

The Leo V. Berger Immigrant's Trunk

From Peddler's Cart to American Artist

The Story of Saul Bernstein



An outreach program of
The Jewish Museum of Maryland
15 Lloyd Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410-732-6400

www.jewishmuseummd.org

The Leo V. Berger Immigrant's Trunk Project Team

Project Directors:

Deborah Cardin, Director of Education, Jewish Museum of Maryland
Leah Wolfson, Education and Programming Coordinator, Jewish Museum of Maryland
Lauren Silberman, Education and Programming Assistant, Jewish Museum of Maryland

Research:

Dean Krimmel, Research Consultant
Willa Banks, Intern, Jewish Museum of Maryland
Lucy Hirsch, Intern, Jewish Museum of Maryland
Deb Weiner, Research Historian, Jewish Museum of Maryland

Archives Research and Photograph Reproductions:

Robin Waldman, Archivist, Jewish Museum of Maryland
Erin Titter, Archivist, Jewish Museum of Maryland

Living History Project:

"Saul Bernstein" script by Sharie Valerio with additional research and writing assistance from Tim King and Harriet Lynn
Performed by Tim King
Produced and directed by Harriet Lynn, Heritage Theater Artists' Consortium
Costumes, Kostumes by Kathryn

"Ida Rehr" script by Sharie Valerio with additional research and writing assistance from Tamara Johnson and Harriet Lynn
Performed by Tamara Johnson
Produced and directed by Harriet Lynn, Heritage Theater Artists' Consortium
Costumes, Kostumes by Kathryn

Many people and organizations were instrumental in assisting with this project. The JMM is especially grateful to the Maryland Historical Society for sharing its traveling trunk program with us.

This program was made possible with generous support from the Leo V. Berger Fund, the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation for the Enrichment of Jewish Education of THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, the Bank of America Foundation, and the Leo V. Berger Fund.

The Jewish Museum of Maryland is an agency of THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore.

To reach the Education Department of the Jewish Museum of Maryland, please call (410) 732-6400 ext. 36 or 29.

Table of Contents

Note to Teachers	4
Suggested Lesson Plans	6
Student Introduction	8
Lesson Plan 1: Saul Bernstein, Immigrant	10
Lesson Plan 2: Saul Bernstein, Peddler	16
Lesson Plan 3: Saul Bernstein, Artist	24
Lesson Plan 4: Examining Documents	36
Lesson Plan 5: Values Clarification Activity: The Classroom Trunk	42
Resource Material: Exploring Artwork	44
Trunk Inventory	45
Saul Bernstein: Biographical Sketch	46
Who is Henrietta Szold?	48
What is Zionism?	50
Glossary of Terms	52
Immigration History Resources	54
Family Resource Project	Back Pocket
Evaluation Form	Back Pocket
Instructions for Returning the Trunk	Back Pocket

The Immigrant's Trunk
Examining a Life through Objects
Saul Bernstein: An American Artist

Note to Teachers:

This outreach kit is intended to bring a piece of the museum into your classroom. One of the most unique aspects of the museum experience is its ability to convey history through the objects contained within its collection. Students have the opportunity to become engaged in the stories behind the objects themselves as well as the period in history from which they came. Contained within this kit, you will find objects, photographs, and documents of a late nineteenth century immigrant. Through these artifacts, students will learn how to read and interpret primary source materials. They will think about the practice of collecting, and enrich their understanding of local Jewish history, as they learn about one Baltimorean's journey from Eastern Europe to the United States.

This kit focuses on the story of Saul Bernstein, a Lithuanian immigrant who began working as a peddler and later became an acclaimed local artist. The trunk includes personal photographs and letters as well as objects representing various stages in Saul Bernstein's life. The photos and documents are reproductions from the archives of the Jewish Museum of Maryland; the objects are found pieces that did not belong to Saul Bernstein himself, but rather are emblematic of the types of objects that he might have used at various points in his life. The students can carefully handle all objects, photos, and documents.

The kit has several main objectives:

- To familiarize students with the immigration process circa 1890.
- To present students with the opportunity to interpret a distinctly Jewish immigration experience
- To introduce students to the concepts of object-based learning
- To teach students how to interpret photographs, documents, and objects
- To engage students with primary source materials
- To encourage students to explore their own lives and priorities through objects with a values-clarification activity
- To encourage students to explore their own family's immigration experience

Trunk activities are organized according to objects, photographs, and documents that correspond to a particular block of time in Saul Bernstein's life. Each lesson plan includes objectives, a teacher's guide, and student activity sheets. Activity sheets for students include background information, discussion questions, and a final culminating activity based on a specific a photograph or object. Several photographs and objects are often grouped together. Any supplies needed are listed in each lesson plan.

The kit is organized chronologically. You may wish to guide the entire class through these activities or divide the class into several groups and rotate them through “stations” of Saul’s Bernstein’s life. For teachers with limited time for these lessons, please find suggested lesson plans in the “resource materials” section of this binder. Background materials that explore additional topics in depth are also available in this section the kit. Please see the trunk inventory list for an explanation of all photos, objects, documents, and supporting materials. The final value clarification activity asks students to construct their own trunk. You may wish to make this a class activity and create your own “mini-museum” in your classroom based upon the students’ ideas.

We hope that you will find this kit engaging and enjoyable. The education staff welcomes your comments and evaluation of this kit. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments, or problems you may have.

Lauren Silberman
Education and Programming Coordinator
(410) 732-6400 ext. 29
lsilberman@jewishmuseummd.org

Deborah Cardin
Education Director
(410) 732-6400 ext. 36
dcardin@jewishmuseummd.org

SUGGESTED LESSON PLANS FOR TEACHERS

Depending upon your own time constraints, you may wish to use only parts of the provided curricular materials. The following lesson plans are intended to help you implement this kit in a way that will best fit your needs. Please note that we have included extensive resource materials for you to use at your discretion. These additional sheets are included as background material for various people and ideas that arise within the context of Saul Bernstein's immigrant experience. We recommend that you provide every student with a copy of the student introduction, values clarification activity, and biographical sketch of Saul Bernstein. The lessons outlined here are meant as suggestions only. We welcome your input about what works best in your classroom.

I. IF YOU HAVE ONE CLASS PERIOD:

Lesson 1: Saul Bernstein, Immigrant

- Object examination and discussion questions for Tefilin, Kiddush cup, and ship manifest list

Lesson 2: Saul Bernstein, Peddler

- Photo examination and activity for: *Saul Bernstein, Peddler, Elkhorn Mining Region, West Virginia, 1891*
- Object examination and discussion activities for wooden spindles, scale, shoe stretchers, and clothing

Lesson 4: Examining Documents

- Document examination and activity for: *Correspondence About Saul Bernstein*

Lesson 5: Values Clarification Activity

- Discuss the values clarification activity
- Compile classroom trunk if time permits

II. IF YOU HAVE TWO CLASS PERIODS:

Lesson 1: Saul Bernstein, Immigrant

- Object examination and discussion questions for Tefilin, Kiddush cup, and ship manifest list

Lesson 2: Saul Bernstein, Peddler

- Photo examination and activity for: *Saul Bernstein, Peddler, Elkhorn Mining Region, West Virginia, 1891*
- Object examination and discussion activities for wooden spindles, scale, shoe stretchers, and clothing

Lesson 3: Saul Bernstein, Artist

- Artwork examination and activity for: *The Rabbi*

- Supplemental material: *Looking at Artwork*

Lesson 4: Examining Documents

- Document examination and activity for: *Correspondence About Saul Bernstein*

Lesson 5: Values Clarification Activity

- Discuss the values clarification activity
- Compile and display classroom trunk

III. IF YOU HAVE THREE OR MORE CLASS PERIODS

Lesson 1: Saul Bernstein, Immigrant

- Object examination and discussion questions for Tefilin, Kiddush cup, and ship manifest list
- Supplemental material: *Looking at Objects; Looking at Photographs; Comparative Study: Other Passages*

Lesson 2: Saul Bernstein, Peddler

- Photo examination and activity for: *Saul Bernstein, Peddler, Elkhorn Mining Region, West Virginia, 1891*
- Object examination and discussion activities for wooden spindles, scale, shoe stretchers, and clothing
- Supplemental material: *From a Different Shore—The Chinese Immigrants*

Lesson 3: Saul Bernstein, Artist

- Photo examination and activity for: *Saul Bernstein's first paint box*
- Artwork examination and activity for: *The Rabbi*
- Photo and artwork examination and activity for: *Jennie Abel Bernstein holding Bernstein family photos and Jennie*
- Photo and artwork examination and activity for: *Saul Bernstein in Cracow, Poland, 1903 and Self Portrait*
- Object examination and discussion questions for The Artist's Pack
- Supplemental material: *Looking at Artwork; Comparative Study: Urban Working and Living Conditions—The Irish Immigrants*

Lesson 4: Examining Documents

- Document examination and activity for: *Correspondence About Saul Bernstein*
- Supplemental material: *Looking at Documents*

Lesson 5: Values Clarification Activity

- Discuss the values clarification activity
- Compile and display classroom trunk
- Allow classroom trunk to remain on display for the remainder of the immigration unit

The Immigrant's Trunk
Examining a Life Through Objects
Saul Bernstein: An American Artist

Student Introduction:

Throughout our lives, we use, discard, and save countless objects. Some items hold sentimental meaning, others are functional, and others we have created ourselves. Yet each of these things has something in common. Collectively, they all say something about who we are, and how we live during a particular time and place in history. A photograph depicts events or people who are important to us. A painting, drawing, or piece of writing shows how we saw the world at one point in our lives. Even everyday objects like a book or a clock or a type of pen reveal something about the environment in which we live. Each object tells its own story about the people who owned and used them. Together, objects can tell us fragments of someone's life story—a story we as observers must construct as we work to interpret what these objects tell us about the person who owned them.

In this trunk, we will uncover the story of one particular person and his journey as an immigrant in the late nineteenth century. During this time, many immigrants from Russia, Poland, Rumania, and other Eastern European countries flooded the shores of coastal cities like New York, Boston and Baltimore. They came with trunks and bundles of belongings to establish new lives in America. Each immigrant group came with their own unique experiences and history. Irish immigrants came to escape English persecution and the rampant poverty of the 1840's Potato Famine. Italian immigrants came in search of economic opportunity. Chinese immigrants began to come in the 1850's to work on the transcontinental railroad. In this kit, we focus on the experience of Eastern European Jews. The trunk we will examine contains both the objects that immigrants might have brought with them and things that they later acquired and used in America. We can think of this trunk, then, as something that you might find in the attic of an old house—filled with the things that survived the person who once used them.

