the moment. They can also walk through a French village as it stood just after being shelled and can imagine the civilian calamity that had been inflicted. The ability to see, hear, touch, speak, and even taste are all physical ways in which human beings interact with the
world around them. It would be unwise for a museum to limit the methods in which people interact with the exhibits, since different individuals learn in different ways. Neil and Philip Kotler have suggested that museums offer, “environments in which visitors can immerse themselves rather than behave as merely spectators, and out-of-the-ordinary stimuli and effects that make museum visits unique and memorable.”

Apart from how visitors expect to interact with exhibits is the equally important question of how visitors expect to interact with the artifacts, the focal points of most museums. Zahava Doering, Director of the Institutional Studies Office at the Smithsonian Institution, has studied museums visitors’ expectations, attitudes, and behaviors in the museum setting and has highlighted four categories in which people associate with artifacts. These are as reverential experiences, social experiences, cognitive experiences, or introspective experiences.

Artifacts, particularly historical and artistic ones, have the power to provide reverential experiences that go beyond anything read from an art or history book. Nelson Graburn, professor of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, describes that “there is a universal human need for a personal experience with something higher, purer, or more eternal, more possessed of authority, more extraordinary than home, work, and the everyday world can afford us.” By presenting audiences with objects, they are provided with valuable opportunities in a public space for experiences that are solitary, contemplative, spiritually uplifting, connect visitors with people and experiences outside the framework of their own lives, and more. For these visitors, the museum becomes a place

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of fantasy and reality at the same time, where they can be alone with their thoughts amid objects that are meaningful to them for any number of reasons.

Other visitors relate to objects simply as part of the overall social museum experience. Similar to the window-shopping in a mall and casually looking at various clothing, these visitors casually view the items, but at not particularly engaged by them. No particularly special relationship is formed between the object and these visitors. For them, the museum simply provides a platform to walk around and occasionally view items that appear interesting. Since they expect to have social experiences in the museum, the artifacts may provide or spark topics of conversation and debate about issues in now way relevant to the museum or its exhibit.

The third way that visitors relate to the objects is through cognitive experiences. With educationally focused missions, it is no surprise that museum put a lot of time and resources into designing educational environments built upon a collection of artifacts that impart knowledge and information. Museums often employ a broader range of educational techniques than do schools, and must beware of becoming simply three-dimensional textbooks. Museums have the power to translate the original context of artifacts into familiar terms, personal meaning and universal values. In this way, museums encourage a fourth type of experience, an introspective one. Through introspective experiences with artifacts, museums can design exhibits where objects and settings trigger certain memories or feelings of connectedness to a particular culture or community.

Enabling visitors to make meaning from objects is a primary responsibility of any successful museum. When visitors are able to establish relevance and a personal relationship to objects, they are likely to embrace them and revisit them. But how is personal meaning made in a museum? Many communications specialists now believe that
communication is a process in which meaning is constructed through interaction between people with various levels of power and authority. While museum professionals have been the traditional keepers of knowledge in a museum, this is not the case today. The paradigm has shifted to a process of interpretation, where many different people have equal say in the process of constructing meaning. Although curators place objects on display in museums and have the authority to tell historical narratives, visitors play a major role in constructing meaning from the same objects in their own ways. I am reminded of a trip I took to the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Manhattan with my grandfather. We stood in front of a samovar – an elaborate Russian tea urn – and several other objects taken by Eastern European immigrants to America in the late 19th century. While the curator intended to display important objects Eastern Europeans brought with them on their journey to freedom to adapt to the new country, my grandfather was reminded of the one his parents used every Sabbath in the mid-twentieth century and the memories of being with his parents. As a teenager, I just looked at the strange brass object and thought, “What a weird thing to schlep across the Atlantic!” From one object, we had each made our own meaning from evaluating the context of the artifact and what it spoke to us as individuals. In the words of Carl Becker, “Everyman, his own historian.”

Memory is an active and powerful component of interpreting history that can lead to critical learning and dialogue in museums and society. Some people make meaning by reminiscing next to a fireplace or restoring an old piece of furniture. Others write books, produce exhibits, or film documentaries. Common amongst these activities is that meaning is made from individual responses to objects and other stimuli. Many objects in museums

have the power to become symbols of particular ideas or events. Objects trigger memories, which create deep personal connections between the viewer and the artifact both consciously and subconsciously, often on topics that have little to do with the museum’s intended message. These behaviors are integral parts of the museum experience since they are important and satisfying to many visitors. By providing opportunities for visitors to share the meaning they have made from the objects they have encountered, people can come together to hold important dialogues. In these conversations, no individual opinion is right or wrong. By exchanging opinions, reactions, and perspectives about the objects, multiple meanings are explored. In this way, people come to uphold basic democratic values of tolerance, respect, and pride, which are all crucial in the context of an increasingly multicultural society.

In an attempt to summarize the needs of visitors in museums, museum consultant Judy Rand created “The Visitors’ Bill of Rights,” which appeared in the *Curator: The Museum Journal* in January 2000. In this short document, Rand outlined eleven factors that make up a successful and enjoyable museum visit. We have already discussed the importance of comfort, creating a sense of belonging, enjoyment, socializing, respect, communication, and learning in the museum setting, but Rand adds four factors that are just as important in designing museums and exhibits: Orientation, choice/control, challenge/confidence, and revitalization. Visitors need to make sense of their surroundings and know where they are headed and how to get there. Orienting visitors can be accomplished by detailed maps, friendly helpful staff members, or even electronic devices, such as iPods, which can be given to museum visitors and can be used for a variety of functions including audio-tours, short video clips, games, and maps. Choice and control are also important factors making visitors feel comfortable in museums. Visitors want to have a feeling that they are in control of
their environment and not the other way around. By providing them with exhibits where roaming from one section to the next is made easy, visitors are not restricted, but are free to move around as they please to learn and experience what catches their attention. In interactive exhibits, visitors must be given tasks that are somewhat challenging. Upon accomplishing these tasks, visitors will feel successful and delighted. Providing a wide range of experiential tasks to use a wide variety of senses and skills is therefore a significant part of the museum visit. Finally, each museum visitor hopes to leave the museum feeling revitalized. When visitors are focused, fully engaged, and enjoying themselves, they feel excited and refreshed through their museum experiences. This is the feeling that many museums hope to elicit from their audiences in order to make them embrace the museum and return in the future.\textsuperscript{20} Often, this feeling comes from a visitor understanding the key mission of the museum and how it relates to himself. For example, after exiting the Museum of Tolerance, visitors leave with an understanding that it is the personal responsibility of each individual to remove elements of racism and prejudice from society. By promoting a certain message, museums can truly effect change in society.

Creating a museum exhibit takes many factors into account that all revolve around the needs and desires of the museum’s audiences. If the Canadian Jewish Museum is to be successful in reaching out to a broad audience of different ethno-cultural communities and visitors with various rates of museum participation it must be designed to become a viable leisure activity for social groups that is at the same time educational, experiential, meaningful, interactive and welcoming.

The Organization of “Strong and Free”

As an institution dedicated to creating an understanding and appreciation of Canada’s multicultural heritage, the core exhibit of the Canadian Jewish Museum, entitled “Strong and Free,” seeks to emphasize the rich cultural diversity that immigrant communities have brought to Canada throughout its history. By telling the story of just one community, the Jewish community, audiences will learn that the Jewish experience, although unique, shares similar themes with the experiences of most other Canadian ethnic communities. Following this line of thought, it is most appropriate that the core exhibition’s name comes from a piece of culture significant to all Canadians; our national anthem.

Originally commissioned by the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, Theodore Robitaille, in 1880 for St. John the Baptist Day, the promise of “O Canada” that the “True North” shall remain “Strong and Free” touches the hearts of those who have made Canada their home. Seeking refuge from persecution, equal rights protected by law, and opportunities to establish powerful culturally identifying communities are all values of great significance to the inhabitants of Canada reaching from Vancouver to St. John’s.

Critics of the title may question the use of a distinctly Canadian name for the exhibit instead one with particular significance to the Jewish community. After all, there is a whole Jewish literature and heritage from which to draw meaningful titles! Furthermore, the notion of using significant Jewish textual passages is a tried, tested, and true method for naming Jewish exhibits. Over two decades ago, an exhibit on two centuries of Jewish life in Canada called, “A Coat of Many Colours,” took its name from the story of Joseph found in the Book of Genesis. A book by Irving Abella, the prominent Canadian Historian and former President of Canadian Jewish Congress, in conjunction with the exhibit, was
published in 1990 using the same title. On the surface, one could draw a parallel between the images of Joseph’s multicolor coat and the Canadian cultural mosaic. Just as each colorful thread helped sew a different section of Joseph’s garment, so does each individual tile create Canada’s cultural mosaic. However, this particular title denoted not the diversity of Canadian society, but the diversity of Canada’s Jewish community – one whose people come from all corners of the world sharing a common heritage. According to Stephen Inglis, who was then the Acting Chief of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, the exhibit was designed to “enable the people whose history it is to tell their own stories,” using artifacts to tell first-person stories from within the Jewish community. Inglis remarked that the “exchange strengthened the appreciation of many contributors for their own possessions as part of the community record. It also strengthened the [Canadian] Museum [of Civilization] in that approximately a third of the artifacts selected for the exhibition have been donated by their owners to the permanent collection.”

It is quite surprising how inwardly-focused these achievements are. According to this statement, the contributors to the exhibit and the museum itself felt the benefits of the exhibit. There is no mention of the exhibit having any form of higher goal such as educating diverse audiences about Jewish experiences in Canada. Furthermore, it appears that the organizers of the exhibit were unaware of who actually visited it. The mission of the Canadian Jewish Museum is specifically designed not to be inwardly focused and cater only to the Jewish community, but to a coat of many more colors – Canada’s entire multicultural community. Using an exhibit name that only Jews or those familiar with the Old Testament would understand begins the process of creating a museum experience where certain audiences will not

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22 Ibid.
understand certain themes. The goal to be a broadly accessible educational and cultural centre begins with creating a broadly understandable, meaningful, and relatable name for the exhibit.

Aside from differences in educational orientation between “A Coat of Many Colours” and “Strong and Free,” some similarities are found in their organization. As an exhibit based on personal stories, “A Coat of Many Colours” organized its artifacts into sections based on three major themes in Canadian Jewish life. The first section, “Where Can We Live?” discussed the stories of Jewish individuals immigrating to Canada, mostly from Eastern Europe from the 1880s to the mid-twentieth century, and their experiences settling all over the country. It was followed by, “How Can We Put Our Talents to Use?” which described the stories of Jews in the fur trade, the professions, and their communal growth. The final section, “Continuity and Contributions,” displayed Jewish ritual and cultural life, Jewish organizations, Jews in the military, their relationship with Israel, and their contributions to human rights legislation in Canada and the world.

What this exhibit had accomplished was the generation of a brilliant thematic understanding of Canadian Jewish history through the lenses of individuals who had lived through it. Thematic presentations allow learners to easily grasp the core ideas of an exhibit without focusing too much on names and dates. Certainly visitors became aware of the themes of immigration, rituals, and contributing to society that are prominent in Canadian Jewish history. However, the problem I perceive with this exhibit is common to most thematic exhibits. Chronology must be taken into account and incorporated into the themes of a museum exhibit intending to be historical in nature. Unfortunately I was five years old when the exhibit opened and never got to see or understand it, but after reviewing its catalogue of artifacts, it appears that the exhibit may have lacked a strong
chronological framework from which themes could be understood as relating to specific
time periods, a framework in which a chronologically organized exhibit would surely have
excelled. Visitors unfamiliar with Canadian Jewish history may not have understood, for
example, the differences between the Jewish immigrants who fled to Canada in the 1880s
and the Holocaust survivors who began to arrive in the late 1940s. In other words, themes
present themselves differently in different time periods and contexts. The question is how
can “Strong and Free” make sure that visitors have the opportunity to learn about specific
time periods while still using a thematic organization of the exhibition artifacts?

“Strong and Free” attempts to answer this dilemma through a unique thematic
organization of its artifacts and galleries. By highlighting the shared themes of immigrant
communities, such as civil rights, holidays, and facing challenges, visitors of all backgrounds
can personally identify with at least some of the stories highlighted in “Strong and Free.” In
this way, it becomes possible for visitors of a wide variety of ethno-cultural backgrounds to
draw parallels between the history of their own families and communities and the stories of
the Jewish community on display. Bearing in mind that the thematic approach must
provide a chronological framework to orient visitors through time, the galleries proceed
chronologically. Each gallery is then organized to focus on particular themes that exemplify
a specific era. Of course, themes in history are not related to only one period, but often to
many. Thus, it is natural that the galleries will contain some artifacts that overlap from
different time periods. Although most of the artifacts have been selected to concentrate
on a specific time period, the overlapping objects directly relate to the themes being
expressed and contribute additional valuable information to the narrative of Canadian
Jewish history. In addition, they are placed there to provide an understanding that history is
a long process that involves many factors throughout time. Themes do not just come into
existence. They occur and are realized over time. For this reason, I have arranged the artifacts and galleries chronologically with a focus on specific relevant themes within each one.

The core exhibit of the Canadian Jewish Museum, “Strong and Free,” seeks to differentiate and distinguish itself from previous exhibits on Jewish history in focus and organization. By using titles and themes common to all Canadians that each individual visitor can relate to on a personal level, the museum becomes a discovery center for personal identity and a welcoming, inclusive place for all.

It is important to note that “Strong and Free” is a museum that tells the story of Canadian Jewish history through artifacts. As previously mentioned, all of the artifacts listed in this concept plan exist and in the future could certainly be used for the envisioned core exhibit. However, it is crucial to understand that the Canadian Jewish Museum does not only rely on artifacts to tell its story. The story, in fact, dictates what artifacts should and should not be used in the exhibit. A curator’s responsibility is to use artifacts in creative ways that help them tell the story and send the messages that the museum wishes to impart to its visitors. This does not all limit the museum to only using artifacts to tell the story. Models and reconstructions of artifacts and settings are acceptable mediums for educating audiences as well. While this exhibit is artifact-based, it must not limit itself to relying solely on artifacts to enhance the public education of the experiences of the Jews in Canada.

This concept plan is focused on describing the ways that artifacts will be used to tell the experiences of Canadian Jews. However, I acknowledge that the exhibit, when produced, should seek to emphasize ways in which other minority groups “fit in” to the narrative. Since the exhibit wishes to become relevant to all minorities, there must be
artifacts present that allow them ways to insert themselves into the story is order to make the Jewish story more relevant to them. For example, it will be discussed later on how Eastern European Jews were often sent to the prairies by the government as a workforce to farm the land. It is also mentioned there that other minorities were used as a workforce, such as the Chinese immigrants, who were brought to Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific railway. Artifacts must not be limited to only the Jewish story. Additional artifacts must be sought out to make the exhibit relevant to other ethnic groups. In this way, the museum will enable itself to discuss comparisons between the experiences of different Canadian minorities, but it will also show visitors of non-Jewish background that the museum understands and cares about their history as well.

Part II of this concept plan goes on to discuss how this particular thematic organization of “Strong and Free” uses particular artifacts to tell the story of Canadian Jewish history and the ways in which the narrative is made relevant to the lives and identities of each visitor to the Canadian Jewish Museum. It provides a detailed outline showing how the concepts of learning and experiencing in museums will be applied to the creation of the Canadian Jewish Museum’s core exhibition. As an institution that aspires to be a hub for the display of Canadian Jewish history and the study of ethnic-minority experiences in Canada, each factor highlighted in Part I – the mission, learning techniques, and exhibition organization – is critical to the development of a center that aims to foster understanding and appreciation of Canada’s multicultural heritage. I believe that if the Canadian Jewish Museum is built on a solid foundation of learning through shared experiences, respect, and tolerance, it will have much to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of each ethnic group within the diverse Canadian society.
Part II

“Strong and Free”

The Core Exhibit of the Canadian Jewish Museum
**Gallery #1: Between Two Origins**

*1608 – 1759*

**Themes:** French exclusion of Jews from colonial Canada and British exclusion of Jews from the civil service in early Canadian history are displayed in this gallery. Jewish investment and involvement with New France, despite restrictions upon them, is also highlighted.

As the introductory gallery of “Strong and Free,” the Canadian Jewish Museum’s core exhibit, “Between Two Origins” is intended to introduce visitors of all ages and backgrounds to the place of Jews within the French and British colonial history of Canada. Although some Jews had hoped that traveling to New France would provide them with new social and economic opportunities, the story did not immediately unfold this way. As a colony of the staunchly Catholic nation of France, Church authorities designated New France to be an entirely Catholic colony. What was the place for Jews in this land? While Jews were not permitted to physically enter the colony itself unless they converted to Catholicism, France was delighted to support its colony with money and supplies provided by wealthy French Jews interested in the colony as a business venture. The British, who were at war with the French over territory in North America, were only slightly more tolerant of Jews. While Jews were permitted to settle, trade, and privately worship in the British colonies, they were not allowed to obtain any sort of government or military position unless they became Christians. This gallery will explore the issues of the exclusionary nature of New France and British Canada and the ways in which Jewish individuals attempted to overcome these circumstances.
By definition, one of the basic characteristics of minorities is that they are somehow excluded from the majority. Throughout history, including the present, various people have been excluded for all sorts of reasons. Race, religion, and sexual orientation are among the more common reasons for excluding society’s minorities from various privileges held by the majority. However, exclusion is not only experienced by groups, but also by individuals. Every person has experienced some form of exclusion in his or her life, such as being singled out and picked on, or rejected from group activities. Painful memories of scenarios of exclusion are upsetting and sometimes harmful to individuals. However, while some just ignore those who exclude them, others learn to deal with their unfortunate circumstances in a variety of ways in order to make the best of a difficult situation. “Between Two Origins” will emphasize these themes through the use of a large audio-visual presentation supported by artifacts, and thereby accomplish the goal of examining the methods that Canada’s first Jews undertook to gain entry into the Canadian land that was largely prohibited to them.

Artifacts and Visitor Experience

The idea that religious discrimination in the Catholic Church prohibited Jews from entering New France will be conveyed primarily through a large audio-visual presentation. This film will address the experiences of the first Jews to arrive in New France and the ways in which they adapted to their restrictive situations. The movie will be the focal point of the gallery, and while some visitors may not be interested in the other artifacts on the wall, they will be surely be drawn to the large movie, for which standing room and a bench for seating will be made available. Movies are effective ways of conveying relevant information
in an exciting and efficient way because the visual images projected on the screen can catch people's attention using animation, cuts, zooms, pans, different voiceovers and so forth. From a pedagogic point of view, audio-visual productions are particularly memorable, and thus would assert that a film would be a fantastic way of educating audiences about the discrimination against non-Catholics in New France.

