



Book and exhibit researched and written by Deborah Freedman

Exhibit designed and fabricated by Chris Fiala Erlich

Forgotten Faces



Nearly twenty years ago author Deborah Freedman set out to record the burials and tombstone inscriptions in Home of Peace Cemetery, Pierce County's Jewish cemetery since 1888. Intrigued, she continued researching to ensure that Tacoma's early Jewish history would be documented and brought to light. Using stories pulled from the pages of Tacoma's early newspapers, along with years of genealogy research, Mrs. Freedman has compiled biographies of nearly 175 families, revealing a lost narrative of a thriving Jewish community, larger and more prominent than previously believed.

At the same time Mrs. Freedman determined that many of Tacoma's pioneers departed the city in financial ruin, casualties of the 1893 banking panic. Surprisingly, she also discovered that Tacoma's scattered Jewish families often died out, leaving no descendants to tell their stories. This exhibit and companion book are her way of honoring the memories of those forgotten faces.



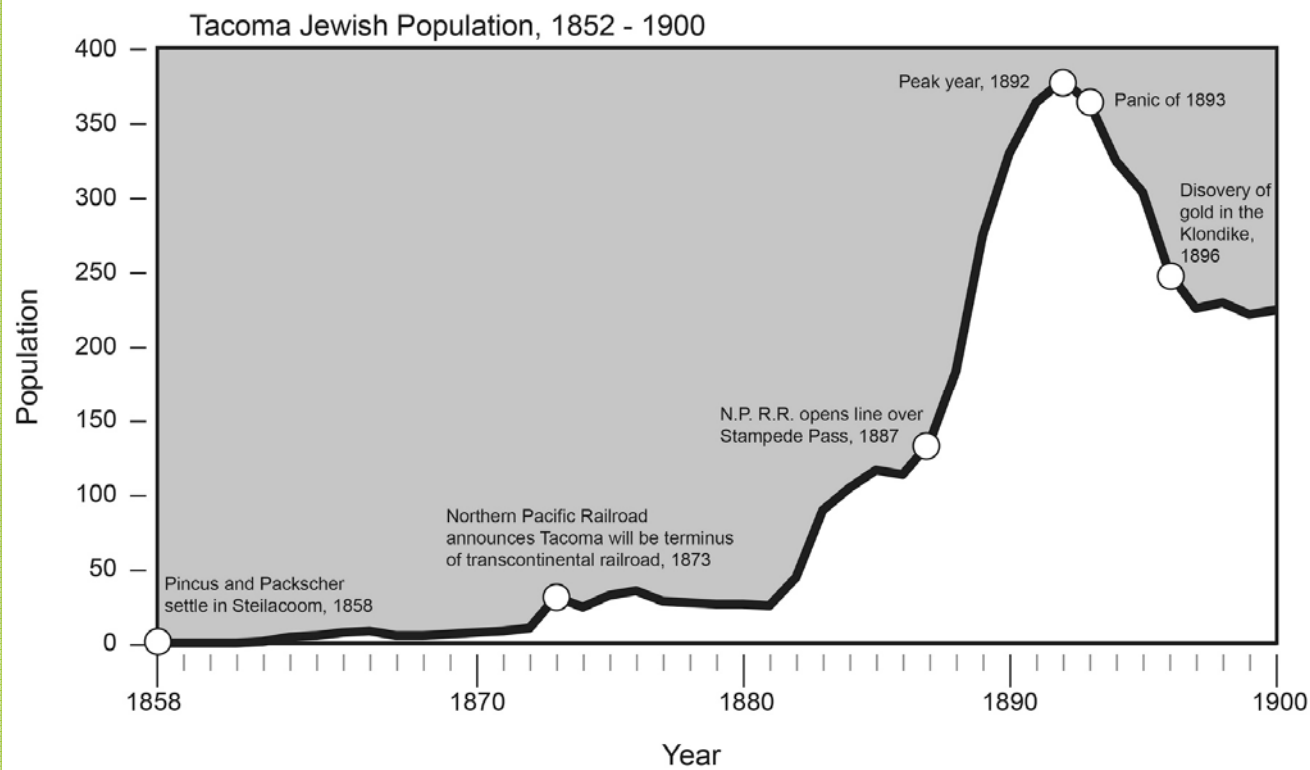
John Leach of LaserWriting presenting the first copy to the author – and the invoice.