For the next several classes, you will explore the life of a young man named Saul Bernstein—an immigrant who came to this country at the age of seventeen from Posvol, Lithuania in the 1890's. You will discover Saul's story through objects, personal letters, and photographs that reconstruct his life in America and interpret his personal history as a Jew from Lithuania. This trunk contains a selection of the things that represent aspects of Saul's life as a peddler, a Jew from an observant family, an artist, and a young man living in Baltimore at the turn of the century. Some of these objects belonged to Saul personally; some of them are included as representations of Saul's life. Through these objects, we can begin to understand how Saul lived his life—his accomplishments, his difficulties, and his everyday activities. As we examine Saul's life, we will think about how the things we use everyday tell the story of our own lives.

Author and scholar Roland Takaki had this to say about his own research into the lives of immigrants:

*As I read and selected these documents, I often found myself stirred by the ways people responded to circumstances not of their choosing. Always, I was reminded that people are history: their experiences, feelings, adjustments, imaginings, hopes, uncertainties, dreams, fears, regrets, tragedies, and triumphs compose our past. Everywhere, I found their stories bursting in the telling.*¹

Takaki writes of the excitement of discovering history through the experiences and writings of one person. As we look at Saul Bernstein's life through the photographs, objects, and documents left behind, we are looking into his piece of history. When we take that knowledge back to our own lives, we too can find our personal histories "bursting in telling."

¹ Takaki, Ronald. *A Larger Memory: A History of Our Diversity with Voices*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998, pg. 4.

LESSON PLAN 1: SAUL BERNSTEIN, IMMIGRANT TEACHER GUIDE

Overview:

In this section, students will learn about Saul Bernstein's life in Lithuania and his immigration to the United States. They will be introduced to the immigration process circa 1890 and the circumstances within Eastern Europe that caused Jews to leave their homes. Students will also interpret Jewish ritual objects in relation to their significance to Jewish identity.

Objects:

- Tefilin and case
- Kiddush cup
- Ship manifest list

Educational Objectives:

- Students will learn about the conditions of Jewish life in Eastern Europe in the late 1890's
- Students will learn about the process of immigration and naturalization
- Students will learn to explore and interpret Jewish ritual objects
- Students will be introduced to the concept of object-based learning

Activities and Supplies:

Student activities include background information and discussion questions for tefilin, kiddush cup, and ship manifest. For this lesson, you will need to make copies of the following documents: "From Immigration to Naturalization: An Immigrant's Journey," Glossary, "Biographical Sketch: Saul Bernstein" and "Looking at Objects."

Note to Teachers:

Before beginning the lesson plan, review with students the goals of the project (see Student Introduction). Please remind students at the start of each lesson to use care while handling all objects, documents, and photographs.

PART I: SAUL BERNSTEIN, IMMIGRANT

Objects:

- Tefilin and case
- Kiddush cup
- Ship manifest list
- Other supplies: pencil and paper

Background Information:

Saul Bernstein was born on May 26, 1872 in Posvol, Lithuania to Wolf and Esther Bernstein. Saul grew up under the government district of Kovno, Russia. His father was a scholar by choice and a bookbinder by trade. Wolf Bernstein preferred his studies to his bookbinding; he was never very successful at his chosen trade. As a result, Saul's family was always very poor. His mother, Esther Shalowitz Bernstein, was a dressmaker to help support the family. Saul's mother gave birth to six children. Only two of them—Saul and his younger brother Benjamin survived to adulthood. When Saul was thirteen, his father sent him to study Talmud in the neighboring town of Poniewicz. Saul came from an observant family; his father wished for his son to be well versed in the subtleties of Jewish law. Even at this young age, Saul displayed a talent for art; his teachers frequently caught him sketching rather than studying. It soon became clear to Saul that he could not pursue his art within his current environment, and he sought greater opportunity to train as an artist. After receiving a letter from an uncle, Abram Shalowitz, in Baltimore in 1889, Saul saw his opportunity to leave Lithuania. In the autumn of 1889, Saul boarded a ship for America using the money his mother raised over the years as a dressmaker. He arrived in Castle Gardens in New York Harbor alone and took the train to Baltimore to meet his uncle. Saul was seventeen years old when he arrived in New York.

Had Saul remained in Lithuania, he would have faced a situation similar to other Eastern European Jews—times fraught with both economic hardship and religious persecution. Saul grew up under the reign of the Russian Czar Alexander II. During this time in Russia, many liberal policies were implemented in Eastern Europe, including the termination of the serf system and the introduction of capitalism. Jews enjoyed relative freedom. After his assassination in 1889, anti-Semitic riots erupted. Czar Alexander III and his government proceeded to introduce discriminatory legislation. The resulting Temporary Laws placed severe economic restrictions on Jews, and, in turn, led to increased violence against them. The Russian leaders supported this violence as a means of diverting attention from a growing revolutionary anti-Czar movement. The Black Hundred, an anti-Semitic movement supported by the Czar, instigated pogroms against Jews in Russia and neighboring countries. Thus, the Jews in Russia and other countries throughout Eastern Europe, who had once experienced a degree of economic and intellectual freedom, were confronted by increasingly oppressive and discriminatory conditions. Many opted to leave and to immigrate to the United States, where they

envisioned a golden land free from religious oppression. At the time that Saul leaves Russia for the United States in 1889, these policies are just beginning.

Jewish Ritual Objects: Kiddush Cup and Tefilin with Case

The objects you are about to handle are Jewish ritual objects and considered sacred to Jews. Please handle them with care and respect, and do not place them on the floor.

Kiddush Cup and Tefilin

We use a *kiddush* cup during *Shabbat*, at weddings, and *Havdalah* service as well as other special occasions. The word *kiddush* translates to "sanctification." The practice of *Kiddush* fulfills the commandment to "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). The blessing over the wine has been a practice since the sixth century BCE in celebration of Creation and the Exodus. As you have seen yourselves, *Kiddush* cups are decorated in many ways. Some reflect the places where Jews have lived; some have ornate silverwork; while still others are more simple in nature. Cups made with fine silver were a common practice in Eastern Europe. Since many Jews were not allowed to handle precious metals, however, Christian artisans often made these Jewish ritual cups.

As you can see, this *kiddush* cup is inscribed with the blessing over the wine.

Tefilin

Tefilin, or phylacteries boxes, are also used during ritual prayer. The commandment to place a symbol "on the hand and between the eyes" comes from Exodus 13:9 and 13:16 and Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18. The boxes are bound to the center of the forehead and the middle of the right arm with leather straps. The boxes contain pieces of parchment with Hebrew phrases from the Bible. The *tefilin* is worn on the head to remind the wearer of his intellectual commitment to God; the *tefilin* on the hand is worn to remind him of his commitment to serve God with might and strength. Jews wear *tefilin* on the left arm—the arm believed to be closest to the heart. The wearer wraps the strap seven times for each word of Psalm 145:16: "Thou openest Thy hand and satisfiest every living creature." The strap is then wrapped three more times around the hand to form the Hebrew letter *shin*, for *Shaddai*, one of the Hebrew names for God.

Discussion Questions:

1. Imagine you have found this cup and have no prior knowledge of its use. What would you guess it was used for? What evidence would you use to back up your claim?

2. We do not know if Saul took these two particular items with him when he came to America. If we assume that he did, however, what would that say about his relationship to Judaism? Why are these two objects important? What would they show about what Saul valued in Judaism?
3. The following excerpt comes from a letter that Saul wrote his friend and patron Henrietta Szold in 1899.² Saul writes of his life in Lithuania:

I was born in a small town under the government of Kovno called Posvol...I entered the cheder at the age of 5 twisted in a dilapidated talit. Of course, it was the cheapest I could get for my father did not yet save much money of his reading books while binding them, but was still counted as one of the erudite persons to let me enter a Talmud Torah.

Our class consisted of Aleph Bet, young men to the high advanced students of the Talmud, about twenty-five or thirty boys besides the 11 persons of the Rebbe's own family of men and women, and cats and chickens and mice filled the little holes of space which were left in the room of a box in size. I loved to draw and drew when I had time or did not have it. Hence, a bang on my head with the largest Five Books of Moses in the place after my masterpieces were destroyed... As a man of thirteen I left home to enter a Talmudic class in Posnevez, a town about a struggling night's travel in good weather, in a wagon of a known transporter. There a new series of serious troubles began. I had to take care of my living, take notice of my Talmudic progress, avoid the eyes of the "Mashgiach," or overseer to whom my mouth and stomach had to pray, also deceive my uncle enough to write good news home about my laborious study of the Talmud, and above all, to attend properly to my artistic development.

What does this excerpt tell you about Saul's Jewish upbringing? How does Saul remember his life in Lithuania?

4. Keep in mind that Saul wrote this letter in 1899, ten years after he immigrated to the United States. What does this letter tell you about how Saul views his early life?

Now look at the ship manifest list for the Port of Baltimore.

Coming to America: The Immigration Process

Student Resource: Handout From Immigration to Naturalization: The Immigrant's Journey (1880's-1920's)

Saul Bernstein boarded a ship headed for New York Harbor in the fall of 1889. At the age of seventeen, Saul left his family and all that he knew in Lithuania for a new life and new opportunities in the United States. Thousands of immigrants took this same journey across the Atlantic--alone and with their families. The voyage itself offered its own hardship before the immigrants ever reached the shores of the United States. Ships held up to 2,000 people at a time--many in the dingy steerage compartments. Because of

² Please note that all letter transcriptions are based upon careful readings of original documents. Despite our best efforts, however, the reader must take into account the difficulty of deciphering handwriting, the writer's inconsistencies, as well as Saul's limited command of the English language.

unsanitary conditions, immigrants often arrived in the New World sick; some died on the journey.

Saul arrived at the port of Castle Gardens, which was where immigrants arrived before the opening of Ellis Island in 1892. Once Ellis Island opened it became the largest immigration port in the United States. As ships arrived there, the travelers faced another ordeal. Often the harbor was crammed with steamships holding as many as 20,000 passengers waiting to disembark. The passengers were sometimes forced to wait for days onboard. When immigrants arrived at Ellis Island, they received a numbered tag that indicated the manifest page and line number in which their name appeared. Doctors inspected the sick and deported those with chronic, incurable illness. Ellis Island operated between 1892 and 1954. Although Ellis Island was not formally established when Saul came to the United States, he would have endured a similar process at Castle Gardens in the Port of New York.

