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Voice from the Rocky Mountains: Helena's pioneer Jewish community 1864-1899

Delores J. Morrow

The University of Montana

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A VOICE FROM THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS:
HELENA'S PIONEER JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1864-1889

by

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B.A., University of Montana, 1970

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ABSTRACT

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A Voice From the Rocky Mountains: Helena's Pioneer Jewish Community, 1864-1889 (162 pp.)

Director: K. Ross Toole

This thesis analyzes the occupations and civic involvements of Helena's pioneer Jewish community (1864-1889) and their relationship to the growth and prosperity of Helena.

Primary research sources were city directories and newspapers and the records of the Hebrew Benevolent Association.

Jews played an influential role in Helena's development because of the important positions they occupied in the community. They were involved in mining and trading, two business activities that fostered Helena's initial settlement and encouraged the town's permanent growth. As businessmen, Jews served as distributors of manufactured goods, financiers, and promoters of Helena. Jews gained acceptance in the community on the strength of their voluntary associations and their prominent achievements in both merchandising and banking.

The thesis concludes that the number of Jews in Helena was an indication of economic conditions in the town. Between 1864 and 1889, Helena's Jewish population fluctuated according to the changing economic conditions of the community.

The thesis further concludes that Jews influenced life in Helena and that life in Helena influenced the Jews. The ease with which individual Jews participated in business and social activities in the town determined the character of Jewish religious life. Jews struggled to make a place for themselves in the community and still to maintain their Jewish identity.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. MINERS AND MINING PROMOTERS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. MERCHANTS, BANKERS, AND ENTREPRENEURS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III. COMMUNITY BOOSTERS</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPILOGUE</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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INTRODUCTION

Despite Montana's diverse ethnic heritage, little has been written about the important role foreign-born immigrants played in the settlement of the state.\(^1\) Indeed, considering the fact that Jews were one of the numerically less significant ethnoreligious groups to settle Montana, it is surprising that this group's history has not been overlooked. There are two histories on Jews in Montana, one which gives an overview of Jewish settlement in general and the other which focuses on the Jewish community in Helena between 1866-1900. These histories are important because they identify significant events and personalities and they offer clues for understanding the important position that Jews played in the development of Montana.\(^2\)

This historical study intends to explain further the Jewish experience in Montana. It focuses on the emergence of Helena's Jewish community and its concurrent development with the town. Rather than


spotlighting on certain individuals, it analyzes the occupations and civic involvements of Jews as a group and their relationship to the growth and prosperity of Helena.

The discovery in 1862 of sizable gold deposits on Grasshopper Creek touched off Montana's first placer rush. This strike and later, richer ones at Alder Gulch and Last Chance Gulch attracted thousands of goldseekers to the territory. Included in this migration were hundreds of Jews "attracted by the potentialities of the new region, by the rumors of wealth or motivated by the spirit of adventure." Next to Alder Gulch, Helena (Last Chance Gulch) had the richest gold deposits in Montana. This camp drew many Jewish immigrants and Jews settled in Helena in surprising numbers. Several Helena Jews were prospectors or miners, but many more were merchants who "sought to dig not riches from the earth but profits from the diggers."

Indirectly and directly, Helena's Jewish residents provided some of the incentives that the town needed for its successful transition from gold camp to stable community. They were individuals who figured prominently in Helena's economic and social history. As businessmen and private citizens Jews served as distributors of manufactured goods, financiers and promoters of the community. Helena benefited from their unique religious and ethnic heritage.

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When Montana's placer mines played out and the glamour of the gold rush wore off, Helena avoided the fate of numerous other gold camps. The town survived with the assistance of its Jewish citizens and evolved into a permanent community. Jews played a significant role in the growth of Helena and in the stabilization of the territory. Jews were influential in the development of Helena and other towns in Montana. Their presence was an important factor in the rise of urban society in the West.
CHAPTER I

MINERS AND MINING PROMOTERS

During Montana's placer boom (1862-1870), more than 160 Jewish men lived and worked in Helena.¹ The majority of these early arrivals listed their occupations as merchants and clerks, but there was no absence of Jewish participants in the mining economy. Several Helena Jews occupied themselves solely as miners and prospectors; others tried mining for a time, but then turned to merchandising. Most Jews involved in trading still derived a portion of their incomes from mining. Jews prospected for gold, recorded mining claims, and underwrote mining enterprises. They purchased mining stock and served as officers of mining companies. From the first year of gold discovery in Last Chance Gulch, Helena's Jews participated in the dominant economy of the region.²

The first Helena city directory, published in 1868, lists

¹This figure includes only those men who arrived in Helena between 1864 and 1871 and are known to be Jewish by their identification as such in local newspapers or through their membership in the Hebrew Benevolent Society and their contributions to the Alliance Israelite Universelle, a relief organization set up by French Jews in 1850.

several Jews who indicated mining as their occupation. One Jewish miner, A. Waters, was president pro tempore of the first Hebrew Benevolent Association organized in Helena. Another, A. Cohen, identified in the directory as "Cohen, A., Washoe, miner, Clore Street," was elected a member of this society in 1867. Other Jewish miners, including Louis Kaufman, became residents of Helena during this period, but fail to appear in the 1868 directory. Kaufman came to Helena in 1866 and "engaged in mining until 1872, when he became a partner with Louis Stadler in the meat business." The estimated number of Jews who participated in Montana's placer-mining industry as miners and prospectors varies because of the mobility of the region's population during the gold rush. Jewish prospectors and miners, like their Gentile counterparts, were, by the nature of their occupations, a restless and transient group. Most

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3. Historical Sketch and Essay on the Resources of Montana: Including a Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, Mont.: Herald and Job Printing Office, 1868), p. 158; Helena Montana Radiator, 8 September 1866, p. 3. His name is spelled "A. Walters" in the newspaper, but in the minutes of the Hebrew Benevolent Society and on the membership list included in the Society's 1867 Constitution and Bylaws, he is identified as "A. Waters."


sought placer gold, those isolated surface deposits which required no special processing and could be worked easily. Such deposits never lasted in any one location and, when production started to decline or when news arrived of new-found placer strikes, the miners stampeded to other camps.\(^7\) (See Appendix B.) Those Jews who were members of this migratory population moved frequently. Some lived in Helena only a short time and never became associated with the Jewish community or identified by the newspapers as "Israelites." Other Jews mined claims in neighboring gulches like Trinity, Piegan, and Canyon Creek and never joined the benevolent society established by their coreligionists in Helena.\(^8\) Many Jewish miners and prospectors simply drifted from Helena to other gold camps in Montana, to the Black Hills, or to larger cities in the West: Denver, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco.

One early Jewish miner, David H. Cohen, experienced the transient lifestyle endured by many prospectors and miners. Cohen lived in Helena for a brief period (1865-1867) during the placer boom and later settled in Butte. He was born in 1833 in Germany, where he learned the tailor's trade. In 1852 Cohen emigrated to America, landed in New York, and worked there as a tailor for six weeks, before sailing for San Francisco. When he arrived in California, Cohen placer mined at Jackson for three years; next, he moved to the Sierra country, looking for better diggings, and mined at Rabbit Creek, La Porte, with some success.

\(^7\) Malone and Roeder, History of Two Centuries, pp. 53-55.

\(^8\) The 1870 federal census enumerator lists two such gulch miners, William Poznainsky and Jacob Cohen. Neither man was recorded as a participant in the activities of Helena's Jewish community, although they lived nearby. U.S., Bureau of Census, 1870.
In this camp he purchased a billiard hall, which he operated for about four years. The discovery of gold in the Fraser River country then lured Cohen to British Columbia, where he remained for six months. Meeting little success there, however, he returned to California and resumed mining at La Porte.\(^9\)

In 1862 Cohen continued his search for new bonanzas and followed the gold rush to Virginia City, Nevada Territory, where he found that all the claims had been "gobbled up." Then he moved to nearby Austin and engaged in the liquor business until 1864, when he sold his inventory and "prospected some in quartz mining." In the spring of 1865, Cohen bought a team and drove to Salt Lake City.

Next he went to Alder Gulch, arriving May 16, 1865. . . . He engaged in placer mining, but did not succeed with it, and he packed his blankets to the Blackfoot country and arrived at Ophir City. There he found there had been a stampede, and he followed it and was the thirteenth man to arrive at McClennan Gulch, his claim was therefore No. 13.

It was September, 1865, when he took out on an average $50 a day, for six weeks. Winter then came up and he was obliged either to build a cabin and store up provisions . . . or sell out. He did the latter, coming to Helena. There he remained until 1867, engaged to a limited extent in speculating, and then went to Austin, Nevada, to see his brother. . . .\(^10\)

Marcus Lissner, one of Helena's early hotel owners, similarly


\(^10\)Ibid., p. 131. There is no record of a David H. Cohen joining Helena's Hebrew Benevolent Society during this early period. The Helena Herald (28 February 1867, p. 1) does list a "David Cohen, 28 Bridge st. [sic] merchant tailor" in its directory of city businessmen. Ophir City (Gulch) was located thirty miles from Helena and McClellan Gulch was approximately fifty.
followed the pattern of other Jewish miners by prospecting in gold camps throughout the West before settling in town and opening a business. The son of a Polish merchant, Lissner emigrated to America in 1851 and spent the next two years selling merchandise in Georgia.

In 1853 he started for San Francisco, from there going into the mountain districts, where he engaged largely in mining, hydraulic and blasting work in the Indian hills of Sierra Co., Cal., from 1858 to 1862, meeting with success. In 1862 he went to Virginia City, Nev., during the excitement over the gold discoveries at that place. From there he went to Austin and the Reese river country prospecting, thence going with a wagon train to Salt Lake City. In 1864, during the Alder Gulch excitement, he came to Montana and devoted his time to mining at that place and Silver Bow. In January, 1865, he went on foot to Grizzly Gulch, and turned his attention to prospecting. . . .11

Later in 1865 Lissner quit mining and opened a restaurant-saloon business on a corner of Main and Bridge Streets in Helena. He earned a reputation as a restaurant proprietor who was "No. 1 in the business of catering to the public taste," and his business prospered. 12

In 1867 Lissner leased his restaurant and opened the Western Hotel, but his success in the hotel business was thwarted by Helena's recurrent fires. In 1869 and again in 1874 numerous Helena businesses, including Lissner's hotels, were destroyed by fire. Lissner rebuilt

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11Michael A. Leeson, ed., History of Montana: 1739-1885 (Chicago, Ill.: Warner, Beers and Company, 1885), p. 1230; Miller, An Illustrated History, p. 152. In Miller's biographical sketch, Lissner is described as conducting a merchandise business in Sacramento and a cigar business in both Forest City and Comptonville, California. In the latter location he also engaged in mining. Silver Bow City was a placer camp four or five miles west of Butte City. Grizzly Gulch was immediately south of Last Chance Gulch.

12Helena Montana Radiator, 7 April 1866, p. 3.
his hotel after each disaster, but the 1874 fire encouraged him to lease his new building, to open a billiard hall and, finally, to return to mining. Hoping to recover his commercial losses, Lissner moved to Jefferson County and operated a leaching business for the extraction of silver. Six months later, he returned to prospecting again and soon was dredging for gold in the Missouri River. Lissner continued prospecting in Butte and at Eldorado Bar, until he returned to Helena around 1880 and started managing the International Hotel. 13

Often Jews left placer mining to invest in businesses that they believed involved fewer chances of loss. Many with training as tailors, butchers, and merchants soon abandoned their hopes of finding quick riches in placer mining and turned to more familiar occupations. They realized that neither prospecting nor gold mining assured anyone of instant wealth, and they believed surer profits and safer opportunities existed in other ventures. Occasionally unanticipated setbacks, similar to those endured by Lissner, convinced Jewish businessmen that mining was not the only difficult occupation. A few Jews periodically returned to mining, but most remained in merchandising and limited their involvement in the mining industry to the investment of their capital.

Yet not all of the Jewish businessmen who invested in mining were miners who had turned to merchandising. Some Jews came to Helena

as merchants and chose mining to supplement their incomes and to provide an outlet for their investment capital. The earliest lode records for Lewis and Clark County verify the participation of Helena's Jewish businessmen in mining. Louis Behm, for example, recorded two placer-mining claims, one on February 24, 1865, at the mouth of the Grizzly Gulch and the other on May 2, 1865, in the Green Horn Lode. Behm was one of two Jewish proprietors of a dry-goods and clothing store on Bridge Street. This mercantile firm, Poznainsky and Behm, claimed to be "the oldest established business house in Helena." Evidently Behm's partner, Felix Poznainsky, shared his mining interests because, on May 9, 1867, the Helena Weekly Herald reported that:

Mr. Poznainsky of the dry goods house on Bridge street [sic], near Main, of Poznainsky & Behm, called on us yesterday, and presented us with a pure copper brick weighing nearly one pound, ... an ore from the Parrott lode, located at Butte City. There has been very little said or known about this massive and very rich vein, by the public. Considerable work has been done upon it, however, and the parties owning it are patiently waiting the incoming of capital that shall take hold of it with machinery, and develop it thoroughly. By a practical

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14 The first lode records are listed under Edgerton County and are housed in the Office of the Clerk and Recorder, Lewis and Clark County, Helena, Montana. The county name was changed by House Bill No. 3: An Act Changing the Name of Edgerton County to Lewis and Clark County, Territory of Montana, House of Representatives, Journal, 4th extraordinary session, 17 December 1867, p. 15.

15 Lode Record A, Lewis and Clark County, 24 February 1865, p. 6; Lode Record B, Lewis and Clark County, 2 May 1865, p. 7, Office of the Clerk and Recorder, Lewis and Clark County, Helena, Montana. His name is spelled "Lewis Beahm" in the first entry and "Lewis Behm" in the second. The Green Horn Lode was located in Edgerton County, northeast from Discovery No. 3.

16 Helena Weekly Herald, 6 December 1866, p. 2.
working test, the ore from this ledge yielded 65 per cent pure copper, and $125 per ton in silver. Good enough for a king! 17

Two other merchants, the brothers David and Moses Morris, recorded ten claims in Lewis and Clark County between April 12, 1867, and September 19, 1867. 18 At the same time that David and Moses purchased this mining property, they were operating a general-merchandise business in Helena with another brother, John. 19 Merchants like the Morris brothers preferred trading to mining, but they continued to invest their capital in the mining industry. 20

By the late 1860s, Jews were involved in organizing companies and corporations to extract gold on a larger scale. Montana's placer deposits had become less productive, and more elaborate and costly mining methods were needed to wash increasingly lower grades of ore. 21 Local investors, including Jewish hotel-owner Edward I. Zimmerman, provided the capital necessary to finance various hydraulic-mining operations. On July 20, 1870, Zimmerman and twenty-four other men located 5,200 feet on Grizzly Gulch for a bedrock flume and claimed

17 Ibid., 9 May 1867, p. 3.
20 On 10 May 1880, eight men located 160 acres of placer mining ground in the Independence Mining District. Six of the men were well-known Jewish businessmen, including the brothers Nathan, Julius, Morris, and Samuel Silverman, Samuel Schwab, and Edward I. Zimmerman. Ranches and Ditches, Record D, Lewis and Clark County, 10 May 1880, p. 249.
21 Malone and Roeder, History of Two Centuries, pp. 54-55.
"sufficient ground to furnish a dump for the tailings."  

In the late 1870s and early 1880s, mining required even more costly methods than hydraulicking to extract the rock-imbedded gold and silver. Local investors, some of them Jewish businessmen, continued to furnish capital for Montana's mining industry. By 1886 several of Helena's Jewish merchants emerged as owners of mining stock and officers of mining companies. Morris Sands was vice-president of the James R. Keene Mining and Milling Company and treasurer of the Alpha and Omega Milling and Mining Company. Moses Morris served as president of the Blackfoot Mining and Milling Company and as a trustee of the Mineral Belt Tunnel and Mining Company. Henry Klein also was a trustee of the latter company, president of the Huron Gold Mining Company, and treasurer of the Assiniboine Mining Company. Edward Zimmerman became president of the Mount Helena Mining and Cruse Tunnel Company. With capital derived mainly from merchandising, Helena's Jewish businessmen actively participated in the evolution of regional mining. They helped finance local mining operations and encouraged the growth of industrial mining in Montana.

Helena's Jewish pioneers were miners, mining-property owners, investors, and promoters of the mining industry. They were directly

22Ranches and Ditches, Record D, Lewis and Clark County, p. 351.
23For a discussion of the influence of local and foreign investment on Montana's mining industry, see Malone and Roeder's History of Two Centuries, p. 145.
24D. Allen Miller, comp., Helena City Directory, 1886-7 (Helena, Mont.: Geo. E. Boos, Printer and Binder, 1886), pp. 40-43.
involved in territorial Montana's most important economic activity—mining. Placer gold first attracted white settlers to Last Chance Gulch and, when the placers declined, quartz-gold mining gave the town new life. Helena's Jews were influential participants in the industry that fostered not only the settlement of Helena, but also the continued development of the region.
CHAPTER II

MERCHANTS, BANKERS, AND ENTREPRENEURS

From the earliest years of the gold rush, Jews figured prominently in Helena's business and financial circles. Some started out as miners and prospectors in the gold fields, but the majority of Helena's Jews made their greatest contribution to the community's economic growth as traders, bankers, merchants, and wholesalers. Jews played important roles as participants in Montana's mining economy, but it was their positions in commerce and banking, not mining, which made them a dynamic factor in the economic life of Helena and the territory. Jews profoundly influenced commerce and banking, two occupations that played a dominant part in Helena's growth and development.

This prominence of Helena's Jews in the field of commerce is not unusual considering the European origins of their work habits. Most of the Jews who arrived in Helena between 1865 and 1871 were young men in their twenties and early thirties, recent immigrants from Germany and Central Europe, primarily Bavaria, Prussia, and Poland. (See Appendix A.) Many came from families of tradesmen or had fathers who


\textsuperscript{2}For a discussion of the myth of the dominance of German Jews
engaged in mercantile pursuits. Some Jews had learned their trades as apprentices in family businesses in Europe and brought these skills with them to America. One of Helena's early meat market proprietors, Ben Falk, learned his butchering trade from his father, a butcher and stockdealer in Germany. Ben Falk and other Jews used their skills as butchers, bakers, and merchants to their advantage in the West.

The majority of Helena Jews who engaged in commercial occupations during the placer boom sold general merchandise and clothing. There were also Jewish hotel-owners, saloon-keepers, auctioneers, grocers, butchers, and tailors. (See Appendix C.) Several Jews began their merchandising careers in Montana peddling their wares to other mining camps. Other Jewish merchants, however, settled in town with their families and became clerks, managers, and owners of retail and wholesale businesses.

One of Montana's pioneer merchants, Benjamin Pizer, started out as a peddler in Helena. He and his wife, Jessie, emigrated from Poland in 1868 and journeyed to Helena in the spring of 1869. With only $150 in the mid-nineteenth-century settlement of the West, the reader is referred to the article by Norton B. Stern and William M. Kramer titled "The Major Role of Polish Jews in the Pioneer West," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 8 (July 1967): 326-344.


in capital Pizer purchased a bundle of dry goods, fifty pounds in weight, and began peddling.

For seven years he continued peddling in this way, and by perseverance and economy accumulated a little money. He then bought a wagon and for two years longer continued peddling, traveling over nearly the whole of Montana, . . . March 28, 1878, he opened up in business in Phillipsburg [sic] having bought out Harry Sims, who was a dealer in fruit, tobacco and cigars.5

Benjamin Pizer was not the only Jewish peddler who lived in Helena during the early years of the gold rush. The 1868 city directory lists one Jewish man, H. Cohen, as a peddler.6 There most likely were other Jewish peddlers in Helena at this time, but they either were not included in the directory or gave their occupations as merchants.7

Some Jews may have decided not to remain peddlers because of the remoteness of Montana's mining camps, the only population centers in the territory in the 1860s.8 Other Jews probably did not engage in

6. Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, Mont.: 1866), p. 141. Cohen's name is also listed in the 1866 Constitution and Bylaws for the Hebrew Benevolent Society and his name is spelled "Cohen" not "Cohn" as in the 1868 city directory. Two other peddlers, S. Kinesminghutz and S. Koquenesburgehner, also are recorded in this directory on pp. 148-149, but they could not be identified as Jews. They did not belong to the Hebrew Benevolent Society and were not mentioned in the Helena newspapers.
7. Records concerning Montana peddlers, both Jew and Gentile, are not available in this early period. There were numerous itinerant peddlers in the territory prior to 1870, but their migratory habits make their presence in Helena difficult to document.
peddling because of the risks involved in pursuing such an itinerant occupation. An incredible lawlessness prevailed in Montana's early mining regions. From 1862 to 1863 all travelers, including peddlers, endangered "life and limb" when journeying in the Bannack-to-Virginia City area. Henry Plummer's road agents preyed upon stagecoaches, gold shipments, and individual wayfarers. Most of Helena's Jewish merchants preferred to open small retail shops in town, rather than to endure the loneliness and hazards of the road.

During the early years of Helena's settlement, Jewish merchants dominated the retail sale of general merchandise in the gold camp. In its directory of city businesses, published February 28, 1867, the Helena Herald listed seventeen Jewish dry-goods and clothing merchants to three Gentiles in the same business:

Dry Goods and Clothing.

- Ladies' Dry Goods Emporium. 36 Bridge street S Levy
- W Weinstein & Bro. 26 Bridge street, clothing store
- I Haas. 20 Bridge street, clothing establishment
- J Helfer & Co. 15 Bridge street, dry goods and clothing
- Poznainsky & Behm. 13 Broad [Bridge] street, dry goods and clothing
- Lavenburg & Co. 11 Bridge street, Temple of Fashion
- Ellis & Bros. 18 Bridge street, dry goods and clothing
- Honest Charley's auction and commission store.
- 16 Bridge street
- I Harris. Bridge street opposite Main. Dry goods and clothing, miners' outfitting store
- Emanuel & Co. Cor Main and Bridge streets, clothing, boots and shoes

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G Goldenburg [sic] & Co. Cor Main and Bridge street, California clothing store
J P Nohm. West Main street, west side, dry goods and clothing
Loeb & Bro. 8 Main street, clothing merchants.
Remish & Stenzel. 20 Main street, pioneer cheap John auction store.
Gens [sic] & Klien. [sic] 28 Main street, clothing, boots and shoes, cigars and tobacco.
John Now. 73 Main street, dry goods, groceries and hardware.
L Blumenthal. 43 Main street, clothing, boots and shoes.
J C Levy. Main street, clothing, tobacco
A Cohen. 5 Main street, clothing, boots and shoes.
John Morris & Bro. 3 Main street, clothing, boots, shoes etc.10

Two of the Jewish clothing stores, Gans and Klein, and J. C. Levy, also sold tobacco and cigars. After clothing and dry goods, tobacco products were the most popular merchandise carried by Jewish retail outlets. Three of the six tobacco-store owners enumerated in the newspaper's directory were Jewish.11 Almost exclusively, Helena's pioneer residents purchased dry goods, clothing, and tobacco from Jewish merchants.

Not all the business conducted by Jews was confined to the retail trade. Some Jewish merchants expanded their existent operations to include wholesaling, and others, including Gumpert, Goldberg and

10 Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1. Stenzel of Remish and Stenzel is not known to be Jewish. Two merchants, J. P. Nohm and John Now are not Jewish. Honest Charley's auction and commission store might have been owned by a Jewish merchant, either Charles Friedman or Charles Blum. Both were merchants in Helena at this time, and not identified with a particular store.