The movie will begin by briefly highlighting the geography of New France in order to orient visitors to the geography of Canada and its early settlement in the 1600s and 1700s. In order to orient visitors to the geography of early Canadian settlement, visitors' vision will be directed by the movie to an old map of the New France and its colonies. The map, made by Guillaume de Lisle in 1708 is entitled “Carte du Canada ou de la Nouvelle France, & des Decouvertes qui y ont ete Faites,” and depicts with surprising accuracy the areas of Canada controlled by New France and discoveries of other territories in North America and who controlled them. The map is not complete, but clearly outlines the areas of modern Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, Hudson Bay, and well as the northern United States – territories occupied by the French and British. Colonies of significance during the 1700s, such as Montreal, Quebec, Trois-Riviers, and Halifax will be shown to emphasize pioneer Canadian settlement patterns along the St. Lawrence River and the Atlantic coast. Further significance of presenting this map is that it conveys the location of Canada, although a small picture of Canada highlighted amongst a map of the world will be displayed alongside it for visitor reference. Many people are simply unaware of Canada’s geographic location and size. Orienting them through maps would create further understanding of Canada’s vast territory.

The movie will then introduce audiences to the Catholic influence in New France by directing their attention to a portrait of Cardinal Richelieu painted by Phillippe de Champaigne in 1637. In this portrait Richelieu is dressed in the traditional deep red cap and robes of a Cardinal. The movie will reveal that it was under his influence that French colonization of New France was expanded, and that only Catholics would be permitted in New France, making it extremely difficult for Jews and other non-Catholics to enter. The painting's significance lies in the fact that Canada was not always the free nation it is today. Jews and other non-Catholics were forced to find ways to involve themselves in the colonies only through concealing their religion. Religious exclusiveness was foundational to New France.

The movie will then direct visitors' attention to a painting by Richard Paton from 1771 depicting the “Capture of the “Prudent” and the “Bienfaisant” in Louisbourg Harbour.” A French Jew named Abraham Gradis owned these two French supply ships. It will be emphasized that although Gradis and his family were barred from entering New France due to their Judaism, they invested greatly in the colony by providing it with various supplies through their prosperous trading company. Although historians debate the role and importance of the Gradis family to New France before its submission to the British, it is clear that the colony was dependent on the provisions they provided. According to historian Irving Abella, the Gradis family ships kept settlers from starving and provided the munitions necessary to defend the colony.24 Using his ships, Gradis sent French troops and supplies through the British blockade of the St. Lawrence River, but few successfully made it back to France. The painting here shows the strength of the British navy as it overpowered

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the French ships of Abraham Gradis, but further significance can be understood by visitors when the movie emphasizes the fact that a Jew invested so much in the development of a colony he would never be permitted to step foot in. At present, the Gradis ships set aflame in this painting lie at the bottom of the Louisbourg Harbor. Battles with victorious British outcomes would become increasingly frequent leading up until 1759.

The film will then go on to tell the story of Esther Brandeau to convey further religious exclusion from the French to the Jews. In 1738, Brandeau disguised herself as a young man, took the alias of Jacques la Frague, and found work on the ship St. Michel as it headed to Quebec in 1738. Upon the ship’s arrival, “this passenger had attracted considerable attention until the remarkable discovery was made that the comely, spirited youth, whose manners were so refined was in fact no ‘Jacques’ but ‘Esther.’”25 Since New France was off limits to Jews, the Catholic authorities arrested her and sent her to a local hospital, because the colony had no prisons for women. Workers at the hospital attempted to convert her so that she might be permitted to stay in the colony. Esther, however, refused to give up her faith, desiring only “to enjoy the same liberty as Christians.”26 The movie will then dramatize a report from colony officials to the Minister in France informing him that, “her conduct has not been wholly bad, but she is so frivolous… with regard to the instruction the priests desired to give her [that] I have no other alternative than to send her back.”27 Esther Brandeau, the first Jew in New France, was deported home to France at the expense of the French government – a major point of exclusion on behalf of the French. By dramatizing this famous story of religious conflict

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
and discrimination in a film, visitors can literally see how Jews were treated inside the colony. Some audiences may even recall instances of religious persecution and relate to Esther’s story on a personal and meaningful level.

The film will then turn to discuss the experiences of Jews under the British in North America. At first, visitors’ attention will be directed to the oldest artifact on display – a document from the English King, William III, ceding Labrador to Joseph de la Penha and his descendents from 1697. The movie will detail the story of de la Penha, a Jewish trader from Rotterdam, Holland, who was driven onto the coast of Labrador by a sudden North Atlantic storm in the 1670s. He immediately claimed the territory for England, whose king also reigned over Holland at that time. About twenty years later, as a reward for saving the king’s life at sea, the king granted Labrador to de la Penha and his family. For reasons unknown, the de la Penhas never took up the offer. This instance is believed to be the first, although unexpected, arrival of a Jew to Canada, and shows the almost accidental nature of discovering land in North America. It further shows Jewish loyalty to the British, which will remain constant throughout Canadian history. Thus, from a historical standpoint, this document showing such a large gift being offered by a British king to a Jew is most significant.

Still, the British were not totally keen on giving Jews too many opportunities. To explain how opportunities for advancement were withheld from Jews, the movie will discuss the story of Alexander Schomberg. Schomberg was a naval officer of Jewish descent who commanded the frigate Diana during the battle for Quebec. However, Jews were not permitted access to high positions in the British navy, so in order to attain that

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position, Schomberg converted to Christianity\(^{29}\). The portrait of him presented in this
gallery was painted in 1763 is by William Hogarth. It shows him dressed in full British naval
regalia, something he could never have dreamed of as a Jew. During the battle, Schomberg
became a close associate of General James Wolfe, who dealt the French their final blow
and conquered New France for the British. The movie will use the painting to encourage
comparisons between the French and British treatment of Jews.

The final artifact that the movie will direct visitors’ attention toward is a large
painting by Benjamin West dated from 1771. “The Death of General Wolfe” depicts the
final hour of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, a watershed in Canadian history, where
the British successfully conquered the French capital of Quebec and took the colony of
New France as part of British North America. Unfortunately for the British, their General,
James Wolfe, was killed in Battle. The movie will describe to visitors the religious imagery
of General Wolfe’s body being caressed by other military leaders and draw a parallel to
portraits of the Virgin Mary, by juxtaposing it with a picture of Michaelangelo’s *La Pieta*,
which shows Mary holding the body of Christ. The film will stress how, even in the
eighteenth century, Christian ideology pervaded the policies of the French and British in
North America. Ultimately this artifact, which concludes the gallery and the film, will
emphasize that the British now ruled over the French in North America, and were tolerant
enough to let Jews settle and work in North America, but would not grant them access to
positions of civil authority. The next gallery, “Equality and Adaptation,” will provide a
comprehensive review of the opportunities Jews had in the colonies as well as the
restrictions placed upon them by the British.

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\(^{29}\) Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey* (Toronto, ON, University of Toronto Press, 2008), 17.
As visitors finish watching the 4-8 minute movie, they will be directed to an electronic screen prompting them to answer one question through the touch of one of two buttons. “Convert or Conceal? What would you have done?” Each time a button is pressed, visitors will be shown the percentage of previous visitors who have decided each option. This method of questioning audiences for their responses is employed by the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. It has demonstrated the capacity to encourage people to step into the shoes of others and experience their travails. In “Between Two Origins,” visitors who encounter this question would have to think, “If I were restricted from something for religious reasons, would I convert or hide my true identity?” This is no simple question, but it forces people to share in the experience of so many Jews who sought new opportunities in New France and British North America.

Ultimately, the artifacts contained in this gallery show the great restrictions placed on Jews by the French and the British during Canada’s colonial history, and the experiences of Jews trying to overcome them. Some Jews converted, others concealed their true identities, but all sought the same freedoms that Esther Brandeau longed for in New France. It is in this fact that visitors of non-French and non-British backgrounds, which make up at least half of the audiences the museum should receive, will understand the precarious position of the Jews in a society dominated by cultures other than their own. Many people feel awkward or uncomfortable in a setting where they do not quite fit in with everyone else. Those minorities who did not wholly fit in with the British and French cultures were discriminated against in colonial Canada. Through the medium of a short film to orient visitors to early Canadian history and the place of the Jews within it, “Between Two Origins” provides visitors with opportunities to identify with an excluded minority.
Ultimately, the gallery succeeds in highlighting the struggle of minorities to conquer discrimination and prejudice, and passing that experience on to the museum’s audiences.

Key Bibliography

Themes: This gallery will present the stories of Canadian Jews developing a community in Canada. It highlights their struggle for equal rights, the methods in which they financially sustained themselves, and their strategies for preserving and adapting their religion in their new homes.

Following the British conquest of New France in 1759, small numbers of Jews from Europe and America began trickling into Canada. This gallery, entitled, “Equality and Adaptation,” describes the experiences of the first Jewish communities in Canada as they pertain to the themes of equal rights, earning a living, and practicing the Jewish religion. The first section, called “Adversity and Civil Rights” discusses how members of the first Jewish communities were grateful and loyal to the British for permitting them to enter and work in Canada. Yet it underlines the Jewish effort to confront the British authorities when prohibited from being granted the same right to hold government office as other citizens of the British Empire. By 1831, successful lobbying by prominent Canadian Jews provided the opportunity for Jews to finally take their elected seats in Parliament.

The story exhibited in this gallery is specific to the Jewish people, but its message reaches out to all audiences by emphasizing a minority group’s struggle for equal rights within a greater society. The struggle for equality under the law has been a defining component of the modern era and is one that many people can personally identify with, especially after thinking about experiences of exclusion introduced by the previous gallery.
Democratic countries venerate heroes of the civil rights movement who fought for inclusion and equality, such as Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi. American audiences, who are particularly attuned to the famous and enlightening words of their Declaration of Independence that “All men are created equal” will be especially touched by the struggle of Jews for equal rights in Canada. Many visitors will come away with a greater appreciation of the freedoms that they now have in Canada.

The second section, aptly titled, “Making a Living,” presents the theme of how Canada’s first Jews sustained themselves financially through all sorts of professions. Through their efforts, they were able to assist in the development of Canada’s vast territory by exploring the country as fur traders, mining for gold, and opening small shops, banks, and hotels. General audiences will come to understand the early contributions of minority populations to the development of Canada, but immigrants will see a deeper meaning. They will see a reflection of themselves in the stories of newcomers to Canada trying desperately to create new economic opportunities for themselves.

The third section in this gallery presents the theme of religious observance in Canada’s first Jewish communities, and is thus titled, “Keeping the Faith.” Despite their tiny numbers, many Jews kept their traditional rituals in the synagogue and in the home to the best of their abilities. There were many difficulties in keeping all of Judaism’s strict laws, but each individual Jew adapted to the conditions of his or her new home in different ways, sometimes with great social and economic sacrifice. Immigrants will especially feel connected to the stories of cultural adaptation presented here. By learning about the ways in which the Jews adapted their faith to the conditions of life in Canada, the desire of a people to keep its historic traditions against the odds should trigger thoughts about the
ways in which one’s traditions change over time and as they are brought from one country to another.

The gallery’s themes focus on conveying the formative years of the Canadian Jewish community in a historically accurate, culturally significant, and personally meaningful manner. By highlighting the personal experiences of Jews as they struggled to adapt to their new homes the gallery challenges visitors to think about instances when they have had to adapt to new and sometimes difficult circumstances. Ultimately in this gallery, visitors will learn that communities are built on the efforts of individuals seeking to brighten their futures in a variety of ways. Thus, “Equality and Adaption” will provide a meaningful way for the multicultural twenty-first century audience to appreciate the contributions of minorities to the early development of Canada.

Artifacts and Visitor Experience

The experiences of the first Jewish communities in Canada will be brought to life in an experiential gallery through the use of artifacts. After leaving the introductory gallery, visitors will enter “Equality and Adaptation,” where they will spend approximately ten minutes interacting with the artifacts. Designed to appear as a small-scale reconstruction of a Canadian town in its early developmental stages, this gallery intends to make visitors feel like they are walking through an early 1800’s Canadian city, complete with three small wooden buildings and a mock dirt road. This exhibition design takes visitors back in time to immerse them in the issues of the period. More importantly, the gallery will create opportunities to understand the complexities and uncertainties of immigrants searching for new opportunities in a new home.
Three main “buildings” will be built along this “street” to separately highlight each of the gallery’s themes. The “Adversity and Civil Rights” section will be presented in a building constructed to appear as a downsized version of Montreal’s original Legislative Assembly. This selection is fitting, since it was in this place where and the struggle for equal civil rights in Canada began. The second building will be constructed to appear as a commercial storefront in order to convey the many ways Jews sought new economic opportunities in their new home. Although Canada’s first Jews took to many professions, the Jews in urban areas were likely to open businesses as commercial ventures to earn income, whereas Jews in frontier towns were found in more adventurous and exploratory professions. The third building reconstruction in the gallery will be a small version of the interior of Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews’ synagogue, founded in Montreal by a small group of Jews in 1768. As the first institution in Canada dedicated by Jews for regular Jewish ritual use, it is a natural setting to examine the ways in which Jews adapted their religious practices in Canada. Each building will be completely open for visitors to enter, and will contain artifacts arranged neatly along the walls for visitors to interact with.

The artifacts from “Adversity and Civil Rights” tell the story of Jewish attainment of equal civil rights in Canada. Arranged along a timeline the artifacts, each connected to a historic event, will emphasize the stages of the struggle for Jewish civil rights Lower Canada in the early nineteenth century. Beginning with the Jewish ritual cup and saucer that belonged to Ezekiel Hart, visitors will be introduced to his decisive victory in the 1807 elections of Lower Canada and the discrimination that followed. In a dramatic episode, Hart was prevented from taking his seat in the legislature since he could not properly take
the oath to serve “on the true faith of a Christian,” as a Jew. The 1808 Registry of Oaths, featured here as well, will clearly exhibit this language and denote that it prevented Jews from taking political office in Lower Canada. A letter from Hart alongside these artifacts explains the entire situation. Visitors will be able to hear Hart’s letter dictated to them through an audio device that they may place to their ears, and will come to understand the details of his story and his personal upset over the situation. A portrait of Hart will accompany the artifacts to provide a face for the main character of this story.

Additional artifacts telling this story include a January 31, 1831 petition from Samuel Hart to the House of Assembly of Lower Canada highlighting the complaint that, “all persons professing the Jewish religion are excluded from office in a manner very public and mortifying.”

Louis-Joseph Papineau, the French Leader of the House who would eventually lead the Rebellion of 1837 against the British in Lower Canada, took this petition into account. Shortly thereafter, he gave his public support to the Jews and other minorities in a speech stating, “Diversity of religion opinion…that same freedom which I claim for myself, for my countrymen…I allow to those whose belief is different.” Excerpts from his speech will be painted on the wall, but can be heard in its entirety through an audio device. The story will conclude with the March 31, 1831 Bill of Rights, which granted the Jews equality under the law in Lower Canada, as presented for approval to William IV, King of England. It was titled, “An act to declare persons professing the Jewish faith intitled

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31 Irving Abella, A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada (Toronto, ON, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990), 27.
32 Ibid. 32.
to all the rights and privileges of other subjects of His Majesty in this province." \(^{33}\) Labels will highlight specific phrases in the document, which document this profound change.

Of course, more objects of significance to the story of Jewish civil freedoms are included in the gallery, but not in the timeline, which is specific to Lower Canada. An 1803 Land Request from Moses David reveals him as the first Jew to be granted land in Upper Canada, and thus the first Jew to permanently settle there. A 1759 portrait of Samuel Hart reveals him as the first Jew elected in 1795 to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, and thus the first Jew to hold a seat in the legislature anywhere in the British Empire. An 1859 portrait of George Benjamin marks him as the first Jewish Member of Parliament in Upper Canada. Finally, an 1837 Montreal newspaper article recounts the presence of antisemitism even after Jews gained equal rights. It describes the unsuccessful plan of a radical French group, Les Chasseurs, to kill Magistrate Benjamin Hart and all the Jews and confiscate their property due to Jewish loyalty to the British during the Rebellion of 1837. This artifact demonstrates that although the struggle for Jewish legalized civil rights was over and Jews were given equal rights, Canada was not free from hatred and violence toward the Jewish people. Minorities, who share the rights of other Canadians, but have still experienced this sort of social discrimination, will be able to identify with this situation.

As an educational and historical gallery, visitors will learn about the difficulties that minorities encounter to obtain civil rights. By viewing historical artifacts and being able to hear the passion for equal freedoms from their actual words, the historical figures become more than old, dusty relics, but valuable sources of a living, relatable, and meaningful history.

\(^{33}\) Ibid. 22.
The purpose of the next section, “Making a Living,” is twofold. First, it seeks to highlight that Jews were attracted to Canada for the economic opportunities it offered and display the diversity of professions Canadian Jews entered in order to sustain themselves in their new homes. Second, the gallery will create opportunities to participate in activities, which allow visitors to learn about Jewish contributions to the development of Canada. Here, artifacts will be arranged along the walls of the “storefront” gallery allowing for visitors to view them up close and even touch some. The fur trading tools and license that belonged to Ezekiel Solomons and Gershom Levy in the late 1700s will be featured alongside a mock beaver pelt for visitors to touch, thus providing an informative and tactile exhibit on Jewish involvement in the fur trade. Visitors will also learn about Jewish activity in the 1860 British Columbia gold rush by using pans in a water-filled trough to sift out mock gold from rocks. Additional artifacts in the gallery detail other professions taken up by Jews in Canada. Samuel Hyam’s eye testing kit will represent Jewish activity in medicine and health care. Other artifacts and photographs displayed together display more diversity of professions among Jewish settlers. Pictures of the Rossin and Hays Hotels, banknotes from Hart’s and Stadacona Bank, advertisements from Nathans’ and Hart’s grocery store and Abraham Hoffman’s dry goods store, paintings of Judah George Joseph’s Jewelry store and Simon Leiser’s grocery store, a photo of Zebulun Franks in his hardware store, and fishing equipment from William Hyman’s store will all denote the variety of small and large businesses established by Canadian Jews. The Belgian Order of the Crown, given to Andrew Joseph of Quebec for helping to promote trade between Belgium and Quebec will be displayed to show that some Jews were publicly recognized for their contributions to the country. Finally a painting of Isaac Oppenheimer, the Jewish fire chief of Barkerville, British Columbia in the 1860s, will show that Jews were not only in business for themselves,
but sought also to help others stay safe. As this displays proves, Jews were involved in many professions and contributed their skills in a multitude of ways to the development of Canada. Visitors will learn specifically about Jewish contributions, but will come away with a greater understanding that the British and the French were not the only ones responsible for building this country. Minorities played a major role.

In “Keeping the Faith,” the third section of this gallery, visitors will learn about the ways in which Canada’s first Jewish settlers adapted their religious practices to their new homes. By interacting with artifacts and hearing the stories of individual members of the Jewish community, the commitment of the handful of Canadian Jews to keep their faith to various degrees will be revealed.