Ship Manifest List

This is a reproduction of a ship manifest list from 1883. Ship manifests recorded the names of all of the individuals who traveled on board a ship. Ship captains were required to maintain accurate lists, and they handed them over to immigration officials when the ships docked. These immigrants came directly to Baltimore harbor. We will begin by reading this list from left to right. On the far-left side, we find a list of the names of each immigrant, last name first. The next column lists the person's age. The fourth column lists the person's gender, followed by his or her occupation. The next column lists country of origin, followed by the person's final destination. If the individual died on board the ship, the cause of death was then listed. The last column lists the pieces of luggage that each passenger brought with him or her.

Note: This is not a ship manifest from the ship that brought Saul to the United States, but it is similar to the one that would have recorded his journey. Refer to the manifest transcription for precise information.

Discussion Questions:

1. Find one person's name and follow it across the entire list. What can you learn about this person? Did this person come with children? How old is he or she? How many pieces of luggage did the person bring? From where was this person traveling?
2. If you were the immigration officer, this list would contain all the information you knew about any given immigrant. What sorts of complications arise from such limited information? What do you know for sure based off of this list? What do you assume? What can this list tell you as an historian? Why do you think the Jewish Museum of Maryland has preserved many ship manifests in its collections?

COMPARATIVE STUDY

OTHER PASSAGES: THE MIDDLE PASSAGE OF AFRICAN SLAVES

When we think of immigrants, we usually envision those who came to this country willingly. Be it for reasons of religious freedom, economic opportunity, or to join other family members, most immigrants came to the United States of their own accord, and for their own reasons. There was, however, one significant immigrant group who came and remained in America against their own wishes: African slaves.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, approximately seven million African slaves crossed the Atlantic against their will. These unwilling immigrants endured a long and humiliating journey referred to as the Middle Passage. Many Africans did not survive the voyage. Olandah Equiano was born in 1745 in what is now Nigeria. He was sold into slavery at the age of ten, and bought by a Virginia Planter. He was eventually resold to a British naval officer and purchased his freedom in 1766. Equiano describes his feelings on first seeing the slave ship:

The first object, which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast, was the sea, and a slave ship, which I was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, which I am yet at a loss to describe, nor the then feelings of my mind.³

Equiano goes on to write of his first realization of his fate:

When I looked round the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, everyone of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted my fate, and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted.⁴

Equiano's narrative goes on to relay the loathsome conditions of the ship, the smell, and the scarcity of food and water. Considering the experience of slavery causes us to reevaluate what we mean when we use the term "immigration." Webster's dictionary simply defines the verb "immigrate" as the act of coming to a country in which one is not a native, usually for permanent residence. In the strictest definition, African slaves are another kind of immigrant, but in a very different sense. As we consider Saul Bernstein's story, we will refer to the conditions and circumstances of other immigrant groups as a means of comparing and contrasting the Jewish immigration experience to those encountered by other groups.

³ Takaki pg. 38.

⁴ Takaki pg. 39.

LESSON PLAN 2: SAUL BERNSTEIN, PEDDLER TEACHER GUIDE

Overview:

In this section, students will learn about Saul Bernstein's life as a peddler in Maryland and Virginia. They will examine archival photographs from the collections of Jewish Museum of Maryland and handle objects typical of a peddler during Saul Bernstein's day. Students will also learn how to critically examine photographs and historic objects.

Objects:

- Photo: Saul Bernstein, peddler, Elkhorn Mining Region Near Bluefield, West Virginia, 1891
- Three (3) wooden spindles with thread
- Working metal scale
- Tin canister
- Two (2) shoe stretchers
- Wool hat, suede vest

Educational Objectives:

- Students will learn about American life circa 1890
- Students will learn how to examine photographs critically
- Students will continue to interpret objects to piece together Saul Bernstein's life story
- Students will use critical thinking skills to answer questions about the objects and photographs

Activities and Supplies:

Activities include handling objects, answering discussion questions, and writing a sample diary entry based on an in-depth study of a photograph. Supplies include the objects and photographs provided, as well as pen and paper. Students should read the introduction to photographs handout before beginning the activity. Please remind students to handle the objects and photos with care.

Note to Teachers:

Before beginning the lesson plan, review with students the goals of the project (see Student Introduction). Please remind students at the start of each lesson to use care while handling all objects, documents, and photographs.

PART II: SAUL BERNSTEIN, PEDDLER

Objects:

- Photo: Saul Bernstein, peddler, Elkhorn Mining Region Near Bluefield, West Virginia, 1891
- Three (3) wooden spools with threads
- Working metal scale
- Tin canister
- Two (2) shoe stretchers
- Wool Hat, suede vest
- Other supplies: pencil and paper

Background Information:

After Saul Bernstein arrived in New York Harbor, he took a train to meet his uncle, Abram Shalowitz, in Baltimore. Saul remained in his uncle's house just one week before embarking on his own as a tin peddler on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Saul spoke little English; he carried his wares on his back, day after day. Saul traveled extensively throughout the small towns of Maryland and West Virginia and gained a loyal following. Saul often faced dangerous situation on the road. He wrote to a friend: "It was the Lord who twisted a pistol from a man's hand to stop him from shooting me, and it was God who threw a giant man over a box and knocked the stuffings out of him until someone came and arrested him."⁵

Saul eventually settled in Coopers, West Virginia as a partner in a local country store. He covered the walls of the store with his artwork. The doorway of Saul's shop was adorned with two large charcoal canvases--portraits of George Washington and Czar Alexander II of Russia. The interior of Saul's shop was covered with drawings of peasant life in Russia. Later, Saul worked as a clerk in another drygoods store in Pocahontas, West Virginia.

Photo Activity: Saul Bernstein, peddler, Elkhorn Mining Region Near Bluefield, West Virginia, 1891

This photo was taken in 1891, just two years after Saul Bernstein arrived in America from Lithuania. Saul spent those years as a tin and wood peddler on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in West Virginia. When Saul peddled his wares, he carried everything he sold in a bundle on his back. His pack was filled with combs, cutlery, china, wooden, and tin goods--all piled into a bundle that Saul hauled through small towns. Saul carried something else with him on his back as well: pencils, pastels, watercolors, sketchpad, and an easel. Saul often drew what

⁵ Alexandra Lee Levin. *Saul Bernstein: Protégé of Henrietta Szold*.

he saw--everyday people going about their lives in the mining regions where he traveled.

When this photo was taken, Saul was peddling in the Elkhorn mining region near Bluefield, West Virginia. He stands in the center of this photo with a dry goods pack slung over his shoulder.⁶ During this time, Bluefield was acquiring a critical mass of Jewish peddlers and small storeowners. Although certainly not comparable to large cities like Baltimore or New York, there were enough young, Jewish, immigrant men to form a small community in mining towns like Bluefield and Pocahontas. In 1892, just one year before Saul arrived to work as a drygoods clerk, Pocahontas had enough Jews to form a small Orthodox congregation. The congregants consisted primarily of Eastern European immigrants. The first two rabbis of the congregation hailed from Lithuania.

Discussion Questions:

1. Hold the picture at arm's length and look at it as a whole. Where are people standing? What do you think they were doing before the picture was taken? Why do you think the picture was taken?
2. Now look closer at the faces of the people in the picture. Find Saul Bernstein amidst the crowd of people. Where are most of the people in the photo looking? How are they standing? Does Saul stand out or blend in amidst the miners? What do you think he might have been carrying?
3. How do you think Bernstein's surroundings would have influenced his work? What sort of skills do you think he might have gained as a peddler that would affect his art? What do you think he might have observed?
4. Finally, what challenges do you think Jewish peddlers faced in terms of their own Jewish practice? Why do you think Jewish peddlers would consider it important to form a community in West Virginia? Do you think Saul might have been a part of it?

Activity:

Write a diary entry for the day this picture was taken. Remember that a diary is simply a record of the day and everything that happened. You might write this in prose form, list form, or some other way. Keep the following questions in mind as you discuss this with your group: Whom did Saul Bernstein visit today? What did he sell? What did he draw? Why is the photo taken? Does he know anyone in the picture, or are they all strangers to him? Are some of these people regular customers? Why would he want to save this photo?

⁶ Photo reproduction courtesy of Ben Cooper, Baltimore.

Object Examination: The Peddler's Pack and Dry-goods Products

The objects you are about to handle are sample items from a dry-goods store in the late nineteenth century. Although these objects did not belong to Saul per se, they represent items he might have used during his time as a peddler in Maryland and Virginia. You are about to examine antique objects; please treat them with care.

The Peddler's Pack

The following objects are examples of items Saul might have carried on his back to sell to people in small towns in Maryland and Virginia. We will examine why Saul might have sold these objects, as well as what they can tell us about the peddler's experience.

Peddler's Clothing: Wool Hat, Suede Vest

This vest and hat are examples of the type of clothing Saul might have worn while on the road as a peddler. The vest is made of suede, and the hat is a wool cap. Compare these examples with the picture of Saul as a peddler.

Cast Iron Skillet

This is a cast iron frying pan similar to what Saul might have sold as a peddler. Saul might have sold this and other kitchen items to local families in Maryland and Virginia. He probably would have several pans to sell--all carried on his back as he traveled from town to town.

Shoe Stretchers

These shoe stretchers would have been used to stretch, preserve, and mold shoes in order to make them last longer. The wooden front wedge of the stretcher is inserted in the front of the shoe, while the knob at the back is adjusted to fit the length of the shoe. As a peddler of woodworks, Saul might have sold these in his peddler's pack.

Tin Canister

Saul began his life as a peddler selling tinwork in Maryland and West Virginia. Since tin was a lightweight, fairly durable material, it was ideal for carrying cross-country on one's back. This canister is an example of the types of tin ware Saul might have sold.