11 Helena Herald, 23 February 1867, p. 1. W. Brown, M. Goldman, and Koenigsberger and Brother were all Jewish.
the Morris brothers, opened new stores that specialized in the wholesale trade.

New Clothing & New Store--Messrs. Goldberg & Morris Bros., at No. 63 Main Street, ... have just opened in their splendid new store room a magnificent stock of all kinds of gents & boys' clothing, hats, boots, etc. This firm are [sic] already receiving orders in the jobbing line, and will pay special attention to the wholesale trade. Give them a call.12

Jewish wholesalers urged merchants in neighboring gold camps to purchase their goods in Helena. They offered their prospective customers numerous inducements, including prompt service, low prices, and large selections of merchandise. One clothing and dry-goods store, Loeb and Brother, promised: "Orders from the Country promptly attended to."13 Another Jewish wholesale merchant, A. Weinshenk, announced his purchase of "the largest stock of ladies' dress goods ever brought to Montana" and offered to sell it to his retail buyers for very persuasive terms.

... He [A. Weinshenk] will not be undersold. Country dealers will do well to give him a call at his wholesale house, (there being two places of business, wholesale and retail,) No. 40 Bridge Street.14

Some "country dealers" were Jewish merchants from other mining towns. They depended on Helena's wholesalers for their merchandise and they journeyed to town several times a year to purchase their goods. The local newspapers occasionally announced the presence in Helena of

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such visiting merchants.

Charles Blum, that genial and popular Deer Lodge dry goods merchant, is over on both business & pleasure--purchasing such minor articles in his line as will insure him the most complete stock on the West Side, and shaking the hands of friends on every corner. . . .15

Again in 1878, the Helena Daily Herald reported the arrival of two Jewish merchants on a purchasing expedition.

Wm Weinstein and Wm Copinus, enterprising and prosperous merchants of the West side, the former of Philipsburgh [sic] and the latter of Butte, have been in town several days, making purchases for the spring and summer trade.16

All three of these merchants had lived in Helena in the 1860s and engaged in merchandising.17 When they moved on to new locations and opened general stores, they naturally retained their connections with Helena wholesalers.

Helena's Jewish merchants kept their ties with relatives and friends engaged in merchandising in other parts of the country. They utilized these ties to set up trading contacts which were beneficial, not only to build up their retail and wholesale businesses in Helena, but also to open new stores in other camps. They depended upon Jewish business associates both in Montana and in the trading centers of New York and San Francisco. Helena's Jewish businessmen participated in

merchandising networks which consisted of brothers, cousins, and friends in shifting partnerships. It was through such partnerships that many Jews succeeded in business in Helena.

A number of Helena's early general-merchandise and tobacco stores were owned by Jewish men in partnerships with their brothers. In 1867 at least four of the seventeen Jewish-owned dry-goods and clothing stores and one of the three Jewish-owned tobacco stores listed in the newspaper directory were family operations. Also, at this time there were some Jewish firms identified only as Emanuel and Company or G. Goldberg and Company, which probably were partnerships between either brothers, relatives, or Jewish friends. One of these stores, for example, Lavenberg and Company, was owned by Alexander Lavenberg and his brother Isaac. Four Helena dry-goods and clothing stores, Auerbach Brothers, Loeb and Brother, Morris Brothers, and Sands Brothers, were owned in the late 1860s by Jewish brothers and were still operating under these partnerships in 1879.

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19 Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1. The family-owned dry-goods and clothing stores were W. Weinstein and Brother, Ellis and Brothers, Loeb and Brother, and John Morris and Brother. The only family-owned tobacco store was Koenigsberger and Brother.

20 Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1.

21 Helena Daily Herald, 27 March 1871, p. 3; Deer Lodge New Northwest, 1 June 1888, p. 3.

In 1867 Loeb and Brother was owned by Bernhard and Jacob Loeb, "Wholesale and Retail Dealers in Clothing, Dry Goods, Boots & Shoes." Both were immigrants from Hesse Darmstadt, Germany, who had worked for a while on the East coast before following the gold rush to California. The brothers had operated mercantile businesses in Sacramento, California; Portland, Oregon; British Columbia; and Boise City, Idaho, before moving to Helena in 1866 and opening their clothing store. By 1873 Loeb brothers were advertising a store on Main Street which specialized in "clothing and gents' furnishings." In the early years of their business in Helena, Bernhard and Jacob Loeb publicized themselves as "Direct Importers from San Francisco and New York," but they never claimed to have the business connections which several other firms in Helena enjoyed.

Several stores operated by Jewish merchants in Helena were branch operations or affiliates of firms in Denver, San Francisco, and New York. Often the merchants who managed these stores were related by blood or marriage to their partners in Helena and to their business associates in these larger cities. Morris Brothers, for example, was one Helena general-merchandise store which was owned by three Jewish

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brothers and was operated initially as a branch house. In the 1860s
John, Moses, and David Morris were operating a dry-goods store in
Denver, Colorado. They decided to expand their operation by opening
two mercantile stores in Montana, one at Virginia City and one later at
Helena. John Morris ran the Virginia City store until 1863, when a
fire destroyed the Morris' business in Denver, and his brothers
joined him in Montana. Eventually, the whole family moved to Helena
and sold out their Virginia City interests.27 By 1867 the Morris
brothers were operating one general store, John Morris and Brother,
and announcing the opening of a wholesale store, which they owned in
partnership with their brother-in-law Grupert Goldberg.28 John Morris
sold out his interest in the business in 1869 and soon after Mr.
Goldberg was reported living in Corinne, Utah. In 1879 Morris Brothers,
owned by David and Moses Morris, was still in operation on Main Street
in Helena.29

Another firm with family connections was Koenigsberger and
Brother, a branch of the Koenigsberger family firm in San Francisco.
In 1867, this store was operated by Philip and S. Koenigsberger who
sold cigars and tobacco at 13 Main Street.30 Evidently, it was a

27 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 1238; Miller, An Illustrated

28 Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1.; Helena Herald
Supplement, 26 June 1867, p. 2.

29 Helena Daily Herald, 12 February 1872, p. 3; Ibid., 6 April

30 Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1.
successful establishment because on December 4, 1873, the Helena Weekly Herald noted the departure of one of its owners, S. Koenigsberger, on an extended vacation.

This morning's coach for Corinne took out, among other passengers, Mr. S. Koenigsberger and wife, who have taken their departure for an extensive trip—a trip to Europe. They go direct to London, we believe, where Mr. Koenigsberger has relatives, and after visiting them awhile will go to Paris, Vienna, Berlin & other noted cities on the continent. . . . They will return in May or June next.  

Just one month later, on January 9, 1874, a fire destroyed numerous buildings in Helena, and Koenigsberger and Brother suffered losses totaling $35,000. This fire, which occurred during the already depressed economic conditions following the Panic of 1873, may have prompted the other owner of Koenigsberger and Brother, Philip Koenigsberger, to also leave Helena.  

Mr. Phil. Koenigsberger is about to leave Helena to reside permanently in San Francisco, where the Koenigsberger Brothers have a large tobacco and cigar establishment.  

Success for Jewish businesses in Montana was not guaranteed

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31 Helena Weekly Herald, 4 December 1873, p. 7.  
32 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 717. In the earlier 1869 fire the Helena Weekly Herald reported that Koenigsberger and Brother suffered losses of $5,000, 6 May 1869, p. 7.  
33 Malone and Roeder, A History of Two Centuries, pp. 130, 142. The firm of Koenigsberger and Brother might have been able to recover its losses from the fire of 1874 if the country had not been experiencing a nationwide depression. The Panic of 1873 caused hard times in Montana because it dried up outside investment sources, curtailed the mining of quartz silver and gold and delayed western rail building.  
34 Helena Daily Independent, 15 April 1874, p. 3.
by family or business connections. The more prosperous firms in Helena in the early years, however, were those whose owners kept in close contact with their relatives and friends engaged in merchandising in other cities. Both Auerbach Brothers and Sands Brothers were family operations that utilized their mercantile connections and set up personal ties with their suppliers in New York and San Francisco.

Auerbach Brothers was a general-merchandise store established in Helena around 1869 by two Bohemian immigrants, William J. and Leopold Auerbach. The Auerbach brothers had relatives and friends in San Francisco, so they planned any personal visits in that city to coincide with their trips to purchase goods for the Helena store. In 1872 the Helena Daily Herald announced the departure of Leopold Auerbach on a buying trip to San Francisco and commented at length on the firm's ability to purchase quality California goods for the Helena market because of its connections.

Among the departures this morning, was Mr. L. Auerbach, of Auerbach Bros., general merchants of this city. Mr. Auerbach goes direct to San Francisco, where he will remain a couple of months or more, visiting family and friends, and in looking over the markets of the Pacific Coast. The Auerbach Bros. are among the most considerable shippers to this Territory of California goods, and for several years past have done a large and lucrative trade in the metropolis, and in many of the mining camps east and west of the range. The firm purchase[s] the great bulk of their merchandise from first hands—their teas, coffees, sugars, and other staple groceries [sic] from

35 Neither brother's name is listed in the 1868 Helena city directory. Both are listed in the Hebrew Benevolent Society minutes, William was elected to the Society on 3 December 1869, and Leopold was elected a trustee of the Society on 3 June 1869. Only William Auerbach is listed in the 1870 census.
Eventually, Leopold Auerbach set up permanent residence in San Francisco and Auerbach Brothers had a full-time buyer to attend to its purchasing needs. By 1879 the Auerbach brothers had added another partner, Charles Wells, to their firm. With his brother residing in San Francisco, William Auerbach needed someone to help him manage the Helena store.

The Sands Brothers firm in Helena had its family and business connections in Denver and New York. Its owners, Abraham and Julius Sands, were Polish immigrants who had spent their early years in America engaged in merchandising in New York. When the brothers came west during the gold rush, they established a mercantile business in Denver and sent for their younger brother, Morris, to join them. In the 1860s Abraham and Julius started a general-merchandise house in Bannack, Montana, and later transferred their business to Helena.

By 1870 all three brothers were living in Helena and Julius

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36 Helena Daily Herald, 14 February 1872, p. 3.
37 William Auerbach to Leopold Auerbach, 1377, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880, Manuscript Collection 125, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana. The Helena Daily Herald notes the death of L. Auerbach's son in San Francisco, 22 May 1877, p. 3.
Sands was already making buying trips to the East. When announcing Sands's departure on one such trip, the editor of the Helena Daily Herald took the opportunity to express his sentiments toward all the Sands brothers.

For New York.—Mr. Julius Sands, of the firm of Sands & Bro., leaves in a day or two for New York and other eastern cities, to purchase their stock of Dry Goods for the Fall trade. The Messrs. Sands are among the wealthiest and most extensive Dry Goods dealers in Montana, and their trade, which for several years past has been very heavy, is gradually increasing. Always liberal and enterprising as citizens, upright and honorable in their business transactions, they have won the confidence of all who deal with them and therefore merit the success which they have achieved.

In order to continue their successful business in Helena, the Sands brothers decided to maintain even stronger connections with their wholesalers in the East. Julius Sands soon became the resident buyer for Sands Brothers in New York, and attended to all the firm's purchases. He still returned to Montana on yearly business trips, and in 1877 the newspaper noted his arrival in Helena.

Julius Sands, the resident New York member of the dry goods house of Sands Bros., arrived on the delayed coach yesterday morning. Julius looked as happy as a lord, and at present is engaged in shaking hands with his friends of early days.

By the late 1870s, Sands Brothers was one of Helena's largest and most prosperous wholesale and retail stores. With brother Julius

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41 Helena Daily Herald, 23 July 1870, p. 3.

42 Ibid., 18 May 1877, p. 3.
living full-time in New York, Abraham and Morris Sands managed the Helena store. The elder Sands brothers, Abraham and Julius, remained the only partners in the Helena store until 1880 when Morris acquired a partnership interest in the firm.43

Auerbach Brothers and Sands Brothers were not the only early Jewish stores in Helena which had resident buyers in cities outside the territory. Gans and Klein was another Helena firm whose Jewish partners quickly established personal trading contacts with their manufacturers. Louis Gans and Henry Klein also realized the importance of developing their marketing connections in New York and San Francisco.

Louis Gans was an Austrian immigrant who came from a family of merchants. He spent his first year in America peddling goods throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He then moved to Mobile, Alabama, where his brother, F. R. Gans, was located and worked as a clerk.44 In 1862 Louis Gans left the South and came west to California via the Isthmus of Panama. He worked for a time in San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon; and Boise City, Idaho, before moving to Helena in 1865.45

Henry Klein, the son of an Austrian merchant, immigrated to America in 1858. He located first on Long Island, New York, for six years before joining his brothers in San Francisco, where they were


44 Sanders, History of Montana, p. 994. Louis Gans also had another brother, S. M. Gans, located at this same time in New York City.

engaged in the mercantile business. Klein remained in California until 1866 when he journeyed to Montana by way of Umatilla, Oregon, with a pack train full of goods. Soon after he arrived in Helena, he formed a partnership with Louis Gans and established a general-merchandise store, Gans and Klein, which immediately began advertising its California goods.  

Gans & Klein have just opened a splendid stock of goods of California manufacture on Main Street, opposite the Crystal Hotel.

During its early years in Helena, Gans and Klein maintained the business relationships which Henry Klein had developed with wholesalers in San Francisco. The firm continued to purchase its goods in San Francisco and to advertise its reliance on California suppliers.

Just received a large assortment of California Clothing, Blankets, Boots & Shoes, Benkert's Boots Hats & Caps which will be sold cheap for cash. Gans & Klein.

By 1872 Gans and Klein no longer depended upon California manufacturers for its merchandise. The firm preferred to buy goods personally in the East rather than rely on San Francisco wholesalers. One of its owners, Louis Gans, was headquartered in New York and attended to the store's purchasing needs. Mr. Gans still made yearly

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47 *Helena Montana Radiator*, 16 June 1866, p. 3.
49 Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 1213; *Helena Montana Daily Record*, 8 February 1904, p. 8. According to the Census of 1870, both Louis Gans and Henry Klein were living in Helena in that year.
trips to Montana to consult with his partner and look after his business interests. On the occasion of his departure from Helena after one such visit, the Helena Daily Herald explained Gans's position in New York:

For the States.

Louis Gans, senior member of the great clothing house of Gans & Klein, of this city, is about to say good-bye to his numerous friends in Helena, and depart for the East. He will proceed to New York via the C. P. and U. P. Railroads, if the blockade will permit; otherwise, by the old Isthmus route. New York is the headquarters of Mr. Gans, where he is located about nine months in the year, purchasing and manufacturing goods to supply the demands of their immense and constantly increasing trade in Montana ...

Louis Gans and Henry Klein not only owned wholesale and retail houses in Helena, but they also operated a factory in New York, where they manufactured some of the clothing for their Montana market. Gans supervised the firm's New York operations while Klein managed the Helena stores. In 1877 Gans and Klein admitted Herman Gans, Louis Gans's nephew, as a partner in the firm and opened a branch house in Butte. The firm previously had maintained branch stores in Deer Lodge and Diamond City, but they were discontinued and "business was eventually concentrated in the Helena and Butte establishments." By

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50 Miller, An Illustrated History, pp. 573-575.
51 Helena Daily Herald, 13 February 1872, p. 3.
52 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 1213.
1879 Joseph Gans, a brother of Louis Gans, also was working for the Helena store, along with another relative, Fernando Gans. With the addition of Gans family members to the firm, Gans and Klein gradually was owned predominantly by members of the Gans family.

Unlike the successful Gans and Klein firm, many Jewish-owned Helena businesses did not survive the placer boom, consequently, little is known about their owners or their family connections. The records which do survive indicate that Helena Jews engaged in a variety of business partnerships and operated commercial enterprises which were not owned exclusively by family members. Some Jews formed business associations with Gentiles, and others, including Louis Gans and Henry Klein, opened businesses with Jewish partners who were not relatives.

In the late 1860s several Helena businesses were operated by Jewish men with Gentile partners. The exact number of enterprises with this type of ownership is difficult to determine because few of these partnerships remained intact long enough to leave any record of their participants.

One early Helena business which was owned by Jew-Gentile co-partners was the Crystal Palace Hotel. In 1866 its proprietors were Captain J. B. Cox and George M. Cohen, a member of Helena's pioneer

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56 Helena Montana Radiator, 1 September 1866, p. 1.
Jewish community. According to the Montana Radiator, the Crystal Palace owed its reputation as the "A No. 1 hotel of Montana" to George Cohen's management. Considering this strong endorsement by the press, it seems strange that three months later the Helena Herald was announcing Mr. Cohen's departure from the hotel business and the end of his partnership with Cox.

Notice of Dissolution. The co-partnership heretofore existing under the firm name of Cox & Cohen is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All liabilities of the late firm will be settled by Captain J. B. Cox, who will collect all debts, due the old firm & carry on the business on his own account.

Louis Remish was another Jewish businessman who engaged in a short-lived, Jew-Gentile partnership. On February 21, 1867, just months after he was elected one of the trustees of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, Remish was identified by the Helena Herald as one of the owners of Remish and Stenzel, a clothing business. The newspaper announced the expansion of the firm to include a branch

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57 George Cohen was elected a member of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, 12 December 1871. He is also listed as one of the Helena Jewish contributors to the Alliance Israelite Universelle. Cincinnati Israelite, 17 April 1868, p. 6. A Jewish weekly newspaper published in Cincinnati, Ohio. The title was changed to the American Israelite with the issue of 3 July 1874.

58 Helena Montana Radiator, 1 September 1866, p. 1.


store in the Salmon River country.

Remish & Stenzel--These enterprising wholesale & retail clothing dealers on Main Street, have recently shipped from their house here, and from their branch in Virginia [City], some $20,000 worth of ready made first class clothing to the new Salmon River mines, where they have a large store already completed to receive them.61

It might have been the addition of this Idaho operation which encouraged Louis Remish to relinquish his share of the business. By April 18, 1867, the firm was publicizing his withdrawal from the partnership.

CoPartnership Dissolution. The copartnership heretofore existing between the undersigned, under the firm name and style of Remish & Stenzel, doing business at Helena, Montana Terr; and also the copartnership heretofore existing under the firm name and style of Remish, Stenzel and Ellis, at Leesburg, (Salmon River) Idaho Terr., is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due to the said firm will be collected, and all liabilities and debts due by said firm are assumed & will be paid by James Stenzel and Himan Ellis. Louis Remish, James Stenzel, Himan Ellis. . . .62

Two months later he was operating a new clothing store, Remish and Company, "one door below Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Office on Main St."63

Not all business associations between Helena's Jews and Gentiles proved unsuccessful. Louis Kaufman was the Jewish partner in the prosperous Stadler and Kaufman livestock firm.64 In the early 1870s he formed a partnership with Louis Stadler to provide meat for the

62 Helena Herald, 18 April 1867, p. 2.
63 Ibid., 19 June 1867, p. 5.
64 Louis Kaufman was elected a member of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, 12 December 1871. Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943.
gold camps. The two men acquired a small herd of cattle, went into
the business of stock-raising and opened a butcher shop in Helena. 65
Their partnership, which was centered on the cattle business by 1893,
was continuous until the death of Mr. Kaufman in 1933. 66

During the early years of the gold rush, many Helena businessmen,
both Jew and Gentile, engaged in a series of partnerships and business
associations. The instability of economic life in the gold camps
made the operation of any enterprise a risk; newspapers of the period
frequently reported business closures and partnership dissolutions.
Many merchants terminated business partnerships and moved away from
Helena seeking more lucrative business locations. Others stayed in
Helena and remained in operation by entering one business partnership
after another. In boom towns of doubtful longevity, most businesses
faced a precarious future and Jewish-owned enterprises were no exception.

Isaac Marks and Ben Falk were two Helena Jewish businessmen
whose early business affiliations reflect the uncertainty of the placer
period. On February 28, 1867, the Helena Herald listed Isaac Marks
and his Jewish partner, Moe Edinger, as the proprietors of Our Sample
Rooms, a liquor store located on Main Street. 67 Three months later


66. Helena Independent, 13 March 1933, p. 1; Ibid., 29 August
1941, p. 1.

67. Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1. Isaac Marks is listed
as a member in the 1866 Constitution and Bylaws for the Hebrew
Benevolent Society. Edinger contributed to the Alliance Israelite
Universelle, Cincinnati Israelite, 17 April 1868, p. 6.
the same newspaper announced the retirement of Mr. Edinger from the business and the addition of a new partner, W. J. Carnduff.68

Our Sample Rooms.--Not our sample rooms exactly, but the popular establishment now conducted by Messrs. Marks & Carnduff on Main Street, near the Western Hotel, where hundreds daily call,

Tip their hats, pass the time o’day,
Take a drink, and, feeling a good deal better for it, rejoicing go their way.

The firm of Marks & Edinger has dissolved and been superseded by Marks & Carnduff, who propose to not only hold to their old friends, but make a host of others.69

In the following year Marks and Edinger were once again partners, but this time in another liquor business, the "Branch Saloon, Ike & Moe Proprietors, Main Street, Helena."70 By 1870 Isaac Marks is the only member of the firm enumerated in the census and Moe Edinger is reported by the newspaper to be selling clothing at another placer camp.71

... There are in Cedar Junction two grocery stores, one whiskey mill, besides Lehman, of the 'Boulder' Block, two restaurants, and one small stock of clothing. Moe Edinger will have a stock here in two or three days.72

Marks remained in Helena for many years and was identified in 1890

68 Helena Herald, 9 May 1867, p. 2.
69 Ibid., p. 3. On page 4 of the Helena Herald, 21 May 1867, there is an announcement that W. J. Carnduff became a full partner in Our Sample Rooms.
70 Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, Mont.: 1868), p. 94.
71 U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1870.
72 Helena Daily Herald, 11 February 1870, p. 3.
as "the largest wholesale and retail liquor dealer in Montana."  

Like his contemporary Isaac Marks, Ben Falk had a series of business partners during his pioneer years in Montana. In 1865 he moved to Helena from British Columbia and opened a meat market on Wood Street. During his first full year of business, Falk entered and ended at least two separate ownership arrangements involving the Empire Meat Market. On January 27, 1866, the Montana Radiator publicized the termination of his partnership with Isaac Fry. Eleven months later, the Helena Herald noted another change in the market's ownership.

Dissolution Notion. The copartnership heretofore existing between the undersigned, known as the 'Empire Meat Market,' is this day dissolved by mutual consent. Leopold Fleishman withdrawing. The business will be conducted at the old stand on Wood St in Helena by Bernhard Falk & Leopold Hechheimer, . . . who assume all the business & liabilities & who alone are authorized to collect all debts due the old firm.

Helena, M.T. Dec. 17, 1866

Leopold Fleishman
Bernhard Falk
Leopold Hechheimer

Despite these successive ownership arrangements, the Empire Meat Market remained in operation and by 1868 Ben Falk was its sole

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73Helena Illustrated: A History of the Early Settlement and the Helena of Today (Minneapolis, Minn.: Frank L. Thresher, Publisher, 1890), p. 58.

74Sanders, History of Montana, p. 1160.

75Helena Montana Radiator, 27 January 1866, p. 4.

76Helena Herald, 20 December 1866, p. 3. Fleishman is the only one of Falk's partners known to be Jewish. He was elected a member of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, 5 June 1868.
proprietor. Falk ran the market successfully until April 28, 1869, when a fire swept Helena and destroyed numerous buildings, including his store. Following this disaster, Falk abandoned his business interests in Helena and moved to New York.