Pierce County's documented Jewish history began in Steilacoom in 1858, with the arrival of partners Adolph Packscher and Isaac Pincus. Like others, they sought opportunities in emerging cities, influenced by growth in transportation or natural resources. Their portable retail industry was welcomed in a young city that had not yet drawn rigid social lines. The pair prospered, invested in other businesses, and eventually reduced their freight costs by purchasing several sailing ships.

In the 1860s Adolph Packscher married Sarah Goodtime. Her brother Heyman and his wife Louisa joined them in Steilacoom, eventually investing in real estate development. Isaac Pincus married Adolph's cousin Seraphina Packscher, and her relative David Magnus also moved to Steilacoom. Packscher had twelve children, Pincus had seven, while Goodtime had none. Most did not marry or have children and all three lines died out.

Wolf Schafer operated the Northern Pacific Railroad Brewery in Steilacoom from the early 1870s until his death in 1889. (Later the building became the Iron Springs Hotel.) He had come from Chicago with his step-daughter, Sophia Greenhut Salomon, wife of Washington Territory's Jewish governor, Edward Salomon. Schafer's only daughter, Anna, did not marry and the Schafer line also ended.





Tacoma's Jewish population grew in the 1870s, as did the rest of the town. The growth was spurred by the announcement that the Northern Pacific Railroad was making Tacoma the terminus of its Transcontinental Railroad. Louis Wolff sold his thriving clothing business in Victoria and was open for business in Tacoma just three weeks after the location was publicized. His daughter served as the first organist in St. Peters Church.



A decade later Jewish merchants operated all four general stores in Old Tacoma. Meyer Kaufman operated a combination tavern and boarding house, optimistically called the Pacific Hotel. His daughter, Carrie, born in 1875, was likely the first Jewish child born in Tacoma. Her mother's was the first known Jewish burial.

Among the earliest families were the Zelinsky brothers – Amil, Solomon, Herman and Joseph. Amil and Solomon sold groceries – first together, and later in competition with each other. Herman was quite a character – nominating himself for elections and receiving only his own vote, and frequently winning costume contests. In 1911 he jumped into the Carnival of Nations parade wearing a kilt, inspiring poetry from the Scots.

ZELINSKY

The Scotch parade was at its height,
The pipers blew with a' their might
As though to drown the noisy drums,
When lo a shout: "Great Scot, here comes
Zelinsky!"

'Midway adown the long parade
Of Scots, clad in a tartan plaid,
Oblivious how the people talked,
Or stared at him amazed, there walked
Zelinsky.

No turkey gobbler in its pride,
With wings outstretched on either side,
No pea-cock in its plumage hid
Could strut more gracefully than did
Zelinsky.

A group of Hebrew gentlemen
Had closed their shops to rubber when,
At sight of him they up and died,
But ere they rose they gasped and cried:
"Zelinsky!"

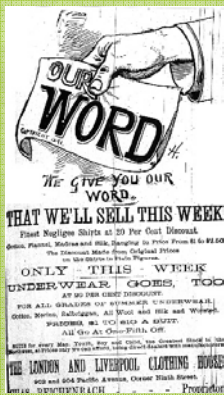
But one of them survived the shock;
Sam Andrews' heart was made of rock,
And yet Sam cried: "Mein Gott, mein Gott!
How could our Herman be a Scot?
Zelinsky!"

It may be that he heard their cries,
It may be tears bedimmed his eyes
To see his Jewish friends throw fits—
Said he: "They'll long remember it's
Zelinsky."

Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled!
There's few dare go where you would tread,
And yet you will concede this much,
It takes some nerve to beat the Dutch
Zelinsky.

(Parade of Nations, Tacoma, Wash., July 4, 1911)

Tacoma's business districts were distinct in the 1880s. Jewish clothing merchants clustered on the west side of Pacific Avenue, stretching south from the prime corner on 9th. Newcomers had to settle with storefronts located as far south as 15th Street.



The close competition between clothing and dry goods merchants brought on a newspaper advertising war, complete with outrageous giveaway schemes and guessing games. Charles Reichenbach responded with eye-catching and timely custom cartoon ads on page one of the *Tacoma Ledger*, unusual at a time when newspapers had few illustrations.



In many cases, promotional advertising pieces are all that remain as reminders of Tacoma's early Jewish companies.