Discussion Questions:

1. Take a closer look at the suede vest and feel the weight of the material. Does it feel durable or flimsy? Why do you think that might be important? Where does a peddler conduct most of his business-- indoors or out? Keeping that in mind, why is it advantageous for a peddler to wear this type of garment?
2. Now pick up the pan and feel its weight. Imagine carrying several pans along with other items on your back everyday. Why do you think this item is made out of such durable material? What would make it a valuable thing to buy?
3. Now take out the shoe stretchers. Why are shoes so important, particularly for a peddler? Why would you need to save them as long as possible? How does the value of shoes make these objects important?
4. Saul describes his peddling experience to Henrietta Szold as follows:

It was a week after I found myself under a basket of tin work leaving my uncle's as well as all peddler's advice in Baltimore. I knew there was no future for art in tailoring while peddling seemed more like business to me. So to providence I risked myself out in the open wide country arranged the Eastern shore of Maryland. I disappointed my compatriots so such that in spite of my little figure and delicate look I was inside of 6 months under a drygoods pack competing with many large competent peddlers indeed climbing at Harrison Co. West Virginia. Of course, there were many of us and down there sometimes starting to roll ahead helplessly, an account of the slippery fall leaves or grass, from the taps of "up" until reaching the dawn.... The head over heels seldom harmed me much. There was only once I had my left arm in a sling for a few days. You see the nature of a wooden drygoods pack is thus: as soon as the peddler looses the balance, he falls and the back takes the advantage of him by rolling about, cast outlay, loose handle knives and forks etc. until it reaching breathlessly the foot of the giant and there it remains helplessly where it is too dark to find the path that as former directed to, and while the nights are too wet and cold to stay outdoors, the last victim feels his way into tumble and the result is unknown to him until he gathered his pieces up...My pack was always, when filled, heavier than myself so I discovered myself contemplating the sky with closed eyes.

What does Saul's account life as a peddler in West Virginia? What was the terrain like?

5. Why do you think this was an occupation that so many Jews chose at this time? Why do you think Saul would have chosen to peddle in such a difficult region?

Saul Bernstein, Shop Owner: Objects from a Dry Goods Store

The next few objects we will examine represent items that you might find in a dry goods store in the late nineteenth century. Saul's dry goods store may well have been the only shop for miles. He would have needed to stock a variety of items for the local population.

Wooden Spindles

Take out the three wooden spindles and examine them carefully. These spindles might have been used in mechanical looms or for home use. During the late nineteenth century, clothing factories were at their peak. Big cities would have had many factories that produced clothing and other goods. These spindles might have been used for that purpose, or for more local home use.

Scale

This is a scale is similar to one Saul might have used in his store to measure out grain, sugar, flour, fruits, or other items. This particular object is labeled "family scale: not legal for use in trade." Such an indication denotes that this item would have been used at home.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who do you think might have bought these spindles? Is this an item that seems to be gender specific? Is this an item you might find in a rural or city dry goods store?
2. Take a moment and examine the scale carefully. How much weight will it hold? How detailed are the measurements? What is the importance of a scale at home or in a store?

**COMPARATIVE STUDY
FROM A DIFFERENT SHORE:
THE CHINESE IMMIGRANTS**

Between the years 1820 and 1880, some 230,000 Chinese immigrants came to the United States through the port of San Francisco. Initially drawn by the Gold Rush and later by opportunities for work, Chinese Americans set down roots in the American West. Unlike other immigrant groups, however, the Chinese were subjected to particularly harsh inspections and interrogations upon arrival in America. Where European settlers would be processed in a few hours, a Chinese immigrant could be held up for days, or even weeks. As immigrants living in the United States, the Chinese faced harsh discrimination. Finally, in 1882, Chinese workers were prevented from immigrating altogether by the Chinese Exclusion Act. The restriction was not lifted until 1943.

Chinese immigrants faced a special challenge. Not only did they encounter a new language and culture, but a completely different world. Chinese immigrant Lee Chow remembers his journey:

My father gave me \$100, and I went to Hong Kong with five other boys from our place, and we got steerage passage on a steamer, paying \$50 each. Everything was new to me...The engines that moved the ship were wonderful monsters, strong enough to lift mountains. When I got to San Francisco, which was before the passage of the Exclusion Act, and I was half starved, because I was afraid to eat the provisions of the barbarians, but a few days' living in the Chinese quarter made me happy again. A man got me work as a house servant in an American family, and my start was the same as that of almost all the Chinese in this country.⁷

One of the few professions open to Chinese immigrants was the laundryman. Like the Jewish peddler, the Chinese laundrymen became a common occupation for new immigrants. Lee Chow recalls learning his profession:

The Chinese laundryman does not learn his trade in China; there are no laundries in China. All the Chinese laundrymen here were taught in the first place by American women, just as I was taught. I did not know how to do anything, and I did not understand what the lady said to me, but she showed me how to cook, wash, iron, sweep, dust, make beds, etc, by doing the things herself and then overseeing my efforts to imitate her. She would take my hands and show them how to do things.⁸

Chinese immigrants were also prevented from bringing their families with them to America; Chinese men arrived alone. This created an unusual class of "bachelors" with families thousands of miles away. The treatment of Chinese Americans adds yet another

⁷ Takaki pg. 134-135.

⁸ Takaki pg. 135.

layer to the story of immigration. On the one hand, the Chinese experienced the same type of discrimination known to many other groups. Irish were often excluded from work, Italians were stereotyped as violent, and Jews were viewed with disdain by a predominantly Christian nation. At the same time, the Chinese are the only immigrant group specifically singled out for exclusion. As we continue to learn about immigration, we must be aware of America's ambivalent relationship with the very citizens it claims to welcome.

LESSON PLAN 3: SAUL BERNSTEIN, ARTIST TEACHER GUIDE

Overview:

In this section, students will learn about Saul Bernstein's life as a burgeoning young artist. They will examine several photos of his artwork, as well as objects that represent this piece of Saul's life. Students will examine Saul's work in both artistic and cultural terms. In addition, they will consider the impact of Saul's religion on his work.

Objects

- Photo: Saul Bernstein's first paint box
- Photo: Jennie Abel Bernstein holding Bernstein family photos
- Photo: Saul Bernstein in Cracow, Poland, 1903
- Artwork: "Jennie"
- Artwork: "The Rabbi"
- Artwork: "Self Portrait"
- Artist's pack: canvas, brushes, watercolors, palette

Educational Objectives

- Students will continue to interpret photographs critically
- Students will learn how to examine artwork from both an artistic and cultural perspective
- Students will be introduced to basic artistic terminology and technique
- Students will gain a rudimentary knowledge of the Zionist movement and its role in Saul Bernstein's life and work

Activities and Supplies

Activities require pencil and paper as well as basic art supplies such as colored pencils and paper. Students should also have the handouts "Looking at Photographs," "Looking at Artwork," "Who is Henrietta Szold?" and "What is Zionism?" This section mainly focuses on photos and reproduced artwork rather than object-based learning.

Note to Teachers:

Before beginning the lesson plan, review with students the goals of the project (see Student Introduction). Please remind students at the start of each lesson to use care while handling all objects, documents, and photographs.

PART III: SAUL BERNSTEIN, ARTIST

Objects:

- Photo: Saul Bernstein's first paint box
- Photo: Jennie Abel Bernstein holding Bernstein family photos
- Photo: Saul Bernstein in Cracow, Poland, 1903
- Artwork: "Jennie"
- Artwork: "The Rabbi"
- Artwork: "Self Portrait"
- Artist's pack: brushes, watercolors, palette
- Other supplies: pencil and paper, art supplies (i.e. colored pencils, paper, markers, etc.)

Background Information:

Despite his small size and initial inexperience, Saul Bernstein managed to make a decent living as a peddler. By 1891, Saul has enough funds to pay for the passage of his parents and brother to the United States. Saul takes great pride in this accomplishment. He writes to friend Henrietta Szold:

I had sent for my family and an uncle of mine and arranged them rooms, bought some machines for my mother, dressed them up in American merchandize and I was successfully keeping store in Coopers, West Virginia.

In 1892, Saul Bernstein found himself running a small clothing and dry goods store in West Virginia. The store, Silver and Bernstein Clothing, served as a kind of makeshift gallery for Saul's drawings. The sign was decorated, and two charcoal drawings adorned the front door: one was a portrait of George Washington, the other of Czar Alexander II of Russia. Inside, the walls were covered with Saul's pictures of rural life in Russia and Poland.

This was the scene that met Baltimore shoe drummer Louis Lutzky as he passed through Pocahontas, West Virginia, on business. Lutzky suggested that Saul apply for admission into the prestigious Maryland Institute School of Art and Design, now the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Saul attended MICA from 1892 to 1894. Saul also attended the Metropolitan School of Fine Art in New York. In 1897, Saul traveled to Paris to study at the l'Académie Julian.

Saul spent several years traveling throughout Europe. He went to Paris, Warsaw, Amsterdam, among other cities and towns. Eventually, Saul had sent about thirty pieces to the home of Henrietta Szold, Saul's friend and patron (see Who is Henrietta Szold?). Szold hosted several art shows for her friend in New York and Baltimore. His work soon found its way to the homes of Claribel and Etta Cone, the sisters whose collection now forms the cornerstone of the Baltimore Museum of Art, American poet Gertrude Stein, and others. Saul was becoming a critically, if not necessarily financially, successful artist.

Photo: Saul Bernstein's First Paint box; Pocahontas, Virginia, 1893

Background Information:

This picture was taken in 1893, just before Saul left Pocahontas, Virginia, for the Maryland Institute of Art and Design in Baltimore. The year before, a shoe drummer, Louis Lutzky of the Frank and Adler firm in Baltimore, had approached the young man after seeing his drawings decorating the walls of Bernstein's dry goods store in West Virginia. Lutzky happened upon Bernstein's store by chance; he was travelling through the Virginia area on business. Lutzky was attracted to the brightly painted signboard of Bernstein's store, Silver and Bernstein Clothing Store. Inside, Lutzky the walls of the shop were covered in pencil drawings-- pictures of Jewish life in Russia and Poland. The shoemaker suggested that Bernstein attend the Maryland Institute School of Art and Design in Baltimore for formal training.

Following this advice, Bernstein sold out his share of the shop to his partner and took a position as a clerk in Pocahontas, Virginia, just over the state line. Bernstein made hats for a time in Pocahontas to make ends meet. When Saul left Virginia, he had already started several subjects for his work: "Poca Whisky Goes Well," "A Stylish Hat," "A Poca Swell Affair," among others.

At the time this picture was taken, Bernstein had no formal art instruction; in fact, he is holding the palette incorrectly. The photo is a professional portrait. Saul would have posed and selected the various artistic tools within the photo. This picture, then, was taken at the brink of Bernstein's career.

Discussion Questions:

1. The photo we see here is a professional portrait of Saul Bernstein. He would have selected the objects, his pose, and the arrangement of the room. Why do you think this picture would have been important for Saul to take? What sort of statement is he making about his personal identity?
2. Compare this picture with the picture of Saul as a peddler. How is it different? Think specifically about his pose in the photograph, the arrangement of people or objects, and the possible purpose each picture holds.
3. After you have considered these things, think about each picture you have examined as a marker in Saul's life. What does each picture tell you about Saul's shift in identity?