Fires and fluctuating partnerships were not the only conditions that disrupted business activity in Montana's mining camps. A more significant risk to stable commercial operations in Helena was the practice of buying and selling goods on credit. Few merchants traded on a strictly cash-and-carry business. Most sold merchandise to miners and prospectors on credit and were liberal in extending credit to retail customers. Often the merchants themselves were badly undercapitalized and were credit customers of wholesalers in New York and San Francisco. On the frontier, success in merchandising "required a skill, the luck of being in the right place at the right time, adequate capital and a line of credit." The latter ingredients were crucial elements for the prosperity of Helena's Jewish merchants and their inaccessibility precipitated bankruptcies and business failures.

Many Jewish merchants preferred dealing with cash customers and

77 Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, Mont.: 1868), p. 94.

78 Helena Weekly Herald, 6 May 1869, p. 7.


81 Levinson, California Gold Rush, pp. 21, 52-53.
used persuasive newspaper advertising to attract them to their stores. In 1870 Julius Sands, for example, ran numerous small ads in the Helena Daily Herald, including the following: "Buyers at wholesale and retail are invited to buy goods at their own prices, for cash." The Sands Brothers firm also offered their customers "a special discount of five per cent on all cash purchases." Most Helena merchants started their businesses by selling goods "cheap for cash," but later expanded their operations to include credit customers.

Julius Basinski was one Jewish merchant who established a successful credit business with several Helena firms. At the age of twenty-two, he emigrated to the United States from Poland and lived four years in New York before deciding "to leave for the Montana Mining fields." Soon after his arrival in Helena in February 1870, Basinski realized that he did not have sufficient capital to open a business, one which could compete with the mercantile firms already operating in the camp. He presented a letter of introduction to the Sands brothers, but was unsuccessful in securing a clerkship in their store. Finally, with the assistance of Jacob and Dave Goldberg, Jewish clothing merchants, Basinski met a local cigar dealer with whom he transacted business.

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82 Helena Daily Herald, 10 February 1870, p. 3.
83 Ibid., 29 December 1875, p. 3.
84 Helena Herald, 6 December 1866, p. 1.
85 Julius Basinski Diary, 1883-1925, Biographies file, 14 pages, p. 3, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
86 D. Goldberg was elected a member of the Hebrew Benevolent
Discouraged by his prospects in Helena, Julius investigated other business locations and decided to move to Radersburg, a mining town near Helena. He opened a candy and cigar store in that community and returned to Helena periodically to replenish his supply of goods. Basinski retained his contacts with the Goldberg brothers and with their assistance established credit with some of Helena's leading business houses. According to his own account, he received liberal credit terms from Sol Holzman and Brother, Morris Brothers, L. Auerbach and Brother, Gans and Klein, and Koenigsberger and Brother, but "these credits were accepted only with one understanding--they are not to hurry me with the payments and [I] will remit to them as fast as business would justify." This credit arrangement proved satisfactory for all concerned and Basinski operated a successful business in Radersburg for several years. Finally, the community's lack of growth forced Julius to seek new opportunities elsewhere. He moved his goods first to Bozeman and later to Miles City, where he remained in the general-merchandise business until 1894. 87

Montana retail merchants were not always good credit risks. Some fell behind in payments to their Helena wholesalers and received threatening letters asking them to come forward and settle past due

Association, 26 January 1871. Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, 26 January 1871. Jacob Goldberg was listed as a member in the 1866 Constitution and Bylaws for the Society.

87 Julius Basinski Diary, 1883-1925; Robert E. Levinson, "Julius Basinski: Jewish Merchant in Montana," Montana the Magazine of Western History 22 (January 1972):60-68.
accounts. Others were unable to pay for their purchases because of mismanagement or the loss of goods in a fire, and they became the subjects of court action. Occasionally, too, a merchant had no intention of repaying his bills and deliberately defrauded his creditors.

On May 29, 1868, the Montana Post published a story about Abe Polak, a Jewish merchant "with an eye more to his own pecuniary interest and comfort than to that of his creditors." According to the newspaper, Abe had been employed at Lew Remish and Company for some time when he decided to embark on a peddling expedition. He purchased $3,000 worth of goods on credit from several local firms (including Lew Remish and Company, Weil Brothers, M. Block, L. Auerbach and Brother, Mr. Brown, Schonfield and Company, A. Lavenburg and Company, Emanuel and Phillips, and Loeb Brothers) and left Helena to peddle his merchandise in several mining camps. Abe wrote his creditors once from German Gulch and reported his progress, but nothing more was heard from him until news reached Helena that he had "shook the dust of Montana soil 88

88 Letterpress Book, 31 October 1876 - 12 March 1877, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880.

89 Helena's Jewish merchants brought their complaints with customers, other merchants, and freighters before Montana's courts. Jews frequently utilized Montana's legal institutions and expected that their cases would be judged seriously and equitably. Note the number of Jewish plaintiffs in the proceeding accounts in the Helena newspapers of the period: Helena Herald, 14 March 1867, p. 5; Ibid., 4 April 1867, p. 1; Helena Herald Supplement, 4 April 1867, p. 1; Helena Daily Herald, 9 March 1870, p. 3. For an examination of the treatment that other minorities received in Montana's courts, read John R. Wunder's article, "Law and Chinese in Frontier Montana," Montana the Magazine of Western History 30 (July 1980):18-31.
from his feet and into the faces of those who had befriended him." He had sold his goods and was attempting to leave the territory without paying his creditors when he was robbed. The Helena Daily Herald reported the incident with a vindictive tone:

"Tit for Tat--Abe Pollock [Polak], who, a short time since was fitted out with a stock of goods by Lew Remish and other merchants in Helena, to peddle around in the adjacent mining camps, is said to have been the identical man who lost eight hundred dollars by the late robbery of the overland coach, near Pleasant Valley. We are informed that he had disposed of the goods and purchased a ticket for Salt Lake, with the intention of defrauding his creditors out of the money which he had realized from the sale thereof. This is what we would call 'tit for tat'."

The editor of the Montana Post, also, published his own version of the story, describing the stagecoach robbers as "agents of retributive justice." Understandably, local newspaper editors were sympathetic to the losses of the town's leading merchants and were quick to publicize any events that jeopardized business operations in the community.

Helena merchants suffered losses in their credit dealings not only with retail customers, but also with their own wholesalers. Occasionally, a Jewish merchant failed to pay his debts and experienced a tightening of credit by his wholesalers in New York or San Francisco. Mitchell Block was one Helena merchant who encountered difficulties with

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90 Helena Montana Post, 29 May 1868, p. 8. Polak is listed as one of the Jewish contributors to the Alliance Israelite Universelle, Cincinnati Israelite, 17 April 1868, p. 6.


92 Helena Montana Post, 29 May 1868, p. 8.
his creditors. Less than a year after his costly experience with Abe Polak, the Helena Weekly Herald reported Block's latest misfortune:

Important Attachment—Persuant to instructions received in this city from New York and San Francisco house[s], the wholesale clothing establishment of M. Bloch [Block], Main Street, Helena, was closed last evening by writ of attachment to recover the sum of $27,000.93

Two Helena Jewish merchants, Leopold and William Auerbach, experienced financial troubles similar to Mr. Block's, but without the same unfortunate results. The Auerbach brothers incurred losses in their dealings with credit customers, wholesalers, and freighters, but they successfully recovered from these financial setbacks and remained in business. The records of their firm, L. Auerbach and Brother, document the problems that early merchandising firms encountered when conducting business in territorial Montana.

In addition to their regular retail trade, the Auerbach brothers engaged in a large wholesale business. They offered goods for sale to merchants in the surrounding mining camps, and counted among their credit customers such merchants as John Morris of Butte and William Weinstein of Philipsburg.94 In conducting their wholesale trade, Leopold and William Auerbach faced recurrent problems with the transportation of goods and the collection of debts owned by their credit customers.

93 Helena Weekly Herald, 25 February 1869, p. 7. His name is spelled Block in the Hebrew Benevolent Society minutes, the 1868 Helena city directory, and the 1870 Census.

94 L. Auerbach and Brother to William Weinstein, 16 January 1877, L. Auerbach and Brother to John Morris, 9 March 1877, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880. Morris and Weinstein were Jewish men who had earlier operated stores in Helena.
Frequently, the Auerbach brothers wrote letters to their customers explaining that transportation difficulties had delayed the arrival of their merchandise.\textsuperscript{95} They also received complaints from dissatisfied customers whose goods were damaged during shipment.\textsuperscript{96} In the 1860s and 1870s most merchandise was hauled in Montana by freight wagons and pack trains and neither was reliable. Freight shipments were often postponed because of poor road conditions, inclement weather, or a scarcity of men, equipment, and animals.\textsuperscript{97} Delays meant inconveniences for the merchants and their customers and higher priced goods for all Montanans.

Another problem facing L. Auerbach and Brother was the collection of past due accounts. Often, moving merchandise from Helena to remote mining camps was easier than obtaining payments for goods already shipped. Leopold and William Auerbach repeatedly corresponded with customers who had fallen behind in their payments. Sometimes one letter from the firm was enough to prompt remittance, but other retail merchants, including J. L. Drinkwater, required the threat of stronger action. On November 2, 1876, the Auerbach brothers wrote Mr. Drinkwater a collection letter in which they "respectfully requested" his payment. Their following month's letter concerning the same account was less

\textsuperscript{95} L. Auerbach and Brother to A. Wilhelm, 4, 11, and 18 November 1876; Auerbach to J. Abascal and Company, 11 November 1875; Auerbach to H. Wiebold, 18 November 1876, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 56.

\textsuperscript{97} Malone and Roeder, \textit{A History of Two Centuries}, pp. 55-61.
politely worded:

... we are getting tired of waiting any longer, having [sic] waited upon you much longer than is profitable, we concluded to have matters settled up without further delay and unless you come forth and settle up the acct., we shall be obliged to cause you additional expense, as we shall be obliged to force collection.98

Leopold and William Auerbach took risks when selling goods on credit, but as credit customers themselves they realized the importance of such financial arrangements. During this time of recurring recessions and fires, most merchants had minimal capital resources so they had either to find credit or to face bankruptcy. Without access to credit from other sources--banks, business associates, or family--Jewish merchants had little hope of staying in business.99

The Auerbach brothers realized the importance of a credit network. They possessed lines of credit with Jewish business associates in both San Francisco and New York. In 1876 L. Auerbach and Brother purchased goods on credit from several San Francisco wholesalers, including Lewis Brothers, Castle Brothers, and Weil and Woodleaf. The firm paid its debts to these merchants by issuing drafts payable by

98L. Auerbach and Brother to J. C. Drinkwater, 4 December 1876, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880.

99Peter R. Decker, "Jewish Merchants in San Francisco: Social Mobility on the Urban Frontier," American Jewish History 68 (June 1979): 398-402. Decker explains the difficulties that Jewish merchants had in obtaining credit because credit investigation agencies like Dun and Company usually considered Jews a poor credit risk. Jewish "religious affiliation more often than not carried with it the automatic assumption and assignment of 'poor' or 'not good' for credit." To overcome ethnic and religious barriers to credit, Jews depended upon "credit and loans from relatives or business associates in eastern cities or Europe."
Lilienthal and Company, also in San Francisco. Evidently, the latter business house had accumulated enough money through its merchandising trade to provide its customers with some banking services. It was not uncommon for Jewish merchants, like Lilienthal and Company, to use any capital not invested in their own businesses to extend credit and loans to other firms.

In addition to supplying goods, some Montana merchants also performed banking services for their customers. Occasionally, Leopold and William Auerbach found themselves not only exchanging money, but loaning and safeguarding it as well. On November 6, 1876, the brothers wrote I. B. Dawkins concerning his order for merchandise and advised him they were encountersing some difficulties: "We have tried to sell your Gold Dust, but were only offered [sic] 17.25 will sell it if we could get 17.75 we would like to do the best we can for you but gold is now very bad, and currency rather scarce." Two months later, the Auerbach brothers were again selling gold for a customer, J. Hildebrand and Company, and offering to provide this firm with a loan until the transaction was completed: "... should you be ...

100 L. Auerbach and Brother to Lewis Brothers, 3 November 1876; Auerbach to Weil and Woodleaf, 3 November 1876; Auerbach to Lilienthal and Company, 3 November 1876; Auerbach to Castle Brothers, 17 November 1876, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880.


102 L. Auerbach and Brother to I. B. Dawkins, 6 November 1876, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880.
in need of any money in the meantime, we will advance it for you until we get returns."  

Not all the loans financed by L. Auerbach and Brother were limited to customers who presented gold as collateral. The Auerbach brothers also offered short-term, personal loans at low interest rates to both individuals and other firms. In a letter dated February 21, 1877, William acquainted his brother Leopold in San Francisco with the status of one of their loans: "... collected this day--that note of One Hundred and Fifty Doll[ars] of Thos Toston--which I loaned out last spring in March at 3% Interest..."  

The Auerbach brothers used the interest they obtained from such loans to accumulate their operating capital and to expand their merchandising business. They were not interested in becoming bankers.

Some Jewish merchants found that greater profits were to be made in banking, not in merchandising. They quickly turned their attention from selling goods to purchasing gold dust. One of Helena's earliest Jewish bankers, Lewis H. Hershfield, had been a merchant in both Central City, Colorado, and Virginia City, Montana, before opening his banking business on Bridge Street.  

As a merchant, Hershfield had learned to

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103 L. Auerbach and Brother to J. Hildebrand and Company, 11 January 1877, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880.

104 William Auerbach to Leopold Auerbach, 21 February 1877, p. 272, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880. Customarily, interest rates at this time were computed monthly.

105 The advertisement reads: "L.H. Hershfield, Banker, 34 Bridge Street, Helena, M.T." in the Helena Montana Radiator, 16 June 1866, p. 3.
determine the fineness and value of gold dust and he used this knowledge to his advantage as a banker.106

Lewis H. Hershfield was born in Utica, New York, in 1836. When he was eighteen years old, he moved to St. Louis, Missouri, to accept a position in a wholesale house. In 1859 he migrated to Leavenworth, Kansas, and from there followed the rush of miners to Pike's Peak in Colorado. Mr. Hershfield operated a mercantile store in Central City until 1864, when he came to Montana. He arrived in Virginia City with twenty-six freight wagons loaded with merchandise and immediately started selling his goods for gold dust. Using his profits from merchandising, Hershfield purchased more gold dust and established himself in the local gold trading business.107 Soon he was convinced that the purchase and shipment of gold from the territory was a lucrative pursuit and he organized a banking firm in Virginia City under the name of L. H. Hershfield and Company.108

106 For some years after the discovery of gold in Montana, gold was the accepted medium of exchange. "... after the establishment of banks, both private and national, for many years their chief business consisted in handling gold dust, ... gauging the value per ounce by weight and degree of fineness." Miller, An Illustrated History, p. 687.


With the discovery of rich placer diggings at Last Chance Gulch, the gold fever shifted from Virginia City to Helena. Leaving his partner, A. Hanauer, in charge of their Virginia City operation, Lewis Hershfield moved to Helena and in November 1865, opened a banking house on Bridge Street. At first, gold trading was better in the new camp and on May 29, 1866, Hanauer reported to Hershfield that "nothing [was] doing" in Virginia City. Later that year, however, the business picture changed and Hershfield experienced a slowdown in gold trading at his Bridge Street bank. Distressed by his lack of business, he complained repeatedly to Hanauer that "business is dull."

Apparently, gold trading had picked up about this time in Virginia City, because on September 5, 1866, Hershfield advised his partner, "You are beating me all to pieces in buying dust." Not wanting to discourage Hanauer's efforts, he added:

You have paid good prices for Va [Virginia City] dust, but never mind, big business, and small margins is the way to build up a trade and get to be millioners [sic] which I hope we will reach some of these days.

In the months that followed, Hershfield's optimism was dampened by the continued slow business at the Helena bank. He finally decided that the bank's location was bad for business and opened a branch bank

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109 A. Hanauer to Lewis Hershfield, 29 May 1866; Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 30 August 1866, 4 September 1866, 5 September 1866, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903, Manuscript Collection 115, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

110 Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 5 September 1866, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903.
Hershfield then made plans to consolidate the two Helena offices, but admitted to Hanauer his reluctance to close the Bridge Street bank: "I kind a [sic] hate to give up the old place but it would be judicious to do so; as Bridge Street is going to the dogs fast." In February 1867, the Helena Herald still reported L. H. Hershfield and Company at two locations, 34 Bridge Street and Bentley's Block, Main Street, but later that year the Bridge Street office was closed.

Hershfield and Company did not confine its business activities to buying gold dust. The firm had started out in merchandising in Virginia City and when Hershfield moved to Helena, Hanauer continued "selling coffee, sugar, bacon & c [sic]." Encouraged by this trading experience, Hershfield committed the company even deeper to the merchandising business. In April 1867, he wrote his partner concerning his purchase of a clothing business and admitted that the reaction in Helena to his investment was less than favorable:

... My purchase of the clothing store created quite a sensation [among the] other merchants. I wouldn't be surprised if we wouldn't be owners of a Dry-Goods shortly also, so it goes. The merchants here both Christian & Jews are rotten to the core and undeserving to confidence unless secured.

111 Ibid., 4 January 1867.
112 Helena Herald, 28 February 1867, p. 1.
113 Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 10 September 1866, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903.
114 Ibid., 1 April 1867.
In his reply to Hershfield's announcement, Hanauer appeared more worried about the firm's overextending itself than about public reaction to its business dealings. Adding up the company's commitments, he concluded, "... in case we are the owners of a Dry goods store, by that time we have our hands full 3 Banking Offices, Clothing & Dry Goods one or more Quartz Mills, the prospects are good."115

In addition to banking and merchandising, Lewis Hershfield and his partner also invested some of their capital in the mining industry. With the decline of placer gold output around Helena, the richer quartz deposits in Oro Fino and Grizzly Gulches, and Lodes like the Whitlatch Vein were developed and Helena became one of the early centers of quartz-gold milling in the territory. Local businessmen, including Lewis H. Hershfield, were encouraged by these developments to invest in mines and stamping mills.116 Realizing that mining was often a risky venture, Hershfield wrote his partner on April 22, 1867, and assured him that their mining investments would soon pay off:

So far as the mill and mining property is concerned I am inclined to believe that allowing it to remain where it is will be the most profitable for us. ... When Whitlatch returns I think I will be able to sell the Mill to him or move it in the vicinity of his mines to crush on shares, so far as ourselves are interested in the matter we are safe enough we can make our money out of the mill & loose property. ...117

115 A. Hanauer to Lewis Hershfield, 3 April 1867, Merchants National Bank Records, 1866-1903.

116 Malone and Roeder, A History of Two Centuries, p. 140.

117 Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 22 April 1867, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903.
Even with the company's expanded investment opportunities, business continued to decline in Virginia City. In 1867 Aaron Hershfield, Lewis's younger brother, moved to Helena to assist in the operation of the bank, and in the following year, Hanauer closed the Virginia City office.\(^{118}\) Aaron then replaced Hanauer as a full partner in the firm and the name of the company was changed to L. H. Hershfield and Brother. In 1882 the Hershfield brothers obtained a national charter for their bank, reorganizing it under the name of the Merchants National Bank with a capital of $150,000. They also established a bank at Fort Benton in 1880 and another at White Sulphur Springs in 1883.\(^{119}\)

L. H. Hershfield and Company was not the only Jewish-owned banking operation in Helena during the gold rush. The banking house of Bohm and Aub, which opened in Helena on November 1, 1867, was owned by S. H. Bohm and Michael and Ludwig Aub, all members of Helena's early Jewish community.\(^{120}\) S. H. Bohm was the first member of the firm to locate in Helena. He came to the territory to establish an assay office with S. F. Molitor, and then used his experience in the appraisal, purchase, and shipment of gold to start a banking business.

\(^{118}\) A. Hanauer to Lewis Hershfield, 1868, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903.


\(^{120}\) Helena Weekly Herald, 31 October 1867, p. 8. S. H. Bohm and Ludwig Aub were both elected members of the Hebrew Benevolent Society on 3 December 1867. Michael Aub became a member in September 1868. Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943.
On January 21, 1867, the Helena Herald announced Mr. Bohm's appearance in the camp and explained his mission:

Mr. S. H. Bohm, of the firm of Bohm & Molitor [sic], at Salt Lake City, assayers of bullion, quartz, and all kinds of minerals, called upon us yesterday, having recently reached Helena from Salt Lake. Mr. Bohm's mission here was to secure a suitable building for an assaying department in Helena, put the same in course of repairs, etc. This has been accomplished, and the new assay office under the management of the other member of the firm, will be opened for business by the 15th of March, in the place known as the Helena bowling alley, this firm having engaged the whole of that building.121

The newspaper continued to report the progress which Bohm and Molitor made on their building improvements and assured its readers that the town's new assayers had excellent credentials: "These gentlemen come to our territory endorsed by the very best testimonials as to their integrity and proficiency in the science of assaying."122

On March 3, 1867, S. F. Molitor, Bohm's partner, arrived in Helena from Salt Lake City. The Helena Herald was quick to announce that he "would 'take upon himself the superintendence of their branch Assay office in this city on Main Street below King and Gillette's."123 Later that month the assay office was open for business and Bohm and Molitor were advertising their assaying skills to "Bankers, Merchants, and public."124

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122 Helena Herald, 7 March 1867, p. 3.
Through his assaying business, S. H. Bohm made contact with Joseph Seligman of New York, an internationally known Jewish banker. Seligman supervised a banking house that three years after its founding in 1864, had grown to include branches in San Francisco, New Orleans, Paris, London, and Frankfurt am Main. He became interested in Bohm's gold trading business in Montana and offered him $25,000 in capital to open a banking house in Helena. On October 24, 1867, the Helena Weekly Herald announced that Bohm had dissolved his partnership with S. F. Molitor and had "completed a copartnership [sic] with a capitalist [sic] of large means in the East [Joseph Seligman], and on the first of next month will open a banking house on Main Street." To oversee his firm's new investments in Montana, Joseph Seligman sent Michael, Philip, and Ludwig D. Aub to Helena to work with Bohm. The Aub brothers previously had been employed in the New York and New Orleans branches of the Seligman firm. With their arrival in Helena, Michael and Ludwig became S. H. Bohm's partners in the banking house and Philip Aub went into partnership with F. Bohm, S. H.'s brother, in the assay office. The Helena Weekly Herald noted the arrival of

125 Carl J. White, "Financial Frustrations in Territorial Montana," Montana the Magazine of Western History 18 (April 1967):34-36. On page 35, White points out that S. H. Bohm may have had family as well as business connections with the Seligmans: "...although no record exists to prove it (S.H. Bohm) may have been related to the sister-in-law of one of Joseph's brothers, Abraham."