Among the many Jewish dry goods firms on Pacific Avenue, the Gross Brothers' "San Francisco Store" stood above the rest. They opened their first store on the far north end of Pacific Avenue in 1878. After less than a year they rented both sides of the only brick building in town at the time, 902-904 Pacific. (Now the site of Frost Park.) In 1883 the brothers moved into the wooden building next door, 906-908 Pacific. After a fire in 1884 they re-built in brick.



In 1885 anti-Chinese sentiment in Tacoma peaked. Many merchants advertised that they sold to "Whites Only." Bucking the trend, Gross Brothers advertised "Justice is our Motto," adopting Lady Justice as their representative and welcoming all to shop there. They also openly advertised each fall that they would be closed during the Jewish High Holidays.

M. Gross, Tacoma.
D. Gross, San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO STORE.

Tacoma, Mar 14th 1888

M. H. Bailey

Bought of GROSS BROTHERS,
—Importers of and Dealers in—
DRY GOODS, CLOTHING, BOOTS & SHOES, CARPETS, KID GLOVES,
DRESS TRIMMINGS, CORSETS, LACES, EMBROIDERIES, ETC.
PACIFIC AVENUE.
Country Orders, whether large or small, will receive prompt and careful attention.

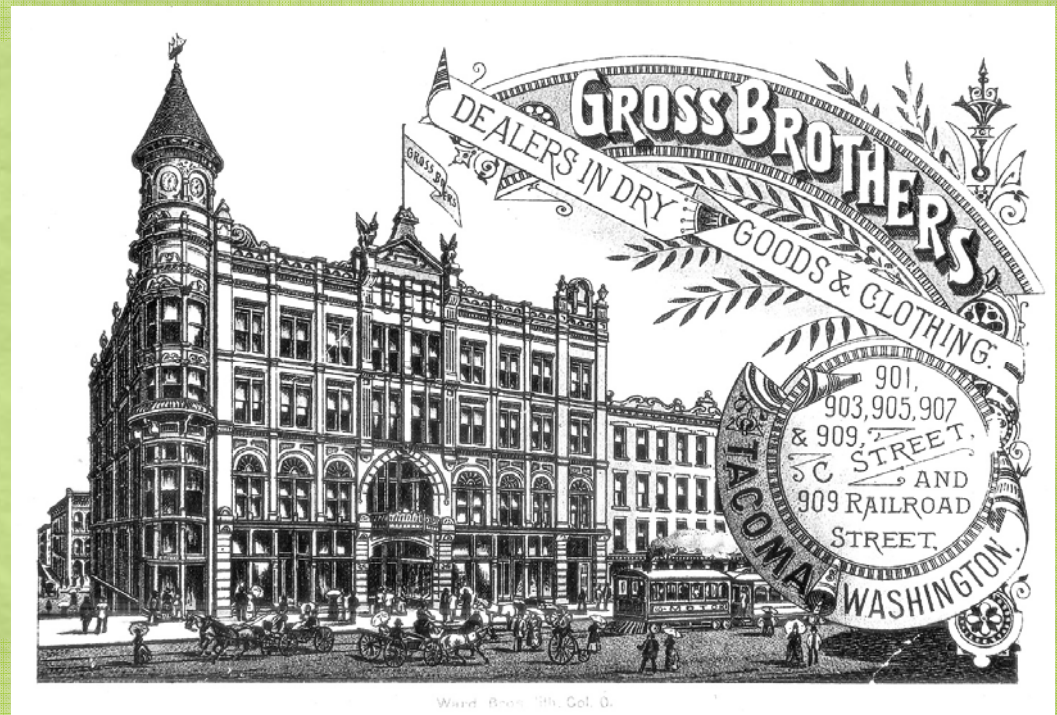
Mar 15. 1. Comfort

2.50

2.50

CROSS BROS.
PAID
MAR 14 1888
HVB.
TACOMA, WASH. TER.

In 1890 the brothers left the comfort of Pacific Avenue and built a huge six-story building on the southeast corner of South 9th and "C" Streets, (now Broadway) two blocks above the established business district. The growing city followed them and the intersection became a transportation hub. For decades after women's stores were mostly on Broadway, while men shopped on Pacific. The Gross Brothers' store offered free child care and had a ladies' retiring room for rest during the rigors of shopping. The ladies' room (with Lady Justice depicted in stained glass) was later Muehlenbruch Candy's upstairs ice cream parlor.