Certain artifacts will convey stories of religious determination and adaptation through personal stories. The portrait of Aaron Hart, who is believed to have been Canada’s first permanent Jewish settler, will be displayed. Having followed the British into Quebec as their supplier following their victory over the French in 1759, his portrait tell the story of his great commitment to his faith. Through the use of an audio device, visitors will hear how determined he was to marry within the Jewish faith that he returned to London in 1768 to wed his cousin Dorthea Judah. In addition, they sent each of their children to Philadelphia to receive a traditional Jewish education, as no Canadian Jewish schools had been established before 1800. Juxtaposed to Hart will be the 1798 Diary of Samuel Jacobs, another Jewish supplier of the British forces. While Hart refused to intermarry, Jacobs married a Catholic woman and raised his five children as Catholics. However, Jacobs seemed to be a committed Jew, referring to himself as “not a wandering Jew, yet I am a
stirring one,”34 and writing in his diary in English using Hebrew characters. In addition, he often signed his name in Hebrew as a sign of personal commitment to his Judaism. Perhaps the greatest story of personal commitment to Judaism will be displayed through the picture of the home of Henry Joseph, circa 1800. Joseph lived in Berthier, Quebec, a small town isolated from other Jews, the synagogue, and kosher food. So determined to observe his faith’s laws to the highest degree that he taught himself the laws of ritual slaughter so that his family could eat kosher meat. He also worked out a Jewish calendar so he would be aware of the dates of the Jewish holidays. As well, he and his wife taught their children everything they knew about Judaism. In his eyes, his dedication paid off, since most of their children married other Jews, one daughter to a Rabbi. Conveying these three personal stories through artifacts allows visitors to understand the struggle of Jews to adapt and preserve their faith in a land with little Jewish communal infrastructure.

Other artifacts in the gallery will show Jewish commitment to preserving the faith in Canada. A 1771 embroidered sampler made by eight-year-old Elizabeth Judah in Quebec depicts the Ten Commandments, believed to have been given to the Jewish people by God. A 1780 prayer book belonging to George Benjamin displays his family’s birth and death dates according to the Hebrew calendar. The book’s wax impression shows that the family seal depicts a hand with the fingers spread apart in the sign of the Jewish priests. Benjamin was believed to have been a descendant of the original high priest Aaron, brother of Moses. An 1866 painting by Montreal resident William Raphael entitled, “Behind Bonsecours Market” depicts immigrants landing in Montreal. Raphael painted himself into the picture holding a Sabbath candelabra. This is no doubt a comment that many

34 Ibid. 10
immigrants brought religious objects to Canada in order to preserve their Judaism in their new homes. As members of a multicultural society, Canadian audiences will understand through these objects the desire of immigrant communities to keep their family traditions alive in a society where they are not the norm.

The last several artifacts in this gallery will showcase the developing religious institutions of Canadian Jews in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of the defining moments in an immigrant community’s organization is the establishment of centers for the community. The formation of religious institutions by Jews marked their desire to continue building a new life in Canada. In order to represent this theme, a photograph of Shearith Israel, Canada’s first synagogue mentioned above, will be displayed alongside photos of other Jewish ritual centers. It must be noted that the congregation first assembled in a small rented room in Montreal in 1768, and funds were donated for a building nearly a decade later by a community member named Lazarus David. In addition, resources were not immediately available to hire a permanent rabbi so individual congregants led religious services. An 1860 drawing of High Holiday services at Shearith Israel will show congregants in contemporary British apparel and Jewish prayer shawls to emphasize to visitors the similarities and differences of the Jews to the greater society around them. Only by 1847 did the synagogue have the funds to hire Rabbi Abraham de Sola to take over the pulpit, whose portrait will be displayed in this section. De Sola, an English Jew of Spanish heritage, became a well-known leader in Jewish and secular affairs, and even taught Hebrew and rabbinical literature at McGill University, showing at once the community’s integration in society and spiritual uniqueness. Pictures of Victoria’s Jewish cemetery, founded in 1859 showing its Hebrew date, an 1864 Act to Incorporate Congregation Emanuel in Victoria, and a picture from 1846 of Shaar Hashomayim, the first
A synagogue in Canada to pray according to Ashkenazic (English, German, and Polish) customs, will denote the diversity of the community’s religious needs as it developed from a handful of Jews to several hundred. As well, a late-nineteenth century invitation to the opening of the Holy Blossom Temple and a photo of the building will reveal it as originally an Orthodox synagogue. Through the use of a four-minute film, visitors will learn how Holy Blossom, Ontario’s first synagogue, gradually became Canada’s first Reform Jewish temple. The film will highlight the synagogue’s history and internal arguments between congregants over changes made to the Orthodox service, including the introduction of mixed gender seating and an organ, which is prohibited on the Sabbath by Orthodox Jews. Ultimately, this section reveals the difficulties Canada’s first Jewish communities faced in keeping their traditions and the ways in which they aspired to adapt.

Throughout this gallery, the concepts of adaptation to new surroundings are greatly emphasized in three areas: Equality, economic sustenance, and spirituality. The design of the gallery and the thematic arrangement of its artifacts take visitors back in time to listen to the concerns of early Jewish settlers over civil rights, participate in their efforts to earn a living, and learn about the ways in which they adapted their Judaism their new circumstances. While the stories depict the experiences of Jews trying to adapt their skills and faith to the Canadian landscape, the gallery shows that all people, but especially minorities, encounter difficulties adapting to new surroundings and creating new opportunities, but also that minorities played a key role in the early development of Canada.

Key Bibliography


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**Gallery #3: East Comes West**

*1880 – 1930*

**Themes:** This gallery displays the story of Eastern European Jews as they adapted to life in Canada in the Prairies and in major urban centers. Themes of immigration, financial sustainment, and adaptation are prevalent.

By 1881, the population of the entire Canadian Jewish community was approximately 2,200, but would grow to 74,564 by 1911. While the first Canadian Jews had firmly taken root in their new home, their attention was turned to the rising hostility toward the Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe. Violent pogroms and a lack of financial and other opportunities left Eastern European Jews clamoring to immigrate to North America. Their sheer numbers overwhelmed the small preexisting Canadian Jewish community and dramatically changed the community’s character in terms of size, religious life, and institutions. The next gallery, “East Comes West” attempts to describe the experiences of Eastern European Jews immigrating to Canada and the impact they would have on the Jewish community and the country.

This gallery is divided into three section sections. The first, entitled “Arriving in Canada” discusses the policies of the Canadian Government in dealing with the influx of immigrants and the reactions and adaptations of the immigrants upon arrival. The second and third sections discuss the experiences of Eastern European immigrants as they settled.

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35 Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey* (Toronto, ON, University of Toronto Press, 2009), 126.
in rural and urban landscapes throughout the country, and highlights the differences between these experiences.

Immigration is a defining element in Canadian ethnic history. Relatively few immigrants to Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were easily accepted and granted entry. The Canadian Government was especially selective of who could enter and wished only to admit “desirable” immigrants, those classified as being of Anglo-Saxon and Nordic origin, but it made a special exception for people it could use to develop the country. Chinese immigrants, for example, were not at the top of the list of preferred immigrants, but were brought to Canada beginning in the 1880s as a workforce to construct the Canadian-Pacific Railway. Similarly, the government felt that the arriving Jews could be used as farmers in the prairies and set out to encourage Jewish immigration to the Canadian West. Of course, many of the immigrants simply decided to stay in major cities, like Toronto and Montreal, to find new opportunities there. Ultimately, this gallery examines the ways in which the Eastern European immigrants struggled to adapt and build new opportunities for themselves.

Artifacts and Visitor Experience

“East Comes West” shares the experiential qualities of the previous gallery. Through a unique design it attempts to enable visitors to step into the shoes of a newly arrived Eastern European immigrant for approximately five minutes and come to an understanding of the differences between the quality of life in the Prairies and the cities. While the experiences here are of Jewish Canadians, they represent the challenges faced by all immigrants to Canada between 1880 and 1930 in adapting to a new home.
Upon entering the gallery, visitors will be faced with a large introductory panel explaining the pogroms and desire for new economic opportunity and religious freedom as the primary reasons for Eastern European Jewish immigration to Canada. The panel will also contain an exact translation of a letter written by an anonymous Russian Jew to his cousin in Winnipeg. The letter reads,

“Our lives and wealth are every minute in danger…Such persecutions and cruelties never happened before in this civilized generation. Men and women have been slaughtered; the female sex have been ill-treated on the public streets…Children have been cast into wells and rivers and drowned; living infants have been torn in pieces and thrown upon the streets. Many women, sick in bed from confinement, have been so abused that they died…There is no other way to remedy these evils than by escaping.”

The letter’s wording expresses the horrors facing the Russian Jews and the need to leave the country as soon as possible. It allows visitors to understand the exact horrific nature of a pogrom from the perspective of an eyewitness, and the immediacy of the need to find a new home. The panel will conclude by introducing the government strategy for absorbing the thousands of Jewish immigrants by placing them in farming colonies and other labor forces. Due to the large amount of all kinds of immigrants arriving in Canada at this time, restrictions were placed on the number of immigrants who could be admitted annually.

The stories told in this gallery let visitors understand that Canada was not generously offering immigrants a refuge, but sought to use them to develop the country.

Following the introductory panel, visitors will be presented with two maps. The first will provide a visual aid showing the countries from which Jews immigrated to Canada between 1880 and 1930. The second map will show all immigration to Canada during the same period to provide visitors with a point of comparison. Alongside the introductory panel, artifacts include a Canadian National Railway Poster from 1925 advertising in English

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36 Irving Abella, A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada (Toronto, ON, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990), 75.
and French for harvesters in Manitoba, a receipt for money send to Poland in 1927 from a Jew wishing to bring his family to Canada, and a Government Notice to Farmers from 1892 alerting them that large numbers of Russian and German immigrants would be immigrating to Canada to find work, and guaranteeing them that “no Jews will be brought out under this scheme.” 37 This artifact will be used to describe antisemitic attitudes towards the large number of foreign Jews immigrating to Canada at this time. Many of the Eastern European Jews spoke a guttural Yiddish language, wore dark clothing, and practiced strange religious customs, thus making some Canadians uncomfortable. The final artifact is a fragment of Tefillin found by a deep-sea diver several kilometers off the coast of Halifax in 1922. A small panel will explain that Tefillin are known as phylacteries in English and are small leather boxes placed on a Jewish man’s hand and head during morning prayers. There exists some speculation that this pair might have been thrown overboard, as some Jewish immigrants discarded their religious articles before arriving in Canada, having heard that there was no need for religion in the new land. The panel will also inform visitors that most of the Eastern European Jews were Orthodox, and that discarding their religious items was not the norm. Visitors in the gallery will thus be introduced to several issues pertaining to Eastern European Jewish immigrants, such as government policy, antisemitism, and religious adaptation.

In order to leave this section, visitors will be forced to choose their next direction and experience the lives of the immigrants in either the Prairies or the Cities. Two train tunnel archways representing the Canadian-Pacific Railway, on which the immigrants traveled to their new homes, will lead to two parallel but separate sections. One tunnel

37 Ibid. 83.
will have a sign over it saying, “To the Prairies” and the second saying, “To the Cities.” This gives visitors the experience of immigrants embarking on a journey through the country to the destination of their choice. Of course, once inside the galleries, an entrance will be provided between the sections for visitors to compare the experiences of Jews in urban and rural settings during this time.

Visitors who choose to go “To the Prairies,” will find themselves in a gallery designed to appear like a composite Jewish farming colony in Alberta, Saskatchewan, or Manitoba. Sheaves of wheat on the floor in one area and wooden boards on the walls give the appearance of a typical Canadian Jewish homestead in the early 1900s. As well, a map showing the locations of over a dozen Jewish farming colonies throughout the Prairies will be provided.

The first artifacts in this section consist of items brought by Eastern European immigrants to the prairies. Like all immigrants to Canada, Jews brought religious and practical items they believed would help them adapt to life in Canada. A set of brass candleholders, brought from Russia to Guernsey, Saskatchewan in the early twentieth century is typical of Ashkenazi Jews, who will be explained by label to have traced their origin to Jews who settled in Northwestern Europe in the early Middle Ages. The label will further describe that they are distinguished from other Jews by their language, Yiddish, and their religious and cultural traditions. It will then be noted that most Canadian Jews are of Ashkenazi origin. An embroidery pattern book, brought from Russia to Rumsey, Alberta and a brass coffee grinder brought from Russia to Lipton, Saskatchewan, both in the early twentieth century, will be explained next as items of significance brought by Eastern European Jews to Canada. These items will be a springboard to place visitors even more firmly in the shoes of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. After viewing these artifacts,
visitors will be asked via wall panel, “If you had to leave your home forever, what single item would you bring?” This method provides a conversation point for families and social groups by encouraging them to think about what possessions they value most in life, and why. As well, they will come to understand the haste in which the immigrants wanted to leave their homes.

The next series of artifacts will explain the efforts of the preexisting Canadian Jewish community to help the new immigrants learn the necessary skills for farming in order to survive in the Prairies. In 1906, Baron Maurice de Hirsch donated the funds to create a branch of the Jewish Colonization Association in Canada. Its aim was to settle Eastern European Jewish immigrants in farming colonies and this it did with an element of success. Several artifacts will highlight these efforts. A graduation certificate awarded to Jacob Spindel upon his graduation from the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural College in New Jersey in 1909 will be displayed to show that the majority of immigrants did not have any farming skills, but had to learn how to practice agriculture. Thus schools were established to teach them how to farm. The certificate is in Yiddish and German, denoting the common languages of Ashkenazi Jews. After graduation Spindel spent several years in the Jewish farming colony at Lipton, Saskatchewan. A photo of the Baron de Hirsch Institute in Montreal, the headquarters of the Jewish Colonization Association will also be featured alongside a pamphlet issued there in the 1910s. The pamphlet reads in Yiddish, “Important questions and right answers for those that aspire to settle on the land in Canada,” and thus displays some efforts of the community to provide accurate information for the emigrating Russian Jews. A signboard from the Hirsch farming colony in Saskatchewan, founded in 1892, will also be present to display the poor immigrants’ gratitude to the Baron for supporting them financially. The Jews named their colony “Hirsch” after their benefactor.
Other artifacts in this section will display Jewish life in the colony. In order to convey the desire of immigrants to obtain some wealth, the Land Title Deed of Israel Hoffer from 1907 will be presented. Its label will explain that Hoffer, an Austro-Hungarian immigrant, worked for two years at Hirsch earning enough money to send for his father and brother. The family filed for their own homestead in Saskatchewan and began a successful farm. Other artifacts, such as Samuel Hanen’s account book, ledger, and branding irons from Rumsey, Alberta will be displayed to present the methods Jews used to keep track of their records and property. Pictures on the walls will have a great impact for describing the lifestyle of Jews in farming colonies. One photo shows Abraham Klenman and his wife sitting at their kitchen table in Wapella, Saskatchewan reading a Yiddish newspaper around 1915. Two more photos show the first Rabbi of Wapella, Edel Brotman, and a picture of the Kalman Isman family wooden homestead, built in 1889. Other photographs from the colonies of Lipton and Sonnenfeld show Jewish men farming wheat, young Jewish students learning in the schoolhouse, a Jewish wedding on the prairies, and children playing at their leisure. Each of these artifacts and photographs allows visitors to experience the vibrancy of Jewish life in the Canadian prairies.

As well, this gallery will also address the experiences of the Eastern European Jews who ended up in Winnipeg. Upon arrival, there was no housing available for them, so they lived in large tents having to endure the harsh Winnipeg winter. A small version of one of these tents will be available for visitors to enter. If necessary, the tent’s climate can be controlled to be very cold. Inside the tent, photographs of early Jewish life in Winnipeg will be present depicting the challenges of creating a community from nothing, with no government support in an isolated Manitoba city.
For visitors who choose to go through the other tunnel and head “To the Cities,” they will find themselves immersed in urban Canadian Jewish life. This section will be designed to appear as a busy Canadian Street with several small storefronts and carts, displaying artifacts in and around their windows. The storefronts will be made from brick and provide a different feel than the rustic wooden storefronts of the previous gallery. The first storefront will host a series of artifacts brought to Canadian cities by Eastern European Jewish immigrants alongside a large photo of the arrival of Jews at Bender, Manitoba (a smaller city) in the early twentieth century to provide a visual aid to show a group of immigrants that visitors can associate with the objects displayed next to them. Many of the objects brought by immigrants to the cities were of a religious nature and denote the Orthodoxy of the majority of the immigrants. Artifacts include silver Torah finials, brought from Poland to Toronto in the late nineteenth century, a Sabbath and Holiday ritual goblet known as a “Kiddush Cup,” brought from the Ukraine to Winnipeg in 1905, and a brass mortar and pestle brought from Russian to Winnipeg around this time sometimes used to grind fruit, nuts, and wine for the a spread called “Haroset” eaten during the Passover meal. Other artifacts to be displayed here had sentimental or practical value to those who brought them to Canada. These include the medical bag of Dr. Iser Steinment brought to Kamsack, Saskatchewan in 1920, a samovar brought from Russia to Toronto around 1925, a pair of female wedding shoes brought from Kiev to Winnipeg in 1899 by Rachel Halperin, and a set of tailor’s tools brought from Lithuania to Montreal in 1904 by Mark Ellis, who later founded Montreal’s famous Bellingham Cleaners. The tools include a pattern book, cutting wheel, an awl, pliers, and a thimble. The final artifact is a large wicker trunk, brought from Russia to Winnipeg in the early twentieth century, representing the luggage of the immigrants arriving in Canadian harbors. In addition to the artifacts, the same question, “If
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you had to leave your home forever, what single item would you bring?” will be posed to visitors who chose to enter this gallery instead of “To the Prairies.” In this way, they too can have the experience of the immigrants deciding what possessions to bring and which ones to leave, and thus spark meaningful conversation about adapting and preserving elements of religion, trade, and culture between museum visitors.

The other storefronts will feature artifacts from small and large cities pertaining to the experiences of immigrants arriving there. One such storefront will portray the professions that the immigrants worked in upon arrival in small towns and villages. An advertising sign for Dave Epstein’s clothing store will speak about how he began life in Halifax as a peddler and soon earned enough money to open his stores across Nova Scotia. A fur trader outfit from the 1920s will describe the story of Jack Leve, who was sent by his parents to Montreal following a pogrom in Russia. He left Montreal shortly after arriving and became a fur trader near Sudbury, Ontario. He lived among the natives he traded with, and they honored his respect for them with a gift of a fur parka, moccasins, and snowshoes to help him capture animals for their pelts in the harsh snowy winters. Other furrier artifacts presented here belonged to Max Dodek, who after arriving in Canada from Poland in 1905, worked as a furrier before opening his own fur store in Vancouver. He used these pelt stretchers, pliers, hangers, knives, and wedges until his retirement in 1970.

The largest and final storefront will display a series of artifacts and photographs depicting immigrant Jewish life in larger Canadian cities, such as Montreal and Toronto, since these three contained the majority of Canada’s Jewish population in the early twentieth century. In examining the adaptation of Eastern Europeans to city life, one of the strongest barriers to integrating into Canadian society was learning English. Two artifacts
represent the struggle of the Yiddish-speaking newcomers to learn English. These are a series of flash cards in Yiddish and English from Rubin’s Stationary in Montreal used by immigrants to learn English, and a 1927 Night School Certificate awarded to one such immigrant upon completion of his English language education.

Some artifacts will portray the Orthodoxy of the Eastern European immigrants and issues specific to them. A photo from 1920 depicts the Orthodoxy of many of the immigrants by portraying them with long beards, wearing Tefillin and Tallit, a ritual prayer shawl during morning prayers. Another photo of an Orthodox Jewish rag picker from 1911 in Toronto shows the difficulty Jews had in obtaining jobs, since many refused to work on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath. As a result, many Orthodox Jewish immigrants obtained professions like rag picking and scrap metal collecting in which they barely made a living.