127 Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, 1868), pp. 60, 80, 123, 134, 138-139.
one of the Aub brothers at the same time it announced the opening of
the banking house:

New Bank.—Messrs. Bohm and Aub will open, on Friday
next, in Dumphy's [sic] Building, a new banking house.
Mr. [Ludwig D.] Aub has had long experience in this
business in New York City, and arrived here on
yesterday morning. Mr. Bohm is well known to our
citizens to need any endorsement from our hands.
The new firm have completed business arrangements
with the most responsible bankers in the East and
in Europe.128

With capital and connections furnished by J. and W. Seligman
and Company, Helena's new banking firm prospered. Soon plans were
made to expand the bank's facilities, and Bohm and Aub started the
construction of a new bank building. On May 25, 1868, a few weeks
before the building was completed, Ludwig Aub died at the age of
twenty-four years and three months.129

The Montana Post printed a memorial statement concerning
the young banker and explained his untimely death: "For a considerable
time previous to his death he has been unwell and was urged to return
to the states, but his uncomplaining disposition always prompted
him to assert that he was only a little disposed [sic]." The Post
also noted, "His strict integrity and unobtrusive manners soon won
for him the esteem of our entire community, and Helena looked upon him
as one of her best citizens."130 His funeral services took place at

130 Ibid.
the assay office of F. Bohm with a large crowd in attendance.\textsuperscript{131}

In the month following Ludwig Aub's death, the firm finished the construction of its bank building "opposite the Assay office of F. Bohm," and moved into its new quarters.\textsuperscript{132} Gold trading remained active during the summer months and the bank carried on a profitable business. On July 30, 1868, the \textit{Helena Weekly Herald} reported the status of the city's gold commerce and predicted a bright future for Bohm and Aub:

Gold Dust.--Mr. Bohm, of the banking house of Bohm & Aub, informs us that gold dust, in very considerable quantities, is being brought to the city from surrounding camps. These bankers are large purchasers of gold dust, and are among the most prominent in this respect in the Territory. They conduct a legitimate banking business on the currency basis, and are building up a business second to none in Montana. Their receipts of dust to-day were five hundred ounces.\textsuperscript{133}

Banks were not the only Helena businesses which profited by the summer's increased gold activity. Assay offices, too, reported a favorable increase in trade, and firms like Molitor Brothers and F. Bohm and Company turned out large quantities of gold and silver bricks.\textsuperscript{134} On July 23, 1868, for example, two firms announced the

\textsuperscript{131}Helena Daily Herald, 28 May 1868, p. 8. This obituary contains a brief biographical sketch. On 5 June 1868, the Hebrew Benevolent Society passed resolutions over the death of its late member Ludwig D. Aub. Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943.

\textsuperscript{132}Helena Weekly Herald, 18 June 1868, p. 7. This article includes a detailed description of the new building.

\textsuperscript{133}Helena Weekly Herald, 30 July 1868, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{134}Ibid., 16 July 1868, p. 8. After his partnership with S. H. Bohm ended, S. F. Molitor went into a partnership with his brother, Titus Molitor, in an assay office. Both brothers list their occupations as assayers in the Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, Mont.: 1868), pp. 152-153. A man identified only as "Morlet" is involved.
following assays:

Messrs. F. Bohm & Co. turned out a beautiful brick this morning, the coin value of which, is exactly seven thousand dollars. The Molitor Bros. melted several lots, weighing in all seven hundred ounces. This goes to show that considerable gold is coming into the city. 135

Most, if not all, the gold assayed at F. Bohm and Company was sent by Bohm and Aub to J. and W. Seligman and Company in New York. 136 Evidently, the amount of gold coming to the Seligmans via Bohm and Aub was enough to keep Joseph Seligman interested in the firm. He doubled his initial investment in the bank and started referring to the Bohm-Seligman enterprise as "our Montana house." 137

By 1870 Michael and Philip Aub had left Helena and the Seligmans had sent a new man named Leopold Rothschild to work with S. H. Bohm and to oversee their business interests. 138 It soon appeared that Bohm needed watching because he started loaning Seligman money to Helena merchants without security and without the firm's knowledge or approval. He also began overdrawing on the firm's account. 139


136 Ibid., 30 July 1868, p. 8.
138 On 18 June 1870, Bohm and Aub ran a notice on page 3 of the Helena Daily Herald that read: "The banking business hitherto carried on under the firm name of Bohm & Aub, will be conducted under the name and style of S.H. Bohm & Co., from and after June 1, A.D. 1870."
Joseph Seligman hoped that Rothschild would look out for the family's investments, but it became apparent that "he [Rothschild] was more interested in taking care of himself than his employer's interests."140

When his letters to both Rothschild and Bohn accomplished no results, Joseph Seligman sent another employee, F. A. Benjamin, to Helena to investigate their activities. Benjamin uncovered more embezzlements, including several unauthorized investments: the El Dorado Mine, of which Bohn owned one-fourth interest, the Northern Pacific Mine, of which Rothschild owned two-thirds, and Bohn's Helena smelting works. When Joseph Seligman received reports from Benjamin concerning S. H. Bohn's total indebtedness to J. and W. Seligman and Company, he responded to the news both with amazement and dismay:

... Now the worst part of the affair will be that you are naturally becoming disgusted in being cheated by such illiterate scoundrels as B. & R. and in addition they have managed to keep you in the dark & prevented you from finding out by what process they have made away with ¼ million dollars or more in the space of less than one year in so small a place as Helena.141

By the time F. A. Benjamin closed Bohn's bank and disposed of Bohn and Rothschild's holdings in Helena, he had reduced the Seligmans' losses.

16 June 1871, Joseph Seligman told S. H. Bohn what he thought about Bohn's loan arrangements: "... We are glad to learn that you will now go to work to collect our money which was intended to aid you in buying gold dust, but which you have been pleased to lend out to 'merchants.' Now we have no money to lend to Helena merchants, in fact we don't pretend to be a loan office at all... ."

140 ibid., p. 39.
141 ibid., pp. 40, 41.
from one-fourth of a million dollars to $115,000, a large amount for "so small a place as Helena."142

Although local investors lost money in S. H. Bohm's business ventures, as well as the Seligmans, this Jewish banker did not play a totally negative role in Helena's early financial history. During the 1860s, gold was the medium of exchange in Montana. Before the establishment of banks in Helena, miners were dependent upon merchants and saloon keepers to exchange their dust into coin or credit. S. H. Bohm, Lewis Hershfield, and their non-Jewish colleagues provided services to the miners by helping to determine set values for gold dust, by acting as depositories, and by converting dust into currency. Gold trading was a profitable business, but transportation difficulties, including road agents, and the fluctuating value of currency made it a risky business as well.143

At first, Helena bankers confined their financial activities to purchasing gold dust, selling exchange, and discounting currency. Before long, however, private bankers, including S. H. Bohm and Lewis Hershfield, were making loans and providing some of the investment capital so badly needed in the territory. Bohm built a smelting operation, loaned money to local merchants, and invested in several

142 Ibid., pp. 41, 42; Birmingham, Our Crowd, p. 99.

mining ventures. Hershfield, also, offered credit to Helena businessmen and invested in mines and stamping mills, but, unlike Bohm, he did not make the mistake of loaning money without proper security. In a letter to his partner, dated May 14, 1867, Hershfield explained his business philosophy:

I have made up my mind conclusively to do no business for friendship sake[.] the [sic] person that has the best security and is willing to pay the most interest gets my money. the [sic] people here don't appreciate accomadations [sic] and I don't intend to extend any unless I am paid for it. to [sic] shower favors upon them is like 'throwing pearls before swine.' don't [sic] take into consideration what others are doing or intend to do, we are here to make money and as quick as possible & I won't make no transaction only when I think there is money in it. altho [sic] we may be mistaken sometimes...

Hershfield's pragmatic approach to the banking business may explain why L. H. Hershfield and Brother was the only private banking firm organized in Helena during the gold rush that survived the placer period.

Although Lewis Hershfield's bank was the more successful of the two Jewish-owned banking establishments in Helena, both firms helped satisfy the territory's obvious need for financial agencies during the gold rush. They handled the exchange and shipment of gold dust and


145 Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 14 May 1867, Merchants National Bank Records, 1866-1903.

146 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 688.
bullion, offered lending credit to business concerns, and encouraged the investment of outside capital in the region. In these early years, neither S. H. Bohm nor Lewis Hershfield had sufficient capital to invest in large-scale business ventures, but they were able to grant assistance to local projects and to finance industrial mining and stock-raising interests. Helena's Jewish bankers and their non-Jewish colleagues fostered the establishment of more sophisticated financial organizations in the territory and encouraged Helena's development as a credit and banking center.

Between 1862 and 1875 Montana's placer mines produced nearly $134,000,000 worth of gold. A substantial portion of this wealth passed through the hands of local bankers, merchants, and saloon keepers, and many of these entrepreneurs, particularly in Helena, were Jews. Through their role as economic middlemen distributing both goods and capital, Helena's Jewish pioneers influenced the financial development of the city and the territory. They also supported themselves and their families and made a place for themselves in the

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148 Ibid., p. 76. Aaron Hershfield was the treasurer of the Galloway Cattle Company. Another Jewish man, Moses Morris, was the president.

community. Jews achieved influential positions in Helena's economic circles and gained for themselves the acceptance and respect of their contemporaries by their business accomplishments and their cooperative, community endeavors.
CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY BOOSTERS

The Jews who settled in Helena during the early years of the gold rush were important participants in the day-to-day life of the community. Most were merchants and, as such, boosters of the community who worked to solve civic problems and to promote cultural activities. Jews joined with other businessmen in the direction of local affairs and placed themselves in the forefront of movements that promised to benefit Helena and Montana. They supported the establishment of local government, organized volunteer fire departments, joined fraternal and social clubs, and held political offices. These enterprising Jewish people had their own futures in view when they thought of Helena, but they nevertheless played a significant role in the growth of the community and in the stabilization of the territory.

Jews came to Helena before the territory had either a well-organized government or effective law enforcement. Many of the camp's early residents were transient miners and prospectors who took little interest in the community or its development. The problems of controlling fire, criminals, and marauding Indians, were left to the concern of local businessmen and the more permanent settlers. Living as they did in an area where the federal government exercised little
authority, Jews joined with their neighbors in supporting local efforts to protect lives and property and to establish law and order in the territory.

Fire Protection

One civic problem that demanded the immediate attention of Helena residents, including Jews, was the constant danger of fire. In 1865, a group of the camp's citizens established a local fire department, but their interest in the company soon waned. By the following year, the company needed rejuvenation and three Helena Jews, L. Levy, Joseph Bloomingdale, and Moe B. Edinger, helped organize a new fire department, Montana Engine and Hook and Ladder Company No. 4, with the express purpose to secure "the safety of property from conflagration." These men became elected officers in the newly-formed company and they worked to develop community support for the organization. Other Jews also became members of the fire department or pledged the group their financial assistance. In fact, at least six of the twenty-one committeemen assigned to prepare for one of Montana Fire Company No. 4's first fund-raisers, the Firemen's Grand Ball, were Jewish businessmen.

Helena's Jews exhibited a concern for the future of the mining

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2. Helena Herald, 15 November 1866, p. 3.
3. Ibid. The six Jewish committeemen were: Moe B. Edinger, Henry Phillips, George Cohen, Felix Poznainsky, J. B. Bloomingdale, and Jacob Loeb.
camp that was not shared by all their fellow citizens. Most Helena residents were apathetic to the town's need for fire protection and their indifference was soon blatantly apparent. On June 26, 1867, the officers of Montana Fire Company No. 4 announced their intention to dissolve the organization because of the lack of public support:

... We trust that our services have been appreciated by those of our citizens whose good opinions are to be desired. But, failing to receive such encouragement as will justify the longer attempt to maintain this organization, and the members of the Company being unable to defray the entire expense of the same, we have determined to disband said Company. The citizens of this city are hereby notified of this fact, and all property now in our possession will be returned to the rightful owners, on demand.

H. Jurgens, Chief
L. Levy, Foreman
J.B. Bloomingdale, President
N.[M.]B. Edinger, Secretary

Other than the Chief, H. Jurgens, all the officers of Montana Fire Company No. 4 were Jews. These men and many of their coreligionists realized the importance of adequate fire prevention long before other Helena citizens, and were in the vanguard of Helena's earliest fire protection efforts.

Jewish involvement in fire protection activities did not end with the demise of Montana Fire Company No. 4. Jews continued to answer the summons of local fire alarms and attempted to minimize the destruction caused by Helena's periodic fires. One clothing merchant, in particular, was long remembered for his actions during the devastating

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4Helena Herald Supplement, 26 June 1867, p. 2.
fire of October 1, 1871. Jacob Feldberg had moved to Helena from Virginia City in 1868 and had lived in the camp only one year when his small store was destroyed by a fire. In 1871 fire again swept the Gulch, and Feldberg, remembering his experience two years earlier, joined the town's fire-fighting efforts. He offered to assist the volunteer firemen on the hand-pumped engine, but was rebuffed with the remark that "he was not big enough to fight fire." Undaunted, Feldberg grabbed a bucket and started throwing water on the flames. Soon, he noticed that flying embers from the fire were endangering houses on Fifth Avenue. He gathered a group of volunteers together and ran up the hill to stop the fire from spreading. With the help of Fifth Avenue residents, Feldberg and his companions had almost checked the fire's progress, when flames from a woodpile caught a barn and two houses on fire. Responding quickly to this new threat,

Feldberg was seen to mount the roof of the barn and disappear over its comb. It was thought that the barn had collapsed and that the daring fighter had gone to a horrible death, but he had bounded into the kitchen of the Blaine house and soon emerged with pails and pans, which he distributed among men there to assist. They formed a bucket brigade, for the entire fire apparatus of the town was doing service in Main street to stop the ravages of the fire. Water was thrown onto the house next west of Blaine's and thus the fire was confined to the two houses first attached--the Blaine and the Stoner. . . .

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5 For an account of the fire see the Helena Daily Herald, 2 October 1871, pp. 2, 3.
7 Anaconda Standard, 12 January 1902, p. 30.
Jacob Feldberg's brave actions in the 1871 fire notwithstanding, Jewish participation in Helena's fire-fighting activities was more notable for its constancy than its heroism. In the years of costly fires between 1867 and 1872, Jews supported repeated efforts to maintain a local fire department. After the disastrous fire of August 23, 1872, Helena's residents, including many Jews, were once again reminded of the town's need for a permanent fire company. A number of citizens banded together to finance a fire department and contributed $3,157.50 toward providing apparatus for such a company. A Citizens Fire Committee was organized with Jewish merchant Henry Klein as secretary, and was instructed to purchase the necessary fire equipment. On December 30, 1872, the Helena Fire Department was established, and several Jewish men, including Sam Schwab and Sol Star, volunteered their services as firemen.

On January 9, 1874, another fire swept Helena and the fire company was unable to check its progress before many buildings were destroyed. Many Jewish-owned businesses suffered substantial losses. Four companies, in particular, sustained greater losses than most of their associates. The property damage reported by these Jewish-owned businesses was significant.

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8 For an account of the fire in Helena between 1867 and 1872 see the Report of the Chief Engineer, Helena Fire Department, Helena Daily Herald, 31 December 1873, p. 1.


companies was as follows: Gans and Klein, $160,000; A. Lavenberg, $75,000; Auerbach and Brother, $60,000; and Koenigsberger Brothers, $35,000. Jewish businessmen whose stores had escaped destruction in the fire joined with other Helena citizens and formed the Helena Relief Committee. Abraham Sands was the chairman of this committee that collected almost $900 to assist the victims of the fire. In the years following the 1874 fire, Jewish citizens continued to support local fire relief efforts and to offer their assistance to the Helena Fire Department both as officers and as members of the various companies.

In addition to investing their time as volunteers in Helena's fire department, Jewish businessmen invested their capital in buildings which reflected their concern for fire protection. Prompted by earlier fire losses and increasing trade, Jewish merchants and bankers gradually replaced their log and frame structures with fireproof buildings made of stone or brick. The Helena Weekly Herald frequently urged local businessmen to construct more "substantial" buildings and noted the farsightedness of any merchant who owned or built a fireproof structure. Following the damaging fire of April 28, 1869, for example, the newspaper reported that two Jewish-owned merchandising firms, F. Poznainsky's and Gans and Klein, reopened their businesses almost immediately because

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13 Leeson, History of Montana, pp. 733-734.
they had "provided capacious fire-proofs for the reception of their goods in case of fire." Two months later, the paper noted the enterprise of two Jewish bankers who also had suffered losses in the fire:

Messrs. Bohm & Aub are erecting a splendid building for their bank on their old ground, Main street. The structure will be of stone, with a brick front entirely fireproof, and in its various appointments will indeed be an elegant institution. . . .

As businessmen, Jews were encouraged to build brick and stone structures not only as a deterrent to fire, but also as a testimony of their faith in Helena's survival. The expected life span of most Western mining camps was short, and Helena's promoters believed that the construction of fireproof buildings exhibited the town's vitality. According to the editor of the Helena Weekly Herald, building improvements demonstrated that: "Our Merchants, Bankers and Capitalists are confident of our young city's future, and consequently have no hesitancy in investing a portion of their capital in buildings that add materially to the beauty of Helena."

Although Jewish businessmen were influenced by campaigns for

14 Helena Weekly Herald, 6 May 1869, p. 7.
15 Helena Weekly Herald, 10 June 1869, p. 7.
16 Rudolf Glanz, The Jews of California from the Discovery of Gold Until 1880 (New York: Waldon Press, Inc., 1960), p. 50. According to Glanz, the Jews in California used their construction of brick buildings as a "counter-argument against those anti-Semitic propagandists who charged that the Jews did not plan to stay in the region."
17 Helena Weekly Herald, 18 June 1868, p. 7.
local improvements, their construction of brick buildings was not without business motivations. After the 1874 fire, Jewish merchants with stores on Main Street had no choice but to build stone and brick structures. The Lewis and Clark County commissioners passed a fire ordinance forbidding "the erection of frame buildings on Main Street, below Wood street." Some Jewish merchants used their ownership of fireproof buildings to obtain more favorable fire insurance rates and to convince wholesalers to credit their accounts with larger inventories. Other Jewish-owned firms felt such buildings inspired the confidence of both wholesalers and credit customers and reassured them not only with the stability of the business house, but also with the safety of their goods. L. Auerbach and Brother, for example, acknowledged the receipt of a shipment of goods with the following comforting response: "... we have recd and stored in our fire proof Ware Hous[e]. For your acct three Bales of Hops." Although Jewish merchants built fireproof structures in response to community fire prevention measures and their own business needs, the buildings they constructed reflected an interest in the betterment of the community that transcended utilitarian motives. Jews were owners and builders of some of Helena's most notable, early business

18 Helena Weekly Independent, 22 May 1874, p. 3.
20 L. Auerbach and Brother to F. Ray, 8 January 1877, L. Auerbach and Brother Papers, 1868-1880, Manuscript Collection 125, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.
blocks.\textsuperscript{21} They built buildings known not only for their dimensions and brick and stone construction, but also for their architectural beauty.\textsuperscript{22} The St. Louis Block in particular, described as the "first fine building in Helena," gained for its builders, the Jewish merchants David and Moses Morris, reputations as "pioneers in the fine architecture ... which has made Helena the beautiful city it is."\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Military Protection}

During Montana's gold rush, increasing populations at mining camps like Alder Gulch and Last Chance Gulch disrupted Indian-white relations in the territory. Indians responded to the miners' invasion with raids on settlers and thefts of livestock. These depredations panicked Montana's white inhabitants and encouraged them to raise local militias and to demand federal military protection.\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ten of the sixty-five business blocks listed in the 1895 directory were owned and built by or named for Jewish businessmen. They were: the Auerbach Block, Birkenfeld Block, Boston Block, Gans and Klein Block, Knights of Pythias Hall, Merchants National Bank, Morris Building, Novelty Block, St. Louis Block, and Silverman Block. R. L. Polk & Co.'s Helena City Directory, 1895 (Helena, Mont.: R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, 1895), pp. 46-47.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Jacobson and Shope, Architects, Historic Architectural Survey of the Urban Renewal Area for the Urban Renewal Committee of the City of Helena, Montana (Helena, Mont.: author, 1968), pp. 10, 12, 30, 38, 40, 48, 58, 59. Eight of the buildings surveyed in 1968 were owned originally by Jews and were constructed either of brick or stone or both. All but one (constructed in 1868) were built between 1884 and 1890.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Joaquin Miller, An Illustrated History of the State of Montana (Chicago, Ill.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1894), p. 203.
\end{itemize}
demonstrated their support of military action, like other citizens, by volunteering for local militias and by encouraging the subjugation of native tribes.

Although conscription laws in their homelands had impelled many Jewish men to immigrate to America, not all Helena Jews were lacking previous military experience. Several Jewish pioneers, including J. O. Cohen and Jake Herman, fought in the Civil War. When J. O. Cohen died in 1870, the local newspaper not only identified him by his military rank, but also went into considerable detail about his military service:

The funeral obsequies over the remains of Major J. O. Cohen, took place at the Jewish cemetery on July 18. A very large concourse of our citizens escorted the deceased . . . to his last resting place. Mr. A. Wolf officiated at the grave, and delivered a solemn and impressive discourse after the rites of the Jewish church. Mr. Cohen came to Montana from the South in 1865. He served in the Confederate Army during a portion of the late war and attained to the rank of major. In one of the campaigns he fell a prisoner of war into the hands of the national troops, and after being paroled came north, and subsequently to the mountains. . . .

Jake Herman was another Civil War veteran who moved to Montana during the gold rush. He came to Helena in 1866, after having fought for the


26 Helena Daily Herald, 19 July 1870, p. 3.
Confederacy during the war.27

Not long after J. O. Cohen and Jake Herman had moved to Helena, Acting Governor Thomas Meagher issued a call for volunteers to protect settlers in the Gallatin Valley from attacks by the Sioux. No Helena Jews are known to have enrolled in Edgerton (Lewis and Clark) County's militia, but Jewish merchants did respond with other Helena businessmen to the militia's need for supplies.28 When Helena's first company of militia was ready to march, the local newspaper noted the contributions made by Helena merchants to the military effort:

Messrs. Poznainsky, Peterson, Capt. Alley, Simpson & Warner, and other merchants of Bridge Street, generously and promptly responded to a call upon them yesterday to subscribe or advance the necessary blankets, to provide Co. A with what they lacked, to make them comfortable on the march and in the field.

Numbers of our prominent merchants have shown their hands like men in coming forward and furnishing the Quartermaster and Commissary such articles, of outfit and supply as were required for the service and to meet the emergency. . . .29


28 Records of the Montana (Territory) Volunteers 1867-1868, Record Series 162, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana. Included in these records is the only known official roster of men in the 1867 campaign. The muster rolls are not complete, but they do include men in Helena's B Company, and no Jewish names are listed. Also, no Jews are listed on the muster rolls found in Leeson's History of Montana, p. 120.

29 Helena Herald, 17 May 1867, p. 1. By the time Montana's militia disbanded in October 1867, it had run up bills totaling $1,100,000, and the "generosity" of local merchants was questionable. A federal investigation into these expenditures found that many merchants had overcharged the militia. At first, the federal government refused to pay the bills, but later settled with its creditors for $513,000. Malone and Roeder, A History of Two Centuries, p. 80; Richard H. Lacey, The Montana Militia: A History of Montana's Volunteer Forces (1867-1976) (Dillon: Mont.: Tribune-Examiner Press, 1976), p. 11.
Jewish merchants, like Poznainsky, joined with other Helena businessmen in providing supplies for the militia because they hoped that their businesses would profit from government contracts and that the territory would benefit from additional military protection. They supported efforts to raise local militias and to increase the federal military's presence in Montana.

