

Glimpses of the "Old" American Jewish West
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Collated by Jerry Klinger

They sleep in the past, gentle forgetfulness, resting under stones gray.

Names recognized no more. Even gone are those who loved them once.

Yet, from distant yesterday, they shaped our today.

J. Rice

JEWISH DOGCATCHER, SAN FRANCISCO - 1887

You have never heard of a Jewish dogcatcher, have you? We have a Jew here whose name is Jake Lindo - no matter about his father being known as Leibush Labershinsky - who has the contract of taking in everything in sight, in the shape of canine corporosity, and he, the same Jake Lindo, is at the lead of the dispatching wagons, and his Spanish-Americans snake every dog they see, tag or no tag, and take it to the pound. Jake makes \$500 a month by the operation. What his boss, blind Buckley, gets out of the racket is none of your business - certainly none of mine.

"The American Israelite, Cincinnati, Sept. 30, 1887. Jacob Lindo had been an auctioneer prior to his dog catching activities, his warehouse being at 609-611 California St., San Francisco. His brother Joseph, a horse-drawn hack operator lived at 636 Sacramento St. WSJH Jan 1985

A JEWISH ESKIMO IN THE MOVIES -1936

Unique among Hollywood's film folk is Mala, handsome screen star who has the leading role in MGM's "Last of the Pagans," which opened last night at the Filmarte Theatre. Mala is an Eskimo-Jew, son of a Jewish fur trader whose business earned him to the far north, where he fell in love with and married a beautiful Eskimo girl.

In "Last of the Pagans" he plays the role of a young Polynesian, who is betrayed by a white man and torn from his loved ones and his peaceful existence on an idyllic island in the South Pacific, to work in the phosphate mines in Pallia. Philip. Goldstone produced the picture, which was suggested by Herman Melville's novel Typee.

B'nai B'rith Messenger, Los Angeles, March 6, 1936. The Filmarte Theatre was at 1228 Vine Street, Hollywood.

WSJH April 1985

KILLED BY THE APACHES - 1886

Benson, Arizona Territory - M. Goldbaum, a merchant of this city, who left here two weeks ago to prospect in Whetstone Mountain, was found murdered by Apaches sixteen miles south of here yesterday.

The American Israelite, Cincinnati, June 11, 1886, Marcus Goldbaum had settled in Arizona in the mid-1850s. He had a son, Abraham, his nephew, David Goldbaum, was a longtime resident of Ensenada in Baja California, and from 1927-1930 served as Mayor of that city.

RABBINIC PARTIALITY IN SAN FRANCISCO -1888

San Francisco, August 24 1888. Dr. [Aaron J.] Messing has had two Bar Mitzvahs last week, but he put his sanctifying hands on the head of that boy only who paid coin, while the other, though brighter but poorer, had to step down without a blessing. This is true and I defy anyone to tell me to the contrary. Some day, when this boy takes an honorable seat among the money-men, Dr. Messing will be eager to invent an excuse, but there were too many people present, who saw that poor boy's shamed face and said "shame." He may regret this un-kind action.

The Jewish Voice, St. Louis, September 6, 1888, The San Francisco columnist for this St. Louis paper was obviously very unhappy with the favoritism displayed by the Congregation Beth Israel rabbi.

A CRESCENT CITY, CALIFORNIA PIONEER -1918

A host of friends will mourn the loss of Wolf Moms, one of the early settlers in Northern California, who died Friday night [May 31, 1918] at his home, 1388 E. 17th Street [Los Angeles]. The funeral was held last Sunday afternoon. Rabbi Isidore Myers officiated. Burial was at the Home of Peace Cemetery.

Mr. Morris was born in Russian Poland eighty-five years ago, came to America by sailing vessel, went by boat to Panama, crossed the Isthmus on horseback and came to California by boat, settling in Crescent City, Del Norte County. He sold merchandise by horseback through Montana and Idaho forty years ago, and was several times attacked by Indians. For the past ten years he had lived in Los Angeles.

He leaves a Widow and eight sons and daughters - Samuel, and Abraham, of the Morris Hardware Company; Isidore, a lawyer; Jesse, in the army; Mrs. Rachel Livingston and Mrs. Jennie Livingston and Fannie and Frances Morris.

B'nai B'rith Messenger, Los Angeles, June 7, 1918.