Suggested Activity:

You are going for a portrait just before an important moment in your life. Maybe this is your high school or middle school graduation, or an important birthday, or any event that marks a transition. Make a list of what you would want in your portrait and design a diagram that indicates where everything will be in the picture. What objects do you want in the picture? Will you be sitting or standing? Is the picture inside or outdoors? Describe your choices to others in the group. What do these choices say about your feelings towards the event? What do they say about the change this event will have on your life?

**COMPARATIVE STUDY
URBAN WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS:
THE IRISH IMMIRANT EXPERIENCE**

In the nineteenth century, approximately three million Irish immigrants arrived in the United States. The Irish emigrated both for economic reasons and to escape British tyranny. It was the Potato Famine of the 1840's, however, that brought the Irish to American shores in droves. The immigrants began their journey in Dublin, then traveled to Liverpool, and finally arrived at New York Harbor. These immigrants joined the new industrial economy of the United States as miners, construction workers, and engineers, among many other professions. Like other immigrant groups, the Irish encountered discrimination. Often signs for work clearly indicated: No Irish Need Apply.

Saul Bernstein's story begins in rural America. Much of the immigrant experience during this time period, however, was focused in urban areas. Like New York, Boston, and other large cities, Baltimore was host to many different nationalities. Living conditions in urban immigrant areas, however, were generally very poor. Irish immigrant Elizabeth Gurley Flynn describes her home in New York:

The Irish who came to this country around the middle of the last century were far from happy. They sought but had not found freedom from religious and political persecution, or a chance to earn a decent livelihood for their families. They lived in shantytowns, even in New York City. One such--consisting of 20,000 inhabitants--was located in what is now Central Park. They were excluded from the better residential areas. In my father's youth, there were many signs on empty houses and factories seeking help: No Irish Need Apply.⁹

Flynn goes on to relate the conditions of the apartment itself:

Our front windows of this tunnel-like apartment faced the smoky roundhouse of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Rail Road. The great engines would chug in day and night and blow off steam there. Many railroad workers lived in the area. In particularly bad times, they would throw off chunks of coal and then look the other way when local children came to pick up coal around the roundhouse.¹⁰

Like countless immigrant groups before and after them, the Irish endured discrimination, limited work opportunities, and harsh living conditions. Today, there are new immigrant groups who face their own challenges and obstacles. Although the stories and voices change with each generation, much of the same struggles take place today as they did over one hundred years ago.

⁹ Takaki pg. 117.

¹⁰ Takaki pg. 120.

The Self Portrait: Saul Bernstein in Cracow and Self Portrait Sketch, 1903

Materials Needed: pencil and paper

Background Information:

In 1903, Saul Bernstein traveled throughout Europe. He visited Laren, a small village near Amsterdam, continued his work in Paris, and spent time with a family in Cracow, Poland. During his time in Paris, Bernstein lived by very meager means. He lived at No. 53 rue Monge in the Latin Quarter--a popular and relatively cheap area for students and artists. He lived on milk, figs, nuts, and honey in order to conserve money. At the time, Bernstein could not even afford a model; he frequently sketched himself. Bernstein was unhappy with what he saw as the pompous attitude of Paris. Then the art capitol of the world, Parisian culture focused on the art trends of the moment. Saul was more interested in pursuing his own subjects. He wrote to Henrietta Szold of his trip to Cracow:

Many have told me that I will be disappointed with the character of the Jews there, but it is the only Jewish atmosphere I could think of that resembles that of Russia and I could only establish my European nest satisfactorily or freely in that country, so, since I have no choice, I am determined to go there with a happy heart and hope to the future to develop more interest when the beginning will be disappointing. Judging on the other hand from my Holland experience I can trust that in Jewish settlement, as strange as it may be and as uninteresting as it may appear in the beginning, I shall always find more interesting material than I found among the ordinary Holland peasants.

Bernstein traveled to Cracow in search of a native Jewish population similar to that of his home in Lithuania. In Poland, however, Saul encountered more difficulties--he could not find anyone who would agree to model for him. Some feared their portraits might be hung in a church, some wondered about Saul's ulterior motives, and still others wanted to know what a young man of marriageable age was really looking for. Saul sailed for Baltimore in March of 1903.

This photo was taken when Saul was in Cracow in 1903. The self-portrait sketch is also from 1903.

Discussion Questions:

1. This picture was a portrait taken in a professional studio. Notice the full vertical pose. What is his stance? What is his expression? Why do you think he is dressed in full hat and coat?

2. What might have been the purpose of this photograph? What is the significance that the picture was taken in Poland? Why do you think he might have wanted this photo?

Now look at the self-portrait sketch of Bernstein completed in 1903. The medium is charcoal on paper.

3. Make some initial observations about both images. What part of the body did Saul choose to draw? What kind of expression did he give himself?

How do you think this self-portrait compares with the photographic portrait?
Does Saul depict himself as the camera sees him?

Photo of Jennie Abel Bernstein holding photos; Portrait of Jennie Abel Bernstein entitled "Jennie;" 1904

Background Information:

Saul Bernstein met the brother of his future wife at a meeting for the Zionist group *Hovevei Zion*--Lovers of Zion. Senior Abel was a Baltimore bookbinder who introduced Saul to the fledgling movement for Jewish migration to what was then Palestine. Saul's art began to reflect these ideals; his focus on Jewish subjects spoke to his growing interest in Zionism. Saul writes of his passion for painting Jewish subjects:

The Jew has both power in him distinctly visible, he is a coward and a hero. The first renders him flexible, the second survival as a conqueror. He survives at time by letting the brutal stores pass across him and his force of intelligence and lives and reigns over everything in that line; he is forcibly the choice of God or nature for he is so much nearer to it: he exists the larger in human. He is a creature developed under rare favorable circumstances, willingly or unwillingly, has he arrived at the capacity of everlasting existence. Almost dead but alive afresh healthy and sound. He will live forever!

Saul married Jennie Abel, Senior Abel's sister, in 1903 in New York City, after his return from Europe. By this time, several pieces of Bernstein's work had been sold as a result of a private art showing given by his good friend Henrietta Szold. Saul had met Szold through the Baltimore Zion Association, and formed a close bond with the prominent educator, essayist, and editor. Szold supported Bernstein throughout his life. She would later go on to found the women's Zionist organization Hadassah (see Who is Henrietta Szold?). Szold held numerous art shows on Bernstein's behalf, and Saul dedicated several pictures to his friend.

Although not a wealthy man, Bernstein was now at the very least a recognized American artist whose works decorated the homes of Szold, the American poet Gertrude Stein, prominent collectors Etta and Claribel Cone, among others. After Jennie and Saul married, they returned to Baltimore and established a home there.

Look at the photograph of Jennie Bernstein first. Although we have no precise date for the photograph, it was most likely taken between 1903 and 1904, the date of the painting we will look at in a moment. Jennie Bernstein is holding two photographs from Saul's childhood. This photo, then, is a "picture of a picture," and we must examine it on both levels.

Discussion Questions:

1. Examine Jennie's pose in the picture. Does this look like a photo she formally sat for in a studio, or a more casual moment of everyday life? How is she dressed? Where is she looking?
2. The two pictures Jennie holds are photos of Saul as a young boy. Why would she want to have this picture taken? Why are childhood pictures important to us?
3. Finally, think about this picture as a kind of "double portrait"--a portrait of both Saul Bernstein and Jennie Bernstein at different points in their lives. What is the impact of putting these two pictures together? Do you think this is really a picture of Jennie, or a picture of Jennie's relationship to Saul, or something else? How does this change the way you look at the photo?

Now turn to the painting of Jennie Bernstein. This painting was completed in 1904, one year after Jennie and Saul's marriage. The painting is oil on canvas, and was originally in color. You are looking at a black-and-white reproduction.

4. Begin by observing the basic differences between the photo and the painting. What portion of the body does each image feature? Where is your focus drawn? Where is Jennie's focus in the painting versus the photo?
5. The medium of this painting is oil on canvas. What effect do the brushstrokes have on the image? What do you think is the mood of the painting? How do you think the artist views her?
6. Keep in mind that neither the photo nor the painting indicates how Jennie sees herself; although Jennie is the subject, she is not the interpreter of her own image. What is the difference between these two depictions of Jennie? Go beyond the physical portrayal of Jennie and look at the impression the artist and the photographer have created.

Suggested Activity:

Pair up with someone else in your group/class and take his or her portrait. Remember that your portrait does not necessarily need to be physically accurate; you are creating an impression, not merely a description, of the person you draw. Spend a few moments talking to him or her before you start your project. What are the person's likes and dislikes? What will he or she be wearing in the portrait? What will he or she be doing? How can you incorporate these things into your work? What does that say about the person?

Saul Bernstein as a Jewish Artist: Examining *The Rabbi*

Materials Needed: pencil and paper

Background information:

Thus far, we have examined Saul Bernstein as an immigrant and as a fledgling artist. With this activity, we will add another layer to his story: Saul Bernstein as a Jewish artist. From an early age, Saul was exposed to Torah and Talmud--the Five Books of Moses and their interpretation. His father, Wolf Bernstein, was a bookbinder by trade and a Talmudic scholar by choice. When Saul was thirteen years old, the year in which a young Jewish boy becomes recognized as an adult in the community, Saul's father sent him to study Talmud in Poniewicz, Lithuania--a night's journey away from his hometown of Posvol.

Saul's art reflects both the Jewish identity instilled during his childhood, as well as his interest in Zionism as an adult. Zionism, a movement that encouraged the establishment of a Jewish State in what was then Palestine, informed the subject of much of Saul's work. As a young man, Saul became involved in the *Hovevei Zion* group--Lovers of Zion. As a result, he wanted his art to reflect a distinctly Jewish theme. One of Saul's friends phrased it this way:

*He felt in himself the desire to paint such a Jewish picture as had never before been painted, one that should show the real Jew as he himself knew him, bearing within him the record of the past and the seed of the future.*¹¹

Friend Henrietta Szold further encouraged Saul's chosen subject. She wrote to him:

*I have great faith in your gifts and in your strength of purpose. It would make me happy beyond measure to have you succeed as an artist, a Jewish artist, no matter how poor you may be to the end of your life, no matter how few of your Jewish pictures were sold...*¹²

Saul's work portrayed the everyday life of Jews in Eastern Europe, the place of his birth. His portraits, however, are an interpretation of this life; they are a part of Bernstein's own impressions. This charcoal drawing is entitled "The Rabbi." Bernstein completed it in 1903.