Public response in Helena to the Baker Massacre revealed just how strongly many Montana inhabitants, including Jews, endorsed the military, and military action against the Indians. On March 7, 1870, the Helena Daily Herald requested that the citizens of Helena meet "to take into consideration the recent action of Col. Baker in suppressing Indian depredations in Montana," and listed twenty-five businesses that supported the calling of such a meeting. Five of the businesses were Jewish-owned firms including: Henry Hirshman, L. H. Hershfield, Gans and Klein, Sol Rosenfeld, and Bohn and Aub. This public meeting resulted in Helena citizens unanimously adopting a series of resolutions explaining that Indian atrocities had made retributive action necessary, including the following:

3. That in our opinion it is the first duty of the Government to protect its own citizens at any cost; to encourage the hardy adventurer who seeks to develop the resources of the country and assure to him safety in person, property and family; that whatever severity of retaliation is necessary to this end should not be accounted barbarity, but is in reality kindness to those who deserve it.

4. That in our opinion Col. Baker and his command discharged a disagreeable duty faithfully, and deserve the gratitude of the whole country, as they receive that of every good citizen in Montana, who can now breathe, sleep and travel with a fuller sense of security than ever before since he entered the Territory. . . .

The Jewish men who signed these resolutions agreed with many of their contemporaries that the Indians should not be allowed to hinder white expansion. These Jews shared the attitude held by many other Montanans that the use of military force was necessary to control the Indians and to insure territorial progress.

Seven years after the Baker Massacre, Jews continued to join other Helena citizens in their demands for, and in their support of, military protection against the Indians. In July 1877, Governor Potts issued a proclamation asking for volunteers to fight the Nez Perce. Helena residents responded to this call for troops by forming two volunteer units: the Helena Cavalry and the Helena Light Artillery. Each company had one Jewish member: Isaac Greenhood in the cavalry unit and Moses Morris in the artillery. Later in that same year, Jewish businessmen helped organize a Grand Ball and supper to celebrate the arrival of the Third Infantry, "the first military organization to occupy the Post of Helena." The citizens of Helena

31 Helena Daily Herald, 14 March 1870, p. 3.
33 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 150.
34 Montana Territory History and Business Directory, 1879 (Helena, Mont.: Fisk Brothers, Printers and Binders), p. 86.
invited all the United States Army officers stationed in Montana to this reception, called by the Helena Daily Herald "the social event of the season." Abraham Sands and Henry Klein were members of the invitation committee along with other influential Montanans, including Governor Benjamin Potts, Chief Justice Decius Wade, and Samuel T. Hauser. Not surprisingly, Samuel Schwab was a member of the supper committee because the meal was held at the Cosmopolitan, the hotel that he operated with his partner Edward Zimmerman. According to the newspaper, "a most bounteous repast was served up by Messrs. Schwab and Zimmerman. It was one of the best suppers ever gotten up in this city and reflected much credit upon these well known caterers."35

Local businessmen, like Schwab and Zimmerman, favored the garrisoning of troops in Helena because they realized that military forts meant increased trade and greater profits. Economic self-interest, however, was not their only motivation for demanding military protection from the Indians. Many Jews shared the belief of their fellow citizens that Indian hostilities delayed the establishment of transportation routes, discouraged settlement, and impeded the development of the territory. Subjugation of the Indian was necessary for the progress of the region.

35 Helena Daily Herald, 15 December 1877, p. 3.
Law and Order

Although Montana became a territory in 1864, federal authority was slow to establish law and order in the mining camps. Local government in the form of miners' meetings continued to provide only the most rudimentary laws and law enforcement methods. This lack of adequate government encouraged the rise of crime and lawlessness. Jews were among the citizens who supported the extra-legal activities of local vigilance committees, but they also were among the first to welcome the establishment of responsible government and orthodox legal systems.

Although no records document Jewish membership in Helena's vigilance committee, several Helena Jews were supporters of vigilance groups in other gold camps before moving to Last Chance Gulch. Samuel Schwab, for example, was a merchant and miner in Virginia City for three years before he opened a dry goods and clothing business in Helena in 1866. While in Virginia City, Schwab collected $93.27 for the local "ferreting committee." This money was raised "to defray the expense in ferreting out highway men," and was contributed, in large proportion, by people who were not vigilantes themselves,

36 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 1249; Miller, An Illustrated History, p. 583.
but who supported the movement. 38

Another Helena pioneer, Joseph Gans, learned by first-hand experience the benefits of supporting local vigilance committees. Prior to his arrival in Helena in 1866, Gans had spent a winter working at McClellan Gulch. While in this camp, Gans met up with a man named Lloyd, whom he had known previously in the Kootenai country. Lloyd had shot a man traveling in Gans's party so when Lloyd was arrested and tried for this crime, Mr. Gans testified against him. Lloyd was found guilty, put in jail, and fined several hundred dollars. Later, when Gans moved to McClellan Gulch, he found that Lloyd was out of jail and was living in the camp. Joseph Gans recounted his experience at McClellan Gulch as follows:

I got a job in a butcher shop. One very cold day I was getting ready to go and kill and Lloyd came in and told me to save the brains and not to forget it. I did not intend to do any extra work [on] a morning like that so [I] did not save any braines [sic]. The next morning as I was cleaning up the shop he came in and grabbed a big knife that was on the block and said: "Didn't I tell you to be sure and save those braines for me?" and he was coming right my way all the time. I looked at him and told him if he came any farther I would kill him. At that he stopped and began to abuse me saying that I had showed my dislike for him when I appeared as [a] witness against him... I had told him that the next time I killed I would save the braines [sic] and that it was for no other reason than the one explained, the cold, that had kept me from doing as he asked.

He still would not drop the knife and was getting undoly [sic] excited, it seemed to me, and I was willing

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38 Merrill G. Burlingame, "Montana's Righteous Hangmen: A Reconsideration," Montana the Magazine of Western History 28 (October 1978): 46. According to Dr. Burlingame, a "ferreting list" in the possession of John Comfort identifies a "large number of Jewish contributors" to the Alder Gulch Vigilantes.
for any thing to happen to rid me of his presence. The building in which we had the shop was one of two rooms. There was a thin board partition which separated us from the other room and any one standing in one room could hear all that was taking place in the other.

I did not know that any one was in the other room. I was watching the scowling face of L. not knowing what to do, when a great big fellow who must have been 6 ft 4 inches slipped in and grabbed L. and told him to drop that knife. He heeded the warning, dropped the knife, and was told to go at once. This man was Sanford the head of the Vigilanties of that camp. He told me that I was not safe with that man around and that I must be very careful or he would get me.

That night there was a meeting of that Comm. and Sanford came to me and told me that I had better join as in that way I would be safer. I attended the meeting and they gave Lloyd just ten days to settle up his business and leave the country. He got out on time and went to California where he was convicted of some crime and sent to the Penitentiary where he died.

I remained that winter working for the butcher and in the spring came to Helena and wrote to my Brô. who was in Idaho to come and locate here.

Both Joseph Gans and Samuel Schwab lived in Helena early enough to have been involved with the camp's vigilante activities. Benjamin Ezekiel, on the other hand, did not change his residence from Virginia City to Helena until 1876, six years after Helena's last vigilante hanging. While living in Virginia City, however, Ezekiel had been associated with the vigilantes at Alder Gulch. He was called one of the "sentries" in the vigilance organization, and was identified

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40 Lee Silliman, "1870 - To the Hangman's Tree: Helena's Last Vigilante Execution," Montana the Magazine of Western History 28 (October 1978):50-59. In this article Silliman describes the events that lead up to the hanging of George Wilson and Arthur Compton on 30 April 1870, the final extra-legal hanging by Helena's vigilantes.
as one of the men who, at the hanging of George Ives, pulled the box from under the condemned man's feet. 41

Like many of his contemporaries, both Jews and Gentiles, Benjamin Ezekiel supported and sympathized with the actions of the vigilance committees when they seemed the only alternative to crime and lawlessness. 42 At the first appearances of responsible government, however, he joined with other citizens in supporting the establishment of orthodox legislative and judicial processes. In 1865 Ezekiel ran for public office and was elected commissioner of Madison County. He was Assistant Clerk of the House of Representatives during the sixth session of the legislative assembly in 1870, and Chief Clerk for the House two years later. In 1873 and 1874, he again served in the legislature, this time as a representative from Madison County. Although his primary occupations in Virginia City during these early years were mining and merchandising, Ezekiel also was deputy sheriff of the camp for a time. 43

Benjamin Ezekiel's years of public service in Madison County were not without their share of controversy. During the 1874 legislative

41 Hoffman Birney, Vigilantes (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Penn Publishing Company, 1929), p. 209. On page 42 in his article titled "Montana's Righteous Hangmen," Burlingame contends that the Ives trial "was not a Vigilante action," but probably provided the impetus needed to organize and spread the vigilante movement.

42 Ibid., p. 48. Burlingame points out that "contemporary opinion supported the stringent action of the Vigilantes."

43 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 1209; Helena Daily Independent, 30 April 1885, p. 4; Territory of Montana, House Journal, sixth session, 1870; seventh session 1872; seventh extraordinary session, 1873; eighth session, 1874.
session, for example, he was accused by the Virginia City press of voting for a bill that assured the passage of the "capital bill." Any legislation that endangered Virginia City's position as capital city of the territory was strongly opposed by Madison County voters so such an accusation against one of their representatives was not to be taken lightly. In a letter to the newspaper Ezekiel tried to vindicate his actions on this bill, but his "frivolous excuses" were countered point-by-point in the Montanian whose editor went on to attack Ezekiel in libelous terms:

The charlatan and mountebank, Ben. Ezekiel, writhing under the charges of fraud and guilt proven against him by this paper, snaps and snarls like a belabored cur beneath his master's lash, and... seeks to clear himself of the glaring guilt resting upon him by pronouncing the charges brought against him to be lies. His established reputation in this community as a fraud and parasite on the public prevents our taking further notice of the moral leper than to condescend to spit in his face should he cross our path.44

Territorial newspapers often used such smear campaigns to vilify political officeholders so Ezekiel's treatment by the press was not unusual. This unpleasant experience in Virginia City, however, may explain his later absence from public affairs in Helena.

Some Helena Jews may have abstained from political involvement to avoid antagonizing either the press or their neighbors, but others were more concerned with making a living than running for political office. Lewis Hershfield, for example, showed an interest in Helena

44 Virginia City Montanian, 5 March 1874, p. 5; Virginia City Madisonian, 21 February 1874, p. 3., Virginia City Montanian, 26 February 1874, p. 5.
politics in the 1860s, but was not noted for his political influence in the territory until years later. In 1867 Hershfield was working very hard to establish a successful banking business in Helena. He was, in his own words, "here [in Montana] to make money and as quick as possible." In letters to his business partner in Virginia City, Hershfield occasionally included personal comments concerning political activities in Helena. On September 3, 1867, he announced the defeat of a political candidate whom he had endorsed, saying:

I haven't as pleasant information as the success of the Union candidate. the [sic] 'cops' carry our town by 177 majority and the county probably by 300. we [sic] have exerted ourselves manfully and spent money freely but we could not outnumber the Missourians. it's [sic] no use denying the fact that they are as thick as 'Blackberries in August'. . . .

Hershfield was a "Unionist," a member of the moderate wing of the Republican party, and he opposed the election of "cops," Copperhead Democrats, to any political offices. During his early years in Helena, he campaigned for Unionist candidates and supported the party through political contributions, but he did not run for office himself. By the 1880s Hershfield had a successful, and well-established, banking business and he had the time to show a greater interest in territorial

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46 Ibid., 3 September 1867.

47 Unionists wanted to preserve the Union, but not to destroy the South. Copperhead Democrats, on the other hand, were northerners who sympathized with the South. Malone and Roeder, A History of Two Centuries, p. 75.
politics. He became the head of the Republican party organization and, in 1889, he was one of the Montana Republicans named as a possible replacement for Governor Preston Leslie. \(^48\) Hershfield withdrew from this race, but later that same year, he ran for another office and won. He represented Lewis and Clark County at the constitutional convention. \(^49\)

Long before Jewish men like Lewis Hershfield felt successful enough to run for political offices, their pioneer coreligionists had entered the political arena. From the earliest years of the gold rush, Helena Jews were candidates for public office and were involved in local government. As early as 1867, George Cohen ran against seven other men for a seat in the legislative assembly, but was defeated. In the following year, two more Helena Jews, Solomon Star and James M. Ellis were candidates for the House of Representatives and the latter one, Ellis, was elected. \(^50\) After his selection, a member of Helena's Jewish community who identified himself only as "Nomade," proudly announced Mr. Ellis's new position in the Israelite and expressed confidence in his abilities:

\[^48\] Smear tactics that were both personal and anti-Semitic were used to block Lewis Hershfield's nomination for governor. Clark C. Spence, Territorial Politics and Government in Montana 1864-89 (Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 177-179.


... this session of the Legislature will have one of our brethren as one of its shining lights, elected by the largest majority of any man upon the ticket.

Mr. Jas. M. Ellis, the member elect, will, undoubtedly, through his industry, honesty of purpose, and intelligence, reflect credit upon his constituents and our faith he so religiously adheres to.51

The editor of the Helena Weekly Herald, also, was supportive of Mr. Ellis's election and had kind things to say about Helena's new Representative:

Hon. J. M. Ellis Representative in the Legislature from this district, called at our sanctum today, ... He leaves for the Capital tomorrow morning, where he will doubtless attend zealously and jealously to the interests of his constituents. Mr. Ellis is an intelligent, energetic, shrewd and far-seeing man, and the people of the 3d district certainly will have good reason to be proud of their choice.52

Solomon Star, the Jewish candidate who had opposed Ellis for the seat in the House of Representatives, was not discouraged by his defeat in 1868. The next year he ran for the county position of Clerk and Recorder and lost again.53 Finally, in 1872 Star's aspirations for public office were realized when he was appointed the Receiver of the Land Office. Another political appointment followed in 1874, when he accepted the position of Territorial Auditor, an office he held for two years.54 Soon after resigning his auditor's

51 Cincinnati Israelite, 13 November 1868, p. 4.
52 Helena Weekly Herald, 10 December 1868, p. 7.
post, Solomon Star left Helena and followed other prospectors to the Black Hills. He settled in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, and immediately became active in local affairs. Star joined forces with other citizens in the camp who were interested in organizing the city's government. In the fall of 1876, he was elected to the town's first city council, and in 1878, he was appointed postmaster. Star later served as mayor of Deadwood for twenty-one years and also was a member of South Dakota's state legislature and state senate.

Felix Poznainsky was another Jewish pioneer who unsuccessfully bid for public office in Montana and later became active in South Dakota politics. Poznainsky came to Helena from Colorado in 1864. He was a merchant and one of the owners of Helena's first newspaper, the Radiator. Poznainsky ran for political office in 1869 and was defeated in his bid for a seat in the Montana House of Representatives.

For an account of the creation of Deadwood's first city administration and Solomon Star's role in its development see Harry H. Anderson's article entitled "Deadwood, South Dakota: An Effort of Stability," Montana the Magazine of Western History 20 (January 1970): 41-47.

Ibid., p. 45; Leeson, History of Montana, p. 1253.


Helena Montana Daily Record, 10 July 1907, p. 5. Poznainsky and his partner changed the name of the Montana Radiator to the Helena Herald and then sold the newspaper to their editor, Robert E. Fisk. Helena Herald, 15 November 1866, pp. 1, 2; 27 December 1866, pp. 1, 2.

He later left Helena, moving first to Denver and then to the Black Hills in 1878. He lived a few months in Deadwood, Rochford, Rockeville, and finally settled in Rapid City in 1879. As a dry-goods and clothing merchant in Rapid City, Poznainsky was interested in promoting the best interests of the community. He took an active role in city government; he was a member of the school board, a city alderman, and, at the time of his death, a member of the city council.60

Although Helena's Jewish pioneers were not notably successful in their campaigns for territorial offices, individual Jews were elected and appointed to positions of public trust in the territory. As a group, the number of Jews in Helena was not large enough for them to be considered a political force in the community. According to the 1870 census, eighty-nine Jewish people resided in Helena, representing 2.86 percent of the town's 3,106 inhabitants. Only fifty-eight of these eighty-nine Jews were men over eighteen years old; the rest were women and children. All but four of the fifty-eight Jewish men who were eligible to vote were foreign-born and seventeen were not yet citizens.61 (See Appendix D.) Considering the fact that almost all of these men were immigrants, relative newcomers to American politics, Helena's Jewish pioneers did run for political offices in surprising numbers.

60 Helena Montana Daily Record, 10 July 1907, p. 5.

61 U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. These census figures were gathered when the mining boom was declining, and do not reflect the total number of Jews who lived in Helena during the gold rush. Between 1864 and 1870, over 160 Jewish men lived in Helena,
Business-Related Issues

Judging from the occupations listed by Helena Jews in the 1868 city directory and the 1870 census, the majority were merchants or tradesmen. (See Appendices C, D.) They dominated Helena's retail and wholesale trade and were directly involved in most of the camp's economic activity. As businessmen, Jews had an interest in the future of the community. They hoped to improve their trade by working for law and order and community improvements. Initially, their civic involvement was motivated by economics, but soon this was replaced by genuine community spirit.

As early as 1867, Jewish merchants were cooperating with other Helena businessmen in the interest of their respective businesses. They held meetings to discuss issues of concern to the mercantile community, including the confiscation of goods by the Collector of Internal Revenue and local revenue laws. Other meetings followed and in February 1867, numerous Jewish names were included among the signatures of Helena businessmen who had approved resolutions that set the value for gold dust circulating in the camp. Such meetings offered precedents for the formation in 1877 of the Board of Trade, a civic organization whose members were businessmen, including many Jews, whose goals were to promote not only the interests of business but also of the town.63

62 Leeson, History of Montana, p. 703.

One issue of early concern to Helena's Jewish merchants and their colleagues was the territory's taxation system. Like other Montana citizens, businessmen disliked the type of taxes and the idea that the territory was subject to "taxation without representation." Some citizens refused to pay their taxes, but the majority of Montanans, including Helena's Jews, obeyed the taxation laws. In 1867-68, for example, forty-seven of the 698 property holders on Lewis and Clark County's assessment roll were Jewish businessmen and their partners. These forty-seven men constituted only seven percent of all taxpayers in the county; yet, they paid $271,120 or ten percent of the total county tax assessment for that year. At a time when some Montanans were expressing their dislike of the levies placed upon them and were choosing to default on their taxes, Helena Jews accepted their share of the taxation burden. The threat of prosecution was one incentive for paying taxes, but there was an even stronger motivation. By providing some of the money for operating government, Jews hoped to encourage government-financed improvements in the territory.

Jewish merchants worked to effect orderly development in Helena and the region by adhering to the tax laws and supporting the Sunday closure movement. The abnormality of life on the mining frontier was evidenced by Sundays in the gold camps. In Helena and other mining towns, Sunday was not a day for rest and religious reflection, but a day for miners to purchase their supplies and equipment, sell their gold dust,

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64 Spence, Territorial Politics, pp. 277-286.
socialize with their friends, and enjoy local entertainments. When communities became more permanent, local groups sought to make life in the camps more orderly and advocated temperance and Sunday closing. By 1870 there were enough Helena residents who supported Sunday closure that local merchants agreed to modify their business activities on the Christian Sabbath. A public announcement to this effect was published in the Helena Daily Herald.

To Be Closed on Sunday.

The merchants and business men of this city have entered into the following arrangement for closing their places of business on Sundays. Some of the clothing merchants, we understand, decline to close up before 4 o'clock p.m. We presume, however, that when they see the example set by their neighbors they will do likewise. We regard this as one of the best plans yet adopted by business men. Sunday is a day of rest. 'Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.'

Although Jews observed a different Sabbath day from Christians, Jewish merchants did not oppose Sunday closing in Helena. On February 12, 1870, two Jewish-owned firms, Munter and Company and Morris Brothers, signed a proclamation with other grocery merchants and announced their decision to close their businesses at 12:00 M. on Sundays. Several days later another proclamation appeared in the newspaper signed by fifteen clothing and dry-goods merchants.

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66 Rodman W. Paul, California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1947), pp. 80-82.

67 Helena Daily Herald, 12 February 1870, p. 3.

68 Ibid.
including eleven Jewish-owned firms. It read:

Closed on Sunday
Helena, February 14, 1870.

We the undersigned clothing and dry goods merchants of Helena do hereby agree that on Sunday, from and after this date, we will make no display of merchandise on our side-walks, and that we will close our respective places of business on Sundays at two o'clock p.m., on and after Sunday February 27th, 1870, and that any one can honorably withdraw from this compact by giving at least one week's notice of the same in either the HERALD or GAZETTE.

Gans & Klein
Sol Rosenfield
Sands & Co.
Booker & Roberts
Charles Aaron
C. W. Blum
C. B. Donalson

Loeb & Bro
M. Hirshman
L. Goldberg
Tootle Leach & Co
Julius Sands
A. Lavenberg & Co
Nick Millen
S. W. Levy

The "tobacco, cigar, fruit, confectionary and news dealers of Helena" followed with a similar announcement on February 18, 1870, and four of the nine signatures were Jewish merchants.0

Jewish businessmen agreed to close their stores on Sunday because they wanted to cooperate with other Helena merchants in activities for the betterment of the community. They did not want to oppose any movement that the majority of Helena residents considered good for the town. Also, they favored a day of rest from work, no matter what day, as long as all merchants adhered to it. Helena Jews were willing to make some accommodations to bring stability and

69 Ibid., 15 February 1870, p. 3. All these firms were Jewish-owned except Booker & Roberts, C. B. Donalson, Tootle Leach & Co., and Nick Millen.

70 Helena Daily Herald, 18 February 1870, p. 3.
civilization to the camp. They wanted to succeed in business, but not at the expense of the community's progress. 71

By the 1870s mining activity in the territory was declining, along with Helena's tax base. Jewish merchants and other Helena businessmen were concerned about the future of the town and the territory. On March 22, 1872, a number of Helena businessmen met "to consider the best means of promoting immigration to Montana," an effort that they hoped would alleviate some of Montana's economic problems. Two Helena Jewish merchants, Henry Klein and Isaac Greenhood, were among the businessmen assigned to committees to gather statistics and solicit subscriptions for a society and a publication. The Montana Immigration Society was formally organized on March 30, 1872, with the following objectives: "to obtain & diffuse reliable information in regard to the Territory, and afford to such as desire it, a reliable exhibit of statistics and resources; and the advantage to immigrants seeking a permanent home." Henry Klein was named to the Society's Board of Directors along with other Helena promoters, including Cornelius Hedges, Anton M. Holter, and Martin Maginnis. 72 The goals of the Society were frustrated by Montana's deepening economic troubles. The national

71 Moses Kligsberg, "Jewish Immigrants in Business: A Sociological Study," American Jewish Historical Quarterly 61 (March 1967):283-318. According to Kligsberg, the principal motive of Jewish emigration was the search for social and material advancement and this was modified by several factors, including education and the desire for knowledge, social ideals, and deep family ties.

Panic of 1873 and the 1874 fire combined to discourage local promotional efforts. The importance of such cooperative ventures, however, was not forgotten, and the Jewish men who organized the Montana Immigration Society later helped establish another business-directed civic organization, the Board of Trade.