Other photos will depict for visitors Jewish businesses, such as Hyman’s Book and Art Shop on Toronto’s Spadina Avenue in the 1920s (coincidentally a few footsteps from the desired location of the Canadian Jewish Museum) and Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Lithwick in front of their Byward Market store in Ottawa in the early 1900s. A photo of Toronto’s Kensington Market, the home of the Toronto Jewish community in the early twentieth century, with Jews bustling about on market day in 1924.

Other artifacts will depict Yiddish culture in Canadian cities by showing a photograph of the cast of the Yiddish Theatre at the Queens Theatre in Winnipeg, along with a poster in Yiddish advertising for another Yiddish Theatre production. Additionally a short film portraying Yiddish film, theatre, and songs will show visitors the vibrancy of Yiddish culture in Canada. Through these artifacts, visitors will come to learn that Jews actively engaged in the arts.
Another series of enlarged photographs will display the activities of Jews in the garment industry and how Jews were instrumental in creating unions and better working conditions in factories for themselves and other employees. One such photo shows workers leaving the headquarters of the Dressmakers Joint Council, Industrial Union of Needle Trades Workers in 1932. Another shows the General Strike Committee of the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union in Toronto in 1919. Finally, a poster in Yiddish announcing a lecture in Toronto by anarchist Emma Goldman, organized by the Arbeiter Ring – the Jewish Workmen’s Circle, who were very influential in Jewish socialist causes.

At this point, visitors have either gone through the prairies or the cities and will exit the gallery. Some visitors may compare their experiences in each gallery and thus discuss the similarities and differences between Jewish immigration to and life in rural and urban Canadian centers. Not only will visitors have simultaneously taken on both roles of participant and bystander while walking through the galleries, they will come to understand the ways in which Eastern European Jewish immigrants strove to create new opportunities for themselves by keeping alive their religious customs and confronting economic and social hurdles.

Key Bibliography


**Gallery #4: Canadian Judaism**

**Themes:** This gallery displays aspects of Jewish religion in Canada, including the synagogue as the primary place of worship, Jewish holidays, milestones in the Jewish life cycle, and kosher dietary laws and restrictions.

No Jewish museum is complete without a mention of Jewish religion and culture. It is their religious rituals and traditions, as well as levels of religious observance, that have continued to make the Jews a unique nation throughout their existence. The purpose of this gallery is to display the religion and culture of the Canadian Jewish community. Until now, visitors have wandered through the galleries learning about the early history of the Jews and how immigrant communities have adapted and contributed to the development of Canada. The stories highlighted Jewish experiences, but encouraged a common understanding that every Canadian minority has faced similar challenges in creating new lives for themselves in this country. “Canadian Judaism” seeks to highlight those things about the Jews that are distinct and different than other cultures in order to highlight the idea that all minorities, although sharing common experiences, have special characteristics that make them a unique tile in the Canadian cultural mosaic.

In order to display those aspects of Canadian Judaism that are unique and different from other cultures, the gallery will exhibit artifacts highlighting several key features of Jewish religious life in Canada. First, the gallery will highlight the synagogue as the predominant center for Jewish religious affairs and will encourage visitors to interact with artifacts from Canadian Jewish synagogues. In the second section, Jewish holidays will be exhibited using artifacts and small audio-visual presentations to describe them in order to
highlight the celebrations of Jews throughout the year. In addition, another section will display elements of the Jewish life cycle to alert visitors to ritual milestones in the lives of Jewish people. A special fourth section on kosher food will highlight the Jewish dietary laws and restrictions and introduce visitors to some Jewish and kosher food. Ultimately, in this gallery visitors will come to understand the special religious characteristics of the Canadian Jewish community and the ways they practice their faith.

**Artifacts and Visitor Experience**

In “Canadian Judaism” visitors will have the opportunity to learn about Jewish religion by interacting with several of its artifacts and practitioners over approximately ten minutes. In the center of the gallery, a Torah scroll will be displayed opened up on top of a table for visitors too see the Hebrew script inside. Large panels will explain that the Torah is the centerpiece of the Jewish religion and is traditionally believed by Jews to have been the word of God written by Moses. It contains five books that tell the history of the Jewish people from the creation of the world until the death of Moses and is the foundation for Jewish legal and ethical texts. Visitors will also learn that it is written in Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jewish people, and that different portions are read from it each week in the synagogue. The Torah scroll itself will be presented under glass, but the handles will placed on a rolling track allowing visitors to turn them and look through as much of the scroll as they desire. While this may seem too dangerous for to use a real Torah, a reproduction of one will also suit the purpose of this section.

In a semicircle around the Torah will be several glass display cases highlighting other artifacts pertaining to Judaism in Canada. Labels will explain their ritual use. These include
a large silver Hanukkiyah from Toronto in 1877, a 1932 silver Torah crown for dressing the scroll, and a silver Torah pointer, a long stick shaped item used for pointing to the words in the Torah. Each of these objects were used or displayed for several years at Toronto's Beth Tzedec synagogue. From Congregation Sons of Israel in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, a 1923 wooden ark used to store the Torah will be presented along with the synagogue's *Ner Tamid*, an eternal light that hangs above the ark in each synagogue as a symbol for God's eternal presence. A 1981 paper sign from an Ottawa home with the Hebrew word, “Mizrach,” meaning East, indicates the direction of prayer toward Jerusalem for those praying in the Western hemisphere. As well, a pre-1768 deerskin Torah scroll from Canada's first synagogue, Shearith Israel, will be displayed along with prayer books from London, England in 1785, which were brought to the tiny Jewish community in Montreal. As well, modern prayer books from the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jewish movements will indicate differences in prayer between the denominations. Labels will show these differences in the movements by highlighting key prayers, language, and gender roles in the synagogue. Percentages of the Canadian Jewish denominational rates will be exhibited as well in increments of 25 years from 1850 to the present to show the diversity of Canadian Jewry in terms of religious observance. Coming away from this section, visitors will have learned about key Jewish beliefs and the purpose of different objects common to many synagogues.

To one side of the gallery will be a series of tall, narrow glass display cases in which some of the Jewish holidays will be presented. Each holiday will be given its own display case containing artifacts that represent them. This section seeks to discuss the holidays as well as how they are celebrated in Canada using personal accounts in audio and video form.
The first objects in the display cases represent the Jewish High Holidays of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, respectively the Jewish New Year and the Jewish Day of Atonement. A Jewish New Year Card manufactured in the 1920s in Montreal from Rubin’s Stationary is representative of the cards exchanged amongst community members wishing each other blessings for the New Year on Rosh Hashana. Representing Yom Kippur will be a Shofar, a horn fashioned from the horn of a ram sounded on this day to symbolize the closing of the gates of heaven and ending the high holidays. Harry Diamond brought this particular Shofar in 1910 from Romania to New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Diamond often conducted prayer services for his synagogue in the absence of a rabbi.

Representing Hanukkah will be two Hanukkiyahs, candelabras with eight branches commemorating the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Greeks in the 2nd century BC. The first will be of Ashkenazi (Northwestern European) origin and the second of Sephardic (Spanish and Middle Eastern) origin in order to allow visitors to see the stylistic differences Jews from different parts of the world used to create their ritual objects. In addition, one metal dreidel from Calgary in 1965 and one wooden dreidel from Vancouver in 1970 are representative of the four-sided spinning tops that Jewish children play with on Hanukkah. A small table with plastic dreidels nearby will be set up with instructions for visitors to play the game at their leisure, something truly enjoyable for families and necessary to make the museum a social experience.

Another display case will exhibit the holiday of Purim, which commemorates the Jewish redemption from a plot by the evil Haman to annihilate all the Jews in the Persian Empire. The Purim story is read aloud in the synagogue each year from a special scroll called a Megillah, which will be displayed in the case. It is customary during the Megillah
reading to use special noisemakers, known as graggers, to symbolize the blotting out of Haman’s name whenever it is read. Following this, a wood and metal gragger made in 1975 from Congregation Beth Israel in Vancouver, said to be the world’s largest one, will be displayed. Video footage of children dressed up in costume for the holiday, exchanging customary food packages, and giving money to the poor will be emphasized as key features of this holiday as well.

Passover, the Jewish holiday commemorating the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, will be represented by a Seder Plate, a special platter containing the six symbolic foods eaten during the Passover ritual meal. Also present will be a box of Matzah, the unleavened bread eaten by Jews on Passover to commemorate the haste in which the Israelites left Egypt. Also present is an embroidered silk Matzah bag with three compartments in which to put three pieces of Matzah. The three compartments represent the Jewish class system made up of the Priests, who trace their lineage to Aaron the High Priest; the Levites, who trace their lineage to Moses; and the Israelites, who represent the majority of the Jewish people. The bag was made in 1920 in Calgary, and sewn into it is the Hebrew blessing over the Matzah. Scenes from Jewish Seders will accompany the artifacts on film and will share individuals’ fond memories of Passover celebrations.

Another major holiday represented in a case will be Sukkot. Sukkot commemorates both the forty-year journey of the ancient Israelites from Egypt to the Holy Land and the ancient pilgrimages of Jewish people to the Temple in Jerusalem, where they would offer sacrifices and pray using four special plant species known as the Lulav (palm frond), Etrog (citron), Hadass (myrtle), and Aravah (willow). Featured in the case will be a plastic reproduction of the four species (since the actual plant species will not preserve). In addition, video footage will be displayed of a Canadian Jewish family building a Sukkah, a
special wooden tabernacle in which Jews traditionally eat and sleep during the eight-day long holiday. Some video footage will note that since this holiday takes place in late October, which is generally very cold and rainy in Canada, most people eat some of the meal inside the Sukkah, but then go indoors to finish it. Very few Canadian Jews observe the requirement to sleep inside it throughout the night due to fear of catching any number of cold-related diseases.

The final holiday presented is the weekly Sabbath, a Jewish day of rest. Jews bring in the Sabbath by lighting candles, represented here by special candlesticks. They eat a festive meal, which begins with a blessing over wine in a special goblet known as a Kiddush Cup, and a ceremony of eating Challah bread. Displayed in this case representing these customs will be Judah George Joseph’s Kiddush Cup from Toronto in 1855 and a modern platter and decorative knife for cutting and serving the Challah. At the conclusion of the Sabbath on Saturday nights, many Jews participate in a ceremony known as Havdallah, which literally means, “separation,” and it ritually divides the week between the regular workdays and the holiness of the Sabbath. During this ceremony, Jews make several blessings using wine, smelling spices, and using candlelight from an elaborate wax candle. A Havdallah set, consisting of a ritual wine goblet, spice shaker, and candle will be presented next to a video of a traditional Havdallah ceremony in order to show visitors a traditional concluding of the Sabbath ritual. The video will also show families singing traditional songs to bring in the Sabbath on Friday nights. All videos in the gallery will be played on a continuous loop with subtitles and translations where necessary.

On the opposite side of the gallery, several glass cases will display ritual artifacts from the Jewish life cycle ceremonies along with video footage from some of the events. At the beginning of the life cycle is birth. The birth of a Jewish male is marked by a ritual
circumcision known as a *Brit Milah*. The Brit Milah is generally held eight days after the baby is born and takes place in the synagogue or the home. In some ceremonies, the baby wears a special gown and bonnet, like the ones displayed here from Montreal in 1919. A ritual set of circumcision tools including a circumcision knife, shield, scissors, and forceps used between 1930 and 1960 by Rabbi Polonsky of Winnipeg will also be displayed.

The next phase in the Jewish life cycle is the beginning of physical maturity, which is marked by a boy’s Bar Mitzvah at age 13 and a girl’s Bat Mitzvah and the age of 12. In Canada, this milestone is celebrated in the synagogue by the reciting special blessings and/or the reading of a torah portion. There is often a large party associated with the event where family and friends of the youngster come together for a meal and celebratory dancing. Several Bar and Bat Mitzvah invitations, including one from New Liseard, Ontario, in 1986, will display the ceremony along with video footage of several Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. The footage will explain the ceremony as a coming of age ritual in which the child takes full responsibility for his actions as an adult member of the Jewish community. It will also portray the child reciting from the Torah as representative of the exact moment he becomes “Bar Mitzvah’ed.”

The next major phase in the Jewish life cycle is marriage. Jewish marriages take place under a special canopy called a *Huppah*. A huppah made in 1864 with Chinese silk for a wedding held in Vancouver’s Temple Emanu-El will be set up so that visitors can walk under it as if they were part of a Jewish wedding. Also displayed will be a *Ketubbah*, a Jewish marriage contract outlining the responsibilities of a husband to provide for his wife throughout their marriage. Video footage will accompany this display showing the Jewish wedding ceremony, the festive dancing, and is intended to show the happiness surrounding the event.
The last stage of the life cycle is death. In the Jewish tradition, community members clean the body of the deceased on a burial table. The museum will display a wooden burial table from New Glasgow, Nova Scotia made in 1912, and will emphasize through a text panel the importance of the ritual cleaning and burial of the body. Upon burial in a Jewish cemetery, the body is traditionally marked with a headstone. In early Canadian history, gravestones were made of wood, like the one presented here from Lipton, Saskatchewan marking the death of a young girl with a poem by her father. A text panel will describe the Shivah, the seven-day mourning period of an individual after the death of an immediate relative and the traditional customs of tearing one’s clothing and avoiding social gatherings as a sign of respect for the dead.

The next section of this gallery will answer the question, “What is Kosher?” Designed to appear like a modern kitchen, and facilitated by a volunteer, this kosher kitchen will explain the dietary restrictions of Jews and introduce visitors to traditional Jewish foods. As visitors tour the museum throughout the year, free samples of Jewish foods associated with current or upcoming Jewish holidays will be handed out in this section. For example, miniature potato latkes, which are customarily eaten on Hanukkah, will be handed out to visitors around December. Matzah, for better or for worse, will be given to visitors in the springtime around Passover. Hamantashen, special triangular pastries with jelly in the middle, will be handed out to visitors around the Purim holiday. These freebies serve to keep the visitors energized as they tour the museum’s exhibit, but they also serve as appetizers to encourage them to eat in the museum’s restaurant following their tour, and thus bring extra revenue to the museum. Furthermore, it introduces them to traditional Jewish cooking.
The kitchen itself will have clearly marked separate cabinets for meat and dairy highlighting their traditional Jewish separation. Rubber stamps displayed on dishes inside the cabinets from Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1966 show how some dishes are used for meat meals, while others are used for dairy. Similarly, a set of hand-forged kosher knives and kitchen utensils will be displayed in the drawers for visitors to see how the separation between milk and meat is a very detailed practice. Hanging on one of the walls will be a 1949 lithograph by Henry Orenstein from Halifax called “The Shoichet” or the Ritual Slaughterer. Text explaining this lithograph will explain that in order for meat to be kosher, it must be slaughtered according to Jewish laws stating that the meat is drained of all blood and salted. As well, a bowl and chopper from Montreal in the early twentieth century for preparing the traditional boneless gefilte fish for the Sabbath meal. Each of these artifacts contributes to the explanation of what kosher food is and how a kosher kitchen is kept.

After visiting this gallery, visitors will have had the opportunity to learn a great deal about Judaism in Canada. They will have handled the objects from its holidays, viewed the celebrations of its annual milestones, and even eaten the traditional Jewish foods. Visitors will leave the gallery contented and hopefully viewing Judaism as a participatory religion that is family-centered and enjoyable.

Key Bibliography

**Gallery #5: Facing Challenges**

1914 – 1950

**Themes:** The purpose of this gallery is to describe the antisemitism that faced the Canadian Jewish community in the first half of the 20th century. It also details Jewish contributions to the World Wars and the racism of the Canadian government, as they were unwilling to let European Jewish refugees into Canada during the Holocaust.

In “Facing Challenges” visitors will learn about how Canadian Jews were the victims of racism and prejudice throughout the history in Canada with a special focus on the first half of the twentieth century. Racism and prejudice are two of the most difficult experiences minorities face in any country, and Canada is no exception. These societal diseases single out people for any number of arbitrary reasons and cause life to become more difficult in the social, economic, political, and personal arenas. For this reason, the audiences of the Canadian Jewish Museum will enter this gallery and learn a valuable lesson about the experiences of Canadian Jews as victims of antisemitism – a prejudice or hatred of Jews – and its harsh consequences. While the gallery focuses heavily on the period between 1930 and 1950, it will also discuss how antisemitic attitudes existed from the beginning of Jewish history in Canada, and during the first decades of the 1900s.

Beginning in 1914, this gallery will convey that the mass immigration from Eastern Europe came to a halt as World War I began and Canada was thrust into battle. As part of the British Armed Forces, Canadian Jews were quite conflicted to be fighting as allies of Russia, the country that treated them terribly and forced them to leave. Even more difficult
for them was the thought of going to war against Germany, since at that time it was the center of modern Jewish culture and philosophy. Despite this conflict, Jews remained loyal to Britain and Canada and fought proudly in their own battalions, since they were prohibited from serving in general battalions.

As the war came to an end, antisemitism publicly reared its ugly head. Many Canadians felt uncomfortable when confronted with some members of the Jewish community, especially the recent European Jewish immigrants. After all, the new immigrants had trouble assimilating into Canadian society. Many couldn’t grasp English or French, most spoke in a guttural sounding Yiddish language, and due to their observance of Orthodox Judaism, they wore dark clothing and appeared to participate in a strange religion. Perhaps it was these characteristics of the Eastern European Jews combined with an antisemitic prejudice against the entire Jewish ethnicity that resulted in lobbying from prominent Canadians against the immigration policies of the government. The government slowed Jewish immigration after World War I and quotas were placed on the number of Jews in schools, and barriers to employment were established. Some country clubs, parks, and camps even barred Jews from entering, and newspapers began publishing antisemitic articles and cartoons.

The rise of Nazism in Germany in the 1930s exacerbated the already distressing situation for Canadian Jews. Nazi supporters in Canada continued to publish even more antisemitic material, and street toughs increasingly terrorized young Jews in the streets of Montreal and Toronto. The appearance of these gangs peaked in the famous Christie Pits riot, where a baseball game between a Jewish team and a Gentile team turned into an all night brawl. During this period, the Nazi symbol of the swastika was found painted on synagogues and Canadian Nazi political parties even marched in the streets. In response to
rising Nazi support abroad, Canadian Jewish Congress assembled itself to lobby the
government for increased immigration and mount campaigns to fight the Nazis abroad, but
little was accomplished.

As World War II began in 1939, thousands of Canadian Jews enlisted and fought
overseas. Their contributions to the war effort at home and abroad were numerous in
terms of producing materials and fighting in battles. Many Jews were honored for their
bravery and victories. Yet while Jews were having success on the battlefield, the Canadian
Jewish Congress was not having any luck lobbying the Canadian government to open its
doors to the thousands of European Jewish refugees hoping to escape certain death. The
antisemitic policies of the government refusing to let Jews in the country will be highlighted
in this gallery as a truly unfortunate and despicable chapter in Canadian Jewish history.