WSJH Jan 1983

HIGH HOLY DAYS, LOS ANGELES, 1870

Editor, Hebrew: These two solemn holidays were celebrated here in a manner which reflects great credit upon us, as the chosen people of God. There were this year two places of worship in

this city. The old Congregation B'nai B'rith held their services at Stearns' Hall, which was crowded to excess. Many of our most eminent Christian citizens were present; the prayers were read by the Rev. A.W. Edelman, who also delivered two eloquent discourses in English, one on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, and the other on Kol Nidray night. The services were very impressive, the reading most effective (according to the Orthodox style), and the lectures gave great satisfaction to our congregation. Even our Christian friends were deeply impressed with all the ceremonies.

The other place of worship was merely a minyan, gotten up by a few Jerusalem Israelites who have lately settled down in this county. Their mode of worship I cannot enough describe; suffice it to say that it was something I never witnessed before. The gentleman who officiated as reader shook himself as though he had the chills and fever, yet he yelled and screamed enough to set a whole regiment of dead soldiers crazy.

Business was almost suspended. Everything passed off quietly and respectably. With all my best wishes for the coming year to you and all the readers of your valuable paper, I remain,

A. Subscriber,

Los Angeles

The Hebrew, San Francisco, October 21, 1870.

WSJHQ July, 1982

Religious Education, Marysville - 1878

Marysville, California. - Dr. A.J. Messing, of San Francisco, who visited this city last week for the purpose of establishing a Hebrew Sabbath school, accomplished his mission quite successfully. On Sunday afternoon, pursuant to call, a large number of our Hebrew citizens assembled at the hall of the I.O.B.B. (B'nai B'rith), when the proposed Sabbath school was organized... Dr. Messing has recently established similar schools in Virginia City, Reno and Grass Valley.

The Hebrew, San Francisco, Dec. 27, 1878

WSJHQ April 1980

Help for Jews of Morocco from North San Juan, California, 1860

The Hebrew citizens of this place have contributed \$28 towards the relief of the persecuted Jews of Morocco. Mr. A. Weil collected the amount and forwarded it to the San Francisco agency. We observe that a vessel was about to sail from New York stored with supplies for the sufferers.

The Hydraulic Press, North San Juan, February 11, 1860

WSJHQ July 1983

A Nevada Justice of the Peace - 1892

Virginia City, Nevada - Mr. Louis Loebenstein was elected Justice of the Peace at the late election, the first time a Jew has ever been elected to the office. Mr. Loebenstein is a son of the late Jonas M. Loebenstein, of Baltimore, Maryland.

The American Israelite, Cincinnati, December 8, 1892

Marriages in Red Bluff, California -1861

A perfect marrying stampeded has taken place, or is about to, among the Hebrews in this section. In less than six months, more than two-thirds of the single ones will have laced their necks in the matrimonial noose.

Red Bluff Beacon, quoted in the Marysville Appeal, April 27, 1861

WSJHQ April 1982

A Pioneer Alaskan -1882

On the 9th inst. (December 9, 1882), there died in this city (San Francisco), Benjamin Levi noted as being the man who, on October 9, 1867, when the territory of Alaska was formally turned over to the United States authorities assembled at New Archangel (Sitka), hauled down the Russian flag, and in its stead raised the Stars and Stripes. After that Mr. Levi went to Fort Wrangell with his family, engaged in business and remained there until recently, when he came to San Francisco in search of medical assistance. He was for many years an employee of the Alaska Commercial Company.

The Jewish Messenger, New York, December 29, 1882

WSJHQ October 1981

Salvation in Portland -1905

David Solis-Cohen, formerly of this city (San Francisco but he actually lived in Oakland), but now of Portland, who originally came from Philadelphia has been furnishing an interesting story about a Chinese vegetable gardener and peddler who became Christianized. He had been very friendly with a Jewish customer, but upon his conversion, told her that he was very sorry she and her family were bound to go "*Hellee*," unless he could induce them to be saved as he had been. But later when his newly-arrived boy was attacked by a snowballing hoodlum, and the brave little son of the customer drove off the assailants, while the mother of the defender bound up the injured boy's wounds, the Chinese father changed his opinion. He said he would say to the Sunday school teachers, when they told him the same old story and sought to embitter him against his Jewish customers, "*Me from Missouli; show me.*"

The Hebrew, San Francisco, November 10, 1905

WSJHQ July 1981

A Yosemite Fable by I.N. Choynski -1898

The only foothold the Jews ever got in any country after being expelled from Spain, was in Calaveras County, this State, when a number of Marranos drifted into the slough of Stockton, and tramped up to the wonderful geysers, looking for a resting place, after a perilous voyage of several months from the inhospitable shores of Spain, whose Ferdinand and Isabelle spoiled the Egyptians - they came in sight of the marvelous cataract, and a child of nature told those wandering exiles - believing they wanted to know his name, that it was *Yo Semite* - meaning I am a Jew; and sure enough the Indians in that region are the very pictures of Jews.