PANIC OF 1893

1893 Banking Panic

On May 5th, 1893, the National Cordage Company failed, and a national banking panic followed. As in the 2008 real estate market collapse, those living through it had no way to judge the enormity or predict the duration of the crisis. Only later was the day dubbed Black Friday.



"Financially Tacoma is busted into ten thousand pieces, and the people are fighting over the fragments, to get material to burn the debris."

— Letter to the Editor,
Tacoma Ledger,
March 3, 1895

On May 5th, 1893, the National Cordage Company failed, and a national banking panic followed. As in the 2008 real estate market collapse, those living through it had no way to judge the enormity or predict the duration of the crisis. Only later was the day dubbed Black Friday.

Discounted merchandise flooded the saturated market, and even Tacoma's high-end merchants eventually failed. Many of Tacoma's Jewish merchants, dependent on the economy, left to seek greener pastures and new beginnings.

The 1893 Panic cost Tacoma half of her population and decimated the Jewish population. Those who remained adapted to the changing market - operating second-hand stores, re-dyeing clothing, and offering closeout and slightly damaged merchandise. In 1897 the new large sleeves in ladies' fashions forced out the remaining high-end clothing dealers, as their outdated stock became instantly recognizable.

D. L. KAUFMAN & SON,
DEALERS IN

New and Second-hand Furniture,
Carpets, Stoves, Etc.
Crookery and Queensware.



1131 Tacoma Avenue.
TACOMA, WASH.

SECOND HAND GOODS.
Abelson Samuel, 1317 Pacific av.
Arnold C H, 1546 South C.
Durie J D, 915 S Tacoma av. (See p 659).
Frazier Mrs Adelaide, 1516 South C.
Freeburn James, 941 S Tacoma av.
Fuller T T, 2301 Pacific av.
Geisenheyner J F, 1710 South C.
Hoenigsberger & Co, 1125 South C.
Kaufman D L & Son, 1115-1117 S Tacoma av.
Lauder C H, 910-912 S Tacoma av.
Lewis W T, 1326 South C.
Lubelski Henry, 1123 South C.
Martin Jacob, 1210 South I.
Matthews Cyrus, 938 South C.
Onn O P, 306 E 25th.
Philip M T, 1512 Pacific av.
Sam Morris, 2323 Jefferson av.
Singleton James, 1721 Jefferson av.
Sterling 2nd Hand Furniture Co, 934 South C.
Tveter & Anderson, 1110 S Tacoma.
Wallis W J & Sons, 1519-1521 South C. (See adv below.)

DRY GOODS SLAUGHTERED.
To Close Out The Entire Stock At Once
M. COHN & CO.
Have moved all of the Famous Dry Goods stock into the room
NO. 938 PACIFIC AVENUE,
Where they will dispose of the entire stock regardless of cost or values. The only object will be to turn every article in the house into cash.

No Reasonable Price Offered Will Be Refused.
SALE BEGINS THIS MORNING AT 10 O'CLOCK.
Here Are a Few Pointers on Prices:

Good Cotton, per spool.....	40	Knitting, per yard.....	40	Grosgrain, Knitting Yarn, all colors, per skein.....	15	Dress Goods, worth five and six, per yard.....	35
Crochet Cotton, per ball.....	40	Cordata, worth regular five and five.....	25	Ladies' Merino Underwear, each.....	20	Black and colored Flannels, worth 75c, per yard.....	30
Knitting Cotton, per ball.....	40	Cordata, worth from 75c to \$1.25.....	40	Ladies' All-wood Underwear, each.....	20	Best Cambric, per yard.....	25
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Ladies' Knit Kid Gloves, per pair.....	40	Calicoes and Shirtings, per yard.....	40
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Ladies' Mousquetaire Kid Gloves, per pair.....	40	Best and Fine German Prints, per yard.....	30
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Small Assorted Ladies' Kid Gloves, per pair.....	40	Woolen and Unbleached Shirtings, per yard.....	35
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Children's Footie's S-Hook, all shades, every pair warranted, per pair.....	40	Large Towels, 11 yard long, each.....	40
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Dress Goods, worth 50c and 75c, per yard.....	30	Turkish Towels, 11 yard long, each.....	40
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Dress Goods, worth 75c, 1.00 and 1.25, per yard.....	40	Crash, Twines, per yard.....	40
Knitting Yarn, per ball.....	40	Children's Cotton Waists, per pair.....	20	Heavy Yarn, all colors, per skein.....	40	Quilling Flannel, per yard.....	40

Silk and Patent, Wagon, Stocking, etc. and all the goods commonly carried in a large dry goods stock will be closed out at the same prices as are quoted on above articles. Everything in the house is ticketed in plain figures so a child can buy goods at this great closing out sale as cheap as the best shoppers.