Artifacts and Visitor Experience

The aim of the “Strong and Free” core exhibit is to allow visitors to experience
Canadian Jewish history by interacting with artifacts and thereby create meaningful
moments and thus gain an understanding of the experiences of minorities in Canada. In
“Facing Challenges,” visitors will encounter the difficulties faced by Canadian Jews in the first
half of the twentieth century. Upon entering the gallery, visitors will be faced with a large
panel introducing them to the gallery’s themes of antisemitism and Canadian Jewish
contributions in both World Wars. The gallery itself will contain several sections
highlighting World War I, increasing antisemitic attitudes, the impact of Nazism in Canada,
Jewish efforts to bring Jewish refugees to Canada during the Holocaust, and Jewish
involvement in World War II.
First a small display discussing Jewish involvement in World War I will aim to show visitors the deeply personal nature of Jews going into battle. World War I threw Europe into chaos, and many of the war’s casualties were European Jews. Canadian Jews felt that it was their duty to enlist in order to serve the country that had been their refuge during the previous decades. Many Jews of Eastern European descent were often concerned as well with helping save the lives of their cousins who were left behind. Five artifacts display Jewish commitment to the war effort. A recruitment sign for the Jewish Battalion in Winnipeg will introduce visitors to the idea that Jews were ready to fight, but were only permitted to serve in their own companies. In addition, a First World War Hat of the Jewish Branch of the Canadian Legion from Toronto and a photograph of the Jewish Reinforcement Draft Company from Montreal will show visitors the dedication that Jews had to serve their country and help save other Jews. While some Jews were fighting in Europe, the ones at home launched a campaign to save war orphans and bring them to Canada. These campaigns will be displayed through two photographs. The first pictures the Saskatchewan and Alberta Conference for the Relief of War Orphans. The banner behind the conference members reads in Yiddish, “Jews! Save our future generation!” Their success will be displayed through a photo of the first group of Ukrainian Jewish war orphans to be granted permission to enter Canada from 1921.

Moving on to a second section, visitors will come face to face with the closed gates of a country club. Plastered on the gates will be several signs saying, “Jews Not Allowed,” “No Dogs or Jews Allowed,” “Only Gentile Business Solicited,” and other signs that commonly discriminated against Jews in the 1930s. This will provide visitors will a realistic feeling of being excluded, just as Jews were from these institutions. The idea that antisemitic attitudes were present in Canada will be explained in a panel to the side of the
gates introducing a portrait of Goldwyn Smith. The panel will explain that Smith was an influential academic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He convinced many Canadians that Jews were parasites and should not be welcomed into Canada. He lobbied for a more restrictive immigration policy and believed that Jews should only be Jews by name, but otherwise be like the Christian majority. Just encountering an average Eastern European Jewish immigrant in the streets was sometimes enough for others to feel uncomfortable and wish the Jews would somehow assimilate. Attitudes like his grew more popular by the 1930s and as a result, Jews experienced antisemitism from the majority population. So deep was the antisemitism that some individuals created restrictive covenants, like the one presented in this gallery from 1931, which prohibited Jews from owning land at Lake Simcoe, Ontario. Such covenants were often written into deeds in the 1920s through the 1940s to prevent the sale or rental of property to Jews. 

On the opposite side of the gate, a series of cartoons depicting Jews in most defamatory ways from the antisemitic newspaper, Le Goglu, will show visitors the gross exaggerations of Jews in the eyes of antisemites. Visitors will be informed in a heading over the cartoons saying, “Made in Canada,” that these terrible caricatures of Jews were the product of a homegrown local antisemitism. In addition, visitors will be alerted to antisemitic boycotts of Jewish businesses throughout Canada in the 1930s, through a series of posters publicizing them with words such as “Achatez chez nous!”

In the Berlin Jewish Museum and Yad Vashem, Israel’s museum of the Holocaust, the same exhibition method is used to display the theme that Jews were restricted from entering certain places or confined to certain streets. Both suspend several large signs saying things like, “No Jews Allowed,” or “Judenstrasse” (street of the Jews). The intent of this method is to show that an antisemitism was public and common. I have adopted this
The technique of using signs to show Canadian antisemitism in the 1930s and 1940s, but instead of suspending signs from the ceiling, I have opted to display the artifacts on closed country club gates to show that restrictions on Jews in Canada were widespread.

In the following section, visitors will enter part of a baseball diamond representing the Christie Pits baseball field mentioned above. An introductory panel will explain the antisemitic atmosphere in Canada during the 1930s and will direct visitors’ attention to a photo of the 1933 championship Jewish baseball team. This photo will be used alongside a newspaper article from August 8, 1933, with the headline, “Toronto Swastikas Arouse Jews,” to show how tensions between Jews and gentiles led to Nazi supporters and Swastika Clubs fighting all night against the Jews who came out to support their team. In addition, a photo from the Toronto Daily Star will show two members of the Swastika Club who were arrested for participating in the riot. Arranged along the walls will be several photographs and newspaper articles showing the Nazi influence in Canada. One poster depicting a key with a swastika on it was used as a symbol for antisemitism in Quebec in the 1930s. Other artifacts depicting the Nazi influence in Canada include a 1938 photo of a synagogue vandalized with swastikas all over it in St. Marguerite, Quebec, and another of a roof with the words, “Hail Hitler” painted on it. Additional photos of Nazi uniforms to be used in Montreal, Nazis meeting at an unknown location in Canada, and the members of Manitoba’s National Unity Party shown in Nazi salute will provide visitors with a shocking glimpse of a piece of Canadian history few are aware of. And to top it off, Newspapers from 1938 and 1939 in English and French will be featured with antisemitic cartoons and so-called, “Facts about the Jews.”

The Jewish response to these types of Nazi supporting activities will be explained through a photograph of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which assembled in 1933. The
congress, made up of prominent Canadian Jewish leaders planned to lobby the government
to allow more Jewish immigration, mount campaigns to fight the Nazis abroad, urge the
British to open Palestine to refugees, and find ways to fund religious and social programs in
Canada. In addition, a special stamp issued by the Jewish Anti-Fascist League in Winnipeg
will represent the campaigns launched in Canada against the Nazis. The stamp shows a
hand symbolizing unity crushing a snake with Hitler’s head. The stamp reads, “Boycott
German Made Goods.”

The next section will be dedicated to Jewish involvement in World War II, but will
mainly focus on Jewish participation in the Canadian Armed Forces. Visitors will enter into
this section and will immediately find themselves fully surrounded by artifacts displaying
Jewish involvement during the war. Recruitments posters published in Toronto by the
Canadian Jewish Congress show will be used to show the methods by which Jews were
encouraged to enlist. Photos of Flight Lieutenant Sydney Shulemson next to his fighter
plane, Pilot Clive Finkelstein’s 1942 air gunner’s log and Royal Canadian Air Force insignia,
Gunner Norman Gilboord’s medals for bravery, and a photograph from a Winnipeg
newspaper featuring twelve grandchildren fighting overseas will all represent the Canadian
Jewish fighters, as will the Jewish Veterans’ Association Hat, from 1950 accompanied by its
pin, crest, and tile. Those who did not return from battle will also be honored in this
section through photographs of an Honor Roll Poster listing the names of the members of
the Vancouver Jewish community who were killed. As well, a photograph of the wooden
Star of David marking the grave of Lt. G. J. Schwartz in a field of cross-shaped grave
markers will highlight the Jewish sacrifices in the war. Ultimately, the same Canadian Jews
who faced discrimination in their own cities also fought bravely and sacrificed for their
Country. Also in this section will be a series of artifacts dedicated to the religious lives of
Jewish soldiers during the war. The uniform of Rabbi David Monson and the Kippah (Jewish traditional skullcap) and badge of Rabbi Samuel Cass, both of whom served as chaplains in the Canadian army, will show how they, with the help of Canadian Jewish Congress, were responsible for providing for the spiritual needs of the Jewish soldiers. Through their efforts Jewish soldiers were able to have synagogue services, access to Jewish prayer books, and Jewish calendars so they could keep track of the Jewish holidays. A photo of Rabbi Cass leading Canadian Jewish servicemen in prayer will be present alongside another of a Passover ceremony held for them in the Maritimes. A “Prayer Book for the Jewish Members of Her Majesty’s Forces” that bears the inscription from Rabbi Monson in 1943 saying, “May God bless you and protect you,” will show visitors the personal nature of the Rabbis’ duties. In addition, artifacts representing the war effort at home will include a photograph of Jewish women sewing various items to send to the Jewish soldiers from Ottawa in 1942 as well as a series of comic books called, “Jewish War Heroes,” which were distributed to young Jewish children by Canadian Jewish Congress in 1944.

The final section of this gallery will show how the Canadian government did less than any other Western country to save Jewish refugees between 1933 and 1948. Beginning with an audio reading a letter from Imre Lob, a Hungarian Jew pleading for entry into Canada dated June 22, 1939, visitors will be able to hear to desperation in his words and realize that for Jews not to escape Europe almost always meant certain death. Canadian governmental responses will be displayed by a diary entry from Prime Minister Mackenzie King, outlining his sympathy for the Jews but his unwillingness to help and a letter from Frederick Charles Blair, the overtly antisemitic Minister of Immigration dated September 13, 1938. The letter contains the words, “the poor Jew all over the world seems very unpopular…it would be far better if we more often told them frankly why
many of them are unpopular. If they would divest themselves of certain of their habits, I am sure they would be just as popular in Canada as our Scandinavians.” This will show visitors the lingering antisemitism influencing Canadian immigration policy. As well, a picture of the SS St. Louis, will appear telling the story of how the hundreds of Jewish refugees onboard were repeatedly turned away from sanctuary in western countries. Canada was the ship’s last stop before returning to Europe, where many of the passengers were murdered by the Nazis. Featured next to the picture will be telegram from prominent Canadians to the Prime Minister asking to let the St. Louis’ refugees enter Canada, dated June 7, 1939. The photograph went unanswered. A photograph of Saul Hayes, Executive Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress during World War II, will explain his unsuccessful attempts to persuade the Canadian government to permit Jewish refugees to enter Canada. At the conclusion of the war, as the extermination of Europe’s Jews was revealed, Canadian Ambassador George Vanier gave a famous speech on the radio saying, “How deaf we were” to the Jewish cries for help. This address can be heard in its entirety through audio device. At the same time, the Congress mounted a campaign to bring refugees to Canada. Representing this campaign will be a pamphlet issued by the Congress after the war with a photo of war orphans and a slogan saying, “What about their Passover in 1946?” With the retirement of Blair and Mackenzie King after the war, the doors to immigration were slowly opened and immigration policies were eased. The Jewish Immigrant Aid Society began sponsoring Jewish immigrants to come to Canada. A photo showing some of these refugees arriving in Halifax will represent these efforts. As well, a family bible that was brought by John Hirsch, who arrived in Canada in 1947 with the first group of Jewish orphans to come over, will be displayed. The final artifact in this gallery will be a Torah Cover, made in a displaced persons camp in Europe, which was
presented by the German-Jewish community of Montreal to the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1950 on behalf of its efforts to settle Jewish orphans in Canada after the Second World War.

In “Facing Challenges,” visitors will come to understand the consequences of racism and prejudice as told through the experiences of Canadian Jews in the 1930s and 1940s. By learning about how antisemitism became widespread and how it affected Jews socially, economically, and politically, visitors will come away from this gallery with a new sense of the importance of making each minority feel welcome and at home in this country.

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Gallery #6: Heart in the Homeland

1948 – 2010

Themes: This gallery depicts the nature of Canadian Jewry as a Diaspora community and its relationship to the State of Israel. Zionism in Canada is traced from its origins in the late 1800s until the present with the focus being on Canadian Jewish support for Israel post-1948, when Israel was established.

The next gallery, “Heart in the Homeland,” describes the unique relationship between Canadian Jews and the State of Israel. Israel was established on May 14, 1948, but Canadian Jewry had been among its most vigorous supporters since long before then. The movement of Jewish nationalism, known as Zionism, began in Europe in the late 1800s and spread quickly to North America. Since Jews had no land of their own and were persecuted in many of the countries in which they lived, the Zionist goal of establishing a national Jewish homeland became quite popular. In Canada, the Jews were attracted to Zionism largely because of their alienation and antisemitism they experienced in the early twentieth century. In pre-World War II Canada, Jews were considered outsiders, since they did not belong to either of the British or French majority populations in Canada. While they expressed loyalty to Canada, they also expressed loyalty to Zionism as their own national movement. Zionism succeeded in unifying Canadian Jews across the vast country.

After Israel became a state in 1948, Canadian Jews continued to support it in many different ways as they integrated into mainstream Canadian society, finding similar
democratic values in each country. Canadian Jews have served in Israel’s military and fought in its wars. The community has raised some of the highest sums of money per capita for Israel in comparison to other Jewish Diaspora communities worldwide, including the American Jewish community. They continue to visit and move to Israel at one of the world’s highest rates. Canada’s Jewish day school system is not only vibrant and popular, but it continues to produce young educated Jews knowledgeable and supportive of Israel and often fluent in Israel’s official language, Hebrew. In fact, Canada sets the standard for teaching Hebrew throughout North America. Furthermore, Canadian Jews continue to be among Israel’s strongest advocates. The success of Zionism in Canada in the second half of the twentieth century is largely due to the centrality of Canadian multiculturalism. While the goal of this gallery is not to introduce multiculturalism in its legal context, the gallery will emphasize that just as Greek-Canadians and Italian-Canadians celebrate the holidays and festivals of their homelands, so too do Jewish Canadians unapologetically celebrate Israel’s important dates. This gallery will show that while living loyally and productively in the Diaspora, Canadian Jewish society retains very strong ties to its traditional homeland, just as other minorities do for their countries of origin.

Artifacts and Visitor Experience

Visitors will enter “Heart in the Homeland” to find a very simple narrow gallery. To one side will be a series of artifacts arranged along a timeline, and a film. Opposite this will be a wall made to appear like Jerusalem’s Western Wall, which will be incorporated into a special activity.
The timeline will begin in 1887 with a photo of the first organized Zionist movement in Canada. This group was a branch of the Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) organized by the famous Russian-born Jewish linguist, Alexander Harkavy. It contained fifty men from Montreal, but despite their enthusiasm, the organization collapsed. A photo of Montreal’s Rabbi Lazarus Cohen on the date of 1892 will describe how he established a new Canadian branch of the Hovevei Zion. Cohen led campaigns to support the purchasing of land in Palestine for Jewish settlement and raised 24,000 francs from Canadian Jews. A photo of Clarence de Sola will mark 1899. It will describe his establishment of the Federation of Zionist Societies of Canada, the nation’s first nationwide Jewish organization. Under de Sola’s leadership the Federation was responsible for spreading Zionism throughout Canada, raising money for Jewish settlement in Palestine, and also acted as an organization in which Jews from all over the country could address internal Jewish communal affairs. The early 1900’s will be marked by a photo of the Herzl Girls Zionist School in Toronto, 1906, and will show how Zionist education was very important to Canadian Jews from the rise of the movement. A 1912 edition of the Canadian Jewish Times published on the 8th anniversary of Zionist founder Theodor Herzl’s death will be featured. The cover shows his picture and reads, “His name shall forever be in our hearts and in the hearts of our children.” A poster from 1915 of the members of Toronto’s Zion Benevolent Association shows their support for Jewish statehood. The poster contains the Hebrew words from the Books of Psalms, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right arm lose its cunning.” November 2, 1917 marked a turning point in Zionist history. On that day, British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour issued a formal statement of the British Empire supporting a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine. A reproduction of this document will appear marking this important date, and will be followed by photographs from
Winnipeg and Regina of Jews celebrating and parading their agreement and support. In addition a flag from Ottawa in 1917 will be featured to represent the parade of Ottawa’s Jews on what they deemed, “Balfour Day.” The design of the flag would later become the national flag of Israel. A 1926 advertisement from S.L. Nathanson’s Montreal store advertising products from Palestine will show that Canadian Jews supported the fledgling Jewish community in Palestine by buying their products. As well, Canadian Jewish advocacy for Israel will be shown through a photo of Montreal’s members of the Zionist Organization of Canada protesting the 1929 Hebron Massacre of Jews by Arabs. A poster held by one of the protesters reads, “Honour to the pioneers who defended our people!” A small tapestry from Palestine given to Ray Rose of Victoria in 1933 depicts Herzl looking out over Jerusalem and represents the Zionist dream of Jewish statehood. Another photo of Canadian and Palestinian Jewish soldiers training to fight together in World War II as part of the Jewish Brigade will be displayed to show cooperation to fight against the Nazi threat. The battalion fought in Egypt and Italy. Ending off the portion of the timeline displaying Canadian Jewish support of Israel pre-1948 will be a collection of charity boxes from the Jewish National Fund. These boxes, known to the Jews as pushkes, were found in nearly every Jewish home throughout the 20th century. People placed their extra change into them and when they were full, the money they raised was used for Zionist causes. The timeline will end on May 14, 1948, when Israel was established, will be depicted through a photo of Israel’s first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion reading Israel’s declaration of independence. A photo accompanying it will show the ensuring celebration by the Labour Zionist Organization in Montreal on that same day.

Following this, visitors will be shown a five-minute video of Israel’s history incorporating Canadian Jewish involvement with the state. It will highlight Canadian Jewish
support of Israel through its history until the present. The video will begin by highlighting the debate over Zionism within Canadian Jewish society in the early 1900s. Three popular types of Canadian Zionism will be discussed: Political Zionism, Religious Zionism, and Labor Zionism. Herzl's Political Zionism stressed the necessity of lobbying governments and international bodies for support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It was quite popular in Canada and could be seen in the success of the Jewish National Fund. The Orthodox and Conservative movements in Canada were generally supporters of Religious Zionism, and the first Canadian Jewish Zionist leaders were from this movement. Only after World War II did Reform Judaism in Canada become supportive of Zionism. Today, all three branches of Judaism are represented in Canada by their own Zionist organizations in Canada, such as the Mirachi, Merkaz-Canada, and Kadima. Labor Zionism arose out of the Jewish workers' movements of Central and Eastern Europe. Labor Zionists argued that the Jewish homeland could only emerge out of the efforts of a Jewish working class settling in Palestine and building the state from the ground up. The first Canadian branch of Labor Zionism was established in Montreal in 1909, known as Poale Zion, the Workers of Zion. Essentially a fraternal organization, it stressed Zionist ideals and tending to the immediate needs of Jewish workers in times of sickness, distress, or death. As well, they educated their workers to support national Jewish emancipation and the regeneration of the Jewish people while strengthening the working class.

The video will then fast forward to a long list of several hundred Canadians who fought in Israel's 1948 War of Independence, it will highlight the stories of some individual fighters, such as Sydney's Lionel Drucker, a law student at Dalhousie University who served in an Israeli tank unit. The film will continue to show famous Israelis visiting Canada, such as Ben-Gurion and General Moshe Dayan in the 1950s. The film will also highlight the
monetary campaigns set up by Sam Bronfman, the head of the Canadian Jewish Congress. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Bronfman arbitrarily chose 20 million dollars as a goal to raise money to help Israel defeat its enemies and reconstruct from the damage. The target was a pipe dream, but shockingly the small Canadian Jewish community quickly raised the funds and surpassed the goal in one of the community’s most successful fundraising campaigns. The film will continue to highlight Jewish schools in Canada celebrating Israel’s holidays, Canadian Jews visiting Israel and making Aliyah (moving to Israel) and the number of programs Canadian Jews organize to support Israel, including Toronto’s annual Walk for Israel, in which thousands of Jews march in the streets with Israeli flags, and Birthright Israel, the project of Montreal philanthropist Charles Bronfman, which sends college aged Jews to Israel on a free ten-day program. It will further highlight the campaigns by the organized Jewish community to free kidnapped soldiers, like Ron Arad and Gilad Shalit. The film will also include a brief piece about the development of anti-Israel activity on Canadian university campuses and the ways in which Jewish students have proudly supported Israel in this public forum. As well, some clips will describe a recent trend among a minority of Jews from the organization, “Not In Our Name,” who claim to be against Israeli policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians, but still proud Jews. The presence of this minority will show a new debate amongst Canadian Jews of whether the traditional community support of Zionism is in fact central to Canadian Jewish identity.