Discussion Questions:

1. We will begin by thinking about the picture's subject. Bernstein has drawn an Orthodox rabbi. Why do you think he chose this particular

¹¹ Alexandra Lee Levin. "Saul Bernstein, Artist: Protégé of Henrietta Szold." Jewish Museum of Maryland Archives.

¹² Ibid

portrayal? How does it reflect Saul's own background? How does it reflect Saul's experience as an immigrant and as a Jew?

2. Now take a close look at the composition of the picture. Keep in mind that this is a reproduced photograph; the original was a charcoal drawing. How are the lines drawn? What are the clearest details, and what details are less defined?

Suggested Activity:

Artists create visual narratives through their art, just as novelists, poets, or other writers create their stories with words. With the above questions in mind, create a narrative for the rabbi. What is he thinking as he sits? Is he sitting in synagogue? On a street corner? Has he posed for this picture, or is he caught off guard? If he posed, why this position? Where is the Rabbi from? Does he serve a small or more vibrant community? If he is aware of this portrait, what does he think of it?

LESSON PLAN 4: EXAMINING DOCUMENTS

Overview:

In this section, students will examine two letters written by Jennie Bernstein and Henrietta Szold soon after Saul Bernstein's death in addition to a letter written by Saul to Henrietta. The two letters form a complete exchange between Szold and Bernstein. Students will again have the chance to examine primary source documents and learn how to interpret them.

Objects:

- Letter: From Jennie Abel Bernstein to Henrietta Szold, June 18, 1905 (reproduced original and transcribed)
- Letter: Response from Henrietta Szold to Jennie Abel Bernstein, June 20, 1905 (reproduced original and transcribed)
- Letter: Saul Bernstein to Henrietta Szold from Paris, June 20, 1902 (transcription only)

Educational Objectives:

- Students will learn how to read and interpret historical documents
- Students will examine the significance of researching primary sources
- Students will explore the questions surrounding primary source research

Activities and Supplies:

Students will engage in a discussion surrounding the challenges of document interpretation. They will explore these documents as both fragmentary and primary voices of the people who wrote them. Students will examine the letters in their original context as personal correspondence; they will be asked to ponder the implications of making these personal letters available to the public.

Note to Teachers:

Before beginning the lesson plan, review with students the goals of the project (see Student Introduction). Please remind students at the start of each lesson to use care while handling all objects, documents, and photographs.

PART IV: CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT SAUL BERNSTEIN

Materials: Pencil and paper

Objects:

- Two reproduced letters from Henrietta Szold and Jennie Abel Bernstein; one transcribed letter from Saul Bernstein to Henrietta Szold.

Background Information:

In this section, you will have the opportunity to examine several letters written by or about Saul Bernstein. As you read these letters, think about whose eyes they were originally meant for. How do we change the purpose of such letters when we collect them in a museum and use them for research purposes? The first letter that we will look at is one of many correspondences between Saul Bernstein and Henrietta Szold while Saul was studying in Europe. This letter dates from June 20, 1902, one year before Saul would move back to the United States.

Paris, June 20, 1902

My dear Miss Szold,

I am extremely sorry that my sending the study in a journal the second time did not prove a successful as the time previous, since it concerns disagreeableness between your friend and you, I should not have tried to save the few dollars attached to the regular way of sending.

I am anxious to know whether this has caused any bad feelings as you anticipated and if there is any remedy for it yet. It goes without saying that I shall do my utmost now, where I am much freer mentally, to restore the friendly feeling.

While you seem to owe work yourself I am not able to concentrate my mind to any serious work. This is not due to myself and this is why it worries me the more: As contented as any friends are with my present success I am doubly discontented: it makes me shiver to think that every year I shall have to waste some months on Salon affairs which seems absolutely of no use to me at all as far as my real aim is concerned. Am I by this success a great painter? Has the Salon added qualities to my work? I doubt much—and materially, am I able to utilize the effect of the advertisement? Do I profit one bit of the newspaper noises that I should draw contentment out of them? No, I am not cut out for business and “hits” and “distributors” are foreign to me although some of my best friends seem to understand these as the only aiming part in my life.

Since I wrote to you last, a few more nice letters and other matters have happened. Among them, I have strong support of two successful art teachers if I wish to organize a class for myself in Laren, Holland. This would have enabled me to make money while continuing my studies there, but my mind is taken up with Galicia more than ever. Not because the latter information added more enthusiasm, on the contrary many have told me that I will be disappointed with the character of the Jews there, but it is the only Jewish atmosphere I could think of that resembles that of Russia and I could only

establish my European nest satisfactorily or freely in that country, so, since I have no choice, I am determined to go there with a happy heart and hope to the future to develop more interest when the beginning will be disappointing. Judging on the other hand from my Holland experience I can trust that in Jewish settlement, as strange as it may be and as uninteresting as it may appear in the beginning, I shall always find more interesting material than I found among the ordinary Holland peasants. Again a trip and study like that of a different sort of Jew may destroy the partiality that I have for the only Jew I know, the Russian Talmudist.

Will an occasion offer itself, I shall try to meet Mr. Lilien, although I confess that his Jewish work do not appeal to me. Why stuff up Zionism with French Nords, Sphinxes, posters, and Russian Muziks and who knows what?

I shall not be able to send you my address until I am at my place as I do not fully know where I will drop into, information is not enough for me to settle and this is all I can judge by so far.

My mother, more womanly than my father, loves yet to display her natural gifts of “once upon a time...” but my father would have been a great inventor had he a suitable education for it. He has invented wonderful things in a primitive sort of way and while a child yet he used to invent “Haman Klapper” that arose the admiration of his whole town. So I do not know to whom to ascribe the bit that I possess. When I was a child, in my own town people recognized me by the resemblance of my mother and when I went to the town where my father was born and raised, the people recognized me by the resemblance to my father. As a whole I always find my nature and taste composed of something distinctly feminine and again something strongly masculine. In the criticism on my work some speak of strong character, virility of execution, others rare delicacy, intimacy, sentiment, etc. (a combination of contrasts so strong support which often amuses me and makes me happy).

To come back: My ghetto, sentimental education, and my American rough and material education. The drygoods and millinery delicate experiences and the peddling and bar room training all come into reinforce the inherited disposition in my character. I am capable of reflecting coldly and am able to throw myself in a nervous excitement, at the construction of a picture once needs coldness at the very end, nervous excitement and feeling to destroy the mathematical dryness and indication of mechanical labor or any disagreeable suggestions which offend the eye or mind. My composed natures serve me well or will so do when I shall be freed of all material struggles including the manipulation of my paint, canvases, or mediums.

Yet these are the qualities I not only feel but see in me and I hope to test it to others when I am fully prepared, but at present, since talk it all I have for proof, I shall have to put my opinion among the other botch of accusations that I consisted.

The passion to find and expose to others this is the only power pushing and pulling one to his aim, which is never reached, of course, but which keeps him full of life, joy, and disgust, happily discontented forever...

*Hoping you are all enjoying your summer visit. With my best wishes to you all,
Yours Sincerely,
Saul Bernstein*

Saul Bernstein died a young man at the age of thirty-three in May of 1905. His death was unexpected to his wife and friends; Saul had just begun to taste success in the art world. This exchange took place between Saul's widow, Jennie Abel Bernstein, and his friend Henrietta Szold just after his death. Jennie's letter accompanied a self-portrait of Saul--the last piece of artwork he completed before his death. Jennie writes that Saul wanted Henrietta to have his picture, although it was undoubtedly difficult for Jennie to give up this reminder of her husband. Jennie and Henrietta knew each other prior to their connection with Saul; they had met at various Zionist functions.

Letter Transcripts

1. Jennie Bernstein to Henrietta Szold

Header:
Baltimore, June 18, 1905
Miss Henrietta Szold
590 W. 123rd Street
New York City

My dear Miss Szold,

Only a few days before the fateful Sunday, May 28, my husband had finished a small likeness of himself; and so well was he satisfied with it that he said joyfully to me: "Do you know, I have not written to Miss Szold for a long time. Now that my work is progressing nicely I shall write her a long letter excusing my silence, and shall send this portrait along with it." I cannot send you the promised letter, for he fell sick before he had a chance to write it, but it is with grateful appreciation of your long and faithful friendship to him that I send you this very last thing he had painted.

Yours very sincerely,
Jennie M. Bernstein

2. Henrietta Szold to Jennie Bernstein

Header:
528 W. 123rd Street
New York, June 20, 1905

My dear Mrs. Bernstein,

Last evening your letter reached me, and this evening the picture--need I tell you that they both renewed by grief, that they intensified the sense of loss that has not left me since the sad news first paralyzed me? The little canvas with its touching inscription hangs opposite to me as I write. Every lineament of the face, every shade of coloring, delicate yet sure and strong, speak of the artist, of the man of thought and character--and he is gone! A few days after his death, I hold in my hands the package of letters he wrote me while he was struggling abroad. How he did struggle! Not only with world circumstances, but also with himself. At last he found himself and, as you write, success had found him--and now death snatches him away

from you and from us who believed in him and in his future, before he could enjoy even the fine fruits of his long toil.

To you and to his poor mother and father and brother--I do not dare think of what his going hence means to you and to them. If we who stood outside loved him and his genius, and were awestruck by his painstaking devotion to his art, what must have been your feelings and expectations, you who watched him day by day? I wish I could write you a word of comfort; there is none except in resignation to the will of God, and who am I that I should preach resignation to you? God Himself will send it to you. Some time, the day will come when you can say with solemn joy: "I once had him, and he will always be my glory!" There must be comfort in that, but it too can come only when the first bitter grief had been softened into sorrow never to be banished from the heart and from life.

My dear Mrs. Bernstein, as I have no words in which to comfort you, so alas I have no words in which to express my appreciation of your willingness to part with the last bit of your dear departed token with his magic brush. I know from what you write that you took it to be in the nature of his last will and testament that it was to go to me and that you did not hesitate to carry out his wishes. And yet it must have been hard for you to give it to me, to anyone. His own pictures, too! I feel selfish to accept it. But hearing the inscription it does, it is as much my duty to be selfish as you feel it yours to be unselfish. To say that I shall cherish it as a possession beyond price, would be an insult to myself, to you, to the memory of him who destined it for me and called me his "dear friend." Now that he is gone, the ignorant sympathy I could give him in his struggles seems so poor, so shabby, so ineffectual, ease the conflict with himself, and yet he calls me his "dear friend."

May God help you bear your affliction with fortitude.