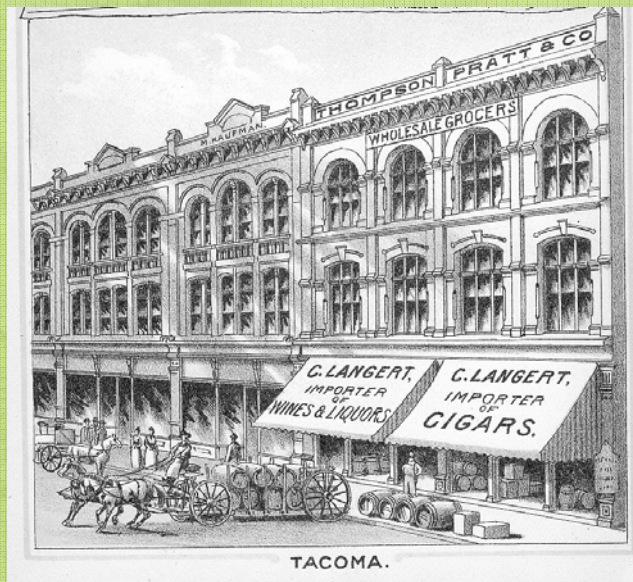
Don't Forget the Time, 10 a. m. This Morning, at 938 Pacific Avenue.

M. COHN & COMP'Y.



Tacoma's Jewish pioneers were involved in every aspect of the liquor business – known then as the wet goods industry. A few worked as delivery wagon drivers, while others ran rough taverns and later fine “sample rooms.” Half a dozen Jewish merchants worked as wholesale liquor distributors, and a few made – and sometimes lost – their fortunes operating breweries and growing and brokering hops.

The liquor industry cycle paralleled the Jewish calendar. Every spring, as Tacoma's Jewish citizens prepared for Passover, the brewers prepared to release their bock beer. In the fall, as the High Holidays approached, hop growers got ready for the harvesting season. Jewish merchants often set up temporary stores in Puyallup to help the Native American pickers quickly spend their earnings.



Charles Langert started a wholesale liquor house in Tacoma in September of 1883. Based on the steady stream of newspaper mentions that appeared in the columns of the *Ledger*, it's quite likely that local reporters made a habit of stopping by Langert's store for a cigar and a chat while on their daily rounds. Langert also made a practice of delivering liquid holiday gifts to the newspaper offices on a regular basis.



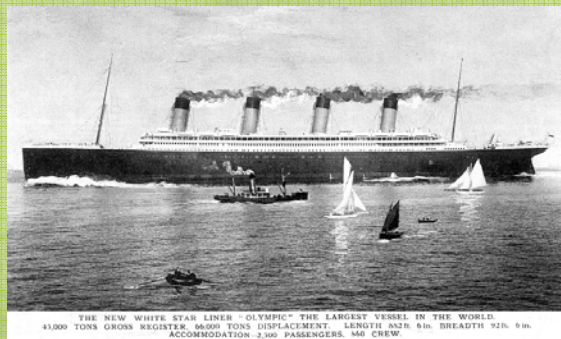
In 1886 Germany's hops crops suffered a major failure, while at the same time New York's hops fields were infested with pests. The price of Washington-grown hops skyrocketed. Washington's climate was ideal for growing hops and Puyallup's Ezra Meeker became known as the Hops King. However, two Jewish millionaires were also heavily invested in the hops industry. Isaac Pincus began buying local hops by the ton, selling to eastern and European markets. He also developed his own hops ranch in Puyallup, cleverly dubbing the house the Hop Inn.

Isaac Pincus continued as a large-scale international broker of hops, turning the business over to his sons in 1905. As with the trials of Job, one disaster followed another - an early heavy frost ruined their entire Roy crop, a warehouse flood destroyed their Oregon yield. Just when the firm's cash flow was at an all-time low in 1910, the boys were caught "selling short." They were forced to buy on the open market to fulfill their export commitments to European brewers. A friend stepped in to buy the remaining hops contracts. Instead of declaring bankruptcy, Isaac Pincus sold his real estate holdings and eventually paid off every single debt dollar for dollar, but never recovered financially.