The depressed economic conditions of the 1870s stimulated Helena citizens "to organize for a concert of action upon the general interests of the town." 73 On November 23, 1877, sixty-three local businessmen, including sixteen Jews, met at Helena's International Hotel and officially established the Helena Board of Trade. At this same meeting officers were elected and Abram Sands, Moses Morris, Isaac Greenhood, and Henry Klein were four of twenty-one men named directors of the Board for the ensuing year. 74 The immediate focus of the organization was improved transportation routes to Montana, but Board members also promoted Helena and assumed leadership positions in the city government. 75 It was largely through the efforts of the Board of Trade that Helena became an incorporated city in 1881 and that rail connections were finally completed to the city in 1883. Helena, thereafter, seemed assured a prosperous future, thanks largely

73 Report of the Board of Trade, p. 7.
74 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
75 Several Jewish members of the Board held city and county offices in the 1880s, including Henry Klein, Marcus Lissner, Jacob Loeb, Moses Morris, and Samuel Schwab. Miller, An Illustrated History pp. 143, 152, 203, 584; Leeson, History of Montana, p. 1233.
to the Board of Trade and to the farsighted individuals, both Jew and Gentile, who made up its membership. 76

Cultural and Charitable Activities

Helena Jews did not limit their civic participation to business-related issues. From the beginning of the gold rush, they realized the importance of joining organizations for social as well as business contacts. Benevolent and fraternal orders, in particular, were extremely popular with both Jews and non-Jews. Groups like the Odd Fellows, the United Workmen, the Knights of Pythias, and the Masons were a "vital part of the process which enabled many of the diverse people arriving in the early West to adjust to each other and to the milieu." 77

By 1866 Helena's Jews had organized their own philanthropic society, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, but they still wanted opportunities to socialize with their non-Jewish neighbors and to extend their charitable activities to include people other than their coreligionists. 78 The Masonic Order was one fraternal society that greatly attracted Helena Jews. Several Jewish men, including Solomon Star, had been active in the Masonic movement in other gold camps before

76 For a discussion of the strategic role that the Board of Trade played in Helena's transition from gold camp to state capital see the article by Joan Bishop, "A Season of Trial: Helena's Entrepreneurs Nurture a City", Montana the Magazine of Western History 28 (July 1978): 62-71.


78 Helena Montana Radiator, 8 September 1866, p. 3.
moving to Helena. Star, for example, was Junior Deacon of Virginia City Lodge No. 1 when the Grand Lodge of Montana was organized in 1866. He was one of the Master Masons who attended that organizational session, and he was appointed the Grand Sword Bearer. In 1867 Star became Junior Warden of Virginia City Lodge No. 1 and, also, was elected Grand Treasurer. The following year, after moving to Helena, he was named Grand Secretary and was elected the first Worshipful Master of King Solomon's Lodge No. 9, an office he held for four successive terms. In 1871 Star was elected Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Montana and, in 1873, Grand Master.\textsuperscript{79}

Moses Morris, another Helena Jewish pioneer, also held the position of Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Montana.\textsuperscript{80} He started his active participation in Montana Masonry during the early years of the gold rush. At the first annual meeting of Helena Lodge No. 3 on December 15, 1866, Morris was appointed Senior Deacon. He demitted from No. 3 in 1867 and became a charter member of King Solomon's Lodge No. 9. In December 1870, two of Helena's three Masonic lodges elected Jewish men as their Worshipful Masters: A. J. Poznainsky, Worshipful Master of Helena Lodge No. 3 and Moses Morris, Worshipful Master of King Solomon's Lodge No. 9. This election was significant for Morris because it signaled the beginning of his long and active


\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 276. H. S. Hepner was elected Grand Master in September 1903.
service for No. 9. In December 1878, Morris was again elected Worshipful Master of King Solomon's Lodge, a position that he held for twelve of the following thirteen years. While serving his terms as Worshipful Master, Morris was appointed Junior Grand Warden for the Grand Lodge of Montana in 1889 and Deputy Grand Master in 1891. He became the Grand Master of Montana Masons in 1892.\textsuperscript{81}

Not all of Helena's Jewish Masons were officers of the Grand Lodge of Montana, but many were active members of their own local lodges. Helena Lodge No. 3 and Morning Star Lodge No. 5 both had Jewish members, but King Solomon's Lodge No. 9 was the Masonic lodge most widely attended by Helena's Jewish pioneers. During its early years, the lodge had numerous Jewish members and most of its Worshipful Masters were Jews.\textsuperscript{82} The combined terms of Solomon Star and Moses Morris account for eighteen years, but two other Jewish men were also Worshipful Masters for No. 9 during the territorial period. Isaac Haas was elected Worshipful Master in December 1871, and Israel Salhinger in December 1882.\textsuperscript{83}

Helena's Jewish pioneers did not limit their fraternal affiliations to the Masonic lodges. When Montana Lodge No. 1, International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), was formed in Helena

\textsuperscript{81}Campbell, Quarries of Last Chance Gulch, 1:20, 34, 35, 81, 88; Miller, Hands of the Workmen, p. 276; Moses Morris Papers, Small Collection 1633, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

\textsuperscript{82}For listings of the members of Helena's Masonic Lodges see the records of the Masonic Blue Lodge Secretaries, Helena, Montana.

\textsuperscript{83}Campbell, Quarries of Last Chance Gulch, 1:40, 113.
in 1867, several Jews were installed as officers including: Moe B. Edinger, Secretary; Isaac Marks, Treasurer; and Louis Levy, Conductor. Another Jewish man, Jacob Loeb, was the new lodge's first initiate. He later withdrew from Montana Lodge No. 1 and joined the Excelsior Lodge (Helena), where he served as secretary for ten years. Loeb also was elected to several territorial offices in the I.O.O.F., including Grand Secretary and Grand Master. In addition to his membership in the Odd Fellows, Loeb was a charter member of Myrtle Lodge No. 3, Knights of Pythias, and a member of Helena Lodge No. 3, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

Many Helena Jews held memberships in more than one fraternal society. There were Jewish names on the membership rolls of all the local lodges that had no religious restrictions, including not only the groups to which Jacob Loeb belonged, but also the Ancient Order of United Workmen and the Independent Order of Good Templars. These fraternal organizations were important to Helena's Jews because they greatly facilitated their integration into the community's social and political life. It was partially through their fraternal activities that Helena Jews, and Jews in other towns in the West, acculturated and became Americanized. The majority of Helena's pioneer Jews were

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85 Lodge History, pp. 8-9, 23.

86 Ibid., p. 29; Helena Weekly Herald, 22 April 1869, p. 8.
foreign-born and the fraternal societies provided them with convenient means for philanthropic service, social intercourse, and leadership training.\(^{87}\)

In addition to joining fraternal societies, Helena Jews participated in other groups that benefited both the individual members and the community. In 1868 Jews helped organize the Helena Library Association, "a society for the gratification of intellectual tastes and the cultivation of the mind," and established Helena's first library.\(^{88}\) S. H. Bohm, the Jewish banker, was elected the first Treasurer of the Association. He and other early members solicited subscriptions and donations of books and magazines for the new library.\(^{89}\) Periodically, over the following years, benefits were given to raise money for the library, and Jewish residents continued to offer their support. In 1870, for example, a masquerade ball was given for the benefit of the Helena Library Association and Solomon Star was a member of one of the arrangement committees.\(^{90}\)


\(^{88}\) Helena Weekly Herald, 26 November 1868, p. 7.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 10 December 1868, p. 8.

\(^{90}\) Helena Daily Herald, 5 February 1870, p. 3.
Cinderella; H. Myers, a Pilgrim; A. M. Lavenberg, in a costume from the Court of Napoleon; Moses Morris, Zerubbabel; and Julius Sands, the sailor boy.

After the library was destroyed in the 1874 fire, Helena's Jews again joined their fellow citizens and canvassed the town for subscriptions of money and books. One Jewish merchant in particular, Jacob Loeb, distinguished himself as an active library supporter through his generous offer to the Helena Library Association:

**Liberal Proposition**

Mr. Jake Loeb of the firm of Loeb & Bro., has tendered to the Helena Library Association the use of the rear room of the new store on Main street for one year, rent free. In addition to this, Mr. Loeb offers to act as Librarian during that time without compensation. The proposition is a very liberal one, and Col. Sanders, President of the Association, will probably recommend its acceptance.

The Association did not accept Loeb's offer, but decided instead to hire a full-time librarian and lease a room on the second floor of the new Herald building. After the library was reestablished and reopened, it remained in operation at the same location until 1886, when a free public library was organized. The early patron registers of the Helena Public Library record the names of numerous Jewish patrons.

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91 Helena Daily Herald, 2 March 1870, p. 3. The newspaper described Morris's costume as that of "Zerubbeub," but the correct spelling is Zerubbabel. According to the dictionary Zerubbabel was "a leader of the Jews on their return from Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. Ezra 2:1, 2; 3:2-13." Random House Dictionary of the English Language, unabridged ed. (1967), s.v. "Zerubbabel."

92 Helena Daily Herald, 16 May 1874, p. 3.

93 Ibid., 6 August 1874, p. 3.
residents who continued to show not only an interest in their own education but also a concern for the betterment of the community. Participation in the library association was not the only method by which Helena's Jewish pioneers nurtured cultural and intellectual development in the camp. They also took a hearty interest in many of the entertainment societies and literary clubs that were formed to bring civilization to the frontier. In the 1870s Helena Jews were members of debating societies, dancing clubs, amateur theatrical troupes, and local musical groups. Samuel and Jacob Silverman, for example, were two Jewish men with memberships in the Helena Debating Club. Both Jews and Gentiles were members of this association which was considered beneficial for "intellectual and social standing" within the community. The object of the debating club as stated in its bylaws was: "the cultivation & advancement of moral, literary [sic], intellectual [sic], and social pursuits [sic]." Jews, also, were members of Helena's Pioneer Dancing Club and regular attendants at this group's numerous soirees. Nine of the sixty-one people on the club's membership register in 1878 were Helena Jews.

Several Helena Jews belonged to the Harmonia Gesang Verein, a

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95 Helena Debating Club Records, 1871-1874, Small Collection 836, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.
club for Germans who wanted "to cultivate & keep alive the spirit of friendship & remembrances of the harmless joys and huerless amusements of days gone by, and homes far away." As part of their activities, the club's members organized a choir that practiced twice a week and sponsored a yearly masquerade ball. By 1881 musical pursuits had become the society's major focus and the Harmonia Gesang Verein was incorporated with "the cultivation of musical talent" as its purpose. Helena Jews had numerous opportunities to express their musical talents through societies like the Harmonia Gesang Verein and the amateur vocal and instrumental groups that gave concerts in the community.

Helena's Jewish citizens were welcomed into the social life of the community. They, in turn, offered the community not only their musical and literary talents, but also their support and financial resources.

97 Helena Daily Independent, 8 April 1874. In the Montana Business Directory, 1879 on page 174, the officers of the Harmonia Gesang Verein are listed, including the following Helena Jews: Vice President, Herman Gans; Treasurer, Jacob Loeb; and Secretary, Emil Lowenberg. In the East "German gentiles... were inclined to anti-Semitism as a carry-over from Europe," but in the West "German social, cultural and political groups solicited and welcomed Jewish members. Not only were Jews active in the leadership of the German turn vereins, they were among the founders of many such bodies. Even Polish Jews... were readily accepted by the German gentile organizations." Norton B. Stern and William M. Kramer, "Periodical Reflections," Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly 7 (April 1975):275.

98 When the Harmonia Gesang Verein Society of Helena held its Fourth Annual Masquerade Ball on 21 February 1879, Jacob Loeb and Emil Lowenberg served on the arrangements committee and another Jewish man, Herman Gans, was one of the floor managers. Helena Daily Herald, 27 January 1879, p. 3.


100 Helena Daily Herald, 19 August 1874, p. 3.
assistance. Jews mingled with non-Jews at masquerade balls and
dancing club soirees, cooperated with them in business and lodge
activities, and served with them on civic improvement committees.
As businessmen and more stable residents, Jews were an essential part
of the coalition of people who hoped to modify the social confusion
of the gold rush and bring stability and civilization to the territory.

The Jewish Image

Despite the cosmopolitan makeup of its early population,
Helena did not prove a friendly place for people of all ethnic and
religious groups. Indians, Afro-Americans, and Chinese were mistreated
and openly discriminated against by people in the community.101
Helena's Jewish pioneers, however, experienced a comparative lack of
anti-Semitic feeling. They generally were accepted by their contempo­
raries with good will and an absence of overt religious bias.
Prejudicial attitudes were present in Helena during the early years
of settlement, but these attitudes were rarely translated into
anti-Semitic actions.

The Helena Herald occasionally reprinted articles from eastern
newspapers that expressed current views of the public's image of Jews.
On December 6, 1866, the newspaper published a news account from
a Mobile paper commenting on the financial success of Jews in that
city:

101Malone and Roeder, A History of Two Centuries, pp. 65-66;
William L. Lang, "The Nearly Forgotten Blacks on Last Chance Gulch,
Hebrew Paupers—A mobile [sic] paper says 'Who ever saw a Hebrew begging bread? There are none. We are informed by an old resident—one who has lived in Mobile for forty years and has served many of them in high official capacity, that among the many who have applied for charity, he has yet to see the first son of Abraham wanting the necessaries of life.'

Early the following year another article appeared in the Herald's "Miscellaneous Column" concerning the wealth of Jews:

A Synagogue will soon be built on Fifth Avenue, New York, of the value of half a million dollars. Jerusalem had nothing like it, leaving the temple aside, but the Jews are richer now than they were in the days when Jerusalem was in all her glory.

Although the December 1866 newspaper story praised the Jews for their self-sufficiency and financial accomplishments, it created the same stereotyped impressions of Jews as the later newspaper article. Both accounts combined generalizations with familiar prejudices. They portrayed Jews in terms that mirrored traditional attitudes: the belief that Jews love money and have Midas's touch so everything they touch turns into gold. At this time the Helena Herald was characterizing Jews according to sentiments and economic stereotypes popular in other parts of the country because the local press was not influenced, yet, by Helena's own Jewish community.

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102 Helena Herald, 6 December 1866, p. 2.
103 Ibid., 17 January 1867, p. 4.
After Helena's Jews organized their benevolent society in September 1866, and started meeting regularly for holiday services, people in the town became more aware of their presence. This awareness was reflected in the local press, where stereotyped impressions were replaced by articles describing the activities and accomplishments of Helena Jews. The earliest news items about the Jewish community announced holiday observances and the closing of Jewish businesses on Yom Kippur, and explained the relief activities of the Hebrew Benevolent Association. By the 1870s the Daily Independent was printing stories describing Jewish holidays, including Passover and Rosh Hashana.

Although Helena newspapers frequently reported only the notorious or humorous incidents involving the town's Chinese and Afro-American residents, they recorded both the ordinary activities and the notable achievements of Helena's Jews. Usually, Jewish businessmen were portrayed by the press in complimentary terms. Merchants, like S. H. Bohm, were described as "liberal, enterprising, and public-spirited men," and Jewish firms, like the Sands Brothers, were characterized as "upright and honorable in their business transactions."

105 On 8 September 1866, the Helena Montana Radiator announced on page 3 that the Israelites were meeting for "divine service" and that they had organized the Hebrew Benevolent Association.

106 Helena Daily Independent, 2 April 1874, p. 3; 20 August 1874, p. 3.

107 Lang, "Blacks on Last Chance Gulch," p. 50.

108 Helena Daily Herald, 16 May 1870, p. 3; 23 July 1870, p. 3.
individual Jews participated in fraternal societies, civic improvement groups, and social clubs, they were rarely identified in the newspapers by religion. Often, deaths, marriages, and circumcisions were the only occasions when Jews were singled out because of their religion. If local Jews were involved in an incident, the press usually referred to them by religion without prejudicial comments. On March 4, 1869, for example, the *Helena Weekly Herald* published the following account of an altercation between two Jewish residents:

Morris vs Morris--A Genuine Knock Down.--Two of our Hebrew citizens of upper town, known as Joseph Morris, clothier, and John Morris, a hale, good-looking, husky gent of leisure, came in pugilistic contact this forenoon on Main street [sic] near Bridge, and got up the liveliest excitement we have seen since the big fire. Very naughty epithets were interchanged; until the elder Morris (Joseph) received blow No. 1, which sent him violently to the ground, and drew the claret freely. But the old gentleman rallied and charged again upon his antagonist, only to meet with, however, another square knock down, and an ugly contusion under the eye. This process was repeated some four or five times with like fearful results upon the face and cranium of the elder Morris. The affair finally terminated at Squire Duke's mansion, where both belligerents appeared without attorneys, and, after a fair interchange of sentiments of reciprocity with the Squire, John Morris exhibited his patriotism in supporting the vehicle of justice by paying in greenbacks to the amount of $37 62½ [sic]; and Joseph Morris, after deducting damages assessed, as we suppose, complimented the Court with about $25.109.

On the rare occasions when Helena Jews clashed with Gentiles, the conflicts were reported less humorously by the press, but with the same lack of prejudice. When describing the fight between

W. Weinshenk and his Gentile companion, the Herald did not point out that Weinshenk was a member of Helena's Jewish community.  

Pistol Drawn--On Sunday afternoon while Weinschenk [sic] and a German companion, were returning from the Hot Springs, a difficulty arose between them, during which the latter used an expression, far to [sic] common, which reflects much more discredit upon the one using it, than upon the one whom it is applied to. Weinschenk [sic] then drew a pistol upon his enemy, but the two were separated by friends. W. was arrested and will have his hearing before Justice McCarty [sic] this morning at 10 o'clock.

The follow-up article in the newspaper pictured a far less violent exchange:

The Sequel--The sequel to the case mentioned in our yesterday's paper, in which we erroneously stated that Mr. Weinschenck [sic] drew his pistol on Mr. Webster, was a trial of both parties before Justice McCarthy, yesterday. It seems that both parties were celebrating the Jewish New Year, and that some little dispute about a horse race resulted in the throwing of stones by Mr. Webster, and threats to shoot by Mr. Weinschenck [sic]. Both parties were fined five dollars and costs, by the justice, Mr. Webster paying his fine, and Mr. Weinschenck [sic] appealing to the District Court.

Another Jew-Gentile confrontation in Helena received notice from both a Virginia City newspaper, and a prominent Helena resident, Andrew Fisk. On May 18, 1867, the Montana Post reprinted the following Helena news item:

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110 Weinshank is listed as a member in the Constitution and Bylaws of the First Hebrew Benevolent Association, 1868. The name is spelled "Weinshank" in the Bylaws, but "Weinshenk" in the Helena Business Directory (1868), pp. 135, 136, 159, and in an article in the Cincinnati Israelite, 17 April 1868, p. 6.

111 Helena Weekly Herald, 3 October 1867, p. 8.

112 Ibid.
Gave Bonds.—Mr. Jacob Smith was brought up before the Police Justice, last Thursday, charged with committing an assault with a deadly weapon on Mr. A. Berthimer [Bertheimer]. The assault was committed on the day preceding, at the slaughter house owned by Mr. Smith, in Dry gulch [sic], and as soon as it was known created considerable excitement among a portion of our citizens. Berthimer [sic] is badly cut and bruised about the head, but we understand from his physician that he is in no immediate danger. Smith waived an examination and gave $5,000 bonds [sic] for his appearance at the next term of the District Court.113

In his diary notation on May 8, 1867, Andrew Fisk comments on the same incident: "Jake Smith and a Jew had a pretty serious fight this afternoon--the Jews [sic] coming out decidedly second best."114 Neither the public report in the newspaper nor Fisk's private account describe the conflict with anti-Jewish comments. They were indicative of contemporary reactions in Helena toward Jews.

Although Andrew Fisk's writings document the personal opinions of only one individual, he was a newspaperman and was aware of the attitudes held by other Helena residents toward Jews.115 In his diary, Fisk points out that Helena Jews mixed freely with their

113 Virginia City Montana Post, 18 May 1867, p. 8. A. Bertheimer is listed as a member in the Constitution and Bylaws of the First Hebrew Benevolent Association, 1869.

114 Andrew Jackson Fisk Diary, 8 May 1867, Fisk Family Papers, 1859-1901, Manuscript Collection 31, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

non-Jewish neighbors and were considered equal participants in the economic and social life of the town. He notes business transactions between the Fisk Brothers and S. H. Bohm. He also mentions several personal friends who were Jewish, including Solomon Star and Felix Poznainsky. When Andrew Fisk was acquainted with a Jewish person, he rarely identified the individual by religion unless he was referring to him in connection with a particular incident. On March 26, 1871, for example, Fisk wrote:

This afternoon, I attended the wedding of Ike Greenhood and Miss Sallie Abrahams, at the residence of Felix Poznainsky. The ceremony was first performed in Hebrew, according to the Jewish faith, and then by a Justice of the Peace. Both bride and groom shed copious tears.

One month later, Fisk again singled out a Helena Jewish resident:

"This morning Wolff Auspach [Wolf Anspach], an old resident of Helena, and one of the leading Israelites, died very suddenly of heart disease."118

Contemporary opinion in Helena, as reflected in the local newspapers and Fisk's diary, was generally favorable toward the Jews. Negative attitudes about Jews existed, but they were rarely exhibited in personal responses to individual Jews. Helena's Jewish pioneers enjoyed good relations with their non-Jewish neighbors and considered themselves welcome participants in the everyday life of the community.

116 Andrew Jackson Fisk Diary, 18 September 1870, 18 October 1870, 29 October 1870, Fisk Family Papers, 1859-1901.
117 Ibid., 14 September 1870, 6 July 1871.
118 Ibid., 13 April 1871.
In a letter to the editor of the Israelite dated October 15, 1868,

one Helena Jewish citizen commented upon the self-image of Helena Jews:

Lately my attention has been called to the fact, that our coreligionists in this isolated Territory have been rather derelict in making their position known to the rest of the world regarding their social and religious merits, compared (not invidiously,) with those that do not agree with us in the faith to which we so tenaciously adhere, and I must here ask your pardon for the trespass upon the valuable space of your inestimable paper.

Concerning the social position of our coreligionists in this mountain country, they can well be proud of the station to which they have attained through their rectitude of conduct in their several walks, and have a firm hold upon the respect and esteem of all classes. Our people have gained universal confidence in the several walks of life, be it as merchant, banker, mechanic or miner, all of which pursuits are represented by Israelites, and upon none of them is brought any disrespect through their fault.

In no country have I seen such a perfectly good understanding and good will shown to people of our faith as in this Territory, and, I assure you, Mr. Editor, they deserve it. No gathering takes place but we are represented, and no exclusion is for a moment permitted because of the different religious views existing among the residents here.

In a political view I can give you no better proof than the fact, that last year the mayor elect of our neighboring city, and the capitol of this Territory, 'Virginia,' was an Israelite; and this session of the Legislature will have one of our brethren [James M. Ellis] as one of its shining lights, elected by the largest majority of any man upon the ticket.

... Thus you see, our coreligionists have raised themselves by means of their merit to positions which are never reached save through positive intellectual capacity and good repute.

In the Jewish families here, of which there are but a very limited number, we spend many happy hours. Time glides by without reminding one of its flight. Happy hours! where the duties of life are not overlooked, and where the heart and intellect are both improved, taste presides, and all that is good in our nature is cheered and invigorated.119

119 Cincinnati Israelite, 13 November 1868, p. 4.
Their inclusion in Helena's social and political activities was considered evidence that Jews had won the acceptance of the community. According to "Nomade," a spokesman for the town's Jewish residents, Jews deserved their favorable positions because they behaved in a manner that was above reproach.