Public Opinion, San Francisco, March 12, 1898.

WSJHQ October, 1980

Word from Yuma, Arizona -1905

On entering Yuma's only Catholic Church, of rather modest proportions, the visitor beholds immediately above the altar, a beautiful memorial window, the principal figure representing the Holy Virgin. Below this figure the following inscription somewhat startles the Jewish beholder: "To the memory of Isaac Levy." The facts regarding this window are these: some thirty-five years ago Isaac Levy, *einer von unseren leuten* (one of our people), located here, engaged in business and took unto his Jewish bosom a wife, an estimable Mexican Catholic woman, who was a widow. Levy died two years ago, bequeathed his fortune to his Mexican wife and twelve children. It was in his honor of her late husband whom she dearly loved that the memorial window in the Catholic Church was erected.

Another striking fact connected with the story, which may perhaps illustrate better than anything I know the historical prolificacy of our people, is this: the Mexican widow of Isaac Levy, shortly after the death of her husband, married for the third time, but this time again to one of her own people. The result of her matrimonial ventures may be summed up thus: first husband (Mexican) no children; second husband (Jewish), twelve children; third husband (Mexican), no children. It is but meet to mention that.

M.K.

Emanu-El, San Francisco, February 25, 1905

Jewish Civil War Veterans in San Francisco -1903

The welcome given to the Grand Army of the Republic exceeded in warmth of hospitality, as the leaders of the veterans acknowledged, even that of seventeen years ago. The triumphal arches, the illuminations and the parades, especially that of the array of survivors of the Civil War on the

second day, also exceeded all expectations, and with other exercises made the occasion an especially notable one, worth of its memories and suggestions. Among those notable in the parades or exercises were ex-Governor E.S. Salomon, the chief marshal; ex-Grand commander Sol. Cahen; Vice commander of Lincoln Post, Charles Edelman, who took charge of the meeting on Naval Night; and Herman Isaacs, ninety-six years old invalid inmate of the German Hospital, who was rolled along in a chair, and is a veteran of the Mexican War and of campaigns against the Piute Indians and was sergeant in the Civil War.

The Hebrew, San Francisco, August 21, 1903

WSJHQ - October 1980

Retail Encounter in the Mother Lode -1863

A great, two fisted Irishman, intending to buy a pair of kid gloves of our Hebraic friend, Mr. Fridenberg, insisted on first trying them on! The merchant objected to the magnitude of the glove stretchers, whereat the fellow called him a Jewish son of a bitch. He was ordered out, and when outside, he dared the merchant to come out and get licked. Mr. Fridenberg, who is some on the shoulder, went out, and then the Irishman shot at him. It was then that Israel went up against the Ammonite, prevailed mightily, threw him down, took the pistol away from him, and was about to take the top of his head off, when others interfered and let the fellow off. That is the third pistol which that unoffending and worthy citizen has forcibly taken from ruffians who had shot at him.

The American Flag, Sonora, California, October 8, 1863 (*Some on the shoulder* in the 19th century meant he was a "big bruiser.")

Leipzig Jewry Read about Brigham Young and the Jews of Utah -1867

Great Salt Lake City, Utah, October 18, 1867

At a meeting of Jews of Salt Lake City, held on October 14, 1867, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Since the Honorable Brigham Young (the present head of the Mormons) has never refused a request which our religious community has put to him, and since he has given us the use of an elegant building for our religious services, the following was resolved: We recognize his friendship as well as his courteous manner in agreeing to our requests. We feel obligated to the Honorable Brigham Young and we want to express our sincerest thanks. A copy of these statements are to be sent to the *Daily Telegraph* of this city, to the *Hebrew* and *Hebrew Observer* in San Francisco and also to *The Israelite* in Cincinnati for Publication.

B.Ellis, Sol. Siegel, F.L. Auerbach, Committee.

Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums, Leipzig, January 28, 1868

WSJHQ July 1980

The Word from Oroville -1872

Editor Israelite:

We have in Oroville at present nine families of Yehudim, with twenty-five children, seven single young men, and one single young lady. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we held meetings in the Masonic Hall. Messrs. L.A. Simon and M. Asher acted as chasanim and performed their part well according to the old Polish customs, omitting a good many of the old prayers, and I myself acted on Kol Nidre evening the rabbinical lecturer, according to the style of Minhag America. My text was taken from Lev. XXIII, and the gist of my discourse was that no one could pray, cry, fast, or lament away his sins; if he wishes forgiveness he must reform himself and forgive his neighbor, and live at peace with the word at large.

E.A. Kusel

The Israelite, Cincinnati, November 22, 1872

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