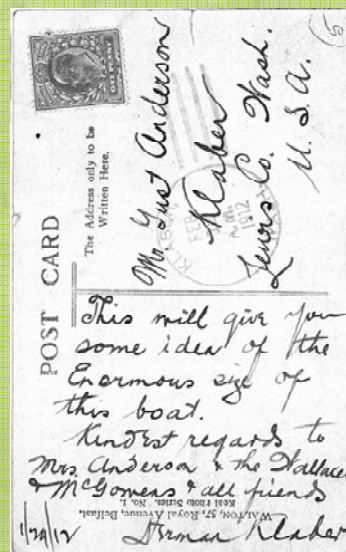


The friend who stepped in (cornering the market for the first time in the industry) was fellow hops broker Herman Klaber, who had been in the Northwest since the early 1890s. Klaber owned a hop ranch near Chehalis, in addition to farms in Lewis County and in Puyallup. Not to be out-punned by Pincus, Klaber named his summer bungalow the Seldom Inn.

His international dealings meant regular trips to London. In the spring of 1912 Klaber was scheduled to return aboard the *Olympic*. However, he chose to delay his departure a week so he could sail home on the maiden voyage of the sister ship, the new *RMS Titanic*. His body was among those never recovered.



THE NEW WHITE STAR LINER "OLYMPIC" THE LARGEST VESSEL IN THE WORLD.
41,000 TONS GROSS REGISTER 46,000 TONS DISPLACEMENT LENGTH 842 ft. 9 in. BREADTH 92 ft. 9 in.
ACCOMMODATION 2,300 PASSENGERS, 540 CREW.



S. S. TITANIC WRECKED

(By United Press Leased Wire.)
HALIFAX, N. S., April 15.—With its 1,300 passengers safely transferred to another vessel, the White Star liner Titanic is slowly approaching this port. Passengers were taken aboard the White Star liner Olympic, then transferred to the Baltic, now steaming for New York.

The fact that the Titanic is the world's biggest vessel is probably the only thing that prevented great losses of life. It is not believed that any other craft afloat could have withstood the shock. "Water Tights" Saved It.

The Titanic's prow was shattered but the water tight compartments automatically closed, and with the pumps working well the crew managed to keep the vessel afloat.

MONTRÉAL, April 15.—Crashing into an iceberg while running in a dense fog, the steamer Titanic, Captain Smith, White Star line, carrying 2,075 souls and diamonds and bonds worth \$5,000,000, 300 miles east of New York, began calling for help at 10:25 last night.

The whole bow of the vessel was crushed in and washed away by the shock of the collision. Only the automatic bulkheads closing kept the water from flooding the entire ship and sending all to death.

With a dozen of the fastest ocean greyhounds steaming to her assistance, the Titanic started limping toward Cape Race or Halifax and made slow progress. Captain Paddock of the liner Olympic at 8:35 this morning flashed by wireless that five boatloads of women and children had been taken on board the liner Carpathia. The liners Parisian and 20 boatloads went to the liner Carpathia. The liners Virginia, Olympic, Mauretania, Amerika, Frederick Wilhelm, Baltic, Prince Adalbert and Cincinnati were hastening to the distressed steamer. The women and children had all been loaded into life boats ready to be lowered away should the vessel sink.

At 9:30 a. m. it was reported that the liner Virginian had reached the Titanic and gotten a tow line aboard her. Shortly after it was reported 800 passengers had been taken aboard the Olympic.

The Titanic sailed for New York on her maiden voyage last Wednesday with 1,300 passengers. Some of the passengers are:

Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Col. and Mrs. John Jacob Astor, Major Archie Butt, military aide to President Taft; Col. Archibald

Gracie, Benjamin Guggenheim, Henry B. Harris, theater magnate, and wife, C. M. Hays, president of the Grand Trunk railway; Imray J. Bruce, chairman of the White Star line; Col. Washington Roebling, who with his father designed the Brooklyn bridge; Countess Rothes, F. D. Millet, president of the American academy of Rome.