Meritorious conduct, however, was not the only explanation for the social acceptance Jews found in early Helena. A more important factor was their prominent positions in merchandising and banking. Jews were engaged in occupations that were central to the town's commercial life. Another explanation was that Jews comprised too small a group to pose a threat to their non-Jewish neighbors. The relative invisibility of Helena's Jewish population and the fact that most European ethnic groups were welcome to settle in the territory protected Jews from discrimination. 120 The generally democratic character of life on the frontier afforded white men a rough equality of opportunity and tempered anti-Semitism in Helena. 121


CHAPTER IV

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

In Helena, Jews found acceptance in the community both as businessmen and as private citizens. They were not excluded from involvement in local affairs because of their religious beliefs; they lived on an equal basis with their non-Jewish neighbors. The ease with which individual Jews participated in the activities of the community determined the character of Jewish religious life in early Helena. No longer guided by the discipline of their European religious communities or segregated from non-Jewish society, Helena's Jewish pioneers struggled "between the lures of assimilation on the one hand and the values of Jewish identification on the other."

They had a longing to preserve some of their Jewish identity and, paradoxically, an urge to "belong" to the majority. Helena's Jews wanted to become fully involved in the economic, political, and social life of the territory and still not abandon their Jewishness.

Although there were no legal pressures on Helena's Jews to change or surrender their distinctiveness, the pull was powerful toward complete assimilation. Economic success depended largely on the ability

to make the necessary cultural adjustments, including the acquisition of the language, the manners, and the general outlook of the majority of the population, and to shed as many differences as possible.² Like everyone else, Jews came to Montana in the 1860s with the hope of acquiring riches and economic necessity encouraged them to adapt quickly to their new environment. Although many Helena Jews chose assimilation, they did not lose their attachment to Judaism. They organized a cemetery and a benevolent society and struggled to follow some of their religious observances. Jews in Helena, like their coreligionists in other cities in the West, were "neither so well assimilated as to abandon their Jewishness nor consciously disposed toward such an act."³

Although the first announcement of Jewish religious services does not appear in a Helena newspaper until the fall of 1866, it is likely that collective worship among Helena's Jews came earlier than this with the gathering together of a minyan, a ritual group of ten or more adult males necessary for worship.⁴ The fact that a minyan could be assembled in Helena probably gave the town's Jews the confidence that they needed to organize more formally. On September 8, 1866, the Montana Radiator reported that "the Israelites of this place

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[Helena] will meet for divine services at the Masonic Hall tomorrow, at half past six o'clock p.m." The editor of the newspaper also made an effort to explain the holidays which Helena's Jews were celebrating:

Rosh Hashono--The Israelites of this city intend observing their time-honored holidays. Divine service will be held in the Masonic Hall on Monday and Tuesday next. These holidays will commence tomorrow, Sunday evening, and are called Rosh Hashono [sic], which signifies the beginning of the New Year. The Israelites in general observe these days of prayer. On Wednesday, the 19th inst., is Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement; this day is observed as a day of fasting and prayer. The Israelites commence the New Year from Monday next, taking their dates from the creation of the world, making the next New year [sic] 5626.

This announcement of holiday services was accompanied by a news item that described the formation of a Jewish society, the Hebrew Benevolent Association. Helena's Jews were organizing not only to worship together publicly, but also to address some of their communal needs.

Although the majority of Jews living in Helena in 1866 were unmarried males, the religious community faced the same problems encountered by Jews in more settled locations. Other than gathering for worship on prescribed occasions, Helena's Jews felt a need to bury their dead in consecrated ground and to care for their sick and indigent coreligionists. The religious community attempted to fulfill these obligations by organizing the Hebrew Benevolent Association, a

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5 Helena Montana Radiator, 8 September 1866, p. 3.

6 Ibid. According to the newspaper, the first officers of the Hebrew Benevolent Association elected pro tem were President, A. Waters; Vice-President, S. S. Hyams; Treasurer, Felix Poznainsky; Secretary, Philip Koenigsberger.
society that would purchase land for the cemetery, dispense charity, and arrange for holiday services.

The Hebrew Benevolent Association was established in Helena in September 1866 and formally activated several months later. Its purpose, as stated in the constitution and bylaws, was "to relieve the distressed and support the afflicted, attend the sick and bury the dead." From the society's opening meeting, the "relief" of certain coreligionists was its membership's first priority. Jews in Helena considered charitable activities a solemn religious obligation. "The awareness that 'all Israel is responsible one for another' had its roots in the Old World" and in Jewish history. As individuals, Jews sent money to their families in Europe or paid for the passage of close relatives to America. As members of Helena's benevolent association, they aided their own members and Jews in other communities both in America and in other lands.

Months before the Hebrew Benevolent Association was organized in Helena, a national Jewish periodical noted the generosity of Montana Jews toward their coreligionists in Palestine.

7 Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, 3 December 1866, Manuscript Collection 38, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

8 Constitution and Bylaws of the First Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena, Montana. Amended and Adopted December 5th, A.D., 1867 (Helena, Mont.: Helena Book and Job Print, 1868). According to this source, the First Hebrew Benevolent Association is the official name of this society. Both the newspapers and the minute books of the Association identify it as either the Hebrew Benevolent Association or the Hebrew Benevolent Society.

9 Learsi, Jews in America, p. 38.
Montana Territory.--Mr. Louis Behm forwarded to us [the Israelite staff] $297.25 for the poor of Palestine, which amount was collected in Helena and Virginia City. The money was forwarded to Sir Moses Montefiore.

The fact that Louis Behm, a Helena merchant, donated the money in behalf of Jews in Both Virginia City and Helena, suggests that Helena Jews spearheaded this contribution drive in Montana. Even before they had organized their own relief efforts, Jews in Helena were dispensing charity to distant causes. They were aware of the conditions facing Jews in other parts of the world and they were ready to offer their financial assistance.

In 1868 Helena's Jews again responded to an international appeal for Jewish relief. This time the request came from the Alliance Israelite Universelle, an organization established by French Jews in 1860 to improve the living conditions of Jews in Eastern Europe, the Near East, and in North Africa. On January 17, 1868, the Israelite published a statement made by the Alliance, urging Jews throughout the world to send funds in support of the Alliance's activities. The Jewish community in Helena reacted to this appeal by collecting money from its members and sending it to the Alliance

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10 Cincinnati Israelite, 13 April 1866, p. 325. This Jewish weekly newspaper was published and edited by Rabbi Isaac M. Wise in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was called the American Israelite after 1874. Moses Montefiore, a British Jew, was an internationally known philanthropist and champion of the Jews.


12 Cincinnati Israelite, 17 January 1868, p. 5.
via the editor of the *Israelite* with the following explanation:

Having noticed in your paper an appeal from the Universal Israelitish Alliance for aid and assistance in this truly grand undertaking, to ameliorate the condition of our brethren wherever the cry of distress may be heard from throughout the globe, we, in unison with all true Israelites, feel our obligations to one another when called upon, particularly for such noble undertakings, wishing them our hearty success.

[Signed] All Israelites of Helena. 13

Fifty-eight Helena Jews contributed $2.00 each to the Alliance, and two Jewish-owned businesses, L. H. Hershfield and Company and Bohm and Aub, each gave $5.00. 14 When the *Israelite* announced the names of Helena's contributors, the editor of the newspaper, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, commented on the response of Helena's Jewry:

We cannot refrain from giving it [the list of Helena contributors] to our readers in proof of that spontaneous good will so highly to be wished for among our coreligionists in all things looking to the material advancement of Jewish interests the world over and not only all Israelites of Helena (honor on them), but all Israelites of America should come forth thus to establish a live branch, a citadel of civil and spiritual freedom, holding forth a beacon peerless to the oppressed of all the world. 15

Several months later Rabbi Wise again had an occasion to note the "good will" of Helena's Jewish community. On September 11, 1868, the *Israelite* published another list of Helena contributors with the information that Helena's branch of the Alliance Israelite Universelle

13 Ibid., 24 April 1868, p. 2.
14 Ibid., 17 April 1868, p. 6.
15 Ibid.
now totaled seventy members. According to Rabbi Wise, "no other city has done as well in proportion." This statement was remarkable considering the fact that larger western cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, also had contributed money and established branches of the Alliance. Evidently Helena Jews, despite their small number, had responded with proportionately greater generosity to this distant cause.

Although Helena's Jewish community reacted generously to appeals for assistance from Jews in other countries, its primary concern was for the relief of local coreligionists. Using funds collected from the admission of new members, monthly dues, and contributions, the Hebrew Benevolent Association aided the transient, the poor, and the sick. The society's efforts in behalf of the sick soon attracted public notice and the Helena Weekly Herald detailed some of the society's activities:

Hebrew Benevolent Society.--The First Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena, Montana, is the name of a very worthy society which was formed in this town some two years ago, and which now numbers over sixty members. This society has for its object the assistance of any sick Israelite who may be unable to help themselves, and many hundreds of dollars have already been expended in this good work. Every provision is made for the comfort of such sick persons, such as furnishing watchers, medical attendance, and food and money. We are glad

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16 Ibid., 11 September 1862, p. 2.

17 A branch of the Alliance was established in San Francisco on 25 March 1864, and in Los Angeles on 16 August 1868. Stern, "Helena Jewry Responds," p. 170.

18 Cincinnati Israelite, 13 January 1871, p. 7.
to learn that the society is in a flourishing condition, and is constantly enlarging its field for usefulness. . . .

As this newspaper article suggested, the Hebrew Benevolent Association was expanding the scope of its charitable endeavors not only to include the indigent and the sick, but also to offer more personalized assistance, such as paying board and room, lawyers' fees and burial expenses, making direct loans to its members and, on one occasion, even purchasing a team of horses for one coreligionist so that he could pursue his occupation as a freighter.  

After the Hebrew Benevolent Association was organized sufficiently to offer relief services, its members next directed their efforts toward another communal concern, the cemetery. At a society meeting held on July 11, 1867, a committee was appointed "to procure a good piece of ground for a cemetery" and "to find out what a [funeral] house and fence would cost." When the society next met in September, another committee was appointed "to let a contract for building a house and fence for a burying ground, the cost not to exceed $500 Doll. and the cemetery to be 50 feet square." Some of the money needed to establish the cemetery was raised by a sale of seats in the synagogue for High Holidays.

20 Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, 3 June 1869, 2 June 1870, and February 1872.
21 Ibid., 11 July 1867. The funeral house was a mortuary building where the bodies were prepared for burial.
22 Ibid., 5 September 1867.
Jewish Cemetery.--At the sale of seats at the Jewish Synagogue (Irwin's Old Theatre), on Saturday last, much liberality was shown by the members of the congregation. Two seats brought one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and none sold for less than ten. Five hundred dollars was raised in all, and this sum is to be appropriated to the fencing of a Jewish Cemetery, to be located just to the right of the junction of the Salmon City and Hot Spring roads, and about two and a half miles from town.23

By December 1867, the cemetery was in suitable condition for use and the trustees of the Hebrew Benevolent Association were authorized "to have the body of E. Blum removed to the Jewish cemetery."24 This disinterment was noted in the minutes of the society because it marked an important day in the history of Helena's Jewish community. When Blum died in 1865, the Jews then in the camp had been unorganized and unable to establish a cemetery.25 Finally, Helena Jews could fulfill their religious obligation and place Blum's body in consecrated ground.

A burial ground ranked high on the list of Jewish communal priorities. Its importance to Helena Jews was apparent by the concern its establishment and maintenance received from the Hebrew Benevolent Association. Even after the land for the burial ground was purchased and fenced, and a burial house constructed, the benevolent society continued its preoccupation with the cemetery, purchasing new articles for it, having the ground surveyed, and making arrangements to have

the cemetery incorporated.26 Between 1867 and 1872 at least twelve members of Helena's Jewish community died and were buried in the cemetery.27 These deaths alone were persistent reminders of the cemetery's importance. The remaining members of Helena's Jewish community wanted the security of knowing that they too would have a proper burial.

After the Hebrew Benevolent Association was organized in 1867, its membership not only maintained the cemetery and dispensed charity, but also organized worship for the holidays. Yearly the society made arrangements for services on the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, renting rooms or lodge halls for the services. On October 3, 1867, the Helena Weekly Herald announced the location of that year's Jewish services:

Jewish Holy-Days. --The Israelites of Helena have decided to use the building known as Irwin's Theatre for a synagogue during the holydays. . . . As we mentioned, in a former issue, their New Year commences at half-past six tomorrow night, and the time will be kept sacred from then until Tuesday night at the same hour.28

During these early years Irwin's Theatre was not the only building used by the Jewish community as a synagogue. The Masonic Hall also served as a temporary synagogue in 1866, 1869, and 1870, and might

26 Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, 7 November 1867; 2 January 1868; 7 January 1869; 16 April 1869.
27 Ibid., 3 December 1866 - 12 December 1872.
28 Helena Weekly Herald, 3 October 1867, p. 71.
have been utilized for services in other years as well. Renting was considered a temporary expedient until the Hebrew Benevolent Association had sufficient members and financial resources to construct a permanent synagogue building.

By 1870 Helena's Jewish residents were actively investigating the possibilities of building a synagogue. At a meeting of the Hebrew Benevolent Association on March 4 of that year, a committee was appointed "to find out where and at what rate they [the society] can buy a suitable place to build a synagogue." The committee reported in June, but no further action was taken on the synagogue until the following year. On January 26, 1871, a committee was selected "to devise means to raise funds for building a place of worship." At the suggestion of this committee, the members of the benevolent society decided to hold a "calico ball" on February 27, 1871, to raise the necessary building funds. Their plans were frustrated by the Methodist Church's decision to hold a ball on the same day and for a similar purpose. The Helena Daily Herald noted the mix-up and offered some suggestions to repair the situation:

Calico Ball.—Do our Jewish fellow-citizens intend to give up, entirely, their contemplated [sic] calico

29 Helena Montana Radiator, 8 September 1866, p. 3; Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, 3 December 1869; Helena Daily Herald, 22 September 1870, p. 3.

30 Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, 4 March 1870.

31 Ibid., 2 June 1870; 26 January 1871.

32 Ibid., 13 February 1871.
ball? Although they were anticipated by the Building Committee of the M.E. Church, South, we yet hope they have not abandoned their idea. We suggest that they make arrangements for a grand ball after the Lenten season has passed, during Easter week. It would be a good opportunity to wind up the festivities of the season, and we feel assured that a ball by the Hebrew Benevolent Association would be well received by our pleasure-loving citizens.\(^3^3\)

Even with this encouragement from the local press, however, the benevolent society did not reschedule its benefit dance and plans to build a "place of worship" were temporarily abandoned.\(^3^4\)

As long as Helena's Jewish citizens could not afford to construct a permanent synagogue building, no effort was made by the Hebrew Benevolent Association to employ an ordained rabbi.\(^3^5\) Consequently, all the religious services and ceremonies that took place in Helena during the 1860s and 1870s were conducted by lay residents of the community. The city's newspapers and the society's minute books neglect to name the laymen who conducted the early High Holiday services, but several men are mentioned as officiating, in the absence of a rabbi, at local weddings and funerals. James M. Ellis and Wolf Anspach were two members of the Hebrew Benevolent Association who officiated at funerals "with all of the very solemn ceremonies of the Hebrew ritual." They administered "the last sad

\(^3^3\) Helena Daily Herald, 3 March 1871, p. 3.

\(^3^4\) It wasn't until 13 May 1883, that another discussion about erecting a synagogue was recorded in the minutes, but no progress was made on its construction until 1890. In that year the synagogue building was started and Temple Emanuel was dedicated on 18 April 1891. Helena Daily-Herald, 20 April 1891, p. 1.

\(^3^5\) The Helena Jewish community hired its first rabbi, Samuel Schulman, in 1890, just prior to the completion of the synagogue.
rites at the graves" and delivered funeral orations described by
the local newspapers as "eloquent and feeling" and "solemn and
impressive." Other members, including Louis Behm and Felix
Poznainsky, "officiated in accordance with the Jewish rites" at
wedding ceremonies. On August 30, 1875, Felix Poznainsky conducted
a Jewish marriage ceremony that received the special attention of
the press:

A Hebrew Wedding.

Another very happy event transpired in this city
last evening. We refer to the marriage of Mr. Marcus
Lissner to Miss Jennie Sobolsky [Sabolsky]. The
ceremony took place at the International Hotel, and
called together a considerable number of our citizens,
among whom were a good sprinkling of Hebrew ladies and
gentlemen. The bridal procession, headed by the first
parties in interest, descended from the Hotel parlors
to the dining-room at 9 o'clock. Beneath a canopy
suspended above their heads the happy pair were made
one, first through the offices of Justice O.B. Totten,
followed by the rites of the Jewish faith, Mr. Felix
Poznainsky officiating. The latter ceremony was
interesting and novel to the number who had not
previously witnessed a similar ceremony. The groom
having placed the ring on the forefinger of the bride's
right hand, the marriage contract, in Chaldean
caligraphy, was spread upon the table nearby. To
this document the groom first attached his signature,
followed by that of the bride, and witnessed by the
signatures of several parties immediately after. A
thin glass tumbler was then placed on the floor in front
of the groom, which he shivered beneath his heel...
Traditional Jewish rituals were observed in this wedding ceremony and in other religious services performed in Helena by the lay members of the community. The absence of a rabbi did not dissuade Helena's Jewish pioneers from retaining some Orthodox practices.  

Other than weddings and funerals, the public religious occasions most strictly observed by Helena's earliest Jewish residents were the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Most Jewish businessmen closed their stores for several days in the fall during this two-week period, and individual Jews marked it by abstaining from work, and by fasting and prayer. In 1868, the Helena Weekly Herald noted the approaching Jewish holy days and their observance by Jewish businessmen:

Jewish Holydays [sic].--Next Thursday is the most sacred day known to the Jewish religion, excepting that of the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur], which occurs on Saturday, the 26th inst. In consequence of the observance of Thursday, we are informed that the Israelites of this city intend closing their places of business on that occasion.

Yearly reports of High Holiday observances appear in the local

39 The presence of a rabbi is not essential for conducting Jewish services or rituals.

40 Rosh Hashanah (also Rosh Hashana, Rosh Hoshonoh or Rosh Hashono) is the Jewish high holy day that marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year. It is celebrated on the first and second days of the month of Tishri by Orthodox and Conservative Jews outside of Israel and on the first day only by Reform Jews and Jews in Israel. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is the Jewish high holy day observed on the 10th day of the month of Tishri by abstinence from food and drink and by the daylong recitation of prayers of repentance in the synagogue.

newspapers, often accompanied by ads for specific Jewish businesses.

In 1870, for example, the Jewish New Year celebration and its resultant business closures caught the attention of the press:

Hebrew New Year. -- Monday next will be celebrated as the Hebrew New Year [Rosh Hashanah], by our Jewish citizens. From notices in our paper, it will be seen that Messrs. Lavenberg & Co., and Messrs. S.H. Bohm & Co., will close their places of business on that day.

Closed on Monday

Our Banking House will not be opened for the transaction of business on Monday. Open at the usual hour on Tuesday morning. S.H. Bohm & Co.

A. Lavenberg & Co's

Dry Goods House will not be opened on Monday. Our fine stock of goods will be displayed for sale as usual on Tuesday morning. A Lavenberg & Co. 42

Helena's Jewish pioneers did not limit their holy day observances to religious services and to the closure of their places of business. Privately, some individual Jews, like Lewis H. Hershfield, also honored the High Holidays by maintaining their own personal religious practices. In a letter to his Virginia City business partner, dated September 20, 1866, Hershfield explained his inattention to business as follows: "I would have written to you a day or two ago but being Yom Kippur I desired to abstain from work as much as possible..." 43 The next year, Hershfield again mentioned his

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42 Helena Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette, 24 September 1870, p. 3.

religious observances in a letter to his business partner, saying:

... Haven't much to write only that I have fasted first rate and just returned from supper at Mr. Cohn's House;[sic] where myself and Aaron [his brother] were invited for both evenings. hope [sic] you fasted as well and had good suppers.44

On the important holidays Hershfield attempted to follow the ritual practices of his religion, but the perpetuation of Judaism was not his overriding concern. The demands of his banking business and his family affairs took precedence over his religious observances.45

Although some Helena Jews relegated their religious observances to the High Holidays, others, like Wolf Anspach, were leaders in the ongoing activities of Helena's Jewish community. They worked hard to maintain some of the rituals and organizations of Judaism and they were proud of their religious community's accomplishments under adverse conditions. In a letter to the Israelite, dated December 26, 1870, Anspach summarized the community's activities to date:

A Voice From the Rocky Mountains.

Having been a steady reader of your valuable paper for a number of years, and watched with diligence your efforts for the relief of the poor and helpless, I can but be agreeably surprised at beholding the many charitable institutions that are from day to day organized throughout the land. And as I notice the proceedings of the various societies from time to time announced in THE ISRAELITE, I do not think it out of place, and for the benefit of the many readers of your paper, in showing that altho' we live isolated from any respectable-sized community, and hidden in the very recesses of the mountains can also pride ourselves

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44 Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 9 October 1867, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903.
45 Lewis Hershfield to A. Hanauer, 30 August 1866 - 22 November 1867, Merchants National Bank Records, 1865-1903.
of possessing a similar institution, that was established by those who with the tide of immigration in '65 and '66, came sweeping along to this country in the eager pursuit of wealth; and who, in the midst of their prosperity, were not forgetful of the loftier and nobler duties of life, but were ready to bestow a share thereof to the needy and afflicted and have, therefore, organized for the above named duties in the Fall of 1866, the first Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena, Montana Territory.

The Society consists of nearly fifty members; governed by a board of officers as follows: A [sic] President, a Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and three trustees.

From its annual receipts derived from admission of members, monthly dues and contributions of all kinds, large sums of money have been expended for various charitable purposes at home; and where the cry of distress from our starving brethren beyond the seas penetrated our mountain fastnesses, and reached our ears, it responded forthwith, by contributing with a lavish hand towards aiding them in their adversity. Similar benefits have been bestowed by it on various occasions for like purposes, too sacred to mention.

It has also taken up a plat of ground for a cemetery, and expended over fifteen hundred dollars for fencing in five acres thereof and other improvements thereon.

It possesses in addition a Sephar [Sepher] Torah, Shofer [Shofar], prayer-books, &c., costing no less than four hundred dollars. Yet, with all this, tho' [through] the benevolence of its members, together with the able management of its officers, this Society has always a surplus fund in its Treasury to meet all immediate needs.

This Community has, as yet, no regular Synagogue, but Divine service is held on New Year's Day and on the Day of Atonement in Masonic Hall, with as much solemnity as in any of the old established congregations.


Although Helena's Jewish pioneers established a benevolent society and a cemetery, purchased ritual objects, and observed the

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46 Cincinnati Israelite, 13 January 1871, p. 7. Wolf Anspach was known to Helena citizens simply as "A. Wolf."
High Holidays, their successful maintenance of Judaism in Helena was not accomplished without gradual accommodations. Living as they did in a region distant from the centers of Jewish faith and culture, the clash between the requirements of traditional Jewish observance and the requirements of frontier urban life was inevitable. The town's geographic isolation discouraged the perpetuation of Orthodox practices such as the observance of dietary laws and the Sabbath. Some Jews struggled to retain their Orthodoxy, but the majority of Jews in Helena chose to keep only those practices and observances of traditional Judaism that were adaptable to their new lives on the frontier. They favored a reform of Judaism.