The final portion of the gallery will be located opposite the timeline and the film. It will appear like Jerusalem’s Western Wall and is intended to be a major activity for visitors. Just like the real wall, this one will also have cracks in it. A text panel will explain that for centuries, Jews have hoped for a state of their own, and now that it exists, Jews come to the Western Wall, their holiest site, and place their wishes, hopes, and dreams inside it.
The panel will then ask visitors what it is that they most hope for and will encourage them to write a note on a small piece of paper, fold it up, and stick it in the cracks of the wall. This activity allows visitors of all backgrounds to participate in one of Judaism’s most treasured customs, and makes them think about what it is that is important to them in their own lives. While Israel is of great importance to the Jewish community of Canada, the wall would become a treasure trove of the important dreams of all the museum’s visitors.

Upon leaving this gallery, visitors will have had the opportunity to learn about the history of Zionism in Canada, the Canadian Jewish support for the State of Israel, and participate in an activity encouraging them to reflect on their hopes and values. By relying on a combination of artifacts, film, and audience participation, “Heart in the Homeland” will leave visitors thinking about the relationship between a country and its Diaspora communities.

Key Bibliography

- Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey* (Toronto, ON, University of Toronto Press, 2008).
**Gallery #7: Canadian Jews and Multiculturalism**

**1950 – 2010**

**Themes:** As the museum’s final gallery, the gallery will delve into the adaptation and contributions of the Holocaust survivor community to Canadian Jewish identity. As well, the stories of more recent Jewish immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East, and the Former Soviet Union will be described. At the end, visitors will be asked to share their own personal stories about living in Canada.

Post-war Canada changed the context and reality of Canadian Jewish life. The widespread antisemitism of the past had largely vanished due to Jewish and Black lobbying efforts. Developing human rights legislation, beginning in the late 1940s, was slowly breaking down barriers that had once prevented Jews and other minorities from having equal access to certain schools and jobs. Jews became prominent in politics, medicine, law, philosophy and other fields. Because of these policy changes, throughout the next several decades the Canadian Jewish community would grow in size, wealth, and organization.

In the decades following World War II, the Canadian Jewish community experienced a boom in size as it absorbed tens of thousands of immigrants. By 1956, Canada has opened its doors to approximately 35,000 holocaust survivors. The survivor community was instrumental in countering the rise of Neo-Nazi groups in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, thousands of Jewish immigrants arrived from Israel,

38 Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey* (Toronto, ON, University of Toronto Press, 2008), 407.
Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Lebanon, following attacks on their communities by Arabs. These immigrants, most of whom followed Sephardic Jewish traditions, added created a greater multiculturalism within the largely Ashkenazi Canadian Jewish community. In addition, the 1970s witnessed a major movement led by North America Jews to free Soviet Jews, who had been persecuted by the Soviet government for several decades. In part due to the massive protests by Canadian Jews, Canada absorbed a few thousand of the Russian immigrants when they were finally permitted to leave the Soviet Union. Canadian Jews were also involved in helping Ethiopian Jews immigrate to Israel in the mid-1980s.

Since 1990, the Canadian Jewish community has begun to face two major new challenges. Due to full Jewish integration in society, there is unprecedented interaction in Canada between Jews and non-Jews, and thus the intermarriage rate has slowly been increasing, causing alarm in more traditional elements of the Jewish community. It is estimated that the intermarriage rate of Jews to non-Jews in Canada is approximately 21.7%.39 Perhaps the most daunting issue to Canadian Jews is the question of Quebecois Separatism. The capital city of Quebec, Montreal, had long been home to the majority of Canadian Jews. However, antisemitism has historically been most fierce in Quebec. Montreal’s Jews fear that if Quebec is able to separate from Canada, antisemitism will increase. As a result, thousands of Jews have left Montreal for Toronto over the last few decades. At present, Toronto has replaced Montreal as the largest center of the Canadian Jewish community. Although Montreal is still Canada’s second largest Jewish community,

cities in the west, like Vancouver, Edmonton, and Calgary have Jewish populations on the rise.

The purpose of “Canadian Jews and Multiculturalism” is to exhibit the above themes showing the effects of Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism. Furthermore, a large interactive center will permit all the museum’s visitors to share their own stories and add their own tiles to the Canadian cultural mosaic. By acknowledging that Canada was not built only through the efforts of the British and the French, visitors will leave “Strong and Free,” with a greater understanding and appreciation of the minorities that help make up the diversity of this great country.

Artifacts and Visitor Experience

As visitors enter “Canadian Jews and Multiculturalism,” they will encounter a large galley with several stations. Each station will consist of its own mini-exhibit telling the story of one of the gallery’s themes and will thus permit visitors to roam around to the particular exhibits that peak their interest.

The first of these sections is called, “Breaking Down Barriers.” The artifacts here will help tell the story of how Jews in a post-World War II era slowly began breaking into professions previously very difficult to attain in a Canada with quotas against minorities. While the provinces created their own human rights codes following the war, their efforts culminated in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. The section will display the text from the Charter, section 15 (1), which claims:

“Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination
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Based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.\textsuperscript{40}

This text, which is the basis of all Canadian equal rights under the law, will be the focal point of the exhibit. It will serve as a basis from which to introduce the artifacts and portraits of several Canadian Jews who achieved prominence in their fields due to the breakdown of discriminatory barriers. A Lawyer’s Practice Nameplate with the names “Cherniak and Cherniak” from Winnipeg circa 1950 will describe how Saul Cherniak practiced law with his father until he was elected to Manitoba’s Legislative Assembly in 1962 as a member of the New Democratic Party (NDP). Cherniak was even appointed an NDP cabinet minister when his party formed the government in 1969. Other political figures shown there will be David Croll, Canada’s first Jewish Senator appointed in 1945, Herb Grey, Canada’s first Jewish Federal Cabinet Minister elected in 1969, David Lewis, founder of the New Democratic Party (then known as Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) and leader of the NDP in Quebec in the 1960s, and Dave Barrett, Canada’s first Jewish Premier, from British Columbia, elected in 1972. A photo of Toronto’s new City Hall housed at Nathan Philips Square will describe how Philips became Toronto’s first Jewish mayor. As well, an anecdote will be shared about how it was not his Judaism that created controversy over his election, but the fact that he was the city’s first non-Protestant mayor. A photo Mel Lastman, another Jewish Toronto mayor, will also be present alongside the photo of Irwin Cotler, a former Federal Minister of Justice and President of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Cotler has been a strong voice for Jewish and human rights in this generation throughout the world. Photos of Bora Laskin and Emil Fackenheim of the

\textsuperscript{40} Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 15 (1). (Part 1 of the Constitution Act, Assented to, March 29, 1982).
University of Toronto, and Max Goldstein of McGill University will show the large contributions of Canadian Jews to the academy. After his tenure in Toronto, Laskin was appointed Canadian Supreme Court Justice in 1975.

The second section will describe the impact of Holocaust survivors on the Canadian Jewish community. Unfortunately, no artifacts have been found to tell this story, and therefore technology must be used creatively. In this section, a video presentation will discuss the uneasy relationship between the survivors and other Canadian Jews. It will also document how survivors led the battle to fight the reemergence of antisemitic neo-Nazi groups in Canada, and were instrumental in developing a consciousness of the Holocaust within the rest of the Canadian Jewish community. Since the 1990s, thousands of community members gather each year at Holocaust memorials throughout the country to mourn those who perished. Footage of these ceremonies must be incorporated into the video to show the passion in which the Holocaust is commemorated in the Canadian Jewish community. The film will also display that the Holocaust is taught in most Jewish schools under curriculums originally written by survivors.

The third section will describe the wave of Jewish immigration during the 1950s and 1960s to Canada from the Middle East and North Africa. Many of these immigrants were from French speaking countries, and were thus attracted to Francophone Quebec and Montreal. A photo of Sephardic Jewish immigrants from Morocco, namely the family of Hair Abenhaim, arriving in Montreal will introduce visitors to this new wave of immigration. The artifacts accompanying this photo will provide a glimpse of Sephardic Jewish culture. A Scroll of Esther, read on the Jewish holiday of Purim, made on 19th century parchment brought from the Jewish community of Algeria to Montreal by Robert Samson in 1964 will show that Jews from each part of the world have common traditions. As well, a
couscousier, used to make the Middle Eastern dish of couscous, will be featured as one of the things brought by Sephardic Jews to Canada from Morocco, Tunisia, and Algiers in the late 1950s. An amulet with a model of the Jewish symbol of a Menorah brought from Iran to Montreal in 1953 will be used to describe the once-thriving Jewish communities of the Middle-East that barely exist anymore, as well as the reasons for their abandonment, such as attacks of Jews by Arabs due to tensions with Israel. The final artifact in this section is a Hannukkiya from 1988 made by Ralph Sulton. Sulton was born in Fez, Morocco in 1930 and came to Montreal via Paris in 1969. This menorah represents his passion for making religious objects inspired from North African and Judeo-Spanish designs.

The fourth station in this gallery will tell the story of Canadian Jewry’s fight for the freedom of Soviet Jewry in the 1970s. This station will feature artifacts supporting a five-minute film about Soviet Jewry’s struggle to leave the USSR and the emergence of a Russian-Jewish community in Canada. The film will begin by portraying the Israeli victory in the 1967 Six-Day War as the cause for a showing of Zionist pride by Soviet Jews. The Soviet government led an antisemitic campaign against Jewish nationalism in Russia and refused to let Soviet Jews immigrate to Israel, leading to the nickname “refusenik” for these prisoners in their own homes. As a result, there was an outpouring of sympathy from North American Jews. Protests throughout Canada and the United States were held placing international pressure on the Soviet regime. Beginning in 1971 and increasingly throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Soviet Jews were permitted to emigrate. While most of them went to Israel and the United States, some ended up in Canada. The film will describe the difficulties the Soviet Jews had adapting, since their secular brand of Judaism was very different from the traditional Judaism of most Canadian Jews. As well, economic opportunities were difficult to attain for the newcomers in Canada, leading to frustration.
between them and the established Jewish community. Time was required to attain mutual understanding. Assertions of solidarity were one thing; reality was another. Artifacts will also be used to convey this story, such as the tea-glass holders made of silver filigree in 1983 by Soviet refusenik Mark Reitman. Reitman gave these to two members of Temple Israel of Ottawa whose congregation “adopted” him and helped him win his freedom.

Also featured will be a Star of David pendant made in Winnipeg around 1971 to protest the jailing of Soviet prisoner of conscience Vladimir Markman, who was later allowed to emigrate and settled in Winnipeg. A photo of the Canadian Jewish Congress Soviet Jewry Committee marching in Montreal during the 1970s will show Canadian protests to free Soviet Jews. As well, a Ketubbah (Jewish marriage contract) from 1987 made in Toronto depicts Jerusalem, representing the Zionist dream of Jews to return to Israel, and the Toronto city skyline and the Kremlin in Moscow, will tell the story of immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Canada. A small part of this section will be dedicated to telling the story of Canadian Jewish efforts to save Ethiopian Jews from war in the 1980s. An Ethiopian Jewish Lion of Judah clay sculpture acquired in 1985, and a reed basket collected at the same time from Ethiopia’s Gondar Province, a centre of fighting in the Ethiopian civil war, will show the desperate situation of Ethiopian Jews and the necessity for them to escape the country. A photo of the Ethiopian Jews of Gondar, photographed with Alan Rose, then-executive vice president of Canadian Jewish Congress, will portray the Black Jews, highlighting again the diversity within the Jewish community, something most visitors would be unaware of.

Another station, dedicated to Canadian Jewish contributions to Canadian business and culture will be present. A commitment to philanthropy will be shows by highlighting the stories of the Bronfmans, the Reichmanns, the Lebovics, the Belzbergs, the Tanenbaums
and others and their dedication to supporting initiatives within the Jewish community, such as social justice, Jewish education, and outreach. Similarly, Canadian Jewish cultural figures, such as Leonard Cohen, Seth Rogan, William Shatner, A.M. Klein, and Mordecai Richler will be featured displayed video clips of their movies, songs, poetry, and literature. These names are those that many visitors will expect to see, and thus the museum must display them.

Other stations will be constructed in the gallery to describe two major contemporary issues pertaining to the Jews of Canada. These include a rising intermarriage rate, and the question of Quebecois Nationalism and separation from Canada. Describing issues of intermarriage will be a large graph showing a rising level of intermarriage in Canada since the 1950s. It will be described that with greater integration by Jews in society, the number of marriages between Jews and non-Jews increases. The graph will also display the various communal responses to it, and will ask visitors, “Should Jews marry non-Jews?” It will then electronically collect their ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers and display their percentages to other visitors.

After each of these stations, the issue of Quebecois nationalism will be displayed through a large 3-dimensional graph showing the increasing Jewish community in most provinces and the decrease of Jews in Quebec in the post-war era. This graph will appear in the center of the gallery showing Jewish immigration to Canada from the 1700’s to the present. The graph will also be broken down by province to show the original rise of Quebec as the center of the Jewish community, but its replacement in the post-war era by Toronto, as well as the increasing populations of the Jewish communities in the Canadian west. As well, bilingual French and English labels for kosher foods will be presented to explain why Quebec has lost much of its Jewish community. The story will be described in
panels next to the large graph showing the historic Jewish fear of the rise of antisemitism in French-speaking regions. For visitors of non-Jewish background, a series of large colorful graphs nearby will show the number of immigrants to Canada from the 1700’s to the present to provide a comparison of Jewish immigration to the immigration of other minorities.

Finally, the exhibit will conclude with two major platforms for all the museum’s visitors to share their own personal experiences of being minorities in Canada. First a series of booths will allow visitors to enter and record their stories by prompting them to answer a series of predetermined questions. The stories will be selected by curators to be part of the museum’s final experience: The Canadian Cultural Mosaic. Approximately 25 feet long, and 12 feet high, the mosaic will be shaped to look like a large Canadian flag. Interspersed throughout the flag will be small television screens showing the stories from different Canadians of their experiences in this country. Depending on where visitors stand, they will be able to hear these personal stories of Canadian Muslims, Greeks, Italians, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Natives and other minorities. These stories will permit them to understand and appreciate the experiences that differ from the Canadian Jewish experience and help make up the Canadian cultural mosaic.

Key Bibliography

Roundtable Conference (December 17-18, 2003).


Part III

Additional Visitor Experiences
Museums are not just about their core exhibits. While the core’s primary responsibility is to provide a broad range of experiential learning opportunities to fulfill the museum’s mission, there are additional areas that museums can build and utilize in order to enhance their overall visitor experience. Thus, in addition to its core exhibit, it is strongly recommended that the Canadian Jewish Museum branch out into other areas that serve to provide knowledge and appreciation of the Jewish community and other minorities in Canada. These areas include, but are not limited to, temporary exhibits, a children’s exhibit, educational programming, special events, a library and archive, a theatre, a restaurant, and a gift shop.

In this section, entitled “Additional Visitor Experiences” I will briefly address the importance of providing these areas to enhance visitor experience and fulfill the learning goals and mission of the Canadian Jewish Museum.

**Temporary Exhibits**

Temporary exhibits are generally smaller than a museum’s core exhibit and are created with the intention of providing information about a particular theme touched on by the core exhibit. Thus, they enhance the visitor experience and help fulfill the museum’s mission. In the case of the Canadian Jewish Museum, temporary exhibits can be used in three ways. First, they can discuss topics relevant to Canadian Jewish history that have not been fully developed, or have gone unmentioned in the core exhibit. Some proposed topics for temporary exhibits that fall under this specific category include exhibits that look at the development of the Vancouver Jewish community, or the influence of the de Sola family dynasty in Montreal. Temporary exhibits can also be categorized by focusing their
attention on general Jewish history. For example, an exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls, or Jewish life in Medieval Spain are both acceptable topics that fall short of being directly relevant to Canadian Jewish history, but provide an understanding of topics pertaining to the culture and heritage of the Jewish people. A third sort of temporary exhibit could fall under the category of minorities in Canada. The Canadian Jewish Museum could therefore host exhibits on “The Muslim-Canadian Community” or “Chinatown: The Adaptation of the Chinese Community in Canada.” In this regard, the Canadian Jewish Museum can strive to attract and enlighten audiences of all ethnic backgrounds and seek not to alienate any potential audiences.

Children’s Exhibit

Since the 1960s, children’s exhibits have become more popular in North American museums. Children’s exhibits are generally aimed for children between pre-school age and 12 and have the ability to take them into a world of discovery. Using interactive participatory activities the museums seeks to fulfill its goal of providing some knowledge about its subject matter. The activities provided are not meant at all to lecture children about the context of the museum’s mission, but are meant to encourage children to explore, have fun, and meanwhile learn something new.

In the Canadian Jewish Museum’s children’s gallery, there should exist several activities based on themes relevant to Canadian Jewish history and minority cultures in Canada. Some ideas for this section include a racing station, where toy boats representing the British and the French navies can be raced by children across a pool of water to ‘Montreal,’ thus teaching kids about the tensions between the two nations in early Canadian
history. A dress-up station where children are able to wear the costumes of minority

groups in Canada could provide insight into the cultural clothing of various minorities and

an appreciation for their diversity and differences. As well, it can provide an excellent

photo opportunity for families to remind themselves of their enjoyable visit and return

soon. Other low-tech methods that can provide educational activities for children in a

museum include solving puzzles and match up games, or areas to look at picture books.

Older children may require high-tech and medium-tech activities, such as engaging in

multimedia or computer based programming, or even creating pottery or printmaking. But

such activities are costly and must be therefore be planned with great care and kept in

mind for future museum expansion projects.41

Educational Programming

As an educational institution, the Canadian Jewish Museum must have a department

responsible for educational programming. Working with a curatorial department, the

education department will be responsible developing and implementing virtually all of the

programs affiliated with the museum. Realizing that the museum seeks to engage all

audiences of all backgrounds, programming must be developed for targeted and diverse

audiences. Programs in museums generally involve tours of the core or temporary exhibits,

but can also be out-of-the-exhibit programming, such as lecture series, teacher-training

seminars, diversity training, and many others that may require the museum to have

classroom spaces. While it is beyond the scope of this concept plan to provide detailed

41 Ed. Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord. *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions* (Walnut Creek, CA, AltaMira

Press, 2002), 156.
examples of educational programming, I must recommend that the Canadian Jewish museum have programs that appeal to all ages and diverse audiences. These include programs for the general public, for Jewish audiences, for school groups of various ages, for the elderly, for families, for the disabled, and for VIP’s. Obviously, the center will create programs for Jewish visitors, but must have different ones for different ages. For example, the program created for third grade students from the local Jewish day school will provide programs that encourage children to use their five senses to think about the artifacts in relation to themselves and their Jewish culture. However a program for public school children must encourage students to think about the artifacts and narratives in relation to themselves and their own ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, a program for adults will encourage them to see the broad themes of the museum and understand its messages of minority contributions to Canada.