Mrs. Jack Cudahy In Trouble

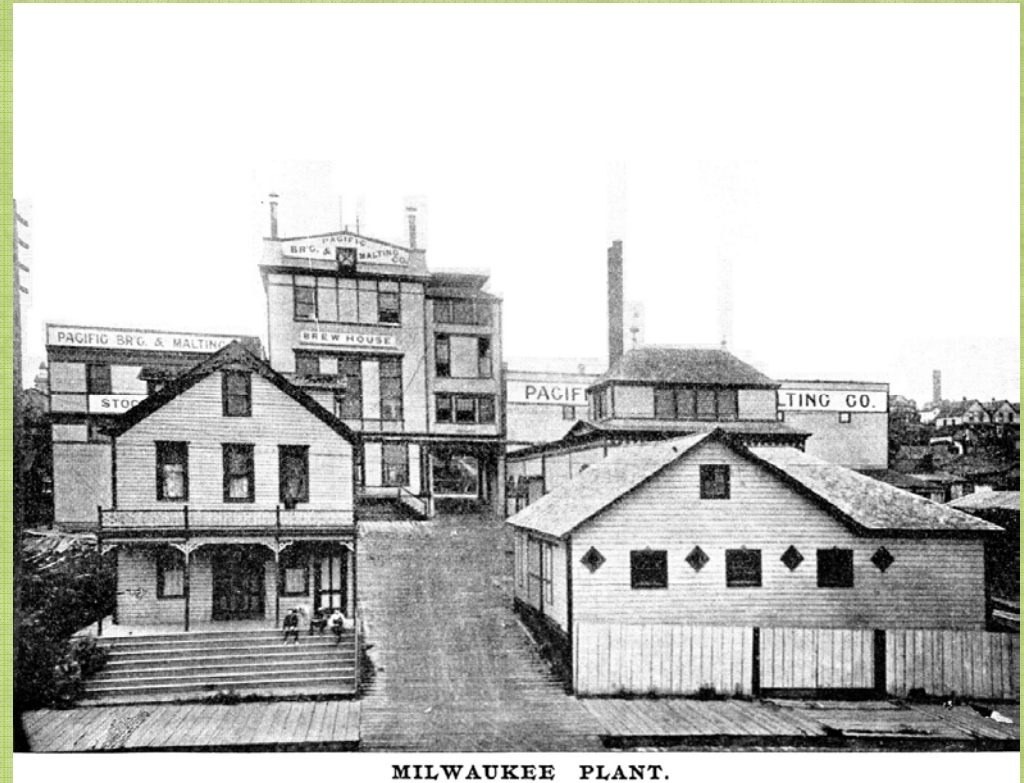


Mrs. Jack Cudahy, who figured conspicuously in the recent notoriety at Kansas City, which arose when Jack Cudahy, the millionaire meat acker, found Jere Latta,

Samuel Loeb, a young brewer from the Midwest, opened the Milwaukee Saloon in Tacoma in 1889. Two years later he joined forces with his new brother-in-law, Albert Weinberg, to purchase controlling interest in the United States Brewery, re-organizing and expanding it as the Milwaukee Brewing Company.



Logo courtesy of Gary Flynn,
brewerygems.com



Meanwhile, the larger brewers in Tacoma and Seattle had formed a combine, buying supplies as a group, and “agreeing” on prices and territories. They didn’t bother including the smaller Milwaukee. Demonstrating the definition of chutzpah, Loeb sent his delivery wagons into the streets of Seattle in 1894, offering his beer at one dollar per barrel less than the “agreed” price. The Beer War was on, reaching its peak in the summer of 1897. Seattle powers purchased Loeb’s plant mortgage and immediately called it due, but the young brewer was able to scramble to arrange other financing.

Frustrated, that fall Loeb & Weinberg chose to merge their Milwaukee plant with Anton Huth’s Puget Sound Brewery. The result was the Pacific Brewing and Malting Company, with several brewing facilities in Tacoma. The merger allowed the combined Tacoma brewers to again reach a settlement with those to the north, renewing their “agreed” price per barrel.

On January 1, 1916, a state constitutional amendment made Washington a dry state. Pacific Brewing and Malting Company built a plant in San Francisco to retain its California and export business. The Tacoma Bottling Company offered home delivery of Pacific Beer from San Francisco. The new law made it illegal to brew beer in Washington, but with a permit beer could still be imported. The rest of the nation adopted Prohibition several years later.

Several of Tacoma’s breweries were converted to process sodas and near-beer. Others manufactured Playmate Soap. Nationwide Prohibition was repealed in December of 1930.