American Judaism was undergoing a period of change in the nineteenth century. Individuals and communities were experimenting with reforms in worship and religious philosophy and Helena's Jews were both influenced by and supportive of this reform movement. As early as 1873, Helena Jews were endorsing national reform efforts to establish a seminary to educate "a native rabbinate that would bring

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48 An Orthodox Jew adheres faithfully to the principles and practices of traditional Judaism as evidenced chiefly by a devotion to and study of the Torah, daily synagogue attendance if possible, and strict observance of the Sabbath, religious festivals, holy days, and the dietary laws. A Reform Jew adheres to a system of ethics and religious worship taken to reflect the needs of modern Jewry and based on only those Biblical and rabbinical laws, liturgical practices, and ritualistic observances of traditional Judaism that are considered meaningful in the light of contemporary conditions.

order to the chaotic affairs of the autonomous and leaderless
congregations and that would approach religious problems without
the biases of a European background." A spokesman for Helena's
Jewish community wrote a letter to the *Israelite* encouraging the
reform activities of its editor, Rabbi Isaac Wise:

> . . . We all sympathize with you in your endeavor
to establish a Jewish Theological Faculty [Seminary].
It is an institution long ago wanted by the American
Israelite. We say, go on with your glorious work and
may success crown your noble efforts.51

The Jewish community in Helena not only encouraged the national
movement to adapt Judaism to the American scene, but also changed
their own local religious customs to follow Reform practices. When
Helena Jews observed Passover in April 1874, they celebrated the
festival for seven days, not eight as required by Orthodox ritual.52
The editor of the *Daily Independent* noted the commemoration of
Passover by the town's Jewish community and he explained the holiday
to his non-Jewish readers:

> Passover.--Yesterday evening at Sun set [sic] the
Jews commenced the celebration of the feast of the
Passover, which's in commemoration of the deliverance
from Egyptian bondage of the children of Israel.

50 *Cincinnati Israelite*, 13 June 1873, p. 6. The Jewish
Theological Seminary was organized in 1886 to meet the need for
Jewish spiritual leaders educated in the United States.

51 *Handlin, Adventure in Freedom*, p. 110.

52 Passover (Pesach) is a Jewish festival that commemorates
the exodus of the Jews from Egypt and is marked chiefly by the seder
ritual and the eating of matzoth. It begins on the eve of the 14th
day of the month of Nisan and is celebrated for eight days by Orthodox
and Conservative Jews outside of Israel and for seven days by Reform
Jews and Jews in Israel.
Yesterday was the 14th day of Nisan, the seventh month of the Jewish year. The passover [sic] lasts seven days, during which no fermented bread or drink is used by them. The biblical account of the flight of the Jews from Egypt states that it was so hurried that they could not take time to make their bread in the ordinary manner, but simply mixed the flour with water & baked the dough in the hot sand & in the heat of the sun and it is in commemoration of this that only unleavened bread is used by them at this time.  

The trend toward Reform Judaism, noted during the Passover celebration in 1874, continued unabated in the following years. Finally in 1879 Helena's Jewish community publicly acknowledged its commitment to Reform by announcing its adoption of Minhag America (American Rite), the prayer book compiled by the Reform leader, Rabbi Isaac M. Wise. The American Israelite noted this important development in Helena and editor Wise used Helena's Jewry as an example to his readers of the successful survival of Judaism in America:

Helena, Montana.--A voice from that distant city in the Rocky Mountains, through the kindness of Mr. Morris, assures us that the sons and daughters of Israel nowhere consider themselves separated from their God and their people. In plaintive strains almost the writer expresses his regret that the Hebrews there are not numerous enough to form a congregation and engage a minister; still, they have established a 'Minhag American Society,' and are desirous that books be sent to instruct them, as they are unable to engage a teacher. The letter sent is full of interest. It is a lesson to all who doubt the life power of Judaism over its votaries. We sent it to the President of

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53 Helena Daily Independent, 2 April 1874, p. 3.

54 This revised prayer book, the Minhag America, was used by Reform congregations until nearly the end of the nineteenth century.
the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to communicate it to the Committee on Circuit Preaching.  

This decision to replace the traditional prayer book with Wise's Minhag America marked the unofficial beginning of Helena's Reform congregation, a group that would eventually build a synagogue and bring a rabbi to Helena.  

Although the majority of Helena's Jews favored the community's accommodations of Judaism, there were Jews in Helena who retained their Orthodoxy. Their numbers were small, but they never merged with the Reform community. The Orthodox worshipped separately, first holding services at the Odd Fellows Hall and, later, at a school house on Warren Street. One family in particular, the Wolf Sabolskys, took great pains to maintain their Orthodoxy. The life of Mrs. Sabolsky, as described in a local newspaper obituary, gives some indication of the difficulties faced by those who remained Orthodox in Montana:  

55 Cincinnati American Israelite, 6 June 1879, p. 6. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was organized in 1873 largely through the efforts of Rabbi Wise. It was a national organization with which existing congregations of many shades of belief and practice were affiliated.  

56 Helena Jews formally organized a Reform congregation, called Congregation Emanuel, on 28 July 1889. This congregation was responsible for the hiring of the community's rabbis, for the organizing of holiday services, and for the building and maintenance of the synagogue. Congregation Emanuel Minute Books, 28 July 1889 - 25 November 1923, Ac 74-1, Norman Winestine Collection, 1886-1946, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.  

Mrs. Sabolsky came to Montana in the early 70s, coming up the Missouri. With her husband she took up her residence in Helena, and she has resided here ever since. She was probably the most orthodox Hebrew in the state, and was noted for her strict adherence to Jewish regulations. So rigid was her observance, that she might be said to have been a vegetarian. There is no fresh meat butchered in Montana according to the Jewish rites, and for that reason she abstained from meat. At times there would be killed for her a chicken according to the rule of her religion, and that was the extent of her meat eating.

There were Jews in Helena who continued their strict observance of Orthodox principals and practices, but most members of the Jewish community had difficulty keeping their faith an active part of their daily lives. Often a year's only publicized religious services occupied a mere two-week interval and, other than periodic meetings of the benevolent society, the rest of the year found Helena's Jewish pioneers involved in their businesses, their families and friends, and their secular community activities. Helena Jews wanted to perpetuate their religious associations by worshipping together and establishing a cemetery. They were proud of their faith and succeeded in continuing its rituals under adverse conditions, but they were not preoccupied with its observance. Like their coreligionists in other small western towns, Helena's Jews adapted themselves and their religion to their new life on the frontier.

EPILOGUE

In an article headlined "What Relation they [the Jews] sustain to the Progress and Prosperity of a Community," the editor of the Helena Weekly Herald, Robert Fisk, claimed that the presence of Jews in Helena in 1887 was a sign of the city's "future of undiminished progress." According to Fisk, "It is an unfailing indication of prosperity, . . . when this class of citizens are [sic] about and investors [sic] in reality."¹ He singled out numerous Jewish businessmen and used them to illustrate his proposition that there was a direct connection between Helena's "advance to metropolitan growth" and the continuance of Jews in the town.²

Fisk was correct in asserting that the number of Jews in Helena was an indication of economic conditions in the town. Since the 1860s, Helena's Jewish population had fluctuated according to the changing economic fortunes of the community. (See Appendix E.) In his eagerness to promote Helena, however, Fisk neglected to point out that the mere "presence" of Jews in Helena did not explain their influential role in the town's past.

From the time of their first arrival in Montana in the 1860s, Jews occupied positions of importance in Helena. As participants

¹Helena Weekly Herald, 21 April 1887, p. 7.
²Ibid.
in the placer rush (1862-1870), the first movement of significant numbers of white men to Montana Territory, they helped lay the foundations for a community. Jews were involved in mining and trading, two business activities that fostered Helena's initial settlement and encouraged the town's permanent growth.

A few Jews were miners, but a larger percentage were merchants and traders who invested in mining enterprises. Jews owned mining property and helped finance local mining operations. They provided some of the investment capital needed by mining promoters to develop local quartz-gold deposits. When placer output started to decline in the late 1860s, the mining of quartz lodes near Helena gave the city "a new lease on life." Jewish investors encouraged the growth of industrial mining in Montana and, simultaneously, promoted the permanent settlement of Helena.

More than mining, trading was the activity through which Jews most influenced Helena. Jews controlled a large portion of the city's wholesale and retail trade and served as distributors of manufactured goods to people not only in Helena, but also in the surrounding mining camps. Through their widespread business and family connections, Jews were able to maintain prosperous businesses and to bring the comforts of civilization to the territory.

In addition to supplying goods to their customers, Jewish merchants performed needed banking services and established banks.

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They exchanged gold dust for coin, financed loans, and extended credit to business concerns. Jews provided a valuable service as economic middlemen, distributing both goods and capital, and encouraged Helena's development as a commercial and banking center.

As businessmen, Jews were often community boosters, but their interest in civic problems and in cultural improvements transcended commercial motives. They were in the forefront of local movements to protect lives and property, to establish law and order, and to promote settlement in the territory. They helped organize volunteer fire departments, ran for political office, and joined fraternal and social clubs. Jews gained acceptance in the community on the strength of their voluntary associations and, also, their prominent achievements in both merchandising and banking. Through their community-oriented efforts and their economic accomplishments, Helena's Jewish community tempered anti-Jewish prejudice in the territory.

The story of Jewish settlement in Helena, however, is much more than an account of the influence Jews had on life in Helena. It is also the story of how life in Helena influenced the Jews. In Europe where most of Helena's Jewish pioneers were born, Jews were considered outsiders and were separated from the Christian community. They lived in close contact with Gentiles, but remained apart from them, strangers in the society. In Helena, and in other mining camps in the West, Jews found their position the only normal one; everyone was to some degree an outsider.\(^4\) No longer separated from contact with

\(^4\) Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great
non-Jews and, at the same time, isolated from their coreligionists in other communities, Jews in Helena struggled to preserve their Jewish identity. A few retained their Orthodoxy, but the majority made the cultural adjustments required by life on the mining frontier. They adapted themselves and their religion to their new surroundings.

At about the same time Robert Fisk was envisioning Helena's destiny to become "the city of the Northwest," Helena's Jewish citizens were contemplating the "future prosperity" of their religious community. Neither Fisk nor the Jews foresaw the reversals that both Helena and the Jewish community would encounter in the years ahead. The Panic of 1893 and the ensuing national economic depression signaled the "decline in the growth and vitality" of Helena and the town's Jewish community. The "boom days ripe with opportunity were gone from Helena... and the Jewish community suffered as a result."

The high intermarriage rate of Jews living in Helena and the decrease in business opportunities discouraged new Jewish families from settling in town. The community experienced a brief revival in the early 1900s, but then continued to decline in numbers. In 1935 the remaining members of the Jewish congregation deeded the temple building to the

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5 Helena Weekly Herald, 21 April 1887, p. 7; Cincinnati American Israelite, 15 May 1890, p. 8.

State of Montana. Today a few members of the early congregation still live in Helena and the town's Jewish citizens once again are holding religious services.

Ibid., pp. 66, 67; Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records, 1865-1943, Manuscript Collection 38, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana. In 1930 the State of Montana sold the temple building to the Catholic Diocese of Helena and in March 1981 all diocesan offices were moved into the former synagogue.

About sixty-six people attended the Passover service held in Helena on 19 April 1981. Religious services are held in town twice a month and there is weekly Sunday School for the children. The Home of Peace Cemetery Association still maintains the cemetery.
# APPENDIX A

## PLACES OF BIRTH OF ADULT, JEWISH MALES IN 1870 CENSUS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohemia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (Total 35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baden</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesse Darmstadt</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurtemburg</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NUMBER</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
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</table>

*From U.S., Manuscript Census, 1870.*
APPENDIX B

PREVIOUS RESIDENCES OF HELENA JEWS, 1868*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
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<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>Idaho</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
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<td>Kansas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washoe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Countries</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Listed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NUMBER</strong></td>
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</table>

## APPENDIX C

### OCCUPATIONS OF HELENA JEWS, 1868, 1879, 1888*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Number in 1868</th>
<th>Number in 1879</th>
<th>Number in 1888</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assayers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auctioneers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeepers/Accountants</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butchers/Meat Markets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks/Salesmen</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Express Agents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Operators</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grocers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hide and Fur Dealers</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Officers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturers' Agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crockery/Glassware</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry Goods</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits/Confectionery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pawnbrokers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peddlers</td>
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<td>Physicians</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ranchers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant Proprietors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saloon Keepers/Liquor Dealers</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tailors/Dressmakers</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacconists/Guns and Liquors</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL NUMBER</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Two with residences out-of-state) (Three with residences out-of-state)

---

*From Business Directory of the Metropolis (Helena, Mont.: 1868); Montana Business Directory, 1879; Helena City Directory for 1888.
### APPENDIX D

**HELENA, MONTANA JEWS IN THE 1870 CENSUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Value of Property</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>U.S. Birth</th>
<th>Citizen</th>
<th>Married</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 Years and Older</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>U.S. Birth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auerbach, Leopold</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Clothing Merchant</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auerbach, William J.</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>1,500</td>
<td>Bohemia</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Behm, Lewis</td>
<td>28?</td>
<td>Not Listed</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birkenfeld, Adolph</td>
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<td>Fruit Store</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Block, Mitchell</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Merchandising</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloom, Joseph</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blum, Charles</td>
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<td>Dry Goods Merchant</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bohm, Fertanand</td>
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<td>5,000</td>
<td>Baden</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, William</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohn, Abel</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Englander, Max</td>
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<td>Dry Goods Clerk</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feldberg, Jacob</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Clothing Merchant</td>
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<td>Bavaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin, Simon S.</td>
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<td>Cigar Dealer</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gans, Lewis [Louis]</td>
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<td>5,000</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goldberg, David</td>
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<td>1,500</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goldberg, Jacob</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20,000</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goldstine, Sulig [sic]</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Merchandising</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenhood, Sol</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>500</td>
<td>Bohemia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haas, Isaac</td>
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<td>Bavaria</td>
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</table>

*From U.S., Manuscript Census, 1870.*
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Males Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Value of Property</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>U.S. Citizen</th>
<th>Married</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hart, Mathew</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
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<td>Hershfield, Aaron</td>
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<td>Banker</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>Poland**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hurshman, Henry [sic]</td>
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<td>10,000</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Hurshman, Moses [sic]</td>
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<td>Wurtenburg</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holzman, Joseph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holzman, Soi L.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Klein, Henry</td>
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<td>Clothing Merchant</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Koenighburger, Philip</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Koenighburger, Sebastian</td>
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<td>Tobacconist</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavenburg, Alexander</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>60,000</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lavenburg, Isaac</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dry Goods Clerk</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lavenburg, Smawel</td>
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<td>Dry Goods Merchant</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lissner, Marcus</td>
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<td>Billiard Hall</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loab, Ben [sic]</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>11,000</td>
<td>Hesse</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loab, Jacob [sic]</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Clothing Store</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Hesse</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks, Isaac</td>
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<td>Wurtenburg</td>
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<td>Molitor, Steven F.</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morris, Jacob</td>
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<td>Clerk</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Bavaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morris, Moses</td>
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<td>Grocer (Retail)</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**In the 1870 and 1880 Censuses, Lewis Hershfield lists his place of birth as Poland or Russian Poland. This information concerning his birthplace conflicts with information in other sources.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males and Age</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Value of Property</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>U.S. Citizen</th>
<th>Married</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munter, Louis</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Peddler</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Grocer (Retail)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myers, Henry</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poznainsky, Alfred J.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Clerk in Store</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poznainsky, Felix</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Merchant (Retail)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poznainsky, Sol</td>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>Clerk Dry Goods</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remish, Louis</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosenthal, Joseph</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Assayer</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rothchilds, Leopold</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Clerk in Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabisky, Wolff [sic]</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Drayman</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sands, Abraham</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dry Goods Merchant</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Sands, Julius</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Schwab, Samuel</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weil, Sol</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Clothing Dealer</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Woolf, Anspeck [sic]</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Tailoring &amp; Repair</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Wolff, Benjamin</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Zimmerman, Edward</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>2,000</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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**TOTAL NUMBER**: 58
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<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>Value of Property</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
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<th>Married</th>
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<tr>
<td>Behm, Agusta</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Keeping House</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
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<td>Franklin, Sarah</td>
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<td>Hurshman, Benutha [sic]</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Keeping House</td>
<td></td>
<td>Virginia</td>
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<td>Hurshman, Clarina [sic]</td>
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<td>Koenighburger, Fannie</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>England</td>
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<td>Loab, Jenette [sic]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Baden</td>
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<td>Molitor, Caroline</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Molitor, Sophie</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
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<td>Poznainsky, Bertha</td>
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<td>Sabisky, Mattie [sic]</td>
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<td>Sands, Dora</td>
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<td>Sands, Esther</td>
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<td>Zimmerman, Emma</td>
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TOTAL NUMBER 14
### APPENDIX D—Continued

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<th>Males</th>
<th>Under 18 Years of Age</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>Value of Property Real Estate</th>
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<th>Place of Birth</th>
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<th>Married</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behm, Joseph</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>At Home</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin, Abraham</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<td>Franklin, David</td>
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<td>Franklin, Jacob</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>Montana</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loeb, Bennie [sic]</td>
<td>6/12</td>
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<td>Montana</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poznansky, Benjamin</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>At Home</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poznansky, Mark</td>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>At Home</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sands, Silvester</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>At Home</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>. . .</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL NUMBER 10

### Females

| Under 18 Years of Age | Abraham, Sallie | 16 | At Home | . . . | . . . | Poland | . . . | . . . |
| Behm, Rebecca | 10/12 | At Home | . . . | . . . | Montana | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| Hurshman, Beatrice | 1 | . . . | . . . | Montana | . . . | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| Sabisky, Jennie [sic] | 12 | At Home | . . . | . . . | Poland | . . . | . . . | . . . |
### APPENDIX D—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Under 18 Years of Age</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Value of Property</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>U.S. Citizen</th>
<th>Married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sands, Henrietta</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sands, Rose</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New York</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sands, Threna</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kansas</td>
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**TOTAL NUMBER 7**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF JEWS LIVING IN HELENA 89**
APPENDIX E

JEWS IN HELENA BETWEEN 1871–1880; 1881–1890*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jewish Men Who Arrived in Helena Between 1864-1870 and Were Still in Helena Between 1871-1880**</th>
<th>In Helena 1891-1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auerbach, William (Died in 1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birkenfield, Adolf</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohm, Ferdinand</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen, Abe</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen, Samuel (Moved to Butte in 1885)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feldberg, Jacob</td>
<td>X (Moved to Butte in 1885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gans, Joseph</td>
<td>X (Died in 1890)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg, David</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg, Jacob (Moved to Deadwood, S.D. in 1876)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg, M.</td>
<td>X (Committed suicide in 1886)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodman, Morris</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhood, Isaac</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haas, Isaac (Moved to San Francisco in 1875)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman, Jake</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hershfield, Aaron</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hershfield, Lewis H.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holzman, Joseph (Moved to Denver ca. 1875)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holzman, Sol L. (Moved to Denver ca. 1875)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaufman, Louis</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Klein, Henry</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavenberg, Alexander (Moved to Butte in 1881, died 1888)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lissner, Marcus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeb, Bernard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leeb, Jacob</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks, Isaac</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molitor, S. F. (Moved to Deadwood, S.D. in 1879)</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*From Helena newspapers; Helena city directories; 1870 and 1880 U.S. Manuscript Censuses; Hebrew Benevolent Association of Helena Records; 1867, 1885, and 1889 Constitution and Bylaws of Hebrew Benevolent Association; and obituaries.

**Does not include Jewish men who stayed on in Helena for a year or two in the 1870s before moving elsewhere.
### Jewish Men Who Arrived in Helena Between 1864-1870 and Were Still in Town Between 1871-1880** 1881-1890

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>In Helena 1881-1890</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molitor, Titus</td>
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<td>Morris, David</td>
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<td>Morris, Moses</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizer, Benjamin</td>
<td>(Moved to Philipsburg in 1878)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poznainsky, A. J.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saboisky, Wolf</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sands, Abraham</td>
<td>(Moved to Denver ca. 1882, committed suicide in 1887)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sands, Morris</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwab, Samuel</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverman, Julius</td>
<td>(Moved to farm in 1884, back in Helena in 1902)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverman, Morris</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sklower, Max</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star, Solomon</td>
<td>(Moved to Deadwood, S.D. in 1876)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Ed</td>
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**TOTAL NUMBER 40**
APPENDIX E--Continued

<table>
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<th>Jewish Men Who Arrived in Helena Between 1871-1880</th>
<th>In Helena 1881-1890</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abraham, Max</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander, B.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander, Samuel P. (Moved to Butte in 1875)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auerbach, Louis</td>
<td>X (Moved away in 1885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohn, Julius</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Cohn, R.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Czarwitz, Isaac</td>
<td>X (Died in 1883)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elias, C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ezekiel, Benjamin</td>
<td>X (Died in 1885)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gans, Fernando</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gans, Herman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepner, Barnett</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Hirshberg, Joseph</td>
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<td>Kobacker, Max K.</td>
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<td>Lavenberg, Selig.</td>
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<td>Loewenberg, Emil</td>
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<td>Marks, David</td>
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<td>Marks, Leopold</td>
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<td>Poznansky, Sol.</td>
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<td>Salhinger, I.</td>
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<td>Schlessinger, Gustav</td>
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<td>Switzer, Jacob</td>
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TOTAL NUMBER 24                                      TOTAL NUMBER 12

Total number of Jewish men in Helena between 1871-1880 = 64
Jewish men who arrived in Helena between 1881-1890 = 100
Total number of Jewish men in Helena between 1881-1890 = 137
BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Interviews

Schwartz, Dorothy Davis. 1407 44th Street, Sacramento, California. Interview at Helena, Montana, 26 June 1980.

Winestine, Norman and Belle. 105 11th Avenue, Helena, Montana, Interview, 1 July 1979.

Manuscript Collections


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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Bose Reminiscence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imperial Restaurant Records</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1876-1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isadore Strasburger Papers</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Gans Reminiscence</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, ca. 1915</td>
</tr>
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<td>Joseph Sklower Reminiscence</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis and Clark County School District #1 (Helena) Records</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1876-1882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masonic Order Temple Committee (Helena) Records</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1872-1873, 1885-1886</td>
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<td>Meyer and Koerner Records</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1873-1875</td>
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<td>Mineral Claim Register Records</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1872</td>
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<td>Montana Immigration Society Records</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moses Morris Papers</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1894-1932</td>
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<td>Sigmund Schlesinger Diary</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1868</td>
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<td>Solomon Content Business Record</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1869</td>
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<td>Twenty-Five Year Pioneers Club of Lewis and Clark County Scrapbook</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1933-1974</td>
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<td>Wolf Anspach Papers</td>
<td>Montana Historical Society Archives. Small Collection, 1872</td>
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Theses, Dissertations, and Papers


Miscellaneous

Headstones in Home of Peace Cemetery, Helena, Montana.

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Anaconda Standard
Bozeman Weekly Chronicle
Butte Daily Intermountain
Butte Intermountain
Butte Miner
Butte Montana Standard
Cincinnati (Ohio) American Israelite
Cincinnati (Ohio) Israelite
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Montana Territory History and Business Directory, 1879. Helena, Mont.: Fisk Brothers, Printers and Binder, ca. 1879.


Articles in Encyclopedias, Journals, or Magazines and Newspapers


Callaway, Lew L. "Fragments." Virginia City Madisonian, 2 February 1934, p. 4.


"Julius Basinski: Jewish Merchant in Montana." Montana the Magazine of Western History 22 (January 1972):60-68.