With gratitude, I am

Sincerely yours,

Henrietta Szold

Discussion Questions:

1. Consider Saul's letter to Henrietta Szold first. By this time, Saul and Henrietta had been corresponding since 1897, throughout his travels in Europe. One year after this letter was written, Saul would return to Baltimore and remain there until his death in 1905. Read the letter carefully. What is Saul's main concern in this letter? What does it reveal about the kind of relationship Saul had with Henrietta?
2. How does this letter give you insight into Saul's personality? What kind of information does a letter convey that an object or photograph cannot?
3. Now turn to the correspondence between Henrietta Szold and Saul Bernstein's widow, Jennie. What kind of relationship existed between Henrietta Szold and Jennie Bernstein? Do you think this is their first letter since Saul's death? Do you think it will be their last? Look at the date of both letters--how quickly did Henrietta respond? What does that tell you about their relationship?

4. What is the effect of Saul's death on both women? What do you think is the significance of the self-portrait to Jennie? To Henrietta? What does that gift convey about the relationship between the two women?

5. Finally, think about how we use documentary sources such as letters and diaries. Why do you think museums and research institutions collect such items? Why are they such a valuable source of information? Do you see any ethical conflicts in collecting/using letters and diaries that the writer intended for a very specific audience?

Activity:

Write Jennie's response to Henrietta's letter. Keep in mind the following considerations: How quickly does Jennie respond? When did she receive the letter? Was she happy to give the portrait to Henrietta, or did she give it grudgingly? What does she want to say to Henrietta?

LESSON PLAN 5: VALUES CLARIFICATION ACTIVITY
THE CLASSROOM TRUNK
TEACHER'S GUIDE

Overview:

In this final section, students will be asked to compile items for their own "class trunk." They will apply what they have learned in the preceding lessons to their lives and examine material culture in a critical way. This activity can be done as a class or as an individual activity. Teachers might consider asking each student to bring the objects they discuss into the classroom to create a "class trunk" of personal items.

Objects

Students should compile their own objects from home.

Educational Objectives

Students will apply what they have learned to create a "class trunk" of objects. This trunk will consist of everyday items, items from special occasions, and something created by the student. Teachers might consider keeping this trunk on display in the classroom as a reminder of the project. In this way, students assemble their own "min-museum" and are able to integrate the concepts of object-based learning into their own lives.

Activities and Supplies

Preliminary supplies include pencil and paper or basic art supplies for the initial list. This is an activity that can be stretched over several class periods during a unit on immigration. Students can begin by listing and discussing the items for the classroom trunk, and conclude with an assembled exhibit of class items. As the class trunk is completed, teachers may want a large box or tray or other means of display.

PART V: CLOSING ACTIVITY --THE CLASSROOM TRUNK

For the past several class periods, you have examined the life of Saul Bernstein through the various objects, photos, and documents that he left behind. Some of these items belonged to Saul personally; others were representations of points in his life. You have explored each item critically and asked what that object says about Saul's life and his time.

In this final activity, we want to turn that critical eye towards the objects we use in our own lives. What do the things we use everyday say about us as people? What do they convey about living in the early twenty-first century? If you knew nothing else about you or your class except the objects they left behind, what would you see? Why do we save certain items and throw away others? How do we choose what we save and what we throw away?

You will be assembling a classroom trunk--your own "mini-museum" that tells the story of your class through objects. Begin by making a list of several items in your life:

1. Two items that you use everyday
2. Two items that you save, and that you consider precious
3. Two items that you created--something you wrote, something you drew, a piece of artwork, etc.

Share these items with the class, and consider the following questions:

1. How do these items say something about you and your personality? How do they reflect where and how you live?
2. What would these objects mean to someone else? How could they view them differently than you do? What might they misinterpret? What might they see as valuable?
3. Finally, look at your class trunk as a whole. What mix of items have you assembled? How does looking at your objects as part of a whole change their meaning? What does your community look like through these items?

Just like Saul's trunk, your class trunk says something about who you are and how you live. If someone found these objects fifty years from now, they might read very different meanings into these items than what you intended. Each object, picture, or piece of paper holds its own unique meaning and story. Together with your class, you have pieced together Saul's story. Now you have put together your own narrative. These objects are a part of you--and the story of a life that you tell through the places, people, and things that you encounter everyday.

**RESOURCE MATERIAL:
EXPLORING ARTWORK: THE ART OF SAUL BERNSTEIN**

A painting exists as the artist's rendering or impression of whatever it is he or she depicts. We, therefore need to pay particular attention to the qualities of that particular image. We need to examine line quality, shadow, medium, focus, and background. Where does the painting direct our focus? Why would the artist paint the person or scene in this particular way? What is the effect of that depiction?

Bernstein wrote to Henrietta Szold about his progress:

For the last few years I have been constantly analyzing my sentiments in an attempt to understand which were due to capricious individual associations, and which were in touch with universal feelings of mankind. I want to learn why things impress me, so that I may know how to impress others.

My sentimental ghetto education plus my rough and materialistic American education--the dry goods, peddling and barroom experience--have reinforced the inherited makeup of my character. I am capable of reflecting coldly, and I am able to throw myself into a state of nervous excitement over the construction of a picture. One needs coldness at the very end, and nervous excitement to offset the mathematical dryness and mechanical labor during its creation. I appreciate the morality and mystery of the Jew, yet I love the beauty of form and color of the Greeks. If only I can give free rein to certain qualities within myself I shall be capable of producing a unique harmony. My composite nature serves me well, or shall--when I am freed from all material struggles.¹³

Think about Bernstein's comments as we analyze his art. By looking at these paintings alongside photographs, we see other questions arise. Typically, we associate a photograph with something "truthful" and a painting as an interpretation. How is a photograph like the painting? How are both types of portraits staged and artificial in their own way? How do they both interpret their subjects? How do both photographs and paintings expose similar truths about the people they capture? We will keep these questions in mind as we turn to Saul Bernstein's passion--the art he created.

¹³ Levin 14-15.

Saul Bernstein: Inventory List

Please return the binder with the trunk. Feel free to copy any pages that you feel you need for classroom use. When you repack your trunk, please make sure to include all of the following objects and supplies:

Photos:

- Saul Bernstein as peddler in Elkhorn Coal Mining Region, 1892
- Saul Bernstein with first easel in Pocahontas, VA, 1893
- Portrait photo of Saul Bernstein in Cracow, Poland, 1903
- Jennie Abel Bernstein holding Bernstein family photos, circa 1903 (not dated)

Photo Reproductions of Artwork:

- "The Rabbi" (1904)
- "Jennie" (1904)
- "Self Portrait" (1905)

Letters and Documents:

- Ship Manifest, 1893
- Letter from Jennie Bernstein to Henrietta Szold on the occasion of Saul Bernstein's death, dated June 14, 1905
- Letter from Henrietta Szold to Jennie Bernstein on the occasion of Saul Bernstein's death, dated June 20, 1905

Objects:

- Tefilin and case
- Kiddush cup
- 3 wooden spindles with thread
- 2 wooden shoe stretchers
- tin canister
- working metal scale
- wool hat
- suede vest
- Artist's pack: canvas, brushes, watercolors, palette

Biographical Sketch: Saul Bernstein



Saul Bernstein was born on May 26, 1872 in Posvol, Lithuania to Wolf Bernstein and Ida Bernstein. Saul grew up under the government district of Kovno, Russia. Saul's father was a scholar by choice and a bookbinder by trade; he preferred the life of study to his work. As a result, Saul's family was always very poor; his mother was a dressmaker to help support the family. When Saul was thirteen, his father sent him to study *Talmud*, or the commentary on the Five Books of Moses, in the neighboring town of Poniewicz. Even at this young age, Saul displayed a talent for art; his teachers frequently caught him sketching rather than studying. It soon became clear to Saul that he could not practice what he loved in this environment; he sought greater opportunity to develop himself as an artist. After receiving a letter from an uncle, Abram Shalowitz, in Baltimore in 1889, Saul saw his opportunity to leave Lithuania. In the autumn of 1889, Saul boarded a ship for America using the money his mother raised over the years as a dressmaker. He arrived in New York Harbor alone and took the train to Baltimore to meet his uncle. Saul was seventeen years old.

Saul remained in his uncle's house only one week before embarking on his own as a tin peddler on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The young man spoke little English, and carried his wares on his back, day after day. Saul's pack carried something else as well-- his pencils, sketchpad, box of watercolors, and a folding easel. Saul became successful enough as a peddler to bring his parents and younger brother to the United States in 1894. When Saul settled in Coopers, West Virginia as a partner in a local country store, he covered the walls with his work--a sight that did not go unnoticed by Louis Lutzky, a shoe drummer travelling through the area. Lutzky was attracted to the small store by the gaily decorated signboard of the Silver and Bernstein Clothing Store. As he approached, two large charcoal canvases adorned the doorway: one the likeness of Czar Alexander II of Russia, the other of George Washington. Once inside, Lutzky found every inch of the walls covered in pencil drawings, most depicting Jewish life in Russia. The man suggested Saul enter the Maryland Institute School of Art and Design (now the Maryland Institute College of Art).

Over the next several years, Saul attended the Maryland Institute, the Metropolitan School of Fine Arts in New York, and later in 1897, and the Academy Julian in Paris where he resided for several years. Saul traveled throughout Europe observing and painting in both small towns and large cities. By late autumn of 1901, approximately fifty of Bernstein's sketches had reached the Baltimore home of Henrietta Szold (see *Who is Henrietta Szold?*). Bernstein became acquainted with Szold through his membership in the Zionist organization *Hovevei Zion*--Lovers of Zion (see *What is Zionism?*). Szold would later become one of the most prominent Zionists of her day. Bernstein also met the brother of his future wife--Senior Abel at a Zionist meeting. In 1898, Saul even attended the Second Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. In November of 1901, Szold held a sale of Bernstein's work. Several pieces found their way into the homes of the most prominent Baltimoreans, among them Etta and Claribel Cone, whose collection would form the centerpiece of the Baltimore Museum of Art, the American writer Gertrude Stein, and several others. Bernstein continued to show his work throughout the United States in Europe over the next four years. In 1903, Bernstein married Jennie Abel in New York, and the couple settled in Baltimore. In May of 1905, Bernstein died suddenly at the age of thirty-three. His wife was pregnant with their first and only child, Paul, at the time.

Who is Henrietta Szold?