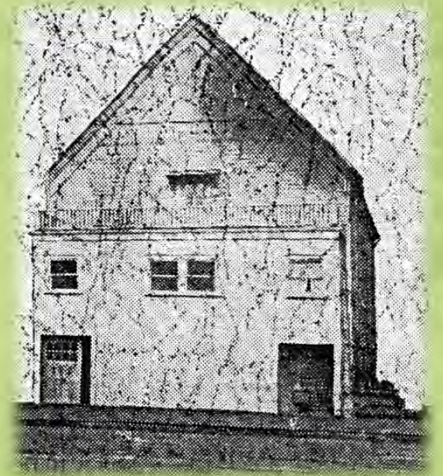


Tacoma's Jewish community in the 1870s and 1880s was made up mostly of people from Russian-ruled Poland and Germany, although at the time many would say they were from Prussia. Another portion were descendants of California's gold rush period – the minors of the “miners of the miners.” These Jews prided themselves on being American and for the most part practiced their Judaism in the new Reform style. Stores were kept open on Saturdays by necessity – often until 10 pm. Pork and seafood were commonly on the menu of Jewish gatherings. This group called themselves Congregation Beth Israel and dedicated their house of worship on South 10th and “I” Streets in September of 1893, after holding holiday services in rented halls for nearly a decade.



Original 1893 window,
courtesy of Temple Beth El

There's a saying that "Two Jews = Three Opinions." In the early 1890s Tacoma had enough Jewish residents practicing a more Orthodox observance to hold separate High Holiday services. By the mid-1890s, as Russian persecution of Jews increased, a second wave of immigration began. In Tacoma, the vast majority of those were related families from the Courland area of what is now Latvia. This group of immigrants were likely shocked at the lack of observance they found in Tacoma. Descendants relate that the men met daily for morning and evening prayers. Their sons and daughters and cousins intermarried. Eventually the cluster of families grew large enough to form their own congregation Chevra Talmud Torah (1909) and commission their own Torah scroll. In 1914 they purchased and converted for their use a church building at 1529 Tacoma Avenue South, and established their own cemetery, Chevra Kadisha.





As Tacoma grew and expanded, many Jewish families left their immigrant neighborhoods and moved to the prosperous North End. In 1918 Congregation Beth Israel sold their building on "I" Street and for several years returned to holding holiday services in rented space. In 1922 the congregation built a new Temple Beth Israel on the corner of North 4th and "J" Streets. Construction funds were boosted by family donations for large stained-glass memorial windows. (Top)

Experiencing similar changes, in April of 1925 Tacoma's Orthodox congregation laid the cornerstone of a new synagogue building on South 4th and "I" Streets. Ever practical, they utilized the same architectural plans and construction company as the Reform congregation, but faced their building in brick rather than stucco. In 1936 the congregation changed to a more contemporary Conservative affiliation and changed their name to Sinai Temple. (Bottom)



Both small congregations struggled through the next several decades, often unable to afford the services of a rabbi. In 1960 Rabbi Richard Rosenthal diplomatically accomplished a merger of the two. Both temple buildings were sold and a new home, Temple Beth El, was dedicated in May of 1968, as Pierce County's only house of Jewish worship. Although the congregation's official affiliation was Reform, service schedules and practices maintained a Conservative element.

Demonstrating the repetitive nature of history, thirty-five years later Rabbi Zalman Heber brought a branch of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement to Tacoma. Chabad Jewish Center of Pierce County dedicated a new synagogue building in June of 2010, once again providing a place for Orthodox Jewish worship and practice. The building was modeled after the Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in New York.

This exhibit was made possible by a Heritage Project Grant from the City of Tacoma's Landmarks Preservation Commission

Curator: Deb Freedman

Design: Chris Erlich

Artifacts and images on loan from:

Gary Flynn (Brewery Gems)

John Potter

Doug Salin

Steilacoom Historical Society Museum

Tacoma Public Library/Northwest Room

Temple Beth El

Washington State Jewish Historical Society

And the collection of Deb Freedman

Grateful thanks to all those who assisted in the fabrication and installation of this exhibit:

Bill Baarsma, Chad and Kellie Bennett, Beth Bestrom, Chris Erlich, Jeff and Deb Freedman, Dusty Gorman, Kel-Tech Plastics, Julie LaRue, LaserWriting/John Leach, Paul Michaels, Ellica Spjut, and Dale Wirsing



Stop by to
see the next
exhibit!