**Special Events**

Special events are generally one-time attractions or public programs that help fulfill the museum’s mission through means other than exhibit development and regular programming. As well, they may produce much-needed revenue for the institution. Special events hosted by the museum can take the form of concerts, plays, lectures, family days, gallery openings, film premiers, auctions, public ceremonies, and more. The Canadian Jewish Museum must position itself to host a variety of quality events as revolving around special dates in the Canadian and Jewish calendars. It would be most appropriate, for example, to host an emerging Israeli band on Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel’s Independence Day, or to have a Canadian politician speak about Jewish war veterans on Memorial Day. Other
events listed above are not required to be on a special date, but may take place on any
evening of the week. What is most important to remember in planning special events is
that they must contribute to the mission of the museum.

**Theatre**

The Canadian Jewish Museum must be equipped with a state-of-the-art theatre in
order to provide a venue for all of its special events. The theatre must provide
comfortable seating for an audience of 200-300 individuals. A stage must be provided for
live acts and a large screen should be present for film screenings. As well, private groups
could provide extra revenue for the Canadian Jewish Museum by renting out the theatre
when it is not in use.

**Library and Archives**

The library and archives of the Canadian Jewish Museum is intended to be a study
and research center for the public. It reflects a core museum value of engaging audiences
in lifelong learning and allows them access to information beyond the physical artifacts in
the museum’s collection. The library and archives should be an intimate, comfortable space
where visitors, students, and scholars can come to learn elements of Canadian Jewish
history, general Jewish studies, and ethnic studies, and should thus contain, but not limit
itself to, books, films, and CD’s pertaining to each of these disciplines. Workstations with
computers, scanners, photocopiers, and televisions wired for video and DVD must be
incorporated into the study space to permit visitors to privately review their material using
a variety of sources. In the age of digitization we are currently in, I recommend that the museum digitize its collection and place it online to provide high quality images of artifacts from the collection for visitors to review. This reduces the amount of security and eliminates the need for climate control, since no actual artifacts would be present. The ultimate goal of the library and archives is to be cozy and welcoming, as well as a serious study center.

Restaurant

Restaurants in museums are becoming more common as museums begin to understand the needs of the visitor. After touring the museum’s gallery and having been exposed to intense visual stimuli, visitors may find themselves tired, hungry, or in need of a break. They may be especially thinking about food if they chose to sample the food from the kosher kitchen in the “Canadian Judaism” gallery. The restaurant of the Canadian Jewish Museum should be a comfortable setting where families, couples, and other social groups can gather to eat and debrief on their experiences.

Regarding the food on the menu, the restaurant must be certified kosher, and provide vegetarian and vegan options so that no population is unable to eat there. The food itself can have a Jewish and ethnic theme, offering items such as matzah-ball soup, deli sandwiches, and even Indian curry to enhance the visitor experience. Although the visitors may simply want to relax and eat, the museum could use this moment as an opportunity to educate them about different ethnic foods, and even offer them a chance to taste them for a price. Thus, the educational experience in the restaurant provides visitors with a deeper
look into ethnic Canadian cuisine and provides a significant amount of revenue for the museum.

In addition, the Downtown Toronto area has very few places where Jews who keep kosher are able to purchase suitable food. The museum restaurant would fill this need and be provided with revenue from the many Jews who work in the downtown area.

**Gift Shop**

Museum gift shops are fantastic ways of providing additional revenue for the museum because they encourage visitors to take a piece of their museum visit home with them. There, they can attempt to relive the experience they had and be encouraged to return to the museum again. While visitors are unable to purchase the artifacts that touched them, the museum store can sell just about any souvenir, be it a catalogue, book, video, toy, ritual object, jewelry, clothing, or other item. That being said, just as all the museum’s additional visitors experiences must support the fulfillment of its mission, so must the gift shop. All items sold within it must have direct relevance to Canadian and Jewish history, or ethnic studies.

The location of the gift shop is the museum is crucial to its success. At the American Museum of Natural History, the dinosaur gallery ends in the gift shop. This allows the museum to capitalize on the experiences visitors had seconds earlier by enticing them to purchase products related to their visit. I would recommend that there be two entrances to the gift shop – one directly from the final gallery and the other directly from the lobby. In this way, the museum can direct as much human traffic as possible from
those who have gone through the core exhibit and those who are at the museum for other non-exhibit related purposes.

Key Bibliography


Conclusion

In this concept plan, the Canadian Jewish Museum has been envisioned as a broadly accessible educational cultural center. While it highlights the story of the Jewish people in Canada, the museum intends to be more than a Jewish institution. It hopes to become a center that Canadian ethnic and religious minority groups will embrace, and has therefore designed a core exhibit that examines several common themes in the lives of all of these groups. The exhibit’s predominant themes are the simultaneous attempts of minorities to adapt and preserve their heritage in a new home, their struggles for new economic opportunities, the adversity they faced lobbying for civil rights and equal treatment under the law, and their relationship with their traditional homeland. Each of these common themes of the experiences of minorities within the context of Canadian history has been displayed using artifacts, audio-visual presentations, interactive participatory activities, and technological aids. These techniques offer visitors a change to enjoy their visit by engaging with the exhibit of several intellectual and emotional levels. Not only do questions in the galleries place visitors into the same mindset as minorities encountering Canadian society, but they provoke empathy among visitors showing them that while each Canadian minority story is unique, similar elements bring them all together on a common ground. Thus, the Canadian Jewish Museum can serve as a platform for respectful intercultural dialogue among the members of Canadian society.

The core exhibition and additional visitor experiences of the Canadian Jewish Museum, “Strong and Free,” have been planned to serve the visitors’ needs. By creating an institution that places what the visitor wants at the top of its priority list, the museum can become a pleasurable leisure experience, as opposed to a primarily didactic lesson in ethnic
studies. As leisure experiences, museums in general must strive to be welcoming, comfortable, and engaging, and this is precisely the kind of museum this one plans to be. The Canadian Jewish Museum addresses the needs of frequent visitors, those who find pleasure in learning new things and being challenged by new experiences by having its exhibit be an excellent provider of relevant information telling the story of Canadian Jewish history. However, as noted above, frequent visitors only make up 14 percent of potential museum audiences. Museums must reach beyond this frequent, natural audience. The Canadian Jewish Museum also seeks to attract the 86 percent of society who generally do not view museums as enjoyable social experiences or those who only visit for special events. These non-visiting and occasionally visiting populations, which are generally families and social groups, have different needs than those of frequent visitors. They need powerful and meaningful experiences for all ages and backgrounds. They need activities that are multi-sensory and participatory to allow for educational exhibits to stimulate the mind. They need to allow visitors to explore and discover new things at their own pace. They need to make visitors feel that their physical needs are being addressed. But most of all, the museum must allow visitors to enjoy their trip to the museum while fulfilling its mission.

While this concept plan for the Canadian Jewish Museum details its mission, learning experience, core exhibition galleries, and additional visitor experiences, there are some shortcomings. In order to carry out this plan, there is still need for several tasks. Architectural blueprints must be designed to construct the museum. A cost-benefit analysis must be conducted to appraise the viability of this plan. An annual fund and a budget must be implemented to supply financial resources for the institution. A staffing plan must be introduced to provide leadership for the museum and an outline of the departments it needs to function as a nonprofit. Also, marketing and communications materials would
need to be produces to advertise the exhibit, not to mention online tools that allow
visitors to experience the museum in various ways from a distance. As well, an proper
qualitative and quantitative evaluation system must be established in order to improve the
services the museum provides. There are just some of the items that must be carried out
to bring the Canadian Jewish Museum to life. Still, this concept plan represents the
institutional backbone for the Canadian Jewish Museum and may be used to provide vision
to the museum’s leadership and supporters.

In conclusion, Canada’s multicultural society can only benefit from the introduction
of a platform to promote understanding and appreciation for the diversity of this country
and the experiences of minority groups within it. The Canadian Jewish Museum, by
highlighting the experiences of the Jews in Canada and encouraging visitors of all ages and
backgrounds to find their places within it and share their personal stories, becomes this
platform. In this way, the Canadian Jewish Museum will one day serve to enhance the
relationships between Canada’s ethnic and religious groups.
Annotated Bibliography

  - Part of a series of six major demographic reports on the Jewish community of Toronto from 2001. It is particularly useful in gathering information about Jewish residential, ritual, and identification patterns.
  - Offers major guidelines and expert advice on how to manage nonprofit organizations effectively. Drucker gives examples and explanations of mission, leadership, resources, marketing, goals, people development, and decision-making.
  - Lankmark report issued by the American Association of Museums on the educational role of museums. It asserts that education is the primary responsibility of a museum as a public service institution.
  - Official City of Toronto website. It contains valuable statistics on the city and its ethnic and cultural diversity.
  - The official website of the Japanese American National Museum. It contains valuable information on the museum’s mission, exhibits, and educational programming.
  - Offers valuable insight into the generation of museum mission statements, audience analyses, educational programming and other museum services. Contains mission statements from dozens of American museums.
  - Article analyzes reasons for visiting museums in terms of usage of leisure time. Divides visitors into visitation rates and offers methods to improve the visitor experience for those who do not visit museums often.
  - Collection of twenty-nine essays discussing various ways to make museums more relevant in an environment of shrinking resources.
• Neil Kotler and Philip Kotler, “Can Museums Be All Things to All People? Missions, Goals, and Marketing’s Role” in Museum Management and Curatorship (Vol. 18, No. 3, 2000).
  o Article discusses three strategies for museums to reach new audiences including improving the museum-going experience, serving the community, and market repositioning toward entertainment.
• American Association of Museums, Museums for a New Century (Washington, DC, American Association of Museums, 1984).
  o Major publication of the American Association of Museums discussing how business principles can be applied to the museum sphere and engage a new clientele of museum visitors.
  o Discusses how individuals use artifacts in museums to make personal meaning out of objects and how these meanings can often differ from the intended message the museum seeks to produce.
  o Uses “constitutional form” to highlight eleven principles museums must take into account in order to properly address the needs of visitors in museums.
  o Book of artifacts and labels published from a popular exhibit on Canadian Jewish History in 1990 at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Many of the artifacts in this concept plan were borrowed from this book.
  o Article discussing the ways people learn with different media, including books, audio, movies, and computers. This is particularly valuable for discussions of pedagogy in museums.
  o Publication of Canadian Jewish history to accompany exhibit of the same name. Book contains many pictures and archival material used as artifacts in this concept plan. Provides detailed overview of 200 years of Jews in Canada.
  o Encyclopedia of women in Jewish history. Particularly useful in providing primary sources for Esther Brandeau’s experience with French Catholic authorities in New France in the 1700s.
• Gerald Tulchisky, Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey (Toronto, ON, University of Toronto Press, 2008).
  o Most recent full overview of Canadian Jewish history from its earliest days in New France to the present. Well-written and divided thematically and chronologically making it easy to use as a standard textbook on the subject.
• Legal document outlining freedoms and rights of all Canadians. Brought about after the provinces established their own charters under the leadership and influence of many Canadian Jews and other minorities.

  o Manual by museum consultants outlining basic components of exhibition planning, design, construction, and more. Also notable is its chapters on children’s exhibits, study spaces, gift shops, and restaurants in museums.


  o This book describes the earliest German-Jewish settlers in Toronto, their efforts to organize a community with Jewish education, social services, and religious authority. Discusses important community leaders, through the lens of the Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto’s first synagogue. Also discusses Eastern European immigration to Toronto and their adaptation struggles.

  o This book discusses the early Jewish settlers of Winnipeg. Emphasizes the context of Winnipeg within the Canadian colonization effort and Jewish involvement with the expeditions of the fur trade and their struggle for survival mainly between 1870 and 1880.

  o Full history of the Jewish community of Winnipeg from its origins until the present. Uses a treasury of photos and archival material to illustrate the vibrancy of the Winnipeg Jews and the community’s change and decline.

  o Series of short articles discussing previously unknown dimensions of conflict within the Orthodox Jewish community in Montreal. Rivalries between leading rabbis, wars over the dietary status of meat products, and failed attempts to unite opposing forces are detailed.

  o This is the story of the evolution on this Ashkenazi Montreal synagogue from its earliest origins in the 1800s until the present. Outlines communal tensions, leadership, and politics.
• Abella, Irving and Harold Troper. None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948 (Toronto, ON, Key Porter Books Limited, 1983).
  o Details high-ranking individuals in the Immigration Branch of the federal government, their resistance to Jewish immigration, and covert antisemitic behavior. Also outlines the response of Canadian Jewish leaders to Nazism’s destruction of European Jewry.

  o Catalogue of artifacts from exhibit of the same name. Artifacts are divided into categories in which antisemitism affected the Canadian Jewish community. Many of the artifacts have been incorporated into this concept plan.

• Betcherman, Lita-Rose. The Swastika and the Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties (Toronto, ON, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975).
  o Discusses the influence of Nazism in Canada during the 1930s and its effects on Jews and other Canadians.

• Azrieli, David J. Rekindling the Torch: The Story of Canadian Zionism (Toronto, ON, Key Porter Books Limited, 2008).
  o Outlines Canadian Jewish support for Zionism and Israel since the 1880s until the present.

  o Describes the emergence of a cleavage between Canadian Jews and Holocaust survivors. Canadian Jews were unprepared to deal with the new immigrants, mistakenly believing they were no different from previous waves of Jewish immigrants. Discusses how survivors established their own circles and rarely spoke of their experiences with anyone outside these circles.

  o This article notes the rising intermarriage rate between Jews and non-Jews in Canada. It appears that the rate is approaching the high rate of the American Jewish community and the community is taking preventative action.

  o Highlights frustration of Separatist politicians with the Montreal Jewish community and the increasing discomfort of Jews in Quebec. Events such as the backlash from the 1980 referendum on separation and “Matzagate” (problem between French language authorities and Jewish community over absence of French labels on Passover food products imported from America) are discussed as factors in the movement of Jews out of Quebec.

  o Highlights the transition of the Canadian Jewish leadership from Montreal to Toronto.
Appendix

Artifacts for the Canadian Jewish Museum

CMC = A Coat of Many Colours
AFCMC = Artifacts From “A Coat of Many Colours”
TCTH = Too Close to Home

1. Between Two Origins
   a. Reproduction of “Carte du Canada ou de la Nouvelle France, & des
      Découvertes qui y ont été Faites” – Lisle, Guillaume de. 1708 (Map of New
      France/Canada) http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps4423.html
   b. “Capture of “The Prudent” and “Bienfaisant” in Louisbourg Harbour, 26th
      July 1758, by boats… Admiral Sir E. Boscawen; Date unknown, Artist
      Richard Paton. Both ships were owned by Abraham Grädis (at the Royal
      Ontario Museum)
   c. Portrait of Cardinal Richelieu, 1637, by Philippe de Champaigne Document
      from King William III offering Labrador to Joseph de la Penha (CMC, 6)
   d. Portrait of Alexander Schomberg, 1763, William Hogarth, from the National
      Maritime Museum,
   e. “The Death of General Wolfe,” by Benjamin West, 1776, (at the Royal
      Ontario Museum)

2. Equality and Adaptation
   a. Adversity and Civil Rights
      i. Cup and Saucer, (AFCMC, 35)
      ii. Land Request, March 9, 1803, from Moses David, (CMC, 7)
      iii. Portrait of Samuel Hart, 1795, (CMC, 9)
      iv. Portrait of George Benjamin, 1859, oil on canvas, by William Sawyer,
         (CMC) 129
      v. Registry of Oaths, (AFCMC, 130)
      vi. Portrait of Ezekiel Hart, (CMC, 19)
      vii. Letter, 1808, written by Ezekiel Hart to James Phillips and Sons,
          (CMC, 20)
      viii. Speech of Louis-Joseph Papineau, Leader of the House of Assembly
           of Lower Canada, (CMC, 32)
      ix. Petition, January 31st, 1831, from Samuel Hart to the House of
          Assembly of Lower Canada, (CMC, 27)
      x. 1831 Bill of Rights, March 31st, “An act to declare persons professing
          the Jewish faith intitled to all the rights and privileges of the other
          subject of His Majesty in this Province,” (CMC, 22)
      xi. Newspaper Article, Montreal, 1837, (CMC, 35)
   b. Making a Living
      i. Fur Trader Artifacts, (AFCMC, 49-50)
      ii. Fur Trading License, 1772, (CMC, 11)
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3. East Comes West: The Era of Mass Immigration
   a. The Government and the Immigrants
      iii. Nathans and Hart Price Current, 1752, (AFCMC, 53)
      iv. Gold Panning Tools, ca. 1860,
         i. Eye-Testing Kit, ca. 1860, – (AFCMC, 65)
         ii. Picture of The Rossin Hotel, (AFCMC, 53)
      iii. Picture of The Hays Hotel and Theatre, Montreal, (AFCMC, 53)
      iv. Banknotes, issued by Hart's Bank, 1835 (CMC, 36)
      v. Banknote, 1874, (AFCMC, 54)
      vi. Belgian Order of the Crown, late 19th century, (AFCMC, 54)
      vii. Pulley, Block and Tackle, Ceramic Teapot, Photograph of Hannah Hyman Levine, General Store Tokens, (AFCMC, 56-57)
      viii. Picture of King Street East, Toronto, 1856.
      ix. Advertisement, 1890, for Louis Green’s tobacco store, in Saint John, New Brunswick.
      x. Picture of Isaac Oppenheimer, ca. 1869,
      xi. Advertisement, ca. 1850, Abraham Hoffman’s Dry Goods, Staple, and Fancy Articles Wholesale and Retail, Victoria, Vancouver Island.
      xii. Picture of Simon Leiser Wholesale Grocer, ca. 1880, British Columbia.
      xiii. Picture of Zebulon Franks, in his Vancouver hardware store, 1902.