Henrietta Szold, was born December 21, 1860. She was the oldest of eight children born to Rabbi Benjamin Szold and Sophie Schaar Szold. Henrietta lived in Baltimore for her childhood and young adult life. Her father, one of the founding rabbis of the congregation Oheb Shalom, raised Henrietta as a scholar. After she graduated from Western High School in 1877, she became the school's temporary principal. Szold continued to teach French, German, botany, and math at Misses Adams School for Girls in Baltimore for the next fifteen years. In addition, Henrietta also taught Bible History at her father's congregation.

In 1888, Henrietta joined the Isaac Levinsohn Literary Society and found a cause that would occupy her for much of her adult life--literacy and education. One year later, Szold convinced the society to open a night school for Russian immigrants to learn English. Szold taught and supervised the program until 1893. At the same time, Szold wrote and edited work for the fledgling Jewish Publication Society.

Szold met Saul Bernstein at a meeting of *Hovevei Zion*--lovers of Zion. Bernstein's future brother-in-law, Senior Abel, first introduced Szold to the cause of Zionism. Szold became well acquainted with Jennie Bernstein, Saul Bernstein's future wife. After Saul's death, Szold wrote to Jennie of their friendship:

Can you come and let me have a glimpse of you to renew my contact with one of the bravest women I have known? It was your brother Senior Abel and his associates who first led me to Zionism, the cause which has made the content of my life these forty-five years. You mention what I did for Saul Bernstein--not what he did for me! My contact with him was an enrichment I have never forgotten.¹⁴

¹⁴ Alexandra Lee Levin. Saul Bernstein, Artist: Protégé of Henrietta Szold.

It was not until 1907, however, that Szold joined the organization in which she would truly make her mark. Szold became a part of the Hadassah Study Circle, a Zionist woman's group, in 1907. Two years later, Henrietta traveled to Palestine with her mother. The trip would change her life. After her return, Henrietta focused all of her energies on health issues within the state of Palestine. In 1912, on Purim, Szold established Hadassah, a women's Zionist organization that still exists today. While serving a term as president of the group, Szold also became involved in the American Zionist Medical Unit. She would later help to implement the Rothschild-Hadassah Hospital in Palestine in 1918, along with the Hadassah School of Nursing. Eight years later, Szold retired from Hadassah, but continued her work in Israel. With the rise of Nazi power in Germany in 1933, Szold became the director of yet another organization--Youth Aliyah. She established this group as a way to resettle and train refugee Jewish children for life in Palestine. On February 13, 1945, Szold died at the age of eighty-five in the hospital that she helped to build. She is buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

What is Zionism?



Zionism, the political movement for settlement and statehood of the land of Israel, began in the late nineteenth century. The term "Zion" derives from references to Jerusalem in psalms and throughout the Five Books of Moses and other ancient Hebrew writings. After the destruction of the First Temple, Zion refers to the Land of Israel as a whole and the yearning for a Jewish homeland there. Psalm 137:1 reads:

*By the rivers of Babylon
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.*

The term "Zionism" first appears as a political term at the end of the nineteenth century. In the April 1, 1890 edition of his journal *Selbstemanzipation*, Nathan Birnbaum coined the term in reference to settlement and philanthropy in what was then the British-controlled State of Palestine. It was Theodor Hertzl, however, who truly adopted the term as his own--and began speaking of it in terms of returning to a Jewish homeland.

Zionism emerges as a movement in reaction to ideas and events occurring in late nineteenth century Europe. During this time, the Jewish Enlightenment movement, called the *Haskalah*, was flourishing. *Haskalah* urged the Jewish participation and integration into mainstream European society while at the same time fostering an appreciation for Jewish history and intellectualism. Writers, historians, philosophers and others strove to define Jewish identity as a part of--rather than separate from--the place in which they lived. At the same time, however, members of the *Haskalah* in Eastern Europe became disillusioned with such ideas. For those Jews living in Russia, Poland, and Rumania, Europe was a place of persecution and anti-Semitism. Throughout Russia, pogroms--government sanctioned mobs of destruction and murder--wreaked havoc on the country's Jewish communities. Palestine offered hope--a place where Jews could flourish in their own land.

Zionism came to the United States via these groups of Eastern European intellectuals. In the 1880's and 1890's, *Hovevei Zion* groups--Lovers of Zion--began to emerge in many big cities. It was through one of these groups that Saul Bernstein and Henrietta Szold became acquainted and active with the movement. Such groups were filled with young people hoping to settle and buy land in Palestine. Zionism played a profound role in both Bernstein's and Szold's careers. Szold made Zionism her life's work while Bernstein's art reflected an interest in promoting Jewish culture.

The Immigrant's Journey

The immigrant's journey from Eastern Europe to the United States was not an easy one. After acquiring the necessary papers for departure and boarding the ships, immigrants were often confined to the steerage section of ships which could hold up to two thousand people. In the steerage section, immigrants were housed in metal berths three bunks high, where they remained during their two-week journey, amidst unsanitary conditions that included spoiled food and unwashed bodies which caused many cases of sea-sickness. Meals were served in dining rooms with long tables. On older ships, however, passengers often ate from tin mess kits in their steerage quarters.

Upon arrival at Ellis Island, immigrants did not immediately disembark but were often forced to wait in steerage for days at a time before boarding a ferry to the immigration station. The harbor was usually crowded with steam ships, and as many as 20,000 immigrants waited for processing. The conditions on the ferries themselves were stifling. Many people died from contagious diseases waiting to make the trip across the harbor.

Once the immigrants finally landed in Ellis Island they were each given a numbered tag that corresponded to the page and line number in the ship manifest where their names appeared. They then formed a line, extending all the way from the dock baggage room up to the second floor where the immigrants were met by a team of doctors and inspectors. The inspection process was very thorough, and doctors searched immigrants for signs of disease, and mental deficiencies. They were especially on the lookout for trachoma, a highly contagious eye disease, as well as cholera, favus (a nail and skull fungus), and insanity.

After the medical inspection, immigrants were required to illustrate that they were competent through a variety of tests proving they were capable of providing for themselves in the US. Often single women and children were required to show proof that they knew someone in the US who would support them before they were allowed to leave Ellis Island. Those without such documents and those who failed to pass the medical inspection were forbidden to leave Ellis Island until they either received the necessary documents, or recovered from illness. Two percent of all immigrants were deported back to their countries of origin because they suffered from an incurable disease, or failed to meet inspection requirements.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ashkenazim Hebrew for Germany, *Ashkenazim* refers to those Jews who made their homes in Europe. *Ashkenazi* Jews have particular customs that are distinct from the *Sephardi* Jews of Spain and North Africa.

Castle Gardens Immigration station located in New York (in what is now Battery Park) through which 8 million immigrants entered the US, before the opening of Ellis Island. Castle Gardens operated from 1855-1890. Saul Bernstein arrived at Castle Gardens in 1889 before settling in Baltimore.

Czar Alexander III The Czar of Russia in the late nineteenth century, Czar Alexander III enacted oppressive laws governing where Jews could live within Russian boundaries. He also established *pogroms*, organized looting, destruction of property, and murder in Jewish areas by members of the government.

Claribel and Etta Cone Two Jewish sisters who became connoisseurs and patrons of European modern art in the early twentieth century. The sisters are most noted for their collection of Matisse paintings that form the basis for the collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Diaspora Jewish people living outside the land of Israel.

Ellis Island Ellis Island was the gateway through which more than 12 million immigrants passed between 1892 and 1954 in their search for freedom of speech and religion, and for economic opportunity in the United States.

Hadassah Jewish women's Zionist organization originated by Henrietta Szold. The organization takes its name from the Hebrew name for Esther. Hadassah was founded on Purim of 1912.

Indentured Servant A person who is bound to work for a specific period of time in exchange for training for a passage to another country.

Manifest Lists Passenger lists, which documented passenger information upon entry aboard ship, by the Captain of each vessel.

Naturalization The process by which an immigrant becomes a citizen of his or her new country.

Nativism An anti-foreigner, and anti-immigrant policy that was significant in the United States during the 19th century, and the early 20th century.

Pale of Settlement 25 Russian provinces where the czarist authorities permitted the permanent residence of Jews. The Jews were confined to this area by laws of 1795 and 1835.

Palestine The name for what is now the State of Israel while it was under Arab and later British control.

Pogrom The Russian word for “thunderstorm”, this word describes violent attacks on Jews beginning in the 1880s through the Russian revolution in 1917.

Sephardim “Spanish” in Hebrew. A descendant of Spanish or Portuguese Jews, also applies to Jews in the Mediterranean as opposed to the Ashkenazim.

Shtetl The Yiddish word for a Jewish townlet in Eastern Europe.

Yiddish A combination of German and Hebrew that was the primary language spoken by the *Ashkenazi* Jews of Eastern Europe.

Zionism A Jewish movement that arose in the late 19th century in response to growing anti-Semitism and sought to reestablish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Modern Zionism is concerned with the support and development of the state of Israel.

Immigration History Resources

Books for Teachers:

- Joyce Antler, The Journey Home: Jewish Women and the American Century, New York, 1997.
- James Ciment (editor), Encyclopedia of American Immigration, Armonk, NY, 2001.
- Isaac M. Fein, The Making of an American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985.
- Samuel Joseph, Jewish Immigration to the US from 1881 – 1910, New York, 1914.
- Arthur Kurzweil, From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History, New York, 1994.
- Avrum K. Rifman, Centennial of Eastern European Jewish Immigration, 1882-1982: Exploring the Immigrant Experience of Baltimore as a Gateway City, Baltimore, 1982.
- Robert A. Rockaway, Words of the Uprooted: Jewish Immigrants in Early 20th Century America.
- Yaakov Ro'i (editor), Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union, Portland, OR, 1995.
- Loretto Dennis Szucs, Ellis Island: Tracing Your Family History Through America's Gateway, Provo, Utah, 2000.

Books for Students:

- Cynthia Klinkel and Robert B. Noyed, Ellis Island, Chanhassen, MN, 2001.
- Kathryn Lasky, Dreams in the Golden Country: The Diary of Zipporah Feldman, New York, 1998.
- Milton Meltzer, The Jewish Americans: A History in Their Own Words 1650 – 1950, New York, 1982.
- Ronald Takaki. A Larger Memory: A History of Our Diversity with Voices. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998.

Web Sites:

- www.ellisland.org – Ellis Island's web site, virtual tours of exhibitions, on-line passenger search
- www.dreamsoffreedom.org – virtual tours of immigration museum in Boston, sample lesson plans
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/~26786/en/introduction> – “From One Life to Another” – articles about different ethnic group immigration stories
- www.jewishgen.org – connects researchers of Jewish genealogy worldwide