   c. Keeping the Faith
      i. Portrait of Aaron Hart, 1724-1800,
      ii. Hebrew Holiday Prayer Book, ca. 1780, (AFCMC, 129)
      iii. Wax Impression of the Family seal of George Benjamin’s “Hacohen” family, ca. 1840. (AFCMC, 129)
      v. Embroidered Sampler, 1771, Quebec, depicting the Ten Commandments in English, made by 8-year-old Elizabeth Judah.
      vi. Picture of Shearith Israel, 1777,
      vii. Picture of Henry Joseph’s House, Berthier, Quebec, 1775-1832.
      ix. Portrait of Rabbi Alexander Abraham de Sola,
      x. Invitation, 1897, to the opening of the new Holy Blossom Temple on Bond Street.
      xi. Picture, 1897, The Holy Blossom Temple on Bond Street.
      xii. Drawing, Yom Kippur prayers at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal, ca. 1860.
      xiii. Picture of Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue,
      xiv. Picture of Victoria’s Jewish Cemetery
      xv. Picture of Morning Prayers, ca 1927, at Schara Tzedeck Synagogue in Vancouver.
      xvi. Act, 1864, incorporating the Congregation Emanuel, Victoria
i. Letter, June 2, 1882, describing the horrors of the pogroms in Russia.
ii. Canadian National Railway Poster, advertising for harvesters in
Manitoba, 1925, (AFCMC, 27)
iii. Government Notice to Farmers, 1892, guaranteeing that, "no Jews
will be brought out [to Winnipeg] under this scheme."
iv. Receipt for Money sent to Poland, 1927, (AFCMC, 27)
v. Fragment of Tefillin, (AFCMC, 31)
vi. “To Let” Sign, in Yiddish and English, from Rubin’s Stationary,
Montreal, (AFCMC, 35)
vii. Night School Certificate, 1927, (AFCMC, 63)
b. To the Prairies
   i. Brass Candle Holders, (AFCMC, 19)
   ii. Embroidery Pattern Book, brought from Russia to Rumsey, Alberta,
early 20th century, (AFCMC, 22)
   iii. Brass Coffee Grinder, brought from Romania to Lipton,
Saskatchewan, in 1901, (AFCMC, 23)
   iv. Graduation Certificate, from the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural
School, 1907, (AFCMC, 30)
   v. Signboard, early 20th century, from the Hirsch farming colony,
Saskatchewan – (AFCMC, 36)
   vi. Land Title Deeds, Saskatchewan, 1907-1910, (AFCMC, 38)
   vii. Farmer’s Account Book and Ledger, 1924-1929, (AFCMC, 39-40)
   viii. Branding Iron, (AFCMC, 40)
   ix. Picture of Abraham Klenman, reading a Yiddish newspaper in
Wapella, ca. 1915, and Mrs. Klenman in her kitchen.
   x. Picture of Edel Brotman, the first Rabbi of Wapella, with his wife,
Leah
   xi. Picture of the Kalman Isman Family Homestead, Wapella,
   xii. Baron de Hirsch Institute, Montreal, headquarters of the Jewish
Colonization Association of Canada.
   xiii. Pamphlet, issued by the Jewish Colonization Association in the
1910’s: titled in Yiddish, “Important questions and right answers
for those that aspire to settle on the land in Canada.”
   xiv. Photographs, 1906-1928, showing farming, Jewish education, leisure,
and a Jewish wedding in Lipton Saskatchewan and Sonnenfeld
colony.
c. To the Cities
   i. Advertising Sign, (AFCMC, 58)
   ii. Photograph of Immigrants Arriving at Bender, Manitoba – (AFCMC,
40)
   iii. Fur Trader Outfit, 1920s and 1930s, (AFCMC, 51)
   iv. Furrier artifacts, (AFCMC, 63-64)
   v. Medical Bag, 1920-1930, used by Dr. Iser Steinman, Kamsack,
   vi. Silver Torah Finials, late 19th century, (AFCMC, 21)
   vii. Kiddush Cups, silver, brought from the Ukraine to Winnipeg in 1905
- (AFCMC, 22)
viii. Samovar, brought from Russia to Toronto, ca. 1925, silver –  
(AFCMC, 22)
ix. Brass Mortar and Pestle, brought from Russia to Winnipeg early 20th  
century, (AFCMC, 24)
x. Wedding Shoes, 1899, brought from Kiev to Winnipeg, (AFCMC,  
24)
x. Wicker Trunk, brought from Russia to Winnipeg early 20th century,  
(AFCMC, 24)
xii. Tailor’s Tools, (AFCMC, 62.)
xiii. Picture, ca. 1920, Morning prayers in the chapel of the Winnipeg  
Jewish Old Folks Home
xiv. Photo, early 20th century, Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Lithwick in front of  
their Byward Market store, Ottawa.
 xv. Photo, Kensington Avenue, on market day, Toronto, 1924
xvi. Photo, Hyman’s Book and Art Shop, Toronto, 1925
xvii. Photo, Cast of the Yiddish Theatre at the Queens Theatre in  
Winnipeg performing a benefit for the orphanage, 1918.
xviii. Poster, in Yiddish for a production at the Queens Theatre,  
Winnipeg.
xix. Photo, Toronto Jewish Old Folks Home, early 20th century
xx. Photo, Workers leaving the headquarters of the Dressmakers Joint  
Council, Industrial Union of Needle Trades Workers, 1932.
xxi. Photo, General Strike Committee, International Ladies Garment  
Workers’ Union, Toronto, 1919
xxii. Photo, Orthodox Jewish rag picker, 1911. Shows poverty of  
Toronto Jews who had difficulty getting jobs because they would  
not work on the Sabbath.
xxiii. Poster, Yiddish, announcing Emma Goldman lecture at the Labour  
Lyceum, Toronto, 1937, organized by the Workmen’s circle.

4. Canadian Judaism
   a. The Synagogue
      i. Silver Hanukkiyah, 1877, given to Beth Tzedec Synagogue, Toronto,  
by Menchem Mendel Gebritig in memory of his father, mother  
and brother – (AFCMC, 34)
      ii. Torah Crown, 1932, silver, Toronto – (AFCMC, 35)
      iii. Torah Ark, 1923, wood, cloth, Congregation Sons of Israel, Glace  
Bay, NS – (AFCMC, 70)
      iv. Ner Tamid, mid-20th century, metal glass, Congregation Sons of  
Israel, Glace Bay, NS (AFCMC, 32)
      v. Photo of Interior of Sha’ar Hashomayim Synagogue, (AFCMC, 74)
      vi. Torah Scroll, pre-1768, deerskin parchment, from Canada’s first  
synagogue, Shearith Israel – (AFCMC, 75)
      vii. Torah Pointer, Silver – (AFCMC, 76)
      viii. Prayer Books, 1785, from the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of  
London, England – (AFCMC, 76)
      ix. Modern Prayer Books (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform)
b. Holidays
   i. Jewish New Year Card, 1920-30, (AFCMC, 85)
   ii. Hanukkiyah, one Ashkenazi, the other Sephardic.
   iii. Shofar, ca. 1910, (AFCMC, 86)
   iv. Gragger, ca. 1975, (AFCMC, 90)
   v. Megillah
   vi. Seder Plate
   vii. Matzah Bag, 1920, Calgary, (AFCMC, 93)
   viii. Kiddush Cup, Silver, Toronto, ca. 1855, made by Judah George
         Joseph, silversmith, watchmaker, and optician – (AFCMC, 94)
   ix. Havdallah set
   x. Candlesticks
   xi. Metal Dreidel, Calgary, ca. 1960, (AFCMC, 98)
   xii. Wooden Dreidel, Congregation Beth Israel, Vancouver, BC, (AFCMC, 100)

c. Ritual Ceremonies
   i. Circumcision gown and bonnet, 1919, Montreal – (AFCMC, 78)
   ii. Whetstone, 1920s, Edmonton, Alberta, used to sharpen
       circumcision knives – (AFCMC, 80)
   iii. Circumcision Knife, Shield, Scissors, Forceps, used by Rabbi Polonksy,
       Winnipeg, 1930s to 1960s – (AFCMC, 80)
   iv. Circumcision Knife, 1901, Glace Bay, NS – (AFCMC, 80)
   vi. Huppah, 1864, Temple Emanu-El, Victoria, VC, commissioned by the
       Hebrew Ladies of Victoria in 1863. Made in England from silk
       imported from China, arrived in Victoria in 1864 (AFCMC, 82)
   vii. Ketubah
   viii. Grave Marker, 1907, wooden headstone of young girl from Lipton,
        Saskatchewan, with poem carved into it by her father – (AFCMC, 83)
   ix. Burial Table, ca. 1912, New Glasgow, NS, wood – (AFCMC, 84)

d. Kosher Food
   i. Rubber Stamps, 1966, from Medalta Potteries of Medicine Hat,
      Alberta, for stamping dishes as kosher for meat or dairy products,
      (AFCMC, 96)
   ii. “The Shoichet”, lithograph, 1949, by Henry Orenstein (b. 1918),
       Halifax, NS – (AFCMC, 96)
   iii. Hand-forged Koshering Knives and Kitchen Utensils, early 20th
       century, Turner Valley, Alberta – (AFCMC, 97)
   iv. Bowl and Chopper, for preparing gefilte fish, early 20th century,
       Montreal – (AFCMC, 98)

5. Facing Challenges
   a. Antisemitism
      i. Restrictive Covenant, ca. 1931, (AFCMC, 45)
      ii. Portrait, Goldwin Smith,
iii. Reproductions of Signs, "Jews Not Allowed," "No Jews or Dogs Allowed," "Only Gentile Business Solicited"

iv. Antisemitic Cartoons, from Le Goglu, 1930, 1932, 1933, 1939, Montreal, (TCTH)

v. Antisemitic Posters, Canada, ca. 1930s, used to support some of the many boycotts of Jewish businesses. (THTC)

b. The Nazi Threat

i. Poster, Key with Swastika, used as a symbol of antisemitism in Quebec in the 1930s (TCTH)

ii. Newspaper, “Toronto Swastikas Arouse Jews,” Toronto’s swastika club terrorized a Jewish baseball team, leading to the Christie Pits Riot, August, 1933 (TCTH)

iii. Photo, Canadian Jewish Congress reassembled in 1933. They hoped to lobby the government to allow more Jewish immigration, mount campaigns to fight the Nazis abroad, urge the British to open Palestine to refugees, and find ways to fund religious and social programs in Canada. (TCTH)


v. Photo, Nazi uniforms to be used in Canada, 1938, Montreal. (TCTH)

vi. Newspapers, Antisemitic English literature in Canada in the 1930’s. (TCTH)

vii. Photo, Nazis at a meeting in Canada at an unknown location in the 1930s (TCTH)

viii. Photo, Synagogue defaced with swastikas, St. Marguerite (Lac Casson), Quebec, 1938 (TCTH)


x. Photo, Toronto Daily Star, August 8, 1933, two members of the Swastika Club, who were involved in the Christie Pits riot. (TCTH)

xi. Photo, “Hail Hitler” painted on the roof of a building

xii. Photo, the championship Jewish baseball team that was attacked in the Christie Pits riot, 1933. (TCTH)


xiv. Photo, members of the National Unity Party shown in the Nazi salute. Winnipeg. (TCTH)

c. “None is Too Many”

i. Family Bible, Brought by John Hirsch, who arrived in Canada in 1947 with the first group of Jewish orphans to be settled here after WWII. His parents and younger brother had been killed by the Nazis – (AFCMC, 19)

ii. Torah Cover, ca. 1945-50, made in a Displaced Persons camps in Europe and presented by the German-Jewish community of
Montreal to the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1950, on behalf of its efforts to settle Jewish orphans in Canada after the Second World War – (AFCMC, 120)

iii. Photograph and Diary Entry, from Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who refused to let Jewish refugees into Canada (TCTH)

iv. Letter, from FC Blair, Canadian Immigration Minister saying “the poor Jew all over the world seems very unpopular… it would be far better if we more often told them frankly why many of them are unpopular. If they would divest themselves of certain of their habits, I am sure they would be just as popular in Canada as our Scandinavians.” Ottawa, September 13, 1938. (TCTH)

v. Picture, The SS St. Louis, Canada was the last place it docked before being sent back to Europe. (TCTH)

vi. Telegram, from prominent Canadians to the Prime Minister asking to let the St. Louis’ refugees enter Canada. There was no response. Toronto, June 7, 1939. (TCTH)

vii. Letter, from Imre Lob, a Hungarian Jew, pleading for entry into Canada, June 22, 1939. (TCTH)

d. The World War I and II

i. First World War Hat, of the Jewish Branch of the Canadian Legion, Toronto, 1914-1918 – (AFCMC, 125)

ii. Photo, Jewish Reinforcement Draft Company, Montreal, 1917.

iii. Recruitment Sign, for the Jewish Battalion, Winnipeg, 1917.

iv. Photo, Saskatchewan and Alberta Conference for the Relief of War Orphans, 1918. “Jews! Save our future generation!” reads the banner in Yiddish.

v. Photo, First group of Ukrainian Jewish war orphans to be granted permission to enter Canada, 1921.

vi. Recruitment Poster, Second World War recruiting poster published by the Canadian Jewish Congress, Toronto.

vii. Kippah, ca. 1940, belonged to Rabbi Samuel Cass, Senior Jewish Chaplain, Canadian Army, 1942-46 – (AFCMC, 67)

viii. Chaplain’s Badge, belonging to Rabbi Samuel Cass, a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1942 to 1946 – (AFCMC, 125)

ix. Jewish War Veterans’ Association Hat, ca. 1950, Vancouver, BC – (AFCMC, 125)

x. Pin, Crest and Tile, ca. 1975, of the Jewish War Veterans’ Association of Canada, Calgary, Alberta – (AFCMC, 126)

xi. Photograph, from a Winnipeg newspaper of twelve grandchildren serving in the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War – (AFCMC, 126)

xii. Prayer Books, 1940, for Jewish servicemen in the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War – (AFCMC, 126)

xiii. Observer and Air Gunner’s Log, 1942, belonging to Clive Finkelstein, Jewish pilot with the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War – (AFCMC, 126)
xiv. RCAF Insignia, 1939-45, Winnipeg, Manitoba, belonged to Clive Finkelstein, one of them is the Distinguished Flying Cross. (AFCMC, 127)

xv. Photograph, of Rabbi Samuel Cass leading servicemen in prayer at a synagogue in Halifax during the Second World War (AFCMC, 127)

xvi. Jewish War Heroes, 1944, a series of comic books published by the Canadian Jewish Congress during the Second World War (AFCMC, 128)

xvii. WWII Uniform, of Rabbi David Monson, Canadian Chaplain

xviii. Medals, of Gunner Norman Gilboord of the Canadian Armed Forces, Jewish soldier who lost his right arm fighting Nazis in Holland.

xix. Photo, Flight Lieutenant Sydney Shulemson, WWII

xx. Photo, Jewish women sewing for the war effort, 1942, Ottawa.

xxi. Photo, Passover Seder for Canadian Jewish servicemen, held in the Maritimes.

xxii. Honor Roll Poster, official list of names of The Jewish Community of Vancouver World War II Honor Roll


xxiv. Radio Address, by Canadian Ambassador George Vanier about the horrors he saw at Buchenwald. “How deaf we were” to the Jewish cries for help!

xxv. News Release, Announcement of H.M. Caiserman’s journey to Poland to survey postwar conditions, December 1945, he was general secretary of Canadian Jewish Congress and the first representative of the Canadian Jewish community to enter Poland.

xxvi. Pamphlet, issued by the Canadian Jewish Congress as part of their campaign for overseas Jewish relief. “What about their Passover in 1946?”

xxvii. Photo, Immigrants sponsored by the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society arrive in Halifax

6. Heart in the Homeland: Canadian Jews and Israel

a. Tapestry, given to Ray Rose of Victoria, BC in 1933 as a gift from a Christian medical missionary who had worked in Palestine and acquired it there. It depicts Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, in Jerusalem – (AFCMC, 81

b. Pushke #1, charity box, early 20th century, Winnipeg, Manitoba – (AFCMC, 123)

c. Newspaper, Canadian Jewish Times, 1912, published on the 8th anniversary of the death of Dr. Theodore Herzl, “His name shall never die in our hearts and in the hearts of our children.”

d. Portrait, Rabbi Clarence de Sola, son of Rabbi Abraham de Sola, and first head of Canadian Federation of Zionist Societies.

e. Photo, Parade in Winnipeg for Clarence de Sola’s visit, 1918.
f. Photo, Balfour Day Parade in support of the Balfour Declaration, 1918, Regina

g. Photo, Canadian Zionist Convention, Ottawa, July 1912

h. Photo, Labour Zionist Organization headquarters in Montreal, May 14th, 1948, the day Israel was declared a state.

i. Pushke #2, 1950s and 1960s, distributed to many Jewish homes by the Jewish National Fund to help raise money for land development in Israel – (AFCMC, 123)

j. Balfour Day Flag, 1917, Ottawa, flag carried in a parade in Ottawa in 1917 celebrating the Balfour declaration, which expressed support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This flag became the Israeli flag upon the founding of the state in 1948 – (AFCMC, 124)

7. Canadian Jews and Multiculturalism
   a. Breaking Down Barriers
      i. Lawyer’s Nameplate, ca. 1950, Winnipeg, the Honourable Saul Cherniak, practiced law with his father and was elected to Manitoba’s Legislative Assembly in 1962, as a member of the New Democratic Party, and when the NDP formed the government in 1969, he became a cabinet minister. This nameplate was from his law practice – (AFCMC, 65)
      
      ii. Photo, Bora Laskin, University of Toronto Law Professor, became Canadian Supreme Court Justice in the 1970s and Ontario Chief of Justice in 1975. Law Library at University of Toronto named after him. Swastikas were spray-painted on it in the early 2000s.

      iii. Photo, David Croll, Canada’s first Jewish Senator, 1945

      iv. Photo, Herb Grey, Canada’s first Jewish Federal Cabinet Minister, 1969

      v. Photo, David Lewis, founder of the CCF and Leader of the New Democratic Party in the 1960s, from Montreal.


      vii. Photo, Nathan Philips Square, Toronto’s first Jewish mayor, 1950s, the New Toronto City Hall stands on the square that bares his name.

     viii. Photo, Irwin Cotler, former Canadian Jewish Minister of Justice.

b. Jewish Immigration
   i. Scroll of Esther, 19th century parchment, brought from the Jewish community of Algeria to Montreal in 1964 by Canadian Robert Samson – (AFCMC, 21)

   ii. Photo, Sephardic Jewish immigrants arriving from Morocco, Haim Abenhaim and family, arriving in Montreal, 1960

   iii. Couscousier, cooking utensils similar to this couscousier were brought by Sephardic Jews immigrating to Canada from Morocco, Tunisia, and Algiers in the late 1950s. (AFCMC, 23)

   iv. Amulet, with model of menorah attached, brought from Iran to Montreal in 1953 – (AFCMC, 25)
v. Ketubbah, 1987, Toronto, Jewish marriage contract. Given to the artist’s parents on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary. Shows pictures of Jerusalem, Moscow, and Toronto, depicting the coming together of Jews from different lands – (AFCMC, 83)


vii. Tea-Glass Holders, silver filigree, In about 1983, Soviet refusenik Mark Reitman gave this pair of tea-glass holders to two members of Temple Israel of Ottawa, whose congregation “adopted” him and helped him win his freedom – (AFCMC, 120)

viii. Photo, Canadian Jewish Congress Soviet Jewry Committee marches in Montreal.

ix. Lion of Judah, a clay sculpture acquired ca. 1985 from a Jewish community in Ethiopia – (AFCMC, 121)

tax. Star of David Pendant, ca 1970, Pendant made in Winnipeg to protest jailing of Soviet prisoner of conscience Vladimir Markman, who was later allowed to emigrate and settled in Winnipeg – (AFCMC, 122)

xi. Reed Basket, collected ca. 1985, from Gondar Province, Ethiopia, a centre of fighting in the civil war. – (AFCMC, 122)

xii. Jews of Gondar Province, Ethiopia, photographed with Alan Rose, executive vice-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, on his visit there in 1985 – (AFCMC, 122)

c. Quebec Nationalism
   i. Food Products with English and French Labels

d. The Survivors’ Impact
   i. Photos, Holocaust Memorials in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton